



# "The Clinton Independent"

1983

## Good Bye Hila, We'll Miss You

HILA MABLE AXTELL BROSS, a former Clinton County Historical Society president and one of those instrumental in forming CCHS, died Dec. 15 at Clinton Memorial Hospital in St. Johns. Mrs. Bross had been ill for the past year and until just a few weeks before her death had been staying with her son, Dan, and his family, at Traverse City.

Often alert in the weeks before her death, she was surrounded by relatives and friends, many of them CCHS members.

Hila and her late husband, Manning, were well known in Mid Michigan musical, social and historical circles. They owned the historic old "Salt Box House" on U. S. 27 about four miles north of St. Johns and from 1953-64 they operated a restaurant there by that name. For the year preceding her death Hila shared her home with the CCHS Genealogy Division which operated our archives there.

"She's going down with all flags flying," Adele Jones, a relative and CCHS member, said just shortly before Hila died. That was an understatement as Hila kept family and friends busy in those last few weeks, passing along ideas for projects she felt various groups might undertake and inquiring about projects already in progress.

Hila retired as librarian from the Bement Library in St. Johns in 1976 and then, when a reporter asked a friend to describe Hila, she said, "Oh, she was into everything." Another understatement.

After hearing that Hila had cancer the St. Johns City Commission made her an honorary citizen of that city because she had always lived in nearby Greenbush Township but had been extremely active and supportive of all city projects and events.

Hila was a member of the Clinton County Bicentennial Committee & also of the 1980 Book Committee which spent five years researching and writing the history book CCHS published two years ago.

She and Manning were blessed with musical talents that they shared with the community and as an organist Hila's willingness to play for events knew no ethnic or religious barriers. She left a musical legacy, having taught piano in St. Johns and Ovid for many years.

Hila, 71, was buried in the family plot in St. Johns.

PRESIDENTIAL POTPOURRI

## Coming Soon

CCHS general membership Feb. meeting: Feb. 17, 7:30 p.m., Capitol Savings and Loan, St. Johns. Program on the "Roads of Clinton County" by Dudley McKean of the Clinton County Road Commission.

March meeting: March 17, 7:30 p.m. at Capitol Savings and Loan, St. Johns, on surveying.

GENEALOGY DIVISION February meeting: Feb. 7 at Capitol Savings & Loan, St. Johns, 7:30 p.m. with instructions on how to do genealogy research. Bring your problems, tips and hints, and a friend.

GENEALOGY DIVISION'S Genealogy Collection, now housed at the DeWitt Township Hall at 4700 Brook Road (former Valley Farms School) is open Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. & Wednesdays, from 1 to 9 p.m.

CCHS Board of Directors will not have a February meeting. Betty Moore, president, said the board is still seeking ideas for a "fitting memorial" to Hila Bross. Anyone with ideas is asked to contact her at 224-2025; Ford Ceasar at 321-3224 or Betty Jane Minsky at 224-4410 within the next few weeks as a decision will be made in March.



# PRESIDENTIAL POTPOURRI

We were all saddened by the death of Hila Brons, who was our founder & friend. She had been so ill, and is now at peace. We offer our condolences to her family and to her many friends. What Hila did for the Historical Society will be remembered by all of us. We will certainly want to find a fitting memorial for her. I would also like to thank Ford Caeser for the fine words, which were so fitting, that he said at the Christmas open house.

A new year is ahead for the Society. Hopefully it will be a good year. 1982 ended on a high note with the Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum staff and Society officers entertaining the Clinton County Board of Commissioners at a Christmas coffee hour at the museum on Dec. 28. (The county board made the home which is our museum available to us on a long term lease and for that we are grateful.)

Our Genealogists moved the archives into their new facility at DeWitt in the township hall there (made available free by the DeWitt Township board) and they are pleased with the excellent facility.

Our membership seems enthused about the new sign program (wherein CCHS has designed a metal sign which will be sold to mark historical structures in the county).

Your CCHS board met Jan. 13 at the archives and toured the facility. We need to know about our facilities if we are to tell others about them. There is a definite need for us to get the word out about the Historical Society and our excellent facilities. I would hope that spreading the word about the Society will be one of our goals for 1983.

Our board is discussing ideas for projects that can double as fund raisers. We need new ideas. We also ask committee chairmen to think about what your needs for the coming year might be. (Anyone with ideas for fundraisers or meeting programs can call our president, Betty Moore, at 224-2025.)

BETTY MOORE, President

## CLOSING

Due to the cost of fuel and electricity Paine-Gillam-Scott Museum will be closed this winter from Jan. 16 to March 13.

The economy has made an impact on our museum and donations are appreciated. Send to Box 174, St. Johns, MI. 48879.

## QUIZ

A Worcester, Mass. girl started the manufacture of valentines in this country. What was her name?

For answer see story provided by Janet Snyder on next page.

PAINE-GILLAM-SCOTT MUSEUM will be closed during the winter and reopen March 13.

## GOOD NEWS

Suburban Newspapers, the owners of the Clinton County News at St. Johns has made available to us bound copies of the paper from 1940 - 1980.

We thank the paper for this gift which will be a fine addition to our collection.



# Pot-pourri

(Excerpts from old St. Johns municipal records of action of the town's village council) 1876 - No person except conservators of the peace shall carry concealed weapons....gave the village fire warden authority to inspect chimneys, condition of wood stoves & pipes and disposition of ashes and power to make owners remove "fire exposures."...prohibited trains from blocking streets for more than 10 minutes at a time....mandated that no privies or cesspools be erected so leakage drained on surrounding land. Prohibited placing impure or unwholesome substances in public drinking troughs in 1980. In 1894 they had constructed a sanitary sewer and an ordinance prohibited the running of storm water into it. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Sounds familiar,)

FOR SALE.-A house and 3 acres of land, with all kinds of fruit trees in bearing. This desirable property will be sold on favorable terms, and if not disposed of by Oct. 1st, it will be rented. Enquire of Thos. Ballenger, St Johns. 719:4w

(An 1880 ad for a house for sale. My, how ads have changed.)

# GENEALOGY

# GAZETTE

## VALENTINES . . .



(Information for this story is excerpted from The Howland Quarterly of July, 1969 and we thank Janet Snyder for making it available.)

...St. Valentine lived in Italy in the third century, it took a Worcester, Mass. girl who had recently graduated from the Mt. Holyoke Female Seminary in 1847 to really start the commercial manufacture of valentines in this country.

Esther Howland . . . , daughter of Southworth Allen Howland & Esther Allen. Her father . . . became the leading stationer & bookseller in Worcester. Soon after Esther graduated . . . she received a valentine from England with white paper lace and cut-out figures which she found so fascinating that she persuaded her father to import some of the supplies. She tried her hand at making the valentines and the next time her brother, Charles started out on his selling tour he took along some samples. Much to the family's delight he came home with orders for \$5,000 worth of Esther's new valentines.

...Ester was overwhelmed with the many unexpected orders but she gathered some young women together and the attic of her home was converted into a workroom. The young ladies worked on an assembly line basis, with Esther designing the cards and the young girls cutting out the backgrounds, the pictures and pasting the lace paper in place.

As years went along, they added Christmas and New Years cards and finally she was doing a \$100,000 yearly business.

Howland valentines can be identified by a red H stamped or pasted on the back, or the initials "N.E.V.Co." for New England Valentine Co.

These valentines were made between 1848 and 1880-81, when Esther sold the business to the George C. Whitney Co.

## THANKS

Recent additions to the Genealogist's Collection (available to use as research tools at our new home in the DeWitt Township Hall at 4700 Brook Rd.)

include: "MICHIGAN CENSUS 1710 - 1830 UNDER THE FRENCH, BRITISH & AMERICANS" . . . . . "HISTORY OF BATH CHARTER TOWNSHIP, 1826 - 1976". The above two publications were acquired by a cash donation from the Clinton County Historical Society.

"MARRIAGE RECORDS BY REV. C. G. THOMAS 1882-1895" and "THE KING STRANG STORY" were donated by Doyle C. Fitzpatrick of St. James, Beaver Island, Michigan.

NEED INF. on Dr. John Bare about 1850 his brothers Jacob & David (my grandfather) . . . . Mary Fleagel (my grandmother) all lived in Henderson, Ovid, St. Johns, Elsie, Ithaca and Laingsburg. Also Fred Bare of Ithaca and Glenna Plowman, St. Johns and Bertha Gardner. Early 1900. Contact Bernadette Palombit, 26 McKinley Pl., Grosse Pointe Farms, Mi. 48236, (daughter of Bert Bare).

## Querries

ALSO see story lower left hand column of this page on Fowler lady postmaser which includes an appeal from Janet Snyder for information.



Our "Genealogy Collection" is now open in our new location in the DeWitt Township Hall, 4700 Brook Road (former Valley Farms School). Val Coletta and Evangeline Caudy are coordinating our volunteer staff there. Anyone interested in helping should call Coletta at 224-4577 or Caudy at 224-2778.

Our hours when the public may come in and do research are: Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesdays, 1 to 9 p.m.

**CLASSIFIED**

NEEDED: Program ideas: If you have ideas for programs contact OCHS board members or anyone in the Genealogy Division.

THE ADJOINING HALF TONE WILL GIVE NEWS READERS A PEEP INTO THE FOWLER POST OFFICE, AT LEAST IT SHOWS THE FACES OF THE ONLY LADY POSTMASTER IN THIS SECTION AND HER ASSISTANT. UNCLE SAM TABOOS THE WORD POST MISTRESS AND CALLS HIS LADY MANAGERS OF LOCAL OFFICES "POSTMASTERS" AS IF THEY WERE INDEED MASTERS OF THE SITUATION. MISS AGNES SAGE, WHO WAS APPOINTED TO THE FOWLER OFFICE SOON AFTER THE DEATH OF HER FATHER, W. H. SAGE IN DECEMBER LAST YEAR, HAS BEEN IN ACTIVE CHARGE SINCE. SHE IS ABLY ASSISTED BY E. S. KNOWLAND, WHO WAS APPOINTED DEPUTY LAST FEBRUARY. MR KNOWLAND WAS BORN IN FOWLER, AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS SPENT A PORTION OF HIS TIME AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE, HE KNOWS EVERY PATRON OF THE OFFICE. FOR SEVERAL YEARS MR. KNOWLAND WAS A TELEGRAPH OPERATOR WITH THE GRAND TRUNK HAVING BEEN IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT STATIONS ON THE MAIN LINE. THE FOWLER OFFICE IS NICELY EQUIPED, THE FURNITURE HAVING BEEN REPLACED DURING THE CLEVELAND ADMINISTRATION. RURAL SERVICE IS GIVEN OUT OF THE VILLAGE BY ONE ROUTE AT THE PRESENT TIME. H. B. THORNTON IS THE CARRIER AND HAS 130 BOXES ON HIS LINE, WHICH RUNS NORTH OF THE VILLAGE. THIS ROUTE WAS ESTABLISHED IN APRIL 1900 AND A DAY DELIVERY HAS NEVER BEEN MISSED SINCE. MISS SAGE IS NOT ONLY OBLIGING TO A FAULT BUT KIND & CONSIDERATE AND THE PATRONS OF THE FOWLER OFFICE ALL SPEAK IN THE HIGHEST TERMS OF HER ADMINISTRATION OF THE AFFAIRS OF THE OFFICE.

IF ANYONE HAS INFORMATION IN REGARD TO H. B. THORNTON FAMILY PLEASE CONTACT: JANET M SNYDER 3416 W BANNER RD ST JOHNS, MI. 48879

Genealogy memberships include membership in the Clinton County Historical Society at no extra cost.  
JOIN TODAY

BUCK FIELD  
(From St. Johns Reminder & written by Steve Vandemark, a journalism student).

On Oct. 8, 1937, Frank P. Buck received the honor (of having the St. Johns football field named after him). Buck, a superintendent, encouraged the city to buy Emmons' Woods (now a city park). The field was built on part of the parcel.



## Clinton County Historical Society



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Saint Johns, Michigan 48879

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Happy Valentine's Day

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