

Easterday Mortuary Opened in 1893

Daniel and Julia Easterday came to a German settlement southwest of Lake Maxinkuckee in the 1860s on what was considered a large farm of 103.6 acres. They built a log cabin for their family. Daniel encouraged two of his brothers with their families to join them in this beautiful place. They did so in 1875.

In 1893 Daniel and Julia's son, William Samuel (called Sam by everyone), began his career on Main Street in the north half of the Knights of Pythias building. The elegant writing on the windows, "Easterday's Furniture and Undertaker," let the town folks know he was open for business.

The July 4, 1907, issue of the Culver Citizen told of Sam's son experimenting, as an undertaker, with his yellow dog. "Chester Easterday made a successful demonstration of the science of embalming in preserving a pet dog which turned up his toes the other day. A very lifelike result has been produced. The animal has been posed in the position of lying on his forepaws with his eyes turned sleepily up at the passerby. The body can be kept any number of years."

A horsedrawn hearse was purchased in 1911. When Sam became the owner of the hearse, he told the people that it was such a good vehicle it would last him as long as he was in business.

The horse was eight years old when acquired for the mortuary and continued in service until he was 23. The automobile forced him into retirement. He had three mates during that time. The livery stable for the horses and carriages used in the business were across the street, on the alley behind the current library. The carriages were ambulances as well as being used for funeral services.

In 1917 Sam bought his first motorized

hearse, giving him the opportunity to learn to drive. It was a Sayres-Scholfield with side lamps, a drop step in the rear, decorative carvings and other traditions carried over from the old-style hearse.

The next hearse he purchased was a 1937 Packard, recognized as "the hearse of tomorrow." Gone were the decorative characteristics of the hearses of past years. The easy-riding car also served as a more efficient ambulance. The ambulance service was taken over by the municipality in 1978.

The merchandising of furniture was included in the business until 1923. At that time the mortuary was moved to a modern brick building at 108 N. Main Street. Above the door of the remodeled building were the words, framed in brick, "Easterday Funeral Services." The Easterdays lived in the upstairs apartment. Two part-time employees were required, A.M. Romig and Charles Ferrier.

Sam was interviewed at the time he had been in business for 26 years. He was quoted as saying, "I estimate that we have buried more people than the present population of Culver."

During those years he had been treasurer of the Chamber of Commerce for five years, trustee of the Knights of Pythias, town treasurer, secretary of the school board and township trustee. During the time the dirt roads were improved with gravel, and the building of the township Carnegie library was begun.

Sam's son William (Bill) joined him in 1933. Before becoming a partner, Bill taught commercial

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Bill and Hildreth Easterday stand with Jim Bonine in front of the Easterday Funeral Home at 108 N. Main Street in 1969.

Society Has Busy Summer

subjects and was chief clerk at the Indiana Boys School in Plainfield. It was there that he met his wife Hildreth, as she was a matron and librarian at the school.

William took some time from work and attended an embalming school. He passed the state boards and came to Culver to work with his father. Bill was an energetic enthusiast in the Maxinkuckee Fish and Wildlife Club.

The couple built a house at 311 W. Washington Street, behind the present library, and Bill and Hildreth lived in the apartment over the business. Sam died in 1946.

Hildreth wrote for the Culver Citizen and the "Over Eighty Club" of the Plymouth Pilot News. It was a feature for many years.

In 1960 James Bonine became a partner in the Easterday Funeral Services. Bill and Hildreth moved to the house on Washington Street, and the Bonines lived in the apartment.

It was in 1972 that Jim and Rosalie purchased the funeral home. Four years later the 79-year-old firm completed building and remodeling the funeral home at the corner of Lakeshore Drive and Main Street, thus increasing the floor space, as well as the parking area. The home was known as the Easterday-Bonine until 1971 when the name was changed to the Bonine Funeral Home.

Gregory Odom on April 1, 2004, purchased the business after being an employee for six years. Following the tradition, when the ownership changed, the name became Bonine-Odom.

— Jo Dugger



William Easterday stands in the doorway of his business in 1910. The children seated on the step are: Roy Carr, George Nearpass, Chester Easterday, Herbert Ulery, William Easterday, Edwin Gandy, Harry Dillon, Ray Carr and Earl Duddleson.

New Editor of Citizen

Jeff Kenney, our secretary and general, all-around indispensable man, has taken the position of editor at the Culver Citizen. Already the Citizen shows his professional touch. It is interesting and readable, and we wish Jeff many good things in the future. He welcomes information about news from around Culver.

Congratulations, Jeff!

— Agnes Bramfeld

Antiquarian & Historical Society of Culver Fall 2007 Newsletter
 News Editor: Agnes Bramfeld
 Feature Editor: Jo Dugger
 Production Editor: Fred Karst

At our annual meeting in June, we elected officers as follows: Jim Peterson, president; Fred Karst, vice president; Bob Kreuzberger, financial vice president; Jeff Kenney, secretary, and Agnes Bramfeld, treasurer. Board members are: Marcia Adams, E.P. Severns, Bob Kreuzberger, Jeff Kenney, Jim Peterson, Jo Dugger, Fred Karst, Chris Landskron, Agnes Bramfeld, Frank Stubblefield and Dave Zeglis. Afterwards, Jeff and Aaron Sporlarich talked about Kurt Vonnegut, who had recently died. Sporlarich researched mainly Vonnegut's connection with Indiana, and Jeff brought him home to his Culver connections.

Carl and Chris Landskron hosted a meeting at their Culver Bed & Breakfast on Lake Shore Drive. Bob Hartman talked about his very interesting book, "Lest We Forget: Two Great Wars and the Years Between." Bob's book is available now at the Academies bookstore.

Another program was at the City Tavern, thanks to the generosity of owner Larry Surrisi. Barbara Cope and Jim Harper, with Jeff's technical assistance, provided a history and slide show of the black community in Culver. Barbara Moore Cope was born in Culver and is the executive director of the Gary Education Development Foundation. Jim Harper, who was interviewed in the Winter 2006 issue of the newsletter, has moved back to Culver. Thelma Hodges Moorhead was at the meeting and is now a member of the society, all the way from the Virgin Islands. This was one of those gatherings that no one wanted to end.

Our most recent meeting was the first held in October, added to the schedule because of the timing of Craighton Hippenhammer's article in the Summer 2007 issue of the magazine, "Traces," and the publication of a new book by Dr. Robert Gray. Craighton wrote about "The House of a Thousand Candles," his home on the East Shore made famous, we think, by Meredith Nicholson's best selling novel of that name. Dr. Gray's book, "Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life," is the first biography of Nicholson ever written.

— Agnes Bramfeld

Rudith Sheridan

Rudith Treder Sheridan was known as the bishop's wife. But she was so much more. She was a mother, a friend, a teacher, a learner, a poet and philosopher. I am leaving out so much. In the eulogy at her funeral on October 16, I heard the word "brilliant" used to describe this quiet, elegant lady and thought to myself, "exactly."

The bishop and Rudith were loyal members of the Antiquarian Society, opening their beautiful and unique home on more than one occasion for meetings and programs. Not long ago, the bishop died, leaving a great empty space in many lives. Rudith bravely continued with her interesting and useful activities.

To her five children and many friends, our sincere and respectful condolences.

— Agnes Bramfeld

Union Township's Cemeteries

The pioneer cemeteries of Union Township are Bucklew, Washington, Cromley and the Old Township Cemetery.

BUCKLEW is also known as the McDonald Cemetery. Located on Quince Road between 16B and 16C, Bucklew Cemetery was the first cemetery in the township and among the earliest in the county. The Bucklew family farm was immediately west of the cemetery.

The Thompson and McDonald families are well represented in this cemetery, especially in the western and older portions. There is a representation of a weeping willow on the McDonald grave markers.

The oldest grave in the cemetery is apparently that of an infant of the Thompson family. The date, which is nearly indecipherable, appears to be 1826. Graves of the McDonald family bear the dates 1837 and 1840.

There is a grave of a veteran of the War of 1812. James Duff was in the 1st Regiment of Pennsylvania.

As we see the burial plots, we realize the hardships of our pioneers. The Mosher family lost children in 1876, 1877, 1886, 1887, 1892 and 1894. In 1894, the mother died. The children's names are engraved on the top of small rectangular stones.

WASHINGTON CEMETERY, at one time called the Lawson Graveyard, is on State Road 117, one-half mile north of 20th Road.

As we stroll through this cemetery reading the names on the stones, we remember the pioneers who made Union Township what it is today. A few of the names in the older section are Edgington, Hawkins, Bigley, Savage and Rector.

It is believed Conaway and Frances A. Rector came to live near Maxinkuckee Village about 1843. They built a log house on a hill on the east side of the lake road just north of the Maxinkuckee Road. Conaway died at an early age. Frances married Daniel Thomas.

Five of their sons lost their lives in the Civil War. Frances was determined to have these sons remembered. Each name is engraved on a stone in the Washington Cemetery. They can be seen at the southwest corner of the cemetery.

As the Civil War began, Lewis Rector and his eldest son Samuel enlisted in the army, served for three years and were discharged. Lewis reenlisted as a corporal in Company C, 18th Regiment, Indiana Volunteers. Many Marshall County men enlisted in this regiment.

Lewis was seriously wounded in the fighting. He came home with wounds that caused his death in 1884. William and Nathan were in Company D, 9th Indiana Regiment. Nathan was killed in an explosion and was buried in Chattanooga in 1863.

William died in 1865. John Wesley was in Libby Prison, came home and died in 1865. Silas was in Company C, 48th Regiment. He died of his wounds in 1875.

Sarah Rector, Lewis' wife, operated a well known hotel in the log house that grandfather Conaway Rector had built. It became a favorite resort place with those who appreciated home comfort. She was very successful and well thought of as a business woman.

CROMLEY CEMETERY is one-half mile north of the Fulton County line on South Union Road.

The cemetery is situated in the woods on a one-lane road ending at the cemetery. Very few of the old stones are still standing; some are dated 1856. The stones are badly weathered and difficult to read. In a corner is a pile of broken stones and parts of stones.

There are inscriptions in old German on some gravestones of members of the Zechiel family. The Cromley family has headstones from 1859 to 1908.

THE MAXINKUCKEE ODD FELLOWS and POPLAR GROVE CEMETERY are on State Road 10 between Pear and Pine Roads east of the Poplar Grove Methodist Church.

The earliest headstones are from 1850. There are many markers of veterans of our nation's wars. The early pioneers are represented by Peter and Harriet Spangler, who began the hotel era of Lake Maxinkuckee in the period from 1870 to 1930.

ZION CEMETERY is located on South Upas Road between 19B and 20A Roads.

On the 14th of May in 1893, the members of Zion Church announced they had laid out lots for a cemetery. A portion of the cemetery was set aside for those unable to pay the cost of a burial.

Zion Cemetery is beautifully situated on a knoll adjacent to the road on the west side of the township.

BURR OAK-VOREIS CEMETERY is on West 14B Road, one-half mile west of Tulip Road.

It is a beautiful cemetery set on a hill with trees shading the area.

There is a lighthouse tombstone for an 11-year-old daughter. Another young girl is remembered with a heart-shaped stone.

Several headstones are of men who fought in the Civil War and one in the Spanish-American War.

The **CULVER CEMETERY (OLD UNION TOWNSHIP CEMETERY)** merged with the **CULVER MASONIC CEMETERY**. On Memorial Day, at the southeast corner of this cemetery, we honor those who have fought for our country. The conflicts our veterans have been involved in are named on plaques on 11 stones encircling the area. We meet there to remember their bravery and sacrifice.

"Haag" became "Hawk" as this German family immigrated to America in the early 1800s. A descendant of this family made a home in Marshall County near the shore of Lost Lake about 1860. They prospered, and their family grew and became a part of the community. In their honor, the nearby lake became known as Hawk Lake. After much accomplishment, David and Catherine Hawk are in their resting place in the Culver Cemetery.

One of the special monuments in the cemetery is the heart-shaped stone monument David Burns made for his wife Freda as he had built with stone in many places in Marshall County. His name is now included on the heart. Those who knew him will remember the license plate on his truck that reminded us, "I'll be there Tuesday."

— Jo Dugger

Sources:

Opal Benedict, from a program she gave several years ago.

John Houghton, who recollected the dog story.

James Bonine

"Marshall County Indiana Cemeteries"
Wendell and Jean C. Tombaugh

"One Township's Yesterdays"
Edwin R. Corwin

Local History and Genealogy Room

FALL, 2007
NEWSLETTER

Antiquarian and Historical Society
P.O. Box 125
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Antiquarian Society Receives \$40,000 grant

A grant of \$40,000 was awarded to our society by the Marshall County Community Foundation on October 10 of this year. Vice President Fred Karst wrote the application for the grant, specifically to help us create a museum on the ground floor of the old Carnegie Library downtown.

At the grant awards ceremony, Fred told the audience, in part, "We've engaged the services of a professional museum designer to help us carry out our plan. We hope that the museum will cover all aspects of the community's history, including the lake, the Academies, the town and the rural areas surrounding the town."

Our members know and appreciate the goals of the society. When President Jim Peterson commented on the award, he spoke of the "sights and sounds, the people and events" that have made our community such an historic place. He added, "The goal is the preserve this unique legacy for generations to come." The MCCF grant is an auspicious beginning for the awesome task of raising the money we need to do full justice to this goal.

We also need items you might have that could be displayed in a museum like ours. We are already accepting artifacts, as loans or outright gifts, and would like to see and evaluate yours. We obviously cannot accept everything that might be offered, and we have an Accessions Committee that will decide whether particular items will

be added to the museum's collection. However, we are still in need of many items that will help to tell the story of our community's history. Bring items that are interesting or unusual pertaining to our history to the library, where the staff can accept them and give you a receipt. The Accessions Committee will examine the items and get back to you in a timely fashion.

The renovation of the lower level of the Carnegie building is nearly complete, with just a few adjustments necessary before work can begin on the two areas we will be providing for the use of the community. These are the historical and genealogical research area and the museum itself.

The research area will be finished first, providing greatly expanded facilities for the use of people who want to research their family genealogy and the history of the community.

Library patrons are already doing this work but are working in confining circumstances, awaiting the opening of the new facility we have planned. The space will also include a place where our records and special software can be accessed by members of the society working on society business.

— Agnes Bramfeld