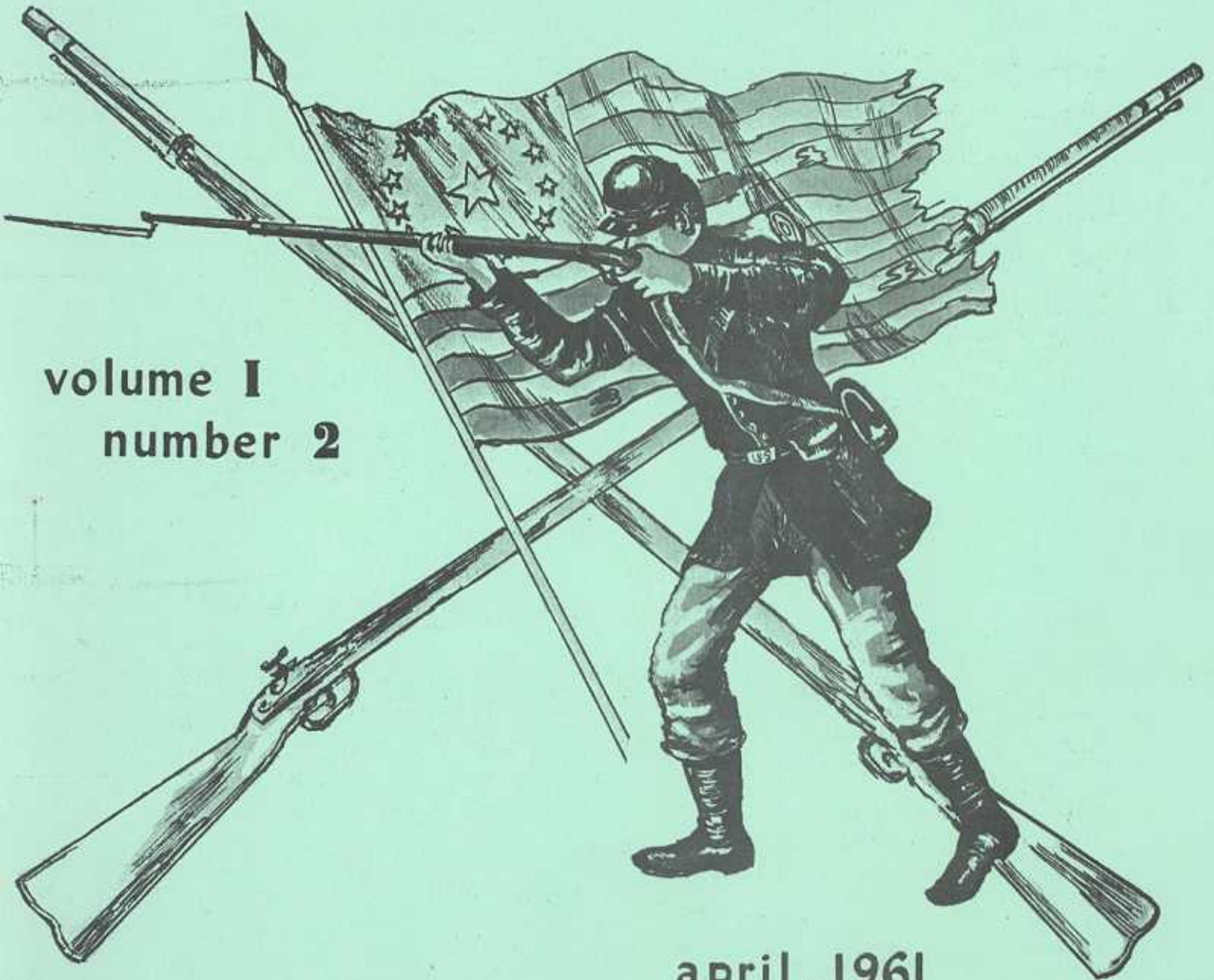


The Dearborn **HISTORIAN**

volume I
number 2



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THE DEARBORN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

CITY OF DEARBORN
MICHIGAN



The Dearborn Historical Commission has worked for many years against public indifference to preserve our rich local heritage. Evidence of their dedication to this cause is reflected in the two city-operated museums.

But, museums and symbols alone are not enough. If our heritage is to be preserved we must foster this objective through continuing communications with the people.

This publishing venture by the Historical Commission and the staff of the Historical Museum is an attempt to reach an everlarger audience. Their combined efforts are directed toward making this community a better place in which to live. One way to help accomplish this purpose is by making our fellow citizens aware and more appreciative of their past. In so doing, we will help them be better citizens in the present and of the future city of Dearborn. With this goal in mind, this publication is dedicated to Dearborn's junior and senior citizens.

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THE DEARBORN HISTORIAN

Volume I, Number 2

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DEARBORN HISTORICAL COMMISSION

QUINN C. SMET, EDITOR

ISSUED QUARTERLY

COVER: The cover sketch of a Civil War Infantryman was done by the Museum's Artist-Preparator, Mary V. MacDonald.



A MAN, HIS REGIMENT, HIS DEEDS

BY CHARLES J. MEYERS

With the American Civil War Centennial Observance in full swing, some individuals are now attempting to establish and document a particular relative's participation in this great struggle. The following is a short sketch of two soldier brothers, James and Sidney Haight. The mode of operation and the source materials utilized in this search are basically the same for any Michigan Civil War veteran that served in a Michigan regiment. I will attempt to tell the story and annotate sufficiently so that the story material will reflect the type of answers that the bibliographic material can within reason supply. In doing historical research the researcher is obligated to use as many primary sources, original documents, etc., as are available. All footnotes appear on page 19.⁷

James Benedict Haight and Sidney Haight were the sons of John and Mary Polly Teachout Haight who came to Michigan from New York State shortly after 1840. In 1843 the Haight family purchased a farm at Reading, Hillsdale County, Michigan. On December 13, 1844, James was born and on August 24, 1847, Sidney arrived. James and Sidney were the sixth and seventh children in a family of eleven children.^{1/} Their childhoods were uneventful and in their late teens they both enlisted in the Army for service during the Civil War.

Sidney Haight was the first of the two brothers to enlist. He had been residing at Goodland, Lapeer County, Michigan, and enlisted in Company E, First Michigan Sharpshooters, on October 23, 1863, for a three year period.^{2/} At the time of his enlistment he was 16 years and 2 months, but he gave his age as 17.^{3/} He was actually mustered into Federal Service on October 30, 1863. The place of his induction into Federal Service is rather vague but more than likely he was mustered in at the United States Arsenal located at Dearbornville, Michigan. This arsenal was locally called the Detroit Arsenal at Dearbornville. After his formal mustering in he traveled on to Camp Douglas located at Chicago, Illinois, and joined his Company and Regiment. From the later part of August, 1863, until the middle of March, 1864, the First Michigan Sharpshooters were detailed

as prison guards at Camp Douglas.^{4/} The prison at Camp Douglas contained approximately 6,000 Confederate prisoners of war and among these were a large number of Morgan's Raiders that this Regiment was instrumental in capturing. James B. Haight enlisted in Company E, his younger brother's Company, on February 23, 1864, at Camden, Hillsdale County, Michigan, and was mustered into Federal Service that same day.^{5/} He enlisted for a period of three years and gave his age as 19. He immediately departed by way of the Old Chicago Road for Camp Douglas to join his younger brother and the Regiment.



The regiment the Haight brothers enlisted in, the First Michigan Sharpshooters, received its authorization to organize in the fall of 1862. Col. Charles V. DeLand was named the Regimental Commander.^{6/} Col. DeLand was a veteran of service in the 9th Michigan Infantry, he had served in the 9th as a Company Commander with the rank of Captain, and had been captured at the Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, on July 12, 1862. He remained a prisoner of war until December of 1862, at which time he was exchanged for a Confederate Army Captain. He returned to Michigan and was promoted to Colonel and placed in command of this Regiment. At the close of the war Col. DeLand was made a Brevet Brigadier General.^{7/} The recruiting of the Regiment was only partially completed when they mustered into Federal Service at the Detroit Arsenal at Dearborn on July 7, 1863. On July 10, 1863, the Regiment was ordered to Indianapolis, Indiana, and then on to Seymour, Indiana. There were only six companies available for active service at this time and these companies were not up to full strength.^{8/} The First Michigan Sharpshooters met their baptism of fire on July 13-14, 1863, at North Vernon and Pierceville, Indiana, where they attacked the rear guard of Morgan's Raiders. Col. DeLand's clever deployment of his small force convinced Morgan that he was meeting superior numbers and he turned tail and made good his retreat into Ohio and then into Kentucky where Morgan was finally defeated.^{9/}

The Regiment then returned to the Detroit Arsenal at Dearborn and continued recruiting and bringing the companies to full strength. On August 16, 1863, the Regiment was ordered to Camp Douglas at Chicago, Illinois.^{10/} When

young Sidney Haight arrived at Camp Douglas in early November, 1863, he was met by a rather unique group of men. First of all the bulk of the regiment had seen some actual fighting as a group; they had been extremely lucky; had taken several prisoners; and had suffered no casualties. Secondly, the men were convinced that they had the finest Regimental Commander in the Army, he displayed to all his ability as a strategist and as a leader of men. Their faith was well founded for his leadership throughout the campaign in Virginia was highly commendable. Furthermore, the enlisted men of Company K were American Indians, coming from the Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi Tribes. One of the company officers, Lt. Garrett Gravaraet, was of mixed Chippewa and white blood. This Company was the only complete company of Indians in the Union Army that saw action against the Confederacy east of the Mississippi.11/

Four months after Sidney's arrival at Camp Douglas his brother James joined the regiment. At this time the regiment was readying itself for the trip east to the war front. A good deal of their time was spent in qualifying all of the men as Sharpshooters with their new weapons. The new weapon was the seven shot Spencer Repeating Rifle and to qualify as a Sharpshooter according to federal regulations a man had to hit a five inch circle at forty rods.12/

On March 8, 1864, the Regiment was ordered to Annapolis Maryland. It actually left Chicago on March 17, 1864, and arrived at Annapolis a few days later. The Regiment remained at Annapolis until April 23, 1864, and then left to join General Grant and the Army of the Potomac. The Regiment met the Army at Warrenton Junction after passing through Alexandria, Virginia. On May 4th and 5th they crossed the Rapidan River. On May 6, 1864, the Regiment met the enemy in "The Battle of the Wilderness" where they sustained their first losses: 7 killed or died of wounds, 17 wounded and 1 missing. This engagement lasted two days and then on the 9th of May the Regiment entered the fighting at Spotsylvania Court House, Virginia. This battle lasted three days and cost the Regiment 34 killed, 117 wounded and 4 missing.13/ James B. Haight was among the wounded in this battle,14/ and on February 23, 1865, he was finally discharged on a Surgeons Certificate of Disability from Harper Hospital in Detroit - - - exactly one year to the day after his enlistment.15/

The First Michigan Sharpshooters actually engaged the enemy in twenty-two separate battles. Sidney Haight was with the Regiment for the twenty engagements fought with the Army of the Potomac under General Grant. On July 30,

1864, the Regiment was part of the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division of the 9th Army Corps and was laying seige to Petersburg, Virginia. Grant was attempting to link his forces with Gen. Sherman's, but the city of Petersburg would not fall. A mining engineer from a Pennsylvania regiment conceived the idea of tunnelling under the enemy works and blowing it up. The tunnel was 511 feet long with a 75 foot shaft directly under the Confederate works. At 4:40 A.M. on July 30, 1864, the Union forces detonated four tons of black powder. This blast cut a hole, or "crater", in the earth twenty-five feet deep and about 250 feet across. Four divisions of Union troops rushed into what they thought was a break in the enemy works, and over 4,400 Union troops were killed that afternoon and evening. Those troops that rushed into the "crater" wound up in complete confusion. The Confederate forces surrounded the area and literally poured round upon round of artillery into the hole. The Union troops found themselves on the bottom of this hole with the Rebels looking down at them from all sides. The Union troops tried to fight their way up the sides of the crater but found themselves at an extreme disadvantage in the hand-to-hand fighting because they had to hold on with one hand and try to climb the sides of the hole while attempting to handle a weapon with the other hand.

In the midst of this confusion the First Michigan Sharpshooters charged the Rebel works adjoining the section of works that had been blown up. The enemy fought back savagely and the First Sharpshooters were forced to retreat as the Rebel forces finally succeeded in retaking the works.^{16/}



Two men of the regiment distinguished themselves in this action, Private Sidney Haight of Co. E and Sergeant Antoine Scott of Co. K. These two men stood their ground when the tide of battle turned and the superior numbers of Rebel troops repelled the attack. Pvt. Haight and Sgt. Scott stood shoulder to shoulder firing their Spencer Repeating Rifles at the onrushing enemy, refusing to take cover behind the captured works they deliberately drew the enemy fire so that their comrades in arms could escape an almost impossible situation. When their troops were well

on their way out of the works and had started back to their own lines Sgt. Scott and Pvt. Haight made a strategic withdrawal dodging shot and shell.17/ In this action the First Sharpshooters captured 50 prisoners but suffered the following losses: 3 killed, 13 wounded (including the Regimental Commander Col. DeLand) and 33 either captured or missing.18/ Sgt. Scott, who incidently was an Ottawa Indian and a member of Co. K, and Pvt. Haight were commended for their bravery by the Regimental Commander.19/

Pvt. Haight soon became Cpl. Haight and participated in nine other engagements with the Regiment including the final capture of Petersburg, Virginia. He was honorably discharged on July 28, 1865, at Delaney House, Washington, D.C.20/

On July 31, 1896, some thirty-two years and one day after Cpl. Haight's conspicuous and daring bravery he was finally rewarded. On this date Cpl. Sidney Haight was presented with his nations highest military decoration - - - the Congressional Medal of Honor.21/

FOOTNOTES

1) Manuscript geneology of the Haight Family compiled by Floyd L. Haight, deposited in the Dearborn Historical Museum.

2) Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers In The Civil War: 1861-1865, Kalamazoo, Michigan, Inling Bros. & Everard, /1903/, Vol.44, p.42. (Hereafter cited as Record of Service...).

3) Haight geneology, op. cit.

4) Jno. Robertson (comp.), Michigan In The War, Lansing, Michigan, W.S. George & Co., 1882, p.544.

5) Record of Service..., op. cit., p.42.

6) Robertson, op. cit., p.543.

7) Ibid., p.811.

8) Ibid., p.543.

9) Ibid., p.544.

10) Ibid.

11) John C. Wright, The Crooked Tree, Harbor Springs, Michigan, privately printed, 1917.

12) Letter, February, 1864, Sargent Noyes to his father, in the possession of Mr. Floyd G. Eavey, Lansing, Michigan.

13) Robertson, op. cit., pp.544-545.

14) Detroit Free Press, May 25, 1864.

15) Muster Out Roll, First Michigan Sharpshooters, Michigan State Archives, Lansing, Michigan.

16) Robertson, op. cit., p.546; Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War, Chicago, Illinois, Star Publishing Company, 1868 /and 1894, 1896/, pp.698-705.

17) Records of the Office of the Adjutant General, Rolls and Regimental Papers, First Michigan Sharpshooters, deposited in the National Archives, Washington 25, D.C.

"HEAD QRS. 1st MICH. S.S. 2" BRIG.
1st DIV. 9" A.C. DEC. 28th 1864

THOMAS MATHEWS
CAPT. and A.A.A.G.

"Captain:- In obedience to instructions contained in Special Orders No. 346 Hd. Qrs. Army of the Potomac. I have the honor to report the following named men of my command, who have distinguished themselves by conspicuous and daring bravery

SIDNEY HAIGHT Priv. Co. E

ANTOINE SCOTT Sergt. Co. K

"Always brave and daring they particularly distinguished themselves in the battle of July 30" 1864 before Petersburg Va.

"Were their conduct, in calmer moments, would be deemed rashness for, refusing to screen themselves from the enemy's fire behind the captured works, they stood boldly up and deliberately and calmly fired their peices until the enemy were almost upon them, when instead of laying down their arms and surrendering, ran the gauntlet of shot and shell and escaped....

"I am Captain
Very Respectfully
Your Obt. Servt.
ASAHEL W. NICHOLS
Major Comd'g. Regt."

- 18) Robertson, op. cit., pp.546-547.
19) Nichols letter, op. cit.,
20) Record of Service..., op. cit., p.1
21) United States War Department, Medals of Honor, Washington, D.C., 1897.



NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Have you been on the second floor of the McFadden-Ross Museum lately? Well then, you've seen the new Civil War exhibit. The exhibit does not attempt to tell the military or the political story of the War (albeit it couldn't be entirely avoided) rather, this exhibit attempts to convey some of the feelings that the War engendered. The Civil War was the most expensive war in our history in terms of men and families involved. The central theme of this new exhibit is the relationship between the man in uniform and his family at home. There is a catalog of the exhibit available at the information desk for those of you who want to go a step further in the study of this most significant period in our national history.

The Junior Curators are again sponsoring Saturday movies at the McFadden-Ross Museum. The boys have selected a varied program which will appeal primarily to boys and girls in the 8 to 14 age group, but which have proven to be of interest to adults as well. A complete program of the movies which will be shown in the coming weeks is available at either Museum.

The month of May promises to be a busy month for the Museum staff and local antique collectors. Local collectors will exhibit their hobbies at the McFadden-Ross Museum from May 21 through May 28. A variety of collectors have been approached in order to present a balanced show which will be of interest to most people. Watch the local papers for more news of this outstanding exhibit.

The workshop-storage building, though not complete, is now partially occupied by the Museum. The workshop area and storage area are being used in a limited way. Much work remains to be done, but even the limited use to which the building can be put is a great help to the Museum.

The new exhibit building on the south side of the McFadden-Ross Museum is now complete (except for landscaping) and will soon be occupied. Watch for a few surprises here in the very near future - you may just see something that hasn't been a common sight around Dearborn for years.

BIOGRAPHY

Each issue of The Dearborn Historian will contain one or two short biographies of Museum staff members, members of the Historical Commission, members of the City administration or persons prominent in local historical circles. Any suggestions concerning persons whose biography might be included will be greatly appreciated.

FLOYD L. HAIGHT, Chairman of the Dearborn Historical Commission, is one man who certainly needs no introduction to the readers of this magazine. Mr. Haight has been a history teacher at Dearborn High School for the past thirty-two years and was first appointed to the Historical Commission in 1939. He has been active in local affairs for many years in various civic, professional and church groups and he has held offices in a great many of the groups to which he belongs.

History, especially local history, has long been Mr. Haight's first love and it has been in this area that he is best known to us. He was instrumental in founding the Dearborn Historical Society and he originated the idea of the annual Old Timers Luncheon. In 1958 Governor Williams appointed Mr. Haight Chairman of the Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission.

Probably Mr. Haight's most notable achievement in Dearborn has been the role he played in the preservation of the Commandant's Quarters and the leasing of a part of the Ross property to insure an income for the Museum. When he first came to Dearborn Mr. Haight found the old Detroit Arsenal rapidly falling into oblivion. With characteristic enthusiasm he started to agitate for the preservation of the old landmark. The road was long and the struggle often frustrating, but eventually the fight was won and today the Commandant's Quarters stands for all to see as the last remaining intact building of the once great arsenal. With the deeding of the Ross property to the City, Mr. Haight set about with the same enthusiasm to insure continued support for the Museum. The leasing of a part of the Ross estate for the construction of the Fairlane Inn has accomplished this goal.

The Museum will long stand as a monument to the dedication of many men and women, but one man, Floyd L. Haight, will stand as a man apart.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

The Dearborn Historical Museum wishes to take this means of expressing a sincere "thank you" to the people who have so generously contributed to the collections. Without the generosity of these individuals and organizations, the Museum could not long function. The Museum is not in a position to buy the exhibit items it needs and consequently is dependent upon gifts from interested persons and organizations.

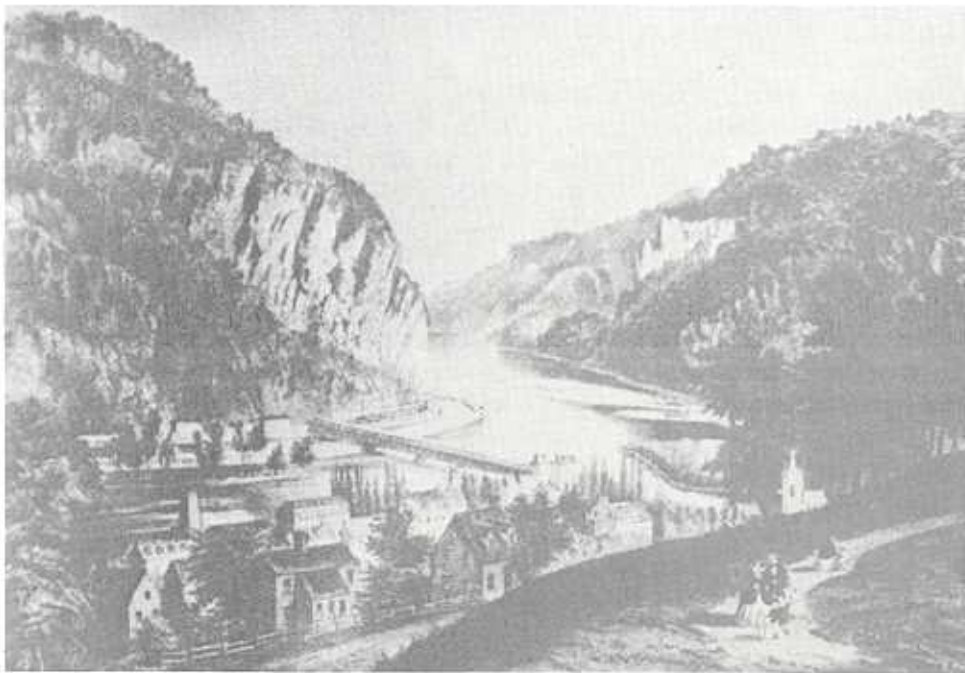
Mr. WALTER GOLBA has given the Museum one kerosene lamp and a nightcap. Mrs. ROSE TROIANO gave four hand-embroidered pictures. Mr. FLOYD HAIGHT donated three old school books, an 1814 family medical guide and sixteen miscellaneous newspapers. Mrs. JOHN A. CALKINS has given a beautiful sofa dating from the early 19th century. Mrs. HAZEL F. C. DAVIES gave two dresses, two jackets, a blouse, five assorted caps, a cape, two shawls, an apron, ten assorted items of infants and children's clothing, two purses, a hoop for a dress, two dresser scarves, two pens, and a doll. Mr. ALLAN C. ZANDER gave an old school slate. The Museum has received a dress from Mrs. ROBERT MINNIE. Mrs. KEITH B. HACKETT has graciously given five books, ten greeting cards, an old card game, and a pair of wooden shoes. Mrs. OLIVE WOOLNER has recently given six items of women's clothing, three items of children's clothing and a pipe.

Mr. WAINO GUSTAFSON has donated six pieces of Spanish-American War hardtack. Mr. THAN MOON has given a part of an 1862 newspaper and a 1919 calendar. Mr. FREDERICK G. WEIDEMAN gave a World War I bayonet. Mrs. FLORENCE B. KINGINGER has recently given nineteen manuscript items, two valentines, nine assorted printed items, four flags, a medal, a cheese sampler, a pair of heel cleats, and a commemorative paperweight. Mrs. THERESA SCHAEFER has given an oil portrait of her late husband, John H. Schaefer. Mrs. SHERMAN L. HOLMES has donated a smoking jacket, a toaster, an iron, a thirty-three piece set of dishes, and a five piece commode set. Mrs. LILA HOLE gave eleven assorted pieces of china. Mr. JOSEPH PENN has given an oil operated time clock. Mrs. DEVERA STOCKER has given a wedding photo and wedding announcement. Mrs. CHARLES K. ANDERSON has given copies of seven Civil War letters, a poem and thirteen envelopes.

The following churches and schools have also given material relative to their history: the FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH, and the LONG SCHOOL.

THE MUSEUM NEEDS

Currier & Ives prints are real collectors items today. Unlike so many other categories sought by collectors, the Currier & Ives prints have value for at least two reasons. The prints are largely responsible for the stereotyped image that we have of the 19th century, and therefore, have research value for the serious student of social history. Furthermore, Currier & Ives prints are authentic Americana. During the last half of the 19th century these idealized scenes of everyday life graced the walls of the typical American home. Antique collectors today prize these prints because they provide an authentic setting for other antiques.



Reproduced from Harry T. Peters, Currier & Ives...

Sometime soon the Museum would like to exhibit some of these Currier & Ives prints. We are fortunate to have in our collection a couple of originals and a few reproductions, but our collection is neither extensive nor representative enough to warrant an exhibit. This is the reason we appeal to you. Do you have, or do you know where we can get, Currier & Ives prints to add to our permanent collection?



COMMANDANT'S QUARTERS
Michigan Ave. at Monroe
Open 9 to 5 daily
Closed Sundays and Legal Holidays

McFADDEN-ROSS MUSEUM
915 Brady St.
Open 9 to 9 Mon. & Tues., 9 to 5 Wed., Thurs. & Sat.
Closed Fridays, Sundays and Legal Holidays

Telephone LOgan 3-0221