Yesteryears

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Did local historians research accurately?

Writer says abolition era was romanticized

By Cris Swetye

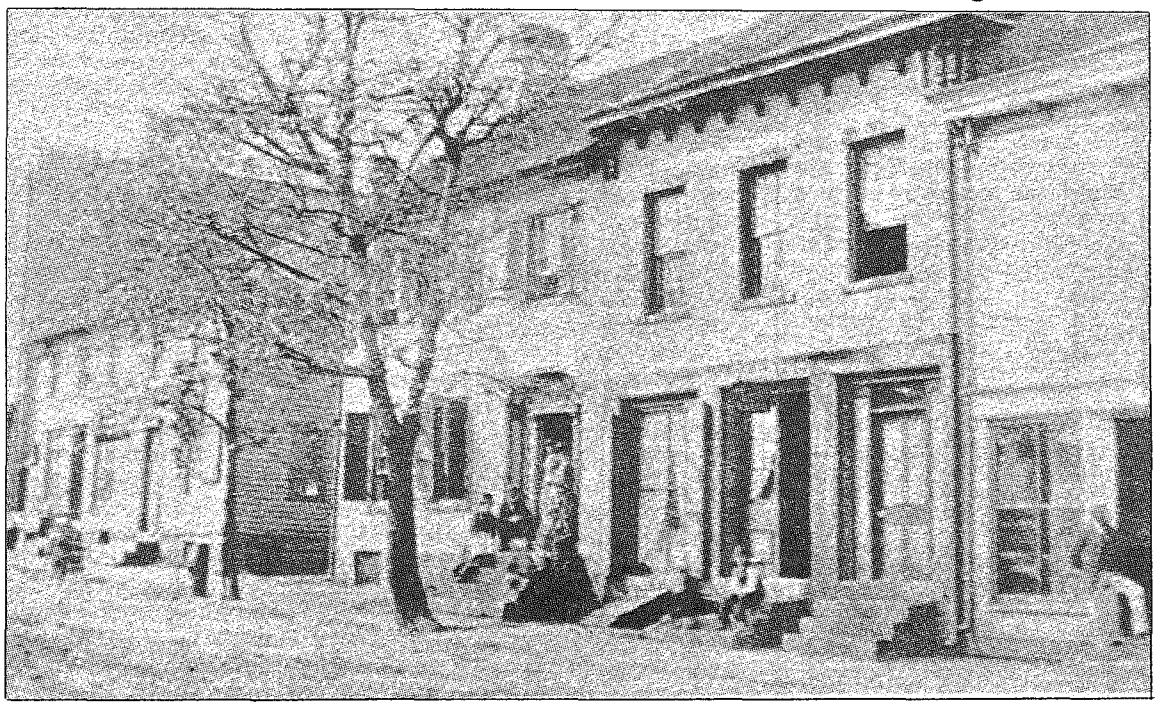
LIKE MOST CITIES IN America, Salem has had its share of local historians who have enjoyed expounding on the glories of the city's past. One of their favorite stories has been Salem's involvement in the anti-slavery movement.

Salem's first historian was George D. Hunt who wrote in 1898. His chapter on the abolitionist movement was written primarily from his own memory and the memories of aging local citizens. He listed the names of Salem's most active abolitionists and briefly mentioned those who opposed them. Hunt's history was mostly fact with little drama. For instance, his only comment on the Underground Railroad was that fugitives often stopped to rest in Salem before going on to Canada. No glorious adjectives were used to describe the abolitionists and their work, but he did claim that the consequences of the abolitionists' actions were not as important to them as their cause.

By 1956, the story of the Salem abolitionists changed dramatically when the Salem Historical Society published The Salem Story. The local reformers were now motivated by excitement, danger and the knowledge that they were "shaping the course of history." Salem's importance on the Underground Railroad also grew. It was said that there were 50 secret roads that went into Columbiana County and at least three of them went into Salem. Local abolitionists also aided in the training of conductors who went south to convince slaves to escape. Most of the chapters recounted the stories of daring abolitionists who cunningly hid slaves from slavehunters and slaveowners. The unknown author left out all references to anti-abolitionist sentiment and implied that the entire town backed the movement.

In writing about this era, local historians have failed in their responsibility to thoroughly research the past. They did not put Salem's movement into a national framework. They accepted the biased accounts of abolitionists as facts without looking into the true meaning behind the words. They failed to ask themselves key questions and in so doing, they did not see that their "facts" did not necessarily support their theories. As a result, Salem historians have romanticized the era, added to the exaggeration of legends and failed to portray the abolitionist movement as it really was.

Salem's first attempt to do something about slavery was the formation of the Abolition Society, in 1828, by a small group of Hicksite Quakers. It closely followed the precepts of the national Colonization Society in that it advocated the colonization of freed blacks in Liberia on the west coast of Africa. By the time Salem got involved, the national Colonization Society was already foundering. It had failed to manumit (free from slavery) many slaves or receive federal support. However, local newspapers encouraged the colonizationists by accepting false claims that the removal of blacks to Liberia was beneficial to both white and black Americans. The displaced blacks were content in their new home and economic conditions there were supposedly excellent.



The home of Jacob Heaton, who was active in the anti-slavery movement in Salem, still stands today along the city's main street. Congenial and proficient in German, Heaton was a carpenter, school teacher and general store owner.

By the end of 1833, Salem abolitionists as well as national reformers questioned the motives of the Colonization Society. A letter to the editor of the Aurora claimed that colonization would only retard emancipation. Salem abolitionist and second editor of the Anti-Slavery Bugle, Oliver Johnson, called colonization "wicked" and against the law of God. Perhaps the most verbal opponent to the society was William Lloyd Garrison of Boston. In the first edition of his anti-slavery newspaper, The Liberator, he attacked the organization and charged that the society was racist and only attempted to deport the black population.

In an effort to create a more equitable solution to slavery, Garrison joined Arthur and Lewis Tappan of New York to form the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Its Declaration of Sentiments condemned slavery as being contrary to the Declaration of Independence and called it a moral sin. it denounced colonization and demanded "emancipation without compensation to slaveholders."

Two years later the American Anti-Slavery Society sought a stronghold in Ohio. With the help of James Birney, the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society was organized in Putnam. Its constitution took a strong stand against bondage, reflecting the ideals of the parent organization. It also agreed to aid the blacks spiritually, intellectually and morally. It admonished the Christian churches of America for not condemning slavery and demanded that the clergy obey God's command to "let the oppressed go free."

Salem abolitionist Sam Reynolds attended the Putnam meeting and as a result Salem formed an auxiliary organization called the Philanthropist Society. The group included five Orthodox Quakers. They were Jonas Cattell, Isaac Trescott, John Stanley, Edmund Carey and Reynolds. They remained active in the cause until the Civil War. Initially, they held their meetings in local churches and schools, but

Turn to ABOLITION on page 6

The polio scare

By Lois Firestone

A recent script of television's "Homefront" dealt with the impact of polio in the 1940s. Actual news footage, including stricken children inside "iron lungs," was integrated into the story, chilling to see because it brought back memories.

It's no exaggeration to say that an almost frantic fear pervaded the country as more and more people, mostly youngsters, caught the crippling and more often than not fatal disease.

Like other worried mothers, mine kept us at home — people stayed away from public places as much as they could. So I was pleased when Mom relented and allowed me to attend a friend's birthday party.

After games, gifts, and cake, we were surprised when the hostess' mom piled us all into their family car. She took me home first and I was puzzled because we passed one of the girls' home enroute. Then one of the girls let it slip: as a final treat, they were being taken to the movies! Everyone, that is, except me.

I knew why; it was that darned polio. My Mom was afraid for me to to go to a crowded theater for fear I'd catch it. I sobbed the remainder of the day away in my room.

I'd forgotten the incident long ago, until I mentioned the "Homefront" story to my Mother and she brought it up. It turned out that her anguish was greater than mine, but her fear outweighed everything.

Years later, Jonas Salk devised the life-saving vaccine in his laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh, erasing for future mothers and their children that underlying foreboding we all felt.

Unheard-of events shaped 20th century

By Jules Loh
AP Correspondent

DOES ANY ARTIFACT of 20th century America better reflect the nation's daily conveniences and irritations than the parking ticket? And how come everybody remembers Henry Ford but nobody knows H.C. North? Or Carl Magee?

The questions arise because the calendar has just crept another notch closer to the dream number, 2000. The turn of the century sits out there like a gift-wrapped package, tantalizing. Chroniclers and analysts can't wait to tear into it. The chance comes but once in a lifetime.

Routine "year-enders," the trade name for those summations of the previous year that appear every January, will become ... century-enders! One hundred years to review, to analyze, to poke around in heavy stuff like the impact of the automobile from the Model-T Ford to the interstate highway system.

So who's Carl Magee?

He was an Oklahoma City newspaper editor, but that was not much of a distinction. Carl Magee invented the parking meter. The first ones sprouted in his hometown in 1935.

And H.C. North?

He was a clergyman of the same city, and you guessed it: He got the first ticket. But he talked his way out of it. He told the judge he had gone to get change, was on his way back ... yeah, yeah, the oldest excuse on the books. Literally.

Any number of less-than-earthshaking events of the 20th century have shaped American life. Small things. Some may bring merely a smile of recognition or, as in the case of the Rev. North, a wince. Call them curious incidentals that might not, alas, find their way into the weighty summaries.

The summaries, for example, will certainly include the atomic bomb, but maybe not its more benevolent fallout, the bikini, named for the Pacific atoll where A-bomb tests were conducted.

On July 5, 1946, four days after the test, a French designer of bathing suits unveiled, as it were, the first bikini at a poolside fashion show in Paris. It caused shock waves of its own. It was banned at some French resorts and wasn't seen on U.S. beaches until well into the '60s.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary, which came out in 1961, explained dourly that the suit derived its name "from the comparison of the effects wrought by a scantily clad woman to the effects of an atomic bomb." You could look it up.

Matter of fact, the bra itself was a 20th-century creation. A New York debutante, Mary Phelps Jacob, whipped up the prototype in 1913 out of a pair of handkerchiefs.

When elastic came along the following year, Ms. Jacob improved her design and sold a patent for $1,500 to Warner Brothers. Not the movie makers but Bridgeport, Conn., corset makers. The patent turned out to be worth about $15 million. Warner, keeping abreast of demand, began cup-sizing in 1939.

Historians will record that World War II ended in the Pacific in 1945. But not for Japanese Lt. Hiroo Onoda.

Onoda hid out in the mountains of Lubang Island in the Philippines, living off the land, deaf to all imprecations to give up. Finally, in 1974, Onoda's aging commanding officer journeyed from Tokyo to Lubang Island and found the 53-year-old holdout.

"Hiroo," he whispered, "the war's over."

Onoda returned to a hero's welcome in Japan, sold his memoirs and retired to a ranch. In Brazil.

They called one of America's most celebrated heroes of the 20th century Lucky Lindy, but it wasn't luck that saw Charles Lindbergh across the Atlantic in 1927. The luckiest American of the century almost certainly was Roger Woodward.

Roger, 7, and his 17-year-old sister, Deanne, were paddling on the upper Niagara River on July 9, 1960, when their boat capsized. Deanne made it to shore. Little Roger, who weighed only 55 pounds, was wearing a kiddie-size life jacket. He bobbed in the water like a cork, out of reach, and the current caught him.

The river coursed swifter and swifter toward the falls. Over Roger went. The tourist boat Maid of the Mist plucked him safely from the churning water below.

A dozen adventurers encased in barrels, padded balls and other such armor have dared Niagara Falls' 173-foot plunge, all during the 20th century. Nine survived. The first to survive in a barrel was Annie Edson Taylor, who made the trip on Oct. 24, 1901.

Does the name Harry Williams ring a bell? Or buzz a buzzer? In 1929, Williams, in the killjoy spirit of Carl Magee, added the "tilt" mechanism to pinball machines.

Critics of 20th-century art will surely celebrate the major American contributors. Will their list include Edwin Binney of Easton, Pa.?

At the beginning of the century, in 1902, Binney mixed paraffin, stearic acid, oil and pigments until, lo and behold, Crayola crayons. At the end of the century, a mixture to successfully remove the resulting art from wallpaper awaits discovery.

From the San Francisco earthquake in 1906 to Hurricane Andrew last year, the century has had its share of disasters. One of the weirdest had to be the one in Boston on Jan. 15, 1919. It was no laughing matter; 21 died. But, still ...

What happened was, a storage tank ruptured and deluged the North End with molasses.

The tank was enormous, five stories high, 90 feet across. Molasses, intended for rum, filled it almost to the brim, 2.3 million gallons. A rivet popped, then another and another. Suddenly, a 30-foot wall of goo began moving slowly (as molasses does in

Turn to next page

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Past history

January 1924

NEW YORK — No longer do the kids of Greenwich village resort to street fights to settle their disputes, for the Greenwich House, 27 Barrow street, in the section which developed Gene Tunney, light-heavyweight champion, has instituted a new kind of settlement work which promises a successful future.

Recently under the direction of Barney Hymen, physical director of the settlement, a boxing show was held at which youngsters ranging from seven to 15 years of age settled their street feuds in a 16 foot ring. All equipment used in regular bouts, including padded gloves, towels, trainers, judges, timekeepers and the gong were on hand.

SEATTLE — Seattle was in the market today for 500 locks which policemen are to tag automobiles wrongly parked in the streets. Motorists have gotten into the habit of paying no attention to notices placed in their cars demanding their appearance in court.

January 1938

SEATTLE — Testimony about a cow that ate rhododendrons, a dog that barked at the cow that ate the rhododendrons and a man who kicked the dog that barked at the cow who ate the rhododendrons ended with the conviction of William Morrow on a charge of using indecent language to Mrs. Laura Pleas.

Mrs. Pleas owned the dog that Morrow kicked. Mrs. Anna Ayres, who owned the rhododendrons the cow ate, was a witness in the justice court trial yesterday.

Morrow, who owned the cow, was sentenced to 60 days in the county jail with 50 of them suspended.

WICHITA — Liquor will flow under the streets of this home town and burial place of Carrie Nation this week when the police department consigns 17,000 bottlefuls to the Arkansas River via the city sewer system.

In a state where it was legal, the liquor would be valued at $50,000. Here it is forbidden and hence has no price. Police accumulated the 17,000 bottles in the past 60 days. Most of it came in just before the Christmas holidays when police had several field days.

January 1942

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The wreckage of a TWA airliner carrying Carole Lombard, famed screen beauty, and 21 other persons, has been sighted 100 feet from the crest of Table Mountain, 30 miles southwest of here, officials of the airline reported early today.

The spot where the wreckage was sighted is 8,700 feet up the side of the mountain and rescuers were not expected to reach the spot until noon.

WASHINGTON — An American submarine has invaded the most closely guarded waters of the Japanese empire — those off Tokyo Bay — and has sunk three Japanese vessels, the Navy revealed tonight.

20th CENTURY

Cont'd from page 2

January) and knocking down everything in the way, buildings, people, horses, the elevated railroad. It left an odoriferous, glorious mess, 3 feet deep in places, that took months to clean up.

Some results of 20th-century technological know-how — like, oh, the electric carving knife, for one, or the wind-chill factor — seem to have slipped into American life capriciously, and remained. Somebody, apparently, has found a use for them.

The nondairy creamer is another. That classic oxymoron appeared in 1961 and has not yet gone away. Instant coffee, which arrived in 1901, may in part explain why. The first pink molded plastic flamingos took root in American lawns in 1957, and have lingered. The first miniature golf layout was contrived in 1926 upon the rooftop of a New York skyscraper. It descended, however, and spread. Father's Day has been around since 1910. Come to think of it, that would help explain the electric carving knife.

Other developments, though, happily evolved into more than their original purpose.

The makers of household refrigerators, which finally became cheap enough to buy during the '30s (but the Depression hit and nobody could afford them) never envisioned that the fridge would one day also become the household bulletin board, snapshot album and recipe file, opening up a vast new market in magnets shaped like strawberries and ladybugs.

In 1907 the Hurley Machine Co. of Chicago introduced the first electric washing machine. When dust storms smothered the Southwest in 1934, an enterprising Texan, J.F. Cantrell of Fort Worth, opened what he called a Washeteria. It was the nation's first, a four-machine operation and a Dust Bowl bonanza.

In truth, so many 20th-century developments have become fixtures of ordinary life it makes you wonder how previous generations did without them:

The paper clip (1900), Teddy Bear (1902), safety razor (1903), paper cup (1908), Kewpie doll (1909), soap pad (1913), Band-Aid (1920), Drano (1921), Kleenex (1924), zipper (1926), adhesive tape (1928), Scotch tape (1937), Barbie (1959), quartz watch (1962), pantyhose (1969), pocket calculator (1974) ...

And of course the airplane.

On the first scheduled air-mail flight, May 15, 1918, Washington to New York, President Woodrow Wilson on hand for the takeoff, three occurrences made the event all the more memorable.

One, the pilot, George Boyle, kept shouting "Contact!" without effect until he discovered he had forgotten to gas up.

The tank filled, he took off and, two, headed south instead of north. "Compass got mixed up," he muttered.

Three, he crashed. He phoned his boss to say his plane was upside down in a Maryland cornfield and would someone please come fetch him and three sacks of mail. His boss, Benjamin Lipsner, sent a car.

Speaking of which, why is it not surprising that the first two automobiles to arrive in Kansas City, Mo., collided?

Jefferson's letter to Stark reveals a lot

A LETTER FROM Thomas Jefferson to the Revolutionary War general for whom Stark County is named gives an insight into both men, an historical document expert says.

Jefferson's Aug. 19, 1805, letter to Gen. John Stark was written from Jefferson's home in Monticello. Jefferson offers his personal thanks for the general's service during the war with the British. Stark led colonial forces to victory in a battle at Bennington, Vt.

"Permit therefore a stranger ... to express to you the sincere emotions of pleasure and attachment which he felt on learning that your days have been prolonged ... ," Jefferson wrote.

The letter was auctioned in November at Christie's in New York, bringing $70,400. The letter was bought by Jefferson Rarities of Jefferson, La.

"This is quite a fine letter for Jefferson," said Christopher Coover, an American manuscripts specialist at Christie's. "It gives a very interesting view of the president looking back through his own recollections of the Revolution.

"It's a completely spontaneous demonstration of affection on the part of Jefferson," Coover said. "It's clear that they never met, which makes it doubly exceptional. They probably were never in the same place at the same time during the Revolution. Stark didn't get any farther south than Princeton and Trenton (N.J.), and during that time, Jefferson was the wartime governor of Virginia."

Stark never made it to the northeastern Ohio county that was named after him, either. Nevertheless, when Stark County was carved out of Columbiana County in 1808, respect was paid to a man who by then was believed to be the last surviving Revolutionary War general.

The president's letter was passed down in Stark's family, as was an unsigned draft of Stark's response to Jefferson, Coover said. The latter manuscript accompanied the letter at the auction.

"I had them both hanging on a wall in my front hallway for 52 years," said Roger Newell, the Reading, Pa., descendant of Gen. Stark. "Before that, they were in my attic."

Newell said his age, 79, and Jefferson's place in the collecting market — "I'm told his signature goes for more than Washington's," he said — persuaded him to part with the letters.

In the general's letter, the 77-year-old Stark apologizes for his tardiness in answering Jefferson's letter, and attributes it to "the imbecility inseparably connected with the wane of life."

Stark thanked Jefferson, as well, for calling him a "venerable patriot."

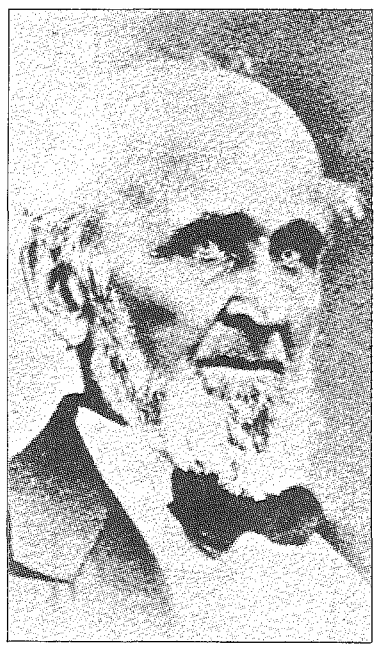
"Nor will I conceal the satisfaction I feel in receiving it from a man who possesses so large a share of my confidence," he wrote.

"I am now calmly preparing to meet the unerring fate of man, with however the satisfactory reflection that I leave a numerous progeny in a country highly favored by nature, & under a government whose principles & views I believe to be correct & just."

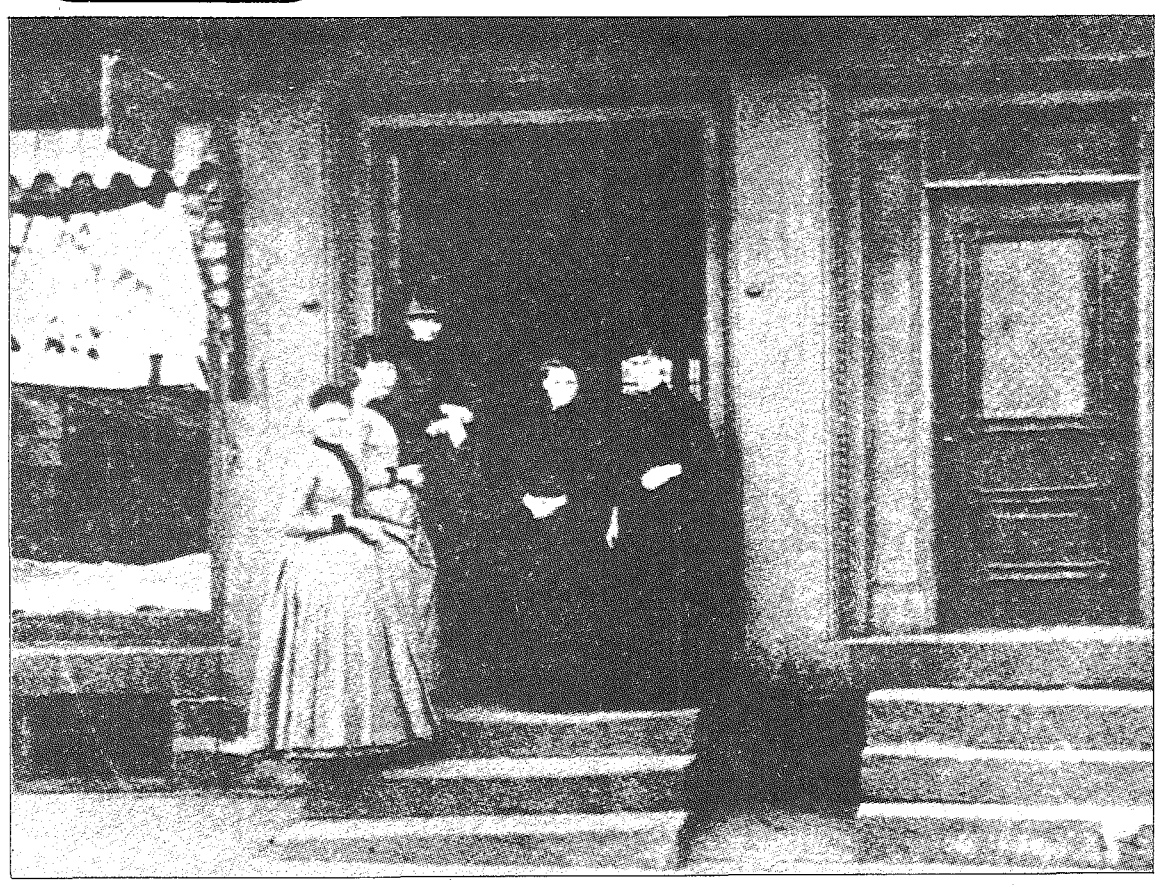
ABOLITION
Cont'd from page 1

their attack on Christianity was seen by local officials as dangerous to the nation. They were shut out of public buildings and forced to hold meetings in the homes of members until 1840 when they moved into the top floor of Reynold's carpenter's shop.

The town of Salem obviously did not back the Salem abolitionists. The reformers were a small group of people and even at the height of the movement in the 1850s only 2 percent of Salem's population were members of the abolitionist group. The other 98 percent were either opposed to slavery or indifferent to the cause. Ministers warned their flocks to stay away from the movement, and many citizens looked upon the abolitionists as troublemakers or fanatics. Others saw the society as merely a way to make money. David Gaskill, a prominent Salem merchant, was quoted as saying that abolition was a "stinking thing."



Jacob Heaton came to Salem in 1831. His home along Main Street, built by John Stanley around 1830, was the site of anti-slavery activity. Heaton's son Rollin founded Heaton & Stratton and another son, William, was president of the New York Stock Exchange for years.



Miss Test's dressmaking shop was near the Heaton home in the 1840s. In this photo are Anna McKelvey (first from left), Miss Ida Bean (fourth from left) and Miss Test (fifth from left).

Those who opposed abolition were as determined to stop the movement as the reformers were to stop slavery. Society meetings were broken up by angry "mobs" who resorted to threatening, yelling and throwing eggs and snowballs. These attacks came to a head in June of 1837 when Marius Robinson, then lecturer for the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society, spoke at the home of Jesse Garrison's in Berlin Center. Upon leaving the house, Robinson was attacked, stripped of his clothes and partially tarred and feathered. He was dropped in a pasture near Canfield where he received aid. He returned to the lecture circuit and later moved to Salem where he became the last editor of the Anti-Slavery Bugle.

By 1840, differences of opinion occurred in the national movement. Noted historian Lewis Perry claimed that many of the members saw Garrison's beliefs in immediate emancipation and women's rights as radical and dangerous. The organization split into three groups and each believed it held the only key to winning emancipation. In April of 1840, James Birney and his followers, convinced that political action was the true way, left to form the Liberty Party. The final schism occurred the next month at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society when the Garrisonians managed to elect a woman, Abbey Kelly, to the Business Committee. The Tappan brothers and their group walked out in protest and later formed the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society."

Which group the Salem abolitionists followed for the next five years was unclear but in June of 1845, Abby Kelly spoke in both New Lisbon and Salem. These meetings attained two goals. They established an organization in the west based on Garrisonian principles and created a newspaper devoted to anti-slavery rhetoric. The first meeting of the new Ohio American Anti-Slavery Society was attended by 78 Salem residents.

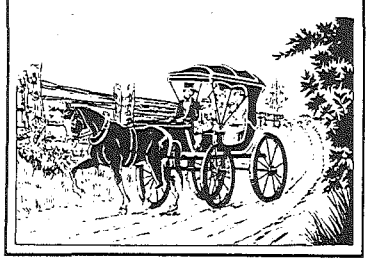
The meeting also established the Anti-Slavery Bugle newspaper which was to be distributed throughout the area. The paper's first office was in New Lisbon and its first edition was published on June 20, 1845. Three months later the office moved to Salem where it remained until the Bugle was discontinued in 1861. The purpose of the paper, according to its first editor, Benjamin Jones, was to preach "deliverance" and "hasten Liberty." The true purpose of the paper was to generate enthusiasm and to keep abolitionists from losing interest in the movement. More importantly, it served to constantly reinforce Garrisonian ideals in the minds of those far from him.

News stories often capitalized on the plight of slaves in hopeless situations. Articles about slaves of "most estimable character" who were beaten and imprisoned for no apparent reason were favorites among the abolitionist editors. These stories often depicted the gory details of a whipping or a suicide but seldom offered the names or locations necessary for authenticating such stories. Slaveowners were seen as "drunkards" or "tyrants." In one story, the owner of a female slave also happened to be her father. The heartlessness of the man was shown as he tried to sell "his own flesh and blood for so much hard cash."

The Bugle also served as Garrison's own personal forum. The front page of the newspaper always contained articles that had previously been printed in the Liberator or the Standard and every article coincided with Garrisonian ideals. For instance, a reprint of a speech made in New York by abolitionist Adin Ballou compared the physical force of the government to the moral force used by the Garrisonians. In short, he claimed that the physical coercion of governments was wrong while the moral coercion of the Garrisonians was necessary.

The proceeds from the sale of the paper were intended to cover the cost of the editor, at $400 a year and the cost of two lecturers at $200 each. However, the Bugle was not an immediate success. In its infancy, it was incapable of meeting its payroll needs. In 1848 the society's executives wrote to the American Anti-Slavery Society and asked for $800 to keep the Bugle going. Wendell Phillips, secretary of the parent society, responded saying that they, too, were in arrears, had fired their lecturers and put all of their money into their paper, the Anti-Slavery Standard of Philadelphia. He suggested that Salem do the same. Instead, the committee decided to raise the subscription rates from $1 to $1.50 annually and to solicit donations from members. Donations brought in only $673 and 24 people discontinued their subscriptions. The paper struggled on and by 1851 was

Turn to next page



ABOLITION
Cont'd from page 6

for the first time financially solid. In 1854 subscriptions brought in more than $2,000.

The first members of the Western Anti-Slavery Society ranged in age from six to 66. Many of them were wealthy farmers, merchants and physicians. Two schoolteachers and the local marshal were also reformers. One-third of the membership consisted of women. One member was a mulatto. While not all of these people were of the Quaker faith, a good majority were.

In spite of the fact that Garrisonian abolitionism was the most radical form, it had a natural attraction for the Salem Friends. Quaker doctrine and Garrisonianism had much in common. Both groups, according to Perry, believed in the Millennium, or the 2,000-year reign of Christ on Earth. They both held that until American Society was purified (through the abolition of slavery) the Millennium could not be attained. Both Garrison and the Quakers had an aversion to violence. The belief, by Garrison, in moral persuasion or peaceful resistance, was attractive to Quakers whose doctrine held that violence was punishable by condemnation or ostracism. Quaker doctrine also determined that slavery was sinful and that the public was morally responsible for world sin.

Since Salem was the center of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, area members were responsible for organizing and conducting the annual anniversaries and fairs. The anniversaries were held every August and consisted of three days of lectures and meetings. Traveling lecturers stayed in the homes of local abolitionists. Prior to 1856 the celebrations were held in a large tent on the north side of town. Later, the Town Hall was used for this purpose. The anti-slavery fairs, held every December, were more gala events. Members donated and sold to the general public clothing, crafts and baked goods. The proceeds were placed in the general fund.

Salem abolitionists also participated on an individual basis. Benjamin Jones was editor of the Bugle from 1845 to 1847. His wife Elizabeth followed Abbey Kelly on the lecture circuit under the name of Jane Elizabeth Hickcock. Women on the lecture circuit were not fondly received by the general public. Hickcock was often criticized for working outside of the home, and her opponents argued that she was in direct defiance of Biblical teachings.

At the resignation of Jones, the editorship of the Bugle went to Oliver Johnson, who was originally from Boston. Before coming to Salem, Johnson had worked with Garrison on the Liberator and lectured in the Salem area. He was well-liked among Salem abolitionists. In 1851 he was offered the editorship of the Anti-Slavery Standard and moved to Philadelphia. The Bugle's new editor became Marius Robinson. He had married a Salemite in 1837 and moved to Cincinnati to start a school for blacks. He and his wife remained in Salem until their deaths.

Several of Salem's residents also formed a local Underground Railroad society. Professor Larry Gara of Wilmington College, in his book The Liberty Line, conclusively proved that the Underground Railroad system that did exist in the North was not centrally organized as was previously thought, but sporadic and locally operated. Blacks, he claimed, made their way North by their own cunning and hard work, and those who did find abolitionists found them accidentally. Local evidence supported Gara's claim. While Salem abolitionist Daniel Hise wrote of "secret" Underground Railroad meetings in Salem, he never mentioned leaving town to find runaways. He recorded the existence of only 17 fugitives in the 13 years before the Civil War.

The affiliation with the Garrisonian movement started Salem on a course of radical abolition, especially during the 1850s. The decade began with the revision of the Fugitive Slave Act. The previous law concerning fugitives, enacted in 1793, prohibited citizens in the free states from hiding, defending or rescuing a slave from his owner. First, the slaveowner had to show proof that the accused black was his property. Second, the law gave no specific process for arresting a runaway, and third, it did not authorize an agent to make an arrest. Abolitionists believed they could use the loopholes in the law to feed and clothe slaves, to teach them their rights, to give them money and arms, and to openly escort them to their destinations. Salem abolitionists seldom felt threatened by the law. They talked with fugitives in public places while "...others gathered round, some to sympathize, others to condemn."

The federal government tightened the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850. Under the revised law, slaveowners were required to produce only an affidavit to establish ownership of an escaped slave. It gave federal marshals and deputies the power to make arrests and carried a $1,000 fine per slave for those who refused. For every arrest warrant issued, the federal officers received $10 but only $5 was awarded if he released the black. Those citizens found aiding an escaped slave were also subject to a $1,000 fine per offense.

Abolitionists were outraged by the change in the law. Marius Robinson believed that the law intended to restrict the work of the Underground Railroad and claimed that no law would stop him from helping a fugitive in need. While Gara stated that the law was aimed more at easing sectional tensions than it was toward abolitionists, the reformers themselves took the law seriously. Fear of arrest spread from abolitionists to the black community, and the movement of blacks from Salem increased dramatically. The Bugle reported that the Underground Railroad was "doing an unprecedented business this season." Hise reported that all of the blacks had moved to Canada as a result of the Fugitive Slave Act. The movement of blacks between 1850 and 1860 was astounding. Columbiana County recorded the existence of 44 free blacks in 1850. In 1860, the census reported that the number of blacks had doubled, however, a closer look indicated that only six of the original 1850 black residents remained in Salem.

The Fugitive Slave Act reconfirmed the abolitionists' belief in disunion which was described by Johnson as personal disassociation from a government that they saw as pro-slavery. The acts of voting or holding a political office were seen as taking oaths to support slavery. Some abolitionists simply refused to be affiliated with a government that would not free slaves or permit women to vote. Not all abolitionists recognized disunion as personal disassociation. As early as 1845, Benjamin Jones advocated a dissolution of the Union because it supported slavery. The Western Anti-Slavery Society restated Garrison's remarks that the "Constitution of the United States government was a covenant with the devil and an agreement with Hell..." And the sub-heading of each issue of the Bugle claimed, "No Union With Slaveholders."

Anger over the Fugitive Slave Act prompted what Marius Robinson called a "rescue" in August 1854. Cincinnati abolitionist Harry Blackwell, while speaking at Town Hall, claimed that he had just received word that the six o'clock train to Fort Wayne would be carrying a slave child. Spurred on by the pasion of Blackwell's speech, the Society retired to the train depot where a committee of four was appointed to search the cars. A little black girl was found, traveling with her owner and their infant.

As the Bugle related the story, the family admitted that the girl was their slave and quietly turned her over to the abolitionists. They took the girl back to Town Hall where Blackwell determined that the girl needed a "Christian name." The local reformers named her Abby Kelly Salem. Donations were then collected for her

Turn to next page

Salem Abolitionists 1845-1850

Name	Age	Occupation	URR
Barker, Joe	NF	*	*
Barnaby, James	31	merchant-tailor	*
Barnaby, Laura	29	*	*
Bonsall, Rebecca	24	*	*
Bonsall, Joel	24	engine builder	*
Bown, Benjamin	NF	*	*
Bown, Sarah	NF	*	*
Boyle, Allen	38	butter packer	*
Brown, Serepta	NF	*	*
Cambell, John	NF	*	*
Carey, Abel	38	physician	X
Carey, Edmund	NF	*	*
Cattell, Jonas	37	farmer	X
Cook, Joel	30	farmer	X
Cope, Samuel D.	40	none	*
Cope, Hiram	NF	*	*
Coppock, Edwin	NF	*	*
Coppock, Barclay	11	*	*
Davis, Benjamin B.	39	*	*
Dickson, Jane	41	*	*
Dickson, Rebecca	20	*	*
Evans, Philip	46	farmer	*
French, Esther	67	*	X
French, Thomas	77	none	X
Galbreath, Esther	NF	*	*
Galbreath, Sarah	32	*	*
Gilbert, Amos	NF	*	*
Gouldbourne, March	NF	*	*
Griffith, Sarah	25	*	*
Griswold, Mary	NF	*	*
Haines, Sarah	32	*	*
Hanna, Sarah	50	*	*
Harner, Thomas	46	farmer	X
Hawley, Benjamin	60	farmer	X
Heaton, Jacob	40	merchant	X
Henschillwood, Phebe	31	*	*
Hise, Daniel	37	blacksmith	X
Hitchcock, Elizabeth	35	lecturer WAS	*
Holloway, Mary	50	*	*
Hough, Anna	NF	*	*
Hurford, Aquilla	NF	*	*
Ingram, Joseph	70	*	*
Johnson, Oliver	40	printer	*
Jones, Benjamin	35	cabinetmaker/editor	*
Kirk, Abner	NF	*	*
Kirk, Candace	NF	*	*
Lightfoot, Ruth	31	*	*
Lucas, George (m)	20	laborer	X
Lupton, Daniel	22	marshall	X
McMillen, Joel	28	farmer	*
McMillen, Sarah	28	*	*
Marshall, Henrietta	35	schoolteacher	*
Painter, Joseph	50	farmer	*
Parks, Lewis	26	schoolteacher	*
Reynolds, Samuel	37	*	*
Robinson, Marius	45	editor	*
Robinson, Emily	43	*	*
Sharpnack, T. F.	38	tailor/merchant	*
Smith, Sarah	37	*	*
Snider, Isaac	43	foundryman	*
Stanley, Jonathon	74	farmer	X
Stanton, Benjamin Sr.	59	physician	X
Stanton, Benjamin Jr.	25	cabinetmaker	X
Stanton, Caroline	24	*	*
Strawn, Jehu	NF	*	*
Swem, Ryneer	60	farmer	*
Street, John	32	farmer	X
Street, Zadok	40	merchant	*
Thomas, Hammond	24	farmer	*
Thomas, Isaac	46	teamster	X
Thomas, Rebecca	46	*	*
Townsend, Milo	NF	*	*
Trescott, Isaac	37	merchant	X
Trescott, Jane	31	*	X
Weaver, Harriette	23	lived with Jacob Heaton	*
West, William	37	merchant/tailor	*
Whinnery, John	34	dentist	X

Key
NF: Not found in 1850 census
URR: Considered a conductor on Underground Railroad
(m): Designates mulatto

ABOLITION
Cont'd from page 7

clothes and education and she was turned over to Joel McMillan and his wife. Robinson also reported that while the slaveowner claimed that the child's mother would "waste away with sorrow," the abolitionists later learned from the child herself that she had been separated from her parents long ago and had not heard from them since.

A second local paper, the Homestead Journal, reported the same incident in a different light. It depicted the growing sense of tension in the movement and did little to help the credibility of the abolitionists. It claimed that the young slave was violently taken from her owners as she screamed and cried. In the struggle, the "mistress" and her infant were bruised by the "ruffians." The child's owner then agreed to sign manumission papers but the crowd was so caught up in its own power that they ignored him. They took the child, who was reportedly screaming and kicking, to their meeting place. The paper also stressed that the child's mother was also the property of the slaveowner and that the child would miss her terribly.

The truth of the incident was probably somewhere in the middle of the two accounts. The Homestead Journal's account must have held some validity because Robinson found it necessary to justify the abolitionists' actions in the next issue of the Bugle. Here he claimed the "rescuers" were well within their legal rights, as the State of Ohio forbade slavery. The abolitionists were only upholding the law. Social standards also granted the abolitionists the right to take the child. In Robinson's opinion, the child was an orphan, not because her owner did not own her mother, but because they had taken her "thousands" of miles from her home. The seizure according to Robinson was a commendable act and the abolitionists "did but half their duty."

By 1855, the Salem abolitionists were so involved in their cause that their belief in pacifism became secondary to their commitment to the reform movement. One fugitive passing through Salem was attacked by what Hise called a "slavehunter." The abolitionists decided it was time for action. They armed all local fugitives for the purpose of self defense. Hise wrote in his diary, "I am for open hostility!"

The society's condonement of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry represented the total degeneration of paficist belief among these Quakers. Moreover the incident gave the abolitionists what they sought — a martyr to their cause. Salem, too, gained a local hero in Edwin Coppoc. John Brown, a fanatic abolitionist, decided the time was right for a slave rebellion. In September of 1859 he led a group of young men, including Edwin and Barclay Coppoc, to a farmhouse outside Harper's Ferry, Virginia. On the night of Oct. 16, they attempted to capture the federal arsenal to secure weapons for the slaves. The Virginia militia, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee, was sent to defend the arsenal, and Brown's group was forced to surrender. Those who were not killed or did not escape were tried and convicted of conspiracy, murder and treason. All were executed two months later.

While the general public condemned Brown, the abolitionists eulogized him. Marius Robinson likened him to Christ and his hanging to the crucifixion. His only crime, it was said, was that he tried to end the "sin of the nation." Entire issues were devoted to Brown and numerous pages were filled with his biography, letters to friends and last words.

Edwin Coppoc (or Coppock) was treated in a similar fashion. He had been captured at Harper's Ferry and executed two weeks after Brown. His uncle and a group of Salem abolitionists went to Charlestown, Virginia, recovered Edwin's body and brought it to Salem. Handbills announcing the funeral were placed around town. Speeches were held in the Town Hall and a funeral procession went out to Hope Cemetery where Coppoc's body was buried. Family members reportedly marched first with abolitionists directly behind. Salem blacks marched last. Two thousand people attended the funeral and the festivities which were later held at his uncle's farm.

Barclay Coppoc escaped Harper's Ferry and went west. The only mention of him in the Salem abolitionist press was in a published letter from Edwin to his uncle in which he wrote that he was glad that his brother had escaped but was sorry that he would have to run from the law for the rest of his life. Barclay was mentioned once in Hise's diary when Barclay had dinner with the abolitionist's family in 1861. Neither Hunt nor the Salem Historical Society mentioned Barclay in their histories.

1861 saw the commencement of the Civil War. The Western Anti-Slavery Society suspended all meetings and the last issue of the Bugle was published on May 4, 1861 because it was determined that slavery could not survive the war. It did not. On December 31, 1862, Hise wrote that on the following day "President Lincoln will declare the slaves of all rebels free men, which will leave but few, God be praised."

The Salem abolitionist movement was not an isolated event. Area reformers were influenced and cooperated with the most radical group of abolitionists in the North. Salem historians would like the public to believe that the abolitionists were altruistic, peace-loving men and women who had the blacks' best interest at heart. But this was not so. For many of them the movement was self-serving. Their belief in the Millennium and the hope of purifying society through the abolition of slavery promised the abolitionists eternal life.

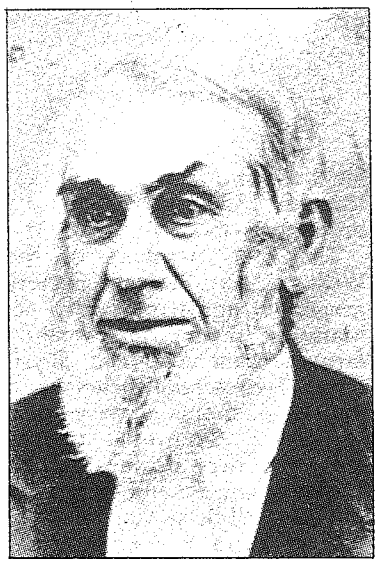
In the beginning, Salem abolitionists as well as most Garrisonians believed in peaceful non-resistance, but the movement changed with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act and the Quaker abolitionists defied their own beliefs by arming fugitives and advocating secession. The progression toward radicalism and violence culminated in the martyrdom of John Brown and Edwin Coppoc.

The kidnapping of the little slave girl from the train was proof that the movement had become more important to the abolitionists than the people they attempted to help. They justified taking a little girl away from the only family she knew and changing her name. They did not attempt to place her in the home of blacks where she may have been more comfortable. Instead, they gave her to a "respectable" white family and expected her to be eternally grateful. In a 1905 interview with Mrs. McMillen, Mrs. McMillen claimed that the child had been unruly and had to be punished often. While $50 was collected for the child's education, it was questionable whether she ever attended school. She was not listed on the roster for the Union School where the other McMillen children went. By 1860, Abby Kelly Salem was no longer listed as living in Salem.

Local historians have also enjoyed depicting Salem as a place that has always welcomed the "downtrodden and oppressed." As an example they use Maria Britt, the first black resident. The Historical Society claimed that she came in 1820 and lived on property given to her by the citizens. She made a living by doing laundry and by baking for weddings. It was also stated that she liked to attend church. But what the Historical Society neglected to mention was that, according to Hunt, Maria Britt felt uncomfortable attending church because of prejudice and therefore, stopped going.

Prejudice was not confined to those who opposed the reform. Traces of it were also seen in the anti-slavery movement itself. The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society advocated education for only free blacks, not slaves. It called for spiritual, moral and intellectual help for the black population, but it said nothing about helping them gain social equality. At the same meeting, the Committee on the Condition of Colored People in Ohio found that the blacks were drunkards as well as vicious and lewd. Ironically, Edwin Coppoc gave his life to help the blacks, and they marched last in his funeral procession.

Benjamin Hawley farmed land and started The Village Register newspaper, forerunner of the Salem News, in 1842. Hawley was an ardent Salem abolitionist.



Marius R. Robinson moved to Salem from his Cincinnati school for blacks to replace Oliver Johnson as editor of the Anti-Slavery Bugle, the newspaper whose purpose was to generate enthusiasm for the abolitionist movement nationally.

Edwin Coppoc, the Winona boy who captured national attention when he was hanged for his association with John Brown's raid on the Harper's Ferry federal arsenal in 1859.

The Underground Railroad has also been glorified. To be fair, the historians of 1956 did not have the advantage of Gara's knowledge on the subject. However, fifteen years after Gara published his book, the Salem Historical Society claimed that the 1956 history had been so well-written and accurate that they did not need to repeat the story for the 1976 edition. They, like other historians of their day, believed the stories told by abolitionists after the war was over, and it was fashionable to have been an abolitionist. There was no evidence that Salem's abolitionists trained others to go South to convince slave to escape. There was no evidence that Salem was any more important on the Underground Railroad than any other Northern town. And there was no proof of daring escapes from slaveholders. As a matter of fact, Salem was probably one of the safest towns a fugitive could find, because the marshal was an abolitionist.

It would be unfair to state that these abolitionists were a group of violent and bigoted men and women whose only interest was self-redemption. They truly believed in what they were doing and did not see their own prejudices against those they claimed to help. To portray them as self-sacrificing egalitarians has also been unfair. It has been unfair to the citizens of Salem and to the abolitionists themselves.