

Yesteryears

Vol. 2, No. 22

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Section of the Salem News

Leetonia telescope firm was unique

John Mellish was self taught inventor, discovered 5 comets

By Dale Shaffer

JOHN EDWARD MELLISH, a builder of astronomical telescopes, lived in Leetonia from 1916 to the mid-1920s. His business was in the front and second story room of his home in the east end. It was unlike anything of the kind in Columbiana County. In fact, his was one of only six such telescope making businesses in the United States.

One of his large telescopes was mounted on a tripod in his backyard. Passersby would often stop and be invited to take a closer look at the moon and stars.

Mellish was born Jan. 12, 1886 in Wisconsin and grew up on his grandfather's farm three miles south of the village of Cottage Grove. He attended only grade school and spent most of his time doing hard work on the farm.

His interest in astronomy began in 1902 at the age of 16 when he was given a little spy glass. He used it first to look at distant objects in the landscape, and then turned it on the moon and stars. The glass, however, was too weak for him to see much of everything.

He then bought a four dollar telescope that had been advertised in the newspaper. Looking through it to view the moon, he was surprised to see streaks and "wavy things that looked like flames." But this instrument soon became

inadequate, so he bought a two-inch refractor telescope for \$16. It delighted him by showing him many new stars.

During these early years he was reading every book and article on astronomy he could get his hands on. Then he began reading a book on how to make telescopes, and decided to make one for himself.

He sent to Chicago for two glass disks six inches in diameter and spent the winter grinding a mirror. Working with light from a window and kerosene lamp, he moved one disk over the other, with emory powder in between. Gradually, he created a convex surface on the lower glass and a concave surface on the upper.

By spring he had a six-inch concave disk that could be silvered to make the mirror he needed to construct a reflecting telescope. His homemade telescope attracted the attention of the neighborhood and many visitors came to look at the Milky Way and other heavenly sights. In 1905 he wrote an article on telescope making for Popular Mechanics, and this brought him several orders for telescopes.

On the evening of April 12, 1907, when he was 21 years of age, he happened to be scanning the northern sky when he spotted a faint object where no such object should have been. It looked like a "tail of smoke."

He notified the Washburn Observatory in Madison, and astronomers there confirmed that he had sighted a new comet.

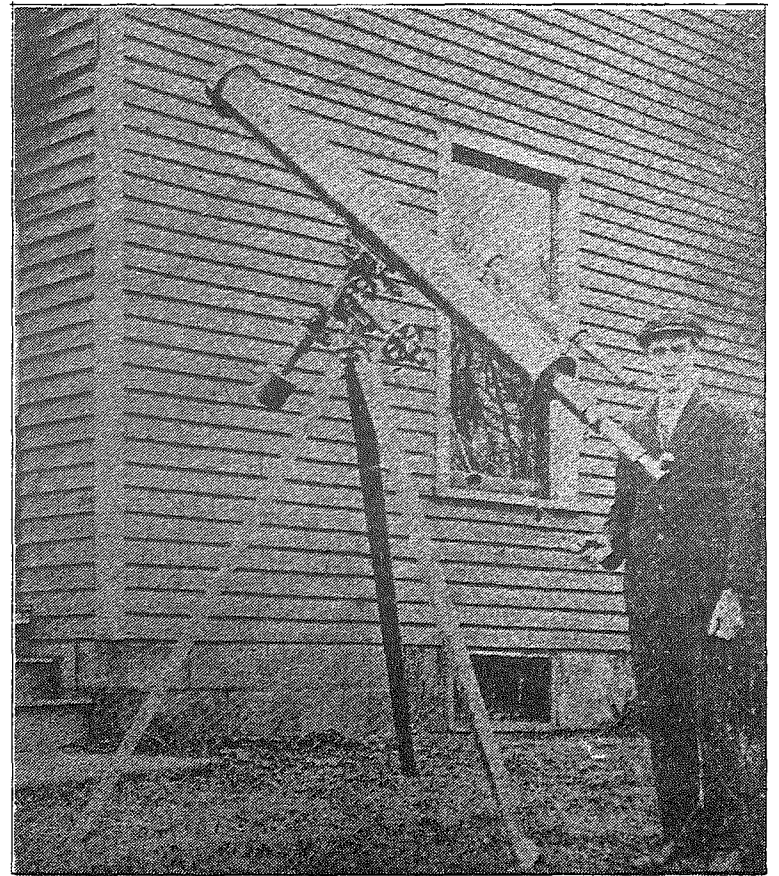
Another observer, however, had also seen the comet, so Mellish had to share the discovery. The comet was named "1907 II Grigg-Mellish." In the fall of that year Mellish spotted another new comet, and this time his name alone was given to it.

Mellish was now in touch with a number of professional astronomers. He wanted to leave the farm and obtain work at an observatory, but money was a problem. Edwin Frost, director of the Yerkes Observatory, began take a special interest in Mellish, encouraging him to continued his optical work. Mellish built a 9½-inch and 16-inch reflector for his own use and wrote several articles on telescope making for the Scientific American.

In 1910 when Halley's comet approached, he was one of the first to see it when it became visible to the naked eye. That year he became a "cooperative meteorological observer" for the Weather Bureau, recording rain, snowfall and other atmospheric conditions.

But he was frustrated with his limited equipment. He could grind the mirrors and lenses needed for high quality telescopes, but they also required accurate clock drives and other accessories. He had little money, since his optical business was not very profitable. This forced him to scrounge for broken devices from the Washburn and Yerkes observatories.

In February of 1915 Mellish discovered his third comet. This was a turning point in his life because it brought an invitation from Frost to spend some time that summer at Yerkes. This would give him an opportunity to use the observatory's equipment, and learn



John Mellish poses with one of the astronomical telescopes he produced in his Leetonia laboratory shown in the background.

more about astronomical photography.

But again, money was a problem. At Frost's urging, Mellish applied for and received a \$300 grant from the National Academy of Science. He spent 15 months at Yerkes with the title of volunteer research assistant. His major project was to search for faint comets that did not approach close to the sun. While there he discovered another comet, and may have been the first astronomer to observe craters on Mars.

Mellish never returned to the farm. On June 15, 1915 he married Jessie Wood of Glencoe, Illinois, and their first child, Veronica, was born on April 30 a year later. The couple would have 10 children, two of whom died in infancy.

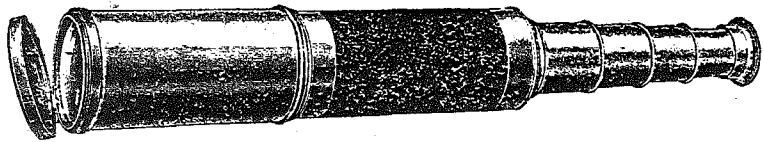
In the fall of 1916 Mellish was given the opportunity to take charge of a well-equipped private laboratory in Leetonia. It was owned by Elmer Harrold, secretary and manager of

the Crescent Wood-Working Machine Co. Mellish's duties included the use of the telescope for visitors on certain public nights. He also had ample time for personal observation with his own telescopes, and the facilities allowed him to continue his work in making reflecting telescopes.

Harrold gave him free use of a large, older home. Leetonia seemed like a good location for telescope making because it was close to numerous industrial towns where materials could be purchased. Mellish could get all the brass tubing he needed from nearby Salem.

In 1917 he discovered another comet, one that appears every 145 years. But Leetonia was not a very suitable place for astronomical viewing. Thick haze from the factories and mills dimmed the night sky. About the only time the sky was clear was when the mills were on strike. Mellish

See Mellish, page 5



This 25-ligne hinge cap telescope was the most powerful telescope Sears Roebuck sold for astronomical work in the 1900s, for \$19.70. "This telescope forms an ideal instrument, showing clearly and distinctly...the mysterious spots on the surface of the sun, wonderful mountain ranges and apparently extinct craters of the moon, satellites and surface markings of the planet Jupiter, the wonderful rings of Saturn, the canals on Mars," the catalog reads.

Cable Car Museum may become a relic

By RICHARD LORANT
Associated Press Writer

ON A BALCONY OVERLOOKING the whirring cables and whirling wheels that drive the world's only cable cars, the San Francisco Cable Car Museum has in the past offered glimpses of a largely bygone era.

But the museum itself may become a relic, as much a part of the city's past as the vintage 1873 cable car it displays.

The Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, which has run the museum since it was founded in 1974, closed the museum the end of March because it couldn't afford to keep running it.

A declining number of visitors and rising security costs have left the nonprofit society running the free museum at a loss.

City officials hope to reopen the museum under new management within a year, but they admit no cable car museum can prosper without the society's three antique cars, which form the mainstay of the collection.

Gillis is son of performer

The name of Lawrence F. Gillis of Challis, Idaho was omitted from the story about the Call family in the March 9 issue. Lawrence is the son of Susanna Call Gillis of the traveling troupe. His late wife, Lee, created and framed a design using the beads and sequins from Susanna's theatrical cape.

The collection will go into storage until the society finds a new home, possibly in another city, said Arthur Lloyd, chairman of the Pacific Coast Chapter.

"It would be strange to have a cable car museum in Baltimore, I agree. But we just can't continue to sustain a loss of \$2,000 a month," Lloyd said.

The museum derived nearly all its income from gift shop sales, and paid 5 percent of the gross to the city.

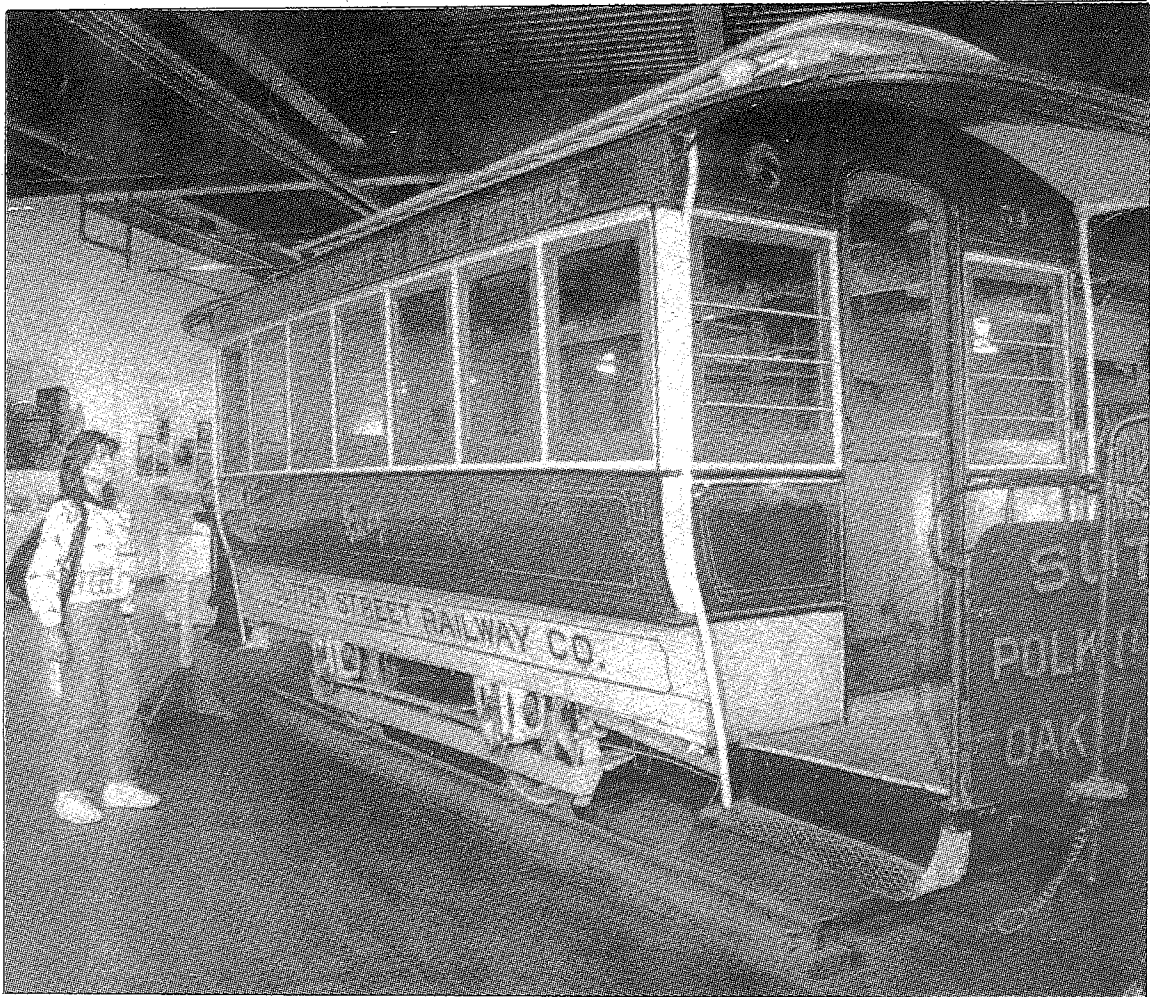
Municipal officials said they wanted the museum to add better exhibits so the cash-strapped city could increase its current take of about \$17,000 a year.

But the city turned down society proposals to charge admission or establish parking for tour buses, which took the museum off their itineraries a few years ago because of parking problems.

"To impose a fee essentially for people to see a souvenir shop would be unfair," said John Corser, manager of marketing and promotion for the Municipal Railway.

In addition to the society's three cars, including one from the first lot built by cable car inventor Andrew Hallidie for the Clay Street line, the museum displays the grips and gadgets that run the cars, models, photographs and Cail-O-Scope viewers that feature 3-D images of turn of the century San Francisco.

Cable cars were invented in



June Rago, a San Francisco Bay area native from Marin, California visits the San Francisco Cable Car Museum for the last time before the March closing because of a disagreement with the city. The collection will go into storage until a new home is found for the museum, run by the Pacific Coast Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society.

San Francisco in 1873 and enjoyed a brief wave of popularity in New York, Chicago

and elsewhere. Today the only operating cars are in San Francisco, and about a million peo-

ple ride them each year, making them one of the city's biggest attractions. Tickets cost \$3.

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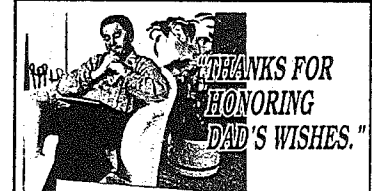
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Carousel horses coveted by collectors, preservationists

By Denise Lavoie
Associated Press Writer

TO SOME, THEY ARE just collectables, worth worth as much as \$1.5 million. But to George Zariff, the magnificent wooden horses of the Pleasure Beach carousel in Bridgeport, Conn. are much more: They are his youth.

They are that hot summer day 45 years ago when Zariff mounted one of the outside horses and managed to grab a brass ring, earning a free ride.

"Boy, what a thrill it was," he recalls.

The carousel and the amusement park are long gone. But the 71 horses and two chariots remain, and Zariff aims to keep it that way: He is leading an effort to keep the horses in Bridgeport, and out of the

hands of collectors.

This is not a small undertaking. Bridgeport is a poor city — in 1991, it became the largest city to file for bankruptcy since the Great Depression — and the horses' sale would bring a much needed windfall. In addition, the city is paying \$1,000 a month to store the horses.

In November, responding to protests, Mayor Joseph P. Ganim tabled the sale of the horses indefinitely. But the horse enthusiasts are keeping the pressure on, fearful that the city will yield to temptation.

"Everybody who's old enough feels the horses are part of their childhood and part of Bridgeport's history," said Zariff. "How can you preserve that for future generations if you sell it off?"

Collectors were willing to pay anywhere from \$6,000 to \$25,000 or more for each of the horses because they were carved by Charles Carmel and Marcus "M.C." Illions, renowned carvers whose original carousel horses have dwindled drastically in number over the last 40 years.

Built around 1914, the carousel was a centerpiece of Pleasure Beach. Zariff recalls days of his youth at the amusement park — crashing bumper cars, having his fortune read, riding the carousel.

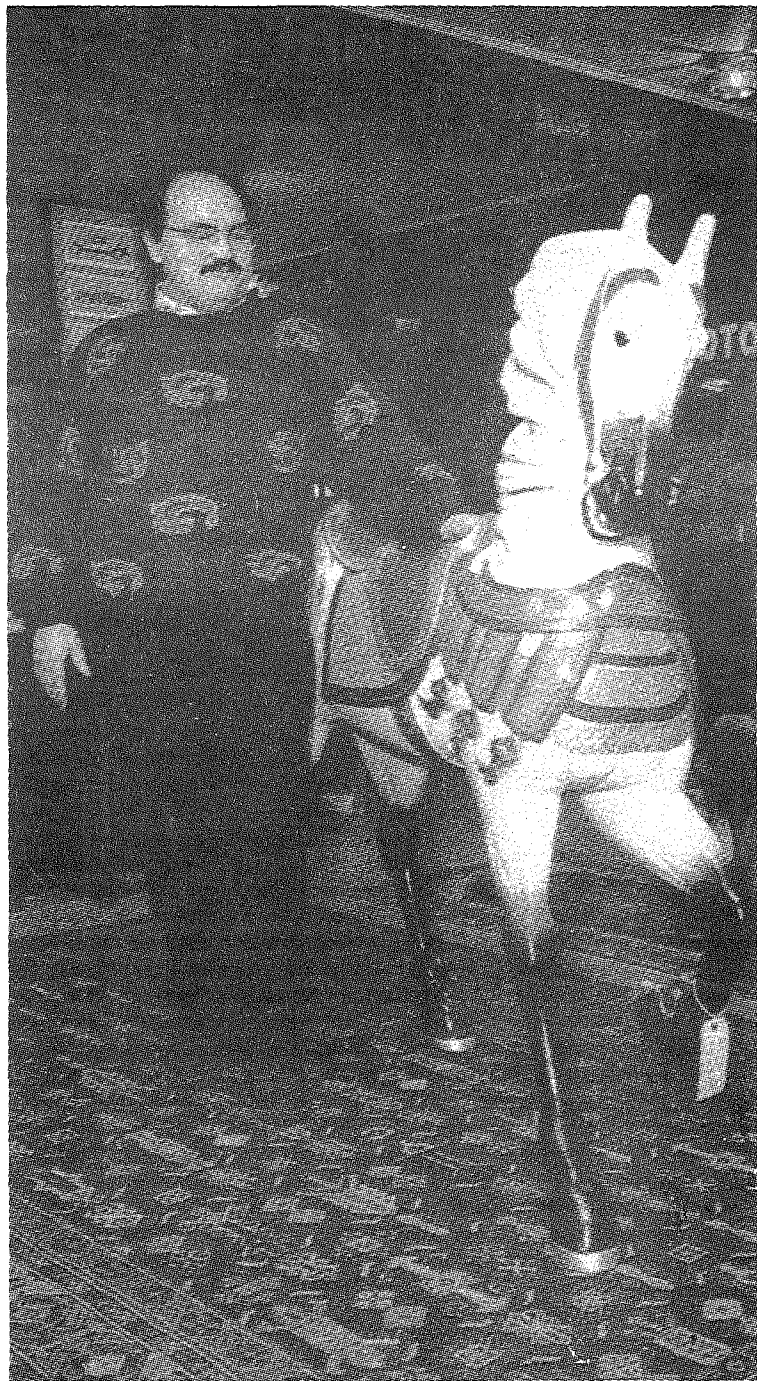
The carousel was virtually abandoned after Pleasure Beach closed in the 1960s. In the mid-1980s, the carousel horses were fully restored, using money raised from Bridgeport business leaders, residents and school children. But they've been in storage ever since.

Parks officials had opted to sell the horses after deciding the city could not afford the \$20,000 to \$30,000 annual costs of maintaining the wooden horses if they were used on a working carousel again, said John Byrne, a city administrator. The city planned to use money from the sale to build a replica.

But to satisfy those who want to keep the original wooden horses, the city agreed to display them in a new building, along with the new fiberglass carousel.

"My feeling is once people see the beauty of these horses, as the people who used to ride them on Pleasure Beach, I don't think people will ever want to sell them," Byrne said. "They're just masterpieces. They're just works of art."

The building, to be built at the Beardsley Zoological Gardens, is expected to cost \$750,000 or more. City officials say they are hoping to get most of the money from a variety of state programs, while the local parks board has committed



Emanuel Dragone poses with one of the Pleasure Beach carousel horses at his business in Bridgeport. Collectors have offered as much as \$1.5 million for the horses, but the Bridgeport city fathers have turned them down.

about \$90,000. Last month, the state bond commission voted to release \$375,000 for the carousel building.

But Zariff and his 75-member citizens' group, "Friends of the Bridgeport Carousel," fear the city will never get all the money needed to build the new carousel house, leaving the

horses ripe for the auction block.

Emanuel Dragone, the auctioneer who was originally hired to sell the horses, thinks the city should go ahead with the sale.

"I think these (horses) should be in the hands of collectors and museums," Dragone said.

Fossils remains from 2.2 billion years ago

By Bud Sargent
Thomson News Service

THREAD-LIKE FOSSILS found at an iron ore mine are the remains of the oldest living things that can be seen on earth with the naked eye.

The fossils, which resemble hair cuttings on a barbershop floor, are about 2.2 billion years old, said Robert Reszka, a Department of Natural Resources geologist from Lansing, Michigan.

"That's 700 million to 1 billion years older than anything that's been found," Reszka said. "It's significant from that standpoint."

The procedure for determining the age of the fossils, now named "grypania cf. spiralis," centers on determining the age of the rock around the fossils.

The tiny hair-like creatures, a

shirttail relative of modern-day algae, were first found at Cleveland Cliffs Inc.'s Empire Mine in loose samples in 1974, said Tsu Ming Han, a recently retired geologist with the company who studied the discovery.

"Every time I went into the mine (after that) I kept my eyes open," Han said. "When I first saw them, I thought they can't be fossils (because) the rock is so very old."

But because the rock samples were not intact — physically attached to a rock outcropping — CCI experts could do little about the discovery except continue to look in and around the open-pit mine for better examples, said Went Slitor, another CCI geologist.

Ten years after the first fossils were discovered, another

See Fossils, page 6

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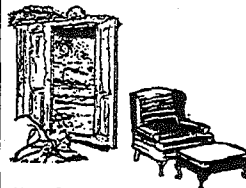
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Stolen Lincoln Civil War letters returned

By the Associated Press

A DOZEN CIVIL WAR documents, including letters written by President Lincoln, have been returned to the Cincinnati Historical Society several months after they were stolen.

The documents, valued at \$100,000, were returned recently after police were tipped by a man who said someone offered to sell him a letter written by Lincoln.

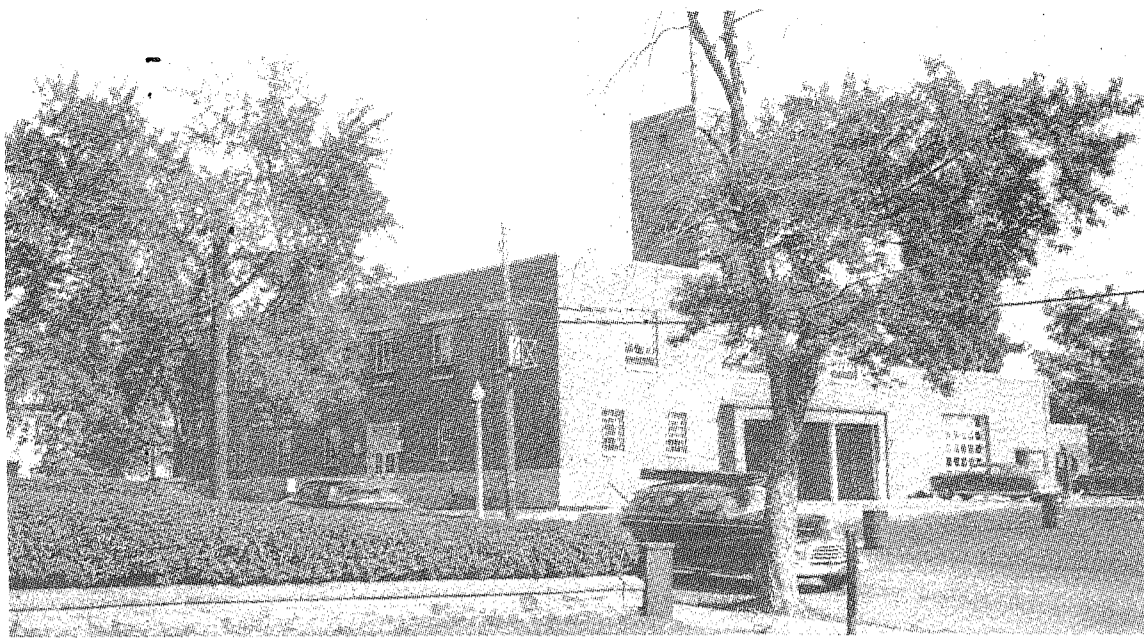
A grand jury is expected to consider charges against a Cincinnati collector who police said smuggled the items from the society between July and November. Police believe the collector, who they declined to identify, sold the documents to

dealers.

The smuggled pieces are rare but are not among the society's most historical pieces, said society director Gale Peterson.

"They're nice to have, but they're not totally unique," she said.

The collection includes an 1860 letter from Lincoln to Oran Follett, who was part owner of the Ohio State Journal; an 1861 letter from Lincoln to Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase; autographs of Civil War generals Ulysses S. Grant, George McClellan, William T. Sherman and George Thomas; and an 1814 letter from General William Henry Harrison to Maj. Gen. John Stites Gano of the Ohio Military.



Salem's City Hall was spanking new when this photo was taken in August 1952.

Fossils

Continued from page 3

batch was found in loose rock on the floor of the mine, Han said. Again, the sample was not physically attached.

In 1990, however, an attached sample bearing the fossils was found several hundred feet below the rim of the Empire Mine pit.

It took several years to prepare papers detailing the discovery for presentation and

publication at professional geological conferences. That work was completed late last year.

When they were alive, the creatures inhabited a great salt sea that covered the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and adjacent areas, Reszka said. A similar fossil, albeit a later version by some 700 million years, was found in 1890 on a rock outcropping in Montana.

Mellish

Continued from page 1

became sick of the thick air in Leetonia, and longed to return to Wisconsin. Unfortunately, there were no openings for him at Yerkes.

In the spring of 1920 Harrold decided to sell his observatory, ending Mellish's job. Fortunately, at that time, Mellish was receiving a lot of orders for his telescope. The work was more than enough to keep one per-

son busy all the time. He continually had from \$3,000 to \$5,000 worth of orders ahead all the time, and was shipping a telescope about every other week. He shipped 22 in 1922.

Some went to Hawaii, Mexico, Peru and Africa. He was also grinding lenses for Yale University. Most of the telescopes he sold were three-inch, but he offered reflecting tele-

scopes up to 16 inches in diameter, and refractors up to 12 inches. Prices ranged from \$50 to \$3,000.

The job of grinding lenses was a tedious one. Fineness of polish was a necessary requisite, so that no colors were visible in the optical glass. There was a particular fineness of measurement to be considered, down to one ten-thousandth of an inch on the concave and convex lenses.

Before World War I most of the finest telescopes came from Germany, but after the war telescopes made in the United States became superior. By the early 1920s the optical glass used by American telescope manufacturers was better than any foreign-made glass.

Mellish spent a lot of time grinding and polishing his lenses. Accuracy was very important. The least variation would make the lens useless, because it threw the objective off.

In his front room in Leetonia he had a single foot-power lathe which he used to shape the convex and concave lenses. After these two pieces of glass were polished, they fit together as closely as skin to the inside of an egg shell. It took him about two weeks to make a telescope.

Mellish and his family left

Leetonia in the mid-1920s and moved to Wilmette, Illinois, near Yerkes Observatory. He continued making reflectors up to 30 inches, and various optical accessories for Yerkes and other observatories. A move to St. Charles, Illinois in the late 1920s was followed by another to Escondido, California in 1933. Around 1960, he moved to Cape Junction, Oregon.

Mellish was fond of doing mathematical computations. He was a Seventh Day Adventist, and once told his oldest daughter that the "mathematical order in the universe had convinced him of the existence of God."

During his career, he made and sold over 100 refractors, from three inches to 12½ inches. He made several 24-inch mirrors, six 36-inch mirrors and a number of others 18 to 32 inches in diameter. One mirror was the 18-inch glass at the Ford Observatory on Mount Peltier in California. His achromatic refracting telescopes represented perhaps his finest work. They were capable of remarkably fine definition.

After Mellish moved to Oregon, a fire destroyed his workshop containing most of his personal and professional papers. Among them were the valuable drawings of the Mars craters. These were particularly

missed when the Mariner IV mission in the early 1960s confirmed that the plant was, indeed, heavily cratered.

John Mellish may not have been a major figure in American astronomy, but his achievements certainly merit recognition. Under very crude and difficult conditions, he discovered five comets. He was one of those traditional American craftsmen and artisans who were self-educated, confident, intensely focused and very independent. He died in 1970 at the age of 84 in a nursing home in Medford, Oregon.

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Irene Weeks was 'Peachy' to her high school students

By Lois Firestone

IT WAS IN THE 1940s, during one of those trying first years of her teaching career at Salem — 33 "rowdy" boys from the football squad signed up for a class that held 36 students.

Irene Weeks solved the potential problem which she later looked back on as a stroke of genius — she told them on the first day of school that they would be governing themselves during the ensuing weeks, and it worked.

Indeed, things turned out so well that at the end of the semester, the boys compiled a "proclamation" in their teacher's honor. In an elaborate, if impromptu, ceremony, Merlin "Mert" Cody presented her with a satin pillow, a peach delicately embroidered in the center: Henceforth, he pronounced, because she was "The Greatest," she would be known as "Peachy" Weeks. The name stuck, and the respect and admiration for this teacher carried through the next 25 years, until she retired in 1968.

Today, at 95, Irene Weeks looks back on those days with nostalgia. Born in Port Huron, Michigan and a graduate of Albion College in Michigan, she taught in Michigan schools and worked as a director in professional theater at Temple Bethel in Detroit. She first came

to Salem in 1925 with her husband, Canadian-born Lisle Matthews — he was looking for a job and his friend, Salem teacher John Olloman heard about a vacancy at the Mullins plant. In 1936 they bought a home and land along North Georgetown Road formerly rented by Marian and Ella Thea Cox.

She was in her mid-40s when she joined the Salem teaching staff. In 1943, male teachers were off fighting World War II, and there was a shortage in the Salem schools, especially the junior high and high school. At first, she taught health to youngsters in the city's eighth grade classes at the Fourth Street Junior High. Then, at biology teacher Ella Thea Cox's urging, the school board hired her to teach biology and geography, among other subjects at the high school — at one point, she was teaching five. Later she headed the German and French language departments at the school.

One of her first "extracurricular" assignments was as adviser to the six high school cheerleaders, Lela Ortell, Betty Whaley, Martha Whinnery, Gertie Zerbs, Donna Lopeman and Helen Chitea. Lela Ortell's mother spent hours cutting and sewing the costumes for the girls. Lasting friendships were formed in the after-school hours when they rehearsed — she remembers many early evenings driving a car full to their respective homes, the fog so thick that "there was a girl hanging out every window giving directions."

Irene also advised the band majorettes, but it is for her work in the dramatics program that she is remembered; she directed junior and senior class plays and hundreds of one-act productions, sought after by local clubs and organizations. She presented annual awards from the National Thespian Society which she formed along with a feeder group for the Thespians, the Salemasquers. Both were continuously active and from their rosters came the

talent for the plays — the budding actors and actresses and hopeful directors, of course, but also the set designers, makeup artists, and stage properties collectors. Those former students recall their director's voice echoing from out front during rehearsals: "I can't hear you." She remembers asking one of the teachers, Herb Jones for a microphone to help project her voice: his answer was "You don't need one!"

The first play was Michael Todd's "January Thaw" presented by the Class of 1948 — she learned quickly that all action had to be brought to the front of the stage (the junior high building was then the high school) because of the design of the balcony areas. Others followed: "Life with Father" in 1949, "The Late Christopher Bean" in 1950, "Charley's Aunt" in 1951, "Girl Shy" in 1952, "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay" in 1953, "Melody Jones" in 1954, "The Fighting Littles" in 1955 and "Money Mad" in 1956.

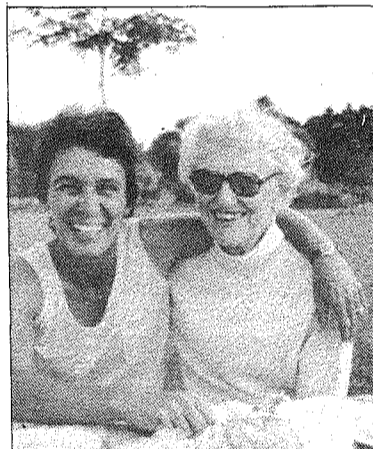
Students enrolled in the Weeks drama class were frequently asked to extemporaneously perform for 30 minutes, making the lines up as they went along after she gave them a sketchy plot. Several went on to work professionally in the arts. Among them were Dana Rice Snyder, Robert Domenetti, Lee Engler, Darrell Askey, Paul Barnard, and Rosemarie Sulea.

When she retired, her students gave Irene Weeks a lasting memento, a charm bracelet filled with symbols of the plays she'd directed. She gave the bracelet to former student Barbara Dickey Adams, along with her Thespian pin. For her, it's the memories that count, and she enjoys reminiscing with former students about her teaching days, the plays she directed and the young actors she coached.

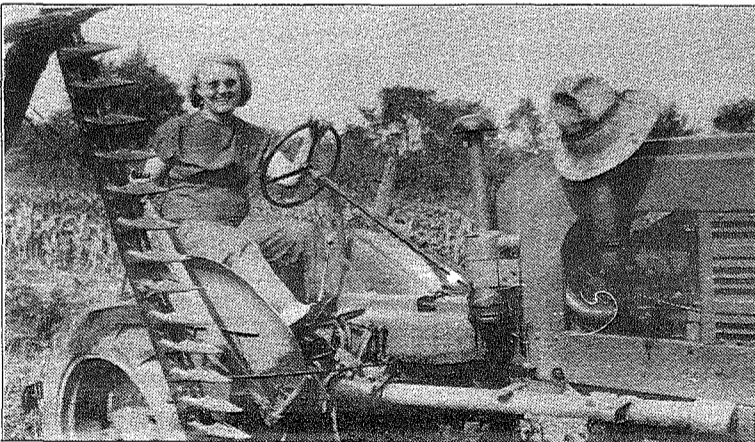
(When Irene Weeks retired, Lee Engler, who provided the background material for this article, dedicated a Memorial Building Winter Special to her.)



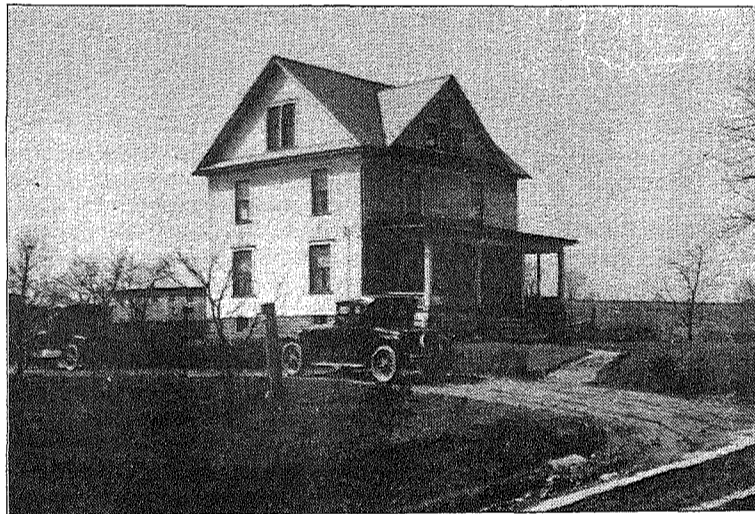
Irene Weeks is dwarfed by the tall corn as she stands in front of the season's corn crop in this 1939 photo taken on her North Georgetown Road property.



Donna Lopeman Houlette, former student and companion for years, poses with Irene Weeks in 1973.



Irene working the fields in 1941.



These photos show the farm along Georgetown Road, then a dirt highway, in 1936. In the foreground of photo below is present-day West Perry Street.

3 Stooges first to make fun of Hitler

MORE AMMUNITION for people who think television is educational: instead of watching the Three Stooges and figuring out how to avoid a pie in the face, viewers should have been watching for political satire, a historian says.

Don Morlan, chairman of the University of Dayton's communication department, is trying to correct what he calls a 50-year-old misconception.

"Most film historians — in fact, most of the film histories that you read — have given Charlie Chaplin credit in 'The Great Dictator' for being the first comedian ... to take Hitler on," Morlan said.

"Actually, Moe Howard was the first comedian to portray Hitler and to satirize him."

Morlan said a 20-minute short by the Three Stooges called "You Nazty Spy" casts Moe Howard as Moe Hailstone, a character clearly based on Adolf Hitler.

Hailstone becomes dictator of a country called Moronika, where he burns books, sends enemies to "concentrated camps" and recruits characters played by fellow Stooges Curly Howard and Larry Fine as ministers mimicking Nazis Joseph Goebbels and Hermann Goering.

"You Nazty Spy" was released in January 1940, nearly two years before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor pulled the United States into World War II.

Chaplin's movie hit theaters nine months later.

"I'm not knocking Charlie Chaplin. He was undeniably a genius," Morlan said. "But it shows that the Stooges were involved. They weren't just goofballs."

Morlan is an specialist in World War II propaganda films and an enthusiast for slapstick comedies made between 1930 and 1960. He has been a Three Stooges fan since he was a child.

He first presented a paper on his research on "You Nazty Spy" at an American Culture and Pop Culture Association conference in Louisville, Ky., in March. The organizers of the sixth annual Three Stooges convention in Dayton learned about his work through news stories.

"I think they invited me to the convention because this helps give the Three Stooges a little credibility," he said.



This sixth grade class at Fourth Street School in October 1948 includes (back row, from left) Paul Tetlow, Thom Ehrhart, Lee Engler, Bob Stockton, Donald Sturgeon, Jerry Hot, Melvyn Deutsch, James Wilson, Billy Nyberg; (third row, left) Jerry Snowberger, Dale Middeker, Bob Boals, Harry Baird, Tommy Weaver, Billy Falk, Ted Barnes, Charles Rogers; (second row, left) Donald Kaefel, Carol L., Marilyn Litty, Geneva Alexander, Barbara Whitacre, Janice Jeffries, Louise Cerbu, Brooks Espy; (first row, left) Carrie McFeely, Patty Kerr, Kay Paxson, Susan D., Wendy Townsend, Shirley Kring, Gloria Rowlands, Vera Evans. Geraldine Floding is the teacher.

Doctors now know what ailed Hitler

By Dr. Peter H. Gott

AS FASCINATED AS WE are by the lives of the rich and famous, we are often even more absorbed by their deaths. Perhaps the health problems affecting celebrities are a testimonial that we all suffer from the same physical complaints, regardless of our positions in society.

For example, Adolph Hitler has provided historians a wealth of presumptions about how an obscure Bavarian corporal could, in the role of a nefarious demagogue, have so altered the course of modern history. Surprisingly, Hitler appears to have been afflicted with a common disease called temporal arteritis, in addition to Parkinson's disease and several prosaic disorders. I've abstracted the following information from an article in the Archives of Internal Medicine (March 22, 1993), written by Dr. Fritz Redlich, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science, UCLA School of Medicine.

Adolph Hitler was born on April 20, 1889. After an undistinguished school career, he entered the Army in 1914, saw

action during World War I and sustained a shrapnel injury to his left thigh, as well as mild mustard gas poisoning.

During his rise to power, Hitler was relatively healthy, but he was an uncooperative patient: He self-medicated, refused examination of his abdomen and genitals and would not undergo diagnostic X-ray tests.

His health began to deteriorate in 1941, during the Russian campaign, and he continued to complain of episodic symptoms for years. In particular, he experienced dizziness, sensitive eyes, visual disturbances, headaches, intestinal spasms, weight loss, fever, and a swollen artery over the right temple. These symptoms are characteristic of temporal arteritis, which I'll describe below.

By meticulously examining newsreels of Hitler, experts have concluded that he had Parkinson's disease. The typical shuffling gait, slow movement and tremor worsened during the early 1940s, and — according to Dr. Redlich — became so prominent by 1944 as to be "obvious to any observer with

knowledge of neurological symptoms." Parkinson's disease was untreatable at the time.

Hitler also had recurring jaundice that (when coupled with bouts of abdominal pain) has led medical analysts to conclude that he had gallstones. However, these were never demonstrated. It's noteworthy that such symptoms may complicate temporal arteritis.

He probably had irritable bowel syndrome and was frequently dosed with drugs that may have made him sicker. For instance, he was given amphetamines, which could have caused the confusion and bizarre outbursts he showed on occasion.

Hitler's health problems were compounded by high blood pressure, which may have affected his vision and certainly contributed to his recognized heart strain. Nonetheless, coronary artery disease is a known consequence of temporal arteritis.

Temporal arteritis, first described in 1937, is marked by arterial inflammation, notably of the temporal artery in front of the ear. The cause is unknown, but the affliction is

believed due to an autoimmune reaction, during which the body becomes allergic to certain of its normal tissues.

The disease is ordinarily associated with headache, a tender and swollen artery, visual disturbances, malaise and fever. It can cause heart disease, liver disorders and intestinal symptoms. It is suspected when the patient has a mild anemia and an elevated sedimentation rate (both of which Hitler had), and is confirmed by a biopsy (which he didn't). Treatment with cortisone is universally successful, but this therapy was not available during Hitler's lifetime.

Perhaps that's just as well: It would have improved the quality of his life without much benefit to humanity. His indefensible commitment to genocide and world domination by a Nazi super-state was a mental aberration, not due to any physical disease. Thus, cortisone would not have caused 20th-century history to have been re-written.

Hitler died on April 30, 1945, from a gunshot wound and potassium cyanide ingestion.