

THURS July 4  
1996

The Republican  
DANVILLE IND

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Casteel of Greencastle were dinner guests, Sunday, of Lee Casteel and Mildred Wiseman.

## It Happened 59 Yrs. Ago

The Danville High School Reunion, 1929-1959, Saturday night, brought Ed Summers, who would have graduated with the Class of 1944, from his home in New Albany.

Ed brought with him the following story which was carried in both local newspapers and then it hit the Associated Press wire service of July 3, 1937:

### Grandpa Knew Best;

### Blast Snaps Finger

DANVILLE, Ind. July 3 (A.P.) — Seventy-two-year-old William Grayson bought fireworks today for his ten-year-old grandson, Edward Earl, but decided the boy was too young to handle the crackers.

He held a cracker too long, and the explosion broke a forefinger on his right hand. His wife suffered a heart attack when she saw the accident, and was sent to bed.

The fireworks are over this year at the Grayson home, they hope.

# Branch bank robbery in 1844 recalled

(Editor's note — This article, written by early Madison resident A. J. Grayson, was printed in The Madison Courier about 1881, and deals with the 1844 robbery of the Branch Bank of Madison).

is hereby offered for the recovery of the money, and \$1,000 for the arrest and conviction of the thief or thieves.

By order of the Board.

JOHN SERING, Cashier.  
Madison, Mar. 2, 1844.

Nothing has ever transpired in Madison since this event that created so much excitement and comment among every class of citizens.

A man named Root was arrested charged with being the robber, and sentenced to the State Prison, where he died.

The Branch Bank of Madison was entered on the night of Feb. 27, 1844 and robbed of \$27,370 in State bank notes. The entrance was made between seven and ten P.M. by means of skeleton keys, and by some person or persons acquainted with the combination of the building, and especially of the size and make of the locks on the alley door (next to the Masonic Temple), the bank parlor door, the external and internal doors of the vault, and on the doors of the safe, within the vault, for all of these, it is said, were unlocked in the usual manner, without violence and without powder, crowbar, or chisel. The robbers were also no doubt aware of the absence of the young man who slept there, and knowing that he would not return until a late hour, got in their work without being disturbed. It was a bold and masterly piece of work, well planned and well executed. The bank officers, several days after the deed was known by them, authorized the following notice to be published:

3,000 Dollars Reward!

Daring robbery.

The Madison Branch Bank was entered on the night of Feb. 27th, between the hours of 7 & 11 o'clock, by some daring villian or villians, who must have been well provided with skeleton keys, and abstracted from the safe in the vault, \$27,370. \$2,000

# Train tragedy

(Editor's note — This article tells of a railroad accident in Madison in 1844, and comes from an article printed later in The Madison Courier —

probably Dec. 15, 1881. It was written by A. J. Grayson, an early resident of Madison):

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On Thursday evening, March

28th, 1844, a most heart-rending catastrophe occurred on the inclined plane, which threw a cloud over the entire city, as a number of our citizens were

## happened in 1844

instantly killed and others fatally wounded. At the time of the accident the passenger coach and baggage car, in charge of Conductor John

Lodge, were about half way down the descent, and between the two deep cuts. It was the practice those days for the passenger train to bring into the

city one wood car every day, having five or six cords of wood on board. On this occasion six cords of wood were put on. Conductor Lodge made it a rule when he apprehended any danger from a slippery track or otherwise, after the wood cars were brought to the top of the plane, to direct them to be detained there until the passenger car reached the foot of the same. On this day he gave direct orders not to start the wood car from the head until the passenger car should reach the foot of the plane. Contrary to his orders though, the wood car was turned loose just when the passenger coach had not got more than two or three hundred yards down, it came thundering after. Conductor Lodge discovered that it was gaining upon him with great velocity, travelling, as he supposed, a mile a minute, and he motioned repeatedly to the brakeman to hold it back; but they evidently had lost all control of it. Lodge, on seeing the true state of affairs, believing the only chance of escape was to let the baggage and passenger car go at full speed down the plane, which he did; but the impetus of the wood car was so great that this proved of no avail and the much dreaded crash came at last, and a dreadful sight met the eye!

Mr. McGill, the brakeman on the wood car, valiently and nobly kept his post, doing everything in his power to avert the disaster, and seeing no hope, jumped and marvellously escaped injury.

The passenger car was between the baggage and wood car when the collision occurred. Conductor Lodge jumped and thus saved his life, though badly bruised about the head and had an ankle badly sprained. The following are the names of the unfortunate who were killed;

Thomas Bondurant, of this county.

Gilbert Durling, of Brownstown, Ind.

Ely Branson, of Belmont Co.

Ohio  
See page 13, column 1

### Train tragedy happened in 1844

Continued from page 10

John Roberts, clerk at railroad depot in this city.

Mr. Enoch, of Bloomington, Ind.

Miss Craig, daughter of J. J. Craig, living at Big Creek at the time, had her right foot and leg crushed in so shocking a manner as to necessitate immediate amputation.

Clerk Robert's wife and two children escaped almost unharmed.

A number of others were more or less injured; in fact no one on the cars escaped without some cut or bruise.

Those who visited the scene of the disaster a half an hour after the fatal collision, met several with their heads and faces bandaged, their countenances clotted with blood, hastening up town for medical aid, and also several men bearing Miss Craig

along on a litter, her mangled condition presenting a shocking spectacle.

But this was nothing to the awful scene at the place of the collision. One man lay dead upon the wood car which had by this time been cleared of its load; another lay under it lifeless, with one of his legs crushed between the wheel and the broken timbers. A third lay a little above it in his dying agonies, with his arms and one leg crushed; and the fourth (Mr. Durling of Brownstown) lay beside the track, some two or three hundred yards further up the plane, where he had jumped and broke his neck.

The passenger car was totally destroyed and the fragments strewn around. The baggage car was off the track and lodged against the bank, causing the stoppage of the passenger coach, when the wood car, with its tremendous momentum, came down upon it, the front passing across the floor of the other, and with one dread crush, sweeping passengers and all off, and crushing some beneath the wheels. It was a harrowing sight to behold.

Conductor Lodge was killed by another accident to his train five miles this side of Columbus, Ind. on the 14th day of November, 1845. There were 25 applicants for his position within 24 hours after his death.



# Memorable men recalled in early Madison times

(Editor's note — This article is reprinted from a letter to the editor of the Madison Herald. It was written by A. J. Grayson, an early resident of Madison, about 1900).

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The Madison postoffice, many years ago, was in the old Bowman building, on the south side of Main Street where Elmer Frost has just erected a new grocery house. One of the Collins was postmaster. The office was removed to the north east corner of Second and West Streets; and was located in the building now known as the Mundt candy factory. The first postmaster that I can call to mind was Col. C.P.J. Arion; then my old printer boss, Rolla Doolittle; Christian Coffin, Capt. W. E. McLelland, Charles Newsbury, Col. M. C. Garber, John W. Linck, M. A. Barnett, E. G. Nicklaus, M. C. Garber, Jr. and Marcus R. Sulzer. Postmaster Doolittle moved the postoffice to the Odd Fellow's building. When Barnett was appointed to the office it was moved to the Niklaus block, and lastly to the present government building. I am not in-

fallible and have tried to get the postoffice business straightened out.

Don't this sound like Madison? Miss Anna Gallagher and other Irish girls in Boston are going to create an unique memorial to Robert Emmett. She will raise by subscription from Americans of Irish birth the money to build a ship to bear the Irish patriot's name to ply between American and Irish ports.

Madison in ye olden time could boast of a number of fine old Irish gentlemen and they were of "the rale old sort."

John Doyle was a prominent figure in amongst the west Main street merchants. He was a wholesale dealer in wines and liquors. His place of business was in the old house where Elmer Frost's grocery is now. Mr. Doyle was a great, big fat man, full of fun, frolic and hilarity.

Martin Wade, father of Patrick Wade, Esq. was for many years in the grain and feed business, and at his death was succeeded by his son, Patrick Wade, who has successfully conducted the business at the old stand, and today no business man stands better as a citizen. His integrity is first class with everybody. He is only a chip off the old block, for no one in that community had more real friends than Grandfather Martin Wade, and his store was the rendezvous for the older Irish citizens, where they would tell the good old man their grievances, who gave them good advice and consolation. These visitors are about all passed away and I hope and pray that they have met with God, our Father in Heaven.

John Coates kept a grocery on the southeast corner of Main and Poplar streets. He was a first class citizen. Ex-councilman Wm. Brown was his clerk and was over 80 years of age. When I would pass the grocery going to work he was generally sweeping the sidewalk. I was passing one morning, when Woodson Holley came along with his white-washing tools and in a very polite manner addressed Mr. Brown thus; "Good morning, Mr. Reed" and passed on. Mr. Brown followed after Holley with his broom in hand and stormed out at him;

"Look here, Holley, which one of those Reeds do you take me for?"

There were three "Reeds" in Madison then, all old men and all were built tall and thin like Uncle Billy Brown. He frightened Holley, as the old

gentleman was very much excited at the time, and Holley always addressed him "Mr. Brown" after that.

Richard Johnson and Robert McKim need no words of praise from the writer. They built right and lasting memorials in Madison that will preserve the memory of their name for their beneficence and general practice of charity and love of doing good toward all men. To justly estimate the real worth of Mr. Johnson to the city of Madison and her people, visit the Eagle Cotton Mills and cordage factory and listen for a moment to the sound of the steady clock-like clicking of the machinery that would have all been silenced forever had not Richard Johnson bravely come forward and thrown his fortune and indomitable business tact into the breach.

I was in Madison when the late John W. Marx's funeral took place in Springdale cemetery, the ceremonies being under Richard Johnson's direction as President of the Western Fire Co. No. 3, of which company the deceased had been a life long member and in paying a last tribute to his old and trusted employe, Mr. Johnson, when dropping an evergreen on his coffin, after it had been lowered into the grave, said: "A good man is gone."

And now for a moment view the memorials that Robert McKim has left in the keeping of the citizens of Madison. Go to the McKim-Cochrane Furniture factory, which was established by Mr. McKim, now owned and operated by Graham & Colgate, and give ear to the sound of the moving machinery. Then walk on Broadway to Trinity church and cast your eyes heavenward and you'll see the pinnacle of the tower above God's temple. That tower is a memorial to McKim, who superintended the building and also gave his time and liberally of his fortunes toward the final completion of the whole church and its furnishings.

The immense coal business established long ago in Madison

& now still running as the R. McKim Co. under the skillful management of that prince of good fellows, Archibald Graham, Esq. whom I have long since placed in my list of Madison's most reliable business men, and withall I regard Arch Graham as one of my best and truest friends, is another memorial left by Robert McKim to perpetuate his spot in Springdale cemetery where Mr. McKim is quietly resting from his many years of labor and usefulness in the city he loved so well.

Dr. J. W. Mullen's drug store was an old style brick building that stood where E. E. Scott's wholesale grocery house now is. The drug store had a large patronage then and so did Dr. Mullen. There were Irish citizens in those days and a large colony of the Celtic race in Irish Hollow. When the doctor retired from the practice of medicine he was a frequent visitor to the Courier composing room, where his son, Alexander Mullen, was employed as a compositor. The writer and the Doctor became good friends even after his son had retired from the Courier office, and he gave me much interesting information in regard to the early work of the disciples of Esculapius in the graveyard robber period, before the establishment of pickling houses and cold storage as an adjunct to public hospitals throughout the country. I will, when I get time, give some of the blood curdling stories as told me by my friend, Mr. Mullen. There was a school for the beginners in surgery to practice in the use of the butcher knife on bodies snatched from country graveyards. The school was on north east street near Third street. I don't like to be the cause of the children hearing "scary noises all about the house" after reading the Herald, but I can't help it.

The March winds are still blowing and

The man in the street,  
By the way,  
Sees some hosiery neat  
On display.



# Madison fire of 1843 recalled

(Editor's note — The following article is reprinted from The Madison Courier of Dec. 31, 1881. It was written by A. J. Grayson, an early resident of Madison).

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In writing of the dead past we have endeavored to the best of our ability to portray old-time events as they really occurred, without exaggeration or coloring, and we are glad to know that our efforts have been appreciated by the readers of the Courier.

While

All the dear scenes of our boyhood

Come from the past to greet us anew,

And every event in memory we've cherished

Seems to rise up again to our view.

We do not forget that but a few of those we knew in Auld Lang Syne are with us today. They have, one by one, silently disappeared from the stages of life. And we begin to realize in some measure that

Softly the shadows around us are gathering,

Slowly the sunlight is fading away;

Silver threads herald the coming of evening,

Telling us gently of youth's sure decay.

Today on the eve of the new year of 1882, we chronicle the most startling event that ever transpired in Madison — the great fire of 1843, that destroyed the First Presbyterian Church and about twenty business houses and residences. The church building stood on the ground now occupied by Alling and Lodge, Thomas Godfrey, and W. F. Clough & Co. There were two storerooms under the church, with entrance to the auditorium in the center of the stores. It is not known certainly

what occasioned the fire. It is stated, however, that in Harvey Smith's store was an old-fashioned tin-plate stove, the kind used in those days. Mr. Smith's clerk, wishing to be out that night on a debauch, put a number of long sticks of wood in the stove, the ends protruding, and when these burned off they fell out on the floor and set the room ablaze. From the best information come-at-a-ble that was the origin of the disastrous conflagration. The clerk was playing cards at a neighboring store when the chapel bell sounded the alarm. It is said that several citizens and the city marshal stood on the church steps to prevent the firemen and others from entering, for fear the nice carpets might be spoiled by the water! The following description of that great conflagration tells how badly the carpets were soiled;

On Wednesday night, March 19, 1843 about 12 o'clock, the startling peals of the deep-toned church bells aroused many of the slumbering citizens of Madison from peaceful dreams to behold their property in flames.

Those first at the scene saw the black smoke bursting in dense clouds from the storeroom occupied by Harvey Smith under the First Presbyterian Church, which was near the center of the square on the south side of Main Cross between Mulberry and West Streets. In a few minutes the flames burst through the auditorium of the church above, and spreading through the whole building, soon enveloped this large and costly structure, and in an hour left nothing but the towering, cracked and blackened walls.

The two storerooms under the church were occupied by

Harvey Smith dealer in dry goods & Gillespie & McMillan, dealers in hardware & queensware. The loss of these gentlemen was considerable.

The flames next took possession of the three-story building adjoining on the west occupied by Messrs. Dutton & Adams, as a book store, who sustained considerable loss by the destruction of bindery tools, and damage of books by hasty removal. Here the flames were stopped by a good brick wall intervening between them and the next tenement.

But on the eastern side of the church the fire spread from Henry Hoffstadt's present place of business to that of Ben S. Abberger's on the corner of Mulberry. The progress of the fire was rapid and soon reached the large two-story chapel that stood in the rear of the church and back of that a frame dwelling, both of which were consumed. It is said that the bell on the chapel was kept ringing almost until it fell, by a rope that was thrown over the roof of the building.

On the east, across the alley the fire first reached a two-story block of four separate tenements; the first was occupied by Mr. John Geen, Sr. as a tailor shop and dwelling. The second by A. Liter, confectioner; the third by D. S. Hudson, silversmith; the fourth by J. W. Hunter, as a hat store. These occupants were obliged to retreat with the utmost precipitancy, though they succeeded in rescuing most of their goods.

In the rear of these buildings were a large number of frame houses of all sizes, through which the flames rushed as through a stubblefield, and passing on eastward, along the rear of the three story block above described, they com-

municated to the back of the following buildings, lying on Mulberry street;

A large three story block, occupied by Mulvey & Lat-  
tner, tailors.

The adjoining building occupied by Capt. Wm. Foras a tailor shop and dwelling.

The large frame building owned & occupied by M. E. Shannon, a tobacco manufactory & cigar store.

A frame adjoining the Shannons, occupied by Wm. Turk, as a gunsmith, shop.

These were all utterly wrecked or consumed. The large three story brick adjoining and occupied by John Marsh as a saloon (then used a coffee house) was saved by great exertions — the back part only being injured.

The heat was so great the buildings along the north side were badly scorched. Everybody was up all night, as it was thought the entire town would be laid in ashes before the mad flames spent their fury.

This embraces the extent of the fire and we think it was a bad one.

The principal sufferers by this disaster, were Harvey Smith, who lost all his goods, books, etc; Gillespie & McMillan's loss was \$3,000.00 worth of goods; Mrs. McKee, the building occupied by Dutton & Adams; Victor and John King, a large interest in the church property, and three buildings that were burned east of it; J. W. Hunter, the house occupied by him, John Mulvey, his house on Mulberry (the only one insured) and W. H. Phillips, the house adjoining; M. & E. Shannon, \$1,200 on building, tobacco and presses.

The night was bitter cold, and it was a trying task for the firemen and citizens who worked so nobly in saving

property, that, but for their untiring exertions, would no doubt have been destroyed. It was providently calm. Had it been otherwise, the best part of our city would have been laid in ashes.

Many individuals exerted themselves in well meant endeavors, but ineffectually because unsupported by others.

Mr. Hump Godman, brother of our efficient Superintendent of the waterworks, and Samuel B. Sering, were each presented with a gold watch, and Mr. George Baldwin, a tinner, was presented with a suit of clothes, by the owners of the property saved, for their valiant services in risking their lives on the roofs of the buildings while a line of men passed buckets to them from below.

The ladies did noble service that night. Many of them, seeing men standing about with their hands in their pockets, actually took a stand in the lines and passed the buckets of water to the engine, while those men, to their shame, be it said, instead of going to their relief, only stood still, and laughed at their patriotic exertions. But few of the names of the large number of ladies who participated in that night's work can be remembered. The most active among those were Misses Elizabeth & Margaret Pugh, daughters of John Pugh, and sisters of Mrs. W. W. Page, and Mrs. Elizabeth Chapman, wife of Mr. Joseph Todd.

There was a well on Mulberry street near where the Odd Fellows building now stands, where the ladies pumped water into tubs and buckets for the men to carry.

Mr. Smith, father of Sheriff Smith, Michael O'Brien, and Thomas Mullen, were watermen, and in these days did good services in hauling water in

their carts. The city was then in the habit of paying \$5.00 to the waterman who got the first cart load of water to a fire, and \$2.00 to the second.

The scene in our streets that night and next day was truly desolate.

The loss by this fire was variously estimated at from \$50,000 to \$75,000.