

Oakdale in the Newspapers

These appeared in the County

Press around 1938-1941

1999 FORTY-ONE YEARS AGO THE SUPERVISORS

The October session of the board of supervisors convenes next Monday. Following is a list of the representatives from the different towns in the county:

Lapeer, 1st District, E. T. Slayton
Lapeer, 2nd District, J. E. Roberts
Almont, Chas. B. Kidder
Arcadia, John Schell
Attica, Franklin E. Watkins
Burlington, A. H. McKillop
Burnside, Joseph Lewis
Deerfield, Fred D. Fricke
Dryden, D. C. Bartlett
Eba, John Conley
Goodland, George W. Dickerson
Hadley, Wm. E. Ivory
Imlay, John P. Eggleston
Lapeer, Benj. F. Kingsbury
Marathon, Elmore A. Brown
Mayfield, Stephen Slayter
Metamora, Mathias Caley
North Branch, W. W. Harrington
Rich, Warren C. Blair

Popcorn season is over, and Thos. Curriston has "folded his tent" and yamooosed.

John H. Dodds is building a new, large and commodious barn on his extensive farm east of town.

Merchant Vansclevier offers \$50 for another street fair next year, so well pleased is he.

W. H. Jennings, L. J. Haddrill and U. D. Bristol, worthy citizens, are still confined to their beds.

Dr. Polglase reports 276 inmates at the Home for Feeble Minded, and the new additions just completed give room for 100 more, who will soon arrive, and there will be 376.

Frank Cutting and wife have returned north.

Ben Myers is at Mt. Clemens attending business college.

T. M. Stewart has gone to Lansing to work on the new State Industrial School.

Auctioneer Donaldson is busy with fall sales and keeps "going, going, going."

Our farmers report that they are not overburdened with prosperity and find times as hard and prices as low as ever.

John Edmunds and wife will spend the winter in California. Their daughters Hattie and Lillian are attending school in Detroit.

1999 THIRTY-NINE YEARS AGO

Dr. Polglase and Will Hevener were the first prize winners at J. H. Bidwell's whist party Friday night.

Harry Demorest is busy as stenographer to the state arbitration board in the railroad strike at Ladington. Harry is in the front rank of his profession.

M. H. McCarthy of Chicago was a prominent figure at the national convention of tailors at Detroit last week and with his wife is visiting in Lapeer this week.

Said an old veteran of this city: "Talk about embalmed beef; why during the rebellion the meat smelled so strong, a guard had to be put around it."

Miss Grace Brundage leaves for Grand Rapids Wednesday where she will spend two weeks in the wholesale milliner house getting styles for the coming season.

George W. Carpenter, a pin-feather out of the wing of his satonic majesty, Hazen S. Pingree, wants to be appointed to the Board of Control for the Feeble Minded Home in place of John Hevener. But Brother Tomlinson of the Pontiac Gazette has his eagle eye upon the spot and will doubtless nail it.

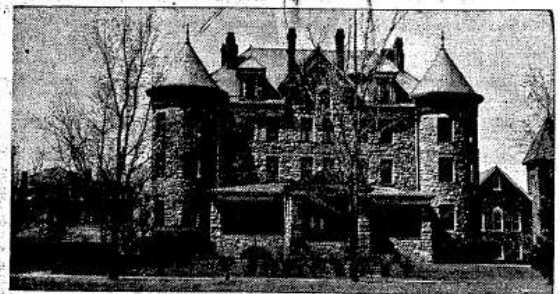
Deverne Matson and Sam Curriston have been to New York with a carload of horses.

H. C. Patterson has a somewhat bruised ankle, done by his horse stepping on it.

John Kiley's toe was smashed and ankle crushed by a falling railroad tie. He is now about on crutches.

Rev. G. W. Durkee has tendered his resignation as pastor of the M. P. church, but his people refuse to accept it.

Rev. Fr. Kelley has been engaged by the Central Lecture Bureau for the balance of the season.



LAPEER STATE HOME

The largest institution in the world for the care of the feeble-minded is at Lapeer—The Lapeer State Home and Training School. Buildings and equipment are inventoried at about \$4,000,000 and 4,000 patients are cared for. There are some 650 employees, and the Home is virtually an independent "city" with its own power and heating plant, a 400-acre farm that supplies much of its food, its bakery, laundry and industrial arts shops where patients learn crafts. The Home officials will be glad to escort visitors through the institution. Between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. are the most convenient times.

WORK IS KEYNOTE OF EARL'S SUCCESS

Note: Another of Judge Cramton's sketches of local Rotarians.

Earl T. Smith was born at Lansing, Michigan, April 27, 1890, and his life's activities have all been within a hundred miles of his birth-place.

Attending the public schools he graduated from Lansing high school in 1907. While going to school he worked in a laundry as general aid and errand boy. So when school was over and work commanded and there was to be no college days, Earl went into the laundry business, started the Model Laundry. It was high in aims but not any too well equipped, but he carried that on for 8 years. Then selling out this business Earl went to work for the Auto Body Co. of Lansing in 1915. This was the pioneer body factory in mass production and Harry Bradner was the head. He took a personal interest in his personnel and may a young man appealing to Bradner was ordered placed on the payroll. Among the many vacation workers of that period were Harry Kipke and Rotarian Karl Kinsy of Caro. Earl here had charge of the timekeeping and cost department. Seventeen years ago his employment by the State of Michigan commenced when he joined the accounting department of the State Administrative Board.

Accepted Appointment

In that capacity Earl was sent several times to the Michigan State Home and Training School, now known as the Lapeer State Home. The then Superintendent, Dr. Harley Haines, offered him an appointment which Earl accepted in charge of accounting at the institution. He began that work Sept. 3, 1924. He was transferred to the Michigan Farm Colony at Wahjemea in February, 1934 and came back to the Lapeer institution as Business Executive in Sept. 1938.

June 23, 1914, Earl was married to Miss Franc Frances at Lansing.

They have one son, Jack Smith recent graduate of U. of M. Law School and now in practice in Lapeer. Earl's own desire having been to be a lawyer he has the great satisfaction of watching his son carry out his own unfulfilled dream.

Caro Rotarian Too



EARL SMITH

Caro Rotarian Too

Earl's chief recreation is reading, current events and novels, but he has never read GWTW. No golf, no cards, when he is not at work it is pretty much the planning of the next day's work and he likes his work. A Mason and K. P. but not active. A Rotarian at Caro and here he has served this Club as Treasurer.

Even though its purchases are centralized as much as possible in Lansing the business side of the Institution has a vast amount of detail and record work. Ten people are employed here in that work, with about 4,000 patients here and 310 at Mt. Pleasant the annual clothing bill is about \$30,000, fuel \$80,000 and food, not including preparation and serving, is \$265,000 or between 19 and 20 cents per day per patient.

Even with central purchasing at Lansing, there is a considerable amount of buying in Lapeer of perishables, repairs and emergency. Lapeers sells also considerable amounts to the local parolees who spend their earnings largely in downtown shopping.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1941

Co. Choirs To Sing Xmas Carols

Music to Come From
Dome of the
Court House

Mrs. Oscar Juberg, chairman of the committee arranging for the various church choirs to sing Christmas songs and carols, December 12-23, announces the names of the choirs.

The choirs will sing each evening but Sunday from the Baird Funeral Home, the music to be amplified from loudspeakers in the dome of the court house. Mrs. H. L. Baird will accompany the groups on the organ. The Rev. F. S. Hemingway will have charge of the broadcasting arrangements.

Working with Mrs. Juberg on the program are Victor Prather Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Baird, and Arthur Lynch.

The choirs to participate are: Brass Ensemble, Lapeer State Home, Victor Prather, director

Lapeer School Glee Club, Jean Golden

Munroe Street Methodist Church Choir, Mildred Kruse

Baptist Choir, Ross Barber

Metamora Congregational Church Choir, Mrs. Florence Burnham

Lapeer Evangelical Lutheran, Mrs. Otto Graesser

Hadley Federated Church Choir

South Hadley Lutheran Church

Lapeer Presbyterian Church, Aarne Oikonen

Church of Immaculate Conception, M. J. Wilson

On Wednesday arrangements are being made to present Christmas recordings during the afternoon.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

These appeared in the County

Press around 1939-1942



Dr. Fred R. Hana, medical superintendent since 1937, and Earl T. Smith, steward for eight years, direct the Lapeer State Home and Training School, which with 3,921 patients is the largest feeble-minded institution in the world. Established in 1893, the institution occupies more than 1,200 acres, part of which is located within the city of Lapeer.



Earl Smith, business manager, and Dr. R. E. Cooper, medical superintendent of the Lapeer State Home, by their splendid cooperation make the annual beef and dairy banquets possible. To anyone who has even helped on such matters, it is not necessary to explain how many hours of preparation are needed to prepare a banquet for 450 people—an impossible task for the limited facilities down town.

Inmate at Lapeer 39-40 Drowned in River

Clarence Wilson, 19, patient in the Lapeer State Home at Lapeer, was drowned accidentally Thursday afternoon in the Flint river which flows through the institution grounds. The body was found home of the youth.

THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO

1910

The board of control of the Mich. Home in its biennial report to Gov. Warner Monday, stated that there were 1,000 inmates confined in the institution at the end of the fiscal year June 30, 1910, and that there were over 300 applications on file at the present time. An appeal is made that the legislature be urged to take immediate action and grant an appropriation whereby an addition to the present building may be erected and other needed improvements made. If the legislature grants the appropriation asked for, which is given at \$137,450, two new cottages will be erected that will accommodate 170 more patients, equally divided as to sex. An addition to the present dining hall will be built, a separate dining hall for the employees at the home, a two story industrial building will be constructed and a house for the home physician will be provided. Other improvements of a less important nature are mentioned.

LEP 1942

THIRTY-TWO YEARS AGO

1910

Charley Hollenbeck has closed up the Farmers Home hotel for lack of business. Not enough to warrant its continuance.

Webb Warren in town. His wife returned with him to Port Huron.

Mrs. Loren Elliott, daughter Miss Edith and Masters Howard and Kenneth, were at Washington, Mich.

Lester Wadsworth has returned to Detroit after a short visit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wadsworth.

Miss Katherine Arbury was very ill with her vaccination.

The Peters estates at Columbiaville are still on the map, its taxes amounting to \$4,000 or more to the township of Marathon.

Frank Williams and Sky Kudner spent Saturday and Sunday in Detroit calling on old friends.

The farmers and towns people are getting over their scare of small pox and trade seems to be picking up. There was quite a large crowd in town Saturday doing their marketing.

Clark Compton: "With three hotels closed, several empty stores on the main street and business with merchants generally on the bum; you can't tell me that small pox and local option don't haunt a town."

Dan Weldon, a Lapeer boy and good lawyer, was recently elected prosecuting attorney of Payne Co., Oklahoma. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Weldon of Lapeer and was formerly an attache of the County Press office.

When Omar Culver, genial proprietor of Cul's Place, walked into his barn Friday night to look after his horses, he noticed his electric lights were burning low and as he started into the stall they suddenly went out. Omar kept on, however, but stopped when the stall door hit him in the face, cutting him in the forehead and blacking both eyes. When asked what caused the damage he said, "You heard about Battling Nelson getting licked?" We said we had. "Well, I didn't lick him," said Omar, and went inside to build a cheese sandwich.

LEP 1942

1942
VF- LAR CNTS OAKDALE

Dr. F. R. Hanna, Home Sup't Succumbs Suddenly

The community was shocked this morning to learn of the sudden and unexpected death of Dr. Fred R. Hanna, medical superintendent of the Lapeer State Home. Dr. Hanna suffered a heart attack last evening at about 11 o'clock, and died shortly afterward. He was only 42 years old.

Funeral services will be held Saturday afternoon at 2:30 at the Presbyterian Church. The body will be at the Baird Funeral Home until noon on Saturday. Rev. Robert Howes will officiate, and burial will be at Mt. Hope cemetery under the auspices of the Masonic Lodge.

Dr. Hanna had capably administered the affairs of the Lapeer State Home, the largest institution of its kind in the world, for the last five years. His death will be keenly felt by all who knew him and scores of friends mourn his loss. There was always a feeling of cordial cooperation between the Home and downtown Lapeer under Dr. Hanna's administration.

He was born January 14, 1900, in Detroit, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Hanna.

He was graduated from Eastern High in Detroit in 1919. After attending Detroit Junior College for two years he entered the University of Michigan where he took his literary degree in 1923. In 1930 he obtained his M. D. degree from Wayne University. He interned two years at Detroit Receiving Hospital and was county physician of Oakland county for one year after spending a short time in Reed City. He came to the Lapeer State Home in 1933. In 1937 he became acting medical superintendent, succeeding Dr. R. L. Dixon, and in September, 1938, he became superintendent.

In 1917 he interrupted his school work, claimed he was 18 and enlisted in the U. S. Coast Artillery as a private. He was discharged on Christmas Day, 1918. He was planning to enlist in the Medical Corps in the pres-



DR. FRED R. HANNA

ent war, he had recently confided to friends.

Dr. Hanna took a keen interest in civic affairs. He was a trustee of the Presbyterian church of Lapeer, a past master of Waverly Lodge No. 257, F. & A. M., Detroit; a member of Lapeer chapter No. 91, R. A. M. and past president of the Lapeer Rotar club. He was also a member of the American Psychiatric Society and the Michigan State Medical Society.

As chairman of the Lapeer county Boy Scout council, he has been in charge of a meeting of that group just prior to his death. He had left the meeting in response to a call to one of the cottages, and it was after returning from this call that he suffered the heart attack that proved fatal 15 minutes afterward.

He is survived by his wife, former Grace Rowland; two sons, Edward, 7, James, 2; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Hanna; a sister, Miss Marian Hanna, a two brothers, David and William, also of Detroit.

Succumbs



FRANK DESNOYER, 73-year-old veteran chief engineer at the Lapeer State Home, succumbed Monday morning at 10 o'clock following a heart attack. He had been ill for three weeks.

Funeral services are this afternoon (Wednesday) at the Baird funeral home at Lapeer, the Rev. Robert Howes officiating. Burial will be at Mt. Hope.

Mr. Desnoyer came to Lapeer in 1894, when the first buildings of the State Home were being constructed. His previous practical experience in steam engineering enabled him to get the position of chief engineer at the Home in 1897. Although he had no formal schooling in the engineering field, he became a recognized authority. A few years ago he was one of three engineers selected in the state to make a study of all the state institutions.

He was born in Port Huron, April 29, 1868. The family came to Attica a few years later. On October 13, 1890, he was married to Cora May Fenn, and they lived at Port Huron until 1894, when they came to Lapeer. He is survived by his widow, a daughter, Mrs. Myri McKellar; a granddaughter, Marion Jane McKellar, and two half brothers, William Desnoyer of Lapeer, and Antoine Desnoyer of Napa, Calif.

Mr. Desnoyer was a member of the Presbyterian Church, the F. & A. M., the Royal Arch Masons, the Knights of Pythias, and the O. E. S.

Adrian Daily Telegram, Adrian, Michigan,
February 13, 1942, Page 6

William Streu, engineer at the Girls Training School, Mrs. Streu and Mrs. Milre J. Sauter, commercial teacher at the institution, attended the funeral of B. F. Des Noyer at Lapeer Wednesday. Mr. Des Noyer, who was an uncle of Mrs. Sauter, was 73 years old, dying after a three week illness with heart disease. He had been chief engineer at the Lapeer State Home and Training School since its beginning in 1894. He was widely known throughout the state because of his Masonic affiliations.

THE LAPEER COUNTY PRESS—LAPEER, MICHIGAN

STORY OF THE BOYS' HOSPITAL AT THE HOME

A story of the Boy's Hospital at the Lapeer State Home has been written by E. F. Felt, supervisor of the Boy's Hospital, and was published in the Employees' Reporter, newspaper published at the Home. The story is reprinted here.

According to Mr. Webster, a hospital is a place for the care of the sick and infirm. That learned man would never have said Boy's Hospital in mind or he would have written a much longer definition than that.

Medical staff at the Lapeer State Home consists of Dr. Zemmer, medical consultant, Dr. Elmer, Dr. Robt., and Dr. Manwaring. Dr. Wilson gives physicals to new patients.

The hospital staff of 29 employees includes Mrs. Burney, registered nurse. Mrs. Kaye is the assistant for both hospitals and has charge of our operating room, supplies and equipment. She also gives all of the ultra violet light treatments and has a little clinic which is conducted on Wednesday evening, each week. Mrs. Carlson divides her time between the medical ward and the laboratory. Mr. Cliff works three days a week in the pharmacy.

The first floor is reserved for the patients who are ill. The patients are sent in from the children and placed in the ward depending on the nature of their illness. South ward is the surgical ward where operative patients are cared for. This ward has four employees and five working boys. The north ward, medical ward, is full to capacity most of the time. Five employees and six working boys take care of this ward. When a patient is admitted to the hospital, he is weighed, measured and his temperature taken. Then they are examined and ordered by the physician. It is important to have their names and number reported correctly, because the physician sends a letter in the parents of each child admitted.

These nine employees and 11 working boys have given 11,886 days care in 1941. That is a lot of babies even if they didn't do anything else, but each one must also have medication, treatment, and routine care of a sick patient. Besides this we have operated 75 times and have done

77 encephalograms. All encephalograms have to be done in our operating room because it is necessary to take them in the X-ray immediately. There have also been 27 lumbar punctures and 60 ultra violet light treatments.

Mr. Trevilian and Mrs. Darling have the Out Patients Department, where patients are treated who are not ill enough to be admitted to the hospital. They cared for 7,320 cases last year. This department is open every morning from 8 to 9 o'clock except Sundays and holidays. Injuries and boys who are in need of other attention after clinic time is over, are taken care of in the emergency room.

On the second floor north ward are the new admissions to the institution. This ward is taken care of by two employees and four working boys. An attempt is made to get the new boys adjusted to institution life and after these physical examinations, initial interview by Mr. Roberts, a trip to the dentist, have their pictures taken, and finger prints made, they are assigned to the building that is to be their home and transferred. If they are unable to be taken care of in a colony they become our resident. South ward on second floor has 30 babies and small children. None of these children can walk and only a few are capable of feeding themselves. Two employees and eight working girls take care of this ward. Every attempt is made to teach these children to walk and feed themselves as soon as possible.

Our third floor has 34 older residents. They are all cripples, epileptic or bad potwells. Most of them are unable to feed themselves. Five employees and 12 working boys take care of this group.

Feeding a group of this size is so small item even if they could all have general diet but imagine trying to supply the proper diet for all the various types of illness that require special traps besides trying to manage feeding from infants with spoons, those to lumpy, lowgrade cripples with the appetites of elephants. Our cook with the help of ten working girls does very well.

We have one graduate nurse, three employees, and six working boys on night duty.

Tucked in behind huge stacks of clean linen waiting to be counted you will find our housekeeper. Her ingenuity coupled with an enormous amount of attention enables us to enjoy smooth sailing so far as the varied housekeeping problems are concerned.

Our patient personnel toy work is supplied by Miss "Mac" and Mr. Waterbury from the various cottages and colonies.

The largest part of our basement is used for the laboratory, X-ray, pharmacy, finger printing and photographing departments. These take care of the entire institution.

It would be almost impossible to cover this aspect of work were it not for the wholehearted cooperation of each and every employee in the building.

Shot Fatal To Father

State Home Employee Commits Suicide

The death Monday, at about 11 a. m., of Robert Angell, 42, an employee of the Lapeer State Home, has been decided a case of suicide by Sheriff Leslie C. Mathews, Prosecutor T. C. Taylor and Chief Grover Phillips.

Mr. Angell, it was reported, used a .38 caliber revolver to kill himself at his home at 510 Railroad street. The shot went through his temples and shattered a mirror in the room. He lived a few minutes after the shooting. Dr. H. B. Zemmer was called and later Coroner H. M. Best.

According to the story given to Sheriff Mathews by Mr. Angell's 15-year-old step-daughter, Margaret, and Mrs. Angell, he shot himself shortly after Mrs. Angell left the house to go downtown. The daughter, and the mother of Mrs. Angell, Mrs. Elizabeth Burt, the two children, Robert Charles, 5, and Betty Jean, 2, and a brother of Mrs. Burt were in the house at the time of the shooting. The step-daughter stated that she heard the shot as she was coming downstairs from her bedroom. She called her mother, who was just leaving the yard, and they found Mr. Angell in his bedroom, wounded.

According to the officers, Mr. and Mrs. Angell had been quarreling and this was given as one of the reasons for the act.

Mr. Angell was born at Adrian, Sept. 24, 1899. He married Jennie Burt Oct. 3, 1930. They lived at Pontiac until coming to Lapeer eight years ago.

He leaves his widow and two children and two brothers and two sisters, Mrs. Frank Carruth, Columbiaville, Mrs. Peter Tipolt, Pontiac, and Edgar and Ernest.

Funeral services were at 2 p. m. today (Wednesday) with the Rev. F. S. Hemingway officiating, and burial at Stiles cemetery.

PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

Drs. Zemmer and McLeod

E. B. ZEMMER, M. D.
Phone 380

E. W. A. McLEOD, M. D.
Phone 1058-J

Dr. Zemmer is not in the office
Thursdays

Dr. McLeod is not in the office
Tuesdays

Capt. Clarke Dorland,
M. C.

Capt. Clarke Dorland, M. C., is
now in armed forces

County Press, May 2, 1945

Slayer's Suicide Try In Jail Fails Hearing Postponed While Potter Is In Hospital

Harry Potter, 50-year-old confessed slayer of J. C. Spates, 28, is in a Flint hospital after an unsuccessful attempt at suicide early Monday morning while being held in the county jail. His hearing, scheduled for Monday, was postponed.

Potter, who shot and killed Spates during an argument Wednesday evening at the Potter farm in Elba township, slashed his wrists and throat but was discovered a few minutes later by Deputy John Scott. He was rushed to Flint immediately and doctors say he will recover.

Spates died early Thursday morning at the Lapeer City Hospital after being brought there at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday by Potter. Sheriff Mathews was called immediately and Potter told him he had come home to find Spates lying on the ground wounded; that he knew nothing of how it occurred.

Spates was partly conscious at the time and told Mathews that Potter had hit him with an axe. "Go out there and look," he said. "The axe is lying by the woodpile and is all bloody." He said nothing of a gun.

State Police and the sheriff went to the scene of the crime and found an axe but it was covered with dirt and had not been disturbed for several days. Potter was jailed Wednesday night pending further investigation.

Thursday Potter was questioned further and in the afternoon admitted the crime. He at first claimed self defense but later told the whole story and seemed anxious to cooperate with officers.

Friday morning he was taken to his home where he reconstructed the crime for Sheriff Mathews, a State Police investigator and a photographer.

Potter said Spates, a former Lapeer State Home patient, had lived with Mrs. Spates in a trailer behind the Potter home for the past month. Spates had worked for Murray Phelps until the Phelps auction a month ago and had married a girl last December that worked for the Potters for the past several years.

WHEN SPATES lost his job at the Phelps farm Potter helped him get work with the railroad where Potter worked. Both men drove to and from work together and both families ate in the Potter home.

The two men had agreed to work the small farm together during their spare time, sharing in the food it produced. Potter said he had difficulty getting Spates to do his share of the work and they had been arguing severely about that for a few days prior to the shooting.

Returning home from work Wednesday afternoon the two men resumed their argument and Spates threatened to "beat his brains out" if Potter didn't stop bothering him. When they arrived at the farm Potter got a 12 gauge shotgun from the house and went out to Spates' trailer. He hid the shotgun under the edge of the trailer and then waited for Spates to come out from the orchard where he had gone for an unknown reason. He was afraid of Spates in hand-to-hand combat, Potter said, and put the gun under the trailer because he thought he might have need for it.

When Spates returned they began arguing and then fighting near the trailer.

POTTER MANAGED to break away and grab the gun. Before he could shoot Spates grappled with him but Potter broke away and from a distance of about eight feet shot Spates in the stomach. He then threw the gun down, helped Spates to his pickup truck and rushed him to the hospital.

Potter told The County Press Friday "I don't know why I did it. I just lost my temper. There must be something wrong with me. It's all my fault." He said he didn't care about himself but it was a "terrible thing for the family." He placed none of the blame for the arguments on Spates. No serious trouble had ever come between them; all the arguments had been over minor differences, he said.

Potter's attorney is L. C. Cranton.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, May 2 (Continued)

MURDER SCENE



J. C. Spates, 28, was shot on this scene at 5 p. m. Wednesday by Harry Potter, 50. Spates and his wife lived in the trailer shown here at 1307 Hadley Road and Mr. and Mrs. Potter lived in the house in the background. Spates and Potter drove home from work together, arguing over division of the work on the garden which they shared. Arriving at the farm at 4:45, Spates walked out in the orchard next to the trailer and Potter went into his house and got his shotgun. He then walked over to the trailer and hid the gun under the trailer on the side toward the camera. Spates came out of the orchard and a scuffle began in the immediate foreground of this picture. Potter broke away for an instant and grabbed the gun. Before he could shoot Spates grappled with him but Potter broke away again. Spates was standing where Sheriff Leslie Mathews is shown in this picture. Potter was by the corner of the woodpile about eight feet closer to the spot from where this picture was taken. He fired one shot, hitting Spates in the center of the stomach. Both Mrs. Potter and Mrs. Spates were away at the time.

KILLER



HARRY POTTER, 50 year old Elba township farmer and railroad employee, is shown here in the county jail after he had confessed to the shooting of J. C. Spates who with his wife lived in a trailer behind the Potter home. Said Potter, "I don't know why I did it. There must be something wrong with me. It's all my fault."

County Press

May 16, 1945

Potter Trial Is Set For Tuesday

**Slayer Regrets
Suicide Attempt,
Wants to Live**

Harry Potter, 50, charged with the murder of J. C. Spates, 28, was bound over to circuit court Friday for trial Tuesday, May 22 at 9:30 a. m. Bonds were set at \$15,000 with two sureties by Justice A. H. Perkins before whom the examination was held. Bond has not been posted and Potter is in the Genesee county jail.

Potter shot Spates April 26 on the Potter farm in Elba township following an argument over Spates' failure to help with the garden work. Both men were employed as section hands on the Grand Trunk railroad.

Spates and his wife lived in a trailer house on the Potter farm.

Potter later attempted to take his life by slashing his throat and wrists in the Lapeer county jail and was removed to Hurley hospital and later to the Flint jail.

Expressing regret over his attempt to commit suicide, Potter said he is now willing to live and face the consequences. Describing events that led to shooting Spates, Potter related, "we argued and then began fighting. He was strong and young fellows like that have good wind. I was afraid of him and lost my courage."

He told of getting his shotgun and shooting Spates in the stomach, later driving his victim to Lapeer City hospital where he died a few hours later.

Potter Trial Postponed

The trial of Harry Potter, 50-year-old Elba township farmer charged with the murder of J. C. Spates, was postponed yesterday. It had been set for Tuesday but reports on a mental examination were incomplete. Thursday morning psychiatrists asked for postponement.

The psychiatric test was given by Doctors Gordon Brain, Flint, R. E. Cooper and A. T. Rehn of Lapeer State Home and Training School.

Potter shot Spates April 26 on the Potter farm in Elba township following an argument over Spates' failure to help with the garden work.

SOLDIERS here in "Here is Your Infantry" say that Lapeer is the best town they have struck in their travels and appreciate the courtesies shown them here.

~ 8 ~

County Press
September 12, 1945

County Press, September 19, 1945

\$10,000 Loss In Home Fire State Home Storage Building Destroyed

Fire of undetermined origin caused a \$10,000 to \$12,000 loss at the Lapeer State Home Thursday night, destroying the storage warehouse and all contents.

The 100x100 foot one-story brick structure contained lumber, building materials, the Home's old fire engine, tools, rags and baled rags.

The blaze could be seen 10 miles from Lapeer and attracted hundreds. First discovered at about 9:30 p.m. the fire had progressed so far that two hoses were of little value. Later, the Lapeer Fire Department was called to help extinguish the blaze which burned most of the night.

The brick walls are standing. Earl Smith, business manager, said the building would be reconstructed.

County Press
October 17, 1945

State Home is Bigger than Lapeer

The Lapeer State Home with its 3,900 patients and over 500 paroled patients, is bigger than the city of Lapeer, Dr. H. B. Zemmer, member of the State Mental Health Commission, told Kiwanians last week.

Dr. Zemmer, with the other four members of the commission, directs the state hospital system for the feeble minded, insane and epileptic. A total of 25,000 patients are now being cared for by the state. Operating costs are \$15,000,000 a year.

State Checks Patient's Death

Whether negligence on the part of a Lapeer State Home employee caused the death of Catherine Rahaim, 8, who died at the institution Sept. 14, will be determined at a coroner's inquest which will be held here Friday by Dr. H. M. Best, local coroner and Prosecuting Attorney Taylor.

The girl died at the institution hospital after being severely burned while bathing at Cottage 33 where she was an inmate. The young girl was an organic brain disease type and was considered one of the low-grade patients. Her physical condition was considered fairly good prior to being burned. She was incapable of caring for herself and had to have assistance to keep herself clean. Shortly before dinner on Sept. 5 the girl needed attention and Miss Frances Smith, the attendant in charge, drew some warm water and detailed another institution patient who was in the practice of helping care for some of the more helpless patients to attend Catherine. Then Miss Smith left the room. During her absence another patient turned the hot water on in the bathtub and placed Catherine

See STATE CHECKS—Page 2

58 Head for Beef Sale Here Oct. 12

Sigler to Talk at

Feast for 600

Gorman Toastmaster

Fifty-eight head of cattle—1 more than last year—are listed in the Beef Sale catalog now being printed. The seventh annual sale is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 12.

The cattle are divided by breed and sex as follows:

	Bulls	Females
Angus	3	1
Hereford	6	1
M. Shorthorn	3	
Shorthorn	5	

Kim Sigler, special state prosecutor in the one man grand jury investigation of alleged graft and bribery in the legislature, has accepted an invitation to be the principal speaker at the banquet Oct. 11 at the Lapeer State Home.

State Checks

(Continued from page 1)

line in the scalding water. The girl was severely burned. She was rushed to the hospital where she was given every attention and day and night nurse service.

The burns were healing satisfactorily and it was thought she would recover when Friday she suddenly became much worse and died within a few hours. Dr. R. E. Cooper, medical superintendent at the Home, states that in his opinion death was caused from toxemic poisoning resulting from absorption following the burns. The girl was burned on the lower third of her legs and up to her hips in back.

A post-mortem was performed Saturday by Dr. Lohr, eminent pathologist. His report awaits laboratory tests.

Dr. Cooper states that it is the practice in all the cottages to have patients help attendants in their work. Without this inmate help it would be necessary to double the staff. Dr. Cooper states this work helps keep some of the patients busy and is decidedly beneficial to them.

Blame Death On Shortage Of Employees

**Jury's Decision
Awaits Report of
Medical Examiner**

Testimony of attendants and officials of the Lapeer State Home held negligence on the part of an employee was not responsible for the death of Catherine Rahaim, 14-year-old patient there.

A jury, impaneled by Dr. H. M. Best, coroner, heard the testimony Friday and adjourned until Oct. 1 to await the report of a medical examiner.

Attendants corroborated the story told by Dr. R. E. Cooper, medical superintendent and his assistant, Dr. Adolph T. Rehn, of the understaffed condition of the home. The institution is short 58 attendants under the state quota. Dr. Cooper said 100 more are needed.

The patient's death occurred Sept. 5 when a fifteen-year-old patient placed her in a bathtub and scalded her with hot water. Only one attendant was on duty at the time. The other had gone to the lunchroom, a quarter of a mile away in another building.

Shortly before dinner on Sept. 5 the patient needed attention; the attendant drew some warm water for a bath.

At that time a child in another part of the ward turned on a faucet, pouring water over the floor, and the attendant left the bathroom to attend to this matter. It was while she was gone that another patient turned the scalding water on the patient who was about to be bathed.

The ward, housing 85 children, is cared for by two attendants with the assistance of the other patients.

The State Mental Health Commission yesterday ordered precautionary measures taken at the Lapeer State Home and Training School as the result of the death of the Rahaim child.

The commission instructed the hospital superintendent to install a system of locking hot water outlets so that only authorized persons could use them.

Term Death At the Home Accidental

**Employee Calls
Dismissal Unjust;
Denies Negligence**

The death, Sept. 14 of Catherine Rahaim, 14, Lapeer State Home patient, was caused by toxic poisoning from burns accidentally received Sept. 5, a coroner's jury decided Wednesday after the report of the post mortem was made. The report was signed by Fred Bentley, George Bell, William J. Vail, Lewis Burt, F. C. Boylan and Fred Stephens.

The jury, impaneled by Dr. H. M. Best, heard two weeks ago how the patient was left in the bathroom while another patient came into the room and placed the child in a tub of scalding water. Shortage of employees was blamed and the attendant who was alone in the ward was absolved of all blame.

Another attendant, Miss Frances Smith, was discharged, however. Her termination of employment notice stated "testimony at an inquest revealed that she was negligent in carrying out the rules and regulations for patient care."

Miss Smith in a statement to The County Press this morning said she was eating her dinner when the accident occurred. She said she left to eat on her regular, authorized time and only after she had been properly relieved and after she had notified the other attendant that she was leaving. She said she ate each day at this time and that she returned within the authorized time. The coroner's jury, she maintained, absolved her of blame and she was at a loss to explain the dismissal.

Explaining the discharge, State Home medical superintendent Dr. R. E. Cooper said Miss Smith testified at the inquest she had left the patient in the bathroom and had not informed the other attendant of the fact. He said he was not concerned with whether or not this was criminal negligence, only that it was a violation of institution regulations.

Ask Home To Reinstate Worker

**Union Petitions
For Civil Service
Commission Hearing**

Reinstatement of Miss Frances Smith, discharged from the State Home after the death of a patient Sept. 5, has been demanded by the Home local of the State, County and Municipal Workers of America.

Miss Smith was discharged on the grounds she violated Home rules in caring for the patient, Catherine Rahaim, 14, who was scalded by another patient. Her termination of employment notice stated "testimony at an inquest revealed that she was negligent in carrying out the rules and regulations for patient care."

The union points out that the coroner's jury termed the death accidental. Dr. R. E. Cooper, State Home medical superintendent, said the jury only determined that Miss Smith was not guilty of criminal negligence. He said she was discharged because she violated institution regulations when she left the patient without notifying the other attendant.

The union stated the scalding occurred after Miss Smith had left to eat on her regular, authorized time and that the other attendant was in the ward when she left. They say it has never been customary to formally notify the other attendant upon leaving the ward at authorized hours. The patient had been left in the bathroom but not in the bathtub.

The union has petitioned the Civil Service Commission for a hearing of the case. No date has been set by the commission. Miss Smith is not a union member.

Individual union members feel Miss Smith has been made a "goat," because this was the second death from scalding within 12 months and some action had to be taken. They point out that testimony at the inquest revealed the patient guilty of the scalding had, a short time previously, thrown another patient out of a window and had been guilty of other dangerous actions. They state this type of patient cannot be controlled by the understaffed institution and should have been confined by Home officials.

Many Changes At State Home

New teachers replacing those resigned from the staff of the Lapeer State Home & Training School are: Mrs. Myrtle Gerhard of Lapeer, who will teach advanced academic classes. She has been an employee at the institution for some time.

Mrs. Leah Roach, Lapeer, who will teach intermediate academic subjects. She taught at the institution before her marriage.

Mrs. Ohpha Bean, former teacher at Kalamazoo State hospital, will teach primer and also one class in music.

Miss Virginia McCauley, with teaching experience in Lansing public schools, will teach art.

Mrs. Rosetta Cotes, Lapeer, with nine years' experience teaching rural schools, will teach sense training. She also has been employed at the institution.

Herbert Murr will teach band, coming here from Marquette prison where he was bandmaster the past summer.

Bob Powell will teach physical education; he, too, is a former employee.

Mrs. Marie Pumphrey, Lapeer, will assist in Occupational Therapy. For many years she has had close contact with young people and is well equipped for her work.

Andrew Eppler will have charge of the print shop this year.

Members of the teaching staff who have taught previously at the institution are: Dr. Dudley A. Roberts, acting director of education; Victor Prather, principal; Miss Geneva McAllister, secretary; Miss Jean Bentley, sewing; Miss Anna MacKichan, beginning academic; Miss Helen Dobson, pre-primer; Mrs. Fay Kruth, music; Miss Helen Jacobson, industrial art; Mrs. Lennea Oster, handwork; Mrs. Florence Hummitch, home arts; E. R. Dunlap, manual training; Mrs. Ellen Chase, occupational therapy; Mrs. Marvel Richter, kindergarten and social relations; Larry Knutsen, boys' carpenter shop.

The following teachers at the Lapeer State Home and Training School have resigned: Miss Alma Niblack, principal for 17 years, resigned and is now working in the same capacity at Caro State Hospital.

Mrs. Mabel Musselman, art director for 11 years, has gone to her home on Lake Huron.

Mrs. Arlene Lockwood, kindergarten teacher for 10½ years, at her home in Lapeer.

Peter Griffith, operator of the rug room for 14 years, retired and is at his home near Lapeer.

Mrs. Edith Schenick, for 7 years a member of the teaching staff, has gone to California to teach. Her husband, Richard Schenick and her daughter, Suzanne, accompanied her.

Mrs. Nora Culver, teacher since 1930 has retired to her

farm at Lawrence where she will care for her husband, who has been in ill health for some time.

Mrs. Imogene Supernault, sense training and kindergarten teacher for 20 years, resigned, and is at her home in Lapeer.

Mrs. Hazel Delehanty, 14½ years, physical education teacher, resigned to be with her family in her home in Lapeer.

Mrs. Agnes Taylor, home economics teacher for 15 years will spend the coming year in the West.

Miss Hazel Barnett, academic teacher for two years, plans to teach nearer her home in Missouri.

Miss Maida Steinberg, speech training teacher, has accepted a position in Chicago.

Sisto Huseiga, Jr., has completed a year as teacher of boys' physical education and has enrolled in Albion College to continue his education.

Victor Prather, former band leader of the Lapeer State Home and Training School, has taken over Miss Niblack's position as principal.

HERE'S THE PROGRAM

Following is the program for the Seventh Annual Beef Sale Banquet to be held at the Lapeer State Home dining room Thursday evening, Oct. 11.

Dr. H. B. Zemmer, chairman

Invocation - The Rev. J. Paul Pumphrey

Introduction of Toastmaster - Dr. H. B. Zemmer

Toastmaster - M. C. Gorman
(managing editor Flint Journal)

Greetings from the Lapeer State Home

Dr. R. E. Cooper, Superintendent
Introduction of Guests - C. L. Bolander
(Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture)

Music - Ramblers Quartet of Lansing

Effect of Michigan's New Livestock Laws and Regulations - Charles Figg
(State Commissioner of Agriculture)

Tap Dancing - Six boys and girls of the Lapeer State Home

Where Are We Going from Here?
Prof. George A. Brown
(Animal Husbandry Department MSC)

Novelty Musical Number - Bobby Thompson
Lapeer State Home Patient

Music - Ramblers Quartet

Address - Kim Sigler

The International Livestock Market, and introduction of Beef Sale Consignors

George Branaman
(Associate professor of Animal Husbandry MSC)

Music - Ramblers Quartet

Tomorrow's Sale - B. A. Mahaffy

STATE DIRECTOR



DR. ROBERT L. DIXON, superintendent of the Caro State Hospital, and former superintendent of the Lapeer State Home, has been appointed acting director of the State Mental Health Commission by Governor Sigler.

The appointment was accepted by Dr. Dixon on a temporary basis, to help the new commission get organized and start functioning. Dr. Dixon will be given a leave of absence from his present job at Caro while he takes over new position.

The directorship of the commission pays \$12,000 a year. Dr. Dixon's present job pays \$10,000 and maintenance, which makes the total compensation considerably more than \$12,000.

The position has been vacant since Dr. Charles A. Zeller resigned in July to accept a similar post in Indiana at a higher salary.

"MY BIGGEST job as acting director," Dixon said, "will be to prepare a complete program of mental hospital building and expansion for submission to the March 18 session of the Legislature."

Sigler said the commission had "canvassed the field within and outside the state seeking a man with the qualifications called for in the act creating the job."

THE LAW requires a physician with 10 years experience in psychiatry and hospital administration. Commissioners contended a physician with these qualifications can command up to double that salary in private practice "and much more in other states."

The Governor said the commission had not yet decided what course to take to make the position more attractive.

UNDER DR. DIXON will be three deputy directors—of business administration, of the child guidance clinics, and of the state hospitals.

The State Health Commission is composed of five members: Dr. H. B. Zemmer, Lapeer, chairman; Edward A. Blitcke of West Branch; Dr. Ray Waggoner of the University of Michigan; Douglas Dow of Detroit; and Mrs. Frieda Blankenburg of Kalamazoo.

41 Years of Service

1948
**DR. WILSON TO RETIRE
FROM STATE HOME STAFF**
1948

By Lillian Redmond

After 41 years as a member of the medical staff of the Lapeer State Home & Training School, Dr. Mille E. Wilson will retire on April 30, and will leave Lapeer to make her home with a friend, Miss Gladys Wagner, at Plainwell, Michigan.

She was born in Rochester, Michigan, the daughter of Dr. Jesse E. and Mrs. Sue Wilson. Dr. Jesse E. and his twin brother, Dr. Jerry Wilson were well known physicians and surgeons for many years in Rochester and Dr. Jesse was in active practice when he died at the age of 85. Dr. Jerry died in his early seventies.

Dr. Mille E. Wilson was graduated from Rochester high school and her father presented her with her diploma. She also attended school in St. Thomas, Ontario, where she lived with relatives for a time. Later she attended Lombard University at Galesburg, Illinois. She was graduated from the Michigan College of Medicine and Surgery in Detroit.

Following her graduation, she was resident physician in a Detroit hospital for a time, returning to Rochester to assist her father after her uncle's death. She later returned to Detroit and established a private practice in the Tuller Hotel.

The late J. R. Johnson of Lapeer, Dr. N. R. Gilbert of Bay City and M. J. Murphy, who comprised the board members of the then Michigan Home for Feeble-minded and Epileptic asked her to join the medical staff of the institution. She accepted the offer and assumed her duties in Lapeer on January 3, 1907 and has been here continuously since that time.

There were 900 patients and



DR. MILLE E. WILSON

about 100 employees at the institution when Dr. Wilson came here. Nine buildings housed the patients. Today there are 5,000 patients and 330 employees with 45 buildings housing patients.

Her first medical superintendent was the late Dr. George L. Chamberlain, who died two years ago in California.

The only employee who was at the institution when Dr. Wilson came to Lapeer and who is still employed, is Roy Bentley, who is superintendent of maintenance.

Dr. Wilson smiled as she remarked that there wasn't a job on the grounds that she has not done during her years of service. Just a few of these jobs was handling all incoming and outgoing patients mail, planning all parties, making Christmas lists and one year she attended twenty-three Christmas parties throughout the institution.

Said Dr. Wilson, "the big

thing in this place in the spirit of doing for others. You just cannot be here very long before you find yourself doing something for these children. They have a keen sense of fairness and their devotion has been a source of great satisfaction to me. They know I have always fought for their interests and tried in every way to better their condition."

After retirement Dr. Wilson plans to do just a few of the things she has always wanted to do. She loves the out of doors and has a cottage near a lake in Northern Michigan where she plans to spend her summers. "Just think," said Dr. Wilson. "I have never had a summer vacation since I was a kid in school; I probably will not know how to act."

Distinctly an individualist, Dr. Wilson has done a number of interesting things in her life. She was one of the first, if not the first, woman driver of an automobile in Lapeer county; she attends the Episcopal church but is not a member of any club. Five years ago she went to Bishop Airport in Flint and learned to fly an airplane, securing her student license and soloing.

She has a number of priceless antiques, including a hand-carved mahogany settee and several chairs; mahogany console table, a breathtakingly beautiful six-piece silver tea service, Bohemian glass decanters and vases, filmy lace shawls and an oil painting of her father, which she prizes most of all. All these treasures are family heirlooms and very precious to the good doctor.

After living on a schedule for 41 years, being on duty every morning at 8 o'clock, Dr. Wilson is a bit fearful of having all this spare time on her hands but plans to exercise her motorboat up at the lake and just see how many fish she can catch.

Her many friends in Lapeer will miss her and hope she will make many visits back here.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

DR. HARLEY HAYNES HONORED AT U OF M



* This plaque honoring Dr. Harley A. Haynes, director-emeritus of University hospital, Ann Arbor, has been placed in the foyer of the hospital. Dr. Haynes was director of the hospital from 1924 until his retirement in 1945. He was assistant medical superintendent at the Lapeer State Home from 1907 to 1912 and medical superintendent from 1912 to 1924. The plaque was designed by Avar Fairbanks, nationally known sculptor and a former member of the U of M faculty.

Assumes Duties



Dr. R. W. Cooper has taken over the duties as Medical Superintendent at the Lapeer State Home and Dr. R. L. Dixon who has served there and also at Caro and Mt. Pleasant since the death of Dr. F. R. Hanna, has returned to Caro.

Dr. Cooper took up residence at the Home February 15.

Lapeer State Home Praised For Its Care of Patients

MAY 49

Featured in the Detroit News Sunday was a letter about the Lapeer State Home, written by a mother who had sent her afflicted child to the institution here. In the letter were many kind words for the work being done by the Home, and many sound words of advice for families that are met with the problem of a mentally deficient child. The letter was written to Jane Lee, who conducts the "Experience" column of the News. Here it is:

Dear Jane: May I say a few words to Heavy Hearted, whose child is mentally and physically handicapped?

I know how you feel, Heavy Hearted. I know your every anguish, your every fear, your every desperate thought. You see, I went through the identical experience some years ago.

Motherhood is the greatest adventure among us humans, and there can be no worse experience than that which you and I have gone through.

When my doctor told me to place my boy in an institution, I was indignant. He was given to me to care for! He was my flesh and blood! Care for him I would to my dying day!

A great many thoughts entered my mind. Why, oh, why, had God done this to me? I didn't think I deserved it. Why should I be given a lifetime of punishment when I had lived a good clean life? I was terribly bitter.

THEN, AS time went on and thoughts were more coherent, I knew there was a reason and then I reconciled myself to the fact that I, as a small earthly being, could not possibly comprehend why this was to be, and if this was part of the game of living, I would face it, bravely, trustingly.

If it wasn't for my wonderful understanding husband, and our love for each other, I could not have gone on.

My husband and I took turns staying awake at night because our boy slept just two or three hours at a time, and as he grew older he became strong and destructive. He had to be watched constantly.

IT WAS ONE night, as I tiptoed in and saw my husband crying, with the boy on his lap, rocking and crooning a lullaby, tears streaming down his face (I had never seen him cry before), that I made my decision.

My child could not know, could not understand, and I knew he'd be happy anywhere if he were treated kindly, but what was this terrible responsibility doing to the man I loved, whose heart was breaking just like mine? His work was failing, so was his health. He looked old. I would have to do something for his sake!

SHORTLY AFTER this, my husband and I visited Lapeer State Home. (Our son is there now). We went through every building and walked through the grounds. If you haven't already done this, do so by all means.

It's a beautiful place; the grounds are like a park. The children (all mentally deficient) play on the playground. They're happy. They're among their own kind. No one to ridicule them or shun them. Those who are crippled are pushed in wheel chairs. Their smiling faces show that they're happy.

WHEN YOU walk through the immaculately clean buildings, the hospitals and cottages where they live like families, don't expect the same details you have in your own home. There are no percale sheets, hand made lamp shades and lush carpeting. Everything is simple and efficient. Easy to clean so more time

can be given to the welfare of your child.

There is more mental attention given than you could possibly give them at home. You and I have not been trained to deal with such unfortunates. We could not possibly do for our children what Lapeer State Home is equipped to do.

THEY HAVE a chapel on the grounds. They see movies and I wish I had room to tell you about their wonderful Christmas programs.

The whole plant is like a little town all its own. They raise their own food. Those who are capable work in the fields.

Those who are feeble-minded have a keener sense of affection than normal people. They attach themselves to someone and give them the love and care equal to a mother's. An older boy became very fond of my little boy. He follows him and cares for him. His hobby must be photography, because he hands us pictures of our boy when we visit.

I KNOW my son is happy because he is so anxious to get back when we take him for a ride.

Of course, I'll admit that to see these feeble-minded people is not very pleasant. I had no knowledge of such institutions before this happened to me. Frankly, I was appalled. I realized how many other families had heartaches just like mine. We are not alone. There are many right in our own communities we never hear of.

It will be the hardest thing you have ever done to leave her, but I know they'll be kind to her. My boy has been there for years and he looks grand. I have never regretted, though I'll admit the first year without him was torment, but God never gives us a heavier cross to bear than he gives us strength to bear it.

I HAVE HAD three children since that time, and I'm truly happy. I believe sometimes I understand why I had to go through this. It has given me more understanding and tolerance, a warmer inside glow and thankfulness and appreciation for what I now have.

I hope you will have another child, my dear, as soon as you can after your little girl goes to her new home. The joy they'll

give you will be immeasurable when you watch their smiling minds and bodies grow from day to day and you thank God for every little thing you possess.

THE SOONER your little girl goes into Lapeer, the sooner you and your husband can resume a happy normal life, and remember, that is what institutions are for, to make you happy as well as your child. Aren't we lucky we live in a country where this is possible?

I wish you all the luck in the world.
A FRIEND

County Press, October 6, 1949

Mrs Merz' Condition Poor; Faces Loss of Sight of Eye As Result of Knife Attack



MRS. HENRY G. MERZ

"I Lost All Control"

Confession of Elizabeth Fox

This is the official statement which Elizabeth Fox wrote out for the authorities after stabbing Mrs. H. G. Merz Monday:

To Dr. Rehn

I got up about 7:00 and went down stairs and got Dr. Merz his breakfast and June's (June Hamilton, another employee) and mine. Then Dr. Merz went to get the boy, who works here on Monday for him.

While he was gone June started to boss me around and call me names and saying she was better than I was. The night before Mrs. Merz started saying things to me about the house and also about my not doing the work fast enough, so you see I had it in for both of them, but I only got one.

I AM SORRY now that I did such a terrible thing. After I started to do the dishes, June started in again, so when she went out I started to get madder and madder. When she came back she started to boss me



ELIZABETH FOX

some more and that is when I felt myself losing my temper and things started to go blank.

I think I lost all control of my reason and then I got a big knife and went upstairs and to the bathroom. There is a door leading from the bathroom in her closet. I went through it and to her bed.

Mrs. Henry G. Merz is still in serious condition at St. Joseph Hospital in Flint with neck wounds received Monday. She was stabbed in her bed by a woman employee at the Merz home a mile south of Lapeer.

Hospital attendants said today that her condition was critical. She will lose the sight of the right eye as the result of a knife cut.

The slight chance there may be of saving the eye is practically cancelled because it is not possible to operate due to the punctured lung.

Her attacker, Elizabeth Fox, 34-year-old State Home patient, is being held at the Home. Issuance of a warrant has been held up pending further reports of Mrs. Merz' condition.

PROSECUTOR Ken Smith said Miss Fox would probably be charged with assault with intent to kill. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment. A psychiatric examination will be given her. It is possible that she may be kept at the Home, or if found insane, committed to an institution for criminally insane.

The slight, 120-pound woman had apparently been angered by the "boosing" of June Hamilton, another employee at the Merz home and a former Home patient.

A LITTLE AFTER eight o'clock in the morning, Miss Fox took a kitchen knife from the drawer and went upstairs where Mrs. Merz was sleeping.

Just as she reached the bedside, Mrs. Merz dog sensed something was wrong and growled. The growl awoke Mrs. Merz in time to see the knife plunging at her but too late to move.

The eight-inch blade pierced the lower part of her neck, drove downward into her chest. An edge caught Mrs. Merz' face and eye. Her lung was punctured.

THE FOX GIRL RAN from the room to find June Hamilton, whom she also intended to attack.

Still conscious, Mrs. Merz reached the telephone beside her bed and called a neighbor, Mrs. Keith McGregor. Mrs. McGregor said she couldn't understand what Mrs. Merz was saying but she knew something was wrong.

Running outside, she called to Dr. Merz, who was working in the yard. Both rushed into the house and found Mrs. Merz.

DR. J. R. McBRIDE, Home official, Sheriff Mathews and an ambulance were called immediately. Mrs. Merz suffered severely from loss of blood and was saved only by the quick

THE DOGS made a noise and that awoke her and she saw me with the knife and screamed and then I stabbed her two times and then I ran as fast as I could. I was very scared for I knew I had done something very bad.

I grabbed the gun out of the drawer and started down the stairs and then when the rain hit me in the face it all came back to me and I realized that I had acted like a common criminal and that I could expect to be treated like one, that is why I pointed the gun when they came after me.

I WAS VERY scared, but then I seen Mrs. Abbey, I gave up for she has always been my friend and I knew if I must face the facts and be willing to cooperate and take punishment for my terrible crime.

I hope someday that I will be given a chance to prove that I will never again do such a thing again and I want you to know that I will be good and never cause trouble again, for I learned my lesson that crime does not pay. But I know I must take my punishment, like a lady.

ELIZABETH FOX

work of Dr. Merz, Dr. McBride, and by rushing her quickly to a hospital.

The attacker did not find her other intended victim, June Hamilton, because Miss Hamilton was in the basement feeding a cat.

Elizabeth grabbed Dr. Merz' .32 caliber revolver from a drawer and ran down the road. Lapeer State Home employees, Jack Davison, Carlos Hancock and Mrs. Blancher Abbey found her 20 minutes later a mile and a half south of the Merz home.

SHE POINTED the gun at the Home employees momentarily. See STABBING Page 2

Confession Continued

—LAPEER COUNTY PRESS—
2 Sec. A—Thurs., Oct. 6, 1949

Stabbing

(Continued from Page 1)

but then surrendered. Besides the gun, when found she carried a knife which had been purchased a week earlier at a local dime store.

Her statement, published in this issue, is believed by Prosecutor Ken Smith and Sheriff Leslie Mathews to be reasonably accurate.

Dr. A. T. Rehn, State Home superintendent, was unable to explain the crime. "I'm a psychiatrist and I can't figure it out," he said.

ELIZABETH CAME to the institution when 10 years old. She is termed "dull-normal" with an intelligence quotient of 92.

She would have been released many years ago, said Dr. Rehn, except that she had no family and had been ill for several years with tuberculosis. Because of her illness, she had never worked outside the institution until she began working at the Merz home Sept. 5.

Institution records showed her to be well-behaved, mild-mannered and shy.

A less intelligent patient would probably not have committed the crime, the superintendent said. "Duller people are less easily aggravated and seldom reach the peak of anger of more intelligent people," he said.

"IT WAS A shocking crime," he commented. "We, of course, feel our responsibility but we cannot find any evidence that would have lead anyone to believe she was capable of this."

Of the 14,168 patients that have been committed to the State Home, this is only the third patient who has deliberately attempted to kill. Murder was committed 20 years ago by a patient who escaped from the Home and another murder was committed in 1945 by a paroled patient.

—LAPEER COUNTY PRESS— 4 Sec. A—Thurs., Oct. 6, 1949

Vern Brown Praises Work Of Dr. R. L. Dixon of Caro

A man who has seen State officials come and go for many, many years is Vernon J. Brown, former lieutenant-governor, former auditor-general of Michigan. His words of praise for Dr. R. L. Dixon of Caro, which appeared in the Ingham County News, carry a lot of weight. Here is what Mr. Brown said:

After 44 years in public service to the people of Michigan and at the age of 72, Dr. Robert L. Dixon, nationally known and publicly recognized authority on epilepsy, is to retire on October 1. That is to say, he is retiring from state service.

In reality he is not going to retire at all but is going to open an office for private practice in Caro near where is located the state hospital for epileptics over which he has presided as director since its establishment in 1914. The only interruption came in 1920 when he consented to take charge of the Lapeer Home and Training school for a time.

It is men like Doctor Dixon in whom the people of the state owe much. A year after his graduation he was named by Chase B. Osborn, then governor, as head of the Michigan department of health.

Later he went to Caro and thus during his whole active medical career he has devoted his services to the field of public health and to the mentally ill. In addition to his duties as superintendent of a large state institution he also took time to act as director of the mental health board of the state for a period.

One of his accomplishments in which he has taken great pride has been his training of others. All of the four who have served as assistant superintendents under his tutelage subsequently became superintendents of state hospitals.

Such public service is little heralded yet most money never fully pays for it. It is of such character that the public hears little of it and recognizes its true worth but slightly.

It has been my good fortune to have known Dr. Dixon, rather well since my early days in the legislature. It is a cherished privilege for me to make public recognition of an eminent physician and to pay my respects to one of the most able hospital administrators in the country, one who never lost sight of the needs of the patients entrusted to his care, yet one who likewise never lost sight of the fact that public money comes from the pockets of the people and is always to be used with discretion and frugality.

Dr. Dixon's public record in all its phases sets a pattern which ought to be copied.

October 1949
Date Not Known

Dr. Dixon Honored at Caro Dinner

Employees of the Caro State Hospital, along with several from the Lapeer State Home staff and other friends honored Dr. Robert L. Dixon at a dinner Thursday night at Caro. The occasion was Dr. Dixon's retirement as supt of the Caro institution.

Dr. and Mrs. Dixon were presented with eight settings of sterling silver flatware by the Caro employees. On behalf of the Lapeer State Home, employee Larry Knutson presented Dr. Dixon with a portable radio. Dr. Dixon was supt here for seven years.

Kenneth Kerr, steward at Caro, was toastmaster, and responding were Karl Kinsey, Caro, and Earl Smith, Lapeer, former stewards, Dr. A. T. Rehn, superintendent of the Lapeer Home and Dr. H. B. Zemmer and E. T. White of Lapeer, former members of the State Hospital Commission.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press, October 13, 1949

County Press, November 17, 1949

Mrs. Merz To Lose Eye Her Condition Still Critical

The condition of Mrs Henry G. Merz, who was stabbed by a household employe Oct. 3, is some better, but still critical. She will lose her right eye.

Mrs Merz was taken to Harper Hospital, Detroit, Thursday, from Hurley hospital, in Flint. Tuesday she underwent a brain operation, and a blood clot was removed.

Examination by brain specialists revealed a pressure on the brain caused by the knife wound in the eye. Removal of the eye will be necessary, but an operation is not practical at this time.

County Press, October 20, 1949

Mrs H. G. Merz Gaining in Life Fight

Mrs H G Merz, who was stabbed on October 3, is gaining at Harper Hospital, Detroit.

Mrs Merz, butcher-knife victim of a Lapeer State Home patient, regained consciousness over the week end and is able to talk briefly.

She is beginning to be able to move her right arm and leg, which has been paralyzed until now. Nothing has been done to the eye which will have to be removed when she is stronger.

Mrs H. G. Merz Has Returned Home

Mrs H. G. Merz, who was stabbed Oct. 3, by Elizabeth Fox, has returned home.

Mrs Merz underwent a delicate brain operation and had her right eye removed at Harper hospital, Detroit. No charge has been placed against the girl, pending the outcome of Mrs Merz's injuries. Lapeer State Home officials have charge of the girl.

Dr H. G. Merz asks that there be no visitors for a few days. Mrs Merz's condition is still serious and she needs rest, the doctor says.

County Press, December 3, 1949

Recovery Slow for Mrs Henry Merz

Mrs H. G. Merz is recovering slowly from the knife attack made upon her a month ago by an employee. She is still suffering from shock and effects of the operation, Dr. Merz said. He asks that visitors telephone before coming, as she is able to see only a limited number for short periods.

Oakdale in the Newspapers

Date Unknown, probably mid to late 1940s



HONORS SERVICEMEN—With 850 names inscribed on both sides, an attractive white board, 15x10 feet, servicemen from Lapeer county are being accorded signal honor by the folks back home. The honor roll, constructed under supervision of Larry Knutsen, Almeda Niblack and Edith Schenick, instructors at Lapeer Home and Training school, one in white and black and graced with red and blue "V" insignia, will be one of the highlights in the Victory day float parade in Lapeer Thursday, following which it will have a permanent place on the courthouse lawn. Names will be added as times goes on. The names of Kinnamon John Pittenger, 17, first announced overseas casualty for the county, will be lettered in gold. (Journal Photo.)