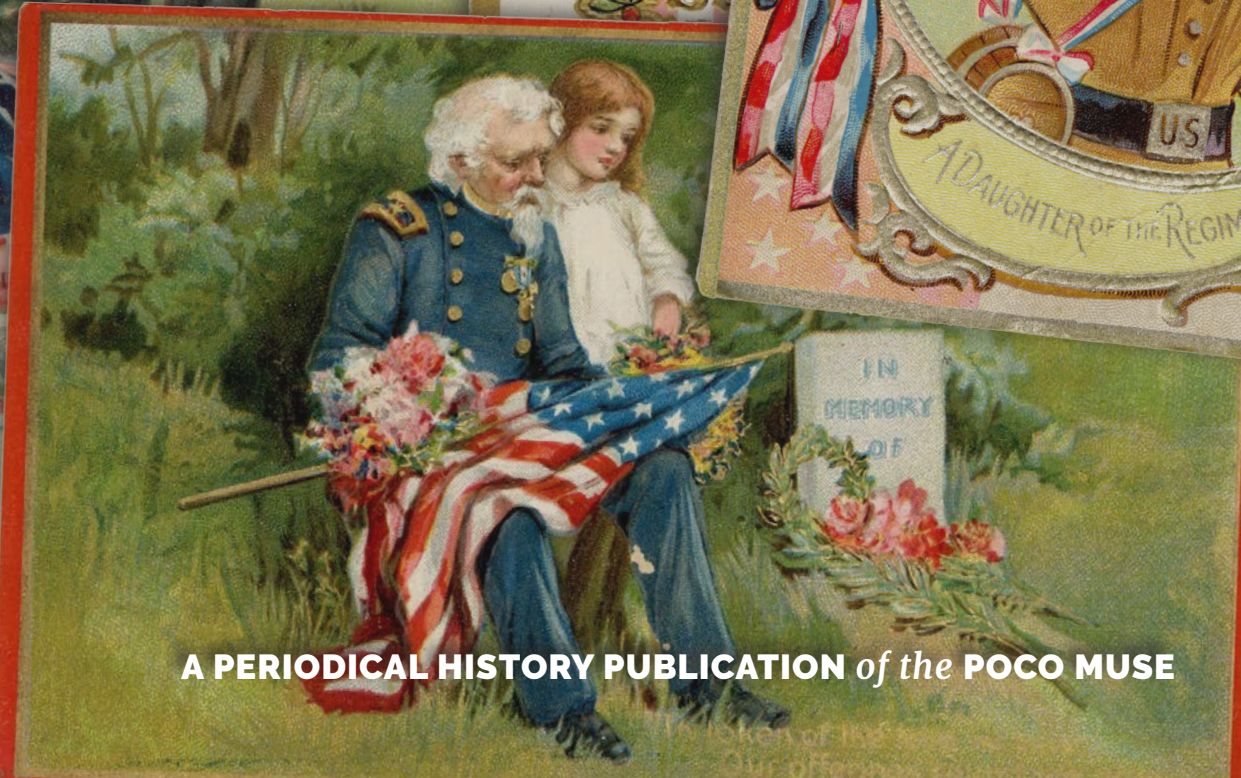
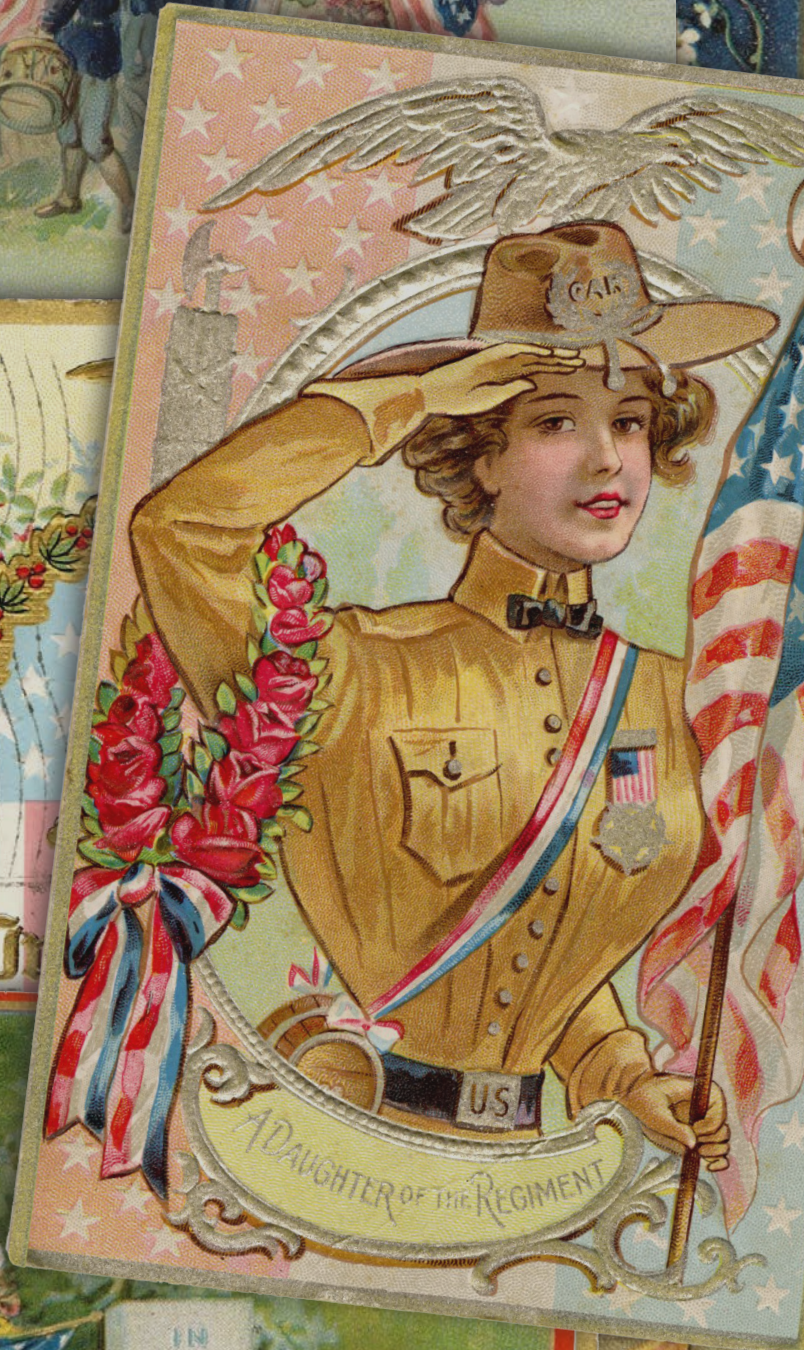


POCO
muse

Magazine

Issue No. 7



A PERIODICAL HISTORY PUBLICATION of the POCO MUSE



“The rescued [plaque and headstone] remain, to this day, securely stored in the museum’s collection facility.”

Like monuments and gravestone markers, this issue preserves the memories of three Porter County heroes and pioneers: Charles Osborn, a Quaker minister and *fierce advocate for the abolition of slavery* (page 4); Dr. Almira Fifield, *an early graduate of the nation’s first women’s medical school* (page 16); and Daniel Bruce, Porter County’s *only known resident to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor* (page 20).

Issue No.7

4 The Learned Gentleman of Clear Lake

By Ronald Trigg

A brief biography of Charles Osborn—journalist, minister, abolitionist—who spent the final years of his life in Porter County

11 From the Archives: Mockler Collection

A small sample of images from the collection of Steve Mockler, longtime supporter, local history enthusiast, and gravestone marker restorer

16 Almira Fifield, M.D. Lost Heroine Of Porter County

An Interview with Dr. Barbara Brandt

Brandt discusses her research into the life of Dr. Almira Fifield, of Valparaiso, one of our nation’s earliest female physicians and Civil War surgeon

20 He Gallantly Gave His Life for His Country

By Ronald Trigg

Daniel Bruce is the only known Porter County resident to have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor

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Dear Readers,

By shedding light on the lives of three important Porter County residents, this seventh issue preserves (and in the case of Dr. Almira Fifield, *rescues*) their remarkable stories. This issue also illuminates an important arm of the PoCo Muse to interpret and by extension, maintain our county’s cemeteries. Our annual cemetery tours, in partnership with our spotlighted friend Steve Mockler, are some of our most popular programs, and we look forward to helping Dr. Barbara Brandt establish an appropriate veteran’s headstone and historical marker for Dr. Almira Fifield in the coming year.

Best,



Kevin Matthew Pazour
Executive Director, PoCo Muse



Joanne Urschel
Chair, Board of Trustees, PoCo Muse Corporation



About the Images

Cover The Mockler Collection (highlighted on page 11) includes thirty Grand Army of the Republic postcards featuring patriotic post-Civil War scenes that commemorate Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day).

Above This very small snapshot of Quakerdom Cemetery is one of the foundational artifacts of the PoCo Muse Collection. Along with other early twentieth-century photographs mounted on brittle black paper, it was part of the 1916 Porter County exhibit for the Indiana Centennial Celebration, which was displayed in the Valparaiso library. Each township offered a selection of representative artifacts. As the site of a large Quaker settlement, Jackson Township contributed snapshots of the Quakerdom community. The centennial exhibit eventually evolved into the PoCo Muse Collection.

The Quakerdom Cemetery, also known as the Barnard Cemetery, is located on U.S. Highway 6 near the LaPorte and Porter County border. This small

Cover Grand Army of the Republic Postcards Between 1909 and 1916

Above Quakerdom Cemetery in Jackson Township Before 1916 2019.20.90

county cemetery is easy to pass, but buried within are the remains of notable Porter County residents, none more so than Charles Osborn, Quaker minister, journalist, and pioneering abolitionist. The cemetery plays an interesting role in the story found on the following pages.

Today, the Quakerdom Cemetery looks much different than this century-old image. The neighboring Quaker schoolhouse no longer stands, and sadly, many of the tablet and columnar headstones have fallen into disrepair or been destroyed by vandals.

Gravestone markers, as well as commemorative historical markers, can be found in every corner of this issue which honors the lives of courageous Porter County residents. Vandalized markers are rescued and restored, missing headstones are reissued, names are etched into marble memorials. They even appear in the background of patriotic postcards. As you encounter the literal stone markers in these pages, consider the richness of their metaphorical possibilities. ●

The Learned Gentleman of Clear Lake

By Ronald Trigg

Charles Osborn was an outspoken advocate for the abolition of slavery. A frontier minister of humble origins, he pushed boundaries within his Quaker faith and traveled to all parts of our young republic crusading against the immoral institution that was ripping us apart.

A country graveyard in Jackson Township, just west of the LaPorte County line, bears remembrance to the Clear Lake Quaker Meeting, a small religious community formed in the 1840s near the shores of an ancient glacial lake on the Valparaiso Moraine. Lying within the grounds of Quakerdom Cemetery are the remains of Charles Osborn, one of the nation's most prominent spokesmen for the anti-slavery movement. Osborn moved to Porter County late in a busy life spent as a spiritual leader and social reformer. His tenure here was short, but he is undeniably one of the most influential people ever to call this place home.

Early Quaker Beginnings

On August 21, 1775, at a time when revolutionary sentiments were spreading through the American colonies and war loomed on the horizon, Osborn was born into a settlement of pacifists in the remote Piedmont region of North Carolina. His parents, David Osborn, originally from Delaware, and Margaret Stout of Pennsylvania, migrated to this colonial backwater and affiliated themselves with the local meeting of the Society of Friends, more commonly called Quakers. (A "meeting" is the equivalent of a congregation or parish.)

Young Charles was heavily influenced by the Quaker faith; it provided both the moral teachings and the general education that shaped his life. He



Quakerdom Cemetery, Jackson Township Charles Osborn was buried at Quakerdom Cemetery in Jackson Township, Porter County, Indiana, in 1850. Image provided by the author, 2023.

[Osborn] is undeniably one of the most influential people ever to call this place home.

gained membership in the Society of Friends by birthright, and he faithfully followed its tenets. Concepts like community, peace, simplicity, and equality were ingrained in him from childhood.

Charles moved with his parents from North Carolina to eastern Tennessee when he was about nineteen. Soon thereafter, the young Osborn found himself disowned by the local Hickory Creek Meeting for abandoning "the plainness and



Headstone Charles Osborn's tombstone was removed for safety from the cemetery and is preserved at the PoCo Muse. Image provided by Albert Photographic, 2024.

simplicity in manner and address” expected of a member. His violation, perhaps nothing more than youthful defiance against authority, was further exacerbated by a relationship with a woman outside the faith. In any event, Osborn’s banishment was short-lived. He returned to the fold, and his new non-Quaker wife soon accepted the teachings of the faith.

Charles Osborn demonstrated early on that he had a mind of his own. The incident at Hickory Creek would not be the last time he ruffled a few feathers in the religious hierarchy.

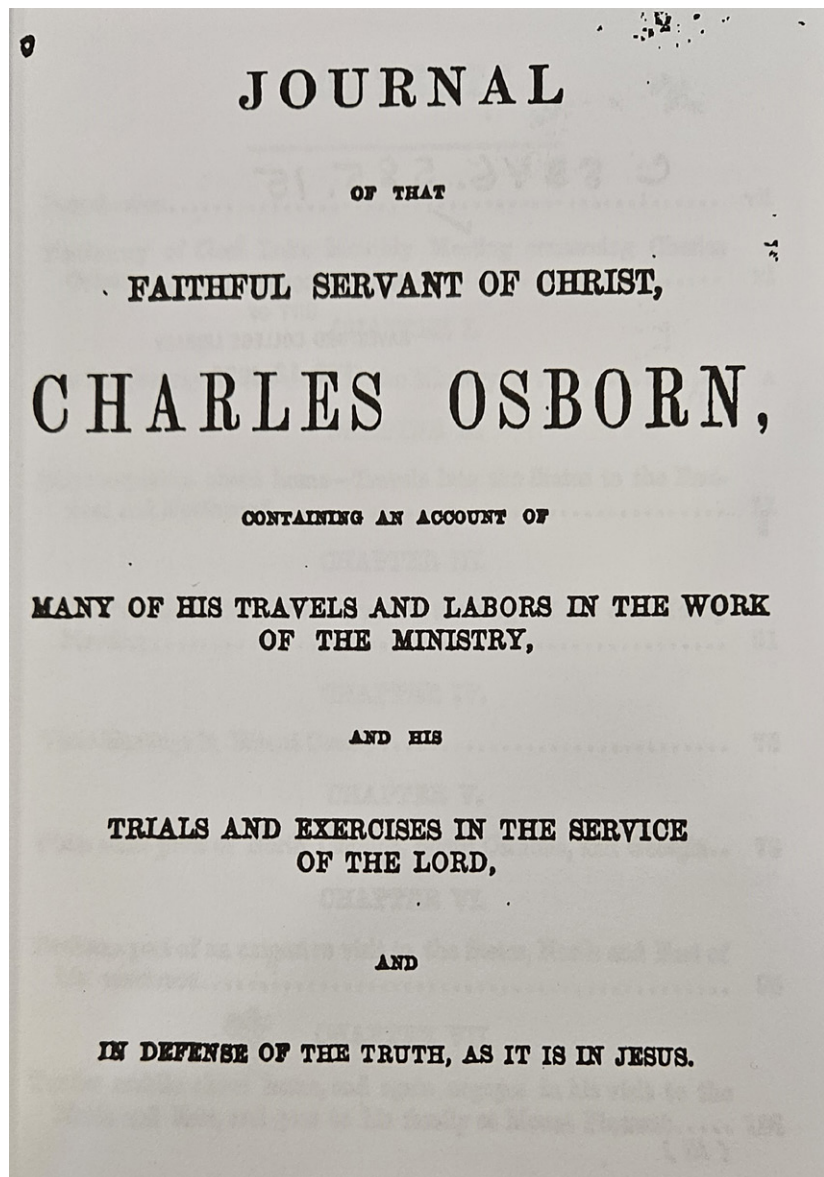
The Traveling Minister

Osborn first showed interest in the ministry about 1807 while living in Knox County, Tennessee. He was formally accepted as a minister of the Society of Friends a year later and set out on his first religious visit within months. The self-described “poor woodsman from Tennessee” spent much of three decades engaged in such “travel in the service of the Lord.”

The life of a traveling minister was very demanding. Journeys were made by horseback over rudimentary roads in wilderness areas, with exposure to whatever weather conditions might prevail. Osborn was accompanied, at least at the beginning of each trip, by a second minister, who provided an element of safety and support against



Charles Osborn Charles Osborn portrait from family records. Image courtesy of descendant Kerry L. Stevens.



Osborn's Journal Title page of Charles Osborn's journal, published posthumously by the Clear Lake Meeting in 1854.

The incident at Hickory Creek would not be the last time he ruffled a few feathers in the religious hierarchy.

the inherent dangers of backwoods travel. For shelter and sustenance, he relied on the hospitality of the communities he visited.

American Quakers in the southern states were frequently on the move, mostly to the north and west, into the wilds of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. The motivation for some was a repugnance for slavery, but improved economic opportunity was likely a greater factor. Others may simply have been attracted to the thrill of the frontier. Wherever a Quaker family migrated, it invariably planted the seed for a new meeting. Thus, the religion spread through these newly opened areas, and there were

dozens of small Quaker settlements that delighted in a visit from a horseback cleric.

Osborn targeted these outposts in an effort to advance the footprint of Quakerism and reinforce its teachings. He preached in countless meeting houses, promoted his own interpretation of Quaker principles, and learned from others. Over his years of travel, Osborn visited communities in nearly all the states, including the heartland of the American Quaker world in Pennsylvania and New England. In 1832-3, he went even further afield, undertaking a journey of eighteen months across the Atlantic. He was chosen to represent the faithful of the New World among the brethren in the British Isles, France, Switzerland, and the German states. Osborn's final ministerial journey, a trip much closer to home, occurred in 1839-1840. Over the course of his travels, he developed a large network of contacts, and his fame grew.

The nature of his work kept Osborn away from his large family for long periods; he left the care of his children to his wife, supported by neighbors and relatives in the close-knit Quaker community. His first wife, Sarah Newman, bore him seven children, and after her death, he took a second wife, Hannah Swain, who produced nine more. The family moved frequently, with stops in Knox County (Tennessee), Jefferson, Clinton, and Warren Counties (Ohio), Grant County (Indiana), Cass County (Michigan), and finally Porter County. Nearly all the Osborn children seem to have survived to adulthood. Apparently inheriting their father's wanderlust, they scattered widely through the states of what we now call the Midwest.

The Evolution of an Abolitionist

Charles Osborn's strong views against slavery were rooted in his Quaker upbringing. The Society of Friends was the first significant religious institution in both Britain and America to condemn the practice publicly, preceding other denominations by nearly a century. Osborn accepted the Quaker belief that every person, regardless of status, contains a spark of the divine and deserves to be treated as an equal to all others. In Osborn's mind, that conviction made slavery immoral. Additionally, as a southerner by birth, he was witness to the cruelty of human bondage from an early age.

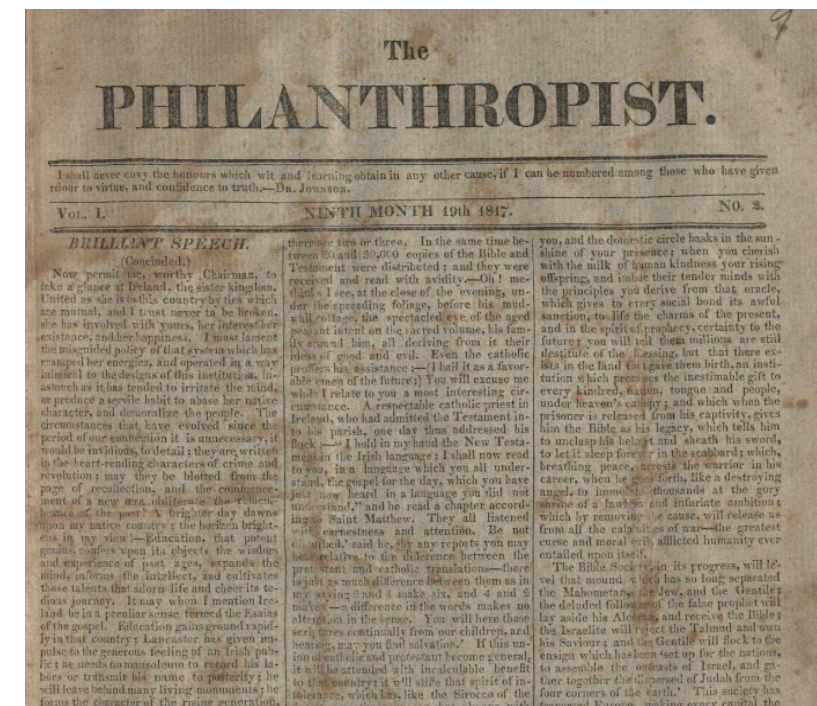
Osborn's views on the issue were uncompromising. Many Friends tolerated slavery—indeed, some in the south even owned slaves themselves—citing economic necessity or local

He advocated for the complete and immediate emancipation of enslaved people; he could not countenance any halfway measures or gradual transition.

custom, but Osborn believed that freedom was the natural right of all men. He advocated for the complete and immediate emancipation of enslaved people; he could not countenance any halfway measures or gradual transition.

An early example of Osborn's leadership in the abolitionist cause was his founding of the Tennessee Society for Promoting Manumission of Slaves in 1814. (Manumission is the voluntary freeing of slaves by their owners, without government intervention.) The idea spread throughout eastern Tennessee, with new branches opening in multiple counties. Two years later, Osborn also took a lead role in establishing a manumission society in North Carolina.

In 1817, Osborn, then living in Mount Pleasant, Ohio, took a new turn by founding and publishing *The Philanthropist*, which was the first newspaper in the United States to espouse an abolitionist point of view. Osborn used its editorial pages to condemn slavery and argue against the ideas of the American Colonization Society (ACS), which proposed transporting free blacks to Africa. Osborn viewed that plan as a means of denying such people the full equality they deserved in the land where they lived. In the end, the aims of the ACS were never fully achieved, although it settled



The Philanthropist This newspaper, founded by Charles Osborn in 1817, was the first in the United States to condemn slavery in its editorial content. Image courtesy of the Indiana State Library.

several thousand in an outpost on the West African coast that became the independent state of Liberia. Another proposal championed by Osborn was a boycott of all goods resulting from slave labor. That idea was strongly opposed by many Quakers who had become wealthy from such products, particularly in the cotton and tobacco industries.

After barely more than a year at the helm of *The Philanthropist*, Osborn sold the business and moved his family to Indiana. The newspaper continued publication for a few more years under new ownership, and the name reappeared in 1836 on the masthead of another paper established in Cincinnati.

The Indiana Schism

Charles Osborn was a controversial force in the American Quaker world, criticized by many of his fellows for acting in a political manner to achieve his religious goals. Among traditionalist members of the faith, he would have been considered an extremist. His hardline stance against slavery led to his being expelled from at least one local meeting, a propensity which may help explain the family's frequent moves.

A split within Indiana Quakerism seemed inevitable when the 1841 Yearly Meeting urged its members to end abolitionist rhetoric and focus on religious matters. The next year's conclave went further, issuing an "Epistle of Advice" declaring that members who oppose or disregard its advice are "manifestly unsuitable for important services to it." Osborn said he could no longer align himself with those Quakers who enabled slavery by failing to take a position against it.

On October 4, 1842, just one day after issuing its epistle, the Indiana Yearly Meeting expelled Charles Osborn and a few others from membership, a move that disqualified them from any formal role in the body. In effect, he was penalized for choosing his moral convictions over church dictum. While he must have been aware of the vehemence of the opposition to his views, Osborn afterwards wrote in his journal that the expulsion caught him by surprise.

The Yearly Meeting's drastic punishment was a hard blow but only a temporary setback for Osborn. The act triggered a broad schism within Indiana Quakerism. Many local meetings which supported Osborn's beliefs withdrew from the Indiana Society of Friends. A rival organization, the Indiana Society of Anti-Slavery Friends was established; Charles Osborn was among its leaders.



Clear Lake Charles Osborn spent his last years living with a small Quaker community on the shores of Clear Lake. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources now maintains a fishing access site there. Image provided by the author, 2023.

It is said that the post office at nearby Westville was overwhelmed by the volume of mail addressed to Osborn.

The Clear Lake Years

Charles Osborn joined the Clear Lake community in Porter County in 1848, when he was about seventy-three and just two years away from death. The meeting here was well established, and its number included people he had met during his ministerial journeys and possibly a few family members. After a life of travel and intellectual discourse, much of it conducted under difficult frontier conditions, Osborn was no longer as robust as he once had been, but he was apparently still sharp of mind. His days on the road were now over, but his struggle against slavery continued.

Osborn's reputation as a learned man and doctrinal teacher extended to the far reaches of the Quaker world, and the old traveling minister spent his days at Clear Lake working on his papers and answering correspondence from those seeking his counsel. It is said that the post office at nearby Westville was overwhelmed by the volume of mail addressed to Osborn. This anecdote may well be apocryphal, but it bears the ring of truth.

Many have suggested that Osborn, during his time in Porter County, was actively engaged in assisting runaway slaves seeking freedom in Canada, i.e., that he was a stationmaster on the so-called underground railroad. It is understandable how such a conclusion might be reached. Osborn had a close relationship with Levi Coffin, who is

credited with facilitating the passage of some two thousand such refugees in Indiana, and, indeed, his own son Josiah apparently sheltered escapees passing through Cass County, Michigan.

The Clear Lake Quaker Meeting was demonstrably in the anti-slavery camp, and its members were sympathetic to those fleeing oppression. Freedom seekers passing through this area would likely have gravitated to the Quakers of Jackson Township for refuge and assistance. It is perhaps unrealistic to suppose that Osborn and the Clear Lake Friends, if the opportunity arose, would have declined a call for help. But definitive evidence confirming their link to this very secretive enterprise has yet to reveal itself.

Charles Osborn died at the age of 75 on December 29, 1850, in Porter County, Indiana. At the time of his death, he was still considered "unqualified" for membership by the Indiana leadership of the faith he had served all his life.

Assessing Osborn's Importance

In the late nineteenth century, scholars began studying the history of the abolitionist movement. Many heroes were identified in this process, but Osborn's role was generally underappreciated. Perhaps the greatest champion supporting an enhanced reputation for Osborn was George Washington Julian, who submitted a paper,

If Osborn's impact seems smaller, it is probably because his focus was primarily on his own Quaker society, whereas the others had a broader national reach.

"The Rank of Charles Osborn as an Anti-Slavery Pioneer," to the Indiana Historical Society in 1891. Julian and Osborn had similar backgrounds: North Carolina Quaker roots and a long residence in Grant County, Indiana. A noted politician in the state, Julian had served a term in the U.S. House of Representatives, and he was the vice presidential candidate on the national ticket of the anti-slavery Free Soil Party in 1852.

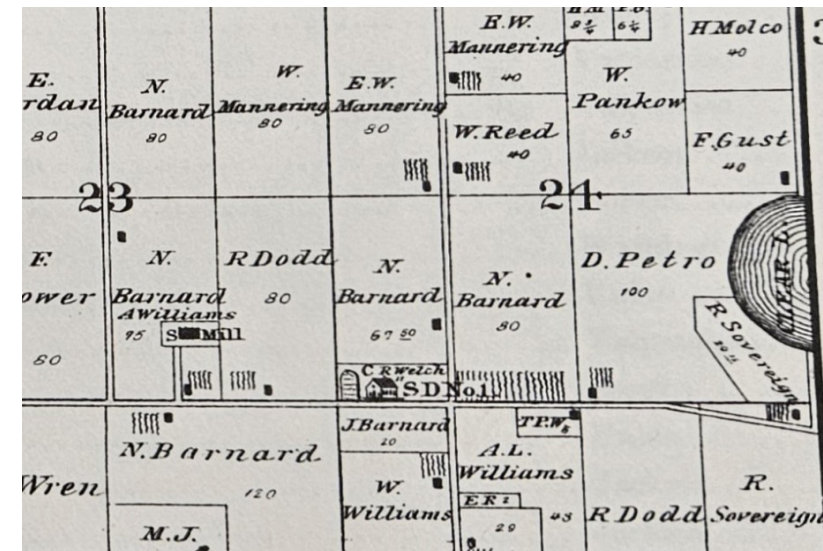
In his paper, Julian maintained that then-current historical accounts of the abolitionist movement wrongly gave credit for Osborn's achievements to other better-known activists. Specifically, he rejected the claim that William Lloyd Garrison, who is often considered the most important abolitionist leader, was the first in America to proclaim the doctrine of immediate and total emancipation. According to Julian, Osborn had publicly espoused that idea at a time when Garrison was only nine years old. Julian also denied suggestions that Benjamin Lundy founded the first anti-slavery newspaper. While Lundy's paper, "Genius of Universal Emancipation," may have been the first to devote itself entirely to the abolitionist cause, it was founded in 1821, four years after Osborn launched *The Philanthropist*. Furthermore, Julian pointed out, Osborn mentored Lundy in the publishing business while the latter was working on his editorial staff.

Julian's essay is also the source of a quotation credited to Garrison that is much-repeated among Osborn's admirers. According to this account, Garrison said that "Charles Osborn is the father of all us abolitionists," but it was apparently not a public statement. It occurred in a conversation with one of Osborn's sons during a casual encounter in Cleveland in 1847.

Julian cites contemporary witnesses as sources for his claims and takes pains to recognize both Garrison and Lundy as giants of the struggle to end slavery. When reviewing all the evidence, it seems that all three men - Garrison, Lundy, and Osborn—are significant figures and equally worthy of praise for their work. If Osborn's impact seems smaller, it is probably because his focus was primarily on his own Quaker society, whereas the others had a broader national reach.

Local Tribute

A century after his death, our local history community sought to honor Osborn by installing a memorial at his gravesite in Quakerdom Cemetery. A bronze plaque



1876 Map of Clear Lake This map from A.G. Hardesty's 1876 Illustrated Atlas of Porter County, Indiana, shows the area formerly occupied by the Clear Lake Meeting community. The lake is on the far right. The cemetery is just west of the now-demolished Quaker Schoolhouse (School District No. 1). The east-west road bordering cemetery and school is now U.S. Highway 6.

proclaiming Osborn to be “The First Pioneer of American Abolition” was affixed to a large moraine boulder and dedicated on September 28, 1958. Sponsoring organizations were the William Henry Harrison Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Historical Society of Porter County (predecessor of today’s PoCo Muse), the Duneland Historical Society, and the LaPorte County Historical Society. One of the speakers at that ceremony memorably remarked: “It is an honor to Porter County that this man’s mortal remains sleep beneath her soil.”

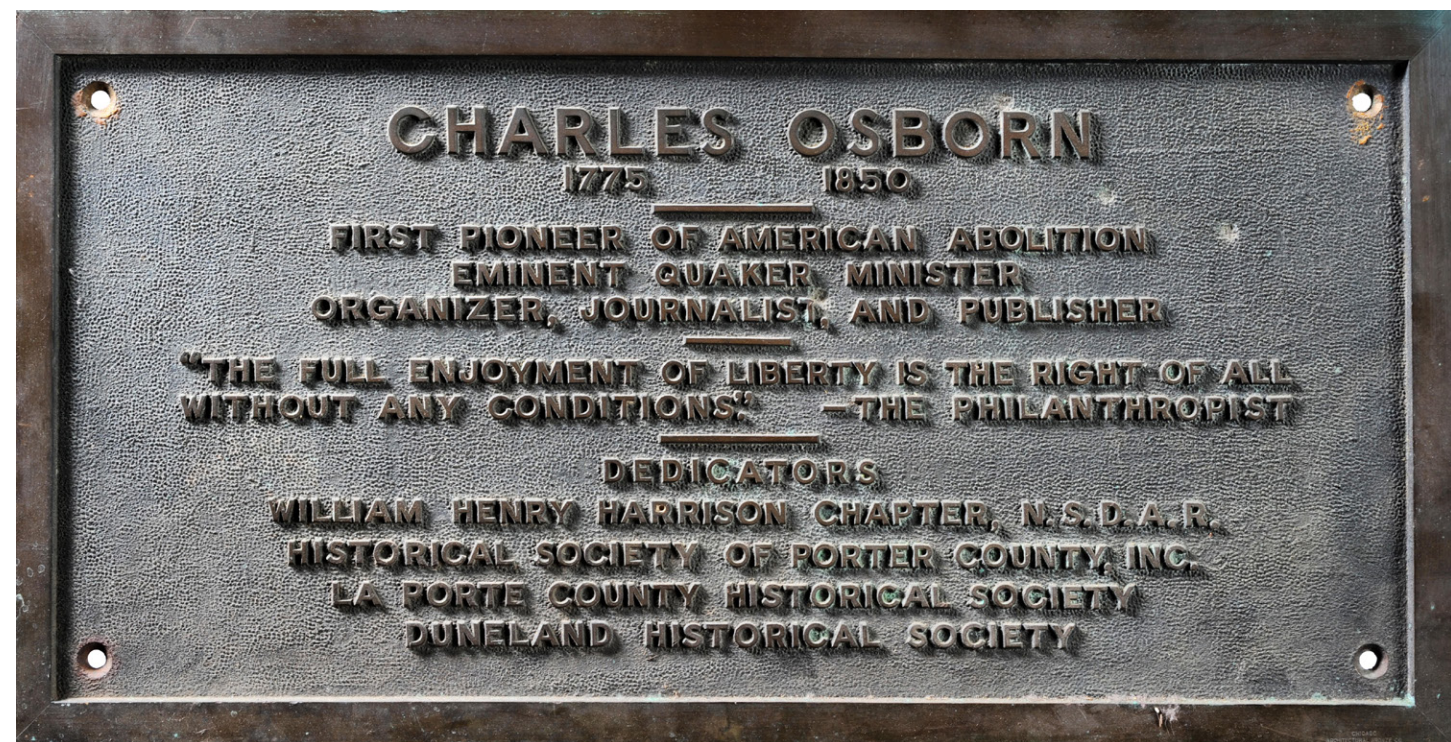
Soon after the dedication ceremony, vandals pried the plaque from its boulder and tossed it across the cemetery. In order to prevent further damage and possible theft, a local history enthusiast removed the plaque and Osborn’s headstone from the cemetery and delivered them to the Porter County Museum for safe keeping. As of this writing, the boulder (still exhibiting evidence of the plaque’s forcible removal) remains in place near the site of Charles Osborn’s grave at Quakerdom. Leaning against the ancient rock is the toppled tombstone of Charles’s son Benjamin, who died one year before his father. The rescued artifacts remain, to this day, securely stored in the museum’s collection facility. ●



Dedication Ceremony Local historical society members at the dedication ceremony for the Charles Osborn memorial plaque in September 1958. (Vidette-Messenger, September 30, 1958)

“It is an honor to Porter County that this man’s mortal remains sleep beneath her soil.”

Ronald Trigg is Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the PoCo Muse. The author gratefully acknowledges the research and inspiration provided by Steven Shook through his website, “Porter County’s Past: An Amateur Historian’s Perspective.”



Charles Osborn Memorial Plaque This memorial plaque was installed at Quakerdom Cemetery to honor the work of Charles Osborn. After a vandalism incident, it was moved to the PoCo Muse for safety. Image provided by Albert Photographic, 2024.

From the Archives Mockler Collection

If you’ve visited the PoCo Muse in the past few years or perused its publications, you’ve undoubtedly encountered images from the Mockler Collection. Steve Mockler’s generous digital donation of postcards and photographs has anchored many of our recent exhibits, notably *Ever Yours: Postcards from the Golden Age* and *The Great Conflagration: Academy of Music Block Fire*.

Mockler is an enthusiastic PoCo Muse supporter who works tirelessly to research and promote the stories of local people and events. He has a particular interest in the Civil War and is a member of David D. Porter Camp 116 of Sons of Union Veterans. His duties include preserving and restoring gravestone markers from local cemeteries. Over the years, he has helped repair much of the damage caused by vandalism in the middle of the last century.

This small sample of images from the Mockler Collection, many of which have never been displayed before, reflects Mockler’s interests and illustrates some of the themes explored in this issue.

1 Grand Army of the Republic Postcards Between 1909 and 1916

The Mockler Collection, containing many Golden Age (1907-1915) postcards, includes thirty from a subcategory of patriotic post-Civil War scenes. Common to these is the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Medal, seen in the top postcard, as well as on the lapels of other figures. The design of the bronze star features a central tableau representing the G.A.R. motto of “fraternity, charity, and loyalty,” and the surrounding insignias of the branches of service (e.g. crossed sabres of the cavalry). Another common motif is a painterly scene of an older veteran (or widow in some cases) and a young child sharing an intergenerational experience. The depicted tradition of decorating the grave of a fallen soldier became popular shortly after the war, on Decoration Day (now Memorial Day), May 30, 1868. The faint text at bottom right reads, “In token of the love we bear, our offerings round we strew.”





2

Interior of the Memorial Opera House
Circa 1903

The Memorial Opera House was built in 1893 to commemorate the Union soldiers and sailors of the Civil War and was the meeting place for the Chaplain Brown G.A.R. Post 106. This rare image of the interior at the beginning of the twentieth century provides a clear view of a popular backdrop depicting a Civil War battle.

Volpno
Opera House



3 Spring Outlet, Sager's Lake
Between 1902 and 1906

This unique composition of a young family in the dense undergrowth along the shore of Sager's Lake offers plenty to look at. It was created by a young graduate of Valparaiso University, Wilfred Marshall (1877-1977), who operated a photography studio in the College Hill neighborhood of Valparaiso between 1902 and 1906.



4 Fox & Hisgen Photography Studio
Circa 1910s

Another photography studio on "the hill" was The Studio, operated in partnership by Harry Fox and John Hisgen. This joyful image captures the details of a fine day of activity on College Avenue. Two smiling young men bound down the stairs of the studio, while a group of children, one wearing roller skates, plays on the sidewalk in the background. Signs at the street level advertise shoe repairs and polish, school supplies, and candy. A kiosk promotes Kodak developing paper and displays a selection of postcards marketed towards university students.



5 John Walter Hisgen, Hopkinsville, Kentucky
Circa early 1900s

Before John Hisgen moved to Valparaiso, he lived in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, the location of this photograph. Seen on the tree at left is an advertisement for "Cooper's Loose Floor," a local market for the booming Kentucky tobacco industry. It's rare to find an image of a photographer in front of the camera, but the Mockler Collection contains multiple photographs featuring Hisgen, usually in his signature overcoat and alpine fedora, as he is shown here.



6 Group Photograph on Interurban Tracks
Circa 1912

This photograph is thought to be part of series of candid snapshots of an unidentified family taken along the Interurban rail line near Sheridan Beach at Flint Lake. The laughing figures beam with a certain transgressive joy as they stabilize each other on the train tracks. The central figure has precariously balanced a white egg between her feet from a supply she carries in her hat.



7 James McGill and Oliver Perry Kinsey
Circa 1915

The images from a social gathering at the large house on the corner of Park and Madison form an iconic series from the PoCo Muse Collection. Valparaiso community leaders are seen jumping rope and dancing on the lawn. This "real photo" postcard from that day features James McGill ("1") and Oliver Perry Kinsey ("2," erroneously labeled as Henry Baker Brown) standing around an early cinematographic camera. Just imagine the amazing footage captured on film that day!



8 Academy of Music Block Fire
1926

The Academy of Music Block stood prominently for sixty-two years at the southwest corner of Lincolnway and Washington Street in Valparaiso. A catastrophic fire in February 1926 destroyed the building and took the lives of two brave men who toiled against the flames. Robert Bartholomew and Harry McNamara were the last firefighters to die in the line of duty in Valparaiso. The courthouse tower can be seen in the background, barely visible over the billowing smoke and steam.



9 Valparaiso Chief of Police Matthew Brown
Circa 1910s

Matthew Brown witnessed the 1926 fire of the Academy of Music Block as Chief of Police and City Marshal of Valparaiso. This striking portrait appropriately testifies to Brown's long career with the department spanning over forty years.



10 Headstone of Henry Baker Brown
Date unknown

This seemingly unremarkable photograph of a headstone honors a notable Porter County resident. Henry Baker Brown, President of Valparaiso University from 1873 to 1917, helped revive the school at a difficult point in its history and established it as a nationally-recognized institution. Brown's grave lies in Graceland Cemetery. ●

Almira Fifield, M.D.

Lost Heroine Of Porter County

In this interview, Professor Barbara F. Brandt discusses her research into the life of Dr. Almira Fifield of Valparaiso, one of our nation's earliest female physicians and a Civil War surgeon. Brandt is championing efforts to ensure that Almira Fifield receives the recognition she has long been denied.

Tell us a little about your research into Almira Fifield's remarkable life.

Professor Brandt: I discovered Almira Fifield, M.D. (1833-1863) when I started genealogy research on my family two years ago. Because her story is close to my academic scholarship, I recognized that a woman wanting to be a physician in the 1850s was highly unusual. Furthermore, she must have had significant grit and determination to leave Valparaiso to seek a medical education in Boston. Telling the story of Almira Fifield requires piecing together a puzzle using local history, genealogy, knowledge of medical education and early women physicians in the United States, and the Civil War.

In 2022, a handful of people knew a few facts about Almira Fifield. Porter County historians, Civil War enthusiasts, and genealogists knew her as a nurse, buried in a now-unmarked grave in the Union Street (Old City) Cemetery in Valparaiso. Today, the cemetery is locked and off limits to the public, because of vandalism in the 1930s-1950s that destroyed gravestones of early Porter County families, including those of six Fifield family members. Historical accounts uncovered locally often misspell Almira's surname (e.g. Fiefield or Tifield), and they invariably identify her as a "nurse."

Barbara F. Brandt is an internationally-recognized leader in the field of interprofessional practice and education. She serves as the founding director of the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education, based at the University of Minnesota.

It was not until the 1986 Porter County Indiana Sesquicentennial celebration story, "Behind Every Great Man," that an attempt was made to give her the credit she was due. That essay described Almira Fifield, a single woman, as one of the county's five outstanding women in its history . . . and a "lost heroine." The irony is that her remarkable story was also lost to her living Porter County and far-flung Fifield family members.

What was Almira Fifield's connection to Porter County?

Professor Brandt: Today's genealogy platforms report her birth year inaccurately because of errors in various 1860s newspapers and publications. By piecing public records and family histories together, I believe that Almira Fifield was likely born in 1833 in New Hampshire. That spring, for unknown reasons, her parents, Thomas Hale Fifield (1802-1890) and Alice Carter Fifield (1803-1844), moved their three children, Mary, Benjamin, and infant Almira, to Canada.

On October 27, 1841, Thomas Hale purchased eighty acres of Porter County land from the federal government's general land office at Winamac, Indiana. As recounted by his granddaughter Bessie Fifield Ouellette (1873-1958), the family's move to



Thomas Hale Fifield (1802-1890) *The U.S. Senate recommended that Almira Fifield's father be awarded a pension, based on his daughter's Civil War service, less than two months before his death. (The Choates in America by E. O. Jameson, 1896)*

Porter County caused quite a sensation as they traveled in a "frame house with two rooms on wheels" called a "prairie schooner" by great-grandson Earl Fifield, another family historian. In the move, Almira, at age eight, joined her parents, four siblings, her 74-year-old paternal grandmother Susannah Choate Fifield (1769-1859), and her Aunt Susannah Fifield (1803-?) who was listed as "idiotic" in the 1850 Census.

For the next fifteen years, they lived a pioneer life, farming near Wheeler in Union Township, before moving to Valparaiso to live at the corner of Michigan and Erie in 1856. After burying Almira's mother and a second wife, Susan Carter Fifield (1799-1849), in the Union Street Cemetery, Thomas Hale returned to New Hampshire to wed his third wife, Calista Johnson (1817-1896), a never-married, thirty-three-year-old, highly educated schoolteacher, on December 30, 1850.

In October 1853, 20-year-old Almira followed her stepmother's footsteps to become a teacher at the newly-opened

Union School of Valparaiso. She taught first grade, which included oral instruction from the Bible, the English alphabet, reading, spelling words of one or two syllables, oral arithmetic, geography, and writing on slates and blackboards. After the Union School building was destroyed in a March 19, 1857, fire, Almira Fifield, a twenty-four-year-old unmarried woman, changed course, ending her career as a teacher, and starting her medical education in Boston.

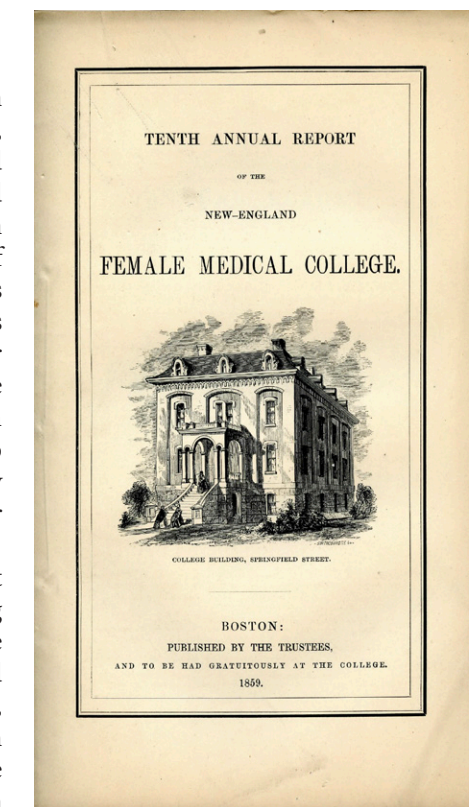
As you described, it was exceedingly rare for a woman of that time to have the determination to study to qualify as a physician. What can you tell us about Almira Fifield's medical education?

Professor Brandt: During an economic depression in November 1857, Almira Fifield entered the New England Female Medical College, the first United States medical school for women. When she graduated in 1859, she became one of 222 formally educated women physicians in the country before the Civil War, as documented by Dr. Edward C. Atwater of the University of Rochester. Of the ninety-eight NEFMC graduates between 1848 and 1874, Dr. Almira Fifield, who received a scholarship, was one of only six who were not from New England or New York.

I am developing theories about Almira Fifield's inspiration for seeking medical education in the late 1850s. One is her Congregationalist New England family, who supported abolition, temperance, and women's rights, which likely influenced her decision. She also may have been motivated by an acquaintance with liberal thinker Dr. James A. Cameron, father of daughters, a graduate of the Indiana Medical College in La Porte, influential editor of the *Valparaiso Republic* newspaper, and

later Major General in the Civil War. These two influences likely led her to the NEFMC founded in 1848 by evangelical Congregationalist, Samuel Gregory, a staunch anti-suffragist with unusual views.

Gregory's primary reasoning for starting the school was based on what he considered indecent and immoral practices: men, or "man-midwives," delivering babies. To raise funds for the school, he stoked public outrage with husbands that their wives should only be cared for by women. In his view, educating women as physicians and midwives would accomplish that goal. In an argument that is archaic today, Gregory, a never-married man, described labor and delivery as a simple, mechanical process. By deploying women to tend to this mundane task, male physicians would be freed up to



New England Female Medical College, Boston, MA *The Tenth Annual Report of the New England Female Medical College (NEFMC) from 1859 lists Almira Fifield of Valparaiso, Indiana, as a graduate of the Class of 1858-1859.*

concentrate on more complex demands.

In 1856, the year before Almira Fifield attended NEFMC, Gregory's fifty-page pamphlet, *Letter to the Ladies in Favor of Female Physicians for Their Own Sex*, was particularly potent in attracting attention to the school. Gregory's pitch to recruit students was to Almira Fifield's demographic and circumstance: younger and unmarried women with the need to support themselves. He observed that the pool of women outnumbered that of men in New England and thus, many females would have slim prospects of finding a husband to support them. While women worked in New England factories, Gregory condemned the corrupting influence of men and women sharing the workplace.

Between 1857 and 1859, student Almira Fifield would have been exposed to new ideas in Boston and surrounded by debates that were falling on gendered fault lines: women's suffrage versus "domestic" feminists, "regular" medical practice versus homeopathy, science versus practical medicine, urban versus rural tensions, as well as various other religious, political, and professional issues. One controversy that followed her back to Valparaiso was whether she should be called a "doctress" and take care of only women, or a "doctor," who could also care for men. Gregory advocated the use of the former title to provide a clear distinction for women to stay in their place.

A March 24, 1859, *Valparaiso Republic* article reported that Miss Almira Fifield intended to establish her practice soon. "We shall expect to see her card in a few days, in the village papers, and herself regularly established in business." However, the announcement of her setting up practice is only a small part of the article; the rest comprises a lengthy description of the controversy of a woman physician caring for the opposite sex. The next issue of the *Valparaiso Republic* published an awkward rebuttal to the newspaper's editor written by "L.H." of Du Quoin, Illinois. Unlike most published references to her, this letter acknowledges her diploma as "M.D.," but

L.H. notes her sex and marital status by calling her "Miss Dr. Fifield" and at the same time praising her.

Whether Dr. Almira Fifield ever practiced medicine in Valparaiso is unknown today and requires more study.

How did her service with the Union Army come about?

Professor Brandt: My research led me to her brother and his ancestors who

generously shared information, as well as to the 9th Indiana Infantry Regiment. After the 9th fought at the Battle of Cheat Mountain in West Virginia in September 1861, Almira publicly began lobbying to use her surgical skills to care for Union soldiers. Her younger brother, Zacheus Barnum Fifield, like many Porter and LaPorte County men, had enlisted in what was later called the "Bloody Ninth." Almira's cause was helped by the intervention of a prominent Indiana politician, Representative Schuyler Colfax, from nearby South Bend. He

wrote a letter advocating for Almira Fifield's service to Dorothea Dix, Superintendent of Nurses for the Union Army. "I add my testimony to that of her other friends, knowing her to be capable, zealous, worthy, robust, & has a withal good knowledge of medicine."

The final decision rested with Dix who created strict guidelines that women must be between thirty-five and fifty and have "matronly" experience, good conduct, or superior education and serious disposition. By these standards, Almira Fifield was too young. The decision took months, but on April 15, 1862, "nurse female" Elmira [sic] Fifield was approved and assigned by the Army to Paducah, Kentucky. In her 1867 book, *Boys in Blue, or Heroes of the Rank and File*, Jane C.B. Hoge mentioned that one of Almira Fifield's justifications for her service included the hospitalization of a relative, likely Zacheus.

According to Indiana University Professor Emerita Jane E. Schultz, twenty-one thousand women left their homes to volunteer as hospital and relief workers in the North and South, providing invaluable service as nurses, laundresses, and cooks. The tensions were high in these Civil War hospital environments, including between the surgeons and untrained nurses. As a result, Dr. Almira Fifield was told to "bury in silence her medical education and her degree." In hiding her expertise, as documented by Atwater, she joined the nineteen educated women physicians who were allowed to officially serve during the Civil War. Only one, Dr. Mary Walker, was permitted to use her medical title. Nevertheless, Almira Fifield's surgical skills were noticed by an official of the Paducah Army Hospital. He wrote a letter to the U.S. Sanitary Commission "praising her ability and faithfulness, wondering at her skill so perceptible, that he had placed her in charge of a ward of surgical cases that were improving rapidly."

After a year of "toil without respite," Almira Fifield developed "congestive chills," likely typhoid or tuberculosis. She took a short convalescence off duty,

then returned to service, eventually going back to Paducah. She died there on March 8, 1863. The March 17, 1863, *Chicago Tribune* called Amelia [sic] Fifield a "Martyr Fallen;" subsequently, Indiana newspapers published the story, correcting her name. On March 19, 1863, the *Valparaiso Republic* reported that Miss Fifield's funeral services had been held at the Methodist Church, conducted by Reverend Smith of the Valparaiso Male and Female College. The "house was filled to overflowing." In the 1860-1870s, Almira Fifield is mentioned with the likes of other renowned female physicians like Elizabeth Blackwell, the first U.S. woman physician, and Mary Walker, in publications in England, France, and Spain.

In 1890, the Dakota Territory Senator Gilbert Pierce, who had Valparaiso roots, introduced legislation to the U.S. Senate to award Almira's father a pension, nearly thirty years after her death. Politician Pierce, who later became editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, ensured word of his sponsorship of the pension was carried in many Northern Plains small-town newspapers. On July 15, 1890, the U.S. Senate recommended a pension on his eighty-eighth birthday. Less than two months later, on September 2, 1890, Thomas Hale Fifield died. Of his family members, the *Chicago Tribune* and other obituaries listed only his daughter, Almira, "army nurse," by name. Thomas Hale is buried in the Union Street (Old City) Cemetery with Dr. Almira Fifield, his three wives, and two other family members.

What steps are being taken to see that Almira Fifield's memory is properly honored?

Professor Brandt: First, I am grateful that the Porter County Museum realized the importance of honoring Almira Fifield properly and partnered with me. This article in the *PoCo Muse Magazine* will kick off those efforts, and I am continuing both genealogical



Union Street Cemetery The remains of Almira Fifield, her parents, and other family members lie in Union Street Cemetery (also known as Old City Cemetery), the oldest graveyard in Porter County. It was closed to the public decades ago, after vandals destroyed many markers.

and scholarly research to write for the academic press. Scholars such as Indiana University Professor Emerita Jane E. Schultz who has generously guided my work and provided feedback on my thinking will continue to be consulted. They are cheering for Dr. Fifield. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized that Almira Fifield's service in the Civil War entitles her to a veteran's headstone; it has been issued and will be erected at Old City Cemetery later this year. The Indiana Historical Bureau has also approved a historical marker for Almira to be installed in Valparaiso. I am grateful to the PoCo Muse for their offer to assist in these matters, and I look forward to working with them.

May the story of heroine Dr. Almira Fifield, M.D., and her service as a surgeon not be silenced or lost any longer. ●

Elmira Fifield
 _____, Co. _____, Reg't _____
 Appears on _____
Hospital Muster Roll
 of _____
 Grace Church U. S. A. Hospital,
 at _____
 Paducah, Ky.,
 for *May + June*, 186*2*
 Attached to hospital:
 When *Apr 15*, 186*2*
 How employed *Nurse female*
 Last paid by Maj. *Never*
 to _____, 186 ____
 Bounty paid \$ _____; due \$ _____
 Present or absent *Not stated*
 Remarks:

 Book mark: _____

 (343) _____ Copyist.

Miss Almira Fifield
 _____, Co. _____, Reg't _____
 Appears on _____
Hospital Muster Roll
 of _____
 No. 1 U. S. A. General Hospital,
 at _____
 Paducah, Ky.,
 for *Mch + Apr*, 186*3*
 Attached to hospital:
 When *Jan 23*, 186*3*
 How employed *Nurse*
 Last paid by Maj. _____
 to _____, 186 ____
 Bounty paid \$ _____; due _____
 Present or absent _____
 Remarks: *Died Mar. 8. 1863.*

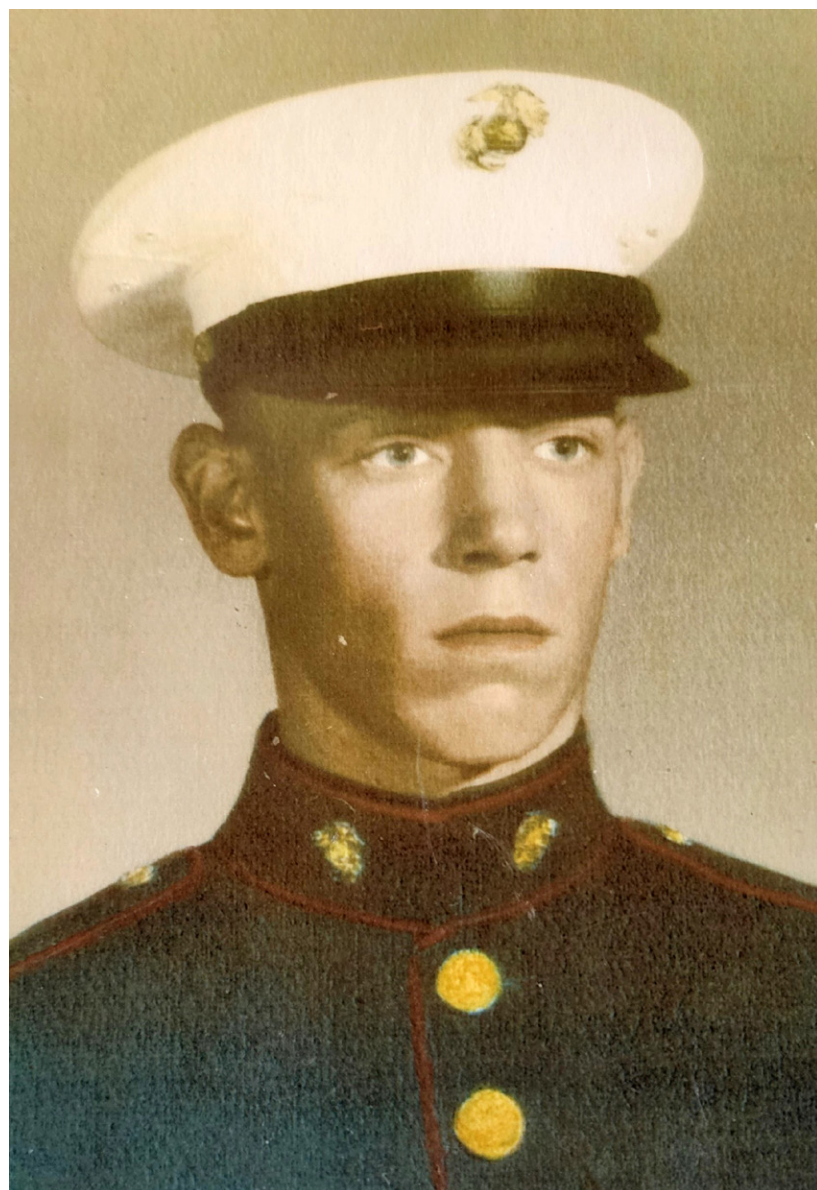
 Book mark: _____

 (343) _____ Copyist.

Civil War Muster Rolls Two Civil War muster rolls from Paducah Hospital: The first, from 1862, lists Dr. Almira Fifield as "nurse female" and incorrectly spells her first name as "Elmira." The second reports Dr. Almira Fifield's death on March 8, 1863.

He Gallantly Gave His Life for His Country

By Ronald Trigg

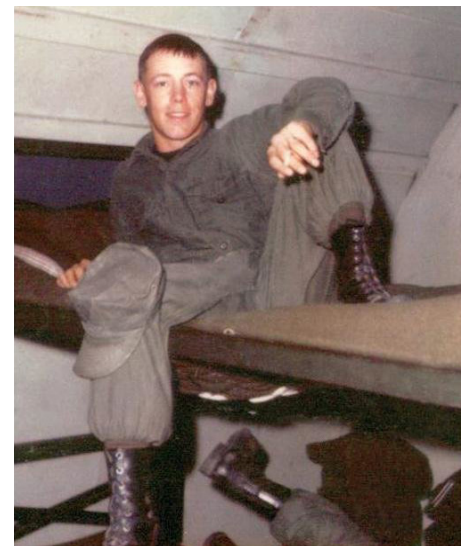


Private Daniel Dean Bruce Private Daniel Dean Bruce (1950-1969) in dress uniform, 1968. Image courtesy of Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery.

Danny Bruce had an ordinary middle-class boyhood in a small Porter County town, but his promising future was cut short in a distant land. At the age of eighteen, he was killed in Vietnam, selflessly giving his life to save his marine buddies in an act so courageous he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the U.S. Armed Forces' highest military decoration.

Daniel Dean Bruce was born on May 18, 1950, in a hospital in Michigan City, LaPorte County, Indiana. The family home was just across the Porter County line in Beverly Shores. Danny's parents were Dean Leroy Bruce and Patsy Pauline Spohn. Dean worked in the building trades and painted municipal water towers. Patsy provided discipline, love, and stability at home for the couple's five children, of whom Danny was the eldest.

Educated in the public school system of neighboring Michigan City, Danny graduated with the Elston Senior High School Class of 1968. It was there that he met Carol Ann Lee, the senior prom date who became his wife.



Vietnam, 1969 PFC Daniel Bruce at his barracks in Vietnam, 1969. Image courtesy of Karen Bruce Gallaher.

Beverly Shores was a great place for a kid to grow up. White-sand beaches stretched for miles along Lake Michigan. High dunes were perfect for winter sledding. Lush woods and wetlands begged for exploration. Danny loved the outdoors. He built a treehouse near home and installed a rope swing that allowed him to fly Tarzan-like through the air. "My brother could climb a tree like a monkey," recalled his sister Karen, the middle child and only girl among the Bruce siblings. Danny once captured a rattlesnake in the local marshes and gave the rare reptile to the Washington Park Zoo.

Danny was an excellent athlete, skilled at gymnastics, wrestling, boxing, and swimming. He enjoyed pickup basketball games with his pals. He was fun-loving and had lots of friends, but there was a serious side, too.

"Caring and respectful" is his sister's description. There was a sense of responsibility from an early age. Danny took his big brother role seriously, leading the Bruce tribe by example. An early instance of self-sacrifice, according to Karen, occurred at a church outing when he was sixteen. He put himself at extreme peril trying to rescue a drowning boy. His efforts failed, and the incident

left him shaken and inconsolable.

In May 1968, Daniel Dean Bruce joined the Marine Corps Reserve, and two months later, he transferred to the active-duty Marines. After completing initial training in California, he was promoted to Private First Class. Danny received orders for Vietnam and was shipped overseas in January 1969. Once on the ground in Southeast Asia, he was assigned to Headquarters & Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines, 1st Marine Division, as an anti-tank assault man.

Danny was quickly thrust into combat duty. On March 1, 1969, little more than one month after his arrival in country, he once again found himself in a position to save the lives of others, in this case his marine comrades confronting enemy action. Unlike on the beach in Indiana, his efforts this time succeeded, but he had to sacrifice his own life to make it possible. The circumstances of Daniel Bruce's heroism are described as follows in the citation for the Congressional Medal of Honor he was awarded posthumously:



Congressional Medal of Honor Image courtesy of Congressional Medal of Honor Society.



Daniel Bruce Memorial Wall The Disabled American Veterans chapter in Michigan City installed a memorial wall in Daniel Bruce's honor on the fiftieth anniversary of his death in 2019.

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as a mortar man with Headquarters and Service Company, 3d Battalion, against the enemy. Early in the morning, Pfc. Bruce was on watch in his night defensive position at Fire Support Base Tomahawk when he heard movements ahead of him. An enemy explosive charge was thrown toward his position, and he reacted instantly, catching the device and shouting to alert his companions. Realizing the danger to the adjacent position with its two occupants, Pfc. Bruce held the device to his body and attempted to carry it from the vicinity of the entrenched marines. As he moved away, the charge detonated, and he absorbed the full force of the explosion. Pfc. Bruce's indomitable courage, inspiring valor, and selfless devotion to duty saved the lives of three of his fellow Marines and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the U.S. Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.



White House Ceremony Bruce Family receives Daniel's Congressional Medal of Honor from President Richard M. Nixon at the White House, February 16, 1971. Image courtesy of Beverly Shores Depot Museum & Art Gallery.



Chesterton Vietnam Veteran Wall Image provided by the author, 2023.



Danny Bruce Chapter No. 23 Disabled American Veterans, Michigan City, Indiana. Image provided by the author, 2024.

Danny's daughter, Stacey Lynn, was born in Indiana the day after her father's death in Vietnam. The family's joy over the birth was tragically disrupted when news reached them a few days later that Danny had been killed. Danny was never to learn that he had a daughter, and Stacey was denied the privilege of knowing her father.

At the invitation of President Richard M. Nixon, Danny's parents and siblings traveled to Washington to accept the Medal of Honor on his behalf at a White House ceremony on February 16, 1971.

Private First Class Daniel Dean Bruce's heroism has been memorialized at many places. His name is engraved on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC, and more locally, on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Chesterton. A dining facility at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia was named in his honor. Michigan City erected a monument to his memory in Washington Park. Chapter No. 23 of Disabled American Veterans named their post in Danny's honor. A collection of memorabilia, which includes the actual Medal of Honor, adorns a wall in their Michigan City headquarters. ●

Ronald Trigg is Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Porter County Museum Corporation. He is a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War.



The award-winning Porter County Museum maintains free general admission as this area's oldest institution devoted to the history and culture of Porter County.

Hours
Tues-Sun, 11a-4p

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Daniel D. Bruce Memorial, Washington Park, Michigan City Private First Class Daniel Dean Bruce (1950-1969) was born in a hospital in Michigan City, LaPorte County, but his family home was across the Porter County border in Beverly Shores. He is the only known Porter County resident to have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Bruce's heroism in Vietnam has been memorialized at many places, including this monument in Michigan City's Washington Park. Image provided by the author, 2024.

Last Look! This photograph of the headstone of Col. Mark L. DeMotte, interred in the Maplewood Cemetery in Valparaiso, comes from the Mockler Collection. DeMotte served as Colonel in the Union Army, was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for one term, and founded the Valparaiso University Law School. Steve Mockler, a longtime PoCo Muse supporter and a member of David D. Porter Camp 116 of Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, works to restore headstones damaged by vandalism and maintain the county's cemeteries.



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COL. MARK L.
M. C.
FOUNDER SCHOOL OF LAW
VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY
DEAN 1879 — 1908
BORN 1832 DIED 1908

