

The Senate; the Marion Shovel; DOT; Mice, Al and a Dog

by Lynne Belluscio

Amy Burton at the United States Senate called the other day to say that the portrait of Henry Clay is receiving a lot of attention in Washington where it is being restored. But for now, the work is on hold until they get a video team on site to record the progress on the restoration. The video will include a history of Phineas Staunton, the artist, and how the painting came to the Senate.

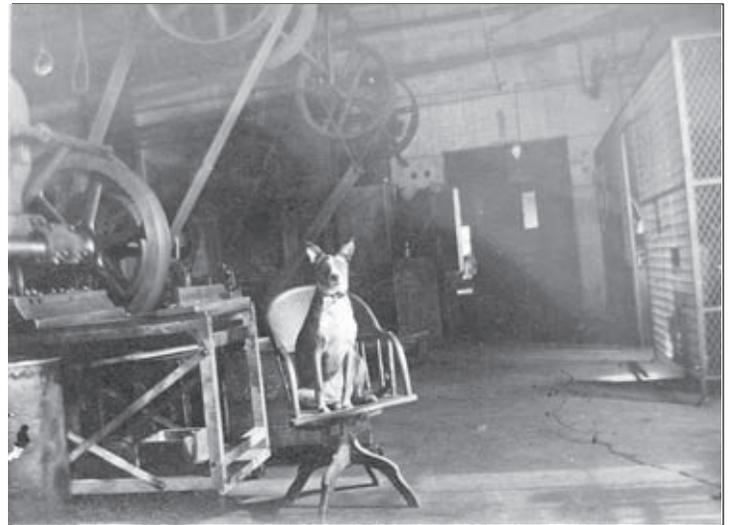
I have been sending her photographs of Ingham University. But in the meantime, the massive frame is being restored. They have verified that the wood is indeed mahogany and the frame was built in four layers to keep the mahogany from warping or twisting. This made the frame extremely rigid and able to survive the past 150 years. The carved corner pieces, which floated around here for years, are missing a few pieces and the carving is so well done, that they are sending them to California to have the missing parts carved. The mahogany in the original frame cannot be duplicated and is not available today, so I wonder what they will have to do to duplicate it. They also discovered an illegible signature on the frame and Amy said that the frame is so magnificent that it had to have been made in New York City or Philadelphia. The gold liner that fits inside the frame is being restored and on one side they have determined the original finish which is a very shiny water washed gold leaf.

Yesterday, Walter Humphrey stopped by to drop off his drawings of the Marion steam shovel on Gulf Road. When he started the project he was living in Adams Center near Watertown and he had come down to Le Roy to climb over the shovel and take copious measurements. He then put the measurements into a cad-cam computer program and has produced very detailed drawings as well as drawings of what the shovel originally looked like. This past year he moved to

Iowa and he stopped by Le Roy on his way back to Adams Center to close up his house, so I was fortunate to have been in town when he stopped by. He has compiled a notebook that is about 6 inches thick on the shovel and related material. We still have a lot of unanswered questions, but if in the future there is any thought that the shovel could be restored, his drawings will be extremely valuable. He intends to continue working on the project in Iowa. Eventually I will go to Easton, Pennsylvania to look at the records there and maybe some questions will be answered and we will know for sure if this shovel came from Panama.

The project that will allow us to change the pitch on the entrance to the driveway was supposed to be completed by the first week in May, but the New York State Department of Transportation, in their wisdom can't decide whether the local office or Albany has to approve the project. Right now, we think that everything is in order and we have approval to remove the cement approach and the sidewalk. In the meantime, we had to dip into reserve funds to post a \$3,000 bond with the state that will be held until the project is completed and we will keep our fingers crossed that they will return it. And of course, according to the grant that we received from the state we have to pay the \$14,000 to the contractor upon completion of the project before we can submit the request for the grant. Last year, when the lift was installed, it took over six months to get all our grant money. So that means we will be out of \$17,000 until someone in Albany signs a check - -and we certainly hope they will do what they promised.

With the increase in prices of almost everything, we certainly have been looking at ways to save a little money, so it was a bit of a shock to receive our water bill and discover that we were being charged for 35,000 gallons of water - - that is to a



place that doesn't have a washing machine or a shower and maybe the toilet is flushed ten times a day, but unless there was a leak, we couldn't figure out where we used that much water - and of course the sewer bill is based on the water bill. Right now it seems that the meter was perhaps read wrong. And in case some of you heard that the fire department was called out to rescue someone in the lift on Saturday - yes that was true. It seems that the lift has settled about 3/4 of an inch which screws up the electric latches. Mary Bryant who works in the Jell-O Gallery was in the lift on her way down to pick up a visitor and she got to the ground level and the door wouldn't open. So thanks to the fire department, they arrived and hand cranked the lift to the lower level where the door opened and Mary was able to get out. We're waiting to hear from the man who installed the lift to make the adjustments. Sometimes it's weeks before he returns the call.

Now about this picture of the dog ... He was in the postcard collection and I suspect he is sitting on a chair in Le Roy Plow Company or some other factory in Le Roy. I have been scanning postcards at night at home into my computer for the Historical Society's annual meeting this week. I was gone to Denver for a couple of days for the American Association of Museums meeting and when I got home, my scanner/printer wasn't working. It turns out that the mice had decided that the scanner would be a great place to store Corn Chex and Cheerios. (So much for the prowess of Al the cat.) So I had to ditch the scanner and buy a new one. The new software didn't install properly and I spent two hours on the phone with a very nice man in India who took me to screens on my computer that I never knew I had. Finally I was able to scan in the rest of the postcard images, including this alert fellow.

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