

# Stephena Wentworth

by Lynne Belluscio

Back in 1892, I put together an exhibit about Ingham University and I wrote a *Pennysaver* article about a very attractive and talented student, Stephena Wentworth. The problem is, I spelled her name wrong. Her name is indeed Stephena, not Stephanie as I wrote in 1992.

So first I have to set the record straight. She is listed in the Ingham catalogues in 1874, 1875 and 1876, but according to the Alumnae files, she graduated in 1883 and she is included in the 1883 commencement article in the *LeRoy Gazette*. Her full name (which was written on the back of a small water-color painting of the Oatka River) was Stephena Drew Wentworth.

Her father, John Wentworth was a noted Methodist minister from Dover, New Hampshire. It was said that he moved to LeRoy so his daughters could attend Ingham. He served churches in Batavia, LeRoy and Perry. For two years he served in Evanston, Illinois and accordingly, the Ingham catalogue lists Stephena from Evanston in 1876.

In 1885, Stephena was living in Buffalo, but a year later she returned to Ingham and at that time she was living in Lima, perhaps while her father served as trustee of the Lima Seminary. He also was a trustee of Syracuse University and the author of several books, including the "*Logic of Introspection*."

The Alumnae records also mention that Stephena taught



for a while in San Antonio, Texas. On October 2, 1888 she married William H. Collins of Buffalo and her career and whereabouts ends, except for the notice in the *LeRoy Gazette* in 1893 upon the death of her father. He died at her home in Buffalo. He was survived by two sons, Richard of Kansas and John of Elmira. A daughter, Mrs. W.G.

Hartwell, had died a few months before his passing. Also listed was a Mrs. F. Allen of Buffalo.

In 1947, according to the Historical Society's Annual Report, Stephena's daughter, Miss Clarissa Wentworth Collins donated two gold Ingham class rings to the Historical Society. One of those rings, with a pearl and an inscription is in the Ingham exhibit in the front parlor of the LeRoy House along with a copy of Stephena's Ingham 1883 diploma and her Concordia pin.

In 1961, Stephena's daughter and her son, Wentworth Collins, donated a "fine three-section, wooden frame screen with hand-painted panels." The screen was painted in 1883 during Stephena's senior year. The center panel is an architectural study of the Staunton Art Conservatory and it is flanked by a panel with a beautiful white cockatoo on one side and an elegant blue kingfisher on the other. The screen has graced the fireplace in the front parlor for several years, but will be a focal point of the summer exhibit on the second floor of LeRoy House.

I have also brought out of storage a small watercolor of the Oatka River by Stephena. It too, was painted in 1883. She was a very talented artist and it is a shame that we have not been able to discover more work by Miss Wentworth. We continue to search the alumnae newspaper clippings to see if there is any additional information about Stephena Wentworth Collins, but so far we have discovered nothing.

The Ingham Exhibit will open on Monday, May 11. The Historical Society will hold its 2009 Annual Meeting at 7 PM that night at LeRoy House, for the election of new members to the Board of Trustees. This year, Barbara Elliott and Brian Duddy have been nominated for their first three-year term and Jim Newkirk has been nominated to serve a second three year term. After a short business meeting, I will present a program on the new Ingham Exhibit so I hope some of you can join us. The meeting is open to the public and refreshments will be served.

**OATKA FESTIVAL MEETING**  
 Village Hall  
**April 23rd, 7:00 p.m.**  
**PUBLIC MEETING**  
 All Are Welcome!  
*Food Vendors Encouraged To Attend*

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