

The Last Rose Of Summer

by Lynne Belluscio

Two weeks ago, we noticed that there was one last bud on the Ingham Rose bush in the garden behind LeRoy House. For several nights I put a towel over the branches, with the hope that it wouldn't freeze and if it warmed up it might bloom.

In the meantime, I headed to Washington, and nobody was around to protect the little white bud. Coincidence, while I was in Washington, presenting the Henry Clay DVD to the Museums Association, I happened to mention that at the very end of the DVD, the background music is Henry Clay's favorite song, "The Last Rose of Summer."

When Clay was dying of tuberculosis, the Norwegian composer and violinist, Ole Bornemann Bull came to Clay's home, Ashland, in Kentucky, and played Clay's favorite song. It was written by the Irish poet Thomas Moore in 1805 and was put to music by Sir John Stevenson. It was published in December 1813. The song became a popular favorite.

Tis the last rose of summer, Left blooming alone;

All her lovely companions Are faded and gone;

No flower of her kindred, No rosebud is nigh,

To reflect back her blushes, Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one! To pine on the stem;

Since the lovely are sleeping, Go, sleep thou with them.

Thus kindly I scatter, Thy leaves o'er the bed,

Where thy mates of the garden Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow, When friendships decay,

And from Love's shining circle The gems drop away.

When true hearts lie withered, And fond ones are flown,

Oh! who would inhabit This bleak world alone?

(I found it interesting that the Grateful Dead in the song *Black Muddy River* made reference to Moore's poem and Judas Priest wrote a song based on the Last Rose of Summer.)

Earlier this past month on the trip to Morristown, New Jersey, we saw the plaster cast of the Ingham sisters that was used for the brass plaque in the entry of the Union Free School building on Trigon Park. The images of Emily and Marietta Ingham are encircled with blossoms of Ingham roses.

This past Saturday, the Western New York Association of Historical Agencies held their annual meeting at GCC, and I presented information about the art and artists of Ingham University. I pointed out that several artists painted the Ingham Rose in portraits of Ingham students. My talk was followed by a presentation by Joan Schumaker from the Nunda

Historical Society. Joan shared information about Rose Shave, the last art professor at Ingham. After Ingham closed in 1892, Rose moved back to Nunda where she taught art and painted. She was particularly fond of painting roses.

As Joan showed images of Rose's work, she included a remarkably beautiful cluster of creamy white roses. "Did you

know that those are Ingham roses?" I asked. "There is no question, that's what they are. A creamy white double rose." Rose Shave's painting was exquisite - - - a true tribute to the Ingham Rose.

Remarkably, the little white bud in the garden survived several freezing cold nights, and this past weekend, it bloomed . . . truly the last rose of summer.



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