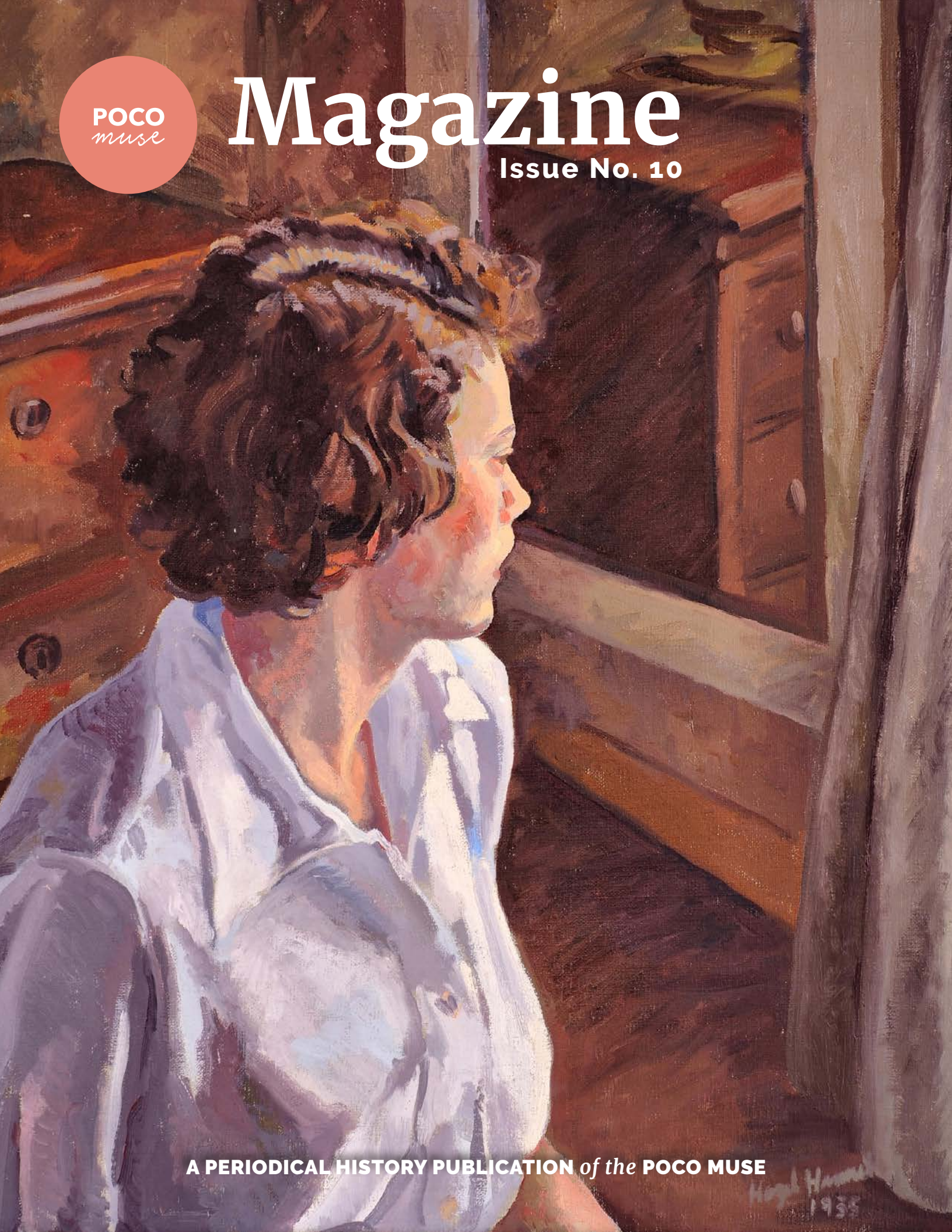


The logo consists of a solid red circle containing the text "POCO" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with the word "muse" in a smaller, white, cursive script font directly below it.

POCO
muse

Magazine

Issue No. 10

The background of the cover is an oil painting of a woman with dark, curly hair, shown in profile from the chest up. She is wearing a light blue or white button-down shirt. The painting style is expressive, with visible brushstrokes and a warm, somewhat somber color palette dominated by browns, oranges, and muted blues. The setting appears to be an interior with wooden paneling or a door in the background.

A PERIODICAL HISTORY PUBLICATION *of the* POCO MUSE

Hugh Hamer
1935

“When Hazel turned 100 ... [she] wanted us to have her last work of art. So, sight unseen, we bought it.”

Hazel Hannell (1895–2002) painted for just shy of 100 years, spanning three centuries (page 4). In the spirit of her endurance, the topics of this wide-ranging issue span nearly four centuries. First, we revisit **a national moment of unrest during the 1960s** and a local response from university student activists (page 8). Next, we learn about **Gilbert Ashville Pierce, a nineteenth-century man for all seasons** (page 16). Finally, we explore the **Bailly family legacy** from the perspective of their possessions (page 22).

Summer 2025

4 Remembering Hazel: An Interview with Douglas Pierce

Local architect Douglas Pierce reflects on his thirty-year friendship with artist Hazel Hannell.

8 Anti-Vietnam War Protests in Valparaiso

By Asa Kerr

Though the unrest of the 1960s in Porter County reflected a broader national trend, various local movements revealed the county's unique character.

16 Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Scribe: The Talented Gilbert A. Pierce

By Ronald Trigg

Gilbert Ashville Pierce (1839–1901) was the son of a shopkeeper in the tiny village of Tassinong, and his professional achievement may be unparalleled in Porter County history.

22 From a Bailly Point of View

Though Joseph Bailly looms large in Porter County, it was three generations of Bailly women who truly shaped the public perception of the family legacy.

Executive Director
Kevin Matthew Pazour

Exhibits & Publications
Jacob Just

Visitor Experience
Quinn Albert
Michael Spudic

Collections
Sarah Berndt
Hannah Sliemers

Board of Trustees
Joanne Urschel
Chair
Tacy Borgman
Vice Chair
Kathryn McMillan
Treasurer
Ronald Trigg
Secretary
Patricia Crise
Kathleen Evans
Kevin Kerr
Jeffrey Lewis
Paul D. Miles
Pamela Murrow

Dear Readers,

For the past five years, we've been publishing the *PoCo Muse Magazine* and delivering Porter County stories directly to your home. This tenth issue presents a “potpourri” selection of articles from a few favorite contributors that reflect the broad range of our storytelling. Our interview with Doug Pierce (page 4) about his friendship with Hazel Hannell is an example of oral history that preserves unique voices and engages perspectives not always found in history books. Pierce's comments perfectly complement the Hannell artwork currently on display in the exhibit *Life Work*. The study of material culture, the tangible objects that make up our society, is another method of understanding the day-to-day lives of people. In November 2025, we plan to remount a 2018 exhibit, *From a Bailly Point of View* (excerpted on page 22), that looked closely at our collection of objects from the Bailly Family to offer fresh perspectives on its legacy in our county.

Best,

Kevin Matthew Pazour
Executive Director, PoCo Muse



About the Images

Cover Hazel Hannell is most famous for her deft watercolors of her natural environment, but this captivating portrait in oil, cherished by its owners Cynthia and Douglas Pierce, stands out from the rest of her work. Every element of the intimate and mysterious portrait of a woman named Iola has been carefully composed to raise more questions than answers. Who is Iola? What is she thinking about? The painting doesn't reveal its secrets easily; it works on the viewer quietly and slowly. In this way, it is unassumingly Modern.

Above One reason the Porter County artists Hazel and Vin Hannell were drawn to settling in the Indiana dunes in the 1930s was because the primitive landscape reminded Vin of his childhood in Finland.

In 1928, the Hannells joined fellow Chicago artists on a six-month visit to Europe, where they spent their time painting, visiting galleries, and studying from the original European masters of Modernism. Part of their journey included a visit to Vin's native Finland, where Hazel made many watercolor paintings of the local architecture and landscape. A local exhibit in Valparaiso in 1940 displayed nineteen of these watercolors, very likely including this work, “Turun Linna, Finland, June 1928,” from the collection of Cynthia and Douglas Pierce. A review declared that the “vermillion cottages in bright green meadows; dark pines and silver birches; forest paths, castles, windmills and ships at anchor—all bathed in the cool, clear light of the northland—are a testament to beauty.” ●



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–5p

Address
20 Indiana Avenue
Valparaiso, IN 46383

E-mail
info@pocomuse.org

Phone
(219) 510-1836

Website
pocomuse.org

Cover
“Iola,” by Hazel Hannell, 1935
Oil on canvas,
Courtesy of Cynthia and Douglas Pierce

Above
“Turun Linna, Finland, June 1928” by Hazel Hannell
Watercolor on paper,
Courtesy of Cynthia and Douglas Pierce

Remembering Hazel

An Interview with Douglas Pierce



Hazel A circa 1970s photograph taken by area artist John Habela of Hazel at work on the potter's wheel. Courtesy of John Habela.

Valparaiso resident **Douglas Pierce** is an architect, artist, and student of the local art scene. He first met Hazel Hannell in 1971, and they were friends for thirty years. In this interview, he shares some memories about the iconic artist and her influence on him and the Porter County art community. Doug and his wife Cynthia generously loaned several pieces of art to the PoCo Muse for the current exhibit, *Life Work: The Artists Hazel & Vin Hannell*, between May and October of 2025.



Douglas Pierce Douglas Pierce discusses a work of art by Hazel Hannell in the PoCo Muse exhibition *Life Work: The Artists Hazel & Vin Hannell*. Photo courtesy of Albert Photographic.

Tell us about your early interactions with the Indiana Dunes art scene.

I attended my first Chesterton Art Fair when I was a junior in high school. A teacher, who suspected I might have a future in the arts, suggested it was a “must-see” event. And she was right. The professional quality of the arts and crafts on display stood out to me.

I set out to discover who the “artsy” folks behind the event were. Some vague and early detective work suggested they were a tight-knit group of artists who had lived and created modern art in the area of 57th Street and Stony Island Avenue on the South Side of Chicago. The Depression had forced them out of Chicago. Some moved to their summer homes in the Indiana Dunes, Furnessville in particular.

Future research got sidetracked while I pursued a six-year architectural degree, followed by two years in the Army. I had plenty of fine arts education as part of my architectural education and was just short of being awarded a fine arts diploma. In May 1971, upon discharge from the military, I sat for the Indiana Architectural Certification exam. This was the pre-computer age. The exam was graded by a team of volunteer architects . . . by hand. It would be four months before I knew whether or not I had

and schools. I considered teaching or joining a firm which offered partnerships. Even without formal certification, I could offer potential employers three years of professional experience gained while in school. To my family and friends, it looked like I was on vacation. To deflect that notion, I decided I would develop some artwork that I had been thinking about.

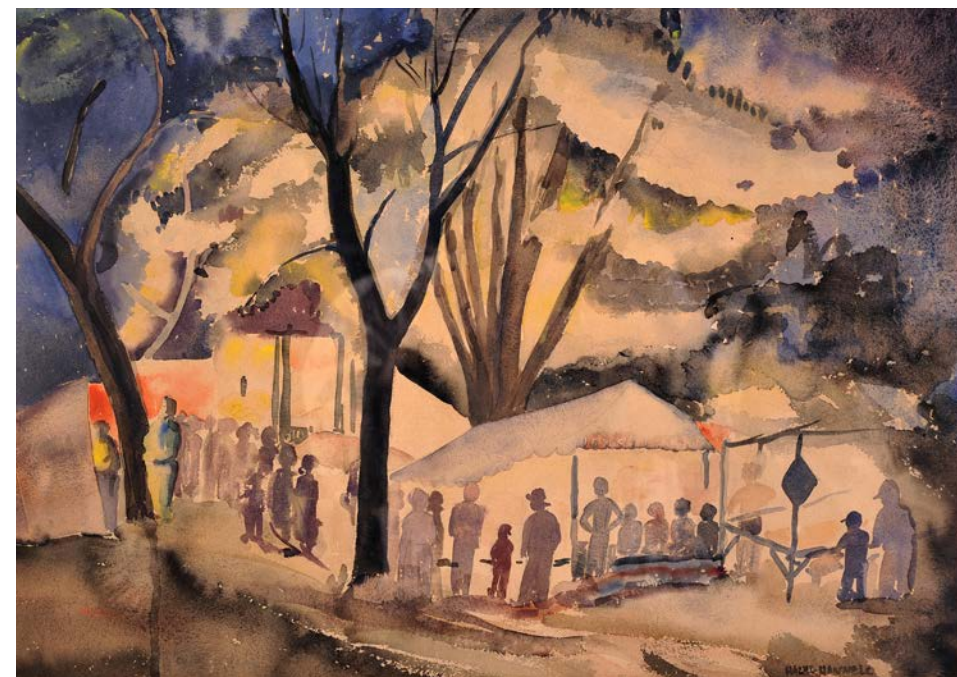
Is this when Hazel Hannell first came into your life?

Yes. I submitted my project to the Chesterton Art Fair committee, and it was approved for the 1971 show. The theme was “grain and graphics.” I painted Masonite boards in primary colors and when dry, I glued on shafts of wheat or soybean leaves, etc. (It was admittedly a nontraditional technique, and it later drew criticism from a 12-year-old fairgoer who turned to her girl scout leader and proclaimed, “even we could do that!”)

There was some controversy over my submission, but it had nothing to do with artistic merit. I built a structure to display in my booth that resembled a windmill-driven water pump, and I crowned it with a

passed. And, if I didn’t pass, I would have to wait for the next May exam, pushing off certification by at least a year.

I took advantage of this four-month period of limbo to assess future career opportunities. I visited architectural offices



Chesterton Art Fair This watercolor of the Chesterton Art Fair was created by Hazel in 1958, when the event was still known as the Tent Show. Hazel has captured a certain magic in the glowing lights of the tents on the fairgrounds. Courtesy of John Cain.

classic Dekalb Corn sign of the type widely displayed at the time on rural roads in the Midwest corn belt. A committee member called it a “blatant infraction” of a rule that prohibited advertising in artists’ booths. He said I must remove the sign immediately. As the ensuing discussion began to heat up, a person of authority arrived, quickly sized up the situation, and lowered the temperature with, “I appreciate your concern, but the sign is directed to farmers, not to art people. This artist is using this classic sign to focus on his theme of ‘grain and graphics.’ I doubt it will have much impact on the price of a bushel of corn.” That person was Hazel Hannell, and her calm and sensible demeanor immediately resolved the issue.

What can you tell us about your relationship with Hazel? How did she influence your growth as an artist?

Over time, Hazel and I became close friends, despite our 30-year difference in age. I recognized her as the committee member who fostered relationships and quietly kept things in order . . . schedules, finances, quality control. Hazel was already widowed when I first met her, so I never knew Vin. But I imagine she played that same role in their marriage. I am also guessing that she gave Vin room to do his own thing. Together, they transitioned from the roaring 1920s on 57th Street to basic survival in Furnessville during the Great Depression. Vin championed social issues, and it showed in his art. Hazel seemed to concentrate on producing pottery creations for sale, as a means of paying the bills.

Hazel introduced me to the well-established and respected Porter County Association of Artists and Craftsmen, their museum operations, classes, social activities, and of course, the annual art fair. I became active in the organization, offering architectural services and helping to plan and stage exhibits including, The History of Chair Design, which became quite popular.

Hazel helped me stage the first “serious” art show on the Porter County courthouse lawn. She had 50 years of experience contacting quality artists and setting standards for selection in a very professional manner. She had been involved in the annual



A “Last Painting” This 1998 watercolor is one of the final paintings created by Hazel when she was 102 years old. It was acquired by Cynthia and Douglas Pierce when they were told Hazel wanted them to have her “last work of art.”

Chicago “No Jury” shows from 1923 to the late 1930s. In my view, this annual show was one of her crowning achievements, demonstrating her steadfast support for Modern Art in the face of Chicago’s support of Traditional Art. The courthouse show was a big success. Hazel’s reputation gave it credibility, and we attracted artists and craftsmen from 30 states.

Later, I helped Hazel get her artworks placed in important venues. As a principal at the Valparaiso architectural firm Design Organization (now Shive-Hattery), I packaged art collections for our clients, which included G.D. Searle Pharmaceuticals in Skokie, Illinois; AT&T Long Lines in Chicago; AT&T Cell Phone in New York City; and the first mobile phone offices in New York City and Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

During the time we knew her, Cynthia and I purchased seventeen of Hazel’s works for our personal collection. When Hazel turned 100, her very supportive artist friend, Harriett Rex Smith, telephoned us while sitting at Hazel’s bedside. She told us that Hazel wanted us to have her last work of art. So, sight unseen, we bought it. We fell for what turned out to be a little trick. Hazel lived six

more years and produced a few more “last paintings.”

Is there anything else you’d like to share about Hazel or the art scene from which she and Vin emerged?

I want to shift back to 1920, long before we met Hazel. I want to leave you with a vision of two important players in the Chicago Art Scene. Two young adults smack in the middle of one of the hottest cultural centers in the world at the time, 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois.

In the early 1900s, a Bohemian community started to evolve on Chicago’s South Side in the area that once hosted the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893. An amazing array of creative figures came here to mix and exchange ideas: writers (Theodore Dreiser, Carl Sandburg, Ernest Hemingway, Emma Goldman, Robert Frost), actors, anarchists, architects (Frank Lloyd Wright met Louis Sullivan here), sculptors, activist attorneys (Clarence Darrow), political radicals, artists (Georgia O’Keefe, John Sloan, George Bellows), journalists, and students

(particularly from the Chicago Art Institute). For artists, it became the center of Modern Art. The Hannells were players among the 57th Street Bohemians.

Uptown’s significant support of “traditional” art was closing ranks to counter the rising interest in Modern Art. A whole generation of art students and aspiring artists came from around the country and Europe drawn by this overdue way of thinking about art. Personal expression was to reign over mastering traditional technique, and it was happening on 57th Street. And the Hannells were in the middle of it all.

For clarity, traditional art was the “coin of the realm.” Museums and art schools, high-end galleries, collectors, and art journalists felt threatened by Modern Art. They would not show it; they would not buy it. They would bash it in the press.

In the late 1800s, rising Modern Art stars in Europe (van Gogh, et al.) faced these same barriers. They organized their own art exhibits much as the Chicago “No Jury” artists did later. On both continents, these shows were instant hits. The first really big “blockbuster” was the Armory Show. It first hit New York and then Chicago. Some writers called it “the Shock of the New.”

The Hannells, along with journalist J. Z. Jacobson, enthusiastically supported the new shows. These events provided important financial support for artists who did not have connections in the traditional art community. During the Great Depression, it was a real lifeline. The success of the “No Jury” annual show was proof that Modern Art had come into its own.

I will conclude my rambling with the following observations:

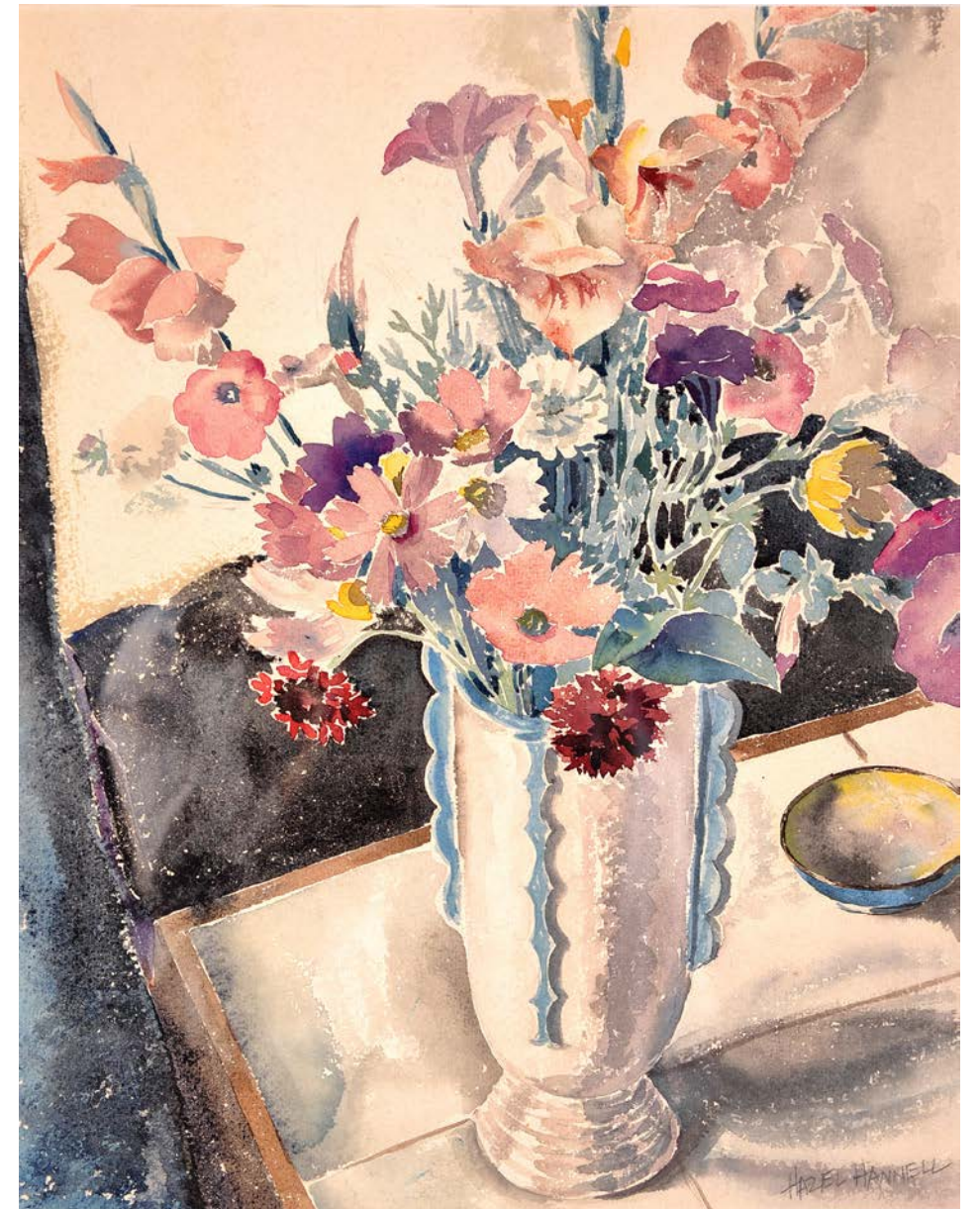
First, as a minor player in purchasing “corporate” art, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, I felt the market for Modern Art was too constricted. Traditionalist forces, including critics, would not cede their ground, and that dampened the respect due the Modernists in Chicago. Some of the top artists left Chicago for New York, because “New York City paid more,” even though they loved Chicago and would have preferred to stay.

Some will challenge me on this, but history has recorded that before World War II, there were three centers of art in America: New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. After the

war, up-and-coming artists left Europe and middle America and clustered in New York and Los Angeles. The shadow cast by Chicago traditionalists was long; it handicapped the Modern Art market. I was thankful that the Hairy Who, Ed Paschke, and John Himmelfarb stayed around!

Second, I have a longstanding regret that I didn’t meet Hazel earlier. I knew nothing of those exciting times on 57th Street or the hardships of the Depression. Nothing about Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration

art program, a godsend for Chicago artists, including Hazel and Vin. She could have reported on the battle between Traditionalists and Moderns. She was there, a veteran of the Bohemian years, the introduction of Modernism, and the Depression years in Indiana. Late in Hazel’s life, I wrote a letter to her wonderful friend and artist, Harriett Rex Smith, and asked her to have Hazel share her observations on 57th Street and the battles over Modern Art. But I was too late. I’m sorry, Hazel, that I waited too long. ●



1930s Watercolor This depiction of a floral bouquet by Hazel features one of her handmade ceramic vases. Courtesy of Cynthia and Douglas Pierce.

Anti-Vietnam War Protests in Valparaiso

by Asa Kerr

The United States occasionally experiences periods of remarkable unrest and activism. Often, these moments are catalyzed when the effects of some policies or attitudes, past and present, come to bear their full weight on society.

One example of these critical moments in American life is found in the mid to late 1960s and early 1970s. War raged in Vietnam, dividing the country between young and old, student and soldier, pro-war and anti-war. Anti-war protests led by students became commonplace. In response, demonstrations in support of the war sprang up in parts of the country.

Nearly simultaneous with the anti-war movement, the Civil Rights movement began to receive national media attention in the U.S., thanks in large part to the bravery of protestors in standing up to violent authority. Though the Civil Rights movement just began to hold the nation's attention in the 1960s, it had been long in the making. In the south, protests against segregation, voter suppression, and other racist policies captivated the nation. While in the north, Black Americans who had endured racist discrimination in housing, employment, and education for decades drew attention to their cause.

Porter County experienced its own wave of anti-war protests, though not near the frequency or intensity of those found in other parts of the country. Nearly all of the protests relating to the Vietnam War in Valparaiso were organized and attended by the students and faculty of Valparaiso University. Though the unrest of the 1960s in Porter County reflected a broader national trend, the various movements, and the reactions to them, revealed the county's unique character.

Porter County experienced its own wave of anti-war protests, though not near the frequency or intensity of those found in other parts of the country.



"We Want to Live" Protestors march past Siever's Drugs in downtown Valparaiso on May 5, 1970.



"Welcome to Valparaiso" A boarded-up window in Valparaiso's College Hill neighborhood on May 5, 1970.

Opposition to the Vietnam War grew slowly beginning in 1964, as the U.S. escalated military operations. The anti-war movement expanded with the institution of the draft and the ballooning of U.S. armed forces in Vietnam. The majority of Valparaiso residents, however, seemed to either support the war or keep their thoughts to themselves until the late 1960s. One of the earliest recorded demonstrations related to the Vietnam War in Valparaiso was actually a pro-war rally in October 1965. About fifteen to thirty Valparaiso University students marched around the post office in downtown Valparaiso carrying signs that read, “Better Dead than Red” and “Valpo for Victory in Vietnam.”

The Valparaiso University student newspaper, *The Torch*, covered the protest in a less-than-favorable light. The paper intended to highlight the contradictory nature of these pro-war demonstrators by quoting their lead organizer as saying, “we think demonstrations like this are childish.” The student reporter threw another subtle jab, writing that those “in the picket line announced they had no recommendations for winning the Vietnam War, either to escalate or lessen U.S. involvement.” Apart from these veiled criticisms, the article noted that many of the passersby they interviewed also voiced support for the war, though most of them did not agree with the students’ decision to demonstrate publicly. Lastly, *The Torch* noted that all those who voiced support for the war, student and otherwise, claimed to get all their news from *The Vidette-Messenger*, implying that the popular local publication was a “pro-war” paper.

They were not entirely wrong. As much as *The Torch* was an anti-war paper, *The Vidette-Messenger* was a pro-war one. *The Vidette-Messenger’s* coverage of the pro-war demonstration in October 1965 was altogether more positive than *The Torch’s*, devoting a front-page column and photo to the event. They mentioned how Jim Beyreis, the Valparaiso University student who organized the demonstration, obtained a permit beforehand, and empathized with his fear that counter protestors might disturb his event. Both articles in *The Torch* and *The Vidette-Messenger* mentioned that Beyreis’s brother was serving in Vietnam—familial connections were a common thread for many supporters of the war.

Two years later, in October 1967, Valparaiso University students and faculty marched from the student union to the courthouse to protest the war. *The Torch* and *The Vidette-Messenger* each offered their own account of the events. *The Vidette-*



March Begins Students and faculty from Valparaiso University begin a march at the university’s Chapel of the Resurrection on May 5, 1970, to protest the United States invasion of Cambodia and the killing of four Kent State University students. One student wears a black armband, while another carries an American flag.

Though the unrest of the 1960s in Porter County reflected a broader national trend, the various movements, and the reactions to them, revealed the county’s unique character.

Messenger ran a front-page photograph with a small caption describing the march as a peaceful procession of roughly fifty university students, with some pro-war counter protestors assembling around them with signs. Significantly, the image of the anti-war protestors is located at the bottom of the front page, underneath a story describing the events of “Operation Gratitude,” a series of national demonstrations “in support of U.S. servicemen fighting in Vietnam,” designed to offset the large anti-draft rally in Washington D.C. What’s more, the photograph is surrounded by the text of an article describing President Lyndon Johnson’s commitment to U.S. goals in Vietnam, regardless of an “unwillingness to stay the course.”

In stark contrast, *The Torch’s* headline read, “Counter Pickets Confront Peace Marchers,” accompanied with a lengthy column and large photograph. The significantly more in-depth coverage is not surprising, given that many of *The Torch’s* student staff took part in the march. However, the difference in the content of both articles most certainly is surprising.

The Torch article describes the march as the culmination of student-led anti-war activities, known on campus as “Vietnam Week.” Earlier in the week, two Valparaiso University students surrendered their draft cards outside of the university chapel, a symbolic act representing their opposition to the draft and its racist and classist prejudices. Organizers also scheduled the



Downtown Valparaiso Protestors carry signs while marching in downtown Valparaiso on May 5, 1970.

march to occur on the same day as a march on the Pentagon, in which roughly 100,000 participants, including a few Valparaiso University students, paraded from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon to protest the Vietnam War. This march was the first major national demonstration against the Vietnam War.

The Torch estimates that 110 protestors, consisting of both students and faculty, convened at the student union where organizer David Nord delivered a speech. Marchers carried an ornate banner at the front of the procession that bore a

One local shop owner equipped with a megaphone shouted, “Make way for the Benedict Arnolds of Valparaiso University.”

quote from Mahatma Gandhi: “If you express your love in such a way that it impresses itself upon your so-called enemy, he must return that love.” Other signs read, “Negotiation Now” and “Peace in Vietnam.” Large pro-war banners hung from every dorm, and, as the marchers proceeded down Union Street, bystanders hurled insults and, in one case, a couple of eggs, which splattered two anti-war marchers. One local shop owner equipped with a megaphone shouted, “Make way for the Benedict Arnolds of Valparaiso University.”

When the marchers reached the courthouse, another group of pro-war demonstrators greeted them, bearing signs that said, “Back Our Men in Vietnam” and “Support the War.” As the anti-war marchers began to circle the courthouse, their line stretched back over two blocks in length. Members of the Young Americans for Freedom ran around the courthouse with pro-war banners and the Veterans of Foreign Wars looked down on the anti-war marchers from second story windows, giving them thumbs down as they waved American flags. One pro-war Valparaiso University student denounced the anti-war marchers as traitors for giving moral support to the enemy. Some shoppers stopped to observe the spectacle, while others made a point of ignoring it.

The scene, though chaotic, remained largely nonviolent—at least in part due to the presence of Valparaiso Police officers at the head of the march. It seemed that, in the two years since the pro-war march of 1965, most Valparaiso residents still supported the war. As earlier, the anti-war sentiment existed mostly within the university community. Both sides were motivated to physically display their stance, whether pro- or anti-war.

As the war raged on into 1968, attitudes within the U.S. began to gradually shift. This was due in part to the media fallout from the Tet Offensive, a North Vietnamese surprise attack on American positions. Though a clear military victory for the U.S., the Tet Offensive resulted in a large loss of life and showcased the horror of total war in Vietnam. This led many Americans to question their country’s superiority and consider the enormous cost of escalating the war. The shock of Tet, combined with a variety of other circumstances, influenced President Johnson to not seek re-election in 1968.

In Valparaiso, vocal anti-war sentiment began to penetrate areas outside of the university. In March 1969, a group of six students at Valparaiso



Carrying a Casket Protestors proceed past the Valparaiso Police Station, carrying a casket to symbolize the life lost in the Kent State Massacre. A student flag bearer leads the march.

High School wore black armbands to protest the Vietnam War. Their symbolic display came on the heels of *Tinker v. Des Moines*, a Supreme Court decision that ruled that students could not be expelled for wearing armbands, as this form of protest did not cause a “substantial disruption.” The protest coincided with the visit of an armed forces recruiter to the school.

Valparaiso High School Principal Clyde Allmon remarked that the students, “caused no disturbance whatever; they are a fine bunch of kids.” However, he sent all six students home, ordering them to return with their parents. When asked why he decided to send the students home, especially in light of the recent Supreme Court decision, Allmon replied: “Even though it is okay in some places, we don’t feel that this is what Valparaiso wants.” A parent of one of the dismissed children returned to the school with a lawyer, though they took no further action.

Though *The Vidette-Messenger* ran a few opinion pieces that criticized the students’ actions, the paper also published two letters to the editor calling for Valparaiso residents to support the students’ right to peacefully protest. A few days after the protest, Susana Rast wrote a letter to the editor, questioning Allmon’s authority to send students home because he believes this isn’t “what Valparaiso wants.” Edgar Senne wrote another letter stating that the dismissal of these students violated the “principle of freedom,” and that regardless of whether or not Valparaiso residents agree with the students, they should petition for an explanation of their dismissal.

In early May 1970, the U.S. began military operations in Cambodia, a country bordering Vietnam to the west, in order to push back against North Vietnamese bases along the border of the two countries. The action drew scorn from the expanding anti-war section of the American public, as Cambodia was a neutral country. Protests erupted across the country with increased vigor. At Kent State University in Ohio, members of the state National Guard fired into a crowd of student protestors, killing four and wounding nine. The Kent State Massacre catalyzed an unprecedented period of student activism, which took the form of strikes, marches, and sit-ins.

In the wake of the Kent State shootings, between 1,000 and 1,800 Valparaiso University students and faculty and some Valparaiso High School students marched around the courthouse.

Instead of a banner with a quote from Gandhi, students carried a casket, evoking a funeral procession for the lives lost in Kent State and Vietnam.

University Student Senate President Joel Junker met ahead of time with Valparaiso Mayor Bryce Billings and Chief of Police Lee Miller to obtain a permit for the demonstration—Billings granted the permit without the usual ten-day waiting period. Junker had assured Billings that the protest would go forward, permitted or not.

The May 5, 1970, protest revealed a more radical student sentiment than previous marches and demonstrations. Instead of “Negotiation Now,” signs bore messages like “God Makes People, We Destroy Them” and “We Want to Live.” Instead of a banner with a quote from Gandhi, students heading the march carried a casket, evoking a funeral procession for the lives lost in Kent State and Vietnam. Articles in both *The Torch* and *The Vidette-Messenger* make no mention of counter protestors. After the protest, roughly 2,000 students and community members assembled outside the university chapel to conduct a memorial service for the Kent State victims. Students then carried the casket in a torch-lit march to U.S. 30, where they buried it.

Earlier in 1970, David Nord, the organizer of the October 1967 anti-war march, returned to Valparaiso a year after his graduation to take a job with *The Vidette-Messenger*. Nord covered the May 5 protest for *The Vidette-Messenger*, and many of the related events that followed. His connection to the university and his personal experience with this subject helped broaden, at least in appearance, *The Vidette-Messenger’s* perspective.

Beginning the day of the protest, May 5, Valparaiso University students joined millions of other university students across the country in an academic strike. In lieu of classes, students attended discussions on the war and planned for further action. On May 6, university students gathered for a rally on a lawn east of the student union to hear a student from Kent State give an eyewitness account of the shootings. Estimates for the number of students at the rally range from 1,000 to 2,000, or roughly one-quarter to one-half of the entire Valparaiso University student body.

After the speech, Valparaiso University President Albert Huegli addressed the crowd, informing students that classes would go on as scheduled Thursday, but only for those students who wished to attend. According to David Nord’s article in *The Vidette-Messenger*, most of the crowd dispersed at this point, with about 100 students and some faculty walking to Kinsey Hall, which housed the office of university President Huegli. The students at Kinsey gathered around a small bonfire

and considered their next steps. Some discussed staging a sit-in at Kinsey Hall the next morning, but later dismissed the idea.

Some in the group outside Kinsey Hall noticed that a small blaze had started in the building’s basement. They immediately called the fire department and attempted to douse the flames with fire extinguishers but without success. When firefighters arrived, students assisted them in saving most of the university records stored inside the building, along with some of the furnishings. One fireman and one student were injured fighting the blaze.

Many of the students and faculty members were saddened by this act of destruction, especially considering Kinsey Hall was then one of the oldest buildings on campus. Barry Hallowell, an organizer of the May 5 march, responded to the arson saying, “I’ve seen our campus do some pretty stupid things, but this takes the cake.” The basement fire was started by a group of three students, acting separately from the rally organizers and the small group of students outside Kinsey Hall. Valparaiso University students and faculty subsequently raised funds to refurbish the building, but it was never fully restored. The university eventually demolished the building in 1985.

Even though the protests culminated in an act of destruction, students continued to organize demonstrations, rallies, and discussions. Nearly the entire Valparaiso University student body denounced the act of arson that resulted in the ruin of Kinsey Hall. The three students responsible were identified and expelled—the university has never released their identities.

The shift in the tone of media coverage seen in Valparaiso reflected a broader national trend of tolerance toward, if not outright agreement with, the anti-war movement as a valid cause. It is difficult to measure the views of city residents about Vietnam. Early in the war, there seems to have been little to no vocal anti-war sentiment in Valparaiso outside of the university. The pro-war counter protestors of 1967 did not materialize for the march of 1970—though it can hardly be assumed they had switched sides. It was, and still is, difficult for many to separate the criticism of a war from criticism of the soldiers fighting it. The war deeply polarized the nation and is, in some ways, still a source of division. ●



“God Makes People, We Destroy Them” Protestors assemble outside the Valparaiso Police Station on May 5, 1970. Valparaiso University professor Walt Rast displays a sign reading, “God Makes People, We Destroy Them.”

“I’ve seen our campus do some pretty stupid things, but this takes the cake.”

Asa Kerr is a Valparaiso native who worked at the PoCo Muse from 2017 to 2022 as a researcher, writer, and the museum’s Collection Manager. He continues to help with research and writing for PoCo Muse exhibits.

He currently lives in western Massachusetts, where he teaches social studies.

A version of this article originally appeared in the *PoCo Muse Letter* during the summer of 2020. His efforts that year helped get the *PoCo Muse Magazine* off the ground.

Note: All images are courtesy of Valparaiso University Archives and Special Collections.

Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Scribe:

The Talented Gilbert A. Pierce

by Ronald Trigg

Gilbert Ashville Pierce (1839–1901) was a nineteenth-century man for all seasons. The son of a shopkeeper in the tiny village of Tassinong, Pierce found acclaim in an impressive variety of fields. He was a Civil War officer, a state legislator, the Governor of Dakota Territory, a United States Senator, a newspaper publisher, a popular novelist and playwright, and a diplomatic envoy. His remarkable resumé is testament to a life defined by intellectual curiosity, driving ambition, and a mastery of the art of networking.

Ronald Trigg is the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Porter County Museum Corporation.

All that remains of Tassinong today is an inconspicuous roadside historical marker, nestled amid corn and soybean fields, with suburban growth encroaching. Even now, the spot can be described as off the beaten path, but it was truly wilderness when the first non-native settlers arrived there in the 1830s. Sylvester and Olive Pierce, farmers from western New York, migrated to this unlikely backwater with their three youngest children in the mid-1850s. Gilbert was a teenager at the time of the move, and he launched his extraordinary career from this new Indiana home.

New York roots

Gilbert Ashville Pierce was born on January 11, 1839, in East Otto, a small community in New York, some forty miles south of Buffalo. He was the fourth of five children of Sylvester Pierce (1802-1890) and Olive Treat (1804-1896). The family's move westward was motivated by a desire for better economic opportunity and more

favorable agricultural conditions. They were among many farmers who left that area for greener pastures in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan.

The Pierces fully embraced their new Porter County home, but they retained close ties with their New York heritage. The family's two eldest children, Minerva (1825-1915) and Emmons (1831-1901), adults at the time of the move, remained behind. Emmons, who raised racehorses and operated a hotel, was also a poet who authored a book with a horseracing theme, *Poems of the Turf*. After the family patriarch died in 1890, the widowed Olive returned to East Otto, likely residing in the home of daughter Minerva and son-in-law John Laing. She died there six years later, but her body was transported to Indiana for burial next to Sylvester.

Arrival in Indiana

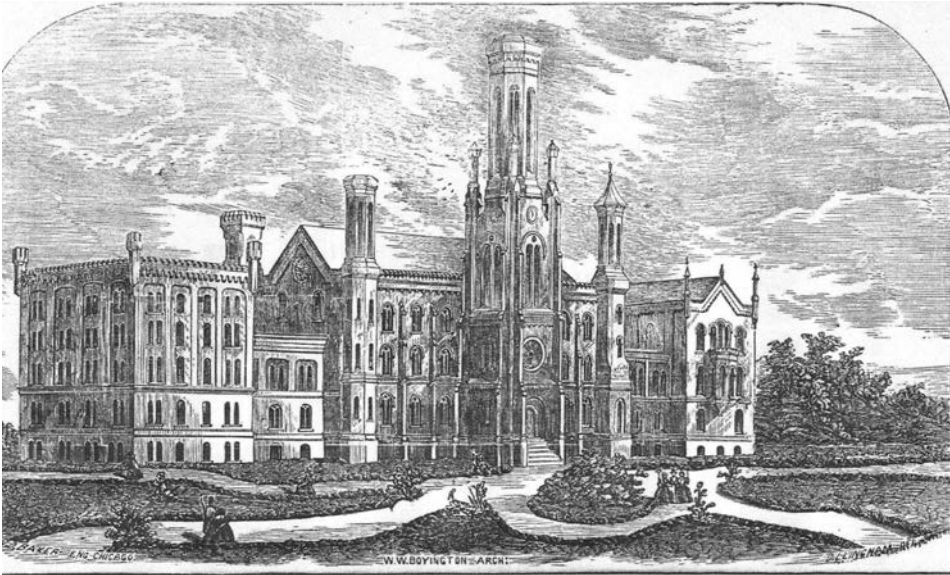
Many accounts assign to Tassinong a storied past as an Indian trading center and seventeenth-century French military outpost. These tales have not been conclusively confirmed. The village is nonetheless notable as one of the early places in Porter County to attract permanent settlers of European origin. Joseph Bartholomew and Jacob Parker acquired land there from the U.S. General Land Office in 1837, and they incorporated the village in 1852. By the time the Pierces arrived a few years later, Tassinong had grown to include a modest number of dwellings, at least two general stores, some tradesmen's shops, a tavern, a church, and a post office.

The Pierce family engaged in farming in their early days in Indiana, but Sylvester soon took another direction, seizing an opportunity to acquire one of the town's existing dry-goods stores. Ultimately, he ran that business for some thirty years. Gilbert clerked in his father's store. In 1869, the elder Pierce took on an additional responsibility: he became Tassinong's postmaster, a position he held until 1885.

Gilbert wasted no time in advancing his personal life after moving to Tassinong. On April 27, 1857, he married Anna Maria Bartholomew (1831-1916). The Bartholomews were one of the leading families of the community; Maria was the daughter of town founder Joseph Bartholomew. Gilbert was just eighteen at the time of the marriage, and Maria, curiously, was seven years his senior. Ties between the families were further strengthened two years later when Gilbert's younger sister Laura married Maria's brother Eli. Forging an alliance with this prominent family is an early example of Gilbert's evolving skill for building relationships beneficial to his future prospects.

Gilbert and Maria set up households in Tassinong (1860), Valparaiso (1870), and Chicago (1880), according to federal census records. They produced four children: Gerald (born 1860), Ellen "Nellie" (b. 1862), Paul (b. 1865), and Mary (b. 1869). The two boys followed their father into journalism and publishing, pursuits that would occupy a large portion of Gilbert's life.





Old University of Chicago Pierce studied law at this institution which predates the current University of Chicago. University Catalogue, 1860-61, University of Chicago Library.

The war years

Like thousands of his fellow countrymen, Pierce responded to the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861 by joining the Union Army. He enlisted in Company H of the Ninth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which was organized by Governor Oliver P. Morton. Even though Pierce had no military experience, he was immediately commissioned as a

second lieutenant, likely in recognition of his advanced education. The initial period of enlistment for the regiment was only three months. In the early days of the war, the North optimistically expected to quickly subdue the rebels, but reality set in soon after Union forces suffered some shocking early battlefield defeats, making it clear that the war would be long. The Ninth was disbanded and reconstituted under the same name in August 1861, but this time with a

commitment extended to three years. The regiment earned the nickname “The Bloody Ninth” because of its fierce record in combat. Pierce may have participated in early battlefield action, but it soon became apparent that his talents were more suited for the rear echelon than the front. When he was promoted to captain at the time of the reorganization, he was assigned the duties of assistant quartermaster. From that time on, he would remain engaged with the Quartermaster Corps, where he was charged with providing the soldiers with all their needs—clothing, food, camp and garrison equipment, transportation, supplies of all types—a critical task for battlefield success. His years clerking at the family store proved good preparation for this challenge, but his military duties were more serious. They had life-and-death implications.

Pierce rapidly rose through the ranks, taking on ever more responsibility at each stop. By the end of the war, he had been promoted to colonel and was appointed an inspector in the Quartermaster’s Department of the U.S. Department of War. Along the way, Pierce’s competence was acknowledged by many senior officials who wrote personal letters endorsing his advancement. Among these luminaries were General William T. Sherman, General Ulysses Grant,

and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Schuyler Colfax. After the war ended and prior to his leaving the service in October 1865, Pierce was given the honorary rank of brevet colonel of volunteers for his “faithful and meritorious service.” He accumulated many valuable friends.

Legal practice and politics

Pierce returned to Indiana after the war with a solid reputation. As a civilian, he chose to keep his military title, going by the name of Colonel Pierce. He actively sought the public spotlight, becoming a regular on the lecture circuit and participating in veterans’ events, often seated with dignitaries on the podium and sometimes composing patriotic poems for the occasion.

Pierce briefly worked in the legal profession, joining the firm of Alvin David (A.D.) Bartholomew, a younger brother of his wife. While Pierce was serving in the army, Bartholomew followed in his brother-in-law’s footsteps by studying law at the old University of Chicago. A.D. practiced in Valparaiso long into the twentieth century and became a judge on the Porter County Circuit Court.

After barely a year practicing law, Pierce was enticed into the world of politics. He was elected to the Indiana State House of Representatives as a Republican in 1868. Pierce took his legislative responsibilities seriously, serving on several standing committees and assisting in organizational, logistical, and ceremonial matters. Despite his very junior status, Pierce took a lead role in the election of George Buskirk as Speaker of the House, giving him another powerful ally.

During his brief tenure in the legislature, Pierce made many other influential acquaintances through his association with U.S. Senator (and former Governor) Oliver P. Morton. In

1869 he left Indiana to accept a position in Washington as an assistant financial clerk of the United States Senate, an appointment almost certainly facilitated by Morton. Pierce spent two years in the Capital; the experience provided an opportunity to introduce himself to the national leadership of the Republican Party and increase his network of friends in high places.

Publishing success

After leaving Washington, Pierce returned to Valparaiso and immersed himself in the local journalism scene. It was a time when broadsheets with opposing political views were being established, consolidated, and terminated. Pierce involved himself in all aspects of the business—editing, publishing, reporting—and he founded a short-lived paper called *The Republican*. Pierce’s experience in small-town journalism agreed with him, and he went on to tackle greater challenges in Chicago.

In 1872, he joined the editorial staff of *The Inter Ocean*, a Chicago-based daily that identified itself as “The Republican Newspaper.” He spent twelve years there, rising to the position of managing editor. In keeping with his standard practice, Pierce cultivated useful relationships with his journalistic colleagues, especially founding editor

Elijah W. Halford, who later served as private secretary to President Benjamin Harrison. Through Halford, Pierce developed a close personal friendship with Harrison that lasted for the rest of both men’s lives. He also caught the eye of another future president, Chester A. Arthur, by publishing a piece protesting Arthur’s firing as Collector of the New York Customs House by President Rutherford Hayes.

The Inter Ocean served as a publishing house for books, and Pierce took advantage of the opportunity so presented. An admirer of English novelist Charles Dickens, he produced *The Dickens Dictionary* in 1872, just two years after the great author’s death. Containing detailed descriptions of the plots and characters of all Dickens’ works, it became a standard reference for scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1880, he teamed with *Inter Ocean* colleague James B. Runnion, an acquaintance from university days, to compose a stage play. Building on a popular sentiment of the day, *100 Wives* condemned the Mormon practice of polygamy. One Philadelphia paper called the play “an argument against the hideous Mormon creed” that “serve(d) the devil.” Traveling companies presented the play across the country to great acclaim. Pierce also ventured into the world of popular literature around this time. He published three novels which he characterized as tales of American society, two of



Ninth Indiana Campsite This commemorative stone in Valparaiso marks the site where local recruits camped before being deployed to active duty. Image provided by the author, 2025.



Ninth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment Unknown unit of the Indiana Ninth Regiment, photo by Mathew Brady, National Archives and Records Administration.



Chicago Inter Ocean Newspaper Pierce was Managing Editor of this Chicago daily newspaper in the 1870s. Newspapers.com.



Poster for 100 Wives Pierce co-authored this play that was critical of the Mormon practice of polygamy. Courtesy of the Huntington Art Museum, San Marino, California.

them set in Washington, with fictional members of Congress as key characters. They received mixed reviews and varying levels of public acceptance.

Onward to the wild west

During the Republican convention of 1884, Pierce worked the floor as part of a campaign to nominate President Arthur for a new term in office. Arthur had been elevated to the presidency in 1881 after the assassination of James Garfield. Ultimately the effort failed, and the convention selected James G. Blaine to head its ticket. After the convention, Arthur offered Pierce a prize for his loyalty, selecting him to be Governor of Dakota Territory, replacing a scandal-plagued incumbent.

The appointment represented a seismic shift in Pierce's life. He arrived at his new post a complete outsider with no experience running a government and little knowledge of the area; his reception

was not uniformly warm. These were turbulent times in the territory, and Pierce had to familiarize himself with many contentious issues. Controversy raged over the movement of the territorial capital from Yankton in the south to Bismarck in the north. The U.S. Army continued its drive to subjugate the Plains Indians and crush resistance to reservation life. Preparations were underway to admit the territory to the union, but should it be one state or two? Pierce lent his support to legislation that ultimately led to the admission of North and South Dakota as separate states.

Another controversial issue in the territory was women's suffrage. In 1885, both houses of the Dakota legislature passed a bill to give women the right to vote. Pierce vetoed the groundbreaking act, arguing that the existence of such a law would weaken Dakota's upcoming application for statehood. An effort to overturn his veto failed. The 1902 multi-volume *History of Woman Suffrage*, edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan

B. Anthony, and others, bemoaned Pierce's failure "to recognize the grand opportunity to enfranchise 50,000 American citizens by one stroke of his pen." Other activists were less gentle in their reaction. A suffragist society in Illinois declared that by issuing the veto he had "recorded his name among the obstructionists to human liberty."

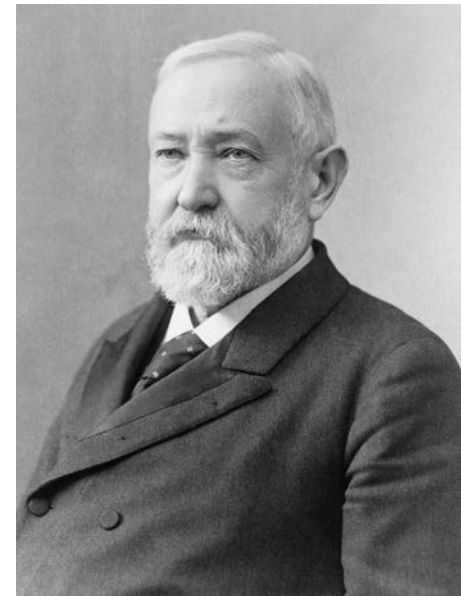
Pierce remained governor until 1887. Afterwards, he stayed in Bismarck as a correspondent for a St. Paul newspaper. When the newly-convened North Dakota Legislature met for its first session in 1889, it chose Pierce to fill one of the state's two U.S. Senate seats. (Until the ratification of the 17th amendment in 1913, U.S. senators were selected by state legislatures rather than by popular vote.) Pierce's Senate term ended in 1891. He sought reelection to a full term, but a fractionalized Republican majority in the legislature rejected him.

Slowed by illness

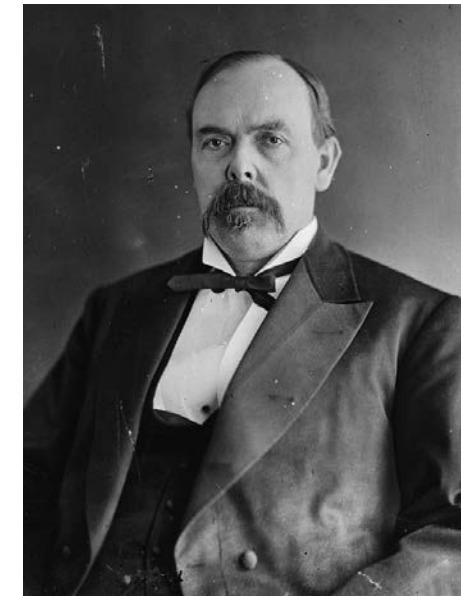
In the spring of 1891, Pierce and a close North Dakota friend, businessman/publisher William Murphy, jointly purchased the *Minneapolis Tribune*. He moved his family to Minnesota and became editor-in-chief of the respected regional newspaper, but poor health compelled him to sell his interest in the paper and resign after only a few months. Pierce had suffered his entire adult life from respiratory ailments, variously diagnosed as bronchitis, asthma, or pneumonia. As he grew older, increasing bouts of infirmity limited his activities. President Benjamin Harrison, only weeks before leaving office after his defeat by Grover Cleveland, appointed his old friend to be Minister to Portugal. Pierce accepted the diplomatic posting, but once again, a few weeks later, illness forced his resignation.

The 1890s represented a sharp departure from what had been a high-activity life. Still only in his early fifties, the very age he might have expected to be at his professional peak, Pierce lacked his accustomed vigor. He spent some time

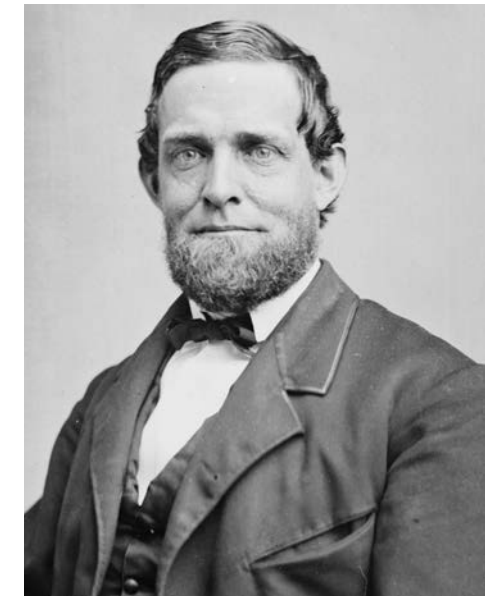
Powerful Indiana Republicans This trio of Hoosier politicians was influential in Pierce's rise. Portraits from U.S. Library of Congress.



Benjamin Harrison
U.S. President (1889-1893)
U.S. Senator (1881-1887)
Union Army Colonel (1862-1865)



Oliver P. Morton
U.S. Senator (1867-1877)
Governor of Indiana (1861-1867)

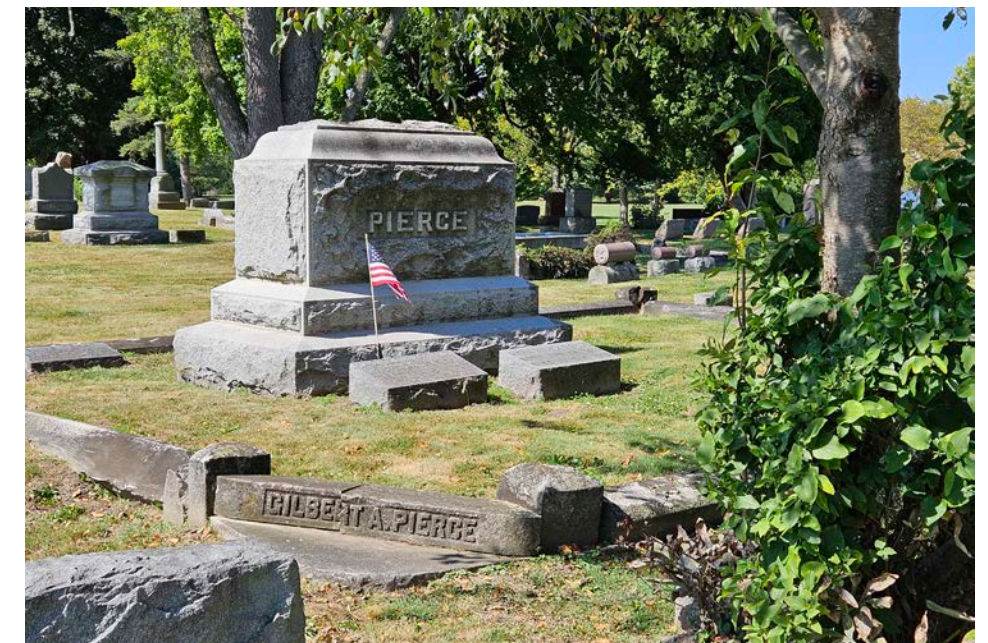


Schuyler Colfax
U.S. Vice President (1869-1873)
Speaker, U.S. House (1863-1869)
Member of Congress (1855-1869)

traveling in the American West, seeking a climate more favorable to his condition. Eventually his health improved somewhat, and he joined his two sons in Chicago. He accepted a position with one of the daily newspapers and took up residence at the Lexington Hotel.

During these years, Pierce clung to relevance by nurturing relationships with his powerful Republican friends. Pierce and Benjamin Harrison corresponded frequently about national issues, and they seemed personally devoted to each other, as demonstrated by this Harrison quote from an 1892 letter: "I am very much touched . . . by your generous friendship." After Harrison lost the presidency in 1892, Pierce advocated for his return to presidential politics in the 1896 and 1900 elections, but Harrison himself had little enthusiasm for a comeback. Finally, years of poor health caught up with Gilbert Pierce on February 15, 1901; he succumbed to pneumonia in Chicago. His friend Harrison died less than one month later.

Gilbert Pierce's versatility and professional achievement may be unparalleled in Porter County history,



Gravesite at Adams Cemetery The Pierce Family plot in Morgan Township contains the graves of Gilbert Pierce, his wife, his parents, and a sister. Image provided by the author, 2024.

but he is little known as a historical figure. Even though he was apparently not interested in pursuing high elected office, he would seem to have been a logical candidate for a cabinet position

or other top-level post in a Republican administration. It's not certain he ever had such aspirations, but in the end, it was human frailty that determined just how far his star could rise. ●

From a Bailly Point of View



Blue Willow serving platter, circa 1830-1915

Made of a less expensive alternative to porcelain, this earthenware serving platter features the blue willow pattern, an English adaptation of Chinese porcelain designs. Manufactured using a process called “transfer printing,” the design was printed on tissue paper and applied to the ceramic surface under the glaze. The willow pattern was the cheapest available transfer-printed pattern by 1814 and remained so through the 19th century. By the Civil War, around half of the table wares of the United States market came from the Staffordshire region, a hub for ceramics production in England.

As Americans were establishing a national identity, they continued to look to Europe for taste and sophistication. Settlers with European roots moved further west, and families like the Howes and Baillys used material possessions to demonstrate a connection to European taste and sophistication.

This excerpt comes from the 2018 PoCo Muse exhibit called, *From a Bailly Point of View*, which looked closely at artifacts from the Bailly Family Collection to shed new light on their legacy in Porter County.

In November 2025, the PoCo Muse will be remounting an expanded version of the exhibit in the museum at 20 Indiana Avenue.

Though Joseph Bailly looms large in the memory of Porter County as its first non-native settler, the lives and work of three generations of Bailly women—Marie, Rose, and Frances—truly shaped the Bailly homestead and public perception of the family legacy.

Frances Howe lived most of her life on a plot of land on the north bank of the Little Calumet River, settled in 1822 by her grandfather, the French Canadian fur trader Joseph Bailly. Though she never met him, Frances idolized Bailly. For Frances, her grandfather was more than the first Euro-American settler of Northwest Indiana—he was a lay missionary of the Catholic faith and a noble civilizer of the American interior.

Frances arrived at the Bailly homestead as an infant with her mother and sister in 1852. The family left their home in Chicago after Frances’ father and namesake, Francis Howe, died of cholera. Marie LeFevre Bailly, Frances’ half-Odawa, half-French grandmother, returned to the homestead where she operated a trading post and oversaw religious observances until her death in 1866. Marie spoke Odawa, dressed in traditional Odawa clothing, and hosted neighboring Native Americans while maintaining her family’s strict Catholic piety. Marie’s death coincided with the culmination of local, state, and federal policies and attitudes which together worked to remove the majority of Native Americans from northern Indiana to open the land for Euro-American settlements. Decades earlier,



Frances Howe A portrait of Frances Howe, granddaughter of Joseph Bailly, at age seventeen.

the 1838 Potawatomi Trail of Death represented the last major forced migration of indigenous peoples from this region. After Marie’s death, Frances and her family remained on the homestead, gradually losing their connections to local indigenous peoples and further embracing the French Catholic heritage of the family’s patriarch, Honore Gratien Joseph Bailly de Messein.

After Marie died, Frances’ mother Rose gained control of the property. She began a series of changes which included the renovation of the old kitchen into a chapel, complete with a wayside shrine modeled after one the family had seen in Belgium. The chapel served as a memorial of sorts to Joseph and Marie, both of whom died in the original building. Once Frances inherited the homestead, she made significant changes to the appearance of the main house to reflect contemporary Victorian Eastlake style. Frances received a classical Catholic education at St. Mary of the Woods in Terre Haute, Indiana, and accompanied her mother and sister on a five-year pilgrimage to Catholic holy sites in Europe. Most of the rest of her life was spent in the homestead, where she worshiped in the chapel, played in the woods, read in the library, visited gravestones in the family cemetery, and ruminated on her family’s past. Frances was well read and enjoyed writing letters and books. She never married but did adopt an orphan named Emma Bachman from St. Mary of the Woods. ●



Rosary & missal

The rosary, a tool for meditation and counting prayers, and missal, a Latin prayer book, are staples of Catholic worship. Frances and her family used both of these objects during services conducted at the Bailly chapel. Joseph Bailly encouraged his family to observe mass every Sunday and to live a pious life. The Baillys often hosted itinerant Catholic priests at the homestead because it was for many years the only place to hold mass in the Calumet region. The majority of new settlers to the area were Protestants, but Frances maintained her devout Catholic lifestyle. Even after the passing of her mother and grandmother, Frances conducted daily services in Latin with her adopted daughter. With these tools of religious observance, Frances continued the Catholic traditions of her family in an area that had become largely Protestant.



Last Look! This lantern made from perforated sheet metal came from the Bailly Homestead and is believed to have been used by members of the family. The punctured pattern was both decorative and functional: the holes allowed air to reach the flame but sheltered it from gusts of wind. Additionally, the enclosure provided some protection to keep a fire from spreading should the lantern accidentally tip over.