

well known educator; Carney Lantis, a psychologist; Cyrena Van Gordon, grand opera soprano; Sherwood Anderson, author; and William Clayton Pryor, author and newspaper reporter.



Hon. O. T. Corson 1857-1928, Supt. of Camden Schools—1880; Pres. of National Education Assn. 1899



Cyrena Van Gordon—Grand Opera Singer 1892-1964



Wm. Clayton Pryor—1894-1949—Author and newspaper reporter

CAMDEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND NATIONAL AFFAIRS

Before the village of Newcomb was incorporated in 1832, the only records of elections were those of the township, and it is assumed that Camden participated in them. During this period there is one reference to the election when the county was divided into four townships and Camden was in the second range, which later was divided into Monroe, Washington, Gasper and Somers. This election was held in the home of Samuel Hawkins in Eaton.

In 1832 when Newcomb was incorporated by special act of the state legislature, corporation officers as prescribed by law, were elected. From this year until 1840, elections, both national and local presented no unusual interest but Camden voted.

In 1840 the first spectacular national election took place and Camden took a vital and absorbing interest in it. William Henry Harrison and Martin Van Buren were the candidates for President and Thomas Corwin and William Shannon were the

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candidates for Governor of Ohio. Because the whole of the United States had been experiencing a depression which had prevailed since 1837, the national issues were great and the whole country, including Camden, was alive with enthusiasm and wild excitement. Eaton was chosen as headquarters for the Whig Party campaign but Camden took just as active a part as the citizens of Eaton and large crowds from Camden attended all the rallies and ceremonies, expressing their approval or disapproval of the candidates. In this year at one large demonstration in Eaton, there was a "Log Cabin Raising" celebrated by the Whig Party; Camden produced a large ball, twelve to fifteen feet in diameter, and rolled it along the road from Camden to Eaton. The expression "Keep the Ball Rolling" was then in vogue and became one of the Whig's favorite slogans. The large ball symbolized the majorities that would be rolled up for Candidate Harrison.

In 1860, great interest again became intense and feudlike. The great slave question split the parties and new parties were formed. The Republican Party was newly organized and was made up mostly of former Whig Party members. They had a group which they called the "Wide Awakes" and Camden members identified themselves with this group. They became quite enthusiastic about their cause and worked hard for its promotion, even adopting a uniform consisting of black cap, blue waistcoat, black pants and red sash. This new organization held spirited demonstrations, invited people from Hamilton, Oxford, Eaton and Winchester to come to Camden and join in the rallies. At one mass meeting three or four hundred arrived and helped stage a large parade, with bands, singing, and speech making. The Democratic Party also was well organized and at one of their meetings, they erected a very large pole which stood about 200 feet in the air, on which hung a banner 65 feet long, bearing the words—"Douglas, Johnson, Vallandigham and Victory." (Vallandigham was in this campaign, candidate for Congress) The

pole fell before the ceremonies began and the Democrats believed that the Republican blacksmith who had welded the iron bands together, had purposely been careless. A Gratis wagon, drawn by 28 horses and a wagon from Butler County, drawn by 45 horses, with a voter on each horse and 150 "Never-Asleep" men from Hamilton on the train, arrived. At a very large demonstration near Bruce's Grove, near Eaton, it was estimated that 10,000 people attended, in a report of the affair it said "Boston and Camden beat anything we ever saw for fine wagons. We can't decide between the two which was best. They both were as fine as need be."

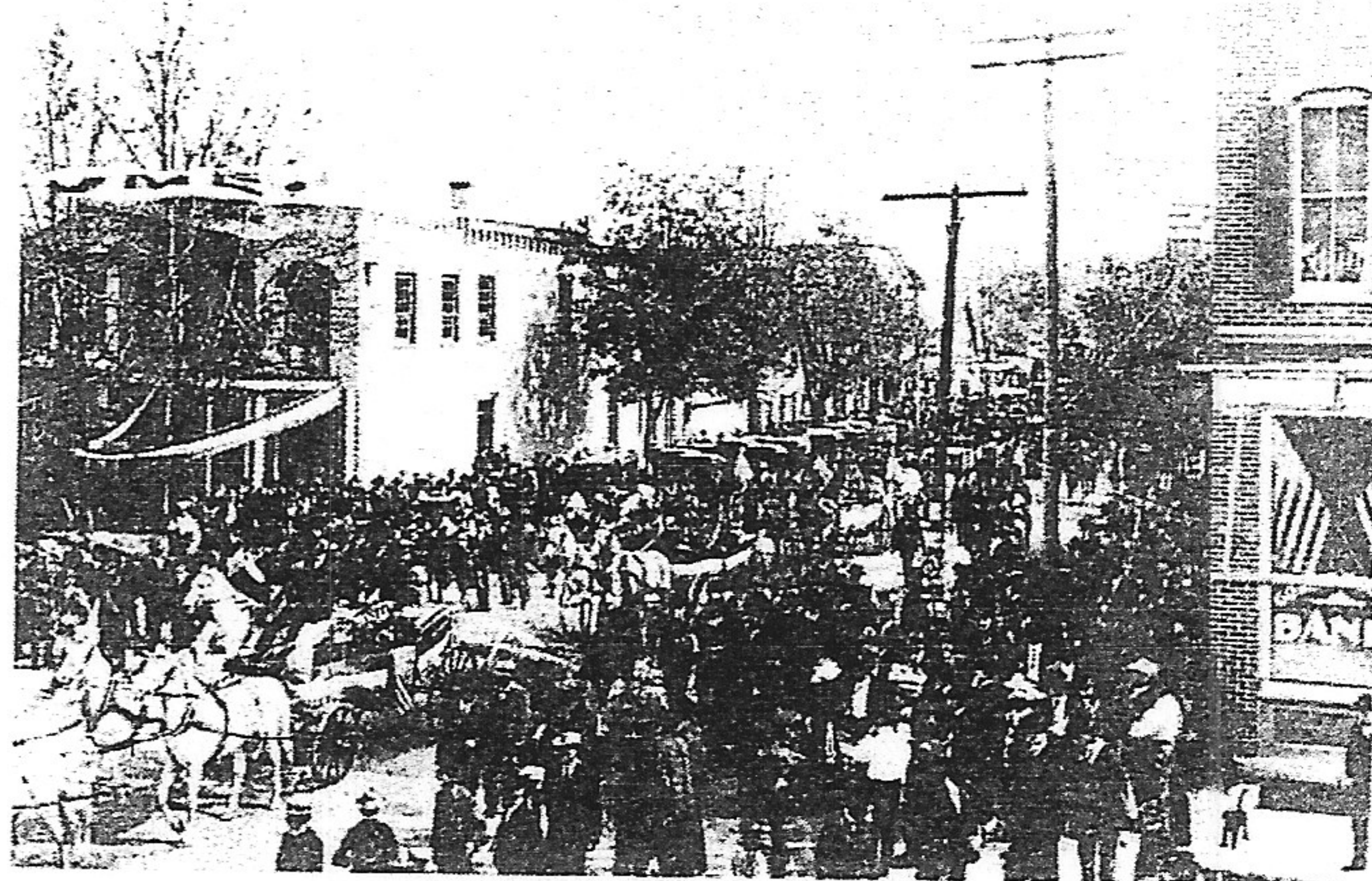
In 1863 the contest for Governor of Ohio, with Clement L. Vallandigham (representing a faction of the Democratic Party called Copperheads) and John Brough (representing the faction of Republicans called Unionists) became very spirited and alarming. The meetings of both parties drew large crowds accentuated by parades, banners, songs, shouting, quarrels and fights. During this campaign an outstanding feud developed between Mr. Dan Payne and Mr. Benj. Kennedy, both highly respected and well liked gentlemen. Articles and letters written to and fro were published in the Hamilton and Eaton papers. Instigating this feud was an occasion when a group of 60 or 70 Vallandigham supporters from Butler County came riding through Camden to a mass meeting in Eaton. On Main St., just north of Hendricks, this procession met Joseph Howard and William Patterson with a two horse team, hauling a saw log. The Butler County procession, being three or four abreast, split its ranks, some going to the west side and others to the east side of the street. One of the marshals of the day from the procession attempted to ride across the street in front of the team. He rode so near the horse's heads that the tongue of the wagon ran between the hind legs of his horse. This caused quite a disturbance between the Vallandigham men and Mr. Patterson, who was a Unionist. Stone throwing, fist fighting, tongue lashings, cursing and a general brawl followed. Mr. Patterson

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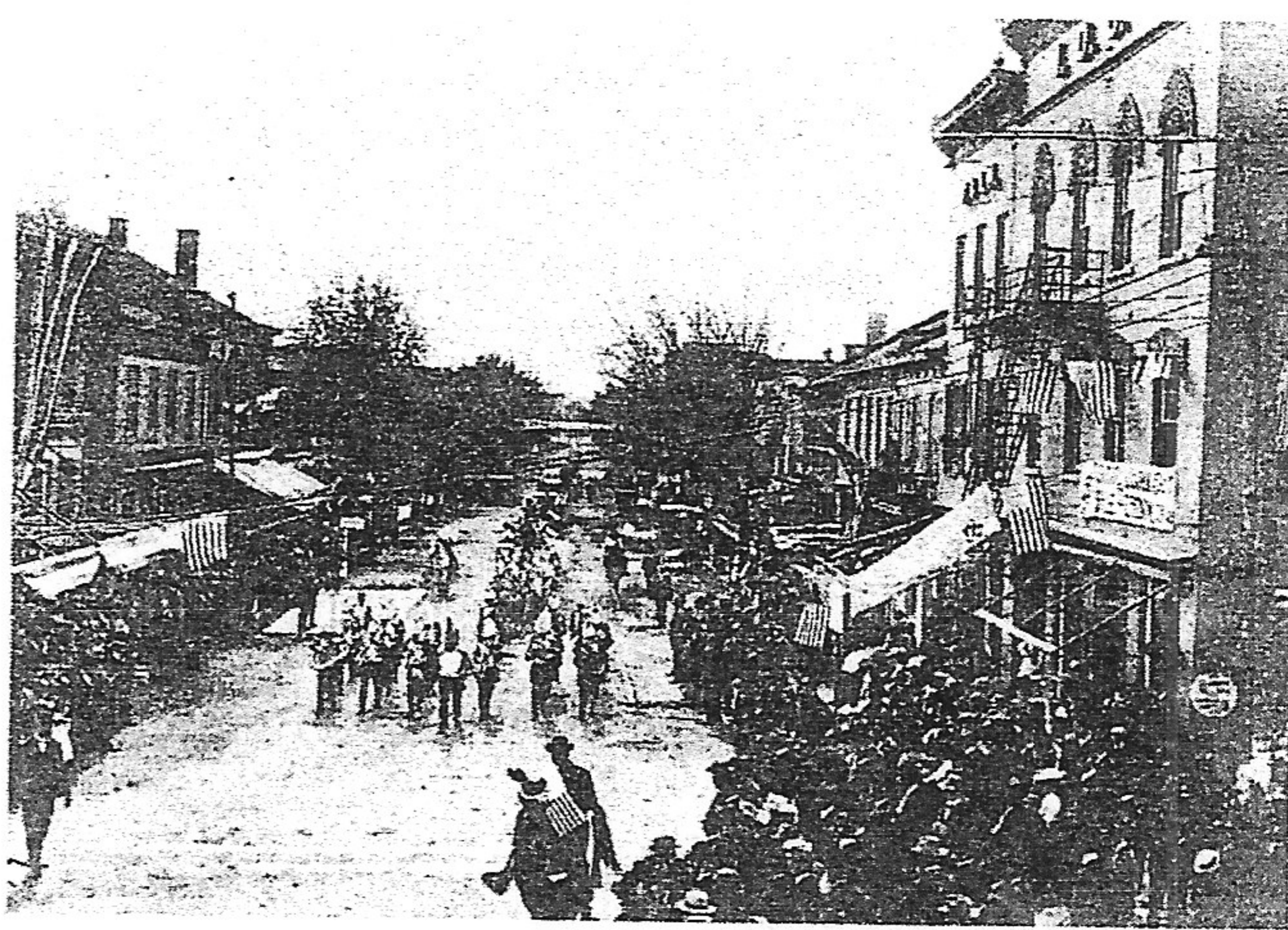
was assisted in warding off his assailants by Mr. Howard and his wagon whip. A lady finally helped Mr. Patterson into a nearby house to protect him from the blows and stones which were being hurled at him. The Vallandigham men proceeded on to Eaton. In the evening when the procession was returning home, the Constable of Somers Township met them just above Camden and demanded surrender of the three men who seemed to have been the outstanding ruffians in the morning incident. The men who were accused promised to stop at the magistrate's office when they entered town but asked for permission to ride in with the procession. When the parade stopped at the magistrate's office, the three designated men were missing. It was reported that two men from Somerville helped two of the three to escape by letting them get into their wagon and the two Somerville men rode in the procession on their horses. Dan Payne accused Benjamin Kennedy of helping the third Vallandigham man to escape by piloting him through one of the back alleys of Camden. Mr. Payne ended his tirade against Mr. Kennedy by saying—"How can a man vote for Vallandigham and be an honest, law abiding, order-loving citizen?" Mr. Kennedy denied knowing anything about the disturbance and therefore he declared he could not have helped the man escape. Their accusations and answers became very personal and insulting and the subject of debate throughout the county.

When the glorious news of the surrender of General Lee at Appamatox reached Camden, church bells pealed, people gathered and formed parades, bonfires were started and a general celebration was enthusiastically held.

In 1892 and 1896 the Presidential elections created more interest than any since the Civil War. While these campaigns were less spectacular than those of 1840 and 1860, great enthusiasm was shown and very distinguished workers in both parties visited and spoke in Camden. Large crowds always turned out to hear the candidates and their supporters. Fantastic parades were held, bands



"Mark Hanna Day in Camden" Oct. 2, 1902. Senator Mark Hanna came to Camden, accompanied by Gov. George Kn. Nash of Ohio and Sec. of Agriculture, Jerry Wilson. Sen. Hanna was the power behind William McKinley, the Republican candidate for President of the U.S. The distinguished guests arrived by railroad train and at the depot they were placed in fancy carriages and paraded up Central Ave. to Lafayette and down Lafayette south.



"Mark Hanna Day in Camden" Oct. 2, 1902. The parade proceeded north on Main St. and over to the grade school grounds where the political speeches were made. Mr. Hanna, a better speaker than President McKinley, took to the road during the 1902 campaign, while Mr. McKinley remained in Washington. Sen. Hanna made only one speech in Preble County and that was in Camden. Great was his welcome that day.

Compliments of Camden Bar

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Above is the group of Camden people who composed the first "First Aid Class" during the Second World War. Dr. McKinley, at the far right, was the instructor.

it and send it to Governor Cox. The Republicans heard of this and determined to bid against them and the price went up beyond all expectations. The Republicans finally bought the cake for \$50.00 and later sent it to Senator Harding. The Democrats bought a smaller cake for \$25.00 and sent it to Governor Cox who graciously acknowledged it and wrote a cordial letter also to Mrs. Harry Charles, who had baked the cake:

Columbus, Ohio
Dec. 1, 1918

Mrs. Harry Charles,
Camden, Ohio.

My dear Mrs. Charles:-

I just want to express my appreciation of the very fine cake, which I understand you baked, which was sent to me by The Committee having charge of the Red Cross sale in Camden. The cake came just as I was leaving for Culver to spend Thanksgiving with my son, who is in school there. We took it with us, and you may be sure the boy enjoyed it, as well as the rest of us. Allow me to congratulate you on your skill, and thank The Committee for its kindness in remembering me. With all good wishes, I am,

Very truly yours,
James M. Cox (signed)

Compliments of Moysey Bros. Clothiers & Haberdashers — Eaton
Suburban Propane — Eaton
Landmark — Eaton
Dowlar's Cafe, Fine Foods & Drinks — Eaton

Governor Cox's father lived in Camden and the town has always claimed the Governor as a Camdenite.

Not only in politics and national wars, but also in civilian work for the government, has Camden made its national contribution. Since early in the 1880's many men and women have held civil service positions both in Washington, D.C. and in other parts of the country, serving in the Treasury, the Labor, the Agriculture, the Internal Revenue departments, the Government Printing Office and the Library of Congress and other special activities.

REMINISCENCES

Though the life of the average Camden citizen may seem very hum-drum to an outsider, there have been exciting, happy, disturbing, disastrous, and upsetting events throughout the years. Some were known only to Camden people and some rated headlines throughout the state.

In 1877 the Camden Awkwards, a famous baseball team, was one of the best teams in the state. The players were William Overholtz, James Paulus, James Cochran, Dr. C. M. Thomas, H. C. Crafton, James Ford, J. Ed McCord, James Overholtz, Horace Brown and John Peters. Although these men have all passed on to their rewards, their names and the team name have gone down in baseball history as the beginning of Camden's baseball fervor. The team played an outstanding game in Eaton when the C. H. & D. Railway ran an excursion from Camden to Eaton and about 500 rooters accompanied the Awkwards. The Awkwards won and a great celebration followed.

Sept. 6, 1894 was indeed a gala day for Camden. The Cincinnati Reds played the Camden team in Camden. It was the first and only time in the history of Camden baseball that a National League team made its appearance in Preble County. The score was 16 to 1 in favor of the Reds. Losing the game did not deter Camden's enthusiasm, which