

# The Crocker House Museum

## Mission Statement

The Macomb County Historical Society and its Crocker House Museum provide educational experiences of Mount Clemens and Macomb County history through the use of artifacts, rotating exhibits, publications, stories, and special educational programs. Our purpose is to collect and preserve our local heritage to instill an appreciation of our community's unique history.

## Position Statement

Crocker House Museum: a late-Victorian home-life experience reminiscent of the world renowned Mineral Bath Era of Mount Clemens in Macomb County, Michigan.



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The Crocker House Museum &  
Macomb County Historical Society

15 Union Street

Mount Clemens, MI 48043

586-465-2488

[www.crockerhousemuseum.org](http://www.crockerhousemuseum.org)



## History of the first mayoral home of Mount Clemens

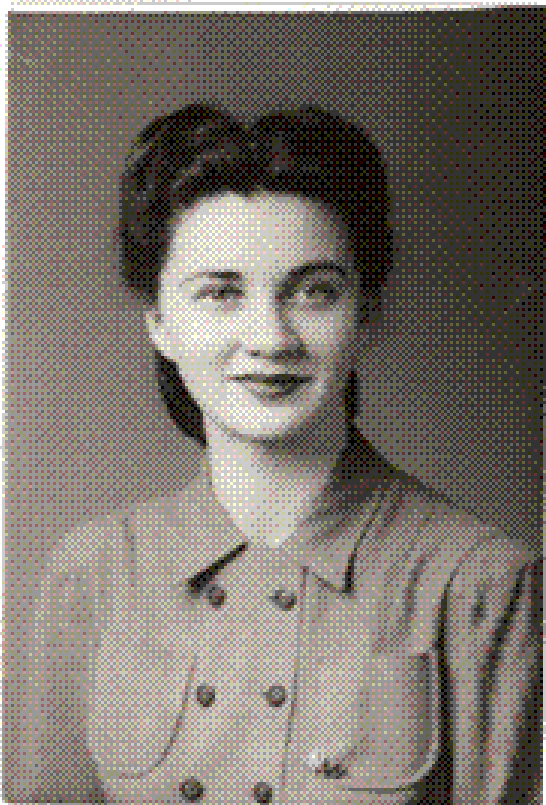
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This book is dedicated to Mrs. Nancy Moyer McCain for  
devoting her life to the preservation of the  
Crocker House Museum  
and the rich history of Mount Clemens.

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Prepared and written by Kimberly A. Parr, Director of The Crocker House Museum and Macomb County Historical Society

Edited by Nancy Feldbush.

All photos are from the Macomb County Historical Society collection.

Page 42 photo of mineral bath courtesy of The Detroit News.

Photos of the Crocker House courtesy of Kim Parr and Marcia Swiderski.



All quoted text within this booklet, such as newspaper references and letters, is reprinted exactly as the original text.

The publication of this material has been made possible by the Will L. Lee Memorial Fund.

Prior to his death in 1953, Mr. Lee had served for 53 years as a teacher and superintendent of Macomb County schools.

The fund is used to publish oral and written history pertaining to Macomb County.



*This photograph is of the Mount Clemens Club gambling at a table now housed in our collection. The photograph was not taken inside of Crocker House, but at another location within Mount Clemens. However, it provides some insight to what the Crocker House became as a gambling hall.*

*Left to right: William Crittenden, Dr. Hutchins, Arthur Eastman (standing), Arthur Canfield, James Tucker, Fred Eastman, James Bosman, John Sherman, Charles Lamb (standing), James B. Eldredge.*

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# After the Crocker Family

The house was moved from 46 Market Street to 116 New Street in 1908 to make room for a new post office, but the Crocker family remained in the home until 1921.

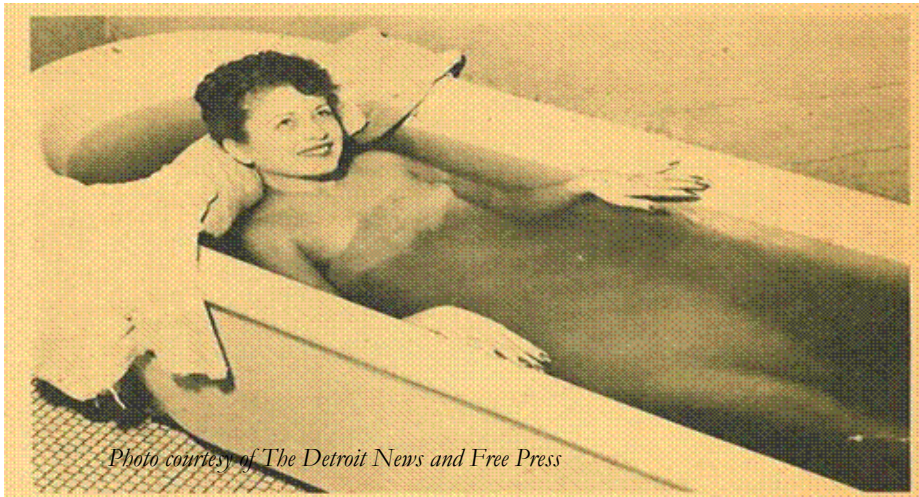
Max Cohen purchased the home and remodeled it into four apartments. He continued to live in the home until his new residence was built next door in 1927. The home was then rented to Harry Chevalier who later purchased the home in 1934.

Harry Chevalier purchased the home in 1934 and ran a small gambling hall and lunch room, called The Club, within the upper rooms of the house until the mid-1940s. He resided there until the mid-1970s when the Michigan State Highway Department purchased the home for \$17,000. Slated for removal or demolition in 1975, the house was rescued by the Macomb County Historical Society, which moved it to 15 Union Street in 1976 for the use as a local history museum.





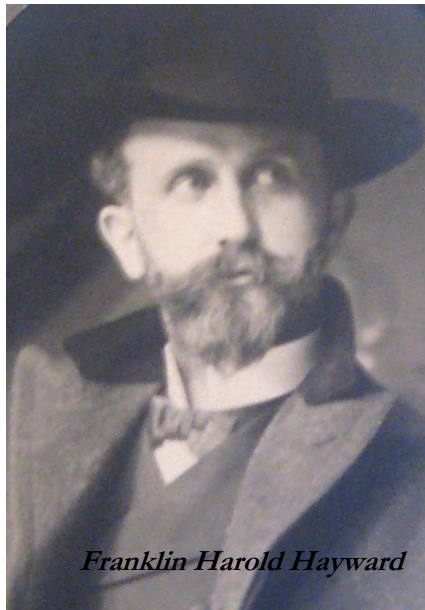
# Mount Clemens = Bath City U.S.A.



*Photo courtesy of The Detroit News and Free Press*

The Crocker House Museum also exhibits the history of the famous Mineral Bath Era of Mount Clemens. Displays include the mineral salts, mineral water and many artifacts pertaining to the bath houses, hotels, and industry that once filled this city.

The parents of the most prominent local artist, Franklin Harold Hayward, were the first physicians to prescribe the Mount Clemens mineral water as medicine. You will find his fine art on display throughout the museum.



*Franklin Harold Hayward*

# Introduction



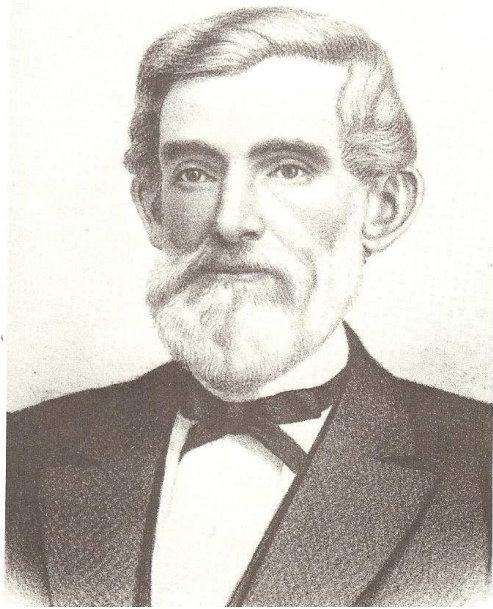
*April 6, 1976: Crocker House moved from 116 New Street to corner of Macomb Street and North Avenue. April 7: House moved to city parking lot on Union Street beside excavation for foundation. April 10: House moved into position over excavated foundation.*

The Macomb County Historical Society was originally started in 1951, but failed to hold together. The society was formed again in 1964 and proved to be successful to now survive over 50 years of operation. The formation of the society was prompted by the fact that Mount Clemens was losing so much of its history. The members of the historical society worked hard to collect artifacts from the local community. Their mission was to open a museum. When they discovered that the first mayoral home—still intact with its original Italianate architectural adornments—was to be razed, they sprang into action.

Local service clubs, notably the Kiwanis Club of Mount Clemens, helped raise the needed funds to purchase the house and lot to place it on, move the home, and restore it to its original condition. Due to everyone's foresight and diligence the museum stands today to preserve our local history and the history of the first two mayors of Mount Clemens.

This booklet provides insight into the lives and environment of those first mayors. Thanks to the efforts of our founding museum members and the research of Sabin Crocker, the Crocker House contains a wonderful file of historical documents relating to the Crocker family. A compilation of those documents led to the creation of this publication.





## Joshua Dickinson

1811 - 1879

Joshua Dickinson was born in Vermont in 1811. He came to Detroit with his parents in 1841 and, a year afterward, moved to Mount Clemens. At first, he engaged in the mercantile business. His provision store burned down in a great fire that happened on January 12, 1853.

### January 12, 1853

Great fire at Mount Clemens. On Monday night, about 11, a fire broke out in the store occupied by Williams & Wooley on NW corner of Court House Square destroying entire block. The fire crossed the Main Street and burned the provision store of Joshua Dickinson.

Mr. Dickinson then worked primarily with real estate. He was instrumental in the building of the Romeo and Mount Clemens Plank Road.

He loved his adopted community and became involved in its politics. A staunch Democrat, he served as Chairman of the County Committee for many years. He was also a charter member of the Odd Fellows, which was organized in 1847.

In 1846, Joshua married Catherine Lee, who was the granddaughter of Judge Christian Clemens, founder of Mount Clemens.

In 1852, Joshua Dickinson was elected Register of Deeds. Unfortunately it was the same year that Joshua and Catherine lost their four-year-old child, Harriet. Just a few years later, at the age of twenty-seven, Catherine died along with their two- and four-year-old children, William and George. It is assumed that they passed away due to some illness. No documents have ever been found to state what took their lives.

Joshua was then left with only one surviving child, seven-year-old Katherine.



The Nursery was restored during the winter of 2011. The walls were severely cracked and the woodwork was in poor condition. A chemical peel through the layers of varnish on the woodwork revealed that the first layer was faux grained. This graining has been restored to its original faux grain color. Since the floor was too thin to sand we decided to also restore it with faux grain as was common. We were not able to find a reproduction of wall paper from this room so we decided to install wallpaper that was originally produced in 1877 and now recreated by Bradbury & Bradbury. The original version was made in England by Jeffrey & Company with Sir Walter Crane's drawings depicting the story of "Ye Froggy A-wooing He Would Go" (or "Froggie went a -courtin" as it is better known today). The paper was referred to as Miss Mouse at Home nursery wallpaper. The version we have was the Americanized version which was reproduced without the permission of Walter Crane or the publisher. It was found in the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut and also at the Brucemore Mansion in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We have our collection of children artifacts displayed in this room. The curtains are reproductions of curtains made in the 1870s.

George Crocker raised 9 children in the home although 11 were born in the house. Sadly one died as a stillborn, another died at just a year of age and another passed on at the age of 9 due to diphtheria.





The dining room is adjacent to the formal parlor. The tiger maple and cherry floor makes this an impressive room. The hanging lamp depicts a Michigan lake scene and was manufactured in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The kitchen includes a Peninsular stove, kerosene wall lamps with mercury reflectors, a sink-side water pump, and many kitchen utensils. A door leads up to the servant's quarters which allowed easy access to stoke the stove during the night.



Mr. Dickinson built his home in 1869 on land that was part of the original Christian Clemens Private Claim 141. It was located at 46 Market Street at the corner of Market and Walnut Streets. This location was platted as part of Mullett's survey in 1836 and was part of the land on which Christian Clemens, founder of Mount Clemens, built the home in which he resided until his death in 1844. The property had been subdivided, but in 1867 it was consolidated into one parcel by Joshua Dickinson, whose wife, Katherine, was the granddaughter of Christian Clemens. Joshua Dickinson set to building the house just one year before Katherine was to marry George Martin Crocker. Katherine Lee Dickinson, married George Martin Crocker September 6, 1870, a few months after he was admitted to the bar. The ceremony took place in the home of her grandfather, Dr. George Lee.

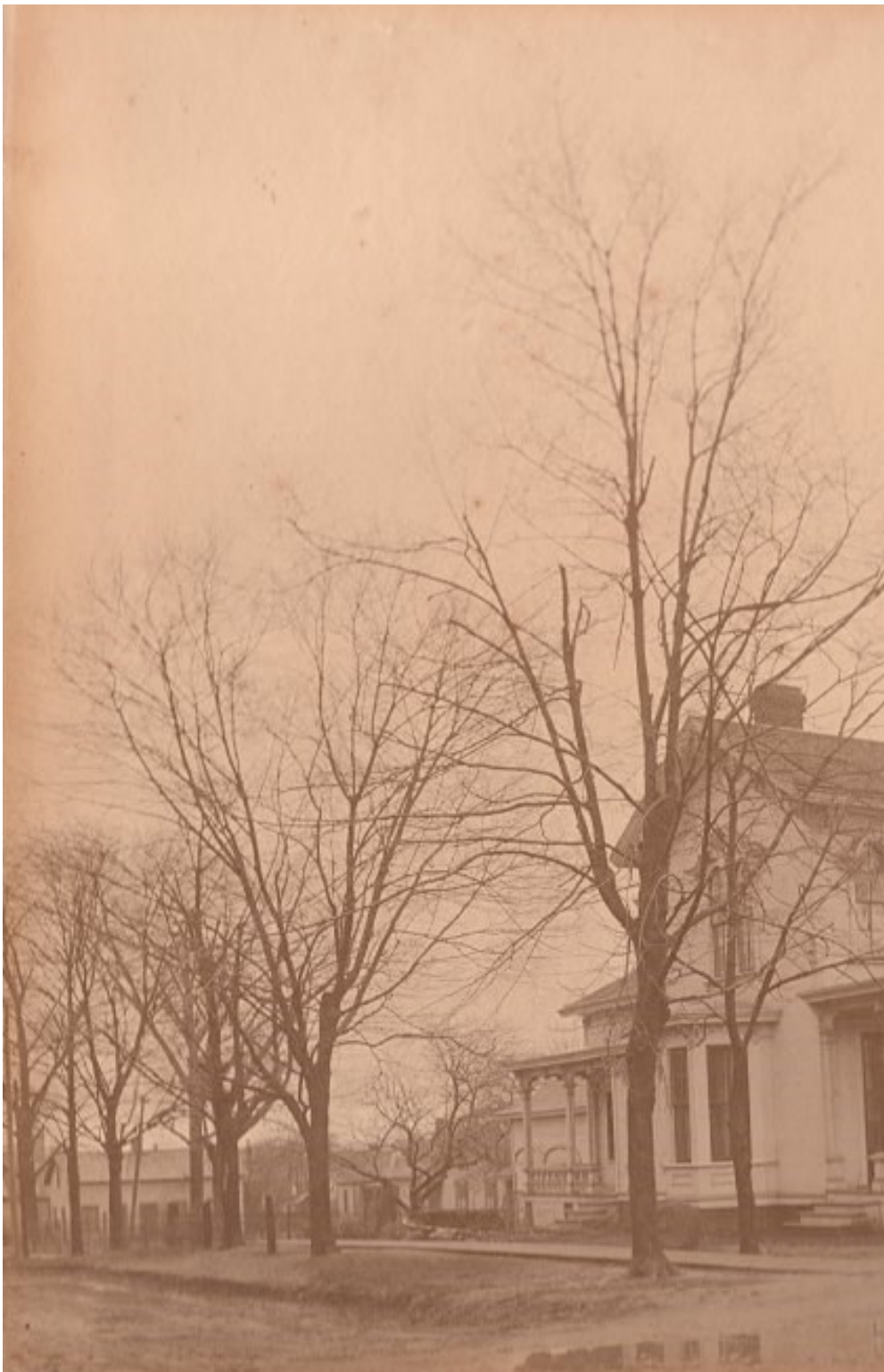
George and Katherine moved into the new, beautiful, Italianate home with Joshua Dickinson sometime after the 1870 census was taken. Mount Clemens was incorporated as a city on March 17, 1879 and Joshua was elected as the new city's first mayor in April. At that time, the population of the city was a slightly more than 3,000 people. Sadly, Mayor Dickinson died of consumption [tuberculosis] in May 1879, just a month after taking office. He remains the shortest-term mayor on record in Mount Clemens.

George Crocker had served as justice of the peace and prosecuting attorney before being appointed to fill out the term of Mayor after the death of Joshua Dickinson. He was reelected as mayor in 1880 and later served as judge of probate court. He went into a local banking firm and later became auditor of the Bay City and Alpena Railroad. He also served in the same capacity for the Mackinaw Railroad. He was a member of the Mount Clemens Electric Company which was purchased in 1907 by the Detroit Edison Company. For many years, he served as a member of the Mount Clemens Board of Education. He died January 4, 1918.

*Katherine Dickinson married George Martin Crocker on September 6, 1870 on the same day, the first Bishop of Michigan, Right Reverend Samuel McCoskry, came into town to lay the cornerstone for Grace Episcopal Church.*



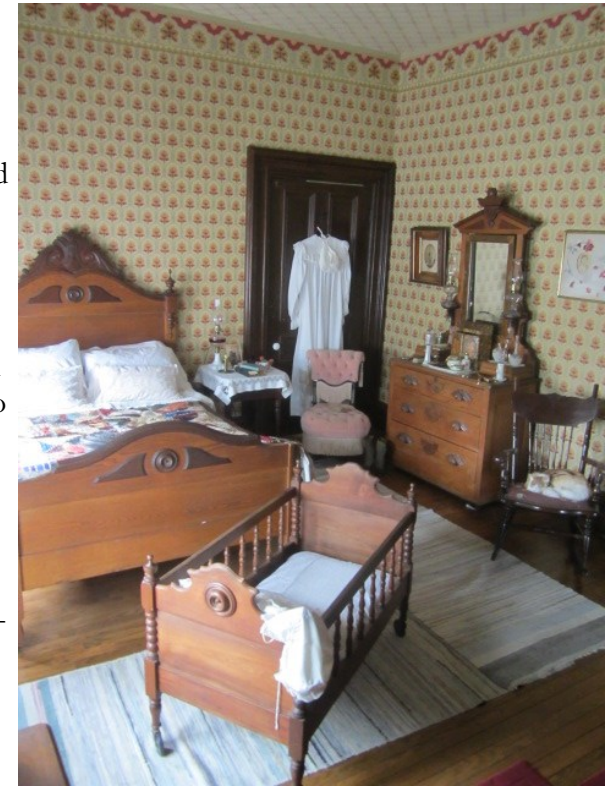




The informal side of the house contains a sitting room and bedroom.

The bedroom is decorated with Eastlake furniture and beautiful hand-stitched linens.

The sitting room was used daily by the family. It includes a c. 1845 Plantation desk that once belonged to the second Michigan territorial governor, Lewis Cass. Mary Moross Prevost, the daughter of early local settler Antoine Moross and friend of Lewis Cass, inherited the desk.

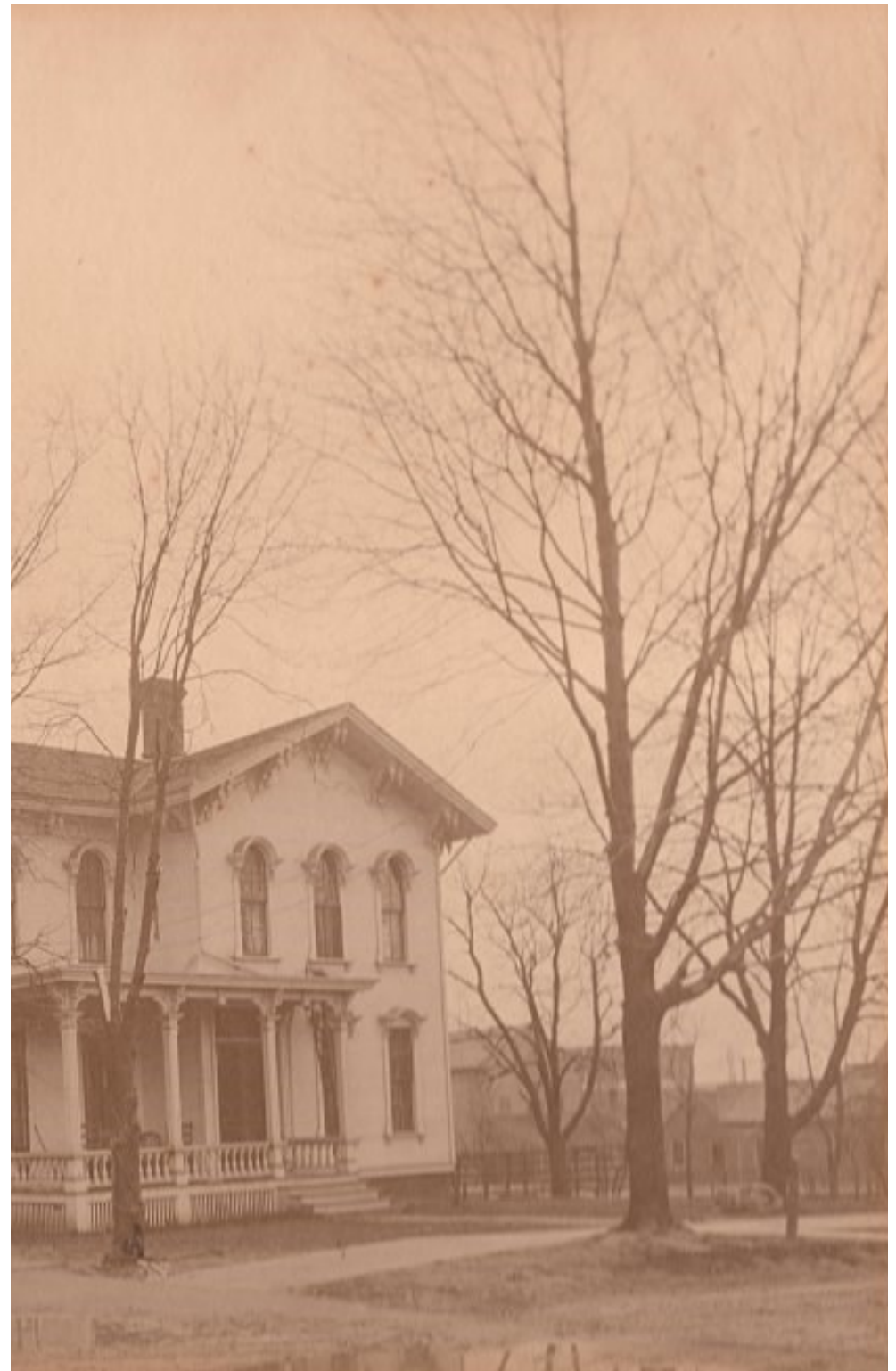




# Inside the Crocker House



The formal parlor, along with other rooms in the home, contain paintings from local artist Franklin Harold Hayward. The room includes a chapel pump organ and melodeon. The painting above the fireplace is of Mr. Breitmeyer, who owned rose gardens in Mount Clemens. The bust is of Poesis, the goddess of poetry. The room has 11-foot walls to the ceiling and includes tall windows of Italianate architecture to allow more light into the room.





## Mount Clemens in the 1860s - 70s



*These early photographs of Mount Clemens provide a glimpse of how Joshua Dickinson viewed his town. Mount Clemens was a growing community that now offered miracle cures through the power of its healing mineral waters.*



## The Servants' Quarters



Through an annual fund-raising event, the *Yvonne Leslie Pottery Luncheon*, and a 2006 International Questers Preservation and Restoration Grant, members of Mah-Nah-Be-Zee Questers #198 helped raise funds to restore the historical Servants' Quarters.

The mission of this project was to restore the room interior as closely as possible to its original wallpaper and woodwork. When the house was purchased by our Society in 1974, the walls underwent a chemical peel to reveal the original wallpaper. These pieces of original paper are kept on file within the Crocker House Museum.

An original door revealed its first layer of paint as being of faux grain.

The 1880 census record shows that two young female servants lived in the home: one at age 19 and born in Prussia, the other at age 15 and born of Prussian parents. We know that Augusta Mathews was a domestic in the home in 1878 at the age of 19. Most young ladies came from neighboring farms. Working as a domestic helped young women earn an income while honing their domestic skills. It is not known how many domestic servants worked in the Crocker home since not all of them were documented.





# Domestic Servants

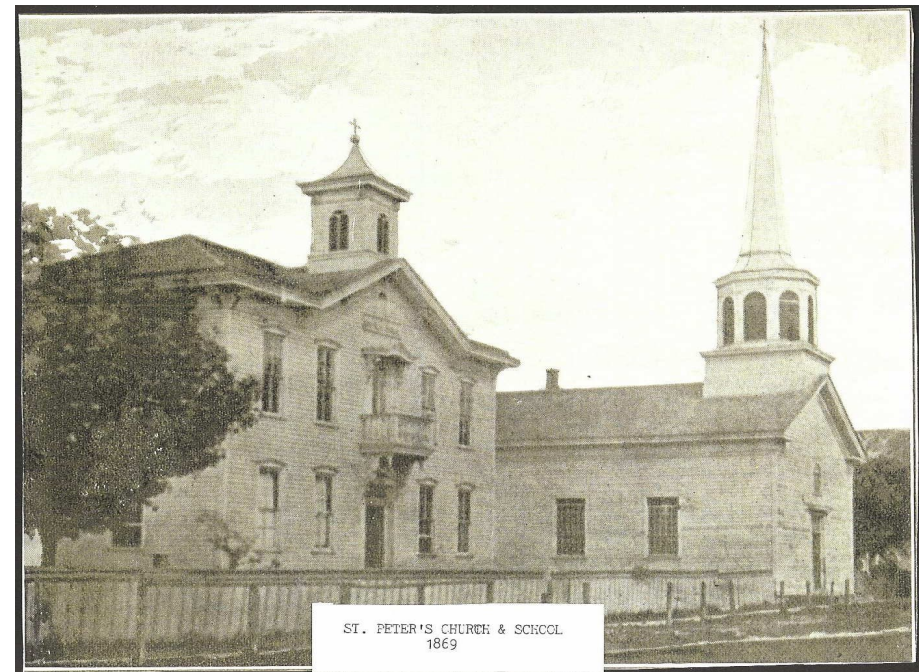


*Servant Anna Keidel told her family that the kitchen held the most prominent memory of her days working at the Crocker House.*

The servants' quarters are located on the second floor and have a back stairwell leading directly to the kitchen. This separate stairwell allowed privacy for the family and easy access to the kitchen for keeping the stove stoked during the night.

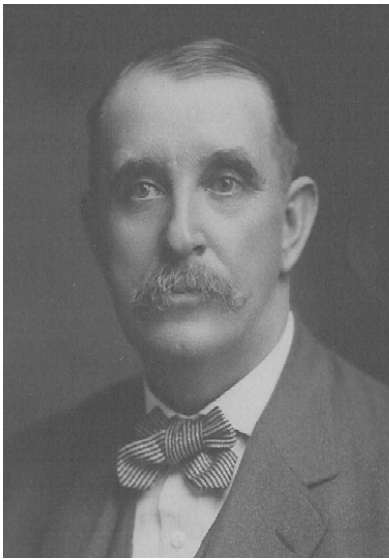


*The servants are posed atop the porch in this Crocker family photograph. c. 1881*



ST. PETER'S CHURCH & SCHOL  
1869





## George Martin Crocker

1848 - 1918

### *Letter written by Ann Crocker about her father, George Martin*

The greatest miracle of grace, it seems to me, is the gift of faith, and, although it has been my privilege to see five members of my immediate family present themselves for Baptism, the wonder never lessens. My father's life and conversion brings Mr. Kipling's lines to mind: "East is east and west is west, and

never the twain shall meet," but only to their confounding because no human being ever closed his life with convictions as diametrically opposed to those held in youth as my father.

Born in a little Illinois town in 1849 [sic] of Scotch-Irish parents, who proudly traced their descent from Elder Brewster of Mayflower fame and Thomas Hooker of the colonial literary era, he seemed a long, long way from home. His mother died when he was about ten years of age, leaving his father with two little girls and this young limb of Satan, (if all the tales he told of himself were true) to bring up. It must have taxed his capacities beyond their endurance for it wasn't long before he married a New England school teacher, thinking perhaps that a little discipline was what his family stood in need.

The most impressive event of his early boyhood was the Civil War which was a source of great delight to the small boy, perched atop of a neighbor's hay wagon watching the troops go off to war, listening to the bands, drinking in the excitement and wishing that he was old enough to be allowed to at least beat a drum. But the war and the dark days that followed was the cause of the family removing to New Hampshire due to the failure of the bank in which my grandfather was interested.

In company with Harry B. Hutchins, who later became president of the University of Michigan, his education was polished off at an academy in Haverhill, New Hampshire. Filled with mischief and life, bright and handsome, the two boys were characterized by their honest and high sense of honor due to which justice must have often been tempered with mercy in dealing with their misdemeanors. Now life in these New England states is viewed with anything but Catholic eyes. It wasn't so many centuries since even Roger Williams had been banished from among these righteous, God-fearing people.

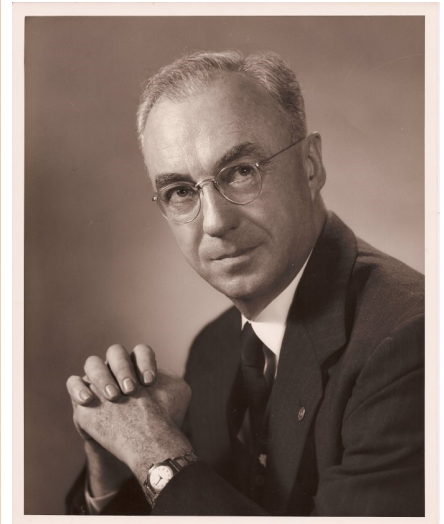
At the age of sixteen, with his ticket and ten dollars in his pockets,



*Martin and Lena Mott Crocker*



*Sabin Crocker with mother, Lena Mott Crocker.*



*Sabin Crocker; namesake of our Crocker House library.*



*George's cousin Martin lived at 168 Cass Avenue where the First Presbyterian Church now stands.*

Many people assume that Crocker Boulevard is named after George M. Crocker, but it was named after his cousin Martin. Martin Crocker donated money and land to build the Macomb Crocker Bridge and a street that would always be called Crocker Street (Boulevard).

Martin was born on February 7, 1858, in New Baltimore, Macomb County, Michigan. His parents were Thomas Martin Crocker and Fandira Richardson Emery Crocker. His father was the brother of George Crocker's father, Samuel Hooker Crocker. When Martin's father, T.M. Crocker, was elected prosecuting attorney for Macomb County, the family removed to Mount Clemens, the county seat.

Martin Crocker, like his cousin George, studied law under his father T.M. Crocker in the firm of Crocker and Hutchins. Also like his cousin George, he became active in politics and, in 1902, became mayor of Mount Clemens. He served for two years as mayor. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Martin Crocker Postmaster at Mount Clemens, a position which he filled until 1921 after President Harding took office.

His son Sabin Crocker, named after his wife Emily Sabin, was the last family member to have a close connection with Crocker House. Sabin researched the family history and placed his research in the library of the Crocker House Museum, which he helped finance.

his formal education complete, he was shipped to Michigan to study law in his uncle's office in Mt. Clemens. But the railroad seemed to hold a fatal fascination for him for at the end of a year his father located him at Fort Gratiot running an engine of some kind, happy, owing no man anything, the proud possessor of one hundred dollars and two suits of clothes.

Despite his success as a railroad mechanic, to his uncle's office he was taken where for a number of years he yielded the broom and the duster as compensation for being allowed to enjoy the learned atmosphere of the law office. At any rate he must have been something of a success for at the age of twenty-two we find him marrying the richest girl in the town and shortly after being elected mayor of the city, the youngest man ever to hold that office.

Politics, the Masonic Order and raising a rapidly growing family made the next few years busy and successful ones. Masonry was established in the county chiefly through his efforts. At home five small children graced the family; board and city politics were literally his meat and drink.

Then a blow fell that seemed enough to crush any young man. His lovely young wife died leaving him alone with an infant son and five other small children. Dark days indeed followed with a series of housekeepers and inadequate relatives running the household.

It was at this time that a man entered his life who was to have the greatest possible influence in turning the current of his thoughts and point of view. St. Peter's Catholic parish was in its infancy. Improvements were needed, among them a sewer. Fr. Rickert, under whose direction things were developing, came to my father for help and influence to get things moving. Out of this meeting a warm friendship developed between the elderly Belgium priest, more familiar with seven other languages than with English, a man of wealth and piety who gave dollar for dollar in the building up of his parish, his hearts delight, and the young attorney. I have often heard my father laughingly repeat a remark Fr. Rickert made to him about his time: "George, you get me a sewer and I'll get you a wife" and he did too.

Mt. Clemens had long been famous for the curative power of its mineral water. One rare day in June a Kentucky lady accompanied by two of her daughters came to Mt. Clemens hoping the baths would be beneficial to the youngest daughter. Being Catholics, my grandmother-to-be and her daughters stopped one evening to call on Father Rickert who seemed to be very well impressed with the ladies and who in turn introduced them to my father. A year or so later my father and the eldest daughter were united in marriage. Then followed a period of brightness and happiness which however was of short duration. In two years my father was again a widower and again followed a regime of inefficient but well-intentioned housekeepers.

But life must go on. Catholic manners, morals and way of life, must have been attractive to my father for after a decent interval armed with letters from Fr. Rickert, he presented himself before Bishop McCluskey, of Louisville, asking dispensations to marry his sister-in-law. A protestant twice



married, a mason wanting to marry his sister-in-law! "No, indeed!" said his lordship. Then more correspondence between Fr. Rickert and the would-be-bridgroom who armed with these credentials went on to Washington to visit his sister-in-law Mrs. Z.B. Vance, whose husband was senator from North Carolina, to enlist her good influences with his eminence Cardinal Gibbons who was a very warm friend of hers.

The dispensations were granted and June 28, 1888, my mother and father were married at her sister's home in Washington.

Not many years elapsed before there were three more locusts, as my father used to call us, to feed and clothe. As each of us in turn were brought to the church for Baptism Fr. Van Hoomisan was called upon to act as god-father as my father's friends were all active masons. "Now don't you lay down and die, Mrs. Crocker, and leave those three children for me to bring up," the young priest would say. Then came the question of schools or rather there wasn't any question, for we were just entered at St. Mary's as a matter of course, although my father at this time was a member of the public school board and continued to be for many years. It must have been an unusual sight to see three of us marching off to mass on Sunday with our collection envelopes tightly grasped in our hands and the rest of the brood off to the Episcopal Sunday school.

From the time of his marriage to my mother, my father's attendance at Masonic meetings ceased. The subject of religion was never discussed but the weight of example was getting in its powerful influence. It was always a matter of astonishment that we children never had to be coerced into going to mass. My father would exclaim: "Why those children like to go to mass!" He must have been very much impressed with our Catholic school training for I distinctly remember him saying: "If I had my family to educate again I would send them all to a Catholic school; it is the only place they learn obedience or respect, and as to the arithmetic and all the rest of it, I can't see that they don't do as well as the other children." Quite an admission for one who had never up to the age of twenty-three ever spoken to a Catholic and to whom the sight of a priest meant bad luck for the rest of the day.

In county politics he never met defeat. His opponents were known to say that the devil himself couldn't beat George Crocker for while he was inside treating the boys his wife was outside holding the horse and saying "Hail Marys."

Among my father's cherished possessions books, I believe would take first place. Always reading and studying! At one time he was known for having the finest collection of books in Macomb County. I never remember our living room without a *Myers General History*, *Spaulding's Church History*, *Josephus*, and a small soft covered, thin leafed copy of *The Bible*. Far into the night he read, first one side of the question then the other. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, the *Britannica*, the *Question Box*, *Faith of Our Fathers*, the *Ave Maria*, *Extension*, *Truth* and even the *Michigan Catholic* came in for its share of notice.

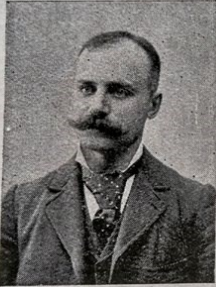
## MT. CLEMENS PLEASED OVER THE NOMINATION

**Mt. Clemens, Mich., September 10.—**  
The news of the nomination of Martin Crocker for congress was received in this city this afternoon at 4 o'clock, and was a matter of gratification to his fellow-townsmen. Mr. Crocker was born in the Bath Town in 1858, and received his early education in the Mt. Clemens public schools. After his graduation from the high school he entered his father's law office. In 1880 he was graduated from the University of Michigan and two years after received his first political honors at the hands of the Democratic party, when he was elected alderman in the first ward. In 1886 and 1887 Mr. Crocker served the city as its attorney, and in the session of 1887 was elected to the house of representatives of the state legislature. He was in the state senate in 1891, and since then has been practicing law in

his native city. He was elected mayor last spring and is now serving in that capacity. He is the son of T. M. Crocker, who for many years was a well-known attorney in this locality. Martin Crocker is a brother-in-law of Dean Hutchins, of the University of Michigan. He married Miss Emily Sabin, of Memphis, Mich., and has one son, Sabin Crocker.



Democratic Nominee  
For Congressman, 7th  
Michigan District,



**WHO FAVORS**  
**Government Regulation of the**  
**Coal and Kindred Trusts.**  
**Harbor Improvements**  
**and the**  
**Building Up of Michigan Beet Sugar**  
**Industries.**

Martin Crocker,  
Mt. Clemens, Mich.

He respectfully solicits your suffrages.

**CROCKER**  
**OF MT.**  
**CLEMENS**

SELECTED FOR CONGRESS BY  
7TH DISTRICT DEMOCRATS.

WAS THE UNANIMOUS CHOICE OF  
ALL DELEGATES.

HIS OPPONENT SAID TO BE A  
FRIEND OF TRUSTS.

NOMINEE WILL PUT UP A VIGOR-  
OUS CAMPAIGN.

His Home Town is Delighted  
With His Selection.

From the collection of the Grand Pacific House of New Baltimore.

Mt. Clemens Press: October 9, 1884

When Register of Deeds Farrer is figuring up his chances of election he may not unprofitably ruminates a little on the big drop that Geo. M. Crocker took when he ran for prosecuting attorney a third time. The third term is a bitter pill in the average voter's throat. – Monitor

Had Mr. Crocker worked for himself as he did for the ticket and the whole democratic party during the campaign of 1880 he would have been elected by a good majority. Mr. Crocker's unselfish principles and his devotion to the party led to his defeat. His references were always to the ticket and the party, and the work that should have been completed in order to secure his own safety was left undone.

The third term business was raised against him – a matter which has but little weight now with the democracy when it is known that a first class man is up for the office – and the consequence was the republicans scooped in enough disinterested voters to elect their candidate. But in this campaign there are no disinterested democratic voters. Every one of them knows full well that this nation must be rescued from the corrupt republican administration and not one of them will lend their influence to put in power a candidate from the highest office of the nation down to the least important office on the county ticket.

Mt. Clemens Press: July 1, 1886

Mr. George M. Crocker presented the diplomas with a few well chosen remarks. He urged upon the class the importance of ever maintaining the free schools of this country; that we could not support and hold up this system with a zeal too steadfast and ardent; that it was the duty of the class as well as of every citizen of the U.S. to see that our present free school system continue forever. A song by the quartet and the benediction by the Rev. Mr. Berry closed the commencement exercises of the class.

Mt. Clemens Press: January 1888

The Pt. Huron Herald says that Geo. M. Crocker, of this city, is about the handsomest man in Mt. Clemens. The Herald man ought to see our "Aunt Jerusha A. Bradshaw," who, by the way, is a man.

George Crocker passed away in his home at 116 New Street at the age of 69 on January 4, 1918. His death record states that he died from cardiovascular disease contributed from a form of kidney disease then known as Bright's Disease.

### Mount Clemens Monitor: January 11, 1918

#### GEORGE M. CROCKER

The funeral of George M. Crocker was held from St. Peter's church Tuesday morning, services beginning at ten o'clock. It was largely attended. Among those present were Hon. E.H. Doyle, ex-state banking commissioner, and J.D. Hawks. Also the county bar association as a body. High mass was celebrated by Father Hackett, assisted by other priests of the diocese, and was followed by an altogether fine sermon by Father Cook, formerly of Mt. Clemens, now of Reese. The theme of his eloquent and touching address was life eternal, based on faith in Christ. He spoke of the exercise of man's faculties in living, of the profit and delight in such exercise, of the desirability of living, and of the hope, the certitude, that the qualities and functions of the spirit were not obliterated by physical death here in time. The sermon was an inspiration to all believers. Honorary pallbearers were: President Hutchins, of the Michigan University, Mathew Slush, J.G. Tucker, A.T. Donaldson, Geo. A. Skinner, Jos. Schanher, Nick Norton, Frank El. Nellis, and Max Herrman. Active pallbearers were younger men of the church. Interment was on the family lot in Clinton Grove cemetery. Mr. Crocker died Friday afternoon, after two years of failing health. He leaves a widow, three daughters, and three sons. He was three times married, his first wife being Katharine, a daughter of the late J. B. Dickinson, first mayor of Mt. Clemens. Born to them were six children, of which four are living. He was married a second and third time to sisters, Misses Harriet and Cecilia Steele, North Carolina ladies, family connections of the late Senator Vance. Two children by the latter are living. George M. Crocker was born at Greenville, Vermont, in 1848, and was son of Samuel Crocker. He received a common school education and in 1867 came West and entered the law office of his uncle, the late Thos. M. Crocker. He was admitted to the bar in 1870, and thereafter held the office of justice of the peace. He was an ardent Democrat and in 1878 was elected prosecuting attorney, an office that he capably filled. There was a slump politically two years later and he was defeated for re-election by I.D. Hanscom, of Romeo.



*George's cousin Mary Louise Crocker Hutchins. Daughter of Thomas Martin Crocker.*



*Mary sitting with her family. Left to right, sitting: President of U of M, Harry Burns Hutchins, Georgina May Hutchins (daughter of Hally and first wife, Blanch Moses), Mrs. Mary Crocker Hutchins (Aunt May)*





*Thomas Martin Crocker was George's uncle; his father's brother. Mayor of Mount Clemens in 1889-1891.*

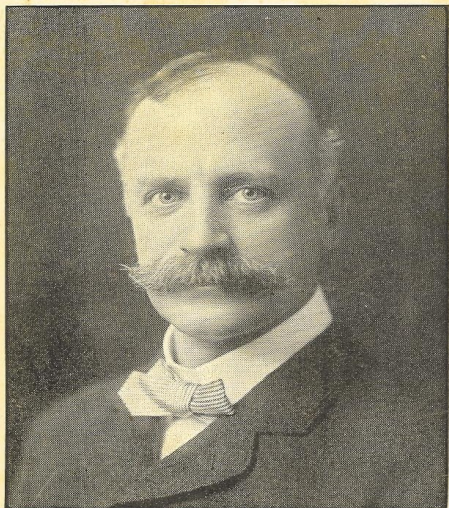
*T. M. Crocker*



CASSEY & RILEY. LANSING, MICH.

*Martin Crocker was the son of Thomas Martin Crocker and became mayor of Mount Clemens in 1902.*

*Democratic Nominee For Congressman,  
7th Michigan District,*



## **Martin Crocker,** *Mt. Clemens, Mich.*

Who Favors Government Regulation of the Coal and Kindred Trusts, Harbor Improvements and the Building Up of Michigan Beet Sugar Industries.

*He Respectfully Solicits Your Suffrage.*

Mr. Crocker succeeded the late Jas. B. Eldredge as judge of the probate and held the office two terms. These were the only county offices that he held. His great interest in life, aside from his family, was little old Mt. Clemens. He found it a straggling and struggling village, of some fame but without an "improvement" of any sort. All his life he labored to make the home of his adoption a more prosperous and better city. In every step forward George M. Crocker was up at the front, and at times he was something of a shock to our conservative citizens. He favored incorporation of the city in 1879, and was a stalwart figure in the fight of that year for retention of the county seat in the town of Christian Clemens. He was for water works, sewers, public lighting, pavements, parks, and a member of the board of education many years he was for the schools with all his soul. He succeeded Mr. Dickinson as mayor of Mt. Clemens, holding the office two terms, and was afterwards alderman from the third ward. He was a member of the Mt. Clemens Electric Co., subsequently taken over by the Detroit Edison Co., and was instrumental in giving Mt. Clemens its first modern lighting system. One of the notable civic arguments of his career was over the Macomb Street bridge. He insisted that one bridge over the river was not enough for the city, and he and his friends pushed the new structure through successfully. The finely developed East Side is its justification and as well the proof of his prescience in public affairs. Upon re-organization of the Detroit & Alpena railroad, in which Don M. Dickinson, J.D. Hawks, and others were interested, Mr. Crocker embarked both money and energy in its affairs. For years he was a large figure in the company's business and as its auditor his shrewd and experienced mind helped push the enterprise northward and develop a considerable part of the state of Michigan. Mr. Crocker was many years an earnest Mason, master of Mt. Clemens lodge, a member of the chapter, and commandery. His joining the Catholic church a few years ago terminated his Masonic affiliation, but it by no means terminated his affection for his long-time brethren of the order or his respect for its teachings. Politics, religion, or social status had no great weight with George M. Crocker when it came to personal friendships. He riveted men to him with links of steel, and his wont was to stand by them. And so it was they stood by him. And so it is that they will remember him as a faithful friend as well as a courageous, progressive, upstanding citizen. He was an American to the core.

## Influences in George Crocker's life and career



George went to school with Harry B. Hutchins in New Hampshire when he was young. Harry later married George's cousin Mary who was the daughter of his uncle Thomas Martin Crocker. Harry graduated from the University of Michigan in 1871. In 1872 he became superintendent of schools in Owasso. One year later he returned to the University to teach rhetoric and history. In 1874 he became an assistant professor. During this time he studied law and in 1876 began practicing law in Mount Clemens with Thomas Martin Crocker. He later returned to the university as Jay Professor of Law. He helped Cornell University organize their law school in 1887. In 1895 he was appointed dean of U of M's department of law. He served as interim president of the university in 1897 and 1898. At the age of 63 he was offered the appointment as president. Due to the demands of World War I he continued to serve until 1920.

## Family of George Martin Crocker

George M. Crocker was the son of Samuel Hooker Crocker (born April 23, 1819, died December 28, 1876) and Harriet Ferguson (born June 15, 1828, died April 15, 1858). His father served as a deputy sheriff and sheriff of Bond County, Illinois. He was then appointed postmaster of Greenville in 1854, from which office he resigned in 1856. He was elected sheriff again in 1858.

George's mother died at the age of 30, just two months after the birth of her last child. Samuel and Harriet had six children:

George Martin Crocker was born on August 9, 1848, and died on January 4, 1918.

Thomas Hooker Crocker was born on January 1, 1850, and died on August 9, 1851.

Daniel Ferguson Crocker was born on February 3, 1852, and died on October 6, 1853.

Mary Louisa Crocker was born on March 26, 1854, and died on September 9, 1909.

Caroline Crocker was born on March 6, 1856, and died on May 17, 1921 (married Albert Frost Kimball, March 10, 1878).

John W. Crocker was born on February 8, 1858, and died on August 30, 1858.

After Harriet's death, Samuel Hooker Crocker married Abiah Worth Morse.

Their children were:

Hattie Lora Crocker was born on November 11, 1861, and died on January 2, 1862.

May Crocker was born on July 11, 1863, and died on August 3, 1863.

Flavius Morse Crocker was born on October 6, 1865, and died on June 24, 1913 (married Laura Vogel Keenan, January 25, 1912).

Herbert Samuel Crocker was born on June 20, 1867, and died on March 8, 1949 (married Ermina Elizabeth Wheeler Perry, August 8, 1895, who died in 1898, later married Edna Louise Mitchell, April 15, 1903).



**Samuel H. Crocker**  
 Funeral services were held today in Los Angeles for Samuel Hooker Crocker, 72, brother of Miss Ann Crocker, Mount Clemens city librarian, and himself a native of the city.  
 Descendant of a long prominent Mount Clemens family Mr. Crocker had made his home in California for the past 40 years. He died in Los Angeles Friday following a protracted illness.  
 In addition to his sister, Ann, Mr. Crocker is survived by a second sister, Mrs. Seth Knight of Honolulu, T. H., as well as by his wife, the former Emma Tuscany. Mr. Crocker is a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George M. Crocker of Mount Clemens.

**Katherine Knight**  
 MOUNT CLEMENS — Word was received today in Mount Clemens of the death of Mrs. Seth Wells Knight on May 16 in Honolulu, Hawaii.  
 Born Katherine Lee Crocker on Feb. 26, 1874, she was a daughter of the late George M. and Katherine Lee Dickinson Crocker.  
 She married Seth Wells Knight on June 22, 1898.  
 She is survived by one son, George Knight, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and one grandson. One daughter, Katherine Lee Knight, predeceased her.  
 Burial was in Honolulu.



The only photograph we have of George's son Samuel is in this photograph taken with the Old Crowd. This photo is cut and enlarged from the Old Crowd photo.  
 Samuel is number 61.



George's uncle, Thomas Martin Crocker, must have been the greatest influence upon George having trained him in his field. The connections made of his uncle became his connections; which were great both in the practice of law and within the political ring.  
 Thomas moved to Macomb County at the age of 18 to work on his uncle's farm. He taught during the winter months. He then moved to New Baltimore with his uncle the Hon. Cortez Hooker in 1851. Thomas was elected justice of the peace and soon afterward appointed postmaster of New Baltimore. He began to study law and was admitted to the bar in 1859. He was elected prosecuting attorney of Macomb County in 1862 and then moved to Mount Clemens. He became partner with Giles Hubbard. In 1864 he became judge of probate of which he served for four years; during which he remained in active practice. He was elected a delegate to the constitutional convention in 1867 where he helped draft a new state constitution. He was elected village president in 1874 of which he served four consecutive terms. 1876 was a sad year for him. He lost both his wife, Fandira Emory, and business partner, Giles Hubbard. He later formed a partnership with Harry B. Hutchins, his son-in-law, until Harry was connected with the law department at the University of Michigan in 1884. After which T.M. Crocker continued practice alone until 1889 when a new partnership was formed with his son Martin. Thomas then was elected the mayor of Mount Clemens in 1889 and was reelected in 1890 and 1891.  
 In 1892 he married a second time to Cordelia Sabin. He moved to Port Huron in 1893, closing his practice with his son Martin, when he became collector of customs.





Senator Zebulan Baird Vance of North Carolina was the brother-in-law to George Crocker's second and third wives. Harriet and Cecelia's sister, Florence, was married to this senator who was solicitor of Buncombe County, North Carolina at the age of 21, state legislator at the age of 24, congressman at the age of 28, Confederate colonel at the age of 31, governor at age 32, three times governor of North Carolina and U.S. senator for fifteen years. He is yet considered the most popular political leader that North Carolina ever produced.

Zeb married Florence Steele in 1880; two years after the death of his first wife.

Florence helped George Crocker receive the needed dispensations from Cardinal Gibbons, in Washington D.C., to marry her sister Cecelia after the death of their sister Harriet. George married Cecelia on June 28, 1888 in the Vance home in Washington D.C..

You can visit Z.B. Vance's boyhood home. For more information: <http://www.nchistoricsites.org/vance/vance.htm>

The Daily Leader, October 12, 1939

**CROCKER RITES SET FOR FRIDAY**

**Was Resident Here In Younger Days**

Funeral services will be held Friday for Joshua R. Crocker, formerly of Mount Clemens. Familiarly known here as Rob Crocker, he died Tuesday at St. Mary's Hospital, in Detroit, after having been in ill health for several years. He was 63 years old.

He was the son of George M. Crocker, former prominent attorney here, and the grandson of Joshua B. Dickinson, first mayor of Mount Clemens after it was incorporated as a city in 1879. Crocker, who was born here, moved from this city almost 40 years ago. For many years he was employed by the American Car and Foundry Co., in Detroit.

The funeral services will be held from his home, 63 North avenue, Highland Park, at 9 a. m. Friday, and from the St. John Vianney Church at 9:30. Burial will be in the family lot at Clinton Grove Cemetery here.

The deceased is survived by his wife, Josephine, and two children, George and Margaret; three sisters, Mary, of St. Louis, Mo.; Ann, of Mount Clemens, and Mrs. Katherine Knight; and two brothers, Samuel and Harry.

The Daily Monitor—Leader, March 2, 1948

**Harry M. Crocker**

Harry Martin Crocker, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George M. Crocker, died yesterday at his home. He was 54 years of age.

Mr. Crocker was a veteran of both World wars.

He leaves his wife Hilda and two children, Donald and Sharon Lee. He also leaves a sister, Miss Anne Crocker.

Services will be held Thursday at 10 a. m., from the Groesbeck Funeral Home with interment in the family lot, Clinton Grove Cemetery.

Daily Monitor Leader, February 26, 1951

**Mary H. Crocker**

Funeral services were held in Mount Clemens today for Miss Mary Hooker Crocker, a native of Mount Clemens and member of a well known family, who died on Friday in St. Louis, Mo., following a brief illness.

Miss Crocker was a daughter of the late George M., and Katherine Lee Dickinson Crocker, and spent her earlier life in this city. For the past 45 years she had been on the public library staff of St. Louis.

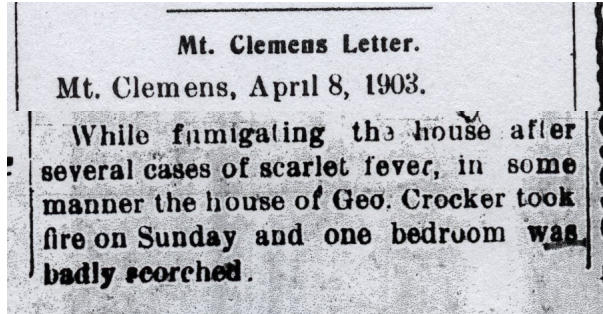
The deceased is survived by two sisters and a brother: Mrs. Seth Knight, of Honolulu; Miss Ann S. Crocker, of Mount Clemens, and Samuel Hooker Crocker, of Los Angeles.

Services were conducted at the Hubbard funeral chapel at 3:30 p. m., by the Rev. George A. Merifield, rector of Grace Episcopal Church. Burial was in the family lot in Clinton Grove Cemetery.



# Children of George Crocker

We have limited information regarding the Crocker children. Ann Crocker was the one who left us the most information. Thankfully, obituaries and news articles give us some information regarding the children of George Crocker.



*Printed in the Utica Sentinel:*

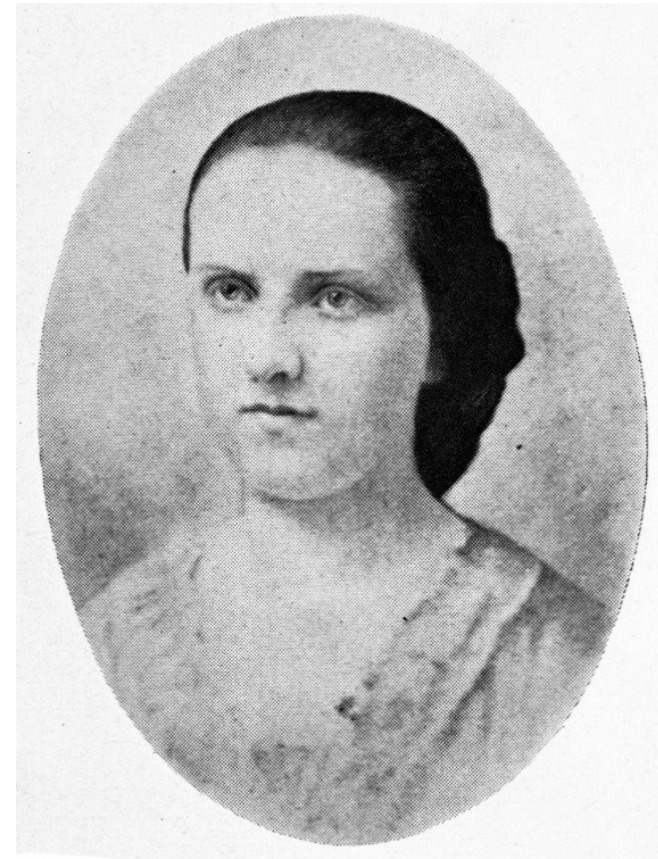
*The Crocker family had Scarlet Fever within their household. Thankfully none of the family members succumbed to the illness.*

**Mt. Clemens Monitor: January 26, 1906, page 1.**

The only case of diphtheria in Mt. Clemens, in the family of Mr. and Mrs. George M. Crocker, resulted fatally Monday night in the death of their young son Don, in his ninth year. He was a lovable little fellow, whose death is deeply mourned.



*Cecelia Steele Crocker with sons Donald and Harry Martin.*



*Florence Steele Vance: sister to Harriet and Cecelia Steele Crocker, George's second and third wives.*



## George Crocker's Three Wives

The following pages provide information on the wives of George M. Crocker.

The unfortunate circumstance that his father had suffered was now on George's shoulders. His young wife passed away, leaving him with a house full of children, including a newborn. One of the main causes of death amongst women in that time was complications from child-birth. The county clerk listed Katherine as having died of consumption, otherwise known as tuberculosis. It had been listed as the cause of her father's death just three years earlier, in 1879.

George pulled through with the help of family and domestic servants. His daughter Ann tells us in her letter regarding her father that it was difficult to find proper help.

Father Rickert, of St. Peter's Catholic Church, introduced George to Harriet Steele while she was visiting the baths with her mother and sister. They married on February 17, 1885, at her home in Kentucky.

Unfortunately, Harriet suffered the loss of a stillborn child and died from complications thereof. George was once again a widower.

George sought the permission of the Catholic Church to marry Harriet's sister, Cecelia. Dispensations were finally granted, and they were married on June 28, 1888, in Washington D.C. This proved to be a successful marriage with Cecelia outliving George by 13 years.



Memorial Card for  
Ann Alexis Steele Crocker  
March 1, 1891 – Feb. 6, 1968  
Graduate of St. Mary's Academy in  
Monroe earned degree in library  
science at Marygrove. Taught in  
Detroit public schools for four years.  
Then took a position at St. Mary's  
School in Mt. Clemens for six years.  
1926 – 1956 head librarian at  
Mt. Clemens Public Library.  
Member of Historical Society &  
Scapular Militia.  
Burial mass at St. Louis Church.  
Buried in Clinton Grove Cemetery.





He learned a great deal about what was “proper” and what was not. He was fortunate to have such a friend and they were good friends, despite the wide difference in age. He cherishes his friendship with Miss Crocker and will always. She was a treasure of knowledge. For myself, I found her a good neighbor, an interesting neighbor. I know she would not have hesitated to tell me that one of my children had done something incorrect but she also had on occasion told me that I was doing a good job as a mother. That was truly appreciated! I enjoyed knowing her. There were times at small parties when she was enormously funny telling her experiences as a young woman. She could keep us spellbound at times. Did like to hold the center of attention. As a librarian she could and did, comment on the books I read and look over her glasses at me which was intimidating when I first knew her. But that changed when I saw her sweeping her sidewalk in a “Hoover” apron.



*Ann Crocker in front of family home. c. 1890s*

## Katherine Lee Dickinson

1849 - 1882



Katherine Lee Dickinson was the great-granddaughter of Christian Clemens, the founder of Mount Clemens. She was also the only surviving child of Joshua Dickinson, the first mayor of Mount Clemens, with whom she continued to live until his death. George and Katherine had seven children together; although one passed away before he was a year old. This photograph is the only one we have of Katherine within our collection.

Five children are visible in the picture on the previous page, and we know that she had one more child. We assume that this was taken shortly before her death in 1882. It is possible that she is pregnant with their son Samuel in this picture. Katherine died at the age of 34, shortly after the birth of Samuel.

### **Mt. Clemens Monitor: March 3, 1882**

Mrs. George Crocker is not expected to live.

**County Clerk Record:** Katherine Lee Dickinson Crocker died of “consumption.”

### **Mt. Clemens Monitor: March 10, 1882**

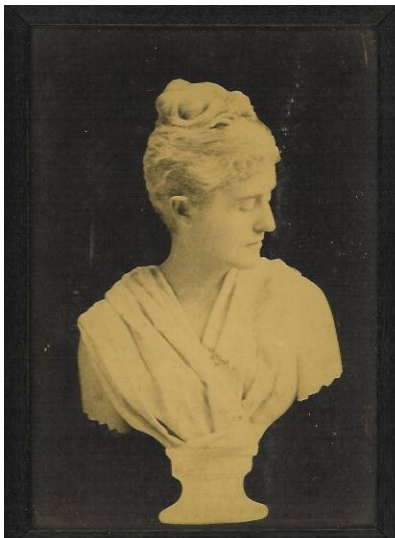
Died

Crocker — in the city, on the afternoon of 7th inst., Catherine [*sic*], wife of Geo. M. Crocker, and only daughter of the late Hon. J.B. Dickinson. Funeral services from residence to-day.

Mrs. Crocker was born in this city 34 years ago.

In September 1870 she was married to Geo. M. Crocker, with whom she happily lived to the time of death, filling the place of a true wife and mother.

Her inexpressibly sad taking off has put a mantle of mourning upon Mt. Clemens. This was her home. Here she grew from infancy to womanhood, and here were developed the beauties of her character, which alike graced the home hearthstone and wider circle of her friends. Many there are who share the grief of the stricken husband and whose hearts ache for the six motherless little ones. Mrs. Crocker was young in year’ [*sic*] her death was, perhaps, untimely; but in reflecting upon the large usefulness of her life the words of Young come forcibly to mind: “That life is long with answers life’s great ends.”



## Harriet Steele Crocker

1850 - 1887

### **Mt. Clemens Monitor:**

**February 20, 1885**

Married

Crocker – Steele February 17th, 1885, at the residence of the bride, Mr. George M. Crocker, of Mt. Clemens, Mich., and Miss Harriet L. Steele, of Louisville, Kentucky, the Rt. Rev. Bishop McCloskey officiating.

*This picture, we believe, is a postmortem of Harriet Steele Crocker. It was kept among her niece Ann's belongings with a hankie inscribed with her name.*

Harriet died at the age of 36. She had just given birth to a stillborn child on April 1, 1887, and is listed on the death record of having passed away on April 23 due to "confinement."

### **Mt. Clemens Monitor: Friday, April 29, 1887**

The sickness of Mrs. Geo. M. Crocker, referred to last week, resulted fatally Saturday afternoon, about four o'clock. Death came as the end of a sinking that became determinate at noon, although before that time progress toward recovery was seemingly established. To make possible the attendance of distant relatives the funeral was deferred until Wednesday of this week. It occurred in the morning, from the Catholic church, of which Mrs. Crocker was a member, and was marked by a very large attendance. Interment took place on Mr. Crocker's family lot in Clinton grove cemetery. We are at a loss for words to fittingly express the deep sense of loss and grief that Mrs. Crocker's death has caused in this community. She came here but a short time ago a stranger, and yet so soon did she gain friendships, and so strong and widely spread were they, that to-day, when she is gone, almost everyone has a feeling of personal bereavement. She was a capable woman, a loving wife, a whole-souled friend. With a beautiful bravery and devotion she assumed the care of a distraught household and six young children. She made it a happy home and gave them a mother's love. Mrs. Crocker's maiden name was Harriet Steele. She was a member of a well known Louisville family and a sister-in-law of Senator Vance, of North Carolina.



## Ann Alexis Steele Crocker

1891 - 1968

*Ann Alexis Steele Crocker was the eighth child, out of ten born, of Mayor George M. Crocker. She was born in 1891 and died in 1968. Here is a friend's description of her:*

Very, very proud of her family, her mother and father. Her mother was a "Southern Lady," who referred to her husband as Mr. Crocker always. Mr. Crocker was evidently very interested in music and played records a lot. Her home was lovely, many beautiful antiques, Oriental rugs and was always in topnotch condition, top to basement. She was a great hostess, concerned about her guests. She loved fresh vegetables and meats, cooked excellent meals. She liked Heath bars and had a jar of them always. Liked Vernor's ginger ale, butterscotch. Liked good clothes and jewelry, hats, treated herself often when a dividend came. She liked fresh Holly and had a bowl of it during the holidays. Liked Christmas carols and the kids singing them. Had a cat named "Hitler." Hitler was black and a tyrant. She claimed he talked back to her when she talked to him. He was fed on ground round and fresh salmon. Miss Crocker often mentioned that he had expensive cat food, not canned. She loved fans, ivory and others. Read a lot, often having several books going at a time. Read philosophy, lives of saints, and much, much more. Liked TV programs on animals, families, Disney movies and anything about animals. She was a staunch Democrat. Liked Adlai Stevenson, once shutting the door on someone campaigning for that "Other Party." She was polite but firm about the fact that Macomb County was a bastion of Democrats. Miss Crocker was very bright, a straight "A" student. I doubt that there was anything she could not discuss. She had firm opinions, was kind, but had a sharp tongue. A good sense of humor. Valued her privacy, no pretenses. Spoke out firmly. Disliked those who did not reach their potential. Believed you should have "fun" or not do it. Was a rather poor driver. She enjoyed children, she favored the boys, probably because she knew them better as they cut her hedges, raked her lawns, etc., all to her exact order. My son John said she talked to him about many things, his thoughts respected.



# Children of George Martin Crocker

1848 - 1918

<b>Married (1) 1870</b>	<b>Married (2) 1885</b>	<b>Married (3) 1888</b>
<b>Katherine Lee Dickinson</b>	<b>Harriet Steele</b>	<b>Cecelia Tarleton Steele</b>
1849 - 1882	1850 - 1887	1857 - 1931
Children:	Children:	Children:
George 1871 - 1920 (unmarried)	Stillborn	Ann 1891 - 1968 (unmarried, librarian in Mt. Clemens)
Frederick 1872 - 1873		Harry Martin 1893 - 1948 (married, lived in Gary, Indiana)
Katherine Lee 1874 - 1965 (married Judge Seth Wells Knight)		Donald 1896 - 1906
Joshua Robert 1876 - 1939 (married Josephine R. Lareau)		
Margaret Fergusson (Margie) 1878 - 1908 (unmarried)		
Mary (Molly) Hooker 1879 - 1951 (librarian in St. Louis, Missouri)		
Samuel Hooker 1882 - 1954 (married E. Tuscany, lived in L.A.)		

Mrs. G.M. Crocker died last Saturday afternoon. She came from the sunny South but scarcely two years ago to grace the home and guard the honor of him, whose loss is without measure, and who has the sympathy and love of all who own Mt. Clemens as a home. Mrs. Crocker came to assume the maternal guardianship of motherless children whose untold grief lies heavy on hearts without utterance; to guild their home and brighten their social lives with her influence. The loss is a husband's hopeless grief, the orphaned children's woe and social calamity. The funeral was held at St. Peters church yesterday.

## Mt. Clemens Press: April 28, 1887

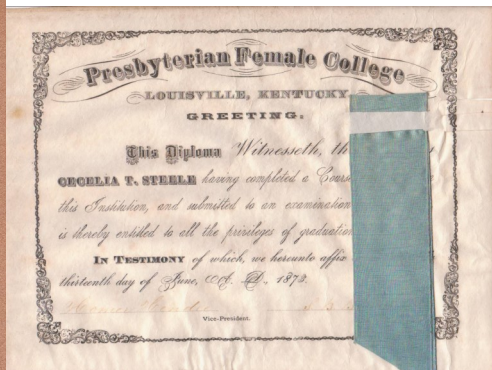
School was dismissed yesterday that the teachers might attend the funeral of Mrs. G.M.C.



*Steele birth home in Kentucky.*

# Cecelia Tarleton Steele Crocker

1857 - 1931



Ann Crocker's letter describes how determined her father was to marry her mother, Harriet's sister, Cecelia. She was educated and graduated from the Presbyterian Female College in Louisville, Kentucky. She would be easily accepted by George's children as they had already known her as their aunt. George and his friends could see that Cecelia would make for an excellent wife and mother. Many people helped to write letters asking the Catholic bishop to give permission for this union not only for George Crocker, but for the sake of his motherless children.

## Mt. Clemens Press: July 5, 1888

Married - June 28, by Rev. Fr Kerwich of St. Mathews Catholic church at the residence of Senator Vance. Washington D.C., Mr. George M. Crocker of Mt. Clemens to Miss Cecelia T. Steele of Louisville, Ky.

## Mt. Clemens Press: March 30, 1890

Cecelia Crocker turned on the switch which lighted the arc lights of the Mt. Clemens Electric Company for the first time.

## Mt. Clemens Monitor: Friday, June 5, 1931

CROCKER RITES HERE SATURDAY

Mrs. Cecelia Crocker, 74, widow of the late George M. Crocker and mother of Miss Ann Crocker, Mount Clemens city librarian, died Thursday morning at her home, 287 Euclid Avenue. She had been ill for some time from diabetes and for the past several years was almost totally blind. Harry Crocker, a son of Detroit, also survives. George M. Crocker, husband of the deceased, was a prominent attorney here and an official of the Detroit and Mackinac railroad. Funeral services will be held at 10:30 o'clock Saturday morning at St. Peter's church. Burial will be in Clinton Grove cemetery.

## Cecelia Crocker's Will: August 20, 1926

...I give, devise and bequest unto my Executor and Executrix hereinafter named the sum of Two hundred dollars to be expended for masses for the Happy repose of my Soul. Having heretofore given by Son Harry M. Crocker, what I consider on half of my household furniture and effects, I give, devise and bequeath unto my Daughter Ann S. Crocker, all of the household effects and silver ware that I may have at the time of my death, to be hers absolutely. Because of the condition of my daughter Ann's health and the care she has given me during my years of sickness, I give, devise and bequeath unto my said daughter Ann the sum of Five Thousand Dollars. All the rest, residue and remainder of my property, both real and personal of every name and nature, I give, devise and bequeath unto my Son Harry M. Crocker and my Daughter Ann S. Crocker, share and share alike.

Cecelia's estate was worth \$13,640.87

