

## Flock Quarterly



*Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners*

## Giving Thanks For Summer

Father, Creator of all, Thank You for summer!

Thank you for the warmth of the sun  
and the increased daylight.

Thank You for the beauty I see all around me  
and for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy Your crea-  
tion.

Thank You for the increased time I have to be with my  
friends and family,

and for the more casual pace of the summer season.

Draw me closer to You this summer.

Teach me how I can pray  
no matter where I am or what I am doing.

Warm my soul with the awareness of Your presence  
and light my path with Your Word and Counsel.

As I enjoy Your creation, create in me  
a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for You.

*- Author Unknown*



*Welcome to the Eleventh Issue of*

## **FLOCK QUARTERLY**

Good Shepherd's magazine for parishioners by parishioners

STAFF --- Graphics Editor Laura Rosato --- Content Editor Richard Reid

In the Eleventh Issue: In our Art section, Mary White offers thoughts and photographs of St. Andrews Chapel and Richard Reid contemplates a sunset. Our Parishioner Interview profiles Julie Syracuse, her Bible Reading program, and her religious aspirations. Columnist Denise Junker considers the Lamb as a symbol of Jesus. Marsula Guarino presents a poem about spring. Richard Reid reflects on a movie theater from long ago. Ellen Ralston contributes sketches of three names on our military prayer list. Bill Munch details his quest to rectify an error on his great grandfather's gravestone.

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**Remember:** You're never too young or too old to contribute. Material from our children and teens as well as from adults of all ages are always welcome.

### Guidelines for Contributors

*Types of Material* . . . Essays; Humor; Bible Reflections; Interviews with Parishioners;  
Short Fiction; Original Photos and Artwork; Original Poetry & Prayers

### General themes for any issue to inspire your submissions

Family; hobbies; your vocation; religion; the weather; people/things/places you remember; a great day; something/someone you're thankful for; current events (avoid being overtly political)

### Special issue themes appropriate for upcoming issues to spark your creativity

*Spring Issue Themes* (published in February)

Ash Wednesday; Lent; Easter; Black History & Women's History Months; Valentine's Day

*Summer Issue Themes* (published in May)

Pentecost; Mother's Day; Father's Day; 4th of July; end-of-school; graduations; summer; vacations

*Fall Issue Themes* (published in August)

Labor Day; autumn; back-to-school; Halloween

*Winter Issue Themes* (published in November)

Advent; giving; Thanksgiving; Christmas; the new year; the ending old year; winter; Epiphany

Please make text submissions in Word format or handwritten and try not to exceed 2,000 words – but don't be intimidated by that number: shorter pieces are always welcome, too.

Unsure of your article or art idea? The Content Editor is happy to discuss and plan it with you.

Please do not send any material in the PDF format. Always submit original photos in .jpeg format

If your original artwork is 8 1/2" by 11" or smaller, it may be submitted for scanning

### Issue Deadlines for Material

Spring (by January 31st)

Summer (by April 30th)

Fall (by July 31st)

Winter (by October 31st)

Email material to Richard Reid ([writer2363@gmail.com](mailto:writer2363@gmail.com)) or telephone (cell: 585-766-7254)

*You are part of the Good Shepherd flock . . . please contribute to Flock Quarterly!*

## ESSAY

### FACES TO NAMES: AARON, SIMON & MEGAN

by Ellen Ralston

*Editor's Note: In our last issue, we began an occasional column designed to answer the question, "Who are the military men and women mentioned during the prayers of the people?" In this issue, Ellen Ralston provides some details about three more soldiers. Who will write the next column? Will it be you? Would those who know something about the lives of other names on our current military list please contact Content Editor Richard Reid @ [writer2363@gmail.com](mailto:writer2363@gmail.com). If necessary, Richard can help you to shape your thoughts into a finished article.*



I have good friends named Annette and Bill Johnstone who have lived locally for many years. They have two sons, graduates of Webster Schroeder High School, who have made the Army their career. Both are on our military list. Aaron, age 34, the oldest, is a Master Sergeant, currently stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina which will be redesignated as Fort Liberty on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Aaron has a six-year-old daughter, Lily.

His younger brother, Simon, age 31, is a Captain approved to become a Major in August. Presently, he is stationed at the Army & Air Force Joint Base Lewis-McChord in the state of Washington. Simon is engaged to Cassie.

They plan to be married at the end of this May.

Megan Dolan is a career Marine that our family met through one of my sons. Her base is in California. She is from New Jersey and serves six-month rotations in Kuwait. Although we are not in touch with her now, we thought it appropriate to add her to our prayer list.



## ESSAY

*A Saint's Corner: The Lamb as a Symbol of Jesus*

by Denise Junker



I adore stained glass windows, but their images can sometimes be quite violent. One of the images I have seen often is of a sword through the center of a lamb and then blood dripping out from underneath the animal, dripping off the tip of the sword. In trying to find a photo, I was unable to find one that matches this specific description. The lamb is prevalent amongst stained glass windows usually holding a flag or with a cross behind it and sometimes blood being shown pouring out of the lamb. The accompanying illustration has the common flag and a symbolic red swirl under it that could be viewed as blood flowing from the lamb. This image is what leads my curiosity about the image of the lamb representing Jesus. This image is obviously referring to his arrest and crucifixion. But, how did Jesus seen as a lamb come about?

In the time and place of Jesus, sheep were prevalent. Their care and slaughter were not always done in some far off place away from a village. Animals when in distress can make a lot of noise. At Jesus' arrest and again at his crucifixion, he did not struggle or scream. He stayed calm. Depending on which gospel you read, his last words may contradict a bit but, he never protested against his captors. This observation is a start toward the symbolism.

In scripture, John the Baptist says, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29a, NRSV; also John 1:36). This phrase "lamb of God" (in Latin, "Agnus Dei") is recognized as referring to two citations: Isaiah 53:7 and Jeremiah 11:19. Both refer to a "lamb being led to the slaughter" while Isaiah emphasizes "he did not open his mouth." The lamb as sacrifice is also elsewhere in scripture.

In the gospels, Jesus is crucified at or near the Jewish festival of Passover. This draws a parallel to the paschal lamb. The paschal lamb is the sacrifice made at the first Passover of a lamb. The lamb's blood was placed on the doorpost of the house as a sign it should be skipped (aka passed over) by the plague God was sending as a punishment (Exodus 12:13). St. Paul specifically refers to Jesus as such in 1 Corinthians 5:7b: "For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed."

John the Baptist said "who takes away the sin of the world." The Passover was not an equivalent of forgiving sins. In Jewish tradition, that is Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement. That adds another layer to the symbol of the lamb. In modern Christian theological studies, parallels are made to the directive in Numbers 29:11 to add a goat to the sin-offering sacrifice. The lamb has been considered an equivalent by some scholars. It has also been taught that at one point in Jewish tradition, a goat or sheep had the communal sins placed on it and then left outside the village walls, left in the wilderness, to take the community's sins away. In my limited research for this article, I have not found the specific writings on either topic but it had been stated by professors when I was in seminary.

The Book of Revelations refers often to the "blood of the lamb." Since the Book of Revelations has another layer of symbolism within it that I could not possibly decipher in this small article, I will not spend any time on how those statements might feed into the lamb symbolism. And since it was probably written after John the Baptist and the Gospels, I feel it does not directly feed into the lineage of John the Baptist's intent.

The symbol of the lamb for Jesus as an innocent taken under arrest and crucified is an obvious interpretation. Jesus as the "lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" is not so easily quantified. But that splitting-of-hairs is not as important as what has become a symbol of the innocent Jesus who suffered and died for us.

My next article will about civil and gender rights activist, and Episcopal priest, Rev. Pauli Murray.

## ***"I Am Still Surprised at the Awesomeness of Our God"***

An Interview with Julie Syracuse by Content Editor Richard Reid

**Richard Reid:** How did you come to attend Good Shepherd? What drew you here? What keeps you here?

**Julie Syracuse:** I have been attending, mostly at the 8am Sunday liturgy since August 2021. What drew me to Good Shepherd was the people, and what keeps me at Good Shepherd is the people. I am an extrovert by nature so interacting with folks is very important to me. I have had opportunities to get to know individuals at Good Shepherd from EfM, ministry work, and a trip to the Holy Land in 2020.

**RR:** What was your church experience growing up?

**JS:** I grew up as a practicing Roman Catholic. My mother was drawn to several eastern religions, while my brother and I attended church with our dad. There was a time when I stepped away from church altogether. I spent this period reading for the most part on spirituality. In 2009, as Christmas approached, I decided I needed to reengage with my Christian roots in a corporate way. I went to one local church for Christmas services as it was the only one that had a website that gave service times. It was not a good fit, but now I could go by the signs outside churches with service times. The next Sunday I entered an Episcopal church and found my spiritual home.

**RR:** Can you tell us something of your parents and your early life?

**JS:** I was born and raised in the suburbs of Buffalo. My father was a re-weaver, someone who invisibly repairs clothing, and also owned a men's clothing shop. My mother was also a re-weaver and a portrait artist. My father, mother and brother have all passed on from this earthly plain. I am amicably divorced; we still talk occasionally especially regarding our daughter. My daughter, Sylvia and her husband, James, live in London, England. They met online through a friend, and when Sylvia did her study abroad in Spain, they would spend every weekend together traveling through Europe. He works for the ministry of transportation and she in the leisure center industry. I am lucky to have the opportunity to visit a few times a year.

**RR:** Any hobbies or interests beyond the religious?

**JS:** During the early days of the pandemic, I was exposed to the practice of iconography, which I continue as a spiritual practice. This has also led to other forms of artistic expression and the launch of Orchard Terrace Studios with a couple friends. We offer original artwork and laser engraved wood décor. I also enjoy boating, fishing, and golfing during the warmer months. I am an avid fan of murder mysteries. During the pandemic, my group met at least weekly to solve murder mysteries available through a subscription service. A box would arrive with evidence and along with online interaction it was our goal to solve the murder. Each story was in six parts and the next 'episode' would ship with successful completion of the goal previous. We continued to play it this past winter.

**RR:** What else keeps you busy these days?

**JS:** I am currently the director of business intelligence for a leading national importer and wholesaler of fine wine and spirits. I have always worked in the alcoholic drink industry – originally in sales before transitioning to IT about 20 years ago. This January I graduated from Grand Canyon University, magnum cum laude with a Bachelor's in Christian Studies. It was a phenomenal experience to go back to school as an adult learner during a pandemic. However, the school happens to be a leader in online education, so that part of the process was easy. It was challenging at times to juggle life, full time work and being a full-time student; but also exhilarating at the same time. Currently, my life at Good Shepherd revolves around weekly worship, Education for Ministry sessions – I will be graduating from EfM at Good Shepherd this Spring – and bi-weekly gatherings of the Chronological Bible Book Club.

**RR:** Just what is a "Chronological Bible Book Club"?

*Continued*



**JS:** The Chronological Bible Challenge is a year-long effort to read the through the bible based upon its own chronology. We use a bible that has books and sections of books interspersed based on this timeline rather than the canonical ordering of the scripture, with an easily amount of reading ascribed to each day, starting with the beginning on January 1st. This gives a reader a different view into how the story of God and his people unfolds. This is the first year as a fully Good Shepherd program. Last year I asked for people to join me on Facebook. Five completed the journey and four of us were from Good Shepherd. At this point we have six folks participating. We come together every other Wednesday evening throughout the year on zoom, to discuss the readings, particularly paying attention to how experiencing the story in this way is different than how we have encountered scripture in the past. It is more like a “good” book club, than a traditional bible study.

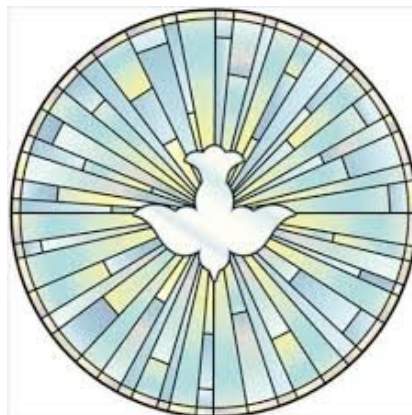
**RR:** I understand the discernment committee has strongly endorsed you for ordination, congratulations. Can you talk a bit about your spiritual journey that has brought you to this point? What role do you see for yourself in the Episcopal church – deacon or priest?

**JS:** In February 2020 while on a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine, I heard the Spirit call me to ordained ministry. Upon my return, I shared this with my close friends and priest, with all of them having the same reaction, “finally”! At that point I knew my first step was to finish my bachelor’s degree, and even in the midst of a pandemic I was able to earn my degree in preparation for applying to be a postulant for the priesthood. Having recently been endorsed by my local discernment group and the vestry, I hope to enter a hybrid seminary program in the fall. This will allow me to still live in my local community and attend seminary at the same time. The greatest part of this journey is sharing my faith story and learning of others’ journeys as they walk with me on this path. I am still surprised at the awesomeness of our God, and His interaction with us. I know that experience of His love will continue to shape my life journey

**RR:** What life skills do you bring to your religious role?

**JS:** This is an interesting question as I believe our spiritual side is integrated into all aspects of our life, and our life experiences are integrated into our spiritual life, both personal and corporate. Our corporate life together is enhanced by each individual’s gifts and talents.

**RR:** Thank you for sharing a bit of your story with us. Over the years, our parish has supported several of its members who have gone on to ordination. Do let us know whenever you think we might be able to help you.



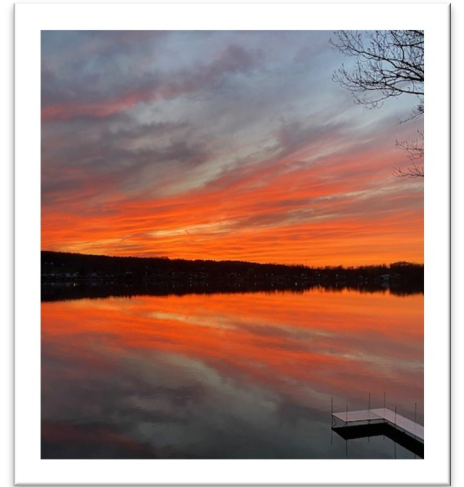
## ART

### Serenity

(Photo by Richard Reid)

A majestic sunset capped a lovely, warm April day at Lake Waneta, NY. It reminded me of this quote from British science-fiction writer H.G. Wells:

“We must not allow the clock and the calendar to blind us to the fact that each moment of life is a miracle and mystery.”



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## POETRY

### *A ROBIN IN MARCH*

By Marsula “Marcy” Guarino

*I saw a robin today!*

*It's July.*

*People must think it is silly*

*to say*

*I saw a robin today*

*in July.*

*But would they think it so silly*

*to say*

*“I saw a robin today!”*



# CARVED IN STONE: A CIVIL WAR VETERAN'S GRAVESTONE

by Bill Munch

On July 19, 2022, on a beautiful summer day just over 135 years after my great-great-grandfather's death (William Munch, 1830 – 1887), a gravesite ceremony was held in a Civil War Cemetery in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the presence of four of his great-great-grandchildren to dedicate his updated gravestone in which his name was corrected from "Wm Monch" to "Wm Munch." How did this happen? Why was it done?

This story starts over 40 years ago when my parents, Neil and Eleanor Munch, became interested in researching the genealogy of our ancestors, specifically William Munch, my great-great-grandfather. A starting point was a circa 1885 photograph taken in Detroit, MI, of William's wife, Catherine, and her youngest daughter Rose. Unfortunately, no photo was ever found of William Munch. Based on a search of Detroit city directories, it was found that William Munch, was a shoe-maker in the Detroit area for the years: 1868 – 1886.



FIGURE 1: Catherine Bezold Munch (sitting; 1836 - 1886) and her youngest daughter Rose (standing; 1872 - 1959)

The search for William Munch's grave started when my mother contacted Barbara Madison, a genealogist in Grand Rapids, MI. In a July 1983 letter from my mother to Barbara Madison, Eleanor writes: "...A letter from my husband's aunt

*in 1966 indicates that William Munch died at the G.A.R. home in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the early 1880's, probably 1882...[W]here would I find the exact date of death and perhaps the place and date of birth? ..."*



FIGURE 2: Incorrectly Spelled Civil War Veteran's Gravestone (Veteran's Cemetery, Grand Rapids, MI) – "Wm MONCH" should be "Wm MUNCH"

Barbara Madison responded to my mother's request almost a year later stating she found a William Munch, who died in Grand Rapids, MI, on Feb. 7, 1887. A June 1984 letter from Barbara Madison to my mother says: "...It would appear from the records that William did not live...more than a day or two at most (after arriving in Grand Rapids, MI). He obviously was very ill and somehow traveled here (from Detroit) to be admitted. William Munch is buried in the Veteran's Facility Cemetery here in Grand Rapids ... (having served in the Civil War) in Co. L, 25th Regiment, State Militia (New York) ..." William Munch actually died in St. Marks Home, Grand Rapids, and not in the Veterans Home, Grand Rapids, because construction of the Veterans Home had not yet been completed. With this information, our family realized that this gravestone for William Munch had his name misspelled (i.e., the last name on his gravestone was MONCH instead of MUNCH), likely because of the very poor record keeping at that time.

Although William Munch died Feb. 7, 1887, what is believed to be his death certificate was not created until 19 months later (i.e., not until Sept., 1888). This shows some of the poor record keeping of the time: his death certificate had very few details, and included another different spelling of his last name (i.e., William Munc-ah):

*Continued*

PLACE OF DEATH				CERTIFICATE OF DEATH				State Office No.	
County <u>Kent</u>				MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE OF VITAL AND HEALTH STATISTICS				2-102	
Township _____				Registered No. <u>2118</u>					
Village _____				City <u>St Mark's Home</u> St. <u>3rd</u> Ward					
City _____ (No. _____) (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.)									
FULL NAME <u>William Muncach</u>									
SEX	Male	COLOR OR RACE	White	MARITAL STATUS	Widower	AGE: YEARS	57	MONTHS	
						DAYS		BIRTHPLACE	Germany
OCCUPATION OF DECEASED						DATE OF DEATH			
Unknown						February 07 18 87			
NAME OF FATHER						CAUSE OF DEATH			
Unknown						Unknown			
RESIDENCE OF FATHER									
Unknown									
NAME OF MOTHER									
Unknown									
RESIDENCE OF MOTHER									
Unknown									
Filed September 01 18 88						Cornelius L Harvey Registrar			

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct transcript of the record of death on file in the Michigan Department of Public Health.

This record provided by the  
Michigan Department of Public Health  
for Genealogical research

B7D 781

Lansing, Michigan

19

Death Certificate (believed to be) for William Munch

Research by the Grand Rapids genealogist uncovered lots of information regarding William Munch's service during the Civil War as a Private in Company L, 25 New York State Militia. It should be noted that in April 1862, the State Militia became the National Guard. William Munch enrolled April 19, 1861 for 3 months of service (which was how long his company existed), and then mustered in May 4, 1861, at Washington City at age 31. Note that after the Civil War, the name Washington City was changed to Washington, D.C., because of expansion of the city's boundaries (Ref (1)). William appeared on the Company muster-out roll August 4, 1861, Albany, New York. We don't have records as to why William served, but one might expect he served for love of his new country. The records for Co. L, 25<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia (Ref. (2)) state that they were located in Arlington Heights, VA, helping build Fort Albany. Here is a copy of William Munch's honorable discharge from his service during the Civil War:



Certificate of Honorable Service – William Munch, Detroit, MI

Another interesting piece of information came from my parent's search of the 1880 census records from Sumpster, Michigan, in which they found that the birth place of William and his wife Catherine was Wurttemberg, Germany. Based on that census information, my parents chose to travel to Wurttemberg, Germany, for 3 weeks (Sep. 13-Oct. 4, 1987) to search for the city from which William and Catherine immigrated to the U.S. They had no real expectation that they would find any genealogy information during this trip but, even if that was the case, it would be an interesting adventure.

After my parents' 3-week visit to Germany was almost up, my parents finally did find our ancestor William Munch learning that he had lived in Mockmuhl, Germany. This information came from a search of an index of old newspapers. After travelling to Mockmuhl, they hired a genealogist and translator who were able to find the following information: William, his wife Catherine, and their infant son (Frederich) immigrated from Mockmuhl to New York City in 1857. I don't believe it was ever found out why they left Germany, but likely for a better life. Through the



Figure 5: L->R: Ilse Saur (genealogist), Eleanor Munch, & Eric Schiedel (interpreter), Mockmuhl, Germany, Oct. 1987

help of the local genealogist and interpreter, they found additional Munch family genealogy information back to about 1500. One interesting tidbit of information was finding out that William was a shoemaker. A quote from my parents notes on this trip dated Oct. 23, 1987: "...The record (was found) of Wilhelm's trip (in those days, William Munch was known as Wilhelm Fredrich Munch) to Nekarsulm where he passed the examination to become a master in his trade as a shoemaker.... (after which) he was then a "Schuhmachermeister"..."

As my parents were aging (my father passed in 2014, my mother passed in 2016), I took on the responsibility of storing and cataloging the 40 or so years of their genealogical research documents (all of which were hard copies). In 2018 as I was completing my engineering career, I personally scanned all of the genealogy documents my parents had created, resulting in about 2,000+ digitized files. After working on a number of genealogy projects (many of which were based on my parents' research), in the fall of 2021 I chose to see if I might be able to correct the spelling of the name of my great-great-grandfather's gravestone from MONCH to MUNCH. I chose to do this work because: (1) I felt I had enough information to make this change, (2) he was my direct ancestor, (3) he was a veteran (i.e., I have a great respect for all veterans) and (4) having correct genealogy information helps those in the future who wish to research their roots. Like my parents' efforts to locate the city in Germany from which William Munch immigrated to the U.S., I didn't know if I was or was not going to be able to correct a misspelling on a gravestone of a veteran, and error that had been misspelled for about 135 years.

In my attempt to determine if a correction to a misspelled name on a Civil War gravestone could be made, I referred to the Veteran Administration's website:

Requesting a replacement government headstone or marker

<https://www.va.gov/resources/requesting-a-replacement-government-headstone-or-marker/>

"...If a historic marker has inaccurate information, which can be verified with documents like death certificates or discharge papers, we will correct the error. Then we'll replace the marker "in kind," which means the marker will have the same type, style, and inscriptions used when the Veteran was buried...."

The information which I felt would be able to verify a misspelled last name on a gravestone was based on information found on the National Park Service's web page used for searching for Civil War Soldiers (<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm>). Based on this web site, I found that there WAS a person named William Munch who fought with the 25th New York State Militia, but there was no person named William Monch who served with the 25th New York State Militia.

Continued

In November 2021, hoping that I had enough information to correct my great-great-grandfather's gravestone, my next step was to call the Veterans Administration in Washington, DC. They told me that, in order to request an updated gravestone, I would need to fill out the following Veteran Administration form: "40-1330 Claim for Standard Government Headstone or Marker" (<https://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330.pdf>), have it signed by myself (a family member) as well as a representative from the veterans cemetery (in this case, Chaplain Bruce Kalish), then fax the filled in form to the address noted on this form (in Quantico, VA). This fax was sent to the VA office in Quantico, VA, on or about Nov. 17, 2021.

On Dec. 6, 2021, an email was sent by the Veterans Administration stating that the request for a new gravestone was approved! In addition, this change was to be made at no cost to the family. On Feb 15, 2022, the gravestone with the correct spelling of the last name was received by the Veterans Cemetery in Grand Rapids. Once the Veteran Cemetery ground thawed, this updated gravestone was put in place of the misspelled gravestone, then the old gravestone was removed and ground up (i.e., to ensure that it could never be used again).



Finally on July 19, 2022 on a beautiful summer day just over 135 years after my great-great-grandfather's death, a gravesite ceremony was held to dedicate the updated gravestone. The U.S. flag presented to the family was the U.S. flag as of the end of the Civil War with 36 stars. Those in attendance were Chaplain Bruce Kalish (officiant) from the Grand Rapids Veterans Home, the Kent County Honor Guard, and four of William Munch's great-great-grandchildren.

#### REFERENCES:

Britannica: "...After the American Civil War (1861–65), the city of Washington expanded beyond its originally planned boundaries and became legally indistinguishable from the District of Columbia..."

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Washington-DC>

25<sup>th</sup> New York State Militia: details of their Civil War service

<https://civilwarintheeast.com/us-regiments-batteries/new-york-infantry/25th-new-york-militia/>



Updated Gravestone for "William Munch" taken at the July 19, 2022 Dedication, Veterans Cemetery, Grand Rapids, MI



Great-Great-Grandchildren who attended the July 22, 2022 Dedication:

L->R: Barbara (Bill's sister), Bill, and Linda, & Diana (Bill's two cousins). All have the last name Munch.

## *Movie Theater Elegy*

by Richard Reid

In early June 2022, I read that the Pittsford Cinema had closed its doors on Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>. What! How could they do that? Suddenly, I had a flashback to the Bronx. It was early in December 1967 when I heard that the RKO Castle Hill, my favorite movie theater of my younger days, had just closed for good. My first thought was, “They can’t do that!” But they could and they had. This essay is an elegy for the RKO Castle Hill movie theater.

The RKO Castle Hill was located at 1320 Castle Hill Avenue, the Bronx, about half a block from Westchester Avenue, along which the elevated subway, the IRT Number 6, Pelham Bay Line ran, though you never heard the train in the theater. Offering one thousand seats, the theater’s architectural style was called Tudor Revival. The inside was a large rectangular box with three straight red-carpeted aisles that led from the back of the theater to the stage. To me, its most distinctive feature was the raised oval containing house lights that dominated the off-white ceiling. The architect was William Shary, whose architectural firm specialized in utilitarian structures, such as gas stations and movie theaters. No doubt inspired by the street’s name, Shary put castle turrets above where the marquee attached to the building. The turrets still remained when I last saw the building’s facade in 2009, though everything else of the theater’s facade was long gone.

When it opened showing silent movies in September 1927, there was a Wurlitzer Style D Console Organ. In the late 1920s, the recently-formed RKO movie studio had added the theater to its chain of theaters in the days when many major Hollywood studios owned their own movie theaters as a guaranteed venue for the movies they released almost weekly. In 1946, the Supreme Court ruled this practice was an illegal monopoly, forcing the studios to divest ownership of their theater chains. The company that owned this theater retained the RKO brand right down to its closing.

It’s possible the first movie I ever saw in a theater was *Lady and the Tramp*, the 1955 animated Disney film, at the RKO Castle Hill when I was nearly five, but I’m just making a reasonable speculation since I was very young. When that question became important to me, my father had passed and my mother, who had not joined me and my father that day, had no recollection. I saw lots of Disney movies there like *Peter Pan*, *Cinderella*, *Davy Crockett*, *Old Yeller*, *Tonka*, *Third Man on the Mountain*, *Ten Who Dared*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, and, *The Parent Trap*, among many others. During Christmas and Easter, ten cartoons featuring Disney characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, along with a nature documentary would often be added to a Disney main feature but it was often tough to get a seat, so huge were the crowds. My parents weren’t movie-goers themselves, at least, not when I knew them. It was probably a matter of money which was very tight in those days, but for me, they would kindly splurge now and then.

The RKO Castle Hill, the only one in easy walking distance for us, was one of four movie theaters very close to where I lived in the 1950s and 1960s. We got to all of them when I was a child. Parkchester, the nearby apartment complex covering 129 acres, built by Metropolitan Life Insurance in 1940, contained the Loew’s American movie theater. Flanking Parkchester’s edges were two small, independent movie houses, The Circle, and The Palace, like rubies on a bracelet with the American as the diamond between them. Designed by John Eberson, the 1,998-seat American was constructed in an Art Deco style with a spacious lobby and foyers in marble, bronze and walnut. It opened near the end of December 1940 and was hailed as “one of 1940’s most brilliant architectural achievements,” by the *1941 Film Daily Year Book*. It sure was impressive but I was never as comfortable there as I was at the much plainer RKO.

*Continued*

Being a neighborhood theater, the Castle Hill seldom booked films until after the first- and second-tier theaters in the RKO chain had first shown them. Back then, it was common practice for studios to gradually release their films, instead of opening on thousands of screens as is common today. Sometimes, this meant agonizing weeks for me, checking newspaper movie ads to see if a film I wanted to see had moved on to the Castle Hill or had been held over for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week at other RKO theaters. Sometimes films appeared at the RKO unexpectedly, meaning they had not been showing at other New York City theaters first. These were usually low-budget genre pictures, often without big star names, though at the time, my awareness of movies as a child only enabled me to identify five kinds of movies: Disney films, westerns, sci-fi/horror, comedies, and stuff I wasn't interested in. For a time, the trick was getting one of my parents to take me, or joining with a friend whose parent was taking him.

Of course, neighborhood theaters did have one big plus: double features, unless it was one really long movie, like the 1958 western, *The Big Country*. That was my first-ever, almost three-hour movie, and I really enjoyed it (and still do). Even as a pre-teen, it didn't take me too long to guess which films might show up at the Castle Hill, based on the studio that released the picture. In the early 1960s, this tended to include films from Walt Disney, 20th-Century Fox, Warner Bros., Universal-International, Allied Artists, and American-International. For first-run films from MGM, Paramount, Columbia and United Artists, you had to go to the Loew's American but there were always exceptions. Wednesday, not Friday, was the typical opening day for a new film.

Occasionally the RKO would drop a film after Sunday and bring something else in for two days, usually on re-release. This is how I got to see for the third time my favorite film from childhood, *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*. I went on a rainy Monday directly from school by myself when I was eleven in 1961, the first time I had been permitted to go to the movies alone. This 1959 sci-fi film was paired with *Sink the Bismarck!* about the British Navy's efforts to destroy the WWII German ship. I was a big boy now, I told myself, able to attend on my own – and still under age 12, so I only had to pay the children's price – best of both worlds! Still, I was an unaccompanied child, so theater policy required I sit in the children's section on the far-left side, down front where the view of the screen was less than ideal. It was for this reason that going with a parent wasn't a bad thing since you could sit in the middle and get the full effect of widescreen films. Deciding I was going to see my favorite movie from a better perspective, I quietly shifted to the middle section, remaining undisturbed until 7pm. That's when I first learned that theater policy required children to have an adult with them after 7pm. I didn't, so I was sent home.

It was at the RKO that I twice saw actors promoting their films via personal appearances on stage. In 1962, The Three Stooges would accompany *The Three Stooges in Orbit* which had the zany trio battling Martians planning to invade the Earth. Paired with a better-than-average Japanese sci-fi flick, *Mothra*, this promised to be a terrific afternoon for me and my friends. Moe, Larry and Curly-Joe were supposed to appear between the two films. When *Mothra* started, the groan from the large audience of largely pre-teen boys was palpable. Within 20 minutes, the film abruptly stopped, the house lights came up and we let out a huge roar as three familiar faces, surrounded by a phalanx of security, came briskly down the children's section aisle and ran up on stage. There were many jokes but not too much physical slapstick for maybe 20 fun minutes before they ran off to the next theater for which they were probably also late. We were all given autographed photos of the Stooges on our way out of the theater. Generally good about keeping such items, somehow, that one has disappeared. Wish I still had it.

*Continued*

Two years later, in August of 1964, another trio of comedians stopped by for 20 minutes of comic patter. This time, it was my father who accompanied me for a terrific afternoon of laughs and chills. The main feature was *McHale's Navy*, the first big-screen version of the popular ABC show that had run in prime-time from 1962 to 1966. Three of the show's stars: Tim Conway (Ensign Parker), Joe Flynn (Capt. Binghamton) and Carl Ballantine (Crewman Gruber) appeared. Genuine movie star Ernest Borgnine (Lt. Commander McHale) was AWOL. Accompanying the film was *Black Sabbath*, a trilogy of horror stories hosted by Boris Karloff who also appeared in the final one as a vampire. Getting Dad to join me was easy since we both laughed ourselves silly over the TV show – Mom said we had no taste – plus we always enjoyed those classic Universal horror movies on television (even with commercials). It was around my father's birthday so I made his ticket one of his presents, a small way to thank him, I explained, for bringing me to the RKO all those years to see the Disney animated features since Mom always refused to see "cartoons".

Since some readers know me as a big fan of movies, you might be wondering if my love of them happened because of my frequent trips to the RKO Castle Hill. I think that played a part but I also saw plenty of terrific films at those three other Bronx theaters as well. From an early age, I watched lots of movies, mostly westerns, and kiddie shows on my home's 14-inch black & white television. As soon as I understood you could see movies that looked huge, mostly in color, and without commercials, I wanted to go there as often as I could. I saw my two favorite western stars in color for the first time at the RKO: John Wayne in *Rio Bravo*, and Randolph Scott in *Seven Men from Now*. When two of my favorite movie monsters battled each other in color, I was at the RKO to see them in *King Kong vs. Godzilla*. Color, a big widescreen image and no commercials – that seemed the way to go – until I began discovering the many virtues of certain old Hollywood movies on television as an older teenager. Yes, they were mostly all that "stuff I wasn't interested in" as a child. That's when I started becoming a true fan of movies.

These days, whenever I put on a DVD or Blu-Ray of a movie I first saw at "my movie theater", films like *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*, *Master of the World*, *The Great Race*, *The Premature Burial*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, and *Cheyenne Autumn*, to name but a few, I often think about the RKO Castle Hill and wish I could be there just one more time. Since you may be wondering, on my last RKO visit, the double feature was a western, *Nevada Smith*, and a sci-fi flick, *Die, Monster, Die!* It was around this time that I acquired a 27-inch color television. I had been saving up for it for over a year. Part of the earnings from my first summer job enabled me to finally obtain for my family what my parents had long-said they couldn't afford. That TV set was never intended to replace the RKO Castle Hill. I long-thought nothing could -- and nothing ever has



As the RKO theater looked in 1940



As it looked in 2009 when last I saw it

## ART

### REFLECTION ON REFLECTIONS: St. Andrew's Chapel, Lake Road, Webster, NY

by Mary White

It's hard to put words to these photos.

I'm not sure I shared them before this.

I wanted a photo of the cute little white chapel on the lake which I have come to love.

The windows panes are very old and the colors bend and change throughout the day.

St. Andrew's is humble in stature yet deeply spiritual for me.

I feel soulful, peaceful and whole in the Chapel.

I feel the reflection gives a voice to the spiritual feeling which I otherwise can't put into words.

I guess that's it.

