

## HISTORY OF OLD STONE HOUSE IN PUTNAM IS TOLD

by Thos. W Lewis

How many Times-Signal readers remember the story of Putnam's Old Stone House, written for the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune by Mrs. Blanche Bailey King, now a resident of this city and widow of John W. King, prominent Zanesville attorney for many years.

It is an uncommonly graphic story and George W. Stewart, of Adair avenue, has made it possible for the reader to enjoy its salient features by lending a clipping which has preserved Mrs. King contribution in its complete form.

### **Mrs. McHenry's Home**

The home in question is today owned and occupied by Mrs.

J.E. McHenry. It stands on Jefferson street, north side, half way between Putnam and Moxahala avenues. It has been greatly improved in the process of making it into a modern residence. The interior is especially beautiful and impressive.

The Commercial Tribune "played up" Mrs. King's story in a manner proving the editor's appreciation of its value. Occupying two columns and carrying a picture of the quaint old structure the story faces the reader in attractive form. The heading reads:

### **Put Into a Nivel [sic]**

"House Made Famous by a Novel -- It Stands at Zanesville and has Been a Fort, State House, Academy and Residence -- Fully Described in the Open Question

Mrs. King's story is dated May 18, 1899, and begins as follows:

"To the people of Zanesville the stons (sic) house which has stood across the river for nearly a century is an object of the deepest historical interest and if this ancient landmark could relate its vaied [sic] experiences of 90 years thy [sic] would make a soy [sic] well worth the reading.

In Elizabeth Robins' book, the 'Open Question', this house plays an important part as the home the Gano family.

### **First a School House**

When the substantial men who founded the town of Putnam felt the growing need of a school of a higher grade than then existed west of the river they built the store house which has stood across was called the Academy [sic];

later it was used as a seminary.

"In 1809, shortly after Zanesville had been honored by being made the state capital, the day arrived for the legislature to assemble. Where our curt [sic] house now stands the new capitol was in peniences of 90 years they would [sic] nearly finished and our worthy citizens found themselves in a quandary.

#### **The Solons Met There**

"What was to be done with the distinguished visitors? It was finally decided that the stone house across the river was the most suitable for the dignified gentlemen, so it was that within the stone house the legislature of Ohio held its regular session 90 years ago."

"Putnam had been settled by anti-slavery New Englanders and was an important station on the "underground railway". Many a poor slave found refuge in the village on his way north. "Beneath the hall of the old stone house" says Mrs. King, there is no cellar, only a space of about four feet between the ground and the floor. It was reached by a trap door in one corner of the hall which was easily concealed under the carpet." Here the fugitives were hidden until they could move on.

#### **Abolitionists Met**

In the stone house's great upper room the Ohio until Slavery Society was organized and there it held two sessions; and while these were in progress, says Mrs. King, "the building was surrounded by an infuriated mob, so bitter was the party feeling."

In due time, the property was purchased by E.C. Robins, whom the older Times-Signal readers will remember. He was the father of Elizabeth Robins, the novelist. Mrs. King writes entertainingly of the use Miss Robins made of the old house in some of the scenes of the book, "The Open Question". She called it the Gano house, as she called Putnam "New Plymouth" in her book.

#### **Meant to Use Her Wings**

There were "deep fascinating windows seats" in the old house and in these the budding authoress spend much time.

"After her career as an actress was decided on," writes Mrs. King, an old fiend [sic] said to her: "Bessie, what made you think of this life?"

"For years I have thought of nothing else," was the reply. "When I was a child I used to sit in the deep window seats of the old stone house and watch the young birds trying their wings as they took flight from the nest. I was

planning how some day I too, would fly away and be free like them. It has been the unchanging purpose of my life."

**"Thus Far, No Farther"**

Elizabeth drew a line on the carpet of her room which "her timid sister was forbidden to cross without leave on penalty of death, and this act, writes Mrs. King, was an actual occurrence that proved the existence of Elizabeth's indomitable will when she was a mere child. This paragraph follows in the same connection.

"I went to the dinning room to see the name, 'Bessie Robins', which is traced on the window pane with a diamond in a girlish hand."

E. C. Robins purchased the property in 1854 and the family resided there for many years. In 1886 it became the home of George H. Stewart and remained such for four years. In 1891 it came into the possession of Charles G. Dillon, a cousin of E. C. Robins. In 1896 it became the property of J.

E. McHenry.

**Cassel Stewart Born There**

The writer does not know whether or not Elizabeth Robins was born in the old stone house, but she lived there, went out of it and made good. So has Cassel Stewart, son of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Stewart, made good, but in a different way, and he was born in the old stone -- [sic] in 1887.

He belongs distinctly among the Zanesville boys who have made a success in life. As a member of the International Boundary commission for years and as City Civil Engineer at the important town of El Paso, Texas, Cassel Stewart has added to the value and the compiment [sic] of the phrase, "The Man from Zanesville."

--from article in Zanesville *Times-Signal*

*In later articles Thomas Lewis admitted that he was wrong in saying that the legislature had met in Putnam. During the depression as part of a WPA project workers went through records of the county commissioners to determine if the Academy had ever been used for a meeting of the legislature They found no indication that the legislature had met anywhere*

*other than in the Zanesville courthouse. The WPA report is in the archives of Muskingum College.*

Towards the close of the year the late Harry Stafford, father of our fellow citizen, the Rev. Price Stafford, and the late Mrs. Levins, opened a Sabbath School in Putnam, I think either in the Putnam Hotel, which stood near the present residence of Mr. Potwin, or in the Stone Academy. The late Edward Tupper was one of the earliest pupils there, in the fall of 1816.

--Elijah Hart Church, article in *Zanesville Daily Courier*, April 15, 1875

In April 1804, Dr. Matthews sold lot No. 24, on which he lived, on the corner of Front street and Putnam avenue, to John Levins, of Springfield, and Benj. I. Gilman of Marietta, for \$600, and built the same year his stone dwelling, the first stone house erected in this part of the State. Messers. Gilman & Levins commenced the erection, in the fall of 1806, of a three story brick building on the lot purchased of Dr. Mathews, for a hotel, and finished it in the summer of 1808.

It was a very substantial three story brick building, with a high stone basement. It was the best location at that time in Springfield, for a hotel, being convenient to the ford, at Fifth street, and the ferry, and the road to Lancaster running past it. On the second floor there was a large hall, or concert room, and on the third floor there were thirteen or fourteen bed rooms. It was the first three story brick building erected in Southeastern Ohio...

--Elijah Hart Church article in *Zanesville Daily Courier*, May 5, 1877

I will here state that Dr. Mathews sold his lot, No. 24, on which he first lived in Springfield, to John Levens and Robert J. Gilman, In April 1906, instead of 1804, for \$600.

--Elijah Hart Church, *Zanesville Daily Courier*, May 17, 1877

The citizens of Springfield, by subscription, raised money and built the large stone academy in the southeastern part of the town, in the summer of 1808. It is a large, substantial, two story stone house, with a hall and two large rooms in it, and a fine, roomy lot. It was built for a State House, so as to induce the Legislature to come to Springfield, or if they failed in their purpose it would answer for an academy, and for school and church purposes. The large three story brick tavern in Springfield was built with an eye to the same purpose, so that members would have ample accommodations when in session. These Puritans, or Yankees, as they were called at that day, were wide awake for business. They were sharp, shrewd, thrifty, businessmen, and always on the lookout for bargains. These large buildings in Springfield aroused the citizens of Zanesville, who then went to work to persuade the Legislature to locate that honorable body at Zanesville, on condition they would build a State House. The request was granted, and the citizens forthwith organized a company which was called the Court House company, from among the most wealthy and influential men of the town and it was agreed to raise the money necessary to erect the building and offices for their accommodation, guaranteeing the amount to the County Commissioners for the necessary buildings.

--Elijah Hart Church article in *Zanesville Daily Courier*, May 17, 1877

When the State of Ohio was formed, the seat of government was placed temporarily at Chillicothe, and the location of the permanent capital was not lost sight of by the ambitious settlements. The residents of Springfield, or Putnam, were called Puritans or Yankees, and their native thrift, enterprise, shrewdness and foresight were all exerted to secure the location of the Ohio capital in their village; indeed some such idea may have been in mind when

the town was platted, as the reservation of land on Putnam Hill was enumerated possible "state" buildings. The town was more enterprising and prosperous than Zanesville, whose only industries were a saw mill and pottery. The Putnamites raised a fund by subscription and, in 1808, erected a large two story stone building, with a hall and two large rooms, located on a fine roomy lot, in the southeast part of the village; also a three story brick hotel, the first of its character in the southeastern portion of the state, at the southwest corner of Putnam and Muskingum avenues, convenient to the ferry and ford, and upon the Lancaster road; a large hall or concert room was provided on the second floor, and on the third floor were about a dozen sleeping rooms, the hostelry being opened by William Burnham. With these facilities and conveniences the Putnam people thought they could offer more completed inducements than any other location, and if they failed to secure the capital, the hotel would prove a valuable investment and the proposed state house could be converted into an academy. These preparations aroused Zanesville, and McIntire was in the front of the agitation to obtain the prize for the older settlement. [p31]

[State house in Zanesville was 50' x 50' with 2,500 square feet on each floor. p32]

[Senate occupied the upper floor and the House the lower floor p35]

During the winter of 1823-4, [students of Dr. Calvin Conant engaged in grave robbing. The citizens were enraged and violence was threatened.] Dr. Conant made affidavit that he had no knowledge, direct or indirect, of the matter and the magistrate postponed the investigation a few days to permit public sentiment to cool; the accused were admitted to bail, but remained in seclusion, and the startling discovery was made that there was no statute against grave robbing; the hearing was conducted in the stone academy, but not one-fourth of the crowd could enter; the absence of a statute under which they could tried placed the magistrate in a dilemma; he was convinced the men would be mobbed if released and he bound them over to court on the charge of larceny of grave clothes; the case was postponed from time to time and was finally nollied. [p57]

--*Past and Present of the City of Zanesville and Muskingum County, Ohio* by J. Hope Sutor The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago 1905

### **THE FAMOUS STONE HOUSE**

The hotel projectors hoped that Putnam would become the state capital and built accordingly. But they went much farther; in 1808 they raised by subscription enough money to build a two-story stone building provided with a large hall and two large rooms. The citizens thus prepared to make a bid for the capital. If the state said "No" the

hotel would be a strong factor in developing the village and the "stone house" could be converted into a splendid academy. In the New England mind education has ever gone hand in hand with business.

There is at least one local authority for the statement that for a short time before the Zanesville 1809 courthouse was ready for occupancy by the state legislature, the Putnam stone house was used for the purpose. In it was held the first meeting of Ohio's Anti-Slavery Society.

The hotel was torn down years ago. The stone house still stands on Jefferson Street and is occupied as a residence by Mrs. J. M. McHenry. [p146]

#### Stone Academy, Zanesville

Erected in 1809. The Ohio legislature's first Zanesville meeting was held in this old, but time-defying, building. The Ohio Anti-Slavery Society's first state convention was also held there. Here Elizabeth Robins, the author, once lived. In it fugitive slaves were often harbored. It is now owned and occupied by Mrs. J. M. McHenry.

[caption under photograph of Academy on page 147. Photograph shows front and west side of building. There are trees in the front yard, electric lines and no brick wall in front of the building.)

--*Zanesville and Muskingum County Ohio* by Thomas W. Lewis. The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago. 1927



As we have seen, the people of God had for some time, no regular or convenient place of worship. At length, after the Court House, now recently demolished, had been erected, and the Stone Academy, the house now owned by Mr. Charles Robbins, had been built, the congregation assembled in these two places, alternately, crossing the river, not, as now, on free bridges, but in skiffs and ferry-boats, often with much inconvenience, till the erection, in 1817, of the First Presbyterian Church, on the north-east corner of Fourth and South streets, where for eighteen years, the fathers and mothers, with their the children worshipped under the able and successful ministry of the Rev. James Culbertson who ... [p8]

Mrs. Lucinda Nye... removed, with her father's family to this vicinity in October 1819. Soon after, she came to this place, where in the family of Mr. J. C. Guthrie, she supported herself by her needle, and subsequently by teaching. In the "Stone Academy", she had a school of some twenty-five or thirty scholars, in whom she became deeply interested,... [p25]

October 26th, 1833, the monthly Concert of Prayer for the abolition of Slavery was established, and held at first in the Stone Academy and for many years thereafter in the basement of [the Putnam Presbyterian church], on the last Monday evening of every month. [p28]

Indeed, as early as 1818, a Sabbath school was started in this village [Putnam], by Mr. Harry Safford, who should be regarded as the father of the institution, here. He was assisted by Mrs. Eliza Whipple, George W. Warner and others. The school was held in the Stone Academy. In 1820, it was removed to Zanesville. [51]

*--Retrospection: An Historical Resume of the Putnam Presbyterian Church Zanesville, Ohio. Delivered at its Forty-second Anniversary. January 7th and 21st, 1877.*  
Addison Kingsbury Published by Sullivan & Parsons,  
Printers, Zanesville, Ohio, 1877 56p

...In March, 1809, they were even more surprised to see Ebenezer Buckingham and his partners constructing the magnificent Stone Academy at 115 Jefferson Street. [p60]

The rumor that the legislature held one meeting in the Stone Academy because the Zanesville statehouse was not finished does not coincide with these facts: the contract required completion a month before the session opened; in Goodspeed's history of Muskingum County occurs the statement that "the statehouse was completed in the summer of 1810", and M. M Granger, Reverend Franklin Richards, and R. J. J. Harkins approved the statement; the *Journal* of the ninth general assembly says that it was "begun and held in the town of Zanesville"; and it would have been a violation of law to hold any sessions outside of Zanesville, the legal capital by legislative act. [p65]

In 1809 these Zanesville [Presbyterians) joined with a small group of unorganized Congregationalists in Springfield to form the United Presbyterian Church and employed Reverend William Jones as their first regular pastor. They worshipped in the log jail, the Hope and Anchor Tavern, the Stone Academy, and General VanHorne's 's new barn on Pine Street. [p75]

...Women from both towns formed the Zanesville and Putnam Charitable Society in 1816 and held quarterly meetings in the Stone Academy. [p95]

... In [1835], at the suggestion of Miss Sarah Sturges Buckingham, the Putnam Female Seminary was started in the Stone Academy. The seminary building on Woodlawn Avenue was completed in 1838. [p115]

A year after the Welles-Hazlett house was started [1809] , Putnam leaders constructed the Stone Academy. After being used as a school, a church, and a public hall for state abolition conventions, John S. Potwin converted it into a residence about 1840. He added several rooms and installed a Mazeppa fire front in an upstairs room. In 1858 Potwin sold the house to Charles E. Robins, cashier of the Franklin Bank and father of Elizabeth Robins. [p179,180]

Candles threw a pale yellow light on the windows of an upper room of the Stone Academy on Jefferson Street one

night in March, 1835. The drone of a man's voice was smothered by the door that had been tightly closed to keep out the cold night air. In the darkness outside no movements could be seen, but the dry branches of a lilac bush rustled as someone passed and the gate creaked on its hinges. An angry shout signaled for a rain of stones and bricks that crashed through the window panes. Thus violence over Abolition exploded between Tuckahoes and Saints in Putnam a quarter of a century before the first shot was fired against Fort Sumter.

William Cassidy banged the front door open and led his Zanesville rioters upstairs in three or four leaps. They grasped the Abolition speaker, Theodore Weld, roughly by the arms and hustled him down into the street. There other rioters attacked him with stones and clubs. The Putnam Abolitionists in the audience went to Weld's rescue and conducted him to the home of A. A. Guthrie. That night they made plans for a state Abolition convention. [p200]

Although the attack on Weld showed the temper of Zanesville people, the Putnam leaders brought a state Abolition convention to the Stone Academy on April 22, 1835...

A mob of Zanesville Tuckahoes again attacked the Stone Academy. The furious proslavery Virginians and the jealous laborers had the encouragement of prominent Zanesville men who saw a chance to strike a blow against the rival town. The Zanesville rowdies threw stones and filth at the Academy and insulted the women present. [p201]

from *Y Bridge City* by Norris F. Schneider  
The World Publishing Company c 1950

Scholars [of the Putnam Union Sunday School] were divided into classes, and were taught by teachers in turn. This society began its instruction in the court house upon the twenty-third of March, 1817. About this time a Sunday school was opened in what was then the Stone Academy, now the residence of Mr. McHenry on Jefferson Street, upon the Putnam side of the river. These two schools were united in 1820 and occupied the First Presbyterian Church building, which stood upon the corner of South and Fourth Streets in Zanesville. [The Putnam Union Sunday School by William E.

Guthrie, p44]

Early in October of 1835 the school for girls [the Putnam Seminary] was opened in the stone house still standing on East Jefferson Street.

Fifteen girls were enrolled the first day under the care of Miss Emerson of Boston and Miss Mather of Hartford. [The Putnam Seminary by Miss Maria Parsons p 52]

Taken from *Historical Papers Read at Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Putnam Presbyterian Church, 1910*

At age ten, after a girlhood in Staten Island, [Elizabeth Robins] was sent to her grandmother's in Zanesville, Ohio, to attend the Putnam Female Seminary. Before the next year was out, Hannah Robins [Elizabeth's mother] who had borne seven children in eleven years, two of them dying in infancy, was institutionalized at Oaklawn Sanitarium in Illinois. The break-up of the family sent the other children to Jane Hussey Robins's Old Stone House in Zanesville, and there Elizabeth stepped into the roles of tutor and surrogate mother to her siblings, as well as play director for the family entertainments. [p 1,2]

The second Mrs. Charles Ephraim Robins had borne her husband seven children before her health wore down and nervous depression forced the breakup of her family and the separation of the five living children. When this happened, twelve-year-old Elizabeth was already living most of the year with her grandmother in order to attend the Putnam Female Seminary in Zanesville, Ohio. [p 31]

[Two days after Easter 1898 Elizabeth] arrived in Zanesville, Ohio, to stay with other relatives in the town of her girlhood. [p 196]

[Synopsis of The Open Question - p 200-206. No mention of Stone Academy.]

The Scene: Childhood, Zanesville, Ohio. In the midst of a raging thunderstorm, jumbled together in the big four-

poster bed in their grandmother's stately home, the little boy Raymond Robins listens to his sister Bessie, eleven years his senior, telling enraptured tales of the gods who made the thunder and lightening... The stars break through the clearing sky, and Bessie turns the puddled driveway into a beautiful lake and creates for Raymond a fairy story ... [225,226]

from a doctoral dissertation, *"Sometimes Suppressed and Sometimes Embroidered": The Life and Writing of Elizabeth Robins, 1862 - 1852.*

Joanne Elizabeth Gates, Department of English,  
University of Massachusetts, May 1987  
Printed by University Microfilms

## **STONE ACADEMY CENTER OF MUCH HISTORY**

by Norris F. Schneider

Mrs. Richard Taylor recently bequeathed to the Pioneer Society her home at 113 Jefferson St. with an annual endowment of \$5,000 on condition that it be operated as a museum. The Society is now raising funds adequate for the acceptance and maintenance of the home.

The McHenry-Taylor house, also called the Stone Academy, ranks as the most historic building in Muskingum County. It is second in age to the Dr. Increase Mathews home.

Springfield School House Co. built the Stone Academy in 1809. Springfield residents changed the name of their town to Putnam in 1814. A spacious school was not needed. When Fortesque Cuming visited the town in 1807, he counted only 50 homes. No tax-supported school system had been established. Prosperous parents paid to educate their children in private academies. There was no demand for a large public school. Another motive actuated the company.

### **State Capital Relocates**

Chillicothe was no longer a central location for the state capital. Every town farther north wanted it. Zanesville settlers from the South and New Englanders in Springfield were bitter rivals. Both towns made strenuous efforts to secure the capital.

In 1808, Muskingum County commissioners built a two-story, log courthouse adequate for that period. It stood near the back steps of the present building. Court was held on the second floor and the jailer for the adjoining log jail lived on the first floor.

The commissioners' journal records that John McIntire and his friends discussed a building in 1808. They organized the Zanesville Courthouse Co. March 8, 1809, let the contract April 10, 1809, and spent \$7,000 to erect a two-story brick structure, resembling Independence Hall in Philadelphia on the site of the present courthouse. Obviously it was not needed. Zanesville wanted to offer it as a building ready to seat the legislators.

Also in 1809 Springfield leaders aspired to the same honor. Ebenezer Buckingham Jr., Levi Whipple, Dr. Increase Mathews and his son, Henry Mathews organized the Springfield School House Co. According to Deed Book K, page

19, the date was March 1809. They erected a building larger than the town would need for the next 50 years. It was designed for a statehouse.

### **Stone Quarrying Began**

Workmen quarried the stone near the present Zanesville Stoneware Co. It was hauled to the site by horses and oxen. Stone masons were imported to chisel the blocks to size. The completed two-story building measured 42 by 28 feet. Zachariah Morris Chandler, a Putnam native and historian, wrote a "Pioneer History of Putnam, Ohio". His mother taught in the academy and he was a student there.

Chandler wrote:

"The second story contained one large school room, the landing of the stairway and a small room over the stairway used as a cloak room and sometimes for a recitation room

He said there were two rooms on the first floor.

Mrs. Taylor said in an interview Aug. 22, 1975, that the outside walls are two feet thick. The inside walls are made of brick covered with plaster. There is a crawl space under the original stone section. Soon after John Potwin bought the property for a residence in 1838, he built a two-story frame addition with a basement. That addition was stuccoed by McHenry in 1908.

Springfield leaders did not limit their efforts for securing the state capital to this one building. Robert I. Gilman constructed a three-story brick hotel of 23 rooms on Putnam Avenue where the LaRue Apartments were later built. William Burnham operated it under his own name and later it was called the Hope and Anchor Tavern.

Elijah Hart Church, early Zanesville historian said:

"The citizens of Springfield hoped that the legislature would hold its sessions in the Stone Academy and his hotel was built with a view to furnishing suitable accommodations to the members of the legislature".

Then, within a mile of each other, stood a new and unneeded "courthouse" and a magnificent but unnecessary "school house" to be offered as state capital. Both towns were confident. But Zanesville outwitted its rival.

Henry Howe provided the explanation in his 1848 edition of "Historical Collections of Ohio". His information came from a series of articles in Zanesville Gazette in 1835. Howe wrote:

"A committee, consisting of John McIntire and others, was appointed to visit Chillicothe during the session of

the legislature and make whatever pledge might be necessary on the part of the county as well as to aid the Muskingum delegates in obtaining the passage of the desired law.

At a session of 1808 and 1809 the Muskingum delegates received assurances from their friends in the legislature that, if the county at its own expense would furnish suitable buildings for the legislature, a law would no doubt be passed for making Zanesville the place of meeting."

"K.S.N." specifically said in his article No. 10 in the Gazette March 23, 1842:

"McIntire and others had verbal promise that the Ohio capital should be moved to Zanesville if citizens could have a building ready."

They had one ready. On Oct. 1, 1810, the legislature passed an act to move the capital from Chillicothe to Zanesville.

Then more cunning promoters stepped in. On the next day the legislature appointed a committee of five to select a site for a permanent capital not more than 40 miles from the geographic center of the state. Zanesville is 50 miles from the center.

Zanesville was state capital from 1810 to 1812. The state printer moved here. Taverns and stores prospered. This city gained considerably in prestige. The former state capitol was used as a courthouse until 1874.

Springfield leaders gambled and lost. Then they had on their hands a costly stone building with no use and no income. Rather than let it stand vacant, they started a private school. The building was called the Stone Academy.

Chandler wrote that his mother, Henrietta Morris, and Jonathan Hobby were the first teachers. Everhart records that Lucinda Nye also taught there.

This advertisement appeared in the Muskingum Messenger Dec. 13, 1811:

"Grammar School. Jonathan Hobby respectfully informs the public that he will open a school in the Academy in the town of Springfield, Muskingum County, on the 18th of the present month."

In the Zanesville Express for July 25, 1816, we find this announcement:

"The proprietors of the Putnam Academy College in Connecticut, as a preceptor with a view of giving permanence to the institution [sic] . Mr. Rogers comes well recommended both for his erudition and morals."



"He teaches reading, writing, English, grammar, the Latin and Greek languages, mathematics, geography, history, in fine, all those branches of education which qualify a young man for entering college.. His government is said to be of the best kind and his attention to the morals of his students unremitted."

This attempt to give permanence to the institution failed. Chandler said that it declined in attendance and prestige and was closed in 1826.

Two years later, on Dec. 22, 1828, Springfield School House Co. recorded the deed to lot number 49 on the present Jefferson Street. Why did they wait for 19 years? Were they embarrassed to admit failure? Did they hesitate to reveal their identity? The explanation was that "it is expedient to sell said house lot."

The deed in Book K, page 19, tells that the lot belonged to Dr. Increase Mathews. It was "sold at public vendue" to the highest bidder, Henry Mathews, for \$600.

Although the school was closed, the owners of the Academy opened its doors to public meetings.

After the United Presbyterian Church of Zanesville and Putnam was organized in 1809, the members met alternately in the statehouse in Zanesville and the Academy until the Zanesville church was built in 1817.

The Putnam Female Seminary was established in the Academy in 1835. Classes were held there until the basement of the Putnam Presbyterian Church was completed in 1836. The three-story seminary building was built on the site of the present welfare department building.

A non-religious event happened at the Academy in 1823. Dr. Calvin Conant, a Putnam physician, had a hostler named Jake. One day Jake saw the foot of a girl's corpse projecting from the hay in the doctor's barn and he did not keep that fact a secret for a second. Four of Dr. Conant's medical students thought they needed a body for dissection. They robed a grave in Moxahala Avenue Cemetery and somewhat carelessly stored their victim.

Putnam residents were irate. They held a hearing in the Stone Academy. Only a fourth of the crowd could find room in the building. There was no law against grave robbing. But the magistrate did not want to release the four students to the angry mob so he bound them over on charges of stealing grave clothes.

The magistrate avoided violence on that occasion but soon anger and violence surged around the Academy over the

abolition of slavery.

copied from the *Times Recorder* Sunday July 24, 1983

## **STONE ACADEMY FACED ABOLITION RAGE**

by Norris F. Schneider

William B. Cassidy led a screaming, cursing mob of Zanesville pro-slavery sympathizers across the Third Street bridge to attack Stone Academy and burn Putnam. They were met by a small army of Putnam Abolitionists with loaded guns who held the mob until the sheriff arrived and read the riot act.

From 1809 to 1826 the Stone Academy on Jefferson Street was used as a school. Then it became a public meeting place. When Putnam Abolitionists scheduled conventions in the Academy, infuriated Zanesville mobs attacked the building.

For a few years in the late 1820's the two towns had joined in common efforts to solve the slavery problem. They organized the Zanesville and Putnam Colonization Society to buy slaves and colonize them in Liberia on the west coast of Africa. Issac Van Home was elected president.

### **Hamline's Speech**

In July 1830, Rev. L. L. Hamline delivered an address before the society. He was a Methodist minister, later a bishop and namesake of Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn. VanHorne requested that Hamline furnish a copy of his address for publication. The only known copy is preserved by the Library of Congress.

Rev. Hamline said with undue alarm, "In 50 years our blacks will increase to 12 million. They will secure our resources, seize our weapons of defense and when they would stab, they need only to raise the arm and give the blow".

Zanesville people approved these colonization efforts. But they began to feel alarm when Muskingum County Emancipation Society to Promote the Abolition of Slavery and Oppressive Laws was organized with Levi Whipple as president.

On Oct. 16, 1833, "a monthly concert of prayer for the abolition of slavery" was begun in the Stone Academy and continued for many years in Putnam Presbyterian Church. As long as they prayed for abolition, Zanesvillians held their temper. Then the society brought the famous abolition speaker Theodore Weld to speak at the Stone Academy in

preparation for a state convention.

Tempers exploded in Zanesville. Southern sympathizers and workmen who feared that abolition would threaten their jobs surged across the Third Street Covered bridge and surrounded the Academy. The enraged and riotous workmen, encouraged by prominent Zanesville businessmen, rushed up the stairs to the lecture room.

Weld later described the attack in a letter preserved in the Library of Congress and quoted by G. H. Barnes in his book, "The Anti-Slavery Impulse". Weld said, "A mob from Zanesville came, broke the windows, tore off the gate and attacked me when I came out with stones and clubs."

Goodsel Buckingham was more specific in his "Autobiography". He wrote, "A mob came over from Zanesville and broke up our meeting, William B. Cassidy leading the rioters. He was drunk, but I was not alarmed. I arose and urged the audience to be calm and remain, but in vain. We were hurried downstairs and I walked arm in arm with Weld until we reached the gate, when the mob separated us. We went to A. A. Guthrie's."

This attack did not intimidate the Putnamites. They scheduled the annual meeting of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society at Stone Academy on April 22, 1835. The speakers included James G. Birney, distinguished lawyer who had freed his slaves in Alabama, Theodore Weld and Henry B. Stanton.

William Culbertson recalled in the Courier in June 1878:

"Had a bombshell exploded in Zanesville, the people would not have been thrown into a greater uproar. The Zanesvillians made preparations to correct their neighbors across the river and break up the meeting."

"Zanesville men belonging to the lower strata of society, encouraged by the more respectable class, crossed the river, disturbed the meeting, defaced to some extent the Academy, insulted ladies who had been in attendance and dispersed the convention."

The howling mob threw brickbats and mud at A. A. Guthrie on the way to his home, which still stands at 405 Woodlawn Ave. Guthrie calmly removed his hat and thanked the scoundrels for escorting him home. One of the mob yelled, "Put on your hat, Captain, you might take cold in your head."

Culbertson said that the mob threatened to burn the barn of Major Horace Nye and the homes of Guthrie and H. C.

Howell had to be guarded by their friends.

At this time the residents of Putnam were incorporating their village. The first council meeting was held July 4, 1835.

Again in 1839 the Putnam Abolitionists invited the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society to meet at the Stone Academy from May 28- 31. And again the announcement of that event ignited furious protest in Zanesville. Newspapers announced a public meeting of protest.

Inflammatory handbills were circulated. One read:

"To the people of Muskingum. Abolitionists. Beware of Wolves in sheep's Clothing."

Another was headed:

"Resurrection of Abolitionists in Putnam".

Gordius A. Hall, builder of the Shurtz drug store, saved these handbills and a descendant gave them to Western Reserve Historical Society. One handbill asserted:

"The county of Muskingum is, unfortunately, infested with a little club of incendiaries and traitors, prowling to and fro, making appointments at churches and school houses.. And it is known to be a fact, that these ABOLITIONISTS are secretly aiming to bring about amalgamation of Negroes with white people."

A mob from Zanesville again attacked the Stone Academy. The toughs also set fire to the barns of Abraham France and Levi Whipple where the speakers' horses were stabled.

The Putnam leaders lost patience. They captured Mike Casey, ringleader of the Zanesville firebrands. Then some of Casey's friends recaptured him. The 200 cursing ruffians raced across the bridge to burn Putnam to the ground. They were met by a brave line of 70 Putnam men under command of Mayor Z. M. Chandler.

Mrs. George Guthrie wrote in her "Recollections" that prominent Zanesville businessmen stood at a safe distance and offered their gold watches to the mobsters if they would attack. Old Major Horace Nye, gripping his 1812 musket in one hand, cupped the other hand to his ear and shouted, "Did the Captain say shoot?" The timely arrival of the sheriff and his reading of the riot act prevented bloodshed at "the Battle of the Bridge."

After serving as a public building and battlefield for 30 years, the Stone Academy converted to a residence. John S. Potwin bought it in 1838. He added the frame wing on the

north. He also divided the second floor into four rooms. And in the southeast bedroom he installed the Mazeppa firefront made at the Washington Foundry in Zanesville.

In 1858 Potwin sold the property to C. E. Robins for his mother. His daughter Elizabeth, the future actress and novelist, was born Aug. 6, 1862, in Louisville, Ky. The family lived several years at Staten Island, N. Y., before moving to the Stone Academy about 1875. Robins was a banker and miner. He built the bookcases in the living room. They contain drawers for geological specimens.

[several paragraphs about Elizabeth Robins omitted in this copy]

Later owners of the Stone Academy were Charles Dillon and George Stewart. About this time arose the rumor that the Ohio Legislature had met there. Mrs. Blanche Bailey King, on May 18, 1899, wrote in the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune as follows:

"The day arrived for the Legislature to assemble. Where the courthouse now stands the new capitol was in process of being erected, but was not nearly finished and our worthy citizens found themselves in a quandary. What was to be done with the distinguished visitors? It was finally decided that the stone school house across the river was the most suitable place for the dignified gentlemen, so it was within the stone house that the Legislature of Ohio held its regular session 90 years ago."

Many facts disprove this claim. One of the most convincing is the testimony of Z. K. Chandler, Putnam native, former mayor and historian. He would have vigorously defended any just claim of Putnam to fame. In 1892 he wrote in his history:

"An anonymous article was published in a Zanesville paper a few years ago--which has since been repeated--to the effect that the Academy was built to be offered to the Legislature as a place of temporary meeting, with the hope of securing the permanent location of the State Capital; this defeating the efforts then being made by the people of Zanesville to get it."

No I cannot be made to believe that there is a particle of truth in this story. My father was one of the proprietors, my mother before her marriage, was the first lady teacher. During my boyhood I went to school there often, heard its history talked over in the family and never heard an intimation of the kind till saw it, as above

mentioned, after I was a man past middle life."

Chandler was not aware of the secret in the minds of the builders. For incontrovertible refutation of the rumor, see the Journals of the House and Senate. They record that the sessions of the Ninth General Assembly were "begun and held in the town of Zanesville" on Dec. 3, 1810.

Thomas W. Lewis said on page 147 of his three-volume history that "The Ohio Legislature's first Zanesville meeting" was held in the Stone Academy. In a Times-Signal article on April 15, 1931, he corrected that statement. The headline read. "Stone house not meeting place of Ohio law makers." He added that the introduction to the 1851 city directory proves that the Legislature met in Zanesville.

In 1933 when the Pioneer Society planned a meeting at the Taylor home, Lewis wrote a letter to the president, E. M. Ayers. He said: "In my county history...I meant that the late Mrs. John W. King had made such a statement.. but I did not mean that I accepted it as history. Since then I have been convinced that Mrs. King was wrong.

According to rumor, a tunnel for escaping slaves extended from the Stone Academy to the Muskingum River. What are the facts? First, the cost of digging a safe tunnel would have been prohibitive. No Underground Railroad conductor would have been financially able to excavate a tunnel braced to prevent cave in.

Second, it would not have been practical. According to the Fugitive Slave Law, citizens who helped escaping slaves were subject to a fine of \$1000 and imprisonment for six months. A suspicious U. S. marshal could have waited at the mouth of a tunnel for conductor and slave. But conductors avoided a boat on the water. They headed for New Concord by land so they could dodge the marshal.

Third, there are published lists of Underground Railroad stations and conductors north from Deavertown to Zanesville and east to New Concord. Several Putnam Abolitionists are included in the list. But no occupant of the Stone Academy is named as a conductor.

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. McHenry bought the house in 1896. Their daughter Lydia married Richard Taylor in 1912. The Taylors made many improvements in the house. They commissioned Dr. Charles Dietz to paint murals on the landing and second floor of the stairway. These murals depict scenes of early Zanesville. The soft colors of the murals blend with the Williamsburg green on the wood paneling.

Mrs. Taylor often showed her guests the mother of pearl honesty button on the newel post. It was a symbol placed by the contractor to indicate he had been paid for this work.

The Pioneer Society is now considering Mrs. Richard Taylor's generous offer in her will to give her home to the society with an annual endowment of \$5,000.

--copied from Zanesville *Times Recorder* Sunday July 31, 1983



In 1817, David Hall, as appears by his advertisement in the Zanesville "Express", October 2, 1817, opened a school for young gentlemen and ladies. This school was in "a large and convenient room in the Academy in Putnam." Instructions in the various branches of English education. Price of tuition) three dollars per quarter; application to be made to the subscriber at the Putnam hotel. [p117]

In 1810, in the corner room of Frazey Tavern,...Jonathan Hobby...established a "Seminary for Young Ladies"

"...Jonathan Hobby respectfully informs the public that he has lately opened a school in Zanesville, in a commodious room in Mr. Frazey's large brick..."

-Zanesville "Express", March 7, 1818. [p117; compare to references to Hobby's school in Academy in Norris Schneider '5 articles]

Emancipation Society - On Monday evening, June 24, 1833, Levi Whipple, A. G. Allen, Thomas Gurney, M B. Cushing and H. C. Howells, met at the residence of the latter, (which is still standing at the corner of VanBuren street and Woodlawn avenue) to discuss the subject of slavery and oppression, with a view to attempt the organization of a society "on the broad principle of total emancipation, as soon as possible." (p146]

October 26th, 1833, the monthly concert of prayer for the abolition of slavery was established, and held at first in the Stone Academy, and for many years thereafter in the basement of the Presbyterian Church, in Putnam, on the last Monday of every month. [p147]

A State convention was appointed to be held here, April 22d, 1835, and during the March previous, Mr. Theodore Weld, afterwards distinguished as an abolition speaker, came, by invitation, to lecture. His meetings created great opposition and excitement, and under date of April 11, 1835, the records of the society show that a committee was appointed to confer with Richard Stillwell, Esq., (afterwards Judge Stillwell) then Prosecuting Attorney of this county, in relation to the disturbance of these meetings, with a view to secure means for their

prevention. During the convention, bands of riotous persons, encouraged by more respectable but more guilty men, crossed the river, disturbed its sessions, defaced the Academy where they were held, insulted the ladies who had been in attendance, and succeeded in breaking up the convention.

The feeling of hostility against the friends of emancipation had at length, in some degree, subsided, when the State Anti-Slavery Society again assembled here in convention, the last of May, 1839... (p147)

Under the new dispensation, Miss L. A. Emerson, of Newburyport, Massachusetts, was employed as Principal, in October, 1835, with Miss Mather and Miss Sarah S. Buckingham as assistants, Miss Daniels, as teacher of Music, and old Mr. Hobbie for occasional lessons in French. The school [Putnam Female Seminary) was opened in the "Stone Academy", with fifteen scholars. The following year it was removed to the basement of the Presbyterian Church, which had just been completed, and measures were taken to provide for an institute building. [p149]

from *History of Muskingum County, Ohio* by J. F. Everhart. Published by J. F. Everhart & Co., 1882

"Most of the above named men [early leaders of Putnam] were of Puritan stock, and they built a large stone school-house, used also as a church, while themselves yet living in log cabins or frame houses. All religious denominations used the school-house freely.

A big stone school house almost within sound of the Indian war-whoop had justly a very wide and high reputation; Herman Cooley, my uncle, and Ela Warriner and Benjamin Stone, my cousins, came afoot long journeys to attend the school, my mother giving them their board in her house, and they did the 'chores', i.e., cut wood, made fire, milkd the cows, etc., in exchange for their home and living."

p. 8

Goodsell became a clerk in his uncle Ebenezer's store in 18XX. A fellow clerk was Alonzo Cushing, Milton's brother.

p. 14

Goodsell ran the family store after his mother died.  
"In 1830 the stock of goods was sold to Mother's  
partner, M. B. Cushing, on credit, and for which he never  
paid, dying a bankrupt and owing the estate of my mother  
\$7,000"

p. 18

"The first abolition lecture I ever attended was in  
the old stone schoolhouse in Putnam in 1835, when T.D. Weld  
delivered a course of lectures. A mob came over from  
Zanesville and broke up our meeting, Wm. B. Cassidy leading  
the rioters. He was drunk, but I was not alarmed. I arose  
and urged the audience to be calm and remain, but in vain.  
We were hurried down stairs, and I walked out arm in arm  
with Weld until we reached the gate, when the mob separated  
us. We went to A. A. Guthrie's. Weld set up with me til two  
o'clock AM teaching me the Bible doctrine of Jewish  
servitude. I soon afterwards tried to embody his teachings  
and all the information I had on the question in a pamphlet  
entitled "Bible Servitude", which was published in Columbus  
at a cost of \$60, mostly paid by me. M. B. Cushing  
superintended the printing of it in Columbus, and A. A.  
Guthrie helped circulate it from Putnam."

p. 29

*Autobiography of G. Buckingham* by Goodsel Buckingham.  
Wynkoop & Hallenbeck, New York, 1884.

## **STONE ACADEMY**

Richard Taylor Home Setting for Old Novel

By Norris F. Schneider

Williamsburg, Virginia, pictures to Americans of 1945 a Colonial town preserved and restored by the millions of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Putnam is our Williamsburg, and the Taylor home on Jefferson street is the best preserved and the most historical house in Putnam.

The Dr. Increase Mathews home on Woodlawn avenue is older than the Taylor home, and several other Putnam houses were stationed on the Underground railroad. But a Zanesville pro-slavery mob attacked the Taylor house when an Abolition convention was in session there. No other Putnam house has that distinction. Nor has any other existing house in Muskingum county been made the setting of a popular novel.

Because of the many important historical and literary associations of the Taylor house, several names are used for it. The recent 500-page "Ohio Guide" calls it the Robins House, because the famous actress Elizabeth Robins lived there and wrote the novel about it. Writers who thought of its original purpose and use have called it the Stone Academy, and the Putnam Academy.

Zanesville historians have never been able to agree upon the date of construction of the house we shall call the Taylor home, because Mr. and Mrs. Richard Taylor, the present owners, have preserved and restored the historic building. If these historians had thought to look at the deed books in the Muskingum county courthouse, their uncertainties could have been replaced by the certainty of legal records.

Planned in 1809

In Deed book K, page 19, the date of the planning of the house has been available through the years. On that page we read as follows: "...in the month of March in the year of our Lord 1809 Ebenezer Buckingham, Jr., and others formed themselves into a company denominated the 'Springfield School House Co.' and entered into articles of association to build a school in the town of Springfield and in conformity to said articles of association the said

company built a stone school house on lot No. 49 in said town of Springfield, which lot was the property of Increase Mathews, who promised to convey said lot to said company. The name Springfield was changed to Putnam in 1814.

The legal document tells us that the Putnam pioneers brought their Puritan devotion to education and religion with them from New England to the banks of the Muskingum. In March 1809, when the school house was planned, the Putnam settlers still lived in crude homes. But for the education of their children they constructed a building that will probably outlast the other early homes of Putnam. The legal document also tells us that Dr. Increase Mathews owned the land on which the Stone Academy was built and that he permitted the construction of the school with a promise that he would later transfer the ownership of the lot to the "Springfield School House company"

Another fact that the legal document tells us is the date of the planning of the stone school house. It was March, 1809. But the document does not give the date of the completion of the building.

Construction of the building was probably much slower in 1809 than it would be today because of the primitive condition of the community at that early date. Until 1804 this part of the state was included in Washington county. When Zanesville became the county seat in that year, underbrush grew in the streets of the town. A traveler by the name of John Melish found 92 houses and 600 people in Zanesville in 1809, when the stone school was started in Putnam. Seven years later Putnam had only 400 inhabitants.

The construction of a building as substantial and artistic as the Stone academy by a community of a few hundred people...

...stone from the end of Putnam hill.

The stone was transported to the building site by wagons drawn by horses and oxen through rough, sometimes muddy roads. We do not know how many stone masons laid the walls layer upon layer until they reached the top of the second story. We do know that David Lewis worked 134 days at \$1.25 a day to lay the one-story walls of Dr. Increase Mathews' house in 1804. Lewis undoubtedly laid off Sunday and lost many days because of bad weather, so that, with the slow completion of the interior finishing, it probably took more than a year to complete that house.

We can get a good idea of the time needed to complete a two-story building in 1809 by glancing at the dates for

the construction of the State House in Zanesville. While the Stone Academy was not planned until March, 1809, the Commissioners' journal in the Court house shows that plans for the State House were discussed in 1808, the plans made as early as March B, 1809, and the contract awarded on April 10, 1809, with the provision that the State House was to be completed on or before November 1, 1810. On December 3, 1810, according to the official journal, the Ninth session of the Legislature was "begun and held in the town of Zanesville."

### "A Symphony in Stone"

Although it will probably never be known whether it took the workmen as long to lay the stones of the Putnam Academy as to build the State House in Zanesville, we have the building today as evidence of their craftsmanship. Students of architecture come to sketch the house because of its perfect proportions. They admire the quoins and keystone over the windows and the careful matching of the blocks. The workmen labored with the love of artists to produce a symphony in stone.

Zachariah Morris Chandler told in his "Pioneer History of Putnam, Ohio" that Jonathan Hobby and Miss Henrietta Morris were the first teachers of the Stone Academy. Since Chandler was a son of the first woman teacher and a pupil in the Academy, his account is reliable. Furthermore, he was a mayor of Putnam before its annexation to Zanesville in 1872 and a strong defender of any justified claim of Putnam to fame.

Chandler said that his mother before her marriage taught the girls of Putnam in the two lower rooms. "The second story," wrote Chandler, "contained one large school room, the landing of the stairway, and a small room over the stairway used for a cloak room and sometimes, for recitation room. This large school room was for the boys' department. It had a small old fashioned pulpit at the west end and was used for many years as a place of worship, and also for public meetings of various kinds."

The course of study included the common branches and enough Latin and advanced mathematics to prepare boys for college. Since it was the only school in Eastern Ohio outside Marietta that prepared pupils for college, pupils from distant towns enrolled at Putnam. Assistants were required by the two teachers.

The "Muskingum Messenger" published the following

advertisement on Nov. 13, 1811: "Grammar school. Jonathan Hobby respectfully informs the public that he will open a school (in the Academy, in the town of Springfield, Muskingum county) on the 18th of the present month. For further particulars apply to Jonathan Hobby."

Z. M. Chandler said that after six or seven years of successful operation the school lost pupils and prestige. This decline was probably caused by the opening of academies in Zanesville by teachers from the east. The owners of the building then permitted itinerant teachers to conduct schools with no payment of rent.

#### One-Man Faculty

One of the last teachers employed by the proprietors was described as follows in the Zanesville Express on July 25, 1816: "The proprietors of the Putnam Academy have employed Mr. John S. Rogers, A.B., lately from Yale College in Connecticut, as a preceptor with a view of giving permanence to the institution. Mr. Rogers comes well recommended both for his education and morals. He teaches reading, writing, English, grammar, the Latin and Greek languages, mathematics, geography, history, in fine, all those branches of education which qualify a young man for entering college. Mr. Rogers has for some months superintended a similar institution in Zanesville, and as a teacher is held in high esteem. His government is said to be of the best kind, and his attention to the morals of the pupils, unremitting."

How long this one-man faculty taught we do not know. Chandler said that Hobby was back in the Putnam Academy in 1824-25, and in that year Chandler was a pupil. Chandler also remembered teachers named Hinckley and Shattuck. Everhart says that Lucinda Nye taught in the Stone Academy.

Sessions of the Zanesville Presbyterian church were held alternately in the Court House and the Putnam Academy before the first house of worship was built in 1817. A Putnam Sunday School was organized at the Stone Academy in 1817 and met there until 1820.

Other public meetings were also held there. Four medical students were given a hearing in the Stone Academy in 1823 for robbing a grave in the Moxahala avenue cemetery. Dr. Calvin Conant's hostler Jake saw the foot of the girl's corpse projecting from the hay in the doctor's barn and he did not keep that fact a secret for a second. Putnam people had murder in their hearts. Only a fourth of

the crowd could find room in the Academy. Since there was no law against grave robbery and the magistrate did not want to release the four students to the angry crowd, he bound them over on the charge of stealing grave clothes.

"Soon after the public schools got under way in 1826" said Chandler, "the old Academy was closed up and remained unoccupied for several years. It was then sold at auction and the proceeds were distributed to the stockholders" According to the county records, the Springfield School house Company sold the school and lot to Henry Mathews for his bid of six hundred dollars on June 23, 1828. On July 29, 1828, his father, Dr. Increase Mathews "in consideration of said quit claim" of the company, conveyed the lot number 49 to the son.

The motive for this transaction will perhaps always remain a mystery. Since Dr. Mathews owned the lot, he had the upper hand. Did he use his hand in securing the sale of the house to his son? A year after the son bought the house he borrowed \$650 on it from Milton V. Cushing and Goodsel Buckingham. Chandler said that Cushing furnished the two rooms on the first floor and conducted a girls' school.

Nothing has been recorded about the use of the Academy building for the next half dozen years. In 1835 the Putnam Female Seminary was started in the Stone Academy. When Sarah Buckingham returned from school in the East, she advocated a girls' school for Putnam. Miss Mather, a governess in the Buckingham family, was placed in charge of the school at the Putnam Academy.

After a year at the academy, the new seminary was moved to the basement of the...occupied until 1902.

The atmosphere of the Stone academy was quiet until 1835. On Sunday the Saints of Putnam walked sedately to worship in the upstairs room. During school hours the stern rule of the teacher permitted no sound except the crackling of the log fire and the subdued scratching of slate pencils.

#### Scene of Riot Over Slavery

In 1835 the quiet atmosphere of the Stone Academy was broken by the uproar of mob violence. One of the advance skirmishes of the Civil War occurred there. Putnam and Zanesville started to battle over slavery 25 years before the states got around to fighting, and the academy was the battleground.

The pioneer settlers of Zanesville and Putnam were



doomed to be enemies by the beliefs they learned in their early homes. Zanesville settlers came from Virginia and Kentucky and brought with them the belief that slavery was right. Putnam pioneers came from Puritan New England where anti-slavery feeling was strongest. With nothing more than the Muskingum river between these hostile communities, it was inevitable that they should clash.

As early as 1833 the Muskingum County Emancipation society was organized. On Oct. 26 of that year the members started a "monthly concert of prayer for the abolition of slavery in the Stone academy.

As long as the Abolitionists prayed, Zanesville people let them alone. But when they brought the famous Abolition speaker, Theodore D. Weld, to the Stone Academy in March, 1835, a Zanesville mob launched a blitzkrieg against the old Academy.

Weld wrote this about the attack: "A mob from Zanesville came, broke the windows, tore off the gate, and attacked me when I came out, with stones and clubs."

Goodsel Buckingham wrote in his "Autobiography" that William B. Cassidy led the rioters. "He was drunk, but I was not alarmed. I arose and urged the audience to be calm and remain, but in vain. We were hurried downstairs and I walked arm in arm with Weld to the gate, when the mob separate us. We went to A. A. Guthrie's."

The Emancipation Society appealed to Prosecuting Attorney Richard Stillwell of Muskingum county for protection from the mob and bravely ...

The news of the convention had about the same effect upon Zanesville pro-slavery men that the news of Pearl Harbor had upon the United States. It made no difference to these angry Zanesvillians that freedom of speech was a right of all citizens. It made no difference that the Putnam Abolitionists were good Christians. It made no difference that the convention speakers included such famous men as James G. Birney, a distinguished lawyer of Alabama who had just freed his slaves; Theodore D. Weld and Henry B. Stanton.

William Culbertson wrote: "Zanesville men belonging to the lower strata of society, encouraged by the more respectable class, crossed the river, disturbed the meeting, defaced to some extent the Academy, insulted ladies who had been in attendance, and dispersed the convention.

Through all this violence the Stone Academy stood

unharmed except for a few scratches and broken panes of glass. The convictions of the Putnam Abolitionists were equally unshaken. In May 1839, they brought the State Abolition convention to the Stone Academy again.

As soon as the Zanesville firebrands heard the news, they passed handbills with these words: "Resurrection of Abolitionists in Putnam."

On the last night of the convention the Zanesville mob again attacked the Academy. But they also set fire to the barns of Abraham France and Levi Whipple in which horses of the delegates were kept. Putnam men captured the Zanesville leader, Mike Casey. Casey's friends, inspired with vengeance and alcohol, started across the Third street bridge to recapture their leader. Putnam defenders met them. Brickbats were poised and muskets from the War of 1812 were loaded. But the sheriff arrived in time to prevent any fatalities.

#### A Private Residence

After serving as a public building and a battlefield for 30 years, the Stone academy became a private residence. In 1838, before the second Abolition convention, John Potwin bought the academy. He remodeled it into a residence and kept it for 20 years.

During the residence of the Potwin family in the house, one of the men of the family painted scenes of this vicinity in oil on the walls of the second floor room on the left. The north wall near the fireplace has a view of Zanesville from Putnam hill showing the old 1809 court house. Near the state house was a row of small buildings of different colors. The buildings were an inch or two in height. The painter curved hills and foliage upward to cross windows and doors when he came to them.

Because the colors were dull and the paint had been damaged by frequent removal of wall paper, the mural was not appropriate for use and the room is now papered. The mural is visible only when the room is repapered.

Potwin also built the wing at the rear of the house to give additional rooms. In the upstairs room on the right he installed a fire front with a Mazeppa figure at the top. Mazeppa was a Cossack chief who was punished for an illicit romance by being tied to the back of a wild horse. Byron wrote a poem about him. The Mazeppa fronts were made at the Washington foundry in Zanesville. They are widely admired for their artistic beauty. Mazeppa fire fronts are still

found in the Rolls home, Adams-Gray house at Adams Mills and Unity farm.

#### Scene of Novel

In 1858 John S. Potwin sold the house to Charles E. Robins, cashier of the Franklin bank in Zanesville. With that purchase began the association of the house with the Robins family which led to the writing of a novel about the house by Elizabeth Robins.

Although Miss Robins was born in Louisville, Ky., in 1862, and lived at Staten Island, New York, she came to live with her grandmother in the Stone house when she was about 12. Her sister Eunice and her brothers Saxton, Vernon and Raymond also lived there.

Miss Robins studied history, art, and French at the Putnam Female Seminary, but that did not satisfy her. She wanted to be an actress. One day her father found her packing her clothes to run away and go on the stage. He took her for a year to a gold mining camp in the Rocky mountains where she could forget the stage.

But she didn't forget. At the chapel of the Putnam Female Seminary on December 21, 1877, she recited "Dutchess May" on the program and inspired this comment from a local report...

beyond description, and mere words fail to do her justice. Miss Bessie's splendid vocal attainments induce the belief that she has a future as a reader."

Her "future" started when the manager of the Schultz Opera house asked her to substitute for an actress in "Who to Win Him?" in 1881. Later she went to New York and started her theatrical career with the help of James O'Neill, father of Eugene O'Neill the American playwright. She toured the United States with Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett in "Julius Ceasar" and other Shakespearean plays.

While on a trip to Europe in 1888 as the guest of Mrs. Ole Bull, widow of the great violinist, she decided to try her fortune on the English stage. She made England her home until she came back to New York in 1940 in time to escape German bombing.

In her autobiography "Both Sides of the Curtain", she tells of her association with Henry James, Oscar Wilde, Beerohm Tree, Forbes-Robertson, Lord Grey and George Bernard Shaw. Shaw permitted her to dedicate her autobiography to him.

In 1899 Miss Robins wrote "The Open Question", a novel

that had the Stone Academy for its setting. This novel tells the story of the Gano family of New Plymouth or Putnam. Mrs. Sarah C. Gano ruled the family at her home in the old stone house to which she moved after the Civil War destroyed her fortune in the South. Her son Ethan died and left a son to bear his name.

Mrs. Gano's grandson Ethan came at the age of seven to New Plymouth. Through his eyes the reader sees the landmarks of Putnam. As Ethan rode in a hack across the old covered Third street bridge his aunt said: "Now we are crossing the Mito (Muskingum); we live on the other side. It's much nicer there."

#### Description of House

Miss Robins wrote this description of the House:

"Ethan looked up at the massive gray front above him on a terrace only a little back from the street. Ampelopsis trailed over, but did not hid the great blocks of hand-hewn stone that in those old days had been set up for defense between the pale face and the Indian."

Miss Robins took the liberty to imagine that the house had been built as a fort.

During Ethan's visit his imagination pictured a ghost as the cause of a moaning noise that sometimes came from the cupboard under the front stairway. Ethan named the ghost Yaffti. He made up a charm to protect himself from the creature:

"Yaffti Makafti, here I am you see,  
I'll be good to you, if you'll be good to me."

Later it was found that the vibrations of the lightning rod caused the mysterious moaning sound.

Nathan eventually married his cousin, Val, in spite of the close relationship and the ...

--from Zanesville *Times Signal* October 7, 1945

## CHAPTER III

### The Development of the Principal Private Schools, Libraries and Academies in Zanesville (1809-1904)

#### THE STONE ACADEMY

Most of the settlers of Putnam were from the New England States. Many of them were fairly well educated and were strongly attached to the school systems of the New England States, because of the thoroughness of the instruction they received in them. Consequently, they were determined to have schools as equally good or even better for their children.

To accomplish their purposes, a School House Association

(1) was formed as early as 1809 for the erection of a suitable building and the establishment of a school, as in their opinion, their own interests and the interests of the town demanded. Tradition says that nearly all of the leading citizens of Putnam at that time were members of the association and subscribed to the enterprise according to their abilities. Some of the leading citizens who belonged to the association were Dr. Increase Matthews [sic], Levi Edwin Putnam [sic], Ebenezer Buckingham, Colonel Benjamin Tupper, and Dr. Jesse Chandler (2). [p.24]

In the fall of 1809, a substantial stone building was erected on Jefferson Street (1). The building was called The Putnam Academy, but was better known as The Stone Academy. The first floor contained two large well arranged rooms separated by a wide hall. These rooms were used for girls schools of different grades. The second story contained one large school room. The landing of the stairway and a small room over the stairway were used for a cloak room and sometimes for a recitation room. This large upstairs school room contained the boy's department. It had a small old-fashioned pulpit at the west end of the room, and the room was used for many years as a place for worship and also for public meetings of various kinds.

The school opened late in the fall of 1809 with Mr. Jonathan Hobby as Principal and teacher of the male

department. The course of study included the common and some of the higher English branches, with Latin and Mathematics sufficient to prepare boys to enter college. Miss Henrietta Morris (2) was the teacher of the female department [p 25]

The Stone Academy was for a time, it is believed, to be the only one of its kind in Eastern Ohio, with the exception of Marietta. It was popular at home and abroad as it drew patronage, not only from Zanesville, but also from more distant places. The school was soon large enough to require assistants in both the girls' and boys' department. Boys who wished to enter college availed themselves of the advantages which it offered for preparation. An advertisement appeared in a local (1) Zanesville paper, extolling the virtues of a teacher and the Putnam Academy, read as follows:

The proprietors of the Putnam Academy have employed Mr. John S. Rogers, A. B., lately from Yale College in Connecticut, as a preceptor with a view of giving permanence to the Institution. Mr. Rogers comes well recommended both for his eruditions and morals. He teaches Reading, Writing, English, Grammar, the Latin and Greek Languages, Mathematics, Geography, History - in fact, all those branches of education which qualifies a young man for entering college, or are preparatory for the study of a learned profession. Mr. Rogers has, for some months, superintended a similar institution in Zanesville, and as a teacher is held in high esteem. His government is said to be of the best kind - and his attention to the morals of the pupils unremitting. Opposed to superficial instruction and that pernicious smattering at science so prevalent today, he aims to give his students a thorough acquaintance with the several branches which they undertake.

Horace Reid, Chairman

After six or seven years of popular and successful operation, the plan of conducting the school was entirely [p.26] changed and its former prestige was never regained. The supervision of the owners of the building was withdrawn and it was occupied for several years, rent free, by such teachers as had, or were supposed to have, the proper qualifications to conduct schools on their own plans and

responsibility. From that time onward the character and efficiency of the schools in the Stone Academy depended entirely upon the education, skill, and faithfulness of the teachers of these Independent or Select Schools as they were generally called. Their continuance were based upon the popularity of the teachers and their ability to keep their subscription lists large enough to compensate them to conduct the school.

Soon after the public schools got under way in 1826, the old Stone Academy was closed and remained unoccupied for several years. It was then sold at auction and the proceeds were distributed to the stockholders. Henry Matthews was the purchaser (1). He then sold it to Milton B. Cushing soon after purchasing it. Mr. Cushing repaired and refurnished the two rooms on the first floor for a girls' school and he, with others (2) engaged a teacher who afterwards became Mrs. William Hadley, to take the management [p. 27] of the school. The school as conducted was well supported and in view of the crude conditions of the public schools at that time, was very much needed. The success of this school, doubtless, had something to do with the idea of establishing the Putnam Female Seminary.

During most of the time from 1826, until the graded schools were fully organized, private schools were kept for boys and girls and supported by those who were not satisfied with the public schools as they were then conducted. But after that time, private schools gradually ceased to exist and all were drawn into the graded schools and were satisfied.

Notes (appearing in the original thesis as foot-notes):

p. 24 1. Muskingum County Deed Book K-P 19, Muskingum County Court House, Zanesville, Ohio, See Appendix IV

p. 24 2. We are indebted to Mr. Zackariah Morris Chandler for some of the information we have on The Stone Academy as found recorded in his manuscript titled, Some Sketches of the Pioneer History of Putnam Ohio. Dr. Jesse Chandler was the father of Mr. Z. M. Chandler. Z. M. Chandler was superintendent of the Putnam Schools for many years. He also taught in the Zanesville Schools.

p. 25 1. Thomas W. Lewis, on page 146, in Volume I, of his History of Zanesville and Muskingum County, states that the Stone Academy was built to be offered to the Legislature as a place of temporary meeting, with the hope of securing the permanent location of the State Capital in Putnam, Ohio, thus defeating an effort then being made by the people of Zanesville to get it. However, there is no evidence to support this contention. The story, no doubt, grew out of the old time jealousy and business rivalry that so long existed between the two towns.

p. 25 2. Miss Henrieta Morris, the first lady teacher in the Stone Academy, was Mr. Z. M. Chandler's mother.

p. 26 1. Zanesville Express July 25, 1816 Vol. IV, No. 31

p. 27 1. Muskingum County Deed Book E - page 409, Muskingum County Court House, Zanesville, Ohio

p. 27 2. The record of this second school house association can not be found.

-from *History of Education in Zanesville, Ohio From 1797 to 1875*, Masters Thesis, Ohio University, January 1945, by Roy C. Beal. Copy in local history collection of John McIntire Public Library, Zanesville, Ohio



**TIMES RECORDER**  
**Sunday, March 5,1995**

# **Stone Academy historic gem**

**by Chuck Martin**

Talking before groups of people has never terrorized me, although I've never overcome that initial nervous flutter as I get started. Once that passes I can cruise along, but at the back of my mind there's always that nagging little thought: Am I making a fool of myself?

Monday evening, I had the honor of being invited to address the local Civil War Roundtable, which meets at Stone Academy. Somehow, over the years, I had missed ever being in the historic building so this invitation had two major attractions: A chance to see the inside of the building that just missed becoming the state capitol and an opportunity to talk about one of my favorite subjects, the Civil War, with people who share that interest.

This was my second time addressing the Roundtable and I can't say enough about the courtesy and friendliness I was received with each time. That does a great deal to help a speaker feel more comfortable once things get under way. I hope they enjoyed the evening half as much as I did.

Standing in front of the fireplace in one of the front rooms of the original part of the building, I couldn't help but feel a sense of the history the place represents. Built by Putnam leaders who hoped to make the village the state capital, Stone Academy served over the years as a meeting place, school and private residence. Now it's a "museum in progress.

I couldn't help but think of the numerous times the building hosted meetings of abolitionists in the years before the Civil War. At least three times, in 1835, 1836 and 1839 state abolitionist conventions were held in the building, On two occasions, pro-slavery mobs from Zanesville attacked the building, In 1835 it was done in an attempt to attack abolitionist speaker Theodore Weld and in 1839 an attack was staged during the convention. Putnam and Zanesville were a microcosm of one of the major issues that was tearing the country apart.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is known to have visited Putnam in 1837 to visit her brother William, who was pastor of Putnam Presbyterian Church. Did she visit Stone Academy, maybe attending an abolition meeting?

I don't know, but the whirlwind that was to envelope the country was building, and Stone Academy played a role.

Slavery was not the only issue that led to the Civil War, but it was one that had

been festering ever since the nation was born and was one of the things (along with tariffs) that made the states' rights debate so volatile.

You stand in a building like Stone Academy and you feel the history in the walls and the floors. You understand why buildings like this, where so much happened, need to be preserved in the hope that future generations can also stand there and begin to understand the richness of the history that has led us to where we are today.

In my humble efforts to understand the Civil War and the events leading to it, places like Stone Academy enrich the feeling of history being something that is here and real, not just names and dates in a textbook. It's not unlike the feeling you get when walking the battle-fields at Antietam, Gettysburg or Chickamauga, only on a smaller, but more personal, scale.

I salute the Pioneer and Historical Society and its efforts to preserve and restore this building as a museum of local history. The goal is worthy of the effort.

*(Chuck Martin is the Times Recorder historian.)*

"[Theodore] Weld journeyed to Zanesville, a community known for its antiabolitionist sentiments early in 1835 to make preparations for the establishment of a State abolition society. No place was available in the city for the meetings, and when he spoke at Putnam across the river, mob violence resulted. Weld persisted, however, and ultimately the meeting was invited to return to Zanesville, where hundred pledged support to the cause.<sup>22</sup> This organization meeting of the Ohio Antislavery Society April, 1835, was attended by one hundred and ten delegates from twenty-five counties."

footnote 22: G. H. Barnes, *Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844*, New York, 1933. p. 83.

--The Passing of the Frontier 1825-1850, by Francis P Weisenburger, Vol. III in *A History of the State of Ohio.*, p. 370. Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society, Columbus, 1941.

## Reader Send Anecdotes Of Robins Family

*The Review of Elizabeth Robins "The Open Question" in this column several week ago recalled to Thomas R. Berkshire of Moxahala avenue some incidents in the life of the famous Putnam novelist. Coming from observation and family tradition, Mr. Berkshire's information is human and interesting. It is also a valuable addition to the meagre biographical accounts we have of Elizabeth Robins.*

*His letter follows:*

[5 paragraphs about *The Open Question* omitted]

Living almost next door to the Robins family, my father had many contacts with them. During his boyhood, there were only two houses on the west side of Moxahala avenue between Jefferson and Adams street. These were the Robins home, fronting on Jefferson street, and the Buckingham home at the corner of Adams and Moxahala avenue. [some copy missing from photocopy and some left out for this transcription]... Almost midway between the two houses was the large Buckingham barn, part of which still stands. I keep my car in the part once used by Mr. Buckingham for his office, and explored the barn from top to bottom many times as a youngster.

You showed me a pen drawing of the Robins house when it had a small front porch which was slightly wider than the front door. My father remembers it vividly, and the porch remained a part of the house as long as the Robins family lived there. When they moved away the house was rented for several years by Mr. Charles Dillon, who added the present large front porch. The original grounds of the Robins house ran clear down below the level of the street on Moxahala avenue.

[5 paragraphs on Robins family omitted]

--from *Zanesville News*, December 22, 1940. Copies from a photocopy in Norris Schneider scrapbook.

# Stone Academy set for June reopening

## State grant funds paying for historical building's renovations

By **CHUCK MARTIN**

**Times Recorder**

ZANESVILLE - If everything goes according to plan, a refurbished Stone Academy building will reopen to the public in June

Go through the building now and you have top step around furniture covered with plastic drop cloths and artifacts stored in boxes and kept safe from the paint drips and drywall dust. But already emerging from the dust and clutter is a brighter, more attractive setting for displays highlighting Zanesville history.

Money for the renovation work comes from an \$87,1018 grant from the state Appalachian Public Improvement Fund. Muskingum Area Technical College is administering the money for the historical society.

According to Historical Society Executive Director Ann Combs, the society wants to use Stone Academy as a site for temporary exhibits. The society's other museum, Dr. Increase Mathews House, features a more permanent display, with different rooms highlighting different periods of the 19th century.

In the interior renovation, Combs explained, the society is trying to use historical colors, but at the same time colors that will not detract from exhibits. Since the house has no ceiling lights, light colors are needed.

Besides painting, plaster repair and drywall installation, the interior renovations have included shoring up a living room floor and installation of ultraviolet-protective storm windows throughout the building. The front stairway steps will be stained to match the mahogany banister, the floors will get a good cleaning and application of a clear preservative for protection and something will be done to enhance the scrollwork in the stairwell.

In the room to the left of the front entrance, the society discovered some time ago that, under five or more layers of wallpaper, there is a large mural covering one or more walls. Because any attempt to restore the mural would be too expensive, only a small portion of the unrestored mural over the fireplace will be framed and protected. If at any time in the future something can be done, the drywall that has been installed in the room can be easily removed as was nailed -

not glued -to the walls.

Outside the building, a brick sidewalk leading from the side entrance to the front walk has been installed and the shutters have been removed for restoration. Plantings and other landscape work are planned for spring,

Upstairs, in addition to painting and cleaning up display rooms, a library will be set up where material now in storage at the Stone Academy and Increase Mathews House will be available for research, although much needs to be done to catalog all the papers, photos and other material owned by the Historical Society, Combs added.

The Pioneer and Historical Society has owned the Stone Academy since 1983, when it was willed to the society by Mrs. Lydia McHenry Taylor, whose family had owned the house since 1896.

from page 19 of *Zanesville Times Recorder Progress* '97 supplement, Friday March 14, 1997.



**JOHN  
SWITZER**

## *Stone house was home to a lot of history*

The Ohio Bicentennial Commission will place a historical marker in front of a grand, two-story stone house in Zanesville.

The Federal-style house was built in 1809 and has been host to some lively history. It's called the Stone Academy and is owned by the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County.

The building was once in the village of Putnam on the bank of the Muskingum River. Zanesville was on the other side of the river then.

Putnam had been settled by New Englanders who were staunch abolitionists. Zanesville was settled by Virginians who didn't much care for abolitionists.

"The two communities had strong feelings about each other," said Linda Smucker, director of the historical society.

The folks in Putnam built the structure in hopes the community would become the capital of Ohio, with the building housing the General Assembly. Zanesville, meanwhile, put up a brick edifice to serve the same purpose.

Zanesville had more political clout and won out, Smucker said. The capital moved from Chillicothe to Zanesville from 1810 to 1812, then returned to Chillicothe until it was moved to Columbus in 1816.

Over the years, Stone Academy was a meeting place, a school, a private residence and a center for abolitionist activities.

In 1835, it was the site of an abolitionist convention. Folks from Zanesville marched across the bridge over the river and pelted the building with eggs and rocks, causing the convention to disperse, Smucker said.

Another abolitionist convention was scheduled for 1837. This time, however, the abolitionists were ready. They met the Zanesville folks on the bridge and a heck of a fight followed. That year the convention was not disturbed.

The house continued to be of historical significance.

"There are strong indications it was probably a stopover for the Underground Railroad," Smucker said. A space found under a stairwell was probably a holding area for runaway slaves, she said.

All the little towns in the area eventually were annexed by Zanesville. Putnam held out the longest because of the strong feelings between the communities.

"They were very proud and thought they could go it alone," Smucker said.

Today will be cold with some clouds and sun and a flurry.

from *Columbus Dispatch* Saturday February 20, 1999

Ohio Historical Center

1982 Velma Avenue

Columbus, Ohio 43211-2497  
614/297-2300  
Fax: 297-2411  
www.ohiohistory.org

**OHIO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
SINCE 1885**

Historical Marker to be established in Muskingum County

Same text on each side

5/8-inch text

**THE STONE ACADEMY**

Constructed of sandstone quarried from nearby Putnam Hill,,the Stone Academy dates to 1809. The Springfield School House Company erected the building, it is believed, to lure the statehouse from Chillicothe. However, when Zanesville was chosen as the capital the following year, the building was used for public functions and for its "intended" purpose as a school. The Ohio Anti-slavery Society held its state conventions here in 1835 and 1839, with prominent abolitionist leader Theodore Weld, among others, in attendance. The Stone Academy became a private residence after 1839. In the 1870s, it was the childhood home of Elizabeth Robins, the famed late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century actress, playwright, author, and activist. The Stone Academy was donated to the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County in 1981.

**OHIO BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION  
THE LONGABERGER COMPANY  
ZANESVILLE-MUSKINGUM COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU  
THE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

OBC logo

Year

Sewah code

Signature of approval

Date