

Antique Show to Have Painting of 'Old Pickle'

By DR. GEORGE G. RADDIN

Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, by invitation of Deborah Chapter 505, Order of the Eastern Star, is to participate in the fourth annual Antique Show, sponsored by Deborah Chapter, Monday and Tuesday, October 27 and 28, from 11 a. m. to 10 p. m., in Hotel Sterling. Among the objects to be placed on view by the Historical Society is the portrait of John Michael Kienzel, painted by Samuel F. DuBois, one of the most important historical items in the society collections.

John Michael Kienzel came to Wilkes-Barre from Berne, Switzerland in 1802 and soon became a familiar figure in town affairs. As he grew older he was affectionately called "Old Michael" by the townspeople and "Old Pickle" by mischievous boys with whose more serious pranks he too often interfered. He was weighmaster of the scales on what is now South River Common in front of the Arndt warehouse, where he kept comfortable bachelor quarters. Near here he also kept the town pound, where cattle and swine found at large during the night were secured until the owner paid his fine.

He was also high constable of the Borough of Wilkes-Barre, and his way with town drunkards who fell by the wayside at night is evidence of solicitude unmatched today. When he came upon the helpless creatures, he went to the Arndt warehouse for his wheelbarrow, tenderly lifted the unconscious citizens into the vehicle, and deposited them in the pound with the cows and pigs, where they remained until sober enough to walk home.

Kienzel rang the 9 O'clock curfew bell, after which he always tolled the day of the month. In winter, he carefully spread ashes on the icy sidewalks. Besides serving in the capacity of high constable, Kienzel was sexton of Old Ship Zion, the Meeting House on Public Square, whose steeple was visible for miles above the roofs and treetops of the town. During meeting he passed the collection bag down through the pews from his station in the aisle. Still used in old New England churches, this device consisted of a long pole to which had been affixed a metal ring from which was suspended a flannel or velvet bag. As the pole was passed, each member of the congregation found it very convenient to deposit his offering in the bag; however, it was well-nigh impossible for the most daring to attempt to retrieve anything from the bag, so swiftly did "Old Michael" maneuver it.

He snuffed the candles during the congregational singing, dug the graves in the old town cemetery on East Market Street, and tolled the Old Ship Zion bell for funerals. "Old Michael" died in 1846, and in turn he was buried in the old burying ground. Before he died Samuel F. DuBois was commissioned to paint his portrait, and for many years after he was buried there was talk of erecting a suitable monument to this much-loved fat-totum who went about his official duties wearing a flat sword he had inherited from an ancestor who fought with William Tell. Today no one knows where his bones lie.

Mrs. William L. Lance of Chase preserves the following bill made out by "Old Michael":

Wilkes-Barre May 2 the 1836
The Borough of Wilkes-Barre Dr. to John M. Kienzel High Constable of said Borough for Collecting tax of Show-mans \$0.50
for Pump Repair 0.75
for Ringing the 9 O'clock Bell one year ending April 10th 1836 20.00
for one years Servis as Clerk of th Market 10.00
\$31.25

Samuel F. DuBois, the artist who painted this portrait of John Michael Kienzel, was closely associated also with the early history of Wilkes-Barre. Son of Rev. Uriah DuBois and his wife Martha (Patterson) DuBois, he was born in Doylestown in 1805 and died there October 20, 1889. The DuBois family was descended from Louis DuBois, son of Peter and Ann DuBois, a French Huguenot immigrant, who settled at Kingston on the Hudson about 1660. Some time after, members of this family moved to Salem County, N. J., where Rev. Uriah DuBois was born in 1738. He was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1790, was licensed to preach in 1796, and settled in Doylestown in 1804 to take charge of the Union Academy. He founded and was the first pastor of Doylestown Presbyterian Church. He died in Doylestown September 10, 1821.

The artist son exhibited such talent as a youth that he was sent to Philadelphia to study with Thomas Sully. He early became a noted portrait painter in Philadelphia, in Bucks and in the neighboring counties, as well as in the Wyoming Valley. In 1837 he maintained a studio on Arch Street, above Fifth, in Philadelphia. He had exhibited in 1836 with the Artists' Fund Society a portrait called "The Sisters." The following year he was represented in the exhibition of this group by "Portrait of a Lady," loaned by Dr. R. M. Patterson, director of the United States Mint at Philadelphia and a friend of the DuBois family, who was also instrumental in hanging many of

the young painter's works in that institution.

By 1840 Samuel F. DuBois had returned to Doylestown, and soon after he began to devote attention to painting portraits in Wilkes-Barre, as well as in Bucks County and Philadelphia. How he happened to come to Wilkes-Barre is revealed in a letter in the collection "Wright Papers," owned by Mrs. William H. Conyngham. Caleb Earl Wright (1810-1889), a native of Plymouth and a former resident of Wilkes-Barre, had settled in Doylestown, where he had been married in 1838 to Phebe Ann Fell. On the 6th of July 1840, he wrote to his brother Harrison Wright (1815-1856), who lived on South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre: "I want you to ascertain if DuBois can have 2 or 3 portraits, by coming to your place. He will visit you, with the certainty of three. His prices are for the different sizes, \$15—20—25—. The largest size, of \$25, by adding a hand, is \$30. Should you send word that he can rely upon 3, he will come in the month of Aug. or Sept. He wouldn't like to incur the expense of so long a trip, without the certainty of something to do. "He would like to know soon, that he may make his arrangements. . . Let me know what you can do for DuBois. After painting one or 2 there, he wd. get many to paint. Of this merits, there is no mistake. You can give him the highest reputation. . . I wrote a day or two ago to still know if father & mother wd. not have their portraits taken by DuBois. If you see them, advise it."

DuBois came to Wilkes-Barre, and among the first portraits he painted were those of Harrison Wright and his parents Joseph Wright of Plymouth (1785-1855) and Ellen (Hendrick-Wadhams) Wright (1776-1872). Some time later he painted an oval double portrait of the elder Wrights now owned by William L. Conyngham II of Chase. During these early visits he also painted the portrait of John Michael Kienzel as well as those of Isaac Smith Osterhout and his wife Elizabeth (Lee) Osterhout, which now hang in the Reference Room of the Osterhout Free Library. A letter from Esther Taylor French to her uncle Harrison Wright, from the Moravian Seminary in Bethlehem October 10, 1842, reveals that at that time DuBois was painting a portrait of Phoebe Wadhams of Plymouth, half-sister of Harrison Wright.

Another DuBois portrait owned by Mrs. Conyngham, that of Mrs. Sarah (Hollenback-Cist) Butler, daughter of Judge Matthias Hollenback and his wife Sarah (Burritt-Hibbard) Hollenback, widow of Jacob Cist, and wife of Chester Pierce Butler, to whom she was married after the death of her first husband in 1825, is probably the finest example of the artist's work in Wyoming Valley. DuBois also painted a portrait of Benjamin Dorrance, now owned by Miss Frances Dorrance of Dallas.

The artist early mastered the technique of taking daguerreotypes and afterward, photographs, and there remain many examples of his excellent work in these mediums. Before the death of Harrison Wright in 1856, DuBois had taken an excellent likeness of this distinguished lawyer. After his death, his widow Emily Lindsley (Cist) Wright commissioned DuBois to paint a portrait of her husband from this photograph. This portrait, also owned by Mrs. Conyngham, is one example of the artist's work to bear his signature. It is inscribed on the back of the canvas in the handwriting of the artist: "Harrison Wright Esq. Painted by Samuel F. DuBois 1858."

DuBois sent two portraits to the exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1855 and a very interesting historical painting "Gertrude of Wyoming (from Campbell)." He was also represented in the Academy show of 1856 by four portraits. Two canvases, both entitled "Marine View," painted by DuBois, were loaned by Mrs. A. H. Emley of Wilkes-Barre to the Loan Art Exhibition held here in 1879. He also painted a handsome banner for the Harvest Home celebration in Doylestown in 1845 and a painting of "Mac," the Mexican pony ridden by W. W. H. Davis of Doylestown in the Civil War.

There is a romantic legend

concerning the artist in Wyoming Valley and in Doylestown. It is said that he left Wilkes-Barre because of "an unfortunate affair of the heart." However, so carefully guarded was the secret that no one living today knows who the young lady was. He died a bachelor.

McLaughlin's

