

A Letter to a Friend

(Continuation)

All these favorable comments and praise have had their effects, favorable and unfavorable. More unfavorable though, because petty jealousy and lack of real intelligence among those who should have known better, started to have its influence, in other words started to work detrimentally. They really caused several of those "famous" reorganizations the net result of which was negative instead of positive. Of course, it was carried out so subtly that those concerned were really not aware what was going on, except that they found themselves in squabbles over trifles. But the cause was really jealousy which is the daughter of ignorance. If all of this was substituted with a positive and constructive approach all thru the last 27 years since the first operatic production—the Slovenians of Cleveland would beyond a doubt have a whole lot more to show, and that in vocal as well as in instrumental music—because it takes almost a whole generation to bring a musical organization, starting, so to speak "from scratch" to a level to be able to do all around good work.

In all justice let me stress one more fact: thru the first or so called "Slovenian operatic decade" the pianist, Vera Milavec-Slejko was the main coach besides the director. For the first few operas, Mary Germ, (now Fogarty), did this work but all the later operas were given a great deal of most capable help at so to speak no cost, by Mrs. Slejko. This also is one of the things which we believe was never neither truly understood, paid or appreciated. And the unselfish devotion and cooperation of the singers, soloists as well as chorus was most wonderful

most of the time, helping one another in more than one way. And another thing needs mentioning and that is, that this Slovenian operatic decade took place during one of the worst depressions in America, (from 1931 to 1940), and that financing the productions, low as the cost was, paying the director \$5.66 per rehearsal, \$10 for concert and \$15 for opera direction and the coach, Mrs. Slejko mostly \$1 per rehearsal, which often lasted till 11 and 12 o'clock, was no joke and that besides Mr. Belle, who went out after the program ads on several occasions, the greatest burden of this work again fell onto my shoulders and that I carried that part always very successfully, thus making it possible to carry on this cultural work in spite of hard times.

I have really written you more than I intended when I started this letter, but knowing that you are really interesting in advancing Slovenian culture, I believe it will give you a little glimpse into the past and into the conditions we had to face during the time when the foundation for the Slovenian opera in Cleveland was being laid.

There were a lot of great sacrifices on the part of the singers, especially the soloists. A lot could be written about them individually and of the roles they sang. I could write why and how we came to give "Mascot" with the younger talents, thus giving them opportunity, etc., etc., but enough for now. None except Louis Belle, ever gave their own concert, capable and deserving as some of the soloists were to be rewarded for the great amount of cultural work they have performed. The demands of our lodges and National Homes

which were just then being built were much greater on the chorus and the soloists in those days than they are today.

In closing I wish to stress once more, that in claiming the staging of the first Slovenian opera in America with the "Zarja" singers in the year of 1928, we do not claim nor wish any honors nor credit, but just the recording of honest, true facts.

Thanking you and wishing you a lot of success, I wish to remain

Sincerely yours,
Mary (Grill) Ivanusch

This Week in American History

On April 19, 1775, American colonists and British soldiers fought the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the first engagement in America's War for Independence. General Gage, the British commander was forced to retreat to Boston. This battle aroused the people of the thirteen colonies. As the news spread from colony to colony, American patriots seized arms and ammunition, formed provincial congresses, and in a few months overthrew the power of the British royal governors. A monument in honor of this battle was dedicated at Concord, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1836. For this occasion, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote his well-known poem, "Concord Hymn," which begins:

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
Here once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world."

April 19th is a legal holiday in Massachusetts and Maine, where it is observed as Patriots' Day.

On April 23, 1791, James Buchanan, the fifteenth President of the United States was born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. Of Scottish descent, he practiced law in his home town of Lancaster, Pennsylvania,

until he was elected to Congress in 1820. He served five terms in the House of Representatives. As Minister to Russia, Buchanan negotiated the first commercial treaty between that country and the United States. In 1833 he was elected to the United States Senate and was twice re-elected. As Secretary of State under President Polk, he supported the Mexican war and annexation of Texas. In 1856, James Buchanan, as Democratic candidate for the Presidency, defeated John C. Fremont, the first nominee of the newly-organized Republican party. In the events that led to the Civil War, President Buchanan took the position that while no state had the right to secede from the Union, the Union had no power to prevent its doing so. Buchanan has the unique distinction of being the only bachelor President of the United States. He died in 1868, at the age of 77.

On April 30, 1789, George Washington was inaugurated in New York City as the first President of the United States. A military escort accompanied him from his lodging to Federal Hall at the corner of Wall and Nassau Streets where a vast crowd awaited. Washington stepped out on a balcony where everyone could witness the ceremony. The Secretary of the Senate held a Bible, resting upon a velvet cushion, while Chancellor Livingston administered the Oath of Office. Deeply conscious of the profound responsibility entrusted to him, Washington stood with bowed head while Livingston shouted: "Long live George Washington, President of the United States!" In his inaugural address, Washington said: "The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican form of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply and finally staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."

On May 3, 1765, Dr. John Morgan and Dr. William Shippen, Jr., established a medical department in the College of

Philadelphia, now the University of Pennsylvania. Previously, two or three doctors had given informal lessons in anatomy and simple medicine to small groups of students, but not until the opening of this medical department at the College of Philadelphia was there any organized school in America for the training of physicians. This small beginning gave impetus to the founding of other medical schools and societies, mostly in connection with colleges, and the movement rapidly expanded after the colonies became a republic. The United States is now a leader in the field of medical science. There are at present some 79 medical schools with an enrollment of over 27,000 students. The total number of physicians in the United States at the beginning of 1954 was estimated at more than 218,000.

On May 6, 1896, Samuel Pierpont Langley, American astronomer and pioneer in aviation, launched his "aerodrome" over the Potomac River, in Washington, D. C. The machine—equipped with wings and a miniature steam engine—twice sustained itself in the air for a minute and a half, the time for which it was supplied with fuel and water, and traversed each time a distance of over half a mile. Professor Langley's experiments with so-called heavier-than-air planes were not altogether successful and he lacked funds for further trials. However, he is now recognized as the pioneer in the design and building of the airplane. Langley is also well known for his studies of solar eclipses; his writings in the field of astronomy, and the invention of the bolometer which records variations in heat radiation from the sun. Langley was secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C. from 1887 to 1906, the year of his death.

On May 12, 1621, some five months after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, the first marriage ceremony to be performed in New England was celebrated—Edward Winslow married Susanna, the widow of William White. There was little gaiety on the occasion, however, because it was only seven weeks since Winslow's first wife had died and only eleven weeks since Susanna White had lost her husband. The Pilgrims' first winter in America was a harsh one, and half of the entire colony—about 50 persons—had died in the five months between the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth and Winslow's marriage. A leader and founder of the colony, Winslow first served as a member of the governor's council, then as governor. He wrote several important pamphlets in defense of the New England colonies and even went to England to plead their cause. Sent by Cromwell on a mission to the West Indies,

Winslow died at sea in May, 1655. On May 28, 1759, a great friend of America, William Pitt, was born in England. Like his father, the Earl of Chatham, and many English liberals of that time, William Pitt was sympathetic to the cause of the American colonists. He fought constantly in Parliament for their rights and opposed the policies of the Tory government. In 1783, when the American Revolution had been won and Britain was ready to recognize the independence of the United States, Pitt became Prime Minister and thus headed the government which negotiated the peace treaty between his country and the new Republic. If the American colonists had not received strong moral support from English liberals, the Tories in England and the Tories in America might have prevented Americans from winning their independence.

(Common Council)



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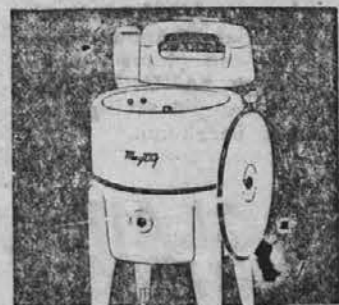
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