

Dover Had Its 'Roaring 20's'

By Kay Williams
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The most turbulent years in Dover's long and exciting history were in the 2 decades between World War I and World War II. These were the days of attempts to enforce the prohibition laws and efforts to combat the depression.

These 2 conditions led to exciting reading in local newspapers and The Daily Reporter regularly had front-page stories recounting prohibition raids, resignations of public officials, Ku Klux Klan activities, industrial layoffs, the slot machine war, and the like.

Some of the stories, however, were never seen in print.

During this period, one man in a position to know and evaluate these activities was Henry C. Hagloch, longtime editor of The Daily Reporter, a position he held at the time.

Utilizing his experiences and his feeling for history, Hagloch recently recalled some of the incidents of the era, published and unpublished.

Tuscarawas County had tried prohibition under an Ohio local option law from 1909-11, but had voted saloons back in December, 1911. All Ohio voted dry effective May 4, 1919, and national prohibition went into effect on Jan. 29, 1920.

Within a year, Dover was in a turmoil, in the struggle to enforce the law and the apparent determination of a large segment of the people to ignore it.

Prohibition was a problem here, as in the nation, for its 14 years of existence, during which time there were almost

daily raids in the county, on every type of suspected business places or private homes.

"In many cases, the raids were led by member of the Ku Klux Klan and sometimes by unscrupulous imported law enforcement agents. Some raids were led by rival bootleggers.

One story which was never published concerned a successful group of local bootleggers, operating out of Dover, who attempted to invade larger cities, with disastrous results. The local group, which could not compete with the city rings, had to suspend its illegal operations.

The Klan, defined by the former editor as "the most mischievous organization ever to invade Dover," was active during this period. "Under the guise of law enforcement," he said, "many unscrupulous persons, hiding behind the flag, the Bible, and a white sheet, perpetrated outrages that equaled the terrorism of gangsters in large cities at the time."

"In my 50 years of newspaper work, the only time I was ever bodily thrown out of a meeting was when I attended a Klan meeting on a friend's invitation, unaware of what the organization was.

"When I found I was expected to sign an oath, without even having the chance to read it, I refused. Two guards 'escorted' me out of the second-floor meeting hall and pushed me towards the steps, amidst the hoots and jeers of the members."

The Klan became so strong it often dominated public ceremonies, taking charge of streets and traffic. One citizen, who

stood up against the Klan was the late Rev. J. E. Weinland of Dover First Moravian Church, who was asked to speak at a school cornerstone laying in a village in the county.

"When he found the Klan actually was in charge of the ceremony, he refused to participate and drove off, followed by the members' threats.

Another such man was S. O. Mace, superintendent of Dover schools. While observing a huge Klan funeral in Dover, with the white-sheeted membership out in force, Mace's friend remarked: "Isn't this disgraceful, making such a display?"

"No, I don't think so," Mace replied, "I think we'd be better off if there were more Klan funerals." Some kind of "reporting" system was evidently at work, for the following night a huge cross was burned on Mace's front lawn.

Working under a system that appealed to false patriotism and false religion, the Klan inveigled many well-meaning, reputable citizens into its membership. Most of these however left the organization when its true character became known.

The Klan also was an ardent supporter of kangaroo courts and raids on alleged bootleggers, creating fear among many innocent residents, particularly those of foreign birth or descent.

There are several murders in the county during prohibition, attributed to bootleg wars, and for which county officials failed to get a single conviction. One of the most notorious was when a Massillon man was found burned in his car along Route 8.

A Dover man was arrested and questioned on the murder, but, again, there was no conviction.

Prohibition proved a terror to Dover mayors and police officials. Two mayors were indicted by the county grand jury, and, although neither was convicted, one was removed from office by the governor.

It was also "known" but never officially revealed, that one Dover police officer, while assisting Safety Director L. O. Hogue in raiding bootleggers at night, "moonlighted" during the day by assisting the bootleggers.

A proficient mechanic, he worked on the gangs' cars by day, so they could outrun the police cars during the nightly chases.

Among officials who stood out against such practices were Hogue and County Prosecutor Eugene Bowers, both of whose homes were bombed in retaliation. It was such activities which added an ominous note to the music of the "Jazz Age."

One local bootlegger was discovered, accidentally, by city efficiency. Members of the Dover service department, working on a clogged sewer, found it was stopped up by an accumulation of mash.

Following the trail through the sewer lines, they discovered a seemingly small, modest residence had a huge basement, efficiently equipped with brewing equipment.

During this period and in the slot machine wars which followed repeal, this type of activity led to speculation on the presence or influence of the Black Hand, or Mafia society, although the rumors were never proven.

The depression was the other big story of the period. It really started in the 1920's and had catapulted into deeper depths with the October, 1929, stock market crash. Dover felt the full force of the upheaval and in the 30's, the strangle grip continued to increase in the city and the nation.

The Hannah Blast Furnace closed in 1926 and became apparent early in the 1930's that the Dover and New Philadelphia plants of the American Sheet and Tin Plate Co. would not resume operations, although no announcement was made until later.

As prolonged unemployment continued, the plight of thousands of county families became desperate. Federal relief was woefully inadequate and local governments struggled desperately with the situation.

Just when they needed more money for relief, local government funds dropped because of property owners' inability to pay taxes.

Food centers were set up through the schools and farmers contributed from meager crops, further diminished by a serious drought.

In the fall of 1931, a public "peach snitzing" party was held in Memorial Hall, with fruit donated by a Walnut Creek farmer. Public officials assisted in preparing the "snitz," which were dried in clay kilns and distributed to families on relief.

Christmas, 1931, was a poignant holiday, alleviated by a band of humanitarian-minded citizens worked for weeks at City Hall, compiling a list of gifts for children of every needy family. They were delivered by city Santa Clauses who visited nearly 300 homes.

With the repeal of prohibition in 1933, some of those who had engaged in illicit liquor trade turned to slot machines and the same hijacking methods employed by rum runners were used on "slots" of rival gangs.

Armed bands invaded business places and ripped out slot machines to put in their own brand. Most of these stories never hit the papers, as the people involved refused to speak of them, evidently fearing reprisals.

Hagloch recalled 3 such episodes, in which he arrived on the scene less than an hour after the armed bands had left. In each case, the proprietor of the establishment denied the incident occurred, despite the fact that in one case, one of the band's guns had been dropped and was found lying on the floor.

At the same time, Dover industry was struggling through its weakest period, with many shut down or working only with a skeleton crew. Scrip money, credit plans and meager doles were instituted. The city passed a \$60,000 bond issue to aid relief.

At one point, demonstrations were held as those on relief requested the daily dole be increased from 5 cents to 15 cents per day.

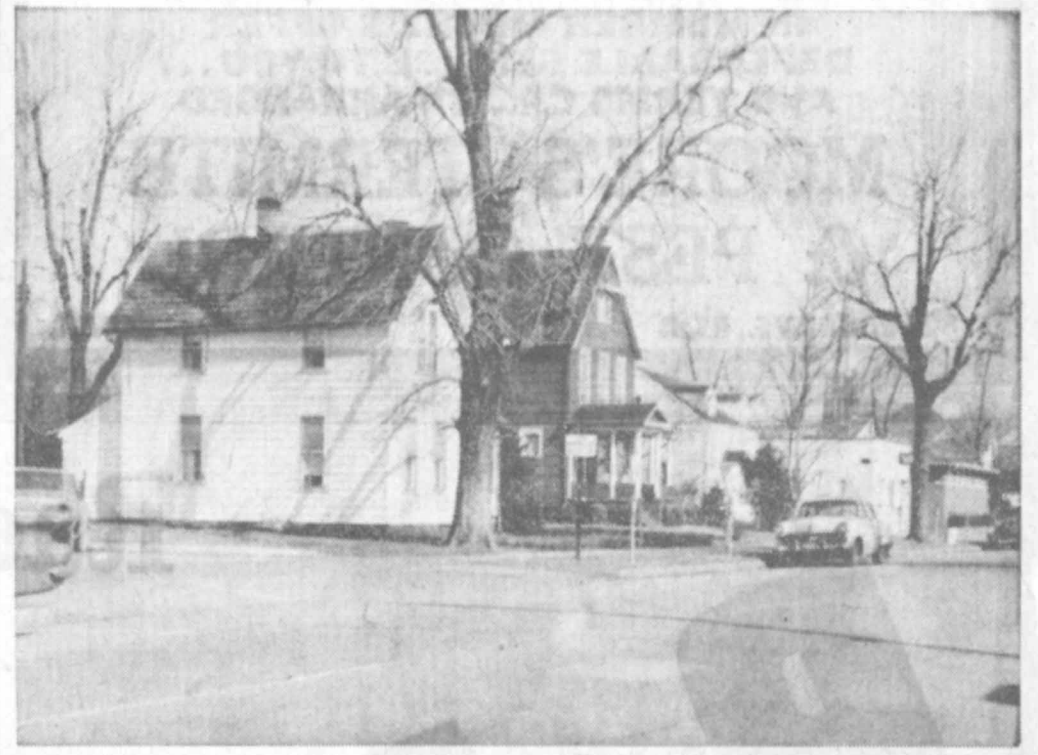
Although such conditions continued for several years, events such as President Roosevelt's "New Deal" and its resulting "alphabetical organizations," the beginning of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District, and increased industrial orders because of the threatening war in Europe, all aided in gradually pulling the economy up.

"The full impact of the depression, however," Hagloch concluded, "cannot be overemphasized. The props were knocked out from under Dover, and in those days we wondered how the city would ever survive."

"Those of us who lived through it were left with the certainty that if Dover could survive those years, it could survive anything, and recent history has proved that point."



THEN AND NOW, This view, looking east on W. 4th St. from the present site of Harbaugh Dry Cleaners, shows the change in the face of Dover. **TOP:** Horse-drawn vehicles obviously had difficulty in the muddy street, before paving. **BOTTOM:** Today, 3 of the original houses are still standing. The first one on the left in the top picture was torn down for the city parking lot, and the one at the corner of 4th and Walnut was razed for the present medical-dental building. The spires of the old and new St. John's Church are in the background of both pictures.



One of the most obnoxious