

**The Joseph W. Doron family house
– Built 1889 –**



The Doron House is listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory¹ and the inventory documents state: ***“This is a fine and rare (in Hamilton) example of Shingle style architecture”***. The Inventory documents also state that the house is eligible for inclusion in the National Historic Register and we intend to file the paperwork to have the house added to the national registry in the near future.

A May 1986 Hamilton City Planning Department book titled *Hamilton, Ohio Its Architecture and History* also states the house is a rare shingle-style Victorian house and that the Joseph Doron family was responsible for building all of the very rare shingle-style houses in the city of Hamilton².

¹ Ohio Historic Inventory No. BUT-606-9

² pages 170-171 *Hamilton, Ohio Its Architecture and History* (Hamilton City Planning Department May 1986)



The house sits near the top of “Prospect Hill” as referred to in historic literature but a city plat book in Hamilton’s Lane Library shows this area as “Doron’s Addition” and the area north and east as “Prospect Hill”. There is also conflicting information about who first developed “Prospect Hill”.

A local historian wrote that Peter Thomson, founder of Champion Paper Co., bought the Thomas Rhea farm on “Prospect Hill” and the city council accepted his plat for “Prospect Hill” in 1891. This contradicts the fact that years earlier Joseph Doron had already started building on “Prospect Hill”!

A historical reference³ we found clearly stated *“The land on Prospect Hill was originally owned by Stephen Hughes and later by Asa Shuler from whom Joseph Doron purchased the entire thirty-five lots of which he built on and sold most with the exception of five lots”*.

Another reference showed Stephen Hughes’ cow pasture was indeed at the top of “the hill” where the street (now North C St.) originally ended. The bordering street (now North D St.) also ended at the top of the hill but only one corner actually touched the Rhea farm that Peter Thomson bought.

A third reference, Joseph Doron’s obituary, stated *“he erected a beautiful home on Prospect Hill.”*⁴

Thus, the facts show that the land Joseph Doron bought was the original “Prospect Hill” but when he filed his plat in 1888-1889 it was named “Doron’s Addition”. Three years later Peter Thomson used the name “Prospect Hill” when he filed his plat for development of the land he bought (the Thomas Rhea farm) that was actually located beyond what was originally called “Prospect Hill”.

Therefore, the hill area originally known as “Prospect Hill” was developed by Joseph Doron while Peter Tompson’s Prospect Hill shown on a city plat book was actually the name of his *subdivision*.

³ page 175 *Memoirs of the Miami Valley* volume 3 1919

⁴ *Hamilton Evening Journal* November 28, 1922 Joseph Doron’s obituary



The Doron house as originally built (1889)

Being the second house built on the thirty-five lots of land owned by Joseph W. Doron on Prospect Hill, the Doron House sits majestically alone on the hill on North D St. (Terrace Avenue) in 1889. (The house in the background is on North D Street)

Sometime prior to 1912 the wood front porch and wood railing was replaced with a concrete porch and an ashlar cut stone wall. Also the second floor open balcony was enclosed and made into two bathrooms, one for each of the two front bedrooms.

In 1905 a neo-classical revival style house was built on lots to the left (south) of the Doron's at 325 North C St. where the Honorable Walter S. Harlan, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas resided. (The house is listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory as the "Walter S. Harlan House". Inv. # BUT-396-9)

Earlier, in 1890, a Queen Anne style house was built on the lots further south of the Doron's at 305 North C. St. where the Samuel D. Fitton family resided. Samuel D. Fitton was a lawyer with the Belden and Fitton law firm. In 1927 his widow Irene and two children were still living the house. (The house is listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory as the "Fitton House". Inv. # BUT-395-9)

In 1906 a Mission/Four Square style house was built several lots away to the right (north) of the Doron's at 385 North C. St. where Nathan Leshner, President of the Leshner Paper Stock Co. resided. (The house is listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory as the "Leshner Residence". Inv. # BUT-397-9)

The lots between the Doron house and Leshner House were not sold by Joseph for many years because circa 1910 they were being used by his sons for a radio antenna array suspended 300-400 feet between two wood towers. (See separate story about Doron Brothers early radio history)

On June 5, 1889 Joseph Doron married Ellen Susan Shuler who was one of Asa Shuler's daughters. The Doron House at 329 North C Street⁵ was built that same year.

The 3-story Doron House sits on property consisting of three parcels totaling almost 0.6 acre which is the largest property on the "hill" and in the general area. Doron family members occupied the house for at least seventy years from 1889 until the 1960's.

Interior of the Doron House

First floor

The previous owner found an architect's drawing of the first-floor floor plan in the attic which is now in a picture frame hanging in the living room. The architect's drawing shows the following room names: a "vestibule" (entry foyer), a "reception hall" (living room), a "parlor", a "dining room", a "den" (off the "reception hall"), and the "kitchen". The "den" was most likely the piano room.

The front entry door leads into the vestibule that opens to the reception hall (living room). A side door located at the carriage porch also leads to the reception hall (living room).

The parlor, formal dining room, and reception room each have fireplaces with hand-carved oak and cherry mantles with mirrors, elaborate iron raised-motif inserts, and ceramic tile. The fireplaces were originally wood burning or coal fireplaces but were converted to gas fireplaces when gas became available in the City of Hamilton. All three fireplaces on the first floor are operational.

The dining room and reception room have most of their original oak window shutters. All rooms have their hardwood floors and oak wall paneling except the kitchen which was likely enlarged and renovated. The former butler's pantry off the kitchen was made into a partial bathroom. The formal dining room and the parlor have jeweled stained glass windows.

The main staircase leading to the second floor has a large landing midway between the first and second floors and partly above the side carriage porch. The landing has original oak fretwork, stained glass windows, and its original interior oak shutters on the windows. A second staircase for the maid and butler leads from the kitchen area to quarters on third floor.

Second floor bedroom quarters

The second floor has two bedrooms in the front of the house and two in the rear. The front bedrooms have their own bathrooms with original porcelain-on-iron ceramic gas heaters in the walls. The bathroom gas heaters are fully operational but for safety reasons we do not use them.

A third bathroom which is located off the hall between the two rear bedrooms was renovated by the previous owner but it still retains its claw-foot tub.

At least three of the four bedrooms originally had fireplaces but two of the fireplaces were removed by previous owners. The master bedroom has the only remaining fireplace on the second floor.

Third floor maid/butler quarters

The third floor butler and maid quarters were renovated many years ago by previous owners and a bathroom was removed. There are currently four rooms on the third floor and we are presently completing the renovation with some changes.

⁵ North C Street was originally named "Terrace Ave." until around 1915 when it became North C St.

Third floor balcony

The front room has a balcony facing the Great Miami River two blocks away and the city area across the river is visible from the balcony when the two huge trees on the front lawn are bare.

The third-floor hidden room

There is a hidden "room" under a section of the third floor which is accessed by lifting a floorboard panel. The room is between the ceiling of the first floor main staircase's split landing and the third floor and although it is only about 3-feet high it is large enough to hide and sleep 2-3 people.

The room was constructed when the house was built and we suspect it was used to hide valuables and/or people. However, there are other stories of its usage during the late 1800's to early 1900's.

- a) Some people suggest the room was used to hide slaves when the Underground Railroad was still operating from Cincinnati through Hamilton northward to Dayton and Springfield after the Civil War ended because many plantation owners did not release their slaves.

However, research at Underground Railroad internet sites contradict that theory. According to historians Butler county had the least number of Railroad agents compared to surrounding counties. In fact, with only 7 agents believed to be involved, the county had 80% less agents than other counties. Furthermore, these sources state that the Railroad ceased operation after 1865 and definitely would not have been operating into 1889 when the house was built.

- b) Some people say John Dillinger may have used the room as one of his hideouts. He frequently visited Hamilton which was called "Little Chicago" but his hideouts were typically known to be on Hamilton's east side rather than on the west side. However, since the house next door to the Doron's was owned by the Honorable Walter S. Harlan, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas what better hideout could there be other than next door to a judge!

Although Joseph Doron died in 1922 and Ellen was a widow at that time, it is unlikely there was any association between Ellen; known as a woman of many graces and attainments in social life and civic activities; and John Dillinger..... or was there?

- c) Some people say the room was used to hide bootleg liquor during prohibition. This is an interesting possibility since the Dorons entertained many guests and their youngest son John Lawrence became a liquor store clerk after the depression in 1944.
- d) When our grandson Jonathan was three years old he examined the room and concluded it was used to hide zombies and mummies.

Other third floor "hidden areas"

Due to the home's construction with steeply pitched roof sections and the use of "knee walls" on the third floor, there are several small hidden areas behind the "knee walls" under the pitched roof.

One area is quite puzzling. On the south side of the house there is a small arch-shaped window that is visible only from the outside. Upon removing a wallboard in a closet in the south room on the third floor we found a small 2½-feet wide by 6-feet long area where the arch-shaped window was located. A few feet away from the hidden window is a piece of thick rope attached to a floor joist that might have been a remnant of a block and tackle.

Basement

The basement is divided into five "sections" and had a bathroom at one time.

Joseph Doron Information

Joseph W. Doron was born April 24, 1854 in Chesterfield, Burlington County, New Jersey.

He was a salesman for a big New York cloth manufacturer from which he traveled on the road for twenty-seven years. In 1888 he came to Hamilton and apparently met Ellen Shuler from his dealings with Ellen's father Asa who owned the Shuler and Benninghofen woolen mills in Hamilton.

In 1889 when he married Ellen Shuler he built the Doron home at 329 North C Street which was the second house he built on the acreage he owned on Prospect Hill.

From 1889 to 1907 his occupation was listed as "traveling salesman" in records at the Lane Library in Hamilton although other references indicate he actually stopped traveling and remained in Hamilton somewhat earlier. Starting in 1908 his occupation was listed as "real estate".

He dealt extensively in property in Hamilton as a builder and developer. In 1907 he built the Dorona Flats at 550 High Street. The Dorona; with its Second Renaissance Revival style; was one of the prominent apartment buildings in the city and is listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory.

In 1908 he built the smaller Verona Apartments at High and Center Streets (518 High) in Hamilton. The Verona; also in Second Renaissance Revival style; is also listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory

He wanted to attract writers, artists, and professionals into Hamilton with his apartments. Hence, we must mention Stella Weiler Taylor who, on February 8, 1908, became the Verona's first tenant residing at "No. 1 Verona" and who lived at Joseph Doron's Verona for more than thirty years.

Stella Weiler Taylor was a teacher, author, and a columnist for the Republican Press-News and the Hamilton Evening Journal (became the Hamilton Journal-News). In her book titled *Rosemary - A series of Lavender Scented Memories of Other Days in Hamilton* she wrote the following passages dated February 4, 1933 about her apartment:

"Just a bit of an anniversary reverie, for it will be exactly 25 years on Tuesday since I moved into my small Verona apartment "in the heart of town" for surely "High and Center streets" must be that."

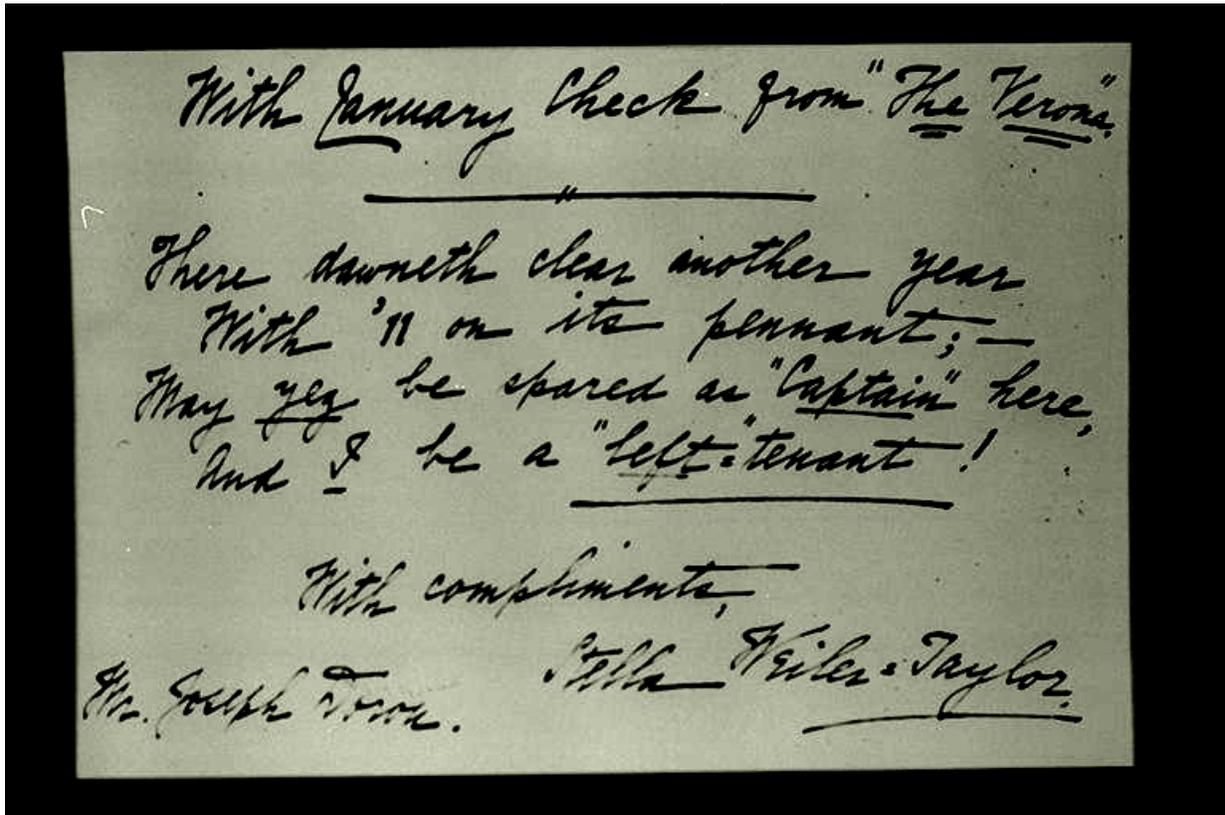
"So on February 7, I moved into the newly built Verona apartments, the first of Joseph Doron's tenants, and so thrilled over the event that for a year I used to send my rent check all done up in rhymes." (note: She rented one of the 3-room apartments with a large bathroom)

"I've loved it always, though I haven't much about the place but books and pictures and famous people's autographs and letters. Little children have worn a trail to the door and the windows are seldom without flowers which cherished friends shower into my unworthy but eager hands."

"It was here in the Verona, too, on March 23, 1913, that I entertained (at an impromptu house part during the great flood) a three-day group of a score of strangely assorted guests, who arrived in improvised gondolas and entered through my second-story front windows. What a play for a revolving stage (a la "Grand Hotel") those three flood-bound days would make! I can't remember what we ate. We slept on the floor mostly. But we laughed and shuddered together (after we had properly introduced ourselves) and I even read a few fortunes to pass the time away. Talk about dramatic situations – one finds a lot of them in the "Heart of a Town."

A copy of Stella Weiler Taylor's 2-volume book *Rosemary* (1940) is in our parlor.

Even after her first year of living at the Verona Stella continued to send notes in rhymes with her rent checks. Shown below is a rent check note from Stella to Joseph Doron from 1911.



As a successful land developer he was credited for building up many sections of Hamilton. In addition to his properties in Hamilton Joseph also invested in real estate in Topeka, Kansas where he developed and sold J. W. Doron's "Walnut Park" addition.

Joseph's youngest son John Lawrence also was involved in real estate and building and according to the May 1986 Hamilton City Planning Department book titled *Hamilton, Ohio Its Architecture and History* he built the former "Doretta Apartments" at 513-519 South Third St. (The Doretta is listed on the Ohio Historical Inventory as the "Doretta Apartments". Inv. #BUT-896-9)

The City Planning Department book also stated "Probably no family has contributed so much to the variety of architecturally interesting properties in Hamilton as the Dorons".

Joseph was a registered member of the Republican Party and a member of the Hamilton Club, the Butler County Country Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hamilton Elks Lodge, and was widely and favorably known in business circles.

Joseph Doron died at age 68 on November 28, 1922 while he was entering a bath house in Hamilton. He was buried on December 1, 1922 in the East Hill section of Hamilton's Greenwood Cemetery. The entire text of his obituary in the *Hamilton Evening Journal* of November 28, 1922 is reproduced on the following two pages.

HAMILTON EVENING JOURNAL
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1922

JOSEPH W. DORON DIES SUDDENLY TODAY FROM HEART ATTACK

Was Stricken as He Was About to Enter Bath House.

He Had Been Prominent in Real Estate Circles Many Years.

Joseph W. Doron, 329 Terrace avenue, realtor and manufacturer, died at 9:40 Tuesday morning two minutes after he had fallen five feet down a stairway which he was ascending to enter the bath house of A.R. Hasemeier, 20 North Front street.

Death was due to heart failure.

Unconscious but still breathing, Mr. Doron, was carried from the foot of the stairway leading to the bath house into a barber shop in the same building. Dr. H. A. Moore, Oxford, who was in the barber shop at the time pronounce Mr. Doron dead before the body was placed in the police ambulance and taken to Mercy Hospital

Coroner Edward Cook who viewed the remains, made a finding of accidental death due to a violent heart attack.

Not Injured By Fall

Mrs. A. R. Hasemeier, wife of the bath house proprietor, the only witness to the tragedy said that Mr. Doron was not injured in the fall.

"In his usual cheery way," Mrs. Hasemeier said, "Mr. Doron ex-tended a good morning as he opened the door to our apartments. He was standing at the foot of the stairway and asked to see Mr. Hasemeier. When told that my husband was busy at the time, Mr. Doron replied that he would come up and wait.

"He started to walk up the steps slowly and had gone about ten steps when he suddenly paled, then swooned and fell backwards.

"He did not say a word before and seemed to suddenly pass into unconsciousness."

Still Breathing

Mr. Doron was breathing faintly when carried from the stairway into the barber shop to the south of the stairway by Hal Hermann, city employee, and William Baker, barber.

Mr. Doron had visited the bath apartments regularly and was bent on his regular visit at the time of his tragic death.

According to friends who had seen Mr. Doron a short time before his death, he was in the best of spirits and apparently in good health. He spoke of timely events with friends on High street a short time before he walked to the bath house.

Death A Shock

The death of Mr. Doron, a shock to the community and a loss to Hamilton, separates from this city, a business leader and civic-spirited man who had toiled incessantly for years in the interests of the city and who had been whole-hearted in his support of all movements to better Hamilton.

Coming to Hamilton in 1888—33 years ago—when he erected a beautiful home on Prospect Hill, Mr. Doron had spent the greater part of his life since that time in this city, devoting his time to development of real estate and furtherance of his manufacturing hobbies.

Always active in civic affairs he became associated with welfare or organizations and business societies here which were bent on boosting of Hamilton.

He was a prime mover in all projects for the betterment of Hamilton and frequently acted as a committeeman and chairman of committees on various projects.

Linking himself with various fraternal and social organizations many years ago, Mr. Doron became a pioneer in many of the movements which ultimately realized success.

Land Development

His success in land development was pronounced and it was due to his vision that many sections of the city were built up.

Pursuant to his hobby for manufacturing and keeping apace with the progress of the age, Mr. Doron and his sons several years ago enlarged their electrical supply business with the installation of a department devoted to the production of radio equipment. With the backing of their father, the sons enlarged the business to such an extent that the scope of the present enterprise reaches not only to all parties of this country but also to foreign lands. Mr. Doron had been a leader of the company since its foundation.

Business Connection

Mr. Doron's first business connections in Hamilton, which finally resulted in him establishing a permanent residence here, were as general western representative of the Mills and Gibbs company, New York at that time the largest importers of dress goods manufactures in the country. Mr. Doron as western representative, completed many business deals with the T.V. Howell & Son company of Hamilton.

His far-sighted vision sensed the possibilities in Hamilton and Mr. Doron abandoned his post with the successful New York concern and devoted his time and money to Hamilton.

Mr. Doron was born in Chesterfield, New Jersey, 68 years ago, a son of Charles and Sarah Doron. He was the only one of the family to locate in Butler county. After securing his education in the public school of his native state, Mr. Doron became a traveling salesman, with offices in New York from which city he traveled on the on the road for a big cloth manufacturing house for twenty seven years.

He came to Hamilton in 1888 continuing to travel for several years, and in 1889 erected his handsome house on North C Street. This was the second house erected on Prospect Hill.

His Married Life

In 1889 Mr. Doron was united in marriage to Ellen Shuler, a daughter of the late Asa Shuler. After his marriage Mr. Doron gave up life of a traveling man and settled down to the real estate business in Hamilton, in which he had been engaged with great success ever since. He dealt extensively in property in Hamilton, as builder and developer and was the builder of the Dorona apartments in 1907, one of the large and important buildings in Hamilton at the present time.

He was also heavily interested in real estate in Topeka, Kansas where he completed several large real estate transactions.

Mr. Doron was widely and favorably known in the business circles of the city and occupied an excellent position in the confidence of his associates. In political affairs he was a staunch supporter of the republican party. His connections aside from his business affairs included membership in the Butler County Country club, the Chamber of Commerce and Hamilton lodge, No. 93, B. P. O. Elks.

Mr. Doron is survived by the bereaved widow Ellen (Shuler) Doron, and three sons, Shuler W., Joseph W., and John Lawrence, now attending Columbia university in New York city. Two sisters, Mrs. Howard Miller and Mrs. Anna Van Ness residing at Mr. Doron's birthplace Chesterfield, New Jersey, also survive.

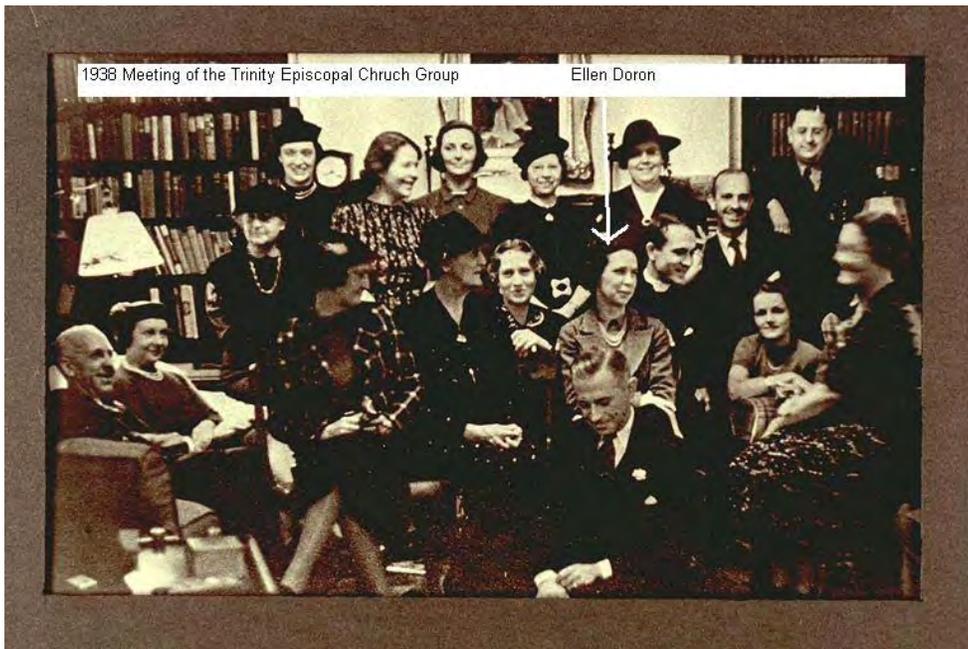
The sudden death of Mr. Doron came as a distinct shock to his large circle of friends and business acquaintances. He was daily upon the streets, engaged in his several business pursuits and was a familiar figure to everyone in the up-town district. To the widow and the sons all so well known in Hamilton, there goes out the deep sympathy of many devoted friends and acquaintances.

Ellen Susan Shuler Information

Ellen was born November 2, 1866 in Hamilton. She was prominent in civic activities and social life and was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and of the Washington Memorial.



Ellen was a member of the Trinity Episcopal Church Group (photo below).



Ellen was one of the organizers of the local Red Cross in 1919 and became Hamilton's Chairman of the Red Cross. She also was chairman of National Council League for Women's Service for Butler county, chairman of the woman's committee of the Council of National Defense, and chairman of National League of Woman's Service, both for Butler County.

She was also responsible for some of the 1926 fundraising for the Fort Hamilton Hospital on Eaton Avenue and she was a member of the first board of the Fort Hamilton Hospital. She also served as member of the YWCA board.

In social circles she was a member of the Browning Club, the oldest literary club of Hamilton; the Irving and Hawthorne Clubs; the Woman's City Club; and the Current Events Club. However, the most interesting club was a "Donkey Club" mentioned by writer Stella Weiler Taylor in her book *Rosemary*.

The Donkey Club

When I found references to a "Donkey Club" and did more research it became obvious it needed to be included in the history of Ellen and Joseph. Apparently Ellen was a member when she was single in her 20's. When she married Joseph they became one of the "married sets" in the club.

The Donkey Club had nothing to do with the Democratic Party (donkey symbol) nor was it a group of some young dumb asses and pranksters running around the city of Hamilton.

It was the "ultra-smart and exclusive" club of Hamilton in the 1890's to early 1900's. As you will see below and on the next page, the members were a who's who of industrialists, capitalists, investors, professionals, and politicians with whom the Dorons associated with in social life and activities.

The club apparently started as an off-shoot of the Irving and Hawthorne clubs which were literary groups. At a party hosted by Dr. and Mrs. Dan Millikin (Dan Millikin was a medical doctor) a group played "pin the tail on the donkey". It was at that party the group decided to be club. Hence, the name "Donkey Club" arose and the Dan Millikins were one of the originators of the club.

Mr. and Mrs. George P. Tangeman who lived on Dayton St. also were originators. (Mrs. Tangeman was the eldest daughter of Cornelius Hoagland, multimillionaire president of the Royal Baking Powder Co.)

Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. McKinney were "leaders" of the club. (Robert McKinney was secretary-treasurer and stockholder in Niles Tool Works which was the largest machine tool manufacturing company in the world at the turn of the century. His wife Nell was daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Beckett. William Beckett was president of the Beckett Paper Co. in Hamilton and a delegate to the Republican National Convention from Ohio during 1860.)

The members were noted for brilliant and lavish hospitality. Each host tried to outdo the previous host with more clever originality. For example, the McKinney's had a balcony overlooking the entrance hall to their Queen Ann home at 610 Dayton St. and one of their party themes was Romeo and Juliet. William Falconer was Romeo and May Neal was Juliet.

Members of the Donkey Club included:

Gov. and Mrs. James E. Campbell. (Prominent Hamilton attorney 1865; Butler County prosecutor 1876-1880; U.S. House of Representatives 1884-1889; Governor of Ohio 1890-1892; delegate to Democratic National Conventions 1892, 1920, and 1924; president of Ohio Historical Society and board of trustees of Ohio State University; died in Columbus, Ohio 1924.)

Major and Mrs. Estes Rathbone (an Assistant Postmaster General. His wife Josephine was a daughter of the late Lewis D. Campbell, a Hamilton lawyer and newspaper publisher who also had been a congressman and U.S. minister to Mexico.)

Col. and Mrs. James Erskine Neal (Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives from 1878-1880)

Dr. and Mrs. Charles E. Walton (Medical doctor in Hamilton during 1879-1889; president of Ohio State Homeopathic Medical Society in 1889; president of the American Institute of Homeopathy in 1900)

Dr. and Mrs. Charles I. Keely (Dentist and teacher of dentistry; pioneer in orthodontia dentistry; president of Ohio College of Dental Surgery)

Col. and Mrs. Joseph B. Hughes (President of the Royal Pottery Co.; auditor of Butler County in 1881; a Knight Templar; past Chancellor Commander in the Knights of Pythias; and American consul in Europe)

Samuel D. Fitton (A prominent attorney who handled the incorporation of Champion Papers in the 1890's)

Mr. and Mrs. Chas E. Macbeth (Secretary/treasurer Long & Allstatter Co manufacturer of agricultural implements)

Mr. & Mrs. James W. See (James was a patent attorney, mechanical and consulting engineer, technical writer and patent expert of international repute. Considered "one of the best known mechanical engineers" and was summoned as an expert witness in over 300 cases involving patents in federal and other courts. He was a counsel for the Wright brothers in the litigation arising from their invention of the airplane and helped represent Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright in several legal battles. Many of his papers were published in Scientific American and others are on file in the Library of Congress with Wright brothers documents.)

Lazard Kahn (Founder of the F. & L. Kahn & Bros. stove company in 1884 which later became the Estate Stove Co.; a founder of Hamilton Chamber of Commerce; a director of the Inland Waterways Association.)

Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Millikin (manufacturer of implements and machinery at Hamilton in 1865, in the firm of Millikin & Co then was clerk of the courts of Butler County,)

Mr. and Mrs. John. C. Hooven (Co-owner of Hooven, Owens & Rentschler Co. manufacturers of engines, threshers and saw-mills. He was a Knight Templar in the order of Free and Accepted Masons)

Mr. & Mrs. W.B. Falconer a director of the YMCA

In February 1939 the only members of the Donkey Club who were still alive were Countess von Rittberg (Grace Campbell) living in Los Angeles, Mrs. Robert C. McKinney (living in New York City), and Ellen Doron.

Ellen Susan Doron died at age 85 on February 16, 1952 and was buried on February 19, 1952 in the East Hill section of Hamilton's Greenwood Cemetery where her husband Joseph was buried 30 years earlier. The entire text of her obituary in the February 18, 1952 *Hamilton Journal News* is reproduced on the next page.

Mrs. Ellen Doron Succumbs At 85

Mr. Ellen Shuler, 85, member of the prominent Shuler industrial family of Hamilton, died of complications Saturday, 4:35 p.m. at her residence, 329 N. C. St. She had been in failing health the last year.

Mrs. Doron was born Nov. 2, 1866, in Hamilton, the daughter of Asa Shuler and Mary Ann Sorber Shuler. Her father was a founder of the Shuler-Benninghofen Mills. She was educated in the Hamilton schools.

On No. 22, 1889 she was married to Joseph William Doron. Mr. Doron, who preceded his wife in death, became prominent in real estate circles of the community. He was builder and erected the Doron Apartments, High and Sixth Sts., and other well-known buildings.

Active In Clubs

Mrs. Doron belonged to Trinity Episcopal Church; the Browning Club, oldest literary club of Hamilton; Daughters of the American Revolution; during World War I, headed the local chapter of the National Council League for Women's Service; the Woman's City Club; Current Events Club. She was also a member of the first board of Ft. Hamilton Hospital and served as a member of the YWCA board.

Survivors include: Three sons, John Lawrence Doron, Shuler W. Doron and Joseph Doron, all of Hamilton; a sister, Mrs. James Dale, Nashville, Tenn.; and two nephews, Frank Shuler and Carl Shuler.

Preceding her death, besides her husband, were a daughter, Mary; a sister, Mrs. Harry Lashorn; two brothers, Charles Shuler and William Shuler.

Funeral Services will be held at the residence, 329 N. C. St., Tuesday, 3 p.m., with the Rev. Charles Fish, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, officiating. Burial will be in Greenwood Cemetery. Friends may call at the residence today. Arrangements were made by Webb and Sons Funeral Home, Ross Ave. and S. D. St.

The children of Joseph and Ellen

Joseph and Ellen had four children. Their first child was born nine months after they married. The children, in sequence were:

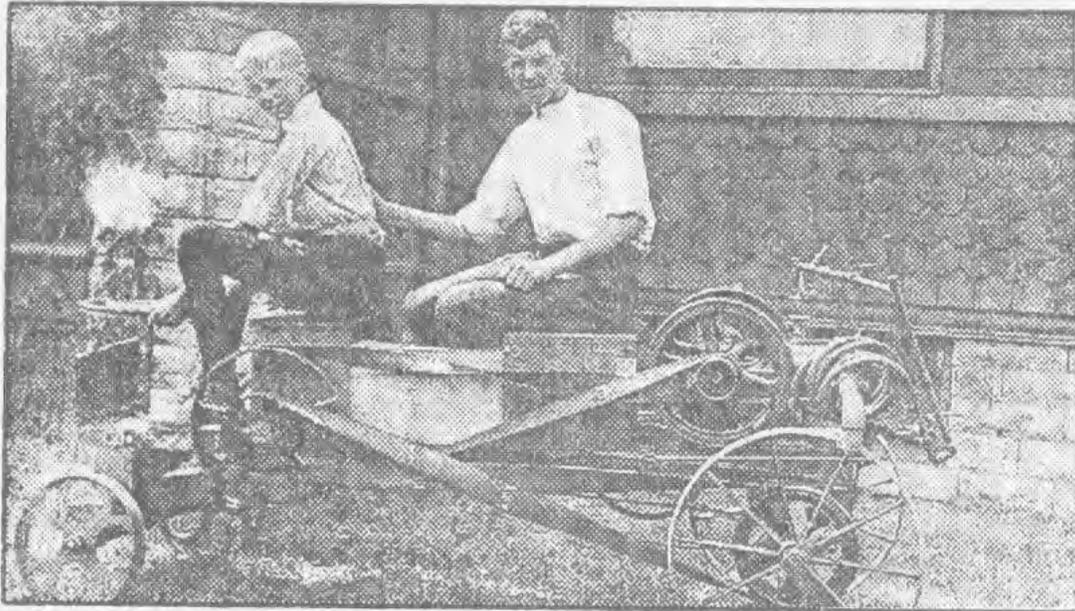
Shuler William, son, born March 7, 1890
Mary Ann, daughter, born December 29, 1892
Joseph W. Jr., son, born August 10, 1895
John Lawrence, son, born November 13, 1900⁶

Joseph and Ellen's only daughter, Mary Ann, died July 26, 1893 of cholera at 7-months old.



⁶ Exact date unconfirmed. John's birth date is not listed in the Butler County birth records. Two genealogy sites list his birth date as November 3, 1900. Page 175 *Memoirs of the Miami Valley* volume 3 (1919) lists his birth date as November 13, 1900. A Florida death record lists his birth date as November 14, 1899.

A bicentennial glimpse



Journal-News Archive Photo

It was about 1908 when Joe (left) and Shuler Doron showed off this home-constructed automobile in front of their residence on North D Street, in Hamilton. The automobile, built by Shuler Doron in the Advance Manufacturing Co. shop, at North B Street and Wayne Avenue, was powered by a one cylinder engine.

In addition to their “engineering talents” as seen in the photo above, Shuler and his brother Joseph were pioneers in early radio and formed the Doron Bros. Electrical Co. around 1914-1915⁷ but they were experimenting with transmitting and electrical devices in earlier years. An iron antenna tower from their radio station WRK (1922) still sits on Prospect Hill visible when crossing the High Street - Main Street bridge. (See separate story about the Doron Brothers Electrical Co. and early radio history)

⁷ Some sources indicate the company was formed as early as 1909 and was initially building wireless radio apparatus in the basement of the Doron house.

Shuler William Information

Shuler William; Joseph and Ellen's first son; was born March 7, 1890

After being educated in Hamilton City schools and Miami University he attended Purdue University where he graduated in the class of 1916.

Shuler was a pioneer in early wireless radio (pre-1910 era) when he was a teenager. In 1914-1915 he went into business with his brother Joseph⁸. (See separate story for Doron Brothers Electrical Company and early radio history)

After the Doron Brothers Electric Co. suspended operations around 1935, Shuler's occupations from 1939 to 1943 were still listed in Hamilton directories as "engineer", "radios", "electrical engineer" but from 1944 to 1946 his occupation was listed as a "tester at General Machine Corporation" when he was about 56 years old.

There is no record that Shuler was married. He continued to live at the family house at 329 N C Street with younger brother John Lawrence until his death.

Shuler died on December 20, 1955 at age 65 and was buried on December 23, 1955 in Greenwood Cemetery. The entire text of his obituary in the December 21, 1955 *Hamilton Journal - Daily News* is reproduced below.

HAMILTON JOURNAL- - -THE DAILY NEWS

Shuler W. Doron Succumbs At 65

Shuler W. Doron, 65, 329 N. C. St., native Hamiltonian, and member of a prominent Hamilton family, died of complications at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday in Mercy Hospital where he had been a patient nine days. He had been in failing health for several years, seriously ill two weeks.

He was born in Hamilton on March 7, 1890, a son of Joseph W. and Ellen Susan Shuler Doron, his parents widely known in the business, social and civic life of Hamilton. He received his education in Hamilton public schools, Miami Military Institute, at Germantown, Miami University and Purdue University.

A lifelong resident of Hamilton, he had been associated with a brother, Joseph Doron, in the radio manufacturing business in this city, the Doron Brothers Electric Co., from 1914 to 1930, their plant located on N. B St.. In the early days of radio, Doron products were nationally known. He served in the United States Army during World War I as a second lieutenant in the signal corps.

He leaves two brothers, John Lawrence Doron and Joseph W. Doron, both of Hamilton, and many friends. He was preceded in death by his parents and one sister, Mary, who died in infancy.

The funeral services will be conducted at 10 a.m. Friday in the David Webb and Sons Funeral Home, Ross Ave. and S. D St., with the Rev. Charles E. Fish, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, officiating. Burial will be in Greenwood Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday.

⁸ Some sources indicate the company was formed as early as 1909 and initially building wireless radio apparatus in the basement of the Doron house.

Joseph Jr. information

Joseph W. Doron Jr.; Joseph and Ellen's second son; was born August 10, 1895.

After being educated in Hamilton City schools he attended college in Andover Massachusetts. (Some information suggests that he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In 1914-1915 Joseph went into the radio equipment manufacturing business with his older brother Shuler.⁹ (See separate story for Doron Brothers Electrical Company and early radio history)

After the Doron Bros. Electric Co. suspended operations Joseph was listed in Hamilton directories in 1935 as a "draftsman" for the AM Rolling Mills Company. For the next twenty-five years he continued working at AM Rolling Mills which later became Armco after which he retired in 1960.

Joseph married Ada Wilson on July 20, 1940 in Hamilton when he was 44 years old. Ada was a school teacher at Hamilton's Harrison School. She was born June 11, 1896 in Hamilton and married Joseph Jr. when she was 45 years old.

After Joseph and Ada moved to their own residence at 340 Buckeye Street in Hamilton's German Village district while Shuler and John Lawrence; both unmarried at that time; continued to live in the family house at 329 North C Street.

(Joseph and Ada's house at 340 Buckeye Street is no longer standing and is now a parking area.)

During 1957 Joseph and Ada moved to 5980 Theodore Ave in a development of new homes just outside the city limits in a peaceful quiet setting away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Joseph's hobbies including gem collecting, creating artwork with rocks, and woodworking.

Joseph Doron Jr. died in Hamilton May 8, 1967 at age 72 and was buried on May 10, 1967 in Greenwood Cemetery where his mother, father, and older brother Shuler were buried. The entire text of his obituary in the May 8, 1967 *Hamilton Journal – Daily News* is reproduced on the next page.

Joseph's wife Ada died in December 1983 at age 86. There were no children of the marriage on record.

⁹ Some sources indicate the company was formed as early as 1909 and initially building wireless radio apparatus in the basement of the Doron house.

Joseph Doron Stricken; Radio Pioneer Was 71

Joseph William Doron, 71, 5980 Theodore Ave., a member of a prominent Hamilton family and pioneer in radio in the United States, died at 1:05 a.m. Monday in Fort Hamilton Hospital where he had been removed by the Fairfield Township Life Squad after becoming ill at his home shortly after midnight.

In apparent good health, Mr. Doron's passing was unexpected and is a shock to his family and friends.

Mr. Doron and his brother, Shuler Doron, began building wireless receiving sets in the basement of their family home, 329 N. C Street in 1910. The Doron Brothers Electric Co. was one the first two or three manufacturers of wireless receiving sets in the U.S., and in 1915 they developed a portable wireless receiving set, housed in an imitation leather carrying case – a forerunner of the portable radio.

Marconi License

In 1916 the Doron firm was licensed by the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Co. to build and sell equipment under Marconi patents.

In 1919, the brothers were operating radio station WRK, in Hamilton, and broadcast one of the first church services in history, a service from Trinity Episcopal Church in this city.

Joe Doron was born in Hamilton on Aug. 10, 1895, the son of Joseph William and Ellen Susan Shuler Doron both members of prominent Hamilton and Butler County families, and was educated in public schools here. He graduated from Hamilton High School in 1915, and attended Andover (Mass.) College, before entering the service during World War I.

Mr. Doron enlisted in 1917, served in Officer Training School and was named a captain in the Signal Corps. at Chillicothe. He was honorably discharged in 1918.

Prior to his enlistment, he and his brother had developed the installation of light air to ground transmitters for the Signal Corps aircraft, and were one of the few firms in the country to participate in these installations.
Company Locations

The Doron company moved from the family home to N. B. St., in 1915, moved again in 1918 to north of Wayne Ave., on N. B. St., and later built its own building at 325 N. B. St. now the Activities Building of the Ohio Division of U.S. Plywood – Champion Papers Inc.

The company suspended operations in 1935, after which Joe Doron joined Armco Steel Corp. as a draftsman. He remained there for 25 years, retiring in 1960.

Mr. Doron was a brilliant man, possessing an active, creative mind, and his creativity remained with him long after his retirement. He was one of the first to build a color television set and a stereophonic record system.

A kind and quiet man, Joe Doron was most modest about his accomplishments. He was a member of the Hamilton Gem society, and created works of art from rocks. He also enjoyed working with wood and his artistic talents won the admiration of all who had the privilege of viewing his creations.

He was a member of the Trinity Episcopal Church and the American Legion.

Mr. Doron married Ada Wilson on July 20, 1940, and they enjoyed more than 26 years of marriage. He was devoted and loving husband, and found his greatest pleasures working around the house.

He leaves his wife, a brother, John Lawrence Doron, Hamilton; two cousins, Mrs. Norman Whitaker, Hamilton, and Jay Howard Miller, Silver Springs, MD, other relatives and a wide circle of friends. Mr. Doron was preceded in death by a brother, Shuler W. Doron, on Dec. 20, 1955.

The World War I years 1917-1919

Joseph Jr. and Shuler both served in the U.S. Army during World War I.

Joseph enlisted on September 19, 1917 at 22 years old and served one year in the Radio Division, Company A, 308th Field Signal Engineers Battalion, 83rd Division as a private stationed at Camp Sherman after which he was discharged on April 18, 1918 to attend Officers' Training Camp, at Leon Springs, Texas where he received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Signal Corps and sent to Little Silver, NJ.

Next, he was transferred to Camp Hancock, Augusta, Ga., where he was made Camp Signal Supply Officer. He was promoted to first lieutenant on the 19th of June, 1919 and was honorably discharged April 14, 1919. In later years after the war Joseph was a captain in the Army Reserve.

Shuler enlisted on April 2, 1918 (November 17, 1917?) in the A.C. Radio Service approximately six months after his brother Joseph and he was discharged October 1, 1918 to also accept a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Signal Corps. As an officer he was Senior Instructor of Air Service in radio work. He was honorably discharged December 3, 1919.

(In 1917 the military draft required men who were 21 to 30 years old to register. Younger brother John Lawrence was 17 years old in 1917 and still a student and therefore he was not required to register. In 1918 the draft registration requirement age was broadened to 18-45 years and John Lawrence was an 18-year old senior in High School during 1918.)

John Lawrence information

John Lawrence; Joseph and Ellen's youngest son; was born November 13, 1900¹⁰. He sometimes used the name Lawrence ("Larry") instead of John.

He attended Columbia University in New York City and graduated in 1925 or 1926. In 1927 his occupation was listed in Hamilton directories as "real estate". Following in his father's footsteps as a developer and builder he built the Doretta Apartments at 513-519 South Third Street.¹¹

The 1930 Census listed his occupation as a "capitalist". From 1939 to 1942 his occupation was listed as "real estate" in the Hamilton directories but for the twenty-year period from 1944 to 1964 his occupation was listed as "liquor store clerk". It is likely the depression from the earlier years adversely affected his investments.

When Shuler died in 1955 John lived alone in the family home until 1959 when he married Virginia H??? at age 60. John and Virginia lived in the family home until 1964 when he sold the house and they moved to a smaller house at 328 North Second Street at the corner of Buckeye St. in Hamilton's German Village district. The house, built in 1879, is still standing as a 2-family house.

(John Lawrence was the last surviving Doron to occupy the family house at 329 North C Street. (His unmarried brother Shuler died in 1955 and his brother Joseph Jr. moved out of the house after being married in 1942 and later died in 1967)

Around 1970 John Lawrence and Virginia moved to Florida where he died on June 14, 1980 at age 80 in Indialantic (in Orange County), Florida.

Since Joseph Jr. and John Lawrence married late in life and had no children and since Shuler was never married and had no children, there were no descendants of Joseph W. Doron and Susan Ellen Shuler-Doron to carry on the history of the family.

So..... when you drive on High Street through downtown Hamilton, Ohio and pass the Dorona Apartments and the Verona Apartments, and when you cross the High Street – Main Street bridge westbound across the Great Miami River and see an antenna tower on the hill to the right....you now know the who, how, and why!

This story was compiled and written by Bob Anello, current owner of the Doron House.
April 11, 2008

¹⁰ Exact date unconfirmed. John's birth date is not listed in the Butler County birth records. Two genealogy sites list his birth date as November 3, 1900. Page 175 *Memoirs of the Miami Valley* volume 3 (1919) lists his birth date as November 13, 1900. A Florida death record lists his birth date as November 14, 1899.

¹¹ Source: page 171 *Hamilton, Ohio Its Architecture and History* (Hamilton City Planning Dept. May 1986)