

Digging up history in Maternity Cemetery

by Laurel Soper

In 1884 Maternity BVM parish, having outgrown its churchyard cemetery, purchased a tract of land just west of the village of Bourbonnais. Today Maternity BVM cemetery lies well inside the village limits on Canterbury Lane, surrounded by Keno Park and Briarcliff and Bristol Woods subdivisions.

Chances are you drive past this lovely little spot, at least occasionally, as you go to work or take your children to school. Perhaps you have a friend or relative buried here. Maybe, as a teenager, you dared to walk through it after dark.

If the cemetery has caught your attention at all, you have certainly noticed its lone mausoleum, the white exterior standing proudly, if not a bit shabbily, against blue sky. Above the door the words Peter Granger 1911 are carved into the lintel. The iron gate in front of the door and iron bars on the windows keep safe the eternally slumbering inhabitants. A peek inside reveals a white-tiled interior and several marble-faced crypts. Just two of them bear inscriptions:

•Peter Granger, born Sept. 9, 1844 at St. George District Diberville, Canada, Province of Quebec, died April 11, 1926 age 81 yrs. 8 mo. 2 dys.

•Olive Granger, born Aug. 28, 1848 at St. Jacques LeMineur, Archdiocese de Montreal, died Feb. 7, 1932 age 83 yrs. 5 mo. 11 dys. Who were Peter and Olive Granger? The mausoleum suggests a wealthy couple. Peter's entry in the Portrait and Biographical Record of Kankakee County Illinois, (Lake City Publishing Company, 1893) and his obituary in a local newspaper revealed these details:

Peter came to this area from Canada at the age of 4 with his parents, David and Elizabeth (Roy) Granger, and his 10 siblings. Olive, also from Canada, was the daughter of Joseph and Sophie Dupuis, one of eight children. Peter and Olive married on Sept. 17, 1867 at Maternity BVM Church. The Grangers had no natural children but adopted a young girl, Emma Trudell.

By the early 1890's the Grangers owned over 400 acres of good farmland and lived in a "pleasant home" in Kankakee. From the Portrait and Biographical Record..., "Mr. and Mrs. Granger are numbered among the intelligent and respected citizens of the community."

More about Peter and Olive can be gleaned from a story reported by two local newspapers, circa 1922. They were involved in an automobile accident at the railroad crossing on N. Indiana Ave. in Kankakee. Mrs. Granger, the driver, was attempting to cross the tracks when a train hit their Ford

sedan. Both articles mention her age, 74, and the couple's address, 387 S. Rosewood, Kankakee.

Still a mystery is little Emma. The 1893 Portraits and Biographical Record... volume tells us the Grangers "took to their hearts and home Emma Trudell, who is now their adopted daughter and goes by the name Emma Granger", but she is not mentioned in Peter's obituary. How did she come into the Grangers' lives? Where did she end up?

Research at the French-Canadian Heritage Museum indicates that Emma Trudell's father may have been Frank Trudell from Kansas City, KS. It is unknown who Emma's birth mother was and unclear how she came to be with the Grangers.

Emma wed George Graveline on Jan. 12, 1898 at St. Rose of Lima Church in Kankakee. They were married for 57 years, raising several children.

Returning to Maternity BVM cemetery brings us full circle. Emma and George Graveline are buried in the Graveline family plot, marked by a large white granite monument, not far from the Granger mausoleum.

So, if you who have an interest in local history, a walk through Maternity cemetery may very well be the best way to connect with the village's past. Historic figures such as Noel LeVasseur and George Letourneau, as well as people like Peter and Olive Granger, lie there, waiting to tell you their stories.

Many thanks to family historian Mimi Raiche, French Canadian Heritage Museum genealogist Norma Meier and Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society member Dorothy DesLauriers for their help in uncovering Peter and Olive's story.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history.

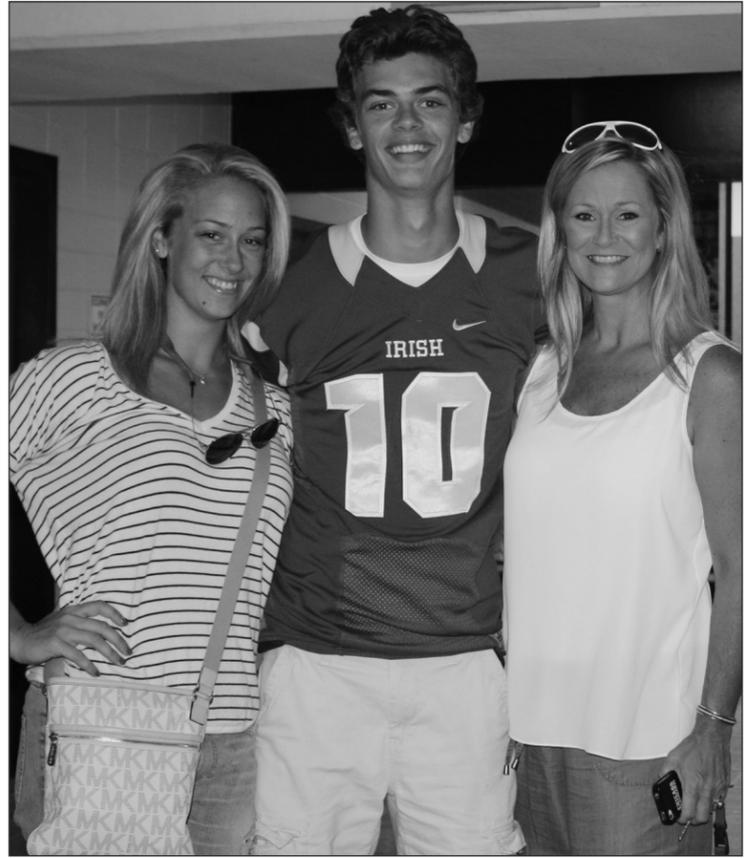
Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March through December.

The museum is open 1 to 4 p.m. on the first and third Sundays of each month, March through December or by appointment.

Visit bourbonnaishistory.org, find them on Facebook at [facebook.com/bourbonnaisgrove](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaisgrove) or call 1-815-933-6452.



Irish Alumni Mass



Photos courtesy of Bishop McNamara Catholic High School Students and families kicked off the Fall Athletic Booster Club Scrimmage with an Irish Alumni-sponsored Mass at Bishop McNamara Catholic High School on Friday, Aug. 21, 2015. Kennedy '12 (above, l. to r.), Kobe '16, and Kate Shutter, all of Bourbonnais, attended the Irish Alumni Mass. Father Dan Belanger (below, center) celebrated the annual Bishop McNamara Alumni Mass with Kellan Saindon '19 (left), Bourbonnais and Olivia Wheeler '19 of Grant Park as altar servers.



Local working on original music

Alyssa Norden, a graduate of Olivet Nazarene University with a degree in vocal performance and a former Bourbonnais Friendship Festival adult idol winner, is currently working on original music with a music producer in Los Angeles, CA.

Beginning at a young age, Norden has performed for Dr. Patricia Polk of Polk Entertainment Enterprises, Inc. Norden has been in Young People's Theater and Kankakee Valley Theater Association productions.

At Clifton Central High School she participated in their musicals, madrigals, band, jazz band, marching band, show choir, cheerleading and speech team.

She has toured with Miss Illinois, sang the National Anthem at local and regional events, recorded two singles on the Christmas with the Idols

CD and has recorded with Brandon Joseph on his album, Lucidus.

She has won the Friendship Festival Adult Idol, Kankakee Karaoke competition, Georgetown Fair talent competition and placed as top vocalist at the Illinois State Fair talent competition.

At ONU, she participated in their musicals, marching band, Orpheus and traveled to Brazil, Hong Kong and South Korea with Concert Singers.

After college, she was cast as Rapunzel in the musical Entwined at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, VA.

She performed at Busch Gardens in Virginia and with the Cranky Cabaret.

She later moved to New York City working with Bee's and Butterflies in their musical Lab Ratz!

Norden is also teaching, volunteering and auditioning.