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BIOGRAPHY

## HELEN MARIA BINGHAM

Helen M. Bingham, teacher, physician, organizer of women's clubs, and author of the "History of Green County, Wisconsin", was born in Monroe, October 10, 1845. She was the daughter of Vermont-born Judge John A. Bingham, who came to Monroe in 1841, and his wife, Caroline Elizabeth Churchill, a native of southern Illinois. Caroline's Vermont father, a soldier of the War of 1812, had come west before 1820, and her New Hampshire mother had journeyed on a flatboat down the Ohio River with her parents, a trip that was recounted in the old "Monroe Sentinel" by her granddaughter Helen Bingham. The Bingham home in Monroe was the red brick house of New England aspect, which John Bingham built in 1850, an exact copy of his father's house in Morristown, Vermont. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Kubly.

Helen Bingham went to school in Monroe, and in 1864 was one of the early coeds at the University of Wisconsin, though that institution then looked with little favor on higher education for women. There were in 1864 but three buildings on the campus: Main Hall and North and South Halls. Helen and two friends shared a room in North Hall. The next year she transferred to Lombard University in Galesburg, Illinois, where she completed its two-year education course.

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# Dr. Helen Bingham from th

## Profile

The Monroe Evening Times  
 commemorative salute to  
 Monroe's memorable citizens



By PHIL TSCHUDY  
 TIMES News Team

The medical profession certainly has improved over the years. Technological innovations, improved education and the advent of antibiotics have revolutionized the profession.

Back when Dr. Helen Bingham was practicing medicine, however, things were different. There was no fancy X-ray equipment, no penicillin and most doctors were lucky if they completed a four-year college course.

Bingham was born in Monroe, Oct. 10, 1845, the daughter of Green County's first judge, John A. Bingham, and his wife Caroline Churchill Bingham. She practiced what was known as homeopathy.

This theory of medicine was developed by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, who believed that a drug which produces certain disease symptoms in a healthy person will cure a sick person who has the same symptoms.

In the "History of Green County" published in 1884, Bingham provided readers with a description of the techniques used by early physicians.

The principal physician based his practice on the belief that when blisters, calomel and the lancet will not save a man, nothing will save him, but that bleeding is then to be resorted to in order to make him die more easily, and he is said to have bled, blistered and saturated his patients successively or simultaneously with an energy that made this a very easy place to die in.

Bingham wrote that unless an absolute emergency arose, doctors rarely made home visits. Instead, remedies were given by the mother or grandmother of the family. "Roots and herbs" were often used to treat common diseases. Boneset, wormwood, pennyroyal, elecampane, smartweed, dock, dandelion, cohosh, tansy and sarsaparilla were popular.

Most people usually got over com-

mon colds, but the treatments were proclaimed to be "heroic medicine." Diphtheria was treated as sore throat. One remedy was to take a piece of fat pork, liberally sprinkled with black pepper and strap it to a person's throat.

Almost as good was a similar method using brown paper doused with vinegar or kerosene. Perhaps the best cure, though, was taking a wool sock from the ill person's foot and wrapping it around his neck upon going to bed. Unless the person actually had diphtheria, he or she got over the illness — heroic medicine at work.

In spring, it was time to purify the blood, Bingham relates, that this was done in two ways. The first was by doses of molasses and sulphur, given nine times in 15 days. The other was by means of bitters, made by adding various roots to a "very liberal allowance of alcohol or whiskey." It has been said that many people look

# ne old school

ed forward to sprung.

In addition to being a doctor, Bingham was also a historian. She wrote her own book on the history of Green County which was published in 1877.

She received her early education in Monroe, and in 1864, she, Louise Ritzenhouse and another friend enrolled in the first co-educational class at the University of Wisconsin. Because of her father's ill health, Bingham returned to Monroe after one year.

After her father's death, she attended Lombard University in Galesburg, Ill., graduating in 1867. According to E. C. Hamilton's book "The Story of Monroe", Bingham became engaged to Dr. Lorenzo Dow but broke it off when he insisted that his mother live with them after the marriage.

She taught school at Little Rock, Ark. and at Lombard before teaching at Monroe High School for four years. She also spent a short time as an assistant editor with the Janesville Gazette.

She organized the Girls High School Literary Society which at-

tracted such speakers as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, co-founders of the women's suffrage movement.

In the fall of 1877, Bingham went to Boston to study medicine. She graduated with honors from Boston University in 1882 after which she began practice in Milwaukee for a number of years.

Bingham and her sister, Ada, also a homeopathic physician, moved to Denver with their brother, Homer, in 1888 because of ill health. While there she helped found the Woman's Club of Colorado and organize an Indian rights group.

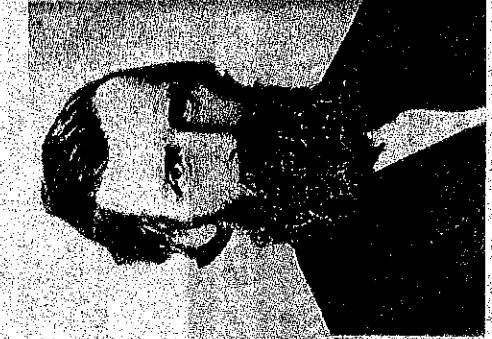
Bingham also served as secretary of the Woman's Club of Wisconsin and was the attending physician for the Protestant Orphans Asylum and the Home for Aged Women. She was also treasurer for the Wisconsin State Homeopathic Society and gave between 50 to 100 public lectures per year.

In 1902, she suffered a stroke which greatly reduced her mental capabilities. She died in 1910 at the Bingham home.

# Judge Bingham helped shape Monroe

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Judge John A. Bingham lived in a portion of the home that still stands at 621 14th Avenue. Mr. Bingham was one of the people instrumental in the building of Monroe.



From the industrial census 1860 we learn that Mr. Bingham operated a flouring mill which was valued at \$10,000. He used steam to power the mill, which had two sets of stones. He employed 20 men for a total of \$163 per month. Their raw materials included 72,000 bushels of wheat at (\$64,800), 16,000 barrels of flour at (\$4,000), 800 cords of wood at (\$1,000), and 50 gallons of oil (\$50). They produced 100 barrels of flour worth \$1,000 and 370 tons of mill sweep (\$3,700). He also operated a cooperage nearby valued at \$1,000. He employed five men for a total of \$20 per month. Raw materials used included 200 m. staves (\$1,000), 80 m hoops (\$250). They produced 800 flour barrels per month (\$2,000).

Photo supplied by John A. Bingham (1819-1865) was one of the men who supported this community so that it could become the city it is today.

From the Monroe Sentinel, Mr. Bingham was mentioned in an article from June 1, 1861 in which it stated that he was the secretary of the Green County Seminary. It mentioned that the tuition was \$2 per quarter for primary branches and up to \$5 for higher branches. There was no deduction of the fee for absence was unavoidable.

In an advertisement on May 10, 1854 stated that, "John A. Bingham, attorney and counselor at law and County Judge, had opened a general land agency and exchange office in Monroe's building on the east side of the Square. He was prepared to sell drafts on the eastern cities and remit money to any of the United States at current rates. He would also buy or sell coin, exchange and bank notes." (A photo of the building referred to here can be seen on page 23 of the Pictorial History of Monroe.)

Later that year, on Nov. 15, the paper stated that Messrs. Bingham and (Arabut) Ludlow, along with a Mr. Washington Delano of Ohio, were associated in a banking house and filed their intentions. They expected to get into operation the first of January. From the known business character of these gentlemen, it was fair to say that Monroe would have a first-rate banking house. This bank was first known as the Bank of Monroe.

The Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad Company had approached the people in Green County in the mid-1850s to help fund bringing the railroad through Monroe. It was reported on Feb. 7, 1855 that Mr. Bingham and a few other prominent men from the area were appointed to directorships and would attend a meeting on Feb. 15 in Milwaukee. All stockholders who were not able to attend were asked to prepare their proxies and hand them to one of the directors to take to Milwaukee.

At a meeting of the Green County Agricultural Society and Mechanic's Institute (the official title of what has become known as the Green County Fair) was held on Jan. 2, 1855 to elect officers for the ensuing year. Mr. Bingham was elected president and also served on the committee on farms, animals, tillage, crops, mechanical productions, etc.

Mr. Bingham had also invested in land as evidenced by an advertisement from July 16, 1855. Mr. Bingham and (Norman) Churchhill offered 50 acres of land for sale at a public auction at the office of Ludlow & Bingham on Saturday, Aug. 11, unless it had previously been disposed of. The land was located in Monroe, half a mile east of the Square on the Beloit Road (part of 23rd Avenue that is now south of 13th Street). The land could be sold in lots, one, two, and a half, five, or 10 acres to suit the buyers.

Mr. Clinton, of the railroad company, had been in town for several days to collect the percentage due on the cash stock subscription in September 1855. He had only been moderately successful as the farmers had not yet marketed any wheat. The company did not feel at liberty to let the contract until the right of way as far as Bass Creek was secured. At that time Messrs. Ludlow and Bingham felt enough interest in the matter to induce them to advance the necessary amount without interest.

Under the direction of A. C. Bury, state superintendent of common schools, the Green Co. Educational Association was formed at the Court House on May 9, 1856. The purpose of this group was to improve its members in useful knowledge and for the advancement of popular education. Mr. Bingham was elected



By Matt Figi

# Back in the Day

An advertisement on July 6, 1857 stated that, "From and after this date, six per cent interest will be allowed on call deposits if left 60 days at the Bank of Monroe." This would certainly encourage people to invest in their own future. In October 1859, it stated that, "All of the issues of the Bank on the east side of the Square were well secured and worth their face in gold."

When N. Churchill & Co.'s new flouring mill was about to go into operation in late October 1859, the news article stated that nearly all of the money had been advanced by J. A. Bingham, who had given an earnest of his interest in the welfare and growth of the village.

A school picnic was to be held at J. A. Bingham's grove (now part of Twining Park) on Saturday afternoon, June 2, 1860. All of the schools were requested to meet at the seminary at 1 p.m. to form a procession to march around the Square, then proceed to the grove where an entertainment of vocal and instrumental music would be provided.

All of the information for this column was taken from the book, "Becoming A Village: Monroe, Wisconsin in the 1850s," which was published in 2009. It contains a wealth of information about Monroe, its residents, and its businesses at that time. Copies of this book are available from me for \$15 each.

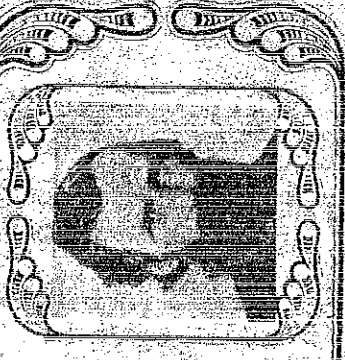
— Matt Figi is a Monroe resident and a local historian. His column will appear periodically on Saturdays in the Times. He can be reached at mfigi48@ids.net or at 608-325-6503.

# Bingham's active life took its toll

SAT. July 2 - 1883

## Profile

The Monroe Evening Times  
 commemorative salute to  
 Monroe's memorable citizens



By PHIL TSCHUDY

TIMES News Team

Life in the 1860s was taken at a much slower pace than it is today. The types and degrees of pressure situations were far less in that time period than those of today's society. John A. Bingham was lucky to have lived in the 19th century.

Bingham was a person who had his nose into everything. He was a lawyer, judge, politician, teacher, surveyor, miller and banker. It would be nearly impossible to perform those duties and raise six children in the 1860s.

Bingham's active life took its toll

on him and eventually sent him to an early grave at the age of only 47. But Bingham definitely contributed to the prosperity and growth of Monroe.

Born in Morristown, Vt., Feb. 27, 1819, he was one of eight children born to John and Lydia (Thompson) Bingham. His parents were of old Puritan stock — industrious, energetic and very religious.

After being reared on the farm, Bingham attended common schools, including Johnson and Montpelier academies in Vermont. He studied law at Stowe and then moved to Wisconsin in 1841.

He settled first in Racine County where he taught school, but after a year, he moved to Monroe where he opened a law office. Bingham served as county district attorney for two years beginning in 1846 and for the next eight years served as probate judge.

Bingham had an avid interest in education. Since he encountered difficulties acquiring his own education, he was always eager to help other students help themselves.

Bingham was a member of the Monroe Board of Education for 25 years and often visited area schools.

In 1854, he opened a broker's office and then, with the backing of Arabut Ludlow and Asa Richardson, he began the Bank of Monroe, which later became the First National Bank.

Bingham was very successful with the bank and served as president for a number of years. Still restless, though, he opened a flour mill which he operated himself until his death in 1865.

He married the former Caroline E.

Churchill, Nov. 25, 1843. They had six children: Helen, Horace, Alice, Ada, Homer and J. Herbert.

Despite his religious upbringing, Bingham did not belong to any church in Monroe, but he and his wife were of the Unitarian faith.

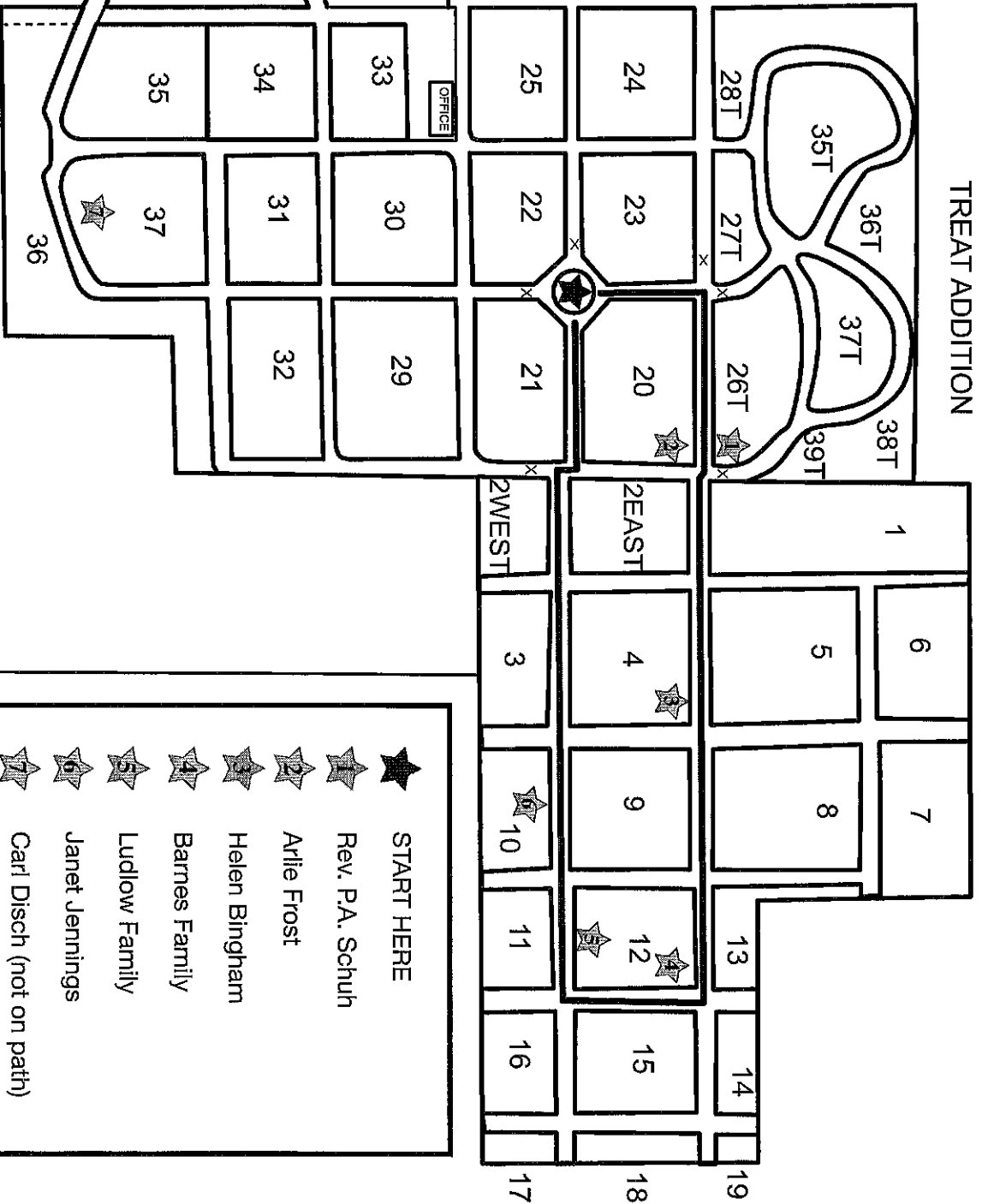
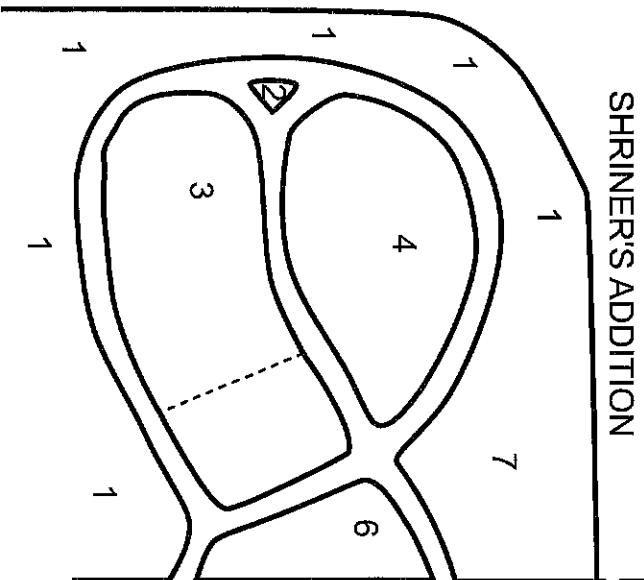
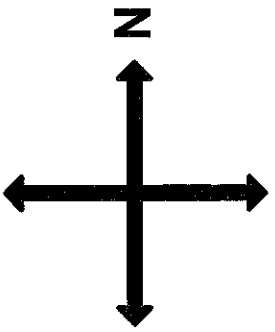
Always interested in politics, Bingham was one of the first Republicans in the state and served as a delegate to the Republican national convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln for a second term as president in 1864.

Bingham was a strong abolitionist and did much to promote the movement into Kansas. His ill health was the only thing that kept him from going into battle during the Civil War.

In 1865, his health became so poor that he was advised to take a vacation. He died while on a trip to his home state of Vermont.

Bingham's historic Greek Revival-style home in the 600 block of 14th Ave. was built by his brother-in-law, Norman Churchill in 1857. The home is now occupied by the Raymond Kabley Jr. family.

# GREENWOOD CEMETERY MONROE, WISCONSIN



- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| ★ | START HERE                    |
| ★ | Rev. P.A. Schuh               |
| ★ | Arlie Frost                   |
| ★ | Helen Bingham                 |
| ★ | Barnes Family                 |
| ★ | Ludlow Family                 |
| ★ | Janet Jennings                |
| ★ | Carl Disch (not on path)      |
| X | no vehicles past these points |

# HISTORY OF GREENWOOD CEMETERY

By:

Lillian DeNure and Debra Bailey Trail  
Nov. 2002

The first village cemetery was platted in 1844 on West Payne St. (now 9<sup>th</sup> Street) in Monroe. This site was originally the Green County Teacher's College and is currently the Monroe Senior Center Building.

The first grounds were donated to Green County and consisted of Lot #12 in Russell's Donation. In late 1859, the Village purchased new, larger grounds and the deceased were removed to that location.

On July 27, 1920 the Greenwood Cemetery Association of Green County was formed. All the property and effects of Greenwood Cemetery as owned by the city of Monroe was turned over to the Association on Dec. 29, 1920, including the \$1200.00 in the city treasurer's office for the cemetery fund.

The first trustees were: N.E. McLaughlin, J.D. Dunwiddie, Miss M. Alice Treat, B.G. Treat, E.H. Gloege, W.F. Trukenbold, Mrs. C.S. Dodge, Louis Kohli, and Charles E. Shriner.

The first officers were: Charles E. Shriner, president; J.D. Dunwiddie, vice-president; B.G. Treat, secretary; and W.F. Trukenbrod, treasurer.

During the fall of 1920 the Treat lot was platted and available for sale on Dec. 29, 1920. And on April 19, 1922 the Association purchased 6 (out of 11  $\frac{2}{3}$  acres) from Charles E. Shriner for \$800 per acre with option to purchase the rest in the future for no more than \$800 per acre. These two new sections were named the Treat and Shriner additions.

The Cemetery's first superintendent was Samuel Bowden in 1878 along with his son-in-law, William Drake, as asst. sexton. In 1884 Mr. Drake became the Chief Sexton and remained as such for almost 50 years. It is estimated he dug at least 5000 graves in his time. (He also did the sexton work for The Calvary and Old Catholic Cemeteries.) Mr. Drake was interred in Greenwood Cemetery when he passed away on Sept. 14, 1936.

The next sexton/superintendent was Earl Summerli who was hired on Sept. 21, 1922. In 1928, Earl's son, Herbert T. Summerli was appointed sexton and held the position until 1978 when the current Superintendent/Secretary-Treasure, Greg Olson was appointed.

#### Bibliography:

1. "The History of Green County, Wisconsin" published by Union Publishing Co.; Springfield, IL., 1884.
2. "Form Cemetery Association", the *Monroe Sentinel*; July 28, 1920.
3. "William Drake, 90 years in City, Dies" the *Monroe Sentinel*; Sept. 14, 1936.
4. Green County Cemetery Association notes found at the cemetery.