

Ann Gatch

By Carol C. Cole (from the archives)

I believe many people think of the Gatch family as living in and being a part of Milford. However, if you're a member of the Terrace Park Historical Society you've already seen my article on the Gatch Family in Terrace Park. Ann Gatch, the historian of the Lewis Gatch family, actually lives in Terrace Park and has done so for many years. In fact she was born here at 312 Rugby Avenue, the house her parents rented from "Momma Ma Lloyd" when they returned from their overseas duties after World War I. They had intended to settle down in Terrace Park where Ann's grandparents lived at 415 Elm Avenue, but instead moved after two years to Milford where there was a family house kept by Ann's great grandfather to help young married couples get started. Thus Ann grew up in Milford but did attend kindergarten in Terrace Park (behind the garage at 609 Miami Avenue) since there was none in the Milford School system. Ann also remembers coming as a child to her grandparents' Terrace Park home to spend the night and play in their spacious side yard. There were other relatives living in Terrace Park as well, even more than I mentioned in my Tracker article.

When Ann was 10 years old the family moved to Arrowhead Farm on Garfield Avenue in Milford where Ann enjoyed both outdoor space and living close enough to a city to take advantage of many city amenities. She went through her sophomore year at Milford High School, before preparing for Smith College at Hillsdale School (now part of Seven Hills School). While still in High School Ann played for services at the United Milford Methodist church which led to her taking organ at Smith and playing in the chapel there. Back in Cincinnati she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in education at UC on top of her Cum Laude double major in English and Music from Smith so was well prepared to be a teacher.

War was declared during her first year teaching at a girl's boarding school 3 miles up a mountain near Littleton, New Hampshire. Wanting to help the war effort Ann joined the Waves but didn't have good enough eyesight to get into officer's training. Thus she went to boot camp at Hunter College where she took many tests, which proved she was a good mathematician, good with her hands and a good teacher. From there she was sent to Link Cadets instrument navigation. It was huge challenge but one she very much enjoyed.

After the war Ann returned to the Milford farm for a while before taking another job in Akron, Ohio, teaching music and English to 7th and 8th grade children of factory workers. Ann deemed this job a disaster since these children were not at all interested in either music or English. In order to get out of this very uncomfortable situation Ann decided to get a Masters degree in Musicology at the University of Michigan on the GI Bill of Rights. She also took lessons during two summer vacations at Aspen Colorado's School of Music.

Having done all that Ann must have been ready to settle down so returned to Cincinnati and took a job at the Cincinnati County Day School on Indian Hill. That was 1950 and Ann was the school's first music teacher so she had the opportunity to develop their music program. There she taught piano and singing for 35 years while also using her two grand pianos, organ and harpsichord to teach others before and after school. She was the organist for the Milford Methodist Church for 50 years and was also a member of

several Cincinnati music groups including the Music Lover's Club and the Keyboard Club, which she joined as a charter member in 1937. Accompanying has been a major part of Ann's musical career – playing with trios, singers, choruses or any group that needed her

During the years Ann has taken advantage of her free summers as a teacher. She's enjoyed trips to Alaska, Galapagos Islands, Brazil, England, France, Italy, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Africa among others, often traveling with the Smith travel group or with relatives and friends. Living near her many relatives has given her much pleasure. Many of those remaining and the new generations still have reunions in the summer at their family compound in Michigan, Camp Greeno. She's always loved to play bridge and for many years belonged to a bridge marathon group at the Milford Methodist Church. Yet another activity has been working as librarian at the Pattison Library in downtown Milford, just over the bridge on Water Street. One time much earlier, when the librarian didn't notice she was still there reading in the stacks, she got locked in and had to climb out a window!

Ann has lived in Terrace Park since 1967 at 602 Miami Avenue and now at 635 Valley View where we hope she will remain for many more years. It's a fascinating family and you can read more about them in the book "The Lewis Gatch Family of Ohio" by Bret Harper, as related in part by Ann Gatch. She is a direct descendant of Nicholas Gatch, a younger brother of Philip about whom you'll hear at the February 25th meeting of the Terrace Park Historical Society.

