



Lighthouse of Iowa

Keeping in touch with Iowa's Churches of Christ

June 2020

The Street That Got Misaid

"Then Jesus said, What is the kingdom of God like? or whereto shall I compare it?"
Luke 13:18 & Mark 4:30

The short story. I love them. So often the authors have some vision or semblance to a utopia, a paradise, a place of peace that is so attractive it draws us in to a point of willingly believing it to be true. This is such a story.

The Street That Got Misaid

by Patrick Waddington (1912-1973)

The main character, Marc Girondin had worked as the filing clerk in the city hall's engineering department for so long that the city was laid out in his mind like a map.

The story reads,

In all Montreal no one possessed such knowledge; a dozen policemen and taxi drivers together could not rival him. That is not to say that he actually knew the streets whose names he could recite like a series of incantations, for he did little walking. He knew simply of their existence, where they were, and in what relation they stood to others.

But it was enough to make him a specialist. He was the undisputed expert of the filing cabinets where all the particulars of all the streets from Abbott to Zotique were indexed, back, forward and across."

Marc was a 40 year old whose mundane work life was better than his home life. His apartment had neighbors that were noisy and sometimes violent, and his landlady consistently so.

One August afternoon at his job, something happened that filled him with amazement, shocked him beyond measure, and made the world of the filing cabinets tremble to their steel bases.

Opening a drawer to its fullest extent, he felt something catch. Exploring farther, he discovered a card stuck at the back between the top and bottom. He drew it out and found it to be an old index card, dirty and torn, but still perfectly decipherable. It was labeled RUE DE LA BOUTEILLE VERTE, or GREEN BOTTLE STREET.

Marc stared at it in wonder. He had never heard of the place or of anything resembling so odd a name. Undoubtedly it had been retitled in some other fashion befitting the modern tendency. He

checked the listed details and ruffled confidently through the master file of street names. It was not there. He made another search, careful and protracted, through the cabinets. There was nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Once more he examined the card. There was no mistake. The date of the last regular street inspection was exactly fifteen years, five months and fourteen days ago.

As the awful truth burst upon him, Marc dropped the card in horror, then pounced on it again fearfully, glancing over his shoulder as he did so.

It was a lost, a forgotten street. For fifteen years and more it had existed in the heart of Montreal, not half a mile from city hall, and no one had known. It had simply dropped out of sight, a stone in water.

In his heart, Marc had sometimes dreamed of such a possibility. But of course it could not happen, not with the omniscient file at hand. Only it had. And it was dynamite. It would blow the office sky-high.

He put the card in his pocket and went home to reflect. The next day he made up his mind. Pleading illness, he took the afternoon off and with beating heart went looking for the street.

Although he knew the location perfectly, he passed it twice and had to retrace his steps. Baffled, he closed his eyes, consulted his mind's infallible map and walked directly to the entry.

It was so narrow that he could touch the adjoining walls with his outstretched hands.

A few feet from the sidewalk was a tall and solid wooden structure, much weather-beaten, with a simple latched door in the center. This he opened and stepped inside. Green Bottle Street lay before him.

It was perfectly real, and reassuring as well. On either side of a cobbled pavement were three small houses, six in all, each with a diminutive garden in front, spaced off by low iron palings of a kind that has disappeared except in the old-

est quarters. The houses looked extremely neat and well kept and the cobbles appeared to have been recently watered and swept. Windowless brick walls of ancient warehouses encircled the six homes and joined at the farther end of the street.

With the sun shining on the stones and garden plots, and the blue sky overhead, the street gave him a momentary sense of well-being and peace. It was completely charming, a scene from a print of fifty years ago."

A woman who Marc guessed was some sixty years of age was watering roses in the garden of the first house to his right. She gazed at him motionless, and the water flowed from her can unheeded to the ground. He took off his hat and announced, "I'm from the city engineering department, madam."

The woman recovered herself and set her watering can down.

"So you have found out at last," she said.

At these words, Marc's reborn belief that after all he had made a harmless and ridiculous error fled precipitately. There was no mistake.

"Tell me, please," he said tonelessly.

It was a curious story. For several years, she said, the tenants of Green Bottle Street had lived in amity with each other and the landlord, who also resided in one of the little houses. The owner became so attached to them that in a gesture of goodwill he deeded them his property, together with a small sum of money, when he died.

"We paid our taxes," the woman said, "and made out a multitude of forms and answered the questions of various officials at regular intervals about our property. Then, after a while, we were sent no notices, so we paid no more taxes. No one bothered us at all. It was a long time before we understood that in some way they'd forgotten about us."

"Marc nodded. Of course, if Green Bottle Street had dropped from the ken of city hall, no inspectors would go there, no census takers, no tax collectors. All would pass merrily by, directed elsewhere by the infallible filing cabinet.

"Then Michael Flanagan, who lives at number four," she went on, "a most interesting man, you must meet him--Mr. Flanagan called us together and said that if miracles happened, we should aid and abet them. It was he who had the door built and put up at the entrance to keep out passersby or officials who might come along. We used to keep it locked, but it's been so long since anyone came that we don't bother now.

"Oh, there were many little things we had to do, like getting our mail at the post office and never having anything delivered at the door. Now

almost the only visits we make to the outside world are to buy our food and clothes."

"And there has never been any change here all that time?" Marc asked.

"Yes, two of our friends died, and their rooms were empty for a while. Then Jean Desselin--he's in number six and sometimes goes into the city--returned with a Mr. Plonsky, a refugee. Mr. Plonsky was very tired and worn out with his travelings and gladly moved in with us.

"My name is Sara Trusdale, and I have lived here for more than twenty years. I hope to end my days here as well."

All of them, it seemed, had had their troubles, their losses and failures, before they found themselves in this place of refuge, this Green Bottle Street. To Marc, conscious of his own unsatisfactory existence, it sounded enchanting.

Marc could not recall when he had been spoken to with such simple, if indirect, goodwill. His heart warmed to this old lady. Obscurely he felt on the verge of a great moral discovery. He took the card out of his pocket.

"I found this yesterday in the filing cabinet," he said. "No one else knows about it yet. If it should come out, there would be a great scandal, and no end of trouble for all of you as well. Newspaper reporters, tax collectors . . ."

He thought again of his landlady, his belligerent neighbors, his room that defied improvement. "I wonder," he said slowly, "I am a good tenant, and I wonder . . ."

"Oh yes," she leaned forward eagerly, "you could have the top floor of my house. I have more space than I know what to do with. I'm sure it would suit you. You must come and see it right away."

The mind of Marc Girondin, filing clerk, was made up. With a gesture of renunciation he tore the card across and dropped the pieces in the watering can. As far as he was concerned, Green Bottle Street would remain mislaid forever.



A lonely and wandering soul with no destination, finding a place of peace to call home. A pleasant and charming place with a warm welcome. Entering in through a narrow gate leaving the outside world behind him. Joining his welcoming neighbors that are more than happy to share the benefits of being separate and apart from the outside world. Sound familiar? It should. A couple differences however—the story of our blessing is non-fiction—and we don't want to keep it a secret.

<https://www.classicshorts.com/stories/mislaid.html>

Chariton

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. (no evening services)

NO MEETINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Location: 811 S. 4th St., Chariton, IA

For information call: Albert Schreck (641) 535-2381 or Brian Schreck (641) 203-2137

- Quiet month at Chariton

June Birthdays

★ None

June Anniversaries

★ None

Dean Avenue

Meeting times: Sundays: 9:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. • Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 2907 Dean Ave., Des Moines, Iowa / P.O. Box 57398, Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

For information call: John McNeece (515) 263-9428

- We will be resuming our Sunday morning service on June 7th.
- Yvonne Coe was sick with Covid-19. She spent a few days in the hospital, but has recuperated and is home now..



June Birthdays

- ★ 18 John Chapman
- ★ 23 Janice Sellers
- ★ 29 Don James
- ★ 29 Frank Meek

June Anniversaries

- ★ 05 Matt & Mary Dobberke
- ★ 29 Ron & Karma Sharp

Fairview

Meeting times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.

Location: 1001 S. 22nd St, Clarinda, Iowa 51632

For information call: Richard Negley (712)542-3728 or Marvin Negley (712)542-2792

We started back meeting at the church May 10th—
Practicing social guidelines.”



June Birthdays

- ★ 22 - Janet Negley
- ★ 27 - Neil McCoy

June Anniversary

★ None this month

Martensdale

Meeting Times: Sundays: 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. * Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.
Location: 10985 44th Lane, Prole, Iowa (1.5 miles east of Martensdale, IA on Hwy. 92)
Website: Martensdalechurchofchrist.org
For information call: Duane Proudfit (515) 961-4470 or Mike Penick (515) 681-0279

- We resumed services on May 3 with a shortened Sunday service and some minor changes. We will resume our normal Sunday morning service on June 7. Still no Sunday night and Wednesday night services.
- Tanner and Tiffany George announced they are expecting a baby in October! Congratulations to them!
- Fred Bown will celebrate his 80th birthday on June 12. If you would like to send a card to help Fred celebrate his address is:
10958 44th Lane, Prole IA, 50229.

- Mike and Shawna Divis have moved to an acreage in Jefferson.

June Birthdays

- ★ Tracy Penick - June 4
- ★ Phyllis Bown - June 10
- ★ Fred Bown - June 12
- ★ Alvin Bown - June 21

June Anniversaries

- ★ Zach & Jenna Wheeler - June 13
- ★ Mike & Shawna Divis - June 29

Pleasant Hill

Meeting Times: ~~Sundays: 9:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. * Wednesdays: 7:00 p.m.~~
Location: 5091 E. University, Pleasant Hill, Iowa
Website: pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org
Contacts: Mike Warner 515-967-4529 / Marty Williamson 515-556-2394 / Marc Hermon 515- 554-3567

- Quite month at PH.



June Birthdays

- ★ None

June Anniversaries

- ★ None

Vandalia

Meeting Times: ~~Sundays: 9:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m. * Wednesdays: 7:30 p.m.~~
Location: 2.5 miles east of Runnells, Iowa on F70, then 1 mile north on 131st St.
For information call: Greg Ingle (515) 994-2824 or Charles Ingle (515) 966-2537

- Quite month at Vandalia.

June Birthdays

- ★ None

June Anniversaries

- ★ None

11. Home, Sweet Home

John Howard Payne, an American who spent most of his life as a wanderer over Europe, with no settled home, became famous as the author of this best known and loveliest home-song the world has ever sung. He was at various times, an actor, translator of plays, and finally U.S. Consul at Tunis, where he died in 1852. The music was probably composed by Henry R. Bishop, although he himself designated it as a "Sicilian air."

John Howard Payne

Henry R. Bishop

1. Mid-pleas-ures and pal-a-ces though we may roam, Be it ev-er so
2. An-ex-ile from home, splen-dor daz-zles in vain; Oh, give me my

6 hum-ble, there's no place like home! A charm from the skies seems to
low-ly thatched cot-tage a-gain! The birds sing-gai-ly that

11 hal-low us there, Which, seek thro' the world, is ne'er met with else-
come at my call; Give me them with the peace of mind, dear-er than

16 CHORUS.
where all. Home! home!—sweet, sweet home! There's

21 no place like home, there's no place like home.

Copies of the *Lighthouse of Iowa* can be found at the following two Church websites:

Vandalia Church of Christ: <https://vandaliacoc.com/lighthouse-of-iowa.html>

Pleasant Hill Church of Christ: <http://www.pleasanthillchurchofchrist.org/library.php>

(select *Iowa Lighthouse* under the Library tab)