

**Winter White Out's
Competition for St. Clair's
2016 Bootlegger Balladeer
And Poet Laureate**

Contest Rules & Regulations

www.StClairOnTheRiver.com

The competition is open to all amateur and professional song writers or poets. The competition is to determine who can write the best song or poem for the "2016 Legend".

*The 2016 Legend
An Escape from Slow Death*

John Sawher was born in 1848 in Pennsylvania. His parents died when he was ten and when he was twelve he made his way to St. Clair and got a job at John Nichol's Woolen Mill.

At 15, he "advanced" his age to enlist in the Second Michigan Infantry, Company F of the Union Army. By the summer of 1864, a little more than a year after enlisting, John was considered a veteran. He fought in the battles of Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor and Fort Steadman. He had been wounded twice, but returned to his unit each time.

That summer his unit was involved in the siege at Fort Petersburg. John's task was to carry gun powder in the mine the union army dug under the Fort. Prior to the final attack on the Fort, John's unit was assigned the task of destroying the railroad line at Ream's Station.

While the Union Army was successful in destroying several miles of railroad track around Ream's Station, it did not complete the job of destroying all the tracks. The Confederate Army attacked John's unit and they were overrun. John and two other comrades (*Sergeant Craine and Private Lee*) were taken prisoner.

While he was held in a temporary prison camp at Fort Petersburg, he was questioned by General Lee. General Lee asked them many questions about the size and position of the Northern forces. Being enlisted men, they did not know the answers the General's questions. John said General Lee was "dressed neatly in his uniform of gray and impressed us very much by his kind and friendly manner."

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John and his comrades were transferred to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. This is John's story:

On the way to Libby Prison, I obtained permission from the guard to buy food at a small street stand. I had not eaten in three days. I purchased four apples and a loaf of bread and handed the proprietor a \$10 bill. He took it with a remark, "Just Right!" That was all the money I had!

We were confined in a block cell on the second floor of the prison for nearly a month, with very little food. My closest call to death was when I looked through the bars one day; a guard fired up at the window narrowly missing me.

The reason he shot was our own fault; we had been in the habit of throwing objects at the guards when they called out the hours for the changing of the guards.

Our escape from that slow death in prison was a miracle. By arrangement, a large number of Federal sailors who had been in prison eighteen months, ill, clothes in tatters and almost too weak to stand, were to be exchanged for Confederate prisoners.

Sergeant Craine, Private Lee and I slipped into line and marched to another room with the sailors where they were to be identified. We lined up with the rest in a dim room; the sailors were so weak that they dropped to the floor while waiting in line. I edged up to the officer in charge and after listening, I realized I could not answer the necessary questions.

I crept over to the other side of the room, where the sailors who had passed their quiz were lying down and curled up like them. Soon Sergeant Craine and Private Lee followed, but I moved away from them – I was afraid they would discover us if we were together.

By the dim light of an early dawn we were lined up and counted before leaving the room. They counted us again after we left the building; and again before we boarded the boat on the James River. Each time my heart trembled, but apparently they did not discover the extra numbers.

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On board the boat we were still prisoners and I hid behind a wooden structure for nearly two days and my comrades found similar hiding places. When we were finally released at Butler's Landing in Maryland in September 1864, we were fed and given three months' pay and two months' furlough.

Epilogue:

When John's furlough ended, he returned to his unit and was discharged soon after General Lee's surrender in the spring of 1865. He returned to St. Clair and got his old job back at John Nichol's Woolen Mill.

John married Esther Carleton in St. Clair and they had six sons. He was St. Clair's first water works engineer when the plant was built in 1894. Later, as city marshal, he closed the city's saloons on Sundays, which proved to be his undoing – *he was not reappointed.*

John became a builder and built several houses in the community. He died in 1932 in his home at 615 Clinton Avenue, at 84 years old.

The challenge is who can write the best ballad or poem telling the story of John's escape from Libby Prison. Many facts are missing and the writer is given creative license to share the facts he or she uncovers from their independent research of the incident.

1. Songs will be judged based on melody, composition, originality and lyrics (*must be based on the "2016 Legend"*). Poems will stand on their own. The decision of the judges is final.
2. Poets are competing for the title, ***St. Clair's 2016 Poet Laureate***. Song writers are competing for the title, ***St. Clair's 2016 Bootlegger Balladeer***. Winner will receive a proclamation from the mayor at the St. Clair City Council's February 15, 2016 meeting.
3. *In addition to winning the title of Poet Laureate or Bootlegger Balladeer, the St. Clair Rotary Club will award cash prizes in each category: \$250 for 1st place, \$150 for 2nd place and \$100 for 3rd place.*
4. Each entry shall be wholly original and shall not infringe on any copyrights or any other rights of any third parties. Each entrant shall, by entering, indemnify and hold the City of St. Clair, St. Clair DDA, the St. Clair Rotary Club and the St. Clair Events Company harmless from and against any claims inconsistent with the foregoing.

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5. The entrant grants the City of St. Clair, St. Clair DDA, the St. Clair Rotary Club and the St. Clair Events Company an unlimited license to use the song or poem submitted.
6. We are requesting that an "Entry Form" be completed by noon, Friday, January 22, 2016 with a copy of entrant's song or poem. Entry forms may be dropped off at LaCroix's Riverside Pub (314 Clinton Ave.), St. Clair City Building (547 N. Carney Dr.) or e-mailed to info@StClairOnTheRiver.com (preferred method of receiving entry.)
7. Entry forms, poems and songs will be accepted on the day of the event.

Entering contest Entrant agrees to perform at these times and locations at no-charge to the City of St. Clair, St. Clair DDA and St. Clair Events Company.

Date	Time	Location	Other
Wednesday, Jan 27	7:00 pm	LaCroix's Riverside Pub	Competition
Monday, Feb 15 (1)	7:00 pm	St. Clair City Building, Council Chambers	City Council meeting

Note 1 – The winner of the songwriting and poetry contests will receive their proclamation from the Mayor at the Council meeting after performing their winning poem or song.

Winter White Out
St. Clair's 2016 Bootlegger Balladeer and Poet Laureate
Songwriting and Poetry Contest for the "Legend"

(A copy of entrant's song/poem needs to be attached.)

Entry Form	
The Song/Poem	
Song/Poem Title: _____	_____
Length: _____	Genre: _____
The Entrant:	
Name: _____	Phone: _____
Address: _____	_____
City, State, Zip _____	_____
E-mail Address: _____	_____
Lyricist(s): _____	_____
Composer(s): _____	_____

The entrant acknowledges that the song/poem is an original work and does not infringe on any copyrights or other rights of any third parties. The entrant shall indemnify and hold the City of St. Clair, St. Clair DDA and the St. Clair Events Company harmless from and against any claims inconsistent with the foregoing.

The entrant grants the City of St. Clair, St. Clair DDA and the St. Clair Events LLC an unlimited license to use the song/poem submitted.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian if entrant is under 18