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OUR YEAR OF ART.....

The name Hebenstreit brings to mind a family of fine artists and we are proud to have two of them at our May program. Our speakers for the May program will be portraiturist Carin Hebenstreit and her son, nationally recognized sculptor, John Hebenstreit.

Have you noticed the sculpture of Dan Beard in front of the Dan Beard Council Boy Scout Achievement Center on Reading Road in Evendale (see below)? It's similar in nature to our Doughboy. John did that and the RockWalk in Los Angeles and last year worked with a team to do the Black Brigade Monument at Smale Riverfront Park. Carin's true-to-life portraits are stunning (see Paavo Jarvi below). Join us to learn more about what goes into the making of a great piece of art. Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 19. We will meet in the Great Room of the Presbyterian Church at 7 PM.



John & Carin Hebenstreit



The program is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be available.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER...Joyce Mueller

You are going to be seeing a lot of your Historical Society in the coming months.

We will be joining with the Wyoming Recreation Center to prepare a 'float' for the annual July 4th parade. We have had a number of 'floats' over the years and are pleased to be able to join with the youth of Wyoming for this year's event.

We will also be at our usual location for Fall Festival, October 1st. We will have displays and give aways and perhaps something to sell. You will just have to stop by to find out. We hope that we will see you at both events. Have a good summer.



Joyce Mueller

Remembering Home...

Our thanks to former resident Bruce Sterritt. Bruce was raised at 7 Ritchie by parents Lester and Justine. The family moved out of town before Bruce graduated. He would have been the class of 1966. Bruce, now living in Illinois, has researched the history of the home he remembers in Wyoming and gave copies to the current owner and to the Historical Society.



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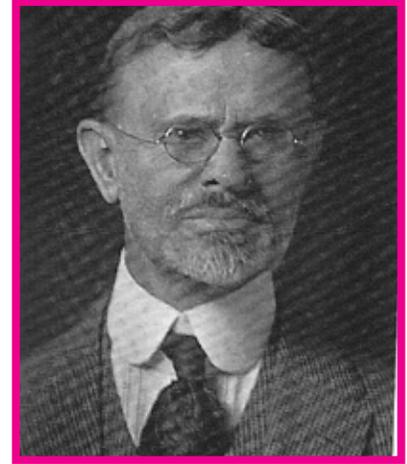
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**Jonathan Edwards Ritchie
20 April 1896 to 18 April 1898**

Our eighth mayor, Edwards Ritchie, was the brother of Melville Ritchie and of the Reverend Ellsworth Ritchie, who was ordained in the Presbyterian Church of Wyoming in 1889 and served as a missionary in China. Edwards was an active member of the community and served it in many ways besides being its mayor.



He was responsible for acquiring the initial sets of scenery for the Amusement Hall stage. The first presentation by the Wyoming Drama Club in the Amusement Hall was held, according to the 1949 Mill Creek Valley News article, on November 6, 1884. Ritchie's notes indicate that "the first play presented was "Hazel Kirk", a favorite melodrama of the period." Thus began a long and rewarding relationship between what was "The Wyoming Players" and the community thru the facilities offered by three different Civic Centers, all located on the same site over a period of 90 years.

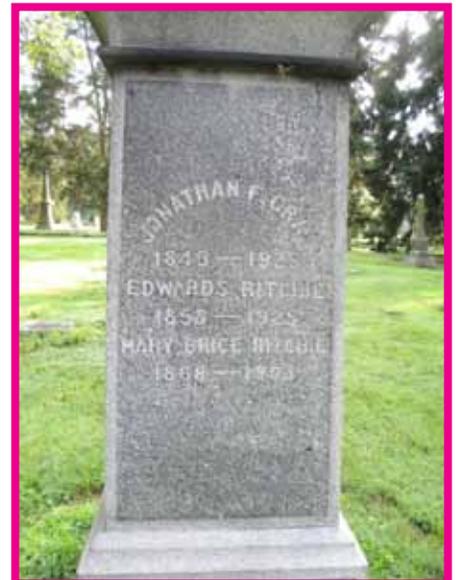


Ritchie Residence - 266 Elm Avenue

According to Melville Ritchie's account, it was his brother Edwards who "lobbied through the state legislature a law providing that a village might lay concrete sidewalks and add the cost to the tax duplicate of the property." That option was not available during the years when the initial 61,000 lineal feet of cement sidewalks were laid. It's indicated that prior to the cement sidewalks, most of the

sidewalks that were in existence, were of gravel and were of little assistance when the rains came. Before he became mayor, Edwards served as the City Solicitor.

Edwards, born in Greenfield, OH in 1858. He graduated from the Chickering Institute in 1876 and from the Cincinnati Law School in 1880. A lawyer, he and his wife, Mary Brice, and their three children lived at 266 Elm Avenue. He died in 1925 and is buried in Spring Grove Cemetery.



Headstone at Spring Grove.

Your historical society is actively searching for additional information on Wyoming's past mayors. If you have any ideas, know any relatives, have any thoughts on how we can learn more on a particular person, please let us know.

MEMOIRS OF J.D. RIDDLE

Summers spend with my grandmother were the happiest years of my young life. She lived between the canal and the village fire house in Lockland. In back of her barn was the best swimming hole in the Mill Creek, where poor folks did their baptizing. We had a rope swing there and used it to swoop down over the creek, give out a big holler and drop into the cold water. It was a lot of fun! I'll be 10 come with June, 1897. My birthday wish is to rain proof cover over our island club house – thanks to some Philip Carey roofing rejects.

One late-summer morning grandmother sent me to Pete Merkle's Butcher shop for some pork chops. When I reached the corner of Mill and Dunn I saw a bunch of Indians. Attached to their horses were long poles that dragged the ground. Blankets stretched across the poles held a lot of bundles. They were heading south on Mill Street. Someone said they were circus Indians and had camped for a few days on Mr. Shepherd's field to rest their horses. I bought the chops and hurried back to grandmother's house as fast as I could.

With the help of two other boys we fixed up an old leaky row boat, painted it white and named it Skylark. When fall came we put it in the canal. One of us got in to steer, while the other two pulled it north toward Glendale. By late that afternoon, we had Skylark full of hickory nuts, paw paws and walnuts. Then all three of us climbed in and drifted slowly down stream singing and laughing. We sold our plunder and used the money for fireworks and the Carthage Fair.

We kids never paid to get into the fair. The gateman would let us in free. He knew none of us had a lot of money. He must have been a nice kid himself. We went every day and spent about a quarter each time for hokey pokey ice cream, hotdogs, lemonade and candy. When we left for home and it was a hot day, we would stop off at the canal aqueduct in Carthage and swim a while. Then followed the tow path north to grandmother's house.

Near the bank and post office on Williams Street was the library. Miss Patterson was a good person and ran things there. When we went in we took off our hats. There was no giggling or talking. We just about tip-toed to our seats. We respected her for keeping us boys in line.

My grandmother was a wise and good woman. She allowed me time to explore – within the bounds of reason. When I was out of sight she knew where to find me.



Source: *I Remember Lockland As A boy* (c:1950)
By John Duke Riddle (1887-?)
Edited by Glenn Lewis

VALLEY GARAGE FOLLOW UP....

In the last issue of this newsletter there was a picture of the Valley Garage and the question was asked... Where it is? Thanks to the detective work of City Employee Debby Martin we have our answer. It is the Friends of the Library Building at 8456 Vine Street in Hartwell. But it does have a new front – probably in the 1930's when it became Kleespies Oldsmobile. But there is much more to the story.

It was built about 1912 by who or for what purpose we don't know. But in 1914, Frederick Gilbert Smith had the Valley Garage and went bankrupt. He had been William Cooper Procter's chauffeur and it was Procter's money that backed Smith in the garage venture. The venture failed and Procter ended up owning the garage. It remained a garage fixing cars, selling tires, selling Boyce-ite gasoline, and selling IVO Glycerine Radiator Anti-freeze Solution. In about 1922, it also became a Ford & Lincoln dealership! That's when we start seeing the name Keith S. Kleespies Sr. running the business although some sources say that Kleespies worked at that spot since 1912. In the 30's, it became Kleespies Oldsmobile and in 1962 Foster Oldsmobile.

In 1972, the building became Peerless Furniture and remained that until about 1982. And as best we could tell, it sat empty for a while until the Friends of the Library took over the space. Keith Kleespies Sr. lived at 751 Springfield Pike, his son, Keith Jr. lived at 20 Allen. His grandson, Keith III, is an artist and resident of Louisville. Keith S. Kleespies Jr. was a 1938 graduate of Wyoming High School. Keith III graduated in 1963.



WHERE WE FOUND RENSSELAER PARK....

Thanks to a number of people, who all quickly responded to our quest to locate Rensselaer Park, we now know where to find it. Rensselaer Park was an area in Hartwell generally bound by Vine Street, Caldwell Drive, and Shadybrook Drive (the street behind Kroger). It goes west until it hits the Metropolitan Sewer District Facilities. It was a small area within Hartwell. Here are several items from the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. The Cormany Family evidently was the center of social activity.

September 30, 1883 – “Mrs. Lewis Sweyer, a handsome young married lady, a leader of fashions in the Scioto Valley, and a resident of the pretty little city of Circleville, is the guest of Major and Mrs. George W. Cormany, of Rensselaer Park, Hartwell.”

February 22, 1885 – “Hartwell, February 19, 1885. Dear Brothers: The sleighing Club will ‘ride’ Friday evening next, starting at eight o’clock from the residence of Brother George W. Cormany, Rensselaer Park. You are ordered to join the party. Yours, in Q., L. and T. Phil Krug, President.”

February 15, 1891 – “The Sticiar Club will give a grand reception at the residence of Major Geo. W. Cormany, Rensselaer Park, on March 13. Miss Mary C. Darroch, of Cleveland, is the guest of Major and Mrs. George W. Cormany, of Rensselaer Park. Mrs. George W. Cormany will leave next Tuesday for Washington D. C. on a visit to Mrs. Elizabeth R. Cox, formerly of Hartwell. She will remain until after the adjournment of Congress, when she will be accompanied by her son, Charles Custus, who is at present a page in the House of Representatives.”

**The Wyoming Historical Society
800 Oak Street
Wyoming OH 45215**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS
FOR MAY 19TH.....**

GASOLINE ON THE PIKE.....

There was a time, some 60 years ago, when there were at least 8 gasoline service stations in Wyoming!

It's quite easy to count how many we have now!! Here is a picture taken sometime in the 1950's that shows 2 of the gas stations in the area of the Pike and Charlotte. Gulf on the left and Marathon on the right. You can pick out the side of Westendorf's Grocery in the background. For those who don't remember, it sat about where LaRosa's is now!! Look for the light colored building behind on the right side.

