

A Publication
of the
Wyoming
Historical
Society

January 2021
Vol. 41 No. 1

THE HISTORICAL RECORD

Member of:
Ohio Association of Historical
Societies and Museums,
American Association for State
and Local History,
Ohio History Connection

OFFICERS:

Jim Walton, President
Carol Beeson, Vice-President
Jeff Blunt, Treasurer
Open, Secretary

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Sheri Callaghan
Mickey Jewett
David LeBuhn
David Lentz
Mike O'Neill
Brian Pitman
Carolyn Rand
Sue Saylor
Sue Wilson

Sherry Sheffield
Newsletter Editor &
Office Manager

Wyoming Historical Society
800 Oak Avenue
Wyoming OH 45215
513.842.1383

History@Wyomingohio.gov

Open Tuesday 10:30-3:00
or by appointment.

Your
Wyoming Historical Society
is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit
corporation.

MEET.....CLARA BARNEY FISK



Clara Barney in her driveway. Look carefully at the building behind her. That is the Stearns Mansion being built.

It was a beautiful home with exquisite woodwork throughout and plenty of book shelves. Those shelves were filled with first editions. Mayor Barney and his brother, Howard, who lived in the Victorian next door, both worked for Robert Clarke Publishing in downtown Cincinnati. Howard's house, later known as the Applegate House, is now the site of two newer houses.

(continued on page 4)

There are stories and more stories about Mrs. Fisk. She was nice. She was a witch. She had cats. She had a bear. All the things you would expect about an older lady who lived back off the road in a big Victorian house and didn't socialize much.

In reality, Clara Louise Barney Fisk was the oldest daughter of Mayor and Mrs. Roderick Barney. She was born here in Wyoming in 1878 at 661 Glenway, the house she lived in her entire life.



Clara and one of her cats lounging on the manicured lawn. This is now Stearns Woods.

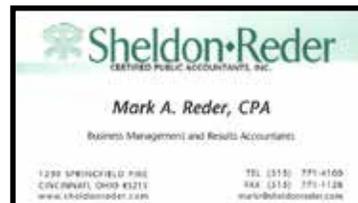
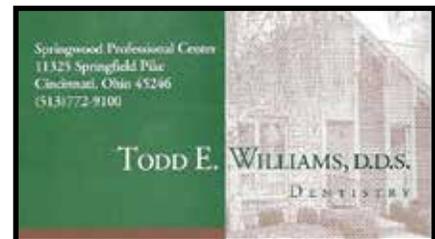
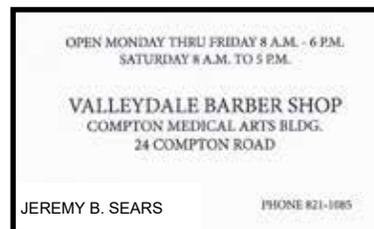
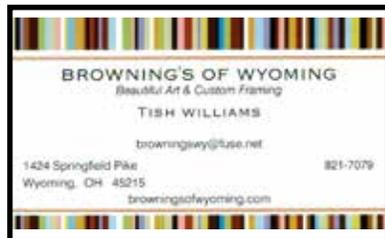


Wyoming History Museum
A Unique and rewarding
place to visit.

PROUD BUSINESS MEMBERS



Fresh flowers, imaginative arrangements, prompt delivery, and you are shopping local! All this can be found in Wyoming's family-owned florist shop. Mary Benken and staff provide you with the perfect floral pieces for any occasion. Consider them when you are trying to brighten up your life or someone else's!



JOINING THE BOARD IS: Sheri Callaghan

Sheri Callaghan grew up on the west side of Cincinnati and has lived in Wyoming for 25 years, moving here for the schools. Sheri and her husband Bryant, have two grown children, one living in Montana the other in Colorado. They love traveling to both places, enjoying the outdoors by skiing, hiking and visiting our National Parks.

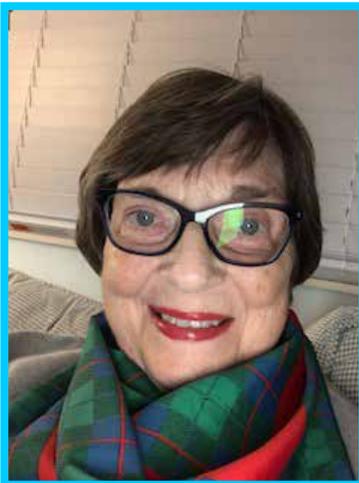


Sheri Callaghan

Sheri recently retired from a business career after spending the last ten years as a data specialist at Prokids, while also volunteering as a Prokids Court Appointed Special Advocate. Sheri has been active in many Wyoming school PSA roles, Wyoming Youth Services Board member, and a Girl Scout Troop Leader. She is currently involved in the mission committee at her church, and on the Wyoming Urban Forestry and Beautification Commission. She receives the most satisfaction volunteering and helping others.

Sheri looks forward to learning more about our wonderful community and the history of Wyoming.

JOINING THE BOARD IS: Mickey Jewett



Mickey Jewett

Mickey (Marlene) Jewett. Mickey came to Wyoming in 1960, raised two sons (WHS '86 and '88), spent many years volunteering and working at Wyoming Presbyterian Church, was in Junior Woman's Club, and served Wyoming on the first Urban Forestry Board.

She relocated to Oxford in 1992, served on the Environmental Commission there, was active in the Institute for Learning in Retirement, the Miami University Women, and an Antiques group. Now back in Wyoming to be nearer to son Dan Johnson and family (daughter-in-law Jessica, grandchildren Ava (WHS '23), Andy (WMS) and Abby (Hilltop).

Mickey is a member of Wyoming Woman's Club and a graduate of the Wyoming Citizen's Police Academy, enjoys bowling, golf, all things antique and historical, and is pleased to be joining the Board of the Wyoming Historical Society!

THE REAL PATSY GAINES....

We know her as Patsy but she goes by so many other names...Betsy Ross, Caroline Scott Harrison, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and many more. She has presented program for us over the years, always bring interesting tales of woman in history.

In October, Patsy was awarded the Women in American History Award from the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Patsy is the past president of the Wyoming Historical Society and is a member of several lineage societies.

We congratulate her on this special honor and look forward to having her present a program in the future.



The Historical Record

(Meet Clara Barney Fisk continued from page 1)

Mayor Barney and his brother were from New York. Their father's job in education brought them to Ohio where Mayor Barney was in the first ever graduating class of Hughes High School. The brothers married the Yates Sisters, heiresses from back home in New York. According to newspaper articles, Mayor & Mrs. Barney gave wonderful parties in their beautiful home.

Clara graduated from Wyoming High School in 1897. Her three cousins, Howard's kids, didn't and neither did her younger sister Ethel. She led a quiet life living at home with her parents and sister. Her mother died in 1898, her father in 1912, and her sister in 1925.

Clara met and married James Garfield Fisk in 1923. He was of the Fisk Monument Family on Spring Grove Avenue. I could find nothing saying he worked in the family business but upon marrying Clara he moved to her home and resided there until his death in 1957. Mr. Fisk reminded you of W. C. Fields, short and stout with a larger nose. He was known to be a drinker and would walk to Hartwell or Lockland bars each day. Many locals would pick him up and drop him off at the end of his driveway so he got home safely. He was also a yodeler. Kids would ask him to yodel and he would oblige them.

Over all these years, Clara owned cats. Not one but many. In an article on the 100th anniversary of the Lewis Animal Hospital, it was mentioned that the doctor would pay visits each year to Mrs. Fisk to check on her cats. At some point, they also had a dancing bear chained to a tree in their yard. We don't know where it came from or where it went but several people have verified that story. Cilley Creek runs through the property and when Clara and her sister were small, their father blocked off a part of the creek making them a swimming hole! This remained until last year when Cilley Creek was cleaned up and the barriers removed.

Mayor Barney loved trees. During his years as Mayor, he started the tree planting program. He also planted a number of non-indigenous trees in his yard and they have continued to thrive. Growing up this made Mrs. Fisk's yard the best place in town to get leaves for the freshman leaf project...and a lot closer than Spring Grove Cemetery! That is why, for more than fifty years, so many high school freshman met Mrs. Fisk. You had to knock on the door and ask the owners if you could take one leaf. Arborists looking at Stearns Woods today are amazed at the non-indigenous trees happily growing there.

Several people have written Mrs. Fisk stories for school projects. Items mentioned include Civil War cannonballs and vintage clothing all which succumbed to neglect. The house could be included in that, cat excrement permeated the beautiful wood floors and bugs took over the 1st editions.

The remains of the house are easily seen when you walk up the driveway, yet the remains of the carriage house and the henhouse with its concrete foundation are also there.

After Mr. Fisk's death, Evans Foster Stearns, then owner of the Stearns Mansion, offered to buy Mrs. Fisk's property that surrounded him on two sides. He allowed her to live there the remainder of her life. She passed in 1965. Due to the cats, most of the contents had to be destroyed along with the house. That was done as a fire training exercise by the Wyoming Fire Department in 1966.

So the Mrs. Fisk stories still continue and we continue to collect them. Do you have a Mrs. Fisk story to share?



Fire sweeps through this once elegant Victorian home.

Special thanks to Frank Dilbert for donating to your Wyoming Historical Society a Barney Family photo album that belonged to his mother, a friend of Mrs. Fisk. The photo with the Stearns mansion is from that album.

JOINING THE BOARD IS: **Brian Pitman**

Brian M. Pitman is a lifetime citizen of Wyoming. He graduated from Wyoming High School in 1992. In 1998, he earned his BA in Elementary Education at the College of Mount Saint Joseph (upon graduation he was awarded the prestigious Jane Cuni Armstrong Award). In 2004, he earned his master's degree in Educational Administration at Xavier University. He is in his 23rd year of teaching at Wyoming City Schools. Brian has a passion for teaching; he can't see himself doing anything else. He currently teaches 3rd grade at Hilltop, but has taught and coached (wrestling, football, and lacrosse) at all 5 buildings in the City of Wyoming. He also has coached youth sports in prior years that include baseball, wrestling, and basketball.



Brian Pitman

Brian has expressed that his students (former and current) and his own children (Noah-21, Serria-18, Brooke-17, Tristan-11, and Aubrey-8) are his life. Without both, he believes he would not be the person he is today. He has three people who he considers a hero and are his biggest influences. They are: Kathy Ryan (former teacher), Mike Pearl (lifetime-friend), and Gene Pitman (father). All three taught him a great deal over the years about work ethic, helping others, and being the best you can be.

Brian enjoys being involved in and out of Wyoming. He is the current manager at the Wyoming Family Aquatic Center and works special events for the City of Wyoming (through the Wyoming Recreation Center). Brian also serves on the Wyoming High School Alumni Association Board, is a very proud mason, honored U.S. Veteran where he spent 10 years in the Army Reserves (served in Iraq 2003), and a proud father. Brian has received a number of awards and honors over the years (outside the community) which include, but not limited to: 810th Quartermaster Soldier of the Year in 2002, 633rd Quartermaster Battalion Soldier of the Year in 2002, Recognized as the Cincinnati Reds Hometown Hero in April of 2017, and has been awarded multiple Cincinnati Hills League Coach of the Year Awards in wrestling.

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S LETTER...*Mary Killen*

Dear Members,

As the lyrics to an old favorite song say "fast away the old year passes." I think we'd agreed that we're glad 2020 is over and that we're looking forward to a better year in 2021.

As this is my final letter as President, I'd like to introduce **Jim Walton** who will be succeeding me. Jim has been a trustee since 2018 and has also been our Secretary and representative to the city's Historic Preservation Commission. In addition, he lovingly restored the McIlwain home on Wyoming Avenue. Over the years, Jim has certainly demonstrated his passion for the preservation and appreciation of Wyoming's history. Congratulations, Jim, and best wishes for a great year under your leadership.

As I have written many times over the past four years, thank you for your interest and support of the Historical Society.

As things gradually return to normal, I hope you will continue to enjoy the programs, tours, newsletters and being part of this organization. And here is my fondest hope and wish for the Historical Society.... *continued success and fulfillment of mission far into the future.*

Honoring Wyoming's Past, *Mary Killen*

The Wyoming Historical Society
800 Oak Street
Wyoming OH 45215

*Look forward to seeing
you when the world is
'normal' again!*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER...Jim Walton

Dear Members,

I'm very excited and honored to be the new President of the Wyoming Historical Society. My family has a long history in Wyoming, dating back to the early 1900's, and that history is something of which I've always been proud.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Historical Society does not currently have any activities planned for 2021. Hopefully, the upcoming vaccines will be effective and we can all have a return to normalcy. When this happens, your Historical Society will be ready with new programs, tours, and events.

Thank you for your interest and ongoing support.

Jim Walton, President

