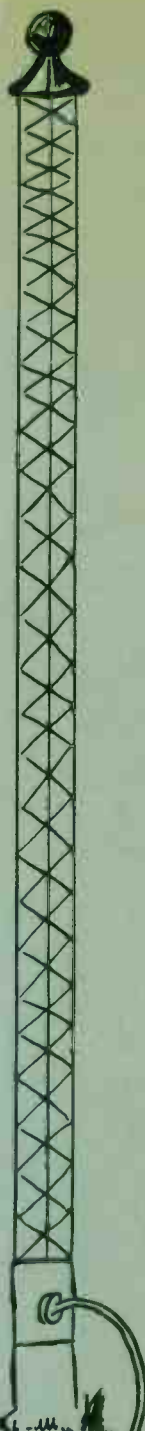


JOE'S JOURNALS



By
Joe
Fahnestock

The Greenville Story



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Dedication

To John Kennedy for envisioning the media over which these Journals were read, and for inviting me to do so. To Clancy and the rest of the staff for putting up with me. To Pat for making me write it up. And, last but not least, Lew Williams, the long-suffering publisher, for bearing up under last-minute alterations and innovations necessitated by important personalities passing from the mortal scene.

A word of praise for the old \$15 Remington Noiseless "swap-shop special" which came to my rescue while my IBM electric typewriter was awaiting a transplant at the hospital.

The telephone rang. "What are you doing?" the voice asked.

"I'm listening to WDRK," I answered.

"Good!" the voice answered back. "Joe, this is John Kennedy. Have you got your pants on? Could you come out here -- I'd like to have a talk with you."

Zippering up my old pea-jacket, I was soon bouncing over the Front Street crossing of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, heading for "The Bright Spark in Darke" communication center where builder, founder and president, John D. Kennedy was expecting me.

Twisting my torso through the busy head offices, past Clancy Plessinger who was readying his nightly sportscast from strips of teletyped baseball scores sprawled across the floor, I suddenly found myself before the executive desk, the direct object of President Kennedy's gaze. All of this transpiring while Nat Wansker was giving the nightly eleven o'clock news.

"Joe, I've been noticing your stories in The Dayton News," began John. "I like the way you handle them. If two cars don't come together and smash each other's fenders, Nat doesn't have any news to report. And now that he'll be leaving us for another station, what would you say to becoming news director of WDRK?"

Being still very much with The Dayton News at the time, I was hard-pressed for a decision. But I managed to strike some semblance of rapport with John by baiting him with the latest newspaper feature I had just been polishing over that very afternoon. So, while Clancy's march-theme was just winding down and his voice began booming forth loud and clear on the valley sports scores, I related my tale.

"I just took a picture of the old Central Hotel, now being torn down," said I, noticing John's ears sticking out the better to hear me. "I have been told that General William Henry Harrison came to Greenville, during the 'Hard Cider Campaign' and stood on the top of that old hotel from where he could view the site of Fort Greeneville and the grounds where the Indian tribes had convened to draw up the treaty with General Anthony Wayne."

"I believe I can be of more help, giving you features like that, rather than handling the news," was my answer.

"I like that," replied John. "Tomorrow that story can be your maiden voyage on the station, right after the nine o'clock news."

I had become acquainted with John Kennedy months before his voice ever went out over the air to announce the call letters of Greenville's first and only F-M radio station. Ever since that day I happened to be prowling around with my old press camera and invaded his sanctum sanctorum where he was busy hammering, sawing and propping up supports here and there to rehabilitate the one-time auto salesroom on Dayton Road, south of Greenville-town. Nothing yet had arrived that resembled anything like amplifiers, microphones, turntables or communications accoutrements. But John had the "faith of things yet unseen" sufficient to carry him through until the unseen could be seen. And the story and picture of his early efforts toward establishing Darke County's first radio station which appeared in The Dayton News was just the "shot in the arm" he was needing at the time.

When John Kennedy and his skeleton crew of Clancy Plesinger and Nat Wansker finally got everything bolted together, the amplifiers and turntables in place a-whirling, and their microphone plugged in -- for those first, sketchy, hesitant, sometimes interrupted, then gradually steadier and finally continuous and uninterrupted announcements--all of Greenville and Darke County held its breath and listened with pride. Local and area residents began buying up all the supplies of transistorized F-M receivers that Japan could manufacture and ship trans-Pacific ear-marked for the shelves of Greenville and Darke County stores. And for a time the station itself, under John's tutelage to guarantee the faithfulness of its listeners, even hawked a certain single-station F-M receiver, built in the form of an old radio station microphone, which was locked in only to the WDRK-FM frequency. What better way to captivate his audience?

Under John Kennedy's eagle eye for local talent, as well as his nose for things civic and newsworthy, WDRK's daily agenda began expanding by leaps and bounds. School kids started rolling out of their beds earlier when John's deep voice began invading their bedrooms, urging them to get their socks on and shoes tied while answering riddles of the junior high variety. Middle-aged women were called 'Dear' and 'Darling' when John's earthy humor and microphone patter took over following the nine o'clock morning news. And, one time during Tradin' Post, when one lady called in that she needed some wire clothes hangers, it caught John a little unguarded, but he recoiled by mumbling to himself, "Who needs clothes hangers? I thought those things inbred among themselves."

It was among such innovations that had invaded the Darke County ether as Dave Huff's imitation and dialogue with "Grandpappy," as an early-morning housewife eye-opener over the breakfast coffee, Marianna Krickenbarger's art and home-decorating hints from the local paint store, Ed Kuester's noontime farm reports alternating with Gertrude Adams' Home Extension Service, the advent of Ron Farmer's announcing and the capers of "Hello Dolly" Marshall that my small contribution to WDRK's already impressive list of entertainment made its official debut. I tried to psyche myself into believing I had no such thing as microphone jitters until I heard another young newscaster, named Jerry, report the Grand Prix Race as The Grand "Priks." And then I wasn't so sure. Especially after Mrs. Kennedy phoned in and ordered Ron Farmer to finish the newscast for him. Then, suddenly, I was "On the Air" - alone in a silent, soundless room with a microphone before me. In my mind loomed visions of Cronkite flaunting his fluency before T-V cameras and here I was groping for my very first word.

But I must've gotten through it. For ten minutes later -- and the rest of that day -- I felt like a celebrity, though no one else seemed to know it.



Van Buren for the presidency that the old Indian fighter arrived in Greenville July 22, 1840. The day marked the 26th anniversary of his celebrated treaty with the Indians, following his successful campaign against the Red Man, which culminated in 1814.

Prior to that, Harrison had participated in General Wayne's campaign against the Indian and the treaty of 1795 which followed.

When news of his forthcoming arrival was spread around, thousands came, many from neighboring states, and congregated in Greenville to participate in the campaign. At ten o'clock on the appointed day, a reception committee accompanied by hundreds of folk, riding horseback and every other kind of vehicle, formed a long procession that marched out to meet the old general as his carriage was leaving Ft. Jefferson. Many floats bearing likenesses of frontier log cabins and Indian canoes bedecked farm wagons drawn in the procession by teams of horses, to emphasize the slogan of "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too."

The first night of his stay in Greenville, Harrison, along with other prominent citizens, went to the top of the Hiram Potter residence (later the Farmer's Hotel and recently the Central Hotel), to get a view of the surrounding scenery. Taking a long look to see if he might recognize something, the historian relates, "The ground, indeed, was still here, the creek still flowed at his feet, the surrounding forest trees still stood, and the blue sky looked calmly down, but no trace of the dusky savage, no resounding of the clamor of war could be seen or heard. Where the soldier boy had brightened up his arms and accoutrements in the former days, and where the savage had strolled, there stood the peaceful hamlet"

History relates that the original Hiram Potter residence, from where Harrison surveyed the site of the great Indian treaty with Wayne, was located on lot 54 which places it directly behind

the present post office, where the old Central Hotel stood to the last. When first built it had a flat roof with railings around it which made an excellent viewing balcony for Harrison and his party -- the gable roof having been added years later.

At the time of this picture, there remained only the memories of the faces of the living dead who had only recently lent a semblance of life to the historic structure in its last days. That -- and the sign reading, "Morrison Bros. Moved to New Modern Plant."



There were always those special days that rolled around each year which posed their own particular bit of history and/or nostalgia. Like one Decoration Day when the ninety year old Charlie Bigler made his annual pilgrimage to an old cemetery east of Greenville to place a flag beside the ancient grave of General George Adams.

On the tottering, moss-covered old tombstone the weather worn inscription read that General Adams had served as a fifer with the Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment during the Revolutionary War and that he died Nov. 28, 1832.

"George Adams was buried with a set of solid silver riding spurs, presented to him by General Washington," explained Bigler, a historian of local repute.

After the War of Independence, Adams served as a soldier in Harmar's army and later with General Anthony Wayne as a captain of scouts.

With the west opened to the white settler, General Adams became commandant of the garrison at Fort Greenville during negotiations preceding the Treaty of 1814.

Five times Adams was shot and he carried the bullets to his grave. Severely wounded, history states that Adams' fellow soldiers dug his grave on three successive nights in three different places while marching with Harmar.

Carried on a litter between two horses, the hardy soldier clung to life and survived the march to Fort Hamilton (Cincinnati). Later he became a Darke County settler and its leading citizen.

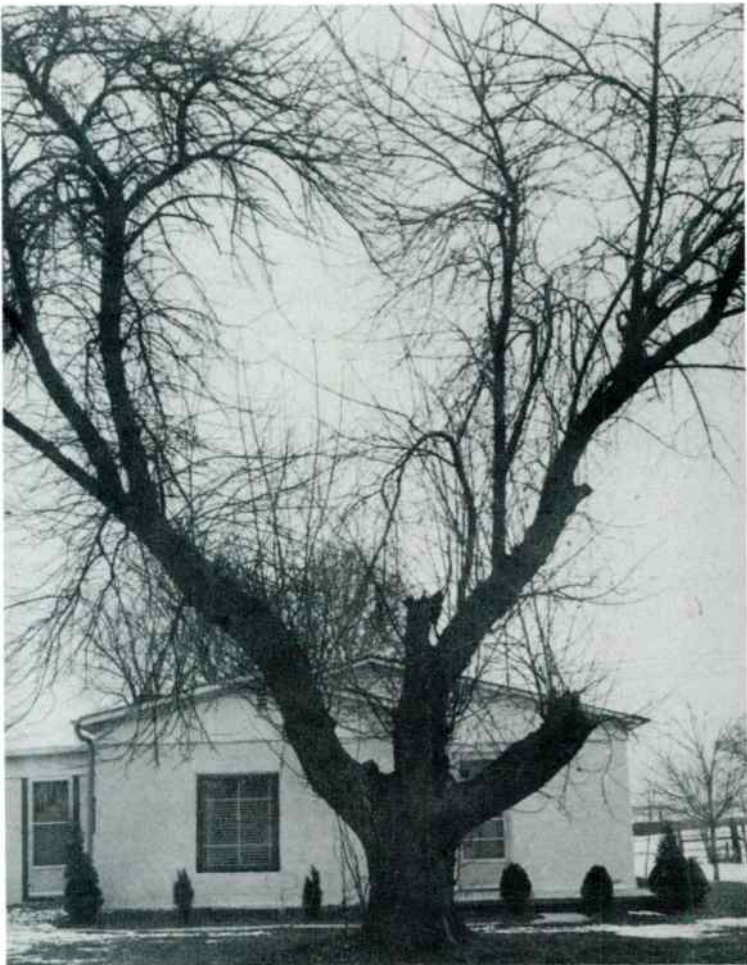
Adams built a grist mill on Greenville Creek, near Gettysburg, and added to that enterprise with a frontier store.

Today, the tottering old tombstone is the only link to the men who helped open the vast Northwest Territory.



It was a mighty tasty apple we often picked up 'neath the craggy branches of the old Johnny Appleseed tree, hard by the Coletown curve on 571. Long before the coming of the electric interurban tracks, its stone arch a hundred feet away, or the D & U Railroad further north, more than a century before, the legendary Johnny Appleseed had come that way.

Wearing a tin hat that served variously as head-piece between meals and mush-pot at grub-time, a paper coffee sack for vest and coat he'd swapped an apple sapling for, Johnny Appleseed trekked the middle west in pioneer days, planting apple seeds he'd salvaged from the thriving cider mills of western Pennsylvania. Combing through the piles of pumice and left-over apple squeezin's, Johnny packed millions of seeds into huge gunny-bags which he lugged barefoot over mountain, 'cross stream and rolling plain, planting and nurturing the first apple orchards which fed the white settlers who came later. Like a devoted missionary he now and then handed out religious tracts



to those who could read the King's English -- expounding his beliefs in the Swedenborg faith.

Believing that all of God's creatures had a right to live, Johnny often snuffed out his campfire before flopping his scrawny bones down for the night to prevent mosquitoes and night bugs from destroying themselves in its blaze. Even snakes escaped his wrath should one be close by, sharing his open-air bedroom, and bite him by surprise.

"I recollect that old apple tree as long as I kin remember," said Coletown residenter, Charlie Marick whose house further up the road overlooks the ancient mill race where once stood the village saw and grist mills. "My wife's grandad, Sam Cole, often saw it, too. He once took a wagonload of wheat to Dayton by way of Piqua 'cause there was no other road and fetched back this grinding wheel in my yard, over a hundred years ago."

But the grand old Johnny Appleseed tree was standing full fifty years before the grist mill -- and many a year after the 1922 tornado blew its timbers through its spreading branches and scattered them across the surrounding fields.

★ ★



It was a cold Thanksgiving Day--up Cosmos-way--and Danny Sharp and the "Missus" were finding it a mighty good time to "set by the old baseburner" and reminisce a spell over the family portraits.

"My ancestors were the first family to settle in Ohio," said Mrs. Sharp. "They were the parents of the first white child born in Ohio."

It was back in 1830 when her great, great grandmother Nancy Russel Scribner -- Ohio's first homemaker -- set up housekeeping in Fort Greenville. Just a briefly penned note at the bottom of the Scribner family portraits (which we see Danny and the Mrs. looking at) tells it vividly this way-- "Azore Scribner was an Indian trader--took six weeks to make a trip from Fort Greenville to Cincinnati and return by ox and mud boat."

"Times have changed," said Danny Sharp. "Every fall, about this time, we'd all get the cabbage gathered in, and Mom

and Dad would put up a barrel of sauerkraut. First they'd put in a layer of slawed cabbage, salt it down, and then stomp it with a big slab of stove wood which had a hole bored in the center in which was driven a broomstick handle."

This process of filling in a layer of cabbage and salting and tromping it kept up until the barrel was filled to the very top.

"Whenever anyone got a hankering for kraut, we'd just go to the old kraut barrel and reach in and grab a big handful and chew on it (my taste buds sat up and listened to this) -- and we'd have the best eatin' all through the cold winter months."

"Then we'd raise pumpkins," continued Danny. "We'd just throw in a handful of pumpkin seeds into the corn planter and never worry about them. But always in the fall there'd be plenty of them scattered through the corn field. We'd gather them, display a few at the fall fruit and cattle show at the Cosmos store, then feed them to the livestock. That's another thing people don't do any more--raise pumpkins. Seems they've gone out of modern farming, same as the horse."

★ ★

He's a descendant of George Washington, even looks like George Washington -- does Walter R. Gard, country schoolmaster, World War One veteran, gentleman Darke County farmer, student-collector and lecturer on Indian artifacts and culture.

Trace his genealogy and you'll discover he's a grand nephew of George Washington, the father of our country.

"Our first president loved this country so much he bought up some land in Pennsylvania and wrote his brother, James, to come over and settle," says Walter Gard. "James being my great, great grandfather makes me a nephew of George Washington."

"Hold a dollar bill up beside him and you can't tell the difference, they resemble so much," said Al Lumpkin, Greenville photographer. Not having a dollar bill I removed the big picture of George Washington from my wife's junior high classroom and posed him beside it. The same prominent features -- the Roman nose, the well-proportioned face and firm, dominant chin which gave the image of strong leadership to Washington's portrait was there. Indeed, it was hard to tell the difference.

Add to this the fact that he has presided as a country schoolmaster before serving our nation in the Great War, plowed his Darke County land with horses like the proverbial gentleman farmer and enriched the lives of his countrymen by collecting and studying Indian culture, and you become aware of the uniqueness of the man.

Not only does his lineage stem from the Revolutionary founding of our nation, but, through his discovery and research of artifacts on his land, he's established a kinship and rapport with civilizations established long before the coming of the white man to our shores.

"Plowing my fields with horses, over the years, I've turned up over eleven hundred rare Indian artifacts, some stemming from the moundbuilders even centuries before," explains Gard.



"I've been hunting them better than fifty years, scouring the neighborhood among the hills, mostly around my farm here northwest of Ansonia."

"We must give the Indians more credit than we have heretofore -- the way they built things to survive and get along," says he. "From the amount of stuff we've found, there's no doubt in my mind that an Indian village must've been located somewhere on my farm."

Spearheads, tomahawks both single and double-bitted, axes and hammers, sinews, and many more comprise the main artifacts of the Stone Age unearthed by Walter Gard, the gentleman farmer.

"I've collected twenty-five axes, the largest being six pounds. And a rare stone corn-cracker which the Indians used to grind corn to prepare their meals -- like a mortar and pestle," explains Gard, like the well-apprised schoolmaster and artifact researcher he is. "Some of the odd things about these particular arrowheads I've discovered only on my farm are that they're sloped on each side to make them whirl and fly straight to their target, like our modern rifles whirl bullets. In that the Indians, in their time, were far ahead of the white man," says he.

And then there are those double-purpose stone tools and instruments -- the rare single finds that Walter Gard unearthed which he explains thusly: "This tube, made of flint, served as both a pipe and whistle. I guess you'd call it a 'half-pipe' -- and it could be used for smoking as well as a whistle for sending messages a distance. Out in the air it sounds very shrill," said he, pursing his lips and blowing a mellow, flute-like tone to perfect pitch.

"It's a beautiful specimen made by their own tools -- single

drills fastened on straight shafts pulled by whang to make them whirl and thumb-powered drills," said Gard.

"I have some articles that apparently were molded by hand, indicating the Indians had developed some kind of concrete," he continued. "For instance these sinews which have the holes through which they drew fibre to make strings of uniform size. And they served double purpose as lavaliers for women's decorations."

"As you pick up these artifacts from the plowed field, you can see the progress in the various utensils they made and deduct from which stone age they came."

"I began teaching school in 1912 until 1917. Then Uncle Sam needed a little help and I went and stayed with him until the First World War was over," reminisces the schoolmaster-patriot. "In my school work, if I could find any book how the American Indian lived and survived, I read it," quoth the frontier rural educator and gentleman farmer whose plows had furrowed out both fact and artifact.

Walter Gard has often taken his artifacts and lectured on stone age culture before Boy Scout groups. They quiet down so to listen, you could hear a pin drop.

"Yes -- people have often commented how much I resemble George Washington," he agrees. "I'm proud to have a drop of blood from our first President in my veins."

"No -- I wasn't born on Washington's birthday. I was born on May 30, 1891."

"Well, that's Decoration Day — and celebrated with more marching and bands playing than even George's birthday," said I.

That's the unusual story about Darke County's own George Washington — Walter R. Gard, who not only looks like the dollar bill George Washington, but is also a direct descendant of our first president. One-time country schoolmaster, a soldier in World War One and now a gentleman Darke County farmer who studies the culture of the American Indian, the life of Walter Gard reads like a page out of a Ben Franklin almanac. As an American he rings as true as does the Liberty Bell.

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Whenever folks used to drive homeward, from Greenville to Union City, they always felt they'd reached the halfway mark when the old Weimer's Mill hove into view, along Greenville "Crick."

For many a year, the old water-powered mill ground out the famous Daisy Flour for which Mom many a time sent me over to Staats's Grocery with my coaster wagon -- to fetch a bagful.

It rated a page out of "JOE'S JOURNAL" -- that old Weimer's Mill. And another page, too, the day I watched sadly as they pulled the picturesque old landmark down. As I walked through the creaky old mill in its final hour, I noted other of its friends basking in mem'ries -- like the saying of good things about the recently departed by neighbors at a wake.

"Daisy Flour -- made by Weimer's Roller Mill," said that brand new sack we discovered still nailed to a hand-hewn beam.



The shadows lengthened ominously but the players played on. The double-header had gotten under way at 2 p.m., but already it was seven by the clock and the game was dragging into the 25th inning with the score one to one.

It was to be a snap for the Bloomington, Ill., team, as they observed a tow-headed youngster enter the box for Decatur -- to pitch his first game of Three-I League ball.

But Burns burned 'em that afternoon -- didn't give a free pass in the entire 26 -- had the boys in the opposing dugout writhing in convulsions. Finally it was Fisher who -- struck in the ribs by a pitched ball in the 26th which put him on first -- was able to bring in the winning run after Mark Purtell swatted a ball that passed over the first baseman's head, fell just inside the line, and then rolled back of the scoreboard, thus completing the longest game in the history of baseball.



"Yep -- it was the longest completed game in the history of professional baseball," said "Jelly" Burns, the one-time rookie pitcher and hero that day, as he pointed out faded pictures on yellowed newspapers hanging on the walls of his Recreation Parlors on Broadway. Then the high priest of pool hall baseball sermonized before an admiring group of his pool room frequenters on the secret techniques he used in pitching his famous curve, swinging his pitchin' arm wide of the ancient glass-domed baseball teletype standing on a pedestal below.

It was Bert Fisher of Union City, Ind., who had brought in the winning run that day, along with the cagey pitching of Greenville's "Jelly" Burns that catapulted that historic game at Bloomington, Ill., back on May 31, 1909, clean into the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N. Y. And it was Bert Fisher who had introduced the youthful Burns into professional baseball -- whose very first game pitched the both of them into the annals of baseball history forever.

Many years later "Jelly" Burns added to his fame by "Burning the pants" off the famed newscaster, Lowell Thomas, in a set-up billiards game, with no holds barred, staged before a distinguished group of Greenville notables gathered 'round the pool tables of the Recreation Parlors. "Burns burned 'em again!"

Later, in discussing the famous baseball game with my son, and the name "Jelly" Burns came up -- Nick replied, "That 'Jelly' Burns -- he's straight. Real straight." All of which implies that sonny boy, unbeknownst to Pop, might've slipped surreptitiously into the Burns Recreation Parlors on Broadway, now and then, during his high school days to shoot a game of pool. And, while there, possibly supped at the "Baseball Fount of Wisdom" -- the great "Jelly" Burns, none other, whose billiard hall he considered no less than a "Holy of Holies."

Some years after that, Nick had taken to himself a German hausfrau. Unwise to our New World ways, one day she burst right through the portals of the Burns Recreation Parlors. Suddenly, she realized that her quest for him had brought her to a place that was no place . . . for a woman.

"What on earth are you doing here?" snapped Nick, as embarrassed as she was. "Don't you know women never come into places like these?"

To which replied Lottie, regaining some control -- "How was I to know? I thought that Recreation Parlors meant a religious place for 'recreating' one's soul."

★ ★

Noting the huge portrait of Fred Coppock hanging in the WDRK lobby, soon after my Journal began, I was told he was the first in a series of monthly biographies being broadcast about local leaders.

"Joe, if you or Pat have any suggestions for our next Man of the Month, let us know," said John Kennedy. Then, as I was preparing my Journal to go on the air, he bent low and confided, "Why wouldn't you make a good Man of the Month for us?"

To which I replied, "John, I'm not that far along yet. Wait 'til I make my first million." Then added, "Pat and I both think Dwight Brown should be next. And she thought our Buster the cat would also make a good Man of the Month -for his many adventures and contributions to the growth of the neighborhood population and its welfare."

"After you get off the air, you're to go out to Bob Brubakers for a portrait. He's doing some staff caricatures which we're hanging in the lobby," quoth John, with an eye to promoting the WDRK personalities. "Meantime, I'll be scurrying out to interview Dwight Brown." Which he did -- for next month the familiar Brown portrait hung in the Bright Spark of Darke lobby while out over the air went the half hour biography.

In my Dayton News stories I had called him Greenville's Mr. Music Man -- Beethoven Brown. For, whether he was just demonstrating how to play "Oompah" on the bass tuba in high school band class, leading the orchestra in Memorial Hall, or directing the Greenville Band in Marlin Shell -- he was just that.

And Greenville will never forget those Brown-Hill musical extravaganzas. The highlight in the Brown musical crown glistened when he directed the high school orchestra, featuring his former pupil, Melinda Menke in Scarlatti's Violin Concerto.

It was Dwight Brown's secret Rube Goldberg contraption which, hidden in the shadows, swung Gail Wade riding the Moon out over the audience that catapulted his "Musical Monks" to the top of Dayton News page one.

When Brownie saw my flash-bulb light up the secret trappings of his wooden moon-beam, like a zeppelin overhead -- my face turned red.

"Oh -- how bashful Dwight used to be when he came calling on me," said Mrs. Esther Brown at a South School P.T.A. dinner one time. "I still have our old Edison phonograph he'd stand by and wind with his feet underneath because his shoes weren't shined."





One of John Kennedy's innovations -- the Brain Bee -- was captivating the local WDRK listening audiences over the weekends. But, with all his many other assignments at trying to keep everyone happy on the home front, he just couldn't find time enough to search out all the many questions to keep up with the various participating schools.

One day the phone rang. "This is John," said the voice from the other end. "Joe, could I get you and your wife to hunt up the questions and answers and write them out for us to use on our Brain Bee?"

So, through the encyclopedias, the gazetteers, the history books and various school texts we thumbed -- day after day -- compiling hundreds of pertinent questions for the students of high school age. Questions like, "Give the dates for the beginning and ending of the Civil War," -- "What was the home of Thomas Jefferson called?" -- "What is the speed of light?" -- "Give the astronomical name for an island universe?" -- "Who wrote the song, JEANNIE WITH THE LIGHT BROWN HAIR?" -- "Who was the hero of San Juan Hill?" -- and hundreds of others, with answers, were jotted down, classified and typed out in lengthy lists to meet the weekly deadlines.

As the Brain Bee ground on, competition increased until only two -- Mississinawa Valley and Bradford remained eyeball to eyeball in the finals. And even they were tied until the crucial question came up -- "Name the island on which the Statue of Liberty stands."

Bradford School was eliminated for answering, "Liberty Island." While Mississinawa Valley won the trophy for calling it "Bedloe Island."

John Kennedy abided by my answer, gleaned from a set of encyclopedias I had purchased at Kroger's. But, after the contest was over, my wife and I discovered that "Bedloe" had been recent-

ly changed to "Liberty Island" -- affirming the fact that no encyclopedia can keep abreast of the fast-changing times.

Mississinawa had won the trophy -- but Bradford had won the Brain Bee. Historic names change without warning -- like the weather.

★ ★

There was this clammy, foggy evening when someone phoned to tell me the Spirit of St. Louis would be coming through Greenville, due to high water on the Richmond Division, further south. Immediately I called to alert WDRK in case they were interested.

Figuring I must try and out-fox the elements, I mixed up a fresh jug of developer, at the required 90-degree temperature, which I set outside my back door so it would be cool enough for processing the film right after my return. Then, loading my bag with film holders and flash bulbs, I was off with my Speed Graphic -- needing all the luck in the world if my tiny flash was to penetrate that fog and pick out the image of the dark locomotive rushing toward me as it raced past the Front St. Pennsylvania Railroad station.



When I arrived there was already a crowd waiting, having been apprised of the event by the WDRK bulletin. While Clancy Plessinger fiddled with his little WDRK tape recorder, attorney Paul Younker, another train buff, called me aside to tell me the rest of the story.

"Mrs. Paul Cothran of Weaver's Station had been hearing a loud banging noise across the field as trains passed during the day and she told her husband to run over and examine the rails," said Younker. "The farmer spotted a four-inch break in the track and alerted Pennsylvania Railroad operator R. L. Brown, who notified other railroad officials."

The engineer of the Spirit of St. Louis was ordered to watch for farmer Cothran's flashlight and bring the train to a halt, so

he could examine the broken rail and determine if it was safe to proceed. Stopping his train, the engineer felt he could make it over the four-inch gap without derailling and decided to go on -- all this transpiring while the sixty-four passengers in the 15-car passenger train relaxed unknowingly.

Meantime, back at the Greenville depot, the crowds began converging toward the tracks when the locomotive whistle was heard coming through the lowland, southwest of town. Out in front was Clancy, holding his mike at arm's length while I popped in a flash bulb and film holder, opened wide the f: 3.5 aperture, cocked and slowed the shutter to a twenty-fifth, and focussed the old Graphic on a light bulb in front of the old depot shelter as a likely distance to snap my picture. Everything had to be in order, for no train, least of all the Spirit of St. Louis, would back up for a second pose.

As she rushed by I pulled the shutter, hoping my flash bulb didn't blind the engineer who was probably more terrified by the crowd at the depot. In an instant the "Spirit" was gone -- swallowed up in the misty night fog.



Rushing home, I hastily retrieved my cooled down developer from the back steps and proceeded to process my negatives -- hoping and praying that my tiny flash bulb had penetrated the night fog and captured the drama.

In ten minutes I was amazed to learn that it had. And while my films were washing and drying over the kitchen stove, I was writing up the story which made it in time by the 6 a.m. bus. For there was the Spirit of St. Louis rushing past the Greenville depot, with Clancy Plessinger holding the WDRK mike -- at the top of page one in next day's Dayton Daily News.

The following day I phoned Mrs. Cothran and asked her if she knew her alertness and her husband's vigil by flashlight the night before had saved one of America's great passenger trains -- the Spirit of St. Louis.

(Continued next page)

"Oh goodness, did I do all that?" she replied. "I just thought it was another train."

A few months after that I was approaching the railroad crossing on Columbia St. in Union City when the gates began dropping. It was night time and misting, but I could recognize it -- the Spirit of St. Louis whizzed past. This time, due to high water, it had been re-routed over the Columbus-Logansport division, via Bradford. It seemed everywhere I went, the "Spirit" was either coming or going.

Time was, when the Spirit of St. Louis ran regularly through Greenville, both ways each day. And one time, as the story goes, Carl Jefferies, starting out from Richmond, decided to race it. Of course, in those days, it was pulled by a steam powered K4 pacific locomotive, and tracks were much better than today -- so the schedule was very fast. Sliding 'round the curves through Braffetttsville, New Paris and points east, crossing and re-crossing the Pennsylvania tracks, Jefferies buzzed through New Madison, slid around the curve on two wheels past Wayne Lakes, roared through Fort Jefferson and ground his '36 V-8 Ford to a stop at the Greenville crossing just as the Spirit zoomed by in front of him.

Carl Jefferies' wild race with the Spirit of St. Louis has been told 'round every cracker barrel store and poolroom throughout Darke County land. First the story -- now the legend.

★ ★





CLANK – CLANK! — "Reno nineteen." CLANK – CLANK!
— "Focht nineteen."

It was the World Horseshoe Tournament finals being played off at Greenville's City Park. All contenders had been eliminated, leaving only the two remaining -- Harold Reno of Sabina and Paul Focht of Dayton to fight it out that gruelling night. Not a word could be heard from the packed and crowded bleachers. Only the steady, almost monotonous clanking of horseshoes on steel stakes -- none missing -- followed each and every time by the almost inaudible voice of Clancy Plessinger whispering, "There's the pitch -- and it's on," into the WDRK mike. For the rules are that no one shall speak out to distract the nerves and attention of the horseshoe pitchers during a tournament -- especially the finals.

The silence was ominous and tense until Focht's final shoe landed a "leaner" -- fetching muffled "Oooohs" from the bleachers -- followed by Reno's two perfect ringers which set the crowd a-roaring. After which Clancy boomed into the mike to announce the new world champion.

The following year, Greenville Park was honored to welcome a visit from Mike DiSalle, Governor of Ohio, who felt it would be a good chance to make political hay just before election by pitching a few rounds of horseshoes with Reno the champ.

While a very relaxed and bemused Reno tossed ringer after ringer, the "honorable Mr. Governor" rolled his shoes so far afield it was difficult to know which court he was pitching in. Had his misses been deductible he would have wound up with an even more impressive score below zero than Reno did above. But before the game reached that ludicrous a trend, the governor's pitchin' arm flabbed limp and the contest was "called." Following which the governor lost the fall election.



The first time I rubbed elbows with the famous Guy Hawley charisma was when Boss Joe O'Brien hired me to type out those long, endless lists of registered Republican voters from every precinct in Darke County. 'Twas back in '44, during the famous campaign of Dewey versus F.D.R. for fourth term while the War was grinding on, when the Grand Old Party rented an empty room at Broadway and Fifth where Grey's Jewelers now hold forth.

"You can hire some high school girls, part-time, to help out with the typing," said Joe, giving me blanket power to hire and fire my gals like Ziegfield did his Broadway Follies.

As election drew near, our headquarters became a gathering place for both the party's elite, including Guy Hawley and cohorts, and the usual politico-loafers.

One of the latter was one-eyed Charlie Smith who always arrived first and plopped down in the biggest, most comfortable rocker in the place. All day he sat there rocking -- staring in space. Then, all of a sudden, like Old Faithful Geyser, he'd shatter the silence by spouting forth in a raucous, rasping voice a short monologue in praise of Tom Dewey -- almost on the hour. Which always fetched smiles on the faces of Hawley and company -- including Judge Brumbaugh, Bud Warner and Boss Joe O'Brien.

It was during one of the quieter moments, between old Charlie's outbursts, that some Democrat prankster opened our door and tossed in a huge poster, bearing the image of Franklin D. I told a young boy nearby to grab that poster and hold it up in front of Charlie.

Looking at the poster, Charlie began spouting loudly, "Yes siree -- that's old Dewey. He's my man."

But when his one good eye suddenly got focussed, he shot back, "Oh hell -- that's not Dewey. It's old Rosey."

A faux faux that shook the Hawley belly, like a bowlful of jelly while republicans laughed like helly.



Bobby Wilt and Misty Drake always had a soft spot in their hearts when it came to creatures furry, feathery 'n friendly.

It was long before they ever heard of such modern slogans as, "Give a hoot -- don't shoot, don't pollute," that the two of 'em went to the barn to prowl. Searched through the hay for hen eggs all day. But their plans went a-foul when they found Hooty the Owl.

Unlike many so-called heroic "sportsmen" who delight in blowing to bits God's tiny creatures with their high-powered, double-barreled shotguns, kids do their hunting, bearing arms of love.

Bloody sport whose meat winds up on walls, as trophies. What a hero! Why not mount a rabbit head to brag about instead? Or a pheasant that tried to fly, but you shot it dead.

Your next trophy -- a human head?



Folks are always in for a big day, when Charlie Ditmer polishes his old 12-horse Advance steam engine, then fires up the boiler and heads the big parade through Greenville for the Darke County Steam Threshers Show each year, come summer.

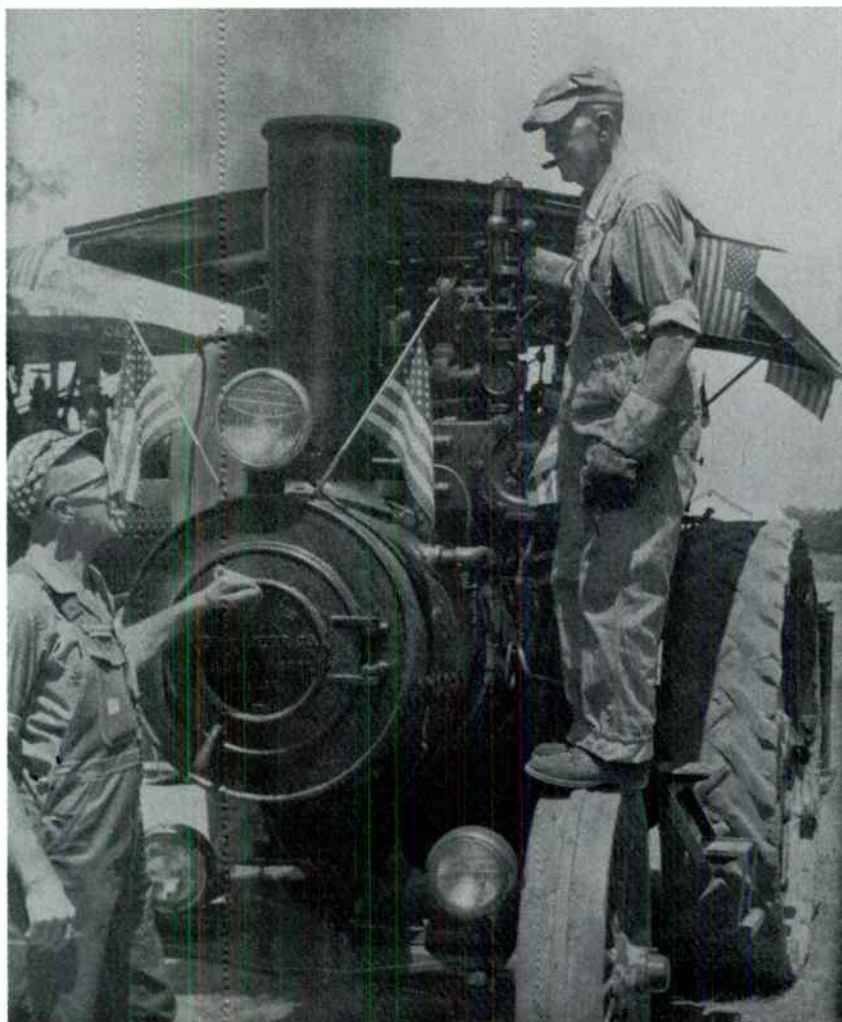
Like the circus, it's as much fun to watch the boys roll in and set up the machinery as it is to see the show. Towing the big engines that have just arrived from other places, off the low-boys that fetched 'em, wheels slipping in mud and smoke getting in faces, chains rattling and men yelling orders to the engineers is a real show itself. But it's even more rewarding and exciting when the whistles blow, the flopping belt takes hold and runs the separator that threshes the grain -- or the saw that saws the log.

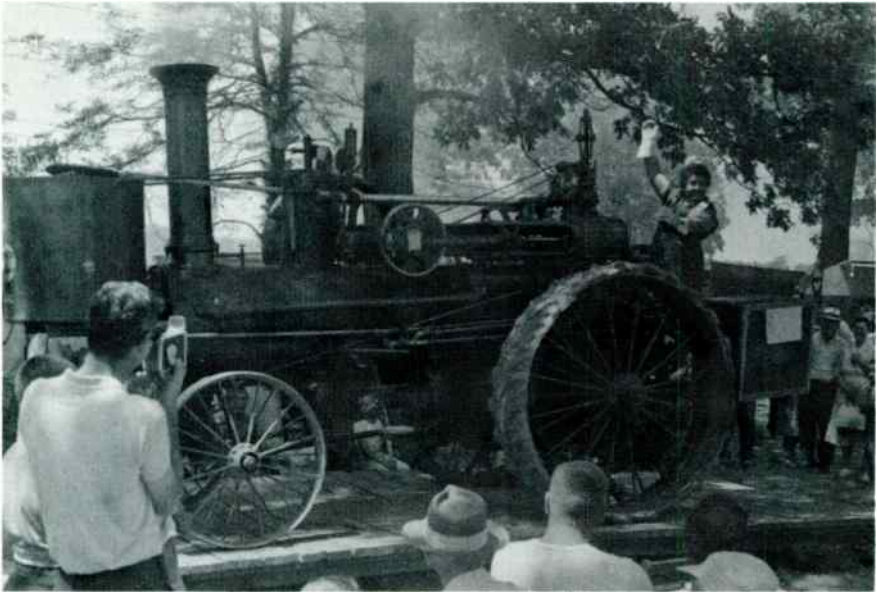
Then comes the daily parade up town, with steam engines whistling and chugging defiance past the Darke County courthouse along Broadway, then down the side street route back to the fairgrounds.

Old-timers chew on their cuds, kids scream and wave at the engineers, who wave back at the crowds below.

An old-fashioned steam engine, gas tractor show welcomes any fellow with whatever kind of contraption he's bought or made to join up and enter the big parade. If he drove the same contraption around his yard, his neighbors would laugh him to shame -- lest he wind up insane. But drive it out at the threshers -- and he's the hero of the day. Even I've entered my old garden tractor, "Joe Dear" -- and roused my share of the cheer.

When the big show is over, the engines head back to the Steam Engine Beauty Shop, with Uncle Charlie's Advance in the lead -- where they're polished and oiled and put back to bed -- to rest up for next summer's show.





Donna Mildred Ary -- some called her "Midge," others Mildred. But thousands knew her as the only woman who could balance a steam engine on the teeter-totter, which she did at the Darke County Steam Threshers each summer. There wasn't an Iron Man who ever stood by and watched her handle the throttle but what he rooted for her, maybe even envied her. For the old 12-horse Gaar Scott Iron Horse was not an easy one to balance.

For years "Midge" helped out with the music at the Darke County Threshers by singing with the Sweet Adelines women's group. And during those leaner years she even helped out at the Sunday morning religious services by playing the piano while the congregation sang "Bringing In The Sheaves."

Those who knew her will miss seeing her drive the little model Rumely Oil-Pull so lovingly made by her husband and nephew to help her get around over the reunion grounds and enjoy the shows better. Her pluckiness, her many talents and willing hands, always ready to help, lent a joy that will be missed. The Darke County Threshers just won't be the same.



There was this day when I stopped by at Frank Doyle's little jewelry store on Broadway -- to have my Dad's old railroad watch fixed up.

"Mighty fine old Elgin," said Frank, bent over his bench examining the innards through his jeweler's loop.

"Years ago I was learning the watchmaker's trade under a jeweler at Springfield, Ohio," reminisced Doyle. "One day a wealthy industrialist stopped in and inquired if he could purchase a very expensive handmade watch."

(Continued next page)

"We recommended a Vacheron-Constantin, made in Geneva. But that it would require a year to make by hand -- at a price of a thousand dollars."

"The man took off for a year's vacation in Switzerland while his watch was being made," said Frank. "When the year was up he returned with the watch."

"Some time later he dropped by and asked us to clean that watch. We locked our doors for a whole week while we dismantled the parts of that watch for cleaning."

"We just couldn't risk customers coming in and bothering us, or stirring up dust until we had finished and put everything back in the case," said Frank, in his soft-spoken way.

Came the day when Frank called and told me my old NYC depot regulator was fixed and ready. There he stood, the portly, dignified figure, to see if Dad's Elgin was keeping time with the station clock.

"Both right together," said he. Then, ruffling his feathers a bit, bemoaned Frank, "All we're getting today is junk."

Fighting the Time-War on the Home-Front was "Punk."



There was this late winter thaw. The kind of weather that turns one's thoughts to that fading rural custom known as farm-yard butchering. The crack of a rifle, the squeal of the hog -- the farmer rushing in with his knife to "stick the pig" and the agony is soon over. Whereupon his neighbors, who have come to help, assist with the ceremonial scalding, then the beheading and slitting of the carcass when "the hog hangs high" -- white and clean like it never looked before.

Then comes the halving and the quartering -- the segments of which are hustled into the summer kitchen and spread out on a huge table of rough-sawn boards improvised on wooden saw horses where other neighbors, both men and women, begin the carving. The menfolk to trim the hams and shoulders, cut out the sweetbread and tenderloin, while the womenfolk settle down to the tedious task of separating the delicate casing for the stuffing of the sausage. The choicer pieces go into the sausage grinder which another starts cranking, while the more fatty ones are tossed into the big, steaming hot iron "kittle" over an outside fire. After which everyone washes the grease off the hands and marches into the kitchen for a feast on fresh fried tenderloin and sweetbread, mashed 'taters 'n gravy which the farmer's wife and the neighborhood women have dished out, steaming hot, on the long dining room table with all the extra boards added.

After dinner, comes the long process of cooking the cracklins to a tantalizing aroma -- tempting some to reach in and pull out a few hot morsels, then overeating and feeling "woozy."

Came the day when the farmers discovered it was easier to drive into town and have their fresh hams, shoulders and sides of bacon custom-smoked at Suter's on Broadway. How tempting an aroma it was when the hickory-smoked hams 'n bacons came rolling out to the rear of the old-time German butcher shop with





the familiar old moosehead hanging overhead -- and the feel of sawdust on the floor on a cold winter's day.

That was butchering the old-time way. Gone is the custom, also the moosehead at Suter's who now do the butchering instead.

As for me, I'll settle for a thick slab of that old-fashioned pan puddin' and a hefty ring o' boloney -- to fortify me through breakfast and snack on 'fore dinner. After which a big "kittle" o' popcorn, popped in jowl bacon grease helps my rip-roaring, night-time snoring increase.

Time was when cracklins filled all that need -- without worrying over calories and the cost of hog feed. Farmers gave 'em away by the cake, while stores offered hogsheads o' free cracklins for customers to take.

Why the last time I tried to buy cracklins, the butcher eyed me cold, like I was a thief robbing Ft. Knox gold. Into a paper poke he dropped a few -- charged a high price for a dozen or two. What a fee for a bag o' cholesterol you can't even see. The thief, as you guessed, was he -- not me.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

The old Lohman three-story brick building, located on the corner of Sycamore and W. Main St., in Greenville, was one of the early manufactories of scientific optics in the nation. Where Bill's Motor Shop now is, in the two-story building remaining, the Lohman brothers once fabricated some of the finest precision astronomical telescopes in America.

Originally helping their father in the building of buggies, Ed and Bob Lohman began experimenting in the grinding of telescope lenses for the purpose of observing the wonders of the heavens. In addition, they applied their ancestral German technical

know-how to designing precision metal tubes and equatorial mountings which synchronized the "big eye" with the planets, stars and galaxies in perfect transitory planes compensatory with the earth's rotation in any latitude.



In early days, the Lohmans often set up their big sky tube on Broadway in front of the courthouse to give the public a view of some special celestial phenomenon, such as the mountains of the Moon, the planet Saturn, or possibly a comet that happened to have within earthly view.

Once, during the depression, I played hookey from a Sunday School convention at the Darke County fairgrounds to slip down and venture into the Lohman holy of holies to get a look-see at some of the scientific proceedings. Treating me very skeptically, Ed Lohman peered down at me over his dime-store spectacles and asked, "What are you doing here?"

I answered that I had once ground a telescope lens myself, for looking at the stars, and that I was quite interested in seeing what they were doing.

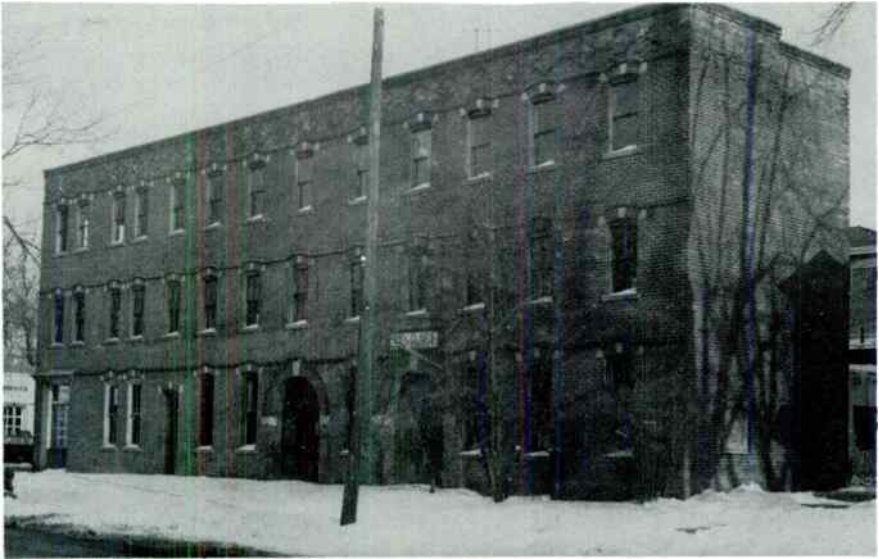
Ed mumbled that the depression had almost ruined the sale of big astronomical telescopes which they sometimes made for colleges. The colleges could no longer afford to pay for them. But I noticed he was working on a very sophisticated electric timer which I knew was for the synchronizing of a large telescope. And I could see a big telescope tube lying on one of the tables, and some thick glass lenses which they had ground to precision.

Ed Lohman's cold, scientific German mind wasn't about to warm up to me very much that day. But repeated visits over ensuing years found him mellowing a bit.

He often vented his wrath to the fact that the monied circles had become contaminated to the point of squeezing out the small telescope manufacturer. "My work consists mainly of sharpening

scythes and lawnmowers," he growled.

One day, when I was having my little old "Joe Dear" garden tractor built at Wes Duvall's blacksmith shop in Coletown, the need came up of having an old '36 Ford V-8 rear-end narrowed to fit it. Ed listened at his lathe while I explained that the axle would have to be shortened, then re-tapered and re-keyed like before in order to fit the wheels for a narrower track. When I returned to get it, Ed showed me the fine, precision work he had done. But when I asked him the cost of all that work, (I wish the reader could guess that cost) -- he replied, "A dollar and a quarter to you." I didn't argue with Ed over the charges. But to many hundreds of people who have stopped to view the "Joe Dear" at antique engine and threshing shows, they can't believe the measly charge Ed Lohman asked for all he had done to that axle.



When the old Lohman building was sold and the workshop junk cleaned out, Attorney Walter Rhynard tried to preserve what he could of the left over telescope parts for local posterity. A small Lohman astronomical telescope which he had obtained, he eventually sold to the Garst Museum. A few of the fine lenses he managed to rescue -- one of which he was using as a paper weight in his law office, until the day I happened by and noticed the overhead light bulb was magnified beautifully in its concave surface.

"That's a fine telescope lens, Walter -- and certainly too good to be used as a paperweight," said I. And after that I noticed Walter Rhynard had it mounted and covered from the dust.

But what Walter had managed to do was preserve all the historic glass photo plates which the Lohmans had taken of their fine astronomical telescopes, both large and small, right outside their shop door. And Rhynard had these printed into fine sets, one of which I now possess.



He was just a plaster-of-paris mutt, sitting with his ear cocked in the horn of a Victrola. "His Master's Voice," said the sign in the music store window. For his job was spreading the gospel that not even a dog could tell the voice of the machine from the man.

The day I snapped this picture, he was still faithful to his calling. For, though his favorite Victrola was no longer around, he pined for his master's sound. But his master, long dead, was now a mistress instead.



"He used to be in Westerfield's Music Store," said his comely mistress who was quite too young to recall. Though I remembered well those Saturday nights when Omar Westerfield let me play an old upright piano in his piano store window on Broadway -- where Revco now plays tunes on the company cash register.

The pianos in the store had names -- like Schumann, Ivers and Pond, Chickering, and Starr. And the phonograph by his side had a name, likewise his master. But does anyone remember the poor dog's name? Was it Fido or Fritz -- Skipper or Nipper?

There are rectangular barns -- very many. And there are round barns quite rare. And then there are the barns both hexagonal and octagonal you can count on one hand with fingers left over. Many of them are white, some of stone, but most barns I remember are red barns -- dotted throughout our land.

There are dairy barns from which our glass of milk comes, and tobacco barns which cure the "weed" to fill the cheek with well-packed scrap-leaf cud. Livestock exchange barns, hog barns, car barns and even bargain barns. And of course there are the bank barns, some built on hills, others quite small with slots to drop pennies in.

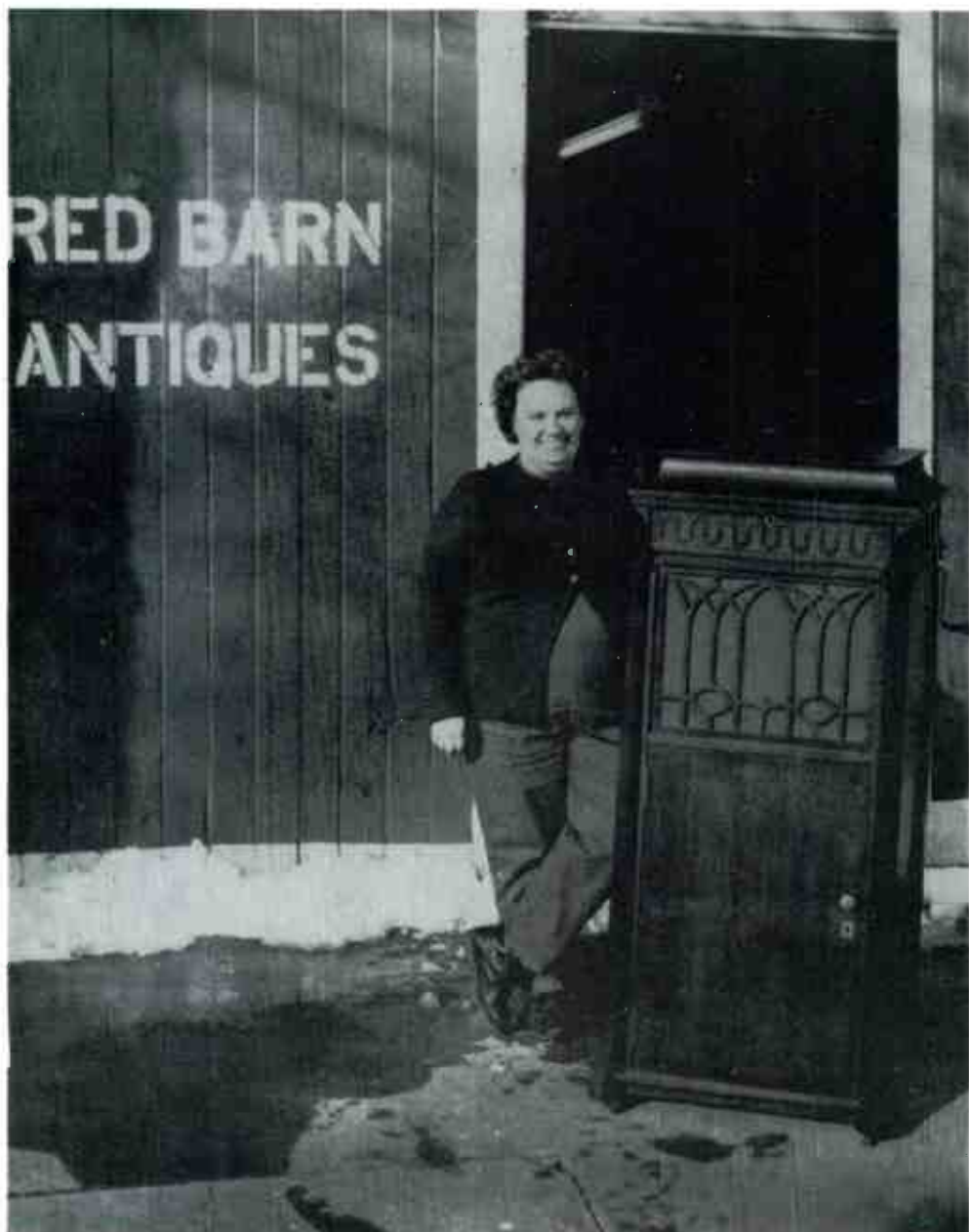
But the barn I'm thinking of is the Red Barn from out of which, without reason or rhyme, came that favorite old crank phonograph of mine. I could barely see the gaunt, dignified lines of that old Diamond Disc Edison sitting lonely and unwanted in the darkened wing of ye olde red barn. Her price was too high -- my offer was too low. She lowered hers a bit, I upped mine a whit. I stood around a lot. She just sit. When I tried to wheedle, she flipped the needle. Just as I retorted, "This won't work and that don't perk," she yanked the crank -- then my heart sank. Record skipped in the middle, like a broken-down fiddle. But the derned thing played -- so I just stayed. I wouldn't nudge and she wouldn't budge. My favorite angle, when I finagle, is head for the door and slam it -- dammit. Thinking I might, she saw the light. Tossed in some records, but I wouldn't kneel, 'til she came down five, then we firm'd the deal.

When I was a growing lad, I got half my musical edification from practicing the piano and cranking the family Victrola. Prior to that, Mom walked "us kids" down Carter St. in Union City to become educated in the classics and opera by listening to Charlie Adams's old Victor Talking Machine play the latest releases of Mary Garden, Galli Curci, Fritz Kreisler and the like.

Then Uncle Stanley Dunkelberger helped us get a new Victrola of our very own. And every time he'd come to Union City, by way of the D. & U. or electric interurban, he'd stop by Shierling's music store and fetch along the latest Victor Red Seal Artists Record, displayed on the store shelf, to inspire his budding nephews to practice.

Paderewski playing his famous Minuet in G, Rachmaninoff his Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, John McCormick singing MY WILD IRISH ROSE, the Flonzala String Quartette, Maude Powell and her violin, Harry Lauder and all the rest -- we cranked up our big new Victrola and stuck our heads in the open doors to listen and dream.

Victimized over my growing years by the Victor ads, claiming the Victrola's superiority in fidelity, I confess I always laughed at the Edison advertisements boasting otherwise. While I realized the Victrola's tone was quite wanting, to me the tall Diamond Disc Edisons looked so gloomy and foreboding, I couldn't possibly see how such an awkward machine could be better. I had never been around one or even heard it play. And I simply couldn't understand the awkward tone arm, or worse, the reproducer and diamond needle which reminded me of a cobra.



It wasn't until very recently I finally heard my first Diamond Disc Edison Phonograph, after reading the company booklets telling of actual opera house tests in Boston, back in 1915, matching the machine's performance with living artists before musical audiences. I couldn't believe it. Yet I was listening to one which proved it. Later I learned that Roy Shierling used to go to area schools around Union City, packing a Diamond Disc

Edison along with him, and a company artist, to prove the Edison's natural tone before classroom audiences. "I had to tune the school piano, ahead of time, to match the pitch of the record," says Roy. "But it always worked out to perfection."

Only recently I was able to borrow from the Troy Library a rare volume, FROM TINFOIL TO STEREO, by Dr. Oliver Read, written for Sam's Photo Facts wherein he tells the complete history of recorded music from the early cylinder records to the latest in electronic stereo. And to the Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph is given the credit wherein Thomas Edison, the deaf genius and inventor, developed the "most perfect reproduction of the human voice ever to come from a machine."

In his comparisons Dr. Read even includes the latest in electronics which he decries as unnatural and thin. Many paragraphs in the comprehensive volume are devoted to the gradual improvement of the phonograph, from the first box to the largest floor console. Though the huge Victor Orthophonic finally achieved a superb naturalness, later in 1926 -- but only then with improved electronic recordings, the older Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph had already reached superiority in natural fidelity as far back as 1912 -- and still used only acoustic records -- the heavy thick ones -- without electronic amplification or microphones.

Dr. Read backs up every claim of the Edison superiority, even to giving historical details about the actual live on-stage performances of the machine with the living artists -- and quoting audience and critics' acclaims who were present.

After winning my blockade of Florence Maggato's Red Barn, I carted my big old Edison home, where in my shop I've lovingly filled every scuff mark and patched tiny holes from the battles of kids who'd played her over the years. For a year I waited on Perry Stokes to repair the pivot of the speaker. When he did, I got tired waiting for him to come back and help me put the big thing back together. So, one day I got out my buggy tools and Model-T wrenches, and screwed all the big iron stove-bolts and square nuts and the whole thing back together.

A year ago, I saw an ad out in California, about a super Edison Reproducer for the old Edison Diamond Disc Phonographs, which claimed to be even louder and very high fidelity. It was developed by Edison in the last days of its manufacture, to prove Edison superiority, even in the face of radio and electronic reproduction. It was also made loud enough for dance halls. It fills every claim, is so superb that a band sounds right before you. No needles to change -- only the crank to wind, and me to listen, with no tubes or amps to get out of kilt.

On several occasions I've held my cassette mike into the old Edison speaker. The modern Norelco can't capture its superb, matchless fidelity, but when I play it at a Radio Shack, the boys really listen. They look a bit weird when I explain it's a 1915 phonograph playing a 1912 record. They don't know Edison hi-fi was whirling records back then. And if they were, what on earth did a feller plug into to activate all them transistors and wham up them speakers?



Though not an official Santa Claus, in the strict sense of the word, Red Bickel was a good runner-up for the honors of St. Nick. For at times, which was most of the time, Red could be full of the Old Nick, and he was jolly round red with ruddy face and a belly that shook like a bowlful of jelly all of the time.

And, just like Santa, Red Bickel loved to fondle little toys and trinkets which he stashed and stored for distribution in his garage atop Knob Hill on Bickel Avenue.

Though he never donned the familiar red suit or coiffured the famous white beard, and his headquarters lacked the lustre of North Pole ice and snow—Red's wholesale house

resembled the workshop of Old St. Nick more than many a storybook legend. Unlike Santa, dashing over rooftops in his sleigh behind eight prancing reindeer, and sliding down chimneys, kids' stockings to fill—Red Bickel drove far and wide his toys and trinkets to deliver. It was tantamount to Santa arriving in town—watching him lean into the rear of his long station wagon and fetch out his bag of gifts full of goodies.

And, like ol' Santa himself, Red never needed a heater in his rig. His body was his stove.

"Even in zero weather I drive with my window down and still sweat," said Red.

The 425 pound Red Bickel often joked about having to drive out to the livestock barns to get weighed.

"There just aren't big enough scales in town," he chuckled.

Once when I dropped by to see Red, he came tripping down Bickel Hill, like a frisky spring lamb, laughing all the way. "This isn't the same old Red you once knew. I've been dieting and lost sixty-five pounds," said he.

Looked like the same old Red to me. I thought he was kidding.

"Been cutting down on calories and eating less. And I feel much better," confided my fellow hometown, born 'n' bred in Union City. "Oh --- once a week I do allow myself the privilege of sneaking down to Parkmoor's and eat a chicken -- to sort of relax from the diet."

The only way Red Bickel could ever diet would be to get stuck in the doorway at T's Dairy.

It was cold and snowy when I followed in the footsteps of Albert Schlimmer to the little Mackinaw depot that day.

"Slim," as they called him down at the railroad, had received orders that the Dayton and Union local would be heading through Greenville, and needed clearing over the C.H.&D. tracks, to proceed to Union City.

It was a quaint country depot that Schlimmer was heading for -- at the end of that winding, snowy path, hard by the curve in 571 in the northwest part of Greenville. For here it was that the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad curved westward briefly, thence turned north to head to Jackson, Michigan, just a hundred sixty-eight and four-tenths miles, to the inch, away from that sign above the depot woodshed.

The icicles were both long and short, and of varying lengths between, that day, forming a jagged natural curtain from the tiny depot roof, barely two feet above Schlimmer's head. Inside, the only light to the ancient waiting room came through the dingy window, reflected by snow around the crossing outside.



Though the D.& U. was a dinky train, of one engine, a caboose, and a car or two -- it required the pulling of fourteen big levers to get the "whole train through."

As he pulled each lever, shifting different segments of track, and signals too, the entire sequence of the whole operational procedure required much more time than for the tiny train's passing. Following which it proceeded up the ancient tree-lined Dayton and Union Railway, for the last twelve miles between Dayton and Union City -- to deliver a single car of Pocahontas

coal to George Fisher's Coal Office.

Immediately after its passing, Schlimmer had to reverse the entire fourteen-lever operation, to line the busier C. H. & D. tracks for traffic again. Then, an hour or so later, when the little D. & U. returned from Union to Greenville, Schlimmer had to retrace his winding path through the snow, back to the tiny depot again and pull all fourteen levers again to let it through.

What Albert Schlimmer had just performed was one of the few remaining such operations in short-line railroading left in our country. And the little depot which resembled a forlorn, last-chance out-post, was indeed the smallest in the nation.

Here it was, many years ago, that Wert Williams of Union City used to occupy the station-master's round-backed chair, serving as operator of the interlocking system of levers, selling a ticket or two to the few passengers who drifted into the tiny waiting room, and sending messages and bulletins in Morse code, as brass pounder, up and down the line.

In only a year or two, both D. & U. and depot were gone -- and the interlocking system of levers too.

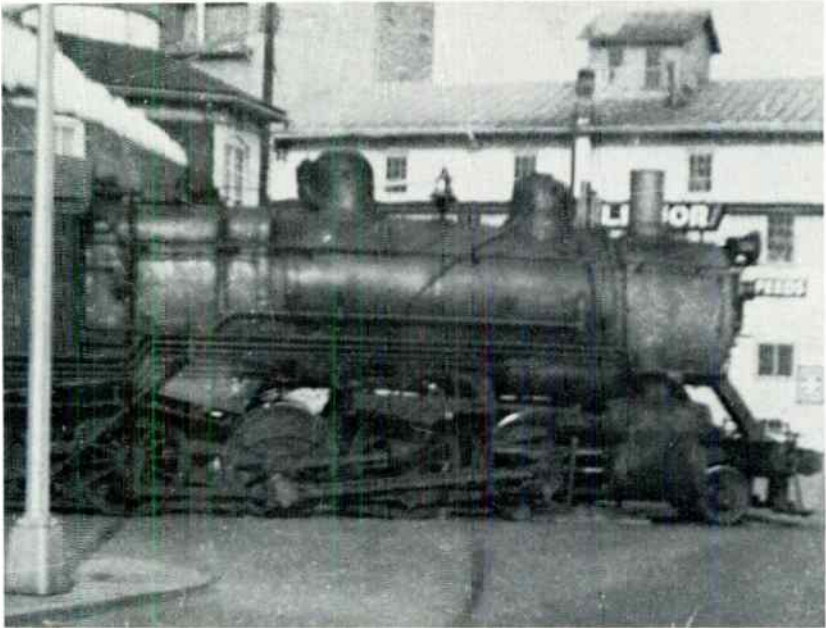
I hopped the last train to Union City, pulling the big Jordan Spreader which began plowing up the D. & U. roadbed as we returned. We no sooner got over the C. H. & D. crossing than the little train had to be stopped to remove a dead tree that had fallen in the path of the tiny locomotive. As we rambled on our sylvan, undisturbed right-of-way, tunneling through archways of trees overhead, all Nature seemed aroused and alarmed at our passing. Birds fluttered, bunnies hopped out of our way -- even a fox chased after our caboose as we clattered by that day. On our return from Union City to Greenville, I rode with the track foreman in the company rail-pick-up truck. On ahead we could see that the tiny diesel locomotive was having trouble raising the heavy Jordan plow. So we had plenty of time for the boss to stop by a thicket or two and cut some sassafras root while his roving eye searched out raccoon dens in hollow trees overhead.

"A steam locomotive could pump air faster to raise that plow," mumbled the foreman. Our return trip to Greenville was taking four hours. The engineer had already complained that using the little diesel was "like sending a boy to do a man's job."

Finally arriving back at Greenville, Albert Schlimmer once again pulled his fourteen levers, letting the tiny train pass, then returned them to their original positions.

Calling it a day, "Slim" went home, to relax in his little clock shop at the back of his house. While I hopped the little red caboose as the train wound its way past the tiny depot, and over the trestle up Walnut Street -- conductor Martin blowing the caboose back-up whistle for each crossing we passed.

"Here -- you can blow it," said he. Which I did, giving two last toots before hopping off. My last train ride aboard the old D. & U.



★ ★

They say an army marches on its stomach. But this VFW Color Guard couldn't get into their old World War Two uniforms to march in the Decoration Day parade, because of their stomachs.

For Paul Niley who had fought in the Battle of the Bulge with Patton, it meant the second "battle of the bulge" dieting on green salads to get his belly down so he could zip his zipper again.

At first I thought it was just another parade, then decided to run ahead down Broadway and snap this picture of Bob Slonaker, Paul Niley, Curly Faehl and Lowell Martin carrying Old Glory. The story and picture were in the Dayton News and appeared in newspapers coast to coast.



The history of Greenville is steeped in Indian lore. Long before Anthony Wayne signed the treaty with the Indians at Fort Greenville in 1795, opening up the Northwest Territory to the White Man, the Indian had followed the deer paths, in quest of wild game, which eventually set the pattern of travel and communication through the vast forestland for the settlers who followed. The trails of wild game became the footpaths of the Indian, followed by the white trapper, the lone courier on horseback, the first settlers, finally the military road hacked through the primeval forest by the White Man's invading army.

At best, the confrontation of the two civilizations, one static, the other advancing, created a tension that made life hazardous for both. Before either could survive, an agreement would have to be reached to alleviate the attrition. The culmination of which brought the Indian tribes of the Northwest Territory to an encampment at Fort Greenville for the purpose of signing a treaty with General Anthony Wayne which was to bring peace and outlaw war forever.

Such thoughts always stir within me, whenever I come face to face with one of our noble forebears, the American Indian. And my inner soul was a-stir with such matters when I stopped by and watched, transfixed, before a certain booth in the Darke County Fair coliseum. His work was confining, exacting -- milling out those endless names on redwood shingles which folks like to hang over their doorways. He worked hard, rarely relaxing -- for he had many mouths to feed and he didn't charge much for his shingles. Suddenly he thrust forth his strong hand and said, "I'm Chief Grey Owl -- and my wife, Little Pigeon."





Our conversation turned to Greenville, and then I mentioned the Indian Treaty which made his eyes light up. Inviting him to bring his family out to Garst Museum to view the Treaty, I made arrangements with curator, Gertrude Holzapfel, to open the doors special for such a distinguished guest. Instantly he shut off his shop equipment which consisted of nothing more than a poor man's milling machine -- an old vacuum sweeper motor with millhead attached.

In half an hour he appeared in full Indian chief regalia -- headfeathers, leather jacket and all, matched by Little Pigeon's Indian headband and long, braided black hair, followed by five li'l Injuns all in a row.

Gertrude Holzapfel beamed with pride when the distinguished entourage entered the Garst Museum portals and signed the register. First he wanted his little family to view the great Indian Treaty, for he had devoted much of his life to the cause of Indian and White Man justice.

"As long as the rivers flow, and the green grass grows -- the Indian shall have fishing and hunting rights," he read out loud. Then his kindly countenance saddened as he sighed, "For a long time we have been denied these rights." But, as a true believer in the Great Spirit, his attitude was understanding and not revengeful. For mortal man, both Red and White, have similar shortcomings.

(Continued next page)

With glowing pride Chief Grey Owl then pointed out the main characters in the original draft of the great painting of Howard Chandler Christy, which hangs in the front room at Garst Museum. "That is Little Turtle, there is Tecumseh, and to the right, General Wayne," explained the Chief to his brood of li'l Injuns who were quite attentive, while I focussed my frontier-like press camera in the background and snapped copious pictures of the grand extravaganza.

"We can't thank you enough for this rare opportunity to see these important documents and exhibits which are so dear to my people," said Chief Grey Owl, the epitome of politeness and understanding.

Holding his big hand up in typical tribal greeting, he was then off followed by his little brood in solemn, single-file procession for the drive back to his modern daily grind in the confines of his fairgrounds booth. Though the Great Indian-White Man Treaty didn't give him back his fishing and hunting rights, the White Man was once again crowding 'round him, paying for his craft. And he was making a living.



Even the rising generation becomes spellbound with awe whenever an Indian visits Greenville. For years the Harold Whites hand-crafted and sold their Mohawk jewelry at the Darke County Steam Threshers. But the real spellbinder came the year when the great chief, Lone Fox, of the Puma Tribe, invaded the Estey Woods east of town and agreed to pose with the grandkids, gently grasping their tiny hands while I hove my old press camera into position to snap the picture for posterity. Whatever their

mother, Lottie Fahnestock, and great grandpa, Ira Cox are amused about is probably the look of fright on the faces of both Tom and Chris. After all one doesn't get to grasp the hand of a heap big Indian Chief every day. Or could it be that they had been watching too many westerns on T-V?

At any rate, the kids continued watching the same cowboy and Indian shows when they went to Germany to live. For the rich Indian lore that once gripped Greenville and Darke County throughout its frontier destinies has now taken hold of Europe and spread throughout the world.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

All Greenville was a-bub with excitement, the day Gene Autry and Gail Davis arrived in town, back in March of '55, to give performances at various schools throughout the area in behalf of the nationally-televised Annie Oakley show.

For Autry, bedecked in western attire, the day's agenda meant repeated renditions of RUDOLPH THE RED NOSED REIN-DEER in the school gyms and auditoriums packed to the rafters with kids. After which there was a special assemblage on the steps of the St. Clair Memorial Hall -- during which Herb Stromer, the "Mayor of Sharpeye" rushed forward to show Miss Davis a pair of genuine cow-hide leather cuffs worn by Annie Oakley in wildwest shows and bearing the outline of her famous rifle. A rare item that Stromer had discovered at a local auction.

But the highlight of their visit to Darke County was a tour of Garst Museum, under the guidance of J. Lendall Williams, President of the local Darke County Historical Society, where they got a first-hand view of the famous Annie Oakley exhibit. Seeing the original historic wildwest show bills and colorful posters, the buckskin shooting garb, the famous guns and medals and personal effects of the reknown Annie Oakley from Darke County was just the spark the famous pair needed to lend authenticity to their nationally televised show.

Later, when it was learned that the famous Annie Oakley exhibit might be purchased and moved from Greenville to a museum in Cody, Wyoming, Miss De Hays announced the impending dilemma to her seventh grade English class at South School.

"Since this is National Letter Writing Week, I would suggest everyone write a letter to Mrs. Holzapfel, the curator of Garst Museum, and ask what is to become of the Annie Oakley Exhibit," she said, lending a sense of mission to the day's assignment.

"Does this mean we might lose the Annie Oakley Exhibit?" the kids cried. "Why can't we do something about it? We could give bake sales, mow lawns and babysit to raise money and keep it here in Greenville."

As the kids lent their hands to the task, I grabbed my old press camera and began taking pictures of students mowing lawns and scything weeds, girls cooing over babies on their laps and cookies, cakes and donuts being hawked in the doorways of local stores up and down Broadway. News of the campaign spread like wildfire throughout the schools of Darke County. When the story appeared in the Camera Magazine Section of the Dayton Sunday News, Mayor Hathaway showed it to Fred Coppock who immediately



responded by announcing, "For every dollar the kids raise, I'll match another dollar."

Gertrude Holzapfel became official co-ordinator as the nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars began filling the Annie Oakley Exhibit coffer at the curator's desk in Garst Museum. But the retaining price of \$24,000, asked by Annie Oakley's niece, Fern Swartwout, for the famous exhibit, was yet a long way off.

Fred Coppock lent a sympathetic ear when it was announced that the kids' total take in their combined efforts amounted to only \$670. Secret conclaves took place between Mayor Hathaway and Mr. Coppock. And even I became an unofficial liaison when Fern Swartwout began phoning me nightly to become apprised of the day to day proceedings.

Finally, through the combined efforts of Mayor Hathaway, Mr. Coppock and Fern Swartwout, with all three exuding a lot of public good will, a price of \$12,500 was agreed upon. And with Fred Coppock taking on where the kids left off, it looked like Annie's exhibit would be staying in Greenville forever.

It was down to the final game of the big Greenville Marble Tournament out in the cow barns at the Darke County Fairgrounds. Tom Clark had just spit-polished his fav'rite glass taw and was knuckling down on all fours, on the mud floor, to eliminate his last foe. All eyes, both young and old, were on Tom's thumb as it let go, scattering the commies to 'n fro.

Getting as much kick out of it as the boys, was junior high teacher, Kenny Pritchard who empathized at each shot, like he was playing -- though he was not.

Like the days, come spring, when every kid in my hometown used to tote his own bag of clay commies and glass taws to school each day. Boys played marbles at the drop of a hat, scrawling circles and knuckling down o'er the schoolhouse lot. Come recess, it was marbles all over again. After school we played marbles all the way up town, setting down our choicest taw to be tossed at and bagging more commies for the big games coming up. During the marble season all the sidewalks of the business district of downtown Union City became alive with rolling marbles. Boys would hold up their favorite glass taw as a tempter, then sitting down with legs spread apart, yell, "Four blocks for this one." Whoever hit it at four blocks got the taw, but before it was over one boy had all. For those more costly agates, the distance was lengthened to as far as eight to twelve blocks -- fetching in even more marbles for the lucky owner whether it was hit or not.





Running a beautiful and innocent young maiden through a sawmill, strapped to an oak log, is hardly the best way to win her true love. Which maybe explains why Joe McGreevey has remained all these years a confirmed bachelor.

But Joe, the villain, and Pauline, the maiden, have no doubt read the script of *THE FURTHER PERILS OF PAULINE* beforehand, secure in the knowledge that said sawblade will come thus far and no farther. Besides, the saw doesn't appear to be turning, Joe's eye isn't where his eye should be, either on the log or the pretty maid, though it should be the latter if her true love he would woo, and he certainly hasn't reckoned with Women's Lib in the deal.

But you just be brave, Pauline, for better things probably lie just ahead. Like being tied on the rails just as the D & U locomotive comes racing down the track. There's nothing like positive thinking, you know.

Swapping old-time, gaslight "meller-drama" for straight comedy, we see golden-haired, be-ribboned Misty Drake getting the finger and eye over Grandpa's bi-focals in a fleeting second of drama enacted in an 1890 Victorian setting. And that's none other than Martin Wogoman, leaning on his cane and doing the admonishing, in case you didn't know. All of which attests to the genius of Martin Wogoman who served as director and guiding light for many years over the dramatic and art classes of Greenville's Art Guild.

And a free jar of moustache pomade to veteran actor, the villainous Joe McGreevey for the many superbly-acted, sophisticated roles he's portrayed -- an inestimable contribution to the culture of his community.



★ ★

One year I determined to set forth in quest of the perfect, unharassed businessman making out his income tax at tax deadline time.

Holed up in his IRS hideout -- a sort of eagle's nest cave -- sat Joe McGreevey poring over the company ledgers, well camouflaged 'gainst a backdrop of multi-colored wall paper cascading off the walls like Niagara Falls.

Here was my man. With fresh-lit cigar at jaunty angle, Joe exuded confidence that the job, just begun, soon would be done.

Let's listen as he goes over his "ten-forty."

"X boxes of skunk cabbage and slippery elm lozenges; X



bundles o' poke weed, sassafras 'n pepper grass; add Y bottles of sarsaparilla, assafetida bags and cubebs; plus Z tins of sore toe and rheumatiz salve."

But the longer Joe labored, totaling remedies 'n figgers, the shorter the cigar and angle it dipped -- while further down the nose his spectacles slipped.

Before Joe was finished, he'd lost his temper, chewed up his stogie and his bi-focals slid off.

To the postoffice, before midnight, Joe went -- both physically 'n financially well spent. In the letter slot his finger got caught. While he fumbled, Joe mumbled, but quote him we'll not. For this unruffled businessman was ruffled 'n hot.

What Joe needed was skunk cabbage -- a lot.

★ ★

When WDRK started broadcasting, John Kennedy used to advertise a special-built F-M radio tuned only to the 106.5 frequency. If he could convince enough people to purchase the gadget, it would be a mighty good way to guarantee a captive, faithful listening audience.

During all my visits out to the WDRK studios, I never saw one of these radios. Nor do I ever recall seeing one elsewhere until recently when I happened to stop by the Clark Feed and Grain Elevator in Gettysburg.

When I spotted a dusty, well-worn radio in the form of an old-fashioned studio mike, in the elevator office window, it didn't register on me exactly what it was until I happened to notice the WDRK letters on it. Then, suddenly it dawned on me that it must be one of John's early gimmicks.

When I asked Ross Clark if he'd sell it, he said he wouldn't. As I pondered that old memento of WDRK's early days, the thought struck me, "Had John succeeded in selling one to every home in Darke County, WDRK would indeed have become what Congress might call a monopoly."





You needn't be a long-whiskered, old-time residenter to recall the thrills of visiting Bert Mathews down Water Street-way. Bert "had everything" -- stashed away in some nook or cranny of that big old house o' his'n, or in some dank, dark corner of his basement. And if you couldn't find it there, you could wander out through the rambling woodsheds 'n out-buildings and down over the hill in search of it. For Bert's vast storehouse of wares sprawled over every inch of the topography, from the curbstones and sidewalks clean down to "crawdad town" at the edge of Greenville "Crick."

It was tantamount to a liberal education to stop by Bert's emporium where you got a free-lecture forum on everything from the original McGuffey Readers to grind organs, rat traps 'n pig feeders. Whatever you stopped by to look, sniff or feel, Bert was right on your heel propounding wisdom -- ready to deal.

"Fahnestock -- if you can guess what that is, I'll let you have it for half price," was his usual patter, knowing I couldn't. After which came the clincher, "But, bein's it's you, Fahnestock, if you buy it today it's only half a dollar."

Whenever I went there needing something -- Bert always had it. And things I didn't need -- he had them, too, which I usually wound up buying with Bert admonishing me most emphatically that I couldn't live without 'em. Now, years later, after cracking my skull and breaking my neck stumbling over them, I wonder how I've survived at all.

But oh, the many interesting gadgets I almost turned down for a dollar or so -- the thought horrifies what they're worth today. And how often I've wished I could reverse time just long enough to buy that beautiful little ebony foot-pedal roll organ with the beveled glass that showed the works and played so magnificently -- for \$7.50, now worth a thousand.

When WDRK came to Greenville, I no longer had to hang out at election headquarters all night. For my newspaper totals I just tuned to John's station -- for the duration. But one night Clancy's voice began cracking and he started packing.

Phoning frantically to the station, I yelled, "John, you promised the total vote. But Clancy's ready to jump boat."

"Hang in -- we'll hang on," quoth John. "And whatever music you want I'll put on."

But I felt for poor Clancy, trapped in his plight, croaking out votes the rest of the night, while John played my music till dawn's early light.

Then BOOM came the sportscast -- 'twas Clancy all right.

* * * * *

During the big winter storm, Bill Booker was practically snow-bound at the WDRK studio. Ditching his daily programs, he directed traffic, warned of hazardous railroad crossings and slippery intersections throughout Greenville and Darke County. The heroic efforts of this "volunteer traffic cop" really helped the members of the regular force during the emergency.



CLANCY PLESSINGER



BILL BOOKER



There was the night of the big windstorm. I had been working late, developing negatives and writing my story in the Glasgow Studio, formerly Burdge's, on the second floor over Ethel Booker's Millinery Store. Setting out for Union City, I was suddenly stopped west of town by a downed pole. Overhead I could see the line crews working furiously to restore power during the storm. Returning to Greenville, I was informed by the police at city hall that a tornado had just passed west of Greenville, and a report from the State Patrol that a second cloud funnel was seen in Indiana heading in the same direction.

Finally, at two a.m., I once again headed for Union City, noting places of wind damage along the way. Heading back toward Greenville at the crack o' dawn, my camera bag loaded with flash bulbs and fast film, I hastily took pictures of the damage left by the path of the storm. The destruction of the government grain bins, west of Greenville, were quite impressive but they were a long distance away from a fence I couldn't climb with all my paraphernalia. Opening my Zeiss Tessar lens to f: 3.5, slowing the speed to 1/25th, extending the range of the reflector and popping in a flash bulb, I snapped the shutter, hoping the tiny light would reach the bins across the field. Enroute to Dayton I hastily stopped on the highway and focussed on a demolished barn, thence proceeded to the Dayton News, arriving just at the deadline. The State Desk told me they were already preparing another feature of mine for the day's edition, and for me to report over at the City Desk. The City Editor said, "You've beaten our own staff photographers. This is a special dispensation, we'll hold the paper until your negatives are developed. While I was giving my story, in only 20 minutes the large, glossy photos were being returned to the desk. My little flash bulb had reached out and penetrated the distance to the grain bins, with a result of detail and fidelity. All pictures came out equally well. I was treated like a hero. A stringer had saved the newspaper in its storm coverage that day. Had it been a lazy, hazy summer day I wouldn't have done so well.

"And that's all for today."



It was a tense moment when Dennis Hanson tried to beat Bob Hawes in checkers one night at the Boys' Club. As founder and director of Greenville Boys' Club, Bob Hawes, who had no children of his own, was the unofficial "Dad" to every lad in town.



The late Catherine Moore, head librarian at Greenville's Carnegie Library, often held classes for children in the selection and reading of good books. In her quiet, unassuming manner Miss Moore was a guiding light to many a young student in the realm of wholesome literature before the schools had the well organized modern libraries of today. In searching out specific material on vast and varied subjects she had few peers, as I found out later.



The occasion was a very painful tooth which I had extracted by Dr. Turner of Union City. But the pain remained unbearable as if it hadn't been pulled. Returning to his office the next day, he probed the surrounding teeth and said, "I'm sure we removed the right one."

Discovering that cold water in my mouth relieved my torture, I carried a bottle of water along when we went east to spend Easter holidays with my son at Camp LeJeune. When the water warmed up to body temperature in my mouth the pain returned, and I had to expectorate and refill with cold water again. I attended Easter morning church services and ate Easter fried chicken, my bottle in my pocket for instant and often refills of my dental orifice.

Returning to Greenville I was called out to the country to cover a story for the Dayton News about some neighbor farmers getting in the crops for a sick friend. I apologized to one of the farmers for having to carry my bottle and refill my mouth with cold water to alleviate the pain of a tooth which had been pulled but didn't stop aching. And he replied, "Maybe you have 'dry socket.'"

(Continued next page)

"What is 'dry socket?'" I asked.
 "I've heard my wife mention it. She has been a dental technician," he said. "Maybe you'd better ask her."
 Just then a young Dunkard lady came out on the porch of the farm house and I asked her to explain a "dry socket."
 "Sometimes a gum doesn't bleed properly after extraction and it causes pain," she explained.
 Returning home, my wife suggested asking Miss Moore if she had any literature pertaining to the subject of a "dry socket." Which I did. And which she found, even referring me to the very pages to read.

The last time I had a tooth hurt like that, was when I had a sore and festered molar. One dentist in Greenville said I must go to a Dayton specialist for an extraction of that nature. But, instead I walked around the corner and up to old Doc Clear's above Wieland's.

"Some doctors are afraid to pull a tooth when it's swollen like that," laughed Clear as he bent over me, then lowered a hog hook into my mouth to yank it.

Painless dentist? Hardly. But his impish, grinning visage in the dim lights, like a clown bent on torture, psyched me witless of horror.



The only time Tom Kelly stuck his chest out further than when he was wearing his Chief of Police badge was for "wearin' the green" come St. Patrick's Day. (And I'm still wonderin' why.)



"Knit one, purl two. Knit one, purl ?

How's that go again? I forgot. You mean I've got to unravel this thing and start all over again?

Pity the poor preacher, the truant officer and substitute teacher.

For the Rev. Harold Messmer, filling pulpits at Abbottsville and Nineveh churches bodes no fear. Nor does the chasing of kids who play hookey all year. What makes this preacher a miserable creature is trying to get by as a substitute teacher. Knows forward and backward the sermon he'll preach and the addresses of kids he must reach -- but never the class or subject he'll teach.

True -- the lot of the substitute teacher is not a very 'appy one. Though in knowledge he's brilliantly knit-pickin' -- his next class may be just sittin' 'n knittin'.

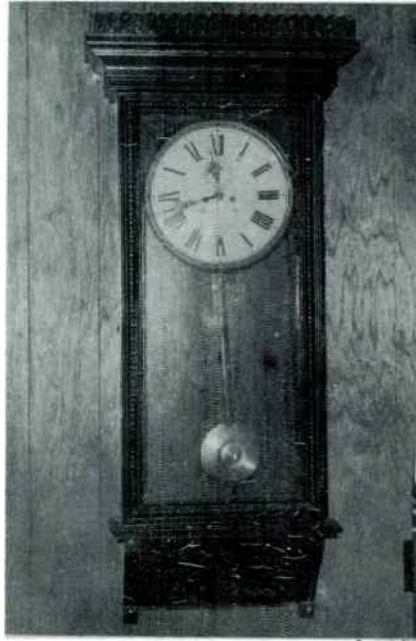
"My fingers are all thumbs," said Rev. Messmer who was doing just that -- "Purl two, knit one. Purl two, knit one," the day he taught knitting, with the help of the girls in junior high home economics class.

The next day he had to demonstrate the motherly art of baby care -- diaper changing, feeding and all that.

"With my brood at home, this comes easier than knittin'."

But easiest of all comes the preaching of the Word, for the Rev. Harold Messmer -- one of three brothers who have distinguished themselves in the ministry and service of the Lord. Rev. Charles Messmer who is presently serving as assistant administrator of the Otterbein Home. And the Rev. William Messmer who supplemented his early struggles as a Darke County pastor with his expertise in making fine sausage -- eventually to emerge as Conference Superintendent of the Evangelical United Brethren Church for twenty years. Now serving as Administrative Assistant to the Bishop of the Western Ohio Conference.

Said the Rev. Harold Messmer, "I am happiest preaching in the rural and village communities."



This old Waterbury clock hung for years in the Darke County courthouse recorder's office.

"In those days, before stamps, they needed a very accurate clock in the recorder's office, for filing deeds and mortgages," said Jim Bryson, court stenographer for years. "People would often rush to the courthouse to register, especially deeds, before someone else beat them. The recorder marked down the time they were filed."

"My husband was the recorder and he liked that old clock so well, when they replaced it with a new electric clock, they just gave it to him," said Mrs. Karl Schmalenberger. "He hung it up in our attic, by the chimney, but he died before he could fix it up."

The old clock has an R. O. Wieland Jewelry sticker in the case.

"Wieland had the contract for keeping the timepieces of the courthouse running," said Bill Nill. "Even the town clock in the tower. So he probably ordered this clock for them, and also repaired it."

Seeing it hanging in the garage of Bill Flory's up on State-line St., in Union City, I thought I'd out-swap Bill for it. Packing three smaller clocks in the back seat of my car, I covered one with a blanket, hoping Bill would see only two.

When Bill looked in, he said, "It'll take all three clocks for this one." (He noticed! Saw right through that blanket, he did.)

But I saved the old clock for local posterity.

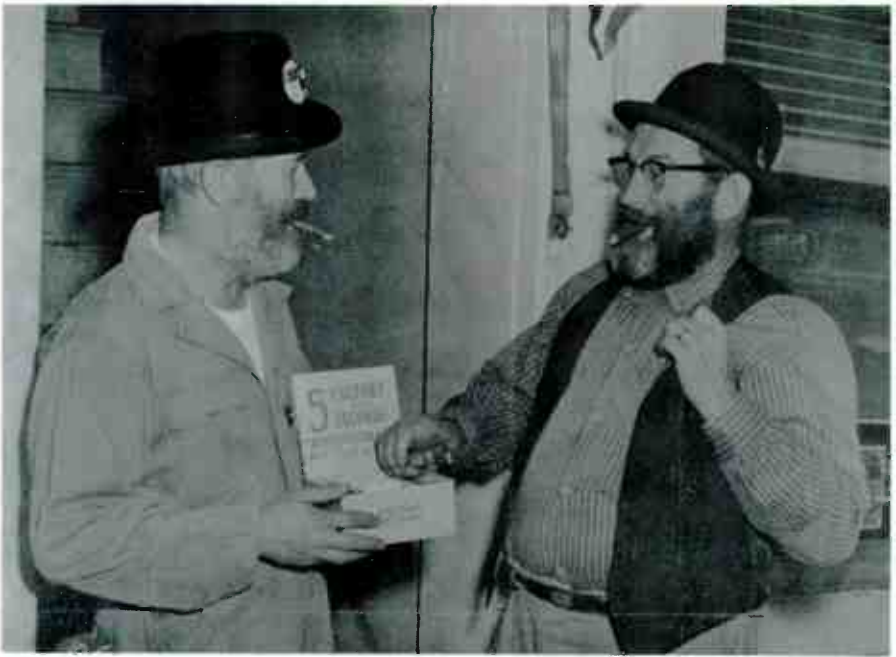


Carl Deubner always like to "Set a spell," along loafer's row, in front of the courthouse lawn, arguing politics. But whenever I tried to sneak a picture of him and his pipe, his head always turned away from my camera.

"If you want my picture, take it of me in my old Fife 'n Drum outfit," said he. "I belong to one of the last Fife and Drum corps in the nation."

So I waited and waited on the second floor studio, for Carl Deubner to arrive. Which he finally did -- bedecked in his white uniform, with his fife and an old war drum 'longside. And I got the picture, on my very last film.

If you saw this picture in the pages of a Mathew Brady Civil War Album, you'd think nothing of it. But, taken a hundred years later, on Broadway in Greenville, it's a classic pose belying our times. As classic as the music, in martial rhythm, that Carl and his group came marching down the street playing in many a patriotic parade of his times.



Behind all that centennial shrubbery is Bill McVay and Chalmer Bish, sampling a box of five-cent Factory Seconds, during sesquicentennial festivities along Broadway in Greenville.



Nobody, but nobody 'round Greenville ever trusted the weather bureau's prognostications 'bout winter, without second-checking their guess with the Wayne Lakes Woolly Worm Man.

(Continued next page)

"I always tell by the brown and black rings," said Clark Johnson who always made a good story for the Dayton Daily News at the onset of winter. "This year the wooly worm is brown at both ends and black in the middle. Means winter will begin mild and end mild, but be cold in the middle."

"That's what Clark says, 'n I'm ricking up my stove wood accordingly," said neighbor Glee Welch.



Wes Duvall, veteran blacksmith of Coletown, Ohio, enjoys a pipeful of "shed navy" beside his model of an old Baker steam thresh engine. The model was powered by a small electric motor which set in motion the tiny piston and fly-wheel belted to a miniature sawmill. Wes flicked a switch which lit up the case and started buzzing up a cord of scale-sized stove wood to cook his spring dandelion greens on the old kitchen range. Note the collection of old pipes atop the case -- probably one for each day of the week, if I knew Wes Duvall.

Duvall was a master smithy of the old order who held forth in a little ramshackle, weather-beaten blacksmith shop northwest of Coletown. You could always tell when Wes was smithing by the chugging of the big one-cylinder gas engine which powered the old overhead line-shafts while his blacksmith shanty trembled to the rhythm. A master artist in iron, Wes Duvall built my old "Joe Dear" one-cylinder Delco-powered garden tractor thirty years ago, which has appeared in many antique engine parades and still plows garden each spring.



Hizzoner, Mayor Mark Baughn, made an official sidewalk proclamation in front of the State Theatre which opened "Greenville Week" by the showing of a special Greenville Movie that evening. Bob Schinke does the em-ceeding, while the crowds line up to buy tickets to the historic event.

Prior to his politickin' days, Baughn was affiliated with the Peoples' Livestock Exchange Barns, west of Greenville. And well do many remember the wonderful displays of fireworks he used to sponsor for the country folk who congregated in front of the Roscoe Lane Country Store at Sharpeye, years ago, to observe the aerial incendiaries, each Fourth of July, while Sharpeye village "mayor," Herb Stromer, played host.



As I leaned on a trackside rail to get this picture of the original starting gate heading the Dr. Parshall Futurity event, little did I dream it would appear on official Darke County Fair posters for years to come.

"Yes -- we've heard of the Great Darke County Fair, but where do you say it's located?"

True, the Great Darke County Fair is known far and wide, whether Greenville, Ohio, is or not. Just like Annie Oakley. For Darke County has held a record of being one of the nation's richest agricultural counties in the land. And that is what county fairs are all about.

But going to the county fair just isn't like what it used to be. Time was when folks didn't get to the county seat more than once or twice a year -- for payin' their taxes. And going to the Great Darke County Fair was one of them, back when folks packed the boot of their buggy full of farm fried chicken and lemonade and loaded the wife and kids up, for a day of picknickin' and fun.

Later, they rattled to the county seat fairgrounds in a fender-floppin' Model-T "Tin Lizzie" to take in the sights 'n sounds 'n smells of the Great Darke County Fair. But still others went a different way, back in that day.

Like Uncle George who went out to stay with his Uncle John and Aunt Dony when he was a kid. For him, the day meant rising at the crack o' dawn each morning -- and working till sundown each evening, then flopping dead tired into a straw-tick to snooze until another day -- when he had to do it all over again.

"The week of the Darke County Fair, Uncle John and Aunt Dony gave me a day off and fifteen cents spending money to attend," says Uncle George.

Fortified with his dime and nickel, Uncle George had to somehow get to the fair -- a full twelve miles away -- either by hitching a ride behind a farm wagon, or hoofing it 'cross field and stream until he arrived at the grounds. If he was lucky enough to sneak in through a hole in the fence, he had all of his fifteen cents to spend that day. His only problem being to somehow figure how he could eat three square meals while there, buy all the ice cream candy and lemonade he desired, see all the sideshows, play all the games, ride the merry-go-round and ferris wheel, visit the Penny Arcade, and munch all the popcorn and peanuts he could buy and still have pocket money left over. Then he still had to figure out a way to get home.

"When I finally arrived back at Uncle John's, it was about an hour before milking time the next morning," says Uncle George. "Figuring I didn't want to rouse anyone, I just removed my shoes and slipped through the house, down the hallway to my room."

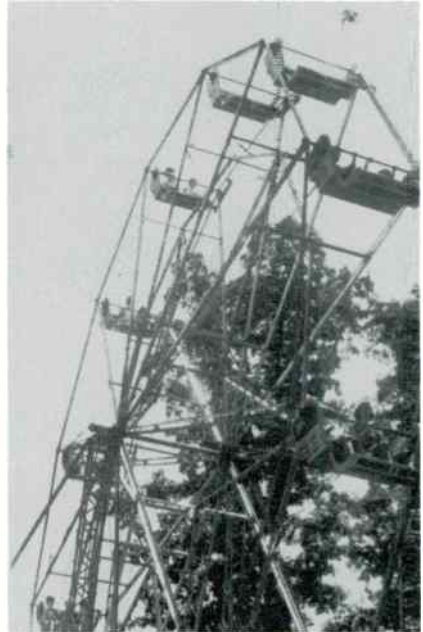
"All of a sudden, Aunt Dony called out and said, 'George -- did you fetch me some ice cream candy?'"

Yes -- Uncle John and Aunt Dony held onto their money. 'Twas a fright. And giving Uncle George a whole day off with all of fifteen cents to spend at the fair, well wouldn't it be only fitten' that he should think of them that had to stay home -- by sharing?

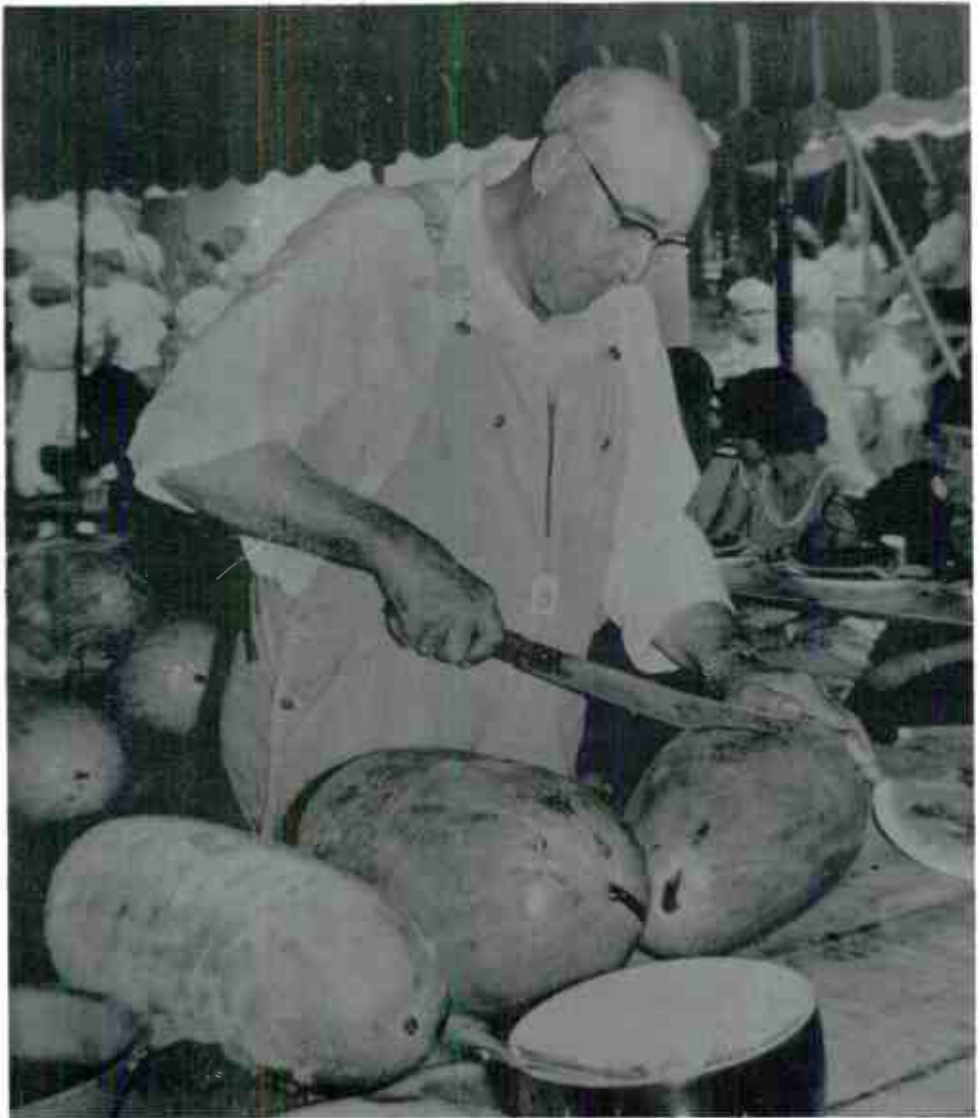
Yet Uncle John and Aunt Dony spent money like wildfire, compared to how Uncle John spent it, after Aunt Dony died. Said John, "I cook up a big kittle of beans and eat out of it all week. And I only flush the toilet once a week to save on water." (The

water was free.)

A far cry, getting a day off and fifteen cents to spend at the fair, from the modern kids who shake their "old man" down for a ten spot and are driven each day to the fair to spend it -- or drive Dad's car, leaving the family home instead.



The watermelon stand was always a welcome place to set down a spell, cool your dogs and munch a heaping slice of ice cold watermelon while watching the rest of the crowd trudge by. And the melon always tasted a "leettle" bit better when Mr. Vernon Duncan, who raised the melons and fetched them to the fair, was on hand to do the slicing.



But, though the Darke County Fair has changed with the times, too, over the more than a century of its history, there are yet the main-stay foundations and purposes for its being. Folks go to the county fair because it's the biggest show of the year. Though the tractor has replaced the farm horse, and modern cars the horse-drawn buggy and Tin Lizzie, once the family

gets there they can still exhilarate over the prize pumpkin, the tallest sunflower, the fattest pig and plumpest chicken quite as well as the ferris wheel, the strongest man in the world and the balloon ascension. True the flickering gas lights of the gay midway in grandpa's heyday lent its special mystic charm and illusion. And the fact that grandpa only made such a trip once a year added import to the occasion. But the modern fairgoer still enjoys the cotton candy, the roasted peanuts, the pink lemonade, the livestock judging, the running of the horses and the big grandstand parade. Folks still go, to loll on the race track fences while visiting with other folks they don't see the rest of the year. Or to rest their dogs 'neath the grandstand shade, while watching the crowd pass by.

It's still the greatest show of the year -- the county fair. And the Great Darke County Fair is one of the best and biggest with the mostest.

But if Uncle George was going today, Uncle John and Aunt Dony would surely have to give him a dime raise in allowance -- two-bits to be precise -- if he was expected to make a day of it -- and, oh yes, fetch some cotton candy to Aunt Dony.



For years one of the familiar sights on Greenville city streets, and outlying highways, has been the fast-pacing figure of "Doc" Thoden, leaning into the head-wind. One of the nation's champion hikers, "Doc" boasted he'd never driven a car -- or even wanted to. Even his friends, driving by, desist giving him a lift, because they know "Doc" prefers hoofing to riding. And the mileage he can clip off at a lively pace rates walking as not only healthful and economical, but a mighty dependable way of

getting from place to place.

Early of mornings "Doc" Thoden can be seen pacing off the two miles from his home, across Greenville, to the House of Lowell -- a cosmetics firm where he holds the double title of Doctor of Chemistry and vice president.



Five or six weekends a year his "Sunday drive" may consist of walking from Greenville to Piqua to enjoy a cup of coffee with a friend. Though the friend always offers to drive him back, "Doc" prefers walking -- making a total of forty-four miles both ways. (Cheaper than buying gas and coffee by the cupful.)

From 1928 to '31, "Doc" was speed walking champion of the state of New York and has served as president of that state's Polar Bear Club.

"We'd often take invigorating dips in the surf when the temperature registered zero or below," says "Doc." "I never knew what a cold was at that time."

Only on rarest occasions does "Doc" Thoden ever submit to riding in a car -- like when he goes deer hunting up in Michigan.

"One year my hunting companions couldn't find a hole in the deer I shot," chuckled "Doc." "So they said I just walked him to death."

Those fifty-mile walkathons, popular a few years ago, never inspired "Doc." "Fifty miles would be easy," said he, not bragging. For, at the time, this World War One veteran, at 65, was averaging a leisurely fifteen miles a day without trying, which totaled to about five-thousand a year.

"No -- I never married," said "Doc," a confirmed bachelor. "That would be the longest mile I ever walked," chuckled the champ, who would probably set a new speed-walking record if faced with a proposal.

The morning I tried to out-pace "Doc" Thoden, to get his picture, I thought I'd be smart and focus my old Speed Graphic and accelerate the Compur shutter in advance. For, yonder in

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the distance, I could see him a-comin' -- like an express train highballing the main. But he'd already whizzed past me before my fumbling finger could flip the shutter. With tongue hanging out and camera flying I kept trying. Dashing ahead, fighting his strong tail-wind, I tried to out-flank then cut in ahead of this fast-moving object, then gain enough ground to assume a photographer's stance for a second chance. But, 'fore I could turn 'round, "Doc" was on me like a hound. To save my hide I stepped aside -- trying again and again to win. Which finally I did.

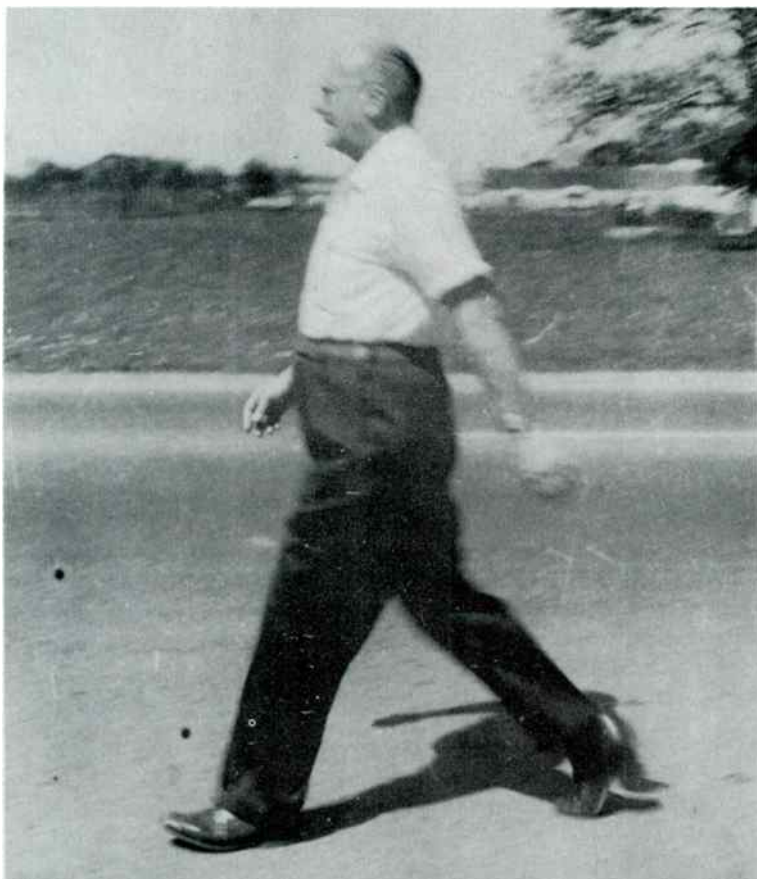
Now herein lies a moral revelation. Don't ever get in "Doc" Thoden's path when he's hoofin' your way 'cause "Doc" has no brakes and no whistle. Never looks right or left, or has time to fiddle.

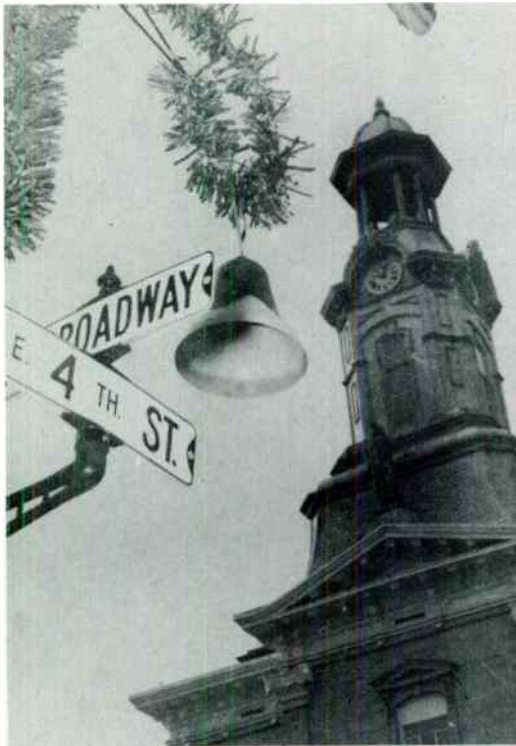
So intense his concentration to reach destination -- no time for botheration is "Doc" Thoden's philosophy.

"Walking is relaxing to me," says "Doc." "I can think out problems I couldn't solve the night before."

By the time I huffed 'n puffed through the House of Lowell doors, the self-educated Ph. D. in Chemistry was already at work in his test tube lab -- all muscle and no flab.

Maybe by the time I get this guy figured out, I'll put my jitney in hock -- and hire "Doc."





Greenville is many things and many memories -- to many people. The hub of many Indian battles culminating in the signing of the Great Treaty between the Indian and White man, that opened up the Northwest Territory; home of the first white child born in Ohio; childhood stomping ground for Annie Oakley and permanent home for the Annie Oakley exhibit; famed for the Commander Lansdowne residence.

Greenville, the county seat of Darke County, is all things for all people. In and out of its noble courthouse daily stream all walks of life -- the gifted, the wealthy, the affluent, the righteous, as well as the upper and lower middle class and the pauper, the sinner as well as the saint, lawyer, preacher, beggar man, thief -- either to pay the tax, file a record, request a stipend, or clarify a point of law, seek a court ruling, ask the price of beans or get stuck with a community immunity Health Department needle.

But Greenville is more than that, a blending of the recent past with the ever present. It is Dwight Brown tuning a fiddle, leading the big brass band and blowing "Oompah" on a tuba in the high school music class. It is Walt McGreevey mixing up ice cream for teenagers while Joe McGreevey doubles as Mephistopheles in an Art Guild extravaganza; Jim Bryson flourishing script on graduation diplomas, Democratic and Republican headquarters, election boards, depots and factories -- dry goods and hardware stores, preachers, lawyers and poets -- and the rest of human life and activities.

Big things, like audio visual in our schools, stemmed from humble beginnings. Like the time Ed Powell phoned that his service club was going to present an electric record player to one of the Greenville schools and I rushed over to get an official picture of the proceedings with my drugstore box camera.

Miss Elizabeth Hill, director of the Greenville High School Chorus, was there, admiring and graciously accepting the welcome gift from Ed Powell and Chuck Covert who presented it. Though it wouldn't make much impression among the more sophisticated audio visual equipment in our Greenville Schools today, the humble little portable phonograph was a significant first-step toward it.

At about the same time I received a call from principal Lowell Bowers at South School, telling me about his school's first flower and vegetable show.



"We've never tried this before, but I felt it would encourage the kids to put out gardens if we displayed some of the things they raised," explained Bowers.

Then there followed other innovations, prompted by Principal Bowers.

"The kids down here at South School are tapping a big maple tree out in front, to catch some maple syrup," said he. "We'll try boiling some to make maple sugar."

He probably knew how. For when I stopped by the Dairy Isle south of Greenville, to buy some ice cream cones, one summer -- Lowell Bowers and his wife, Evelyn, were not only dippin' my cones, but also topping sundaes with all flavors of syrups that day.

Principal Bowers, South School innovator, had innovated a new way of sweetening up the kids of Greenville schools, come summer vacation time.





When I heard they were clearing out the old Western Union office in Greenville, I thought I'd drop by and take a picture of the master clock. When I got there the big clock was gone.

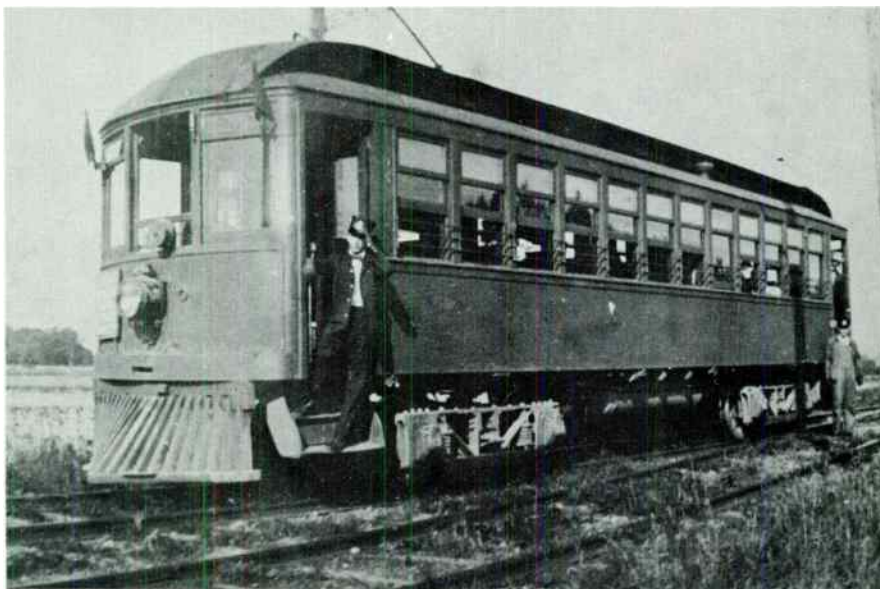
While taking some pictures of the fellows removing equipment, I asked for a little memento for nostalgia. They unscrewed a telegram holder and handed it to me. Then they held up one of the teletype machines and told me I could have it, or they'd junk it. After which they gave me the second teletype, also the metal table, and operator's chair.

When I went to pick my wife up after school, she said, "What's all this in our Jeep?" I answered, "The Greenville Western Union office!" (All but the clock.)

Remember the electric interurban? If you ever rode one you'd never forget.

What a thrill it was, boarding the big green and black traction car at the Union City Y-terminal, where passengers transferred from the Indianapolis-Muncie cars to travel over into Ohio.

The rhythm of the air-pumps, the smell of ozone from the overhead trolley, the "All aboard" from the conductor made the pulse beat faster as the heavy car began inching around the curve onto Pearl Street, thence across the stateline into Ohio. Proceeding down Elm Street, our speed increased, then slowed a bit as the big car rounded the curve east of town and began the climb to the high wooden trestle over the D. & U. tracks. Suddenly our car seemed air-borne, as we looked down on Bill Friedline's old barn and the little red school below. Curving wide across 571, our conductor called, "Stonersville," then, "Hillgrove" and "Coletown" -- the motorman slowing the car, ready to stop for passengers along the way.



O'er bridges, through meadows and farmland we sped as the motorman tooted his whistle to warn crossings ahead. Fences and power-poles flashed by our window "like the deuce," as the "motineer" kept throttling more 'n more juice.

Up Broadway our cow-catcher aimed at town hall, but the motorman he missed it like a curve-ball. We cut a wide arc, 'round village square, heading straight at the depot, I swear. Then our brakes "took a-holt" and we stopped with a jolt, jerking heads on shoulders like a landslide o' boulders. "Greenville!" yelled the conductor -- that lout! The nerve o' him -- ordering, "Everyone out!"

"Do I remember the interurban? You've got to be kidding," said Gertrude Holzapfel. "Why I rode the very last car from

(Continued next page)



Down came the century-old James Hotel, at the west end of the public square -- to make way for the new city hall.

For Mayor Tillman Hathaway it was a proud moment, the day folks gathered to watch him wield a bright silver trowel, sealing records in the cornerstone of what was to become Greenville's new municipal building.

One day I chanced to meet the mayor in the corridors of the new building, shortly before his death -- and commented, "I'm so glad the style is early American, rather than a modernistic monstrosity."

And he replied, "Fahnestock, I fought all the way against modernistic plans to build it this way."

What does a feller do on his 100th birthday? Well, if he happened to be Muggs McGriff, he probably enjoyed a cup of coffee with his family doctor, over the counter at Martindale's restaurant. With the coffee all "saucered 'n blowed," ready to drink, the conversation drifted back through memory lane -- to "the time when."

"Gonna march Muggs down to my office 'n give him his annual heart check-up," said Doc Sarver, as the two set their cups down and hoofed out together.



"Heart runs like a sewing machine," said Doc, laying his stethoscope aside, minutes later.

Muggs McGriff's closest friend, for many years, was the ninety year old Charlie Bigler whom he called "young feller."

Though the two of 'em couldn't talk books together, and they didn't agree on religion, the both of 'em liked horses, so they did a lot o' "horsin' around" together.

"I went to school only one day," 'minded Muggs. "When the teacher told me to take my hat off, I ran out, down the road, and talked to some gypsies who were sitting on their horses around a camp. And I never went back."

Quite a contrast to the well-educated, country school-master, Charlie Bigler, who believed in God and taught Sunday School, which Muggs didn't. No, it wasn't the fear of God that kept these opposites together. It was horses -- and that long

old ear-tube of Charlie's so he could hear what Muggs had to say -- and the two of 'em could do horse-talk together.

For years Muggs ran the Oak Saloon on Broadway, while Charlie taught the three R's to the tune of a hick'ry stick in the ivied halls of Buzzard's Glory one-room country school. Whenever Muggs opened up a bottle of beer for a customer, he laid the caps in long rows behind the bar for the beer truck man to count his next time around. Unlike Charlie whose figurin' was sound, Muggs couldn't count.

When the Great Darke County Fair opened for its hundredth year, it was Muggs who was chauffeured first through the gates in a rattling Tin Lizzie -- to receive the number one ticket from secretary Gilbert Lease. Then over to the race track he sauntered, to wait for Bigler who came later and paid, minus fanfare and aid.

Later, when I visited the McGriff's, to take a picture during their 75th anniversary of wedded bliss, the bride, still blushing, said this, "I'm perfectly happy."

But Muggs viewed marriage more real. Quoth he, "I won this house in a poker game deal."



★ ★

John H. Foster was his name. But I always called him Johnny "Horse" Foster because a horse race never could have been run at the Darke County Fair without him. Furnishing all the fancy, ornate silver loving cups and horse coolers -- trophies to the winning horse and driver -- was his job around the fair raceway. He was as much a fixture at the Great Darke County Fair as that ancient judge's stand with the pagoda roof which used to stand across the track opposite the grandstand. Foster could take one look at a horse with his good eye and judge it in an instant, whether it was a thoroughbred. And if it wasn't, his Irish wit pronounced it fit for only dog food -- pronto. His name was a by-word around every county fair race track and horse barn throughout the tri-state

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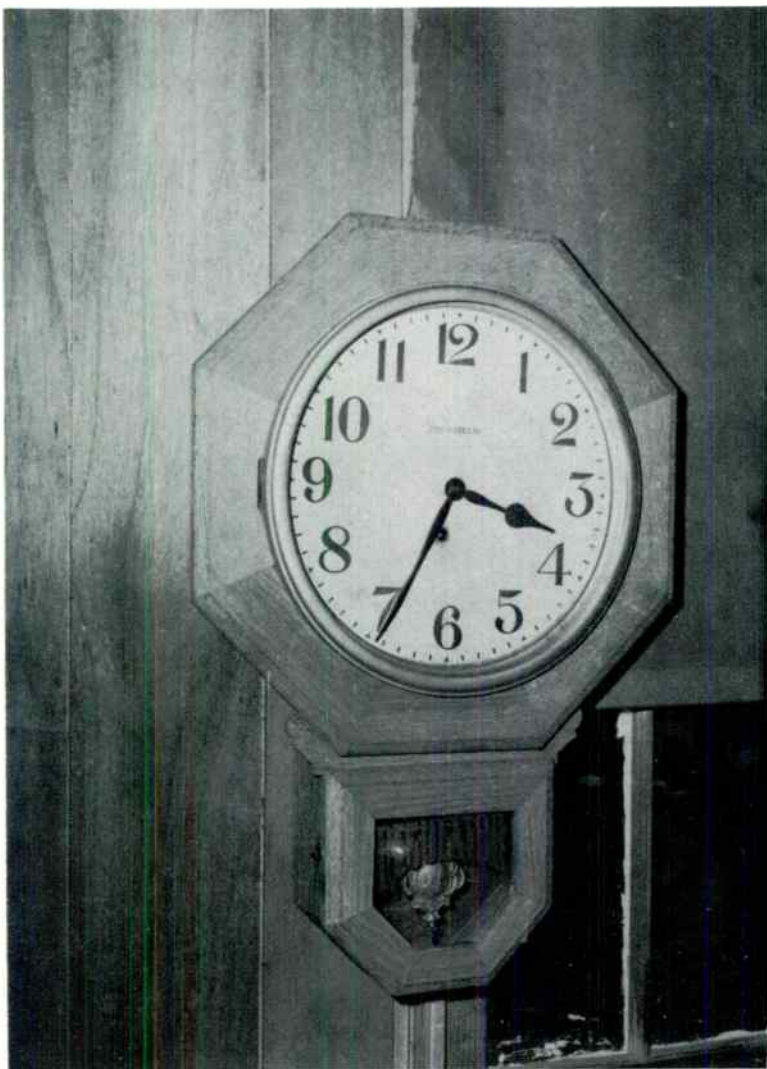


area of Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. He walked and talked with the greatest, the wealthiest and the humblest and all conversation was on a first-name basis. For a year or two it was my experience, through pain and pleasure, to serve part-time as secretary to the great Mr. Foster. Writing letters about trophies to the elite of the horse racing world throughout the U. S. and Canada often posed its ordeals betwixt us. Foster would bark out rapidly what he was trying to say. But it was my job to type it out in readable, grammatical language, polishing it with a coherence and finesse that would guarantee return orders for Johnny's trophies. Altogether in a different style than Foster would say it.

Often he'd pause right in the middle of the muddle to tell me a story about the prominent personage or the race horse stable we were writing to. Like the millionaire lady in Canada who had so much money she invented ways of spending it. So she had expensive diamonds set in the teeth of some of her thoroughbreds.

But none of it ever spilled over onto me. For I never got rich, working for a dollar a day for Johnny "Horse" Foster.

This old Ingraham clock hung for years in the first Eikenberry neighborhood grocery on the corner of Harrison and Sater in Greenville. Many an old order Brethren lady has counted her egg money and bought groceries from Myron Eikenberry 'neath its swinging pendulum, then looked up at its hands before rushing home to prepare dinner. And many a factory hand has paused to glance at its face, while buying a pack of chewing scrap -- so's not to be late for the morning whistle. While kids, heading with tablet and pencil to South School, it kept from being tardy.





Whenever Ed Schwartz heard a joke once, he never forgot it. Whether he'd heard it at some medicine show, in a black-face minstrel or -- we hazard the guess -- even at a burley-cue, it was his forever. And Ed had a headful on those shoulders o' his.

Over the years, Ed Schwartz and Dwight Brown would gang up together -- to put on some of the rip-roarin'est minstrels the town ever had.

"I just wish Brownie and I could get the gang together for one more minstrel," pined Schwartz in his latter days.

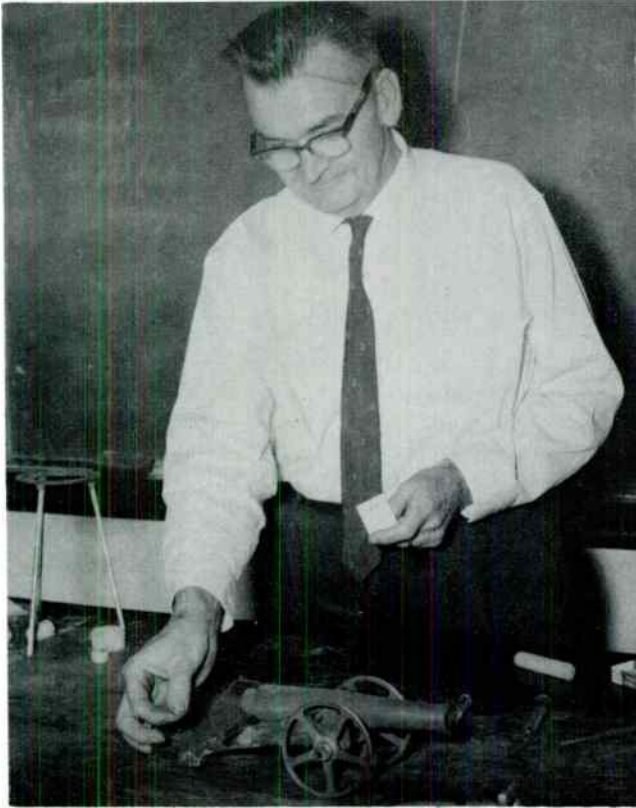
But the highlight of the old showman's career came on those special days, when Ed was invited as guest soloist to sing the Star Spangled Banner at the Reds Baseball Stadium. A feat that could frazzle the nerves of many a singer, but not Ed's. For Greenville fans it was always extra special, hearing

Schwartzzy boom forth about "The bombs bursting in air," just before game time.

But I remember Schwartzzy best the time he had his bathroom fixtures on exhibit at the coliseum Home Show. He was tired 'n pooped at the end of the day. So he sat on a toilet in his center display.

Almost took a picture of that ludicrous scene. But desisted, lest I'd be seen. Though Schwartzzy would've dubbed it quite keen.

★ ★



Each year, come a special day, Loren Kludy always warned the school faculty he'd be shooting off his cannon in junior high lab. Applying match to carbide, it roared out a BOOM that shook every room. Some kids plugged ears, others wiped tears. When the smoke cleared, Kludy scratched his head, quoting theories quite dread. That a cannon boom could spell man's doom. Or a population explosion might erase erosion. But the students thought the boom more terrific than scientific.

After I'd finished my journal on Kludy that day, Bill Booker had this to say: "You know old Kludy never bothered reading the labels on the science lab bottles. He just stuck in his finger 'n licked it instead."

(Preferred carbolic acid to arsenate lead.)

"Old Bill's forgotten more than all the rest of us know," said Carl Fair, listening to my Granddad's old Civil War watch which was ticking again.

It was a mighty sick watch -- hadn't ticked for years -- when I left it at Bill's for repairs.

"Hair-spring's all wommixed, main-spring's broke -- balance-wheel staff's broken, too," sighed Bill, squinting through his jeweler's eye-loop with his chin on his bench.

"The hair-spring 'n staff I can order, but they don't make main-springs that size anymore," said he. "But I can snip the broken end off, re-drill it and use the old spring anyhow -- just be a bit shorter," quoth Bill.

The first time I met Bill Nill, someone had told me about a jeweler who was building a model of the Dewitt Clinton train. So, grabbing my little old five-dollar drugstore camera, I set out for Nill's front porch jewelry store down on Hiddeson. Unwrapping carefully each delicate part, Bill showed me his beautifully hand-crafted brass model of the historic Dewitt Clinton engine while explaining the multitudinous details and techniques of its fabrication.

"I needed a little money back in the depression, so I entered this POPULAR MECHANICS contest, to see if I could build the best model and win the hundred dollars," said Bill. "But the contest's been over years ago, and I'm still working on mine," he chuckled.

Then he showed me some of his masterful wood carvings -- a long wooden chain and tiny wood scissors he's carved by jack-knife out of single pieces -- for which he'd received the POPULAR MECHANICS Master Craftsman in Woodcarving Award.

As a lad, Bill had to quit grade school and go to work,



to help provide for the family. But what Bill lacked in formal education, his probing, inquisitive mind more than made up for it, over the years. When other jewelers claimed it couldn't be done, folks just fetched their clocks 'n watches to Bill where it was.

The tools of the old-time watchmaker's trade were a staggering assortment, costing much money. For, besides the usual watch-maker's lathe, there were the balance-wheel poise, tiny jeweler's screwdrivers, delicate brass hammers, engraving tools, needle files, drills by the dozens and tweezers en grosse, chucks, chisels, metric and ligne measures, silver-soldering irons and alcohol burners, hand-pullers and staff-removers to itemize just a few of the basics. As work piled higher on the watchmaker's bench, so did the need for specialized jeweler's tools to cope with the intricacies and variables of foreign and domestic movements.

If Bill Nill didn't have the tool, and couldn't buy it -- he just made one up to get the job done.

"When I was in Piqua, during the 1913 Dayton Flood so many clocks were ruined by the high water and brought in for repairs, I couldn't waste the time required to wind 'em," said he. "So I made this to do the job. I can hold it with one hand and wind with the other lots faster," explained Bill showing me a long brass tube through which a long brass crank extended. (Two-handed crank better than a one-handed key.)

Whenever I'd take an old-time watch to Bill's for fixin', he'd pull out all his bench drawers, searching amongst hundreds of old movements -- Deuber-Hamptons, Elgins, Walthams, Hamiltons, U. S. Standards, Ball Specials and Illinois -- fondling and explaining the history of each as he pawed through them for spare parts.

Outside his little jewelry and watch shop, which occupied both the front and back porches, Bill was just as resourceful. If he happened to be resting his eyes, bird-watching out his rear window, he probably closed up his shop to make a birdhouse or two for his feathered friends. When his old hand mower began bothering his "rheumatiz," he just added an old washing-machine motor and kept on mowing.

But one time old Bill was faced with a problem he wasn't sure of solving.

"This jewelry house hawker came into my shop, sporting a green elk's tooth on his tie pin," said Bill. "I wanted one so bad, but he wasn't able to tell me the secret of making an elk's tooth look green."

"So I got me an elk's tooth and began experimenting," explained Bill. "I buried that tooth with a hog's liver, under my apple tree, then dug it up six months later. It was just as green as his. I mounted it on a nice gold tie-pin, to show that fellow if he ever came 'round again."

Like every other problem he solved it -- else he'd a-died tryin'.

John Kennedy's WDRK was more than a glorified juke box, programmed to grind out music twenty-four hours a day. If news didn't arrive by wire, John, Clancy and staff struck out in quest of it. Like the time when the 50-mile walkathons were the rage -- and several Middletown postal carriers decided to hoof it to Greenville one winter day, running into a raging blizzard along the way.

I was hanging around the studio with my old press camera, awaiting their arrival when John decided we hop into the company van and go out together, so I could get my picture during the storm. It was all we could do to stay on the road, but we met them thirteen miles south of town and I barely got my photo despite the blowing snow. By the time we got back to the studio, Clancy, Anna Mae and the staff had big tubs of hot water and pots of strong coffee a-boiling for the bedraggled, half-frozen hoofers to thaw their dogs and warm the cockles of their hearts when they arrived. Which they did.

Or the time that John had Dave Huff break into the afternoon program to announce, "Joe Fahnestock, come to the studio right away." So I could go along with John and get a picture of young Allan McClain who was approaching Greenville on a 1700-mile cross-country bicycle jaunt, to visit his mother enroute.

Official Marine headquarters might have called someone on the carpet when they heard that President John Kennedy, ex-naval hero, was given a Special Marine Merit Award in the WDRK Greenville, Ohio, studios on a certain day -- for outstanding services to the community. What was President John Kennedy, ex-naval hero, doing that far from the White House? And just why were the Marines making a beach landing in a Greenville, Ohio radio station to pin a medal on a one-time navy guy called John Kennedy? Sergeant York, name your defense!



The seeds of John Kennedy's planting, back when he was hammering nails for electronic equipment supports before any had arrived, bear out the parable of the mustard seed that grew into a formidable stock with branches on which even the birds could roost. As the poet wrote, "From tiny acorns mighty oaks do grow," -- so the ramifications of John's vision have reached into the community educational system.

For, under the guidance of Dave Thomas, former WDRK announcer, Greenville's new WGVO-FM station has sprouted in the basement of the Memorial Hall on the 88-spot at the far end of the dial.

When Pat asked me to tune in and check the programs, I was quite surprised how well the new station came in, down on Front Street. My wife, in directing the junior high library, was quite cognizant of the station's programming, since the station's high school staff often send couriers to invade her sanctum sanctorum to get research materials and avail themselves of the audio-visual cassettes for programming.

I heard all the school news, sports, local, state and world news, the temperature and weather, some modern and classical music. The appearance of live musicians with chorus and piano accompaniment were fresh and reassuring outlets for the local talent which John Kennedy had always believed in promoting. And, best of all, was the three-act historical drama, "Christmas in Trenton," re-enacting Washington's bold Christmas Eve thrust to defeat the revelling British at Trenton. His army was ragged, hungry and freezing, and if General Washington didn't strike then he'd have no army left, come spring. In the second act I heard the British officers, revelling with women and drink, laughing at the name of Washington and his Yankee riff-raff, the students of the high school drama class accenting the King's English to surprising perfection. In the third act I heard the Yankee guns booming the British revellers out of their lair. The Revolution was saved!

Afterward I heard that the junior high wrestling team had defeated the Troy team the night before, a report on the night's accidents and incidents of vandalism and thievery, lectures on fire safety, the name of the Student of the Week, special courses being offered in the Greenville Schools, and a short skit on American graffiti sponsored by the U. S. Navy.

I was so thrilled I phoned publisher Lew Williams to see if the new WGVO-FM range of estimated seven miles could reach the village of Arcanum.

"What do you know, I can get it loud and fine," exclaimed Williams, exuberant over the latest innovation in Greenville's ether waves. "I didn't know they had a radio station at the Greenville Schools." He was even more surprised to learn some days later that I had been able to receive the Greenville High School radio station from my home east of Troy, Ohio.

From those early seeds, planted by John Kennedy, a garden was now growing in the ivied halls of the Greenville School System, whose youth had now taken on a new and responsible dimension!



Like Uncle Amos 'n' Aunt Sarah drivin' old Maude -- we finally made it to the hitchin' post. Despite the fact, on my last negatives, the chemical jug slipped from my fingers, exploding all over the place.

Kept ol' dobbin reined down to a pace, but we did win the race.

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