

# Newsletter of the MASON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Mason, Ohio

and Alverta Green Museum

May 2020

The Mason Historical Society and Alverta Green Museum are located in the heart of downtown Mason, Ohio. Established over 40 years ago, the Society's aim is to create, promote and preserve the history and heritage of Mason.

For more information, call 513.398.6750, visit our website at [masonhistoricalsociety.org](http://masonhistoricalsociety.org) or friend us on Facebook.

Visit us at:  
207 W. Church St.  
Mason, Ohio

**REGULAR HOURS**  
1 pm - 4 pm  
Thursday and Friday  
First Saturday of the Month  
10 am - 1 pm  
and by appointment

**NOTE:** We will be closed during April and May as a safety precaution due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please check our website for updated information as the situation evolves. We hope you all stay safe for the health of your family and your community.

## HISTORY DOES REPEAT ITSELF

Gina Arens, Editor

### Covid-19 Pandemic resembles Spanish Flu

It was March of 1918 when outbreaks of a flu-like illness were first detected in the United States. However, it wasn't until October that year that this widespread pandemic received any media attention and was finally addressed. After all, we were at war and no one wanted the country to look weak or hurt morale.

Although there is no consensus about where the Spanish Flu originated, it was first discovered in military personnel in the spring of 1918. It was called the "Spanish" flu because it was first identified in Spain, a neutral country during The Great War, where they did not censor press reports on the illness like other European countries.

The conditions of World War I (overcrowding and global troop movement) helped the 1918 flu spread. The vulnerability of healthy young adults and the lack of vaccines and treatments created a major public health crisis.

With no vaccine to protect against influenza infection and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections that can be associated with influenza infections, control efforts worldwide were limited to non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings, which were applied unevenly.

*story continues on next page*

### Compton Family Tragedy

Excerpt from Nina Compton's autobiography, donated to the Mason Historical Society by Nina's family.

On **June 3, 1918**, our tenth wedding anniversary, we had a big party in the evening with all our relatives invited. I didn't want to have it very much as I was quite busy, but Clyde wanted to have it and I have always been so glad we did, as he never lived to see another anniversary.

On **January 15, 1919**, our sixth child, Mildred Fay, was born. She seemed to get a good start, but when she was six weeks old, tragedy invaded our home. This was the year of the terrible flu epidemic and it hit us—Clyde first, then me, then all the children except the tiny baby.

Clyde took sick on Friday and, after a week, developed pneumonia and died on Monday, March 3. My father came at midnight on Sunday when Clyde was so bad, and he never left us until his death on July 3, 1931.



Janet Hamilton

Nina and Clyde Compton, married June 3, 1908.

## HISTORY DOES REPEAT ITSELF, cont.



This period doctor's bag (on display at the Museum) carried nothing that could treat the flu or infections.

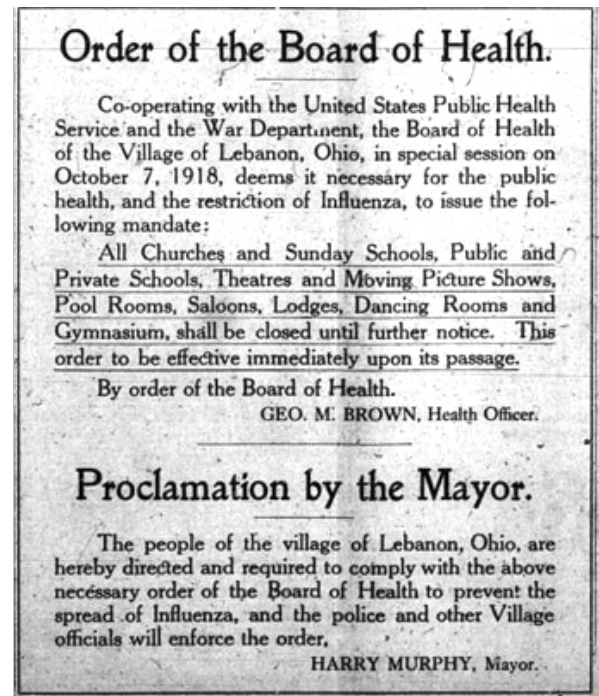
In early October information from a bulletin issued by the US Public Health Service was published in *The Western Star*. It read, "Spanish Influenza resembles a very contagious type of 'cold', accompanied by fever, pains in the head, eyes, ears, back or other parts of the body and a feeling of severe sickness. In most cases the symptoms disappear in 3-4 days and the patient rapidly recovers. Some patients, however, can develop pneumonia and other complications and many of these may die."

They also recommended isolating flu patients from others and for those tending to their care, wearing an apron and a gauze face mask.

The US Public Health Service further recommended that towns and cities across the country should close churches, schools, theatres & moving picture shows, pool rooms, saloons, lodges, dancing rooms and gymnasiums. (Sound familiar?)

The "Around Mason, OH" book notes, "During the fall the Deerfield Township schools were closed for a period of time because of the influenza epidemic but by November 11 the school board decided that the school classes should be resumed."

The following appeared in the *Western Star*. The Board of Health lifted the flu ban on November 11th.



The 1918 influenza pandemic infected an estimated 500 million people or one-third of the world population. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States.

[U.S. population in 1918 was 103,208,000; the death toll equaled .65% of the total population.] Those most vulnerable were children younger than 5, young adults aged 20 - 40, and the elderly [over age 65].

Today, unlike a hundred years ago, information about the outbreak was quickly available, allowing faster execution of preventive measures. Hopefully this quick response will result in a reduction in the number of infections and fatalities of this current Covid-19 pandemic.

Interestingly, then as now, non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings remain good advice.

[cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html](https://cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html)  
[look.substack.com/p/the-spanish-flu-of-1918-lessons-for](https://look.substack.com/p/the-spanish-flu-of-1918-lessons-for)

## Did You Know...

The future of the handshake is in jeopardy, but it has existed in some form or another for thousands of years. Its origin was believed to be a gesture of conveying peaceful intentions. By extending their empty right hands, strangers could

show that they were not holding weapons and bore no ill will toward one another. Some even suggest that the up-and-down motion of the handshake was supposed to dislodge any knives or daggers that might be hidden up a sleeve.

# The Board Report

Jay Meibers, President



Who would have thought that instead of watching baseball in May we would be hunkered down in our residence with many of us wearing masks when we do venture outside? This in an unprecedented time and we pray that our Leaders make the right decisions moving forward on balancing the health and economic risks of COVID 19.

Based on the current COVID 19 situation, the board has decided to keep the museum closed at least through May. We have also decided to postpone the Ice Cream Social until late Summer or early Fall. These actions are being taken for the safety of our Membership and Visitors as we continually assess the situation.

I am sure you have clearly noticed the amazing new design layout for our monthly newsletter. I want to thank Sally Sherman Caudill for her creativity in developing the updated newsletter and Gina Arens for her assistance with editing and providing content. I appreciate their willingness to take this on.

I also want to thank Denise Landise, who decided to step down from the board as Secretary for personal reasons, for her many years of support in developing and editing the Newsletter.

I have one more person to thank and that is Jerry Mullins who has decided to step down from the board after decades of service and support of the Historical Society.

I appreciate all members who have renewed their 2020 memberships. If you have not renewed please take the time to do so. This is even more important this year due to donations being down with the museum being closed the last few months as well as the Ice Cream Social being postponed.

Also, please reach out to family members, friends or associates who may be interested in becoming members of MHS. The larger the membership the more robust the Society becomes in ensuring our existence over the many decades ahead. Take care and stay well!

## THIS MONTH IN MASON HISTORY

Excerpt from *Around Mason, Ohio: A Story*, Rose Marie Springman, ©1986.

**1803:** Deerfield Township was designated in the newly established Warren County.

**1811:** William Mason, then 51, married Sarah Murphy, age 21. It was his second marriage and he had two children, ages 9 & 11. William and Sarah, were to have four children: Elizabeth died at 18 mos, William Jr. died at age 8, Cynthia and Sarah lived long lives.

**1828:** William N. Kirkwood paid \$120 to William Mason for lot #112, believed to be the first location of a post office in town. Records show the area was listed as "Kirkwood Post Office" for a number of years.

**1840:** First Marshall, William Walker was appointed. He performed various functions including collecting taxes and enforcing ordinances. One very important ordinance he was tasked to enforce read in part, "no person shall ride or drive a horse or horses violently through the streets of said town in any manner as to endanger the life or limb of any person or persons or children." Obviously, this was a problem!

**1877:** Railroad tracks were being laid in Mason, connecting Cincinnati to Lebanon.

**1897:** D.W. VanDyke, who had been Mason's second mayor and who had won the mayor's position 12 times between 1850-1880, died of dropsy, known today as edema (caused by heart or kidney problems).

**1918:** Robert Jennings Hall, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hall, died of wounds received three days earlier in France. He was the first soldier from Warren County to be killed in the First World War.

**1934:** WLW began broadcasting with 500,000 watts power. Programming from the 831-foot tower was broadcast thousands of miles and nearby residents tapped into the electricity to light up their yards. Wattage was drastically reduced five years later, and the free power was ceased.

**1940:** Powel Crosley Jr. purchased a 385-acre dairy and poultry farm just south of Mason along Route 42. It was to become known as "Everybody's Farm". The activities of the farm became the basis for a daily agricultural radio program featuring Ed and Mame Neal, who had been living on the farm when it was purchased.

**1962:** The Mason Booster Club agreed to pay over \$2,000 for football uniforms for high school boys so the sport could be started at the school. The Mason Activities Club donated \$632 for helmets.

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*Around Mason, Ohio: A Story* (Bicentennial Edition) is available for purchase at the Alverta Green Museum. This book is an invaluable reference for anyone interested in the history of Mason.



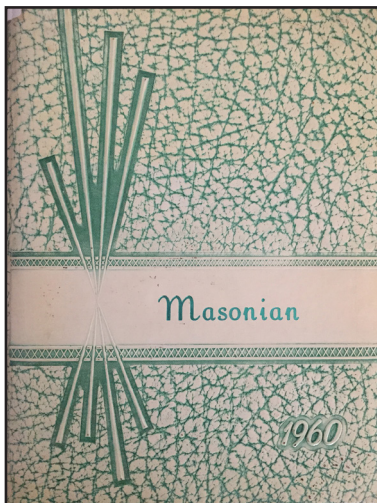
# CLASS OF 1960 PLAN 60TH

William Mason High School class of 1960 will hold their 60th year reunion on July 18, 2020. Plans include a tour of the Historical Society Museum, a tour of Mason Central and Mason Middle School. Later the class will meet for dinner at the Houston Restaurant. A noon picnic is planned for the following day at Warren County Armco Park.

The class is also inviting graduates from 1958 and 1959 to join them.

The class of 1960 spent 11 years at Mason Central and were the first graduating class that attended the old Mason High School, currently Mason Middle School. They had to return to Mason Central for graduation day since the new high school did not have an auditorium.

If you'd like to attend call or text Sarah or Jim Cross, 513-868-3538 or 513-673-9798 (cell). Sarah may also be reached by email at [srhjim1993@yahoo.com](mailto:srhjim1993@yahoo.com).



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have any thoughts you would like to share regarding Mason history, please submit them to "Letters to the Editor". You can mail these to the museum or email them to [mason.oh.historical@gmail.com](mailto:mason.oh.historical@gmail.com).



# MUSEUM JOB POSTINGS

## Museum Tour Guides – aka "Docents"

If you are an outgoing individual who likes interacting with people and loves talking about Mason history, we have just the job for you! The Alverta Green Museum needs volunteers who are willing to serve as Museum Tour Guides, 1-2 days per month for three hours per day.

One of the most important services that is offered by the Mason Historical Society is allowing members and visitors the opportunity to tour the Alverta Green Museum. It is so gratifying to hear our visitor's compliments after they have enjoyed their time with us. It is truly a remarkable place!

Tours typically occur between 1-4 pm on Thursday and Friday afternoons. Training and notes will be provided, as well as the opportunity to shadow as often as you like. If interested please call or email Perry Denehy at 513-444-9882, [perrydenehy@gmail.com](mailto:perrydenehy@gmail.com). Thank you in advance for your help in keeping Mason history alive. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Museum Curator

**If you have a knack for organizing, an eye for design and a love of Mason history, please read on!**

The Historical Society Executive Board is seeking a part-time Museum Curator. The Curator is responsible for receiving, assembling, cataloging, managing/presenting museum collections.

The Curator will attend monthly board meetings, reporting collections condition, relating needed repairs, recommending display fixture purchases, and assisting the Executive Board as needed. This person will also chair the Collections Policy Committee.

The Curator will be chosen and approved by the Executive Board and is a salaried position which will require 6-10 hours per week.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please contact Jay Meibers at [jmeibers1@zoomtown.com](mailto:jmeibers1@zoomtown.com)

## A New Look

As a new editorial staff takes the helm this month, we are introducing a new look to our newsletter. This updated design will allow us to bring you even more great content in an easy to read format. We hope you like what you see.

Gina Arens - Editor

Sally Sherman Caudill - Contributing Editor

# THE MOTHER'S CLUB

Honoring our Mothers this month, we share a story of some of Mason's most remarkable women. They were known as The Mother's Club.

For over thirty years, The Mother's Club of Mason worked tirelessly for the needs of the schools and community. Organized in 1915, the club was the backbone of the community when it came to philanthropy towards the interests of children, especially regarding the needs of the schools.

The group was a fund-raising machine and earned the respect of everyone from the local School Superintendent to the Ohio State Superintendent of High Schools. People knew if The Mother's Club deemed the request worthy, they would generate the funds to make it happen.

They sponsored all matter of entertainment from operettas at the Opera house to a street lawn fete they organized each year. There were carnivals, food sales, catering for community groups, lectures, concerts, picture shows and the annual paper drive (they eventually turned that one over to the Boy Scouts), all for the purpose of funding school and community causes.

Through their efforts they were able to finance electrical wiring throughout the school buildings. They were also the ones who started hot lunches on a regular basis in the school in 1937. They purchased tables, chairs, trays, cooking utensils, & silverware to equip the cafeteria and cooked and served the meals.

Coca-Cola wanted to sell their product in the lunchroom, but they refused. They thought the children ought to buy ice cream and milk instead. The next year the school took it over, but it was the Mother's Club that got the ball rolling!

Much of their time was volunteered for community causes. They served a community Thanksgiving dinner every year and held a Christmas party at the school, decorating the community Christmas tree. During the First World War they formed a Red Cross Society to help the war effort and later during WWII they sent cards to the 108 Mason servicemen.

Flora Tetrick, first president of the Mother's Club and granddaughter of William Mason once wrote, "It is well for us to pause in the excitement of our modern life and ask ourselves these questions. . . . Why are we here and what things in life are best worth our time and effort?" Obviously, the Mother's Club answers that question.

In September of 1947 The Mother's Club was approached by a District representative of the Parent Teacher Association, the PTA as they were called, who explained the work they did and asked the Club to join them and no longer operate as a separate group.

It was voted on and approved and at the next meeting in October 113 people gathered for Mason's first "PTA" meeting. Ironically, even though the new organization meant to involve the fathers of school age children, all the new officers were women.

## ROSE HILL

### Cemetery Statistics 1918–1919

#### How the flu affected our community

During the height of the Spanish Flu, Rose Hill Cemetery records show 90 burials with 34 or 38% listed with cause of death as influenza, pneumonia or both.

### Memorial Day Parade Tradition may be suspended

Memorial Day (previously called Decoration Day) dates back to the Civil War. In the Springman book, *Around Mason*, the first mention of an annual Memorial Day parade and services at Rose Hill Cemetery was in May of 1909. (In 1898, the town held Decoration Day Ceremonies, but there was no mention of a parade.)



Memorial Day parade at Rose Hill, circa 1938.

Marilyn Taylor

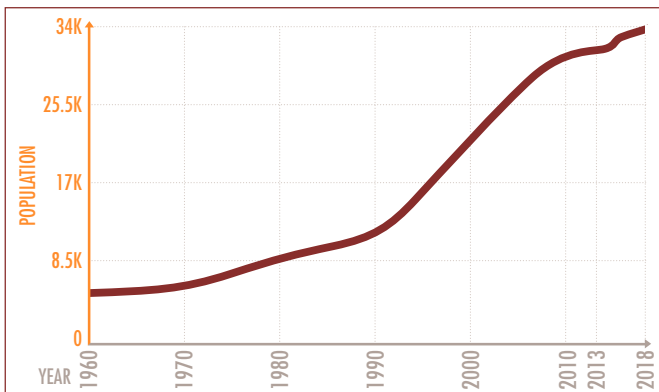
This long-standing Mason tradition, well over 100 years old, may be interrupted this year due to orders of social distancing. At press time we could not confirm its status.

# THE CHANGING FACE OF MASON

Jeff Raines, Vice President

The population of Mason is changing and growing year by year, bringing new and different perspectives and ways of life. A number of factors, including location, excellent schools, thriving businesses and desirable housing, make Mason one of the fastest growing communities in southwest Ohio. But what does this mean for the history of Mason in the future?

Since 1960, Mason’s population has grown over 7x, from 4,727 in 1960 to 33,586 in 2018. As the curve below shows, a significant portion of this growth was during the period from 1990 to 2010. This coincides with the growth of several large businesses in the Mason area, such as Proctor & Gamble.



With this growth came increasing prosperity. The 2018 median income in Mason is \$96,511, which is over 50% higher than the US median. Again, the factors that contributed to Mason’s population growth also brought more affluence.

From the relatively homogeneous population of 50 years ago, Mason is becoming increasingly diverse.

The percentage of foreign born people living in Mason was 12.2% in 2017. This is up from 11.3% in 2016. The percentage of foreign born residents in Mason is almost two times that of Warren County, and almost three times that of Ohio on average. Based on data from the American Community Survey (conducted by the US Census Bureau), the population demographic in Mason is:

Ethnicity	2010	2018
White	87.5%	82.3%
Asian Indian	3.2%	7.2%
Asian (other than Indian)	3.8%	4.9%
African American	2.9%	2.5%
Two or More Races	2.1%	1.4%
Native American	0.0%	0.1%
Other	0.5%	1.6%

So what does all of this mean for the history of Mason? For many of us that have been here nearly all of our lives, Mason had that “small town” feel. Some of the changes going on around us are radically different, even bewildering. But with this change comes more opportunities to share and learn than at any time in our past. New people and perspectives can broaden and enrich our lives. Sense of community is a state of mind.

Mason has a rich and evolving history. During this period of change we need to work to preserve our past while embracing the future. Certainly the history of Mason that we look back on in 50 years will be much different than our current historic view. This is what makes preserving our past, and the mission of the Mason Historical Society, so vital.

WorldPopulationView.com – Census.gov – DataUSA.io – Data.Census.gov

Then & Now
225 West Main Street

Tower Inn (serving “Home Cooking Meals”) on right  
First-Mason Bank on left – c. 1946 – *Marilyn Taylor*

5/3 Bank – 2020





## COMET ROOM UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### Your Help Needed!

We are continuing to work on our “Comet Room” at the Museum and need your help! We are looking for mid-century modern style furniture (‘50’s - ‘60’s) couch, chairs, lamps, tables, curtains, a black and white TV, and a ceiling fixture. If you have any of these items and would be willing to donate or loan to the Museum, please contact Perry Denehy at 513-444-9882, or [perrydenehy@gmail.com](mailto:perrydenehy@gmail.com).

## 2020 MASON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD MEMBERS

Jay Meibers - President  
Jeff Raines - Vice President  
Larry Jeffers - Treasurer  
Missy Courts - Membership  
Perry Denehy - Trustee  
Sue Erbeck Rapp - Trustee  
Darlene Henn - Trustee

The following positions are currently open. Anyone interested in serving on the Board, please contact Jay Meibers at [jmeibers1@zoomtown.com](mailto:jmeibers1@zoomtown.com)

Secretary  
Historian  
Social Media  
Trustee  
Trustee

## LAROSA'S FUNDRAISING EVENT



### 3RD WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

**DINE IN** at Triway and Rte. 42

**CARRYOUT** by calling 513-347-1111

or **VISIT** [www.larosas.com](http://www.larosas.com)

LaRosa's will donate 20% of your pre-tax bill back to the Mason Historical Society.

Present your Golden Buckeye card and receive a 10% discount.

**PRESENT THIS AD TO YOUR  
SERVER, CASHIER OR DRIVER**

## KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

You Can Help!



Every time you shop at Kroger funds will be donated to the Mason Historical Society if you sign-up for their Community Rewards program.

It's easy to enroll.

Go to [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com).

Create an account by providing your name, address, phone & preferred store.

You'll also need our organization program rewards number **#HE524** and your Kroger Plus card number.

You can also enroll by phone by calling Kroger customer service at 800-576-4377.

Kroger never shares your personal information, and this will not affect your fuel points.

Last year we collected \$449 from Kroger, we think we can do better, and you can help!

# BUSINESS MEMBERS *and* PARTNERS

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Al's Heating and Cooling  
American Legion, Post 194  
American Legion Auxiliary Unit 194  
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Voorhis, Slone, Welsh & Crossland, Architects  
Walldogs – Mason Sign Company  
Yost Pharmacy, Inc.

## BUSINESS MEMBERS

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Lt. Robt. N. Mount V.F.W. 9622 Aux.  
Mason Bowl, Inc.  
Mason Health Care Center  
Minuteman Press of Lebanon  
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Warren County Historical Society  
16 Lots Brewing Co.

## PARTNERS

City of Mason  
Culver's – Mason  
LaRosa's – Mason  
Mason City Schools  
Mason Community Grange No.1680  
Mason-Deerfield Chamber  
Mason Public Library

We urge you to support our wonderful business members and partners, who have been so generous with their support of the Mason Historical Society.

A "Blast from the Past" of one of our Lifetime members,  
from the Mason High School 1975 yearbook.

Note that in the last 45 years, their location and phone number has changed. 🤔



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