

Newsletter of the MASON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Mason, Ohio

and Alverta Green Museum

September 2021

A TRUE NASA SPACE PIONEER

Mason's Own, Dr. Stanley White

Sally Sherman Caudill, Editor

Author's note: Thanks to Everett Landen (MHS class of '63) for this story idea. Everett is related, through his mother, to Dr. White, and recalls his pride, at the age of 14, in hearing Dr. White speak at the 1959 MHS commencement.

Before Everett's letter, I had been unaware of Dr. White and his remarkable accomplishments. There isn't enough space in this newsletter (much less a novel) to list all of his awards and achievements. In 2012, his son, Stuart, donated his father's papers and photographs to Wright State University in Dayton. Going through the treasure trove of boxes at the WSU archive and researching Dr. White's life and career has left me in complete awe of this extraordinary man.

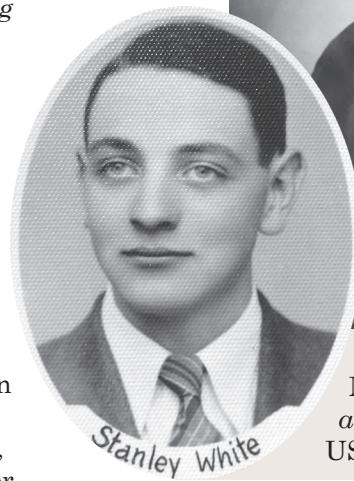
Stanley Conly White was born just up the road in Lebanon on January 13, 1926 to George and Effa Marie White (nee Scott). He was the fourth of five children: Wallace (Wally), Doris, Gene and Ralph. His father was a prominent farmer who moved the family to Mason when Stanley was young. They settled on a farm along Rte. 741 (where Masters Pharmaceutical is today).

Stanley attended grade school at Student's Hall (at the corner of 741 and Bethany Road). His brother Wally thought he would never amount to anything. Wally bemoaned that "all Stanley wants to do is sit around and read all day," while he and brother Gene did all the farm chores. Stanley graduated from Mason High School in



Dr. Stanley C. White Papers, WSU

The White family farm on Rte. 741.
Photographed by Dr. White on a visit home in 1954.



Stanley White



Dr. Stanley C. White Papers, WSU

left Stanley White as a senior at Mason High School, 1943
above Colonel Stanley White, USAF Medical Corps, July 5, 1972

1943 and in the Class Will, he bequeathed "my super, masculine, intelligence to my brother, Ralph, hoping he gets out of school before he has a grey beard."

Stanley joined the U.S. Navy and attended Miami U. in Oxford, graduating pre-med. University of Cincinnati Medical school was next, where he graduated in 1949. While in med school in 1948, Stanley married Helene Ross from Lebanon, and they would go on to grow their family to include four sons and a daughter, just like his parents.

In 1951, Stanley transferred to the Air Force (AF), and did his residency in Aviation Medicine all over the country. He went from Randolph Field in Texas, to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore (where he earned his Masters in Public Health), to Langley AF base in Virginia, and finally to Wright-Patterson AF base. In 1956, Stanley was board certified in Aviation Medicine and was on the way to his destiny.

story continues on next page

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.

TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Join the Mason Historical Society at
Masonhistoricalsociety.org
or Call 513-398-6750

New Museum Hours

The Museum is now open Thursdays only from 2-8 pm. We hope the addition of evening hours will allow more opportunities for visits. Museum tours outside these hours will still be available by appointment.

Dr. Stanley White, cont.



Stanley in training at the USAF School of Aviation Medicine, Randolph AFB, 1951.

From 1963 until 1970, Dr. White was assigned to the USAF Manned Orbiting Laboratory where he served as the Director of Bioastronautics and Systems Support and then as Director of Biomedical Research. In 1967 he was named Chief Flight Surgeon, and in 1969, he was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, for his “leadership, professional expertise, managerial skill, exceptional foresight, and devotion to duty.”

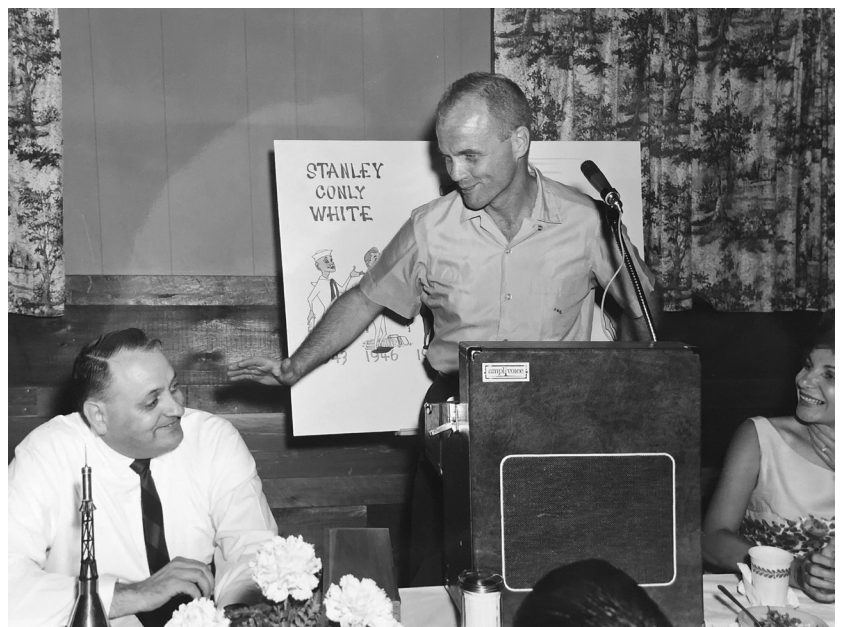
In 1970, newly-promoted Colonel White returned to NASA and became the Biomedical Support Officer and



Representing NASA, Dr. White addressed the King of Belgium, members of the royal household and distinguished scientists on the goals and progress of the U.S. manned space flight program. He is shown here explaining and presenting to the King, a color photo of a hurricane, taken by one of the American astronauts from his space craft. Brussels’ University, Belgium. October 3, 1962.

Stan’s small step into history began in 1957 with his involvement in the space program. Lt. Colonel White was the project officer on the USAF man-in-space capsule design. In October of 1958, Dr. White was transferred from Wright-Patt to Edwards AFB in California to work on the X15 hypersonic research program. Stanley and his family loaded into their Mercury station wagon, which was towing the family Volkswagen, and left their home in Dayton. Days later as they reached Albuquerque, NM, he was pulled over by a state trooper. The trooper asked, “no offense, but where have you been?” Apparently, newly-formed NASA had requested the immediate loan of Dr. White from the AF on the very day that he left Dayton. State police from Ohio to California had been trying for four days to locate him.

At NASA, Dr. White was the Chief of Life Systems. His team was responsible for the selection and training of the Mercury astronauts, and the design of life support systems, feeding & waste management systems, space suits, and emergency survival equipment that were included in Projects Mercury, Gemini and Apollo. His duties also included the medical care and support of the astronauts during flight, and post-flight assessments. For his accomplishments, Lt. Colonel White received the AF Legion of Merit for his “significant contributions to the life support systems of the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo space programs.”



At a dinner honoring Dr. White, Astronaut and future U.S. Senator John H. Glenn, Jr., speaks warmly in tribute to Stan. They had become friends in 1959 when Dr. White selected Glenn as one of the original Mercury 7 astronauts. Ca. 1964

story continues on next page

Dr. Stanley White, cont.

then the Asst. Director of Life Sciences to the Skylab Program. Skylab, which was the first U.S. space station, launched in 1973.

Colonel White then worked for the Secretary of Defense as the Asst. Director for Environmental & Life Sciences from 1974-1977. His group managed research and development programs with funds of approximately \$450 million/year (\$2.3 billion today).

In 1977, Dr. White retired from government service and worked in the private sector, before returning to the space program in 1982. As senior scientist at Kennedy Space Center (now Cape Canaveral) in Florida, he provided technical and scientific advice, guidance and oversight for Life Sciences projects.

Dr. White retired for good in 1997, and became an avid "RV-er" with his wife. He continued his voracious reading

habit throughout his life and into his retirement. Big brother, Wally, probably had a few laughs over the years with his earlier "estimation" of Stan's future prospects.

On September 10, 2011, this space medicine pioneer passed away at the age of 85 at his home in Satellite Beach, Florida. In an obituary, a NASA colleague said of Dr. White... he was "a giant in our field, he was also very approachable and friendly. I loved his quick wit and sense of humor." Another colleague wrote that he "loved listening to Stan's many incredible life stories."

Dr. White was the epitome of service to his country and to mankind. Life stories don't get any better than that.

Dr. Stanley C. White Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio
"Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine" Aerospace Medical Association, Vol. 82, No. 11, November 2011

Dayton Daily News, January, 28, 1962

Ancestry.com

NASA Memorial Site-Legacy.com

Your Historical Museum Collection

Featured item of the month



Artist Lou Van Harlingen and her daughter, Gretchen, ca. 1898.

This month we're featuring a beautiful, serene winter landscape that hangs over the living room fireplace at the Alverta Green Museum. It was painted by Lou Wikoff Van Harlingen, the granddaughter of William Mason. This is a scene from the late 1800s of Reading Road at 3rd Ave. looking south. Lou (born Lulu) grew up on the Wikoff farm. Their home was just out of sight of this view (where Logeman Orthodontics office at 318 Reading Rd. is today)

If you're having trouble believing this is the same location, you're not alone.

Don Middleton explains..."Where this (drain) tile goes under the road is at the N.E. corner of Reading Rd. and 3rd Ave. After the road and sidewalks were installed, there was a wooden footbridge in the sidewalk near the driveway into Gallimore's Funeral Home (at left, now Shorten & Ryan). This ditch was tiled to S. West St. in 1950 when the funeral home was built for Ray Gallimore by Middleton Bros."

Then & Now

Reading Road at 3rd Avenue - view looking south



CELEBRATIONS IN MASON

The Heritage Festival Tradition

Gina Burton Arens, Editor

It was 1965, the year of Mason's 150th birthday and the people of Mason were ready for a party. A weeklong party it seems. The excitement included a parade, costumes, beards, contests (including a cowchip-throwing contest), and decorations throughout the town. Mason's Sesquicentennial Celebration lasted from September 1-6. The whole town was on board, it was a week to remember!

The village had experienced a similar celebration fifty years earlier in 1915, when they celebrated the town's centennial birthday. The Horse Rangers, who were commemorating their 65th anniversary that year, assembled a massive parade that marched through the full length of the village and ended in a picnic and other festivities at Wikoff Woods. The parade featured 140 men and women on horseback, 92 carriages and rigs and 65 automobiles.

Aside from this, smaller festivals or lawn fetes throughout the town's history were typically fundraisers that had been organized by groups such as churches, the Grange, the Mother's Club, and the firemen. The first mention of a lawn fete was in 1886 benefitting the Universalist Church.

For the next two years the only gathering noted was a chicken barbecue hosted by the Kiwanis Club. In 1968 the Kiwanis expanded the chicken barbecue, held at Mason High School, to also

include a flea market, games, entertainment, and music. From this the "Community Unity Days" were born and continued for four more years. It wasn't until 1973 that the festival changed names and for the next five years became known as the "Mason Bicycle Festival." The same basic format ensued with a parade, food, games, entertainment, and music, all provided by local talent.

In 1978 The Bicycle Festival became The Heritage Festival. From there, for many years, a committee composed of Mason citizens would form, select a theme for the festival and plan activities accordingly. From the beginning, establishing a theme was always traditional to festival planning. The annual parade, a constant each year, would include floats and costuming in keeping with the festival theme. In 1978



Pat Diangelo, *Pulse-Journal* publisher dresses as a Mafia Don for the Roarin' 20s Heritage Festival Days in 1979.

the theme was "Schools of Mason." The next year it was the "The Roaring Twenties," followed by "The Fabulous Fifties" in 1980. From 1986 through 1989 the Heritage Festival was celebrating our "International Heritage." In 1991 the focus was "Through the Years," followed by "Back to the Future" in 1992, "Festival of Color" in 1993, "Kaleidoscope of History" in 1994, and "Movie Memories" in 1995 with Nick Clooney as Parade Grand Marshal.

It was in 1981 that the festival added something new and very different: the "Outhouse Races"! The "outhouse" had to be built and raced according to certain instructions set forth by the Outhouse Committee. The Outhouse Races survived five years through 1985, but for whatever reason they were flushed out of the celebration. (Pun intended!) It had been a fun idea that had garnered a lot of laughs and press coverage throughout the region. The Outhouse Races experienced a brief revival in 2007 to 2009 but did not return after that.



left Sandy Pierce shows off "Ol' Faithful," her entry into the Outhouse Challenge in 2008. right The Pulse-Journal's entry "Best Little Outhouse in Mason," which took first in decorations.

In 1985, after the demise of the Outhouse Races, a new idea surfaced. How about allowing a garage sale in Yost parking lot? This, reasoned festival planners, would provide an additional activity to festival attendees. The next year the garage sale was set up in the Fifth Third Bank parking lot and appears to have continued there through 1995.

In 1990, Mason had its 175th birthday so another big birthday party was planned. Apparently that year the highlight of the festival was a massive birthday cake that would serve 3,000. A large, well-attended parade, interesting booths, entertainment and of course, the Grange's usual offering of old-fashioned, picnic-style foods with lots of homemade pies, lemonade, and iced tea were all described as part of a successful festival that year.

In 2002 the theme, "In My Own Backyard," honored local police and fire departments. The 9-11 attacks the previous year generated a consensus to do something to honor our first responders. That year we saw one of the area's largest parades (200 plus entries), arts & crafts, food, games, rides, and entertainment including a new,

story continues on next page

Mason Festivals, cont.

Grammy-nominated country music singer named Keith Urban. The festival was organized by a committee of 20 members and employed an additional 250 volunteers the day of the event.

Also new in 2002 was “The Battle of the Bands” where four high school bands were selected to compete against each other. The band entrants had to try out prior to the festival with only four making it to the festival stage for the competition. “Battle of the Bands” became a very popular event and continued through 2011.

In 2004 as the city prepared to celebrate its 39th Heritage Festival (counting from the 1965 event), there was a concern that the festival wouldn’t have a future. Early in the year, the longtime organizers no longer wanted to be in charge. It took a deal involving the city council, the Chamber of Northeast Cincinnati, and a group of volunteers to keep the event alive. The city agreed to provide \$35,000 in funding, in-kind services, and liability coverage. The NE Chamber gave administrative support and office space to help the newly formed “Festivals of Mason Inc.” which would manage and coordinate The Heritage Festival, Christmas in Mason, and similar events. “Festivals of Mason” would remain in place for the next eleven years, taking the festival through the Bicentennial Celebration in 2015.

In 2004 “Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Future” took center stage. The Cincinnati Enquirer called it, “A celebration of the city’s past.” That year the “Mason Idol” singing competition began. In 2010 it was referred to as “the favorite event for the past seven years!” but ironically 2011 was its last year.

In 2005 the festival was held in downtown Mason. They had 200 booths, music was featured on three different stages, Mason Idol winners were crowned, along with Little Miss Heritage, another festival standard. A mobile skate park was featured that year and proved quite popular. The 2005 theme was “Celebrating History, Making Memories.” Partnering with *The Pulse-Journal*, the city printed a 28-page calendar distributed for free at the festival. This was promoted as the 40th Heritage Festival. The newspaper acknowledged that the festival had been known by other names, but that this annual community event began in 1965. The theme of the 2005 parade focused on the history of Mason and honoring military personnel.

In 2013 the Heritage Festival made a permanent move to the Mason Municipal Center grounds. It had been there in 2006 when the downtown plaza was under construction

but was moved back to downtown Mason the following year. While it was emphasized that the new location would offer more parking and green space, moving it out of downtown seemed to diminish some of the festival charm and its core connection to the city.

In 2016 the Heritage Festival and Patriot Fair was the last full-day celebration. It went from a 10 am parade to fireworks at 9 pm. The past three Heritage Festivals, from 2017 to 2019, have seen reduced hours. A festival that once consumed the entire day from 10 to 10 pm, now runs from 10 to 4 pm. Dan Chambers, Festival planner from the City of Mason, says it is because of declining attendance.

As we all know, The Heritage Festival skipped 2020. It is back this year, scheduled for Saturday, September 18th, and will be combined with the “Red, Rhythm & Boom” celebration. A 10 am Heritage Festival Parade will once again weave its way down Main Street and Mason Montgomery Road to the Mason Municipal Center. The festival will then pause until 4 pm when the Red, Rhythm and Boom festival begins with vendors, games, and activities. Music will begin at 6 pm with Grammy Award winner, Clint Black taking the stage at 8 pm. Fireworks will follow at 10 pm. Festival planners are forecasting a crowd of 20,000+. The city of Mason’s website proclaims, “Mason City Council hopes you enjoy this FREE regional event intended to showcase the quality of life that Mason has to offer!”

In its early days, I always looked forward to the Heritage Festival. I had been here for Community Unity Days and the Bicycle Festivals. I would

go mostly because I would always see people I know. I think many residents had the same sentiment. But it seems like, as the years passed and the crowd multiplied, I saw fewer and fewer of the people I knew.

For many long-time residents it may feel like the Heritage Festival is getting a little short-sheeted this year, but we can only hope that it will return to its former glory in years to come. In studying the history of the festival, one sees a reoccurring theme. The festival planners were volunteer residents who seemed to care deeply about the success of the festival. They demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment. Each year they generated new ideas and activities to attract more attendees. We need those people today if the Heritage Festival is going to survive and thrive. Anyone up for an old-fashioned garage sale or outhouse race? I’m in, how about you?

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GAMES ***** ENTERTAINMENT ***** MUSIC

FATAL FLIGHT & A NUCLEAR SCARE IN MASON

WED. SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2021 @ 7 PM

Mason Elementary School
6307 Mason Montgomery Road
KIVA room – Enter at exterior door #A-8

THIS EVENT IS FULL

If anyone who has RSVP'd, and is unable to attend, please let us know as soon as possible (513-398-6750). We will be taking names for a waiting list.

MHS September Events

MURAL UNVEILING & WINE TASTING

FRI. SEPT. 17TH, 2021 – 6-8 PM OPEN HOUSE

Join us for the unveiling of our new, 26' x 8' Museum Wall Mural that depicts the historical progression of Mason. A wine tasting featuring wines paired with small bites will be offered. Soft drinks and lemonade will also be available. A discussion of the mural development and design is included. RSVP by calling 513-398-6750, or emailing the museum at mason.oh.historical@gmail.com

Mural design by Sally Sherman Caudill
Painted by Herb Nally of Mason Sign Co.

The Board Report

Jay Meibers, President



September used to be the month of anguish as we headed back to school after Labor Day. Now kids return to school 2-4 weeks prior to Labor Day which seems crazy but what do I know! I do remember as a kid that the schools I attended were not air-conditioned and September is typically a hot & dry month. The classrooms got very warm even with the windows open. Having a bad case of hay fever as a kid I sneezed and wheezed in school until the first frost. Schoolmates hated it when I opened my lunch and mom had packed me a hard-boiled egg sandwich that had been sitting in a hot locker all morning. That sandwich could clear a lunch table in about 5 seconds flat! But it was always nice getting back to school and seeing many of your classmates you had not seen all Summer. The teachers, not so much!!

You should be receiving our Reach-Out Raffle tickets soon if you have not received them already. By purchasing or selling the raffle tickets, you not only support one of our big annual fundraisers but you may also end up being one of our lucky winners! The winning tickets drawing will be the night of our annual business meeting and elections on Nov. 16.

September is an action-packed month! We are looking forward to the exciting Sept. 15 plane crash program as well as the Sept. 17 unveiling of the new mural at the museum. And in conjunction with the Heritage Festival, the City of Mason will be declaring September "History Awareness Month." Due to numerous issues including actor availability we will not be having the Cemetery Walk this year. We are looking at another potential October activity and will keep you updated.

Have a great September and look out for those hard-boiled egg sandwiches!

THIS MONTH IN MASON HISTORY

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

1884: During the months of September and October there was a typhoid fever epidemic in the area. Also, Eliza Nixon recorded on September 19: "There was an earthquake at 2:15 p.m. felt at Cincinnati and as far as Chicago and hundreds of other places rocking from north to south. I felt three distinct shakes."

1901: Hageman's September entries in his journal included, "Sept. 6 —McKinley was shot this afternoon. Sept. 8 --McKinley is still alive. Some hope. 'Sept. 10 — McKinley is getting better. Sept 14 — McKinley died last night."

1908: A local option election held on September 26 in all of Warren County resulted in the county being voted dry by about 130 votes. In Deerfield Township the vote was 338 to 323 in favor of "prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor."

1916: On September 15 the township schools were closed so that the students could go to the Warren County Fair.

1919: School opened on September 8 with L. R. Smith as the principal of the high school and Verna Leming as the only other high school teacher. Forty-seven students attended the high school and their English classes included studies of such work as Silas Marner, Washington's Farewell Address, Paradise Lost, Macauley's Life of Johnson and King Lear.

1928: When Ell Pickering resigned in June as the village marshal, the position remained open until late September when Richard Cox was appointed. He was to be the last marshal in Mason. The last mention in council minutes of a town Marshall was in 1940, thus ending a 100-year tradition in the village.

1952: St. Susanna School was expanded to allow 133 students to attend the eight grades in September. Four nuns, Sisters of Notre Dame, taught the classes. Father Raymond Haun was appointed the assistant pastor of the church.

1968: Mason holds its first Community Unity Days in September. In 1979 the community celebration, then known as "The Mason Bicycle Festival," became The Heritage Festival.

LEADER OF THE BAND

Susan Chace, Guest Contributor

Editor's note: As a follow up to our story on "Music In Mason" last month, we're highlighting Harry McVay, teacher, farmer, businessman and musician, who led or performed in as many as four musical groups in Deerfield Township in the 1910s, '20s and '30s.

Harry was born in Deerfield Township in 1868, to William C. and Mary (nee Slayback) McVay, who owned a farm on Socialville-Foster Road (between Simpson Creek Way and Harborpointe Drive today).

Before phonographs and radios, nearly every American home featured a piano in the parlor or an instrument of some kind that could be pulled out to entertain family and visitors.¹

Harry learned to play clarinet and violin. At the age of 23, he married 17-year-old Grace Casseday on Christmas Eve of 1891. Grace, whose family settled in the Mason area in 1806, was a pianist.

Together, Harry and Grace formed the nucleus of the McVay Family Band, which grew as the couple had children. Erma, born 1896, played double bass; Veda, born 1899, played violin; and Eleanor "Mickey," who came along in 1918, took up the clarinet.

Harry also was a member the Mason Band in the late 1910s. The community band performed in Mason, Morrow and South Lebanon parades and sometimes traveled as far as Columbus, Ohio, and towns in Indiana, to represent the Junior Order of American Mechanics.³

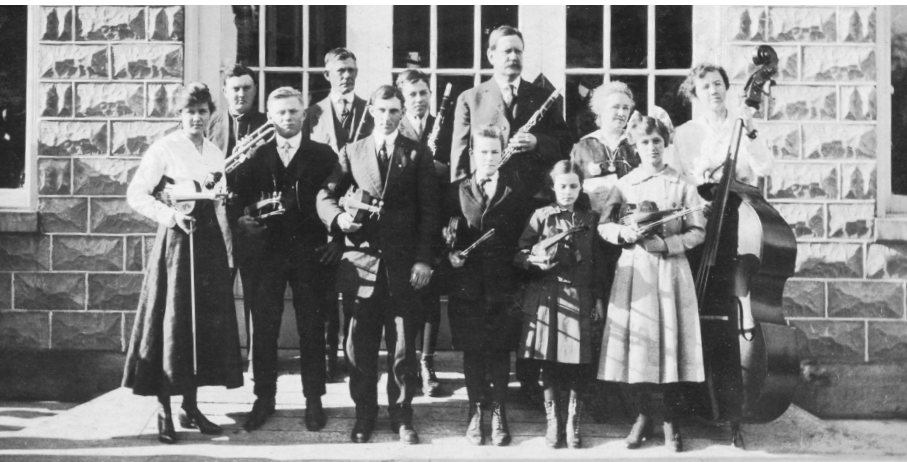
Finally, Harry formed the Harry McVay Orchestra, a popular dance band of the 1920s and '30s that performed throughout the tristate. The orchestra was composed of the five McVay family members and a range of local musical talent.

The first three decades of the 20th century marked a transition from the sentimental love songs and marches of the late 1800s to the modern music era. There was ragtime, blues, jazz, and swing. The Harry McVay Orchestra repertoire included it all.

Harry's granddaughter, Marian Chace (nee Whited), remembers one ragtime hit originally written by Henry Fillmore of Cincinnati in 1915 for trombone and piano.

"Lassus Trombone!" Marian replied when asked what she remembered of Harry's orchestra. Band members always stood back for this especially showy number since Fillmore's trombone pieces were heavy on glissandos and long slides.

In the early 1920s, Harry and Grace bought the house at 123 S. East St. in the village of Mason. It was there, just two months after Harry and Grace celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, that Harry died in 1942 at the age of 73.



The McVay Family Orchestra outside the garage at 100 E. Main St. (formerly Reber's), ca. 1925. Harry stands tall with his clarinet in the back row, 3rd from the right. His wife, Grace, who played piano, is to his right. Oldest daughter, Erma, is on double bass, far right. Middle daughter, Veda is on violin, far left. And young Mickey, front row, 2nd from the right. She is shown with a violin, but usually played clarinet. Other band members are unknown, except for Halleck Bowyer, back row, 2nd from left. Let us know if you recognize anyone in the photo.

"We started playing as soon as we could hold an instrument," Mickey Ertel (nee McVay) recalled during an interview in 2003. She said the McVay Family Band performed at area socials, birthday parties, weddings, and community events.² One of their paying gigs - for \$11 - was a 1911 commencement ceremony held at the Methodist Church in Socialville (still standing at the intersection of Socialville-Foster and Snider).³

Harry didn't stop with the McVay Family Band. In 1908, he and Grace became charter members of the Mason Grange No. 1680. Soon, Harry was leading a Grange Orchestra that performed at Grange meetings and functions in Warren County.⁴ In 1918, Grange members were entertained by a local fiddlers' contest, at which Harry placed third - beaten by Clarence Melampy and Grover Green.³

Harry taught school for 14 years, was a farmer for 21 years, worked as a carpenter, ran an insurance business, was an amateur ornithologist and taxidermist (his extensive collection of local birds were displayed at Mason Central School through the 1950s), and served as vice-president of the Mason Building & Loan and a director of the First-Mason Bank.

Nevertheless, Harry McVay may be remembered best as leader of the band.

¹Ballad of America. <https://balladofamerica.org>.

²Interview with Susan A. Chace, great granddaughter of Harry McVay.

³Around Mason: A Story, Rose Marie Springman, 1982.

⁴"History of the Mason Grange No. 1680," handwritten history by Lizzie Voorhis (dated 1932) and Margaret Hoff (dated 1938).

Editor's note: Thanks to Marian Chace and Susan Chace for the recollections of their very talented family.

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No.1680
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Mason Public Library

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