Newsletter of the
Mason Historical Society
and Alverta Green Museum
Mason, Ohio
January 2024

"SHOOTING" STARS

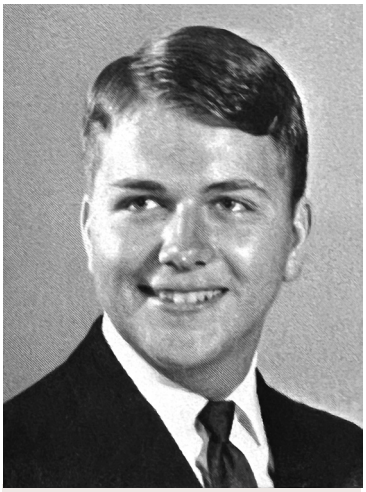
Behind the Lens with Bob Erbeck

Sally Sherman Caudill, Editor

Editor's note: I am certain that anyone who's ever been lucky enough to know Bob Erbeck has said the same thing… that he is the nicest person they've ever met… and funny on top of that. This man with the fascinatingly impressive career has more stories than you can imagine.

Robert Nelson Erbeck was born on September 28, 1948, to Nelson and Virginia (nee Shurts) Erbeck. "Bob" joined big sister, Judith, to round out the family at their home in downtown Mason, and it was here that he and Judith grew up. He recalls that they had a wonderful childhood with very loving and nurturing parents.

Bob was a member of the Mason High Class of '66, and his classmates voted him, and Janet Clem, as "The Friendliest" in the class. That fall he attended college at UC, majoring in Radio/TV. Soon after arriving though, he contracted a bad case of mononucleosis and had to be hospitalized. While in the hospital, he developed jaundice. He found out later his condition was so dire, the doctors told his parents he may not make it through the night.



Bob's senior photo, 1966.

He was still weak from the mono when he returned to classes, and struggled to catch up with his challenging workload. He then had to make the tough decision to withdraw from school. Bob had previously joined the Navy Reserves, in their officer training program, so he wouldn't have to worry about the draft while at UC. After he withdrew from school, though, he had to give up the officer program and do two years of active duty as an enlisted man. He was assigned to the Seabees and received additional training with the Marines. He soon found himself in Vietnam. He recalls, "The first week after getting to Vietnam was tough, but I quickly adapted to the reality of the situation. Once you accepted the fact that you could die at any minute, it was "bearable."

When Bob returned to civilian life in Cincinnati, he decided to pursue a career in the TV industry. He lucked out with a full-time job at WCET, thanks to another Masonite and family friend, Bob Wolfe. Mr. Wolfe told him to call his old buddy, who was the General Manager of WCET. Bob soon learned that hands-on work and practical experience were more valuable than a degree, so he decided not to go back to school. At WCET, he worked as a director, producer, announcer, and engineer,… and pretty much everything else having to do with the studio.

Nelson and Virginia Erbeck with young Bob and Judith in front of their home at 125 S. East St., ca 1953.

In December of 1972, he was hired by WKRC to work on *The Nick Clooney Show*, which began airing in early January. Bob recalled, "Nick was a great guy and a wonderful host, and I had the privilege of working with talented individuals such as singer Dave McCoy, and Mike Reid, a former Cincinnati Bengals player turned singer-songwriter." Nick's show was a live, one-hour afternoon variety show, that aired 5 days a week. Any time celebrities were in town to perform at the Beverly Hills Supper Club, they would often appear on Nick's show first. Bob has many fond memories of the entire Clooney clan, and says they were all like family. He tells me that, "ten years after Nick's show ended, many of us (now living in LA) flew back for a 3-day reunion in

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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 promote and preserve the history and heritage of Mason.

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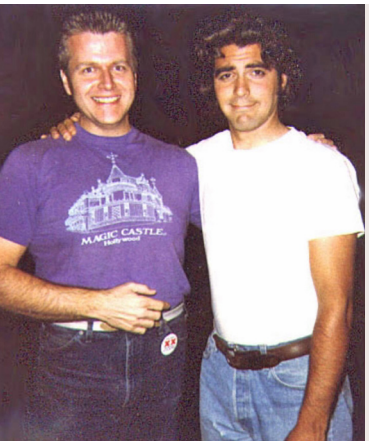
MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum is open from 2-5 pm every Thursday, and by appointment.

Bob Erbeck, cont.

which we spent a weekend taping an unaired episode, having a picnic at their house in Augusta, and mingling until late in the night."



Bob was hired to shoot a pilot for a new sitcom *Baby Talk* in 1990. He had no idea who the actors were, as he settled in behind his camera. He heard someone holler, "Hey Erbeck!" George Clooney, who was the male lead in the show, called Bob over to introduce his co-star Connie Sellecca. George regaled her with stories including how Bob used to show him how to run camera on his dad's show when he was a little boy.

One "corny" memory of his time at WKRC happened when shooting the Bob Jones morning show. The guest that day was an entrepreneur from Indiana, who was launching his popcorn business. He actually popped some corn on air, and after the show, the crew dove in. "My first taste of Orville Redenbacher popcorn, and he popped it for me! How many people can say that?"

In 1977, Bob decided to take his talents out to LA. When he'd started at WKRC, they were doing 7-8 live shows a day. Five years later, it was just the news, and "Bowling for Dollars."

His dad Nelson, came along for the cross-country trek as Bob made his big relocation out west. The move was made easier as he had friends from WKRC-TV who'd already relocated to LA. Bob found a great deal on an apartment, from a family friend in Burbank, and set about looking for work. He heard Metromedia was hiring summer relief help so he filled out an application and left his resume. A week went by with no word, so he wrote a letter to the head of Engineering telling him that, "he was part of a minority… the minority of good camera operators!" They called the next day and he was hired. It turns out his application & resume had been lost, so it was the letter that set him on his successful path.

All of Norman Lear's shows were currently being shot at Metromedia, and Bob worked on them all (including *Maude* and *The Jeffersons*); except for the crown jewel, *All in the Family*. He was soooo close though. They had an opening and wanted Bob to fill that spot as a regular. But he was working on *One Day at a Time*, and they didn't want to lose him, so he had to turn down shooting his dream show.

After a few years at Metromedia, Bob decided to go freelance. Occasionally, he even came out from behind the camera, and into the spotlight. While filling in on *The Mike Douglas Show* in July, 1980, he was in the control room and noticed that one of the guests the next day was going to be Olivia Newton-John. He casually mentioned to a couple of other guys there that he was finally going to get to see her after all these years. (She was one of the people he most wanted to meet when he moved to LA). Word of that exchange secretly got to the host. Fast forward to the on-air interview the next day, when Mike said, "By the way Olivia, we have a fellow on our crew who's very much in love with you…he's on Camera One and his name is Bob Erbock." They then walked over to a flabbergasted Bob who didn't know what to say. Bob's startled reaction to this attention was the hit of that show and during the closing credits, they called him out on the stage as if he had been one of the guests. He didn't even care that Mike Douglas had mispronounced his name, as he got to hug and kiss Olivia as the credits rolled. He also got $300, since he was an AFTRA member and had made an appearance on a national TV show.

You can view a 7-minute clip of Bob and Olivia on YouTube. You'll also see fellow Masonites Paul Schutte and Karen Koenig sitting behind Bob in the first row. They'd come to town on vacation and Bob had gotten them tickets to the show. "They were just as surprised as I was."

When working on the show, *Three's A Crowd* in 1984, Bob was taking a week's vacation, but was staying in town. He jokingly told the director that if he needed an extra for any scene, to call him. Well, the director actually did call him in as a featured extra for a party scene with John Ritter, the star of the show. When they came off stage, John (who Bob had worked with on *Three's Company*) came up to him and said, "you got a bigger laugh than I did!" For his 5 minutes of fame, he didn't even say a word and he has made over $1000. Not a bad gig! Over 40 years later, he still gets modest residual checks for that appearance.

Bob also got to shoot a lot of sports. KTTV-TV aired all the Dodger games and whenever they played in San Francisco or San Diego, they'd take their LA camera crew with them. During batting practice in San Diego one day, Steve Garvey hit a ball within feet of Bob's center field camera, so Bob got a fun, albeit very scuffed up, souvenir that day. Years later while working on *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper*, Cincy Reds-great Frank Robinson was a guest on the show so Bob got him to sign the Garvey ball. Several more years later, Bob met Steve Garvey at an interview and the legend was happy to autograph it too, but he was really curious why Frank Robinson had also signed his batting practice ball…

There were many favorite career highlights for Bob over the years. In 2004, he worked on *The Dick Van Dyke Show, Revisited* with all the surviving original cast members, and amazingly they used the original living room set that had been hidden away in a warehouse for

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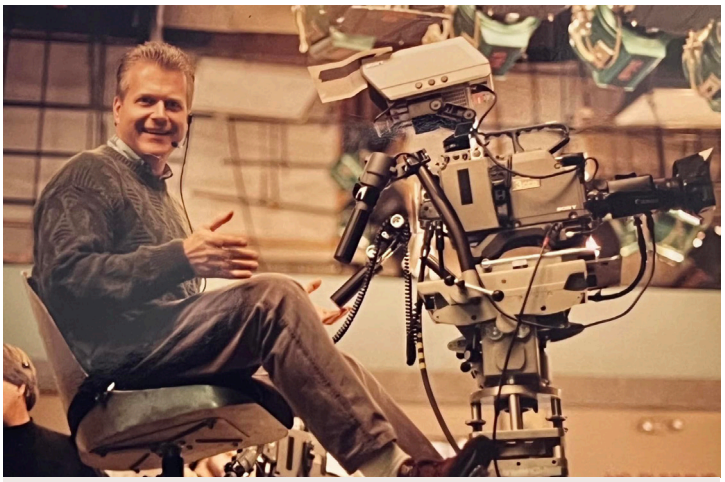
Bob Erbeck, cont.



On the set of *Who's The Boss*, starring Tony Danza, ca. 1984.

Bob working out his *Sid the Science Kid* camera angles on stage at Henson Studios, ca. 2007.

40 years. This was such an historic event to be witness to, that other actors shooting on the MTM lot would rush over during their breaks to watch these screen legends and history in the making… and Bob had a front row seat. Pretty cool.

Other highlights include hangin' with Nell Carter while taping *Gimme A Break* and *Hangin' with Mr. Cooper*. The star of the show would take him and another camera guy to occasional lunches in her Lamborghini, which had been gifted to her as a signing bonus from NBC. Bob also worked on Merv Griffin's very last game show called, *Merv Griffin's Crosswords*. When Merv died, the show did as well.

In 2004, two wizards at the Jim Henson Co. had invented a new ground-breaking "virtual" camera to shoot live-action animation. They didn't want their engineers breaking it in; they needed a real sitcom camera operator. Brian Henson, Jim's son and CEO of the company, was also the Executive Producer/Director of this initial project. Henson's people called Bob to see if he was interested in working on this one-of-a-kind camera. Always game for a challenge, Bob accepted the 5-week job. He would be shooting stories from Russell Hoban's children's book series *Frances*, about a little badger girl.

Bob recalled the first week was grueling. Brian Henson had done very little video before; only film. Bob, on the other hand, had mostly worked on video, and very little film. It was a challenge for Bob to try to both figure out this new camera and also to try to decipher Brian's film terminology. "We were at each other's throats for a bit," he laughingly recalled.

Two weeks after the project wrapped, Bob was called back to meet with the inventors and share any ideas he had on how to improve the camera. He was quite pleased when he found out that everything he suggested, they did. For the next several years, Henson called him in for many more jobs with the camera, and he continued working with the engineers to improve it. The biggest job was *Sid the Science Kid* for PBS; 67 episodes from 2008-2011. He loved working at Henson's historic studio lot. It had started life in 1917 as Charlie Chaplin's Studio, and later when it was owned by A&M Records, "We Are The World" was recorded there in 1985 to raise money for Africa.

In his many years in Hollywood, Bob has racked up more credits and taped more TV shows than you can count. His career was so fulfilling and brought him countless memories, but health issues began to surface. In 2007, he was diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy in both feet, after coming in contact with Agent Orange while in Vietnam. He once told me with a wry, sad smile, "Vietnam … the war that keeps on giving." In 2012, the problems with his feet put him in a wheelchair for nine months, which forced Bob to retire from the industry he loved.

After 46 years in beautiful, downtown Burbank, Bob moved, less than a year ago, to an independent-living facility in Los Altos, CA. His sister Judith and her husband, Fred live nearby just south of San Francisco. Friends have told Bob for years that he needs to write a book about his many unique experiences working on so many different shows, and he's definitely considering it.

Bob worked many Oscar night specials hosted by Barbara Walters. At far right, Bob shoots Barbara's interview with David and Victoria Beckham at a rented LA home, 2007.

In Bob's words: "Looking back on my life, I wouldn't change a thing. If I had to do it all over again I would do it the same way. Although my health has restricted me from pursuing certain activities, such as flying or traveling, I remain grateful for the experiences I had, the relationships I built, and the memories of a life filled with lights."

Ed. note: Bob has many memories of his time in Vietnam, but for this article, I've focused on his amazing career. Hopefully at a later time, he will agree to let us share some of his war stories.

THE LURE OF THE OPEN ROAD

Takes Two Adventurers Through Mason

Gina Burton Arens

In 1944, two dear friends and recent college graduates, Doris Roy and Thelma Popp, undertook an adventurous journey that they had dreamed of during countless hikes together over their college holidays. They had been Camp Fire Girls together, loving the out-of-doors, camping and hiking the open road. Their dreams finally developed into a plan to ride bicycles from their home in Buffalo, New York, to Cairo, Illinois, where the Ohio River meets the Mississippi. They admired Mark Twain's adventures, had read his ***Life on the Mississippi****, and sought to follow his path to the Midwest.*

But now, before starting their careers, they decided that the coming summer would be the ideal time to have their adventure. Doris had signed a contract to begin teaching first grade in Middleport, New York, on the Erie Canal on September 4, 1944, so it was now or never…

Doris and Thelma at the start of their trip.

On the morning of June 22, 1944, Thelma Popp and Doris Roy, enjoyed a nice breakfast with their families and then set out on what would be the cross-country trip of a lifetime! With the wind in their hair, $100 each in their pocket and the ecstatic feeling of freedom and adventure, the two young women embarked on what would be a 3,000-mile bicycle trip. Many years later Thelma documented their journey in her book *The Lure of the Open Road* (2007). The girls were confident they would have no trouble managing life on the road. In Thelma's first journal entry she writes, *"before us lay the world… hills for a bed and two months of unfettered vagabond life!"* (Oh, the unbridled spirit of youth! Can that be bottled?!)

It was not far into their journey that a man warned them of the hills they would encounter following their planned route to Pittsburgh then Virginia, so they decided to be sensible and travel through Ohio. Thelma relates, "Ohio seemed a dull state, but it was true—it was more level and the distance shorter." So, they peddled through northern PA and into Ohio, ultimately passing through Cleveland. There they picked up Route 42 heading south.

As they traveled, it was rare that they were not able to find a barn or some other accommodation at bedtime. They cooked over a campfire, did dishes & laundry, bathed, swam, and even went to church on Sunday. They ate when they were hungry and went to bed when they were tired. One newspaper report stated, "they carried no watches or other time pieces."

South of Cleveland they experienced a stretch of countryside where they saw nothing but green fields, herds of hogs and corn stalks. They concluded Ohio must be the great hog and corn belt of the U.S.!

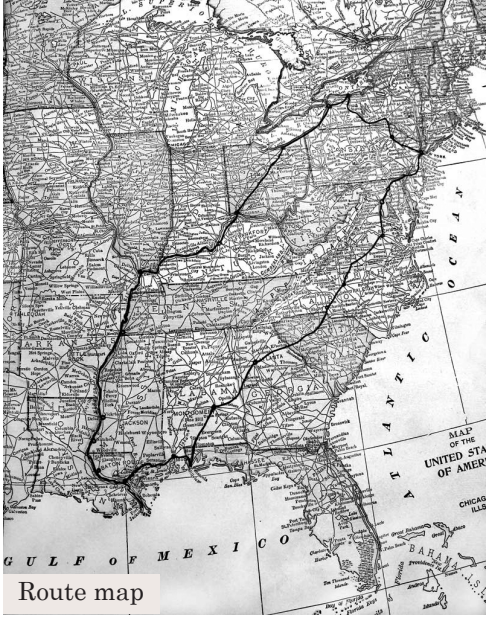
While taking a rest between Waynesville and Lebanon, Thelma pondered where they would sleep that night. She later wrote: *"once we ended our siesta and biked on into Mason, we could not help but notice the Tompkins home. It was on a hill, and following the Victorian style of architecture, it was large and gabled. We paused just to look at it, and then we noticed there was a barn nearby. Would we possibly be accepted here?*

"Accepted? That is not the word. Mrs. Tompkins does not accept, she energetically welcomes people into her home and into her heart. She is a thin, spry, and extremely active little person, whose eyes twinkle and whose smile constantly reassures you of her kindness and understanding.

Cora (nee Bowyer) and her husband, Victor Warren "VW" Tompkins, along with Thelma and Brownie, in front of their home at 405 E. Main St. The house still stands.

'My,' she exclaimed, 'that's just the kind of trip I would like to take, just what you girls are doing. Good healthy exercise,' she declared as she made us comfortable in her deep living room chairs.
'I'd like you to meet my brother, Mr. Bowyer. He writes poetry.'
We stood up and shook hands with Mr. Bowyer.
'Have you ever been in Mason before?' Mrs. Tompkins inquired.
'No, this is our first trip south,' I answered.
'Well, we have a nice little town, but the place of most interest is the WLW radio station.'

"Before we knew it, we were all in the car on our way to the WLW radio station. They told us this was the most powerful broadcasting station in the country. We circled the maze of towers and met some of the Tompkins-Bowyer relatives. We had been lying on a hill of grass four hours ago, but now we were part of a family, riding around town in the car, discussing rain conditions for the crops and new neighbors. We drove up the drive to our new home and brought our miscellany of wash clothes and towels into the house to wash up for the night. They tried to persuade us to sleep in the house tonight, but we decided to roll out our bedrolls on a mattress of corn stalks in the spacious barn, with Brownie the dog at our side."



Route map

Bidding the Tompkins farewell and thanking them for their wonderful hospitality, the women once again mounted their bikes, heading for Cincinnati. Arriving late morning they parked their bikes and pulled out their trusty AAA Travel book which would advise them of the city's history and places of interest. They used this guide in every large city they visited. It was an invaluable tool for their education on the road.

Peddling across the Ohio and through Covington, continuing to follow Rt 42, they encountered what seemed like an endless hill where they eventually began to walk their bikes. They were out of water and needed a place to replenish their canteens. Not far they found a friendly gas station. One of many they relied on not only for water but for the restrooms they provided where they were able to freshen up, do laundry, and rest.

The men at the station advised them that the trip to Louisville was hilly and would be difficult by bicycle. They suggested they hitch a ride with a truck driver who happened to be heading that way. It was the first of many rides they would accept that made travel easier and speedier although at times they had second thoughts about accepting rides, only because they felt they saw and experienced much more by bicycle.

Arriving in Louisville on July 3rd, they sought overnight lodging at the YWCA, a place they often frequented when a barn wasn't available. With no room at the Y they were referred to a boarding house down the street. The women would end up staying in Louisville much longer than planned as they waited for an opportunity for employment as maids on a riverboat that would take them down the Mississippi River, a trip they had dreamed of since beginning their journey.

It was July 11th when they finally got their chance and readily accepted jobs as maids on the Steamboat *Corregidor*. Once onboard they were trained by Mrs. Lynch, a short gray-haired lady in charge of the kitchen. She had worked on the boat over twenty years with her husband who was the first mate. She warned the ladies not to go out on the deck alone at night. She reminded them there were thirty men in the crew and only four women on the boat. They knew what she meant, and it was a bit worrisome, but they were glad for the warning and heeded her advice.

The steamboat *Corregidor*

The ladies enjoyed the day-to-day rhythm of their jobs on the steamboat for a little over a month, riding up and down the Mississippi twice before disembarking in New Orleans on August 15. It was difficult saying goodbye as the captain & crew had been so wonderful to them. As usual, the YWCA was their first stop but having no beds they were directed to a rooming house in the French Quarter. Enjoying several days of the luxury of the French Quarter and the history of New Orleans they continued their journey.

Arriving in Biloxi, MS they found a lovely room at the Hotel Riviera right on the Gulf of Mexico! Enjoying a swim in the warm gulf waters they were thrilled to stand in the white sand on the very tip of the U.S., knowing beyond this body of salt water was South America.

Passing through Alabama they finally arrived in Atlanta, GA. A great surprise awaited them there as a reporter for the *Atlanta Journal* called and wanted an interview! The next day their story and photo made the front-page, detailing their journey.

After spending a couple nights in Atlanta, they hitched a ride to South Carolina and then to Washington DC. Where they visited the Capitol, the National Gallery of Art, and the many historic monuments of the city. Next the ladies were able to hitch a ride to Baltimore to visit friends. Another ride took them to New York City where they peddled down famous streets like Broadway and 5th.

Their final visit to a nearby truck terminal led them to a ride to Buffalo via Scranton, PA. On September 2, their driver dropped them just a few miles from Doris's home and the ladies quickly peddled there where their families and a delicious home-cooked meal awaited their return.

Thelma concludes her story with a final comment. *"Our bicycle trip and spirit of adventure have never left me. Now in my eighties I continue to travel and explore new parts of the world with Gordon, the soldier I married!"*

The Lure of the Open Road, Thelma Popp Jones, 2007.

A footnote to this story. The following was written by Thelma Popp Jones many years later:

"Now over 50 years later, as we read the news and watch the television reports of abductions that take place today, we wonder. Were we courageous or just naïve? Or was it our outlook, our spirit, the happiness we exuded that carried us along in safety? We really never considered that anything formidable would happen to us."

And if they had they would have never experienced the thrill and "lure of the open road". And as far as was it "courageous or being naïve?", maybe a bit of both but they pressed on and I am certain there were no regrets.

IN MEMORIAM

We were very sorry to hear of the passing of three wonderful ladies this past month. Our heartfelt condolences to their families and many friends.

Miriam "Mim" L. Williams passed away on Nov. 20, 2023 at the age of 93. Mim was born June 30, 1930 in North College Hill, to the late Nelson and Alice Burbank. She was predeceased by her husband, John Williams, sister Joyce Taylor, and grandson Mark. She is survived by her sons Mark (Lisa) Williams, and Tom (Sarah) Williams, as well as her five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Mim graduated from Miami University with a master's in education. She took this accomplishment and became a lifelong educator within Mason City Schools and beyond. She was a member of Mason United Methodist Church where she sang in the choir, and she served on the board of the Mason Public Library for many years.

Patricia Ann "Patty" Kuntz (nee Conover) passed away on December 18, 2023 at the age of 84. She was born to Mae and Marvin Conover (Mason's first Police Chief) on April 9, 1939. Patty volunteered with the Mason Life Squad for many years. She loved nothing more than her Bengals, college basketball and "Bud Light" on game days. She was always so kind, and being an accomplished hostess was one of her many talents.

In addition to her parents, she is predeceased by her son, James. She is survived by her children: Rhonda Kuntz, Sherry Williams *(MHS curator)*, Mark, Tony, and Dennis "Fid" Kuntz; sister Donna (Ron) Pennington; Ten grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Celebration of life to be announced in the near future.

Evelyn Kimberly Landen (née Swaine) passed away on December 19, 2023 at the age of 101. She was born to Phillip and Bertha Swaine on August 21, 1922, in Lynn, Massachusetts. She was a long-time member of Mason Methodist Church, Warren County Garden Club, Mason Grange and the Order of Eastern Star. She worked in the water office in Mason as a clerk for 12 years. *(An interview with Evelyn was featured in our August, 2022 newsletter.)*

Evelyn was preceded in death by her parents, first husband John Cammett, second husband Elmer Landen, her six siblings, and daughter Maryann McDonald. She is survived by her children John (Trish) Cammett, Elizabeth (Brad) Oelman, Ralph Cammett, Janice (Mitch) Bonham, William (Mary) Cammett, Everett (Barb) Landen; and sixteen grandchildren.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love hearing from you, so if you have any thoughts you would like to share regarding Mason history or our monthly newsletter, please email them to: mason.oh.historical@gmail.com

Elaine Muennich Hutten – *<u>Loved</u> your St. Susanna articles!! (Oct. 2023) I am proud and privileged to be one of the very FIRST of the 35 students in the new St. Susanna School in 1949!!*

We had a wonderful teacher, Sister Helen Therese… for our whole 5 years that we were there! (Note: 4 of those years in the same room.)

Sister Helen Therese was a huge influence on me, and I have many great memories of my 5 years there, grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8!!

<u>Thank you</u> to everyone who gave us this beautiful tribute with great photos.

Angie Barnes Stryker – *Just read the MHS newsletter. Nice article on Jack Gray! I used to hang out with his wife frequently as a child. This was after he passed away. We had a lot of widows in our neighborhood. Anyway, I do remember the museum. So interesting to understand more of what he did back in those days. I just loved Mrs. Gray. She taught me so much about a variety of things, and we had fun playing games like Kerplunk! They also had a great cherry & mulberry tree where I spent lots of time picking & eating the fruit!*

Janet Hamilton – *It's hard to think of the Grays without remembering the many years and hundreds of boys and girls who benefitted from the Grays' devotion to Boys and Girls Scouting programs. As one of her Girl Scouts, I have grown to have a lifelong love of birds. And did you know that Mr. Gray was a semi-professional photographer? He had his own developing equipment and took pictures for several organizations in town. I was able to earn a Girl Scout photography badge with the use of that equipment.*

Teresa Trenkamp Brausch – *Loved the December newsletter! Ralph Spaeth is delightful!*

NOTICE ABOUT DONATIONS

When bringing donations to the Museum, we would very much prefer that they are brought in during open hours, from 2-5 pm on Thursdays.

Outside of that time when no one is there to accept your donations, and you have to leave them on the porch, please be sure to leave your name and phone number so we can contact you if we have questions. Thank you!

The Board Report

Jay Meibers, President

Happy New Year and welcome to 2024. Safe travels to those of you heading for warmer weather for winter. Fortunately, the past few winters have not been too bad in Mason and I hope this year follows the same trend.

I can remember the back-to-back winters in 1977-78 & 1978-79 which were so brutal that they were talking about the coming of the next Ice Age. I got my driver's license in Dec. 1977 and the roads were nothing but ice. It was April of 1978 until the ice cover finally melted on the roads. I can also remember the snow piles 8-10 feet high on both sides of Mason-Montgomery Road and it felt like driving through a tunnel. Hopefully we never see that again!

Make sure you get in your RSVPs for the April 3 "Black Wednesday – The day that Mason will never forget" program on the 50th year anniversary of the 1974 tornado that hit Mason. Seats will be limited. We are working with Jeff Hill Video on the presentation as well as partnering with the City of Mason. Exciting stuff!

Thank you to everyone who have already sent in their 2024 membership dues. Memberships are due by the end of January 2024. Just a reminder that new members who signed up after June 2023, your 2024 dues are covered. If you have any questions on your membership then please call or email us at the museum. I also want to remind you that we have three year's worth of past newsletters on our website for your viewing pleasure!

All Board members have returned to serve in 2024. We are lucky to have such dedicated and talented Board members and volunteers to ensure we can effectively execute our mission of promoting and preserving Mason's history. Have a safe & healthy New Year!

THIS MONTH IN MASON HISTORY

Excerpts (up to 1965) from *Around Mason, Ohio: A Story*, R.M. Springman

1839: On January 22 an act to incorporate the town of Mason in the County Warren was signed by the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, James J. Faran, and by the Speaker of the Senate, William Hawkins, of the 37th General Assembly.

1906: Alvin Voorhis, James Shurts and Charles Mosteller, trustees of the Universalist Church in Mason, along with the clerk, C. P. Sweny, the treasurer, M. C, Wikoff and Reverend F. L. Carrier, decided in January to build a parsonage west of the church on Church Street and the sturdy house lasted throughout the century. It still stands today.

1917: The Farmers' Institute was held at the Mason Opera House during the first week of the year, The weather had been quite rainy and waters were high in the area. By January 14 the temperature was down to 10 degrees F, below zero.

1944: Edward Hoppe, whose family had owned the flour mill at Fosters since 1886, was killed in a tragic accident in the mill in January and the family immediately sold the property. The large island in the Little Miami River formed by the mill race had been called Hoppe's Island for many years and was used for recreational purposes.

1952: The Mason council was reorganized on January 1st and Mayor "Barney" Lane appointed members to committees for Building and Utilities, Highway and Traffic, Public Institutions, Welfare and Planning, Sewer, and Finance and Law.

1964: In the late fall the families of Otto Burnside, Lee Carey, Bob Mitchell, Orris Horsley, Ellis Johnson, Lester Johnson, Don Burnside and Dale Burnside laid the plans for the Mason Church of Christ. On the first Sunday in January, 1964, 84 people were to meet at the Western Row School for the first services. James E, Walker was the first minister. A church building was to be constructed in 1968 near the school and an addition was made to it in 1970 to accommodate the growing membership. The church was demolished by the 1974 tornado but was rebuilt and reopened in January 1976.

MASON UNITED METHODIST CLOSES

Ends 186-year History in our City

As of January 1, 2024, the Mason United Methodist Church will be closing its doors. We are saddened to hear this news and considering its long history in the community we wanted to make our readers aware of their closing. April's newsletter included a story about Mason's early churches and noted the following:

"In 1837 Rev Joseph Jefferson Hill, a minister in the West Chester area since 1835, purchased a lot just one block east of the Universalist Church from the William Mason estate and donated it to the newly formed Methodist Episcopal Church. The membership numbered about thirty. A simple frame building was constructed for church use. The Rev. Hill, who was to be a chaplain in the Civil War and who died in Lebanon in 1885, later had his name permanently united with the church when a plaque was installed in a second church building on the same location. It was inscribed; "Hill M.E. Church – 1879."

Over the years the church was not only a place of prayer and worship but also a center of social activity and community support. Many improvements were made to the Church St location but eventually the congregation outgrew the facility and built a much larger church at 6315 Mason Montgomery Road in 1986. Two additions to the original structure brought the facilities to 35,699 square feet. According to the church's pastor, Mark Damschroder, the church and the 6.5 acre plot it occupies will be turned over to The United Methodist Church.

Around Mason: A Story, 1982. RM Springman, and Warren County Auditor

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Mason City Schools

Mason Community Grange No.1680

Mason-Deerfield Chamber

Mason Public Library

WARREN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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UPCOMING THEATER PRODUCTION

Mason High School will be performing "And A Child Shall Lead" in their Studio "Black Box" Theater. Dates are set for Jan 19th, 26th, 27th @ 7pm and Jan 20th @ 2pm and 7pm.

The play by Michael Slade tells the heroic and true story of children coming of age in Terezin, the "Jewish city" established by the Nazis near Prague as a way station before the death camps. In the face of unspeakable horror, these children use their determination and creativity to build lives filled with hope and beauty -- playing, studying, making art, and writing an underground newspaper -- all at the peril of being executed. Their actual poems and stories are woven into a fast-paced drama, evoking the universality of children caught in the insanity of war.

Tickets are $10 each and are available at https://masondrama.com/current-production/