CONNECTIONS

August 2018

207 W. Church Street Mason, Ohio www.masonhistoricalsociety.org 513.398.6750

Open 1 to 4pm Thursday and Friday; First Saturday of Each Month 10 –1pm, and by appointment

2018 RAFFLE

A thank you to everyone who has returned raffle tickets to date. Thank you for any additional donation you may have included.

If you have not yet done so, there is still time for you, a friend, a relative or a co-worker to take a chance to become a BIG WINNER. A friendly reminder this is one of our main fundraisers to maintain and operate all of the property. We appreciate all of your support.

"Mason Athletes From The Past"

Have you ever wanted to try your hand at acting? Maybe you've acted in the past and would like to do so again. If you fit that description here is a great opportunity to do just that and help the Historical Society with an important fundraiser. We are looking for volunteers to portray Mason athletes of long ago in this years Cemetery Walk at Rose Hill Cemetery, October 9th at 7pm! The scripts are only 5-7 minutes long and require nothing more than some enthusiasm and desire to represent a Mason athlete. If you and/or someone you know fits the description above please contact:

Perry Denehy: perrydenehy@gmail.com or call the

Historical Society: at 398-6750. Tickets go on sale in September.

Art, Art & More Art…

The month of August is your last chance this year to see our treasured art collection. Come to the museum and see how local artists have immortalized many significant buildings in Mason with their artistic abilities.

We treasure this collection for many reasons! Here are my top three. My number one reason… Who knew we had such talented members! That's right some of the artist's names you will recognize as members of the Mason Historical Society. They have shared their talent's with us as well as their love of Mason and some historic spots many of you will recognize.

Second… Depicted in these paintings are many Mason homes, farms, schools and businesses that are no longer standing. By painting these places it preserves their history and reminds us of simpler times.

And the third reason I treasure this art collection is the various mediums the artists used to preserve the memories of these Mason sites. We have art created in oil, water color and drawings.

And just to make your viewing of these works a little more interesting, we challenge you to answer a few questions about the collection when you are here. Prizes will be awarded.

So don't miss out on seeing this wonderful collection of Mason history captured forever in beautiful works of art, created by Mason artists.

A Month at the Museum Gay McCurley

Where has the time gone? It is now August and you have only this month left to come in and view our art show. Question... Who is the artist? Answer,… art created by some of our members.

Some of the artists of these great works of art, friends of the Society, are now gone. Each of them have left a legacy for us to enjoy. The subjects of choice for the artists are notable buildings in and around Mason. We are so blessed to have two large works from William Mason's granddaughter which are beautiful. There is a challenge going on at the Alverta Green Museum come in and have some fun while enjoying the show.

If you have not been by the museum lately you have missed the new and improved exterior. As you drive by be sure to look up at the chimney and then down at our new sign. We would love to hear your thoughts on the appearance of the Alverta Green Museum.

Just a reminder that we always accept orders for bricks. I will have another install in the fall. Remember Christmas is coming, Birthdays, Memoirs for loved ones and just to have your family remembered in our walkway.

The museum has been on a few bucket lists this summer where families have stopped in and toured the museum, so they could cross a tour of the Alverta Green Museum off their list. These visits have been very enjoyable, and we hope to see this continue throughout the year.

"Characters of a Town" Submitted by Gay McCurley

The following article was first written by Mr. Robert Mong during the 1960's. It was found in the Alverta Green Museum's library.

Mason: Yankee Bowyer breached the bounds of propriety in this town with his strangeness, bombast and complexities. Mason city fathers could laugh with this man of reputed fine wit and the next instant be bent over as his assaulting words banged against their sensibilities. And what one did to the other was not always pretty-for vindictiveness and pettiness over pieces of junk is not a pretty sight in a tidy town. Frank M. (Yankee) Bowyer Jr. was a junk dealer the likes of which you'll likely never see again. Very much a public figure, he was a sometime politician, a folk hero to some, an enigma to all and a very sharp thorn in City Hall's side. Yankee died last April and his controversial junkyard is about to be removed. Most say he possessed genius and a few frown and disagree. "If he was so smart," one woman remarked, "why was he a junk dealer?" Some say he was his own man but a lonely man still; seemingly out of place in every situation, never quite fitting in. But to others he was convivial, a good guy. Yankee, the rebel. Never did relate too well to authority. He always loved a good scrimmage and the bigger the opponent the better he liked the scuffle. Part of his mystery was linked to his unpredictability. In 1934, he was graduated as valedictorian from Mason High School. Record books at the school show Yankee's grade average 15 points higher than his nearest classmate. But with all that talent, he sloughed off a handsome scholarship offer from Wilmington College-a move his friends never him regret. A few years later, he became mayor of South Lebanon but soon abandoned that and returned to Mason where he dabbled in politics-running for Mason mayor in 1967 was his last race. He was a natural lawyer who loved to argue and whose forensic talent won most of his verbal battles. Even as he grew older, and wore the dingy uniform and makeup of the junk man he was, his high intelligence glistened through when he needed it, which was usually when he felt he was harassed by City Hall. Yankee's last junkyard (he kept several over the years) was strewn along U.S.42 in north Mason and the city did not like it much, thinking it unsightly. "What annoyed Council was that Yankee would not compromise. The more they were after him to clean up the junk, the more he'd add. They both were pretty stubborn," one city official said. From May 1967 until a few days before he died, Yankee was arrested 36 times by Mason police; 30 of those arrests resulted from junk related violations or what Yank interpreted as harassing arrests. "They (Mason Council) broke him financially. That's the only way they could get through to him, just nickel and dime him to death. In the end, all he had was character," Yank's brother Julian said. Paul Weber, Mason City solicitor, often had to fight Yankee in court. He maintains the city wasn't "out to get Yankee," but just wanted the junkyards spruced up. When the city first started proceedings against Yank, his yard was downtown and one stack of ruined cars was piled four high, Weber said. Oil drippings from that old yard still stain the earth.The fighting eventually caught up with Yankee last autumn. In October he was sent to Warren county jail on a 102-day sentence for running a junkyard without a license. He was released after 30 days. Once free, Yankee remained adamant and refused to bow to Mason Council. But his problems struck again. He returned to jail a few months later to serve a 60-day term on the same charge. He was out in 45 days with the help of Lebanon attorney Ed Cranmer. Twenty-six days later Yankee was dead. Those last days weren't pleasant. His mother died in February, his wife divorced him and his only child was placed in Mary Haven, the county's home for boys and girls. After his divorce Yankee often abandoned his house in town and slept at the junkyard, sometimes in the cars on the property. He fired the engines on those cold April nights to warm himself. On April's last night, he did just that; started the engine and the muffled warmth put him to sleep. He was found the next day. "Yankee was the kind of man," one of his buddies recalled at the Buckeye Lodge, "that didn't hide what he did behind some white shirt and tie. Most everything he did was done openly. He was the most honest man I ever met." One city official said: "I don't think the older Mason residents minded the junkyard that much. It was these new people in town that wanted everything just right."

Footnote: Buckeye Lodge was a bar located across from Mason Bowl. Yankee was 56years old at the time of his death. The junkyard in town was located where the current All Smiles Family Dental Office at 409 Reading Rd. is located.

Preserving A Mason Artifact— "The Dream Of Music"

The M. Shulz player piano donated to our Society a few years ago sets idly in the parlor of the museum. We were told the piano was used for some period of time in the early days of Mason's "movie house" built in 1916. The "movie house" was first called *The Princess Theater*, later *The Grand* and finally *The Dream*.

Doing some research, we learned it is 90 years old. You might guess the "player action" no longer works and the piano is out of tune.

After making several phone calls to several piano companies we were directed to a company on the west side of Cincinnati which restores player pianos. A piano technician came to the museum and disassembled the piano enough to determine the work and parts needed to rebuild the player action and regulate the action so it can once again be heard. Good news was, there is so little wear to the felt on the hammers it is not necessary it be replaced and he is confident the piano can be tuned.

Just think how great it would be for visitors to see this instrument of such nostalgia playing a song. If you have visited a museum, who hasn't, which has a working display it always adds excitement to the attraction. This would be our first such attraction! Item B under Purposes in our Society Constitution states: "To collect, preserve, and exhibit for educational and cultural purposes all types of historical artifacts, records, structures and matters having particular interest to Mason and the surrounding areas. The rebuild would include an electric blower so it could be set to play automatically or the adventurous visitors could take a try at pumping the piano manually to crank out a song or two. It would be great as well to have Society members who can play the piano playing Christmas songs during our Open House celebration in December.

The cost for the restoration is $4,600.00. This includes picking up the piano and returning it once all the work has been completed. The price includes tuning the piano a few weeks after being returned and there has been sufficient time for the instrument to acclimate to the museum's environmental conditions.

The Society Executive Board has agreed unanimously this is a worthwhile fundraising project. As such, a plaque will be prominently displayed with the names of those who donate towards the restoration.

Marilyn Batsche, the widow of Judge David K. Batsche, has agreed the funds donated to the Society in the memory of her husband be used as seed money to restore the piano. David was a Charter Member of the Society, served as President and was a dedicated member for thirty nine years. As such, he served as Society legal advisor for 35 years. Two of his key contributions included his law firm preparing and submitting to the IRS and the Ohio Secretary of State, the paperwork necessary for our Society to incorporate as a Non-profit organization.

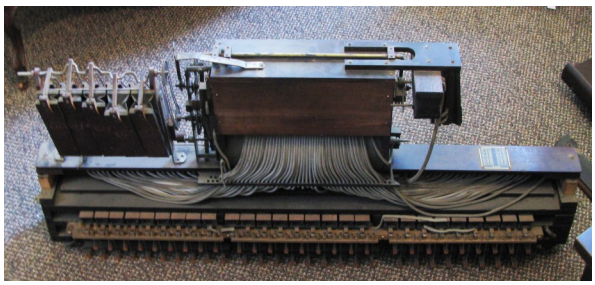
Many of us have fond memories of seeing a movie at *The Dream Theater*, getting a bag of popcorn and maybe a candy bar all for 50cents or even less. Maybe you also remember the March of Dimes campaigns for the fight against polio? They would turn on the lights in the theater after the previews of coming attractions and pass around a can so you could drop in a dime or another amount to help put an end to that crippling disease.

How great it will be if we can restore this piece of Mason history.

Inside Drop Lid

Front Cover Removed

Player Action



Doesn't Everyone Have Fireworks Every Night in Their Back Yard?

Submitted by Carol Christianson Stone

The Mason Historical Society is hosting a program July 17th presented by the Cincinnati Museum Center on the *History of Cincinnati's Amusement Parks*. As I was thinking about the program, it dawned on me that the history of Kings Island is MY history; it impacted so much of my growing up! My trip down memory lane isn't unusual or special as a late baby boomer growing up in Mason, but it is fun to reminisce!

I was born and raised in Mason, which at the time was small town USA! (Population = 5677 on 1970 census). It had just been incorporated to become a city in 1971 and the village was growing. As a kid growing up in the "Heights", our summer days consisted of being out of the house all day either swimming at Pine Hill Pool, climbing on what would now be considered a very dangerous trapeze set my Dad built, hanging out in my buddy's tree house (thanks Marilyn Ehde Rogers) or riding our bikes for miles down Cox Road. Everywhere you looked it was farmland. Playing in a retention basin was exciting! But then… KINGS ISLAND!

What was that? I knew about Kings Mills because of the Little Miami River and canoeing, but Kings Island? A big Coney Island? As a 8-year-old kid, we had no idea. Within two years, there was a whole amusement park with the Eiffel tower visible for miles! That opening year of 1972 was magical! At first our parents were protective of us and made us stay in groups but before long, we were on our own! My first memories were riding the Racer over and over again…your hands smelled like metal from holding on to those bars. We would ride the Rotor and hoped no one recently vomited in it! When we got really hot the Log Flume was a winner! 1973 brought the best thing EVER…the Brady Bunch! Any girl in the early 70s was in love the Greg and he was in Mason! Those first years also brought nightly fireworks at 10PM…our new "time to go home" signal.

1974 brought us Lion Country Safari and its monorail track. My mom and I got a first hand look at "behind the scenes." I had what I thought were 2 male mice for a science fair project…I was going to train them to go through a maze my sister (Donna Christianson Weisman) had made. Well I didn't train them and then they started having babies. Somehow my mom found out they needed mice to breed so they could feed the snakes…I think she just really wanted them out of the house so off we went! I do hazily recall the stories of certain animals escaping and the locals assisting in the search. After so many escapes, the Safari came to an end!

Official park timelines include Evel Kneivel (1975), a long list of all the rides that have come and gone (the Beast is still my favorite: 1979), and some of the dark memories of accidents. For me the biggest addition came in 1976, the American Heritage Hall. This would become my home 6 days a week all summer long for 5 years. As a small town 16-year-old girl, I was a bit naïve. While my friends were working admissions, rides, or being litter gitters, I lucked into a costumer/dresser job for the live shows. Thanks to my mom and Helen Voorhis (4H), I knew how to sew. Everyone was older than me… almost all of the cast were in college or out of college doing cruise ship work. What an education I got very quickly! It was the 70s! My shows were *Yabba Dabba Doo Caperoo*, *New York! New York! That's Entertainment,* and *Celebration*. I was at work a few months ago and we started talking about our high school/college jobs. I told my friends what I did and the next day a co-worker brought in the record to *Celebration*! Yikes! I did get to do a brief fall stint as a smurf…a lot of smurfs had gone back to college already which made me blue! (Sorry…couldn't resist.)

A lot of change has happened over the years to Mason, Kings Island, and me! We have all aged and changed a bit but are still surviving! Now as I walk down International Street, looking at the Fountains and smelling the same LaRosa's pizza smell, I'm doing it with my grandkids! The excitement my 2-year–old grandson has on the old train is a recurring memory of mine that's generational and irreplaceable…thanks Kings Island for the memories!

Mason Post Office

From: Pulse-Journal, Mason, Ohio Wednesday, May 14, 1980

"Before 1820 mail from Mason had to be handled through a post office in Lebanon but about that time Judge J.D. Lowe established a post office about a mile northeast of the town. After 15 years it was decided to facilitate matters even more by having the post office in the town and, even after this resulted in the official change of name for the town, there was some confusion because then Masonites referred to the post office as "Kirkwoods" after Postmaster William Kirkwood. This attests to the obvious dynamic personality of Mr. Kirkwood.

The post office moved up and down Main Street a number of times until it settled in 1957 at 402 Second Street. The early postmasters after William Kirkwood were Mason Seward, Williams Dodds, A.C. Bates, D.W. VanDyke, Thomas Blackburn, Mrs. Sena Ross and Mrs. Flo Sausser. The inclusion of two women in this official position is of note since records show that few women's names crop up in Mason's history.

Mail was delivered in rural areas from Mason by horse and wagon and later in good weather, by motorcycle. In 1921 when Merrill (Beebe) Johnson was hired to take over one of the two rural route deliveries out of Mason, cars were being used to deliver mail but Freeman Williamson, the other rural carrier, still kept a horse and wagon for use in bad weather. The routes were 17 miles long and the pay was $90.00 per month. Mr. Johnson worked in the same position until December 30, 1964, just 3 days short of 44 years' service in the Mason Post Office.

On February 9, 1957 the first house delivery of mail was made and in November of that same year the post office was located on 2nd Avenue and Paul Snowden is now the post master."

Neither rain nor snow… this horse and wagon was used by the rural mail carrier .

I'm sure we can all agree we'd like to see more things made in America. When I came across this article I thought it would certainly interest many of you.

From: The Dow Drug Co. Diary 1930

Health and Beauty Hints, Household Helps, General Help

"First Things Made in America"

Pins were fist made in America in 1832.

The first daily was "The Penny Packet", 1784.

The first Bible was printed in Germantown, by Dr. Saur, in 1743.

The first lightning rods were put up in 1752.

The first public lighting by electricity was in 1878.

The first theatre was built at Williamsburg, Virginia, 1752.

The first sleeping car was seen in 1858, and the first vestibule train in 1886.

The first ferry, operated by steam, was between New York and Brooklyn, 1824.

The first printing press was put up at Cambridge, Mass., by Stephen Daye, in 1639.

Until 1772, umbrellas were unknown in North America. In that year they were imported from India.

The first apartment house in America was erected in 1869, at 142 E. 18th Street, New York.

The first telescope used in this country for astronomical purposes was set up at Yale College in 1830.

The first Thanksgiving Day was celebrated in the autumn of 1621. The second was in July, 1623.

The first fire company, called the "Union," a volunteer company, was established at Philadelphia, 1736. The fire engine was sent from England.

The first stove was invented and made by Benjamin Franklin, in 1741.

The first glass for windows was used in Virginia, 1615. Massachusetts was the next state where it was introduced, twenty-four years later.

Trivia Questions, *From:* www.nationdaycalendar.com

Answers on page 7.

1. Fried chicken lovers celebrate this American favorite at nearby restaurants, home or picnics. _____ _____ brought their tradition of deep frying chicken in fat to the southern United States. Who brought their tradition?

   A. Mexican immigrants

   B. British immigrants

   C. Canadian immigrants

   D. Scottish immigrants

2. Traditionally the chicken is fried in lard. However, corn oil, peanut oil, canola oil or vegetable oil are also frequently used. And one famous fried chicken restaurant uses what technique to make their finger licking good chicken?

   A. Pressure Cooker

   B. Soybean Oil

   C. Motor Oil

   D. Double lard fried

Mason Through The Years

In 1836, Ann Ferris paid $33.50 to the executors of William Mason's estate for lot #8 one block south of Main Street. She was the only woman to purchase directly one of the original lots of Mason.

In 1931 David Pickering, the last surviving Civil War veteran in Mason, read a poem during the Memorial Day Program at Rose Hill Cemetery.

1890 John McClung had to be taken to court about his refusal to allow the village to put a sidewalk in front of his home on the southeast corner of Main Street and Section Line Road. He was granted a judgement of $135.00 and the cost of the trial was $211.03.

50 Years Ago-1968

August 30, 1968-Most popular song was The Beatles; *Hey Jude*.

1968's most popular baby names; *Lisa, Michelle, Kimberly, Jennifer, Melissa, Michael, David, John, James and Robert.*

1st appearances & 1968's most popular toys & gifts; *Don't Break The Ice, Hot Wheels, Battling Tops, Whirlee Twirlee & Silly Putty.*

Silly Putty originally came out in 1950, but regained popularity when it was announced Apollo astronauts took some to the moon with them. They explained it was for stress relief.

Reach Out & Update Us

For many reasons it is so important to us to have our member's current phone number, mailing address and email address.

When you have to make changes in how your family and friends reach you there are many people to notify, please add us to that list.

This information is essential to us so you will receive your Connections Newsletter, any other items we send through the mail and to make phone calls when we may want to ask you to volunteer.

If you have any question as to whether we have your most updated contact information, call us or send us an email with your name and information; (513) 398-6750 or email us at:

mason.oh.historical@gmail.com

Thank you.

Answers To Trivia Question On p.6

1. D. Scottish immigrants
2. A. Pressure Cooler

McDonald's picture from 1955.

Condolences

The Mason Historical Society would like to offer it's sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Margaret French who passed away on March 5, 2018. Margaret was a Society Lifetime Member and will be missed.

Note From the Editor

Remember this is your newsletter. If you have any contributions or suggestions for making the newsletter better, I'm easy to reach.

Contact me at 513-398-6750

mason.oh.historical@gmail.com

513-850-3780

deniselandise@yahoo.com

Remember the things that happen today, no matter how small, are tomorrow's history.

Thank you.
Denise

2018 MEMBERSHIP FORM … MASON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Become a NEW member of the Mason Historical Society or RENEW you membership TODAY!
Please make your check payable to the Mason Historical Society and mail with this form to the address below.

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(to be published in our monthly newsletter)

MAY WE CALL ON YOU TO HELP PRESERVE MASON'S HISTORY BY VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME _____?

The Mason Historical Society is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, as defined under the Internal Revenue Code.
MEMBERSHIP DUES, DONATIONS AND MEMORIAL GIFTS IN ANY AMOUNT ARE APPRECIATED AND ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**.**

* * * *

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Events Reminder

August 4 - Sat., Museum Open 10 – 1

August 6, 13, 21, 28 – YOGA

August 15 - Eat at LaRosa's; Take a Flyer

August 20 – Program - Mason Trivia

September 1 – Sat., Museum Open 10-1

Sept. 1 thru Nov. 9 - Veterans Display

September 15—Heritage Day

Sept. 17 - Program – Speaker
Captain Larry Plum, Vietnam

September 19 – Eat at LaRosa's; Take a Flyer

(Programs & Yoga @ Museum Begin at 7PM)

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