Small Town Sampler

by Betty Miller
Small Town Sampler

by

Betty Miller
Anyone who lives in a small town chooses a certain way of life. It's true that life in the suburb of a large city at times resembles small town living — but not quite. In a suburb the noise and activity of the city are too close. In a small town the sounds and the peace of the country are minutes away. Choosing to live in a small town implies you like gardens and trees, the sound of children, and visits with neighbors. When the police cruiser moves slowly by your house you wave at the officer instead of wondering where a crime has been committed. If you choose small-town living, when you walk down Main street you will know most of the people you meet. A trip to the grocery store will include several conversations before you leave with your groceries. A small town is a place small enough for the entire population to rally around a high school basketball team or gather for a town celebration.

I would like to explore life in one small town — Ada — as it was in the past, as it is now, and how it might be in the future. I can remember as far back as Cunningham’s Dry Goods Store, Ernie’s Wednesday night band concerts in Railroad Park, the Sugar Bowl, Balish’s, Ream’s Grove, a one-man police force, and Mohler’s Greenhouse (where the post office is now). The rest of the past will have to come from those who recorded it and the memories of those who lived it. The present is in the minds of all of those who live in a small town now. The future is only speculation for all of us.
CONTENTS

Memory Test ............................................................................................................. 3
When Ada Was a Two-Track Town ................................................................. 4
Fourth of July 1896 ............................................................................................. 6
 Farmers and Merchants Picnic ......................................................................... 7
Garage Sales ........................................................................................................... 9
Restoration or Destruction? ................................................................................ 9
Up The Steps To The Ada Herald ...................................................................... 13
Small Town Social Life ....................................................................................... 14
ONU and Ada ........................................................................................................ 16
"The Good Old Days" .......................................................................................... 17
Small Town Salesmen ........................................................................................ 18
Telephone Directory, 1900 ................................................................................ 19
Wednesday Night Band Concerts ..................................................................... 21
Rules For Living In A Small Town .................................................................... 22
Party Lines ............................................................................................................ 24
The End of Summer ............................................................................................ 26
Balish's Confectionery ....................................................................................... 27
Odeon Serials ....................................................................................................... 29
Dwight Clark Memories ..................................................................................... 31
Village Problems ................................................................................................ 33
The Sugar Bowl .................................................................................................. 35
The First Snow .................................................................................................... 36
Willie Simmons Memories .................................................................................. 37
One-Room Schools ............................................................................................. 39
Teachers Examination ......................................................................................... 41
Edith Rutledge and Halley's Comet ................................................................. 43
Ada Centennial, 1953 ........................................................................................ 44
Listening To The Radio ....................................................................................... 46
Small Town Christmas ....................................................................................... 47
Ada Trivia Quiz ................................................................................................... 48
Recipe For "A Nice Little Town" ......................................................................... 50
Indian Lake and The Point ............................................................................... 52
Ada, August 4, 1920 ........................................................................................... 54
Sears Catalogue .................................................................................................. 56
Small Town Talk ................................................................................................ 58
Memories and Smells ......................................................................................... 59
Bits of History From Agnew Welsh ................................................................. 60
Memory Test

If you remember all these things you're a real "oldtimer." If you remember half of them you're on the way to the category of "oldtimer." If you remember less than half you're either very young or you're a "newcomer."

Having your picture taken by Bill Frederick at Paessler's Studio—Ola Miller's dress shop where the dressing room was her living room—the Midway Cafe—the bowling alley above Joe Breck's store—the Koffee Kup—Dean McElroy's cafeteria under Brown building (with "Doc" sitting on the floor waiting for someone to slip him a tidbit)—as a kid, sitting on the cannons of the ONU campus—Doling's—the Lima-Ada bus—Archie Mertz's furniture store and his "Dream House" contest—Dana Welsh's drugstore—Messick's 5 and 10—Gardner's booths and soda fountain—Charley Hawk standing outside the Ada Theatre waiting to take your ticket—swimming in the quarry—Ream's Grove with high grass and weeds except in August—roller skating at Welcome Park—ice skating at Walls' pond or on Hog Creek—John Atha's horse-pulled snow removal sledge—the Hill tower bell tolling once for each ONU graduate at Commencement—the "last day of school" exercises in March at Woodlawn school—Bill Ream's bicycle shop—Dr. Freeman reciting Shakespeare—riding on top a horse-drawn
hay wagon—the South school building—being sent to the meat market for 15 cents worth of meat for supper—old cars or outhouses on top a downtown building the day after Halloween—street dances—Eley's market on the edge of town—slates—bellings after a wedding—the change carriers on the ceiling track at Cunningham's and Sophie who waited on the customers—the Ada Centennial parade and the "Centurama" in the park—Poling's—taking elocution lessons—the Kinsey Komedy tent show in the north end of town—the smell of leaves burning in the fall—Peach street in Ada—the library in the brick building on Highland—Pat Patterson's news stand—Mrs. Irick's piano recitals—the military drill teams at Brown gym—dancing at the Sugar Bowl—going to Turkeyfoot to fish—out-of-town hunters in town for the fall pheasant hunting—washboards—going to Russell's Point—poolrooms and cardrooms—snakes, ladyfingers and roman candles on the Fourth of July—spittoons and chamber pots—brick streets and sidewalks—boarding houses—glass bottles of milk and cream on front porches each day—base burners in winter—coal bins—the rumble seat in a Model A Ford—burying garbage in the backyard—swinging on a grapevine—the 2x4 and the miniature golf course across from the campus—listening to the Gettysburg Address on Memorial Day.

When Ada Was a Two-Track Town

Ada recently changed from a two-track town to a one-track town. Change quite often reminds us how things used to be. The railroad was once an important part of the town. The station and the platform were crowded with people arriving in Ada or leaving Ada. A lot of the townspeople were train watchers. When they knew it was time, they hurried downtown to watch the Broadway Limited rush by. They stared at the strangers looking out
the windows from the dining car and wondered what exciting places they were heading for. Smoke and steam poured from the engine and if you got too close sometimes you got a cinder in your eye. A steam engine whistle is the kind of sound you never forget. If you were close to the train all conversation had to cease because it intruded rudely. If you were at the other end of town the whistle had a mournful sound and awakened all kinds of wistful thoughts of far away places.

The railroad gate keeper’s little watchtower stood in the corner of the park beside the gates. It was high and the gate keeper climbed a long ladder to get to it. I never knew who was up there when I was a child, but I liked to watch him get his supper. He lowered a rope and the person at the bottom tied a basket on it. He pulled it up slowly and carefully until he could take it through the trapdoor. It was his job to raise and lower the gates. If someone happened to start across the tracks just before the gate keeper rang the warning bell outside the tower, the person didn’t have to worry about getting trapped
between the gates with a train coming (a scary situation). The gate keeper waited until the person reached the other side before he lowered the gates. You always felt there was a real person up there looking after you and not an automatic device which distrustfully might malfunction.

I'm glad they left one track so you can still count the freight cars as they go by and now and then see a stranger's face looking out the window at you. I'm especially grateful that the old railroad station still stands.

Fourth of July, 1896

The Fourth of July used to be a time for celebration in every small town. In the past, Ada hasn't been very consistent. Some years we celebrate in a big way with club-sponsored events in the park and fireworks. Lately, we hang out our flags and watch the fireworks on television or go to another town to see its display. A few daring people light an illegal firecracker or two, but it seems like any other day. Whatever celebrating we do is nothing compared to the "Grand Celebration" on July 4, 1896 in Ada. That celebration began with a thirteen gun salute at 6:00 a.m. In between the scheduled events "suitable music" was "rendered all day by good bands." A baseball game in Lehr park between the ONU team and Ottawa began the festivities at 9:00 a.m. We are told in the official program that Ottawa boasts about its winning ways but the townspeople should come "see them get fooled once." At 11:00 the Grand Parade took place with a $5 first prize and a $2 second prize for the "most fantastic display." The local businesses were represented by "suitable floats." At noon the mayor performed a Public Marriage. This appears to have been one of the day's highlights for the happy couple received thirty-five gifts "and many other useful articles" immediately after the ceremo-
ny. What young couple (thinking about marriage anyway) could resist the promise of "two sacks flour, a clothes wringer... Box cigars... One fancy silk nightshirt... a subscription to Herald and Record... Baby shoes... Pair of fine thoroughbred poultry... and three buckets lard" among other fine gifts? The afternoon was taken up with races: Slow Mule Race, Three-Mile Bicycle Race, Pony Race, Sack Race, and Fat Man's Race. All of these ended at 5:00. Since there was nothing listed on the official program until the Grand Illuminated Bicycle Parade at 8:30, we must assume the citizens and visitors took advantage of the special sales the merchants offered in their ads in the official program book. Kemp's Drug and Book Store offered "Fire Works for your home display" while John Young's Drug Store enticed them with an "Ice Cream Soda and a Prescription cigar." J.T. Cunningham and Sons tempted the ladies with "Lawns and Dainties at 6½/2¢" while The Famous Clothing Co. would take orders from the gentlemen for a pair of pants at "$2.75 and up" or a suit for "$15 and up. "There were promises of "warm meals and cool drinks" at B.L. Edwards' Palace Restaurant. The Young Hotel had a special meal for the day at 35 cents. The bargains continued after the celebration, for if you had an official program you could present it on July 10 at Dr. Sells' office (at the sign of the Big Gold Tooth) and he would extract your teeth "absolutely free." After the Bicycle Parade, the celebration climaxed with a "Grand Display of Fire Works" in Railroad park.

From the National Salute of Thirteen Guns to the last of the fireworks, it must have been quite a day in Ada.

Farmers and Merchants Picnic

Several years ago a newcomer to Ada complained he had gone downtown to transact some business and found every store closed and the town deserted. It was
Wednesday on an August day. Where was everyone? he wanted to know. I explained that it was Farmers and Merchants Picnic Day and he should have gone to the park. "It's been an Ada tradition for years," I told him, and if he wanted to see the community together that was the place and the day to see it. It was so important to the community that the Ada people who worked in Kenton and Lima often took a "sick day" so they wouldn't miss a Farmers and Merchants Picnic. People who had once lived in the Ada community came long distances to bring their families to a Farmers and Merchants Picnic. He asked me to tell him more about it.

How do you explain the Picnic to someone who has never been to one? I told him it had changed a little through the years but it is a pet show, a horse show, a tractor pull, a Queen, a parade, band concerts, talent shows, a flower show, a water fight, snow cones, pony rides, horseshoe pitching contests, picnics, games for the kids, bingo, free swimming, and watermelons for prizes. The main purpose, however, is visiting and relaxing. The older folks take their lawn chairs and without moving from their spot in the shade can have a pleasant afternoon visiting with the people who pass by. Small children run back and forth or are pushed in their strollers. The new babies are on display for everyone to admire. Teenagers wear their new white shorts to show off their summer tans and pose and posture before the opposite sex. Those couples holding hands announce to the town that they are a new "romance."

The next year my newcomer friend went to the Farmers and Merchants Picnic to see why it was so important. When he said he thought it was all I had said it was and he intended to go every year, I knew he understood the meaning of small-town living and accepted its values.
Garage Sales

In the spring and summer in a small town we have the modern phenomenon known as the garage sale. It started slowly in small towns because we weren't sure we wanted people who knew us to see our junk on display. In the past, clubs and organizations had rummage sales to make money for their projects. We took our old clothes to another town to sell because no one would want to wear clothes someone else in town had worn. When we cleaned out our attics and garages we piled the discards by the street for the trash man to haul away. But now we are all garage-sale entrepreneurs.

The first garage sale is the hardest but after you sell the flower print in the plastic frame (which you've always hated) to someone who is delighted to have it, or after you find an old plate (25 cents) that matches one from your grandmother's set you become a regular garage sale client. You await The Ada Herald on Wednesday night to read the garage sale ads and begin to map out your weekend itinerary. Sometimes you make a real "find" and if you get tired of it you can always recycle it in your next garage sale. In fact, some people make the rounds to buy garage-sale items for their next garage sale.

Those who sneer at this activity don't know the fun they're missing. I once saw a visitor take a picture of a garage sale to send to her family in Europe. She wanted to show them what people in a small town in the States did on weekends. Maybe it's just an old Yankee "swap and deal" trait inherited from our ancestors that made us join in the garage sale mania.

Restoration or Destruction

One evening last August I stopped to watch some men working on the roof of the old brick Young house on
South Johnson by the railroad. A young man told me he wanted to restore the house to its original beauty. He knew only that the house had been built in the 1860's by Christian Young. That name is well-known in the history of Ada and in the history of the Presbyterian church. It's exciting to watch a restoration take place but sad to watch the destruction or removal of something old and familiar. A restoration takes a long time, but a destruction takes very little time; the brick and walls fall in a cloud of dust, and soon there is just a pile of rubble to be hauled away. Within the next few days it is as though it had never existed. Grass already covers the spot where the old Collins block stood at the beginning of summer. Beuchert's Bakery, Poling's Grocery, Landon's Book Store, and Art Keller's barber shop are now just memories. The brick house next to the Collins block which served as a boarding house for many ONU students is no more. The next two corners on South Main where McGinnis's Meat Market and Russell's grocery stood are blank spots. On Gilbert Street, Raabe's house is gone. The parking lot on the corner of Buckeye and Main has erased all signs of the Liberty Bank with its big safe, Rothrock's, or the Ada Locker. They make pizza now where they used to sort the mail next to the railroad. Modern banks have replaced Doling's, A.C. Mertz's, Allen's barber shop, and Preston's funeral home. Kemp's house and Mohler's have been replaced by a WPA post office; across the street the Clutter and Comrie homes once stood. The coal office next to the railroad on South Johnson has disappeared and so has the King Lumber Company on Buckeye. The South and the North school buildings are gone, and where the big maples once stood on Main and College along with Clara Wright's house, the restaurant and student gathering places, and the Delta Sig house are now the gas pumps of progress. The Rutledge house is gone, replaced by the Northern
Freeze. The old Candler house has disappeared from the other corner and there is a parking lot there. It is hard sometimes to remember the little 100 year old church that stood on the corner of College and Gilbert, Dr. Freeman's house next to McIntosh Center, or the Willis house on Gilbert where Mrs. Irick gave piano lessons for so many years. The Terrace which stood next to the Willis house and was once the home of S.M. Johnson, the founder of Ada, is gone—so is the TNE house. The new west campus replaced the swampy, crowded Veteran's Village of the 40's. Ada residents take pride in it and show it off to their visitors. But the buildings on the old campus on Main Street are special to those who have been around Ada for a long time. In a way, the campus symbolizes the bond between the town and the university. Ada's history and ONU's history often become one history in the accounts of the town and gown meetings where the town rallied to raise money for a new college building or to support the endowment fund so ONU and Ada could survive the hard times. Old grads and long-time Ada residents still miss Brown building; the removal of the campus cannons is yet a source of consternation to many grads and townspeople since the cannons have been a part of the ONU campus and Ada's Main Street for at least seventy years. All these missing links to Ada's past were pronounced "eyesores," unsafe, or unsuitable—in the way of progress. It is a paradox that we destroy so much of the past in our own little town and then take our children or grandchildren to Greenfield Village or to the restored sections of other towns to show them the way things used to be. It would seem that the generations (many of whom have traveled, admired, and sent back postcards of foreign landmarks) would want to hang on to the way things were in their own part of the world. But often it's the younger generation who have the desire to hold on to the past. They are the ones who buy
the old houses, work long hours stripping the wood, and restoring old beauty. They appear at the auctions to find the treasures their grandparents discarded.

Railroad Park with its Civil War cannon and the restored depot, the restored old houses, the unique churches and buildings in Ada are reminders of the past, yet have their functions in a modern world. Restoration takes more time and more thought than destruction, but when it is finished the past and tradition (both important to small town life) remain.

Up The Steps To The Ada Herald

The Ada Herald of the 1980's is housed in an efficient, modern building. But to show you how reluctant I am to accept change, each time I go in The Ada Herald building I think of it as the new Ada Dairy building. Instead of newspapers, I remember the thick malts Mr. Smith and Jim Reissig used to make—and the hand-packed ice cream. The Ada Herald (at least in my memory) is still on the second floor next to the Sohio station. My grandmother often sent me there with social items informing the readers that various relatives had been at her house for Sunday dinner. I never put the item in the box at the bottom of the stairs but climbed the long flight of steps to make sure Marie or Barton Snyder got the item personally. To be honest that wasn't the real reason I went all the way up. It was the smell and the noise of the office. The smell of printer's ink was a wonderful smell. The Linotypes clattered and banged as
Everett Swinney and "Timer" Long set up the stories for that week's Herald, and watching them do their jobs was so fascinating that it was hard to leave. Later, Ruth Brown was there at a long table folding ONU pamphlets or club programs. Behind the counter in an open space was Barton's office. He was usually reading copy or working on a story. Marie was hard at work too. One of them always came to take your news item, treating it with courtesy and interest.

The office may be more modern and efficient but The Ada Herald hasn't changed. It still leaves most of the world's tragedies and the sensational news to the city newspapers and concentrates on the small-town concerns its readers want. It records the births, marriages, and deaths in the community, serves as a forum for anyone's complaint or praise, and is the large bulletin board on which the varied events of a small community are announced. The businesses offer their wares and services, and I suspect the ads in the Herald are read more thoroughly than the city newspaper ads are read.

Many big city visitors who have never had any contact with a small-town weekly ask these questions: "Who wants to know who saw the first robin, who had peas from their garden in early May, or who had their grandchildren visit them? " The answer is "We do. That's why we live in a small town. " We can read about the world's problems in our other newspapers; The Ada Herald records the events which are important to the everyday lives of our families, friends, and neighbors.

Small Town Social Life

Newcomers to Ada forty years ago were amazed at the number of organizations in town. There were clubs for everything—or anything you wanted to do: play cards, embroider, quilt, crochet, square dance, study literature
or current events, sing in a chorus, collect coins, stamps, or electric trains, trapshoot, fish, or just be social. All these groups were in addition to the grange and church activities. Life was not dull in our small town. The men had their service clubs but they usually ate at a local restaurant, had a brief program, talked awhile and then went home—as they still do. With the women’s clubs it was different. Some of the women’s clubs are still in existence but because so many women work now, clubs are not the “big night out” they once were.

Forty years ago if you were going “to have club” you began a month or two before the meeting to prepare for it. Since it would be in your home you might even wallpaper a room or two if you thought the place needed sprucing up. Cupboards and drawers were cleaned just in case someone opened them. Because the members usually put their coats in the bedroom that had to be cleaned also. Most clubs had trays and coffee urns which were passed around so you had to pick those up, borrow dishes and silverware, and get chairs from the funeral home for the people to sit on. The greatest challenge was to find a new recipe to serve your guests. If you were a cautious person you tried it out on your family before you served it to the club members. On the day of the meeting, if you could, you sent your small children to a friend’s house, put the dog outside, and cleaned. Usually supper was a pot of chili, and the family was urged not to linger over the supper table on that night. In fact, everything was speeded up. The children had their baths early and their pajamas on before you got dressed for the meeting. Your husband had escaped from the house long before the guests arrived. Women’s club meetings lasted all evening and sometimes into the early morning hours. Often there were long discussions on projects or how the money should be spent. The speaker for the evening sometimes sparked arguments which had to be
settled. When everyone had left, you folded up the funeral chairs, piled the glass dishes and cups in the sink, had the last cup of coffee in the urn, and left the rest of the work for the next day. Now all you had to worry about was your program for the club meeting next month.

ONU and Ada

One of the attractions of our small town is that it is a "college town." If Lehr and the townspeople had decided to build the school outside the town it might be more separated from Ada life. But because it is on Main Street surrounded by Ada homes it is an integral part of our town. When people travel through the village they can't miss the campus. In Lehr's brochure, written to publicize the North-Western Ohio Normal School, he announces the calendar for 1878-79 and devotes a paragraph to the advantages of the setting:

Ada is a pleasant and thriving village of about 1800 inhabitants, and is more free from the evils of aristocracy, and the vices so common in larger towns and cities. Its people are moral, kind and courteous toward the students, and take great pains in making their stay at the Normal both pleasant and profitable.

From the beginning Lehr's school was a joint venture of the teachers and the townspeople. Lehr mentions in his brochure that "the citizens of Ada have agreed to buy $2000 worth of apparatus for the school." That was a large investment in 1878 when the tuition was 67 cents a week for an education in the Common Branches and 75 cents a week for the Higher Branches, book rental was 5 cents a book, and room and board cost the student $1.50 to $1.60 a week. The enrollment for 1878-79 was estimated at 700 students. Some of those 700 students
lived in townspeople's homes and became part of the community until they completed their studies.

Even today we can imagine what Ada would be like without the Ohio Northern students. When they leave for their quarter "breaks" or for the summer, we settle back in a kind of lassitude. The streets and the downtown seem almost deserted. Then the cars come from all directions, the lights go on in the dorms, the parking spaces are gone—and the town comes to life again.

"The Good Old Days"

We preach to our kids about their easy lives and love to tell them how hard life was when we were young. Any grandparent can tell a grandchild how many miles he walked to school in subzero weather or how many hours he worked for a 25 cent allowance. Yet the same grandparent also refers to his childhood as "the good old days." This paradox may contain a simple truth; there is a great deal of satisfaction in the pleasure that results from a lot of effort. My childhood was the easy life of
modem conveniences but my grandparents lived a simpler life until they too succumbed to progress. I experienced some of the feeling of "the good old days" when I spent summers at my grandparents' house in Ada. The water tasted better because I had to pump a long time before the water came. The popcorn tasted wonderful because I had to shuck it first. The walnut cake was more delicious because I had to crack the walnuts on an old flatiron and pick out each piece before my grandmother could bake the cake. The cherry pies were better because I had to pick the cherries, wash them, and pit them before there could be a pie. I had to dig up the potatoes or pick "a mess of beans" from the garden before I could eat them for supper. The sound of the Sousa march on the record was more exciting because I had to crank the handle on the victrola to hear it. The ice cream was the best I've ever tasted but only after my aching arm had turned the crank for an eternity. My clothes smelled sweeter and felt softer because I had helped all day to heat the water, wash the clothes, turn the wringer, and hang the clothes on the lines to dry.

Perhaps the new generation of homemakers realizes the same truth in all this and feels the same satisfaction as they plant and harvest their herb gardens, bake their own bread, can their homegrown vegetables, cook their jams and jellies, and even trim the wicks and fill their auction-bought lamps with scented oil.

Small Town Salesmen

Somewhere in our town someone is selling something. People who live in small towns are not as fearful of answering their doorbells as big city dwellers are because the person on the other side of the door is usually someone they know. It may be a neighbor selling greeting cards for her club's project or the neighbor's son
selling chances on a turkey so his baseball team can buy uniforms for the summer games. In a span of several months we may buy cheese from a band member, candy from a Cub Scout, cookies from a Girl Scout, brooms from a Lions member, fruit from an FFA member, chances for the school carnival prizes, or tickets for the school play. The Saturday morning bake sales, the raffles, the suppers, the magazine sales, the jewelry parties, the kitchen gadget parties, the book fairs, and the car washes all seem to come at the same time. In fact, it seems as though they will never stop coming. Just as we've decided that's all we can buy, the doorbell rings and a seven-year-old redhead offers his last package of flower seeds for sale.

We complain a lot, but we really don't mind. After all, if we support someone's projects, when we have tickets to sell, we know just where to start.

Telephone Directory, 1900

A look at a 1900 Ada Telephone Exchange Company directory (consisting of eight pages) will tell you a subscriber could make a direct toll call from the Ada Exchange "over its own full-metallic lines" to Lima for 15 cents, to Alger or McGuffey for 10 cents, to Kenton for 15 cents, or to North Washington for 10 cents. Thirteen rural subscribers were listed; the rest of the telephones were in Ada. The instructions warned the caller to "talk directly into the transmitter and not AT it," and "not to leave the receiver off the hook as it will ruin the batteries."

The listings show that in 1900 Ada had everything to make it a busy and prosperous village: seven grocery stores (Povenmire and Price, the Busy Bee, Russell's, Woodward's, Shannon's, Alex Comrie's, Umbaugh's); three meat markets (Cotner's, McElroy's, McCafferty's); three bakeries (Doling's, the Bon Ton, Wilson's); three
drugstores (Kemp's, Yates's, Young's); three lawyers; seven doctors and dentists; three coal and lumber companies; Cunningham's Drygoods Store and Schindewolf's Clothing Store; three hardware and furniture stores; two laundries; several grain companies and flouring mills. If you wanted train information you called B.A. Welch, the Pennsylvania railroad agent, at 33. If you wanted a trunk delivered, you called William Garlinger at 86. Mrs. Rose Enos, the milliner, would make a pretty new bonnet for a lady. The Ada Record and the University Herald could supply printing needs and the bookstore could supply reading needs. The First National Bank or the Building and Loan Co. could handle any money problems. If you needed a drayman, there were several listed. If you wanted to talk to someone at ONU you could ring up the president, H.S. Lehr, at his office or ring the homes of Professors Darst, S.D. Fess, Maglott, Park, Wright, or Willis. I wonder if anyone in Ada knows where the Lawton Hotel or the Elk Restaurant were. One conclusion is that Ada wasn't the sleepy little town it appears to be on some of the old postcards.
Wednesday Night Band Concerts

Traditionally Saturday was the social evening for any small town and everyone looked forward to it. The women had done the washing on Monday, the ironing on Tuesday, the mending on Wednesday, the upstairs cleaning on Thursday, and the downstairs cleaning and baking on Friday. The men had completed their business dealings and farm chores. Saturday was the day for baths and then the family came to town to do the shopping and to visit. This was the custom in Ada too.

For many years in our town, however, the social highlight of the week was the Wednesday night Community Band concert in Railroad Park. The bandstand is gone, new benches have replaced the old ones, but the cannon is still there and so is the old railroad station to remind us. It often seemed the whole community was at the concert. Even the teachers studying at the university for their summer credit hours were there. Ernie Routson directed the band and when he bent over his music stand and lowered his baton, music filled the town. Ernie usually tried to time the numbers to avoid the noise of a train passing through but often part of a selection was obliterated by a locomotive whistle as a train rumbled through Ada. Some church group usually had an ice cream social and people could eat homemade ice cream and a piece of pie or cake accompanied by the sounds of “The Washington Post March,” “His Honor March,” or “Glow Worm” (with lyrics sung by a young singer in the community).

The community band tradition continued in Ernie’s later years at the Farmers and Merchants Picnic when the new band shell was built at Memorial Park and was dedicated to Ernie. At noon on Picnic Day Ernie’s loyal band “alumni” (many from far away) gathered at the band shell, along with some of the high school musicians, to play the music they had played in their younger days.
They didn't need a rehearsal and many didn't need any music. Doctors, lawyers, dentists, farmers, businessmen, and housewives (often sitting next to their sons or daughters) waited for Ernie's baton to lower and soon "The Stars and Stripes Forever" echoed the Wednesday night concerts in Railroad Park. Ada tried to continue the community band tradition after Ernie was gone but it wasn't the same without Ernie.

Rules For Living In A Small Town

If you were born in a small town you can never get far away from your beginnings. Even though you think you have escaped your past in the city, or even in another part of the world, if you come back to your small town for a visit you will be identified as Hiram Smith's oldest boy or Ezra Brown's nephew's daughter's second child. One thing is sure—the oldtimers will judge you by your roots. If your great grandfather was a horse thief and you are
now a successful lawyer in California, the oldtimers will be surprised you turned out so well. If your great grandfather was a respected farmer in the community and you are just barely making it in the world, you will be welcomed as Isaac Crumpton's boy because "you come from good stock." You're a newcomer forever in a small town if you have no roots in the community or weren't born there. A newcomer can't buy his way into small-town society because the amount of money he has or the size of his house isn't as important as family background.

In a small town like Ada, people come and go over the years. Many of them devote a lot of time to the churches or to town projects. The townspeople welcome the fresh ideas and enthusiasm. They are still a little leery, however, about newcomers ("We tried that thirty years ago and it didn't work"). If you want to be accepted as a respected member of a small-town community, you'd better tread softly. If you criticize some feature of the town, you will have to deal with the cold resentment of its longtime citizens (even though secretly they may agree with you). If you make an unkind remark about one of the town's citizens, you're probably criticizing someone's relative and the remark will never be forgotten. You may say that's unfair. It is, and it is one of the negative aspects of small town life. Underneath the surface of its society are the old conflicts between town and gown, town and country, those who live south of the tracks and those who live north of the tracks, the village council and the citizens, Republicans and Democrats, newcomers and oldtimers, and the old feuds between families and neighbors. Since small-town people are human they can be spiteful, arrogant, and unreasonable at times. They can also be kind, generous, and caring when someone needs help. In spite of flaws, Ada people still observe the "good neighbor" rituals: they bring in food for funeral
meals, they watch your kids for you in a crisis, they write you notes of thanks and let everyone see them in the Herald, they serve as volunteers to fight your fires, get you to the hospital, or raise money for community needs.

One conclusion: if you live in a small town you'd better behave yourself. If you have worthy ancestors you can get away with small sins. If you're a newcomer you'd better observe all the rules.

Party Lines

When we moved into the house where my grandparents had once lived, one of the first things we did was have a telephone installed. The phone was on the wall and had a hook on the side for the receiver. Our number was Red 221. (If you once had a color phone number I imagine you can recall yours too.) Next door to us was Green 221 and somewhere in the neighborhood were White 221, Black 221, and Blue 221.

As a child I watched my grandmother call the grocery in the morning to order her groceries. Several hours later a boy came bringing the groceries in a box. He brought them in the kitchen and set them on the table. That was service—all within reach of the telephone. Long distance calls were another matter. Suppose someone decided he needed to get in touch with a relative in Oregon. He took down the receiver and when Maggie or Bonnie came on the line he asked about her health and chatted about the weather for awhile. Then he gave her the number and hung up the receiver. After perhaps fifteen or thirty minutes the phone would ring and the operator would tell him she was having trouble getting through Chicago, but she'd keep trying. In another fifteen or thirty minutes she'd ring in again and he could talk to his cousin in Oregon. I remember people always yelled when they talked long distance. I don't remember too many long distance
calls or the phone ringing much in the evening. If it did ring then, it was usually someone on the other end announcing a death or a family emergency. Telegrams were often delivered in Ada by telephone since both companies shared an office on the second floor (over the Township Trustees’ room) on Buckeye up a long flight of narrow steps. We all knew a telegram received at night could bring nothing but bad news.

Most people had party lines and when country families got a call it rang in on all the phones. They had to count the number of rings to know whether it was their call or someone else’s. Our town phones hummed softly when someone else got a call. This, of course, encouraged “listening in” and sometimes when we answered a call we might hear a clock ticking in some neighbor’s living room or a soft click indicating someone had picked up his receiver somewhere on the line. This led to some puzzling one-sided conversations: “You know that person we were talking about last week? Well, he was where I said he’d be last Saturday.” The “listener-in” spent the rest of the afternoon wondering who “he” was and where he was on Saturday night (with the implication he shouldn’t have been there).

The Ada operators performed many functions. They called the volunteer firemen to make sure they knew where the fire was, they tracked down the doctor for an emergency, they interrupted our social calls to tell us someone was trying to reach us on long distance and we should hang up to get the call. Occasionally they located a lost child or told us to come pick up our wandering dogs.

When the new dial system was installed, all the teenagers sat with their fingers over the dial trying to be the first to use the new phones. As for me (even though it took more time) instead of a tape telling me I have ten seconds to say what I want to say and then blasting a
shrill tone in my ear, or hearing the drone of a dial tone, I sometimes wish I could pick up my phone and hear a pleasant, familiar voice say, “Number, please.”

The End of Summer

Sounds and signs of summer’s end seem more evident in a small town—especially since they’re right outside the door. The cicadas and the katydids begin their end-of-the-summer chorus to remind us that fall is six weeks away. A few brown leaves have hit the ground and the bright blue sky is a sign that even though there are still hot days ahead, October is near. The wheat has been cut long ago, and the sweet corn and garden vegetables are at their best. Although I can still hear noise from the park, it is quiet in the afternoons and the noise stops much earlier as there are more days when the air has a chill in it. I heard one sure sound that fall is near the other day. It began as a distant thump, and as it got closer I realized it was the sound of drums. Soon other instruments joined in—the marching band had started its practice for the fall football games. Football has always been an important part of Ada’s fall season. In September through November everyone becomes a coach and the Friday night games are replayed every Saturday morning at the downtown breakfast clubs.

In October 1926 when the Kenton Wildcats finally beat the Ada Bulldogs after twelve years of Ada victories, it was front page news in the Ada Record. I searched the microfilms for The Ada Herald account of the game but that issue of the Herald was missing. Since the score was 25-0 perhaps that game is best forgotten. Part of the reason for the defeat was blamed on the absence of Captain Peterson who stood on the sidelines with his arm in a sling. I don’t remember Captain Peterson but several other old football programs list some familiar
names. In 1932 Ada played St. Marys and Carl Stump was the coach. The team of fifty-two years ago lists these players: Peterson, Lowman, Shinaberry, Conner, Orwick, Ash, Wallick, Smull, Rockwell, Shanks, Moore, Wolfe, Klingler, Huber, Brame, Gillespie, Runser, Yount, and Messenger. The cheerleaders were Dot Cribley, Martha Cole, and Bill Tallman. Ten years later in 1942, Lowell Reese was the coach and Ada played Forest in the final game of the season. Forest was certainly the underdog with only thirteen players to Ada’s twenty-seven players. Again the Ada roster includes familiar names: Duane Fender, Bill Sanderson, Fred Cheney, Charles Umphress, Sylvan Simon, Dick Carmean, Arden Roberson, Merrill Keller, Gilbert Elwood, Herbert Anspach, Bill Hawley, Robert Elliott, Ed Gossard, Robert Baum, Harry Banks, Richard Deringer, Lewis Good, Lloyd VanAtta, Ralph Keller, Robert Gobin, Gerald Motter, Richard Smith, and a few young players with “00” on their jerseys — Harry Sousley, Ralph Sousley, Robert Stair, and John Elliott. Lee Tressell (who left Ada for greater football fame) was the quarterback. The scores are not included with the old programs, but no doubt the players in these games (the old fellows who are still around) remember the games, the scores, and every play.

When the lights go on in Memorial park, when the bands march in to play “The Star Spangled Banner,” when the flag goes up, and when the team comes on the field, summer is over in Ada and fall is officially here.

Balish’s Confectionery

Each year the high school graduates and ONU graduates come back to Ada for class reunions. They ask about people they knew and places they used to go in Ada. If the grads are older, at some point in their remembering the name “Balish” is sure to be mentioned. Rose
and Frank (Rose called him Ferris) had their fountain and candy store in what is now part of Parshall’s Clothing store next to the old post office by the railroad. At the front of the store were glass cases filled with chocolates and mints. Opposite the candy cases stood a beautiful old wood and marble soda fountain. A mirror stretched the length of the fountain across the back and at each end of the mirror were the shelves to hold the phosphate glasses and the soda and sundae glasses. Little mirrored doors with stained glass ornamentation kept the glasses sparkling and ready to be filled with wonderful concoctions. In the rear of the store were high-backed wooden booths where you could hide from the world with your date or your friends. But if you lingered too long or got too noisy, Mr. Balish walked by to hint it might be time for
you to move on. Mr. Balish made his candy in the back room and you could find him there pouring out his yellow, pink, green, white, and red mints on the marble slab. They melted in your mouth and people ordered them if they were going to have a special celebration. When you went in Balish's on a hot summer afternoon Rose would serve up a "Green River" (one of my favorites) and conversation. She loved roses and fishing. Behind the candy display cases Mr. Balish had an old floor model radio so he could listen to the news. If you happened in at news time you might have to wait awhile because Mr. Balish took his news listening seriously and would interrupt it for no one. On the Sunday Pearl Harbor was bombed I was in Balish's with a group of college freshmen. We had just got off the train and were returning for the new quarter. Sitting on his chair by the old radio Mr. Balish turned up the volume. As the announcer's voice intruded on our chatter we stopped to listen, somehow sensing our lives were going to change. They did change—and Balish's Confectionery is gone. Nevertheless it remains one of Ada's nicest memories. Who could forget the sodas, the tin roofs, and the buffalo sundaes? There was nothing better and nothing will ever taste as good.

**Odeon Serials**

TV videos and Saturday cartoons seem to be the current way of providing excitement for the younger set. In the 1930's it was the movie serial. The Odeon on Ada's Main Street included many of these serials along with the featured films. If we had 20 cents we could take in the movie and have enough left for an ice cream cone after the show. Thinking back, it seems to me the heroes of the serials were either Marines or cowboys. I looked up some old Odeon ads in the *Herald* and my memory seems to have functioned properly for these were some
of the titles: "The Pride of the Marines," "The Phantom City," "The Indians are Coming," "Devil Horse," "Whispering Shadow," and "Fighting Hearts." The serial episodes, which ran about twenty minutes, always began with individual pictures of all the characters: Bart Winslow, owner of the Rocking-Bar Ranch; his daughter Mary, a young, beautiful, smiling girl; Lloyd Colgrove, the sneering, unscrupulous businessman from Chicago who wanted the oil on the ranch; Tom Markley, a handsome, young ranchhand at the Rocking-Bar; "Pokey" Smith, Tom's sidekick. Five minutes recapped the story reminding us where it stopped a week ago. The episodes always stopped just as someone went over a cliff (on a motorcycle or a horse) or was about to be shot (with a bullet or an arrow). When the episode ended we could hardly wait until the next week to see how the hero (in a white hat or some kind of uniform) could possibly survive. One episode which I will never forget left the excited viewers gasping as the Marine hero went over the cliff on a motorcycle. He was poised in midair over the wild rapids hundreds of feet beneath him. The episode was over.
The following week the motorcycle fell into the rapids and tumbled over the waterfall. The hero (was it Dick Foran?) grasped a tree growing on a ledge of the cliff. He scrambled back to the top of the cliff, had a magnificent fight with the villain (was it Victor Jory?) and all was well. The Odeon rang with cheers and applause. I've seen some heart-stopping movies in my life but never any as exciting as the old serials.

Dwight Clark Memories

People who leave small towns for other places often return in their later years to live in retirement where they grew up. The familiar surroundings seem to stir their memories of those early days. I had a long talk with one of those people one afternoon in June. Although Dwight Clark celebrates his 91st birthday in July, he had just finished mowing his yard before our talk. He moved to Ada
from Illinois when he was four and left Ada when he was 29. The busy years in between were spent as a farmer near Marion. As a boy he farmed with his father where Helen and Everett Ludwig live. He remembers some names of the farmers in that area: Fred McGinnis, John Epley, Cass Ireland, and John Jennings. Then the farmers' big crops were corn and oats and some wheat "for the biscuits." In those days they cut with binders and shocked and threshed later. He remembers hard work (no fancy machinery) just horses and later, simple tractors. Since "there were always weeds to be taken care of" the farmers didn't do much socializing except for "across the fence" visiting.

He remembers Ada as a little "country town" with mud streets. Friedley's livery barn stood where Cole Motors is now, and Shep Kerr's livery barn was where the Depot Restaurant is today. He remembers Ike McElroy's grocery, Oscar Melhorn's dairy and grocery by the Methodist Church, Dr. Ames' office "up the stairs," Hesser's furniture store, and Jim McGinnis's meat market. Saturday nights the young people walked up one side of the street and down the other so they could see everyone and hear the latest news.

In one of his early business ventures, he bought a hay baler from Earl Huber, who sold machinery as well as furniture, on credit for $640. It was sent from Columbus and shipped to Dunkirk where they assembled it. Since Dwight also owed $400 for a team of horses, he started work immediately baling hay. He made $100 the first week and after baling from December to February he paid off his debts in full.

Two dates stand out in his memory—1913 and 1914—and both stories concern weather. In the spring of 1913 Hog Creek overflowed and so did the ditches. He recalls seeing Charlie Marti coming through the fields on a raft to get to the house. The chopped wood piled in the
woods came floating by the house. The horses were moved to higher ground, and Dwight used stilts to get to the barn where water was coming through the raised plank floors. Tragedies occurred in those days too. Three men from town drove the butcher wagon out to rescue hogs at the slaughter house by the stone quarry north of town. But because water covered the narrow road and everything around it, the horses slipped from the road into Hog Creek and were swept under the bridge. Only one man, Bert Stober, survived. He swam to a pile of rocks and was rescued.

The winter of 1914 was a cold one. The snow piled up and the people in Ada who depended on coal for heat were in danger because trains could not get through to bring in more coal. Jay Huffman asked Dwight to take a load of wood in from the country. Against his father’s wishes he did. The roads were covered but because it was twenty-two below zero, the horses pulling the bobsled could move on top of the snow. Dwight says he had to get out and walk most of the way so he wouldn’t freeze. After he took the wood to those who needed it most, he did what any young man would do. He took the horses to a livery stable, had some lunch at a restaurant (maybe Elzay McElroy’s or Puddin’ Clum’s) and then went to the poolroom.

If you really want to know about the past, ask some of those people who lived in it. They have interesting stories to tell.

Village Problems

A group of Ada residents made a survey of the town and then attended a council meeting with their results. They suggested the following items be considered by the council and the mayor:
"The Gilbert Street railroad crossing was found in a rundown condition."
There was a problem with "junk and brush piles."
The town was in "fair financial condition."
Bicycle travel should be regulated.
The cost of lighting the town should be a concern.
The trimming should be closely supervised so that the trees are not harmed.
Traffic at the corner of North Gilbert and Turner Avenue should be regulated.
One-fourth of the sidewalks are in need of repair.
This report did not come from last month's Ada Herald council report or even from last year's report. It was recorded in the April 10, 1936 issue of The Ada Herald. The group making the suggestions was an Ada high school civics class and the mayor was Harry Sousley.

Are we to conclude that the basic problems of Ada are the same as they were almost fifty years ago? Will the problems be the same fifty years from now in 2034? Probably, although the bicycle problems may become moped problems and the railroad crossing may disappear and not be a problem anymore. The streets will have to be repaired again, the trees will continue to grow and have to be trimmed, and some people will still pile junk in their yards. We'll still argue about the way council should spend our money but instead of worrying about the cost of lighting, the Ada citizens of 2034 may argue about the cost of the new computers.

Now and then some sociologist tells us small towns are disappearing. He states that in the next century we won't be allowed the luxury of our big houses and yards; we'll all huddle together in shared housing. Small business won't survive and we'll order our needs by computer from the cities. This 1936 council report should allay our fears. In fifty years some Ada businesses will have changed owners or ceased to be; different people will
live here, but the village will stay pretty much as it is today. That's one interesting thing about small towns—the continuity, even in the basic practical problems.

**The Sugar Bowl**

It is a fact of life that teenagers must have a place to hang out. A hangout is a place where teenagers go to be together, to talk, to see the opposite sex, and usually to listen to their own kind of music without the constant warnings of their parents to "turn it down." The oldtimers recall the church box-socials, the iceskating parties, taffy pulls, or the hayrides which ended at someone's house for hot chocolate. Weiner roasts were a good way to get your group together. Treasure hunts and scavenger parties were fun, and school dances after a game brought out a good crowd. But these were organized by adults and maybe your parents were the chaperones. You might be with your friends but adults were watching. A hangout is a place where you can be with your crowd away from the adults in your life. You can go there for an hour after school or drop in for a few hours in the evening. Doling's and Balish's were two favorite hangouts. You could dance at Doling's but not at Balish's. The drugstore fountains, the dairies, and the restaurants seemed to draw the older crowds. My dad's store across from the campus was one of the college students' hangouts in the 20's. In my early days at college "Joe's" was the place to hang out between classes. If you were a teenager in the late 30's or early 40's one of your favorite hangouts was "The Sugar Bowl" on South Main. It was in a space which is now part of Gardner's drugstore. Lynn Young and his wife Laura ran the place and kept the peace. When I try to picture it, all I can remember are booths and a juke box—the essentials for a good hangout. We tried the latest jitterbug steps to the juke-box
background of “Frenesi,” “String of Pearls,” “In the Mood,” “Pompton Turnpike,” “Woodchopper’s Ball,” “Cherokee,” “One O’Clock Jump,” or slow-danced to “Moonlight Serenade,” “Skylark,” and “Sentimental Journey.” When “Shanty in Old Shantytown” came on, we could sing all the words along with Johnny Long. The college students came there too, and the high school boys kept a close eye on their girls when a college man from Cleveland or New York asked a town girl to dance. It was a nice place to go and we expended a lot of energy—and not much money. Hangouts are great places for teenagers and everyone should have a “Sugar Bowl” to remember.

The First Snow

September and October with their warm, sunny days sometimes lull us into another summer slow-down. We forget that soon the weather will change and winter in a small town is ahead of us. We have plenty of reminders of winter’s approach. The farm wagons rumble back and forth from the fields to the elevator, and some of the fields have been plowed for the new planting. The pumpkins are piled at the roadside stands. The Halloween candy has been in the stores since the middle of September, and the Thanksgiving napkins are beside them on the shelf. The mail includes thick stacks of Christmas catalogues reminding us to shop early. It seems a short time ago that the cars rolled into Ada bringing the college students back to classes, but already they’ve begun talking about their Christmas “break” plans. Each nice weekend in October we’ve watched those people who have their lives well-planned putting up their storm windows, adding to their wood piles, and planting their tulip bulbs for next spring. We should have taken note but winter takes some of us by surprise. Three things used to
remind me that winter had arrived in Ada: John Atha, milk bottles, and church suppers.

One morning we would wake to the first big snow. After we had admired the snow (the first snow is always admired) we began to think we should get out and shovel the drifted sidewalks. But if we waited, soon John Atha would appear on our street with his wooden sledge. One of his huge lumberyard horses pulled the sledge up and down the sidewalks, and in a short time the sidewalks were clear. The second reminder of winter was the bottle of milk on the front porch. If we forgot to watch for Norm Ash and Babe to deliver our milk from the Andrews Dairy, when we went to bring it in from the porch the cream had frozen and pushed out the cardboard top to form a kind of giant popsicle. The frozen cream was delicious but if you sneaked a bite it left the milk watery and pale blue. The announcements of the various church and organization suppers were the third reminder. Instead of strawberries and ice cream we were offered ham and beans, vegetable soup, smelt, oysters, and spaghetti—foods fit for cold days. If we didn’t know it by then, these were all clear signs the long winter was here. We had one last chance to put in the storm windows.

Willie Simmons Memories

When people move away from small towns, they take their memories with them. Several former residents, now far away from Ada, have sent some of those memories back for us to share. Last winter when the snow was deep and the air was cold a tape came through the mail from Willie Simmons in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Willie lived in Ada from 1939 until 1978 and worked for the Ada Water department under George Hesser. On the tape Willie reminisces in talk and music about his early days in Ada as “a barefoot boy of 17.” He picks out a
minuet on his guitar which he says D.O. Betz taught him—a song from "the old country." Willie mentions the downtown places he remembers—Betz’s shoe store, Bud and Ann’s, Harry Sousley’s insurance office, Dana Welsh’s drug store, Ola Miller’s dress shop, Anderson’s Dry Goods store, and the bakery. He remembers Vance Botkins telling him about the stream which used to flow through Ada at the corner where the Liberty bank and the First National bank once stood. Vance told him stories about “the big ones” he used to catch from that stream. Willie says that after a rain the ground was soft in front of Vandemark’s and Umphress’s so he knows the stream is still down there somewhere.

Willie sends a song on his tape which he wrote and titled “Tree City, That’s What They Call Ada Now.” He sings about the blizzard of 1978 with “everyone locked in” which chased him back to South Carolina because “five feet of snow is too much.” Officer Gibson and his helpers had to rescue him from his trailer on Lincoln Avenue when the power went out. After the blizzard destroyed many of the trees, Willie says, “the town got busy thinking of replanting trees.”

We should reassure Willie that we’re still planting new trees along the streets of Ada and that many of the ancient trees are still standing. Willie mentions in particular in his song the old trees on Ohio Northern’s campus. We can tell him that some of the evergreens S.M. Johnson planted to grow from his new house on South Gilbert across to Main Street have weathered the storms and the years and are still on the campus. In his song, Willie says, “someday I’ll see that town again.” We’ll tell him to come in the spring or summer when the trees lining the streets give us shade and beauty and the winter storms are just a memory.
One Room Schools

During the Hardin county Sesquicentennial in 1983 The Kenton Times printed a map showing the locations of the one-room schoolhouses in the county. Carl Russell of Kenton who did the research discovered 126 sites. Liberty township had eight of these schools, one every two miles. We have several teachers in our community and many former students with memories of one-room schools so I decided to find someone who had experienced teaching in country schools and in an Ada country school in particular. Woodlawn school (which stood on the corner by the cemetery and was called at other times Cemetery school or Hoon school) was in existence until 1929. The last teacher before its closing was Pauline Reese, so I went to her for some recollections.

Pauline received her early elementary schooling in Ashtabula county where the educational system had advanced to centralized schools. She remembers going to school in a "kid hack" (a spring wagon with benches
on each side) in the warmer weather and in a bobsled in the winter—both pulled by horses, of course. Liberty township did not have this forerunner of the yellow school bus so the students had to walk. When Pauline came to Ada she attended the eighth grade at the Rinehart school where Liberty grange meets now. Ruth Davenport was her teacher. Students had to take the Boxwell examination if they wanted to go to high school and since Pauline had decided in the fifth grade she wanted to be a teacher, high school in Ada was the next step for her. After high school she followed with the two-year Pedagogy degree classes at Ohio Northern. In the two-year programs, future teachers studied the subject matter they would have to teach: arithmetic, geography, history, grammar, penmanship, and agriculture. Several theory of education courses and practice teaching were included. If they passed the State Teachers Examination Test, they received a certificate to teach. In the very early days, anyone could teach elementary school by passing the Boxwell examination. By 1940 all teachers were required to have a B.S. in Education so Pauline and hundreds of other teachers returned to Ohio Northern to complete the requirements. In the 1930's Ada was a busy place in the summer months.

Pauline taught one year at Hillville near Beaverdam, one year at Woodlawn, four years at Espy Grove, south of Kenton, and at Scioto Valley. She knows from experience that the people who taught in those little country schools were "janitors, teachers, and principals" from seven in the morning to five at night from the beginning of school in September until the end of school in April when the boys were needed for farming. At Woodlawn she had seventeen students in the first through eighth grade. Recitation and memorization were stressed and since the teacher could spend only fifteen minutes on each subject with each grade, students learned to study
on their own. They also learned by listening to other classes recite.

Most people who attended a one-room school recall the last-day-of-school activities. The class had its picture taken, parents and relatives came with baskets of food, set up boards across the desks to form tables for the indoor picnic, and listened with pride as their children performed. Some recited, others took part in plays. Pauline had formed a drill team and those children entertained with their drills. Ruth Brown, Kent Klingler, Harold Kindle, and Warren Hull should remember some of this since they were a part of the class at Woodlawn.

After her country school experience, Pauline taught for three years in the second grade at Ada and then for thirty-four years in the first grade. I wonder how many people remember Miss Reese as the one who introduced them to reading, writing, and arithmetic. She remembers you.

**Teachers Examination**

In the last “Sampler” Pauline Reese mentioned the Teachers Examination Test which teachers took for certification to teach. The March 1888 issue of the *University Herald* (later to become *The Ada Herald*) printed a copy of a test given by the Hardin county Examiners in February of 1888 to aspiring teachers. It might be interesting to see if we could pass it.

This “Sampler” will list the history and arithmetic questions.

**UNIVERSITY HERALD**

**TEACHERS EXAMINATIONS QUESTIONS**

The following is the list given by the Examiners of Hardin county, at Ada, Feb. 24,’88:

**History**

41
1. Why were the “Alien and Sedition” laws passed?
2. What did the Earl of Chatham say of the first Continental Congress?
3. To what general did the victory of Saratoga of right belong? Why?
4. How many forms of government in the Colonies prior to the Revolution? Where did each exist?
5. What is the object of a Constitution?
6. What were the political tenets of the Federalists?
7. What acts gave fame to Gen. George Roger Clark?
8. Who was the best known leader of the Federalists? Of the Whigs?
9. What value do you attach to the giving of instruction in history in the common schools?
10. What claims had the U.S. to Texas before the annexation scheme was under consideration?

Arithmetic

1. A can do a certain piece of work in 40 days, B in 60 days; after both work 3 days, A leaves: when must he return, that the work may occupy but 30 days.
2. A man cleared $19.00 in 25 days, by earning $1.25 each day he worked, and spending 50 cents each day he was idle: how many days did he work?
3. Two globes, each 5 inches in diameter, and two cubes, each 5 inches in length, were melted into one cube: how long was the side of this cube?
4. A body falling by its own weight, if not resisted by the air, would descend in the first second a space of 16 feet, 1 inch, the next second 3 times that space; the third, 5 times that space; the fourth 7 times &c, at that rate through what space would it fall in one minute.
5. What is the smallest number that is divided without a remainder by 45, 55, 70, 90, and 125?
6. A hat cost $5.00; what must I ask for it, so that after falling 33 1/3 percent, I still may gain 33 1/3 percent?
7. Give the length in feet of the side of a square acre.
8. I travel and find my watch two hours slow; which way did I go and how far did I travel?
9. A man sold two horses for the same price; on one he gained 25 percent; and the other he lost 50 percent. His whole loss was $25. What was the selling price of each?
10. What is the diameter of a sphere which has the same volume as a cone whose base is 3 feet, altitude 9 feet?

**Edith Rutledge and Halley’s Comet**

All the enthusiastic stargazers are getting ready for the big event of 1985—the return of Halley’s comet. The last time it appeared the scientists called it Haley’s comet, but now they’ve added another ““l” and a different pronunciation. For most of us, it will be our first view, but for others it will be the second time around.

One of our oldest residents, Edith Rutledge, remembers the event clearly and even had a “Comet Party” to celebrate the phenomenon. She was in school at Ohio Northern and lived on Route 81 with her uncle, Andrew Foss, on his farm. She tells me “the comet was visible at times and we were told the earth would pass through the tail at a certain time.” It was late September or early October and the weather was nice. Everyone was excited because the scientists didn’t know what would happen when the earth passed through the tail. Edith says they wondered whether it would be “hot or freezing” or “what kind of gasses were in it.” So her aunt and uncle let her have a party with nine of her friends to await the answer. She remembers some of the party participants—Jesse Rutledge (whom she later married), Don Magliott, Ray Tressel, Dale Schurz, Paul Ernsberger, Edith Wollam, Nora Wollam, and some other girls whose names she can’t recall. They played games on the front lawn while they waited for the great event. She remembers
they had "cameras, flashlights, and coats and blankets" to cover them in case they needed protection from the passing comet.

I wish I could report that the earth grew cold as the tail passed over, or that an amazing glow appeared in the sky. But Edith says "nothing happened." The celebrants felt nothing nor saw nothing: "Party over; we went home early—after all, we had to be in chapel at 8 the next morning." I hope Edith has more excitement with her second view of the comet in 1985. At least she'll have another excuse to have a party.

Ada Centennial, 1953

Gayle Zimmerman brought me a poster left from the Ada Centennial celebration in 1953 advertising the "Mammoth Historical Spectacle" with "hundreds in cast. " Those of us who had anything at all to do with "The Centurama" remember the long hours of rehearsal in Taft Gym with Chris Carter, the professional director, until finally John Atha's team of horses pulled the covered wagon on the field at Memorial Park and the 14 episodes in Ada's history were presented to our audiences for four big nights. Some Ada young people (who have added a few years since then) must remember learning how to square dance or how to do a Virginia Reel or the Charleston so they could be in the show. It was a little harder to get Indians until the local Boy Scout troop volunteered under pressure. I seem to remember that Steve Cole made a dandy Indian even though he was embarrassed to be put on display performing "The Dance of the Green Corn. I wish I could remember some of the other performers. Perhaps this will jog their memories and they'll identify themselves.

The parade was one of the biggest the town had ever put on. The Ada Herald promised us "Cochran's
Majorettes, seven high school bands, seven floats, the Shriners Oriental band, baton twirlers, Fireman's ladder unit, antique automobiles, horse drawn vehicles, 250 horses, drum and bugle corps, Girl and Boy Scout marching units, and Lima Tank depot vehicles. We got all that and more. We invited our out-of-town friends, and the whole community was there to see the three-mile long parade.

Every celebration has a queen and we had two. Twelve girls vied for "Miss Ada Centennial:" Allie Ann Fay, Colleen Holland, Peggy Main Smith, Dorothy Hover, Beverly Orders, Joie Benham, Helen Fleming, Marlene Crawford, Joan Tressel, Antoinette Anastasi, Phyllis Earl, and Sue Ramsdell. Joan Tressel got our votes so she wore the crown and presided over all the events. The junior queen contest was just as spirited and we saved our pennies for our favorite candidate. Janice Irwin reigned as our junior queen. The other candidates were Pamela Bosch, Cathy English, Roberta McElroy, Jo Ann Runser, Jane Seig, Carol Ross, Kandy Miller, Joyce Crouse, and Judy Shepherd. The twins, Tim and Tom Rodabaugh were the pages.

We displayed our family treasures in the store windows, and Gayle remembers that we kept the windows lighted through all the nights of the celebration. The men grew beards so they would look more like their ancestors, and the women went to the trunks in the attics for their grandmothers' dresses and bonnets.

For those of you who don’t remember, find a souvenir program of the Centennial with Pearl Underwood’s history and Clyde Lamb’s group pictures, look at the Ada Herald of 1953, or find the film of the Centennial parade. It was an exciting summer as we celebrated Ada’s first one hundred years.
Listening to the Radio

My introduction to the world of entertainment came at an early age when my uncle put a set of earphones on my head and turned on the wireless. I heard the faint, crackly sounds of music. The adults told me the music was coming from KDKA which was far away in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I wasn't sure what radio was, but I knew it was some kind of modern miracle. From then on I was hooked, and so were a lot of other people—even the adults. We always sat close to the radio; the sound faded at times, and we didn't want to miss anything. When I was alone and turned the knob I could hear the adventures of Jack Armstrong, "The All-American Boy," or Little Orphan Annie. (We all drank Ovaltine so we could send for a mug.) The Lone Ranger, Silver, and Tonto came thundering in to expose injustice and fight the evil forces in the world as did The Shadow and The Hornet. Later, at slumber parties, my girlfriends and I turned on the radio in time to hear the strains of the Moon River theme so we could listen to the sentimental love poems and soft music. As my tastes became more sophisticated, I tuned in to learn the latest catastrophes to befall Stella Dallas, Mary Noble ("backstage wife"), Helen Trent, Ma Perkins, David Harum, Vic and Sade, or Our Gal Sunday ("Can a girl from a little mining town in the West find happiness...?"). Lux Radio Theater and The Little Theater Off Times Square brought me the latest in the world of drama. Pepper Young’s Family and One Man’s Family became old friends, and I wouldn’t have missed an episode in the lives of Cliff and Claudia, Teddy and Paul, Hazel, and Mother and Father Barbour. I laughed at Eddie Cantor, Joe Penner (Do you wanna buy a duck?), George and Gracie, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Fibber and Molly, and all the characters in Allen’s Alley. When the creaking door announced Inner Sanctum
or the Hermit told me to "Turn out your lights—turn them out," I turned out the lights, pulled up the covers, and prepared to be scared out of my wits. During the week, everything came to a standstill after supper as each family on the street tuned in to hear Lum and Abner in their JotEm Down Store, Amos and Andy, and Lowell Thomas. My eclectic taste included the New York Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, Jessica Dragonette, Lanny Ross, Your Hit Parade, Kay Keyser and his College of Musical Knowledge, the A&P Gypsies, and Bing Crosby. I received an early education by listening to Dr. I.Q. ("I have a lady in the balcony, Doctor"), Information Please, the President's "fireside chats," and the baseball games.

Radio really was a marvelous invention. Even though we lived in a small town, we could have the world come in with the twist of a knob.

**Small Town Christmas**

In a small town the Christmas pleasures are simple and old fashioned. Although each family follows its special traditions, the spirit of the season draws the townspeople closer together in common memories from past Christmases.

Christmas in a small town was going to the woods to cut the tree—decorating the tree with popcorn and cranberries—riding in a sleigh along snow-covered country roads to church or to the relative's house for dinner—aunts, uncles, and grandparents gathered together—sitting at the children's table with the cousins—sleeping in a cold room with a feather tick on top of the bed—the new Flexible Flyer—the red Buddy fire engine—the china-headed doll with the soft kid body—the wicker doll buggy—a game of checkers—ice skates—hearing the adults talking and laughing as they sat around the base.
burner after the children had been put to bed—the families in the church social hall with Santa Claus handing out sacks of candy and oranges.

Christmas in a small town is the volunteer firemen putting up the Christmas decorations on Main Street—the church bazaars—the lighting of the tree in the park—the carolers—the smell of Christmas cookies baking and the scent of cinnamon from the warm candy—unpacking the old ornaments—the angels in their coat-hanger haloes and tinsel-covered wings—the Messiah—the boy in his brother’s flannel bathrobe playing Balthasar in the pageant—the Cradle Roll children singing “Away in a Manger”—the green pine roping and candles in the church on Christmas Eve—reading the notes on Christmas cards—hoping for snow—getting in touch—waiting for someone to get “home” for Christmas—hearing the old familiar words.

Often the past and present are the same. The Flexible Flyer can be painted and given to the next generation. The sad or lonely Christmases are mixed in our memories with the happy and exciting Christmases. In a small town we share the memories with friends and neighbors.

Ada Trivia Quiz

As the winter cold sets in, small town residents get out their games as did the residents of 100 years ago. Instead of dominoes, checkers, or Parcheesi, trivia games are the current rage. I guess we think it’s entertaining to see how many unimportant facts we’ve accumulated over the years. In the spirit of the times I’ve constructed a quiz to see how well you would do in an Ada Trivia Bowl play-off.

1. What was the original name given to Main Street in Ada?

2. When the name of the post office was changed from
Johnstown to Ada, there was a vigorous campaign for the selection of another name. What was it?

3. What community landmark is the English translation of the Indian word “Kosh-ko-sepee”?

4. What was the population of Ada in 1861—150, 250, or 550?

5. What was the east end of University Avenue once called?

6. In 1869 what was the monthly salary of a primary teacher in the Ada school?

7. Who was the first child born in Johnstown?

8. What was the name of the stream that once ran from the west side of town and crossed Main Street at Buckeye?

9. Two men who lived in Ada were later elected senators. Who were they?

10. In 1895 from January 19 to January 21 Ada had one of its heaviest snowfalls. How many inches—10, 20, or 30?

11. In 1838 how much did early pioneers pay for an acre of land north of Woodlawn Cemetery?

12. Where was the first Ada Public Library located? Just in case you didn’t know all the answers, they’ll appear in the next Sampler.

Here are the answers to the great Trivia Quiz. There are no prizes. If you answered ten correctly, you will probably be appointed to the post of Ada Historian.

1. Main Street was originally named Margaret Street in honor of S.M. Johnson's wife. Johnson was the founder of Ada.

2. The campaign was waged to change the name from Johnstown to Sweet Liberty.

3. The English translation of the Indian words “Koshko-sepee” is “swinestream” or in the vernacular—Hog
Creek.
4. The population of Ada in 1861 was 250.
5. The east end of University was once called Peach avenue.
6. In 1869 the monthly salary of a primary teacher in the Ada school was $25.00.
7. The first child born in Johnstown was Mary Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S.M. Johnson. Her nickname was “Pud.”
8. The name of the stream was Swag Run, and people often fished in it at the edge of town.
9. The names of the two men who were elected senators were Frank B. Willis and Simeon D. Fess.
10. In January of 1895 at the end of three days there were twenty inches of snow on the ground.
11. In 1838 a pioneer paid $2.00 an acre for land north of Woodlawn Cemetery.
12. The first location of the Ada Public Library was in the rest room of the old town hall.

My sources for the answers are Agnew Welsh in a series of articles he wrote for The Ada Herald in 1931 and Pearl Underwood in her history of Ada written for the Centennial in 1953. If their facts were wrong, so are mine.

Recipe For “A Nice Little Town”

Each small town has a unique character which it must have to survive. A drive through the surrounding counties illustrates this point. Towns which once flourished are now reduced to a few houses, an empty gas station, and boarded-up buildings. It might be interesting to speculate on the influences that have kept Ada alive even though it still remains a small town. The first plat of Johnstown (1855) indicates the importance of the railroad to the town. Johnson’s sawmill stands beside the Ohio and
Indiana Railroad track, and both north and south of the track are railroad shanties. Along with the dozen houses are a school house, a hotel, a saloon, two general stores, a doctor's office, and a preacher's house. Woods surround the little settlement, and clearly the depot and the track are the focal point. The crude plat pictures a frontier town. Even in 1866 H.S. Lehr recalls the only main street "a sea of mud" with water so deep he "had to climb along on the rail fence" to get into Ada (recorded in H.S. Lehr and His School by Sarah Lehr Kennedy). Pearl Underwood tells us in her "History of Ada," written for the Ada Centennial celebration in 1953, that in 1866 there were ten saloons in Ada. All indications are that in its early years Ada was on its way to becoming a rip-roarin' railroad town. But 1866 is the same year the school teacher Lehr entered the town with his dreams for a Normal School—a new influence which would shape the character of Ada. The 1896 Rice and Ferguson *Historical City Directory of Ada, Ohio* gives us clues for the kind of town Ada will be in 1985. Instead of one muddy road, the Directory lists 26 streets. Instead of a few residents, almost 1,000 people lived in Ada in 1896. They are listed by name, what they do, and where they live. Some are designated simply as "widow" or "retired;" many are laborers and "servants." Others are listed as flagman, section hand, lumberman, baggagemaster, or freight agent. The many hotels and restaurants listed indicate the movement of people in and out of the village. The railroad is one of the influences which shaped Ada in its early growth. It still bisects the town and cannot be ignored. The 60 residents listed as "students" and the 12 residents listed as teachers at ONU (in addition to the 53 listed as "teachers") are the result of H.S. Lehr and his fulfilled dream. The 1896 Directory gives us another clue to an important influence on the character of Ada for there are 37 farmers listed. Outside the town the woods
have been cleared and there are now large farms to work on.

These three influences—the railroad, the Normal School, the farms—are reflected in the occupations of the other residents listed. The grocers, the hardware dealers, the drugstore owners, the 36 carpenters, the 19 boarding house keepers, the dentists, the doctors, the two "street sprinklers," even C.B. Myers with his "fruit and nut stand," indicate a growing community providing services for other residents. It's not all commercial growth, however, for there are nine churches, 11 "Secret Societies," and the three Literary Societies at Lehr's school. Among the men of business listed are also 11 music teachers, a teacher of elocution, a photographer, an artist, and Miss Chat Miller, the pianist in the nine-piece orchestra at the Whiteside Theatre. It seems early Ada residents decided they wanted culture as well as commerce.

Tracing my own background I found that one of my great-grandfathers came to the Ada community in 1862 because of the rich farmland; another great-grandfather came in 1867 because he wanted his children to have the advantages of a college town. Some residents of Ada can probably trace their choice of Ada as "home" to one of these influences as well. Perhaps others choose to live in Ada because its unique character is a blend of these diverse influences.

Indian Lake and The Point

Our cottage at Indian Lake is open for the summer and ready for the hot, lazy days. Whether you refer to it as Indian Lake, the Reservoir, or Russell's Point it has special memories for many in our small town.

My mother remembers going to Waterbury with the Campfire girls for a week of camping when she was
twelve. Years ago the Ohio Northern faculty had one-day retreats at Sutton’s resort before the old hotel burned down. On warm summer afternoons my grandfather and I went to Turkeyfoot and rented a boat for an afternoon of fishing in the channel (I rowed, he fished). Many of us went to Beatley’s hotel for dinner or dances, and often groups of high school girls (with a chaperone of course) rented a cottage for a week of fun in the sun. Avondale was a popular place for picnics because of its swimming pool with the big slide. I can still remember the feel of my toes sinking into the muddy bottom. The serious fishermen pitched their tents at Long Island and kept an eye out for rattlesnakes. Young people went roller skating at Wicker’s resort and the older ones went to Old Vienna and the Showboat. Lakeridge was the place for camping trailers and some of the bigger family summer homes. Indian Lake holds memories of the excursion boat owners calling to the passers-by to come take a ride around the lake on the “Mark Twain.” The Rock Chimney served their good chicken dinners family style and the Redwood Inn and the Red Bird hosted many club luncheons.
But the place that holds the most memories for some of us is the Point. At least once a summer most families took their children to walk along the boardwalk, ride the merry-go-round, the dodgems, or the rickety old roller coaster, test their skill with the cardboard ducks at the shooting gallery, have some cotton candy, a waffle or a cinnamon apple, and buy hamburgers for a nickel. If you were a teenager, Moonlight Terrace was the reason you went to the Point.

Before the war all the big bands came to play at Moonlight Terrace on their way to the bigger amusement parks. Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Henry Busse, Alvino Rey and the King sisters, Dick Stabile, Clyde McCoy, Glenn Miller, and Les Brown played for us as we danced on the cement floor under the stars. We didn’t sit much at the little metal tables—we participated. We crowded up by the bandstand to talk to the band leaders and the singers. Many old scrapbooks still have the owners cherished autographs of favorite singers and band leaders. Jinny Neiswander has a special memory of Helen O’Connell and Bob Eberly sitting at her table to talk during a Dorsey band “break.”

Sometimes when I’m sitting in front of the cottage I look across to Orchard Island and the Point beyond. The only bright lights now are the golden arches of McDonald’s and the music that comes across the lake is not my kind of music. The curved bridge over the lake is the only thing left to remind us of those summer nights and the good times.

By the way—if you go through the covered bridge this summer, don’t forget to honk your horn.

Ada, August 4, 1920

In the first weeks of August, life slows down in a small town community. The graduations and weddings come
early in the summer. Most vacations are over and relatives and old friends have made their summer visits. The wheat is cut and the corn and soy beans are still growing. Ahead of us are the Farmers and Merchants picnic and the county fair. In the early part of August we sit in the shade and talk about how hot it is. For the young, most of the activity is centered at the pool or around the country ponds. The August 4, 1920 issue of The Ada Herald recorded a summer week in the life of Ada 65 years ago.

Because the primary elections were August 10, political ads were placed throughout the paper. Dr. Freeman was running for representative to the Ohio legislature and Frank Willis was a candidate for United States senator. Walter Kinder wanted to be reelected to Judge of the Court of Appeals. The Ada Village school had a three-mill levy on the ballot. But, ignoring politics, if someone still had time for a vacation he could take a tour from Cleveland to Buffalo on the steamer “Seeandbee” with connections for Niagara Falls. The fare was $4.63.

The Hardin county fair was announced for August 24-27 in Kenton, and Cunningham’s store would celebrate its 48th anniversary on August 7. If someone were considering a new car, Chas. M. Cole advertised “the Ford Sedan with electric starting and lighting system, with demountable rims with 31/2-inch tires all around... anybody can safely drive it.” If he didn’t want to buy a new car, he could buy a can of Lowe’s Automobile varnish at George Rothrock’s hardware and make his old car look new. Others offered to drill a water well “free from typhoid or other germs.” The Liberty Bank had an ad to catch the eye: “We do not only pay interest but show interest.” Mesdames Northrup and Miller were attending “the millinery openings in Toledo” and “Leland Smull was host to a number of little folks this Wednesday. It was his fourth birthday anniversary.” Several people from the
country motored to the reservoir, and Marjorie Detrick offered a reward for the return of her lost angora cat, Fluffy.

The D.O. Betz Music House announced some of the August Victor and Columbia top hits to play on the victrola. Suggestions were Harry Fox's latest release, "Way Down Barcelona Way" or two new recordings by the Roselands orchestra, "Oh, By Jingo" and "Rose of Chile." If someone fancied himself a dancer, D.O. suggested the All Star Trio's, "All Step, One Step" and "Hy'n Dri Foxtrot." In a tent on Ohio Northern's campus, summer Chautauqua was underway with the Harold Dunbar bell-ringers, Beryl Buckley who gave "Booth Tarkington character interpretations," a violinist, vocal groups, a tenor soloist, lectures by Granville Jones on the dangers of Bolshevism, and Mlle. Marie Lauer who spoke on the spirit of the French woman. The White Hussar Band was a hit, so were the Ada children's pageant and the concert by the Ada Roach Company.

I had planned to conclude by saying that the first part of August in a small town remains much the same over the years. I think I've changed my mind. Ada was a busy place 65 years ago.

**Sears Catalogue**

Several years ago at a country auction I bought a box of books. At the bottom of the box was a treasure I hadn't realized was there—a 1922 Sears, Roebuck catalogue. I remembered how a catalogue was a source of hours of entertainment for me as a child, and this one was just as much fun in the present.

It was evident that looking good was important to the woman of 1922 for several pages had advertisements for hair nets, hair rolls, hair front pieces, and even toupees. At first, something called "colorators" puzzled me until I
discovered it was hair dye. Pages of the latest dress fashions "direct from New York" showed calf-length creations in challis, gingham, French serge, Canton crepe, Poiret twill, voile, and organdie. One Homestead house dress, priced at $1.79, fashioned of black sateen "trimmed with prettily flowered cretonne" and adorned with a sash seemed a little fancy for housework. Perhaps the housewife who wore this kind of dress sat in a chair and directed the servant girls to do the dirty work. Even a Mother Hubbard or a Hoover apron couldn't protect that attire. Several dresses featured an "extension waist" for maternity wear or for those women who had "added weight." Underneath the dresses the woman could wear a Prof. Gale Tru-Lift corset. The corset was advertised as "a help to womankind" but the picture looked more like an instrument of torture.

For the men, oiled slicker coats and caps were the style. Evidently under their herringbone suits and detachable collars they wore union suits. But on the outside they shone with gold watches, vest chains, fobs, coat chains, and cuff links. Depending on his budget, a man could buy a can of "50 Steel King Pittsburgh Stogies" for $1.59 or a pound bag of Killickinnick granulated tobacco for 53 cents.

For their children, mothers could order rompers, creepers, wool vests, union suits, knickerbockers, bloomers, drawers, and button shoes. The smaller children could be taken for a stroll in a baby cart called the Rock-a-Bye Roadster which sold for $4.39. Velocipedes, coaster wagons, kiddie horses, and hand cars provided playtime recreation for the older children. As a special treat, Sears offered six packages of chewing gum for 21 cents, each package a different flavor: Yucatan, California fruit, Black Jack, spearmint, Beeman's Pepsin, and Chiclets.

In 1922 the entire family could have fun with a Ouiji board (42 cents), a mandolin ($4.95), piano rolls (37
cents), a blow accordion (a transition instrument to move from mastery of the mouth organ to mastery of the accordion), or best of all—a Silvertone phonograph for $78 ($4.50 a month with no additional charges).

The Sears, Roebuck catalogue offered everything from how-to books to stoves and plows. Schools could buy desks for $4.25 and a farmer could buy a gallon of barn paint for $1.43. One of the expensive items in the catalogue was a five room pre-cut cottage for $748. No wonder they call catalogues “wish books.”

Small Town Talk

In the winter I used to sit on a small stool at the edge of a hot air register in my grandparents’ living room. The main purpose was warmth from the coal furnace, but another purpose was to listen to the women talk—my grandmother, my aunts, my mother, and various female relatives. Their conversations seemed disjointed and perplexing at times and I often dozed off. But years later, I sometimes find myself involved in the same kind of conversations with long-time residents of the town. The following conversation is an example of this type of discourse. Of course, I’m using fictitious names, and I should protect myself by stating that I do not refer to any specific events.

“Guess who I saw in town last week? Sophie Dorman.”

“Who’s Sophie Dorman?”

“You remember her. Her father was John Cornwall. They lived two miles north of town.”

“Oh yes, wasn’t she the one with twin sisters?”

“No, that was her cousin, Sarah.”

“Sarah had pretty yellow curls.”

“She had red hair. You’re thinking of her daughter, Sybil.”

“I don’t remember her.”
“Oh yes you do. She was at the South school building at the same time you were.”
“Was she in Laura Hutchinson’s room?”
“No, it was Mrs. Tallman’s room.”
“I still can’t place her. Was she any relation to Spud Green?”
“I think his grandmother and her grandmother were third cousins.”
“Did she run around with a short blonde girl with glasses?”
“Maybe you’re thinking of her uncle’s second wife’s niece who lived with them for awhile.”
“Was she the one who ran away with a college student to Kansas City?”
“Who? Sarah, Sophie, Sybil, or the niece?”
“I don’t know. Who are we talking about?”

If you happen to be in a group when this kind of conversation takes place—it often does in small towns—just sit tight and don’t doze off. The whole problem of identity will be cleared up in an hour or so.

Memories and Smells

Sometimes your nose can revive memories. The smell of chocolate mixing with soda water still reminds me of confectionery fountains, the smell of oil on wood reminds me of old schoolroom floors, and the smell of manure reminds me of an old barn where my cousin Tom and I played on visits to the farm. When the smell of fresh-baked bread floats through the air, I remember old bakeries. The rather unpleasant smell of milk being pasteurized takes me back to old dairies, and the smell of printer’s ink and pipe tobacco reminds me of an old newspaper office. Medicine smells remind me of doctors’ offices, veterinarians’ offices, dentists’ offices, and drugstore prescription rooms. Hardware stores had a mixture of
smells—kerosene, linseed oil and leather. Grocery store smells are too many to remember but fresh ground coffee and dill pickles can start a chain of memories. A familiar whiff takes me back to the past, and often I identify the smell with a season.

The smells of summer were lemons squeezed for lemonade—Fels Naptha soap chips in hot water on washday—starch boiling in a pan—newly cut grass—strawberries crushed for shortcake—potatoes frying at noon for the big meal of the day—cherry juice—talcum powder—fresh-cut hay in a haymow—horses when they came in from the fields—sheets hung on a clothesline—white shoe polish—burning garbage—roses—peaches.

The smells of fall were cider—burning leaves—vegetable soup—chow-chow—boiling tomatoes—grape juice dripping from a cotton bag—dill and sauerkraut in big crocks—pumpkin pie—gingerbread—smearcase—pears rotting under a tree—newly peeled apples—black walnuts.

The smells of winter were clothes drying on a rack—the grease on your chest under a warm piece of flannel—coffee boiling on a stove—buttered popcorn—cinnamon poured in hot hardtack syrup—fruitcakes baking—pine needles—fudge—oranges—hot chocolate—burning coal—cod liver oil.

The smells of spring were lilacs—varnish and wallpaper cleaner—dust from the rug on the clothesline—Easter Lilies—mock orange blossoms—spice bushes—clover—newly turned earth—lilies of the valley.

What familiar smells stir your memories?

Bits of History From Agnew Welsh

When Agnew Welsh began his series of twenty-seven articles in The Ada Herald on January 2, 1931 he explained it was an attempt "to put into fairly presentable
shape” records of the “life-history of the Ada community.” Mr. Welsh was the editor of *The Ada Record* for thirty-three years (1881-1914). During that time he saved official records, notes from conversations, and letters about the early days of Ada, intending to publish a book. When he realized there wasn’t enough time to achieve his goal, he put everything in a box labeled, “In the event of my decease to be given to Barton F. Snyder.” In Florida after his retirement, he concluded that it would be “a herculean task for any busy editor” to undertake, so he decided to present his information in a series of articles for “the future historian” to check for inaccuracies, to sort, and to assemble. I found the articles in a scrapbook where my grandmother had put them, and they provide an overall picture of early days one could not get in any other form. I too hope some “future historian” will undertake a life-history. To spark interest in such a project, here are samples of the information Mr. Welsh gathered from many sources.

In 1845 the forest around the Johnstown settlement was filled with deer, bears, wolves, wild cats, wild hogs, wild turkeys, and porcupines.

Once people picked blackberries in what is now the center of Ada.

In 1837 someone asked Mrs. Jacob Sapp how they lived in the wilderness in Liberty township. She answered “on cornbread and spice-bush tea.”

Ada grew slowly. In the earliest days there were three houses: one on East Buckeye near the armory, a log cabin west of the Lutheran church, and a third on ground at 118 South Main (the current address of the Liberty-National bank).

Ada village’s first heavy debt was the purchase of a Silsby steam fire engine in 1873. It cost $5,000.

Before Ada had a post office, residents got their mail at Huntersville. In 1852 they went to Maysville to the “Hog
Creek” post office. Mail was brought from Findlay by a “Star Route” post rider through Cannonsburg. The first post office in Ada was in a store which was “general headquarters for the town loafers after supper.”

In the season of 1886-87 Ada consumed 780 gallons of oysters.

Because it took two hours to light the sixty-seven gas street lights, the lamplighter started at 3:00 p.m.

Alger was once called Jagger.

In 1854 Ada was connected to a regular rail route with a daily train schedule. By 1909 ten mail trains and two passenger trains passed through Ada.

The vote in the 1902 special election: dry 476 and wet 183.


I'm sure there are some good stories in each one of these items. Agnew Welsh thought so too.
The "Small Town Samplers" included in this book (with some editing and correcting) appeared as a series of columns in The Ada Herald from July, 1984 to December, 1985. Most of the material came from my recollections, old issues of The University Herald, The Ada Record, and The Ada Herald. Readers responded by making available to me old programs, catalogues, books, and pictures. They stopped me on the street or in the stores, called me on the telephone, wrote me personal notes, or wrote "letters to the editor" to tell me what they remembered about Ada and the past. This book is for them and for all of you who think small towns are unique places that deserve a place in our memories.

The pictures are from the ONU archives, the Centennial Souvenir Program of 1953, The Ada Herald, and friends and relatives. Many of the pictures, including the cover picture, are from Vince Reichert's postcard collection. I am indebted to him for allowing me to use some of them.

A special thank you to Janet Hubbell, Jo Kindle, Marian Conley, and the other members of the staff of The Ada Herald as they continue to record weekly the important events of several small towns for future generations.
Small Town Sampler II

by Betty Miller
Ask the residents of any small town why they choose to live in such a society instead of a larger community and they will give you these answers: "The people are friendly," "It's a quieter kind of life," "You get to know your neighbors," "It's a good place to raise children." One of the important qualities we have in a small town is not only a sense of belonging but a sense of continuity. We are reminded of it constantly in the old buildings, the churches, the houses, the trees, and even the people's names. Most have been around for a long time. It may be the reason small-town citizens become so agitated when one tree is cut down, a landmark disappears, or a tradition is altered. We are not against change or progress but the past has priority.

If your background includes a small town at any time in your life those qualities, values, and influences stay with you and become an important part of your memories.

© Elizabeth (Betty) Miller, 1987

The cover picture of the "new" depot (100 years old this year) and the old depot on Johnson street is a copy from Vince Reichert's collection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forgotten History</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Cookbook</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street 1950’s</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After World War II</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tramps</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Bands</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Irick</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Almanacs</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class of 1936</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Memorials</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bicentennial</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ream’s Grove and Trees</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and the War</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887 University Herald</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Newspaper Style</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ada Theatre</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Orgy</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest Festival</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Memories</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geneva Yale Memories</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ada Commercial</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Car and Greer Memories</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Morrow</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatchet Mystery</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidson Traction Engine</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters to the Editor</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kemp Drugs</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas 1886</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck and Minnie</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada Streets</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depot Recollections</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Passenger Station</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad Park</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph Office</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Watchtower</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The End of an Era</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forgotten History

The Ada Herald real estate ads are part of my weekly reading. One description of a land sale caught my attention because it was two columns long. I’m sure the engineers, the surveyors, and the farmers in the county are familiar with this kind of land description. I found it fascinating. Even though directions and degrees were given it seemed difficult to believe one could start from "a stone and brick in the middle of the County Road near a large oak tree" and end with so many acres "more or less." To describe the property in another tract the account took the land "to the north bank of the Scioto River; thence up the river with the meanderings thereof." Then it followed from a blue ash to "two ashes, beech, sugar tree and red oak" to two other beech trees and a stone in the center of the tract. These lands, of course, were part of the Virginia Military Lands given to soldiers after the Revolutionary War and a stone, a tree, or a river would be a boundary one could count on. The land in Liberty township is laid out in neat square plots. But to the east it is much different.

Scattered about through these odd-shaped townships are small towns. H.T.O. Blue in his Centennial History of Hardin County, Ohio (1933) names the early towns in the county—many now forgotten. For example, where are St. Michael’s, Geneva, and McGoldrick’s Town? Do traces of Peru still exist? Blue says there was "even talk of making this place the county seat on account of its high elevation and central location in the county." Many towns have changed their names. Jagger (because it was Elias Jagger’s land) was changed to Alger in honor of Russell Alger, a Michigan statesman; North Washington was changed to Dola; Oakland was changed to Foraker in honor of Ohio Governor J. B. Foraker; Wheeler (the tavern owner’s name) was changed to Pfeiffer to honor a former postmaster. Of course Johnstown was changed to Ada in 1855 by General Thomas Kilby Smith, a postoffice department official in Washington, because he had a favorite sister. Nothing is left of Blocktown except St. John’s church. Jumbo and Jump are crossroads communities. Although I remember the Huntersville church on the curve, I can’t remember Huntersville. Kenton, Dunkirk, Forest, Mt. Victory, Ridgeway, Patterson, Silver Creek, McGuffey (in honor of John whose idea it was to drain the Great Scioto marshlands), Yelverton (a stockholder in the Mad River railroad), Hepburn, Grant, Maysville, Blanchard, Roundhead (after the Chief), and
Holden are still on the map.
Someday I'm going for a ride through the county with someone who knows more about it than I do. Maybe we'll find the stone, a large oak tree, two ashes, and a beech which make up the "more or less" acreage. On the way we may pass the traces of a little forgotten town.


Presbyterian Cookbook
Everyone knows that if you want to be on the best-seller list you must publish a cookbook. It's true now and it was true in the past. Every church group, grange, or social organization in a small town must have published a cookbook at some time in its history.

One of the treasured best-sellers from the Ada past is the Presbyterian Cookbook. Its familiar brown cover with a sketch of the church on the front can still be found in many Ada kitchens. Our copy, published in 1927 by the "Ladies Aid Society," has not been put away as a keepsake. The book with its well-thumbed pages dusted with flour and smudged with lard and butter grease spots is often pulled out when other cookbooks
simply do not meet the occasion. It’s true that a box of pancake mix from the supermarket will let you turn out something that passes for a pancake, but Dick Stambaugh once told me that Lucy Weir’s Pan Cake recipe which calls for sour cream (the real kind) will convince you that you’ve really never tasted a pancake before.

With this cookbook at hand, a beginner cook could stick to recipes like Mrs. M.L. Snyder’s swiss steak, Ilo Gilmore’s breaded chicken, Mrs. Lowman’s apple pie, or Mrs. William Shanks’ ginger cookies. The more experienced cook might want to try Mrs. Alexander’s sweetbread croquettes, Mrs. Judson Searson’s “Little Figs in Blanket” (bacon and oysters), Mrs. Arthur Brewer’s “Shin Digs,” Mrs. P.O. Moore’s Spider Pudding (mixed and baked in a skillet), Mrs. J.L. Runser’s “Heavenly Food,” or Mrs. S.H. Elliott’s Potato Puffs. No cook in those days could imagine a cake mix in a box so Mrs. T.J. Smull contributed three of her cake recipes—a Hot Milk cake, an Ideal Sponge cake, and a Prune layer cake. She also included an emergency icing recipe for those who ran into problems with the finishing touches.

Since ladies often served sandwiches for club meetings and luncheons, the cookbook has some fancy sandwich recipes. Laura McElroy’s “Komona” sandwiches call for five cents worth of cheese. Mary and Julia Ash revealed the secret of their raisin sandwiches—raisins, celery, and nuts mixed with marshmallow cream. The peanut butter sandwich was enhanced by Mrs. Al Ream when she added grated cheese, mango relish and mixed it together with whipped cream.

Candies, cookies, breads, puddings, meat dishes, egg dishes, ice creams, and jams are all included in the cookbook along with Mrs. Luttie Neiswander’s “chow chow,” Mrs. Ed Lantz’s “picalilli,” Mrs. C.W. Breck’s White Cake (Cheap But Good)—and, of course, Mrs. John Weir’s pan cake recipe.

**Main Street 1950’s**

If you live in a small town for most of your life, the changes that take place happen gradually over the years. One day a new house goes up in the field across the road; the next year another house goes up. Ten years later you look around and realize with a shock that things have indeed changed, and the fields and the woods are no longer a part of your view. In the downtown section the bank buildings have created the greatest changes because they replaced several familiar homes. But some of the unique old business blocks built about the turn of the century are still a part of Ada. It’s the businesses that have changed.
The ads in the Ada Herald 1957 issues reveal the changes in a brief passage of time in our town’s history.

For example, did you buy your groceries at the Ada Super Market, the Kroger store, Currey’s Market, or Chrismer’s Market? Did you shop at the Ahlenius, the Charles, Greer’s or Gambles? Did you make trips to Fields Bakery, Binkley’s Poultry Market, the Ada Dairy, or Messick’s next to the Mertz Hardware? Did you go to the Avon Beauty Shop, Roush Motor Sales, or the Huber Furniture store? Do you remember the Conner Music Co. in the South school building after it was no longer a school? Did you ever take an ailing radio to Foxie’s Radio store? Were the Supreme Cleaners or Sealts Cleaners on your list of places to go? Do you remember Garver Auto Wrecking, Steinman Bros. Lumber Company, or Pifer Stone and Dirt? All of these places of business were very much a part of Ada in 1957.

Reichert’s Clothing, Cole Motor Sales, Peper Drugs, and Gardner’s Drug Store are still placing ads in the Herald, and the next generation is making sure the business stays around for awhile. Vince is still in his store (even though his coffee breaks are getting longer), Van is still busy in his real estate office downtown, and Verda still waits on us with her friendly smile at the hardware store. Maybe we can accept the changes the next thirty years will bring as long as we can see a few familiar faces when we make a trip downtown.
Valentines

February always reminds me of the valentine box in every room in an elementary school many years ago. The box was covered with construction paper and decorated with cupids and hearts. One of the February art projects was to create your own box in which to carry your valentines home. You covered it with silver wrap and embellished it with red paper hearts. Carefully you folded the construction paper, cut half a heart, and hoped when you opened it it would be a decent heart, not ballooning out at the sides or not too skinny. Sometimes you made several hearts—one big one to paste on the paper doily, smaller hearts to decorate the corners, and of course, a white one to fit inside the big red one. You printed on the white one, “Be my Valentine” or if you were daring enough, “I love you,” or clever enough, “I luv U.”

The main job of getting ready for Valentine's Day was accomplished in many hours of hard work at home. Your teacher said you had to give each of your classmates a valentine although you didn’t want all of them to be your valentine. Even in the first grade you were sensitive enough not to want anyone to go home with an empty shoebox. So you bought penny cards for most of the class—perhaps one that had a lamb on it and said, “Woolya be Mine?” or a log and a verse that ask, “Woolen you be my valentine?”—ones that let the recipients know they weren’t supposed to take you seriously. Then you bought or made special cards for the teacher, your best friends, and perhaps even spent a nickel for someone you secretly admired.

The one kind of valentine I haven’t seen for awhile is the insult valentine. Printed on cheap white paper they were covered with comic drawings and bad poetry. They were addressed to “Buster Braggart,” “Big Shot,” or “Dizzy Dora” and had clever verses on them: “You may think that you are smart/but believe me, Buster, you just aren’t.” These were always unsigned and usually sent in fun (although sometimes they weren’t). As I remember, they filled the void between the cute valentines (Bee my valentine and let’s buzz around) and the flowers, red satin boxes of candy, and the “Sweetheart” cards. When you were too old for the cute cards and too young for the “mushy” stuff, you insulted the person to let him know he was noticed.

Along with the valentines came the red cinnamon candy hearts which gave you a red tongue and scarlet lips, and the colored candy hearts (which tasted a little like face powder) that have the same words printed on them today as they had

Valentine’s Day was a day when you couldn’t wait to get home from school, open your shoebox, count the cards to see how many you had, and try to figure out who had sent you the unsigned ones.

**After World War II**

On January 11, 1946 the Ada Herald editor, Barton Snyder, began to run a front page column titled “Back in Civies” to record the return of local men and women from the service. Andrew McBride came home after serving three years in the Philippines. When he shipped from Nogoya Japan, his brother Howard was 25 miles north of Nogoya but neither knew it. Nick High was home with five battle stars, John T. Richardson from two years in North Africa and Iran, and Merle Wirt with his discharge from the navy. Glenn Neiswander arrived home from the Pacific area on February 7, and Charles Umphress after 22 months on an LST surprised his parents by walking in unannounced. By this time the Herald had added a banner at the top of the front page: Welcome Home Returning Vets!”

Robert Hale Messenger was home after five years in the army air corps. John Ferguson and Sylvan Simon had received their discharges. Thad Gardner, a machine gunner of the Trail Blazer division, was home and so was Robert Tipple. Vinton Brame and Ralph Neiswander, from the minesweeper USS Delft, were back in Ada. Thomas Rutledge and Rollin Yale were discharged from the navy and their overseas duty. Virginia Wilson returned from her medical corps service. Arden Roberson after serving on a patrol craft in the Philippines was back. Joe Davis after twenty months on a destroyer in the South Pacific also brought a Purple Heart home with him. These homecomings took place in the first few months of 1946. The veterans continued to come home and each week their arrivals were front-page news.

Along with the home-town veterans came 325 discharged servicemen who wanted to make use of the GI Bill and attend Ohio Northern in the spring and summer. Ada and ONU faced a crisis in housing. Dr. Robert McClure, ONU president, told the town the university needed 5,000 new housing units for veterans and their families. The fraternity houses and the rooming houses could accommodate some of the single vets, and work began in the national guard armory to house 100 students. The pre-fabs, the trailers went up beside Presser and behind Taft and were soon filled with married veterans and their families. Larger Ada homes and space above the down-
town buildings became apartments. Every bit of space was utilized. W.C. Arbogast ran an ad announcing "a desperate need for housing," and several university officials even went house-to-house searching for rooms. All of the additional students (and more coming) meant more classroom space and new faculty. One new history teacher, Dr. Robert Hilliard, a Captain in the artillery and recently released from the army, was one of the lucky ones. He found a vacant room in the Shelly north Main street home.

Ada was the scene of many happy homecomings in 1946 but also had a problem of where to put everyone.

Tramps

The April 3, 1914 issue of the University Herald carried an account of a "Cn Yor Hi" meeting. One of the discussion topics was introduced by a student: "The town is literally overrun with tramps. Some seem willing to work. Others belong to the professionals." You will notice that the word used is "tramp" and not "itinerant" or any other such euphemism. Tramps they were, and they did seem to seek out the small towns in the spring and summer months.

My grandparents lived at the edge of town. An old black pump stood outside by the kitchen door and had a blue
graniteware cup hung on the iron hook. Often we could hear the pump handle creaking as some passerby stopped for a cold drink from the well on his way to or from the country. That was what the cup was for—anyone who was thirsty was welcome to use it. Now and then a stranger in old clothes, a pleasant-looking person, appeared at the pump about noon. No doubt he was drawn to the house by the fried-potato or hominy smell, or perhaps the pan-fried steak cooking in the heavy, black "spider" on the stove attracted him. If he tapped on the screen door and asked for a hand-out, my grandmother dished up a plate of food and a big cup of coffee. The tramp sat on the back steps and ate his meal. He was always polite and said, "Thank-you, ma'am." I suppose the adults kept a close eye on me, but sometimes I went outside and sat on the steps beside the tramp until I had to go in and eat my own dinner. He might tell me where he was going and where he had been. I wasn't afraid of him, and I certainly didn't feel sorry for him; in fact, his life seemed rather exciting. At least he appeared to be satisfied with things as they were. When I went outside again after dinner, the only traces of his presence were the empty plate, the used silverware, and the coffee cup placed neatly by the back door. If I heard a train whistle in the distance, I concluded he had probably left one small town for the next one, hoping to arrive in time for supper.

I remember one day we found a chalked "X" on the house foundation. Someone told me a tramp had probably put it there so the next tramp passing would know this was a house where he could find a free meal.

I haven't seen a tramp in our small town for a long time. I guess he knows he wouldn't be welcome in the 1980's.

**Community Bands**

Some groups in a small town's past are best forgotten but there's one group many of us wish hadn't vanished. We miss it at the Farmers and Merchants Picnic and we miss it in the summer months—the community band. After the opening concert of the community band's weekly summer series in 1939 the Ada Herald printed a history of Ada's community bands. That article and the sound of the high school bands marching in this year's Farmers and Merchants Picnic parade made me wish for the days of the noon concert in the bandshell and the Wednesday evening concerts in Railroad park.

The first real Ada band which played in the 1872 period was called "The Ada Silver Cornet Band." Members included the
Lindermans, Lem and John; the three Young Brothers, Christian, William and Henry: Albert Charles, and E. W. Gilbert.

The Philharmonic band of 1898 was led by Scott Young and was made up of 18 business and professional men. Its members included John and Harry Young, Joe Linderman, Billy Gilbert, Del Rice, M.V. Gilbert, Bill Crooks, Ed King, Oliver Goldsmith, and John Dennison. This band was evidently a popular one in Ada and in the surrounding communities. The players traveled in a “circus-type band wagon, drawn by four ponies driven by Stant Bowers.”

Sometime before World War I a Knights of Pythias band directed by Ralph Parlette included Paul Hill, Roy Marty, Henry, Norman, and Charles Freund, and Ernest and Leo Routson. This band had snappy “wine-colored uniforms trimmed in black braid.” They played for town events but also at the fairs and firemen’s conventions. They also had the distinction of playing for Henry Morrow’s funeral—but that’s a story in itself.

E.M. Routson started a boys’ band in 1915 but it disbanded after three years. The newspaper account tells us “the instruments were sold to Alger citizens to pay off a mortgage on them.”

The community band most of us remember was formed in 1920 by Mike Mazzulla. He used the ONU band as a core and others in the community soon joined in for weekly concerts. Ernie Routson took over the direction and membership came from the country, the surrounding communities, and the town. The old wooden platform in Railroad park was replaced with a stone and concrete bandstand in 1939. That bandstand is gone and so is the Memorial Park bandshell which was dedicated to Ernie Routson. The musicians, old and young, are still around. All we need is someone to get them together and we can reinstitute a 100-year tradition in Ada.

Mrs. Irick

One summer I took piano lessons from Mrs. Irick when she lived in the Willis house next to Presser. The house was on a small rise with huge fir trees in the front yard.

Mrs. Irick made a game of learning to read music. She spread a large blank cardboard staff on a table. We learned to put a cardboard treble clef or a bass clef on the lines and fill in the whole notes, the half-notes, the quartenotes, the bars and rests, and tap out the rhythm with our fingers. I realized later
that she was teaching us the language of music before we tried to make music. Only after we had the music in our heads did we receive our Beginners Book I and actually get to press the keys on the piano. Mrs. Irick had snow-white hair with soft waves when I knew her. She sat beside me on the piano bench and in her soft voice admonished me to make the top of my hands like tables. If I played my “piece” without too many mistakes, she put a gold star at the top.

At the end of the summer lessons she had a recital at Lehr auditorium. I wore my best dress, announced to the audience that I would play “May Basket Party,” and hoped I would be able to get through my part of the program without shame. After the ordeal was over, we gave our curtsies or bows, accepted our applause, and went to sit in the front row of the auditorium to listen to the others play. Those of us who were the beginners were outshone by the real musicians—Marilyn Packard, Joan Tyson, Kenneth Niswander, Alyce High, and Katherine Pratt—who dazzled us with their performances.

When Mrs. Irick could no longer teach and then after she was gone, her daughter, Betty, continued the music lessons. My three girls followed my efforts and took piano lessons from Betty and played their “pieces” at the recitals. Betty’s son, Jimmy Estep, made his grandmother and mother proud as he performed for the audience. He continues their tradition of teaching music to young people. It was a strange experience as I sat waiting for my daughters’ lessons to end. I often wondered how many times Mrs. Irick and Betty had heard “The Happy Farmer” or “For Elise” played by clumsy fingers.

None of us became concert pianists, but we all learned something about music and how to enjoy it. I think Mrs. Irick and Betty would believe that was enough.
A faithful reader of farmer's almanacs, I have learned some interesting facts over the years.

If we want to know the chances for rain the following day, a farmer's almanac gives us some clues. If our "cat sneezes or lies with its head upside down" or our cattle scratch, stand with their backs to the wind, or "gaze at the sky emitting a low low" we'd better plan on a rainy tomorrow. Go outside. If the woodpeckers are making a terrible racket, the birds are sitting on the telephone wires, or the pigeons are "flying home slowly," rain is on the way. Of course we have to figure out whether the pigeons have just left home or are returning home.

The almanacs provide us with little-known historical facts ("January 1853 was the only time in our history that the U.S. was free from debt.") but also gives us the latest debunking of historical events. For example, we learn from authority that "Betsy Ross probably did not design or make the first flag." We also learn that since General George Patton couldn't get parts for his tanks in 1940 "through official channels, he ordered (and received) the parts from Sears."

The farmer's almanacs care about our health and the health of our friends and relatives. If we discover we can pull hair out easily on the top of our heads and decide that maybe we are going bald, an ad in the almanac tells us this might "run in the family" but it may be caused by "an excessive discharge of toxis sebum." Their company has a product that will stop hair loss and perhaps even grow new hair. All we must do is send to the company for more information—no obligation, of course.

Other ads tell us we can join the Happy Matchmaker Club and find new companions, borrow thousands of dollars, become a student of Witchcraft, or even get a university degree by mail. By simply writing to an address we can buy "Rare, Exotic breeds of poultry, ducks, and turkeys" or find out how to make a profit raising earthworms or red worms. We can buy personal Voo Doo dolls to avoid evil spells.

The almanacs provide us with recipes, science lessons on tides and moons, and cures for hiccups. In addition to all this valuable information, we can become important people in our social groups as we predict the big blizzards, the floods, the natural catastrophes of the coming year, simply by taking a quick look at our almanacs. Where else could we get so much for so little?
In the spring of 1936 WPA offered hope for jobs in Ada. Work on the new swimming pool would begin the last of April or early part of May; planned improvements to Route 69 and the Municipal building gave a promise of summer work for many. If he had a job a young man could buy 20 acres with a new 5-room cottage, small barn, and drilled well for $1,800 or a 6-room house on East Lincoln for $600. He could purchase a new Hudson at Zimmer and Wirt for $710. Chiffon hose were 39 cents at Anderson’s and three cans of corn cost 25 cents at Harris Market. Greer’s advertised Botany ties for 55 cents or suits from $18.50 to $24.50. The Pennsylvania railroad reduced the fare from Ada to New York from $6.38 to $4.25 so if you had any money left you could take a trip to the big city. Mayor Sousley gave notice in The Ada Herald that the “Dog and Chicken Ordinance” would be enforced and anyone who let his dogs or chickens run at large on private property would be fined. A new restaurant, the “Modern Cafe,” was opening at 223 North Main. At the movies Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were appearing in “Follow the Fleet,” Warner Oland was “Charlie Chan at the Circus,” and Laurel and Hardy were making everyone laugh in “The Bohemian Girl.” Clark Gable and Jean Harlow were burning up the screen at the Odeon in “Wife vs Secretary.”

All over Hardin County the seniors were preparing for graduation. Alger had 12 seniors, Dola, 24, Lafayette, 28, and McGuffey, 9. At Ada High School “the largest class in recent years” (57) was busy with graduation activities. The Class Night committee, Jack Underwood, Robert Pease, and Mary Ellen Ferrall, was making plans. On May 8 the Junior-Senior banquet was held and after dinner Mack Finch played for dancing in the high school gym. Betty Dilts had turned over the presidency of the Girl Reserves to Joan Shaw. The seniors, with Maxine Fender as chairman, presented the final chapel program. Jane Deming, Harry Gossard, Ross and Everett Epley, Dick Fulks, Donald Moore, and Jack Needy gave a skit directed by Coach Hendricks. On May 15 the seniors presented their class play, “The Thirteenth Chair,” with a large cast: Richard Underwood, Hazel Hover, Robert Tipple, Genevieve Jenkins, Jack Underwood, Jane Deming, Mary Ellen Ferrell, Evan Huber, Evalyn Neiswander, Leila Mae Baum, Russell Brown, Charles McElroy, Betty Dilts, Joe Wertheimer, William Lenhart, and Ivor Campbell.

The Wednesday night before graduation Ivor Campbell
gave his valedictory address at Class Night, Joe Wertheimer delivered the salutatory, and John Underwood, the class president's message. Ruth Weir read the history, Eleanor Orwick the prophecy, Leila Mae Baum the class poem, and Tom Wolfrum the will. Finally on May 22 Judge Homer Ramey of Toledo presented the graduation address and the Class of 1936 left Ada High School.

In June some old classmates will gather in Ada to recall some of those memories of 1936 at their 50-year reunion.

Campus Memorials

During the years 1911-1918 Ada was engaged in a flurry of activity as the Lehr Memorial building was completed and the classes, alumni, and townspeople donated their gifts to the Memorial as a tribute “to Dr. Lehr, the founder of the institution, to Dr. A. E. Smith, who conceived it, to Secretary Thomas, whose untiring efforts gathered the funds” (Northern, 1915). The pride in the new building was reflected in the 1915 Northern yearbook as the student editor described the entrance with the floor and wainscoting of “pure white Vermont marble protected by elegant brass hand railing,” the new heating system, “the forty brilliant bulbs and clusters” in the auditorium which would seat 1500, and the “art glass” windows. His conclusion was that Lehr Memorial “would stand four hundred years.”

From all over the United States had come the cash donations to help complete the subscribed $66,000. The class of 1914 gave the fountain beside the building. The class of 1915 donated the ornamental electric lamp posts at the entrance to Lehr. In 1918 the class memorial was a large oak case for the names of “soldier boys of the school” (Ada Record, 1918). This case filled with the names of students who served in World War I was on the wall outside Alumni Hall until it was removed in the 1960’s. Probably the gift which was to become one of the distinguishing landmarks on the main campus was the gift from the class of 1916. That class provided a permanent home for the campus cannons. There must be hundreds of snapshots in albums of alumni and townspeople as they posed for the traditional picture “beside the cannon.”

According to a Northern Review article of April 18, 1928, the Federal cannons from the Civil War were “sent by the government to commemorate the brave men from the university who had participated in the Nation’s Wars.” They were also a tribute to the ONU battalions who drilled on the
main campus from 1883-1921. The guns had come to the campus mounted on carriages and were in working order. According to the Review reporter, the cannons "were used in rendering salutes to distinguished personages," but when a serious accident occurred during a visit from Governor Cox, the guns were silenced. After they were placed on the cement bases "they have kept their silent vigil" until they were removed two summers ago.

Most small towns have war memorials and they become familiar landmarks. Many of us miss the cannons on the campus as we would miss the Civil War cannon in Railroad Park or the mounted gun at War Memorial Park if they were removed. Perhaps the silent guns are reminders to "Let us have peace" as the Honorable Ralph Cole reminded his audience at the dedication of Lehr Memorial on May 18, 1915.
Mary Stambaugh Bowden, Marie Mazzulla Hungerford, Bettie Focht King. Contributed by Virginia Nelswander. Other pictures from Northern yearbooks.
The Bicentennial

We planned to celebrate the American Bicentennial in a big way in Ada. The women's groups got it off to a start with the first event of our celebration in March—a Food Fair and Style Revue "spanning 200 years." Before we began our summer celebration, however, we paused to complete our small-town spring and early summer rituals which are important to the life of our town. We graduated the Ada High School class of 1976 with Paula Dornbusch and Elizabeth Remsburg as co-valedictorians and Judy Linger as salutatorian. We sent Doug Cotsamire, Bo Michael, and Mike Elliott to Boys State. We had some weddings. Mary Crider and Thomas Weatherwax got married—so did Patty Hubbell and Dave Devier. "Dr. Sam" told us he planned to retire from the presidency of ONU in 1977; Karl Roider (of ONU) and Walter Rusher (the post office) decided they wouldn't wait another year to retire. The Garden Club planted a flower flag in Railroad park, Tony Milnar talked to Rotary about "the escalation of terrorism," and Ada Police Chief Park Elwood told us about his Safety Council programs for the children who would enter school in September. Then we turned our attention to the 4th of July celebration.

Billie Hindall and her committee (Gretchen Robinson, Virginia Bischoff, Violet Baransy, Ruth Mary Kain, Gayle Zimmerman and Evelyn Jenkins) announced the plans for the 4th. We would begin with an ecumenical church service at Memorial park, follow it with picnic dinners and displays of early American crafts. In the evening, a community chorus with Dr. Roider and William Anderson in charge would present a patriotic cantata. This would be followed by a square dance and a really big fireworks display. All of this took place and we remembered our beginnings.

On TV we watched the tall ships enter Boston harbor, we heard Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops play John Philips Sousa, and we witnessed the Statue of Liberty lighted in the darkness by the fireworks. We celebrated our more humble heritage by participating in the Hardin County Historical Society's old-fashioned ice cream social in Railroad park and listening to Mike Wright play his banjo. The judges awarded prizes for the best cakes to Mrs. E. Stuart Rogers of Kenton for her "spicy jam cake," to Mrs. Robert Crider for her hickory nut cake," and to Mrs. Kay Kline of Kenton for "Gram's Applesauce cake." The prizes for the best pies were given to Eileen Parshall for her "Dutch Rusk pie," Joyce Hines for her "Heritage Ohio Lemon Pie," and Mrs. Ralph Fleming for her
“gravel pie.”

Before we knew it, Van and Ray McClure had completed plans for the Picnic talent show, a community band was getting organized, and an Ada Herald headline read, “83rd F&M Picnic Just Around Corner.” We wanted the summer of 1976 to be a summer to remember—and it was.

Ream’s Grove and Trees

From May through October, Memorial Park is a popular place. Ada people enjoy it but so do many of our neighbors from surrounding communities. As we hear the noise from the pool, the football field, or the ball diamonds and smell the fires in the grills for the picnics and family reunions, we often take its beauty for granted. Perhaps the joggers, the walkers, the bike riders, and the lunch-hour visitors (those looking for a quiet place) notice the trees in the park more than others.

Over fifty years ago (in March of 1935) the Ada Garden Club was deciding on a project for the year. Gayle Zimmerman mentioned it to her father, Perry. Remembering the former Tri-County fairground and the trees that stood around the track, he suggested they plant some trees in the community park to replace those that had been damaged or removed. Mary Tipple called a meeting of the club and those who attended, Ida Runser, Mrs. Bish, Ray Sharp, Mrs. J.H. Baker, and Gayle, were enthusiastic about the project. John Rusher and the Phillips sisters told the Zimmermans they would supply young trees from their woods and Mayor Harry Sousley offered the town truck to pick up the trees. Dr. Raymond Dobbins of ONU made a list of trees and Perry Zimmerman selected and tagged 100 trees in the woods. During the worst wind storm of 1935 with muck from the marsh darkening the sky the volunteers planted the new trees in the park and the Ada Herald recorded their names: Joe Dearth, C. R. Johnson, Russell Stauffer, James Newland, Don Bosserman, Fred Oberlin, George Parshall, Albert Atha, Jack Dearth, H.G. Poling, Charles Ryan, Mr. Drewbaugh, and James Johnson. It was a two-day job and the Garden Club served them coffee and sandwiches each noon. In April Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Klingler donated 26 more trees, and the Garden Club asked for 30 more pin oaks, sycamores, stellhornsumacs, red buds, walnut, bladdernut trees and wahoo shrubs to complete the planting.

Years later Bertie Hawk said that with his project suggestion Perry Zimmerman made a living memorial for
himself and never realized it. The next time we walk in the park it might be appropriate to remember the people who wanted to make the park a special place in our small town and left us a legacy of trees.

My thanks to Gayle for the Ada Herald articles and her personal remembrances.

Photo by George Hesser.

Life and the War

Tom Tighe brought me two old issues of Life magazine from 1942 and I did some reminiscing.

Do you realize it’s been 44 years since many of us lined up inside a schoolhouse for our first book of rationing coupons? We were allotted a half-pound of sugar a week (48 teaspoons of the sweet stuff we used in our coffee). The government told us we must cut down because 62 percent of our sugar was imported and what was more significant, “large amounts of sugar are used in the manufacture of alcohol for explosives.” We were at war. Many men had already enlisted and each day more of our home-town boys were leaving for faraway places—places we’d never heard of. Instead of college students, ONU would soon be filled with paratroopers in uniform marching across the
In Life we saw pictures of naval battles in the Battle of the Baltic showing German planes bombing the Russian fleet. The reporter praised our allies, the Russians, who “have held [Kronstadt] with a vengeance.” We saw bleak pictures of Hawaii at war—a blacked-out skyline and barbed wire on the beaches.

In the December 14, 1942 issue of Life after the first anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the government gave us the harsh statistics: eight battleships, three mine layers, and two cruisers destroyed; 2,343 men killed, 960 missing, and 1,272 wounded. We finally saw pictures of the black smoke and fires of Pearl Harbor.

In the April issue of Life, we hadn’t seen too much of the war in the Pacific so along with our new ration books we got pictures of Greer Garson doing a highland fling in the movie Random Harvest with Ronald Coleman. We were told about Alfred Hitchcock’s “swell thriller” Saboteur starring Robert Cummings, Priscilla Lane and Otto Kruger where, at the end of the film, the saboteur fell over the railing from the Statue of Liberty’s torch. They showed us the latest in women’s clothing—frills on everything and little hats. George Brent flashed his bright white-teeth smile from the Calox toothpowder ad. The April issue showed we were still concerned with our everyday lives. In the December issue, Life instructed us on the use of V-Mail, on how to make our own Christmas cards and decorations. The last picture was a happy picture of an army wedding in Hawaii. But somehow we couldn’t forget the pictures of Pearl Harbor in the front pages of the issue.

1887 University Herald

The University Herald (the forerunner of the Ada Herald) contained, for the most part, literary essays, news of university activities, some world news, and a lot of Ada news.

In 1887 the students were as concerned about the typhoid fever, scarlet fever, and measles epidemics as were their Ada families. The editor was pleased that the enrollment at ONU that year was 2,438, but he also recorded the 500 scholars at the Ada Union school. Everyone in Ada was proud of the new railroad depot that had been completed and was now open for use. Both students and townspeople were informed that Walt Whitman was working on a volume of poems, Harvard University and the Peabody Institute had purchased the Serpent Mound in southern Ohio, and that California had an
earthquake. It was equally important news that five out of six of Prof. Ashbrook’s pharmacy class passed the State examination. The one unfortunate student who didn’t pass forgot “to number one paper of his manuscript which caused them to throw it out.” The town and university together solved the problem of overflowing classes in the practical department of the Commercial college by moving some of the classes to a vacant room in downtown Ada.

The students of 1887 thought it was a good idea that more Ada people were putting down brick walks in front of their homes. It was probably because they used those walks to get to their boarding houses. One student reporter notes that during his literary society meeting their “meditation” was stilled because the dinner bells began to ring at the boarding clubs reminding the students “that good dinners were in waiting.” The meeting was adjourned promptly, and we can assume there was a rush to the dinner tables. The same student reporter also suggested that both student and town rowdies study “a book on decorum” so that one group would not indulge in the practice of shoving the other off the new brick sidewalks into the mud.

Even though items in the Herald often covered university activities, since the students boarded with the townspeople and worked in their stores much of the news was small-town news. The ONU students often referred to themselves as “Ada’s sons” as well as “Sons of old ONU,” and indeed the University Herald of 1887 illustrates the closeness between town and gown.

Note: My thanks to Bill Robinson for copies of the University Herald.

Early Newspaper Style

Reading old small-town newspapers from the past accentuates the change in journalistic style. Rather than the factual, objective style of reporting the news adopted by modern journalists, the newspaper reporter of the past gave his readers an overabundance of nouns and adjectives, fanciful images, and a subjective view of the news.

Accidents and other tragedies were described in vivid language, omitting none of the gory details and appealing to the reader’s sympathetic nature, probably causing him to reach for his handkerchief to wipe away the tears.

Instead of a simple announcement of a wedding giving the who, when, where facts, The Ada Record in 1914 had a story on its front page titled, “Professor Cotterman Weds.” The reporter, carried away by his own eloquence, begins his story,
"The ever flying arrows of Cupid found a vulnerable mark in the heart of our Professor Harold F. Cotterman, Dean of the College of Agriculture."

Reporters also inserted their own brand of wry humor into their news stories. At the conclusion of a particularly long session of an Ada council meeting which included heated arguments on an alley closing, street lighting, and fees and payments for various services, the reporter wearily records his closing remarks: "At this point the clerk phoned a reply to his wife that he expected to be home in time for breakfast whereupon this scribe, feeling the need of a few hours sleep, absconded."

Compare a present-day account of an ONU commencement to one in the University Herald in 1910. Perhaps it was written by a graduating senior overcome by his school spirit. He begins his front-page account in this way: "Again the glad bell of commencement peals forth... Once more the senses thrill and the heart beats fast at the sight and the sound of the processional as it moves in majestic column to Brown Auditorium to hear the parting counsel of the president."

Finally, since a small-town newspaper often cannot print what the whole town is secretly talking about, the editor even lectured his readers in a "News Brief" in 1914. He warns his reading audience that if they "think the paper lacks in sensational news, remember it cuts to the quick to see names in print under adverse circumstances." He tells them the newspaper must pass up many items "that would make racy reading for those who enjoy that class" and ends with this admonition: "such news don't help you or the town."

The small-town newspaper of 75 years ago may not have conformed to the rules of objective reporting, but it certainly was colorful—and the readers probably didn't skip a word.

The Ada Theatre

Last year when Lavon Kerr saw the kids waiting in line for the free Christmas movie at the reopened Ada Theatre she said it brought back memories of Charley and Bertie Hawk. Lavon and her husband "Babe" had a restaurant, "Polly's Grill," in the former Russell grocery next to the movie from 1946 to 1955 when they sold it to Emily Collins and Nan Burnett. During that period Chuck Kerr helped Charley with tickets. Later their grandchildren Mike and Polly Spar worked at the theatre, Polly selling tickets and Mike sweeping the entrance and sidewalk.

In 1938 major changes took place in Ada. The Lima News in
September of 1938 reports, "Possibly not since 1879 when the first university buildings were erected has there been such building activity." Ada’s first multiple-family apartments, the "Bryn Mawr," a Baransy and Wolfrom project, was opened. Standard Oil built a new glass-front service station on the corner of Main and Lincoln; south on the next corner the new Linco station opened. The O-K had come to Ada from Cincinnati in February and already needed more space. McCurdy Manufacturing was ready to reopen after a fire, and the new post office had changed the southwest corner of Main and Lincoln. Quiet summer afternoons in Community park were gone forever because the municipal swimming pool had opened in June. All these building projects kept the sidewalk superintendents busy. The building project that created excitement for the entire town, however, was the erection of a "de-luxe, modern $60,000 theatre with seating capacity of 600."

The Odeon had been our movie house for 25 years and before that the Southern and the Lyric had provided entertainment for our parents and grandparents. But this new theatre would be something to see with a 30 foot high facade of "turquoise blue terra cotta, tan-face brick, and black structural glass ornamented in yellow." The marquee would be "metropolitan in design." We couldn’t wait to see the "waterfall lights" at the entrance and the interior decorated in ONU colors, orange and black. The grand opening was in November of 1938 and the first movie on the screen was the Bing Crosby hit, "Sing You Sinners." Charley Hawk was manager, Randall Davidson, operator, Howard Elzay and William Floyd, assistants and ushers, and Marie Hover and Mary Ellen Ferrell, ticket sellers.

Charley continued as manager for 29 years. He knew most of us and then later our kids. Dressed in suit and tie, Charley set a standard when he took our tickets and strolled the aisles reminding us to behave. He stood with the younger children outside the theatre after the show to make sure parents picked them up. If someone was left behind, Charley let them use the box office phone to call home. If parents were worried when their kids stayed for a second showing, Charley would travel the aisles, find the kid, and send him home.

For Lavon Kerr, and many others, the lights on the marquee did bring back memories. It was good to see the lights go on again.
The former Kerr home and "Polly's Grill" next to the Ada Theatre on the corner of Ballard and Main. The Russells once lived here and their grocery was next to the house. Picture furnished by Lavon Kerr.

This photograph of the "new" Ada Theatre was taken by George Hesser.
Summer Orgy

The big city food markets are an attraction for me. I gaze in wonder at the assortment of lettuce, papayas, Swiss chocolates, French escargot, and Russian caviar. Now and then I like to sample these exotic foods. But if I lived in the city, I would have to give up my annual summer orgy which begins in May and ends in October.

When the pink stalks of rhubarb and pieplant appear above ground, the feast begins. The sauce and the rhubarb pie are not finished when the asparagus is ready. A fancy restaurant would serve a few asparagus spears, but I can have a whole plate of it. By this time the lettuce and onions are up. The next course of salad or wilted lettuce with bacon and vinegar is on the table along with the sweet onions dipped in salt. The crisp new peas are waiting to be eaten—so are the strawberries. This is the beginning of the excess of indulgence for now I can have strawberries fresh from the garden, served with cream, served with shortcake, or served in a pie smothered with whipped cream. After the strawberries are gone, the cherries are ripe—the Queen Annes, the Bing, and the sour reds for pies. Now the red and black raspberries appear, and raspberries and cream is a royal dish.

The next course is the orgy of the vegetables when the new potatoes (boiled and dripping with butter or covered with fresh parsley) are put on the plate with the ever-present zucchini, the tiny, tender beets, and the side dish of cucumbers and onions in vinegar sauce. The main attraction of this meal is the green beans cooked just a little so they are still crisp or, better yet, the old-fashioned way—cooked a long time with bacon fat. Why is it they’re even better the next day with potatoes added? I await the Pandora melons, the watermelon, the squash (baked with brown sugar and butter), the lima beans, and the end-of-the-summer fruits—the plums, the peaches, the grapes, and the apples.

But for me the highlight of the summer feast is the tomato and sweet corn entrée. I can sit before a plate filled with sliced “beefsteaks” and ears of “county gentleman” as though I were (let’s face it) a hog at a trough. One summer I was in England from July through October. Even though I sat at the tea table with a plate of warm scones topped with strawberry jam and Devon clotted cream, I thought wistfully that I was missing the Ada corn and tomatoes.

Did you ever notice that people who have moved from Ohio and plan to visit you in the summer ask in their letters if the
sweet corn is ready or if the tomatoes and the melons are ripe. They want to take part in the summer orgy too.

**Harvest Festival**

Some important events took place in Ada in 1938. The first issue of the Purple and Gold, the Ada high newspaper, made its appearance in October. We got the word that the town would build a new bandstand in Railroad park. The Brecks opened their new store “for boys and girls” and would include not only clothing but a hobby department for the model airplane and model train enthusiasts. We had lots of places to shop downtown: Povenmires, Reed's Meat Market, Andersons, Ream's Hardware, Gesaman's shoe store, Conn's Ben Franklin, Gardners, Dana Welsh Drugs or Ada Drugs. We often stopped for the latest town news at the Koffee Kup which had been here for five years. Even though we had all this big city convenience along with a fancy new post office and new industry (the O-K), a popular feature in the Ada Herald titled “What Did you See?” had this item: “Norman Ash's horse saw a basket of apples in front of the Kroger store. Milk wagon and all, he crossed the street and occupied the sidewalk.” The Herald also carried news items sent in by correspondents from Eagle Creek, Beehive, Marsh View, Harrod, LaFayette, Washington Grange, Huntersville, Maysville, Pleasant Hill, Alger-Roundhead, Old Sandusky Trail, Armorsville, Liberty Grange, Blocktown, Red School, New Stark, Ridge Road, and West Newton.

Our town can never separate itself from its small-town agricultural roots—nor does it want to. Now and then, town, gown, and country come together to acknowledge this heritage. So in the “building-boom” year of 1938 we decided to celebrate with a Harvest Festival.

The plans were announced week by week in the Ada Herald. Russell Long was chairman of the antique exhibit in the Kemp room next to Gardners. Mertz Furniture would exhibit the large pieces of antique furniture and the coverlets. A corn and grain show along with baked and canned goods displays would be in the municipal building. The Garden Club planned to have a plant sale in that building also. The ONU marching band would lead a big parade and then give a concert. Co.H would give a machine gun demonstration. Some daily events were a team-pulling contest, a hog-calling contest, goat races, and bicycle races. Merchants would have special sales, and the auctioneers would show their skills at a town auction. The Harvest Festival would close “with a Mardi Gras parade and masked dance at
the armory.” Bill Floyd’s orchestra would play for dancing.

The planners of this year’s Herb Festival wanted some ideas. The committee has only to look to the past, include the depot centennial, and the 1987 festival will go down in history as did the Harvest Festival of 50 years ago.

Preparation for a street festival. Photo by George Hesser.
Summer Memories

In long-ago summers when we were very young we never had a problem of what to do with our free time. The backyard was a playground where we could make hollyhock dolls, dandelion chains, tin can telephones, or whistles from a blade of grass. A spot of ground behind the barn could be a place to spend an afternoon digging a hole. It was fun to walk on stilts or make music with a tissue-paper comb. It seemed that once every summer a neighborhood project was to make a wagon out of old boards and the wheels from a discarded baby buggy. Each neighbor's pile of discards put out for the trashman held great possibilities: a big furniture box could become a clubhouse, for example. You could even combine work with pleasure by counting the buckhorn you had to dig out of the yard before mowing with the old push mower; you could have a cherry-seed-spitting contest after you picked cherries. If you had to carry tin cans out to the barn, you could crush two of them, put them on your feet, and make a terrible racket as you clumped down the back sidewalk. My cousin had a tent so we played "safari" and learned to give authentic Tarzan yells. One of my uncle's old mail bags became a saddle on an old sawhorse for a western setting.

When we got hot we ran through the water from the hose. When we got restless we played a game where the neighborhood group rode bikes and hit a tennis ball around in the street with sticks. On a summer afternoon on south Johnson street the only traffic would be when Bill Tietje (the town policeman) rode by and waved. We played mumblety-peg with our pocket knives or a game we called "Paper, Scissors, Rocks." Two people clenched fists and at the count of three they either spread their fingers, put two fingers in a v-shape, or left their fists clenched. Scissors (v-shape) could cut paper (fingers spread), rocks (a fist) could crush scissors, and paper could wrap around a rock. If you were the winner you got to crack the other player on the wrist with two fingers. At the end of an hour of this game a loser's wrist would be red and sore. I can't remember why we thought this was fun.

After supper the adults sat on the porch in the swing or in rockers while the neighborhood kids played Hide-and-Seek, Red Light-Green Light, or Mother May I. We caught lightning bugs in a jar or tried to find the Big Dipper. After the mothers called from the front porches, we washed the dirt from our bare feet at the pump—the water so cold it stung—before we went in the
Summer Memories

In long-ago summers when we were very young we never had a problem of what to do with our free time. The backyard was a playground where we could make hollyhock dolls, dandelion chains, tin can telephones, or whistles from a blade of grass. A spot of ground behind the barn could be a place to spend an afternoon digging a hole. It was fun to walk on stilts or make music with a tissue-paper comb. It seemed that once every summer a neighborhood project was to make a wagon out of old boards and the wheels from a discarded baby buggy. Each neighbor’s pile of discards put out for the trashman held great possibilities: a big furniture box could become a clubhouse, for example. You could even combine work with pleasure by counting the buckhorn you had to dig out of the yard before mowing with the old push mower; you could have a cherry-seed-spitting contest after you picked cherries. If you had to carry tin cans out to the barn, you could crush two of them, put them on your feet, and make a terrible racket as you clumped down the back sidewalk. My cousin had a tent so we played “safari” and learned to give authentic Tarzan yells. One of my uncle’s old mail bags became a saddle on an old sawhorse for a western setting.

When we got hot we ran through the water from the hose. When we got restless we played a game where the neighborhood group rode bikes and hit a tennis ball around in the street with sticks. On a summer afternoon on south Johnson street the only traffic would be when Bill Tietje (the town policeman) rode by and waved. We played mumble-peg with our pocket knives or a game we called “Paper, Scissors, Rocks.” Two people clenched fists and at the count of three they either spread their fingers, put two fingers in a v-shape, or left their fists clenched. Scissors (v-shape) could cut paper (fingers spread), rocks (a fist) could crush scissors, and paper could wrap around a rock. If you were the winner you got to crack the other player on the wrist with two fingers. At the end of an hour of this game a loser’s wrist would be red and sore. I can’t remember why we thought this was fun.

After supper the adults sat on the porch in the swing or in rockers while the neighborhood kids played Hide-and Seek, Red Light-Green Light, or Mother May I. We caught lightning bugs in a jar or tried to find the Big Dipper. After the mothers called from the front porches, we washed the dirt from our bare feet at the pump—the water so cold it stung—before we went in the
When we went to bed we were asleep before the noise of the night insects began outside the window.

**Weddings**

The account of a wedding in the Ada Herald gives us some names and specifics of the happy event, but it doesn’t include some interesting details an 1885 Ada Record account does. The paper listed the wedding gifts and the givers’ names. Perhaps this was to save the bride the bother of thank-you notes or maybe it was to impress the neighbors. Certainly no one whose name was listed need be ashamed or accused of cheapness because the gifts were more than adequate. A sample list from one wedding included a “tablecloth and set of dishes,” “six head of sheep,” “set of upholstered chairs and rocking chair,” “an oil painting and fruit dishes,” and a “set of silver knives and forks.” The donor’s name was included with each gift.

Soon after President Grover Cleveland’s wedding day in June, 1886, Ada residents could read a detailed account of the glorious event in the Record including the entire wedding service, a description of what the bride wore (“a dress of thick ivory satin, the kind that stands alone”), her age (23), and the honeymoon destination (Deer Park, Maryland) where, the reader was told, the happy couple was “now rusticating in seclusion.” The menu for the wedding feast was also printed and certainly must have impressed those who had recently dined on chicken and mashed potatoes. The President, his new bride, and their guests had sampled “Aspect of Kennebec salmon, Histori, Tartellette of frogs, Parisienne, Cuitelette of squabs, Bellevue, four salads, ices, Basket of assorted flowers, Basket of assorted fruits, Bon-bons and bonbonnieres.”

Perhaps when the Ada readers looked at the menu again, they decided chicken and mashed potatoes seemed a good choice and a simple wedding with lots of gifts and a wedding night in Kenton was better than “rusticating” in Maryland.

**Geneva Yale Memories**

One of the advantages of living in a small town is that we have many people nearby who lived some of the past and can tell us about it. Geneva Tabor Yale, who now lives in Findlay, lived on farms south of Ada and then in town except for the 11 years she and her husband, True, were involved in the Yale Bros. Printing in Waynesfield. On March 21 Mrs. Yale will be 93 and
recently she reminisced about the early days.

The Rundell farmland was on the corner of 309 and 235, next was the 40-acre Tabor farm, and then the 80-acre McWilliams farm. She recalls the McWilliams had 10 children at home. With horses, pigs, sheep, cows, chickens, fruit trees, and a big garden a farm family of this size at the turn of the century was almost self-sufficient. Mrs. Yale’s Grandma Pugh lived in the brick house where Pauline Reese lives now. She remembers her grandmother mixing pie dough, “never measured a thing,” for her chess pies. As a pupil at Woodlawn school she recalls the last day of school when “every mother tried to see if she could bake the best cake.”

Mrs. Yale and her brother, Mason, passed the Boxwell examination which qualified them for high school. Since their father did not want them to cross the railroad to go to high school, they attended the special three-year preparatory high school courses at Ohio Northern. She does not recommend being one of four girls in a math class of 30 engineering students. After she passed the Teachers Examination, she taught in one-room country schools; the first was Buckeye Grove (“Stumptown”). Her father got permission to build a little stable for her horse and buggy which took her to the school four miles east of the cemetery. Among her 26 pupils were Roy Epley, Irvin Ludwig, and the class “cut-up,” Homer Ludwig. She remembers making Homer sit up front because of his antics. When he left school that night he took his books intending never to return. The next morning he was accompanied by his brother who reported that according to their father, “Homer should sit any place you want him to sit.” Her other teaching job was at the Kingsley school, a mile south of 309. Mr. Ross Turner who was teaching in Alger gave her a ride in his horse and buggy and she remembers the winter blizzards with snow drifts “as high as a man.” Earl, Carl, and Willis Moe were among her pupils, the Preston boys, Howard and Red, and Justin Neubert. From her 40 or 45 dollar a month salary she saved for tuition and entered ONU, graduating in 1919. Her next job was teaching at a centralized high school in Auglaize county for four years. When she took her college courses she roomed at Elizabeth Rew’s mother’s and grandmother’s house for a dollar or a dollar and a half a week. She remembers chicken dinners at the College Inn for 35 cents and Dean McElroy’s restaurant under Brown building.

When she, True, and their sons, Walden and Rollin, returned to Ada they lived for awhile with her uncle Byron Tabor on 235. The huge garden supplied them with everything from egg plant
to lima beans. She recalls that Dan Augsburger gave the boys three piglets which they named Amos, Andy, and Senorita Butterfly. The Harry Pratte family often joined them for Sunday afternoon outings to Lake Idlewild where the boys learned to swim.

The Yale Ada home was on Union street. Just beyond had been Mr. Rockwell’s 80-acre farm where people bought a gallon of milk for 45 cents. They watched McIntosh Center go up in the formation of the new West campus and Mrs. Yale taught the student couples who rented their apartment how to bake an apple pie. True whom many remember for his steamboat whistle imitation and his handcarved boxes died in 1962. Walden and Rollin graduated from Ada high school and although Walden lives in Illinois and Rollin lives in North Carolina they both keep in touch with Ada friends. Mrs. Yale says Rollin is such a hometown boy he “even reads the want- ads in the Ada Herald.”

Mrs. Yale’s reminiscences include old school pictures “which make me feel ancient,” Rose Elliott’s chicken tetrazzini, the marsh where “the muck rolled in and sifted in the attic windowsills and under the doors,” hanging around the depot to watch the students arrive, the parade for Governor Willis, and the Farmers and Merchants picnic where they spread a blanket on the grass for the lunch. Mrs. Yale does not live in the past, however. She lives with humor remembering Ernie Ford’s words that “if children aren’t obnoxious, they’re not normal,” remembering that in the good old days you had to dig wells, pump water, heat water, “freeze the clothes,” and drink unpasteurized milk. But the past and old friends are worth remembering, and she regrets the waste of tearing down and destroying the valuable old in the creation of the new. Perhaps her philosophy is stated in a framed cross-stitch which hangs in her retirement apartment: “Don’t regret growing old; it’s a privilege d.
The Ada Commercial

Many have tried to publish weekly papers in our community, but the papers failed because the editors misread their audience. When James Fisher came from Tuscarawas county and bought the young Ada Record from Bent Thompson in the mid-1870's, he changed the name to the Ada Commercial. His second mistake, according to Agnew Welsh, "was that he did not conduct his paper on a high plane; it used vulgarity and did not sense the temper of the community."

The Ada Commercial issue of December 20, 1877 included news from other papers. This was not unusual for the early newspapers with no other way to communicate the outside news. But the editor had to make choices. Mr. Fisher selected accounts of gruesome murders from the Chicago Tribune and the Boston Herald. Other reprints were descriptions of buildings constructed for the Paris Exhibition of 1878 and reports of accidents (again gruesome) in Toronto, Canada. One article from an Arizona paper tells of two men, Carter and Kellogg, who quarreled over a mining claim. Kellogg shot Carter but because the bullet hit the Bible in Carter's pocket, he was saved. But the story does not end here. The enraged Carter cut Kellogg with his bowie-knife, had second thoughts, stanched the wound, and rode for a doctor. Since the doctor was 90 miles away, it took Carter 24 hours. The writer of this Arizona saga concludes: "Kellogg is recovering. Carter, to avoid arrest, tried to cross the river; this time the Bible didn't save him. He was drowned. The moral of this recital is very intricate. But it is plain that Carter wasn't born to be hanged."

In addition to the western tale, the 1877 Commercial included a serial romance in which Edith sees "the smile in the velvet depths" of Philip's eyes, an article on catching sharks in Florida, and a feature story on Sitting Bull. There is a section titled Wit and Humor ("Better to have loved a short girl than never to have loved a tall") and some poetry ("Ah, chasms and cliffs of snow"). All of the selections were intended to entertain and they do resemble some of our modern television fare. The subscribers probably thought, however, they could get all this and more in the popular dime novels. The "vulgarity" and insensitivity Agnew Welsh refers to shows in the local news reports. A young man had been thrown over the dashboard of his wagon. The reporter states, "His wounds are serious." Someone agreed for the headline reads, "Probably a Fatal Accident"—small comfort for the young man's family and friends in the community. Another local news item gives the
readers the information that “two young ‘bums’ from Lima stopped for dinner at the Commercial House and then got drunk” looking for “a buddy.”

The Ada Commercial lost subscriptions and readers until E.L. Millar and George Rutledge bought the paper, restored its name, The Ada Record, its reputation, and in 1881 sold it to Agnew Welsh.

Old Cars and Greer Memories

George and Herb Greer furnished this picture of what George says “is the first automobile ever owned in Ada.” The car (standing in front of Railroad park) belonged to George Kephart, the Greers’ grandfather. Mr. Kephart moved his handle factory to Ada from Spencerville in August of 1898 and his family and descendants became an active part of Ada life and Ada business. The big window in the Baptist church is a memorial to him. George and Herb’s father, Louis Greer, was mayor of Ada from 1903 to 1905 and according to George “laid the first brick when they paved Main Street.” Herb is remembered at Ada High School and at ONU as an outstanding athlete. In the years after George bought Detrick’s Clothing Store, he and Evie were enthusiastic participants in Ada activities. We remember George as a classy dresser and an even classier banjo player. Evie was one of Ada’s best women golfers. Herb lives in Virginia now and George and Evie live in Ocala, Florida.
In a recent letter George recalls some of the old Ada businesses and some names that are part of Ada’s history—Charlie Beuchert, Joe Tyson, A.C. Mertz, Dean McElroy, Bill Danner, Roy Brace, Ernie Lowman, Toby Tobias, J.I. Baransky, Sant and Paul McCurdy, Sadie McElroy—Hesser’s filling station, Spellman’s cobbler shop, Nell Crotinger’s and King’s variety store, Bill Ream’s bicycle shop, Ream’s hardware, the Ada Herald upstairs and the Record across the street, Louis Gesaman’s shoe store, and Harry Vestal’s movie north of Balish’s Confectionery. He also reminds us of some of the old groceries—Russell, Jacobs, Steinmetz, Povenmire, and Underwood.

Henry Morrow

People who act a little differently from their neighbors are scarcely noticed in the city but in a small town they become “characters.” I do not use this term disparagingly. Most small-town people conform to the mores, sometimes so rigidly that they frown on those who do not conform. But because town characters (as did Henry David Thoreau) hear “a different drummer” they add spice to small-town recollections. Like the Prodigal Son, often they are more memorable than those who lead quiet, obedient lives. I suppose we would classify W. H. Morrow as one of our town characters although he probably would not like to be compared to a Biblical figure.

Henry Morrow’s monument in Woodlawn cemetery on the east side next to the highway has attracted visitors for many years. Oldtimers usually point it out as a curiosity. The monument covered on all sides with expressions of Morrow’s religious disbeliefs have set him apart in the town’s history as the “town atheist.” The dates on the monument are 1832-1909 and chisled in the stone are quotations from Thomas Paine and Mark Twain. Other passages express Henry’s beliefs—“Give humanity truths, not myths; knowledge, not dogmas” and “I have no creed but love.”

According to Agnew Welsh, Henry Morrow lost an arm early in life but was able to ride one of the early bicycles, “the old high wheelers with a little one trailing behind.” On his bicycle Henry made trips to conventions and distant cities. He was always noticed and often described in the newspapers as “Ada’s one-armed bicycle rider.” The story passed around in the town was that he had once been a Baptist minister but had somehow “got off the track” and become a disbeliever. His funeral must have shocked many in the town for the Knights of
Phthias band whose members dressed in snappy wine and black-braided uniforms played “Yankee Doodle” and other patriotic tunes.

Each town and probably each family has “characters” in its history, those who are remembered because they followed “a different drummer.” Two of the many inscriptions on Henry’s monument may sum up his philosophy of life—“If in the world I’ve played my little part, let the power that lit the candle put it out” and the Thomas Paine quotation, “The world is my Country, humanity my brethren, to do good my religion.” Henry Morrow’s inscriptions are as clear and easy to read as the day they were chisled so his monument will be around for a long time (whether we agree with his beliefs or not) to commemorate one of the town’s most famous “characters.”

Hatchet Mystery

Ann Casper brought me some postcards dated 1912 and 1913. They belong to her husband Roland’s grandfather, Harry Steiner, who was 91 in October of 1986. Mr. Steiner, who lives outside Kenton, was a teacher, part owner of the Hardin Quarry, and at one time had a hardware store at Blanchard Station. He was a graduate of Ohio State but his brother Leo, who sent the cards, graduated from ONU in electrical engineering in 1913. According to the messages on the back of the cards, the crowd of students on the campus are gathered for “the Engineer-Pharmic celebration or Hatchet anniversary.” This annual affair was marked by mayhem and craziness which could better be described by those who participated in it or those who watched.

An interesting footnote to these pictures appeared in the June 14, 1957 issue of the Ada Herald when a front-page story announced that workmen on the ONU campus had dug up “a rusty hatchet.” It was rescued from the trash pile by Bert McBride who probably knew its importance to the history of the university. The Herald article continues: “It is believed to be the very same hatchet buried by the engineers and pharmics in 1914. It was then that John Cloyd, “he of the green shirt,” gave the oration that marked the end of years of feuding by the two colleges.”

Bert McBride, according to the article, gave the hatchet to Dr. T.J. Smull but Miriam Smull Parkhill has never seen it nor was it among her father’s possessions. Larry Archer, who was the Dean of the Engineering College for many years, has never seen the hatchet. Here is a real historical mystery to solve: Where is the hatchet?
Harry Steiner postcards. Contributed by Ann Casper.
Davidson Traction Engine

Philip Long brought this ad to the Ada Herald office several months ago. A long-time Ada resident, Noble M. Davidson, patented the Davidson Traction Engine on March 27, 1877. It was advertised as the “first engine ever built that traveled the highway.” A pioneer traction engine built to replace horse-power it evolved into the modern tractor. G.W. Rutledge and J. E. Lowry were backers of Davidson’s idea and tried to market it but few were sold. According to Agnew Welsh, in his 1930’s articles in the Ada Herald about the early history of Ada, makers of threshing outfits took the idea, “improved upon it and adapted it to their own use.” Mr. Welsh added some further information on the inventor: “Mr. Davidson was a genius with engines and for many years had charge of the old ‘Pride of Ada’ steam fire engine.” This same fire engine was referred to by some townspeople as Ada’s “white elephant.” Mr. Welsh also reported he had some wood cut blocks in his Record office for “printing in three colors large posters showing the engine pulling a thresher, water-wagon, etc.” This ad is evidently a sample of one of those old posters.

Courtesy Phillip Long.
Letters to the Editor

Small-town editors don't have to worry about reader response to the weekly local news. The day after the paper is in print, editors get phone calls at the office, visits from people who drop in to express opinions on the coverage, and they get "letters to the editor." Editors like to print letters in their papers because it shows a reader response, positive or negative, and it often gives other readers opposing views of local issues. Letter writers are encouraged and their letters are printed if the editor has space. But a few don't make it. They are the letters not signed, unreadable, or what the editor politely calls "in poor taste." Agnew Welsh received one of these "File 13" letters in 1888. He didn't publish it but he did keep it. It gives us a portrait of a type of townswoman who lived in our small town almost 100 years ago. Here is a translation of the original:

Sept. 3rd 1888

Mr Editor Welsh & Bro We as a Band of White Caps 30 in number request you to publish this that we raided the Strunk manosh tard and fethered her and a certin young man and Smashed windoes and dores In and gave them notice that to leave In 10 dayes or they would get a worse Dole and thare are other ranches (?) In town will be treated likewise If not stoped also a hel Hole run as a resterant or a first class Saloon take warning and Stop or you will be In 10 dayes and leve town Both of you as we dont need you and mean It Yours Truly Comittee

From Agnew Welsh scrapbook.

In the original you can see Editor Welsh's response to this group of vigilantes who from the "White Cap" description must have been some kind of temperance group. He wanted no part of them and certainly didn't want to be called a "brother."

This type of fanaticism and the violence of tar and feather justice do not leave us with a pleasant memory from the good old days.
Mellin’s Food Twins

Their rugged and robust appearance is an excellent tribute to the merits of Mellin’s Food, properly prepared with cow’s milk.
Mellin’s Food will do as much for your baby.

L. J. KEMP
Drugs, Books, Wall Paper and Stationery
ADA - - OHIO

The picture in this ad brought to the Ada Herald office by Ed Lantz must date about 1917 or 1918 since the twins in the picture were born in 1916. The girls were raised by the Henry Tremains who lived on N. Simon according to Inez Moe and Virginia Umphress who did the recollecting. Anabel married Wayne Triplehorn of the Triplehorn Poultry and Egg business on Route 81 and Isabel married Lowell Binkley, the Wilfred Binkleys’ son.
Kemp Drugs

In the Mellin’s Food Twins ad, the L.J. Kemp in the ad is Laura Jane Kemp. She and her husband David, who was a druggist, came from Illinois to Ada in 1877 and bought the Runkle Drugstore at 125 S. Main. According to an Ada Herald review of Ada history, when David Kemp died in March of 1894 at the age of 46, “a hush fell over the village . . . all the shops and places of business were closed; the streets were deserted.” People from all over the county attended the funeral services.

After her husband’s death and until she died in 1918, Laura Kemp owned the drugstore and her son-in-law, Toby Tobias, was the manager and pharmacist. The building had a north room and a south room. The drugstore was in the north side when the event known in Ada history as “The Great Fire” occurred in the summer of 1881. All the wooden buildings south of the railroad on the west side burned to the alley beside the Kemp building. Miriam Parkhill, whose mother was Cora Kemp, the youngest Kemp daughter, remembers stories her mother told of the family putting wet mattresses against the windows during the fire.

When the drugstore was in the south side of the building, various businesses moved in and out of the north side. The McDowell and Stonehill grocery and the Davis and Hoover Furniture store were there at sometime in 1885. In the early 1930’s Purity Sweets sold food and fountain treats according to Eunice Cole who worked there as a college student. Burke Gardner began his drugstore days in 1922 in the south side and moved to the north side when Purity Sweets closed in the 1930’s. In the 1940’s the Sugar Bowl was in the south side. It’s interesting to note that Laura Kemp Young (David and Laura’s granddaughter) and her husband, Lynn, managed the Sugar Bowl. Later Dr. John had his chiropractic office in that part of the building. Some of the oldtimers may remember other names and other businesses.

Drugstores were always an important part of a small town selling a variety of items—drugs, wallpaper, stationery, fireworks, cigars, and books. Many sold pottery and small bottles of whiskey—dispensed by a doctor’s prescription “for medicinal purposes only,” of course. Mrs. Kemp even published ONU textbooks written by the professors.

Burke Gardner had the drugstore for 47 years until his daughter Mary Ann and her husband Jim Turner took over in 1969. The post office has replaced the old Kemp house and Mohler’s Greenhouse which followed, but the Tobias house next
to the drugstore was moved and still stands on Lincoln Ave. next to the post office parking lot. Oldtimers will tell you that if there were a canvas awning on the front of the original part of the drugstore, it would look much the same as it did when it was Kemp Drugs 100 years ago.

Christmas 1886

As our small town gets ready for another Christmas I wondered how different it would be from the Christmas of 100 years ago.

The December 8, 1886 issue of The Ada Record was still filled with news about Thanksgiving activities but the Christmas ads were starting to appear. Most were for practical gifts. Cunningham's suggested a good buy in their "All Winter Wraps" and Albert Shaw was advertising sturdy boots and shoes. For those whose past year had been prosperous Patterson and Co. had sleighs, harness, robes, and blankets for winter journeys and Conner Brothers offered a "Stylish Park Wagon" for 100 dollars. But the notion store had dolls and picture books for the children and the new meat market at Bauman's Grocery had good meat for the Christmas meal. They also would buy "hides, pelts, and furs" so some residents must have furnished their own meat for the Christmas dinner.

Since there was no home mail delivery, the paper carried lists of names of people who had letters, packages, and merchandise waiting for them at the post office with the warning that if they did not pick them up in four weeks the items would be sent to the Dead Letter Office.

The Christmas spirit was not evident in all parts of town for there were sheriff's sales of Ada property and A. B. Charles, the county treasurer, announced that he would be in Ada on December 17 to collect the December taxes. The paper published a list from the Ohio State Board of Health of diseases prevalent in Ohio the last of November and the first part of December: 135 cases of acute bronchitis, 85 cases of Malaria fever, 62 cases of diphtheria, 33 cases of typhoid fever, 40 cases of scarlet fever, and 170 cases of measles. The paper noted there was almost an epidemic of influenza among area children.

In spite of all the problems the paper was filled with news of visitors and relatives coming and going on the train and by wagon and horse for their holiday visits. Oyster suppers were the way for groups to make money or a way to entertain your guests. A Christmas ball was announced for Bastable's Hall "on Christmas eve, Christmas afternoon and evening." On
Christmas eve the Methodists would give a Sunday School Concert followed by gift distribution from a Christmas tree. Admission was ten cents for adults and five cents for children. The Kenton Democrat encouraged attendance at its “Art Fair and Festival" which would close with a “Fan Brigade drill. . .by 30 of Kenton’s sweetest ladies en costume.”

The Christmas issue of the Record, published on December 22, 1886, had a supplement with pages of Christmas stories, poems, and pictures for the children. A recipe for cream candy was printed—the white of one egg, an equal amount of water and confectioner’s sugar, and nuts or candied fruit if you had them.

Even though there was sickness and the temperature was only eight degrees above zero, the warmth of the Christmas season would take the town and its residents into a new year—as it always has.

Buck and Minnie

A letter once came through the Ada post office addressed to “Buck and Minnie, c/o the McElroy eatery, Ada, Ohio.” The clerk did not hesitate; it was delivered to Frank and Minnie Street at Dean McElroy’s College Inn.

For many years, the Streets were a familiar couple in Ada. Frank was called “Buck,” “Buckshot,” or “Powder.” Minnie tells me he acquired these names because of a firecracker incident when he was young. It was the kind of accident that happened too many times. A teenager lit the firecracker, it didn’t go off, he leaned over to check—and the firecracker went off in his face. Dr. Ames treated Buck for many years as a result of this youthful mistake.

Frank came to Ada with his family from Indiana when he was a teenager. During World War I, he was an army cook in Montgomery, Alabama where he acquired the skills that Ada people remember. After their father died in 1918, Minnie and her sister, Mildred, came to Ada from Michigan to live with their Aunt Cad and Uncle David Florida. They cooked for fraternities so it was natural that Minnie would become, as she says, “a general flunky” in the kitchen. She met Frank at the College Inn, and they were married in 1926. With this combination of their talents, they gave Ada many years of good food.

Dean McElroy’s College Inn across from the campus was always a busy place when school was in session. In my early days I remember the horseshoe-shaped counter, the tables on
the north side, and the French doors that opened into my father's store and soda fountain on the other side. Elaine McElroy with her beautiful long curls used to take me for walks around the block. After chapel, the students rushed to the College Inn for some of Buck's good food. Minnie tells me a restaurant cook had to do everything in those days. Frank cut his steaks, his veal chops, and pork chops himself and on Saturday, he, Minnie, and the kitchen help dressed the chickens for the Sunday dinner. She remembers that George Perry's mother was a pie-maker and so was Sylvia McElroy. Students served as waiters, waitresses, kitchen helpers, and dishwashers for their board.

Since the College Inn was not open in the summer, Buck cooked for the National Guard at camp for many years when "Jut" McElroy was captain of the local unit. Later in the 1930's when Dean McElroy took over the University cafeteria from Johnny Craig, the Streets went along to do the cooking. The cafeteria was down the steps in the big room under Brown building. Florence Binkley was the pie-maker, and the students again flocked in for Buck's good cooking.
Before World War II, Buck’s summer job was running the club house at Camp Perry for the National Rifle Matches. After World War II when Camp Perry was no longer a prisoner of war camp, Buck and Minnie ran the club house for the National Matches again. The Streets had to furnish their own help so they took many Ada and surrounding area teenagers with them. They lived in tents at Camp Perry, set up the tables for the three meals a day, worked as servers, bus boys, and dishwashers. Even though it was hard work and Buck was a strict manager, the afternoons were free for sunning on the beach and swimming in Lake Erie. Minnie remembers one young man using too much of her ice to put on his face so he could stay awake for the breakfast shift.

The Streets ended their long years of work at the Ada Locker (when Jess Stair managed it) by cutting, wrapping, and preparing our meat for the lockers we rented for storage.

One nice thing about small-town memories is that you don’t remember just the people who were chairmen for the big town projects, but you also remember those who were busy working behind the scenes every day for many years. They left us some pleasant memories too.

Ada Streets

If you discovered an old letter in which the writer describes a stroll down Margaret street to Hoosier street with turn-offs on Normal, Peach, or Mill streets, the town will be Ada but the year is before 1909.

Although Margaret had been changed to Main street before 1909, the other renaming of Ada streets took place because of the growing prosperity about the turn of the century. Ada was booming, and the post office business went beyond $10,000 in April of 1909. When that happened, the local post office could offer free delivery. Postmaster Elliott informed council at its August 25, 1909 meeting that before the residents could have mail delivery, the houses in Ada would have to be numbered. First, council had to decide how to section the town.

Acting Engineer Maglott wanted to make Buckeye or Mill street the half-section line, but several businessmen objected. They said they’d always been “south Main street businessmen” and they didn’t want to become “north Main street businessmen.” They won, and council decided to let the railroad stay as the dividing line.

Earlier, Gilbert street residents had circulated a petition asking that the name of their street be changed to Maple avenue, but council decided that wasn’t a good idea and turned
them down. Agnew Welsh, Editor of the Ada Record, suggested renaming Mill street (often referred to as "Smoky Row") and Hoosier street. He expressed the opinion that "Mill and Hoosier are about as appropriate and poetic names as Sow and Sorghum would be." According to Editor Welsh, September 1, 1909 gave us one of the most confusing and amusing council meetings in town history. One group presented a petition to council to change the name of Mill street to Lincoln avenue. Seconds later, another group appeared with a petition to change Hoosier street to Lincoln avenue. It was obvious there would be a street in Ada named for the "Great Emancipator"—but which one? I don't know how they resolved the problem (probably behind closed doors) but Mill street became Lincoln avenue and Hoosier was changed to Highland avenue. The University asked if Normal street could become College avenue and that was granted. Later, Williams street, on one side of Main, and Peach street, on the other side of Main (so-called because of Uncle John Dobbins' peach orchard on the corner of Gilbert) was changed to University. That was about as far as council was willing to go. The street named for the founder (Johnson) had to stay. Council couldn't do away with names like Liberty, Union, Buckeye, and Franklin (after Benjamin) or they would be accused of being unpatriotic. Ream, Simon, Dobbins, Irwin, Edwards (named for Uncle Billy Edwards) and Ballard (named for a merchant, "Happy Jack" Ballard) were named, for the most part, to honor old Ada residents. Council probably realized it would have real problems with irate citizens if it began tampering with those names, so they stopped. Of course, all the streets weren't paved yet, but that's another story.

**Depot Recollections**

Some of the sounds and sights of the past which deserve a place in our memories center around the old railroad depot in our small town and the steam locomotives which passed through on the railroad tracks. The depot will be one hundred years old in December of 1987. It leads a quieter existence now and not as many trains go through town. But for many of us the depot brings back vivid scenes from the long ago. Perhaps in celebration of its centennial we should gather some recollections of those days.

The depot with its wood floors, the busy ticket office, the freight wagon loaded with trunks, suitcases, and packages, the telegraph operator, with his green visor, tapping out his Morse-
code messages, the long wooden benches where we sat and waited, the conductor’s swinging lantern and his “All abooward” are a part of the past many of us look upon with nostalgia. The trains often interrupted our conversations, shook the floors beneath us, and showered us with cinders. But on clear summer nights we listened to the wonderful sound of the steam whistle and the noise of the trains rumbling through town with a fascination many of us have never lost as adults. We stood by the tracks and marveled as the man in the mailcar lifted the mailbag from the hook beside the track as the train moved by. We waved to the watchman as he leaned out the window of the watchtower by the sidewalk.

The history of the train is at times our history too. As the railroad grew so did our town. During the early days it brought businessmen, the buyers and sellers, to our town to spend the night at the hotels. It carried the soldiers of many wars away from home and brought most of them back again. The freight cars carried the farmers’ grain to the city markets and brought coal in for fuel. The railroad once brought a President of the United States to our depot in 1910 to deliver the commencement address at the university. It brought politicians, entertainers, lecturers, and the circus. When the new ONU students arrived the old students gathered in huge crowds to welcome them and recruit for the literary societies. Later, one of the highlights of the year for many of our school children was the train ride to Lima and back.

Other buildings in our town are older than the depot but none represents a past more important to Ada. Each of us has special memories of the depot and the trains tucked away in our
mind and in old photographs. During this year we should share these memories and pictures with the younger generation so they will know they missed something special.

The Passenger Station

Before 1850 Johnstown Station had little to offer a settler looking for a new home. The farmers had come to Liberty township in the 1830's and found the rich marsh land a good place to grow crops. But "fever alley" filled with frogs that croaked through the night, bears, wildcats, and wild hogs that roamed the forest, the snakes and swarms of mosquitoes that infested the swamp would not be a site a developer would choose for a new village.

The timber was the reason William Mitchell invested in the 160 acres where Ada now stands. It was timber that drew S.M. Johnson and his sawmill to Johnstown. In addition, because they were both astute businessmen they knew the railroad was coming through this section. In the same year Mitchell recorded the plat of Johnstown with the county recorder, 1853, the rails were laid for the trains. Johnson soon had a contract for the oak "mudsills" on which the ties would rest and commerce had begun. The little settlement of railroad workers and lumberjacks would now attract merchants and families.

After the passenger trains began to move through Ada, the railroad company built a frame building to serve as a depot and freight office. It stood on Johnson street on the southeast corner and would not fit our picture of a depot for William Maxwell, station agent and section foreman, had a "hotel" in part of it. Mrs. Nathan Ahlefeld of Kenton gave Agnew Welsh an account of the Daniel Hoon and Elizabeth Sipes wedding in 1856 which was held in the depot "hotel."

One has only to look at a Hardin county atlas of 1879 to see the rapid growth of Ada in the next twenty-five years. The Ohio Normal school enrollment had increased from 131 to 2434 in 1887 and the students now came by train as well as by wagon or buggy. In June of 1887 rumors of a new station are mentioned in the University Herald. By August the Herald can announce that "the new depot will be built near the north-west corner of the park." Building obviously moved faster in those days for in October the Herald reports "the slate roof has been put on the new depot and the sheds which are to cover the platform have been erected. It promises to present a fine appearance when finished." By December of 1887 the Herald proclaims, "The new depot is finished and is now ready for use." The final
touches were nearing completion for the well was being drilled and the railroad was grading around the depot using "a nice sand and fine crushed stone on top." The stone walk would be level with the tracks and go from Main street to the old depot which would be used for freight.

The students and townspeople were proud of the new depot and in its centennial year this lovely Victorian structure still delights us. The depot has become a part of our heritage and a unique historical attraction for those who stop in our town.

Picture contributed by Mary Motter

Photo by Betty Miller.
Railroad Park

When the new depot was built in 1887 the citizens of Ada had to decide what to do with the wooded area around the depot. Someone probably suggested cutting down the trees, building some hitching rails, and using it as a parking place for horses and buggies. We can give thanks that our ancestors rejected this kind of "improvement."

In 1882 the town had placed a wooden war monument in this area; ten years later they replaced it with a brick one. Since neither had lasted, in 1902 the Carman post of the GAR asked for donations to buy a Civil War cannon and to build a granite base to mount it on. Two hundred townspeople and business firms gave over 625 dollars for the gun and base. The list includes many donations of a dollar or two. To help out, the railroad offered to bring the cannon to town at no cost. Mayor Greer and the citizens gave the monument to the Carman post on Memorial Day, May 30, 1903. The cannon was placed so that it pointed toward Fort Sumter. Civic groups rimed the park with shrubs, and with the new depot and the Civil War monument it soon became a gathering place for village celebrations. On pleasant summer afternoons the benches under the trees were filled with shoppers or train-watchers.

In August of 1958 the Ada voters were asked to decide whether or not the town should ask for a half-mill levy so the council could buy Railroad park and maintain it as a community beauty spot. The Pennsylvania wanted to sell it. The company asked for an easement on the land where the station stood and an outlet to the drive. They agreed that "if the station is ever abandoned, the building would revert to the town." The park was getting shabby. Fewer trains were stopping and now the community bands played at Memorial park. Children went to the swimming pool instead of playing around the cannon. The Ada Herald asked the question, "Shall we let it go?" The old-timers remembered Ernie and the concerts, the ice cream socials, and the old station. Mayor Carl Sanderson wrote an "Open Letter to the People of Ada" and reminded them of the generations of civic groups who planted the shrubs, the flowers, the trees, built the park benches and the bandstand. He wrote, "We should preserve this spot in their memory and pass on our heritage to future generations. . . . We have inherited this park."

The Ada Herald reminded the voters "the park is a historic spot. . . . If the levy is approved by a 65 per cent majority, the park (and the depot) will never pass into private hands."

Ada precinct B ("Old Bloody One") passed the levy by the
narrowest margin, the rest by larger margins. When it ceased operation, the depot and "the wooded area around the Pennsylvania station" were ours "as the result of a favorable public vote." It was a bargain at $6,430 dollars. Our early town fathers would have been proud of us.

Telegraph Office

These two pictures will bring back memories for many oldtimers. One shows H.T. Hauff of Lima presenting an official notice of retirement to Roy Pease in 1952. Mr. Pease began work as a Pennsylvania railroad telegrapher in 1907 and worked a 12-hour day, seven days a week for $62.50 a month. A railroad man for 45 years, he represents an elite group who lived in our small town and devoted themselves to keeping the trains running.

The other picture is the interior of the old telegraph office on Gilbert street in 1925. It was taken by Art Cotner and he used a rather ingenious method. The clock reads 9:20 at night. Since this was before the flashbulb, a photographer usually used magnesium powder in a balloon-shaped cloth bag. Instead, Mr. Cotner set up his camera, lit a match, touched it to an inch of magnesium ribbon and, in the resulting flash, took the picture.
The picture gives us a good view of railroad history—the switches that controlled the signals west of the tower, the jack-box where the operator could plug in on any wire to connect his key, the three telephones (two railroad phones and a local phone) and the sounder box or resonator. According to Mr. Cotner, a Prince Albert tobacco tin usually stood inside the sounder box to sharpen the click of the signal so the operator could hear above the noise of the trains.

When the depot was first built, the telegraph office was on the second floor where you can still see the little room with the windows that gave the operator a clear view of the tracks in either direction. Later, the telegraph office was close to the eastbound track west of Gilbert street. It was a small two-story frame building with a coal burning stove on the first floor where the lanterns and cross-sticks were kept. When Art Cotner was a young man this is the building he remembers. Roy Pease was the night operator during this period. The evening operator was Bob Allonas “who made friends with all the kids in town,” including Art. Mr. Allonas sometimes took some “strong young kids” along with him when he went to Forest where there was an interlocking plant. Mr. Cotner says Bob Allonas weighed about 120 pounds but when he hit the control levers, the switches went in place. Mr. Cotner recalls two orders—a 19 and a 31. The “31” were routine operation orders; the “19” were “Don’t
do anything else” orders. Occasionally “the fireman would get cute” and dump a chunk of coal at the telegraph operator’s feet as he passed his orders on the cross-stick to the moving train.

On Saturday morning the switch engine moved the cars from the several local side tracks. The car by the Storer Bros. Produce Plant (part of which still stands east of Johnson street at the railroad) was loaded with ice and plucked chickens. At the elevator, an old Buckeye oil engine blew smoke rings from its exhaust with a slow speed “boom-boom-boom” sound. Both sights and sounds are in Mr. Cotner’s memory. Although the old telegraph office is gone, Mr. Cotner says “the old depot still looks pretty much the same.” It reminds us of some of those early railroad men who were a part of our small town.
Watch Tower

Many who pass through our town stop to look at our railroad depot, ask questions about it, and sometimes tell us about their own town depots which were torn down or became abandoned eyesores. But since ours was included in the purchase of Railroad park in 1958, the town has maintained it as a spot of beauty. We kept the depot but we lost a village landmark in 1960.

The station was a center of activity in the early 1900's. In April of 1904, 1300 freight trains and 555 passenger trains passed through Ada. A second track had been added in 1900. This great rush of railroad activity gave life to the village but also presented a danger as the town had developed on both sides of the tracks. In January of 1903 a serious wreck at the Main street crossing and several other accidents and "close-calls" at other crossings were enough for the citizens to petition for safety actions. The railroad stationed O.W. Doling as watchman at the Main street crossing. Isaac Altenberg of Upper Sandusky and Michael Voelker followed him. In 1904 the railroad began to erect a watchman's tower beside the Main street crossing and in January of 1905 Michael Voelker was the first man to sit in the tower. Inside the tower were the gears which would "pneumatically operate protective gates at Main and Johnson." Not only did this make the Ada residents feel safer when the trains moved through the center of town, the tower became a landmark. Like our depot the tower was unique. Unlike other towers which were box-like structures, ours was balanced on a graceful support. It soon became part of the downtown landscape as familiar to us as the cannon, the depot, and the water tower. As we moved in and out of the stores on north and south Main we listened for the clanging of the big bell on the side of the tower knowing that the watchman would soon lower the gates. On a February weekend in 1960 it was still there; the next weekend it was gone. An Ada Herald reporter snapped a picture of the stripped, windowless watchtower and asked the question,
"Is This progress?" The next morning the controls were disconnected and the bell removed. The automatic gate controls took over and the tower was dismantled.

The removal of the watchtower seemed to affect all town residents. They recalled the sound of the crossing bell and told stories of old watchmen—Vance Botkin, Newt Cornish and all the others—who had watched over our safety. The Ada Herald reporter concluded, "Now there's only a vacant place against the sky."

The End of an Era

When Frank Brace was a boy he “ran telegrams” for Mr. Brame, the passenger and freight agent at the Ada depot. Like many youngsters he dreamed of becoming a railroad man. In 1955 after the death of William Knell, the agent for ten years, Frank Brace was appointed station agent at the same depot where he had once delivered telegrams for a nickel a telegram. It was appropriate that when Penn-Central finally closed the station in Ada, Frank was the agent who sold the last ticket from the depot that for 100 years has been so much a part of the history of our small town.

Frank Brace and Depot. Toledo Blade photo.
The first "Small Town Sampler" book is a collection of the columns which appeared in the Ada Heralds of 1984 and 1985. This second book contains the columns from 1986 and 1987. Since this is the Ada railroad depot’s centennial year I have included all the columns on its history even though some had not yet appeared in the newspaper when this book was published.

Again I must thank all the people who shared their stories about the past, let me copy their photographs, or helped with research on community history. This is their book too.
Small Town Sampler III

by Betty Miller
Small-town life is as certain as the change of seasons in Ohio. When fall comes we know what will follow: the county fair, red and golden trees, football, college students, pumpkins, festivals and bright blue skies. When winter comes we know what will follow: roast turkey, Christmas lights, snowmen and sleds, and a book by the fire. When spring comes we know what will follow: crocuses, lilacs, gardens, clotheslines and plowed fields. When summer comes we know what will follow: graduation, swimming, reunions, baseball, the Fourth of July, rows of corn and picnics.

As the seasons change, the older generation moves to the background of history and the younger generation takes it place in the cycle. At times aberrations occur but they are so gradual we hardly notice. When someone returns he can say with assurance, “Life in the old hometown hasn’t changed much.”

© Elizabeth (Betty) Miller, 1988
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ZoRoLo</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scioto Marsh and Alger</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Township School 1873-1901</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada's Electric Trolley</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Scorchers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy and Village Government</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bitter Honey and Ohio Farm</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town Humor</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Houses</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Advertising</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas, 1887</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada's Treasures</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada, 1962</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tietje</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler McMillen Remembers:</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agnew Welsh</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Frank B. Willis</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dr. C.H. Freeman</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada Mysteries</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town Sickness</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewer Block History</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Photographs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Memorial Park History</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floyd Latimore's Tri-County Fair History:</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Fair</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The Races</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unpleasant Past</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Sundry Memoranda&quot;</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers and Indians</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda Fountains</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Jameson's Office</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Park Bandstand</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ZoRoLo

Nearly every kid in an American small town knows something about baseball. They've played in a vacant field in a pick-up game or been drafted as outfielders at a Sunday school picnic. In the spring and summer the baseball diamonds are filled with college players, high school players, pee wee teams, little leagues, church teams, or town teams. Sometime during any team's season a photographer takes the team picture. In the early 1930's the ZoRoLo baseball team played in a community league with Dola, Forest, Dunkirk, Alger, and McGuffey. The games were played "on west Buckeye in a vacant lot next to Mrs. Irey's house." This information comes from George Allen who is the young man holding the trophy in the championship team picture.

The ZoRoLo company was the team sponsor and a well-known name in Ada from the 1920's until the 1940's. ZoRoLo was a product made in Ada. When Ralph Runyan lived in Lima he was troubled with arthritis. A relative, a doctor in Canada, sent Mr. Runyan a sample of something he had mixed up. It cured the arthritis. So in the building on east Buckeye back of the

Liberty bank Mr. Runyan began to manufacture ZoRoLo. The first and second floors of the building were used for an office and as a place to hold the vats in which the formula was mixed, placed in gallon containers, and shipped to places in the United States. A group of salesmen distributed it to stores and sold it to individuals.

ZoRoLo sponsored a basketball team as well as the baseball team. George remembers one game in Findlay when the basketball team was not faring too well. At the half the team lined up on the court. Each player took out a bottle of strawberry jello (ZoRoLo was red) and took a deep swig from his bottle. They went on to win the game. Evidently the product's reputation and advertising worked, for Roma Runyan Wickenden continued the business until the 1940's. A few days ago she received a call from California and a woman who wanted to know if ZoRoLo still existed. Roma won't tell us what magic ingredients were in ZoRoLo. It's a family secret.

We know the secret for the success of the baseball team. Look at the names of the players.

My thanks to Roma and George for the information and to Jinny Neiswander for the picture.

Scioto Marsh and Alger

A fascinating area in our community is the Scioto marshland around Alger and McGuffey. Last winter I spent several afternoons talking to two longtime residents of the area, Abraham Perkins and Audra Englehardt.

Mr. Perkins says he was born in a little two-room house "on the banks of the Cottonwood ditch" between Alger and McGuffey. One of his childhood memories is of sitting on an overturned onion crate in the little house swishing his feet in water as the flood waters in 1913 overflowed the ditches, covered the fields, and came into the houses. Rowboats were the only way to cross the ruined onion fields. He recalls schooldays at Lone Oak school where Mr. Cotterman was his first teacher. He and his father worked in "Cub" Stone's fields in Willard for awhile and then returned to Alger where Abe "worked all over the marsh" until he got married. Early Alger memories include Saturday nights when as a 17-year old he walked to town with five or ten cents for an evening of fun. After a stint at Lima Superior, he worked at Ohio Northern for 11 years as an electrician retiring in 1976—"nicest job I ever had" he says, recalling his boss George Scheid and his coworkers.

Audra Englehardt was born outside Alger (first called Jagger) in a house east of the Preston cemetery. Her roots go
back to a time when her grandfather was born in a covered wagon on the way to this area. Her mother was a Shadley and it is the Shadley log cabin which Pete Adams moved to a spot beside the Red Fox restaurant where it still stands. She and her husband Curtis who studied engineering at ONU (but decided he liked farming better) spent 18 years on a 150-acre farm in Indiana before they returned to Alger. She speaks with pride of their "four good boys" and the family's independence—"I could hitch up a horse blindfolded then; I still could."

With her remarkable memory, Mrs. Audra Englehardt recreates "the salad days" of Alger: the three grocery and dry goods stores (Andy Basden, Jack Kirts, and Harry Spilke, proprietors), the printing office where Paul Scoles and later Guy Kingsbury printed The Alger Gazette, a hotel (with the undertaking parlor in the rear), the three barbershops, the "racket" store where they sold paraffin candy and novelties, Joe Brown's photography shop, E. G. Harriman's money lending shop, Jim Huston's building where the movie house was, Campbell's drug store, Bozarth's bakery, two hardware

Kingsley school (located near Alger at intersection of Co. Rd. 80 and 45 where Mr. and Mrs. Alan Ewing live)—Florenda Dempster, teacher. Students: Lucy Dempster (Ramsdell), guest: Harold, Delmer, and Everett Shadley; Elza and Ethel Feister; Donald Slaybaugh; Audra Slaybaugh (Englehardt); Lucille Neubert (Shadley) and Justin Neubert; Ilo Houchin (Gossard) and Eula Houchin (Rose); Bert Cotterman; Mildred Bowman; the Fry family. Picture furnished by Audra Englehardt.
stores, the livery barn where her cousin had the "Elite Dance Pavilion" on the second floor, three millinery shops, the bandstand where the Alger town band gave concerts, the blind piano tuner's room, the feed mill, the jail, the tin shop, the blacksmith shop, the carriage shop, the coal yard, the planing mill, the three doctor's offices, and the four passenger trains (two each way) which stopped at the Alger depot. The Alger of the early 1900's was a thriving village surrounded by the rich muck and the onions which made fortunes for many men one year and took it all away on the winds and rains of the next year.

The work in the marsh onion fields was hard work. The workers straddled the rows moving the wheel hoes up and down and then crawled on their knees to pull the pigweeds which had to be pulled three times a week. Both Mrs. Englehardt and Mr. Perkins mentioned the strike on the marsh in 1934 as the event which led to the decline of the area—the intrusion of outside organizers, the violence, "everybody mad at each other." The untended fields went to weeds, the marsh fires smouldered beneath the surface and dried the muck, and the winds which blew for days depleted the land. Mrs. Englehardt describes the muck like "pepper blowing" and darkening the sky. Mr. Perkins describes the muck "piling up like snow drifts" along the willow rows. He says that often the young onion plants would blow on the wind to the streets of Kenton.

Few of the original families are still in Alger. Only the brick streets and some of the lovely old homes in the town or in the surrounding countryside are left to remind the oldtimers of the Alger of the past.


**Washington Township School 1873-1901**

Each Hardin county township had a section of land set aside for schoolhouses so it could educate its young. The Board of Education in Washington Township was in charge of eight schools in the district. In an old leather-bound book, the clerks recorded the business of the board from April, 1873 to February 1901. In spite of the hand-written entries (when handwriting was an art to be perfected) and in spite of time (114 years) the problems of the early school boards seem to be much the same as those of today.

The first entries in 1873 allow one hundred dollars for "payment of seats and desks for #1," grants one thousand dollars in installments of one hundred dollars for a new school house at #2, and makes a division of funds for seats and fuel to all the schools from $15 to $117. The new School Directors, Clerks and their election are recorded: J. Eberhart, C.T. Jones, M.E. Barber, N. Gerlach, B.C. Spar, T.H. Mathews, C.A.
Guider, and Daniel Helms. Andrew Dirmeyer was elected president of the board.

Through the years, the boards placed in the treasury $21.50 from the sale of The Old School House, sold an old pump for $2.50, posted newspaper notices in 1887 for the sale of "One old school house and two lots...known as the Old School Property of North Washington," and advertised the letting of a contract "for building a School House in Sub-District Number Three." Both were signed by Isaac Fletcher, Clerk. The board decided to allow Sugar Grove Grange to use the school for meetings and made an "enumeration of youth of said tp. between the ages of six and twenty-one years." For the most part, the board collected money and dispersed it for wells, dirt, pumps, paint, fencing, bells, screens, desks, chalk, erasers, and teachers.

One teacher in 1895 had disciplinary problems and some parents submitted a petition to the board asking it to dismiss the teacher for "1st brutal and unnecessary punishment of pupils and 2nd The school under his management is making little or no progress and is therefore a needless waste of time and money." But the teacher fought back presenting a copy of his grades and teacher's certificate to prove his qualifications and presenting an argument of his own "substantiated by scholars and teacher

1. That Ben Cooper and Charley Daniels are not attending school for any good purpose
2. That they have boasted that they were going to do as they pleased
3. That Charley Daniels seldom comes much before recess and then recites in only two classes
4. That Ben Cooper and Charley Daniels [are there] only for mischief
5. That when Charley Daniels and Ben Cooper are absent the [?] is better and a great deal more quiet.
6. That Charley Daniels has willfully destroyed the inkstands of three of the desks.

The Board supported the teacher and rehired him for the following year. They decided, however, to retain a lawyer.

I don't suppose anyone in 1873 or 1987 would say that a school board member's job is an easy one.

My thanks to Tom Tighe for letting me look at the old Washington Township book.
Ada's Electric Trolley

Now and then a big city promoter comes to a small town to convince the citizens they need what he's selling to make their village more up-to-date. The story of the Clutterville to Kempville electric train is chronicled by Agnew Welsh in the Ada Records of 1902-1905.

In 1902 Ada was booming. Plans for the Brewer block north of the tracks were announced and the new post office would be there; Brown building and Dukes Memorial would add to the ONU campus; sewer pipes were going in; the Ada Telephone Company added new telephones each day; William Lantz and Senator Foraker made arrangements for a cannon for the Railroad Park memorial; the railroad was adding telegraph wire and repainting the passenger station; the Ada Waterworks Company "had been capitalized at $75,000; pipes were laid for the central heating system and Ada residents would have cold and hot water in their homes by 1903. Best of all, brick would soon replace the mud and macadam on Main street. The Ada Chamber of Commerce was formed and the balance in the town funds was $34,200. No wonder the businessmen and town officials were a little giddy. The big-city promoters rushed to Ada with their wares.

According to Wheeler McMillen, the interurban craze was at its peak at the turn of the century when the cities replaced their horse trolleys with electrics. The electrics were like railway passenger cars except for the overhead wire. Mr. McMillen says they often carried light freight, the newspapers, and food as well as passengers. Representatives from various lines contacted Ada businessmen and filled them with dreams of boarding an electric train at Main and Lincoln and traveling to Sandusky, McGuffey, Alger, Foraker, Columbus Grove, Wapakoneta or Kenton—perhaps even as far as Columbus or Chicago. The rumors flew and Agnew Welsh extolled the enterprise in the Record. In October, 1904 the S&SWRR (Sandusky and Southwestern Railway) was given a franchise to cross Main street and money was raised to lay some track. With the new street project the track better be started "just in case."

In January of 1905 the bad news began to trickle in from the out-of-town newspapers: "Sandusky, Southwestern now in hands of a receiver; F.O. Oleson, general manager of S&SWRR, was arrested in New York for a bad check of $25 at a hotel;" "Mr. Oleson held on $300 bail in New York. Instead of $25, he owes $700;" "the electric road has $40,000 in debts;" and finally "Oleson, the electric promoter, was sentenced to 30 days in the Tombs."

Many Ada businessmen had invested in the electric train
and town officials had approved it. According to the Record, however, when members of the S&SWRR came to the community "trying to get ten men to pay in $5,000 each to pay off the road's debts they found no takers. Wheeler McMillen recalls that Agnew Welsh conducted a survey which he printed in the Record asking Ada merchants' opinions of the electric line proposal. The most memorable is from "Long Doc" the Chinese laundryman: "Melica man heap damn fool. Me washee collar, three for five."

The Clutters lived on the corner of Main and Lincoln; the Kemps lived across the street where the post office is now. The track crossed from one side of the street to the other and thus the town joke about the Clutterville-Kempville trolley. Several times when Main street was repaired, the tracks reappeared and the jokes were revived. Carl Sanderson says the rails were finally removed and given to the World War II scrap metal drive. The oak sills are probably still there and should remind us never to trust those tricky promoters from the big city and their grandiose schemes.

**Summer Scorchers**

"Gonna be another scorcher," my grandfather used to say when we had a hot spell in the summer. But the coffee boiled on the stove and my grandmother fixed us "a good hot breakfast." Awnings covered the kitchen windows and the side of the back porch. To keep out the hot summer sun every door and window was tightly closed with the shades pulled until afternoon. The big elm in the back yard and the maples in front and at the side protected most of the house. My grandfather kept us informed on the temperature. Looking out at the big thermometer on the side porch he announced—"80 degrees...90 degrees...100 degrees," making us feel hotter than we really were.

The weekly routine was still followed. If it was Monday, the water was put on the stove to heat for the washing. If it was Tuesday, out came the ironing board. My grandmother fried potatoes for the noon meal and maybe fried some chicken so we could have it cold for supper. After the noon meal was over and the dishes washed, things did slow down a little. On a "scorcher" afternoon my grandmother might take off the big white apron she always wore and sit on the porch, fanning herself with a funeral home-cardboard fan. The fly paper spirals put up with thumb tacks soon filled with careless flies. We made several trips to the well to fill the bucket of drinking water which stood on the cupboard shelf, and we had to empty the pan under the icebox more than usual.

As the afternoon sun sent shimmering waves of heat there
might be special treats. Some adult might turn on the hose so the neighborhood kids could run through the cold spray or some of the ice might be used for lemonade. The tar on the road beside the house bubbled and no one ventured out on it with bare feet.

In the evenings after supper I asked for a nickel to get an ice cream cone at the dairy. I loved to walk the streets—down Johnson to Main, over to Simon or Gilbert. On a summer night it was like a series of cacophonous movies as I passed the houses. I could hear the radios tuned in to Amos and Andy, Lum and Abner, or Lowell Thomas. I knew which mothers were yelling at their kids, which husbands and wives were fighting. Now and then I heard someone playing a piano, practicing a trumpet or, the worst sound of all, a beginning clarinet player. Occasionally a dog barked from under the porch steps where he had found a cool spot. When I traveled Johnson across from the South building, Miss Hutchinson stopped me to ask about each member of the family.

If the nights were hot ("Good for the corn," my grandpa said) I might be allowed to sleep on the floor downstairs. The upstairs bedrooms with their sloping ceilings held the layers of heat through the night. Downstairs all the windows and doors were left open to catch any night breeze. The only torment was the ants bugs from the fields across the road crawling over my sweaty skin or the mosquitoes buzzing about my ears. Other than that I don't remember minding the "scorchers" of the summer except to wish the adults would stop asking, "Hot enough for you?"

**Sandy and Village Government**

About a year ago I asked Carl Sanderson if he would talk to me about Ada and his experiences as councilman and mayor. He said he would when he felt a little better and had some time to think about it. On June 10, 1987 we spent three hours talking. I wrote a Sampler and gave it to Sandy to approve or disapprove. He disapproved. "It's too much Sandy," he said. "Each administration has a job—things to finish and things to begin. . . I was a very lucky man." He pointed out his "capable and experienced council," "a certified engineer and certified legal man for advice," and the town and university citizens who helped him. I rewrote the Sampler, persuading him to let me use some of his strongly expressed statements, and left it at his door. On July 8 he called and said, "C'mon down." He approved the new version. In a large envelope he had several pictures of his years as mayor. The one he wanted to accompany the Sampler was not one of "Sandy the Mayor" but one with his
first council in 1954.

When Sandy died on July 10, I wished I could use the first Sampler that had "too much Sandy" in it, but the Sampler you will read is the one Sandy approved.

In the late 1950's when a Pennsylvania railroad official in the Philadelphia land office sent a letter to the mayor, Carl Sanderson, offering Railroad Park to the village he addressed it to the Honorable Mayor "Sandy." In a way this illustrates how a small town views its mayor and town officials. On formal occasions we give them due respect, but most of the time we think of them as Harry, Bob, Larry, Van or whatever names we know them by. Candidates for office in a small town do not have to wage political campaigns. They place an ad in the weekly paper to announce they're running for office, tell us what projects they consider important, and then we vote.

Carl Sanderson served as councilman in 1952 and 1953. From 1954 to 1960 he was mayor and had the distinction of going down in town history as the last mayor to have criminal jurisdiction for arrest cases. During Sandy's terms of office, the village took over the responsibility of Railroad Park, bought the waterworks, moved the water department into the city building, and put the sewage disposal plant in operation and also the lift station north of town. It was up to later administrations to finish the sewer project, completing the change from the old partial septic system to a more modern one. These facts support one of Sandy's views on village government.

The planning in each administration for any project is for 50 to 75 years. From the public meetings where citizens give opinions, suggestions, and ask questions, to the council committees that review and study projects, to the final decision by ordinance or council directives, the mayor only supervises. But Sandy says, "You always used the word 'service'...go back to the village...the people you govern...the people you're responsible to."

Since small-town officials hold other jobs to make a living, they rely on citizens' help. This cooperation between citizens and officials Sandy believes sets "a family relationship built in from the village government down to its serving the people." Often the citizens are former officials, those citizens who have experience with the problems, or those with special skills. Sandy says he always felt the town officials didn't "lean on the
university enough...so much potential and we didn't use it.”

He mentions “Tommy” Smull, John Needy, Cliff Deming, and Dr. Freeman who made valuable suggestions and even plan revisions which saved the town money. He often asked Dr. Binkley questions on municipal government. After all, Sandy says, “Dr. Binkley wrote the book on municipal government...I had a lot of respect for him.” The summer Dr. Binkley taught at Oxford in England, Sandy write him a ten-page letter asking questions. Dr. Binkley replied with an answer to each question: “What the town officials could do and what they couldn't do.” Sandy left the letter at the city building along with his other papers hoping it would help future administrations.

Sandy believes as each administration struggles to solve the problems of its time and plan for the future, it accomplishes what it can and leaves the rest for the next administration. Town history affords a continuity and the experience of one group is passed to the next. Of course, Sandy concludes, if you happen to be the mayor you will get the midnight calls about flooded basements...that goes with the job.

Left to right: Carl Sanderson, mayor; W.C. Arbogast, Robert Bischoff, Austin Gant, C.B. Hindall, Carl Luft, councilmen; Okey Van Dyne, acting solicitor; Willis Winkler, clerk. Missing from the picture are J.L. “Lem” Runser who was on a leave of absence and Anne Paugh, treasurer who was sworn in later.
Bitter Honey and Ohio Farm

Small-town communities are proud when some of their own go out into the larger world and achieve success. We like to think that growing up in a close-knit society added to their special talents. In turn, many often express the feelings they have for the people and places they remember back home. Sometimes they make a permanent record of these memories in print. Recently I read two books written by two of our own: Bitter Honey by Martin Joseph Freeman whom most of the town knew as "Tom" and Ohio Farm by Wheeler McMillen. One is fiction and the other, non-fiction. One has a village setting and the other a farm setting. Both deal with events and people as the authors remember them in the early 1900's.

Although Tom Freeman calls his fictional town, Fairhaven, it is the Ada he lived in as a boy. Published in 1942 when Dr. Martin Freeman was an associate professor of English at Hunter college, one reviewer of Bitter Honey says it "must be a fairly accurate picture of the Ada of 30 years ago." Grass Run, Ream's cow pasture, the Lyric theatre, the opera house, Wilson's bakery, and the Hog Creek muck are recognizable in the story although they are given other names. Many of the town characters are easily identified by readers who also knew them or heard their stories passed down by parents or grandparents. Academicians knew Dr. Freeman as a scholar who with John Manly and Edith Rickert wrote "The Writing of English" and as a Shelley expert. Although the townspeople knew Tom had published some mystery stories, most remember him as one of C.H. Freeman's boys.

Wheeler McMillen's Ohio Farm was written as a tribute to his parents and is a personal history of daily life on a farm when horses pulled the plow and man power was the main ingredient for successful farming. His farm is real and the fields by the old Kenton-Lima pike are still cultivated. Some of the names Mr. McMillen mentions are familiar names—Powell, Runser, Shanks. His account of life on the farm, hired men, the Grange, Fourth of Julys, fishing trips to Turkeyfoot, first automobiles, and colorful pictures of an Ada with streets of dirt are part of our community history. The outside world may remember him as former Editor-in-Chief of the largest farm magazine in the country, the Farm Journal, and the author of many books. They know of his encounters with the famous—Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and the others he mentions in his books—and of his service to President Eisenhower and to the Boy Scouts. Our community knows all this too and takes pride in his accomplishments. But in the book he is L.D. McMillen's
son, a boy in overalls.

Tom Freeman died in 1969. Wheeler McMillen lives in Virginia with his son, Robert, and keeps in close touch with the places where he spent his boyhood. Their books are a permanent record of the events and values of a time past. More than just history though, their authors share the same feelings we do about certain places and the people in our community.

Small Town Humor

The rooster story in the October 6, 1987 issue of the Ada Herald offered some hope that maybe we haven't lost our small-town sense of humor. The adventure of the oriental rooster who rode 38 miles from Dola to Fostoria first under the cab of a semi-truck and then on the return trip in grand style inside the cab should have been on the front page of the paper instead of the last page.

What would our lives be like if we looked back only to the tragic historical town events and ignored the goldfish served “under glass” by a local restaurateur and some practical jokers in the 30’s to a man who proclaimed his liking for a good piece of fish? In 1966 in the midst of the sewage plant controversy our mailman-wit Doug Herman’s wry observation that “this sewage plant story has stirred up a lot of public sediment” made our lives more bearable.

Our mayors and public officials often threw aside their political dignity and joined in the fun. In 1936 when we bought the new police motorcycle, Mayor Harry Sousley “executed a steeple chase on the motorcycle by crossing Johnson street in one dash gracefully hurling the hedge at the railroad park.” When Flo Fisher was busy on the election board in 1960, Mayor Larry Archer bowled for her on the Masonette’s team. The mayor “wore a bright colored skirt and blouse, huge red earrings and a blonde wig.” Instead of a dry, formal dedication of the new municipal pool in 1975, Mayor Bob Bischoff and Pool Committee Chairman, Norm Rex, jumped fully dressed in the pool to test the water. The event was recorded for posterity as was the 1967 Ada Herald picture of Myron Shilling pushing Ralph Hays down Main street because the 7-mill school levy passed: “Jim Mertz who is not above capers like this, furnished the wheelbarrow.”

Council meetings are often trying events for the members and sometimes for the observers too. Agnew Welsh who covered meetings for the old Ada Record went back to his office, sharpened his pencil, and created these headlines and comments: “Chamber of Horrors: The Council Ponderously Flounders at Sea with Plenty of Wind but No Rudder or Sail;”
"They Ripped and Snorted;" "The sidewalk committee was speechless when called on for a report." When the contractor who was paving Main street was asked the reason for delays, Agnew Welsh says he answered "in glittering generalities." The headline for the start of the Main street paving reads, "They Proceed to Prepare to Begin to Get Ready to Commence the Street Work." A few "war of words" ensued when Agnew wrote this about the mayor but no lawsuits for defamation of character: "In his most dulceet tones and with his blandest smile, one of those sickly, excruciating smiles that spread over his face like backwater in a spring freshet, the lord high mayor inquired if there was any further business." And when the council meeting was over the mayor "brought in a box of cigars and the crowd drifted into the cool air." One of the rules you learn if you want to survive in a small town is that no one is going to let you take yourself or life too seriously.

Old Houses

The year 1987 may go down in the Ada history books as a year of progress or it may go down as a year of destruction depending on how future generations define our actions. Some decisions we had no control over. For example, the old Tobias house which stood next to Gardner Drugs on Main awaits destruction back of the post office because of a fire. Professor Axline's house across from the ONU campus had to be destroyed perhaps so that progress which the automobile gives us could be accommodated. Each year we are faced with more empty spaces in our history. Is it important that we know the Axline house was listed in the 1896 Rice Ferguson Directory and it might have been 100 years old? A village councilmen at the turn of the century, Axline was the dean of the law college and had a law office in the Citizens Bank building with H.A. Clark and Simeon Fess who later became a United States senator. Is it important that we record these facts for future generations? Perhaps not and yet another historical celebration may spark an interest in the next generation.

During our centennial reach into the past in 1953 we discovered four houses in our small town which had been built by early settlers. Miraculously, in 1987 they are still here. One is the Abraham Ream home next to the Körner Kut known by old Adaite as the Sneary house. Built in 1861 as a farm home it was constructed while his family lived in a log cabin just east of it. Another Civil War era house at 112 E. Highland was Dr. Floyd Elliott's office before he and Dr. Bob moved to Main street. The G.H. Zugschwert family lived there before Dr. Floyd's father, Dr. S.H. Elliott came to Ada in 1866. Another
early home was built in 1868 by Isaac Garwood and still stands beside the Church of Christ. Mrs. Wilson who had boarders lived there. Dr. H.S. Lehr added the wings in 1876 and his granddaughter, Miss Mary, lives there now. The fourth house was “one of the earliest buildings erected in Ada” and stood at the corner of Main and Lincoln where the post office is now. It was moved back when the Kemp home was built. The 1953 Herald which featured the old houses on the front page during the centennial tells us “the main part of that century-old structure was moved to the corner of Union and Ballard.” The Clyde Lamb family lived there. Other homes in Ada may deserve the label “Civil War Era” — the Young house on Lincoln has an 1869 date beside the door.

The reporter who did the research for the Herald article did not sign his name but I thank him for recording the facts. The old homes in our town deserve to be noticed—even though it may be only in photographs for future generations.
Business Advertising

The businessmen and women of our village, past and present, display the items they have to sell in their front windows to attract the passersby and entice them to enter their stores. In the 1870's the Jessie Gilbert grocery was located in a frame building on the west side of Main next to the railroad track. To attract customers he placed a pile of dried apples in the window. It probably had an opposite effect, however, as Agnew Welsh tells the story that in the middle of the dried apples was a pet coon sunning himself. John Noggle whose buggy, harness, saddle, and horse goods store was located south of Railroad Park on Main had a display which some oldtimers still remember. Mr. Noggle had a stuffed pony in his front window.

The city directories proved a gold mine for the printers because the advertisers often placed their biggest ads in them. In the 1896 Rice-Ferguson directory W. W. Whetslar announced, "If you want a left hand . . . shave or haircut make a point to see Whetslar. He shaves easy and smooth." L.O. Ream sold "furniture of every description. Undertaking a Specialty." For the rural customer O.C. Powell advertised, among other things, "Poland China Hogs, large, lengthy, prolific." In 1896, a period of beards and mustaches, W. D. Greene, the barber, offered a special "term plan." Paying ahead would give you "shaving, haircutting, hairdressing, shampooing Sea Foam at a great reduction." By the way, the motto of the Rice-Ferguson printing company was "No Bum Work."

In a year of washtub baths in the kitchen, 1911, Frank Allen advertised not only that he had a barbershop but also a "Bath Room." For the ladies he had a "Ladies Private Massage and Shampoo Parlor." Also in the 1911 directory Paeszler Photographers invited you to "come in and look around whether you are pictorially inclined or not" and Kemp's Rexall Store assured the customers "Every Rexall Remedy guaranteed . . . one for each human ill." Dr. James Wells, "Practical Dentist," promised "Teeth extracted without pain by the use of the ODONTINE PROCESS." Even the horse could be pain-free as Dr. W. F. Albertson in the 1902 Ada Record announced he was opening an office for the practice of "veterinary surgery and horse dentistry."

In 1936 the business people of our village were still using ingenuity to pull in the customers. Taking advantage of the rage of the day—the knock knock joke—a local restaurant ran this ad in the Ada Herald: "Knock, knock. Who's there? Fannie. Fannie who? Fannie Body's hungry, they should go to the
Koffee Kup."

Ads in early publications seem to interest even the modern reader. Some of the ads were real masterpieces excelling even the New York Madison Avenue adman's creations.

Christmas 1887

For Christmas in 1887 the citizens of our small town received a new railroad depot from the Pennsylvania Railroad and street lights from the village council. Twenty-five gasoline vapor lamps placed in town lighted our streets for the first time and kept the lamplighter busy. Two years later, in 1889, the town Christmas present was electric street lights. Since we were the first small town in the area to have electric lights, we felt very "citified." In 1903 the government gave us a new post office in the Brewer building; the Water company gave us hot water in time for Christmas. And in December of 1904 Adaites dug deep in their pockets and gave themselves splendid brick streets to replace the mud and macadam.

These were the Christmas presents that changed our town and made life easier. They made the front pages of our newspapers. Perhaps more important than our community presents are the small ones that appear in the newspapers down through the years and often do not make the front page. Each year someone puts up the Christmas decorations downtown, the Christmas tree lights are turned on in homes and wreaths appear on the doors. The children give us their school Christmas programs much as the children did in the township one-room schools. The candles are lighted in the churches, the choirs give us the gift of music, and the ministers read the familiar words the early Johnstown settlers heard. Santa Claus comes to town sometimes arriving as he did in 1960 with "reindeer cousins"—ponies with antlers attached. The nights are filled with lights from the store windows, sounds from carolers and bells from the old churches. If it snows at Christmas the editor puts a winter snow scene on the front page.

When Christmas comes we light our fires, wrap our presents, think about our neighbors, and recall other Christmases. The history of our town is recorded by the newspaper in much the same way each December. Names and faces change through the years in our small town but we still say in December, "Merry Christmas."

Ada's Treasures

In June of 1987 The Kenton Times ran a story titled "Penturbia, new migration." It explains a study made by Jack
Lessinger, a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle, in the June issue of American Demographics, "a magazine specializing in population issues," he sees a fifth (penta) migration movement in America away from the metropolitan areas back to small towns. Lessinger calls the type of American who seeks these new promised lands the "caring conserver, a person who saves and guards resources, works for preservation of air, water, buildings, parks and cultural artifacts." This type of person he believes will replace "the consumer" who puts stress on the present rather than the future. When these "caring conservers" move into small towns they will demand "judicious planning to prevent runaway growth" and "will see older buildings in small towns as both rich in nostalgia and less expensive than new construction."

We seem to have both "conserver" and "consumer" elements in our small town. Our downtown buildings on the west side of Main have been left, for the most part, much as they were when they were first built representing I suppose our "conserver" side. The downtown section on the east side perhaps represents the conflicts between conserver and consumer because we have both old and new. The restoration of the Brewer house on north Main and the restoration of the McElroy house on the corner of Dobbins and south Main received approval from both consumers and conservers. Through the years, outside consultants the village or Chamber of Commerce hired told us the depot and Railroad Park were the focal point of our town. But it took volunteers from many organizations, money we raised from levies and town projects, and about 30 years to restore it to the focal point it was in the past. Even now some consumer residents are surprised to learn that this part of our town is included on historical tours of the county.

When the new wave of "caring consumers" hits our town they will point out things we never really noticed before in the way strangers do now. When a newcomer mentioned our trees I suddenly noticed the big tree beside the Ada Theatre which I must have passed hundreds of times. When a stranger exclaimed over the architecture of our business buildings on the west side of Main, I looked up and realized they were special. Some are shabby but beneath the peeling paint is a beauty impossible to duplicate. We have many architectural treasures. Perhaps we should look at our town the way a stranger does or the way a migrant "conserver" will when the "penturia movement" reaches Ada.

How many of these architectural treasures can you identify?
Ada 1962

The end of an old year and the beginning of a new one is a time to sit by the fire and to remember. The Ada Herald has a custom of printing a review of the year's news stories in its last issue of the year to remind us that a lot happens in the life of a small town in a short space of time. The Herald asks its readers each week in a popular feature, "Do You Remember?" Do you remember 1962—a brief twenty-five years ago?

JANUARY—E.R. Rodabaugh is elected president of the school board. Several former members attend the meeting as is the custom: Mrs. J.D. Judkins, Arden Searson, S. D. Peper, Dr. A.L. Tipple, Earl Huber, and Dr. Floyd Elliott. Van is sworn in as mayor. Mrs. Tallman's coffee room opens in the old Liberty Bank building. The Chamber of Commerce officers, Daryl Baker and Dwight Baughman, begin the fight for an interchange at the new Interstate 75 and Route 69. We have dial telephones.

FEBRUARY—The Gminder triplets are two years old. Rebecca Reissig replaces Naomi Tipple as Ada librarian. Jim McGinnis celebrates his ninety-third birthday and looks forward to spring and golf.

MARCH—School closes because of a snowstorm. Marv English and Mid Parshall are crowned king and queen of the Mardi Gras Ball at the armory. Ada Farmers' Exchange announces the purchase of the Ernsberger Milling Co. Presbyterians have a new minister—somebody named Hancock.

APRIL—The kids have their Easter egg hunt at Memorial Park.

MAY—Verla Baughman is honored as director of the Methodist Junior Church for twenty-one years. Seniors win Interclass. Tom Parkhill selected "Outstanding Senior Athlete." D. R. Lowman sells the Varsity Bookstore. Fifth-grader Beverly Keith is "Miss Poppy." The Garden Club plants the official town flower, the pink petunia, in the Railroad Park.

JUNE—Mills Bros. Circus is coming to town. Ada will soon have two new dentists, Mark Shull and William Shambarger.

JULY—Councilman George Failor says, "I would not be opposed to a village income tax." Spence Gilchrist is the new grid coach. Kroger store advertises two heads of lettuce for 25 cents. Fields Bakery has apple pies for 39 cents.

AUGUST—Guards leave for Camp Grayling. Council votes for new Main street lights (overhanging fluorescent). Leslie Allen is crowned Farmers and Merchants Picnic Queen. Seventy candidates turn out for 1962 Bulldog football team.
Gov. Michael DiSalle declares Hardin county a drought disaster area.

SEPTEMBER—ONU enrollment nearing 1700. Cohoe and Dornbusch are new ONU teachers. Linda Staley selected AHS Homecoming Queen. Virgil Trowbridge sells Community Gas and Oil.

OCTOBER—Halloween carnival at the armory; parade directed by Cosmopolitan Club.

NOVEMBER—Bulldogs end with a 4-4-1 record. Don Everhart and Tracy Brown, co-captains, receive letters as do Dan Allen, John Currey, Earl Fisher, Glen Williams, Dennis Burris, Greg Campbell, Bob Irwin, and Ron Kipker. "Man of the Year" is Wilfred Binkley. Registration for Sabin oral polio vaccine. Bob Hitchcock's sports column is a popular feature in the Herald.

DECEMBER—Big snowstorm. Herald carries a year-end feature story on Mr. Duffy, "Ada's Dog-About-Town."

Tietje

At its first meeting on September 5, 1861 the Ada council passed two ordinances establishing the positions of town treasurer and town marshal. Necessities for running the village taken care of—revenue and law and order—council did not pass any other ordinances until April of the next year.

Life was simpler in the early days. When council needed more funds for major projects, town residents decided by levy vote whether or not to give it to them. Local newspaper accounts of crime in 1879 are of Uncle Billy Whetzel, the town marshal, chasing unruly boys through the stove piles by the railroad depot or dragging some wayfaring drunk up the steps to the jail. Later violence did occur during the anti-saloon fight which even brought the Chicago reporters to Ada. By 1902 Ada had voted itself "dry" and the restaurants and saloons could sell only "non-intoxicating beer." The dynamiting and fighting continued after prohibition and council had to appoint an extra policeman in 1904, furnishing him with "a helmet, a star, and a mace." Gradually the town settled down. There was an 8:30 curfew and the Ada Electric Light Company shut down at 10:00 p.m. When the sun went down most citizens went to bed and law enforcement could be handled by one policeman.

Depending on your age or when you came to Ada you probably recall some of the law enforcers from the past—George Parshall, Sr. who was both policeman and street commissioner, Bryon Hefner, or Park Elwood who served the department for fourteen years.

My memories are of William "Bill" Tietje, probably
because he patrolled the streets when I was young. Bill started his police career in 1934 as a night watchman. If he needed help he called for it. One dark night in 1936 he asked some citizens and "Bugs" Long for help in capturing what he thought was a young fox squirrel in the Mertz Furniture doorway. "Bugs" would do the capturing while the rest stood guard. Flashing a light on the animal they discovered—a skunk. The mission was aborted and the incident provided some laughs in the town. Carl Sanderson said that Bill Tietje had a mind of his own. He refused to ride the motorcycle the department had for transportation. Instead, he drove his own 1935 Ford affectionately named, "Old Leapin' Lena, Pride of the Force." Bill was also the first officer to appear in full uniform. Sandy said Bill didn't like the uniform any more than he had liked the cycle so town officials often had to remind Tietje how professional he looked in his uniform. On March 4, 1955 Tietje was not on duty because he had the flu—the first duty hours he had ever missed. In April of 1955 Bill decided he would retire. Serving under seven mayors (Sousley, Collett, Breck, Gant, Preston, Binkley, and Sanderson) he had been on 24-hour call as an Ada policeman for nearly twenty-one years. He was seventy-five years old. When asked by a Herald reporter for his philosophy he said he had "always tried to stay courteous."

When I remember Tietje I think of cigars. He always seemed to have one stuck in the corner of his mouth whether he was standing on the corner of Main and Buckeye or driving around in his Ford watching for the light to go on at the First National Bank corner to let him know he had a call at the station.

In 1956 the village bought a "flashy new cream colored Plymouth" cruiser, costing over 2,000 dollars, to replace "Old Leapin' Lena" so Tietje and Lena retired together. They had served the village faithfully.


**Wheeler McMillen Remembers:**

You will note that this week's Sampler includes a distinguished signature—one familiar to many readers of the Herald. Wheeler McMillen, now ninety-five, was editor of the Farm Journal from 1935 until 1955. The author of fifteen books, his most recent article was published in the Farm Journal in
1987. Just as important to our community, however, is that he still considers himself an "unreconstructed Adaite" and throughout his busy years has kept in touch with his many university, town, and country friends.

When the Ada Herald published Agnew Welsh's History of the Ada Community some of the younger town residents asked, "Who was Agnew Welsh?" It seems appropriate to have Wheeler McMillen answer this question, for Agnew Welsh in many of his scrapbook notes expresses "a justifiable pride" in his former apprentice's journalistic and personal achievements.

Wheeler McMillen
Photo: Russell McClung

Betty Miller

Recollections of Agnew Welsh

For the third of a century Agnew Welsh was publisher and editor of the Ada Record and a leader in citizenship. In 1875 he came from a farm near Bucyrus to attend the Ohio "Normal" as ONU was then known. In 1881 he acquired the newspaper and operated it until he sold it in 1914.

Early in my high school days I applied at the Record office for an after-school job and to be taught something of the printing trade. Slender, gray of hair and mustache, brisk but gentle in manner, Mr. Welsh made me welcome. The first assignment was to sweep the office. He handed me a broom, demonstrated the curious stuff that was to be spread on the floor to absorb dust and debris, and noted my curiosity about the shop equipment. A few days later he escorted me to a slanting type case, placed a "stick" in my hand, and offered such basic information as why the "e" compartment in the type case was much larger than the one for the "q's." I was to set the type for a half-column article he had clipped and planned to reprint.

After a few afternoon hours I completed the task. The office foreman, Harlo Povenmire, took a proof. Mr. Welsh laid it on his desk, whipped in place his pince-nez spectacles and said, "Let's see how many egregious errors we can find." He found several, and explained the correction marks he had made on the margins. That proof is still in my scrapbook.

His encouragement was not solely verbal. He printed such
news items as I offered and some other amateur writing, not
that it was valuable to Record readers.

After the student years he took active interest in my
journalistic moves through Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana.

While still too young, I wanted to operate my own
newspaper. One was up for sale at Kendallville, Indiana, a
daily. I asked my father and Mr. Welsh to view the property and
to see whether the price was fair. They joined me in Fort
Wayne, where we had to stay over night. The day was hot.
Father remarked, after we had checked into the hotel, that he
was thirsty, but since he disliked to drink strange water he
would go up street for a beer. An hour later he came back
laughing and said:

"I knew Welsh was an active church man and thought he
might be offended to be asked to go along. But as I walked into
the saloon there he was at the bar, foot on the rail, blowing the
froth from a glass."

Mr. Welsh reported separately: "I decided to get a glass of
beer, but I was afraid to ask your father because I knew his
reputation as an upstanding citizen and thought he might be
offended."

Those two beers were probably all either had drunk in that
or any other recent year. The three of us enjoyed our laugh. The
newspaper offer seemed to be fair enough, but I decided it was
too large an undertaking, and a few months later bought a
small weekly in another Indiana town.

Under Mr. Welsh the Ada Record presented the news of
town and community and explored many questions of local
interest. When an interurban rail line was projected to be built
through town, he asked the business men for their views about
its merits or demerits, and printed briefly the opinions each had
expressed.

Among the conventional Main Street remarks most
memorable was the reply from Long Doc, the Chinese laun-
dryman, printed in full: "Melica man heap damn fool. Me
washee collar, three for five."

Harlo Povenmire, the Record's foreman, became captain
of the local national guard, Company G, led it through the
Mexican border affair and then into Europe in World War I.
Privates called him "the skipper." After retirement he was for
a time president of the Liberty Bank. His hobby was a study of
Abraham Lincoln, about whom he acquired a notable book
collection.

After selling the Record in 1914, Mr. Welsh retired to Miami
to live with his younger daughter, Margaret. Unable to be
content with idleness, he took a job as manager of the Miami Herald’s “morgue” (the department which maintains files of clippings and facts for possible future reference). Later he amused himself by writing numerous historical articles for the Ada Herald about the old home town. I saw him a few times in Miami, once when I coaxed him to join me on the dais where I delivered a loud dinner speech to some convention.

He was to live for forty-one years of retirement, a longer time than he had spent with the Record. Death came when he was not far from his hundredth birthday. His daughter, Rhea Stambaugh, who helped supply some dates for this account, is now approaching her 103rd anniversary.

What Mr. Welsh paid me as a printer’s apprentice and occasional reporter, I do not recall. The amount positively was a very tiny fraction compared to my indebtedness to him.

When ONU welcomes its alumni in the spring, the oldest man and woman present are awarded the Willis pitcher and the Willis cane. Perhaps there are some who do not realize the honor that comes with the presentation. The recipients possess, if only for the day, two items belonging to one of Ada’s most distinguished former residents. Frank B. Willis graduated with the class of 1893 and served on the faculty from 1894 until 1914 when he was elected Governor of Ohio. Even when he entered national politics, Willis kept his close ties to Ada. He returned often to deliver speeches or to campaign. The 1924 Purple and Gold yearbook was dedicated to Willis and Simeon Fess. Whenever Willis came to Ada both town and gown turned out in great crowds to welcome him. Between the Wilson Art building and Presser Hall among the three fir trees where “Willis house” once stood is a marker listing Willis’s accomplishments.

Frank Willis died when he was only 57, but many can recall the Willis charm and voice. Wheeler McMillen is one of those who remembers.

Betty Miller

Recollections of Frank B. Willis

All of Ada and every Ohio Northerner took keen pride in the career of Frank B. Willis. From class room to the United States senate he bore qualities that deserved our admiration.

Yet, whenever anyone spoke or thought of him, nothing came to mind so regularly as his most remarkable voice. The nation was to hear and to hear about it. Willis was a big man,
more than six feet tall, weighing 250 pounds or more. His voice was loud, resonant, never harsh, and it carried far beyond the reach of any ordinary vocal chords.

One spring morning when windows were open I was late to his class in history. While hardly halfway across the campus I heard my name as he called the roll, and I shouted "Here!" as loudly as I could. When I opened the door he interrupted the lecture he had then begun and said, "It's all right, McMillen; as long as you are on the campus we count you present."

A year or two later Willis was in charge of presenting an important bill before the U.S. House of Representatives. The Associated Press led its report by describing how the Willis voice had resounded through and beyond the House chamber, one such as never before the Congress had heard.

Again, during the national Republican convention of 1920, the wire services led dispatches with stories of how Willis's voice had echoed from every corner of the big convention hall, and of his conclusion: "Come on, boys...and girls...let's nominate Harding." This had been the first appearance of women as delegates.

Willis was born in 1871 at Lewis Center in Delaware County. When he first came to Ohio Northern I do not know, but he became professor of history and economics and lived with wife and daughter in a modest house on the Gilbert street side of the campus. He served two terms in the Ohio legislature, and from 1911 to 1915 in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was governor 1915-17 and U.S. senator 1921-27. He died in 1928.

While he was governor, the Indiana association of Republican editors invited him to speak at their annual dinner in Indianapolis. As the only member who knew him, I was asked to meet his train. It came quite late, and we reached the hotel only after dessert. Willis looked over the dignitaries on the dais, noted them all in tuxedos, and began his speech by saying: "These fellows all look fine in their fancy clothes. I want you to know that if my train had been on time I could have been all dressed up, too." With that he lifted from his suitcase a hanger with a tuxedo visible and held it up for all to see. It made a good start for the eloquent speech.

Only once or twice did I have occasion to see Willis while he
was in the senate. At the visit I best remember he found that I disagreed with a position he had taken on a measure then prominent in controversy. He asked questions until he brought out all my knowledge of the matter, one which I knew something about since it concerned farmers. Whether his mind was changed I do not know.

In 1928 Willis was announced as a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. He came out strongly for enforcement of the prohibition laws. How he might have fared in face of the national prestige and popularity of Herbert Hoover can never be known. Some months before the national conventions he died suddenly while making a speech.

With all his commanding presence and great voice, Willis was kind, jovial and friendly. He was conscientious in personal and political conduct. Though he made Delaware his later residence, Ada held a sound claim to its part in his distinguished career as an outstanding American.


Although Ada High School students compete for honors in sports, music and scholarship, the school has one competition that is unique. Interclass contest focuses on excellence in speaking, writing and ingenuity. For eighty years the event has encouraged a class spirit and unity that last long after graduation. Wheeler McMillen, a 1910 Ada High School graduate and former interclass contestant, writes a tribute to Dr. C.H. Freeman, founder of this Ada High School tradition.
Recollections of C.H. Freeman

As teacher, citizen, legislator and public speaker, C.H. Freeman exerted extraordinary influence. Thousands of students listened in his classrooms, many hundreds of them became teachers, and instilled his ideas and idealism into further generations.

Ada High’s interclass contest began with Freeman. One spring morning in 1907 found all students staring at a gaping hole in the ceiling of the big assembly room. The news spread quickly. The night before, in an attempt to demonstrate “class spirit,” some of the boys had made their way into the dark attic, aiming to attach their flag to the steeple outside. Groping along without light, “Johnny” Howard Bentley had stepped from a firm joist on to the yielding lath and plaster of the ceiling. Had he fallen down to the assembly floor he would have been quite seriously injured, but luckily with help he regained the attic. The incident was celebrated three years later in the class annual, for which Albert Warren drew a picture of Johnny’s lower half suspended through the ceiling.

Freeman was quick to seize upon a suggestion that followed. If class “superiority” had to be demonstrated, why not try a better way than with monkeyshines over putting up a flag? Why not let classes engage in a contest with orations, essays, recitations or other endeavors? Why not utilize the competitive spirit to further education? He shortly announced plans for the first contest. Classes chose their representatives and enthusiasm rose. The first contest attracted so large an attendance that the opera house was engaged for the following year. Now, after more than fourscore years, the contest continues as an A.H.S. institution.

Freeman was the high school principal 1906–07, superintendent of public schools for two years, before beginning his forty-three years as head of the Ohio Northern department of English.

Having had so unusual a name conferred upon him—Childe Harold, after the hero of Byron’s famous poem—Freeman no doubt came from a family that enjoyed books. His familiarity with English literature ranged from Chaucer to contemporaries. To inculcate a desire to read good books and to
appreciate the qualities of their authors, he constantly challenged the interest of his students. The assignments he gave them invariably widened their respect for the language. His tenacious memory brought up scores of quotations, in prose or poetry, from the masters. When he said that Macaulay had written, "The Puritan hated bear baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators," he gave the student an impulse to see what else could be found in Macaulay's essays and histories.

When the bells rang for a Freeman class students seldom dawdled or failed to attend. Whether freshmen or about to graduate, they had learned to expect to hear a fresh idea, a funny story, maybe a brief burst of serious eloquence with a note of inspiration new to their experience. The themes he assigned encouraged originality, study and preparation. When presented they were subject to his careful evaluation. Praise he gave liberally, criticism gently and helpfully.

Former students called so often for him to address their teachers' institutes that he came to speak in nearly every Ohio county and some beyond the borders. For three terms, 1922-24, Hardin County sent him to the Ohio legislature, where his eloquence left memories. Once he was called upon without notice to present silk flags to two Civil War veteran members. A colleague wrote that it was "a brilliant burst of oratory...a great scene of American patriotism and will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed it."

After Freeman had sponsored a Teachers' Retirement Act, the legislature met in joint session to consider it. He addressed the body "with such zeal that the measure was easily carried."

He was chairman of committees on public schools, on taxation, and was active in other legislative processes. Many of his bills became state laws including one, famous for the time, to curb or punish "criminal syndicalism," an early stage of communism.

Freeman's speeches to varied audiences at home and
around the state blazed with force, sparkled with humor, and
left no one displeased. He responded generously to local calls
from luncheon clubs, American Legion units and Sunday School
groups. For many years he taught a class in the Ada Methodist
Sunday School.

The Ada high school class of 1910 devoted a page of its
yearbook to compliments for Prof. Freeman. In response, he
wrote: “The greatest demand of the world today is not so much
for more wheat or more money as for real men and
women. . . . There is no place for the physical, mental or moral
mollycoddle.”

Much, much more could be written about Dr. C.H.
Freeman. Let me end by saying that among all the men I have
known he stood out as one of the great.

Ada Mysteries

Trying to put together the scattered pieces of a small
town’s history is a little like solving a mystery. One clue ap-
pers in an old atlas, another in an early newspaper or a faded
letter. A year later someone with a long memory adds another
piece or someone finds a picture or a postcard in an attic.
Perhaps after several more years there’s enough information
and the story is complete. For example, the mystery of the
electric railway tracks at Main and Lincoln was solved in two
years from clues in the Ada Records from 1902 and 1905, a dim
copy of a picture of the tracks from a friend, and information
from those who knew parts of the story. Finally, when Carl
Sanderson told me the tracks had been given to the Second
World War scrap metal drive, the mystery of a town fiasco was
solved. But other mysteries remain unsolved and certainly
somewhere someone has clues or even a final answer to these
mysteries.

Where was our founder’s, S. M. Johnson’s, first house? Was
it the rear part of the building torn down for the Liberty-
National bank building on Railroad Park Alley (or its new
fancier name, Central Avenue)? What happened to “Happy
Jack” Ballard, an Ada businessman and proprietor of Ballard’s
Hall where the early entertainments and dances were held
before we had an Opera House? The Hall was on the second
floor of the Ream building below the old Masonic Hall. “Happy
Jack” was evidently important enough to have a street named
for him. Why did he suddenly disappear from Ada never to be
heard from again?

Where are some of the town’s historical artifacts? Where is
the bell from the watchman's tower? Does it reside in some railroad museum? Where is the ONU Pharmic/Engineer feud hatchet dug up on the main campus in 1955? Where is the large Honor Roll board listing the students who served in World War I? What happened to the Rhonemus sign? It was one of the largest Ada ever had and hung outside his store on the northeast corner of Main and Buckeye. What happened to the stuffed pony in John Noggle's shop? Where are the pictures of Crystal Lake?

These questions are intriguing but the unfinished stories are too. In 1902 the Ada Record printed the following item from the Kenton News Republican:

An organized attempt will soon be made to locate three saddlebags of Spanish and French coin which are reported to have been buried by a band of Wyandot Indians about the time Colonel Crawford was burned at the stake. The coins are said to have been buried at the spot of an old sycamore snag on the Hog Creek marsh three miles west of Dunkirk. Recently a half breed Wyandot appeared on the scene and began to search but with what success is not known.

Does the conclusion of this story appear in a later newspaper? Did the half breed find the coins? Did some farmer unearth them as he did some fragments of mastodon bones in the marsh? (By the way, the pieces of bone are still at ONU.) Does someone remember hearing the story of the buried treasure? I like mysteries but I like solutions to the mysteries too.

Small Town Sickness

Today in our town if you get sick you take to your bed. The word that you're ailing may pass through the village grapevine but usually you can be privately miserable until you appear again on the streets. This was not true in the past. Your name and the details of your illness appeared in the weekly paper for all to see. Accidents and serious illnesses appeared on the front page while minor illnesses were relegated to the "personal" column.

Some accident reports (including names) might have caused embarrassment to the victims. For example, in 1902 Ada voted itself "dry" but Alger went "wet." In following issues of the newspaper numerous accounts of buggy accidents resulting in broken bones and cracked heads were reported.
The Ada men involved were returning from “business trips” to Alger late at night. Did the tongues wag when the newspaper came out that week? “Nervous prostration” seems to have covered a lot of illnesses. Long hours of work could cause it, marital disagreements could cause it, or as one account explained an Ada woman was sick from “nervous prostration” because her horse ran away and took her “at high speed for two miles.” In 1903 if a student at the Ada Union school was absent he’d better be home in bed sick or have a quick explanation because the Ada Record published a list of names of students who were “absent without excuse from parent.”

In 1937 Gloria Jean Welsh needed no excuse because the Ada Herald personal column recorded that she had been ill with scarlet fever but had recovered “and the quarantine lifted.” In March of 1939 the Herald reported that “Mrs. Robert Cole and son, Bobbie, were confined to their home because of influenza.” The speech class contest play in 1941, “Mooncalf Mugford” under the direction of Eleanor Baum was performed in Bluffton under real duress. Of the five cast members, Edmund Sheafer, Bettie Focht, Dorothy Long, Martha Garwick, and Walter Sousley, two members “had measles on Sunday and did the play on Tuesday.” They won anyway and went to the State contest.

Talk about embarrassing details. In 1902 a local drugstore owner was reported “quite ill...with congestion of the bowels.” Some years later, a clerk at Greer’s Clothing had to take an enforced vacation “due to systemic trouble believed to have been caused by bad teeth.” By 1961 some of the freak accidents were placed in the “What Did You See?” column as the community learned that “five-year-old Freddie Reichert has a small hole in the top of his head” put there by a young bluejay’s mother.

Perhaps the only good thing about having your accident or illness announced in the local paper is that you might get more bowls of homemade chicken soup brought to your door to help you recover. It’s probably easier to suffer alone and put up with having townspeople ask you after your two-week bout with the flu, “Have you been out of town?”

**Brewer Block History**

In H. G. Howland’s 1879 “Atlas of Hardin Co. Ohio” each town presented its best view. Downtown Ada is represented by three of its earliest brick buildings, considered a little pretentious in 1872 for a village which still had wooden sidewalks and dirt streets. Only one of the buildings still stands, the Citizens Bank building on the corner of Main and Buckeye.
The other two were demolished in 1973 and replaced with a parking lot.

Because the brick came from the John and George Ash brick mill at the edge of town, the Ream building was a real Ada enterprise. Abraham Ream, whose house still stands next to the Korner Kut, was the local contractor for the first ONU campus building. Evidently his belief that the “Normal” would be a success and the town would grow encouraged him to take a chance and build his grand structure in the center of town in 1872. E.E. Bauman constructed his brick building on the corner in the same year. The wooden warehouse by the railroad, built in 1873, was torn down and in 1902 replaced by the brick building which is still there. This first block northeast of the railroad (known as the Brewer Block) became one of the busiest in town. The list of its occupants provides a history of some of the early businessmen whose efforts made Ada a thriving village, keeping pace with the Normal School growth and the growth in railroad traffic.

In 1860 Hollis Gilbert and W.L. Reece had a general store in a small wooden building on the corner. Bauman’s grocery store was on the same site in 1862. Later, Rhonemus Haberdashery took over the corner room; some of our male residents remember buying their first pair of long pants from Mr. Rhonemus. The Liberty Bank moved from across the street to take over the corner spot in 1917 and the big domed safe by the front window became a familiar landmark. After the two banks merged, Mrs. Tallman had a coffee room in the corner space
until 1966 when she sold the building to Dr. John Homan. The Ada Improvement Association, Limited was the last owner. In the early days the Oddfellows had their meetings on the third floor, and for many years W.W. Runser had his law office on the second floor. In the 30's and early 40's the ZoRoLo Campany had the side room facing Buckeye.

Ream's building was also a center of activity. George Thomas had a drugstore on the street level and the Bastable and Van Liew Hardware next door became Rothrock's Hardware. When he came to Ada in 1902 Archie Mertz had one of his first furniture stores in the Ream building. His son, young Jim Mertz, opened a hardware store in 1936 in the Rothrock room. The CloverFarm store was the last occupant. The second floor was probably one of the noisiest places in town. Ream's Hall (later Ballard's and then Bastable's) was the gathering place for entertainments and dances before the Opera House existed. Steps led to the ONU School of Oratory and to the Masonic lodge rooms on the third floor. In the small room next to the Brewer building, King and Seiler trimmed hair and beards and had a 'Bath Room.' Most long-time residents remember it as Dr. Wilcox's office or Rayl's Shoe Repair. Dale Westenbarger still cuts hair there, but he doesn't have any bath tubs in the rear.

From 1902 until the new one was built in 1938 the Ada post office was next to the railroad in the Brewer building. For many this block holds memories of Harry Vestal's Lyric Theater, Balish's Confectionery, J.O. Tyson's tailor shop, Breck's Clothing, Field's Bakery, and Parshall's Clothing. In 1911 the

The Brewer Block in the Centennial year 1953. (Howard McBride photo)
Ada Knitting Company, McElroy's Pool and Billiard Parlor, John Young's Insurance, Dr. Sells, the dentist, William Danner, the barber, and the Sterling Publishing Company occupied the upper floors. Much later you could hear the bowling balls hit the pins when you were in the stores below.

Jim Mertz tells some interesting stories about his days in the Brewer Block. Someone decided to put a rollerskating rink on the second floor above his store. The floor surface needed to
be smooth for the rink. Workmen solved the problem by sprinkling sand on the floor surface and then taking a horse up the stairs to provide power for the float. Evidently it worked. Jim recalls that women did not go into hardware stores unescorted. His wife, Flo, had been recruited to help out in the store. Everyone knew that women could sell hats and drygoods but many of his first customers were skeptical about a woman hardware clerk. Flo had to prove she had a knowledge of nails, bolts, seeds, and leather before the men would let her wait on them.

Each business block in Ada has a history of its own and the Brewer Block was soon followed by a renaissance of building on Main Street. Since this block had the first brick structures, it set an early architectural style for the village.

Thanks to Jim and Flo for the stories, Juanita McElroy for the 1911 Directory, and Wheeler McMillen and Art Cotner for help in sorting out years and people.

Old Photographs

The history of a small-town community is often told, not in words but in pictures. One old picture shows a “last day of school” at Woodlawn country school. The boards across the desks hold the pies, the cakes, the fried chicken, and the deviled eggs all waiting to be consumed. About 50 adults and children, all unsmiling, stand frozen in time. An old wedding picture of a young bride and groom dressed in their best clothes, again unsmiling, does not seem to indicate a happy event. Another picture of a store owner and his helpers shows them as grim and unsmiling people. These are the posed pictures for a photographer who told his subjects to “hold that pose.” Valuable because they give us background and faces, these pictures are only a part of our history. The result of a quick snap of the box camera often gives a truer view of human nature. The snapshot of a group of long-skirted girls in a pony cart with the pony looking directly into the camera lens, the boy in overalls with his arm around a shaggy dog, or the little girl with wispy hair holding a cat are pictures that bring the past a little closer. And the subjects are usually smiling.

When people reminisce, somewhere in the account of names and events they often add a statement like this: “I had a big dog, Queenie” or “I remember an old farm horse named Moses.” Agnew Welsh in a “Current Comments” column in a 1948 Ada Herald makes observations on current national events and then recalls his childhood dog, “Old Toss.” Wheeler Mc-
Millen, in his book Possums, Politicians, and People, pays tribute to Shep: “I wish I were as good at being a man as Shep is at being a dog.”

My early family history includes Kate, a horse who lived on the farm, and Bruce, the pony, who lived in the town barn where our garage is now. I could also pay tribute to some dogs I’ve known: Dixie, Wilhelmina, and Duchess who lived with us; Tracie, Streaker, and Amanda who often visited us; Mickey who lived next door; Cricket, Blackie, Molly, Sugar, Gigi, and Tipper who lived down the street; Lady who lived in the country; Marie, Nix, and Oscar who offered a wag of the tail. They are all in old snapshots, and everyone is smiling.

I have known some cats too, on more formal terms since we merely tolerated each other. Their names for the history books were Raymond, Charles, Bridey Murphy, Snowball, Puddin’ Tat, Inky, and Harry. All high-class cats as you can tell by their names.

In our community history many names should be recorded, including Doc. At the 50-year reunion of the ONU class of 1934 a class member read a list of memories. Doc, the campus bulldog, was listed. I remember him in Dean McElroy’s cafeteria in Brown building. After attending Dr. Freeman’s English class, he frequented the restaurant sitting in the aisle in a gentlemanly manner waiting for his share of food. Surveying his campus, he had his picture taken for the Northern yearbook. The picture caption is “His Majesty—Doc.”

A long list of town and gown dogs who lived from family to
family or store to store and attended all town gatherings would include "Old Crip" and "Mr. Duffy." What names have I forgotten?

**War Memorial Park History**

We have visible reminders in our small town that many of our young men and women have gone to war. The 1905 Civil War monument in Railroad Park bears the inscription: "Lest We Forget."

When it was time to honor our servicemen and women of World War II we asked the veterans what kind of memorial they wanted. About 90% of them voted for a place where the community could enjoy sports, band concerts, and family gatherings—a place of flowers, grass, trees, and peace. On February 15, 1946 the Ada Herald published the plans for War Memorial Park. Details showed a lighted stadium with bleachers, a bandshell at the east end, tennis courts by the swimming pool, flower gardens in old Ream’s Grove, and a bird sanctuary. A goal of $25,000 was set for the project. Harry Sousley, Dayle Spar, and Carey Clum, the Memorial Park board officials, asked the community to make the living memorial a reality.

On February 22, 1946 Kiwanis and Rotary sponsored a dinner at the Methodist Church and the drive for money began. Solicitors were named for Ada and the surrounding townships at a Boosters meeting in March, and in two weeks they had collected $4,790 in pledges. By April the pledges were nearing $12,000. In 1944 Kiwanis had raised $900 by sponsoring "a mile of pennies." Their second "mile of pennies" grew to $1300. By June of 1946, $16,000 in contributions and pledges had been made; it was time to start the clearing and grading. The work
continued until October when it was suspended until spring. A cash balance of $5,000 and $4,000 from taxes were small amounts to continue the work in 1947, but everyone knew it could be done.

All winter the fund-raising continued. Thirty-four Rotarians and 24 women from Cosmopolitan club put their signatures on the notes to underwrite the cost of the lights and scoreboard for the field. It took them from the May Day carnival in 1947 to the Fall carnival in 1948 to pay off the debt. The Boosters club put on a minstrel show that winter, and each project any group in the community attempted received support. In the spring and summer of 1947, when the call went out from the Ada Herald, volunteers appeared to help with seeding, with watering, with wiring. They cut weeds, helped the Boosters build temporary bleachers, cleared the track for cinders and the roads for stone. Lima Locomotive donated a 50-foot flagpole and the Lima Telephone Company an American flag. Barton Snyder, the Ada Herald editor, tried to give groups and individuals credit for their gifts and labor, an impossible task because everyone in the community was involved.

Finally on the Wednesday night before the first football game, Bob Baum of Ohio Power threw the switch. As the lights went on around the green field the hundreds of people watching cheered and tooted their car horns. On September 12, 1947 the first local football game ever played on a lighted field began. Thad Gardner recorded it in the Herald. Kenny Shoemaker, the AHS coach, and his team beat Wapak 6-0.

The formal dedication of War Memorial Park was on October 3, 1947 before the Ada-Carey game. The temporary wooden bleachers became reserved seats for the veterans. Headquarters company marched from the armory and the band played. After George Hindall, a member of the park board, presented the park to the community, Charles Spar responded for the American Legion, Supt. C.C. Roberson for the public school, Dr. Robert McClure for the university, and Dr. C.W. Breck, mayor when the project started, for the town. The team won that game too, 14-6.

The committee had planned to put the 3-inch gun in the park grove, but the veterans of Post 185 of the American Legion asked that it be placed near the entrance by the green triangle the Garden club had planted. The gun and the bronze plaque would be a reminder of the park’s purpose. It was easy for those who had worked on the park to remember; often during those early years they had paused for graveside memorial services as many of the men whose names appear on the plaque “came home.” We wanted the names to be remembered by future
generations too: World War I: Walter Agin, Leo Hawk, Stanley Foss, James McElroy, and Russell Meyer; World War II: Adrian Basinger, Gerald Caris, Howard Elliott, Harry Gossard, Donald Hurlburt, Ralph Ludwig, Ralph Mankey, Robert Ream, John Beach, Donald Clark, Lee Ellis, Lewis Elwood, Hobart Hall, Robert Irwin, Neil McElroy, and Walter Sheets.

On Memorial Day the flags on the graves in Woodlawn Cemetery or in the little country cemeteries, the speeches, and the military ceremonies often bring back painful memories as we honor our veterans of all the wars. But at War Memorial Park, we celebrate our life as a community—what the veterans wanted.

Floyd Latimore’s Tri-County Fair History

While researching the history of War Memorial Park and the first football game under lights, I discovered two articles on “The Farmers and Mechanics Tri-County Fair.” The fair was held from 1883 until 1900 in Ada’s War Memorial Park area.

Floyd Latimore wrote a fascinating history of the three-day fair which attracted huge crowds from Hardin, Allen and Hancock counties. The first article appeared in the Sept. 12, 1947, issue of The Ada Herald. The second article on the horse races appeared in the September 26, 1947, issue.

Betty Miller

The Fair

When the Ada Bulldogs and Wapak Redskins open their 1947 season on the new Memorial Park gridiron tonight, older fans attending the game will find their thoughts turning back to memorable events of former years enjoyed on that same field.

Few of the young generation may be aware of the fact that Ohio Northern and Ada High School battled in athletic competition on that field for many years before the Polar Bears shifted to their gridiron adjoining Taft gym and the Bulldogs to a field south of the high school building.

Still fewer of those present will recall the days of the old Tri-County Fair, operated on grounds now included in Memorial Park, from 1883 until around 1901. Fair days usually drew huge crowds, just as tonight’s contest attracts sports lovers.

Races, livestock exhibits, farm products, fine arts and flowers, worked metals, household fabrics and vehicles of the horse and buggy days drew farmers and their families along with townspeople from Hardin, Allen and Hancock counties in annual competition.
Known as "The Farmers and Mechanics Tri-County Fair," the first event was held here from Thursday, Sept. 19, 1883, through Saturday Sept. 22, at the new fairgrounds, according to the first premium list printed by "The Record Steam Book & Printing House." Competition was "open to the world." The booklet, an impressive 24-page publication, also contained advertisements of Ada merchants.

Officers of the fair association were S.W. Phillips, president; D.G. Lewis, vice president; Agnew Welsh, secretary; and Peter Ahlefeld, treasurer. The joint stock company was capitalized at $5000. Drinking and gambling were frowned upon by the organization.


To give the fair a start, ten men pooled their funds for construction of buildings and premiums. The grand stand, on the site of the present gridiron, accommodated from 1,200 to 1,500 persons. Horse and stock barns were along the north and west side of the park grove. Much of the labor was donated, just as for today's project.

The half-mile track was constructed under the supervision of John Cochran, at a cost of $1,000. Its stretches were 40-feet wide. Some of the best horses in the country competed on this track, which encircled the present gridiron.

Speed ring premiums on that track had amounted to $990 for first eight-event program. The free-for-all trotting race with a purse of $300 was the largest event of the day. Prizes for all events totaled $2,599.

Along about 1895-6-7, bicycle racing was added to the program. Oldsters well remember John and Otto Stemple, two of the main performers, who usually made it a brother one-two combination. John would pace the younger brother and once in a while go on to win the race when his brother tired.

The art hall, which stood where the municipal pool is now located, had four wings divided into different sections for exhibits. A big boarding hall stood nearby, where Jane Bodell served the first meals for 25 cents. The fair board sold the privilege of running the boarding house for $125. As many as 300 dinners were served each day, recalls Jack Horner, who operated the hall for several years.

Large crowds from the three counties invaded Ada at fair time and livery barns couldn't begin to feed the horses. It was a common sight to see rigs with the day's rations lashed to the rear. Horner also recalls operating hacks from downtown to the
fair. Two other hack services were operated.

Livestock exhibits were also big features. Some of the larger exhibitors: George Grant, Dola; Billy Wellwood, near Kenton; the Arnolds, near Lafayette; Jim Irwin; Gibb and George Helser; Rev. Tom Carey; L. Butler of Ridgeway with his Short-Durhams & big show type cattle of the era; John P. Conner, Tom Hubbell and J.E. Johnson.

In the grove, the fair board built seats around trees for the convenience of fair patrons. Drilled wells furnished plenty of water. One of these is still in use today.

As the lighted gridiron can be used for other entertainment, so the fairgrounds of that day were adapted to other community interests. Political debates, which attracted nationwide interest, were staged on the grounds.

Most notable of these was the McKinley-Campbell debate, arranged by Dr. H.S. Lehr, founder of Ohio Northern University. Politicos from throughout the country attended the great forensic battle, making it one of the largest gatherings ever to be held here.

The park board constructed a large stage on the track to accommodate speakers and other distinguished visitors. Bleachers were provided for the huge crowd.

The last Tri-County Fair was held here in 1901. It had become a losing proposition. Henry Young, veteran florist, filed a petition in common pleas court on March 12, 1902, to have the organization dissolved. He bought the stockholders’ interest and was the last man to own the property before it was acquired by the university. Dr. Leroy K. Belt, then president, subdivided the land and then sold it. Thus the splendid half-mile track and grounds passed from public use.

So, history repeats itself. We of this generation are enjoying modern-day sports on the same ground used by our fathers and grandfathers for the type of entertainment best loved in their day more than half century ago.

The Races

While the crowd of grid enthusiasts watched the grid game, Sept. 12 at Memorial field, inaugurating night football for Ada, memories of many older residents recalled the days when horses performed on that same field for the plaudits of the crowd in the racing heyday of the old Tri-County fair.

Although racing “times” were not up to present day standards, for high wheel sulkies were in vogue and rubber tired outfits were not introduced until around 1895, competition was keen. The standard for registration was 2:30 for the mile.

Interest in racing here must have been high because two
race meets were run during the year — one in July and at fair
time in September.

Information obtained at random from the late George
Stambaugh’s personal file of Wallace’s Yearbook of Pacing and
Trotting leads me to believe that the last fair must have been
held in 1900. Season’s records appeared a year late in the
Yearbook, final tabulation from Ada, Ohio, appearing in the
1901 volume.

The 1895 volume was interesting because two local horses
participated. In the first event of the day, a Lima horse, John R
driven by W.N. Faurot, took all three heats of the 3-minute
class, for a purse of $125. His times were 2:40, 2:39¼, and
2:41¼.

Purse for the next event, the 2:40 class, was $125. Limber
Jim, a big horse owned by Dr. J.K. Evans, father of Fritz
Evans, was victor in straight heats. His times under the hands
of S. Hammond were 2:45, 2:44 and 2:46½.

Almont took the $200 purse in the 2:35 class as A. Letson
brought him in on times of 2:34½, 2:34½ and 2:46¾.

Billy Scott, a trotter, once owned by Ben Conner, won the
$125 purse in the free-for-all. He was driven by J.H. Conley. At
one time he was one of the fastest trotters in Ohio and won
many races at the Ohio State fair. He held a 2:21½ pacing
record, and once made a 2:16¼ mile in a match race against
Almont.

Maybird, another local horse owned by Sam Snyder, also
won several races in later years.

The event in the 1898 meet was unearthed by a local race
fan. He recalled that J.C. Simpson, one of the more consistent
winners of the day owned by Steiner brothers of Lima, won the
first heat but lost the next to Joe Erwin. The driver was im-
mEDIATELY called before the judges for allowing his horse to
“play” in the race. Taking his reprimand, the driver went on to
win the next two heats. Strangely enough times for the first two
heats were 2:34½; for the last two, 2:24¼.

Evidently no racing meet was held in 1899, as no records
were listed. According to the 1901 file, a meet was held in 1900.

Comparison between the first and last meets reveals a
bettering of the speed records, although no world record was
set during the life span of the fair here.

Marie B in the 2:35 class won a $300 purse for the times of
2:25¼, 2:24¼ and 2:24¼. Isabelle took a $160 purse in the 2:20
class with 2:27, 2:25¾ and 2:36¾. Billy J was winner of the $160

An amusing incident was recalled concerning the late
George Helser, who was in charge of checking lunch baskets.
One woman desirous of checking her basket, asked a horseman where to take the basket. "Go to Helser," was the reply. She became highly incensed, evidently failing to hear the last syllable.

John Cochran, who was in charge of the track work, also took charge of a crew thinning out the grove in preparation for the opening fair in '83. Peter Whetzler recalls helping to cut and haul the timber.

While memories of older fans dwell on the fair, sports fans of later days recalled the defeat of Fostoria high in 1913 and the winning of the Miami Valley cup on that same field when Dayton Stivers was defeated 13-7 in 1920.

More highlights in the history of Memorial field will be recalled. One of them shines with exceptional brightness for me. It was a rainy and muddy day. Ohio Northern was playing Wooster and taking the worst of it. Carl Holman, then an Ohio Northern great, kicked his team out of trouble when he stood on the ONU goal and with the aid of the wind and a fortunate roll, dropped the ball in the opposing end zone.

Present and future high school and college teams must now make history for future discussion.

by Floyd Latimore

The Unpleasant Past

Sometimes we are overly nostalgic about the past. "The good old days" often appear through memory to have been the best of times when the days moved slower, people were friendlier, and life was idyllic. The past was not always a pleasant place to be, however. We want to remember the good times and the people we miss but sometimes it's better to take off the rose-colored glasses of memory, view the past as it really was and be thankful for progress.

Some of us weren't around yet in 1917 but an ONU student, H.W. Johnson was. An elementary education student he wrote a report on health conditions in Ada for a special project in his biology class. I hope he got an "A" because his investigation was thorough and his report probably mirrored other small towns at the time. His 21 photographs of sites in northwest Ada are excellent pictures, not scenes of a pretty little village but of backyard privies, manure piles, trash heaps, pig pens, chicken coops, open discard barrels, and the town dump. In his written report he lists causes of the 31 deaths in Ada in 1914—13 from typhoid, diptheria, tuberculosis, cancer, heart disease and accidents; 21 from old age; four stillborn deaths. He does admit these numbers show "that Ada is at least up to the average as a healthful community." The Water Plant supervisor wouldn't let
the student in to inspect the water supply; he did get into the ice plant and found the stored eggs and ice "in excellent condition." Two farms which furnished Ada's milk supply he pronounced "hygienic." Two of his photographs are of homes and yards that are neat and clean but for the most part he focuses on the negative. He offers a plan to make Ada a healthier community—enforce the laws and clean up the mess. His precise recommendations are for a sewage disposal system instead of emptying the waste into Hog Creek, a proper drainage system, and garbage disposal. I'm sure the town fathers had been wrestling with these problems for some time. The impatient student condemns the mayor as "a mere figurehead" and implies the town council and health board better get on the job.

In a way his report reminded me of the campaign to clean up Ada in 1972 when the Ada Herald printed front page pictures of beady-eyed rats along the railroad tracks at night and litter-strewn alleys and yards in Ada. The junk ordinance moved in and out of council that year until it finally passed—weak but enforceable. The "clean-up-the-town" effort was a success in 1972. At least some people were shamed into a clean-up day after pictures of their yards or alleys made the front page.

The 1917 Ada residents probably resented a young student pointing out the deficiencies in their town—if they ever saw the report. The pig pens are gone but if H.W. Johnson were around
today he could take his box camera and still find a few eyesores on a journey through the town.

Thanks to Terry Keiser for letting me see H.W. Johnson’s report. Maybe it should become part of our historical documents so we remember that we were not always perfect.

**Trees**

When spring comes to our small town, one of our assets is clearly visible; this is a village where trees are important. The Ada Garden Club crab trees flower along the highway, the pear trees blossom in front of Hill and Dukes, and the red buds and Japanese maples adorn yards all over the town. Those who feel the same as we do about our village trees see that branches are trimmed and plant new trees to replace the old ones that have lined our streets for a century or longer.

Our trees often make the news as old and respected members of our community. In November of 1947 the Ada Herald printed a picture of “Bill” Lantz standing by one of our trees, the sycamore on the north side of the Ada Theatre. A history of the tree gives it a permanent place in town records. It came to Main street from what later became the university farm as “a slip of a sycamore.” James Dobbins planted it in the yard of his parents in 1870, and it continued to grow as the new Presbyterian church took its place on the corner in 1891. The John Dobbins family lived in the house by the tree, the Ralph Parlettes lived there, the Knights of Pythias occupied it, and later it became the Lantz and Cretors Funeral Home. Since the house, the church, and the tree are still very much alive and the theater will have its fiftieth birthday this year, together they form a place of history in our town.

Most of the time Ada residents let progress make its changes. When the oldest part of the business section was demolished in 1960 for the erection of the new Liberty-National Bank building, the oldtimers sighed and recalled other days. When Railroad Park Alley’s name was changed to Central avenue,
some residents thought that was a pretty fancy name for a place where the old livery stable had once stood. Often when trees were involved in progress an irate citizen wrote a letter to the Ada Herald editor as one did after the Lawson groundbreaking: "What an improvement...to cut down all those big shade trees along our Main Street. Now we can drive into their sun-baked parking lot and see when they have bologna on sale."

A real town brouhaha occurred in 1961 when the Ada Herald reported council had decided to "clear and improve" the east side of Railroad Park and adopt the village engineer's drawings for a parking lot. The plans called for the removal of six trees and seven stumps. The Herald reported "a deluge of mail" to council from former ONU students and former Ada residents. On March 24 "council agreed to give further consideration to removal of all trees at the east end."

By this time groups of residents, including the Garden club and the Ada Federation of Women's Clubs, were attending council sessions. In April, council revised the plan to include two tree removals and four stumps. Finally in May, council adopted another plan: remove one tree instead of six and eliminate eight or ten of the 61 parking spaces to save more of the park.

Everyone quieted down—just in time to see the buds open on the trees in town.

"Sundry Memoranda"

If you have read Agnew Welsh's "History of the Ada Community" you know that after a section of history, Mr. Welsh often adds several brief statements totally unrelated to the subject. For example, after a discussion of pioneer families he adds this sentence: "For the holiday trade of 1891 local
merchants sold 9,240 pounds of candy, bringing about $1,700." Not memorable historical data unless you are doing a study of business trends in 1891. But as a statement, it makes you pause and think, "That's a lot of candy" or "That's a lot of money." As a veteran newspaper editor, Mr. Welsh collected many "fillers" through the years for the pages of the Ada Record and for his box of unsorted history. Even though these bits and pieces of knowledge are not astounding historical facts they are difficult to ignore. Mr. Welsh titled them "sundry memoranda." I too find it impossible not to collect "fillers" which I add to an already bulging file. These unrelated facts stopped me for a moment; maybe they will have the same effect on you:

Knute Rockne played in his first college game at Ada in 1911. ONU scored the only touchdown against Notre Dame that year. The final score—32-6.

In 1902 the Record printed some ONU Law College yells:
Rah, rah, rah; Zip, rah boom!
Law, Law, Law, Give us room!
Tally, balolly, balolly, rip, rah
We're it, we're it! Who? Law,
Law, Law, of ONU.

From the Ada school board in 1966: "All young ladies must wear hemlines no higher than one and one-half inches above the top of the knee cap."

On May 9, 1941 a fisherman took a record bass (5 lb. 14 oz.) from Turkey Foot.

In 1926 Ada drew national attention over a "$100,000 opium cache" left in a rooming house by some Chinese students—turned out to be patent medicine.

Gardner Drugs removed their soda fountain in 1956.

The crocuses bloomed on April 6, 1972 in the Robert Bowdens' front yard on south Main Street.

In 1936 forty business and professional men formed the Ada Business Association to bring more industries to Ada. Ben Focht was the organizer.

In a 1938 speech in Columbus Louis Untermeyer, the poet, said, "Ain't is a good American word and will be in general use 50 years from now.

In 1936 Ada Council proposed an ordinance to "prohibit children under fourteen years of age from driving motor vehicles in Ada."

The following Lost and Found ad appeared in the Herald on
March 18, 1965: “Lost, a green parakeet—talks fluidly.”

In March of 1902 the Kenton Press said of Lewis Dukes’ gift of $10,000 to ONU and Ada’s raising of the $10,000 to match his gift: “Bully for Ada, bully for Belt.”

In 1941 the Odeon cut movie prices for the summer to 10 cents.

Twelve applicants applied for the job as policeman in 1904. Council went into “executive session for two minutes but it was a long two minutes.” They tabled the decision.

In 1960 Ada forgot to decorate the Christmas tree in Railroad Park until December 16 when someone noticed it was still bare.

I can’t dismiss these facts as unimportant and toss them in the wastepaper basket. You will probably get more “sundry memoranda” from time to time. They may tell us more about our town than do the momentous events and dates.

Pioneers and Indians

Sometimes on a rainy day my grandfather would get out his box of Indian arrowheads and relics. Some he found near Chief Stiahta’s village on the Scioto; some the plow turned up in the spring planting on the farm south of Ada. Even when I held the rough stones or the smooth flints in my hand it was hard to imagine real Indians. Today local farmers and relic hunters still find traces of the ancient Mound Builders and the Shawnees, Wyandots, Miamis, Senecas, Ottawas, Delawares, and Mingoos who once roamed our area.

By 1843 most of the tribes had left Ohio for the West, sent from their villages and hunting grounds to the reservations. The Indian stories, however, remain a part of our community history. Hog Creek named by the Indians Kosh-Ke-Sepee (Swine stream) still bears its white-man’s name. The story of the woman settler left alone one night who took her livestock into her cabin and with her rifle on her lap guarded her hogs and cow from an Indian raiding party is passed-down history. The accounts of the Wyandots from Upper Sandusky who set the Hog Creek prairie on fire to flush the game is another familiar tale. Our county seat reminds us of the stories of Simon Kenton. The vivid descriptions of Indian torture, of
Kenton who lived to tell about it and of Colonel Crawford, a
torture and death graphically described in an eye-witness
account by his son-in-law, Dr. Knight, are recorded by R.C.
Brown in the Hardin County History of 1883. These accounts
dispel any romantic notions we may have about Indians and
make clear the dangers of the wilderness.

When the first Hardin county settlers, Peter McArthur and
Daniel Campbell, came from Ross county in 1818 they built log
cabins in McDonald township, planted corn, and left to bring
their families to the new homestead. It’s easy to understand
why they didn’t return until 1822—news of expected Indian
outbreaks in this area. When the Campbells did return it was to
danger and hardship. After two of their children died they
returned again to the safety of Ross county. When they came
back to their Hardin county land in 1829, it was to stay. Round-
dhead was organized in 1832, the first permanent settlement in
the county, and Daniel Campbell was appointed Justice of the
Peace. He was later elected Hardin County Recorder and led
the organization of the Scioto Marsh Draining Company in 1850.
His son-in-law, Alexander Given, was to become a respected
probate judge.

These were merely facts in community history until last

Creek on County Road 90
summer when some of Daniel Campbell’s descendants showed me his portrait and let me hold the musket-loading rifle carried by the first white settler in Hardin county. Lifting that heavy rifle brought history a little closer to the present.

If you pass through Roundhead, stop by the bridge and look along the banks of the Scioto where Indians once lived. Or if you wander the county roads between Kenton and Ada, stop and look down the creek on County road 90 by the bridge. The view of water, trees, and undergrowth will make the stories of the early settlers and Indians not as far back in the pages of history as you thought. In fact, if you use a little imagination they will be as close as the smooth wood stock of an old rifle or the face in an old portrait.

**Soda Fountains**

Hot summer days make me think about soda fountains. Most of them were in rooms that had fans with blades whirling on the high ceilings to create a feeling that perhaps it was cooler there than out on the village sidewalks. Each soda fountain had distinctive features; each person behind the fountain is a memorable character in my small-town recollections.

My first soda-fountain memory comes from my father’s store across from the ONU campus. On the other side of the French doors was Dean McElroy’s College Inn. An exciting place to a three-year-old, the campus store was filled with students who dropped in after class for “a coke with lots of ice.”

Dana Welsh didn’t have a soda fountain in his drugstore where the Senior Citizens meet now, but the spots where Burke Gardner and Sig Peper had their stores did. Both had booths but the fountain seats were the place to sit for the town news.

Balish’s Confectionery in the Brewer block and Doling’s Bakery where the Liberty-National bank is now had marble-top fountains. When we were small someone had to lift us up to the high stools. We could get in a couple of fast spins before the adults made us stop. Mr. Balish’s homemade candies were displayed in glass cases opposite the fountain. The smell of peanuts and candy syrup often mixed with the smell of chocolate Rose Balish was using at the fountain.

Dolings had a case with baked goods opposite their fountain and Doling memories for many are not only of ice cream but of French pastries layered with nuts, cinnamon and icing, round cinnamon rolls, or rectangular rolls covered with brown sugar and pecans. These good things were also on display in the front window and if that didn’t bring you in, the smell of bread baking in the ovens in the back room next to Railroad Park alley.
would.

The Ada Dairy where the Herald office is today also had a fountain. Jim Ressig or Mr. Smith would dip scoops of ice cream into the mixer and serve a milkshake so thick you couldn’t drink it with a straw.

A job as a soda jerk gave a teenager some status because he could reward his friends with an extra scoop of ice cream or an extra squirt of cherry syrup but it was hard work. One summer between my college years Helen Hites whose summer job was cashier at Walgreens in Lima put in a good word for me and I was hired as a fountain clerk. As anyone who has worked behind a fountain knows, by the end of the day your legs ache from standing and your arms pass the aching stage from dipping ice cream. When you put the metal container on the mixer you may get a shock. If you don’t tilt the glass just right the soda water sprays you with syrup. The hazards are many. My father tells of being covered from head to toe with marshmallow creme when containers exploded in the storeroom.

Looking back, it’s easy to see why fountains disappeared. A five-cent “coke with lots of ice” could take several hours to drink. Instead of tending to his main business the store owner often found himself washing glasses or cleaning the fountain. Soda fountains are hard to find today and I’m sorry some kids will never have the experience of sitting on a high stool, giving it a couple of fast twirls, and sipping a soda on a hot summer afternoon.

George Jameson’s Office

The small brick building on Highland avenue behind Dr. Bob Elliott’s office was the Ada Public Library until the new building was completed in 1952. Later it served as Dr. Tom Martin’s office and then as Dr. Duane Wires’ office. A physical fitness center was the last business to occupy the room.

Soon it will be filled with the documents, books, and memorabilia of our community’s past as it becomes the repository for the Ada Public Library’s historical holdings. Before Emma Mertz or Opal Hixon checked out our books, the building was the law office of George Jameson from 1900 until he died in 1913.

George Jameson and his wife Mary Elizabeth (McClure) Jameson, whom he called “Lib,” grew up together in Apple Creek, Ohio and their romance began in their childhood. George visited her brother Alfred often, not always to see his friend but to catch a glimpse of Alfred’s sister. Later, Alfred and George roomed together at Kenyon college. George and
Mary Elizabeth were married in 1861. He served in the Civil War and then after two years of study received his law degree from the University of Michigan. Their only child, Charles, was born in 1866.

Lima became their first home after his graduation and Jameson avenue and Charles street defined the boundaries of their "wooded acres." On Market street the Jamesons built a large brick house which he designed. In addition to his law practice Mr. Jameson was the organizer and president of the original Lima Street Railway Company. The cars were horse-drawn then but many of us can remember the thrill of riding the electric street cars on Market to the Public Square.

The Jameson family history in Hardin county begins in 1883 when the family moved to their land on the Hog Creek Marsh. At the edge of Dola (North Washington then) the Jamesons built a lovely brick home similar to the Market street house in Lima, even to the tower on the top. "Jameson Manor" stands today on the marsh, a lovely farm tended by Charles and Bernadette Poling since 1962. Leo Clark lived in the house in the 1940's. The rich soil still produces crops for the Jennings Stambaugh heirs who own the farm.

In 1899, George Jameson's "Lib" died of pneumonia. All Hardin county records of her death make note of their ideal marriage and George Jameson's devastating loss. He could not bear to live in the house without her and moved to Ada. His son, Charles, had married Elma Sanford in 1888 and later they lived on her parents' "Longbranch Farm" (renamed Oak Grove Farm) on route 81. By 1900, George Jameson had the brick building on Highland avenue constructed, put his law office in
the front and had living quarters in the back. He survived his
grief in a close relationship with his son and his six grandsons:
Edwin, Cloyd, Sinclair, Sanford, Walter and Robert. At times
the boys and their parents lived in Ada in the winter months so
the boys could attend the Ada schools. Robert Jameson
remembers his grandfather renting a horse and buggy in Ada to
pick up his grandsons at the farm. They often drove to Dola
"within sight of the Dola house but never went to it."

Many people remember George Jameson as an excellent
lawyer, an active Presbyterian, and as a dignified gentleman
dressed in a Prince Albert coat and trousers and a tall black
hat. In 1901, he published a tribute to his wife, "In Memoriam,"
and always kept her portrait above his desk in the little brick
building.

Robert Jameson, George Jameson's grandson, lives in
Charleston, West Virginia and in his retirement years is busy
with historical projects. He reads the Ada Herald to keep in-
formed on town news, changes in his old high school and ONU
where he received his undergraduate degree. His family
history published in 1982, The Jamesons and Related Families
and George Jameson's "In Memoriam," will soon be a part of
the holdings in the brick building on Highland.

Thanks to Mr. Jameson for supplying the historical family
photos.

George Jameson and his law office, 112 E. Highland Ave., Ada, Ohio
Memorial Park Bandstand

The original 1946 plans for War Memorial Park included a structure at the east end of the football field next to the swimming pool to serve as a speakers’ platform and a bandstand. After the playing field was completed, the park board decided to wait and put the bandstand in the park grove. In 1951 a raised concrete stage, the first phase, was completed in time for the Farmers and Merchants Picnic. It was all that money would allow, for that same year the Ada Farm Service had been given a contract to erect the steel gates at the entrance to the field.

As soon as word got around town about the new bandstand, the park board began to receive suggestions for its dedication. All the suggestions were the same and the board assured the community that the dedication had already been decided. Everyone was in agreement. Only one person was worthy of the honor—Ernest Routson.

“Ernie” had filled our town and community with music for as long as most residents could remember. Born in Ada in 1878 he had attended the state school for the blind because of his poor eyesight. It was there he became interested in music and helped pay his way at the school by playing in Columbus bands. In 1905 he became the custodian and fireman at the Ada schools and remained there until he retired in 1947. Generations remember Ernie at the school where he built stage settings for class plays and started a high school orchestra in 1915. During two wars he often filled in for the music teachers who left for the service.

Ernie had formed a boys band in 1912 but it is the community band he started during World War I that most people remember. The band played for summer concerts in Railroad Park on Wednesday nights and then at the Farmers and Merchants Picnic until 1963.

In 1953, our centennial year, the park board completed the bandshell over the concrete stage. Everyone thought it was magnificent. Ernie sat in the park testing the acoustics for he wanted his community band to sound its best that year. Before noon on Picnic day the musicians took their places on the stage under the new bandshell. The Everhart boys from Columbus, Bob and Dick, now doctors, and Gene, a lawyer, came as they tried to do each year to play with Ernie’s band. Men and women from the town and country who had played for Ernie when they were much younger filled the chairs. Many of their children sat on the stage beside them ready to make music. Although Ernie’s baton was not as steady and he had to lean a little closer
over his music stand, the band had never sounded better. In 1963 at the Town and Gown banquet, Ernest Routson was named "Man of the Year."

In 1985 when the bandshell was in need of repair, the park board decided to replace it with another structure. Ernie's "monument" may be gone but as long as a band plays a Sousa march in the park many of us will remember Ernie and his music.
Ada's Main Street, 1988, from the railroad looking south.

By Thad A. Welch

By Thad A. Welch
Small Town Sampler IV

by Betty Miller
Nothing is more important to local history than its photographers and artists. Dates and events recorded in words by village historians are brought to life in old snapshots or in sketches of buildings and houses that no longer exist. A photograph of a community celebration that filled a town with noisy excitement on one special day in its life can be frozen in time for future generations.

The individuality and character of a community is expressed most clearly in the faces from its past. Although some of the faces may not be familiar to us, these people gave us a heritage. Their work, their special talents and their visions created the kind of community we live in today.

Some people who lived where we live now achieved recognition in the wider world, but great deeds are not required to achieve a space in local history. A citizen who planted some trees, a woman who worked on an improvement project or a man who was a good neighbor can attain a permanent place in a small town's memory. A section of photographs in this collection of samplers focuses on some of these faces.

© Elizabeth (Betty) Miller, 1990

Cover: Front, Johnstown 1855, as drawn by Agnew Welsh, from "History of the Ada Community.

Cover design and layout by Janet Hubbell.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President Taft’s Visit</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town Editors</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sundry Memoranda”</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner Hall</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town and Gown Banquet</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ada School Landmarks</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip to Lima</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteside Opera House</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Justice Docket</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faces From the Past</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to the Movies</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shanks Family</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Family</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and Politics</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabe Hubble’s Adventures</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Letter</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Campus Cannons and Dr. Crile</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town Progress</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mertz, the Furniture Man</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rites of Spring</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depot History</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinderella’s Story</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Memories:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gant/Huber</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Montgomery</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendell Hughes</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Faces” Identifications</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenes from the Past</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
President Taft’s Visit

In January all signs seemed to indicate that 1910 would be a prosperous and peaceful year for the citizens of the village of Ada, Ohio.

M.L. Snyder and Agnew Welsh, the editors of the two town newspapers, The University Herald and The Ada Record, were gathering the news for their weekly issues. The 1910 January news was not unusual: Ruth Circle of the Church of Christ announced a soup supper to replace the earlier supper canceled because of bad weather; Donald Robertson and his company of players from the Chicago Art Institute would present “that great American play, The Art of Life” at the NuAda Theatre on January 18; the Ohio Northern University Artists’ Series would feature John Hersh, basso, from Cincinnati and his accompanist, Miss Alice Shiels of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music on January 25 in Brown auditorium; the athletes of Company G were practicing for their January basketball game at the armory with the undefeated Crestline Cubs. These routine announcements would soon give way to more
momentous news.

At Ohio Northern on Main Street, the 32 faculty members were in their classrooms, including a law and economics professor, Frank B. Willis who in five years would be elected governor of Ohio. Hard at work but looking forward to graduation in June were the 250 seniors. In the office of ONU president, Albert Edwin Smith, discussions were taking place that would make 1910 an unforgettable year in the pages of the Ada history books—the year a President of the United States came to Ada to deliver the commencement address at Ohio Northern University.

Early in February, rumors of President Taft’s visit began to circulate through the town grapevine. On February 23, Dr. Smith had sent the invitation to President William Howard Taft. On February 25, he received the answer from the White House and it was “yes.” Taft would be in Ada on June 3 to deliver the commencement address and to review the military units on parade. He also accepted the invitation to lunch with Dr. Smith at his home. To convince those who couldn’t believe the rumors were true, The University Herald printed a copy of President Taft’s letter to Dr. Smith on the front page.

Taft was coming to a small village in Ohio to pay the political debt he owed John Wesley Hill. Hill, a prominent Methodist
minister in New York City, was a loyal alumnus of ONU. His father J.W. Hill, a retired Methodist minister at 79, still lived in Ada and occasionally preached a sermon at the local church. His son had toured the nation, using his eloquent voice to campaign for Taft. In return for his efforts, he asked Taft to come to his old school and give a commencement speech.

President Taft delivers the 40th annual commencement address at Ohio Northern University. Photo from 1911 ONU yearbook.

As soon as the date was confirmed, Mayor Campbell and Dr. Smith began to form their committees. Their main concern was the safety of the President. In 1881 Garfield had been assassinated, and only nine years before in 1901 McKinley had been shot while attending a public function. With these two events on their minds, the mayor "appointed Major Cliffe Deming the duty of safeguarding the President." The ONU military units would work with the National Guard and the secret service men from Washington.

The two hotels, the boarding houses, the downtown businesses, and the five restaurants began to spruce up their rooms for the visitors who would descend on the town. The Methodist Church members began a good cleaning because if it rained the ceremonies would be held in the church. On April 7, Mayor Campbell called a public meeting at the armory to tell the citizens about the plans for decorating the town and to urge them to take advantage of "a golden opportunity for Ada to add to her glory and fame." Ada businessmen had raised $250 for
flags and bunting and the mayor suggested flags for each home. Cunningham’s Dry Goods store quickly put flags and bunting on sale.

In May the college military battalion drills intensified. The units had always tried for a “first” on Military Contest Day, but this year it was even more important to make a good showing. Friedley’s Livery barn offered “swell rigs for a drive out to see the cadet battalions in camp.” The swell rigs would “backtrip” the people to the First National Bank corner. Circus posters went up in town announcing the June 15 appearance in Ada of Robinson’s Famous Shows with over 100 feature acts performed on a “Roman race track.” Perhaps the show owners hoped the euphoria of June 3 would linger until June 15 and they’d have a big crowd. No doubt it would be a swell show as it was touted as “The Towering Pinnacle of the Amusement World.”

Ten days before the President’s visit, the town adorned itself in red, white and blue. Pictures of Taft were everywhere. Professional decorators began their work at the campus using the orange and black colors of the college and the national colors. From the campus flagpole “ran strings of streamers, banners and bunting to every corner” in red, white and blue to
honor the distinguished guest.

Thursday afternoon as reporters and visitors began arriving at the depot, the wind began to blow and it rained, but by the next morning when the President's train pulled in at 10:30 a.m. the rain had stopped and a huge crowd had gathered around the depot. Dr. Smith went aboard to welcome the visitor and John Wesley Hill who accompanied him. When the President appeared on the car platform the University Herald reports, "At the first sight of that characteristic broad smile a mighty shout went up from the crowd in greeting." The festivities began. A fine carriage and horses awaited the President and his military attache, Captain Butt. Escorted by town and gown dignitaries in carriages or in automobiles, the carriage started north to Montford, east to Main and moved to the campus with cheering crowds on both sides of Main Street.

The grandstand had been erected so that it faced the university buildings. When the President stepped onto the platform, the audience and graduates rose to give him a fine chautauqua salute. As they waved their white handkerchiefs in the air, the sun broke through the clouds. The ONU band played and then John Wesley Hill gave the invocation, facing the building which still bears his name. The choir sang and after a brief introduction by Dr. Smith, the President delivered his address. He thanked Dr. Hill for the opportunity to speak at the university and paid tribute to the university's founder, Dr. Lehr, who was seated on the platform. Then, perhaps because he looked at the faces of the graduates, he apologized: "I did not expect to see so many ladies in the class in caps and gowns and they will excuse me while I lecture to their brother members."

The University Herald printed the entire speech, but the Ada Record printed excerpts. The address had three major points: the immortality of character, influence, and gifts and concluded with this statement: "Without character life is a failure no matter what success you may have; with it life is a success no matter what failures you may have made." Sitting at the press tables below the podium were seventeen local newsman, reporters from Cincinnati, Toledo, Cleveland, three New York papers, and representatives from Associated Press, United Press and Hearst News. They had copies of the President's text and had probably heard the ideas expressed at many commencements, but the pads and pencils were busy during the President's opening comments. He spoke of the lessening editorial influence of the press and of newspapers that "sought
to control the opinion of the people by misrepresentations.” In a 1906 speech, President Roosevelt had coined the word “muckrakers” and Taft used it when he spoke of journalists “drunk with power.” The telegraph operators estimated that 20,000 words with an Ada Ohio dateline went over the wires after the speech.

After the luncheon at Dr. Smith’s home on Johnson Street, the President held a press conference. The Ada businessmen paid for a buffet lunch for the reporters and the Masonic lodge rooms became press headquarters. At 2:30 the President reviewed the four cadet companies of the university, the six companies of the National Guard, a group of Civil War veterans and four bands. At 3:30 the President’s train pulled out of Ada.

The ONU president, the mayor, the village reception committee composed of S. D. Hazlett, Louis A. Greer, B. S. Young, and professors Willis, Wright, and Beer—and especially Major Deming—must have breathed a collective sigh of relief. Other than a few petty thefts from parked buggies and autos, everything had gone well. Everyone wondered how many people had been in Ada. The University Herald used 15,000 in its headline. Agnew Welsh of The Ada Record in a friendly jab at his competition made this statement: “A few placed it as low as 10,000, while some enthusiasts claim 30,000 and there are many who can figure it out to you within a gnat’s heel that there were 15,000.”

Ada had to brag a little about its coup. The other Ohio colleges were envious of the publicity and prestige the President’s visit had brought Ada. The University Herald printed a copy of the Columbus Dispatch cartoon titled “Ada Has a Caller.” Pictured is the portly Taft seated on a sofa beside a shy young girl with ADA printed on her skirt. Taft says, “Ada is a pretty name.” In the corner of the cartoon the other girls stand in a circle of gossip and comment: Mi-Amy, “She’s such a little snip.” Della-Ware, “Well, I can’t understand what he sees in her.” Mary Etta, “They say she flirts. Won’t she have her nose in the air.”

The record of the day the President came to Ada is in old newspapers, the commencement programs and the postcards and photographs. Gene McClure of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, recently sent a framed six-foot long panoramic view of the campus and the faces from that eventful day. It now hangs on the wall of the Ada Public Library Historical Annex. Some of the programs and postcards are there too. The most vivid memories come from the eyewitness accounts. Wheeler McMillen, as an “accredited” reporter for the Ada Record at 17, sat at the press
table and got to shake hands with the President and the big city reporters later. Edith Rutledge sat with the graduates but received a blank diploma because she lacked a few hours of credit. After the ceremony she decided she would rather marry one of the graduates than have a signed diploma. My mother, who was thirteen, helped her friend Harriet Smith at the luncheon for the President. She remembers only the girth of the President and that he spilled gravy on his tie.

Whatever the memories, it must have been, in addition to auspicious, a swell day in Ada.

This cartoon appeared in the Saturday, June 4, 1910, issue of the Columbus Dispatch.

Small Town Editors

On April 3, 1872, Bent Thompson set the type for his stories, turned his old hand press and printed Ada's first newspaper, The Ada Record. Because the citizens believed a hometown paper was an important addition to a growing town, they had
supported his venture by guaranteeing him a bonus of $600. A second paper, The University Herald, began to print its news of the college and the town in 1885. M.L. Snyder changed the name to The Ada Herald in 1916. For 116 years we’ve had a weekly newspaper to read, and at times two papers. Small-town weeklies are in a class by themselves—so are the editors.

The days of a small-town editor begin early and end late. He doesn’t try to cover the national news; his readers follow that in their daily papers. Instead, his job is to record the events that later become local history. Who got married? Who had a baby? Who died? Who took a vacation? Who had visitors? What are the mayor and the village council up to? What’s going on at the school? What changes are taking place along Main Street? What’s happening on the farms and in the nearby towns? These are the topics he works with to fill his columns.

Unlike the big city editor with a staff of reporters, the small-town editor often has to find the answers to the questions himself. He may call for an interview, grab his notebook and camera and leave the office, conduct the interview, take the picture, return to write the article, develop the picture, make a photocopy for the story, set his own story in print, arrange the layout and proofread the results. Sometimes he helps deliver the newspapers to the sellers. The rural correspondents and citizens are his reporters and the rest of the people in the office work as hard as he does.

The day after publication his phone begins to ring with readers who thank him for coverage (very seldom) or readers who complain (very often). His office becomes a gathering place for conversation about village events as a story remains half finished on his desk. He knows all the town gossip but can’t print most of it. Because he too is a citizen he often attends town meetings at night, always with a pad and pencil ready. His fellow townsmen are also his customers and advertisers so he must smile and be pleasant as they tell him how he could do his job better or criticize his efforts.

The morning after the paper goes to the printer and before the phone starts ringing, the editor may sit back in his chair and take a deep breath. Not for long, however, because he must start on next week’s issue.

I used “he” to include all small-town editors. The women readers will be happy to know that in 1887 Miss Alberta Smith served as editor of The University Herald.
“Sundry Memoranda”

After a summer of reading old newspapers, I have another collection of what Agnew Welsh called “sundry memoranda.” Although not containing enough information to turn the sentences into stories, the statements forced me to stop and consider the possibilities.

• The Ada Herald announced the first bloodmobile visit to Ada on July 13, 1951.
• In 1968 Kiwanis had “an impromptu question and answer session” with several council members and water board officials. When Wilbur Umphress was asked why water and sewer rates were so high, he said the present bond would not be retired until 1987.
• “The Downtown Athletic Director” JET began to write sports stories for the Ada Herald in August, 1972.
• In 1947 the Alger Variety Store advertised Miltex dresses for $6.95. “A dress for any occasion.”
• In August 1957, Ada council changed the name of Hufford Street to South Park Drive and Maglott Street to North Park Drive.
• The Great Northern Detective Company of Ada was granted a charter in September 1890.
• On June 12, 1975 the Ada Area Chamber of Commerce, saying it was time for a town meeting asked, “What are priorities? We need more public meetings.”
• School board president, Edward Powell, accepted the new Hardin Northern building from the architects in April 1953.
• In October 1903, the Methodist Church people “showed appreciation for the heroic efforts of the firemen in saving their church by serving them an elegant supper.” They also took up a collection and gave the firemen $66 for their fund.
• On May 14, 1948 Dwight Baughman was elected president of the Ada Boosters Club. He announced the first project would be a foundation for the bleachers at the field. By December, Booster Club membership had reached 749.
• In 1923 George Richard, an Ada teacher, drove a Model T Ford 443 miles in 15½ hours.
• In 1938 Harley Messick bought the Sales 5c to $1 store.
• On Monday, September 13, 1948 the opening show of the Kinsey Komedy Players, in a tent on N. Johnson, was “Love, Honor, and Oh Baby.”
• In May of 1968 Mayor Bob Bischoff answered citizens’ questions about the income tax ordinance in an Ada Herald
“letter to the editor.”

- William Routson, 92, Ada's last veteran of the Civil War was buried with military honors in Woodlawn Cemetery in 1938.
- January 19, 1962 Lost and Found Item: "a ball point pen on Main Street. Owner may have same by identifying and paying for this ad."
- When it was dedicated on August 13, 1879, Hill building on the ONU campus did not yet bear the name of John Wesley Hill. It was dedicated as "New Building."
- March 19, 1948: Council lifted an ordinance passed in 1904 that declared boys and girls under 18 were not allowed in bowling alleys.
- The Ada Model Railroad Association put in a new heating system on the second floor of the depot and renovated the restrooms in 1975.
- On March 28, 1968 Mrs. Harry Judson sold her Vero Beach, Florida, home to Dr. Billy Graham, world evangelist.
- In June of 1948, 18 members of the ONU class of 1898 met for their 50-year reunion. Their class motto was "Forsan et olim meninisse juvabit." This quotation from Vergil translated reads: "Perhaps it will be pleasant someday to remember even these things."

**Turner Hall**

When the siren on top the city building began its noisy alert on Thursday, February 3, 1949 at 2:30 in the morning, it signaled the destruction of an Ada landmark. The next morning all that was left of Turner Hall on the corner of Gilbert Street and Lehr Avenue was a pile of smoldering ruins.

When a landmark is destroyed it affects the entire town, but often the loss is a more personal one. In 1941, Turner Hall was my first campus home. The young women who live in Stambaugh Hall, which replaced Turner Hall, would be envious if I described the room where my roommates Jean, Louise and I lived. On the second floor, the bay windows on the south and tall windows on both sides of the room gave us a view of trees and the campus beyond. The high ceiling and wide dimensions made us feel we each had more than enough space.

A curved stairway led to the rooms downstairs, a small apartment where our housemother, Miss Gillespie, lived and the parlors where we had our parties. Curfew was 7 p.m. on weekdays and the housemother announced "lights out" at 10 p.m. If we had library permits we could stay out until 8 p.m. My
roommate, Jean, remembers that we went to the library a lot. Turner Hall had a porch that faced Gilbert Street and went around on the south side with wide steps—good places to sit and have serious talks. One more thing about the stairway—a freshman girl could make a spectacular entrance coming down that stairway in a taffeta formal gown on the way to a fraternity dance or the Engineer's Ball. Since dates had to wait in the hallway, they were sure to witness the entrance.

This impressive house where we lived had a rich history, but since we were more interested in finishing a class assignment for Jimmy Freeman, listening to the latest Glenn Miller record, or perfecting our jitterbug steps, I'm afraid we cared little about the history. A few years later, Sarah Lehr Kennedy gave a speech on Turner Hall based on things her father told her, and I wished I had paid more attention. Fortunately, her notes for the speech were preserved and now I can look back.

H.S. Lehr, the founder of the university, had the house built in 1888. The cherry, buckeye, and oak wood used for the woodwork and staircase came from the Lehr farm where Tom and Eleanor Tighe live. In 1889 the house became the home for President Lehr and his family until he sold it to P.W. Turner in 1902. This grand house had the first furnace in Ada, electric lights, four bell calls in the sitting room with a speaking tube for communication throughout the house, and even two bathrooms for family and guests. In 1930, the university bought it from the Turners to house freshmen women.

In the notes left from Mrs. Kennedy's speech are the names of visitors who passed through the house: four Ohio governors—Foraker, Bushnell, McKinley and Campbell—and a future governor and senator, Frank B. Willis. When William Jennings Bryan came to Ada to deliver a speech to an overflow audience at the Methodist Church, he was entertained at Turner Hall. Senator Simeon Fess and Eva Thomas were married in the front parlor. Distinguished bishops and West Point judges for the military contests were guests in the home. Crowds of students moved through the house at the student receptions or gathered on the side lawn where Lehr talked to them from the porch.

Probably the most elaborate event the house witnessed was on October 8, 1891 when William McKinley and Governor Campbell had their famous debate on free trade at the old fairgrounds. Ada was host to 15,000 visitors and Lehr entertained twelve of the guests at dinner in Turner Hall. Mrs. Kennedy's notes contain the sumptuous menu: blue points on
the half shell, soup, lake trout, turkey, sweet breads, fried oysters, chicken salad, lemon pie, plum pudding, ice cream, chocolate and white cakes, coffee and fruit. These are the memories from one hundred years ago.

Another person in Ada has memories of the night Turner Hall was destroyed by fire. A young education instructor, Katie Lou Craft, was the housemother in 1949. Katie Lou remembers being awakened by the smell of smoke and walls that seemed to be radiating heat. She woke the student in the next room, Sue Bremeyer, and told her to call Bert McBride, the ONU custodian, and the Ada fire department. The next task was to get the girls upstairs safely out of the house. As in any crisis, Katie Lou remembers one girl who grabbed a hairbrush as she ran from the room and a male student watching the fire who lifted the refrigerator from the kitchen to the yard only to discover that it took four students to move it the next day. Katie Lou put a coat over her nightgown and left behind her doctoral dissertation notes which reappeared later as charred bits of paper.

The college and the town handled the disaster together as
they had so many others. Sixteen girls and Katie Lou found temporary homes in the upper story of the infirmary, in sorority houses, the Terrace, or in the Ada homes of the Younkmans, the Barton Snyders, the Dr. A.L. Tipples and at Dean Raabe’s house. Katie Lou remembers that Mrs. Stambaugh who always seemed to sense the right time to help the university or the town gave each girl $50 “to buy shoes.” A young man on campus, Eugene Hanson, came to Katie Lou’s rescue and offered his support to help her recover from the ordeal.

Perhaps a modern dormitory is a more efficient and safer place to live, but some of us are glad we had the chance to live at Turner Hall—a symbol of the charm and elegance of an earlier period.

Thanks to Clyde Dornbusch who found a copy of Mrs. Kennedy’s old notes in the English department files and gave them to me; to Mary Kennedy for her stories; to Jean Evans March of Forest (one of my roommates) who helped me remember; to Katie Lou Hanson who had no trouble remembering the fire.

Town and Gown Banquet

The origin of the Town and Gown Banquet can be traced to 1870. In that year a committee from Findlay came to the village to persuade Henry Solomon Lehr he should become the head of their schools and establish his proposed normal school there. Delphos and Bluffton also wanted the normal school. Ada citizens were forced to choose a future for their small town and they took immediate action.

Although some pessimistic town leaders thought the normal school would be a losing proposition, others felt it was vital for the growth and welfare of the village. The optimists prevailed. The town agreed to furnish Lehr with three and one-half acres of land and to help raise money for the first building. The larger subscribers (over $20) were considered stockholders and could vote on the selection of trustees and decide where the Normal would be located. Because they chose a part of the Dobbins farm on the only muddy road leading into town, ONU is on Main Street instead of east on Lehr, west on Montford, or east on North Street.

The beginnings of the school were shaky and the pessimists probably grumbled, “I told you so.” The first building was not completed when 147 students arrived for the first term in 1871.
But the town opened the churches, the public meeting halls and every empty room in the village so classes could begin as scheduled.

In 1878, Ada citizens voted a tax of $30,000 for the school district to build another building for the expanding Normal enrollment. The school board gave the university control of the building; in return, the Normal gave free tuition in some “higher branches” to Ada High School students. When the university asked for transfer of school board land in 1901 for further expansion the citizens voted 540 to 41 to grant the request. Dr. Belt, the new ONU president, gave a token silver dollar to Agnew Welsh, the school board clerk, and the transfer was made.

The relationship between town and gown has always been close. The town invested in the university, and faculty invested in Ada business. But the bonds were closer than just financial ties. Students lived in Ada homes and when alumni returned to the campus they visited their Ada “families” and friends. Townspeople joined the university community in the cultural, social, and athletic events at the college. Faculty families were involved in local school and town projects. Church, civic, and town social groups are still a mix of town and gown.

At the urging of Dr. T.J. Smull, on November 26, 1956, the Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis and Rotary arranged “a goodwill party” for members of the ONU faculty. The dinner, held at the Student Center on campus was “an appreciation of what ONU means to Ada.” In 1957 the successful party was given the name, “Town and Gown Banquet” and the sponsoring groups were from both village and university.

At times the relationship between village and university has been stormy and often a crisis appeared to threaten both groups. But in town meetings they discussed problems and found solutions together. The Town and Gown Banquet became an event where ONU and the Ada community could express a mutual respect in their 118-year relationship.

Ada School Landmarks

Another Ada landmark has disappeared. Since most people in town didn’t know it existed (including me), this historic event would have passed unnoticed had not Leila Hooper called it to our attention. Developers building the new apartments behind the houses on N. Main Street and W. North Street have filled a
one-half acre hole that has been in Ada for over 100 years.

Leila reports that Sadie McElroy once told her she remembered when the hole was dug, about 1870. Sadie lived with her parents, the Dave McElroys, at 244 W. Center Street, later renamed North Street. A milliner, Sadie had a flourishing business at a time when a lady’s outfit was not complete without a hat. Walter and Leila sold the acreage containing the hole to Walter Lautenbach of Urbana in 1976.

A hole in the ground is not unusual, but the reason for the hole is part of our local history. The dirt was used as fill in the building of the old Union School that only a real old-timer could remember because it was completed in 1872. In 1892 it was replaced by the North building and many remember that

![First brick building, erected in 1872.](image)

Sketches from the Cn Yor Hi Book of 1911

school. The last students, carrying their books in brown paper bags, walked to the new elementary building in March of 1951. ONU used the North building for its engineering classes, and then it was torn down to be replaced by the new fire station. The school bell still has a place of honor on the site. It hangs above the old fire bell as part of the volunteer fireman memorial in front of the fire station. Former students have pleasant memories of the North school, and the building, a magnificent
structure, is a clear image in their minds.

I often wonder, however, if the students who walk down Montford on their way to the new school know they’re passing an earlier history. The frame schoolhouse built in 1852 where H.S. Lehr taught his first classes still stands. Originally on the corner of Main and Montford, where Bob and Avonelle Main

Old frame erected at the southwest corner of Main and Montford in 1852.

South Side Building, erected in 1890.

North Building, erected in 1892.
live, the schoolhouse was moved across the street where the Peter Previte family lives. It finally found a permanent spot at 222 W. Montford. Jeff and Kara Long and their daughter, Kristina, live in this historic structure.

The school board must have used the Union School plans when they built the South Side school in 1890 on the corner of S. Johnson Street and E. College Avenue. They look very much alike. Although the building is gone, the retaining wall along the sidewalk is still there. If you were a “south-ender” you remember imitating a tight-rope artist as you balanced on top of the cement support. The ground sloping to the wall is higher, so I wonder if there is a 100 year-old hole somewhere south of the tracks. By now it too must have gone the way of progress.

Historical facts turn up in the strangest places. The hole is gone but the cancelled bonds for the 1892 North building, signed by Agnew Welsh, the clerk, are in the new Ada Public Library Annex. Schoolday memories are bright and clear in the minds of all the former students.

**Trip To Lima**

When I was a child the end of the summer vacation in Ada culminated in a trip to Lima. Those were the days when some of the older people called it “Limey.” The trip meant getting dressed up and putting socks and shoes on grass-stained feet. My aunt and mother wore hats and white gloves since they were going to the city. It seemed like a long trip and the breeze that blew through the open windows of the car on my cousin Tom and me in the back seat was hot. I knew we were getting close to Lima when the Glen Alexander Insurance signs appeared along the highway. Then when we saw the car perched high on a pole I knew we were almost there. I never could figure out how they got the car on such a high pole and why it stayed there. I still haven’t figured it out.

We didn’t buy many clothes. My grandmother had already made me some school dresses (and bloomers to match) with material from Cunningham’s. We just looked at the latest styles in the Leader, Feldman’s and Gregg’s and rode the elevators. My mother usually bought my brown school oxfords at Crawford’s. They had an x-ray fitting machine (the latest thing); I stuck my foot in the machine and the x-ray showed whether the shoes would be big enough in six months for fast-growing feet.

After we got tired of watching my aunt and my mother try on
hats at Gregg’s, they relented and took us to the 5 & 10 cent store. Ada had dime stores but the one in Lima seemed immense. We looked at the toys and games and I got some new hair ribbons. The big bows slipped through a clip and fastened on your hair. Since I had a “boy’s bob” for the summer they never stayed put, but I thought they were pretty. The dreary shopping part of the trip was over and we were ready for the highlight of the day.

We had lunch at Jack’s Cafeteria on High Street. All the food looked wonderful and I always put too much on my tray. If it was a very hot day we went to the Ohio Theater to see the afternoon movie. The stores and sidewalks were hot but at the Ohio you had to wear a sweater. Arctic blasts swirled about you during the movie and made the heat more unbearable when you came out into the hot afternoon sun.

Before we left Lima we bought nuts at the stand in the square to bring home to those back in Ada. The car was radiating heat in waves so we stopped at the rootbeer stand before the long drive home. The mugs had ice on them when the girl brought them out and clipped the tray on the car window. The rootbeer was wonderful but so cold it made your throat and stomach ache.

I can’t remember much about the trip home—we dozed in the back seat. Supper was a light one because we were still full of cafeteria food, nuts, and rootbeer. We might sit on the front porch swing to cool off after supper but bedtime came early the night of the big shopping trip to Lima.

Whiteside Opera House

The old Ada town hall once stood where the municipal building is today. In 1881, when the town hall was completed, the street level doors led to the post office, the village officials’ offices and the Bon Ton restaurant. When the fire bell on top of the building clanged, the volunteers of the “Twilight Engine Company” went into action for the fire engine and hose carts were housed in the building too. The stairs to the right of the engine house, however, led to the second floor and a different world—the Whiteside Opera House.

Ada had opera houses before the Whiteside. The second floor of the Ream building on the corner of Main and Buckeye, where the parking lot is now, had a hall which could hold 60 to 70 people. Shows were presented by the Ada Histrionic Society. Small towns usually named their halls of entertainment “the
opera house” although no one expected to hear opera there. The theater was suspect, perhaps even immoral, and the pretentious title gave the place an aura of respectability.

The new Ada opera house drew big names and the latest in New York plays because it was located halfway between Pittsburgh and Chicago on the Pennsylvania railroad line. After performances, the actors and entertainers could have a drink at the Commercial Hotel bar or the Dewdrop Moonshine Saloon across from the railroad depot, and a good meal and a clean bed at the Young Hotel. Ada was prosperous and the 800 seats at the opera house were filled with enthusiastic audiences.

In 1896, the opera house was given the name of Walker Whiteside, a Shakespearean actor from New York, who was an Ada crowd pleaser. One of his cherished possessions was a spade used in a Hamlet production by Edwin Booth, the brother of John Wilkes Booth.

The 1896 Rice Ferguson directory lists the nine local men who managed the Whiteside Opera House. They booked the shows and sold the tickets. W.H. Park led the pit orchestra consisting of violin, flute, clarinet, cornet, double bass, trombone and trap drum. The orchestra was made up of local musicians with Miss Chat Miller at the piano.

Walker Whiteside gave the audience Shakespeare and per-

Early picture of Ada town hall and opera house. Postcard loaned by Mary Motter.
formances of *Rip Van Winkle*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Ben Hur* were favorites. The performances were publicized and reviewed by Agnew Welsh who in turn received the use of a box seat. In his review of *When the Bell Tolls*, Welsh praised a “great monastery scene where Lord Swansleigh is saved from the snowdrift by huge St. Bernard dogs.” The dogs were real. Not only were dramas presented but also specialty acts. Professor Jack Troy's educated dogs, Dell and Butterworth with their buck and wing dances, hypnotists, magicians and singers performed between acts. The Kinsey Komedy Kompany always played to packed houses and even had a Saturday matinee.

The opera house was rented out to other groups in town. The Farmers Institute used it for some of its gatherings. When graduation for the public school class of 1903 was moved to the opera house because the class was so large—36 seniors—the railings in the gallery were hung with class banners. Interclass had to be held at the opera house to accommodate the large crowd. In 1903, Professor W.W. Newcomer’s School of Expression presented Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*. Twenty-three local thespians made some quick changes to fulfill the advertised “forty different costumes.”

When $1,600 in improvements had to be made to avoid a closing by the State Inspector of Shops, council considered
selling the opera house, but no one would second the motion. Council discussed renting it to Co. G of the Ohio National Guard as an armory but because the citizens insisted, the opera house remained open and the repairs were made. Finally, the new movie houses began to draw the crowds away from live performances.

In 1923, the painted background scenes were stored and the opera house theater room was leased to the board of education for a five-year term to be used as a gymnasium.

The old town hall was replaced by the present municipal building in 1936. In the 1950’s one old wall of the lumber company next to the building still had some of the colored plaster from the old scenery. A few memories of the Whiteside Opera House remained too—and perhaps some echoes of Walker Whiteside’s Othello.


**Police Justice Docket**

Annabelle Orders brought me an old Police Justice Docket of the Village of Ada which Jim had rescued from destruction. The docket entries are handwritten when penmanship was an art. No cheap paper or computer print-outs, the pages are bound in an impressive leather book. The first entries, dated 1882, give a view of crime and punishment in an earlier time.

The police justice attempted to make his entries sound “legal.” Since Ada was filled with railroad workers and saloons, many of the town marshal’s arrests were for “disorderly conduct in the night season” or someone who “unlawfully did get intoxicated by drinking a certain intoxicating liquor the more particular name and description of which is to the affiant aforesaid unknown.”

The usual punishment for these crimes of human error was a fine of two dollars and costs. The costs could amount to six dollars and ninety cents, however, making a night on the town rather expensive. If the prisoner in custody couldn’t pay his fine he was taken to the jail where he stayed when he was not working on the “streets, allies, or other public works.” For this he was given 75 cents a day until the fine was paid. I did wonder about the intoxicated woman who was arrested for using
“barberous and noisy language” and “cussing and swearing and making threats.” Perhaps she had to clean the jail.

The street commissioner supervised the prisoner’s work; evidently he was a man of power and good judgment. One prisoner, “Taugle—whose real name is unknown” began his street work on August 29 in 1882. On August 30 the commissioner brought in a physician’s certificate testifying that “Taugle is liable to drop dead any minute.” The commissioner reported to the justice that he had done the only sensible thing. He had discharged Taugle and sent him quickly out of town. Other fines for prisoners working on the streets were “thrown off” because the men were “totally deaf” or “on account of severe cold.” Thus justice was tempered with mercy.

Usually it was wise to plead guilty—especially if you were caught in the act. R. Houston climbed on a Pennsylvania freight car but since he “did not board said car as a passenger, nor had the said R. Houston any business on said car” he was fined four dollars and eighty-five cents. Since he had only two dollars in his pocket, it was accepted by the justice. Case closed.

One defendant pleaded not guilty on November 24, 1882. Usually a trial was held in the mayor’s court the next day with four citizens sworn in as jurors. In this case the trial had to be postponed until December 1. After one night in jail, the defendant changed his plea to guilty and paid his fine.

Now and then a crime was of a more serious nature, and the prisoner had to be delivered to the Hardin County sheriff so the case could be heard in the Common Pleas court in Kenton. In 1885 the marshall, R.W. Botkin, had to rent a rig from the livery stable and pay someone to go with him. His bill for all this expense was four dollars and seventy-five cents. This case was a robbery. Thieves had stolen some personal property of “one William Cole.” The items taken were a suit of clothes, gold cuff buttons, a razor, a pocket mirror, a silk handkerchief, one linen shirt and collar, and a shawl. In addition to wanting to improve their appearance the robbers must have been hungry for they also took “one plate and three pies.”

Those who broke the village laws were dealt with swiftly by the mayor, the police justice and the street commissioner. Peace was soon restored and the streets were clean and in good repair.

The Police Justice Docket will be placed in the Ada Library Annex to become a part of local history.
Faces From The Past

The history of a small community often comes to life only when a newspaper photograph, a studio portrait or an old yearbook picture produces a face to go with a name and the memories.

Last year the Ada Herald focused on some of Ada’s treasures—the old buildings on Main Street. This year the focus is on another treasure—the people who make up the real essence of a community. Some of the people are still around (perhaps a little older), others have left town for other places, and many are with us only in memory. They are all part of our history.

The Herald will have a contest to see who can put the most names with the faces—one point for each face you can identify correctly. The only clue will be the year the picture appeared in the newspaper, a yearbook, a family album, or some other publication. You'll have to keep in mind that newspapers often use file pictures with stories. The pictures won’t be ones you’ve seen recently. That would be too easy.

Some faces we wanted to include won’t appear because the original was faded or the newspaper too yellowed for a clear copy. Perhaps the ones that do appear will remind you of other faces and other times. (Identifications begin on page 71.)
(Identifications begin on page 71.)
(Identifications begin on page 71.)
Going To The Movies

In 1938 when the Ada Theater opened as the newest entertainment spot in Ada, a teenager could have a big night out for 50 cents. That would buy him a ticket to a first-run movie and a sack of popcorn, with enough change left for a hamburger and a coke after the show. Although the prices changed with the times, the Ada community has been going to the movies for 82 years.

Jean Snyder’s interview with Harry and Mae Vestal appeared in the August 13, 1948 issue of the Ada Herald as a history of the early movie houses in Ada. In 1906 John Snyder opened the Nickelodeon in the room now occupied by Futureshape. With a sheet hung for a screen and benches for seats, the theater attracted community residents who crowded in to see the latest in silent films. Five cents was the admission for every age. The Vestals bought the Nickelodeon in 1908 and renamed it The Lyric. With its new stage, screen and raised floor so the people in the back row could see, it was so popular that in 1914 the Vestals opened an overflow theater, The Southern, at 105 S. Main. Mrs. Vestal played the piano to furnish background for the action on the screen with Mr. Vestal “lecturing from pamphlets furnished by the film companies.” In 1912 the theater added vaudeville—lion and bear acts and some ONU musicians who performed for free. The admission was raised to 10 cents.

Harry Vestal had some good stories to tell of those early days. One story had “Fred Bentley lying in a coffin on the steps of the theater” buried with leaves dropped on him by the people passing by. What movie do you suppose he was advertising? Another story concerns a roomer living in the back part of the theater who opened his door to face a chained bear from the vaudeville act. The man nearly “died of fright.”

Mae Vestal was appointed to the motion picture censors board of Ohio from 1913-1916. Her position led both Vestals to California in 1915 for the opening of Universal City and “the beginning of the Hollywood industry.” Mr. Vestal told Jean he remembered “dancing with Mary Pickford” and meeting Buffalo Bill and Francis X. Bushman.

Since the movies seemed to be here to stay, some Ada businessmen financed an open air theater listed in the 1911 directory as the Air Dome Vaudeville Theater at 222 N. Main. In 1914 the Odeon was built by Jacob Clum in the spot were the Napa Auto Parts store is now. Snyder lists the first owners as
Toms and Bradley of Lima. Later owners were Carl Moore and Mr. and Mrs. W.R. Rhodes.

Whether your movie memories include William S. Hart, Valentino, Hopalong Cassidy, Clark Gable or Bambi, I bet the images are so vivid you can almost smell the popcorn.

We thank Jean Snyder Felt for recording her interview with the Vestals. It deserves some pages in our local history books.

A comment in the interview raises yet another mystery to be solved. In 1914 the Vestals had a Columbus man “take moving pictures of the first Farmers and Merchants Picnic.” Someone also took some movies in 1910 when President Taft visited Ada. Mr. Vestal planned to give these films to the village archives but they were “mislaid or stolen.” Vestal thought they might “be lying in some attic or storeroom.” Were they ever found?

Shanks Family

In 157 years most of the early farms in Liberty Township have changed owners. A few, however, have been passed down through the generations, and descendants of some of the early settlers still grow crops on the land their ancestors cleared. One of these farms is owned by Bob and Anna Mary Shanks on County Road 65. At some time in their lives, seven generations of the Shanks family have called this home.

Bob’s great-great-grandfather, Thomas Shanks, came to eastern Hardin County with his 13 children in 1832, the year before it became a county. He had also bought land in Liberty Township several miles southeast of what would one day become Ada. In 1837 when his son John was 16, Thomas sent him to clear the land. It would be difficult for the present generation to imagine what hard work went into clearing a large area of wilderness, felling huge trees and providing drainage with oxen, horses and crude homemade tools.

John married Jane Mustard in 1846 and they bought the land on County Road 65 across from the Mustard farm. The back part of the house that stands there today was built in 1856. To accommodate a family, the front part of the house and the upper story were added soon after that. John and Jane’s children, four children who died young and the two surviving boys, John H. and Royal Sheldon, were born before the Civil War.

Bob says it would take a crowbar to remove the original
walnut wainscoting. Wide ash floorboards upstairs have burned spots to show where the coals jumped from the stove in the hired hand's room. One of the additions was a portico at the front and open porches on both sides of the house. Bob says one of the family stories is that John's family decided to remove them because the preacher was the only visitor who ever used the portico and the front entrance to the parlor. A prosperous farmer, John once owned and farmed 640 acres in the area.

John H., the bachelor son of John, was the next to live in the house and oversee the farming. Milo and Anna Shanks Cronbaugh moved in to help. Royal Sheldon, Bob's grandfather, lived on the south farm. To their friends and neighbors they were known as J.H. and Shelly. J.H. at one time had over 2,000 sheep housed in a large sheep barn with 12-foot cupolas. In 1933, the wool J.H. had stored in the barn waiting for a better price was sacked and shipped to a buyer. It filled one railroad car.

Both Shelly and Bob's grandmother, Mary Catherine Ream, attended H.S. Lehr's "select school" in 1868 when Lehr was Ada's schoolmaster in the small wooden school that now stands on Montford behind the Previte home. Bob's father, William C. "Will," studied engineering at ONU but returned to the farm after Shelly died. Bob and Anna Mary moved to the house in 1940 from the south farm and their three children, Cathy, Tom and Dick grew up there and went to the Ada schools. Edie, their granddaughter, lived most of her life on the farm until she graduated from ONU in 1987 with a degree in pharmacy. She calls the farm her home too.

Two other reminders of the early days provide a family story. John was a member of the militia. One of the historical documents preserved by Agnew Welsh is a call for a parade assembly of the Goshen Rifle Rangers signed by the captain, John Shanks. According to Bob, the story is that in 1864 when John left on horseback to serve his 100 days in the Civil War with the 135th Regiment, he broke off a branch from the top of a small maple tree at the entrance to the lane to use as a riding crop. Today, the tree is taller than the house.
Bob and Anna Mary keep the Shanks history close at hand and try to add to it—the Scottish background and the roots in the United Kingdom. Bob says they have discovered “Anne Boleyn hangs on the family tree” and because a Shanks once guarded the body of an English king who was killed in a hunting accident, the family was awarded an estate and coat of arms. Thomas Shanks’ old account book, with entries when he was a storekeeper in Mansfield, Ohio, lists “jills” purchased for 12 1/4 cents—obviously a wee drop for medicinal purposes. The family Bible contains the record of births, marriages and deaths. Family portraits of Bob’s ancestors, and Anna Mary’s ancestors, the Tituses, Cauffields and McCameys, line the center hall. In a place of honor by the stairs is John Shanks’ Civil War discharge signed by Abraham Lincoln.

The family still collects stories. Bob tells of a helper who got a drink from the well and announced the water tasted “like it got hair on it.” Knowing that sulfur water was used in the barn but the drinking water came from a dug well, Bob investigated and discovered a groundhog in the well. After Bob explained that Thomas, who lived with John after his wife died, had lived to 101, John had lived to 92 and J.H. had lived to 89, the helper decided that rather than having the well condemned perhaps the water should be bottled and sold.

The long lane leads back to the Shanks house on the small rise in the land, the maples still stand at the entrance to the lane (although Anna Mary says “their days are numbered”) and the corn grows tall in the fields as it did in 1840. When Bob looks out over his fields he says, “I wouldn’t want to live anywhere else.”

Drive east on Lima Road, turn right on 65, look down the lane beyond the maples to the house and glimpse a part of community history.

Shanks homestead. Photo by Thad Welch.
Long Family

When the descendants of Tobias Long gather at the old homestead for a family reunion, sometimes 200 or more are in attendance. Phillip Long who lives on the farm on County Road 15 is Tobias’s grandson. If you think more generations should be accounted for in land purchased in 1835, you should know that Phil’s father, Charles, was Tobias Long’s 24th child. Forty-six years separate the oldest child from the youngest.

Tobias was born in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, in 1814 but his family migrated to Coshocton County in Ohio. According to the family history, when Tobias was 16 he joined a group of twelve men who set out to explore the wilderness. They walked, carrying only their deer rifles. When they reached this area Tobias chose land for a homestead. Phil laughs when he says, “I’m glad Grandpa got tired and stopped when he did.” He adds, “Grandpa picked some good land,” pointing out the natural drainage for the fields and rises for a house and barn. Tobias placed his claim for 160 acres at the government land office in Bucyrus, paying $1.25 an acre.

In 1835 he built a two-room log cabin on his new land and went back to Coshocton County. He returned in 1836, this time on horseback, because he brought with him his bride, Sarah Haney. A family story records that Tobias gave his last silver dollar to a neighbor to dig the well.

Tobias and Sarah had 15 children, ten of whom survived. When Sarah died in 1862, Tobias was left with children to raise and a farm to work. Three of the older boys had left for the Civil War and some had gone west, as far away as Kansas. Melissa Ann Fisher, whose father had moved his family by wagon to Allen County to work on the Ohio and Indiana Railroad, married Tobias in 1863 and raised the remaining children of his first marriage. She and Tobias had nine children of their own. All but one survived. In 1902 when the oldest son, John, met the youngest son, Charles, in Kansas it was the first time they had ever seen each other. John was 67 and Charles was 21.

The new four-room two story log house Tobias built with his neighbors’ help in 1845 still stands on the homeplace. Although the back walnut and oak logs are covered with painted boards, the floor logs are visible in the basement. Phil has removed some boards from the living room ceiling and preserved the exposed logs.

Phil’s father and mother, Charles and Hattie, had nine children: Elmer, Fred, Mildred, Eunice, Clyde, Charles
Raymond, Mary, Glen and Phillip. Five of the nine children were born on the homestead.

Phillip and his wife, Ruby, with their children, Perry, Joyce, Anita and Phil lived in a house on the homestead constructed from two double tourist cabins. As the family increased, rooms were added and porches enclosed. Phillip and his sister, Mildred Shriver, live in the little house today. They preserve the family history in the big house and Phil is busy in his salvage and bolt shop where he supplies hardware for any kind of repair. Phil sends the County Line news to the Ada Herald.

The first barn was built close to the railroad. Lightning struck it during a storm and it burned. The second barn also burned and finally in 1930 the present barn was built. Charles moved a sawmill to the farm and all the wood for the frame came from the Long woods. Ed Berger was the carpenter, and Phil thinks it was one of the last barns in the area constructed with the use of a gin pole pulled by a team of horses to raise the frame.

Moser owned the gin pole and the horses.

In the early days, with seven strong sons to help with farm work, Tobias could practice his other trade—shoemaker. Seated at his cobbler's bench he made boots and shoes for his large family and most of the settlers in the area. A child's boot fashioned by Tobias has a place of honor on the mantle in the old house. Phil says his father told him when the boys came in from chopping wood, they dried their homemade boots by the fireplace. But Phil recalls his dad saying, "When someone mentioned a gathering at the church or a dance at Hallstown (north of Lafayette) the boots were pulled on and off the boys went."
Tobias also worked as a surveyor’s helper. In 1853 when William Mitchell drew up his plat for Johnstown (now Ada), Tobias aided the engineer in the layout of the streets. When S.M. Johnson needed shacks for his sawmill workers and the railroad needed places for its workers, Tobias helped build those. Tobias was a busy man for he also served as a county trustee and as constable for Liberty Township when there were only 17 voters.

Some of the family’s favorite stories are of the Longs’ relationship with the Wyandot and Shawnee Indians. Although the Indians in this area had been sent to reservations in the west by 1843, the Wyandots were the last to go. Before they left, they stopped to say goodbye to their friends, the Long family. Their trail to Upper Sandusky followed the railroad tracks beside the Long farm. Phil says they were especially fond of Sarah’s buttermilk and johnnycake and often stopped to trade their venison for it. If only one or two Indians traveled the trail, Tobias invited them to sleep on the cabin floor by the fireplace. According to the stories, they always slept with their heads next to the fire, Indian fashion, so they could see anyone entering the room.

The apple and peach orchards Tobias planted are gone but his family treasures the old deer rifle he carried on that first trip to Liberty Township. Underneath the old farmhouse siding are the logs placed there in 1845. The ground probably hides a few arrowheads left by their Indian friends. Today a peacock struts proudly in the farm yard among the peahens and the bantam roosters. The name on the mailbox on County Road 15 still has the Long name.

Women and Politics

November is a month of politics. As the election returns determine the big city mayors and council winners, often they are women. Small towns in our area have women mayors and women on their town councils. Why has Ada never had a woman mayor? Why is Betty Elzay the first and only woman ever elected to council in our 136 year-history? I decided to go back in our town history and see if I could find some answers.

The early directories tell us something about women’s activities because the 1896 Rice Ferguson Directory lists occupations of residents. Although many of the women kept boarding houses, 15 dressmakers and 11 music teachers are listed. Because of the Normal School many women are
teachers. L.J. Kemp listed as the owner of the Kemp Drugstore is Laura Jane Kemp, and Mary Evans is listed as a physician.

The 1911 Ada and Rural Directory gives property owners, and women's names appear frequently along with the entertainers, nurses and milliners as farm owners, home owners and commercial owners. (Raymond Sharp is listed as a milliner; obviously he was a pioneer for male rights.) History shows us that local women were active in business but in old newspapers I found no women running for town government positions. Of course, they couldn't vote until 1920.

In 1895 when Ohio passed a law saying women could serve on a school board, Agnew Welsh records that 50 women met in March of the same year and nominated Mrs. Mollie Hickernell and Mrs. E. L. Pendleton for positions on the Ada school board. Both women were elected. Maybe that's what it takes—a group to set a precedent. The school board has proved to be one place where a woman can be elected to office and some have served as president.

In 1887 Miss Alberta Smith served as editor of the University Herald "for a few months." The yellow pages of the 1938 Ada telephone book list under "Attorneys," Justin McElroy, W. W. Runser, Okey VanDyne and Mary Wolfrom, the first woman practicing attorney in Ada. Evelyn Wright became the first woman employee at the post office in 1966. In 1981 Betty Elzay won her seat on council, winning in all four precincts. Her closest opponent had 103 fewer votes. Now we have our first woman pastor, Julianne Smith, at the Lutheran church.

Women have always taken an unofficial active role in village affairs and often appear at council sessions to support or protest council decisions. In 1904 when Ada was paving Main Street, the university wanted part of Peach Avenue (later renamed University) for Brown building on the corner. The ladies, and some men, appeared at a council meeting to call it "dark, underhand plots against the people." The women also protested at that meeting, new walks which would necessitate cutting down trees. In 1961 they fought, along with many male supporters, to save the trees in Railroad Park. In 1972 they worked for a junk ordinance and finally got a watered-down version. If women have official roles they are usually appointments to safety or beautification committees. History shows we have elected county officials who are women but other than village clerk or a school board member, the slate is usually male in Ada.

In 1965 when a citizen advisory committee was formed to plan
for urban renewal and the "beautification" of the corner across from the University main campus, the original 21 members were male. On the advice of the Columbus consultant, Robert Mott, a few women were added. In 1971 when Ada completed its Comprehensive Community Plan, Joan Dornbusch and Nancy DaPore were listed as members of the Citizens Planning Committee. Other women worked on the zoning section and future development.

In our community, women are nationally known scholars, sell real estate, publish our news, dispense prescriptions, run banking institutions and invest our money, own property, teach our children, take care of our emergency medical needs, have a knowledge of business as owners or partners, serve on our library and church boards, participate in farm management, are members of the Chamber of Commerce, count votes and raise money for town projects. These abilities would seem to qualify them to make decisions on town matters.

Envision, if you can, this possibility for Ada's future: a woman mayor, a woman village administrator, a council composed of at least four women, a woman engineer to oversee civil problems of waste and water, a woman in charge of industrial and commercial development, a woman legal counsel for the town, a woman police chief, a woman fire chief, a woman school superintendent and two women principals, a woman president and several women deans at the university.

What would happen to the town?

I didn't find any answers in local history, but perhaps in the future a few good women will come to the aid of their parties and we'll all find the answers. After all, the twenty-first century is close at hand.

**Gabe Hubble's Adventures**

If you like adventure stories filled with Indian encounters and narrow escapes on the frontier, you don't have to search for old "shoot-em-up" movies or books about the West of long ago. You can find a better story in our local history, and all of it really happened.

One winter day in 1896 a respected area farmer, Gabriel Hubble, stopped at The Ada Record office to spend a few hours chatting with the editor, Agnew Welsh. During the conversation, the editor discovered that some thirty years earlier "Gabe" had spent some time in the West prospecting for gold in the Denver area. He also mentioned he had served from 1861 to 1864 in the Civil War as a scout and spy for the 1st Colorado
Cavalry. Agnew Welsh heard enough in those few hours to recognize a story with "sufficient romance and adventure to make a novelist dance with delight." He persuaded Gabe to share his stories with Ada Record readers. A year later, the first installment of "Scout and Spy: A Tale of Adventures on the Frontier" appeared in the January 20, 1897, issue of the paper. Fifteen installments later, Gabe wrote "The End." What exciting tales he told.

Gabe left for the West in 1856 when he was 21. Stopping in Iowa to earn some money he had his first narrow escape. Gabe and his companions were cutting logs on an island in the Missouri River when heavy rains flooded the island and their cabin. Setting out for shore in a hastily constructed canoe fashioned from the trunk of a cottonwood tree, the men found the canoe filling with water. Gabe grabbed a tree branch, climbed to the top, and waited for help. Rescued by Jacob Preston from Ada, who lived in Nebraska, Gabe wrote that even after his close encounter with disaster, he still had "a great desire to try my fortunes in the mines of Colorado."

In Nebraska he found work wherever he could for money to "fit out a wagon, buy ponies and provisions." Joining five men and other wagoners, he crossed the Missouri and headed west on the California trail. Now he was in the real West where wagon trains had to be on the lookout for buffalo herds, where the cries of wolves "made our hair stand on end," and tornados destroyed camps and wagons. Indians stole their food at night.
and thieves disguised as Indians stampeded their livestock. But the mountains were beautiful and Gabe described Denver as “a smart little town consisting mostly of miners.”

Near the mining town of Hoosier’s Gulch they prospected for gold. Their claim produced $25 a day for Gabe and each of his companions. Since a sack of flour cost $50, eggs and onions were 50c each and coffee was $1 a pound Gabe concludes, “You see where most of the gold went.”

Winter spent in a mountain cabin near Leadville brought encounters with some friendly Ute Indians, a mountain lion, a large panther, a wounded elk and an angry charging black bear. Spring thaws rekindled the thoughts of gold and, with a lot of hard work, the California Gulch yielded nuggets. Although the claims above and below Gabe’s were bringing in $60,000 rewards, Gabe’s results were far below that figure. He still had “great hopes of striking it rich.”

In October 1861 Gabe started for Buckskin Joe, a Colorado mining camp. The Civil War had just begun and the recruiting office was at Buckskin Joe. Gabe and four of his companions enlisted in an Independent Cavalry Company. The company’s “work consisted in scouting and fighting guerrilla and Indians.” Gabe had been in the West for five years, and because of his experience in the mountains he was selected as a special scout and spy for the army. His real adventures began.

Gabe recounts his search of the officers’ quarters leading to the discovery under a floor board of a cache of blasting powder. Installment III ends with the arrest of “a rebel from Kentucky” who had plans to blow up the fort. He was given a military trial and found guilty. One of the army guards decided to speed up justice and shot the rebel, saying he had tried to escape.

When a group of captured Southern rebels appeared to be planning an escape from the prison, Gabe was sent to stay in one of the cells at night. In the darkness when the prisoners were asleep, he discovered the escape tunnel under a wash stand.

Scouting trips took Gabe to New Mexico and Fort Craig on the Rio Grande. When he slept at night on the grass, he put his lariat on the horse and held the end in his hand. If his horse was restless, so was Gabe. Since the Indians mistrusted the regular army but knew most of the volunteers, often Gabe carried government gifts to appease the Kiowas and Comanches. But he learned never to turn his back to any Indian.

In one adventure Gabe’s curiosity led him to explore Deep Hole Canyon in Comanche territory even though the guide
warned him of “much Deiablo.” When Gabe found himself surrounded by whistling lizards standing 18 inches tall he concluded, “The Indians said it was full of little devils and I thought they were about right.”

In 1863 he was sent to carry a dispatch from Pueblo to Fort Larned in Kansas. The group, consisting of four men, was pursued by Sioux Indians on the war path for five days with “little to eat or drink and scarcely any sleep.” Gabe provides vivid details of the fights with the Indians worthy of any western saga. Not only did the Indians present a danger but ranchers protecting their homes and livestock also posed a threat. His group was taken captive once by ranchers with ropes in hand “to string us up” until they realized they were soldiers and not cattle rustlers. On the journeys, which might cover hundreds of miles between forts, they often stopped at small adobe hut settlements. If they could convince the families they were not bandits, they received a meal. One hut provided a dish called “chilacolarough (a mixture of corn meal, goat milk and cayenne pepper).” Gabe compared it to eating fire.

Often traveling alone on a ride of 200 miles, Gabe explained that he was never lonely for “the country through which I passed was very beautiful.” He describes the herds of buffalo and wild horses in the valleys below. Occasionally he met another person from Ohio in the wilderness and tells of seeing a copy of the Cincinnati Weekly Times in an isolated mountain cabin.

His final western adventure began when a man with an arrow in his back struggled to the fort to tell of a nearby attack by a band of Sioux Indians. Supplies for western forts were brought in by wagon and families heading west often joined the supply wagons. When the soldiers hurried from the fort to help they found the “savage butchery” of a massacre. Searching for anyone still alive they found two boys, seven and eleven. Both had been scalped and were taken to the fort and cared for.

Gabe and his company had enlisted for three years, but had remained for an extra three months to help in the Indian fighting. Now they were anxious to cross the plains and head “for the states.”

When his train finally reached Lima, Gabe decided to spend the night at a hotel where he could have a good sleep, a bath and a shave before he met his friends at the little wooden depot in Ada. On one of his last scouting trips he lost 60 pounds and he knew he had changed in the eight years he had been gone. It was 1864 and he had enough adventures and memories to last a
Samuel Hubbell's house on Co. Rd. 25. Built in 1855, the house was purchased in 1910 from Eli Anspach. Of barn beam construction, the center is supported with large rocks from the Alger Ridge Road area. This is the Robert Hubbell family home.

Jesse Hubbell's house on 309 was Gabriel Hubbell's homestead. The summer kitchen structure was a log cabin. The brick house was built about 1876. Currently, this is the home of Isabelle Hubbell Nelson and her family.

Franklin Hubbell's home on the corner of 235 and 309. The house was built around a log cabin in 1861 by George Reece. Some of the original logs are still visible in the basement. This is now the Charles Hubbell family home. Photos loaned by Robert Hubbell
lifetime. He was ready to settle down.

The next year he married Sarah Carman. After the loss of their first baby they had three sons, Samuel, Franklin and Jesse. Sometime during this period the spelling of the family name was changed to Hubbell from Hubble. Many of Gabriel’s descendants still live in the area and some live on the Hubbell farms. Esther Huber, Elsie Tressel, Edna Koch and Robert Hubbell are Samuel’s children; Isabelle Nelson and Reed Hubbell are the children of Jesse; Mary Noe, Franklin D. who died in 1976, and Charles who died in 1984, are the children born to Franklin.

Since the young men who traveled West seldom used their real names. Gabriel was known as “Buckeye.” Somewhere in the pages of the history of the Old West, Buckeye’s adventures are recorded. They are more vivid than any novelist could imagine.

Thanks to Robert and Wilma Hubbell, Norma Jean Hubbell and Isabelle Hubbell Nelson for their help. Gabriel Hubbell’s family history, collected by Bob and Wilma, is at the Ada Public Library Annex. A copy of “Scout and Spy: A Tale of Adventures on the Frontier” from The Ada Record is included in the file.

Christmas Letter

This sampler is for a special group—the 775 people who read their Ada Herald three or four days after we read ours. You live in Ohio—Columbus, Mansfield, Dayton, Cleveland and towns and farms scattered over the state. Some of you live in New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Missouri, Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Illinois, Arkansas, Michigan, the Carolinas, California and Washington D.C. The Ada Herald goes to Maine and Florida, to Alaska and Texas. Some copies make the long journey overseas. All of you read the Herald because you have special ties to this small area of the world and you want to keep in touch. Consider this your holiday letter from us.

Some of you get back to visit but for many of you it’s been a long time since you walked down Main Street. You used to drop in at the Koffee Kup, Bud and Ann’s, or Polly’s Grill to catch up on the news over a cup of coffee. You can still do that except today you’d stop at Dave’s Diner, Jerry’s or the Northern Freeze.

Only one track runs through town now. The watchman’s tower is gone, but Railroad Park is still here with the cannon pointing south. The depot had its 100th birthday last year. Many
of the trees on the Johnson Street side were cut down for a parking lot, and the bandstand is gone. We don’t have to wait on as many trains to pass as we once did, but at night we still hear the whistle blow as a train rushes through town.

Most of the old buildings are standing but there are some new ones too. The Liberty Bank building and the Clover Farm are gone, but the old National Bank building is firmly in place on the corner of Main and Buckeye. Gardner’s and Peper’s drugstores are still at either end of the downtown section. Although the outside no longer says Cunningham’s Dry Goods, if you step inside the Decorator Shop at 111 N. Main you can still see the embossed tin ceiling. The balcony at the rear where the change carriers were sent is intact. Both have been preserved as lovely reminders of the past. The Presbyterian and Methodist church steeples, the water towers, and the elevator still make up our downtown skyline.

If you wanted to find the ONU students you couldn’t locate the College Inn, Joe’s, Balish’s or Doling’s. Now you’d find the students at the White Bear or Hardee’s. Hill, Lehr, and Dukes look just about the same as they did when you were here. Brown is gone and so are the cannons where you had your picture taken. If you haven’t been back for awhile, the west campus would surprise you with all the fine buildings. You’d be proud to see the changes in your old school.

At War Memorial Park, the high school and college football games are over, the picnic tables are in storage, and the pool has been drained. Beyond the park, the fields are ready for spring planting and the winter wheat is the only green you can see.

Since you read the Ada Herald you know we’re still doing the same things—working, going to grange meetings and church suppers, attending school activities, studying for final exams and visiting. Sometimes we argue about town matters, and now and then we call the police to settle a bigger problem. For the most part, the little towns in our community are still filled with friendly people. We hear from some of you occasionally but we often wonder what the rest of you are doing.

We have the Christmas decorations in place and the lights are on. By the time some of you read this, Christmas will be over. In the spirit of any holiday letter, we wish you well in the coming year—with some pleasant memories of the days you spent among us.
The Campus Cannons and Dr. Crile

Each fall our village population increases as new students enter the university. While they are here they are influenced by the books they read, the professors who teach them, and the townspeople they meet. This story is about one student who came to Ada in the early days of the university and the campus cannons.

The cannons came to Ada in 1903, sent by the government for the ONU military companies to use in their training exercises. In 1916, the graduating class placed the cannons on concrete bases. Many of the students who had vied for first-place honors in the military contests would soon be in France fighting in World War I. A silent reminder to future students of the military heritage of the university, the cannons were dedicated to Dr. George Crile.

In Dr. Crile’s Autobiography he describes his first term at the old Normal school in 1882 as “exciting” and remembers that “in books I discovered a new world.” He credited his position as captain of the ONU Adelphian debating team with his ability in later years to present his ideas clearly to his colleagues and the public. So that other students might have the same advantage, he established the Crile Oratorical Contest at ONU in 1912.

When Dr. Crile graduated from the Normal in 1884, he became a teacher. Contact with a village physician in Plainsfield aroused an interest in medicine, and he took his medical courses and training at the old Wooster Medical School. Later he returned to ONU and took special courses in biology.

It may seem strange to some that the cannons, a symbol of war, should be dedicated to a former student who had achieved fame as a surgeon and healer. Dr. Crile says he reached an important conclusion on the battlefield that the three dangers to the human body were “shock, hemorrhage and infection” and the treatment for these dangers could apply to both soldier and civilian.

Serving as a surgeon in the Spanish American War, Crile established a field hospital so the wounded could have immediate care. In 1914, he went to Paris before America entered the war and organized the Red Cross Base Hospital Units. Dealing with “the dead, the dying, the shell-shocked and poison gas” victims, he experimented with new treatments. Applying what he learned on the battlefield, he became a pioneer in “surgical shock” treatment. Realizing the need for replacing
blood quickly in dying soldiers, he performed the first successful blood transfusion in 1906. By 1918 transfusion was an accepted procedure. His "first successful amputation under local anesthetic in 1897" led to his perfection of the "nitrous-oxide method of general anesthesia."

Because of his use of dogs for experimental testing in the trenches of World War I and later large animal experimentation, he was often condemned by his critics. His

colleagues (including the Mayo brothers) however, rewarded his achievements. One of the committee who founded the American College of Surgeons and the American Society of Clinical Surgery, he became a prominent member of the American Medical Association. He was awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal and the Lannelongue Medal by the National Society of Paris. The Royal College of Surgeons in Great Britain made him a fellow.

When he founded the Crile Clinic in 1921, he selected as his assistant a man with a background similar to his own. Ed Lower had also attended ONU, taught school, and attended Wooster Medical School. Although George Crile's clinic and
hospital in Cleveland no longer bear his name, the search continues for new ways to treat human disease.

The 1916 Northern yearbook contains a tribute to Dr. George Crile, calling him "a true son of Northern and a servant of humanity." The cannons were a fitting memorial to the man who took what he learned from war and applied it to peacetime use.

In his autobiography, which contains passages from his war journals, he displays some of that same oratorical ability he had as the student captain of the Adelphian team. After a day of performing four surgeries an hour he describes an evening on the battlefield:

It was September third—the air was cool, the stars languid, the moon ardent. We sat in the open and watched it creep up over the dark hills. Suddenly enemy planes were over us...It was as if giant bees laden with bitter honey were over us in a continuous swarm.

The cannons are gone from the campus; perhaps the students who come to ONU today are not even aware of the story of the young student from a small town in Ohio who became a pioneer in medicine.

Dr. George Crile's two volume Autobiography, published by Grace Crile in 1947, was placed on the Ada Public Library shelves by the Zetetic Club in memory of Annetta Cotner. It is now part of the Ada/OUN Collection at the library annex.

Small Town Progress

The end of an old year and the beginning of a new one usually result in some serious thinking. Individuals make New Year's resolutions and communities talk about progress. Our small town is no different. Successes and mistakes of the past year are examined each January as they have been since Ada became a town in 1853. Only the passage of many years decides whether or not what took place was progress.

Last summer, a woman from California and her daughter from Alaska came to Ada on a genealogy search. The woman's mother had lived in Ada before the turn of the century, and she wanted to find an account of her mother's graduation as valedictorian from the Ada Union School. In an 1892 copy of The Ada Record she found the printed information for her family records. Her search also introduced her to the results of nearly a century of progress.

Since she and her daughter had never been to Ada, we took a
drive around town. Both women lived in towns formed after World War II, so they exclaimed over the old buildings on Main Street, the trees and the churches. The depot and Railroad Park attracted their attention, and the younger woman was excited that some of what she was seeing had been here during the Civil War. She asked about Indians. After a tour of the university, the woman said, “Ada is a nice little college town.” Then she laughed and added, “I have to tell you something.” The woman and her daughter had stopped in Lima first to reserve a motel room and to eat lunch because they weren’t sure there would be places to sleep or restaurants in Ada. In case they got thirsty, they had put a thermos of water in the car. Their image of Ada was based on what the grandmother had told them. She had said she couldn’t wait to get out of Ada after graduation and never wanted to return. The women wondered why.

Before the turn of the century, Ada didn’t have much to offer a bright girl of 17. The Normal School campus had two buildings (one with a leaky roof), and if the girl didn’t want to be a teacher, the school probably didn’t interest her. Law, pharmacy, and engineering courses were just underway and these were not professions for women. Had she stayed in Ada her only choices were marriage, clerking, dressmaking or the duties of a hired girl.

When it rained the streets were muddy, or dusty when it didn’t rain. Downtown businesses were, for the most part, in wooden buildings, the ones that survived the 1881 fires. A few brick structures pointed the way to the building renaissance at the beginning of the new century, but perhaps the girl was too impatient to notice. In the evenings the hotels, the saloons and the pool halls were filled with salesmen or railroad workers stopping on their way to Ft. Wayne. Sewage ran through the ditches in the farmers’ fields, and the doctors lectured to the school children on the dangers of typhoid and tuberculosis. Coal and wood smoke poured from the chimneys of the shops and mills on the side streets and Lincoln Avenue was called “Smoky Row.”

Although surrounded by storage buildings, the livery stables and piles of scrap from the stave factory, the depot and the railroad were the focal point in town. When she saw the trains passing through on their way to the West, the young girl must have planned her escape.

The 20th century has brought progress if we define improvement in terms of streets, sewers, new buildings and environment—and most of us do. The woman from California
spoke of these when she pronounced Ada, "a nice little college town," but she spoke also of other qualities. She mentioned friendliness when she stopped in the stores to ask where she could find her family information. She remarked that people on the street smiled at strangers and even stopped to talk to them.

Ada has changed since the young girl left, almost a hundred years ago, but still retains its small-town qualities in its definition of progress. The women and I decided some people are not cut out for small-town living. They want progress to move at a faster rate. On their way out of town to find change and adventure, they pass the people coming to the town in search of stability and a progress that moves at a slower rate.

**Mertz, The Furniture Man**

To achieve success, A.C. Mertz believed a businessman had to work hard and devise unique ways to promote his merchandise. Most of all, Archie placed his trust in the power of advertising.

Born in 1875 in Hancock County near Williamstown, Archie and his wife Mattie came to Ada in 1902. Although he began his business career as a dealer in second-hand furniture, more fanciful visions filled his dreams for success. He had bought the Crystal Lake farm on Township Road 30 and in April of 1902 The Ada Record announced that A.C. Mertz "contemplated making of it an ideal picnic and pleasure ground." Plans included "a Naptha launch on the lake." Archie's dream vanished when Crystal Lake disappeared into the new drainage ditches and became just another field on Airport Road.

Like Crystal Lake, the places where Archie sold furniture from 1902 to 1943 are gone. The first room where he sold second-hand furniture later became the Koffee Kup with Bill Ream's bicycle shop below. The building stood between the old Ada Herald office and the Sohio station. His next store was in the Rothrock building, now part of the parking lot on the corner of Main and Buckeye. In back of his home and the brick building that housed Doling's Bakery and Allen's Barber Shop, Archie had a second-hand furniture store. The Liberty-National Bank now fills that space. His last store before he retired in 1943 was again in the Rothrock building.

Archie never had a monopoly on the furniture business in Ada. J.E. Hesser, Luther Hesser and Earl Huber provided competition so Archie had to be inventive. He turned his empty packing crates into benches for Railroad Park—with his name displayed prominently on the backs. Writing her school
memories for the Herald in 1988, Ethel Tarr remembers a Mertz sign along the road to Red school. The jingle “Happy you’ll be/ If you buy from me/ Mertz the furniture man” indicates Archie would have done well as an ad writer for Burma Shave. He put his advertising on postcards and ran a “Dream House” contest to attract new customers. His early delivery service was by horse and wagon. Later when Archie acquired a truck, a sign on the front read “Here Comes Mertz.” As it

![Image of a sign reading: Get Married and Buy Your Furniture of Mertz.]

traveled down the street, the truck bore a sign on the back “There Goes Mertz.”

Archie urged everyone to support local business and was proud of his civic activities. A charter member of the Ada Business Men’s Club he is given credit for coming up with the idea for the first Farmers and Merchants Picnic in 1914. On the day of the picnic a banner was strung at Ream’s Grove reading “Welcome.” On the other side as people left the park a banner read “GLAD-U-CUM”. Clearly one of Archie’s ideas. If you didn’t feel like walking, he offered taxi service to the park on picnic day for a nickel.

Usually sitting beside Archie on the front seat of the delivery
truck in the 1930's was his dog Peggy, one of Phil Long's brown and white terriers. If animals take on characteristics of their owners, Peggy was a good example. A canine showman she performed tricks on the porch of the Mertz home or on the sidewalk in front. In addition to routine dog tricks she sat with paws extended while Archie placed a penny on her nose. Until her master gave a command she remained frozen. Peggy was also a skilled rat catcher, an admirable vocation since the used-furniture store was behind a bakery. Occasionally Clark Povenmire borrowed Peggy to work in his grocery store across the street. After she had completed her rat-killing tasks, Peggy came home with her day's pay—a small package of meat.

The one talent that ensures Archie Mertz a spot in local history is his advertising for he wrote his own copy, usually in verse. Sometimes he pushed the words to make them rhyme and his meter was often ragged but his poetic endeavors appeared in The Ada Herald, The Ada Record, the ONU yearbooks and the village directories and cookbooks. Archie covered every source for potential customers. His poems usually had three or four stanzas and ended with a moral:

Then it is correct
Furniture to select
From Mertz the furniture man.

Promoting wedded bliss he directed his ads toward newlyweds. The first business after the ceremony was to select furniture so Archie’s poetry expressed this sentiment:

It would be a wise idea
At Mertz's store to stop;
And see the best and latest
Where the styles are tip-top.
He counseled the young couples:
   And that Domestication
   Is not a bore
   If your Equipment is from our store.

A.C. Mertz Furniture delivered anywhere. Several years ago, Rollin Yale wrote that he remembered riding with the deliveryman to take a load of Mertz furniture to Dr. Robert Everhart and his bride, Gertrude Richardson. Their new home was in Columbus so Archie really meant it when he wrote these lines:

   And his big auto-truck
   Will deliver near and far
   Without a scratch or flaw
   Its beauty and style to mar.

There must be library tables, rockers and princess dressers from the Mertz store still in Ada homes, or maybe they are posing as antiques at flea markets. If the furniture has been discarded, the old newspapers have hundreds of samples of Archie’s poetry. He was a genuine entrepreneur.

Pictures loaned by Virginia Mertz Neiswander.

Rites Of Spring

After months of the dreary, sober days of winter, the sight of green grass and fields and the feel of a warm breeze seem to bring about erruptions of activity in small-town dwellers. Often this released energy results in a rite-of-spring silliness.

On March 1, 1905, the Ada Record printed six letters to the editor. Each writer reported the sighting of the first robin. In response to this frenzy of robin-sighting, a letter appeared written in the style of Josh Billings. If you’re too young to know that this is the pen name of Henry Wheeler, a popular humorist of the early 1800’s, here’s a part of the letter: “Dear Agnew: I seen yur notis in the Record about robins Pa and I seen one clean last summer on the rear gable end of the left wing of our chicken kupe. . . .” I suspect the Record editor, Agnew Welsh, was having some fun with his readers.

After the inactivity of winter months, small-town residents often find diversion in practical jokes. In the spring, the male coffee groups begin their discussion of new cars. An Ada legend tells of a member who parked his car in front of the Koffee Kup. In one version, the car has seen its better days; in another version, it is the latest model. When the owner came out of the restaurant, he found his car was missing. (We left our houses
unlocked and the keys in the car in the old days.) The owner discovered his car parked on the Sohio station corner with a huge "For Sale" sign stuck on the windshield.

The spring weather is often as unpredictable as the residents. Just after the completion of the Girl Scout Easter egg hunt on April 7, 1961, "hail as big as 12-gauge buck shot" came from the sky. A week later, snow covered the daffodils and budding shrubs.

Usually the ONU commencement is a solemn affair, but in 1947, the weather again brought some interesting highlights. The exercises were held on the lawn of the main campus. When the rain came, as it did in 1947, everyone ran for Lehr auditorium. As Karl Roider and the chorus began their first offering, the rain-drenched audience began to laugh. The selection was "Oh Lord What a Morning." At this same commencement when Dean Huber called for the liberal arts graduates to come forward and receive their diplomas, "a small brown dog trotted across the stage."

1948 appears to have been a banner year for spring reports in the Herald. Most of the servicemen were home and back at work or study. Perhaps it was a post-war response to spring. When Union Street experienced its annual flood, the Herald, printed a picture of people in rowboats on "Lake Union." The bell clapper on top of Hill building made its annual disappearing act. In the past it had turned up in California, and one year was found buried beside the cannons.

Bill Shryock, an ONU senior, wrote a column for the Herald, titled "Covering the Campus" in 1948. Perhaps because it was May and he knew he would soon graduate he indulged in a little playfulness. In his May 7 column he discusses some songs on the juke box he thinks are obsolete: "Florence of the St. Lawrence" and "Veronica and Her Harmonica." He suggests a juke box replacement number: "I Knew That Ball Park Was Haunted When That Old Bat Said Hello."

In the same month, the veteran railroad men in the Dunkirk tower were aghast when all their signals flashed to red, tying up Pennsylvania and New York Central traffic. Frantically searching for the reason, they found "a mouse had gnawed away insulation around a signal cable." The Ada Herald reported "the short circuit resulting had blasted him into mouse heaven."

Even stranger things were happening on top Hill building that year—something was growing in addition to the forsythia below. Pilots flying over the campus reported it to ONU of-
ficials in July. Bert McBride and Dr. Raymond Dobbins climbed to the top of Dukes with binoculars and discovered a 9½-ft cottonwood tree "rearing its head over the parapet of Hill building's 60 ft. tower." The tree was finally cut down in August.

I could go on and on with mention of the initial search at the public school on March 12, 1948, for 26 owls, 22 rippling waters, 36 leaves, 18 elves, 20 rabbits, 30 fairies, 38 children, 7 bluebells, 9 harebells, 11 daisies and 12 poppies. All this in preparation for the spring musical, "The Forest Court," directed by Orlo Sprunger. The Gas Company cooking school in April of 1966 brought some spring surprises. Bob Hooper won the $25 prize and Frank Brace, representing the Lions club, won a prize for completing his cherry pie first. And don't forget the 30 streakers who raced through McIntosh Center in March of 1974.

I haven't seen one robin-sighting letter in the Ada Herald this spring. Can it be we have discarded our small-town spring traditions?

Depot History

In 1987 when the Ada passenger station was 100 years old, the community celebrated the depot's early days. To bring its history up to date I've looked at the Hardin County Historical society minutes and scrapbook, Ada Herald microfilm, and old leases and documents.

When the Pennsylvania Railroad liquidated its holdings in 1958, it offered to sell Railroad Park to the Village of Ada for $6,340. Included in the offer was an agreement that when the railroad no longer required the use of the depot it too would be deeded to the village. The village had no money, so Mayor Carl Sanderson and the council placed a special levy on the ballot and asked voters to ensure that this historic section of Ada would "never pass into private hands" and would be kept "for future generations." In November of 1958 the voters passed the half-mill levy to run for four years. Funds from the levy allowed the village officials to buy Railroad Park and the depot built in 1887.

In 1971 "the Council of the Village of Ada appointed the Hardin County Historical Society as its agent for the preservation of the passenger station." The Society was given a five-year lease with the possibility of developing a railroad museum and a senior citizen center.

Since the roof and the depot itself were deteriorating, the Society asked the railroad's permission to begin restoration
even though Frank Brace, the local Penn-Central Agent, was still using part of the building. After they received permission, the Society, local service groups and clubs, and youth organizations began to replace the roof, paint the depot and clean the interior. In 1976 the Historical Society returned the depot to the village and it took over as caretaker.

In 1981 the Ada council transferred the depot deed to the Ada Area Community Improvement corporation (CIC).

Various civic groups used the second floor attic for storage after the depot was given to the village. In 1972, the Historical Society, with the approval of Ada council, sub-leased the attic for four years to the Ada Model Railroad Club. This group began a restoration of the attic room where the original telegraph office windows overlook the track. They added insulation, rewired the attic and the ground floor, installed a heating system on the second floor, and constructed their first scale model railroad layout. In 1977 the Village of Ada gave the Ada Model Railroad Club a ten-year lease.

With CIC granting the railroad club additional leases they have met in the upper-floor attic for 18 years. The railroad club keeps Ada’s train heritage alive. The old arrival and departure board, a crossing sign, the signal flags, track tools, the Ada identification signs and Pennsylvania memorabilia are kept in the attic room. Although some of the rate books and agent stamps have been moved to the Ada Public Library Historical Preservation Annex, a 1903 railroad map and a wooden telegrapher’s box still hang on the wall. Club files contain pictures and materials of the Empire State Express (now the Broadway Limited). The steam engine established a speed record of over 127 miles an hour passing by the Ada depot in 1905. Robert Heinfeld described the engine’s unbroken record run in an August 14, 1987 Ada Herald article.

This March the Findlay Courier featured a story about the club’s train enthusiasts as they renovated their layout and control panel and replaced earlier wiring. The Courier article points out that Ada will be one of the stops on the line of 34 cities and towns on the newly expanded layout.

Currently the railroad club is directing the community project of restoration of a Pennsylvania caboose for Railroad Park. Appointed as the agent for CIC, the club raised $2,000 for the purchase of the caboose from Conrail with the help of area clubs, organizations, Ohio Northern University, businesses and individuals. Work will start on the caboose this spring, and Bill Linebaugh, Ada project chairman, hopes the restoration, like
the first depot restoration, will be a community effort.

Although trains no longer stop in Ada, the depot holds a fascination for many. During the Harvest and Herb Festival, the Model Railroad Club holds its annual open house. Over 500 visitors passed through the attic room in 1987—the year of the depot centennial. Betty Wirt, who has leased the bottom floor for eight years, says many visitors stop to see the inside of the depot. Many of the visitors express a regret that passenger stations in their towns have been torn down, modernized, or allowed to deteriorate. Artists, architects, and preservationists view the depot as a valuable reminder of the past.

**Cinderella’s Story**

In 1861 when news of the surrender of Fort Sumter and the beginning of the Civil War reached the 250 residents of Ada and the surrounding farms, the response was immediate.

Agnew Welsh’s “History of the Ada Community” places in the pages of local history the story of S.M. Johnson’s trip to the woods, with a team of oxen and some helpers, to find an ash pole and a hickory pole. Strung from the poles across the railroad track a banner proclaimed to everyone who passed from Pittsburgh to Chicago that Johnstown West was united politically in the Union cause. (Before elephants and donkeys the poles symbolized the two political parties.) Also recorded is the story of the villagers bringing “barrels, buckets, wash boilers” filled with water to place beside the track from the old depot on South Johnson to the Main Street crossing so that a trainload of Minnesota volunteers could stop and fill their canteens. E.W. Gilbert adds an eye-witness report of Billy Dixon from Kenton with “a fifer and three drummers” marching from the railroad to a recruitment rally at the first Ada schoolhouse on the southwest corner of Main and Montford. The images are colorful and clear because Gilbert was one of the nine young Ada men who volunteered that day.

These word pictures record the public patriotic fervor in the village during the Civil War. The personal stories, often incomplete, unrecorded and elusive, sometimes remain hidden for future generations to discover. One of these stories is about a girl named Cinderella.

In 1987 Jim and Theresa Bingman decided to remodel the house they bought on West Highland Avenue in Ada. The house had been there when the street was called Hoosier. When Jim and Theresa lifted out the old window frames to replace them, they discovered the beginning of Cinderella’s story. In the wall
they found a packet of yellowed, rain-stained shreds of paper, obviously something destined for the trash heap. When Theresa glanced at them, however, she noticed several words and dates still visible in faded brown ink: "1863...1864...110th Reg. Ohio Volunteer Infantry." Instead of throwing away the pieces, Theresa put them in a plastic bag, shut them in a drawer and forgot about them. In 1988 Theresa gave them to me.

One evening I spread the scraps of crumbling paper on the kitchen table. Like working a jigsaw puzzle with half the pieces missing, I tried to fit them together. At the end of two evenings six letters and two envelopes appeared. The rest of the pieces were unreadable.

One letter addressed to "Cinda" written in November, 1863, was from her cousin, Charlie Garlinger, with the army of the Potomac. He tells of "the rebs" shelling his regiment near Culpepper and Brandy Station. Charlie, a good storyteller, gives an account of a skirmish where "pieces of shell whistled around us forty ways for sunday" and describes the supply locomotive that "follows us up along the railroad." Charlie is "tired of this cussed army of the potomoc." Another unsigned letter from a homesick soldier to Cinda is from "Versails, tenn" dated March 4, 1864, and tells her "the trees are beginning to bud and everything looks green this is nice country but it is nothing like Ohio."

"A friend, John E" dates his letter February 9, 1864. He
expresses the universal soldier’s lament that her letters “make me think of the old times and the fun we ust to have but them times are all past but i hope they are not gone for good.” It soon appears that John is perhaps more than a friend for in the same handwriting one letter begins, “My dear beloved Cinda” and the envelope is addressed to Cinderella Garlinger. What reader with even a trace of romance in his soul could stop there. I had to discover more about the girl named Cinderella.

My first phone call was to Delilah Garlinger. She knew of no one in her family history named Cinderella and could shed no light on the house on Hoosier and who lived there. When Delilah died several weeks later, I put the pieces back in the plastic bag along with my typed sheets of the reconstructed letters and the story remained in the files.

A chance remark and an article in an old Ada Herald brought the story to life again. Several years ago, Joseph Thompson from Bluffton had stopped to see my mother and me because his father had worked for my great-grandfather, David Thompson, on the farm next to Woodlawn Cemetery. One day Mother remarked that Joe’s father had taken the Thompson name but his real name was Garlinger. I mailed a letter to Joe in Bluffton. The article in the Herald was from the August 17, 1956, issue. Sim Garlinger of Lima had come to the Farmers and Merchants Picnic and was awarded the plaque for being the oldest person there—102. He told the reporter he had once lived in Ada, had been a railroad worker for 35 years and retired in 1910. By this time Joe had sent me some Garlinger family material his cousin in California, Barbara Petersen, had collected. On the census list of 1850 were Simeon Garlinger, aged four, and a sister Lucinda Garlinger, aged eight. Could Lucinda be the “Cinda” of the letters?

Four letters revealed a rather shaky romance. John mentions a ring, but the rest of the letter had been erased by a leaky roof and 125 years. In the second letter, John reassures a worried Cinda by telling her not to pay attention to what people are saying. “You ar the only one i care anything about,” he says, and “if you care as much for me as i care for you we will never fall out.” He is “on march” and will not be able to write for a long time. The last letter made me feel as though I were eavesdropping. John tells Cinda, “the last two or three months has been the unhappiest period of my existence on earth.” He explains, his parents object “to our union” because of the contrast in ages. Cinderella’s mother lives with her, and his parents think he “could not get along.” John wishes he could
explain in person but "it would not do for you to come." He is "heartsick."

In the summer of 1989, Barbara Petersen had come from California to research the Garlinger and McGlumphy families at the Ada Library Annex. In March of 1990 she returned for more research. I told her I had decided Cinderella was a playful name given to Lucinda and perhaps Cinderella did not exist. Joan Reichert, who was working as a volunteer at the annex, interrupted to say, "Cinderella Garlinger was my grandmother's name." After almost three years of searching had I found the elusive Cinderella in my own back yard?

The search would probably be easier now except that Joan's grandfather's name was James Shaw and not "John E." A picture of that Cinderella hangs on the Reichert's wall and Joan tells me her grandmother lived a busy life for 95 years. In some Cinderella's past was an unhappy period during the Civil War. The historical accounts will never record the sad love affair, and perhaps local history should leave the events as obscure and faded as the letters Cinderella placed in the wall.

Gant/Huber

Many Ada Herald readers will remember the Gant and Huber families who were important parts of Ada's past. Pauline Gant Huber sent the Herald the following "memories of Ada in the 1930s." Harold and Pauline Huber now live in Mansfield.

After reading a recent "Sampler" column, I decided the time had come for me to write about my memories of Ada in the 1930s. The article mentioned Balish's and brought back thoughts of my soda jerk days there.

I had just returned home from my second summer as a waitress at the Beatley Hotel, Russells Point, and had my mind set to enter Ohio Northern. Fortunately I was able to get three part-time jobs to help on tuition and other expenses.

I worked in the treasurer's office for Z. LaVerne Daring between morning classes. Then I ran home for a bite to eat, back to Conn's 5c and 10c store from 2 to 5 p.m. Another dash home for dinner, then off to work at Balish's from 6 to 11 p.m. or later. It depended on what activities were going on in town. I didn't get much sleep because studying late and getting up early to study and getting to class did not leave me much time.

At Balish's there was no time for me to sit on the stools. The closest I ever got was to clean and polish them. Of course, Rose
had set up residence on the end stool where she could keep an eye on what was going on. If anyone got too rowdy, a dark look from Rose meant to straighten up and fly right—or get out. Not a word did she speak—there was no need. And, when you saw Frank walking up and down the aisle that meant you had kept that booth long enough. Again, not a word was uttered.

If I have given the impression that Balishes were dour, cross people, that was not my intent. Instructions were given in a soft, courteous manner and mistakes were pointed out to me with such grace I never could be angry.

Another part of their personalities was that they each had their own sense of humor. I remember being very much surprised by this because I never had the opportunity to be around them alone. Some of my most difficult times were relieved with a remark or joke that gave me a real laugh and eased the situation.

Of the highlights of my job, one would be the times when Frank (I always called them Mr. and Mrs. Balish) made the chocolate-dipped candy. He would call to me, “Come on, Pauline, I’m ready to pour.” If I had a customer just then, I would hurry to serve him so I could dash to the backroom. If I were only washing dishes or cleaning the soda fountain—that could wait. Frank taught me what the curlyque on top of each piece meant, so I’d know when a customer wanted a certain flavor.

After watching the pouring and learning the designs, he would question me about flavors indicated. With correct answers, I received a reward from “samples” that he said were not ”poured just right.” They looked the same to me so, perhaps, that was a nice way he had of just letting me enjoy his wonderful candy.

The excitement was endless. I looked forward to going to work each evening. High school and ONU students kept everything in high gear. They did not have much money to spend, but pooled their resources, and shared with those who didn’t have a nickel in their pocket. We sold many “Ginger Beers,” whatever they were—some soft drink I guess. Rose was more generous then people realized. She would sit there and say, “It’s o.k.” when I would put two straws in a glass. They only cost 5 cents but at times only one of the pair would have a nickel to spend.

She wanted to be fair with everyone, so instructed me as to the portions that went into sundaes, milkshakes, sodas and even the sandwiches. The milkshakes were delicious! It is not
possible to get milkshakes like that very many places these days. The sundaes and chocolate shakes were made from Frank’s special recipe. I was not allowed to digress.

I always thought that maybe that was the reason Rose sat there—to see that I didn’t favor friends—nor eat them out of business by “sampling.” But it wasn’t. It just was a comfortable place where she could sit and know what was going on and ride herd on the students. I would have never tried that—I needed the job too badly! I always enjoyed her company as I worked.

I agree that the dipping of the hard ice cream was a killer! How I used to pray that I’d never get two customers back-to-back that wanted a quart! A pint wasn’t too bad, but a quart made you feel like you needed a chiropractor for your back and a “finger organizer” to straighten out your fingers.

I remember one ONU student, Chet Cullen, who was sitting in a booth with his cronies. He asked me for a celery sandwich. I told him we didn’t have them, but he insisted we did. He said we called them ham salad sandwiches, but because we put in more celery than ham, he called them a celery sandwich. I thought that was real funny, so his friends and I laughed it off and I came back with the retort—“I only make it by Mrs. Balish’s recipe.” Things like that made for fun evenings, even though I knew I had to hit the books when I got home.

We have never found anywhere but Balish’s, their delicious instant George Washington coffee. I guess it was only put out by companies that service restaurants. No one seems to have ever heard of it. What a pity! It was the best we have ever tasted.

One thing that has given Harold and I a good hearty laugh is the fact that after we left Ada, we could not understand why the soda jerks could not make a “Buffalo sundae.” We did not realize this was only a name coined by Mr. Balish that was a special chocolate sundae (one generous dip of vanilla ice cream, one chocolate syrup, marshmallow topping and crushed nuts.) How many hours I mixed the marshmallow topping with hot water to the correct consistency. We can still taste them! We told fountain people in other towns how to make them. They always looked at us like we were a little bit off. They never tasted the same so we gave up. Perhaps it was the elbow grease that we used in mixing the marshmallow topping or Frank’s chocolate topping. Or, maybe because it was concocted at Balish’s.

There was a certain excitement when the students, high school and college, came in and we could observe the mat-
chmaking. Many resulted in marriage.

The teasing I had to take was a part of the job, but I was able to hold my own. The Balishes were a wonderful couple to be around.

One of the saddest days, especially for the students, and adults also, was the day the Balish Confectionery closed its doors. How we would have loved to become the owners of the beautiful chrome soda fountain and the back bar made of majestic dark mahogany or cherry wood (I don’t remember which.)

My sisters Imogene, Lucille and I worked many jobs. At times each of us worked three jobs simultaneously. It was not surprising that at times we became competitive. Lucille worked at the other five and dime store (I can’t remember the name. It was located in the building that later became Messick’s) at the same time I worked at Conn’s. There was a difference of opinion between us, as to which was the best. Imogene, at the same time I worked at Balish’s, was working at the Huber Drug Store which also had a fountain—a very good one I had to admit. She and I had disagreements as to which made the best milkshake. I had to give in on that one. I even lost out with my husband, Harold. He has told me he stopped every evening after school at Huber’s Drug Store to get a milkshake and they were the best! Imogene also worked a short time at the Sweet Shop located where Gardner’s Drug Store opened. The Sweet Shop closed after a short time.

We girls got our work ethic from our mother, Dulcie Gant, who also worked several jobs at the same time. She worked at the telephone office, Saturday nights at McLaughlin’s grocery, sold Avon (we girls delivered the Avon products) and other jobs she could squeeze in between.

The waterless cooker was always on the stove with delicious hot food waiting for us, when each one was ready to eat. There were special home-made cakes and pies to satisfy our sweet tooth. She also would find time to make us a special dress for some occasion. All that and raise three girls was quite an order. We’ll never know how she managed it all. One wonderful mother!

Besides these things, we gave full evening entertainments in Ada, Lima and other surrounding towns. We took music and dancing lessons so we had to manage for all to be together at times to practice and learn new routines. Mother was at the piano and we were directed by Esther Toy, Lima, (our dancing teacher.)
We girls left Ada at different times. Lucille, after graduating from ONU started a teaching career which included Columbus Grove, Wooster and Columbus (where she now resides). Imogene’s last position was as Dr. Don Printz’s nurse. She helped bring many babies into the world. Many, might be still living in Ada and surrounding areas. She married John Fry and after a few years in Lima, they moved to California. They now reside in Huntington Beach.

My last job in Ada was with Huber Furniture Co. and Harold and I were there until he went in the service. After World War II, we opened a furniture store in Mansfield. We retired there. Harold’s brother, Evan and his wife, Genny (Jenkins), also had a store in St. Marys.

Dad and Mom Huber were a jolly, wonderful couple. Good bosses also! They later turned from bosses to my mother and father-in-law. We had many happy times.

Several years ago, Earl and Sarah Huber, received the Town and Gown Award, the first “couple” to receive the award.

There are very good memories of our work in their store with fun-loving co-workers. Helen Shelly was one of them. We still keep in touch with her and stop for a visit when we come to Ada. We have some reminiscing to do about our experiences together. That could fill a book!

All of us have kept in touch over the years with some of the high school and ONU friends and Ada townspeople. We all agree Ada was an ideal town in which to grow up, and still is. We would not have wished it to be any other way.

Pauline (Gant) Huber  
137 N. Brookwood Way  
Mansfield, Ohio 44906

Dr. Montgomery

Several people responded to the Ada Herald picture of the Dr. West Montgomery medicine bottles discovered by Ernie and Sue Hackworth in their house rafters.

Clair Montgomery reports that Dr. Montgomery was his grandfather’s cousin and promises to bring to the Herald a family history written by Dr. Montgomery. Ruth Marling also called to say she was related to the doctor. Other relatives are Rosemary VanAtta, Miriam Willeke and Mabel Dearth.

Virginia Umphress remembers her mother’s (Gail Foss) story that Dr. Montgomery gave medical care to Becky McCarty, one of Ada’s more colorful characters who read tea leaves for the area ladies. He persuaded Mrs. Foss and some
other women to help Becky when the town had deserted her and she was dying. Virginia also points out that Dr. Montgomery's picture appears in the 1902 Landon photo collection of "Ada and the ONU." She thinks he owned a farm northeast of town on County Road 65, north of the McElroy cemetery.

Wheeler McMillen, who patiently responds to my persistent questions about Ada in the early days, tells me Dr. Montgomery presided at his birth in 1893. Dr. Montgomery's son, Charles, was an Ada High classmate of McMillen's. Carl and Fern were the other Montgomery children.

Most people think his house, and perhaps his office, stood on the corner where the Methodist Church now stands. When the church was built in 1897 the house was moved back to face Highland and then torn down to provide a parking lot for the church. One person placed the office next to the Presbyterian Church and Clair Montgomery's aunt, Helen Montgomery, remembers that the doctor removed her tonsils "upstairs across from the Methodist Church."

Although an ad (no date) which Helen Shepherd has gives Dr. Montgomery morning, afternoon and evening office hours, it appears the busy doctor found time to serve as an Ada councilman for several terms and then as Ada's mayor 1916-1918.

Like many of the people who give our community its vitality,
Dr. Montgomery seems to have served this area not only in the practice of medicine but also with many hours of public service. The Montgomery family history should provide more information on Dr. Montgomery and perhaps more people will respond.

Wendell Hughes

Many community residents who have begun a search for their own past will be interested in this article by Wendell Hughes on the problems and rewards of a genealogy search. Hughes and his sister, Irene Hughes Inskeep, grew up in the Harrod-Alger area. Irene lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas and reads the Ada Herald to keep in touch with old friends. Wendell Hughes graduated from Harrod High School in 1933 and had a radio sales and service shop in Alger. He now lives in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. One of his hobbies is, of course, genealogy.—Betty Miller

When I became old enough to start looking backward instead of forward (a gradual trait affecting many of us), I decided to try to find out all about my ancestors. This is really a disease called genealogy. It becomes much worse with time and the finding of a "goodie" occasionally.

Upon inquiring of relatives, I was told my paternal grandmother, Nancy Hughes, was adopted and was raised by the George Coons of West Newton. Further inquiries indicated she was born in Miami County, Ohio, and she was married at Terre Haute, Vigo County, Ind. Since the man she married, my grandfather Perry, was from the West Newton area, too, it was very strange that they went to Terre Haute to be married. Her maiden name was reported to be McPherson.

This posed more questions than answers. For instance:
1) Why were they married in Vigo County, Ind.?
2) Why did the George Coon family adopt her?
3) Her father must have been a McPherson. Did he live in Miami County, Ohio?

From the 1860 Federal Census records it was learned that George Coon, age 78, had a young lady living with him and his wife, who was listed as N.E. McPherson, age 16. This was Nancy Elizabeth McPherson, my grandmother.

Next, the will of George Coon, located in records in Lima, showed Nancy McPherson as a granddaughter of George Coon. Something must have happened to Nancy McPherson's mother or father for George Coon to have raised his granddaughter.
in Vigo County, Ind.?

In the Federal Census records for Vigo County, I located Thomas McPherson married to wife #2, Rhoda. Later, after she died, he remarried again to wife #3, Virginia. I am convinced that my grandparents were married in Vigo County so her father, Thomas, could "give her away." Her grandfather, George Coon, had died in 1867 a short time before my grandparents were married.

This is what makes genealogy interesting and rewarding.

Wendell Hughes
1726 Mayflower Rd.
Ft. Wayne, IN 46819

First Contest Identifications

1) Sanford M. Johnson (1855) — the real founder of Ada; the village was first called Johnson’s Station, then Johnstown in his honor; his energetic support of Lehr’s Normal School, the railroad, and business brought growth and prosperity to Ada; a street still bears his name.

2) Dr. Floyd M. Elliott (1915) — longtime village physician as was his father S.H. Elliott; school board member and library board member for many years; 1964 Distinguished Citizen.

3) Janet Welsh Hubbell (1952) — Ada Herald staff member for almost 20 years; advertising representative, reporter, photographer, editor and now publisher.

4) Frank Ballish (1961) — owner, along with his wife Rose, of Ballish’s Confectionery from 1913 until 1960. Ballish’s 10 cent “buffalo nut sundae” was a favorite of many.

5) Agnew Welsh (1910) — publisher and editor of the Ada Record; school board clerk for 20 years; fire chief, township trustee and clerk; one of the founders with H.S. Lehr of the Ada Church of Christ Disciples; preserver of early Ada history.

6) Ernest Routson (1947) — founder of the Ada Community Band and its director for 50 years; Ada Public School custodian for 42 years; 1963 Distinguished Citizen.

7) Pearl Underwood (1955) — Ada high school teacher; librarian at Ada Public Library; author of the Ada Centennial history.

8) Frank Ramsdell (1902) — came to Ada in 1898; lawyer; elected to serve as mayor of Ada in 1901; taught at the old Lima High School.

9) Thomas J. Smull (1916) — Dean of ONU College of Engineering 1905-1917; several ONU administrative positions from 1917-1942; Village of Ada engineer 1906-1923; architect for present city building, Tressel building, Taft gymnasium and the old law building (now ONU College of Business); 1958 Distinguished Citizen.

10) Robert Allen Jr. (1947) — life-time resident of Ada; served in National Guard; member of American Legion; appointed village councilman in 1978; served as councilman until 1984 when he was elected mayor; currently serving as mayor of Ada.

11) Wheeler McMillen (1910) — farmer; journalist; former editor-in-chief of The Farm Journal; author of 15 books; 1964 ONU Distinguished Alumnus award; at age 96 still writing and publishing.


13) Paul Cramer (1958) — former principal at Ada High School; active in ONU alumni groups; now local realtor.

14) Barton Snyder (1924) — editor of the Ada Herald for almost 50 years; active in the Presbyterian church, veterans groups, 1961 Distinguished Citizen.

15) Wilhelmina (Billie) Arbogast Hindall (1930) — member of the National Red Cross Board 1966-69; member for over 25 years of the local Red Cross chapter, president several times; supervisor in national volunteer disaster relief assistance; 1972 Distinguished Citizen award for her many hours of community service.

16) Robert Hubbell (1947) — president of the AHS class of 1947; officer in National Guard; active in American Legion (often chief fish-fry cook); currently Community Relations Manager of United Telephone Company of Ohio.

Contest winners:

If you can identify these two people, you will know who tied for first place in the personalities contest. Although separated by 30 years and some 150 miles, they each identified all but two of the pictures for a total of 14 points. If you think chicanery was involved, they missed different faces.
First Contest Winners

1930 Ada High School Graduate; ONU graduate; advanced degrees from Ohio State and University of Michigan; head of Catalog department at ONU Heterick Library; now Associate Professor Emeritus; many hours of volunteer work in scouting, at the Ada Public Library, Presbyterian church, ONU, and civic and social groups.

1962 graduate Ada High School; University of Michigan graduate; gave his hometown a thrill when he played for Michigan in the Rose Bowl; now Director of Industrial Relations and Plants for General Motors Division of Chevrolet, Pontiac, and Chevrolet of Canada Division; although now a resident of Michigan, he is a comprehensive reader of the Ada Herald.

Second Contest Identifications

Identifications for Week 1
June 7
Ada High School
basketball team 1940-41
11. Ella Frick: over many years gave Ada youngsters piano lessons.
12. Harry Sousley: Ada's first "Man of the Year" in 1957; Ada mayor for ten years; first president of the Farmers and Merchants Picnic; first president of the Memorial Park board; active in business and civic groups for over 40 years.

Contest winner: Isabelle Nelson, Alger.

Identifications for Week 2
June 14
The Fergusons are tireless workers in Liberty Grange and community activities. Ruth has been an Ada Herald correspondent for over 25 years.
15. Avonelle C. Stambaugh: benefactress to almost every segment of the Ada community; first woman to receive the "Citizen of the Year" award in 1960; Stambaugh Hall on the ONU campus and the Ada Public Library are outward signs of her generosity, but she also served as the first president of the area Red Cross Chapter and for 36 years as president of the board of the public library, active in Methodist Church projects, social and civic groups.
16. Terry Keiser: Professor of biology at ONU since 1967; former Ada council member; president of the Ada Area Improvement Corp.; serves as Ada’s forester.
17-22, Ada School bus drivers in 1959:
Contest winners: Maggie Williams, Ada and Susan Stambaugh, Columbus.
Identifications for Week 3  
June 21

23. O.C. Powell.
24. Frances Powell.
Mr. and Mrs. Powell, respected members of the community, both taught in the country schools, were 60-year members of Pleasant Hill Grange and faithful members of the First United Methodist Church. Mr. Powell, a pioneer in hybrid seed corn production, began Powell Seeds in 1937 and his family continues his work.

25. F. Bringle McIntosh, sixth president of Ohio Northern University, affectionately known as “Doctor Mac.” Under his leadership, the residence halls were completed, the first unit of McIntosh Center was put in operation and the university received academic and professional accreditation.

26. Frank “Buck” Street was for many years the cook at Dean McElroy’s College Inn and later at the university cafeteria in Brown building. Buck cooked for the National Guard and he and his wife, Minnie, provided us with good home-cooking.


28. Richard “Dick” Kain was an ONU faculty member for 31 years and was for 26 years chairman of Industrial Technology. He still does the sign engraving for ONU. An active Ada citizen and member of the tree commission, he helps Ada maintain its title, “Tree City.”

Contest winner: Jim Mertz.

Identifications for Week 4  
June 28

29. Maxine McBride: If you attended Ada High School, you must recognize the smile. She served as secretary for many years until her retirement this year. Maxine was selected Ohio Secretary of the Year in 1968. She is also the Clerk-Treasurer for the Ada Public Library board.

30. Betty Miller: Another face was supposed to appear in this space. Seeking diversion, the infamous gang in the back room of the Herald switched photos at press time. They replaced one with this ONU freshman picture obtained from a former friend. Its only historical value is that Bill Frederick at Paeszler’s Studio was the photographer.

31. Clyde Lamb
32. Harris Lamb
These brothers came to ONU in 1929 and with the help of students handled all varsity sports. Clyde “The Chief” was Athletic Director and coached freshman teams. Harris was head coach for both football and basketball. Clyde was selected “Distinguished Citizen” in 1968. He took many of the photographs for the Ada Centennial book in 1953.

33. Robert Hilliard.
34. Wilfred Binkley.
35. Boyd Sobers.
36. Oscar Darlington.
Members of the ONU department of history, these men were also active community members. Robert Hilliard recorded ONU and Ada events in slides and photographs. His scrapbook of our Bicentennial activities in 1976 is a valuable community record. Wilfred Binkley was an internationally known scholar through his books and lectures. He also served as mayor of Ada and received a “Distinguished Citizen” award in 1962. Boyd Sobers was an Ada council member, was secretary of CIC and now serves the Methodist Church as treasurer. Oscar Darlington was Dean of Liberal Arts. His ready wit made a PTA meeting a night to remember when he served as president.
Contest winner: Susan Stambaugh, Columbus.

Identifications for Week 5
July 5

37. Joan Tressel Kindle: Elected our centennial queen, she presided over the festivities in 1953. Involved in farm community activities, she also served on the Ada school board and was editor of The Ada Herald for three years.

38. John Kramer: Dr. Kramer, bearded in honor of the centennial in this Howard McBride photo, began his years in Ada as the Director of the ONU Health Service. After a stint in the Air Force, he returned to serve Ada as a family physician when doctors made house calls. He was selected “Distinguished Citizen” in 1977. In between house calls, he found time to play a little golf and to appear in an Ada Community Theater production as a traveling salesman.

39. Vincent Reichert: Howard McBride snapped Vince in this centennial pose as a “brother of the brush.” Vince has been an Ada businessman for 37 years, moving from his men and boys clothing shop on N. Main to his present store in 1963. Vince searches for Ada’s past in old postcards.

40. Gayle Zimmerman: Gayle’s activities have included Ada Methodist Church projects, politics, local history and as “Aunt Gayle” to the neighborhood children. Her garden behind the house on S. Main adds a special quality to our town. “Starts” from Gayle’s flowers and plants can be found in yards all over Ada. In this photo she is dressed for the Ohio Sesqui-Centennial pageant at Kenton in 1953.

41. Betty Elzay: Serving as secretary for ONU maintenance for 25 years, Betty earned a degree in history while she was working. She taught swimming and life saving in the Red Cross program at the pool. Betty is assured a place in local history for in our 136 years she is the first and only woman elected to serve on the Ada Village Council.

42. Norman Rex: A teacher at Ada High School and Ohio Northern he is currently chairman and professor of Engineering Technology at Lima Technical college. Norm served on Ada council and has worked on many village planning committees, including the new municipal pool in 1975.

43. Louis Greer: Ada businessman who as mayor laid the first brick for the paving of Main Street on August 3, 1904. As mayor he urged the grading and beautification of Railroad Park and presided at the dedication of the Civil War monument in the park on May 3, 1903.

44. Henry Solomon Lehr: The man whose vision and hard work created one of the major influences in shaping Ada. Working in partnership with the citizens, Lehr founded Ohio Northern University in 1873. Active in Ada business and one of the founders of the Disciple Church, his achievements will be with us for a long time.

Contest winner: Lawrence Rodgers, Lima.

Identifications for Final Week
July 12

The pictures with a 1938 date came from a Barton Snyder Ada Herald file apparently to be used in an Ada business promotional feature. Most of the pictures were taken by “Jamie” and others are copies the Herald had on file.

45. L.C. Povenmire: Povenmire’s Grocery stood where Dr. Love’s office is now. The grocery was there for a long time and Mr. Povenmire delivered groceries to your kitchen.

46. Sherry Hauenstein Pees: Sherry appears in this photo as an Ada High drum major. Later her painstaking research of county history made us all focus on our pioneer heritage.

47. John Amburgey: A former Ada High school athlete and still a familiar
figure around town. John is one of the younger generation of Ada businessmen.

48. Simeon Fess: ONU teacher and Ada lawyer, he was elected to the United States Senate in 1912 and served with Frank Willis. Fess later became the president of Antioch College. His lovely home still stands on the north side of the new fire station.

49. J. Stewart Main: His last business in Ada, an appliance store, was behind his Pure Oil station on Main Street. He was a councilman for 24 years and a member of the County Board of Health for 14 years.

50. Carl Luft: He owned a Chrysler agency and then a garage on Lincoln Avenue. After the fire at his garage, he moved across the street to the building behind First Federal. A favorite Ada saying about Carl was that he could fix anything.

51. Charley was the manager of the Ada Theater. He entertained two or three generations of Ada families at the movies.

52. Burke Gardner: Ada pharmacist and owner of the drugstore that still bears his name. Burke was in the store for 47 years until his daughter, Mary Ann, and her husband, Jim Turner, took over in 1969.

53. Sanford McCurdy: Sant came to Ada in 1915 and built poultry and hog feeding equipment. He also made fluorescent lights, clocks and thermometers. One of the thermometers stood outside Cole’s Insurance for over 40 years. His name became known beyond the Ada community when he and his son Paul designed the elevators for farm use and when Sant invented his gravity grain box in 1955.

54. Robert Bischoff: After serving on council for many years, Bob was elected mayor in 1968. Active in his Highway Oil business, Rotary, Boy Scouts, Farmers and Merchants Picnic and ONU alumni activities, he often used The Ada Herald “Letters to the Editor” column to answer citizens’ questions or to commend citizens’ actions. One of his permanent council committees included a citizen advisory group to help council plan for the future of Ada. In 1970, he saw the completion of a master plan for Ada begun under Mayor Vandemark and earlier councils. In 1976, he was awarded the “Distinguished Citizen” award posthumously.

55. Earl Huber: Owner for many years of Huber’s Furniture Store on the corner of Main and Highland. He and his wife Sarah were the only couple to be selected “Distinguished Citizens” in 1967 for their many services to the community.

56. Dr. Guy Wilcox: Family physician whose office was on N. Main in the Brewer Block next to Jim Mertz’s first hardware store. Those who knew Dr. Wilcox say he represented the ideal picture of a small town doctor, a dignified gentleman.

The Ada school cafeteria manager and cooks in 1961.


Contest winner: Gary McCurdy.

Overall winners: Susan Stambaugh, Columbus and Maggie Williams, Ada. Each accumulated 25 correct identifications to win.

Photo of Frank Ramsdell loaned by Paul Ramsdell.

Photo of Frank Street loaned by Mildred Plummer and Minnie Street.

Photo of O.C. and Frances Powell courtesy of Phyllis Griffith.
The research that resulted in the stories about President Taft's visit and Dr. George Crile's medical contributions also uncovered some information on the military companies that were a large part of the early life of Ohio Northern University.

Some alumni and community residents can recall the excitement of Military Contest Day when the government sent army officials from West Point or Washington to judge the campus battalions. Part of the drill included firing the campus cannon at sunrise and "taking down the cannon."

The Military Department was established in 1882 and the cannon arrived in Ada in 1903 and were retired in 1913 or 1914. The class of 1916 placed them on the main campus until they were removed in 1985.

These pictures of the campus cannon in action and the cadet training camp are from the ONU Archives. Some of the early history of the military companies is recorded by Paul Logsdon, Director of Heterick Library, in the 1984-85 Winter issue of the Ohio Northern Alumnus magazine. The 1971 Centennial Edition of The Northern also devotes two pages to ONU's military heritage taken from the centennial history, "Tempered by Crisis" written by Professor George Belch.
Cadet Camp, 1909.

ONU Military Company, 1909. From ONU Archives.
ONU Military Company and campus cannon, 1909. From ONU Archives.

Main Street, Ada, Ohio, looking south. ONU May Day Parade. Photo from 1948 "Northern."
Thank you
to those who shared a family story, a photograph, or a memory
to the editors of The Ada Herald who gave me space—
Janet, Jo, Thad and Marilyn
to Pat and Ann who turned the writing into print
to Thad who took some pictures
to Rachel who spent hours in the dark room working with the photos and Sherry who did the same thing for the earlier Samplers
Finally, thank you to Janet who offered suggestions, encouragement and created order in all four Sampler collections from 1985 to 1990.
Small Town Sampler
by
Betty Miller
As I looked back over 150 samplers, I realized that many of the pleasant afternoons with my tape recorder were spent with people who live in the country.

That’s one of the advantages of living in a small rural village. Drive to the edge of town and you’re in the country, a quiet world of woods and fields with only a distant water tower or grain elevator on the horizon to keep you on course.

One of my treasured correspondents was Wheeler McMillen who died at 99 in March of 1992. Although a good deal of his life was spent in busy city offices seated at a typewriter, his thoughts were often in the farmland of Hardin County. In my file are letters filled with his great good humor about events from the past, including memories of driving cattle down Ada’s Johnson Street on the way to the farm.

Wheeler had a lot to say about farmers and the land in his books and articles: “Farm work is neither repetitive nor monotonous. The seasons, even the hours, vary the tasks. The man who plows, plants, and cultivates can see the tangible result of his individual effort. . . . He can enjoy a kind of personal pride that is denied to millions who work in a mechanical routine.”

When a small town is surrounded by farm fields, the community has a special quality.

© Elizabeth (Betty) Miller, 1992

Cover photo and layout by Janet Hubbell
CONTENTS

Doug Herman's Wit ..............................................4
Cunningham's .....................................................7
Ada Ghosts ..........................................................9
Mausoleum ........................................................12
Jim Clum and Lafayette .........................................13
Midwinter Fair .....................................................16
Hospitals — 50 Years Ago ......................................18
Nurses — 50 Years Ago ..........................................21
Doctors — 50 Years Ago .........................................24
Line Crew .........................................................27
Class of '41 ........................................................28
D.S. Pence ..........................................................30
Ada Business Men's Club, 1912 ..............................32
Farmers and Merchants Picnic .................................34
Ada Tri-County Fair, 1883 ......................................37
Ada and Footballs ...............................................40
Christmas 1991 ...................................................44
Teachers' Examination, 1911 ..................................46
Messicks' 5¢ to $1 Store .........................................48
Doug Herman Reappears .......................................51
Ream House .......................................................52
Henry Morrow, “Town Atheist” ..............................54
German Accordion ..............................................60
Ads from the Past ...............................................63-64
Doug Herman's Wit

In an age when conversation has degenerated to "ya knows," "whatevers" and soundbites, Doug Herman's two sentence letter to The Ada Herald editor (October 24, 1990) recalls a time when words were lively and punny. Doug cautions Ada citizens not to be concerned about Sports Illustrated's recent reference to Ada as a "dead town." After all he writes, "It always was well laid out." When I stopped laughing, I began a search to rediscover the "Herman wit."

Doug was an Ada mailman for 37 years. His witty responses to people and events in general conversation came so fast and frequent that we sometimes missed them. So that we had time to shift our brains into high gear, The Ada Herald editor often printed the Herman responses. Readers reacted in several ways. Some groaned at the atrocious puns, some didn't get it, and some spent the next ten minutes laughing.

Often Doug's comments were made in the midst of village unrest. One of my favorites came when the sewer system was the topic of many letters to the editor in 1966. Doug observed, "This sewer plant story has stirred up a lot of sediment." In 1968 one of the town's lovely old homes next to the new Liberty-National bank was razed and replaced with an ultra modern brick building for the new dentists, Shull and Shambarger. After citizens complained that the offices had no windows, Doug quipped, "The building has no windows because they are paneless dentists."

Doug's daughter, Jane, edited her father's book, "Once A-Pun A Time: A book dedicated to the O-pun minded people of the world." In the foreword, Jane relates some of her father's early practical jokes. In a rigged radio broadcast of the legendary Ohio Northern-Army football game in 1931, Doug and Guinea Routson as fake
announcers gave the cheering crowd gathered at “Pat’s Newsstand” a play-by-play account of an astonishing ONU victory over Army. By the time the listeners realized the bitter truth—Army 60, ONU 0—Doug and Guinea were in a safe place.

In 1932, Doug began a period as a free-lance radio gag writer for a Cleveland station, WHK. Some of his one-liners made it to the popular Colonel Stoopnagle and Bud, Marty May and Ray Knight broadcasts from New York. If you are an early radio fan, you will recognize this beginning of a routine from Doug’s pen: “What kind of breakfast food does a chiropodist eat while attending school? Cream of Feet. What kind does he use after graduation? Post Tootsies.” The routine could go on and on with pauses for the laugh lines. Doug’s one-liner gem written for an A.C. Spark Plug Company sponsored show was “A.C. come, A.C. go.”

Doug Herman’s humorous articles appeared in The Ada Herald, The Northern Review and The Lima News. The titles display his ability as a master punster, almost a lost art. A description of the “mad horde of malemutes” and Ralph (he barked “Ralph, Ralph, Ralph”) who followed Doug on his North Simon Street mail route is titled “The Canine Mutiny or Queeg Henry The Flit.” For cat lovers he followed with “Tabby Or Not Tabby.” Two ancient Egyptian cat owners, “Sidi Loan” and “Ali Wey” are featured in this essay. In “From Wags To Witches” (with a Halloween motif) he introduces Roy Rajah from India and his horse, Trigger Treat. Doug created other memorable characters in the essays. In “Messer-Smith Goes To Washington or a Mock Senate Scene” the hero, Bob, closes his speech on communism in government with this stirring sentence: “Up where the pants left off, down where the shirrtail begins, that’s where the vest begins.” We knew Doug would have a great time with the streaking rage in 1971 and he did. He
titled this essay “Streaking Is Buffoonery” and suggested a name for ONU participants, “Polar Bares.”

All topics and occasions met their match when Doug took them on. He fell in 1981 while jogging and was taken to Lima Memorial Hospital. After he returned to his home on Ballard Street in Ada, he got his bill and discovered the hospital had addressed it to “Mallard Street.” The hospital should have known better. Doug sent a check but couldn’t resist a note to accompany it. Directing his remarks to “Dear People,” he wrote about the “foul up” which didn’t get him “down” and assured the hospital he wasn’t trying to “duck my bill.” He closed with “teal we meet again” and signed it “Duckless Herman.”

In 1941 Doug formed the H.F. and A.S. Club (Ada Hay Fever and Asthma Sufferers’ Club) and wrote several articles about it. The Associated Press “recognizing that it was nothing to sneeze at” sent news of the club all over the country. Ragweed was the official flower and the club’s official anthem was “It Flies Through The Air With the Greatest of Sneeze.” Meeting “in the rear of Pollen’s grocery,” members entertained with song, “Yes Sir, Asthma Baby,” and played their favorite game, “drop the handkerchief.”

It is 1990 and Doug Herman and his fertile mind are still at it. Doug reads The Ada Herald in Delaware, Ohio, where he lives now, and I am surprised we haven’t heard from him sooner. I wonder if he ever finished his book about President Truman’s wife. Jane says her father is sure it will be a “Bess seller.”

If you feel like 51 pages of laughs, Douglas Herman’s book, published by daughter Jane in 1982 is in the Ada/ONU Collection at the Ada Library Historical Preservation Annex. I have used a lot of material from the book with Jane’s permission.
Cunningham's

In the early days of Ada, businesses on either side of the railroad tracks were always in danger from the hot coals and cinders of the steam locomotives passing through the village. Small wood and coal stoves that provided heat for the stores were fire hazards during the winter months. An even greater threat were the three bakery ovens, fired up late at night when the town was sleeping. The seven grocery stores, the three hotels, and the many boarding houses and restaurants needed their fresh bread by early morning.

On August 13, 1880, at 11 p.m. Ada volunteer firemen were called to fight a fire that started in a bakery behind the wooden two-story drygoods business of J.T. Cunningham. His store stood on the corner where the Cole-Humphrey Insurance office is today. When only ashes were left, Mr. Cunningham had managed to save some merchandise but had suffered a $6,000 loss.
Like other businessmen of the day, Mr. Cunningham was hard-working and determined. Seven months after the fire, on March 4, 1881, he reopened for business. He relocated in the new north section of the brick Union block built in 1876. By 1888 he had added another room and in 1900 he added one more room with entrances on North Main Street and West Buckeye Street. When he celebrated 33 years of business in Ada in 1905, J.T. Cunningham had one of the most prosperous stores in the area.

Mr. Cunningham started his business career as a store clerk when he was eight years old. In 1869 he came from Coopville in southern Ohio and bought a farm in Lima. But merchandising was his real interest and in 1872 he moved to Ada and bought Frank Schwab’s stock of dry-goods and shoes. In 1887 the store became Cunningham and Sons when Meason, Frank and later Charley joined their father. Frank died and Charley became a minister so Meason was the Mr. Cunningham most people remember.

When J.T. died in 1911, all Ada merchants closed for the funeral to honor one of the town’s distinguished citizens. His son, M.E. served on the village council and like his father was a strong supporter of the Methodist Church and the Masonic Lodge. J.T. was on the board of directors of the old National Bank. M.E. was a director of the Liberty Bank, located on the corner next to Cunningham’s before the bank moved across the street in 1914.

Both J.T. and M.E. were aggressive businessmen. In the old newspapers their ads are full columns featuring suits and dresses, hats, rugs and drapes, shoes and boots, umbrellas, capes, corset covers and just about anything the men, women, and children of the community needed. In celebration of sales or special promotions, J.T. often threw pennies from the second floor to the waiting children gathered below on the sidewalk.
The Union block is a group of remarkable buildings with the 1876 date still visible from the street. In the Decorator Shop are traces of Cunningham’s emporium. The beautiful embossed tin ceiling is still there and so is the balcony at the rear where the cashier sat at the desk with the ledgers and the cashbox. Over 115 years of paint and plaster cover the tracks for the Barr coin carrier system J. T. installed in 1885.

In the early 1930s when I went to town with my grandmother, one of the regular stops was Cunningham’s where she bought her yard goods. Anyone who remembers the store recalls Sophie Felker, or one of the other clerks, putting the money and the sales slip in the coin carrier. Fascinated, we watched the carrier move along the track to the balcony where the cashier made change and sent it back to the counter.

There may have been bigger and fancier stores in Kenton and Lima but Cunningham’s was Ada’s response to big-city merchandising.

Ada Ghosts

You know how it is. You’re sitting with a group of friends surrounded by two or three conversations. Last summer, relaxing in a canvas chair in front of the Indian Lake cottage, I listened to words and phrases coming at me from all sides: "cup and a half of pecans," "sale on towels," "spectacular Canadian scenery," "my ghosts." All conversation stopped at the last words. In the inappropriate setting of a sunny summer afternoon at the lake, we heard a ghost story.

Her husband had bought a building in Ada, the storyteller began. For several years the couple lived in a second floor apartment while they remodeled the third floor, a former lodge hall where meetings and entertainments were held from 1905 until sometime in the 1940s. When
the work was finished, about seven years ago, they moved into the third floor apartment with its now spacious and comfortable rooms. Soon the woman began to sense they were not the only inhabitants of their new home.

One evening as the couple came up the wide stairs leading to the apartment entrance, the woman thought she saw what seemed to be the lower section of a figure "wearing a black cape or long skirt" standing beside the door. She dismissed the experience by recalling, "The first time it happens, you just think, oh well you know maybe it was your own shadow or something." But the figure and the cape appeared by the door "again and again." That winter in a small room off the living room she saw the same black cape. Later another figure appeared wearing white. The ghostly appearances didn't frighten the woman and became familiar sights. As she told me, "I couldn't tell you how many times I've seen them in seven years."

The next episode involved a rocking chair. Returning from a shopping trip, the woman stopped first to talk to her husband who was in his workroom on the first floor. Climbing the stairs, she unlocked the door of the third floor apartment. After placing her packages on the kitchen table she went into the living room. The chair was rocking as she entered and then suddenly stopped, "just like somebody put their hand on it to stop it."

Two years ago, two smaller figures, still only partially visible, appeared near the doorway of the little room. The woman describes them as "about the size of teenagers." Last winter as she passed the room, she saw in front of her sewing machine the lower half of a child, perhaps five years old, "spinning and twirling around in a circle" as children do. She couldn't see the top half of the tiny figure but the skirt appeared to be one of those old-fashioned dresses with a dropped bodice that children once
wore. The remarkable thing was that it was the first color the woman had seen for the dress was blue.

No one else had seen the figures until the woman's mother came for a visit. One afternoon after waking from a nap in the small room, the mother reported she had seen the figure in the black cape. Unlike her daughter who saw only the lower half of the figures, the mother had seen the full figure. Questioned by her daughter, she said she could not make out features since the face was covered.

The woman's husband has never seen their visitors, but he wonders about the woman in the old picture he found in the building. She is wearing a dark dress accented with a white lace collar, a dress reminiscent of a style before World War I, and she has "a tired, worried face." He also wonders about the door to the little room that he finds open in the morning when he and his wife are sure they closed it the night before.

In September as I walked down the long hall to the stairs leading to the third floor apartment to hear the story again, I thought about the people who had once lived in the building — Robinson, Lucinda, Grace and the others. I hoped the figure in the black cape would be standing outside the door. When I sat in a chair facing the little room, "their room," I wanted to see the little girl twirling in her blue skirt. I took pictures with my camera, hoping when the pictures were developed a blur in the photo would indicate something was there I could not see with my eyes. The photographs showed nothing.

Perhaps the next time I go I can report to those of you who are skeptics that, as Shakespeare's Hamlet says to his friend Horatio, "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."
Mausoleum

Agnew Welsh, editor of The Ada Record, often used his newspaper columns to advocate projects he thought would benefit the community. In 1888 he told his readers there ought to be “a public receiving vault” at Woodlawn Cemetery. Nothing happened that year, but the community began to talk about it. In 1898 the township trustees included the subject in the agenda for a meeting. The trustees had only $367.45 in the cemetery fund and $110.10 due on lots so they didn’t have the money for that kind of building project. They did decide, however, that if an additional $600 could be added to their treasury from the sale of lots, they would build the vault. L.O. Ream, one of the Ada undertakers, and others began an effort to sell lots to the public.

The trustees soon had enough money and a promise to keep. Agnew Welsh tells us that “On December 12, 1899 trustees L.L. Dobbins, George Carey and Robert Krofft contracted with a Mansfield, Ohio firm for a Bedford (Ind.) limestone mausoleum, eight by twelve feet inside, for $1500.” By November of 1900 the mausoleum was finished and stood on the southwest side of the cemetery beside the highway.

When it was new the mausoleum, with enough crypts
for 240 burials, was an imposing structure with its solid brass doors and brass frames for the skylight windows that covered the roof.

In 1990 Jim Clum of Lafayette told me the story of Mr. Fishbaugh, the stranger who came to Ada at the turn of the century. He sold each crypt space for $300 and agreed to put $50,000 in the bank for the future maintenance of the mausoleum. Twenty years passed and when the roof began to leak, no one could locate Mr. Fishbaugh or the $50,000. As far as I know, the mystery was never solved.

Mausoleums seem to attract the curious and planners of initiations. Soon the locks on the brass doors were broken and vandals entered. Macabre stories about the mausoleum began to circulate in the community. About 1968 the last vaults were removed from the crypts and placed in burial plots in the cemetery. The mausoleum was torn down. It had fallen into such a state of disarray and had caused so many problems for the trustees that everyone was glad to see this landmark disappear.

**Jim Clum and Lafayette**

Driving the old Lima-Ada bus route — SR 235 to SR 309 with a right turn at Napoleon Road—I stopped in Lafayette where the bus used to pick up passengers. The Civil War soldier, a familiar landmark, stands as he has since 1903. I spent the next two hours talking to James Clum and came back to Ada with the seeds for ten or more good stories.

Jim collects the Clum family history and the early accounts are filled with family names familiar in the area: Shuster, Boyd, Staley, Runser, Gilbert, Shrider, Binkley, Anspach. Jim’s history book provides genealogical facts and some great anecdotes passed down through the generations.
Jacob Clum, Jim's grandfather, is a central figure in many of the stories, including an account of life in a log cabin with seven family members sharing the sleeping loft. If you have a fascination for Indians you'd want to hear about Jacob's discovery, while digging a basement, of an Indian skeleton “in a sitting position facing west.” With the skeleton of a dog on his lap, the Indian was surrounded by beautiful artifacts.

With an interest in Indians you'd probably turn to the tales of John Clum. An illustrious family member, he was the U.S. Apache Agent on the San Carlos Reservation in 1874 and played a part in the capture of Geronimo. As the first mayor of Tombstone and the editor of two early Arizona daily newspapers, John Clum's story would provide some vivid pictures of the Old West.

Jacob Clum's business ventures in Ada would add to the pages of local history. Jacob owned the livery stable where Cole's used cars are parked today. George White managed it and slept there at night in a haymow. If a stranger got off the train after midnight, he could pull the rope hanging by the lantern, and in answer to the bell George would fix him up with a buggy or a riding horse to complete his journey. In addition to horses and hay for the livery stable, Jacob and Clara's dairy farm north of Ada provided daily milk deliveries to Ada and fresh fruits, vegetables and meat for local families. Ada's first motion picture theater, The Odeon, was in the Clum block built by Jacob. This fact could lead to some reminiscences.

Clara Boyd Clum was buried in the mausoleum. That leads to a mystery to be solved about the stranger, Mr. Fishbaugh, who built the grand mausoleum with brass doors and brass-framed skylights at Ada's Woodlawn Cemetery in 1900. With enough crypts for 240 burials, Fishhugh sold each crypt space for $300 and put $50,000 in escrow for maintenance. Twenty years later when the roof began to leak, Fishbaugh was gone and
so was the $50,000.

A story for further research is sparked by a sample of D.S. Pence's penmanship found in an old Shuster religious book. In 1873 and 1874 Pence taught Drawing, Bookkeeping and Plain and Ornamental Penmanship at Ohio Normal. What is remarkable is Pence had no hands.

Jim has a record book, dated 1856-1870, found in the cornerstone of the old Desenberg Lutheran Church on the corner of PeVee Road and Desenberg Road (now part of SR 81). A wine bottle buried with the book was in pieces and a newspaper in shreds, but the ink used to record the church members' names is as clear as the day the book was put in the cornerstone.

Mark Twain would have chuckled had he read the boyhood adventure stories of Jim's father, Parley Clum and his brother, Harvey, called "Pud." Jim titled them, "Parley and Pud's Easter Egg Hunt," "Pud and His Dynamite," and "Pud's Camp Out." Included are descriptions of Parley's trips on ice slates to visit his grandparents on PeVee Road. His journey took him down Hog Creek, then onto the river in Allen County.

The life story of Jim's father, Parley, could produce an interesting biography. As a professional lineman working "Telephone, powerlines, telegraph lines and D.C. feeder lines for inter-urban street cars," he traveled the United States as a "tramp lineman." When he settled down at 39 to a steady job with the Power Company in this area, it's documented in a photo of Parley as supervisor with his line crew in front of the Cole Ford Agency.

I left Lafayette with a tape filled with stories, a book of Clum history, a Desenberg country school history and some of Jim's drawings and cartoons that provide him pleasure in his retirement days. I had the photos of a younger Ada tucked under my arm. Inside my camera were shots of the Civil War soldier's monument and the
little German accordion the blind Civil War veteran, Uncle Paul Hagerman’s father, played on the streets of Ada. In the weeks to come, I’ll share some of these stories.

Midwinter Fair

Early in the 1920s a group of men in the Ada community got together to discuss promotional events that might appeal to all interests in the area—agricultural, educational, business and social. In summer the county fairs, street festivals, ice cream socials and band concerts in the parks brought people together. The Farmers and Merchants Picnic in August was on its way to becoming a tradition. The men wanted something that would do the same for the cold winter months.

After World War I, the Ada American Legion, with its growing membership of young veterans, wanted to raise some money for permanent quarters. In 1919 the Legion’s three-day

There’s one survivor from those days. Ollie Brown exhibited a jar of her green beans and won a prize. Her son, Bud Brown, kept the beans and after 72 years they would still win a blue ribbon. Of course, after awhile everything begins to show its age—even green beans.
indoor carnival and bazaar at the Ada armory had been a success. The craft tables, the fortune teller’s booth, the country store and the War Museum had attracted big crowds. People bought chances on the grand prizes—a pony and a fur coat—and stayed to listen to Runser’s orchestra, the university’s Lawyer’s Jazz Band and Mike Mazzula’s music.

With the Legion’s project as an inspiration, the group of men organized the first Midwinter Fair for the first week in December in 1921. Most of the activities would take place at the armory. The women were in charge of the canned and baked goods displays. Anyone could display crafts. Ohio Northern would have educational exhibits and so would the area school children. The livestock show and judging would take place in the downtown barns in Ada. Many people had invested in an automobile by then but the livery stables were still in use. Businessmen were asked to decorate their windows and offer some special sales for Christmas.

Because the first Midwinter Fair was a success, it got bigger and better. The Ada Herald had a detailed account of the three-day Midwinter Fair of 1923. The officers worked long hours to make it, according to the reporter, one that “will go down in history.” W.H. Powell was the chairman. H.J. Sousley and Frank Detrick worked with the volunteers on the committees. School children from the area schools — Ada, Hostler, Red, Mustard, Rinehart, Woodlawn and Owlsburg — put up exhibits of their work. The women brought in baked goods, canned goods and crafts for judging. Dean H.E. Huber and Professor Edgar McElwain from the university set up an interesting and elaborate display on the European Corn Borer. Many of Ohio Northern’s 1100 students back in town for the start of the winter quarter helped with exhibits.

The livery stables were filled with livestock. Sunny
Slope Farm had the champion Belgian stallion and mare; the McElroy and Wolber bull won grand champion; Roy Pickering from Kenton showed his Shorthorns and won some prizes; Edward Powell won a first for his Poland China pigs; Dave Sousley took home the senior grand champion boar prize; Gail Moore had the champion pony; Ernest Klingler's mules were winners and so were the Ash Brothers' Holsteins. Others went home with ribbons or cash prizes too — Henry Sleesman, Arthur Oldham, Wayne Putnam, Dan Motter, Ivan Kimble and Lowell McQuown.

After the judging, the winners and their champions left the Main Garage on Buckeye and paraded down Main Street. It had rained the first day of the fair and snowed the second day; the last day was labeled “a cold snap.” The spectators pulled wool caps over their ears, wrapped their mufflers a little tighter and watched the fair finale. After it was over, the restaurants sold a lot of hot coffee and soup.

The county fairs, the street festivals and the bazaars are still part of small town life, but the Ada Midwinter fairs are history.

**Hospitals — 50 Years Ago**

Has a computerized hospital bill passed through your mail lately? If it has, then you’ll be fascinated with a Lima Memorial Hospital 1937 schedule of prices Cathy Nelson found in an old book. Glenna Emlinger brought the print ed list to *The Ada Herald* office, and it triggered some thoughts and research on medical care 50 years ago.

In 1937, if you were sick enough to go to a hospital you didn’t totter through a maze of halls following the colored lines and arrows to an out-patient room for treatment or tests. You were put in a bed. Lima Memorial would give you one for $2.50 a day if you were willing to share the
room with three other sick people. You paid $5 if you wanted privacy. If you insisted on privacy and a bathroom, the cost went up to $7.50 a day. Suppose the diagnosis called for surgery. The operating room charge was $10 for major surgery or $5 for minor surgery. You could stay in the bed after the operation until you felt like going home.

Operating room picture is from a March 1979, Lima Memorial Hospital employees' publication celebrating the hospital's 80th year. Photo loaned by Lima Memorial Hospital Library.

Tonsils and birth were two of the main reasons for a hospital stay 50 years ago. If the doctor saw white spots on your tonsils, it was only a matter of time. Parents could pamper the child and have the tonsils removed in the hospital. That cost $2.00 for a room and $5 for the use of the operating room. Most children, however, were taken to the family doctor, and he took them out in his
office surgery. Teed Neiswander remembers entertaining children from the township sitting on the steps outside L.C. Neiswander’s office in the Tressel building in Ada waiting their turn on tonsil day. Dr. Neiswander was Teed’s father and Teed’s job was to distract the children from thoughts of what was going on behind the closed door. Until he saw his pajamas in the car one day and realized it was his turn, Teed enjoyed his job. The only good thing about having your tonsils out was the chipped ice for your sore throat and maybe a dish of ice cream.

At the turn of the century, a woman about to give birth might live in the country at the end of a long lane that drifted shut in winter. Someone went outside and rang the dinner bell or shot off a gun and the neighbors came to help. If a doctor couldn’t get there, the neighbors took over.

Forget the stories of the women who worked in the fields, went to the house and had the baby and were back in the fields the next day. In 1937, with ambulances available from the local funeral homes, and with McK itrick and San Antonio hospitals in Kenton and Lima Memorial and St. Rita’s in Lima, area women soon found an easier way. When a mother-to-be went to the hospital 50 years ago she expected to stay in her bed for at least 10 days after the birth. Lima Memorial gave the parents a 10 day flat rate of $40 for her room; if she had a Caesarian, she received a 10 percent discount. At the end of the 10 days she might sit on the bed and dangle her feet. Then she was carried to a car for the trip home and put to bed to recuperate. A relative or paid worker came in to do the housework, help with the new baby, take care of the other children and cook the meals. The baby, disciplined by a hospital routine of four-hour feedings, slept most of the time.

World War II changed all that. The theory of the woman in the fields returned and women had to get up and get
on with life after the birth. Today a pot of flowers doesn't stand a chance of arriving at the hospital before the mother and baby are sent home.

When Lima City Hospital (renamed Lima Memorial in 1933) opened its doors in 1899, it had 13 patient beds. San Antonio in Kenton opened in 1897 and had about the same number of beds. We have only to step inside a modern hospital to marvel at the changes.

*Thank you to Cathy and Glenn for sharing their “find.” A thank you also to Margaret Cutter at the Lima Memorial Hospital library. She let me browse through the hospital’s historical material and make copies of the pictures.*

**Nurses — 50 Years Ago**

Medical costs and treatments may have changed through the years, but we still have nurses who help us get well.

Fifty years ago, a young woman who aspired to wear the white uniform of the nursing profession had to rank academically in the upper third of her high school class, pass a battery of physical and mental tests and stay unmarried until she graduated. After she paid her $150 tuition, she moved to the nurses' home connected to the hospital and lived there for three years with her classmates.

Her days were filled with books, lectures and floor experience in surgery, pediatrics and obstetrics. The 1940 nursing class of Lima Memorial Hospital was the first to participate in an affiliation when they went to the Toledo State Hospital to train in psychiatric care. At the end of the three years, a future nurse spent two days in Columbus for the state board examination. When she received the black stripe for her cap and her registered nursing pin at graduation, it was one of the high points of
Photo of Lima Memorial Hospital School of Nursing Class of 1940. Some of the familiar faces are June Thrush Epley, Bess Bosserman Rodabaugh, Addie Guthrie Doemberg, Wanda Cheney Berry, Dorothy Ramsdell Moffett and Barbara Elwood Tighe. Photo loaned by Barbara Tighe.
her life. With pride, the new nurse wore her navy blue cape with the red lining.

The nurse of 50 years ago was busy with shots, baths, back rubs, enemas, catherizations and bed pans. Not only did she care for seven to ten patients, she was responsible for cleaning the room after a patient went home. She scrubbed, using a lot of green soap, as well as sterilizing the ever present bed pan. With no recovery room, she sat by her patient's bed until he was fully awake.

Her general duty pay was $2.50 or $3 a day, but she did have other benefits. The hospital laundered, starched and ironed her white uniforms (no easy task). She ate free meals. If her name came up on the list for private duty, she earned $5 for eight hours of work and stayed on the case until she was dismissed.

When she put in her emergency room hours, she could usually count on some extra time to catch up on her studying or bandage preparation. Only two or three patients would pass through the emergency room during her eight hour shift. The cost of emergency service at Lima Memorial Hospital in 1937 is a real eyebrow raiser. Treatment for a cut and dressing was $2 and the minor service fee was 50¢. If the patient needed anesthesia while the house doctor put in some stitches, the cost went up to $5 or $10, depending on the injury.

Even though men had served as nurses in the Civil War, not many men entered nursing 50 years ago. They were trained as orderlies instead, helping nurses with male patients who might be reluctant to let a woman give them a bath or help them shave.

Today, instead of funeral home ambulances, modern and efficient EMT squads usually administer the first care for the patient and transport him to the hospital. The nurse is ready when the squad pulls up to the emergency entrance.
Some things have changed, but nurses in the doctor's offices, the nursing homes, the schools and the hospitals are still motivated by the same desire that made someone choose nursing 50 years ago — the desire to help. Thanks to Barbara Tighe for her reminiscences and information about her nurse's training at Lima Memorial Hospital and for the photograph from her album.

Doctors — 50 Years Ago

One group of names in local history never seems to fade from the memory of a small town — the family doctors. To complete the series on medical care 50 years ago, I talked to Dr. John Kramer.

Although Dr. Kramer planned to be a teacher of English and German, three months before graduation from Miami University he made an important decision. Medical studies had been in his thoughts before college, but in 1931 the country was in the middle of a depression. Tuition was $270 a year at The Ohio State School of Medicine and requirements were four years of studies with a year as a hospital intern or resident doctor. Nevertheless, that summer he completed courses in organic chemistry, parasitology and mathematics and applied to Ohio State. He added that in 1991 his grandson reports at one medical school the tuition is now $30,000 a year.

Noting some changes in medical studies in 50 years, Dr. Kramer says today's students have an earlier contact
with patients. It wasn’t until the junior year that his class was handed stethoscopes and worked with patients. One of the senior requirements was to complete 25 home deliveries, a vital experience for a future family doctor who would deliver thousands of babies in his years of private practice.

Dr. Kramer’s choice of Ada is an account of someone who happens by chance to be in a certain place at a certain time. Recovering from an emergency appendectomy, with a week off to recuperate, Dr. Kramer and his wife, Berneice, rented a cottage at Port Clinton. On the way to Lake Erie they stopped for lunch at the College Inn across from the Ohio Northern University campus. Clyde Lamb, who must have noticed the medical insignia on the Kramers’ car, came to the table and asked if he was a doctor. After a few minutes of conversation, Clyde escorted Dr. Kramer to ONU President Robert Williams’ office. When he came out, he had a signed contract to be the new college doctor and to teach 15 hours in the College of Pharmacy for the 1939-40 school year.

While he was the university physician, he also began a private practice in Ada. He remembers assisting Dr. Printz with anesthesia for tonsilectomies and helping Dr. Smith with a serious farm accident patient. Blood count reports for his patients and for other doctors were made in his office and took about 1 1/2 hours to complete. With modern technology, now it takes about five minutes. In 1942 he left for World War II and the Air Force. He recalls a letter from President Williams telling him he considered it "a leave of absence." When he returned to Ada in 1945, he resumed his private practice.

What was it like to be a small town doctor 50 years ago? The day began at six with hospital rounds. If a doctor had hospital privileges, he might have patients in Lima, Kenton and Bluffton. Some house calls, office hours from 1-5 and 6-9, more house calls and the day
might be over. Dr. Kramer kept a journal, and on one day in the late 1940s he treated 69 office patients and made 17 house calls. Office charges were $1.50 and house calls, $3. At night the phone calls came from worried mothers, and a baby case meant another trip to Lima, Kenton, Bluffton or a country home somewhere in the county.

When I asked Dr. Kramer what had brought about the greatest change in medicine in 50 years he responded, "antibiotics." Another change occurred when the new medical insurance paid for emergency room care but not for a doctor's office or house call. Emergency rooms expanded and the doctor got a few more hours of sleep. Treatments changed from the days of cataract surgery when the patient's head was immobilized with sand bags for 48 hours and a hernia operation required a week's stay in the hospital. Now the patient, with either operation, goes to the out-patient surgery and is back home the same day.

For many years, Dr. Floyd Elliott and later his son Robert, Dr. Kramer and Dr. Love took care of us. If one took some time off, the others took over. Doctors weren't supposed to get sick. Each doctor took his turn staffing the emergency rooms at St. Rita's and Lima Memorial twice a month, gave the public school physicals, administered the polio shots and still managed to be part of a family and the community.

Every small town has a list of doctors in its history. The names Souder, S.H. Elliott, Montgomery, Ames, Neiswander, Wilcox, Printz, Smith and McElroy are written on our family records. If I've forgotten a name, some family will remember.

Photo of Dr. John Kramer is from the Ohio Northern University "Northern" of 1941.
This photograph was donated to the Ada Public Library Annex by James Clum, Lafayette. Parley Clum, line supervisor, is seventh from the left with his unidentified line crew. The Cole Ford Agency building is in the background. The Ada Armory and the house that stood next to it are on the right. To the left is the old livery stable. Jacob Clum sold the building to Stewart Main who used it for a garage and as a salesroom for Overland Whippet automobiles.
Class of '41

Events that took place 50 years ago are considered milestones, and perhaps one of the most nostalgic is a high school reunion. Although they didn't know it at the time, the Class of 1941 graduated in what Hal Bock, an AP sports writer, calls "America's last summer of innocence."

World events were shaping the future of the Class of '41 while they were still in high school. Great Britain and France declared war on Germany while they were sophomores. When they were juniors, Hitler invaded Denmark and Norway and the Battle of Britain took place. They sat with their families by the radios and listened to FDR's fireside chats and heard the sound of static obscure the voice of Hitler. While the adults discussed the war in Europe, the high school seniors tuned their radios to Jack Benny, Fred Allen, the Hermit and the Lucky Strike Hit Parade.

The Class of '41 graduated and Germany invaded Greece, Yugoslavia and Russia. The House in Washington voted 203-202 to extend the first American peacetime compulsory military service from a year to 18 months, and the war seemed closer. People talked about National Defense and America as "the great arsenal of democracy."

Before they left for college or for jobs, the graduates planned to make the most of the summer of 1941. They went to the movies to see the detectives—Charlie Chan, the Saint, Ellery Queen—or the cowboys—Gene Autry and William Boyd. They laughed at Andy Hardy, Hope and Crosby in "Road to Zanzibar" and Charlie Chaplin in "The Great Dictator." It was a great year for sports - 22-year-old Ted Williams batted .406 and Joe DiMaggio got hits in 56 consecutive games. Whirlaway won the Triple Crown, and Joe Louis in the 17th defense of his title.
knocked out Buddy Baer. In that “summer of innocence” the closest the Class of ’41 got to evil was Hemingway’s racy best seller, “For Whom the Bell Tolls” or the smoke from a Viceroy blown out the bedroom window.

Most of the time they listened to their favorite records and danced to the jukebox music. Their music was sentimental or silly. They slow-danced as a young band singer, Frank Sinatra, crooned “All Or Nothing At All” and “This Love of Mine.” The happy beat of the big bands—Miller, the Dorsey’s, Goodman, James, Barnet, and Shaw—came from the jukeboxes, and they jitterbugged to “Chattanooga Choo Choo,” “Amapola,” or “Frenesi.” When Ish Kabibble lisped “thwee liddle fiddies in an itty bitty pool, boop boop didum, dadum, wadum choo” they sang along. If they could borrow the family car, they went to the lake resorts and the dance halls and crowded near the bandstand to talk to their idols and get their autographs. They danced as though the summer would never end.

The Class of ’41 had started college classes and new jobs and was getting ready for Christmas when the news of Pearl Harbor came over the radios on Sunday afternoon. America declared war on Japan December 8 and on Germany and Italy December 11. Life would never be the same. Congress lowered the draft age to 20. The men of the Class of ’41 had only a year or two left and they, and some of the women volunteers, would join their older friends in the service. Unfamiliar names came over the radio - El Alamein, Schweinfurt, Bastogne, Nijmegen, Kwajalein.

On April 12, 1945, Roosevelt died and on May 1, Hitler’s death was announced. In New Mexico on July 16 they tested the first atomic bomb. When V-E Day (May 8) and V-J Day (August 15) brought the war to an end, 322,188 American soldiers had been killed and 700,000 had been wounded.
When the rest came back, the generals and the war heroes marched in the city ticker tape parades. The regular troops were discharged by length of service, so after the ships brought them back to America, they came home alone by train or bus. Sometimes they hitchhiked to the small towns and farms. Some had been gone for three or more years. They rejoined their families and quietly went back to their studies, the jobs and marriages that had been interrupted by the war.

The Class of '41 won't talk about world events at their reunion - they've never talked much about their war. The ones who were overseas let Ernie Pyle's newspaper columns about "his boys" and Bill Mauldin's cartoons of Joe and Willie, "the dogfaces" tell their war stories before Hollywood added its glamorized versions. Instead, the class will remember classmates who aren't at the reunion, teachers, dances, parties, football and basketball scores, plays, funny things that happened - and the music.

When the Class of 1941 meets for its 50th reunion, they'll have a good time. Why not? 1941 may have been the best time to graduate - just before the world changed.

D.S. Pence

Some of us remember sitting at a school desk, putting a pen point in our wooden holders and then dipping it in the ink bottle safely anchored in the hole in the desk. This began the process of forming intricate circles that would lead to a mastery of cursive writing. Instead of scribbled, unreadable signatures, a written name was once a work of art.

When James Clum of Lafayette sent The Ada Herald a copy of D.S. Pence's written expression of gratitude found in an old family book, a lost art and a remarkable
man were rediscovered.

Many remember E.E. Long who taught penmanship at Ohio Northern from 1907 to 1930 but few remember D.S. Pence. He taught "Drawing, Bookkeeping and Plain and Ornamental Penmanship" at the old Ohio Normal from 1873 to 1874. Students left his classes to become teachers in the country schools; many of the male students became secretaries and clerks in business and government offices. All of them left samples of their writing in old deeds, ledgers, government minutes and personal letters.

The ONU Centennial Issue published in September 24, 1970, by The Ada Herald tells us why D.S. Pence was a remarkable penmanship teacher: he had "both arms off at the elbows." Pence left ONU in 1875 to become Superintendent of the Ada school.

A news item in the November 8, 1882 Ada Record indicates the reason for a decline in the beauty of the handwritten word: "S.P. Axline is teaching the use of the typewriter at the Normal School. It is a machine by which
letters are printed about a third faster than they can be written."
We may have gained some hours but we lost an art.

Ada Business Men's Club, 1912

In February of 1912 the formation of an Ada Business Men's Club seemed like a good idea. Members could discuss mutual problems: closing hours, sales promotions, customer credit ratings and beggars. The first meeting was a satisfying exchange of ideas and ended with refreshments, "a kraut supper" in the Masonic club rooms. The next two years were frustrating as the club tried to promote too many projects with too little money. Out of their meetings, however, came a community tradition now in its 76th year — the Farmers and Merchants Picnic.

Ada village funds were low and council was beset with problems in 1912. If the town hall opera house was to remain open for public meetings, council had to spend $3,000 for repairs. Main Street lighting needed to be modernized and the Ada Water Company requested council's help for the installation of five public drinking fountains "for man and beast." The new brick streets had cost $50,000 in 1904 and council had recently invested in a new fire alarm system. Some side streets were still muddy or dusty, depending on the weather.

The councilmen and the mayor listened to complaints at every meeting. Discussions of the town dump on Gilbert Street usually ended in a "no action taken" solution. Residents complained about traffic safety now that the automobile had joined the horse and wagon on Main Street. They complained about the lack of decent public restrooms. They grumbled about council's inactivity but after paying their street assessments and the new water rates, citizens were in no mood to vote more money for
anything.

In addition to the town's financial problems in 1912, President Smith at Ohio Northern had asked the community to help raise $100,000 for Lehr Memorial, $10,000 for the University farm and $200,000 for an endowment fund. Things were so bad that the Ada City Band said it would be unable to play any concerts because of the condition of its instruments. When the band asked the Business Men's Club to "repair some of their horns," the club began to think of ways to raise money. A Pumpkin Show project died because it would conflict with the Knights of Pythias carnival. Outside promoters approached the club with money-making propositions (one offered an aviation show) but a 1905 trolley fiasco had made businessmen leery of outsiders' schemes.

In March of 1914 enthusiasm returned to the club when Justin Brewer, president of the First National Bank, "gave a town boosting talk" on the "value of securing for Ada the Lincoln Highway." In April he reported that highway officials had been in Ada. Citizens meeting at the Presbyterian Church had endorsed the idea "and the Lincoln Highway thru the main street of Ada is now an assured fact." With visions of travelers in touring autos stopping in Ada to eat, sleep and shop, the club ordered metal signs to be placed "at the Lincoln Way corporation limits." The club urged council to consider "a new system of lighting along the Lincoln Way on Main Street" and suggested the hitchhacks be removed and the posts and fountains be painted "in Lincoln Highway colors." The women thought of planting flowers at the edge of town. An outside firm was planning a film to include views of 100 towns as possible routes for the highway. Even though Ada felt confident it would be on the route, everyone urged the village fathers to participate. President Smith started the film fund by pledging $25 from ONU.

The Business Men's Cub realized they would need the
support of the entire community, town and country, to achieve what had become ambitious goals. They needed something to bring area people together and to create a spirit of cooperation and goodwill. According to the reports of those who were there, Ada’s "poet-artist," A.C. Mertz, had an idea for a combined town and country picnic. Harry Sousley called a special meeting on June 19, 1914, to discuss the picnic as part of the Fourth of July celebration. But the Fourth was on Saturday and businessmen did not want their customers at Ream’s Grove on the biggest shopping day of the week. They decided to have the July Fourth festivities downtown in the evening and set the third Wednesday in August for a joint Merchants and Farmers Picnic.

The Lincoln Highway never made it through Ada, missing it by several miles to the north, but the Farmers and Merchants Picnic on August 19, 1914 was a great success. Dana Welsh reported a profit of $73.67. More important than the money was that 4,000 people from the town and country had such a good time they wanted to have another picnic in 1915 and a tradition was born.

*When you go to the Picnic this year and find yourself surrounded by trees, you’ll be in Ream’s Grove. When you drive north on SR 235 and come to U.S. 30, you’ve reached the Lincoln Highway. Next week — more information on the early Farmers and Merchants Picnics.*

**Farmers and Merchants Picnic**

In a world of rapid change the Farmers and Merchants Picnic has a reassuring sameness about it, and yet some special feature makes each picnic memorable.

This year when the kids and their pets line up for their parade they will continue a tradition of 60 years. When the Pet Parade was added as a feature in 1930, Rosemary Hofer was the grand prize winner. Accompanied by
Evan Huber, Rosemary rode in a red, white and blue crepe paper decorated cart with her white collie, Pal. Adorned with braided ribbons Fanny, her Welsh pony, pulled the cart. Rosemary was the envy of every child in the park. The Pet Parade continues to be a popular feature while many of the early events are only memories.

At the first picnic in 1914 A.G. Williams, "the farmers' favorite speaker," climbed on a wagon and talked to the crowd. Mrs. Ancil Botkin's baby won the five dollar first prize in the baby contest and "woke to find itself famous." While children competed in races and games the adults played too. The horseshoe pitching contest attracted a large group from McGuffey who challenged the area experts. In the first of the picnic baseball games the town team defeated the country team 6-0. While "a moving picture operator" recorded the events, 4,000 people drank free lemonade.

In 1915 the Ada Business Men's Club committee added some country representatives to form a picnic board. After the Ada City Band played a concert in the public square at 9:00 a.m. it moved to the picnic grounds. The crowd followed the band to the park and the picnic had its first parade. That year the children had some exciting moments on "a merry-go-round with prancing steeds and a big organ."

From 1917 to 1919 the picnic reflected the war in Europe. A feature in 1917 was "The Soldiers' Big Dinner." Officers of the Second Ohio Infantry and Company G, the Machine Gun Company and the Infantry band were guests at a table 150 feet long "loaded with the best Hardin County has to offer." The mess bugler called the men to the picnic feast at noon and again at five. Because many community boys were at the front in 1918, some thought the picnic should be canceled. Picnic board members decided to go ahead and infantry drills by the Home Guard and military band music gave
the picnic an appropriate patriotic flavor. In 1919 more than 250 ex-servicemen were welcomed back at a "Homecoming Day" picnic.

Each year the picnic board, the township trustees and many volunteers work to improve the park and make each picnic "the best one ever." In 1929 the large shelterhouse was built in ten days and gave the gardeners a place to show their prize blooms at the first Flower Show. Ada Community Band members still had to put their chairs on the grass but picnic officials promised they'd try to provide a bandstand in 1930. It was 1951, however, before they had a raised concrete stage in place and 1953 before the graceful curved shell completed the bandstand for Ernie and his band.

For 76 years the picnic has kept its old-fashioned qualities with the emphasis on music, entertainment and relaxation. Old fiddlers, banjo players and whistlers, the lawyers' orchestra, Kiwanis Club singers, bands from New Stark, Alger, Dunkirk and area schools, Mike Mazzulla's band and Ernie's band gave us music.

Magicians, parachute jumpers, riders and horses and Irvin Vandemark and his helper, Ray McClure, with their talent shows entertained us. We've had nail-driving contests, tug-of-wars, watermelon eating contests, doll shows and 4-H, Boy Scout and Girl Scout displays.

The picnic has changed only to adapt to the times. Space for buggies is now filled with cars and pickups. Instead of a chicken the kids chase a more durable pig. The work horses are gone and tractors pull the loads in competition. We don't select a beautiful baby but choose an older sister as a Picnic Queen. Perhaps picnic baskets are fewer and hamburgers and hot dogs more abundant. Often the music that comes from the park bears no resemblance to a John Philip Sousa march, and the expanse of exposed flesh and show of legs would leave the long-skirted ladies of the first picnic aghast.
On Picnic Day, 1990 we'll watch the children parade with their pets and hear the clank of horseshoes. The topics of conversation in old Ream's Grove will be the crops, the weather, family milestones and town, country and university news—the same topics they discussed at the first picnic.

All Ada Business Men's Clubs records and Picnic Board records have been placed in the Ada Public Library Historical Preservation Annex by Irvin Vandemark, the board and Tony Wolke, this year's president.

Ada Tri-County Fair, 1883

Not many people know that over 100 years ago, Ada, Ohio, was the setting for a large fair that covered three counties. The first "Farmers and Mechanics Tri-County Fair" opened for three days on Thursday, September 19, 1883, attracting exhibitors from Allen, Hancock and Hardin counties. It was discontinued in 1900 or 1901.
Most of the fair records are lost or scattered, but history has a way of showing up in old newspapers.

In 1987 I discovered two fascinating accounts of the fair written by Floyd Latimore in the September 12, 1947, and September 26, 1947, issues of The Ada Herald. The Ada War Memorial Park football field was dedicated in 1947 and Latimore noted that the field was part of the old tri-county fairgrounds. In 1947 he could still find people who remembered attending the fair.

Latimore describes the art hall with its "four wings divided into different sections for exhibits" and the big boarding hall...where Jane Bodell served the first meals for 25 cents." The buildings stood about where the first Ada Municipal pool was located. His articles give details of the fair with its "livestock exhibits, farm products, fine arts and flowers, worked metals, household fabrics and vehicles of the horse and buggy days." Latimore's interviews and research reveal some of the livestock exhibitors: "George Grant, Dola; Billy Wellwood, near Kenton; the Arnolds, near Lafayette; Jim Irwin, Gibb and George Helsel; Rev. Tom Carey; L. Butler of Ridgeway with his Short Durhams & big show type cattle of the era; John P. Conner, Tom Hubbell and J.E. Johnson."

With all traces of the buildings gone, it wasn't until 1988 that I realized the size of the fairgrounds. Mary Bowden gave the Ada Library Annex a copy of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper dated 1891 that Dean Harvey Huber had given Bob Bowden. A page of sketches accompanied an account of the famous McKinley-Campbell debate held at the fairgrounds in 1891. In one picture by Krauss and Ebersole of Lima, the grandstand appears as a magnificent structure.

One of the main attractions of the fair was the harness racing with purses as large as $300. Latimore points out that the high wheel sulkies, not equipped with rubber tires until 1895, didn't allow the fast times at today's
races. (The registration standard for the mile was 2:30.) With access to George Stambaugh's personal files, Latimore gives us some wonderful names from the past: John R. driven by W.N. Faurot of Lima; Limber Jim owned by Dr. J.K. Evans and driven by S. Hammond; Almont, driven by A. Letson; Billy Scott "one of the fastest trotters in the state"; Maybird, owned by Sam Snyder and "J.C. Simpson owned by the Steiner brothers of Lima." These champions raced on a "splendid half-mile track" and this has been a topic of speculation for years. Just where was the track? Latimore believed it "encircled the present gridiron."

Bud and Ruth Brown live on the farm east of War Memorial Park on CR 50. Bud thinks he knows where the race track was and has drawn a map to prove his theory. Remembering when he plowed the Paul Motter 14-acre farm where the homes on S. Park Drive and Lima Avenue are today he says, "We used to hit these clay spots on the northwest, southwest and southeast corners." The spots were prominent, probably "where they banked the corners." He "remembers asking Paul
Motter about this one time and he said it was part of the old race track." Bud adds, "Later when the fence was placed for the Fred Heifners on Lima Avenue, workers "hit cement, a foundation of some kind." John Richardson told him it was part of the old race track. The Motter farm was the right size for a half-mile track and the clay banks indicate the boundaries.

If the mystery is solved, where today's crowds cheer for football players, 100 years ago in the now quiet backyards of Lima Avenue and S. Park Drive in Ada the crowds cheered for John R, Limber Jim, Billy Scott, Maybird and J.C. Simpson. As they raced down the home-stretch, they must have been surrounded with the same noise and excitement that race day brings to any fair.

Ada and Footballs

The story of Ada and footballs begins in 1937 at the end of the depression years.

For many people the period between 1930 and 1936 includes memories of bank closings, plunging farm prices and lost jobs. In the first issue of The Ada Herald for 1937 the editor, Barton Snyder, expressed the hope that the new year would be better than the last one. In his cover story he reported some optimistic signs: 60 people were working on WPA projects in town, 112 "aged persons" in the area were now receiving pensions of "$20 or more" from the new Social Security plan and only 13 families were "on direct relief." Since college was a luxury during the depression, Ohio Northern University had also experienced some bad years and professors often went without paychecks, supplies and equipment. In September of 1937 an enrollment of 700 students was anticipated, the highest in a long time. Maybe the lean years were over.

The optimism was cautious because WPA would end in
1941 and ONU President Williams warned that events in Europe might bring America into a war. If that happened, ONU's enrollment would plunge again. Ada needed an industry to support its shaky economy, one that would fit its small town image, stabilize local real estate values and offer some jobs for its residents.

Meanwhile in Kentucky in 1933 William Sonnett Sr. had started making inexpensive footballs in a barn. A 1955 issue of The Sporting Goods Dealer featured Sonnett, relating how "At night he cut the leather for inflated goods, assembled the sections and sewed them. The next day he would go out in search of customers around Cincinnati." His early partner was from Kentucky so they named the small firm the Ohio-Kentucky Manufacturing Company. After the younger partner sold his interest to Sonnett for $48, Sonnett moved his modest enterprise to a garage in Cincinnati and it began to grow. Then disaster came with "the great flood" and the O-K company had a stock of ruined merchandise, some salvageable machinery and a $15,000 loss.

One of those strange coincidences brought the O-K and Ada together. Harry Judson, who lived in Ada with his wife Ruth and son Robert, traveled as an industrial engineer with a Chicago firm. He was in Cincinnati setting up a new production system for the O-K when he heard the owners were looking for a new place to set up operations. According to the reports, Judson said, "I have just the place for you" and got in touch with the Ada Business Association.

In October of 1937 the Industrial committee called a town meeting at the Municipal building in Ada. More than 75 citizens came and agreed to raise $7,500 through the purchase of land grant certificates. With the money the Ada Business Association would buy a building, improve it, and lease it to the O-K for five years. The citizens also agreed to donate $1,500 to help the company move its
equipment from Cincinnati. In November Harry Sousley, Dana Welsh, Lloyd McElroy, Kahler Pfeiffer and Barton Snyder presented the plan to the O-K and the company approved it.

The committee began to sell the certificates and collect the moving expense donations to achieve the $9,000 goal — not an easy task in 1937. A building along the Pennsylvania tracks was purchased from the university. The former McCurdy Manufacturing plant, the building was used by the engineering college as a mechanical laboratory. After the renovation, the building would provide more than 14,000 square feet of floor space.

From the day The Ada Herald announced to the waiting town that the O-K would begin to move equipment in February of 1938 and some hiring would begin, it was a successful merger for both Ada and the company. Not only could men supply the labor, but for women supporting families the sewing machines represented a familiar skill. In its second year in Ada, the O-K increased its business by more than $100,000. At one time business was so good the village had to find more space for the company on the second floor of the Brewer building on Main Street.

In 1940 the O-K bought the factory building, offering the local certificate holders preferred stock in proportion to the amount they had invested. Because other towns had made attractive offers to the company, Ada residents
breathed a little easier knowing the O-K would stay in Ada. On December 31, 1954, Sonnett sold the company to the Wilson Sporting Goods company and in 1956 he retired. In 24 years he had moved from a Kentucky barn where he was “manufacturer, sales staff, stenographer, bookkeeper, buyer and bill collector” (Dealer) to a business that now grossed nearly two million dollars a year.

Bill Sonnett Jr., who worked with his father from the beginning in 1933 and became the plant manager in Ada from 1957 to 1977, remembers the footballs made in the Kentucky barn and in the Cincinnati garage. He is understandably proud of the company’s success and national recognition. The small group who came to Ada with the Sonnetts in 1938 and a group of 20 employees worked hard to turn out a fine quality of sporting goods - footballs, basketballs, volleyballs, soccer balls, boxing gloves, baseball gloves and striking bags. Bill says they “sold them all over the country.” During the war years, Bill recalls the company expanded to 150 workers and had government contracts for footballs so servicemen could renew their hometown sports memories in their few hours of recreation. For a graver purpose, Bill says the company manufactured “barbed wire gauntlets” so the troops could cut across enemy lines.

The Wilson name and the logo on one of Ada’s water towers proudly announces to all visitors that this is the home of the NFL football. That initial effort and cooperation between a small town and a small company has continued for more than 50 years.

Thanks to Bill Sonnett Jr. for his recollections. He and his wife, Eleanor, still live in Ada. Thanks to Tom Elkins of Wilson’s for a copy of the 1955 article, “Born on Farm, O-K Big-Time Now.” The rest of the information is from Ada Herald articles from 1937-1956.
Christmas 1991

The 840 Ada Herald subscribers who no longer live in this community and perhaps are miles away from Ohio tell us they don’t recognize many of the names in the news items when they read their Heralds, but they still can’t give up the memories. Since small town traditions link the present to the past, we share some of their memories. Especially at this time of year, it’s pleasant to reminisce with this special group of readers.

Remember the suppers? This year, at the church Christmas bazaars we’ve tasted the soups -- bean, vegetable, chili and potato. We’ve sampled the homemade noodles, cakes, breads, pies and candies. We’ve had chicken sandwiches, baked fish, and pancakes served up by the service groups to make money for their projects. Offer us some good food and we’ll buy a ticket, as everyone used to do for the oyster and smelt suppers.

Remember the programs? Interclass at Ada is over (the seniors won). If you glanced at the community calendar in the newspaper, you noticed that until Christmas there’s something going on almost every day at an area school, a church, a grange or the university. The carolers and choirs will sing the melodies and hymns you heard when you were a part of the community -- Silent Night, The Messiah, Away in a Manger.

The Christmas decorations are up in the surrounding towns, and colored lights shine from windows in Harrod, Alger, McGuffey, Forest, Dola, Dunkirk and Lafayette. The old county courthouse on Kenton’s public square is aglow with lights, and the museums are filled with reminders of Christmas past.

We can’t pretend it’s exactly as it was when you were here. You’d notice the changes.

If your childhood memories go way back, the country roads were filled with the sound of sleigh bells; now, the
first big snow brings the roar of snowmobiles. But on the frozen ponds you might see some kids with ice skates. On Christmas Eve, the winter wheat may be covered with snow, but down the country lanes lights from the farmhouses shine a welcome. And in the country you still have a wider, clearer view of the stars.

In the towns some businesses are gone, houses you remember have been torn down and some people you knew are not in the town anymore. But you'd see some snowmen in the yards and some sleds. And you wouldn't have to go very far to find someone who remembers you or your family.

The home of Steve and Peggy Cole on E. Montford St. still had some working gas lamps when Steve purchased the home in 1962. The house was built by J.L. Stemple and his brother in 1900. The date is proudly displayed over the carriage portico. Steve's grandfather, Charles Cole, purchased the house in 1915. He was a widower when he was killed in 1923. At that time Steve's great aunt, Ida Runser, and her husband, Clarence, moved into the house and raised Charles' children — Robert Sr. (Steve's dad), Mildred and Martha Helen. - Marilyn Nelson
In the spirit of the season when we all remember, we hope you have some wonderful memories to warm your hearts.

**Teachers Examination, 1911**

Magazines and newspapers are filled with analyses and statistics on the subject; television networks show program after program that discuss it. Every administrator, teacher, parent, student and man on the street seems to know what the problems are and what to do about them. The topic is education and the subject is not a new one.

A headline in *The Ada Herald* of 81 years ago caught my attention. “Apt Questions for Teachers” the headline announced. Anyone who wanted to teach elementary school in 1911 had to pass the examination prepared by the Ohio State School Commissioner “to test the mental qualifications of those who seek positions as teachers in the public schools.” The examination was given in Hardin County on June 3rd and the entire test was printed in the June 30, 1911, issue of the Herald.

Since the prospective teachers were supposed to know all the answers to the 75 questions, the test was probably a good indication of what students were taught in the school rooms of Ohio. In eight areas of knowledge, the commissioner asked 8 - 10 questions in each category. There were no true or false, no easy “guess the answer” questions. Except for parts of the arithmetic section most of the questions required written sentences or longer essay answers. The test filled three long columns of newspaper space so I’ll give you just a few samples.

**Theory and Practice** - Name some leading issues of American politics of the last half century. How do you teach your pupils to study any one of these from the standpoint of a citizen rather than a partisan?
Arithmetic - Write a promisory note of $180, drawing interest at 7 1/2 percent, dated the day of this examination and due the 15th day of February 1913. What is the amount due at that time?

The distance around a rectangular field is 98 rods; its width is 3/4 of its length. How many acres does it contain?

Reading - What can you say of the work of the recent session of Congress?
Tell briefly about the recent decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States.

United States History Including Civil Government - Name two leading French, three leading English and two leading Spanish explorers and give the results of their work.

Geography - What are the principal river systems of South America, Europe and Asia?
Write a short essay on one of these topics: "Around Cape Horn," "Our Insular Possessions," "Rome and Italy," or "Ancient China and Japan."

Literature - Who were the representative writers of the Age of the Restoration? Tell about their chief works. Quote from any one of them.

Who is your favorite novelist?

What is your favorite novel? Why?

Writing - Write two or more lines as a sample of your penmanship.

Grammar - Define passive voice, transitive and intransitive verbs and give examples of each.
Analyse or diagram and parse the words in italics:
*Though* sharpest hearts may *wring*
Though bosoms *torn* may be
Yet suffering is a holy thing;
*Without it* *what* were we.

Orthography - This section included 25 words given in a spelling test. Here are some of the words: guage, cym-
bal, acquaint, irrevocable, disguised, persevere, vitiate, prejudice, irrelevant.

In May of 1911 the Ohio Senate passed the Warnes bill, the governor signed it and it became law. All elementary and high school teachers, principals and superintendents had to be qualified to teach agriculture. The 1912 test would probably include some questions on agriculture.

It seems the new teachers had to learn not just facts but how to apply the knowledge. What do you think? Should we go back to “the good old days” of education?

Messick’s 5¢ to $1 Store

Depending on your age you called it the racket store, the five and ten, the dime store or the variety store. If you had a nickel or a dollar you could leave the store with two or three items.

In 1938 Harley Messick owned the variety store at 113 N. Main Street in Ada. The block of buildings on the west side was a busy place. Ola Miller had her millinery shop next to the railroad track, A.C. Church sold jewelry and fitted glasses in his store, and the Midway Cafe had food and beer. The Ada Building and Loan later became an insurance office for Kahler Pfeiffer and then Harry Sousley. Dana Welsh had a drugstore where the American Legion is now, and Cunningham’s had become Anderson’s Dry Goods and then Mertz Hardware. D.O. Betz had a shoe store before Bud and Ann had a restaurant in his space, and on the corner the Cole and Dome Insurance office had replaced the old Liberty Bank. Other businesses had come and gone. Messick’s 5¢ to $1 store was between Mertz Hardware and Bud and Ann’s.

Harley came to Ada in 1935 from variety stores in Indiana to work for Marion Sales of Spencerville who owned the Ada store. In 1938 Harley bought the business and
rented the room from Mabel Bowersmith. Those were depression years and Harley remembers that getting money to buy a business was not easy. It took him only three years to pay off his debts, however. He had competition too, for Conn’s Ben Franklin store had opened earlier in the year next to the Odeon theater.

Displays of seasonal goods in the windows attracted customers, and inside his store Harley sold stationery, notions, tinware, graniteware, dishes, oil cloth, linoleum rugs and throw rugs, men’s underwear, ladies’ lingerie, cosmetics, jewelry, toys and candy. Harley says when he took over the store most of these items could be bought for a dollar or less.

If the younger generation thinks this last statement sounds unbelievable, Harley reenforces it with a personal experience. The Messick’s son, Robert, was born in
Indiana but their daughter, Carolyn, was born in Ada. In 1939 Dr. Wilcox, whose office was across the street from the store, spent the day at the Messicks' home waiting for the birth. He told Harley his charge for a delivery was usually $20 but since the Messicks were newcomers he would charge them $15.

Holidays and Saturday nights were peak selling times for Ada merchants. At Christmas Harley added velocipedes, red wagons, wheelbarrows, Tonka trucks, electric trains, dolls and stocked up on the games - checkers, dominoes, Flinch, Rook and Monopoly. When everyone came to town on Saturday for the weekly shopping, Messick's stayed open until 10 or 11 p.m.

If you want to give your taste buds a real memory treat, read Harley's list of some of the candies he had in the glass cases fifty years ago - gumdrops and jelly beans, iced jellies, maple nut goodies, chocolate nonpareils, burnt peanuts, orange slices, peanut brittle, fudge, marshmallow peanuts, wintergreen and peppermint lozenges, coconut bon bons, peppermint puffs, cinnamon imperials, spearmint leaves, sour cherries, lemon drops, starlight mints, licorice twists and whips.

A package of bubble gum with four or five baseball cards inside was 5¢; a pound of Brach's best chocolates cost 98¢. One stick of Teaberry, Juicy Fruit, Black Jack or Beaman's chewing gum could keep a kid busy for a few hours, and a jawbreaker or an all day sucker could keep him satisfied for half a day. Often with careful preservation the gum and the sucker could be enjoyed the following day. Inez Dodge Moe worked at Messick's for 30 years so she probably sold a few hundred licorice sticks for a penny a piece.

In 1965 Harley decided to expand and bought the Kroger store building that Irvin Vandemark was using for his talent show enterprise. The new variety store flourished until 1976 when Harley retired and Peper Drugs
bought the building. There was nothing cheap about the old five and dime stores except the price. You didn't rush in and out of a ten cents store. It took a long time to look at everything before you made your choice, and you always got your money's worth.

**Doug Herman Reappears**

Well, Doug Herman strikes again. He's moved from the Delaware Court Health Care Center in Delaware, Ohio and is now inflicting his punny humor on a new audience at Evergreen Manor, also in Delaware.

The Ada Herald received a note from Candy Craig, the activities director at Evergreen Manor, with a message from Doug and a few new puns so we won't forget him:

- A police officer stopped a couple of speeding ambulance drivers and questioned what they were doing.
- They replied, "We were just re-hearsing."

**TB or not TB**

That is the congestion.

Consumption be done about it?

Of cough! Of cough!

Do you think that old rooster is the father of that old hen?

Poppy-cock!

That's what I mean.

When he was at the Delaware Court Health Care Center, Doug was dubbed the Delaware Court Jester and did some writing for the newsletter. Candy included a copy of his Christmas message, "Yule Be Sorry."

Christmas isn't as much fun as when I was a teenager. I remember my brother and I asking for pens for Christmas.
I received a "pig pen" that came with a bottle marked "Pen and Oink." My brother, on the other hand, got an "Ohio Pen" which really came in handy for short and long sentences.

I remember that our mailman's feet always went bad at Christmas time. One afternoon, he stopped by the podiatrist's but they had closed. He asked the doctor what he could do for the foot pain. She said, "Take two aspirin and callous in the morning."

Doug tells everyone about his hometown, Ada, and even revealed his most embarrassing Ada moment. (We didn't know Doug was ever embarrassed. This is just an example of one of his many Ada icescapades.)

Doug says one day when he was making his rounds as an Ada mailman, a woman came out to receive her mail. After several attempts of warning her not to step on the sheet of ice between them, they were found embracing—to prevent falling. Doug wonders what the neighbors thought about that scene.

Doug wants us all to know how much "he misses the whole town." We miss him too, and he'll know we are still civilized when he looks at the front page story in the April 15, 1992, Ada Herald about Homer Binkley's lambs. The heading for the story is "Would ewe believe?" That's the kind of thing Doug encourages.

Doug's new address: Douglas Herman, Evergreen Manor, Griswold St., Delaware, OH 43015

Ream House

During the last 30 years Ada has lost many of the old houses on Main Street to progress. Some were noteworthy. When the walls fell, the exposed walnut staircases,
brick fireplaces, and rooms brought recollections of events and people. Some were houses that served a simpler purpose — homes to families and their memories. Two more houses have disappeared from Main Street. As the machines cleared the ground for another parking lot, I wonder if the operators were aware of how close they were to history.

Next to the Komer Kut and across the alley from the property of the recently demolished houses stands one of the oldest homes in Ada. Featured in an Ada Herald article in Ada's centennial year, 1953, it is known to most residents as “the Sneary house.” It still has the lines and form of a farmhouse and Abraham Ream built it for that purpose. After they moved from New Stark to Ada, the Ream family lived in a log cabin just east of the house until it was competed.

It is difficult for us to imagine this section of town as “country” but Abraham Ream's land extended through
Memorial Park. The house was built in 1861 at the start of the Civil War, eight years after Johnstown was recorded as a village, six years before its name was changed to Ada, and ten years before John Dobbins' farm and peach orchard down the road became Ohio Northern University.

Abraham Ream was one of the “sureties” for the contract to build the first Ohio Normal building. Agnew Welsh tells us when the “Canton, Ohio man flunked on his contract before the building was finished, his sureties had to finish it.” Ream was so convinced the new Ohio Normal would be a success and Ada would grow that in 1872 he took a chance and built a grand three-story brick business building in the center of Ada. In 1873 two more brick buildings replaced small wooden structures. Ada began to grow with style in spite of the wooden sidewalks and dirt streets. Ironically, Ream’s building on the corner of Main and Buckeye, along with the Liberty Bank building, were demolished for a parking lot in 1973.

Stories about the Ream family appear throughout the early history of Ada. Bob Shanks once told me the humorous tale of “The Day Abraham Ream’s Beard Caught On Fire.” As industrious businessmen and builders, the Ream family members were active boosters of Ada and Ohio Northern.

When the neighboring houses crashed to the ground, I hope the noise and dust didn’t disturb the old house left on its precarious site. For 130 years it’s been a part of Ada’s Main Street and it deserves some respect.

**Henry Morrow, “Town Atheist”**

On May 2, 1909, when Henry Morrow’s funeral service at the Ada armory ended, the Freund town band struck up a spirited version of “Marching Through Georgia” for the funeral march to L.O. Ream’s undertaking parlor.
Henry's arrangements, made the year before his death, had been followed exactly.

In a city, Henry Morrow's life would probably have gone unexamined, but in the small town of Ada he was placed in the category of "town atheist."

His background is a little hazy in spots. He'd been born in the state of New York in 1832 and came to Ohio when he was 20. Henry was a railroad locomotive engineer in his early years, so the town storytellers speculate that Henry passed through the village on the new railroad, liked what he saw and got off the train and stayed. Somewhere in his past he'd had a marriage and a son, James, the town never knew.

Henry settled into village life, married Eliza Carey in 1861, and had two sons, William and John H. and two daughters, Clara and Jennie. Agnew Welsh repeated several times in print later the story that circulated in town. Henry had been a Baptist preacher and somehow "got off the track." The town decided he was an atheist because he stated his beliefs often and publicly. In a village of 1,000 citizens with nine churches and 11 orga-
nized religious groups by the late 1800s it would seem that a man like Henry Morrow would be ostracized for his beliefs.

Far from an outsider or a recluse, Henry had some redeeming qualities that made the town accept him as he was. He had enlisted on August 17, 1862, with Company G of the 4th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. His service record included engagements with his regiment at Romney, Fort Royal, Fort Republic, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. On the third day of the last battle of Chancellorsville he was wounded and lost an arm. When he returned to Ada from the hospital, he was a Civil War hero.

According to Agnew Welsh, Henry learned to ride a bicycle, "one of those old high wheelers with a little one trailing behind." He made trips to the city and was often described in out-of-town newspapers as "Ada's one-armed bicycle rider." He was elected vice president of the Ada Building and Loan Association and was one of its directors. He served as health officer for the town and was a member of the Hardin County Humane Society. His name is listed as Adjutant of the Carman Post of the GAR in 1883 and as a charter member of the Ada Encampment, No. 226 of the Oddfellows.

In spite of this admirable background, if it were not for what the town perceived as his active role as town atheist, Henry Morrow would probably be forgotten by now and his name lost in the pages of local history. Agnew Welsh and Henry made sure that wouldn't happen. When Henry died, the Ada Record issue of May 5, 1909, carried a detailed account of his funeral. Agnew Welsh reported the story and gave Henry as much space as he would have given an important town official.

The year before he died, in 1908, Henry Morrow made his funeral arrangements, including his death notice. Instead of the traditional black border, his obituary card
was edged in red, white and blue. Henry wanted no flowers at the funeral; at the bottom of the card he restated his views on death. He organized his casket preparations at Ream’s funeral home in Ada: a coffin lined with yellow satin with two flags draped in the lid. His Oddfellow friends were named as pallbearers and they were to wear no mourning symbols. Instead of black armbands, he had fashioned for them to wear, “long streamers of yellow ribbon draped at the top with the national colors.” No sad religious dirges for Henry Morrow: the Freund town band should play lively military tunes.

In the year before he died, even though a lingering illness had begun to take its toll, Henry boarded the train in Ada and made the long trip to Cleveland to arrange for his cremation. Probably fearful that tradition might overtake his sorrowing family, he engaged the National Guard armory for when his time came and sent $80 to Dr. J.B. Wilson of Cincinnati to speak at his service. No one knew exactly who Dr. Wilson was, but he was not a Christian minister.

All these arrangements made their way through the town grapevine and when Henry died no one was going to miss this funeral. Hours before the service began, a crowd gathered at the armory. Agnew Welsh reports, “The building was jammed with people.” The coffin was placed “just inside the entrance to be viewed by the passing throng.” Henry knew the curious would be drawn to his funeral so he had left instructions for his family to be escorted to a room off the balcony. They could hear the speakers but would not be subjected to the stares of the audience.

Henry had entrusted a friend, A.W. Clutter, to give the opening remarks. Clutter was an Ada photographer who had married into one of the town’s respected families, the Gilberths. Later, in 1916, Clutter was elected town mayor. He gave the eulogy for Henry Morrow, the man, noting
his service to his country and to his town. In place of the Oddfellow service, Clutter read a statement of Henry's beliefs, written by Henry and signed by Henry. The next day, Clutter and two other friends from the Oddfellows' lodge accompanied the body to Cleveland for cremation and returned the ashes to Ada.

In spite of the extensive coverage, the funeral address delivered by Dr. Wilson was too long to print in the Record. Agnew Welsh only had this to say; "After a few remarks in which he said death was a sad thing to the young but not to the aged he began his attack on the clergy and the Christian religion." It was a long address and "twice during his remarks there was a manifestation of levity, once in particular the audience, or at least many of the hearers, breaking into a laugh." Welsh was a kind man for he referred to the service as "out of the ordinary."

Henry Morrow knew what the response of some of his fellow citizens would be, and he also knew they would join him at Woodlawn Cemetery in the years to come. So that his views on life and death would last through time, he left his philosophy literally chiselled in stone. His simple rose granite monument where his ashes are buried is covered with inscriptions; even the punctuation marks have not faded.

On the front of the monument are Henry's dates, 1832-1909, and his wife Eliza's dates, 1838-1913. On one side of the tombstone are quotations from Thomas Paine and the old sceptic, Mark Twain. Since Henry carefully included quotation marks for the words of others, many passages on the monument were probably composed by Henry. For example: IF IN THE WORLD I'VE PLAYED MY LITTLE PART, LET THE POWER THAT LIT THE CANDLE, PUT IT OUT.

People in Ada often take visitors to the cemetery to show them the town atheist's tombstone. When hazing and a week of fraternity initiations were part of the early
days of Ohio Northern University, a student pledge directed to "the atheist's stone" at midnight knew exactly where to go.

If a visitor spends enough time reading the inscriptions, he comes away with this conclusion: Henry Morrow did not fit the description local history has given him — the town atheist. Something in his past made him reject organized religion and the clergy. Both were included in the town's definition of religion. His family and close friends respected his larger view of the universe.

A mile south of the village of Ada is Woodlawn Cemetery. Travelers who have heard the stories about Henry Morrow turn off I-75 or SR 309 to SR 235 that is Ada's Main St. On the east side of the heavily traveled road, Henry's monument stands in the front line of graves.

Wherever Henry Morrow is in "that vast future" he must be pleased to know visitors stand and read his beliefs. It will take a lot of weather and a century or two before his statements fade and become lost in time.

Photo of Henry Morrow's monument in Woodlawn Cemetery, Ada.
German Accordion

After one of my trips to Lafayette to tape some of Jim Clum's stories, I returned to Ada with an old German accordion on the car seat beside me. This beautifully crafted instrument, its wooden case glowing with a richness only age and careful preservation can give, had a Hardin County history. Jim's request was to "take it back where it belonged."

The story of the accordion and its owner, a veteran of the Civil War, has many missing pages, and research has not turned up many new facts.

Jim's aunt, Delta Clum, was married three times. Her second husband was Paul Hagerman, a life-long resident of Ada and a clerk in the Ada post office when it was in the Brewer block south of the railroad track. The accordion belonged to Paul Hagerman's father, John.

Jim first heard part of the story of the accordion and its player 60 years ago from his Uncle Paul when he gave a fife to Jim's brother, Ross, and gave the accordion to Jim. Paul's father, John, had served in a fife and drum corps in the Civil War. Jim says, "When he wasn't blowing his fife, he was in the artillery division." One day when John was loading or charging one of the cannons, a spark caused an explosion. John Hagerman was blinded in both eyes as a young man.

Another fact came from the family storytellers. The blind Civil War veteran played the accordion on the wooden sidewalks of Ada "for any nickels or dimes anyone would give him." Jim thinks his war pension amounted to about $10 a month.

John must have had competition, or perhaps he was part of a group. Agnew Welsh in an 1881 Ada Record article tells of the many "street entertainments" in Ada. In particular, he mentions "a little German band discoursing good music and gathering stray nickels."
Seeking a connection between earlier Hardin County Hagemans and the blind accordion player, a researcher finds the most notable name that appears is the Rev. Samuel Hagerman. A traveling preacher, he was one of the early Huntersville settlers and preached at Silver Creek, Dunkirk and Patterson. When the Methodists of Liberty Township held their first services on a farm south of Ada in 1851, Rev. Hagerman was the preacher. Were all the Hagemans in the county related in some way?

Two Hagemans from this area, Silas and Day, served in the 33rd and the 4th regiments in the Civil War, but a John Hagerman is not listed. Did he enlist from some other county? We know that fifers and drummers were often boys too young to be in the regular army. Was John one of these boys?

The Rice-Ferguson Ada directory of 1896 lists a John
Hagerman, 60 S. Main as a broommaker, a common occupation for the blind in those days. According to a later Ada directory, John lived at 315 S. Simon with Paul in 1911. He must have lived there for some time because Bob Runser, Jim's cousin, remembers a blind John Hagerman living on the corner of Simon and Lehr.

Perhaps someone somewhere knows the rest of the story of the blind street musician. Meanwhile, the little accordion is in a glass case at the Sullivan-Johnson museum in Kenton, again a part of Ada and Hardin County history.


Thanks to Marilyn for her editing and patience; to Carole for rescues from errors; to Ann for her typesetting skills; to Janet for fitting words and pictures on the pages and for her cover photo.
CHRISTMAS
Gift Suggestions
Woodbury Men's Sets $1
Also in Williams - Coty's and Wersey's

City Restaurant
Now Under
NEW MANAGEMENT
JUST A FEW OF
Saturday, November 1
SPECIALS

| Hot Dog, Homemade Vegetable Soup and Coffee | $1.50
| Minced Ham Sandwiches and Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup | $1.50
| Ham and Cheese Hamburger and Potato Salad | $1.00

Choose your CHRISTMAS CARDS
With the Theatre in Mind

A Gift Hint for Men - Complete Line of Tobaccos

Cigars
Cigarettes
Smoking Tobacco

BOXED CANDIES
$0.25 up to $3.20

Watch Our Windows for Bargains in Tiny Foods

ADA DRUGS

ODEON
Cream of Pimento 15c
Shows 7:30: 9:15: Sun. 5 p.m.

Fri, Sat, Sun, Mar. 9, 10, 11
Western adventure Classic, with lineup of top stars!

TRAIL OF THE VIGILANTES

Frank Hall Tuna, Warren William, Prince Marian, Andy Devine and Mischa Auer
"Mississippi Swing"

News

GOLDEN HOOFs
"Home Guard"

WALLPAPER STEAMER
and FLOOR SANDER
FOR RENT
J. W. Mertz Hardware
Phone 134

MESSICK
Easter Cards
5c to $1.00 STORE

EASTER CARDS
3 for 5c; 2 for 5c; 5c

Come in and See CANDY FILLED EASTER BASKETS
and NOVELTIES

"A DAY AT OASIS"

is a wonderful discovery on the desert

But just as delightful to find an Oasis in Ada
with Tempting Snacks and Superb Coffee

NORTH MAIN AT CITY LIMITS
Small Town Sampler VI

by Betty Miller
Since 1984, the year the first Small Town Sampler appeared in *The Ada Herald*, I’ve traveled through almost 150 years of Ada community history.

It has been one of the most satisfying journeys I’ve ever taken because of the people who joined me along the way. They added facts and insights on events and people and searched their memories for clues to old mysteries. Because of those who found the discoveries as exciting as I did, a few simple lines in a newspaper or a letter led to some stories worth keeping.

Involved in all the 11 years were the editors and staff of *The Ada Herald*, giving suggestions and offering support. They continue to keep the spirit and purpose of a small town weekly alive by preserving the community’s past while they are recording its future history.

Thanks to all my fellow travelers.

© Elizabeth (Betty) Miller
Ada, Ohio, 1995

Cover photo: Railroad Park Friendship Garden,
Ada, Ohio 1995

Layout and cover photo by Janet Hubbell.
Layout assistance by Ann Reichenbach.
Published by Brown Publishing Company, *Ada Herald* Division
CONTENTS

“Hanging Tree” Myth .............................................................. 4
Preparations for Christmas .................................................. 6
Ada’s 140 Years in 1993 ....................................................... 7
Johnstown ................................................................. 7
The Ohio Normal ........................................................... 9
The Railroad ............................................................... 9
The Village ............................................................... 11
The Streets ............................................................... 11
The People ............................................................. 15
Sanford M. Johnson ....................................................... 16
Railroad Park Cannon ..................................................... 19
Joseph Leslie and Gumballs .............................................. 21
Farmers Almanac 1994 .................................................... 24
Christmas 1994 .......................................................... 26
Main Street Train Wreck ................................................. 28
Old House Contest ....................................................... 32
Mary Cotner Motter Memories ......................................... 44
Lester Ackerman’s Tour of the Past ..................................... 47
The Little Wooden Building ............................................ 50
More “Sundry Memoranda” .............................................. 55
“Hanging Tree” Myth

Rumors move quickly through small towns and often the various accounts of an incident are gathered into a story. With the passage of many years, however, it is difficult to know what is fact and what is fiction. Bessie Farrar’s story is one of those.

For as long as many of us can remember, one monument in Ada’s Woodlawn Cemetery has attracted attention and speculation. It stands on the west side next to the first lane that runs parallel to CR 60. A stone replica of a tree trunk has these words carved on one side: “Bessie L, Dau, of E.J. and B.E. Farrar Died Jan. 26, 1895 Aged 19 Y, 10 M, 10 D.”

The sculptured details on the rest of the monument have been woven into a story. Vines cover the tree trunk, a young girl’s hat is at the base as is a book. Above the inscription is a piece of rope draped over one of the tree limbs.

In the 97 years since Bessie’s death, this story has been told to those who asked: One day a young girl of the town left school, placed her hat and book at the base of a tree and committed suicide.

Believing that such a tragedy in a small town would be recorded in the newspaper, I went to the old Ada Records. In the Jan. 30, 1895, issue I found this small item at the bottom of the second page: “Miss Bessie Farrar, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Farrar, died in Tennessee last Saturday. She was 20
years of age. She went to Chattanooga last Fall and was employed as a saleslady in a dry goods store there. Her disease was lung fever. Her mother started for there Saturday morning."

No further details appeared in the next issue, but in the Feb. 13, 1895, edition of the Ada Record Bessie Farrar’s obituary, a five paragraph item, is printed and signed by “A Friend.”

Bessie was born in Kenton, but her family soon moved to Ada. She graduated from Ada High School and was a student at the Normal University. She lacked only one term to complete the course in the Normal Commercial department, and a notice of her death appeared in the University Herald also.

“For some time,” the friend writes, Bessie “was a saleslady in J.T. Cunningham’s and Sons dry goods store. In November she left for Chattanooga, where an aunt was living, to take a similar position in a large dry goods house there.”

A few days before she died in January, Bessie’s friends had heard “she was suffering from an attack of pneumonia.” When her mother received a telegram on the morning of Jan. 26, she left on the train for Chattanooga, but Bessie died a few hours before her mother reached her. The friend records Mrs. Ferrar’s “lonely return home” with her daughter.

The friend notes Bessie’s qualities as “a dutiful daughter, a loving sister, and a faithful friend.” Services were conducted at the Church of Christ by Rev. George A. Smith, assisted by Rev. A.B. Campbell of the Presbyterian Church. “A large number of Bessie’s schoolmates and friends were here gathered to weep with those who were sorrow stricken.”

In 1967, an Ada Herald reporter wrote an article on “The Hanging Tree” monument, trying to erase unfounded stories that still persist today.

Bessie’s story is a sad one and the tree that is her monument symbolizes a life cut off before a twentieth birthday. Perhaps the story should be left as “A Friend” told it 97 years ago.
Preparations for Christmas

A judgment often made by those who remember many a Christmas past is that people who have their gifts wrapped and hidden by October have forgotten the spirit of the season. A few evenings spent reading my grandfather's journal, written in the 1900s, and some reminiscing convince me the holiday preparations began early in those years too.

While it was still warm enough to work in the barn, Grandpa gathered his supply of cigar boxes and began to fashion doll beds. Waiting to be planed and sanded, the long heavy pieces of wood for the stilts stood beside his workbench. Hidden under the bench was a carved wooden box to fit on sled runners for the newest baby. A small chair, almost finished, had to be painted red while the weather was still warm.

On the last sunny windy days of fall Grandma hung the featherbeds on the clothesline. Upstairs bedrooms, usually closed for the winter, were “turned out” for the family coming home from a distance. The French doors to the parlor were opened, window shades pulled high, furniture polished, the room aired, and then closed again until Christmas.

Grandma made her fruitcakes and noodles long before the holidays. In the cellar, cucumbers in big crocks were becoming pickles; cream in the smaller crocks was becoming smearcase. Winter pears had been wrapped in paper and put in boxes beside the potatoes. Jars of sour cherries, green beans, beets, chowchow, and mincemeat lined the shelves ready for Christmas dinner.

On days when the sun still warmed the side porch, Grandma sat in her rocker and started the quilts for the cigarbox beds. From the scraps left over from last year’s wiseman’s coat or a used angel’s gown she made doll clothes. She crocheted doilies for the newlyweds’ furniture or knit caps, mufflers and mittens. Grandpa sometimes joined her on the back steps and carved the small wooden birds and animals he made for the children.
When the days grew colder with the first tentative snows, they sat beside the baseburner. Using the old flatiron Grandpa cracked walnuts for the Christmas cakes or fudge. From the magazines she’d saved all year Grandma cut pictures of children playing, birds flying, or flowers growing to paste in the scrapbooks she made for each new grandchild.

Grandpa and Grandma waited until after Thanksgiving to make a trip to town for the store-bought presents — the combs, jacks, marbles, jackknives, hair ribbons, or small bottles of cologne for the scented handkerchiefs. At the variety store Grandma bought her pink and white peppermint drops for the candy jars, and Grandpa picked out the anise flavored Christmas candy.

After the months of preparation the family gathered, and when the cousins were much younger, Santa Claus came from upstairs to distribute the children’s gifts. Grandpa had missed him again.

Grandpa and Grandma had few surprises when the adults had their gift exchange. He received a new gray sweater, some westerns for his winter reading, and a package of his favorite licorice. She got handkerchiefs with crooked borders, hot pads, and always lilac or lily-of-the-valley talcum powder.

The smell, the taste, the sight, the feeling of Christmas all need many months to create memories that last a long time.

**Ada’s 140 Years in 1993**

**Johnstown**

If Ada wanted a reason for celebration in 1993, the village could have a 140th birthday party on August 1st.

In 1853, D. Barron, the Hardin County Recorder, entered William Mitchell’s plat of Johnstown on page six, Volume A. Making it an official document were the signatures of Samuel Smith, a Hardin County Justice of the Peace, and D. Barron. Attached to the document were the description and measurements of the proposed village signed by Henry I. Rudisil the sur-
veyor, an assistant engineer for the Ohio and Indiana Railroad.

Mitchell laid out the original Johnstown in 75 plots, each 60 feet wide and 150 feet long, located south of Center St. (SR 81), east to Simon St. and south to Montfort (Montford). Its boundary on the west was the one road through Johnstown, Margaret Street, named for Mrs. S.M. Johnson. Mitchell may have taken care of details, but S.M. Johnson was the principal owner of the earlier settlement, Johnson’s Station.

Margaret St. yielded to small town tradition and became Main St. When General Kilby Smith, a Washington D.C. postal official discovered in 1855 there was a Johnstown in Licking County, he changed the town to Ada in honor of his favorite sister. Many residents fancied Sweet Liberty as a name.

Some photographer had the foresight to aim his camera down Ada’s Main St. in those early days. Cliff Landon preserved the photos in his 1902 pictorial history, “Ada and the O.N.U.”

When the photos appeared in the 1953 Ada Centennial history, someone added an approximate time period — before 1865 and after 1865.

It might be fun to look at some of the old photos of Ada in its 140th year and see what changes have taken place.
First Ohio Normal building begun in 1871 on what would later become the Ohio Northern University campus. The photo was taken by the Clutter Art Studio in Ada, and is part of the Barton Snyder Family Collection of the Ada Public Library.

**The Ohio Normal**

The dream of Henry Solomon Lehr and the village of Ada began to take shape in what had been John Dobbins’ cornfield when the first building was dedicated in 1872.

It was large enough to hold classes for the 131 students who came by foot, by wagon, or by train to study at the Ohio Normal. The building was demolished and replaced by Lehr Memorial in 1914.

**The Railroad**

This photo captures a scene played many times in small towns since the Civil War — young soldiers boarding a train to leave for war.

On the back of the photo 1898 is recorded. The war is the Spanish-American War. Some names and places come to mind from the pages of our school history books: U.S. Battleship Maine, Commodore George Dewey and Manilla Bay, Teddy Roosevelt’s “Rough Riders” and San Juan Hill. The official reason for the war against Spain, declared on April 25, 1898,
by Congress and President McKinley, was that Cuba be granted its independence and Spain withdraw from the island.

Of the 274,000 U.S. officers and soldiers who served during this war, 5,462 died and 1,604 were wounded. Ironically, only 379 deaths were battle casualties; the rest were from disease and other causes. The final result of the 112-day war was the establishment of the United States as a power in the Pacific.

The Ada depot, visible on the left, was new — eleven-years-old — when the photo was taken. Probably somewhere in the flag waving crowd is the town band playing military marches to "send the boys off."

For many years railroad depots were the setting for tearful farewells and happy homecomings. Often the "coming home" was tragic as a group of uniformed guards stood at rigid attention in the silent crowd awaiting the arrival of the train and the flag draped coffins.
When the Degler house, later the Alden home on Gilbert St. across from the ONU law library, was demolished several years ago, the Alden’s daughter, Priscilla Alden Ekdal, gave this postcard to the Ada Public Library.

The Village

An old postcard with a one-cent stamp and an obliterated postmark gives us a “Birds Eye View” of Ada, Ohio, and foreshadows Ada’s future designation as a “Tree City.”

The postcard is addressed to Miss Leila Degler in Defiance, Ohio. An Ada girl, she married C.R. Alden who was Dean of the College of Engineering at ONU from 1921-24 and a professor of electrical engineering from 1955-65.

Probably taken from Hill building on the ONU campus, the photographer turned his camera north toward the village business section.

The only way to look at the photo is to focus on the Church of Christ (Disciples) with its unusual bell tower roof rising above the trees. The Presbyterian and Methodist church spires are in the distance. Memory has to fill in the rest.

The Streets

In 1903, Ada was ready to enter the 20th century with telephones, electricity, copper telegraph lines, new street lights, plans for water lines to homes and pipes for central heating, and a busy railroad depot and freight station. Ohio Normal had a new building, Dukes Memorial, and building plans for Brown building.

The granite was here for the Soldiers’ monument in Railroad Park; the cannon had been promised. An Ada Chamber of Commerce was formed to promote business and industry. The safe for
Ada, Ohio, 1904, Main and Buckeye looking west. The Liberty Bank is at its old location (until 1914) where Cole-Humphrey Insurance office is in 1993. Photo is from the Barton Snyder Family Collection at the Ada Public Library.

the Liberty Bank was in place, and the First National Bank, not to be outdone, announced the purchase of an adding machine.

Council and the citizens couldn't put it off any longer. Macadam had to be removed and Main Street from Lima St. to Center St. (North St.) had to be paved.

On Feb. 16, 1903, council called a public meeting to discuss the $50,000 project. For a year, often joined by groups of shouting citizens, council argued in stormy sessions until the 11:30 p.m. signal that "the lights were going off."

In March, 1904, The Ada Record published a list of Main St. property owners and paving assessments on the front page. Almira Russell with 169 ft. frontage owed $540.80; the Presbyterian Church, $168; and the Ohio Normal College, $1,504.
Agnew Welsh complained in the Record about his double assessment: the newspaper office fee of $108.75 and his home on N. Main St. a fee of $87. Keep in mind, this was a year of dime admission to the Kinsey Komedy players or Shakespeare at the opera house and two-for-a nickel cigars. Council had to set up some special hearing sessions.

In April, 1904 the first “hard burned vitrified paving brick” was unloaded, and the work began in May. In June and July it rained. On Aug. 3, Mayor Greer laid the first brick and on Dec. 7, the contractor took the councilmen and the village engineer to “a convenient restaurant” to celebrate before he left town.

Just in time too. The rumor had spread from Kenton that Jacob Lintz had bought the first automobile in his town — “an $800 gasoline machine ignited by battery.”

Buildings stood at the corner of N. Main and Buckeye (where the parking lot is now). The Citizens Bank Bldg. on the northeast corner is still there. The wooden building is where the Brewer Bldg. is now (next to the railroad). Brewer Building was built in 1905. The two buildings on the south east corner were constructed in 1872 as was the Citizens Bank Building. The brick used for the buildings was made in Ada.
Ada's South Main Street looking north. Railroad Park is on the right and has not been developed yet. Note the wooden sidewalks. Probably before the turn of the century since the Brewer Building is not there yet to replace the wooden warehouse.

Looking north from Gardner's Drug Store, Main St., Ada, 1994, some evergreens in Railroad Park can be seen. The "Brewer Building" is north of the track, Liberty National Bank is south of the park.
Does anyone recognize this woman? Her photo was found in a building in the 200 block of N. Main Street in Ada. The date on the building is 1905, but the photo is obviously much older. An 8" x 7" half-plate tintype, it is much larger than most photos made using this process.

Charles Jacobs, curator of the Sullivan-Johnson Museum in Kenton, believes the dress and hair-do of the woman indicate it was taken during the Civil War era. Several photographers have also dated it in the late 1860s or 1870s.

The details of the photo are very clear, and gilding has been applied to the jewelry to highlight her earrings and brooch.

If the lady resembles anyone’s ancestors or anyone can provide clues, please call or write to The Ada Herald.
Sanford M. Johnson

His name was Sanford M. Johnson, and the early settlers awarded him two titles: "Founder of Ada" and "Ada's Patron Saint."

Johnson's name appears everywhere in the early records of Ada. It was the Johnson's Station sawmill that gave Ada its first industry. Johnson's name is on deeds when he gave land to the Ohio and Indiana Railroad for right-of-ways through Ada, and later when he gave the Railroad Park ground to the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad.

His name is on the board of directors for the first public school in Ada, on the building committee for the first church in town, the Presbyterian, on the petition for a post office, and as bondsman for the first postmaster, W. F. Green.

When the village government was organized, Johnson's name was on the 1861 petition for incorporation with a notation that S. M. Johnson was selected to present the petition. His name is listed as a member of the first elected village council.

In nearby communities other respected leaders were also developing their small settlements into towns, but S. M. Johnson made one important decision that would give Ada a special quality.

In 1866 when Henry Solomon Lehr told Johnson about his dream to establish a college in rural northwestern Ohio, the story is that Johnson said, "You're just the man we need."

The other name in Ada's history is William Mitchell from Kendallville, Ind. In 1852 he bought 160 acres for $1,000 and
laid out 75 lots for a town in a section from Montford to North Avenue. Mitchell’s interest was timber. Perhaps he envisioned a town of lumber workers. Mitchell stayed only a few years and then returned to Indiana. Before he left, however, he offered a Ft. Wayne man, S. M. Johnson, a millwright, half interest in his land if Johnson would come and set up a sawmill.

Johnson was not a young man seeking adventure in the wilderness when he came to Ada in 1853. He was 35. Born in Genesee County, N. Y. in 1818, he was orphaned soon after his second birthday. His older brother, Chester, took Sanford home to Columbus to live with him. Johnson married in Columbus, but his first wife died after a few years.

In 1852, Johnson married Margaret Taughenbaugh, an Indiana woman, and moved to Ft. Wayne. Perhaps he saw Mitchell’s offer as a new beginning. His maturity and even-tempered traits made him a good leader with a reasoned perspective of what a small settlement needed to grow and to prosper.

Johnson set up his “muley mill” on the south side of the new railroad track site somewhere between the present water plant and Johnson Street. A crooked wagon road led from the woods near the present Methodist church to his sawmill.

He built his first home near the current site of the Liberty National Bank. His busy mill was soon providing mud sills for the railroad, and lumber for homes and stores. His business was important to the area, and Johnson was respected as a citizen. When fire destroyed the mill, the community replaced it. The settlement took his name and became Johnstown.

Mary, the Johnson’s oldest daughter, was the first child born in the new village. The Johnsons added six more children to their family — Sarah, Ida, Ollie, Lydia, Carrie, and William. As other families moved to the new town, Johnson was one of those selected to make plans to educate the village children. He was the builder of the first four-room brick school on Main Street.
Religious groups were meeting in private homes or at the schoolhouse, and in 1861 S.M. Johnson was on the committee to consider building the first church in Ada, the Presbyterian. When it was completed in 1864, Johnson was one of its active members and sang bass in the choir.

In 1866, when H.S. Lehr came west looking for a place to teach and carry out his dream of a normal school, he stopped at Bucyrus, Upper Sandusky, Dunkirk, Forest, and finally at Johnstown. Lehr said, “not finding the directors I went on to Monroeville and Elkhart, Ind., then back to Johnstown, none of the places being in sympathy with my ideas. I was directed to see S. M. Johnson.”

Johnson was an immediate enthusiastic supporter of Lehr’s plan. The other directors and many townspeople had doubts. Why pay a schoolmaster three dollars a day when you could get one for a dollar? Lehr was a small frail man and probably could not maintain discipline. His plan for a normal school was too ambitious and admitting “foreigners” (students from outside the village) would create problems. Johnson became Lehr’s champion and convinced the town that Lehr’s ideas were just what the village needed.

In 1901, when Ada looked back almost 50 years, Agnew Welsh wrote a tribute in *The Ada Record* to Sanford M. Johnson. Some of the early settlers shared memories and stories of Johnson and what he had done for Ada.

Henry Young remembered “the good times they had together.” Johnson played the bass viol in Young’s orchestra and Young recalled that Johnson called his bass viol, “Susie.” An old pioneer, William Lantz, said, “He was a giant physically...The burdens of the whole town rested on his shoulders, but he was always kind and genial.” Lehr had this to say about his friend: “He was one of the kindest men I ever met, was very sociable and enjoyed the good things of life. I always found him an honorable man.”

Johnson had built a large frame house for his growing family south of town where the Elzay Art Gallery is now located. The
house was known as "The Terrace" when it was a dorm and a restaurant in the 1940s.

In 1867, S. M. Johnson sold his sawmill and moved to Lima. In the Lima move, he traded homes with John Dobbins. The land where Johnson had planted evergreens, all the way to Main St., would become the Ohio Northern University campus in 1871.

In Lima, Johnson organized the Lima Paper Mill Co., and became its president. He died in Lima in 1882.

There are no monuments in Ada to S. M. Johnson. One known portrait shows the face of the man. The name of the village is no longer Johnstown because of a Washington decision that it would be confused with a Licking County Johnstown. One street still bears his name.

Although S. M. Johnson lived in Ada for only 14 years, the homes, the eight churches, the university campus, business and industry, and the kind of small town Ada has become, clearly reflect the mark of the man who was "The Founder of Ada."

Information and dates are from local documents and Agnew Welsh's tribute in the 1901 Ada Record.

Railroad Park Cannon

A target date of December, 1993, for the completion of the restoration of the Pennsylvania caboose in Railroad Park would mark the 90th anniversary of another Ada community project. The old Civil War cannon resting on its granite base in Railroad Park was dedicated in 1903.

It took 21 years to find a fitting centerpiece for the Pennsylvania railroad park. As the village began to grow, the railroad-owned land from Main St. to Johnson St. (with the track on one side and the alley on the other) was often used for piles of staves waiting to be shipped from the stave factory. It became an unsightly spot.

In 1882 the village decided it wanted to honor its war veterans, and in 1882 that meant those who had fought in the Civil
War. The citizens erected a 15-foot wooden memorial. It withstood the Ada weather for only ten years.

In 1887 the railroad had given Ada a beautiful new depot closer to Main Street. In 1892 the town replaced the dilapidated wooden monument with a brick monument "stuccoed with cement." It too could not weather the rain and snow and lasted only a few years.

In 1902 the citizens and town officials decided it was time to make the park a place of beauty and build a fitting war memorial that would last.

Agnew Welsh records that "when an act of Congress gave G.A.R. posts the privilege of claiming a condemned cannon, the Carman Post asked for one for Ada. The secretary of war sent a siege gun from Fort Mifflin, below Philadelphia."

Members of the post took up a collection of $50 for the cost of loading the gun, but the Pennsylvania Railroad brought the cannon to Ada free of a freight charge. Perhaps it took the same track route from Pennsylvania the 1941 caboose took when Conrail brought it to Ada, freight free, on Oct. 18, 1989.

The cannon was put in the northwest corner of the park while the Carman Post appointed a committee of members and citizens: Colonel N.R. Park, S.W. Nixon, Jacob Leinard, William Lantz, and Agnew Welsh. In November 1902, the committee signed a contract with J.B. Weber of Leipsic for "a Barre granite base, die, and gun rest." The cost was $575 and Agnew Welsh reports that "200 individuals and business firms contributed from one dollar to five dollars each."

On Memorial Day, 1903, Ada Mayor L.A. Greer presided at the dedication and presented the monument on behalf of the donors to Carman Post, 101, Grand Army of the Republic for safekeeping "In Memory of the Soldiers of 1861-65."

Railroad Park has changed since the cannon took its central position. After Ada citizens voted to buy the park from the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1958, part of the land became a village parking lot. The stone bandstand council built for the village is gone, and so are the sounds of the Wednesday night
band concerts. The Ada garden club's bed of pink petunias is gone and so are the green park benches.

The world has changed too. The Civil War is only one of many wars recorded in our history books. A red caboose no longer brings up the rear of the trains that pass through Ada.

In spite of the changes, treasures from the past, the depot, the cannon, the caboose, are surrounded by trees and a lovely garden planted and cared for by a new generation.

Those who worked for their lasting monument in 1903 would be glad to know that 90 years later, Railroad Park is still a pleasant place to rest, surrounded by the beauty of the past and present.

Joseph Leslie with one of his gumball machines.

Joseph Leslie and Gumballs

In November, I went back a few years in memory. Joseph Leslie gave me a red gumball to chew.

Some of you remember the round glass globes filled with brightly colored gumballs. They stood on black pedestals or
were fastened to the walls in gas stations and stores. You put your penny in the slot, pushed the lever to the right, and when you pulled it back, a gumball fell into a metal pocket.

Mr. Leslie told me all he knows about the old machines that are now antique collectors’ prized possessions. Since Mr. Leslie will be 96 on Dec. 20 and has spent many of those years with gumball machines, he’s an expert.

When I asked him how he got to Ada, he said, “You’d better ask me how I got north first.” A southerner, he was born in Dorville, Ga., 15 miles from Atlanta. He worked in the post office there. After World War I, he got word that there were good jobs in the north and he’d better head in that direction.

He worked for General Motors in Pontiac for 15 years, and moved up the assembly line from metal finisher to touch-up inspector. If he okayed the car, it went off the line. If not, “it went to the hospital.”

When Mr. Leslie told me he helped build the first Pontiac, I asked him if he owned one. He laughed and said he always drove Fords, “I’ve got one in my driveway now.”

In Michigan he met his future wife, Louise. When he said “he wanted to find a good Christian girl,” the woman where he boarded told him she would get him a date with a girl she knew.

The woman asked Louise 10 times if she wouldn’t like to date this nice young man, and Louise refused 10 times. Finally, Mr. Leslie said, “Ask her one more time and tell her this is the last time.” Louise decided she’d try the blind date, and they went for a ride and talked.

The matchmaker must have known that Joe and Louise would make a good pair for they were married for 67 years, had three daughters, Marilyn, Katherine, and Carolyn, six grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

When work at General Motors slowed down and Mr. Leslie had taken his wife “back home,” his brother-in-law in Columbus, Ohio, asked him to come there and take a gumball route. He says, “I did, with no intention of keeping it. From Columb—
bus, he started his route with 300 machines and built it to 750. In 1942, Ada was one of the towns where he had a dozen or so machines. He liked the town, especially the university, and thought maybe a college town would be a nice place to raise children.

The Leslie family made the move to Ada. His routine still meant he was on the road servicing the gumball machines from Monday to Friday. "I didn't have much to do with raising my girls," he says, giving his wife credit for that.

He drove the 16 Ohio counties, servicing the 750 machines about once every three weeks. "I never wanted to see them empty," he says. Using a penny counter, he added up the pennies and gave the owner his 20 percent.

The gumballs came from California, and he recalls his biggest order was for 100 cases. It cost him $2,500.

When someone from the gum company said, You can't make any money at a penny," he raised the price to two pennies. He showed me how to plug every other rotor so that with just one penny, the gumball won't fall. The next penny gives you a gumball.

He built up a group of loyal customers. One of his machines was in Cole Motors, Ada. At one time a competitor wanted to replace it with one of his. Mr. Leslie says, "Mr. Cole told him as long as Joseph Leslie is putting in gum machines, nobody is going to put a gumball in this town but him."

One of Mr. Leslie's gum machines has been in Cole Motors for over 50 years. When Mr. Leslie retired, Steve Cole bought
the machine that has a 1919 patent and keeps it filled with gumballs for a penny.

That may be one of the reasons Mr. Leslie has a Ford in his driveway. He has driven a car for 79 years and still drives to church in Lima, to Kenton, to the grocery, and anywhere he wants to go. The car has over 100,000 miles on it, but he says, "I pump it once or twice and it starts right up."

Since his wife, Louise, died two years ago, he has managed by himself. Marilyn lives in Texas, Katherine in Lima, and Carolyn in Maine. He does his own housework and cooking.

"I don't know whether you'd want to eat it or not," he says, laughing.

After many miles on the roads and thousands of gumballs, Mr. Leslie decided to retire when he was about 90. He's made only one concession to age—"I get up carefully." He can park his car in any space, carry on a lively conversation, and can still fill a gumball machine quickly.

Farmers Almanac, 1994

The third week in January 1994, I lost faith in something I believed would never fail me, something I've relied on for years. I mean, of course, The Farmer's Almanac.

The small yellow agricultural bible promised for January "temperatures averaging 35 degrees." The week of Jan. 16-22 would be "sunny and mild" with some "heavy rain." What we got instead was six days that will go down in the pages of local history as "That week in January 1994 when the temperature stayed below zero."

At first, when the thermometers reached 20 below and kept going and the snow piled higher and higher, the midnight silence was a pleasant surprise (if your power was on and your pipes weren't frozen).

The dogs that bark all night in the summer went into hibernation. The young owners of cars that zoomed by the house in summer, with stereos turned at full blast to rattle your win-
dows, decided to stay home. They had tried to duplicate the noise with snowmobiles, but it got too cold for that too.

Since we live in the house where my grandparents lived, I can easily slip into nostalgia about winter in Ada when I was a child — coffee soup with sugar bread, hot water bottles under the feather tick, warm flannel cloths for aching ears, holes on frosty windows made with your breath so you could see out, and base burners that made your cheeks flush.

I remember the sleds, the snowmen, and the angel wings when you got down and wallowed in the snow.

Then I thought some more. The base burner may have warmed the front of you, but your back was covered with a chill. The water froze, the clothes froze, the milk froze, and you could see your breath in the room where you were going to sleep.

Maybe our ancestors were tougher than we are. The Jan. 8, 1894, Ada Record printed an item that caught my attention: "During the past week many farmers were plowing stubble for oats." No January vacations to sunny places for farmers 100 years ago, I thought. They were outside in the cold with horses and plows working their fields.

A few items later in the 100 year old newspaper, the reporter cited someone named Foster as an authority: "Foster says January will average colder than the normal for the month from the 5th to the 20th."

With my newly acquired cynicism, I reflected that perhaps Foster based his predictions on The Farmer's Almanac. The local farmers were probably plowing fields in a sunny 50 degrees.

I've given up nostalgia for the good old days. It was cold, clear to the bone. I'll put my faith in central heating and an electric blanket.

I'm not going to try The Farmer's Almanac 1993 third prize recipe, "Chicken in Chocolate Sauce Piquante." It would probably taste awful. The beans and peas will be planted when it's warm enough to dig in a garden, not necessarily on March 15.
Christmas 1944

December 1944

We had mailed the overseas boxes with the Christmas cookies cushioned by popcorn and new warm socks. In an envelope at the bottom of the box were the black and white snapshots of family members and the new baby the soldier had never held. We knew the photos were more important than the cookies which probably would arrive in pieces, but the cookies were an assurance that back home we would keep Christmas.

Ada had snow on the ground and the temperature was often below zero as we faced our fourth Christmas at war. The town was as bleak as the weather with no downtown Christmas lights, no lighted stars, and only dim lights in the store windows. At night the only bright lights were on the engines that rushed through the town on the eastbound and westbound tracks carrying supplies, equipment, and troops. The only sound was the mournful warning whistle at the crossings.

In December, we tried to keep some of the traditions that bound us together as a community. The business and professional men honored the 1944 undefeated and unified high school football team at a banquet. The ONU concert choir and the Choral Society rehearsed the Messiah for a December 17 performance in Lehr auditorium, and the churches planned their Christmas programs and services.

The Church of Christ primary class learned to sing "Away in a Manager," and the Catholic church prepared for its midnight Mass. We gathered together to sing the familiar carols and hear the Christmas story as people in our community had done during the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and World War I.

The days and nights were long in December. The farmers had their crops in from the fields, and some of them had gone to work in the war plants until spring planting. Cooper Tire in Findlay placed a large ad in The Ada Herald for 50 urgently needed workers. The Lima-Ada bus traveled the highway, taking men and women to Lima plants. The 150 workers at the
Ohio-Kentucky factory in Ada filled government contracts for footballs for the servicemen and barbed wire gloves to cut across enemy lines.

In Ada homes, women followed the poster’s warning to “Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without.” They had learned to improvise during the depression. If the washer couldn’t be fixed, then the cloth diapers had to be washed by hand.

The women planned the Christmas meal with the ration books beside them. Sugar was scarce, but cans of collected grease could be turned in for extra red stamps for meat. The victory gardens had produced jars of vegetables and fruit. The bright spot in a cold winter was that coffee had been taken off rationing and the Ada Kroger store had three-pound bags for 59 cents.

If the Christmas tree lights had burned out, the stores had none to replace them. If we could find a tree, underneath would be a few packages wrapped in last year’s paper: some toys and books for the children, handknit gloves and scarves, a small bottle of 25 cent Follow Me or Nonchalant cologne, a pack of Lucky Strikes or a Dutch Master for the adults. A $2.50 set of Evening in Paris from an Ada drugstore might be under the tree for a special person.

Unless a distant family member could get space on a crowded train, he would not be home. With a gas ration of eight gallons a month and threadbare tires, cars were left in the garage.

Because of a war-time blackout, news from the front was often delayed until the battles were over. Roosevelt had been re-elected to a fourth term with a new vice president, Senator Harry Truman. FDR told us the new year would be a hard one but victory, at least in Europe, was closer.

The war was costing our country $250 million a day, so we were in our sixth War Loan drive to raise $14 billion, and by December, Hardin County had raised one-third of its quota of $1,486.

We did not forget the third anniversary of Pearl Harbor. The Ada Herald had given us names to go with the memories of the
nine men in the community who had lost their lives, the five men missing in action, the four men who were prisoners of war, and the many who were in hospitals. Nearly 600 of the men and women who called Ada home were in the service; 1,000 Ohio Northern students and former students were in the armed forces. When we went to the Odeon to see “Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo” or to the Ada Theater to see “White Cliffs of Dover,” the tears we wept came from deep inside.

With the year’s news of D-Day, the RAF bombing of Berlin, the liberation of Paris, the Red Army’s entrance into Poland, and the taking of Salpa so that the new B-29 bombers could begin bombing Tokyo, we began to think of the future.

Roosevelt had signed the GI Bill in June promising college educations for some veterans. For others, the four percent home loans with no down payment had become part of their dreams.

The Ada Kiwanis Club’s “Mile of Pennies” for the war memorial fund to build a new park area to honor the returning veterans had reached its goal, and people were still filling the one-foot cards in Ada stores. The committee chairman, Carl Dickmeyer, and the treasurer, George Umphress, turned over $900 to the fund drive treasurer, Anson Gear.

Judy Garland sang, “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” from her new movie. As her voice came softly over our radios at home and over the Armed Forces broadcasts far away, it reflected our feelings: “Through the years we all will be together, if the fates allow, but ’til then we’ll have to muddle through somehow.” There was no “peace on earth” in 1944, and after Christmas we had to face 1945.

**Main Street Train Wreck**

Although the railroad brought prosperity to the small towns along its route, it also brought danger. Since Ada developed on both sides of the Pennsylvania tracks, the village was particularly vulnerable. One of the vivid reminders of that danger is
The Wrecked Cars — Coach No. 7122, Combination No. 7544
Photo from Ada Record, Jan. 14, 1903

Agnew Welsh’s report of the train wreck at the Main St. crossing in the Jan. 14, 1903, issue of The Ada Record.

The accident was a result of lost minutes and weather. Train No. 19, the westbound limited mail, usually passed through Ada at 2:55 p.m. It was two hours late that Thursday. Also westbound on the north track, train No. 35 carried two cars, a regular day coach and a combination smoker and baggage car. It stopped in Ada to discharge and to take on passengers and railroad workers at 4:45 p.m. each day.

On that Thursday, No. 35 was 14 minutes late. The crew also lost departure time because the air brakes set just after the train pulled out and had to be adjusted. No. 35 had to wait for a local work train to back into the north siding so they could pass. A flagman had been sent to the back to protect the train because they knew No. 19 was close to their running time. When they realized the flagman wasn’t aboard, they slowed again to take him on.

As soon as No. 35 left the station, Amos Marty, the station operator, pulled the block to hold back No. 19, but now weather was a factor. Darkening skies, snow flurries, and exhaust steam from the handle factory outside town obscured the track,
and the engineer did not see his warning block until he reached the coal sheds. Running 35 miles an hour, he put on his brakes and reversed his engine. As No. 19 passed the station, the engine wheels were throwing sparks high into the air.

It was now shortly after 5:00 p.m. Most people were eating supper or getting ready for the Thursday night prayer meetings. Agnew Welsh was still in his newspaper office on N. Main. A.W. Clutter, an Ada photographer returning from Dunkirk, had just left the passenger train after saying goodbye to Guy Kingsbury, editor of the Dunkirk Standard, who had stayed on the train. Mr. and Mrs. Guyselman with their 18-month-old baby had boarded the train in Ada to return to Van Wert after a visit with Mr. Guyselman’s sister, Mrs. O’Dell.

Mail workers were sorting and bagging the mail on No. 19. In the passenger car of No. 35 the conductor, P.C. Travis, had started to collect his tickets. In the smoker car, the railroad workers had settled back for the trip home to Lima, Van Wert or Ft. Wayne.

No. 19 engine struck No. 35 just after its rear car had cleared Main St. about 50 feet. The force was so great, the engine went half way through the last car and sent it north across Gilbert St. Just a minute later, the Chicago-New York limited passed on the south track traveling east. Had large parts of the wrecked trains been on its track, the crowded passenger train would have been part of a greater disaster.

As it was, the limited carried wreckage debris down the track until it was able to stop by Grass Run. A piece of metal flew through the window putting a large gash in the fireman’s head, the only personal injury on the limited. The engine was damaged, however, and limped back for repairs before it could continue.

The noise of the collision brought Ada citizens and businessmen running from north and south of the tracks. Electric lights in the cars had gone out, and the strong smell of oil splashed from the lamps warned of danger of fire. Passengers were crawling out the broken windows of the coach. Townspeople
were soon bringing stretchers and horse-drawn wagons to carry the injured to nearby houses, to the offices of the doctors, Montgomery, Smith, and Souder, and to the Lawton Hotel by the tracks.

I.P. Kickley, a 30 year railroad veteran, was in charge of the mail train. The crash had sent him sprawling in the mail bags. He ran to the telegraph station to have Amos Marty notify North Washington (Dola) to flag the second section of No. 19 on its way to Ada, thus averting more tragedy. The wrecking crew at Crestline was alerted as were the railroad officials in Ft. Wayne.

When a final check was made, three people were dead: Arthur Halley from Van Wert, J.J. Stein from Lima, and W.A. McCool from Ft. Wayne, all railroad men. Fourteen others had broken bones, cuts, bruises and torn muscles. The Guyselm baby was not injured, but its mother was wedged between the seat and the footrest and a saw had to be used to free her.

The railroad crossing wreck had a great impact on the community. After the new depot was opened in 1887 and traffic increased, citizens had insisted on a watchman for the Main Street crossing. After the second track was put in, train traffic increased even more. A year after the wreck, the Pennsylvania erected a watchman’s tower at the edge of Railroad Park with someone always on duty. Pneumatically operated gates began functioning early in 1905 at the Main and Johnson street crossings.

Memories of the wreck brought periodic concerns about safety. When the South school closed, parents worried about school buses crossing the tracks. We were reminded of the danger in 1994 when a boxcar struck the Dearth’s house on Gilbert St. and again in January of 1995 when a train carried an abandoned car 510 feet down the track. The danger is still with us.
Old House Contest

House #1
Then (l) and Now (below)

House #2
Then (l) and Now (below)
House #1
580 E. Lincoln Avenue
(Mill Street until 1909)

C.B. Hickernell built "The Old Stone House" about the turn of the century. Bud Brown says the house was once surrounded by 160 acres.

Hickernell taught Latin and Greek at the Ohio Normal in 1881. Like most of the professors he was also involved in Ada business and had a coal company.

Jack Carey wrote from California that he was "surprised and pleased" to see his house in the Herald. Dale and Ruth Carey lived in the house for 20 years. Jack recalls "summers in the cool kitchen in the basement." He remembers also "the dumbwaiter that moved food from the kitchen to the first floor." As a boy, however, he used it to move toys and games from floor to floor.

Clauđe ("Brownie") Brown, his wife, Vivian, and their family lived in the house from 1957-1989. Vivian remembers the kitchen and the dumbwaiter too, the hardwood floors and beautiful oak woodwork and doors. Vivian says she was told that seashells shipped from Japan were embedded in the cement blocks used for the house.

Lavon Kerr wrote to say she remembers the house and the families who lived there. Her daughter, Barb, used to go to the Jack Carey's parties held in the basement.

A nostalgic twist is that Mollie Hickernell lived in the house when it was new and Wilma Hubbell reported that in 1994 another Mollie's name is on the mailbox.

House #2
513 S. Johnson Street

S.B. Wagner who owned the Ohio Normal Bookstore across from the ONU campus was the owner of this house.

On June 30, 1885, Wagner, with U.S.G. Cherry and W.W. Poulney, two Ohio Normal students, began publishing The University Herald. The name was changed in 1916 to the Ada Herald.

Clarence D. and DeBrito Hindall lived in the house with their children, George, Carey-Bob, and Shirley. C.D. was the Ada postmaster from 1934 until 1950. The William Peppler family also lived in the house for a few years.

The Victorian iron fence at the rear is original to the house, and the light post in the back came from the centennial in Philadelphia.

The original cost of the house was $4,000. Steve and Nadeau Reese, who live in the house now, worked for 15 years to complete a beautiful restoration, inside and out.
House #3
Then (l) and Now (below)

House #4
Then (l) and Now (below)
House #3
535 N. Main Street
Simeon D. Fess, who lived in the house, taught U.S. History and Mathematics at ONU from 1888-1900. He is one of the two U.S. senators (F.B. Willis was the other) who sent congratulatory letters to the 1924 seniors as a feature of the Ada Hi Purple & Gold yearbook.

The house, however, was known to most people as the Ames house. Dr. C.S. Ames, his wife, Carrie, and daughters, Alma, Dorothy, and Mildred were active and social citizens. Oldtimers tell of a spacious ballroom on the second floor. Dr. Ames added the porch and other additions to make it one of Ada's loveliest homes.

Lavon Kerr was a friend of Mildred's and remembers the family well. Alma married Lowell Snyder.

Tragedy touched the family and the town when Dr. Ames, on his way to a patient in McGuffey, was in an auto accident near Woodlawn Cemetery in January, 1917. He died a month later at age 56.

Not long after, Dorothy committed suicide in Cleveland where she was studying nursing.

After the Wolfrums bought the house, it became the Norwood Apartments, and many people have lived there.

[An "egregious error" (one of Agnew Welsh's favorite phrases) appeared in this house description, and I apologize to all those who know better.

Dr. and Mrs. Ames had three daughters: Alma, Dorothy and Mildred. Alma married Arthur Shepherd; Dorothy married Lowell Snyder; and Mildred took her own life.]

House #4
222 W. Montford
(originally Montfort)

The gentleman standing in front is H.S. Lehr, and this was his first school when he was hired as Ada's superintendent.

The wooden structure, built in 1852, first faced Main St. on the southwest corner of Montford.

Then it was moved to the corner corner where the Prevites live. It was moved again to its present site and used as a home.

It served as a schoolhouse until 1869 when the first brick Ada Union School was built on Main Street and when the old North building replaced it in 1892.

In 1861, when the Civil War began, recruiting meetings were often held in the wooden building, public meetings took place there, and congregations gathered to worship until they built their churches.

Several people identified the house as Lehr's first school but put it in other locations in town.
**House #5**

202 W. Highland Ave.

(Hoosier Street originally)

John G. Park, who built the house, was one of the original owners of Lehr's Ohio Normal School and also taught from 1871-97 and from 1906-12. His name is still etched in the front door glass panel.

Park's English grammar textbooks and workbooks were used in many classrooms. He also taught the university students' Sunday School class at the Disciple church for many years and was a director of the Liberty Bank.

The parquet floors are an outstanding feature of the house, as are the tile fireplace with an antique brass cover, and the oak sliding doors.

The DaPore family lived in the house, followed by the Gilbreths, and the Coldwells. Donna and Hal Hartley with their family live in the house today.

---

**House #6**

501 N. Main Street

This house is in the section of the original plat of Johnstown (Ada). The house was the home of Mason (sometimes it's spelled Meason) Cunningham. His father, J.T. Cunningham, started a small drygoods store in 1872. After a fire in 1880, J.T. reopened a much larger store in the new Union Block where the fitness center is now.

Mason joined his father in the business in 1887. J.T. died in 1911, so M.E. is the Mr. Cunningham most oldtimers remember. M.E. was a strong supporter of the Methodist Church and the Masonic Lodge. He was a village councilman and a director of the old Liberty Bank.

Sue Stambaugh remembers that the Careys had their insurance office in the house at one time. Gale and Beverly Daugherty live in the house now, and it probably looks much the same as it did when it was the home of one of Ada's leading merchants.
House #7
Then (l) and Now (below)

House #8
Then(l) and Now (below)
House #7
1002 S. Main Street
The Dobbins House

The unique feature of the oldest contest house is the attic floor. It is constructed of solid 18 foot logs (actual tree trunks) laid side by side.

The history of the house is written in the obituary of Mrs. I.I. Dobbins. In 1855, she was born Almyrah Thompson in the house; she married Lewis Dobbins in the house, she lived in the house with her husband and children, and in 1931, she died in the house. Her daughter, Deta Jones, lived there after her mother died.

Almyrah’s parents, the W.W. Thompsons, were pioneers who came to Ada six months before she was born, clearing the forest to build their home.

Standing on a small rise, the house faced the dirt road that carried the farm wagons and buggies to the village. Surrounded by fields, woods, and ditches, the house stood alone until new developments and businesses began their move south after World War II.

Paul McCurdy renovated the house, and Robert and Alice Hilliard called it home for many years. Ruth Roeder was the next owner.

House #8
434 N. Main Street
Justin Brewer House

This is one of several Brewer family houses in Ada. In 1894, Justin Brewer owned part of the Empire Mill on W. Montford St. Later, Brewer bought the old grain warehouse on the southeast side of Main St.

In 1902, he demolished the warehouse and replaced it with the Brewer Block next to the railroad track. Part of that building became the Ada post office.

Brewer was president of the First National Bank, and a member of the Ada Businessman’s Club that sponsored the first community picnic in 1912. He served as Hardin County auditor in 1901.

At the turn of the century, if you wanted to build a grand home within the village limits, the choice lots were on North Main. This house has hardwood floors, back to back fireplaces in two of the downstairs rooms, and a powder room.

The “before” picture was taken in 1913 when it was the Sigma Pi fraternity house. After the house began to deteriorate, Jennings Stumbaugh bought it at a sheriff’s sale and completely renovated it. Later when the Stumbaugh moved, they sold it to the Don LaRue family, Dexter and Melanie Caw Woods are now the owners.
House #9
Then (l) and Now (below)

House #10
Then (l) and Now (below)
House #9
415 N. Main Street
Because of the contest clue, many people thought this was the Burton Snyder home, but an earlier newsman owned it — Agnew Welsh. The Ada Record was his newspaper from 1881-1914.

Welsh collected old documents and recorded conversations with early residents, leaving us a history of the community. A student at the Ohio Normal in 1875, he stayed in Ada to become one of the most active people in the town.

His lovely home with its stained glass panels was large enough for his wife, Cora, and his children, Earl, Rhea, Opal, Margaret, and Dana. His wife was one of the early members of Twice Ten Arts club (1902). He often wrote comments in the Record (probably to his wife’s chagrin) about the “wild parties” the club had in their house.

The porch has been removed where Welsh watched the news of Ada taking place, and the house is undergoing renovation.

House #10
3487 SR 81
Leonidas Richeson House
The original deeds show that when Leonidas Richeson came to Ada after the Civil War, he bought the original five acres from Captain Michael Melbourne in 1873 for $500.

An early directory lists an Ada business as “Richeson Bros. brick and tile makers in E. Center St.” (early name of SR 81 because it is the center of Liberty Township.)

Riche son used the brick he made and fired in his kiln to build his house. He must have made the bricks to last, for the old photo is dated 1880. The narrow gravel road in front of the house is now a busy state route.

Wilma Hubbell remembers the pond in the back as a popular skating spot in the winter, and recalls Ann Coe living in the house when she was in high school.

Jim and Mildred Walls bought the house in 1957, and Bill and Ernestine Hawley became the owners in 1980. Other owners the Hawleys mention are Clark, Motter, Dr. Smith, Fender, and Lowery.
And the winners are...

For winning first prize in the 1994 House Contest Wilma Hubbell will receive a year's subscription to The Ada Herald. Marilyn Nelson, managing editor of the Herald, congratulates Wilma.
Lavon Kerr won second place with her entries in the recent “Small Town Sampler” House Contest. Her granddaughter-in-law, Bev Spar of Ada, helped fill out the entry forms for her. Lavon also requested a year’s subscription to the Herald as her prize.

Third prize in the House Contest designed by Betty Miller was won by Sue Stambaugh. She also selected a year’s subscription to The Ada Herald as her prize.
Mary Cotner Motter Memories

Surrounded by special keepsakes, Mary Cotner Motter sits in her pleasant room and talks about her childhood in Ada.

When Mary reminisces about her high school days at Ada's North building, she shows me one of her possessions—a door knob from one of the old schoolhouse doors.

Most of her recollections need no objects to jog her memory, for her early days with her parents and brothers and sisters are clear and bright. Annetta (Boyd) and Joseph Cotner had eight children and Mary goes down the list in order of birth: Goldie, Mary, LeRoy, Leila, Arthur, Robert, Joe, and Edith. "It seemed like there was always a new baby in the house," she says.

Her parents had always lived in the Ada community, but Mary was born in Huntington, Indiana in 1901. Her father was there taking the examination to become a railroad postal clerk on the Pennsylvania. Six weeks later, the family was back in
Ada.

Her father's job as a railway mail clerk was on the Pittsburgh to Chicago run and when he retired, he had 31 years of service. He worked for a week and then was in Ada for a week. Mary remembers the children had to be quiet when he was home so her father could study. Railway mail clerks had to know every town and what railroad route a letter had to travel to reach its destination.

As the train moved through the towns, the clerks took the mail bags from the hooks beside the tracks or caught them as they were thrown aboard the mail car. The sorting began immediately and the clerk had to know in which mailbag the letter belonged.

One of her favorite recollections is her mother putting fresh-baked pies in a basket and then taking the children to stand by the track. When the train pulled in the Ada station, Mary says, "My father jumped off, kissed everyone, grabbed the basket of pies, and jumped back on the train."

Mary remembers pleasant family evenings. After the supper dishes were washed, her mother and all the children sat at the large kitchen table. "Lessons had to be done first," Mary says, and then they took turns reading from books their mother had selected.

Their other family activity was church. Her father and mother had met at the Church of the Brethren, and the family went there when they lived in the country. After they moved to town, they attended the Disciple church on Main Street. Mary laughs and says people used to say the Cotner family "looked like a string of ducks," when they came down the street on their way to Sunday School.

Mary's school days began at age five. Because her sister, Goldie, was in the first grade at the Wood country school, two miles west of Liberty Grange, Mary was allowed to tag along.

She completed her elementary schooling at the old south building. Because the family lived just outside the village limits, her father paid tuition so she could attend high school at
the north building. One of the teachers there was Annie Kelley, and her father said, "If you go to her, you'll learn something." The west addition to the school had just been added and Mary remembers her Latin classes with Mrs. Hickernell, reading Cicero and Caesar.

Mary graduated in 1919, and her seven brothers and sisters were also Ada High graduates. If a family owned property in Ada, the children could attend Ohio Northern tuition-free. "For a large family, that was a blessing," Mary says. The Cotner children took advantage of the chance to take engineering, pharmacy, teacher education, and commercial classes.

After a year at Ohio Northern, Mary went to work at the First National Bank in the brick building on the corner of Main and Buckeye. Later, she crossed the street to work at the Liberty Bank.

Then she met Tom Ball, "the love of my life," who was visiting a sister in Ada. They were married and Pasadena, California became Mary's home from 1930 until 1965.

After Tom's death, Mary returned to Ada. Errett Motter who had lost his wife convinced Mary that their golden years could be even more golden if they were married and could share their common interests. They had been classmates in high school so they had many of the same memories.

Mary is alone now and her move to the Mennonite Home in Bluffton has made life a little easier. Former residents from Ada who also live there are readily available for reminiscing. Family members and visitors from the Ada Disciple Church keep her in touch with the present.

Although Mary says that "sometimes I have to dig a little deep" the memories are as near as her keepsakes to connect her to the past.
Lester Ackerman’s Tour of the Past

On a blue and gold October day last year, Wilma Hubbell and I drove to the home of Lester and Kathryn Ackerman on County Road 10 where Orange Township in Hancock County and Liberty Township in Hardin County meet. We had been promised a view of some early area settlers’ gravesites.

With Mr. Ackerman, who will be 81 in October, as our guide we set off at a smart clip across a field newly plowed for spring, across a neighbor’s field, and then into a dense woods. Mr. Ackerman seemed to know each tree and used them as markers to take us to the spot among the tall trees where the old gravemarkers stood.

Using a genealogist’s device, he sprayed the worn stones with shaving foam, wiped them off, and names and dates appeared.

One stone bore the name, Ohio Dally, who had died in 1852 at age 42. Another stone indicated the resting place of H. L. Dally, who died in 1864 at age 26. One small sunken stone had only the initials H. D. visible. A broken base was the remnant of
another grave. In the quiet of the woods, we heard some history.
Ohio Dally had come from Ireland when the United States
thought it had enough Irishmen, so the Dallys found their way to
the wilderness by way of the back
doors, first landing
in Canada, mak-
ing their way
south to Tus-
carawas county
in Ohio, and
finally moving
north in 1832 to
settle in what
would become
Orange Town-
ship.
John Candler, a
Virginian, had
settled with his
son, James Marshall Candler, also in 1832 in the northwest
corner of what would later become Liberty Township.
Henry L. Dally brought his wife and eight children to the
same Ohio spot in 1834. Their log cabin was three miles from
the nearest neighbor. Mr. Ackerman says a tombstone in Can-
dler Cemetery shows the wife of Ohio Dally and some of their
children are buried there. Were those neighbors three miles
away the Candlers?
On the way back through the woods, Mr. Ackerman pointed
to the black pipes where someone had once drilled for oil, per-
haps recalling the days when the Ada newspapers recorded the
frenzied search for oil and wealth in the area at the turn of this
century.
Stopping beside a tall hickory tree, Mr. Ackerman told us it
was "a special tree." He is a quiet, modest man so his daughter
added the details to the story of the tree later.
Born in Lafayette, Ohio, Mr. Ackerman was an electrician, attending a school in Chicago. In 1948, he and his wife bought the John Ryan farm. They started their nursery in 1959 and continued to serve the area until about 1990. Kathryn took care of the selling and Lester took care of the growing.

Especially interested in grafting, he made his own drawings and became a popular speaker, teaching the process to garden clubs and nature groups in the area. In his study of wood and bark in the woods, he had noticed the nuts from “the special tree” had a thinner shell and a larger, better grade of nutmeat inside.

When Mr. Ackerman served as president of the Ohio Nut Growers Association in 1961, the former president of the group, William Weaver, took sionwood from the special tree and grafted it on an ordinary hickory tree. The result was the highest grade of hickory nut, and the tree was named the Ackerman hickory. One of the trees grows at the Kingwood Center in Mansfield, Ohio. Another was planted at President Eisenhower’s farm at Gettysburg, Virginia.

One of Mr. Ackerman’s many interests since boyhood has been the search for Indian arrowheads, hammers, and stones. When he began to find a great quantity of them in one area on trips back from the woods, he looked for signs of water that might indicate a former Indian settlement. He showed us the spot he had discovered—a spongy area in a bone dry field, the site of an underground spring.
Back at his home, he introduced us to his library, a thousand or so books on history, nature, Indians, and genealogy. He has gathered them over his lifetime, attending library book sales and every auction where there might be boxes of old books.

In among the bookshelves are his charts, his collections of butterflies and moths, his mounted wood and bark samples, and his Indian relics. It has become a small treasured museum.

Both Lester and Kathryn have had health problems this past year, but their son, Richard Ackerman who lives near Lafayette, and their daughter, Dorothy Rayl who lives outside Ada, are nearby to help.

If the woods seem too far away for awhile, Mr. Ackerman has more to learn from his books and collections. Dorothy says when her father was a boy, his mother always knew where to find him—"under the porch reading to learn all he could learn." Although he is most at ease alone in the woods, he has always been willing to share what he has learned—the sign of a natural-born teacher.

A thank you to Lester Ackerman for a wonderful day in the woods, and the visit to his books and collections. Thanks also to Dorothy Ackerman Rayl for her help.

The Little Wooden Building

Ada's "mysteries" are challenging, and here is one that hasn't been completely solved.

With the possibility the small wooden building on John Atha's former property might have a railroad connection, a search began for documentation of its identity. In 1994 Marilyn Nelson printed a photo of the building in The Ada Herald and asked for information.

Merle Cheney responded with a phone call to report it might be an early depot. He remembered seeing a sign inside reading "Johnstown" (Ada's original name). John Smith also thought there was a railroad connection.

Charles Jacobs, director of the Hardin County Museums, looked at the building, did some research on old railroad struc-
tures, and said the building might be "a significant landmark." Two weeks of looking at microfilms of the two Ada newspapers from 1887 to 1904 produced no information.

When the Ada Council wanted to clear the land where the building stood near Grass Run Industrial Park in May of 1995, the Building and Grounds committee recommended that the building be "put up for bid." Several articles in The Ada Herald and The Kenton Times increased interest in the small structure, and council extended the date for a decision so the research could continue.

Dave Devier and Norm Rex, both Ada residents, examined the wood and construction of the old building, and, instead of a pre-1887 date when the present depot was built, placed the origin of the Atha building "closer to the turn of the century."

A letter to the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum director in Strasburg, Pennsylvania gave me a name to contact. Roger Grant at the University of Akron is the editor of Railroad History magazine, as well as the author of books on early depots and a member of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board. He responded to my letter on June 19, 1995, with suggestions for research, a premise the building might have been used as a temporary depot, and with a personal conclusion: "I strongly encourage you to save this structure."

Maura Johnson, the northwest regional representative for the Ohio Historical Society at Bowling Green, also encouraged the preservation of the building.
Mike Lackey's column on the building in The Lima News brought a call from Mike Leis of Bluffton. He had come to Ada to see the building, interested in acquiring it if no one in Ada wanted it. He said it was similar to other old railroad structures and suggested the wood used might have come from an old boxcar, a common railroad practice.

Even Ada Police Chief, Ray Mumma, got involved. He questioned the railroad crew replacing the Ada Main Street crossing in July. One crew member who examined the building said it looked like "an old car house where the train crew kept warm while the train was stopped." Several other railroadmen agreed with that possibility. The microfilms between 1887 and 1904 had still produced no information and the council committee extended the decision time again.

Finally, Don Whetzler made a significant contribution when he told me he had worked for John Atha from 1937-41 and identified the building as the former telegraph operator's office that stood on the southeast corner of the S. Gilbert Street crossing next to the tracks.

Jake Marling worked for Atha in 1934-35. He remembered the building was at Atha's before he came and that Atha had bought it from the railroad. The only sign he remembered was the one advertising the hides John Atha sold.

In 1987, Art Cotner told me about the telegraph building, and I had used it as the subject for a Sampler. He furnished photos, which he had taken in 1925 of the interior, using a strip of magnesium ribbon (no flashbulbs then). I contacted him again. Because of the dentils on the Atha building, he doesn't think it's the telegraph building ("too fancy for a railroad building") unless they were added later. The Gilbert Street building had a second floor with two stairways leading to the operator's office on the top floor. The Atha building has a ladder leading to a trapdoor and with indications the roofline has been altered, but there are no traces of stairways.

Before the turn of the century, the town dump was located on the northeast corner of Gilbert and Buckeye. There are stories
of "squatters" moving into abandoned buildings. Cotner suggested the building might be one of those.

With the years from the dates Don Whetzler and Jake Marling had given me, I returned to the University Herald and The Ada Herald microfilms. Finally some information appeared.

In 1904, Agnew Welsh petitioned Ada council to contact the Pennsylvania for more Main Street crossing protection, although a watchman had been there since 1886. Is the small building in a 1902 photo showing the Gilbert Street crossing, the Atha building?

The Main Street watchman's tower that many of us remember was built in 1904 in response to council's request, allowing the operator to lower and raise the gates at Main and at Johnson. Nothing was said about the Gilbert Street crossing.

In 1914, after several train wrecks, some near accidents, some fatalities, and an increase in automobile traffic, council asked the railroad for more protection. Is this when the building was added? The village waited and tried to slow down the increasing traffic, including reckless youth driving automobiles. It wasn't until 1936 that council prohibited "children under 14 from driving motor vehicles in Ada."

In 1929, council asked the Pennsylvania for added protection again (Ada Herald, council report, Aug. 9, 1929). The railroad decided to install an "electrically-operated gate system in the Main Street watchtower" in December. Since gates at the Johnson and Gilbert crossings would be operated from the watchtower also, the Gilbert Street telegraph and watchtower building was removed and "sold to John Atha in December of 1929" (Ada Herald, Dec. 27, 1929).

The wooden building on the former Atha property cannot be documented as an earlier depot or even as a temporary car house without checking the National Archives in Washington as Roger Grant suggested. Other than the 1929 sale notice to Atha in the Ada Herald, we can't say for sure it is the old telegraph building, although at least two people are sure it is. They remember no other building that size at Atha's.
The building will be put up for bid, and many of us hope it stays in Ada. The search for its history will continue, Dave Devier had a good concluding statement for the two-year search: "Any older buildings that have character are worth saving....It's a neat old building."

View looking west down the tracks in Ada. The small building left of the tracks is a railroad building. Construction of the Brewer Block has just begun in 1903.

*Samplers in this book were printed in The Ada Herald from 1992 - 1995.*

**Other Small Town Sampler Collections Available:**

- Small Town Sampler I 1984-85 (second printing)
- Small Town Sampler II 1986-87
- Small Town Sampler III 1987-88
- Small Town Sampler IV 1989-90
- Small Town Sampler V 1991-92

For copies contact: Betty Miller, 824 S. Johnson Street, Ada, OH 45810. Copies are $5.00 each + .30 tax. Add $1.00 if you want a book mailed.
More Sundry Memoranda

This will be the last Small Town Sampler. After eleven years, 170 articles, and six Sampler collections, it's time to move on to other things. I could never stop looking or listening for community history so if I discover anything exciting, I'll let The Ada Herald know.

My file is still filled with scraps of history. Agnew Welsh called his bits of history, "sundry memoranda." I've used his category several times, and as I use it one more time, I'll give you items from Mr. Welsh's paper, The Ada Record. It was a vital part of our community from 1872 to 1927 when it ceased publication.

The Ada Record, 1881

Ada's public square will get a new flag.

The marshes burned Saturday and Sunday with black smoke like "storm clouds." (October)

A couple of improper females were given the bounce from the Normal this week.

Ada council called for bids for new wooden sidewalks.

At H. M. Nelson's store — ladies morocco shoes for $1.25

There were 15 student boarding houses in Ada.

Ada Union School report: Total enrollment, 479; Average percent of attendance, 91. (October)

October market reports: corn per bushel, 60 cents; wheat, $1.35; oats, 35 cents. Grocery prices: butter, 18 cents lb.; eggs, 15 cents doz.; ham, 14 cents lb.

"A little "unpleasantness" occurred at the Commercial House last Sunday. A very "happy" man's head came in contact with a chair held in the hands of another and bounded against the wall, causing it to spring a leak. Accidents will happen."

Council will buy a new hand engine for the Twilight Engine Co.
Hon. William Jennings Bryan spoke at the Ada Methodist Episcopal Church on “A Conquering Nation.” Bryan’s thesis: “Government may be a blessing or a curse.” (February)

Standard Oil leased 2,000 acres in Liberty and Washington townships to drill for oil. (April)

The new keyless post office boxes arrived. Mr. Welsh’s comment: “They’re opened by a two figure combination and you will have to keep sober, or, by Harry, you can’t get in.”

The mayor chastised council: He said he “loved them all, but they were too careless.” Councilman Miller responded, “The mayor is on his high horse too much and does not give council a chance to do business.” (August)

Postmaster Elliott bought Smith property at corner of Buckeye and Johnson for an armory, construction to begin April 1, 1905.


At the Kenton armory, ONU Girls’ Basketball team (the orange and black) defeated OSU (the scarlet and grey) 19-5 with 1200 people watching. Game was for the state championship. (Jan.)