

# THE HISTORICAL RECORD

September 2023

A Publication of the Wyoming Historical Society and the Wyoming History Museum

## WYOMING'S OWN "ROADSHOW" WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH

Wyoming's very own Graydon Sikes, an expert on the long-running PBS favorite, *Antiques Roadshow*, regales us with stories of the greatest and craziest items he's had the pleasure of appraising. Graydon, a member of the Wyoming Historical Society's board, is one of the founders of Caza Sikes Gallery and lends his art expertise to our community.

Graydon is a USPAP (Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice) certified appraiser and a licensed auctioneer in Ohio and Kentucky. He has previously worked as the director of artwork for *Everything But The House* and was the director of fine art for Cowan's Auctions. On *Antiques Roadshow*, you will find him appraising paintings and drawings. Bring along a treasure from your own attic (one per family) and Graydon may just appraise it for you (subject, of course, to time constraints).



NOTE: This program is on a Wednesday.

**PROGRAMS ARE AT  
7 PM  
Wyoming Civic Center**

**FREE - OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - REFRESHMENTS**

Wyoming Historical Society  
800 Oak Avenue  
Wyoming OH 45215  
513.842.1383

[History@Wyomingohio.gov](mailto:History@Wyomingohio.gov)

Open Tuesday 10:30-3:00  
or by appointment.



**Wyoming History Museum**  
A Unique and rewarding  
place to visit.

Member of:  
Ohio Association of Historical  
Societies and Museums,  
American Association for State  
and Local History,  
Ohio History Connection

Wyoming Historical Society  
is a 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit  
corporation.

## ADDING TO THE ARCHIVES....



In 1974, at Wyoming's Centennial, Sylvia and Howard Bockelman were chosen as the Queen and King of the Centennial. This dress, worn by the Queen, was recently received from the Bockelman's daughter, Mary Oakes, and is now in our museum.

Thanks to Ben & Laural Sakai for the donation of a chair from the "old" Fay Auditorium

Brain Pitman has given us many t-shirts from various youth teams and sports that were coached by his father, Gene Pitman.



## NEW ADDITIONS - WYOMING AUTHORS COLLECTION

Did you know that the Wyoming Historical Society has a library full of books by Wyoming authors? Here's a list of our most recent additions to the library. We're always looking for donations to our library, so check your shelves at home for books, music, or movies featuring Wyoming-ites (past or present). We'd love to add them to our collection!

Recent additions to the Wyoming Authors Collection are: *Let Me Live* by Angelo Herndon, *Hockey Meltdown* by Jake Maddox (Emma Carlson Berne), *Hide & Squeak* and *Curse of the Bambino* with illustrations by C.F. Payne, *The Elijah Door* by Linda Leopold Strauss, *Cincinnati Boys Basketball Encyclopedia* by Kent Stephens and *The Stalin Stain* by Bill Mefford.

## MEMBERSHIP...

Our membership year is January-December with our membership drive happening late each fall. However, we gladly welcome new members at anytime of the year. For a year dues are: Individual \$25, Family \$50, Business \$75, Lifetime \$500. High school and college students are free. New members joining after August will be credited through December of the following year. New members please send your check, name, address, phone and email to us and we will handle the rest. 800 Oak Avenue, Wyoming, OH 45215. Thank you.

## BUSINESS MEMBERS



Steve Tonne paints homes, inside and out, with high quality craftsmanship and products. Over the years, the business has grown by good old-fashioned word of mouth. They pride themselves on a job well done, and folks seem to agree because they are a small business that grows mostly by referral. Ask your neighbors or start counting our Steve Tonne "The Painter" white yard signs – you'll see that they are painting the exteriors and interiors of Wyoming area homes.

Our thanks to Steve for supplying and driving one of our two automobile 'floats' in the July 4th parade.



## STEVE TONNE "THE PAINTER"

### 2023 Wyoming Historical Society

#### OFFICERS:

Jim Walton, President  
David Savage, Vice-President  
Maureen Geiger, Treasurer  
Mickey Jewett, Secretary

Sherry Sheffield  
Newsletter Editor &  
Office Manager

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Anne Black  
Jeff Blunt  
Sheri Callaghan  
Kevin Grace  
Brian Pitman  
Amy Pursley  
Sue Saylor  
Graydon Sikes

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

Access Audio	Tom & Susan Handley
Deborah Allsop	Old School Craftsman
Anne Black	Ethan & Susan Pagliari
Tom Bond	John Sears
Jim Briggs	Kathryn Shahani
Sheri & Bryant Callaghan	Sherry Sheffield

### -- MARK YOUR CALENDAR -- PROGRAM FOR THE 2023-2024 YEAR

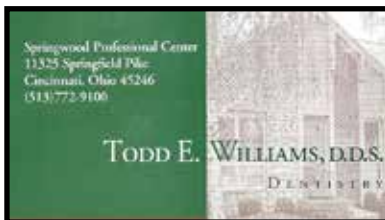
November 9  
The History of Beer in Cincinnati - Michael Morgan

February 9  
Cincinnati's Underground Railroad - Dr Eric Jackson

April 11  
Artists of the Queen City - Dr. Julie Aronson

June 13  
Cincinnati Curiosities - Greg Hand

## BUSINESS MEMBERS



## G.B. Fox Letters Add Context to History....Joe Hornsby

Reading many of the George Benson Fox Civil War letters has painted a sharper image and context of major historical events as they occurred during a recent vacation to South Carolina, where the 75<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry was transferred in 1863 for the Charleston Harbor siege operations. Letter #71 was especially interesting while taking a sightseeing harbor cruise, as Fox describes watching the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ft. Sumter through a telescope for three hours seeing the rebel flag taken while the Bombardment of Charleston subsequently continued, offering an unmatched context to the tour and tie to Wyoming's history.

As a student at Miami (Oxford), I remember walking the campus to and from classes and how that repeated experience created a personal context to the history of the university and Oxford itself. Whether imagining the escapades of Lottie Moon in the 1840's – as recounted by Phil Shriver, the events surrounding and leading up to the 1848 Great Snowball Rebellion, or the university tradition of Tuffy's Toasted Rolls; this everyday historic context created a sense of place and meaningful connection to Miami which not all are fortunate to have.

This same experience exists here in Wyoming with the treasures we encounter everyday around the city providing context and adding to this special sense of place. Wyoming has many great stories to tell that have formed the place it is today – and perhaps the place it's always been. Recounting the evening in 1861 as Robert Reily gathered women and men at his house to decide the name "Wyoming", Fox's January 1863 letter describing fellow soldiers' reactions to President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the historic markers around the city telling of our unique heritage, and many others all add to the fabric and sense of place of our community.

Copy the link below or scan the QR code on your phone camera to view the complete digital collection of the George Benson Fox Civil War Letters and summary schedules. These will soon be made available world-wide in the Cincinnati Public Library online archives.

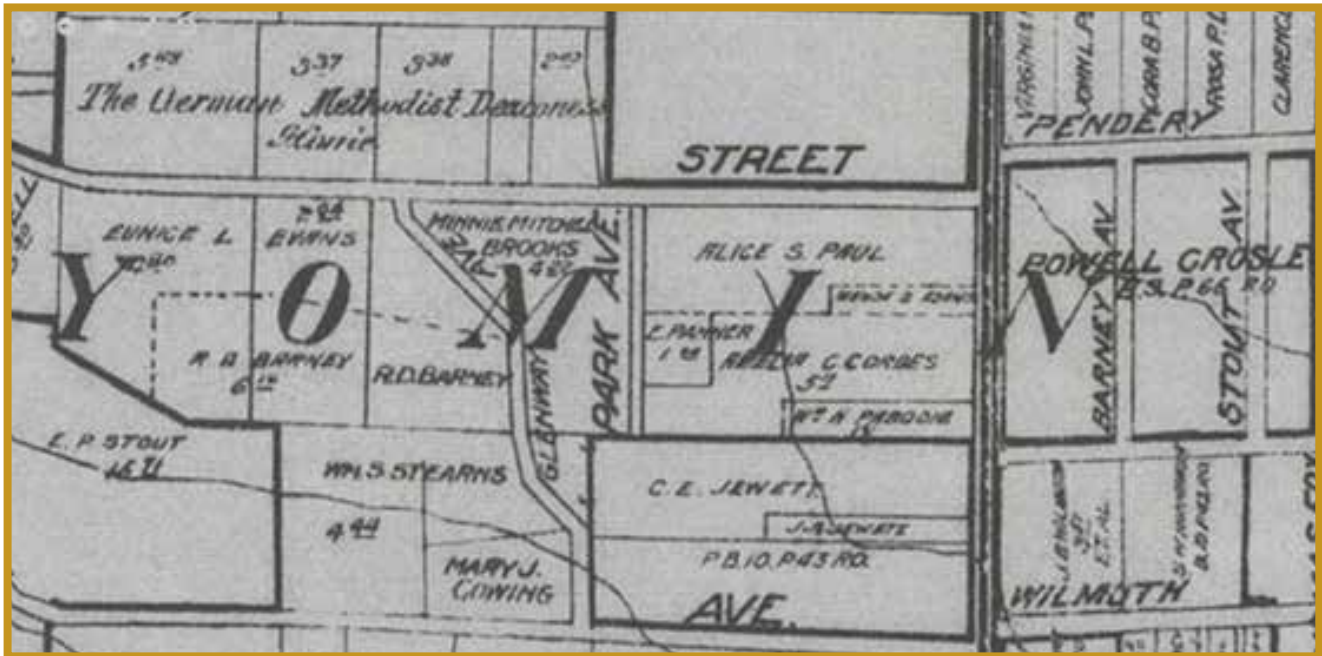
<https://tinyurl.com/GeorgeBensonFox>



Ft. Sumter

## HOW THEY GOT THEIR NAME....Amy Pursley

### BROOKS AVENUE



Hamilton County Atlas, 1914, showing Park Avenue

Brooks Avenue was formerly known as Park Avenue. In November of 1913, the City of Wyoming re-named the street to Brooks Avenue, which was most likely named in honor of the Brooks family, who lived on property bordered by Oliver Road, Glenway Avenue and Park Avenue, as shown above. The street renaming was also probably to clear up confusion between Park Avenue and Park Place Avenue, which both existed in Wyoming at the time.

The Brooks family lived in the house that is now known as 233 Oliver Road. Minnie Mitchell Brooks was the matriarch of the family. Leroy Brooks, Sr. was the patriarch. Minnie and Leroy had five children: Leroy Jr., Edward, Nellie, Jethro and Martha. Sadly, Nellie and Jethro (who went by his middle name of Mitchell) passed away at ages two and four respectively due to diphtheria. Minnie and Leroy Jr. also contracted diphtheria at the same time as Mitchell, but they were able to recover.

Leroy Sr., whose occupation was often listed as “druggist”, was known to rub elbows with the likes of former president Grover Cleveland, John Uri Lloyd (namesake of the Lloyd Library in Cincinnati), former Attorney General Judson Harmon (a fellow Wyoming-ite), former Ohio Governor Charles Foster, and Joseph Peebles. Leroy Sr. and Judson Harmon were so close that Leroy Jr.’s middle name was Judson. Also, in a later celebration for J. U. Lloyd, Leroy Brooks, Sr. was described as a close companion.



Left to right: Leroy Brooks, former president Grover Cleveland, and John Uri Lloyd “on one of their many fishing excursions to Bass Island in Lake Erie.” (Flannery, Michael A., *John Uri Lloyd: The Great American Eclectic*, 1998, pg. 60)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Leroy Jr. graduated from Wyoming High School (1898) and the U.S. Naval Academy (1902). He was appointed to be in charge of naval recruitment in the Cincinnati area. In 1909, he helped found the firm of Tool Steel Gear and Pinion Company. He was that company's first secretary-treasurer. He served as its president from 1929 to 1952. He served as chairman of the board from 1952 until his death in 1963. Leroy Jr.'s son, Sanford Brooks, became president of the company in 1961.

Other than his naval tenure, Leroy Brooks Jr. lived his entire life in Wyoming, Ohio. His last place of residence was 529 Burns Avenue. Besides his wife and son, Leroy Jr. had three daughters, one of whom married Frederick Wrampelmeier, who became the mayor of Wyoming. Leroy Jr.'s wife, Florence, died one year later in 1964. According to an article in *The Cincinnati Post*, she left an estate valued at \$999,000 to her four children. In today's dollars, this estate would be roughly equivalent to \$9.6 million. Most of the estate's value came from stock in the Tool Steel Gear and Pinion Company.

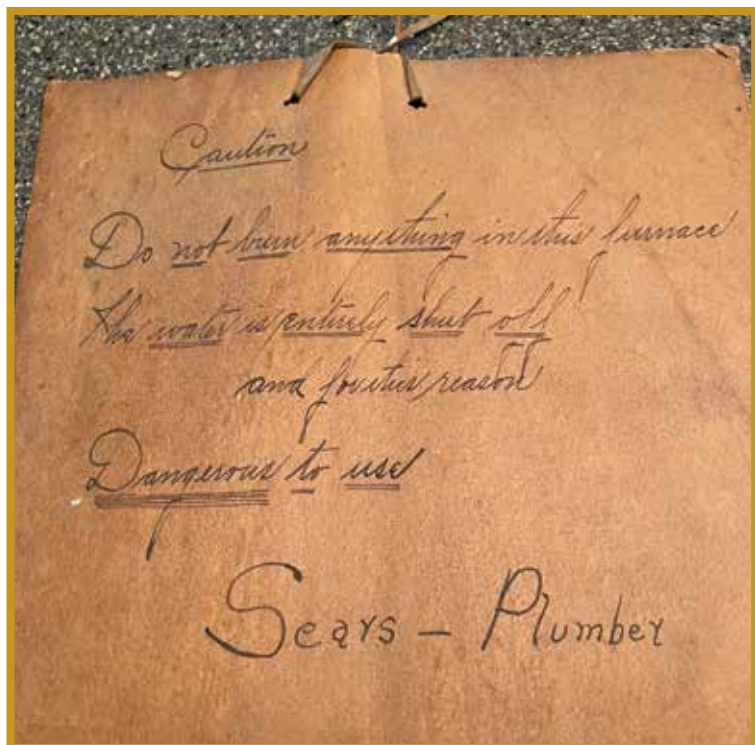
Leroy Jr.'s brother, Edward Little Brooks, graduated from Wyoming High School (1901) and Yale University (1905), where he played on the school's baseball team, was a member of the Yacht Club, and a member of Alpha Delta Phi. After college graduation, he was quickly employed as a clerk with German National Bank in Cincinnati. After a year of service there, he went to W.R. Todd & Company to become a bond salesman. From 1907 to 1923, he was engaged in various business endeavors in Kalamazoo, Michigan and Akron, Ohio. However, he did take time away from work in 1918 to serve overseas with the American Red Cross at a U.S. Base Hospital in Portsmouth, England. There, he achieved the rank of Captain. In 1923, he came back to the Wyoming area to work as the secretary-treasurer of Sawbrook Steel Castings Company in Lockland, Ohio where he would eventually become the vice president. From 1928 to 1940, he pulled double duty serving as the secretary-treasurer of Tool Steel Gear and Pinion Company, the firm founded by his brother, Leroy Brooks, Jr. In 1933, Edward and his wife, Florence, welcomed their first child, a son, named Leroy Rodgers Brooks, in honor of his father and brother. Edward passed away in 1942.

## CALL THE PLUMBER....

Hopefully your plumber is as thoughtful as John Sears Sr. was when he left this note on the furnace of a home where he was doing some plumbing work.

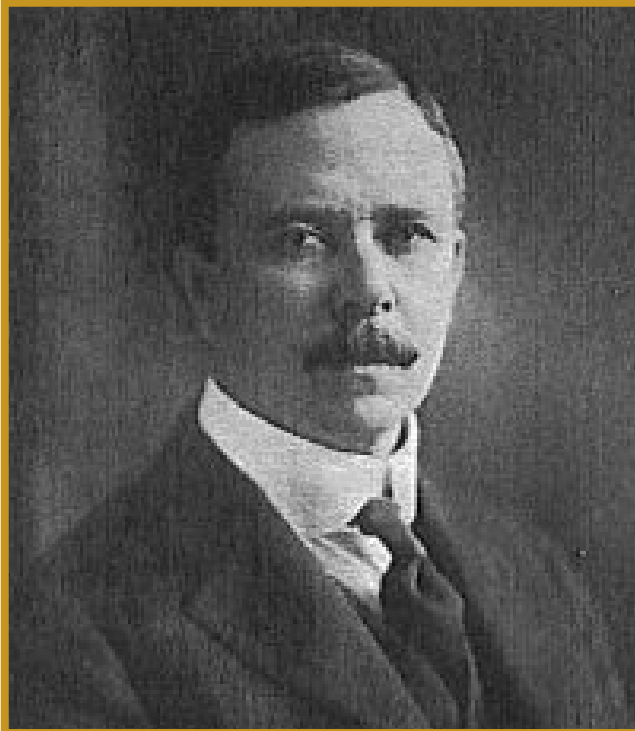
Caution  
Do not burn anything in this furnace!  
The water is entirely shut off and for this reason Dangerous to use

Sears-Plumber



## IMAGINEERING...

Many people that live or have lived in Wyoming have 'invented' something. Whether its a formula for a soap, a cooking spray or a piece of art. We continue to highlight some of those people who helped make our life better in their special way.



Dr. Ernst Twitchell

### "The Grandfather of Oleochemicals"

"Cincinnati's chemical industry dates from about 1850, when old rule-of-thumb methods began to give way to scientific processes. American industry depends upon the research chemist for new discoveries and for methods of improving present production."

"The chemical industry surged forward here about 1890, when a great deal of attention was suddenly given to chemical reactions in the making of soap. Before that time production had been based more or less on guesswork formulas, and products had often been unsatisfactory. In 1898 Dr. Ernst Twitchell discovered the saponification process for separating glycerine from neutral fats and oils. Saponification revolutionized production methods in the soap industry; it reduced waste and made possible the utilization of many by-products." Between 1898 and 1916, Dr. Twitchell earned

five patents for his research. "In 1915 the Twitchell Process Company was incorporated and a plant opened adjoining the Emery Industries, Inc. Here various chemical processes for industry [were] discovered and developed. In 1917 Dr. Twitchell was awarded the Perkin medal, the highest official honor a chemical savant can secure."

From 1898 to 1905, Dr. Twitchell and his wife, Maude, rented the house at 412 Worthington Avenue. Then, they had the home at 120 Wyoming Avenue built and they lived there from 1906 until Ernest's death on June 5, 1929. According to his obituary, he was a member of the Wyoming Club, Wyoming Golf Club, Cincinnati Country Club, Fish and Game Protective Association, the Chemical Club of New York, Society of Chemical Industry and the Sigma Chi fraternity. He was also known widely for his interest in civic affairs and for his philanthropies. He also endowed the Twitchell Fellowship in the Department of Chemistry at his alma mater, the University of Cincinnati. Shortly after this fellowship was established, the university conferred an honorary doctorate degree to Twitchell. When Maude Twitchell passed away in 1948, she gave \$15,000 to the University of Cincinnati to be used for chemistry scholarships.

According to an online publication by Emery Oleochemicals, Twitchell "was of a quiet retiring disposition but made friends easily and was kind and understanding, which inspired confidence among peers and young scientists." He was also "very fond of animals and kept a pet cat in his laboratory."

#### Sources:

1. Ohio Federal Writers' Project, "They Built a City: 150 Years of Industrial Cincinnati", 1938, pg. 120-121
2. <https://www.emeryoleo.com/sites/default/files/2019-11/emery-175-ebook.pdf>

**The Wyoming Historical Society**  
800 Oak Street  
Wyoming OH 45215

Look forward to seeing you at our  
next program on September 20th.

## **A NOT-SO-NEW COUPLE IN THE VILLAGE....**

Any idea who this couple is? Meet the Pfaffs. They built and lived in a house on Wilmuth. He owned a varnish company in Cincinnati. Learn more in the next newsletter.



## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER...Jim Walton**

Dear Members,

Hope everyone is having a splendid summer. Autumn is fast approaching, which means your Historical Society will be continuing with our Programs at the Civic Center in September.

As always, we will be present at the Fall Festival in October. This year the Historic Preservation Commission will have a booth next to ours as we collaborate to offer information, advice and education regarding Wyoming's beautiful Historic District. Hope to see you there!

Thank you for your ongoing support.



**SEE YOU AT FALL FESTIVAL**