

# THE HISTORICAL RECORD

January 2024

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

Thursday, February 9th

## Dr. Eric Jackson Cincinnati's Underground Railroad

While the Ohio River was a symbol of freedom and equality for thousands of enslaved black Americans, it was also used to transport slaves down the river to the Deep South. Dr. Eric R. Jackson, is co-author of Cincinnati's Underground Railroad (Arcadia Publishing, Inc., 2014), and will discuss the people and places that formed Cincinnati's involvement in the underground railroad.



A Professor of History, and Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at Northern Kentucky University, Dr. Jackson has almost thirty years of academic experience at the university level and has taught numerous classes in the fields of American and African American History, Race Relations and Peace Studies. He has published a wide array of books, book reviews and articles in local, regional, national and international journals.

**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  
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and Local History,  
Ohio History Connection

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

## JOINING THE BOARD IS: Mike Murray

My name is Mike Murray. I was born in Lima, Ohio. I received a BA in History from Miami University and went to work for Procter and Gamble. We had two children... Trevor is a doctor in Cleveland and Stacy is the director of Lads and Lassies Pre-School.

After working at the Lima Procter and Gamble plant for 25 years with roles in Quality Control and Inbound Logistics, I moved on and received a Master's degree in Education from Ohio State. In 2000, my wife, Marty, and I moved to Wyoming to be near our daughter Stacy, her husband Brian, and their two children, Grayce and Chloe. Grayce graduated from Ohio State and is pursuing a Masters at the University of Cincinnati. Chloe is a senior at Miami University. I taught math at Wyoming Middle School for 19 years and retired in 2020 at the age of 68. While at WMS, I served as Math Department Chair and coached JV Golf. My wife, Marty, passed away in September of 2022.

Since retirement I spend time painting with acrylics, playing golf, reading detective stories, and enjoying podcasts on topics that interest me.



## JOINING THE BOARD IS: Tom Bond



Tom is a Wyoming native. His grandparents on both sides moved to Wyoming in 1911 and 1913. His mother and father graduated from Wyoming High in 1924 and 1928. Tom started kindergarten in the current Middle School on Wyoming Ave and graduated as a senior in 1964 from the same building. He was married to the late Becky Mills Bond. They have one son living in St Louis, MO and two grandchildren. Tom and Becky moved west in 1968 where he earned a certificate for aircraft maintenance and pursued that line of work in Oregon. They moved back to Wyoming in 1986 where their son attended Wyoming schools graduating in 1992. Tom went back to school and earned a business

degree then worked in the HVAC field until retirement.

Tom likes to travel. One his most favorite places is the great state of Wyoming. Each year he drives west to spend time with his family on a ranch in NW Wyoming. He then continues on to explore other states such as Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Washington and more.

Tom enjoys reading, photography, working with his hands making or repairing things and a little genealogy. He looks forward to learning more about Wyoming in his time with the historical society.

## JOINING THE BOARD IS: Beth Brigger

Beth Brigger has lived in Wyoming most of her life. She has lived in Washington D.C. and Denver, before moving back to Wyoming with her daughter Ellen in 2015; who is now in the Middle School. Beth received her undergrad from Bowling Green University and her Masters in Science from Xavier University. Beth currently is the Business Operations Director for Camp Joy. Her love for nonprofit runs deep.



Beth is active with many organizations in the community. Currently she sits on the Board for Wyoming JWC, volunteers with Wyoming PSA and has volunteered with Kindervelt #8, been a Girl Scout Troop Leader and was a coach for Girls on the Run. Beth's passion for people, connection and history sparked her interest in joining the Wyoming Historical Society Board, where she hopes to make even greater connections in the community with the rich history Wyoming provides.

When she has free time, Beth loves to spend time with her daughter, loves reading, cooking, volunteering and, walking her dog Buddy around Wyoming admiring all the old homes in the village.

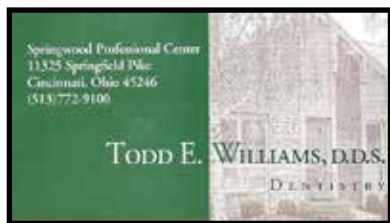
## BUSINESS MEMBERS



## BROWNING'S OF WYOMING

A one-stop shop for all your framing and art needs. Tish Williams shows you the answers to your decorating questions. Their Gallery is an ever-changing selection of beautiful original paintings & limited edition prints and etchings by Local and Internationally known Artists. They also carry posters and decorative prints. Professional Custom Framing gives your art the perfect finish.

Since 1961, Browning's has been providing exceptional service to the Wyoming area and your Wyoming Historical Society.



## NEW MEMBER WELCOME...

Amy Getgey Brooks Fiesinger  
Evora Fiesinger, student member



## 2024 Wyoming Historical Society

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Jim Walton, President  
David Savage, Vice-President  
Tom Bond, Treasurer  
Kevin Grace, Secretary

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Tom Bond John Sears  
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## -- MARK YOUR CALENDAR -- PROGRAMS FOR THE 2023-2024 YEAR

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

June 13  
Cincinnati Curiosities - Greg Hand



## BUSINESS MEMBERS



## 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!

Thanks to David Savage for donating his son, Jack Savages' book "Chris Craft" and to Jim O'Reilly for donating copies of books he has authored or co-authored. Also, Jim Friedman donated a copy of "Just Passin' Through" an award winning movie he produced and directed in 1998.

## 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.

## WILMUTH HOUSES...

These two homes on Wilmuth figure predominantly in the following story of the Pfaffs. 216 Wilmuth, on the left, has been colorized. It was taken circa 1900. The children on the porch could be the Pfaff children. On the right, 224, was taken about 2020.



## THE PORTRAITS...

A description of the portraits on the following page as described by Historical Society board member Graydon Slkes: "A pair of half length "American School" portraits, of Mr. & Mrs. John Wesley Pfaff. Each fourth quarter 19th century, oval form, and house in period gilt and gesso frames. Each oil on canvas. Unsigned, and likely executed by an itinerant regional artist."



## MEET THE PFAFFS

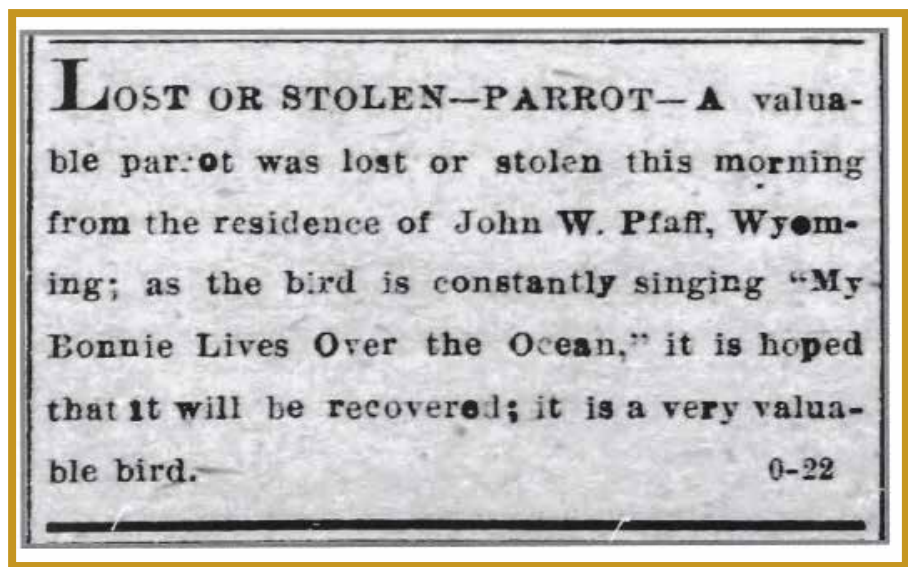


John Wesley Pfaff (1849-1912) and his wife Sarah Elizabeth Abbey Pfaff (1851-1939) were long time Wyoming residents in the late 1800s and early 1900s. John was a Mason and served 16 years on Wyoming City Council. He owned the Pfaff Varnish and Stain Company. This company was started by his father, John P. Pfaff, in 1840 as the Great Western Varnish Company. It was located in the 1600 block of Central Avenue in downtown Cincinnati, near Findlay Street. He took the train from the Lockland-Wyoming Station (now Crescent Park) to work each day. Two years after his death in 1912, the company was sold and the name changed to Perry - Derrick Varnish Company.

The Pfaff Family occupied several homes in Wyoming. The 1880 census finds the Pfaff family (mom, dad and 4 young daughters) living at 41 Burns Avenue. John P. Pfaff, in 1877, had bought lot 38 – now known as 224 Wilmuth. He passed away that same year and left his property to heirs. In 1882, John W. purchased lot 37, 216 Wilmuth, from Thomas Fox. Fox was a founder of the Fox and Friend Paper Company. Fox's house still stands at 505 West Wyoming Avenue in Lockland.

In 1887, the house at 224 Wilmuth was built. With 4 growing girls, the family quickly outgrew that structure and in 1890 they built 216 on lot 37, next door. A house the family would occupy for 86 years, until the 1960's.

Their three younger daughters Louise '94, Estelle Frances '97 & Mary '96 all graduated from Wyoming High School. The eldest daughter, Pearl, married Clarence Evans, President of the Evans Iron and Steel company in 1896. According to the Kentucky Post article about the marriage "Miss Pfaff is considered to be one of the most beautiful and accomplished young ladies in Wyoming." Pearl was a member of the Presbyterian Church, sewing robes for their choir,



Cincinnati Post September 22, 1893

## THEIR CHINA WEDDING.

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Pfaff, of Wyoming, celebrated the twentieth anniversary of their marriage at their residence last evening. Over two hundred guests were present, many going from the city and suburbs. Mr. and Mrs. Pfaff were the recipients of many beautiful presents in china. The house was artistically decorated with plants and flowers, and an orchestra on the staircase discoursed sweet music. The refreshments were delightfully served. Mr. and Mrs. Pfaff were assisted in receiving their guests by their daughters, Misses Pearl, Mamie, Lou and Stella, all bright and attractive girls fast budding into womanhood.

Cincinnati Post March 28, 1893



This past summer Kathy Evans Schrock, great-great-granddaughter of John & Sarah Pfaff, drove from Wheaton, Illinois to Wyoming to present the Historical Society with the portraits of her great-great grandparents shown here. We thank her for trusting us with these family treasures.

Research by Amy Pursley, Kathy Evans Schrock, and Sherry Sheffield

The third daughter, Mary J. Pfaff (1878-1967), married John Charles Ely Jr. and had three children. The other two daughters never married. Louisa "Lulu" Pfaff (1876-1958) was probably the best known as she was for many years the social editor of all things Wyoming for the *Millcreek Valley News*.

The youngest, Estelle (Stella) Frances (1879-1958) taught a business course at Lockland High School for over 30 years.

After Mary became a widow and Pearl was divorced, all four daughters and grandchildren ended up living back at home at 216 with their widowed mother. The girls were friends with Clare Barney Fisk, (Mrs. Fisk) who lived on what is now the Stearns Woods property. The family is buried at Spring Grove Cemetery.

## Clarence F. Evans to Carry Miss Pearl Pfaff Off to the Kentucky Highlands.

Clarence F. Evans, President of the Evans Iron and Steel Company, will wed Miss Pearl Pfaff, daughter of John W. Pfaff, the varnish manufacturer, of Cincinnati, on the evening of Oct. 21, at the residence of the bride's parents, on Wilmuth Avenue, Wyoming. Rev. John Leroy Taylor, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, will perform the ceremony. Mr. Evans is one of the rising young business men of Cincinnati, and Miss Pfaff is conceded to be one of the most beautiful and accomplished young ladies in Wyoming. A short wedding trip will be made, after which they will occupy a residence in the Highlands back of Newport. The house will be furnished complete, ready for occupancy on their return from the trip.

Kentucky Post Oct 3, 1896

## WHEN THE WALLS SPEAK .... JOE HORNSBY, CURRENT OWNER OF 209

Looking back on the last few years can stir emotions in all of us. For me personally, I'm certain this arbitrary tie to George Benson Fox will forever draw personal context to a variety of challenges in a rather volatile season of life. And so, a 'typical' house renovation takes on new meaning adding to an already appreciated 'sense of place' here in Wyoming.

The Striker Family lived at 209 Worthington Ave. since 1970 and graciously wrote a brief history of the three previous residents in the home's 150 year history, inspiring the desire to discover additional information about Maj. George Benson Fox – and what a great time it's been getting to know people like Sherry Sheffield of WHS, Christine Engels of CMC, and others who've been helpful to these efforts. With a renovation project on the horizon, one could only imagine what treasures could be hiding within the walls awaiting discovery.

Most surprising was a small bronze plaque in a basement cabinet haphazardly wrapped in brown paper and coated in decades of dust - the Wyoming Historical Society plaque from the Historic District designation in the mid-1980's; its proud Wyoming emblem and etched 1872 birthday presumably never gracing the front facade as are many displayed today. Some cleaning and polishing of the plaque has it looking as good as new, ready after 40 years to finally breathe fresh air on the front porch. Much gratitude to Jenni McCauley's leading efforts and time in designating our Historic District.

As the kitchen ceiling came down, an aged envelope to 'Mrs. Benson Fox' saw the light of day for the first time in 132 years! Inside, a perfectly preserved invitation to:

AN EASTER MARKET  
TO BE HELD BY THE  
LADIES' AID SOCIETY  
OF THE

WAYNE AVE M.E. CHURCH

At the residence of Mr. G. G. (George Gideon) Palmer  
on Burns Avenue Friday, March 27, 1891, from 2 to 5

There will be for sale, Flowers, Candies, Choice Edibles, Fancy and Plain Sewing

To imagine 13 decades passing since this invitation was received and somehow slipped into the floor above where it rested for 132 years is rather humbling. The more modern Wyoming connection is that in the 1950's church elders of what was the Wayne Ave Methodist-Episcopal Church in Lockland decided to move their congregation to Springfield Pike in Wyoming, becoming Friendship United Methodist Church.

Subsequently also falling out of a nearby wall, was a Nov. 1, 1900 antique billhead from "E.F. Gates - Hartwell" likely to have been for retrofitting the home's first indoor sanitary plumbing and water – a distinct luxury of the times; and now the perfect framed display piece for above the commode!

Discovering the story of what's been here all along has kept us going through an arduous project. The opportunity of adding our personal story to this history is the most exciting part of all! While all of this adds to Wyoming's character, charm, and 'sense of place', no amount of history can ever beat the sense of place created here every day among

our neighbors – our unique street communities, community in education, and all the things bringing us together contributing to an unmatched quality of life. For us especially, our years living on East Mills Ave. have been wonderful because of our neighbors. As true as this is in today's Wyoming, I garner a strong sense this was as well the story 150 years ago.



Plumbing receipt from 1900.

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

Look forward to seeing you at our  
next program February 9th.

## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Check out our web site by using this QR code to transport you there.



Dear Members,

Hope you all had a wonderful holiday season. 2024 will be an exciting time for your Historical Society as we make plans to help celebrate the City's 150th Birthday!



As always, thank you to those who continue to support our group with your dues, donations, and volunteer activities. We truly couldn't do this without you.

Please mark your social calendars for our slate of 2024 programs at the Wyoming Civic Center. We have a great line-up of guest speakers who will educate and entertain throughout the year.

*Jim Walton*  
President