

# ROCKY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O Box 16445, Rocky River, Ohio 44116, Ph:440-331-4614  
<http://rockyriverhistoricalsociety.org/>

A Centennial City

1903-2003

## November 2020 Newsletter



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## GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC HIGHWAY U.S. ROUTE 6

by Gay Christensen-Dean

We might be feeling isolated due to the virus, but we are really connected to the whole rest of the country.

U.S. Route 6, also known as the Grand Army of the Republic Highway, runs through Rocky River as Lake Road. The Grand

Army of the Republic was an organization of veterans of the Civil War. The organization ended when the last Civil War veteran died in 1956.

Heading east from Lake Road in Rocky River, U.S. 6 follows the Clifton Blvd. bridge over the Rocky River into Lakewood, where it is joined by U.S. 20. Continuing on, it passes Edgewater Park, crosses the Flats on the Detroit-Superior Bridge, winds around Public Square and follows Superior Avenue until it joins Euclid Avenue after East 131st Street. At Euclid Creek Reservation, it splits from U.S. 20 and follows Chardon Road through Chardon and across Ohio to Pymatuning Reservoir on the Ohio/Pennsylvania border.



# GRAND ARMY of the REPUBLIC HIGHWAY

## (continued)

Leaving Ohio, U.S. 6 zigzags through northern Pennsylvania, through the Allegheny National Forest, follows a scenic part of the Susquehanna River, and then through the Pennsylvania anthracite coal country until it crosses into New York at Port Jervis, on the Delaware River. Still going, it crosses the Hudson River north of New York City at Peekskill, New York, and then it's on into Connecticut.

It enters Hartford, Connecticut, capital of Connecticut, and location of the Victorian Gothic Mark Twain House, built for him in 1874, with woodwork designed by Tiffany, and where he wrote his most famous books, including of the fictitious adventurers Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. Next comes the college town of Providence, Rhode Island, another state capital, founded by Roger Williams who fled the Massachusetts Bay Colony as he believed the right to worship should not be regulated by the state.

Turning south, U.S. 6 goes through the old whaling port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, and on to Cape Cod. This main route across the Cape passes the dunes of Cape Cod National Seashore and ends its journey at the very tip: Provincetown.



Back in Rocky River, our adventure now takes us west, still along the lake, to Vermilion, Huron, and Sandusky, after which U.S. 6 leaves the lake, crosses Indiana, skirts the south side of Chicago through Joliet. In Illinois, it parallels I-80, sometimes joining it, and crosses the Mighty Mississippi River at the Quad Cities (Moline and Rock Island, Illinois; and Bettendorf and Davenport, Iowa.) Then, it's on to Des Moines, named after the river which was originally called La Rivière des Moines (River of the Monks) by French voyageurs. It leaves Iowa at Council Bluffs, historically a site of Native American ceremonial pow wows, crosses the Missouri River into Omaha, Nebraska, and then comes another state capital, Lincoln. The capitol building is topped by a 19' tall statue of "The Sower", representing the importance of agriculture to Nebraska, on top of a 400' tower that can be seen for 20 miles. Next comes Hastings, Nebraska. Kool-Aid was invented there in 1927.

Paralleling or joining I-76 in eastern Colorado, it's on to Denver and another state capital. The 1908 neoclassic capitol building resembles the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Leaving Denver, U.S. 6 is the same as I-70 all the way to the Utah border, crossing the Continental Divide at Loveland Pass (elevation 11,990 feet) and continuing through the ski areas of the Rocky Mountains, including Vail, Colorado, named after Charles Vail, the highway engineer who routed U.S. 6 through that Eagle Valley area in 1940.

In Utah, it is the same as U.S. 50, travelling north of Arches National Park, and then it splits from U.S. 50, heading north and back south through Delta, Utah. Entering Nevada at Great Basin National Park, an area of ancient bristlecone pines, and dark skies, it's on to Ely, Nevada, founded as a stagecoach station for the Pony Express, and then southerly to Tonopah before entering California and ending at the tourist town of Bishop, California, on the east side of the Sierras.

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

The history of St. Thomas congregation began during the trying times of World War II. Because of the spiritual needs of those living in the Rocky River area, the Mission Board of the Central District, Missouri Synod, sent Reverend Otto Toelke, its missionary-at-large, to canvass that region. In October 1944 Pastor Toelke began ringing doorbells and by the end of November, the first worship service took place. Over 200 people crowded the newly named "Rocky River Mission" at 2220 Wooster Road. Soon afterward, meetings were held to discuss the organizing of a congregation, and by February 4, 1945, 55 charter members signed corporation papers. St. Thomas congregation was born.



The first order of business concerned the acquisition of a permanent site for a church. A three and one half acre tract of tax-delinquent land, at 21165 Detroit, was purchased at a county auction. Because of the times, the War Production Board would not allow any new construction, only remodeling of existing structures. So, in His grace, God provided an existing village schoolhouse, for which St. Thomas paid \$190. It was moved from behind Beach School to the Detroit location and plans were initiated for a new house of worship to be fashioned from it. The resulting white frame, colonial chapel was ready for dedication in September 1945. By

1948 it was necessary to enlarge the chapel to accommodate 200 people and to provide additional Sunday School space and other facilities. By the end of the decade the congregation reached a total of 300 members and was now under the seven-year pastoral leadership of Reverend Luebke.

For St. Thomas the 50's were blessed with steady growth and in February 1959, Pastor Streufert provided spiritual encouragement for the third building project in their short history. The structure, which holds the present sanctuary, was designed, constructed, and ultimately dedicated on the eve of St. Thomas the Apostle's Day in December 1959. In the fall of 1960, the rededication of the former chapel as a school took place. At that time there were 35 pupils in grades K-8 with a principal and two teachers. From then on, they were known as St. Thomas Lutheran Church and School.

During the next decade the congregation again outgrew its facilities. Groundbreaking for an educational wing, complete with gymnasium, took place in May 1971 and the new elementary school and parish house were dedicated in April 1972; and the chapel was demolished. Pastors Streufert, Giessler, and Mueller served in succession up until 1994 when Pastor Eric Van Scyoc, the current pastor, was installed. The rapid increase of grade school students brought a new challenge and so in 1997 yet another building program was under way. This was for the purpose of expanding some of the meeting rooms, the narthex, but mainly the school. Two more classrooms were added, an art/science room, a music room, a youth room, and a cafeteria. Included also was the addition of an elevator for those with limited mobility.

Sources: Pastor Eric Van Scyoc, [www.stcr.org](http://www.stcr.org)

OUR PRESENT BECOMES THE PAST THAT SHAPES OUR FUTURE.

# Taken from "CITY of ROCKY RIVER GOLDEN JUBILEE And OHIO SESQUI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 1903-1953"

By Ralph D. Richards, and contributor Mayor J. Frank Gibson

December 2, 1913 – Sion Wenban sworn in as mayor.

December 16, 1913 – Resolution to request permission from United States Government to erect a bridge over westerly branch of Rocky River connecting with island near mouth of river owned by Cleveland Yacht Club Company.

July 7, 1914 – Ordinance granting franchise to East Ohio Gas Company.

June 1, 1915 – Acceptance and dedication of Lakeview Avenue from Morrison property to Center Ridge Road.

July 20, 1915 – Mayor Wenban authorized to secure an option on 19 acres of lake front land from Beach Cliff estates for \$35,000 for park area.

August 3, 1915 – Name of Pease Avenue changed to Lakeview Avenue.

December 14, 1915 – Result of election, 217 for and 143 against sale of liquor.

June 20, 1916 – Lake Road accepted and dedicated as a county road.

August 1, 1916 – Prospect and Dorothy Avenues dedicated.

October 3, 1916 – State Board of Health approves plans for proposed sanitary sewers and sewerage treatment works.

July 3, 1922 – Acceptance and dedication ceremony of new bath house and pavilion in Lake Front Park.

February 20, 1923 – Earl Martin employed as repair and maintenance man of street lighting system.



Sion Wenban



Earl Martin

## **SION W. WENBAN**

Mr. Sion W. Wenban was the second mayor of Rocky River, serving from 1913 to 1917. He was born in Halsted, Kansas and died in Rocky River in 1951 at the age of 75.

Mr. Wenban was active in many civic organizations and during his long career was a leader in many events in the development of Rocky River from a hamlet to the present city. He was head of the Rocky River Basket Company for many years; a director in the First National Bank; a member of the school board (1914-1915); president of the Library Board of Trustees for nine years; president of the Lakewood Cemetery Association; member of the local Chamber of Commerce, and past master of the Dover Masonic Lodge.

Mr. Wenban claimed the honor of being one of two young men first to graduate from Lakewood High School. He and Earl Stafford opened a store in Rocky River and had charge of the post office.

Mr. Wenban's home was at 20112 Center Ridge Road. The residence is now [in 1953] occupied by his son, Wade, Jr. His daughter is Mrs. Nadine Auer, a graduate of Rocky River High School.

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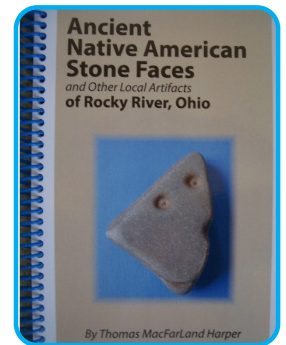
## !!JUST PUBLISHED!!

### **ANCIENT NATIVE AMERICAN STONE FACES OF ROCKY RIVER, OHIO**

By Rocky River resident, Thomas MacFarland Harper

Bradstreet's Landing Park is a treasure-trove of small ancient Native American stone maskette faces, Native American artifact stone tools, Col. John Bradstreet's boat disaster of 1764 relics and other stone oddities. Tom Harper's book details much of what has been found there. Price = \$25.00.

The book may be purchased at the following Rocky River businesses:  
Pier Beverage and Deli, 22474 Lake Rd.  
Ace Hardware, 20200 Detroit Rd.  
Ford's Clothier, 19821 Detroit Rd.

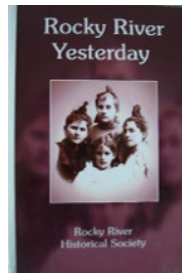


## \*\*BOOK SALE\*\*

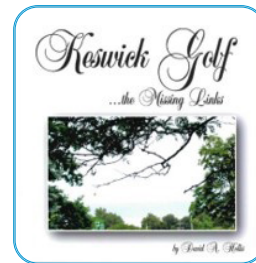
Contact 440-331-4614 to order.



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WHERE THE RIVER ENDS  
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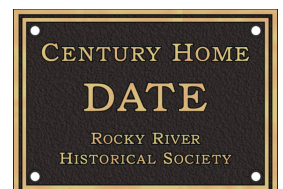
ROCKY RIVER, YESTERDAY  
\$15.00



KESWICK GOLF  
the MISSING LINKS  
\$20.00

## **CENTURY HOME PLAQUE PROJECT**

Thirteen more owners signed up in 2020 for the Century Home plaques, honoring houses 100 years old or older, as recorded by the City of Rocky River! Drive around Rocky River and try to spot all the plaques!



## **CHRISTMAS WREATHS**

See the enclosed insert to order your Christmas wreaths for this year!

**OUR PRESENT BECOMES THE PAST THAT SHAPES OUR FUTURE.**

## 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



In 1945, Jane and Bob Lewis bought the Jan Dell Flowers business (and the name), located in the Beachcliff Theater where Burntwood Tavern is today, from the original owner who had had it for one year. Jane had grown up in Lakewood and Bob in Cleveland. They met at the roller-skating rink on Brookpark Road. He was a construction worker, a crane operator. After marriage they bought the business and Jane ran it with Bob helping her when he could.

Around 1950, they built the building where Jan Dell Flowers is still now located in 2020, at 19350 Detroit Road, Rocky River. For a while, the family lived in the house next door that is now attached to the flower shop. It was a 2-family and they lived on the first floor. In the 1970's and 80's they added giftware, and clothing in the house next door.

Around 1971, they opened a second flower shop in Bay Village. Their son Jim ran it until they closed it in 1985. Jim has grown up with the flower business. As he said, the first thing he had to do when he got his driver's license was to go out and deliver flowers.

Over the years he has seen a few changes. They get their flowers from local wholesale houses. In the old days, the flowers came from Cleveland growers. More recently, the almost daily deliveries come from local wholesale houses that get the flowers from South America (Ecuador and Colombia), and some from Europe, California, and Canada, which provides a greater diversity of species.

Jim, who has lived in Rocky River most of his life, has now inherited the business. He misses many of the old-timers, but now also likes to talk to the many young people who come in. He still sells the beautiful flower arrangements, many interesting gift items, and since about 20 years ago, he added model trains, like Lionel.

### **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to Jim, and Jan Dell Flowers**



### **FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION:**

Send your name(s), address, and optional phone number and email address, with your check to:

Rocky River Historical Society

P.O. Box 16445

Rocky River, Oh 44116.

(Individual = \$25.00, Family = \$45.00)