

WOMEN'S CIVIC CLUB OF ASHVILLE

**Special Thanks to the late Barbara Hopper for submitting this information!
Organized May 1946**

One day while playing cards a group of ladies were discussing the needs of the village. A friend of Jo Cameron's, Helen Scothorn, was visiting from Columbus. She told the group of the many different things that her woman's club had done. The group thought that possibly they could do the same things.

The Women's Civic Club of Ashville was organized May 2, 1946 and met in the community club rooms of the Odd Fellows Building at the corner of Long and Wright streets. In 1951 it was decided to have the meeting in the homes of members. Occasionally churches and the refurbished train depot have been used for meetings. After the Floyd Younkin Branch Library was dedicated in December 1999, the meetings were held in the Robert Mabe Meeting Room. The first regular meeting was held June 6, 1946 when the Constitution was presented by the Constitution Committee chairman, Ruth Allison Bowers and it was later adopted. The object of the Club was "to promote the intellectual, civic, and social interests of the members and the community."

The first board consisted of Gretchen Plum Featheringham, president; Virginia Casteel Courtright, vice-president; Kathleen Creager Cooper, recording secretary; Zelma Hoffman Gardner, corresponding secretary and Isabel Schlegel Fischer, treasurer.

Programs for the first year were presented by different club members. The topics were "Post-War Household Appliances", "What's New in Children's Books", foods and Post-War Refrigerators", "Views and Pictures of the Grand Canyon", "The Home of Tomorrow" and "Post-War Travel".

Johnda Davis of the Monday Club in Circleville was instrumental in assisting the Club becoming a part of the General Federated Women's Clubs (GFWC) and the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs (OFWC). The local Club received its membership to this organization January 21, 1947. The Club remained active in these organizations until the fall of 1983. Later Davis served as the president of OFWC from 1956-58.

Over the years members attended various district and state meetings. Some members served as committee chairman. At the 1963 OFWC convention, held at the Deshler-Hilton Hotel in Columbus, Ann Cromley co-chaired a committee that was responsible for the pages at the convention. That year Ada Lou Deal was president of the local Club. Numerous club members served as pages for the entire convention. All of the pages wore dark skirts, white blouses, gold and blue jackets. The personal pages of the officers were dressed in white skirts, white blouses and striped jackets. Three members, Ada Lou Deal, Velma Purcell and Jane Bausum, had the distinct pleasure of being pages for the state officers. Ada Lou remembers that they got to "carry the officers furs around!" Elinor Flierl was chairman for the special convention outfits. In October 1977 the Club was hostess for the Central Ohio River District that met in Ashville. During the Clubs participation in these organizations several awards were won at the District (Central, Central Ohio River and/or Southeastern) and State levels.

During the first year the members worked to obtain better health service, a community library and garbage collection for the Village of Ashville. Their fund raising projects consisted of a benefit card party, a Stanley Products demonstration, the serving of an Ashville Community Club dinner, assisting at the fish stand at the July 4th celebration and the placing of tax stamp boxes in several businesses.

The Club donated to the Memorial Forest near Loudenville, sent a Christmas box to the Boys'

Industrial School at Lancaster and Christmas baskets for local needy families.

The Club had three social events that year: a Valentine Tea for members and their guests, a dinner with the Ashville Community Club had a Club dinner held in May at the Wardell Party Home.

A Library Committee composed of Nelle Oesterle, Chairman; Gretchen Featheringham, Virginia Courtright and Zelma Gardner succeeded with the help of the Circleville Library, in having a branch placed in the Barth Variety Store on Main Street. Three hundred books were loaned and many donations were made by local citizens. Clara Lou Stewart served as part-time librarian. This project continued until the Country Library Board was established. The local library closed during the club year 1950-51.

The Club was instrumental in establishing a tennis court at the southeast corner of the Village Park. In 1992-93, the Club donated money to the Ashville Community Club for the refurbishing of the courts.

In 1949 another project was to have supervised skating, with refreshments, at the Open Shelter House, once a week for six weeks during the summer. A Girl Scout Troop helped to clean the shelter house each week. The project continued until August 1959.

Through the joint efforts of the Ashville Community Club, Women's Civic Club of Ashville and the Village Council ways to improve traffic conditions of the Village were investigated. This collaboration resulted in many new traffic signs around the Village.

During the early 50's the Club had an Air Defense Committee. Gretchen Featheringham, Betty Margulis and Isabel Fischer were the members of the committee. In cooperation with the village firemen and the Civil Defense, members served as watchers for aircraft.

For many years the Club has participated in the July 4th Festival by helping at the fish stand, hosting the Little Miss – Mister Fourth parade and pageant, selling souvenirs, assisting with the Art and Craft, Baked Goods and Flower Show, selling tickets for the amusement company and entering a float in the July 4th Parade. In the beginning the floats were designed and made by club members in Roger and Helen Hedges' barn and the TVHS vocational lab. In later years they have been made by a professional float firm in Williamsport, Ohio.

The Club has had a program and social hour for the senior citizens in the area. For several years these were well attended. But as our mobile society has changed so has the attendance of these gatherings. The Club also had a program and refreshments for the senior girls at the high school and later the entire senior class. This project was discontinued in 1972 due to conflict of interests.

In 1958, a scholarship was funded for a graduating senior who would be attending college in the fields of education. It started as a scholarship of \$200 over the four years. It is now \$2000 over the four years of college. A bronze plaque has been placed at TVHS with each recipients name engraves. The scholarship was named for a charter member, who was also a teacher, Louise Miller Cromley. In the early 90's the named was changed to the Women's Civic Club of Ashville Memorial Scholarship Fund. In the mid 90's, the scholarship ceased to be limited to the field of education. Those that received a scholarship are: Charles A. Moss – 1958, Sharon Stephenson – 1959, Patricia Frazier Southward – 1960, Marty Ann Dore' – 1961, Kathryn Stout Ohlin – 1962, Ellen Snyder Langham – 1963, Betty Thomas Meyers – 1964, Carol Balthaser – 1965, Jody Butt, Jill Butt Mundy – 1967, Donna Berry Noecker – 1968, Elaine Campbell Horn – 1969, Sandy Scothorn Petty – 1970, Karen Epps Williams – 1971, Jeff Sheets – 1972, Diane Pobst Ett – 1973, Deborah Kay Biller – 1974, Kim Martin – 1975, Brad Sherman – 1976, Michele Brown Barrios – 1977, Jan Deal Mulhern – 1978, Kathy Foreman Efaw – 1979, Scott Bartholomew – 1980, Beth Solt Cottrell – 1981, Donna Felty Davis – 1982, Vicki Leatherwood Moss – 1983, Rhonda Peters Duncan – 1984, Cathy Hoover –

1985, Brent Sherman – 1986, Angela Masters Curlette – 1987, Laura Solt Steele – 1988, Barbara Jo Mc Kinney – 1990, Lisa Hickman – 1991, Melinda Willeford Tussing – 1992, Toni Watson – 1993, Pamela Dixon – 1994, Jeff Hurt – 1995, Karen Noecker – 1996, William D. Rogers – 1997, Brea Jervis Wolfe – 1998, Kimberly Dixon – 1999, Pearl Fortner – 2000, Angela Simpkins – 2001, Andrea Underwood – 2002 and Brian Douglas McFarland - 2003.

Over the years the Club has had many fund raisers such as: sales tax stamp collections, talent show “Fun For You” in conjunction with the Ashville Community Club, Fourth of July Festival, bake sales, white elephant sales, Big Bear Luncheons, pecan sales, Christmas Bazaars, Tour of Homes, Christmas Cookie (each member has to bake 12 dozen cookies), style shows and luncheons, selling tickets for Nolan Amusements Company at the July Fourth Festival and the selling of a small banner – type Village flag..

The first Tour of Homes was held the spring of 1959. Fifty members and guests toured the homes of Mrs. W.J. Whitehead, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Messick, Mr. and Mrs. Warren Brown and Mr. and Mrs. Roger Hedges. Tea and cookies were served at the Hedges’ home. After the tour the regular business meeting was held at the home of Ann Cromley. In the late 80’s the Tour of Homes was held again for profit in December. The first style show was held in March 1949 at the First English Lutheran Church. According to the historian’s records over the years, it appears that the style shows have been held both in the spring and the fall, at the Ashville E.S. or at Teays Valley H.S. For the most part the clothing that was modeled by members and their families was from local stores in Circleville. The one exception was when Sears, Roebuck and Co. at Eastland Mall provided their own models. This show was not accepted as well as others. Currently Sharf’s provide fashions for juniors, misses and young men while Wal-Mart provides fashions for children and women.

In September 1959, Georgia Dore’, chairman of the Welcoming Committee shared a booklet that the committee had completed to give families new in this area a listing of businesses, churches, medical services, etc. that were available in the community. In the early 90’s the Club donated monies to a non-profit organization that attempted to do the same project. This organization was of short duration.

Over the years the programs for the Club has been many and varied. In the early years and until 1983 the programs were around a theme of OFWC. Members have also visited various places such as the DuPont plant at Circleville, the Reynolds plant at Ashville, the Home and Garden Show t German Village, the Art Museum, the Center of Science and Industry, Columbia Gas of Ohio demonstrations, the County Children’s Home, Clarke-May Museum, and attended several plays, movies and concerts.

In 1970 the Club voted to select an outstanding woman in the community to be honored at the July Fourth Festival. Those that have received this honor were: Nelle Oesterle – 1970, Helen Hedges – 1971, Gretchen Featheringham – 1972, Georgia Dore’ – 1973, Ethel Seigle - 1974, Mae Alexander – 1975, Stella Morrison – 1976, Josephine Bowers p- 1977, Ethel Axe – 1978, Elda Behnke – 1979, Ruth Bowers – 1980, Helen Cookson – 1981, Ada Lou Deal – 1982, Esther Pontious – 1983, Elizabeth Beattie – 1984, Evelyn Bastian – 1985, Velma Purcell – 1986, Marilyn Sabine – 1987, Geraldine Hedges - 1988, Evelyn Morrison – 1989, Inga Koch – 1990, Mona Lee Morison – 1991, Louise Barr – 1992, Helen Toole – 1993, Eileen Rife – 1994, Elizabeth Smith – 1995, Dorothy Cook – 1996, Katy Dum – 1997, Carolyn Lutz – 1998, Shannon Bumgarner – 1999, Mary Irene Younkin – 2000 and Karen McNeeley - 2002

In 1999 it was decided to give two awards to women. The original Woman of the Year would now be awarded to a woman who had done something heroic or outstanding for the community in the past year with no age limit. Nominations for this award can be submitted by the community. The other award would be named Distinguished Service Award. The award would be given to a woman at

least 50 years of age who had contributed to the community over her lifetime and nominations would come from club members. Recipients of the new category Woman of the Year have been: Shanon Bumgartner – 1999, Mary Irene Younkin – 2000, and Karah McNeeley – 2001.

Recipients of the Distinguished Service Award have been: Carol Ramsay – 1999, Alice Woolever, - 2000, Clara Lou Stewart – 2001, Arlene Fortner – 2002 and Barbara Moss Hopper - 2003.

In 1973 the Club purchased American flags to be displayed from the utility poles during the July Fourth Festival and other holidays. Due to vandalism and thief the Club stopped this project. In October 1973 the Club voted to contribute \$500 to save Stage's Pond, a kettle pond formed by a glacier. The Club also participated saving the Scioto Railroad Station.

In August 1973 invitations were sent to 30 prospective members that might be interested in forming a Junior Club, to an evening tea. The CORD District Junior Membership Chairman, Jean Holycross spoke to those gathered about "Junior Club work and its challenge to a community." At the first meeting there were nine women who showed interest. Five of the group was asked to write a constitution and by-laws and call a second meeting. At the next meeting there were 19 present and by the November dues deadline they had 24 charter members.

Also in August, 120 invitations were sent to prospective members asking them to attend the September meeting as a guest. Martha Poling, Central District President discussed "What the Federation Means to Me". This venture was not successful as only five guests attended and one elected to join the Club.

In the fall of 1973 the first joint Christmas Bazaar was held with the Ashville Junior Women's Club. Each profited over \$400.

In October 1974, officers for the newly formed GFWC-OFWC Future Women's Club were installed by their advisor, Lillian Trego. The officers were Deb Myers – president, Becky Peters – vice-president, Kim Martin – secretary and Becky Foreman – treasurer. That November they joined the other local GFWC-OFWC clubs at the Christmas Holiday Bazaar. Over the next few years, girls that were in the Future Women's Club were awarded prizes and/or scholarship monies from OFWC: Taundra Van Pelt – first place in the Student Sewing Contest in CORD district allowing her to compete at the state convention, Theresa Jones – scholarship from OFWC Ethel Swanbeck Nursing Scholarship Fund, Cindi Beattie – OFWC Elaine Weidman Memorial Scholarship in journalism and Becky Peters – Annette Phelps Lincoln Scholarship.

During the club year 1974-75 the Club had three projects for the country's bicentennial: 1 – Under the chairmanship of Nelle Oesterle, the Club prepared and printed a booklet of the history of Ashville. 2 – A project to preserve the Ohio-Erie Canal Lock 31 at Millport. It was hoped that the lock would be placed on the National Register of Historical Places. 3 – The Club sponsored a flag contest open to people ages 14 and up to design a centennial flag for the Village of Ashville. The winning design was by Becky Dum Barr. It depicted the traffic light designed by Teddy Boor. The traffic light was outlined in blue with a red dial, this was enclosed in red and blue circles, and the lettering was also done in blue on a white background. The Flag was presented to the Village Council June 1976. It was to first be displayed at the July Fourth Parade. It was not displayed in parades again until the 80's. One of the stipulations was that there would be no smoking in the council chambers as this would destroy the flag. After a few years and new council members this was not observed and the flag eventually turned a dingy brown. In 1994 the council was presented a new flag and appropriate hardware for displaying the flag. This was done after a no smoking ordinance was passed.

On October 28, 1975, the Club was recognized at the Columbus Dispatch's Ninth Annual Women's Club Contest in category B (21-60 members) for the Lousie Miller Scholarship Fund.

In 1982 the Club donated \$1000 to the Centennial Committee to make a small park area in front of the Ashville Area Heritage Society Museum.

In 1993-94 the Club donated to the Teays Valley Board of Education over \$2000 which was more than half the cost of new curtains for the Ashville E.S. stage. The curtains consisted of theater backdrop and the front pull curtain which was done in dark blue with a gold "A." During that time the Club also donated money for the Kids Play Station at the north west corner of the Village Park and to obtain outdoor basketball courts located at the Ashville E.S.

In the fall of 1998 the Club was approached to donated money for start a library in Ashville. The Club's pledge and donation of \$5000 spearheaded the campaign to raise funds for the library branch which is now known at the Floyd E. Younkin Branch Library of the Pickaway County District Library which was dedicated December 16, 1999.

The following is a partial list of projects or organization with which the Club has been affiliated: Girl Scouts, Boy Scout Valley Forge trip, March of Dimes, American Heart Association, Berger Hospital Guild, sponsored a blood bank, sold articles for the blind, various funds and projects of OFWC, Ohioana Library, American Legion Auxiliary – Girl's State, Pickaway County Historical Society, Ashville Area Heritage Society, Christmas, Home Decorating Contest (in conjunction with the Ashville Community Club, Kiwanis, Ashville Food Pantry, Creative Living, Meals on Wheels, Haven House for abused women, Hands for Disabled and many more.

Our 25th anniversary was held at the Pickaway Country Club. The 40th and 50th anniversaries were celebrated t JR Hooks Cafe in Circleville.

The Women's Civic Club of Ashville meet at the Younkin Branch Library Meeting Room, September through June on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

All women in the Ashville area are welcome to join us. Contact us for more information at:

Women's Civic Club
P.O. Box 310
Ashville, Ohio 43103