



Bomber Crash of 1927 in the Burg

Interview by Mike Millar, Submitted by Suzy Millar Miller

My brother, Mike Millar, was featured in an article that was reported by Mark Dunbar in the Wednesday, May 20, 1987, *Reynoldsburg Reporter*. Mike was a 1970 graduate of Reynoldsburg High School and a technical writer for Rockwell. He became interested in the story of an ill-fated bomber when he was going through our father's belongings. Mike found a charred aviation mechanic's book with the name of Clyde Taylor and a medieval-looking compass with sloshing oil in it. Mike discovered that the artifacts had come from our grandfather Wason Millar's house. Through research, Mike determined that Grandpa had retrieved these items from the crash of a Huff-Daland XLB-5 bomber crash in Reynoldsburg on May 28, 1927. Here are excerpts from that story.

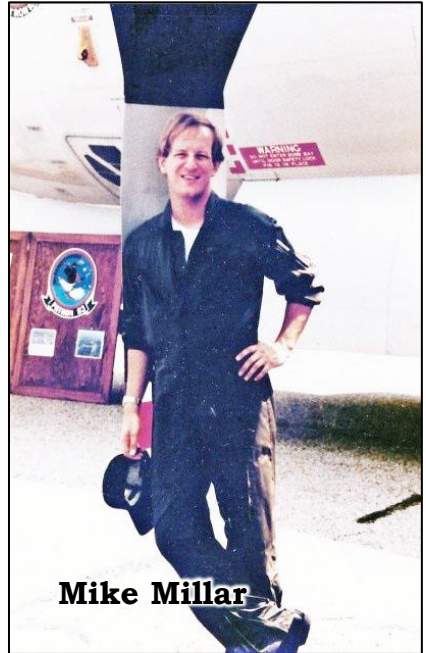
"The official Army report, dated May 31, 1927, reads, "Cause of Death: Crushing injury of the head and body.

"Private Daniel Leroy Yeager, 19, died in Reynoldsburg at 12:15 p.m. May 28, 1927, when the Army bomber he was in, a bi-wing Huff-Daland XLB-5, crash and burned in an oat field owned by J.F. Ayers directly across Rt. 256 from Silent Home Cemetery.

"With Yeager on that flight were four other men, all who survived by bailing out and parachuting to safety. The others were Major H.L. Brereton, first Lt. Bernard A. Bridget, Master Sgt. Clyde Taylor and Staff Sgt. Fred Miller.

"All five men had been participating in Army maneuvers in San Antonio, TX, and were returning to their home base of Langley, VA, when disaster struck, according to Mike Millar of Wigwam Way in Reynoldsburg. Millar, an aviation buff and a 13-year Navy flier, has researched the crash for one and a half years in attempts to locate eyewitnesses and learn more about the unique aircraft the five were flying that day.

"Millar has written to aviation magazines, the Smithsonian Institute, the Air Force Inspection and Safety Center, the National Archives, as well as aviation buffs and Army veterans connected with the incident in (continued on Page 02)



Mike Millar

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an effort to recreate the event. (**Suzy's Note:** All of Mike's research was completed in the years before anyone had access to any Internet. All of the research was done through letters, library work, and interviews.)



“According to Millar, the XLB-5 was one of the last bi-wing bombers used in the country. Its builder, Huff-Daland, went out of business a few years later and

re-organized as the Keystone Aircraft Company. By the early 1930s, single-wing airplanes were replacing the bi-wings.

“According to the facts Millar uncovered, the five men flew the plane, with Brereton and Bridget at the controls, from Texas to McCook Field in Dayton, which eventually became Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. From there they flew to Norton Field, an Army airfield then at Yearling and Broad in Columbus.

“Opinions differ as to why the plane stopped at Norton. Some accounts delivered by men relying on memory say the plane had experienced engine difficulty. However, Millar doesn't buy this theory. Millar's theory is that the crew was refueling in order to make it over the mountains to Virginia. Even though the plane was an experimental model, according to Millar, it had logged only 100 flying hours.

*“For whatever reason it stopped in Columbus (**Note:** According to available reports today, it appeared there was an engine problem with the right engine and the “brushes were worn out”.) The crew took off from Norton at around 12:10 p.m., according to the official Army records, and climbed to approximately 1,200 feet. About 10 miles and 10 minutes later, the propeller on the right engine failed and dislodged.*

“The propeller ripped up the lower right wing as it sheared off and the crew turned the plane around in an attempt to make it back to Norton field. It traveled approximately half a mile back before going into a spin and crashing, according to reports.

“According to the Ohio State Journal of May 29, 1927, Private Yaeger died a “heroic” death. He was in the nose of the plane and climbed out onto the wing after the others had jumped, but when he saw that the plane was heading for some houses, he climbed back in to steer it toward the field. The time it took for that selfless act cost him his life, the paper said.

“However, another version is offered from Col. Henry B. Bridget, son of the plane's pilot that day. In a June 1986, letter to Millar, Bridget says, ‘My dad said he had done his best to get the crewman (who died) to

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(continued from page 02)

jump, but the man was petrified. My dad...said he couldn't wait any longer.'

"One eyewitness, Joseph C. Hamilton, Jr. (nicknamed "Red"), described the crash in a letter as he remembered it as a nine-year-old.

"As a youngster, this incident affected my life. I had just read the 'Extra' newspaper Columbus-Citizen about Charles Lindbergh flying over the Atlantic Ocean a few days before (**Note:** The Lindbergh flight was completed on May 21, 1927), so naturally at the sound of an airplane I ran to observe this bi-plane bomber flying over the open field to the east of our home – the 'Wisteria Inn' on US 40, one quarter mile east of the first Hamilton Oil station built and started by my father in 1924.

"I heard the loud engines, then the prop flew off, but I was particularly interested in the men parachuting out of the plane. In fact, I started running out into the open field, thinking the plane would crash there and I saw it spinning down. As a nine-year-old, I misjudged and discovered crashed directly across the street to the west of Silent Home Cemetery.

"I observed the chutes coming down. One man had his catch on the steeple of the old Presbyterian Church, another lit in a tree. I stood by the burning crash. The Reynoldsburg Volunteer Fire Department could not remove the one man remaining in the plane because of exploding gasoline tanks. We watched him burn alive.'

"The man who hit the church was Bridget. Accounts differ as to the severity of his injuries, but he was the only one of the four survivors to be taken to a hospital – Grant, in

Columbus. His son said that his father 'landed on a church steeple and suffered a bad back the rest of his life, but only his family knew.'

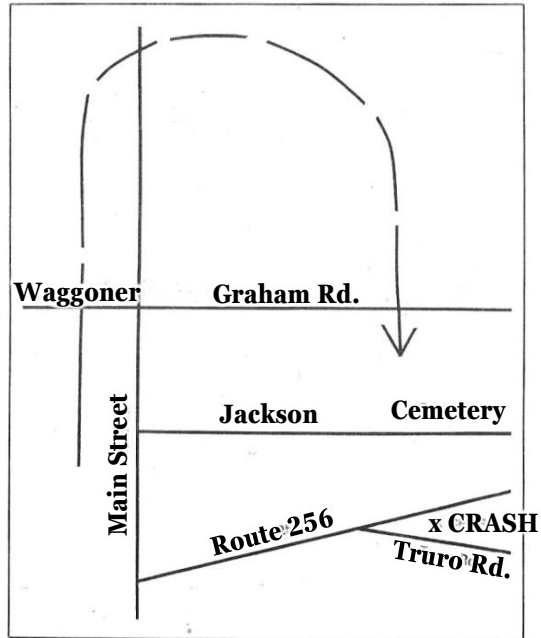
"The church Bridget hit, according to Millar, was the United Presbyterian Church at the corner of Jackson and Main. It burnt down on Dec. 29, 1946.

"The other survivors suffered only minor injuries according to reports, which is amazing Millar said, since they all parachuted from less than 1,000 feet.

"Millar said one report had the owner of the field, Ayers, charging the curious a dime to look at the crash site the next day. 'He was apparently attempting to recoup some of the damages done to his oat field,' Millar said.

"Brereton ended up a general in command of the Far East Air Force in the Philippines at the outbreak of World War II and was eventually made

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commander of the 9th Air Force in Europe. He retired in 1948, according to Millar.

“Millar said he has tried to find copies of the crash photos that appeared on the front page of the Dispatch the morning of May 28, 1927 but has had no luck at the Ohio Historical Center. He said the Dispatch claimed the photos ‘didn’t exist’.”

Interesting side note: At one time RTHS had objects from this crash, but apparently, they were retrieved by the donor.

Cemeteries of Truro Township 2019

by Cornelia M. Parkinson



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The **Cemeteries of Truro Township** is a MUST for any genealogist studying their families in this area.

Did you ever wonder what all the symbols represent that are carved on gravestones? It's all explained in here!

Contact Mary Stoots at (614) 560-4987 or email RTHSCourier@aol.com to order a book for yourself!

2020 CALENDAR

MAY 2020

- 12 – TUE – Board Meeting - 7:00pm
- 16 – SAT – The Western Electric Open House is **CANCELLED**
- 19 – TUE – The Western Electric Open House is **CANCELLED**
- 25 – MON – Memorial Day Service
9:30am at Seceder Cemetery

JUNE 2020

- 13 – SAT – Alumni Walk-Thru, RHS Class of 1970 **MOVED TO OCT 17TH**
- 16 – TUE – Board Meeting 7:00pm
- 20 – SAT - Open House 10am-2pm
- 24 – WED – Max & Erma's Fundraiser
- 30 – TUE – Family Indoor Picnic, 6:30 and General Mtg 7:00

JULY 2020

- 14 – TUE – Board Meeting, 7:00pm
- 18 – SAT – Open House & Yard Sale
9:00am - 3:00pm
- 22 – WED – City BBQ Fundraiser

AUGUST 2020

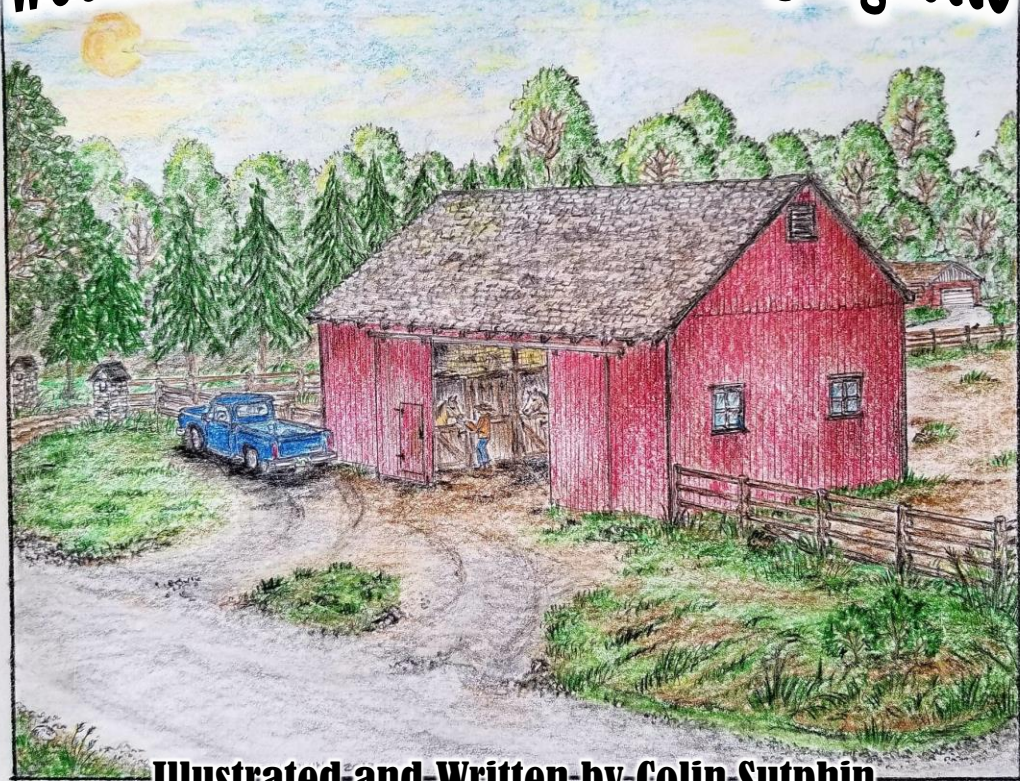
- 06 (THU) – 07 (FRI) – 08 (SAT)
Tomato Festival
- 11 – TUE – Board Meeting, 7:00pm
- 15 – SAT – Open House 10:00am-2:00pm
- 19 – WED – Pizza Cottage Fundraiser



New Member!

Barbara Glenn – Individual

Woodruffs Barn ~ A Reynoldsburg Vignette



Illustrated and Written by Colin Sutphin

Once, there was a RED BARN on Rodebaugh Road at the corner of Waggoner Road.

The barn belonged to the Woodruffs who lived on Waggoner Road in a white two-story house just north of the barn.

Dave Bender lived in the house across from the barn on Rodebaugh. Across from Bender's was a white two-story wood house that mason Warren (Pete) Peters bricked up. He later built a new brick house in the area behind the barn.

Others living within a short distance of the barn, circa 1960 were: Ann VanAtta, Jim Mills, Harry Baldwin, Annette Savage and Joe Van Schoyck. Chuck and Martha O'Dell, friends and neighbors from Brookside, used to keep their horses at the old red barn.

In my drawing we are looking west into an evening sun. Martha is inside feeding the horses. Can you tell what kind of horses they are? I've added an assortment of other creatures in the picture. See if you can find them. You may have to enlarge the picture to its original 8"×10" size to get a better view.

I would love to hear your comments about the old red barn, before suburbia engulfed the area.

Colin Sutphin

RTHS Courier, MAY 2020 -05

"Water, Water, Every Where, Nor Any Drop to Drink"

by Cornelia M. Parkinson

Creeks are fascinating places: to wade or swim or fish in, to row a boat or paddle a canoe or pole a raft in, to cross on wet stepping-stones or footbridges or automobile bridges, or to linger on the footbridge and see through the water; to walk beside, to investigate the lush grass growing along it or the life living in it: muskrats, beavers, otters, all sizes of fish and crawdads and countless other under-water critters.

Man has used and misused creeks, always. We have drunk from them, bathed in them, done our washing in them, panned for gold, washed our horses and sheep, let the cows drink in the shallows. We have watched from a safe distance the dark tan floodwaters that sprang up after long rains, carrying mud, sticks, leaves, medium-sized stones, signs torn loose from their base, firewood piled too close to water, objects flying by so fast that we didn't know *what* they were.

Moving bodies of water used to be our garbage disposal (what the rats, stray dogs, or the hogs didn't want). In early days we saw more rats than now, and hogs and domestic geese wandered the town, and the

slaughter houses were built up high so that the hogs could get underneath, to clean up the mess. A Reynoldsburg village ordinance was passed in June 1881, forbidding the carcass or offal from any animal (sheep, cattle, hogs) to remain [or to be disposed of] on "private property or any street, or alley, or common, or *watercourse*," and the notice of said ordinance was posted in five conspicuous public places. In spite of that, those most concerned kept right on a-doin' it in the way they were used to doin' it. Tanners and butchers were especially guilty of misusing clean running water: fling the unusable parts (intestines, blood, dung) into the crick and let the water take it downstream from The Burg. Pollution was a fancy word we didn't fully comprehend then. Boys swimming might come up with a necklace of horse guts from the tanyard [so said historian Fay May], but that was the chance you took when you were having fun.

Not amusing at all were two 1908 deaths. Harley Chamberlain, age 32, and his mother Lydia, age 59, died of typhoid fever, a disease spread by contaminated water. Lydia's husband Samuel was a Reynoldsburg butcher.

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"Water, Water, Every Where, Nor Any Drop to Drink" by Cornelia M. Parkinson

(continued from page 06) A quarter-century passed, and something had to be done. In September 1934, the firm of Jennings-Lawrence was [to be hired as] engineers for "the waterworks project," not previously mentioned in the minutes of village council meetings. In October 1934, \$1000 was to be used for the acquisition of real estate and easements for the waterworks. \$41,000 was to be used for the construction of a general waterworks system, including buildings, water mains, pumps, wells, tanks, etc. Remember, this was dollars of 86 years ago -- when \$41,000 was big bucks.

By May 21, 1935, the village was under suit (by persons not named in the minutes) for pollution and contamination of both French Run and Blacklick Creek as a result of sewage excrement, offal, and refuse from the current system of pipes and ditches. The village could not afford to fight a suit, especially one they were likely to lose anyway. So they passed legislation regarding a sanitary sewer system -- which they could not afford either. Best to spend borrowed money on a sure thing.



Stone Quarry Run



French Run

On June 7, Lewis Benton Tussing Jr., Village Solicitor, submitted an application to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Economic Recovery Act for "a \$5,000 grant of funds, which would be in excess of a valid bond issue for construction of a sanitary sewer system or a sewage disposal plant for the village." In September, the village clerk inserted a notice in "the paper" for all *citizens* who wanted to get work on the water works project to report to the clerk's office to have their names checked against a list of those who had registered with the employment agency.

We were in the depths of The Great Depression, not to come out until the next war started.

In January, 1937, the water system was completed. A water tower had been built in 1936. In February 1937 the village requested additional

funds from the federal Public Works Administration, in part to procure additional water. The water and sewage problem had been given proper attention.

Water towers provided the pressure to get water running through our faucets. I remember a tower behind the old Methodist Church, into the 1950s and later. Lee Leonard remembers that when he and (continued on page 08)

"Water, Water, Every Where, Nor Any Drop to Drink"

by Cornelia M. Parkinson

(continued from page 07) his wife Ruth (RTHS member) moved in The Burg in 1970, a water tower stood about where Kroger is now. Both towers have been taken down. The sewer system was east of town. Later, a larger system was built at another location. John Zollinger, then water supervisor, boasted that the system was so efficient that he feared no germs from drinking out of the fountain installed there -- a bit of bravado on all sides.

But as late as May 9, 1938, village council had not taken enough notice of what was in the pipes and ditches flowing through the

Although not a potable source, **Blacklick Creek** and **French Run** waters flow through town and township. They were not always called that. Some creek names on old maps include the following:

Our major local body of water may never have had another name. According to John Kilbourne's *Ohio Gazeteer 1833*, **Black Lick Creek** rises in the northeast quarter of Franklin County, runs southward [and westward] for 20 miles then, eight miles southeast from Columbus, enters the east side of **Big Walnut Creek**. Well into the 19th century there was a two-lane covered

bridge on Route 40 over Big Walnut. [In snowy weather, men had to spread snow on the planks of the bridge so sleighs could get through.] At the west edge of The Burg in the 1800s there was a covered bridge on Main Street over Blacklick. It could have lasted well past August 1930, when an ordinance was passed to permit the State Highway Department "to construct a bridge over Blacklick Creek."



Big Walnut Creek

town. Mary Eliza and Robert Durant's house stood at the southwest corner of Graham Road and Main Street. Mary Eliza wrote to village council about the "open ditch on the [their] property contaminating the stream beyond description" and suggesting that "if our town is to be made more sanitary, this problem should be solved as soon as possible." Six weeks later, the town toilets, which had been open since 1906, were permanently closed. I have no notes on any further action taken, though

some was.

Living Water Run became **French Run** in tribute to John D. French, on whose plat The Burg was laid out in 1831. [A flowing body of water not big enough to be called a river could be called a stream, a crick, a run, or, Scottish, a burn. Usually the smaller *creek* flows into a *river* or a larger creek, a *lake* or even the *ocean*.] A little stream called **Cooper Run** emptied into French Run straight from the north. While Highland Terrace was being built in 1907, drain pipes were laid underground to direct

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"Water, Water, Every Where, Nor Any Drop to Drink"

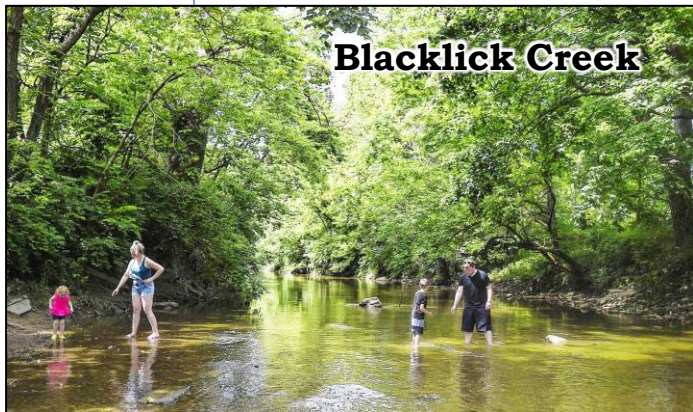
by Cornelia M. Parkinson

Cooper Run's flow; and were discovered, dry, 51 years later, when men were digging the foundation for Richard Parkinson's house at 7344 East Rich Street. The home

ground of Blacklick Creek and French Run was originally a swamp, which had to be drained and extensively filled and the water redirected from both creeks in the early 1800s time of John French, so that a permanent road could be built.

French Run has had varying shapes. It did not always flow between its present banks. It once crossed Main Street at approximately 7300 East Main. In November 1900 the village council appointed Christian Krafft [local builder, originator of the Krafft Addition] a committee of one to contact the Franklin County Commissioners to determine what was to be done to establish a channel for French Run. In June 1904 the flow of the creek was still obstructed by a number of slaughter houses that had been built creekside for "sanitary drainage." In 1909 the village committee on streets cleaned the stumps out of French Run. In October 1928, dams were to be built in both French Run and Blacklick Creek. [The village budget was \$946 that last year before the Depression. Little wonder that action was delayed on important but money-gobbling projects.] Not until the late 1930s, when the National Road [Route 40, The Burg's Main Street] was widened and rebuilt, was the course of French Run diverted to empty into Blacklick Creek.

In the late 1930s, it was King Pickering, a relative of mine I liked, steadily employed by the State Department of Weights and Measures, but still a local



Blacklick Creek

character, who set the crick on fire. Honest. We have photos. A gasoline truck turned on its side up on Main Street and spilled a great quantity of gasoline into Stone Quarry Run, which carried the stuff into French Run. The story goes -- said Ralph Connell, late RTHS member/president -- that King lit a match and threw it. In the resulting conflagration, all the trees the length of the stream were burned. Ralph told me, "It brought out just about everybody in town." Nothing that awesome has happened in The Burg lately. We don't know what's happening wherever King is.

By whatever name, **Stone Quarry Run** is a narrow stream a foot or so deep at the bottom of its little canyon, to be seen on private land along the south side of Rodebaugh Road at Waggoner Road. It flows, sometimes visible and sometimes underground or under a culvert, into Blacklick Creek. It is one of several insignificant parallel streams that originate

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in Licking County and join with Blacklick waters. A fork of the same run winds through culverts parallel to Main Street, visible in front of the little house in the hollow on the east side of Waggoner, just north of the gasoline station.

Little Jordan Run, a feeder of **Blacklick Creek**, ran from the east into the creek just a short distance above Five Points*. Some time after 1872, it became called **Medbery Run**, for the Medbery family who owned land from Jackson Street to Graham Road and who lived in the house on that land for 36 years.

Thomas Corwin Ashton bought the property from Medberys in 1903 and soon afterward moved half the house into town. Both halves of this large house have now been moved from Five Points, and sit back to back separated by a back yard, an RTHS building, and Beech Alley. The half that was moved a century ago, using one horse and a capstan for leverage, faces Lancaster Avenue/SR 256 at Broadwyn Drive. The other half, moved by a commercial company in 1993, is the Museum of the Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society. It faces Hannah J. Ashton School on Jackson Street.)

Big Walnut Creek (just west of I-270, still in Truro Township) has been **Big Lick**, **Big Belly's Creek** (for a local Indian) and, a part of it, **Gahanna River**, an Indian word meaning three in one, for the triple confluence of **Alum Creek**, **Blacklick Creek**, and **Walnut Creek**.

* Five Points is the intersection at Livingston Avenue, Graham Road, State Route 256 N-S, and Slate Ridge Boulevard.

THE COURIER
May 2020 Issue
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10-RTHS Courier, MAY 2020

Invite your friends to join!

When Grannie was a Girl

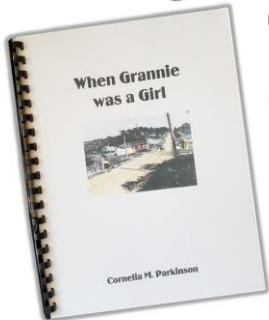
by Cornelia M. Parkinson

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When Grannie was a Girl was originally written by Connie for her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. Since it's full of stories we can relate to, she has decided to share it with us!

If you would like a copy, feel free to call Mary Stoots at **(614) 560-4987** or send an email to RTHSCourier@aol.com

OR - you can write a check payable to "RTHS" and put the name of the book in the memo line, then mail it to:

P.O. Box 144, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068



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Sunshine Committee

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Contact Wendy Raftery if you are aware of an RTHS member who could use a Get Well, Thinking of You, Sympathy, or any other type of card for some added sunshine in their life....

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Please call after 2:00pm

Write "SUNSHINE" in the subject line of your email:
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THANK YOU!

For all of the Get Well wishes, food, and prayers. I am slowly on the mend and I appreciate every single one of you!
 ~ Mary Turner Stoots

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Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society

Join us for an Evening of Fun & Games!

BOARD GAME & CARD PARTY

Thursday, October 1, 2020

5:30pm – 8:00pm

Tickets are only \$5 each*

Where: Reynoldsburg Senior Center

1520 Davidson Drive

Reynoldsburg OH 43068



* Your \$5 Ticket includes:

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- Non-Alcoholic Drinks
- Door Prizes

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Silent Auction and 50/50 Raffle!

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WE WILL HOLD YOUR TICKETS FOR YOU AT THE DOOR!

* All proceeds benefit the Reynoldsburg Truro Historical Society, which is self supporting and receives no funding from the City of Reynoldsburg