

# THE HISTORICAL RECORD

January 2025

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

January 23, 2025

## CINCINNATI'S EARLY RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE...

Wyoming resident and a native of the UK, Matthew Smith has been a naturalized US citizen since 2017. He teaches classes in US and World History at Miami University's Hamilton campus, and serves as Director of Public Programs at Miami University's Hamilton and Middletown campuses. His book, *The Spires Still Point to Heaven: Cincinnati's Religious Landscape, 1788-1873*, was published by Temple University Press in 2023.

This presentation explores the religious landscape of Cincinnati from frontier beginnings to the wake of the Civil War. Founded in 1788, Cincinnati was the first completely new major American city to emerge after the revolution. A magnet for immigration and the economic hub of the Midwest, this talk shows how the Queen City led the nation in the assimilation of religious minorities, and how religious diversity drove growth in the economy, print culture, education and more.



**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

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



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

Member of:  
Ohio Local History Alliance  
American Association for State and  
Local History,  
Ohio History Connection

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

## JOINING THE BOARD IS: Joe Hornsby

Joe and his wife Nikki moved to Wyoming in 2017 and stay busy raising their three young children- Savannah, Olivia, and Grant. Joe became intrigued with WHS through studying local transportation history in helping the city propose what became a favorable outcome for the controversial I-75 highway exit planned in Lockland. This interest dove deeper through renovation of their Village home and their 'rediscovery' of a collection of letters written during the Civil War by George Benson Fox of the 75th OVI, which he received a grant to digitize and copy for WHS.

Joe's a Miami University graduate 2006 & 2007 and CPA, IT industry exec. Joe recently served on the Wyoming Presbyterian Church Session and volunteers with the Lads and Lassies Community Preschool Advisory Board. He believes understanding our local history is an important part of serving the community today and into the future, and is looking forward to leading many 3rd grade bus tours!



## JOINING THE BOARD IS: Ann Verhaeghe

Ann Wiggers Verhaeghe grew up in Wyoming. After graduating from DePauw University with a BA in Sociology she moved to San Francisco. Ann lived in the Bay Area for 15 years and the Los Angeles area for 10 years working in fixed income management and trading. She returned to Wyoming continuing in the investment business and completing an MBA at UC.

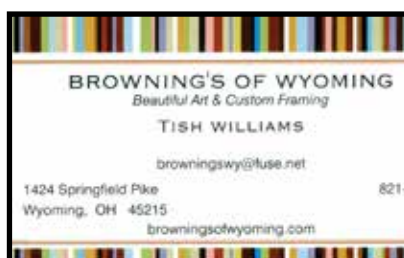
After retiring she volunteered with the Environment Stewardship Commission and Valley Interfaith. Ann also was active with the Trowel & Error Garden Garden Club for 15 years and is a Master Gardner. She also ran an estate sale business for 7 years until the pandemic curtailed the sales.

Ann's girls reside in Maine and Montana. She loves traveling, some of it visiting our national parks with her girls. So far, she has been to 33 and working on more.



Wyoming was lucky year this to have had great weather for both the 150th celebration in May and Fall Festival. We enjoy seeing and talking with everyone at our community events. Pictured on the left: Sherry Sheffield, Jim Walton and Tom Bond at our booth during the 150th Anniversary celebration.

## BUSINESS MEMBERS



## TERRY'S MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Terry's Montessori School, Inc. has provided Montessori education in Wyoming since 1973. Terry's began as a full day Montessori home care program for children 2 through 6 years of age at 209 Wyoming Avenue. They now offer an infant and toddler program as well at several locations: 425 Crescent, 435 Crescent and 415 Poplar. Terry's was created to offer families a unique, homelike environment, within turn of the century homes. Over the years Terry's has provided a warm and caring setting in which a sound education and developmental program has flourished. This atmosphere was fashioned to cultivate a healthy self-image for each child in our school.

## 2025 Wyoming Historical Society

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David Savage, Vice-President  
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Sherry Sheffield	Kitty & Todd Williams

## NEW MEMBER WELCOME...

Andrea & Nathan Zeidler

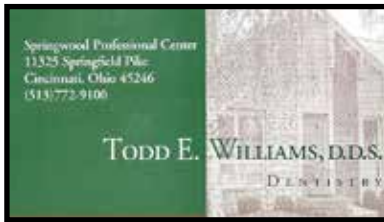
## -- MARK YOUR CALENDAR -- FUTURE PROGRAMS FOR EARLY 2025

February 20, 2025 WHS President Amy Pursley examines the people and places behind Wyoming's street names and the changes to those names over the years.

March 27, 2025 Internationally known for his dedication to wildlife preservation, Thane Maynard, takes us on a journey through the history of the Cincinnati Zoo from its beginnings to the present day.



## BUSINESS MEMBERS



IF YOU HAVE NOT PAID YOUR 2025 DUES YET PLEASE DO SO. WE DEPEND ON YOU TO CONTINUE OUR MISSION TO PRESERVATION WYOMING'S HISTORY.

## WYOMING INSTITUTE OF MUSICAL ART

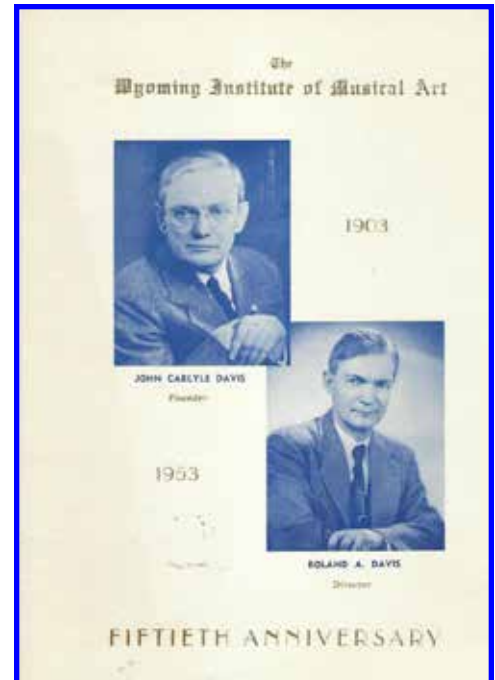


Before Wyoming had the Fine Arts Center, we had the Wyoming Institute of Musical Art. Founded in 1903 in Hartwell, it was moved to Wyoming in 1922 when the Founder, John Carlyle Davis, purchased 15 West Hill Lane.

The Institute started teaching piano. Over the years, more teachers were added and instruction expanded to cover organ, voice, violin and other orchestral instruments as well as classes on four-hand playing, sight-reading and practical & theoretical harmony. Some of the students went on to be teachers at the Institute. Many teaching at the Institute were familiar Wyoming names: Mary Alice Kern Crotty, Shirley Cordes Merkle, Ethel Haag Wilcox, Frances Morris Elliott, Jay Sutherland, and Bessie Richards Meagher.

John Carlyle Davis was born in Cincinnati in 1878. He met his future wife, Grace Barbour, while studying journalism at Harvard, and they married in 1900. Rather than pursuing a career writing articles, he turned to writing music and sold his first pieces in 1907 while studying at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

After John's passing in 1948, his son, Roland, ran the Institute and continued teaching the hundreds of students who took lessons over the years. Rollie, in 1915, was the youngest performing organist in the U.S.



(Continued on next page)

There were several annual recitals, referred to as commencements exercises, that were held at the Wyoming Club, Civic Center, Baptist Church, Episcopal Church, Hartwell Presbyterian Church and occasionally at a downtown location. Roland played the organ and/or directed the choir at the Baptist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian Churches in Wyoming and Christ Church, Glendale.

In 1967, the WIMA closed and Roland Davis and wife moved to a smaller home on East Mills. Roland '19 and his sister, Hope '22, graduated from Wyoming as did his four children Nancy '47, Pauline '52, Faith '54 and John '59.

## THE SIGN....

The sign, shown at the top of page 4, has a tale of its own. Its long-time home was the porch of 15 West Hill Lane. When the Davis' moved to East Mills in 1967 they took the sign with them and placed it in the basement. Two owners later and the sign was still living at 123 East Mills! In October of this year Chyi Leubbe, who had taken the sign with her when she moved from East Mills, posted a picture of it on Facebook asking if anyone was interested in it or knew its history. The sign and its more than 60 years of history are now residing at the Wyoming Historical Society. Thank you Chyi for saving this wonderful piece of Wyoming history.

## 15 WEST HILL LANE....

Built about 1880, this house doesn't look much like its original Victorian self. Several makeovers have changed the look of the house. Most noticeable is the missing "turret"! When the house was built its address was 347 Springfield Pike and it had a rolling front lawn that stretched all the way to Springfield Pike. In 1900, a street was put in between 347 and the Woodruff house (now located in the parking lot of St James). It was called Sims Street after Robert Sims who once owned much of the

property. In 1922, City Council voted to change the name of the street to West Hill Lane. It was

in the late 1930's, on that flowing green lawn, that 355 Springfield Pike (1938) and 9 West Hill Lane (1939) were built.



But...there is more history to this house. In 1922, the Davis' bought this house from Ada Taylor, wife of James Taylor the local dentist. It was their son, Francis F. Taylor, who invented the Taylor Tot. The baby stroller was a must have item from the 1920s through the 1950s. You can find them for sale online.

## 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.



**We close our celebration of  
Wyoming's 150 years with  
the highlights of the past 50  
years.**

## **WYOMING BY THE YEAR**

### **1974-1998**

The community pours its heart into the 100th celebration and the rewards came over the next years in the form of continued house tours, the Historic District, annual fireworks display, Citizen of the Year program, founding of the Wyoming High School Alumni Association and more. The Community is at its best!

- 1974 Wyoming celebrates its first 100 years and the Valley Temple on Springfield Pike is dedicated.
- 1975 Centennial Park is dedicated on July 4th.
- 1976 An Ordinance establishes the Architectural Review Board.
- 1977 Wyoming High School's football team wins their first Ohio Division AA State Championship.
- 1978 Wyoming signs a contract with Rumpke, Inc. to take over the garbage collection from the city.
- 1979 Football coach Bob Lewis retires with a record at Wyoming of 221-34-8.
- 1980 A Charter Review Committee is established to review Wyoming's charter, it hadn't been done since its inception some 30 years before.
- 1981 Wyoming Historical Society is founded.
- 1982 As the Woodruff Building, Wyoming's first business district, is demolished Wyoming establishes the Green Areas Trust to preserve natural areas.
- 1983 Fall Festival becomes an annual Wyoming Celebration.
- 1984 An Ordinance is passed regarding the operation of motorized bicycles and mopeds.
- 1985 The Wyoming High School Alumni Association is founded.
- 1986 The Wyoming Art Show begins and Wyoming annexes Fleming Meadows.
- 1987 St James celebrates 100 years.
- 1988 Wyoming begins using the 911 emergency phone number.
- 1989 Solid Waste Task Group, predecessor to the Environmental Stewardship Commission, is formed.
- 1990 The Civic Center goes from privately owned to a city owned building.
- 1991 The Village Green Restaurant opens in the former Fire and Police Station at what was now 400 Wyoming Avenue.
- 1992 Wyoming High School Sports Hall of Fame is established.
- 1993 The Safety Services Building at 600 Grove Avenue is dedicated.
- 1994 The land for Wyoming Glen is annexed into Wyoming.
- 1995 Robert Reily Weekend is held with a variety of events including the dedication of a headstone at Reily's grave in Spring Grove Cemetery.
- 1996 Wyoming's Lady Cowboys Varsity Basketball team wins the Ohio State Division III Basketball Championship.
- 1997 Wyoming named one of twelve "Prettiest Painted Places in America."
- 1998 John Wirtz retires after 35 years as head of City Services, Director of the Water Works and Fire Chief! City enters into contract for the building of a new water plant.



# WYOMING BY THE YEAR

1999-2023

This quarter century brings improved parks and recreation facilities. Soccer, bocce ball and pickle ball all found places throughout the city. The Wyoming Avenue school building received another renovation and so did the Civic Center. The city adds or replaces hundreds of trees each year and converts the fall leaves to spring mulch for the residents.

- 1999 Wyoming celebrates its 125th Anniversary. The fountain at Centennial Park, donated by the Trowel & Error Garden Club, are dedicated.
- 2000 Wyoming High School graduates, Greg Ruckman (1992) and Alyssa Beckerman (1999), represent Wyoming in the Olympics in Sydney.
- 2001 Camp John McLean Memorial Park is dedicated at the corner of Bonham Road and Harmon Drive.
- 2002 Wyoming celebrates its 20th Fall Festival.
- 2003 Wyoming open the Skate Park in Oak Park.
- 2004 The Spring tree planting was cancelled due to the cicadas!!
- 2005 Foster Memorial Park gets a new picnic shelter and play structure.
- 2006 The city closes Worthington Avenue at the railroad tracks to expand Crescent Park.
- 2007 Barry S. Porter, is sworn in as the 26th Mayor and the 4th Wyoming High School graduate (1955) to serve in that capacity.
- 2008 Section one of the Hike-Bike Trail is completed.
- 2009 An Ordinance is enacted regulating bed and breakfast establishments in the community.
- 2010 Wyoming participates in its first Earth Day celebration.
- 2011 Wyoming celebrates the 150th Anniversary of the Naming of Wyoming which occurred on April 4, 1861 in Robert Reily's home.
- 2012 120th anniversary of the Wyoming Water Works.
- 2013 The Historic Preservation Commission publishes the Design Guidelines for Historic Properties.
- 2014 Wyoming is named 24th Best Suburb in the country by Business Insider.
- 2015 A Christmas Melody with Mariah Carey is filmed in Wyoming.
- 2016 A change in Sign Code allows for mural projects on the sides of building.
- 2017 The Wyoming History Museum opens in the lower level of the Municipal Building on Oak Avenue.
- 2018 Wyoming water is voted best-tasting in the state by the American Water Works Association.
- 2018 A section of Oak Park, Little Oak, is renamed for Wyoming High School graduate David Payne (2000), an Olympic Medalist.
- 2018 The Community Gardens moves to raised gardens on Van Roberts Place.
- 2019 Wyoming is named Tree City USA for the 25th straight year.
- 2020 Livestreaming of City Council meetings begins on YouTube.
- 2021 Police Department adds body cameras to their uniforms.
- 2022 Crescent Park gets an upgrade to a universally accessible playground.
- 2023 The final leg of the Hike Bike Trail is completed and sidewalks are installed on Compton Road.

Over the past 150 years, the residents of Wyoming have always honored the past and preserved traditions that have become part of the city's fabric. Yet throughout our history, we are a city that embraces innovation and change. Wyoming is a mix of old and new in perfect harmony. In the next 150 years, may residents continue to embrace the past yet look for new ideas that will keep our city vibrant and growing.

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

*Look forward to seeing you at our  
next program on January 23rd.*

### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER...Amy Pursley**

Now that Wyoming's 150th birthday is in the books, we can reflect on the special year we had through original programs such as Wyoming Village Gothic in September and history-inspired horse drawn carriage rides through the village in May. We also celebrated Wyoming's past Olympians, dating back to 1896 and we installed a new historical marker in Centennial Park. And who could forget Alma Reckner's ride of a lifetime in the Fourth of July parade in a 1923 Dodge Brothers Eagle Coupe to celebrate her 100th birthday!

Thank you to the entire community of Wyoming for making our sesquicentennial such a special year. But hopefully the best is yet to come. Our upcoming slate of programs and events would not be possible without the support of all of our members and volunteers. If you haven't had a chance to renew or start your membership, please take the time to do that now. We don't want you to miss out on any of the fun programs and events on tap for this year.

