

Listen for the **JAZZ**



Key Notes in Columbus History
Second Edition

**If the beat
catches you,
If the beat
snatches you...
Turns your insides
round about,
Turns your one heart
inside out...
That's jazz,
Ladies and gentlemen...
That's jazz!!!!**

Anna Bishop

from her book *Dedicated Poetry* © 1987





TO THE FUTURE...

In thinking about the dedication for this project we pondered about Thelbert and Judy, whose fate we pray will not befall any others in our midst, or "Rusty" Bryant whose unflagging spirit gave hope to all who knew him, or Earl Hood, who gave the project depth with his willingness to share his wealth of information, or Eddie Beard, who battled sickness to be with us at the premiere of the first edition, or Ronnie Kirk, who became "Rahsaan" in a dream. Oh yes, and what about Archie Gordon, who "Stomped" his way to fame, or Christine Kittrell, who was wounded in Viet Nam, or Jeanette, who sang her first solo at the age of five... Somehow, no matter how rich or emotional the past is, it is the future for which this book is intended. The book is a gift to the people who, through generations to come, will learn about and appreciate the contributions of Columbus based artists through this effort.

So, to the future... may one child be touched, may his or her life be changed by the contributions included in this book. May just one child learn to play or stand up and sing and the effort will have been worth all of the years of work.

C. L Watkins



In 1942, the Mt. Vernon School Drill Team posed on the steps of their school. In the second row, on the far right stands Jimmy Rogers, someday to be "Stix" and to hold the World Record for his legendary drum marathon

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Cover photo by Rae Ann Johnson
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Cover photo by Kojo Kamau

The organizers' greatest fear is that someone will get left out or that information will be incorrect. This problem has arisen from the first edition and will most probably continue. To those of you who feel that we missed you or got some facts wrong, we apologize. Please send corrections or additional information to the address listed below and someone will personally get in touch with you.

Arts Foundation of Olde Towne
787 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43205
614-221-4411

INTRORAP

This book is the combined effort of many people and the result of years spent researching, interviewing and collecting. The organizers of *Listen for the Jazz* are aware that this document only represents a portion of the rich musical heritage that is present in this community. The time period involved is roughly 1890s to 1960. The book's focus is the jazz scene in and around the Near East Side of the City of Columbus. The book is an attempt to plant seeds of interest not only in this subject matter but in the documentation of cultural history as a whole. Those involved in this project hope

that others will pick up where this document leaves off and that this will not be the last effort of its kind. Rusty Bryant summed it up best when he said: *Those that go back that far kind of relate to the younger ones... what a ball we had in those days, before we had to bother with things like crack and dope and thievery and stealing and all that. It was just pretty much solid music right then in the east end, around Olde Towne. We'd like to reminisce about those days.*

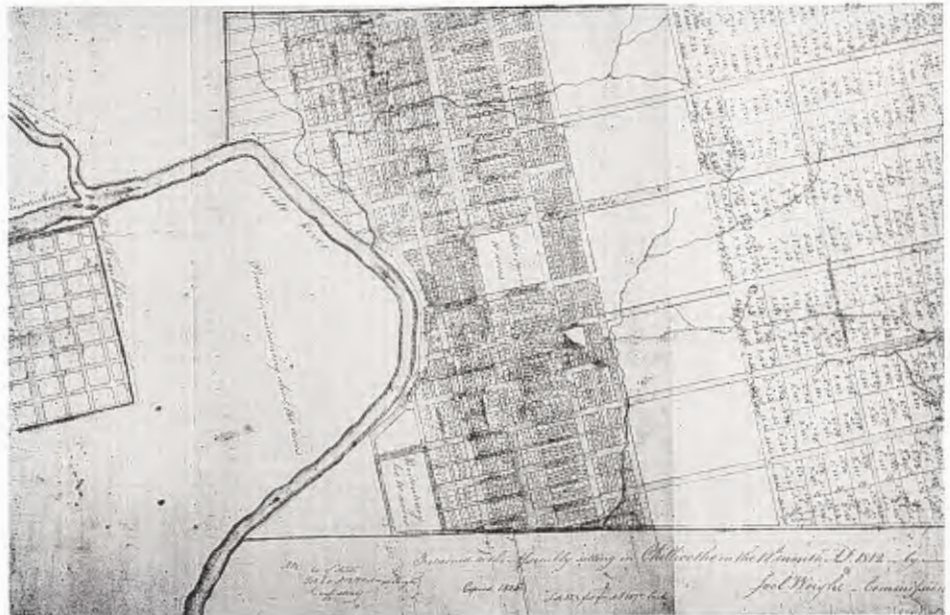
So... for those of you who would like to reminisce about the old days, we offer this book.

EAST BY NORTHEAST

by Ed Lentz

The part of Ohio known as Columbus has been occupied and settled for at least ten thousand years. Long before the City of Columbus came into being, people passed through this area as they travelled between the Scioto and Muskingum Rivers. By the Fifth Century AD, the "moundbuilder" culture was well established in central Ohio. A mound forty feet tall stood at the intersection of Mound and High Streets. Trees three feet across reportedly stood on this mound in 1800. A smaller mound stood at the present location of Bryden Road and Champion Avenue. In later years, a Mingo Indian village was established at what is now the Ohio Penitentiary site on Spring Street. And as late as the 1890s, human remains were found in the downtown area as utility excavations exposed ancient burial sites, especially in the area around the Center of Science and Industry, where a series of natural springs reached the surface.

In 1795, a man named Lucas Sullivant laid out a town on the west bank of the place where the Olentangy met the Scioto River. He named it Franklinton, and in a few years it had begun to prosper. His home still stands in Old Franklinton. In 1810, the Ohio Legislature



Joel Wright's 1812 drawing for the City of Columbus

began looking for a new home more centrally located than the then current capital at Chillicothe. After a spirited competition, the site selected was "The Highbanks opposite Franklinton at the Forks of the Scioto known as Wolf's Ridge." Columbus was born as a capital city.

The original town was laid out by one Joel Wright in an area bounded by Parsons Avenue (called E. Public Lane), the Scioto River, Nationwide Boulevard (called Naughten Street), and Livingston Avenue (S. Public Lane). The original map of the city was lost, and Wright redrew it from memory many years later. By that time, Long Street had its current name and with it the story that it was named for William Long, an early mayor (1829-1932 term) of Columbus.

The town grew relatively slowly at first, and the land near Long Street was occupied by homes and garden lots until after the Civil War. In the earliest days of the city's history, most of the African-American population lived in a neighborhood near Fulton and High Streets. Over the years, that area had been built up by business, and the residential base had dispersed over various parts of the city.

After the Civil War, the newly perfected railroad network led to the opening of huge coal and timber resources in the Hocking Valley. Industries using these materials sprang up in Columbus, and large numbers of people migrated to the city. By 1870, an identifiable business district had emerged on Long Street near High Street. Over