



A Walk Through History

The Westerville Public Library
Local History Resource Center Newsletter
Spring 2008

Westerville's Centennial Celebration: August 16-23, 1958

Over 12,000 people helped celebrate the 100th birthday of Westerville's incorporation in August 1958. Citizens planning the week-long activities formed two groups, "Wester -villains" and "Wester - belles", to promote all the festivities. The men grew beards and the women donned long skirts and bonnets to celebrate the town's history.

The August events were kicked off with a huge ball with participants twirling to the music of the Roy Roop orchestra at the Blendon Grange Hall. The refreshments included the largest cake in Westerville history. Dignitaries in attendance included the governor of Ohio.

The grand parade included seven marching bands and many colorfully decorated floats spotlighting Westerville history and heritage. One of the most popular nightly events during the week was the pageant "Trails 'N Turnpikes" which shared the history of Westerville from settlement to 1958. Three hundred local residents acted in the spectacular production. To the thrill of the audience special effects included flares, smoke bombs and fireworks. The most popular prop was the "singing trolley," an exact replica of the streetcars that began traveling up State Street in the 1890s. Sanders Frye created this extraordinary vehicle.

The events for young people included demonstrations of the pioneer lifestyle at the Hanby House, a doll show sponsored by the Campfire girls, Junior Olympic contests, and junior tennis matches. The most popular event was the children's parade which encouraged the community's youth to dress up and parade with their pets.

1958 Celebration



Centennial Celebration Queen and her court
in front of Westerville High School.



Residents gather on State Street
to celebrate town's 100th birthday.



A "Wester-villain" Brother of the
Brush sporting his beard and bow tie.



Parade wagon on State Street.



WRFD radio station calliope in parade.



Rachel Nutt and daughter
decked out for the festivities.

Ohio Humanities Council

Chautauqua coming to town

When community volunteers met to begin mapping out the celebration of Westerville's 150 years of incorporation, they decided to focus on three signature events. First, was the *Celebrate on State* New Year's Eve party. An estimated crowd of 10,000 enjoyed a balmy December 31st evening and strolled up State Street greeting neighbors, blowing noise-makers and anxiously awaiting Westerville's own ball rise at midnight.

Now we are moving on to the next big events – Chautauqua and the Independence Week festivities. The Chautauqua programs are a return to the early years of the 19th century when the traveling tents were set up on the Otterbein campus and residents thronged to hear the music and speakers. This year the tent is going to be set up in the sports fields across from the Community Center on Cleveland Ave. The five inventors and innovators being portrayed are Mary McLeod Bethune, Andrew Carnegie, Alexander Graham Bell, George Washington Carver and Thomas Edison. Daytime programs for youth will be offered at the library and the community center. The full schedule will be available at the library, the community center and will come to your home in the *ThisWeek* newspaper. Look for further details and join us under the big top for some music and free educational entertainment each evening Wednesday, July 2nd through Sunday, July 6th at 6:30pm. Refreshments will be available.



**For additional information contact Beth Weinhardt, coordinator of local history,
at the Westerville Public Library at 882-7277 ext. 160 or
by e-mail at bweinhar@westervillelibrary.org.**

Activities

Math:

On page six you read about Chautauqua coming to town beginning on Wednesday, July 2nd. The Westerville community will be celebrating its sesquicentennial of incorporation. How many years is Westerville celebrating? If you are not sure, look up the definition of "sesquicentennial" in a dictionary.



Language Arts:

On page one you read how fireworks were a big part of the nightly centennial celebration events. Have you watched fireworks? Was music playing while you watched the fireworks? Did the fireworks you watched have a lot of loud booms? Who were you with when you watched the fireworks? Why were there fireworks? Write about what you heard, saw and why.

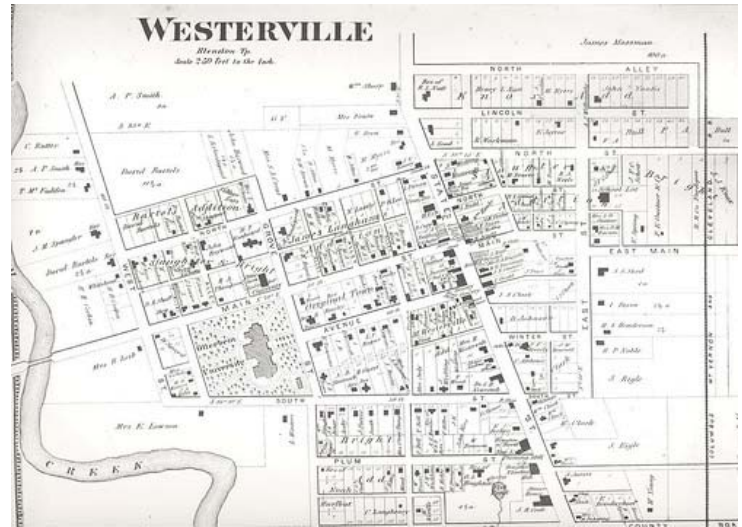
Art:

On page one you read that there was a children's parade in which the youth dressed and walked with their pets. Draw a picture of yourself dressed up and walking in a parade. What would you be wearing? Would you be walking with a pet? If so, put your pet in the picture too.



Timeline

There have been many important events in Westerville history over the last 150 years. We chose just a few to highlight.



- 1858-----Westerville is incorporated.
- 1860-----First fire department is formed. It is all volunteers.
- 1873-----The railroad began direct service to Westerville.
- 1901-----Westerville built its first water plant.
- 1908-----Cellar Lumber, Westerville's oldest operating business, began operations.
- 1909-----Anti-Saloon League brought their printing headquarters to town.
- 1916-----Westerville became the first village in Ohio to adopt a city manager form of government.
- 1930-----The Westerville Public Library was founded.
- 1933-----City offices were moved to 21 S. State St.
- 1955-----Hoover Dam was dedicated.
- 1958-----Westerville celebrated its 100th birthday.
- 1966-----Westerville established its Parks and Recreation Department.
- 1982-----Old water plant became the Westerville Senior Center.
- 1984-----St. Ann's opened central Ohio's first planned suburban hospital.
- 1986-----The Municipal building was expanded to its current space.
- 1995-----Westerville annexed 941 acres of land north.
- 2001-----Community Center was opened on Cleveland Ave.
- 2007-----Westerville was named among the top 50 best places to live by *Money* magazine.

The Westerville Public Library has unveiled a history timeline in honor of the 150th birthday of the incorporation of the village of Westerville.

Images bring history to life.

To access the timeline go to <http://www.westervillelibrary.org/timeline/index.php>.