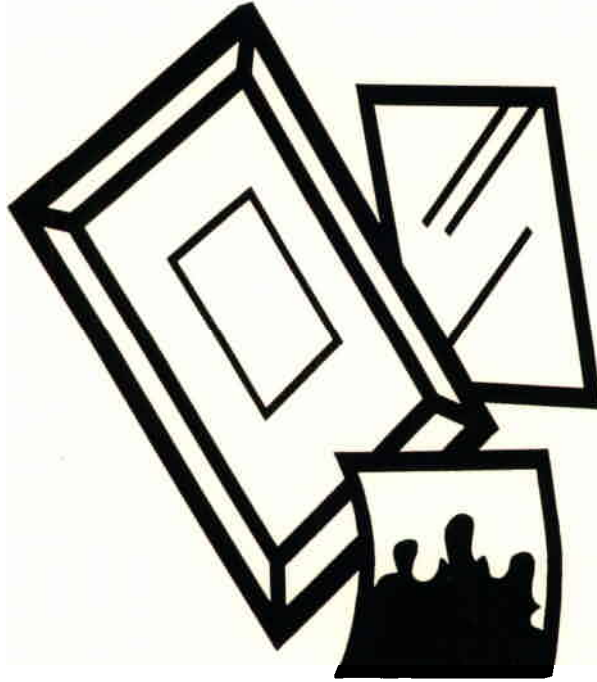


People



ONE IN SIX BILLION

We decided that we wanted to find out more about Ohio history by interviewing one of our classmates. We wanted to try to see history through his eyes. Although he was born in the hills of Linden, West Virginia, he came to Ohio during his teenage years and considers Ohio his home now.

Claude Berry is a man who has been in this world since 1925. He is an ordinary man who has witnessed much in his lifetime. He is not anyone big or famous, but he is a man who has held on to his beliefs for 77 years.

As Claude walked through the heavens and hells of life he found a flower that blossomed in his eyes. Thanks to the love that grew between them and their commitment to one another they have been together for over forty-eight years. They agreed to walk through the thorns of life together because each knew that with the other by their side they would be stronger and better able to protect one another. They have been blessed with two daughters and now two grandsons whom they adore.

Claude served overseas in World War II. He has many interesting stories about his experiences over there. One in particular deals with a situation in which he unknowingly insulted an English woman because he didn't know that the word "sweet" had a different meaning in England.

Claude has always been a hard worker. His work ethic helped him to be successful in all areas of his life. Claude worked at Lennox in Columbus from 1965 to 1992 where he was a foreman.

As a community leader, Claude helped to develop a sports program in his area called the Glenwood Browns. The program, which started in 1967, had football, basketball, and cheerleading. Claude said, "It was my dream for the black community - for the children."

Claude has a very strong Christian faith, and he is a deacon in his church. He enjoys listening to Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder. He played baseball and football. He also enjoyed swimming.

Claude is a man who has strong ideals and is not afraid to fight for what he believes in. In spite of his age, he stands firm for equal rights, honor and pride. He believes that religion and knowledge have made him the man he is today. Although he still lives in a middle class neighborhood, his happiness with his family and his life today make his heart glow more than any upper class heart that is filled with money demons.

Even though in many ways he is an ordinary man, it is important that his story be told. He is a great man with stories that should not be left untold and unknown. He has said, "I will live a homey and die a homey."

-Nader Kayali & Anthony Jenkins

MY GREAT-GRANNY'S STORY

This is a story about my great-grandmother. She was born Mary Ellen Yeomen on March 2, 1907, in New Holland, Ohio, to Mary Ella and Ottis Yeomen. She was one of four children. She had one sister, Hazel, and two brothers, Ralph and Ervin. Her father was a traditional farmer until he went blind. After he lost his sight he was able to continue farming by using three threshing machines. These were stationary wheat combines powered by steam engines. She had a pretty average childhood and adolescence. When she was around twelve years old she began playing the organ for the silent movies that were being shown at the local theater. She continued playing until she was sixteen and married my great-grandfather.

She married Theodore L. Vincent in 1923, and together they had seven children. When my grandfather was in the first grade they move to Bloomington, Ohio. From there they moved to South Charleston and New Holland. During the Depression my grandpop worked and was the "breadwinner," while my granny raised their family. In 1957, my granny and grandpop divorced and she moved again. She supported herself by giving piano and organ lessons and playing for various churches. She played for the Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Bloomington and the Baptist church in Wilmington. She also played for weddings and funerals. She belonged to The Eastern Star Chapter in New Holland.

Her life was dedicated to her music and her family. She was also very religious. She once belonged to The Church of Christ in New Holland. In 1985 she moved to Mount Sterling, Ohio, where she continued to give piano and organ lessons. She also played for a small church in Mount Sterling. She would remain there for the rest of her life.

My fondest memories of her were going to visit her with my grandparents and watching basketball. I really liked her custard pie, too. She was a great cook. I also remember when I was five or six and my parents and my family went over to my grandparents' to celebrate Christmas. She was there to celebrate with us. She had a family tradition that was called the Christmas Family Dinner. It was a very special dinner that only those who had graduated from high school were invited to attend. It was a chance for her to see all of her kids. My grandfather made it a point to go home for Christmas even after he had moved away. He had promised her when he moved that he would try to come back every Christmas until she was gone.

The last time I saw her was at my grandparents' 50th Wedding Anniversary Party in October of 2000. I admit that her age was beginning to get the best of her but she was still as sharp as a tack. She remembered everybody and saw the good in all people. She was a wonderful friend, mother, and grandmother to all of us.

On April 8, 2001, I lost this great woman to leukemia. It was a month after she celebrated her 94th birthday. I heard that she did not suffer very long and for that I am very thankful. She was the only great-grandmother I knew.

In December of 2001 the Mount Sterling Library dedicated their music section to my granny. I think she would have loved that because music was her life.

To this day she is missed by her seven children, twenty-four grandchildren, thirty-two great-grandchildren, and five great-great-grandchildren. She was a wonderful woman. I really loved her and truly miss her. Her memory, spirit and voice will live on in all of our hearts for the rest of our lives.

Amylyn Perry

PREJUDICE IN THE 1950's

In 1956, I started the ninth grade at Waverly High School, Waverly, Ohio. That year a colored girl rode the bus for the first time. She was friendly and nice. I liked her and she liked me as a friend.

I found out my dad and her dad knew each other. They were friends. They had been friends for a while. Her dad delivered milk in those tin milk cans with lids that fell down inside of the cans with handles. Dad told us to be friends with the colored girl.

My sister and I would be her friends. We started school together. We sat in the front of the bus with her and went to school. The other girls and boys didn't like it but I didn't care. I knew what was right and wrong. You love everybody, no matter what color, but the others didn't care too much for it. I didn't care what they thought.

They didn't like the way we dressed or acted. I dressed the way Dad and Mom told me to. They were the boss. We laughed together and got along fine together. In school they thought we were not as good as they were. They thought they were better than my sister, our colored friend, and me. It is all worth it with the love of our Lord.

-Faye Shears

HOLD YOUR HEAD UP

I lived in Columbus, Ohio, for ten years and all of my life I felt like I had bad luck. One day I was walking down the street and this man told me to keep my head up and something good would happen. As the day went on, I waited for something to happen. Nothing happened. I started wondering what did he mean by that? Should I hold my head up right at that very moment, or did he mean later on down the line?

When I turned fourteen years old, I started going to middle school. At first, I thought school was going to be fun. When I walked into my classroom, I felt like everybody was looking at me. I met a lot of friends. My teacher was nice. She used to let me read to the class all the time. One day she told the whole class that we needed to write a play. I picked three people to be in it, but they didn't even show up, so I had to act out everybody's part including my own. I did a real good job. I was a little nervous, but after a while I went crazy with poetry and singing. I ended the talent show and sang "One in a Million." I won second place. Once people knew I could sing they were asking me to sing just about every day.

When I went to another Middle School, I found myself reading and writing a lot more, and I had more new friends. I talked to the teachers about letting me have my own peer mediation class. They let me do it. Over thirty people signed up. My program was mainly about how to handle situations in their homes. People took heed to what I was saying. Some of them came to see me talk or just to get out of class. I also talked about how to say "No" to drugs. I kept a lot of people motivated to do more work in class. I saw more people coming to school. A lot of people were starting to turn their lives around, but most of all my poetry really motivated. It had grown women in tears. I just love reading and talking to people about their problems. That was a really fun year.

Last summer I moved to Virginia. My aunt owned a flower shop in Washington, D.C. I learned all types of new things. I learned how to make flower arrangements, casket sprays, standing spray baskets, fruit baskets, wedding flowers, etc. I learned the names of flowers like carnations, birds of paradise, roses, daisies, baby's breath, monkey's paw, etc. I had fun, and the best part was I got paid every day. The bad part was that I had to come back home to Ohio, but it turned out good. I'm back in school and studying for my GED and working.

Now, I guess that's what the man meant by "Keep your head up." Even when times get rough, you still have to keep a smile and your sense of humor.

-Denise Hanks

A FRESH START

Many people make mistakes and unfortunately I was one of them. I was one of those people who didn't care about anything. Then one day I realized that I had done something wrong and I was sorry for it. As much as I wanted to make things right, I couldn't.

I am from Texas. When I was younger I got involved in drugs. I thought that it was my business what I did and I didn't think there would ever be any real consequences. But I was very wrong.

I got pregnant with my first child. She was born premature and Child Protective Services wouldn't let me take her from the hospital because they didn't think I could take care of her. They told me I had to do periodic drug testing, go through rehab, and therapy. I did all they asked me to do.

They made arrangements for me to live at the Transitional Living Center. I was trying hard to get my life together so that I could have my baby, Heidi, permanently. While at the Transitional Living Center I became pregnant with my second child, Sharon. Sharon was also premature. This time it was stress, not drugs, that brought on the early labor.

Things were going somewhat better when I got a toothache. The dentist gave me Tylenol 3. This showed up in one of my drug tests. Without doing any investigating they kicked me out of TLC and took both of my babies away. I had to go to court to prove that the drugs were medicinal, which I did. The court placed my children and me in a foster home.

I thought that my lawyer was there to help me, but I was wrong. Between the judge and the lawyer I was told I needed to give up my rights to my children because I would never be able to take care of them. I did everything the court wanted me to do, but it wasn't enough. In December of 1999, I gave up all rights to my children because they told me I had no choice. It was the hardest thing I have ever had to do.

I always thought I had a family that would be there for me, but when I really needed them, they acted as if I wasn't even there. This has made me learn to take care of things myself. I've been alone and I am not afraid of it anymore. I've learned over the years that sometimes it is good to have someone to talk to and sometimes the people you trust betray you.

I left Texas a broken woman. I hoped that distance would help to heal my heart. My boyfriend and I lived in our car for a while. One night we got a room in a motel so that we could shower and cleanup. The manager of the Days Inn at I-70 West Broad St., Columbus, took an interest in us and allowed us to stay at the motel while we got on our feet. I cleaned rooms while my boyfriend looked for a good job.

With time and hard work I have been able to get an apartment and provide a home for my child and myself. Ohio has given me a great opportunity to start my life all over again. This is something I will never forget. I am glad I came to Ohio and I'm proud of myself because I did it all by myself.

Life is better now than I ever thought it could be. I came from Texas with nothing. Now I have a home in Grove City for my son and myself. I have only called my family once to tell them I didn't need their help – I did it on my own.

Ohio has been good to me. I am very glad that I am here. I am happy to have my son, Andres, but there is still a hole in my heart that only seeing my girls will ever fill. I did what I thought I had to do. If somehow my daughters should ever get to read this I want them to know I tried my best and that they are always in my heart. I am waiting for the day I can see them again. I love them with all my heart.

-Denise Salais

VICE PRESIDENT AL GORE

In the year 2000, a historical event happened right down the street from me. The Vice President of the United States, Al Gore, visited my children's school, Avondale Elementary, in west Columbus.

It was a very chaotic day. We were told not to park on our street for this was where the teachers were to park. I had two children attending Avondale at that time. They kept going to the door and watching all the activity, while I was trying to get them ready for school. After they were dressed, my family stood in the doorway watching the policemen on horseback, teachers walking to school, and the secret servicemen everywhere. My daughter, Mary, was especially excited when she saw the secret servicemen walking around on the roof of the school.

When Mr. Gore arrived, he spent the night with one of our kindergarten teachers, Mrs. Fadley. He rode to the school with her, and we saw them as they drove by. He ate breakfast with all the children in the cafeteria. He also went around to different classrooms and talked to the whole school during an assembly.

After school, a couple of the children walked him over to Gladden Community House. The excitement still had not died down after school. The parents were not sure if they were to pick up their children or not. They still had several of the streets blocked off.

When the children arrived home, they had so many stories to tell. This is a day our family will never forget. I am sure my children will tell this story to their children and their grandchildren.

-Rebecca Robinson

BUCKEYE BETTY

A long time ago a fourteen year old girl, known as "Buckeye Betty" lived with her parents and brother on Forest Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, in the late 1930's. Buckeye Betty loved Ohio State football. She listened to the games on the radio. One year Betty got mad during the big game because the Buckeyes lost to Michigan. She turned the radio off and her family turned it back on. Every time this happened, Buckeye Betty was taken to the kitchen to calm herself down. Her trusty beagle dog, Willie Elizabeth, went with her.

Buckeye Betty today has a family of two wonderful daughters and a wonderful husband.

Buckeye Betty is my mother, Elizabeth Lones!

-Marcia Lones

SAM

My name is Sam Tolliver. I was born in 1938 in my home on First Avenue in Urbancrest, Ohio. I come from a family of five brothers and sisters in addition to myself. I have lived in Urbancrest all my life.

Over the years there have been many changes in Urbancrest, both personal and not so personal. When I was a young man, I remember not even having a lock on our door. Today, I have to have a lock on my door and I still worry about my house being broken into.

Our houses back then were small with only four rooms - two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen - and of course, an outhouse. Today, the houses in Urbancrest have been made up-to-date and are much larger.

I also remember having church services every night except Saturdays. Today you are lucky to have it twice a week. There used to be only a couple of churches to attend. Today there are many to choose from.

Times have changed for the old school house since my younger days also. The schoolhouse is so much larger than it was back then. I remember having school in one building for everyone from the first through the eighth grade. There were four rooms in the building. Each room had two grades in it.

I have had a good life. If there was one thing that I would have changed, though, it would be that I wish I had married. But that's a part of my history that I have to deal with.

People are basically the same in Urbancrest as they were when I was growing up. There are just more of them. Urbancrest just keeps on growing and changing, and so do I.

-Sam Tolliver & Lisa Wright

MY MOTHER

Although my mother died when I was only a young child, I feel her loss very deeply even today.

When I look at pictures of her I see pain etched in her face. This pain was real and followed her from the time she was sixteen. It was at this time that a family friend raped her. Her father refused to believe her and she ran away. With no other place to go she moved in with her boyfriend. When she found out she was pregnant, her boyfriend left her because he couldn't believe that the baby was his. He thought it was a result of the rape. He left her and the baby at the house because they had no where else to go.

My mother had blonde hair and blue eyes and was about five feet nine inches tall. She was a little chubby but very pretty. She always made people laugh by making funny faces. She was a very strong person in spite of all that she had been through.

Her face showed the life she had lived. Even as she grew older her life was filled with heartache and pain. When she died at the age of thirty-five she left eight of her children behind. She also left the man she loved behind.

If her father had believed her, her life would probably have turned out very different and she would not have been so depressed all the time.

At the time my mother died she was having my little brother. During childbirth my mother had a heart attack and it killed both her and my little brother. They both died on Father's Day in 1992. After my mother passed away the sins of that generation were passed on to me. Everything that happened to my mother *has happened to me*. My mother was a very *caring* and loving woman despite the hard life she had. All of my family wishes she were here today.

-Cassandra Harlach