

The First 100 Years

By JAY CORDRAY

The Village of Malta dates back to the earliest days of the State of Ohio. During the War of 1812, an ex-sailor, Simeon Pool, and his son-in-law, John Bell, settled in the area. Pool traded a brick tavern in Marietta for the tract of land.

Pool and Bell laid out the first lots of Malta in 1816. Pool named the town in commemoration of his visit to the Island of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the earliest settlers in Malta, William B. Young, moved to the area in 1817. Young built and operated the first ferry across the river between Malta and McConnelsville, and later owned a small grocery store.

Another early resident of the village, William Palmer, came to the area with his family, in the fall of 1818. Palmer, and his family, spent the winter with another family in a log cabin with no floor. In the winter of 1818, only six families lived in Malta.

In 1818, Hyman Lazarus opened the first store, selling whiskey, and purchasing ginseng.

In the 1820s, there was no proper school building in Malta. Instead, school was taught in a log house by a man named Dominie Walbridge.

In 1827, Henry Dawes embarked in the mercantile business in the village. Dawes was a prominent member of the community, who also represented the county in the state legislature.

The first tavern, located where the Twin City Saloon used to be, was opened in 1829, by George Miller. This site was the home of many businesses over the next two hundred years.

The Malta Post Office was also established in 1829.

The Malta Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1833. That church later became the Malta United Methodist Church and is still active today.

The first true school house in Malta, a frame building, was built in 1838.

George Townsend moved to Malta in 1839, and began a successful business making saddles and harnesses for horses on Main Street.

In 1841, William Palmer and his son, James Jackson Palmer, founded the Malta Furniture Manufactory. This business was located where current Malta mayor Greg Hill's shop, "Greg's Auto Clean-Up" is now. Originally, all of the work was done by man power, but in 1851, a steam engine was added to the operation. This was the first steam engine built in Morgan County, and was a product of another Malta business, the foundry of Dunsmoor & Dickerson.

Malta was incorporated as a village by a special act of the state legislature on March 7, 1842. John Timms was the first mayor.

The foundry of Dunsmoor & Dickerson, forging steel and metal, was started in 1844, by Hiel Dunsmoor and David Dickerson.

The first tin shop was opened in 1846, by John Mellor. Mellor learned his trade from George P. Morris, founder of Morris Hardware in McConnelsville.

The first drug store in Malta was established by James Cornelius in 1852. In 1867, Cornelius sold the drug store to Dr. W. Wood, who sold it to Dr. Daniel Rusk in

1873. Rusk sold the store to Ambrose Middleton, who, in turn, sold it to Brad S. Harris in 1907.

In 1855, the first hardware business, J.M. Rogers and Co., was opened. It was the only hardware store in town for over 30 years.

In 1857, W.P. Brown and John Brown

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The Brown Manly Plow Company building, on Main Street. Brown-Manly was one of the largest employers in Malta at one time, hiring as many as 200 people, and supplying plows to two-thirds of the United States.

Robert and 'Boots' Harrison hold 'The Longest Married Couple in Malta' distinction

By JAY CORDRAY

This year, the Village of Malta celebrated its Bicentennial, with a celebration and parade on Saturday, August 13. Two very special guests were recognized during the parade. The couple, Robert and Beulah "Boots" Harrison, are the longest married couple in Malta. The Harrison's have been residents of the village for a total of 54 years, and have been married for 72 years. This distinction makes them "The Longest Married Couple in Malta."

Mr. Harrison was born, and grew up, in Ringgold. He started the first grade in Ringgold's one-room school house. He graduated from Homer Union High School in 1943.

The high school at Homer Union eventually became a grade school. The school was built in 1935, through WPA (Works Progress Administration), a public works program started by then President Franklin D. Roosevelt to give people work through the Great Depression.

Mrs. Harrison went to five different schools growing up. Her father worked in the oil fields, so they moved around a lot. She even attended school in Cambridge for a time.

While her name is Beulah, most of her friend's know Mrs. Harrison as "Boots." Mrs. Harrison said, when she was a young girl, there was a comic strip called "Babe and Boots." She said everyone called her sister "Babe" and her "Boots." Although they eventually stopped calling her sister

"Babe," somehow Mrs. Harrison's nickname stuck.

When asked what they did for entertainment in the evenings or during the weekend, Mr. Harrison responded by saying he grew up on a dairy farm and worked seven days a week.

"We had a dairy," he said. "We didn't do anything else on Sunday, but we still had to milk those cows twice a day. We milked about 20 cows. We'd go to a show once in a while, on Saturday night, at the Opera House in McConnelsville. In those days, it only cost a dime."

Mr. Harrison added that he did not hunt at all, while growing up, because his family members were always too busy on the farm. In fact, he said he did not see his first deer until 1940.

"Deer just weren't around back then," he commented.

Mrs. Harrison had nine siblings growing up, five brothers and four sisters. She said they would spend all day outside playing when they were little, and there was always somebody to play with.

Mr. Harrison had five brothers and sisters, one of whom, Walter, was killed in North Africa in WWII. Mr. Harrison said his siblings were spaced out so much in age that his oldest brother was also his first grade teacher.

Mr. Harrison's first job, not on the farm, was with the Ace High service station, in Malta, which was located beside the trailer court. The service station was owned by

the Barkhurst family. It sat beside the Hoffman Tannery.

After that, Mr. Harrison went to work for Muskingum Valley Grocery, which was located in McConnelsville at that time, where the Riecker Building stands now. He worked for MVG for 32 years, driving a truck for 12 years and selling groceries for 20.

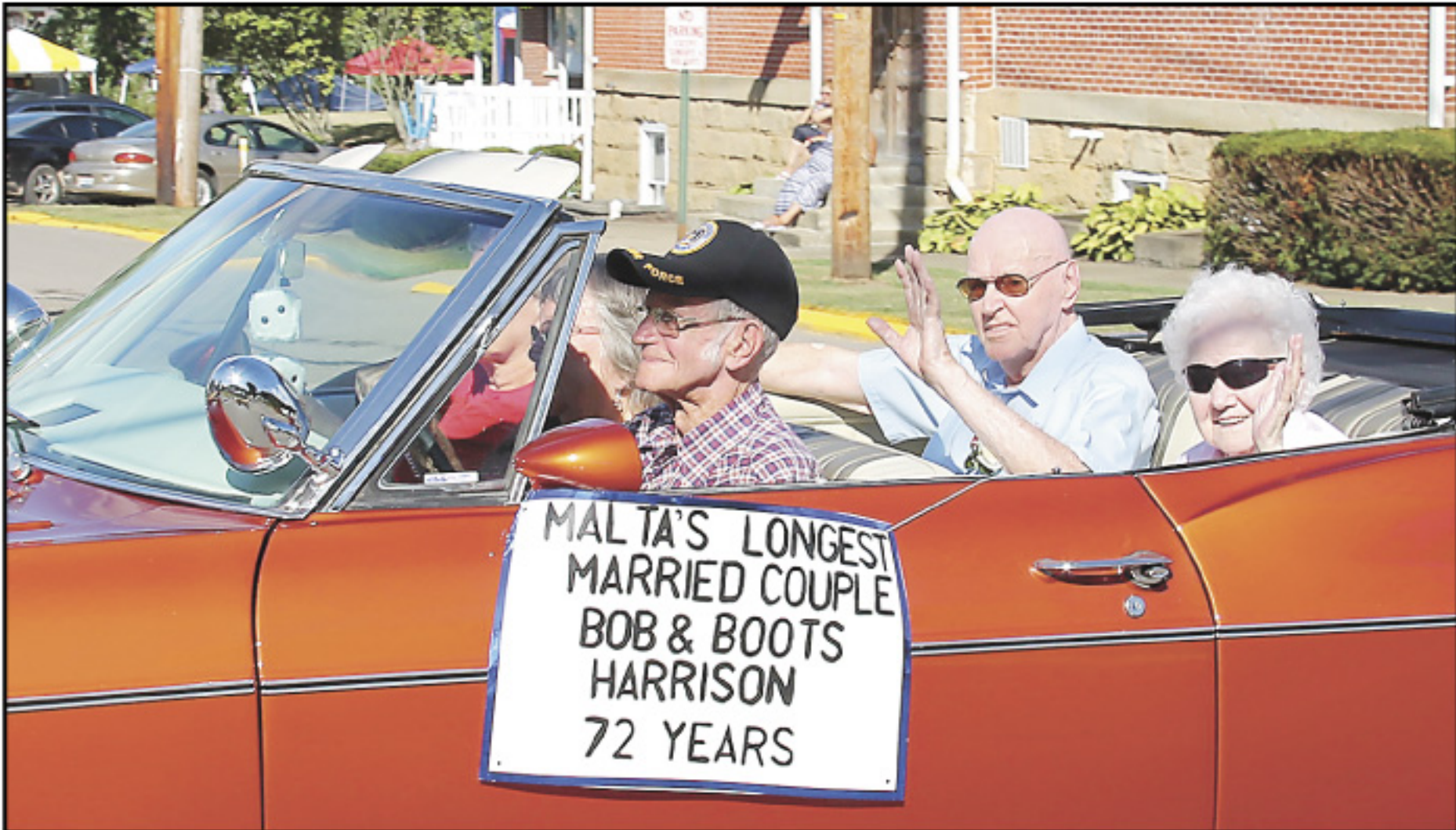
The Harrison's were married in June of 1944. Mr. Harrison was 18 years old when they married. Mrs. Harrison was 17. They noted that they were not married in a

church, but at the preacher's house. Mr. Harrison said they had to wait to perform the service until after the preacher was done with his chores.

"He had just finished milking the cows," Mr. Harrison said, "and we had to wait for him to get his suit on."

The Harrison's lived in Ringgold before moving to Malta. Mr. Harrison said Ringgold did not have electricity until 1948. He said, before that, they had a "light

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MCH Photo / TRICIA GRIFFIN

ROBERT AND BEULAH 'BOOTS' HARRISON, THE LONGEST MARRIED COUPLE IN MALTA

Spotlight on Bessie Hill: The Oldest Woman in Malta

By JAY CORDRAY

Bessie Hill was born in Marietta, OH, on August 1, 1915. She grew up in Stewart, near Athens. Her parents moved to Stewart when she was two years old. She had one brother and two sisters growing up, all of whom have since passed away. One of her sisters, Janie, passed away at the age of 103, and the other, Ruby, at 100. Her brother, Alfred, passed away in his 80s.

Mrs. Hill said she doesn't know too many people in Malta, as she lived in Chesterhill most of her life. However, many Malta residents are a part of her family. Her granddaughter is Patti White, wife of Malta Village Councilman Jamie White. Her great-granddaughter is Tricia Griffin, who is married to another Village Councilman, Bryon Griffin.

Mrs. Hill's father was an auto mechanic, and he owned his own garage. She said she cannot cook because she was always helping her father work on cars. Mrs. Hill said she was a bit of a tomboy growing up.

"I remember wearing overalls, and girls didn't wear overalls in those days," she said.

Mrs. Hill graduated from Rome-Canaan High School, in Athens County, in 1933. There were 31 people in her graduating class.

Mrs. Hill said she and her husband, Wilfred, grew up together in Stewart. They were married in 1935, and were married for 75 years. They had two daughters, with seven grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 26 great-great grandchildren.

Mr. Hill worked for Ohio Fuel, which was

later purchased by Columbia Gas. Mrs. Hill is a former employee of Gould, and worked as a substitute bus driver in the 80s.

"When the boys on the school bus got so ornery that I couldn't stand it, I quit," she said. "I didn't think kids would get that nasty with you, but they do."

The Hill's moved from Athens to Chesterhill, in 1940, just in time for their daughters Ajuana Faye (Worthington) and Arita Rae (Ellis) to start school. Over the years, the Hill's owned four separate properties in Chesterhill.

Until the mid-50s, Mr. and Mrs. Hill operated a dairy farm in Chesterhill, and Mrs. Hill would deliver milk to a number of stores in the area, and door-to-door.

Mrs. Hill said her favorite thing to do on the farm was bail hay. She mowed, raked and bailed the hay, into her 80s. She said she loved driving her John Deere tractor.

Even after moving out of Chesterhill, Eddie Lindimore, on SR 60, would let Mrs. Hill come out to his farm and drive his tractor, on her birthday, because she enjoyed it so much.

While on the farm, in Chesterhill, Mrs. Hill's favorite pet was a llama named Sir Lando. She said her husband never liked Sir Lando because he used to chase their cattle, but she loved him.

After she moved to Malta, Sir Lando went to live on a neighbor's farm outside of Chesterhill. Griffin and Mrs. Hill would pull alongside the field he was in and Mrs. Hill would call for him. When Sir Lando saw that it was Mrs. Hill, he would run to

the car to see her.

While llamas are known for spitting at people, Mrs. Hill's daughter said Sir Lando never spit once at anyone. Mrs. Hill added that he was a very polite llama.

Mr. Hill was a representative of the Morgan County Farm Bureau and he and Mrs. Hill travelled all over the United States going to meetings and conferences for the bureau. Mrs. Hill said they had been to all the 50 states with the Farm Bureau, including trips to Alaska and Hawaii.

"We went everywhere together," Mrs. Hill said. "He and I would take turns driving. We'd go 100 miles each, and then switch off. We'd drive straight through."

An avid golfer, Mrs. Hill was a founding member of the Morgan County Traveling Ladies Golf League in 1966. She golfed three or four times a week and still watches golf on television. She was happy to see it back in the Olympics.

Mrs. Hill was also very involved with the

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MCH Photo / TRICIA GRIFFIN

BESSIE HILL, THE OLDEST WOMAN IN MALTA



# MALTA BICENTENNIAL

## The Great Flood of 1913

**By JAY CORDRAY**

“The flood was second only to Noah’s,” said the father of Orville and Wilbur Wright, Bishop Milton Wright, from Dayton, of the flood of 1913.

Over a century later, the flood of 1913, also known as “The Great Flood of 1913,” is still considered the most catastrophic weather disaster in Ohio’s history.

The storms began on Good Friday, March 21, 1913. An arctic high pressure system spawned violent windstorms across the eastern half of the United States. Winds across the Great Lakes reached record-breaking velocities up to 90 miles per hour. Hundreds of telephone and telegraph poles across half a dozen states were destroyed. Freezing rain coated everything in thick ice. The middle of the country was completely without communication.

On Easter Sunday, March 23, thunderstorms and tornados developed in the Midwest and swept eastward. For the next five days, streams, creeks and rivers across Ohio flooded after storms dumped as much as 10 inches of rain on the countryside. The Muskingum River reached a height of almost 40 feet in some places, well above its average depth of seven feet.

With no telephone or telegraph lines, the only warning that communities downstream had was from word-of-mouth,

church bells, or a few community fire sirens.

Though no deaths were recorded in Morgan County, statewide, the death toll was over 460. Of the 31 houses and farms between Zanesville and McConnelsville, only 13 were left standing. In Malta, 200 families were left homeless by the flood.

In McConnelsville, 28 buildings were washed away. Malta was much more sorely hurt than McConnelsville. Malta lies mainly in the floodplain, and 60 percent of the town was flooded. Both the Hoffman Tannery and the Brown Manly Plow Company saw their main buildings washed away. The Valley Mantel Company canning factory was carried away, dropping a line of canned goods for a good mile.

“When the waters all receded,” Larry Cordray said, recalling a story told to him by his grandmother, the late Mary Cordray, “my grandmother, and her brothers, waded around in all the mudholes and picked up all kinds of canned goods. But the labels weren’t put on the cans very well back in those days, and they were washed off the cans. So, they ate canned goods for six or seven months after that, but they never knew what they were going to get. They might have four days in a row of nothing but corn.”

More than 1,000 people died nationwide, including those killed by tornados.

In all of Ohio, over 40,000 homes were flooded, with infrastructure damage alone estimated at \$3 billion in today’s dollars. Damages were reported to be in excess of \$350,000 in Morgan County. Adjusted for inflation, that is over \$8.1 million dollars in damages, just in Morgan County.

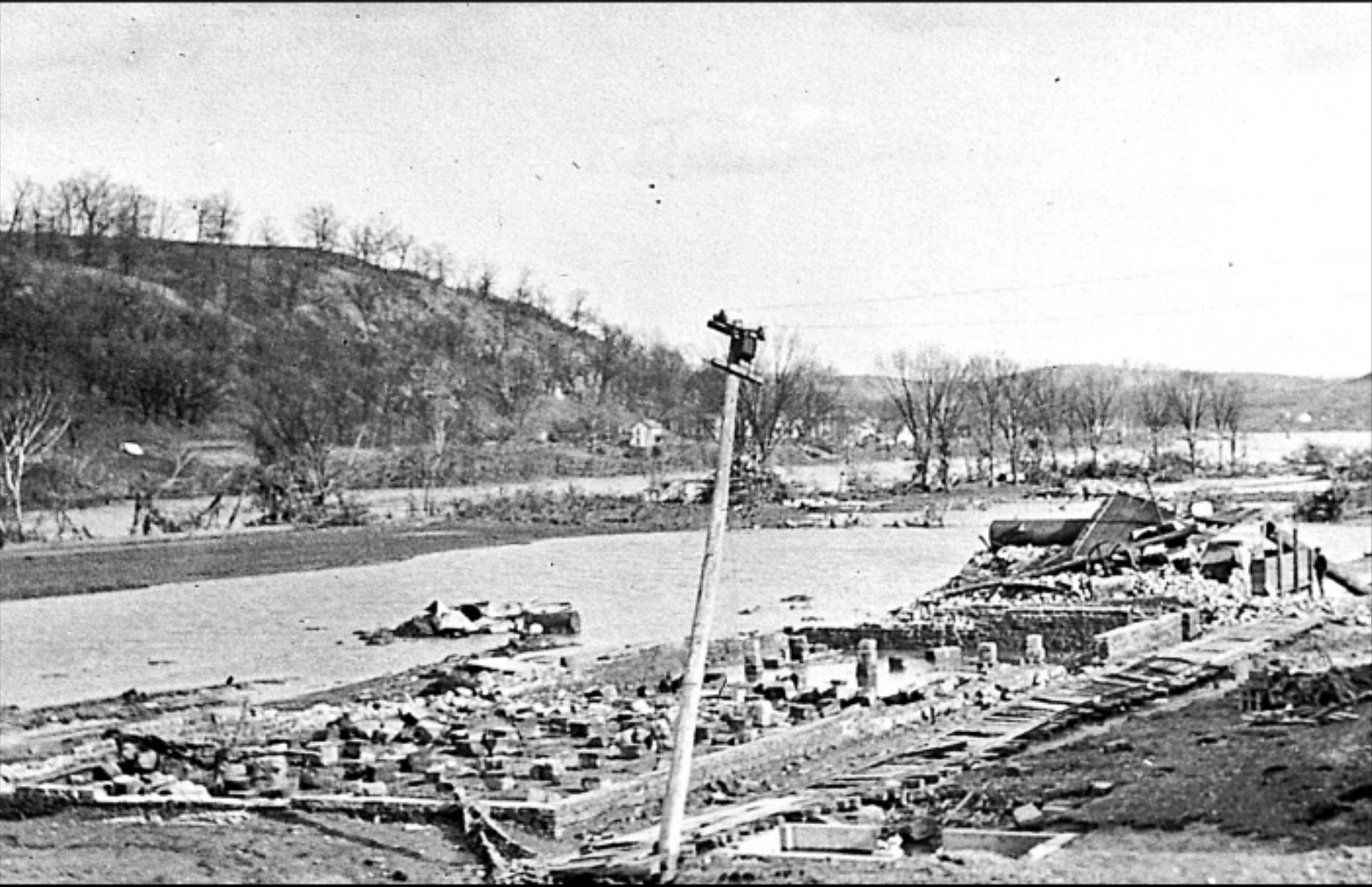
Sarah Jamison, a National Weather

Service flood expert in Cleveland, compared the flood to a number of more recent weather disasters.

“This event was so historic, but it really has slipped through the public consciousness,” she said. “If you think about the scale of this event, it was a hurricane Katrina or a superstorm Sandy.”



“The Twin City Bridge,” connecting Malta and McConnelsville, was destroyed by the flood of 1913.



The remains of the Valley Mantel Company. The canning company sat alongside the Muskingum River, and was almost entirely washed away by the flood.



Main Street, Malta, after the flood. Sixty percent of the village was flooded, and 200 families were left homeless.

## The First 100 Years

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began the manufacture of a one-horse double shovel plow in Unionville. The business expanded to Malta in 1859. At that time, the company employed 12 to 15 people at any given time.

A two-story brick school house was constructed in the village in 1858. The building was sold in 1890.

The Seventh Street Church of Christ was first organized in 1859 as the Christian Church of Malta. The church operated until 1861, when it was broken up for a time. It was reorganized in 1865, and a building was erected on Fourth Street to serve the congregation. It moved to Seventh Street in 1926.

In 1864, W.P. Brown and John Brown formed a partnership with James and

Frankly B. Manly, to create the Brown-Manly Plow Company. By 1885, their sales reached two-thirds of the United States. At the height of their success, 150 to 200 men were employed by the Brown-Manly Plow Company.

After many years of discussion, work began on a wooden toll bridge connecting Malta and McConnelsville in 1866. The bridge was completed in 1867. It continued as a toll bridge until it was purchased by the county commissioners in 1882.

A.L. Miller was the first jeweler in Malta. In 1872, he erected the Miller Building, which housed the Malta National Bank for a number of years. It is now the home of Washington-Morgan County Community Action.

Malta National Bank was chartered in 1872.

Malta Grange number 717, located in Malta Township, organized March 7, 1874.

In 1875, Austin Allen Coulson, along with C.W. Davis, purchased the John Hall & Son store, located on Front Street, where the Twin City Saloon now sits vacant. Davis retired in 1864, and the business became known as the A.A. Coulson & Company. It operated as a successful mercantile and dry goods business for many years.

Misses Beckwith Millinery and Fancy Goods Store was opened in 1878, by Emma and Serepta Beckwith.

In 1880, the population of Malta was 652.

The Malta Hotel was erected in 1880, on the southwest corner of Main Street and Adams Street. The hotel was originally known as the “Valley House.”

The Malta Elementary School was erected on four lots on Main Street in 1890.

The original Malta Manufacturing Company was founded in 1896. It was located where Goins Park is now. The company made windows, door frames, brackets, moldings, and more. The Malta Manufacturing Company was in business until 2001. At one time, they employed between 400 and 500 people.

The “Twin City Bridge,” connecting Malta and McConnelsville, was completed and dedicated in 1902. This bridge was destroyed shortly after in the flood of 1913.

Numerous homes and businesses were destroyed by the flood of 1913, including Malta Manufacturing Company; Malta’s hydroelectric plant was destroyed, leaving only the foundation and turbines; the canning factory; the Valley Mantel Company; and many others.



Malta Elementary School, constructed in 1890, was demolished in 2002. Muskingum Valley Health Center was built on this location in 2011.



Tha Malta Hotel, on Main Street, served guests and organizations for 100 years, before being demolished in 1980.



Atlantic Gasoline was located on the spot of the present day-River Queen Tavern & Restaurant.



Main Street, Malta, in the days of brick streets and horse-drawn carriages.



MALTA BICENTENNIAL

The Second 100 Years

**By JAY CORDRAY**

Following the Great Flood of 1913, Malta, along with the neighboring village of McConnelsville, underwent a great period of rebuilding.

The Malta Manufacturing Company, which was previously located at the junction of Main Street and SR 78, was rebuilt at Thirteenth Street and Main.

The “Twin City Bridge,” which connected Malta and McConnelsville, was destroyed in the flood. A new iron bridge was built to replace it in 1914. This bridge was rededicated the “Veterans Memorial Bridge” on July 7, 2001.

In 1919, the Morgan County Farmers’ Elevator Company bought the lot next to the Malta United Methodist Church on Fourth Street and erected a feed store. It was in business until 1961.

William Howard Baldwin, formerly of Xenia, Ohio, purchased the Malta Greenhouse on the corner of Main Street and Eleventh Street. Baldwin operated the greenhouse until his death in 1949.

In 1916, Malta’s original two-story brick school house, which was built in 1858, was sold to Carlos S. Martin. Martin turned the building into a feed store which he operated until 1930.

The Ace Hi Filling Station, on Main St., was opened for business in 1925 by brothers-in-law George T. Hoffman and Charles M. Barkhurst. The business was sold to the Standard Oil Company in 1956.

In 1927, the Malta and McConnelsville Gas Company obtained a franchise to supply natural gas to residents of the area. Three years later, this company merged with the Ohio Fuel Gas Co., which supplies gas for Columbia Gas to this day.

In 1932, Ernest M. Elliot started selling lumber and other building materials from a business he previously co-owned with Hobart Smith. This eventually became known as the Elliot Lumber Co.

Also in 1932, the Gessel Milling Co. constructed a mill on Main Street in Malta. The mill changed business models, and hands in the family, until it was destroyed by a fire in 1955. After the fire, it became the Gessel Tractor & Implement Co., and focused on selling farm machinery.

Taylor Woodcraft, Inc. was founded in 1948. The company launched its business in a small building in the back of the Malta Hotel. In 1964, the company constructed a new plant, on CR 2 in Malta, which was in business until 1995.

In 1950, a fire devastated the Brown-Manly building on Main Street. Along with the Brown-Manly building, the Malta Town Hall, and four houses were destroyed in the blaze. Two hundred and fifty people lost their jobs. The fire marked the end of a long and prosperous company.

In 1952, The River Queen, one of the longest-running businesses currently in Malta, opened.

In 1960, Muskingum Valley Grocery moved from McConnelsville to Malta.

In 1962, the Dari-Whip was opened on Main Street, by Bob Reed. The Dari Whip has changed hands a number of times over the years, but remains a family favorite in Malta to this day.

In 1966, Malta celebrated its Sesquicentennial on the weekend of Friday, October 28, through Monday, October 31. The celebration was reported to have drawn over 20,000 visitors during the four-day period. Organizers dressed in

old-fashioned clothing, and the men all grew long beards in honor of the village’s founders. The celebration featured an antique show, a talent show, parades, and a spitting contest.

In 1968, a new bridge was constructed between Malta and McConnelsville, connecting SR 78, on the Malta side of the Muskingum River, with SR 60 on the McConnelsville side. Despite being almost 50 years old, this bridge is still referred to by most residents of the county as “the new bridge.”

The Poor House Inn, a steakhouse, located on Main Street, opened in 1975.

In 1980, the Malta Hotel, a century old landmark in the village, was razed. Along with hosting guests and travelers for a hundred years, the hotel served as a meeting place for the Rotary and Lions Clubs, and was the location for countless weddings, anniversary and birthday dinners. In later years, it was the home of the Malta Rescue Mission and the Malta Pilgrim Bible Church.

In 1989, the ball park at the corner of Main Street and SR 78 was dedicated the “Chet Goins Field” in honor of Chet Goins. Goins was a Little League coach and a beloved member of the Malta community, who was killed in an automobile accident in late 1988.

The Malta Elementary School celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1990. Staff and students celebrated by dressing in old-fashioned clothing and using pens and inkwells to complete their assignments.

The discount retailer chain Family Dollar opened a store in Malta in 1991, opposite the Chet Goins Field, on SR 78 and Main Street.

In 1997, new playground equipment was added to the park on Malta’s Riverfront Park. The park is officially named the Frank Dempster Memorial Park. Dempster was a former mayor of the village, serving from 1976 to 1988.

A Sternwheeler Cruise-In was held on the banks of the Muskingum River in 2000. Eleven sternwheelers, from three states, traveled to Malta to take part in the event and celebrate the importance of the boats in the history of the area.

In 2001, Malta Windows closed. Originally known as the Malta Manufacturing Company, the business was founded in 1896, and was a financial lynchpin for the community and for its many employees.

The Malta Elementary School, on Main Street, was demolished in 2002.

In 2005, the M-M Kiwanis park opened. The park is jointly owned by the villages of Malta and McConnelsville and features a basketball court, a number of ball fields, and a skate park.

Malta embarked on a major construction project, upgrading the village’s sewer system in 2011. The project was done in three phases: Phase One began in 2011 and was completed in 2012; Phase Two was started in 2014, and was completed in the summer of 2015; and Phase Three began in late 2015 and was completed in the early summer of 2016.

Also in 2011, Muskingum Valley Health Center was opened, on the site of the Malta Elementary School, on Main Street. The health center offers residents the opportunity to visit general practitioners, as well as dental services, without having to travel to Zanesville or Marietta.

Malta’s ‘Famous Sons’ made their mark in history

**By JAY CORDRAY**

Most residents of Malta and Morgan County know of Malta’s most famous son, James Ball Naylor. Naylor was a doctor who in his spare time wrote numerous novels, children’s books, poems, and even columns for magazines. But, Naylor was not the only son of Malta to achieve some degree of fame, or notoriety. There have been other Malta-born men, besides Naylor, who left the village to make a name for themselves. Today, we look at three of them: U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Jeremiah McLain Rusk, General Rufus R. Dawes and former Texas Governor W. Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel.

Jeremiah McLain Rusk (1830-1893) was a General in the Union Army during the Civil War, a U.S. Representative, the 15th Governor of the State of Wisconsin, and the second U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Rusk was born in Malta. His early years were spent as a farmer, before becoming an inn-keeper and finally a banker in the years before the American Civil War.

In 1862, Rusk joined the Union Army, as a member of the 25th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment. Rusk served the Union Army faithfully throughout the war, ultimately attaining the rank of Brevet Brigadier General of volunteers, in 1866, by the appointment of then President Andrew Johnson.

After the war, Rusk became a congressman in the United States House of Representatives, as a representative from the state of Wisconsin. He served in Congress from 1871 to 1877.

Upon leaving congress, he became Governor of Wisconsin. Rusk would serve as governor of Wisconsin for three terms, from 1882 to 1889.

In 1889, Rusk accepted the cabinet position of Secretary of Agriculture under President Benjamin Harrison.

Rusk lived most of his life, and was buried, in Viroqua, Wisconsin.

Rufus R. Dawes (1838-1899) was also a

General in the Union Army during the Civil War, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, a businessman, and an author. He was born in Malta, on July 4, 1838.

Dawes served in the Union Army, during the American Civil War, from 1861 to 1864. Like Rusk, Dawes also migrated to Wisconsin. He became a member of the 6th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. And, not unlike Rusk, he too attained the rank of Brigadier General. He was noted for his service in the famed Iron Brigade, during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Dawes was the father of six children, one of whom, Charles G. Dawes, served as Vice-President of the United States, under President Calvin Coolidge.

After the war, Dawes returned to Ohio, and entered the lumber business. He became a Companion of the Ohio Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, and was also a Trustee for Ohio’s Institute for the Deaf and Dumb.

Dawes was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, in 1881, as a representative from the 15th Congressional District of Ohio. He served for one term.

In 1890, Dawes published a well-received account of his career in the Civil War entitled “Service With the 6th Wisconsin Volunteers.” This memoir was republished in 1962, by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, for the Wisconsin Civil War Centennial Commission.

Dawes served on the Board of Trustees of Marietta College from 1871 until his death in 1899, at the age of 61. He was laid to rest in Marietta’s Oak Grove Cemetery. He was elected to Marietta College’s Hall of Honor in 2003.

Finally, Wilbert Lee “Pappy” O’Daniel (1890-1969) was a radio host, a songwriter, a U.S. Senator and a former Governor of the state of Texas.

O’Daniel was born in Malta, but moved to Kansas with his mother, as a boy, after his father was killed in an accident.

In 1925, after working with various companies in Kansas City, MO, and New Orleans, O’Daniel began to work for the Burrus Mill Flour Company in Fort Worth, TX. He eventually assumed responsibility for the Burrus Company’s radio advertising. He wrote songs, sang, and hired a group of musicians to form a band to back his vocals.

Originally called the Light Crust Doughboys, O’Daniel’s band later became “Pat O’Daniel and his Hillbilly Boys,” named after O’Daniel’s own Hillbilly Flour Company.

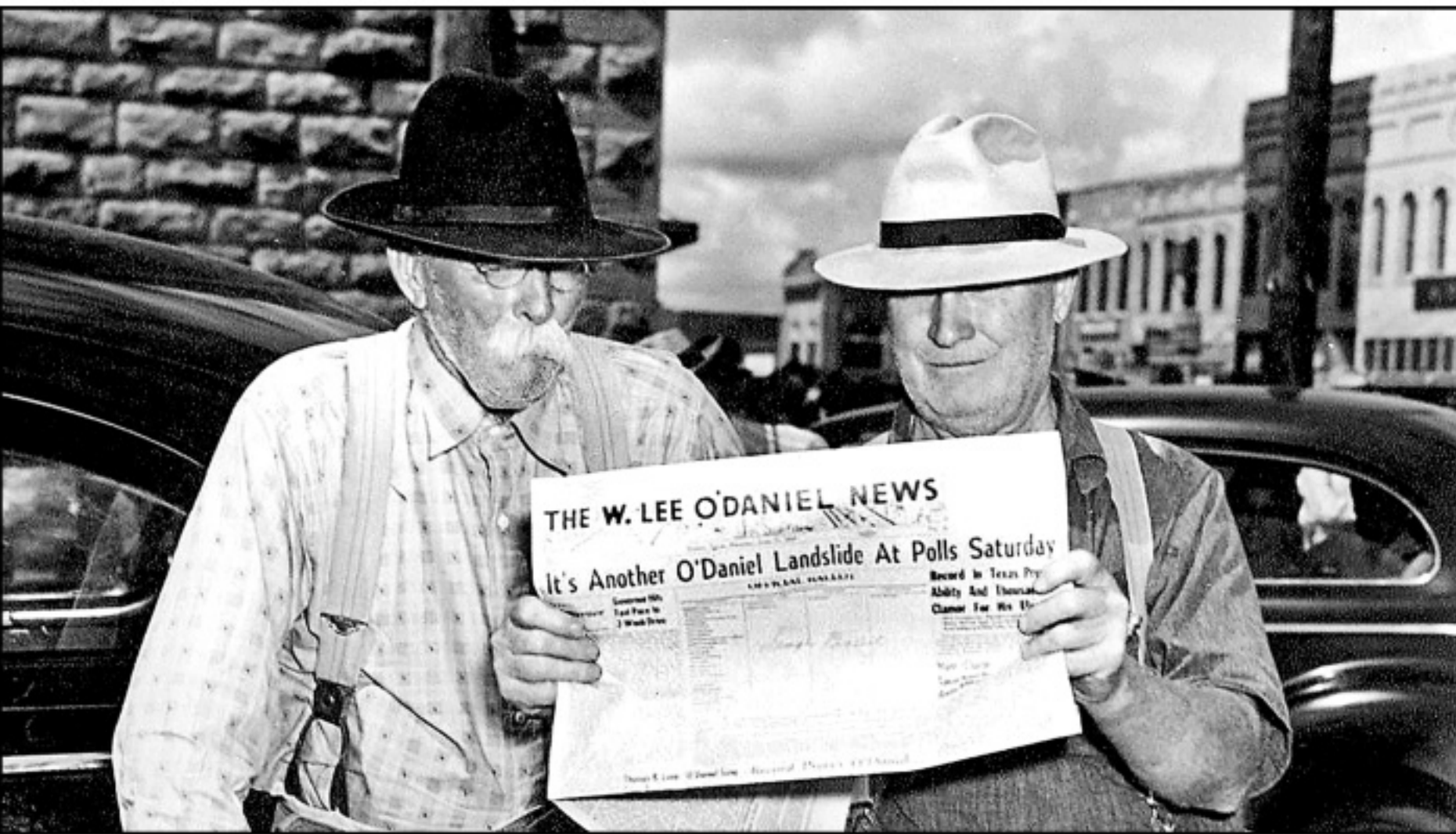
O’Daniel was propelled into the public spotlight when he became the host of a statewide noontime radio show. He earned the nickname of “Pappy” thanks to a catchphrase used frequently on air, “pass the biscuits, Pappy.” By the mid-1930s, “Pappy” O’Daniel was a household name in Texas. The show extolled the values of Hillbilly Brand Flour, the Ten Commandments and the Bible.

In 1938, he ran for governor of Texas, winning the Democratic primary with 51 percent of the ballots over twelve opponents. He was elected governor in 1938, and was re-elected for a second term in 1940.

In 1941, O’Daniel ran for the United States Senate, in a special election. He defeated Lyndon Johnson by 1,311 votes, in one of the more controversial elections in state history. His victory made him the only person to ever defeat Johnson for elected office.

O’Daniel died in Dallas on May 12, 1969. He was buried in Hillcrest Memorial Park, in Dallas.

Governor O’Daniel was immortalized in the 2000 film “O Brother, Where Art Thou,” starring George Clooney. The film, which is set in Mississippi, features a character named Governor Pappy O’Daniel, played by Charles Durning, who was loosely based on the real O’Daniel.



Two supporters of Texas Gov. W. Lee O’Daniel read an edition of The W. Lee O’Daniel News, with the headline “It’s Another O’Daniel Landslide at Polls Saturday.”

Malta’s Longest Married Couple

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plant,” what we would refer to as a generator nowadays. He said the light plant generated just enough electricity to power the lights in their house and a milking machine in their barn.

In 1951, an ice storm hit Ringgold and wiped out the electricity for almost two months.

Mr. Harrison said that even after they got electricity, they did not own a refrigerator until they moved to Malta in 1953. Before then, they kept their milk, and a few other items, in what Mrs. Harrison referred to as a “milk cooler.”

Mrs. Harrison worked for a dry cleaner, in McConnelsville, for 17 years. After that, she worked at the Ben Franklin store in McConnelsville, for another 17 years.

According to the Harrisons, Malta has not changed much in size over the years, but it has lost a lot of businesses. The Harrisons recounted business after business that had came and went, including Glidden’s Restaurant, A&P Grocery Store, Hileman’s Carpet, and many others.

Mrs. Harrison recalled riding the B&O Railroad that used to come through Malta. The railroad traveled through Marietta, to Malta, then went on to Zanesville. Mrs. Harrison said she and her daughter used to ride the train all the way to Newark and back.

The Harrison’s spoke about having a party telephone line. A party line is a shared telephone line that would service a number of houses in a given area. For example, everyone on the same road might share the same line. So, if you want-

ed to make a call and you picked up the receiver, you might very well join your neighbors in conversation. You could not make a call yourself until your neighbor hung up the phone at their residence.

In those days, there was a telephone operator located in one of the second story rooms on the square in McConnelsville, just down the street from Morris Hardware. Mr. Harrison said they had a telephone on the wall with a crank handle and when you wanted to make a call, you would pick up the mouthpiece and tell the operator who you wanted to talk to. The operator would then connect the call.

Mr. Harrison said back then, they did not even have telephone numbers.

The Harrison’s were members of Fairview United Methodist Church, in

Dale, until they were no longer able to attend services. However, Mr. Harrison is still a church trustee and continues to receive calls for advice from other members of the church. Recently, the congregation of Fairview purchased him an electronic lift-chair to help him sit down and stand back up, because it is not so easy for a man of his age.

Over the years, Mr. Harrison has had four pacemakers, Mrs. Harrison has had three. Mrs. Harrison has had two strokes. Mr. Harrison recently had his eyes operated on. They both have battled cancer. Through it all, they have remained together. Their family and friends, their faith, and their love for one another, have helped them become the longest married couple in Malta.

The Oldest Woman in Malta

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Girl Scouts. She said she was the cookie chairman and would drive to Newark to pick up the cookies for all the Girl Scout troops in the county. Mrs. Hill said her favorite kind of Girl Scout cookies are the Thin Mints.

“She’d always freeze them,” Griffin said, “so she could have one every morning.”

Another of Mrs. Hill’s passions is OSU Buckeye football. She watches the Buckeyes every time they play on TV.

Even though Mrs. Hill never attended a Buckeyes game herself, she did host a number of OSU players at her home, last year, on her birthday.

As Griffin explained it, she had become friends of one of the Buckeyes, Jamal Luke, through a nutritional products business. Several OSU players were in the area for a football camp when Griffin asked Luke if he would visit her grandmother on her 100th birthday. Luke agreed, and surprised Mrs. Hill by bring-

ing with him Chris Carter, Jimmie Bell, Dionte Allen, Dimitrios Makridis and Pierre Woods.

“They sure were nice men,” Mrs. Hill said.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill moved to Malta, from Chesterhill, in 2005, after being involved in a traffic accident.

Mr. Hill passed away in 2010, at the age of 92.

Mrs. Hill said the best thing about living in Malta is being so close to her family and

sharing vegetables from her neighbor, Grant Earich’s garden. Mrs. Hill is currently teaching Griffin how to can vegetables.

“We get lots of joy out of his garden,” Mrs. Hill’s daughter commented.

Mrs. Hill stays in touch with her numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great children through email, Facebook and other social media. She loves to get online and look at everybody’s pictures.

“I’ve had a very happy life,” Mrs. Hill said. “I don’t regret any of it.”



# MALTA BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



MAYOR'S CHOICE – Larry Still's 1971 351 Boss Mustang.



DJ'S CHOICE – Larry Way's 1942 Dodge truck.



DRIVERS' CHOICE – Zeke and Judy Miller's 1948 Anglia.



MALTA OWNED AND MALTA DRIVEN – Russell Erwin's 1970 Pontiac Firebird.



Members of the Malta Village Council receive proclamations of recognition celebrating the village's bicentennial. From left: Councilmen Tom McCoy, President Terry McGrath, Bryon Griffin, State Senator Troy Balderson, Councilwoman Leslie Robbins, Adam Rapien, from the office of U.S. Congressman Steve Stivers, State Representative Ron Hood, Councilmen Jamie White and Joe Williams.



Theresa Marie Flaherty, author of *The Final Test: A Biography of James Ball Naylor*, gives a presentation on Naylor to a group of attentive guests.



RICK SHRIVER'S GYPSY ENSEMBLE



DARLA'S DANCERS



THE PATRIOTIC BOUNCE HOUSE, COURTESY OF THE VFW



DOC AND SALLY RICHMOND'S SARSAPARILLA WAGON



Friends and family watch the performance by Darla's Dancers.



Visitors of the Malta Bicentennial celebration enjoy the car show.

Herald photos by Tricia Griffin