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### Did you know?

...that the city started with just four industries in 1955; Fisher Body, American Cyanamid, Associated Aircraft Tool Mfg. Co. and Bright-O-Inc.?

## Cropenbaker Led Schools Through Rough Times

Robert W. Cropenbaker served the Fairfield School District for 32 years most of which time was spent as superintendent. He led the district through the most expansion of students and buildings that the district will probably experience.

He was born in California, KY on October 20, 1913 and was educated in Campbell County, KY schools. After graduating from A.J. Jolly High School he entered Kentucky Wesleyan College on an athletic scholarship and participated in baseball and basketball. During the last semester of his senior year, he signed a professional contract with the Cincinnati Reds. Later he was sent to the Paducah, KY Indians, a member of the "Old Kitty League" with teams in Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri. After leaving baseball in 1937 he took a teaching position at Camargo High School in Montgomery County, KY. During his six year tenure there he married a fellow teacher, Lena Rader and they enjoyed a 40 year marriage until her death in 1978.

In 1943 Robert became a teacher in the Fairfield School District but only served for one year. He was named the Fairfield High School Principal in 1944. Shortly before Fairfield became a city in 1955, Robert was appointed Superintendent, a job he held for 20 years and became the longest term of any Superintendent to date. During his tenure the Fairfield City School District experienced the greatest growth in student population forcing the district to operate the elementary and junior high on double sessions. He oversaw the construction of North Elementary in 1958, West Elementary in 1959, South Elementary in 1972 as well as additions to the High School on Nilles Road.

In 1980, after five years of retirement, Bob was married to Patsy Ruth Davis who was a Hamilton City School District elementary teacher. Their marriage lasted 21 years until Pat passed away in 2002.

Robert was involved in many clubs and organizations, including the a lifetime membership in the Butler County and Ohio State Retired Teachers Association, the Ohio State PTA Association as well as the state and national Superintendent's associations, the Ohio Junior Achievement Club, United Way Board, Fairfield High School Athletic Hall of Fame and the O'Tucks . He was also President of the Butler County Schoolmaster Club and was named a Kentucky Colonel.

At his 90th birthday celebration Robert was asked what his most meaningful life achievements were; he immediately answered, "Being married for a period of sixty-one years to two lovely women, and working with Fairfield students and their parents for 32 years."

Robert passed away May 2, 2006 at age 92.

## WMOH Revives 1976 April 1

WMOH 1450 AM rewinds the clock from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on April 1, 2014 to April 1, 1976 (NO FOOLIN'). Live DJ's will include Johnny Wade, Dan Loftus, Big Joe London, Jim Nelson, Eileen, Johnny Midnite, Jim Jordan, Mary Helen Sutton, P. Michael Griffin and Bob the Producer Berry spinning the sounds of the 70's. Bob Long and Dean Langevin will have the news of the day. Hamilton Mayor Pat Moeller and Fairfield Mayor Steve Miller will be on the air from 9-10 a.m.

Former Fairfield City Council member Johnny Wade Brown plays the Top 40 in 1976 during his stint at 1450 WMOH. (Courtesy WMOH Rewind 76)



## Tommy Toes by Ercel Eaton

I've had a lot of jobs in my 80-something years. The first I can remember is among acres of cornstalks taller than my small height. Corn was one of the most important crops treasured by farmers in the southeastern part of Kentucky, deep in the Appalachian mountains where I spent a lot of my child hood.

Our cornfields ran almost straight up the slopes where we climbed to hoe the rows, that stood like soldiers as our family members worked among them. They needed hoeing at least three times a season. But my job came early in the lives of the little corn –thinning corn. I must leave three plants in each hill, so I had to know how to count.

Speaking of thinning corn reminds me of a little essay mailed to me by a first cousin, Schuyler Day of Kernersville, NC. I'm sure he wrote it shortly before his death several years ago. We hadn't seen each other in a long time, but we grew up along Polls Creek in Leslie County. I'm including the following writing in his memory. It is titled 'Tommy Toes.'

*We called them Cherry Tomatoes, but our grandparents called them Tommy Toes and planted them throughout the cornfields and around the edges of the gardens and creeks. Fifty to 75 years ago people in those mountains planted every bench and cove of land in large grain white corn to provide cornmeal for their family as well as feed for their horses, mules, cows, hogs, chickens, ducks and geese.*

*Corn was a staple and certainly necessary for the mountain families. Those who had an abundant supply of corn used it like cash to barter for labor. Those who didn't, gladly worked three days for just a bushel of corn to grind for meal to feed their families. This writer's grandmother told about carrying Tommy Toes seeds in her apron pocket, and planting them while hoeing corn on a hillside far from the house and water.*

*She had a plan in mind. Later in the summer or early fall the tiny foods would ripen just in time when fodder was ready to be harvested and the weather hot and dry. At that time a large handful of them would take away thirst as well as offer a burst of new energy. Finding a vine full of yellow Tommy Toes might be equal to finding Easter eggs to both adults and children," Schuyler wrote.*

His piece brought a lot of memories foaming into my head. One, the lovely sight of the tomato plants, growing in glowing coils knee-high on cornstalk and weed. The yellow colors sliced through greenery where Mom had scattered seeds she had dried in the summer sun on a window sill. Dried, they were stored until planting time.

As they grew and bloomed they looked for all the world like the edging of embroidery Mom crocheted around pillow case edges. A fistful of the tiny tomatoes slaked dry throats and flowed with bursts of energy through small forms at work. Today perhaps, we'd call them an energy snack.


## Fairfield Trivia

Dalton Court, located off Talawanda Drive near the Village Green, was named in 1969 to honor Gordon Dalton, the first city resident killed in the Vietnam War.

Sacred Heart Church Sister Tamara Blank was discovered roller skating down the school's hallway after school dismissed for the day in the mid 1960's.

In 1958, the city spent \$20,000 to build a structure at 5103 Pleasant Ave. to serve as the municipal building, fire house and police department. The building still stands today vacant but awaiting a new beginning.

**WELCOME TO MY WORLD Fairfield, Ohio**



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