

# BEYOND THE CLOCKTOWER

## NOTE FROM THE ARCHIVIST!

Where has the time gone? It seems like yesterday that I was just writing up this blurb and Memorial Day was just around the corner! Today as I type, it's Labor Day, that's right around the corner!! I don't know about you, but I'm looking forward to cooler days and the bright fall colors that will soon spread over the landscape!

October is Archives Month which is a time to focus on the importance of historical records and enhance awareness of what archivists do to maintain and preserve the vital records that we hold in our repositories. This year October also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Greene County Archives! For the last twenty-five years, Archives' staff have been collecting records of historical value from county offices and departments and ensuring that they are preserved for future generations. We hope that you'll join us at the Archives for a celebratory Open House on October 20, 2021 from 10 AM to 2 PM.

If you haven't already, be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) so you don't miss any of the posts highlighting our historical records. Also, be sure to check out our [FLICKR](#) page for a virtual exhibit on the History of the Greene County Infirmary (AKA, Greenwood Manor). There will also be a small exhibit setup inside the Archives highlighting the history of the Archives. I'm sure there will also be some interesting stories told in our weekly blog, "[Out of the Clock Tower](#)" over the next few months. You never know what we might find here at the Archives!

The Archives is fully open and appointments are not needed in order to visit the Reading Room. We will continue processing record requests through the window in our entry way during our normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 9 AM to 4:30 PM). Please note, while we welcome back our researchers, *Archives' staff are UNABLE to provide genealogical, property, and/or other extensive research.*

Until next time,

Robin Heise

Greene County Records Manager &  
Archivist



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- VIP—John Bryan
- Greene County Fair—  
an excerpt of our blog.
- Discover what's been  
happening in and out  
of the Archives.

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF

JOHN BRYAN.

Residence; Riverside Farm & Park  
Yellow Springs,  
Ohio.

I, John Bryan, of Ohio, born in Auglaize County, near Unionpolis, Ohio, my parents having been John Bryan and Minerva Besse Bryan, in order to perpetuate some of my own wishes and to promote the welfare of some persons who survive after I am dead, do make and declare this my last will and testament:

My "Riverside Farm" consisting of 500 acres, more or less, situated southeast from and near Yellow Springs, Ohio, I give and bequeath to the State of Ohio, conditioned that said farm be cultivated by the State as a Forestry, Botanic and Wild Animal Reserve Park and Experiment Station, and call it after my full name, "The John Bryan Natural History Reserve" and conditioned further, that my body and my wife's body shall never be disturbed nor the tombs molested if I or she should be buried on said Reserve, and it is further conditioned that the State of Ohio, shall not allow or establish any religious institution on said Reserve, nor allow any religious public worship to be practiced or promulgated on said Reserve, nor shall the State exclude from said Reserve well-behaved people of any race or color in the world.

I further condition that my wife and her attendants, if she so desires, shall be allowed by the State to reside on said Reserve during her life, in a house she may choose and retain or build and maintain thereon, and have such reasonable use of barn-room and of horses, automobiles, carriages and other animals of her own as she may need, but she shall interfere not at all, or as little as possible with the use of said Reserve by the State of Ohio, as aforesaid.

If the State of Ohio does not accept said Reserve and use it according to the conditions hereinbefore declared by me, then under similar conditions, I hereby will and bequeath said Reserve to Greene County, Ohio. If not accepted by Greene County, Ohio, then said Reserve shall be sold and considered a part of my general estate and pass with the residue of it as hereinafter provided.

If said Reserve should be accepted by the State or by Greene County, my wife, Fredericka, has already by our antenuptial contract, (now in possession of Milo Snodgrass, Xenia, Ohio) waived her right to dower in said Reserve and has agreed to sign any deed of conveyance of said Reserve made or directed by me, or allow said Reserve to be conveyed without her signature or future consent. And this disposal of said Reserve will work no hardship upon my wife as she will have enough property left out of the residue of my estate to provide for her luxuriously as long as she shall live.

The plot of land which I own, consisting of about fourteen (14) acres, more or less, in the Village of Yellow Springs, Ohio, formerly occupied by the "Old Folks Home" I give and bequeath to the Village or City of Yellow Springs, Ohio, to be used for general park purposes, for lectures, games, refreshments or amusements, but no

## John Bryan, 1851-1918

Born in Auglaize County in 1851, John Bryan grew up to be quite the inventor, entrepreneur, poet, author, and philanthropist. He moved to New York during the late nineteenth century and made a fortune in inventing electrical appliances. In 1896, he visited a friend in Yellow Springs and enjoyed the Miami Township village so much that he relocated that same year to Yellow Springs.

Bryan purchased several hundred acres along Clifton Gorge and named the property "Riverside Farm." By 1910, Bryan married, Fredericka, a woman thirty-five years younger than him. In 1918, John Bryan died and was buried at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. Bryan bequeathed "Riverside Farm" to the state of Ohio "...to be cultivated by the state as a forestry, botanic and wildlife reserve park and experiment station."

In 1949, John Bryan State Park was transferred to the newly established Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

*First Page of John Bryan's Last Will and Testament*



*John Bryan State Park,  
courtesy of Travel and  
Shoot via Flickr*



*Tractor Pull at the Greene County Fair, 1983  
(Greene County Parks & Trails Collection)*

## Calendar Events

- \* **Monday, September 6th:** Greene County Archives closed in observance of Labor Day
- \* **October 12, 2021, 2:00 PM:** Spooky Tales—Virtual event via Zoom
- \* **October 20, 2021, 10:00 AM—2:00 PM:** Greene County Archives' Open House
- \* **Facebook Live Tours, during the month of October**
- \* For October events, please check out our [Facebook page](#) closer to when these events occur for updates.

## A PASSAGE FROM OUR BLOG



## Greene County Fair Week

Each year during the first week of August, the Greene County Fair is celebrated. This year, marked the Fair's 182 years of its existence.

The Greene County Agricultural Society was established in 1834, with the first fair being held on the Courthouse Square in 1839. After the initial success, the fair witnessed

continued growth and had to move locations several times to accommodate said growth. In 1867, the current location was chosen, and just under 40 acres were purchased to build the fairgrounds (but it has grown to about 50 acres since then). To see some more photos and records from the Greene County Fair, check out our [blog posts](#).

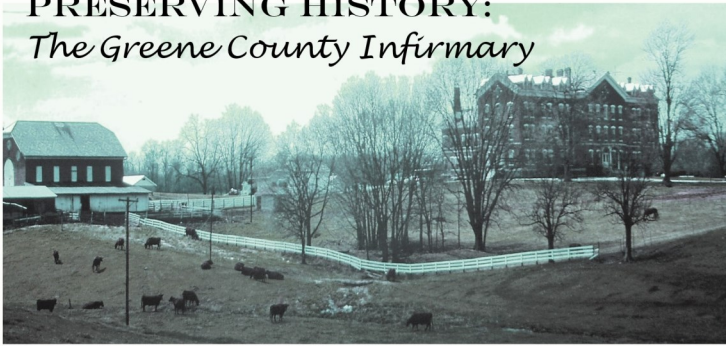


*Above Photograph: Greene County Fair, 1983  
(Greene County Parks & Trails Collection)*

*Right Photograph: Aerial photograph of the Greene County Fairgrounds, 1986 Greene County Parks & Trails Collection)*

# News from the Archives

## PRESERVING HISTORY: *The Greene County Infirmiry*



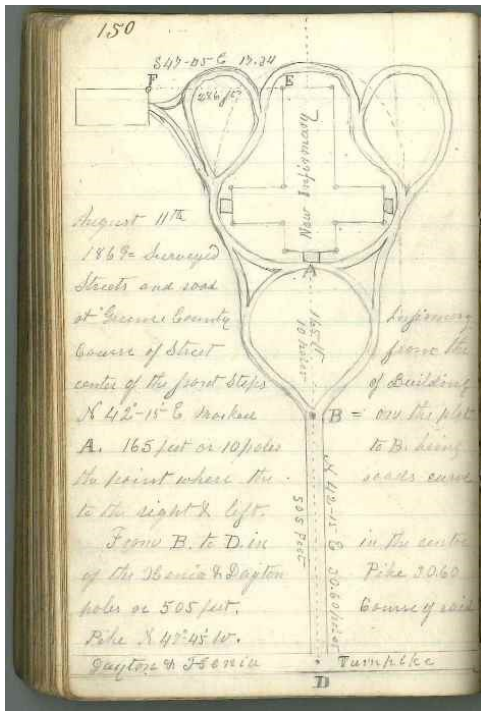
## PRESERVING HISTORY: *Greenwood Manor*



## NEW VIRTUAL EXHIBIT

We have created a new online/virtual exhibit on our [Flickr page](#). Preserving History: The Greene County Infirmiry and Greenwood Manor explores the history of the Greene County Poor House/Home/Infirmiry and Greenwood Manor. Here are some images from the exhibit and a short history.

In 1816, the state of Ohio ratified a bill permitting all Ohio counties the right to establish poor houses in order to meet the needs of the increasing state population. In 1828, the commissioners of Greene County purchased around one hundred acres in Xenia Township for the purposes of erecting a one-story building for the County's indigent and destitute. As the years progressed, the poor house began to outgrow its simple structure. A two-story building replaced the first structure and a mentally ill wing was added.



In 1869, a three-story building superseded the two-story structure and residents or "inmates" as they were referred to, suffered from disabilities, and physical/mental illnesses. In 1977, after one hundred and eight years, the building could no longer properly house and the County Home/Infirmiry was torn down. That same year, Greenwood Manor was opened. For forty-four years, Greenwood Manor operated as a County-run nursing and rehabilitation center.



For the County, it was no longer economically feasible and in July of 2021, Greenwood Manor closed its doors for the last time.