

Clyde Brant

Clyde was born on March 7, 1883 and died May 28, 1943 at the age of 60. He and his sister, Eva Crete (Rardin), were the only children of Joseph Henry I and Kate Brant (Sarah Catherine Funk). Clyde's grandfather was Joseph Brant, Sr. who was the son of Christian Brant and Elizabeth They grew up in Lucasville and later were graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University. There Clyde studied business and journalism and met and married Nellie Mae Idleman in 1904.

Clyde and Crete had attended the Lucasville schools with Branch Rickey. At OWU, Clyde and Branch played baseball together, and Branch later visited Clyde at Lucasville. His strength in journalism took shape as his "Whittler Gazette" newspapers when he managed the Brant Store. He writes about that time playing ball at Ohio Wesleyan University. **"Yes sir, us Lucasvillians just about ran that ball club for four or five years."**

The Brants had three children: Joseph Henry II, Dean and Joan who later married Ralph French. After Nellie died, Clyde married Audrey Slavens.

Although Clyde would have preferred a career in writing and journalism, he dutifully assumed management of Brant's Store. The store was legendary. It carried drugs, dry goods, shoes, fabrics, railroad cross ties, cattle feed, kerosene, clothing, groceries, fresh meat and even sunglasses. During the great Depression, customers often paid by trading produce, eggs, chickens or by signing liens of indebtedness.

As said before, he found an outlet for his writing by publishing the "Whittler's Gazette." Brant installed a "Whittler's Bench in front of the store and promoted the motto "Stop and whittle awhile."

Clyde was involved in the operation of the Scioto County Fair and followed in his father's footsteps in being involved in the Valley Township School System. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge.

In 1914, when a county superintendent was named and took control of school system decisions, Clyde led a township opposition to this authority. Valley managed to hold onto their system from 1914 to 1926. At that time the County abolished the Township school board, created a new district which included

Jefferson Township and a small part of Rush and Morgan Townships, and named a new school board. In 1931, a group of citizens under Brant's leadership formed a statewide group of concerned Townships. This group called themselves the Square Deal Group. At the meeting in Columbus, Clyde was named president. For ten years they opposed the McCowen candidates.

The controversy continued until 1941 when Clyde supported the two McCowen candidates, Sandy Phillips, and Earl Stephens. Earl Stephens managed the Brant farm. In an article in the Portsmouth Times, the 'Old Whittler' said, "One of the main principles he had fought for has been accomplished – the teachers' continuing contract law enacted by the last state legislature...It seems that continued opposition to the county superintendent would not only be useless, but detrimental to the best interests of the schools."

Just one year later, his old nemesis, E.O. McCowen, was elected to Congress, and two years.

later, on a snowy night in January 1943, the Brant Store burns along with Brant's home and other buildings. Clyde had always supported the N&W Railroad whose track ran right behind the store. An N&W train picked up thousands of gallons of water at Clifford and rushed to the fire, but it was too late.

Then in May of that same year, Clyde Brant dies and is buried in Lucasville Cemetery. His life is the stuff of Legends.