

“Doc” Hurd

Russell Alonzo Hurd was born at George Station, Clay Township, Scioto County, Ohio, on February 10, 1904. He and a sister, Sadie Margaret, were raised by their mother & stepfather, Augustus “Gus” and Martha Hill. They attended Davis School, it being one of a handful of Scioto County schools that allowed black children to receive their education alongside their white neighbors.

Early in his life, Russell developed a love for rabbits. He began to raise them & studied the various breeds and varieties. As his knowledge grew, so did his reputation, and he earned the nickname “Doc”, because he was sought after by those who also raised rabbits for show and for meat.

Doc Hurd was a director and active member of the Portsmouth, Ohio Rabbit Breeders Association and raised purebred rabbits for over 50 years. He organized and supervised rabbit shows at the Scioto County Fair for 43 years, and he annually sponsored a rabbit class for 4-H Clubs and presented prize rabbits to the winners. He was a staff member of Portsmouth's 14th Street Community Center for many years and a former employee of the Luther Transfer and Storage Company in Portsmouth. He was also very involved in the Boy Scouts.

Doc Hurd never married, but he assisted with the raising of his niece and nephew, Mary Hill (later wife of Walter Curry) and Harold Hill.

For many years, he was a fixture at the Scioto County Fair, where he could be seen in his beloved rabbit and poultry building. That structure became known as “Doc Hurd's Hutch” in honor of his long years of service to the rabbit community and 4-H clubs.

Doc Hurd died at Pike Community Hospital, Waverly, on January 7, 1992. He was laid to rest in the Orms Cemetery in Rosemount.

Eva Hemans Thomas McConnell

Eva Hemans Thomas was born in Lucasville on July 23, 1871, third child of William Marion and Rachel Rebecca Morgan Thomas. She was one of seven children born to William and Rachel, and four of the children would grow into adulthood.

Her father, William Thomas, had suffered ill health for most of his life. His death in 1882 was a profound blow to the family, but her mother was determined to see that her children were educated.

Indeed, Eva received an excellent education in the Lucasville schools, which was supplemented by her parents' and grandparents' libraries. When Lucasville established a high school, she was one of two graduates in the first class in 1888.

After the Thomas children had advanced as far as possible in the local schools, Rachel Thomas moved the family to Delaware, Ohio, so the children could further their education at Ohio Wesleyan University. Eva entered Ohio Wesleyan University 1888 in Literary course, registered in Academical course in 1889, returned to the University in 1890 in Classical course (freshman standing), and was graduated in 1894.

While at Ohio Wesleyan, she met a young divinity school student, Francis J. McConnell. The two would marry in 1897.

Francis McConnell would soon rise in the ranks of the Methodist Church, eventually becoming bishop. The family resided all across the country, including San Diego, California; Denver, Colorado; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and New York, New York.

When Bishop McConnell retired in 1944, the couple returned to Lucasville, taking up residence on the farm established by Eva's grandparents, James D. and Nancy DeHart Thomas. They spent summers in Lucasville and winters in New York City. The couple decided to turn the farms in Lucasville into a successful business enterprise. Through selective hiring of management, their goal was achieved, and Eva continued to manage the farms well into her 90's.

In his biography, "By the Way", Bishop McConnell said this of his wife, Eva. "She is of enduring and persistent idealism. Through more than a half century of knowledge of her character, I have never known her to weaken or slip in any compromise with

what she holds as ideal. For easy going adjustments to ideals or activities which she does not think worthy, she has no place and holds to what she thinks best without any trace of that priggishness which makes the pretensions of some self-satisfied good people a delusion and a snare.”

And a 1966 newspaper article stated, “At 4 feet 10 ½ inches in height and 90 pounds in weight, Mrs. McConnell is considered a giant by those who work with her at the farm. She still does her own banking, assists with the weekly shopping, and carries on a wide correspondence.”

Eva Thomas McConnell died on February 19, 1968 at the advanced age of 96. She is buried next to her husband in Lucasville Cemetery.

Dr. Henry Clay Beard

Dr. Henry Clay Beard was born December 21, 1839, near Middlebrook, Augusta County, Virginia, a son of William and Jane Ewing Beard. He was born into a family who supported slavery, though it is not known if they ever owned slaves. But in his youth, Henry grew to abhor slavery, and upon completing his early education, he came to Ohio (a state where slavery was always outlawed) in 1859 to begin the study of medicine.

Henry took his first course of lectures at the Medical College of Ohio during the session of 1860-61. After war broke out, in August 1862, Henry enlisted as a private soldier in the 117th O.V.I. (later the 1st Ohio Heavy Artillery). Upon learning that he had enlisted with the Union Army, Henry's family in Virginia cut off all ties with him. He would never see nor hear from his parents again.

Henry was soon promoted to hospital steward and advanced to assistant surgeon of the 1st Regiment Ohio Volunteer Heavy Artillery, second brigade, fourth division, Army of the Cumberland. During the war, he would contract stomach and bowel trouble; this would plague him the remainder of his life. He was mustered out with his regiment at Knoxville, Tenn., July 25, 1865, and returned to Lucasville.

In October 1865, he located at California (now Stockdale), Pike County, Ohio, and engaged in the practice of medicine for four years, at the expiration of which time, he removed to Portsmouth, and engaged in the drug business, but on account of failing health was forced to abandon it and resume the more active duties of the practice of medicine.

In June 1869, he graduated from the Cincinnati College of Medicine and Surgery. He located at Lucasville in May 1870 and was actively engaged in the practice of his profession until near the time of his death.

Henry was married Dec. 25, 1860 to Mary Ellen, daughter of David and Nancy Morgan Noel, she being the descendant of pioneer families of the Lucasville area. They were the parents of five children: Nancy Jane (1862-1863); David Francis (1866-1936); Dr. Michael Jacob (1868-1915); Augusta Virginia (1871-1873); and Roscoe Eugene (1874-1950). Dr. Beard's love and reverence for his native home can be seen in the naming of his second daughter, Augusta Virginia Beard.

Dr. Beard was an active member of the Hempstead Academy of Medicine and the Scioto County Medical society, having filled various offices with honor and acquired the highest esteem and friendship of all with whom he was associated. He was also a member of the Ohio State Medical society, Bailey Post G.A.R., and Lucasville Lodge No. 465 A.F. and A.M.

His obituary, which appeared in "The Portsmouth Blade" on August 21, 1895, stated, "He was a kind husband and an indulgent father. As a man, he was esteemed and respected by all who knew him. As a physician, he ranked at the top of his profession and was noted for his good judgement and the mastery manner in which he led his patients from the valley of the shadow of death into the sun shiny paths of life. Always ready to lend a helping hand to the needy and oppressed, without money and without price, in justice to him, we can, we think, truthfully say that he will reap the reward bestowed upon he faithful who have passed to the great beyond from which none ever return."

Dr. Henry Beard paid a very high price for standing up for what was right, having lost all contact with his family in Virginia. He died at his home in Lucasville on August 21, 1895. He was laid to rest in Lucasville Cemetery.

Genevieve Hamilton Marsh Spriggs

Genevieve Hamilton Marsh was born on her parents' farm south of Lucasville on March 10, 1871. She was the 13th of 14 children born to William Absalom and Eleanor Overturf Marsh.

She was educated at the Marsh School, which still stands off U.S. Route 23 south of the intersection of Cook Road and is used as a house. And when Lucasville established its first high school, she was one of two graduates in the first graduating class in 1888.

Genevieve was very knowledgeable of not only classical studies, but she also developed a keen interest in both domestic activities and in horticulture and animal husbandry. She would just as likely be found outside with her father & his hired farm hands and brothers as she would inside the house, helping her mother & other domestic servants.

Life took a dramatic change for Genevieve when her father, William A. Spriggs, died on May 22, 1889, aged 65. The family struggled to settle his estate and pay off debts and claims put against them while still maintaining the farm. But eventually, all the lands would have to be sold to settle the estate.

Because of her love for farming, it is no surprise that, on April 19, 1892, Genevieve married local farmer John William "Bunker" Spriggs, son of John Crull Spriggs and Julia Ann Farmer (later Shuler). They took over operation of the Spriggs family farm east of Lucasville in Valley Township. The Breckenridge community of homes occupies the former farm.

Genevieve was an active partner in the care of the farm, its crops and livestock. She kept a household and farm journal, detailing home remedies and other "tips of the trade" for farmers of the time.

She was also active in both the Lucasville Methodist Church and of Scioto Valley Grange, a social organization for area farmers and wives. One of the unique aspects of the Grange is that women could hold leadership positions, something that was

almost unheard of in the early 1900's. Genevieve herself served as Master of the Grange.

John and Genevieve had a large family of eight children, who in turn grew to establish families & take on leadership positions. They are: Clara (1894-1976; wife of John S. Alley); Irma (1896-1978; wife of Thurman Milam); Clinton (1898-1989; married Gladys Bernthold); Marsh (1901-1976; married Garnet Keairns and later Mary Russell); Bessie (1904-1978; wife of Ashby Hawk); Charlotte (1906-1999; wife of Tracy Harwood); Louis (1908-1979; married Ann Jane White); and Kathryn (married William Smith).

Genevieve died on the family farm in Valley Township on December 15, 1945. She was laid to rest in Lucasville Cemetery.

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.

Francisco Sutphin Alley

Frank Thompson writes a great blog about many subjects. He researched Frank Alley, one of our early pivotal superintendents that made Lucasville High School a grade 1 rural school in the state. In 1912, the name changed to Valley Township School. Frank has given LAHS permission to use his blog entry as an introduction to Alley being a 2022 Lucasville Legend. Thank you, Frank. He writes,

I had never heard of Professor Alley except for a small paragraph in the Sesquicentennial publication. The entry reads ...

“Also in 1909, Mr. Frank Alley took charge of the Lucasville schools. It was mainly under his leadership that the new high school building of the time was built. He drew the plan. He raised the class of Valley Township schools from third to first place in the State.”

Such a claim as this made me wonder more about Alley. After all, this exalted standing for a small rural school was remarkable. I longed to read more about Alley and the schools of that time, but I could never find any other reference.

Then, I discovered *The Whittlers' Gazette*. The Portsmouth Library has several editions of the wonderful publication on public view. And guess what? In Brant's newspaper I found a story about Professor F. S. Alley. It is a gem for those who hold Lucasville schools near and dear. Allow me to share it with you ...

“I went to our High School Alumni Banquet and had the pleasure of listening to an address by Prof. F. S. Alley. Professor Alley is past 85. He spent 48 years supervising schools in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, seven at the head of the Lucasville schools. He is now a successful poultry raiser and lives on Cockrell's Run.

“Contrary to precedent, Mr. Alley deliberately left a large city school to devote the rest of his active school life to work in the hills, in response to a call from the forward-looking, local board of education which had asked the head of Ohio State University to recommend the best educator in Ohio to assist in carrying out its revolutionary plans.

“Under his leadership, Valley Township was the first in all Ohio to centralize its schools and establish a first grade, rural high school. Mr. Alley said in his address that he had never known of any other school that supplied free text books. So new and successful was the whole idea, Dr. Graham from Ohio State University paid the school several visits and made *lantern slides which he used in lectures and duplicate sets were sent to colleges in every state in the union, to South America, Canada, Mexico, and even to London, England. Mr. Alley has one of these sets in his possession.

“Dr. Graham is now at the head of a department of our Federal Bureau of Education in Washington and no later than last summer, in a lecture before the 4-H Clubs of Ohio again told the story of the development of the Lucasville Schools.

“It is significant that Mr. Alley who had lived in and was familiar with every nook and cranny of at least two states should choose from among them all to come back to the hills of Lucasville to make his permanent home. And the Whittlers' Gazette for one herewith pays tribute to his exceptional abilities and accomplishments. Proud indeed are we to call him a fellow citizen.

* Lantern slides – a slide or transparency for projection by a slide projector or magic lantern.

(The Whittlers' Gazette. Official publication of The Whittlers' Clubs of America. National Headquarters Brant's Store, Main Street, Lucasville, Ohio. July 1930 Edition.)

With this link, I soon discovered an article from *The Newark Weekly Advocate*...

“One of the best examples of what can be accomplished in a centralized school through better trained teachers and more complete equipment is found in the school at Lucasville, Valley Township, Scioto County, Ohio.

“The valuation of this township is but a million and a half dollars. Still, through the leadership of Superintendent F. S. Alley, a centralized school has been erected and a fine equipment for industrial work installed in the building.

“A regular four-year course is given in the high school by three trained teachers, each of whom conducts a particular phase of the industrial branches, manual training, domestic science, and agriculture. A large basement room is divided into

laboratories to aid in the teaching of chemistry, physics, biology, manual training, and domestic science. The manual training room contains 15 individual work benches and the domestic science room 10 individual stoves, two sewing machines, dining room table, and dishes. All counters, lockers, and tables were built by the boys in their manual training work.

“There is also a room in the building which is frequently used for public lectures. Three acres of land space for a school garden and plans are being made this spring to set out shrubbery in desirable places about the grounds.”

(“Lucasville Valley A Progressive School. The Newark Weekly Advocate. <http://old.minford.k12.oh.us/mhs/history/PortsmouthHistory/Schools/Valley.htm>. May 28, 1914.)

Professor F. S. Alley's long history as an educator is full of praise. He was a native of Union County, Indiana, and he was employed as superintendent of Preble County schools from 1884 until 1891 when he removed to Ripley, Ohio, to take charge of the schools there. He organized the first rural high school in Preble County. A description of Alley:

“To Professor Alley, perhaps, more than any other single individual, was due the credit of the organization and development of the New Paris schools, which has made them among the best in the county. He revised the course of study and systematized the work of the high school, which had not previously reached that stage or real organization.”

(Robert Eaton Lowry. History of Preble County, Ohio: Her People, Industries and Institutions. 1915.)

Professor Alley also worked with distinction in Dayton, Kentucky ...

“When the present superintendent, Prof. F. S. Alley, came into charge (1896) a notable change was inaugurated in the school management. It had been the custom to adhere to the Cincinnati course of study and the methods there, but these have largely been superceded in the more advanced and progressive schools of the country. Prof. Alley has reconstructed the course of study in harmony with the best of educational thought and practice of the foremost educators of the day.

“HE has introduced new principles of classification, or of grading. Promotions from class to class are made according to the pupil's advancement, and not with an arbitrary interval of a year between classes. This does away with the final examination, and with that, of course, goes the practice of 'cramming' for the occasion. The reward is given for every-day work and affords a continuous stimulus instead of a spasmodic one - the former as healthful as helpful, the latter often positively injurious, and never an unmixed benefit.

“Where there are two or more classes in the same grade, as it often happens, the pupils are divided according to ability to do work, so that the quicker pupils may not be held back by the slower, nor the slower unduly urged or discouraged by their more rapid fellows.

“By these advanced methods the Dayton schools have been brought to the front rank in scientific education, far ahead of others in this vicinity, a matter of proper pride in parents and of momentous interest to the coming generation.

“There could be no more hopeful indication about the schools than the fact already mentioned, that the attendance in the higher grades is increasing, in comparison with the aggregate attendance. This is a testimony to the wise and efficient management, as well as to the appreciation of the people.

(“The City of Dayton, Kentucky.”

http://www.nkyviews.com/campbell/GAR/GAR_texts_hist.html.

The *Whittlers' Gazette* article also mentions Albert B. Graham, another famed Ohio educator and friend of Professor Alley. Graham (1868–1960) was born near Lena, Ohio. He was a country schoolmaster and agriculture extension pioneer at The Ohio State University. He received his teaching certificate from the Ohio State University in 1890. For the next decade, Graham taught in rural schools in Champaign, Miami, and Shelby Counties. He organized a Boys' and Girls' Agricultural Experiment Club in 1902.

Graham became superintendent of Agriculture Extension at Ohio State and continued his work educating rural youth. He also worked for the Federal Extension Service from 1919 to 1938.

His ultimate fame? Alfred Belmont Graham established the earliest 4-H club (a Boys & Girls Agricultural Club) on January 15, 1902. Members learned production practices to improve corn yields and also learned "the 4-H Way" through hands-on activities. The four "H's" are for head, heart, hands, and health. And, the rest is history.

* * Addition to original post from local historian, Jim Detty:

"Had to dig some more into Mr. Alley's past. Born March 8, 1850, in Franklin County, Kentucky. He was Superintendent of Valley Schools from 1909 to 1915 and retired in 1921 following 49 years in the education field. In March 1917 he and his wife Emma purchased a 100-acre farm on Cockrell's Run from John and Martha Kelley and this is where they retired to. Emma passed away on June 2, 1933, at the age of 75 and is buried at Maple Grove Cemetery in her hometown of Brookeville, Indiana (about halfway between Cincinnati and Indianapolis). Spending his remaining time continuing to educate others at agricultural shows, etc., Frank passed away at his home on August 14, 1936, at the age of 86, and is buried next to his wife in Brookeville. He was survived by four sons."

John Artis

John was born on March 10, 1902, the son of John Thomas Artis and Elizabeth Bentley Artis. His father was a farmer on Salt Creek (Cockrell's Run) near Lucasville, Ohio. John's brothers were Gordan and Clyde. His sisters were Kathryn Louise, Ruth, Dorothy, Leona, Mamie, and Anna.

He had to quit school during his junior year when his father was killed in a farming accident. He began earning money for the family at age 16 by driving one of the early school buses pulled by horses around 1918. Later he began working on the N&W Railroad becoming a supervisor in the Motive Power Department.

He was married to Gertrude Patrick. They had the following children: Barbara Lee Jerry Roger, Charles Delbert, and Connie Sue.

John is a Lucasville Legend for his civic work in the Lucasville Area. He served on the Valley School Board for several years and had the baseball field at the old High School (which is now the middle school) named for him because he organized to have dirt from a mudslide on the railroad brought onto the school grounds to improve the rocky ground. This improvement allowed the games to be held at the school rather than off the school grounds.

He was a pioneer along with others who organized the Little League program in Scioto County. The first games were played in New Boston and later the Lucasville area. He was also chairman of the Portsmouth Charity Horse Show. He was also on the committee to get "city water" in the Lucasville area.

He was the general chairman of the Lucasville Sesquicentennial Celebration. That celebration is still talked about today.

He was prominent in the Masons. He was a past Master and was a KYCH (Knight of the York Cross of Honor) which means he was the presiding officer of the York Rite bodies. That included Lucasville, Mt. Vernon bodies and the Calvary Commandery. The latter three being from Portsmouth. This information was confirmed by Jason Throckmorton, who said, "This is a high honor. Very few Freemasons ever obtain this." He also served as trustee, chaplain, and secretary at various times.

He was on the board of the Scioto Baptist Church and taught the Bible Class in Sunday school for many years. One incident that his children recalled was when their father felt sorry for the plight of a family at Christmas time.

His daughter, Connie Miller writes in a Father's Day tribute, "Mother cooked a lot of food and the two of them took it to the family. The pastor's wife altered the family's daughter's dresses and made new ones for her. John's family went to Fairtrace's Shoe Store and bought new shoes for the kids and purchased toys for them at Clark's and clothing for the boys. The entire family came to church.

"We were all proud of our dad. It isn't any wonder there was such a sense of serenity in the hospital room the night Dad died. "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." (Psalm 37:37).

John Artis died November 1, 1992, at the age of 90. His work was done. He is buried at Scioto Cemetery.

Charles Vernon Preston

A native of Lucasville, Charles was born on May 30, 1917, the son of Robert and Belle. Here we see the family in the 1930 census.

Household Members	Age	Relationship
<u>Robert Preston</u>	51	Head
<u>Belle Preston</u>	49	Wife
<u>Hobert Preston</u>	25	Son
<u>Anna Preston</u>	20	Daughter
<u>Thomas Preston</u>	18	Son
<u>Raymond Preston</u>	15	Son
Charles Preston	12	Son
<u>Thurman Preston</u>	10	Son
<u>Beatrice Preston</u>	7	Daughter
<u>Robert Preston</u>	5	Son

He attended the Valley Rural School District graduating in 1936. He was a key player on the basketball team that eventually went to the state tournament the year after he graduated. He received a basketball scholarship to attend Rio Grande College and play basketball. The scholarship did not provide for housing, so he lived in the basement of a building where he stoked the furnace to make a little money. He received a two-year diploma from Rio Grande in 1940. He returned home to teach, but in 1943 we find him in Springfield, Ohio where he continued his studies at Cedarville College.

He married Evelyn Preston. They had daughters Sandra Parmley and Susan Bates.

His studies were interrupted in 1945 when he was drafted into the army. In the army he served as a physical reconditioning instructor helping convalescent patients gain strength and physical stamina. In 1947 he left the service to complete his Bachelor of Science degree in 1951.

He returned home once again and began teaching math and physical education at Valley. He coached both baseball and basketball becoming a Lucasville Legend. The basketball team won the Scioto County Championship in 1953 in a game played against Clay that is still talked about today.

In 1954, he returned to Springfield employed by the school district and operated the AAA club's driver's education school and as an instructor at the traffic violator school.

Charles was a member of the Lucasville Masonic Lodge and the American Legion, the Rotary Club and Optimist Clubs in Springfield.

Charles died October 6, 1989 and is buried in the Lucasville Cemetery beside his wife, Evelyn.

Mary Jane McKinley

When Mary Jane was told in the 1940's that she couldn't become a band director because she was a woman, she didn't let that stop her. Instead, she enlisted the help of two Ohio University professors who "championed" her cause, as she once put it, and who voluntarily provided her with the instruction she needed for the degree she so desired.

That early passion and determination led to her becoming one of the first female band directors in Ohio. The milestone would be the start of a long and distinguished career in music education, one that continued even after her retirement in 1982. Most of her 36 years of teaching was with the Nelsonville-York City School District.

McKinley, known by friends as "Mac", died on November 30. She was 86.

Many around Nelsonville will remember her for the Christmas music she'd play on piano from the Rocky Outlet store or for her direction of the Nelsonville First United Methodist Church choir. Most, however, will remember her for doing what she loved – educating children through music.

"She was one of the most unique band directors in the entire state," said Marcus Neiman, of the Ohio Music Education Association. "She was a no-nonsense type of person who was in complete control of everything she did. The kids loved her, and the parents respected her. I've never met anyone with more compassion or caring."

McKinley, originally of Lucasville, found her love of music in 1930 when she saw the Portsmouth High School Band at the Scioto County Fairgrounds for the first time.

I thought it was the most wonderful, exciting thing I had ever seen or heard," McKinley said in an article in Triad, the official publication for OMEA. "I was consumed with the desire to be a part of it.

She was the youngest of seven children and born into a family of educators. She was the daughter of Jesse and Mabel Bonzo McKinley of Lucasville, Ohio. Jesse was the son of Calvin and Sarah Field McKinley. Mabel was the daughter of William and Katherine Artis Bonzo.

At a young age, her father insisted all his girls take private lessons in piano. She loved the piano so much, "I had to play it every time I walked by a piano." She wrote.

While admirable, it was a passion that frequently made her tardy to school. During her sophomore year, she was tardy 76 times out of 136 days.

Her nephew, William McKinley, tells us that she wrote the lyrics to the Valley Fight Song. She graduated from Valley in 1944.

In high school she played bells then switched to alto saxophone, the instrument she played through college. While in college, she added the clarinet to her repertoire. She graduated from Ohio University in 1950, in the top 10 percent of her class.

Throughout her career, McKinley taught vocal, instrumental theory, stage band and marching band to all ages, elementary school through high school. She also served as the head of the music department of her district.

In addition to her success as a band director, she was an avid golfer. She coached Nelsonville-York City men's golf team for 15 years, advancing to six sectionals and district tournaments.

While McKinley was known for her compassion and patience, she was afraid to push her students to reach their potential. "She was the type of person who had the warmth of a grandmother, yet could have the intensity of a drill sergeant," Neiman said. "The students had a responsibility to play music and the responsibility to play it well."

That drive earned the Nelsonville school band 29 district superior ratings, 17 state superior ratings and countless top ratings in the solo and ensemble events during her tenure.

In 2008, Neiman presented McKinley with the Distinguished Service Award, an honor bestowed on just one music educator a year.

"It's like a lifetime achievement award for music educators.

Cheryl Nunnally, a former student who later became a music teacher, remembers McKinley's kindness and resourcefulness. "She could make an instrument out of wood and glue and no money." Nunnally wrote in her letter supporting McKinley's nomination for the award.

Steve Cox, another former student, said many of his fondest memories from high school were from his time spent in her class. "In a word, she was a leader," he wrote, "She embodies all of the finest attributes of those who choose to educate. Knowledge, compassion, respect and unwavering friendship were hers to offer."

It wasn't uncommon for McKinley to work until 9 or 10 p.m. in preparation for competitions, recalled her life partner Kate McCoy.

"Above all else she was a fine educator," Neiman added. "Her first love was teaching children music. It wasn't teaching music to children. She may not be with us anymore, but what she did in her life will remain with us throughout our lives and we'll carry them on to the next generation."

