

John Artis

John was born 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. John's brothers were Gordon and Clyde. His sisters were Kathryn Louise, Ruth Dorothy, Leona, Mimi, 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 operating one of the early school buses that was pulled by horses around 1918. Later he worked for the N & W Railroad and became a supervisor in the motive power department. He married Gertrude Patrick, and they had children: Barbara Lee, Jerry Roger, Charles, Delbert, and Connie Sue.

John is a Legend for his Civic work in the Lucasville area. He served on the Valley Local Schools Board of Education for several years. The current Valley Middle School (as of 2025) had a baseball field when it was the Valley High School (before 1993) and that field was named after him because he organized to have dirt from a mudslide on the railroad brought onto the school grounds to improve the rocky playing field. This improvement allowed the games to be held at the high school rather than at other locations.

John and others were pioneers that organized the Little League program in Scioto County. The first games were played in New Boston and later in the Lucasville area. For many years, he was also chairman of the Portsmouth Charity Horse Show that was held at the Scioto County Fairgrounds in Lucasville.

Mr. Artis was also a member of the committee that focused on bringing "city water" into the Lucasville area.

In 1969 he was the General Chairman of the Lucasville Sesquicentennial Celebration, which continues to be a fond memory for many residents. He was a Freemason and Worshipful Master of the Knight of the York Cross of Honor, which means he served as the leader in the area of Lucasville and Portsmouth (Mount Vernon and Calvary Commandery). This information was confirmed by Jason Throckmorton, a Freemason from the Lucasville Masonic Lodge #465, who said, "this is a high honor. Very

few Freemasons ever obtain this level". Mr. Throckmorton also shared that Mr. Artis also "served as trustee, chaplain, and secretary" at various times.

He was on the board of the Scioto Baptist Church and taught Sunday School for many years. One incident that his children recall was when their father felt sorry for the plight of a family at Christmas time. His daughter, Connie Miller, writes in a booklet published by the church as 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 daughters' dresses and made new ones for her. John's family also 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 at the age of 90 on November 1, 1992. His work was done. He is buried at Scioto Cemetery on Cockrell's Run outside of Lucasville.