

## Allen County Leaders

These individuals are recognized for their leadership in improving daily life in Allen County, inspiring its people, and shaping the county into what we know it as today.



### **Joseph C. Bradfield (1889-1936)**

Dr. Joseph C. Bradfield, an esteemed doctor with a career spanning over 25 years, worked towards benefiting the Black community through healthcare, social-welfare programs, and politics. He was born in 1889 in Mount Vernon, Ohio. He attended the Starling Medical College in Columbus, Ohio, which later transformed into the Ohio State University College of Medicine, and he graduated in 1911. In 1912, Bradfield and his wife, Edith Payne, moved to Lima. Joseph Bradfield served during World War I in the Army Medical Reserve Corps at the 365<sup>th</sup> company field hospital in France. Bradfield set up his medical practice here in Lima when there were fewer than 750 Black residents. That number would grow following the Great Migration of Black workers from the South to the North, the Midwest, and Western industries for greater opportunity. Bradfield worked to create better living and working conditions for the community by updating their sanitation and serving as an experienced doctor for the health of the residents. Bradfield was active in a multitude of organizations, such as the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Endocrine Club, and the Lima and Allen County Academy of Medicine, to name a few. He strongly believed that participating in politics was the answer to many of the ills of the Black community. He was described as "partisan [Republican] to the core." As a part of his work in creating social-welfare programs, Bradfield and a number of other committee members started the Citizen's Recreation Center in 1933. The doctor passed away in 1936 after catching pneumonia at the age of 47. The Citizen's Recreation Center was renamed the Bradfield Center in 1938 to honor the doctor who dedicated his life to the Lima community.



### **Bessie Crayton (1857-1933)**

Bessie Crayton, born Mary Elizabeth Catt in 1857, was a leading Suffragist and supporter of Prohibition in the community. Social activism was prevalent in her family as she was related to Carrie Chapman Catt, who was a leading national campaigner for Women's Suffrage during the same time period. Crayton was the president of the Political Equality Club, which later transformed into the League of Women Voters. Prior to her marriage in 1881 and the birth of her son, Guy, Bessie was a school teacher. Crayton believed that the Temperance and Suffrage movements were allied efforts, and so she devoted herself to both. She pushed for Prohibition through her involvement in the Women's Christian Union and was the backbone behind the local Suffrage movement. She was described as being one of the only women who identified with the Suffrage movement in Allen County. Her husband, William, was an equal supporter of women's Suffrage and her work in various organizations. Crayton and her husband spread the message of Temperance and enrolled over 200 children in the Loyal Temperance Legion on the South Side by 1921. In nineteen-fourteen, Bessie co-organized over 1,500 marchers for a Suffrage parade through the city square. The Political Equality Club campaigned throughout Lima and passed out pamphlets to spread awareness of women's right to vote. Finally, their dream was recognized in 1919 when Ohio passed the Suffrage bill granting the right to vote, and the following day, the 19th Amendment was ratified. When the organization was transformed into the League of Women Voters, Bessie led classes on how to register and vote in elections, providing valuable education to first-time women voters. Crayton and the rest of the Suffragists are remembered for their contributions and dedication to women receiving the right to vote in Ohio in 1919. In twenty-twenty, 100 years after the 19th Amendment became law in the United States, a plaque was placed in the city square commemorating Bessie and the Allen County Political Equality Club's contributions towards Suffrage. To learn more about Bessie and other area women's roles in Allen County's fight for Suffrage, visit the [Campaigning for Votes: Women's Suffrage in Allen County](#) online exhibit.



### **Benjamin Faurot (1829-1904)**

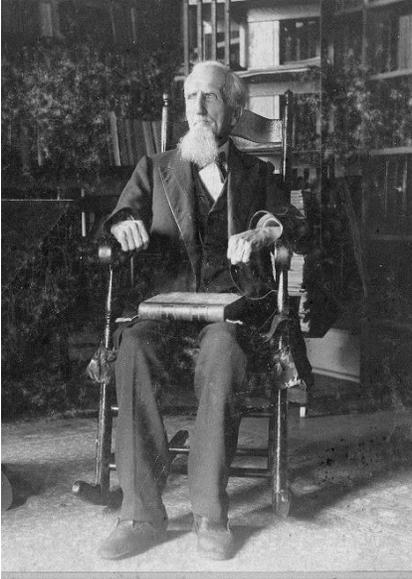
Benjamin Faurot, known as B. C. Faurot, made Lima known for industry and the arts. Educated for only one year, he worked as a farmhand for his father and later as a teamster hauling gravel in Kenton. In the 1850s Faurot followed Pennsylvania Railroad's arrival to Lima, where his livery business supplied horses and mules to the Union during the Civil War. Faurot married Helen Wells in 1853, and they had three daughters. He was a staunch Republican and belonged to Trinity Methodist Church, serving on its financial committee. Faurot expanded his fortune through investing in Lima's real estate and incorporated what became Lima National Bank in 1865. He served as president and navigated the business through the Panic of 1873. In 1870 he organized and became president of the Lima Paper Mills, one of Lima's largest employers. Faurot was also president of the American Strawboard Association. Following Faurot's team discovery of oil at the mill on May 9, 1885, Lima's industry and population grew. That same year, Faurot built Lima's first electric plant. He organized the electric lighting of Lima's streets, making Lima, Ohio's third city to electrify. After acquiring the horse-drawn Lima Street Railway in 1878, he electrified the service by 1887, which became one of the first electric railways in the country. He and Calvin Brice worked to bring the Erie Railroad (later Nickel Plate) repair shop to Lima. Faurot organized and acted as President of the Globe Machine Works, Inc. that manufactured portable engines. He also supervised a canning operation for sweet corn on his 700-acre farm. Community-minded Faurot planned a parks system. He opened a park and a driving park on his farm. There the community enjoyed horse races, plays, and baseball games. He built the Faurot Hotel and Faurot Block in 1882. The Faurot Block housed the Faurot Opera House, where international talent performed, and a music hall. The Lima National Bank failed in 1892 after Faurot overextended his finances following the sale of the Lima Paper Mill. He sold the mill to invest in what would become the Lima-Defiance Railroad (completed 1899) and in plans to colonize Mexican land for a Mormon colony and railroad. Within the next 10 years, Faurot lost his wife, daughter, son-in-law, three grandsons, all of his businesses, the Faurot Block, his farm, and West Market Street home. Lima's generous benefactor died destitute and was buried in Woodlawn, a cemetery he helped plan.



### **Jack Inoway (1889-1942)**

The talented chef and business owner, Jack Inoway, was a huge contributor to the Lima community in his life. Jack was born in Japan around 1889. Inoway, originally spelled Inoue, immigrated to the United States at the turn of the century. He married Toshi Hujii, and they had two children named Katie and Carl. Inoway had an incredible career. He began on the Vaudeville stage, showcasing his talent for entertainment and his inverted-and reversible-writing tricks, which were widely recognized. After a short time in the group, Jack enlisted in the Navy, where he honed his cooking skills and he participated in the Navy's World Cruise from 1907 to 1909. Inoway is remembered for being a well-known cook who opened a variety of restaurants during his life in

Lima, including Jack & Yoshi Cafeteria, Jack's Cafeteria, and Jack and Frank's Steak House. Jack purchased 80 Japanese Cherry Blossom trees for \$500 that were planted around Schoonover Lake in the park in 1938. He purchased them as "a living memorial to his two children as well as an act of appreciation to the city in which he said he has great faith in the future." Although the trees are no longer there, a plaque stands memorializing Jack Inoway's contributions to the community. However, loved as he was in the community, he was not immune to what was happening outside of Lima. Nineteen forty-one brought the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the fear of Japanese-Americans. Jack's business was searched for ties to the enemy, Japan. He was subsequently cleared, but he decided to no longer pursue cooking. He sold his share of the business to his partner, Fred C. Harrison. Before his death, Inoway had dreams of re-enlisting to support the United States during World War II. However, he passed away before he was able to do so, and like many other Japanese-Americans, Inoway's family was sent to an internment camp in the western United States. His family visited Lima many years later.



### **James Mackenzie (1814-1901)**

The Honorable James Mackenzie had a wide-ranging career of being a soldier, a lawyer, political activist, teacher, newspaper editor, and judge. He was born in Alythe, Scotland, in 1814. James' father William Mackenzie owned a newspaper in Canada, and that was where James learned the business. Mackenzie moved to Ohio in 1837 as the Canadian Rebellion was rising, and he left to support the effort. Mackenzie was unsuccessful in his attempts and returned to the United States. He immediately went to work in New York for a newspaper called the *Freeman's Advocate*, which supported the Canadian freedom cause. During Mackenzie's time in Rockport, New York, he began to study law. He continued those studies in Cleveland, Ohio, and he passed the bar in

1839. James worked as a teacher and a school examiner across Ohio. Mackenzie moved several times in the next few years and worked as a prosecuting attorney in Henry, Putnam, and finally Allen County. He was elected in 1853 as the representative from Putnam and Henry Counties to the Ohio State Legislature. While in Putnam County, James published *The Kalida Venture* for 10 years. After working on that, he moved to Allen County in 1858, and worked as a prosecuting attorney, and published *The Allen County Democrat* for two and a half years. By 1863, he was elected as judge of the Common Pleas Court, which is a position he held until his retirement in 1898.

On May 28, 1846 Mackenzie married Lucina P. Leonard. Their octagonal home is described as being large with a complete library, which acted as the first public library for the citizens of Allen County. The house no longer stands and instead is now the site of Huntington Bank. They had seven children with six of them surviving to adulthood. Their surviving children were Ella G., Eugene C., William L., Mabel, Isabella, and Lucina Augusta (Finch). His children were equally ambitious in their own careers, whether legal or business-related here in Allen County. All of the daughters were heavily involved in the Allen County Historical Society and the Philomathean Club. He lived out the remainder of his years with his unmarried daughters in their home at 227 S. Collett Street, where they moved after Lucina died in 1888.



### **Easter Straker (1918-1992)**

Easter Straker, who is among the most recognizable voices and faces of the community in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, had a career that spanned over 50 years. Her community work and television programs made her an iconic figure in Allen County. Easter was born on August 25, 1918 to John R. and Madge Straker. Straker earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from Indiana State Teachers College. However, she chose a career in broadcasting. Straker's programming at WIMA, now WLIO, put on shows such as "Easter's Parade." Her show covered a variety of topics, including testimonials from herself. Easter's radio program was heard each morning at 10 a.m., and it was an informal chat about anything from basketball games to flower shows and more.

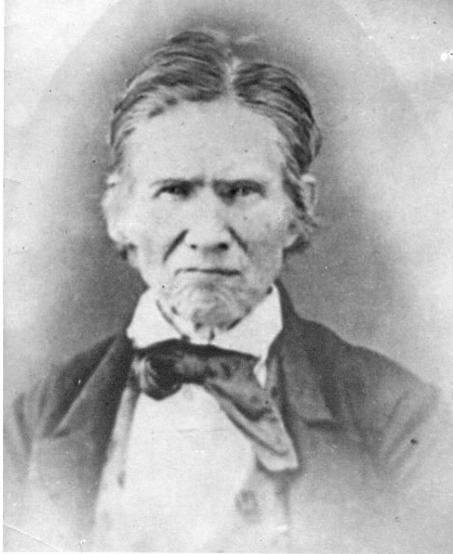
One of the most recognizable aspects of her show was the "birthday chair" segment. She interviewed and gifted children toys and, later, pennies from 1955 to 1984. She interviewed more than 41,600 children in this program, and one of the birthday chairs currently sits in the museum. Straker gave talks to area organizations on her global travels and more, including one that was titled "Living in the Space Age" in 1963. Straker organized a drive for the Allen County Polio Fund in 1954, and she raised over a million pennies. Easter promoted the Teddy Bear Fund, which continues to deliver teddy bears to sick children in Lima area hospitals today. She also donated time and money to Marimor Schools throughout her life. She retired in 1991 and passed away after a seven-year battle with colon cancer in 1992.



### **Dollie Taylor (1922-2020)**

The energetic Dollie Taylor was known for wearing multiple hats in her style and civic work. Taylor became the first Black president of Church Women United in 1969, where she had served as secretary two years prior. During that time, Church Women United added a new addition to the Mizpah Community Center (now the Cheryl Allen South Side Center). Lima La Sertoma Club named her Woman of the Year (1996) for her work as president of the Riverside North Neighborhood Association, which she helped found. During her tenure, the association provided equipment for the Lima Police Department's Riverside North community outpost, coordinated neighborhood cleanups including in Faurot Park, and hosted activities for Make A Difference Day. In addition

to participating in plays and singing at the Second Baptist Church, Taylor served as Missionary Society president, Ladies Aid Society president, Children's Division of Sunday School superintendent, choir director, and chaired events and campaigns. Taylor also instructed Head Start at Southside Christian Church. She held several positions at the Lima-Allen County Head Start program between 1969 and 1987: teacher, workshop director, and volunteer and parent coordinator. At the Bradfield Community Center, Taylor taught preschoolers, advised senior citizens, and worked on several committees. She served on the YWCA and Mizpah Community Center boards. Taylor participated in the Democratic Minority Caucus, Church People for Change and Reconciliation, Forsythia Garden Club, and Aealeon Club. She moderated focus groups on the community health assessment, Healthy People 2000. Throughout her volunteer work, Taylor gave presentations on a variety of topics to local groups. She earned an associate's degree in child development from Lima Technical College in 1977. Dollie and her husband, Raymond, married in 1941 and had one daughter. Taylor died in 2020 at 98 years old.



### **Christopher Stark Wood (1772-1855)**

Christopher Stark Wood, founding father of Allen County, arrived in this area around 1824. He assisted in organizing Sugar Creek, Hog Creek, and Wapakoneta settlements. He served as Justice of the Peace in Amanda and Bath Townships. Between 1829 and 1831, his efforts focused on establishing Bath Township and the county seat. Wood was the first clerk, a treasurer, then a supervisor of the Commissioners of Bath Township. He oversaw the surveying and platting of 160 acres for Lima, the county seat. As Lima's first and only Town Director, he superintended the first public sale of lots. However, a corrected copy of the Deed of Lima was filed with the state in 1844 due to errors in the description of the land.

Wood also served as an Associate Judge for the Court of Common Pleas and as Road Commissioner to engineer a State Road from the Loramies to Wood County via Wapakoneta and to survey a road through, Bellefontaine, Lima, Putnam County, and Defiance. His home was a place of worship for different denominations, the first Sunday School in Allen County, and a store. He taught Sunday School and arithmetic.

Born in the Virginia Counties (Pennsylvania today), Christopher Stark Wood spent his teenage years in Kentucky. Eighteen-year-old Wood joined the militia, where he fought against American Indians to increase the United States' Northwest Territory in Ohio. He accompanied the expeditions of George Rogers Clark and Benjamin Hogan; participated in the border invasions by General Harmar (1790), General Arthur St. Clair (1791), and General Anthony Wayne (1794); fought in the Battle of Fort Recovery; and scouted during the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Wood participated in the burning of Shawnee villages under General Benjamin Logan in what would become Champaign and Logan Counties, including Blue Jacket's Town (Bellefontaine today). During War of 1812, Wood fought at Frenchtown in 1813, witnessing the River Basin Massacre, and at Fort Meigs. In 1812-1813, Wood became the captain of a spy company, participating in Tupper's March from Urbana to Fort Meigs, and he later recruited and trained spies in the 26th regiment of the U.S. Infantry at Urbana.

Wood married Mary Ann Turner on October 6, 1797, and they had ten children. The Woods moved to Ohio in 1799, living in the Bush Creek settlement in Warren County. By 1805 the Woods moved to Champaign County, Ohio, where Wood was Miami Township's Justice of the Peace, and to Logan County, where he helped establish Bellefontaine in 1820. While visiting his son in Athens, Indiana, Wood died due to injuries from a train wreck in 1855 and was buried there.