



The mill taken in 1971

LAURELVILLE SCHOOLS

The Laurelville citizens were quick to realize the need for a school, so about the same time that the town was laid out a school was established.

Many changes have taken place in Laurelville schools, for that matter in most schools in Ohio during the past century. It would be interesting to make a list of all the famous people who attended Laurelville School. The list would be an impressive list which would include ministers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers - a cross-section of American life.

The first school, a one-room building, was located across the creek from the present park. This structure was probably of log construction, and had a capacity of 15 to 20 elementary children; the children of the first families of the village. The emphasis was probably placed on the 3 R's in this typical rural school.

In 1875 the Laurelville community joined the community just west of the village and built a school near the present location of the Fetherolf Meat Packing Co., which was called

the Toad Run Academy. The name was taken from the name of the small stream that joins Saltcreek near there. This school was used jointly by the communities for 10 or 15 years.

During this period when the Laurelville children attended the Toad Run Academy Laurelville was growing in size and population and the old school was becoming more and more crowded each year. Floods often caused a problem too, as this old school building was located near the streams, so the village citizens started discussions relative to building another school in the village where floods would be less troublesome.

After much discussion it was agreed upon that a new building would be erected upon the site where the present school now stands. The land for the new school was donated by Allen Strous, a public spirited citizen, who felt that a good school should be the hub of the community. As the village continued to grow in population the school enrollment mounted as well; the two-room frame building was soon too small to accommodate all the children, so another room was added to the building.

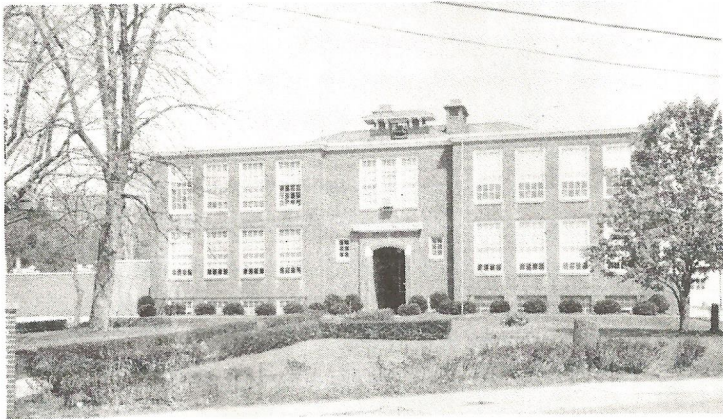
In 1913 a new modern 4-room brick building was erected in front of the frame structure but on the same plot. The old frame building was removed from the grounds. This new brick structure was modern only in the sense that it had a central heating system and was more fire-proof than the other building.

Additions were made to the original building when in 1924 four additional rooms were added. Again in 1953 another four-room addition was completed, thus completing the original building which now contained 12 rooms. Some improvements were made from time to time such as: electric lights, drinking fountains, interior decorating and finally restrooms were added.

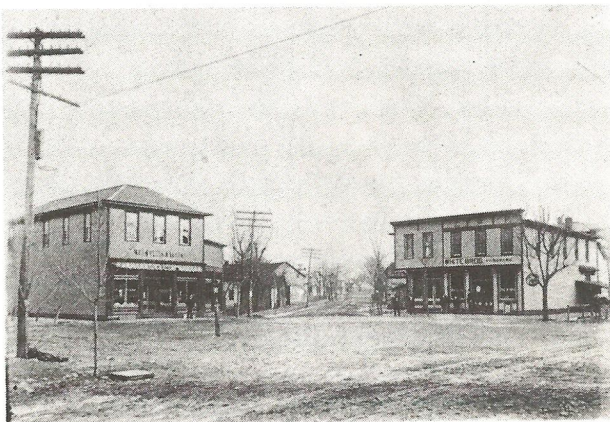
Several buildings were added to the school plants as they were needed: The old Baptist Church was purchased and was converted into a bus garage. The Community Club built the structure known as the Community Hall which was used by the school for an auditorium, a gymnasium, as class rooms, and later as cafeteria. A Farm Shop - Garage combination was built to enlarge the curriculum choice of the high school students and to repair the school busses. A dwelling was pur-

chased and was converted into class rooms for home economics. A gymnasium – class room combination was constructed to replace the old Community Hall. The final building to be erected was a cafeteria – class room combination with built in features desirable in a school cafeteria was completed in 1963.

The State Department of Education is recommending larger and larger school units, and we hear much discussion relative to creating one high school for each county.



The Laurelville School Building in 1971



The Laurelville Village Square and a view down Pike St.



**Mettlers Store in Laurelville with Thomas Mettler owner
and Dr. Cain at right with his granddaughter**

LAURELVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Soon after Laurelville was founded a bucket brigade was organized to take care of emergencies in the village. This brigade of young ambitious men and boys rendered a real service to the village year after year. They were not called on often but when they were they gave a good account of themselves. As the members grew older or moved away or for any other purpose they were replaced.

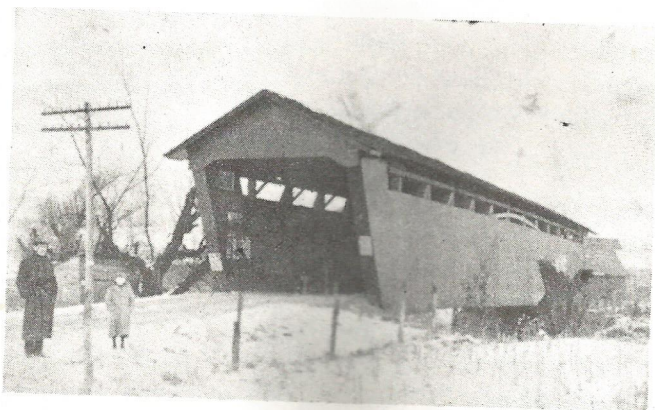
In 1910 some new equipment was purchased to supplement the bucket brigade and thus make a better and more effective organization of fire-fighters. Horses were used to pull the machinery from the fire shed to the fire. In 1925 Laurelville bought their first fire engine with a motor driven pumper which had a capacity of 350 gal. per min.

In 1940, a new Seagraves fire engine was purchased. This was a real patented machine and was one of the most efficient and dependable small machines available at the time. Laurelville was very proud of this new equipment. Much of the cost of this equipment was donated by the citizens of Laurelville and the surrounding area. Additional equipment as well as replacement equipment was added from time to time. Features of the new replacements were pumps with greater capacity but also trucks with storage tanks mounted on the truck so that no time was lost in locating water storage facilities or cisterns available.

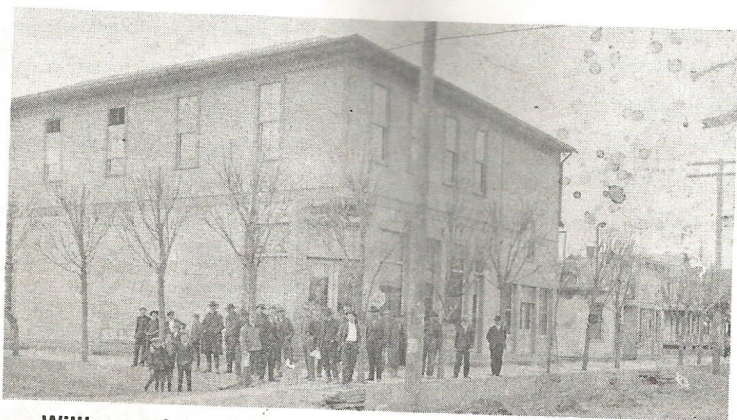
Around 1950 town wells were drilled and these connected with water lines, which would provide all areas of the village with water, pumped from the town wells with adequate pressure to be effective. This served in place of a public water system which was realized sometime later.

Laurelville has always maintained a volunteer fire department and still does. Today this volunteer fire department provides fire protection to all of Perry, Saltcreek and Benton townships and they also provide mutual agreements with all neighboring fire departments. This is done by a group of young men who have dedicated themselves to this very worthy service.

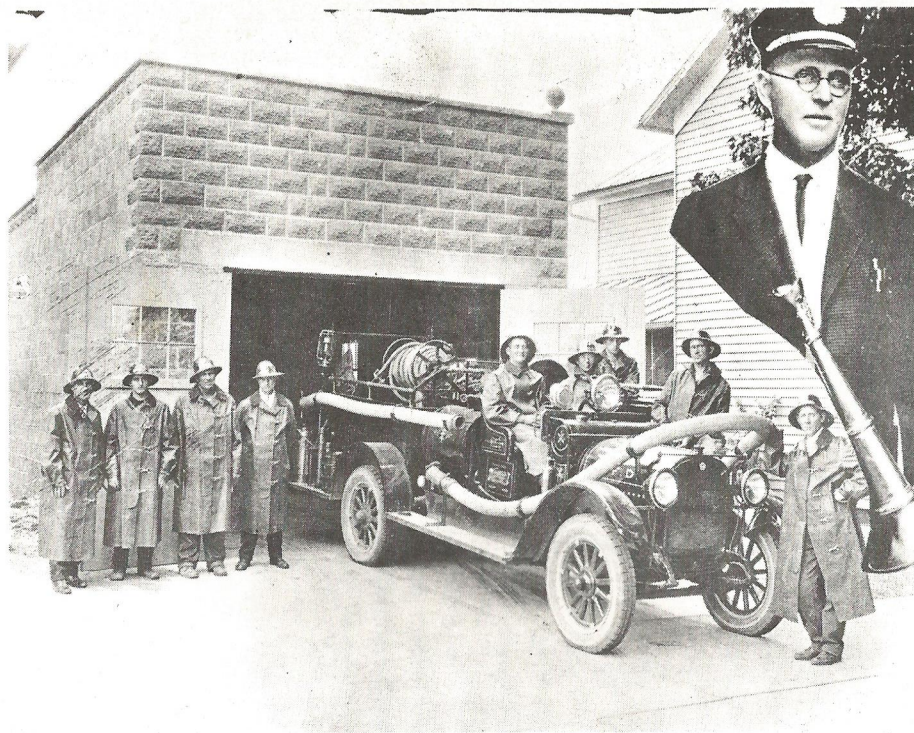
When the fire alarm sounds – day or night or summer or winter, they go just as quickly as they can. All the citizens of Laurelville and neighboring areas can sleep more soundly perhaps because they, the firemen, don't – they listen for the fire alarm.



**The Old Covered Bridge in winter
with Tom Mettler and son Hilgar**



Williamson's Store now Foodtown – A picture of the past



LAURELVILLE

The Firemen from the past with chief L. A. McClelland
Left to Right: Otis Mowery, Paul Armstrong, Bert Poling, Levi
Scott; On the Engine: Lafe Strous, Charley Reynolds, Frensil Tisdale,
Harry Wharf; In Front: B. W. Friend

LAURELVILLE HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The First United Brethren Church of Laurelville was organized April 9, 1889 by Rev. A. E. Wright, the circuit preacher. It was one of four churches on the Pickaway circuit, the other three being the Pontius, the Morris, and the Dresback.

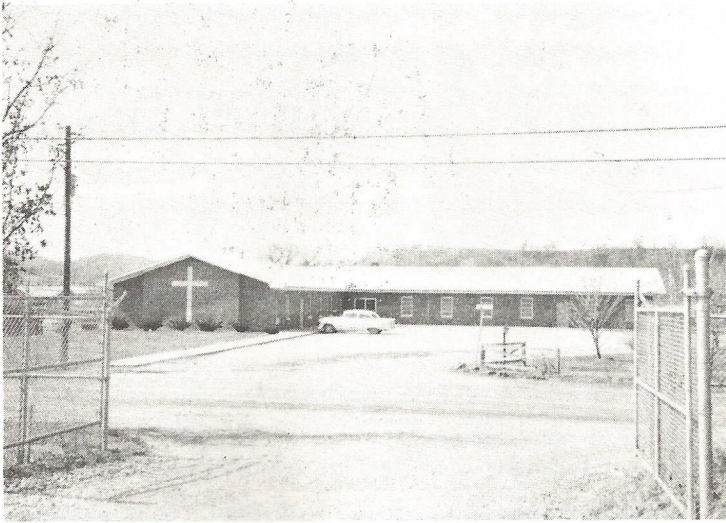
In 1901 the United Brethren Scioto Conference reorganized, which resulted in the Laurelville church being switched from the Pickaway circuit to the Laurelville circuit. This new circuit consisted of five classes: Laurelville, Pleasant Hill, Bethel, Zion and South Perry.

In 1908 this circuit was dissolved; the new circuit was Hallsville, Laurelville, Etam, Colerain and Walnut Valley.

In 1890 the first building of the Laurelville United Brethren Church was erected from an abandoned church, which was moved from Tarlton. John K. Steele, one of the twenty-four charter members, donated the land as the site to erect the building, which is now the dwelling house of Willis Johnston. The building was dismantled and hauled piece by piece to Laurelville, where it was reassembled. Its main timbers were hand-hewn and pinned – not nailed – by wooden pins. It was estimated to have been forty years old at the time it was moved.

On Nov. 16, 1946, The United Brethren Church and the Evangelical Church united and the church became known as the Laurelville First Evangelical United Brethren Church.

In Sept. 1953 the church was separated from the Laurelville circuit leaving Morgan Chapel, Bethel Pine, and Mt. Olive at So. Perry in a circuit together on April 23, 1968 the Evangelical United Brethren Church united with the Methodist Church at a meeting in Dallas, Texas. On August 25, 1968 our new building, which was dedicated in May 1963 became known as the Laurel Hills United Methodist church of Laurelville. During this period from 1889 to 1971 the Church has had forty pastors.



Laurel Hills United Methodist Church in Laurelville — 1971



The Pleasant Ridge Church — 1971



The Geo. N. Dumm General Store in the Early days of Laurelville History

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

The Laurelville Church of God was founded in 1934, being purchased from Clifford Dille. The church when purchased was a one room building.

Several improvements and additions have been added in recent years. These improvements consist of a full basement now used as classrooms, kitchen, Junior church sanctuary and furnace room. Restrooms and the pastors study were added later. The most recent additions are a nursery, entrance and upstairs class room. A new piano and organ were purchased in 1970 and air-conditioning installed in April 1971. The present pastor is Rev. Lynn Summers of Laurelville, now serving his eighth year.



The Church of God in Laurelville 1971

HISTORY OF TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF LAURELVILLE

About the year 1906, Rev. G. H. Creamer, then pastor of the Tarlton Methodist Church, saw the need of a Methodist church in Laurelville. With the help and encouragement of several influential families in this neighborhood, an effort was made to raise money for this purpose. Mr. & Mrs. Nelson Armstrong gave a building lot and a contribution for this. The raising of additional funds and construction of the building continued through 1909. Mr. George Haynes, the contractor made the cement blocks and with local help erected the church at a cost of \$5,500.

The first session of Sunday School was held February 14, 1909. Superintendent of the Sunday Schools who have served: L. C. Watts, M. E. Archer, Nelson Armstrong, Wayne Armstrong, W. P. DeHaven, C. N. White, Paul A. Potts, Thomas Hockman, Arthur Hinton and Howard Egan, who is serving at the present time. Charter members of the church who are still living are: Mabel Bowers, Ruth Boecher, Amy McClelland, Alice Morris and Lana Dix.

Through the years many improvements have been made at the church. New pews and new carpets have been added along with a Hammond organ. In 1953 Mr. and Mrs. Daniel McClelland willed their home to the Laurelville Methodist Church. The parsonage, which formerly had been in Adelphi, was then located in Laurelville and first occupied by the Rev. R. C. McDowell family. Also, in the same year more remodeling was done: a new chancel, a modern kitchen, restrooms and stain glass windows were installed. In 1969 extensive decorating was done, such as a cathedral ceiling and the installation of new lights in the main auditorium.

After the union of the Methodist and United Brethren Churches on April 23, 1968, the members voted upon a new name for the church, which is now the Laurelville Trinity United Methodist Church.

Ministers who have served are: A. E. McCullough, J. R. Fields, Robert Meyer, S. C. Elsea, C. L. Thomas, Fredric Brown, J. K. Price, E. B. Dean, Lester McCandlish, Paul Scott, R. L. Klausmeier, William Gross, I. C. Wright, Oscar King, J. A. Bretz, H. D. Frazier, Clyde Webster, Donald Disbennet, R. C. McDowell, F. A. White, J. W. Glick, and W. C. Cook.



The Laurelville Trinity United Methodist Church 1971

FLOODS

The spring floods have plagued the residents of Laurelville since the town was started in 1871. Floods are always disastrous with much damage and repair necessary to restore facilities to pre-flood condition. Some floods were worse than others with greater damage resulting to public facilities. The floods of 1905, 1907, 1909 and 1913 were especially severe. Different areas of Ohio were effected with much damage resulting. Laurelville however, suffered more damage in the flood of 1968 than any previous flood recorded.

Through the years Laurelville officials tried repeatedly to control these high waters and devastating floods by various methods but in the days of P.W.A. Laurelville built a flood wall along Laurel Creek to hold back flood waters. Much of the fill material was taken from the stream channel which consisted mainly of sand and gravel, not the best fill materials, but the most available. The flood wall solved the flood problem in Laurelville for many years. The maintenance of the wall, was an important item in the mind of every citizen of the village. The average height of the flood wall was about 6 feet above the level area of the neighboring territory. Some trees were planted along this levee as many town officials believed that trees re-enforced the earthen wall. Automobile bodies were anchored at strategic spots to further strengthen the wall against the current of the stream.

On May 28, 1968 after several days of rather heavy rain with the streams fluxuating up and down, a steady heavy rain started in the evening and continued past midnight and brought the streams back to crest points about 2:00 o'clock A.M. Drift consisting of trees, slabs, tree tops was picked up along the streams and much of it lodged along the Laurel bridge and backed up the water until the pressure tore out the abutment and the bridge collapsed in the stream diverting the swirling waters toward the village. A wall of water estimated by some to have been 8 or 10 feet high almost instantly covered about one half of the village to a depth varying from a few inches to as much as 6 or 8 feet. The flood water with all the filth of the fields and barnyards loaded with mud or silt came into the homes and business places. Many of the citizens were in bed when the break occurred.

One of the older citizens was overheard to say, "This was Laurelville's darkest hour." To give an accurate description of the damage wrought upon the inhabitants of this village would be impossible. Many tears were shed and many prayers were said as the villagers began to estimate their losses. Daylight revealed to each person his share of the loss and it was enough to shake the courage and determination of the strongest.

After a few hours of daylight, work started and continued through the day and part of following night. A similar schedule was followed day after day, week after week until all was restored.

People from the surrounding countryside and from cities and towns as far away as Columbus came to help Laurelville in its greatest test of strength and courage.

The men of the town were organized and plans were made to rebuild the flood wall. The Department of Civil Defense came as did the National Guard. Temporary quarters were set up in the school - (the school was not touched by the flood). The cafeteria was used to prepare and serve meals. Used clothing for men, women and children came in by the truck load. Furniture, gasoline, food, shoes, bedding, cots and money were provided by churches, civic clubs, lodges and granges as well as individuals.

One of the greatest contributions of all came from the Mennoites, a religious denomination with church units all over Ohio. They came in trucks and cars from almost everywhere. They came to work and they did. They brought their brooms, shovels, buckets and other things. They were well organized and one of their leaders supervised their work and sent them into the various homes where help was needed. They mopped, shoveled, carried and hosed out homes completely from the basement to the kitchen. Men, boys and women too came to help those who needed their help. They seemed to understand how best to render assistance to those who had suffered such losses.

The two bridges were repaired and rebuilt, streets were cleaned and repaired. The flood wall was rebuilt and it is higher, longer and wider than it was before the flood. People donated trucks and drivers to rebuild the flood wall and hundreds of tons of fill materials was transported from the gravel bank to the flood wall. Residents of Laurelville purchased furniture by truck load. The Red Cross provided some essentials for those unable to purchase them.

Laurelville has been cleaned as it never was before. Damages have been repaired or replaced and, contrary to the state-