

# ***New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society June - September 2024 Newsletter***

## **THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 14 and 21 (Saturdays) -- 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Free food and beverages on September 14<sup>th</sup> during our Grand Opening  
Ealy House Museum, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany

Uniforms, combat gear, photographs, medals, and displays  
will fill the house, including the actual Butsko door now being  
cast in bronze for New Albany's Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Visit with veterans and join us as we celebrate the kickoff of our  
fundraising campaign for the memorial to be completed in 2025.



# **\* \* \* UPCOMING EVENTS \* \* \***

## **ANNUAL POTLUCK PICNIC**

**AUGUST 17 (Saturday) -- 5:00 p.m. -- Saveson barn, 8370 Clouse Road**

All members and their guests are invited to this very friendly and informal event. Please bring a main dish, salad, side dish, or dessert to share, and its serving utensil. Table service and water will be provided. For more information, call Marty Saveson at 614-855-9809.

## **OPEN HOUSES AT THE EALY HOUSE**

**SUNDAYS -- 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. during June, July, and August (closed July 7)**

Ealy House Museum, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany

## **THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE OPEN HOUSE**

**SEPTEMBER 14 and 21 (Saturdays) -- 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Ealy House Museum, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany

## **OLD HALLOWEENS OF NEW ALBANY**

**OCTOBER 2 (Wednesday) -- 7:00 p.m.**

New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany

Event is free and open to the public.

## **HALLOWEEN FAMILY DAY AND OPEN HOUSE**

**OCTOBER 27 (Sunday) -- 1:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

Ealy House Museum, 6359 Dublin-Granville Road, New Albany

Vintage Decoration Display - Free Hot Dogs, Snacks, Drinks, Candy - PIG BEAR Stories

## **LOVE LETTERS FROM WORLD WAR II**

**NOVEMBER 6 (Wednesday) -- 7:00 p.m.**

New Albany Library, 200 Market Street, New Albany

Presentation by Dennis Keese. Event is free and open to the public.

### **SAVE THE DATES**

#### **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**

**NOVEMBER 24 (Sunday)**

#### **HOLIDAY DINNER**

**DECEMBER 4 (Wednesday)**

### **BOARD MEETINGS**

**AUGUST 1**

**SEPTEMBER 26**

**OCTOBER 24**

**6:30 p.m. at Franklin Church,  
7171 Central College Rd, NA**

If bad weather, meeting will be held via zoom

### **FUTURE EVENTS TO BE DETERMINED**

Check [www.newalbanyhistory.info](http://www.newalbanyhistory.info) for updates

Notice of meetings and cancellations will be sent by email

Front cover photo taken by New Albany  
Veteran Dennis Scott at Khe Sanh, Vietnam

# MARJORIE (DORAN) KEESEE

by Dennis Keesee

New Albany lost another long-time resident on June 21, 2024, with the passing of Marjorie Chloe (Doran) Keesee, my mother.

Marjorie Keesee was born on December 7, 1931, upon the kitchen table with the aid of Doctor Alexander Doran. The NAPT Historical Society has Dr. Doran's medical bag and tools within its collection, and I have wondered if some may have been used that day to help my mother arrive into this world. Marjorie's birth occurred on the Doran/Evans family farm on Bevelhymer Road to parents Gladys (Strider) and Chester Doran. She was the fourth child following sisters Dorothy, Betty, and brother Harold. Sister Marian was born two years later with brother Paul arriving last. Paul Doran is her only surviving sibling at the current age of 84.

In her youth she and her siblings all worked on the farm which survived the Great Depression by selling thousands of eggs and chickens. Beef cattle were also raised as well as pigs and lots of crops. The Doran farm was originally obtained with a U.S. land grant by Mark Evans in 1818. The parchment was signed by President James Monroe, and I have it today in my possession. After Mark Evans's death at the age of 44 in 1821 the farm passed to his son Samuel, who died in 1864. After Samuel's death Alexander Doran, who had married Samuel's daughter Mary Evans, purchased the farm and it eventually passed to Marjorie's father, Chester Doran, who was born on September 5, 1900.

Two stories, retained from my mother's youth, were the day Pearl Harbor was bombed on her tenth birthday and the day of the tornado when she was 15.

On December 7, 1941, a day to become infamous for the Japanese bombing of Hawaii, Marjorie and her family had all enjoyed her birthday cake and her older siblings had gone out that evening. Mom and her younger siblings and parents were all sitting in the parlor listening to the radio and relaxing. Suddenly a news alert started that Pearl Harbor had been bombed on that Sunday morning. She said she went and sat in fear on the floor by the table holding the radio as parents Chester and Gladys gasped and talked in horror at the news. Before the war was over four years later her brother Harold had been a Prisoner of War and her two older sisters had married soldiers.



When Marjorie was 13, she started her first job at the five corners store, as it was known then, and E&D Market to my generation. The business was located where Central College Road, Kitzmiller Road, and State Route 62 all intersect. One day when 15, she was working when a big storm approached and was instructed to head home. One of the local boys offered a ride and they drove to her home on Bevelhymer Road. As she opened the car door to rush inside her home, the door was torn from the car by a tornado that was swirling overhead, a close call indeed.

Marjorie attended New Albany-Plain Local Schools where she was a cheerleader, graduating in 1949 with 19 classmates. She is shown on the left of the photo, going to a high school dance with a friend. When looking at her scrapbook saved from that time, we learned that she loved following the different sports teams, even those from the area schools. She also was a member of the local 4-H Chapter and enjoyed showing cattle at the Franklin County Fair each year.

On July 12, 1953, she married Thomas Keesee, whom she had known when a young girl when the two attended the Evangelical United Brethren Church on Central College Road. Tom had moved to Columbus but years later when home on leave from the Navy, he called the Doran home to ask Marian on a date.

Marjorie answered the phone, so he asked her. After that call they stayed together until Tom passed in 2012 after 59 years of marriage. To them were born four children: Gary, Krista, Rhonda, and Dennis. She was the grandmother of 17 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren whom she loved dearly.

Mom was a natural businesswoman which was not common in the 1950s. Soon after starting her family, she knew she still wanted to work so she began selling Avon. Her positive and outgoing personality led her to befriend all she met which helped her sell more than others. She was soon noticed by management and asked to join their team despite not having a college degree. She retired from Avon Products as a District Sales Manager where she at times had nearly 500 salesladies under her care. With Avon she earned the prestigious Circle of Excellence Award and travels abroad numerous times. Italy, France, and Egypt were some of her award destinations. During the 1960s when Marjorie was promoted to management there were only a few American corporations elevating woman, so good for Avon as she was great at her job.

Marjorie and husband Tom were also the proud owners of New Albany's Eagles Pizza, which they acquired in 1971. For over 50 years the town favorite has served the New Albany Community, having hired hundreds of area youth.

For many years she was a member of Franklin United Brethren Church, active with Dale Carnegie, and a member of New Albany Women's Network and Red Hat Society. She was the 2008 City of Hope Woman of the Year.

Marjorie hosted hundreds of parties at her home, and everyone knew she loved a good party!



# DORAN'S FARM MARKET

by Catherine Saveson



After 53 years of growing and selling produce in the New Albany area, Doran's Farm Market on Babbitt Road closed in July 2024. The Doran family are members of the Historical Society, and the Doran farm has been an integral part of the New Albany-Plain Township community. The Dorans hosted New Albany's annual fall Harvest the Arts Festival for 19 years, in collaboration with the New Albany Arts Council and the Historical Society. Many local residents will miss the farm. We wish the Dorans all the best in this new phase of their life.

## Timeline

- 1840s – The Doran family settled on Babbitt Road in a cabin back in the fields
- 1893 – The farmhouse in which Jim and Michele live was built. It was added onto over time.
- 1894 – Jim's father, James L. Doran, was born in the farmhouse
- 1971 – Jim Doran graduated from OSU and started growing produce on the family farm
- 1980s – The strawberry patch was added
- 1987 – Jim's father passed away
- 1988 – Jim and Michele married
- Around 1990 – The retail shop in the large barn opened
- 2000 – The old barn was struck by lightning and burned down
- 2001 – A new large barn was built by Amish
- July 2024 – The farm market closed

When Jim Doran graduated from OSU in 1971, his family had been raising milking cows for over a century on their farm on Babbitt Road. The Doran family settled there in the 1840s, living at first in a log cabin and eventually building the farmhouse in which Jim and Michele now live. Jim's father was born in the house in 1894, a year after it was built. Jim remembers the milk from his father's herd being picked up from the farm in large cans when



he was a kid. His father (at left) was an educator – a teacher in the Mifflin schools and superintendent of New Albany schools. Changes in agricultural regulations in the 1950s and 1960s required expensive equipment and structural upgrades which caused many small dairy farmers to get out of the commercial business. But Jim's father kept the dairy herd going on the side, almost as a hobby. The family also grew feed crops for the herd.



Jim came home from college with a degree in pomology (the cultivation of fruit). He first planted a grove of fruit trees but soon realized that he also needed to plant crops that would generate more immediate income to live

on. So, he started growing corn and melons. Sweet corn was in high demand locally. Jim sold fresh sweet corn wholesale to groceries and farm markets in the northeast quadrant of Columbus. He would ask store produce managers what they needed and plan his planting around providing produce for them. Back home on Babbitt Road, Jim and his father set up a farm stand wagon (at right) near the road, which his father tended. "My dad did a tremendous amount of work for me...He did the retail stuff, and he loved that...visiting with people. He was really good with people. He was well-thought of," Jim remembers.



Jim and Michele met at the New Albany Cardinal grocery store where she worked and Jim delivered produce. **“We met because of the produce!”** Michele joked. They were married in 1988 and have two daughters. **“I couldn’t have been luckier,”** Jim said, about his wife. In addition, Michele was a tremendous help with the farm business: knowledgeable and hard-working. She enjoyed working with numbers and handled the bookkeeping.

Over time the business grew; the family started to grow new types of produce, and invested in field improvements so they could expand the operations. Jim says he didn’t have a lot of funds to start out, but he was always willing to fix and salvage equipment and do things himself. The farm market offered an array of fresh homegrown produce to local customers, including sweet corn, muskmelons, tomatoes, strawberries, pumpkins, gourds, and more. Jim started growing strawberries in the 1980s, which became a large pick-your-own side of the business. Jim became an expert at timing the planting of seeds and varieties to have continuous produce available for as long as possible every season, and at knowing when to purchase supplemental produce, such as peaches, to meet customer demand. Michele’s father helped on the farm after he retired in the late 1990s. Around 1990, the Dorans moved their retail operation on Babbitt Road from the wagon by the roadside into the large 1901 historic barn.

In the winters, Jim drove a fuel oil truck and made deliveries to customers around the area. It was a seasonal job that dovetailed well with the summer produce business, and he did it for 43 years. It helped provide year-round income.

Disaster struck in 2000. A violent electrical storm swept through the area. Lightning hit the large barn and burned it to the ground. A house on Summit Road was also struck by lightning the same night, and the same storm knocked out police communications in Bexley. The firefighters called it **“a wild night.”** They were unable to save the barn and they worried that the wind would spread the fire, so they sprayed water on the Dorans’ house and the house across the street to protect them. The houses were saved. An old oak tree in front of the barn was damaged by the fire and had to be removed. Amazingly, the Dorans’ little barn and other outbuildings survived the night. In 2001, the Dorans hired Amish craftspeople to build a new, even larger, barn, which housed their retail business for the next 23 years.



Jim says that they had wonderful help over the years. When he first started, it was just himself and his dad working on the farm, but eventually they hired up to five people each summer to help with the farmwork. The helpers were usually high school and college students working to earn money for school. **“They were good kids and they’d get a lot done,”** Jim said. They came from Gahanna, New Albany, Licking Heights, and around the area. Many had siblings or friends who would also come to work for the Dorans.

**“Jim showed a lot of young people how to work hard,”** said Michele. Jim would be at the produce terminal at 5:00 a.m. to pick up supplemental produce, then be back at the farm by 7:00 a.m. to pick corn with the crew and work all day. He would stay so busy and be so tired at night that he couldn’t get out and spend money. Jim said, **“It’s hard work and it’s time-consuming. To do it right, you’ve got to give an awful lot of yourself. It’s a lot of work – that’s it in a nutshell.”**

Closing the market was a difficult decision. Michele said, **“We’ve gotten to know so many people over the years** and appreciate all the customers that came out. Some people have been coming who remember his dad out by the wagon. That’s one thing I’ll definitely miss.” Jim said, **“If I could continue raising fruit and vegetables I would,** but I just physically can’t do it. I don’t want to sound like I’m making an excuse. That’s the way it is. I really like it and I’ll miss it when it’s totally gone.” The Dorans plan to take some time to travel a little bit, enjoy their property, do some projects, and grow some of the produce they like on a smaller scale. It’s a bittersweet end to an era. **“We have truly enjoyed the farm,”** Jim said.



## MEET THE STREETS: THE STORIES BEHIND NEW ALBANY'S STREET NAMES

by Doug Tracy

Most of us pay little attention to street names as we drive around the area, except as a means to get us to where we are going. However, many street names in New Albany have fascinating stories behind them. Some may be whimsical or random, but many reflect the history of the early founders and builders of this exceptional community. The New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society recently embarked on a project to research, document, and share the histories of these street names, which we hope to eventually compile and publish. We titled this project, *"Meet The Streets: The Stories Behind New Albany's Street Names."* The story of the naming of Greensward Road is the first result of this project, with many more to come soon.

### GREENSWARD ROAD



New Albany residents are certainly familiar with Greensward Road, which follows the contours of the picturesque golf course and stately homes, connecting old SR161 with Johnstown Road. But how many know of the connection between the name of that road and New York City's Central Park?

On October 13, 1857, New York City's Board of Commissioners of Central Park unveiled a competition seeking architectural proposals for the design and development of the newly-acquired park land, with prizes for the best four proposals ranging from \$400 to \$2000.

Out of a total of 33 proposals that were received, one stood out and was declared the winner: The "Greensward Plan," submitted by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux – surnames that will be recognizable to

most New Albany-ites. *"This decision would later be hailed as a landmark in the history of landscape architecture."* The winning proposal was described as exemplifying *"the judicious blending of the picturesque and half wild with the wholly pictorial and artificial in the parts designed for the use of the general public for entertainment and promenade."*

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation tells us that: *"Their winning design plan named 'Greensward,' comes from the English term for 'unbroken stretch of turf or lawn,' and was seen as innovative and visionary, something they knew had never been seen before."*

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) was born in Hartford, Connecticut, the grandson of a Revolutionary War soldier, and later farmed on Staten Island, where he met Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), an English architect. Olmsted soon became Vaux's protégé. The pair later formed a partnership.

Following the Central Park project, Olmsted and Vaux partnered on a number of other major landscape projects before dissolving their partnership. Olmsted's subsequent work can be found in Yosemite National Park, the Capitol grounds in Washington, and North Carolina's Vanderbilt estate. His obituary in 1903 noted: *"The death of Frederick Law Olmsted (August 28, 1903), leaves landscape architecture in the large sense about as lacking in this country as it was when he first began with Vaux the development of the Central Park of New York city, at a time when there was no such thing as an artistically thought out and worked out park scheme in the country."*

The noted architect Daniel Burnham once said of Olmsted, *"He paints with lakes and wooded slopes; with lawns and banks and forest-covered hills; with mountainsides and ocean views ..."* The Buffalo Morning Express wrote that Frederick Law Olmsted *"has been called 'the father of landscape architecture in America.'"*

Were the architects of the 'new' New Albany influenced by Olmsted and Vaux? As you drive or walk past the stunning landscapes of New Albany that seamlessly meld natural, structural and artistic design elements, the answer is clear.

**HISTORY OF THE TAYLOR FARM**

This interesting presentation on April 11<sup>th</sup> by Dennis Keesee and Doug Tracy was attended by multiple Taylor family descendants.



**INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION**

The Historical Society parade entry on July 4<sup>th</sup> was an Army Jeep driven by Tim Butsko with Vietnam Veterans David Gerhardt (waving to crowd) and Dave Halsey as passengers. Open House docents were Helen Pestel, Catherine Saveson, and Doug Tracy.



**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

- Mark & Kimberly Derwent
- Morgan Derwent
- Nan Koch
- Judy Doran & Fred Myers
- Jim "JET" Thompson

**2024 FOUNDERS DAY**

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, Robert and Debbie Dean represented the Historical Society with their 1937 Studebaker coupe in the parade. Open House visitors were greeted by docents Valerie Bevelhymmer, Chandler Kiesel, Catherine Saveson, and Doug Tracy.



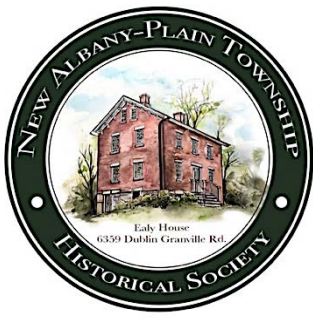
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**NEWSLETTER EDITORS**

Betty Maynard & Marty Saveson



New Albany-Plain Township Historical Society  
PO Box 219  
New Albany OH 43054-0219  
  
(614) 855-9861  
[www.newalbanyhistory.info](http://www.newalbanyhistory.info)

## RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Grant funds provided by the City



See page 2 for details of upcoming free events,  
including the Potluck Picnic on August 17<sup>th</sup>  
and our second annual Halloween Family Day.

### JUNE – SEPT 2024

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**EALY HOUSE**  
**HALLOWEEN FAMILY DAY**  
**FREE HOTDOGS, SNACKS, DRINKS**  
**CANDY FOR THE KIDS**  
**Sunday October 27 1:00 PM - 6:00pm**

Learn about the legend of New Albany's **PIG BEAR**,  
OUR BIG FOOT FROM YEARS AGO