

Parkman Gazebo School Bell, Millstone and Datestones dedication



Over the years, Parkman has had to bow to the inevitable march of progress in spite of our desire to keep our history intact. But, at each step along the way your citizens and your trustees have done what they can to keep as much history as possible.

Using part of the American Rescue Plan grant funds which the township received in 2022, the township has had a plan to preserve our historical buildings and structures, with upgrades to the Community House consisting of paint, new and refinished flooring, new tables and chairs, and even an elevator to assist those with mobility issues. The fresh new look has resulted in more rentals for weddings and large groups, providing good revenue for the township. A new front porch is in the planning stages.

The Overlook Park has a new horse shelter, a new swing set, and a complete upgrade of the Large Pavilion. Repairs to the fireplace are also in the works. Overlook Cemetery entrance pillars will be rebuilt, using the ARPA funds, an Ohio Department of Commerce grant and township funds.

These funds also made it possible for the township to refurbish the gazebo with needed repairs. A new roof, with a 50-year warranty will be completed by Memorial Day. It has a new paint job with a beautiful blue ceiling, an old southern tradition intended to ward off evil spirits or the belief that a blue porch ceiling will prevent bugs from making a home here. You choose the story that you like best. We moved the benches out from behind the gazebo for more comfortable views.

The Mill Stone and Cromwell datestone are two other historical markers for Parkman. Today we also dedicate these items which are placed at the sidewalk entrance to this park.

In 1946, a group of young men who just graduated from Parkman School led by Don Burnett and John Turon, held a scrap drive to earn some money for a class trip. While looking for scrap in the burned-out blacksmith shop, they found a large millstone. It was there to have new grooves hammered in, probably for the old mill by the river. Being pranksters, they decided to move the stone with a tractor to the center of town near the Veteran's Memorial. They were caught by the one-eyed constable, Jess Sherwin who ordered them to "get it out of there". They just dropped it in place by the monument and it wasn't moved again for 76 years.



In 2022, when the Veteran's Park was re-dedicated with a new large American flag and new flagpoles bearing the banners of our branches of service, the mill stone was moved to the Gazebo Park across the street here, where it remains as a symbol of Parkman's history.

During the demolition of the Cromwell building by the state to ease truck traffic at the intersection of Main Market and Madison roads, the datestones from the Cromwell Building built in 1899 were salvaged. Those were also placed here at the Gazebo Park entrance.

The original Gazebo

The original Gazebo which was called a Bandstand was built for the Parkman "Buckeye" Band. On August 10th, 1887, the Parkman Bandstand was dedicated right here. Located in the town center, this gazebo was a place to allow the community to enjoy outdoor performances. Local residents spent the summer building the bandstand and it was a point of community pride. There was a large crowd for this dedication. The Western Reserve Band from Windham, and the West Farmington Cornet Band were both here to help celebrate the event. People traveled long distances to enjoy the sounds. The name "Buckeye" band stemmed from the fact that the band members wore an actual buckeye attached to a silk string that hung from their jackets. The township is currently planning to plant a Buckeye tree at Overlook Park.



Today, a gazebo still stands at the same location in Parkman Center Park. The original had deteriorated badly. In 1997, this new gazebo was built and donated to the township by Tim and Kara Yoder of Parkman to honor their son Josh, a young man who had recently passed, leaving a hole in the hearts of his family and the many Parkman friends of this family.

You can find the brass roof of the original Parkman Bandstand on the gazebo in Burton Square. It is a part of the Century Village and the Historical Society for Geauga County. Recently, the Parkman Alumni Association donated the original Parkman School bell to the township. This bell hung in the belfry of the original Parkman School from 1883 to 1952 when the school was demolished and a new Parkman school was built.

At that time, Concezio "CONNIE" Testa who was the custodian of the Parkman School for many years retained the bell for safekeeping. When Connie retired, he took the bell home and maintained possession of the bell until his death in 2010. Mr. Testa's family donated the bell to the Parkman Alumni Association and it was stored at the home of Bill Stanley until the spring of 2022 when the Alumni donated it to the township.

It has been placed in this structure in the center of the gazebo to honor our history and for everyone to enjoy. Directly beneath is a time capsule buried at the time of the new construction in 1997 by the Parkman Chamber of Commerce. It is to be opened in 2047.

**We hereby dedicate this bell
to the settlers who built Parkman,
the teachers who taught
Parkman children
and to those residents
who honor
Parkman's history.**

