**The Joy of Giving**

It’s been sometime since the last article about that interesting individual here at Forest Hill Cemetery. With the weather changing we have been preparing and focusing on the upcoming mowing season. So let’s look at two names that have come up.

Some of you may have heard of a gentleman here in town by the name of Albert “Doc” McKnight. Old “Doc” was born in 1855 and died on March 11, 1935 at the age of 80.

Albert was always seen around town in a top hat and well dressed, leading parades and greeting newcomers and guest to the city. Some within the community refereed to him as the city’s *unofficial ambassador.*

The *Stillwater Valley News* wrote this when Albert died in its paper:

*After he had played the self appointed role of master of ceremonies in the funeral procession of so many other persons, there seems a sort of strange justice in the announcement that Albert "Doc" McKnight will not be buried with only casual rites accorded those who die at the county infirmary. A pomp and circumstance which befits the occasion will surround the funeral of this widely known character. If "Doc" is able to know what is happening for him, he will have achieved the final recognition. A prominent Piqua man, whose generosity and deeds of philanthropy are ever giving happiness and comfort to some unfortunate, realizing the irony of Albert's burial without due ceremony, has arranged that the body be brought to the Groven Funeral Home from the county home, where the well known Negro character died Friday from a heart attack. The body will lie at the Groven mortuary until the time for the funeral Monday afternoon at two o'clock. During this time several thousand people viewed the remains. The funeral was conducted by Rev. Father James G. Falls of St. Mary's Catholic, Rev. Maxfield Dowell of St. James Episcopal Church and Rev. R. N. Nelson of Cyrene A. M. E. church. The Groven company donated their services.*

If you read the statement from the *Stillwater Valley News* you see that “Doc” was to be buried in what was commonly referred to as a “potter’s field” but thanks to a local family he was brought home to Piqua and buried in Forest Hill Cemetery.

It makes one feel good that even this man who was said to have no money or the ability to pay for a funeral but was part of so many other life’s that he was given a great sendoff by the thousands of locals that visited and the number of local ministers and priest that performed the services, a well deserving tribute to a man that loved his community and his friendship. Here’s to you “Doc”.

Albert “Doc” McKnight was laid to rest in Section 10D- Lot 37.

Clarence O. White, not a person that comes to mind when you first think off maybe somebody important in the community, but Clarence did a great thing, he saved a life.

Clarence White, 41, stove molder, saved Alphonso J. Collins, 51, from drowning, on March 26, 1913 in Rossville, Ohio, now many should know what happened in 1913. Early in the morning of March 25, Collins's house was swept from its foundations by the rising waters of the Great Miami River, and Collins, who was lightly clad, took refuge in a tree. He stood on a branch two inches thick and clung to a smaller branch with his hands until the following morning, at which time the water was 10 feet deep at the tree. White started from the opposite side of the river in a flat-bottomed boat and rowed across the main current, which was about 500 feet wide and flowing at a speed of about 7 m.p.h. He reached a point upstream from the tree and made his way cautiously to the tree. He warned Collins about dropping into the boat and then worked the stern of his boat to a position under Collins. Collins stepped into the boat, and White again crossed the main current to the opposite side of the river, passing over a levee on the way where there was a roll of the water about one foot high. Collins was taken to a hospital, and he later recovered from the effects of his experience

For his deed Clarence White was awarded the *Carnegie Medal* in 1914, along with a financial grant of $1,000.

Today that $1,000 would be like receiving an award of just under $23,000.

In closing I have met many wonderful individuals, many of them in a sad time in their lives but I remember a quote “Do not cry because it’s over, smile because it happened”. When we lose someone we are saddened but I remember the good that I received from them and the time I got to spend with them so remember what many say is a Dr. Seuss quote “Do not cry because it over, smile because it happened”.