

# The First Community Christmas Tree

## ~ It took a village ~

*Tracing Fairview Park History, Chris H. Gerrett*

November 1948, community spirit was strong, what better time, then the present, to start a new tradition, a Community Christmas Tree.

In addition to locating a tree, the community planning included a jolly fat Santa with a smile and package for the children as well as a chorus. It would take donations and labor from community members, organizations, the school system, and the village street crew: the Fairview Merchants' Association, and the Fairview American Legion Post 738 donated for the purchase of decorations and lights. Harper's Hardware in the Fairview Shopping Center obtained the hard-to-get light sockets and bulbs. The village administration and the school board provided the electrical power and the land. Many months of planning were needed to make this possible.

Originally the plan was to chop down and re-erect a tree that would then have lights strung on it. As with many plans, things change, and in the case of the Community Christmas Tree, the change was good. Mrs. Edward Bohm donated a fir tree from her backyard on Stanford Ave. Instead of chopping down the tree, as planned initially, Fred Masso, a local tree surgeon/expert provided the equipment and expertise to transplant the tree with help from the village street crew.

The tree was placed on the southwest corner of what was the Garnett School grounds, known today as the O'Neill Healthcare. This location was considered a 'central location' for the village in 1948 and would become the center of the village Christmas spirit. The American Legion Post 738 and Unit 738 Ladies' Auxiliary strung the lights and hung decorations. A week before Christmas the tree lighting event took place and Mr. Frank Barr, head of the music department at the high school, lead a volunteer service of the Mixed Chorus that sang Christmas carols.

Over the years, the location has changed, the first tree was removed, and other trees were placed in another area of Fairview Park. The ideas and planning continue growing, the tree lighting takes place at the annual Winterfest held in Bain Park, with community activities held in the historical Bain Park Cabin. Whether a Village or a City, the plan to bring the community together continues.

*Who were the common folks in this bit of history?*

*Mrs. Edward Bohm and her daughter Gloria Bohm provide the history of the tree. The tree had been planted in 1931 on Gloria's first Christmas. That was the first and last year they would celebrate Christmas with their husband and father, Herman Stolpman. In 1948, did the family know they would be moving and wanted the tree located in a public area?*

*A person can only imagine the special meaning this tree held for Gloria and her mother and why they let it go.*

*Fred (Ferdinand) V. Masso, the tree surgeon/expert, was the owner of F.V. Masso Tree Service, 21335 Lorain Ave. The son of Italian immigrants he learned a skill as a Tree Surgeon / Expert as early as 1930. It is no surprise that he gave his time and loaned his equipment for the Community Christmas Tree in 1948. Giving and helping others appear to have been a way of life for Fred. At a young age of 24, he was raising his step-son and step-daughter, while keeping a roof over the head of his brother-in-law and sister-in-law. By 1939, Fred and his wife, Mabel were business owners and homeowners in Fairview Village and continued their journey through life giving to others.*



## **Fairview Park Historical Society**

[www.FairviewParkHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.FairviewParkHistoricalSociety.org)

### **2019 Events & Program schedule At-A-Glance**

*Membership business meetings start 30 minutes before the presentation –  
presentation start times indicated with \**

#### **Winter Break November 2018 – March 2019**

**Presentations will start again on March 14, 2019**

**Historical Society Museum Open House** 2:00 – 4:00, *Stop in and checkout the many historical items we have on display or participate in a Scavenger Hunt. The museum will be open the first Sunday of each month, May through November*

May 5, 2019

June 2, 2019

July 7, 2019

August 4, 2019

September 1, 2019

October 6, 2019

November 3, 2019

***All events are at Bain Park Cabin (except for Summerfest) or noted otherwise  
Fairview Park history related books, post cards, note cards and more will be  
available for purchase at all events and programs.***

**Join today**

## The Fairview Park Historical Society

Explore the history of Fairview Park

[www.FairviewParkHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.FairviewParkHistoricalSociety.org)

The Fairview Park Historical Society invites you to join us in exploring the events and people that have provided us with a rich and interesting history over the last 100+ years.

**Your membership includes** presentations that take place in September, October, November, March, April and May, as well as two newsletters per year.

To learn more about our program, visit our website [www.FairviewParkHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.FairviewParkHistoricalSociety.org), or connect with us on LinkedIn or Facebook or email [FairviewParkHistory@gmail.com](mailto:FairviewParkHistory@gmail.com).

**Fairview Park Historical Society Museum**  
21077 North Park Drive  
adjacent to Bain Park Cabin

Open the first Sunday in May - November  
2:00 – 4:00



Our museum is located in the original library room of Bain Park Cabin, we have on display many collections from the police department, fire department, high school yearbooks, Garnett School, Gilles-Sweet School, Coffinberry School, Parkview School, St. Angela Church & School, Messiah Lutheran Church, Century Homes, and businesses, as well as many photographs of the founding families and much more.

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### FAIRVIEW PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

*please print*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership dues:

Student	\$5.00
Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Corporate	\$25.00
Life Member	\$100.00

***Please note: contact information is used  
for historical society business ONLY.***

Please make checks payable to: Fairview Park Historical Society

Mail to: Fairview Park Historical Society

P.O Box 26165 Fairview Park, Oh 44126