



ISSUE 53 - JANUARY 2018

# WILLOW HOUSE TIMES - 100th Anniversary editions all year long!

## Cuyahoga Hts. Historical Archive

Kennedy House (picture above)  
4651 E. 71st St.  
Home of the Historical Committee  
and Boy Scout Troop 28

---

## Historical Committee Members

Barb Bartczak  
Mark Chase  
Laura Hine  
Sandy Waldemarson

Willow House Times Editor:  
Laura Hine ([genealogygal2@juno.com](mailto:genealogygal2@juno.com))

### Website:

[sites.google.com/site/cuyahogahtshistorical](https://sites.google.com/site/cuyahogahtshistorical)  
Webmaster: Laura Hine

### Facebook Group:

[facebook.com/groups/132447953512779](https://facebook.com/groups/132447953512779)  
(Many have shared their own pictures to this Facebook group).

### 2018 Meetings at the Kennedy House:

10 a.m. - Noon  
April 7  
May 5  
August 11 (times to be announced - 100 year celebration)  
October 6  
May 28th Memorial Day Open House 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Stop by and visit! We'd love to see you! Our website shown above shows some of our holdings. Please consider bringing any photos or artifacts that you might have pertaining to the Village.. We have a scanner onsite and can scan and save them while you visit!

The Historical Committee's next meeting will be on Apr. 7, 2018 from 10 a.m. to Noon. Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting or look at the displays in the Kennedy House. You can also schedule a special time to visit by contacting any committee member or the Village Hall. We welcome out-of-town families, seniors groups, school classes, or anyone interested in seeing our holdings.

THE HISTORIC WILLOW HOUSE (demolished 2015)

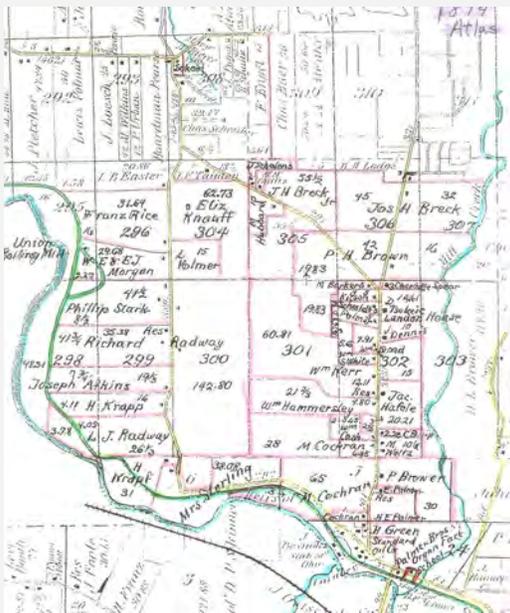


We hope you enjoy the newsletter. Newsletters are produced in January, April, July, and October.

# Happy 100th Birthday Cuyahoga Heights!!!

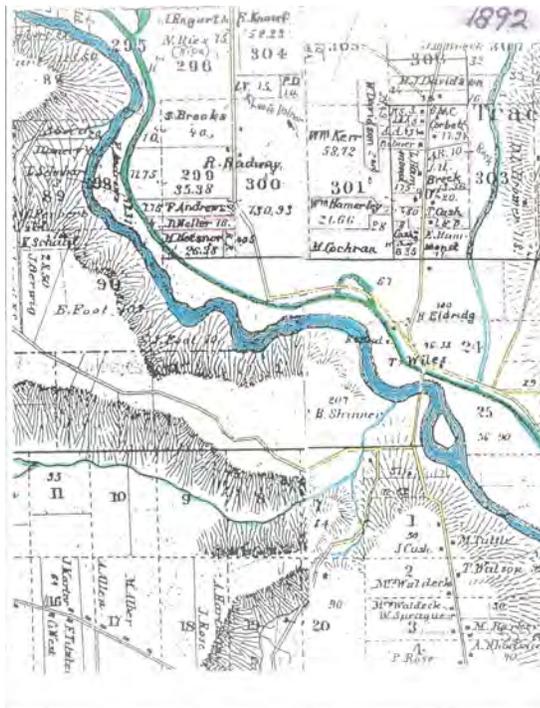
**Howdy! It's Cuyahoga Heights.**  
After separating from Newburg Heights and forming the township of Willow, the secessionists have now organized the village of Cuyahoga Heights. They will elect officers March 16.

March 5, 1918 Plain Dealer blurb announcing the creation Of the Village of Cuyahoga Heights!!

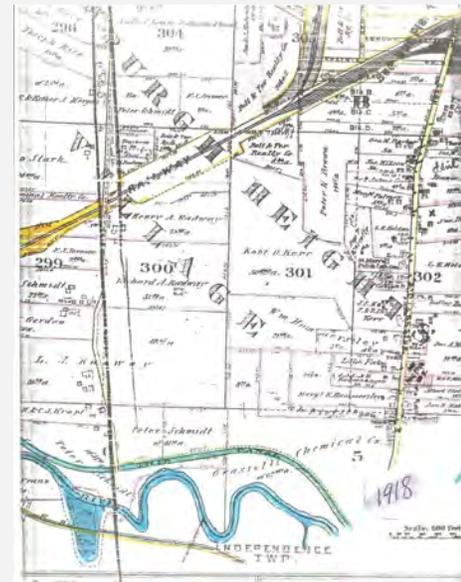


1874 Atlas showing what is today the Village of Cuyahoga Heights

## The Birth of our Village! The Birth of a tight knit community!



1892 Map showing what is today the Village of Cuyahoga Heights



1918 Map showing right before Cuyahoga Heights was founded.



Map of Willow Township. Willow Township was a township in Cuyahoga County, and Willow Township is what the Village of Cuyahoga Heights was called before it was founded.

Although Cuyahoga Heights has been in existence as a political entity since 1918, the roots extend deeply into the early history of Ohio. The Ohio Canal, which was a vital link in the state's transportation more than 150 years ago, remains as evidence of the role the rural community had in making of a great state and nation. Cuyahoga Heights, when it was born in 1918, was a quiet, rural community. It had agriculture as its major commercial venture. Industry found the location ideal for expansion and the political climate inviting.

Like all small rural communities it boasted a post office, blacksmith shop, a dairy, a drugstore, two saloons and felt the fate of prohibition, a dance hall for Saturday night fun and a string of prosperous truck farms. The road system included several miles of 10-foot red brick pavement along old Harvard Hill, East 49th St., and East 71st St. With the coming of the automobile, East 71st St. was designated as Ohio Route 21.

One frequently hears, of course, of communities that have seceded from larger municipalities, but not often does it happen that the seceder takes the city hall along. Nor does it very often happen that the part which breaks away contains within itself the richest part of the dismembered territory. Above all, it does not very often happen in Cuyahoga County, yet here we have Cuyahoga Heights Village, now a separate civic entity, doing very well, thank you, after having severed political relations with its parent, Newburgh Heights, in 1918, and waxing prosperous down there on the southern fringe of Cleveland, what with all the manufacturing plants within its

boundaries going practically full blast and paying tidy sums annually into the town treasury.

Samuel E. Clapp, clerk of Cuyahoga Heights, served from 1918, except for four years when he thought he should retire, and then was asked to come back in 1932, sat with a reporter from the Plain Dealer a whole evening pouring over records for details of the controversy that marked the secession of the Village from Newburgh Heights. Like all such records, the Village books were severely brief, and one had to read between the lines to get the picture of what had really happened. "Moved by Schmit, seconded by Hammersley, to hold an election to form a township, as asked by a petition signed by 30 freeholders." According to Mr. Clapp, who served as assistant superintendent of the American Steel & Wire Company plant, knew a story or two about the town, having lived in it for some time, and was able to enlighten the report with the following story.

According to Mr. Clapp, the community quarrel was caused by the fact that although the residents of what is now Cuyahoga Heights were paying higher taxes the money was spent in improving other sections, notably the district near Washington Park. At that time East 71st Street was only half paved, and East 49th Street had but a narrow pavement. Sewage was faulty, transportation poor. In fact, this section resembled the "slums," while the lower part of Newburgh Heights looked like a most up-to-date metropolis.

Mayor Anton Linek of Newburgh Heights was confronted time and again to correct the problems facing the residents of East 71st and East 49th, but the situation was not altered. Finally, led by Jesse W. Hammersley, who had lived at 4940 E. 71st St. for 55 years, 25 citizens met one night in a shed and voted to form the township of Willow, which was the first step necessary before a village could be organized. An election was held on February 2, 1918, and 59 persons - a large number for that section - turned out in the bitter cold weather to vote for secession. Four trustees were elected, including

Clinton Gordon, Mr. Clapp, Joseph F. Schmit, and R.D. Kerr. After a few more meetings required by statute, the Village was legally organized and at a final election, March 16, 1918, Mr. Schmit, bachelor and son of a pioneer family which had lived on the same homestead for 60 years, was chosen first mayor. He remained in office 12 years.

In addition to establishing the Village of Cuyahoga Heights and choosing its officers, the election gave four out of the five square miles which comprised Newburgh Heights to Cuyahoga Heights - including the former's city hall, which was in the seceding area. Naturally, it found itself involved in a lawsuit over the possession of the city hall, yet it not only won the suit, but in a later one was given 86 percent of Newburgh Heights cash on hand in the bargain. In tax duplicate valuation this represented \$10,674,360. Also included in the court order were all office equipment, a Ford car and a garbage collection outfit.

Mayor Linek of Newburgh, perhaps, was not particularly concerned over the money value of his official residence, for it was a rather unpretentious place, no larger than a good-sized garage. But there was a principal involved. No new and upstart Village could be permitted to get away with that sort of thing, and so suit was filed that went clear to the Supreme Court of Ohio and lasted more than a year. The decision as has been stated, was quite a blow to Newburgh Heights, especially that tax business. The Cuyahoga Heights tax duplicate amounted to \$12,396,630, and after Cuyahoga Heights was granted its 86 percent, there was only \$1,772,270 left for poor Newburgh Heights. Frederick W. Green, the solicitor of Cuyahoga Heights was credited with acquiring the tax money for the Village.

But in acquiring such a handsome percentage of the parental taxes the offspring likewise was compelled to assume 83 percent of Newburgh Heights debts, which amounted to \$270,515.21. It was a load, and after 18 years (1936), there was still an unpaid balance of \$105,000. Despite the heavy bonded debt, however, none of the 800 residents seem to regret its secessionist action. During Mayor Schmit's administration East 72st and East 49th streets were given new pavements and better sidewalks, and the \$250,000 trunk line sewer on East 71st was finally installed.

The Village built a \$75,000 two-story Georgian town hall during the Depression which replaced the rickety old building over which the two towns fought so hard. The structure was designed to serve a double purpose. It was to serve as a city hall and community center, with a shiny combination dance hall and auditorium with a seating capacity of 800 - the exact population of the town. Included in the new structure was a club and lodge room and a community kitchen capable of serving 300 guests. There was also a children's play room and a two-room apartment for the custodian. In the basement was a bowling alley and billiard tables - and two cells, usually vacant.

Cuyahoga Heights in 1936 had no troublesome tax problems like some of its somewhat distracted sister communities. Residents paid only a small fraction of the total value of taxable property. The \$17,000,000 tax duplicate of which Cuyahoga Heights was so proud, and justly, too, since no other Village in the United States at the time could equal it, came mostly from the manufacturing plants that had established legal residence.

## **CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS - THE EARLY DAYS**

Long before Cuyahoga Heights came into existence as an incorporated Village, its roots were established in the early history of the state of Ohio. The Ohio Canal, which runs through the Village was a vital link in the state's transportation more than 165 years ago, a reminder that the community played a vital role in making Ohio a great state. In the early days of the Village, truck farms along E. 49th St. took their produce and vegetables to the markets in Cleveland. The farms provided plenty of summer work for young men and

worked as much as six days a week at the rate of a whopping 10 cents or less an hour. They received, as a bonus, free produce for their families when harvest time rolled around. During the fall canning season the farmers sold their produce along the streets of the Village.

Railroading became an important part in the growth of the Village. The New York Central Railroad operated the Marcelline Yards, where they put together strings of railroad cars to transport goods and material all over the country. The Newburgh and South Shore Railroad on East 71st served industry in both Newburgh and Cuyahoga Heights, and the Cleveland Railway Company located its car repair facility and roadbed maintenance facility on Harvard Avenue, between East 42nd and 49th Streets.

With the demand for electricity increasing, the Illuminating Company built a power station at Oak Avenue and East 71st St. Both Ohio Bell Telephone Company and the International Telephone and Telegraphy Company established major long distance centers at East 49th and Harvard Avenue. Before the coming of electrical refrigeration, the Pearse brothers operated an ice farm in the ravine near East 49th and Harvard. During the winter season, blocks of ice were cut on the site and stored for summer usage.

The Village even had two churches at the turn of the century. The Willow Baptist Mission was erected on the present site of the Toscana Club and the Forestdale Presbyterian Church on East 49th near Harvard. Helen Jones (later Mrs. Dustheimer) was the organist and Sunday School teacher at the Willow Baptist Mission. In addition, she taught classes at old Harvard School. The Catholic residents attended St. Joseph (Woodland Ave.), Holy Name Church, Sacred Heart of Jesus Church, St. Michael's in Independence, St. Therese Church and several others.

The Kalfas Dairy and Phillips Drugstore formerly stood on the site of the elementary school on 71st Street. Village residents could buy their gas at the drugstore which featured a hand-pump in front of the building. The community store near Bletch Court served as the post office before regular mail delivery service was started in the Village. Residents could pick up their mail at the store on their way to buy groceries.

Transportation in and around the Village came from the old Forester Bus Line, which was located on East 57th and Fleet Avenue. The bus line operated open-air White buses manufactured in Cleveland.

The Village had always been rich in natural resources and lumber, sand, and gas found in plentiful supply along the Cuyahoga River Valley. During the 1920s a blight completely destroyed the beautiful chestnut trees. During World War I, the black walnut found in the community, was being used to produce rifle butts.

## **SOCIAL LIFE OF THE EARLY DAYS**

The Village was no different than any small community in the early days, the social life evolved around square dances, picnics, clambakes, dances and skating on the ponds during the winter months. The Village boasted of its own dance hall where popular Saturday night get-togethers were held. The men of the Village participated in a variety of sporting events including fishing, turtle catching, fox hunts, hunting and baseball.

The local halls and later the Town Hall were popular spots for the dance crowds. Ted Lang, the robust drummer and his wife tickled the keys in the musical era.

During the Depression Years of the 1930's the local dramatic club, "Ruralites", produced many interesting programs. The teenagers and young adults produced plays and variety shows. The talented group included Helen Baur DeSantis, Dorothy Kruzel Bartczak, Esther Chase Keys, Harry and Irene Blue,

Marian Humphrey, Alvina Gallitz, Mary Bacci and John Hanousek.

In the early days, men participated in mushroom picking safaris. Each year turtle soup was a delight on the menu of refreshments at the men's stag parties and at the Home Day celebration. Prominent chefs were Police Chief Bill Baur and Dan Marek, who guarded their recipes with the professional pride of gourmet cooks. The fall of the year was a favorite time for the mushroom pickers. Chapek, the popular tavern keeper, was an expert at recognizing the varieties of the field mushrooms and passed his skill to the other men.

Rabbits, pheasants, squirrels, ducks and smaller game were plentiful in the wooded ravines that surrounded the village. The predatory fox was the subject of Sunday morning hunts of large groups of the sportsmen. After the hunt, a brunch of hot chili or turtle soup rounded out the day of fun. In friendly competition, the men would record their biggest turtle or largest mushroom picked during a single season.

Many holiday activities were provided including the annual Christmas visit by Santa; the VFW Post Easter Egg hunt; trips to the Cleveland Stadium to see big league baseball; Halloween Parties; Saturday movies at the Town Hall and back-to-school parties. Some of these programs have been a continuous treat to the village youngsters for more than 40 years. Another traditional event was the Home Day in August of each year. It gave the residents, past and present, a chance to socialize and recall the good old days. The Fourth of July water show and fireworks at the high school football field were enjoyed by young and old.

### **SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN THE VILLAGE**

In addition to the men's fast pitch softball team, horseshoe pitching and bocci ball were popular among the men. Regulation horseshoe pits spotted the village at several locations including the Weidner homestead on Marcelline Court. The contest during the last summer evenings were popular. The winners were treated to the finest home-brew since the prohibition era was in effect.

When the Town Hall was built, a bowling alley provided both men and women an opportunity to participate in league competition and weekend open bowling. In 1938, the Cuyahoga Heights Athletic Club was formed and entered a team in the Newburgh Heights Fast Pitch Softball League. Playground activities were organized at Chapek's Grove (later taken over by the Village in 1945) and the Town Hall. American Steel and Wire leased the East 49th St. playfield to the Village for one dollar per year. In 1955, the Village built the William R. Gerdon Swimming Pool adjacent to the City Hall. The swimming pool was named after the former mayor. In 1953, Little League Baseball came to the Village and a team was organized. The ladies of the community were not overlooked as they organized a Pigtail team for the girls. The High School provided team sports in football, basketball, baseball and other sports for the students.

Another popular event was the first ripe tomato derby each season. Early planting and guarding against late spring frosts was the secret of the gardeners. Many have shared in the coveted title of tomato derby competition including Bill Baur, Frank Bartczak, Jack Klima, Marcel "Bus" Golene, Vince Wesey and others.

In 1953, the Little League fever among young boys hit the community and Lloyd Wey assisted by several young men, organized a team. The league competition included the villages of Brooklyn Hts., Cuyahoga Heights, Independence, Newburgh Hts., Seven Hills and Valley View. The opening day each season was a festive event. Mayor Bill Gerdon tossing out the first ball, a band, presentation of the colors by the VFW Post and Auxiliary and all the fanfare associated with a big league opener. The managers, coaches, umpires and scorekeepers were volunteers. It made possible the wholesome sport activity for the young boys that continues today.

### **OTHER LANDMARKS**

The Kalfas Dairy and Phillips Drugstore stood on the site of the present elementary school on E. 71st. A hand pump in front of the store, which was later converted into a grocery meat market by Eugene Gesel, provided gasoline.

The Krapf farm, that overlooked the Cuyahoga Valley at the bluff on E. 49th St., is now the site of Reliance Electric. The original red brick farmhouse was built by Jacob Krapf Sr., in about 1860.

The Gallitz farm was on Grant Ave. When the Willow Freeway was started, the house was moved over to open fields to East 49th St. The Ford Motor Co. parts depot later stood on the site.

The community store near Bletch Court served as a post office before the postal delivery service was established. On E. 49th St., near the road to the old Ohio Canal pump house, the former mayor of Cleveland, Tom L. Johnson, built a summer cottage and trout fishing troughs.

(The above history from the 75th Anniversary pamphlet of Cuyahoga Heights 1918-1993)

## THE RADWAY FAMILY

The Radway Family were the largest landowners in 1918. Their farm was on E. 49th Street. All pictures on this page are of their farm and homestead.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER,  
**CELEBRATED 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY.**



LEAVITT J. RADWAY.      MRS. LEAVITT J. RADWAY.

Mr. and Mrs. Leavitt J. Radway celebrated their golden wedding on Dec. 28 at their home in Newburg Heights.

Mr. Radway, who was born in Vermont, came with his father, Richard Radway, to Ohio in 1871. He has since lived on the homestead where they then settled. His brother, Amasa, still lives across the road, on part of the farm, and a sister, Mrs. Olive Marshall, lives in the city.

Mrs. Radway came from Germany with her father's family when quite young and they settled on the next farm but one from the Radway place. She has one sister, Mrs. John Sommer, living in Newark, N. J.

Though held on a very severe day the wedding anniversary was attended by relatives and friends to the number of fifty, who gathered around the table in the big hall, built in the homestead many years ago by Richard Radway for his children and grandchildren. Mr. and Mrs. Radway were well remembered by their friends, the presents being many and beautiful.

Their daughter, Miss Bella Radway, wore her mother's original wedding dress. Their sons, Alfred and George, still live with them and the youngest son, Charles, with his family, lives in Newburg.



4894 E. 49th - The Radway Home





The Huy Farm on Harvard Avenue. The Huy's were early settlers in the area as well!

## INDUSTRY ON THE CANAL AND RIVER!!

A. ALEXANDER STEAM GRISTMILL – exact location unknown.

PALMER ORGAN FACTORY AND STEAM GRISTMILL – Canal road where the service department is today. Appears in 1874 atlas and was still there in 1876. This property became the A.C. Currier Grindstone and Sickle Sharpener Company.

A.C. CURRIER GRINDSTONE AND SICKLE SHARPENER COMPANY – this business began operation in 1876 and became the Newburg Fertilizer Co.

NEWBURG FERTILIZER COMPANY, later NEWBURG REDUCTION CO. (founded 1898), later CLEVELAND RENDERING CO (founded 1917), later CLEVELAND GARBAGE PLANT (founded Jan. 27, 1917) – where the service department is today.

HARRY WOOD STEAM GRISTMILL – (Before 1867) Destroyed by fire and became the Cleveland Acid Rectifying Works. For location see Cleveland Acid Rectifying Works.

CLEVELAND ACID RECTIFYING WORKS (founded 1867), later UNION ACID COMPANY, later UNION ACID RESTORING CO., later AMERICAN CHEMICAL AND MANUFACTURING CO., later GRASSELLI CHEMICAL CO., later NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT - This facility was located on what was called "Acid Hill," located on Canal Road, just west of East 71<sup>st</sup> Street, where the I-77 overpass is on Canal and East 71<sup>st</sup>, and part of the Sewer District now.

CLEVELAND ROLLING MILL aka U.S. STEEL – E. 49<sup>th</sup> south of Grant Ave. – later became American Steel & Wire – Founded in Cuyahoga Heights in 1907.

CALIFORNIA POWDER COMPANY aka HERCULES POWDER CO. – founded 1877 closed 1897 and located on the east side of E. 49<sup>th</sup> Street just south of Grant Ave. Elizabeth Knauff owned this property in 1892 and by 1898 the property was owned by Hercules Powder Co.

AUSTIN POWDER COMPANY – founded 1867 on the east side of Canal just north of Harvard, where Harvard Rd. descends down the hill to Jennings Rd.



8 Mile lock in Cuyahoga Heights looking northwest



8 Mile lock in Cuyahoga Heights looking northeast. E. 71st Street hill can be seen in the background.



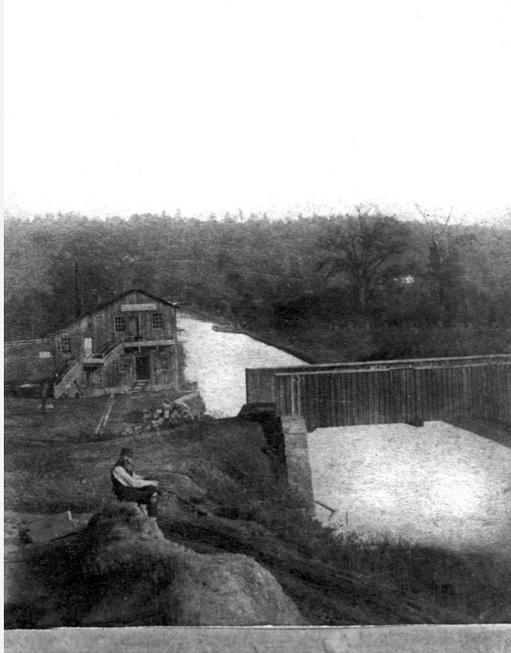
Austin Powder Company



Austin Powder Company



These types of boats made their way down the Canal.



The Palmer Organ Factory on Canal Road

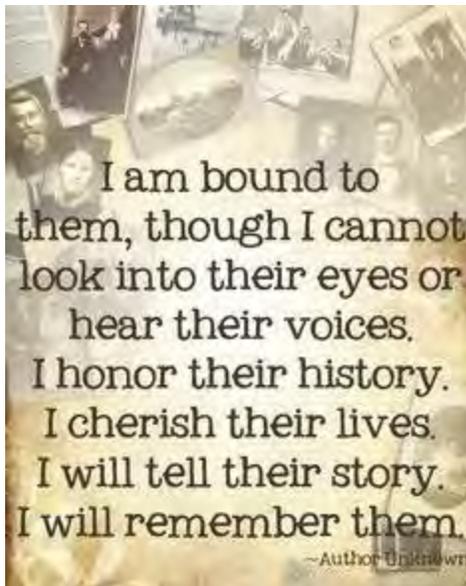


The Palmer Sawmill at 8 Mile Lock of the Canal

In the next edition of the Willow House Times, we will discuss Landmarks in the Village, as well as the three different War Memorials that have existed in the Village over the years!



### The Ohio Canal System



**SO MUCH OF OUR  
FUTURE LIES IN  
PRESERVING OUR  
PAST.**

QUOTEHD.COM

Peter Westbrook