



Patterson Castle Built On Barter System In 1898



When telling people you are from Barnesville there is a mixture of responses. “How about that football team?” “Ah, Good old Blue Eagle Lake.” “Isn’t that where the castle is?”

The last question may be the most popular. Yes in fact, Barnesville is home to the popular castle.

Built in 1898, the Queen Anne style home sits just off Highway 9

in Barnesville. The home features prominent chimneys, a variety of window shapes, stained glasses, towers and asymmetrical plan and massing.

According to tradition, the Stone Castle was built for Dr. Robert Patterson in 1898, although the lot on which it stands was first deeded to him in 1901 when the acreage was platted. It is said to have been built

with stones Dr. Patterson accepted from his patients in lieu of payment for his services.

Because of its age, it is on the National Register of Historic Places. The house remained in the Patterson family until he retired in 1911.

Since that time there has been a succession of many owners. At one time it was divided into apartments.

It is currently a private residence, owned by Anne Kramer.

Robert Patterson was born August 21, 1850 in Grafton, Ontario, son of Thomas and Mary (Hardy) Patterson, one of six children.

A brother, A.G. Patterson, was an early day principal in the Barnesville school and later, a doctor. Both Thomas and Mary Patterson are buried in City Cemetery.

James J. Hill, the noted railroad tycoon, reportedly persuaded Dr. Patterson to move his practice to Barnesville to treat Hill’s railroad workers. Dr. Patterson arrived in Barnesville in June of 1887.

He graduated from Trinity College, Ontario, in 1880 and practiced medicine in Buerton, Ontario, and Moorhead, Minnesota. Prominent in the growth of Barnesville, Patterson served as city treasurer and alderman. For many years he served on the school board and was considered instrumental in the building of the first high school in 1899.

In connection with his medical practice he also operated the Patterson Drug Store on Front Street, now part of Barnesville Drug & Hardware.

He was responsible for organizing the Masons and Eastern Star in Barnesville and was an active member all his life. He was a member of the Congregational Church and served as treasurer from 1906 to 1909, deacon from 1909 to 1911, and trustee from 1906 until his death.

By 1910, Dr. Patterson’s health

had begun to fail and he contracted typhoid fever. He turned his practice over to his son in 1911 and went to Biloxi, Mississippi, to spend the winter, where he died of a “stroke of

apoplexy.” A newspaper account of his death reported that he was highly esteemed and that hundreds came to the Masonic Hall where he lay in state.



Dr. Robert Patterson, began his practice in Barnesville 1888. A native of Ontario, Canada, and a graduate of the Toronto University, Dr. Patterson also operated the drug store where Barnesville Drug & Hardware is now located. He served several years as president of the local school board, was a member of the city council and served as city treasurer for two years.

Takedown Club Promotes Participation At All Levels

By: Michael Stein

A continual challenge for parents and educators is how to keep kids active and involved in activities that are wholesome and provide positive life lessons.

Youth wrestling does both, says parent and coach Jesse Grabow.

In Barnesville, the Trojan Takedown Club is integral to boosting youth wrestling. Grabow is a former high school wrestler who has taken on the role of coach and spokesperson for the Takedown Club for the past several years.

He is passionate about the sport of wrestling and what it can teach young people about life.

“Our hope has always been to get more kids involved with wrestling,” Grabow said. “A big part of that is getting the word out about the program. We do have pretty good numbers with our younger kids, but we start losing them around junior high age.”

Grabow said it’s becoming more challenging to attract new kids to the program. “We really don’t know for sure if it’s a slump or a continuing

trend. A lot of other activities seem to be in the same boat.”

There’s hope for growth on the horizon with Barnesville’s participation in the Northwoods Wrestling League (NWL).

Dan Cox of Barnesville explains in an online forum that the NWL differs from similar one-off events because “we structured our seasons together, created a specific uniform, and all the coaches are aligned on the concept.”

Cox says the current competition options are not supporting the

development of the less competitive wrestlers or “late bloomers.” Kids prefer team events with their buddies.

The league will focus on grades 2-6 to compete on dual teams from area schools, and are matched by ability level and weight. Moves such as headlocks are prohibited.

“Kids who are eager to participate will not be excluded based on age,” Cox said.

“The goal with the NWL is to get the youth at the right level with the right type of competition,” Grabow said.”

Quoting Olympic wrestling champion Dan Gabel, Grabow said, “Once you’ve done wrestling, everything else is easy. Wrestling is a sport of everything, including speed, strength, and technique. The mental part is the hardest. With this sport there is no hiding. You’re out there in front of everybody. So if you don’t put in the work beforehand, it’ll be seen. It’s much different than team sports and even sports like tennis or track. There’s nothing else like it, except maybe boxing.”

Grabow said the Takedown



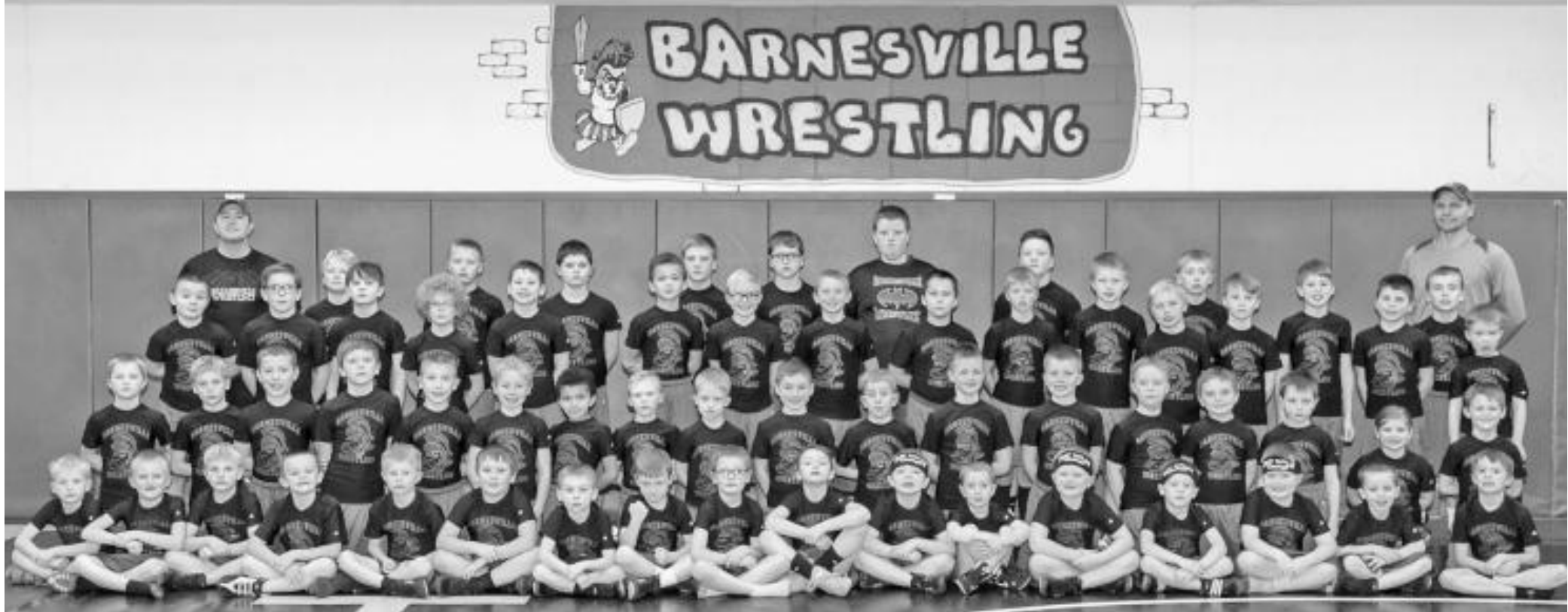
JESSE GRABOW

Club tried to avoid the attitude of “this is the way we’ve always done it.” Finding ways to keep the kids in wrestling include making sure their placed a the right level of competition.

With youth sports in general, Grabow said, there are parents who try to push their kids too far too fast. “There are actually national tournaments for kids still in kindergarten, which is ridiculous. With the NWL, there is more team-based positive reinforcement.”

The Takedown Club has a good fund-raising history in Barnesville. Grabow said they will be trying some new things in 2020, such as a reverse raffle.

“We’ll continue with our ham and turkey bingos,” Grabow said. “Our golf tournament is in its third year. Last year we received wonderful support from the public and area businesses. We depend on those funds to keep going, so we are very thankful for that support.”



2020 participants in Barnesville Youth Wrestling.



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Hegewald Family Restores Historic McGrath Home

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different patterns in the corners.

The solid wood pocket doors add a touch of integrity that speaks to the originality of the home.

The intricate pattern of the staircase is one that can’t be matched. “We are having a heck of a time finding someone who can spindle wood to match the spots where some are missing,” explained Jim.



John McGrath first came to Barnesville in 1879 with his brothers Thomas and Dennis. He built his home on the west side of the tracks in 1897. McGrath and his family lived in the home until the mid-1940’s.



The John McGrath mansion was the first home built on the west side of the railroad tracks. The tracks separated what had become the downtown business district east of the tracks from Old Town where the community began to take shape when it was chartered in 1892.

What we have here is a unique look at early Barnesville. The year is 1911 and we are looking west into McGrath Park. The photo was likely shot from high atop the Barnesville Farmers Elevator.

While the landscape was basically wide open prairie in 1911, there are a couple of landmarks that were new at the time and still grace the city today. On the center right of the photo is the McGrath Mansion. That classic three-story home had fallen on hard times in recent years but has been brought back from a date with a wrecking ball by the Jim

Lisa Hegewald family. They have restored the gracious old mansion to its original glory.

McGrath Park itself has developed into a popular oasis in the center of Barnesville. John McGrath’s donation of the 10-acre site took shape slowly over the years. For generations it was a quiet secluded park where people would come to enjoy a picnic, a family reunion, a Memorial Day Service or just a day loafing in the shade.

Making the park more kid friendly began with the installation of playground equipment and a bath house. That equipment was enhanced in 2017 when the Lawrence and Elaine Kava Splash Pad was dedicated in the center of the park. The park facilities were again upgraded with the installation of new playground equipment starting in late 2018 and finished in the spring of 2019.

Lehman’s Creating Memories In Historic Home

By: Pam Aakre

One of Barnesville’s newer families is making one of the city’s older residences their home.

Matthew and Jessica Lehman purchased the huge, old, three-story Peter and Hannah Thompson mansion in October 2018, but did not make the move from Moorhead until June 2019. The months in between were spent doing some repair work and preparing the historic home located on Second Street NE for their young family.

The Lehmans are parents to twin three-year-olds, Oliver and Vivienne, and four-month-old Evelyn.

Wanting to move into a smaller, friendly community with a good school system to raise their children, the Lehmans chose Barnesville.

Jessica was acquainted with the town having two great uncles living in the community. Her grandmother, Lorraine (Mulcahy) Barry is a sister to Ed and Wally Mulcahy.

In addition, the Lehmans both are history buffs, so were captivated by the legacy of the Thompson home.

Built in 1903, the three-story abode retains all of the original oak woodwork. The hardwood floors, as well as the rich, warm, stained multiple-paneled doors, and wide woodwork trim provide much of the home’s character.

Upon entering the front door, guests enter a foyer that features 2-1/2 foot-high paneled wainscoting along each wall. In keeping with the neoclassic style, two floor-to-ceiling Doric columns welcome individuals

to a sitting room.

“I’ve been told that Peter used this room as his office,” says Jessica pointing to an enclosed space directly across the front door. Peter was one of Barnesville’s first businessmen and is often referred to as “the father of Barnesville.”

A grand staircase, with glass windows at the landing, leads to the second floor where four bedrooms and a bathroom are located. Supposedly, stained glass windows were situated in this stairwell of the home at one time.

Two sets of pocket doors in the living room, approximately six feet wide, enable the family area to be closed off from the foyer and dining room. When not in use, the doors disappear into the walls. Pocket doors were a popular architectural detail during this time period.

A formal dining room and kitchen complete the layout on the first floor. “There’s a service button on the floor of the dining room,” states Jessica. “When sitting at the table, Mrs. Thompson could press it with her foot signaling the domestic help that it was time to serve the food.”

Located behind a full-size door in the hallway of the kitchen is a dumbwaiter. The positioning of the dumbwaiter allowed staff to remain out of sight from the “public” spaces, which were designated for company. This freight elevator once carried food, dishes, or laundry from the basement all the way to third level of the home. Small doors at each level of the home allowed access to what was being transported up and down the shaft.

Although the ropes and mechanism remain in place, a few shelves have been added to the compartment and the dumbwaiter now functions as a small storage closet.

The Lehmans are in the process of renovating their new home. One of the first projects was to transform the kitchen. Thoughtful consideration was given to retain the home’s character when selecting the custom cabinet design and hardware.

Steep, narrow, painted wooden

steps provide another access to the upper living quarters from the kitchen. This staircase contrasts the one in the foyer, which is wide, oak stained and formal.

Jessica gestures to the servant staircase and states, “There are two flights of stairs. One leads to the second floor where the Thompsons would have slept. The other stairway brings you to the third floor of the house. That’s where the servants would have resided.”

Two more bedrooms, a small living area and bathroom are located on the top floor of the house. The original cast iron claw-footed bathtub, along with its fixtures, remain in working order.

The Lehmans are appreciative of the preservation work done by



What was once used as a dumbwaiter is now being used as a small closet. The dumbwaiter was a helpful tool in transporting food, dishes or to each level of the former Thompson home.

One area that the Hegewalds lucked out on, was with the doors. “All of the doors were still here and in great shape,” commented Jim. “They just needed to be cleaned up a bit.”

Above the bedroom doors on the second level are glass panels. “You would think those would be cool wouldn’t you,” laughed Jim. “But at 3:00 in the morning when someone turns on the hall light and your entire bedroom is lit up, it loses it’s fun.”

A major change to the third floor was opening up the attic. “It used to have a pull down staircase in the middle of the hall,” said Jim. “We sealed that up and created a staircase leading up to the now usable fourth floor.

“Now it’s a space the girls can come up to and relax.”

“One interesting thing with the paneling on the third floor was no two pieces of drywall were the same size,” said Lisa. “With the different pitches of the roof, it was impossible for the drywallers to measure once and cut multiple.”

“They just loved us,” she laughed. About 75 percent of the work was done by Jim, Lisa and the girls. “We did have to hire out for a few things, but majority of the work we did ourselves,” said Jim.

While picking out paint colors for the exterior of the home, the family eventually settled on green paneling

with dark trim. But that wasn’t the first color the family tried.

“I had picked out a beautiful plum purple color to go on the outside,” said Lisa. “One evening we started spray painting the house. We had a

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The Vern Terry family owned the sprawling McGrath mansion from 1946 to 1973. In those 27 years that they lived in the home, they converted some of the space into an apartment. Vern was active in local city government serving as Barnesville Police Chief from 1947 to 1952 and was the Barnesville Liquor Store Manager from 1951 to 1968.

previous owners, like rewiring the electrical system and refinishing the floors.

Jessica says, “Although some of the vintage characteristics have been removed, there are quite a few elements that still exist.”

Dorothy Garven, a Barnesville historian, researched several of the city’s historic homes and published a booklet, Historic Barnesville: Old Houses and the People Who Lived in Them, in 1992. One of them was the Thompson home.

Her investigative efforts uncovered an April 17, 1902 issue of the Barnesville Record which reported that P.E. Thompson would soon begin work on his \$20,000 residence in the city, and when completed, it would be the finest in Clay County.

The home was constructed by the Hancock Brothers, one of North Dakota’s most prominent architectural firms. Many of the works designed by George Hancock, and his brother Walter are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Thompson home. The home was added to the

national registry in 1996.

Describing the building’s architectural features, Garven writes, “This is an elegant example of the neoclassic style. This style is recognized by its use of classical columns (the Thompson house employs Doric columns on

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Julian Thompson was the last member of the Thompson family to live in the mansion. He was the son of Peter Thompson, the builder of the home.



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