



Historic Building and Local Business Spotlight

316 Elm Street, Ronald B Jones Funeral Home



*Bentley House before mid-20th c. additions
by Patrick Snadon*

Early Ludlow residents Matthew and Mary Bentley built the grand Victorian house on the northwest corner of Elm and Butler Streets that is now the Ronald B. Jones Funeral Home. For nearly eight decades the Jones family has preserved the Bentley House by making it one of Ludlow's oldest and most successful businesses. A map from c. 1860 shows the lot at 316 Elm St still to be

empty, while a map from 1883 shows the house to be there. This, and the architectural style and construction details of the house, suggest that it was probably built in the 1860's.

The featured photograph to the left shows the house before two-story additions of stone to the east and west sides in the 20th-century. It was originally a handsome, Italianate-style composition with a T-shaped plan. The narrower Elm Street front is organized under a broad gable with Victorian pressed metal cornices and brackets. In the attic is a round, "bull's eye" window. Two, rectangular windows are below in the second story, and a three-sided bay window occupies the first story.

On the east, or Butler Street side, were long, rectangular, walk-out windows that opened onto an ornamental terrace. The Butler Street side terminates

with a gabled cross-wing, like that on the Elm Street side, with an identical, one-story bay window. A wooden porch originally occupied the interior angle of the wings. The elaborate hood-molds above all the windows appear to be of cast iron; those on the east side were removed and re-mounted on the newer stone addition.

The Bentley House addressed its prominent corner site. The fronts facing Elm and Butler Streets to the south and east contained large windows and bays, and the rooms occupying these fronts were likely the best in the house – the parlor and dining room. The west side, by contrast, contained fewer and smaller windows that probably lighted the kitchen and service rooms. The rear, or north, facade faced the stables behind and was nearly windowless.

(see our e-newsletter for full article)

A Ludlow Legacy

by Julie Wartman

The funeral home known today as Ronald B. Jones Funeral Home was originally founded as Catherman and Bullock in 1935 and was located at 254 Latta Avenue. Following Mr. Bullock's death in 1943, the business transferred to Mr. Catherman who renamed to Catherman Funeral Home and relocated the business to the Bentley House at 316 Elm Street in 1946. In 1947, Ronald Bradford Jones was hired as a teenager by Catherman Funeral Home. His duties consisted of washing vehicles and driving the ambulance service. During his employment at Catherman, Ron graduated from Ludlow High School and served 2 years in the US Navy Medical Corp. They partnered in 1953, and the firm became known as the Catherman & Jones Funeral Home. In 1960, Ronald purchased the firm from Mr. Catherman and later changed the name to Ronald B. Jones Funeral Home. Ron Jones and Grace Cox met in 1966 at the Ludlow Businessman's Christmas party. Though Grace

arrived at the party with her father (owner of Cox Flooring on Elm Street), she was escorted home by Mr. Jones. They were married the following year and raised 4 daughters in the upstairs of the Bentley House, all while conducting funeral visitations downstairs on the first floor. Ron had a hidden button that he would press to send a buzzing signal upstairs when there was too much noise coming from their living quarters overhead. The children would scurry to the couch and do their best to remain quiet until the visitation ended. Ron and Grace were great partners in life and in business, conducting mortuary procedures as a team. Grace is still responsible for the aesthetics of the inside and outside of the property. The beautiful landscaping that we enjoy as passersby is all thanks to Grace's efforts. Also, to this day, Grace oversees the financial duties of the business. The stones that encase the Bentley House once lined Vine Street in downtown Cincinnati. The rocks that form the wall surrounding the property came

? Did you know...?

On September 18, 1881 the depth of Ohio River fell to 1 ft 11 in, prompting scores of Ludlowites to wade to Ohio and back.

from Sleepy Hollow Road.

Ron and Grace have 11 grandchildren and one great grandchild on the way. Cheryl, the Jones' youngest daughter, is in the process of purchasing the business and will continue as manager. Cheryl and Josh as Funeral Directors, along with Jessica Nienaber who has served as Funeral Director for almost 20 years, are continuing the Ronald B. Jones legacy by serving the community with compassion and exceptional service during their greatest time of need. While Jones passed away in January of this year, he will be long remembered as a dedicated family man, successful businessman, preservationist of his historic property, and a committed community servant to his Ludlow hometown.

Early Ludlow Resident Pioneers Air Mail Delivery

by Ruth Bamberger

A hot air balloon craze earlier this year dominated the news when a Chinese spy balloon floated across the U.S. before it was shot down in the Atlantic. Almost 200 years ago, hot air balloons were the hot topic of the day as a way to speed up mail delivery. A pioneer of this first air mail system was Richard Clayton, who in 1854 bought and lived in the Ludlow Kenner plantation home, today called Somerset Hall. Clayton had a wholesale watch and jewelry business in Cincinnati, and had a keen interest in aeronautics. In 1835, he launched his own balloon “Star of the West” from downtown Cincinnati with thousands of onlookers paying 50 cents to see him take off. He traveled 350 miles in 9.5 hrs. before l

anding safely in a tree in the Allegheny Mountains. Clayton’s dream was to inaugurate an air mail route to the Atlantic coast, but successive efforts to do so failed. However, he is credited with the first mail delivery by air when his balloon, destined for the east coast, flew into a storm, forcing a landing about 100 miles east of Cincinnati. His bag of mail was delivered to the local post office in Waverly, OH. Clayton died in 1877, but the dream of air mail lived on with the advent of airplanes in the twentieth century.

Sources: David E. Schroeder, *Life Along the Ohio, A Sesquicentennial History of Ludlow, KY*. Jeff Suess, “2 Local Flights Impacted Air Mail Delivery,” *Enquirer*, Oct. 2, 2022, 4A.



A Message from the Mayor

Summer in Ludlow is a beautiful time! I have such vivid memories of growing up spending my days at the Ludlow-Bromley Swim Club where my time would be filled with swimming and epic wiffle ball games. I wanted to take a moment to highlight a few upcoming events that promise to be amazing nights in our community. Of course, this is far from an exhaustive list. I would encourage everyone to keep an eye out for the numerous fun-filled activities that pop up as we move through the summer. On July 22nd we will witness the return of the Ludlow Limburger Fest at the Ludlow Vets. The night is billed as a family-friendly celebration of cheese and friendship that will include food, beer, and fun for all. Three local bands will be playing as folks enjoy traditional Limburger sandwiches, grilled sausages, local German-style beers, and family friendly lawn games. I promise to not force you to at least try a bite of the Limburger if I see you there! July 29th will bring us a new event in the form of the first Ludlow Porch Fest. From 2 PM to 9 PM, six local musical artists will be

taking over the porch of 606 Linden Street. Local vendors will be present along the street. Donations are welcome at the event and will go to the artists and to the the Family Resource Center at Ludlow Independent Schools, helping kids and their families get the supplies they need for a successful school year! Also on July 29th, our friends over in Bromley are reviving the Street Fair. There will be a taco truck, fish fry, sweets for the kids (and adults), live music, and beverages! Personally, I can’t wait to bounce between both events; the 29th is going to be an awesome day and night in our river towns! As we start thinking about the end of summer

and kickoff to a new school year, it is difficult not to get excited about the upgrades at Ludlow Independent Schools. This will be most visible as our soccer and football teams take to the new unique (and awesome) red turf. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or issues you can reach me via email: cwright@ludlow.org, at Coffee with the Mayor the third Thursday of each month at Ludlow Coffee, or at our City Council meetings regularly scheduled for the second and fourth Thursday of each month at the city building. Have an amazing summer Ludlow!

-Mayor Chris Wright



Community Calendar

July 12-15 Cincinnati Burger Week Conserva, Special at Ludlow Tavern	July 29 Ludlow Porch Fest 2-9 PM • 606 Linden Bromley Summer Block Party 4PM-Dusk • Bromley Park
July 22 Ludlow Limburger Fest 4-8 PM • Ludlow Vets Hall	September Shop Ludlow Saturdays

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