



# Parkman Paragraphs

2025 Memorial Day Celebration  
and Parkman Gazebo Bell Dedication



## Parkman Veteran's Memorial Park

Parkman's Veteran Memorial Park is located on the south west corner of Rt 422 and Rt 88 / Rt 528. The current Memorial was donated by the Parkman Mothers Club in the early 1950's to honor all of Parkman's Veterans. It reads:

**THIS MEMORIAL IS  
ERECTED TO THE  
MEMORY OF THE  
SONS AND DAUGHTERS  
OF PARKMAN TOWNSHIP  
WHO SERVED THEIR COUNTRY**

The ORIGINAL wooden Parkman Veterans Memorial located in the same spot was also donated by the Parkman Mothers Club in the early 1940's. The memorial had an honor roll of the WWII veterans on this version. Today our veterans names are honored on our website.

Parkman is thankful to Richard Thorn and Joseph Wells for their service to both country and community.  
May they find well deserved rest in peace.

Richard Thorn and Joseph Wells have been recently added to our Parkman Veteran Honor Roll on the Parkman website. If you notice a Parkman Veteran that should be added to the Honor Roll - let us know!

**Thanks to all who serve both our country and community!**

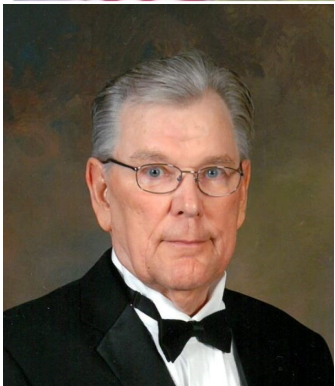


## Honoring our Parkman Veterans

**Richard Thorn - Navy Veteran**  
**Joseph Wells - Air Force Veteran**

Community Website: <https://ParkmanOhio.com>





## Richard L. Thorn

February 20, 1939 ~ September 4, 2015 (age 76)  
<https://www.slyffh.com/obituary/Richard-Thorn>

The family of Richard Thorn would like to thank the trustees of Parkman for inviting them to share a little about Richard and for honoring him today. Richard was born on Feb. 20, 1939, in Sharon, Pa., son of Thomas William and Charlotte Ruth Thorn. He lived most of his young life with his grandparents. As a high school junior, he quit school to work for his Uncle Charlie who was a plumber.

At 20 years of age, he signed up for service in the U.S. Navy along with two friends. He

served his country from 1959-1963 and was honorably discharged. Richard worked in the machine shop on a Naval Repair Ship. He was stationed in Norfolk, VA but was deployed on the ocean all over the world, including Monaco, Spain, and Cuba during the Bay of Pigs invasion. Aboard his naval ship, he even traveled through the Panama Canal, which he described as quite a spectacle. On the ship, he also earned his GED. Richard remained a part of the Naval Reserves until October 28, 1965.



**Ajax** His work in the Navy was integral in setting him on his career path. He continued working in machine shops, 12 years for Ajax, first in Warren, then in Kentucky, and eventually moving back to Ohio and working for Copperweld for 18 years in Champion as a foreman, then advancing to superintendent.



Richard was the loving and devoted husband of Barbara Moss Thorn for 43 years before passing on September 4, 2015. They raised two children, Joe Motz and Jason Thorn, and lived in Parkman 35 years. Many years after his Panama Canal adventure, Richard took his wife Barbara on a cruise through the Panama Canal, so that she could have that amazing experience. Many things had changed and they were on a much smaller vessel, but he loved sharing that adventure with her.

Richard was a member and a former trustee of the Parkman Congregational Church and the past president of Parkman Chamber of Commerce. He had a love for all things outdoors, but especially spending time fishing, boating, and waterskiing with his family and friends.

Richard Thorn was a friend that you could count on to fix anything that was broken or problem solve something that needed engineered. He kept in touch with his Naval buddies, getting together several times throughout the decades. Richard always came through.

His family remembers him daily and cherishes the memories built from his life dedicated to service to God, his country, and all those he loved. Today, we honor his legacy as a hardworking, faithful servant of God and his country, loving husband, father and friend. Let us be inspired by his example and strive to uphold those same values as citizens of our community.

**Thank you Mr. Thorn for your service to both Country and Community!**



## 2025 Memorial Day Special Edition Parkman Paragraphs

Created by Cory Anderson - Parkman Paragraphs is published in Spring and Fall of each year. This limited edition issue is printed specifically for the 2025 Memorial Day Parade.

We wish to thank all of our Active Duty and Veterans throughout all eras of our country's existence for all of the sacrifices that they have made to give us our freedoms and continue to make our country a safe place to live. May our future generations understand these sacrifices from our Veterans and appreciate the quality of life created for them.

On behalf of the Parkman Trustees and the Parkman Chamber of Commerce  
 Special Thanks for the continued support of the:

Geauga County Sheriff Department  
 American Legion Burton Post 459 and VFW Middlefield Post 9678  
 Parkman Volunteer Fire and Rescue Team  
 Scouts of America Burton Troop #197  
 Cardinal Marching Band, Flag Line and Cheerleaders  
 Cardinal School Supporters  
 Parkman Congregational Church & Rev. William Coley  
 SS Edward Lucy Catholic Parish & Rev. Jacob Bearer  
 Western Phoenix Masonic Lodge # 42 & Worshipful Master Bobby Morris  
 and the various participants who helped to make our  
 2025 Parkman Memorial Day Celebration a success:  
 Thorn Family - (thanks for the photos and info about Richard Thorn)  
 Wells Family - (thanks for the photos and info about Joseph Wells)  
 Mike Komandt - Chief, Parkman Volunteer Fire Department  
 Lauren Zetts, Director - Cardinal High School Marching Band  
 Amanda Garrett and Mike Craver - Burton Troop 197 Scout Leaders  
 Dale Komandt - Parkman Historical Society  
 Patti Humr - Parkman Cemetery Sexton  
 Roger and Kathy Anderson - Parkman Veterans Memorial Park Gardeners

Joyce Peters - Parkman Trustee  
 Henry Duchscherer - Parkman Trustee  
 Lance Portman - Parkman Trustee  
 Denise Villers - Parkman Fiscal Officer

**Best wishes to everyone for a fun and safe summer  
 and don't forget to give THANKS to a Veteran.**





## Past Parkman Honorees

2001	John R. Ferry, WWII
2002	Robert F. Barnett, WWII
2003	Glenn A. Thompson, WWII
2004	Richard Stanchak (Stanley), WWII
2005	Richard Giles, WWII
2006	Richard O. Polari, WWII
2007	Stanley Smith, WWII
2008	Dennis Testa, Vietnam
2009	Gotham Brothers: John, Carlisle "Kelly", Glen, Neil, Leland, WWII
2010	Albert Wilson, WWII
2011	Harold Blackford, WWII
2012	Carl B. Wilson, WWII
2013	Carl 'Ed' Wilson, Vietnam
2014	Bill Snyder, WWII
2015	Richard 'Dutch' Komandt, WWII
2016	Wayne Komandt, Vietnam
2017	Steve G. Soltis, Korean
2018	Leonard Hickox, Korean
2019	Oliver 'Big O' Graves Jr., Vietnam
2020	Jeannette Elizabeth Smith Loomis, WWII
2021	Ralph C Butt, WWII
2022	Forrest Rollin Bidlack, WWII
2022	Elwood (Elly ) Leonard Evans, WWII
2022	Glenwood Harold Ferry, WWII
2022	John E. Larmi, WWII
2022	Herbert Bruce Olmstead, WWII
2022	James (Joe) Soltis, Korean
2023	Frank Benyo, WWII
2023	Joseph Klima, WWII
2024	Kenneth J. Baptie - Navy Veteran
2024	Kaarlo Pollari - Army Veteran
2024	Donald E. Villers - Navy Reserves Veteran



**You can find all of their profiles on our Parkman Website Honor Roll.**



**Thanks to all who have served both  
Country and Community!**



**American Legion - Burton Post 459**

<https://www.facebook.com/AL.Post459>  
Burton.Middlefield.Post459@proton.me or (440) 834-8621

**Veterans Of Foreign Wars - Middlefield Post 9678**

Facebook = <https://www.facebook.com/vfwpost9678/>  
middlefieldvfw9678@gmail.com or (440) 632-1257  
Thanks to all who support!



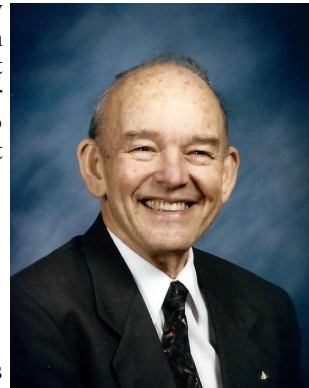
## Joseph Gordon Wells

September 7, 1928 ~ July 16, 2020 (age 91)  
<https://www.slyffh.com/obituary/Joseph-Wells>

Joseph Gordon Wells, 91, of Parkman, Ohio passed peacefully at home on July 16, 2020. He was born September 7, 1928 in Columbus, Ohio, the fifth generation of the Wells family that founded the Granville and Hartford area. The youngest of four boys, he graduated from Harford High School in Croton, Ohio in 1946 then attended The Ohio State University, where he met his wife of nearly 70 years, Bernice E. (Smith) Wells.



He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served in the Korean War, based in New York, Mississippi, South Dakota, and Guam. His work specialized in the radar systems for the B-36 bomber.



Following his military service, he and his family returned to his wife's hometown of Parkman and purchased their family home where they raised their five children.

He worked for 38 years at the same company and retired from Lucas Aerospace as a Lead Test Engineer.



He was an active member of the Parkman Congregational Church for over 60 years, holding various offices, and of the Western Phoenix Masonic Lodge #42 for 55 years, serving many positions including several times as Worshipful Master and many years as Secretary.

He enjoyed spending time with his family, celebrating all holidays, restoring family heirlooms, and could fix anything. He was a kind hearted, gentle man who loved his family, friends, neighbors, and pets and helped anyone when needed.

He was preceded in death by his son Steven Wells, brothers Thomas, Charles, and Robert Wells, parents Franklin Harold and Georgia (Hixon) Wells, and several in-laws to whom he was very close.

He is dearly missed by his beloved wife Bernice, daughters Nancy (Donald Robert) Wheelock and Susan Wells of Parkman, OH, sons Gary (Suann) Wells of Burlington, IA and Michael Wells of Troy, OH, daughter-in-law Jennifer Wells (Bryan Croteau) of Hilton Head Island, SC, as well as many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, and nieces.

**Thank you Mr. Wells for your service to both Country and Community!**



## Parkman Gazebo School Bell, Millstone and Datestones dedication



Over the years, Parkman has had to bow to the inevitable march of progress in spite of our desire to keep our history intact. But, at each step along the way your citizens and your trustees have done what they can to keep as much history as possible.

Using part of the American Rescue Plan grant funds which the township received in 2022, the township has had a plan to preserve our historical buildings and structures, with upgrades to the Community House consisting of paint, new and refinished flooring, new tables and chairs, and even an elevator to assist those with mobility issues. The fresh new look has resulted in more rentals for weddings and large groups, providing good revenue for the township. A new front porch is in the planning stages.

The Overlook Park has a new horse shelter, a new swing set, and a complete upgrade of the Large Pavilion. Repairs to the fireplace are also in the works. Overlook Cemetery entrance pillars will be rebuilt, using the ARPA funds, an Ohio Department of Commerce grant and township funds.

These funds also made it possible for the township to refurbish the gazebo with needed repairs. A new roof, with a 50-year warranty will be completed by Memorial Day. It has a new paint job with a beautiful blue ceiling, an old southern tradition intended to ward off evil spirits or the belief that a blue porch ceiling will prevent bugs from making a home here. You choose the story that you like best. We moved the benches out from behind the gazebo for more comfortable views.

**The Mill Stone and Cromwell datestone are two** other historical markers for Parkman. Today we also dedicate these items which are placed at the sidewalk entrance to this park.

In 1946, a group of young men who just graduated from Parkman School led by Don Burnett and John Turon, held a scrap drive to earn some money for a class trip. While looking for scrap in the burned-out blacksmith shop, they found a large millstone. It was there to have new grooves hammered in, probably for the old mill by the river. Being pranksters, they decided to move the stone with a tractor to the center of town near the Veteran's Memorial. They were caught by the one-eyed constable, Jess Sherwin who ordered them to "get it out of there". They just dropped it in place by the monument and it wasn't moved again for 76 years.



In 2022, when the Veteran's Park was re-dedicated with a new large American flag and new flagpoles bearing the banners of our branches of service, the mill stone was moved to the Gazebo Park across the street here, where it remains as a symbol of Parkman's history.

During the demolition of the Cromwell building by the state to ease truck traffic at the intersection of Main Market and Madison roads, the datestones from the Cromwell Building built in 1899 were salvaged. Those were also placed here at the Gazebo Park entrance.

## The original Gazebo

**The original Gazebo** which was called a Bandstand was built for the Parkman "Buckeye" Band. On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1887, the Parkman Bandstand was dedicated right here. Located in the town center, this gazebo was a place to allow the community to enjoy outdoor performances. Local residents spent the summer building the bandstand and it was a point of community pride. There was a large crowd for this dedication. The Western Reserve Band from Windham, and the West Farmington Cornet Band were both here to help celebrate the event. People traveled long distances to enjoy the sounds. The name "Buckeye" band stemmed from the fact that the band members wore an actual buckeye attached to a silk string that hung from their jackets. The township is currently planning to plant a Buckeye tree at Overlook Park.



Today, a gazebo still stands at the same location in Parkman Center Park. The original had deteriorated badly. In 1997, this new gazebo was built and donated to the township by Tim and Kara Yoder of Parkman to honor their son Josh, a young man who had recently passed, leaving a hole in the hearts of his family and the many Parkman friends of this family.

You can find the brass roof of the original Parkman Bandstand on the gazebo in Burton Square. It is a part of the Century Village and the Historical Society for Geauga County. Recently, the Parkman Alumni Association donated the original Parkman School bell to the township. This bell hung in the belfry of the original Parkman School from 1883 to 1952 when the school was demolished and a new Parkman school was built.

At that time, Concezio "CONNIE" Testa who was the custodian of the Parkman School for many years retained the bell for safekeeping. When Connie retired, he took the bell home and maintained possession of the bell until his death in 2010. Mr. Testa's family donated the bell to the Parkman Alumni Association and it was stored at the home of Bill Stanley until the spring of 2022 when the Alumni donated it to the township.

It has been placed in this structure in the center of the gazebo to honor our history and for everyone to enjoy. Directly beneath is a time capsule buried at the time of the new construction in 1997 by the Parkman Chamber of Commerce. It is to be opened in 2047.

**We hereby dedicate this bell  
to the settlers who built Parkman,  
the teachers who taught  
Parkman children  
and to those residents  
who honor  
Parkman's history.**

