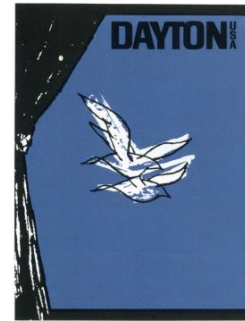
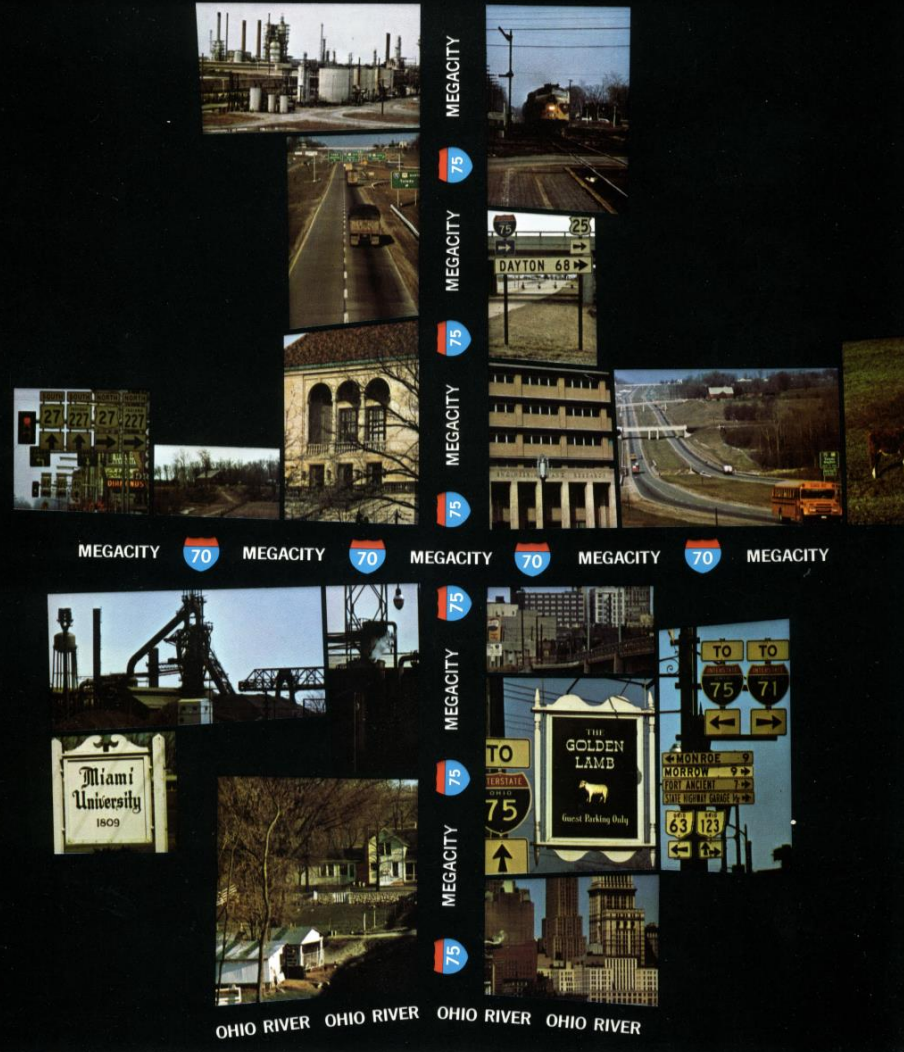


FIFTY CENTS

NUMBER 3 1965

# DAYTON USA



A community is, in reality, its people.

No better example of this can be found than in DAYTON U.S.A. with the loss of two irreplaceable pillars of civic achievement. For these two, J. V. Colley and Miriam Rosenthal, were devoted to the best interests of the entire community and their fellow man.

J. V. Colley, vice president and treasurer of the Dayton Power and Light Company, served as president of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce 1963-64. His was a quiet dignity, interspersed with a twinkling humor that delighted because it was so unexpected. A man who felt deeply his devotion to others and to the area, he was, in large measure, responsible for bringing this magazine into being. With his death the Dayton area lost leadership it can ill afford to lose.

At the heart of every project for culture, music, theatre, embroiled in every large-scale fund-raising campaign in Dayton in the last 30 years was Miriam Rosenthal, truly the personification of community spirit. Her friends were legion — she knew the great of music, opera and the stage—and yet she also knew bell-hops, stage hands, cab drivers whom she counted among her friends. She knew her community and made even the largest fund-raising effort look easy. She was devoted to her community and its people.

They have left us now to tend the affairs of DAYTON U.S.A. without them, but while they were with us they showed us how to lead and the road to progress. They will be missed.

Jim Clarke

# DAYTON USA

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JOSEPH P. GEIGER



## THE INLAND CHILDREN'S CHORUS

The lights of the crowded auditorium have dimmed and the spots focus on the parting curtain. There, on a multi-tiered stage, 50 boys and 50 girls wait for the conductor's downbeat to burst into song—another Inland Children's Chorus concert is on its way.

As you look at the boys in their Eton suits and at the girls in their Alice Blue gowns and listen to their singing,

you somehow feel that you have traveled this road before. And chances are you have, especially if you are fond of good music.

The Inland Children's Chorus is, indeed, a unique institution in many ways. Sponsored by Inland Manufacturing Division of the General Motors Corporation, it enjoys the distinction of being the only organization of its kind to be sponsored by a large corporation. The Chorus is unique in its membership, which is limited to children or near relatives of Inland employees, and it is unique in its composition which assures its year to year continuity: while only 100 children make up the concert chorus, more children are always in training and working toward a concert status.

The chorus' suits and gowns have become a tradition to Daytonians. They never change. Only what's in them does as new faces belonging to a new crop

of youngsters take over when old age thins the ranks.

And "old age" in the Children's Chorus is a very profound 16 years!

It takes a look beyond a "perfect performance" to evaluate the real worth of the Children's Chorus to its sponsor, its participants and the community.

The Chorus was founded 28 years ago when Inland was still a relatively small manufacturing organization in Dayton, largely devoted to the production of steering wheels for automobiles. The division had grown to 2,500 employees and had continued the custom of holding a Christmas party for the children of these employees that started when the firm employed only about 200—some 15 years earlier. The children provided entertainment at these festivities and from this germinated an idea—

Why not add something of perma-

nent value to the hundreds of children who came each year, something that would not only reflect the spirit of the Christmas season, but would also be a real inspiration to children and their parents? The idea was then conceived of forming a Children's Chorus, one with very definite objectives and one that might become the finest organization of its kind anywhere.

There were three primary goals:

First, to give the children of the employees of the Division a musical education and an appreciation of good music which they might not otherwise be able to receive.

Second, to give to the employees something permanent with which they can identify themselves and in which they can participate in a practical and constructive way, and

Third, to make a worthwhile contribution to the cultural life of employees and community by cultivating chil-

*Continued on page 44*





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## INLAND CHILDREN'S CHORUS *continued*

dren's voices and by instilling in them a lasting interest in good music.

With these stated objectives in mind, Richard Westbrook, widely-known in Dayton musical circles, developed the Inland Children's Chorus in 1936. Westbrook was a rare individual. His ability and talent in obtaining the interest and affection of the children with whom he was working, plus his tireless efforts and devotion, created an esprit de corps that endures to this day, ten years after his death.

This spring Judy Westbrook—the last of the Westbrook children—will graduate from the chorus. Judy has been in the chorus eight years and expresses her feelings for the chorus by saying, "The most important thing the chorus has given me is the experience of performing for others and appreciation of good music." Judy—the fourth Westbrook graduate of the chorus—"will miss it."

Joseph P. Geiger, organist and director of the St. Mary Church choir for the past 35 years, assumed direction of the chorus in 1955.

Geiger feels, "With Judy goes the shadows of the founder and first director of the chorus."

Geiger has followed the early policies and objectives Westbrook set and he has expanded those in line with company and community growth.

"Care is taken that rehearsals and performances do not interfere with the children's normal life or affect their school work. The concert group, which includes 120 children, rehearse twice a week—once a week with both their section and with the entire chorus. Two weeks before a concert the chorus practices almost every day.

Geiger cites these interesting figures: In 1955, there were 126 members in the chorus; today, there are 183, of which 118 are girls, 65 are boys.

The children put in 500 hours of rehearsal each year and master an average of 40 musical numbers during that period. Total number of graduates since 1955 is 173.

"An average of 40 children audition each year. We never have trouble filling the vacancies in the fall which result from spring graduation," says Geiger. "The staging, lighting and sound projection have been developed by experts and are used whenever the children sing. The children appear in concert only under the most favorable conditions."

As years went by, Inland Manufacturing grew from a 200-employee plant to a 6,500 employee complex, with facilities both in Dayton and Vandalia. Its product line had expanded from steering wheels to a vast number of

other items for the automotive and refrigeration industries, ranging from brake hose and linings, motor mountings, weather strips and instrument panel covers to plastic foam seats, metal ice trays and a new, automatic ice maker. This growth made the original Christmas parties for employees impractical but this same growth gave the Inland Children's Chorus the opportunity to stand on its own and fill the void in a more meaningful manner.

Each Christmas season, the Chorus presents its annual Christmas concert at Dayton's Memorial Hall. There is a capacity crowd as employees, both current and retired, use this occasion to enjoy the fellowship of their co-workers, their families, and friends during the Christmas season.

Inland's employees take pride in their Chorus. It is their voice; when it brings the glad tidings of a holy season, it speaks for them. And it is this identification with the Chorus and all that it represents that is valued so greatly.

A Spring Concert has also become a tradition; so has the annual appearance at the Dayton Art Institute as part of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce Winter Musicale Series. During its 28 years the Inland Children's Chorus has appeared with the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra on many occasions; had the distinction of singing Benjamin Britten's beautiful cantata, "Miracle of St. Nicholas," under the direction of the famed conductor Hugh Ross; has been heard on a national radio hookup in its "Story of Bethlehem"; and, in January of 1952, performed with Steve Allen in "Stars for Polio," a Dayton-originated TV network show.

What influence has the Inland Children's Chorus had on its participants and their families? Talk to any Inland parent and you'll hear words of praise that go far afield. They'll emphasize the discipline of rehearsal.

"They have been exposed to the kind of group discipline they'll meet in later life and because of their chorus experience, they'll be able to live with it better."

"The Children's Chorus has given our children something to talk about, something to be proud of. Time and again they'll tell their friends about the Chorus," says Bauman.

The Bauman singers, past and present:

Jim, 23, now a computer operator at UD's Research Institute, six years; Gary, 21, now a corporal in the U.S. Army's Medical Corps, six years; Judy, 20, a secretary for the Marianist Mission, graduated from the Chorus after eight years; Gail, 13, five years; Joan, 11, three years, and Janice, 10, two years. The last three are still active, as are eight Bauman nieces and nephews.

"The Chorus has really been an inspiration to us, because the children



are getting something they couldn't get anywhere else," Mrs. Stevens says. "I'm not only thinking about the musical phase, but also of the overall guidance they get from the program. Few know that the children pray before each performance, each to himself and each in his own way. This is a very wonderful thing and it can't help but leave a permanent impression of mutual understanding."

Stevens pointed to the skills the Inland Children's Chorus has given his children:

"Nancy, our oldest, is active in the church choir. She is now using her Chorus training in helping to train others."

The Stevens' children—Nancy, 18, seven years and a graduate; Don, 16, eight years; John, 15, seven years, and Candy, 14, six years—just won't accept a low standard of music anymore, their parents say. "They have been exposed to quality for too long."

To the Stevens, the Inland Children's Chorus has become an important segment of their lives. They feel the joy of accomplishment and the sadness when it's all over.

"My daughter Nancy and I cried when she graduated," Mrs. Stevens said. "I will really be sad when they all get out of it."

Both have high praise for the conductor. "He's not only concerned with the kids during Chorus work, but he is interested in everything they do."

Several Children's Chorus members have used their childhood experiences as a stepping stone for professional careers: Angela Mae Lehman (who uses the stage name of Joan Lamont) has performed on Broadway and on TV and club circuits; Eileen Slattery (now Mrs. James Tyler of New York) studied at the College of Music in Cincinnati, and at Julliard in New York and has sung in many operettas.

June Albers, one of the Inland Children's Chorus charter members, sang in off-Broadway productions of "Pal Joey" and "Kismet" under the stage name of Morgan St. John, while a recent Chorus graduate, Ludlow Hamman, is now doing outstanding solo work. He sang with the St. Louis Symphony last summer in addition to appearing with the Santa Fe Opera. He is a graduate of Oberlin College and has a teaching fellowship at Southern Illinois University where he also studies with former opera singer Marjorie Lawrence.

Through the years, the Chorus has enjoyed the services of several skilled accompanists and Paul Ray Jones has been an integral part of the group since 1954. Jones, dedicated to his work with these young people, is organist for the First Lutheran Church and is chorus master of the Dayton Opera Guild.



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