



# Silver Hills Historical Society

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## SILVER HILLS HISTORICAL SHORTS

APRIL 2021 #3



Courier-Journal Photo by Curt Best  
Perry Botkin (second from left), guitarist with Bing Crosby and John Scott Trotter's orchestra, takes it easy on his visit to New Albany last week. From left: his wife Virginia; Botkin; their daughter Molly, a national swimming champion, and their hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Ellis. Ellis is Mrs. Virginia Botkin's brother.

### Ellis - Botkin

*Come and listen to my story about a man named Jed  
A poor mountaineer, barely kept his family fed,  
And then one day he was shootin at some food,  
And up through the ground come a bubblin crude.*

*Oil that is, black gold, Texas tea.*

*Well the first thing you know ol Jed's a millionaire,  
The kinfolk said "Jed move away from there"  
Said "Californy is the place you ought to be"  
So they loaded up the truck and they moved to Beverly*

*Hills, that is. Swimmin pools, movie stars.*

***New Albany's Perry Botkin ('Mr. Guitar') Keeps On The Go***, was the headline of an article published in the Courier-Journal newspaper on December 4, 1952. Botkin was an American composer, producer, arranger and musician. Botkin did not write the music and lyrics the Beverly Hillbillies but is credited for writing several songs for the show, e.g. "Elly May's Theme, and worked with Bobby Darin, Harry Nilsson, Gary Crosby, The Lettermen, Ed Ames, and Harper Bizarre, among others.

Botkin claimed he was from New Albany but actually; he was born in Richmond, Indiana. He married Virginia Cathryn Ellis, daughter of Raymond Ellis of Silver Hills, and sister to Wiley Ellis. They were married June 7, 1930. Raymond Ellis and his wife, Molly, moved to Silver Hills in 1916 when they bought the house on Riddle Road from Harry E. Pierce, a large three-story stone house appropriately given the name, Stonehenge. William P. Lewis built the house in 1891. It was the first house constructed on Riddle Road after William Tuley subdivided the property. In 1909, Lewis sold the house to Harry Pierce. Raymond and his wife had three children, Stanley, Virginia and Wiley. Wiley was the youngest. Wiley remained in the house where he and his wife Margret raised their family of four children. Botkin claimed New Albany as his home because that was where his father-in-law lived, and because he came to New Albany many times throughout his life. The picture above appeared in the Courier-Journal in August 1958. It was taken on the terrace patio in front of the house overlooking the Ohio River.

Botkin's long career in music playing the guitar began with his first big gig at the Brown Hotel in Louisville. By way of New York, he made his way to Hollywood, and for 17 years he was the music director for Bing

Crosby. Some say Bing Crosby was a frequent guest at the Ellis house on Silver Hills. It's very possible Crosby visited the Ellis family on Silver Hills in the company of Botkin but the story can't be documented.

Botkin and his wife had three children, Perry Botkin, Jr., Ted, and Molly. Molly was named after her grandmother, Molly Ellis. At the age of 14, Molly established a Women's National A.A.U. Championship record for the 200-meter freestyle. Molly was a three-medal winner when she entered the 1960 Olympics in Rome. Her team won gold.

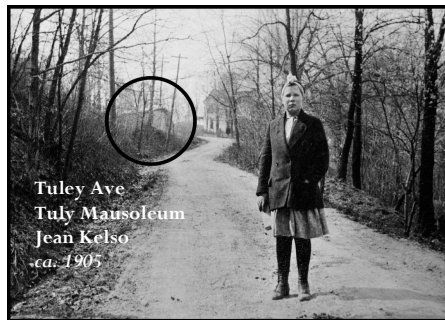
*Story Inspired by Amy Clere*

*Botkin Story Background - Wikipedia*

## Silver Hills Horticulturalists

*(Squire George Tuley & John Owen Greene)*

**Squire George Tuley** was one of the earliest settlers on Silver Hills. In 1851, he took up residence on his mother property on the south end of Silver Hills, where he developed a thriving strawberry farm turned enterprise, appropriately named, Highland Farm. We are reminded

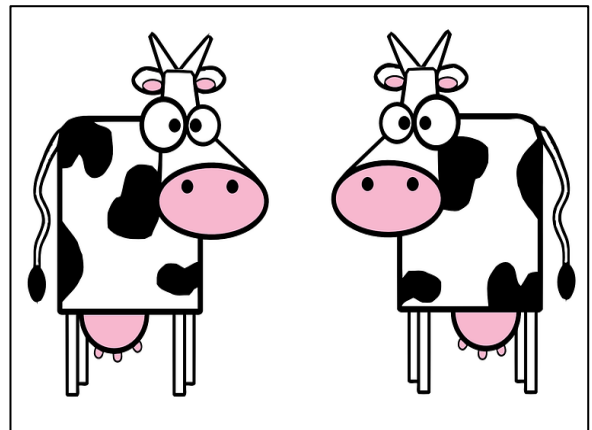


Squire George Tuley and John Owen Greene were Silver Hills first residents who excelled in the field of horticulture. Tuley lived on the south end of the Knob (Caney Knob prior to 1891) and Greene lived on the north end. Sharing similar interests, they surely were good friends.

of the Highland Farm today when we drive down Highland Avenue. Tuley was a cabinet maker by trade, having been given credit as carpenter on the steamboat Nashville in 1867. George was a bit of a character having shot him

self in the foot while cleaning his gun, and in an attempt to frighten a young man trespassing on his property shot him as well. The young man was not seriously injured. He stood for principle, when in 1901 he forced the Cumberland Telephone Company to remove two poles on his property because they refused to give him free telephone service. He loved to play the fiddle, not wanting to call it a violin. In 1905 he built his own mausoleum on the side of Main Street Hill Road below his house. For many years before his death he used the mausoleum to store vegetables. He died in 1910, and four years later his body was removed to Fairview Cemetery.

**John Owen Greene** was the other well-known horticulturist on Silver Hills. Greene owned 23 acres, the better part of the north side of Silver Hills. He purchased the property in 1861 from the George Ashton heirs. By 1879 Greene had planted an estimated 2,000 pear trees and cultivated strawberries, turned enterprise. A lawyer by trade, Greene was nominated for Congress in 1882 and for Judge of the Supreme Court of Indiana in 1898. He retired early for his true love was his farm, appropriately named Greenland Fruit Farm. Greene claimed he owned the finest milking cows in the country, having the capacity to produce about one thousand pounds gross in milk in a month, or twenty pounds each of butter per week. Upon careful inspection it was noted their udders were of immense size though very handsome in shape, with the fore teats eight inches apart.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>*New Albany Daily Ledger*  
1879