

Famous Guernsey County Natives

July 18, 1921 was an inauspicious date in Guernsey County history until 41 years, six months, and two days later when the Cambridge native born on that first-mentioned date made world history.

Col. John H. Glenn Jr. was the personage born that day at 1201 Foster Avenue, and on February 20, 1962 he became the United States' first astronaut to orbit the earth. His three turns around the planet made him Guernsey County's most illustrious native.



Although the name Ansel Briggs is not nearly so well known as Glenn's, he was also a pioneer who was born in the local county. After serving as deputy sheriff for two terms and then as sheriff of Guernsey County, Briggs moved west to Iowa territory after losing the county auditor political race. There in

the heart of what was west in those days he established mail routes in the new country, served as deputy treasurer of Jackson County, and was elected to the state legislature in 1842.

Four years later when Iowa was admitted to the Union as a state, he won election as its first governor.

John Glenn was not the first Guernsey Countian to achieve international fame, however. That honor goes to Dr. Charles E. Jefferson. Jefferson, born in Cambridge August 26, 1860, gained a world-wide reputation as a preacher, author, and leader of the peace movement of the 1920s.

In 1924 *The Christian Herald* conducted a poll of 25,000 ministers, and results showed Jefferson to be one of the 25 most influential preachers of the day. Today his name and reputation live on in the annual scholarship presentations made to area high school graduates who are going on to college.

When John Glenn was entertained at the White House after his historic flight in 1962, he had been preceded by another Guernsey Countian with as much right to access there as America's first orbiting human. That man was Frank Hatton, who in October of 1884 was sworn in as Postmaster General of the United States. Hatton, born in a frame house on the south side of Wheeling Avenue between Sixth and Seventh Streets, served under Pres. Chester A. Arthur and was the second youngest Cabinet member in history, Alexander Hamilton being the youngest.

Hatton, a newspaper editor most of his life, died in 1894 while serving as editor of one of the world's most distinguished newspapers, *The Washington Post*.

Bill Boyd, the "Hopalong Cassidy" of movie fame, was also a Cambridge native.

Rounding out Guernsey County's sextet of most illustrious natives is The Ohio State University's most famous president, William Oxley Thompson. Born in Adams Township November 5, 1855, Thompson early made a name for himself as a teacher and preacher. In 1891 he was named president of Miami University where he remained until taking the head spot at OSU in 1899. Under his guidance the university grew from 1,200 to 12,000 students in 1925 when he voluntarily retired.

He was named Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in 1927. His death occurred in 1933.

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