

SHERBURNE PARK

For one hundred years residents of this city have enjoyed spending time at the local riverfront; the children have played on the swings and playground equipment and the adults have been sitting on benches under shade trees while watching the waters of the Ohio River making their way to the South. Sherburne Park has always been one of the prettiest little parks on the Ohio River; a place of attracting.....for home folks and for visitors alike. Only a few people have realized that the park is a memorial to a young boy, who once upon a time loved to watch the traffic of the river boats, listened to their steam whistles, and dreamed of becoming part of the exciting life of this growing river town. It was a dream which would never come to fruition. The park is also a memorial from the parents of this lad.....they wanted us to remember their son.

Sherburne Cronbach was born November 29, 1886. He was born prematurely, the first and only child of Jacob and Nellie(Blunt) Cronbach. He was named after his grandfather, Dr. Marcus Sherburne Blunt, a prominent physician in this city, who had died five years earlier. Jacob and Manuel Cronbach, the boy's father and uncle, owned and operated a popular drug store in downtown Mt.Vernon. They were the sons of German immigrants, Marcus and Betty Cronbach, clothing merchants, who first lived in Ohio and later in Mt.Vernon.

Little Sherburne grew into a model young man, well-liked and respected by all who knew him. On February 24, 1903, his friends were saddened to learn that he had died of a lingering illness of typhoid fever. He had reached the age of 16 and would have graduated from high school the following year. Certainly the sympathy of the whole community was with the parents.

By his zeal and keen business ability, Jacob Cronbach became a wealthy man. The drug store on the corner of Main and Third streets was a success from its beginning. At one time the brothers owned over 4,000 acres of land in Posey County. During Jacob Cronbach's residence in Mount Vernon, he took an interest in public affairs and served as city councilman and was a member of the school board. He was an active member of the Ansche Israel congregation and for several years was instrumental in soliciting the aid of Mr. Carnegie, who gave \$14,000 to build and equip the Alexandrian Free Public Library in 1904.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Cronbach's lasting contribution to Mount Vernon came in 1912 when they deposited \$1500 with People's Bank to be used in the building and equipment of a park on Mount Vernon's riverfront, which was to have the name SHERBURNE PARK in memory of their deceased son. By November 1912 the park was near completion with a total cost of \$2882.40.

The dedication of Sherburne Park was on May 28, 1913. According to The Western Star, about five hundred people attended the ceremony which included speeches by Mayor Moeller, Judge Herdis Clements, and a few words by Jacob Cronbach. An orchestra entertained the crowd with music and children tested the new playground equipment as they romped and played until late into the evening. Concrete walks, well-lit lamp posts and a shelterhouse completed the new park which would bring joy to Mount Vernon's young and old for many generations to come.

Although Mr. and Mrs. Cronbach moved to Santa Monica, California shortly after the dedication of Sherburne Park, their contributions over the years helped to install new swings, merry-go-rounds and other equipment to the public playground.

Jacob Cronbach died suddenly on April 19, 1926, at the age of 66 of influenza. Nellie Blunt Cronbach died June 16, 1939 at the age of 76. Both were buried beside their son Sherburne at Mount Vernon's Bellefontaine Cemetery. Mr. and Mrs. Cronbach were philanthropists, giving large monetary contributions to Oakland City College and liberal donations to the Baptist Church in this city.

Their kindness, their love for their son, and a young boy's hopes and dreams will always be remembered at Mount Vernon's Sherburne Park.

One hundred years later after the completion of Sherburne Park, the City is completing the Riverfront Development of the land next door that once was a busy commercial district of the city and the Ohio River. This land has been completely cleared of the old silos and buildings; and transformed into a destination to meet friends and enjoy family activities.