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**Joseph Curl (1873-1943)**

An advocate of recreational activities and firm Baptist deacon. Joe Curl assisted in the organization of the Yellow Springs Youth Council in 1936, and served on the executive committee until his death.

Joe Curl was born in Yellow Springs in 1873, and was employed by the Hercules Powder Company for nearly 30 years before joining Antioch College as a custodian. From 1893 to 1905, he coached the Antioch baseball team, which came to be known as the ‘Yankees of Southern Ohio’. An unusual feature of this ball club was the catcher—Joe Curl—as it was permitted for the coach to participate in the starting line-up. He gained national fame as a catcher, though he never joined a big-league team.

As an ordained deacon in the Baptist church, Curl’s training of community young men followed the principles of the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA): train the mind and the body. In addition to skill in sports, he formed quartets of young men in both the Baptist and African American Episcopal (AME) churches locally.

Joe got along well with nearly everyone; and some said this could be attributed to his care to avoid disagreeing with people. On the contrary, it was also known that Joe stood his ground and did what he thought was right. He was one of the few blacks to confront whites with the same frankness and assertiveness he used with other blacks. That is one reason Curl gained the support of many white voters in Village Council elections.

Joe Curl’s civic and professional career were a testament to the democracy of a small town. He held a modest job and belonged to a disadvantaged race; yet he was one of the leading citizens of Yellow Springs for over 20 years.

*Source: Phyllis Jackson*