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- Panorama of downtown Ravenna
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Welcome to the



Archive of Ravenna Pictures,

2004 edition.

To read the best way to look at these pictures, [click here.](#)



Catalogs from the Coach and Hearse Company

Click once on the link to view the thumbnails in the corresponding folder.



[Pen-and-ink Catalog of early Vehicles \(100 pgs\)](#)



[Merts & Riddle horse-drawn Vehicle Catalog \(22 pgs\)](#)



[Merts & Riddle Coach and Hearse Co Catalog \(51 pgs\)](#)



[Riddle Motor Funeral Vehicles Catalog \(16 pgs\)](#)



[1905 Catalog of Riddle Coach and Hearse Company](#)



[Pictures and Advertisements](#)



[Hearses and Coaches -- a variety of Pictures and Articles \(41 pictures\)](#)



[Advertisements of the Coach and Hearse Company \(19 pictures\)](#)



[Pretty Women Calendars of 1914 and](#)



[the back of the same Calendars\(16 pictures\)](#)



[Inside the Coach and Hearse Company \(21 pictures\)](#)



[The McKinley Funeral Movie -- photography by Thomas Edison in 1901](#)



Recent Pictures of Hearses and Coaches



[The Riddle Hearse at the Portage County Museum \(16 pictures\)](#)



[The Hearse of the Bissler and Sons Funeral Home of Kent, Ohio \(23 pictures\)](#)



[The J. Phillip Jones' Brougham — Colonial Shield-glass Coach \(42 pictures\)](#)



[The Spear's Hearse in West Virginia \(35 pictures\)](#)



[The Oak Harbor Hearse](#)



[Pictures of Riddle Coaches and Hearses found on the Internet \(21 pictures\)](#)



The Ravenna area and the Riddle Family



[Old Postcards of Ravenna \(41 pictures\)](#)



[Ravenna Pictures \(51\) and](#)

[more \(54\)plus Articles \(31\)](#)



[A 1911 and 2001 Panorama of downtown Ravenna](#)



[A concise History of downtown Ravenna Architecture](#)



[A few Riddle Family Pictures \(15 pictures\)](#)



[Finally, the local paper the day after Henry Warner Riddle II was reelected mayor](#)

[Background to the Riddle Archive and a little History](#)

On this CD-ROM are over 500 scanned articles and pictures pertaining to the Riddle Coach and Hearse Co. of Ravenna and the city of Ravenna. There are also two movies made by Tom Riddle. One is the McKinley Funeral procession in Canton, Ohio, the other a movie featuring a panorama of downtown Ravenna in 1911 and 2001.

The material comes from the collections of Betsy Whitmore, Hugh Riddle, and Jack Schafer. In addition to opening up his postcard collection to us, [Jack Schafer](#) took most of the pictures of modern downtown Ravenna that appear here; he also wrote many of the captions. All of the articles were found in old family scrapbooks or in recent scrapbooks compiled by Betsy Whitmore, and with the kind permission of the Record-Courier we are able to present them here. The article we have entitled "[History of Motorized vehicles at Riddle Man. Co.](#)" comes from a book published by the Western Reserve Historical Society and the Cleveland Automobile Club entitled *Golden Wheels, The Story of the Automobiles Made in Cleveland and Northeastern Ohio, 1892-1932* by Richard Wager.

We would also like to acknowledge the help of Irene Yanniello of Riddle Properties, Carl Spear and Keith Spear of Spear Funeral Home; Rick Bissler of Bissler & Sons Funeral Home; Hurd Robenstine of the Portage County Historical Society Museum; Rick Sheridan of Look at Me Studios, Gayle Jones and J. Philip Jones. The biggest photograph on this CD, the panorama of downtown Ravenna in 1911, comes courtesy of Robert Fankhauser.

With the exception of a "recent pictures" that were taken with a digital camera, everything was scanned and retouched by Tom Riddle. Using a Hewlett Packard 6200C scanner, pictures were scanned in the TIFF format in at least 250 dots per

inch (a fairly high resolution), and then imported into the program that almost all graphics arts professionals use today, Photoshop. Photoshop was used to enhance and clean up the pictures.

One could argue that part of the beauty of old pictures is that they look old. Tom, however, felt that no one wants to look at a scratched up and faded picture when they can look at something more interesting. Some pictures, though, in spite of everything, could not be improved. Usually the brownish tint of old pictures, "sepia," was preserved. After the pictures were enhanced, they were saved in the JPG format. Currently, JPG is the most widely used picture format - all graphics programs including the Internet browsers and the Macintosh computer can read a JPG formatted picture or scanned article. Additionally these pictures can be imported into popular word processing programs or printed by professional graphic services or on any printer.

All of the pictures have a hypertext index. That means that if you use Windows Explorer or My Computer to double click the file called Riddle Archive and you have an Internet browser (Netscape or Explorer) installed, the file will open like a page on the Internet and you will see the hypertext index.

The index consists of links to pages of thumbnails of the pictures in the *Archive*. You can click on any of the links to see the page of thumbnails. By clicking on any of the thumbnails you can see the picture. However, often you will only be seeing a portion of the picture. The problem is that most computer screens are 800 by 600 pixels in size, but many of the pictures are much bigger. Viewing only a portion of a picture can be annoying. What you need is a picture viewer that will allow you to view the entire picture at one time and then zoom in on interesting areas of the picture. We have provided three such viewers here. VuePrint 7, which you can find in a folder of the same name, is a viewer that takes up very little disk space, is very fast, and incorporates a very good zoom feature-with a right click of the mouse you can zoom out and with a left click of the mouse you can zoom in. Other features you can discover for yourself. The makers of VuePrint allow you to use the program for two weeks, after that they ask you to register your copy. To install VuePrint simply copy the file to your hard disk, double click it, and follow the simple directions. The other two viewers can be found in the folders called "viewer-ifran" and "viewer-photoplayer". These are high quality free viewers. Photoplayer is unique in that it can run without installing. To run it, simply click [here](#) and browse.



After Tom scanned and retouched the pictures he downloaded them to Betsy Whitmore's computer. Betsy then viewed each picture and edited the captions and titles. Many times she asked her 90-plus year-old father, Max, for an explanation of the picture.

These photographs may not be reproduced for commercial purposes without prior permission from Tom Riddle or Betsy Whitmore. However, scholars and historians are welcome to reproduce them. We have pride in our family history and in Ravenna

and would like to spread an awareness of our Ravenna history throughout the community.

We hope that you enjoy this archive. It has been a pleasure to put it together. On that note we would like to dedicate it to our grandparents who worked, using the best technology of their day, to preserve what for them were precious and fleeting moments of this life. Finally, we ask that you pass this archive on, perhaps moving it to yet another medium as we have moved them from paper to disk. In preserving these memories we hope to honor those who have gone before and inspire future generations who are taking their own pictures and building their own archives.



A brief History of the Riddle Family and the Hearse and Coach Company

The Riddles of Ravenna can trace their family back to Ireland, province of Ulster, county of Monaghan, townland of Glanish. Andrew Riddell, as it was spelled in Ireland, was descended from Scottish ancestors who settled in Ireland after they were given townlands by the English Calvinist, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) for their help in the English civil wars (1640-1660) that he, Cromwell led.

Andrew's son John and his wife Susan came to America in 1816. Eventually all of John's living children came also. Our family is descended through his son Hugh's line. After living in New York, and Philadelphia, most of the family moved to Pittsburgh. There Hugh married Eliza Thornburgh. They had 8 children and it was during the



birth of the twins that Eliza died. Their oldest daughter Mary Ann, married Charles Merts. He and

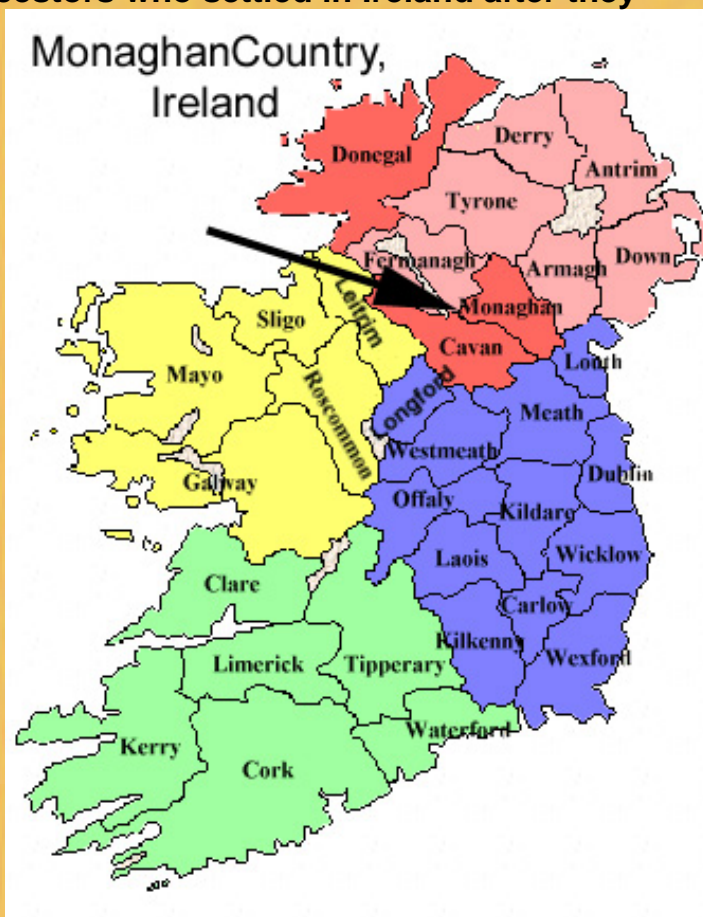


Mary Ann's brother, Henry Warner Riddle I, soon began working together in



the coach business. Merts was the one who was drawn to Ravenna.

Henry would have preferred Cincinnati, thinking that it was closer to the market. Eventually all of Henry's brothers and sisters moved to Ravenna after their father's death.



In Ravenna, Henry married, Emily Howard Robinson, whose brother was a



prominent judge. He and Merts worked for the N.D. Clark Company, a maker of coaches. Within five years, they bought out Clark and the company became Merts & Riddle Coach and Hearse Co. When Merts was ready to retire, in 1891, Henry bought him out and the firm's name was changed to Riddle Coach and Hearse Company. It was a very successful company. At least two American Presidents McKinley and Harding were carried to their graves in Riddle hearses. The company made motorized hearses from about 1910 to 1925. They were made completely in the Ravenna factory, still employing the fine workmanship that they were famous for. As the assembly line came in they could no longer compete with the large motor companies who were producing inexpensive stamped metal bodies. The company closed in 1925. For much more of this history of the company see [hearses and coaches - a variety of pics](#) and [articles about Ravenna](#).



During his years at the Coach and Hearse Company, Henry built many downtown buildings. His idea was to have shops on the main level and apartments upstairs. Hence the name of Riddle Blocks. He also built many houses in Ravenna. His son H. Warner Riddle took over the management of Riddle Properties after the coach business closed.

In 1984, the family sold their interest in the properties.

-- [Tom Riddle](#) and [Betsy Whitmore](#), January, 2004

