By June of the same year, the Warren County Commissioners were excepting bids on a single span, high truss, steel bridge, 100 ft. long and with a 5 ft. sidewalk. The new steel bridge was completed in 1914. Though the face of the little town would be changed forever, the community would continue to prosper.

1915 John Maag purchased what was once Seth Greely’s home from Ernest & Minnie Hoppe. John would become the community’s Post Master the same year. He would hold this position for over 15 years. Later, other Maag family members would also serve in this position. In 1942, John would sell the property to Oscar and Alice Dunn, having owned it for 27 years.

1923 With the introduction of the automobile and its increased use, the State of Ohio began designating route numbers to main roads. The 3C Highway (also called Montgomery Road) through Foster would be designated State Route 3. As it was the main road connecting Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland and traveled extensively, the town adapted to the new trade it brought.

Augustus Hoppe’s son Herbert Hoppe, who now owned the old James Foster store, began selling fuel, auto accessories and making deliveries with a motorized vehicle. It would be the only business to sell
FOSTER HISTORY

gasoline in the town and later have a bus stop. In 1926 the road was also designated to be US 22 by the Federal Highway Administration. Still a dirt and gravel surface (called a mud road in the wet seasons), the road would not be paved until 1930 and then maintained by state and local governments.

1923 Eugene Diss Sr. and his wife Luella purchased the Foster Hotel and a store between the hotel and railroad tracks from W. Louise Braun. (Braun had purchased the property 2 years earlier from the Rohling Family.) In addition, they purchased a large frame home to the rear of the hotel and store, which was once used as a boarding house. The store became a furniture store and later an antique store. The hotel continued operation and in 1934 the name was changed to The Blue Danube (a name it would retain until 1975). By 1945, Diss was a widower and sold the Blue Danube to Albert F. Fritts. However, he kept the store and home which were later passed to Eugene Diss Jr., his son.

1925 Hoppe’s Island had evolved into a get-away paradise for relaxation. Offering swimming (in a pool built below the dam in the river), canoeing, picnicking and dancing in a pavilion named Liberty Hall, it became a popular destination (part of the pavilion exists today in Carl Rahe Park). The grist mill remained operational, but the island park became the growing business. The Roaring Twenties and Jazz Age encouraged people to dance and have fun. Big Band Leader Ace Brigode managed the park for a period of time and many popular bands would be featured from around the country.

Edward Augustus Hoppe’s daughter Bernice Hallam stated, “on Sundays it was impossible for visitors to reserve a picnic table, unless at the premises as early as 5 am”.

Page 23
By the mid 1930’s, a swimming pool was constructed in the mill race next to the pavilion. A beach area was also built (still visible today in Carl Rahe Park) between the Old 3C Highway and the pool. The river supplied water not only for the mill, but also the pool. With two diving boards, steel rings suspended by chains from a steel cable extended across the pool and later two US military surplus inflatable rafts. The pool became a big attraction on the island.

**1925** The Foster Park Company advertised sites for summer homes. The main entrance began at the southwest end of the community from US 22 & 3 and portions of the development ran south to the Old Mill Road. It also, extended from the top of the hill over to Davis Road along the river. With Joseph Ertel and his son being the sole agents, the restricted summer camp sites were advertised to be the ideal sites for summer homes. Huber Builders Material Company provided a model summer home for sale on easy terms. Lots were advertised to be $75.00 with $12.50 cash down and payments of $5.00 per month.
1935 Well known Cincinnati photographer, Paul Briol, purchased a cottage from Shiro Tashiro, a Japanese American UC Professor. The property was located close to the river in Foster Park, on the corner of Old Mill Road and Davis Road, near Jeremiah Morrow’s old home. Briol visited the cottage religiously on weekends from his home in College Hill and referred to it as Camp. It was decorated with a variety of national flags and lights both inside and outside the little cottage. Among his guest were people connected with the University of Cincinnati, musicians with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and later immigrants and refugees from Europe (Briol spoke fluent French). By the 1940’s he was the most sought after photographer in Cincinnati. In 1950 he was seriously injured in a car accident, one mile south of Mason on US 42. Though attempting to continue his work and life style, he never fully recovered. By 1962 he moved to Katonah, New York. Today, his work is still valued and displayed.

1936 Work began on the Foster Viaduct with an open-spandrel concrete rib-arch bridge design. A WPA Project, the goal was to not only facilitate the flow of traffic, but also to elevate U. S. 22 and State Route 3 out of the flood plain, thus preventing another tragedy similar to the 1913 flood.
The design provided a pedestrian walkway across the bridge, with a stair access at the southwest from the Old 3C Highway and another stair access at the northeast from Foster Maineville Road. The bridge was dedicated in 1938 and the bus stop (Greyhound) was relocated from Hoppe’s store in town, to an unsheltered location at the southwest end of the viaduct. Later, a state roadside park with outdoor facilities and several picnic tables was built a short distance northeast of the Viaduct (the pull-off area is visible today). In 1991, the bridge deck was resurfaced and the walkway removed. Though the new bridge created a by-pass that would affect other businesses, Hoppe’s Island continued to enjoy its popularity.

1938 With the completion of the viaduct, resident Stella Doan York, a hobbyist who wrote lyrics and poetry (some of which were published), wrote a poem that reflected the feelings of most of the community:

COME ON FOLKS

Come on folks, right out to Foster
If you want to get a thrill
You will get one every minute
As you ride from hill to hill
It’s our new bridge and we like it
Don’t you think you’d like it too
As you look out at the scenery
Up against the sky so blue.

Come on out, right now this minute
I’m sure you’ll be delighted
Don’t stay away and say you cannot
Cause you have not been invited
And oh yes, now please remember
Foster’s just a little town
And if you would like to see it
You can do so looking down.

Looking down upon the village
And the river flowing by
Looking down on the little Miami
From the viaduct up so high
Up so high above the river
And the town all down below
It’s no wonder we are proud
You’d be too, don’t you think so

Oh look down there at the old bridge
Where it reaches across the stream
Now our new one, it is real
For a long time ‘twas a dream
And while looking at the hillsides
And the river on its way
Haven’t you enjoyed the scenery
Aren’t you glad you came today?
While the majority of the community was elated and proud of the new structure, most would not realize the long term effect this bypass would have.

1944 Tragically, Edward Augustus Hoppe lost his life in an accident at the mill. The Hoppe Family would sell the mill property to (William) Henry Caldwell. (In 1915, Ernst Hoppe sold the hillside residence to John Maag Sr.) The popular park continued to operate under the original name, Hoppe’s Island. Henry Caldwell converted the wheat elevator, located south of the mill, into a very impressive residence with a view out over the millrace and island. Tragedy would strike again in 1953, when Henry suffered a leg injury in a tree cutting accident. Shortly after, he passed away from a blood clot. The property was sold in 1953 to Glenn Irwin and Glenn Reynolds.

1944 Herbert Michael purchased the Miami Inn from Mary Elizabeth Stuemer.

1948 Dillard and Ethel Gose would purchase what was once the Joseph G. Foster store from the Hoppe family.

1949 Richard and Goldie Ashburn would purchase the Magg Inn from the Magg family. The business name would be changed to Dick’s Inn.
1953 Glenn Irwin and Glenn Reynolds would buy Hopppe’s Island. The name would be changed from Hoppe’s Island to Glenn Island. Glenn Irwin would later buy Glenn Reynolds’ share and become the sole owner. The Island would continue to be operated as in the past. However, the Lodge would evolve into permanent residences.

With the continued problem of spring flooding along the river, Irwin made the decision to fill in the pool in the mill race and construct an elevated keyhole shaped pool at the north end of the pavilion. The new pool would utilize well water and be equipped with a filtration system (the old mill race pool was dependent on river water). Also, the main entrance would be move to the north, to accommodate his new outlay (this entrance is the same as used today at Carl Rahe Park). While the park and picnic areas remained virtually the same, the pavilion would be renovated and local popular bands would be hired to provide music for dancing.

In spite of the new pools elevation, floods would continue to plague the property often causing extensive damage. The property would later be purchased by the State of Ohio and converted into Carl Rahe State Park.

1964 The community would experience yet another flood. Though not as extensive as prior floods, it would always present businesses and residents with the same challenge of clean-up and putting their
FOSTER HISTORY

properties back in order. In addition there was a loss of trade and restricted travel during these times. Many structures would be razed and never replaced after the waters receded.

Also, on the eastside of the river, the railroad business would be interrupted when waters reached extreme levels. Ironically, the same river with its Indian paths that aided early settlement and provided water power for mills, would now become part of the community’s demise.

1967 Little Miami Inc. (a non-profit charitable organization) with volunteers and donations, was founded to preserve the Little Miami River. Among their goals was, not only to achieve a balance between environmental protection and economic development, but also to save the Foster river front. In 1968 the State of Ohio passed the Scenic River Act and one year later, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources designated the Little Miami River, in its entirety, to be the first State Scenic River. Also in 1968, the Federal Government passed the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Little Miami River through Foster was named as Ohio’s first National Scenic River in 1973.

1974 Trains stopped running and in 1976 the tracks were removed. By 1979, with the efforts of Little Miami Inc., the abandoned railroad through Foster became part of the Little Miami State Park. In 1983 the Ohio Department of Natural Resources began work on a paved scenic trail. Among the Little Miami Inc. achievements were, facilitating the establishment of the Little Miami Bike Trail and Carl Rahe State Park (formerly Hoppe’s Island and later Glenn Island) in Foster. Today, known as the Little Miami Conservancy, they continue to improve and preserve the area through research and donations.
1984 The dam in the river at Foster was decommissioned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. It was felt that by restoring the river to its natural free flowing state, it would augment the river’s ecology and improve recreational opportunities. However, the primary reason was safety, as low head dams were viewed as drowning machines. The dam was not only partially breached, but also in poor condition. In 1985 the Army Corps of Engineers began to lower the river level by controlling the discharge of water from the Caesar Creek Reservoir (built in 1973 for flood control) and the dam was removed.