CHAPTER 1

"We Were the Dreamers"

Richie Furay and Yellow Springs

Throughout its history, Yellow Springs, Ohio, Richie Furay's birthplace, has been developed by visionaries and dreamers with big plans and faith in the human spirit. Men like Elisha Mills and his son William, Robert Owen,[1] Horace Mann, the Rev. Moncure Daniel Conway, and Arthur Morgan sought to establish enterprises in Yellow Springs that would serve not only the immediate community but also the world community. Each hoped to construct a new paradigm, a new "city upon a hill."[2] They found their inspiration not so much in the Bible or in the religious rigor of John Winthrop but in the do-goodism of Ben Franklin and an American idealism that transcends economics, religion, gender, and race. Some enterprises worked out better than others, but throughout the years, a series of altruistic and optimistic experiments, perhaps best exemplified by Antioch College, have left an imprint of openness and hope on the village and its inhabitants.[3]

The village was named after an actual yellow spring, now a featured attraction of Glen Helen Nature Preserve and about a mile from the Humanist Center in the middle of town. Shawnee chiefs and warriors like Tecumseh, Blue Jacket, and Black Hoof bathed in its restorative waters. The first white settler, Lewis Davis of Dayton, Ohio, arrived in 1803 after purchasing land from Congress as part of US westward expansion, and he built a home near the yellow spring (which has an ocher tinge from its high iron content). Davis traded with the Shawnee and opened a tavern to host white guests who visited the mythical spring. In 1826, Elisha Mills purchased land near the spring and began promoting his "water cure spa, just a day's ride north of Cincinnati."[4] As a boy, Richie Furay hiked with friends to the yellow spring to play

cowboys and Indians. "It was a wonderful place to go and play and pretend we were out in the wild," he recalled.[5]

William—or "Judge"—Mills, son of Elisha Mills, bears the title "the father of Yellow Springs."[6] Although not a sworn-in judge, Mills reconciled many private disputes among residents and worked tirelessly to develop Yellow Springs. While he was involved in several businesses, his greatest contribution came in the mid-1840s when he convinced the Little Miami Railroad Company to place a stop in Yellow Springs instead of Clifton, at the time a far more prosperous community, just five miles away. When funding faltered, Mills traveled at his own expense to Boston and New York to lobby investors. The first passengers disembarked in Yellow Springs in 1846. The result was that Yellow Springs flourished and Clifton floundered. Unfortunately, Mills lost most of his wealth in the Panic of 1857 and struggled financially until his death in 1879. His obituary in the *Xenia Torchlight* celebrated his many contributions to Yellow Springs and his "ardent hopefulness,"[7] a trait Mills has in common with many Yellow Springers, including Richie Furay.

Antioch College

At a meeting in Dayton, Ohio, in 1850, the Christian Connection, a loose collection of various religious denominations, passed a resolution to found a college for men and women that, despite some disagreement, would be nonsectarian. To procure the college's location in Yellow Springs, Judge Mills, who had studied the classics at both Kenyon College and Miami University of Ohio, donated $30,000 and twenty acres of land. Antioch has had a profound effect on Yellow Springs. In many ways, the college stands as a symbol of the town's idealism and hopefulness. In 1853, at the formal inauguration of Horace Mann, Antioch's first president, over three thousand attendees arrived from across the country. "Dreams ruled the day," wrote Yellow Springs journalist Diane Chiddister in 2003.[8]

Antioch would be only the tenth US college to admit both men and women, following the first, Oberlin College, Ohio, by only sixteen years. Among its first ten faculty members was Rebecca Pennell, Mann's niece and the first woman professor in the United States to have the same rank and pay as her male counterparts. Mann's feminism was, however, limited. He did not grant women students the same rights and privileges as their male counterparts, and he discouraged the commingling of the sexes. Male and female students, for example, could not leave campus together unless accompanied by a faculty

member and, in what sounds particularly odd today, women were not permitted to memorize texts or speak extemporaneously—unwomanly practices in the mid-nineteenth century. Furthermore, Mann, for all his liberality, considered the day's feminists as extremists, "the ultra sorts," and considered feminist thinker Margaret Fuller, who knew Mann's wife, as bothersome.[9] Not particularly fond of the Fuller family, he thought that Margaret "had the disagreeableness of forty Fullers."[10]

Mann and Mills were both abolitionists, who agreed that Black people should have access to higher education at Antioch. It was a controversial decision, one that affected enrollment and fundraising—a constant problem in Antioch's history. In the mid-1850s, Mann's admittance of two Black women students caused one trustee to resign and withdraw his children from the college. A few years later, Antioch issued a formal policy stating that no student should be rejected because of his or her race or gender, a policy that the college clung to despite opposition. In 1863, approximately a dozen students left when two Black women enrolled. In the previous year, the Rev. Moncure Daniel Conway, a Cincinnati minister who admired Mann, had brought escaped slaves from his father's plantation to dwell in the safety of Yellow Springs.

Over the years, Yellow Springs has proven more racially tolerant than most communities, which is not to say it has been without incident and demonstration. In 1942, students and faculty from Antioch and nearby Wilberforce University, a historically Black college, led a successful protest at the Little Theatre (now the Little Art Theatre) to remove the restrictions that allowed African Americans to sit only in the last two rows. A year later, in 1943, Antioch increased its efforts to recruit African American students by offering scholarships to non-white students. One recipient was Coretta Scott, whose future husband, Martin Luther King Jr., delivered the commencement address at Antioch in 1965. In 1946, a year after Furay's birth, Dr. William Anderson, a music professor, became the first African American professor to chair a department outside of the nation's historically Black colleges, a position he held until 1965, and in 1959, Jim McKee was appointed police chief of Yellow Springs, the first African American to hold that position in a predominantly white community in the United States. He remained chief until his retirement in 1993.

Perhaps the most noted racial protests occurred outside Gegner's Barbershop beginning in 1960. That August, the *New York Times* reported that proprietor Lewis Gegner had been found guilty of violating an ordinance against discrimination as he refused to serve African Americans, claiming that he lacked the expertise to cut their hair.[11] Over the next several years,

intermittent protests occurred, including one with over six hundred participants led by former Antioch president Arthur Morgan. On March 14, 1964, another large protest turned into a near riot. Police chief Jim McKee ordered that tear gas and fire hoses be used to disperse the crowd. He later called it "the worst day of my life."[12] Richie Furay found himself in the midst of that protest: "I remember getting caught up in it. I had just been hanging out. [It was] the first time I ever got a taste of tear gas. It was quite a feeling, to say the least."[13] Finally, in June, Gegner closed his shop and vowed never to cut hair in Ohio again.

To be clear, African Americans have long been attracted to Yellow Springs because of its reputation for racial tolerance. In the 1940s, particularly after World War II, Yellow Springs had its historically steepest growth spurt. Its population rose from 1,640 in 1940 to 2,896 in 1950, an increase of 76.6 percent with over 400 African Americans comprising 14 percent of the population.[14]

If Antioch promoted racial tolerance, it also inspired new solutions and progressive educational and societal projects. In 1921, after a shutdown because of financial constraints, Arthur Morgan, an engineer, was installed as president and found the college "in its usual state of poverty-stricken idealism."[15] Yet Morgan saw not only a challenge but also an opportunity to develop a college to match his vision. "I believe it is near enough dead," he wrote, "to start over in the form I dream of."[16] Morgan pushed forward with fundraisers, public relations events, and a cooperative education program that combined work off campus with a rigorous liberal arts education. By his second year, enrollment had sprung from approximately fifty to four hundred students, the faculty from six to forty-five, and the budget to half a million dollars. Additionally, Morgan founded the Antioch School, an alternative elementary school, still in existence, which seeks "to emphasize the joy of living" and to tap into "[the] spirit of action, of daring and adventure, so nearly universal in youth."[17] Morgan remained as president until 1936, when Pres. Franklin Roosevelt tapped him to head the Tennessee Valley Authority. Yet his influence on Yellow Springs continued. In 1940, he founded Community Service, Inc. (CSI) "to promote family life and small towns—the world's classic small communities—as the best hope for a rational human future" in a rapidly urbanizing America.[18] CSI is still headquartered in Yellow Springs. Morgan died in 1975 in Xenia, Ohio, approximately ten miles from Antioch College.

As Richie Furay put it, Yellow Springs "looked very much like Mayberry," the idyllic fictional town of *The Andy Griffith Show* (1960–68), "but it was quite a progressive community, thanks in part to the presence of Antioch College."[19] Antioch's influence would be more potent at some times than other times

—depending on enrollment and solvency—but Yellow Springs has maintained a progressive spirit and openness. In 1979, for instance, Yellow Springs became the smallest municipality to pass an ordinance prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, in some ways, as Richie's sister Judy says, "The town was sort of divided" between the more longtime residents and the college community.[20] That is not to imply that there was tension so much as a lack of socializing between the two groups who, like the African Americans and whites, coexisted rather than mingled. The acclaimed actor John Lithgow, who moved to Yellow Springs after his father, Arthur, took a professorship at Antioch, wrote that, in contrast to the other residents, the college personnel "teemed with pinko bohemians and tweedy anarchists."[21] However, in a town where "everything is in walking distance," the groups interacted daily and mostly got along well.[22] Lithgow's brother David, for example, hung out at times with Judy, as David's best friend Dan McGregor, son of Antioch's president, had a crush on Judy's girlfriend. Rod Serling, who created the *Twilight Zone* TV series, was a student at Antioch, who participated in its work-study program and lunched regularly at the counter at Furay's Drug Store, where he usually ordered a cheese sandwich and Coke and became friendly with the Furays. "I saw hippies, bohemians, and jeans all the time," said Judy,[23] not a usual experience for most Midwestern small-town residents in the 1950s or 1960s.

In fact, Richie's love for performing took root when—in 1956, at ten years of age—he appeared as an extra in *Much Ado About Nothing*, a production of Antioch's Shakespeare Under the Stars. In 1952, Professor Lithgow had founded the festival, which hired professional actors for the main roles and used Antioch students or Yellow Springers in minor roles or as extras. The festival brought international attention to both Antioch and Yellow Springs. After the first season, Queen Elizabeth II wrote a congratulatory letter, and the *New York Times* would consistently send their leading theater critics, including the legendary Brooks Atkinson, to review the productions. "That's one of the things that made me want to be an actor," said Richie, who—at college and later in New York and Los Angeles—considered acting as a career.[24]

Yellow Springs Today

That bold liberal spirit, that openness, that trust in dreams and people that early Yellow Springers embodied is very much visible in the streets of Yellow Springs today. Xenia Avenue, the town's main street, flies as many rainbow as

American flags and features as many boutiques, tie-dye shops, and art studios as convenience stores and barbershops. A lively music scene, interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, offers a diversity of live music; everything—from jazz to bluegrass to chamber music to rock—plays in bars, cafés, coffee shops, and clubs. In addition, there is a Yellow Springs Community Band, a Yellow Springs Ukulele Club, and the World House Choir, which performs to inspire "our communities toward justice, diversity, and equality."[25] Twice a year, a street festival features two performance stages and, annually, the PorchFest calls on local musicians to play on porches, front yards, and patios within a half-mile radius of downtown. (Coincidentally, Furay performed two livestream back porch sessions from his home in Colorado to raise funds for music-related organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic.) A quick survey of the internet finds Yellow Springs referred to as "retro-hippie," "Ohio's hippie enclave," "a little hippie haven," and the "cutest hippie town ever."[26]

Comedian and actor Dave Chappelle, a resident of Yellow Springs, interviewed live on CNN during New Year's Eve 2019, placed Yellow Springs "deep in the heart of Trump country, but the town . . . is like an itty-bitty Bernie Sanders island in the Trump Sea."[27] In 2018, Richie and Judy sold the Xenia Avenue properties they had inherited to Chappelle. In the 2020 presidential election, while Pres. Donald Trump won Ohio with 53.7 percent of the vote, Joe Biden scored 92 percent of the vote in Yellow Springs.[28]

The Furays of Yellow Springs

Paul Richard Furay was born on May 9, 1944, in Dayton, Ohio, as Yellow Springs had no hospital. At that time, with D-Day or the Normandy Invasion, a crucial turning point of World War II, still a month away, the outcome of the war was in doubt. Yellow Springs, like the rest of America, was preoccupied with the war effort: over two hundred young Yellow Springers had enlisted; the local post office promoted defense stamps; community leadership conducted air raid drills; local stores, like the town beauty shop, boasted of saving aluminum; and residents dutifully participated in rationing and shopping with coupons for sugar, canned goods, meats, cooking oil, and more. In late June and early July 1943, Yellow Springs held the Little Peace Conference in Bryan High School, which focused on supporting veterans upon their return to the community, and Antioch College welcomed several Japanese American students onto its campus as part of a national program that permitted students to leave internment camps to enroll in participating colleges.

Several days before Richie's first birthday, Germany surrendered unconditionally, and Japan followed that August. America and Yellow Springs celebrated. It had been a tumultuous half century for Americans, which began with the assassination of Pres. William McKinley in 1901, followed by significant labor unrest, World War I, the chaotic and freewheeling 1920s, the Great Depression, and then World War II. When the war ended, a tired America sought stability, tranquility, and prosperity. It was time for family, home, and hearth, which was barely disturbed by the Korean War (1950–53), sometimes called "The Forgotten War" or "The Unknown War" for its limited media coverage and its limited hold on the American consciousness.

Many Americans remember the late 1940s and 1950s as a time of contentment. The economy thrived; TV sets and new appliances proliferated, making homelife more comfortable; and a car culture developed, hastened by the Highway Act of 1956 and emerging suburbs. When Richie was two and his sister Judy five, the Furay family participated in the new middle-class prosperity. Their father, Paul Furay, bought the drugstore he had managed, turning Finley's Drug Store into Furay's Drug Store, and he took the family on summer vacations, driving to destinations in Michigan, Florida, and Virginia, for example. These vacations formed some of Richie's fondest youthful memories.

After purchasing the drugstore, the Furays moved from North Winter Street, less than a mile outside of town, to 616 Xenia Avenue, in the center of town and little more than a five-minute walk to the drugstore. The Furays lived upstairs and rented the bottom floor, which housed two shops. While their parents worked long hours at the drugstore, particularly their father, young Richie and Judy were looked after by their paternal grandmother, who favored Richie. She did some cooking, but a housekeeper cleaned. Richie and Judy would have lunch at the drugstore's counter or, if it was crowded, they took their lunches to the back room, with Richie reading one of the latest comic books. Later in the afternoon or on their way home from school, the children might return for milkshakes, ice cream, or other treats. Paul Furay was extremely gregarious, always smiling as he interacted with customers, whose names and children's names he knew. It's a practice that Richie absorbed and adopted for his career as a musician and pastor. When possible, Richie would spend time after or before a show or service to make himself available to fans and congregants. In March 2015 at the New York City Winery, for example, Richie walked from table to table welcoming early-arriving guests. Furay's mom, Naomi or "Snookie," was also outgoing, only slightly more reserved than her husband, but was primarily responsible for the accounting. "She was in the back a lot," recalls Judy, "with her big old-fashion adding machine on

the desk with the big handle that you pulled and her big ledger book, which must have been two inches thick. I remember her sitting there for hours looking for a penny."[29]

Paul spent most of his day at the drugstore, where he employed a staff of about half a dozen. He left home at about 6:00 a.m. and finished his day as late as 10:00 p.m., trying to find time to return home during the day or for an occasional dinner in the evening. "We didn't get to spend a lot of time together," said Richie. "It was the sad part of my growing up. My dad was very intent on providing for the family and making provisions for us."[30] The store was open Sundays, which meant Paul would spend at least part of his day there. Judy explains, "It was a very small town with two drugstores. [Our dad] had to be at the top of his game. It was competitive. I remember a man came in and asked him for a pair of red shoestrings and he was a customer of the other drugstore. My dad said, 'We don't have them right now.' The man turned to go out and my dad said, 'If you come in tomorrow, I'll have them for you.'"[31] Getting those shoestrings required a trip to a supplier in Springfield, which would add an extra hour to Paul's already long day. Snookie spent more time with the children. She volunteered with Judy's Brownie and Girl Scout troops, and she helped coach Richie's little league teams. Always a gifted athlete, she had played basketball and tennis when she was younger, and she golfed into her eighties.

Paul's lack of time with this family was typical for fathers in the 1950s. The evening family dinner, for example, has been much mythologized in American popular culture, especially in the television shows of the 1950s and 1960s, like *Ozzy and Harriet*, *Father Knows Best*, and *Leave It to Beaver*. As the *New York Times* reported in 1990, that "celebration of the breadwinner's return . . . has been clouded by selective memories and myth . . . and few methodical surveys. . . . Even [in the 1950s], for many families who experienced divorce, poverty, shift work or any number of other factors, this [family dinner in TV land] was not a reflection of their lives."[32] Similarly, at that time, fathers especially were expected to be strict disciplinarians and strong heads of households, but neither Richie nor Judy recalls ever being severely disciplined, and most of the time their mild-tempered father and mother handled things quietly. The family attended services on Sunday at the local Methodist church, where Snookie sang in the choir and Richie and Judy attended Sunday school. There was the usual sibling rivalry between Richie and Judy, but nothing especially intense, and Richie remembers looking up to his sister. He followed her path to Bryan High School, where their parents had been sweethearts, and then to Otterbein College.

In 1955, Paul, who was not a pharmacist, and Snookie sold Furay's Drug Store to Carl E. Lowe, who operated Lowe's Drug Store until his retirement in 1973. Snookie, who had an especially astute business mind, convinced her husband to sell only the business and not the building, thus generating additional income. The couple invested in a new venture, Furay's Gift Shop, and constructed a long building in a vacant space, a large alley at 241 Xenia Avenue, closer to their home. The successful business was more of a mini–department store than what we might consider a gift store today. They sold everything from jeans and books to housewares, sporting equipment, and jewelry. Their father carried his people skills into the gift store. "The kids sometimes called him Captain Kangaroo; he kind of looked like him; his hair was gray. . . . He had a mustache, and in the back where we had a little shoe department, he had a rocking horse for kids," recalls Judy, who worked alongside her parents in the store. "He was a very well-liked person. I remember one day he let Mike DeWine [Yellow Springs native and future US senator and governor of Ohio], take a swing with a baseball bat in the store."[33] Although Paul still worked long hours, he made an effort to spend more time with his son, who was moving into his teen years. Richie recalls a favorite memory of demonstrating his little league pitching skills to his dad: "I don't know how fast I was throwing, but I was stinging his hands."[34] There was no anger in the pitches, only a son showing off for his father's approval and acknowledgment.

Tragedy Strikes

Judy remembers the day clearly:

> I was going to be a junior and Richard was going into eighth grade when our father died. . . . The whole thing was really a shock. He was forty-five. They brought him down on a stretcher one Sunday morning . . . the day of the Coffman [mom's family] reunion. Richie went to the reunion with an aunt, and I stayed home. My mom barely made it to the hospital before he died. It was that quick. Somebody at the reunion, an older cousin, came up and told Richard that his father had just died; it was a real shock. . . . It was a real shock to the whole town. . . . He knew everybody in the town, was friends with everybody.[35]

On that August 1957 morning, Richie awoke to paramedics attending to his father. His mom had called an ambulance when her husband complained

of chest pains. Paul had suffered a ruptured aortic aneurysm, almost impossible to treat. The easygoing father was much beloved by the community, and his viewing was rumored to be one of the most heavily attended in Yellow Springs. Richie was not only saddened but also confused. At thirteen, he was ill-equipped to handle a parent's sudden death. While the family regularly attended church, they were not overly attentive to religion and scripture and, therefore, did not find the guidance and comfort in the Bible that Richie would find in later years. Furthermore, in the 1950s, mental health therapy was not commonly where middle-class families turned for help. In his confusion, Richie did not rebel or demonstrate anger. He just carried on and avoided confronting his grief. Perhaps aware of his mom's and sister's struggle, he did not want to be an annoyance, and perhaps he felt instinctively the need to be a man modeled after his father, which meant staying composed and strong. On the other hand, Judy's schoolwork would be affected: "I held it inward. My English teacher said, 'If you don't participate your grade will go down.' But I couldn't. I was still in shock. He died in August and school started in September."[36] Judy experienced nightmares for some time.

Snookie was intent on remaining strong, insistent that, as Richie writes, her children "could look toward the future with optimism."[37] However, both she and her daughter found their home on Xenia Avenue too full of memories and reminders. Although Richie had hoped to remain in the central location with his backyard basketball court, Snookie decided to move less than a mile away to Spillan Road. Grandma Furay did not make the move as the new home was smaller and the children were now in their teens. Snookie continued to run the variety store and take the children on summer vacations to, among other places, Washington, DC, Colorado (where later Richie would reside for most of his life), and California, where Richie flew in a plane for the first time and insisted that they tour the television home of Ozzie and Harriet.

Richie was a fairly stable teen, occupied by an intense interest in sports and music. Perhaps too he recognized that his father's death did not allow him the luxury of rebellion. His teenage angst expressed itself in occasional beers with friends and an outburst now and then. Both Richie and his sister remember his slamming and shattering the dashboard of the family car over his frustrations with acne. His sister laughed as his mom threatened him idly with military school. "I was pretty straight and narrow, I guess." He recalls one friend from high school of whom he was warned: "Now this is one of those guys that you don't want to be associated with because he is really a rebel. Stay away from him." Richie remained friends with the "rebel," who went on to become a dentist.[38]

Sports and Music

Like most American boys in the 1950s, sports were important to a young Richie Furay. He particularly liked basketball and baseball. He and his friends spent long days playing basketball on the Furays' small black-topped court, which his parents had constructed for him. Initially, basketball was Richie's favorite sport but, in time, baseball replaced basketball, largely because Richie's short stature proved a disadvantage—as an adult he would stand five feet, nine inches. His height may have kept him off the high school varsity, as he had to be content on the reserves. But even before then, baseball took over his boyish fantasies. He simulated games by pitching a rubber ball off the outside entrance to his basement as he imagined facing the day's stars like Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, and Mickey Mantle. He would turn imaginary double plays mimicking his favorite infielders, Johnny Temple and Roy McMillan, from his favorite team, the Cincinnati Reds. "Man, I would stand out there for hours and bang a ball against that thing and pick up grounders. . . . Then my cousin and I—there was a big open field next to our house—would go and hit flies to one another." When he was a little leaguer, his uncle took him to see the Reds play: "My mouth just dropped. I mean I never saw green grass like that in my life. It was a whole different world."[39] Richie played second base on his high school team and dreamed of a career in the major leagues.

Richie was a decent student, but when his focus was not on sports it was on music. When he was eight years old, he placed a guitar at the top of his Christmas list. That Christmas morning, he awoke and raced to the tree and saw a gift wrapped in a peculiar shape that could only be a guitar. His heart soared, only to plummet when he unpackaged the "puke green" toy guitar replete with cowboy scenes.[40] He sped to his parents' bedroom and spared them none of his disappointment. He would not be appeased until his parents agreed to drive to Springfield, some twenty minutes from Yellow Springs, to buy him a real guitar. Before long, Richie held a Gibson ES295, a hollow-body electric guitar, first sold in 1952 and deemed a classic after Scotty Moore played it on Elvis Presley's first four Sun singles.[41] Richie also insisted on lessons. "Every Monday night my mom, he, and I would drive to Springfield and he took music lessons at Morelli's," Judy said. "We would sit and wait for him. His hand couldn't even go around the neck. But he loved it."[42]

He remained persistent and diligent as he struggled through beginning songs like "The Rustic Dance." "I mean from the time that I was a little kid . . . when my parents gave me a guitar . . . all I wanted to do was play music."[43] After a few months, Richie and three friends formed a quartet and earned

a dollar each when they performed at a senior citizens' home. Curiously, Richie's father placed a condition on his son's guitar lessons: Richie must learn the trumpet in high school. Richie followed through and made it up to second chair, first trumpet in the high school band, which suggests he was fairly good but lacked the leadership qualities of first chair. He never played trumpet during his professional career.

While still in junior high, Richie was invited by a group of high school students to join their vocal group. He sang with the Barons until the end of his freshman year, at which time the other Barons graduated. While they performed only sporadically, Richie was Little Anthony to their Imperials as he sang lead to their backing *oohs* and *aahs*. They performed doo-wop songs of the day, like "Teenager in Love," "16 Candles," "In the Still of the Night," and some Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers songs.[44] When the band played high school dances, the underaged Furay and his girlfriend, Diane Bingham or "Bubbly," were allowed entrance. Richie wrote his first song, "Bubbly," for Diane, but no one, says Richie, has ever heard it except for the two young teens. The first song that Richie wrote and recorded was Buffalo Springfield's classic "Sad Memory," also about an early girlfriend: "I was head over heels about this girl in college, and thought she was the one. But she wasn't." And with characteristic optimism, "I always want to believe that there is hope out there and there's something better right around the corner," and then, referring to his wife, Nancy, "and there was."[45]

While his mother sang in the choir, neither parent played an instrument, and neither was more than a casual music listener. Snookie's favorite singer was Kate Smith, "The First Lady of Radio," who had a big, booming voice and was best known for her signature recording of Irving Berlin's "God Bless America." Paul preferred what Richie called the "deep country" of Eddy Arnold and Porter Wagoner.[46] Judy, three years older than Richie, listened to the popular teen hits of the day and especially liked the Platters ("The Great Pretender," "Twilight Time"). She and her friends listened to Wingy Wing, or WING-AM, out of Dayton, which Richie would listen to as he grew into his teen years. A very young Richie, however, gravitated toward music. Judy remembers: "We had an old jukebox in the drugstore, a great big fancy thing. It was huge, four feet by three or four feet. When those records got old [Dad] brought them home. I had no interest in them, but Richard did. [Before he could read], he had every single record memorized by their labels."[47] As Richie puts it, "That's definitely where my musical ambition started. Just with the store, those little records [my dad] brought home, and the radio."[48]

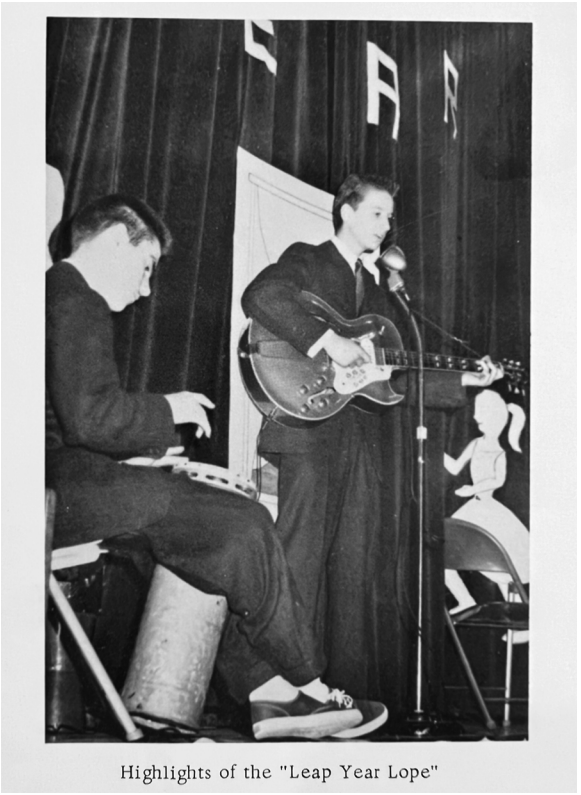

FIG. 1
Fifteen-year-old Richie Furay takes the stage at a high school dance. Courtesy of Richie Furay.

For Christmas one year, Paul gave Snookie a Revere reel-to-reel tape recorder, which Richie hijacked and carted off to his room, where he taped his favorite songs off Wingy Wing. In those early teen years, he loved the vocal harmonies of the Five Satins, the Del Vikings, the Drifters, and the Dovells as well as the rockabilly rhythms of Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, Buddy Holly, and Carl Perkins. But his first musical hero was Ricky Nelson. In 1957, Nelson began performing on *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, often at scenes staged at high school dances, as he became the first teen idol to use television to promote a slew of hits, beginning with "Teenager's Romance," "Be-Bop Baby," and "I'm Walkin'." In time, young Richie noticed that Nelson had a dazzling guitar player in James Burton, who would inspire many 1960s guitarists and play an important sliding dobro on Furay's "Child's Claim to Fame" from *Buffalo Springfield Again* (1967). Also, in 1957, a Yellow Springs resident, twenty-four-year-old Brien Fisher, appeared on *American Bandstand* to perform "Fingertips," a gentle rockabilly original. Neither Richie nor Judy

remembers the appearance. But the harmonies and the rockabilly rhythms from these years would have a strong impact on Furay's future music.[49]

As a high school student, like many young Americans, Richie was captivated by the new folk music, especially the Kingston Trio, who would inspire much of the folk boom that ran from the late 1950s into the mid-1960s. As a freshman, in 1958, he heard the trio's #1 *Billboard* hit, a rendition of a traditional folk song, "Tom Dooley." Richie was hooked. "They really took off and struck a chord with me. . . . I really loved that band. [They] had a tremendous influence on my life."[50]

From 1958 through 1962, the Kingston Trio released seventeen albums, five of which reached #1 on the *Billboard* charts. Two reached #2, three peaked at #3, one at #4, two others in the Top 10, and the remaining four positioned between #11 and #18. In later years, the Greenwich Village folkies and other "purists" favored Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and many derided the Kingston Trio for their showbiz flair and commercialism, citing their uniform appearance, their clean-cut collegiate look, and their lack of grit and political angst. But the trio's influence was substantial. In the late 1950s and early '60s, guitar and banjo sales soared with many young people taking lessons to learn the simple folk style and chords. Before heading to college, Richie, who had stopped playing his guitar while in high school, started playing again. But he traded in his Gibson for a Martin D-28 acoustic guitar, the one he would use to write many songs. Still, he longs for the classic Gibson: "It was a beautiful Gibson. I wish I had it now."[51]

The Imprint of Yellow Springs

It is difficult to measure the influence of Yellow Springs on Richie Furay, a third-generation Yellow Springer who lived there for his first twenty years. Like those founders and the subsequent builders of Yellow Springs, Richie possesses an "ardent hopefulness," and he is, undeniably, a dreamer. In fact, he has written and sung consistently about dreams throughout his fifty-year career, from his lead vocals on Neil Young and Buffalo Springfield's "On the Way Home" ("When the dream came . . . ," 1968), to Poco's "What A Day" ("I've got to dream," 1969), to his solo album *I Still Have Dreams* (1979), right through "Heartbeat of Love" ("You've taken me beyond every dream," 2006) and "Hand in Hand" ("You are the girl of my dreams," 2015). I asked him in 2015 if he was still a dreamer: "Sure! I am very blessed that I am able to still do what I do, at the level that I do it, and, I, I have dreams and I have

aspirations. . . . I'm 71 years old. Am I going to see all of those dreams fulfilled? I don't know, but it keeps the creative juices flowing."[52] However, like many of the Yellow Springers mentioned above, not all Furay's dreams have come true.

Of course, his upbringing, particularly the influence of his parents, has strongly shaped Richie's enduring optimism. Both Richie and Judy describe their parents as "optimistic," "pleasant," and "upbeat."[53] Similarly, Richie and his music are generally buoyant, energetic, and hopeful, as he "keeps on believin'." I spoke to him when, at age seventy-five, he was recording his country-covers album. He could barely contain his boyish enthusiasm: "It's really going to be good! It's amazing how good it's certainly going to turn out! I'm getting ready to go to LA tomorrow to finish up some vocals and then we go to Nashville again in March to finish up some more of the background vocals and then [Val Garay will] be mixing it."[54] And, on another occasion, "I can't wait for you to hear the 'Pickin' Up the Pieces' that we did in Nashville in November. We did it Bakersfield! We didn't do it Nashville,"[55] referring to the different styles of country music from those two cities.

But in the fall of 1962, work on his twenty-first studio album, as either a solo artist or band member, was a long way off. Furay instead ventured off to Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, still clinging to dreams of a professional baseball career. However, in addition to his glove, he carried a Martin D-28.