

F.A. Seiberling (1859 – 1955)

Frank Augustus “F.A.” Seiberling was born on October 6, 1859, in Norton, Ohio; the second of nine children to John Frederick and Catherine Miller Seiberling. The Seiberling family moved to Akron in 1865, where F.A. attended public school before enrolling in Heidelberg College in 1874. He remained in college for two years before joining his father at the J.F. Seiberling & Company, a manufacturer of agricultural machinery.

On October 12, 1887, F.A. married Gertrude Penfield. The couple resided in Akron and had seven children, six of whom lived to adulthood.

In 1898, F.A. co-founded The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company with his brother Charles “C.W.” Seiberling. He began his career as the director, and became president in 1906. By 1916, Goodyear was the world’s largest tire producer. During his tenure, F.A. received several patents for significant improvements to tire design and manufacturing including co-inventing the Seiberling State Tire Machine, which revolutionized how tires were manufactured.

During his lifetime, F.A. used his fortune and influence to create fair housing, build a hospital, improve transportation both locally and nationally, preserve green space for the community’s enjoyment and fund countless arts and culture programs and organizations. F.A. believed true prosperity was gained through the enlightenment and improvement of every citizen. A 1937 *Akron Beacon Journal* article, stated:

“One reason we all like the Seiberlings is because they never went ‘high hat’ on Akron; perhaps no other local family ever enjoyed greater prosperity and achievement . . . yet they were never so busy as to turn a disinterested ear to any pleader for Akron’s future or civic welfare . . . No man in Akron ever had a broader conception of Akron’s civic problems than Frank Seiberling.”

F.A. focused on projects that directly impacted the lives of his Goodyear employees, and thereby ensured the success of Akron. He developed and underwrote the development of Goodyear Heights, a neighborhood for factory workers; and Fairlawn Heights, a neighborhood for white-collar employees. In addition, he was a founder of The Peoples Hospital (now Cleveland Clinic Akron General), the Fairlawn Country Club, and the Metropolitan Park system in Akron (now Summit Metroparks). F.A. also supported four educational institutions: his alma mater, Heidelberg College; the University of Akron; Lincoln Memorial University in Cumberland Gap, Tennessee; and the Western Reserve Academy, a private boys school in Hudson, Ohio.

In 1921, during a financial reorganization, he stepped down as president of Goodyear. Six months later, he co-founded the Seiberling Rubber Company with his brother, C.W. and serving as president until 1938. F.A. then became chairman of the board until 1950, when he retired at the age of 90. F.A. Seiberling died from pneumonia on August 12, 1955 at The Peoples Hospital.