

## Bell Acres History...

# Tom Thumb Weddings

Tom Thumb Weddings were plays in which children performed mock marriage ceremonies while dressed in elaborate costumes. Dozens of youngsters, some as young as two or three years old, appeared as brides, grooms, bridesmaids, groomsmen and guests. Wildly popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the plays were presented as fund raisers in schools, churches and social halls.

The theatrical “weddings” were inspired by the real life 1863 marriage of Charles Stratton aka General Tom Thumb and Lavinia Warren who were little people that performed in P. T. Barnum’s circus. Following their wedding, which was orchestrated by Barnum, the couple toured Europe and America with great fanfare. It was Queen Victoria who bestowed the title General on Stratton.

This circa 1948 photo shows the cast of a Tom Thumb Wedding that was performed in Franklin Park’s Fairmount Presbyterian Church.



This Bell Acres History article also appeared in the **Sewickley Herald**.