



# Old Tyme Chronicle

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## Meet Our New Trustees. . .

### Chris Killeya

Chris and his wife Carol moved to the Sunbury area in 2022 from the northern edge of Westerville and they have been residents of Delaware county for 30 years.

He is a retired electrical engineer who designed installation test procedures for cellular mobile phone systems for Nokia.

Before that Chris was a field engineer, which included living and working on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Adak Island in the Aleutians, and internationally in Bermuda, Newfoundland, and Wales.

He is looking forward to increasing his knowledge of local history and sharing that with the community as a docent. He is eager to help out in any way he can. His hobbies include history, music, woodworking, and genealogy.

### Michael "Mike" Wise

Mike has been serving as a docent in the Myers Inn Museum and marched in Civil War uniform in front during Christmas on the Square to direct people into the museum. At the January Trustee meeting, he volunteered to serve as BWAHS Vice President in 2024.

Mike grew up in southeastern Ohio and moved to Sunbury in 1978 after marrying his bride, Velda DeWitt. Active in the FFA during high school and college, he served as the Ohio FFA treasurer and was awarded the American FFA degree in Agribusiness.

After completing a corporate administration and operations career, he became a licensed funeral director for the DeVore-Snyder Funeral Home, where he continues part-time service.

*(Continue on page 2)*



**Lt. Col. Granville Frambes**

**Charles Grapes invites you to  
"An evening with  
Lt. Col. Granville Frambes: Citizen  
Soldier, Educator, and  
Civic Leader."**

Beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday evening, February 13, in the Myers Inn Meeting Room, Grapes will step inside Frambes, the character he played in our Civil War Reenactments.

Born in Clermont County, Ohio, Granville and his brother Oliver valued education and both went to Ohio Wesleyan. In Delaware, Granville met the Sprague family and came to Porter Township with them. He got a job as school teacher in the school where Lucinda Stark, daughter of Judge Almond Stark, had gone. Lucinda was a second cousin of General Rosecrans. When Granville was on leave, he and Lucinda were married. He went back to war and she taught school in Berkshire.

Let's leave the other many things about this man for you to enjoy at the presentation.

We are very pleased to welcome Mr. and Mrs. Grapes back in our community.

*Thanks*

Many thanks to all of you who donated to our End of Year Donations Drive. In response to Rick Helwig's letter we received \$3,720 which will help us with a scholarship and other expenses. We appreciate your choosing to help Big Walnut Area Historical Society.

New Business Membership Spotlight. . .

# Gossing Construction

35 S. Galena Road, Sunbury

Established in 1978 as a custom home builder and remodeler, their goal has always been to provide customers a house that meets their needs and satisfies their desires.

Gossing Construction builds new custom homes and remodels existing homes in the Greater Columbus area, including nearby projects in Sunbury, Delaware, Westerville, Ostrander and Lewis Center—plus in all major Columbus suburbs.

For more information, see [gossingconstruction.com](http://gossingconstruction.com) or call 1-740-965-0822

## Mike Wise Becomes Vice President

*Continued from Page 1*

A member of Genoa Church and former Trenton Twp. Trustee, he is a Past Master of Sparrow Lodge #400 and a 32<sup>nd</sup> degree Mason.

Mike and Velda have a son and three grandchildren.

## Calendar of Events

Feb.. 13 at 6 p.m. BWAHS Trustees meet in Myers Inn

Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. BWAHS Program: An Evening with Lt. Col. Frambes featuring Chuck Grapes ( page 1)

**Myers Inn Museum and Gift Shop are open 10-3 on Saturdays.**

Docents are on duty to give you tours or answer questions about the exhibits.

**If you wish a special tour on another day, call 740-965-3583, leave a message and your phone number. Someone will call to schedule your tour.**

An avid historian, Mike is completing his Ph.D. in Historical and Theological Studies at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky , concentrating on 19<sup>th</sup> century American society, particularly Civil War era.

Questions? Email [info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:info@BigWalnutHistory.org).

### BIG WALNUT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### 2024 OFFICERS

Richard Helwig, President  
Mike Wise, Vice-President  
Damon Bower, Secretary  
Bill Kavage, Treasurer  
Polly Horn, Curator,  
Webmaster,  
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#### TRUSTEES

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For Information email [info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:info@BigWalnutHistory.org) or Call **740-965-1154** and leave a message

## Joining BWAHS is Easy . . . .

### Circle One:

*Individual \$20, Family \$35, Business 10 or fewer employees \$50, Business 11-99 employees \$75, Business 100 or more employees \$100, Patron \$100, Other ?*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address or P. O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Send with check for dues to BWAHS

**P.O. Box 362  
Sunbury, OH 43074**

# Solving Blind Minister Monument in Sunbury Cemetery

by Polly Horn

In preparation for the 1976 National Bicentennial, Suzanne Allen and I decided to locate and mark the graves of all American Revolutionary soldiers in the Big Walnut area cemeteries..

If you have spent any time in the old part of Sunbury Cemetery you have probably seen this monument and wondered about it. I used the writing on the marker and public records to get part of the story for our booklet “Discover Big Walnut Area Historical Treasures, take a self-guided Auto Tour” which we sold in our Gift Shop as part of a Heritage Day celebration. It left more questions than it answered.

The monument marks the final resting place of Rev. Peter R. Van Houten who was a blind pastor who served several churches in our community. He had a remarkable horse who knew the routes and got him to the services.

Kenny Crawl was my goto for these questions. He said, “I’m related to him.” Unfortunately, he died before he got the info to me. His relatives did not seem to know who I was talking about.

A few weeks ago, Joan Shaw brought a tote full of papers from Pat Wise, Kenny’s cousin, to the Myers Inn. There were lots of genealogy papers on various people in the tote. I spent the afternoon sorting the families and putting them in folders..

When I came to the 173 pages of the Family Chart for Van Houten, I hoped it was the answer to the monument. The pages were neatly single-spaced typed in a genealogical numerical system I am not used to working with. A quick scan did not help so I started on page one skimming each name beginning with Coenelis Meetenz born 1586 in Holland.

About 4 hours into the project I found the name on the statue, Peter R. Van Houten . . . died on January 20, 1876 in Sunbury, Ohio. ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY EIGHT YEARS AGO THIS DAY! I let out a very loud YES which caused Chris Killeya, a new docent who was upstairs working, to come running downstairs to see if I fell. Peter was on page 135!



***Blind Minister Monument***

Van Houten was born in Patterson, New Jersey, on October 13, 1814, to David Hendrick Van Houten and Margaret (Lighthipe)Van Houten. On January 1, 1841 he married Alice E. White in Rush, Susquehanna, Pennsylvania. On January 10, 1842 daughter Harriet was born in Rush. She died a year and a half old on June 16, 1843 in Birchardville, Pa.

Almost 5 years later Mary Rebecca was born April 13, 1848 in Ohio. In the 1850 Berkshire Township, Delaware County, Ohio Census Peter is shown as a blind peddler worth \$800, age 34, married to Alice Sarah Van Houten, age 28 living on #274 (worth \$275. He is one door from John S. Brown {John 59, Sarah 58  
(Continue Page 4)

## Blind Minister Continued from Page 3

and Henry Strickland 14, their worth \$275} and Lot 273 was N. M. Shaffer, the M.E. Minister. Two doors away is Nathan Dustin worth \$5,000. Nathan Dustin's brick house today is the law office of Chip Welch across the street from the Galena Post Office.

In 1851 this statue, called the Blind Preacher, won first place in the Ohio State Fair sculpture contest. Sculptor is still unknown.

Peter's wife, Alice, died on October 19, 1851 in Sunbury.

On August 1, 1852, Peter married Sarah Thrall in Granville. A daughter Alice Jane was born in January 1855 in Ohio.

In 1860 census Van Houten is a blind clergyman in Lincoln County, Tennessee, with his wife Sarah and 2 daughters Mary Rebecca, age 12 and Alice, age 5.

In 1868, Mary Rebecca married William Van Dorn Dawes in Delaware, Ohio. His parents were John Dawes and Mary Magdalena Van Dorn (probably the daughter of Gilbert Van Dorn of Vans Valley).

In the 1870 census, Peter is a blind minister in Delaware with his wife Sarah and daughter Alice Jane.

On January 20, 1876, he was riding his horse home on a foggy night and his horse lost his footing along the Big Walnut Creek and they went over the cliff, killing both of them. If you drive behind the Big Walnut Middle School on 555 S. Columbus Street (the Old High School), look over the bank to the creek. I can't imagine anyone riding a horse along there.

Thanks to Pat Wise and Joan Shaw, the mystery of the blind minister is solved. However, his genealogy reads like the Who's Who of the community. As early as page 66 in the genealogy, I began finding local residents,

Benjamin Van Houten was born in New York, died in Trenton Twp. but his daughter, Jessie, married first Willis Henry Stith when he died she married James Comstock.

Jessie's son 1. Henry Harrison Stith called "Harry" was the father of Larue Stith and grandfather of Fred and Marty Stith. Her 2<sup>nd</sup> son was Henry Van Stith (the one who verified the Raccoon Who Saved the Bank Story) and grandfather of Roger, Ann, and Philip Stith. Did Jessie clean the Farmer's Bank? Aleta, wife of Henry V. gave us the raccoon.

Jessie's daughter Basha May married Wello Crowl and was the mother of Gerald Larue Crowl, grandmother of **Kenny Crowl**, great-grandmother of Jerry, Tom, Doug, and Susie.

Gerald was also the father of Lillian Joan Crowl who married Leo Ulery, the father of Jessie Jean Crowl who became the mother of Greg Roy, the father of Linda Joyce who married Don Kroninger, and was the father of Jim who married Heidi McDannald.

Basha was the mother of Leland Perle Crowl who married Lela Bell Needles and the grandmother of Patty Crowl who married John Forest Wise thus **Pat Wise**.

Mary Almira Van Houten married John H. Walker. Their son Pearlee married Fannie Chambers. They were the grandparents of Dean Alton Walker and Russell Gordon Walker and great grandparents Gwen Walker who married Marvin Bailey and Wanda who married Melvin Mantor of Galena.

Their daughter Ada married Charles Lane in Condit. She was my Sunday School teacher in Condit Presbyterian Church when I was in grade school.

Margaret Van Houten b 1830 in NJ married in 1850 Calvin Thomas Townley. Their son Waldron Townley b 1851 in MA married in 1883 Elnora "Nellie" Bird born in 1861 in Ohio. Their grandson married Hattie M. Duston b 1890. They were the parents of John Dudley Townley b.1915 in Delaware County who married Gladys I. Wise b. in 1919 and became the grandparents of Gladys Erlene Townley who married Gary Girberd.

Margaret and Calvin's 2<sup>nd</sup> son was George Townley who married Mary Plumb and became the parents of Cecil M. Townley who married Violet Bishop and grandparents of Marston of the former Sunbury IGA.

While we know who Peter was the sculptor is still a mystery for another day.