



# Old Tyme Chronicle

Published by Big Walnut Area Historical Society

Volume XX

October 2020

## Sunbury Heritage Day 3-6 Sunday, October 25

Alice Lacher is not sure if the activities outside the Myers Inn Museum will be available for the event. At press time, she is still looking for someone to be in charge of the activities. If you are interested in helping, please contact Alice at 614-505-9194.

**Myers Inn Museum is Open for Family Groups** on Saturdays by appointment made 24 hours in advance. Call 740-965-3582 and leave a message. Your call will be returned and an appointment made.

### Many Thanks to Brent Carson

His first person conversation about the history of Delaware has had over 150 views. See our website.

### Featured Business Member **SUNBURY VETERINARY CLINIC**

Sunbury Vet Clinic has been caring for the pets of Delaware, Franklin, Morrow, Knox and Licking counties since 1986.

Dr. Ann Mandic and Dr. Lee Nowac provide compassionate care for a wide variety small animals. Patients include dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, pocket pets, reptiles and other exotics.

Preventive care like vaccinations, dental cleaning, parasite control and nutritional advice are available.

They can be contacted at 491 W. Cherry St,  
[frontdesk@sunburyvetclinic.com](mailto:frontdesk@sunburyvetclinic.com)  
or call 740-965-4577.

## Industrialization in America from 1890-1914

Jack Brown is returning to us with a new YouTube program in October for the historical society to view online. He will be looking at some of the changes in the American factories during this 24 year period often called the Second Industrial Revolution.

Electricity, telephones and automobiles are only a few of the new inventions which completely changed the way people worked, lived and communicated. All were setting the stage for the technology we take for granted today.

Brown is adding a new twist to this program by giving the members the opportunity to have input into the program.

If you have a question or comment about this era or even a specific event which made a change in our industries, please send it to [info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:info@BigWalnutHistory.org) with Brown in the subject line and it will be sent on to him. "While I can't promise to respond to all, I will try to include them in the presentation," he noted.

Brown was recently featured in the Columbus Dispatch Special Edition highlighting "Everyday Heroes of Central Ohio." Brown has taken his love of science from his workshop to classrooms so students can actually see how things work and even invent things to improve tomorrow's communities.

From a career in community analysis and statistics to a retirement hobby of furthering education of adults and youngsters, Brown brings a unique hands on look at his subject. This program is bound to make you think.

To get the link for the program, watch your email or our website at <http://BigWalnutHistory.org>.

## Calendar of Events

**Myers Inn Museum Open on Saturdays**  
by appointment made 24 hours in advance  
To make an Appointment, call 740-965-3582  
and  
leave a message.

**Tuesday, Oct. 13, 6:30 Board of Trustees**  
via Zoom

**October Program Industrialization in America,**  
1980-1920. Watch website for link

**Sunday, Oct. 25, 3-6 Sunbury Heritage Day**  
Myers Inn Closed - Outdoor events only

**Saturday, Dec. 4, Christmas on the Square-6.**  
*Details pending*

## Election of Officers in November

Members of the Board of Trustees for the BWAHS serve for 3 years. This means they are committing to 36 board meetings probably 12 monthly programs and numerous special events throughout the year. Some officers also serve as docents or help with school classes.

All leadership in the historical society is done by volunteers. We seek people from a wide spectrum of our community to provide the best leadership

President, Bill Comisford, is in charge of the search. If you can serve, call him 614-403-4356.

### Big Walnut Area Historical Society

#### OFFICERS

Bill Comisford, President  
Brian Moore, Vice President

Chip Welch, Secretary  
Bill Kavage, Treasurer

Polly Horn, Curator, Webmaster  
and Editor of Newsletter

#### TRUSTEES

Alice Lacher

Brock Schmaltz

Carol Wood

Damon Bower

Mel Meyers

Mindy Pyle

Quin Thomas

Roger Roberts

For Information Call 740-965-1154

leave a message or

email [Info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:Info@BigWalnutHistory.org)

*A Member Remembers . . .*

## Pandemic Memory

*By Damon Bower*

Everyone has been adversely affected by this 2020 pandemic, but as I start to feel sorry for myself I think what my father experienced during the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic.

Being born in Dayton in 1906 made him all of 12 by 1918, in a family with 6 children (four older girls and one younger brother). His mother died after the birth of his brother, so from 7 on his two older sisters helped raise the children. His father decided keeping a newborn was too much of a burden, so the baby was put up for adoption. During the 1918 pandemic the two sisters closest to his age both died. I don't really know how scary or traumatic this was for him, since he never talked about it. I do know that money was tight and after eighth grade he was asked to learn a trade and entered refrigeration repair school given by Frigidaire.

I can say he was a quiet and gentle father who had a healthy relationship with my mother and his two boys, so despite the pandemic, lack of formal education and the Depression he led a successful life.

## 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**

*From the Curator's Desk . . . .*

## R.F.D. Began in Sunbury

Sunbury Post Office was founded in 1817, one year after the founding of the town. Unfortunately most of the early history has been lost. Oatfield Whitney, postmaster from 1912-6, researched the history for Sunbury's Sesquicentennial in 1966. It was printed in The Sunbury News and in Esther McCormick's book "Sunbury's Part in Ohio History."

Not only were the postmasters political appointments, the postmaster usually ran the post office from his home or business. The first nine were Roswell R. Chapman 1817 - 1822, Sanford S. Bennett 1822- 24, George Whitmore 1824-1825, Lawrence Myers 1825-29, Benjamin L. Webb 1829-1833, Samuel Peck 1833, James Smith 1845-1849, Allen McLane 1849-1855 Rev. Asher A. Davis 1855- until his death in 1861 when his wife Adaline T. Davis finished his term.

Appointed the tenth postmaster In 1861, Adaline Davis, known as Lizzie, continued running the post office from her home at the northwest corner of Cherry Street and Vernon Street. Although she was seldom in the office, for the convenience of her patrons, a bell was on her desk would bring her quickly from the house along with the delicious smelling aroma of her dinners she fixed for her family and tenants. Lizzie ran the post office for 32 years.



**Roland Sedgwick, Postmaster, and Mrs. E. L. Gill  
Post Office in Patrick Building**

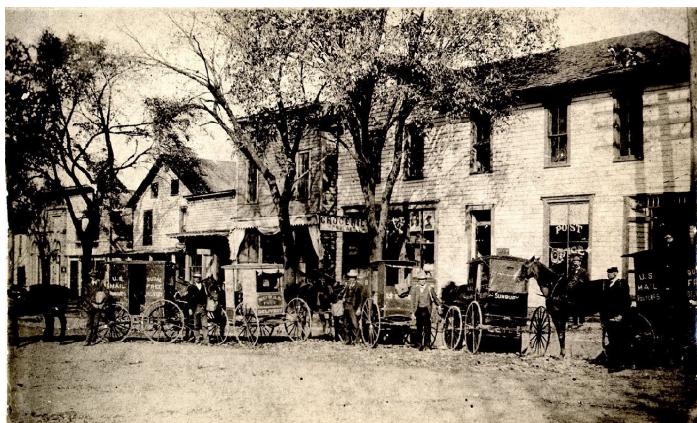
In July 1897, under President McKinley, E. L. Gill was named postmaster for Sunbury. McKinley was moving ahead with rural free delivery. Before fall Postmaster E. L. Gill had a route laid out and driver to deliver mail

to rural customers and saw no reason to wait several more months until the designated starting date the United States Post Office set to deliver mail throughout the country. Thus Sunbury became the first post office to offer R.F.D. (rural free delivery) in the nation.

John Longwell carried the pioneer Buckeye mail route - sometimes in a horse and buggy but about half the year on horseback and even now and then on foot. His salary was \$400 per year. He did not last long on the route and so Matthew Geddis followed him.

E. L. Gill's son, Roy Gill, Delaware County Welfare Director in 1961, told Dan Clancy of The Columbus Dispatch, that a lot of merchants objected to the rural mail delivery arguing it would hurt business because farmers wouldn't have a frequent excuse for coming into the village.

Rural Free Delivery was so popular in 1901 two more routes were added. Douglas C. Gorsuch had Route 2 and Arthur M. Culver Route 3. In 1902, Routes 4 and 5 were added. John Domigan carried Route 4 and Oatfield Whitney, Route 5.



**1903 Carriers L to R: Matthew Geddis, Douglas Gorsuch, Arthur Culver, Douglas Moore and Oatfield Whitney**

In 1903, the five mail carriers posed for a photo in front of the Sunbury Post Office still located at the corner of Vernon and Cherry. In 1906 Route 5 was moved from Sunbury to Condit. Oatfield Whitney was offered the job but turned it down. Ezea Gill continued as postmaster until 1912.

Mail came into town on the train. The railroad used hooks by the track to catch the bags of mail rather than stop the train. The mail was then sorted for surrounding communities. **(Continue on page 4)**

Each little community had its own post office: Condit, Cheshire, Center Village, Berkshire, Harlem, etc. These slowly merged into Galena and Sunbury as the postal service consolidated for better efficiency.



*Postmaster Oatfield Whitney  
on S. Vernon Street*

The post office moved to the Cupp building on the east side of the square but following the fire of 1926 it was moved to a new brick building at 75 E. Cherry.

the spring he frequently made special deliveries of live chicks ordered through the mail or carried a letter to a mother from a serviceman. The Postmaster was an important part of the community.

Trucks replaced the buses and mail was no longer sorted en route but was pre-sorted in each post office and bagged according to destination. Mail between Sunbury and Galena had its own bags and was dropped off at the right post office. Semi-trucks could not get in the alley to the back door. Whitney had to get permission for a new Post Office with truck access.

Whitney moved the Post Office into the store front on Vernon Street until the post office was completed at 65 E. Granville Street. It was finished in 1975, three years after Whitney's death.



*65 E. Granville Street*



*2002 Post Office at 267 West Granville Street*

In 2002, a new post office facility was opened on Granville Street. Galena rural routes and Sunbury routes go out of the same building. Mail to Galena post office boxes is still delivered in Galena. Now mail is not sorted in the local post office but taken into Columbus and sorted by machine using the zipcode and is sent out from there. Local mail returns to be delivered in a day or two.

Granted mail is still delivered to homes in town and in the country but how many know the Post Master's or even their carrier's name? Do remember that R.F.D. began here even if the Post Master General refused to admit it when asked in 1965.



*First Building Built to be a Post Office - 75 E. Cherry*

I remember working for the post office during holiday break from college in the late 1950's when Post Master Hoyt Whitney (son of former postmaster Oatfield Whitney) answered every child's Santa letter and then worked late on Christmas Eve to hand deliver gifts which came in after carriers had made their rounds. In