



# Old Tyme Chronicle

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## Myers Inn Museum to Open

Dear Members and Friends,

Beginning June 2, the Myers Inn Museum is permitted to reopen but the size of the groups in the building at any one time will still be limited. Masks are only required if you did not get vaccinated.

The Board of Trustees voted to open July 3<sup>rd</sup> from 8 to 2 which includes the Independence Day Parade time. Please volunteer to help with tours and outdoor activities while people wait to tour the museum.

The museum is dusty since it has been closed for over a year. If you are willing to do some cleaning let me know at [infor@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:infor@BigWalnutHistory.org).

Beyond the holiday, docents and guides need to let Polly Horn know if they are available to work and what hours they prefer so we can have a monthly schedule of workers.

If you are willing to volunteer your time to help as a docent or guide but have not done it before, we can schedule a training session in the next couple of weeks. Again, use the email above to let us know.

For those of you returning, review your manuals and calendars and prepare to volunteer. It will be great to see your smiles again.

Polly Horn,  
Curator of the Myers Inn Museum

P.S. I am facing hip surgery and will be unavailable for museum duty for a while. Please help by covering hours I normally cover if you possibly can. We are a team, so we will get everything done. Thanks.

Coming June 22 . . .

## The Underground Railroad

Roy Nichols is returning to the Big Walnut Area Historical Society to talk about “The Underground Railroad in Court” at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening, June 22. The virtual program will be available via zoom.



*Roy Nichols*

His presentation focuses on Ohio's Underground Railroad Court Cases which arose under the Fugitive Slave Law.

Nichols graduated from Gordon College north of Boston then Cleveland-Marshall Law School. He also studied at Oberlin College and the Free University of Amsterdam.

He taught History and Government before becoming an attorney with the state of Ohio for 10+ years. Then Roy practiced law for 24 years.

In retirement he became a storyteller, plays Santa and gives historical presentations, and performs in Vaudvillities shows.

Roy finds time to be a member of an Underground Railroad Study Group, as well as the Ohio History Connection, Westerville Historical Society and two Civil War Round Table groups.

Zoom link will be emailed a week before program to all who receive this newsletter via email. If you use Zoom but get the newsletter another way, send an email to [info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:info@BigWalnutHistory.org) and the Zoom link will be emailed to you.



**12647 State Route 521**

# Porter Township

Part One

by **Jenny Kavage**

The grand old house that overlooks Olive Green is probably older than Porter Township itself. In 1937 Agnes Kenney told an Olive Green homecoming crowd her Lindenberger ancestors built it in the early 1820s. The township was organized in 1826 or '27, exact date unknown.

Delaware County histories say brothers Ebenezer and Christopher Lindenberger settled on several hundred acres in the Olive Green area in 1817. They were from Rhode Island, well educated and “in good circumstances financially.” The Find a Grave site for their father, John Lindenberger, says he fought in the Revolutionary War battles at Germantown, Trenton and Princeton. By 1787 he was in Providence, RI advertising his plane-making business. He was a carpenter, blacksmith, toolmaker, taught architecture and traded in various goods. He married Dorcas Sprague who accompanied their sons to Ohio after her husband died insolvent in 1817, according to the Find a Grave source. The 1850 census shows Christopher with a plane factory but Ancestry.com reads “plane” as “plow” and concludes he’s making farming equipment.

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 leave a message or  
 email [Info@BigWalnutHistory.org](mailto:Info@BigWalnutHistory.org)

## Calendar of Events

- June 8 at 6 p.m. BWAHS Board of Trustees
- June 8 at 6 p.m. BWAHS Board of Trustees
- June 22 at 7 p.m. Program: “The Underground Railroad in Ohio Courts”  
 By Roy Nichols via Zoom - See page 1  
 Via Zoom- Link will be emailed to newsletter list
- July 3 - Independence Day Celebration  
 Outdoor events from 10-3  
 Small family groups admitted to museum.

**Myers Inn Museum is Open for Tours on Saturdays by appointment. Call 740-965-3582**

## Nestlé’s Whistle Given to Museum

Mr. and Mrs. John Krohn donated the brass whistle that was the town clock for many years. We grew up knowing we were OK if we made it home before the 5 o’clock whistle blew.

The whistle was attached to a steam pipe which put over 600 pounds of steam through when Mr. Jackson pulled the chain at 8 a.m, noon and 5 p.m.

### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Send with check for dues to BWAHS**

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

## *Porter Township continued from page 2*

Two other Rhode Islanders, Edward Mason and Festus Sprague, settled nearby. Sprague was probably related to the Lindenbergers but check it out before concluding they both married Lindenberger sisters.

Describing the old house, Agnes said there was originally an upper porch the same size as the lower one and a center room that held all the chimneys for the six fireplaces. It was not only a family home but an inn for travelers passing through, including stagecoaches, it is said. A large barn provided livery services.

Danny DeLong, present owner, says the house has a two-story addition on the back that includes a kitchen, two bedrooms and a bath bringing the total number of rooms to 17. All the joists in the house, he describes as original trees with their bark still on and at least 30 inches around.

Probably the first settlers in what would become Porter Township were squatters who lived by fishing, hunting and trapping. Local history says they were called "Taways" but were "white people and not of blood kin to the Indian tribe of that name." (I have read that "Taway" was a name the Lenape (Delaware) people called the Ottawa tribe.) The name stuck to the area and the Trenton Christian Union Church became known as the "Tahway Church." The late Margaret Fisher said older area residents remembered the road by the church being called "Tahway Road" before the county named it Centerburg.

The Township is named for Robert Porter, a prominent attorney and circuit judge in Pennsylvania, who received a patent for 4,000 acres in Section 3 in March 1800 from President John Adams. As far as is known, it was the first patent for township land. He never lived on this land but he did visit occasionally. In May 1800 Judge Porter deeded 300 acres on Big Walnut Creek to Thomas Mendenhall, a merchant of Wilmington, Delaware, who passed it on to his son Joel. Joel brought his family and erected his cabin in 1819. He was a farmer and for many years the county surveyor. Among the earliest "real" settlers were Daniel Pint, Timothy Meeker and Timothy Murphy. In 1810, brothers Peter and Isaac Plan settled in the southern part of the township.

In April 1836 Ebenezer Lindenberger and William Page had a plat drawn up for the town of East Liberty. It was certified by Festus Sprague, Justice of the Peace. In

May 1836, Justice of the Peace William Page Jr. returned the favor when Festus Sprague and Christopher Lindenberger brought him their plat for the town of Olive Green.

Early on there was a log school on James Stark's land near present St. Rt. 656 and 61, at about the Kingston-Porter township line. The Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1836 across St. Rt. 656 from the Stark Cemetery but before that the congregation met for some 10 years at the log schoolhouse. Or was the first school built in 1825 about where Sugar Creek flows into Big Walnut as another history suggests? The 1866 Beers Atlas of Delaware County shows the township was divided into nine sections with a school house in each one. In a box of township school documents the oldest document found was a \$1 lease for a school site written in 1852.

In 1837 the Presbyterian Church divided on a number of issues and the "New School Presbyterians" left the Old Blue Church in Kingston Township and built the Porter Presbyterian Church in East Liberty. About 1860 this group had a disagreement. A number split off and built a Congregational Church in Olive Green. By 1870 they had returned to Porter Presbyterian and the new church building became a township hall. The church established a cemetery on Ulery Road in 1864.

Most histories say James N. Stark was the township's first postmaster but the records show Christopher Lindenberger was appointed Olive Green postmaster in 1845. He may have been the storekeeper at the large store and lodge hall down the hill from his house at that time. In 1851 Stark was appointed Kingston Centre postmaster, with Kingston P.O. shown on the 1866 map at the big Olive Green store. Stark did run the store for a time. Also in 1851 George Blaney was appointed Olive Green postmaster but he ran the stagecoach inn in East Liberty.

By the 1850s the Methodist Church at Stark Corners had become too small for its attendees and a new church was built in Olive Green soon after. At one time it was the biggest rural Methodist church in the county and rows of hitching posts stretched out from the front of the building

Early in the 1850s the Springfield, Mount Vernon and Pittsburgh Railroad was building a railbed through the township. There was great anticipation for a bright future and Salmon Lott had *(Continue on page 4)*



a 30-lot addition to the town of Olive Green platted. The air went out of the balloon in 1854 when the company ran out of money. Work never resumed but traces of the railbed still exist. From time to time hopes have been high for gas wells but there's been no oil boom either.

On the 23rd day of April in 1853 in a special meeting at the home of Edward Mason, township clerk, the Porter trustees dashed off "An Ordinance for the Suppression of Tipling and Intemperance in Porter Township." Basically it said from the first of June onward any person 14-years and upwards keeping or aiding to keep any house, shop or store for tipling or intemperance shall be fined \$5-50, imprisoned in the county jail and fed on bread and water for 20 days.

And so went the first 50 years of Porter Township and we've only skimmed the surface. One thing I've become acutely aware of writing this is that the passing of history through the generations by word-of-mouth is better than nothing but at best not exact and at worst way off the mark. I've been able to check some things that came from the old histories but not all so please speak up if you question something

*Many thanks to the papers and records saved by Porter Township's Audley Clive Metzger, II, (1915-1998) known as A.C. Metzger. He was a resident, a history collector, an educator and the goto for Porter Township. He promoted the popular Olive Green homecomings.*

## Folklore, Vanity Presses, Histories

Before there was a written language, history was passed from one person to another orally. While this tended to be embellished by the storyteller, it contained enough truth to make folklore a valuable tool to those studying a previous era.

Publishing books is expensive so 'history' writers would start with state history, add local history and then people paid to add their photos, stories, etc. These are called Vanity Books. They are very valuable when there is nothing else.



**1849 Landowner Map of Porter Township**

If you own Baskins 1880 "History of Delaware County and Ohio" you may have noted there are missing pages. If people failed to pay by a certain date, pages with their names were removed.

True history books are researched, sources given, often footnoted and published by reliable companies. In our era of wanting information quickly, it is often difficult to tell if what is on our screen is true.

As Jenny says, we do our best to sort the real history from someone's memories.