



# Old Tyme Chronicle

Published by Big Walnut Area Historical Society

Volume XXII

March 2022

*From Our President . . .*

## Memories Past and Future

By Mindy Pyle

We are closely approaching March and I am sure that everyone is looking forward to Spring! During this Winter season, I have enjoyed the time with my family. I pretended I was young again and went sledding down the various hills in Sunbury. Of course, a day of sledding ends with enjoying hot cocoa with my children.

In the time of togetherness, I am looking forward to our potential in-person events in the Spring. We are hopeful to start up a Children's Workshop beginning in April and the Mother's Day Tea in May. Our goal is to encourage families to develop a love of learning local history and be an active part of the community's history.

My own daughters have certainly picked up their favorite stories to share with museum visitors. My youngest daughter loves sharing how the raccoon saved the bank. My oldest daughter is learning about the Ladies' Aid Society and the display in the women's room upstairs. The Ladies' Aid Society began in the Civil War continued during the Women's Suffrage Movement and it still carries on in various women's groups as part of community organizations.

We are hopeful to spread this joy of learning history with the community as we approach the Spring months.

We will advertise details about the upcoming events in the newsletter, on the signs in front of the Inn and on social media.

Thank you for all your support for the Big Walnut Area Historical Society during this unique time!

*Thanks*

Thanks for having Kroger donate to us when you shop. During 2021, we earned \$437.69 thanks to you!

*Coming in March . . .*

## Jails and Crimes in Delaware Co.

Brent Carson will present the program March 15 via YouTube to our historical society.

Carson is considered Mr. History of Delaware County. Since the Delaware County Historical Society bought the county jail and he has been researching crimes and jails in our county.

While I do not remember the jail in the Sunbury Town Hall, I do remember seeing it in the lower level of the old house which sat where the Sunbury Municipal Building was built in 1982.

However as a child of 6 or 7, my father took me and my younger sister to Delaware when he went to pick up news items for the Sunbury News. He had arranged for the Sheriff to show the two of us the newly painted jail. All was fine until the door was closed and we were each locked in a cell with a bed without a mattress, and a toilet stool without a seat. I was old enough to know my father would be back but Peg cried the entire time. We were let out with, "This is what happens when you do not obey the laws," from our father. Needless to say, neither of us were ever tempted to break the law.

There were crimes in the area from theft to murder but hard criminals were taken to Delaware jail. Sunbury jail was used for drunks to sleep off their celebrations.

Many may remember the jail built for the Sunbury Sesquicentennial to house clean shaven men and painted ladies. This was used again during in the nation's bicentennial in 1976. The library was in the Town Hall and too much of a temptation for pranks so some of the Community Library employees found themselves behind bars until families paid their fines.

Watch email for YouTube link to Carson's program.

# Trenton School District #3

by Polly Horn

Our earliest settlers made do by teaching children in a home, shed or any building until schoolhouses were built. The first schools in our community were primitive subscription schools erected by volunteer labor. Logs cut 16' or 18' lengths were used for the construction. Broad boards composed the roof. Each had a fireplace, a clapboard door. If there was a window it was probably greased paper to let in light. Students benches were fashioned from trees. A subscription of \$1.00 to \$3.50 per child was paid for a 3 month period. Teachers boarded with the families. Readers consisted of The New Testament or Old English Reader. Grammar was rarely taught.

In 1853, Ohio revised it's education system law by forming a Township Board of Education for each township. These boards consisted of one representative of each sub-district school and the clerk of the township. This group was invested with the title, care and custody of all school property. They appropriated the money among the sub-districts, determined what text books were to be used, fixed the boundaries of the districts and located school sites. They reported to the County Auditor annually. City and incorporated villages acted as their own sub-district.

When I was young my grand-father would tell us we had it so good because we did not have (Continue on Page 3)

## OFFICERS

Mindy Pyle, President  
Chip Welch, Secretary  
Bill Kavage, Treasurer  
Polly Horn, Curator of  
Myers Inn Museum

## TRUSTEES

Alice Lacher  
Ashley Hornbacker  
Bill Comisford  
Damon Bower  
Jon Geyer  
Mel Meyers  
Rick Helwig  
Roger Roberts

To contact email to

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

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### TRENTON PHOTOS ON DISPLAY

March 8 at 6:00 BWAHS Board Meeting via Zoom

March 15 Program: "Jails and Crimes in Delaware County" presented by Brent Carson on YouTube

### MYERS INN MUSEUM IS OPEN

12-3 ON SATURDAYS

Special Tours may be arranged on another day by calling 740-965-3582

## WANTED

### Proofreader

I want to apologize for repeating material in the Trenton article last month. I wondered why the photo of Dan Schwartz's house did not fit in the final copy. A mill & quarry were behind it.

Check the website at [www.BigWalnutHistory.org](http://www.BigWalnutHistory.org)

## 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

## *Trenton #3 continue from page 2*

to walk to school." I knew he lived on Whitney Road which is now Longshore Road so I thought he had a very long walk to Sunbury school. Not So.

Each sub-district (usually 6-10 per township) had a school so children did not walk more than a mile or two to school. Each township had a local board of directors who controlled the schools. They enumerated the children of school age, employed and dismissed teachers, made contracts for the building, and furnishings of the schools.

The state bill also eliminated the rate-bills and made education free to all youths in the state. Thus one room schools began to replace the primitive schools. Typically these structures were 22' by 36' from outside to outside. Usually they were brick with more than one window to provide light. Each had one door, a chimney (usually for stove) and generally a blackboard as well as benches and tables or desks.

In my family documents, I found a paper indenturing Horace and Robert Whitney for \$400 to build the frame school house at intersection of Hartford and Whitney (now Longshore) Roads. Wanting to learn more about this I went to the Trenton Township and indexed the school records.



*Trenton District #3 Schoolhouse  
Photo sent Paul Clay*

This one was on Wilson property so we always called it the Wilson School. At the April 1879 Board of Directors meeting of the Porter-Trenton School Board, William H. Wilson and Elias. J. Condit (both farmers) were hired as teachers. Wilson had 2 daughters and a son in the school, Condit had 2 boys and 2 girls in school. W.H. was the teacher in 1880.

Recently the owner of District 3 schoolhouse asked what I could tell him about it. It is one of the brick schools built to replace the log buildings.

April 25, 1885 G.M. Perfect made a motion to appropriate a 2 mil + .5 mil levy to construct a new school in District 3. I'm only report the highlights.

March 1886, Levi J. Wilson was paid \$16.52 for serving as clerk of the School Board. Noah Longshore was hired as Truant Officer.

June 1893, Board of Directors hired Hodge Wilson, Levi's 20 year old son, to teach at \$25 per month for 2 months. In December they appointed a building committee of Thomas. Van Kirk, David Bricker and Levi Wilson. They advertized for bids and got: B.P. Williams (Delaware) \$1251.57, Hopper & Higley (Ashley) \$1388 and Culver & Gorsuch (Condit) \$980. The latter got the bid. In the same meeting, they hired Mr. Regal to teach for \$2 per day for 8 months.

Culver & Gorsuch came in under bid at \$780 (no date) For some reason, the height of the schools had to be raised about 15" (possible changing from wood to coal?) so the actual cost was \$832. Not surprising the pair continued to win bids to build schools.

In December 1894 the Board approved to pay W. H. Wilson for the 1/8 of an acre the school was on. Cost of the land, building, fence, privies, etc., made the total \$1527.42. Other schools were being built in the Township using a very similar routine of supervision.

Who were the builders? Truman Overturf Gorsuch (son of Nathan and Lorana Overturf Gorsuch) married Hulda Belle Culver (daughter of Truman and Emelia Culver). John W. Culver (son of Bazel and Elizabeth) listed as a Speculator in 1880 census. I do not believe he ever married. Both were local resident.

### **The Wilsons**

Robert and Martha Jane (Beattie) Wilson of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania moved to Ohio where four of their sons were born. (Martha Jane is relative of Gilbert Van Dorn of Vans Valley.) **Levy James** born (1834), **William. Henry** (1837) and **Samuel Alexander** (1841 baptized in the Kingston Blue Church), and **Robert Elliott** (1844). Robert built a home on St. Rt. 37 - often called Wilson Road since at least 20 cousins lived along the road.

### **LEVI JAMES WILSON**

Known as Big Jim, Levi married Belle Beattie in Cumberland Co., PA. He took a ship around the Horn

to look for gold in California in '49. He returned home with lots of stories and some gold.

He was one of the first stockholders in the Sunbury Creamery. Six of their 7 children graduated from the National Normal University and taught in various schools including Sunbury.

**Dr. Eugene** got a medical degree and opened a practice in Galena before leaving the community.

**Hortense** taught school then married Dr. J. Andrew Drushel, an educator and author of a math textbook.

**Maidie**, a Normal School graduate went on to Radcliffe and then taught in a private school for girls in the south. In 1914 she returned home to care for her mother and taught in Sunbury High School until she married Dalton Mann a farmer near Center Village in 1919.

**Charles Hodge**, finished Normal school and taught at Vans Valley for several years before enrolling in Chicago Medical School and getting a degree in Dentistry. He moved back to Sunbury and opened a dental practice upstairs over the newspaper on Granville Street where the police park now. He married Cora Estella Jefferies. They had one daughter, Hortense who graduated from Sunbury, then Otterbien College. After a few terms in graduate school she got a job with U.S. Army at Ft. Hayes where she continued for 31 years seeing much of the U.S. She married Robert Pieper after she retired.

**Maslet, known as Mac** is the only farmer of the brothers. He married Ina Curry and operated a Licking County farm before returning to the home farm on 37. Their son James Curry Wilson graduated in Agriculture from OSU. He farmed in Licking Co., and taught in nearby high schools.

**Robert**, the youngest of Levi's sons taught at Vans Valley before getting a dental degree at OSU. He practiced in Westerville, married Josephine Markley. Son James was a president of Westinghouse in PA. Son Joseph became a doctor in Dayton.

**Lucy**, Levi's youngest graduated from the University of Lebanon, married Frank Robinson, Attorney General of Mississippi. They had son Frank who became a lawyer in Washington, D.C. and a daughter Shirley who resigned as a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy. She married William S. Carr, a lawyer in Louisville, KY.

#### **WILLIAM HENRY WILSON**

William Henry Wilson married Mary E. Orr and lived in Trenton. William was Justice of the Peace for the township, treasurer for Del. Co. Farmers Mutual Fire Insurance Company for 34 years, Deacon of Condit

Presbyterian Church for 30 years and an Elder in 1894. They had 7 Children. **Henrietta** married Philip Wagner then Noah Gorsuch. **Roberta** married Hosea Hopkins and they ran the Hopkins House (now Myers Inn). **Elliott** married Bessie Hunt, **Marguerite** Francis married John Gerhardt, **William C.** married Clara McNamara,

**Evangeline** married Frank Baumgardner, and **Irene** married Leland J. Fisher.

#### **SAMUEL ALEXANDER**

Sam married Jane Dawes, a cousin of Charles G. Dawes, Vice President of the USA, They all went to the dedication of Bemen Dawes' Arboretum in Newark. Samuel died after 18 years of marriage so Jane raised the family on their homestead.

**Martha** taught school at Vans Valley and was active in the Vans Valley Methodist Church.

**Carrie** taught in the country schools, went to Ohio Northern University and later taught in the University. She was a speaker for the Farmers' Institutes.

**Annie Belle** married Mathew Geddis and was the mother of Caroline, Royce, Doris and Lois Geddis.

**Orlando** was a farmer and cashier of the Bank of Galena. He married Nellie Beattie. Their children were Raymond E., Orlando G., and Gertrude.

**Sadie** taught school and married Clarence Geddis. Their son Eddie died as a baby and had a daughter Karol Louise.

**Mable Elizabeth** stayed on the family farm and later wrote music and poetry.

#### **ROBERT ELLIOTT**

Robert E. married Ella DeWolfe, daughter of Harding, a former blacksmith. They had Henry D. and Clyde L. When Ella died Robert married her sister Adelia. The following is in The People Book.

**Henry D.** married Nettie Saunders and had four sons -all graduates of OSU. He farmed the land west of the schoolhouse. **Henry D. Jr.** ran the family farm in 1976. **John Robert** a teacher, married Betty Barker, 2 children, lived in Kaubul in 1976, died 2001 is buried in National Memorial Park.

**John Lewis** and wife Linda and daughter Heidi lived in Alexandria, Va.

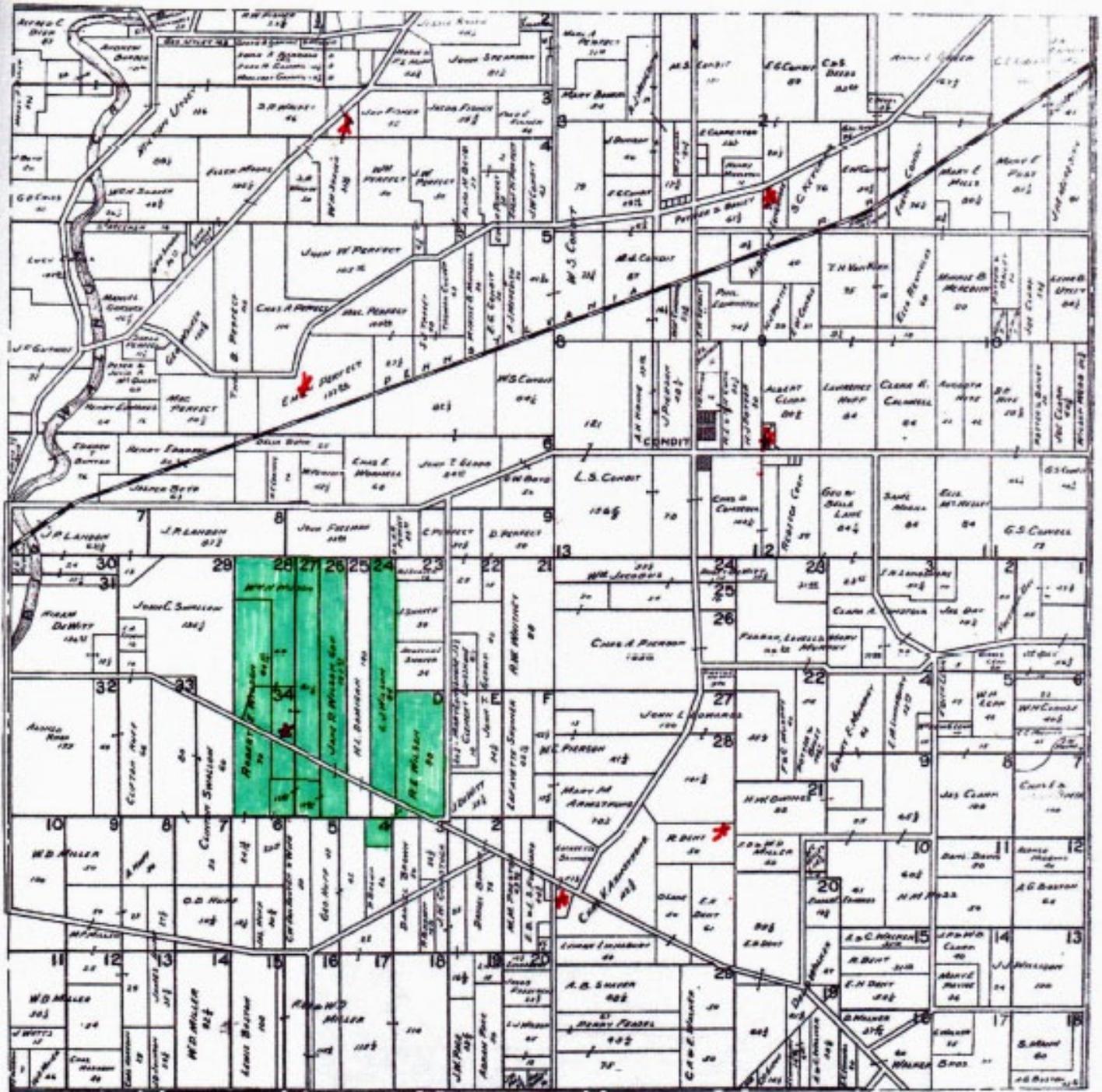
**William Henry** and wife Cathy lived in Kent, Washington with 3 children.

**Elliott**, was wounded as a Major in the USMC in WWII, married, had 4 children. Died in 2006 in CA.

**Christine**, Henry's daughter, was in Casper, Wy. Clyde L. Wilson, Sr. and Jr. were not in The People Book.

# TRENTON TOWNSHIP

T-4 R-16



▲  
Vans Valley Rd

▲  
St. Rt. 37

This map is from the "1908 Moodie Centennial Atlas and History of Delaware County, Ohio." I added the green to lots owned by the Wilson Families. Levi also owned another lot on 605 about 3 from the bottom of the page. I roughly marked the brick schoolhouses. This map not only shows the owners of the land, it shows how many acres are in each lot. You can find this on our website at <http://BigWalnutHistory.org>. It can be enlarged as big as your screen which makes it easier to read. Look in LOCAL HISTORY then under Transportation, go to Delaware County Maps.