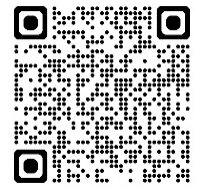




# Old Tyme Chronicle

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## From the President's Desk . . . Central Ohio in April 1776: A Decisive Transition

by Mike Wise

April 1776 marked a decisive transition in central Ohio, as the full effects of spring transformed the region from a winter-bound frontier into an active corridor of movement, diplomacy, and mounting tension. With rivers flowing freely and forest trails reopened, the Ohio Country became increasingly entangled in the widening conflict between Great Britain and the American colonies.

British agents operating out of Detroit intensified their efforts during this period, seeking to solidify alliances with Native nations such as the Shawnee, Delaware, and Wyandot. Councils became more frequent and urgent, with British emissaries distributing trade goods and emphasizing a consistent message: if the American rebellion succeeded, unchecked colonial expansion would threaten Indigenous lands. These efforts reflected the broader British strategy of leveraging Native alliances to contest American influence across the western frontier.

At the same time, American leadership at Fort Pitt responded with renewed activity. With improved travel conditions, scouts and messengers moved deeper into the Ohio interior, gathering intelligence and attempting to preserve Native neutrality. Frontier militia units began informal musters, and coordination between Virginia and Pennsylvania authorities increased.

The American approach remained cautious but increasingly assertive, recognizing that the Ohio Country could become a critical theater if British-Native cooperation intensified.

For Native communities, April heightened an already complex dilemma. The Delaware continued to pursue neutrality through diplomacy, while the Shawnee faced growing internal debate over whether to resist American encroachment more actively. Seasonal hunting and planting cycles resumed, bringing greater mobility—and more frequent contact—between Native groups, traders, and scouts. These encounters, though often peaceful, carried the constant risk of escalation.

The environment itself played a role in shaping events. Swollen rivers allowed for expanded canoe (Goto 2)

## Coming to Myers Inn May 12 . . .

### Native American Code Talkers.



“Are you interested in uncovering a little-known piece of American history? Join us at 7:30 on Tuesday evening, May 12, for an enlightening and unforgettable journey into the history of the Native American Code Talkers.”

**Gregory Edmonds** Gregory L. Edmonds who shared the “Tuskegee Airmen” with us in September is returning to share his extensive knowledge of this remarkable chapter in American history and the incredible impact they had on the outcome of World War II. The program is admission free in the Myers Inn Museum at the corner of Columbus and Granville Streets.

## “Hitting the Kwai” by Craig Kodera *Art Print Displayed in the Meeting Room*

There was actually no bridge over the Kwae Noi River, but the classic David Lean movie was based on a true story. Some 16,000 Americans, Australians, British, and Dutch Prisoners of War perished during the construction of the infamous “Death Railway” that provided the Japanese with an overland supply route from Bangkok to Burma. The Bridges that conveyed the tracks to the shore along the River Kwae Noi were strategic targets that had to be destroyed by the United States Army Air Forces. This limited edition work of art by **Craig Kodera**, honors them all.

**Charles D. Mott**  
Flight Leader  
American Volunteer Group  
Prisoner of War, 1942-45

**Kyle O. Thompson**  
Private First Class  
U.S. Army  
131<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery  
Prisoner of War 1942-5

**Carl H. Fritiche**,  
First Lieutenant B 24 Pilot, 7<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group,  
*He was a former Big Walnut Historical Society member who gave a program about his roll in this historic event to our members many years ago.*

The print is on loan from Big Walnut Grad, Larry Edwards, who served during Vietnam and actually visited this site which he found very moving. He bought this art print which he is sharing with us.



## From the President's Desk

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travel, drying ground made overland movement easier. Information, rumors, and influence spread more rapidly than in the winter months. Central Ohio, once insulated by cold, now stood fully exposed as a contested space.

By the end of April 1776, the region had not yet erupted into sustained warfare, but the trajectory was clear. The Revolution had firmly extended into the Ohio Country, transforming it into a strategic zone. Alliances were being tested, positions hardened, and preparations quietly advanced. As spring deepened, central Ohio stood on the edge of a more volatile phase—its forests no longer merely observing the conflict, but increasingly becoming part of it.

### ***BWAHS Members Celebrate USA's 250<sup>th</sup> by Sharing Programs at Community Library, 44 Burrer Drive***

- "How Ohio Won the Civil War" with Mike Wise was on April 30, 6:30 pm;
  - "Double Victory: the Story of the Tuskegee Airmen" with Gregory Edmonds on May 28, 6:30 pm; and
  - "A Tour of Historic Sunbury" with Polly Horn on June 25, 6:30 pm.
- Registration requested. <https://www.yourcl.org/>  
Refreshments will be served. See you there!

## Red Edwards Estate

Big Walnut Area Historical was one of 6 recipients of Donald Edwards Estate. In addition to many items from Red's Museum, we are very grateful to receive over \$46,858 from "Red's Estate."

Our trustees have been working on a new display which will feature his items, Nestles, and the Sunbury News. We plan to open the display on Memorial day.

## What Do You Know About President James Arthur Garfield?

**By Polly Horn**

He was born in Moreland Hills, Ohio, November 19, 1831, elected President in March 1881, was shot July 2, 1881 and died September 1881 is buried in a tomb overlooking Lake Erie in Cleveland.

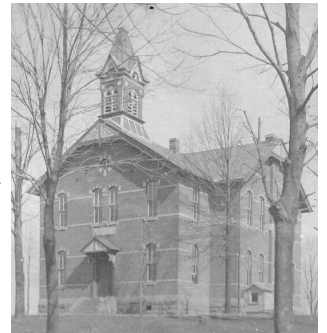
If you have Netflix, I strongly recommend the mini series "Death by Lightning" presently showing. Earlier this week my son recommended I watch it. I have since checked some of the facts which proved to be accurate. Elections were very different. Buntings, a surprise!

## Follow Us on Facebook

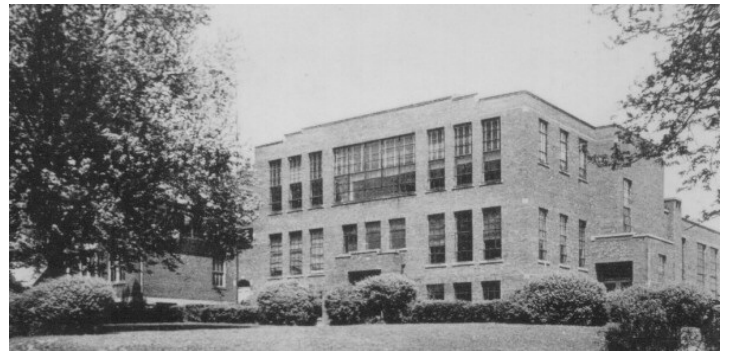
Guess what? We are back on Facebook but under a new name. You can search for Big Walnut Area Historical Society to follow our page or copy and paste this link when you are logged into your Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579544770157n> We hope you will join us and find out about all the fun events at the Myers Inn!

### **Sunbury School, after 2 Additions: Front Door Opens to Harrison Street**

After the school in the center of the square failed, Sunbury built a 2 story square building in 1878 on Harrison Street. In 1913 an addition was added to each side making it + shaped.



*Sunbury School - 1913 after 2 additions*



*A \$75,000 bond issue passed to add an addition to the school. In 1924-25 the new school opened just east of the first two buildings and connected with an enclosed walkway know as the "dogtrot."*

## BWAHS Joins Open House to Say Goodbye to Harrison Street School



**Chris Killeya & Damon Bower**



**Chris Killeya & Polly Horn**



**Doug Linnabary in Truck Pulling Wagon To Harrison Street School - April 16, 2026**  
Photos by Karen Snyder