



Old Tyme Chronicle

PUBLISHED BY BIG WALNUT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME XXVI

March 2026

From the President's Desk . . .

Central Ohio in March 1776: The Frontier Reawakens

by Mike Wise

March 1776 brought the long-awaited thaw to central Ohio, and with it a decisive shift in the frontier's relationship to the American Revolution. Where winter had imposed stillness, early spring restored movement. Rivers loosened, forest trails reopened, and the Ohio Country—long held in a season of waiting—began to stir with renewed diplomacy, travel, and apprehension. The conflict between Great Britain and the American colonies, distant in geography yet immediate in consequence, now pressed more actively upon the region.

British influence from Detroit reemerged as the season progressed. As snow receded, traders and emissaries again moved south along the Sandusky and Scioto routes, carrying goods, ammunition, and renewed appeals for Native alliance. Councils held in Wyandot and Shawnee towns emphasized a familiar warning: American rebels, if victorious, would unleash unrestrained settlement across the Ohio Valley. Yet March also revealed British constraints. The Crown's agents could promise support, but they could not prevent the steady trickle of colonial movement toward the frontier's edge.

At Fort Pitt, American authorities responded in kind. With travel now feasible, scouts ranged farther into the interior, observing village activity and British contact. Frontier militias drilled more regularly, and communication between Pennsylvania and Virginia outposts increased. The American objective remained twofold: maintain Native neutrality where possible and prepare for defense if neutrality failed. Settlers along the upper Ohio resumed seasonal movement—clearing land, repairing cabins, and reopening trade paths—actions that Native observers could interpret as encroachment regardless of the settlers' intent.

For Native nations in central Ohio, March 1776 confirmed that winter's fragile pause had ended. The Delaware still urged restraint, seeking to preserve peace through diplomacy. The Shawnee, however, faced mounting pressure. Reports of renewed American settlement and British encouragement alike sharpened debate within their communities. Spring hunting and travel increased encounters among Native parties, traders, and scouts, heightening the possibility of confrontation born less of policy than proximity. *Goto2.*

Coming April 14 . . .

Local Man Killed Chasing Rum Runner During Prohibition *Program by Mike Wise*

When a suspected Run Runner's car was seen approaching Delaware from north 23 the first Delaware County Motorcycle Patrolman, Rea Horlocker, was called for the chase. Mike Wise will bring his story to life for this program.

To Learn how we came to know this story go to page 2

Chad Neeper Earned 2025 Volunteer Award

At Volunteer Luncheon held on February 16th, Chad Neeper was named as the 2025 award winner.

Chad began his association with Polly Horn and Myers Inn when it was called the Hopkins House and he was in grade school. School visits usually had a program included in the Hopkins House or the Sunbury Municipal Building. As a young teenager he came to the Teen Center where the students ask for a dictionary and a set of encyclopedia and quiet time to do their homework before they played computer games like "Pong" on Texas Instrument computers, board games and ping-pong. Chad was a wizard at fixing the T.I. Computers. He volunteered around the library in young teenage years and even helpful as a high school senior by providing wiring input to the salesman who was setting up the computers throughout the new library. As an adult, he renewed his interest in local history as a Trustee in 2023 but unfortunately most of his clients needed him in off hours to keep their computers running so he had to drop off the Trustee Role. However he has continued to work with the Membership Committee. His more recent contributions include: maintaining monthly a membership roster listing active members and one listing renewals due the next month; changes in a brochure sent to business members; and design and production of post card mailer sent to neighbors at no charge and awareness of a Postal Service that can be used at minimal cost.

Chad is a graduate of Big Walnut and lives and works in Trenton Township. He owns a small company which installs and services library computer systems through out the state. You may not see him volunteering at the Inn, but his contributions mean a lot behind the scenes.



From the President's Desk

Continued from page 1

Environmental change itself accelerated tension. Melting snow exposed winter tracks and abandoned camps, reminders of unseen movement. Rising rivers carried canoes deeper into the interior. Forest paths, once muffled by snow, again carried sound and rumor. The Ohio Country was no longer insulated by cold; it had reopened as a contested space of passage.

By the end of March, central Ohio had not yet erupted into open warfare, but the region's role in the Revolution had unmistakably advanced. The frontier was again in motion—its peoples traveling, negotiating, and preparing with new urgency. The thaw had not merely changed the landscape; it had restored the conditions for conflict to spread. In March 1776, the Revolution stepped fully back onto the Ohio frontier, and the quiet woods began to feel the weight of its approach.

Learning About Rea Horlocker

By Polly Horn, Curator of the Myers Inn Museum

For years I have headed Red Cross Blood Drives in Condit Church. Due to illness I had to miss a drive which my brother, John Whitney, covered for me.

Following the drive he was returning my materials and gave me a bag with a scrapbook inside from blood donor Jim Gorsuch.

While I had not heard of Rea Horlocker, Maud Horlocker was one of my favorite librarians at Community Library when I was in elementary school. I knew Maud had been a school teacher in the Condit one room schoolhouse in Trenton Township. At the time, teachers were not allowed to be married so I assume she quit when she married Rea. Maud's brother Clarence married Opal Leak and they became the parents of Weldon Stockwell, who was the father of Kathleen who married James Gorsuch.

Many thanks to Jim and Kathy for donating the scrapbook to BWAHS. Many Thanks to Mike Wise for Making the story into a program.

Rum Runners were also caught in Sunbury during Prohibition. At the time, Mayor Stone lived in the house at the North East corner of Harrison Street and Columbus Street, the jail was in the lower floor of the Town Hall in the middle of the Square. The Rum Runners wanted to stay unknown so they insisted the Mayor be awoken and hold court. They were willing to pay for anything to remain anonymous. After much debate, Mayor Stone agreed to let them go if they would brick North Street and Morning Street to match the streets around the Square and never drive through Sunbury again. The deal was made.



Carson as Paul Revere

When Covid caused us to close our doors, Brent Carson came to the Myers and presented his program on Paul Revere which we filmed and is posted as a You-Tube on our website at <http://bigwalnuthistory.org>.

On April 18th 2025, Brent Carson traveled 146 miles through Delaware County to commemorate the historic ride of Paul Revere. The ten hour trip included 26 stops at predominately first responder locations - fire departments, EMS stations, and police stations.

On April 20, 2026 Brent will return to Powell to speak at the Powell Historical Society, 103 E. Olentangy Street in Powell. Dressed as Paul Revere he will discuss the events of the early struggles leading to independence and the individual role which made him an American hero. Sherry Carmichael ask Mike Wise to write about the historical event.

251 Years Ago: Paul Revere's Ride for the Ohio Country

By Mike Wise

On the night of April 18, 1775, Boston silversmith and patriot Paul Revere rode through the Massachusetts countryside warning colonial militia that British troops were marching toward Lexington and Concord. His alarm helped mobilize local forces and contributed directly to the first clashes of the American Revolutionary War on April 19.

Although hundreds of miles away, news of the fighting in Massachusetts traveled quickly along military and trade routes to frontier outposts such as Fort Pitt (modern Pittsburgh), the nearest major British stronghold to the lands that would later include central Ohio. In 1775, the Ohio Country remained largely Native American territory, contested by Britain and several Indigenous nations following the French and Indian War.

Revere's warning and the outbreak of open war heightened tensions across the frontier. British officials sought to strengthen alliances with Native nations and prevent American settlers from pushing westward. Colonial leaders, meanwhile, feared that the Ohio Country could become a staging ground for British-supported attacks on frontier settlements.

For the region that would later become central Ohio, the events set in motion by Revere's ride were decisive. Britain's defeat forced it to surrender the Ohio Country to the United States in the Treaty of Paris (1763). Only after that transfer of power could American settlement expand into the region, eventually leading to communities such as Delaware, Sunbury, and Columbus.