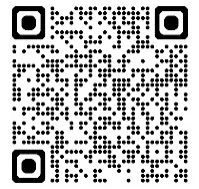


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From the President's Desk . . .

The Ohio Country: Logistical Nightmares, Diplomatic Chess, and the Battle for Neutrality

by Mike Wise

In May 1776, Central Ohio was a powder keg waiting for a spark. West of the Appalachian crest, the concept of a peaceful American interior did not exist. Instead, the Ohio Country was a fractured, blood-soaked borderland where British imperial power, insatiable colonial land hunger, and sovereign Native nations collided in a high-stakes game of survival. Long before the first shots of the Revolution echoed in the East, this region had been deeply scarred by the brutal fallout of Lord Dunmore's War. Now, as illegal squatters violated treaties and local panic escalated, the frontier stood on the razor's edge. The brewing war was not a distant political debate over taxes—it was an imminent, existential threat.

It was also an existential threat to the Delaware (Lenni Lenape), Shawnee, Wyandot, and Mingo nations. The conflict forced immediate, urgent ultimatums regarding ancestral lands, trade networks, shifting tribal alliances, and absolute cultural survival. Consequently, May 1776 became a period of suffocating suspense.

While delegates in Philadelphia debated independence, the repercussions raced westward. The frontier grew thick with British rumors, colonial diplomacy, clandestine military planning, and localized panic. The future of the Ohio Country would be shaped not only in Philadelphia, but also along rivers, trails, villages, trading posts, forts, and council fires across the western frontier.

The Lifeline of the Frontier: Military Logistics

Launching a military campaign into Central Ohio during this time was a logistical nightmare. The vast frontier lacked roads, requiring all movements to rely on winding river networks and narrow, mud-slicked Native trails like the "Great Trail." The Trail refers to a historic and sprawling network of Native American footpaths that connected the eastern woodlands of North America to the Great Lakes, the mid-Atlantic, and beyond.

Supply Hubs: Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) served as the primary American logistical hub, while the British operated from Fort Detroit. (Goto Page 2)

Doctors Aboard Navy Ships Bring Miracles to Many People

Les Mohler will share his medical missions aboard Navy Hospital Ships at the June 9th meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the Myers Inn Meeting Room.

Navy Hospital Ships are floating hospitals. Duties include providing on-site care for U.S. combatants as well as humanitarian care throughout the world. They provide rapid, flexible, and mobile medical and surgical services as needed – ashore or afloat.

Les was born in North Canton, graduated from Capital University (where he met his future wife, Rosalind Volk who was studying nursing) and Ohio State Medical School. He did an internship in Santa Barbara, California then returned to Columbus as General Surgeon at Mt. Carmel. From there he went to Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh to learn more about Plastic Surgery. In 1970, Les and two friends formed Ohio Plastic Surgery, Inc, in Columbus where he worked until retirement.

Les married Rosalind Volk, known as Rosie. Missions were a way of life for the couple. Rosie also shared her nursing skills and compassionate nature on many medical missions to the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Operation Smile formed in 1982 and Les joined the doctors on the ship in 1997.

The Mohlers housed 21 children from Ireland into their home under Children's Committee 10 which formed to try to help Irish teens learn they had more in common when housed one Catholic and one Non-Catholic in the same house and on Mohlers' houseboat.

Les and Rosie have 3 grown children and 11 grandchildren and have touched many more. Rosie served on the Big Walnut School Board, Meals on Wheels, and the Big Walnut Girl Scout Service Unit. Her father, Lloyd Volk was a Trustee for Community Library and shared rocks with any interested person. Les and Rosie brought the carver of the Johnny Appleseed Statue to Sunbury.

MANY THANKS TO LAURA SNODGRASS AND THE MUSIC AND MARCHING BOOSTERS FOR A WONDERFUL MARKET ON SUNBURY SQUARE MEMORIAL DAY!



From the President's Desk

Continued from page 1

- **The Powder Crisis:** Continental forces faced severe ammunition shortages, as black powder had to be hauled by packhorse trains over the rugged Appalachian Mountains.
- **The Tonnage Limit:** Armies relied on shallow-draft boats called “batteaux” to transport heavy provisions like flour and salted pork along the Ohio River.
- **Foraging Warfare:** Because supply lines were so fragile, troops were forced to live off the land, turning seasonal cornfields into strategic military targets.

The Battle for Peace: Native Diplomacy

While military officers calculated rations, American and British agents waged a fierce diplomatic war to secure Native alliances, or at least guarantee neutrality.

- **The Neutrality Strategy:** In May 1776, newly appointed Continental Indian Agent George Morgan arrived at Fort Pitt. Morgan desperately traveled the Muskingum and Scioto river valleys to advocate for peace. His immediate goal was to prevent a unified Native uprising by convincing tribes to stay out of the “family quarrel” between Britain and her colonies.
- **White Eyes' Gambit:** Morgan found an indispensable ally in White Eyes, the principal chief of the Ohio Delaware (Lenni Lenape), who used his immense political capital to counsel strict neutrality. White Eyes fiercely championed a policy of neutrality, envisioning a future where an independent Native state could exist alongside the Americans.
- **The British Counter:** Operating from Detroit, British agents used trade goods like blankets, mirrors, and steel axes to sway the Shawnee and Wyandot nations. They argued that a colonial victory would mean the unchecked theft of Native land.
- **The Wampum Trails:** Throughout May, messengers carried strings of wampum beads across Ohio. These belts served as official diplomatic documents for accepting or rejecting invitations to a massive peace council scheduled for later that year.

By the final days of May, the illusion of frontier isolation was completely shattered. Across the Muskingum and Scioto river valleys, the diplomatic wampum belts grew heavier, the British supply lines from Detroit grew stronger, and the peace engineered by George Morgan and White Eyes began to fracture under the weight of incoming rumors. In Philadelphia, the delegates were rapidly moving toward a formal declaration of independence. But out in the Ohio wilderness, the fuse was already lit. As the spring mud began to dry, the fragile pause of May was about to give way to a scorching, violent June.

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<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579544770157n>

Docent Needed for Cub Scout Visit

On Sunday, June 7, we will be welcoming a group of Cub Scouts as they complete a summertime fun event in Sunbury. At 2:00 they will begin at the Train Depot Museum. Next they will meet Polly at the Rosecrans Statue. They will then travel to the Myers Inn for a quick 30 minute tour before ending at the Johnny Appleseed Statue.

So far, Mike Wise, Polly Horn, and Karen Snyder are available to help. Having 1-2 more docents would be beneficial. The times needed would be approximately 2:30-3:30 to allow for arrival and departure.

Please let Karen know if you can help (614-425-1923 or snyders04@msn.com).

Plan Ahead for July 4th

July 4th will be a big celebration this year as we celebrate our 250 years as a nation. Big Walnut Civic Association will start with family **Movies on the Square** with the showing of “**Miracle**” at 6p.m. on June 6th on Sunbury Square. On July 3rd, they will show “**Captain America**” on Galena Square at 6 p.m.

Big Walnut Civic association is in charge of the events on July 4th beginning with the Parade in the morning. The Parade Route is the same as last year. **Volunteers for the parade are still needed to keep children safe along the parade route.** To volunteer go to their website at <https://www.bwcivic.org/>

Myers Inn Museum will be open following the parade until mid afternoon featuring our new exhibit.

At 6 p.m. activities will begin at the Old Big Walnut High School on Columbus Street and continue into the evening, followed by fireworks. Please be respectful and pick up your trash.

Watch for BWAHS Wagon in the Parade

Our volunteers have been working hard to get the ‘Covered Wagon’ parade worthy. It is one thing to have it sitting in the side yard but another to have it pulled by horses in the parade. The shaft needed to be lengthened to accommodate the horses. Wheels greased, etc.

The restored wagon was originally donated to BWAHS by Ken and Bev Herb, later adapted for a medical wagon for the Civil War Reenacting group since General Rosecrans designed one actually used in the Civil War.

Many thanks to the Sunbury-Galena Rotary Club for their generous donation to supply the horses to pull our wagon.