

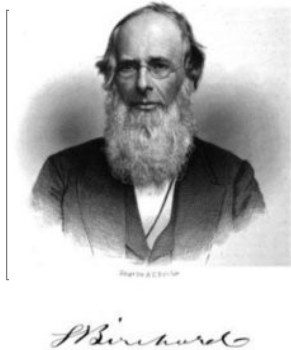


Delaware County Historian

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Meet Sardis Birchard

By Bill Rietz



Rutherford Birchard Hayes was born October 4, 1822, in Delaware, Ohio and was destined to become the 19th President of the United States. Young Rutherford had many disadvantages being raised in a small frontier village with limited educational opportunities. He had a strong determined mother in Sophia Birchard Hayes. His mother's bachelor brother,

Sardis Birchard took a special interest in Rutherford's opportunities to get a good education and be a support for the rest of his sister Sophia's family.

Sardis Birchard was born January 15, 1801, in Wilmington, Vermont. By the age of 12, both of his parents had died. Sardis lived with his sister, Sophia, and her husband, Rutherford Hayes, Sr. In 1817, Hayes Sr. moved the family to Delaware, Ohio. At the age of 21, Sardis took charge of his sister's family and estate after the death of her husband in 1822. The children included Fanny and Rutherford Birchard Hayes, who was born after his father's death. Sardis oversaw young Rutherford's education through his preparatory school years and while he was at Kenyon College and Harvard Law School.

Sardis became familiar with Fremont, Ohio (then called Lower Sandusky) in 1824, while delivering hogs in cities along the Sandusky River. He eventually established himself in Fremont and became a well-known merchant and banker. Sardis Birchard carried on an extensive trade with the Wyandot, Seneca, and Delaware tribes until they were moved west of the Mississippi River. His store became the largest in Ohio, west of Cleveland and north of Columbus.

Largely unsettled, Northwest Ohio's land could be purchased at the government rate of \$1.25 per acre. Birchard acquired landholdings in Sandusky, Wood, Lucas, Erie, and other Ohio counties. His wealth continued to grow through real estate sales and several business partnerships. On July 1, 1851,

Sardis and his partner, Judge Lucius B. Otis, opened the first bank in Fremont known as Birchard & Otis. After Judge Otis moved to Chicago, Illinois, the bank became Birchard, Miller & Co. which later merged into the First National Bank of Fremont. The bank was the second national bank organized in the state of Ohio.

Strong educational opportunities were at a premium on the early Ohio frontier. Sophia Hayes wanted Rutherford to have a good education. In 1835, Sardis suggested Rutherford attend a Methodist Preparatory School near Lower Sandusky, Ohio (now Fremont, Ohio). By 1837, Sardis was encouraging Rutherford to leave Ohio and attend Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Sophia was resistant to her 15-year-old son attending a school so far from home. The next year, 16-year-old Rutherford was enrolled in Kenyon College, located in Gambier, Ohio. Rutherford excelled at his college work and by 1842 had earned his degree. Sardis was then instrumental in assisting Rutherford in attending and graduating from Harvard. Sardis said in his writings that "the money spent on his (Rutherford's) education would be money well laid out". On his daily trips to his business,

Birchard admired the great trees and deep woods of the property that he would later name Spiegel Grove. Its clear standing pools of water reflecting like mirrors reminded him of the German fairy tales of his youth. He named the land Spiegel Grove. "Spiegel" is the German word for mirror. He selected the property as the site of a home for his nephew and Rutherford's family, with whom he planned to spend his final years. Birchard began building the brick home in 1859.
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Military and political obligations prevented Hayes from residing there until 1873. However, several of the Hayes children, Birchard A. Hayes and Webb C. Hayes, spent considerable time living with their Uncle Sardis in Fremont.

Today, Spiegel Grove is the 25-acre estate that includes the Hayes Home and Museum and Library building. In 1916, the estate held the first presidential library in the United States.

Sardis was generous to his hometown of Fremont. He made several public and private donations, including to the Home Missionary Society, the Ladies Relief Society, the First Presbyterian Church building fund, and a public library endowment. Today, the library in Fremont is known as the Birchard public library. In addition to the estimated \$50,000 monetary donation for the library, Birchard purchased the historic Fort Stephenson land as a site for the building. Sardis also donated two public parks to the city.

Before his death, he appointed his nephew, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Anson H. Miller trustees of the real estate for his

future library. Sardis Birchard died January 21, 1874, in Fremont, Ohio. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery of Fremont. President Rutherford B. Hayes inherited his uncle's business and real estate holdings. After his administration, President Rutherford and Lucy Hayes made Spiegel Grove their permanent home. That grove of trees that Sardis Birchard was attracted to many years before was a final legacy to the Hayes family. Spiegel Grove became the center of the Hayes family life and Americans can still walk the grounds and the Hayes home today.



Pictured above - Spiegel Grove



Pictured below - The Birchard Public Library

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Contributions of original historical research concerning Delaware County, Ohio, are welcome!
Please send contributions to the attention of the Newsletter Editor at the above address.



Director's Column

By Donna Meyer



Celebrating Our Roots



This hangs on my wall

"A people without the knowledge of their history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots." —Marcus Garvey

The United States celebrates October as National Family History Month and for good reason. Knowing, recording, preserving, and sharing our family histories can provide countless benefits to individuals, families, and entire societies. Family history is more than family trees—it can give us a stronger understanding of who we are and motivate us to deepen our roots for generations to come. Learning about our ancestors can be a fun family experience and help us understand the challenges our ancestors faced during their lives. My mother used to say that in every family tree, there is at least one horse thief and one minister. I have found plenty of ministers but no horse thief, yet, (though I doubt that would have been noted in the records.)

I am interested in more than my ancestors names and when they lived. I want to learn why they came from Scotland, England, or Germany. The hardships they faced after they arrived or experienced during the journey. I want to know more about an ancestor who fought in the 121st OVI during the Civil War, fought beside a fellow Delaware Countian who was killed during the siege of Atlanta and came back home to marry his widow and raised her two young boys, along with many more children, including my great-grandmother. Having my DNA analyzed has even uncovered unknown cousins here in Delaware County! It's so exciting to learn

about local connections. I am curious to learn more about my 3% Scandinavian, my 1% Italian or my 1% Sub-Saharan African DNA. Who were these people?

Knowing our family history builds resilience. In learning about our ancestors' lives, we can see patterns of overcoming failures and surviving hard times. As a genealogy show addict, I often see how moved the guests are when they are shown their immigrant ancestors' passenger list to discover that their forefathers came to America with \$6 in their pocket. We all need connection and a sense of belonging. The more we discover about our past, the greater the relationship we feel with our ancestors. Whether you are 8th generation Delaware Countian, or the 1st generation; whether you are learning about your forebearers or Delaware County's earliest settlers (or maybe both), the Delaware County Historical Society offers a variety of interesting and educational opportunities for everyone.

One of our recent programs, held in August, featured a cemetery driving tour followed by events held at the Barn at Stratford, including reenactors who portrayed early pioneers and interesting characters. Past programs we have held include a house history workshop, Oak Grove Cemetery Walk, Underground Railway sites, and a pioneer woman's perspective of the early Ohio frontier. Our programs which are held at the Barn at Stratford, have audience interactions including those who tell about their early restaurant job, or memories of the Blizzard of 1978, all part of their own history.

We have captured numerous oral histories, and many have been transcribed, with the subjects being long time county residents, harness racing, and our newest project, "Growing up Black in Delaware". These are among our most treasured ever-expanding collections as we can learn so much from them. We from encourage people to record their own family histories, whether that includes videotaping an oral history or creating a journal for future generations to read, the story of our past is a key to understanding our family roots.

Join us as we celebrate our 75th Anniversary in November at our Annual Meeting. Amazing to think about how far we have come!

Donna

E.J. Fitchhorn's Influence in Delaware

By Dana Kolesar



Elva Joseph Fitchhorn, known as Fitch or Joe to friends and family, was born in Mederville, Indiana, in 1896. From the beginning, he knew he wanted to pursue a career in music. His aspirations took him all over America, including Delaware, Ohio, where much of his career took place.

As a graduate of Gray's Conservatory of Music and the VanderCook College of Music in Chicago, Fitchhorn had the credentials to become a notable musician. In 1917, the John Phillip Sousa's band came into town searching for a French horn player. Being one of the most prestigious bands to perform in, Fitchhorn desperately wanted to join. However, he was quite young, and performing jobs were hard to find, especially if one had limited experience. He auditioned and won the position. It ended up being one of the best career decisions he had made. Not only was it an incredible travel opportunity, but it also boosted his credibility as a musician.

He remained with that orchestra until World War I. Fitchhorn did not meet the physical requirements to become a soldier, but he was able to secure a position as the bandmaster of the 317th field artillery from 1918 to 1919. During that year, he joined a team going into German territory to retrieve certain photographic chemicals to develop film taken from German soldiers. While the mission was successful, a plane he was in made a bad landing. As a result of the incident, Fitchhorn suffered hearing loss. He was told that his musical career could not continue unless his hearing returned.

Because of this setback, Fitchhorn decided to switch to a career in photography after the war. He went to Indiana University for photography and then opened a portrait studio in Kenton, Ohio. In the meantime, he met a woman named Gladys Royer and married her in 1920.

Soon after, the couple moved to Mt. Gilead, and Fitchhorn received an operation to restore his hearing so he could again return to music. He then served as the band director of Mt. Gilead schools from 1926 to 1928. During this time, he invented the Saxette musical instrument. Made of brass, this clarinet-shaped instrument was Fitchhorn's way of helping young students become musicians. Despite the benefits of the Saxette, the invention did not catch on, so Fitchhorn began to pursue other ideas.

After Mt. Gilead, Fitchhorn moved to Delaware, where he became the elementary school band director in 1929. However,

in 1932, the high school band director left the district, so Fitchhorn became the official band director of all city schools. His high school band quickly became critically acclaimed. It was considered to be the best band out of all Class B schools and won more awards and honors than any other high school band in America.



Fitchhorn continued to invent instruments, undeterred by the original Saxette's failure. He debuted his new song flute in 1938. The song flute was a result of seven years of hard work. Made out of plastic, this flute was designed to help kids learn to read music without having to worry about pitch or tone. Built in the key of C, the flute allowed kids to switch between notes easily in comparison to other instruments.

The song flute became a huge success. Elementary schools all over the state used Fitchhorn's invention to enhance their music programs. Children became more invested in



music. Many of Fitchhorn's students went on to become successful musicians. In every account, his song flute revolutionized music education. Later he served as educational director for C.G. Conn Ltd. who manufactured the song flute. He was rated as one of the 10 outstanding band masters in the United States and he was regarded as the "father of the pre-band instruments".

Fitchhorn left the Delaware County music program in 1958. Sadly, his wife passed away shortly thereafter. After her death, Fitchhorn moved around the country. First to Florida, then to Arizona, and finally, to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where he could live close to his son. He passed away in 1985 at the age of 89. His daughter, Delaware resident, Dorothy Jean (Fitchhorn) Florence, passed away in 2019 at the age of 98.

E. J. Fitchhorn is one of the biggest names in musical education. He had a long and successful career and won many awards, but more importantly, he influenced hundreds of students. He cultivated meaningful connections between children and music. For some students, music was a hobby; for others, it became a career. No matter how his students chose to pursue music after high school, it is undeniable that Fitchhorn helped kids become well-rounded individuals. Because of his contributions, music continues to transform students into the best version of themselves.

Celebrating his 200th Birthday - R.B. Hayes Day

By Bill Rietz, Chair of the R. B. Hayes Heritage Committee



October 4, 2022, will mark the bicentennial birthdate of Delaware's own Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th President of the United States. Only 45 communities in the country can claim that someone born in their town went on to become President. To commemorate this

once-in-a-lifetime occasion, the R.B. Hayes Heritage Committee is planning a day-long celebration.

Formed in 2018, the R.B. Hayes Heritage Committee's mission is to bring appropriate recognition to and educate the community about Delaware's native son, Rutherford B. Hayes. With the help of a generous community, the committee has already erected a 7' bronze statue and interpretive panel with a timeline of Hayes' life in the plaza at the corner of William and Sandusky Streets. At Hayes High School, a granite pedestal holding a bronze bust of Hayes now sits in the front entrance rotunda. Additionally, an upgraded memorial sign with improved landscaping marks the site of Hayes' birth at 17 East William Street in Delaware.

To further its educational mission, the R.B. Hayes Heritage committee will celebrate R.B. Hayes Day on October 4. This year's bicentennial celebration, presented by Greif Inc., will include a tribute ceremony starting at 8:30 a.m. on the plaza behind the statue. At noon, Ohio Wesleyan University will host a Hayes Day activity in Merrick Hall spotlighting the connection between Paraguay and President

Hayes. The Delaware City Schools will have grade-oriented programs portraying the qualities of Hayes and the events that shaped his work in Ohio and national government. The day will conclude with a catered dinner and program at Rutherford B. Hayes High School, beginning at 6 p.m. All proceeds from the event will be used to establish a Rutherford B. Hayes Scholarship to be awarded annually to a deserving Hayes graduate beginning in 2023.

Tickets are \$50 per person and may be reserved at Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celebrate-r-b-hayes-200th-birthday-on-october-4-tickets-391730996957>

All are welcome to participate in any or all planned activities. The Ohio Legislature, County Commissioners and Delaware City Council are all proclaiming this date as R.B. Hayes Day. Don't miss the opportunity to be part of a historic day in Delaware County.

The Delaware County Historical Society is proud to sponsor the R. B. Hayes activities. Additional sponsors include Willow Brook Christian Communities, First Presbyterian Church, Delaware City Schools, Mays Consulting, Manos Martin & Pergram Attorneys at Law, Ohio Wesleyan University, Triad Architects, Shemastore.com, Restoration Brew Worx, Jack and Mary Hilborn, All Occasions Catering, the Bob Rietz Family, The City of Delaware, Bill and Kay Rietz, Kiwanis Club of Delaware County, J. Gumbos, First Commonwealth Bank, William Street UMC, Ron Sabatino and Family, Dr Yvette M. Ertle, Dr. David Smith and Richard M. Smith.

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A “Fair Business”: R.B. Powers Company

By Joe Dwenger, DCHS Curriculum Committee

On a picturesque street located in the heart of Ashley, Ohio, there is a building that is home to a unique and historic business, R. B. Powers and Company. This company is not just a ribbons and trophy company but a pioneer partner of the Jr. Fair, the sole award manufacturer for the Little Brown Jug and an Ashley community champion.

It all started in 1907 when Rollin Powers, an entrepreneur and cobbler by trade, opened a storefront in Ashley, Ohio. In addition to offering shoe repair, Powers made and sold badges and buttons. He maintained his normal shop offerings for 15 years until an opportunity fell on his doorstep. The Ashley Jr. Fair needed a supplier for ribbon awards.

The Ashley Jr. Fair was an idea born out of necessity. In 1923, its parent, The Ashley Fair Association, was experiencing financial difficulties. As a possible remedy, the addition of a separate junior fair competition was initiated. This separate junior fair competition allowed children 18 and under to participate in their own fair categories simultaneously with the senior fair. The young competitors even received their own monetary premiums. By 1925, participants in the Jr. Fair competitions elected officers and established the first Ashley Junior Fair.

Other Ohio fairs liked the idea of the Ashley Junior Fair so much that they started their own junior fairs. During the next decade, the Junior Fair Movement spread throughout Ohio and much of the United States. Many of those fairs' ribbons were supplied by R.B. Powers Company. Eventually, the business even became known as “The R.B. Powers Co., Manufactures of Fair Supplies”.

Rollin Powers was a staunch supporter of the Ashley community and of the Ashley Junior Fair. Powers hired workers from around the Ashley area to sew and make ribbon awards. Demand for ribbons was strong enough to enable the company to move to its current headquarters, the old Ashley West School Building, in 1945. Due to overwhelming interest, the company soon started to make a myriad of awards including plaques, trophies, glasses, jugs, and metal badges in addition to ribbons.

Powers was a kind man who cared about his employees. When his wife fell ill in 1942, he hired a nurse by the name of Ethel Tankovich to care for her. He became acquainted with the nurse's husband, Tony Tankovich and convinced him to move his family to Ashley to join the R.B. Powers Company. During this time, a close relationship developed between Mr. and Mrs. Powers and the Tankovich family. The relationship was so strong that Tony changed the family name to Powers,

upon Rollin Powers' death in 1944, and Tony (Tankovich) Powers became the head of the company.

The dedicated workers of R.B. Powers Company created superior quality ribbons that garnered the attention of many, outside of Fair competitions. Soon the company was producing ribbons and awards for animal shows, parades, schools, sports, and numerous other organizations and groups throughout the United States and the World.

In 1946, the Delaware County Fair hosted the first “Little Brown Jug”, an event for 3-year-old pacers on the Grand Circuit of Harness Racing. At the time, R. B. Powers Company supplied ribbons for the Delaware County Fair, but the trophy for the Little Brown Jug winner, a silver punch bowl, was supplied by a company in Columbus, Ohio.

With Ashley's neighboring city of Delaware hosting the Delaware County Fair and, subsequently, The Little Brown Jug, participation and revenue for the Ashley Independent Fair declined. The Ashley Independent Fair ceased to exist, but R. B. Powers Company did not miss the Ashley Fair business for long. Tony Powers strategically purchased the company that made the awards for the Little Brown Jug. This enabled the company to provide awards, ribbons, and trophies for both the Little Brown Jug and the Delaware County Fair.

Tony Powers oversaw R.B. Powers Company until 1976 when his son, Ed Powers, took the helm. Ed has successfully managed the company for 46 years. Like Rollins, and his father, Ed tries to hire people from the Ashley area. The factory employs 20 to sometimes 50 people who are trained on the job. Many students have earned money for college by working at the factory.

One of the perks of remaining in the Ashley area and supporting the community is having the honor of presenting the trophy to the winner of The Little Brown Jug. The award is currently an emblazoned brown jug mounted on a wooden base. Ed Powers has presented the award to the winner of



Pictured above - Ashley West High School

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Highlights of Cultural Communities: Early Settlers and American Indians 1770-1850

By Nancy Fleming, Francine Butler, and Cindy Kerr



**Curriculum Support
Committee Chair,
Karen Hildebrand**



**Program Narrator,
Nancy Baxter**

On a crisp day in November 2019, four members of the Curriculum Support Group met at the Meeker Homestead Museum to discuss creating a program related to early Delaware County. The name, “*Cultural Communities of Delaware County: Early Settlers and American Indians*,” was conceived by committee member, Watson Walker Jr., and it was decided to develop a program that reflected the multi-cultural influences brought with the pioneers to the early Delaware settlement. The focus was for an in-person program that educated and informed adults, especially senior citizens and students, grades 5-12, about the cultures that lived in Delaware, Ohio during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Our team was composed of current and retired educators, curriculum specialists, librarians, and a representative from the clergy. It was a quick leap to take our topics and refine and embellish them for adults. We continued researching early Americans and American Indians for another year, adding a vignette about “women,” “Africa, Ohio,” and, “The Crawford Band.” We read books, newspapers, journals, public records, and first-person accounts published during the time our county’s ancestors lived. Eleven vignettes were written with the purpose of sharing some of our county ancestor’s joys, trials, and relationships with one another.

More than half of the vignettes have to do with the interactions between early settlers and the Lenni Lenape, or Delaware People. Nekole Alligood, an American Indian consultant from the Ohio History Connection, was instrumental in guiding the traditions, language, dance, and storytelling related to American Indians living in Ohio at the turn of the 19th century. Two of our vignettes display the success of African Americans in Delaware County, guided by our historian, Watson Walker Jr. Reenactors researched period clothing and purchased or made a costume appropriate for their character. Some individuals chose props and a backdrop to help transport the audience back in time. After months of practice on ZOOM and in person, the

reenactors particularly enjoyed letting loose as they moved and made music under the direction of Francine Butler’s song and dance inspired by Lenni Lenape traditions. When presented in person, participants will have an opportunity to stand, dance, and play American Indian musical instruments.

At the opening, audience members are asked to envision living in the Ohio country in the late 1700s. Food, clean water, lumber for heating and cooking could all be in short supply depending upon the weather. Several American Indian tribes lived in the area along with the new European settlers. In general, the diverse people tolerated and helped one another survive but there were disputes.

Joe Dwenger brought the Reverend James B. Finley to life. Finley was a Methodist Episcopal Church theologian and author. He was an activist for prison reform, temperance, and government policies dealing with American Indians. Joe dramatically speaks from Finley’s journal account of the lifestyles, food, housing, and traditions of the Wyandotte Indians before the U.S. Government’s Indian Removal Act of 1830. The Wyandotte women tapped maple trees for maple sugar. The men collected bear, fried the meat, preserved it in deerskin bags and used the oil in the bear intestines as a high-energy drink. Imagine that meal. Um-um good!



**Joe Dwenger as
Rev. Finley**

Sounds of a jazzy clarinet introduce the audience to Benjamin Franklin Thomas, reenacted by Mark Butler (pictured right). Thomas was born in 1847 in Madison County, Ohio. Although not born a slave, he and other African Americans in Ohio, were required to pay a fee of twelve ½ cents to the County Clerk to receive a “Certificate of Freedom.”

Benjamin worked his way up to be the foreman of a local wagon and carriage repair shop. Eventually, he purchased the shop and as owner, renamed it “The B.F. Thomas Wagon and Carriage Repair Shop” in Delaware. Thomas was multi-talented. Did you know that Delaware was home to the best harmonious band in Ohio? Started by Stewart Crawford and Benjamin Thomas, the Crawford Band



entertained both black and white patrons in social dance halls, as well as political conventions.

Nancy Fleming (*pictured right*) interprets Mrs. Dolly Byxbe, the wife of Moses Byxbe, founder of Berkshire (1804) and co-founder of Delaware (1808) in Delaware County. In the fall of 1812, the Lenape Indians had to surrender their guns, ammunition, and forty-three cabins to American soldiers. The Lenape were then forced on the long march from their homes to an area in northwest Ohio. Mrs. Byxbe's dramatically tells of her heart-wrenching, silent interaction with an elderly Lenni Lenape woman during the forced march. Byxbe quietly recognized the misery of the Indians and how American soldiers were just beginning their oppression of Ohio's indigenous people.

Ray Myers (*pictured below right*) concludes the program with the "Cultural Communities Artifact Cart." Artifacts include numerous points, arrowheads, animal skins, a clay pipe, and other items mostly found on a local county farm. Ray brings that historical period to life as he describes numerous 18th-19th century objects and their uses.

This program, based on the cultural communities of Delaware County, Ohio, was nominated for an Ohio Local History Alliance Award. The Alliance bestowed their 2021 Award for Public Programming to the Delaware County Historical Society - "Cultural Communities of Delaware County: Early Settlers and American Indians 1770 – 1850" program at the annual OLHA meeting.



CAST	CREW
Karen Hildebrand Nancy Baxter Brent Carson Roxann Newton, Joe Dwenger Mark Butler Chris Gherman DJ Sanfillipo Nancy Fleming Francine Butler Ray Myers	Program Directors: Nancy Fleming and Francine Butler Local Historian & Accessibilities Consultant: Watson Walker Jr. Videographers: Diane Williams and Brad Cowan Project Leader: Susan Logan American Indian Consultant: Nekole Alligood Project Manager: Cindy Kerr

A "Fair Business": R.B. Powers Company

(continued from page 6)

The Little Brown Jug every year since he became the manager of the company. His picture and the company's awards are forever a part of the history and lore of the race.

Throughout his tenure at the company, Ed has helped the business progress while keeping true to the traditions and standards set by his predecessors. He has a background in business and computer processing which has helped him integrate computer technology for engraving and design. However, the company has not strayed far from the original ribbon and rosette making process. The rich, brightly colored

rosettes for which the company is best known are still created today in part by using the old Singer sewing machines with computer programs, as well as the handcrafted skills of the factory's employees.

A while ago, Ed Powers made the decision to retire. He has put the company up for sale with the hopes of finding a buyer for the factory who will keep the dedicated Ashley workers and maintain the traditions and standards set by the prior generations.

R.B. Powers Company is not just a "Fair Business" but a business with a heart and soul, exhibited by its owner and workers. Its legacy lives on in the community and the millions of people who have been thrilled to receive an R.B. Powers ribbon or award.

John McElroy - Early Wagon Builder

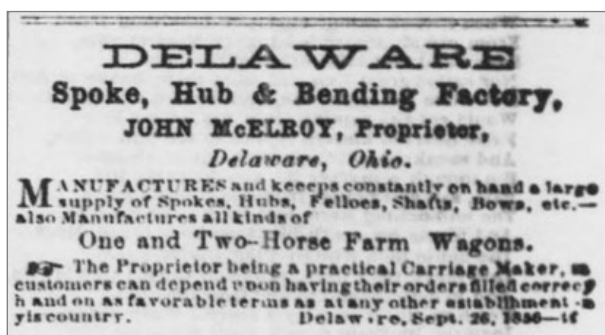
By Steve Schmitt

John McElroy was an Irish immigrant, born about 1812. He arrived in New York in 1833 on the ship Dunlop that departed Belfast, Northern Ireland. The 1875 Illustrated Historical Atlas of Delaware County Ohio describes a Wagon Factory, John McElroy & Son, which began in 1835, "employs 20 hands with capacity of 10 wagons/week," and with \$20K in capital. The McElroy home and shop were located at the northwest corner of West William and Washington Streets.

John's father and brother were both active in Delaware. His father, Rev. James K. McElroy, was a rector of the St. Peters Episcopal Church in 1860. He died in 1872. In 1860, John's brother Charles Henry McElroy was working as Delaware City Engineer, an attorney, and an insurance agent. Charles married Caroline Murray in 1858, after which he served in the 20th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. In the 1880 census, they are listed as living at 64 Franklin Street and having six children at home. Charles passed in 1904 and Caroline passed in 1883. All are buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.

John married Maria Gilbert, but the date is uncertain. In the 1850 census they are both 38, he is a carriage maker and they have four children: Irwin (or Earvin), Amelzer, Milo, and Mary. In 1836 they purchased in-lot 55 (96 West William St) for their home. The shop was located next door on in-lot 56 on the corner. Over the years, they rented, bought or sold parts of in-lot 56 until, eventually, Milo's wife, Helen White McElroy, purchased it from the estate in 1898.

The house that John and Maria lived in must have been fairly large. In addition to their children, the census records indicate that they had several employees and others boarding with them. In 1850, there were two carriage makers, three blacksmiths, and one trimmer boarding. In 1860, there was an engineer, a painter, and a turner boarding. The boarders were generally in their early 20's. It is not known if the building, currently at 96 W. William Street is the original house.



The advertisement above was placed in the Delaware Gazette on December 1, 1859.

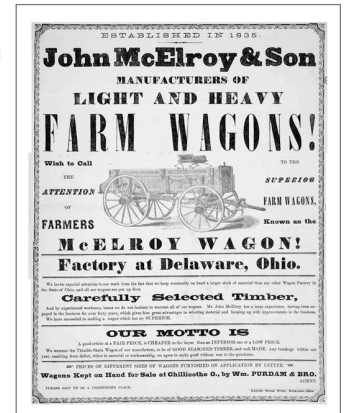
McElroy & Son won several prizes for their wagons at both the Ohio State Fair and the Delaware County Fair as reported in the Delaware Gazette from 1865 to 1870. The prizes that were named indicate McElroy made a variety of wagons, including buckboards and spring wagons, both one- and two-horse configurations, as well as agricultural equipment.

There was competition in Delaware from firms such as Daniel Stimmel, Evan & Carnahan, and James C. Evans, all of which won various prizes at the fairs.

The flyer pictured above was found on the Library of Congress website. Based on the years of experience (40 cited), and the founding in 1835, this flyer is likely from about 1875. This wagon is a buckboard as the only springs are under the seat and there no springs on the axles.

The 1880 census listed John as a 68-year old wagon manufacturer living on West William Street with wife Maria and children Milo and Stella Adams. Around 1882, production of wagons at the McElroy & Sons shop appears to have ended. The Columbus Dispatch reported on August 14, 1882 that a building recently vacated by the McElroy Wagon Company had caught on fire. The fire was extinguished with little damage. In 1882, a limited partnership, Doty, Chapman, and Co. was formed to manufacture wagons, particularly the McElroy wagon. John McElroy's son, Amelzer, was an investor along with other notable Delaware citizens, such as Hiram Perkins, John Van Deman and Benjamin Franklin Thomas.

The partnership purchased the James C. Evans foundry site on E. William St. for wagon production. There were reports in the Delaware Gazette of investments in equipment and an extended product line. Also accidents at the new works were reported. Amelzer sold his shares in 1883. By 1888, the company was out of business. The 1908 History of Delaware County stated the company was formed to capitalize on the reputation of the John McElroy's wagon business for superior workmanship and first-class materials. It goes on to say the partnership, in their eagerness for large and quick profits, used inferior and improperly seasoned lumber and cheap labor.



(continued - page 11)

Strategic Planning Project at the DCHS

By Karen Cowan, Delaware County Historical Society Board Development Chair

There is a saying that "if you don't know where you are going, it does not matter how you get there." The board of the Delaware County Historical Society took that to heart and embarked on a strategic planning process that has taken several months to complete.

Jackie Barton of Birchwood Planning Group, was chosen to lead the strategic planning committee, made up of the Board and key volunteers through the process. Jackie had extensive experience in strategic planning and historical societies as she worked with the Ohio History Connection and with her own consulting business.

The process was divided into several components:

- Review, revise our vision, mission, values
- Capture information from the public
- Set strategic initiatives for the organization
- Decide on action plans to accomplish the initiatives

After much discussion, the Strategic Planning Committee agreed and the Board approved a new Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and organizational Core Values.

OUR VISION

A community that values its history as it plans its future.

OUR MISSION

To be a trusted resource to connect the diverse stories and fabric of the past to the people of today and tomorrow through preservation, education, and engagement.

OUR CORE VALUES

- **We delight in discovery.** Curiosity about the past illuminates our present and helps us prepare to navigate tomorrow.
- **We welcome you.** We seek to provide hospitable spaces for all to gather, engage, learn, and build community. We embrace a diversity of perspectives in our storytelling and within our organization.
- **We get things done.** We are committed to our communities and tackle the responsibility of preserving and interpreting our unfolding history with energy.
- **We collaborate.** We are enthusiastically committed to the cultural and geographic communities that were and are in Delaware County and embrace working alongside them to preserve, understand, and share the region's historic people, events, and objects.
- **We are stewards.** We promote the preservation of places, artifacts, stories, and memories.

The Vision, Mission, and Core Values are all new and are meant to inspire not only our members and volunteers but also Delaware County citizens. We want to be relevant in the lives of people across Delaware County.

The group has decided on three strategic initiatives that will guide their work for the next several years:

- Community Engagement
- Stewardship
- Organizational Sustainability

These three strategic initiatives have resulted in several action steps that are being shared with the volunteer leaders and volunteers to help them plan their goals and objectives for the next several years.

"It was not an easy process," stated Karen Cowan, a member of the Strategic Planning Committee, "but the strategic plan along with the Ohio History Connection Needs Assessment that we had done last year will give us not only a 'place to go' but the road map to get there."

This project was funded, in part, by the Ohio Arts Council.



John McElroy - Early Wagon Builder

continued from page 10

Wagons that could do heavy work were an economic necessity in a agrarian society and for transportation for light manufacturing. In addition, it was a boon for the inevitably necessary replacement parts to be available for commerce. Supply chain was an issue in the 1800's.

City directories indicate that here were still manufacturers of wagons in Delaware into the early 1900's even as gasoline powered vehicles began to eclipse the age of the horse drawn wagon.

John McElroy passed in 1889 and Maria in 1895. Amelzer McElroy passed in 1894. All are buried at Oak Grove Cemetery. The McElroy & Son shop site on West William Street eventually became a Shell auto service station, owned by Earl Quillen. It's currently a Domino's Pizza shop.

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Our work would not be possible without your support.

Visit Our Museums & Discover History

Nash House Museum

157 East William Street, Delaware, Ohio

This beautiful brick Italianate house was built in 1878 and was originally owned by Thomas and Mina Slattery who resided here with their three young children. In 1885, the home was acquired by William Henry and Emiline Nash.

The Nash family had five children. When Henry and Emiline died, the home passed to son Eugene and his wife Lois. They had one child, Pauline, and the residence remained in the Nash family for 70 years. In 1954, Pauline Nash donated the house to the DCHS.

This lovely seven room home displays Victorian furnishings and accessories that are true to the period, helping visitors experience life during this era.

Visit us and step back into time at the Nash House! *Open most Sundays from 2:00 - 5:00 PM; Wednesdays from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM and 1:00 - 5:00 PM. Located next to the Cryder Research Library.*

Meeker Homestead Museum

2690 Stratford Road, Delaware, Ohio

This federal style home, built in 1817 and expanded in 1823 has been transformed into an educational museum showcasing the early settlement of Ohio. It contains nine exhibit spaces, three of which are beautiful period rooms that allow visitors to see how people lived in the early 1800s.

The latest exhibit, titled *Journey to Delaware County*, explores the lives of the people who settled in Delaware County, during the early 1800s. You will, through interactive displays, come to understand why these people migrated to this new area, which at that time was called the "West."

Other exhibits include a large spinning exhibit, a rare pre-Civil War era loom, an American Indian Gallery of artifacts, a display of chairs from the award-winning historic Delaware Chair Company, information on the once vibrant mill town that occupied the Stratford area, and the early interurban transportation (CD&M) that made its debut in 1892.

The Meeker Museum is open on the first Sunday of each month from 1:00 - 4:00 PM.

The Millworker Cottage

2571 Stratford Road, Delaware, Ohio

In 1838, a paper mill in Stratford was established by Hosea Williams and Caleb Howard. Houses were built for the workers beginning in 1850, and a thriving mill town was created.

As you explore this stone cottage, which has been restored as a mid 1800's museum, you will experience the lives of the millworkers who lived and labored here.

Located at the intersection of Meeker Way and Stratford Road. Open during Meeker Museum hours.

The Historic Jail & Sheriff's Residence

*20 West Central Avenue, Delaware, Ohio
(behind the historic courthouse)*

Constructed in 1878 by David Gibbs of Toledo, the old Historic Jail and Sheriff's Residence was in use until 1988 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. This beautiful, primarily Italianate structure features some Gothic Revival and Second Empire details. The 8500 square foot building contains sixteen cells that were used for men and two additional cells for women.

As part of the prison reform movement, of which Rutherford B. Hayes championed, this building served as the sheriff's home. The sheriff's wife, known as the "Matron", cooked meals for the inmates.

This newest museum is being furnished as a late 1800's residence would have been, with cells that have not been modified.

Special exhibit now open! Visit us every First Friday from 6:00 - 8:00 PM through November.

Museum admittance is free. Donations are encouraged.

Upcoming Events

Delaware County Fair

Visit us in the Merchants Building as we celebrate our earliest settlers in our exhibit, *Journey to Delaware County*.

Delaware County Historical Society Annual Meeting: Celebrating our 75th Anniversary

Held on Thursday, November 17 at 7pm at The Barn at Stratford. *This event is open to the public and all members will receive an invitation.*

Holiday Open Houses

- Nash House Museum and the Cryder Research Library - Sunday, December 4 from 3:00 - 6:00 PM
- Meeker Homestead Museum - Sunday, December 11 from 3:00 - 6:00 PM

Visit ohiohistory.org for more information or contact Donna Meyer at 740.369.3831 (ext. 3).



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The Nash House * Cryder Research Library
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