



Delaware County Historian

VOLUME 70, ISSUE 1
Fall 2025

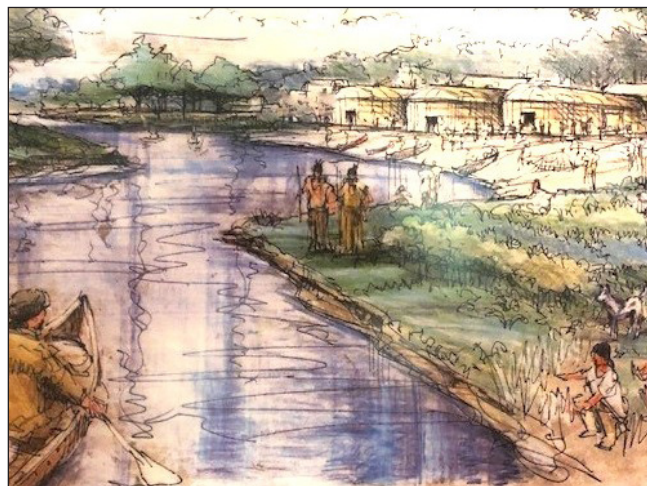
“Pluggy’s Town”— A Village of Resistance

By Ronan Thompson, DCHS Volunteer

The Delaware County Historical Society, in partnership with Delaware County, is organizing many America 250 – OH activities in our county. Though there was no “official” Delaware County in 1776, there were many people living here. This article provides information about our native population who lived on the banks of the Olentangy River in what is now the City of Delaware.

Today, Mingo Park offers Delaware citizens a place to gather and enjoy the Olentangy River. You can wade into the shallows and cast your fishing line, play a game of soccer or practice your skateboarding skills under the shade of the oaks and black walnuts, or simply enjoy the natural beauty of the shale cliffs and great blue herons that glide above the water. In the 1770s, however, the strip of land alongside the Olentangy was a bustling center of Indigenous resistance against the rapid, brutal force of colonization by American settlers.

The town was founded around 1772 alongside the Olentangy River (*Kewhongsheconseung* or “The River of White Stone” in Algonquian) by the Mohawk Chief Tecanyaterightto, called “Pluggy” by settlers.¹ Like many others, Tecanyaterightto was forced westward when his homeland in Pennsylvania was overtaken by European settlement. He brought his followers to the banks of the Olentangy, where they could reestablish themselves, and prepare to fight back against those who had displaced them from their homes. “Pluggy’s Town” became infamous as a staging ground for attacks against colonial settlements from Kentucky to Pennsylvania.²



“Pluggy’s Town” illustration by Rod Arter

Tecanyaterightto’s town was mostly home to people from different Iroquoian nations, including the Ottawa, Chippewa, and Wyandots.³ Though they were all referred to as “Mingos,” they came from different backgrounds, spoke different languages, and had their own unique cultures and ways of life; all of which had been suddenly uprooted and threatened.

While tensions were high between Algonquian tribes and the Iroquois Confederacy, Chief Tecanyaterightto was a close ally of the Shawnee (and Algonquian nation) in the fight to maintain

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“Pluggy’s Town”

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sovereignty over their land, including the Shawnee Chief Hokolesskwa (known as Cornplanter by settlers). He also worked closely with the well known Mohawk orator and resistance fighter Logan, and the two had much in common. Like Tecanyanteright, Logan was yet another powerful leader and politician who was forced to abandon his home in Pennsylvania and move west into Ohio. In April of 1774, however, his trust of Euroamerican settlers would be forever changed by the Yellow Creek Massacre.

Inspired by a recent wave of colonial violence, a group of Virginia Militiamen, headed by brothers Jacob and Daniel Greathouse, decided that they were going to attack the Indian Village at Yellow Creek.⁴ A group of Logan’s relatives were lured away from the village, across the Ohio River, and into the cabin of rum trader Joshua Baker. Accounts vary on how they were tricked, but once the group arrived at Baker’s cabin, they were slaughtered.

This brutal display of violence made it clear to Logan that the rapid press of colonialism could not be dealt with through oration alone. In a famous address to Virginia Governor Earl Dunmore, Logan emphasized this betrayal: “During the course of the last long and bloody war, Logan remained idle in his tent, an advocate for peace. Nay, such was my love for the Whites that those of my own Country pointed at me as they passed by and said ‘Logan is a friend of the White Men.’” He went on to lament: “There runs not a drop of the blood of Logan in the veins of any living creature. Who is there to mourn for Logan?—Not one.”⁵

In response to the Massacre, Logan began a series of raids against colonial settlements across Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, alongside Chief Tecanyateright and their Shawnee allies. Logan lived in “Pluggy’s Town” for several years, helping to organize the resistance against colonial invasion. This series of attacks and the response by the Virginia Governor became known as Dunmore’s War.⁶

Officially, Dunmore’s War ended in 1774 with the

signing of a treaty between the Shawnee and Lord Dunmore. By the middle of the decade, the Pluggy’s settlement had reached a considerable size, with estimates of around 300 residents and at least 70 warriors at any given time.⁷

Tecanyarighero was killed on December 29th, 1776, while leading an ambush in present-day Georgetown, Kentucky. He was buried there by his surviving warriors.⁸ The settlement was eventually abandoned in 1778, and Logan and his allies moved further up river.⁹

¹ Wickham, E. *Pluggy’s Town, Horseshoe Bottom* published by the Delaware County Historical Society, (1931)

² Hinderaker, E. *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley* (1999)

³ Hinderaker, E. (1999)

⁴ It has been incorrectly recorded that Colonel James Cresap was the perpetrator of the Yellow Creek Massacre, as this was originally believed to have been the case. It has since been revealed that the Greathouse brothers orchestrated this particular attack, however, Cresap was responsible for several similar massacres, which are said to have inspired the Greathouses. <https://lccn.loc.gov/rc01002828>

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<https://blogs.loc.gov/manuscripts/2022/09/of-note-thomas-jefferson-thinks-again-a-new-letter-about-logan-cresap-and-the-yellow-creek-massacre/>

⁵ “Enclosure II: Hugh Mercer’s Copy of Logan’s Speech, 13 February 1798,” Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-30-02-0070>. [Original source: *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, vol. 30, 1 January 1798–31 January 1799, ed. Barbara B. Oberg. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003, p. 103.]

⁶ *Britannica*, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2017, May 8). “Lord Dunmore’s War.” Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Lord-Dunmores-War>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Conover, Charlotte Reeve. *Concerning the Forefathers: Being a Memoir, with Personal Narrative and Letters of Two Pioneers, Col. Robert Patterson and Col. John Johnston*. New York: Winthrop Press, 1902. (pg. 146)

⁹ Wickham, E. (1931)

Life of a 19th Century Millworker at Stratford

By Jeanne Ball, Stratford Resident

When we first moved into our home on Stratford Road in 1984, I was very curious about all the small stone houses and the stone-end barns. There had to be easy access to pieces of limestone somewhere nearby. My first question was answered quickly. I discovered that the land just north of us used to be a stone quarry. I could literally walk through the woods along the river and kick up pieces of limestone, thus, easy access to limestone as a building material.

I started asking questions about the small stone houses and found out that Stratford used to be a milltown. There used to be a large paper mill at the corner of Stratford Road and U.S Rt 23. The owners of the mill provided

homes within walking distance of the mill. Accessible housing was necessary to attract a steady pool of employees. There were also log homes for the workers and larger homes for the mill managers and owners. By developing a mill village the mill owners cultivated a public perception of a benevolent mill company with a paternal interest in the welfare of its employees.

The size of the community was determined by the size of the mill and the size of the mill by the amount of water power available. The mill owners would hire entire families. Therefore, the homes the mill owners built were designed for single family occupancy. These minimal

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DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 1947

Donna Meyer, Executive Director
Susie Lehtomaa, Sales and Event Manager



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Historical Society**
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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 Vision:

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

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The Delaware County Historian

is published biannually by the Delaware County Historical Society, Inc.

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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.

Come One, Come All to Experience “Wilderness Transformed 1820-1860” at the Meeker Homestead Museum

By Becky S. Cornett

DCHS volunteer and Meeker Museum curator, Benny Shoults is well-known for his design artistry in creating informative and thought-provoking exhibits. His current offering in the Meeker Homestead Museum, “Wilderness Transformed 1820-1860,” opened in June, and depicts stages of the growth and development of 19th century Delaware County. It is the sequel to “Journey to Delaware County 1804-1820,” which visitors enjoyed in 2023-2024. That exhibit helped us better understand the considerable obstacles the settlers from Europe and Eastern parts of the United States faced just getting here, and their challenges to build a life from the land. In October 2023, the DCHS received the Outstanding Achievement Award for the exhibit from the Ohio Local History Alliance (Benny Shoults accepted the award along with colleagues Roxann Newton and Steve Frazier).

Information panels, artifacts, illustrations, and photographs in the new exhibit “Wilderness Transformed” tell the stories of the county’s extensive agriculture and livestock history which, to this day, is a major county industry; the roads that made Delaware County a crossroads from the start; the stagecoach and wagoner era; the influence of steamboats on Lake Erie and the Ohio and Erie and Miami and Erie canals that—while not near our county—still helped our forebears move goods; and develop industry, commerce, and community here. We also learn about the beginnings of our status as a very busy railroad center when the train came to Delaware in 1851 and shortly after to other county villages.

The exhibit is essentially an interpretation of the early American Dream on a county level, especially because Ohio was the first state (1803) created from the Northwest Territory, after the Northwest Ordinance was signed by the new congress (1787); and became a key industrial powerhouse for the US in the 20th

century. Delaware County helped to set the stage for that tremendous growth as an agricultural center.

This exhibit engages visitors of all ages – there is something for everyone! Children (and adults) can handle artifacts to see if they can determine how the items were used, and visitors can try to answer questions together to spark learning (the exhibit meets state social studies standards). Each township in Delaware County is represented, too.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence (July 4, 2026), it is the ideal time for Delaware County residents, and visitors from the region, to learn about the past to inform the present.

Editor’s Note: We are grateful to exhibit sponsors the Ron Sabatino Family Fund and the Charles H. and Betty J. Sheets Family Donor Advised Fund through the Delaware County Foundation.

The Meeker Museum is open the first Sunday of each month from 1- 4 p.m. from now until November 2. We are always looking for museum volunteers.



19th Century Millworker

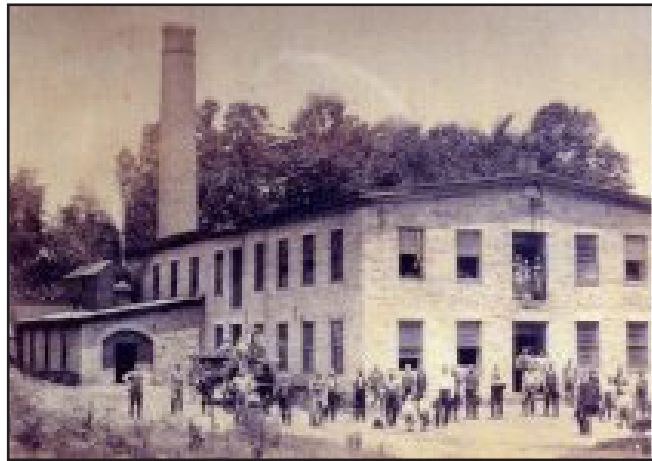
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structures provided only the most essential space for family living.

The Delaware County Historical Society has a summer festival each year. One feature of the festival is to open some of the houses along Stratford Road so visitors can learn more about a milltown. When I docent at the millworker cottage at 2571 Stratford Road (The Millworker Cottage), children are always surprised: "A whole family lived in this one room?!" Yes, Mom and Dad slept downstairs with a baby and the rest of the children climbed a ladder and slept on the second floor. There would be one stove to cook on and heat the house. Some food could be placed in the river to keep cool. The family would carry water from the river to bathe and wash their clothes. Soap was made from ash and fat. There was an outhouse nearby for their bathroom.

There is a spinning wheel in the house. Clothing was made from flax. Flax would be grown in a garden. (It looks a little like wheat.) The mom would comb, comb, comb the flax and then spin it to make thread so they could make cloth for their clothing. It feels like linen. For wool clothing they would have to have sheep – so it was cheaper to grow flax.

Not only did the family have to cook, clean themselves and the cottage, heat the cottage, make their clothes, tend a garden, but also work at the paper mill each day. Not an easy life!



Making paper is a very interesting process. The mills would open at midnight on Sunday and operate continuously until midnight on the following Saturday. There were two shifts of 12 hours each starting at noon to midnight and midnight to noon. Rags were sorted and fed into cutting machines by female workers. The next step in the process was to boil the rags and straw and later wood pulp in a vat of bleach solution (vitrol!) for several hours. This was a dangerous task and accounted for many injuries and several deaths. (One child in the Breyfogle family, in our cottage on Stratford Road, fell into the vat and was killed) In the finishing room the rags were fed into a machine that beat them. The mixture was

then scooped up and strained on a screen to let it dry. The paper is then hung on a line to complete the drying process. The Stratford Paper mill made wrapping paper and writing paper and all the paper for the State of Ohio. The average pay for women and children was \$1.00/day and for the rag engineers and foreman it was \$1.25/day. "I owe my soul to the company store." The millworkers would charge their goods against their pay for the week and were almost always in arrears to the Stratford Paper Mill.

The Paper Mills of Stratford lasted from 1838 to 1896. In 1901 the mills were sold to the Columbus, Delaware, and Marion Railway for \$2,700. The former paper mill was converted to a power plant. In 1927 the building was destroyed by fire and the railway company went bankrupt in 1933. We are left with a lovely little historic village called Stratford and a history that (hopefully) will continue to be told for many, many future generations.

Bill Rietz: Citizen Extraordinaire of Delaware Ohio

By Becky S. Cornett

Mention the name Bill Rietz in Delaware and you'll hear about his career of working with youth. His career in the public schools included teaching social studies at the Delaware Area Career Center and Delaware Hayes High School. His career of public service began at a young age. At age 18, he was the youngest ever national political party convention delegate. He was a witness to history at the August 1976 Republican Party Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, that nominated incumbent President Gerald R. Ford as the Republican nominee. Notably, the 1976 convention was the last of either major party in which the nomination was seriously contested. Future president Ronald Reagan seriously competed for the nomination. In July 2024 *Time* referred to the 1976 meeting as the "convention that changed the GOP" because Reagan-influenced Conservatives were able to greatly influence the platform. Rietz had a front-row seat to what Reagan biographer Craig Shirley, in 2016, described as "a riotous" open convention: "(the nominating process) went on for hours, and there were melees in the hall."



Bill Rietz, 1976 Republican Convention delegate-at-large, Kansas City, MO, August 16-19.

Rietz says that Brent Carson got him involved in the Delaware County Young Republicans. Carson nominated Rietz for the state board of the Ohio Young Republicans. Rietz was elected chair, and from there became part of the Ohio at-large convention delegate team. His service is memorialized in archived notes at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.



Asked why he has been so involved from a young age Rietz replied that his parents and grandparents were role models of civic engagement.

In addition to his teaching career, he maintained a long-standing commitment to competitive swimming and diving. Summers would find him managing the Jack Florance Pool at Mingo Park and coaching the local swimming and diving clubs since 1979. He provided his coaching talent to coaching swimming and diving teams for the Delaware Hayes Pacers from 1980 until 2017. Bill also served on the board of directors for the Delaware County Historical Society from 2011 – 2013.

His civic commitment has taken him to larger leadership role in the Delaware community with his work to recognize and honor Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th U.S. President who was born in Delaware on October 4, 1822. Rietz was a driving force behind the "Hayes Comes Home" initiative that installed a statue

of Hayes by Ohio artist Alan Cottrill on the corner of Sandusky and William Streets on October 4, 2019. He continues to educate about the heritage of Delaware's homegrown President, Rietz is chair of R.B. Hayes Heritage, a separate non-profit organization.

Rietz was an early adopter of good citizenship. He was senior class president at Hayes High School, a member of the National Honor Society, and earned four varsity letters on the Hayes swim team.

A 1975 graduate, Rietz was inducted into the Hayes

High School Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame in 2015. Upon his retirement in 2017 from coaching the Hayes swim team for 29 seasons, athletics director Steve Glesenkamp said in *This Week News*, "... you can never replace people who are so unique and special like him. He's really made a difference in generations of young people. It's difficult and rare to find coaches and teachers who love it and live it every day. He really leaves a legacy." Indeed!

Thank You to our Historian sponsors



Dusty Hostutler

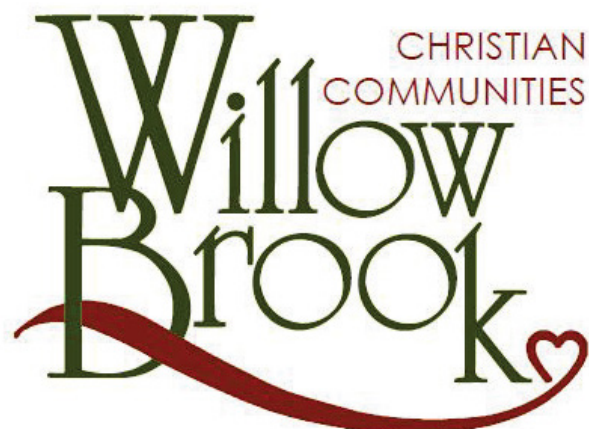
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Learning About the Littles by Volunteering at Cryder

By David A. Simmons, DCHS Volunteer

The excitement of uncovering previously unknown, or little-known, history kept me engaged over a four-decade career at the Ohio Historical Society. And it was the possibility of similar emotions that helped prompt me to volunteer at DCHS's Cryder Research Library, working under the thoughtful guidance of Susan Logan. Here there seems to be unending opportunities for new discoveries, and Susan invariably shares my enthusiasm whenever I bring her attention to them. A case in point is my current project working on a significant donation connected to the Little family

First, some background on the Little family is in order. William Little Sr. and his wife, Catherine Wood Little, came to Delaware from Worthington in 1808 when he was 29. Although a saddler by trade, he became, according to *Baskin's 1880 History*, "one of the earliest and most successful merchants," whose small brick store stood at southwest corner of Winter and Sandusky. Here he sold a variety of clothes, shoes, crockery, hardware, medicines, and groceries. William was a large landowner in Delaware, but it was as bankers that Little and several of his five sons were most celebrated.

A Little descendant donated material, consisting of 24 individual images, 34 manuscript items, and a photo album of approximately 80 pages, in the summer of 2024. From the album, I chose to individually catalog nearly 300 images, which ultimately stretched the cataloging over a five-month period.

Besides the obvious benefit of growing DCHS's collection inventory, the project was remarkably satisfying. The very first Little item I cataloged was an album print of William Little Sr. standing in front of his Sandusky Street storefront. Since Little died in 1848, this has to be among the earliest images in all of DCHS's collections. And since album prints did not become widely popular until after 1860, this must have been printed from a copy negative of a now-missing daguerreotype, details that I added to the catalog record.

Having first acquired a youthful interest in history during the Civil War Centennial, I was especially intrigued by the manuscript correspondence recounting the wartime experiences of several Little family members serving in the volunteer army. Charles Otis Little was a graduate of Kenyon College and enlisted in the 95th Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI), a unit that served in Mississippi during the war. A college graduate, Charles found himself promoted to sergeant, assigned as an aide-de-camp. Catherine Little, his widowed mother, took special pleasure in his "wielding a pen instead of the sword," saving him from having to stand in muddy rifle pits with his regiment. She also kept her son posted on the home front in Delaware, commenting on "a little black boy" brought back to the city by Captain Richard Reynolds from the Washington DC area. The "little contraband" was working for Reynolds, a downtown merchant, as a carriage driver. In the process, she expressed empathy for the "poor negroes" that had received such "savage treatment."

Early in 1865, Charles O. Little used connections with some of his former Kenyon College acquaintances to obtain a position in the Assistant Adjutant General's Office in Washington DC. So it was that he was in the city on April 14, 1865, when Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre. Legend says that Little obtained a small cloth saturated with Lincoln's blood, a souvenir today on display at Cryder Library.

Charles's brother, George Wood Little, enlisted in the 17th OVI and was eventually transferred to the 110th OVI. Like his brother, he rose to an administrative position as regimental quartermaster.

John Howard Little, was the individual most responsible for assembling the donated materials. It was the grandson of Howard Little, as he was known, who made the donation to DCHS. Happily, Howard invested time in annotating the black construction paper of an 80-page photo album with a white marking pen. The combination of his annotations and the photographs themselves provide a personal outlook on his family,

community, and early career. It also sheds light on societal mores and attitudes at the turn of the twentieth century. In a lot of ways, studying the material helps one feel like they've "gotten to know" Howard. The period covered by the photo album stretches from the late 1880s when Howard and his two brothers were toddlers in Ohio to about 1920.

Howard Little was born in the family's Delaware home at 160 West Winter in 1883. Several photos show him playing childhood games—such as “army”—with his brothers or neighbors, to which Howard's comments add a humorous twist. As he got older, he showed considerable mechanical aptitude. Numerous photographs illustrate the process of creating multiple “hydroplanes,” or speedboats from a model stage, testing it, moving through fabricating the full-scale version, and then exploring its limits on the Muskingum River around Zanesville. All the while, Howard was developing his skills as a photographer, and there are numerous double exposures with individuals facing themselves, engaging in some provocative activity.

A handful of images in the album show Charles and Julia Little, Howard's parents, together but because Charles died in 1898, there are many images of his mother alone taken by Howard. In some, Howard comments on the relationship between the two of them. In the process, he also documented interior rooms of the Little home, offering a glimpse into the era's home furnishings.

Julia Little apparently rented rooms to Ohio Wesleyan female students at her Winter Street home. Some of Howard's nighttime experiments in photography, in fact, involved gatherings of these young women in what must have been one of the rented rooms. It also helps explain the presence of OWU campus scenes in the album.

Howard Little had a brief career working as an airplane manufacturing inspector on the East Coast during World War I, and some of the manuscripts involve his efforts at gaining this position, including several letters from Frank Willis and Senator Warren G. Harding. Professionally, Howard Little's greatest fame came later as an artist in San Diego, California, where he



Detail of a landscape painting, “Winter 1937” by Howard Little.

built an enviable reputation for his natural landscapes. Still, the photo album from his youth provides images of lots of Delaware area landmarks like the Old Stone Mill, Greenwood Lake, Sandusky Street, the Olentangy River, and horticulture at the family farm in Liberty township.

Working with the Little family donation provided a fascinating opportunity to learn about and explore the very rich life of a wide-ranging family whose members extended back into Delaware County's pioneer period. It took me to lots of unexpected places but gave me new insights into what it meant to be a native of central Ohio at the turn-of-the twentieth century.

Editors note: I have often said that sometimes pulling on a single thread can unravel a lot of history. This writing underscores some points:

- **The importance of learning about the day-to-day experiences of people and how they lived can inform you about the times as much as knowing about famous people and famous places.**
- **Preserving seemingly innocuous details such as fashion and the architecture of the day.**

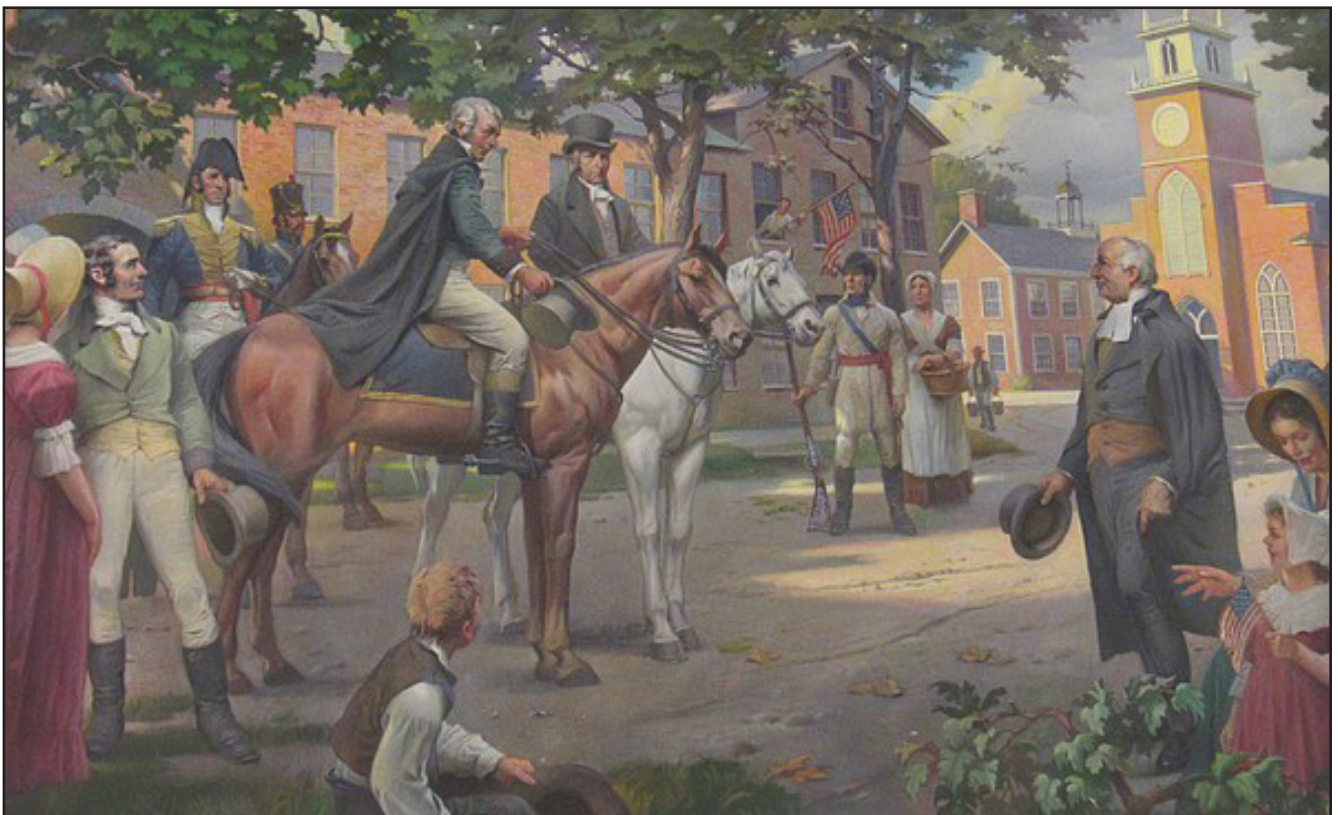
President James Monroe Visits the Frontier Village of Delaware

By Steve Shaw

Next year, America will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The 5th President of the United States, James Monroe, was the only President to visit our community while President. He is also the only founding father to visit Delaware. Monroe had been a Revolutionary War soldier and was part of the delegation to purchase the Louisiana Purchase.

On August 23, 1817, the small frontier village of Delaware, Ohio was just nine years old. The few hundred residents of the village saw a sight they had not been expecting. The President of the United States, James Monroe, was riding a horse into town from the north. A few weeks after his inauguration, President James Monroe had begun a journey through the New England states and then to the far West seeing the

Northwest Territory. His trip had two purposes. First, to foster national unity since many in New England wanted to secede from the Union. Second, to inspect military defenses, since the War of 1812 showed an unsatisfactory level of defenses. Less than 5 years earlier, British troops had established forts in Ohio and the Michigan territory, and the British Navy had controlled Lake Erie. Monroe's journey began on May 31, 1817 and after an extended tour through the New England states he was ready to go into the frontier of the Northwest Territory. He was the first sitting President to be in the West. After a two-day schooner journey across Lake Erie from Buffalo, New York, Monroe arrived at Fort Detroit in the Michigan Territory on August 13, 1817. He was able to assure military readiness at this important frontier outpost. By August 19, Monroe was at Sandusky Bay. He could see where



A mural depicting James Monroe visiting Worthington, Ohio

Admiral Perry's decisive 1813 naval victory was won. It was to be at least a hard three day's journey to get to Delaware, Ohio.

There was an undeveloped military road to take them through the Black Swamp, forests and two Indian reservations. On Saturday August 23, Monroe's party passed by the abandoned Fort Morrow in northern Delaware County. Even by standards of the time Monroe certainly did not travel in high style. One account described Monroe's party as follows. "They traveled on horseback... They rode fast, generally in a canter. Mr. Monroe wore the old fashioned three-cornered, cocked hat—his dress otherwise was in plain, citizen style. His face was effectually sunburned from exposure." Monroe then arrived at the small frontier village of Delaware that was the County seat. One account of how this Presidential party appeared stated with a bit of a flourish that "Monroe and his entourage emerged from the distant thickets like a ghostly apparition." There is no record of remarks made by the President in Delaware.

At the time, Delaware had a tavern that also served as a hotel where Monroe and his party stayed, located on the northeast corner of Sandusky and Winter Streets. Sunday morning found Monroe attending Church with the First Presbyterian Church, that met in the Court House at the time. The pastor was the Reverend Joseph Hughs. Reverend Hughs was reported to be nervous. Unusual for Hughs to be nervous considering the 28-year-old pastor's experience and resume. He was the first Grandmaster of the Masonic Lodge in Ohio, had preached to General William Henry Harrison's troops during the War of 1812, and accompanied General William Hull during the War of 1812 as a Chaplain. As a Delaware citizen he had seeded three Presbyterian congregations; First Presbyterian Church, Liberty Presbyterian Church and Radnor Presbyterian which was to become Old Stone Presbyterian. Hughs was the first Clerk of Court in Delaware County and was co-founder of the *Delaware Gazette*. After his remarks, President Monroe sent Hughs a complimentary message before leaving to complete his tour.

Sadly, Hughs' life was tragically taken during the fever epidemic of 1823. Hughs was just 33 years old at the time of his death. He was laid to rest in the Old Burial Grounds (what is now Selby Field) and then re-interred to Oak Grove Cemetery by family.

Upon leaving Delaware, Monroe's travels took him to Worthington, the new Ohio Capital, Columbus, and then to Chillicothe to meet with the Ohio Governor Thomas Worthington. Monroe's party left Ohio on September 1, 1817. Monroe returned to Washington D.C. on September 17, 1817. Monroe was re-elected in 1820 and his time as President gained the label as "The Era of Good Feelings."

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First Fridays from 6:00 – 8:00 PM

And, explore our other historic properties to check out featured exhibits and learn more about our shared history here in Delaware, Ohio!

Nash House Museum

157 East William Street, Delaware

• *Wednesdays from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
and 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM*

Meeker Homestead Museum

2690 Stratford Road, Delaware

• *Open the First Sunday of each month
from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM*

Director's Column

By Donna Meyer, DCHS Executive Director

Looking Back... and Forward

"Thoughts on retiring – effective September 30."

I first became involved with the Delaware County Historical Society in 2010. After terming off the Main Street Delaware Board, I realized that I had some free time on my hands. I had a full time job, working at SourcePoint, plus growing a large vegetable and flower garden and selling those items at the Farmers' Market, so not sure how I came to that conclusion.

It didn't take long to figure out how to spend those "extra" hours. I was always interested in history, being a seventh generation Delaware Countian, I had always appreciated my ancestors and understood the challenges they experienced as they paved the way for me to grow up in Delaware. I had friends who were DCHS Volunteers – Roger Koch, Jack Hilborn, Brent Carson, and Bob Gerspacher – highly respected men who convinced me that this was where I belonged.

After serving on the board for a few years, it became clear that we needed to hire a director. This was mostly due to the acquisition of the Stratford property, generously donated by Tom and Carolyn Porter, who used to operate Garth's Auctions. I had just retired from SourcePoint after 13 years, so thought I would throw my hat in the ring. In fact, it was Roger's wife, Jan Fleischmann who convinced me to apply for the position. (I believe this involved a visit to Staas brewery).

One of my primary goals for the organization was to be relevant to our community, whether that involved school children's tours, monthly programs, house history workshops, Victorian Tea Parties and the multitude of other activities that we organize, there is something for everyone. No longer were we the "little old ladies" who told children not to touch anything in our museums. Rather, we encourage that with our artifact carts that are taken into schools.

Among the many accomplishments we have achieved over the last 10 years, I am proud of the State funds we have received to preserve the Barn at Stratford, totaling over \$1 million dollars. This will ensure the 177 year old barn, a testament to our rich agricultural heritage, will continue to stand tall and proud for generations to come.

I will take away many memorable moments over the last 10 years. It was a privilege to work with such dedicated venue staff – Connie and Melissa. They each brought many gifts to the table and also more than a few laughs. I am so very fortunate to have worked with a dedicated and hardworking group of volunteers. They do not hesitate to roll up their sleeves and get the job done. I am confident that they will continue to do so in my absence.

I will especially miss my Stratford neighbors – folks who care about their history and community. Stratford has a special meaning for me. My great grandmother grew up in Stratford and her family worked at the papermill. Knowing that she saw the Meeker house, where our administrative office is located, every day while she lived in Stratford, brings me a sense of deep roots.

I expect that I will fill my time with grandchildren, traveling, gardening, genealogy research and of course, volunteering with the DCHS. I am also running for Radnor Township Trustee which will be a new challenge.

I am so very thankful for the experience of leading this amazing organization. It has made my life richer and more meaningful than you could imagine. I am very grateful for all of our donors, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters. Together we have truly made history come alive.



Delaware County Historical Society Receives Historical Tractors



In July 2021, the Delaware County Historical Society received the first of three historical 1941 tractors from Greg and Suzan Nobis of Delaware. The tractor, a Farmall H model was lovingly restored by Rob Ray of Ostrander. Named "Virginia," it was purchased from the estate of the late Charles Lehner of Radnor, Ohio where it was used for 4 generations by the Lehner family.

In 2023, the Delaware County Historical Society received the second tractor, a special donation – a 1941 Ford Ferguson tractor – earlier this year. The tractor, named "Violet," worked fields in Michigan and was then sold to Maggie and Charlie Webb, who brought it to Delaware County. Maggie, a DCHS volunteer, and her husband sold it to the Nobis family where Violet plowed fields and pulled hayrides for their grandchildren. Violet was also restored by Rob Ray.

In May of this year, Greg again contacted the Delaware County Historical Society and asked if he could donate another 1941 tractor, a John Deere Model B, named "Vivian."

Vivian is the smallest in the collection and did not come with a battery powered electric starter. Instead, it was started by hand utilizing a magneto to keep it running. And for economy, Vivian could also run on kerosene, which was about ½ the price of gasoline.

Vivian worked farms around New Philadelphia, Ohio and in the mid-1960s Vivian arrived in Radnor, Ohio. In the summer of 2023, she was found covered with mud in a barn adjacent to the property originally owned by Gladys and Ellis Lehner. Through the efforts of Rob Ray and Greg Nobis, Vivian was brought back to life, restored and now

running, ready to plow again.

These tractors are on display at the Delaware County Historical Society on Stratford Road.

Membership in the Delaware County Historical Society means:

You are supporting:

- A great organization dedicated to the preservation of Delaware County history
- Education outreach programs for over 3,000 county students and adults, per year

You will receive:

- Discounts on merchandise and ticketed events and programs
- An invitation and a vote for new board members at the Annual Meeting
- A discount for items for sale offered by the Historical Society
- The *Historian* and *Historic Happenings* – two great email newsletters
- Exclusive invitations to special member events

Life members receive these additional benefits:

- Invitations to special Life Member events each year
- Sneak preview events for exhibit premiers

ROAM Membership

Introducing ROAM, a new type of membership level for the Delaware County Historical Society. This membership will include a membership to the Delaware County Historical Society.

As a ROAM member you will have access to over 500 participating ROAM (Reciprocal Organization of Associated Museums) museums, cultural institutions and galleries in the United States, and Canada as well as continue to receive member benefits for the Delaware County Historical Society, all at a discounted membership price.

Local Ohio museums that you can visit as a ROAM member include:

- The Wexner Center for the Arts
- Kelton House and Museum
- Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library and Museums
- Cleveland Museum of Natural History
- The Works: The Ohio Center for History and Technology, Newark

For a list of participating ROAM museums and information about those museums, go to: <https://sites.google.com/site/roammuseums/home/list-of-roam-museums>

For \$100 a year for a single ROAM membership and \$125 per year for a ROAM Household membership, you will continue to receive Historical Society benefits and you will be able to visit over 500 participating ROAM (museums and cultural centers across the United States and Canada at a discounted member price.

Flexible, Fantastic Flax

By Robin Mayes, Preservation Parks Farm Educator

I sprinkle them on my salads, soak them in water for use as an egg substitute in vegan recipes and grind them into flour. I use LOTS of flax seeds! They are versatile and considered by many to be a “superfood” due to their high dietary fiber, omega-3 oils and anti-carcinogenic lignans. But long before its recently “discovered” nutritional benefits, products from the flax plant (*Linum usitatissimum*) were highly valued. It has been an important plant for a variety of uses.

For industrial use, the seeds are pressed to create linseed oil – a preservative for wood and concrete and as an ingredient in paints, varnishes, inks and soaps. Due to its polymer-forming properties, it can be used on its own or blended with combinations of other oils, resins or solvents.

But it is the flax plant as a fiber that really intrigues me. Linen has long been considered a high-quality fabric. Its creation is a lengthy process that involves steps like retting, rippling and scutching. Early pioneers wore pants made of “linsey-woolsey” a combination of linen warp and wool weft. In the early part of the 20th century, “linoleum” was designed with jute backing and solidified linseed oil. It is now making a comeback as a “green” alternative to vinyl flooring.

Every year, ‘oil-cloth’ was an item on my back-to-school list. Purchased at the local 5-and-Dime, it was canvas-like fabric that had been treated with linseed oil to be waterproof and was similar to today’s vinyl tablecloth. We would use it to protect our desks when we rolled out our modeling clay or used finger paints.

Mom also kept a few flax seeds in the medicine chest. If you were unfortunate enough to get a foreign object in your eye, putting a flaxseed in your eye would attract the object and then both could be removed. That never seemed like a great solution to me!

Flax is even a part of Delaware County history. Many farmers were growing it in the mid-1800s. The large stone building at the corner of Lake and Winter streets was a flaxseed pressing mill. That is also why we have

Flax Street on the east side near the Olentangy River. The site has an extensive history dating back to the 1850s when it was annexed into the city of Delaware. In 1863, the

Delaware Manufacturing Company constructed the Flax Mill and Warehouse north of Flax Street and west of Milo Alley. The Delaware Chair Company moved to the site in 1876 and was a major employer for the surrounding neighborhood. The building has been preserved and is part of a housing development on the banks of the Olentangy River.

Whether it is grown for the seed or the fiber, flax plants are a beautiful addition to the garden. The sky-blue flowers are a welcome sight on summer mornings before the breeze dislodges the petals. I have never seen an entire field of flax but I imagine it could be breathtaking! I often contemplate that and thank the farmers who grow it as I munch on my flaxseed crackers.

For more information on growing flax visit <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental/flowers/flax/flax-plant-care.htm>



This building at the corner of Lake and East Winter Streets was built in 1862 by James Barnes and operated as a Linseed Oil Factory. Note the large door on the right side of the building – it was constructed so farmers could pull their wagons in to unload.



This photo is of the abandoned Flax Mill and Warehouse, located on Flax Street. The building later housed the Delaware Chair Factory.



Bringing History to Life

Join us for these programs in 2025

Registration will be on Eventbrite for all programs and events.

Additional information will be posted on our website several weeks before each program or event.

Delaware County Industrial History: Agricultural Implements

Presented by Steve Schmitt, Society Volunteer

Thursday, January 23 at 7PM, Zoom Only

Farming - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Panel Discussion moderated by Karen Cowan, Society Volunteer

Thursday, February 20 at 7PM at the Barn at Stratford

The Life of a Farmer's Wife and Children Over the Years

Panel Discussion moderated by Alice Frazier, Society Volunteer

Thursday, March 20 at 7PM at The Barn at Stratford

Farm Energy—Past and Future

Presented by TBD (Coordinator TBD)

Wednesday, April 23 at 7PM at the Barn at Stratford

Delaware County Barns

Presented by TBD (Susan Logan coordinating)

Wednesday, May 21 at 7PM at The Barn at Stratford

Sustainable Agriculture

Presented by Jeff Dickinson, Stratford Ecological Center

Wednesday, June 18 at 7PM at The Barn at Stratford

Mechanization of Farming

Presented by TBD (Coordinator TBD)

Wednesday, August 20 at 7PM at The Barn at Stratford

The Horse World in Delaware County—1940s to 2000

Presented by Maggie Snyder, Society Volunteer

Thursday, September 4 at 7PM at The Barn at Stratford

Eastern Delaware County Cemetery Tour*

Sunday, October 12 Afternoon Driving Tour with Reenactments 630PM at The Barn at Stratford. Ticketed Event.

Annual Meeting – Delaware County Agricultural Future

Presented by Mary Fleming, Delaware County Farm Bureau

Thursday, November 20 at 7PM at The Barn at Stratford

**Ticketed Events—Members will receive a discount.*

Programs are free unless otherwise noted.
The Barn at Stratford—2690 Stratford Road

info@DelawareOhioHistory.org DelawareOhioHistory.org 740-369-3831

Issue date: September 4, 2024



**Delaware County
Historical Society**
Our History, Our Heritage

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Delaware, OH 43015

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In addition to your membership noted above, please consider an additional gift to the Society:

\$100.00 _____ \$250.00 _____ \$500.00 _____ \$1,000.00 _____ Other _____

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Make checks payable to Delaware County Historical Society, and mail to 2690 Stratford Road, Delaware OH 43015.