

THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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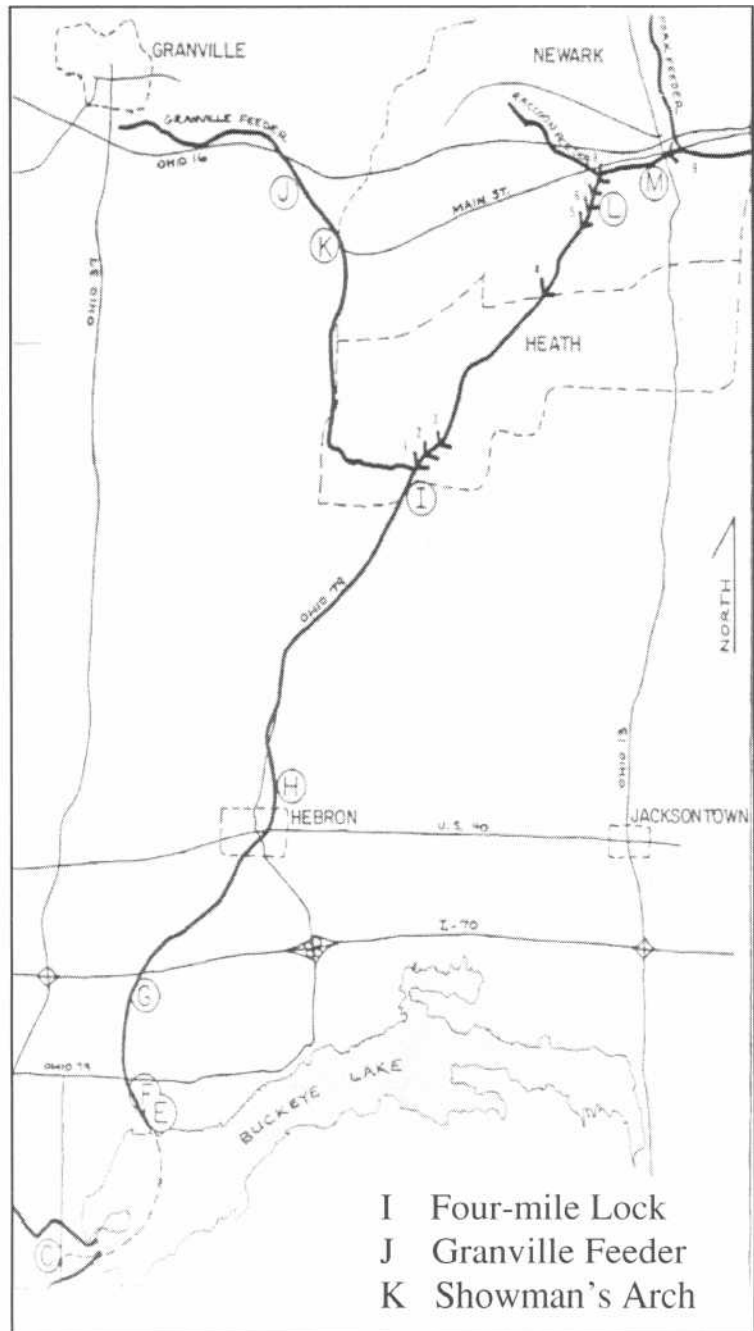
Summer 1999

Tracing the Granville Feeder Canal

An extension into Granville

In an age when communication and transportation have reached unparalleled advancement in speed, capacity and efficiency, one tends to forget the antiquities of the not-so-long ago. If our contemporary society were suddenly transposed to the America of one hundred years ago, what would it find? There would be no evidence of aircraft or motorcars, and the commonplace railroad would be found only in its infant state. The question, in time, then would be asked, "How did people travel and ship their goods in the United States of 1849?" Of course, the horse provided the universal mode of transportation, but there was something else that did much to develop our own particular area — the canal. Much of the growth and internal improvement of our own state can be attributed to the construction and operation of the Ohio Canal system of which the subject under consideration, the Granville feeder canal, was a part. To quote N.N. Hill, Jr., who compiled a volume entitled the History of Licking County, "A large majority of the people of Ohio know but little at present about the great Ohio Canal, and the interest taken in it at the commencement of the work. " It therefore is the purpose of this paper to acquaint the reader with the Granville branch of the Ohio Canal and to establish a few facts about it.

Not much has been written about the Granville feeder, and the writer has found that much of the material written concerning it was erroneous. Such a small but important link of the canal system that traversed Ohio in the mid-1800's did not receive much attention by writers and only a few references can be found concerning it. As is often the case, a historian, to reinforce incomplete data, must consult not primary or



secondary sources, but natives of the area who are known as being reliable in information and historical material. This study, in the main, was thus conducted, and most of the actual information concerning the course of the Granville feeder was gained in this way. A few maps are available' but these were found to be unreliable and even contradictory in some instances. As general reference material, they serve to establish a few points that would be difficult, if not impossible, to find otherwise, but both maps must be referred to with caution. The actual location of the canal is the problem which is to receive the greatest consideration.

Location of the Canal

The Granville feeder extended from Licking Summit to Raccoon Creek, at Paiges' woollen [sic] factory, about a mile and a quarter southeast of Granville. In order to have navigation as near Granville as possible, the commissioners agreed to make the feeder navigable for boats as far as Paiges' factory, provided the people of Granville would make it navigable from thence to the bridge at the Lancaster road. This they agreed to do. It involved considerable expense, as a dam, guard lock, lift lock and about a half mile of canal had to be built to render it navigable. A warehouse was erected at

the head of navigation, and a boat built here by the Troy and Ohio Line, under the superintendence of a Mr. Wallace. This is believed to have been the first canal boat built south of Cleveland. The feeder was used for navigation until the Granville furnace was abandoned in 1838, since which it has become dilapidated and out of repair.'

This statement is about as much as can be found anywhere regarding the feeder. However, even this passage is not free of certain discrepancies.

The Granville feeder began at "Fourmile" lock which can be seen today as one drives (south from Newark) over the Newark-Hebron road (Ohio 79). This highway closely follows the old Ohio Canal from Lockport to Buckeye Lake, and in many places the abandoned canal was filled in to facilitate the building of the road. "Fourmile" lock was chosen by the builders of the Ohio Canal as a location for the ceremonies of dedication of the entire system. DeWitt Clinton was imported from New York to serve as guest speaker for this occasion. At that time, this spot was named the "Licking Summit," but this was a misnomer, because Buckeye Lake is actually higher than "Fourmile" lock, and the Lake and the portion of the Canal near Millersport was the highest level that the canal reached. The builders probably considered the entire area to be the "Licking Summit."



Photograph by William C. Stewart in 1965

Remains of the Granville Feeder at the south end of New Gran Drive, looking west toward Clouse lane. The Granville by-pass is at upper left.

More Water

Just why the Granville feeder was built is another problem. Most references to it merely state that it was constructed; why, or for what purpose is the question. If Buckeye Lake, or, as it was then called, the "Summit Reservoir" was higher than "Fourmile" lock, was it necessary to provide a feeder canal to furnish water to the main canal at this point? Did any political motives push the construction of a canal to Granville? It is the opinion of the writer and of others consulted that, while the Granville feeder was not absolutely necessary in the operation of the canal, it did provide sufficient water to maintain navigation in times of need. Leakage and operation of locks demanded a large supply of water in the canal at all times, and it is highly probable that the ten mile length of canal from the "Reservoir" to Lockport (now incorporated in the Newark city limits) could easily have utilized all available water supplies.

In addition, due to [its] particular geographical location, the "Reservoir" also supplied the southern and western extensions of the [canal] system as far as Lockbourne, which accounted for a vast quantity of water. As for possible political involvement, there perhaps could have had some implication, for [some of] the money needed to build the canal from the lock to the site of Paiges' "woollen" factory, now known as Clouse's Lane, was provided by state legislation. Such legislation, undoubtedly, was influenced by many factors. The following passage sheds some light on the real motive.

The Granville feeder, designed to convey to the Licking summit-level the water of the Racoon [*sic*], or Middle Branch of the Licking, and at the same time to extend Canal navigation to the flourishing town of Granville, has also been put under contract since the last Annual Report of the Board. It is considered important to throw into that summit-level the running waters of the adjacent streams, though not of a durable character, so long as they will yield even a partial supply of water from the Reservoir for the use of that summit to as late a period in the season as possible; and thus to diminish the quantity necessary to be drawn from that source, and also the time during which dependence must be placed upon the Reservoir alone. This plan not only renders the adequacy of the supply more certain, but, it is believed, will have a beneficial influence on the health of the surrounding country by precluding, in ordinary seasons, the necessity of drawing down the water, considerably, in

the Reservoir, during the heat of the summer.'

Locating the Canal

To trace the abandoned canal today is not a difficult task if one recognizes the traces handed down to us by the handiwork of nature and of the tillers of the soil. In some places the feeder is well preserved, and in others it has been entirely erased from view. However, the latter instances are so few in number that the canal can easily be mentally reconstructed from the existing maps of the area. Let us, then, establish the location of the feeder, beginning at its eastern termination and then proceeding along its route in a northwesterly direction to its origin.

Starting at "Fourmile" lock, we shall proceed due west. The feeder entered the canal at a spot a scant hundred yards south of the lock itself. Sighting across the Newark-Hebron road (Ohio 79), the remains of the feeder can be seen running west until all traces of it vanish as a result of the present location of the Kaiser Aluminum Plant (north west of the U.S. Air Force Testing Laboratory, and in 1999, the Central Ohio Aerospace & Technology Center). It is in this area, and in the area of the Pure Oil Heath Refinery (now Koch Materials Company, at the west end of Newark Airport runway) that reconstructing the feeder is most difficult. This is a highly industrialized area, and all the land in that vicinity has been modified to provide a location for the vast array of buildings and machinery that one finds there. Here it is necessary to consult the maps at hand to ascertain the route of the canal. Both the Hill's and the Beer's maps seem to agree that the feeder continued until it reached the approximate site to the main rolling mill of the aluminum plant and then made a gradual turn in a northerly direction. The feeder then crossed Ramp Creek. It is here that evidence and research completely fail to explain how the canal crossed the water course. Upon observation, evidence of the feeder can be seen on either bank of the creek, but in the creek bed itself there is nothing to indicate the method of bridging used.

Two general means of traversing water courses were widely used by the constructors of the Ohio Canal System. As illustrated by Showman's arch, which still stands today (at the bend in Cherry Valley Road as it crosses the Raccoon), one method was to pass the canal over an aqueduct constructed of field stone and wooden timbers. The other means, whose incidence was less than that of the aqueduct method, was to construct a dam downstream from the proposed site of crossing. This construction was less costly but more subject to the whims of nature. The geographical position of Ramp Creek practically abolished all consideration of the latter method. The surrounding area of the crossing is of such a nature that the utilization of a dam would inundate much of the land in time of flood. The

former means is the one that the writer feels is the more acceptable. The lack of evidence of masonry or of stone at this times proves nothing, for it is highly possible that the stone has been removed for construction purposes after the canal was abandoned. This practice was widely followed by native farmers as evidenced by the Davis [301 Clouse Lane] home at the termination of Clouse's Lane. Also, it has been reported that a barn in the vicinity of Ramp Creek has a foundation of cut stone which closely resembles that used by canal builders in the construction of locks and aqueducts. It is possible that the aqueduct, if used, was built of wood alone, and the passing of time has totally eliminated all traces of the structure. By line of sight alone, it seems improbable that [some] other means was used in preference to the aqueduct.

Central City

From Ramp Creek, the feeder proceeded due north to a settlement now known as Central City (around what is now the MARKET BASKET on Cherry Valley Road as it goes to join Main Street). In doing so, the canal passes along the western boundary of the [old] Pure Oil Refinery. Many traces of the canal have been destroyed by the construction of residences in "Central City." Here, again, the maps indicate that the canal did not deviate from a straight route. The feeder closely paralleled the macadam road (now Coffman Rd.) running to the refinery from Central City, and in many places, the excavation is clearly evident. From Central City, the feeder can be visually traced to the old Showman homestead where, making a general turn to the left and passing through a deep cut in the rock strata, the canal passed over an aqueduct, bridging Raccoon Creek. With the passing of years, this unique structure has become known as Showman's Arch. This "arch" has a peculiar and interesting history itself. When the canal fell into disuse, the arch was first used as a roadway. Then with the construction of an electric railroad (The Interurban, cf. *Historical Times* v.5, No.1, Winter 1991) between Granville and Newark, the old aqueduct became a way of transporting both wagons and rail coaches across the Raccoon. According to the present owner of the old Showman house, Mrs. C.C. Jones, the home was built during the days of the canal, and in time, the name of Showman became attached to the aqueduct.

The Turning Basin

From this point to the termination of the original canal at the old "turning basin", the feeder can still be followed easily. The "turning basin" was the name applied to the enlarged area at the foot of Clouse Lane which facilitated the rotation and unloading of canal boats in preparation for the return trip down the waterway. From the "turning basin," then, to the termination of the feeder at its junction

with the Ohio Canal, the Granville canal ran its course on one level without the assistance of a single lock. At least there is no evidence, either cartographic, historical, or visual to indicate the existence of a lock structure.

The author gave most careful attention to the location of the "feeder" ... [into] Granville. Not only is there little or no evidence, written or otherwise, to substantiate the route of the feeder from the "turning basin" to the Lancaster I Road] bridge, but erosion and flood action have removed all but a few traces of the canal in this area. However, by information gathered from present owners and natives of this particular area, the route has been fairly well established. In a few locations, traces can be seen and with the additional knowledge of Mr. Harrington Howe and Mr. "Wat" Thomas (men regarded as reliable sources of historical data concerning Granville and the vicinity) the writer believes that there is [little] doubt as to the course of the abandoned canal. Maps of this area are incomplete, and only the Bushnell map indicates the existence of an excavated canal west of the "turning basin."

Granville Pays

As stated in Hill, the people of Granville agreed to defray the cost of completing the canal from the old site of Paiges' "woollen" mill, near Clouse's Lane to Lancaster Bridge. To do this Hill mentions the fact that a dam, guard lock, lift lock, and about a half mile of canal had to be built. Keeping this in mind we shall again prowl. At the end of Clouse's Lane (the end of the original canal), a dam and a guard lock were constructed to maintain navigation. At present there is no traceable evidence of the dam built across Raccoon Creek from the north bank to the sharp bluff of Arbutus Ridge. but a fine specimen of what is believed to be part of the original lock can be seen on the north bank of the creek. This land is now owned by Mr. Irwin Davis, whose home is a landmark of the canal days. The date of the construction of the Davis house is not known, but it was standing during the operation of the Granville feeder which would indicate that it was built before 1840. The cellar of this homestead contains a large colonial "dutch oven", and it is thought that this basement room was used by canal men as a place of lodging. A wine cellar in an adjoining room undoubtedly added to their comfort, but this is a thought, not an established fact. The drinking habits of canalers are well known.

Mr. Davis has uncovered what he believes to be part of the original lock gate that once stood on his farm. The specimen is a large sawed plank, backed with two visible studs which are secured by hand wrought nails common to the canal period. This plank was found on the site of the old guard lock, so it is very possible that Mr. Davis is not mistaken. Also in his possession are several hand made spikes, approximately a foot in length, which are known to have been used by the original builder of the canal system. These specimens can be seen at the Davis home upon inquiry.



"Showman's Arch" The CherryValley Road Bridge over Raccoon Creek

On to Lancaster Road

From the guard lock, the feeder proceeded up Raccoon Creek until it met a large island which has been battered by innumerable floods. Here a cut was made across the island at creek level and a straight course was maintained until the feeder reached the eastern boundary of the present Harrington J. Howe farm southeast of Granville. At this location, a second lock whose earthworks are still plainly visible, raised the water level from the creek to the general height of land extending along the southern banks of Raccoon Creek. There are many indications, both from available map references and from visual traces, that the creek has changed its course since the original mapping of this general area. The Beers map in many places shows that the creek has had a tendency to shift northward, but these areas did not affect the operation of the original canal.

From the second lock, the feeder crossed the Howe farm, running parallel to the River Road, and in front of the Howe home it began a gradual turn to the right until it ran almost at a right angle to the creek. ~Mr. Howe states that a building, torn down by him several years ago, was used as a

warehouse during the canal era. Also at the same location, he further implies, was a flour mill which operated during the same time. The warehouse was probably used for the storage of wheat and grain during inoperative periods of the canal. If the land is viewed carefully, the path of the feeder can be traced across this flat plain. The land has been cultivated for many years, but the depression of the canal is still visible.

Reaching Raccoon Creek, the canal again followed the natural water course of the creek until it reached Lancaster bridge. At the point of juncture of creek and canal, a log dam was erected to maintain a constant level of water and to establish the depth of water needed to render the creek navigable. Mr. "Wat" Thomas informed the writer that he knew of the existence of the old dam which he believes was constructed of sycamore logs. The map of this area found in Bushnell's *History* further substantiates the use of such a dam.

Navigation ceased at the Lancaster bridge, and at this location a slaughter house and a warehouse once stood (cf. Receipt of canalman Warren Moulton cited in Philosopher of Mt. Parnassus.)² During the operation of the canal, boats would receive and unload cargo at this point. Mr. Thomas, who has maintained an interest in the old canal through the years, indicates that near the site where the feeder entered Raccoon Creek south of Maple Grove Cemetery, a brick and

a charcoal factory operated during the canal days. Even occasionally now, one may extract a broken brick or a bit of charcoal from the soil of that area, but the buildings themselves have long vanished.

The water level in this portion of the canal was susceptible to many variations, from all available reports. Mr. Thomas recalls that during a drought in the summer of 1935, he remembered a tale heard by him as a boy concerning a similar lack of rainfall in 1835 when the feeder was in full operation. The story goes that a canaler was once held at Granville by lack of navigable water in the feeder. One night during a "revival" meeting he prayed fervently for enough water to float his boat down to the Ohio Canal. Strangely enough, it did rain that night, but it not only rained, it poured. In fact, it rained so much that the creek overflowed its banks, and when the boatman awoke the next morning, his vessel had disappeared down the creek. The truth of this tale is doubtful, but it is representative of the type of story that grew out of the canal period.

The Demise of the Canal

The dates of operation of the Ohio feeder canal are not easily ascertained, and a few deductions are necessary to establish the approximate date of the opening and closing of this branch. The Ohio Canal was [dedicated] at the site of "Fourmile" lock on July 4, 1825, and the Granville feeder was opened to navigation about 1832³. Although Hill maintains that the canal was abandoned in 1838 when the Granville Furnace (cf. *Historical Times* v.11, No.3, Summer 1997) ceased operation, there is some evidence that the canal operated as late as 1870 when the Atlantic and Lake Erie Railroad, later called the Ohio Central, was constructed from Heath to Granville. Both "Wat" Thomas and Harrington Howe remember when water stood in the old canal, and both seem to think that 1838 was not the actual date of closing. Perhaps commercial traffic in the Granville feeder did lose momentum after the furnace closed down, but it would seem that navigation was kept open until a much later date.

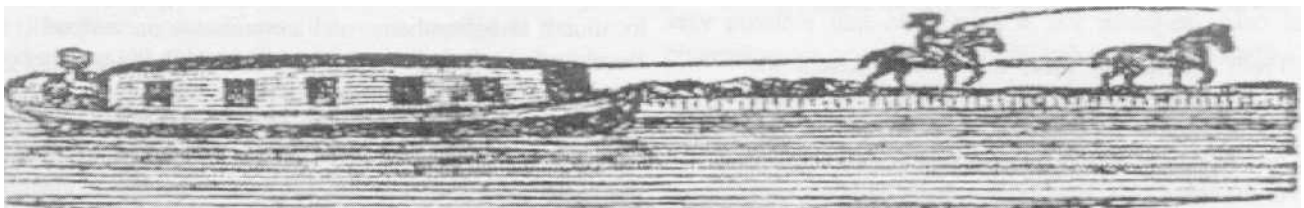
This account has been designed to acquaint the reader with the general route and landmarks of the Granville feeder, and the illustrations and maps appended to this material are planned to give more specific attention to the actual course of the canal. A study of this abandoned waterway will indicate that the years have not been kind to it, and traces of the feeder are constantly diminishing in number. It is, therefore, my hope that this paper will keep alive some of the remembrances of this historical mode of transportation that did so much [for] the development of this particular area.

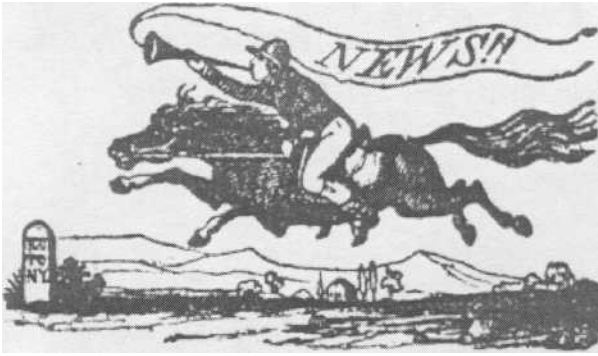
Albert Watson Davison, Jr.
Spring 1950

Albert Watson Davison, Jr. graduated from Denison University in 1950, majoring in History. This article is taken from his senior thesis that was completed under the direction of William T. Utter. He particularly acknowledges as well, his father, Dr. A.W. Davison, who grew up in St. Albans township and the Granville area. Local residents in 1949, Harrington Howe and "Wat" Thomas, were also special sources of information.

Notes:

- Hill, N.N., Jr., History of Licking County: A.A. Graham Newark, OH (1881).
- Beers, F.W., Atlas of Licking County, Ohio: Beers, Soule & Co. New York (1866).
- Kilbourn, John, "10th Annual Report of the Board of Canal Commissioners," cited in The Ohio Canals.
- In 1950 as this was written: more difficult today.
- Bushnell, Henry, History of Granville: Hann & Adair Columbus, OH (1889).
- White, Charles Browne, The Philosopher of Mount Parnassus: Denison University, Granville, OH (1948).





Old Colony Burying Ground News

The annual Old Colony Walking Tour was held on June 3^d, a beautiful early summer evening. Visitors came to see the progress on restoration and to tour in groups and meet several of Granville's early residents who were portrayed by costumed volunteers. Featured this year were Theophilus Rees (1747-1826), John Paige Whipple (1817-1824), Sereno Wright (1799-1858) and his wife Fanny (1754-1858), Hannah Graves (1762-1839) with her husband Roswell (1757-1850), Olive Woodworth (1829-1838), and Joseph Woodard, Sr. (1769-1851).

It was especially interesting to many of the visitors to note that Virginia Gakle, her great great, great, great granddaughter, portrayed Hannah Graves, one of the original settlers of Granville. Joseph Woodard, Sr. and his sons carved many of the gravestones in the Old Colony.

The Fannins were back in early June to conserve more of our old gravestones. They worked on 33 during their 10 day stay, many of them near the new D.A.R. oak tree and seating area. Any members who have not seen this part of the cemetery lately, should walk through and admire the progress!

We are grateful to the Village of Granville for quickly replacing the flagpole. The old one rusted through and fell to the ground just two weeks before Memorial Day. The Village crews obtained one and had it up so that the flag could fly on that holiday.

The Fannins will return in early August and work by our corps of volunteers continues on a regular schedule. All citizens of Granville are invited to help with this important historic restoration. There are job for all sizes, strengths and interests. Call the Society at 587-395 I to ask for more information or to volunteer.

Editorial Board

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Send comments, suggestions
or inquiries to:

The Granville Historical Society
P. O. Box 129
Granville, OH 43023-0129

*This is the thirteenth year of publication for
The Historical Times.*

A Correction

Our sharp eyed readers have pointed out two errors in the Granville Golf Course article in the last issue. Inverness Golf Course is in Toledo, not in Cleveland. Alex Murray unfortunately died in February 1927, not in 1924 or 1925. The editors regret these errors and welcome your further scrutiny.

Board of Managers of the Granville Historical Society

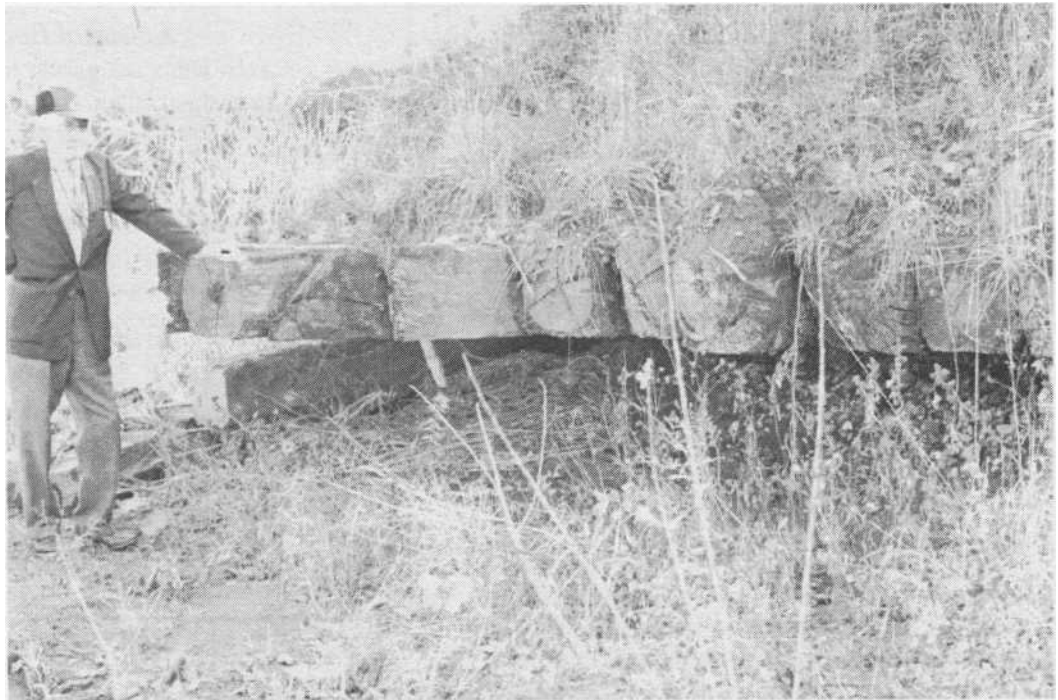
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From the Archives:

Richard H. Howe standing at the remains of the Ramp Creek Feeder Aqueduct built in 1832. High water exposed the large red beech timbers.



Photograph by William C. Stewart in 1965

More late breaking news . . .

Historical Marker is erected for Major General Charles Griffin

Society member Kevin Bennett spearheaded the project to place an Ohio Historic Marker at the family homestead of Major General Griffin, a Union hero during the Civil War. The new marker was set at the driveway of the Richard Neff residence on State Route 37 just west of town, and dedicated on Friday July 2, 1999.

The Neff family was "happy and pleased" to participate in the dedication. "He's found the unsung hero of Granville. We love to walk with the ghost of Gen. Griffin," said Dick Neff. Bennett credits Dick's sister, Betty Ford, for making the marker possible. She is a Denison alumna and attended the joint meeting of Denison alumni and the Granville Historical Society last winter when Denison President Dale Knobel talked about Griffin's Texas years. The next day she talked with Bennett about history and General Griffin. Her interest in history and the relationship with her brother's house were the catalysts in her contribution.

At the dedication, Bennett gave a brief account of Gen. Griffin's career, quoting a West Point classmate's assessment of the general which called him "cynical, quick to resent insults" and "bellicose." Griffin's tenacity, however, was needed when Texas citizens resisted the freeing of the slaves during reconstruction, where he was highly unpopular among white citizens. During the Civil War, Griffin is credited with cornering Gen. Lee's army at Appomattox, making a retreat impossible. He was with General Grant to accept Lee's surrender, which ended the war. "Those who answer our country's call are quickly forgotten after the conflicts are over," Bennett said. Granville's most noted historic military figure will no longer be so easily forgotten. "When he left these rolling hills to go to West Point in 1843, no one could have imagined the marvelous things he would achieve," Bennett said.

With thanks to Charles A. Peterson
and *The Granville Sentinel*

¹ See *The Historical Times*. Vol. XII No. 1, Winter 1998, for a full account of General Griffin's career.