

THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume V Number 4

Fall 1991

AN ACCOUNT OF TWO BEAVER DAMS IN THE NORTH WESTERN PART OF GRANVILLE TOWNSHIP

NOTE: This 1885 manuscript, in Charles Webster Bryant's handwriting, from the Society archives, reports his observations about some beaver dams near Granville.

RECENTLY, upon the invitation of our fellow member, Mr. Dr. E. W. Jones, I visited in company with him a beaver dam in this township and have deemed the general observations made as worthy of preservation in the archives of this Society. And here let me say once for all that this same Jones is most excellent company on a trip of this kind. He never opens his mouth without saying something: but what is more flattering and gratifying to a vainglorious man he is a most excellent listener - paying the best attention to all that is said as though matters of vital importance were dependent thereon. Long live Jones-may his tribe increase.

The day chosen was perfection its self for an expedition of this sort. It was one of those mellow hazy days that in the late fall are rapidly becoming scarcer and more scarce. All nature seemed in a plethoric lethargic state—the natural sequence of a bountiful yield of the fruits of the field. The red winged black birds were gathered in a committee of the whole

in the tops of the swamp alders preparatory to their autumnal pilgrimage. The killdeers ran ahead of us and

cried out to know by what authority we had invaded their domain. An occasional whirr told us that a quail had been near but was gone. Even the round glad faced pumpkin looked out from among the pigeon grass of the neglected cornfield as if to say "a fine day gentlemen." While the sleek full-bellied porker scarcely uttered a grunt of regret when roused from feeding on mast in the woods.

Our route out from the village was upon the Mt. Vernon road as far as Moses Goodrich's thence through the "New Road" to Burgh Street and from that point across the fields in a Northwesterly direction. The intersection of the aforesaid New Road with Burgh Street is about on the dividing ridge between the waters of the Raccoon and the waters of Brushy Fork. After crossing Burgh Street we encountered "cat swamps": such as are commonly found on dividing crests: the waters from which may, with very little inducement, be led into either stream.

Upon the east part of the farm of Wm. Richies **Esq.** we noted a magnificent specimen of the Burr Oak that would girth some eighteen feet and is about sixty feet to the first large limbs.



Charles W. Bryant.

Founder of the Granville Historical Society

We wish here to record our regret that the cupidity of man has made way with all our magnificent original forests. Why could we not have had preserved to our day one **hundred** acre lot in all this township in the condition it was in when Timothy Rose, Timothy Spelman and Job Case came here to spy out the land. Such a park would be something for Granville to be justly proud of.

Continuing north and west we were soon upon the site of the dam which is upon lot # 6, range # 7 of the Licking **Company's** survey in this township of Granville - which is township # 2, range # 13 of the U.S. Military Lands. This lot was first owned by Zadock Cooley a member of the Licking Co. who so far as I can learn never lived here. The first settler upon the lot I believe to have been Ormand Rose a soldier of the war of 1812 and a descendant from the common ancestry of the Rose families of this town and of old Granville, Mass. The present owner and occupant of this lot is Rev. Benjamin Jones.

The dam is located some 800 or 1000 ft. east from Mr. Jones house on Lowdan St. It forms an irregular curve trending in a general N.W./S.E. direction with the convexity towards the southwest. A ditch of some 6 or 8 ft. deep at the dam drains its water to the north east. The land to the S.W. of the dam where the pond or lake once existed is now all tillable: but has been largely brought under cultivation within the memory of my coinvestigator Mr. Jones. It is difficult to estimate at this date the height to which the beavers raised their structure but it was our judgement that it would measure four, five, and possibly six feet at different points. The cunning displayed by these sagacious animals yet appears at this dam in two ways

1st: The beavers took advantage of a natural strait to aid them in construction thus reducing the volume of their work to a minimum and

2nd: They build the convexity of the dam up stream thus securing the greatest possible resistance with the materials used. The dam was probably about 250 or 300 ft. in length though it is difficult to now determine where the natural ridge ceases and the artificial begins. Leaving this dam at our back and taking an Easterly and afterwards a South Easterly course we followed up the banks of a ditch that partially drains a large brush swamp on the East. part of Madison Gregory's farm and the West part of the Thompson lands.

Here in the woods not far from the South line of Rev. Benj. Jones lot and yet upon it our fellow member Mr. Dr. E. W. Jones discovered a second beaver dam and I desire here to place it upon record that our Jones is the first man who ever brought this dam into public notice. This last dam is not so large as the one first described but is in a

fair state of preservation and there can be no doubt as to its authenticity. Its general direction is N.E./S.W. In the woods near by are other ridges that may have been the work of the same builders. If other beaver dams exist in this township I know not where they are but sincerely trust that some one from this society will at an early date trace out and record them.

But the beavers, where are they? It would be of interest to know at how late a date these animals were found in the region. I regret I have no data that will help to answer this question. I know not whether they were here as late even as the coming of the colony in 1805. Furs formed the staple of traffic between the Indians and whites and beaver skins were ranked among the choicest of furs. Doubtless this section was laid under tribute for furs and peltry long before any permanent settlements were made here. The hardy French traders made long trips into the Indian country with goods to exchange for skins while on the other hands the Indians would make long journeys with their merchandise to reach the posts of the traders. It is recorded that before 1795 a trading post had been established at Montour's point on the Licking a few miles below the site of the present city of Newark. The beaver, as is customary with the rodents, fought only in the defensive and all his skill and planning and building tended in the same direction.

But it was a hopeless fight: succumb he must before the combined attacks of Indian hunters supported and urged on by the insatiable demands of the advancing higher civilization which we are supposed to represent. He was exterminated and we now view his works as among the "has beens" well worthy of historical note and mention. From information received since the above was written I am led to believe that the dams visited by Mr. Jones and myself are only a part of a series that extended along the little swamp stream northward toward Brushy Fork. Further inquiry and examination into this subject are now in order.

Near the dam first visited it was my good fortune to pick up a small stone skiver such as the Indians are said to have used in removing fat and flesh from skins. It occurred to me that a biography of him who made and used this tool together with his genealogy wrought out after the manner prescribed for members of the G. O. Hist. Soc. would be matter well worthy of preservation. But so many moons have passed by since this Mr. Redskin for the last time pillowed his head on mother Earth that I fear this information is forever lost: and if it is at this late day reproduced it must be by some one more familiar with Indian lore than

Oct. 1885

Yours Faithfully
Chas. W. Bryant

TO SEEK, TO FIND, AND BE BOWLED OVER BY YOUR ANCESTORS

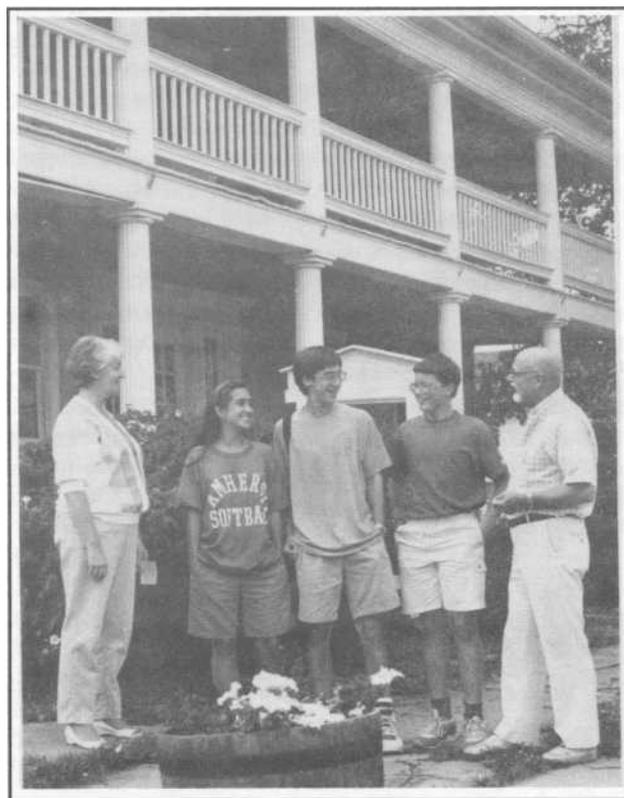
Preamble: My brother, Lawrence Myers, now living in Tulsa, OK, owns the "family Bible" which succeeds to each Lawrence in a generation of the family. We have been aware of the family genealogy only from the records in Onawa, Iowa, where my father grew up in a family of four brothers and sisters. Extensive search by me and my siblings of burial records and cemetery sexton's ledgers provided excellent information about that much of the Lawrence Myers (my father) origins in Iowa, but did not go back from there. The family Bible had in its vital statistics records the names with birthdates, marriages, and deaths in a rather disorganized fashion. Notation in the front of the Bible, however, was "Lawrence Myers, Sunbury, Ohio, December 1827," adding the figure \$4.25 which seemed to be the price of that large tome. At my request, my brother photocopied all the vital statistic pages and the front notations, so I could try to trace the family back from Iowa.

The Procrastinating Stage

After moving to Ohio it was not convenient for me to immediately seriously start the family tracing, but I did look through Ohio histories in the Denison Library and other local places, checking on "Sunbury" as a settlement hoping to find some reference which might pinpoint my forebears. About all I discovered was there are two towns named Sunbury in Ohio — one nearby in Delaware County, and the other near Dayton in Montgomery County. Dates of founding were not at issue, so my conclusion was that either could be the place where the Bible had been purchased. Whether or not family members resided in such a town was not evident.

I sought advice from various people locally about both the settlement of Sunbury(s) and the method by

which I might begin to track this line of the family. Both the Delaware County Historical Society and the Ohio Historical Society were suggested, and I was given excellent advice on how to proceed to locate a family in the genealogical centers associated with those agencies — including references to the availability of Church of Latter Day Saints extensive genealogy compendia.



Polly Horn, head of Sunbury's genealogical collection, with Erica and David Myers, Eben Kenah, and Gail Myers.

Being pessimistic about locating such old family records in either place, and further assuming it was a fifty-fifty chance that any such records would be in that other Sunbury way over by Dayton, I was not eager to embark on what looked to me like a very laborious and frustrating search. This family search (after my Onawa, Iowa experience) could turn out like my library researches which have taken weeks and months, and which have a tendency to be so absorbing that I can't attend to other aspects of professional or personal life. So I kept putting it off. I planned one trip after another to the genealogical center at the Ohio Historical Society and each time something else, more pressing, came up.

The Search Actually Starts

On Wednesday, June 12, partly to belatedly start my ancestor hunt, and partly to find an activity which the "family" could do, I loaded up daughter Erika (a rising junior at Amherst), son David (a rising eighth grader at Granville Middle School) and his friend Eben Kenah into the car and headed for the Ohio Historical Society.

David and Eben could look at the displays while Erika (who is very interested in our family history) and I would go to the third floor and start looking up the Myers clan.

But on the way, why not stop in this nearby Sunbury

and see if there is a cemetery or a village record center where we might discover some hint of the Lawrence Myers who spent his \$4.25 on a Bible there in 1827. We had enough of us to search a graveyard if we found a likely looking one, and Sunbury was not much out of the way to drive.

With minimum expectations we pulled into the town square in Sunbury. A large official looking brick structure stands in the center of the square and, although we did not know what it represented, it looked official enough so the village constable or some other resident functionary could direct us to an old burial ground or local records (although I had heard most of the town records had already been moved to the county seat in Delaware).

It turned out to be a library we walked into. The lady at the desk asked if she could help, and we stumbled around a bit before hitting on the possibility there were historical writings available in this place. Sure enough. She indicated a shelf which had the genealogical records of the village.

Erika and I pulled out the volume about "People" in Sunbury and turned to the index of names. F's, G's past the L's to the M's and the end of the M's and there in very clear words was "Myers, Lawrence, co-founder of Sunbury."

We nearly whooped out loud; grabbed our other two travelers and showed them the entry— partly to confirm it for ourselves.

Shaking our heads, grinning silly smirks at each other, we looked for the other co-founder and discovered it was Myers, William, a younger brother.

Erika, who had the Bible records in her hand, said it would be good if we could find Elizabeth, the wife of Lawrence. Then a voice behind us said it was really "Eliza" and not "Elizabeth" we were looking for. That voice turned out to be Polly Horn, acting librarian and head of the genealogical collection — and avid chronicler of the Myers founders.

Striking It Rich

In the next few hours we traded stories with Polly and shared our family Bible notations in return for her documents about the Myers founders. She explained how the two brothers had come to this place, started a village in 1816, each one owning part — Lawrence north of the square and William south of the square. At that time Lawrence was 22 and William 20. Both had come out from Pennsylvania — likely from Forty Fort, near Wilkes

Barre — where the earlier Lawrence Myers and his brother William settled after service in the Revolutionary War. That Lawrence had no children, but William's larger family sent his namesake west along with many others from that Pennsylvania region. Galena and Sunbury were settled about the same time — according to Polly, the Galena settlers were more conservative, older, more staid, and the Sunbury founders and settlers were much younger, venturesome, less law abiding, and today might be called hippies.

More wonderful stories and a tour of the Lawrence Myers house (a stage coach inn) owned by the library, all were forthcoming with Polly and we finally quit pumping her about the history of this great, great grandfather's exploits. She has promised a look at extensive family documents when I next visit and she copied the material I have from the founder's Bible.

Directed to the Berkshire cemetery (four miles west of Sunbury), we found the graves of most of the people listed in the Bible — headstones in good condition, and the carefully maintained grounds made beautiful pictures, including of a brass plaque erected near Lawrence Myer's grave in 1967 by the Sunbury Sesquicentennial Commission. Brother William and his family are buried in the Sunbury cemetery.

As this year marks the 175 years of the founding of Sunbury, there will be a celebration of Settlement Days of Sunbury/Galena from June 30 through July 8. A community parade on July 6 will have as its Honorary marshal, the great, great grandson and namesake of the co-founder, one Lawrence Myers (my brother) who has arranged to come from Tulsa for the event.

Epilogue: This is a story of someone with the most modest expectations walking, by merest chance, into an incredible wealth of sudden information about his ancestors. I'm still sorting out the deluge of data from only my first contact with Polly Horn's mother-lode of Myersism-in-Sunbury. The amount of data available just about the family in Sunbury is rich to overwhelming. Next there is tracing and accurately filling in my computer genealogy program further back than I could have hoped. Erika is pursuing the related Eliza Brown family connection from her base in Amherst, Massachusetts, and we will be digging into the Myers family records going back to Forty Fort, Penn., and beyond into Germany if we can. That day we never did drive on to the Ohio Historical Society; but maybe we'll get there later.

Gail E. Myers
June 1991

GOOD NEWS!

The Old Colony Burying Ground will be restored! The Granville Township Trustees and the Granville Village Council have united to form a Union Cemetery for operation and maintenance of the Old Colony. Each governing body passed a resolution and then met in joint session in the Old Academy Building on August 28 to elect the Board of Union Cemetery Trustees. The law requires three trustees, one from each of the governing bodies and one elected from the community. Elected at the meeting were Eric Hones from the Township Trustees, Daniel Freytag from the Village Council and Florence Hoffman. The trustees are now in the process of organization.

The \$ 91,000 grant from the Opera House Settlement Fund will be used for restoration of gravestones. The Village will contribute approximately \$ 7000 each year for maintenance. The Council appropriated \$ 3500 for the remainder of 1991. Additional donations of both time and money will be required to effect the restoration. The Historical Society's Old Colony Committee will continue to be active and will advise the Union Cemetery Trustees.

GRANVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

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It has been nearly two years since the effort began to restore this historic cemetery and the Society has borne the cost during this time. Brush has been cleared, a grid has been laid out, and documentary photography to record the position of stones is proceeding. The Fannin-Lehner Restoration Specialists of Concord, Massachusetts were hired to assess the condition of each stone. The available records of the Old Colony have been entered into a computer database. The garden clubs have put in flower beds.

Please contact one of the Cemetery Trustees or leave a message at the Society if you can help. There are jobs for all ages and skills and with the help of the community this historic burying ground will become a place of beauty and a pride to the community.

SUMMER INTERNS INTERVIEW GRANVILLE RESIDENTS

As part of a project in oral history, two college students, Eric Evans and Janet Tebbin spent several weeks interviewing Granville residents regarding aspects of their experience living in Granville. Dick Shiels was in charge of these projects. The tape recordings are part of the Society's permanent collection. We hope to publish several essays based on these interviews in THE HISTORICAL TIMES.

The Board of Management was gratified with the work undertaken by these Summer Interns and hopes to sponsor a similar program in 1992.

NEW MEMBERS OF EDITORIAL BOARD FOR THE HISTORICAL TIMES

Maggie Brownfield and Bob Seith are working with the Editorial Board in arranging the issues of the Newsletter. Maggie and Bob bring wide-ranging computer and editorial skills to the Newsletter team of editors.

The enhanced format for this issue has profited much from Maggie and Bob's expertise.



CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

The Roundtable continues to meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 in the evening. Scheduled presentations for the next few months include the following:

November 19: "The Andersonville Prison," with Walt Gowans as the discussion leader. Denison "D" Room.

December 17: "**Chickamauga**," with Todd Fell as the discussion leader. Denison "D" Room.

January 21: E. Chris Evans will present his re-enactment of Leonidas H. Inscho, the first Medal Of Honor recipient from Licking County. Old Academy Building.

February 18: Tom Hankins with a presentation on Civil War Surgery and medical work. Denison "D" Room.

Additional Spring meetings may include a discussion of *The Red Badge of Courage*, an account of Harpers Ferry, and a presentation on the Copperhead trials in Indiana.

THE HISTORICAL TIMES is a quarterly publication included with membership in the Granville Historical Society and is sent to all members.

Questions, comments and suggestions may be sent to:

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Editorial Board: *Maxie* Brownfield, Florence Hoffman, Anthony Lisska, Samuel Schaff, Robert Seith

ANNUAL BANQUET

The annual fall meeting and banquet for the society was held in the lower level of the Presbyterian Church on Tuesday evening, November 12. Following the dinner, there were brief updates on some current projects of the Society, after which Paul Bennett read several of his narrative poems about Granville. Eleanor Jackson Hadnot prepared the banquet for the members of the society.

THE HISTORICAL TIMES RECOGNIZED BY OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On November 9, the Editorial Board of your quarterly newsletter accepted an "Outstanding Achievement" award presented at the annual meeting of the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums, which is affiliated with the Ohio Historical Society. Dick Shiels from the Board of Management nominated **THE HISTORICAL TIMES** for this award.

The editors are gratified and delighted to have the newsletter recognized as "outstanding" by the Ohio Historical Society. This issue completes the fifth volume of the publication.

LANDSCAPING PROCEEDS AT MUSEUM LAWN, OLD ACADEMY BUILDING

The Board of Management is pleased to report that two substantial bequests have been made to the society for the purpose of landscaping the front of the Museum building grounds and to enhance the lawns surrounding the Old Academy Building. Granville landscape architect, Kirsten Pape, has designed both areas with exceptional aplomb. These newly enhanced grounds will be part of Granville's contribution to the 1992 Ameri-flora project for central Ohio.

SEITH APPOINTED TO FILL TERM ON BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Bob Seith of Granville has been appointed by the Board of Management to replace Eric Jones on the Board. Eric has been elected a trustee of the Union Cemetery Board, and this entailed his resignation from the Board. Bob will complete Eric's term, which expires in 1992.



From the Archives

The north side of Broadway in downtown Granville, 1925.

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