

THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

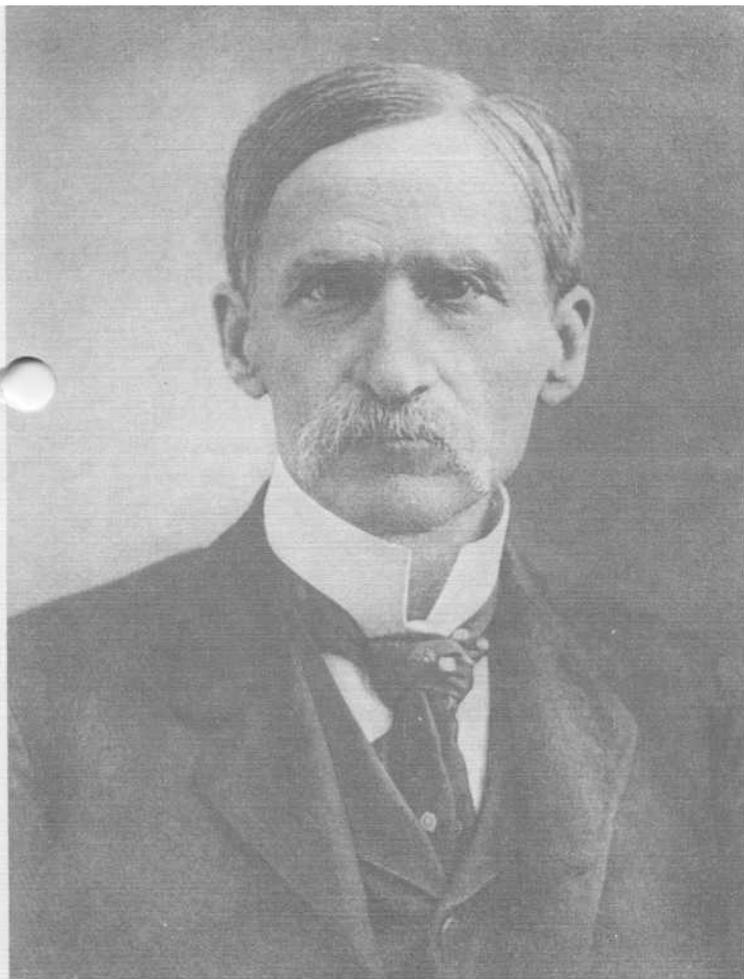
VOLUME IV NUMBER 4

FALL 1990

MORRIS SCHAFF: Author/Soldier/Historian/ Public Servant

West Point graduate and author of a book of local Licking County history, ETNA AND KIRKERSVILLE. Morris Schaff was born on December 28, 1840 on a farm in Etna Township. His parents were John Schaff and Charlotte Hartzell Schaff. Morris' father, known as "Squire Schaff", had taken part in the organization of Etna Township in 1833. In 1849, he bought a farm near Kirkersville. It was from this farm that Morris Schaff received the appointment from his Congressman, Samuel S. Cox, to West Point in 1858.

Schaff was commissioned a Second Lieutenant of Ordinance when he graduated from West Point in June, 1862. Bliss Perry, in writing a MEMOIR of him for the Massachusetts Historical Society [PROCEEDINGS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Volume 64, March 1932] wrote: "Although he seems not to have been an earnest mathematician, he ranked ninth in his class. He sat a horse well, was the champion broadswordman, sang in the choir and acquired a life long preference for the Episcopal service, swapped endless stories with his southern roommate, with Custer and the other joyous spirits of "D" Company, and in short, like his favorite Dick Steele of Oxford, won 'the love of the whole society'."



Morris Schaff

CML WAR EXPERIENCE

Young Morris Schaff became a First lieutenant in March, 1863, and served in the Rappahannock campaign. In 1864, when the Richmond campaign opened in May, Lieutenant Schaff was acting Aide-de-Camp to Major General Warren; he was brevetted to the rank of Captain. He served with General Hooker, General Meade and General Grant. These war experiences provided the material for three books Morris wrote and published in the early part of the twentieth century. Schaff resigned from the Army on December 31, 1871.

In 1868, Morris Schaff married Alice Page. Moving to Massachusetts, he served as Superintendent of the Berkshire Glass Works, owned by his father-in-law, from 1872-1893. He became known as General Schaff after he was appointed Brigadier General of the Massachusetts Militia in 1880. For twenty-six years he served on the State Gas and Electric Light Commission of Massachusetts. He was known to be fearless, fair-minded and incorruptible honest.

AUTHOR

Morris Schaff embarked upon a writing career late in life. He published what became his best known book, THE SPIRIT OF OLD WEST POINT, in 1907. This book appeared originally as a series of articles for THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. An interesting sidelight is that several years ago when Douglas MacArthur was pictured on the front of LIFE MAGAZINE. Morris Schaff's book on West Point was seen to be one of those on General MacArthur's desk. His first book, ETNA AND KIRKERSVILLE, was published in Boston in 1905.

The next few years witnessed a flourish of writing activity. Morris published three additional books dealing with the Civil War. THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS appeared in 1910, following its earlier serial publication in THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. In 1912, his seventy-second year, Schaff published both THE SUNSET OF THE CONFEDERACY and JEFFERSON DAVIS: HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY.

A widely respected gentleman, Morris Schaff received several honors, among which were the Presidency of the Alumni Association of West

Point in 1912, the LL.D degree from Williams College in 1913 and the Litt. D. from Otterbein in 1914. Schaff had undertaken one year of study at Otterbein before going to West Point.

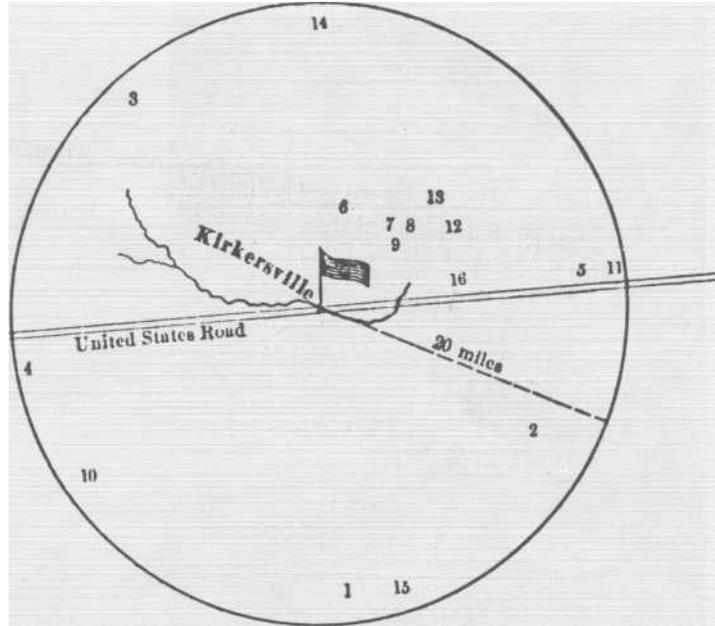
Morris Schaff died at home in Southboro, Massachusetts, on October 19, 1929.

NE FAMOUS KIRKERSVILLE DIAGRAM

The diagram which appears in this article is from Schaff's book, ETNA AND KIRKERSVILLE. Bliss Perry said of the book: "It has the freshness of the early world, a passion for the fields and woods not yet wholly conquered by plough and axe, and haunted by wild pigeons and wild turkeys; a keen eye for the humors of frontier life; a romantic, patriotic thrill in witnessing the westward migration along the National Road."

The diagram gives a clear picture of the contribution made by a number of men from Licking, Fairfield and Perry Counties to the Civil War. Coming from the rural Ohio village of Kirkersville, Morris was often the brunt of jokes from his classmates at West Point. Several years after the Civil War, when Morris was stationed at the Watertown Arsenal near Boston, the commanding officer gave a dinner to honor General Sherman when he visited there. At the dinner, after Sherman had asked the major sitting next to him about his father [a political figure in Pennsylvania], he turned to Morris and said: "Well, Captain, where are you from?" Some of the men present had been classmates of Morris at West Point and naturally expected Sherman to come up with some keen comment about Kirkersville. So they were more than somewhat surprised when Morris answered: "General, I have the honor to come from the adjoining county to yours. You are from Fairfield, I am from Licking, but I don't suppose you have ever heard of my town, Kirkersville." To which Sherman replied with enthusiasm, "Kirkersville! Why I've been there many a time. I know it well. It had the biggest wild pigeon roost in the world." He then commented on the number of officers in the Civil War who had come from a twenty mile radius of Kirkersville.

Samuel D. Schaff
Granville Historical Society



1. Lt. Gen. W. T. Sherman.
2. Lt. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan.
3. Maj. Gen. W. T. Rosecrans.
4. Maj. Gen. Irwin McDowell.
5. Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis, who won the great battle of Elkhorn.
6. Maj. Gen. Charles Griffin, who **commanded** the 5th Corps at **Appomattox**, and was one of the General Officers **to parole Lee's Army**.
7. Maj. Gen. Charles R. Woods, Graduate of West Point, Commanded a Division in Sherman's Army.
8. Brig. Genl. B. W. Brice, Graduate of West Point, Paymaster General.
9. W. B. Woods, Associate Justice of U. S. Supreme Court.
10. Allen G. Thurman, U. S. Senator, of national reputation.
11. Samuel S. Cox, Member of Congress, of national reputation.
12. Willard Warner, Brigadier General in the War of Rebellion, Senator from Alabama.
13. James F. Wilson, long a distinguished member of Congress from Iowa.
14. James B. Howell, U. S. Senator from Iowa.
15. Thomas Ewing, Secretary of the Treasury under Harrison, and of the Interior under Taylor.
16. Ed. Roye, President of Republic of Liberia.

CHARLES BROWNE WHITE ON MORRIS SCHAFF

In his THE PHILOSOPHER OF MOUNT PARNASSUS, Charles Browne White writes about Morris Schaff in the following way: "His military record is without blemish, but his greatest honor, in my opinion, is his authorship of ETNA AND KIRKERSVILLE, a small book of 156 pages but a very valuable contribution to social history, giving a vivid and authentic picture of pioneer life in central Ohio. General Schaff had seen enough of the world to acquire a sound judgment of human values, and his scholarly mind and refined literary taste gave him the ability to express his views

with clearness and precision. Moreover, he had an intense love for the section where he was born and brought up, and he wrote about its people and customs with such sympathy and charity that his book is suffused with charm. I recommend this history highly. A perusal of its pages will reward you richly." [pp. 128-129]

[N.B. Several years ago, the Licking County Genealogical Society republished Morris Schaff's invaluable ETNA AND KIRKERSVILLE jointly with Henry Bushnell's HISTORY OF GRANVILLE. Presently this edition is out of print.]

A Victorian Masterpiece

The restored George T. Jones House



Connie Barskey chats with Dick and Louise Shiels.

The September Meeting of the Society featured a tour of the 1861 Jones House which has been meticulously restored by Constance Barsky and Steven Katz.



Steve playing the reed organ.



Slides showing stages of the restoration were shown in the Old Academy Building before the tour.



Bill Brasmer and Anne Grimes



The hosts in the parlor.



Betsy O'Neill talks with Connie,
Buck Sargent listens.



ANNUAL BANQUET

The annual Historical Society Banquet this year will be held on Tuesday evening, November 13, at 6:30. Because of the large turnout of members for the banquet over the last two years, the Board this year will hold the banquet in the larger Fellowship Room of the Presbyterian Church rather than the Old Academy Building.

Members have received a notice of the banquet from the Program Committee (Dick Shiels, Chair) along with a reservation form. The reservation form and payment (\$7.00) need to be returned prior to the banquet date. You may renew your membership with the same form. Annual dues for 1991 are \$5.00 per person. The amount is stated incorrectly on the form.

The Program Committee is pleased to announce that, following the dinner, Tom and Mary Hankins will present a Civil War interpretation of the common lives of soldiers and citizens. This is a very popular first person narrative of Civil War experiences. Dressed in period costumes, Tom recreates the role of a Confederate cavalry surgeon and Mary the role of a woman involved in the war. This promises to be a fine event in the tradition of Historical Society banquet presentations.

The Historical Times is included with membership and is sent to all members of the Society. Questions or comments may be sent to:

Editors

The Historical Times

P. O. Box 129

Granville, Ohio 43023

Editorial Board: Florence Hoffman, Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit, Samuel Schaff.

CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

The Civil War Roundtable sponsored by the Society began its second year of meetings on September 18. Kevin Bennett presented a fascinating account of the "Jacksonville Mutiny", a study resulting from his work at the National Archives.

The October meeting will take place in the Old Academy Building on Tuesday evening, October 23 at 7:00. The topic for discussion is James McPherson's article, "A War That Never Goes Away", which appeared in the March, 1990 issue of AMERICAN HERITAGE.

Our November meeting will coincide with the annual banquet of the Granville Historical Society on Tuesday evening, November 13. Following the banquet, Tom and Mary Hankins and their family will provide a rendition of "personal glimpses" from historically alive Civil War persons, both soldiers and common folks.

Our December meeting will feature Mitchell Snay, from Denison's Department of History, talking on the religious context of the South at the time of the Civil War. The Roundtable will meet in Lamson Lodge on the lower campus of Denison University on Tuesday evening, December 18, at 7:00. Lamson Lodge serves as our meeting place during the winter months.

The January meeting of the Roundtable will take place on Tuesday evening, January 15, at Lamson Lodge. The topic is a slide presentation of old photographs from various Civil War sources, especially the collection of Tim O'Sullivan. O'Sullivan was a student of Mathew Brady.

The Civil War Roundtable is open to all members of the Granville Historical Society. If you would like to be placed on the mailing list, drop a note to Tony Lisska in care of the Historical Society, Box 129, Granville. The normal meeting time for the Roundtable is 7:00-8:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month, September through June.

OLD COLONY UPDATE

Work continues at the Old Colony Burying Ground. The attractive flower beds on the slope along Main Street were designed and planted by Kirsten Pape and Greg Frazier. The plants were purchased from the Village Memorial Fund for Bill Chambers. Plantings within the cemetery must wait until we have located all the gravestones.

Documentary photography has begun in the completed sections of grid map of the grounds. We must record what is there now before straightening stones or temporarily moving them for repair. These photographs will be preserved as a permanent record of the Burying Ground at this time. A work day is planned to pull the turf away for the base of stones in the completed sections of the grid. Lawnmowers will not need to get as close to the stones, if the turf is not growing up on them. Watch for an announcement of the work day.

We have been able, already, to identify fragments of several stones using the record of inscription on monuments made by Charles Webster Bryant in 1886. We are certain that we will find buried stones and be able to identify them. The entry of Charles W. Bryant's record into the computer database is progressing.

As this issue goes to press, we have not yet received word of a decision by the Township Trustees on applications for the Opera House Settlement Funds. We hope that we may be granted funds to begin work on the gravestones. The time and effort of volunteers will still be needed, and indeed will be crucial to restoring the Old Colony to the condition that the pioneers buried there deserve.

WELSH HILLS CEMETERY MARKER DEDICATED

The photograph at right shows T. David Price, Kevin Bennett and David Neel standing near the monument to Civil War Medal of Honor soldier, Corporal John Shellenberger [Co. B, 85th Pa. Vol. Inf.], dedicated on October 13, 1990. Following the war, Corporal Shellenberger worked on various farms in the Granville area. He is buried in the Hartman family plot in the Welsh Hills Cemetery [Sec. 1, Lot 5].

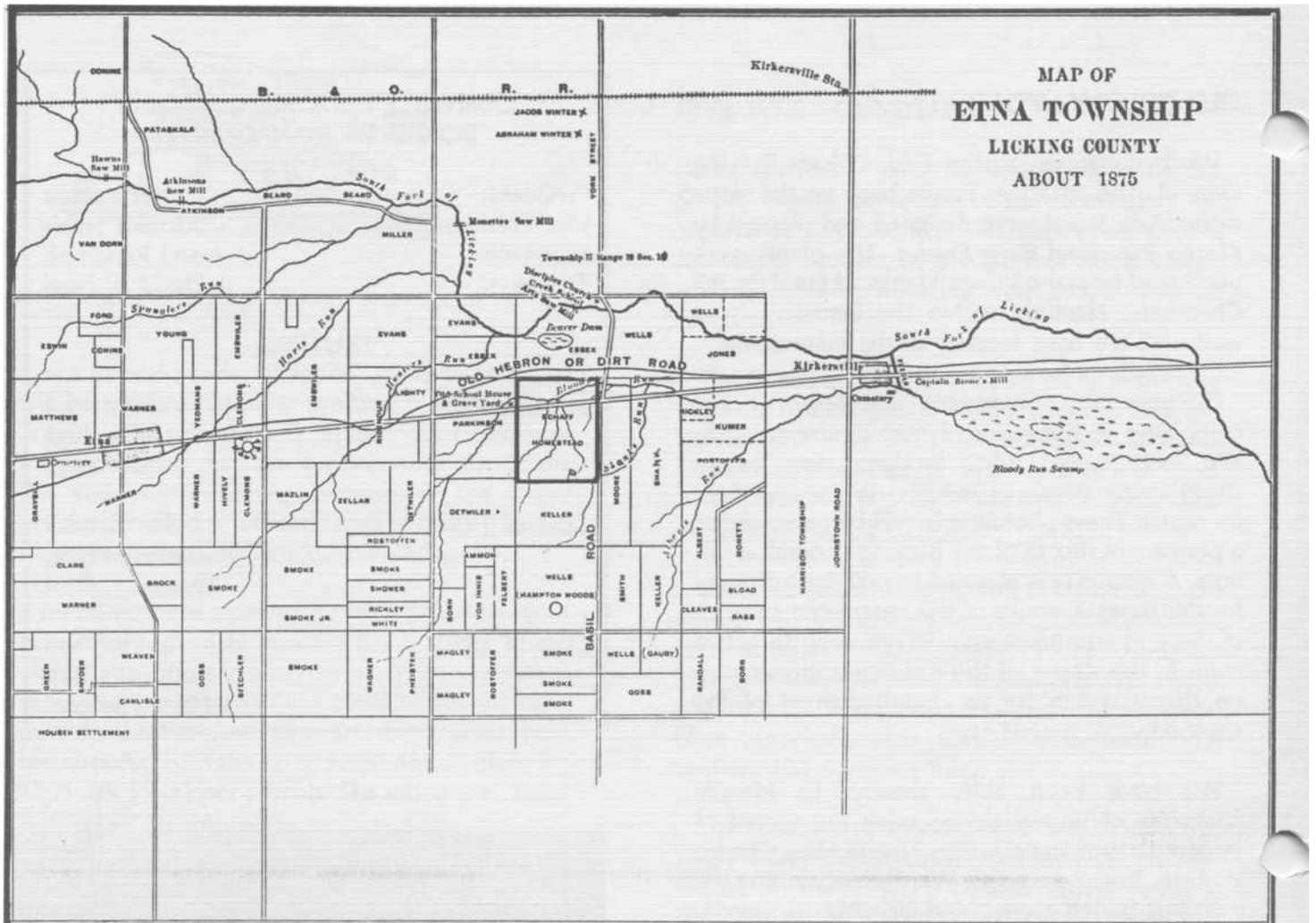
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From the Archives--

A map showing the east section of Etna Township, Licking County, Ohio about 1875.

A map of the township was included in Morris Schaff's book.



The Granville Ohio Historical Society
 Post Office Box 129
 Granville, Ohio 43023