

BAINBRIDGE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Bainbridge Township, Ohio

Summer 2007



1912 Photo from Vern Huff Album. Located at Crackel Road just east of Route 306

CENTREVILLE MILLS

Excerpts from a history

Centerville Mills and the Old Chillicothe Road

Written by Frederick A. Henry – Oct. 1946

“Circa: 1940’s – 1950’s A majority of members of the Cleveland YMCA would take their yearly outing of days or weeks at Centerville Mills. The campgrounds of about 140 acres are completely encircled by farmlands. No other equal area with a surface so pleasantly varied and a location both protected and accessible, could be more suitable for its purpose.

Situated partly in Original Lot No. 22 in Aurora, but mostly now in Lot No. 13 of Tract 3 in Bainbridge Township, the whole parcel is crossed by the highway which, running along the Portage-Geauga County line easterly from the Old Chillicothe Road is now known as Crakel (sic) Road in honor of the Associations beloved first promoter of this camp. Southwesterly through both

parcels runs a small branching creek, broadened into a little lake near its mouth and merged by a dam into a pond at Crackel Road. Below the pond is a deep rocky gorge several rods long, with a precipitous head and sides, and leading southwesterly to the nearby Aurora fork of the Chagrin River into which the creek flows.

Two stations on the Erie Railroad are each about three miles from this site – Aurora to the southeast and Geauga Lake to the west; but there are very few human habitations within a mile and a half of the camp.

It was not always so. Before the advent of the railroad in 1856, a small but flourishing industrial community had here grown up known as Centerville Mills. (It was always so spelled, high up on the front of the old grist-mill, with the first word curved over the second.) Mr. William A. Benjamin, some of whose kindred for generations have dwelt just east of the mill property, estimates that years ago within a radius of less than two

miles, there were over fifty houses, a brick yard, tannery, blacksmiths and shoemakers shops, gristmill and carding or woolen mill; also a cooperage where they made barrels, wooden utensils and bowls.

Around 1811, settlers here bought land from the Connecticut Western Reserve. Pioneers might see Indian families strolling along the Chagrin trail west of the river south of Pettibone Road. By that time there were perhaps three dozen white families within twenty-five square miles of Bainbridge.

Chillicothe Road was opened through the Reserve in 1802. In 1817, Fred Henry's great grandfather, Simon Henry was driving his team and wagon to his purchase in Bainbridge when he got stuck in the mire of this highway a mile north of Centerville.

The Land Company granted land and loans for building grist mills and sawmills to attract craftsmen. From Aurora Station to Solon the Chagrin River flowed past five sawmills and gristmills. The first one was at Centerville in 1830. The waterpower came from an eastern tributary of the Chagrin River which flowed into Chagrin by the bridge on Chillicothe where two towns, two counties, two streams and two roads converge.

John Jackson established a log home here in 1812. He had a carding mill. Later he built a frame house on the east side of Chillicothe, near the bridge. Members of the Jackson family have occupied that house for 130 years. Jackson was a colonel in the militia, a member of the State Senate in 1843-44 and at the time of anti-slavery, his house was a station of the Underground Railroad. There is a Jackson family burying ground west of Chillicothe Road, north of the river.

Freeman Howard built a grist mill in 1813. It was christened Centreville Mills. A fragment of this original mill still stands in the flat rock bed of the stream near the waterfall.

The first home on the south side of the bridge was a log cabin built by a shoemaker named Slater. He sold it to Freeman Howard, who built what is now known as the White House.

The community had a district schoolhouse which figured largely in church life, especially the Aurora Baptist Church.

In the early 1900's, Centerville Mills branched out into other lines of business – picnics, skating parties at the little lake, a pavilion for dances and a photo gallery.

In the winter of 1901-02, the mill property was sold to the brothers, Alton and Otis Eggleston. Alton lived with



The Mill at Centerville Mills from down river side.
1917 photo courtesy of Vern Huff

his parents in the Carleton (White) house and ran the mill. Otis remained at the old homestead a half mile north and farmed. The Egglestons ran the business for ten years and in June 1911 sold to Dr. Leigh Baker, a friend of the YMCA, for whose use he made the purchase. On August 10, 1911, the mill property, with another parcel of the original Jackson land was conveyed to the Association and since then about 100 acres of adjacent land was added to the camp." A 264 acre tract of land situated at the intersection of Pettibone and Brewster Road and about 1 1/2 miles from the main Centerville Mills property was added in 1960.

The land was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Rankin and Mrs. Frank E. Taplin Jr. The gift consist of two adjoining parcels of land which includes a lodge, farm house and buildings, a wading pool and five small lakes. The Aurora branch of the Chagrin River runs through the property.

The land was used as a summer home for both the Rankin and Taplin families as a summer retreat. The gift to the YMCA was given in hope of preservation as a place of natural beauty, providing healthy facilities for the young people of Cleveland.

Needing money the YMCA sold it to developers for the River Edge development.

Rankin is a partner in the law firm of Thompson, Hine and Flory. The Rankins lived on River Road in Hunting Valley. Taplin was a former assistant to the president of Princeton University and a director of Scurry-Rainbow Oil Ltd.. And North American Coal Corp. They are former Clevelanders. They now live in Princeton, N.J..

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Meetings of the Bainbridge Township Historical Society are held the second Wednesday of the month (September through June) at 7:30 p.m. in the Burns-Lindow Building at the corner of Route 306 and Bainbridge-Solon



Town Hall—Circa 1914
Now—Burns Lindow Bldg

Centerville Mills News Clip at right was taken from Chagrin Falls Exponent, March 17th issue, 1950.

Alice Wilbur Patterson was the correspondent for the Centerville Mills News and the South Group.

Bainbridge at the time had ladies groups that were part of the Bainbridge Community Church group. There was an East, Center, and a South Group.

Mrs. Patterson was also the writer of the Bainbridge chapter of the 1950 edition "History of Geauga County".

Need a gift for someone from your home town? Bainbridge Twp. Historical has a nice mug with a picture of the historical Bissell House on it for \$5.00 and also has a unique 10" frisbee that folds into a pocket pouch 3 1/2" x 4" for \$2.00. Call Carol Malz at 543-5266 to purchase

**The First Flight of the Frisbee®
The History of the Frisbee**

Every object has a history, and behind that history an inventor, the person who thought it up first. Sometimes who was first can be a topic for hot debate: often several people independent of each other will all think of the same good idea at around the same time and will later have to argue "No it was me, I thought of it first." Many people have claimed to have invented the Frisbee.

The Frisbie Baking Company (1871-1958) of Bridgeport, Connecticut, made pies that were sold to many New England colleges. Hungry college students soon discovered that the empty pie tins could be tossed and caught, providing endless hours of game and sport. Morrison (after his split with Franscioni) produced a plastic Frisbie called the Pluto Platter.

With a deal signed, Wham-O began production (1/13/1957) of more Pluto Platters. The next year, the original Frisbie Baking Company shut down and coincidentally Fred Morrison was awarded a patent (Design patent 183,626) for his flying disc. Morrison received over one million dollars in royalties for his invention

Today the fifty year old Frisbee® is owned by Mattel Toy Manufacturers, only one of at least sixty manufacturers of flying discs. Wham-O sold over one hundred million units before the selling the toy to Mattel.

**
** **Just a Reminder—Annual dues are Payable in September but no later than December—\$10.00 for singles,**
** **\$20.00 for family. Life Membership—\$100.00. Make**
** **checks payable to Bainbridge Township Historical So-**
** **ciety. Pay Marge Cook at the meeting or mail to her**
** **at 116 Leaview Ln., Chagrin Falls, OH 44022.**
**

CENTERVILLE MILLS

CENTERVILLE MILLS, March 14 — The South Group had a White Elephant sale last Thursday afternoon at the home of Mrs. W. B. Troy.

Mrs. Vern Huff and Mrs. Wilber Patterson were in Chardon one day the past week.

Aunt Nora Giles is gaining slowly from her recent illness.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Foltz and family from Castalia are with Mr. and Mrs. Will Benjamin.

Mr. and Mrs. Burton Smith have bought a place in California and are going into chicken business.

Mrs. Alice Patterson attended the Hostess dinner last Tuesday at the home of Mrs. Ernest Parker in Chardon.

Mrs. Wilber Patterson and her mother, Mrs. Fred Smith were at the Flower Show in the city Friday.

Mrs. C. H. Imars of Bedford and Miss Bernice Post from Chagrin were Friday evening dinner guests of Mrs. Alice Patterson.

Mrs. Lucius Taylor of Solon and Mr. Taylor's daughter and family from Ashtabula Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Jackson from Cleveland were recent callers at the Patterson home.

Check out our web page www.bainbridgemory.org

December 12th, 2007: Our annual Christmas Party—More on this later.

November 14, 2007: Early Indians of Ohio. Learn about the native Indians that roamed Ohio's once dense woodlands and settled villages along rivers and lake-shores. Ann Dewald will be the speaker.

October 10, 2007: William Telling "the man and his mansion". The mansion is located in South Euclid, and Esther and Alfred Eich will be the speakers.



Our next meeting, September 12th, 2007, 7:30 P.M., at the Burns Lindow Building corner of Solon Bainbridge Road and Route 306. Helen Havlina—Part II—Taborville, also known as "DTJ". She is known as the historian of Taborville and will cover the period from 1940 onward.

Fall Meeting Schedule

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter
Marjorie Cook
116 Leaview Lane
Chgrin Falls, Ohio 44022

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