

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter

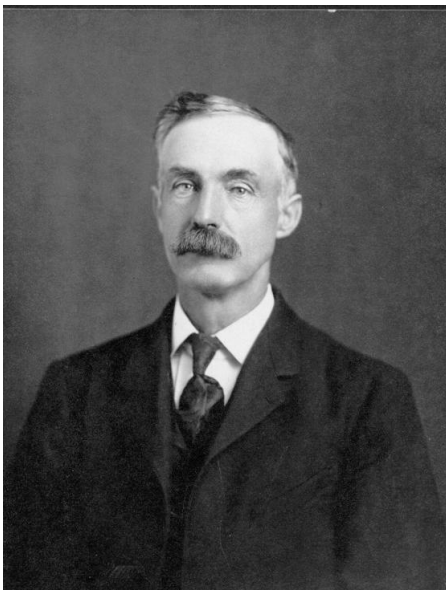
Volume 8, Issue 3/4

Bainbridge Township, Ohio, 44023

Fall/Winter 2013/2014

Early Peace and Order in Bainbridge Township

By Bill Takacs



Martin L. Miner

Expansion of the early colonies on the east coast brought early settlers to the Western Reserve in northeast Ohio. In these colonial times came disputes over land purchases, property lines, and an occasional need to restore community order. The justice of the peace in this period was responsible for arresting and arraigning citizens who violated moral or legal standards. By the early 1800s, the crimes handled by the justice of the peace often included drunkenness, adultery, and public disorder. Justices of the peace also served as county court staff and heard both grand jury and civil cases. The increasing number of criminal, slave, and tax statutes that were passed during the 1800s also broadened their enforcement powers.

Early Ohio state law provided for sheriff, constables and justice of the peace. Sheriffs were elected at the county level and constables and justice of the peace were used at the local level prior to the creation of police departments.

The first justice of peace elected in Bainbridge Township was John Fowler. Fowler came from Washington, Massachusetts with his wife and two sons in 1817, moving into the house that was left vacant by Enos Kingsley. He later purchased land, built a house, and moved into it in 1823. He later gave land to the township to be used as a cemetery, eventually named "Fowler Cemetery" and located on Haskins Road. His two year old grandson is buried there.

The next justice of the peace was William Howard, son of William R. Howard who came from Washington, Massachusetts in 1821. The younger William first served as a township clerk in Bainbridge. In 1870 he was elected justice of the peace, holding that office until he became county auditor.

Justices in Bainbridge included John Fowler, Simon Henry, William Howard, John McFarland, H. H. Benjamin and Jonathan Vincent. Unfortunately, the township records from 1850 to 1880 were lost in a fire. Justices of the peace from 1880 were: M.L. Miner, C. R. Post, O.J. Post, C.P. Haskins, Charles Giles and Clare Miner. Incidentally, many relatives of the above-named still live here.

January 1, 1948, marked the start of the 60th year that a Miner was justice of the peace in Bainbridge Township. Martin L. Miner was a J.P. from 1888 to 1919. His son, Clare S. Miner, who succeeded him, served 8 four-year terms. The importance of these court officers diminished considerably over the decades.

Generally, Bainbridge was a very peaceable community in the early years. Filing deeds, wills and affidavits used

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Clare S. Miner

to be important duties, but were withdrawn from the justice court 10 years earlier. As a Bainbridge student in the 1940's, I can attest to the growth of the community. It was a very quiet and peaceful township even though there were new kids in classes and the school was expanding. Once in a while you might see a Geauga County Sheriff in the area since we did not have an established police department at the time.

In the late 40s and into the 50s, the southwest corner of Bainbridge had much activity going on without much notice from the rest of the county. We had Geauga Lake, three fourths of which was in the township, the Grandview Race Track and the Pettibone Club. Many people from Bainbridge worked at these establishments, including my father, in various capacities including private security. Any problems were handled by employees of these establishments. About this time Cleveland began to crack down on the mobsters and gambling, and ran the individuals out of Cuyahoga County. Where did they go? They went to the Mounds Club in Lake County and to the Pettibone Club and race track in Geauga county. The Cleveland Press in October, 1947 printed an article entitled "Pettibone Club Investigation is 'Accident' ". The "Accident" was the naming of Martin Miller, a Cleveland steel company executive, as foreman of the Geauga County Grand Jury. He turned out to be a man who took his public duty seriously and didn't fear the power of well entrenched racketeers. Miller was picked by Prosecutor Bostwick and Judge Sperry. After the jury was read its duties, Miller asked "What about gambling?" Bostwick replied "You can investigate anything you want."

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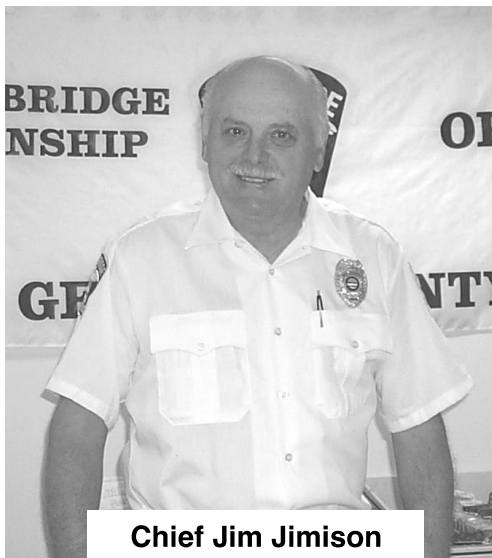


Bostwick called Sheriff Harland into the jury room and the Sheriff told jurors he was short-handed by three deputies to patrol some 750 miles of roads in the county. Foreman Miller then read from a newspaper clipping that there was evidence of slot machines at Junction Tavern at the corner of State route 44 and U.S. 322. Sheriff Harland asked Miller what he wanted him to do with them. The slots were remove the next day.

Miller then asked the sheriff if he knew anything about the Pettibone Club and if he had ever been in the place, and Sheriff Harland respond "Yes." Miller asked how he got in and the sheriff replied "I just walked in". Miller asked if he saw any evidence of gambling and the sheriff replied "No." Miller then requested charges so the grand jury could further investigate whereupon Judge Sperry dismissed the court. Miller knew he was in trouble and went home to think about the situation. He next called on Cleveland Press managing editor Norman Shaw for advice and that is what prompted the Press to get further involved, digging for more information.

The next day the Cleveland Press had a front page article titled "Pettibone Club is Target of Jury Gambling Probe." This was a gray day for Bainbridge Township to be in the headlines. The probe continued for many years contributing to later Governor Frank Lausche making his mark in politics. Lausche hired a private investigator to infiltrate the club to gather information. Both the county and the township had shared, on a percentage basis, in receipts of the gamblers. The building burned down in June 1963 and with it receipts and local jobs.

As Bainbridge continued to grow in population from three thousand in 1950 to almost double that in 1975, it brought increased traffic problems and need for a police department. At about the same time, James P. Jimison was having lunch with a friend from the Narcotics Bureau in Cleveland and learned of an opening for police chief in Bainbridge. Jim lived in South Euclid and had been a detective for the South Euclid Police Department for 11 years. He thought a bit and decided to submit a resume. He got the job and was asked if he could get the department together in a couple weeks. The new department had its official start on June 13, 1975.



Chief Jim Jimison

The new Chief was given a police car and hired two men. They broke duty down to 3 shifts of 8 hours each. It was hard at first with all of the paper work and reports, and they shortly hired two more patrolmen. They were given a small and large office to use at first. There was no holding cell and officers had to cuff persons to chairs until they were transferred to the county jail. There was a small police budget from the township's general fund to start as there were no police levies at the time. They had to create a records system and develop formal arrest procedures. There were no computers, no fax machines and, of course, no cell phones.



First Police Station at Town Hall

The Chief's first customer was a resident guilty of a small infraction. Jimison brought the man into the station and while there he received another call and told the prisoner to hold down the police station while the Chief went on to his next problem call. The Chief was not that lucky on this call, the fellow kicked out the back windows of the police car.

When Jim Jimison left the South Euclid Police Department he had no training on capturing runaway horses, but he learned quickly and soon purchased ropes to carry in the police cars. I remember a day when we had a couple of cows that were loose for a couple weeks and we finally located them in the woods north of McConahey Hill. We borrowed a capture gun to tranquilize the leader cow and brought it home tied to our tractor with the calf on the tractor and the other cow following. The cow delivered the calf while on the loose and she was not the most cooperative. We called police to help stop traffic while we herded the cattle down Snyder Road. I don't believe the officers got out of their cars that day.

By September, 1989 a full-time communications center was established serving all police, fire, and rescue services within Bainbridge Township. Then in the 1990's, the opening of Route 422 that connected Cleveland to Warren and Youngstown, brought rapid housing expansion to the area, but also opened the township to an influx of drugs and other types of criminals. Yet, the department kept pace. It consisted of fourteen full-time officers and four part-time officers.

The 2000 era brought different crimes with the Market Square shopping center and bigger stores. There has been increased stealing from stores, physical confrontations, and cyber crimes that included identity

theft and internet fraud. Inappropriate information on Facebook and bullying are problems too.

Our Chief Jimison has now retired and was honored in May of 2000. A reception was held honoring his 25 years of service. November 30, 2010 was his official retirement and at that time he was honored as the longest serving Chief in Geauga. Also, the Police Dept. was then designated as the James P. Jimison Safety Center by the Trustees.

A new 25,542-square-foot police facility was built and dedicated in August 18, 2004. This facility has all of the latest in technological features that should serve the community for many decades. Highlights of the new building include:

- A computerized five bay shooting range
- Evidence processing rooms equipped with a fumer hood to remove dangerous chemicals and a space-saver storage system for drugs, weapons, cash, etc.
- Expanded booking areas
- New line-up area and holding cells for adults and juveniles



The Townhall with police station on lower level north side of Townhall



Police Station today on Bainbridge Road

- State-of-the-art Communications center serving police, fire and rescue
- Physical fitness center with new equipment donated by John P. Lennon
- In addition, the capabilities of the new communication will
- allow it to substitute for the county's center at the sheriff's
- Department should the latter have disruptions in service.

Currently there are eighteen full-time officers. In addition to the officers, there are six dispatchers, one records clerk/dispatcher and an administrative assistant. On average, the Bainbridge Police Department receives over 8000 calls for crimes against persons and property and makes over 300 arrests annually. The department currently operates with eight marked squad cars and is led by Chief Jon Bokovitz.



Chief Jon M. Bokovitz



Shooting Range



Booking Room



Dispatch Center



Historic Home Honored

The formal dedication of Heritage Park, named for the township's pioneer history and its veterans, was held on October 13, 2013. Several hundred citizens attended the ceremonies and then toured the Bissell-Tucek House, a new addition to the fire department, gazebo and a veterans' memorial. Society president Charles Hesse noted the importance of local history to the community and accepted a "proclamation of honor" from township trustees. An early settler to the community was Justus Bissell who built his home in 1835 and was the first postmaster. The last family (of nine different families who had lived there) was that of Frank Tucek who sold the home to the township in 2001.

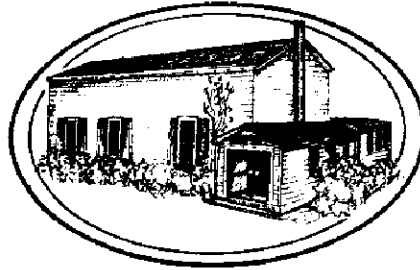
One of the hostesses for the Heritage Park dedication was our own Harriet Novy, society secretary, attired in appropriate dress, who greeted guests both at the gazebo and in the Bissell-Tucek House. When renovations to the north side of the Bissell-Tucek House are completed this year, the historic society will have its own dedication of the entire facility.



Tom Eakin Helps Out Again

Our lifetime member, Thomas Eakin, once again presented a generous gift to support our society's endeavors. Mr. Eakin's, whose company prints the Kenston Sports Calendar, donated \$200.00 last fall to help restore the Bissell-Tucek House. Accepting his generosity is Harriet Novy, our society's secretary. Members were grateful, and we thank him for this gift and many others he has provided over the years.

Bainbridge Township



A PROCLAMATION OF HONOR FOR THE BAINBRIDGE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WHEREAS, the roots of history run deep in Bainbridge Township, Ohio beginning with the David McConoughey family's 600-mile relocation from Blandford, Massachusetts to our fair town in 1811; and

WHEREAS, the beauty of our location attracted founding settlers, who grew to a population of 72 by the year 1817, when the settlement was named for naval war hero Commodore William Bainbridge, and a township government established; and

WHEREAS, in 1835 Justus Bissell built a family structure that also served as Bainbridge Township's post office, and would later be used as a coach stop, inn, tavern, ballroom, and meeting hall; and

WHEREAS, this historic structure had known nine owners since its construction and experienced minimal interior changes, yet preserves the building's original integrity, strongly maintained up through its last family owner, Frank Tucek; and

WHEREAS, the Bainbridge Township trustees purchased the Bissell-Tucek House in 2001, endeavoring to keep the town center property from possible commercial use, as well as to preserve the historical legacy of Bainbridge Township's early days; and

WHEREAS, initial steps in developing the current Heritage Park campus saw the township relocate the Bissell-Tucek House from its original location, south to its present home; and

WHEREAS, appreciation, education, and preservation of all matters historical from Bainbridge Township, including the iconic Bissell-Tucek House have become vested in the Bainbridge Township Historical Society; and

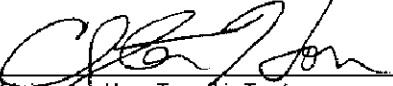
WHEREAS, the Bainbridge Township Historical Society, a non-profit, public organization, which abides by the motto *'Preserving the Past ~ Enriching the Future'* maintains the Bissell-Tucek House with the permission and support of the Bainbridge Township Trustees, to the recognized benefit of the public; and

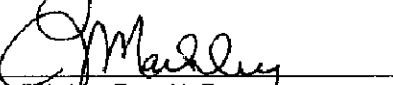
WHEREAS, the Bainbridge Township Historical Society was granted permission by township trustees and, thereafter, worked tirelessly to establish a beautiful museum and protected artifact displays in the Bissell-Tucek House; and

WHEREAS, the glory of Bainbridge Township's heritage lives in the restored and revitalized beauty of the Bissell-Tucek House, in very large part due to the dedication, perseverance, and passion of all members of the Bainbridge Township Historical Society;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY PROCLAIMED by the Bainbridge Township Board of Trustees on this 13th day of October, 2013 that the Bainbridge Township Historical Society be duly recognized and honored for its staunch commitment, proud accomplishments, and on-going efforts showcased in the Bissell-Tucek House, located on the Heritage Park Campus, Bainbridge Township, Geauga County, Ohio.

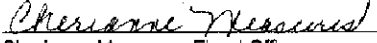
So Proclaimed this Thirteenth day of October, 2013, by


Christopher Horn, Township Trustee


Jeff Markley, Township Trustee

Attested to by:


Lorrie Benza, Township Trustee


Cherrianne Measures, Fiscal Officer

Officers 2014

President

Charles Hesse
216-407-2616 (C)

VP & Program Chr

Donna Yuse
543-3199

VP & Membership Chr

Marge Cook
440-338-5375

Secretary

Harriet Novy
440-543-9206

Treasurer

Donna Lucas
440-543-9206

Editor & Publisher

Bill Takacs
440-543-4991

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

**Bainbridge Township Historical Society
17870 Chillcothe Road
Bainbridge Township
OH 44023-0363**



Town Hall—Circa 1914
Now—Burns Lindow Bldg

Everyone enjoys the refreshments of our monthly meetings; so remember when the refreshment sheet gets passed around to please pick a convenient date and add your name to the list to provide a voluntary item. This makes the job of our Refreshment Committee much easier. Barb Phan and Lois Little are our chairwomen. Besides their setting up tables and making beverages, they too often have to make numerous calls to find bakery volunteers. Call Barb Phan at 440-543-7972 if you can help.

Thank you to the following for hosting refreshments.

September— Barbara Phan, Carol Malz, Cyndy Vogley, Lois Little and Janet Novak

October—Shirley Takacs, Barbara Hesse & Mareen Wolfe

November—Marge Cook, Elaine Witmer, Donna Lucas & Dick Newton

December—All baked for Christmas Party

* Welcome New Members *
* Jessie Taylor Frank & Mareia Schnabel *

We will have the Bissell-Tucek House & Museum open on the 1st Saturday, 1-4 p.m., March through May. The House contains numerous memorabilia depicting old Bainbridge history. The public is encouraged to visit and receive a tour from one of our docents. Admission is free.

Check out our web page www.bainbridgemory.org

The historic society's acting curator Elaine Witmer requests that those desiring to donate or loan artifacts to the Bissell-Tucek Museum to please delay donations at this time. (If you absolutely cannot delay, contact Elaine at 440-543-3442, and we'll see if we can find a temporary storage area.) The on-going refurbishing of the north section of the House has us very cramped with much dust. Elaine and Mareen Wolfe are currently busy consolidating and cataloguing the many artifacts already received. We will be most welcoming of additional historic memorabilia in a few months. *Thank you.*

We're always looking for ideas and articles for this newsletter. If you have a story to share, please let me know. If you would rather not write it, call me at 440-543-4991 and we'll try to get on tape or take notes. We really need to hear from you.
Bill Takacs

* Just a reminder – Our constitution states that membership dues are *
* to be paid in September of each year. Deadline for payment is De- *
* cember 1. Those current members who have not paid by December *
* 1 will not receive a newsletter. Annual dues are: \$10 for singles, *
* \$20 for family. Life Membership for Individual or Family - \$100. *
* Make checks payable to Bainbridge Township Historical Society *
* (BTHS). Payment should be given to Marge Cook at meetings or *
* mailed to her at 116 Leaview Lane, Chagrin Falls, OH 44022 *

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter
17870 Chillcothe Road
Bainbridge Twp.OH 44023

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

2014 Meeting Schedule

February 12, 2014 - Dan Ruminski, telling us about John D. Rockefeller.

March 12, 2014 – Cathie Winans. Ex. Dir., Shaker Historical Society. "The story of the Van Sweringen Brothers; developers of Shaker Heights, and the S.H. Rapid

April 9, 2014 - Foster Brown as "Sergi, the Voyager" an early American fur trader

May 14, 2014 - Ralph Pfingsten. "The History of the Ravenna Arsenal," the story of the former defense complex that employed 16,000 people and built 36 million bombs.

June 14, 2014 – Picnic