

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 2

Bainbridge Township, Ohio, 44023

Summer/Fall 2014



NW corner of Rt 306 and old Rt 422 - McFarland's Corner 1938—article page 4

Growing Up On Snyder Road - Reflections

by Bill Takacs

Step back in time to what rural life was like in Bainbridge Township, 1930-1950's. I came into this world in the 30's and now live one quarter mile from where I was born. There was quite a dramatic change in farm life in that period of time. There were differences between the social, economic, and cultural lives of city residents and those of the rural farming community. We had no electricity, indoor plumbing, refrigerators nor many other modern conveniences. We went from horse-drawn plows, steel-wheeled tractors to rubber tired tractors, lanterns to electric lights and out houses to indoor plumbing.

The census of 1930 listed 920 people living in Bainbridge. That's 94 less people than were living here in the 1850 census. Much of the population loss was due to job opportunities in Cleveland. The city was the automobile capital of the world in the 1900's along with other industry to support it, all of which attracted a huge migration from Europe. Both of my grandfathers came from Hungary to work at Eberhard Foundry in Cleveland and after several years, they purchased farmland in Bainbridge and Auburn Townships. Much of the migration to Geauga County was due to the Interurban route that went to Hiram, Middlefield and Chardon. Early immigrants in the city did not have horses and relied on this new, motorized vehicle to view the country. My grandfather purchased land along the Interurban line in Bainbridge in 1909 and that land remains in our family today.

My grandfather was a dairy farmer. Dairy farming was a year-round occupation. Spring was the time to turn cows out to pasture. Pastures were usually land unsuitable for tillage at the back of the property. Of course, fence building and repair were necessary. Trees

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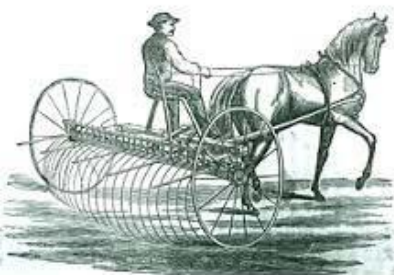
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were cut for fence posts, bark stripped and holes dug with a hand posthole digger. Grandfather had rail fences which did not require digging holes, but meant cutting longer logs and splitting them into 10-12 foot lengths which were then stacked to make a fence to contain the cattle.

Milking was done by hand, twice a day, seven days a week. While Herbert McCormack invented the "surge bucket milker" in 1922, it did not appear on small farms until the 1940's. Cows would not always come to the barn to be milked and someone would have to go bring them in. That job was fun at times, but miserable in cold rainy weather. Neither was it fun to milk wet cows with dripping tails swinging back and forth to shoo away the flies! Milk was put into milk cans that would be either taken to local cheese factories or sent to Cleveland on the Interurban. To keep the milk cans cool overnight before transporting them, water had to be pumped to a vat in the milk house. When trucks became available in later years, farmers put their cool milk cans on a platform in front of the farm for pick up.

Cows were usually "grained" while being milked. Of course, the farmer had to provide that grain, usually by raising it. In the spring the ground had to be plowed and made fit for planting wheat, corn, and oats. All fieldwork was done with horses until the 1930's when early steel-wheeled tractors were introduced. The grains were planted in spring and summer. Between milking, time was spent harvesting crops for the following winter.

Haying season usually began in June, went into July and sometimes into August, depending on the weather. Hay was cut and left to dry before being gathered. In the early days, a horse-pulled "dump rake"



Dump Rake

was used to rake hay into piles and then it was picked up. Later "side delivery rakes" piled the hay into rows where the hay was picked up with a "hay loader" machine and put on to a wagon. The wagon was pulled into the barn where a big fork device pulled on a rope to lift the hay to a track at the top of the barn. There the operator pulled a trip rope to drop the hay where desired.



Side delivery Rake



Hay Loader

As the grain crops ripened, they also needed cutting. We used a "grain binder" to cut oats and wheat and bind them into little bundles. These bundles were gathered by hand and put into "shocks" in the field to dry. Once the grain had dried, it needed thrashing. Elwen McFarland would bring in his thrashing machine powered by a steam-driven tractor. This was always exciting. Neighbors would come with horses and wagons to gather the bundles that were in "shocks" and bring them to the large thrashing machine. The straw was either blown into

the barn or outside into a pile. The grain came out of a chute and was put into bags to be hauled to the grainery. This same process occurred at all farms up and down the road. A big meal was prepared at noon for the crew by the lady of the house. This concluded the summer harvest. Hay was there for cows and horses, while oats and wheat served cows, chickens, hogs and horses, too.

In the fall when the corn ripened, it needed to be cut. Some ear corn was cut with a "corn binder" into bundles, shocked like grain, left to dry and would be husked later. Other farmers had silos. Their corn was cut green and brought in by wagon where it was placed into a silo cutter and blown into the silo for silage, a fermented, high-moisture stored fodder which can be fed to cows. This usually marked the end of the harvest season until the next year.



Grain Binder

After harvesting, the grain crops were taken to grainery mills for grinding. There was a mill at Centerville Mills and two others in Chagrin Falls. Ground oats and corn were mixed with mineral supplements and molasses to make feed for cattle. Horses were usually just fed oats. The local feed stores sold feed for all animals and poultry, plus seed and fertilizers.



Shocks of Grain



Above—Threshing the Grain—The shocks grain was brought in and thrown in the thrasher to be cleaned and separated and straw was blown on a pile or into the barn. Some times the straw in the pile was baled.

Next, issue, part 2 will review the winter season and include butchering, sugaring, and farm equipment.



Silo Filling Time—Corn was cut with corn binder and the bundles were picked up on the field with wagon and fed into the cutter/blower and blown into the silo.



Above—Shocks of Corn that were stacked in the field to dry and were brought in later fall or winter to husk and then ground for feed or shelled.



Area Historians Meet

Nearly 40 representatives from 12 historical societies met at Bainbridge Towh Hall on October 4th to review how each group encourages their residents to become members. Other points of discussion focused on raising funds, monthly program ideas, working with their local government, and displaying artifacts in their museums. Ideas were plentiful and many notes were taken. Attendees were members of the Consortium of Chagrin Valley Historical Societies who meet twice a year.

More than half the attendees then toured the Bissell-Tucek House and found the home-like museum very warm and inviting.

The next meeting will be hosted by Aurora next spring.

A little history on the NW corner of Chillicothe road (Rt 306) and Washington Street (old Rt 422).

John G. Meek arrived in the United States, along with his parents John and Frances Meek and brother William, from England in 1884. John must have come over as an infant. His birth and arrival date are the same year. John lived in Cleveland and after his marriage to Cleo Augustine in 1910, they lived East Cleveland, Euclid and Pepper Pike on their move to Bainbridge. Property map of 1928 show them owning the NW corner of the intersection of Chillicothe road and East Washington Street. John and Cleo first had a restaurant called the "Green Shutter Dinning Room" that served chicken dinners on Sundays. That venture was not that successful and they decided to move the house several hundred feet north on Chillicothe road for their residence and built a small 16 x 26 building to complement a gas station business they planed to open. John had the feeling that the intersection could use a gas station. John was a carpenter by trade and this was a speculative move since the restaurant business failed. The Jerkovitz family was living in the old McFarland house on the SE corner (now behind the green awning plaza) and they were looking for work and they ended up with the Jerkovitz family running the station. Story as told to my by Irene Jerkovitz Trimble that her father was tired of farming and with his son Richard saw this as an opportunity for them.



The House move and the building of the filling station might have been too much for John Meek - he died 21 January 1939 and his wife died in 1944.

The Jerkovitz family ran the filling station for John and Cleo Meek until their daughter Martha married George Heath and they took over the station in the 50s. The station was quite successful. He sold ice cream and other snacks and had slot machines in the early years.

The Green Shutter Dinning Room was the family home of Martha & George Heath and their daughter Mitzie and property is now where the Heinen store now is and a bank sets on the corner where the gas station was.

The Jerkovitz family previously lived on the property that is now Bainbridge Commons in the center of Bainbridge before moving to the McFarland house. I remember their barn stood where the parking lot for the plaza is and their pasture was in the valley next to where the fire department now sets in Bainbridge. Anton Jerkovitz was born in Hungary in 1871 and came to the United States with his wife Rose and son Joseph. Joseph married Irene Dobias in June 1920 and son Richard was born in 1923 followed by sister Irene.



Photos taken October 1938 by Cleveland Surveyors

Thanks to Irene Jerkovitz Trimble and Mitzie Oster Rutkai for information on this story.



The famed replica of the Henry home on Geauga Lake Road has its own room so that visitors can walk around and see the intricate interior.



From the north side living room (1870's), one can see the "cut through" that was made to provide improved traffic flow for visitors

Bissell-Tucek House Update



A look at the "cut through" identifies the structural beams that were erected in 1835 and 1870's. Examples of lathe work for plastered walls is provided to visitors to understand early construction of walls.



A closer look at the two sections of the Bissell-Tucek House. Most of the living by the 9 families who lived in the house from 1835 to 2001 occurred to the right in the original structure.



Our historic home was the recent recipient of a "Herald Oak" model cast iron stove built in 1905 by the O.G. Thomas Company, Taunton, MA.



A "turn of the century" display case is new and located on the second floor with tools.



The "Household Room" displays early washboards, sewing machines and ironing board.

BTHS Members Star as Musicians

Here are two ladies who produced nearly 140 years of music for Geauga County. That's the story of Marion Taylor Howard and Carol Taylor Malz from Bainbridge who recently retired from the Great Geauga County Fair Band.

It all begin in 1933 when Marion's husband, Vernon, started with the All-County High School Band. It was re-organized in 1938 as a county fair band, with Marion joining in 1941. Younger sister Carol joined in 1948 and served three years as president. Both played saxophone. Marion and Carol have been long-time members of BTHS, with Carol serving as president from 2006-2009. Congratulations to both for their long-time service in the greater community.



Left-Marion — Right-Carol

Early Hamlet Along Brewster Road



Pictured before several poster boards are Joan Demirjian (R) and Grace Henry (L), who has several relatives buried in the cemetery.

Joan Demirjian, a BTHS member and local journalist, recently fascinated us with maps, pictures and information on the "Old Southwest Burying Ground" and former mill-hamlet that once thrived on her current homestead. At the same time Centerville Mills was establishing pioneer businesses in the 1820's - 30's, so was the little valley on Brewster Road (off Pettibone Road). There was a saw mill, grist mill, cheese factory, blacksmith, brickyard, tannery, and even a distillery that ultimately led to references to the area as "Hell's Hollow."

The adjacent cemetery, now called Old Southwest Burying Ground dates to 1831 with its first grave of Revolutionary War veteran Joseph Witter. *See details about Joseph Witter below.* Other prominent pioneer graves are found there as well. Other names associated with this site were the Henry Cemetery and Small-

pox Cemetery. Joan left us eager to make a society visit to this historic area come warmer weather. Stay tuned for a Spring, 2015 hike.

Joseph Witter—Born 7 Apr 1762, Canterbury, CT., the son of Joseph & Hannah (DAVISON) Witter, died 25 Jan 1831. A Rev. War soldier buried in Old Southwest Cemetery. According to the Roster he was a private in Capt. Black's Co. and was one of the guards of the execution of Major Andre. Ref.: Mass. Soldiers & Sailors Vol. 17 p698 and 648, Middlefield, Mass. Vital record. He married Hannah Washburn March 5, 1783, died in Bainbridge in 1831. Will probated in February, 1831. Children: William, Hannah, Lucy, Dolly, Joseph and Abraham.

The 1820 census of Ohio shows Joseph Witter living in Bainbridge, Ohio. His sons, Joseph and Abraham, both have residences of their own. The soldier's father, also called Joseph, Jr., died in Aurora, OH, 1817.

Officers 2014-15

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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. 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.

June— Potluck - All Participation

September—Barbara Phan, Dick Newton, Gloria Triplett

October 4th—Consortium: Marge Cook, Barbara Hesse, Lois Little, Donna Lucas, Harriet Novy, Barbara Phan, Elaine Witmer, Mareen Wolfe



To accommodate forthcoming holidays, the Bissell-Tucek House & Museum will be open from 1-4 p.m. on the following days: Saturdays - October 18; November 1 & 29; December 6 & 27. Also, January 17, February 21, and March 21. Will you have guests visit during the holidays? Why not take them to the Museum? The House contains numerous memorabilia depicting old Bainbridge history. Receive a tour from docents. Admission is free.

Also, consider buying an inscribed brick as a holiday gift for a loved one (\$50 and \$80). Forms are available at the House or contact Marge Cook, 440-338-5375.

Now that renovations of the north side of the House are nearly complete, we can begin to accept your permanent donations or loaned artifacts. Please call Elaine Witmer at 440-543-3442 to determine whether your "gift" can be accepted. We don't want too many duplicates, but pictures of old Bainbridge are always welcomed.

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 it 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**
*

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17870 Chillcothe Road
Bainbridge Twp.OH 44023

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

2014—2015 Meeting Schedule

- 11-12-14** -- Hear David Lintern of the National Park Service speak about the election and assassination of President James A. Garfield from Moreland Hills. He died only 200 days after becoming President. MEET AT TOWN HALL @ 7:30 p.m.
- 12/10/14** -- Holiday Party @ 6:00 p.m. at Burns-Lindow Building.
- 1/14/15** -- Bill Jackson - "Resorts of Little Mountain" 1830-1925; nice hotels and spas catering to wealthy in Concord and Chardon Townships.
- 2/11/14** -- Kevin Horak will speak about old Sears and Montgomery Ward catalogs.
- 3/11/15** -- Ralph Pfingsten. The Ravenna Arsenal and railroads (Erie, B&O and Penn). They operated 24 hours a day.
- 4/8/15** -- Cathie Winans -- Tells about her pilgrimage to Shaker sites in the U.S. and England.
- 5/13/15** -- Sylvia Piper -- Born and raised in PA. Graduated at 17. At 18 she had to go to New York, started out babysitting for family and ended up being a "Rosie the Riveter." A fascinating story about women who worked during World War II.
- 6/10/15** -- Picnic. Location yet to be announced.

Check out our web page www.bainbridgemory.org

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Volume 10, Issue 1

Bainbridge Township, Ohio, 44023

Winter 2015

Growing Up On Snyder Road & Reflections (Part II)

By Bill Takacs

As we entered into late fall on our family farm, it was time to put away tools and equipment, harvest apples and potatoes, and put other harvested crops in cold storage. Because grass had stopped growing in the pastures, cows were kept in the paddock for feeding overnight.

Cattle are usually on a 12-hour schedule for milking. It is dark at six in the morning as well as six at night which meant burning lanterns to illuminate the stalls. Getting out early when it's near zero degrees with snow blowing and trying to keep the lantern lit is no fun! First, you must feed the cows, then remove manure from the stalls and put down clean bedding before milking by hand.

Winter was a time of survival and keeping cattle, horses, chickens and hogs reasonably comfortable. Dealing with frozen water containers and hauling water in freezing weather were major challenges. Water in our house was first provided by means of a hand pump and bucket. Later my father hooked a gas engine to the pump. It was my job to watch the pressure gauge on the tank and shut off the engine when the pressure peaked. We had a huge water tank that was 3 feet around and about 5 feet high with a pressure gauge and pressure relief valve. Every so often my interest would be elsewhere, the valve would trip, and water would be all over the floor. I would get chewed out for sure! Now that I think about it, I wonder if they made pressure switches at that time (the mid-1930's). I do remember cranking the engine to start it when I was older.



Fuller Johnson pump engine

Winter was also butchering time. Because we had no electricity when I was little, it required canning, salting or smoking meat for preservation. We always raised several hogs, butchered one for our family and sold the others to relatives in the city. Hams were injected with a commercial preservative called Morton's Tender-

Quick while bacon slabs were rubbed with salt. We had a small smoke house where we hung hams, bacon and sausages for curing. Smoked meats would sometimes remain in the smoke house until mid-summer. I remember Mom telling me to go the smoke house to bring in a slab of bacon. Other meats, pork chops and stew meat were canned in glass jars. Small cut-offs were ground up for sausage or rendered for lard. Cracklings were used with scrambled eggs or biscuits.

Our house had a cold cellar under the front porch where we stored potatoes, apples, barrels of cider, squash, and



Smoked meat in smoke house

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