

# Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter

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Bainbridge Township, Ohio 44023

Winter 2015/2016

## Brewster Road - Home of First Cemetery and Early Hamlet

by Joan Demirjian

*In September 2015, our historical society took its program series on the road to visit a very early settlement in Bainbridge. Nestled along Brewster Road, just south of Pettibone Road and about a mile west of Chillicothe Road (Rt. 306) is the very early site of a small 1820's – 1850's community complete with the township's first cemetery. It is located adjacent to the home of Joan Demirjian, society member.*

*Joan and family erected tents for a lovely dinner gathering and displayed artifacts and maps from this earlier era. About 60 members, neighbors and friends then hiked past signs depicting former businesses to the Southwest Cemetery to see more than a dozen gravesites. We asked Joan to summarize life in this tiny hamlet in order to preserve a written history for our records. Pictures help tell the story too. Thank you to all.*



*Society members enroute to cemetery*

The Aurora branch of the Chagrin River runs through the picturesque valley on Brewster Road, located just south of Pettibone Road. The river's abundant water resource gave rise to some of the first industrial activities in the township. The area was the site of a busy hamlet that is now all a part of the township's past. Two mills, a cheese factory, tannery, blacksmith shop and even a brick factory were enterprises of the day.

And nearby and overlooking the former hamlet is the Southwest Burying Ground, established in 1831. Its grave stones stand surrounded by waves of green myrtle throughout the year. The burying ground of about 1.2 acres was also known as the Henry Cemetery for members of the pioneering Henry family who are buried there.

Revolutionary War veteran Joseph Witter was laid to rest in the cemetery that was originally on property he owned. He served as a private in the 8th Massachusetts Regiment, having enlisted at the age

of 17. He was reported to have been a guard at the execution of the British spy Major John Andre.

The Daughters of the American Revolution placed a marker at the site to indicate Mr. Witter's service to his country. He was a farmer in the township and he and his wife Hannah lived near Giles Pond which later became Picnic Lake and then Geauga Lake Park. Mr. Witter died in 1831.

The William and Rachel Henry family headstones are surrounded by an iron fence and a large monument in the center which includes all their names. They are: Carlos Henry, died in 1865 at age 41; Ellen M. Henry, died in 1854 at 17; Jane E. Henry, died in 1854 at the age of 24; Rachel Henry, died in 1888 at 87; William Henry, a veteran of the 1812 war died in 1860 at 66;

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*Entrance to SW Burying Ground,  
established 1831*



*Real Deal Spring Band*



*Joseph Witter grave site*

and William Harrison Henry, died in 1854 at age of 20.

The cemetery was sometimes referred to as the Small Pox Cemetery because three young Henrys died of the disease.

Others buried there include members of the Linton family. They are: Archibald Linton, died in 1851 at the age of 13; Catherine M. Linton, died in 1863 at the age of 68; and Thomas Linton, who died in 1838 at the age of 19.

The family of the McClintocks lived nearby on Geauga Lake Road. Those buried in the cemetery include James McClintock Jr., who died in 1854 at the age of 36; James McClintock who died in 1845 at the age of 66, and Nancy McClintock who died in 1848 at the age of 29. Mahala McClintock Short, died in 1837 at the age of 29.

The burial ground also includes the headstone of Ozro D. Fuller, son of James and E. Fuller, who died in 1865 at the age of 31.

Even before the cemetery, however, what was then a wilderness area of the township was being developed. First there were the two mills built by Chauncy Eggleston of Aurora. Dams were built to divert water from the Aurora branch of the Chagrin River to operate the mill wheels. The mill area was designated the Cold Springs Mill and later Fuller's Mill.

Springs are abundant in the area and for many years, a spring across the river was used in what was the mill office as well as into more recent years for the home at the site. The saw mill was said to have been destroyed by fire; hence nothing is left of the framing.

The hamlet was also known as Hell's Holler, and that name is said to have had to do with a distillery being built near the mills.

Mr. Eggleston was a wealthy farmer, born in 1786 in Massachusetts who moved to Aurora in 1807.

In his personal reminiscences, he writes, "I commenced building the mills in Bainbridge in 1820 in company with Sanford Baldwin and was at great expense in building a long dam and saw-mill and

grist-mill with two run of stone in the wilderness near a mile from any house.

"I bought Mr. Baldwin out soon after we commenced building and had all on my hands, but finally succeeded in getting them finished, in a year or two, and we did a good business for many years in sawing and grinding and a great benefit they were to the public in this wilderness country. For the past 50 years much sawing and lumbering has been done there and grinding grain and making cider and planing boards, etc." Cheese boxes were made there too, he added.

Mr. Eggleston said "Much of this was done by Mr. Fuller who still manages the mills. I got new burr stones and repaired the mill several times, built two stone dams, all the expense the mills was to me I have thought would amount to \$7,000. I sold my half of the mills about 1860 to Mr. Fuller for \$600." The mills were still existence in 1878 and said to be the longest operating mills in the area.

Mr. Eggleston died in 1873 when he was 87 in Chagrin Falls where he had expanded a tavern into a hotel at the corner of Main and Washington streets in the village.

The foundation stones for the planing mill still exist along with the grist mill's grinding stones.

The book "Captain Henry of Geauga" by Frederick A. Henry notes how the "Brewster house," owned by the Henry family, stood on the west side of Brewster Road. There was Aaron Squires' tannery at the stream, the book notes. "These, with the mills just above and other buildings made up quite a hamlet: Cold Springs Mill," the book notes.

The many and varied industries had a direct bearing on the lives of the settlers in the area.

The Rocky Dell Cheese Factory was at the river where the bridge is and there was first a tannery at that location. The cheese factory was owned by F.H.Brewster and later it was the Strannahan Brothers Cheese Factory. The locations, including the mills, are

*continued on page 3*

all on private property.

Above the cheese factory site is Pencil Falls, a natural falls where the cold water was used to in the cheese-making process. It is also on private property.

The storage barn for the cheese was nearby and the foundation stones are still there. It is believed the wood and beams were used in the 1920's or 1930's for the basement of the house next door.

On the Eggleston mill property, a brick yard produced bricks. Clay was gathered from the river banks to make the bricks. There was a blacksmith nearby, and he was said to be one of the first in Bainbridge.

Just up the road, where the current Wild Water Kingdom parking lot is now, was a "red school house" at the edge of the township.

Nearby was the old train depot. Area residents walked to the depot to take the train to Cleveland. Visitors from Cleveland also rode the train out to Picnic Lake on Sundays. Picnic Lake later became



*Society members touring cemetery*

Geauga Lake Park.

While little is left of the busy Brewster Road industrial hamlet, it will always remain an important part of the township's pioneering history. ■



## Southwest Bainbridge Past Highlighted at Hearing

In early December, our historical society was asked by Bainbridge Twp. Trustees to participate in a discussion with Meijer Supercenters that is considering buying 40 acres of former Geauga Lake park property along Rt. 43. The topic: how best to bring a "nostalgia" component from the old Geauga Lake Park to their proposed "hyper-shopping center."

Thanks to our Bill Takacs who had previously prepared a presentation "Gauga Lake Park - History through the Years," the audience could identify with pictures of a number of so-called artifacts that might be considered by the shopping center owners. For example, there were suggestions to use roller coaster names like the Big Dipper or former carousel horses to identify parking lot rows. The park's Golden Nugget Arcade and architectural features for benches, cart barns or even trash receptacles were mentioned. Our president Chuck Hesse cited southwest Bainbridge as the site of not only the 100-year old amusement park, but the previous homes of Sea World, horse racing and even gambling.

Final recommendations will be presented to trustees and then to Meijer.

## Thomas Eakin Supports BTHS

Tom Eakin visited us in November and donated \$200 to help support our endeavors. Tom prints the Kenston Sports Calendar that lists an array of schedules for the high school. If anyone would like a calendar, please contact Chuck Hesse. Thanks Tom for your continued generosity. Posing with Tom are BTHS Treasurer Donna Lucas and Secretary Harriet Novy.



# SW Bainbridge Township: One of County's Oldest Landmarks Cited in Newspaper of 1905

*It is interesting that the reporting by Joan Demirjian about the township's famed hamlet along Brewster Road in the early nineteenth century, was captured in a similar descriptive article printed in 1905. The Geauga Republican Newspaper published a story entitled "Two Geauga County Landmarks." It follows below and is written by A. R. Phillips of Bainbridge. We are still trying to identify the other county "landmark."*

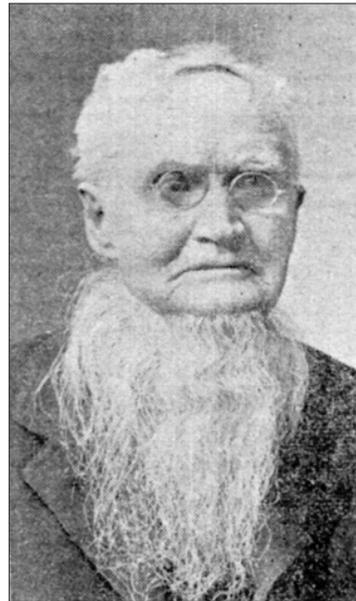
## TWO GEAUGA COUNTY LANDMARKS

One of the oldest landmarks of the county, is found in the southwest part of Bainbridge, on the Aurora branch of the Chagrin River. Here, in a picturesque nook of the river, famous for its beautiful scenery, stands the oldest frame gristmill in Geauga County. The busy hum of an active and necessitous pioneer industry in forever stilled within its walls, but the building yet stands intact, and in a good state of preservation. The massive oak timbers of the frame are a wonder to modern carpenters. They are nearly twice the size of ordinary timber frames, and the wonder is how could such massive green oak bents be upreared to their proper positions.

This old mill was built 85 years ago [1820], by General Chauncey Eggleston and Sanford Baldwin, two early pioneers. They also built a sawmill about the same time, but the mill was long since destroyed by fire. Mr. Baldwin soon sold out to Gen. Eggleston, who continued the business for over 30 years when he sold out to James Fuller, who continued to run the old mill 'til about 1878, when failing health and the death of his wife caused him to abandon the business. The little valley, both before and after Mr. Fuller came into possession of it, became a sort of center, where throve many and varied industries, all of which had a direct bearing upon the lives and necessities of the pioneer settlers of nearly 100 years ago.

Besides the saw mill and the gristmill, there was a cider mill, a box factory, and a tannery. The latter was built by Mr. Lowery, about 75 years ago [1830], but afterwards sold to Sylvester Squires, who continued to tan hides from which the nearby shoemaker made boots and shoes of the pioneers and their families. The Chagrin River has considerable descent at this place, and by damming it, furnished sufficient power to run all these industries. Gen. Eggleston at first built a log dam to run the gristmill and sawmill, so that scarcely a trace of them remains at this day. The first run of stones used in this gristmill were made from common, huge, bard head boulders, found along the

river bed. The varied industries at this picturesque spot became widely known and remembered throughout this section. Hardly a trace of all of these busy industries exists at the present time, except the gristmill, a picture of which the writer recently had taken, and which is here shown.

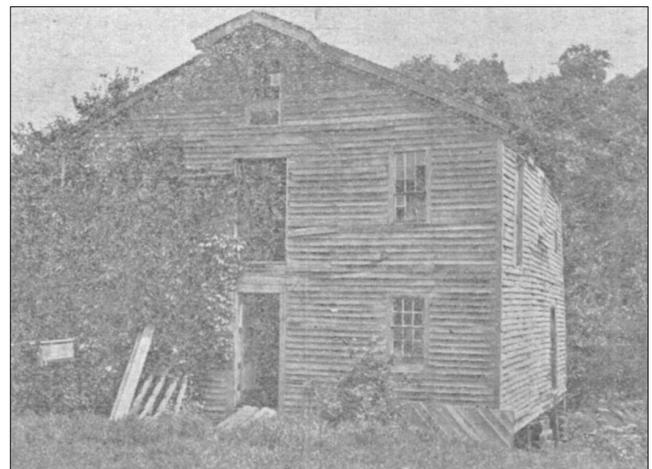


Mr. Fuller is yet living, and he one of the oldest pioneers, if not the oldest in Geauga County. He has reached the extreme age of nearly 98 years, having been born in October, 1807. He is [in] fairly good health, and is able to go about a good deal, though failing in eyesight keeps him close about his home. He cast his first vote for President for General Jackson in 1828, and has voted for

every President since that year. He is the last of his day and generation. None of the companions of his early years survive. Like the old mill, whose picture is shown here with his, he seems shoved far out on the plane of life, seemingly alone, yet surrounded by a busy, active generation that knew him now.

We owe a debt of gratitude and respect to those sturdy pioneers, who cleared the forests, built the mills, established the industries, and hewed their way through difficulties that stood in the line of their advance, and made this region a place fair to look upon, and a comfortable place in which to dwell.

A. R. Phillips, Bainbridge, O., Aug. 4, 1905.



## OFFICERS 2016

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216-407-2616 (c)

### VP & Program Chair

Donna Yuse  
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Grace Henry  
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Harriet Novy  
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### Treasurer

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### Publisher

Excel Printing & Graphics

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 Road.

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



Town Hall - Circa 1914  
Now - Burns-Lindow Bldg.

## Refreshments

Everyone enjoys the refreshments of our monthly meetings, so remember when the refreshments 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 providing refreshments:

**October** – Marge Cooke, Anne Davidson, Judy Dolence, Sandy Dzurik, Lois Little, Janet Novak, Harriet Novy, Barbara Phan, Gloria Triplett, Elaine Witmer

**November** – Gerry Chittock, Connie Clark, Marge Cook, Anne Davidson, Sandy Dzurik, Judy Kluchar, Lois Little, Donna Lucas, Dick Newton, Harriet Novy, Barbara Phan, Shirley Takacs, Gloria Triplett, Elaine Witmer, Mareen Wolfe

## Welcome New Members

David & Ann Foster • Laura Goretta • Marsha Hedberg

Linda Spehn • Walter Zimmer

## Hours & Misc.

The Bissell-Tucek House & Museum will be open on the third Saturdays - January 16 and February 20 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. It can be opened by special appointment for group tours. 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.

Consider buying an inscribed brick for a loved one to place along the outside sidewalk. Prices are \$50.00 and \$80.00. Forms are available at the house.

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 welcome.

*Chuck Hesse*

## Membership dues are “due” for 2016

This is a reminder that annual dues for 2016 need to be paid by end-of-year. Dues underwrite the costs of the newsletters, programs and purchase of artifacts for our historic home. If you are a lifetime member, no further dues are required. But financial gifts are always welcome.

Make checks payable to Bainbridge Twp. Historic Society and transmit to Grace Henry, 7589 Pettibone Road, Chagrin Falls, OH 44023. If you have questions, call Grace at 440-543-1579. We are also collecting emails that can provide timely communications to our members. Please consider providing.

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

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**DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**  
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### **2016 MEETING SCHEDULE**

*All programs at Burns-Lindow Building @ 7:30 p.m.*

**January 13. FOSTER BROWN** of Cleveland Metroparks uses the age-old art of storytelling to embody the life of the early Ohioans. Through tall tales, true stories, folk songs and Native American legends, we capture the past and learn from it. Come have fun. Bring young people.

**February 10.** The **SOUTH NEWBURY UNION CHAPEL** in Newbury has made history built as a “foundation for free speech.” Built in the late 1870’s it includes among its speakers James A. Garfield and Susan B. Anthony. Mike Fath, a trustee of the Chapel, will be our speaker.

**March 9.** Tom Vince will speak on “**The CONNECTICUT WESTERN RESERVE IN OHIO**”, a strip of land 120 miles wide running from Lake Erie to south of Youngstown and hundreds/thousands of miles west... depending on interpretations.

**April 13.** Katherine Kohl will return and talk about the **CLEVELAND CULTURAL GARDENS** which start on East Blvd in Rockefeller Park in Cleveland. There are 31 unique gardens for different ethnic groups. It was conceived in 1916 and maintained by the City of Cleveland.

**May 11.** Rebecca McFarland will speak of **THE GREAT LAKES EXPOSITION OF 1936-1937**. It was a world’s fair-type celebration to celebrate the centennial of Cleveland and drew over 11 million people including a president. It was housed on grounds now used by the Great Lakes Science Center, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and Burke Lakefront Airport.

**June 8. PICNIC.** Location to be determined.