

# Pleasant Hill History Center Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 1  
September 2015



**Pleasant Hill History Center**

Pleasant Hill, Ohio

## *Mission Statement*

**“To preserve the history of Pleasant Hill and Newton Township through documents, pictures, and artifacts.”**

Historic

**Pleasant Hill and Newton Township**

**“Preserving our local history by telling our stories.”**

# Pleasant Hill History Center Newsletter

Fall 2015

## A Note from the President

What is history? According to Webster it is the “study of past events”; “events of the past”; and “past events that relate to a particular subject, place, organization, etc.” That being said, what it boils down to is, what happens today, is history tomorrow. I think we all know, as we work hard to make the Pleasant Hill History Center a great resource for researching past history and creating wonderful displays of artifacts that relate only to Pleasant Hill and Newton Township, we are also creating history.

We have come a long way in the two years of our newly established “History Center/Museum” and owning our own building and I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and give credit to the original Board Members who made it happen. Thank you, Milan Bashore, Sharon Bledsoe, Lesa Delcamp, Jean Gilbert, Virginia Kinney and John Weaver.

The following are the Board Members for 2015/2016: Donna Favorite, Pres., Steve Patton, VP, Rosalie Adams, Secretary, Lolita Schultz, Treas., Ruthann Beck and Jean Gilbert, Members at Large.

We will try to fulfill the duties of our positions to the best of our ability and ask that the Partners and Community continue to support the Pleasant Hill History Center and help us “Make History.”

Donna Favorite, President

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## Membership News

We have 116 partners and 8 business friends for the 2015-2016 year. New members include: Brian Ewart, Kenneth Beard, Doris Brown, Pam Coate, Paula Bond, Gayle Esarove, Sharlyn Larsen, Teresa Mueller, Barbara Navick, Carol Jay, Pat RePenn, Joan Moored, Judy Diers, and Diana Williams.

Questions about your membership, call Lolita Schultz, 676-2771. Thank you for your support.

Lolita Schultz, Membership Chairman

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## Pleasant Hill History Center Museum

Have you ever seen a steam engine piston ring? How about the very ballot box that the early citizens of Pleasant Hill used for voting? Stop in to the museum to view artifacts from Newton Township and Pleasant Hill.

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## Pleasant Hill's Sesquicentennial

In 2016, Pleasant Hill will celebrate her sesquicentennial. On June 30, 1866, Pleasant Hill was officially incorporated. Although we are not “in charge” of the festivities, we certainly are involved in this historical event.

For further information contact Ruthann Beck or Steve Patton.

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## History of Patty-Schultz Implement Co.

In the month of September, John Schultz has allowed us to display his antique cast metal tractors. Stop in this month to view his collection along with other artifacts from the Patty Implement Company.

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Museum hours are every Monday from 3:00 - 7:00. Come visit your museum!

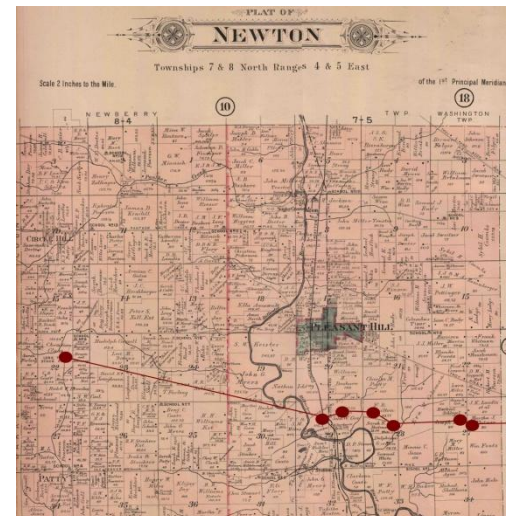
**Be sure to check our web site @ [Pleasanthillhistorycenter.com](http://Pleasanthillhistorycenter.com)  
and visit us on Facebook**

# Tornado of 1902

On Wednesday, June 25, 1902, a tornado swept over Newton Township at about 5:00 pm. It swept houses, barns, tobacco sheds and corn cribs away and leveled everything in its path.

The first touchdown reported was the farm of Christopher Glass, near Buckeye School, where the house and barn were destroyed. The storm traveled in a southeasterly direction.

The barn of Mrs. Amanda Snyder was demolished and the tobacco shed was carried away and her son was carried some distance. He was uninjured.



Looking West from Greenlee Road

Next was the John Cox farm where the house, barn and other out buildings were swept away and the debris was scattered over several acres. Dick Furlong with his wife and small child started for the cellar to get to a safe place. When they reached the cellar, they were unable to get the door open. The house was lifted by the wind and slammed to the ground. If they had been in the basement, they probably would have been killed. They were left standing uninjured.

Dots mark the sites listed in this article

At the Hamilton farm, where Mr. Rong lived, the large bank barn was torn to pieces and carried away.

At the Jacob Beitman farm, Frank VanKirk, who lived there, was in his tobacco shed and when the storm struck the shed was demolished and VanKirk was seriously injured. On Friday night he was operated on and they didn't expect him to live. (He did survive; however, his hearing was entirely destroyed.)

The large bank barn on the farm of L.W. Whitmer, just South of Pleasant Hill, was leveled to the ground. Mrs. Jennings, who lived there, received a broken leg and her husband, Frank Jennings suffered a broken arm. The barn of Charles Whitmer just south of there was badly wrecked and the trees were uprooted.



Looking West from Greenlee Road

The tornado continued into Concord Township and demolished homes, barns and brick School House No. 1. After the storm, people by the hundreds from every section of the county came to view the ruins. All day long rigs were coming and going. It was estimated that over 10,000 people visited the disaster area.

With all the destruction, it was deemed a miracle that no one in Newton Township was killed during the storm.

Information was taken from news articles in the [Piqua Daily Call](#), [West Milton Record](#), and [Miami Union](#).



Whitmer Farm

## Robert Gordon

Robert Gordon was born in 1826 in the state of Tennessee. His youth and manhood were spent on the rich plantation of Dick Bowling, his master.

The following is an excerpt of an interview with Robert Gordon published in the Dayton News in 1914 when he was 88 years old.

“At the age of 10, I was put to work in the tobacco fields until I reached manhood. Then I was hired out, my master getting the profit.

Once I was with my master’s son playing. He was writing in the sand. I watched him and found I could make the same figures, and took great delight in doing it. One day my mistress was out and I showed her what I could do and got a severe beating.

Coming up to 1861, I was hired out as cook for the rebels to Phil Lee, rebel captain at Camp Boone. I cooked for the officers and was at the battle of Shiloh. I ran off from their camp and returned to Clarksville and prepared to gain my own freedom or die in the attempt.

My wife was dead and leaving my boys in mother’s and God’s care, I went to my master and he said he heard I was going to leave. He took my pocketbook with \$12, but I had hidden \$75 in gold, belted around my waist. I bade good-bye to my mother and boys and at 7pm with two other men, started. We double quicked and walked all night, but the others got afraid and left me alone. I traveled on and at midnight heard rebel soldiers coming. I hid in a pile of ashes and they passed without seeing me. At daybreak I had covered 47 miles. I saw a slave owner counting his slaves. On my way I stopped at a cabin and the old auntie gave me something to eat and told me to hasten as the blood hounds were after Dick Bolin’s slave. I asked for some red pepper and certainly used it. With the blood hounds almost on me, I at last reached the camp at Fort Donaldson.

The Yankees and Captain Hardy came to my assistance and had the men who were chasing me put into jail as spies. I went on picket duty with the boys.

Thank God there I met Captain Isaiah Brandon of Pleasant Hill, Ohio, who was determined I should have my freedom. We came through the lines, I as his servant. I came to Pleasant Hill and met some real men, the Hills, Whitmers and others. One woman in particular, Mrs. Jacob Reiber, washed and mended my clothes, despite the abuse she got.

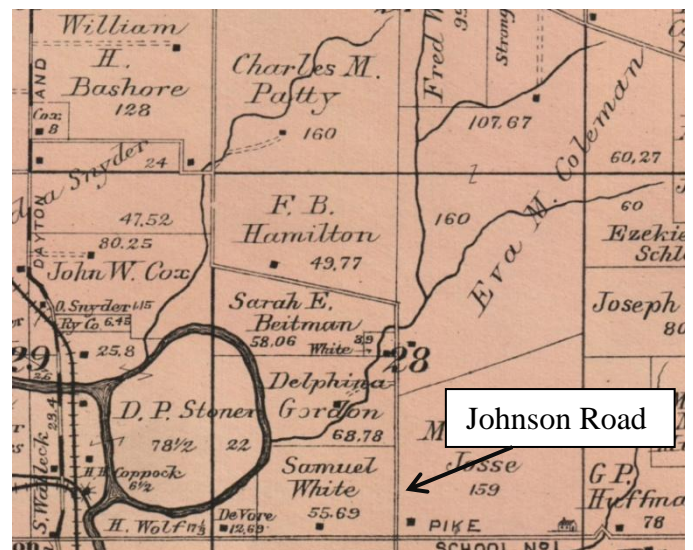
I then heard the call for arms and enlisted that I might get my revenge and saw face to face my master’s son in line. I enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> heavy artillery; was General Slocum’s orderly at Vicksburg; I was injured at Black River. Our regiment was cut to pieces at Milligan’s Bend.

After the war was over, I returned to Pleasant Hill and settled on a farm owned by Mary Gregg and Sarah Furnas Wells, who were my friends in spite of abuse and outrageous insults we met with every day.

I recall my first voting. I was the first slave to vote in Miami County. On learning I was to vote in Pleasant Hill, I met with great opposition - a nigger voting. I stood still and gave it up, but my friends, the Brandons, Coppocks and others came for me with their guns ready and marched me up to the polls with Nathan Hill with a law book, and I cast my first vote for Lincoln.”

In Tennessee, Robert married Eliza Dorson and had two boys; Edwin and Eugene. He married Delphina Clay in Miami County. She was one of the original Randolph Slaves. They lived on a farm on Johnson Road. Their children were; Wyatt Gordon, Mrs. Fannie Hall, and Mrs. Geraldine Giles. He was a member of the Coleman Post, GAR in Troy.

Robert Gordon died October 28, 1914 and is buried in Riverside Cemetery in Troy, Ohio. His wife Delphina Clay Gordon died July 11, 1924 and is buried beside him. (Mary Gregg and Sarah Wells were both daughters of Joseph Furnas)(Joseph Furnas owned the land before the Gordons.)



1911 Plat map showing Delphina Gordon’s farm

## Daniel Mikesell

Daniel Mikesell was born March 12, 1883 in Pleasant Hill. His parents were Jacob Deeter and Mary (Brewer) Mikesell. (They are both buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery) His siblings were Mason, Bessie, and Roland. Bessie died in 1892 and is buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Sometime between 1892 and 1898, the family moved to Monroe Township, near Tipp City. On November 27, 1898, Jacob died in Monroe Township, "suddenly in the barn." The death records indicate that he died of heart disease. He was 45 years old.

In the 1900 census, Martha is still living in Monroe Township with her two sons Daniel and Mason. Daniel married Martha Biddinger September 23, 1903 in Lima, Ohio. The couple had four children; Dwight, Robert, Martha and Mary.



The Mikesells moved to Dayton in 1906. Daniel worked at selling dry goods and as a collector for the Home Telephone Company. In 1910, he purchased a dried beef slicer through a newspaper advertisement, and founded the D.W. Mikesell Company to sell dried beef and sausage.

Just as his business started, he had an opportunity to buy equipment to make what were known as "Saratoga chips." Mikesell added the potato chips to his product line in 1910. In 1913, he began using a Ford panel truck to deliver his goods. He was the first in Dayton to own such a delivery truck.

When the great flood of 1913 struck Dayton, Mikesell was forced out of business, but he immediately started over. In 1915, the company was destroyed by fire. Once again, he found money to re-start the business.

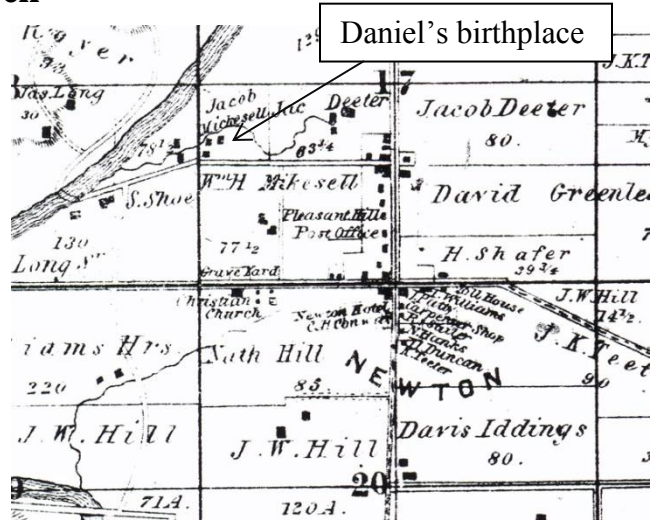
In 1925, the company decided to make a play on the name Mikesell and the company name was changed to "Mike-sell's".



On January 14, 1926, Daniel's son Robert died of diabetes and was buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery. His wife, Martha died on September 12, 1947 and was also buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Both Martha and Robert were moved from Pleasant Hill and taken to Miami Memorial Park Cemetery, January 17, 1958.

Daniel died May 19, 1965 at Miami Valley Hospital. He was 82. His son in law and daughter continued to run the company.

What began as D.W. Mikesell's potato chip company in 1910, is now America's oldest potato chip company.



# Newton Township One Room Schools

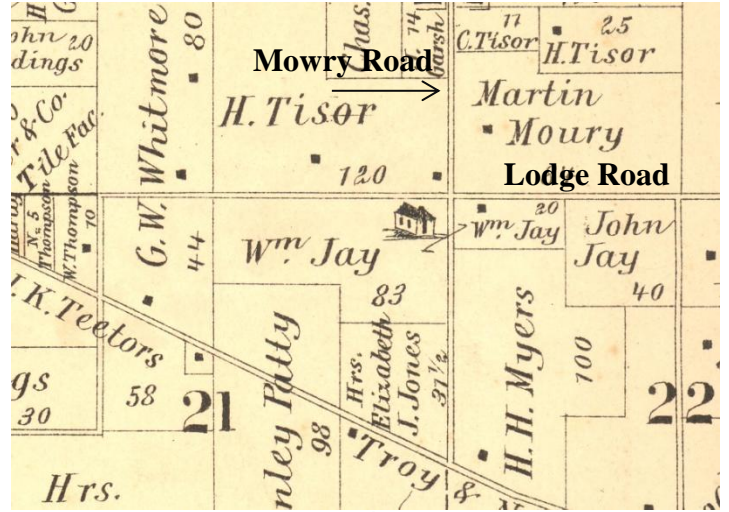
## School # 8 - Lick Skillet School

Location: One acre off of the North part of the East half of the North-east quarter of Section 21, Town 7, Range 5, East; commencing at the Northeast corner of said quarter section, thence running West 16 rods; thence South 10 rods; thence East 16 rods; thence North 10 rods to the place of the beginning.



**1911 USGS Map**

Some teachers at Lick Skillet include: B. F. Keister, Joseph Deeter, John Whitmer, Jacob Beitman, Flora Teague, Laura Albaugh, Barbara Dohner, Charles E. Staub, Mary Steenrod, and Roy Smith

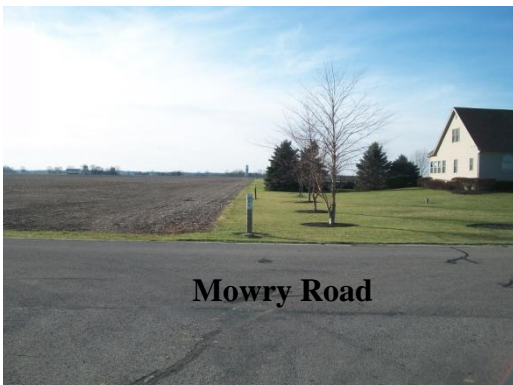


**1894 Plat Map**

The first school was on the Hiram Tisor farm. It was leased for \$1.00 in 1840. The second location was on the Jay farm. The land was purchased from William Jay in 1865 for \$100.00.



When Newton Schools consolidated in 1923, Lick Skillet was sold to J. G. Myers for \$215.00.



←  
**Lick Skillet  
Location in 2013**

**Looking West  
from Lodge Road**



**Charles Staub, Teacher (circa 1904)**