

# Pleasant Hill History Center Newsletter

Volume 4 Issue 3  
March 2017



**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

Spring 2017

## A Note from the President

Well, I guess the groundhog saw his shadow so we can look forward to more winter weather. Although the weather has been relative mild, I for one, am still looking forward to Spring. We have had our winter break and are anxious to open the doors at the History Center on Monday, March 6th from 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

We have scheduled several evening programs and will feature three special displays. We will make every effort to provide something for everyone to enjoy. Our first program will be held on Thursday, April 20th at 7:00 p.m. with Martin Stewart presenting “Redemption, 71st Ohio Volunteer Infantry”. This is a short story of the Civil War Regiment raised in Miami County. Watch our website and local news media for these upcoming events.

I would like to remind all of you, as Partners, you are eligible and welcome to become an active participant as an Executive Board member or a Volunteer. The Board rotates annually and there are term limits for eligibility for a person to serve no longer than two, two year terms. Please consider taking an active part in YOUR History Center in Pleasant Hill. See you soon.

Donna Favorite, President

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## Membership News

We have 126 partners and 9 business friends. Pat Locker is our newest member. Questions about your membership, call Lolita Schultz at 937-676-2771. Thank you for your support.

Lolita Schultz, Membership Chairman

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## Pleasant Hill History Center Memorials

Donations to the museum have been received in memory and in honor of the following individuals: Imogene McBride, Tom Bohlander, Mary Ann Klopfer Bower, Don Evans, and Esther Trost. We are grateful for their contributions to the history of Pleasant Hill.

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## Winter Hours

We hope you have had a pleasant winter. The Museum will re-open on March 6, 2017.

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## Sesquicentennial Items

We still have some items from the Sesquicentennial for sale. We have notecards, glasses, maps, Cat’s Meow buildings, and our Pleasant Hill History Book. We also have DVDs of the Sesquicentennial Parade.

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## Kroger Rewards

Our Kroger Rewards program is doing great for us. We average about \$300 a quarter. This money helps us pay our utilities for the year. Thank you for signing up!

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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**

# The Great Serpent Mound and Landon West

## WAS THE GARDEN OF EDEN IN OHIO.

The Rev. Landon West of Pleasant Hill, Ohio, thinks he has discovered undeniable evidence that the Garden of Eden was located in the Buckeye State. He points to the famous Serpent Mound in Adams county as proof of his proposition. For many years the archaeologists have been trying to discover how and why and by whom the mounds of Ohio were built, but beyond the general agreement that they were made by the mound builders no conclusion bearing upon these queer structures has been reached by the men of science, and they have no plausible theories to advance concerning the identity of the mound builders.

But the Rev. Mr. West is convinced that there was only one mound builder, and that he was God. The great Serpent Mounds, the reverend gentleman declares, was placed by the Almighty in Adams County, Ohio, to serve as an everlasting reminder of the temptation and downfall of man.

*The Elyria Reporter*  
September 19, 1901

Reverend Edmund Landon West was born on December 7, 1841, in Adams County. His parents were James King and Margaret Clark West. They owned land which adjoined the Great Serpent Mound where Landon grew up.

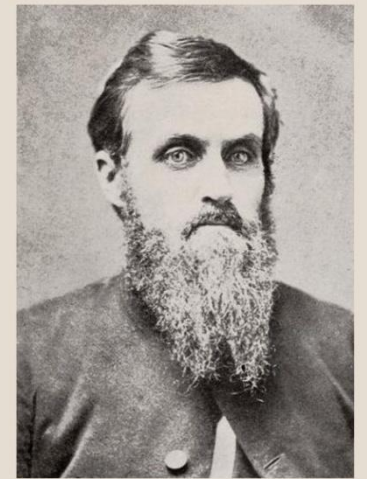
He attended the New Vienna Academy, founded by James Quinter, a German Baptist preacher.

Landon married Salome Garman and had three children: Bertha, Eva, and Pearl West. Salome died in 1873.

In 1880, he was ordained into the Brethren Church.

He married Barbara Landis on October 18, 1882, in Miami County. She was the daughter of Daniel and Susan Deeter Landis. To this union, five children were born. They included: Mary - 1883-1966, Martha - 1885-1969, Susan - 1887-1973, Samuel - 1890-1969, and Daniel - 1893-1971 (founder, Heifer International).

The family moved to Newton Township February 20, 1900.

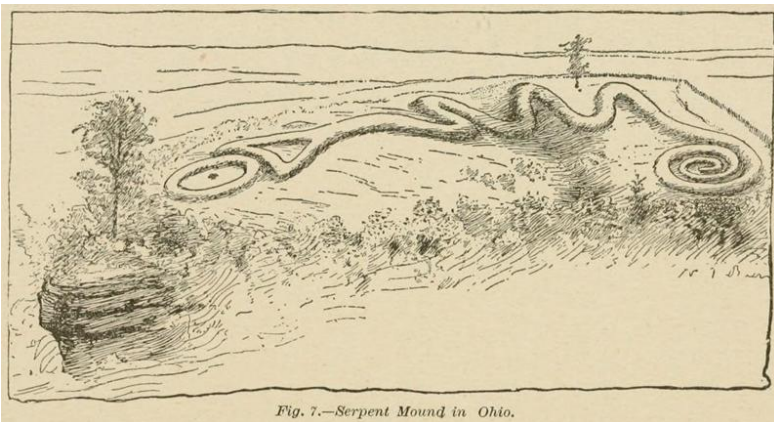


Elder Landon West

In 1908, Landon West wrote an 18-page pamphlet, *Eden's Land and Garden With Their Marks Yet to Be Seen*. In it, he gave his theory on the creation of Serpent Mound.

Many articles can be found describing Reverend West's ideas on the Serpent Mound. The following comes from Brook Wilensky-Lanford's book, *Paradise Lust, Searching for the Garden of Eden*.

Near the turn of the 20th century, the Rev. Landon West of Pleasant Hill, Ohio, interpreted the effigy as a depiction of the serpent in the biblical Garden of Eden. He claimed that the oval mound at the snake's mouth represented the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The Rev. Mr. West believed Serpent Mound was created by God, or at least by people inspired by God, to mark the location of the Garden of Eden.



He didn't believe the mound's builders could have been Indians. "He believed the Mound Builders were America's first people: Christian people who 'most assuredly' knew something of the Bible events recorded in Serpent Mound." Humans from Adam through Noah lived in Ohio until the Great Flood, when Noah built his Ark on the Mississippi River and then traveled 48 miles a day (or 7,500 miles in five months) from the Gulf of Mexico to Mount Ararat in Armenia.

Landon West died on December 16, 1916, in Pleasant Hill. His wife, Barbara, died on January 28, 1933. They are both buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

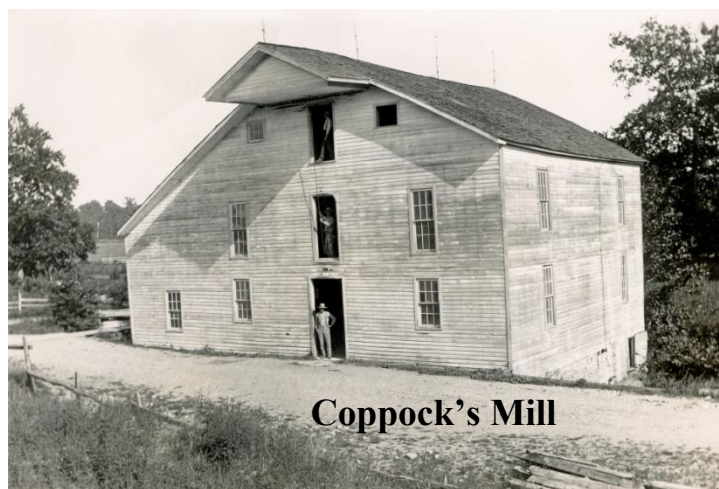
Many descendants of Landon West still reside in Pleasant Hill and Newton Township.



## Pleasant Hill Post Office

In 1839, the first postmaster was appointed to the Pleasant Hill Post Office. The office was located south of town on a small hill. It was a pleasant place. Thus the name was given Pleasant Hill. Later, the Post Office was moved to Coppock's Mill. The mill was located just north of Fenner Road near the Stillwater River.

In 1850, the Post Office was moved to the village of Newton. In 1866, to avoid confusion, the village of Newton petitioned to have the name of the town changed to Pleasant Hill to coincide with the Post Office.



On November 27, 1906, the Pleasant Hill Post Office was robbed. George Whitmer, Postmaster, said the safe had been blown. The robbers thought there would be a large amount of money, but Whitmer had sent the money in the last mail of the day. The robbers got some postage stamps. They were never apprehended.

The Post Office has been in various locations in town on Main Street and Monument Avenue. The Monument location was used before moving to the current location which was dedicated on June 23, 1968.

### Postmasters

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment Date</u>
Thomas Jay	June 19, 1839
Isaac Waddle	October 1, 1839
James Cothran	November 9, 1841
John Whitmer	January 20, 1848
William H. Mikesell	July 6, 1852
Edward C. Staight	August 8, 1853
Jacob K. Teeter	July 11, 1854
John Deeter	January 3, 1856
George Shoemaker	December 3, 1856
John R. Fritz	August 22, 1861
Joel Rothermal	October 9, 1862
Jacob Reiber	December 7, 1877
Daniel W. DeBra	April 1, 1889
Allen Reiber	June 13, 1889
John W. Whitmer	July 14, 1893
Frank M. Longnaker	July 20, 1897
William T. Marshall	August 19, 1904
George W. Whitmer	October 12, 1906
Henry H. Coppock	February 23, 1911
Ira A. Deeter	February 22, 1915
Nathan H. Powell	March 13, 1924
Louis A. Schuesselin	July 15, 1932
Paul M. Hawn	June 19, 1936
David A. Jasper	March 18, 1972
Dorothy Major	May 28, 1983
Judith A. Weaver	November 23, 1985
Mark S. Allen	March 6, 1993
Philip M. Johnson	October 6, 2012

In 1934, Pleasant Hill and Ludlow Falls fought over the one lone rural route. A poll of the patrons was taken to see which town would be given the route. On April 14, 1934, Ludlow Falls was assigned the rural route.

Today, the Pleasant Hill Post Office has its own rural route.



Dedicated June 23, 1968

**TO DEDICATE POSTOFFICE** -- Pleasant Hill Postmaster Paul Hawn and his staff will welcome the public to the modern new postoffice at 102 N. Main Sunday at 2 p.m. Dedication will be followed by an open house to show the facilities. Among guests expected are Raymond H. Glassmeyer chief of Organizations and Standard Branches of the Regional Office, Cincinnati and Congressman William M. McCulloch of Piqua.

## The 1913 Flood and the Three Bridges

The area south of Pleasant Hill where State Route 48 crosses the Stillwater River was called the Three Bridges. The three bridges were: the covered bridge, for the main road, the bridge for the Dayton, Covington & Piqua Traction Line, and the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Delphos Railroad Bridge. All three bridges can be seen in the picture to the right.

The rains started on Easter Sunday morning on March 23, 1913. The rains continued all day. The water in the Stillwater River rose and when it was over, all three bridges had been washed away.

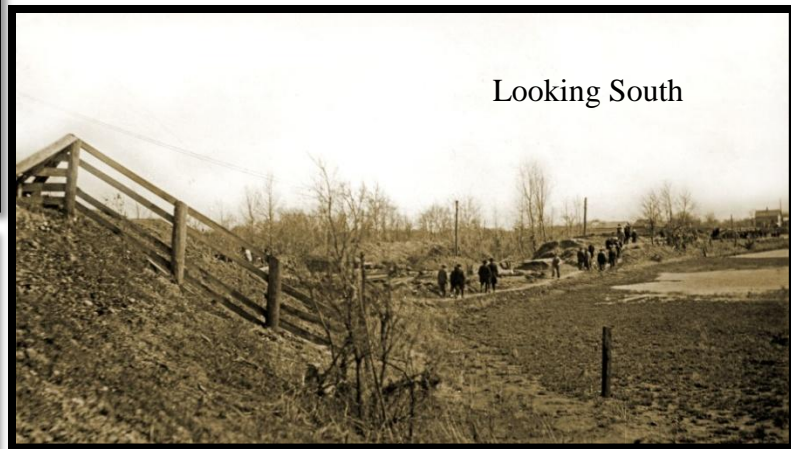


Stillwater River



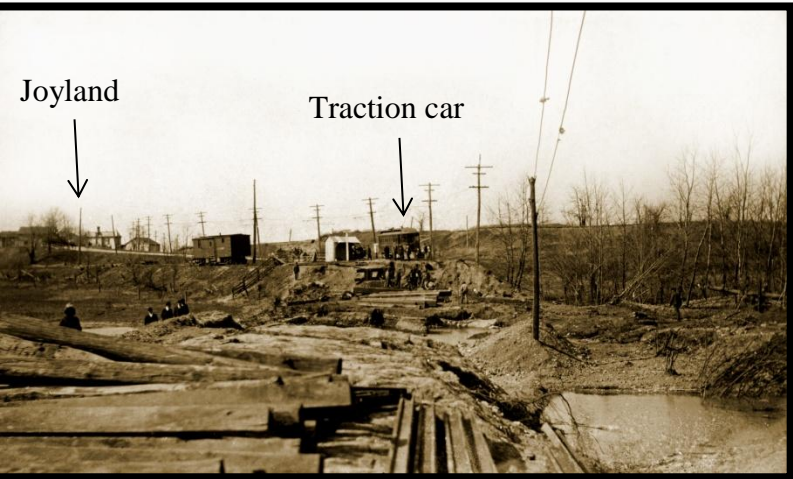
The following three pictures show the area where the bridges were washed out. People can be seen walking toward the river to survey the damage or to board a traction car.

Looking South



Joyland

Traction car



Because the traction line was so important to those traveling to Dayton, the solution to getting over the river was to build a foot bridge using the piers of the covered bridge. Patrons would get off the traction car, walk across the foot bridge and get on another traction car continuing south. Of course, individuals could do the same thing going North. The foot bridge was used until the bridge could be rebuilt.

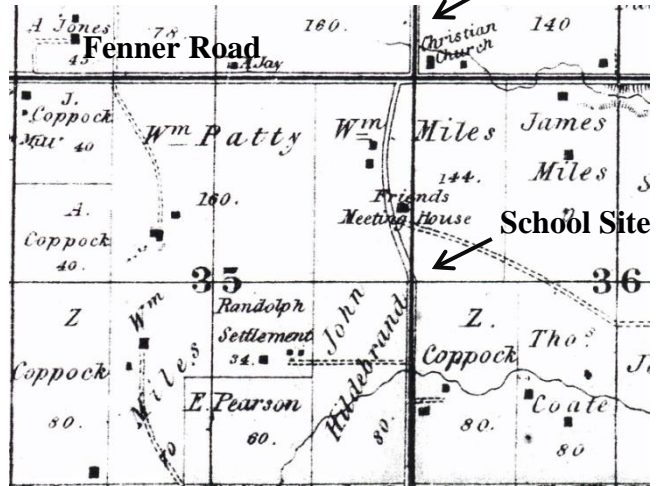
Today, the railroad and traction line bridges are gone.



# Newton Township One Room Schools "Colored School"

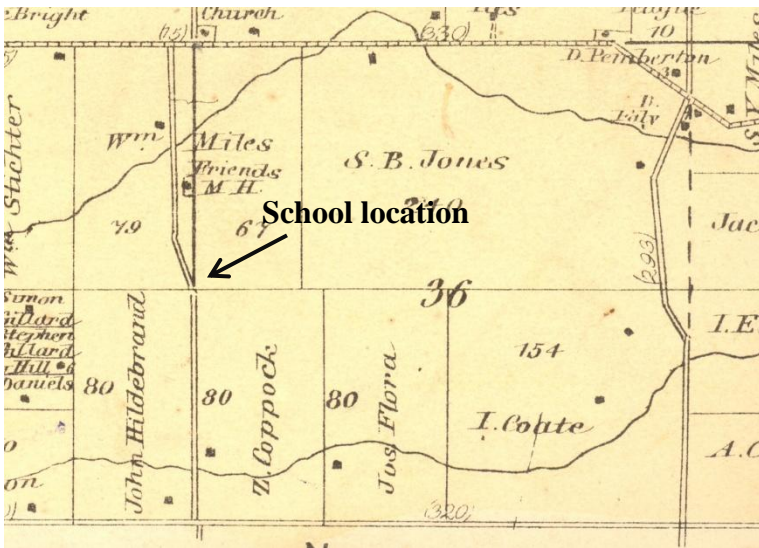
Location: Beginning at the Southwest corner of the Northwest qtr. of Section thirty-six Thence North parallel with said section line six rods. Thence East six rods and eleven feet. Thence South six rods to the South line of said qtr. Sec. Thence West six rods and eleven feet to the place of beginning. Containing one fourth of an acre.

Shiloh Road



The land was purchased by the Board of Education on June 18, 1871, from William Miles for \$25.00.

The school was sold to William Miles for \$37.50, on December 31, 1879.



**1875 Plat Map**

The teachers at the Colored School included:  
D. Whitman, Jesse Coate, L. J. Jones, and Cassie Beery.

The Colored School was built to educate the children of the Randolph Slaves who settled in Newton Township. The school was only in existence for 8 years.

Date		No. of Order	EXPENDITURES	Tuition Fund.	School House and Contingent.
1871	10/15	90	By Jones	\$76.11	18.91
1871	11/14	91	By Jones	44.00	15.00
1871	13/11	14	Robert Coate	120.00	
			By Jones	240.00	36.91
			Acct to Bal contingent fund		1.09
					38.00

This page from the Newton Township Treasurer's book shows the teacher's salary at the Colored School.



Lick Branch Church  
Friend's Meeting House

The Quaker Church helped with the settlement of the Randolph Slaves.



Shiloh Road

Location of the school taken in 2016  
Looking north on Shiloh Road