

# Pleasant Hill History Center Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue 1  
September 2019



**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 2019

## A Note from the President

I hope you've been enjoying the pictures posted to the Pleasant Hill History Center Facebook page as much as I have been. Newton Township has a rich heritage full of interesting stories. And there are a surprising number of things that have happened in our township over the years. Many businesses have come (and gone) along with stories of horse battles, floods, trains, new ways of giving to our fellow man, and inventions.

When I think of Newton Township my mind races to not just the history that I've lived here. But really, I think I find the history that came before me to be much more interesting. I think that's one of the reasons I enjoy the pictures on Facebook so much. It's a mix of the familiar and the past. It seems to tie it all together. I don't have to go back very far to find my own roots in this township and to me, that's important.

As always, we're looking for people who are willing to share their own "history" with visitors to the History Center. This is especially true for our older members. In some ways you are our most valuable ones because you're walking around with our history in your head.

If you'd like to volunteer and would like to work out a schedule that fits your daily activities, let us know. We can use the help almost any Monday.

Jerry Warner, President

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## Membership News

We have 114 partners and 12 business friends. Welcome Duwayne Owings and Brent Barnes as new partners. If your membership has expired, you should have received a letter or email regarding your renewal.

If you have questions about your membership, call Dawn Spitler at 937-632-0000. Thank you for your support!

Dawn Spitler, Membership Chairman

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## Pleasant Hill History Center Memorials

Donations to the museum have been received in memory of Pat Locker, Garry Miller and Jar Davis.

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## Gold Star Mother – Clara Fair

During the months of September and October we will feature a special display of Clara Fair. She was the mother of Nate Fair who was killed during WWI. She was invited by the U.S. Government to travel to France to view her son's grave.

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## Executive Board Officers

The officers for the 2019-2020 year are as follows: Jerry Warner, President; Charlene Haines, Vice President; Amy King, Secretary; Dawn Spitler, Treasurer. Ruthann Beck and Donna Favorite are members at large.

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## Pleasant Hill Village Council Meeting

The Pleasant Hill Village Council will hold its September meeting at our museum. The meeting is September 9 at 7:00. We welcome the council.

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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 at [PleasantHillHistoryCenter.com](http://PleasantHillHistoryCenter.com)  
and visit us on Facebook



## Virginia Kinney's Sugar Cookies

For the past 10 years, Newton Township resident, Virginia Kinney, has been working on a project near and dear to her heart - getting the sugar cookie recognized as the official state dessert of Ohio.

"It all started years ago," Kinney said. "A friend of mine went to New Mexico and during one of her visits with me, she brought me a box of 'biscochito' cookies that were labeled 'The State Cookie of New Mexico.' That made me think, 'Huh, what is Ohio's state cookie?'"

Mrs. Kinney had already known about the state's various symbols, like the state tree and state bird. However, after some research, she discovered Ohio does not have an officially declared state dessert.

Starting in 2009, Mrs. Kinney reached out to various Representatives. Finally, in 2019, she spoke with Rep. Jena Powell. She listened to her, but did not pursue it further.

A few months later, Kinney learned that third-grade students at Sycamore Township Catholic School, in Cincinnati, had been studying the origin of the sugar cookie and were also working to designate it as Ohio's state dessert.

After bringing this to the attention of Powell, Kinney, along with several of the Sycamore Township Catholic School students, were invited to a session of the General Assembly, in Columbus, on June 5, for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on House Bill 235, titled, "Designate the Sugar Cookie as the Official Cookie of Ohio."

House Bill 235 was unanimously approved, and afterward, Kinney was presented an official commendation by Rep. Jena Powell, on the House Floor in Columbus.



The bill is now set to be introduced before the entire Senate on the floor and, if approved, will go to the governor's desk to be signed into law.



## The Erp: Bluff-Top Site

The Erp Site is located west of Pleasant Hill on the bluffs west of the Stillwater River. The earliest reference to this pre-historic site is written in the *History of Miami County* book in 1880. The text is written as follows:

On Section 19, Newton Township, are two pre-historic works, situate near Pleasant Hill, on the west bank of Stillwater, on the bluffs forming, the west bank. The larger of these works is 700 feet in circumference. On each side of the hill upon which the fort was built, are two ravines of about 100 feet in depth, running back from the river, and forming a junction about three hundred yards from it; in the angle of these the fort is built. The ravines running, Northwest and Southwest protect it on three sides, and on the west side runs a half-moon embankment, 240 feet in length and six feet high, reaching from ravine to ravine; where the wall joins the ravines they are about twenty-five feet deep. Ditches are cut inside and outside of the wall. From the bottom of the ravines, looking up, the fort has the appearance of an immense truncated mound. It presents a formidable front, and its ragged sides look impossible to scale. Five hundred yards north of this is a smaller one, protected on the north by a similar ravine, running from west to east. The embankment is a circular enclosure, 300 feet in circumference, about three feet high at present. Trees of great age stand within. **History of Miami County – Beers - 1880**

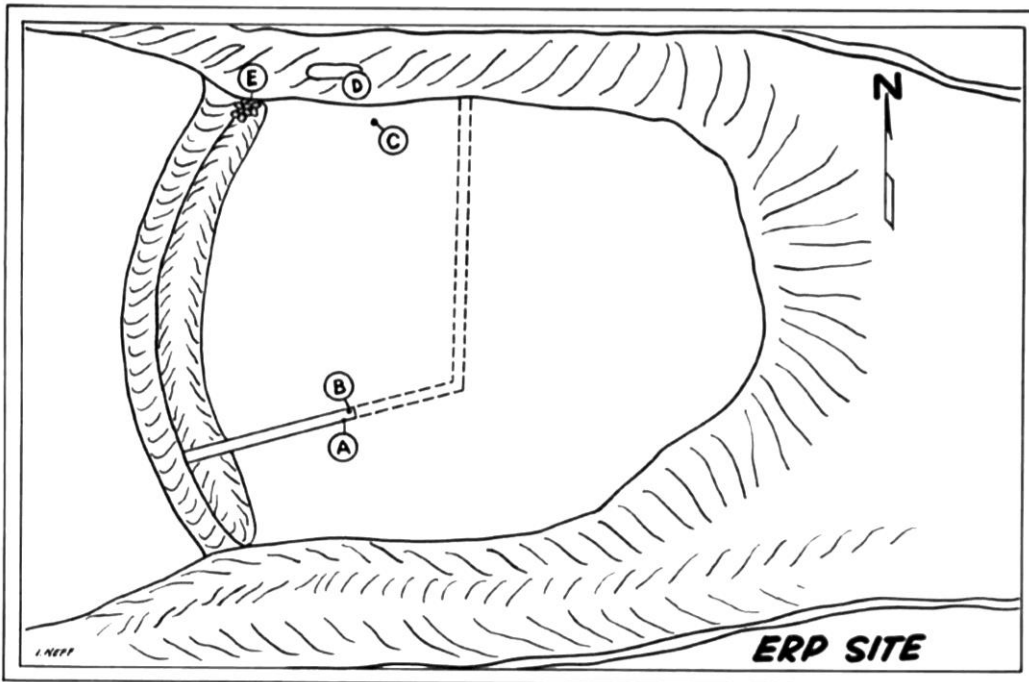


Fig. 1 (Allman)--General plan of the Erp Site. Solid lines indicate trench dug in 1959, dotted lines indicate plan for its continuation in 1960. A locates fire-place; B, child's skeleton; C, adult skeleton; D, refuse dump; E, rough stone "pavement."

The area was named the Erp Site, after the owners at the time of John Allman's exploration, Erwin J. Erp. The property was later owned by Ray Lybarger. It was recently sold in 2018.

John Allman and L.R. Grossman explored the site in 1958, 1959, and 1960. Mr. Allman wrote articles on their findings in the *Ohio Archaeologist*. The map to the left was in his article in 1960.

Artifacts taken from the Erp Site included pottery, flint points, slate gorgets, bone beads, bone needles, and clay pipes. Over a thousand items were taken from the site. These items were donated to the Ohio State Museum in Columbus.

A human rib bone was found near one of the skeletons, but it could not be determined if it belonged to it.



These are some of the artifacts taken from the Erp Site.



Human rib found at the site with an arrowhead stuck in it.



Fig. 2 (Allman)--Trench cut through embankment.

A charcoal sample from the site was sent to the University of Michigan. They dated the material to between 1300 and 1600 A.D.

One of the questions studied by Mr. Allman was: Who were the people who built this structure? In a two page summary, he concluded that it was built by the Fort Ancient people. The Fort Ancient people also built SunWatch village near Dayton.

This picture shows where John Allman and Mr. Grossman dug through one of the embankments in 1959.

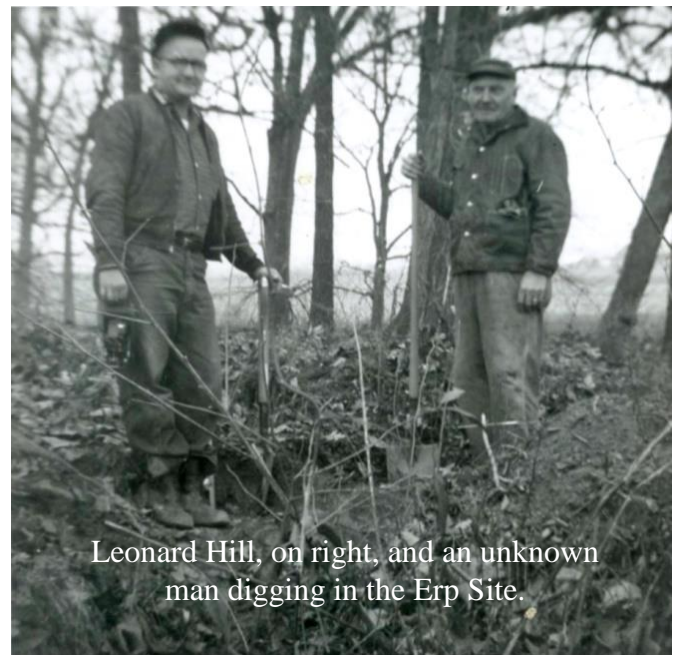


MR. AND MRS. L. R. GROSSMAN REASSEMBLE 'PHINEAS'  
Prehistoric Bones Laid Out In Miami County Farm Home

*Dayton Daily News* – January 13, 1958

Others have dug in the Erp Site. Leonard Hill, local historian, visited the site. No written documentation could be found in his books. However, a few pictures exist of his findings.

To read more on the site, The Pleasant Hill History Center has copies of the articles written in the *Ohio Archaeologist*.



Leonard Hill, on right, and an unknown man digging in the Erp Site.



Phil Karnehm standing with some of the items taken from the Erp by Leonard Hill.

## Marion C. Alexander

Marion C. Alexander was born to Morris and Vergie (Brown) Alexander on November 19, 1917. Marion graduated from Newton High School in 1937.

He married Dorothy Coate in 1943. They had one son, Gary.

Marion was inducted into the Armed Forces on November 27, 1943. In December of that year he was sent to Fort Thomas, Kentucky. He also received training in Alabama and Maryland.



**Pvt. Marion Alexander** is now taking Army training at Ft. McClellan, Ala. A graduate of Newton high school and former Lear Avia, Inc., employe at Piqua, he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Morris Alexander of Pleasant Hill. His wife and a son also live in Pleasant Hill.

*The Dayton Herald*  
May, 1 1944



Pfc. Marion Alexander, 28, has been listed as killed Nov. 27 in France, according to word received by his widow, Mrs. Dorothy Coate Alexander of Pleasant Hill. He had been wounded twice in September, but had returned to duty soon after on both occasions. Besides the widow, he leaves his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Morris Alexander of Troy, two brothers and a sister.

*Dayton Daily News*  
December 14, 1944

In June 1944, Marion shipped overseas, serving in Company D, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 320<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. This unit was part of the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

In September of 1944, he was wounded twice and received the Purple Heart.

After recovering from his wounds, he returned to combat.

### Correction Made By War Department

Mrs. Dorothy Alexander of Pleasant Hill received a telegram from the War department on Christmas day informing her that her husband, Pfc. Marion C. Alexander, was killed in France Nov. 23 instead of Nov. 27 as was reported in the telegram she received from the department Dec. 12. She has also received the Purple Heart which was awarded her husband for wounds he had suffered in September. He had written her a letter stating that he was sending her the medal.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris Alexander, parents of the late Private Alexander, reside in Troy.

On November 27, 1944, during a combat mission near Francaltroff, France, the machine gun squad he was serving with was fired upon by an enemy tank. All soldiers of his unit were killed.

Marion was buried in the **Lorraine American Cemetery & Memorial** at St. Avold, France.

In 2019, Marion's granddaughter took his great-granddaughters to France to visit his grave.

