

Pleasant Hill History Center Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 1
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Pleasant Hill, Ohio

8 East Monument Avenue
P. O. Box 82

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 2022

A Note from the President

We had our annual meeting on July 22. Elizabeth Gilbert and Cecil Jackson were approved as representatives of the township and Faith Renner for the village of Pleasant Hill. We are happy to have them on the Executive Board.

Our officers for this year are: Ruthann Beck - President; Charlene Haines - Vice President; Elizabeth Gilbert - Secretary; Dawn Spitler - Treasurer; Cecil Jackson and Faith Renner – members-at-large.

We are still open on Mondays and look forward to seeing you.

Ruthann Beck, President

Membership News

Welcome Kristin Gray, Faith Renner, and Clint Shellenberger as new partners.

If you have questions about your membership, call Dawn Spitler at (937) 417-4985. Thank you for your continued support!

Dawn Spitler, Membership Chairman

Pleasant Hill History Center Memorials

Donations to the museum have been received in memory of Virginia Kinney, Wayne Leonard, and Ruth King. We have received donations from Dick Cecil, and Ron Jackson. We thank them for their generosity. We are also thankful to all those who have added to our donation jar at the museum.

Roof Project

When we moved into the History Center building we knew that the roof leaked. After nearly 10 years of patching, it was decided to finally replace the lower section of the roof. We have been extremely fortunate to have very supportive people to help us. The Miami County Commissioners donated nearly half of the costs. We also received funds from the Village of Pleasant Hill and the Newton Township Trustees. Summit Builders were very helpful preparing the roof for the roofers. Thank you to all involved in the project.

Additional Openings

The Pleasant Hill History Center museum will be open two Sundays this fall: September 11 and October 9 from 2:00 until 5:00. We will also be hosting the Pleasant Hill Village Council on September 12 at 7:00.

Museum Winter Closing

The Pleasant Hill History Center Museum will be closing for the winter on October 31, 2022. The museum will re-open the first week of March 2023.

Farmer's Market

Pleasant Hill will hold the last monthly Farmer's Market on September 23rd from 5:00 – 8:00. We hope to have our booth there. Drop by and see us.

Be sure to check our web site at PleasantHillHistoryCenter.com
and visit us on Facebook

Halloween in Pleasant Hill

There has been a long tradition of Halloween activities in Pleasant Hill. Many of those activities continue today.

... At Pleasant Hill

PLEASANT HILL — Costume judging followed the annual Halloween parade Monday evening. The activity is sponsored by Pleasant Hill American Legion Post and Auxillary.

In the division for pre-school children through adults, prettiest costumes were worn by Jason Shellenberger, first; Christian Davis, second; Bijet Hlsher, third; most original - John Adams, first; Greg Schultz, second; Kebra Blabo, third.

AMONG FOURTH to eighth graders, winners for prettiest costume were Elizabeth Loxley, first; Susan Han-

blim, second; Sammy Besecker, third; ugliest, Robert Barnhart, first; Beth Weeks, second; Jeff Schultz, third; most original - Jeff Kiser, Bill West, Mark Straghter, first; John Kiser, second; Dave Neff, Mark Leonard, Mark Hanblim, third.

In the division for ninth grade through adults, judged prettiest were Lori Ginther, first; Diane Leonard, second; Lillian Hoppinheifer, third; ugliest - Frank Stein, Chuck Martin, first; Kathy Leistner, Tricia Richardson, second; most original - Glenna Swaney, first; Brenda Renner, Tracey Clem, second; Bob Monrin, third.

The Piqua Daily Call
November 1, 1977



Halloween Parade in Pleasant Hill

Rex went to the blaring sound system and read the winners of the ugliest contest. Of course, he read that the winner was Frank N. Stein. It hit him like a ton of bricks. When he realized what he had said, he burst out laughing. The joke lasted for many years, and any time I saw Rex, we would always bring it up, and we would laugh.

Halloween activities continue today with Trick-or-Treat and the annual Halloween Parade. The History Center has enjoyed handing out treats each year and being a part of the fun night.

**BIG CELEBRATION
AT PLEASANT HILL**

Masked Frolic on Streets—Parade at
7 o'clock P. M.

Pleasant Hill is planning a celebration for Saturday evening, and entertainment features have been provided for young and old.

Ten prizes for the best costumed persons will be given by the local merchants.

A parade will take place at 7 o'clock, led by a band.

Two picture shows have been scheduled. The first one at 5:30 and the second one at 8:45 in the Township Auditorium.

Everybody cordially invited to come and urged to bring your friends

Stillwater Valley Advertiser
October 29, 1926

My favorite memory of Halloween in Pleasant Hill was the costume contest in 1977. (see article above) The costume contest was always a big deal with candy and cash prizes. I put on an old suit coat and a rubber Frankenstein mask and entered the ugliest costume division. To my surprise, I was awarded first place. Rex Strong was the Master of Ceremonies that year and asked me my name. Of course, I said it was Frank Stein. After a pause, I told him to include my middle initial, which was "N."

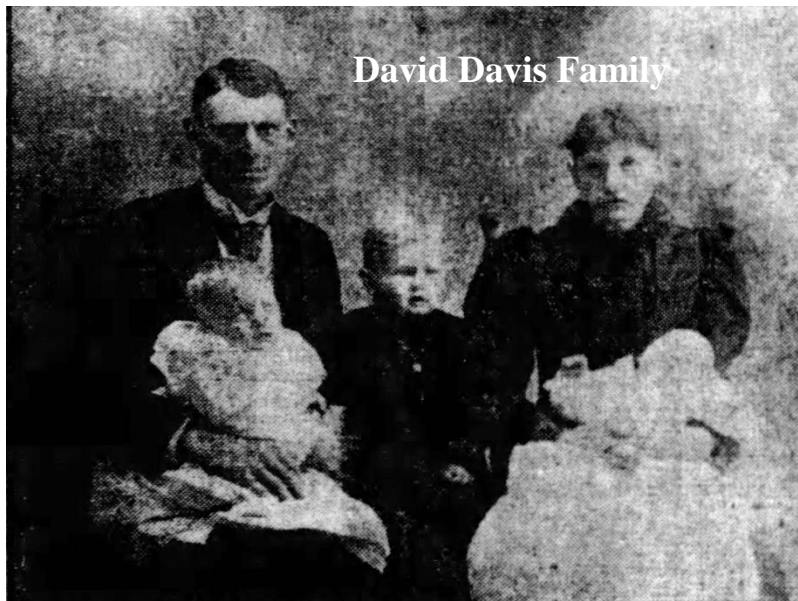


Passing Out Treats at the History Center

The following article, transcribed from the original article in the *West Milton Record*, contains disturbing text that may be offensive to some. Read at your own risk.

Demented Man

Crushes Wife and Baby's skulls with Ax and then Ends Own Existence. Other Children Escape Bare-footed and in Night Dress to Neighbor Fourth of Mile Away



One of the most horrible deeds in the history of Miami County was enacted on Monday night two miles north and one mile west of Patty, at the home of David Davis. Financial trouble is given as the cause of the affair. About a week ago Davis threatened the life of his wife and self. Mrs. Davis confided the matter to a neighbor who came to the home and talked the matter over with him after which he seemed in better spirits.

There were five children in the Davis home, the oldest one being ten years of age and the baby 15 months.

The oldest of the children, a son, says that they were awakened near 3 o'clock in the morning by a noise in his parent's room and as he went in discovered the father with an ax. The boy ran to get the baby and is thought that his father struck at him as he done so and missed the boy and struck the baby. The boy managed to get the baby under the bed and then with the other three children escaped down the stairs and hid in the orchard barefooted and in their night clothes. They waited there for some time afraid to return to the house and trembling with fear lest the father find them. The father finally came out of the house and went to the barn when the oldest boy went back to the house secured the baby (thinking his mother was dead) and with the other children ran a quarter of a mile without shoes or stockings and in their night clothes, when they reached the home of Roy Godown. Mr. Godown was away from home and his wife and the children were badly frightened. The Davis children were admitted but all were afraid the father would follow and attack them. Waiting till daylight Mrs. Godown carried the word to the neighbors and an investigation was started. Going to the bedroom they found Mrs. Davis lying unconscious with her skull crushed. She lingered in the same condition until about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when her life left her. A thorough search was made of the house and it was some time before the body of Mr. Davis was found hanging by the neck in the barn.

There were three ugly gashes about the right temple of the murdered woman, one about three inches long and the whole side of her head crushed.

After the escape of the children from the home Davis evidently struck himself in the head with the ax as the skull was fractured and the bloody butcher knife on the kitchen table and his hackled neck bore the evidence that he endeavored to end his existence by cutting his throat and not being successful he went to the barn and hung himself.

The baby was hurried off to the Memorial hospital at Piqua where a whole was bored through its skull and the crushed part pressed out. Its eyes were swollen shut. At Covington it took a little nourishment. The operation has given indication of being successful as the child has revived and indications are that it will survive.

Davis was 40 years of age and was quite industrious. He had just erected a large new tobacco shed and made other improvements about his home, but finances began to worry him to such an extent that his mind became deranged.

Mrs. Davis was a sister to Mrs. Frank Palmer, of Laura, and to Mrs. Aaron Pearson of east of Laura. An inquest is to be held over the bodies by Coroner Gaines.

All day Tuesday people came from every direction to witness the gruesome sight, and it is estimated that as many as 2,000 people visited the place.

The funeral services for Mr. and Mrs. Davis on Friday forenoon from Laura Christian church. Friends are to meet at the house at ten o'clock.

The Davis Tragedy

The coroner's inquest in the David Davis tragedy revealed nothing new other than what has been given through our columns, except that the coroner gives out that Davis would have died from the self-inflicted wounds made with the ax had he not hung himself in the barn. The infant which was taken to the Piqua hospital is recovering and now plays with toys and eats with a relish.

The deceased woman's name was Esther Weaver, and she was the daughter of Henry and Hannah Weaver and was 34 years of age. She was married to David Davis in August 1893. Six children were born to this union, one dying in infancy. Three brothers, five sisters, six half-sisters and three half-brothers survive Mrs. Davis. Mr. Davis had reached 38 years. The family was industrious and apparently prosperous.

The funeral services were held from the Laura Christian church and were attended by 1000 to 1200 people.

- *West Milton Record, March 18, 1908*

The names of the children were: Samuel, Dessie, Ethel, Harry, and Blanche. After the incident, they found homes with relatives and friends.

***Miami Union* article two years later.....**

Patty--Harry Davis died early Monday morning after four weeks illness of brain fever. He was born in Champaign County, Nov. 14, 1901, and was the son of Mr. and Mrs. David Davis.

Until about two years ago the family lived near Muddy Corner where occurred one of the most shocking tragedies of recent years. The father killed the mother and but for the efforts of Harry would in his crazed condition have probably killed the children, but failing killed himself. After the tragedy Harry was taken and cared for by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lawrence, who have the sincere sympathy of their neighbors in their sadness.

Harry also leaves three sisters and one brother. The funeral was held from the Laura Christian church Tuesday afternoon with Rev. Enos Pemberton officiating. Burial at Old Ludlow.

- *Miami Union, February 10, 1910*

Blanche, the baby in the article, survived the attack; however, she died of tubercular meningitis, two years later on October 20, 1910.

The last surviving child was Ethel May Davis McMullin who died in 1983 in Seattle, Washington. She was buried there with her husband, Harley McMullin. (A picture of her stone was not found.)



Dessie Davis Coon



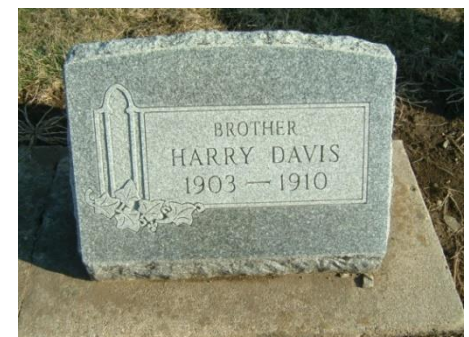
Samuel Davis



David and Esther Davis



Blanche Davis



Harry Davis

Charles H. Jackson Quarry and Stone Crusher



Charles H. Jackson Quarry and Stone Crusher shown in operation.

The following text was taken from *The Miami Union* - Troy, Ohio - April 12, 1906

The Charles H. Jackson stone quarry lays immediately across the Stillwater River from the Sugar Grove Flour Mill, in Newton Township, Miami County. An immense business has been built up there in the past 14 years by Charles H. Jackson who bought the 18 acre farm in 1892 and opened the quarry the same year, which venture proved a financial success to the owner as the quarry proved capable of furnishing any thickness of building stone up to 18 inches. Although Mr. Jackson has steadily increased the output of his quarry year after year he has never been able to fill the demand. A brief description of the management of the plant at this time might be of interest to some so will begin by saying that the demand for building stone is as great as ever, but in this age of concrete work the bulk demand is for crushed material, so two years ago, (1904) Mr. Jackson erected a monster stone plant that might well be called a sky scraper, for it is 75 feet from the bottom of the quarry to the top of the elevator. The plant has a capacity for crushing 300 cubic yards of stone per day. Two crushers are used, a No. 6 and a No. 3. The power for these machines is furnished by a 60 horse power (steam) engine and a 80 horse power boiler while another (steam) engine of 10 horse power is used to run the steam derrick for loading cars with uncrushed stone.

Six small cars of two yard capacity are used in the quarry where not less than one fourth of a mile of net work car track is laid in the bottom of the quarry and so arranged that stone can be loaded in the cars in any corner of the quarry while blasting is being done in another part. All drilling for blasting purposes is done with a steam drill that rapidly penetrates the wonderful deposit of stone that nature had formed in that part of Miami County.

Two hand derricks are still in use in the quarry and used for loading wagons with heavy building stone which is yet in demand in some parts of the country. The two yard quarry cars when filled with stone for crushing are taken up an inclined railroad by means of a wire cable and when full 50 feet above the level of the ground are automatically dumped in a bin. From this bin the stone is fed into the crushers and the crushed stone is elevated and screened into other bins from which chutes lead to the steam (railroad) cars that stand on the 2150 feet of side track that Mr. Jackson had built for his special benefit.

The price of this crushed stone ranges from 60 to 75 cents per cubic yard (loaded) on board cars at the crusher. The principal part of this material is used in nearby localities although some shipments have been made as far south as Cincinnati and as far north as Delphos.

The stone crushing season only lasts about eight months of the year but when this plant runs, 15 to 50 hands are employed daily. During the crushing season for 1905 this plant was the only one out of the four that are located between Covington and Ludlow Falls that ran steady.

Today, the quarry is filled with water and is a lake. Some of the tracks can still be seen.