

Pleasant Hill History Center Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 3

March 2016



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 2016

A Note from the President

Wow, where does the time go? It seems like only yesterday we closed the History Center for the winter, and now we are looking forward to reopening on March 14th and preparing for a very busy year ahead of us. I am very excited about this year's coming events.

As Pleasant Hill celebrates its 150th anniversary on June 25th, we are planning to have a couple booths which will sell food and also items of historical interest, some of which were created by local artist Marcus Miller. As we are a very small organization, with many of those directly involved with the sesquicentennial committee, we are going to need all of the help we can get from our Partners to accomplish all we would like to do.

The History Center Board would like to have a float in the parade. We will need both the space to create one and the expertise/manpower to make it happen. We also need volunteers to man the food booth and the memorabilia booth. This is your time to help us make this a successful Historical event.

Please visit us and see all we have to offer at the History Center starting Monday, March 14th from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. and perhaps sign up for one of the above mentioned committees, or call me (676-8431), or any of the Board members if you are interested. Please watch our website, Facebook, and media sources for upcoming programs and events for the coming year.

Donna Favorite, President

Membership News

We have 120 partners and 6 business friends. We welcome Darrell Fessler as a new member! Questions about your membership, call Lolita Schultz at 937-676-2771. Thank you for your support.
Lolita Schultz, Membership Chairman

Pleasant Hill History Center Memorials

Donations to the museum have been received in memory and in honor of the following individuals: Raymond and Cuba Fessler, Larry Amick, Warren Jackson, Marjorie Westfall, Patsy Schultz, Velma King, Rita Noll Beard, Dean Schauer, and Virginia Landis. We are grateful for their contributions to the history of Pleasant Hill.

Winter Museum Hours

We hope you have had a pleasant winter. The Museum will re-open on March 14, 2016.

Upcoming Speakers

Marla Fair will be giving a presentation at the History Center on March 29th at 7:00 P.M. She will present the program: *The In-Betweeners* - A short history of life in Midwest Ohio between the American Revolution and the Civil War. On April 26th, Patrick Kennedy will be speaking on the *Underground Railroad*. Look for more information as we get closer to the dates.

Sesquicentennial

The Sesquicentennial committee is busy planning for the big 150th birthday party of Pleasant Hill. Mark your calendars for June 25th for the celebration.

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

Be sure to check our web site @ PleasantHillHistoryCenter.com

and visit us on Facebook

The Cornstalk Speedway

If you Google, “Cornstalk Speedway” you can find that “autoracingrecords.com” has it listed as a dirt oval which is now defunct. “Pitgate.com” has someone who is looking for Speedways of the past, asking where the Cornstalk Speedway in Pleasant Hill is located.

If you ask most people in Pleasant Hill, they will say they have never heard of it....But for a bunch of guys in the early 1950’s, it was one of the greatest play areas of their childhood.



Mike Short is pinned beneath his car having flipped over after hitting part of the “guard rail” a cement filled can with a stick marker. No. 35 is in trouble, no doubt about it. But Butch Herbst, the pusher, knows Mike will make short work of it....

The entry fee for the race was five cents. The winner would receive all the entry fees for that race.

In October of 1953, the Dayton Daily News sent a photographer and reporter to write a story about the Cornstalk Speedway. They took pictures of the boys at the raceway. The article appeared on November 1, 1953, in the Dayton Daily News.

Later the track was moved to a location near Piper Pines. The cars were used as a demolition derby. No major injuries were reported.

As the boys got older, they turned to cars instead of bikes and the raceway faded into history. But if you ask any of the guys involved, they will recall the fond memories of that Cornstalk Speedway!



Front row: John Schultz, Jack Hixon, Bob Cecil
Row 2: Ronnie Morris, Joe Longnecker, Kenneth Beard, Elmer Herbst, Dave Herbst **Back row:** Jack Scurlock, Paul “Pee Wee” Thiesing, Bill Longnecker, Jerry Wahl, Wayne Shellenberger, John Hawn

In the early 1950’s, no one is sure of the exact year, a group of Pleasant Hill boys took their reel lawn mowers and mowed an oval track in a corn field. The field located east of Long Street belonged to C. V. Thompson. He gave them permission to use his land.

The boys found wheels, used lumber and whatever else they could find to build the cars. The older boys would push the younger ones with a broom or other handle. The younger boys would steer the cars as they sped around the oval track.



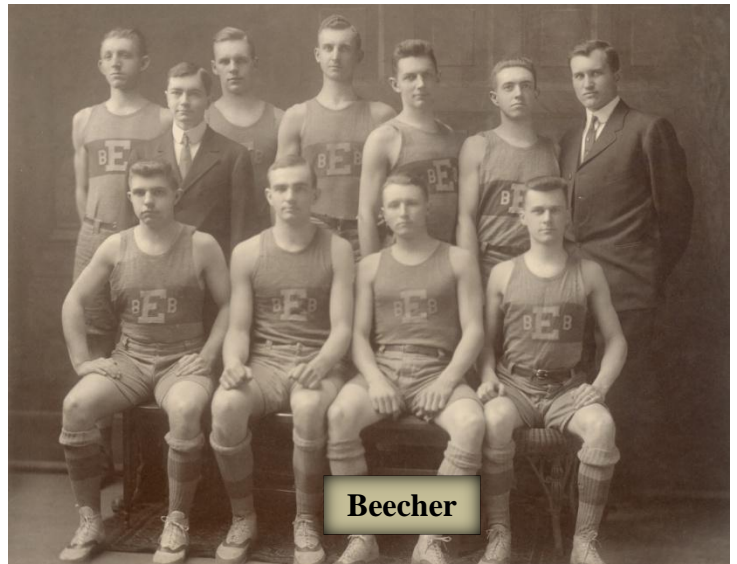
John Hawn is pulling Joe Longnecker on a speedway car.

Beecher Beery

Beecher Beery was born on July 24, 1896 to Jesse and Almeda (Coppock) Beery. Beecher's father was the founder of the Beery School of Horsemanship in Pleasant Hill.

Beecher graduated from Pleasant Hill High School in 1916. He was the center on the Pleasant Hill Eagles basketball team.

Beecher started his professional career in photography in 1927 when he sold several pictures to a magazine. He was a long-time contributor to such magazines as National Geographic, the Audubon Bird Book, Forest and Stream, and Farm Journal. He was also a contributing photographer for Britannica Films.



He banded birds for the U.S. Wildlife Service for over 50 years, perhaps providing more data to that organization from 1929 to 1979 than any other individual in the United States for their study of bird migratory habits.

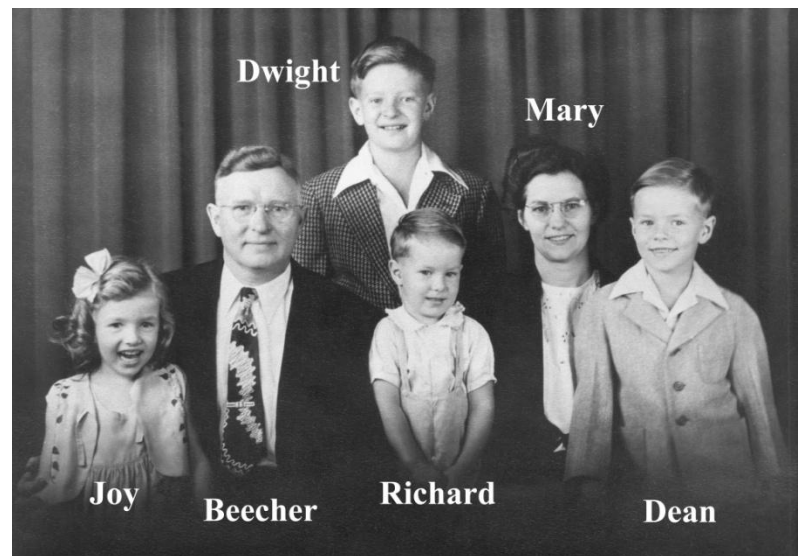
He was a founding trustee of the Brukner Nature Center and served as vice-president of the board at one time.

In 1935, Beecher married Mary Berkebile. She was an elementary school teacher. Together they had four children: Dwight, Dean, Joy and Richard.

Beecher and his brother, Ray, owned and operated the Beery School of Horsemanship for 50 years. He retired in 1970.



Beecher was a member of the Church of the Brethren. He taught Sunday School and was a Deacon for many years. He was instrumental in helping refugees come to the United States after World War II.



Beecher Beery Family

He helped chaperone Newton Senior trips to Washington, D.C. and was very involved with the school. In 1990, he was inducted into the Newton Hall of Fame.

Beecher died April 16, 1979 and is buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Pleasant Hill Triathlon

Course: Canoe, 7K (4.4miles), Run 7.6K (4.8 miles), Bike 33.3K (20.6 miles)

The first Pleasant Hill Triathlon was held on May 9, 1987. The event had a dual purpose (1) to provide competition and recreation for the participants and (2) to provide income for charitable community projects in Pleasant Hill/Newton Township. The Triathlon was the brain child of John C. Saunders and John O. Davis who had participated in other triathlons and thought that the scenic Stillwater River near Pleasant Hill would be an ideal site for such an event. Donations for the first year went to the Children's addition of the Oakes-Beitman Memorial Library.



The second annual Pleasant Hill Triathlon was held on May 7, 1988. The same course was followed except due to road closing, the bike leg up Horseshoe Bend Road had to be re-routed. The compiling results were collected on computer by Earl Blevins. A donation was made to the Indian Hills 4-H Camp building fund.

Cold rain and high waters were a challenge at the 3rd annual Pleasant Hill Triathlon held on May 6, 1989. The High waters resulted in the fastest canoe leg yet at 33 min. 7 sec. Entries totaled 194 and were received from Indiana, Kentucky, as well as, Ohio. A contribution was given to the Indian Hills 4-H Camp and Triathlon T-shirts given to The Odyssey of the Mind Team from Newton.

The 1990 event was held on May 5th. Donations went to the Newton School auditorium seat replacement project.

Contributions were donated all twelve years of the Triathlon to Pleasant Hill/Newton Township projects including, a donation to the Pleasant Hill Rescue Squad toward the Jaws of Life tool in memory of Brian Willis.

Volunteers were the heart of the Pleasant Hill Triathlon. Each year many compliments were heard from the competitors coming into the area about how friendly everyone was. All profits from the triathlon went back into the community.



Bike riders are riding down Owens Road near Stillwater Community Church



John O. Davis, Larry Dodds, and their families headed up the third to the twelfth and final Triathlon ending in 1998. During this time Paul Benson did the compiling of results by computer, so that they could be announced immediately after the triathlon race ended.

The Triathlon was a worthy event for Pleasant Hill and Newton Township. The funds raised were a help to many organizations!

John Davis and Larry Dodds are presenting Sharon Bledsoe with a donation to the Oakes-Beitman Museum from the 6th Annual Triathlon.

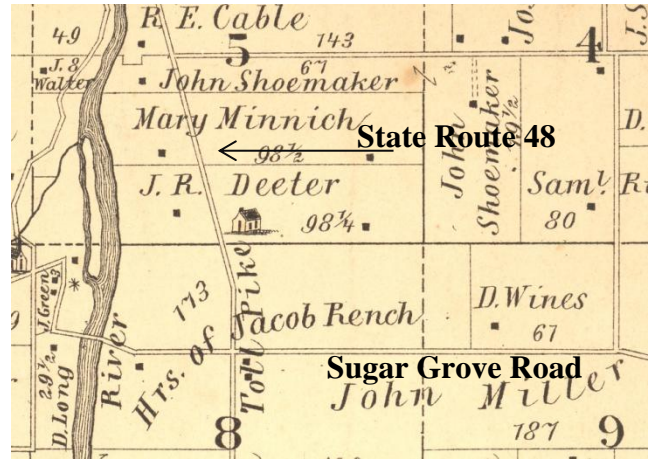
Newton Township One Room Schools

School # 10 - Sugar Grove or Willow Branch

Location: Part of the North East quarter of section 8, town 7, range 5. Commencing at the north west corner of said quarter then east with the north line 4 rods then south nine rods then west four rods then north to the place of beginning.

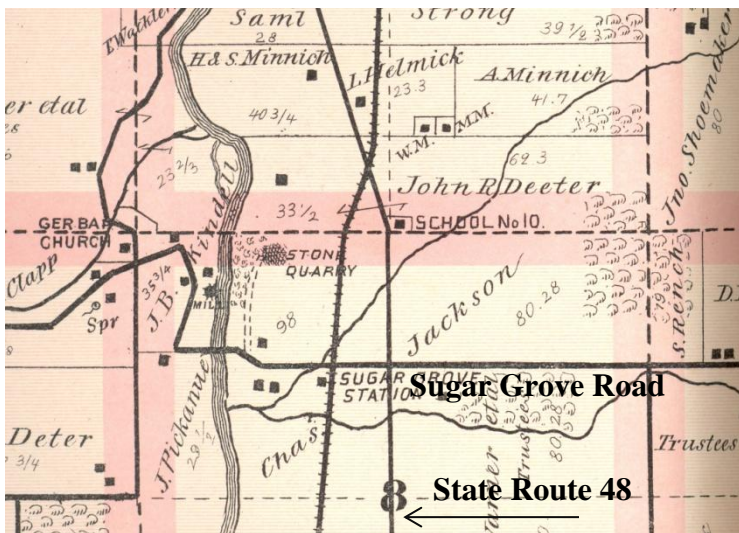
North of Sugar Grove Road on the East side of State Route 48.

The land was leased from Jacob Rench in 1848 for 2 and a half cents per year. Additional land was leased in 1853, 1871, and 1879.



1875 Plat Map

Some teachers at Sugar Grove include: R. Shoe, John Keister, Joseph Deeter, J. M. Wine, Samuel Overcash, Edward Fox, Mollie Hartzell, Katharine Lehman, Mabel Johnson, and Pearl Mohler



1894 Plat Map

When Newton Schools consolidated in 1923, the land was returned to Jacob Rench



Front row: Dewy Via, William Jackson, Lawson Robbins, Wilford Jackson, Russel Robbins, Melvin Via, Harry Rudy
Row 2: Ruth Thompson, Lucile Marlin, Bertha Gorman, Mina Hoke, Franny Via, Ida Link, Velma Johnson, Bertha Jackson, Mary Marlin, George Smith
Row 3: Ruth Shafer, Bessie Jackson, Edith Helmick, Lydia Minnich, Mabel Jackson, Ruth Sotzing, Marie Kindell, Teacher-Marie Karns
Row 4: Jess Gorman, John Via, Melvin Robbins, Harry Sotzing, Edward Johnson, Walter Via, Lorenzo Minnich, Raymond Minnich, Andrew Jackson

Notice the school was also called Willow Branch



Souvenir from T. D. McBride

