Acknowledgments

This is a second edition and with it has come some changes, most noticeably the layout and the addition of an index. The College Hill Historical Society has continued with the new Board and trustees: Sarah Wolf, President; Kate Weldishofer, Vice President; Don Baechle, Treasurer; Jennifer Schuermann, Secretary; Amy Finnegan, Reno Runck, Karen Forbes-Nutting, Doug Trimmel, Trustees.

Without the memories of many of our original College Hill Historical Society members, this could not have been written. Special thanks go to the late Ruth J. Wells, John O’Neil and Edward Stare; Martha Tuttle, Douglas Trimmel, the Emerson family, and Chilton Thomson. The written legacy of the late Mrs. Dorothy Henshaw and the drawings of her dear friend, Caroline Williams, are an important part of this book. I want to thank both Constance Lee Menefee and her son, Jonathan Burkhardt, for their technical assistance. Also, Gail Finke kindly made her College Hill photograph scans available.

Knowing that this book will be used for genealogy, the tangled, intermarried, and indexed College Hill family trees are found in the Appendix. Much of this information has been graciously submitted by the families represented. There are three indexes—one for the text, one for photographs and a final one for the Appendix.

The cover illustration is portion of a Strobridge Lithograph ca. 1865 of College Hill. This book’s title came from Tom Lowe, a Farmers’ College student, who described College Hill in 1853 as “A little piece of Paradise which an accidental opening of the clouds let fall upon the earth.”
1853 Map of Farmers’ College Experimental Farm
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1869 Map of College Hill
Introduction

Hundreds of years ago this area of Hamilton County was occupied by Indians but their ways came into conflict with the influx of pioneers arriving to settle these lands after the Revolutionary War. Since this area abounded with game and stands of primal woods, the Indians used this as a hunting ground. Any Indian camps would have been temporary. Years later, as the forests were cleared for the plow, Indian arrowheads and other relics were frequently uncovered.

In the Centinel of the Northwest Territory, December 18, 1793 was the following: “Good encouragement will be given to a number of settlers at Mt. Pleasant, 2 miles from Ludlow’s Station on the main road to Ft. Hamilton. (signed) John Ludlow.”

An early trail followed the ridge that is now a bit east of today’s Hamilton Avenue, where the Hammond North Condominiums now stand. It was this track that a company of soldiers followed on a northern expedition from Fort Washington in 1792. One of the soldiers was a young ensign, William Henry Harrison. The soldiers camped on the land that Farmers’ College would later occupy.

The last actual Indian camp was more than one hundred and fifty years ago on the site of the intersection of Belmont and Hamilton Avenues. These were of the Miami (Te-wighte-wa) tribe. The name refers to the cry of the crane, the symbol of their tribe. An undated newspaper article recalls the life of James La Rue who gave a final glimpse of Indian life. “When a young man Mr. La Rue saw 1,600 Wyandottes pass his door in a single file. They had sold their reservation, which was a little north of Dayton, to the Government, and tramped down the old Winton trail to the fort on the river (Ft. Washington). They walked the 60 miles in 24 hours, resting by the roadside whenever they wished. Having been paid their pittance, they marched back the same way, leaving Hamilton County forever. Their line stretched seven miles, while the same number of white men would have marched in one.”

The only other reference we have to Indians in the vicinity of College Hill is from Etsu Sugimoto1 recalling what she had learned from General Samuel Fenton Cary. She would “…sit with the General and his invalid wife listening by the hour while he told stories of early American life. Knowing that incidents of personal history especially appealed to me, he once told me that his own large estate was bought from an Indian chief in exchange for one chair, a gun and a pouch of tobacco; and that Mother’s large home (the Obed J. Wilson house) was once an Indian village of bark tents and was purchased for a half-a-dozen split seated kitchen chairs.”

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Chapter 1  Symmes & Harrison

After the Revolutionary War the land which formed the Northwest Territory had many claimants. Virginia, Connecticut and Massachusetts divided the lands amongst themselves, while other states contended they should be included, as all states fought in the war. The Indians considered the area theirs as stated in a prior treaty with England. Even the French had an opinion, since their explorers buried a lead tablet at the mouth of the Great Miami in 1749 declaring that the Ohio Valley belonged to their country.

Congress tried to resolve the claims by declaring that this area would be used to create free and independent states. The three states mentioned above having a prior claim surrendered this territory to Congress by 1786, but not before two of them retained a section to reward their Revolutionary War veterans. Virginia kept a tract in Ohio between the Scioto and Little Miami Rivers (Virginia Military District). Connecticut called its strip the Firelands as this land was given to its residents whose homes were burned during the Revolutionary War.

People started to move into the Northwest Territory right away, some (squatters) having no legal claim to the land they settled on. The Revolutionary veterans were paid in Continental certificates, which were worth little in cash, and many used these as payment for land.

Congressman Thomas Jefferson drafted the 1785 Land Ordinance dividing the areas into townships six miles square. Every township was divided into thirty-six sections, each containing six hundred and forty acres. When land was sold, it was by whole sections only. The Ordinance of 1787 guaranteed religious freedom, right to trial by jury, prohibited slavery or involuntary servitude, designated land for schools, and established a legislative system for governing this area.

The spring of 1788 greeted about 18,000 settlers in nine hundred flatboats (also called arks, broadhorns or Kentucky boats) destined for Kentucky where people had been arriving since 1774. Flatboats carried everything a pioneer had and needed. Up to 50 feet long and 16 feet wide, flatboats floated with the current, their flat bottoms passing over shallow water and submerged trees. Since they were incapable of going against the current, at their destination they were disassembled and used for building cabins. By the end of 1788, Kentucky had nearly 70,000 pioneers.

Few settlers moved into the area north of the Ohio River because of Indian resistance. The area was dubbed the Miami Slaughterhouse because of Indian raids. The Shawnee, Delaware, Wyandot and Miami Indians had been pushed into this area by the ever increasing settler population and shrinking hunting grounds. It was in Ohio that the Indians took their stand. The British and French also wanted the settlers kept out in an effort to keep their peace and trading with the Indians.

Major Benjamin Stites, a war veteran from New Jersey, left Redstone (Brownsville, Pennsylvania) in 1786, traveling down the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers with supplies for trade at Limestone (Maysville, Kentucky). Leaving Limestone he traveled four miles south to Washington, Kentucky, begun in 1784 as a station by Simon Kenton. There the settlers had just been raided by Indians that had stolen some of their finest horses and escaped by crossing the Ohio River. Stites formed a posse and tracked the Indians into southwestern Ohio. Impressed with the fertile land and game, Stites later went to the Continental Congress while it was in session in New York, and told the attendees what he had seen.

Judge John Cleves Symmes was a descendant of early English settlers. His father, Reverend Timothy Symmes, was born in 1714, and after ordination, was rotated through several parishes, finally settling at River Head, Long Island. He married Mary Cleves in 1740 and had two sons: John Cleves (1742) and Timothy (1744). Both sons moved to New Jersey where they fought in the American Revolution.

John Cleves Symmes served as colonel in one of the Sussex County, New Jersey, militia regiments. He and his regiment erected forts and batteries on Manhattan and Long Island, New York in 1776. Commanding three regiments of the New Jersey militia, he defeated a large British force. From 1776 - 1779 he was in charge of forts guarding the New Jersey frontier and fought in major battles of the Revolution. His military record was excellent and inspired trust of his leadership among the New Jersey veterans.
His civil record was equally as fine as his military one. He served on the Council of New Jersey and was an associate justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, 1777 - 1783. He was elected to the Continental Congress in 1785 and it was here that he met Benjamin Stites.

Like many other former Revolutionary War officers from the eastern states, Symmes was part of a land company; speculators who purchased military land warrants from veterans, redeemed them for large tracts of land and resold the land at a profit to settlers wanting smaller acreage. Some of the officers holding the higher ranks felt Congress owed them additional compensation for reducing some benefits they were promised, for monies lost while they were away fighting and sometimes for the cost of outfitting their own troops. Other agents were William McMillan and Elias Boudinot. There were two dozen partners in the Miami Land Company.

Symmes traveled with Stites in the fall of 1787 to see the area for himself, going as far south on the Ohio River as Louisville. Some of the features he was looking for were fertile bottom lands to grow crops, game, and water power to be used by mills.

Congress adopted more regulations for the sale of the Northwest Territory. Buyers were to survey the lands, dividing the area into townships and to lay out plats with lot #16 in each township donated to schools; lot #29 was set aside for religious purposes; lots #8, 11, and 26 were to be unused - awaiting future disposal by Congress. The government reserved the high hills and knobs and planned to survey them later for mineral deposits. If minerals were found, the property cost would be raised. Also, one township was saved for a college.

In 1787 Israel Ludlow was appointed to survey the land between the two Miami Rivers in Ohio, an area that the New Jersey Society contracted to buy.

Symmes approached Congress to purchase one million acres of military lands between the Great and Little Miami Rivers. His newly acquired status as one of nine judges of the Northwest Territory aided the passage of his proposition to Congress. On Oct. 15, 1788, Symmes was granted a charter from Congress to develop these lands whose southern boundary was the Ohio River and the northern boundary was to be determined later. The cost was $200,000 for the first 300,000 acres, with additional payments of the same sum for extra land, every six months. Stites purchased 20,000 acres at the mouth of the Little Miami from Symmes. Symmes was optimistic; he didn’t own the land yet!

Symmes advertised his lands in the eastern states. He continued to offer land in the northern area of his purchase that he expected to own. Symmes paid 16-1/2 cents per acre, offered the land for sale at 66-2/3 cents per acre, with the price increasing to one dollar an acre in November 1788. He also offered prospective settlers free timber for cabins, a supply of Indian corn and free lots in his city.

At that time giving a free in-city lot with the purchase of out-of-city land was common, as it aided in the creation of a centralized community. The in-city lots were to build a house upon and live in while the out-of-city lots were beyond the town boundaries and meant for farming, with a musket kept close. The earliest in-city homes were log cabins with a clapboard roof, mud and stick chimneys, puncheon floors and greased paper windows (ca 1790). By 1812 the new houses would have had hewn logs with shingle roofs. The puncheon floors would have been replaced by ash boards, paper windows by those of glass and chimneys of brick. Brick and stone houses would follow (ca 1830).

Stites found twenty-six persons willing to settle with him. This first settlement he called Columbia - located where today we have Lunken Airport. Columbia was founded Nov. 18, 1788, twelve years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The first group to arrive at the second settlement, Losantiville on December 28, 1788, was surveyors to determine the size of Symmes purchase. Col. Israel Ludlow and thirteen others had many difficulties that winter - the weather, Indians, and conflicting measurements. Surveyors used natural landmarks - rocks, trees, streams - which made accurate and reproducible boundaries at a later date very difficult. Ludlow platted and surveyed Losantiville, using a street plan similar to that of Philadelphia; rectangular streets forming blocks of a convenient size.

Before leaving Limestone for North Bend, Symmes is said to have sent the following letter Jan. 3, 1789, as quoted in *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati* by Charles Cist (1859):

> “Brothers of the Wyandots and Shawnees! Hearken to your brother who is coming to live at the Great
Miami. He was on the Great Miami last summer, while the deer was yet red and met with one of your
camps; he did no harm to anything which you had in your camps; he held back his young men from
hurting you or your horses, and would not let them take your skins or meat, though your brothers were
very hungry. All this he did because he was your brother, and would live in peace with the Red People. If
the Red People will live in friendship with him, and his young men, who came from the great Salt Ocean
to plant corn and build cabins on the land between the Great and Little Miami, then the White and Red
people shall all be brothers and live together, and we will buy your furs and skins, and sell you blankets
and rifles, and powder and lead and rum, and everything that our Red brothers may want in hunting and in
their towns.

Brothers! A treaty is holding at Muskingum. Great men from the thirteen fires are there, to meet the
chiefs and head men of all the nations of the Red People. May the Great Spirit direct all their councils for
peace! But the great Men and the Wise Men of the Red and White people cannot keep peace and
friendship long, unless we, who are their sons and Warriors, will also bury the hatchet and live in peace.

Brothers! I send you strings of beads, and write to you with my own hand, that you may believe what
I say. I am your brother, and will be kind to you while you remain in peace.

Farewell!        Signed, Jno. C. Symmes”

Symmes brought his own group of pioneers that winter (Feb. 2, 1789) to settle North Bend at the
mouth of the Great Miami River, on the most northerly bend of the Ohio River. North Bend was founded
two days before George Washington was elected President. Cist in his Early Annals and Future
Prospects of Cincinnati (1841) described the camp from a letter written from Symmes to Dayton:

“This afternoon we raised what in this country is called a camp by setting two forks of saplings in
the ground, a ridge pole across and leaning boat boards which I had brought from Limestone, one end on
the ground and the other against the ridge pole, enclosing one end of the camp and leaving the other open
to the weather for a door where our fire was made to fend against the cold which was very bitter.”

Symmes was able to raise only $82,198 of the first $200,000 he owed. The next year he renegotiated
his payments and land contract. In exchange for one million acres, Symmes would buy 246,594 acres for
$82,198. (33.25 cents per acre).

Symmes expected his site of North Bend to be superior to Columbia and Losantiville. Symmes City
would be the location of a fort, necessary to protect settlers from constant Indian attacks. It would also be
a major trading area conveniently located at the confluence of two rivers. He described his city as “Egypt
on the Miami.” Unfortunately, the hilly terrain of North Bend made the region inaccessible to the type of
trade he envisioned, and both North Bend and Columbia were on the flood plain. Losantiville proved to
be the superior site; the river was tamer there, it was on a bluff overlooking the river, and the area was
free from yearly flooding. When the surveyors came to choose a location for Fort Washington (1789),
North Bend and Columbia were flooded, so dry Losantiville received the fort, as Congress promised
protection from Indians. To soothe over any hurt feelings due to the fort’s location, Symmes was given
the honor by Governor of the Northwest Territory, Arthur St. Clair, to name the section of the Miami
Purchase that was organized into a county. Symmes designated Hamilton in honor of the new Secretary of
the Treasury. Symmes chose for himself and two nephews adjoining lots on the Ohio River. They
worked hard and by the following year seven buildings were erected, including a smoke house, double log
cabin and a log building with a two-story basement. Later, two stone mills were built - for grain and
lumber. Mills attracted people to that area for settlement. During the spring of 1789, eighteen soldiers to
be stationed at North Bend arrived without any supplies. Building cabins, erecting a hexagonal
blockhouse with an overhanging second story, and hunting venison were their first priorities. A few
departed to Big Bone Lick (Kentucky) to gather salt. Flax, cotton and corn were sown as soon as land was
workable. Flour and meal were purchased from Losantiville until the crops could be harvested.

Gershom Gard came with his brother David in a party organized by Symmes that left New Jersey in
1790. Gard’s cousin Alexander (son of their brother Daniel) also was on this trip. On Jan. 9, 1790
Symmes wrote: I have sold one of the shares of the city to Gershom Gard. Alexander Guard (as his family
spelled their surname) brought his family, as did Gershom. Gershom first settled, along with brother,
David, on a farm about 5 miles east of North Bend, in the Delhi area of today. David died later that year.
Jacob Parkhurst, a relative of the Gards, wrote in an account of his life the Christmas of 1790 at North Bend. “On Christmas day Judge John Cleave Symms (sic) invited the whole Garrison of men, hunters and all, to the raising of a fort or blockhouse over on the Miami bottom. It was a log cabin with 16 corners, which he had planned as to afford a chance to fire on the enemy from the port holes in every direction. We did not finish it that day, for the days were short and it was a troublesome building to raise...it was calculated for four fire places, and for four families to live. I thought it was an invention of the old Judge to have something curious and exciting to send back to New Jersey...”

Among the Judge’s lighter tasks were marriages, his first being between Jemima Gard (daughter of Gershom Gard) and Captain Peter Keen (married on 10 Oct., 1781). Their daughter, Angeline, was the first white child born between the two Miami Rivers.

Along with Gershom Gard, Captain James Keen and family came from New Jersey. James Keen’s son, Peter, was an early pioneer in College Hill who established Keen’s Station, five miles from Ludlow’s Station along the St. Clair’s Trace (today the corner of Hamilton Avenue and West Galbraith Road). Gershom Gard had been a private in his future son-in-law’s company of the Morris, New Jersey militia during the Revolutionary War. At North Bend, Judge Symmes also presided at the wedding of another early College Hill family, Ephraim Brown to Eunice Gard (on 10 Feb., 1791).

Gershom had purchased sections 25 and 31 in Springfield Township from Symmes in 1787. After Gershom’s death in 1807 in College Hill, his son Seth, Seth’s nephew Aaron Waggoner (Jr.), assorted family and friends including Peter Keen left this area to resettle at Palmyra, Illinois, the town that they founded.

Indian attacks to the area continued, keeping settlers away, and Symmes had problems meeting his payments to the government. Troops were stationed at Fort Washington - 1,400 in 1790. Headed by General Josiah Harmer, they were expected to rout the Indians. But, since only one fifth of this group was trained soldiers, the troops were defeated. Harmer was replaced as military commander. In the fall of 1791, General St. Clair marched north with his troops, faring no better than Harmer.

It was in 1790 that Rev. Oliver M. Spencer’s family arrived among the log cabins and stockade at Columbia. Their cabin stood near Tusculum and Columbia Parkway intersection, near Crawfish Creek (Delta Avenue). Spencer recounted the early years of living at Columbia and his subsequent capture and escape from the Indians in his 1834 book.

Oliver’s father’s story was the same as many other settlers. “Before entering the continental army he possessed a small fortune, the fruits of his industry in a lucrative business; but of this a large amount was destroyed by the enemy, and more than ten thousand dollars, advanced by him in specie to pay and clothe his regiment, were repaid to him by Congress in Continental money, on which he sustained a total loss. Like many of his companions in arms, after encountering the dangers and enduring the hardships of a protracted war, Colonel Spencer found himself at its close reduced from affluence to comparative poverty... with impaired health and injured constitution he again engaged in business....After toiling many years with little success, hearing the flattering accounts then in circulation of the beauty and fertility of the Miami country, he determined to explore it (1789)...Previously to his leaving home he had disposed of his certificates for his military services at one-third of the nominal value and vested their proceeds in Miami lands...”

Another incident in the day of a pioneer is the following:1 “When grandfather (Abraham Swartsel) went back to Warren County to reap his harvest he left grandmother (Elizabeth Izor Swartsel) and the children in her new home. She was not afraid for she trusted in the Lord for protection. One morning she went to a branch some distance from their shelter to do some washing, leaving the children at the shanty. About ten o’clock the four children came carrying the baby and all so badly frightened, said, ‘Oh, so many Indians in the house.’ No one was near, so after a prayer to God for guidance and protection she took her little family and went into the shanty. When she reached her little home the Indians were gone, but they had eaten everything they found in the house; however, they did not find the victuals under the

1 Source: Marti Buente, Indian account by Elizabeth Swartsel Oldfather from the collection of Seb Miller.
rocks so they had some food left for themselves. The Indians went about one-fourth a mile away to a little hill where there was not much growth and camped for the night; she could hear them whooping and having their war dances; she spent the night in prayer and watching, but they left in the next morning.

About ten o’clock grandfather, Abraham Swartsel, came, had almost rode his horse to death; he heard the Indians were on a trail up the river from Cincinnati and had massacred several families and he found they were on a path towards his home, and he expected to find his little family massacred, but, Oh what joy, they were safe and well.”

The floods returned in 1793. Alexander Guard and his family moved to the mouth of the Big Miami River where there were some unused cabins. The family and their household goods traveled the river in a pirogue (a type of hollowed log canoe). Alexander’s wife, Hannah, and their children walked along the shoreline, herding their animals. The pirogue was steered by Alexander and Captain Joseph Hayes. As they took the canoe around into the Miami to unload, they were swept downstream by the swollen, swiftly moving river. The pirogue overturned and while everything the Guards owned, including all their money, was lost, the men made it to the shore. Mrs. Guard is reported to have said; “We have one another, our new home, our land and our farm animals.”

Alexander made what furniture they needed, including a new loom, but Hannah worried about the lost clothing. In the often mentioned style of hardy pioneers, she tried weaving with nettles fibers. Nettles grew abundantly and are tough, fibrous stemmed plants. The 12 to 16 foot long nettles were gathered, Hannah cut away the leaves, pounded the stems to soften them, soaked them for several days after which the softer plant parts fell away and only the fibers remained. She carded those fibers and spun them into a strong but coarse, yellowish brown thread that was later woven into winter clothing. In one season she made 200 yards of nettle cloth. As late as 1876 their daughter, Sarah (Guard) Bonham had a piece of this cloth left.

Guard relocated his family two more times, ever moving west. Their final home was in Dearborn County, Indiana where Alexander died in 1810. The continual push west was less a case of itchy feet than that of agricultural necessity. After farming in the same location, using the same crops, the soil became depleted of nourishment and crop yields became smaller. Moving to fresh land was all a farmer knew - crop rotation, fertilizers, contour farming were yet to be discovered.

Job Gard, son of Gershom, advertised in the Centinel of the North Western Territories newspaper in Nov. 8, 1793 issue that he had “Lost, at little above North Bend, Parchment Pocket-Book, containing a number of valuable papers of no use to any person but the owner, whoever finds, and returns it to the Subscriber should have the above reward. (Four dollars).”

Gershom had purchased 1280 acres in Springfield Township from Symmes in 1787. Sections 25 and 31 shown on Col. Israel Ludlow’s survey map (1792) of the Miami Purchase are labeled as belonging to Gard.

Symmes continued to have financial worries. Settlers started to sue him since they had purchased land in good faith and Symmes did not have clear title to settle the transaction. Some of the lands he sold were outside of the Miami Purchase. Settlers even petitioned Congress for help. Poorly kept records, natural objects being used as boundaries for surveys and changes of the purchase terms by Congress all combined to create a bureaucratic mess. On Sept. 13, 1794 President George Washington signed the U.S. Patent conveying 248,250 acres to Symmes. Fifteen acres were reserved for Fort Washington and further government use. Symmes was to pay $70,455 for 105,683 acres (66.7 cents/ acre) and use military land warrants for 95,250 acres. The total was 200,933 acres. (By comparison, Hamilton County has 256,000 acres.) Congress gave a credit of 33 cents per dollar for land unsuitable for use and for minor charges. Congress also passed a relief act to allow landowners to purchase their property directly from the government. The total of Symmes Purchase was 300,000 acres, only one third of the land he thought to buy.

Indian attacks continued in 1794. Rumors of attacks were circulated to encourage settlers to move into Kentucky and pass Ohio by. Small settlements, isolated and vulnerable, spread along the Ohio and Miami Rivers. Hostile and peaceful Indians died, but both felt the cutting of forest lands destroyed something that the tribes held sacred. The May 17, 1794 edition of William Maxwell’s The Centinel of
the North-Western Territory printed the notice that a citizen’s committee in Cincinnati and Columbia proposed to pay a bounty for Indian scalps with the right ear attached.

In 1795 townships were established. North College Hill and Mt. Healthy are in Springfield Township while College Hill, to the south, is in section 30 and 36 of Millcreek Township. A section is 640 acres. Springfield Township is divided into 42 sections of which 31, 32, 25 and 26 are the heart of North College Hill at the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Galbraith Road. Mt. Healthy is composed of sections 32, 33, 26 and 27 and is divided by Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road.

The northeast part of each section was called “the forfeit.” If the person who purchased the section did not personally or arrange for another to occupy the land and did not farm it within two years he forfeited 1/6 of his land (106 2/3 acres) to any qualified settler.

As soon as the townships were created and sectioned, pioneers and speculators started to purchase land. Gershom Gard, Ephraim Brown, Abner and Cary Johnson and the Cary brothers, William and Christopher, were a few of such pioneers.

Section 26 was a Congressional section so retained by the government should land be needed for the common good. Christopher Cary purchased the west half of #26 in 1814, later selling 100 acres of the northwest corner to his son Benjah. Sam Hill secured the northeast quarter in 1830. William Snodgrass bought the southeast quarter in 1813. Gershom Gard, purchased 1,280 acres with a Miami land warrant and $200 (sections 31 and 25). His land extended from North Bend Road to Galbraith Road, and from Daly Road to the Colerain Township line. Peter Keen received the forfeit of section 31 and bought 267 acres of that same section. This land was sold to Gard’s son-in-law Ephraim Brown. Gershom later sold to his son, Seth, the 640 acres of section 25 for $640. When Gershom died in 1807 he was buried on his farm in an area he set aside for a family cemetery. He is buried in College Hill off of North Bend Road in Gard Cemetery. Gershom married Phebe Huntington of New Jersey and had nine children. Two of Gershom’s children married into the Ephraim Brown family; Seth (married Mary Brown) and Eunice (married Captain Ephraim Brown). Peter Keen married Jemima Gard and Betsy married Aaron Waggoner, Jr., part of the small group leaving to found Palmyra, Ill. on the Wabash River. According to his obituary, Gershom died Dec. 28, 1806. Phebe followed in 1812. Ephraim Brown was an assistant surveyor on the road from Cincinnati to the mouth of the Big Miami River. In 1795, Symmes sold him the east half of section 32, 320 acres for $100 in military warrants and $160 cash. This area covers Galbraith Road to Compton Road, Hamilton Avenue to Arlington Gardens Cemetery. He later sold this parcel to Peter Laboyteaux. Captain Ephraim Brown built a brick house in 1812 on 267 acres of section 31 that he purchased from his father-in-law, Gershom Gard. Savannah Avenue was once the lane leading to this home. In the street a little circle of grass remains where once the carriage turn-around was.

Freeman G. Cary described Brown as “a man of sterling integrity.” Captain Brown was a Justice of the Peace for Colerain Township and also was a trustee there. He served in the Ohio legislature both in the House and Senate. To fight in the War of 1812, Ephraim raised and outfitted his own cavalry unit. In College Hill he operated a distillery - farmers brought Brown excess fruit to be made by his household into brandy, which had a ready market. He is buried in Gard Cemetery, College Hill. Ephraim’s brother, Israel Brown, served as Judge of the Courts of Common Pleas of Hamilton County.

Israel Ludlow established his residence on land in the Mill Creek valley. His domain included Cumminsville, part of Clifton, part of today’s Spring Grove Cemetery, and a part of Ludlow Station where Chase and Chambers Streets and the railroad yards now are. Ludlow planted a large apple orchard and entertained Johnny Appleseed whenever he was in that area. Charlotte Chambers married Israel Ludlow.

At this time, North Bend had a population total of 300-400, Cincinnati had 900 and Columbia, 1100. In 1793 a smallpox epidemic killed one third of Cincinnati residents.

Troops marched from Fort Washington to establish several forts and repelled Indian skirmishes as they moved north in Ohio, culminating at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

This decisive battle led to the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The treaty negotiations lasted two months. Tarhe (the Crane) of the Wyandot represented all of the Ohio tribes - he later led his braves in support of the United States in the War of 1812. The Treaty was expected to be the final settlement of
Indian troubles but problems persisted.

Symmes tried to be both fair and kind to the Indians. His reputation allowed him to exert some influence on them. After the Treaty of Greenville, several Indians declared that during the war they had often raised their rifles to shoot him, but, recognizing him, had desisted.

In 1791 Lt. William Henry Harrison came to Fort Washington. He was the son of Benjamin Harrison (V) of Virginia, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and thrice governor of Virginia. William had studied medicine under Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, before entering the army. Later in his life Harrison was on the board of the Medical College of Ohio. Harrison was a religious man and, in 1792, contributed money for the building of the first church in Cincinnati - a 30’ X 40’ cabin whose congregation was lead by the Presbyterian minister, James Kemper.

While stationed there, Harrison disciplined two men for being drunk and disorderly in conduct. He did not know it at the time, but these were civilian employees and were not subject to military rules. Harrison had the men whipped and the men swore a warrant for assault against Harrison. General James Wilkinson was commander at that time and ordered Harrison to stay within the fort, thus evading the civil court. Judge Symmes and Judge McMillan loudly protested this tactic by Wilkinson. Harrison hastily left the fort as escort to Mrs. Wilkinson and her children on their return trip to Pittsburg. Harrison didn’t return to Fort Washington until 1793.

In 1794 William was aide-de-camp to General Anthony Wayne at the Battle of Fallen Timbers (so named because a tornado had toppled many trees in this forest). After this battle, Harrison was promoted as commander of Ft. Washington (1795).

Harrison met Judge Symmes’ daughter, Anna, and the Judge didn’t think he would be successful as a soldier. They reportedly had the conversation: How do you expect to support my daughter? My sword is my means of support, sir. Because of Symmes’ objections, William and Anna were married by a Justice of the Peace while Symmes was out of town (12 Nov., 1795). For several years the young couple lived in Symmes’ old log cabin at North Bend.

Symmes built a second house for himself and his third wife, Susanna Livingston. The house had 26 rooms on a 180 acre lot, cost $8,000 to build and the bricks reportedly came from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The house, “The Chimneys,” was an attempt to keep Susanna happy. As the daughter of a former governor of New Jersey, she preferred life back east to that of North Bend and finally deserted Judge Symmes. To add to Symmes problems, the house was set on fire by a disgruntled office seeker (1811). Not only the house at the foot of Mount Nebo was lost but the documents of deeds and land transactions were also destroyed, making it difficult to settle land disputes which still plagued him. Eventually he sold many of his acres and possessions to satisfy the claims. The fire left him without income except from his lands.

Under Judge Symmes the first roads were planned in the Miami Purchase. North Bend Road, which runs through College Hill today, started as a deer or buffalo trail and most certainly was an Indian pathway. It was also a major military road which ended at North Bend, Ohio and began at the Carthage location of John Caldwell’s mill, on the Mill Creek. Carthage was an early settlement founded by pioneers as they moved north of Cincinnati following the waterway.

Symmes was a widower by his previous two marriages to Ann Tuthill and Mrs. Mary Halsey. He had only two children, Anna T. and Maria (who married Peyton Short). Years later, in 1889, the community of Addyston was platted by Matthew Addy out of the Short Hill estate of heirs of John Cleves Short, grandson of Judge Symmes. John C. Short married his first cousin, Betsy Harrison, daughter of William and Anna Harrison.

Disillusioned and resentful, Symmes’ circumstances forced him to live with Anna and William. Symmes developed cancer. Symmes’ will, quoted in the Evening Post, April 10, 1884, said “... after giving his executor power to settle and divide the proceeds between his sons-in-law (he) bitterly moralized thus: I hope I need make no apology to my children and grandchildren for not having so much property to leave them as might have been expected from the earnings of a long industrious, frugal, and adventurous life, when they recollect the undue methods taken as well by the government of the U.S. as by many individual private characters, to make sacrifice of my hardly earned property at the shrine of
avarice. It has been my particular lot to be treated with the blackest ingratitude by some who now laugh at
my calamity, but who would at this day have been toiling in poverty had not my enterprise to this country,
my benevolence, or the property which they have plundered from me, made them rich. How dark and
mysterious are the ways of heaven.”

Harrison was renting a house in Cincinnati at that time and it was here Judge Symmes died on Feb.
26, 1814 at age 72, according to his tombstone. Symmes is buried in Congress Green Cemetery it North
Bend, on land he originally set aside for the village square.

Charles Wilson Peale, who is known for his portraits of Washington and Jefferson, painted a portrait
of Symmes that hangs at Symmes Hall of Miami University. Symmes set aside for education the tract that
Miami University (founded 1809) occupies.

When Harrison was age 25, he was appointed by President Adams as the Secretary to the Northwest
Territory, stationed in Cincinnati. Harrison resigned from the army to take this post. As a territorial
delagate to Congress, Harrison promoted the division of the Northwest Territory into states. He authored
the Harrison Land Act which reduced land speculation by allowing settlers to purchase smaller sections of
land than they were previously allowed, at prices they could afford. By reducing the acreage to 320 acre
parcels, the settlers were required to put 25% down and had four years to pay. That brought their cost to
around $2/acre. In 1800 Harrison was appointed the first Governor of the Indiana Territory. He and his
family moved to Vincennes, Indiana in 1803 and built their home “Grouseland” in a walnut grove.
Grouseland was two and one half stores high, and was built with fortifications against Indian raids. There
were shuttered windows, a closet under the stairs in which to hide, a powder magazine and a rooftop
lookout. The well was located in the basement. For a decade Harrison served as Governor, leading the
territory into statehood.

Part of Harrison’s fame came from his victory at Tippecanoe. Tecumseh, of the Shawnee, and his
brother, The Prophet, claimed that previous treaties were not legal. As Indiana opened its lands for
settlement, Harrison had negotiated a treaty in 1809, purchasing from the Indians western Indiana lands
lying south of a line that followed the sun’s shadow at 10 AM on September 30. This Treaty of Fort
Wayne is what Tecumseh challenged. Tecumseh lost his father and two brothers in fights with the new
settlers and moved aggressively to stop further encroachment by pioneers. At Tippecanoe Creek in
northern Indiana the power of Tecumseh was broken, and The Prophet killed, as Harrison led troops
against an Indian ambush. Tecumseh, who was away from his encampment visiting another tribe when
the battle occurred, went into Ontario, Canada. He was made a brigadier in the British army and fought
along with several thousand Indians on behalf of the British during the War of 1812. Tecumseh was killed
during the War at the Battle of the Thames.

In 1800, Ohio was covered 95% by virgin forest (25 million acres). After fifty years of farming, land
clearing and settlement, 54% of the state still had virgin forest. Today, only 100 acres exist statewide.

During Harrison’s governorship of the Indiana Territory, President Thomas Jefferson wrote to him:
“Our system is to live in perpetual peace with the Indians, to cultivate an affectionate attachment for them
by everything just and liberal which we can do for them within the bounds of reason and by giving them
effectual protection against the wrongs from our people. When they withdraw themselves to the culture of
a small piece of land, they will perceive how useless to them are the extensive forests and will be willing
to pare them off in exchange for necessaries for their farms and families. To promote this, we shall push
our trading houses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them in debt, because
we observe when these debts go beyond what the individual can pay, they become willing to lop them off
by a cession of lands. But should any tribe refuse the proffered hand and take up the hatchet, it will be
driven across the Mississippi and the whole of its lands confiscated.”

Harrison resigned as governor to serve as Major General of the Kentucky militia (even though he
didn’t live in Kentucky) during the War of 1812. He rose in rank throughout the war, finally commanding
all troops in the northwest for the retaking of Detroit and forays into Canada.

This war had popular support. Music of the time had shifted from being primarily religious in subject
to political issues and important events. The song “Hail Columbia,” recalling the glories of America, was
a favorite during the war.
After the war, Harrison returned not to his home in Vincennes, but to the Symmes farm at North Bend. The log cabin was covered by boards, wing additions built on both sides and the house painted white. At this time, Anna and William had ten children. One, John Scott Harrison, kept the farm going while Harrison served in the Ohio House (1816-19) and Senate (1825-28).

The adjoining town of Cleves was platted by William H. Harrison in 1818. In 1829 he was appointed Minister to Columbia, South America and brought back a macaw that was the family pet for many years.

The Harrison home contained 16 rooms and the farm encompassed 3,000 acres. The house overlooked the Whitewater Canal and the Ohio River. Harrison was a strong backer for building the Miami and Whitewater canals.

Better ways to get farm goods to and from market was a problem. Wagons had difficulties on muddy, rough roads and were limited in size. Flatboats could maneuver only on large streams during high water. The key to market accessibility was the canal network. Harrison sold right of way on his land, assuring his grist mill supplies of grain to grind and a quick way to move the flour to sell. He also sold the canal builders bricks from his brickyard, timber from his land, and stones from his quarry. The canal wasn’t completed until after Harrison’s death and a tunnel on his land along the canal was named for him. The Harrison Tunnel is still standing.

Harrison helped to organize Christ Church (Episcopal) in Cincinnati along with Dr. Daniel Drake, General Arthur St. Clair and Jacob Baymiller. In 1835 Harrison was one of the founders of the Young Men’s Mercantile Library Association - better known as the Mercantile Library, which is still active and is Cincinnati’s oldest library.

Harrison’s background led to the Whig party nominating him for President in 1836 opposite Martin Van Buren, who won the election. During Van Buren’s term there was the severe financial panic of 1837. Even though Van Buren wasn’t responsible for the panic, the people blamed him. In 1840 Harrison ran again, with John Tyler from Virginia as his running mate on the Whig ticket. The Whigs thought the government should re-establish a central bank and improvements by the government should be paid by tariff fees. The Democrats expounded broader states rights, state controlled banks and revenues created by taxation.

This election started political campaigns as we know them today. The slogan “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too” was catchy and easy to remember. A Democratic newspaper called Harrison “… the farmer from North Bend.” Cabin caricature pictures were widely distributed showing raccoon skin lined interior walls which were ornamented with strings of buckeyes suspended from pegs and a barrel of hard cider on the porch. Another paper wrote; “Give him a barrel of cider and... he will sit the remainder of his days content in a log cabin.” This statement was creatively turned by the Whigs into the Log Cabin and Hard Cider slogan. Miniature Old Tipp log cabins and cider jugs became his political insignia. Parades were held at every rally and a cabin of buckeye logs built on a wagon was predominant at every parade. Harrison, at age 67, traveled extensively and stumped as the log cabin candidate. People soon started calling Ohioans buckeys and buckeye wood canes were a popular campaign item. Dedicated followers, such as Samuel F. Cary, campaigned for Harrison throughout Ohio and Indiana.

A letter from Clarissa Gest described a rally in this campaign: “One of their Banners (has) on one side Harrison guiding the plough and a log cottage in the distance. On the reverse (are) 3 barrels of good hard cider to regale his visitors. The cause of this subject was many of the opposition say he is a farmer in this position and make it their chief objection.”

William Warder, in a March 8, 1840 letter to Erasmus Gest, described a Columbus, Ohio rally where 20,000 people joined a parade as “…Beautiful banners were waving. Log cabins, canoes, brigs, etc. were drawn along on wagons. Whenever the name of Hamilton was uttered, such shouts arose, that you could not speak. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed…”

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2 Source: Cincinnati Enquirer, Builders of ill-fated canal took the hard way, Owen Findsen, October 6, 1996.

3 Inventory of the Erasmus Gest Papers, 1834-1885), Ohio Historical Society library.

4 Inventory of the Erasmus Gest Papers, op. cit.
This was the start of grassroots campaigning even though Harrison was of the Virginia gentry. By the time of Harrison’s election as the ninth President, the buckeye was forever linked with Ohio.

Harrison’s campaign is also credited for introducing the abbreviation “O.K.”5 into our vocabulary. A Harrison supporter took a wagon full of his neighbors to hear Harrison speak. On the wagon was a sign, “The people is Oll Korrect.” Democratic newspapers derided this as proof of the lack of education and back woods nature of Harrison supporters. Near Springfield a tavern keeper took the farmer’s phrase and changed his tavern’s name to the OK Tavern. When asked about the new name, the tavern keeper explained it meant his tavern was “all right” or “all correct.”

Harrison was exhausted by extensive campaigning and besieged by people wanting favors and political appointments. He rode in his inauguration parade bare-headed and coatless during stormy weather. His inaugural address was two hours long. Harrison developed pneumonia and died 31 days later (April 4, 1841). His was the first funeral to be held in the White House. His local funeral was conducted at Cincinnati’s Wesley Chapel. “Tyler Too” was now the first unelected President.

Anna Harrison (died 1864) never occupied the White House although her son, Col. William H. Harrison Jr., was with his father during that time. Anna and William lost four of their sons before Harrison became president - three sons during his last three years.

William Henry Harrison is claimed by Ohio, Indiana and Virginia - the state of his birth. His home in Vincennes, Indiana has been restored and is open to the public. The Tippecanoe battleground is a state memorial. A statue of him is on Monument Square, downtown Indianapolis.

The familiar statue of him astride his horse, named Fearnought, in Piatt Park downtown Cincinnati, was modeled by Louis Rebisso. Pledges were collected to pay for the pedestal. During the dedication of the monument in the summer of 1892, Samuel F. Cary was a keynote speaker. Piatt Park was named for John James Piatt who moved to North Bend, Ohio in 1868. He and his wife were poets. John was also a journalist, and was named Consul to Cork, Ireland.

Harrison is buried at North Bend. The original tomb had a sod covered, arched roof which was later replaced, and the brickwork has been covered by cement. His tomb site was secured from his heirs by the state of Ohio in 1919.

At one time, steamboats passing the tomb blew their whistles in respect. Mrs. Ruth J. Wells remembered reading that when the Indians were moved from the Northwest Territory they were marched down to the Ohio River and loaded onto steamboats. One of the Indian chiefs died while on the march down and was buried somewhere along the road. The steamboat captain stopped the boat opposite Harrison’s tomb because these Indians had fought under Harrison and wanted to pay homage to their General. Years later (1912) a statue of Harrison’s nemesis, Tecumseh, was erected in Sayler Park, a few miles away from Harrison’s tomb.

It was in 1855 that botanist Dr. John Aston Warder purchased about 300 acres from Mrs. Anna Harrison, who was land poor. Warder designed Cincinnati’s park system, planted Spring Grove Cemetery, established President’s Grove in Eden Park, founded the American Forestry Association, and helped to establish Arbor Day. He bought these acres to enjoy during his retirement. On this property still are trees more than a century old, including the largest buckeye tree in Ohio and the largest English oak in America. This land is now being developed. Reuben Warder, one of his sons, became superintendent of Cincinnati parks. The nursery in Finneytown is named after Reuben.

John Scott Harrison, one of William and Anna’s surviving eight children, was a member of Congress, and had a law practice for a short time with Nicholas Longworth. John gave up his law career to manage his father’s farm at North Bend. He and Elizabeth had eight children. In 1858 the Harrison home, the log cabin of the 1840 campaign, burned and Anna moved in with his family at “The Point,” 600 acres at the mouth of the Big Miami River. His son, Benjamin (born 1833) was taught by private tutors at the North Bend farm.

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5 Another derivation of O.K. is that it stood for Old Kinderhook, a nickname for Martin Van Buren. Van Buren was born in 1782 and grew up in the New York Hudson River Valley village of Kinderhook. In support of his second presidential term, the Democratic O.K. Club was formed.
John Harrison’s granddaughter, Elizabeth Irwin (Harrison) Buckner, gave an interview to the Times Star, May 16, 1940. At that time it was hoped to make this home a national shrine. Mrs. Buckner had several articles of furniture from the old homestead and the hand written will of her great-great-grandfather, Benjamin Harrison who owned the estate he called “Berkeley” on the James River in Virginia.

She remembered her grandfather as “generosity itself. In fact it was his signing of notes for friends that in his later years caused shrinkage of his holdings. There used to be fine orchards at “The Point”6 But none of the great yield was sold. The neighbors were at liberty to come and take what they wished.” This house was demolished in 1959.

There is a second John Cleves Symmes7 of this area that gets confused with the Judge. This John Cleves Symmes was his nephew; son of the Judge’s brother, Timothy. Timothy was a silversmith, and spent most of his life in New Jersey. Timothy had three sons by his first wife, Abigail Tuthill (sister of Symmes wife Anne) - Daniel, William, and Celadon.

Celadon was the first settler at what is known as Symmes Corner, now part of Fairfield in Butler County, Ohio. Celadon originally purchased a lot in Cincinnati for $8, built a shop and worked for a year at his trade as a silversmith. He sold the shop and lot and went to work for his Uncle Symmes at North Bend in 1790. He became the overseer of the farm and guarded the surveyors as they worked. He wasn’t paid a wage, but received a section of land in Butler County in exchange. During the time he lived at North Bend he was often in danger from the Indians and wild animals. On one occasion his dogs were fighting a wounded mountain lion. When the dogs were losing the fight, Celadon seized the forepaw of the mountain lion and stabbed it to death. Celadon’s son, Benjamin Randolph Symmes, built the first tavern/hotel in Butler County, still standing as the Savings of America Bank at the crossroads of Pleasant Avenue and Nilles Road.

The second John Cleves Symmes was the half-brother of Celadon. He was born in Sussex County, New Jersey in 1780. In 1802 he entered the United States Army as an ensign. He was promoted to Second, then to First Lieutenant, and in 1812 was commissioned a captain. He served through the War of 1812. Early in his military career he was sent to the southwest. While stationed at Fort Adams, fifty miles below Natchez, he fought a duel with another officer in 1807. He was shot in the wrist and never fully recovered its use.

In 1816 he retired from the army and went to St. Louis, where he furnished supplies for the troops in the upper Mississippi and traded with the Fox Indians. From 1819 to 1824 he lived in Newport, Kentucky. In 1824 he moved to his farm near Hamilton, Ohio. This was a section of land which his uncle, John Cleves Symmes, had given him. Judge Symmes gave each of his brother Timothy’s eight sons a portion of land. The farm was sold after Captain Symmes’ death to pay his medical expenses.

While in St. Louis, Capt. Symmes had developed “The Theory of Concentric Spheres, Polar Voids, and Open Poles.” “To all the world: I declare the earth is hollow and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentric spheres, one within the other, and that it is open at the poles twelve or sixteen degrees ...I ask one hundred brave companions, well equipped, to start from Siberia, in the fall season, with reindeer and sleighs, on the ice of the frozen sea; I engage we find a warm and rich land, stocked with thrifty vegetables and animals, if not men...”

This theory wasn’t well accepted by the scientific community. Jules Verne used this idea for his book, “Journey to the Center of the Earth” printed in 1864. Symmes gave many lectures on his hollow earth theory throughout the United States and Canada and, his health impaired, returned to his farm near Hamilton, where he died May 29, 1829. He was interred in the old burying ground with military honors (now a park). His son, Americus Symmes, had a monument erected over his grave. It is of freestone,

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6 North Bend, Ohio
7 Thanks to Mrs. Ruth J. Wells who wrote The Symmes Family in Vol. 5, #4, Oct. 1969 of the Coleraine Pageant. Portions of her text are used here as well as the notes from her 1970 presentation on the Symmes family for the Butler County Historical Society. Thanks also to Karen Forbes Nutting, and Mrs. Ruth Cummins.
surmounted by a hollow globe open at the poles.

There is a third John Cleves Symmes born in Newport, Kentucky in 1824. He was the son of the aforementioned John. He is known for his development of the Symmes (Simz) carbine, Symmes cannon, an air engine, bridge trusses and an air balloon.

An article in The Gun Report (May, 1970) mentions that “Major General Thomas S. Jessup knew Captain Symmes well and once commented in writing that he was one of the most gallant officers of his rank, mentioning his service in the Niagara Campaign and of Lundy’s Lane (War of 1812).”

The Harrison family has a link to College Hill. In the fall of 1845 Dr. Robert H. Bishop, former president of Miami University, along with Dr. John Witherspoon Scott, a good friend and fellow educator, joined the staff of College Hill’s Farmers’ College, founded by Freeman G. Cary. Freeman graduated from Miami University in 1832, and had been one of Dr. Bishop’s favorite students. Dr. Bishop was from Edinburgh, Scotland and had already taught twenty years as a professor at Transylvania University (Lexington, Ky.) and twenty years as president of Miami University before coming to Farmers’ College. He was considered “our beloved Father” by many of his pupils and staff wherever he taught.

Benjamin Harrison spent three years under Dr. Bishop, studying history and political economy. Bishop’s textbooks were the public documents sent from his former students that were working in Washington, D.C.

Bishop emphasized facts, asserting: “Other things being equal, that man will succeed best in any given work who has the most facts; Education is getting possession of your mind, so you can use facts as the good mechanic uses tools.” Another of his teachings was that when speaking, either in public or privately, say something that others will remember. Benjamin’s education at Farmers’ College helped him throughout his career to become a noted speaker and writer.

Harrison attended Farmers’ College during 1848, 1849 and 1850. His stay was not without boyhood fun. Cary was known for his piety and strict discipline which made him the target of pranks. Raiding his nearby fruit orchard and rolling a rock filled barrel down a flight of stairs during prayers was led by Murat Halstead, Oliver Nixon, Joseph McNutt and, youngest of all, Benjamin Harrison. Harrison would have graduated in 1851, but Dr. Scott returned to Oxford to become principal of the Oxford Female Institute, and Harrison was in love with Carolyn (Carrie), Dr. Scott’s daughter.

In the fall of 1849 money was so scarce in the Harrison household that it jeopardized continuing both sons education. There was illness in the family and the deaths of their youngest brother and their mother. This problem must have been resolved for Harrison switched colleges, graduating at Miami University in 1852. The following year he studied law in Cincinnati and was admitted to the bar in 1853. He married Caroline Scott (Oct. 1853) and moved his law practice and family to Indianapolis in 1854, starting his road to the presidency from Indiana. Caroline died while they were in the White House (Oct. 1892). He married in 1896 Mrs. Mary Scott Lord Dimmock, a widow and niece of his first wife.

During the Civil War, Harrison served as a Brigadier General. Afterwards he was the Indiana Supreme Court reporter and continued a private law practice. He served as a Senator (1881-87) and successfully ran as a Republican against Grover Cleveland in 1888 to become the 23rd president. Benjamin Harrison was the fourth Civil War general from Ohio to become president. William McKinley, Rutherford B. Hayes, and Ulysses S. Grant were the other three.

His father, John Scott Harrison, died on May 26, 1878 and was buried among the family at Congress Green. He was the son of a president and father of a president. It was noticed at his interment that a near-by grave had been opened and the body removed. At this time medical colleges frequently purchased unearthed bodies for dissection and study, although the policy was illegal. The day after the burial of John S. Harrison, a search warrant for the Ohio Medical College was obtained by John Scott Jr. and John Scott’s grandson, George. During their search they did find a body - that of John Scott senior whom they had buried the day before! The college denied any knowledge of the “resurrectionist” practices. Buying

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the body back from the Medical College for $3.00, Benjamin Harrison returned for the temporary burial of his father at Spring Grove Cemetery while the tomb at Congress Green was repaired and strengthened. The nation was shocked, and the ensuing publicity made it a major news event of the time.

The 1888 election pitted the president, Grover Cleveland, against Benjamin Harrison as the Republican candidate. Cleveland won the popular vote but Harrison was elected by winning the electoral vote 233 to 168.

During Benjamin’s presidency the Oklahoma land rush started, the zipper was invented, the electric automobile was being tried and color photography became possible. Harrison was known for his honesty. He passed the Disability Pension Act giving pensions to most veterans. The McKinley Tariff Act levied high tariffs to protect domestic agriculture and industries. The Sherman Antitrust Act prevented large monopolies by businesses. Six new states were added: North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Washington, Idaho and Wyoming. Three of his legacies are the National Park Service, the prominence of the flag on all government buildings and schools and the start of the modern Navy. In 1890 he appointed another Ohioan, William Howard Taft, to the position of Solicitor General. He also appointed John S. Noble, one of his fellow Farmers’ College students, Secretary of State.

Harrison and his wife presided over the restoration of the White House. The First Lady petitioned Congress to have the White House enlarged but failing this, proceeded with remodeling the five bedrooms and one bath executive mansion. The White House’s first electric lights were installed during this presidency. The Harrisons were fearful of shocks and were so uncertain of electricity that an engineer was responsible to turn on the parlor and hall lights at night and turn then off in the morning (1891).

Carrie started the Presidential china collection. China painting was her hobby and she designed the china with a wide cobalt border painted with golden ears of corn. The Presidential eagle is in the plate center. His family erected up the first White House Christmas tree, a tradition that continues.

Carrie did not live through her husband’s presidential term. She died of tuberculosis in 1892 while still living in the White House. Harrison died on March 13, 1901, several years after he was defeated at the polls by Grover Cleveland. Benjamin Harrison’s three-story, sixteen room home, built in 1874, is open in Indianapolis (1230 N. Delaware Street) as a museum.

Suggested Reading:
- It Happened ‘Round North Bend, Marjorie Byrnside Burress, 1970
- A Devotion to the West: The Settlement of Cincinnati 1788-1810, Carol Jean Blum, Spring 1990, Queen City Heritage, Cincinnati Historical Society.
- Chief Little Turtle, Indiana Historical Bureau, Indianapolis Indiana.
- William Henry Harrison, Indiana Historical Bureau, Indianapolis, Indiana.
- The Centinel of the North-Western Territory, Nov. 8, 1793, May 17, 1794 (microfilm, Cincinnati Historical Society).
- William Henry Harrison Comes to Cincinnati, Hendrik Booraem V, Queen City Heritage, Vol. 45, Fall 1987, #3.
The Log Cabin Song (tune of Yankee Doodle)

It rather seems than humbug schemes
Can never more cajole up;
There’s such a run for Harrison
That nothing can control us!

The western world the flag’s unfurled,
No future can divide her;
And all the rest will sign the text,
“Log Cabin & Hard Cider!”

When our frontiers were drenched in tears,
Their cabin sack’d and gory;
He struck the blow, chastised the foe,
And conquered, peace with glory!

(Refrain)
Then join the throng and swell the song,
Extend the circle wider;
And lead us on for Harrison
“Log Cabin & Hard Cider!”
Chapter 2  Early College Hill

Samuel Freeman Cary wrote of the beginning days of College Hill in an address he gave to the Pioneer Association in 1879. “Our pioneers are passing away so rapidly that soon not one will remain who can speak from his own personal knowledge and experience of the homes, the habits, the customs, the amusements, the trials and incidents of pioneer life in the Valley of the Ohio. Those who will soon occupy our places will know only from what they hear how we lived. Even now, when we give an unembellished account of what occurred, the generations which are taking our place regards our truthful narratives as false, as overdrawn and extravagant pictures. Though one of the youngest of the pioneers, it has occurred to me that I might render a service by giving a brief sketch of what has passed before my own eyes, and relate incidents in which I have participated. My purpose is two fold - to recall to the failing memories of the aged, scenes through which they have passed, and exhibit to those who are crowding us from the busy stage of life how we spent the early years of our earthly probation: how we lived before the cities, villages, cultivated farms and costly palaces were established.

Our Homes

Our dwellings were built of round logs, just as they were found in the primeval forest. Occasionally a pioneer would construct a palatial residence by hewing the logs on the outside. The logs were notched near the ends with an ax, for the double purpose of holding them firmly and bringing them nearer together. The spaces were filled with split sticks and clay. When the logs were cut in the proper lengths they were dragged to the spot selected for the cabin, and the neighbors for miles around were invited to the ‘house-raising.’ With hand-spikes, forks and ‘skid poles’ the logs were raised to their position, and a man with his ax on each corner prepared the notches. In this way a cabin one story high was soon erected. The gables were formed by beveling each end of the logs, making them shorter and shorter until the ridge-pole was laid on. These logs in the gable were held in place by poles extending across the house from end to end, which served also as rafters on which to lay the ‘clapboard’ roof. These clapboards were rived out of a straight-grained white or black oak or ash tree, sawed into lengths of five or six feet. They were laid beside each other and the joints covered with another so as to effectually keep out the rain. Logs were laid upon these shingles to keep them in place, blocks of wood between them keeping them in position. The cross-cut saw was put in requisition to make openings for the doors and windows and fireplace. The logs, where cut off, were held in place by pinning split sticks on the ends, which served also as lintels.

The doors were made of clapboards, fastened with wrought nails upon cross-pieces, which, being bored near the end, constituted the hinges, and were hung upon pins fastened upon the lintels.

The doors were opened from without by a string passing through a gimlet-hole in the door and hanging outside. It was locked at night by pulling in the string. From this incident originated that saying when hospitality was tendered: ‘You will find the latch string always out.’

The cabin fireplace was always ample, often extending more than half-way across the house. The chimney was built on the outside sometimes of stone and mortar, but more commonly with split sticks laid crossways and then dubbed with ‘cat and clay,’ an admixture of mud and straw. Some of us remember with pleasure the large, green back log and the ample log-heap fire which imparted both light and warmth to the family group gathered about the old hearth stone. The floors above and below were made of split plank called ‘puncheons.’ The cellar, which was simply a hole in the ground, was entered by removing a short puncheon between two of the sills.

The loft above was reached by a rough ladder, the sides of which were a split sapling, and the rounds were sticks, the ends passing through auger-holes in the sides, and made secure by wooden wedges. The lower room answered the purpose of kitchen, sitting-room, parlor and bed-room. If crowded with company, some were sent into the ‘loft’ to sleep.

The site of the cabin was chosen with reference to the accessibility to water. If there was no spring, a

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9 From the collection of Mrs. Ruth J. Wells.
well was often dug before the building site was determined. Sometimes two cabins were built near
together and connected by a rude hall-way between them. This was called a double cabin.

**Pioneer Furniture**

The furniture was simple and easily inventoried. The bedstead sometimes consisted of dogwood
forks passing through the puncheon floor to the ground. Small saplings were placed in the forks for a
bed-rail and upon these clapboards were laid for a bottom. Our pianos were a large and small spinning
wheel, the former for spinning the woolen rolls and the latter for the flax. Their music was heard through
the day and often far into the night. A woman spinning upon the large wheel stepped backward as she
drew and twisted the thread from the roll, and forward as she wound it upon the spindle, placing her in
more charming and graceful attitudes than were ever exhibited in a drawing or ballroom. It may be that
her feet were bare and her dress of ‘linsey woolsey,’ but her symmetry of form and her graceful motion
were better shown than when clothed in costly and fashionable attire.

When the spindle was well filled the reel was put in requisition, and we have witnessed with what
exultation she tied the knot when the snapping of the reel announced that the last of twelve cuts (a good
day’s work) were ready for the loom. We can appreciate the beauty of Solomon’s description of a
virtuous woman when he says: ‘he seeketh wool and flax and worketh willingly with her hands; she
layeth her hands to the spindle and her hands hold the distaff.’ In one corner of the cabin stood the loom
for weaving our cloth for shirts, pantaloons, frocks, sheet and blankets, and near the fire the dyeing-tub,
the perfumes from which were not like the Attar of Rose.

The outer walls of the cabin were often nearly covered with the skins of rabbits, raccoons, bear and
deer, stretched to dry, to be converted into articles of dress or exchanged for ‘store tea’ or calico.

A green handspike rested against the side of the chimney, with which to roll in or adjust the logs. A
similar stick passed through the chimney above the blazing fire, called a ‘lug pole,’ suspended on this was
a forked stick, having a wooden peg in the lower end, which served as a crane to hang on the pot or kettle.
The andirons were large stones. The beef or mutton roast, the pig, the opossum or turkey was suspended
by a string fastened to a wooden peg over the fireplace, and cooked before the blazing fire. The gravy, as
it oozed from the meat, was caught in an iron pan resting on the hearth. Ever and anon the attendant
turned the meat around, basting it with the dripping fat properly seasoned. In the corner nearby was the
covered skillet filled with biscuit, with the glowing embers above and beneath, or a corn pone, or ‘Johnny
cake’ upon a clapboard at an angle of forty-five degrees. Persons may boast of their cooking appliances
and fancy dishes, but give us the corn bread baked upon a board before the cabin fire and the barbecued
opossum or pig in preference to all the scientific cookery of modern times. Our best table dishes were
of pewter, and the bowls and spoons of that material were kept as bright as polished silver. ‘The old
oaken bucket that hung in the well,’ fastened to the well sweep by a wild grape-vine, and the gourd tied to
the curb, are among the pleasant recollections of our early homes. Pioneers arrived on horseback or
with wagons. Some simply walked the distance carrying all they owned. Cooking utensils were scarce
because of their weight. The most common utensil was a skillet with a lid. A skillet could be used for
many things including baking bread. The corn dough could also be baked on a long board placed near the
fire. When one side was browned, the bread would be turned over and baked the same way (Johnny-
cake). Lacking a board or skillet, bread could be baked on a metal hoe, with the handle removed, that was
greased with bear fat (hoe cake). Bread could also be baked on the edge of the hearth. The dough would
be wrapped in cabbage leaves or fresh corn husks and buried in the ashes (ash cake). Pots were made out
of clay and fired to hardness, without a glaze. Fats from meat would leach out to cover the outside of the
pots. Later, a covered three legged pot became popular which simplified boiling water and cooking. Stews
were the mainstay as this pot was kept perpetually boiling on the fire. Whatever vegetables dug up were
added, along with various meats.

**Habits and Customs**

We were self-reliant and combustively independent. Every family did a little of everything. We
made our own cloth out of our own raw materials; manufactured our own soap, and dipped our own
 candles. When we killed a sheep, or calf, or bullock, we sent pieces to our neighbors, and they, in turn,
performed the same kind office for us. We, in this way, had a supply of fresh meat without the aid of a
professional butcher and without money. The shoe maker and tailor, with their kits of tools, made their semi-annual rounds to make or mend our shoes and coats, the materials for which were provided beforehand by the head of the family. Our inventory of furniture would be incomplete did we omit to mention the flint-lock rifle, or musket, with powder horn, shot or bullet-pouch, all of which were placed upon wooden forks fastened to the upper joists.

In the loft was an ample supply of catnip, sage, tansy, pennyroyal, wormwood, elecampane, dog fennel and boneset, gathered in their season. These constituted the *materia medica* of the pioneer. ‘Apothecary medicine’ was not much in demand. Strings of dried-apples, peaches and pumpkins hung in graceful festoons from the rude rafters, while the winter’s store of hazel, hickory, walnuts and butternuts covered the upper floor. To guard against the ague, a jug of bitters composed of cherry, dogwood bark and prickly ash berries was provided. To ward off attacks of worms among the children, tansy or wormwood bitters was regularly administered.

Hospitality was hearty and unbounded. No visiting by card, no primping or simpering, none of the heartless formalities of modern artificial society. ‘Bring your knitting and stay a week,’ was the outspoken invitation. Whatever was provided for the table was placed at once before the guests; and without apologies or ‘courses,’ all were expected to help themselves. Manners, customs, and habits have changed, perhaps for the better; but the memory will cling with fondness to those of other days. It gratifies our pride to have all the adventitious aids in preparing and serving our food. It is pleasant to have a house of eight or ten rooms, each supplied with its appropriate furniture and adornments; but we very much doubt whether these things make us more happy or contribute greatly to our family and social enjoyment.

**Our Libraries and Schools**

The library of the intelligent pioneer consisted of the Bible and hymn-book, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Fox’s *Book of Martyrs*, Baxter’s *Saints’ Rest*, Hervey’s *Meditations*, Aesop’s *Fables*, William Riley’s narrative, *Gulliver’s Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*.

The school books were very few; that for beginners was a paddle with the alphabet and words of two letters pasted on one side, and baker, cider, &c., on the other. This answered the double purpose of instruction and punishment.

The school house, like the dwelling, was built of logs, with a window one pane of glass wide extending the whole length of the house. Sometimes in place of glass, paper greased with raccoon fat was the substitute. The seats were made of slabs or ‘puncheons.’

Our schools were sustained by subscription, and our teachers received from $8 to $12 per month for their services and ‘boarded round’ with their patrons. On certain festive days the custom prevailed of ‘barring out’ the teacher, the pupils not permitting him to enter the school room until he treated to cider, apples, gingerbread or candy. Our old fashioned schools were excellent and the boys and girls obtained a good, practical primary education. On account of the sparseness of the population and the work to be done at home, in which the young of both sexes had to lend a helping hand, we had usually but ‘two quarters’ of school in a year.

**Our Wardrobes**

Our clothing was mostly of domestic manufacture. Our shirts were made of linen tow. The men and boys raised the flax, broke and swingled it, and the women hetteled, spun and wove and made up the garments. The recollection of the new tow shirt with its pricking ‘shives’ almost makes us scratch as of yore. Toweling, tablecloths and bed linen were of the same material, as well as our summer pantaloons, frocks and aprons.

The winter garments of both sexes and all ages were made of wool shorn from our own sheep, carded, spun, colored and then woven in our own looms. Sheep-washing was regarded by the boys as fine sport. The sheep were confined in a pen near a running stream of water, then taken one by one into the stream and cleansed. After being left a few days for the wool to dry, the fleeces were shorn with shears made for the purpose. This, as I remember it, was hard work.

**Our Farming Utensils**

Our farm implements were few and simple. The ax was in the most constant use, and was always
kept in good order. A maul, a few iron wedges, which were supplemented with others made of dogwood, were in constant use in making rails. A wooden mold-board plow, a harrow with wooden or iron teeth, log chains, a ‘bob-sled,’ a wagon, a cross-cut saw, a few augers of different sizes, a gimlet, a hammer, a hoe and grubbing hoe, a rake, a flax-break, a swingling-board, a couple of threshing machines, which consisted of two sticks fastened together with a piece of raw hide, called a flail, constituted the principal outfit. Two or three neighbors joined in the purchase of a winnowing mill to clean grain.

**Our Domestic Animals**

In addition to a small flock of sheep, every farmer had a team of horses, and, if from New England, he was supplied with at least one yoke of oxen. For piling logs in a clearing or breaking up new ground oxen were preferred to horses. A cow or two was indispensable, and droves of hogs of all ages, gathering the mast, filled the woods. Their ownership was determined by marks or slits in the ear. Geese were kept principally for their feathers. A feather bed in an open cabin was a luxury in a winter’s night. We had a great variety of dogs, and sometimes a half dozen claimed the same master, and found their kennel under the same cabin floor. To protect our sheep and cows from the wolves that prowled and howled about at night, we often were compelled to ‘corral’ them in a rail pen about the house. These stealthy and vagrant pests were afraid to venture near the light of the cabin fire. Our fowls were often captured by the minx, the opossum or raccoon. Our sheep folds were sometimes invaded by hungry dogs, and many a poor cur had to suffer the extreme penalty of the law for crimes of which he was not guilty, by an exasperated sufferer from canine cruelty. The half starved yellow dog and the ravening wolf alike played havoc with the farmers’ flocks.

**Our Amusements**

Those who suppose that pioneer life was one of continual hardship -‘all work and no play’- are very greatly mistaken. We had our amusements, which, if not as refined as those of more modern times, were as exciting and enjoyable. The pursuit of game with the faithful dog and trusty gun relieved the monotony of daily toil. The forests abounded with squirrel, wild turkey and deer. We trapped the rabbits and quails and other small game. ‘Coon and ‘possum hunting at night furnished much amusement.

Pleasure was often combined with business. House-raising, log-rolling and husking frolics were frequent and were attended by old and young. Corn-huskings in the fall were universal. The ears were torn from the stalk unhusked and deposited in a long row upon a table. We were assembled in the evening, captains were chosen, who divided the heap as near the middle as possible. They selected their men alternately, and being arranged under their respective leaders the contest began. The husks were thrown backward and the ears of corn forward. The company that finished first was the winner and had the first swig at the bottle and the chief seats at the royal feast which followed. Often times daylight revealed the fact that the unhusked corn was found both among the shucks and the corn heap.

Young people in the fall and winter evenings were often assembled at a quilting or apple-cutting party. When the quilt was finished, or the apples peeled, quartered and cored, and a sumptuous feast was disposed of, all united in a dance or in some play. The old pioneers will remember with what spirit and enthusiasm they marched with their partners and sang:

Oh, sister Phebe, how merry were we
The night we sat under the juniper tree,
   The juniper tree, the juniper tree,
   Hei oh! &c., &c.
Or -
We are marching forward to Quebec!
The drums are loudly beating,
   America has gained the day,
   The British are retreating...

Seldom were these joyful occasions marred by an unpleasant incident, or by excesses in eating or drinking; but at an early hour in the morning each young man went home with his girl, only to repeat the enjoyment at some other cabin on the next moonlight night.
Conclusion

We could indulge in these reminiscences almost without limit; we could speak of our rude churches, our camp meetings, our unlettered pioneer preachers, their style of sermons, and many other things which crowd upon the memory, but we have exceeded the limits prescribed.

We will only add that these scenes have passed, and in a few more years those who have participated in them will have become pioneers to another country, and be there followed by a ceaseless stream of emigrants from this changing world.

May we not hope as one generation passeth away and another cometh that each succeeding one may attain a higher degree of excellence than its predecessor, and become wiser, better, happier?
Chapter 3  The Land and People

The first settler was Aaron Waggoner who built a log cabin in 1796, slightly south of today’s location of North Bend and Argus Roads. This was the forfeit of section 30. What was land worth at that time? Land near Cincinnati was being sold for a cow, or an axe worth one dollar, seventy-eight acres for 19 pounds and 10 shillings, and one property lot with a 100 foot front was exchanged for a pair of $2 moccasins.

In the same year (1796) Richard Hankins petitioned John Cleves Symmes for the forfeit of section 36, having already built a house and lived there for the required seven years. Near North Bend Road and Oakwood he built his two-story log cabin. This cabin remained there for more than 100 years, hidden under weather boarding until around 1900, when it was moved to Betts Avenue in West College Hill. This land was later the residences of the Henshaw, McCrea, Emerson and Wild families.

The forfeit was 106 2/3 acres located in the northeast corner of every section of the Miami Purchase. To purchase the forfeit, the settler must have lived on the land and build a house within two years or he would forfeit this land to any other pioneer who met the qualifications and applied for the land from Symmes.

In October of 1796, John C. Symmes sold a large tract of land to Nehemiah Tunis. Nehemiah sold a potion to his nephew Jabez, who in turn sold 491 acres of section 30 to William Cary, Sept. 8, 1813, for $7 an acre and 75 adjacent acres north of North Bend Road.

Some of the pioneers came in a wave from Vermont. The Vermont and northeast weather was unusually severe in 1816, leading to that time being referred to as “Eighteen Hundred and Froze to Death.” The first two weeks of September had the first warm weather of that year (70 degrees) which was 25 degrees higher than in May. Farmers, devastated by a year of no crops, left for warmer climates.

College Hill was known for being healthy. The valley below was filled with crowded housing and industry which was polluting the Mill Creek even back then. Because of the elevation and the frequent breezes, ‘the Hill’ was known for the longevity of its residents. By the 1850’s College Hill contained many summer homes of Cincinnati’s wealthy.

Samuel Cary describes in his Historical Sketch of College Hill and Vicinity the forests of College Hill as: “…trees large, of great variety, and superior quality. The variety embraced white, red, black and chestnut oak, white and yellow poplar, white and blue ash, hard and soft maple, cherry, black walnut, butternut, linn, beach (sic), hickory, buckeye, gum, sassafras, black and honey locust, mulberry, coffee nut, hackberry, and iron wood, with a thick undergrowth of dogwood, red bud, sumac, and pawpaw. Among the exuberant smaller vegetation were May apples, ginseng, ferns, dog fennel, pennyroyal, burdock, yellow dock, plantain, black berries, milk and iron weed, red and black haws, wild grapes, hazelnuts and wild plums.

The timber on these two sections (30 and 36), if restored to their primitive condition, would sell for more money than the land is now worth, even with its proximity to a great city. The best black walnut, ash, and oak timber were split into fence rails. Trees which could not be thus utilized were cut and piled into large heaps and burned...Your historian has aided in burning single walnut trees which were too much curled to make rails, that would now readily bring two thousand dollars (1886).”

Game was abundant and “made to succumb by the flint lock musket or rifle, were deer, wild turkeys, wolves (occasionally a bear), raccoons, opossums, squirrels, rabbits, quail and pigeons. The howling of the wolves at night was terrible. To protect sheep and other stock from becoming a prey, they were driven into a rail pen built around the cabin. The light of the fire showing through the chinking between the logs kept them at bay. With all this care and precaution these pests sometimes decimated our flocks.

The raccoons and opossums often played havoc with our poultry. At certain seasons of the year squirrels gray and black were very abundant, and made their raids upon our patches of corn, completely

11 Cherry was prized for furniture and later, black walnut was the favorite wood used.
destroying the outside rows, especially if near the woods. ‘Coon\(^{12}\) and opossum hunting at night furnished rare sport. The turkeys were very abundant, were large and fat, and were of finer flavor than when domesticated. This, no doubt, must be attributed to the mast upon which they fed. They were very wild, and seemed instinctively to know when the hunter was near, and at the slightest noise would run with the speed of a horse, or fly beyond the reach of the rifle. They were often caught in traps...

Quails were often caught in nets constructed for the purpose. Thirty or more were sometimes taken at a single haul...Flocks of unnumbered millions of pigeons, by which their numbers darkened the sky, and by their movements produced a roaring like the waves of the sea, were often seen. Day and night the air was black with them. Occasionally a flock would alight in the woods in such numbers as to break large branches from the trees. In Kentucky and Tennessee there were roosts to which they habitually resorted. In such places the trees were so broken down by them as to lead an observer to conclude that a tornado had passed by. They could be killed in such numbers as to fatten hogs upon their carcasses. In the spring of the year they passed here going northward, and in the fall they made their way to the south, occasionally pausing to feast upon the acorns and beach nuts of our forests.

I remember of felling a large hickory tree near our residence late in the evening without any suspicion that it was inhabited. Returning in the morning more than a barrel of honey was upon the ground. In falling, the tree split open in the hollow part, and the honey had been displaced. The flowers of basswood or linden and the locust furnished the bees with material for the manufacture of a winter’s supply of provisions. Almost every pioneer had his hives of bees, which were usually sections of hollow logs.

Wild grapes, pawpaws, persimmons, wild plums, mulberries and May apples were the native fruits of this region. Hickory nuts, black walnuts, butter and hazel nuts were abundant. The heavy mast of beech nuts and acorns in their season invited a large migration of squirrels, turkeys and pigeons, and enabled the pioneer farmer whose corn crop was limited to fatten his hogs. Considerable attention was given by the settlers to the growing of apples, cherries and peaches. The first orchards were very thrifty in their growth, and bore large quantities of delicious fruits. Peach trees grew almost spontaneously, and although of native growth, the fruit was larger and more luscious than any of the budded or grafted fruit of the present day....We had to share our cherries with the woodpecker and the blue jay, which were then numbered by the thousands....the supply of peaches was enormous, far beyond the demand of our limited market. My Father, during the peach season, sent, six days in the week, a large two-horse wagon loaded to the Cincinnati market. Those of superior size and quality would retail at four cents a peck, while inferior ones, like the best of the present day, could hardly sell off at any price. We took thousands of bushels to Jessup or Brown’s distillery... College Hill was known for its maple syrup, molasses and honey. ‘Peach and Honey’ was a beverage considered second only to the fabled nectar of the gods. Cincinnati, then a place of a few thousand inhabitants, was our only market, and it was easily gotten with provisions of all kinds. The prices were extremely low. Pork was one dollar per hundred pounds; turkeys, ten cents; chickens, fifty cents per dozen; eggs, two and three cents per dozen; corn, ten and twelve cents per bushel; cider from fifty to seventy-five cents per barrel; butter from five and ten cents per pound.

In wet and springy places logs were laid across to keep teams from miring. These causeways were exceedingly rough. Rough and bad as the road\(^{13}\) was between the creek and the hill and the Millcreek, it was much better than between the creek and the head of Main street. I can well remember Gen. Anthony Wayne’s Trace as it was called, being the road out through the wilderness for the passage of his army in 1792. It could be identified by the absence of large trees and the undergrowth along the line. The route from ‘Ludlow’s Station’ north was on the ridge east of Z. Strong’s residence, thence along

\(^{12}\) While raccoons were eaten, the opossum flesh was a delicacy.

\(^{13}\) The roads of that time were based on Indian trails and geography that permitted the easiest passage. Huston or Hill Road was the name of Hamilton Pike back then, still later to be named Hamilton Avenue. It also was named Mt. Pleasant Road as it wound its way to Hamilton, Ohio. At one time Hamilton Avenue was also called ‘dug hill’ and it passed to the west of where it is now located, near the site of Samuel Caldwell’s stone house.
where the Sanitarium stands. Near the residence of I. Wise, I remember of seeing a number of beach trees with the names of the soldiers cut in the bark with the date of their occupation of the spot.\textsuperscript{14}

The “valley road” or “military road” was Spring Grove Avenue. Wagons laden with military supplies, artillery and the main body of soldiers went this way.

Before 1835 the Colerain Road was the main route through Venice and Oxford, Ohio and Richmond, Indiana. S. F. Cary wrote: “The older residents will remember when this great highway was corded with hogs from Venice to Cincinnati. For days and weeks the shouting of the drivers and the squealing of the swine was incessant from early morning far into the night. The mud was so deep and the traveling so difficult that a drove could not make more than from four to six miles per day. Every field was put in requisition at night and every farm house was crowded with drovers, so that the floors were covered with the muddy and tired sleepers.”\textsuperscript{15}

After 1835 the Colerain and Oxford Turnpike (following Colerain Avenue) opened, diverting hog traffic away from College Hill entirely.

Hogs were a major industry in 1833. Corn was the major area crop and raising pigs and distilling liquor was a profitable, convenient way of taking the corn to market. Hogs and whiskey were the most efficient way of disposing of the corn and excess fruit crops; it was easier to sell, wouldn’t spoil, simpler to transport than heavy wagons and was marketable at a profit. By 1833, Cincinnati held the title of “Porkapolis.”

What did they do with all those half million pigs (1848) that were slaughtered yearly? The dye color Prussian blue\textsuperscript{16} was made from the blood. Pork was salted and cured as bacon. Mess pork was used in the U.S. and British Navies. Prime pork was packed for ship use. Clear pork, a better cut, went to New England and lesser cuts used for bait by mackerel fisheries. Bulk pork was used immediately or was smoked and sent down river to southern smoke houses. Some meat was pickled. Intestine casings contained sausage. Lard was exported to England, France and Cuba. Lard was refined into lard oil. Stearin, a by-product of the rendering process, was made into candles and soap. Lard oil was used to adulterate sperm whale oil and in France, was mixed with olive oil to lower the price. Lard grease was used in soap. Bristles were used in brushes. What was left unused from the hog became prussiate of potash that was used in colored printing inks.

By 1835 Cincinnati city council decided to change the way butcher stalls were rented from that of a fixed rate to auctioning them off to the highest bidder. The butcher’s went on strike in 1836 before the auction was held. Rebekah Gest\textsuperscript{17} wrote to her son, Erasmus, on May 12 of that year: “…the Butchers have kept us without Beef or Lamb for the past week. They will not permit the Stalls to be sold at auction to the highest bidder, as they were last year, so they intend to fast us into measures. This evening a crier proclaimed through town that they intend to have Beef at their Stalls tomorrow morning…the Butchers have to pay one dollar per day for the use of each stall until they submit to the regulations of council…(May 13). Many of our Citizens have not purchased one ounce of meat from them this morning…and on their Stalls the meat out to be let remain until it spoiled.”

On May 27, Erasmus’s sister, Clarissa wrote “…the Butchers do not all attend and the meat is very inferior to what it was. There was a rumor that they intended leaving and buying up the cattle to take with them; if they did, our markets would be soon refilled. Many, many will not buy from them. They must certainly feel very disappointed in the effects of their strike.”

As the population grew, more roads were added. Petitions filed to create roads are a good profile of neighborhood residents. Such a petition was filed in 1849 to reopen a part of Arnold Road, now Argus

\textsuperscript{14} History of College Hill and Vicinity, Samuel Fenton Cary, 1886.

\textsuperscript{15} History of College Hill and Vicinity, op cit.

\textsuperscript{16} The term ‘Prussian blue’ is rarely used today because of the lack of general knowledge about Prussia and where it was located.

\textsuperscript{17} Inventory of the Erasmus Gest Papers, 1834-1885, Ohio Historical Society library.

An interesting old house is still standing at 2320 North Bend Road, just outside of College Hill’s current boundaries. George W. C. Hunter occupied this site in 1830, probably in the brick house still there. The timbers used for the house and barn came from the land itself and bricks were made on the site.

Mrs. Dorothy S. Wurzelbacher wrote: “George W. C. Hunter in turn sold to David Conkling in 1835. The next owners were Edmund and Margaret Hale who sold the house and over 50 acres to John R. and Sarah Hatfield in 1834 for $1,425. Hatfield is listed as Recorder of the village of Mt. Airy at the time of incorporation on Oct. 30, 1865. The house and land were forfeited for back taxes in 1867 and a deed was conveyed to Frederick Blum in 1869 by the Hamilton County Auditor.

The first owners who were not farmers were Samuel W. and Susie A. Ramp who lived in the house from 1881 to 1897. He was a self-educated man who rose high in the ranks of the Third National Bank and was also related to the Simpson family of College Hill. The Ramps were reported to have had many parties in this charming house.

In 1897, Joseph A. Brigel (great grandfather of my husband, Dr. Richard T. Wurzelbacher) obtained ownership of the house at a sheriff’s auction. He had hoped his only child, Eleanor Brigel Dolle, would want to live there but she never did. The house was rented to various people including a Mrs. Brady, who raised show horses. Family stories are also told about bootleggers operating on the premises for a short period of time during the prohibition era. Some remodeling was done during this period including the installation of indoor plumbing.

The home was first occupied by a Brigel family member when Marion Dolle Wurzelbacher (granddaughter of Joseph Brigel) and Milton Wurzelbacher returned in Mt. Airy in 1925, after a brief residence in the New York City area. Milton Wurzelbacher founded the Cincinnati Dowel and Wood Products Co. and was a major supplier of bungs to the many breweries in Cincinnati and throughout the country.

They restored this historic landmark, adding a wing to the back (a porch and laundry) and a downstairs bathroom. They also preserved the fine old barn to the rear of the grounds. Remnants of an old barn yard and several old cisterns can still be found on the property. Various other outbuildings, including an old brick smoke house which has been removed, also were on the property.

The house was listed on the Ohio Historic Inventory in 1977. It is an excellent example of a single story brick Greek Revival country house with a recessed entrance and two interior chimneys on each gable end and a symmetrical facade. A picturesque well still stands near the back door and the handsome barn remains in use.

Milton Wurzelbacher died in 1975 and Marion remained in the house until her death in 1989 at the age of 91 years. She lived in this house for over 64 years. Her grandson, Thomas Wurzelbacher, now occupies the house and enjoys this historic landmark.”

In 1937 Eleanore Dolle submitted to the City of Cincinnati, a plan to develop Breeze Hill subdivision. The family did not initiate construction until Joseph Brigel’s great-great-grandson, Richard, redesigned the street plat. The original names, Breeze Hill and Sweetbriar, were retained in the 40 acre Sweetbriar Estate Condominiums on Kipling Avenue.

One thing that Cary did not mention was the cholera epidemics that caused people to move further and further from the core Cincinnati basin. The downtown area is elevated just enough to escape yearly flooding. As the city developed, increased population and industrialization brought crowded conditions, disease and a blanket of smoke that hovered above the city. But it was the river that brought cholera to

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18 Source: Dorothy S. Wurzelbacher
Cincinnati.

Cholera was a scourge from 1832-34, 1839, and in 1847-1852. There was no cure. It spread rapidly and people could die only a few hours after experiencing symptoms. Eight hundred died in the first Cincinnati epidemic. So many orphans resulted from this disease that the Cincinnati Orphan Asylum was founded. Wesleyan Cemetery was founded in 1843 because existing cemeteries were filled by cholera dead.

Thought to be caused by impure air, vapors and fogs that formed in valleys, those who could left Cincinnati for the country - up to the cleaner air of the surrounding hills. Mt. Pleasant changed its name to Mt. Healthy by those fleeing this plague.

In downtown, fires were lit on every corner, believing the smoke would dispel the miasma. Night and day these fires burned, even in the heat of summer. People would inhale the smoke, cough and continue on their way thinking that the coughing would help prevent the disease. Over the basin a shroud of smoke hung. The water supply, pumped directly from the river - which mingled sewerage and offal - was not suspect.

Cholera reappeared in April of 1833 and a pattern emerged. The disease would start in April, stopped by the time of frost, with most deaths occurring from June to August.

Peter P. Laboyteaux in 1830 sold his farm (in today’s North College Hill) and along with his second wife, Margaret Cameron, moved to Henry Co., Indiana. Mrs. Ruth J. Wells wrote in the Pageant, "This was an unfortunate move for Margaret. The history of Henry County relates that Squire Batson brought the cholera there after a trip to Cincinnati in 1833. Margaret nursed him, caught the cholera, and both were dead in less than a week. Margaret’s oldest daughter, Elizabeth Ross, of Newcastle, Indiana took care of her mother, in turn catching the cholera and carrying it to Newcastle, where she and two children perished within three weeks.”

The longest and worst period of cholera was 1847-1852. At the Jackson Tavern (north east corner of Walnut & 12th Streets), all of the occupants of the inn, innkeeper Jacob Wise and his family, a total of 25 people, died in one day of the disease that entered their door that morning from an ill traveler. Cases occurred where the unwashed clothing of the deceased was sent to relatives. The person who opened the box usually died first. Even the person washing the clothes died. Clothing was prized highly and less easily obtained than now. Mrs. Ruth J. Wells remembers her mother recalling from her childhood that people walking along the street would fall over and were picked up by cart or wagon and taken to the nearest hospital. But seldom did the treating physician die even though he breathed the sick room air.

Mrs. Alice (Davey) Ante sent the following cholera treatment from Grandma Davey’s recipe book of 1826, recopied in 1893.

**The Bingal Chronicle (1831?)**

1 oz. Of cinnamon water
1 oz. Of ipecacuanha
35 drops of tincture of opium
1 drachm spirits of lavender
2 drachms tincture of rhubarb

To be taken at once and the complaint will be instantly relieved.

Cincinnati’s 1849 population was 116,000 of which 4,600 died of cholera in one year. The breakdown of deaths by ethnic groups is interesting. German, Irish and Jewish populations reported the most deaths, due to living in crowded tenements with poor sanitation. At this time more than 100 died every day for a six week period. Rev. James Kemper and Dr. Daniel Drake’s granddaughter died in the epidemic.

The causative agent of cholera was not discovered until 1883. But Dr. John Snow of England urged

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19 Source: Coleraine Township Historical Society
greater water sanitation in 1849 and demonstrated that cholera declined in London when better sanitation was followed.

This is not to minimize the effect of other epidemics that impacted our city. A 1793 smallpox epidemic killed a third of Cincinnati’s residents. The flight of the more affluent to the suburbs is not unique to Cincinnati. In Louisville and New Orleans, cholera and yearly outbreaks of yellow fever had affluent residents moving away to the far suburbs for the duration of the summer.

Cary didn’t mention about the economic turmoil the nation periodically experienced. Letters20 from his family to Erasmus Gest describe what happened locally during these periods, summarized in an abstract by the Ohio Historical Society: “In early May, 1837, Clarissa (Gest) reported that the banks had stopped specie payments thereby leaving the city with a paper currency instead of the streams of gold & silver with scarcely enough small coin for change. On May 8, she wrote ‘two or three ship builders have given up and several foundries last week discharged workmen to the number...of 200 or more. No money can be got to defray expenses.’” Conditions were such on October 18, that Clarissa reported that “no one scarcely will change a dollar in any way, and silver is a curiosity. Indeed ready money is scarce. In the city it commands 10%, none under.”

On January 12, 1840, Joseph Gest wrote to his son saying “all business appears suspended...The taxes are far behind in their collections, every thing looks dull and gloomy. Mechanicks (sic) and labourers are out of employ...There is no sale for property now. Little or none selling except what is sold by the Sheriff.” On February 2, Clarissa wrote it was rumored that “several families who were reputed worth $100,000...parted with furniture to get market money.”

The crisis peaked and on January 12, 1842, Joseph Gest wrote to his son “The day before yesterday, the 10th, the Miami Exporting Co. stopped redeeming their paper. Yesterday morning, the 11th, the Cincinnati Bank called Mr. Gilmore, put a note on the door that they would not redeem for 20 days...Immediately...crowds collected...broke open the bank, tore everything up, threw the paper in the streets...Some plundered and ran away. They next attacked the Miami Exporting Bank, emptyed it if its contents...carrying off thousands of dollars of redeemed & other paper, some specie & etc. Afterwards (at the) Bates Exchange bank at the corner (the mob) made him pay out some time till he cleared out, tore everything out of the house. The Mob then crossed over to Longers, made him pay as long as he could, then tore every thing, counters & everything...”

The Ephraim Brown/Rankin House at 6268 Savannah Avenue

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20 Inventory of the Erasmus Gest Papers, 1834-1885, Ohio Historical Society library.
Chapter 4  The Coming of the Carys

Dr. Samuel Cary was born June 13, 1734 in Scotland, Connecticut. He graduated from Yale University in 1755 and was a well known Connecticut physician. In 1762 he married Deliverance Grant and in 1768 they moved to Lyme, New Hampshire. He died in 1784 leaving his infant sons, Christopher and William. The boys studied by the light of burning pine knots, as candles were too expensive. Deliverance married Captain John Strong of Thetford, Vermont and after having two children she was left a widow once again.

Her son, Christopher, with land warrants as pay for his participation in the Revolutionary War, bought land from Israel Ludlow in 1801. Leaving New Hampshire with his family, they arrived in Ohio in 1803, when his son, Robert, was 15 years old. In 1802 Deliverance moved to Cincinnati with her children; Samuel, Delia and William.

Christopher and William did not have the advantage of formal education but William became the driving force for the colleges that were later established in College Hill. Christopher lost an eye as a child and was later crippled by a falling tree. At age 16 he enlisted in the Revolutionary War and went to Canada to fight. There he was taken prisoner by the British and was kept jailed at Montreal for ten months before he escaped and walked home to New Hampshire. Described as being of “stout frame and iron constitution,” he had wanderlust and would spend months among the Indians.

When William came he worked with Christopher on his farm, several miles north of where William would buy land and settle, and found work “laying pump logs or bored logs to convey the water from a flowing spring on the side hill, afterwards called Keyshill north of the city to water the then village of Cincinnati.”

He married Jan. 8, 1809, Rebecca Fenton, who came from New York in 1805, and built Bulls Head Tavern at the head of Main Street and Hamilton Road. When S. F. Cary wrote of this location he mentioned that “...the site (of the tavern is) occupied by the large German Church, the road forked, one branch going up Sycamore Hill, the other on Hamilton Road passing westwardly to where the Brighton House lately stood. Here the road forked again, one branch passing out through Cleves, Miami Town, Harrison, etc., the other going up the Valley of the Millcreek, through Cumminsville, Carthage, Springfield, to Hamilton. At Knowlton’s Corner, a “hill road” to Hamilton was established, passing through College Hill, Mt. Pleasant, and Burlington. This was called the Huston Road; a family of Hustons having settled a large tract of land above Burlington...”

Deliverance died at the family home downtown in 1810 and was buried where the First Presbyterian Church stands (4th and Main Streets). William kept the tavern until 1814 and then sold it along with 32 acres. He, his wife and three children - Freeman Grant, William Woodward and Samuel Fenton - moved to College Hill. Freeman Grant Cary later remembered the trip up “…where Isaac Laboiteaux now lives; when on the way he (the speaker) had to dismount from the wagon stuck in the mud on what is now Parkers Hill, with two spirited horses in the team. There were no excavations or side cuts in those days, but the heights were sealed and ridges threaded, covered with trees, at first blazed to point out the trail. The lands purchased - some seven hundred acres - then were covered with a heavy growth of timber...”

They traveled the Hamilton Road.

In 1811 the Ohio River valley was rocked by the largest recorded earthquake, centered on Madrid, Missouri. The river town of Madrid was totally destroyed when the Mississippi River altered its course during the earthquake, inundating the town. The town of New Madrid was founded on the newly formed banks. In 1874, E. D. Mansfield of Camp Washington described it: “On the sixteen of December, 1811, we were roused from our sleep by the rattling and tumbling of everything in the house. In fact, the chimneys had fallen down, and we rushed out of the house upon a light snow on the ground, in order, as we supposed, to save our lives. That was one of the hardest shocks; but successive shocks occurred for

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21 Early Annals-Autobiography, Freeman Grant Cary, from the library of Mrs. Ruth J. Wells
22 Early Annals-Autobiography, op. cit.
four months. My father, in order to test the motion, hung a powder horn as a pendulum in the window, and it never entirely ceased vibrating until the first of May! I mention this because it is not impossible that such an earthquake may come again, and it may then be remembered that such things have been.”

While its fertile soil attracted Cary, much of College Hill is clay. This accounts for wet basements and mature trees easily blown over during windstorms - the tree roots can’t penetrate deeply into the clay and thus the roots grow only to a shallow depth.

Cary built his log cabin in the fall of 1813, cleared the land and dug a well. His family moved to the cabin in April of the following spring. This was a temporary home, as he dug the foundation and fired the bricks himself to complete an elegant brick house in 1817.

William Cary had an extended family. In 1816 he was granted guardianship of Albert Arnold (age 15) and Cyrus Arnold (age 11), following the death of their father Jacob.

Under the name Pleasant Hill, the village was platted about 1820 by William Cary and Jabez Tunis on sections 30 and 36. Jabez Tunis sold 491 acres in section 30 to William Cary in 1813 at $7 an acre and sold 50 acres on the east side of the section to David Gray at the same price. His son, Moses David Gray, established greenhouses by the road that bears his name. Cary later bought 75 acres more north of North Bend Road adjoining his original tract. All of College Hill in section 30 is on the Cary land.

The first settlers on Tunis’ section 36 were Albert Arnold, Roswell Hazeltine, Thomas B. Weatherby, George W. C. Hunter, Nathaniel Ryan, Jesse Jones, Edward Grogan and David Jessup, all between 1827 and 1832. Weatherby had 50 acres bought in 1832 for $589. Other land sold just as cheaply.

Settlers coming to College Hill were mainly Revolutionary War veterans and farmers from New Jersey. Cyrus Howard bought 50 acres; in 1815, New Yorker Roswell Hazeltine, who later owned the 7 Mile House inn/tavern in Cheviot, purchased 50 acres; Zebulon Strong, 32 acres and John Strong 56 acres (1819). William Cary agreed in 1819 to exchange 2 acres for six split-bottom chairs (that were never delivered) from David Thomas. Thomas’s furniture business was northwest of Windermere and Hamilton Avenues.

The first child born was in July 1814, R. F. Howard, son of Cyrus Howard, grandson of Solomon Howard and Anna Cary. Cyrus Howard made his clearing on the north side of Linden Avenue opposite the home of his son, Stephen F. Howard. In 1814, Cyrus’s brother, George and his wife Sally, moved onto the Howard property and built a cabin. George died in 1838 (age 48) and Sally in 1839 (age 34). Both of their daughters, Phoebe and Rhoda, died as infants. Adjoining the Howard land on the west was the 50 acres of Roswell Hazeltine. The Howards built their brick houses in the sturdy New England style. Three of their homes are still standing: 5686 Folchi Drive, 1340 and 1240 Groesbeck Road.

Solomon Howard paid Cary ten dollars an acre for his land and built the first frame dwelling in College Hill in 1820. Originally constructed on the site of the College Hill Presbyterian Church, it was moved across the street at 5749 Hamilton Avenue in 1834, the year that Solomon died. The one and one half story house was the home of the Deininger family. The house was moved in the 1950’s to 2025 North Bend Road, north of St. Richard of Chichester’s Church, where it stands today under siding.

In 1819 John Strong, Zebulon’s brother, bought the 56 acres between Linden Avenue and the south line of the Pierson property, all except for one acre that was on the west side, which formed part of the later Hollenshade lawn.

Besides farming, some settlers provided other services. Albert G. Arnold set up forty tanning vats in 1828 on his thirty-three acres. Aspen trees provided the necessary ingredients for tanning. He also made shoes and had a currying shop. Before that time shoemakers with their kits of tools, went to house from house to make and repair boots and shoes for the household. Tailors also made periodical visits in like manner.

Mrs. John Strong was a weaver and Isaac Sparks had a loom house in Colerain Township. Many

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23 Abstract Book 1. Probate Record 1791-1826 Hamilton County Ohio, Common Pleas Nov. 25, 1816, pg 333.
pioneers had foot treadle looms and wove woolen, cotton and linen cloth. Freeman G. Cary described “…Our dress in those times was indeed rough and coarse, and manufactured by handlooms in our dwellings from tow flax and wool of our own raising. Many a day have I dressed flax to make our clothes.” Spinning was done by hand and the thread could be made of a mixture of wool and flax, or of either fiber alone.

William Cary established a saw mill (1820) on the creek that still flows behind Pearce’s Auto Center on the east side of Hamilton Avenue between Marlowe and Ambrose Avenues. It was a treadmill operated by oxen. As the team walked in a circle on a wheel with a 30 degree angle, the motion operated a perpendicular saw. This saw mill produced the lumber for the 1823 Mill Creek bridge built in Cumminsville. A grain mill was added but the power was not sufficient to saw and grind at the same time. Later this mill was replaced by a steam saw and a grist mill added, both of which burnt shortly after they were built. Cary spoke of a cherry tree near Cedar and Lantana that was six feet in diameter. He had a pair of parlor tables, bookcases, a bureau, a tall clock and a bedstead built from the wood of this tree. The nearest other mill was Goudy’s, built 1795, along the Mill Creek at the bottom on Winton Road.

“Logs and grists were converted into lumber and meal for a certain share. George C. Miller’s wagon and plough factory, Adonijah Peacock’s plough factory, Melendy’s fanning mill shop, Luman Watson’s clock factory, Riley & Reed’s picture and looking glass frame factory, and Edward Kimball’s turning factory, all in Cincinnati, were supplied with lumber from this ox mill.”

Mr. Powell started a pearl ash and black salts factory. He leased lands from Cary and built a home on the site of the College Hill Presbyterian Church. His factory was between Hamilton Avenue and the Davey mansion on Linden Drive. He collected ashes from the residents and made lye by leaching the ashes.

Maple syrup and molasses were made. Sap was collected and poured into sassafras troughs, and iron kettles were used to reduce the sap water to syrup and sugar. The kettles were suspended from poles over a fire or set in a stone archway with a fire burning underneath the arch.

Captain Brown had whiskey stills located on Rankin’s farm. Stephen Jessup also had a distillery and small grist mill. David Gray had a distillery in the valley south of Moses Gray’s house. This area abounded with orchards of peaches, pears, apples and cherries. Less than perfect fruit was taken to be made into brandy, which had a ready market. Since currency was scarce, a portion of the brandy, corn or wood was left with the miller or brewer as his payment.

Bartering was the main way of transacting business. The money of that time was the Spanish silver dollar. A blacksmith could cut a dollar coin in half or into five wedge shaped pieces, one of which the blacksmith kept as is payment. A 1/5 piece was called a ‘sharpskin.’ A dollar coin could also be cut into 1/8’s, a ‘bit.’ One bit was worth 12 cents, 2 bits represented 25 cents. No small coins were available for change in Cincinnati until Yeatman’s store brought a barrel of pennies from Philadelphia in 1795.

Early cabins were upgraded as the families prospered. Walls were whitewashed, mud and stick chimneys were replaced by those of stone. Iron lard lamps replaced those made of scraped turnips, log benches gave way to split bottomed chairs. Feather beds with woolen covers, calico curtains, skins covering a floor of wooden planks or hard packed dirt - these were signs of fashion.

In his Early Annals, Freeman G. Cary lists others he remembers: Seth Gard, men by the names of Keen, LaRue, Sparks, Walker, Coons, Wagoner, Raymond, Vansant, Finney, John Jessup and his sons, Stephen, Isaac and David, Indian Daniel Jessup, the father of John, so named because he was taken captive by Indians, John Hawkins, Peter and John Laboyteaux, Peter (the tailor) Laboyteaux, John Snodgrass, Samuel and Jedidiah Hill, John and Aaron Lane, Danforth Witherby and his sons, John, Luther, Branch and Oliver, William and James McCash, Bradbury Robinson and sons, Solomon Smith, Arad Lawrence, John Wolf, William and Jacob Badgley, Solomon Eversul who died at age 101, Ezekiel Hutchinson, James and Israel Ludlow, Andrew Mack, Isaac and Clark Bates, John Riddle, Isaac Perry, Joel and Jacob Williams, William Woodward, Samuel Merry, Thomas Hofner and his sons, John,

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Samuel, Jacob and Eli, Thomas Moss, and David John. Some of these lived from Mt. Pleasant (Mt. Healthy) to Cincinnati along Hamilton Avenue.

Phebe Cary, another of William’s sisters, married John Crary in 1783, Lyme, New Hampshire. Their family moved to College Hill in 1806. Lyman Crary of College Hill was her son and Rev. B. F. Crary, D. D. president of Wisconsin University was her grandson. Mercy Cary, sister of William, married Thomas Weston of Townsend, Mass. They came to College Hill in 1828. She died in 1830 and her children married into families in Colerain Township.

Samuel Cary, William’s brother, came to Cincinnati in 1802 and was the first tailor in the city. He died of smallpox in 1804.

Christopher Cary applied for his military pension in 1824. His children were grown and he worked as a farmer and a laborer. In the pension affidavit he stated he owned no real estate, was indigent, living at the home of his son Robert, and that his property of 1 mare, 1 cow and household goods were worth $73.00.

He married three times, the first was Elsie Terrel in Lyme, New Hampshire, then Lear Brokaw of Cincinnati and lastly to Margaret McCarty in 1825. He died in 1837. He had a large family: Lucy married James McGinnis; Robert who married Elizabeth Jessup and later Anna Lewis; Benijah settled near College Hill. He married Polly Nichols of Hartford, Vermont in 1812 and moved to a farm in New Richmond, Ohio where he died. One of his sons, Joseph, was a sea captain and was engaged in the slave trade, dying on the coast of Africa; Maria married John Loring; Christopher who died young in an accident; Irwin, Maria died as an infant and Anna, who married Mr. Sprung and lived in Missouri.

Robert and Benijah both fought in the War of 1812. Robert was with General Hull and at the surrender of Detroit. He married Elizabeth Jessup in 1813 and she died of cholera in 1835. Robert purchased 60 acres of land from his father in 1824 and for fifteen years the family toiled to pay off this debt. It was a working farm. The family lived off of what they produced and sold off any excess. They had nine children: Rowena married Isaac B. Carnahan; Susan married Alexander Swift; Rhoda who died young, Alice, the poetess (1820-1871); Asa married Leah A. Woodruff and lived on a farm near College Hill; Phoebe, the poetess (1824-1871); Warren, who lived near Harrison, Ohio for a number of years; Lucy, died as an infant, and Elmina, who married her widowed brother-in-law, Alexander Swift.

Alice described: The first fourteen years of my life it seemed as if there was actually nothing in existence but work.

Phoebe described her father thus: “He was a man of superior intelligence, of sound principles, and blameless life. He was fond of reading, especially romance and poetry, but early poverty and the hard exigencies of pioneer life had left him no time for acquiring anything more than the mere rudiments of a common school education, and the consciousness of his want of culture, and an invincible diffidence, born with him, gave him a shrinking, retiring manner, and a want of confidence in his own judgment, which was inherited to a large measure by his offspring. He was a tender, loving father, who sang his children to sleep with holy hymns, and habitually went to work repeating the grand old Hebrew poets, and the sweet and precious promises of the New Testament of our Lord...In his youth he must have been handsome. He was six feet in height, and well proportioned, with curling black hair, bright brown eyes, slightly aquiline nose, and remarkably beautiful teeth.”

“Those who saw him in New York, in the home of his daughters, remember him a silver-haired, sad-eyed, soft-voiced patriarch, remarkable for the gentleness of his manners, and the emotional tenderness of his temperament...It was a delight to the father to take that long journey from the Western farm to the New York house.”

It was Alice that named the farm “Clovernook” because of the fields of clover on their property. The original three room frame cottage was located approximately where the Shell Service station (7358

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26 The Poetical Works of Alice and Phoebe Cary, With a Memorial of their Lives, Mary Clemmer, 1876. From the library of Pam and Gary Shinn.

Hamilton Avenue) is today. The cottage was empty on Cary’s property after he built his seven room brick house about 1832-35. Peter Stryker purchased the frame house and moved it to Perry Street in Mt. Healthy where is still stands, although remodeled. The bricks used for Cary’s house were made and burned on the site. The workmen stayed with the family until their job was finished.

It was among these peaceful and beautiful surroundings that the Cary sisters gathered their inspiration for many of their poems, and it was in memory of the old home that Phoebe Cary wrote the poem, “Our Homestead”, the closing lines of which are:

Our homestead had an ample hearth
Where at night we loved to meet;
There my mother’s voice was always kind,
And her smile was always sweet;
And their I’ve sat on my father’s knee
And watched his thoughtful brow.
With my childish hand in his raven hair-
That hair is silver now
But that broad hearth’s light: Oh that,
broad hearth’s light!
And my father’s look and my mother’s smile.
They are in my heart tonight.

Recollections of the days of their youth are set forth in a book entitled Clovernook, written by Alice in 1851, which gives a history of part of their lives spent on College Hill.

Elizabeth Jessup Cary was described by Alice years later. “My mother was a woman of superior intellect and of good, well ordered life.” Phoebe recalled: “She was a wonder of my childhood...How she did so much work, and yet did it well; how she reared carefully, and governed wisely, so large a family of children, and yet found time to develop by thought and reading a mind of unusual strength and clearness, is still a mystery to me...An exemplary housewife, a wise and kind mother, she left no duty unfulfilled, yet she found time, often at night, after every other member of the household was asleep, by reading, to keep herself informed of all the issues of the day, political, social, and religious.”

After the death of Elizabeth in 1835, Robert married Anna Schmidt Lewis, a frugal woman who believed the writings of Alice and Phoebe were a waste of time. Their stepmother caused such dissention that Robert built another house for him and Anna, and the children stayed in the brick Cary’s Cottage of today. Anna had not deterred Alice and Phoebe and they became well known, moving to New York City about 1852. Both are buried in Greenwood Cemetery, New York.

Eventually the house was no longer in the Cary family and was purchased by William Cooper Procter in 1903. It was given in trust to the Trader sisters, Georgia and Florence, as a home for ten sightless women. Such was the beginning of Clovernook Home for the Blind. Both are buried in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

Georgia, after many operations, went blind at age eleven. Education was only available from state institutions for the blind but the Traders persuaded the Cincinnati Board of Education to admit Georgia. As a result of her admission, the Cincinnati schools began to offer classes for the blind in a regular school room situation. The sisters also convinced the schools of the need of school sponsored compulsory eye examinations. The public library opened a Braille reading room as a result of the sisters urging.

It was this background that impressed Procter to found Clovernook. The Shakers from Lebanon, Ohio donated looms and taught Clovernook residents how to weave. The largest of the Clovernook

28 The Poetical Works of Alice and Phoebe Cary, With a Memorial of their Lives, Mary Clemmer, 1876.

buildings was constructed in 1913. In 1958 Clovernook Home and School for the Blind was incorporated. The emphasis then and now has been on employment. Clovernook is known for its fine weaving and is the world’s largest Braille printing house. Cary Cottage is on the National Register of Historic Places.

A story about the Cary’s is recounted in Howe’s Historical Collections of Ohio (1888). “The Cary Homestead, ‘the old gray farm-house,’ is still standing, in a thick grove about 100 feet back from the road, on Hamilton pike, just beyond the beautiful suburb of College Hill...The (Cary) sisters were born in a humble house of logs and boards on a site about a hundred yards north of it...The most interesting single object in this region is what is known as ‘the Cary tree.’ It is the large and beautiful sycamore tree on the road between College Hill and Mount Pleasant. The history of this tree is very interesting, as given by Dr. John B. Peaslee, ex-superintendent of Cincinnati public schools.

In 1832, when Alice was twelve years old and Phoebe only eight, on returning home from school one day they found a small tree, which a farmer had grubbed up and thrown in the road. One of them picked it up and said to the other: ‘Let us plant it.’ As soon as said these happy children ran to the opposite side of the road and with sticks - for they had no other implement - they dug out the earth, and in the hole they made they placed the treelet; around it with their tiny hands, they drew the loosened mold and pressed it down with their little feet. With what interest they hastened to it on their way to and from school to see if it were growing; and how they clapped their little hands for joy when they saw the buds start and the leaves begin to grow!...They planted and cared for it in youth; they loved it in age.”

The rural nature of College Hill in these early times made agricultural self-sufficiency a necessity. It is not surprising that many area residents were active in the Cincinnati Horticultural Society, founded in 1843 for the purpose of exchanging information on cultivation of ornamental and edible fruits, vegetables, flowers, trees and shrubs.


The Carys grew grapes, cherries, peaches and strawberries. Mrs. McAvoy grew “McAvoy’s Superior Strawberry.” Col. Charles C. Harbison, of “Rose Hill” presented a paper on dogwoods. Mrs. F. G. Cary was known for her different flower varieties and fruits. The Hammitts grew both flowers and had orchards.

Bulbs, seeds, flowers, and saplings were collected by members throughout their trips to other areas of the country and through plant exchanges would see what varieties would grow best in the Ohio valley. “Nowhere in this Union can there be found a richer supply of all standard fruits than around Cincinnati,” proclaimed a 1845 paper.

Of interest are the many types of apples grown by Society members. One, the Broadwell apple, came from a seedling obtained by Jacob Broadwell in the 1790’s from the collection of one hundred different seedling apple trees raised by Israel Ludlow. Of Ludlow’s hundred, only this type grew well. Ludlow’s orchards were frequently visited by John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed) who was his good friend.

F. G. Cary wrote to the Society in June 1858 of his trip down the Ohio River to New Orleans and the change in the growing season and floral types he observed. Concerning fruits he said, “You are ready to ask, what think you of Southern fruits - Oranges, Pineapples, Bananas, etc? My verdict is against them, if they are to be brought into comparison with ours. Give me only the Peach, Pear and Apple, as cultivated with us, and you might have them all.”

The Society left an unusual legacy to Cincinnati. In 1845 a site for a neighborhood cemetery was sought. The Horticultural Society selected what they named Spring Grove and purchased the Gerrard farm (160 acres) from Josiah Lawrence for $10,500. The State legislature incorporated the Society and gave it the power to dedicate a Rural Cemetery...for the erection of tombs, cenotaphs and other monuments; to lay out the grounds in suitable lots and to plant and embellish the same with shrubbery.
After the land was purchased some Society members thought it would be better to form a distinct and separate incorporated cemetery association, which was done. The officers and directors of this new organization were elected from the Society membership. Later 434 acres were purchased ($330,000). While the cemetery remained a distinct organization it was managed and planted during its formative years by volunteer Society members.