

# City's History

Foreword, published February 3, 1949

This year, 1949, is the sesquicentennial of Miamisburg, the 150th anniversary of the erection of the first building on the town site - a small log blockhouse home in a picket stockade on the riverbank, in 1799.

"The Souvenir History of Miamisburg", published in 16 weekly chapters in The Miamisburg News through cooperation and sponsorship of the representative interests shown below each chapter, is produced in observance of the city's 150th anniversary and makes available to all in the community an account which few ever would have an opportunity to secure, learn or preserve. The first installment appears in this issue of The News.

Rewritten from data and information secured from every authentic source, the story reconstructs the town and peoples it with those who long have been gone - common people like us, who lived and loved and labored, then became lost in obscurity long, long ago. Among them many who live here today will find their great-grandparents, five generations removed.

The job has not been an easy one but has been tedious, long and expensive and without the collaboration of the sponsors would have been most difficult. One hundred and fifty years are a lot of leaves off the calendar and much sand through the glass. Old letters, books and family papers become lost or destroyed and old newspapers crumble.

But for the drop of ink on a bit of yellowed paper here and there, the old wraiths of tomorrow will move over and allow room for us of today in their oblivion. It is to circumvent such obscurity that a few sketches of Miamisburg today are printed along with the historical matter.

Little ghosts that flutter out of musty history books and old newspaper files whisper strange tales, the stories of those long gone who, but for the ink-spot shades, never would come back to us. Written from the chatter of the ghosts under old printer's ink, comes the colorful story of Miamisburg. The News hopes its readers will like, clip and keep it.

## Chapter 1

But for the fear of an impending Indian attack rumored to come in the summer of 1799 there would have been no Miamisburg and consequently no chronicle of the community's century and a half of colorful past to be related.

It was to ensure a more adequate defense against the Indians that Zachariah Hole that spring built a small blockhouse near the riverbank opposite the mouth of Bear Creek and moved his family into it. The dreaded attack never came.

Put up on the east side of the Great Miami River, the blockhouse was of Buckeye logs and within a split-pole stockade. Buckeye wood was used because of its soft, spongy nature and abundance in the neighborhood. Buckeye offered little resistance to the easily dulled pioneer axe blades but at the same time was almost impenetrable by the Indians' rifle balls.

During the summer of 1799 James Drew, Anthony Chevalier, George Adams and William Van Arsdell all came from the Cincinnati settlement and built small cabins around the blockhouse. Thus, the little five-family settlement became the nucleus of Hole's Station - later becoming Miamisburg.

In the Hole family were Zachariah; his wife, Phoebe Clark; their sons William, Daniel and Jonathan; and daughters: Polly, Sarah, Betsy and Phoebe. An elder son, John, preceded them into the Ohio country and was practicing medicine in Cincinnati.

Zachariah and family came to Cincinnati from Virginia in 1790. The father, William and Jonathan had taken homesteader's rights to free lots there but did not complete their contracts and receive deeds.

Forfeiting their lots, all moved to Miami Township in 1798, William buying land west of Miamisburg, and Zachariah a tract west of William's ground.

In 1798 the whole family lived in a small cabin on William's ground, just outside of the present town. When the Indian scare came, the blockhouse was built on Zachariah's land, part of which was on the east side of the river. Over the now Dixie Highway, which had been blazed but still was uncut and uncleared, the Holes were over a week cutting their way to their new home.

#### 1) *Lackner Chevrolet*

Zachariah's oldest son, John Hole, came to Cincinnati in 1789, when the settlement was barely a year old, and bought a half-acre lot on the northeast corner of Front St. and Race St., living there in a 9x12-foot log cabin with his wife, Massie Ludlow, whom he had married in 1778 in New Jersey, and their children: Jeremiah, 18; Elizabeth, 11; Jane, 9; David, 6; and Nancy, one. The first three were born before the Revolution ended. Dr. John Hole practiced medicine and surgery in Cincinnati until 1796 when he bought land and moved to Miami Township.

John Hole had 1,440 acres in township 2, range 6, along Silver Creek, paid for with a military land warrant. His cabin was on the creek bank where David Gebhart's house later was built, a little below A. Holman's mill. The name of Silver creek later was changed to Hole's creek.

In that log cabin another daughter, Matilda, was born in 1799 and in a hewed-log house which replaced it, another, Phoebe, in 1802. John Ludlow Hole was born in the log cabin in 1798 - the first white child in Miami Township. He married Susan Hatfield and died June 5, 1849. Jeremiah died June 9, 1811, in Washington Township. Elizabeth married William Dodds and died in September, 1852. Jane married Rev. Jacob Mulford, a Baptist minister, and died August 3, 1866. David married Margaret McClucas and died January 10, 1892. Nancy, single, died January 17, 1840. Matilda married Elisha Hopkins on Christmas Day, 1823, and died in 1832, Hopkins living until 1849. Phoebe Hole, unmarried, still was living in the 1880's - the oldest woman in Miami Township. Dr. John Hole died January 6, 1813, and his wife, July 25, 1842. Both were buried in the little pioneer graveyard a half mile north of Centerville.

Dr. John Hole, born in 1754, was in the Battle of Bunker Hill and was with Gen. Richard Montgomery when that officer was killed at Quebec. It was Hole who named Montgomery County after General Montgomery.

Of Zachariah Hole's family, other than the doctor, William Hole married Ruth Crane; Daniel Hole, Polly Bedle; Jonathan, Hannah Delay; Polly, David Yeazell; Betsy, John Craig; and Sarah and Phoebe, into the Eaton family.

Ruth Crane was of the Clinton County Cranes; Polly Bedle, the daughter of William Bedle, who built Bedle's Station, near Todd's Fork, Clermont County, in 1795; Yeazell, son of Henry Yeazell, built Yeazell's Mill" still shown on the map near West Carrollton; Craig located on the Springboro road, southeast of Miamisburg in 1804, where later the home of H. C. Hunt was built; and the Eatons were relatives of John Cleves Symmes, founder of North Bend and owner of "Symmes' Purchase". Zachariah and Phoebe Hole were buried somewhere near their old blockhouse.

The Holes were friendly with the Indians and the station never was known to have been attacked.

Zachariah put up another cabin in 1801 in which he opened an Indian trading post, vying with Benjamin Archer for the honor of being Miamisburg's first merchant. Filled with tinsel and gimcracks, powder and ball, bodily decorations and face paint for the Indians, Hole's trading post more resembled a ten-cent store than that of a general merchant. He had a large Indian trade and catered to it.

#### 2) *Westcott's 5c to \$1 Store*

It is difficult to visualize, even by a stretch of the imagination, the busy, modern Miamisburg of today as a five-family, log cabin town, all its huts nestling around a Buckeye blockhouse inside a high picket fence, but such was the city - the Hole's Station of 1799.

## **Chapter 2**

During its first years Hole's Station was deep in thick wilderness, except for a primitive, blazed bridle path from Ft. Hamilton (Hamilton), the forest being almost impenetrable. Huge hickory, beech, ash, oak and sycamore trees, mixed with maple, elm, buckeye and black walnut, grew close together, some of them more than four feet through.

The undergrowth was a tangle of brush, shrubs, pawpaw, and spicewood, and the forest floor a thick mat of bear-grass, weeds, running vines and wild pea with great splotches of color here and there - the roses, red-bud, dogwood and wild lilies. The flowers were everywhere.

There were bears in the woods—and panthers, wildcats and wolves. Deer, an occasional buffalo and small game were plentiful. Racoons and opossum were abundant, and the trees were loaded with wild turkeys and squirrels. The river and creek banks were lined with otter and beaver and the streams themselves, filled with fish. It was a hunter's paradise.

Though the only sign of an Indian village that once was on the west bank of the Miami remaining was a wide cleared space on the blockhouse side where the Indians had held ceremonial dances and councils, many Shawnee towns of more or less than a dozen Indian cabins were scattered here and there in the woods.

No Miami Indian lived alone but always in little groups making up a village. The occasional wigwam or tepee found in the forest was an abandoned one, used only by hunters. The Indians lived in pole cabins with bark roofs, built in even rows along narrow streets, and cleared and cultivated small patches of corn and pumpkins just like the whites who succeeded them. Apparently friendly, the Indians and whites were suspicious of each other and had little in common. Even the dogs fought when they found themselves together. Three Indians once came to Doctor Hole's cabin on Hole creek when the doctor was out in the woods and demanded something to eat. Mrs. Hole cooked dinner for the Indians but managed to get one of them to blow a conch shell, which summoned her husband to the cabin. After eating, the Indians left. Out in the forest the Indians found a buck, killed it and came back with a quarter of venison which they presented to the Holes. It was an example of Indian appreciation.

Doctor Hole took much of his pay for treatments in provisions and other necessities. One due bill, preserved by descendants, reads: "November 1, 1801 - I agree to deliver to Dr. J. Hole a winter's smoking of tobacco or five venison hams. (signed) G. Adams." That was George Adams, one of the first to locate at Hole's Station. Another due bill read: "For medical services I owe Dr. Hole one pair of leather shoes for a boy child. (signed) Benjamin Robbins." He was Miamisburg's first shoemaker. A third IOU read: "November 1, 1801—Due Dr. J. Hole 50 pounds of salt. (signed) Benjamin Archer." Archer was the sole competitor of Zachariah Hole's Indian trading post - Miamisburg's first merchant.

Salt was a luxury in the backwoods, often being hoarded and kept for use in case of sickness. Once the doctor took his pay in a two-year-old heifer; again in six Barbary sheep; and on another occasion in 200 bushels of corn.

Frontier stores obtained salt from the Indians, who got it at the salt deposits in Kentucky. But for venison, bear meat and other game, and home raised vegetables and forest-grown fruits they had little food. Early stores did not bother with meats and groceries.

### 3) *Lutz's Cash Super-Market*

Hole's Station was on the "Great Miami road" surveyed and blazed by Daniel C. Cooper, Cincinnati, from Ft. Hamilton to the mouth of the Mad River at Dayton in 1794 in preparation for the first settlement of Dayton, which came in 1796. It connected with the Cincinnati Road at Hamilton and now is the Dixie Highway, U.S. 25, through Miamisburg. Barely a marked bridle path, filled with stumps and standing trees, unbridged creeks and other streams, the road was only finished to Miamisburg in 1794 and was blazed to Dayton the next year. The streams had to be forded or crossed on rafts made on the spot from timber cut for the purpose. In 1796, when William Harner took the first load of settlers from Cincinnati to Dayton in a wagon pulled by four horses, it took him two weeks to make the trip. A group going by river in pirogues got there four days ahead of the wagon.

The next settlers in Miami Township, both in 1799 and from Pennsylvania, were William Dodds and Alexander Nutt. Dodds located on section 21, near West Carrollton, and Nutt on section 36, a mile north of Hole's Station, where by 1812 he "had a fine orchard." Nutt was a brother-in-law of Benjamin Robbins, who owed Doctor Hole the shoes. Robbins moved to Hole's Station from Franklin, where he had settled in the spring of 1798. It is related that Robbins' log cabin was built in one day by neighbors who "raised" it at a cost of six gallons of whisky. The workers drank up all the

liquor that day but by nightfall the cabin was done and the Robbins family moved into it. Robbins was Miamisburg's first shoemaker.

The Dodds family comprised William; his wife, Isabel McGrew; and their six children: William, John, James, Margaret, Polly and Catherine. Thomas and Martha were born after the family arrived at Hole's Station. Dodds' brother, Joseph, single, who came with them, was killed in the War of 1812. Both William and Isabel Dodds died on their Miami Township farm.

#### 4) *The Miamisburg Building and Loan Association*

The first gristmill in Miami Township was built by William Lamme shortly after the family's arrival in 1802. It was in a narrow gorge between the hills on Hole's creek. Lamme and his wife, with five children, came from Kentucky and located on section 9 in the northeast corner of the township. A son, David, built "a better mill" at a different location in 1804. David was married to Margaret Dodds and the couple had two sons and eight daughters. Long a justice of the peace and a member of the legislature in 1840, David Lamme died in 1855 and his wife, in 1860.

### **Chapter 3**

1804 was a big year in the settlement of Miami Township and Hole's Station. Families coming that year were: Abraham Scott, who soon moved to Indiana; George V. Stettler, John Shupert, James Pettigrew, William Long, Tobias Whetzel, Andrew Small, Peter Gebhart, and John and James Ungerer. The Straders also came to Hole's Station that year. Pettigrew and Long located southeast of Hole's Station, and Whetzel near the Gebhart church. The Whetzel family was composed of Whetzel, his wife, Catherine, and five children. Two other children were born after the Whetzels came to the township.

Until the opening of a land office at Cincinnati in 1803, shortly after Ohio became a state, all of Montgomery County and parts of Greene, Butler and Warren Counties were a portion of large "Dayton township" and paid taxes accordingly. Zachariah Hole's taxes, in 1799, were \$1.87; William Hole's taxes were \$1.73; Daniel Hole's taxes, 37<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents; and Dr. John Hole paid \$2.54 on his 1,440 acres of land along Hole's creek, which included "Ariel Coy".

When Dayton township was cut apart March 24, 1803, Montgomery County had 526 males; Green County 446; Butler County 836; and Warren County 854. The State of Ohio that year had a population of 15,314 persons.

Samuel Boltin, a Dunkard preacher, located on section 35, on the west bank of the river in 1804, with his wife, Elizabeth, and five children: William, Mary, James, Sarah and Henry. Stewart, Ann, Samuel and Phoebe were born there. Phoebe became the wife of James Makain, and Henry, the father of three sons: Samuel, Cornelius and Henry. The elder Boltin died in 1839 and his wife a few years later.

John Shupert located a mile southeast of Hole's Station. His children were: Christopher, Frederick, Jacob, Eve, Polly and Tena. Christopher was married and had a son, John. The Ungerers settled on section 30 and Andrew Small, a Revolutionary soldier, a little west of them. Small used to "preach a little".

Most of Small's preaching and that of Boltin, the Dunkard, was done in the crude log cabin homes throughout the settlement. The next minister and the one who preached the first real sermon in the township was John Jacob LaRose, who came in a four-horse wagon to Hole's Station in 1804. With LaRose, who came from Pennsylvania, was his wife, Mary B. Gift, whom he married during the Revolution, and their children: Phillip J., Louis V., Jacob, John, Daniel, Elizabeth and Catherine. The family located on 160 acres a mile southeast of town. LaRose began to preach in 1805 and preached until 1830. After his wife died in 1813, he lived with his son-in-law, Emanuel Gebhart, at Hole's Station, where he died November 17, 1854. He was born in 1755 and was married in 1780 in Pennsylvania. LaRose organized the Gebhart Church in 1805; the Stettler Church in 1806, and in 1809, St. John's Church, at Germantown.

It was from Mary Gift LaRose's love of personal adornment that the pioneer women of Hole's Station learned to "dress up a little" and wear what jewelry they had been able to secure to church services - quite a common practice today. Adornment consisted chiefly of shell combs, finger rings and earrings and a locket on a chain. Watches were only for men and were great, key-wind affairs, much too clumsy for feminine wear.

#### 5) *Paff's Jewelry Store*

Henry and Mary Strader came from North Carolina, where their son, Samson P. Strader, was born in 1796. Samson Strader married Mary Benner, also born in 1796, daughter of Jacob and May Benner, Miami township.

George P. Stettler settled a mile southeast of Hole's Station, where he died April 23, 1815. He had five sons: William, Henry Daniel, George and Jacob. The family, in 'poor circumstances' on its arrival, prospered and became prominent. Daniel, born in 1773, married Catherine Geherer, of Philadelphia, who had come to Butler County with her parents. He was in the War of 1812 and died in June 1853. Catherine died November 27, 1863. One of the earliest churches in Miami township was organized in 1805 in the Stettler log cabin home.

Henry and Elizabeth Moyer came to Hole's Station in 1804 with one son, Peter, then 15, and located on section 25, east side of the Miami river. Henry died there the following year. Peter was married to Elizabeth Heck in 1812 and the couple had ten children.

George Parsons and family arrived about 1804 and located in the Dodds neighborhood. Jacob and Catherine Baum, from Maryland, came to Hole's Station in 1806 with their eight children: Martin K., May, Elizabeth, John, George, Susan, Barbara, Jacob and Joseph. The Baums settled on the east bank of the Miami, where the mother died in 1808 and the father in 1830.

Jacob Baum, Jr., married Elizabeth Cramer and the couple had three daughters: Margaret, Eliza and Mary. Margaret became the wife of John E. Shaffer, Germantown, with whom John, Jr., later made his home. Martin K. Baum became Cincinnati's first banker, built the beautiful present Taft home, now a museum, for his residence and became prominent in the organization of Cincinnati industry.

Charles Baum, a descendant of Jacob and Catherine Baum, leased the old "Miami House" from the Widow Black shortly after it was remodeled in the winter of 1872-1873 and ran the inn for some years. Later it was turned over to E. Bickford and Baum who opened the then-beautiful and luxurious "Baum House" on East Central Ave., whose site now is the location of The Farmers and Merchants Bank.

#### 6) *Farmers & Merchants Bank*

Peter Gebhart, his wife and children, John and Elizabeth, came to Hole's Station in 1804 and located southeast of town. Peter died the same year, but his widow lived long. In 1805 Valentine Gebhart, wife and sons: Andrew, Philip and Daniel, from Berks County, Pennsylvania, settled at Hole's Station. Daniel Gebhart built the first tavern in Miamisburg in 1811 at South Main St. and Lock St. It long was called the Daniel Gebhart House. Charles Connolly bought the place, but in a few years moved to Main St. and Ferry St. and in 1831 to the "Miami House", then back to Main St. and Ferry St. which he ran until he died in 1882. The old Daniel Gebhart House, "where the flat boats stopped", eventually became a boarding house, "which did "but little business", according to old accounts.

### **Chapter 4**

John Gebhart, his wife, Christine, and their children: Catherine, George, Jonathan and Elizabeth, came to Hole's Station in 1805 and located on section 24 where Mary, David, Christine, Thomas, Solomon and Lydia were born. John Gebhart died in 1842 at 64 and his wife in 1870 at ninety. The wife's parents, also Gebharts, George and Margaret, came to Hole's Station with John and Christine; and also two brothers-in-law: George and Elizabeth, with seven children; and Jacob and Salome Gebhart, childless, accompanied them. John's fifth daughter was named after Salome.

Emanuel Gebhart came to Hole's Station in 1809 and married Elizabeth, daughter of John Jacob LaRose. She died December 26, 1867, at 83. Emanuel died January 22, next year. Gebharts have played a prominent part in Miami Township history since the first decade of the 1800's. Son of Charles H. Gebhart, grandson of George P. and Susanne Tobias Gebhart and a direct descendant of John and Christine Gebhart, who came to Miamisburg in the early 1800's,

7) *Gebhart Meat Market*

The first Miamisburg ferry was operated by John Yeazell, son of Henry and brother of Polly Hole's husband, David Yeazell, shortly after the War of 1812. At the foot of Ferry St., it did business until the late 1830's.

With its seasonal slump in business because persons forded the river at Lock St. in low water times, Yeazell's ferry lasted but a few years after the first bridge was built in 1827.

Put up by a joint stock company, with M. Jones doing the construction, the first bridge was at Water St. and Bridge St. (now Linden Ave.) and collected tolls until taken over by the county, when the toll was abolished.

Jacob Kercher and his wife, Margaret, with an unmarried brother, John Kercher, came to Hole's Station with the Gebharts, one of whom was Jacob's father-in-law. They located on ground west of the blockhouse but which now is a part of the town. The Kerchers had two sons and eight daughters. Jacob died in 1855 and his wife a few years later.

Peter and Annie Eagle came in 1809 with their children: Henry, Jacob, George, David, Polly, Eve, Betsy and Sarah. John and Annie were born later in Miami Township. Peter, Sr., died in 1820 and his wife later. Their son, Peter, married Mary Whetzel.

John and Elizabeth Neibel came from Virginia by wagon in October 1810, with three children. A fourth child was killed when the wagon upset two days after their start to the Ohio country.

Elizabeth died in 1841 and John in 1855. A son, William, was five years old when the family arrived at Hole's Station.

In 1811 William and Catherine (Sutphin) Conover arrived from New Jersey with their children: Ida, Abraham and Ann. The family settled on section 29 on the east bank of the river, where Ohio, Deborah, William, G. S. and Mariah were born.

Peter and Catherine Hetzel came in 1812 and settled on section 10 in the northeast corner of the township. They had one son, David. Philip Huiet and family also arrived in 1812 and located on the Miami River north of Hole's Station. Huiet, in 1812, built one of the earliest mills in Miami Township on the riverbank, north of Miamisburg. The first year it ground 500 barrels of flour on contract for the army.

The old Huiet mill was operated by various persons until 1872, when it was removed by L. Morganheimer and later bought by Schultz & Manning, who used the water power to manufacture paper. By 1880 the mill was still and unoccupied. Miamisburg had passed the days of johnnycake and hoecake baked from coarse-ground meal or flour.

In the old days a sort of bread was baked in the old Dutch ovens before an open fireplace and hoecake, on the wide blade of a garden hoe, held over live coals or before the open fire.

Johnnycake was baked on the clay hearth after live coals had been raked out of the fireplace onto it and then back again after the hearth was heated. Such was baking in the old days in Hole's Station and Miamisburg.

8) *Egan & Son*

The first Miamisburg newspaper was "The Miamisburg Gridiron" edited and published by John Anderson, a Dayton man, during the late 1840's. It was a pithy sheet, given to flowery language and was caustic in its expressions. Because of this the paper had little money and few friends. In an attempt to finance its resurrection after a suspension, Anderson offered the paper at \$2 a year, payable "\$1 in advance and the other dollar at the end of six months." It did not work and publication was never resumed.

The second Miamisburg newspaper was "The Miamisburg Union," started in 1856 by Isaac Pepper. Printed on the second floor of the Weaver building, southeast corner of Main St. and Central Ave.,

"on the public square," The Union was Democratic in politics and had six-column pages. With good equipment and good type and much patronage, the paper still drifted into financial difficulties and moved away. Pepper had three sons, all good printers, who helped him in the shop. The next paper was "The Miamisburg Bulletin," published by Blossom Brothers - A.H.; C.B.; Malon - sons of the pioneer merchant, M.S. Blossom. The paper was politically Independent and was recognized as an authoritative tobacco journal. Its office had gas lights and the machinery was run by a gas engine - ultra-modern in those days. The founders still were publishing it at the turn of the century.

Of the local newspapers, only The Miamisburg News weathered successive storms and survived. Organized and incorporated in 1880 by Charles E. Kinder, formerly publisher of The Putnam County Sentinel, still publishing at Ottawa, Ohio, The Miamisburg News was Democratic, had a good patronage from the Miamisburg merchants and citizens and was recognized as a paper closely and dutifully identified with the best interests of Miamisburg and the whole Miami Valley. Kinder was a son of John E. Kinder and Elizabeth Clark, daughter of Nelson Clark, Miamisburg's first gunsmith.

#### 9) *The Miamisburg News*

### **Chapter 5**

First Miamisburg homes lacked all the pretention and most of the conveniences of the neat rows of cottages on side streets and the larger dwellings around the corner but met all the standards of backwoods comfort common in the era.

Usually 12 by 15 feet and built of Buckeye logs, they had clap-board roofs, kept in place by heavy weight-poles; home hewed door and window frames; a clap-board door with a wooden bolt and hinges; and a dirt or split-pole floor. The split-pole floor was called puncheons.

The cracks between the logs were chinked with dried clay and the little square window panes were of paper, greased with bear's grease to let the light through. A hole was bored near the bolt, through which the buckskin latchstring was pushed - pulled in at night for safety.

A wide stick-and-mud chimney was outside at one end of the cabin and opposite it, within, a great fireplace, with a wide baked clay hearth in front. The back log in the fireplace usually was Buckeye because of the slow-burning character of the wood.

Clap-boards fastened on pole rafters made a ceiling to the cabins, with a loft reached through a square hole and by a portable ladder. The loft was the storage room and also served as the guest room when company came.

Though most of the dwellings had but one room, large families like the Gebharts and a number of others had to build "double cabins" to take care of the group. These were merely two-room cabins with a narrow hall between the rooms, open at either end but all under one roof. The bark usually was left on the logs.

Later came the more pretentious "hewed log" cabins, with the bark off and the logs hewed square with an adz. These mostly were two stories, the hole and ladder still comprising the stairway. A hole, a few feet square and equally deep was dug in the middle of the cabin's dirt floor and was covered with puncheons on the puncheon floor. This was the "potato hole".

The potato hole was Miamisburg's first refrigeration system. In it provisions, and even meats, kept fresh and unspoiled for days and sometimes for weeks. Besides, it was a good place to hide the children when Indian raids were expected. That is, it was so until the Indians discovered its existence. Then, it was the first place for which the Indians would hunt when attacking a cabin - in it they might find plunder and more victims at the same time.

#### 10) *C.L. Deniston Co.*

Though some light furniture had been brought to Hole's Station by packhorse through the forest, most cabin furniture was home-made and of the crudest kind. Chairs were small sections sawed out of a log, split apart and legs driven into the rounded side, the smoother side being the seat. They were only three-legged stools. Tables were just like the chairs but had four legs.

Log cabin beds were made by driving one end of poles into holes bored in the inside log walls. The other ends were fixed together by a crosspiece and held up by vertical poles which served as a foot board. Sometimes the bed was allowed to slant, the foot ends of the pole sides resting directly on the floor. Strips of deer-skin, laced from side to side, comprised the springs and a buffalo or bear hide made a very good mattress. Coverlets were made from deer or other skins, sewed together. Sometimes the backwoods wives made straw ticks out of ticking and filled them with grass or home-threshed straw. The threshing was done with a flail and on the cabin floor or outside on the dry, clay ground.

Miamisburg was a log cabin town and frame houses did not appear until well into the 1800's. The first brick house in town was built by Reverend Dechart in 1827 on the northeast corner of the then Bridge St. and Water St. Most settlers cleared a three-acre truck patch around their cabins and planted it in corn, pumpkins, potatoes and whatever vegetables they wished to raise.

Meat was plentiful. Deer and bear were abundant in the forest all around Hole's Station and an occasional buffalo was killed. Buffaloes did not disappear from the Ohio country until about 1805. Raccoons and squirrels filled the trees and the river and creeks provided plenty of fish. Before Huiet put up his water-power gristmill north of the settlement, corn was ground into meal or flour in hand mills or pounded into a coarse meal with pestle and mortar. Settlers often were without any corn at all and frequently it was so scarce it was parched and eaten grain by grain. Venison and bear meat were either boiled in a big Dutch oven hung by a cross-piece before the open fireplace or broiled before the fire on the hearth. The meat sometimes was fried in an old skillet or frying pan set on the hot coals.

Roasted bear paws were the delicacy deluxe in the Miami township backwoods. Usually they were baked in a mixture of ashes and live coals raked on the hearth or toasted on sharp sticks held before the fire. Peeled, like taking the skin off a fresh beef tongue, bear paws were rated delicious all over the wilderness.

Unable to raise pigs because of the bear and wolves, settlers brought in a few cows and milk became plentiful and butter easy to obtain. Honey came from bee trees. Salt was scarce and usually was peddled by the Indians, who found it in Kentucky. There was no pepper to be had at all. Coffee was scarce and usually was made from sumac berries. Tea was made from sassafras roots - termed by the pioneers "sassafrak".

Fires were kindled with flint and steel and a box of lint - just as with the cigarette lighters of today but without the "click" or swear words when the contraption fails to go off.

*11) David Beachler & Co.*

So runs the colorful tale of Miamisburg's growth during 150 years. It's first citizens were as real and as earnest in their time as are we of today. When in reading, we get to know them - they are real indeed.

## **Chapter 6**

Unmade and yet unnamed, Hole's Station streets in the early 1800's were mere footpaths zigzagging in crazy fashion from cabin to cabin among the trees.

The Ft. Hamilton-Dayton Road widened into a bridle-path then to a rude wagon road, but stumps and fallen timber still blocked the way and many long and tedious detours were necessary. Small streams had to be forded, and rafts built from timber on the spot to cross the larger ones. One of the first requisites in early horse trading was that the animal secured must be a good swimmer.

Life during the early 1800's still was primitive. Two new roads were then being projected - one to Centerville and the other to Springboro, in Warren County. Tallow dips, fire-knots, candles and lard oil lamps still lighted the cabins and shone mostly through greased paper panes. Embers in the fireplace were kept alive but if they went out a burning brand was borrowed from a neighbor or the fire was relighted with sparks from flint and steel and a tinderbox.

All the Hole's Station homes were located near the Miami River and the cabins further out in the township all were by some stream. Later, when the first well was dug the water was raised by an

old bucket hung on a grapevine from a pole or small log sweep. Men and boys bathed in the yard or in the river; women, usually in the old Dutch oven, in which the bear's meat later was boiled. The Dutch oven also was used for boiling the family wash.

Men shaved by looking into a little mirror set on a shelf supported by pegs driven into the log cabin wall.

The settler's long-rifle, powder horn and bullet pouch usually rested on pegs over the fireplace, within easy reach, and an old fiddle and bow hung from another peg further from the fire. Too much heat made the gut strings snap and break.

A spinning wheel and distaff were necessities in every cabin. Every settler cultivated flax for weaving and from it the women made linen and linsey-woolsey shirts and hunting shirts for their men. When the flax crop failed, they resorted to nettles. Did you ever wear a nettle-cloth shirt? Nettles were a member of the flax plant family and worked up into cloth in the same way. The woods always were full of nettles, to be had free for the picking - and scratching afterwards.

In the early 1800's Hole's Station men dressed in buckskin breeches, a linen or woolsey hunting shirt, moccasins and a coonskin cap, usually with the tail hanging down behind. Often after finally managing to secure a suit of "store clothes" the worn out portions were patched with buckskin. It gave a mottled and bizarre effect. Backwoods home-spun breeches were somewhat shapeless, and housewives took particular care their husbands got the garment on right side before. Not that it mattered much in appearance but that it was "unlucky" to put your garments on wrong side before.

#### 12) *"Suttman's", a store for men*

The shelf in the cabin where the looking glass rested also was the family "dresser". On it rested the family comb and a long spiked nail used by the womenfolk to curl their hair. The nail was heated over a candle or in the fireplace. The family flour barrel was the backwoods beauty's powder box and a touch of pokeberry or berry juice, her rouge. Soap? They made their own in the Dutch oven, out in the cabin yard.

Early Miamisburg women wore linsey-woolsey gowns, a little shorter than their multiple petticoats, allowing the nether garments to suggestively show below. It was a bit "risque". Linen and calico dresses also were much worn and summer or winter, sunbonnets. The women, like the men, usually wore moccasins. Worn much for everyday wear, were short, deerskin skirts and linsey-woolsey or linen jackets. In the 'old days it was the petticoats, not the skirts, which had "that new look". The skirts were shorter - usually falling just below the knees. The petticoat did the rest.

#### 13) *The Fashion Dress Shop*

Early Miamisburg life was not tame but lacked much of the abandon of today. There were singings and prayer meetings in the neighborhood cabins; cabin raisings and log rollings; shin-digs and hoe-downs to wild fiddle music in the woods in summer and at parties in the cabins in winter. In winter the young folks took hayrides in bobsleds pulled by oxen and in summer rode horseback or walked in pairs among the trees. It was simple but as well, romantic.

On a cabin shelf - a what-not---in the corner most families had a few books: Paradise Lost; Belles Lettres; The Idler; books of poems and the like.

Throughout the neighborhood, everybody took his or her nip. Despite the fact that good Monongahela whiskey could be had for 50 cents a gallon - it had to be seven years old to be considered fit for drinking - every cabin had some kind of still and the occupants made their own liquor. The pioneers liked their own making better than the "boughten" kind, it was stronger. Hard drinking was the custom of the back woods. Each guest was offered his swig on arrival at a cabin and not to take it was looked upon as an insult. Even the preacher and schoolteacher took their guzzles. Many an early sermon was preached with a wavering, unsteady voice and many a lesson was heard through buzzing ears and with a feverish, flushed face.

It was the custom for the earliest merchants, especially at Hole's trading post and Archer's first store, to set a bottle of whiskey on each end of the counter. It was free to all who cared to take it up and gulp. The whiskey bottle was a sort of welcoming gesture to those who came there to trade.

Nobody took more than his share - he did not have to. He had more than was better, in his own cabin.

Such was Miamisburg life in the first decade of 1800 - the daily routine of our forefathers more than 100 years ago. They were a hardy lot, men and women. Otherwise they could not have withstood the hardship and privation which was a part of the backwoods pioneer life.

## **Chapter 7**

By the end of the War of 1812 the town had been much cleared and the two Indian villages which had long been near the north end of Hole's Station were gone.

Only the naturally cleared space west of the river and opposite Market St. remained to remind of them. There the Indians had held their dances, outdoor councils and ceremonial festivals. It was those towns of the Miami Indians which finally gave Hole's Station its newer name - Miamisburg, "the town of the Miamis", and not the river, which itself was named for them.

With the departure of the Miamis and Shawnees went the last of Zachariah Hole's brisk Indian trade. Only a few Indians were living in Miami Township with the advent of the 1840's. In 1845 the last of the warlike Miamis were herded onto river steamboats at the Cincinnati wharf and sent to take the trip west. So went the last of the Miamisburg Indians.

Even before the war of 1812 the old Miamisburg burying-ground, where the fire department and police station now stand on East Central Ave., contained a few graves. With the close of the war, they began to increase rapidly. It was good business for the preachers. In the old days there were no undertakers, and the ministers acted as funeral directors, getting \$25 for each burial.

The system ended soon after Ben Brough came to Hole's Station. Ben was one of four brothers who came in a covered wagon over the Allegheny Mountains with their mother, the widow Brough, in 1811. Ben Brough was the town's first cabinetmaker. Soon after their arrival Ben built a small log cabin shop and began making furniture. In the shop he also made coffins, which sold at \$8 apiece. Brough soon awoke to the fact that where he got only \$8 for a coffin, the preacher received \$25 for conducting a funeral. To him it appeared a bit out of proportion. So he sent to Philadelphia for a book - "How to Become a Funeral Director." He became the first Miamisburg undertaker.

### *14) Ben Brough's Furniture and Funeral Director.*

A few log stores had followed those of Benjamin Archer, Zachariah Hole's trading post and Benjamin Robbin's shoe shop, mostly trading with the Indians. The early stores carried no groceries and all had almost identical stocks of merchandise: gaily colored calicoes; bright shawls; huge red and blue bandanas; wide striped white and black blankets, usually bought by Indians; little bells, trinkets, tinsel and brass nose and ear rings, all for the Indians; axes, hatchets, tomahawks, butcher knives and a few guns; powder and lead for frontier rifles. Among the dry goods too, were bolts of green or blue English broadcloth. Boxes of black and yellow paints, used by Indians to paint their faces on ceremonial occasions, also were in stock. The customary bottle of home-distilled whisky was on each end of the rough wooden counter and was much sampled by customers, free - especially by the Indians, who would file into the store one at a time, take their free swig of liquor, select some article and pay for it then come in again, take another gulp, buy another item, pay for it and walk out. The performance was repeated until the Indian had all he had intended to buy and all the whisky he could hold. That, invariably, was the Indian way of trading and never was varied. The free whisky was the pioneer merchant's trade expansion campaign, and it worked.

Indians never asked for nor secured credit. Honest enough among themselves, they had no hesitancy about stealing from or cheating white men. That, they considered, was small enough interest on the land the whites had taken away from them.

Though the squaws often accompanied the braves to the trading posts, the men did the buying, got the whisky and the squaws remained outside. It was the women, however, who carried the purchases home to the wigwam and did most of the other work in the villages.

### *15) the Fair Store*

Because little or no money was in the Hole's Station settlement in its earlier days, skins and pelts were legal tender in the pioneer stores, as were corn and whisky. The skins had a standardized value in trade: a buckskin represented \$1; a doe skin 50 cents; a fox skin 25 cents; a coon skin 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents; and a rabbit skin a fi'-penny-bit - six and a quarter cent. A bear skin was worth as much as a buck skin and otter and silver fox pelts were taken in at as low a figure as the merchant could get them. However, shipped east to a market the silver fox skin often brought the trader as much as \$75. The old barter system - merchandise for skins and pelts - was a profitable one for the merchant and many backwoods traders grew wealthy through its manipulation.

## **Chapter 8**

Transition of Hole's Station into Miamisburg began with the coming in 1811, of Peter and John Treon, father and son, and both physicians. In Berks County, Pennsylvania, John had studied medicine under his father, then at an Eastern medical school. Nearly penniless on arrival at Hole's Station, both began to practice medicine immediately.

Soon after the arrival of the Treons, Peter Treon, Jacob Kercher and Emanuel Gebhart secured possession of the unsold land around the settlement and platted it into a village. On Friday, February 20, 1818, the first lots were sold. Each lot contained one-fifth of an acre and adjoined a 16-foot alley. "Free public grounds in the middle of the square" donated by the promoters became the present public square, where the old market house and town hall still stands.

Low prices and easy terms on payment for the lots were offered. The first town plat showed the town extending a half mile east from the river and a mile north and south, described the place as "six miles north of Franklin and 11 miles south of Dayton" and changed its name from Hole's Station to Miamisburg.

Peter Treon died soon after the town was platted, but his son, Jon, born in 1791, lived to be ninety-one. Married to Eve Weimer in 1818, Jon Treon married Elizabeth Black, widow of Hezekiah Black, after Eve's death in 1873.

Black had been owner of the old Miami House, northeast corner of Main St. and Linden Ave., and his widow continued to run the tavern after her husband's death. Black had bought the place from Jacob Zimmer during the Civil War. Remodeled in the winter of 1872-1873, Mrs. Black leased the old inn to Charles Baum, E. Bickford, a man named Pushaw, then to I.H. Hager. Opened in 1831 by Charles Connolly and sold in 1833 to John Zimmer, the old tavern was bought by John Zimmer's brother, Jacob, in 1840. It was run by Good & Campbell for three years; repossessed by Zimmer in 1843, then leased to E. McCauly. The place still stands - a low-priced rooming house.

The Widow Black was the daughter of George W. Weaver, an early Miamisburg merchant. Weaver was a grandson of Jacob and Margaret (Gebhart) Weaver and began business in 1844 on the southeast corner of Main St. and Central Ave. with \$8 of his own money and \$150 borrowed capital. His grocery once was the largest in town and at different times he handled hardware, Queensware, wagons, buggies, farm implements and seed, and sold sewing machines.

The Weaver store was sold to Charles Ware in 1900; later to Jesse C. Prugh; Lester Lucas in 1918; and then bought by Forest B. Smith in 1926.

### *16) Star City Hardware and Seed Co.*

Only the ghost of a memory around Miamisburg today, is "Shock, the tinner", who began by doing the town's tinkering.

In 1834 Shock built a shop on South Main St. and next year moved to a larger place on Linden Ave. He remained there until 1855, then built a bigger shop. In the 1880's Shock's shop, at Linden Ave. and Water St, was the largest of its kind in Miamisburg.

The second brick house in Miamisburg, at the head of Main St., was built by Nelson Clark, the town's first gunsmith, whose product, "the N. Clark rifle," was sold all over the west. It was a good gun. Clark's wife was Sarah, a daughter of Joseph Tapscott, and she died in 1841. Of their daughters, Anna S. married M.P. Nolan, of Dayton, and Elizabeth, John E. Kinder, Miamisburg. Clark married again and died August 8, 1859.

Elias Gebhart, son of John and Christine, opened a cooper shop and made barrels for Perry Pease's distillery and later for those of Simon Huiet and Joseph Dryden, Sr. Elias Gebhart married Joseph Gebhart's daughter, Elizabeth.

Elias Gebhart's father was Miamisburg's first carpenter. He lived until May 31, 1842, his wife living until August 25, 1870, was named Christine. She was a Hubler, and their wedding took place in 1840.

Perry Pease's distillery was near Lamme's mill and was running as early as 1826. After the canal came, the distillery was turned over to Perry's brother, George, who moved it to Carrollton and also started a sawmill. George married Ellen Wheatley and after her death in 1839, was married to May A. Lamme, a daughter of David Lamme, in 1841. She died August 30, 1875, and Pease, February 23, 1880.

Huiet's distillery adjoined the Sycamore Creek culvert on the west side of the canal. Sold in 1842 to M. D. Whitridge, who ran it until 1849, the place became a tannery until 1867, when it was abandoned and torn down.

Joseph E. Dryden's distillery was under his own management until his death in 1856, when a son, Joseph E. Dryden, Jr., took it over and ran it until the Civil War. The place was closed and abandoned in 1863, when Dryden enlisted in Co. A, 12th Ohio National Guard.

A large flour mill was put up near the canal locks in 1829 by Madison Brothers. After successive owners in intervening years, Uriah Engleman had it in 1882. Besides the flour mill the Engleman's operated a sawmill on the same tract.

It is a tradition in the Engleman family that eels often clogged the turbines which the old mill used for power instead of a millwheel, and the millstones frequently were still until the eels could be unwound and the waterway cleaned of them. The old Engleman mill's waterpower came from a hydraulic millrace which led off the canal.

Only in recent years was the old mill torn down and fragments and refuse still litter its site along the old canal bank.

#### *17) Peerless Oil Co.*

Incidentally, Thurman Waters, operator of The Peerless Oil station, relates that the old Engleman flour mill and stable were still operating at the time of the 1913 flood, when, as soon as the waters subsided, the Dayton food famine was eased by much flour from the Engleman mill, hauled to Dayton by the mill's own teams and wagons. Where the old mill stable stood is one of Miamisburg's most popular restaurants – much frequented by the news and editorial staffs of the town's one surviving newspaper, conclusive evidence that the food is both good – and cheap.

## **Chapter 9**

During the town's earliest years, flat boats bound from Dayton to Cincinnati and on down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans, stopped at Miamisburg to take on shipments of skins, venison hams, produce and other items received by the merchants in trading with the Indians. The boats were built for one-way travel and were broken up and the timber sold in New Orleans, the crew returning on foot or horseback through the forest. No flatboat could travel upstream. After 1811 the flatboats made Miamisburg headquarters at the Peter Gebhart tavern and sometimes took on passengers from that point. The first flatboat had come down through Hole's Station in 1799, loaded with grain, pelts and 500 venison hams for a two-months voyage down river to New Orleans. The last flatboat passed through Miamisburg in February, 1828, loaded with merchandise for New Orleans.

The flatboats gradually were displaced by keel boats. The first keel boat passed through town in May, 1819, a 75-foot craft, loaded with goods for Dayton. The keel boats could also travel upstream. The river at many points south of Miamisburg was cluttered with submerged stumps, overhanging boughs, shallows and sand bars. So many mills had been built along the stream that the dams almost had put the flatboats out of business by 1818. Both flat and keel boats had dwindled to a few by 1829, when the Miami & Erie Canal was opened through Miamisburg.

Other than the boats, transportation out of Miamisburg consisted of oxcarts or heavy wagons drawn by four-horse teams over partly finished mud roads and passengers went by wagon, on foot or on horseback. Much merchandise was carried on packhorse, loaded by skilled "pack-horse loaders" who had no other occupation. The loads must consist of a certain amount of weight and be fixed on in a certain skillful manner.

*18) L Roberts Sales and Service, Inc.*

Early on Sunday morning, January 25, 1829, the "Governor Brown", first canal boat to pass Miamisburg, nosed into town. It was on the way from Cincinnati to Dayton. In the afternoon the "Ferrer" came in and a few hours afterward, the "General Marion". It was after dark before the "General Pike" got there. Crowds lined the canal banks and there was much cheering and celebration.

The "Governor Brown" was the only packet fitted up exclusively for passengers. Under Captain Archibald it made regular trips twice a week between Cincinnati and Dayton, accommodating 50 passengers without crowding. The one-way trip took from 20 to 22 hours and the boat stopped at the old Peter Gebhart House to take on or put off passengers. The "Alpha", under Capt. H.F. Jones, of Dayton, was partly fitted for passengers and partly for freight.

The entire fleet, the "Governor Brown", the "Ferrer", the "General Marion", the "General Pike" and the "Alpha", with a Dayton party, were to make the trip back to Cincinnati together but a break in the canal at Alexandersville prevented their departure.

Until 1837, when it was finished to Piqua, the canal extended only 66 miles from Cincinnati to Dayton. First ground had been broken at Middletown in 1828. The entire line under contract was to have been done by June, 1828, but breaks, floods and damage by winter had delayed the work.

The finished work, excluding the canal's junction with the Ohio river at Cincinnati, included nine locks; five aqueducts; 20 stone culverts of three to 20 feet chord; and many paved waterways and road bridges. With its three miles of side cuts and feeders it cost \$746,852.70, averaging \$10,963 a mile. Cost of connecting with the Ohio river alone had been \$135,000. The first year after completion the canal took in tolls amounting to \$20,941.36, partly freight charges. In 1828 its net tolls, after repairs and expenses, aggregated \$200,773. In 1840 the tolls paid over six per cent of the canal's original cost.

Coming of the canal was the making of Miamisburg. Among others, M.S. Blossom came to Miamisburg in 1827 and opened a saddlery and harness shop in a log cabin already partly occupied by Robbins, the aged shoemaker, and also a tailor. It was a small cabin and crowded. Blossom became one of the village's most prominent businessmen, served one term as mayor, and was for long a member of the Board of Education. His shop was on North Main St. until 1873, when he closed it and took a vacation in California, not returning to Miamisburg until 1875. He then reopened the business. He was the father of A.H., C.E., and Malon Blossom, who began a manufactory in 1867.

The opening of the canal displaced the first Miamisburg schoolhouse, built in 1818, when the town was platted, and also used as a church.

The schoolhouse, which stood just west of the old graveyard and next to H. Groby's lumber yard, right in the middle of the bed where the canal was dug. It was moved east and south to the west side of Locust St., where it was jointly used as a school and a Reformed meeting house until the 1880's. Before it was built, with John Gebhart doing most of the carpenter work, school was kept in the cabin homes, a small log schoolhouse, and for a time in a tannery.

The old burying ground is now the site of the Miamisburg Fire Department and Police Station building.

*19) Grove & Weber Company*

The coming of the canal brought Miamisburg another tavern - the Washington House, built by Jacob Winger in 1830. Sold to S. Zehring, it later was acquired by F. Gwinner and a theatre now is on the site.

### **Chapter 10**

Besides the Miami House, Gebhart House, Washington House and the old Baum House, already mentioned in foregoing chapters of this account, old Miamisburg taverns and hotels included the "Valley House", built by Nelson Clark, the gunsmith, in 1856; and the "Bauer House", built by Charles Bauer.

Clark sold the "Valley House" to F. Jacobus in 1860, who in 1868 retired and leased the inn to D. Young and later to F. Schwartztrauber. Bauer put up the more modern "Bauer House" in the winter of 1877-1878, during the tobacco boom.

The largest store in Miamisburg more than 100 years ago was Hoff & Dechert, on the corner of Main St. and Bridge St. (now Linden Ave.) in 1839. There, the partners, William Huff and Samuel Dechert, sold both dry goods and groceries.

The firm dissolved in 1847 following which each partner did business on opposite corners and became highly competitive. Dechert kept the old stand but Hoff moved his store to a new business block he built in 1858 at the corner of Main St. and Market St. That year Hoff took his son, G.S. Hoff, into the business and died in 1876. Dechert became postmaster but later moved to Springfield, Ohio.

Fisher N. McCraight, after clerking for three years for Beachler & Wertz, worked in Hoff's Main St. and Market St. store for two years then got into business for himself. In 1873 McCraight married Amanda Shupert, daughter of George and Mary Shupert. Shupert was a grain dealer and had become somewhat of a capitalist in Miami Township. In 1874 McCraight went into business with Peter M. Gebhart and in 1875 Shupert bought Gebhart out. In 1879 McCraight was the sole owner of the business.

#### *20) J.C. Donahue's 5 and 10 cent Store*

Emanuel Shultz was a shoemaker when he came to Miamisburg in 1838 and made and sold boots and shoes for eight years after coming. Then he got into the produce business and July 23, 1840, married Sarah Beck, of Miamisburg. Their daughters were: Mary A. (Mrs. William H. Manning); Amanda M. (Mrs. A. T. Whittich); and Sarah Oletta (Mrs. H.C. Shuberth). Shultz in 1855 helped organize the private bank "H. Groby & Co." and was the principal projector of the Miami Valley Paper Co. with William H. Manning in 1871. He was a member of the legislature in 1875 and in 1880 represented the fourth district of Ohio in Congress.

#### *21) First National Bank*

Another Miamisburg store of more than a century ago was H. Heckerman, boots and shoes, on Main St., in 1844. One of his clerks, David Wolf, left Heckerman and went into the boot and shoe business himself in 1852 on South Main St.

Prices current in Miamisburg stores in 1822 were: flour, \$2.50 a barrel; whiskey, 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents a gallon; wheat, 20 cents a bushel; rye, 25 cents a bushel; corn, 12 cents a bushel; fresh beef, one to three cents a pound; bacon hams, two to three cents a pound; chickens, 50 to 75 cents a dozen; butter, five to eight cents a pound; and eggs, three to five cents a dozen.

Other items were accordingly cheap. The bacon price, it is noted, was on "bacon hams" - not sliced bacon.

Apparently, something went haywire with Miamisburg business in 1822 which could not be blamed on a slump following the War of 1812. The year 1818, when Miamisburg first was laid out, was in the interim and prices were higher that year.

Prices current in Miamisburg in 1818 were: beef, 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents a pound; pork, same price; veal, 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents a pound; mutton, 5 cents a pound; hams, 9 cents a pound; fresh venison, two cents a pound, with no takers; butter, 18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents a pound; cheese, 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents a pound; wheat flour, \$3 cwt.; corn meal, 50 cents a bushel; salt, 50 cents a bushel; potatoes, 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents a bushel; coal, 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents a

bushel; venison hams, 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cents apiece; turkeys and geese, 39 cents a pair; pullets, \$1 a dozen; partridges, 25 cents a dozen; eggs, 9 cents a dozen; milk, 25 cents a gallon; honey, \$1 a gallon; whiskey, 50 cents a gallon; sugar, tea and coffee, higher than in England; woolen, cotton and European goods, high; fresh berries and fruits, low; river fish plentiful and cheap; common flour, barrel of 195 pounds, \$3.50 to \$4; all other items in accordance.

Though in 1804 Hole's Station was only five years old and had few log cabin stores and the few business places, little stock of the kinds, commodity prices in 1804 as of Dayton and Cincinnati that year are given for comparison. They were effective in the Miamisburg area and are the earliest to be obtained.

Prices current in 1804 were: bacon, cwt., \$18.75; beeswax, lb., 18c; coffee, lb., 50c; cordage, cwt., \$12; cotton, clean, \$15; corn, bushel, 75c; cotton bagging, yd., 50c; flour, bbl., \$10; gunpowder "K", lb., 75c; gin, gal., \$1.75; iron, cwt., \$10; lime, bu., 75c; pork, bbl., \$14; sweet potatoes, bushel, 50c; rum, fourth proof, gal., \$2; sugar, cwt., \$16; salt, bbl., \$7.50; whiskey, gal., \$1.50; Maderia, gal., \$4.50; amalga, gal., \$2.50; red port, gal., \$2.50; teneriffe, gal., \$2.50; sherry, gal., \$3; claret (for gentlemen), gal., \$8. Beef, butter candies, candles (moulded and dipped), corn meal, hemp, cider, lard, Irish potatoes and first, second and third proof rum; and tobacco - all were scarce with none on the market.

## **Chapter 11**

Strangely enough, Miamisburg's first financial institution was not a bank at all but a "literary" society, which got into the financial end of the game by lending money to its members - something like the credit unions of individual industries today or the present building and loan associations. It was "The Washington Social Library," organized in 1839. Dr. John Treon was president; Ed L. Jones, vice-president; and Treon, Jones, William Ruff, William L. Smith, and C. F. Huber, all of Miamisburg; and Christian Taylor, Germantown, and John Mooney, Franklin, comprised the board of directors. The institution closed in January, 1841 - staying in business two years. The Washington Social Library was the granddaddy of today's building and loan associations.

### *22) Mutual Building and Loan Co.*

Jacob Hetzel, president of the Mutual Building and Loan Company in the early 1890's, was one of David Hetzel's two sons. The other was Jeremiah. Jacob's grandfather, Peter Hetzel, a carpenter, who shortly after his arrival at Miamisburg in 1812, began making furniture for its homes and fanning mills for wheat cleaning and hand looms for local weaving, for whoever he could sell them to. He died in 1863.

David Hetzel learned his trade under Peter and later invented a sausage cutter which he made and sold widely. Then he invented a velocipede for cripples, which operated something like a wheelchair. It also had a wide early sale.

David Hetzel married Margaret Neible, daughter of Jacob and Christina (Early) Neible, April 27, 1833. Of their daughters, Catherine became Mrs. Jacob Wagoner; Christina, Mrs. Bryan Fornshell; Louisa, Mrs. Samuel Hager; and Sarah, Mrs. George W. Hubler.

When David Hetzel retired in 1870, his son, Jacob, and son-in-law, Samuel Hager, continued operation of the sawmill and the sausage machine business.

Another early industry was Cassidy & Strong's cotton mill, which in 1830 operated on the east side of the canal near Madison Brothers' flour mill - pretty close to the Peerless Oil Company station of today. A frame building, the cotton mill burned down in 1852. The same year, Cassidy & Stewart built an oil mill on the site of the fire. This time the building was brick. When Michael Cassidy died in 1874, it was operated as a flour mill until 1880, when it was bought by Weiser & Shupert and used as their grain warehouse. Shupert was father-in-law of Fisher McCraight, an early Miamisburg grocer.

### *23) Gebhart & Schmidt, Funeral Directors and Home Furnishers*

Barely a year after the opening of the Miami & Erie Canal, Miami Township was organized - December 9, 1829. The first township election was held April 5, 1830, in Charles Connolly's

tavern, northeast corner of Main St. and Ferry St. The old tavern was moved off in 1862 and the residence of Emanuel Shultz was built on its site. Elected judges that day were John Neibel, Adam Harvey and Philip Keller. John Conley and M.S. Blossom were the clerks.

Benjamin Sayre, Fletcher Emly and Neibel were elected the first trustees; Thomas Norton, clerk; Charles Connolly, treasurer; and Andrew Treon, constable.

There was a race for the job of justice of the peace, the election of such a magistrate not being held until April 21, 1830, when William Goreign received 155 votes against John Burk's 64 votes of the total cast of 219 ballots.

In October, the same year, Miami Township showed an increase of 12 in its poll book of qualified electors. At the election of a governor, October 12, 1830, the township cast 231 votes - 143 for Robert Lucas and 88 for Duncan McArthur.

The new township officials designated Miamisburg as school district No. 8, and that year, 1830, a survey showed the town had 104 householders. In 1832 the district was divided into two parts, Market St. and the Centerville Road being the dividing line. The first township school was held in the old Gebhart church.

Perry Pease, John Reeser, John Garrett, John Betson, Jacob Bonnel, Thomas Dodds, William L. Smith, John Penrod, Henry Gebhart, Jacob Root and John Dodds were the first township supervisors - a rather numerous board.

In 1833 the township officers were: John Neibel, Henry Gebhart and James Morton, trustees; John Conley, clerk; Peter Gebhart, treasurer; Isaac Hoover, constable; J. W. Kothe, Louis Hasselman, overseers of the poor; and Gooding Holloway, George Kiser and Samuel D. Loree, fence viewers.

## **Chapter 12**

Miamisburg was incorporated as a village February 11, 1832. No election of town officials was held until May 7, that year. The first election was held in Jacob Wenger's inn, the old Washington House, where a theatre now stands. The clerk was J.A. Hartman and 88 votes were cast.

Gooding Holloway received all the votes but two and was elected first mayor of Miamisburg. Tradition has it that there were two other candidates, each voting for himself.

Philip Keller was elected first Recorder; James Fisk, James Morton, C. Beck, John Burk and William Sanger, councilmen. John Conley was elected treasurer and John D. Mullison, marshal.

May 21 the first ordinance was passed—establishing the village limits as those fixed by the town plat of 1818, half a mile from the river east and west and a mile north and south. The city appears pretty well the same way today.

Sidewalks on Main St. were provided for in an ordinance passed on August 6, 1832, and in 1836 an ordinance providing for grading the streets became a law. In 1837 a resolution regulating gambling was passed and in 1840 another ordinance regulating burying grounds, became a law. Another ordinance regulating gambling and prohibiting the sale of liquors without a license was in 1843.

The first fire engine and the first hook and ladder wagon were bought by the village in 1843 and the same year, volunteer fire-fighting companies were formed. By 1851 the town had grown large enough to need a new market house and town hall and they were built, together in one building that year. The old combination building still does excellent service, standing in the "public square" - the back end, after nearly 100 years, still dedicated to the sale of meats.

In a single generation it had seen the transformation of a five-family group of log cabins to a town which by wilderness standards of the day was one of the most modern and progressive in the state. A second bridge, joining the north ends of the town, was built in 1859 by popular subscriptions and county help. No tolls were charged. Not long after its completion the county purchased the old bridge and abolished the tolls on that.

With no tolls on bridges and better roads into town, Miamisburg became an important marketing center. Farmers raised more crops, bought better farm machinery and abandoned the old, antiquated implements so long used. Wagon after wagon poured across the bridges, loaded with grain, feed, and other products of the farms.

#### *24) Raisch Supply Co.*

In 1830 a brass foundry opened near the canal lock, operated by B. Altic. After a few years it moved to Dayton. The C.F. Ellis woolen factory also at the lock about the same time, shortly afterwards moved to Terre Haute, Ind.

A cutlery factory was started in Miamisburg in 1830 by Harris, Platte, Dechert and Huff (Hoff?). It closed in 1848.

With power provided by a one-horse treadwheel, Allen, Watson and Allen began manufacturing grain separators in 1835 at the north-west corner of Bridge St. and Canal St. In 1841 D.H. Hoover replaced the Allens and the firm became Watson & Hoover. Watson retired in 1855 and in 1859 the firm became D.H. Hoover & Sons. It moved to the east side of the canal in 1848, buying the shop of N.T. Beal. The firm became Hoover & Co., in 1866 when C.R. Allen bought an interest. D.H. Hoover died in 1870 and William Gamble took his place. When Allen died in 1878 Gamble became sole owner.

In 1878 Miamisburg had 12 mercantile stores; one woolen and one cotton factory; one gristmill; one iron foundry; three churches and a high school. The churches were: Dutch Reformed, Lutheran and Methodist. The population that year was 1,055, a gain of 221 since 1840, when the town had only 834 residents.

In 1849 the D. Bookwalter shop was making buggies and carriages on a limited scale at the north side of Main St. and Water St. In 1866 the plant partly burned. Bookwalter also began to make wheels, spokes, hubs and other carriage parts in 1864 and in 1871 moved the factory to Canal St. The concern then was incorporated under the name, "Bookwalter Bros. & Co," the brother being B.F. Bookwalter, and the company, H.C. Hunt, A.A. Hunt and Samuel Mitchell. A.A. Hunt died in 1880, when the plant was employing about 50 men.

In 1825 a weekly line of main stages ran through Miamisburg, between Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati. Twenty years hereafter there were three daily stage lines running through the town and the trip to Cincinnati took only one afternoon. In 1825 two days had been required to make the trip from Dayton to Cincinnati. The stage depot on both occasions was at Jacob Zimmer's Miami Hotel. Zimmer also became the first station agent for the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton railroad after that line was completed in 1851.

Jacob Zimmer, innkeeper at the Miami House in the 1820's, was one of Miamisburg's pioneer tobacco men. In 1848 he had a vineyard and Miamisburg apparently was a promising wine center. However, grape culture of the Lake Erie islands provided too much competition and the wine business in Miamisburg allied away.

In the 1860's Zimmer was a tobacco buyer and much of the town's enviable reputation for producing excellent seed leaf tobacco was due to Zimmer. It was through his efforts that the much-used Zimmer-Spanish tobacco was developed. Tobacco was raised in the country around Miamisburg since 1841 and in the early-1900's there were 10 tobacco warehouses in town. Zimmer, first of his name in Miamisburg, first married May E. Klenck. A year after her death in 1875 he was married to Mary T. Trunch.

#### *25) John E. Lauver Feed Store,*

Another old Miamisburg tobacco buyer was Henry C. Shuberth. Shuberth, 75 years ago, represented a New York concern and in the era when he and Zimmer were buying, Miamisburg shipped out several million pounds of tobacco Samuel B. Umbenhauer back in 1868.

### **Chapter 13**

Curious ever since the first few cabins were built at Hole's Station, about what was inside great sugar-loaf mound, about a mile southeast of Miamisburg, the villagers found out in July, 1869, when they sunk a six-foot shaft 66 feet from the top to two feet below the mound's natural surface as surveyed. It was a civic enterprise, took a lot of digging, cost a lot of money and brought out a lot of dirt.

Among other things, they found a skeleton, large, old and pretty dead. Actually the bones had been there so long that they began to crumble when the excavators began to pick them up preparatory to bringing the relic to the surface, so the skeleton was left where it was found, in a sitting posture with its face due east, eight feet below the top of the mound.

Inside the mound a cover of clay several feet thick was found and beneath it a layer of ashes.

Deposits of vegetable matter, THIRTEEN bones of small animals, wood and stone were around it. burg was

At 24 feet the diggers found a Cincinnati triangular stone, perpendicularly, about eight inches in the earth with the point Xenia, • upward. Around it, set at an angle of about 45 degrees and overlapping each other like shingles, were rough stone about a foot in diameter and of uniform size. They were like those quarried in the hills of the neighborhood.

The mound is believed to have been about 80 feet tall originally and to have had about 20 feet cut off its top during earlier explorations.

During one of the former attempts to excavate it, more than 100 years ago, workers sunk a shaft from the top to a depth of about 11 feet and became afraid to dig deeper because the earth at that point sounded hollow. They believed that two vaults were in it, one at the bottom and one near the top of the mound. In the 11 feet dug up, the workmen found a number of human bones.

The mound, at the time of the 1869 exploration, measured 800 feet around its base and was 67 feet high. Its north and east sides were steepest.

In the old Hole's Station days the mound was covered thickly by forest and a tall maple grew from the apex. By climbing the sugar tree, the town of Dayton could be seen plainly, old accounts relate. In the 1840's the mound was an orchard of more than 40 apple trees and many peach and other fruit trees. Some forest timber still remained. The view from the summit of the mound, tradition has it, was beautiful and "at one's feet lay the village of Miamisburg, while the fertile valley of the river is seen stretching away for miles." That was the description more than a century ago.

#### 26) *Philhower Druggs*

Before the advent of weekly mail stages between Dayton and Cincinnati in 1825, Miamisburg residents got their mail once a week and usually late. Mail was delivered by a post-boy on horseback, who carried the letters in saddlebags.

The post route was a wide circle, starting in Cincinnati, including Lebanon, Piqua, Dayton, then through Miamisburg, Franklin, Hamilton, back to Cincinnati.

Before 1804 residents of Hole's Station had to go to Cincinnati for their mail or wait for the post-boy. In 1804 Benjamin Van Cleve opened a post office in his cabin on the southeast corner of First and St. Clair St. in Dayton. Miamisburg then got its mail there. The first post route out of Cincinnati delivered mail once every two weeks. But after the Dayton post office was established, mail was delivered once a week.

Adam Shuey was the first Miamisburg post-master, serving for 11 years. After Shuey, others in succession were: Philip Keller, eight years; William Brooks, four years; George Perry, four years; Mrs. Philip Keller, two years; D. Winebrenner, two years; John Kiser, four years; Samuel Dechart, five years; J. Vogel, three years; and Henry Boltin, 12 years.

The coming of the three stage lines brought Miamisburg daily mails and still more time was clipped off the time of mail travel with the advent of the railroads.

The D. and B.F. Bookwalter and J. Kauffman buggy and carriage factory was organized in 1869 on North Main St. and Water St. It was sold to Kauffman & Sons in 1879 and employed 15 hands in 1882. Another buggy manufacturer in 1875 was Theodore Sinninton, whose shop was on East Market St. He employed five hands, according to the state industrial report of 1882.

#### 27) *C. J. Stueve, Inc., Ford Agency*

In 1873 the Miamisburg Flax Mill moved from the west side to the east side of the river. Shortly after moving, however, the owner, X. Glasser, died. The mill never operated thereafter.

The Hunter Cutlery Works, built in 1877, quit business the following year. Its mill was sold to the Ohio Paper Co., who turned it into a pulp mill.

The Ohio Paper Co., built in 1879, was a corporation formed by Weiser, Lewis, Lyons, May, Lyons and Albrecht. Using hydraulic power, the factory made both book paper and newsprint. In 1887 seventy-five employees worked there.

The Shelby & Manning Paper Mill, built in 1871, employed 50 men in 1880, the state industrial report states. The mill made both book and newspaper. In 1879 the west end of the mill and the machinery in it burned but the factory was rebuilt and re-equipped and ran by hydraulic power. The fall was 20 feet from the canal to the river at the point where the mill was located. The concern was incorporated in 1882 by Shelby, Manning, Abel Hoover and William Gamble, of Miamisburg, and John T. Bell, of Franklin.

Such were some of the Miamisburg industries in the old days - nearly 75 years ago. There was one bank - H. Groby & Co.

## **Chapter 14**

It was a big day in Miamisburg, that August 20, 1851, when the first railroad train ever to enter town pulled in. The Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton railroad had been completed from Dayton to Miamisburg two days earlier - August 18, and though the track lacked 48 miles of getting into Cincinnati, the company ran its first excursion.

The train was four "platform cars," pulled by the wheezy engine that was used on the work train during the road's construction, but the flats were jammed to the sides with Daytonians anxious to take a ride on the first train to operate over the railroad.

The round trip fare between Miamisburg and Dayton, on that train, was 25 cents and though the name of the engineer is not a matter of record, the identity of the conductor has not been lost during the ninety-eight fleeting years - he was J. Carey. Nobody remembers what the "J" stood for. All of Miamisburg's 1,500 residents were down along the right-of-way to welcome that train into town and there was quite a celebration - speech-making, firecrackers and shouting. The firecrackers had been brought in by stagecoach from Reading. They were making them that early over there, but the factory blew up a few years later.

Dinner was served during several hours at Zinner's hotel - the tavern could not take care of all the diners at one sitting. As many persons from Miamisburg as could crawl onto the cars went back to Dayton on the train that night, so they, too, could brag of having ridden on the first train to enter the town. Room for them was provided by those who got off and remained at home. A lot of citizens from Miamisburg had gone to Dayton by stagecoach in order to come back home on that excursion. The persons who replaced them returned by stage - there were no regular trips being made on the railroad as yet.

Construction work on the tracks had begun both at Dayton and Cincinnati and somewhere between, the ends were to meet.

By Saturday after the Miamisburg excursion the track was finished as far as Carlisle, in the corner of Franklin township. Another excursion was run there that day, with an extra platform car and a brass band, which the excursionists took along. Many Miamisburg people got on when the train halted at Miamisburg and rode to Carlisle.

Returning that evening, the train stopped at Miamisburg for supper - at Zinner's tavern.

September 13, 1851, the road was finished between Dayton and Cincinnati and by September 22 regular trains were running between the two terminals-60 miles. Miamisburg had its first railroad - now the Baltimore & Ohio. The engines were wood burners.

### *28) Roy's Friendly Service*

The second railroad through Miamisburg came July 1, 1872, when the old "Bee Line" ran its first train between Cincinnati and Dayton. The road was organized September 9, 1870, as an extension of the C. C. & L. between Dayton and Cincinnati,

The Miamisburg extension ran only 48 miles, from Dayton to Ludlow's Grove, now St. Bernard, a suburb of Cincinnati. Built by the Cincinnati & Springfield Railroad Co., it was leased to the C. C.

& I. forever on completion, the lessor operating the road and paying any balance remaining after operating expenses and interest on the bonds, to the lessee.

The Cincinnati & Springfield Railroad completed its 138-mile original line from Cincinnati to Springfield then to Dayton February 22, 1851, but bypassed Miamisburg. The original road was leased to the Dayton Short Line. The "Bee Line" directly between Dayton and Cincinnati rectified the error of building a roundabout line in the face of competition.

Later becoming a part of the C. C. C. & St. L. and Big Four, the line now is a part of the New York Central System.

#### 29) *Drayer Motor Sales*

Between the coming of the two railroads the subsequent Civil War began to cast its shadows over Miamisburg. Formation of a militia, later to become the Miamisburg Co. A, 12th Regiment, Ohio National Guard, was begun. The militia of that day and the Ohio National Guard, as defined and organized at the beginning of the war, were different units.

There was little choice about joining the militia. All "free, able-bodied white men between 18 and 45" were included in the militia. Each man

had to provide himself with "a good musket, fusee or rifle; bayonet, belt, knapsack; two spare flints; a pouch for 24 cartridges or a powder horn; and a quarter-pound of powder and 24 balls." Officers wore a sword.

Montgomery county was included in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 1st Division. A brigade consisted of two regiments; each regiment, of two battalions; and each battalion of four to eight companies. There were from 40 to 80 men in a company.

The result was that everybody between the age limits, male and physically fit, got into the Miamisburg militia before the outbreak of the Civil War - that is, all but the preachers, judges of courts, jail-keepers, customs and police officers, stage drivers and ferrymen, and the post-boys on the mail routes. Those were the only exemptions, married or single.

Later - in 1861, the Ohio National Guard was formed and many Miamisburg men switched to Co. A and other units. The militia still was a different organization. Members of the National Guard fared better. The state furnished the guns and ammunition, but the men had to furnish their own uniforms. Each man had to pay \$7.21 for his "breeches and fatigue cap." Their dress uniforms, which included "a trimmed hat," cost \$12.72. Companies drilled on local campgrounds donated by the Miamisburg merchants, who also furnished the "fuel oil and some supplies". The state of Ohio had sold them on the idea that "such a great number of men camped in their community was good for trade."

## **Chapter 15**

Sometimes, like a ray of sunshine through an overcast sky, a bit of warmth breaks through that convinces us that after all, there is a lot of good left in the human heart. That is the way the Catholics of Miamisburg got their first church. And they named it "St. Michael's" for good and sufficient reasons.

There was barely a handful of Catholics in Miamisburg a century ago - none at all up to 1834, when Michael Meyers and his family settled there. Then in 1840 the Swisler family came; and four years later, Nicholas Meyers, Michael's brother. In 1845 the George Shoup family moved to town and in 1847 George Beck-er, Peter Hart and John Kuhn, with their families. Richard Wilhelm and Andrew Eaglebrand brought their families in 1848. A few others followed. Thus began Miamisburg's Catholic population.

During 1851 mass was being celebrated in the Hart and Swisler homes by Rev. Henry Damien Juencker, of Dayton. After that irregular services were held in other homes of the little flock. Then, in 1852 the ray of sunshine broke through. Big, genial, Irish Michael Cassilly, Cincinnati grocer, found out the Catholics at Miamisburg had no church building and though he knew nobody there, decided to give them one. That was Mike Cassilly, of the old days, whose corner in the Cincinnati bottoms-was known as "Cassilly's Row" in the stagecoach and canal boat times.

Cassilly bought a two-story brick house and large lot between Main St. and Old Main St for use of the Miamisburg Catholics as a church. Michael Meyers fitted it up for a church and pastor's residence at his own expense. The chapel was on the second floor and the first mass was celebrated March 1, 1852—in "St. Michael's Church".

A new church, brick, with stone trim and stained glass windows, 36 by 75 feet, was built and dedicated in 1881. Though the church was unfinished and as yet had no furnace, it so far had cost \$4,500 and services in it were begun. It was named "Immaculate Conception".

The Catholics throughout Miami Township mostly were steady, hard-working farmers, adding much to the agricultural importance of the community. With those farmers around the pioneer Gebhart and Stettler churches on either side of town, much produce and farm products were sent to the Miamisburg market and much trade came to the business part of the town.

### *30) The Valley Farm Equipment*

The Miamisburg Methodist Episcopal church was organized in 1834. The first pastors were Rev. J. P. Durbin and Rev. A. Brown. With a church building costing \$8,000, the congregation comprised about 230 members in the 1880 to 1890 decade.

The first cemeteries in Miami Township were the Gebhart Church burying-ground, east of Miamisburg, and the Stettler graveyard, southwest of town, both dating back to 1805. There many of the first settlers were buried.

The old Miamisburg cemetery, opened in 1815 on Jacob Kercher's land, was on the site of the present Miamisburg fire department and police station of today. Though there were older graves there, the oldest headstone was dated 1820. The name was illegible through erosion.

The Reformed church of Miamisburg, organized in 1820 with a dozen members, and the Evangelical Lutheran church, organized in 1821 by Rev. John C. Dill, held services "Sunday about" in the little frame schoolhouse next to the old graveyard until the building had to be moved off the canal bed onto South Locust St., near the S. Luventhal & Co. tobacco warehouse.

The Reformed church had no regular preacher for four years. Its first trustees were: Jacob Baum, Emmanuel Gebhart, Frederick Gruendner. In 1830 a brick church, 39 by 46 feet, with a gallery, belfry and bell, was begun but was not finished until 1833 because the money ran out. It cost \$3,200 and was dedicated May 12, 1833, and used jointly with the Lutherans until November, 1862.

Because the Reformed church was building a new brick church on a lot bought from John Treon for \$300 in 1861, it sold its interest in the first brick church to the Lutherans for \$600, continuing to use it with them until February, 1863, when the new \$5,000 church was done. By the time it was finished the \$5,000 building had cost \$11,000. Rev. I. N. Reiter preached the first sermon on July 11, 1863 - in the basement. (first floor)

A Sunday school was organized February 1, 1863, and in 1876 the church was frescoed and painted. It usually had between 300 and 400 members.

The Evangelical Lutheran church had no preacher until Rev. C.H.D. Heineke was assigned to it in 1826. Heineke preached there 33 years - until 1859. The church had but three pastors during 54 consecutive years.

On its separation from joint use with the Reformed church, of the old brick building in 1863, the Lutherans in 1864 completed a new brick building 50 by 80 feet, with the building in "good style, beautifully frescoed and supplied with a fine organ." It cost \$20,000. There were between 350 and 400 members most of the time.

There was a small United Brethren church at the corner of Main St. and Lock St in the 1880s. It was opposite the Catholic church. Its congregation was small and during that decade it had no pastor.

### *31) Mary Ann Shop*

In 1887 Miamisburg had one each of the United Brethren, Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist and Catholic churches. The newspapers were The Bulletin, published and edited by the Blossom Brothers, and The News, published by George E. Kinder.

Louis H. Zehring was mayor; A. C. Schell, clerk; George T. Mays, treasurer; William Dalton, marshal; and H. Ross, St. commissioner. Population was 1,396 and there were 925 scholars attending school. Thomas A. Pollick was the school superintendent.

Factories that year were: Miamisburg Binder Twine & Cordage Co., with 205 hands; Bookwalter Bros. & Co., carriage wheels, 46 hands; Hoover & Gamble, agricultural implements, 165 hands; H. Grobe, builders' woodwork, eight hands; Miami Valley Paper Co., 42 hands; Ohio Paper Co., 54 hands; A. Kuehn, lager beer, four hands; Kauffman Buggy Co., 63 hands. Capital invested was \$700,300.00 and value of annual products, \$1,544,500.00.

## **Chapter 16**

Miamisburg's record in all wars is an admirable one. Many first settlers were veterans of the Revolution and already have been enumerated. Some of them, with their sons, were in the War of 1812.

The Miami Township record, like those of all Ohio, in the Mexican War, is obscure. Muster rolls were incomplete, few were retained in the Adjutant's office at Washington, and many were captured and destroyed. Of all Ohio only 5,536 men were in the War with Mexico and of them only 57 were killed, missing or wounded.

The Civil War was a different story. The township and town furnished soldiers to many units made up in other parts of the county and state. Of the units composed mostly of men around the Miamisburg district, Companies D and E, 1st O.V.I.; the 1st and 12th battalions of the Ohio National Guard; Companies B and E of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Infantry; the 131st Regiment, O.V.I.; the 35th O.V.I.; and the 69th O.V.I. were the most prominent and sustained great losses. The record of Companies D and E, 1st Ohio Volunteer Infantry - the old militia companies - already had been mentioned.

The old militia companies, many of the men re-enlistments, fought in the battles of Shiloh, Stone River, Liberty Gap, Orchard Knob, Chicamauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Buzzard's Roost, Resaca, Adairville, Burnt Hickory, Kenesaw Mountain and Chattahoochie River. The regiment started with 1,000 men and returned October, 1864, having lost 527 officers and men killed and wounded. At Shiloh it lost 60 killed and wounded; at Dog Walk 10; at Buzzard's Roost 9; at Resaca 20; Burnt Hickory 86; and Missionary Ridge 120. At Orchard Knob five color bearers were shot down and five officers and 78 men killed or wounded. The fate of other organizations containing Miami township men was as tragic and as glorious.

Some of the "missing and unknown" who still molder under white crosses in southern National cemeteries were: Private Leverette Aldrich, 25; Private Samuel M. Beasley, 19; Private Eli Bennett, 20; Private Charles Crawford, 18; Private Lawrence B. Dubber, 19; Corporal Horace W. Farwell, 24; Private Enoch F. Jones, 18; Private Lewis W. Peck, 24; Private Eugene Roberts, 19; Private Charles J. Scobie, 18; Private George W. Saler, 18; Private Frederick Bean, 19; Corporal Christopher Todd, 34; Private John A. Wilkerson, 28; and Private Benjamin Young, 21. All were from the 1st Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

From Co. E, 1st O.V.I., were: Corporal Charles Dunkle, 23; Private Alexander Fair, 39; Private James L. Hauser, 18; Private James D. Miller, 18; and Private William T. Heiffler, 45.

From Companies B and E, 11th O.V.I., were Captain George S. Topley, 41; Privates Isaac Avery, 49, William H. Harrison 24, Benjamin F. Hostetter 25, Frederick Locke 25, Patrick Murphy 18, William Hogle 33, James Roach 21, and Valentine Shultz 24. Shultz was killed March 25, 1863, at Missionary Ridge.

Others from Co. E were: Lieutenant George E. Peck, 22, and Sergeant John H. Peck, 22, twins. Corporal L. G. Murphy, 17; and Privates Henry William Bogle, 18; Henry G. Day, 28; Charles M. Gensch, 33; Noah Sams, 36; Simson Shidler, 33; John Schmidt, 36; and Marion B. Wolf, 22. Those were from the old Miamisburg militia companies. One-sixth of the 11th regiment's men were lost at Buzzard's Roost in a single charge. It was mustered out June 21, 1864.

So went the flower of Miami township, leaving no grave in the home cemetery to decorate with little American flags and roses on Decoration Day. It was near the end of the war and their ages speak plainly of the depletion of Federal ranks. Only a few out of many lost - their names would more than fill the newspaper.

The Spanish-American and both World Wars remain in the memory of persons still living and are chronicled in files of old issues of The Miamisburg News; rosters in the adjutant's office and the honor rolls within the new American Legion building.

### *32) McKnight & Schmitz*

For the benefit of posterity, some of whom might seek data for another chronicle during a centennial a hundred years hence, the log-cabin town of Hole's Station has grown into a city of nearly 7,000 - Miamisburg. The Miamisburg News still enjoys the confidence of the community, and its circulation grows a bit week by week.

Officials of the city in 1949 are: Walter I. Staley, mayor; R. M. Hetzel, auditor; Harold Bussard, treasurer; Joseph E. Pollock, safety-service director; and Paul M. Zimmerman, president of council. The councilmen are: Oscar Beachler, Clifford Gebhart, Henry M. Vogler, Louis Dudley, Philip S. Cade, Alfred Koehler and Robert J. Schreiber.

New buildings have replaced many of the old in historic Miamisburg, among them the palatial American Legion Memorial, dedicated early in 1949. Plans are underway and their success well assured for a new Civic Center, probably to be constructed from city-owned material from buildings bought from the Mound Laboratories AEC installation.

Here and there among the new, historic landmarks still stand, most of them lending their floor space to modern usage.

In the old post office room, where Miamisburg swains once peeked through the glass into other people's boxes and the village lassies looked for the peculiar slant of the stam, which meant something or other in the old flirtatious days, their grandchildren now buy shoes for themselves and their babies.

### *33) Urschel's Shoe Store*

So merges the Miamisburg of today with the Miamisburg of other years. It is the community's sesqui-centennial and an auspicious year. Soon after Christmas the 150 candles on the town's big birthday cake will blink out and there begins another century during which Miamisburg will grow—maybe bigger than Dayton. The old ghosts whisper that once on a time it was. Back when Ohio became a state Miamisburg was bigger - Dayton had five families.