

Footprints

Volume 35, Issue 2

Delhi Historical Society

468 Anderson Ferry Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45238

Phone: 513.451.4313
FAX: 513.451.4300
E-mail: delhi.history@fuse.net
Delhihistoricalsociety.org

Preserving our Past for the Future

Nonprofit organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cincinnati Ohio
Permit No. 3173

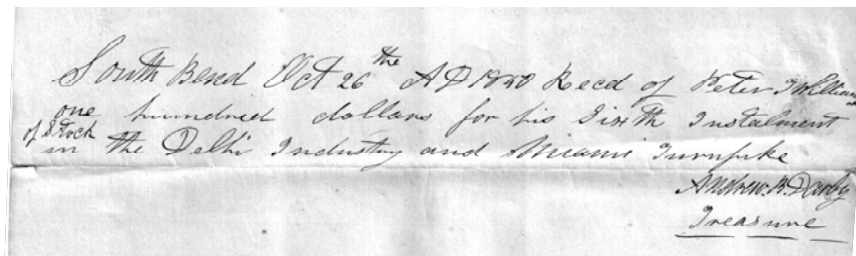
Return Service Requested

Farmhouse News

Rare Documents Discovered

In early March, Delhi resident Harry Keilholz brought a shoebox filled with old documents that belonged to his wife's family. To our amazement, there were original papers of Delhi pioneer Peter Williams. Williams was colleague of John Cleves Symmes, the original owner of 300,000 acres in Southwest Ohio, from the river up to above Dayton. Williams was probably an investor with Symmes when he purchased the land in 1788. The records include deeds and other legal documents from around 1800, as well as personal letters and materials from the Williams family.

Below is a receipt from Henry Darby for \$100 for stock in the "Delhi, Industry and Miami Turnpike" (now Delhi Pike). Williams put more than \$1000 toward the upgrading and upkeep of the road from 1840 to 1860.



We were able to copy all of the documents for our archives. This is a major acquisition of material for the Society and helps us to preserve Delhi's history.

Window Campaign Update

We hope that everyone will stop by the Farmhouse to see the results of major upgrades to our facility.

First on the list was replacing our 120 year old windows, which were in very bad condition. But those were put on the back burner temporarily when it was discovered that rotted box gutters had resulted in major damage to the south side of the Farmhouse and that the knob and tube wiring in our basement was greatly outdated. So the \$20,000 grant from the Skyler Foundation that had been set aside for windows was instead used to fix the roof and gutters, and upgrade our electric. That work was completed in March.

We went ahead and replaced the windows, confident that our members and friends would help defray the cost. The new windows were installed in mid-April. We have a very good start toward our goal of \$10,000 toward window replacement, with donations of \$2,000 already in. We hope that all of you will consider a donation — any amount — to help with this major expense.



Upcoming Dates

- **May 4 - Flower Sale begins, 12-3 p.m. daily**
- **May 9 - Museum Day on the Square 10 am to 2 pm**
- **May 14 - Cincinnati Amusement Parks with William Frank, 7 p.m. Delhi Park Lodge.**
- **May 27 - Memorial Day Ceremony, 1 p.m. Veteran's Memorial Wall, 934 Neeb Road (shuttle from Delhi Senior Center).**
- **June 14 - History of Green Township with Joe Flickinger, 7 p.m. Delhi Park Lodge.**

Coming Soon!

News about Summer and Fall events, including a bus tour to historic Madison, Ind.

The Delhi Historical Society Farmhouse Museum

Hours are:

noon-3 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday.

Suggested donation is \$1.

DELHI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring 2012

Volume 35, Issue 2

Footprints

Flower Sale begins May 4

Good Selection of Annual Plants for Your Garden

Delhi Historical Society annual flower sale in our historic greenhouse begins Friday, May 4. Tell your friends about this sale - from 12-3 pm daily until flowers are gone - shop early to get the best selection. Flowers are potted. Greenhouse is at Delhi Historical Society Farmhouse Museum - 468 Anderson Ferry Road in Delhi.



Upcoming Programs:

May 14: Cincinnati Amusement Parks with William Frank

The 'thrill' rides of today's amusement parks were not the Cincinnati amusement parks of yesteryear. Travel back in time to learn about the swimming beaches on the Ohio River and the trolley amusement parks. Enjoy a stroll through yesterday's Chester Park, Coney Island and LeSourdesville Lake. Then decide if today's King's Island will be the amusement park of the future. The program is at the Delhi Park Lodge beginning at 7 p.m.

June 12: History of Green Township

Join Joe Flickinger at 7 p.m., for a discussion about his book, "A Bicentennial History of Green Township". Joe will talk about the overall history of the township, what he found interesting through his research, and his experiences getting published. A handful of rough and tumble frontiersmen took a break from cutting their farms from the forest and answered the call from the constable to attend a meeting establishing a township. This township met the requirements of the Land Ordinance of 1785—a thirty-six square mile tract of land; the only one laid out this way in the Symmes Purchase. These men unknowingly were helping to set the stage for what would become one of the largest townships in Ohio. This book celebrates the history and heritage of Green Township, and its journey from isolated frontier wilderness to being one of the largest townships in the state of Ohio.



Postcard showing the boardwalk at Chester Park

Museum Day on the Square May 9

Stop by Fountain Square on Wednesday, May 9, from 10 am to 2 pm, as the region celebrates Museum Day. The Delhi Historical Society will have a booth set up along with more than 20 other historic sites. You will be able to look at old maps, and genealogy files, sun-gaze with the Cincinnati Observatory, and participate in a junior ranger activity with the William Howard Taft Site. Hope to see you there!

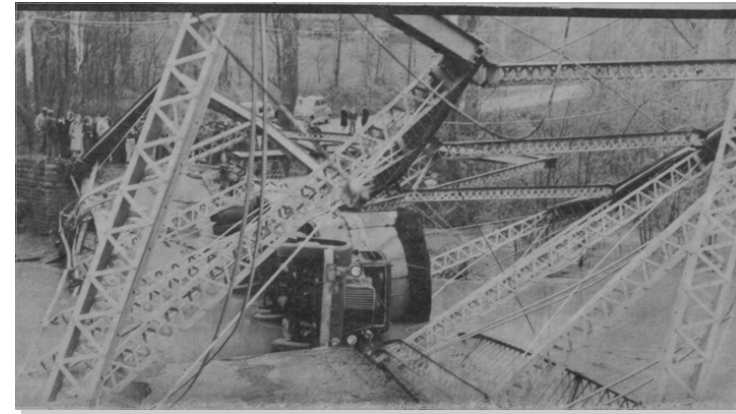
From the Archives

The Bridges of Delhi Township: Creek Crossing through the years

The Cleves Warsaw Bridge over the Muddy Creek is scheduled to be replaced this year. Built in 1923, this bridge is one of the most historically significant structures because it is one of only four Camelback through truss bridges remaining on Ohio's roadways. History has shown that progress often means the destruction of the familiar but in the end improvements benefit all. Member Matt Maley recently photographed the entire bridge structure so that the Delhi Historical Society can document its history. The following is a short history of Delhi's bridges.

Delhi is full of creeks and runs - most are dry or low except when spring and summer rains turn them into fast-flowing streams. When settlers first arrived, they forded the creeks on foot or horseback and avoided them during high water.

The bridging of Rapid Run and Muddy creeks began in earnest in the late 1800s when bridges began dotting the southern portions of the township, especially along River Road, which was then part of the township. Newspaper reports from 1893 tell of a flash flood taking out the railroad bridge over the Rapid Run (now near Bender and Hillside Avenue) causing 4 passenger cars to plunge into the water. Both Hillside Avenue and Cleves Warsaw had covered bridges over the Muddy Creek by 1900. According to the Sayler Park Historical Society, the picture below shows the Hillside Avenue covered bridge. That bridge was re-



placed by a steel structure in the early 1900s which gave way under the weight of a truck in 1948 (above). The Muddy Creek was in flood stage at the time, which likely caused the bridge to weaken. At the time, Hillside Avenue turned west meeting Cleves Warsaw more toward South Road. When the bridge was replaced with a concrete span in 1949, the road was straightened to its current location.



With the event of automobiles, Delhi considered how to span the Rapid Run and Wulff Run creeks. A number of small concrete bridges (similar to the one above on Rapid Run Road west of Neeb) were built along Rapid Run, Delhi, and Foley roads during the 1930s, many by WPA workers making 40 cents an hour. But no bridge was built on Wulff Run Road, which led to tragedy in April of 1964 when teenager Kathy Hahn tried to drive through the creek and was swept away to her death. It was a reminder to all of just how strong creek water can be during flash floods.



Cleves Warsaw Bridge

Cleves Warsaw is one of the oldest roads in Delhi Township – the portion between Hillside and Pontius being used as early as 1820. By 1850 it was a turnpike – bonds were sold to build a road made of wood planks, the bond paid off by tolls charged to use it. Because of this, it was commonly called Plank Road well into the 20th century.

Crossing the Muddy Creek was always an issue as the waterway could go from a dry bed to raging flash flood in a short period of time. Early maps (1835, 1845 and 1869) show a ford at the creek, which in a sudden storm, could result in people stranded on one side or the other until the waters receded.

The 1884 map indicates a bridge, probably the wooden covered bridge that preceded the current one. This bridge was set at a right angle, which resulted in sharp turns when approaching and exiting from either end. The stone foundations for this old bridge still sit on the creek bed. Two factors spelled the end of the old covered bridge – the invention of the automobile and the 1913 flood. Cars coming up to the narrow bridge could not see anything coming from the other direction because of the bridge angle and its solid wood sides. Often two vehicles would meet unexpectedly in the middle. The 1913 flood slightly altered the course of the creek so that the stone foundation was in peril. In 1916, Hamilton County began plans for a new bridge. The new bridge was to be a Camelback truss, a subtype of the Parker truss bridge with five sloping diagonal tension members of wrought iron or steel. The state of Ohio adopted the Camelback as standard design for through truss bridges. The Massillon Bridge and Structural Company designed the bridge, which was constructed by the Brackett Construction Company of Cincinnati. The bridge opened with great fanfare in 1923. In an oral history given in 1976, Ray Martini talked about he and friends walking a mile or so to the bridge just to watch cars drive over it and listen to the hum caused by the open grate deck. The bridge features a sidewalk for pedestrians. In 1970, the bridge received a complete overhaul with new curbs, drains, surfaces, and cleaning and painting. In 1984, some steel structural members were repaired or replaced, guardrails were upgraded, and both abutments were repaired.

Now it is time to say good-bye to the 90-year-old bridge. Make sure to take a drive to this rural part of the township to drive over the old structure before she is gone.



Membership Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State ___ zip _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Make checks payable to: Delhi Historical Society, 468 Anderson Ferry Road, Cincinnati, OH 45238

Membership Levels

Senior Citizen or Student (\$10) _____

Regular Annual (\$20) _____

Regular Family (\$35) _____

Sustaining Individual/Family (\$50) _____

Patron Individual/Family (\$100) _____

Business (\$100) _____

Benefactor (\$500) _____

Founder (\$1,000) _____