

Dedication

This historical document was written to commemorate:

- The pioneers who trudged with endless effort and unwavering spirit across these lands searching for a better life in an expanding America
- The settlers who toiled tirelessly to clear the land, till the fertile soil and build the homes and communities in which we live
- The runaway slaves who journeyed through this area in the dark of night, who left behind their family, friends and meager possessions and risked their lives in their incredible struggle for freedom
- The township residents, past and present, who have carefully preserved our heritage and safeguarded the bounty of Mother Earth for the benefit of the generations to follow

Introduction

Over the past ten years, I have conducted hundreds of interviews on the history of Israel Township which have resulted in thousands of wonderful stories. It has been extremely difficult to select the stories to share in this document and an even more arduous task to succinctly capture the essence and feeling of those stories. Some of the incidents dramatically touched the heart and, in some indescribable way, changed the lives of those sharing the stories.

One gentleman, when reflecting on the 1930s Depression, shared that most farm families had enough home-grown produce and livestock to live on, although they had little or no money. And then, after a long, awkward pause, he related there were some families that didn't have enough to eat. He said he didn't realize it then, but these families were more than hungry. They were undernourished and were both mentally and physically impacted for life. And then, there was another long pause as he undoubtedly reflected upon that time so long ago and probably wondered what he as a young child could have possibly done differently.

Another man shared that on Valentine's Day, the students in school were to exchange Valentines with all of the other students in their class. Most of the Valentines were large, colorful, fold-out cards, but the valentine he has never forgotten was a small, simple card. That two cent card was the only card one boy's parents could afford. That boy gave his one solitary card with great pride to the person I was interviewing. The man relating the story was, once again, deeply touched by that poignant moment that occurred eighty years ago. All of the other cards were quickly discarded and forgotten, but this one card, given from one friend to another, provided memories that have lasted a lifetime.

A woman related an incident that occurred when she was in the seventh grade. She was eating lunch in the school cafeteria near an obviously poor boy with his rumpled lunch bag and its meager contents. She noticed as one of her teachers passed the thin, young boy, that she discretely placed a sandwich near him and silently continued on. She has never forgotten this simple act of kindness. She selected a career in social work. Coincidence? Maybe, maybe not.

About the Author

I began my education in a one-room country school near Defiance, Ohio, and attended college at Bowling Green State University, General Motors Institute and graduated from the Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree and Masters Degree in Mechanical Engineering. I retired from the Procter and Gamble Company in 2004 after a 31 year career in engineering, construction management, manufacturing and international logistics. I have attempted in this document to emulate the writing styles of William Least Heat Moon in his book Blue Highways, Charles Kuralt in A Life on the Road and Robert James Waller in One Good Road is Enough.

Underground Railroad

Churches Role in the Anti-Slavery Movement

Any history of Israel Township must begin with the dominate role the early churches played in the development of the township. The 1881 History of Preble County states, "There is no other township in Preble County whose history of every day life is so thoroughly identified with that of the church. Her pioneers were her preachers and her early settlers were her church members. The majority of the pioneers of Israel emigrated from the south and principally from South Carolina ... because of their love for God and their abhorrence of evil." The evil they abhorred was that of slavery.

Much has been written about the history of the early churches but little has been written about their involvement in the anti-slavery movement. This document will focus on the churches' moral stand on slavery and their active leadership of the Underground Railroad (UGRR).

Members of the **Hopewell Church** and the **Fairhaven Church**, founded in 1806 and 1834 respectively, were steadfast abolitionists and a leading force in the UGRR movement. The United Presbyterian Church of North America states "many southerners who hated slavery moved north on account of this institution. For instance, in 1806 a colony of such persons moved from South Carolina to Preble County, Ohio, and organized the Hopewell Church. This was the mother church of those at Fairhaven, Morning Sun, College Corner and Oxford (Ohio). In 1826, this church sent up a memorial to Synod on the subject of slavery. This memorial was followed during the next dozen years by a number of resolutions condemning slavery."

The churches were utilized both to spread anti-slavery sentiment and to provide support for the black community. The "Fairhaven Community Church History" states, "In the 1842 minutes, the Trustees ... moved and seconded that lecturers on Temperance and Abolitionism be admitted to the use of the Meeting House." Congregational minutes in 1846 read as follows: "...the Trustees ... moved and seconded that seats No. 18 and 19 in the southwest corner of the meeting house be set apart for the colored people..."

Underground Railroad Routes

The UGRR was a loosely organized network that helped slaves in the southern states escape to Canada and freedom. The UGRR was neither a railroad nor underground, but railroad terminology was utilized to describe its elements. Those helping slaves escape were called conductors, and the locations where slaves were hidden were called stations.

The UGRR was cloaked in secrecy, first and foremost, to protect the runaway slaves from being captured and returned to the South and slavery. Also, there were stiff penalties for those helping slaves escape, particularly after the Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850, which made it a crime, punishable by large fines, imprisonment or confiscation of property, to help runaways. In addition, business owners risked the loss of revenue from those not supporting the abolition movement. Bounty hunters were even permitted by law to search any home for escaped slaves.

The UGRR operated in Israel Township from the early 1800s through 1865 when slavery ended with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. There are a number of historical documents confirming the extensive UGRR activity in the township. In 1848, **Lewis Falley** identified the three main UGRR routes through Indiana and Michigan. One of these routes went from Cincinnati to Hamilton, then northwest along State Route 177 through Morning Sun and Fairhaven to Richmond and Newport, Indiana, (currently called Fountain City), where Levi Coffin, president of the UGRR, lived.

Reminiscences, a book written by **Levi Coffin**, relates, "Three principal lines from the South converged at my house; one from Cincinnati, one from Madison and one from Jeffersonville,

Indiana. The roads were always in running order, the connections were good, the conductors active and zealous and there was no lack of passengers. Seldom a week passed without our receiving passengers by this mysterious road. Every precaution to evade pursuit had to be used, as the hunters were often on the track and sometimes ahead of the slaves. We had different routes for sending the fugitives to depots ten, fifteen, or twenty miles distant, and when we heard of slave-hunters having passed on one road, we forwarded our passengers by another."

The Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroads, written in 1898 by Ohio State University Professor **Wilbur Siebert**, also documents UGRR routes. Mr. Siebert writes, "The College Hill route extended north through the west part of Cincinnati, connecting with way stations at Mount Healthy, Batavia, Milford and Hamilton, and on up to West Elkton, where the Stubbs brothers kept their two stations. From Hamilton, a branch passed through a colored settlement in Israel Township, where Nathan Brown, Ebenezer Elliott and others were station keepers. This branch continued through Fairhaven into Indiana. The Western route out of Cincinnati trailed up and over Mount Auburn and through West Fork (Cheviot)...Fugitives were conveyed thence to Dunlap, a Negro settlement nine miles north. From there a branch veered northwest to Darrtown and through Morning Sun and Fairhaven into Union and Wayne counties, Indiana."

It is impossible to project how many slaves escaped via the Israel Township route. Of the estimated 100,000 slaves who escaped via the UGRR, it is believed 40,000 escaped through Ohio. According to Professor Siebert's book The Underground Railroad in Ohio, "At least one operator in Ohio, a long time resident of Cincinnati, forwarded three thousand (slaves) over Ohio and Indiana lines. I refer to the bold friend, Levi Coffin." Author's Note: Coffin moved from Newport, Indiana, to Cincinnati in 1847, where he continued leadership of the UGRR.

Conductors on the Underground Railroad

The Hopewell and Fairhaven churches, whose membership included **Ebenezer Elliott, Nathan Brown** and **Gabriel Smith**, provided not only the moral foundation for the anti-slavery movement but the UGRR conductors as well. The 1881 History of Preble County states, "Levi Coffin, President of the Underground Railroad, had one branch of his road through Israel Township. Ebenezer Elliott, Nathan Brown and others along the line are said to have been directors of the road. Whenever the colored refugees touched College Hill, near Cincinnati, they were sure to go to Canada via the Israel Township route." Later in the book it states, "Their sable (black) conductor was none other than Gabriel Smith, known all over the country as 'Old Gabe'." Professor Siebert writes, "A party of wayfarers was overtaken by a rider on the pike out of Oxford. He intended to lead their master to them and followed them until they entered the house of 'Old Gabe' Smith, a colored character living in Fairhaven. While the rider contentedly bided his time, 'Old Gabe' let the pilgrims out through a back window and ran them through a cornfield into Indiana."

Gabriel Smith is an enigma. He was born a lowly slave, and his burial site is unknown and probably unknowable. He is most likely buried in an unmarked grave in the "colored" section of some unknown cemetery. Yet his life has been written about many times over the years. He is discussed in the 1881 History of Preble County, in Professor Siebert's 1898 UGRR documents, in a 1945 National Historical Magazine article, in the Hopewell and Fairhaven church histories, in documents in the United States National Archives and he is depicted and described on the 1976 Bicentennial needlepoint displayed in the Preble County Courthouse.

"The South Carolina Presbyterian Migration 1800-1833" documents, "In Hopewell Church, pews were set aside for the 'blacks'; among them were...Old Gabe Smith and his wife (Priscilla). Gabe was a saddler by trade and a famous fiddler, who charmed and delighted the young men and maidens of the community." The Fairhaven Community Church History reports, "There

were some Negro people in the area that had been slaves. There was 'Old Gabe' Gabriel Smith, who 'fiddled' at the Bunker Hill Tavern." The 1850 U.S. census documents Smith was born a slave in 1803 in Maryland and was a music teacher residing in Fairhaven in 1850. The 1881 History of Preble County states, "Nearly 40 years ago, an emigrant from the South came into Israel Township bringing his two slaves with him, but as it was unlawful to hold slaves in Ohio, he settled just across the Indiana line. One of the slaves was Old Gabe. He was a fine singer and the fiddler of the county, and was quite a character." **Jeannette Hays** related, "My father-in-law, Arthur Hays, a long-time friend of the Hawes family who owned the Bunker Hill House, told me Gabe had a room under the stairs at the Bunker Hill House, and he fiddled for the dancers in the ballroom."

Smith's life is one of contrasts. His room was a small closet under the servant's stairwell in the Bunker Hill House. Compared to the patrons who danced in the beautiful Bunker Hill House ballroom where he fiddled, he lived an austere life. However, when compared to the runaway slaves he was helping escape to freedom; he lived a life of luxury. He was born a slave and yet became a highly respected and widely known "fine singer," "famous fiddler," music teacher and saddler. In contrast to his highly visible public life, he also lived the secretive life of a conductor on the UGRR. He must have been a truly remarkable, dynamic, charismatic man to have been "known all over the country" as stated in the 1881 History of Preble County.

Stations on the Underground Railroad

It has been estimated there were about 700 UGRR stations in Ohio, an average of about eight per county. There were several stations in Israel Township. **Ebenezer Elliott** lived on a farm about a mile south of Morning Sun on State Route 177. The bank barn on the farm he owned, which is currently owned by **Ed and Pat Prescott Krebs** and **Ken and Sue Posival Krebs**, still has a 6' wide by 7' high by 23' long concrete enclosure in the bank adjacent to the barn foundation where the runaway slaves were hidden.

"We believe **Nathan and Mary (Sloan) Brown** lived on a farm just east of Morning Sun on the south side of Morning Sun Road," said **Helen Wright**, a local historian. "He was from Newbury, South Carolina, and lived from 1774 to 1849. He was a maternal ancestor of my husband, Stanley." A letter published by Professor Seibert states, "The (UGRR) train (from West Elkton) arrived at Brown's about 10 or 11 o'clock at night. A gentle rap on the door was the password. Brown always knew the knocks."

The **Bunker Hill Tavern** (currently called the Bunker Hill House) in Fairhaven was also an UGRR station. **Laura Hawes**, who lived in the Bunker Hill House from 1862 - 1923, confirmed it was on the UGRR, according to her grandniece, **Wendy Hughes**. **Mary Hawes McDivitt**, a niece of Miss Hawes and long-time teacher, told **Elaine Ford**'s class, "The slaves traveled at night up the Four Mile Creek behind the Bunker Hill House. When it was clear, they were led into the back of the building and hidden." **Russell McDivitt, Jr.**, grandnephew of Miss Hawes related, "I was always fascinated with the trap door in the summer kitchen which led to the cellar." **Russell Austin**, whose mother worked for Laura Hawes at the Bunker Hill House, shared, "Laura Hawes told my mother runaway slaves were hidden below the trap door."

The Bunker Hill Tavern was constructed by **Hiram Evans**, great-grandfather of Dave and Jim Williams, beginning in 1834. Evans owned the building from 1837 through 1858 and operated a way station, providing a dining facility, tavern, lodging and ballroom for pioneers migrating west, for drovers herding their animals to Cincinnati stockyards and for settlers in the area. It was also a stagecoach stop on Western Stage Coach Company's Cincinnati Omnibus Line that operated daily between Cincinnati and Richmond, Indiana. In addition, the building housed the Fairhaven post office with Evans serving as the postmaster. In its heyday, 40 or 50 wagons, each

with teams of four to eight horses, mules or oxen, would visit daily. **Author's Note:** The Bunker Hill House has been designated an Ohio Underground Railroad Historic Site by the Ohio Friends of Freedom Society and accepted as a National Underground Railroad Historic Site by the United States Department of the Interior. In addition, it has been designated an Ohio Historical Site by the Ohio Historical Society, listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior and is certified as a National Wildlife Habitat Site by the National Wildlife Federation.

The Flavor of Life in Israel Township

Life on the Farm

For 200 years, farming has been the lifeblood of Israel Township. All of the farmers interviewed, however, were amazed how farming has changed over the past 75 years.

Meryl McCampbell remembered starting out in a threshing ring as the water boy and eventually becoming a bundle wagon driver. "It was a large threshing ring," related McCampbell. "There were two people hauling water from the creek for the steam engine, one person running the steam engine, eight people on bundle wagons delivering the bundles from the field and feeding them into the threshing machine and six people throwing the bundles onto the wagons in the field. The threshing machine was positioned near the barn where the farmer wanted the straw pile from the threshing process. Threshing machines were used only on wheat and oats. If we shredded corn, we made shocks and followed a similar process. If we shucked corn by hand, the goal was to husk two wagon loads of corn a day. We had a compartment at the back of the wagon for the real large ears, and we would use those as seed corn for the next year."

Harold Black recalled how in the 1930s his father, William, would husk a horse-drawn wagon load of corn by hand in the morning and another in the afternoon. "With our equipment today, we can harvest that much corn in 15 minutes," said Harold. He and his son, **Bobby Black**, farm about 1,600 acres. When Harold started farming in 1951, he planted corn, wheat and hay and raised hogs and cattle, as did most farmers in the township. Now, like almost everyone else, they primarily plant only corn and soybeans. Bobby reflected that there is probably not one dairy cow left in Israel Township. Bobby summarized it best when he said, "The future of farming is bigger farms, more paperwork and fewer farmers."

Clifford Whitesell farmed just north of Morning Sun. He was born in 1920 and remembered seeing a deep red sky in 1935 and 1936 due to the dust bowl in Kansas and Oklahoma. He solemnly related the struggles during the 1930s Depression and the many hardships, including the loss of family farms due to bank foreclosures. He also recalled people visiting the veterinarian when a doctor was not available or funds were lacking.

Gordon and Rosemary Morton Lybrook also grew up during the Depression. "My Mom, on her way to Richmond, deposited money in the Boston, Indiana, bank. By the time she returned through Boston, the bank had closed, and she lost her money. I lost \$16 I made from threshing, as well," said Gordon. "My brother (Bill) and I farmed 900 acres near Fairhaven. Before we got electricity in 1934, we used batteries in the radio and windmills for pumping water. I had planned to go to college, but a man offered to rent me a farm right after I completed high school so I started farming. I regretted not going to college, but I vowed that day I would read and learn something new every day."

Burdette White reflected on the Depression years, "I bought 100 gallons of gas for \$10 when I started farming in 1939." He also recalls how impressed his father was when he bought the first television in Israel Township in 1948, a 10" \$700 marvel. When he asked his father what he thought of the wondrous invention, he said, "Son, watch how you spend your money."

Francis and Jeannette Flory Hays farmed land that has been in the family for nearly 200 years. Robert Hays purchased one quarter section of land (160 acres) from the U.S. government

in 1812 and moved his wife and four children from South Carolina to pursue his dream of farming. The original deed is made of sheepskin and is signed by then-President James Madison. The farm has passed down through eight generations of the family and has been designated a "Century Farm," a distinction awarded to those who have maintained a farm and homestead in their family for at least 100 years.

Sisters **Joanne West Shavers and Shirley West Mitchell** recalled growing up on the 30 to 40-head dairy farm their parents, Bob and Jean Steele West, lived on. They and their two brothers, Kenneth and Darrell West, shared the farm chores which consisted of pitching silage from the top of the silo, placing the silage in two rows of feed troughs and hauling buckets of milk from the barn to the milk house. Each day they negotiated who would do which task. In summer, the cows were in pasture so pitching silage was replaced with hoeing in their monstrous garden. Their father gave away much of the garden produce, since they always planted much more than they needed. His generosity was repaid years later. In 1969 when his barn burned down one morning, 17 men spent the day relocating stanchions from other farms so he could milk his cows that evening. Members of the church, neighbors and family cleaned away the debris and fed the diligent workers. There were also two years when he was physically unable to plant his crops in the spring. Shavers recalled her father asking to be driven to the fields to thank the neighbors. She counted 25 tractors on the farm helping.

Stanley and Helen Hall Wright started their married life in 1956 farming 250 acres and operating a 35-head dairy herd just north of Morning Sun. Stanley's maternal great-great-grandparents, William Sr. and Mary Douglas McCreary, moved to Israel Township in the early 1800s and had a land grant signed by then-President Monroe. The Wright family moved to Israel Township in about 1806, when Stanley's great-great-great-grandmother, Janet Orr Wright, a widow, rode on horseback from South Carolina with her two sons, John and James.

Helen and Stanley were also Ambassadors of Goodwill. They joined the "Friendship Force," an international organization dedicated to exchanging ideas and cultures with others around the world. They opened their home to visitors from foreign countries such as Russia and Japan, and they traveled to Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and Peru as well. Despite the differences in government, religion, skin color and economic background, Mrs. Wright stated, "There are good and honest people in every country."

Len Vonderhaar observed, "The United States is still the breadbasket of the world. Farmers realize we must preserve this precious land, so all farmers are stewards of the soil. We have to be since our livelihood depends on it. The seeds we plant are treated with insecticide so we no longer spray insecticide as we plant. With global positioning equipment, we can now spray crops for weed control with very little overlap of chemical applications. These approaches minimize the amount of chemicals required and enable farmers to use no till or minimal till farming techniques thus reducing erosion."

Vonderhaar's ancestors were farmers in Holland who came to America in the late 1800s. As with most farmers, they have sought to find a niche to maximize their farm income. At one time or another, they had a dairy farm and processed milk, packaged and sold bird feed, cleaned grain for others, raised sunflowers and sold mulch and straw. The straw operation is a no-touch operation from field to store. The bales are first handled by humans when they are loaded into the customer's truck. Vonderhaar recalled when his father planted soybeans for the first time in 1946. "He planted the beans in the far back field so no one could see if the crop failed."

Ed and Pat Krebs discussed how farming has changed over the years. "Farming used to be more fun," said Ed. "I am constantly on the cell phone and computer determining where and when to buy chemicals, fertilizer, seeds and fuel and when to sell crops. Prices fluctuate so much from day to day that you must continuously monitor the changes. A number of farm wives now work outside the farm primarily for health insurance benefits." When asked what he did for

fun while growing up on the farm, Ed promptly answered, "We baled hay." Pat recalled a memorable month-long bike trip the youth minister and seven youths from the Morning Sun United Presbyterian Church took from Morning Sun to the minister's home in Connecticut. "We made it all the way to Dayton before my daughter, Lori Krebs Brixey, had the first flat tire on the trip," stated Pat. "Patty Roberts and I drove the supply truck."

Russell Austin told of caves that extend into Hueston Woods from southeastern Israel Township. **Tom McQuiston**, who lives near the appropriately named Cave Creek, shared that spelunkers once stopped and asked if they could explore the caves on his farm. "I told them there were caves there, but I didn't think a ground hog could fit into the opening. They assured me that they had crawled in many tight caves before and, in fact, had to remove their clothes to maneuver through some of them. So, I told them where the caves were, and off they went with all of their gear. Within 15 minutes, they were back loading their gear into their vehicles."

Life in the Villages

In the 19th century, pioneers traveling west and drovers herding their livestock to Cincinnati markets frequently spent the night at taverns in the small villages along the turnpikes. "Ben Lashley, my great-uncle, drove cattle, pigs and turkeys from Centerville (Indiana) to Cincinnati stockyards along State Route 177 through Fairhaven and Morning Sun," said **Jane Cook Conti**. "To keep the turkeys moving, someone would sprinkle shelled corn in front of the flock. At night, the turkeys would be kept in pens at the taverns along the way." **Jim Williams**, renowned Israel Township historian, related, "During the long walk to Cincinnati markets, the turkeys' feet would get sore, and they would sit down and refuse to move. To protect the turkeys' feet, a pan with tar would be placed at the exit of the overnight holding pen. The turkeys would walk through the tar and then through some sand that was placed adjacent to the tar pan. The turkeys' feet would thus be 'retread' and they would be ready to continue on."

Pioneers transported not only their families and possessions along the turnpikes, but they also spread disease along it as well. **Jim Williams** shared, "In 1849 and 1850, a cholera epidemic was transported by emigrants from Europe along State Route 177, and it killed half the inhabitants of Boston, Indiana. My great-grandmother (Jane Humphries Evans, co-proprietor of the Bunker Hill Tavern, with her husband Hiram) died and my seven-year-old grandfather (Robert Evans) was relocated to a farm away from the turnpike to escape the disease. The stagecoaches traveling daily between Cincinnati and Richmond via Morning Sun and Fairhaven were even cancelled until the cholera epidemic passed."

"In the 1920s and 30s, Fairhaven was a beautiful little town," recalled **Russell Austin**, a longtime Fairhaven resident. "The gravel road through town was lined with large maple trees the length of the village, which gave the feel of traveling through a tunnel. During the Depression, we had no place to go and no money to spend, even if we got there. So we raced bikes down main street, fished, hunted squirrel and groundhog, played basketball and wandered along the Four Mile Creek. We also hunted mushrooms in spring, played with Roy Doty's pet raccoon and his albino squirrel and explored the many barns in Fairhaven. The barns were interesting because they were full of threshing machines, cows, pigs, sheep, goats, ducks and chickens."

In the days before refrigerators and air conditioning, Austin had several methods of keeping cool on the hot, sultry days of summer. Lou and Mary Foley, who lived in the north end of the Bunker Hill House, operated a general store with an adjacent ice house across the street. Ice from the Four Mile Creek was placed in the ice house in winter and covered with sawdust to keep it from melting. Ice was sold throughout the year for keeping food cool, but Austin thought the best use of the ice was just to sit in there with his friends talking or playing cards. That kept them cool until Foley, always vigilant for such activities, caught them and chased them out. Then the only option for keeping cool was to go swimming in Four Mile Creek. Given this was

the middle of the Depression, Austin and his friends didn't have money for swimming trunks, so they consequently didn't have to worry about getting their clothes snagged during a swim.

In winter, they ice skated and played hockey on the Four Mile Creek near Mrs. Pinkerton's swinging foot bridge and the race for an old grist mill just west of the Bunker Hill House. Before school, they threw snowballs until they heard Clint Paxton with his horse-drawn school hack rumble through the covered bridge at the north end of town. The school hack had a charcoal burner in the floor, so they could warm their frozen hands on the way to school. For exciting sledding, they iced down the hill on State Route 177 just south of the Bunker Hill House. The town had three large sleds called the "Nancy Hanks," "Princess" and "Sonnell". When fully loaded with up to 22 people and properly steered, the sleds would race to Walnut Street near the far end of the village. An icy road was great for sledding, but, Austin acknowledged, probably not so great for those trying to drive horses or cars up or down the hill.

The transition from horse to automobile was not always smooth. Austin remembered when a man drove a 1932 Ford to Foley's Store and told Foley to fill it up with gas and add a quart of oil. Foley had no problem adding the gasoline, but he wasn't quite certain where to add the oil. Not wanting to seem uninformed, he added the oil in what he thought was the most logical location. He removed the air filter and poured the oil into the carburetor. Of course, that is not where the oil should have gone, and the car wouldn't start.

The roads were different then, but the way decisions were made in the home - maybe not so different. Austin recalls one Sunday when his parents were trying to decide whether to go to his grandma's house in the country. It had rained hard for several days, and the old gravel roads throughout Israel Township were full of ruts and mud-holes. His mom was washing dishes in the kitchen, and he, his father and siblings were in the living room. His mom called into the living room, "Kids, get ready. We're going to grandma's house." His father said, "No, we're not. It's rained for a week, and we'll get stuck." His mom said, "Kids, get ready. We're going to grandma's house." His father said, "No, we're not." About this time, his mother came through the door into the living room with a pie pan in her hand. As the pan skimmed over his father's head and crashed into the wall behind him, his father said, "Kids, get ready. We're going to grandma's house." And so they went to grandma's house in their Model T Ford. Austin didn't recall getting stuck on the trip, but he did recall it was a rather chilly ride.

When Austin was growing up, the people of Fairhaven were essentially self-sufficient. The village had Harry Ebersole's blacksmith shop, Judge Pierce's livery stable and post office, Clyde Pierson's buggy and harness shop and general stores owned by Lou Foley and Harry Austin (Russell's uncle). To be self-sufficient, the people of the village had to be multi-skilled. Austin said his father, at various times, worked as a mechanic at Ramsey's sawmill, maintained the Fairhaven School, was the constable of Israel Township and built fences, planted corn, threshed wheat, cut wood and butchered hogs for Willard Hays. His mom worked at the Bunker Hill House for Miss Laura Hawes and also worked at the Fairhaven School. The town blacksmith also had very diverse skills. He worked his trade during the week and was the town barber on Saturday. Austin said, "The blacksmith cut my hair on Saturday for 10 cents. However, my friend got his hair cut in Morning Sun for 15 cents from 'Billy-Up-To-Date,' a real barber."

In those days, a son often learned his life's occupation from his father. Austin helped his father at the saw mill maintain the steam engine, which doubled as the engine for a threshing machine at harvest time. By the time he was fifteen, he was working at Red Robert's garage in Fairhaven. Shortly after Austin started working at the garage, a large black car pulled in about dusk. The driver, a dapper, well-dressed man, explained he was having problems with the headlights and needed a mechanic to repair them. Austin shared that all of the mechanics were in the fields planting crops, but he could fix the problem. The man was dubious, but given he had no other option; he agreed to have him look at it. Austin raised the hood and was about to lie across the

fender to repair the lights when the man grabbed him by the back of the shirt and pants and told him, "Don't you ever lay across my fender like that. Get a blanket and put it on my fender." The man was John Dillinger, renowned bank robber and 'public enemy number one' as designated by the FBI. Austin, fortunately, completed the repair successfully.

Dillinger, whose family lived across the border in Indiana, periodically traveled from Chicago to Hamilton, Ohio via State Route 177 through Fairhaven. Austin had obviously impressed him because Dillinger returned several times for mechanical work. One time Dillinger and three men stopped for a tune-up. Dillinger and the driver got out of the car, but the two men in the back remained seated. Austin had to retrieve an item from the back of the garage during the tune-up and noticed the men in the back seat had guns across their laps. A mechanic could not receive a better testimonial than for a bank robber to stop for a tune-up just before executing a robbery. The bank about to be robbed was not the Camden Bank. The Camden Bank Board of Directors, in a stroke of staffing genius, had selected Dillinger's cousin, H. R. Brown, to be bank president.

Jean Lybrook Charles recalled swinging on the swinging bridge across the Four Mile Creek just west of the Bunker Hill House. "Mrs. Pinkerton, who owned the bridge, always called out that we should not swing on the bridge," said Charles. Mrs. Pinkerton must have been a very busy woman because everyone I interviewed told how they swung on the swinging bridge and how Mrs. Pinkerton always promptly called out to them. Charles also shared how she would sled down the hill west of the Fairhaven School. She remembers timing her last ride during the lunch period just as the bell was sounding. Thus, she had an extra long recess. Based upon all of the interviews, I think everyone timed their last ride just as the school bell sounded.

Steve and Sheila Larrison Pierson grew up in Fairhaven in the 1940s and '50s. "We moved away when we got married but quickly returned after discovering how much we missed our family, friends and the quiet community," said Sheila. Although Steve grew up in Fairhaven, he said he knew the name of only one street. "Ben Hurley told me the street through Fairhaven was called Plumb Street because it went plumb through town," said Steve. Actually, the street name is Main Street, but it does go plumb through town.

Steve reflected on the pool hall with its two tables but with so little space that you had to use a very short pool cue. He also remembers standing with some friends outside the pool hall when the transformer overhead suddenly burst into flames and lit up the night sky. "Sheila was playing her clarinet in her home across the street, and we were all convinced her playing caused the transformer to explode," laughed Steve.

Steve recalled when he and Bobby Austin played on the many trails along Four Mile Creek. They fished in summer and went sledding in winter, always with a large bonfire to keep warm. He remembered sitting in the street watching movies projected onto the side of Lou Foley's store and the Ohio Bus Line bus stopping at Foley's Store every day at 11:20 a.m. on its run between Richmond and Hamilton. He remembered the exact time of the bus stop because lunch was at 11:30 at the saw mill where he worked for his dad, Oren "Bus" Pierson. Bus operated the saw mill at the north end of Fairhaven for 25 years. When Miami University lost 1,800 elm trees to a nationwide tree fungus, Bus removed them. Some of the trees were so large only one log would fit on a truck. For 44 years, he also hauled farmer's livestock to Cincinnati stockyards.

Elaine Parks Ford grew up in the brick house east of the Methodist church in Fairhaven during the 1940s. "My father (Earl 'Skinner' Parks) and my brother (Harry Parks) milked cows in a barn behind the house and my mother (Mary Horner Parks) sold the milk out of the house," recalled Ford. "I knew everybody in the village by walking with my grandfather (J. M. 'Mac' Parks)." She and her girl friends made mud pies and sold them for a penny each to the older residents of town. She also had a pet lamb, a pet rooster, rode bikes and swung on the swinging bridge. "Fairhaven was always a safe place, so we didn't lock the doors to our house. However, one time my granddad's car got stolen. He couldn't believe the thieves got it running!"

"My father (Skinner) was a sports nut and excellent athlete," said Ford. **Ray Beckett**, town barber, recalled Skinner making the winning basketball shot against dreaded rival Camden. Skinner eventually played semi-pro ball for the Dayton Ducks until his mother, Syla Maud Ebersole Parks, convinced him to return home. Skinner taught Ford's son, Kenneth, to throw by throwing rocks into Four Mile Creek. "After his granddad's funeral, Ken went to Four Mile Creek to throw one more rock for granddad," said Ford.

Carol Benton, her sisters, Sandy Benton Borradaile, Beverly Benton Campbell and Linda Benton Peters and brothers, Dick and Tom Benton, grew up in Fairhaven in the 1940s and '50s. "In those days, we used what we had for entertainment, namely the great outdoors and our imaginations," said Benton. "Our playground was Four Mile Creek and the surrounding woods. We sometimes walked along Four Mile Creek from Fairhaven to Hueston Woods and back. We (the kids in the neighborhood) would also have grand parades around the block. Everyone brought what they had, so we had a parade of dogs, cats, goats, sheep, ducks, bicycles and wagons. About all we didn't have were spectators."

Benton also went to Fairhaven's version of the movies. The Morgan family, through technical savvy, creativity and magic, somehow projected the Sunday funnies onto the interior wall of their barn while someone simultaneously read the funnies. They had wooden benches for seating and charged two cents admission. Benton's mother, Beulah Larison Benton, made them dress in their Sunday best for the event. Some evenings, Beulah and the older children would crawl out the second floor window of their home onto the top of the porch roof and listen to the phonograph while gazing up at the wonders of the night sky. Her mother also took them for long walks in the woods, identified herbs and shared with them the many wonders of nature.

Benton related, "The north end of town had one bicycle, and we all shared it. Everybody got to make one lap around the block before they turned it over to the next person. I was one of the youngest so I had to stand on a stump to start the bike ride. When I completed the lap, I had to jump off of the bike and catch it before it crashed since it was so precious." Dick Benton, her brother, maintained the bike and eventually acquired enough spare parts to build a second bike. Gradually, his mechanical skills improved, and he built a go-cart, fixed up a riding lawnmower tractor and repaired cars. Eventually, the skills he honed in Fairhaven resulted in a 35-year career in the Air Force, maintaining and repairing Air Force jets around the world.

Not everything went smoothly as he mastered his trade, however. Benton and his friend, Bob Huber, built a go-cart in the hay loft of an old barn. Everything went well until the initial shakedown drive. Huber started the engine, put it into gear and before he could react to the ever-so-sensitive-clutch, he and the go-cart shot out of the second-floor door of the barn and crashed to the ground with a thud. Benton's experience with the lawnmower tractors wasn't much better. He and Dick Crosley each drove a tractor onto the ice on Four Mile Creek. The ice broke under Crosley's tractor and all that remained above water was the yellow cap on the fuel tank.

Donald "Buck" White grew up in the 1950s and '60s in Fairhaven. He remembered the woods surrounding the village was filled with young kids scurrying around in fierce pretend battles. "We played in the creek, and we played baseball," said White. In the 1970s and '80s, he was the coach for the Fairhaven baseball teams. Today, he is an Israel Township Trustee. "Israel Township doesn't have a township tax since we get a bed-and-breakfast tax on the Hueston Woods Lodge sales. Most townships don't have this source of income," stated White.

Businesses and Business People

The **Hawes General Store** in Fairhaven was owned by **Laura Hawes** early in the 20th century. "Laura was a fantastic person and a talented businesswoman," said her grandniece, **Wendy Hurrell Hughes**. Hawes not only managed the general store, but she sang, played piano, was an artist, taught painting, collected antiques, traveled extensively and completed many domestic chores. She was also an historian who commissioned one of the first detailed

histories of Fairhaven. In addition, she documented not only the events of her daily life but also her feelings in a personal diary she kept for 17 years from 1894-1911. In her spare time, she volunteered at the Fairhaven United Presbyterian Church (currently called the Fairhaven Community Church), participated in town functions and entertained at her home, the Bunker Hill House in Fairhaven, where she lived for over 60 years.

Hawes was simultaneously a shrewd businesswoman and a benevolent neighbor. As manager of the Hawes General Store, she was essentially the Bank of Fairhaven. **Russell McDivitt Jr.**, Hawes' grandnephew, shared documents showing she loaned money to many in the area at 5½% interest. Due to her business savvy, she was able to hire a woman to assist with the domestic chores, a man to manage her horses and carriages and a clerk, Lou Foley, to assist with the general store. She was also generous. "Laura and Lou didn't allow those in need do without," stated **Jeannette Hays**, local historian and long time Israel Township resident.

Hawes took her music, as well as everything else in her life, seriously. The *New Paris Mirror* reported, "Miss Laura Hawes of Fairhaven is enthusiastic over voice culture to a degree that impels her to arise at 3:30 a.m. every Thursday and make a stagecoach drive of 16 miles to Richmond where she receives instruction. She has a splendid voice and will no doubt be able to 'star' it some day." A newspaper clipping from Hawes' scrapbook states, "A brilliant wedding party took place on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, 1898. The bridal party entered to the music of Bartholdi's Wedding March rendered by Miss Laura Hawes of Fairhaven, Ohio."

She painted landscapes and portraits on canvas as well as beautiful designs on ceramic vases. She also taught painting according to **Edwina Hughes Henderson**, daughter of Wendy Hughes and great-grandniece of Hawes. **Audrey DeCamp**, a local newspaper reporter, related, "One of Miss Hawes' many talents was painting. She sat on the hill at the south end of the village and painted a beautiful scene of Fairhaven's main street."

Hawes was also a renowned collector of fine furniture, imported china, glassware, ceramics, pottery, silver, quilts, Indian artifacts, animal mounts and much more. On October 5 and 6, 1938, her fantastic 12,000-piece collection was auctioned off with buyers traveling to Fairhaven from New York City and other distant locations. The auctioneer's preface in the auction bill of sale states, "(Laura Hawes) was one of the pioneer collectors of antiques. The judgment of Miss Hawes was of a high degree, as will be noted by the many outstanding pieces in her collection. The rare old coverlets are as fine as have ever been offered. Some patterns are found only once or twice in a decade." The *Cincinnati Enquirer* in 1938 reported Hawes' "taste ran from sea shells to Sheraton tables, from Indian arrowheads to Staffordshire pitchers." A newspaper article further stated, "Her (Laura Hawes) group of Mound Builders pieces was declared by a Columbus collector to be the best he had ever seen outside a museum." She also had collected museum quality antique furniture. Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, offered to buy the beautiful spiral staircase in the Bunker Hill House for \$1,000, but the family declined to sell it.

Hawes' domestic activities included making soap, canning food, butchering chickens and sewing. **Margaret Hurrell Hudelson**, her grandniece, related that her mother, **Helen Hawes Hurrell**, attended Western College in Oxford, and Hawes helped decorate her room. Hurrell writes, "In that day colors were subdued, tan or lighter. Is that the way Aunt Laura decorated her niece's room? No indeed. She brought a wine-colored carpet decorated with flowers. In quilting, delicate colors were not for Aunt Laura. Bold reds and bright greens decorated her quilts. Did she have woven coverlets? These were red and blue."

Hawes entertained frequently at her home. One newspaper clipping from her scrapbook states, "The prettiest event of the season was the dainty informal tea given last evening at the palatial home of Miss Laura Hawes of Fairhaven, Ohio. The elegant reception room, parlor and banquet room were most beautifully decorated with calendulas, phlox, asters, geraniums, gladiolas and sweet peas. In the banquet hall, the table was richly laden with choice dainties, refreshments and

fruit. The evening was a grand success, and all present unite in proclaiming Miss Laura a charming hostess and entertainer. The occasion is one to be long remembered."

In a time when the average person seldom, if ever, traveled more than 20 miles from home, Hawes traveled extensively. In 1910, she traveled with her sister, Elvira Hawes Cramer, for four months by train and stagecoach throughout the Midwest and West, visiting Mexico, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Denver. She traveled to Washington, D.C., attended the St. Louis World's Fair, visited Boston and shopped in Cincinnati. She was truly a Renaissance woman.

The **Morning Sun Telephone Exchange** was operated in the 1930s and '40s by **Hope Boyer Crowell's** parents, **Rico** and **Blanche Bess Boyer**. The manual system had to be operated 24 hours a day seven days a week. Fortunately, the telephone equipment was located in their home, and not many people owned telephones, so the task was manageable. The job was not always pleasant, however. Crowell's mother shared that one time a farmer who lived in the country south of Morning Sun walked to the exchange and asked her to call a doctor for his sick children. She called the doctor, and the man left only to return a short while later asking her to contact the doctor once again since he had not arrived yet. He left but returned a third time. This time he asked her to tell the doctor not to come. His children had died.

John Johnston's parents, **Clyde** and **Ruby Sanford Johnston**, owned a grocery store on Eaton Street in College Corner and operated a "huckster" truck. "Mom ran the store, and Dad ran the truck," said Johnston. The truck was a school bus that had been converted to deliver groceries and merchandise to residents in the area. Clyde also bought chickens, cream and eggs from the farmers in a sort of barter system. Clyde put the chickens into cages he had constructed under the truck, and when he returned to College Corner at the end of the day, he sold the chickens and eggs to the poultry house and the cream to the creamery, both located in College Corner. Then he prepared his truck for the next day's deliveries with items from the store. "The customers would place a list of what they wanted and money in a basket on their porch, and dad would fill the orders," said Johnston. "If he didn't have an item with him, he would deliver it the next week. He sold everything from food to kerosene to shoe strings. 'Here Comes Clyde' was printed on the front of the truck." Clyde delivered more than the staples of daily life, however. Before there were telephones, Clyde told farmers the news. When the first telephones arrived, it was a "party line" system in which you could secretly listen in to the ten or so people on your "party." Hence, you knew what was happening on your party line. What you didn't know was what was happening on the other party lines. Clyde delivered that, too.

When Johnson was 12 to 14 years old, he worked for the College Corner postmaster. "I took the outbound mail in a canvas bag from the post office to the train depot. If a passenger was at the depot who wanted to get on the train, it was my job to flag down the train, and then I would throw the mailbag in the baggage car, where someone sorted the mail on the train. If there was no passenger present, I had to hang the outbound mail on a hook by the train track. The train had a hook to capture that mail bag as they went by, and they would throw out the inbound mailbag for College Corner. Sometimes they would miss the outbound mail, and I would have to carry two mail bags back to the post office and take the outbound bag back again the next day."

Johnston has been the College Corner Fire Chief for 42 years. The fire department is a private organization and negotiates annual contracts with Union Township, Union County, Indiana; Bath Township, Franklin County, Indiana; Israel Township, Preble County, Ohio; and College Corner, Indiana, and College Corner, Ohio. Johnston said, "The fire department was originally owned by the town of College Corner, but became a private organization a number of years ago."

"The **Talawanda Springs Water Company** packaged water from springs located just east of College Corner from 1903 until the plant closed in 1993," said **David Woodruff**. He and Beverly, his wife, worked at the plant and were proud of the bottle label which read, "From the

famous Talawanda Springs at College Corner, Ohio.” The springs were discovered by the Indians, used by the settlers and at the time of the plant closing, the water was sold in six states.

“**Roberts Farm Equipment and Parts Inc.** was started by **William ‘Morgan’ Roberts** in 1932 in a small garage on State Route 177 between Morning Sun and Fairhaven,” stated **Patty Brown Roberts**, daughter-in-law of the founder. “In 1939, he bought the Morning Sun School and relocated the business to that location. During World War II, farm equipment dealers could not buy new equipment because of the steel shortage. However, when Morgan sold a load of scrap metal, he would get a certificate to buy new machinery. As a result, he was the only dealer in the area who sold new farm machinery during the war. We only sold locally until 1978 when a potential customer from Maine became indignant when informed by my son (Roland Jr.) that we did not ship parts. I said, ‘Why don’t we ship?’ So we shipped the part, and now we ship around the world. The majority of the business is now conducted by telephone and the Internet.”

“Morgan’s father, Daniel Roberts, had a unique driving style,” said Roberts. “He would pull up to a stop sign, wave his hand out the window and go even though he didn’t have the right of way. Everyone knew when he raised his hand and waved, he was going to go so everyone stopped for him.” Morgan’s sister, **Wilma Roberts Shaw**, started driving when she was twelve. Her brother taught her how to shift a manual transmission, and she promptly started up the car and drove through their potato patch. Shaw said, “My dad asked who taught me how to drive. My brother confessed it was him, but he said, ‘I didn’t know she would go crazy’.”

The **Fairhaven Antiques Festival** was initiated in the 1970s. In the early decades of the late May/early June event, Fairhaven was a Mecca for fine antiques, and the festival drew numerous quality dealers from the east resulting in one of the finest antique shows in America. Antique malls and eBay have removed some of the luster from the annual festival, but the small hamlet still gets spruced up for this special occasion nonetheless.

The Villages

The villages of Israel Township were formed to support the pioneers migrating west, the drovers herding their livestock to Cincinnati stockyards, and the local farmers who needed goods, services and laborers. The pioneers and drovers are gone and the farmers now require little local labor so the villages have changed dramatically. They are no longer self-sufficient and filled with general stores, shops and busy craftsmen. Most of the current village residents have jobs outside the township but appreciate the relatively quiet life these small hamlets afford.

Fairhaven was laid out in 1832 by Jonathon Caldwell. By 1837, Fairhaven was described in the “Ohio Gazetteer” magazine as “a new but flourishing post village in Israel Township, Preble County. It is situated ... in the midst of a rich and dense population and within one mile of a steam sawmill. It contains one store, one tavern, one physician, 25 dwelling houses and 100 inhabitants...” In her 1911 “History of Fairhaven,” **Miss Susan Pierce**, a teacher of 50 years, identified 1800s Fairhaven businesses including: a pork-packing house, cooper shop, saw mill, grist mill, shoe-making shop, blacksmith shop, shingle plant, weavers, tailor shop, saddler’s shop and general stores among other businesses. She related, “one side of the (Fairhaven double-barreled covered) bridge was used (for traffic) ... as Charlie Pierce’s sheep slept in the other.”

In their 1945 “History of Fairhaven,” **Harry Lybrook and Lou Foley** describe Fairhaven in the early 1900s when the “population consisted of six retired farmers, four teamsters and helpers, a wagon maker, three blacksmiths, three shoe shops, two broom makers, a tinner, a carpet weaver, a feed mill, a hotel, a photograph gallery, three complete threshing machine outfits, a saw mill, a cider mill, a sorghum mill, a tile kiln, a butcher shop and slaughter house, a stockyard, two harness makers, a skating rink, a dance hall and auction room, post office, lodge hall, two livery stables, two carpenters and their men, a house mover and two churches. A drug store carried a full line of drugs and medicines. There were three doctors, one veterinarian and

one combination vet and breaker of kicking horses and wild colts. There were two painters and paper hangers and the mechanics were real mechanics. The mail was brought to Fairhaven by what was called the 'Star Route' from Hamilton and Richmond."

Morning Sun was laid out in 1833 by James McQuiston, **Tom and Jetta McQuiston's** ancestor. The McQuistons were also founding members of the Hopewell Church. "My ancestors moved from Ireland to South Carolina in 1772, to Hamilton (Ohio) in 1807 and then to the Morning Sun area in 1808," said Tom. The McQuiston family has farmed in the area for 200 years since the founding of Preble County. Today, Tom plants over 650 acres of crops.

College Corner is a unique village as evidenced by the fact it was listed in "Ripley's Believe It or Not" in 1939. It is located in two states, three counties and three townships. The school is located on the state line with half of the school in Indiana and half Ohio. "Peter Ridenour was among the earliest settlers in College Corner," said **Shara Henry Ridenour**. "He built one of the first grist and saw mills in the township in 1806 on Little Four Mile Creek. Ridenour Road was named after him, and he gave land to build the College Corner School. His brother, Jonathon, also had a grist mill built in 1806 just west of Four Mile Creek behind the Bunker Hill House in Fairhaven. The Ridenour's are my husband's (John Ridenour) ancestors."

Jean Lybrook Charles reminisced how the state highway department about 30 years ago, in what must have been a nostalgic moment, placed a sign at the intersection of State Route 725 and Eaton-Oxford Road to commemorate the hamlet of **Claysburg**. Given there were only two houses at the intersection, township residents thought the sign a bit excessive. When highway officials learned the tiny village was really **Fosterville**, they decided to relocate the sign to the intersection of State Route 725 and Cramer Road where Claysburg was really located. Much to their chagrin, there were no longer any buildings at that location. In its heyday, Claysburg consisted of one house and some unsold lots. At some point, the farmer tired of paying taxes on the lots and had them converted back to farmland, which was taxed at a lower rate.

Early Churches

"The **Hopewell Church** was named after a ship," related **Bob Simpson**. "Five ships of Scotch-Irish sailed from Northern Ireland in 1772. One of the ships was called the Hopewell. The immigrants settled in South Carolina where they founded a church, and eventually some of them moved to Israel Township, where they founded a second church. They named both churches 'Hopewell' to commemorate the ship they sailed on to America. The Hopewell ship's journey was not exactly a smooth one. During the sailing, the crew mutinied and threw the captain overboard. Their intent was to sell the passengers as slaves in the Caribbean, but they came to realize they could not effectively navigate the ship. During the ensuing confusion, the passengers reclaimed the ship, and it sailed on to America."

One of Simpson's ancestors married the daughter of Reverend Alexander Porter, the first minister of the Hopewell Church, so his family has long-standing ties to the historic old church. The church closed in 1915 due to dwindling membership and was condemned by the county building inspectors in 1964. Simpson and several other dedicated historians founded the Historic Hopewell Committee and have beautifully restored the church. It is now open for services during the summer. Simpson still lives on and farms the land his ancestors have resided on for nearly 200 years. Even the road passing by the farm, Simpson Road, is named after the family.

"My ancestors sailed on one of the six ships commissioned by William Penn to transport Quakers from England to America in the 1680s," shared **Gordon White**. "They initially settled in Philadelphia, relocated to New Jersey, then West Elkton, Ohio and eventually migrated to Israel Township. They built the **Quaker Ridge Meeting House** (also called the **Westfield Meeting House**) in 1821 at the northeast corner of Israel Township." **Burdette White**, Gordon's father, recalls attending the Quaker Ridge House prior to its closing in the 1920s.

Early Schools

"There were eight schools in Israel Township in the early days," said **Gordon White**. "The schools were located so the students didn't have to walk more than two miles to school." There were many outstanding teachers who taught the township students over the years. Susan Pierce taught in Fairhaven for 50 years in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and she was followed by Mabel Evans Williams. More recent dedicated teachers include Mary Hawes McDivitt, Jeannette Flory Hays, Jean Lybrook Charles, Joy Donohoe Rhoden, Mary Lybrook Thomas, Edith Matthias Williams and Gordon White, among others. Burdette also remembers serving on the local school board saying, "There wasn't a rattle-brain in the bunch (of board members)."

Jeannette Hays said she always enjoyed teaching. Born in 1914, she started teaching immediately after high school, which was the practice at that time. However, she was forced to quit when she married, since the law allowed only one income per married couple. In 1953, when a teacher passed away shortly after the start of the new school year, the Fairhaven School Board asked Hays to teach once again. She recalled with fondness her teaching career. "I really loved my first-grade class at Fairhaven. The classroom was located in the basement right next to the kitchen and the cook, Rosie Hart, used to periodically give snacks to the first-graders. She was a good cook!" Hays added, "You taught whoever showed up in class that day. One day I remember teaching 42 students. All first-graders were in the same class and the more advanced students helped those in need. Teachers in those days had great parental support, too."

When **Gordon Lybrook** was in school, the junior class traditionally got off a day of school to hunt rabbits for the junior class rabbit roast. Lybrook's class caught 500 rabbits that day and had a very profitable fund raiser.

Russell McDivitt Jr. recalled, "I played basketball in the College Corner gym with the baskets in two states and at West Alexandria, where the ceiling was so low you could only shoot a lay-up or a line drive shot. The most unusual gym, however, was at West Elkton where there were pillars in the middle of the basketball court and linoleum on the floor."

Transportation

The first improved roads through the area were toll roads called **turnpikes**. The Cincinnati-to-Hamilton turnpike was completed in 1817, the Hamilton-to-Fairhaven turnpike was built between 1835 and 1841 and the Fairhaven-to-Richmond turnpike was constructed between 1842 and 1844. This turnpike was the lowest cost and most direct route for many pioneers traveling to the Northwest Territory. Pioneers would travel down the Ohio River by flatboat and then by Conestoga wagon along the turnpike. There were toll gates near Morning Sun and Fairhaven with toll charges of 15 cents per 10 miles for a four-wheeled cart drawn by two horses or oxen.

In the 1850s, there were three railroad companies building lines out of Hamilton: one line was planned to Eaton, one to Oxford and one to Fairhaven. The Eaton and Oxford lines were completed, but the Fairhaven line was not completed since the **Four Mile Valley Railroad Company** went bankrupt after the rail bed was constructed. **Clifford Whitesell**, the Fairhaven Methodist Church historian recalled, "A meeting on the railroad at the Fairhaven Methodist Church was so crowded that the floor of the church broke down." **Jeannette Hayes** related, "The railroad workers, who were hired to hand-dig the railroad bed, stayed at the Bunker Hill Tavern during the week and went home on weekends. When the railroad went bankrupt, some of the workers just decided to live in Fairhaven. Paddy Foley was one of those who stayed. His son, Lou, operated a general store for many years." The railroad bed was built just west of Four Mile Creek as it passed through Fairhaven. Steve Pierson recalls his dad hauling the railroad bed dirt that crossed Cherry Street just west of Four Mile Creek to form a parking area at the northwest corner of State Route 177 and Creek Road. An 1871 Preble County map shows a proposed railroad route south of Fairhaven, but that rail line was also never built.

The advent of the automobile in the early 20th century completed the transition from self-sufficient villages to small hamlets completely dependent upon the outside world. Perhaps some future change in transportation or mode of communication will restore the once vibrant, small villages that were so vital to the growth and moral fiber of America.

There is a new trail through Israel Township, the **American Discovery Trail**, which passes through Hueston Woods and Fairhaven. The trail is a 6,800-mile coast-to-coast hiking and biking trail between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The trail is one of four major American trails, the others being the Appalachian, the Continental Divide and the Pacific Crest Trails.

War

War has impacted every generation of Israel Township residents. Some individuals found careers in the military. Others were financially drained and, sadly, some were injured and others never returned. All who helped in the fight for freedom are to be honored.

The Revolutionary War was partially funded by the DeHaven family, ancestors of **Dave and Jim Williams**. Dave related, "The DeHavens sold their vineyards in France and moved to America. They loaned \$400,000 in gold to the U.S. government in 1775 to help finance the Revolutionary Army. When the war was over, they went to collect their money and were informed the government had no record of the loan and hence would not pay - and they didn't." Williams' ancestor, Carey Toney, fought in the Revolutionary War in General Washington's army. Mr. Toney died at the age of 101 and was the last survivor of the War in the country. Williams' grandfather, Robert Evans, and great uncle, J.H. Evans, fought in the "Grand Army of the Republic" during the Civil War. J.H. Evans was among the hundreds of thousands of casualties of the war. Dave Williams enlisted in the Air Force just prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor in World War II. He flew B25s, B26s and C47s and retired as a major in the Air Force.

"The first burial in the Hopewell cemetery was that of Thomas McDill," reported **Bob Simpson**. "McDill was injured in the War of 1812 and died in 1814 as a result of those injuries. McDill's father was a passenger on the Hopewell ship that sailed from Ireland in 1772."

Lester Shattuck planned to enter World War II to help build the 1,500-mile-long Alaskan Highway that was being constructed to protect Alaska from invasion. But as life often goes, he was sent instead to halt the Japanese invasion of Asia. As a member of the canine unit, he and his faithful dog, Butch, always traveled 100 yards ahead of about 100 of his fellow soldiers, searching for snipers. Shattuck and Butch were much loved by the soldiers for the protection they provided. Shattuck recalled, "Once I was carrying Butch around my neck during a long march because his paws were sore. A senior officer drove up in a jeep and asked what was wrong with my dog. I told him Butch's paws were sore, and he told me to take him out in the woods and shoot him. Immediately, the entire troop had their guns pointed at the officer. The officer quickly decided that shooting Butch would not be necessary."

Shattuck calls himself "a very lucky man." During the four years he spent in the war, he was strafed by a Japanese Zero plane as he ran up a hillside, huddled in a foxhole when a mortar landed on the edge of the hole and failed to detonate, had the pack on his back riddled with holes by Japanese soldiers as he lay pinned down in a rice field and was shot in the hand and side. He was also hurled up a hillside by the concussion of a mortar and was in a foxhole with three other soldiers when a shell struck a tree limb directly overhead and the shrapnel seriously wounded two of the soldiers. Years later in 1990, Shattuck met Marion Wiant. He says, "Marion is the best thing that ever happened to me." Shattuck is, indeed, a very lucky man.

June Austin Wolf talked about swimming in Four Mile Creek, biking and dating. She recalled, "Glenn (Wolf) asked me for a date when I was 18. I told him I would have to ask my mom if it was ok. Mom said 'yes,' and I told Glenn she said, 'no'." Shortly thereafter, Glenn joined the Army and fought from 1942-1946 in World War II, island-hopping through the Pacific

and eventually becoming part of the occupying force in Japan. When he returned from the war, Glenn, never easily discouraged, asked her for a date again. That time she said yes. "We were married nearly 60 years, and we were inseparable," said Wolf. "We did everything together, from working on the lawnmower to canning food from the garden. Last fall, he was trying to help me can green beans, but he didn't have the strength to break the beans in two. He cried because we could no longer share everything. He died last Thanksgiving. I miss him so."

David Woodruff joined the Navy in 1960 and became a member of the "Golden Shellback" Club, which recognizes those who cross the international dateline and equator simultaneously. At the time, he was on the Navy aircraft carrier "Coral Sea" bound for Australia. Woodruff was also on the Coral Sea north of Japan during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. "For 48 hours, the ship was on highest alert. A plane was located in each of the three catapults, the planes were fully loaded with fuel and bombs, the pilots were in the cockpit with the engines running and the catapult operators were ready at an instant's notice to launch the planes. The entire crew of the ship was battle-ready," said Woodruff. Fortunately, war was averted.

Matthew Hueston, for whom **Hueston Woods State Park** is named, was a soldier in General Anthony Wayne's army that marched in 1793-94 from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) through western Ohio. A decisive battle with the Indians at Fallen Timbers near Toledo resulted in the Treaty of Greenville, which made southwestern Ohio safe for migration and settlement. Hueston was awarded land for his military services, and thus became one of the earliest settlers in the township. He and his ancestors preserved more than 200 acres of his forested land in its natural state. This woods, one of the largest stands of virgin forest remaining east of the Mississippi River, was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1967 and an Ohio State Nature Preserve in 1973. The woods provide an excellent habitat for hundreds of types of plants and animals, including the pileated woodpecker, a crow-sized red crested bird once feared to be nearing extinction. "The pileated woodpecker was the model Walt Disney used to create the cartoon character 'Woody Woodpecker'," stated Park Naturalist **Chad Smith**.

"Hueston's land was acquired by the state of Ohio in 1947," said **Lonnie Snow**, Hueston Woods Regional Park Manager. "A 625-acre lake was constructed in the 3,000-acre park by damming up the Four Mile Creek in 1956-57. Honor status prison inmates cleared the land of trees to establish the lake and improve the infrastructure. The prison camp buildings now serve as the park administrative offices and nature center." Smith related, "**Adena Indians** (also called the Mound Builders) lived in the area from 500 B.C.-400 A.D. and built several mounds. Excavations of a mound in the park by the Ohio State University conclude it was for ceremonial purposes, not for burials. It contained seashells from each coast, which verifies the Indians of 2,000 years ago traded extensively." After the Adena Indians disappeared, the **Miami Indians** settled in the area. According to **Merle Rummel**, a local historian, an Indian Trading Post and village were located in the park. "Look closely. The flashing lights you see on a warm summer's night might not be fireflies. They may be the torches of Little Turtle's warriors," said Rummel as he paraphrased an *Oxford Press* article from 1950.

Summary

I sincerely want to thank the many individuals who so graciously shared their stories, photos and historical articles with me! I only regret I could not share more of those wonderful stories in this book. I believe the stories included in this article provide a flavor of what life was and is like in Israel Township. These types of stories are not experienced in the big cities or the suburbs, where people are constantly moving from one location to another and thus never get to know their neighbors. These are the stories of a stable, close-knit community of caring people who worked hard, shared willingly and became lifelong friends in the process.

There is a peaceful feeling in Israel Township that is like a step back in time. **Billie Larrison Wiseman**, sister of Shelia Pierson, captures that feeling in a poem she wrote about Fairhaven:

My thoughts wander back to a quieter time
And in memory see some things so clear,
Like sidewalks and streets lit only with moonlight
And never a thought tinged with fear.
The sight of this town between the two hills
Often blurs my vision with tears
When I remember anew those gentle old times,
In this haven of my innocent years.

Chronology - Israel Township

- 1803 Joseph Kingery, a native of Virginia, is the first recorded settler in Israel Township.
- 1805 James Ochletree's Mill on Four Mile Creek was the first grist mill in Preble County.
- 1806 The Hopewell Church was founded by families who emigrated from South Carolina and Kentucky.
- 1808 First township election was held with Joseph Caldwell, John McCormick and Paul Larsh elected trustees.
- 1809 Township was named after Commodore Israel of the U.S. Navy. The area was previously called Beech Woods because of the extensive beech forest that stretched from Hamilton through Preble County.
- 1821 The Quaker Ridge Meeting House was built at the northeastern corner of the township.
- 1840s The turnpike was completed from Hamilton via Morning Sun and Fairhaven to Richmond.
- 1850s The Four Mile Valley Railroad Company started construction on a railroad from Hamilton through Fairhaven. Some of the railroad bed was built, but the railroad went bankrupt and was never completed.
- 1870s An omnibus operated daily between Hamilton and Richmond delivering goods until 1910
- 1957 Hueston Woods opened as an Ohio State Park.

Fairhaven

- 1805 Joseph Caldwell and his children emigrated from North Carolina and settled in what is now Fairhaven.
- 1806 William Ramsey built a mill for Jonathon Ridenour on Four Mile Creek at Cherry Street in Fairhaven.
- 1832 Jonathon Caldwell, son of Joseph, laid out the village and built the log Bunker Hill Tavern. Captain Bonny named the village Fair Haven because of its lovely situation in the Four Mile Creek valley.
- 1834 The Fairhaven Community Church and the brick Bunker Hill Tavern were built.
- 1848 The first Methodist Episcopal Church was built in Fairhaven. Services were previously held in homes.
- 1883 The Fairhaven Methodist Church was constructed.

Morning Sun

- 1806 William Ramsey built a mill for John Sloan northwest of Morning Sun.
- 1809 The first township school was established about a half mile east of Morning Sun.
- 1810 The Beech Woods Reformed Presbyterian Church was organized by Reverend Donnelly. In 1870, the congregation became the Morning Sun United Presbyterian Church.
- 1833 James McQuiston laid out the village of Morning Sun.
- 1852 The Morning Sun Academy was established by the United Presbyterian Church.
- 1876 The United Presbyterian Church built a new brick church in Morning Sun.
- 1903 The Morning Sun Telephone Company was incorporated.
- 1932 Roberts Farm Equipment Company was founded by William Morgan Roberts.

College Corner

- 1799 The first settlers in southwestern Israel Township were the Huestons, the Ridenours and the Kingerys.
- 1843 Members of the Hopewell Church built a daughter church in College Corner.
- 1868 College Corner, Ohio, was laid out by the Shidler family.
- 1893 Ohio and Indiana residents erected a school exactly straddling the state line with four rooms in each state.