

Washington County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society

Meeting Minutes: July 18, 2020

The Wash. County OGS met today at the Kiwanis Shelter on the west side of the Muskingum River. The meeting was called to order by President Jim Reed with 12 members and 2 guests.

Sharing Session:

Jayne Stehle mentioned that the local historical society archives contain quite a bit of genealogical information that may be useful to anyone looking for ancestors.

Barb Moberg mentioned an online program with the Ohio History Connection narrated by Krista Horrocks that discussed the WPA and the effort to document veterans in Ohio cemeteries. They planned to map out where over 2 million veterans were buried in 31 wars. Ohio was divided into 6 districts. Every veteran had a Veteran Grave Registration Card. Burials were originally done with the head to the west and the feet to the east. The WPA created maps and documentation. Central Ohio was well mapped out, but the perimeter counties were not done as well or not at all. Washington County was not done. There are over 14,000 cemeteries in Ohio. A book called Ohio Cemeteries, 1803-2003, by K. Roger Troutman was mentioned as an excellent source. A woman, Linda Ellis, has a cemetery blog, Exploring Cemeteries in Ohio. Through the Cemetery Restoration and Improvement Act grants are available.

The state of Iowa had the most thorough mapping done.

Program: Topic: Gunmakers Amon Ford and John Vincent

Our speaker today is William Reynolds, widely known for his work at local museums, guns and historical programs. Bill gave an overview on Campus Martius museum and the need for volunteers. A training session is scheduled soon.

Barb Moberg had mentioned a mirror method for reading faded gravestones. The carver's name was usually in the bottom left hand corner. Bill suggested an app called "Capture" that explains that and other methods for reading deteriorated tombstones.

Bill is also working on an exhibit at Campus Martius on the experience of early settlers and references to the earthworks in the area. Samuel Holden Parsons made maps on 1786 that were found in the Jefferson papers and in the papers of Israel Stiles. Apparently, Mr. Parsons was appointed Indian Commissioner and traveled to the area with Richard Butler and George Rogers Clark to the mouth of the Great Miami River to negotiate a Peace Treaty with the Seneca Nation.

While in the area he visited the Big Bone Saltlick which was extremely popular with the settlers. He sent back 12 Mastodon bones to Israel Stiles. On his return to the East, he stopped in Marietta and made maps of the local earthworks. Four early maps were published in New England and in Europe.

Bill stated that he owns 14 or 15 John Vincent or John Caleb Vincent Rifles.

Bill displayed Norris Schneider's book Muskingum Valley Gunsmiths but the information on the Vincents is incorrect. Bill is currently working on a book with correct information. Along with that he is doing serious research on Amon Ford.

Amon Ford was the sixth child of William and Sarah Ford who lived in the Watertown township area which was also known as "Wooster". William Ford bought the land at Watertown by 1817 and moved his family west from Connecticut.

In 1827 Amon married Hanna Park and in 1832 he was listed as head of household with 2 children on 80 acres of land in the area of what is now Anderson Road, near Watertown. In the Schneider book, he is listed as a Shantyboat gunsmith. Another person, Alex Appleby was a shantyboat gunsmith at about the same time and same area.

In the 1840 census he is listed as a farmer and employed in the trades.

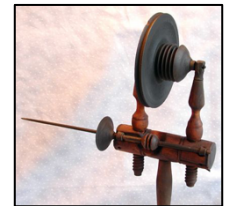
He died in 1845 at the age of 37 and left 8 children. His wife Hannah died in 1892.

John Dillon Vincent was the son of William Vincent of Providence County, Rhode Island. William purchased 180 acres of land near Barlow around 1822 and moved his family to Ohio. He died in 1825.

John D Vincent was born in 1809 in Providence, RI. In 1832 he married Elizabeth Dustin from Marcellus, NY. Their child, John Caleb Vincent was born in 1841. John moved from Barlow to Vincent, OH, across from the Railroad Station. He died in 1882.

The burial stone for John's son "Caleb" is in the Barlow cemetery and is not well cared for. Caleb was also a gunsmith.

John Vincent was listed as a cabinet maker although he is famous for the Vincent Spinning Wheel. He made a section called the Miner's Head. The device accelerates spinning.



The **similarities between John D Vincent and Amon Ford** are that they were born within 1 year of each other, they owned land 15 miles apart, both were active in abolitionist activities and their sons owned land and lived 12 miles apart. Were they associates? Maybe! Was John Amon's apprentice? Unlikely.

Gunsmithing is a skilled trade, usually learned as an apprentice. There were no such programs known in Washington County at that time. Perhaps they viewed each other's work and learned from each other.

Ford and Vincent Rifles are legendary. John Vincent was primarily a farmer who may have made rifles in the off-season. Ford was more prolific but Vincent rifles are known world-wide.

Bill displayed a picture of John Vincent as well as a school book that had wooden covers with excellent paintings both front and back, half the size of the page.

He also had an original deed from William Vincent that was witnessed by Amon Ford.

The Laflin Family sent many letters to William Vincent with the address as “leave at Point Harmar Post Office.” Bill showed us some examples.

Caleb stayed in the family home until both parents had passed. A Day Book was kept, although there was no mention of Amon Ford.

Bill had an example of an old book – Ohio Taxation Codes – that had been reutilized as a scrapbook. Newspaper articles had been glued to each page.

So, what happened to the Ford children? Some were shown as in the mercantile business, some as a tannery business and some moved Westward.

And who was Robert Lamb, listed as a maker of Vincent Rifles and a repairer of farm equipment?

Perhaps the gunmakers should have been called gun stock makers as the metal parts were purchased and installed into the crafted wooden stocks. A large source of the metal parts came from James Brown in Pittsburgh.

One interesting fact is the stock was made to fit the bicep area and not the shoulder. This allowed the gun to be held steadier.

Bill stated that the Vincent Rifles are superior to the Ford Rifles because of the workmanship of the wood. Vincent rifles have been sold across the United States and at least one in Europe.

Bill learned his woodcraft in high school shop classes and created the Ohio Long Rifle Collectors 35-40 years ago. When asked how Bill learned to make his first gun, he replied that he read the book! He has honed his skills with the help of Warren Offenberger, Dan Augenstein, and Mr. Phelps.

Business Meeting:

The meeting was called to order.

The minutes were read and approved with corrections.

The treasurers report showed an ending balance of [REDACTED]. Several items pending will change the balance to [REDACTED]

Library – No report

Books – No Report

First Families – No Report

Old Business – None

New Business – Discussion of our annual picnic. It was decided that all shall bring lunch and meet at 1 pm at the Kiwanis shelter. Sharon Gardner will check on a speaker, if none is available, we will have a sharing meeting.

There being no further business, the business portion of the meeting was adjourned.