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An 1826 map of the Western Reserve and the Firelands.

Speculators, Ohio land companies motivated Granville, Mass. residents to move to Ohio

By Anthony J. Lisska

This essay is the third installment of four regarding observations on the settling of the Ohio Frontier by Connecticut and Massachusetts natives, gleaned from a series of essays on the Western Reserve—at that time referred to as “New Connecticut.” This area in northeast Ohio ran from the western Pennsylvania border one hundred and twenty miles westward along the coast of Lake Erie. In several ways, the experiences of these migrating New Englanders into northeastern Ohio mirrored closely what the settlers from Granville,

Massachusetts and Granby, Connecticut encountered in 1805 when arriving from over the Allegheny Mountains to what became Granville Village and Township in Licking County. This collection of texts—*The Peopling of New Connecticut*—is a marvelous assortment of mainly first person narratives dealing with the movement of New England Yankees to the newly acquired Northwest Territory.¹

Over-population and the Necessity of Migration

We in the twenty-first century sometimes consider

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that the issues of over-population that are currently news items are indeed a contemporary phenomenon. However, even a brief reflection of the population concerns engendered in Connecticut in the last decades of the eighteenth century suggest otherwise. It appears that the generally European-based populations of Connecticut, originating in the middle seventeenth century, grew rather rapidly. One historian suggests that for at least three generations, the life spans of the European settlers outdistanced the Native Americans still resident in the area. The land around the Long Island Sound where natural harbors were discovered served as the original inhabited places. With a growing population, however, the next generations moved inland and thus established additional communities. Agriculture played a dominant economic role, especially in the river valleys where the better soil was to be found. When these places grew more crowded, migration moved towards the more rocky and mountainous parts of the state, and agriculture was replaced with animal farming, especially raising steers. Eventually the land contained within the confines of Connecticut became over crowded from the Rhode Island to the New York state lines. Migration became a part of the solution to this problem of overcrowding. This brief but significant tale of overcrowding helps explain why in 1805 citizens of Granby, Connecticut and, nearby across the border, Granville, Massachusetts, became excited and enthusiastic about the possibility of migration to central Ohio. Several essays in *The Peopling of New Connecticut* suggest that too much migration harmed the agricultural pursuits of Connecticut; this topic will be considered later in this essay.

The Formation of the Land Companies

The Land Company that was formed in Granville, Massachusetts and Granby, Connecticut, in order to engender interest in and eventual travelling to Granville, Ohio, was called "The Licking Company."ⁱⁱ William Utter notes that all official transactions refer to this organization as "The Licking Company,"ⁱⁱⁱ An earlier land company, which brought New England settlers to the Worthington area, had been established in the area around but not in Granville, Massachusetts itself. This land company, named the Scioto Company, served, so several historians remind us, as the model or paradigm for The Licking Company. There are two

"Land Companies" named "Scioto"—the one noted above that developed Worthington and an earlier company that was instrumental in assisting French refugees from the French Revolution to escape to the newly established United States; this latter company was notorious and more or less swindled the French émigrés, some of whom remained in the area and founded the Ohio River town of Gallipolis.^{iv}

Professor Richard Shiels tells us the story of the Worthington Scioto Company in some detail, the principal features of which are the following.^v A Granby, Connecticut Episcopalian, James Kilbourne, called a meeting in May 1802 to discuss a migration to Ohio. No Granville residents were present at this meeting, which was composed primarily of Episcopalians; Granville had many members of the Congregational Church as residents. Professor Shiels considers these religious differences as a principal reason for the formation of two different Land Companies near one another in Connecticut. These two associations led to the eventual migrations to Ohio but three years apart and the establishment of similar communities roughly thirty miles from one another.

At this meeting, Kilbourne recommended forming a land company to be called "The Scioto Company," with the purpose of founding a transplanted colony of New Englanders somewhere between the Muskingum and the Miami Rivers. Following an exploratory trip to central Ohio and meeting with Thomas Worthington—who was destined to become the first governor of Ohio—Kilbourne and an associate met with Dr. Jonas Stanbury in New York City. Stanbury was a noted land speculator, and he agreed to sell the Granby citizens land along the Scioto River for \$1.25 an acre, which was less than the \$2.00 per acre that Congress was selling land for in what was called the United States Military District. Kilbourne returned to Granby and in the Autumn of 1802 with forty-one other men established the Scioto Company. The Licking Company was established three years later in 1805.^{vi}

The Connecticut Land Companies

It appears that several land companies were established in Connecticut prior to the foundation of the Scioto Company; these land companies sponsored migrations to the Western Reserve land and were formed in a more vigorous capitalist manner. Titles for large tracts of land were acquired and then marketed to prospective settlers. In the late eighteenth and early

nineteenth century, the original owners of several portions of land in what would become both the Northwest Territory and the central Ohio villages of Worthington and Granville were veterans of the Revolutionary War. As a reward for service in combating the British in the war for independence, the veterans were given land grants. Of course, many of the veterans were not interested in moving to Ohio from their homes in New England or the Middle Atlantic States; nonetheless, they had title to vast sections of land. William Utter relates this story in the following way:

At the close of the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress pledged that it would reward veterans of the Continental Army with warrants to western lands. . . . The act created a situation highly favorable to land speculators who immediately scoured the eastern country for land warrants, paying the veterans as little as possible and obtaining deeds in the west which they later sold to prospective settlers—their profits were often several hundred percent.^{vii}

Accordingly, the speculators entered into the fray suggesting a way for the veterans to make a little money from the titles bequeathed to them by the federal government. A colloquial term for the speculator was “the land-jobber.” The speculators sought titles to large tracts of land; eventually, as noted above with the Scioto Company and the Licking Company, a “land company” usually was formed with the sole purpose of acquiring tracts of land and urging migration from New England to Ohio. Hence, in particular, the efforts of the speculators for what became The Connecticut Land Company began in earnest to entice citizens from Connecticut to buy land in the Western Reserve—aka “New Connecticut”—and head westward to “the land flowing with milk and honey.” It appears that some speculators from The Connecticut Land Company were not of an honest ilk; there is some evidence that more than several devious speculators had been involved in forming the land company and enticing Connecticut citizens to move westward to northern Ohio. There appears to have been something like the “I have some swamp land in Florida that I think might interest you” attitude among some of the speculators. There seems to be little evidence, however, that the Massachusetts and Connecticut citizens who assembled with the Scioto and the Licking Companies were deceived in any such

way.

The Formation of the Western Reserve

The story regarding the formation of that part of northeast Ohio that became both the Western Reserve and the Firelands is an interesting tale in itself. Only a rudimentary account, however, can be undertaken in this essay. The story goes back to the granting of the charter to the Colony of Connecticut in 1662 by King Charles II that formed what eventually became the State of Connecticut. This Charter granted Connecticut all land from coast to coast; the charter reads: “all of the territory of the present state and all of the lands west of it, to the extent and breadth, from sea to sea”^{viii} Later, of course, other royal charters were given by the crown of England to both New York and to Pennsylvania. One might argue that the crown heads of the British Empire were geographically challenged at best and downright ignorant of land sites at worst. Eventually Connecticut settled for the expanse of land that extended from the Western Boundary of Pennsylvania running along the coast of Lake Erie one hundred and twenty miles into what would become the State of Ohio.

The land immediately to the west of the Western Reserve, some 500,000 acres, was named the “Firelands.” This tract was also referred to as “The Sufferers’ Lands.” Both names came about because the land within its borders was reserved for Connecticut citizens in particular but also other New Englanders whose homes, villages, and other tangible properties were burned intentionally by marauding British troops during the War of the Revolution.

Connecticut, like the other original thirteen colonial states, was burdened with heavy debt from the Revolutionary War; likewise, the federal government was overwhelmed with debt from this war for independence. The Connecticut legislature noted that if it could sell off the lands of the Western Reserve for at least a million dollars, this would assist in reducing the war debt. Speculators took to this bait immediately. A group of very wealthy Connecticut residents in the eastern part of the state—several historical references suggest that this group of investors principally came from Suffield,

Connecticut—established the Connecticut Land Company. This group of entrepreneurial investors offered the state 1.2 million dollars for titles to the land, which, of course, the state offices accepted gleefully. In 1795, The Connecticut Land Company purchased three million acres and in the following year undertook the work of surveying the land anticipating the beginning of land sales.^{ix} Thus was established the “Connecticut Land Company,” a group of speculators or “land jobbers” in the fullest extent of the terms. The goal was to turn a profit on these lands and to entice Connecticut citizens, especially to what one historian refers to as “land-hungry younger men from New England,” to migrate to the Western Reserve, this purported land of their dreams. Nonetheless, poor management conjoined with a lower than expected number of sales of the land eventually forced the Connecticut Land Company around 1810 into bankruptcy.

One lasting effect of this group of speculators was that one of its original Connecticut members was Moses Cleaveland, who led the first group of surveyors to the area. He mapped out a future settlement, appropriately named “Cleveland.” Several historians suggest that the change in name from the original surname of the investor to the name of the present metropolis was due to a cartographer’s mistake. There are several references that Cleaveland established a “spin-off” segment from the Connecticut Land Company, called “The Erie Land Company.” It is



Moses Cleaveland

unclear how this smaller land company functioned. An additional benefit to the state of Connecticut was that this rather vast sum of money obtained from the speculators was earmarked to assist in the funding of public education within the state.

One notices immediately the differences between the land companies formed to sell off lands in the Western Reserve and those formed to assist Connecticut and Massachusetts citizens migrating to the central Ohio villages of Worthington and Granville. It appears that the *Ohio History Central* webpage, sponsored by the Ohio Historical Society, concerning the “Licking Company” is confused on this issue. One

finds the following passages: “The Licking Company consisted of real estate speculators. These men hoped to buy unimproved or undeveloped land in Ohio relatively cheaply and to sell it at a profit.”^x The organizers of the Licking Company—and it appears the Worthington Scioto Company also, purchased their properties from east coast speculators, but they were not speculators themselves. This is an important historical distinction.

The General Worry about the Effects of Western Emigration

Behind these somewhat nefarious accusations against the land speculators appears to be a general concern about the worrisome effects of emigration on the New England states and Connecticut in particular. As late as 1817, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., the recently elected Governor of Connecticut, in a speech before a session of the Legislature, noted the worries about emigration both for those who settled in the west and the general welfare of the state itself. The following is an excerpt from Wolcott’s address:

An investigation of the causes which produce the numerous emigrations of our most industrious and enterprising young men, is by far the most important subject which can engage our attention. We cannot justly repine at any improvement of their condition. They are our relatives and friends, who, in the honourable pursuit of comfort and independence, encounter voluntary toils and deprivations, and the success of their effort affords a most exhilarating subject for contemplation.

Still it is certain that the ardour for emigration may be excessive, and perhaps the time has arrived, when it will be wise in those who meditate removals, to compare the value of what they must relinquish with what they can expect to acquire; & to reflect that schools, churches, roads, and many other establishments, necessary to the comfort, preservation and dignity of society, are appendages of real property in old States; and that in a comparative estimate, the expenses of forming these establishments anew, ought to be added to the first cost and other charges incident to new settlements. (pp. 102-103)

The newly installed governor goes on to express

the need to address some of the issues that led to what he refers to as the excessive emigration.

On our part, it is important to consider whether every thing has been done which is practicable, to render the people contented, industrious and frugal, and if causes are operating to reduce any class of citizens to a situation which leaves them no alternative but poverty or emigration in that case to afford the most speedy relief. (p. 103)

In the background of Governor Wolcott's remarks was the continuing strife in Connecticut between the old guard Federalists and the newer Republicans.^{xi} The Republicans were perceived as second-class citizens, which appears to have been a driving force behind the rather massive emigrations to the west. This political and social dispute will be the subject of the next and last installment in *The Historical Times* on the conditions central to the western movement of peoples from New England.

Texts Critical of the Speculators

The introductory notes to one section of *The Peopling of New Connecticut* suggests that one of the principal criticisms of the emigration movement to the west was directed towards the land speculators. Several authors "denounced speculators for profiting at the expense of the settlers." (p. 104)

The journal of Zerach Hawley, as quoted in *The Peopling of New Connecticut* and whose passages have been referred to in earlier *Historical Times* essays on the Western Reserve, is quite critical of the manner of living and the overall quality of life in the Western Reserve. Hawley graduated from Yale in 1803 and engaged in a medical career for almost two decades. An editor of *The Peopling of Connecticut* suggests that Hawley was "an unsuccessful physician."^{xii} In 1820, Hawley set out for the Western Reserve and spent a good part of a year traveling around this countryside and charting his observations in a most informative journal.^{xiii} Parts of this journal were written for Hawley's brother and were not originally intended for publication. However, Hawley did publish this narrative in which are found important glimpses about life on the frontier in the early nineteenth century. Hawley gives his reasons for publication in the following passages:

The following pages were not, at first, designed to come before the public, but upon

reflection it appeared to me a duty incumbent upon me, to give them publicity, in order, in some measure, to undeceive the community, respecting a portion of the Western country, which has been represented as an earthly Paradise, where every thing necessary, every thing convenient, and almost every thing which is considered a luxury, might be had almost without care, labour or exertion.

A very important motive for publishing what I have written, is, to prevent the evil effects that may arise from the high sounding recommendations, (in most cases totally unfounded in fact,) of land speculators. These evils are, persons selling their property at a great loss in many cases, the expense of moving to Ohio . . . which swallows up a great proportion of their property, incapacitating them to pay for farms taken, disappointments of all kinds, on arriving at the place of destination, and in most cases an inability to return, however much it may be desired, in consequence of the impossibility of procuring the means of returning. (p. 159)

Hawley goes on with his concerns about the speculators:

Much has been said about the clemency of the weather in Ohio, both by speculators and the inhabitants; and each of them have their own peculiar motives. The former speak highly of the climate, in order to induce people to purchase their lands; and the latter do the same to induce people to come and settle among them in order to increase their numbers, and that they may sell their produce to the immigrants . . .

The climate is not the only thing respecting this part of the country, about which the people are deceived. They are told that the society is good. "As good," say those who are interested in the assertion, "as any of the country towns in the New-England States." Nothing could be more untrue than this assertion. (p. 163)

A Hartford doctor, William Hand, was particularly opposed to emigration from New England. In 1818, he published *T'other Side of Ohio*, in which he calls to task the speculators for the evils they have caused to the settlers newly arrived in Ohio.^{xiv} Hand interviewed more than several emigrants during his trek through northern Ohio. The following is a fine illustration of his

unpleasant discoveries:

I pursued my route and every day found Yankees; and never found any but upon questioning of their old homes, would immediately fall into a strain of repinings, and in the most plaintive tone describe the enjoyments of their former situation, which compared with their tale of suffering since they left them, added to the despair of ever again visiting their native soil, or making their adopted country seem like home—(all of this) was enough to wring the hard heart of a land-jobber himself. I shall for ever hold in utter abhorrence those men who bait my countrymen to exile. (p. 118)

Hand continues with this theme, waxing a bit poetic yet with forcefulness:

The delusion practised upon the people of New England is beyond all human endurance. The conscriptions of Bonaparte were fair dealing, compared with the arts and practices of land speculators in this country Not so with the evil Genius which haunts New England; like a mean archer, he is ever where (*sic*) he cannot be hit, and his victim carries a poisoned wound for ever (*sic*) in his bosom. (p. 119)

The Selfishness of Some Speculators

In addition to the concern about the exaggerated claims of some of the land jobbers, there was some feeling, no doubt justified, that the speculators had kept the best lands for themselves; consequently, they offered only the lands of poorer quality to the settlers. The introductory notes to an essay entitled "Emigration—Hard times," published in *The Connecticut Mirror* in 1819^{xv}, notes that the author of this small essay stressed "the likelihood that emigrants would be victimized by speculators who had engrossed the best lands." (p. 119) The essay itself contains this graphic assertion: "All the best land in the country is engrossed by the rich, and by the speculators." (p. 120) The essay quotes a Mr. Campbell, who remarked to the author of this essay: "All the richest best part of the country is settled and owned by the rich men, and rents are very high." Given the financial instability of The Connecticut Land Company, it is not difficult to understand—but certainly not to justify—both the tactics of "serious salesmanship" together with the hoarding of the good

lands by the speculators. Often, townships and villages were named after some of the speculators; nonetheless, in some cases when the settlers became so disillusioned with these speculators, they changed the name of the civic entity from the speculator to another. Hard feelings indeed surfaced in northeast Ohio. Such revengeful feelings do not appear to have been fostered in the Granville or Worthington communities.

Conclusion

Actions undertaken to establish New-England style villages in northeast Ohio by means of the Connecticut Land Company is an interesting tale in itself. What is more interesting is the fact that the Licking Company—together with the Scioto Company—appear not to have been involved with any financial chicanery; the latter two land companies appear to have been established only as a means of community-building so that the members of the community could have an equal place at the table for dividing the land in both the future Worthington and the future Granville. One might argue that this difference in land company operating procedure is an interesting social and political commentary on the need of some semblance of community as a necessary condition in order to assist peoples to establish and profit from their communities. The contemporary Harvard University political philosopher, Michael Sandel, has developed these concepts in some detail.^{xvi}

Another Harvard philosopher of an earlier age, George Santayana, once remarked that "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."^{xvii} One would hope that a consideration of the strengths of community building found in the workings of Licking Company and its success in Granville when contrasted with the selfish attitudes engendered by the Connecticut Land Company in dealing with much of the Western Reserve will be a reminder of the need for community in the governing process.

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Endnotes

The author acknowledges the proofreading assistance of Marianne Lisska, whose knowledge of grammar and structure far exceeds the limited capacities on these matters of the author.

ⁱ *The Peopling of New Connecticut: From the Land of Steady Habits to the Western Reserve*, edited by Richard Buel, Jr. (Hartford, CT: The Acorn Club, 2011). For the most part, spelling and grammar from the original texts have been reprinted in this essay as found in the original; a few minor corrections for the benefit of a greater clarity for the reader have been substituted.

ⁱⁱ Often this company is incorrectly referred to as "The Licking Land Company," but its proper name is "The Licking Company."

ⁱⁱⁱ William T. Utter, *Granville: The Story of an Ohio Village* (Granville, OH: Denison University Press, 1956), p. 29. Henry Bushnell, in his *The History of Granville, Licking County, Ohio* (Columbus, OH: Hann & Adair, 1889), suggests that the official name was "The Licking Land Company." One suspects Utter is correct on this matter.

^{iv} Bushnell writes that there were three associations called "The Scioto Land Company." He also suggests that the original name of the "Licking Company" was the "Scioto Land Company," but it was changed when the Granville, Massachusetts citizens realized that the area to which they were emigrating was not near the Scioto River. Cf. Bushnell, *Ibid.*, p. 24.

^v Richard Shiels, "A New England Colony: The First Generation," Chapter Two in *Granville, Ohio: A Study in Continuity and Change, Volume One: A Purpose, A Plan, A Place*, edited by Anthony J. Lisska and Louis I. Middleman: Granville, OH: Denison University Press, 2004), pp. 51 ff.

^{vi} The interested reader might consult Professor Shiels's informative table comparing the dates and the events of both the Scioto Company and the Licking Company. Cf. Shiels, *Ibid.*, p. 53.

^{vii} Utter, p. 11.

^{viii} Upton, Harriet Taylor, *History of the Western*

Reserve (Chicago: Lewis Pub. Co., 1910); this history can be found in part on the Western Reserve History website, among other places. One should note that at least one reference claims that the western terminus of the Charter for the land extended all the way to the "South Sea." It is unclear what the reference for this body of water might be.

^{ix} Some historical documents refer to 1796 as the year of the land purchased by the Connecticut Land Company.

^x http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Licking_Company?rec=3169.

^{xi} One suggestion about this dispute is that the Republicans were in principle the followers of Thomas Jefferson.

^{xii} *The Peopling of New Connecticut*, p. 147. This editor also notes that Hawley was a Federalist, a group mostly opposed to emigration from Connecticut.

^{xiii} Zerah Hawley, *A Journal of a Tour Through Connecticut, Massachusetts, et al* (New Haven: 1822), pp. 158-69.

^{xiv} William Hand, *T'other Side of Ohio* (Hartford, CT: 1818).

^{xv} "Emigration—Hard Times," found in the *Connecticut Mirror*, July 26, 1819.

^{xvi} Michael Sandel, "Morality and the Liberal Ideal," *The New Republic* (May 7, 1984): pp. 15 – 17. Additional contemporary political philosophers expressing some of these community concerns articulated by Sandel are Martha Craven Nussbaum of the University of Chicago and Alasdair MacIntyre now an emeritus professor at the University of Notre Dame.

^{xvii} George Santayana, *Life of Reason, Reason in Common Sense* (Scribner's: 1905), p. 284.

Granville's one-room schools are September lecture topic

Professor Emeritus of Education Thomas Gallant of Denison University will present a program on Granville's One Room Schools at 7 p.m. in the Robinson Research Center on Sept. 17.

Does his HTH book with a spook ? Is her BBH a townie toad? - Grins from 1967

This glossary of Denison University slang first appeared in the Mother's Day edition of the *Denisonian*, May 6, 1967. The words were compiled by a voice and diction class; definitions were supplied by Shirley Dekker '70, Bob Morgan '68, Kent Pope '68, Holly Ulmer '67, Mary Whittaker '68, and Tom Martin '68. This list also appeared in the Spring 1978 *Denison Alumnus*. Reprinted with permission.

- Grab some Z'S:** verb; to sleep
- Stud:** noun; handsome male
- Zip:** noun; nebulous person, zero
- Blow lunch:** verb; to vomit, regurgitate
- Pimp:** verb; to double-cross, let down. Noun; double cross, one who is unfair, or a double-cross
- Touch:** adj.; really good
- Rack:** noun; bed. Verb; to sleep
- F:** noun; one who is socially inferior
- Screamer:** noun; a freewheeling, sometime obnoxious person (depending on situation)
- Flamer:** noun; an obnoxious person
- Gape:** verb; to be caught by surprise, to deviate from normal behavior. Noun; behavior or an act which deviates from the norm
- Blither:** verb; to talk nonsense (often without realizing anyone is listening to what is being said)
- Plowed:** adj.; drunk
- Honked:** adj.; angry
- Nailed:** adj.; very secured, or double-crossed, also caught in the act
- Gut:** noun; something easily done (often used in reference to a course)
- Rally:** verb; to rouse oneself for something
- Ace, Boat, Hook, Dog, Flag:** nouns; grades A,B,C,D,F
- Reek:** verb; emit a quality of unsavoriness
- Brew:** noun; beer
- Spacehead:** noun; empty-headed person
- Unie:** noun; clothes, student union
- Cop out:** verb; to quit at last moment, to accept responsibility and then reject it.
- Hung up:** adj.; emotionally involved to the point of

conflicting with other behavior.

- Hurt:** verb; to be lacking (often in a social sense)
- Pit:** noun; messy room or person
- Zoo:** noun; drunken, wild party
- Horror Show:** noun; drunken party
- Off the wall:** adj.; unaware of reality, emotionally unstable
- Whirlies:** noun; dizzy feeling due to intoxication
- Grubbies:** noun; old clothes
- Mash:** noun; kiss. Verb; to kiss
- Jock:** noun; athletic
- Rents:** noun; parents
- Jerk Job:** noun; something unfavorable that occurred instead of what was expected due to the plotting of someone else
- Blow one's cool:** verb; to lose one's social poise
- Passed:** adv.; having assumed an unconscious state
- Coin or coins:** noun; money
- Toad:** noun; unsavory person
- Ding:** noun; a socially rejected person. Verb; to reject (usually a person)
- Nurd:** noun; a social inferior (*accurate period spelling-Ed.*)
- Total:** verb; to wreck completely
- Totaled:** adv.; completely wrecked or drunk
- Book (it):** verb; to study
- Out of it:** adj.; unaware of the situation, drunk
- Trou:** noun; trousers
- Animal:** noun; extremely crude, physically aggressive person
- Up for grabs:** adj.; euphoric
- Road poppies:** noun; the beer one drinks while driving
- Punt:** verb; to kill time that could be put to better use, to neglect
- Take it in the ear:** verb; to fail or be failed
- Gross:** adj.; crude, unsophisticated
- Cool head:** noun; one who is socially adept
- Blow an hourly:** verb; to perform poorly on an hourly exam
- Bip around:** verb; to socialize

-**Loaded:** adj.; drunk, rich

-**Brownie:** noun; one who patronizes his professors for ulterior motives

-**Thumb it:** verb; to hitchhike

-**Stoned:** adj.; drunk

-**Sweat it:** verb; to worry

-**The Libs:** noun; the library

-**Wimp:** noun; a small, wispy person

-**In the bag:** adj.; drunk

-**Jelly:** noun; one who is indecisive

-**Snowed:** adj.; infatuated

-**Spook:** noun; one who does not make it to the union at least twice a day; one who is different from the norm; an introverted person. Verb; to act obscurely

-**Camp:** adj.; socially acceptable

-**Groovy:** adj.; socially attuned; admired

-**Lit:** adj.; slightly intoxicated

-**Strapped:** adj.; angry

-**Keyed:** adj.; enthusiastically anticipatory

-**Bear:** adj.; difficult (as in a course or exam)

-**Bush:** adj.; unsophisticated

-**Take grief (archaic term: Took gas):** verb; do poorly

-**BBH:** noun; boy back home

-**HTH:** noun; hometown honey

-**Honey:** noun; female

-**Turns me on:** verb; excites, provides enjoyment

-**Out of sight:** adj.; extremely good or bad

-**Teenie bopper:** noun; high schooler

-**Sangy:** noun; sandwich

-**Boss:** adj.; socially attuned, admired

-**Tube:** noun; television

-**Power book:** verb; to study extremely hard

-**All-nighter:** noun; a prolonged study period that prevents the student from getting any sleep

-**Kiss it off:** verb; to dismiss from consideration

-**Gas:** noun; unfavorable comment

-**Clutch:** verb; to experience heightened anxiety culminating in hysterical amnesia and inactivation during periods of distress

-**Faced:** adj.; drunk

-**Primed:** adj.; slight intoxication in preparation for great intoxication

-**Shot:** adj.; physically and/or mentally, emotionally exhausted

-**Looped:** adj.; drunk

-**Blitzed:** adj.; drunk

-**Boozed:** adj.; drunk

-**Chug:** verb; to drink rapidly

-**Hooking:** noun; drinking

-**Good or Bad scene:** noun; pleasing or displeasing activity or behavior

-**Throwing them down:** verb; drinking

-**Turfing:** noun; a warm weather outdoor sport played in mixed teams of two

-**Bad news:** noun; any unpleasing activity

-**Gourd:** noun; head

-**Winner:** noun; a person who is socially adept; something that is displeasing or inept

-**Grins:** noun; fun

-**Drag:** noun; something that stimulates negatively

-**Turkey:** noun; a social inferior

-**Lizard:** noun; a social inferior

-**Tool:** noun; a socially attractive person; a person who can be used by others to do busy work; an intelligent person

-**Face man:** noun; handsome male

-**Townie:** noun; a non-college person

-**Hot for:** adj.; enthusiastic or enamored of

-**Turned on:** adj.; enthusiastically anticipatory

-**Psyched up:** adj.; in a state of heightened anticipation

-**Raw deal:** noun; something that is unfair

-**Got the shaft:** verb; received a "raw deal"

-**Caught it:** verb; "Got the shaft"

-**Bod:** noun; body

-**Bulk, Eats, Monge:** nouns; food

-**Cut out:** verb; to leave

-**Wheels:** noun; car

-**Flake off:** verb; to remove one's presence, to act incongruently

-**Bennys:** noun; beneficial ultraviolet rays

-**Catch some rays:** verb; to sunbathe

-**Ticked:** adj.; angry

-**That's close:** explanation; reply to a statement that someone has just made that is highly unlikely

-**Threads:** noun; clothes

-**Big deal:** noun; something that is unimportant

-**Mickey Mouse:** noun; a creation of Walt Disney; also, busy work, unnecessary or "absurd" ritual

-**Schnockered:** adj.; drunk

-**Hot ticket:** noun; socially desirable woman

-**Fish:** noun; someone who imbibes over-frequently

-**Rack monster:** noun; the hallucination that lures one from studies to a state of sleep

Jerry Hyatt: the last person from the Granville community killed in action

By Kevin Bennett

This article comes from a speech Lt. Col. (ret.) JAG Kevin Bennett gave to over 700 people gathered at the Granville Memorial Day 2014 ceremonies.

Memorial Day is our opportunity to remember those men and women who answered their country's call and more especially to recall those from the local area who went off to war and didn't come back; to briefly reflect what their deaths have meant to us. In that vein I would like to speak for a few moments about a young man by the name of Jerry Hyatt.

He was the son of Betty and Russell Hyatt who lived out on Cherry Valley Road. Jerry was a member of the class of the Granville High School Class of 1967 and I note the presence today of a large number of his classmates who have gathered here to pay tribute to his memory.

By all accounts, Jerry was a quiet and introverted young man who was especially shy and diffident around the young ladies. He did, however, have a wry sense of humor. For those members of the class of 1967 who are still wondering who put the head of a groundhog in the toilet in the girl's room at the old high school senior week, even though your Principal "Buffalo Bob" Wright collared Jim Holt and gave him three whacks with a paddle, the real pranksters were Jerry and his good friend Wayne Bell.

You see, his main loves in high school were hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities-- it was his dream to pursue a career in forestry after graduation. To that end the Granville Kiwanis Club sponsored him to attend forestry camp down in Tar Hollow State Park.

But the affairs of nations often times interfere with the plans of individuals, and such was the case with Jerry Hyatt. Just a few short months after graduation, he received written greetings from the President informing him that he been drafted into the United States Army.

A classmate recalled encountering him in early April 1968 at the now demolished Tiki Bar, which was a short walking distance from Jerry's home. As he was alone and appeared down, she engaged him in conversation. She recalled Jerry stating that it had



Jerry Hyatt

been "the worst day of his life," that earlier that day he had passed the induction physical at a military examination station in Columbus, and that he was to report to Army boot camp within the week.

He also went on to say that he was convinced that he would be sent to the "meat grinder," Viet Nam, and that he had a "strong premonition

that he wouldn't return home alive."

Naturally his friend tried to dispel these dark thoughts, but finally asked whether if he felt that strongly had he considered going underground and making his way to Canada. Jerry immediately rejected that stating he didn't want to be known as a draft dodger and do something which would bring shame to his family.

On Thanksgiving Day 1968 Jerry Hyatt celebrated his 20th birthday and also landed in Vietnam, where he was assigned as a light machine gunner in the 5th Infantry Division. The following April he was out on patrol with his unit in Northern Quang Tri Province when a soldier in front of him tripped on a land mine. Some of the flying shrapnel hit Jerry. He recovered and eventually returned to duty with his unit but was under no illusions about the war. In a letter home dated Aug. 1, 1969 he wrote "Dad, this war is a waste, the people don't want us here. During the day they act like our friends, at night, they shoot at us. They are playing both sides."

A week later, Jerry was again out on patrol when his platoon stumbled into an enemy ambush. He was ordered to set up position and lay down a protective covering fire while casualties were extricated and the rest of his unit retreated a short distance to regroup in the rear. Several other soldiers were posted on flanks to provide protection. Unfortunately, after just a few moments these soldiers lost their nerve and fled to the rear leaving Jerry alone ... and vulnerable. In a few

Granville Historical Society 2013 Volunteer List

The Board of Managers expresses heartfelt thanks to the following individuals who contributed many volunteer hours to ensure the success of the Society's

programs, publications, archives, collections, and educational efforts, as well as upkeep for our buildings and grounds and staffing the museum in 2013.

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minutes enemy combatants were able to infiltrate close ... a flurry of hand grenades ... followed by a sharp blast of shrapnel ... and Jerry Hyatt breathed his last.

Jerry Michael Hyatt, aged 20, the last member of the Granville community to be killed in action on the field of battle. A young man who lost it all before life had really begun.

While this may seem to many to be the classic example of the waste and tragedy of war, and in many respects it is--the un-lived life, the unborn children, the unfulfilled promise -- and yet, there is a deeper meaning, that this son of Granville, who despite his deep misgivings and doubts about the war and why he was there ... kept faith with his fellow soldiers. That when the moment of crisis came, he possessed the personal integrity to stay and fight to help protect his fellow soldiers even though some of them had cut and run leaving him to his cruel fate.

His personal sacrifice for his fellow soldiers on that steaming hot August day in Vietnam in effect became a

sacrifice for the rest of us as well...and the rest of us ought to think about that.

On this Memorial Day 2014 we remember Jerry Hyatt, and in doing so we keep not only in our minds but in our hearts as well the widowed mother who still grieves the loss of her only son and the kid sister, only ten at the time of his passing, who never really got the chance to know her big brother. For it is only when we personalize not only the sacrifice of the soldier but that of the family and the loved ones left behind that we can truly understand and appreciate the significance of Memorial Day.

Kevin Bennett is immediate past President of the Granville Historical Society. He is a frequent contributor to *The Historical Times* and was named Historian of the Year by the Society in 2012.

The dark side of Granville

Some cases still provoke
powerful emotion, outrage

This is the last of three installments of "The Dark Side of Granville," written by Kevin Bennett, outlining the history of murder in the community.

1979 - Don't Ever Let Them out of Prison!

The Roberta Peters Killing

In researching and writing about various murder cases, one can easily fall into the trap of being too clinical and dispassionate about these very human tragedies, especially in regards to chronologically older cases. There are cases however, that can still arouse powerful emotional responses and outrage. The brutal killing of Roberta Ann Peters in September, 1979 is one of those. It is the sad story of a young and promising life being senselessly snuffed out by a couple of low-life career criminals whose actions provide a compelling argument for the death penalty.

Roberta Peters, 23, hailed from Tucson, Arizona. A recent college graduate, she had met Andrew "Andy" Merkle of Granville in August 1979 while both were vacationing at a resort in Michigan. Deeply attracted to each other, they maintained contact and in early September she arrived in Granville. She was invited to stay at the Merkle home located in a rural area of Granville Township off State Route 16. Andy, a recent Denison University graduate soon to attend law school, lived in the country house with his mother, Margaret Merkle. In addition to continuing her romantic relationship, Peters was actively pursuing employment in the local area as a teacher and association with a local symphony orchestra as she was a gifted oboe player.

Life seemed full of promise for the couple until September 20, 1979. The day began with an air of excitement at the Merkle homestead. Margaret Merkle was awaiting a number of her family members to accompany her to view the Old Brown Jug, a premier harness racing event in nearby Delaware, Ohio. The family had a long history of involvement in that sport and the house was filled with numerous silver trophies, plates and other memorabilia associated



Recent prison photos of Paul Duncan (L)
and Daniel Graham (R)

with harness racing. Although usually attending this event, on this occasion Andy declined citing a pressing need to tend to some rental property repair over in the German Village area of Columbus. Roberta also demurred and indicated that she was going to help out by doing some general housecleaning at the Merkle home.

Unbeknownst to them was that the Merkle home had been targeted by a couple of serial burglars, Paul Lee Duncan 52, and Daniel Graham 33, who had plans to break into the home and steal valuables that morning. Graham had received a "tip" from an undisclosed source at the racetrack that the Merkle home would be a "big score". More importantly, the source informed him that it was certain the house would be empty as the Merckles traditionally attended the Little Brown Jug event. The information provided was detailed down to the point that Graham expressed disappointment that he would be unable to steal a valuable ring that "the old lady would probably wear to the race". During the late morning hours they drove their cargo van down the winding Merkle driveway to the largely secluded house.

Entering the home, they soon encountered Roberta Peters who was busily engaged in cleaning in the kitchen area. Startled, she cried out "Who are you" before grasping her danger. She then ran out one door chased by Paul Duncan who was armed with a .38 revolver. He quickly caught her and forcibly dragged her by the hair back inside the kitchen. Terrified, she begged for her life but to no avail. Having seen their faces, Duncan and Graham didn't want to leave any witnesses to their crime. Duncan grabbed a small terry cloth from the kitchen counter wrapped it around the muzzle, forced Peters to her knees and then placing the muzzled weapon to her left temple fired a round

into her head. The two criminals then exchanged a few sharp words as Graham voiced his disappointment that he had not been allowed to sexually assault the girl prior to her killing. Duncan later stated that he came close to killing Graham at that time but refrained from doing so because police suspected the two worked together and leaving his body behind would probably implicate him too.

A bedspread was obtained from Mrs. Merkle's bedroom and it was used as a sling to carry the lifeless body outside. In a nearby ravine, they tossed the body down into a large bramble thicket. They then commenced to loot the house, making off with over \$70,000 worth of silver trophies and plate. After leaving, they apparently reflected that the murder aspect made the stolen goods dangerous if traced back. They drove south and threw the items and the murder weapon into the Ohio River. Several days later they embarked to Portage, Michigan to burgle another location they had been tipped on.

Upon returning home around 3:30 p.m., Andy Merkle became alarmed when he noted the presence of blood in the kitchen and porch and was unable to find Peters. After a number of anguished phone calls, he searched the grounds before discovering her body. Police investigators hit a standstill early on although there was some suspicion of Duncan and Graham. The case went unsolved for years.

Then there were some breaks that developed in the case. A portion of the stolen property was later discovered by two barge workers on the Ohio River. Next, several parties came forward and indicated that Duncan and Graham had told them at different times about the burglary and murder. First, a former girlfriend of Graham who was in custody for unrelated charges, revealed that Graham had told her his version of what had occurred during the Merkle robbery. When Paul Duncan later learned that Graham had blabbed the story, he spent months trying to track the woman down so he could silence her. Accompanying him on one of these trips was a nephew, who occasionally assisted in some minor criminal activities. During the trip, Duncan related the story of the killing and the need to find and dispose of Graham's ex-girlfriend. Later, the nephew was arrested during the course of a burglary and he came to blame Duncan for his capture, believing he had been set up. In hopes of securing a more lenient sentence, he related the grisly tale of Paul Duncan's role in executing Roberta Peters



Nancy Walick

to police.

By the time sufficient evidence was compiled, both Duncan and Graham were already serving prison time. Both were convicted in 1995 on federal racketeering and conspiracy charges, Duncan receiving a 40 year sentence, Graham 15 years. Finally, in 1997 they were both charged and indicted for the murder of

Roberta Ann Peters and were convicted by a Licking County jury on October 7, 1997, eighteen years, two weeks and two days after the crime was committed. Both received a sentence of 20 years to life. Both are still incarcerated and come up for parole hearings in March 2021. Hopefully, common sense will prevail and they will remain locked away for the remainder of their miserable lives.

Nancy Walick - Purely Random Murder

Nancy Walick had a bright future ahead of her. Recently graduated from Kent State University, the vivacious and attractive 23 year old former beauty queen had commenced her first full time job as a sales representative for R.J. Reynolds Company. She originally came from Parma, Ohio, a member of a close knit ethnic Croatian-Slovak family, her father being a successful attorney. Tragedy had recently struck the Walick family, her younger brother Jim had accidentally drowned while on a summer church outing. Still, Nancy was moving on with her life and her parents had just helped her to move into what they deemed a "safe" apartment complex in Columbus. On May 9, 1984 her life was to unfortunately intersect with a force of malevolence, Dale R. Diehl.

Diehl's life to date stood in stark contrast to that of Walick's. He had just turned 18 but had accumulated a juvenile record and involvement with the local courts that signaled that he constituted a serious threat to others. He grew up in the small rural village of Homer, Ohio, a place whose residents are justly proud of the historic personages that lived there such as the Rosecrans brothers and Victoria Woodhull. Undoubtedly, Homer residents would rather forget about Dale Diehl. Consistently in and out of trouble while attending Northridge Schools, he only completed the ninth grade. Cited as "having a long series of

problems relating to others", school officials became so frustrated with his behavior that they began isolating him from the other students. His behavioral problems rose to the level that the Juvenile Court system intervened and yanked him out of his family home on several occasions placing him in Ohio Youth Commission facilities for extended periods. Prior to reaching 18, his rap sheet included a juvenile delinquency record that included burglary, theft, forgery, public masturbation and numerous reports of socially aggressive and inappropriate behavior.

Having turned 18 in late April 1984, Diehl had no employment and was living out of his parent's residence in Homer. On Tuesday May 8th, he drove his hooty '73 Chevy Vega to nearby Mt. Vernon to spend the day drinking beer, smoking dope, and slumming around with a couple of other slack-jawed yokels. During this trip he flashed around a .22 caliber aluminum plated revolver, startling his companions when he brandished it at them on several occasions. He offered to sell it to them but was evasive as to how he had procured it. It was later determined that the pistol was stolen. Later that afternoon Diehl left the abode he had been partying at as its occupant was expecting a visit from a married woman and he made it clear that he didn't want Diehl around. He then proceeded to a shopping mall on the east side of Mt. Vernon and proceeded to a checkout counter in the J. C. Penney store. He subtly flashed his pistol and demanded cash from the surprised female clerk. Taking around \$200 cash, he quickly departed the store, jumped into his car and drove to the nearby home of a friend, Dan Huffman. That night the two partied on the money that Diehl had obtained in his robbery.

The following morning Diehl decided he would continue his nascent career as an adult criminal and drove south arriving at the parking lot of the Sears store in Heath, Ohio. Around 10 a.m., a local married woman and her young daughter were out shopping for dresses and were returning to her van in the Sears parking lot. After seating her daughter and buckling her in, she proceeded to the other side of the van. She had just opened the driver's door when Dale Diehl quickly came up behind her. With a mother's instinctive reaction she hit the automatic door lock and closed the door. Diehl then pulled back his jacket to show his pistol and directed her to get into the van. Exhibiting composure and quick thinking she calmly

told Diehl that her small daughter was not feeling well, that she needed to take her to the doctor that he looked like a nice guy and would understand. She went on to tell him that maybe they could meet some other time. Diehl then made a number of remarks regarding her foot and toes, asked her to take off her shoes



Dale Diehl, shortly after his arrest.

whereupon he began kissing her foot and licking her toes, all the time keeping a menacing hand on the pistol tucked in his waistband. He then indicated his intent to engage in further sexual acts. She calmly stated that she did not want to perform in this type of activity in public view and suggested going to the loading dock area of the Sears building. Before he could respond she began walking at a fast pace towards Sears and beckoned him to follow. He tried to stop her by getting to the Sears entrance first but she was able to reach the door first. As she entered the second door she immediately screamed for help. With this, Diehl pulled up short and fled the area on foot back to his car. The moxie and clear thinking demonstrated by the woman that morning probably saved her and her daughter's life.

Dale Diehl then drove over towards Granville, eventually parking his vehicle in the large parking lot outside of the local Ross' IGA grocery store just south of the village.

Inside the store, Nancy Walick was conferring with Gregg Ross about merchandising R.J. Reynolds cigarettes. Around 11:45 a.m. she went back out into the parking lot to get some promotional material from the 1981 Ford wagon that the company had leased for her. She clearly intended to return as she left behind several work notebooks. Seeing her busily engaged in retrieving materials from her car, Dale Diehl converged on his prey and again utilizing his pistol, ordered her into the car and to drive away with him.

What occurred over the next 45 minutes will never be known to a certainty as it ended with Nancy Walick dead, dumped on Canyon Road with a bullet wound to the head. The only other witness, Diehl, has never been closely wedded to the truth. Evidence from the police

investigation reveals that she drove Diehl southwards eventually coming to a stop in a relatively secluded rural area. Several vehicles passed and noted their presence. One thought they were a couple out for some necking. Another truck, driven by a local farmer, passed around 12:15 PM and saw the station wagon parked alongside the road with the driver's door open. Diehl was standing outside by the door looking in. Nancy Walick was lying down on the seat with her feet towards Diehl. According to the witness, she still appeared to be alive and moving. This was the last Nancy Walick was seen alive. About 15 minutes later another vehicle came along and observed her body sprawled out on Canyon Road, her head lying in a pool of blood from a wound delivered at close range to her left forehead. She was fully clothed but shoeless.

Diehl then fled the area in Walick's car. He did not get far. Travelling north back towards Granville, he lost control of the vehicle on James Road, clipping a mailbox and shearing a telephone pole. Abandoning the car, he walked and was eventually able to hitch a ride from a couple of locals back to Jenkin's Sunoco station. From there it appears that he made his way to his vehicle and drove home.

Police response was rapid and a possible connection to the Heath incident was quickly drawn. A massive manhunt utilizing helicopters was conducted in the area surrounding the abandoned car but with no success. When news of the murder spread, various witnesses came forward including the two women who had given Diehl a ride to the Sunoco station. His physical description was quickly passed on to other law enforcement agencies around the state.

The next day Diehl drove to Mt. Vernon and picked up his friend Dan Huffman. They then made their way to Columbus for a day of carousing; again using the money Diehl had robbed from the J.C. Penney's in Mt. Vernon. That evening they were driving south along High Street in Columbus when a police cruiser noticed that Diehl's car was operating in an erratic manner. They commenced a pursuit. Diehl, who had been drinking, attempted to conceal the .22 caliber pistol by placing it under his seat while driving. His reactions impaired by alcohol, this action caused him to drive up over the curb and to hit a light pole. He was arrested at the scene and cited for Operating a Motor Vehicle while Intoxicated and Carrying a Concealed Weapon. His friend was released. As it was Friday night, he was held in custody over the weekend until he could be arraigned on Monday morning. A Columbus Police

Officer, being aware of the alert, had pictures of Diehl sent over to Licking County. The pictures were then shared with the various witnesses and Diehl was positively identified.

Detectives from the Licking County Sheriff's Department went over to take custody of Diehl on Monday morning. In what had to be a frustrating incident, they arrived about an hour after Diehl posted his \$150 bond, again using money obtained from the robbery. In reaction, his residence in Homer was put under surveillance and when word arrived that he had finally returned home that night, a team of officers descended around 10 PM. Diehl was discovered cowering in a closet and arrested.

Meanwhile the heartrending news was conveyed to the Walick family in Parma. As noted, they were still recovering from the recent tragic death of their son. It is difficult to conceive of the shock of such an event, especially after they believed that their child was ensconced in a safe environment. Her father spoke of the family being "completely numb". In speaking of Diehl he could only state "He doesn't know the pain that he has caused this family". Dismay and fearful concern were the local reactions. The totally random nature of the crime spooked Granville citizens and the local police station received dozens of calls that day. Some were to provide tips on supposed sightings or strangers observed in the area, others were inquiries on whether it was safe to use the bike trail or be out on the streets. Denison professor Don Bonar recalled that everyone had the "willies", that no one thought that anything like this could happen in Granville. Long time resident Laura Evans stated that she was now locking her house which she had never done before. She observed that people were watching their children more closely, that there was a level of worry, mainly because there was little anyone could do.

Incredibly, even after his arrest, Dale Diehl was not yet finished with victimizing others and creating mayhem. In late May 1984 he pretended to ingest some oil based paint while on a work detail at the jail and he was rushed to the hospital. Examination showed no evidence of paint in his system and it was marked down to an episode of attention getting. He was also unsettling to a number of other inmates in the County Jail, constantly bragging about how easy



Freddie Wampler listens as the verdict of guilty is handed down for the killing of Darrell Sponseller. In the background, Elizabeth Sponseller glowers at her husband's killer.

it was to kill someone. That this was not idle chatter was demonstrated by his escape attempt while awaiting trial on the murder charge. First he was able to break a piece of metal off a weight bench provided for inmates which he then fashioned into a "shiv". He then convinced several other inmates to take pages from a phonebook and paperbacks and stuff them into the recesses of the cell locks to prevent them from completely closing. Then during the night of November 2, 1984 he and his compatriots opened their cell doors and attempted to leave their area. Upon encountering Deputy Paul Rine, the others blocked his path while Diehl starting viciously striking Rine about the head and face with a mop handle. Knocking him to the floor, Diehl then stabbed Rine in the neck with his "shiv" seriously injuring him. The escape attempt was quickly foiled as other officers responded and an automatic lockdown was triggered.¹

Finally Dale Diehl was brought to justice and in 1985 was convicted of Aggravated Murder, Escape, Robbery and other offenses. He received a life sentence and will be eligible for parole in August 2033.

1990 - Not a Good Idea to Watch Porn with your Mother-in-Law: The Slaying of Darrell Sponseller

The new year of 1990 was barely four hours old when the usual tranquility of Granville was shattered by a drunken argument that resulted in the fatal shooting of Darrell Sponseller. Shot squarely in the forehead, he lingered on for several days in a Columbus hospital before he was definitively declared brain dead and disconnected from life support. The story of how Darrell Sponseller came to be the last killing in the Granville community is a pathetic and

unsavory one.

Sponseller lived out in the old Aileen Duncan house on Burg Street, leasing the property. He was employed at Jenkins Sunoco. He was recently married to Elizabeth Marshall Sponseller and had two children from a previous relationship. By most accounts Darrell was an average sort of fellow and a good worker...when he was sober. When he was intoxicated, he was an individual you did not want to be around. Local police reports and neighborhood accounts reveal a person who would frequently drink to excess and then stagger around the area in various states of undress. Neighbors were alarmed by his unprovoked yelling and belligerent behavior. One local lady recounted that just a few days before the shooting that Sponseller was out at the end of his driveway attired only in boxer shorts behaving in a very agitated manner. The weather was below freezing at the time. As she drove by with a friend in her car, he began chasing the car on foot for some unknown reason, screaming and gesticulating with his fists. This was not an isolated incident.

On New Year's Eve of 1989 Sponseller and his wife Elizabeth planned to go out partying to celebrate. They were to be joined by Elizabeth's mother, Linda Faye Marshall and her out-of-state boyfriend, Freddie Wampler. This couple arrived at the Sponseller home late that afternoon and commenced drinking, waiting for Darrell's shift to end at 6 P.M. After getting off work and changing, the quartet drove over to the Old Towne Bar in Newark. Finding it overcrowded, they decided to go to a local dive called the Salty Dog Saloon, an establishment that one police officer described as making the current Jugz Bar look like a high class establishment in comparison. Over the course of the next six hours they continued to usher out the old year by imbibing in their favorite adult beverages. Their stay at the Salty Dog was not without incident. Darrell encountered an old female acquaintance and had a brief conversation. That did not sit well with Elizabeth for she later got up to talk with a man she knew. Their conversation, overheard by Darrell was such that he perceived that the two had been sexually intimate in the past. This angered Darrell. He became surly and his mood darkened with each progressive drink.

When the Salty Dog closed at 2 PM, the group decided to go to Frisch's Restaurant in Heath where Darrell's mother worked as a cook. Their presence became problematic as they engaged in loud,

boisterous behavior, annoying the staff and other patrons. The restaurant night manager requested they tone it down but to no avail. Frustrated, he asked Sponseller's mother to see if she could have a calming effect. Otherwise, he was going to toss them out. Apparently, her plea had some impact, for they were able to finish their early morning meal. One suspects that everyone in Frisch's breathed a collective sigh of relief when they finally departed.

Arriving back at the Burg Street home somewhere between 3 - 3:30 AM, the group continued to drink and there were suggestions of marijuana use. For entertainment, an adult sex tape was viewed. Somewhere during the movie, Darrell made some wisecrack about one of the "actresses" in the movie resembling another daughter of Linda Faye Marshall. She took offense at this impolitic remark and an argument broke out between the two. Before long, the argument seems to have branched off into other subjects and became something of a free for all involving all of the parties. Around 4:30 AM, Linda's boyfriend, Freddie Wampler, was growing increasingly irritated with Darrell Sponseller. He went outside to his car and retrieved a loaded .25 caliber pistol from the glovebox. He then returned inside and standing a few feet away, pulled the trigger and put a slug into Darrell Sponseller's head.

It took a few minutes for the impact of this action to sink in. Initially Darrell appeared to be dead but a light pulse and labored breathing indicated otherwise. The house contained no phone so the two women determined to drive down to the Certified gas station where a pay phone booth was located. After placing a call to police they returned to the Burg Street home to find Darrell still breathing. During this time Freddie elected to set out on foot to seek haven somewhere. He made his way to the nearby Denison campus which was largely empty due to the holiday break. Whether from discomfort or confusion, he later doubled back and hid himself in the garage behind the Sponseller residence. A recent snowfall made tracking his footsteps relatively easy.

When police arrived, they reported that Elizabeth was shrieking uncontrollably. Her mother appeared calm and took Elizabeth outside to try and calm her. Or so police thought. After returning from the phone call, Linda Marshall attempted something of a cover up. She tried to hide the murder weapon as well as to alter the crime scene. There was suspicion that she

was trying to further coach her daughter on what to tell the police. The initial focus of the responding officers was to assess the medical condition of Darrell and to have him transported immediately to a Columbus hospital. Once this was concluded they commenced taking statements and as facts developed, searched for Freddie Wampler. He was easily tracked to the garage where he surrendered without a struggle.

As the investigation developed, evidence came forward that Freddie Wampler was less than an ideal citizen.

With past convictions for distributing illegal drugs, breaking and entering, burglary and conspiracy to injure a federal officer, he had recently been released from a federal prison and placed on probation for several firearms related offenses. The terms of his probation prohibited him from travelling outside of Virginia and to have no contact with firearms. He claimed that the killing of Darrell Sponseller was in self-defense.

That defense started becoming unglued in March 1990 when Linda Faye Marshall was convicted for tampering with evidence and received a 1 year sentence at the Women's Reformatory in Marysville. Other evidence disproved his contention of being locked in a close struggle with Darrell Sponseller. The case went to trial in July 1990 and Wampler was found guilty of manslaughter receiving a 10-25 year sentence along with an additional 3 year sentence for using a firearm. He has subsequently been released.

OTHER CASES OF NOTE

In addition to the ten cases listed previously, there were several other incidents of violent death that were connected to or which impacted the local community. While not meeting the criteria of being a murder that occurred in the community, they merit brief mention.

Tragedy Strikes the Avery Family

In March 1937 tragic and almost unbelievable news reached Granville. Anna Avery Arthur, daughter of Allen and Ida Avery, a distinguished Granville family line, had been shot and killed at her home in Tacoma, Washington. Slain along with her were two daughters, 15 year old Mary Ann and 12 year old Janet. As facts emerged, the murders were at the hands of her husband, James M. Arthur who

committed suicide afterwards.

Anna Avery had married James Arthur, a dashing Depauw University graduate whom she met while living in Columbus. Shortly after marriage they moved to Los Angeles, California where he pursued a successful career as a tire company executive. In September 1936 he moved the family to a spacious home on the shore of Lake Steilacoom, near Tacoma, Washington.

What occasioned the March 1937 killings cannot be stated for certain, family sources were quoted as saying that James Arthur had suffered a nervous breakdown. In any event, the manner in which he planned and carried out the deed was chilling.

On March 17th, James Arthur shot and killed his wife Anna in the home that afternoon using a .25 caliber pistol he had recently purchased. Waiting for his two daughters to arrive home from school, he then shot them as well. He then carefully washed the bodies, re-dressed them and placed them in beds in a second floor bedroom. He then composed a note directing that notification of the deaths be made to his brother, sister and to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Ida Avery of Granville. Sitting down in a living room chair he placed a telephone call to the local funeral home requesting that they send a hearse to his address. James Arthur then placed the muzzle of the pistol in his mouth and fired. He was found by the ambulance attendants slumped in the chair. Lying beside him were the pistol and numerous family pictures which he had yanked from their frames and torn or crumpled.

The remains of the family were cremated and shipped to Granville where they were interred together in the Avery family plot at Maple Grove Cemetery. A headstone stands there as a sad memorial to this family tragedy.

Mother-in-Law Beware. Or Buckshot in the Backside!

The summer of 1964 witnessed another episode of bloody violence in the small community that was still reeling from the recent slaying of the Leisure parents. On a hot July night, a marriage that was defined by years of domestic violence climaxed in a shooting that left two women wounded and the gunman dead.

Paul Steele was a former Marine who had served in the Pacific during World War II. Whether his

wartime experiences had adversely affected him is open to speculation but over the years he increasingly turned to alcohol. According to those who knew him, he was not a person you wanted to be around when drinking. Neighbors described him as a moody, violent person. He married Mary Lou Williams in 1950. She was the daughter of the famed local football coach and educator Harvey Williams and his wife Imo. The marriage produced five children but it was a stormy one with repeated reports of violence. Mary Lou filed for divorce on three different occasions but withdrew the first two. She filed for the last time on April 2, 1964. Paul Steele moved out into a small paint shed that was located in the rear of their home on Granger Street.

On the night of July 21st, he attempted to again reconcile with his wife but his overtures were rejected. Apparently he then retired to the paint shed and began to reflect on his situation while consuming alcohol. Shortly after midnight he began yelling for his wife, strode to the front door and broke the glass in the door. As his wife approached the door he reached through the broken glass and grabbed her by the arm. Forcing her outside, he began dragging her by the arm towards the paint shed. A pistol was tucked into his pants. The noise awoke a number of the neighbors, one of whom was his now widowed mother-in law, Imo Williams, who lived two doors down the street. Also awakened was his oldest daughter Paula. She went outside and begged her father to let her mother go and to leave her alone. Fearing for her daughter's safety, Mary Lou pleaded Paula to go back inside. As she started back to the house, Paul Steele pulled out a .25 caliber pistol. Mary Lou broke away from him and started for the house. He then shot at her, hitting her in the arm.

As noted there were a number of neighbors outside observing this drama with horror. Alarmed for her daughter and grandchildren, Mrs. Imo Williams began shouting for help. Now distracted, Paul Steele noticed her, reached in the shed and grabbed a loaded 12 gauge shotgun. He then ran to the corner of the house towards his mother-in-law yelling "I'll get you too". He then discharged the weapon at Mrs. Williams. Most of the load of #2 buckshot went astray, but a fair number of pellets struck her in the backside as she was fleeing. She made it to the nearby Cherry home which took her in. Steele then commenced to firing the remaining rounds in his revolver at the Cherry house. Upon

expending his pistol ammunition he returned to the paint shed. There he removed his shoes, placed the barrel of the shotgun under his chin and pulled the trigger with his toes. As a general rule, suicides are an intensely sad, private matter, however, by his actions that evening, it seems clear that Paul Steele was in a murderous state of mind and Granville barely avoided it second multiple murder that year.

The Unsolved Mystery of Michelle Dawson

The morning of November 7, 1996 dawned damp and cold in the Granville area. For a resident on James Road it was to be a memorable if alarming one. Lying near his driveway in a muddy field was the naked body of a dead woman. It took investigators a while to determine the identity of this woman; it took even longer to definitively determine the cause of death. What has never been answered is where she died, the exact circumstances, and who was responsible.

It was eventually determined that the remains were those of Michelle Dawson, a 36 year black woman from Columbus. One of nine siblings, she had two children of her own. According to her mother, Michelle became involved with drugs during her teen-age years. Despite several stints in rehabilitation she was unable to shake her addictions. Concurrent with her drug habit was resorting to prostitution on the streets of Columbus to help pay for drugs. While her mother vehemently denied this aspect of her daughter's life to the media, Michelle's conviction and arrest record said otherwise.

The last her mother saw of Michelle was on the morning of November 7th. The daughter stopped by to ask for \$30 from her mother. This request was refused and Michelle left the apartment. No one knows what occurred over the next 18 hours but perhaps the mother summed it up best when she stated "She got in the wrong car with the wrong person".

There was considerable investigation into the exact cause of her death. Toxicology reports indicated that she had high levels of cocaine and other drugs in her system. The initial conclusion was that she had died of a drug overdose. Certainly the levels found could have caused death. There were however, visible marks of restraints having been on her wrists and ankles as well as compression marks on her neck. There were also signs of recent sexual

activity of a rather unusual sort. Investigators were puzzled. Was this a case of murder by strangulation or was it a case of rough sex play gone awry? Was she purposely fed a toxic level of drugs or did she ingest them of her own accord? Did this occur in the Columbus and then the body callously dumped in another jurisdiction? Unfortunately, these questions are unlikely to ever be definitively answered. About the most that can be hoped for is that the good Lord will hold Michelle's troubled soul closely in his hands and that she has found the peace and happiness that eluded her in this world.

Conclusion

The casual observer reading this account might well form the impression that the Granville area is one prone to incidents of violent crime. Nothing could be further from the truth. The cited incidents are truly aberrations from the everyday flow of life in this community. While there have been significant changes in the nature and demographics of the community over the years, Granville was and still is a great place to live and raise children. Some may question the need to recount these unpleasant events, a point not without some merit. Always mindful of the potential to cause pain to those directly impacted by the outlined events, it is a difficult undertaking to balance of what is essential to tell the story accurately while at the same time excluding that which only serves to shock or titillate. History needs to be kept alive and recounted, no matter how ugly it sometimes is. We do this so that we have a better understanding of past and the reactions of people that were confronted by these situations.

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