



# THE HISTORICAL TIMES

Quarterly of the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society

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## SHADYSIDE SAVED



**Shadyside, the formerly forlorn, dilapidated house on Granville's far east side, gives passers-by a sign of relief with its new look. Donna and Ken Yeager, responsible for the restoration-renovation, are pictured.**

*All photos from Ken and Donna Yeager*

### Ambitious restoration gives pioneer home new life

**By CHARLES A. PETERSON**

Ken and Donna Yeager have never seen a dilapidated house they didn't love. And for the Village of Granville, that passion saved a pioneer home that would surely have fallen to the wrecking ball had they not intervened.

The couple told their story of restoration and

renovation in a program entitled "Effort to Save Shadyside" last Nov. 30 as the program for the Granville Historical Society's annual meeting.

Their obsession for restoring old rundown homes started in 1982 before they were even married. When Ken and Donna were first dating they heard about a Self Help Housing group, a Federal Housing



**Donna Yeager cleaned up 2,500 salvaged bricks from demolished sections of Shadyside as she and husband Ken tackled the restoration project.**

Administration program, through Ken's cousin. Donna joined and signed on as a single individual to help build a house on Mount Vernon Road between Newark and St. Louisville. But she needed a partner, and Ken agreed to join in. Before the year was over, halfway through their project, they were married in the Church of St. Edward the Confessor in Granville, Ken's hometown.

Donna, a Newark native who is a Senior Accountant at Wilson Shannon and Snow in Newark, had already learned much about the building trade — “digging ditches and slopping stuff on walls,” she said — through her father, Bernard Baker, a contractor in Licking County. “I knew all aspects of building,” she related to their Historical Society audience. The couple learned even more lessons in Self Help Housing, she said. “We did everything but drywall and carpet – and foundation,” Donna said. “We learned how to do electrical and plumbing. Very good experience.”

After finishing that first house in March 1983, they eventually decided they needed a bigger place and wanted to be “closer to town” in Newark, so they spotted a rough-looking rental on West Main Street in Newark and purchased it in 1986. After starting a family in 1987 and needing more room, they found the 1870s-vintage Swisher Home on Franklin Avenue in Newark. After fixing three gas leaks and 19 broken windows, in order to move in, they then set out to complete a full restoration.

Not long after, they found a home that didn't need work, a good thing since Ken was working on a doctorate degree at The Ohio State University, where he is currently a professor in the College of Medicine and is the David E. Schuller Professor for Patient Compassion. They stayed in that residence for 20 years.

### **BITTEN BY THE BUG AGAIN**

After noticing the dilapidated structure on the eastern end of the Church of Latter Day Saints property at 2486 Newark-Granville Road in September 2019, during several trips in and out of Granville, the restoration bug bit the Yeagers again.

“Donna and I had driven up and down Newark-Granville Road,” Ken said, “and I don't think any time that we drove by that house I didn't say, ‘For God's sake, why doesn't somebody save that house? Why doesn't somebody do something with it?’.” “We'd say, ‘It's a beautiful home,’” Donna added.

After Ken spotted a For Sale sign in the yard the couple called Realtor Jim Bidigare to arrange a walk-through. Donna said, “Here we go again”! The property included 6.5 acres with the home. Since the Yeagers wanted only a house and yard, Bidigare assisted in working with the Village of Granville and the trio spent a year attending meetings, negotiating, and working with the Latter Day Saints organization. They eventually bought the house on 2.5 acres split out from the larger parcel — a long, narrow lot south from Newark Granville Road. The Village of Granville took the balance of the acreage and set it aside as greenspace.

The couple's first look at the property was intimidating, Ken said. “Let me ask you a question,” he said to their Historical Society audience. “If you come upon a house, even a cool house like this, and there's a six-foot fence around it that says ‘Keep Out’,



**This is how the west side of Shadyside looked as the Yeagers approached their first walk-through of the property, with numerous Keep Out signs circling the place.**

why in the hell wouldn't you keep out?" Envisioning and fearing continued deterioration of the structure, the gargantuan cost of a rehab, and the prospect of being arrested for trespassing inside the fence, he said, "There are a lot of good reasons not to go inside that fence, but I couldn't help myself."

As for Donna, Ken recalled: "She's looking at it. She's not smiling."

The couple learned a lot about the history of the house from a book, *Request to Spare Shadyside – A Quest to Preserve History in the Present Day*. It was written by Gill Wright Miller of Granville, a great-great-great-great-granddaughter of its builders, Granville pioneer William Spencer Wright and his wife, Julia Ann Brown in 1820-21. William Wright came to Granville with his family at the age of two. His home was one of only 13 brick homes in the Granville vicinity at the time, Ken said, and was 2.5 miles from the center of the village. Gill Wright Miller's efforts including her book were the first steps toward saving the edifice from destruction.

"Just to put this in perspective, Napoleon Bonaparte was still alive when this house was built,"

Ken said.

While it took a year to buy the property, it took another year to get demolition completed to start the building/rebuilding processes. After interviewing several construction companies and wanting to hire a local contractor, they hired C.L. Mays Construction.

### **STARTING FROM SCRATCH**

As it stood, the original structure had two stories plus an 800-square-foot one-story section in the rear, and a two-story addition on its east side built on in 1900.

The back section, which included a brick fireplace and chimney, were severely damaged by the elements, however. "A tree had gone down through the roof many years before that left it open to the elements." Ken said the home had been exposed to the elements for 13 years. The good news: doors and beams were rescued, and the back section was rebuilt on the same footprint, with the addition of a bathroom the only change.

"At this point the fun begins, right?" Ken said.

Adding to the challenges, he said, was a health department edict giving the couple three days to tear down the back of the house. Having already lined up someone for the job, they pleaded that it couldn't be done that quickly. It took a week, Ken said. Fortunately, no fine was issued.

Adding to the challenges was the fact that the couple had to move into the house well before it was finished, on New Year's Eve 2021, after the unit they were renting was sold out from under them. "It was literally camping indoors," Donna said.

The first tough decision came when the fireplace and chimney and the brick wall in the back where the new kitchen is now couldn't be saved.

"We worked diligently to save the fireplace and keep it where it was," Ken said, "and to keep that back wall brick. But the fireplace was just precariously perched upon stones. The idea of rebuilding the inside of the chimney and building a concrete form around those stones - costing about \$13,000 — we said that's not in the budget. We're



**The brick from the fireplace and back wall (above) that could not be saved were salvaged and reused on the west side of the original section of the house.**



**A photo of the back section of Shadyside prior to the renovation shows the dreadful impact of the elements on the kitchen in the original back section, which was razed as the restoration work began.**

going to lose the fireplace and the back wall."

"We were going to try to keep that wall and build around it, but it was so unstable we decided it all had to come down," Donna added.

The brick from the back wall was put to good use, however. As part of the program's slide presentation, Ken introduced a photo saying, "This is my beautiful wife. When we took down this brick wall she cleaned 2,500 bricks. What's more, she found three bricks that had the thumb print of the person who made them." The salvaged brick were set aside and are now a part of the exterior brick wall along the west side of the home down to the garage and were included in a new fireplace in the one-story back section. There's still one small pile of the brick left for a future project.

The original back section is now a sitting area with the fireplace and a kitchen. To the left of the kitchen is the dining room made from a three-season

room that former owner-occupants Nancy Rush and her then-husband John Noecker added when they lived there during the 1970s and '80s. Flooring here is made up of 150- to 200-year-old reclaimed barn siding that Ken sourced from Mel Howard, a Granville resident. The basement under the original two-story section, meanwhile, features walls with stacked stone from a quarry behind the Bryn Du Mansion. Beneath the main first-floor fireplace is a gargantuan stone that is 8 feet long, 24 inches deep and 17 inches thick. The basement ceiling also has hand-hewn beams. "The beams in the basement still have the bark on them from 200 years ago," Ken said.

### **PRESERVING THE ORIGINAL SECTION**

Inside the original two-story section is a foyer with a stairway and the main room, now the living room to the left. Upstairs is a bedroom and bath. The 1900 addition created rooms on each floor, the ground floor space now a bedroom and the upstairs

room housing Ken's vast guitar collection amid office space.

Several original doors and pieces of wood were saved despite considerable termite and rot damage. Doors to the basement, foyer, living room and the upstairs bedroom and bathroom are original to the house.

An original built-in cabinet in the front room was preserved and the original fireplace mantel was restored, as were all the floors. The fireplace is workable, Ken said, adding, "It's incredible how efficient that thing is."

Ken confessed that the ceiling beams inside the old section was one attraction that led to his decision to take on the restoration. "When I walked into the house and saw the beams—the original hand-hewn beams—I said, 'We can't let this go. We can't let anybody buy this and tear it down. We have to save it. My love of history and my love of hand-hewn beams just kind of got us into this.'"

An unfortunate by-product of 13 years of vacancy



**Restored features of the front room of the original Shadyside section included the cabinets at left, the fireplace mantel, and the beams above.**

was the graffiti all over the inside.

“We had a retired police officer tell us that every weekend on average he’d run 20 kids out of that place over the years,” Ken said. “They broke all the spindles on the staircase. It was just awful, which was a reason I was saving all the wood. Because where would you find wood that would match 200-year-old wood if you didn’t have it? So I was able to salvage cherry to be able to fix those broken pieces from the staircase. And that staircase is 200 years old! You walk up and it still doesn’t creak. It doesn’t make a sound.”

The necessity of replacing the rafters atop the 1900s section brought a fascinating discovery for Ken in the 1820 section of the upstairs. The 4 by 4 walnut trusses were attached at the top like they were nutcrackers, he explained, with a hole drilled for wood pins that allowed flexibility when the rafters were added. The concept attracted the interest of a Bowling Green architectural student who took pictures of them for a class.

All windows — 9 panes in the upper sash over 6 panes in the lower sash, were replaced with their original sizes for architectural integrity.

The Yeagers also saved a 1917 clawfoot bathtub. Ken sanded it on one side but discovered it was the side facing the wall and hidden from view. But he was willing to put forth the “hours and hours” of sanding the correct side to get it right.

“That tub would have been that family’s equivalent of us getting color television,” Ken said.

## **TWEAKING THE EXTERIOR**

Outside, the original house wasn’t entirely brick, Ken said. Red paint on the wood-sided 1900 section had been used to blend with the original brick, which was also painted red for uniformity. However, the red was removed from the 1900 addition and replaced with a cream color. The red paint will be removed from the original brick exterior, ultimately, to help it match the cleaned-up west-side and garage brickwork.

Meanwhile a Federalist façade that frames the front entry, added during the mid-1970s by the Noeckers, was saved—and then rescued again when carpenter bees began to drill into it after Ken sanded it down. Fortunately, the bees carved a perfect three-eighths-inch hole that required only a



**The stairway in the foyer includes the original steps and spindles reworked from pieces of cherry wood found among the ruins. Note the kitchen in the back section.**

wooden dowel of the same size, sawed flat to the original surface. The front door had also been restored along with its original hardware. Nancy Rush said the façade came from a house torn down in Newark to make way for the new four-lane Ohio 16 freeway during the 1960s.

Yet another monumental challenge came when, during the work on the façade, Ken suffered a stroke while driving the couple on King Road from Sharon Valley Road between Granville and Newark. Donna managed to pull the car over with Ken still in the driver’s seat. He was life-flighted to the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center where the clot was broken up. “She saved my life that night,” Ken said reverently. The stroke was nine out of 10 on the severity scale, he said.

## **FINISHED? NOT QUITE**

The Yeagers emphasized the renovation-



**Ken Yeager turned a second-floor room, part of the 1900 addition to Shadyside, into a combined office and showplace for his vast guitar collection.**

restoration characteristics of the project.

“In doing that hopefully we blended the best of 1820 with 2020,” Ken said. “When you walk from the two-story part of the house through an entry that is thick with brick, we call that transition from then to now. But we have a lot of historic features from the old in the new.”

“Will we ever be done?” Donna then asked rhetorically at the annual meeting. “It’s just a labor of love.”

“We are not finished,” she said. “There is still a lot to do. A lot of family and friends have helped. We’ve had a lot of input from the Granville community. We’ve had a lot of new friends we’ve made, a lot of driving down the driveway (asking) ‘Can I just see inside? You’re not tearing it down, are you? Could I just peek inside, I’ve always wanted to see what it looks like.’ So we’ve given tours and tours and tours. And met lots of wonderful people. We are just so appreciative of the people who wanted to see it

saved. Because we found out that a Denison professor researched the history of that house and was so intent on it being saved, that we couldn’t see it being torn down. It was so close to gone.”

A “future” project Donna related to the Historical Society audience was in fact completed prior to the 2022 Christmas holiday: installation of three replica 1800s gaslights along the driveway. Landscaping to expand upon the “hundreds of daffodils blooms” that come up each spring is on the list for spring. There will also be a big garden in the back yard.

“I’m retiring from the medical college and the Wexner Medical Center in June,” Ken added. “Our plan is to live in and enjoy the property for as many years as we can. Just hopefully, with what we’ve done, it will last another 200 years, because the village deserves it.”

*Charles A. Peterson is Editor of The Historical Times.*

# Granville what it is today thanks impact of ice age

## Central Licking County is where glacier stopped

By CHARLES A. PETERSON

The Granville and Newark we know today are nestled comfortably on their respective “terraces”, in geological parlance, thanks to the last North American glacier. The landscape in this area before the glacier had more “relief”—a more rugged terrain with deeper valleys than today that would have made impossible the development of both communities as we know them.

Denison University Professor Emeritus Tod Frolking layed out the impacts of the ice age Feb. 2 in a program entitled “The Impact of the Last Glaciation on the Granville Landscape” held jointly between Granville Historical Society and the Licking County Community Center for 60+ Adults. Frolking is a retired a professor in Denison’s Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences.

Frolking displayed a map of the world that shows how far south the Laurentide ice sheet—the last one to impact North America some 20,000 years ago—extended. “Interestingly Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois represent the farthest south of any glacier on earth,” he said. “The European glaciers did not extend as far south as the North American glaciers,” due to moisture from the Gulf of Mexico that fed them.

Another map showed “flow lines” of the ice. “You can see that the terminus—the farthest southern extent of the glacier—is not just a straight line. It’s very topographically dependent,” he said, adding that in Illinois, Indiana and western Ohio the ice advanced farther south—as far south as Highland County in southwestern Ohio, one hundred miles south of Granville. Whereas the Western



**Denison Professor Emeritus Tod Frolking presents his program on the impact of the last glacier on Granville and Newark.**

Pennsylvania terrain east of Ohio was too high for the ice to advance very far southward. With western Ohio, he said, “you’re right on the axis of Lake Huron,” he said. “These are weak rocks – limestones and shales, principally. There’s no sandstones over there. Terrain is lower, flatter, wetter, and the ice could slide down easily and extend to its farthest southern reaches.”

### **ONCE THERE WAS A “NEWARK RIVER”**

Pre-glacier, the topography of central and northeast Ohio was unrecognizable some 600,000 years ago to today’s Licking County residents with one substantial river, named by geologists as the Newark River, running in a southwestern direction through Licking County as it drained northeast Ohio. A tributary that geologists named the Utica River, now the north fork of the Licking River, was also

present.

“You can see we’re really in a transition zone,” he said of Granville and Licking County. “To the east of us is the ‘ridge and ravine’ topography of the Appalachian plateau. We have fairly flat lying resistant rocks, mainly sandstones. Rivers cut into those and created fairly steep slopes, narrow valleys, and ridge tops.”

He said the terrain changes dramatically from Granville westward to Columbus. And, “You go west from Columbus and it’s Plain City. It’s like a plain. So we’re right at the contact of the unglaciated Appalachian plateau and the glacial till plains that extend all the way to Nebraska. These are relatively flat-lying features, mostly glacial deposits. And we’re right at the transition where the glaciers came up and kissed the Appalachian plateau.”

#### **ICE BROUGHT GRANVILLE ELEVATION UPWARD**

At that time, today’s downtown Newark and Granville would have been 200 to 300 feet lower than their present elevation. In that scenario, the difference in elevation between the Denison college

hill down to Raccoon Creek would have been 400 to 500 feet.

“Today it’s 200 feet,” Frolking said, as the Denison hill is 1,100 feet above sea level and downtown is about 960 feet. “Imagine walking down to the IGA from campus. It would have been a big deal. You would have descended 500 feet instead of 200 feet. A little more like West Virginia.”

An earlier, more extensive ice sheet, the Illinoian, advanced to Hanover in what is now eastern Licking County and dammed the Newark River, creating a lake. As the lake level rose, it overflowed to form the Muskingum River that flows to Marietta at the southeastern Ohio border.

The last glaciation, the Wisconsin, came from the west, covering Columbus and stopping somewhere near the Longaberger basket building on Newark’s far east side. Ice blocked west-flowing drainage and created a smaller lake—named Glacial Lake Licking—that rose and spilled over its bounds to form Black Hand Gorge, which the now east-flowing Licking River drains through.

At the glacier’s peak, today’s downtown Granville



**A 20<sup>th</sup>-century photo taken from Flowerpot Hill, south of Granville looking north, shows the modern Raccoon Valley flood plain in the foreground, up to the Granville Terrace, where downtown Granville sits, flanked by the Denison College Hill on the left and Mt. Parnassus on the right. Ohio 37 is the road leading up to the village.**

*Granville Historical Society Photo*



**Looking west on Broadway from its intersection with Prospect Street shows the Granville Terrace, a land formation resulting from the last ice age that provided a perfect setting for the village of Granville. The terrace continues west into the plains resulting from the last glacier that flattened the terrain from Granville west to and beyond Columbus.**

*Granville Historical Society Photo*

was under approximately 300 to 600 feet of ice, he estimated. The last glacier peaked 22,000 to 23,000 years ago and started retreating more about 18,000 years ago, Froelking said. By 16,000 years ago it was out of Licking County and exited Ohio 2,000 years later.

"I think much of the terrain in the valleys as we see it is due to the last thousand or two thousand years when ice was here," he said. "That was kind of the last imprint of the glaciers."

And the topographic features present due to the ice are many. "We have outwash terraces such as that the broad flat in front of us (the Bryn Du Mansion great lawn), formed by meltwater coming out of the ice. We have glacial 'kames' such as one the Bryn Du Mansion sits on. We have the modern flood plain that is a much younger feature."

Kames, he said, are the result of debris sifting down from stagnant ice. "This hill (on which the mansion sits) and many of the hills on this side of the Raccoon Creek valley may be from an earlier Illinoian glaciation when ice was filling the valley and melting out, and debris was just sluffing off."

Froelking illustrated a point about Granville village's terrain with a photo of Broadway looking

west from downtown in 1905. "This very broad, flat surface that sits about 50 to 60 feet above Raccoon Creek is an enigma," he said. "There aren't any other flat surfaces around here of about that approximate elevation. It's been labeled the Granville Terrace by geologists studying the area."

He defined the Granville Terrace as a stepped surface above Raccoon Creek but below bedrock hills of Granville. However, there are no terrace-like features west of Granville. To the east, he said, "The entire city of Newark is built on this same surface as this terrace we're on," although it's somewhat lower in elevation.

#### **A DEPENDABLE WATER SUPPLY**

Significant for Granville, he said, is activity that resulted in a number of springs that pioneers took advantage of when they arrived here in 1805. At the elevation of the Granville terrace is where sandstones that comprise the college hill start irregularly grading into layers of impermeable silts and shales below. As a result, the perched water issues out of valley sides as springs. "Springs played a big role in Granville history," he said.

Granvilleans can also thank the ice sheet for its

marvelous source of drinking water in the well field just south of Wildwood Park and the bike path on the village's southeast side. He stressed, however, that this aquifer is not an underground river.

"There's no such thing as an underground river. There's no free channel of water flowing. It's water percolating slowly through whatever sediment is there," he said. "So you figure it's a couple hundred feet deep and a mile wide. That's a lot of water. Even during the dry phases we've had in the last 10 or 20 years, the well field has not had any perceptible decrease in pumping rates."

What's more, the chemistry of the village's well number 4 near Raccoon Creek saves the water department a bunch of money because the water there is not as hard as in the other wells farther from the creek. This means the village doesn't have to spend as much money removing calcium. "We're in a very good situation for water here," Froelking said.

Sugarloaf and Mount Parnassus, the twin peaks that protrude through the Granville Terrace itself, are older than the glacier, he said. "These are bedrock hills. These were not impacted much by glaciation. They've been here for quite a while."

### THOSE BIG ROCKS

The ice sheets deposited glacial till, which Froelking defined as unsorted sediment from the size of boulders on down to silt-sized rock flour. The large rocks littering western Licking County he termed as glacial erratics. "They're typically somewhat rounded, beveled and some have planer surfaces and scratches. These guys rode south in the glacier from Canada. We like to call them Canadians, so you have to change your accent a little when you talk to them." The rock on the monument at top of Sugarloaf is an example of one of these boulders, and there are

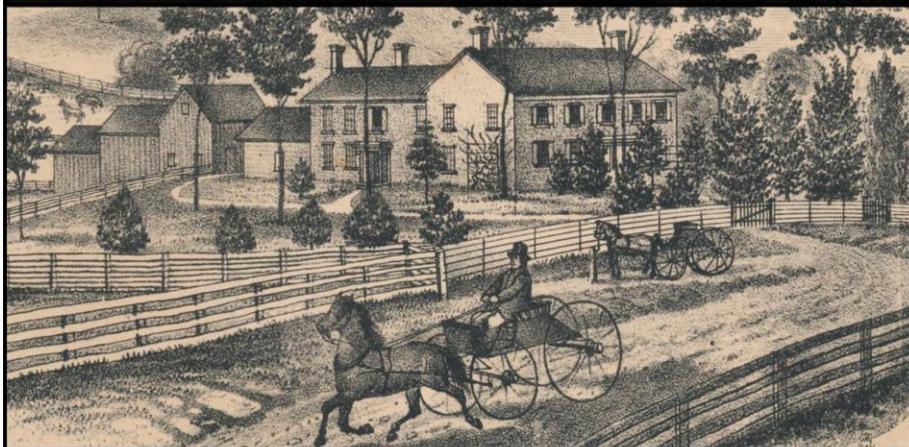
others scattered around the Denison campus, he said.

Froelking closed by saying we're lucky to be living in a time immediately following the last ice age.

"Glaciation is responsible for much of the fertile soils in the Midwest--really, the success of the United States," he said. The ice also filled tremendous aquifers with water, sand and gravel. "We can thank the recent glaciation a for the success of humanity on earth. A lot of it is linked to glaciers."

Froelking advised his audience not to worry about another glacier anytime soon. "We're no longer in natural climate oscillations that brought the ice ages," he said. "We're now in a period of human-controlled climates, termed the Anthropocene. We will not have, until humans leave, any more ice ages, which I guess is a good thing because most of us would starve in those circumstances. Things are too warm for ice to start forming again by a significant margin. I don't think the future will bring any more."

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## GRANVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

115 E. Broadway

P.O. Box 129

Granville, OHIO 43023



# THE HISTORICAL TIMES

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The Granville Historical Society is an all-volunteer, non-governmental not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization with membership open to all. Joining the Society is a delightful way to meet people who share a love of and interest in Granville's rich, well-documented history. A variety of programs, quarterly publications, and a museum chock full of intriguing artifacts are some of the ways that enable Society volunteers to share facets of what makes Granville so fascinating with members and guests. Volunteers are welcome in the Archives and Museum Collections areas, as well as volunteering as museum hosts. Please visit [Granvillehistory.org](http://Granvillehistory.org) for further information about all that we do and how you can get involved.

The Granville Historical Society  
P.O. Box 129, Granville, OH 43023

740-587-3951

[GranvilleHistorical@gmail.com](mailto:GranvilleHistorical@gmail.com)

[www.granvillehistory.org](http://www.granvillehistory.org)

Granville History Museum and Robinson  
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