



The 1811 Historic Shupe Homestead
Drawing courtesy of Neal Jenne

The New Indian Ridge Museum --Quarterly

...Preserving, Interpreting, and Teaching the Past...

...to Prepare and Build for the Future...

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Of Note:

Upcoming Events:

This summer, we look forward to formally dedicating the Shupe Homestead historical marker and the Western Reserve Land Conservancy Preserved Land signage at the Homestead.

Please refer to www.newindianridgemuseum.org for the most up-to-date information from our various Museum offices. Click on the "News" tab.

Local History

Amherst's Old Town Hall, School Demolished

This is a brief but as complete as possible history of what was among the oldest buildings still standing in the original downtown Amherst area.



Amherst's first Town Hall was moved from its original location and was most recently located next to the current movie theater. We learn from Amherst Historian Bertine Foster that the first Town Hall was originally an old two-story house. Justice of the Peace and the founder of Amherst's original downtown district, Josiah Harris, owned that building in the early years, then located on original town lot #1, near the present sandstone Amherst Town Hall, on Beaver Court. Later, Wilhelm Braun owned this property, where his house was built about 1860 (today, the 5 Corners B. & B.).

The first structure on this lot referred to above, was reportedly built about 1830, possibly by Mr. Harris and used as a house. Early on, Wolcott & Hall operated a harness shop on the first floor of the old wooden frame structure, and the second floor soon accommodated a schoolroom and the

Village's first Town Hall or government office, before the town was officially incorporated. In 1849 a fire in the "old Town Hall school" as it was called at that time, destroyed the top floor. This floor was repaired a year later. Another fire again wrecked this upper floor, and this time it was not replaced.

As mentioned, at one point it was suggested that the old structure located on original lot #1 be used as a lecture room and Town Hall. Some significant events that occurred in this structure include: in 1876 the fire department was voted on and started out of this building; the town marshal was hired out of the building; the street commissioner was appointed out of this structure; and the board of health commissioners was appointed out of that building. Early Amherst Township meetings were conducted here as well. The building was used as a town meeting place, and in



1873 Amherstville was incorporated, changing its name to North Amherst. A mayor and council were thus elected,

Local History Update

Town Hall, School Continued

and this Town Hall was then partly used as a space for council to meet. The new sandstone Town Hall was built in 1884, housing the present council chambers and an opera house, among related offices such as police and fire. The land for this building was donated by Josiah Harris, and it was stipulated that a town hall of native Amherst sandstone be constructed on this property.

The Congregational Church Society was organized December 2, 1834, and for a period of a few years, their meetings were held in the Village Schoolhouse or first Town Hall building. Then in the winter of 1838-9, the first Congregational Church was erected.

Amherst Historian Mrs. F. R. Powers noted that this building was used as a school on its original site until 1849 when it was moved to its present location (278-280 Church St.) and used as the first "centralized school." In 1849 a Mr. Horn, who was later an Amherst postmaster, bought the building and had it moved to Church Street where it was last located. It continued to remain as a one-story affair.

This wood frame building was further used as a school until 1856, when the first Central School (Union) was built - a brick schoolhouse measuring 25' x 40.' (Therefore, Amherst's first centralized union school house was housed in the old town hall building.)

About 1856, Amherstville formed the Union School district, and Amherst pioneer Josiah Harris donated the land at 474 Church Street for a new school. A brick school was built on the present site of the old sandstone Central School, in 1856. It burned July 5, 1893. The first stone Central School was built in 1893 to replace the brick structure. It had a stone over the doorway stating "Public School." This building burned in 1907. It was rebuilt, and the stone over the doorway was changed to "Central School," which can be seen today. In

1922 an addition of matching Amherst sandstone was made to the rear. It was used until 1984, when it was sold to Sprenger Healthcare in 1987. So, even though the old wood frame building ceased to be used as a school after 1856, its use was continued as the Town Hall from 1849-1884, until the present, sandstone structure was built on the town square. It was also used as a temporary school during the times the other schools burned and were out of commission.

Over the years, the wood frame structure continued to have numerous occupants as well. From Amherst Historian Fay Van Nuys Ott's *Downtown Business Database*, we learn that the North Amherst post office was located here from the late 1800s through the early 1900s, on and off, for a varying amount of time. Ms. Ott's book on Amherst history also provides other valuable information. The Black River Telephone Company occupied the building starting in 1894, when J. Orcutt, the first manager of the Amherst phone office purchased this building (this phone office was relocated in 1926). The building was also home to the Rawson Electric Co. Phones from 1878-1900. Other uses included: the Trusello Show Repair occupied the building for a time until 1942; the Pikey Cab Service from 1947-48; Moebius Insurance Company from 1963-72; and "The Amherst News-Times" office from 1972-1978. Most recently a jewelry store (Kolenda) and hair salons have made use of the structure.

In 1994 the Amherst Historical Society recognized the structure as an historic landmark. Because of alterations to the building over the years, and the fact it has been moved off its original foundation, its overt historic integrity has been challenged. However, it was decided by the Amherst Historical Society Preservation Committee that the structure qualified as an historic landmark. Not only very early on did decisions for the fledgling village of Amherst come out of the building, but also decisions for the whole township were made here in those early years. The significance here goes back to its original and "first"

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uses and those connections or contributions it has made to the advancement of our early community.

The building was offered to the Amherst Historical Society in 2015, to be moved to the Society grounds. At this time, the old Church St. Bar & Grille building is being remodeled into another related business. A special Committee was formed, and Historical Society Vice President Col. Nahorn, presided over this “findings committee,” in order to assess the feasibility of acquiring and moving the structure. After much research, the cost to move and restore the structure was simply not feasible for the Society to take on, especially due to an extremely tight time frame in which to raise funds. The structure was deemed difficult to move. Permission was given to salvage items of historical interest before the demolition. Demolition occurred April 27, 2015.

Shupe Homestead Update Projects Continue

Many projects around the Shupe Homestead have begun and continue - including repainting Col. Vietzen's Native American Indian statue of Paul Chapman; re-roofing the Vietzen outhouse with antique slates; and installation of ash steps in the Shupe House cut from a dead ash tree on the Homestead property.

Excursions Around Lorain County Visit to Bungart Island

There is an island in the Black River, and you can boat or kayak by it today. There is a unique history behind this interesting spot, right here in the midst of an industrial river, on its way to being restored.

The Bungart Family owned the Island in the Black River, and it was used for farming operations for many years. Farm animals would be ferried over for grazing on the Island, and in the late 1800s, several black walnut trees were cut from the Island, floated down the River, and cut into lumber for use by the Bungart family.

Starting in the mid-1800s, there were several water-powered sawmills (later converted to steam sawmills) along the banks of the Canesadooharie (the Native American Indian name for the Black River). The Island, located just downstream from the confluence of the French Creek at the Black River, today is maintained by a local park district.

In the late 1800s, Peter Bungart was either born in a small log house on the Island or on the mainland, grew up to be a well-known paleontologist at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, and today is known for assembling the giant fish fossil found in the Cleveland Shale formations of the shale outcroppings along Lake Erie. This giant, armored fish fossil is an extinct species of shark, known as *Dunkleosteus terrelli*. It had a bony exoskeleton and was larger than our present-day sharks. It lived here several hundred million years ago, when this area was covered in a shallow, warm ocean, and when Ohio was basically located where the Caribbean is located today.



For several years, we planned to examine the Island, formally documenting this historic landform. On May 11, we took the rare opportunity to visit this area. Our expedition team included Museum kayak consultants Vito Cammarata and Robb Koscho. We noted the heron rookery and also Globeville, a ghost town along the River. We noted black walnut trees, generally young and a few mature, sprinkled across the Island, along with evidence of beavers on the edge of the Island. Visit <http://newindianridgemuseum.org/category/articles/> for more photos & information!

Vermilion River Kayak Tours & Scouting Trips

The Vermilion River is one of the most scenic rivers in this section of Ohio. Its watershed not only boasts beautiful river views and willow and/or hemlock-lined shale cliffs, but it also provides unique opportunities to explore local history, geology, prehistory, ornithology, ecology, hydrology, and other related



fields. Paddling down the River allows one to not only view beautiful scenery but to also reconnect with our local natural world.

Col. Nahorn accompanied a couple of River scouting trips down the winding Vermilion River in June, along with our Museum Kayak Consultant and friend Vito Cammarata, of West River Paddle Sports in Vermilion. We put in at Schoepfle Gardens in Birmingham and traveled the roughly 14 miles north to the mouth of the Vermilion at Lake Erie. What a great trip! We hope to be able to run it again soon. *Also, please check out West River Paddle Sports in Vermilion to rent a kayak, paddleboard, or canoe!*

Tour of Prehistoric Franks Site

May 8 tour of prehistoric Franks



Site on the Vermilion River, *photo courtesy Vito Cammarata*. This was an ancient Erie Indian village high above the River, as pictured in Col. Vietzen's book, *The Immortal Eries*.