

Randolph Historical Society has received the reprint of the 1902 Centennial Souvenir Book

The *Randolph Centennial Souvenir 1802-1902* has been reprinted by the Randolph Historical Society. This historical book is available to all the citizens of Randolph. The price is \$10.00 and copies are available from

the Historical Society and the Randolph Library.

The following is an excerpt from the *Ravenna Democrat* from June 26, 1902 on the Randolph Centennial Celebration.

Newsletter Staff:

Kathy Lang
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Anyone with any ideas or stories concerning the history of Randolph please contact the R.H.S.

Excerpt From *Ravenna Democrat* June 26, 1902 Randolph Centennial

June 24 - Last Friday, June 20, Randolph township celebrated her centennial, and a grand good time was had, nicely enjoyed by both old and young. A large crowd assembled to do honor to the occasion. The meeting was called to order at 9:30. W. H. Bettes was president of the day. The Charlestown Band furnished good music for the occasion. An address of welcome was delivered by Rev. W. L. Denslow, responded to by Hon. Friend Whittlesey, and prayer was offered by Rev. L. O. Eldridge.

Mrs. Yarian read two interesting letters from absent friends recounting olden times and stirring up old memories. T. F. Meriam and Fr. Thein, the latter of the Catholic church, both spoke of the early religious life of the settlement. Rev. Thein closed his remarks by referring to the early foundation of the Catholic church in Randolph, which now has a membership of about 1,200. O. B. Yarian recounted incidents in the agricultural and domestic life of the early settlers, which was quite interesting.

In the afternoon the address of the day was delivered by D. E. Rogers,

of Alliance, which was an able one. H. D. Smalley then spoke about the educational life of the early settlers, which closed the exercises of the day. Quite a number of old ladies and gentlemen were present, the oldest of whom were Mrs. Henry France, of Randolph, and Mr. Geo. Austin of Hartville.

The relics exhibited were quite interesting. Carpets and domestic cloth woven over 100 years ago; a old hall clock, 125 years old, still keeping good time; a splint bottom chair 80 years old; a flint lock musket, 96 years old, and numerous other articles.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

The Randolph LEGACY

The Randolph Historical Society Newsletter

The Rise and Fall Of Johnnycake Hollow

By Myron Mullett

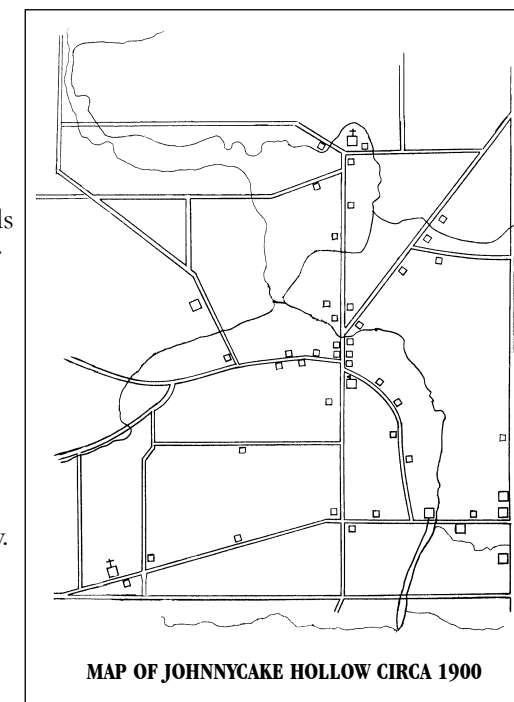
From its humble beginning in 1810 until 1840, Randolph grew to become the largest populated settlement in Portage County: Ravenna being the second largest followed by Kent.

Although the Randolph area was devoted mostly to farming, a sizable number of skilled tradesmen and their families established small shops and industries to serve the needs and wants of this agricultural community. Among the first of these businesses which flourished were: a grist mill, blacksmith shop, cider mill, tannery, saw mill, barrel maker, and distillery. A concentration of several cross roads to the northwest of Randolph Center attracted many of these fledgling operations. A major factor to this location was the abundance of fresh water flowing northward in the Little Cuyahoga Creek. It was also known as Congress Lake Outlet, but later to be called Breakneck Creek. This area became known as Johnnycake Hollow. The name probably originating from the corn meal biscuits or pan bread that the growing number of workers and residents of the vicinity ate as a lunchtime staple.

The Merrill Company became the largest employer. It was a foundry and machine shop which specialized in making molds and metal patterns. Mead & Brainerd Flouring Mill was another major factory. John Strong had a shop devoted to the manufacturing of wheels and fabrication of wagons and buggies. O. C. Dickinson built a steam powered grist mill. Jonah Hines also had a flouring mill in the area. Other firms included

Belding & Collins cloth dressing, Hiram Outcalt's tannery, Asa Rawson & Nathan Kreinberg's jewelry and clock repair, Elmore's chair and cabinet shop, Eliakim Merriman's cooper shop (barrel making), a brick kiln, an ashery, a tavern, linen and leather shop, grocery store, cobbler and a gunsmith.

Perhaps as many as 200 peo-



MAP OF JOHNNYCAKE HOLLOW CIRCA 1900

ple were gainfully employed, some earning as much as 25 to 50 cents a day.

In 1854, there had been no rain since June; the entire area was in the midst of a considerable drought. Then early in the forenoon of a dry and dusty day in early August, a major fire erupted in the engine room of the Mead & Brainerd flour mill. The flames quickly spread throughout the wooden structure despite the futile

efforts of several workmen. There was no fire department and a lack of workers and effective equipment prevented the containment of the fire. Sparks and burning embers were quickly whipped and picked up by the wind and rising currents of air to be spread to nearby businesses including the Merrill factory which was similarly destroyed.

Ground fires also raged in the underbrush and weeds along the creek destroying other structures as well. Much was given to save items of worth and tools. Horses, mules and oxen were led to a safe distance and secured. Several people were singed and burned, but unbelievably there was no loss of human life.

Some of the businesses were not completely destroyed; but could not continue because of the fragile dependence upon each other's products to operate. For example, the wagon maker, chair and cabinet shops needed the wood from the destroyed saw mill. The tannery had provided skins and hides to the leather, harness and shoe shops. Carding, weaving and dye works had relied upon the woolen and textile firms for materials.

Consequently, the absence of workers and customers caused the few remaining retail, service and repair operations to either close up or move. Some business men decided to rebuilt in more populated locations, bringing to an end the heyday of the bustling boom town. Johnnycake Hollow became an almost deserted village.

A local legend had it that a public hanging in Ravenna had drawn many of the workers and local towns

people. This however, is untrue, since there is no record of such a newsworthy event occurring on that hot and windy destructive day on August 9th of 1854.

The entire area eventually returned to a quieter and slower pace of life. Orchards were enlarged, forests and woods were thinned and cleared to provide more tillable farmland. Churches and schools were built, roads and bridges were improved and additional families moved into the

vicinity to establish a stronger community and improved way of life.

Breakneck Creek continues to flow, meandering and curling its way through the hollow with only its steady current to remind us of that tragic day which changed the history of Randolph Township, Portage County in the state of Ohio.

The Historical Society would like to thank Myron Mullett for his article on Johnny Cake Hollow.

This Article Appeared in the Portage Sentinel

Destructive Fire In Randolph: - The steam Flouring Mill of Mead & Brainerd and the Machine Shop of Merrill & Co., of Randolph, was consumed by fire yesterday morning, about 9 o'clock. Loss estimated at about fifteen thousand dollars. We are informed that there was no insurance upon the property.

What happened in Randolph, Ohio in July of 1875

On July 14th, the *Portage County Democrat* reported the latest news from Randolph. Some had gone to see the circus elephant in Ravenna; some boasted of the community's produce; some went to the Independence Day festivities; and others stood around and watched the paint dry. Of great importance was the formation of a new historical society.

HUDSON'S CHEESE FACTORY is in full blast as usual, a the daily receipts of milk averaging

about 6,000 pounds. Hitherto the odor arising from the factory has been an annoyance to the neighboring residents, but through the efforts of the present manager everything is kept neat and clean as a maker of good cheese Miss Rood has but few equals.

The 3rd - As a general thing people went to Ravenna to see the elephant which had been so extensively advertised.

A LITTLE PATCH - Joseph Jerome has picked and sold nearly a

600 quarts of strawberries from his small patch.

PAINTING - The Disciple Church is undergoing a thorough painting both inside and out. R. J. Torpey is doing the job which is a guarantee of the work.

MONUMENT - Hiram Austin has caused a fine monument to be placed at the graves of his two daughters who are interred in the Center Cemetery.

Ohio Bicentennial Weekend "Celebrate Ohio"

Sponsored by the Friends of the Randolph Library and the Randolph Historical Society.

Saturday July 12

- 11 am Richard Staats, local author: "Civil War and Randolph Township"
- Lunch Randolph Boy Scout Troop
- 1 pm Dr. Stephane Booth: "Buckeye Women the History Of Ohio's Daughters"

Sunday July 13

- 1 pm Banjo the Clown: Original songs, magic and juggling
- 2 pm Kid's Craft and Ohio Birthday Cake served
- 3 pm Ohio's Immigration Heritage: Presentation of immigration stories sponsored by Bicentennial Commission of Ohio.



Carey Steele and Richard Staats, both to speak to Historical Groups

Our Historical Society president Carey Steele will be speaking to the Rootstown Historical Society on June 23, and the Sandy Valley Branch Library on June 26, on the history of the Underground Railroad in north-eastern Ohio.

Richard spoke about the Civil War to the Monroe Falls Historical Society on June 2nd. His last two volumes of the *Grassroots* series - *The Life and Times of Ephraim Cooper* and *The Bully Seventh* - are currently being printed. We hope to have the four-volume set available for the Heritage Festival.

The newest woodcut that the Historical Society is having made will be the Feed Mill, This will be our 10th woodcut.

Looking back at the July 4th 1876 Centennial Celebration in Randolph Township

William Bettes, a distinguished Randolph resident, contributed Randolph news to the local newspapers for over 40 years. On July 7, 1876 he sent the following report to the Democratic Press.

"The fourth was generally observed as a holiday by the people of this town. Some went to Ravenna, Akron, Alliance and other places to help swell the multitudes on that day. Some four to five hundred who were left at home met on the fair ground and had a very good time. The exercises consisting of a the reading of the Declaration or Independence and a poem by H. D. Smalley; remarks by Truman Case; flax dressing and making ropes by James Coe; Spinning by

Phoebe Merriman and a general exhibit of ancient articles; a Basket dinner after which Truman Case read a Historical sketch of the early settlement of the township. This sketch had been carefully prepared and furnished by W. J. Dickinson who has been for many years collecting material for a complete history of the township. In the evening there was a grand display of fireworks at the center which brought out a large crowd of spectators. There was one feature of the day which was noticeable. It was that a large number of our German citizens were present to listen to reading of the Declaration of Independence and take part in the proceeding"

HELP! Identify the gentleman in this photo?

The Historical Society has received some photos from Linda Gently a descendant of the Meacham's and Jerome's. Linda, now residing in Goodyear, Arizona has been corresponding with Carey Steele and has been gracious enough to send family pictures of the Meachams and Jeromes. Below is a picture of the

Randolph school 1889 and a photo of the man with no name. This photo which is part of her collection, has never been identified. If anyone could offer any information it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you Linda for your donation.



Picture of the Randolph School Students in 1889.



Photo of unidentified man

Randolph's first Historical Society an article from the Portage County Democrat in July of 1875

WORK OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY - A goodly number of the citizens of this town celebrated on the 3rd by a picnic dinner on the Fair ground. By previous arrangement W. J. Dickinson and Truman Case gave some historical sketches relating to the early settlement of the Western Reserve and of Randolph's township ... At the close of Mr. Dickinson's remarks, steps were taken to form a township historical society for the purpose of getting a more complete his-

tory of the early settlement of Randolph, and in order to more fully accomplish this object, a request was made that any who have knowledge of facts connected with the settlement and growth of the township report the same to W. J. Dickinson that they may be recorded. On motion of J. P. Coe a committee of three were appointed to more fully carry out the objects of the meeting. Adjourned to meet in one year

Recollections on Memorial Day from Irene May

Irene remembered when the lumbering army trucks filled with dough-boys arrived at the intersection of Waterloo Rd. and Rt. 44. The Town Hall served as a canteen for the troops; and the patriotic folks of Randolph plied them with refreshments before the lads had to continue their journey to the eastern ports to embark for Europe.

In 1920 the Great War was over, at the Memorial Day parade in Ravenna, about a dozen Civil War veterans marched beside the young veterans of WWI. "Not a man of them asked to be excused from the duties of this day of scared memories, although approaching the twilight when steps grow weary and ambitions lack the sustaining strength of youthful years. Their presence was a lesson in devotion and fidelity." Rev. E. K. Romig of the Methodist Church remarked, "that they had not come there to laud war, but to commemorate the heroism and the sacrifice of those who braved death for the sake of preserving the principles without which popular sovereignty would perish from the earth."

District 4 State Meeting

The OAHSM Region 4 meeting was hosted by the Rootstown Historical Society. The meeting was held at the NE Ohio College of Medicine and First Congregational United Church of Christ. The theme of this years meeting was *Historical Organizations as Caretakers of the Past*. Collecting, storage, displaying collections and the legal status of collecting was discussed.