Yesteryears

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# Homeworth Presbyterians were pioneers

## Families joined for worship in fall of 1816

*By Lois Firestone*

ON A CRISP AND clear October day in 1816, three Presbyterian families gathered to worship in a hollow behind the site of the future Middle Sandy Creek Presbyterian Church in Homeworth.

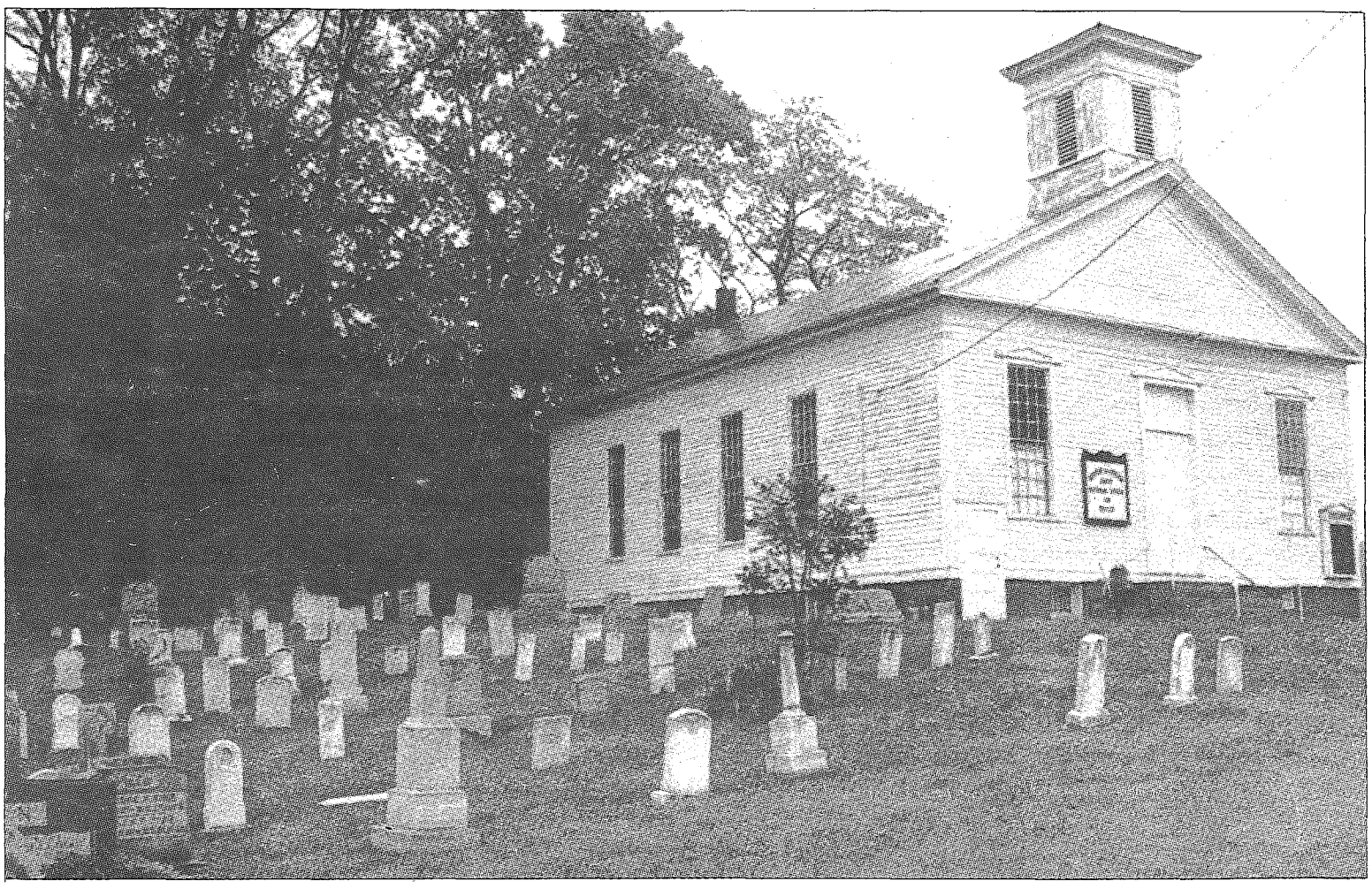
Scotch-Irish emigrants from Ireland brought the Presbyterian religion to the United States in 1705 in Philadelphia; by 1781 the synod was sending missionaries to form settlements beyond the Allegheny Mountains.

One of these missionaries, evangelist Robert Semple preached the sermon at the first worship service on Oct. 29, 1816. Seeking religious supplies from the Presbytery to carry on their teachings were settlers Henry Estep; Moses, Thomas, George and John Gilson; and Thomas, Benjamin and William Anderson.

The Gilson families were the second permanent settlers in section 19 of Knox Township, organized in 1808. Henry and Abigail Anderson Estep deeded a portion of the property they'd acquired from Abigail's father, Benjamin Anderson, to the Middle Sandy Presbyterians on Oct. 29,1816.

Five years later, on Nov. 10, 1821, Middle Sandy Presbyterian Church was officially formed by nine people from six families with Rev. Joshua Beer as the leader. Beer was the son of pioneer James Beer, a War of 1812 veteran who is buried in the Middle Sandy cemetery.

The Lord's Supper was administered by Rev. James Robertson, assisted by Rev. Beer during the early summer of 1822. Once again, the service was held in the clearing on land bought by the church earlier, but the day was marred when a sudden storm felled a tree and killed one of the members, a Mrs. Shaffer and her infant daughter. The event is recorded in Sheehan's History of Middle Sandy: "The scene was one of sublime and terrible solemnity; while the preacher, Mr. Robertson, then in the meridian of his powerful Scotch eloquence discoursed from the solemn text in the old testament prophecy 'Zechariah 9-12: Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.' "



**The original Middle Sandy Presbyterian Church (above) was once fenced in on three sides. Built in 1854 at a cost of $1,700, the building replaced the original log cabin. Today, the church is used by the Columbiana County Historical Society.**

Rev. Beer remained at Middle Sandy from 1823, when he was installed as the first pastor, until his death in March 1844. All told, his pastorate was the longest in the church's history, totally 20 years of service as pulpit supply and active minister.

The first church was a log cabin built in 1825, followed by a 40 by 60-foot wood frame building 19 years later. That church, which cost the congregation $1,700 when it was built, has been preserved and today is used by the Columbiana County Historical Society.

A young bridegroom, Rev. John R. Dundas was the first full time minister. Coming directly to the church with his bride after graduating from seminary, he built a house on Harmon Knoll along a road above the church. Like Rev. Beer, John Dundas would return to serve Middle Sandy for a second time.

Most of the early families came from religious revival communities in western Pennsylvania and so revival meetings were popular. Typical was the meeting presided by Rev. Lyman E. Hanna the winter of 1894. One hundred eleven people confessed Christ and united with the church.

These families were later joined by immigrants from Ireland and Scotland who did much to strengthen the congregation. By 1868 the membership was nearly 200.

During the first century, pastorates were brief and at times the church was without a pastor, mostly because the church couldn't support their salaries. Often on a Sunday, the pulpit was manned by students from a seminary in Pittsburgh. Evangelistic services and cottage prayer meetings did much to keep the church going.

This lack of ministers led to sharing between churches. Over the years the Middle Sandy shared pastors with Bethel and Irondale churches along the Ohio River — passenger service on the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad made this possible — and with Salem, Hanoverton, Concord and North Benton churches.

A basement and classrooms were added to the church during Rev. H. S. D. Shrimp's tenure from 1921 to 1924. During the years Dr. Solomon W. Seeman was minister, the old manse was sold through the court for $2,600 and a new one built with the profit.

Dr. Seeman pastored at Middle Sandy for 17 years, and supervised Sunday School activities in addition to teaching a Bible class regularly. For years, he accepted a reduced salary. On March 5, 1934 he wrote the following note to the church trustees: "Because of the financial depression making it difficult for the members of our congregation to pay my salary in full, I hereby waver the payment of balance due for 1933 and 1934."

During his 50 years as a

See Homeworth, page 6

# Lighthouse keeping a dying tradition

*By Jerry Markon*
*Associated Press*

ON THE WESTERN TIP of Coney Island, a 79-year-old man lives in a house by the sea, thinking about the days when being a lighthouse keeper really meant something.

For 29 years, Frank Schubert wound a grandfather-clock-like mechanism each night that powered his rotating light. In foggy weather, if electricity went out, he tolled the 1,000-pound fog bell by hand with a sledgehammer.

Many of the ships navigating New York harbor needed the flashing red beacon atop the 80-foot lighthouse in Schubert's front yard. Many of the ships needed him.

Nowadays, there's not very much for America's last civilian lighthouse keeper to do. Schubert still cleans, cuts the grass and shows visitors around. Sometimes he changes a light bulb.

Schubert — a vigorous man with leathery skin and receding white hair — has lived alone with his dog, Blazer, since his wife died in 1986. He is not bitter about his diminished role.

"They just made my job a little easier, that's all," says Schubert, who has not taken a vacation in more than 30 years. "This is my home, and I've been here so long I don't want a change."

The Coast Guard is also content with its part-time employee, who draws a pension and lives rent-free. Jim McGranachan, a Coast Guard spokesman, estimates Schubert's salary is about $14,000 a year.

"We need Schubert over there to stop vandals and maintain the grounds," McGranachan says. "He's the last of the civilian lighthouse keepers. There's nobody like him in the whole country."

Lighthouse keeping was a dying tradition long before Schubert came to Coney Island in 1960.

America's first lighthouse was built in Boston Harbor in 1716 and generations of ship captains relied on lighthouses for safe navigation. During this century, electronic guidance equipment gradually reduced their importance.

Advances in automation occurred over the years and in 1985 the Coast Guard perfected a system to run lighthouses electronically and monitor them by computer, said Coast Guard Lt. Chad Asplund. By 1991, all lighthouses except Boston Harbor had been automated, and all the old keepers were gone except Schubert and those in Boston.

Since the Boston keepers are Coast Guard personnel, Schubert is considered the country's last civilian lighthouse keeper.

Ironically, while the importance of lighthouses has waned, interest in them has soared, says Wayne Wheeler, president of the San Francisco-based U.S. Lighthouse Society. He attributes this to nostalgia and the historic preservation movement.

"There are lighthouse models, T-shirts, hats, earrings," Wheeler says. "We're called about every day by a company that wants us to sponsor some lighthouse product."

It wasn't nostalgia — or even a love for the sea — that made Schubert become a seaman in 1939. He needed a job.

"I had no idea what I wanted to do," recalls Schubert, who grew up on Staten Island. "Jobs were scarce. There was a depression on."

Schubert parlayed his first job on a buoy tender, which delivered supplies to lighthouses, into a series of positions operating lighthouses around New York.

After working at Governor's Island for 15 years, Schubert and his family came to Coney Island and took up residence in the two-story red and white brick house. The main channel of New York Harbor is 100 yards from the front door.

"It was real interesting growing up," recalls Schubert's daughter, Francine Goldstein. "It was easy to make friends, telling people my father was a lighthouse keeper. It's a great conversation-starter."

Each night, Schubert ascended the white steel tower to turn a metal crank for 15 to 20 minutes. That wound a drum and caused a 40-pound weight to rise to the top of a steel tube inside the tower.

As the weight slowly dropped over the next 24 hours, it ran the clock under the lens. The clock rotated the light, allowing it to show its signature flashes to ships in the vicinity.

Schubert maintained the fog bell and operated it if power was out. An alarm bell by the front door alerted him if a light bulb needed to be changed in the tower.

Schubert's favorite memories include watching the Verrazano Bridge being built 1½ miles to the north in 1964; rescuing at least 15 sailors over the years from boats that went aground on the rocks and having lunch at the White House with President Bush.

"He was nuts about lighthouses," says Schubert, who proudly displays a photo of himself talking with Bush in the Oval Office.

Today, the Coney Island light, visible for 14 miles, is still used by small boats that don't have electronic equipment. Four other lighthouses also help guide ships into and out of the harbor.

Schubert's only operational role is to occasionally change a light bulb in a power surge during a thunderstorm. Otherwise, he spends his time woodworking, bowling and laying yellowed old charts on his kitchen table to show visitors how things used to be.

"Lighthouse keeping is a lost art today, and I'm very proud that he's the last one," says Schubert's daughter. "He's always just been a lighthouse keeper. I never remember him doing anything else."

## Scenes from the past


In 1944 Butler's Auto Clinic was located on the northeast corner of Jennings Avenue and West State Street. Lee and Catherine Butler owned the station (above) which sold Canfield gasoline. They had two children, Dick who is deceased and JoAnn who lives in California. Today (below) the old gas station houses NAPA Auto Parts. (Comments by Dale E. Shaffer)

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*Thomas E. Spargur*
*publisher/general manager*

*Cathie DeFazio*
*managing editor*

*Lois A. Firestone*
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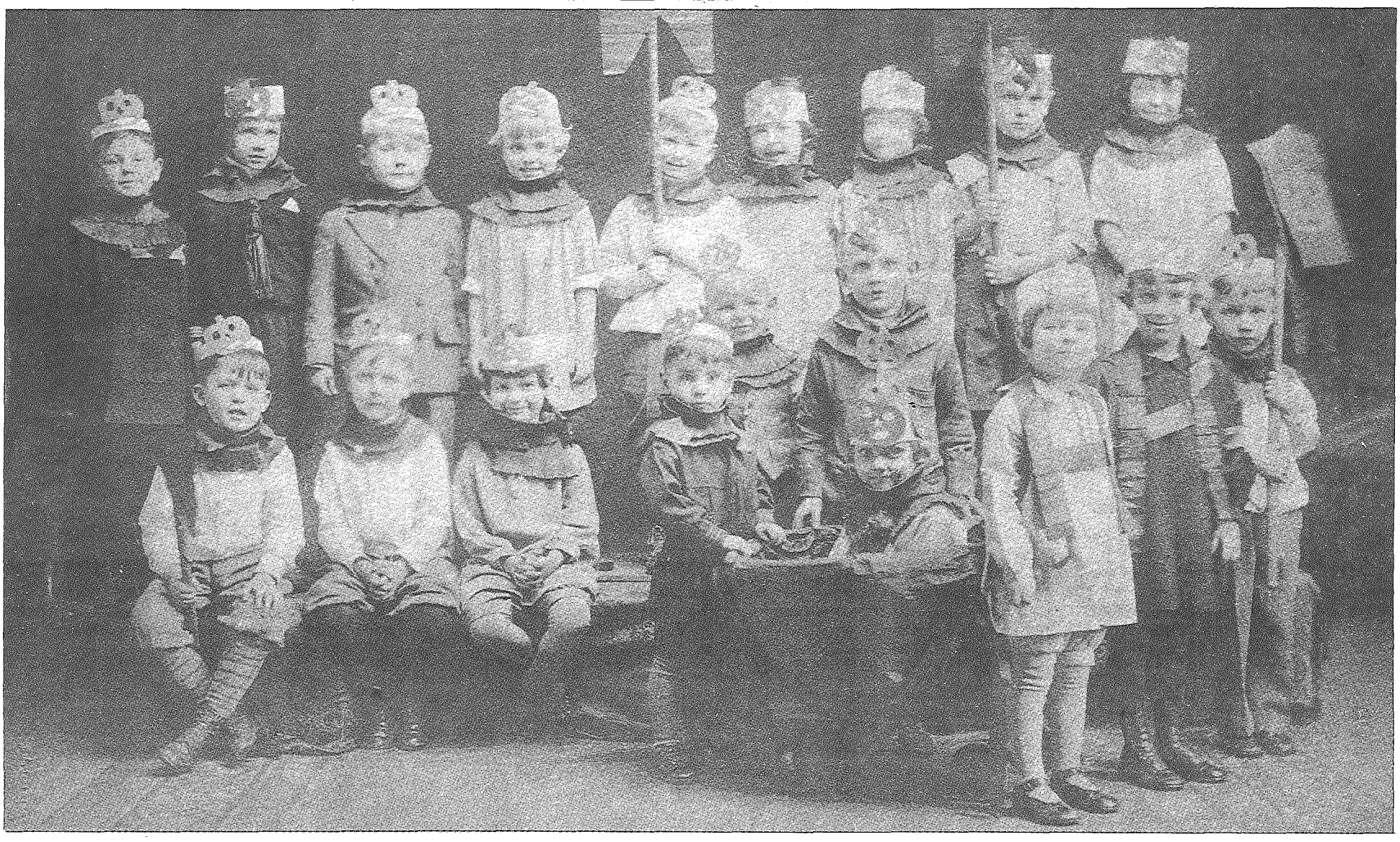


**Children in the Memorial Building kindergarten class are attired in crepe paper streamers and paper pumpkin headbands for a Halloween pageant in 1927: (first row, left) ?, Ernest Judd, Frances Webster Beattie, John S. Myers, Bruce Krepps, William Haifley, Betty Hester in pumpkin buggy, Helen Ward Wolfgang, Betty Culberson Jackson, Paul B. Myers; (second row) Joe Morris, Polly Silver Riley, George Hanson, Ruth Schmidt, Frank Stone, Bettie Rogers, ?, ?, Mary Jane Britt. *(Photo: Paul B. Myers)***

# Johnson's Island was Civil War prison

*By Associated Press*

A HISTORY BUFF HAS memorized much of the story of Johnson's Island, the Lake Erie outpost where Confederate prisoners of war were held during the Civil War.

Don Breen, 69, of Amherst has memorized prisoners' letters, can recite tales of escape attempts, knows when many of the buildings were torn down and who carved the statue at the island's cemetery.

"I don't know what it is exactly about the Civil War that I find so fascinating," he said "There's, of course, the American-fighting-American aspect, and my great-great-grandfather enlisted in the war, but I wouldn't say that is what has drawn me to the subject."

Breen has always enjoyed talking about the Civil War, especially about the Union Army's island prison, the topic of his master's thesis.

A graduate of Defiance College and Kent State University, Breen taught in Lorain schools for 27 years before retiring from Southview High School as a history teacher in 1981. He also taught at Cleveland State University.

His interest in the prison took him most recently to Chesapeake, Va., in September to speak at a weekend event of Civil War lectures and reenactments at a library there.

"When the kids were young, we'd pack up and head for all of the battlegrounds in the East," Breen said of his five children. "They didn't like it back then, but I imagine they are grateful now."

Breen said he was awe-struck to be standing on the fields where so many Americans died.

"You just think about what must have gone through these men's minds, the passion they must have felt about fighting for something they had no problem dying for," he said, shuffling through photographs of the prison buildings and guards.

Leonard Johnson leased his uncultivated island to the Army and the prison opened on April 10, 1862, with a capacity of 1,336 prisoners and 168 guards.

"Since the prisoners were all officers, the guards couldn't force them to work," Breen said. "They had a lemonade stand, two baseball teams, an ice-cream shop and a tailor's shop."

Breen said there is "nothing magical" about his drive to learn about the Civil War prison.

"Everybody has something they feel passionate about," he said. "There are so many resources out there that anyone can become an expert on the subject they really enjoy."

## Homeworth

Continued from page 1

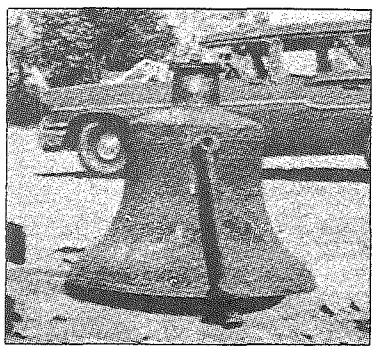
minister he was absent from Sunday services only six times, and that was because of illness. In those five decades he preached in 135 different churches, organized two congregations and served during construction of four church buildings and four manses. When he announced in January 1942 that he and his wife were retiring to an apartment at Penney Farm for retired ministers near Jacksonville, Fla., no one wanted to let him go.

Ground was broken for the present church on April 14, 1963 and the building was dedicated a year later. At the final service in the old building, Rev. Robert Swanson's sermon subject was "If This Building Could talk."

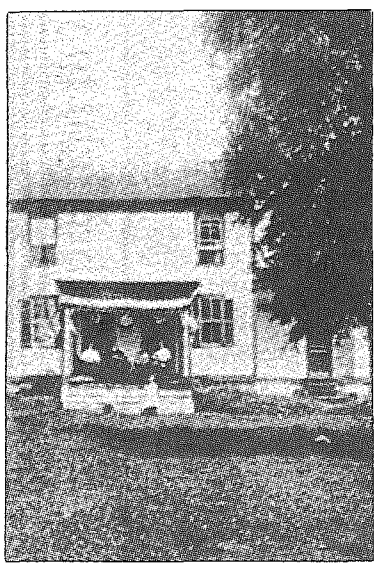
Today, 179 years after that first religious gathering, the Middle Sandy Presbyterians are building again, this time a 3,420-foot Christian education wing to house eight classrooms, handicapped restrooms and an elevator.

**Much of the material for this article came from newspaper clippings and a fascinating history of the Homeworth area, "A History of Middle Sandy Presbyterian Church formed as Middle Sandy Creek Congregation 1816 at Homeworth Ohio" compiled in 1971 by Hazel Johnston Jones.**

**In this 1922 photo, the cast of a play depicting Brotherhood, Liberty and Justice gathers in the Middle Sandy Presbyterian Church sanctuary. Youngsters in the front row are Beulah Yeagley, Helen Smith, Eliza Reed, Russell Fredley, Jack Malone, Don Davidson, Marion Shaffer, Bill Casselman, Letha Risden, Dean Heestand, Betty Willard Elaine Maxwell, Raymond Risden, Jim Davidson, Mervin Risden and Forest Swartz.** ***(From the McQuilkin Collection)***

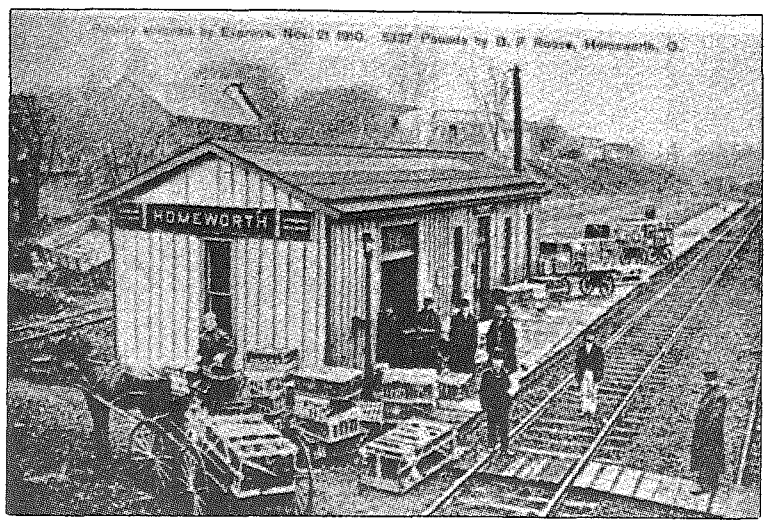


**The church bell was originally purchased in 1872 and taken from the old Middle Sandy Presbyterian Church**



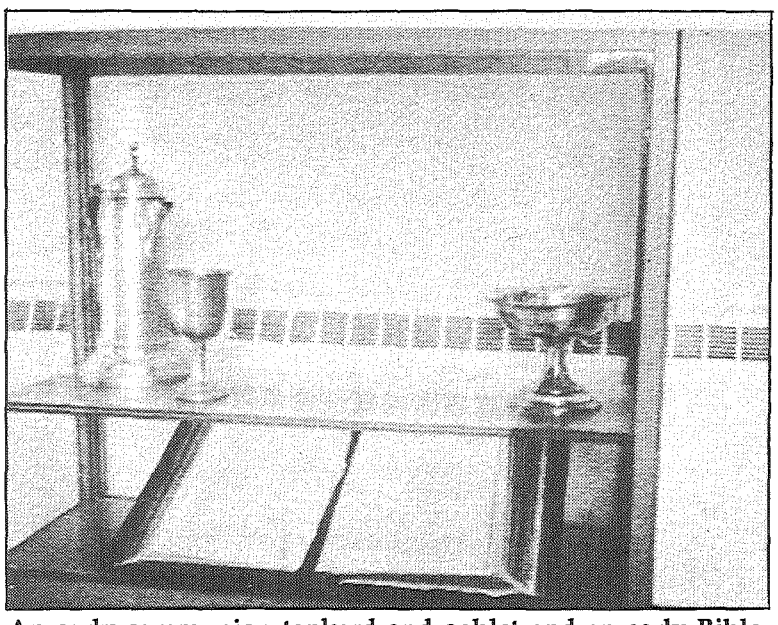
**This house, built after 1840 was donated by Eliza Porter to be used as a manse in 1900. The home was used for that purpose until 1925 when it was sold and a new manse built by the church.**

**Sunday School class members pose for this photo in the 1890s: (front row, left) Orpha McPeek, Gladys Nichol, Ruth Scott, Phoebe Hoffman, Marguerite Welsh, Marian Anderson; (back row) teacher Mrs. Van Horn, Mae McPeek, Anna Mary Hoffman, Mary Scott, Linnie Dice, Nellie Malone, Daisy Fredley, Clara Scott, Marguerite Herren.**

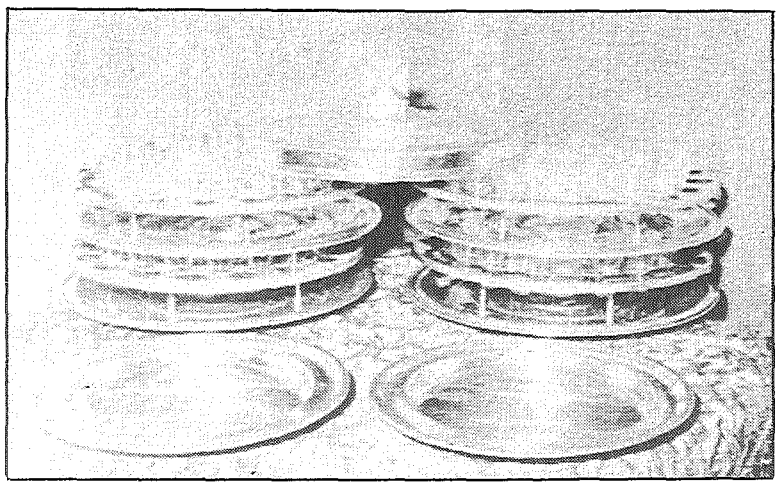


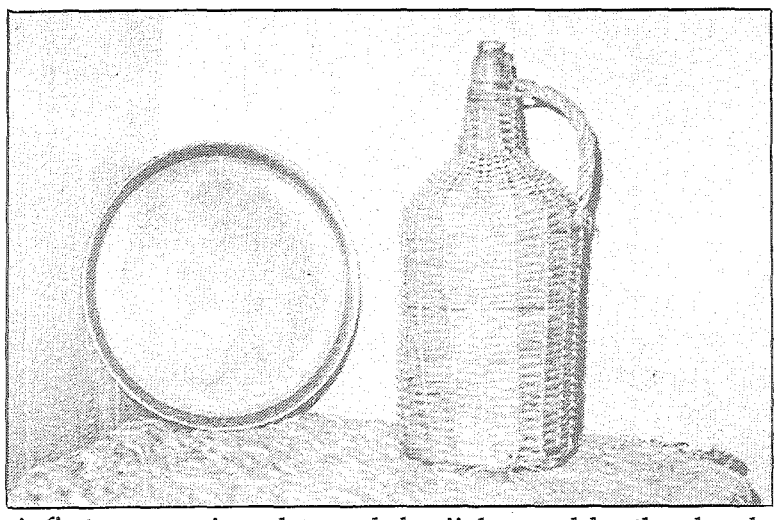

**The forming of the Middle Sandy Creek Presbyterian Church had much to do with the origin of the small railroad town of Winchester, later named Homeworth.**

**Youngsters enjoy a Sunday School class with teachers Dorothy Proudfit and Kathryn Zeller (seated, left) Dan Bowman, Terry Grove, Jim Wagner, Gail Edeburn, Jimmy Emmons (hidden), Mike Scott, Peggy Antonasanti, Jan Freshley behind; (front) Clare Johnston, Janet Bush, Jean Wallace and Janice Bowman.** ***(Photo owned by John Proudfit.)***

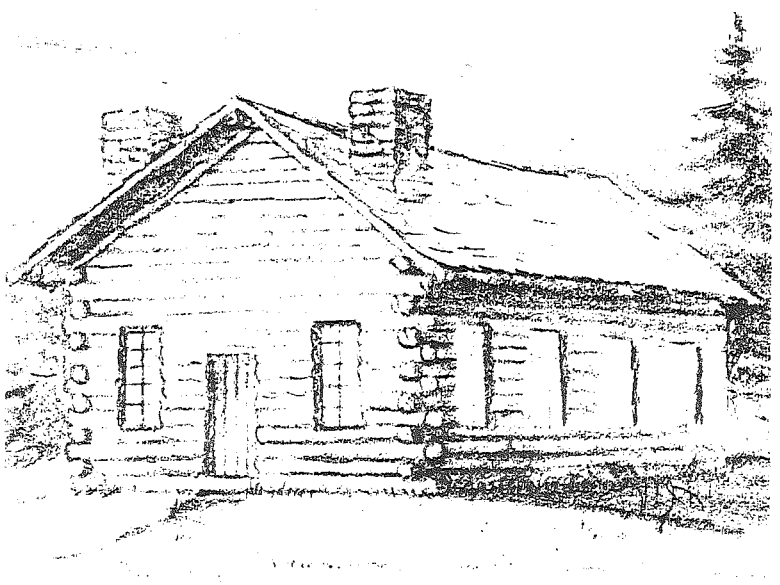


An early communion tankard and goblet and an early Bible has been preserved by the church (above) along with (below) an antique communion service and fount.

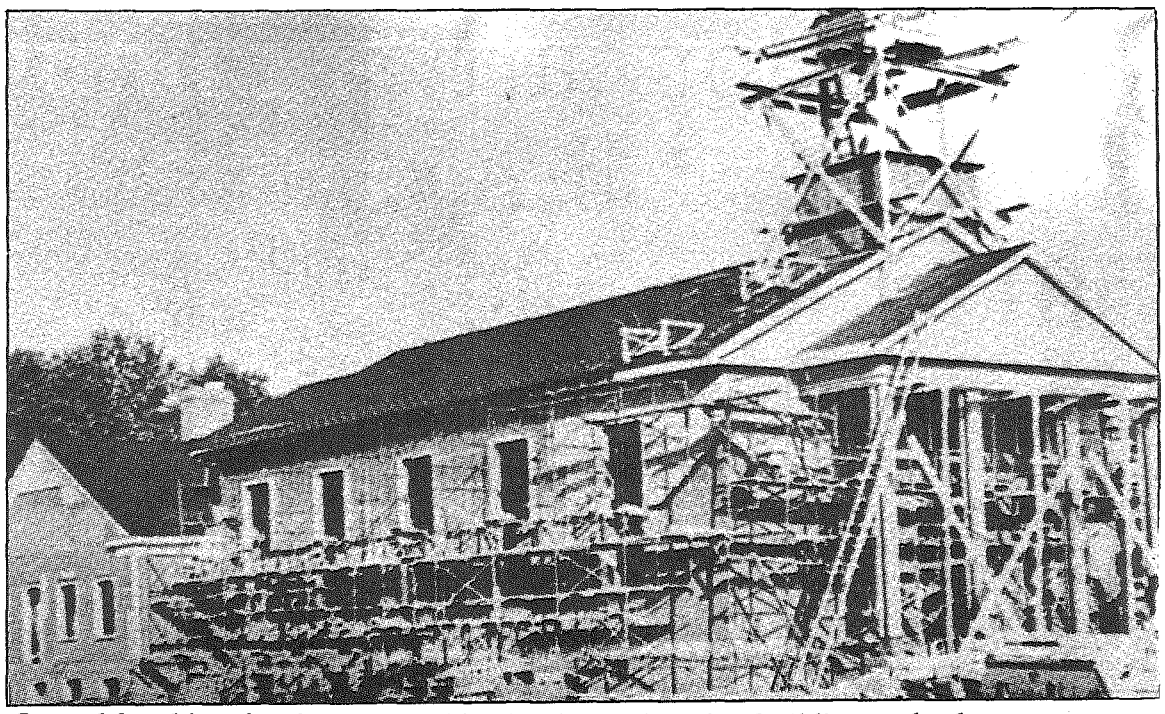




A first communion plate and demijohn used by the church sometime after 1921.

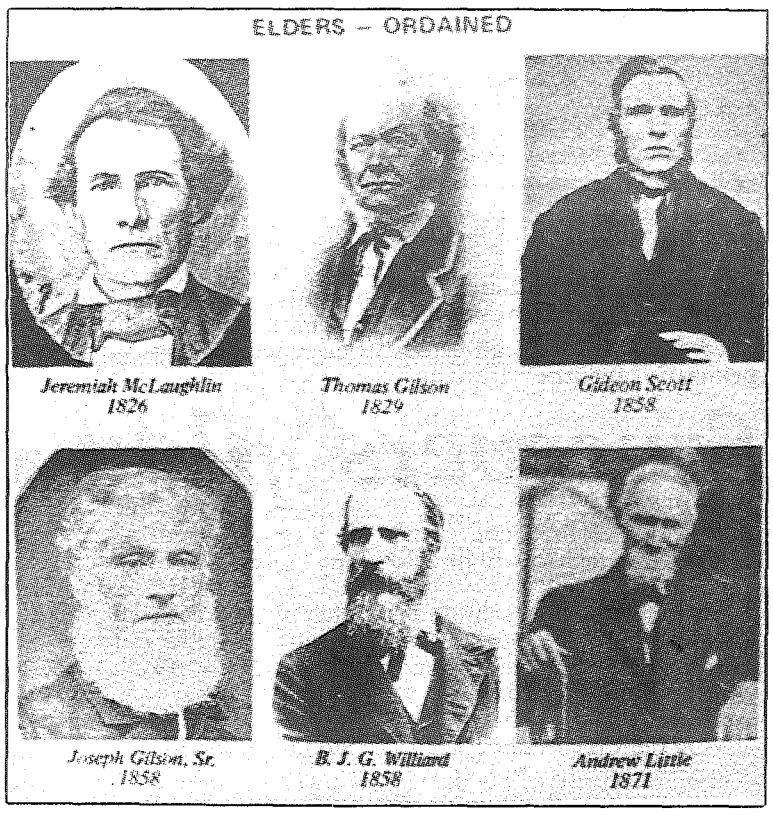


This sketch of the log cabin church built in 1825 was done by Harold E. Fessler.



Ground breaking for the new Middle Sandy Presbyterian building took place at noon on Easter Sunday, April 14, 1963. Ford McQuilkin was chairman of the building committee and Dr. Frank Lindsay headed the building fund committee.

This photo was taken on Oct. 29, 1944 to be sent to the boys in the service.




Ordained elders over the years at Middle Sandy have had a major role in church activities. Jeremiah McLaughlin was one of the first, serving the church in 1826.

# Origin of a superstition

One superstition begats another. Take, for example, the idea of having bad luck if you open an umbrella indoors. A modern belief is that if you want dry skies, be sure to take the umbrella to work. Forget it and leave it at home and it's sure to pour.

The umbrella story began, it's said, in 18th century London where folks carried water proof umbrellas with meta spokes and a spring mechanism to open them. The act o opening the umbrella ofte spelled disaster for a favorit decorative object or, eve worse, a youngster or adu who was poked in the fac with it.

Accidents evoked cros words or injuries which wer considered bad luck by many So, the superstition came abou as a deterrent to opening th umbrella indoors.

# Animation art may be relics but collectible

*By the Associated Press*

CELS AND DRAWINGS on the wall, which one's fairest of them all?

The beauty contest these days is no longer between Snow White and the evil queen, but between still-life relics of their moving images.

These relics — original drawings, background sheets and "cels," hand-painted celluloid frames filmed in rapid succession to produce animation — have become collectors' items. Animation art from films such as the 1937 Disney classic, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," sell for thousands of dollars at auction houses and nearly 300 galleries across the United States.

A new book, "Animation Art — The Early Years 1911-1953," seeks to simplify the task of determining which pieces are the fairest — and what's a fair price. Author Jeff Lotman explains the animation process, and documents 6,800 original cels, drawings and background sheets sold at major auctions during the last 10 years.

The 420-page hardcover book is not cheap — it lists for $125 — but is the first reference work to price so many individual pieces of animation art, according to Elyse Luray-Marx, an animation specialist at Christie's East auction house.

"There's a plethera of reference books on animation, but this is the first book to give you the fair market value," Luray-Marx said recently. The publisher is Schiffer Publishing Ltd. in Atglen, Pa.

The book reports only on major auction results, not small gallery purchases or private sales.

It does not include, for example, a reproduction of the cel from Disney's 1934 short film "Orphan's Benefit" that a St. Louis collector bought privately in 1989 for $450,000 — the highest price ever paid for a work of animation art. The seller, a Staten Island, N.Y., restaurateur, had bought the 11-by-13-inch black-and-white cel of Clara Cluck and Mickey Mouse two years earlier for less than $50,000, according to Leslie Brooks, owner of Mice, Ducks and Wabbits, a gallery in Dougleston, N.Y.

Lotman, 34, of Philadelphia, said recently that sketches from old Disney, Warner Bros., MGM and Hanna-Barbera films have become collectors' items partly because the quality of cartoons was superior 50 years ago, when all steps in the animation process were done by hand.

Another reason for the high price of early animation art — a storyboard from Disney's 1929 short film "The Plow Boy" sold for $101,500 at Christie's East recently — is its relative scarcity.

Snow White may have survived the evil queen' plot to carve out her heart, but she fared less well on Disney's carving board. Disney saved only 8,100 of the 250,000 cels used in the film, according to Brooks.

Perhaps the reason the company did not save more of its production cels was that Walt Disney thought they were less interesting than the drawings.

"In Walt's mind, what mattered were the original drawings, because that reflected the original hand of the artist," said Lotman, who was about 5 years old when Disney died in 1966. "A cel could always be reproduced."

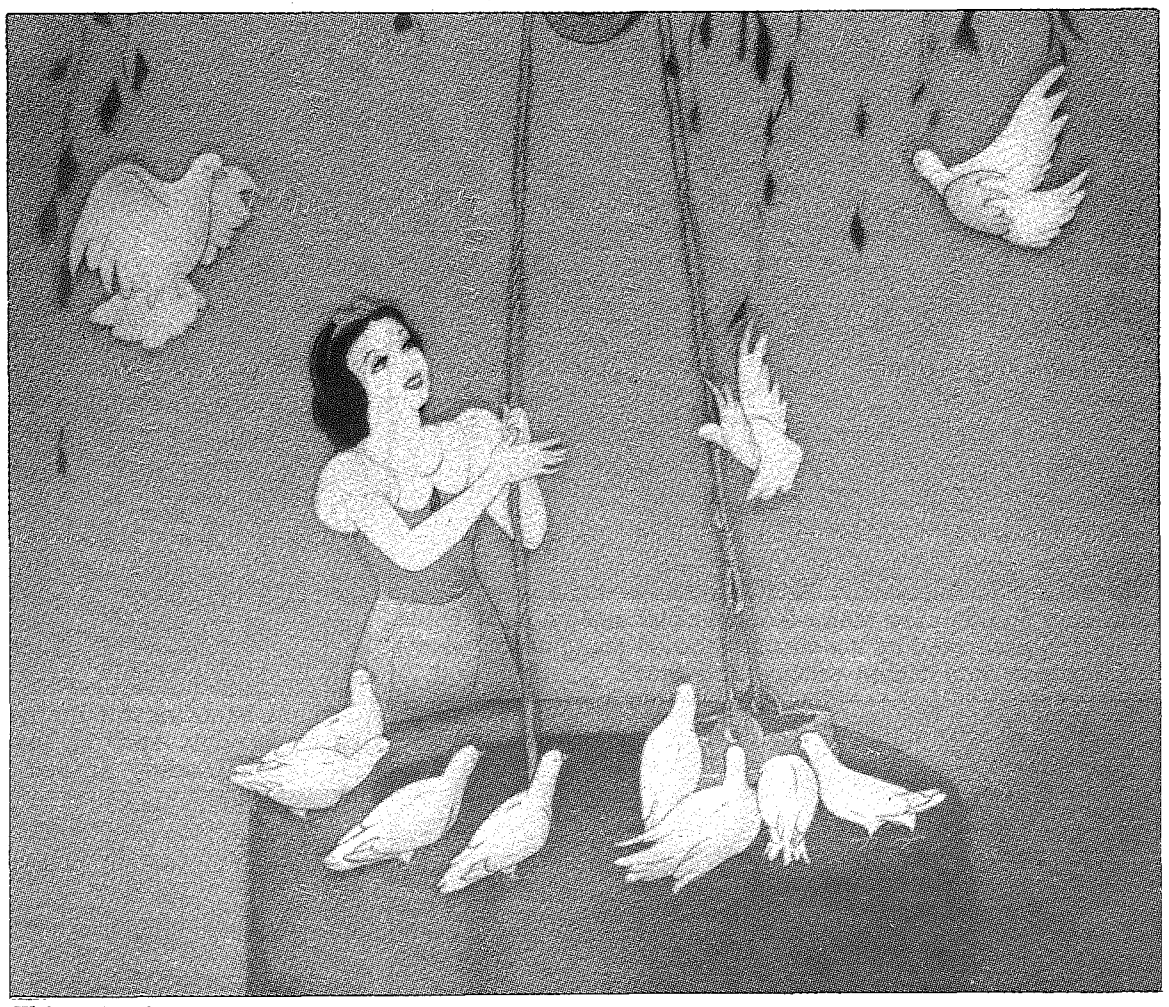
Walt Disney's tastes are reflected these days in the buying habits of European collectors, he said. "The Europeans, who I think are more sophisticated collecters, (are attracted) primarily by the drawings, pastels and concept art instead of the glitz and the color that you would find in the cels that Americans tend to go for."

How does one distinguish a great work of animation art?

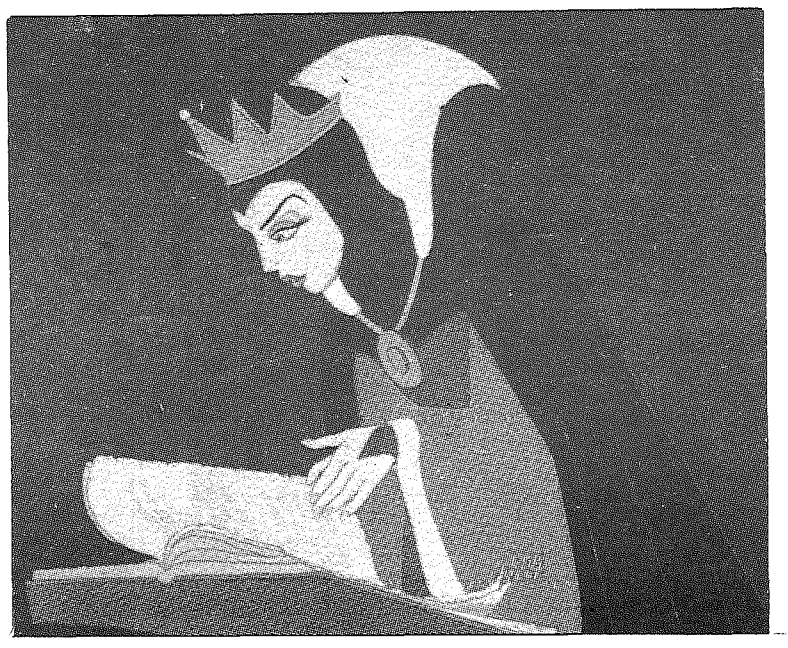
The best pieces, Lotman says, are almost always "on model," in other words, used in the film. They also tend to be "extreme" rather than "in-between" shots. If Mickey Mouse were throwing a ball, for example, the top animators would draw the warm-up and follow-through, and leave the in-between shots for lesser lights.

Above all, says Paul C. Jenkins, vice president of collectibles at Christie's East, a great sketch is beautiful and should strike an emotional chord. "It can remind me of how scared I was in seeing the film," he said recently.

And fear is just what the evil queen would have wanted us to feel.



**This cell of Snow White with doves on a watercolor background from Disney's 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' (1937) was sold recently for $13,800 in auction at Christie's East in New York City.** *(Associated Press photo)*



**This cel of the Queen on a hand prepared background from Snow White was sold recently for $8,050 in auction at Christie's East.** *(Associated Press photo)*

# *Hoover Sweepers play ball in Canton*

EXCITING DAYS ARE ahead for the Hoover Historical Center's baseball team called the Hoover Sweepers, now permanent after three years a single annual summer program at the Canton center.

The first home game will take place Sunday, June 25 at 2 p.m. at Hoover Park in a true 1860s atmosphere. The five-piece brass band will begin the game by playing the new Sweepers Song, written with words by Sally Donze to the tune of a Civil War song, "The Battle Cry of Freedom." Popcorn and lemonade will be sold for a nickle.

Sweepers have scheduled seven contests for this summer and requests for more games and exhibitions continue to pour in. In their first match versus the Canal Fulton Mules, Captain Jerome Pruett and Manager Rich McElroy led their team to a 14-5 victory.

Part of the allure of the game is the exercise in good manners, for this is a gentleman's game. Each player is referred to as "Mister" and rules forbid any ungentlemanly conduct. Also the base ball terminology (they spelled base ball with two words) is quite different and amusing to 1995 fans, or "cranks" as they were called. A run is an ace, and must be reported to the tally keeper by the player who also must ring the bell at the tally table while reporting. Failure to do this results in no score being recorded.

The team is known as a "club nine," players "leg it" instead of running, and they may not swear, spit, or steal base. Any infaction of these rules results in a 25-cent fine.

Previously the Ohio Village Muffins from Columbus, who originated the event as a historic exercise, loaned uniforms to their opponents. Today, however, their greatly expanded schedule and the formation of many new clubs makes this impossible. All of the participants in historic base ball now perform independently; they make up their own schedules, obtain their own necessary equipment (such as bats, balls, bases, uniforms) and secure their own tally keeper, umpire and team members.

Although played at a slower pace, this game is far from easy. Players don't use a glove and a ball may be called an out when it is caught after one bounce.

The Center, located at 2225 Easton St. NW in North Canton, will be open for tours from 1 to 5 p.m. on June 25 and admission is free.