

# Yesteryears' Trails



Quarterly Newsletter Published by the Defiance County  
Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society  
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Winter 2018

Vol. XXXVII

Issue 4

## Defiance County Genealogy Chapter and Board Meetings

Regular monthly meetings of the Defiance Chapter OGS are held at St. John United Church of Christ at 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise stated. The address is 950 Webster Street— on the northeastern corner of the Defiance College campus. Entry is on the north side of the church adjacent to the college gymnasium.

Chapter meetings are the 4th Monday of each month except May, August, and December or as noted.

Board meetings are held at 3:30 p.m. the third Thursday of the month at the St. John UCC at 950 Webster Street.

## Coming Chapter Programs

**Monday, January 28**

*Rhonda Casler - A Genealogical  
Journey to Ireland*

**Monday, February 25**

*Popular Genealogy Websites-  
New and Old  
DCGS Board Members*

**Monday, March 25**

*To be announced*

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## **OHIO GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE**



**1-4 MAY 2019**  
**GREAT WOLF LODGE | MASON, OHIO**  
[WWW.OGSCONFERENCE.ORG](http://WWW.OGSCONFERENCE.ORG)

**Defiance County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society  
Yesteryears' Trails Vol. XXXVII Fall 2018**

**Officers and Trustees**

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**Trustees:**

Rhonda Casler

Dawn Hasch

Pat Wise

**First Families of Defiance County  
and Centennial Families**

**Defiance County First Families**

If you can prove your ancestor resided in Defiance County before January 1846, your ancestor can be classified as a "Pioneer." If he or she lived here between January 1846 and December



1860, that ancestor can be classified as a "Settler." To prove your lineage back to your ancestor, you may use birth records, death records, marriage licenses, census records, Bible records, and other primary or supportive secondary records.

The application fee is \$15.00 which covers as many ancestors as you can prove and also covers your membership pin. You must be a member of the Defiance County Chapter OGS. This membership may be paid at the same time as your application fee is paid. The cutoff date is August 1st of the year in which you apply. For more information and to download the application for First Families, please go to the Society's web site at [www.defiancecountygenealogy.org](http://www.defiancecountygenealogy.org) or write to the chapter at PO Box 7006, Defiance, OH 43512-7006 attention of Mary Scranton, chair.

***Change of Address or Email ?***

If you change your postal or email address, **please** make sure you email the chapter at <defiancegenealogy2002@yahoo.com> or send the changes to Defiance Chapter OGS, PO Box 7006, Defiance, OH 43512-7006 so that your current information is on file.

**Become a Member of DCGS**

Chapter dues are \$12.00 for an individual and \$15.00 per family.

*An additional \$5.00 is required for mailing the four annual newsletters through the U. S. Post Office. Membership form is at the end of this newsletter or you may download a membership form at [www.defiancecountygenealogy.org](http://www.defiancecountygenealogy.org)*

**Defiance County Centennial Families**

To acknowledge families which have been in Defiance County for 100 years or more, our chapter has established a centennial recognition program. Just one item of proof showing that a family member was here in 1918 or before is needed to register a family. Upon registration, a certificate will be sent from the chapter. For more information, please contact the chapter via email or by postal mail-- attention of Carol Ehlinger.

### September Board Meeting

Dianne Kline reported over 129,500 hits to the chapter blog site.

Rhonda Casler has gathered and sent in all the necessary information for the chapter's charitable registration with the Ohio Attorney General's office.

First Families: Mary Scranton noted there will be 10 new inductees and additional names added to three members. Plans were discussed for refreshments.

The board unanimously decided to waive the fee and to honor Roena Bayes with a membership to Defiance First Families. She has already completed the paperwork for Williams County First Families.

### October Board Meeting

Corresponding secretary Dianne Kline noted that she had answered several simple queries and also noted that there have been 131,696 blog site hits. The top five are the Ney Saloon, biographical information on Owen Smith, Conomos Candy Store, the Bear Visiting the Vagabond, and the Allen Hotel in Farmer.

Changes to the chapter's constitution and bylaws will be voted upon at the October chapter meeting. Mary will send the updated documents to OGS and to the DCGS board.

Mary Williams moved to approve the annual donation to the Stryker Area Heritage Council of \$30. Dianne Kline seconded the motion; motion carried.

Plans for the October First Families Reception were discussed. The last chapter meeting of the year will be Monday, November 26, with Tanya Brunner's presentation "WWI: How Bullets and Bacteria Reshaped World History." Possible programming for the 2019 year was also discussed.

### November Board Meeting

The DCGS board met at 6:00 prior to the chapter meeting. Dan Hasch presented a listing of genealogy books appropriate for the elementary school levels. Rhonda Casler moved to place a copy of Links to the Past, a teacher resource book, in each of the five public school elementary libraries. She also moved that one copy of each of the remaining eight books be placed in the Defiance Public Library System. Pat Wise seconded the motion which carried. All books will have book plates noting the gifts to the libraries are from the DCGS and requesting that the chapter be notified if they are removed from the libraries. A letter will accompany the teachers' resource books which will also include a listing of the books available from the public library system.

Possible programs for 2019 were discussed.

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### September 19, 2018 The Crescent-News



***Civil War veteran, Joseph P. Robinson, who is buried in the old section of the Evansport Cemetery, received a new marker. Shown at the site are Tanya Brunner (center) of the Defiance County Veterans Office, along with Robinson's descendants of Joseph Robinson, JoEllen Culbertson (left) and Roena Bayes.***

The following article was written by DCGS President Joanne Allison. It was published in The Crescent-News on October 4, 2018.

### **Defiance County genealogists learn about Woodland Indians by historian Taylor Moyer**

The Defiance County Genealogical Society met on Sept. 24, where historian Taylor Moyer, dressed in native apparel, told the history of the Woodland Indians of northwest Ohio to a large crowd of listeners.

Moyer has been interested in history since he was in kindergarten when he first took an Indian dream catcher to class for show and tell. Since then, he teaches history and has done much research, particularly the history of the people of the Maumee River Valley.

Moyer's program was given from the view of the Native Americans.

The Indians lived off natural resources along the Maumee River and on the periphery of the Great Black Swamp, going into the swamp only to hunt beaver, rabbit, and deer. More than 1,000 native people lived and flourished along the river, many in the area that is now Florida, Ohio.

White men appeared carrying flags, guns, and cannons, scattering the Indians into the swamp where they broke up into smaller villages. Moyer emphasized that the reason Indians made war against the whites was to protect their wives and children and the land they depended on for everything.

Early on, the Indians had guns as soon as they could trade their beaver pelts and buckskins for them. Though their traditional weapons of war were bows and arrows and pipe tomahawks, besides guns, they most opted for war clubs and knives.



**Taylor Moyer displays some of the reproduction items that Woodland natives would have used.**

There were a lot of conflicts and bloody battles between the whites and the natives, so General Anthony Wayne was sent to the northwest area to put down Indian resistance. He ordered the construction of several forts such as Fort Wayne and Fort Defiance.

The fighting came to a head on August 20, 1794, during the Battle of Fallen Timbers.



*The following article was written by DCGS President Joanne Allison. It was published in The Crescent-News on October 4, 2018.*

## **Defiance County genealogists honored at First Families reception**

A special reception was held by the Defiance County Genealogical Society (DCGS) on Sept. 24, where First Families chairman Mary Scranton recognized those who have successfully completed the requirements for First Families or Centennial Families.

Each First Families member documented that he/she is a descendant of an individual who settled in the area now encompassed by Defiance County before 1860. DCGS began awarding certificates in 1987 and to date has 140 members.

Those honored as a Centennial Families member have proved by documentation that their family came into Defiance County 100 years ago or more.

Scranton's grandchildren — Marissa Marie Sims, Brooklyn Renae Sims, and Carson Scott Sims — added 15 ancestors to their membership. Since they were unable to attend the meeting in person, the children made a video presentation telling the history and interesting stories about their ancestors.

Tricia Sanford-Speiser and her daughter, Ashley, became new members with 17 documented ancestors. Tricia also told about her ancestors.

Also added were Pat Wise and her seven grandchildren, with two documented ancestors.

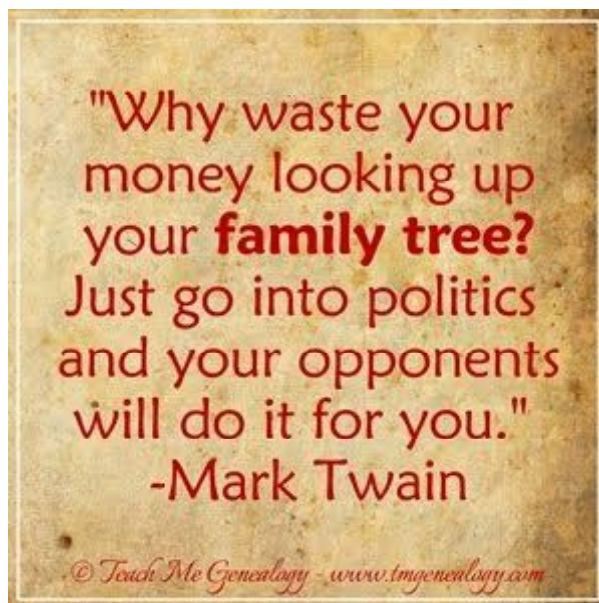
Roena Bayes, now 100 years old, had proven her first families lineage for the Williams County Genealogical Society, but had not yet completed her paperwork for the Defiance County society. Adding to the documentation from Williams County's first families, Scranton completed Bayes' research and paperwork for Defiance County and



***Defiance County Genealogical Society members Gladys Donson, Roena Bayes, Carl M. Veith III, Pat Wise and Tricia Speiser were honored at First Families and Centennial Families reception.***

surprised her by inducting her into First Families. Scranton's research also revealed that Bayes was eligible for Centennial Families as well, as well the Centennial award.

Carl M. Veith III told about his family history and he was presented a Centennial award through his paternal great-grandfather, who settled in Defiance Township in 1905.



*The following article was written by DCGS President Joanne Allison. It was published in The Crescent-News on December 2, 2018.*

### **Tanya Brunner reminded genealogists of how World War I changed America**

The Defiance County Genealogical Society met on Nov. 26 where Tanya Brunner from the Defiance County Veterans Office spoke about the history of World War I (WWI) and the many changes it made for our ancestors and for us today.

As demonstrated in the television series, "Downton Abbey," European power had once been held by aristocracies, but WWI restructured governments which ended royal power and created for the first time a middle class society.

WWI was a war of new technology with weapons of mass destruction such as machine guns, tanks, airplanes, artillery, bombs, and German submarines.

Terrible gases containing sulfur mustard gas or cyanide chlorine blinded the eyes of soldiers or blistered their skin and lungs. Ninety-thousand unnamed soldiers died in the trenches due to exposure to mustard gas, and their dead bodies were just stacked in mass graves.

The red poppy has become a Memorial Day symbol, as the mass graves in Flanders Fields uprooted thousands of red poppy seeds, causing them to bloom. The red poppy must have light to bloom, but their seeds can live for 80 years under the soil. John McCrae was inspired to write the poem, "In Flanders Fields" when he saw the numerous blooming poppies over the graves of fallen soldiers. Speaking to genealogists, Brunner called attention to the fact that many family lines ended there in Flanders Fields.

Brunner read the names of the 49 war casualties from Defiance County. Local records also show that between the years of 1920-25, many Defiance County veterans died after returning home,



***Speaker Tanya Brunner (left) admires the WWI memorial plaque once in possession of the joint ancestor of Lavina Boesling and Ruth Block.***

probably as a result of the gases or disease.

Three years after the war, President Warren G. Harding brought home an unnamed American soldier from France. After military honors, the deceased was entombed in what is called "The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier" in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. His tomb is a reminder of the countless unnamed boys who have given their lives.

Another cause of death of thousands of soldiers was the 1918 pandemic of H1N1 influenza. The disease was accelerated in the close quarters of military camps. Though the flu had spread throughout the world, the media from most countries did not want the public to know how bad it was. However, Spain reported it liberally; thus, it was called the Spanish Flu.

Numerous courageous, but damaged, survivors came home from the war with shell shock and mental illness. Life for them and their families was never the same. America's costly victory was not only because of strategy and power, but because of these young warriors' endurance.

Following a group reading of the words to Taps, Lavina Boesling and Ruth Block displayed a picture of their relative wearing a World War I uniform. His picture is preserved in a beautifully decorated, enameled, memorial plaque.

## HISTORY OF CHURCHES IN EARLY DAYS

By U. G. FIGLEY

*Defiance Democrat*  
*January 11, 1917*

### Baptist

The first Baptist services in Defiance were held in January 1846, by **Rev. James FRENCH**, a missionary of the Ohio Baptists. February 19, 1846, at the residence of **James WARD** met seven persons, **Wm. CLARK, Caroline CLARK, Sarah A. GOODSON, Mary A. STILLWELL, James WARD, John WINFIELD,** and **Jane WINFIELD**, who organized a Baptist church. April 15, 1846, Mr. Ward was elected pastor.

Other members being added, May 16, 1846, **Wm. Clark** became deacon, and June 22, **Amos ZELLARS** was chosen clerk. Mr. Ward was pastor a few months. Later the 22 members were minus a pastor a year and a half till in 1848, **Rev. H. P. STILLWELL** came, remaining until 1853. During his incumbency the church was incorporated and also built a structure, which was dedicated on May 21, 1852.

From November 1853, for about six months, **Amos PRATT** was pastor. Upon his leaving, the building was rented for school purposes till in March, 1855, when **Rev. Wm. BRANCH** came. He remained a year. In May, 1857 **J. C. ARMSTRONG** became pastor, remaining until in Dec. 1858. When he left, there were 46 members.

War times found the church too weak to do much, and services were few till 1866 when **W. V. THOMAS** took charge, remaining till 1873. During his term, considerable advancement was made all along the line. June 1873 to August 1874, **J. H. SEDGWICH** was pastor from that date to August, 1876, **Rev. A. VON PUTKAMER** was pastor, and he had the parsonage built. In 1877 **W. V. THOMAS** returned for a time, and from that time the church, in spite of ups and downs, moved steadily forward.

### German M. E. Church.

The first services of the German M. E. Church were held in 1850 in a school room. General missionary work was done and in 1857, **Rev.**

**Frederick RUFF** was stationed on the circuit. The official members at Defiance were local preachers, **Hermann IDING** and **A. SCHMIDT**; **Philip THORREITER** was class leader, and there were 15 members. They paid the preacher \$200 and that year built a church costing \$700 on Wayne Street. The parsonage was built in 1860. The bell was given by the Presbyterians. The church from the first enjoyed a conservative growth.

### German Lutherans

**Rev. August F. KNAPE** of Fort Wayne in 1845 settled at Independence, and besides his own little congregation, came often to Defiance to hold services for the German Lutherans, numbering about 36. He was pastor till 1849.

In 1850 they elected their first officers, and these were **Christian HESS** and **Martin VIEBACH** for trustees, **Edward KORNBAUM** and **Valentine STORK** for elders. There were 21 members.

After preaching for them a few times, May 29, 1851, **Adam DETZER** was elected pastor and was installed August 3, 1851, by **Rev. TRAUTMAN** of Adrian. They had no place to hold services as the school house west of the German Catholic Church used frequently for church services, was now in the hands of another denomination, but finally they found an old house on Water Street, alias 'Smoky Road', which was put into -for services.

The congregation increased so that in 1852, a lot was bought of **J. D. PHILLIPS** of Dayton, on the bank of the Auglaize, for \$75, and in 1853-54, a church was built, the members donating timbers and doing all they could to help the builders. The house, 31 x 45, was dedicated July 9, 1854, **Rev. Detzer** having moved the year before from near Archbold. Often he walked the 21 miles to Defiance to hold services through all kinds of weather and under all kinds of conditions.

A parsonage was built in 1856, and the same year the church was incorporated as St. John's German Evangelical Lutheran Church. A bell was put on the church in 1860, and in 1864 a pipe organ costing \$636, was built.

In 1867 the congregation invested \$800 in four town lots. In 1870 a brick school house costing \$1153 was built. Also in 1870 a disruption in the congregation occurred, the offshoot being St. Paul's

Church under the Iowa synod with **Rev. John DEINDOERFER** pastor of the organization for a number of years. The congregation bought three lots for \$1,200 on the corner of Clinton and Arabella Streets near Union School Park, and put up a small building for a parochial school. In 1871 a \$6,000 church was built. In 1873 a parsonage was built.

After the disruption mentioned, **Rev. Detzer** finally abandoned the pastorate after a labor of 21 years, as a faction had elected a **Rev. W. I. LANGE**, and by a final vote, the latter was elected pastor only to resign. **Rev. Detzer** was asked to remain till a successor could be found. From Sept. 1872 to Dec. 1872, there was no pastor when **G. M. ZUCKER** was chosen, remaining a long time as preacher and teacher.

### Episcopal Church

The first services of the Protestant Episcopal church were held by **Rev. WALBRIDGE** of Toledo in Nov. 1851. In 1858, **Rev. David BARKER** of Maumee, preached a few times. **Rev. Moses HAMILTON** of Napoleon held services about six months in 1857. In 1878, **Rev. Edward WINTHROP** of Maumee, held occasional services, as did **Rev. JUKES**.

Grace Episcopal parish was organized May 1, 1855, with the following vestrymen: **Alexander BACKUS, Henry M. CLARK, Jacob J. GREENE, John W. McKINN, Wm. SHEFFIELD**. From 1858, for more than 15 years, the parish lapsed till **A. V. GORRELL** of Hicksville, who had been holding occasional services for a few years; in 1876 he stirred up an enthusiasm enough to build the present brick church on the Auglaize River. It was dedicated by **Bishop BEDELL** April 11, 1878. A rectory costing \$4, 600 was built in 1881. The late **Geo. S. MAY** became pastor in 1880, serving until his demise, Feb. 24, 1903, at the age of 70.

### German Reformed Church

The German Reformed church life in Defiance dates from services held in the old court house on Wayne street in 1861, by **Rev. J. O. ACCOLA**. An organization was made in 1863 with a membership of fair size, and in 1864 **A. B. KOPLIN** as-

sumed his charge as pastor, with another point at Sherwood, and was succeeded in 1866 by **H. DANIEL**, who for various reasons resigned the next year. In 1869, in spite of a lot of adverse circumstances, the little congregation headed by the **SPANGLERS** and **WIDMERS**, built a church at the corner of Fourth and Washington Streets but had no settled pastor.

In 1871 a parsonage was built. A regular pastor, **J. B. POERNER**, secured in 1873, remained a year. He was followed by **C. PLUESS**, who stayed about a year. Left with debts and no pastor, the parsonage and lot was sold. After transient preaching, in August 1876, a new man, **A. K. HEINEMAN**, an enthusiastic young student, took charge, bringing back many of the 'strays.' A new parsonage was built in 1878, and all debts were cleared. Fortunately the troubles of the congregation now were safely past.

### Other Churches Not Mentioned in Article

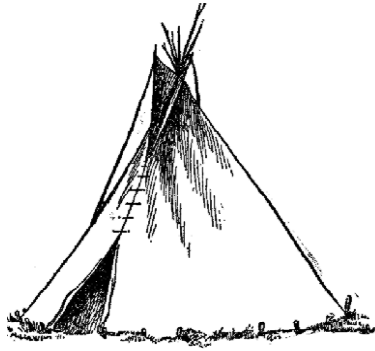
"The organization of the United Brethren and Christian churches and affiliating organizations and branches are more modern history than those mentioned above and have no place in this all-to-brief account of early church matters in Defiance and vicinity." U. G. FIGLEY

#### Tips for "Googling" Ancestors

1. Use quotation marks around the exact phrase or name. ("Edgar Allan Poe")
2. Add the word "genealogy" to the ancestor's name or family. ("Poe Family Genealogy")
3. Use and asterisk to note something unknown. ("Edgar \* Poe")
4. Use the capital *OR* (*in italics*) to search for different versions. (Edgar Poe *OR* Poe Edgar)
5. Use a minus sign to eliminate extraneous finds ("Jonathan Winters" - seasons)
6. Add a date to the search. ("Edgar Allen Poe" 1809...1849)
6. Search Google Books  
<books.google.com>
7. Search Google Images  
<images.google.com>
8. Search Google News Archive  
<news.google.com/newspapers>



*Defiance Democrat*  
April 5, 1917, page 4



**“WOMAN HAS THRILLING EXPERIENCE IN  
PIONEER DAYS WITH MAD INDIAN**

*by U.G. Figley*

After running a quarter of a mile, the Indian overtook her, drove her back to the house at the point of his butcher knife, sat her on a chair in the middle of the floor and told her if she got up, he would kill her. Then he took hold of the child and tried to pull it away from her, and with the two of them pulling at it, it is a wonder the child was not badly hurt. Letting go the child, he began dancing around her, and then went and looked out of the window.

Again she made her escape and hid behind a large sugar tree. The Indian came out and ran toward the river again. She ran the other way through the woods several miles, to where the sale was [going on], and as it was nearly over, waited till it was finished, presenting herself.

The husband, Elias SHIRLEY, with his brothers, Nathan and James, and a posse of the neighbors, went to the house and found it knee deep in the feathers the Indian had taken from the beds. Some lard had been poured on the feathers. The chairs had been thrown into the fireplace and then pitched on the feathers. Medicine bottles were broken. The contents of the bureau and other things were carried off.

A large iron kettle had been chopped through the bottom with the axe. About 40 [men] then started out on an Indian hunt. Arriving at OCCONOXEE's village, they found the Indians out hunting. One of the men drew an Indian profile on a door, giving him a big heart, and shot the heart full of holes. The men then divided up in four bands of 10 each, the one finding the Indian to receive a fine gun, and signal guns were to be fired till they were all together.

The Indians were found on Flatrock Creek. The old Indian's head was all white with feathers. Elias Shirley begged a rifle to shoot the Indian,

but Nathan and the rest refused to let him have one, and the old Indian was put in jail at Defiance to await trial. The chiefs of the Ottawas paid Mr. Shirley \$100 for the property destroyed, a low estimate, but nothing for damages. The younger Indian was allowed to go free.

***Was Bad Man.***

The Indians said he was a bad man and often made them trouble. When the Indian was released from jail, he was told to never return to the neighborhood, and if he did, that Shirley would shoot him, which the Indians said they would be glad for him to do. They glimpsed each other in Defiance once after that, but the Indian made himself absent.

The next summer when Nathan Shirley was clearing on his new farm preparatory to moving, OCDONOXEE, the chief, SEGATCHEWAY (his brother), Dr.KICKWAS, SCOBENAH, POKESHAW, and several other Indians said: 'Colonel Shirley, I am Occonoxee, chief, your men shoot Indian on wigwam door, Indian no like it.' To please them, he had a white man drawn in profile on a board and had the Indians shoot at it. This satisfied them and they went away.

This POKESHAW, a Pottawatomie Indian, married Occonoxee's sister, who had married a Frenchman named LOMBARD, and who had a farm at Delaware town. They parted, he taking the boy, Peter, and she the girl, and Peter LOMBARD sold goods to Indian and white alike, the girl making a fine Indian lady, or squaw. Pokeshaw got drunk and was drowned in a big spring, and 'Old Mrs. Pokeshaw,' as she was familiarly known for many years, finally went west with the rest of the 'bunch.'

I am not sure if there are any of Nathan Shirley's descendants yet in Defiance county. The youngest daughter, Nancy, who married Andrew J. DILS, went to Boise City, Idaho, in the early 90's where her son, Nathan Shirley DILS was in November 1916, elected to his second term in the state legislature."

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| Lash                                      | Pamela      | 17    | Stillman                    | "Ilo" Rose     | 23    |
| Lewis                                     | Amanda      | 23    | Stillwell                   | Mary A,        | 43    |
| Lewis                                     | William Jr. | 9     | Stillwell                   | H. P.          | 43    |
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