

Hedges
Family

The Jabez Hedges Homestead, 1794-1994

By KATHERINE R. WHITTEN

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This story is one that was submitted for judging in the Pickaway County Historical Society's History Fair. It was received too late by the editor of the Pickaway Quarterly for inclusion in the Summer Edition.)

In 1794 the land was covered with trees. These trees were up to six feet in diameter. Wild animals were in abundance. Deer, turkey, bear, and wolf roamed the earth while the bald eagle flew majestically in the brilliant sky. Indians lived in peace hunting unhindered in this virgin land. This was all before the white man came.

In 1797 the pioneer family of the Williamson came. They built a small cabin on the southern half of section sixteen, in Walnut township, in Pickaway county, in the Northwest Territory. This family moved to the northern half of the same section in 1812.

About this time there was a family by the name of Hedges who was getting ready for the journey to their new home. The head of this family was Joshua Hedges. He had eleven children. Their names were Joshua Jr., John, Obed, Jabez, Cynthia, Phebe, Rhoda, Julia, Cyrus, Morgan, and William. His wife's name was Mary. The family lived in Hedgesville, Virginia (present day West Virginia). They began their journey in 1804. The Hedges family came to Pennsylvania. From there they went to Marietta by flatboat. After they arrived they obtained a wagon and came to Lancaster. Once in Lancaster, Joshua Sr. died. In the fall of the same year the rest of the family moved to Walnut township.

Jabez Hedges was born on December 28, 1789 in Hedgesville, Virginia. He was a volunteer in the War of 1812. Jabez married the daughter of pioneer Williamson, Mariah. In 1829 he and Mariah moved to the southern half of section 16. They built a cabin on the site of Williamson's old cabin. They had 13 children. On April 28, 1836 Jabez bought the west half of the southeastern quarter of section 16 and the east half the southeastern quarter of section 16 which contained 80 acres more or less.

Jabez built a brick Federal Style home in 1844. The kiln used to make the bricks was on the other side of the road. To make the necessary bricks the kiln was probably in use for a couple of summers. The house consisted of two stories and was in the shape of an L. There were originally six rooms, a hall, and a basement that stretched the full length of the house. These rooms were as follows: a parlor, a living room, a dining room, servants quarters, and two bedrooms. There was also an attic. The kitchen, hearth, dairy room, and the meal room was added on sometime shortly thereafter.

Many outbuildings were added throughout the home's 150 year history. There was an outhouse about 25 paces from the house. This building was leveled in 1983 when a tomado went through. Next there was a smokehouse. This building was where the year's supply of meat was cured and stored. There was an old shop where one of the present grain bins stands. This building was the original Nebraska Post Office. Its outer boards were weathered walnut. This building was torn down before 1977. There was a chicken house and a brooder house also. A well house stood on the east side of the house. It was filled with sawdust to keep it from freezing in the winter. It had a wind pump to draw the water out. There was a granary and a corn crib on the west side of the house. The granary was burned down in 1992 and the corn crib in 1990.

There was an orchard that stretched out to the road. None of this orchard remains. There are two other barns. The first was built before 1916. This barn was constructed with wooden pins. Also in this barn there were loose walnut boards in the mow that were turned every year to keep them from warping. The second barn was built in 1916. It has no center stanchions, it is supported totally from the outside structure. This barn was bigger and was also constructed with wooden pins. There was a buggy shed with scales room. The scales were Fairbanks.

At both ends of the shed there were doors that opened that allowed the livestock or grain to enter and to be weighed. There was a trough and well west of both barns. When this trough was filled and the cap in its center was removed the trough on the east side of the barn would fill.

There was a sugar camp in the woods to the east of the house. Also in the woods there was a bandstand where the family would gather after church. All of the family was musically inclined. Hedges Chapel was built on land given to the church by one of the Hedges. The land will return to the present owner if the church ever disbands. There was a one room school house across from the Nebraska Post Office.

After Jabez died at the age of 90 on January 18, 1880 the farm was taken over by his son Joshua. Joshua was married to Sarah Hartman. They had nine children whose names were: Clara, Oman, Hattie Parks, Emma Krutcher, Chester Hedges, Edgar Hedges, John Hedges, Claude Hedges, Anna Crumley, and Ida who died at birth. Joshua died on October 30, 1910. After his death John inherited the farm. John married Anna Wilson and they had two children, Russell and Fred. After John died in 1935, Russell ran the farm. After Russell's death his son Joe inherited it. Joe sold the farm to Richard Hansen in 1989.

THE JABEZ HEDGES HOMESTEAD, Continued

This farm has had many owners over the years. Its surface has changed greatly. The six feet in diameter trees are gone, as are the eagles. Houses are scattered here and there with only patches remaining of what were once the mighty forests. Two hundred years have passed and people, animals, plants, and buildings have come and gone. Only one thing has remained, the land. The land will be here as long as the world is. If it could talk, what tales could it tell? We can only imagine and preserve our history, so our children don't have to wonder. We must wait and see what will happen to the Hedges Homestead in the next two hundred years.

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Interview with Mr. and Mrs. John Hedges.

Interview with Mr. Doug White.

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Program for Annual Meeting

Hugh Wilhelm, professor of Geography at Ohio University, Athens, will be the speaker at the annual meeting of the Pickaway County Historical Society. The meeting will be a carry-in dinner beginning at 6:30 p.m. November 10 in the St. Philip's Episcopal Church Parish House.

The title of Dr. Wilhelm's presentation is "Rural Folk Architecture: Barns in Ohio"

Dr. Wilhelm is a native of Lower Silesia (now Saxony) in East Germany. In 1946 he fled his home region to a small town in Baden-Wuerttemberg in West Germany. While there he began an apprenticeship program, leading to a farm manager position.

In 1950 he applied and was accepted for a one-year high school exchange program to the United States. He emigrated to the United States in 1954 and received his citizenship in 1959.

From 1955 to 1960, he attended the University of Illinois, majoring in geography and receiving both the B.S. and M.A. degrees. After a year of teaching at the University of Southwestern Louisiana he returned to college, this time at Louisiana State University to proceed with his doctoral work. While there he studied under Professor Fred Kniffen, one of America's foremost scholars on folk architecture.

Dr. Wilhelm joined the Department of Geography at Ohio University in 1963 where his teaching and research interests continue to focus on cultural landscape.

**Darlene Weaver Recognized
By Ohio Historial Society**

Darlene Weaver, director of the Pickaway County Genealogical Library, is being recognized for Outstanding Individual Achievement by the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums (OAHSM) for her invaluable work with the Pickaway County Historical Society, and her significant contributions to the community which it serves.

The 1994 Outstanding Achievement Awards Program, initiated in 1982 by OAHSM, is an effort to recognize excellence in promoting and interpreting Ohio state and local history by historical societies, history museums, and individual historians.

Darlene will be recognized at OAHSM's Awards Luncheon, to be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. November 5 at the Ohio Historical Center in Columbus. Forty-three organizations and individuals from all geographic regions of Ohio will be recognized in the nine categories which include: County or Regional History Publication, Local History Publication, Promotional Publication, Newsletter Publication, Exhibit or Display, Public Program, Youth/School Program, Audio-Visual Program, and Individual Achievement.