



# RAVINIA

*An Advocate for Community Resources*

Published by Friends of the Ravines (FOR)

Fall 2009/Winter 2010

## The Unseen Stream of Iuka Ravine And Other Stories—Part Two

by Daryl Largent

In 1832, the Treaty of Pontotoc Creek was signed. Among other things, the treaty called for the Chickasaw nation to cede land east of the Mississippi and obtain new land in the west. A Chickasaw named Chief Ish-ta-ki-yu-ka-tubbe endorsed and helped ratify the treaty, but it is not for his diplomatic skills that he is remembered today. Instead, it is his name or, rather, a contraction of it: Chief Iuka.

Other than supporting the treaty and having a recognizable nickname, Chief Iuka is known for suffering a terrible illness. So severe was his sickness that he was literally carried to a spot in what is now northeastern Mississippi to drink from supposedly curative springs. The spring waters proved pure and powerful; Chief Iuka recovered and even settled there—east of the Mississippi—for the rest of his life. The area quickly became known as the town of Iuka, one of an eventual five in neighboring states.

The town of Iuka, Mississippi, gained fame for its springs, but gained infamy during the Civil War. Fought in 1862, the Battle of Iuka took over 400 lives and left over 500 captured or MIA from the two sides. Over 1,300 men were wounded, and among these men was Captain Neil, the youngest son of William Neil.

Commemorated by Neil Avenue and described in any book on Columbus history, William Neil had moved to the mid-Ohio area in 1818, six years after Columbus was founded. His name became more important in Columbus than the city's namesake ever was. Neil bought a large amount of land north of Columbus, much of which would later become the site of The Ohio State University. On this land he built a farmhouse. Today's Neil Avenue is the former long lane that led from downtown to Neil's farm. Neil was prosperous in many businesses, but mainly recognized for stagecoaches, which earned him the title of "Stage King."

In 1856, on a hill that may or may not be an Adena mound (there is speculation), William Neil built a large brick home for his son Robert at the present address of 1842 Indianola Avenue.

More of the Neil family, including William, would end up living in the new brick house after the farmhouse burned. Henry Neil, William's youngest son, owned the brick house by 1872. It was Henry Neil who was the first Ohioan to enlist in the Union Army for the Civil War.

Henry Neil soon became Captain Neil. He fought and was among the many wounded at the Battle of Iuka before making his way back to Columbus. Captain Neil named the brick home *Indianola* (which, like Iuka, is a town in Mississippi). Apparently finding his talent, he may have been responsible for renaming Wachita Avenue Indianola Avenue, as marked on an 1892 map: "Indianola-Place Addition for Henry M. Neil." (see below) A section of Indianola is also changed to 16th Avenue



Source of the Neil 1892 map is the Ohio Historical Society Archives.

## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

**D**espite our nation's current economic crisis, Friends of the Ravines forges ahead with its mission "to protect, preserve and restore ravine areas for the benefit of the urban community as well as the wildlife that utilize them." We are grateful to all who have supported us in the past and continue to contribute by volunteering in many ways to ensure that ravines remain a vital aspect of our community.

Highlights of 2009 included our annual spring plant walk in Indian Run Falls Park, led by Mimi Migliore, Nature Education Coordinator for the City of Dublin. Spectacular views of the waterfall at the top of massive limestone cliffs highlighted our journey through one of central Ohio's truly amazing natural areas. In March, a lively community forum addressing the topic of fogging for mosquitoes produced strong arguments on both sides of this controversial issue.

On Tuesday, September 15, Friends of the Ravines partnered with United Way of Central Ohio for Community Care Day. Volunteers working in Glen Echo Park removed graffiti, cleared trash from the stream, and planted native shrubs along the slopes. Exciting plans for 2010 include a plant walk in Camp Mary Orton and a cover article in *Ravinia* written by renowned Ohio naturalist Jim McCormac.

With this expanded 10th anniversary edition of *Ravinia*, it is worthwhile to reflect on past achievements in protecting and enhancing ravines in central Ohio. Countless hours of work by dedicated volunteers have made the Glen Echo restoration project a huge success. Our "Guide to Protecting Urban Ravines" and the numerous outstanding articles in *Ravinia* have provided invaluable information for those working to maintain the ecological integrity of these resources. With your ongoing support, Friends of the Ravines will continue to work with the community to protect and enhance these outstanding treasures.

*Brian Gara, Chair, Board of Trustees*

## NEWS FROM THE RAVINES

**IUKA RAVINE** had a couple of front-porch-arm-chair birdwatchers who reported that the cessation of all other bird sounds announced their resident hawk's approach to its nest in a nearby boulevard tree this spring.

**TUCKER RAVINE** wildlife in spring 2009 included a mother red fox and four kits who were spotted frolicking in a meadow adjacent to the wooded ravine, along with a young buck, doe, fawns, and several unidentified hawks.

**BILL MOOSE RAVINE** was home to a pair of coyotes that had a litter of at least four pups in April or May. An adult coyote and four pups were spotted at the edge of the woods.

**WALHALLA RAVINE**, site of the 27th annual Clintonville Homes Tour in September, featured eight homes, all on the ravine in the heart of Clintonville.

**GLEN ECHO RAVINE** attracted a birder who spotted 20 different species, including six Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and three Ruby-crowned Kinglets, in a couple of hours.

## FOR Receives \$2000 Grant

The Columbus Foundation and United Way of Central Ohio have awarded Friends of the Ravines (FOR) a Neighborhood Partnership Grant to help fund a 12-page Tenth Anniversary issue of *Ravinia* and to purchase native plantings for the prairie slope west of Indianola Bridge in Glen Echo Ravine. FOR was among 61 organizations selected from 173 applicants reviewed by a 22-member volunteer panel. A celebratory event honoring all recipients was held on August 20 at Mount Carmel West. The evening's program included dignified speakers, an award ceremony, hors d'oeuvres, and live music. Sponsors of the event were The Columbus Foundation, United Way Neighborhood Partnership Center, United Way of Central Ohio, Bob Evans, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, and National City Bank.

We apologize to our readers for the printing glitch in the title of the article on pages 6 and 7 of the Spring/Summer 2009 Issue of *Ravinia*. The title should have read:

*Friends of the Ravines Celebrates the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of*  
**RAVINIA**  
*With a Chronology of Articles*

*Prepared by K Adamson and Martha Harter Buckalew*

*(Please note that the title appears correctly in the issue posted on Friends of the Ravines Web site.)*

on the map. These street name changes, if indeed his doing, are trivial compared to Captain Neil's greatest apparent naming: Iuka Ravine. Thereby, the first diagonal street to break the Columbus grid became Iuka Avenue.

In Iuka Ravine, along Iuka Avenue, ran the stream that Captain Neil may have named Indianola Run, or perhaps the more humble Neil Run. Of course, others may have attached these easy titles to the stream, as is the case with "Iuka Run."

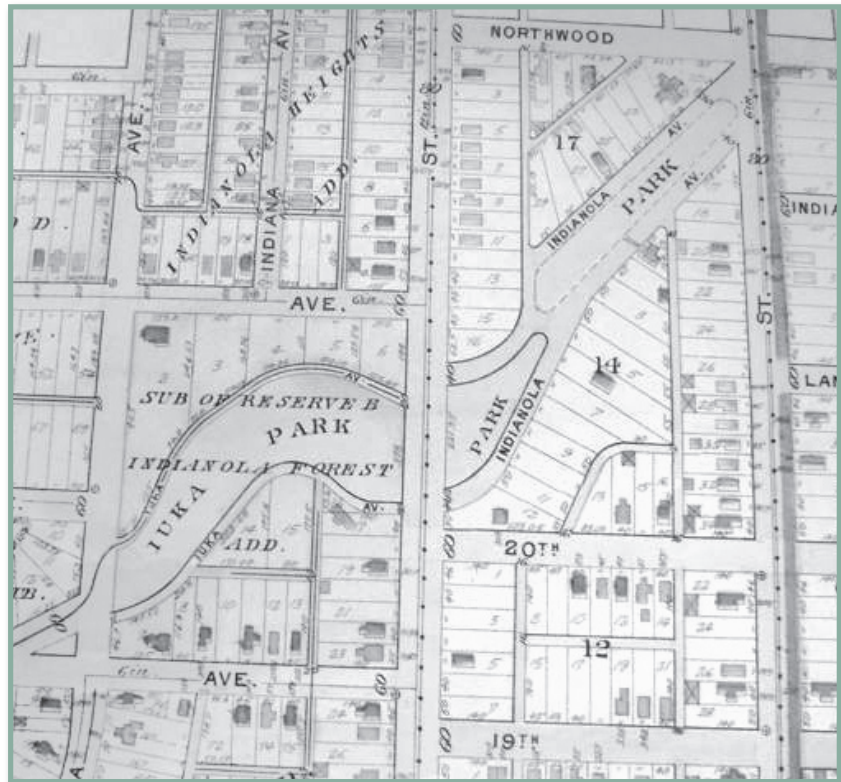
The ravine and stream were important in the placement of the house *Indianola*. William Neil built the home on a hill between branches of the ravine, which are marked "Reserve" on the 1892 map. Current dips in the neighborhood indicate the old branches. The home, set up on a hill behind a circular driveway, would have overlooked the area. Iuka Run once ran down 16th Avenue, and may have been visible from certain vantage points—especially a probable bend in the stream at the corner of 16th and Indianola. Aside from his owning the property known as Indianola Farm, it is reasonable to assume that William Neil built the home at 1842 Indianola for the beauty of the area, including the clear, spring-fed waters of Iuka Run.

The house was later reportedly used in the Underground Railroad, not unlike other ravine buildings such as Clinton Chapel, now a funeral home on Walhalla Ravine. Today, *Indianola* (at 1842 Indianola) looks quite different and is the Kappa Sigma fraternity house (with less brick, more columns).

Where else to find mention of Iuka Run? Information surely must come from the Iuka Park Association, a.k.a. the Iuka Ravine Association or, upon its founding in 1918, the Iuka Avenue Park Improvement Association. Aside from shortening its name, the club has achieved many things since its founding: Iuka Avenue as a "one-way parking street," trash cans in the park, and a determined speed limit all began as discussions within the club that date back to its founding. The organization also had a hand in the designation of the Iuka Ravine Historic District in 1986.

The earliest Iuka Park Association constitution listed in its goals the maintaining, preserving, and restoring of Iuka Ravine. Indeed, trees were planted, schoolchildren were lectured, and the forest has been more or less preserved—although the flowering dogwoods have long since disappeared. The club discussed preservation at weekly meetings, in which motions were passed, past minutes were agreed upon, and discussion was focused on where to hold the next picnic. It was a kind of neighborhood social club where an amicable agreement on who should be the ravine step-sweeper was reached and

delicious refreshments were served. A picnic committee eventually formed, apparently to determine on which bank of the Scioto to meet and, again, what delicious refreshments to bring. Other topics came and went, such as cats versus birds in the ravine and "little Miss Nancy" who "sang a group of songs . . . a great variation of themes." The club's work culminated in 1964 with a petition to rezone a section of Iuka Avenue from Apartment-Residential to Single Family Dwellings. Their petition appears to have been accepted, which led to a court case between the club and Mr. Newton Hess, who was building an apartment complex. The petition was then denied



Source of 1910 Baist map is Columbus Metropolitan Library.

by a 6-1 vote, and the ravine was not rezoned. To this day, several apartments mingle with homes along the ravine. The club's activities subsided after this climax in their actions, but they still meet today.

Since one of their goals was the restoration of the ravine, it's striking that no mention of Iuka Run appears in the records. The only mention of water (aside from river picnics) was in 1938: "stagnant water in the park." This was most likely a reference to the pool of water that still forms in Iuka Park. The "water-in-the-park situation" was resolved by a member's simply resolving to take care of it; motion passed. In 1921, the club met by the river to picnic, but also to collect stepping stones for the ravine. A week later, they found that they did not have enough stepping stones "to complete the walk across the ravine." The wording is unclear, but it's doubtful that they were seeking stepping stones for Iuka Run.

*continued on page 4*

One of the Iuka Park Association's first contributions began in 1918, when the committee agreed to plant Boston ivy in Iuka Ravine. This ivy is one of three invasive ivies that cover large banks of the ravine today, including a few sycamores.

The sycamores rooted along the ravine are among the remains of the stream. Another remnant is the pronounced meander of the ravine, notably along the northern edge west of the Summit Street Bridge. The meander indicates the curves and bends of the stream. The hollow-walled trench on the south side of the park, within which grow some sycamores and an ironwood, is an example of how deep the ravine used to be and is one of the closest examples of an original portion of the ravine. The slight meander in the trench indicates Iuka Run, which can still be heard under the nearby manhole. Unlike the trench, the surrounding ravine banks were leveled with fill. This happened when soil was moved from a road embankment during construction on the Summit Street bridge in 1912. Previously, Iuka Run is said to have flowed into a culvert under the embankment (if not already in a sewer drain).

There are two places in Iuka Ravine that have close-to-original banks. Slightly buried on the north bank by the Summit Street bridge, and exposed on the southwestern edge where the ravine ends at Woodruff Avenue, are layers of brittle shale, evidence of the original ravine edges. These banks are likely where the stream cut through, as seen in Glen Echo and other ravine streams.

Iuka Ravine is the example closest to downtown of an upland deciduous forest. It contains two beech trees, oaks, and maples, as well as reintroduced native wildflowers and sedges. Then there are the massive sycamores, with bone-white branches above, peeling bark below, and the largest leaf of any tree native to North America.

As noted above, the sycamores are evidence of a former stream. Sycamores love water and grow most often around stream edges and bottomlands. These trees grow throughout the Columbus ravines. At the Park of Roses, Adena Brook has exposed many sycamores' massive roots. Rows of sycamores can be seen along the Olentangy from the

Highbanks overlook, and a nearby sign points out that people learned to look from hills for the white tree branches to locate water. (See related article on sycamores on page 6.)

Following the sycamores that grow along Iuka Ravine reveals the path of Iuka Run. Sycamores lead down the ravine, then south towards Indianola and 16th avenues. A grove of sycamores grows here, which may indicate a large bend where the stream is said to have flowed down 16th. The Kappa Sigma house (formerly *Indianola*) sits nearby. A few more sycamores follow 16th and go past the former Indianola Informal Alternative School, the first junior high school in the United States. This building may be the source of one of the stream's names, "School Run." However, the Columbus Board of Education did not authorize the development of junior high schools until 1909, at which point the stream may or may not have run by. From the school, a few sycamores lead to 16th Avenue and Pearl Alley. There aren't any more sycamores until the Oval on the OSU campus, and the next best grove of sycamores is in the South Oval, or the Hollow.

The Hollow was once Iuka Ravine. The gentle slopes of the Hollow have replaced the once steep banks. A *Daily Dispatch* reporter noted the Hollow in an 1872 article: "Through this [campus] runs a small stream, fed by springs, and the valley

here is well adapted for a fish-pond." Multiple springs continued to feed Iuka Run—or rather Neil Run, as it is documented in this area of donated Neil land.

The springs were so pure that upon tasting the water in 1870, the College Board was heavily swayed towards building in the area, rather than in Springfield or Worthington. A German member, Mr. Keller, after taking several draughts of the water, fell to the ground and is supposed to have said, "Shentlemens, it's hard to get a Dutchman away from a spring like that." (As with Dr. Orton and the boulder, there is little to support this story.)

What is fact is that in 1891 the city built a large brick storm sewer through the area along Neil Run. As a result the springs, which fed into a short stream that flowed into Neil Run and then into what had been Mirror Lake, eventually



Source of 2008 map is Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks.

expired. An attempt to restore the source resulted in sulfur water. Mirror Lake's water supply was eventually switched to river water and finally, in 1972, to city water.

Two branches of Neil Run met around the location of the old Ohio Union, and up to the 1970s the area still flooded during heavy rains. The course of Neil Run through campus was altered at least once; "improvements" such as straightening, shortening, and filling Neil Run occurred from 1876 to 1880. There is reported to have been a swimming hole where the branches intersected near a sycamore tree. There are many large sycamores in the area, especially in the Hollow, that could be that old sycamore.

Sycamores can live up to several hundred years, although urban trees have a considerably shorter lifespan, and the huge size of the trees in the Hollow attest to their age. It's probable that their roots drank from Neil Run while it ran freely, until the city bricked this section in 1891 (a year before Iuka Ravine officially became Iuka Park).

From Mirror Lake, a few huge sycamores lead in a nearly straight line north of 12th Avenue by the Biomedical Research Tower, where the stream once ran. Traveling in a line west of these trees, Iuka Run would have emptied into the Olentangy River between what is now the Route 315 on-ramp and the Campus Loop Road bridge.

Iuka Run may still empty from a drain here. A combined sewer overflow, marked by a warning sign and small path, pours forth a constant and pungent flow of water and debris, especially after a heavy rain. The water flows from a large drain that could easily have been 72 inches in diameter—again, large enough to stand in, although you would not want to stand in this. If this water is Iuka Run, it at least has room to flow freely—or to better transport litter, storm runoff, and even sanitary sewer overflow into the Olentangy.

If the overflow is the end of Iuka Run, then where does it begin? Other than the spider web of sewer lines underground, traces of the stream elsewhere are nearly impossible to find because the Linden area, located east of I-71, is flat and developed. However, behind Crew Stadium (northeast of Iuka Ravine, where the stream would have run), there is a large ditch. In this ditch are two streams that flow from culverts



*OSU South Oval swale photographed by Sherrill Massey.*

into a sewer. One of these streams is cold and clear as a spring. This could be a merging of Iuka Run branches and, if so, it's good to know that the stream still supports some life (cattails).

Beyond these possibilities, could Iuka Run ever see the light of day? There was discussion of exposing the stream in Iuka Park, but aside from practical problems, the stream is too polluted with storm and possible sanitary water. Exposing children, dogs, wildlife, and drunken students to a heavily polluted stream is a bad idea. To safely daylight the stream, the sewer system would have to be reworked.

Iuka Run will continue to flow below Iuka Avenue, another curiosity among many. While unseen, the stream hints at the stories behind the other curiosities of Iuka Ravine—from a fraternity house on one end, ivy-enrobed sycamores on the other, and a whole lot of boulders scattered erratically in between.

*A special thanks to Martha Buckalew, Doreen Uhas Sauer, Greg Maynard, Linda Ridihalgh, the Ohio Historical Society, and City of Columbus Department of Utilities for their help, information, and support with this article.*

Daryl Largent enjoys exploring ravines, and has found many wildflowers, wildlife, and a hidden waterfall. He is pursuing a master's degree in Creative Writing in the NEOMFA program at The University of Akron. Read his ravine articles at [friendsoftheravines.org](http://friendsoftheravines.org).



# The Magnificent Sycamore

By Sherrill Massey

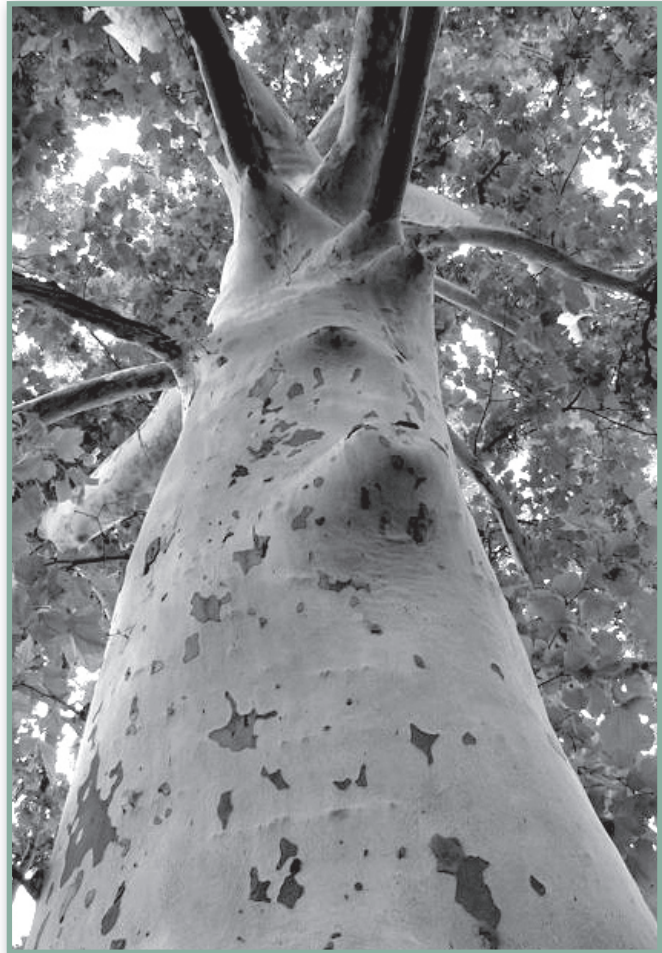
*Have you noticed the really big sycamores on The Ohio State University campus? I have!*

I take a lot of pictures and I've photographed these sycamores. I've always admired them: for their size, their shade, the white, peeling bark, and their ghostly appearance in the winter—they are majestic on the landscape. These trees have inspired many, such as the composer George Frideric Handel, whose famous "Largo" from **Xerxes** is in fact a love song to the sycamore and the gentle refreshing shade it casts on the earth.

A huge old sycamore was to be removed for a new, improved, and enlarged student union. When I heard this tree had to go for this building, I was upset. The plans for the new union could not be changed to include the tree. There was a lot of thought to preserving historical parts of the old student union for reuse—a recycling effort. Was there a similar effort to preserve this old tree? I felt an urgency to document it as much as I could.

This tree measured 20' in circumference and its presence dominated that landscape. I admired its singular beauty and massive canopy. It was a strong vertical contrast to the horizontal parking garage. The tree's main leader was broken off, but secondary branches had grown to form a beautiful crown. Old sycamores sometimes hollow out; this tree's hollow had been filled with concrete and topped with a metal plate. The day came when the tree was to be destroyed, and I was there when it came down. Others gathered to watch. The tree stayed firm, but eventually it was torn apart.

An American sycamore in front of Hopkins Hall has a historic marker stating that the tree was living at the time of the signing of the U. S. Constitution, in 1787. (The Ohio State University was not established until 1870.) This sycamore is less massive and perhaps



younger than the one torn down. These giant trees have witnessed the origin and evolution of a country farm into a great Land Grant University.

Sycamores are North America's largest native broadleaf trees, and they provide large areas of shade. The Hopkins tree measures 15' 8" in girth. Our state champion tree, located in Ashland County, measures 35' 1". Sycamores live a long time, sometimes five to six hundred years. Fossil records show them as contemporaries of the dinosaurs. They frequently grow in riparian areas, near streams and rivers. Early campus maps show a ravine stream called Neil Run that traversed the campus from Iuka Park to Mirror Lake and on to the Olentangy. The South Oval is a remnant of that ravine topography, where many sycamores grow and are some of the largest trees on campus.

Perhaps the old student union sycamore was in decline and its loss was inevitable. But would we regret the loss of this sycamore and its history as much as we mourn other losses? We really need to celebrate the life of each of the shade trees on campus, especially these giants and the stories that they could tell us.

Photographs by Sherrill Massey



# How Many Ravines Are There?

By Shirley Hyatt

*Just how many ravines are there in Franklin County?  
Many, as it turns out. Some are named and some remain nameless; all  
have been altered, and the natural environments of most  
(if not all) face destruction.*

In the 1800s, the rivers and the ravines flowing into the rivers, with their wooded banks and shale or clay beds, served the residents in myriad ways; not only as water sources and as temporary shelter, but for fishing, for powering mills, for transportation and navigation, for raw materials to make bricks and tiles, for play, and for inspiration. As fields and woods gave way to housing in the 1900s, new homeowners were attracted to such areas by the beauty of the ravines; they could live in a picturesque environment, with sweet air and the sounds and colors of the woods, while commuting into the concrete city for work. Population and commerce burgeoned. There has ever since been a fragile balance between nature and population growth with its attendant urban infrastructure.

The lovely **IUKA RAVINE** district is an example of an existing natural landscape that has been artfully manipulated by manmade works in the tradition of Frederick Law Olmsted. Developed on a large tract of land once owned by local tycoon William Neil, and later by his son, this area originally consisted of forest and farmland. Clear, cold springs fed a creek that ran through the wooded ravine and then meandered along what is now 16th Avenue and emptied into a small lake approximately where Mirror Lake now stands. Houses began to be built on the ravine in 1906. In 1908, the ravine's creek bed was placed in a vaulted storm drain under the brick roadway, and the ravine was made shallower. Iuka Ravine was the first development in Columbus to take advantage of an existing natural landscape by retaining old forest trees and using curvilinear street patterns. The Iuka Ravine Historic District was placed on both the national and Columbus registers of historic places in 1986. Today, the Iuka Ravine Association coordinates clean-ups and watches over the ravine and the park.

In contrast, **FLINT RIDGE RUN** at Camp Mary Orton has been altered little. This land was owned by Harvey Johnson, who gave it to his daughter Annetta Johnson St. Gaudens, who in turn donated land to the Godman Guild (a northside settlement house founded in 1898) as a camp to give poor mothers and their children respite from the city. Eventually, Edward Orton, Jr. and other benefactors acquired and donated additional acreage, and the camp became Camp Mary Orton, after Edward's first wife. The Godman Guild has continued a low-impact development strategy to complement the natural landscape of Flint Run Ravine and has retained ownership of the camp's 167 acres, despite pressure from real estate developers, and has been designated an Ohio Natural Landmark.

Parts of **GLEN ECHO RAVINE** echo Iuka Ravine's development. The eastern end of the ravine was turned into a residential development that leveraged the scenic beauty of the stream cutting through the center of the ravine. Part of this area was crafted into a city-owned public park, with retaining walls, bridges, and stone-wall traffic barriers. The area along Arcadia Avenue was once a large and prosperous brickyard, utilizing clay from the land surrounding the ravines. (Local gardeners can attest to the abundance of clay even today.) The area adjacent to the Olentangy River was at one time the popular and prosperous Olentangy Amusement Park. The ravine's various sections have experienced cycles of neglect, manicure, exploitation for infrastructure purposes, proposals to fill it in, and rejuvenation. Glen Echo Neighbors (formerly Friends of the Ravines on Glen Echo, FORGE) has been awarded grants, donated sweat equity, and coordinated the massive multi-year refurbishment of the park. It conducts regular ravine clean-up days.

**WALHALLA RAVINE** was owned for many years by Mathias Armbruster, who lived on the ravine with his son and daughter from around 1880 until the early part of the 1900s. Armbruster, a renowned theatrical set designer, eventually sold the property for real estate development but had input into the naming of the streets and chose some of the names from Wagner's Ring Cycle. Today the banks of the ravine continue to be owned by the homeowners who live along the ravine, and the Walhalla Ravine Organization coordinates Walhalla Ravine's clean-ups.

The **ADENA BROOK** Watershed, associated also with Overbrook Ravine, once housed an Early Woodland circular earthwork surrounding two conical mounds. It was called the Overbrook Ravine Earthwork or the Dominion Land Company Earthwork and was located in the vicinity of Yaronia and Wynding drives. The formation was destroyed at the request of residents, but much green space along the brook remains. Today, the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department oversees Overbrook Ravine Park, the greenway along the brook. The Adena Brook Community (<http://adenabrook.org/>) coordinates clean-ups, recruits government aid in preventing pollution and sewer overflows, and conducts periodic clean-ups of invasive plants.

**RUSH CREEK** is home to Rush Creek Village, a housing development just south of Route 161 in Worthington. The housing subdivision was developed in the early 1950s on a

*continued on page 8*

site selected because of its proximity to Worthington as well as its beauty. The designer of Rush Creek Village, Theodore Van Fossen, adapted Frank Lloyd Wright's "organic architecture" approach to capitalize on the visual drama of the local topography. He designed the houses to optimize the views of Rush Creek—views oriented the people inside the houses, rather than those on the street. Friends of the Rush Creek Village works with Friends of the Ravines to preserve the well-being of its creek.

**BILL MOOSE RUN**, where the campuses of the Ohio State School for the Blind and the Ohio School for the Deaf are now located, was, prior to World War II, a large and esteemed golf course first owned by the Elks Lodge and later known as Wyandot Country Club. The land surrounding the ravine was extensively altered to build the original golf course. This ravine continues on the west side of High Street and has been incorporated into the architecture of Wesley Glen Retirement Community. The Sharon Heights Community Association has looked after this ravine.

Two groups caring for ravines north of Route 161 are Worthington Condominium Association on **TUCKER RAVINE** and Bainbridge Condominium Association on **LINWORTH RUN RAVINE**. Tucker Ravine is on the east side of the Olentangy, while Linworth Run Ravine is located west of the Olentangy. In 2006 the Worthington Condominium Association residents defeated Worthington City Council's plan to dredge in Tucker Creek to install a sewer connector. Instead, after hearing impassioned speeches from residents, their lawyer, and a representative from the Sierra Club, council voted to install a lift station, saving Tucker Creek from an environmental hazard. The Bainbridge Condominium Association is the only organized ravine group west of the Olentangy River that has worked with Friends of the Ravines. Residents have aggressively removed bush honeysuckle and have privately financed the purchase of native plant stock to promote the health and well-being of Linworth Run Ravine where it bisects their properties.



*Linworth Ravine photographed by Sherrill Massey*

Shirley Hyatt, a local author and resident of Clintonville, based this article on past *Ravinia* articles as well as on research conducted while writing her book, *Clintonville and Beechwold*, published by Arcadia Publishing in 2009.

## ✓ Mark the Date!

### 2010 Ohio Botanical Symposium

Friday, March 26, 2010

Villa Milano

1620 Shrock Road

Columbus, Ohio 43220

The keynote speaker will be Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in our Gardens*. He is Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, where he has 69 research articles and has taught Insect Taxonomy, Behavioral Ecology, and other courses for 28 years.

[www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/20259/default.aspx](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/20259/default.aspx)



# Private Property Restoration Inspired by Glen Echo Model

By Maureen Crossmaker

Like so many people who use Glen Echo Park and property owners fortunate enough to live on its ravine, I have watched the park's restoration with delight over the last decade. I have lived in my Glen Echo ravine home since 1985, and over the years I've worked on my slope that descends into the park. The slope, primarily shale and facing north, was badly eroded and subject to slipping. After I completed rudimentary tiering, which did improve the slope, it was clear that more work was needed.

During the Glen Echo Park restoration, I talked with the liaisons for the restoration project among Columbus Parks and Recreation, the contractor, volunteers, and Friends of the Ravines who provided contacts and introductions, and I began planning the slope restoration on my ravine property that would complement the work being accomplished in the park.

## Informing Neighbors

I talked with my neighbors to let them know about the project and how it would be accomplished. This was necessary since the street is narrow and trucks might need to be accommodated, the work would take time, and it sometimes would be loud. A next-door neighbor was concerned that my erosion mitigation would increase the erosion on his ravine slope. The contractor assured him that, rather than causing more problems, having proper drainage and erosion beds abutting his property would lessen his slope's deterioration.

## Accomplishing the Private Restoration

Columbus Parks and Recreation staff members were very helpful and supportive. The department was open, under very strict guidelines, to permitting access to the park if that proved necessary. The contractor provided a proposal and began work after the park's restoration was completed. The plan was to build erosion-control beds on the hillside like those on the city-owned slopes.

Preserving the existing trees was important to me and to the contractor. There was a large dead tree leaning in the fork of a dying tree. Since both trees would fall sooner or later, the contractor cut them both, controlling their fall, and avoiding damage to any other trees. The felled trees were cut into large sections and hauled into place to become the bones of the erosion-control beds. Thus, it was not necessary to bring in logs, as had been done during the park's restoration. In addition, the

company bringing in the dirt had a long slinger that stretched from the street to the edge of the slope. The topsoil was blown down onto the prepared beds. Solving the problems of bringing in the logs and the topsoil made it unnecessary to request access from the Parks and Recreation Department.

The contractor installed 200 feet of storm drains and fittings. Rainwater from gutters and the home's sump pump now drains gently down the slope, watering the property through the holes in the drain pipe instead of hastening erosion. Trees, shrubs, and other plantings now help hold the hill.

## Ravine Property Owners Can Restore Their Slopes

With good planning, ravine owners can restore their properties. If property owners lack the resources to complete a full restoration project, other efforts can make a significant difference: Many ravine owners have installed drainage to diminish erosion. Others have terraced and tiered. Many plant native trees, shrubs, and perennials and eradicate such invasive species as bush honeysuckle and garlic mustard. All of these efforts make huge contributions to the health of our ravines.

Ravine owners have a special responsibility to mitigate the potential negative effects of human habitation on fragile ravine ecosystems. How we care for our piece of a ravine has a daily impact on erosion, wildlife habitat, and the preservation of native species. Ravine owners who practice good ravine stewardship are part of a web that preserves these treasures for our children and grandchildren.

One valuable resource for anyone who has property or tends a garden is the book *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens* by Douglas Tallamy.\* The author describes the unbreakable relationship between native plant species and native wildlife. He stresses the importance of cultivating native plants that host the insects that are necessary for pollination; are food sources for birds, amphibians, and other fauna; and that ultimately keep our environment in balance. This easy-to-read and thoroughly enjoyable book has many photographs for identification and ideas for people looking for information about what natives to plant and the benefits they bring. Every garden, no matter how small, can make a difference in restoring the diversity needed for a healthy ecosystem. Tallamy will be the guest speaker at the 2010 Ohio Botanical Symposium. See page 8 for details.

If you want more information in order to plan your ravine restoration, please e-mail [friendsoftheravines@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoftheravines@gmail.com)

\* Copyright 2007, updated second edition 2009, Timber Press, Portland OR.



# Community Care Day

By Maureen Crossmaker

The **FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES (FOR)** collaborated with the United Way of Central Ohio and the City of Columbus for a Community Care Day clean-up of Glen Echo Park on September 15, 2009. The United Way matched FOR with the Affinion Group, an information technology company with offices in Dublin.

**A**ffinion volunteers exerted enormous effort to clean and restore Glen Echo Park, a city park set in a beautiful ravine. Aply led by the team's coordinator, Doug Carpenter, Mindy Billingham, Diane Foughty, Jeff Thomas, Ron Scheetz, and Mike Zorio cut and hauled away dead trees and branches that were along the stream and catching trash. They walked the stream and cleaned it of debris. All of the graffiti were painted over beneath the Indianola Avenue bridge.

Our volunteers also painted over graffiti on stream retaining walls and the long sets of stairs from the top of the ravine into the park. Graffiti were removed from the park's interpretive signs. Many tasks were accomplished: The Affinion Group picked up trash throughout the park; a neighborhood volunteer planted native trees donated for planting in Glen Echo Park and native shrubs purchased with funds from a United Way Neighborhood Tool Box grant.

Individuals and businesses in the Glen Echo area also helped with the effort. The Giant Eagle store at 2801 N. High Street was extremely generous, donating water, fruit, and ice. We also received donations from local Target (Graceland) and Kroger (3417 North High Street) stores. Local volunteers pitched in to



organize and participate in the day. A ravine resident provided a wonderful grilled lunch. The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department provided paint to cover the graffiti, and Keep Columbus Beautiful provided tools.

Each year, the United Way of Central Ohio organizes volunteers from businesses, government agencies, and labor unions who spend the day working to improve neighborhoods and schools. This year, Community Care Day projects were held all over Central Ohio on September 15. Friends of the Ravines is pleased to have participated, and it applauds the volunteers from the Affinion Group, those from our neighborhood, and our local businesses for their commitment to our community. Their assistance helps FOR carry out its mission to protect, preserve, and restore ravine areas for the benefit of the urban community as well as the wildlife that utilize them. We are grateful for leadership of The United Way who helps groups like Friends of the Ravines build community connections by working together to protect our natural resources.



Photographs by Sherrill Massey.

**YES! I WANT TO BE A SUPPORTING MEMBER OF FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate any special instructions for listing of your name in the Roster of supporting members. \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Category** *Make Check Payable to Friends of the Ravines.*

- Friend: \$15       Sponsor: \$35       Sustainer: \$50
- Contributor: \$25       Household: \$40       Patron: \$100       Corporate (Over \$100) \_\_\_\_\_

I want to volunteer to help Friends of the Ravines carry out its mission to protect ravine areas and educate the public. I can help by:

- Distributing *Ravinia*       Writing Articles for *Ravinia*       Preparing Mailings
- Assisting with the Website       Giving Computer Advice       Helping with Ravine Cleanups
- Planning Community Forums       Removing Invasive Plants in Ravines       Becoming an On-Call Volunteer

My special area of expertise is \_\_\_\_\_.

My favorite ravine is \_\_\_\_\_.

Friends of the Ravines, PO Box 82021, Columbus, Ohio 43202

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## Thank You:

### Community Care Day Volunteers

The Affinion Group  
David Baxter  
Barbara Fleming  
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### Ravinia Design and Production:

AJaX Designs

### Ravinia Copy Editor:

K Adamson

### Production Assistance:

Kenwel Printer, Inc.

*Ravinia* is the official publication of Friends of the Ravines.

### CONTRIBUTORS

K Adamson  
Maureen Crossmaker  
Shirley Hyatt  
Martha Harter Buckalew  
Brian Gara  
Daryl Largent  
Sherrill Massey

*Ravinia* is funded through donations from supporting members. The mission of Friends of the Ravines is to foster the protection and restoration of ravine areas in Franklin County through community education and conservation.

*Submissions and suggestions are welcome.*

### FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Martha Harter Buckalew  
Maureen Crossmaker  
Jack Cooley  
Brian Gara  
Sherrill Massey

Web site: [www.friendsoftheravines.org](http://www.friendsoftheravines.org)

e-mail: [mhbuckalew@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mhbuckalew@sbcglobal.net)

Ravinia  
P.O. Box 82021  
Columbus, Ohio 43202



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