



# RAVINIA

*An Advocate for Community Resources*

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## Country Life on Linworth Ravine

by Martha Harter Buckalew

On October 20, 1980, two brothers, Elmer and Leslie Snouffer, returned to the land of their boyhood—their father's farm—which had been located on the north rim of Linworth Ravine on a bluff overlooking today's Olentangy River Road. With the brothers was Elmer's son Ed, who clicked on his portable tape recorder when they began their walk.

Their starting point was Jeffers Hopewell Prehistoric Mound, where Elmer and Leslie used to coast down the slopes and out into the fields on their homemade toboggan. On that day, the mound seemed to be smaller than they remembered. Elmer opined that perhaps when the area was developed, fill-in around the base had diminished its height—or maybe the mound had just seemed larger when they were young. Thinking back to the countryside they had known in their childhood, they found it strange to see cars going lickity-split through land where their father had once grown melons.

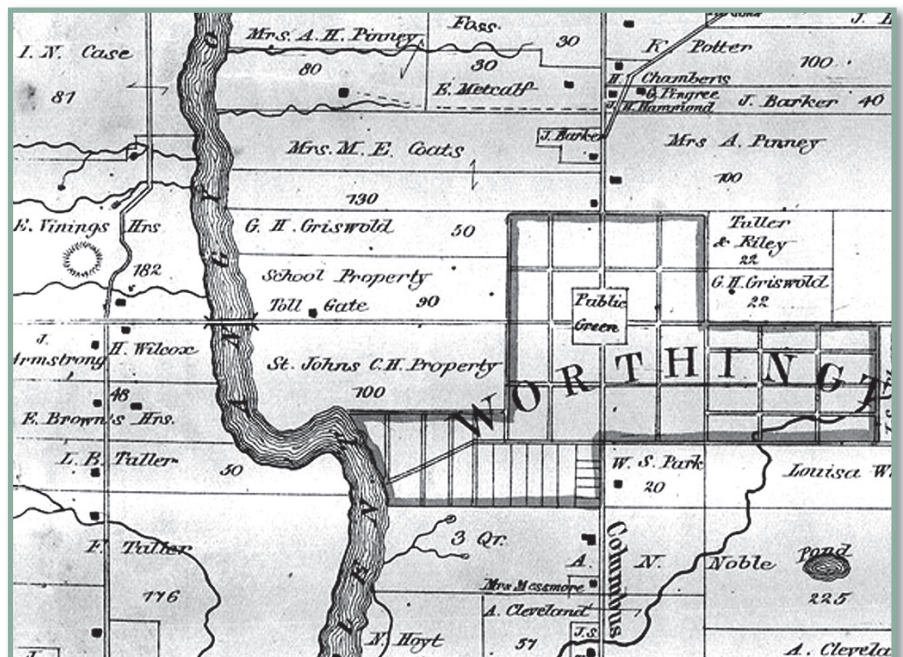
The Jeffers Hopewell Prehistoric Mound dates back to 400 B.C. The mound was on a parcel of the original plat of Worthington mapped by James Kilbourne in the early 1800s. That parcel was purchased by a Scioto Company subscriber, William Vining, one of the first settlers of Worthington. The land stayed in the Vining family until the 1920s, when it was sold to Herman Plesenton Jeffers. (See related article.)

The old Snouffer homestead was an early Sharon Township structure. Built on the bank of the Olentangy River, it had originally been a hunting and fishing lodge. During the 1800s, Sharon Township was located in the northeast quadrant of Franklin County. Its population in 1820 was 923. By 1870, close to the time that the first Snouffers arrived in Ohio, it had grown to 1480.

At the time of its settlement, the area, like all of Ohio, was densely wooded with oak, elm, beech, maple, ash, and walnut trees. Fish were so plentiful in the Olentangy that they could be plucked from the water with bare hands and nets; game and fowl were so abundant that the early settlers organized hunts in order to protect their crops from the wildlife. Records show that on one day in August 1822, a hunt party slaughtered 19,660 squirrels.

Stanley Snouffer was one of eight children of John (1779–1823) and Mary Magdalena (1784–1868) Snouffer. After her husband died in 1823, Mary moved her family from Maryland to Perry Township, where they settled in an area close to what is now Don Scott Field. Stanley, who became a carpenter, was one of first of the Snouffers to settle in Sharon Township.

*continued on page 3*



1872 Map of Sharon Township

(Courtesy of Franklin County Engineer's Office)

## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

**A**s one of the hottest summers in recent memory begins to fade into fall, it is important that we reflect on the lessons learned from the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The sheer magnitude of this disaster was almost beyond our comprehension as we observed for several months in “real-time” the millions of gallons of raw crude oil pouring into the water. In addition to the tragic loss of human life, the enormous detrimental effect on marine organisms will affect this sensitive ecosystem for years—probably even decades—to come. We must hope that the helplessness we felt as the tragedy unfolded will lead to a greater understanding that many natural ecosystems are extremely fragile and need much greater protection. Without such protection, systems that have taken thousands or even millions of years to develop can be lost in an instant. This is true not only for marine environments but also for the many ravines we have in central Ohio. While we are fortunate that a fair number of these sensitive habitats remain, several have already been lost. Of those that remain, many have been degraded—in varying degrees—by encroaching human development.

Friends of the Ravines continues to encourage the protection and restoration of these ravine ecosystems through education and public involvement. While the task is large, it is made much easier through the help of the many friends who support our mission. We are especially grateful to those of you who have donated in the past year, despite these difficult economic times. Your continued support ensures that we can maintain our focus on these ravine habitats and work to keep them safe for future generations. Thank you!

*Brian Gara, Chair, Board of Trustees*

## NEWS FROM THE RAVINES

**GLEN ECHO RAVINE** had 100 volunteers plant 335 trees after they removed 74 bags of invasive plants on as a part of Earth Day Activities. Volunteers worked more than 500 hours!

**IUKA RAVINE** has been hit with the plague of the Kudzu vine. The noxious invader can grow up to a foot a day and is established in at least 16 Ohio counties, including Franklin.

**LINWORTH RAVINE** residents, who lived in the Snouffer house from 1934 until 1982, kept six 6' long black snakes confined in the cellar. Why? To rid the place of rodents; they turned the snakes loose in the house when they were away. When they sold, they left behind their snare—and the snakes.

**WALHALLA RAVINE** residents were entertained this spring by a pair of Cooper's hawks, who were quite busy getting their nest in a sycamore tree arranged just right.

### Friends of the Ravines Sponsors Art Contest for Students

Students of Columbus City Schools, grab your pencils, paint brush, or camera. Friends of the Ravines is sponsoring an art contest titled “Nature's Impressions: Artwork Inspired by Franklin County Ravines.” Entries of poetry, prose, photography, and 2D art will be accepted for three grade categories: elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), and high school (9-12). Entry deadline is January 31, 2011. Awards will be presented in a ceremony at the Northwood ARTSpace, located at 2231 N. High Street, on April 1, 2011. Prizes will be awarded in each grade category, and the schools of students with winning entries will receive \$100.

Winning works and selected entries will be publicly exhibited at the Northwood ARTSpace from mid-March through April 2011. For an entry form and a complete listing of rules and regulations, go to [FriendsOfTheRavines.org](http://FriendsOfTheRavines.org). This event is made possible, in part, by the Greater Columbus Arts Council.

## Nature's Impressions: Artwork Inspired by Franklin County Ravines

### An Art Contest for Columbus City Schools Students

Grades K – 12

Photography, 2-D Visual Art, Poetry, Prose

**Entry Deadline: January 31, 2011**

For entry form, complete contest rules,  
& regulations see: [www.friendsoftheravines.org](http://www.friendsoftheravines.org)



Greater Columbus Arts Council



No one knows exactly when it occurred, but the hunting and fishing lodge that would become the family home of Elmer and Leslie's father—Stanley—was moved from the riverbank up to the northeast rim of Linworth Ravine where the Whieldon Mansion now sits. Franklin County Recorder's records show that the house was first registered for taxes in 1880. Word of mouth has it that the lodge was moved in 1862.

While Elmer and Leslie walked the land around Linworth Ravine on that October day, reminiscing, Ed's tape recorder picked up the sounds of saws and hammers: evidence of the development boom that was changing the terrain of Worthington in the 1980s. The clearing of the land reminded Elmer and Leslie that they used to collect pawpaws in socks and shoot army rifles at an old beech tree. And they gathered butternuts and baked them in salted water—hoping they didn't "forget them and burn them, which happened about half of the time." They walked through what had been an apple orchard where folks used to run them off when they tried to hijack a midday snack. Springs, where their parents had once washed vegetables and cooled melons and butter, were being diverted into culverts. The old gooseberry patch had disappeared.

As they walked on, they found part of the fence their father had put in that marked his lot line and wondering how folks knew where to put lot lines in the old days. They discovered part of the dam that their father had put in to make a little pond in the ravine for swimming—and remembered the waterfall just below the dam where they had caught minnows and where "Dad hit you with a cornstalk for swimming when you were supposed to be working." They walked through their old ball diamond down in the ravine where they couldn't lose a ball "because when you hit it up the hill, it always rolled back to you."

Then they came upon the fireplace built by Billy McMeekin in the 1930s. Billy never built a cabin, just the fireplace, where he would bring a chair and come down and sit in the evening with his dog, Old Boot, who eventually had to be put down. Elmer said, "The dog got so bad he couldn't get around. They gave me a .38 revolver, and I led Old Boot

back on the hill. Old Boot looked at me like he knew what was coming. Afterward I took him down the hill and buried him."

The Snouffer homestead included a chicken house, barn, shop, and outhouse, described by Elmer as "a three-hole crapper," that his father had built on the side of the ravine. It was considered an indoor facility and was flushed out weekly with their mother's wash water. Tourists who drove up from Columbus to picnic or camp along the scenic Linworth Ravine took advantage of the Snouffers' outhouse. (On one occasion, womenfolk, whose approach had not been heard in time, forced Elmer to leap out of the outhouse window to avoid meeting them face to face.) The Linworth valley terrain was so inviting that one young couple chose to camp there for the summer when they were first married.

Their October walk took the Snouffers to the upper rim of the ravine, through a spot once cleared for their potato patch, and brought them to a steep ridge, which Dad had cultivated with horse-drawn plows. Elmer recalled, "Dad was plowing the road out up there, and the horse or the plow got over the bank and everything came down over the hill. One of the horses got up while the other was hanging on his back up against a tree."

The brothers searched unsuccessfully for a tree where their father had carved his initials. They passed by a large rock

where they had cracked hickory nuts and under a hickory tree that once was covered with grapevines where they had played Tarzan. They found a 70-year-old post that had marked one of the original boundaries of the farm. They remembered gathering beechnuts from the plethora of beech trees—"the sons of beeches"—that grew among the ash and sycamore trees.

One son recalled that Dad had kept the young chickens in coops while the larger ones roosted in trees. When he suspected that someone

was stealing his chickens, Dad put a tin cup on a string in his bedroom, stretched the string outdoors, and tied it to the tree where the chickens roosted. When he heard a clang in the night, he hopped up and shot into the dark with his shotgun. He thought he must have hit the culprit because he heard someone running off into the ravine.



*Eastern end of Linworth Ravine*

*(Photo by Sherrill Massey)*

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As Ed, Elmer, and Leslie walked on, they saw what remained of the hunting lodge that had been the family home. It no longer sat on the northeast rim of the ravine; it had been moved back into the woods, west of the condominiums that were being built. The original house with its two rooms and a chimney had been altered and remodeled. The front door had been moved.

The owner's wife told this story: "It was about 20 to 25 years ago. There were two older people dressed in old-time clothes. The woman had on a high-neck and long-sleeved dress, and he had farm clothes on. They both just smiled very sweetly. Didn't scare me in the least. They were so nice and friendly. The dog picked up his ears and kind of mumbled a little to himself; then he lay down again and just watched. And they turned and went out right there where that bookcase is and they looked over their shoulders and smiled as they went out. I thought, 'Oh well, isn't that nice. We had ghosts in our house.'"

The Snouffers confirmed that the house had been turned around when it was moved. The front of the home originally faced north. They decided that the ghosts probably were Sonny Wilcox and his wife, who owned the property before Stanley Snouffer bought it. The Wilcox family had been among the original pioneer settlers of Worthington.

After the flood of 1913, Leslie and Elmer had been scouting around, close to the Wilson Bridge area, and found a piece of poplar 2" thick and 20" wide. "We carried it round to the old bridge, and a couple of guys came along and said that

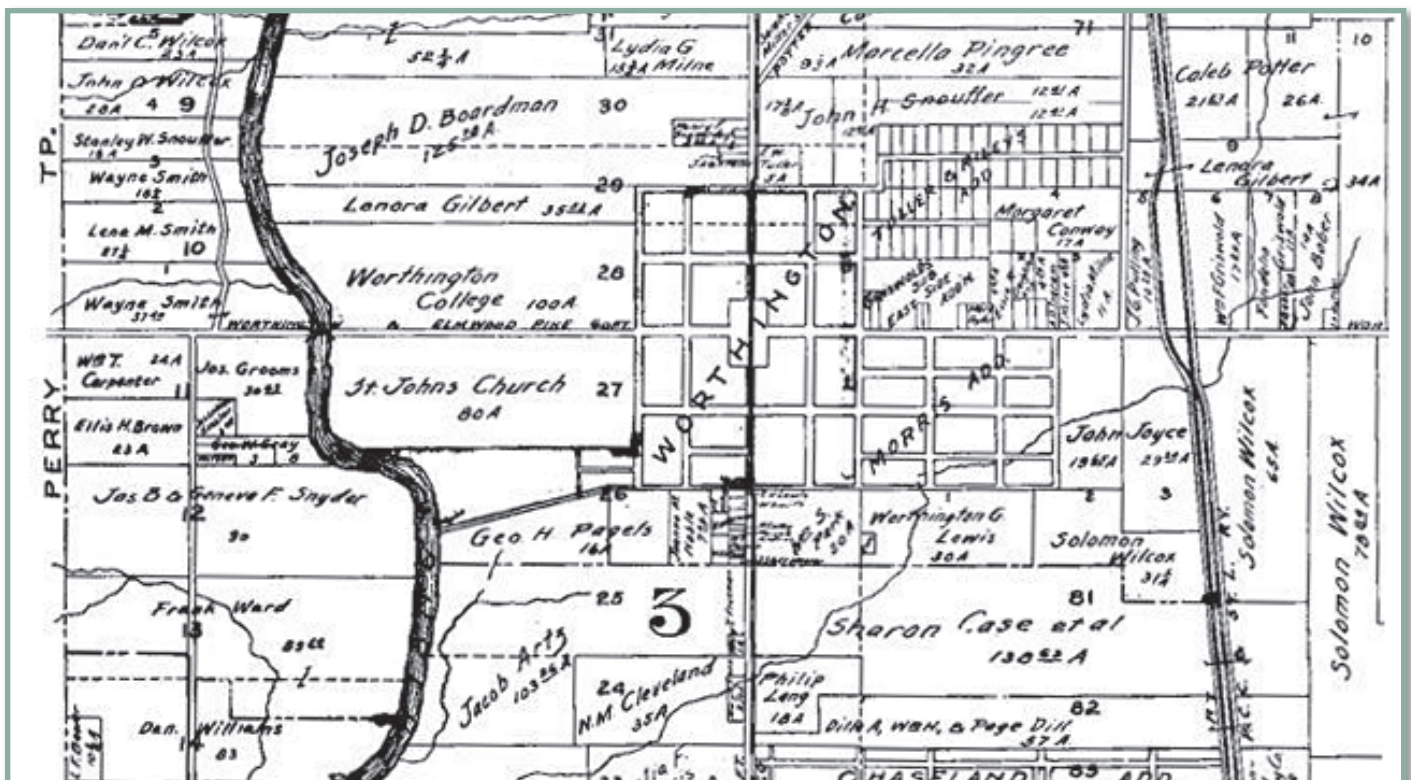
they'd give us a quarter for it if we would just take it up to so and so. Well, we were a little bit too smart for that and we went down and got the old horse and buggy . . . When Dad remodeled the house, he used that for the countertop. It was a beautiful piece of wood."

Stanley Snouffer was a resourceful man. He built the foundation of his chicken house and paneled the living room of their homestead with wood milled from wild cherry trees cut from his surroundings. He fashioned a floodgate to control the depth of the water in the swimming hole that he dammed up. He was a practical and frugal man who strung the family's wash line between two walnut trees and once bought a skinny work horse for ten dollars. "It didn't live long."

By October 20, 1980, practically all that remained from Elmer and Leslie's boyhood land were the words on tape. No longer could you strip down after a day's work, slip into overalls ready for a swim, and race to the Olentangy. No longer could one of the huge sycamores on the riverbank save you a walk to the outhouse. The countryside had become citified. "Don't know that Dad would want to see this. This was a very important place in his life."



*Friends of the Ravines thanks Douglas Snouffer for permission to transcribe information for this article from a 1980 tape recording. Douglas is the great grandson of Stanley Snouffer (1877-1970). The voices heard on the tape include Douglas' father, Edward Snouffer (1929-2005), his grandfather Elmer Snouffer (1898-1994), and his great uncle Leslie Snouffer (1901-1986).*



1910 Map of Sharon Township

(Courtesy of Franklin County Engineer's Office)



# The Snouffer House on Olentangy River Road

## A Sequel to "Country Life on Linworth Ravine"

By Martha Harter Buckalew

Over the years there have been extensive renovations to the Snouffer house after the horse and buggy days when it sat on a bluff overlooking Olentangy River Road. After it had been sold and moved ten acres to the west, a second story was built over the one-story frame house, and several one-story additions were added, along with four open porches and an 8' by 17' wood deck.

In October of last year, I met with the current owners, who confirmed that they live in the original Snouffer home. Numerous updates hide the evidence that documents its true age, including steel railroad ties in window frames and 3" by 4" rough-cut beams hewn from trees on the bank of the Olentangy. The only visible remnant is a small window that was salvaged from the original structure.

In 1979, the builder Kim Kelsic developed ten acres on Linworth Ravine that he had purchased from the Whieldon family. Most of the units, styled after Sessions Village in Bexley, are clustered around Whieldon Lane. The names "Bainbridge" (for the condominiums) and "Marlow" (for a short street that forms the western border of the development) were taken from an English painting owned by Kelsic. West of Marlow Street, a connector to Whieldon Lane extends through a thickly wooded area.

That's where you'll find the house that encases the remnants of the hunting lodge that once was on the banks of the Olentangy. And although 26 custom-built condos now sit on the ten acres between it and the river, it still has an Olentangy River Road address.



1987 aerial view of Linworth Ravine

(Courtesy of Ray and Patty Miller)

# Jeffers Mound

## A Sacred Space of the Ancients

By Maureen Crossmaker

Little evidence remains of the great network of earthworks created by the Native American Nation, often called the Mound Builders. One of the very few such places remaining in the Franklin County landscape is a mound raised above the Olentangy River and near a steep ravine cut by Linworth Run as it flows on its way to the river.

Mark Welsh, Ihanktonwan Dakota and Mohawk, is a descendent of the Mound Builder Nation, whom he names the Ancient Ones. On a beautiful summer day in June 2010, Mr. Welsh, from the Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio, joined Friends of the Ravines for an interpretive site visit to this mound.

The earliest known print source about the mound and its environs is an engraved map (reproduced here) and a description by the surveyor Charles Whittlesey titled “The Ancient Works, near Worthington, Franklin C. Ohio”:

“The work is rectangular in form; its sides correspond very nearly with the cardinal points, (varying but five degrees) and measure six hundred and thirty, and five hundred and fifty feet respectively. The walls are unaccompanied by a ditch, and are very slight, though distinctly traceable. In the line of the southern wall is a large truncated mound, C, twenty feet in height, and measuring one hundred and ninety-two feet in diameter at the base, and seventy-six feet in diameter



1848 engraved map of the mound and its environs.

(Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution)



at the summit. It is covered with large trees. The wall that leads from this mound to the left, is placed a little further outwards than that leading to the right. The mound D, in the centre of the enclosure, is small and low. Near the south-western corner of the work is a small circle, with an interior ditch and single entrance; it is one hundred and twenty feet in diameter. Some distance to the north-west of the enclosure, and on the opposite side of a deep ravine, is another small circle, one hundred and forty feet in diameter, with three entrances.”<sup>1</sup>

Today, only Mound C remains, protected by the Worthington Historical Society; it is now called the Jeffers Mound and is located on Plesenton Drive. Herman Plesenton Jeffers purchased the land in 1921. When the Jeffers family platted the holdings for subdivision in 1954, they did not include the mound. Twenty years later, the Jeffers Trust deeded the mound to the Worthington Historical Society in order to preserve it. The mound is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and a commemorative plaque marks the site.



(Photo by Sherrill Massey)

In speculating on the original earthworks, of which the Jeffers Mound was a part, Mr. Welsh, who has studied and provided interpretive tours of the great Newark Earthworks, described the Worthington Earthworks as one of many thousands of sacred spaces built near waterways and linked by roads that stretched from the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in the north to the Gulf states in the south.



(Photo by Sherrill Massey)

Such earthworks had several uses, sometimes overlapping, including for defense, for observation, and for spiritual and ceremonial occasions. The location of an earthwork reflected its uses. Mr. Welsh concluded that there was nothing in the Whittlesey map or description to indicate defensive uses of this earthwork. Several factors led him to conclude that it served a sacred purpose and, given its height over the river and surrounding area, may have also been an observatory.

Knowledge of geometry and astronomy guided the building of earthworks. Like the Celtic sites, many of the sacred mounds and circles were aligned with the summer or winter solstice. Mr. Welsh noted the relationship in many earthworks between the use of circles and rectangles or squares. He described circles as presentations of the natural cycles of plant, animal, and human birth, life, and death. Rectangles and squares are not shapes that are found in nature, but represent the super/above natural Creator and the cardinal points of the Four Winds where a ceremonial space is formed.

The interior ditch of the rectangle and ditches cut at the base of the mound most likely held water. As Mark Welsh learned in the Dakota language from his grandfather, and he from those before him, “Mni Wau Wiconi yedo.” (“Water is everlasting life.”)

We stood at the base of the mound, picturing it encircled by water and greeted on each side by the waters of the rectangle, spreading to encompass the borders of eight acres of ceremonial land. Inside this space, the smaller mound was also surrounded by water. And outside the rectangle, the two circles most likely were circled with water. Whittlesey noted that the circle northwest of the earthwork had an interior ditch. Mr. Welsh suspects that the mounds and possibly other features of the earthworks were built in alignment with the summer solstice. This prospect offers interesting opportunities for solstice observations.

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These ceremonial spaces were used for important events in the lives of individuals—marriages, funerals and Vision Quests—and for gatherings of spiritual importance to the nation. Individuals would embark on Vision Quests: some several times in a lifetime, many once a year. This practice continues. Mr. Welsh noted that, whether accomplished yearly or less often, these times of fasting and reflection are opportunities to “get to really think where you’ve been and where you want to go in life.”

Mr. Welsh suggested that only an individual or a family of guardians would have lived inside the earthworks. The caretakers most likely would have periodically conducted controlled burns to keep the earthworks clear of trees and brush.

People most likely lived in villages close by the river. They would hunt deer, turkeys, ducks, geese, and a wide variety of such other animals as fish, clams, turtles, and frogs. Perhaps they traveled to the Buffalo Marsh, now called Buckeye Lake, to hunt and put away meat and hides for the winter. They would collect nuts, such as walnuts, hickories, and acorns, as well as many kinds of berries. From the fertile land, the people would cultivate sunflowers, knotweed, goosefoot, little barley, maygrass, milkweed, tobacco, pigweed, squash, and beans. Later, during the Woodland Period, corn traveled north and became a staple.<sup>2</sup>

Though opposed to DNA testing of the bodies of Ancient Ones, Mark Welsh stated that test results confirmed that these people were the ancestors of many First Nation people,

including the Dakota, Choctaw, Pottawatomie, Chippewa, and Yakima. Alfred Berryhill, second Chief of the Muscogee Creek Nation, explained to Mr. Welsh that his people continue the Mound Builder traditions in parts of the South.

Mr. Welsh prefers the name Ancient Ones for a number of reasons, including that this is the term tribal elders use. He finds the names in common use, “Hopewell” and “Adena,” given by settlers, inadequate. One culture is named for Mordecai Hopewell, a Chillicothe landowner who allowed excavations of mounds on his property in the 1800s. Governor Worthington’s Chillicothe mansion, completed in 1807, was named Adena, and a mound on the grounds of the original 2,000-acre estate was subsequently named Adena Mound.

Franklin County residents reap the benefits of the Jeffers family’s foresight in ensuring preservation of the Jeffers Mound, along with the good stewardship of the Worthington Historical Society and the Plesenton neighbors who respect and care for this ancient and remarkable place.

<sup>1</sup>The map and description were published in *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley: Comprising the Results of Extensive Original Surveys and Explorations*, by E.G. Squier, and E.H. Davis, The Smithsonian Institution, June 1848. Whittlesey places the site, “on the banks of Olentangy creek, a tributary of the Scioto river, about one mile west of the town of Worthington.”

<sup>2</sup>An additional resource for further reading is *American Indian Places, A Historical Guidebook*, by Frances H. Kennedy, Editor, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008.



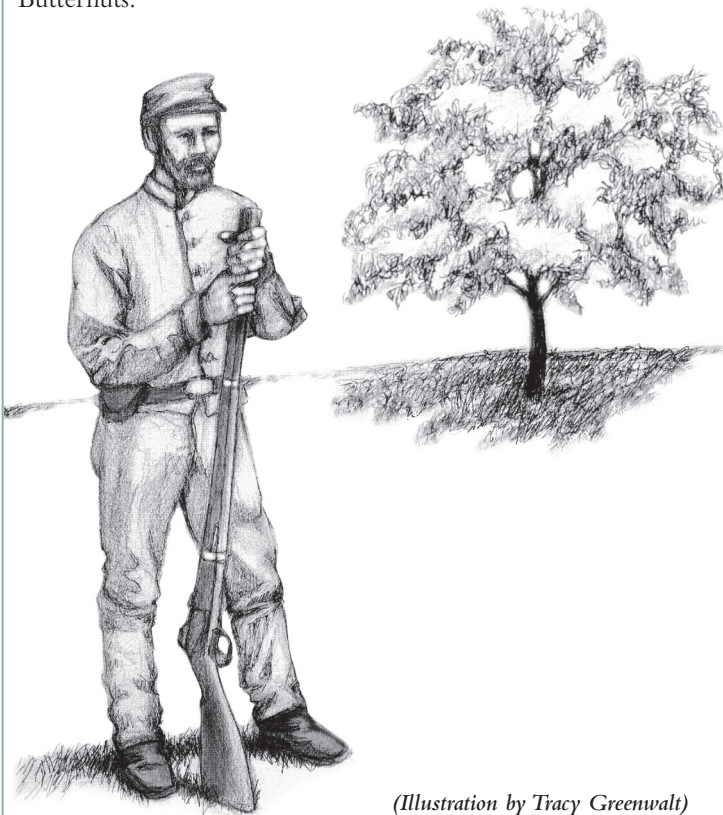
*The surface of the mound is easily eroded, and visitors are asked to keep off the mound itself. The Worthington Historical Society requests that all visitors treat the mound and the surrounding neighborhood with the greatest respect. The Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio reminds visitors that the mound is a sacred place.*  
(Photo by Sherrill Massey)



# What's Up with the Butternut?

By Alice Waldhauer

If you were strolling through a glen, you might not recognize this tree. The butternut is slightly smaller than its close relative, the black walnut. It is round topped, deciduous, and reaches a height of about 60', with branches that spread 50' or so. The trees are best known for the nuts they produce, which have been an important food source for humans and other forest inhabitants. Native Americans boiled the sap to make syrup and sugar, as is done with sap from maple trees, and they used the bark for various medicinal purposes. Butternut wood was once a popular choice for carved altars, church pews, and carriages—because it was light in weight. The bark and the husks contain a brown pigment that stains the fingers and can be used to dye material used for clothing. The rust-colored husks were used to dye the Confederate uniforms during the American Civil War, resulting in their nickname The Butternuts.



(Illustration by Tracy Greenwalt)

Optimum conditions for the butternut include full sun and deep well-drained soils, particularly moist bottomlands and ravines. The butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), also known as the white walnut, lemon walnut, or oilnut tree, has a range that generally overlaps that of the black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) and encompasses most of the Upper Midwest. However, the butternut is more tolerant of cold climates, so its range tends lie farther north. Butternuts have experienced a startling decline in numbers in recent decades. The culprit is the butternut canker (a

fungus with the challenging moniker *Sirococcus clavigignenti-juglandacearum*) first described in 1979. The fungus causes sunken oval-shaped areas on the branches, trunk, and stems that develop into black lesions which continue to grow. Butternut canker is deadly to the host tree, and there is no known remedy. Researchers believe it may be spread by insects and rain splash. Since the canker was first observed in 1967, 80% of butternut trees have succumbed across its range. It is currently listed as a threatened species by the United States Forest Service, and some scientists believe that the species will be extirpated if no action is taken.

Overall, butternut trees are similar in appearance to the black walnut, with subtle differences that are apparent mainly to tree experts and enthusiasts. Some tree identification guides use a side-by-side comparison of the two species because the differences are easier to comprehend when presented this way. According to the Ohio Champion Big Tree Program (Ohio Department of Natural Resources), the largest butternut tree in Ohio lives in Kent (Portage County), boasting a height of 78' feet and a trunk circumference of 19'.

The leaves of the butternut are alternate and pinnately compound, with nine to nineteen leaflets. When disturbed, the leaves give off a pungent odor, and the petioles (or stems) of each leaflet are downy and sticky. The tree is not known for its fall color, as the leaves tend to drop off during periods of dry weather in late summer. The nuts, which are lemon-shaped with two ridges running from end to end, mature in drooping clusters of three to five nuts. The wood of the butternut is prized by carvers and furniture makers because it is light in weight, with a pinkish creamy tan color and little of the dark brown coloration of black walnut wood. The bark of young butternut trees is light gray and smooth, and grows in mature trees into flat-topped ridges forming a diamond pattern that has a shiny, silvery color.

Butternut trees are not likely to form large single-species groves or make up the predominant species in a forest, and this may have to do with their characteristics as a species. Solitary examples of the tree are found across its range, which includes all of Ohio, but they are reported to be more common in the eastern portion of the state. It is a relatively short-lived tree, usually with a lifespan of 60–70 years. About 20 years of growth are required before the tree produces nuts, which ripen in September or October and are prized for candy making and baking. Good crops are typically produced only every two to three years.

Like the black walnut tree, butternut trees produce jugalone, a substance that suppresses growth in the soil surrounding the base of the tree, even of butternut sprouts. Butternut trees are shade intolerant and will not survive in the forest understory.

The butternut tree is monoecious, meaning there are male catkins and female “flowers” on the same tree. However, the catkins and flowers don’t usually appear at the same time, ensuring that viable seeds are the cross of more than one individual tree. (In light of all of these characteristics, it’s a wonder that the butternut tree ever flourished.)

Where does the supermarket walnut, with its easily cracked shells, fit into this picture? They are varieties of the Persian walnut, and almost all of them are grown in California.

According to the Diamond Foods Website, there is a species of black walnut native to California (*Juglans californica*), but growers at various

California missions in the late 18th century planted trees native to Asia Minor. The species was then known as the English walnut, because the nuts were carried on British trading ships to locations around the world. Today, “Persian walnut” is accepted as a more accurate description of the supermarket walnut. In Ohio, some people still harvest black walnuts, but cracking the nuts and picking out the nutmeats is a labor of love. Butternuts are said to be somewhat easier to crack and clean and have a more buttery flavor and a higher oil content in the kernel. Butternut oil was once used to finish wood, and it was said that oil from one nut was sufficient to finish a walking stick.

The continued viability of the butternut tree species is threatened by the butternut canker. Other species have been nearly wiped out by the introduction of exotic fungi. Perhaps the best example is the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), which is still on the brink of extinction after a fungus (*Cryphonectria parasitica*) that caused the chestnut blight was inadvertently introduced around 1904. Problems were said to have begun when exotic Japanese chestnut trees that harbored the blight fungus were planted in New York. Although the exotic chestnut had some resistance to the blight, the American chestnut had none. The tree was a towering favorite of lumbermen, because it was very fast growing and had a long straight trunk. The trees would grow to 100 feet, with trunks up to ten feet in diameter. The wood resisted rot, making it suitable for ships’ masts, railroad ties, and building materials. At the turn of the last century, the American chestnut accounted for nearly a quarter of the trees growing in

Appalachian forests. By 1950, four billion trees had succumbed to the blight, and conservation efforts to coax this species back into the forest environment continue today.

One way this is being accomplished is by a horticultural method called backcrossing. In the case of the American chestnut, resistant specimens are hybridized with a Chinese chestnut that carries the blight-resistant characteristics; the resulting hybrid is then successively bred back with American chestnuts until the resulting tree has the desired characteristics of the American chestnut while retaining the resistance to the chestnut blight. The backcrossed American chestnut is almost indistinguishable from its blight-susceptible ancestors, although biologists rightly protest that the backcrossed trees are not the real deal. They are currently being introduced in many states, including southern Ohio’s reclaimed strip-mined areas in the Wayne National Forest. Sixteen hundred backcrossed American chestnuts were planted during 2008 and 2009 with the help of the U.S. Forest Service, the American Chestnut Foundation, Ohio University, the Watershed Restoration Group, and the Boy Scouts. If the experiment works, it would be a one way to rehabilitate strip mining sites while helping bring the towering American chestnut back from the brink of extinction. A research project to identify disease-resistant trees is currently under way at the University of Vermont, however, no plan to introduce a backcross hybrid butternut tree has yet emerged.

The butternut tree may not be the optimum plant for small urban yards—jugalone inhibits growth beneath the spreading branches,

and they lack brilliant fall color. However, the nuts are quite attractive to squirrels and other mammals. Even grackles, the black birds with the clownish antics, are known to love butternuts. These creatures, in turn, are attractive to birds of prey, whose numbers are increasing in central Ohio. The perfect site for a butternut tree may be along a river’s edge where there is plenty of open space, sunshine, and moist fertile soil. And residents of Clintonville can now see butternut trees in Glen Echo Park, where the City of Columbus planted 18 butternut saplings in the fall of 2009. Although the trees are now little more than stout-branched saplings, it is hoped that they will grow to maturity and provide park creatures and visitors with butternuts in the decades to come.



*In the fall of 2009, the City of Columbus planted 18 butternut saplings in Glen Echo Park. (Photo by Alice Waldhauer)*





# The Ravine

Always wanted a ravine

Now I have one.

Sitting on the triangular deck designed by Emma  
My late wife  
I peer out over the scene  
Of my beautiful ravine

The trees are reaching to the sky  
It's blue and clouds are drifting by  
It's solitude and serene  
From my beautiful ravine

The hill provides sledding in the winter  
For kids to sled and play  
They jump into the air  
When they hit the mill race  
The only one left in place

The birds are flitting hither and yon  
In winter I photograph the dawn  
I don't think I have ever seen  
Anything as lovely as my ravine.



*Poem and photo by G. Paul McCormick*

## 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

## Supporting Members:

(from 3/13/10–9/13/10)

Anonymous	Bob McBurney
Sharon Austin	Robert Nekervis
Nan Burns	Dr. Peter Robinson
Dennis R. Cebul	Christine Hayes
Ann Chambers	Nina Hawranick
B. Chandrasekaran	Daryl Largent
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Donald Cooper	David Poole
Mike Dekay	Heather & Mathew
Greg Denby	Raymond
Cindy Decker & Jeff Frontz	Doreen Uhas-Sauer
Dianne & Ed Efsic	& John Sauer
Joyce Fasone	Julie & Jeffrey Sharp
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Olentangy Watershed	Barbara & Robert Strouse
Kevin George	Julia Tague
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Andrew Klein	Bill Whan
Michael Klein	David White
Chuck & Arlene Kozak	John W. Wilkins
Paul & Margery Love	Jesse & Mary Williams
George Paul McCormick	Robert Wing

## Thank You:

### Community Forum

Clinton Heights Lutheran Church      Giant Eagle  
Kroger      Beth Mills  
Simple Sweets Bakeshop  
Speakers: Algy McBride & Richard Barrett

### Operating Assistance

Clintonville-Beechwold Community Resources Center  
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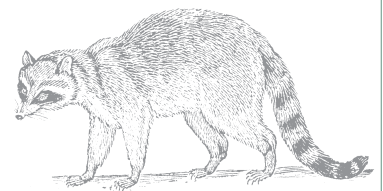
*Submissions and suggestions are welcome.*

### FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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