



# RAVINIA

*An Advocate for Community Resources*

Published by Friends of the Ravines (FOR)

Fall 2003/Winter 2004

## An Account of the Lost Adena Earthwork on Overbrook Ravine

Following the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier from central Ohio around 14,000 years ago, hunter-gatherer Paleoindians migrated into the region from the south hunting mastodon and elk. In the region's forests, wetlands, and grasslands they gathered plants for food and fiber and collected flint from stream banks and ridge outcrops to fashion into stone tools. Between 10,000 and 3,000 years ago, during the Archaic period, native people continued hunting and gathering, although some of the largest mammals they hunted were becoming rare.

Only near the end of this period did Native Americans living in the Ohio River valley begin to cultivate plants and establish semi-permanent settlements, associated with ceremonial structures. Between 3,000 and 2,000 years ago, during the Early Woodland period, native people in the Ohio River valley built perhaps a thousand large circular enclosures made of earth. This culture is sometimes referred to by archaeologists as the "Adena," named after the Chillicothe estate of Thomas Worthington, where a large conical earthen burial mound was excavated in 1901. Burial mounds are found both within the large earthen walled enclosures, but many thousands more are found scattered throughout the Ohio River valley.

An Early Woodland circular earthwork surrounding two conical mounds was constructed in what is today Clintonville, along Overbrook Ravine. It was one of approximately 25 or 30 circular earthworks constructed in Franklin County, most of which have been

destroyed by modern development and agriculture.

The earthwork is officially known as 33 Fr 12, the 12th archaeological site in Franklin County (Fr), Ohio (33). It is registered with the Ohio Historical Society, the agency charged by the state of Ohio with keeping a record of Ohio's rich history. The Overbrook Ravine Earthwork is also known as the Dominion Land Company Earthwork (also Fort Reserve or the Cook Earthwork), after the land development company that purchased the site of the earthwork for \$20,000 from Roy Wolfe in the early 1950s to build a housing subdivision. An effort was made by the city of Columbus, at the mayor's request, to preserve the earthwork as a park, but local residents opposed that idea and city council rescinded a resolution to acquire the property.

The Dominion Land Company Earthwork was located between Wynding and Yaronia Drives, west of Indianola Avenue and south of Cooke Road. Earthmoving operations preparing the subdivision for the construction of houses, roads, and water and sewer lines probably destroyed much of the site.

The earthwork had consisted of a 400-

foot diameter circular earthen embankment with a contiguous inner ditch, probably created as a result of excavating earth to construct the adjacent circular embankment. The digging was likely done with pointed sticks to loosen the soil, which was then placed in baskets made of plant fiber. The embankment contained an opening or "gateway" on its northwest side. The area encompassed by the embankment was approximately three acres. Inside the embankment and ditch were two earthen mounds (see figure 2 on page 3).

When Prosper Wetmore, who wrote about the earthwork in 1888 for the inaugural issue of the Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly, visited the site as a boy, the mounds were conical in shape and about 10 feet high. Shortly after his article on the "Earthworks of Franklin County, Ohio" was published, the trees on the site were cut and the area began to be farmed. It was then part of the H.C. Cook farm. When the Ohio Historical Society partially excavated the site in 1953, the embankment had been reduced by plowing to only two feet high and about 17 feet wide. By 1953, one of the mounds was nearly obliterated by bulldozing in preparing the site for housing development. The second mound was six feet high and 60 feet in diameter (figure 1). Over a period of four months, Ohio Historical Society archaeologists, assisted by students from the Ohio State University, excavated portions of the two mounds and its encircling embankment.

Near the center of the Mound I there was a 4 x 2-foot, shallow oblong hearth surrounded by a one-inch



fig. 1

*continued on page 3*

## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD...

There has been a flurry of activity since the last issue of *Ravinia*. We continue to receive supporting memberships and offers to volunteer. We thank you for your generosity. Your contributions help us finance operating costs and your willingness to volunteer your time is vital to carrying out the mission of Friends of the Ravines.

In April we were notified that Friends of the Ravines was the recipient of an educational outreach grant from the Environmental Challenge Fund. This grant will be implemented over the next three years and will help fund educational outreach (see related article in this issue).

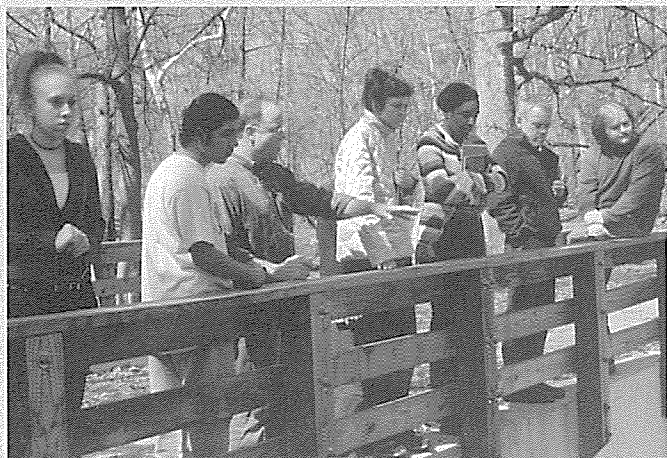
In May, Friends of the Ravines was awarded a \$1000 grant from the Clintonville Fund. Half of the money was allocated for plantings on the northern restoration site in Glen Echo Park. In June the Board of Trustees voted to make the other half of the Clintonville Fund Grant available to the Adena Brook Community as a challenge grant to purchase native plant species for public areas.

Friends of the Ravines has partnered with The Graham School on several projects this year. Science students participated in field laboratory activities in Glen Echo Park in late spring and returned in May to help volunteers plant trees on the northern slope. Students under the supervision of the school's Director of Technology Fred Whiteman are constructing a website for Friends of the Ravines. We have purchased the domain name friendsoftheravines.org. We'll keep you posted as this unfolds.

In June Friends of the Ravines had a booth at BioBlitz 2003 in Whetstone Park, where we displayed specimens of invasive plant species: Bush Honeysuckle, Forsythia, Common Periwinkle, Garlic Mustard, Goutweed, Wintercreeper, Norway Maple, Japanese Stilt Grass, Buckthorn, Winged Euonymus, Burdock, Poison Ivy, and Tree of Heaven. Later in the month we had a booth at ComFest in Goodale Park. In August we had a booth at Riverfest, held at Three Creeks Park.

We appreciate your support and I thank you for being friends of the ravines.

Martha Harter Buckalew



Glen Echo Restoration Spokesperson John Husted (center) talks to students from The Graham School.



## NEWS FROM THE RAVINES

**Adena Brook Community** continued its Second Saturday Cleanups through the summer months of 2003, with a number of volunteers who cleaned along Overbrook Drive and the Cooke Road Exit onto I-71. They collected more than 43 bags of trash, removed 12 large tree of heaven, degirdled 10 trees, and arranged for pick-up and disposal. They also hosted a September forum on invasive plants at the Whetstone Library to discuss issues raised by removal of bush honeysuckle.

**Friends of the Ravines on Glen Echo** will be having monthly cleanup, invasive plant removal, and native species planting sessions in Glen Echo Park on the third Saturday of each month from March to October of 2004 from 10:00 until 12:00.

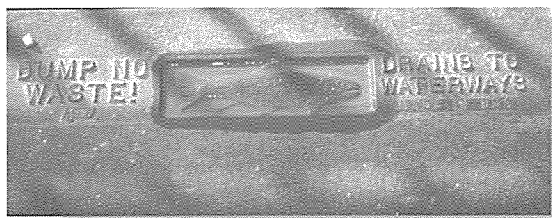
**Greenways** Coordinator from Columbus Recreation and Parks Brad Westall has met with Friends of the Ravines on Glen Echo, Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, and officials from sewers and drains to discuss stream restoration in Glen Echo Run. Cheryl Roberto, Interim Director of the Department of Public Utilities, has written a letter of support for the project.

**Iuka Ravine Association** reports that the City Development Department will be selling bonds to raise urban infrastructure funds to repair brick streets, bury overhead lighting, install period lamp-posts, and landscape within the District.

**Rush Creek Village** and the City of Worthington are in the planning stages of a project to restore creek banks to a more natural state. A consultant has been hired and neighbors are meeting with Worthington City Council. Rush Creek Village has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Walhalla Ravine** Residents are once again opposing development on the stream. The most recent incident was a 532 sq. foot house to be built right on the stream in the ravine. (An earlier controversy surrounded proposed construction of a new middle school on the edge of the ravine east of Calumet and north of Weber Road.) Both highlight the need for more meaningful stream protections. A controversial Watercourse Protection Overlay met stiff opposition and was withdrawn in 2001.

**Urban Ravines** are wildlife refuges and provide habitat for all kinds of critters and creatures. An eastern box turtle has been sighted in Iuka Ravine which is home also to striped salamanders. An immature bald eagle was spotted in the spring soaring above Rush Creek at the Olentangy River. Neighbors on Glen Echo report seeing a northern harrier swooping over the meadow in the eastern end of the park close to a tree where, later, a rough legged hawk perched for a mid-morning rest. Walhalla Ravine was home to rough-legged and red-tailed hawks last nesting season.



New storm sewer grates in Columbus post environmental warnings.

## An Account of the Lost Adena Earthwork on Overbrook Ravine, continued from pg. 1

wide ring of burned clay filled with 1 to 4 inches of charcoal and ash. Many pieces of burned rock and a few bone fragments were found in the hearth, which could have been an altar.

The other mound was about 300 feet north of the former. It contained a number of features on the mound floor, including the burial of a 6 to 8 year-old child, determined by the development of the child's teeth. The child was buried in an extended position, covered by earth and slabs of limestone. Other human bone fragments were found scattered in the mound. Under the earthen floor of the mound, archaeologists found 48 features, each averaging 5 inches in diameter and spaced 2.5 feet apart. These post holes, were placed in a circular pattern forming a structure that was probably used for ceremonial purposes (Figure 3). The structure was 40 feet in diameter, one-tenth the size of the embankment surrounding it.

Nine elliptical-shaped pits were found inside the ditch of the enclosure. The pits varied in size from 4 to 6 feet wide to 11 to 19 feet long, and from 1.5 to 3 feet deep. Most contained broken pieces of flint and pottery. A few large ceramic pots were found in these pits (Figure 4).

Other artifacts found in the pits during the dig include fragments of tubular smoking pipes, flint spear points, granite hammerstones, celts, pestles, and slate fragments probably used as a necklace. Much of the flint is of the type that was collected from nearby stream banks and ravines. It is known as Columbus-Delaware flint. Other types of flint found included Upper Mercer and Flint Ridge, quarried from outcrops in eastern Licking County and Muskingum County. Flint collected or traded from other parts of the Ohio River valley, such as West

Virginia, Kentucky, and southeastern Indiana, was also found.

Radiocarbon dating of hickory nutshell found in one of the elliptical pits indicated that the earthwork was constructed around 2,500 years ago. The style of spear points and pottery found at the site are consistent with this date, making it one of the earliest dated Early Woodland or "Adena" earthworks in the Ohio River valley, an important site in understanding the development and history of native cultures in the region.

A small number of earthworks similar in structure to the Dominion Land Company Earthwork survive primarily on private property scattered throughout the Ohio River valley. A significant concentration can be found at The Plains, northwest of Athens, Ohio. An excellent example of a circular earthwork on public property can be found at Mounds State Park near Anderson, Madison County, Indiana. The museum at the Ohio Historical Society contains an excellent interpretive exhibit on "Adena" earthworks and their builders, including a display containing some of the reconstructed pots from the Dominion Land Company Earthwork.

In 1989, Ann Cramer, now the archaeologist for the Wayne National Forest in southeastern Ohio, wrote her master's thesis at Kent State University about the Dominion Land Company Earthwork. Much of the information contained in this article and the map of the site was taken, with her permission, from her thesis. Martha Otto, Curator of Archaeology at the Ohio Historical Society, graciously allowed duplication of the photographs.

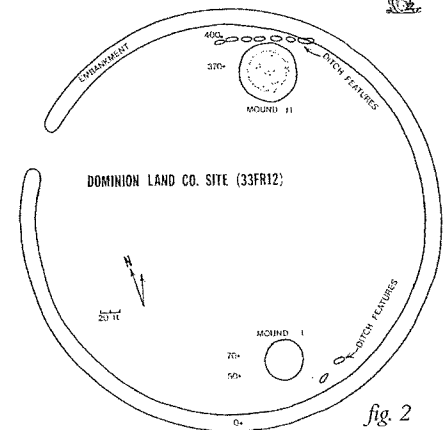


fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4

## Meet FOR's Newest Board Member

Cyane Gresham says she is happy to have found Friends of the Ravines when she moved to Columbus in January 2003, and Friends of the Ravines is happy to have found Cyane. In June she was elected to the Board of Trustees and is serving on the editorial staff of *Ravinia*.

Cyane worked at the Rodale Institute in Pennsylvania for fifteen years in a display garden where she was a composting, native plant, and invasive weed specialist. From 1994-2000 she helped to create and market a conference, *Native Plants in the Landscape*,

that attracted 400 participants per year. The conference facilitated communication among educators, nursery people, landscape designers, homeowners, botanists, state agency personnel, and conservationists.

Cyane left Rodale to attend law school at Fordham University where she was an editor and writer for *The Environmental Law Journal*. She won first prize in a statewide essay contest for an article on uses of municipal parkland, and was a public interest scholar. She has a bachelors and masters degree in geology.

She finished her last semester of law school at Ohio State University, and did research on the connection of municipal sewer and water utilities and urban growth. In May 2003 she received her Doctorate of Jurisprudence from Fordham University School of Law. Cyane took the Ohio Bar Exam in August and is actively looking for employment that combines law and conservation. Cyane is replacing Susan Michael Barrett who resigned from the board in March 2003.

## Recycling Yard Materials

There are different kinds of organic waste materials from your property. The key to managing them successfully is understanding which methods work best when.

### *Types of Materials*

The most common organic materials that property owners generate are grass clippings, leaves, yard and garden trimmings, brush, woody materials, and food scraps. Grass clippings can be the largest component by far for a suburban lot with a big lawn and few trees. In contrast, a ravine site with many old trees can produce no grass clippings but lots of brush, vines, and woody materials. There are many methods and options for managing organic wastes but they should never be dumped in ravines.

### *Methods of Recycling and Disposal*

Organic wastes can be broken down into nutrient materials on-site, sent away with the trash, picked up curbside for yard waste recycling, or taken to a composting facility. On-site reuse of organic materials is generally through composting or mulching. Composting accelerates natural decomposition by heating in a pile of mixed organic materials and soil. Mulching is simply using something like wood chips or leaves as a blanket on the surface.

Although all organic materials break down over time, some are best disposed of by bagging with the trash. Poison ivy or invasive weeds going to seed are examples that are safest to dispose of by trash.

Many municipalities contract for weekly yard waste pickup for their residents. In Columbus, Rumpke Recycling picks up

yard materials in heavy large paper bags, in containers, or brushy material tied with string. Rumpke also services Dublin, Gahanna, Westerville, and Worthington. Local Waste Company serves Hilliard and Groveport. Grove City relies on Republic, and Grandview uses their own municipal service. More rural townships may not pick up yard materials. Check with your municipality to see what they offer.

Finally, for large volumes there are at least three industrial scale composting facilities near Columbus where one can deliver yard waste. The City of Columbus compost facility is at 7000 State Route 104 S in the southeastern quadrant (<http://www.swaco.org>). Kurtz Brothers composting facilities are in Groveport on Rohr Road and Westerville on Westerville Road.

### *Which Method for Which Material?*

Grass clippings are in many ways the easiest material to manage. They are high in nitrogen (about 3%) so they can be viewed as a valuable source of nutrients when used to mulch. However, if you prefer to avoid the work of bagging and spreading them, clippings can be left on the lawn to break down and fertilize the lawn. Special mulching mowers accomplish this process even faster. It really makes no sense to remove the clippings and then fertilize the lawn.

Grass clippings are an excellent mulch for garden beds. They retain moisture (in years when that is needed), keep weeds out, and actually fertilize the soil. Bark mulch does not. Chemically treated lawns should be given a chance for pesticides to break down before clippings are used.

Leaves, if mixed with grass clippings, compost wonderfully. Leaves also make a great mulch and can replace purchased bags of commercial mulch. In fact leaves are

nature's way of mulching the ground with a protective blanket in the fall. If you prefer to not use them on-site, they can be easily bagged for curbside pickup.

Garden trimmings make for great composting since there tends to be a mixture of size, shape, and texture. If you can make a convenient but hidden pile, garden trimmings will break down to produce compost to enrich the soil. However, extremely invasive weeds that spread through runners or seeds should not be put in. It is much safer to bag poison ivy, garlic mustard, lesser celandine, etc. and put them in the trash. Also, large amounts of ivy and euonymus may not compost quickly or efficiently and should be handled like brush.

Brush may be one of the largest volume yard wastes from ravine properties. Probably the best way to dispose of cut honeysuckle, mock orange, multiflora rose, tree trimmings, and vines is to have them picked up curbside for recycling by the city. Large amounts of brush and woody materials may need to be delivered to the composting facilities yourself.

Food scraps have lots of composting potential but must be handled properly. Food waste left uncovered on your compost pile can attract animals. Either cover it with a new layer of compost or purchase a compost container. Coffee grounds are a fantastic source of nitrogen. Pet waste is best not put in the compost.

### *Conclusion*

Throwing yard waste into ravines is not a viable option. Dumping of yard waste introduces weeds into the ravines, encourages dumping of garbage, and can hasten erosion.

There are many good ways to manage organic yard waste – it is just a question of matching the method to the material!



## New Education Outreach Director

Steve Winters is a relative newcomer to education. Before joining the teaching profession in 1999, Steve worked for over a decade as a geologist and hydrologist for consulting firms in California and North Carolina and for the State of Vermont. As a former professional scientist, Steve brings a sense of reality to what he teaches. With a deeply held conviction that science is not something learned in a book—although it may start there—he encourages his students to investigate important real-world environmental issues that exist in their backyards. Since

2000, Steve has taught science at The Graham School. He teaches his students to think critically and independently but work collaboratively—as all good scientists must. For over three years, his students have been busy collecting invertebrates in the Olentangy River, sampling water quality in the Adena Brook watershed, coring soil samples for erosion and bank stability studies in the Overbrook Ravine, and—last year—planting trees at Glen Echo. In the fall of 2003, Steve and his students plan to expand their plant biodiversity studies in the Clintonville ravines. They will focus on the identification and removal of the invasive plants that threaten the biodiversity of our local ecosystem.



New Educational Outreach Director Steve Winters (right) and Restoration Spokesperson John Husted (left) explain the anatomy of the Glen Echo Restoration to students from The Graham School.





# EPA Tests Columbus Watersheds for Quality

The water had a grayish cast and an obvious unpleasant odor. Before Environmental Specialist Paul Van Der Meer collected the water samples, he put on a pair of latex gloves. Van Der Meer, a specialist with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and summer intern Kim Yoder surveyed three watersheds that empty into the Olentangy River. Water quality data was gathered at Walhalla Hollow, Glen Echo Ravine and Turkey Run – all located in Columbus.

Oxygen levels, pH, temperature, and conductivity (ionic structure of the water) were measured in order to assess the water's quality. Water samples were then collected in plastic containers for further analysis. Preservatives and ice will ensure the survival of vital information the samples contain, Van Der Meer said.

The information, in addition to data gathered during fish shocking and macroinvertebrate sampling, will be used to calculate the Total Maximum Daily Load ("TMDL"). A TMDL includes a written, quantitative evaluation of water quality problems and their sources, and the amount of pollutants that must be reduced to meet water quality

standards. It also assigns responsibility to individual sources to reduce their pollutants, and provides a foundation for watershed restorative actions.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, better known as the Clean Water Act of 1977, specifies water quality standards that states must adopt to protect, preserve and enhance the quality of U.S. surface waters. Each state has to develop a program designed to meet the goals of the Act. Ohio is one of the few states to have implemented a plan to improve water quality.

Chemical criteria for particular sites result from various laboratory studies, according to an Ohio State Extension Bulletin. The chemical data from the three sites, among others, will be compiled over the next year and a half, Van Der Meer said. The EPA must examine each TMDL before it is finalized.

"The TMDL shows people living in the Olentangy watershed what they can do to improve the water that flows through the area. (The results) have a lot of importance across the board," said Heather Lauer, an Ohio EPA Interest Center employee. She accompanied Van Der Meer and Yoder to all

three sites. People living in the Olentangy watershed can review the data and make informed decisions about what they can do to improve the water that flows through the area, she noted. A stream is officially contaminated when established water quality goals have not been met. Sewage is just one cause for impairment. Others include "soil particles, lawn chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and runoff from streets," Lauer said.

The Glen Echo Ravine is located near Indianola Avenue in Clintonville, an area in which many OSU students reside. On testing day the ravine's stream seemed polluted – sanitary sewage overflow was the suspected culprit and is a known problem at Glen Echo, Van Der Meer said.

To learn more about the Olentangy watershed, visit <http://www.ohiowatersheds.osu.edu>. The Ohio EPA, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and OSU Extension work together to establish support and provide funds for cleanup plans and preservation projects across the state.

*This article appeared in The Lantern of Ohio State University on July 15, 2003. It is reprinted with permission.*



## 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) \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate Shirt size: \_\_\_ M     \_\_\_ L     \_\_\_ XL     *Anyone contributing \$100 or more will receive TWO T-Shirts!!*

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  
\_\_\_ Constructing a 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

## Plant Walk on Camp Mary Orton Update

An April 27 plant walk organized by Friends of the Ravines at Camp Mary Orton attracted more than 40 ravine aficionados. John Furlow, Curator of the Herbarium at the Museum of Biological Diversity, led the three-hour walk along Flint Ravine through the deep woods to the Olentangy River Flood Plain. In addition to the two-page list of plants that Furlow predicted we could likely observe, he submitted the following list of additional species that were observed that day.



Over 40 people came to Flint ravine to see spring ephemerals.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Family
Black haw	Viburnum prunifolium	Honeysuckle
Thyme-leaved speedwell	Veronica serpyllifolia	Figwort
Crowfoot	Ranunculus abortivus	Buttercup
Dead nettle	Lamium purpurea	Mint
Geranium	Geranium maculatum	Geranium
Low blueberry	Vaccinium pallidum	Heath
Pawpaw	Asimina triloba	Custard apple
Red maple	Acer rubrum	Maple
Sassafras	Sassafras albidum	Laurel
Sensitive fern	Onoclea sensibilis	Sensitive fern
Serviceberry	Amelanchier arborea	Rose
Virginia bluebell	Mertensia virginica	Borage
White violet	Viola canadensis	Violet



## Camp Mary Orton Scenic Easement

During the spring plant walk at Camp Mary Orton (CMO) in April there were many queries about the survey stakes posted along paths in the camp. The property has ravines, streams, a waterfall, meadows and river frontage. There is an abundance of wild flowers, wildlife, various trees and shrubs, and steep shale cliffs.

The fall 2001 issue of *Ravinia* featured an article entitled, "The Legacy of Camp Mary Orton on Flint Run Ravine," which traced the history of CMO from 1910, when Annetta (Johnson) St. Gaudens donated eleven acres of her family farm in 1910 to Godman Guild, to the present. Through donations of contiguous properties from friends and trustees over the years, the camp embraces one hundred and sixty-seven acres today. Maintaining a camp this size has been a challenge to the Guild.

The Godman Guild board, staff and stakeholders began a strategic planning process in 1991 to explore better uses of the camp beyond its current use. CMO neighbors and businesses were invited to participate in the planning. One particular question resulted: Highbanks Metro Parks shared a boundary with CMO on the northwest side. Would a scenic easement with Metro Parks be possible?

In 1998 The Godman Guild Board of Trustees signed a scenic easement with Metro Parks based on an agreed-upon appraisal for a portion of the camp. The easement continues the Guild's current use of the camp for its programs, rentals and general use of the camp, while protecting the considerable natural areas. The stakes seen on the Plant Walk were part of the comprehensive survey done to outline the easement area, approximately ninety-three acres, which lies primarily along the floodplain and Flint Run ravine.

*Dr. John Furlow, curator in the Museum of Biological Diversity, led the annual plant walk in April.*



## Environmental Challenge Grant Awarded to Friends of the Ravines

Friends of the Ravines has received a grant of \$4200 from NiSource Inc. to facilitate an educational outreach program as a continuation of the restoration of Glen Echo Ravine located in Glen Echo Park. The funding will help us expand our pilot program involving high school science students in field laboratory activities in Glen Echo. This program will grow by at least one school each year from 2003 to 2005.

Over the next three years Friends of the Ravines in partnership with The Graham School will research and design three interpretive signs: the geological history of ravines; a fact sheet on watersheds, ravines, and erosion; and the anatomy of ravine slope restoration. The signage will enable Friends of the Ravines to reach a broader constituency and will help us fulfill our mission to educate the public about healthy ravine stewardship.



Volunteer marking Norway maples for invasive removal.

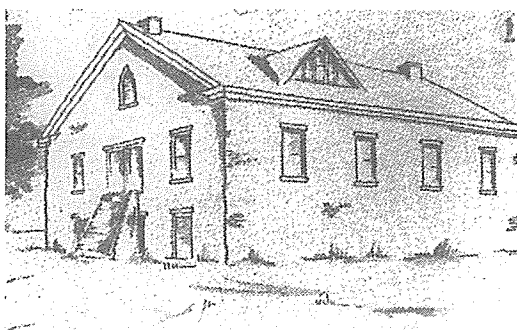
# The Underground Railroad and the Ravines

The Underground Railroad was neither underground nor an actual railroad, but a system of loosely connected safe havens where those escaping slavery were received, fed, clothed, concealed, disguised, instructed and transported to freedom. Conducted through a vast network of secret paths, trails, roads and waterways, this freedom movement was one of America's greatest social, moral and humanitarian endeavors. Ohio's history is rooted deeply in the Underground Railroad, with thousands of runaway slaves passing through or finding permanent residence in the state.

The system grew and around 1831 it was dubbed "The Underground Railroad" after the then emerging steam railroads. The system even used terms used in railroading. The homes and businesses where fugitives would rest and eat were called "stations" or "depots" and were run by "stationmasters." Those who contributed money or goods were "stockholders," and the "conductor" was responsible for moving fugitives from one station to the next. The Underground Railroad probably aided around 1,000 slaves per year in escaping. It effectively moved hundred of slaves northward each year. According to one estimate, the South lost 100,000 slaves between 1810 and 1850. Its success helped raise awareness in the North about slavery and pushed supporters of slavery into defensive measures that contributed to worsening relations between North and South. One of these measures was the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, which made it a crime to help slaves escape and made it easier for masters to reclaim escapees. Black and white abolitionists violently resisted enactment of that statute.

The journey to freedom was extremely dangerous and could last from two months to more than a year, depending on weather and safety conditions. For the slave, running away to the North was anything but easy.

The first step was to escape from the slaveholder. For many slaves, this meant relying on their own resources. Sometimes a "conductor" posing as a slave would enter a plantation and guide the runaways northward. The fugitives would move at night. They would generally travel between 10 and 20 miles to the next station, where they would rest and eat, hiding in barns and other out-of-the-way places. While they



*The Clinton Chapel as it appeared in the mid-1800s.  
Reprinted from Winter 1999 Ravinia.*

waited, a message would be sent to the next station to alert its stationmaster. Polaris, the North Star, served as an aid to navigate the journey. Slaves fled using the simple direction "walk towards the North Star." However, unable to plan a route, they risked walking into impassable or dangerous terrain.

The following letter from Cynthia Bull Spurgeon of Columbus to Professor of History Wilbur Siebert illustrates the risks of traveling the Underground Railroad.

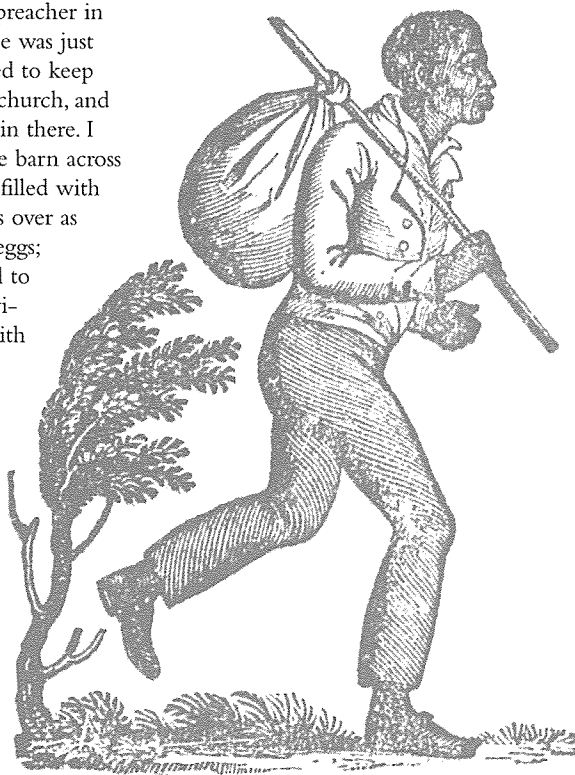
**July 25, 1892**

"Jason Bull (my father) was born at Burlington, VT. He was a local preacher in the Methodist church. His house was just north of the old church. We used to keep potatoes in the rear part of the church, and I presume Father did put slaves in there. I used to be sent over there to the barn across the way with a little egg basket filled with provisions, and I would take this over as though I were going to gather eggs; and when over there, would call to the slaves, and hand up the provisions to them. Deacon John Smith lived just north of North Broadway, Columbus, Ohio, back in a clump of locust trees. He was a sympathizer, but worked so hard during the day that he didn't like to get up at night. My father's ancestors were Quakers, and he himself always wore the broad-brimmed hat.

A colored man and his wife came one night and the man was terribly

scared, for he was sure he had seen his master and another man in the city. The Southerners wore palmetto hats in those days; it was therefore necessary to hurry them on. The man was dressed up as a driver, and the wife was dressed up pretty fine with a heavy green veil over her face. Father sat along side of her in a canopied-top carriage, with a high collar on. Two men did ride by when they were about halfway to Worthington and had palmetto hats on, but the darkey acted natural, though father said it was difficult for him and he almost turned pale. Father stopped at Worthington, but finally got to Garner's."

Following the stone wall along the south side of what is now the Southwick-Good-Fortkamp Funeral Chapel, one soon encounters Walhalla Ravine. Safety could not always be found in a concealed room, attic or cellar. When those types of "stations" were not readily available, runaways sought shelter in caves, swamps, hills and trenches. Here locally, the steep incline in the Clintonville ravines provided a secluded, tree-covered area — a perfect cover for those stealing away further north into the neighboring town of Worthington and beyond.



## Become an On-Call Volunteer

We are looking for retirees or part-time workers who want to contribute their skills to Friends of the Ravines. There are a variety of jobs to be done.

This organization is run entirely by volunteers who donate time and resources to help us carry out our mission. There are many ways you can help. We need people to write articles for *Ravinia* and proof-read upcoming issues. If you enjoy networking with other environmental groups, you could volunteer your time at one of the community events we attend. If you are a good teacher, we have educational initiatives. If you like working alone, there is always organizational work. Perhaps you have ideas for the website or for future community forums. We need your energy and creativity. Let us hear from you. You can respond on the volunteer portion of the membership form printed in this issue and send it to FOR, PO Box 82021, Columbus, 43202, or you can email [mhbuckalew@aol.com](mailto:mhbuckalew@aol.com).

## Roster of Supporting Memberships

*(New Memberships received since Spring 2003)*

Anonymous	Chris and Debbie Staggs
Cynthia Decker & Jeffry Frontz	Pamela J. Van Schoyck
Becky Mansfield and Gary Allison	Jerry Wager
Stephen Penn May	Roger and Connie Warren
Susan Neumann-Martensen	The OSU Institute for Collaborative Research & Public Humanities
Jacqueline and Rod Mayo	
Mark Skinner	

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

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Cyane Gresham	Cathy Nelson
Sherrill Massey	Alan Tonetti

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Submissions and suggestions are welcome.

### FRIENDS OF THE RAVINES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Martha Harter Buckalew  
Jack Cooley  
Andrea Gorzitze  
Cyane Gresham  
Tom Logsdon  
Sherrill Massey

### SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Louis Buckalew, Membership Chair  
John Husted, Restoration Technician and Spokesperson  
Anne Paterson, Development Advisor

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## *Friends of the Ravines Say Thank You!*

### Community Forum

Richard Pfeiffer

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The Graham School

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### Maps

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David White, Ohio EPA

### Educational Outreach

John Furlow, Plant Walk Guide  
Godman Guild and Camp Mary Orton

The Graham School

Steve Winters from The Graham School

Greg Maynard

### T Shirt Sales

The Back Yard Experience

### Display Racks

Graves Piano & Organ  
Stanton's Music

### Plant Material Donations

Martin Quigley, Department of Horticulture & Crop Science at The Ohio State University

### Operational Resources

Big Bear Stores

Clintonville Community Coop

Keep Columbus Beautiful

Mobile Tools Program

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