



HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Knowing where you've been, helps you see where you're going

A Periodic Publication of the North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society

October 2012

Post Office Display a Summerfest Hit

The newly refurbished early 1900s Post Office display attracted over 250 viewers during the July 28 North Baltimore Summerfest. The Post Office and a separate display of blacksmithing tools from North Baltimore's Ulch blacksmith shop are located in the garage at the Historical Center. Visitors also saw a new display on the Henry Opera House in the Historical Center's parlor, which highlights this important source of entertainment in 19th Century North Baltimore. If you have not yet seen these displays, please drop by the Historical Center on Tuesday mornings, 9 to noon, or by special appointment.

Mailbox Naming Rights for Sale

The Historical Society is selling naming rights to the mailboxes in the restored Post Office display for \$10 a mailbox. Although the 30 brass boxes have all been sold, 16 of the 35 wooden boxes are still available on a first come/first served basis. Purchasers have named the boxes for themselves, living relatives, ancestors, and defunct or existing North Baltimore businesses. If you would like to name a mailbox, please contact the Historical Society by phone, email, or mail.

Number of Volunteers Has Increased

The NBOAHS has seen an increase in the number of members actively engaged in supporting the Society's activities during the last year. Their contributions have enabled the Society to create new displays, improve building maintenance, enhance landscaping, provide aid to researchers and genealogists, and undertake the inventory and recording of the Society's archives and artifacts using our new Past Perfect collections management computer software. However, there are still many projects for which the Society could use help.

NBOAHS Welcomes Members

The Society welcomes new members, solicits their input, and encourages them to attend Board meetings—usually held at 7pm on the first Thursday of each month. Members can also help with tasks such as managing records, greeting visitors, or helping with displays. Please use the form at the end of this newsletter to renew or apply for membership.

Events at the History Center

Oct. 4, 7 pm NBOAHS Board Meeting
Oct. 9, 1pm Questette Club
Oct. 17, 7 pm Garden Club
Oct. 18, 9:30am Broken Needles
Nov. 1, 7 pm, NBOAHS Board Meeting
Nov. 14, 11 am, Red Hats
Nov. 15, 9:30am Broken Needles
Nov. 21, 7 pm Garden Club
Dec. 6, 7 pm, NBOAHS Board Meeting
Dec. 8, Christmas Open House, hours TBA
Dec. 19, 7 pm Garden Club
Dec. 20, 9:30 am Broken Needles

The Historical Center is open on Tuesdays from 9 am until noon. The Center will be closed on November 7, Election Day, and Dec. 25, Christmas Day.

Preserving NBHS Graduation Photos

The graduation class photographs formerly displayed in the old school are deteriorating, and steps need to be taken to preserve them for future generations. The older color photographs are fading, and many of the even older black and white class photographs are showing their age.

School Superintendent Marlene North has agreed to let the History Society digitally scan the photographs as a first step in preserving them. After scanning, Superintendent North will decide which pictures will be displayed in the new high school building.

Once scanned, the images will be preserved for future generations. Digital copies will be maintained by the Historical Society, the NBPS, and the North Baltimore Public Library. In addition, digital copies will be placed at the Center for Archival Collections at BGSU and the Wood County Historical Museum in Bowling Green. Storing the digital images in multiple locations greatly reduces the risk of permanent loss due to fire, natural disaster, or human error.

Some funds have been donated to cover the cost of the scanning project but more are needed. If you would like to help, please send a donation to North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society.

Society Purchases Display Cases

The Historical Society has purchased three large glass display cases from the now closed Scarborough Pharmacy in North Baltimore. The cases will be used to protect items in the school, military, and dining rooms of the museum. The Society wishes to thank Mr. Scarborough for allowing the Society to purchase the cases at a substantial discount and volunteers Sam Bretz, Jim Kuhlman, and Kevin Powell for moving the heavy cases to the Historical Center.



Society Seeking Info on Old Photo

Dorothy Trout has given the museum the photo below, which hung on the wall at the former Overmier Rexall Drug Store in North Baltimore. The photo appears to have been taken near the Capitol in Washington, D.C. If you know anything about the photo, such as the date it was taken, why it was taken, and the identification of any of the people pictured, please come by on a Tuesday morning or contact the staff by phoning [419 257 2266](tel:410-257-2266) or by email at nbahs@wcnat.org.

HULL'S TRACE: Henry Township's Early Role in American History

General William Hull's 2,600-man army blazed a path through the Black Swamp early in the War of 1812 and almost certainly camped for at least one night in what is now Henry Township. Hull's primitive road served as an important route for U. S. forces moving north to fight the British and their Native American allies. The approximately 150-mile road ran from Urbana (west of Columbus) to a point north of the Maumee River where it joined existing pioneer roads.

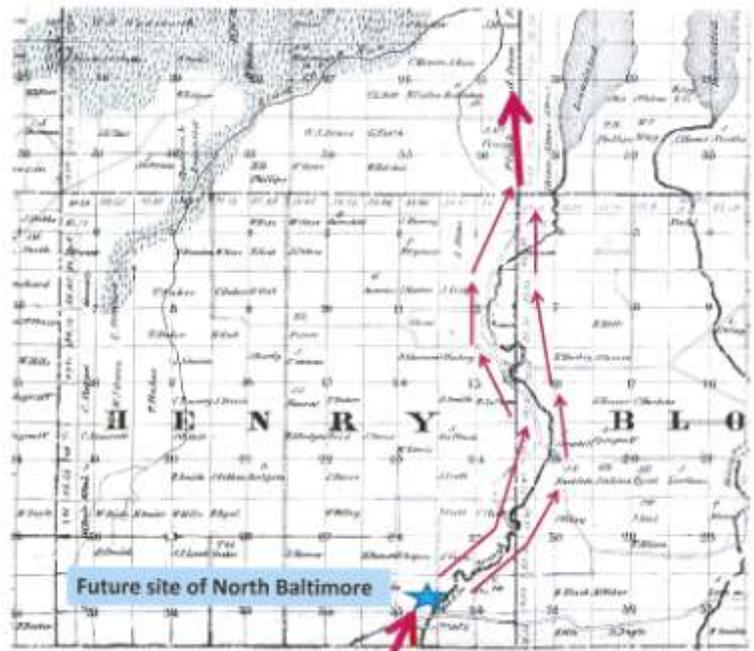


General William Hull was a former governor of Ohio and Revolutionary War officer. However, by 1812 the elderly general was in ill health and unfit for command.

Hull's mission was to reinforce the American forces in Detroit, deter British invasion from Canada, and protect the local settlers from hostile Indian attacks. After assembling his army at Dayton in May 1812, Hull marched

north to Urbana using the existing pioneer roads. Because there were no roads north of Urbana, Hull's men cut one through the forests and swamps of Champaign, Logan, Hardin, Hancock, and Wood Counties. While the general route is fairly well known, the precise location has been obscured by 200 years of road building, farming, and urban development. Hull often erected a blockhouse every 15 to 20 miles to guard the road, and these sites are well identified.

Hull's route imposed on an 1858 map of Henry Township shows how his Army marched on both sides of the Middle Branch of the Portage River (now called the Rocky Ford Creek). The units marching on the east bank were forced to cross to the west bank in order to move between tall, dense grass to the west and two lakes on the east. These terrain features were obscured when the land was drained and converted to farmland in the mid 19th Century.



By June 26, 1812, Hull's army had reached the south side of the Blanchard River where it camped and erected a blockhouse named Fort Findlay. On June 27th, Hull resumed his march north to the Rocky Ford Creek near what is now Van Buren and from there along the west bank of Rocky Ford Creek. Moving at the rate of 10-15 miles a day—a reasonable rate for difficult terrain—he would have arrived at the present site of North Baltimore on June 28.

Because of swampy conditions, the army would have camped along the few ridges and other high ground available. For this reason, it is likely Hull's men camped on the north/south ridge upon which North Baltimore was eventually built. The present site of Maplewood Cemetery and Memorial Field Stadium may have been part of Hull's camp.

After leaving the North Baltimore area, Hull's force proceeded north, reaching the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan by July 5th. There, Hull was tricked into surrendering his army to a much smaller British force—a humiliating defeat. After the war, Hull was sentenced to death for cowardice, but President Madison later pardoned him because of his age and Revolutionary War service

Hull's road was used repeatedly during the War of 1812, and it is possible that other military units camped near present-day North Baltimore. After the war, the road became known as Hull's Trace and was used by early pioneers. Eventually, it was incorporated into newer routes. Hancock County Township Road 49 between Van Buren and North Baltimore follows Hull's Trace along Rocky Ford Creek as does a small section of Insley Road in southern Wood County.

As far as is publicly known, no hard evidence exists today to support the theory of an encampment on the site of present day North Baltimore. However, there have been tantalizing reports of searches and discovered artifacts. In the 1890s, the North Baltimore Beacon published several articles about local citizens finding weapons and other military artifacts, which were attributed to Hull's Army. On one occasion, over three dozen badly rusted muskets were reportedly found near Hull's Trace in Liberty Township just south of present day Portage.

The Beacon also reported that a son of B. L. Peters, founder of North Baltimore, conducted an extensive excavation on the south side of town hoping to find an abandoned cannon, but the results of his efforts do not seem to have been documented. According to local oral history accounts, as recently as the 1950s, a U.S. military belt buckle and several uniform buttons were found when houses along High Street were built. Other military artifacts may be as yet undiscovered. However, as of this writing, the whereabouts of any War of 1812-era artifacts that may have been left in Henry Township is unknown.

The North Baltimore Ohio Area Historical Society

A tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization

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2012 Membership Application

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Do you prefer the newsletter to be sent via _____ print mail or _____ email?

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All membership fees and donations are tax deductible.

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