



# From The Burg to Buckeye Lake

by Suzy Millar Miller and Connie Parkinson

As winter winds down, it's time to think about fun things to do in the summer. Memories of sweet corn, fishing in the lake, hot summer days by the swimming pool, and the county and state fairs help us get through these last days of snow and ice.



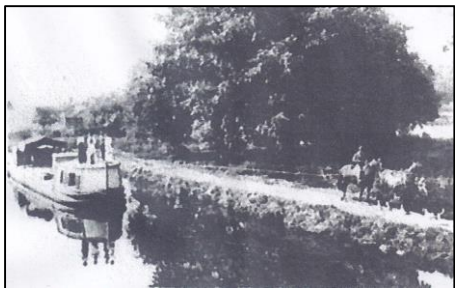
Speaking of summer, do you remember going to the Buckeye Lake Amusement Park in the '50s and '60s? It was a family park, but also a great place to go on dates. My mother, Maebelle, and her friend Hester Foltz used to go listen to the sound of the "Big Bands" like Tommy Dorsey, Guy Lombardo, Count Basie,

Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and Duke Ellington at the Crystal Ballroom. I don't remember the ballroom at all. I remember the scary rides like the **Wild Mouse**, **Tilt-A-Whirl**, and the **Roundup**. Other popular rides were the kiddy boats, merry-go-round, bumper cars, kiddy train and the **Whip**.

There used to be special "family days" for companies when the entire park was occupied by families from DCSC, General Electric, Owens-Corning, or Curtiss-Wright Aviation. We would ride the rides, eat "fair" food, watch the boats on the water, play Skee Ball, try to win prizes from the barkers on the midway, fire guns at the rifle range and laugh at our



images in the house of mirrors.



Buckeye Lake wasn't always a lake. For probably thousands of years it was a large swamp around which, rather than through, major Indian trails passed. It was called Big Swamp/ Buffalo Lick/ Buffalo Swamp, an area where animals came for salt. From 1826-1830 the south fork of the Licking River was dammed to form Licking Reservoir, a water

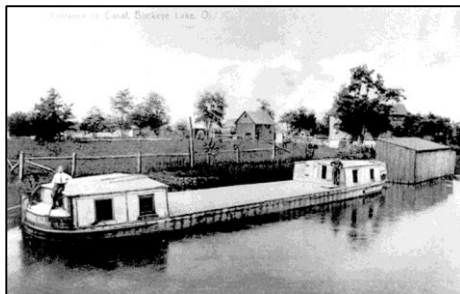
source for the new Ohio and Erie Canal. At its greatest measurement it was 7.25 miles long, 1.25 miles at its widest, covering 4,000 acres, (continued on page 02)

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*(continued from page 01)*

with 30 miles of shoreline-and navigable, if you watched out for tree trunks and stumps.

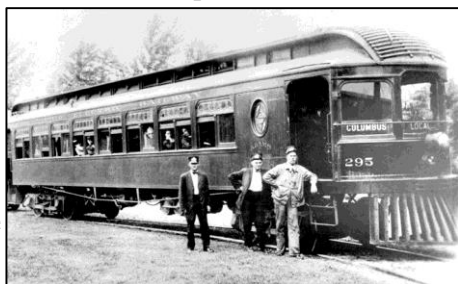
The lake itself is in Licking and Perry Counties, and at the edge of Fairfield County. The water flowed into the Lancaster Lateral Canal, a feeder for the major Ohio and Erie Canal. The Canal's early connection with The Burg was through James C. Reynolds, our namesake, who in 1846 paid the Lancaster Lateral Canal Company \$2,000 for 11.16 acres surrounding locks 9 and 10 at Carroll, where the company had laid the mill site. James also had to construct and keep in repair two regulating weirs (dams). At the time James built his flouring mill, the canal was lined from end to end with boats passing two ways, loaded with grain, produce, lumber, and a new product, coal, from Hocking Valley. At its completion the Ohio Canal would cut through the whole state from the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland to the Ohio River at Portsmouth.



The canal systems lasted about 70 years, into the 1890s, being overwhelmed by the faster freight-carrying railroad systems, which were in turn diminished by automobiles, therefore truck transport. In 1894 the Ohio Legislature made the reservoir into Ohio's first state park, calling it Buckeye Lake. Ten years later the state began removal of the tree remnants that were such a hazard to navigation. Buckeye Lake grew over decades as **The Place** to go for fun.

Visitors to the lake included people such as Margaretha and Louise Kuhn. Louise is Jack Turner's grandmother (Mary Turner Stoots' great grandmother) and Margaretha is Jack's mother. The photo was taken at Buckeye Lake circa 1910.

As early as the 1870s the lake had been accessible by railroad, but the park benefited greatly through the Interurban Line. When the Columbus, Buckeye Lake, and Newark Line was completed the Interurban ran right through The Burg, and you could hop on it and go to The Lake for a day trip or for a longer stay at one of the many hotels or cabins.



Buckeye Lake Park reached its peak in the 1920s and 1930s. Offered for your delectation were rides, a skating rink, boat excursions, the Lake Breeze hotel, Picnic Point, the crystal-clear Crystal Swimming Pool, and the Crystal Ballroom. Famous big bands of 20 to 30 musicians played at the ballroom including the locally famous Chuck Shelby and His Orchestra. During WWII days, Selby and his men worked in

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*(continued from page 02)*

war plants, and at night pooled gasoline coupons to travel to Buckeye Lake or some farther destination. "We were just dead tired," Selby said. "Our faces ached." But they went, to give other tired and war-weary human beings a little sweet music, a little romance, one more reason to keep on trying. On August 13, 1947, a fire gutted Buckeye Lake Park, destroying many of the concessions.

It was socially desirable to own a vacation home at Buckeye Lake, or Millersport, where offshoots of the canal can still be seen. There are now many nice houses around the lake. Several Reynoldsburg residents had homes at

the lake including the late Budd and Belle Oldham and Burg ex-mayor Kent "Kenny" Francis. One interesting note is that a well-known Burg resident, Vinton H. Raymer, the first Fire Chief of Truro Township, lived at Buckeye Lake in 1910 when he was five years old with his parents, Margaret and Frederick Raymer. In later years, Vinton had a small television and radio repair shop on Rich Street.



taken by eminent domain to become a large part of Buckeye Lake. Stephen Holtsberry spent the rest of his life building rowboats to rent to visitors at Buckeye Lake while he continued to go to court

RTHS member, Sharon Cosner Sellitto, currently owns two houses on the lake on the dam. She has renovated one small cottage into a beautiful home and is working on the renovation of a large house, which used to be the Holtsberry Hotel, nicknamed "El Shacko" by the previous occupants. The hotel was owned by Stephen A.

Holtsberry. Most of the Holtsberry family farm was



to oppose the loss of the farm. Prior to the hotel, the area housed workers (many Irish) who built the canals and lake.

Weldon Ice Cream Company was formed in nearby Millersport in the 1920s, nearly a century ago now, is still run in the summers by family members. Early lake cottages were small and primitive. There were few inside toilets: water, high in iron and often muddy, was pumped by hand. But it was soothing to simply be there, to watch sailboats and sunsets and the antics of other vacationers. A grocery boat from Millersport came to your dock every day.

Connie wrote some personal thoughts about Buckeye Lake in addition to her extensive historical research about the area.

*"My only youthful memory of Buckeye Lake is mixed.*

*(continued on page 04)*

# From The Burg to Buckeye Lake by Suzy Millar Miller and Connie Parkinson

(continued from page 03)

One sunny Sunday afternoon Parky took me to Buckeye Lake. We got there in his floor-shift, four-seater, black Model A Tudor Sedan Ford. (Although a sturdy vehicle, she did not survive his WWII years away in the Army, but sat lonely and unemployed in his



mother's garage developing a cracked engine block. The end.) We rode past cornfields, potato fields, gladiolus fields, barns and barnyards, past the little green house at a country intersection where nearby a live bear was displayed standing in a cage, shuffling from back foot to back foot and wanting out.

"At the amusement park he and I took a ride on the Ferris Wheel and wandered around gawking at the sights. Then he said, 'Have you ever been on a roller coaster?' Certainly not! We got into the swaying seat and the operator locked the wooden bar in front of us. I couldn't see any reason for that, but he did it.

"At a moderate speed we climbed up that first hill, and I wondered where was the thrill supposed to come in. I found out as we started downhill, gaining speed. By the time we reached bottom, I was clinging to the grab bar, terrified. The rest of that eternal ride I hung on and prayed I wouldn't be cast out of my seat into some faraway forever-darkness. Up, down, up, down around an out curve, straightaway, oop-er, up - down. I was petrified with fear. I don't even know if I screamed. Probably not, for that might bring some further death-defying twist in the tracks. Years and years later, we stopped and got off. I was bright green, jelly-kneed, sick and sweating. I think my hair had turned white. Parky was smart. He didn't ask how I liked it.



"I did recover, and by late afternoon we had ridden - in his car - to Millersport, where

we got a double-dip cone of Weldon's ice cream. That made it all turn out just fine."

That roller coaster was called **The Dips**. The coaster was built in 1930 (some sources say 1924 and apparently there are photos of it under construction in August 1923). "The Dips" was built with massive wood beams and was billed



as "Ohio's Largest Roller Coaster." A bad accident occurred in 1958 which caused several people to end up in the hospital in Newark. The roller coaster never ran again. Its massive skeleton sat in place until 1966 when a storm blew it into the water.

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(continued from page 04)

My favorite ride at the amusement park was the **Roundup**. It was a modern marvel which used centrifugal force to spin you around while you were standing up. I should have been totally concerned about spinning and staring at the ground at the same time. It makes no sense that I enjoyed it so much. I'm terrified of heights and that ride definitely stuck up in the air! My least favorite ride was a one-time excursion on the **Wild Mouse**. It was the replacement roller coaster style ride for "The Dips." The Mouse was steel construction with 90-degree turns, steep drops, high speeds and heart-stopping times when it felt like the car was going straight into the lake from its greatest height.



I have no idea who talked me into boarding that ride, but I'm sure I never spoke to them again!

On the other hand, who can forget the salt-water taffy, sweet corn in season, and the fish with French fries. One vendor, Jimmy Kearns, started selling fried fish



and fries in 1946. He loved to fish, so he built a trap door into the floor of his booth which extended over the water. In between food orders he would drop a fishing line into the lake and then go back to work. A bell would ring if he got a bite and he would haul up his fresh catch.



The Buckeye Lake Yacht Club was founded on April 24, 1906, with a gathering of 40 people. Their first event was a race on Memorial Day. The Columbus participants boarded the interurban at 7 a.m. and arrived at Buckeye Lake at 8:30 a.m. There was a boat parade complete with a fanfare of gunfire and periodic cannon fire. It must have been quite an event. The yacht club is still very active today and even has a monthly newsletter called **The Log**. The club has many events throughout the year.



(continued on page 06)

# From The Burg to Buckeye Lake by Suzy Millar Miller and Connie Parkinson

(continued from page 05)

One thing I didn't remember at all was brought to mind by my cousin, Sharon Cosner Sellitto. In August 1964 she participated in a "Miss Central Ohio" contest. She was invited to join the contest which was part of the Miss Ohio competition. The *Columbus Star* Newspaper sent her

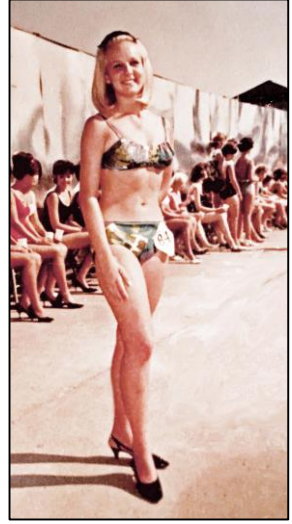


a schedule that included instructions to "be in bathing suits and in the Crystal Ballroom for final instructions before the contest" followed by "all contestants to parade before the Judges' Platform over the Crystal Pool." She didn't win, but she got a bad sunburn!

Buckeye Lake has shrunk some, covering 3,173 acres. There is no longer an amusement park. There are beaches, picnic and parking areas, numerous businesses including a gas station, even the Buckeye Lake Historical Society Museum. The lake is a fine place to go, rent a boat, and stay a while.

In March 2015 the Huntington District of the US Army Corps of Engineers was paid \$140,000 to inspect and report on the structural condition of Buckeye Lake dam. In the report

numerous weaknesses were pointed out that could cause the entire dam, houses, and all, to slide into the waters. Corps officials suggested several options, which included completely replacing the dam, or entirely draining the lake. Almost any alternative would mean no boating, for habitual boaters or even casual ones; damage and disaster for the local businesses, the



possibility that *your house* might be sucked away when the dam broke; all sorts of negative, scary, and very real prospects. Governor John Kasich approved \$150 million in funds to have everything put back together. The job was expected to take five years. *Five years*, while your foundations sank and you'd be forced to pay for some expensive repairs yourself. In the end, within three years the dam was restored – incidentally, at a cost of a mere \$107 million. On November 8, 2018, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held.



THE POOP BY THE LAKE, BUCKEYE LAKE PARK, 1900s NEWSPAPER, O

Residents of Buckeye Lake let out a long sigh of relief.

Today, Buckeye Lake has two distinctions: (1) It is a U.S. National Historic Landmark District; (2) It is on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places.

Photos shown came from Colin Sutphin, Connie Parkinson, Sharon Sellitto, Mary Turner



Stoots, a Buckeye Lake Historical Society flyer, and the Internet.

# 2020 CALENDAR

## MARCH 2020

### *Publish March Courier*

- 17 – TUE – Board & General Meeting  
Combined - 7:00pm
- 21 – SAT – Open House, 10am to 2pm
- 25 – WED – Max & Erma's Fundraiser  
11am-10pm All Day Long!

## APRIL 2020

### *Directory/Roster Published*

- 08 – WED – Slate Ridge 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Tour  
9:00am-12:00pm
- 14 – TUE – Board Meeting, 7:00pm
- 16 – THU – French Run 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Tour  
9:00am-12:00pm
- 18 – SAT – Open House, Helping Hands  
Shower 10:00am-2:00pm
- 28 – TUE – Board Game & Card Party at the  
Reynoldsburg Senior Center  
5:30pm to 8:00pm

## MAY 2020

### *Publish May Courier*

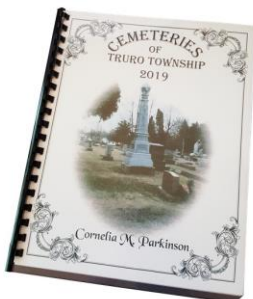
- 12 – TUE – Board Meeting - 7:00pm
- 16 – SAT – Western Electric Open House  
10:00am-2:00pm
- 19 – TUE – Western Electric Open House  
5:00pm – 8:00pm
- 25 – MON – Memorial Day Service  
9:30am at Seceder Cemetery

## New Members!

Shirley A. Corrigan – Individual  
 Susie Luker – Individual  
 Clifton Morris – Individual  
 Sallie O'Dell – Individual  
 Carol Trejo – Individual  
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## Cemeteries of Truro Township 2019

by Cornelia M. Parkinson



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Did you ever wonder what all the symbols represent that are carved on gravestones? It's all explained in here!

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Be sure to visit us at the

# Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society Museum Open House

## Saturday, March 21, 2020

### 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

***Come to the Museum and take a walk back in time ....***

1485 Jackson Street (across from the Hannah J. Ashton School)

# THE COURIER

March 2020 Issue

Reynoldsburg-Truro  
Historical Society

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PO Box 144  
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Mary Turner Stoots, Colin Sutphin,  
and Sharon Cosner Sellitto

### Contributors:

Suzy Millar Miller, Connie Parkinson,  
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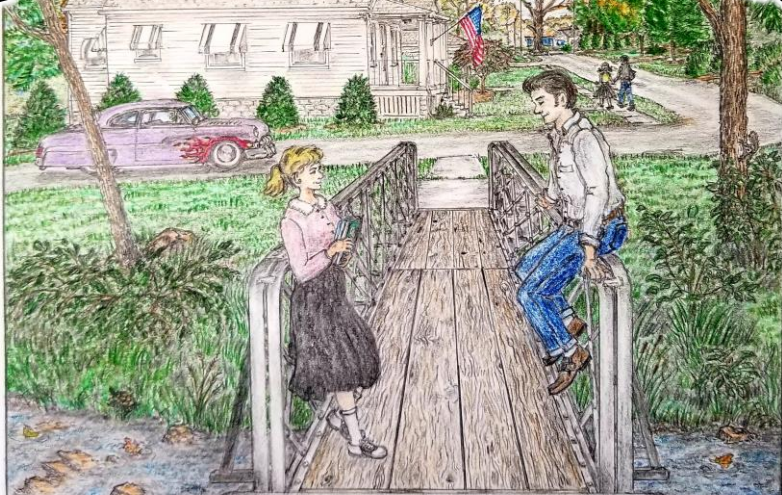
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# Meet Me at the Old Footbridge A Reynoldsburg Vignette



**Illustrated and Written by Colin Sutphin**

Sometimes, I want to go back to the good old days, if only for a short visit.

The year was 1958, and it's the first week of fall. Trees are beginning to turn color and weather is mild. The summer had been great. Swimming at Echo Woods (Tall Timbers) out on Route 40.

Working for Don McClain refinishing furniture. I was new in the "Burg", having just moved here in June. I met a gal at the summer carnival, but she was "going steady." Oh well, Mom always said "There's more fish in the sea." And, she was right.

Walking to high school from the far end of Brookside, I crossed the footbridge at the end of Epworth Avenue twice a day. The bridge had a certain aura about it. Still does. Probably one of the reasons it's now called the "Memory Bridge."

There was another footbridge then. It was behind the old K of P building, and

crossed French Run in front of the new, at that time, Post Office and near Dr. Weltner's office. It was damaged by flood waters and eventually removed.

In the pencil drawing the footbridge is the meeting place for our young couple. Let's call them Sandy and Danny. I know, you're thinking *Grease*. ♪You're the one that I want...Oh honey...ooh, ooh, ooh.♪ (Now try to get that tune out of your head for the rest of the day.)

Danny arrives a little after 3 pm. He's in Distributive Education and gets out of school at noon. He works as a stock boy at Albers' Supermarket in Great Eastern Shopping Center. This is his day off, so he wants to meet with Sandy at the bridge after she leaves the high school around 3:30 pm.

He dresses casual, long-sleeved shirt rolled up two turns. Levi's with rivets and button fly, rolled up two turns at the cuff, penny loafers and white socks.

*(continued on page 10)*

## Meet Me at the Old Footbridge A Reynoldsburg Vignette

*(continued from page 09)*

The Guys wore quite a variety then. Blue jeans mostly, but dress khakis were good too. Some guys would roll up the sleeve of their T-shirts. Then, tuck a pack of Lucky Strike or Pall Mall cigarettes under the sleeve at the curve of the shoulder. Cardigan or pullover sweaters were popular in cool weather. Wide ties were still in but getting narrower by the year.

Guys' shoes: penny loafers, white bucks, saddle oxfords, wing tips, points, Snap Jack's from Thom McAn, Converse sneakers and engineers boots. And, white or argyle socks.

Guys' hair: The flat top was popular, others wore a crew cut, Hollywood, Princeton, pompadour and last but not least the D.A. or duck tails achieved by combing the hair horizontally in back of the head, then running the end of the comb vertically down the middle.

Sandy departs the high school walking north on Jackson Street. She crosses Main Street under the watchful eye of Mr. Oath Young, who helped students safely cross busy Main Street for many years. She picks up her pace when she spots Danny already on the bridge.

Sandy's wearing a black pleated skirt hemmed 4" below the knee, pink cashmere sweater with a white lace collar and pearl-like stud earrings. Also, saddle oxfords and bobby socks.

Gals had quite a wardrobe. Straight, poodle, pleated or A-Line skirts and dresses. Capri pants and pedal pushers were common. Sometimes denim or even Bermuda shorts in summer. Cotton print blouses, cashmere and angora sweaters in pullover or turtleneck styles.

Gals' shoes: saddle oxfords, white bucks, pumps, Capezio T-straps worn with nylon hose seamed in the back. Oh, white Keds.

Gals' hair: pageboy, pigtails, ponytails, flips, bangs and shoulder length were all good. Or, maybe bleaching...

The couple lingers at the footbridge for a while, then walk to Danny's car so he can drive Sandy to her home.

Ah yes, Danny's car... It's a customized 1951 Mercury 2 door. Lowered but not chopped. DeSoto grille, Frenched headlights, louvered hood, '54 Mercury taillights, Cruiser skirts, Lakes pipes, spun aluminum hubcaps and twin dummy spotlights. The paint is purple metallic with red and yellow flames. Interior is purple and gold Naugahyde, rolled and pleated. Under the hood is a Flathead V8. 255 c.i.d. bored .030 over, dual "Smithy" mufflers, 2 Stromberg 97 carburetors on an Offenhauser manifold, "Isky" 3/4 cam and Edelbrock high compression heads. From the factory this engine produced 112 hp, now, twice that.

Danny is proud of this car. I'm pretty sure Sandy likes it too.

The two sit in the car at Sandy's house and talk for a good spell. Then, her mom motions from the kitchen window. She knows that is the signal to come help with supper. After a quick kiss Sandy heads inside and Danny pulls away, squealing the tires a little. Boys!

I hope you enjoyed this bit of nostalgia.

### Cofin Sutphin

Also in the drawing is Matt and Cindy Lappert's house. The American flag has the star pattern for 48 states, which is how many states we had in 1958. In the background is the iconic maple tree in the middle of Epworth Avenue, and I always include a few natural creatures.

## When Grannie was a Girl

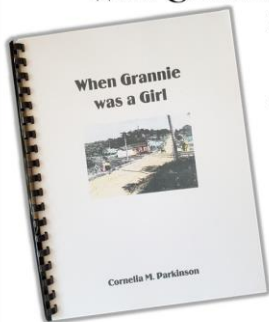
by Cornelia M. Parkinson

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*When Grannie was a Girl* was originally written by Connie for her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. Since it's full of stories we can relate to, she has decided to share it with us!

If you would like a copy, feel free to call Mary Stoots at (614) 560-4987 or send an email to [RTHSCourier@aol.com](mailto:RTHSCourier@aol.com)

OR - you can write a check payable to "RTHS" and put the name of the book in the memo line, then mail it to:

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- 1976
- 1982
- 1992

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### Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> is the perfect day to take your family out to eat!



This is our **BIGGEST** fundraiser of the year! Please help us make it **successful!** We will need donations for the silent auction, side dishes for the buffet, door prize donations, help setting up ahead of time, ticket sales, and the list goes on. Please contact me at [RTHSCourier@aol.com](mailto:RTHSCourier@aol.com) or call me at 614-560-4987 if you can help in any way! ~ Mary Turner Stoots, President

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5:30pm – 8:00pm

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