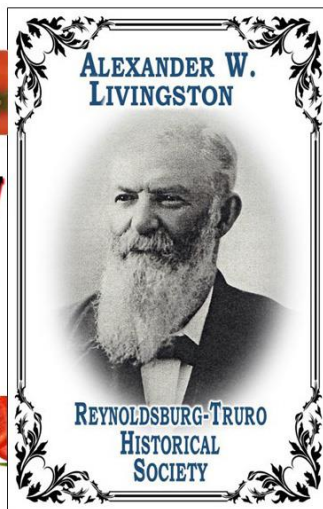




Anything You Ever Wanted to Know About Alexander W. Livingston

by Mary Turner Stoots, with
Comments from Cornelia M. Parkinson



A few years ago, Barth Cotner and I did an interview with WOSU-TV at the Livingston House about our very own Alexander W. Livingston. Since the Tomato Festival is around the corner, about a month away, I thought it would be prudent to do a story about one of our favorite sons.

The Livingston family is included as some of the earliest settlers to this region. Alexander's father, John Livingston, came to Truro Township in 1815. Mary Graham's family arrived in 1817.

It didn't take a very long time, because John and Mary became husband and wife the following year in 1818.

In January of 1821, John bought 25 acres of land on Waggoner Road, built a house, and Alexander Livingston (AWL) was born on October 14th of that same year!

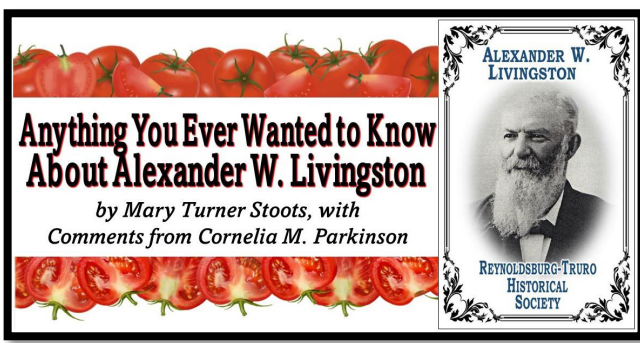
By the time Alexander was about 10 years old, two events were taking place in 1831:

1) the National Road was coming to the village, along with a very likeable young man named James C. Reynolds who would set up a sutler's store, and become the postmaster

2) AWL discovered tomatoes!

In Alexander's very own words:

"Well do I remember the first tomato I ever saw. I was ten years old and running down one of those old-fashioned lanes, on either side of which was the high rail fence then so familiar to all Ohio people. Its rosy cheeks lighted up one of those fence corners and arrested by youthful attention. I quickly gathered a few of them in my hands and took them to my (continued on page 2)



(continued
from page 01)

mother to ask what they were. As soon as she saw me with them, she cried out, "You must not eat them, my child. They must be poison, for even the hogs will not eat them."

"But what are they, Mother?" I asked.

"Some folks call them 'Jerusalem apples,' others say they are 'love apples, but now mind, you are not to eat them. You may go and put them on the mantel, they are only fit to be seen for their beauty."

This I did, adding purple and yellow tomatoes to red ones, and soon had quite a collection on display. The wild tomatoes bore small, hollow, tough, sour, watery fruit. They were no more like the new and improved varieties of today than the Pennyroyal cattle then were like the Shorthorns now seen in our pastures everywhere. From that early date the tomato became an object of special interest to me. Little did I think..."

And so became Alexander's lifelong obsession with tomatoes!

Within the next ten years James C. Reynolds became so well-liked by the people in this village that it was incorporated as 'Reynoldsburgh,' in 1839, and about that same time, Alexander begins an adventure as he

starts to court a young lady named Matilda Dickey Graham.

In the early 1840s, AWL landed a job working on the farm of Robert Robertson. He was hired to work for four months at eight dollars per month, or about thirty cents per day. He had a quick, retentive mind, and was a close observer. It was on this farm that he listened, learned, and studied to become (over time) an authority on all types of plants.

Alexander married Matilda in 1844, and she would eventually bare seven sons and three daughters.

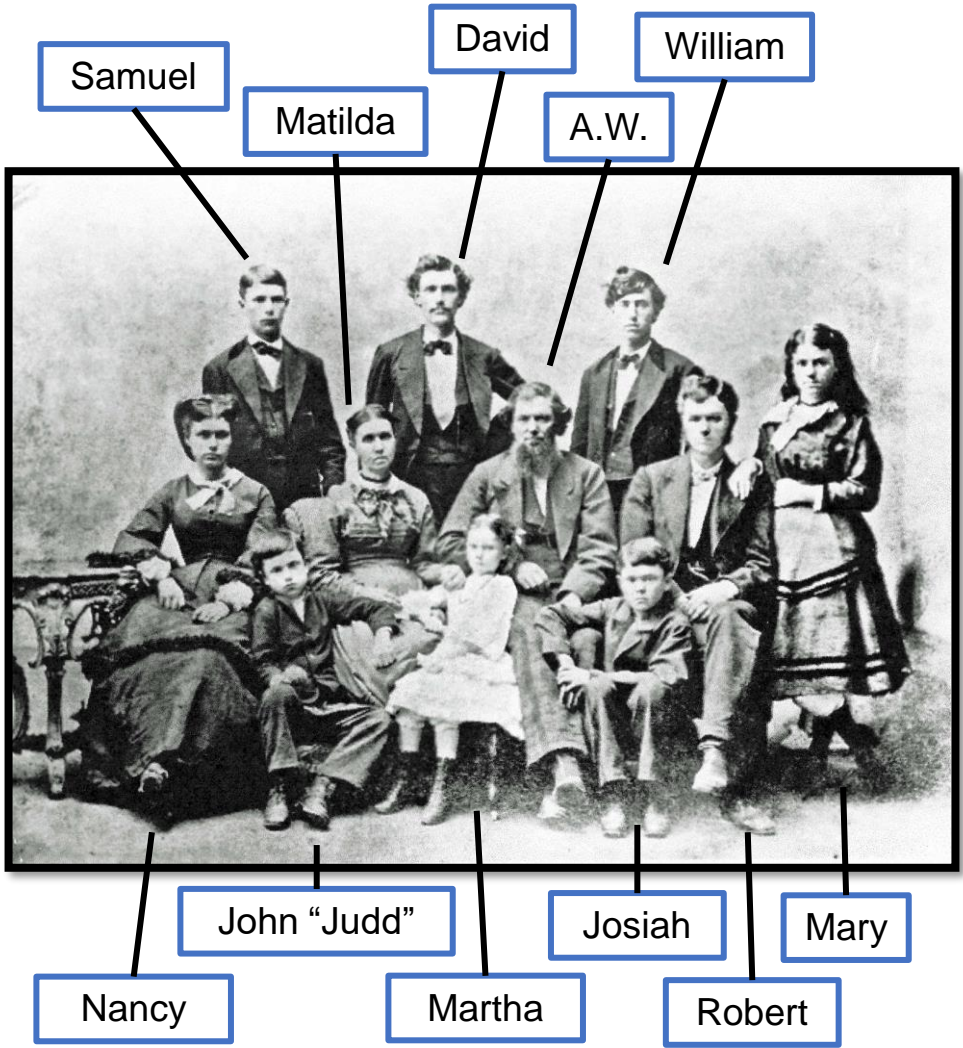
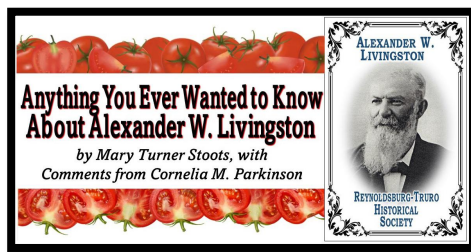
In 1845 AWL leased a 113-acre farm at the cost of \$150 per year.

The first child arrived in 1846, but sadly passed away at the age of two in 1848. All of the nine remaining children lived to adulthood born on the following:

- 1847 – David J.
- 1849 – Robert
- 1851 – Nancy M.
- 1853 – William Donnan
- 1855 – Ebenezer Samuel
- 1857 – Mary L.
- 1859 – Josiah Lunn
- 1861 – John 'Judd'
- 1863 – Martha Louise

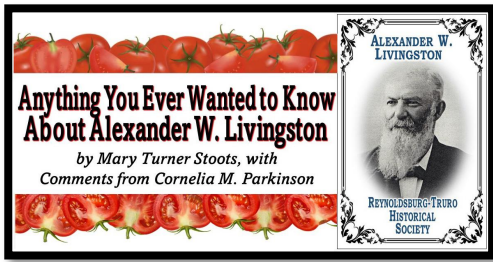
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The Alexander W. Livingston Family



Alexander W. Livingston (1821-1898) and Matilda Dickey Graham (1823-1883) married in 1844 and had 10 children. The eldest, John J., died at age two, and is buried in the Seceder Cemetery. Family members are from left to right, (first row, small children) John "Judd" (1861-1948), Martha (1863-1934), and Josiah (1859-1943); (second row) Nancy (1851-1938), Matilda, Alexander, Robert (1849-1940), and Mary (1857-1929); (third row) Samuel (1855-1899), David (1847-1924), and William (1853-1898).

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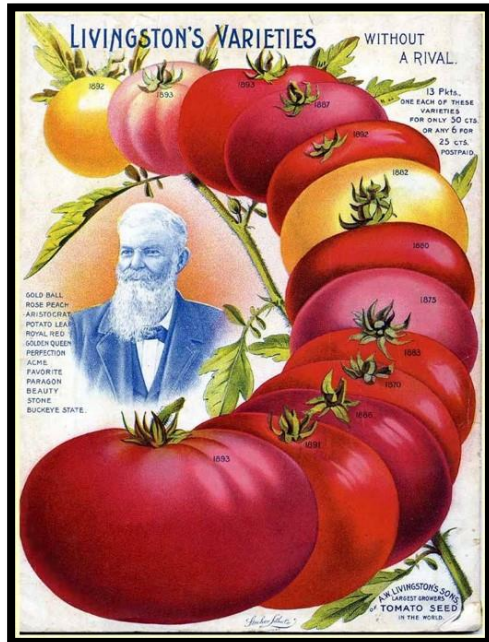


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By 1850, AWL had studied a variety of plants, but he decided to focus on just one, so he started to experiment with the tomato.

What most people don't realize is that Alexander was mostly self-taught. He didn't attend school as we think of it today.

from Cornelia M. Parkinson: AWL's education amounted to



probably a few grades only, as children went to work early two centuries ago. People learned a lot from others who knew the answer; formal education was short for most in AWL's era. My

grandfather Omar Price went to fourth grade, but he became a successful businessman because he LISTENED and thought it out.

AWL would need to buy some land for his fields, so in 1852 he had saved enough money to purchase about 70 acres from Joseph and Henrietta Osborn for \$2,050. The property was just east of Graham Road on both sides of Palmer Road. It was on this land that A.W. Livingston's Buckeye Seed Gardens were located. The following year he bought 8.16 acres from his father for \$25.

EARLY EXPERIMENTATION

When Livingston began his attempts to develop the tomato as a commercial crop, his aim had been to grow tomatoes smooth in contour and uniform in size, with palatable flavor. For fifteen years he tried one method. He selected the best kinds of tomatoes known to the public, and from them took **specimen tomatoes** whose qualities approximated what he sought. At the end of his many trials, he was no further ahead from when he started. He had not yet discovered that such stock-seed would reproduce every trait of their ancestry, good and bad.

Although he was very discouraged, he refused to give up, so he decided to try a different method.

At the time there was not a tomato field in the entire *world* from which a single bushel of uniformly smooth fruits could be harvested. He passed through his fields, picking out tomato **plants** having distinct characteristics and heavy

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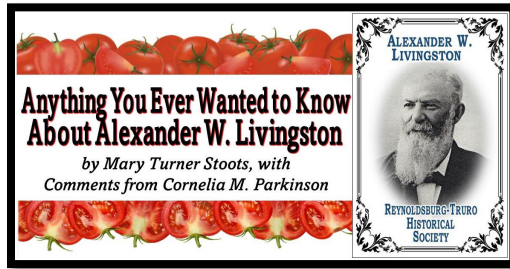
foliage. He saved the seeds carefully.

The following spring he set two rows, each forty rods long, across his garden. To his happy relief, each plant bore perfect tomatoes like the



Robert & Nettie Livingston

parent vine. They were also a little larger. From the first ripe and best specimens of these plants he selected his stock for the following year. At the end of five more years the fruit had become larger, fleshier, and more attractive. Pleased with its qualities) superior to all others then on the market. Alexander called it the **Paragon Tomato**, and put it out on the market in 1870. The **Paragon**, product of 20 years' observation and experimentation, was the first perfectly and uniformly smooth tomato ever introduced to the world. It was blood red, with a strong, vigorous stalk and heavy foliage. As an added advantage, a second crop came late in the season, having the same properties of size, quality, and evenness of ripening as the first crop.



Alexander had started a revolution. With the **Paragon**, tomato culture began at once to be the great enterprise of the country. Today, the crop is grown in every state in the Union.

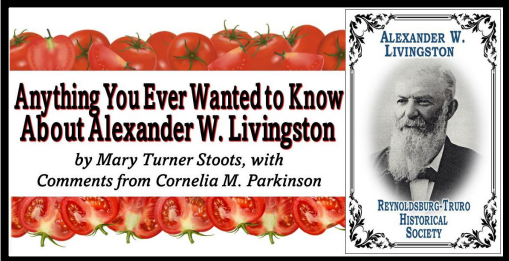
Once it had been shown that tomatoes could be improved, there was a demand for other varieties. Alexander did not believe in rushing, so he cultivated his tomatoes for several years before pronouncing them stable and fit for marketing. Some people preferred a purple tomato, so in 1875 Alex introduced **Acme**, early, bright purple, fine-fleshed, and tender. Like **Trophy**, but far more successfully, **Acme** served as ancestor of many subsequently



introduced varieties.

In 1866 Parker Earle of Cobden, Illinois, made the first refrigerated shipment of fresh fruit. Earle's

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page 06)



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shipment was made in airtight, watertight chests holding 100 pounds of ice and 200 quarts of strawberries, which sold at two dollars per quart. The following year the first patent for a railroad refrigerator car was issued.

Livingston, ahead of the trend, had long been experimenting to develop a tomato with the proper shipping qualities. In the various tomato fields he found an occasional "sport" that was quite distinct from the other plants. He selected a plant from a field of **Acme**, and from it got **Livingston's Perfection**, which he introduced in 1880. **Perfection** was a blood-red tomato with a thick skin and a characteristic of ripening over a period of several days, which made it ideal for shipping.

At one of the county fairs that he often attended, Alex saw an attractive yellow tomato. The grower presented him with one. He carefully kept the seeds, and over a number of years improved

the product. In 1882 he introduced it as **Livingston's Golden Queen**. It was said to be the best-flavored tomato then in existence. It was bright golden yellow, good sized, early ripening, and prolific. Livingston mentioned the eye appeal of a serving dish of sliced **Golden Queen** alternated with red or purple tomatoes.

Alexander W. Livingston went on to cultivate many more varieties:

1883 – Livingston's Favorite, Red, Solid, and Meaty - One grower said he grew them fourteen and one-half inches in circumference.

1886 - Beauty Much larger than the Acme Tomato – would continually bear fruit until the first frost

1887 - Potato Leaf for grow – ers with land consisting of heavy clay soil

1889 – New Stone – great weight & size

1891 – Dwarf Royal Red - a tomato primarily used for catsup

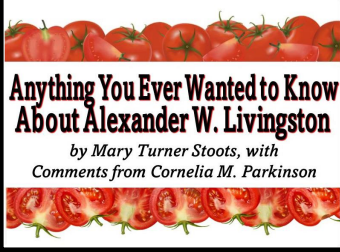
1892 - Livingston's Gold Ball a tiny yellow tomato

1893 - Rose Peach

1893 - Aristocrat

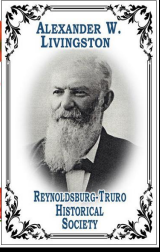
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Anything You Ever Wanted to Know About Alexander W. Livingston

by Mary Turner Stoots, with Comments from Cornelia M. Parkinson



2024 CALENDAR

JULY

- 10 – WED – Presentation at the Ohio Governor's Residence Heritage Garden – Alexander W. Livingston
- 16 – TUE – Board Meeting, 6:30pm
- 20 – SAT – Open House 10am-2pm
- 31 – WED – Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser 4:00-10:00pm

AUGUST

- 02 – FRI - Life Builders Tour –Neuro Diverse Group 10am – 12pm
- 08-09-10 – Tomato Festival
- 13 – TUE – Board Meeting, 6:30pm
- 17 – SAT – Open House 10am-2:00pm
- 20 – TUE– DEADLINE FOR SEPT COURIER
- 24 – SAT –Class of 1974 Alumni Walk Thru 10:00am-12:00pm
- 28 – WED – Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser 4:00-10:00pm

(continued from page 05)

1893 Buckeye State Tomato -

Large Purple tomato – many weighing up to a pound and a half.

Articles in the 1937 yearbook of the US Department of Agriculture called Livingston and his associates "geniuses" and stated: of the 40 varieties of tomato that had attained a distinct status prior to 1910, one-third were productions by Livingston Seed Company. One-half of the varieties were derived from Livingston productions and credible to the abilities of the Livingstons to evaluate and perpetuate superior material in the tomato.

References:

History of Reynoldsburg and Truro Township by Cornelia M. Parkinson

Alex Livingston–The Tomato Man and His Times by Cornelia M. Parkinson

SUPPORT LOCAL HISTORY

Join the Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society

Individual - \$20 Family - \$25 Sustaining - \$30 Contributing - \$50 Life Membership - \$300

Name _____

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Make Check Payable to RTHS and mail to: RTHS, PO Box 144, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

Invite your friends to join!

RTHS Courier JUL 2024-07



Doncha' just love 'em? I do! They get me out of the house for a good cause.

The only problem is, **how can you RSVP if you don't have a computer?**

I wish the restaurants would understand that a fair amount of OUR members do NOT own a computer.

More and more restaurants are moving to "Group Raise" for their fundraisers. I thought I could RSVP for my members, but (guess what?) I was WRONG!

Some of the restaurants want a particular number of people to RSVP, or they will not allow the fundraiser.

OR - they say you need 20 participants, but when you RSVP, they count you and your spouse as ONE unit (instead of two people)!

I already wrote to Group Raise with some grandmotherly advice. It just happened to be my MEAN Grandmother (I'm kidding. I borrowed somebody else's mean grandmother).

So --- PLEASE - RSVP if you can, and RSVP separately for every member of your family! My biggest concern is our Christmas Dinner at MCL. If you're not going.... Feel free to RSVP anyway. (I didn't just say that!)



Sunshine Committee

Do you know someone who needs some Sunshine?

Contact **Carol Deuber** if you are aware of an RTHS member who could use a Get Well, Thinking of You, Sympathy, or any other type of card for some added sunshine in their life

Cell: (614) 581-7048
Home: (614) 471-3288

Write "SUNSHINE" in the subject line of your email:
cadeuber@gmail.com

RTHS 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Vice President** – Dick Barth
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- Courier Editor:** Mary Turner Stoots
- Publicity Chair:** Mary Turner Stoots
- Email:** RTHSCourier@aol.com
- Museum Phone:** (614) 902-2831
- Website:** www.RTHS.info



by Mary Turner Stoots

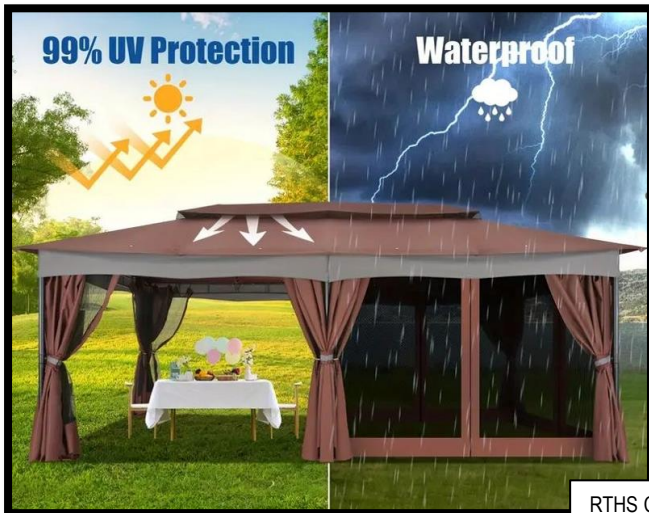
The Reynoldsburg Tomato Festival is right around the corner! And guess what? Bruster's Ice Cream has offered to sponsor our non-profit at the festival, so we won't have to pay a fee! This will save us a LOT of money!

The Festival is August 8th, 9th, and 10th, and I am looking for volunteers. Can you come and sit in a tent, possibly with members of our Board and other friends?

During the first evening, I won't be available because I have an anniversary party to attend, but I plan to be there for the rest of the time (*if my body will allow*).

We won't have to lift anything because Bruster's will have a boatload of "Bruster's High School Scoopers" that will carry anything and everything for us.

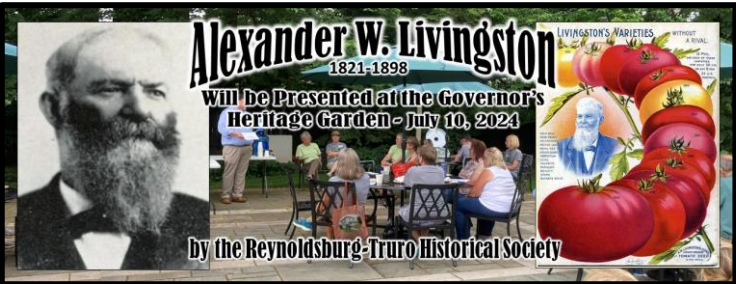
We will share a tent like this one, with another non-profit (Sorry, but I do not currently have their name), and we will have enough room for one of our 6-foot tables. I am looking forward to this Festival!



PLEASE VOLUNTEER!

PLEASE VOLUNTEER!

Some Upcoming Events!



Your President (Mary Turner Stoots) has been invited to speak for RTHS at the **Governor's Heritage Garden** in Bexley on July 10, 2024, about the life and accomplishments of **Mr. Alexander W. Livingston**.

Open House July 20th from 10:00am to 2:00 pm

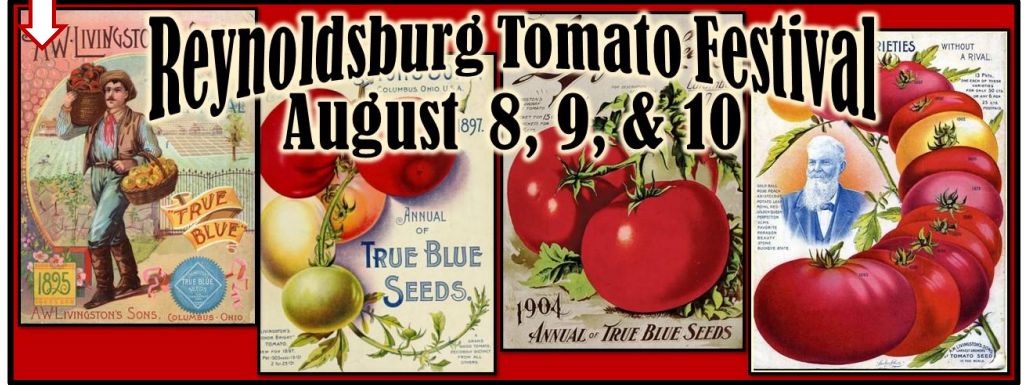


Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser

This is the third out of five events at this facility this year. They asked us to book every month, but we have other restaurants we like to visit as well. Our last two **Texas Roadhouse** events will be on Wednesday, August 28th and on Wednesday, October 30th



Bruster's Ice Cream is sponsoring RTHS to share a tent at the festival!



More Upcoming Events!



Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society
Open House
Saturday, August 17, 2024
10:00 am to 2:00 pm

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



The Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society
Welcomes the RHS Class of 1974

From 10am to 12pm

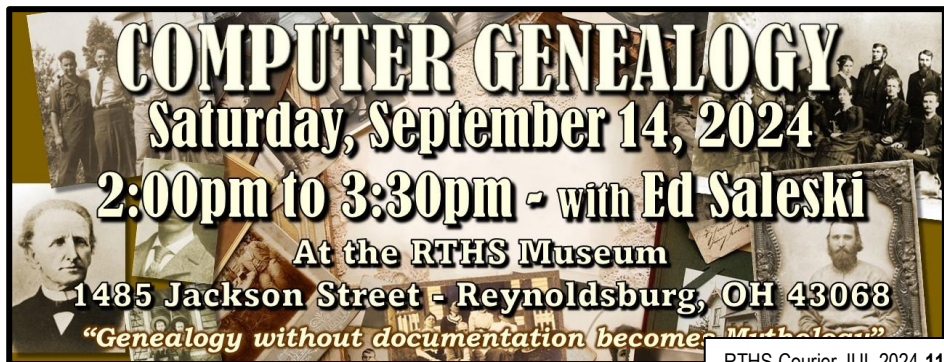
1485 Jackson Street

For an Alumni Walk-Thru, Saturday, August 24, 2024



Support the
Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society
TEXAS roadhouse

Download Our Flyer and Eat at
Texas Roadhouse
Wednesday, August 28, 2024
4:00 PM to 10:00 PM



COMPUTER GENEALOGY
Saturday, September 14, 2024
2:00pm to 3:30pm - with Ed Saleski

At the RTHS Museum
1485 Jackson Street - Reynoldsburg, OH 43068

"Genealogy without documentation becomes wishful thinking."



As everyone in town knows, the Main Street revitalization project was completed earlier this year to the great relief of commuters. Now also nearing completion is the Paragon mixed use project on the northeast corner of Lancaster Avenue and Main Street. At nearly 20,000 square feet it has re-made the character of the old downtown district in a way that is being very well accepted. "It's beautiful!" proclaimed our own Mary Stoots upon seeing the near-finished building.

The Paragon project is being built and managed by Trivium Development of Columbus with two tenant improvement projects being handled by general contractor, Contracting Solutions (owner Pat Zollars) of Reynoldsburg. It sits on the site previously occupied by The Happy Dragon Chinese Restaurant. The land upon which Paragon sits was purchased from the City of

Reynoldsburg as part of its larger community development plan supported by multiple city administrations. The makeup of the businesses in the building has changed over time but the two tenants who will open first are Bruster's Real Ice Cream of Reynoldsburg and Edward Jones Investing. The project adds 38 public parking spots for all downtown businesses and two beautiful patios that

are open to the public. Also said to be among the building's offering are a coffee shop and shared office space options.

Since the project's inception, it was always anticipated that a family-oriented ice cream shop would help set the tone for the development and that wish is about to come true. Sean Cress and John Haag, co-owners of Bruster's Real Ice Cream of Reynoldsburg, are targeting the last week of July for the Grand Opening

(continued on page 13)



(continued from page 12)

if everything goes as planned. Except for stand-alone stores, every Bruster's is somewhat unique. In our case, being involved in the design from the beginning of the overall project has allowed us to build a store that we think will be among the most beautiful Bruster's real Ice Cream stores in the world. This was only possible through the partnership of the City of Reynoldsburg, Trivium, and the Bruster's team along with an amazing amount of public support.

Interestingly, our Bruster's is the very first store in 35 years to operate a truck or a cart prior to operating a store for at least a year. We are thankful for the go-ahead to try this experiment from Jim Sahene, CEO of Bruster's, and we think it has been a great success. It allowed us to become a real partner in the community, build brand awareness, and hire a bunch of amazing local teenagers long before our opening. We couldn't be more proud of our kids and our community.

The partnerships for our locally-owned business does not stop with The city, the schools and others in the community. We are thrilled to have planted the seeds of a long-term partnership with the Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society (RTHS), with the generous support of Mary Stoots, president, and the RTHS Board of Directors, we will increase awareness of this local gem and help to encourage participation and donations.

We have already partnered for events on the RTHS property that have introduced many new residents to a



great resource of which they had little or no knowledge. We are encouraging our Bruster's Scooper Kids to learn as much as possible about the museum so that they can encourage customers of Bruster's to get to know the museum.

In addition to these efforts, we are planning to incorporate an "RTHS Museum Annex" as a component of the dedicated "Community Corner" area of the new store. Situated just off



the main lobby of the building, in a lovely, airy colonnade, the RTHS Annex will feature rotating exhibits (with the assistance of Bruster's staff) from RTHS as well as maps and other ways to encourage families to make the three-minute

(continued on page 14)



(continued from page 13)

walk to the museum with their ice cream cones in hand!

Bruster's is also working with Mary and the Board of Directors to implement QR Code technology. Initially intended for the Bruster's RTHS Annex; it will eventually appear throughout the museum proper to allow visitors to use their smart phones to find out more about virtually any museum exhibit just by pointing their phone's camera at the display!

And this is just the beginning!

Sean and I are committed to doing everything in our power to promote the museum and work with The Board to ensure not just its long-term survival; but to see it grow into a next-generation local museum ready for the 21st century and positioned to document the latest historic era of growth in our city.

We look forward to our journey together!

John Haag, President
Sean Cress, Vice President



THE COURIER

July 2024 Issue

Reynoldsburg-Truro
 Historical Society

Mailing Address:

PO Box 144

Reynoldsburg, OH 43068-0144

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Photos & Illustrations

Provided by:

Mary Turner Stoots

Contributors:

Mary Turner Stoots, John Haag,
 and Sean Cress



NEW MEMBERS!

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Norman E. Cox | Individual |
| Dolly (Yates) Parker | Individual |
| Sharon (Kern) Bartholic | Individual |

When a 23-year-old complains about the 5-way split at Livingston and Graham, Try explaining how it was originally designed for horses and carriages. They think you are making it up.



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RTHS is listed under #LJ440, (L=Lyndon J=Johnson 440) or Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society.

4. Guess What! Now that you have a digital account, you can clip digital coupons and they will automatically attach to your Kroger Card!

BOOKS FOR SALE!

Reynoldsburg High School 1899 to 1970

A compilation of RHS class pictures published for the Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society

\$37.00 for Non-Members*

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\$5.00 S&H (Tax included)

*A Free Membership will be given to Non-Members through 12/31/2025 for the purchase of a book, which includes Bi-Monthly issues of the Courier Newsletter to be delivered by email ONLY (no hard copies)

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by Mary Turner Stoots and Suzy Millar Miller

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by Cornelia M. Parkinson

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by Mary Turner Stoots with Cornelia M. Parkinson

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Mailing address: Reynoldsburg-Truro Historical Society

P.O. Box 144, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068