The Curator

The Newsletter of the Brunswick Area Historical Society

MARCH 26

Waite Memories

Meet us at Waite Funeral Home in Medina at 6:30 pm to tour the special train room on the 2nd floor that houses the personal collection of Ralph Waite.

APRIL 18

Tracks Through Time

Register for this mini, bus tour as we travel and learn about the interurban lines from our guide, Steve Hambley. See our website; *brunswickhistory.com* for more details and to register.

APRIL 30

Memoirs Of Carl Bilski

Carl knows just about everyone in the construction business. Best known as the Sandman, he has been involved in building, racing and tractor pulls for many years.

2026

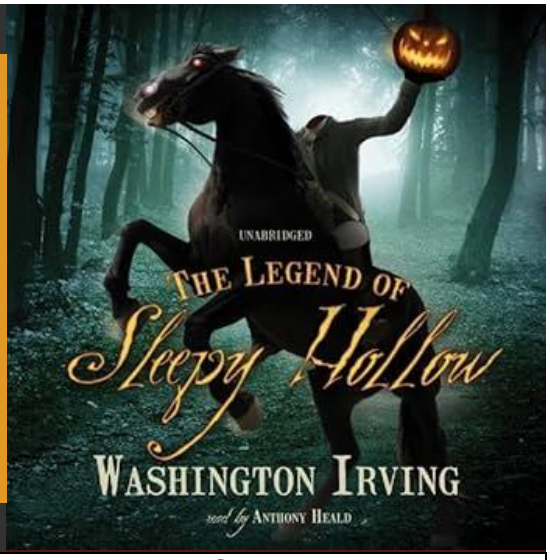
HEADING 3 TEXT HERE

Sundays at the Farm are right around the corner! If you, or someone you know is interested in being a volunteer or vendor, contact Katie at: sundayatthefarm.bahs@gmail.com

History You May Not Know

By Sam Boyer

Many of you knew the late Brunswick resident, Gary Jamison, who was sorting deed records donated to the Medina County Historical Society by Stan Scheetz. He was working through the original townships alphabetically and, it was lucky for us, he had completed the spreadsheet for Brunswick Township and sent them to the Brunswick Area Historical Society before he suddenly passed away.



The County has now given all those records to the corresponding townships. Going through the spreadsheets I stopped short. There was the name of Washington Irving! Yes, that Washington Irving. He apparently never lived here but bought land. One story that had been told was that he went to school with David Berdan – the Berdan family owned what is now Heritage Farm, home of the Brunswick Historical Society. That story proved to be untrue, however, there is a Berdan connection.

David Berdan Jr. was friends with Washington Irving's nephew, Pierre Munro Irving. He was Washington Irving's literary assistant, and he accompanied David Berdan Jr. on Berdan's 1825-1827 European tour.

Washington Irving had already established himself as the first American writer to gain major international fame starting with "The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.", published in a serialized format beginning in 1819 and continuing into 1820. This collection included the stories that made him famous – "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820).

Washington Irving first appears in land records in August 1838. John (one of three Berdan brothers who came here) and Pamela Berdan transferred to Washington and Ebenezer Irving, a mortgage for $100. John and Pamela moved to Toledo where they opened a store (the Berdan name is on that building today) and he became the first mayor of Toledo.

Ebenezer Irving (1776-1868) was one of Washington Irving's older brothers and part of the influential Irving mercantile family in New York. Records say this was extremely common: eastern investors often held title to Ohio land that was then sold, leased or improved by settlers on the ground. The Irving brothers—Peter, William, John Treat, Ebenezer, and Washington—were deeply involved in trade, banking, and land speculation during the early 19th century.

Ebenezer himself was a partner in the family's mercantile firm, managed financial affairs for several family members, and frequently appears in correspondence related to land investments, debts, and western expansion. This background matters because New York merchant families were heavily involved in Ohio land speculation after the American Revolution.

In February 1843, Washington Irving purchases a "school and house" on 172.5 acres from a Sheriff's sale from Sheriff William Halden. It's a "believe or not" moment as that property was on "Sleepy Hollow Road at Wooster Pike-southeast corner." That puts it on the corner of Route 42 and Sleepy Hollow, and that probably was named after The Legend of Sleepy Hollow became so famous. Sleepy Hollow's original name was Sodom Street.

Finally, in March 1848, the house and acreage on the "north part" was sold for $780 to Stephen H. Strong. That corner and the schoolhouse was known to early residents as Strong's Corners.