Many from this area of the country tend to dismiss the Klan as an organization of the South, where it was initially organized after the Civil War. Very few are aware that Newark and Licking County were, at one time, a hotbed of Klan activity. Moreover, in the 1920s, several of the largest KKK rallies ever conducted in this country were held at Buckeye Lake. In addition, the Klan was politically powerful in this area, controlling many city and county government positions.

The Klan of the 1920s was, like its modern day successor, an intolerant fraternal society composed of white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Unlike the earlier KKK, which was formed almost exclusively by Southern whites as a backlash to Yankee carpetbagger rule, the “new” Klan of the 1920’s solicited membership from all parts of the country.

The Klan was immensely successful in attracting membership during this period, especially in the Mid-west, largely as a result of increased competition for jobs and housing. Appealing to racial and religious prejudices, the Klan played upon the fears of the local population of the growing numbers of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who, with their different cultures and religions, competed with the established population in the tightening job market.

The Klan in Licking County first started to become a significant movement in the early 1920s. At its peak, it registered more than 3,000 members within the county, with many more belonging to women’s auxiliary organizations such as the Kamellias.

In 1923, the local Klan selected Buckeye Lake as the site of its statewide “konklave.” In light of the large crowds anticipated, the local Klan cooperated closely with the management of Buckeye Lake Park in setting up the event. Special arrangements were made for erecting impressive speaker’s stands, decorations, and a large circus tent, where special Klan programs were to be held. Transportation coordination was also made with the Columbus, Newark, and Zanesville Interurban for special train service to transport eager participants to Buckeye Lake.

The rally drew an immense crowd estimated at 75,000 people. According to local paper accounts, the roads leading to Buckeye Lake were filled with automobiles all day, and the interurban train did a tremendous business. It was also reported that lodging was impossible to obtain in the local area due to high demand. At all roads leading to the lake, hooded and robed guides were stationed with sheriff’s deputies to provide directions and assistance.

The day’s events consisted of a number of speeches by national KKK figures, including the infamous D.C. Stephenson from Indiana, who noted that Ohio led the country in the number of its Klansmen and Kamellias, and urged them to combat the “threat of pagan civilization” and “to restore the government of this country to the plan upon which it was founded by our
1,700 new members was held. Preceded by bands from Columbus, Dayton, and Newark blaring “Onward Christian Soldiers,” the initiates were escorted to a specially constructed altar flanked by 40 foot electrically illuminated crosses. At the climax of the ceremony, a 50-foot cross located on the crest of a nearby hill was set afire and thousands of robed Klansmen formed into a human cross with lights and candles. The konklave ended with a midnight fireworks show launched from barges in the lake.

On the whole, the rally seemed to have been favorably received, and took place with little or no incident. News reports did indicate that state prohibition agents made a raid on the “Blue Goose,” and the owner was arrested for possessing and selling liquor to errant Klansmen (Prohibition being in effect). Additionally, one fatality occurred when one elderly Klansman from Columbus succumbed to a heart attack, aggravated by the 90 degree heat.

Subsequent to this rally the local Klan continued to grow and muster political strength. In the 1923 local elections, an independent candidate with Klan backing, H.N. Stevens, won election as Newark’s mayor. Other Klan-backed candidates won election to city council and county offices. Stevens was one of the early leaders of the local Klan, and during his two terms as mayor from 1924-1928, his activities provided constant news fodder for area newspapers.

It appears that the local Klan did not engage in any widespread campaign of violence. There was no indication of beatings or other forms of racial intimidation usually associated with Klan activities. Rather, the local Klan, for the most part, was comprised of otherwise respectable middleclass families who joined the Klan for business or political reasons, or simply because of their fear of a rapidly changing industrial society. This is not to suggest that prejudices did not exist, or were not acted upon in areas of employment or housing.

In light of the success of the 1923 rally, the Ohio Klan again elected to stage another konklave at Buckeye Lake in August, 1925. Various national figures spoke at the event, uniformly railing against evolution science and the immigration laws. The evolution issue was particularly hot, as the Scopes “monkey trial” had taken place earlier that summer. Along with the standard Klan ceremonies, a number of “Klan weddings” were performed.

By the late 1920s, the Klan’s power began to rapidly deteriorate. This was due to a series of financial and personal scandals involving the national leadership. Embezzlement and misappropriation of funds by national officers resulted in numerous lawsuits, and for the national Klan to be placed into receivership.

The leading figure of the Midwest Klan, D.C. Stephenson, was convicted of rape and murder, throwing the Klan into some disrepute. This disarray at the national level percolated down to the local level. Mayor Stevens was arrested for assault to commit rape. The cumulative effect of these scandals resulted in rapidly declining interest and membership. By 1928 the Klan had virtually disappeared from the local scene.

Reference: GB 4/12/93 story by B. Kevin Bennett president, Licking County Historical Society

Contributors to the LCHS 2010 Annual Appeal

Archivist ($50-$99)
Amy & Jerry Bowden
Earl & Elaine Browning
George Funk & Anne Conley
Rebecca Gernhart
Dorothy Harvey
Joe & Irene Kennedy
Dr. Harold Kelch
Emily & Richard Larson
Doris Lowney
Bob & Bobbi Meldahl
Barbara Pettit
Robert & Reta Tharp
Carol & Zane Wachtel

Conservator ($100-$499)
Barcus Lawn Care
Rene & Bruce Bartlett
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Beattie
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Total amount raised in the 2010 Annual Appeal was $4,310.00. Thank you to those caring members who participated. These contributions are crucial aid for the Society’s operating expenses, such as utilities, supplies, mailings, and salaries! You help us do what we do best—preserve our local history!
In 1865, following the Civil War, the Lemuel Cooper family came from Pennsylvania and settled east of St. Louisville on Hillcrest Road. Lemuel had been a school teacher, but upon arriving in Newton Township, he took up farming. Lemuel and his wife, Ann, attended the Bell Church, located just across the Licking County line in Knox County, and are buried in the Bell Cemetery next to the church. Myers Cooper, the youngest of eleven children born to Lemuel and Ann (Young) Cooper, was born November 25, 1873.

Myers received his early schooling at the Echo School, a one-room school located near his home. He later attended Utica Schools. Dr. Charles Sinsabaugh, retired local physician and a member of the Licking County Historical Society, shared with me that in 1939, Myers Cooper was the speaker at his Utica High School graduation. (Dr. Sinsabaugh stated that out of a class of 42 students, he and two other classmates became medical doctors, and a fourth classmate earned a PhD. Not bad for a rural school in 1939!) In my conversation with Dr. Sinsabaugh, he told me that in 1936, Myers was in a serious automobile accident on Route 62 between Utica and Johnstown. His severe injuries kept him in Mt. Carmel Hospital for several weeks. The curve where the accident took place became known as Cooper’s Curve. Sometime later the road was straightened and the curve was eliminated.

In 1894, at the age of twenty-one, Myers left Licking County to go to Cincinnati, where he became a part of his older brother’s real estate business. He married Martha Norman Kinney on December 15, 1897. Myers eventually went into the real estate business for himself. His business interests also included banking, coal mining, and lumber distribution. In the Cincinnati area, he is best known as the builder of more than 2,000 homes. He became well known throughout Ohio when he served eleven years as president of the Ohio Fair Managers. Along the way he also served three terms as president of the Ohio Council of Churches. His own religious preference was Disciples of Christ.

In 1926, Myers won the Ohio Republicans’ gubernatorial nomination and ran for the office of Governor, but in a closely contested race he lost to the incumbent, Vic Donahey. In 1928, Myers ran for Governor again, and overwhelmingly defeated Martin L. Davey, in what was a Republican year. During his two-year term (1929-1931) as the 51st Governor of Ohio, 222 bills were passed. He vetoed 22 of them (each veto stuck), and he allowed three bills to become law without his signature. His many legislative accomplishments, to name a few, included the passage of a law for conservation of natural resources, a reduction in taxes, a revision of the highway code, re-establishing the state library, and revising the criminal code. It is said that many of the administrative practices used today in our state government had their beginning while Cooper was Governor. In the 1930 election, as the Great Depression had set in, those who held public office paid the price. Governor Cooper lost his reelection bid for a second term to George White. Myers remained active in politics well into his seventies, serving on the Little Hoover Commission (1949-1951), which prepared proposals for state government improvements and reform.

As First Lady of Ohio, Myers wife, Martha, became well-known by becoming the principal founder of the Ohioana Library. She believed that Ohio needed to honor its artists, authors, and musical composers. The library was founded in 1929 in the solarium of the Governor’s Mansion. The library grew, and in 1935 was moved to the State Library. Martha was honored with an Ohioana Career Medal in 1949. She remained active with the library until her death in 1964. In 2005, the Ohioana collection included more than 45,000 books and 10,000 pieces of music. The library also publishes the Ohioana Quarterly that lists acquisitions, and provides information about Ohio’s authors and composers.

Myers Cooper, the only Ohio Governor who was born in Licking County, died December 7, 1958 at the age of 85. He was survived by his wife Martha and their two children, Raymond K. Cooper and Mrs. Martha Ann (Cooper) Judy. Governor Myers Cooper and his wife Martha are buried at the Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Author’s Note:
There’s an interesting story about how the Echo School, mentioned in the above article, got its name. According to Dave Berger, St. Louisville area resident, the school was located between three hills, Dixon Hill, Evans Hill, and Wintergreen Hill. Dixon Hill was named for Raymond Dixon. Evans Hill was named for an Evans family (John Evans, a professor at Ohio University who, prior to his death, was active in both the Licking County Genealogical Society and the Licking County Historical Society was a descendent of the Evans family). Wintergreen Hill was named for the wintergreen that grew there. According to Dave, if you shouted loudly, your voice would bounce off of Wintergreen Hill and then off the other two hills, causing an echo, hence the name, Echo School. Located on the northeast side on Loches Road, just south of Stickle Road, Echo school prospered until about 1921, when it consolidated with the St. Louisville Grammar School. That school closed and eventually became a part of the Utica School District.

(continued on Page four)
Sources of Information:
7. Photos taken from www.ohiohistorycentral.org

Bob Tharp is a LCHS Trustee and a retired Licking Valley school administrator. He resides in Heath with his wife Reta.

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**THEY’RE MORE THAN IMAGES OF ARCHITECTURE, HISTORIC FIGURES, AND MONUMENTS.**

**THEY’RE YOUR LEGACY. IF YOU WILL IT.**

By remembering the Licking County Historical Society in your will or estate plan, you can make a lasting gift to protect the history you love, for generations to come. There are many easy ways to make a charitable bequest: through the Licking County Foundation, to the Acquisitions Fund, or to the Sherwood-Davidson House Fund. So whether you’re taking those important first steps toward planning your estate, or updating your estate plan, contact us today.

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<th>New and Renewing Members — October 25th-January 31st</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Glen Able</td>
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<td>Mr. J.H. Darby and E.W. Acton</td>
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<td>Anne Albyn</td>
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<td>Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Anstine</td>
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<td>Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Apthorp</td>
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<td>Mr. and Mrs. James Cooper</td>
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<td>John and Ruth Cooper</td>
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<td>Mr. and Mrs. Tom Ellinger</td>
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<td>Dr. and Mrs. Harding Ganz</td>
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<td>Ms. Rebecca Gernhart</td>
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<td>Ms. June Greer</td>
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<td>Mr. Donald Gunneron</td>
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<td>Mr. Delbert Guttridge</td>
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<td>Miss Ann Hansen</td>
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<th>Life Members</th>
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<td>Ms. Connie Baldwin</td>
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<td>Dr. Henry Hook</td>
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<td>Mr. William T. McConnell</td>
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Please contact the office at 345-4898 with any mistakes or omissions!
Calendar of Events for 2011

Saturday, March 12th—12:00 PM
Civil War Period Style Show and Lunch
Buckingham Meeting House
Enjoy lunch followed by a viewing of Civil War era fashion
Reservations required. Cost: $13 members, $15 non-members

Sunday, April 3rd—2:00 PM
Civil War 150th Anniversary Kick-Off
Buckingham Meeting House and Veterans’ Park
Join the Licking County Historical Alliance as they commemorate the beginning of the War Between the States.
Speakers, displays, and entertainment.
Cost: Free for LCHS members, $5 non-members

Saturday, May 21st—8:00-11:30 AM
Johnny Clem Memorial Breakfast
Buckingham Meeting House
Enjoy a scrumptious breakfast, speakers, and entertainment in honor of own Civil War hero!
Cost: $7 adults, $3 children under 12

Saturday, June 18th—12:00 PM
Mother Bickerdyke Luncheon
Buckingham Meeting House
Following lunch, enjoy a first person presentation on the life of Civil War nurse, Mary Ann Bickerdyke, a native of neighboring Knox County.
Reservations required. Cost: $10 members, $15 non-members

Friday, July 9th—6:00 PM
LCHS Annual Membership Dinner
Buckingham Meeting House
In house caterer, Doug Barrett presents dinner followed by a Civil War program.
Reservations required. Cost TBA

Friday, September 9th—6:00 PM
“Echoes from the Past,” Graveyard Walk
Cedar Hill Cemetery
Licking County residents of the Civil War era come to life at their gravesites.
Cost: Free for LCHS members, $5 non-members

Sunday, November 6th—4:00 PM
Civil War Harvest Dinner
Buckingham Meeting House
Partake of a feast featuring dishes of the era.
Reservations required. Cost: TBA

Sunday, November 20th—12:00-4:00 PM
Buckingham House Boutique
Buckingham Meeting House
Shop ’til you drop at our unique vendor booths.
Admission: Free

Saturday, December 10th—5:00-8:00 PM
Civil War Christmas in Veterans’ Park & Candlelight Christmas at the Webb House
Admission: Free
What is the Webb House? I’ve been asked that so many times over the years. The Webb House Museum is rather unusual, as museums go. It’s not the home of a very wealthy or famous person. It doesn’t house a collection of historic Licking County artifacts like the Sherwood-Davidson House does. It was simply the home of a generous woman who loved Licking County history and had no heirs to inherit her lifetime collection of beautiful things.

Shirley Webb moved in to the house on Granville Street in Newark as a new bride and lived there for almost 70 years. She had an appreciation of art and antiques and filled her home with beautiful things she loved. She was probably one of those people for who antique is a verb! Mrs. Webb also had a deep connection with her past and had many, many things that had been passed down from her ancestors. She was one of the founding members of the Licking County Historical Society and was instrumental in getting the Sherwood-Davidson House moved and opened as a museum.

Her dear friend and one time next door neighbor was Robbins Hunter. It is thought that he encouraged her to donate her home to the Historical Society. It’s one thing to offer to donate your home and your possessions. What set Mrs. Webb apart was that she donated her assets as well, which allowed the Society to accept her gift. She provided the finances to care for the house through the years. Her wish that her beautiful home and all the things in it could be enjoyed after she was gone could be fulfilled.

So what is the Webb House? It is the lifetime collection of a very generous woman. It is a glimpse of a simpler yet less casual time in our history. It is a small look at a vanished way of life, when a lady did her shopping in a hat and gloves instead of sweatpants and flip-flops! It’s not a museum, really. It’s still a home.

If you would like to visit the Webb House, you won’t have to wait too long. We close for the winter but open again in April. Just think. The daffodils will be in bloom! Please call 345-8540 for exact opening date and time.

— Mindy Honey Nelson, Curator

After a lovely Christmas open house featuring several interesting collections, the Sherwood-Davidson House looks a little bare these days! That won’t last long. We are scurrying to unpack and put on display the items from our Civil War collection. We have uniforms, dresses, weapons, photographs, letters, and other objects from the era. On March 5th we are hosting a post meeting tour for the Ohio Local History Alliance Region 6 Meeting (being held at Heisey), so we have to be presentable earlier than usual this year.

I am excited to be putting our Civil War artifacts on display again, and I love “doing up” the rest of the house to represent this time frame as well. The Davidson’s moved into the house in 1860, so I always feel that the 1860’s best represent this family.

Cornelia Davidson was an active member of the Ladies’ Soldiers Aid Society of Newark. These societies were usually responsible for supplying regimental flags, and the local women did so for Newark’s own Ohio 76th Volunteer Infantry. Though the ladies worked hard, they were not able to complete the flags before the regiment left Newark. But the colors were delivered to Cincinnati before the regiment went to battle.

As the war went on, Cornelia was also prominent in gathering clothing and supplies, and forwarding them to the sick and wounded soldiers of the 76th. She received a personal letter of thanks from the officers of the Battle of Pittsburgh Landing. Cornelia was raising two toddlers during the war years, George M., Jr., born in 1858, and Charles, born in 1860. I’d say she was a multitasker!

Our Civil War collection will be on display throughout the year as we join the rest of the county in celebrating the 150th Commemoration of the beginning of The Great Rebellion, as it is sometimes called. The exhibit will open to the public on April 3, as the Licking County Historical Society hosts the kick-off event for the yearlong celebration here in Veterans’ Park. Plan to visit Cornelia’s house this coming season. Perhaps you will imagine her and other society matrons sitting in the parlor, rolling stockings and preparing other supplies to send to the boys in blue!

Speaking of supplies, there are several things we need at the Sherwood-Davidson House to aid in storage and display: clean cotton (preferably white) sheets, large plate stands, various sizes of plastic storage tubs, padded hangers, and a couple of large jewelry boxes. If you have any of these items and would care to donate them, we would be most appreciative!

— Emily Larson, Curator
Antique Appraisal Fair—An Annual Success!

Our first event of 2011 was an enjoyable, interesting day, as people shared personal stories of their treasures at our Antique Appraisal Fair held January 22nd. Auctioneer Craig Connelly was knowledgeable and entertaining as he evaluated the many different items people brought in. Besides estimating the monetary value of items, Craig also had helpful tips for care and preservation of the antiques. There was quite a range of interesting relics people had to share: an old 1930s radio; two local artist’s paintings of Union Street buildings from 1909; an intricate pocket watch; an 1863 Springfield Rifle; various beautiful glass and china items; a 3-cup holding inkwell; a “reverse painting” picture painted on glass, just to name a few. Be sure to look for this popular event to be held again next year.

Check Out Coming LCHS Events to Honor the Civil War’s 150th Sesquicentennial

“Reflections as War Begins” and GWTW “Look-Alike” Contest

Come hear period music, and listen to personal narratives of some Licking County citizens as they share their thoughts and feelings as the Civil War begins. And...is “Gone with the Wind” your favorite movie? Think you look like Rhett or Scarlet? If so, come in costume to be chosen as best portrayal of your favorite GWTW character. Winners will be selected, and will appear the following week at the showing of “Gone with the Wind” at the Midland Theater on April 9th!

Commemorative Book: At our LCHS office, you can now pick up a wonderful Commemorative CW150 Events Yearbook keepsake that includes interesting information as well as all events planned by the various historic groups of Licking County. This program book is also available at The Works and Park National Bank.

“Flat Johnny Passport Program” Also available at the LCHS office, this clever “Johnny” is designed to get children involved in learning about the Civil War. Kids are encouraged to attend events, and can have their folder officially “stamped” each time. Those filling up their folders may win prizes!
Membership Application
The Licking County Historical Society

Name ____________________________________________

Address __________________________________________

City __________________________ State ______ Zip ______

Email address __________________________ Phone No. __________________

Regular Memberships:
☐ Individual.......$25  ☐ Student...........$10
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☐ Senior..........$20  ☐ Sustaining.......$125
☐ Joint-Senior....$30  ☐ Life.................$1,000

Business Memberships:
☐ Small Business......... $50
☐ Large Business.......... $250
☐ Corporaage Member..... $500

Please complete this form and enclose payment to:
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Newark, Ohio 43058-0785

Thank you for your support! Your membership dues help fund the activities of the Historical Society.

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