

## DEFIANCE 100 YEARS AGO

Banks of Maumee Thick With Black Walnuts;  
350-Pound Woman and Cider Bout; Rohn, Partee and  
Other Settlers

### BY EDWIN PHELPS (1815-97)

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It is rather Interesting to trace the early settlement of this county. As I have before remarked there were a few white settlers here prior to 1820, who were either stragglers from the war of 1812 or the remnants of surveying parties. No land was sold prior to that time as the surveys were not closed until 1821. About the first settlement of any note was made on the Auglaize south of Defiance by the **Hudsons** and **Shirleys**.

The next principal settlement was upon the Maumee River above Defiance in the west end of Defiance and in Delaware Township by the **Hiltons**, **Travises**, **Mullicans** (**Mulligans?**), **Hills** and **Snooks**, and as I have before remarked were mostly from the vicinity of Piqua, Miami County, where the United States land office was located, and it is probable that the near proximity to the land office was one of the inducements to the earliest settlements on the Maumee and Auglaize rivers.

### Settlement Below Defiance

Another settlement was made below Defiance on the Maumee about the year 1822, 1823 or 1824. **Pierce Evans** at that time settled about a mile east of Defiance, and his brother-in-law, Isaac **Braucher**, adjoining him. Isaac Braucher was a blacksmith and had a shop on his small farm where he lived and died, leaving his widow still occupying the place. He had two brothers, who lived with him until they married and settled for themselves, Christopher **Braucher** and Allen **Braucher**.

Christopher **Braucher** owned and occupied the farm near Independence. Allen **Braucher** was an Indian trader and bought furs for the American Fur Company. At one time he was in the mercantile business at Defiance with

his nephew, Orlando **Evans**. He died in Defiance, and his widow married Dr. **Godfrey**, of Columbus Grove, but now of Ottawa, Putnam County, with whom many of our citizens are acquainted.

### Peaches 12 1/2c Per Bu.

The first settlement made below Defiance was in 1817, by John **Hiveley**, who settled about three miles below Defiance on one of the most forbidding farms there is along the river, but it was out of the water at that time and there was not much that was at that time. He set out a fine orchard of peaches and apples which in 1836 were just in their prime, and I have seen choice peaches loaded into a pirogue there at 12 1/2c per bushel. I think one of his sons and one daughter are still living in this county.

Mr. **Hiveley** and his wife were both rather eccentric, and you were not likely to be regaled with their luscious fruit unless you managed to get on the right side of Mrs. **Hiveley**. She was a very large woman, and the boys used to annoy her very much as she was too fleshy to chase them. They procured a big dog, after that the boys left them alone. I am not sure whether he was a remnant of the army, or whether he came with Don **Perkins'** surveying corps, but am inclined to think he was an axman in the surveying corps and that James **Partee** and John **Plummer** were chain carriers.

Mr. **Hiveley** was a tanner by trade, and worked at it a great many years, and in connection with his orchard he built a cider mill which used to be a favorite resort for men and maidens, too, during the fall when peaches were ripe and cider was being pressed out.

The banks of the Maumee were thickly grown with black walnuts and other trees, and it was a beautiful horseback ride along the banks in the cool of the autumn evenings.

### Enlarge Door for Coffin

The writer of this was in the post office of Dr. **Colby** and was kept posted when the

cider was in good condition. One evening a party of four gentlemen concluded to try the cider, which was reported in prime order, and accordingly mounted their horses and paid a visit to Mother Hiveley, having first made a contract that the one who drank the least was to pay for all. The scores stood when the bill was called for: highest 4 1/2 quarts; 2nd, 3 1/2 quarts; 3rd, 2 1/2 quarts and lowest 1 solitary quart, and then we divided the other pint to make it even 3 gallons. Mrs. Hiveley was gladdened by the receipt of 37c, or 3 shillings as it was called then. It was all shillings and sixpence then; dimes and nickels had not yet been invented.

This Mrs. Hiveley became very fleshy before her death weighing some 350 or 400 pounds, and the door of the house had to be enlarged to get the coffin out.

John **Perkins** made his headquarters at what was then called Camp No. 3, where the **Rohn** farm now is and from my best information he stayed there until the surveys were closed about 1821, and that soon after that he moved to Brunersburg where with the assistance of James **Partee** and John **Plummer** he built a sawmill as early some say, as 1824, but the grist mill was built later in 1828, I think.

#### **First County Marriage**

William **Rohn**, the grandfather of Samuel W. Rohn and Mrs. Dr. Rohn, settled at Camp No. 3 in 1822. He had three sons, Samuel, William and Charles, all of whom are dead, and one daughter, Mrs. **Dunbar**, who is still living near the old homestead. She married for her first husband, Peter **Tittle**, the father of our late townsman Charles P. **Tittle**. Her husband and his brother Jacob **Tittle** settled near there in 1824.

Samuel **Kepler**, settled on his old farm south of the Maumee River, where he kept bachelor hall in a log cabin for three years. Afterwards he went to Findlay and married the first white woman married in that county. This was on the second day of December, 1825, and the first white couple married in Defiance

County, or rather Williams, was on the 24th day of December, 1824, Carver **Gunn** (not Green, as the type made me say in my last). He was married to Mary Ann **Stribner** by his father, Charles **Gunn**, a justice of the peace, and some relation to Willis **Colby**.

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