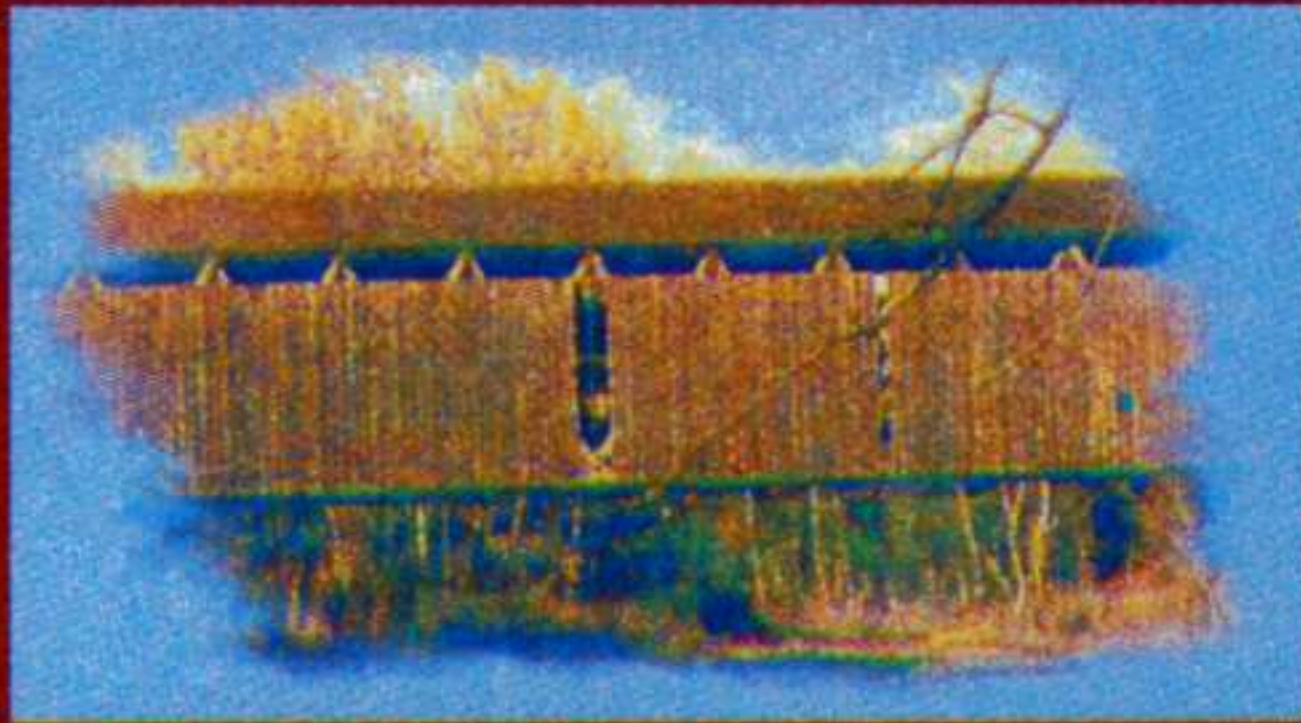


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Wilson Bridge Road



A LINWORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINISTRY

Linworth Historical Society Newsletter

The Story of Leatherlips and His Friend “the White Man, Elias Lewis”



If this 250 + year old bur oak tree could talk, one of its stories would surely be the execution of Wyandot Indian Chief Shateyaronyah (Leatherlips). This tree is located in Perry Township within a few hundred feet of where the execution took place.

On a Sunday afternoon during the summer of 1939, the members of Linworth Methodist Church gathered in the white frame building that had housed the congregation since 1889. The occasion was to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary by paying tribute to the men and women who had played a part in the spiritual movement at Elmwood Station—now called Linworth. Rev. Frank Gunsaulus, Rev. David Store, Sam and Elizabeth Davis, James and Mary Wilcox, and Charles Hard were among those being honored. Of all the enthusiastic workers mentioned, the one who was remembered as being there at the very beginning was Elias Lewis. He had started and led weekly bible study and prayer meetings in log cabins west of the Olentangy River, long before the Village of Elmwood Station was founded in 1877.

Lewis came to Worthington with his family in 1806. One year later he took on the care of his mother, two brothers, and three sisters, when his father, Jedediah, unexpectedly passed away. This added responsibility left Elias little time for himself, but having an adventuresome spirit, the twenty-one year old often

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Linworth Historical Society

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Native Americans: Our Brothers and Sisters

On Sunday, April 25, 2004, Linworth UMC reminded the congregation of its Christian responsibility to help with the needs of Native Americans. As a part of that service, the Newsletter story of Leatherlips was read by Ed Pollock, Historical Society member. Pictures of Leatherlips and Elias Lewis were shown on the church's two large multi-media screens. Through our mission projects and our lives, it is our hope that Native Americans will know Linworth as “my friend, the white man.”

The Story of Leatherlips . . . continued from front page

ventured into the wilderness between the Olentangy and Scioto Rivers. As a result of his treks, he became acquainted with the Wyandot and Mingo Indians whose hunting and sugar making camps were in the area. Historical research indicates that one of those camps was close to



Copy of Hal Sherman's painting of the execution of Leatherlips.

where the present Linworth United Methodist Church building (Bent Tree and Federated) now stands. Lewis met and became a friend to Wyandot Chief Shateyaronyah. This chief was called Leatherlips by the settlers because he had a reputation of never breaking a promise. Respect between these two men grew and they taught each other many things.

A powerful Shawnee warrior named Tecumseh was forming an Indian coalition in 1809. He became bitter toward Leatherlips and would not forgive him for his loyalty and friendship toward the white man. From the Shawnee village at

Tippecanoe in Indiana Territory, six warriors were sent to the camp of the Wyandot chief. It is not clear if the commands against Leatherlips were given by Tecumseh himself or by his brother, the Prophet. We do know that after the warriors arrived, a mock trial was held and the verdict of death was given. Leatherlips, when given a chance to speak, replied, "If I have to die, I have one request. I want to have my friend, the white man Elias Lewis with me." When Elias was informed, he came to be with Leatherlips and was by his side to the end. Later that day Chief Leatherlips was executed and buried in a shallow grave on the east bank of the Scioto River.

Lewis returned to Worthington deeply affected by what he witnessed. Years later, recounting this tragic day, he told his son, "Worthy" Lewis, "Leatherlips stood right beside the grave and the Indians formed a circle all around, and danced this dance of death. The hardest thing I ever did was to see that good man put to death."

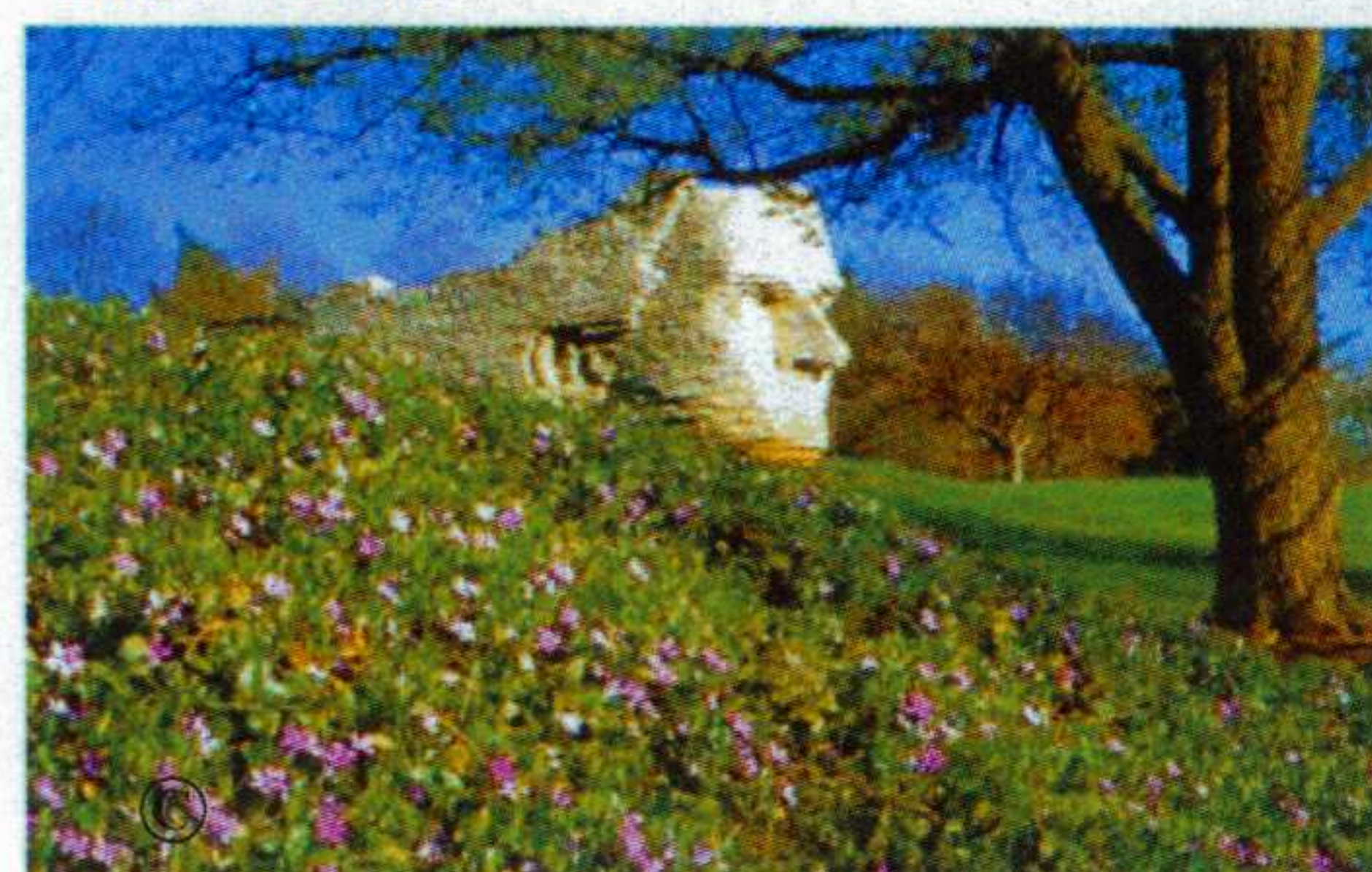
Elias lived his faith and became a lay preacher in the early years of Worthington Methodist Church. In 1820 he was elected a trustee—a position he held for sixty years. While continuing to hold bible study and prayer meetings in homes throughout the area, he started and taught church school in what would later become the Village of Elmwood

Station.

During the 50th Anniversary and Homecoming of Linworth Methodist Church in 1939, Elias Lewis was recognized as the organizer and first superintendent of what is now known as Linworth United Methodist Church Sunday School.

Along side the last great Indian Trail, now called Riverside Drive, is a substantial rock wall protecting a granite monument that reads: "Leatherlips—a Chief of the Wyandot Tribe of Indians, was executed on this spot June 1, 1810."

It is the hope of the Linworth United Methodist Church Historical Society that we have brought recognition to a unique relationship between two individuals—one a Native American named Shateyaronyah and the other—"my friend the white man, Elias Lewis".



Photograph of Leatherlips Memorial by Mark Slonecker

"I want to have my friend, the white man, Elias Lewis with me"

Historical Musings with Jim Jim Thompson



Leatherlips Burial Site

After the execution of Leatherlips, a local blacksmith, Joseph Thompson, used rocks to cover the shallow grave. Over the next eighty years, Joseph's family and the descendants of the early settlers who knew and respected the Chief, protected the site and kept it from desecration. In 1887 an historical address honoring Leatherlips was given to a group of wealthy gentlemen belonging to a social organization called The Wyandot Club. The speech was delivered by Joseph's son, Colonel Sam Thompson, a former Columbus town marshal and chief of police. After hearing the glowing tribute to the character of the Wyandot Indian, the Club started a movement which resulted in the building of an impressive monument at the burial site.

In June 1892, while improving the area within the rock wall surrounding the sacred ground, the remains of Leatherlips were inadvertently uncovered. These were then carefully buried to a depth where they will never be disturbed.

Share your story with Jim by calling Jim Thompson at 614.885.3958

Did You Know?

Colonel Sam Thompson was one of the last old town marshals (1860-64). He became the first Columbus Chief of Police in 1874.