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Wilson Bridge Road



A LINWORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINISTRY

Linworth Historical Society Newsletter

From Slavery to Linworth—Excerpts from Recollections by Harry A. Gentry

The following article was written and submitted by Lois J. Gentry (Mrs. Harry A. Gentry) on February 6, 2004. Her story is printed here in its entirety.

This is a story about a Black family, Charles and Mary Angeline Davidson who lived on a farm at Linworth, Ohio in the 1930's.

The Davidsons presented to their family, children and grandchildren, the best in Christian and moral principles. They taught respect for themselves as well as others; to be kind and generous; and to seek the best quality of education possible.

Charles Davidson was born in 1854 near Tazewell, Virginia. Not much is known about his childhood, except that he grew up on a plantation and knew about farming.

How he ever got to the mountains near the Blue Ridge in southern West Virginia is not known, but there he met and married Mary Angeline Gore, who also was born into slavery. She was born in 1860 at Casher's Hill near Madison, West Virginia.

The Davidsons were among many black families who moved North to Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Davidson had a brother living on the west side of the city who had horses and he rented them to the city of Columbus for city work. Soon after Mr. Davidson's move, he bought two teams and went into the excavating business.

Digging basements became a profitable business and soon Mr. Davidson expanded to grading streets on the Hilltop (west side of Columbus). He could dig a basement a day, which brought in about \$28.00; \$33.00 for a double. Soon he bought a Fordson tractor and the Davidsons were "on top of the world". Money came in and their standing in the community rose significantly.

Mr. Davidson became a member and a Steward in the Wheatland Avenue Methodist Church, and a respected business man. They delighted in entertaining, especially preachers. Mrs. Davidson would order the best of foods and all who came to their home (continued back page)



Mary Angeline Gore (1860-1952) Charles R. Davidson (1854-1937)

Linworth Historical Society

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Do You Know?

- God loves YOU! You are never alone.
- Linworth UM Church has a Prayer Chain. There is no need too small or too great—and you don't have to attend Linworth Church. Call Janet Enck 614.451.9776. Janet will have members of the Prayer Chain praying for you within minutes of your call.



From Slavery to Linworth continued from front page

were "served" well at the Davidson house. When friends and family came to eat, the children would be sent to the yard to play, so as not to disturb the adults. Later, the children were served at the second table setting. Everyday ended with a prayer from Mr. Davidson, especially that his two sons, Emanuel and Vinnie would return home safe and sound from World War I.

The 1920's were good years for the Davidsons. However, being a very generous man, over the next few years, the money dwindled and their lives took a new direction.

He quit the excavating business and moved to a farm at Westerville, Ohio where he began to raise hogs. He planted acres of corn, which fed the hogs, along with several acres of wheat and soybeans. In the late 1920's, cholera hit the farm and the hogs died by the dozens. Little was known about cholera and in a short time, Mr. Davidson lost everything. With the little he had left after his great loss, he moved to another farm, as a sharecropper. This farm was located halfway between Worthington and Dublin, at Linworth, Ohio.

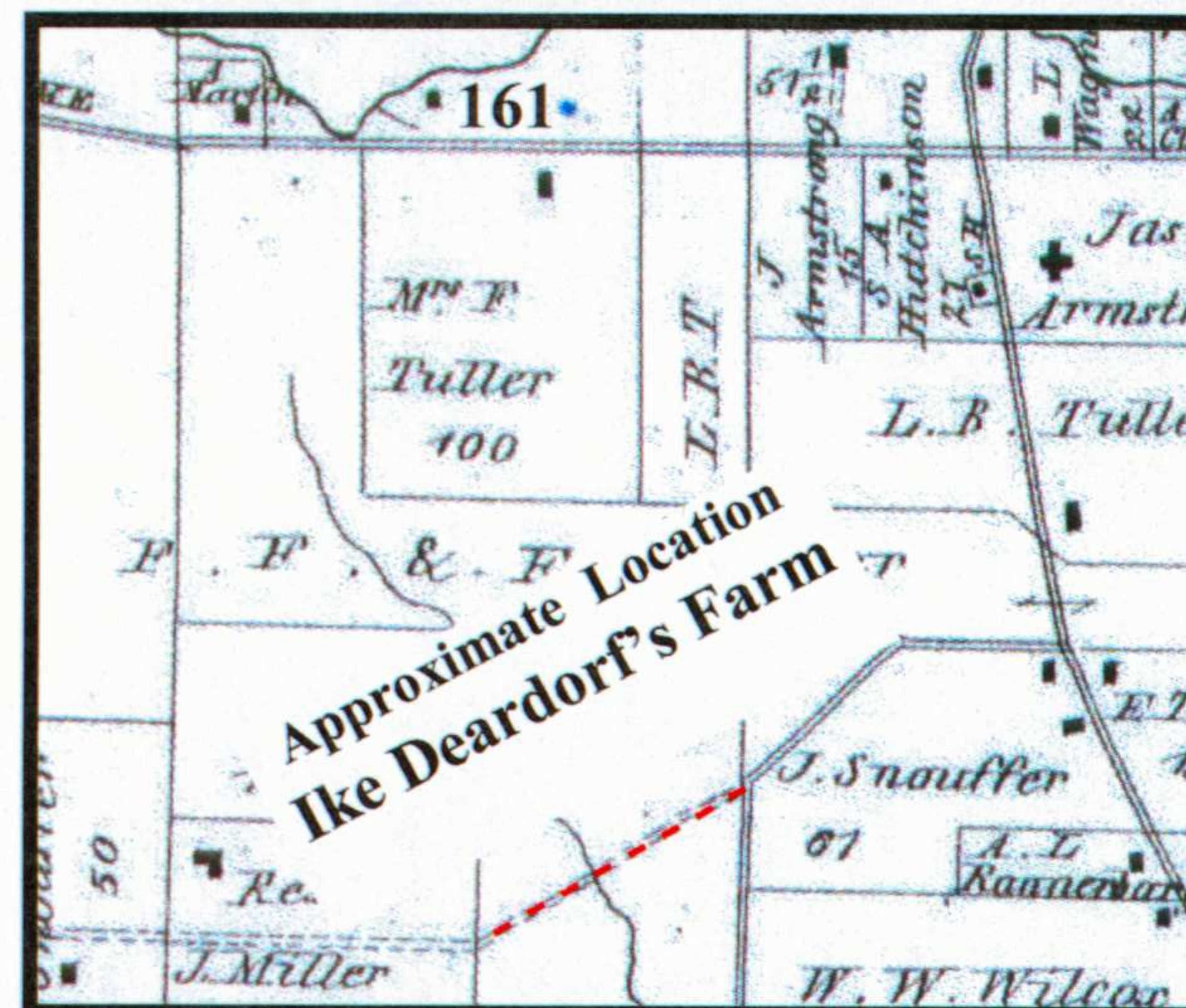
Here, also, he raised corn, wheat and soybeans. This was the place where all the Davidson offspring learned about country living. Sometimes, there would be thirty or more visiting them at the same time. It was no problem for Mrs. Davidson to feed everyone, and for all to sleep. She would fill feather ticks with straw from the barn and put them on the floor. She was a master at teaching the

family how to use the hoe in the garden, as well as in the cornfield.

Another very important event occurred on the farm at Linworth in the early 1930's. The Davidson/Gore Family Reunion was born. We were living in the Great Depression and Franklin D. Roosevelt had become President. Things were bad, but on the farm, there was plenty of food; the family ate and conversed with each other, and listened to Uncle Hiram Gore preach. His sermons were always long, because he covered everything from "Heaven" to "Politics". Roosevelt, having been elected, the Davidsons nor the family were used to a Democrat running the country, let alone Negroes being Democrats. There were three things Mr. Davidson said he would always do: "Chew Beechnut tobacco", "Be a Methodist", and "Vote Republican".

In the late 1930's, Mr. Davidson's health began to fail and he and Mary Angeline were too old to work the farm, so they moved from Linworth back to Oakley Avenue in Columbus. Mr. Davidson died in 1937 and Mrs. Davidson died of smoke inhalation in a fire in 1952.

Surviving Charles and Mary Angeline Davidson are several grandchildren, among whom are: Harry Gentry of Dublin, Ohio; Bessie Newby, Emanuel Davidson II, Rosemary Holliman, Dorothy Brown, Delores Prillerman, Lawrence Davidson and Ruth Goodrich, all of Columbus, Ohio; and Charles Davidson of Plain City, Ohio.



Charles Davidson was a sharecropper on a farm owned by Linworth Store keeper and Postmaster Ike Deardorf. This 1870's map shows a gravel/dirt road extending west off Godown Road. This was still being used in the 1930's by the Davidson Family in order to reach their farm house. Thank you, Mrs. Gentry, for sharing Mr. Gentry's memories of his grandfather, Charles Davidson.

Lessons from the Past

Many of the people who later developed the village of Elmwood Station (Linworth) were leaders in the anti-slavery movement of the mid 1800's. The early Methodist churches of the area were active participants in the Underground Railroad. These courageous people are examples to us in the twenty-first century of what it means to put your faith and beliefs into action.

So faith without deeds is dead.

James 2:26

Historical Musings with Jim

Historic Home in Linworth

6417 Linworth Road

Elisha Hard moved his family from Vermont to Ohio in 1814. He came to Perry Township in 1829. Twelve years later in 1841, he built a large frame home on Linworth Road (originally known as Franklinton to Delaware Pike) in order to accommodate his wife and nine children. When Elmwood was established in 1877, this house was considered one of the finest in the village. In the 1960's this house was part of the Worthington Historic Tour. The house was razed by building contractors in 2002.

