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Wilson Bridge Road



A LINWORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH MINISTRY

Linworth Historical Society Newsletter

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Tribute to Johnny Appleseed— The Tree Planter in Central Ohio (Part II)

In our last newsletter we told of Johnny's arrival to Ohio with his family settling in what is now Noble County. As much as he may have loved his home in the Duck Creek Valley, his passion for planting and cultivating apple orchards would lead him throughout Ohio. While Mansfield served as his home away from home, he felt called to visit as many settlements as possible growing apple trees and sharing his faith.

Little is known of the locations of Chapman's nurseries. It is only through oral history and family memoirs that we can understand his travels and the impact he had in Central Ohio.



Holding Cane—Richard Davis Gordin

Coffman House—Dublin, Ohio—March 2008

Johnny Visits Sam Davis (1763-1849)

One time frontiersman and scout with the famous Simon Kenton, Sam Davis, brought his large family in 1814 to an unbroken forest west of the Scioto River and south of Sells Settlement (Dublin). Along with building a log home, land was cleared for an all-important orchard. Within a few years, an oddly dressed, bearded wanderer, John Chapman, passed by and helped enlarge the orchard by planting apple seedlings grown in his own nurseries. (It was not until years later that John's travels and works became legendary and gradually he became known as Johnny Appleseed.)

Sometime in the 1830's, Sam Davis, perhaps feeling a little nostalgic, cut down an apple tree in his orchard. From a root he fashioned a cane that he used in his declining years. It seems likely that the tree was one planted years earlier by Johnny Appleseed.

The historic heirloom remains with the Davis family in the possession of Sam's great, great, great Grandson, Richard Davis Gordin. It is presently on loan for educational purposes with the Dublin Historical Society.

Note: Sam's son, Sam Davis, Jr., wife Elizabeth, and son, Lewis, helped organize and build Elmwood (Linworth) United Methodist Church in 1889. The building is now The Village Book Shop. Sam Davis, Jr. and his wife, Elizabeth, served on the church Finance Committee and son, Lewis, on the church Building Committee.



Trading Post—1910—Built in early 1800's

This served as an Indian Trading Post until late 1840's

The pioneers who settled along the Whetstone (Olentangy) River wrote of John Chapman, better known as "Appleseed John", planting apple seeds or seedlings on high ground west of the river. Combining folklore with oral history, it is believed his nursery could have been behind an Indian trading post on a bluff west of the Olentangy River (southwest corner Wilson Bridge Road and Olentangy River Road.)

During a visit in 1927 Indian Bill Moose told the owners, Rev. and Mrs. A.K. McCall, of coming to the store around 1843 with his parents. It's believed Johnny made his last planting at the store a few years earlier, around 1840.



Old Well at Trading Post—1910
(Photograph courtesy of Pat Zimmerman)

Standing at the Trading Post Well is two year old Margaret McCall, granddaughter of Rev. and Mrs. A.K. McCall. Seen in the background could be one of the last plantings in the area by Johnny Appleseed.

Replanting in Johnny's original nurseries make it nearly impossible to identify which trees were planted by him or by others.

Johnny visited his family in Duck Creek Valley one last time around 1842. He returned to Indiana where he sometimes resided, possibly to be near his sister who lived in Ft. Wayne. He continued to work on his nurseries in Indiana until he died March 18, 1845, at age 70. He was buried in a small cemetery two and a half miles north of Ft. Wayne.



**Aerial Photo—Circa 1960's
Southwest corner of Olentangy River Road and Linworth (Wilson Bridge) Road**

The house in the center of the picture is the old trading post after being remodeled by Rev. and Mrs. A.K. McCall. By 1960 only a few traces of the original apple orchard remained. In a few years the construction of I-270 and State Route 315 moved the Olentangy River several hundred yards east and removed the hillside, taking the trading post with it.

The farm field in top half of the picture is now Interstate 270. The southbound exit into State Route 315 is where the large tree and trading post is standing in the above picture.

Historical Musings by Jim Thompson

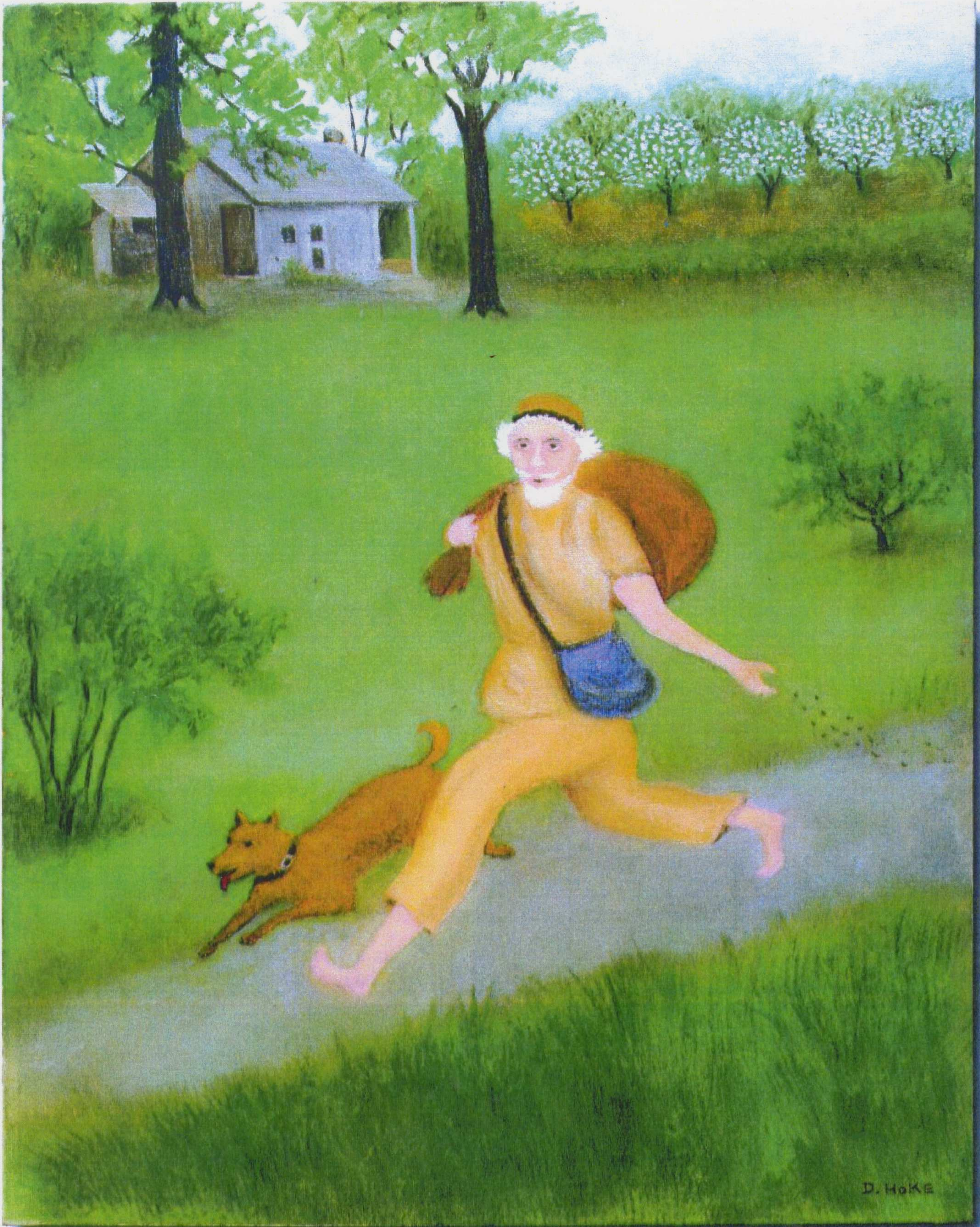


Noble County Historical Jail

Artist, Dick Hoke, longtime member of Linworth United Methodist Church donated his original painting of Johnny Appleseed to the church in 2007. A copy was presented to Joy Flood, Manager of the Noble County Historical Society, to be added to their Johnny Appleseed Collection housed in the Historic Jail, Caldwell, Ohio.

Joy M. Flood, Collections Manager of the Noble County Historical Society sent the following: "On behalf of the Officers and Directors of the Noble County Historical Society, the community, and visiting researchers, I would like to thank Linworth United Methodist Church for your gift of the painting of Johnny Appleseed by Artist Dick Hoke to the Historic Jail Museum."

A visit to Caldwell, Ohio and the Historic Jail Museum makes an interesting day trip.



Artist—Dick Hoke

Johnny Appleseed
1774-1845

“Without a hope of recompense, without a thought of pride, John Chapman planted apple trees and preached and lived and died.”

(Quote from John Chapman Memorial Monument)