

WORTHINGTON:

New England in the Wilderness

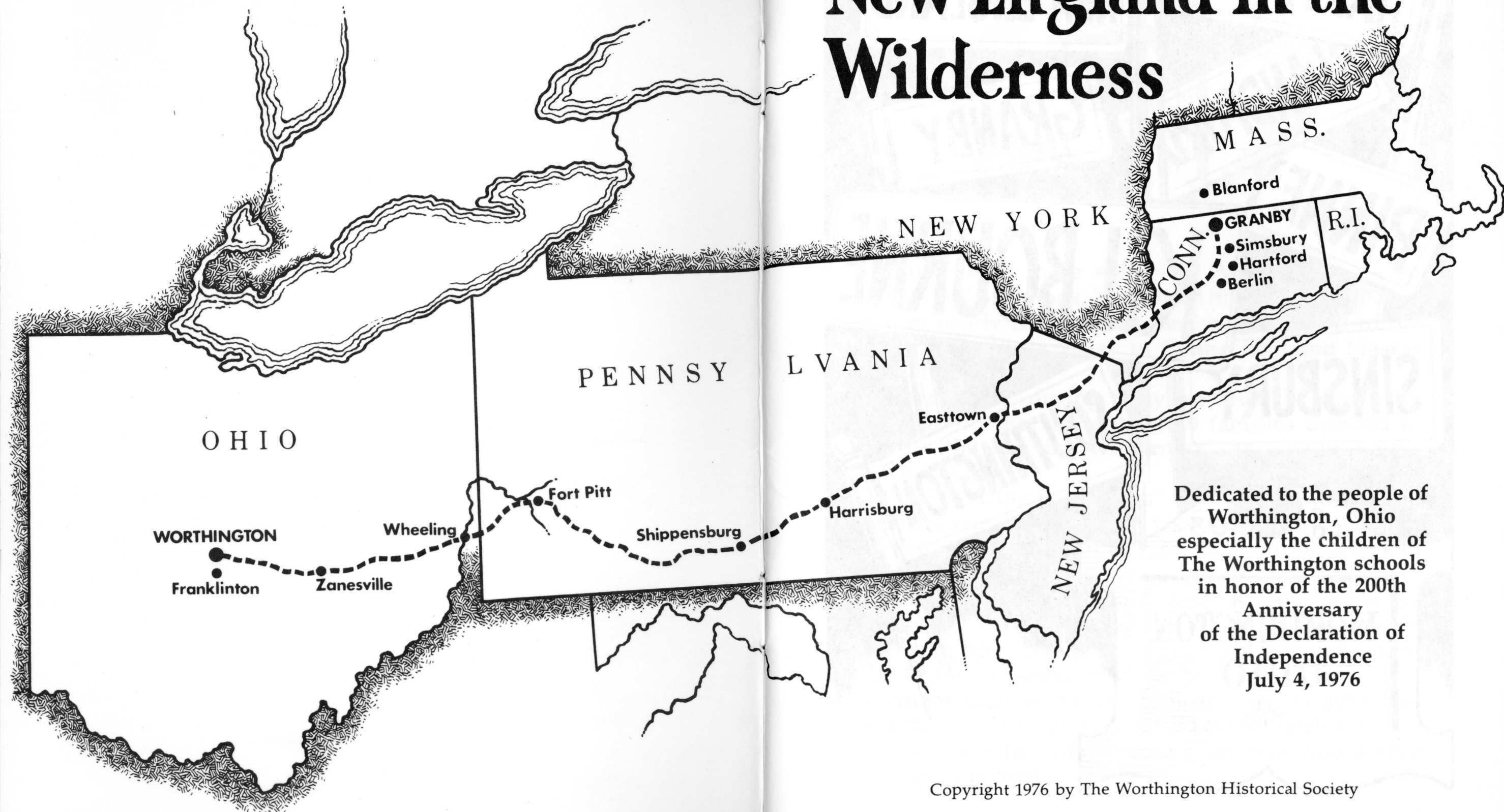


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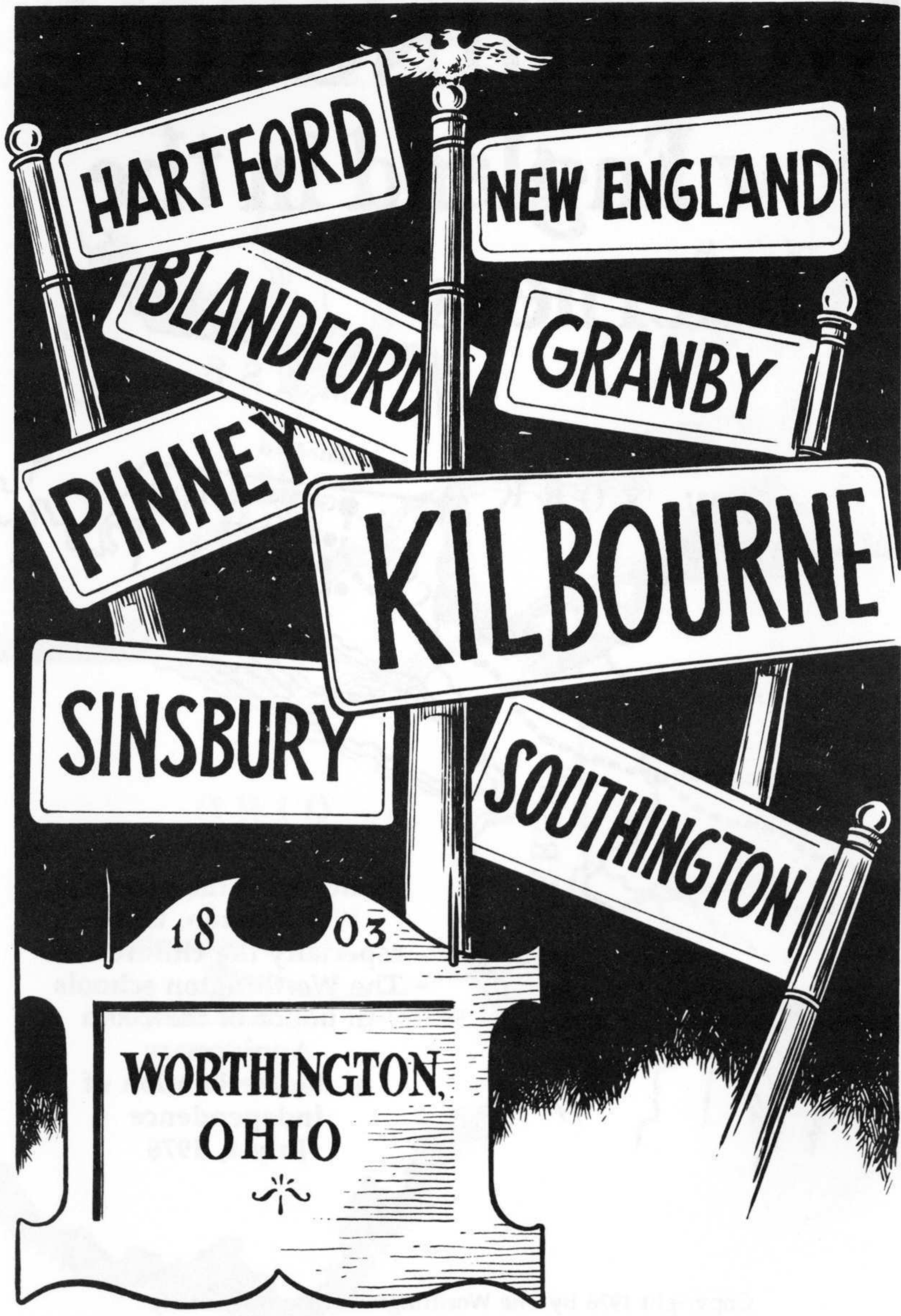
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The Worthington Bicentennial Committee, H. C. McCord, Chairman
Text, design and illustrations: Jim Baker & Associates
Editorial Consultant: Jane Trucksis, Curator, The Worthington Historical Society

WORTHINGTON: New England in the Wilderness



Dedicated to the people of
Worthington, Ohio
especially the children of
The Worthington schools
in honor of the 200th
Anniversary
of the Declaration of
Independence
July 4, 1976



HARTFORD

NEW ENGLAND

BLANDFORD

GRANBY

PINNEY

KILBOURNE

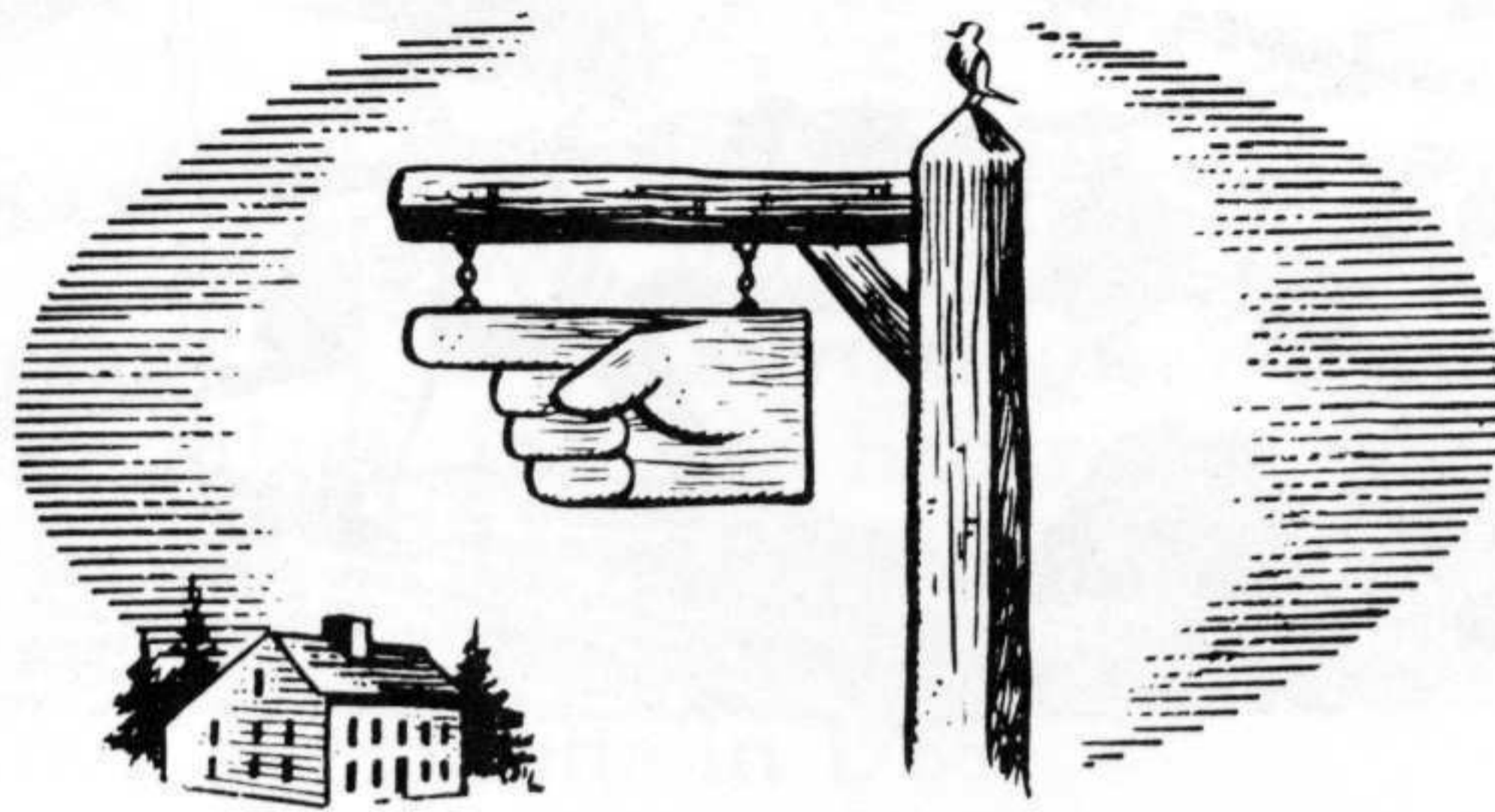
SINSBURY

SOUTHINGTON

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**WORTHINGTON,
OHIO**





You've seen these names in Worthington — on streets and buildings. You would have heard the same names nearly 200 years ago in New England, in the Farmington River Valley in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

It was there, during the years after the American Revolution, that a group of 40 families decided to brave "the howling wilderness" and build a new town in Ohio.

"The howling wilderness" is what Mrs. John Fitch called it. Her daughter Lucy was married to an energetic young minister named James Kilbourne, who had thought up the whole idea.

A most remarkable man, James Kilbourne. At the age of 15, he had started out on his own, scarcely knowing how to read or write. Eight years of war in the Colonies, starting when he was only five, had meant no schools. It had also meant that his father had lost all his money and farms and could barely feed his family. Sadly he had told young James he would have to make his own way.



And he did just that. Leaving home with only the clothes on his back, he went to work on the farm of Elisha Griswold in the summers, studying at night with young Alexander Griswold to learn spelling, Greek, Latin and mathematics. In winters, he worked for his keep for a clothier, learning the trade and eventually taking over the business.

When he was 19 and newly established, he married Lucy Fitch Kilbourne, daughter of John Fitch, inventor of the first steamboat in America.

Hard work brings success

By the time he was 30 years old, Kilbourne had become a wealthy man, even surviving a terrible illness caused by breathing the fumes from dyes used in the clothing. He owned several stores and farms, was a tax collector, surveyor of roads, and had become a minister in the Episcopal Church.

Even though successful in business, Kilbourne was an ambitious man who needed more opportunity to be a leader, more outlet for his energies. He and the members of his church also wanted more freedom to

worship as they pleased. After all, the Episcopal Church was a branch of the Church of England, and after the Revolution many of the patriots were still suspicious of its members. Most of the influential people in Connecticut belonged to the Congregational Church.

While some of Reverend Kilbourne's friends were prosperous as he was, many had suffered losses of farms and money in the Revolution. They were hearing that farmland in Ohio had richer soil than the worn-out land in New England and was cheaper. Other New England people had already come out to start a town at Marietta in 1788.

Reverend Kilbourne's father-in-law, John Fitch, had been to Ohio. Perhaps he suggested it would be a good place to settle. When Reverend Kilbourne proposed that he should lead a group and start a new town in Ohio, he had to use all his skill as a speaker to convince his friends and his church members that he really wasn't crazy.

But they knew he was an excellent organizer, a good businessman and a tireless worker, and they had faith in his judgment.

So in May of 1802, Rev. Kilbourne and seven other men met in Granby, Connecticut to make plans to go to Ohio. They decided to call themselves the Scioto Land Company. Membership was to be limited to 40 families; new members were to be elected by majority vote. All would put their money together to buy a large tract of land.

Rev. Kilbourne and young Nathaniel Little then set out, in July of 1802, to look for land in Ohio. Taking a stage coach as far as Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, they then walked 150 miles across the mountains to Fort Pitt (later Pittsburgh). It took them eight days to go from Philadelphia to Fort Pitt.

After paddling a canoe down the Ohio River to



Wheeling, they rented horses and rode through the forest to Chillicothe. Nathaniel Little kept a record of their journey, noting that the Scioto was "a fine clear stream" and the land was "of good soil and covered with timber." Several times he wrote "Mr. Kilbourne forgot his watch; we returned for it." Mr. Kilbourne probably had many things on his mind!

At Chillicothe, they visited the land office kept by Col. Thomas Worthington, and the next day took off on horseback to search for suitable land to buy. Nathaniel Little's journal mentions that "the inhabitants here are very hospitable", and tells of their trip up the Scioto and around "Big Belly Creek" in the eastern part of what is now Franklin County. Fortunately the name was later changed to Big *Walnut* Creek.

Heading back west, they came to a road that went to Chillicothe from Franklinton, a settlement on the Scioto about where Columbus Central High School stands today. Returning to Chillicothe, the two men had tea with Col. Worthington in his "neat cabin" on a hilltop outside Chillicothe, on the spot where Worthington's mansion "Adena" stands today. "This

gentleman entertained us courteously and we can truly say he is one of the best informed men we have met with in all the country," Little wrote.

Higher ground is better

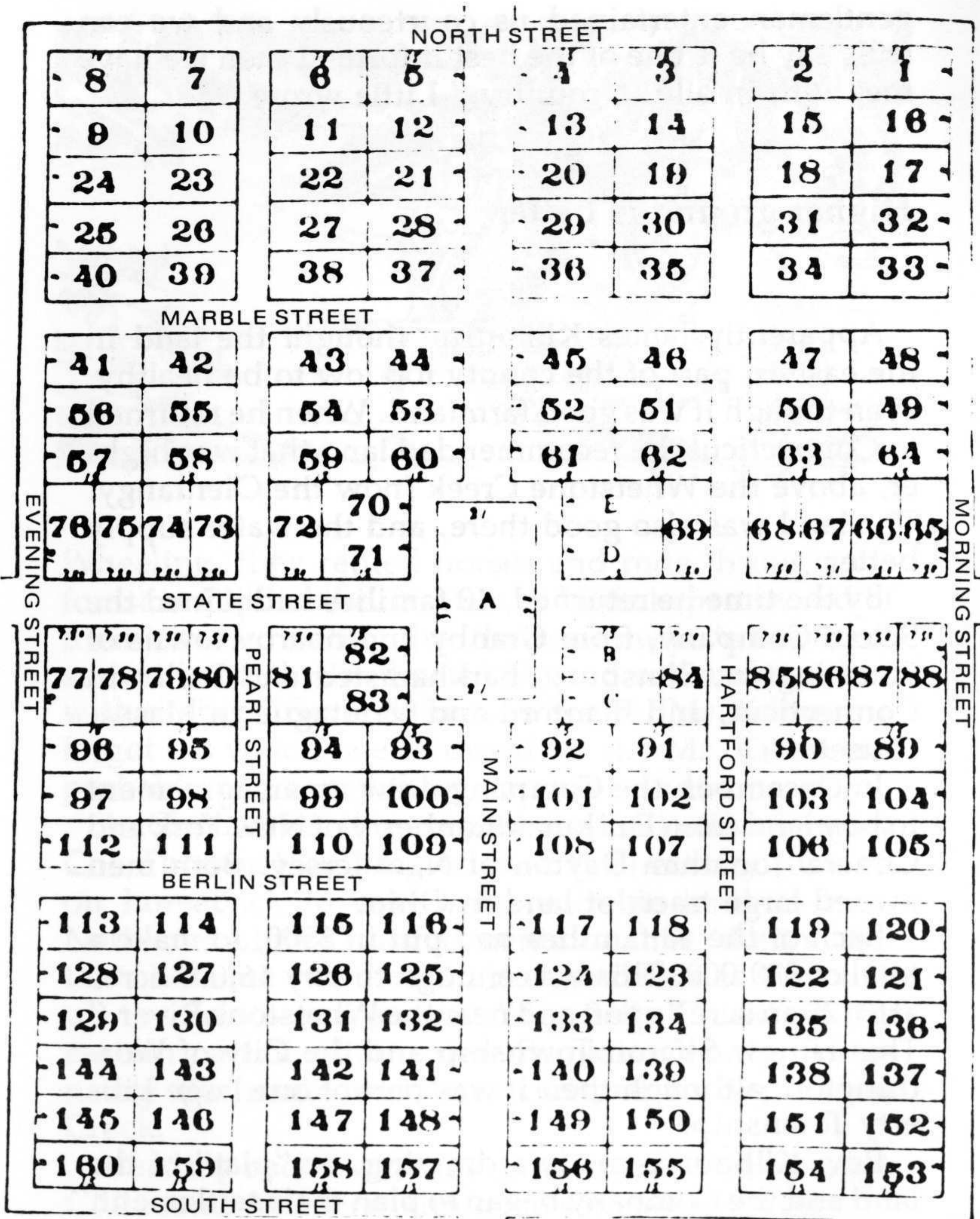
Apparently James Kilbourne thought the land in the eastern part of the county too low to be healthy, even though it was good farmland. When he returned to Connecticut, he recommended land that was higher, above the Whetstone Creek (now the Olentangy). The land was also good there, and the water supply better.

By the time he returned, 40 families had joined the Scioto Company, from Granby and nearby towns of Southington, Simsbury, Barkhamsted and Berlin in Connecticut, and Blanford and Montague in Massachusetts.

In December, the Company drew up an agreement to buy land from Dr. Jonas Stanberry of New York and General Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey. Both men owned large tracts of land in Ohio.

Each of the 40 families had put in \$500, to make a total of \$20,000. This was enough to buy 16,000 acres at \$1.25 an acre "upon and near the Whetstone River." This is now Sharon Township and the City of Worthington, although then it was part of one large Liberty Township.

Rev. Kilbourne made a drawing, or "plat" of the land and the Company began to plan their settlement. This is what made Worthington different from most frontier settlements, which usually grew up around trading posts or where roads met. Worthington was planned as completely as possible before its first settlers ever left New England.



Original plan for lots within town boundaries of Morning, Evening, North and South Streets. Note that the Green was not crossed by roads, and many streets had different names than they do today.

There would be a north-south road and an east-west road. Where they met would be a village Green, or Parade ground. Today those roads are High Street and Granville Road, and the Green remains a landmark of the town.

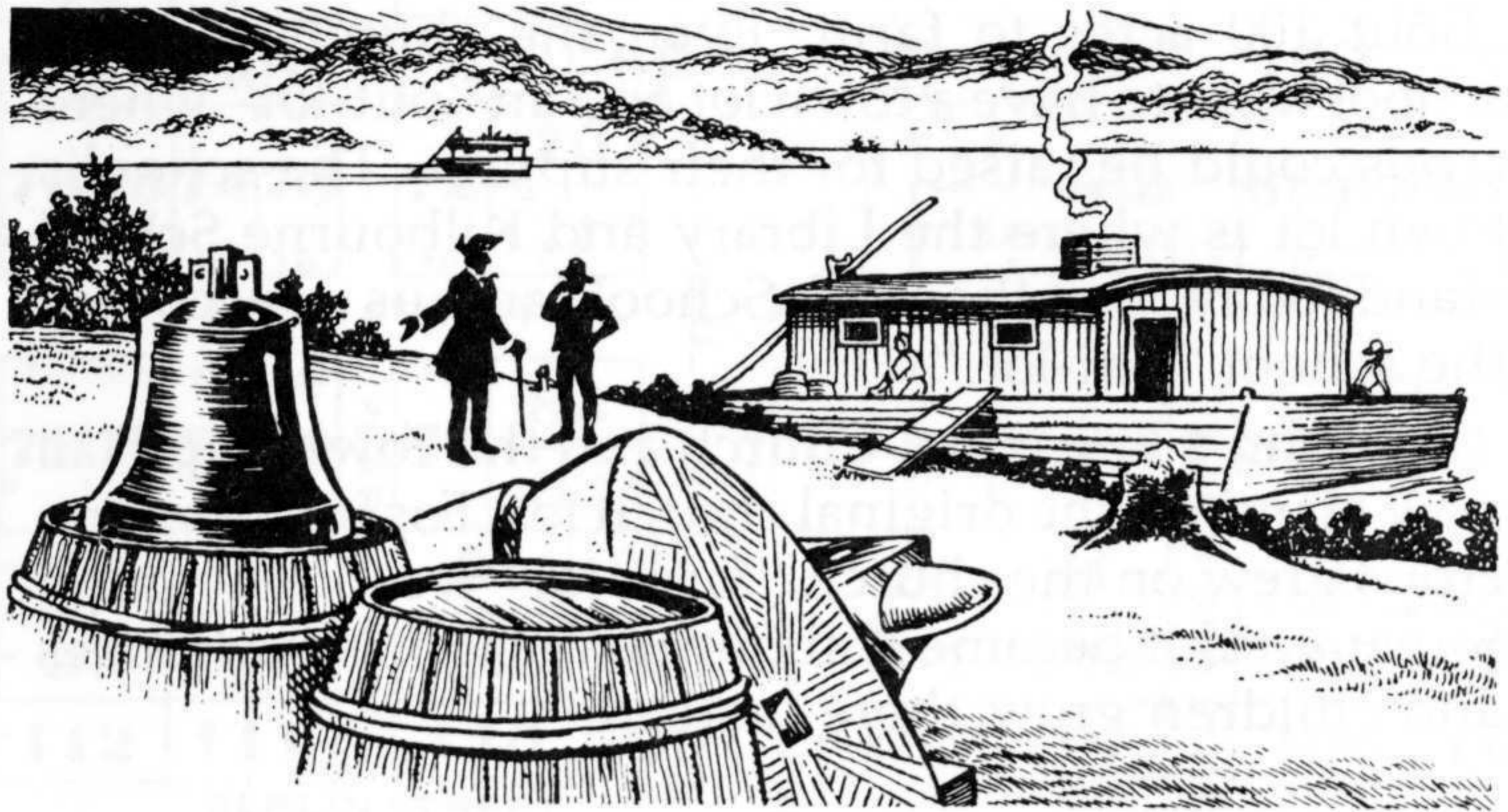
The town would be bounded by North, South, Morning and Evening Streets; those too are still the same, although other names given to streets have been changed over the years. Within those boundaries were to be 160 lots of about an acre each. Each owner of a town lot could also have a country lot of about 100 acres to farm. Even the church and the school were to have a town lot and an "out-lot" where crops could be raised for their support. The school's town lot is where the Library and Kilbourne School stand today, and the High School campus now covers the school "out-lot."

St. John's Episcopal Church and the Township Hall now stand on the original church lot. For many years, crops grew on the church "farm-lot" west of Evening Street until it became Kilbourne Village. Now houses and children grow there instead.

Meanwhile, back in New England. . .

The winter of 1802 and early 1803 saw lots of activity, as the families started to plan. Some had to borrow money on their homes, or sell them, to raise their share of the land price. But by spring of 1803, Rev. Kilbourne set out again for Ohio, going by way of New York and Philadelphia where he paid Dr. Stanberry and General Dayton for the land. Going by horseback on to Ohio, he was followed soon by a small "advance party" on horseback and in wagons. Among them were a carpenter, a blacksmith and other strong young men.

On his way across Pennsylvania, Rev. Kilbourne stopped at Fort Pitt to buy iron to make nails, millstones, blacksmith's tools and a large cast-iron bell. The bell would be needed in the new settlement to call people together for meetings or to warn of danger. He arranged for these heavy things to be sent by boat down the Ohio River and up the Scioto to Franklinton, which was about nine miles from the Company's new land. Franklinton had just become the county seat of a new Franklin County.



That attended to, Rev. Kilbourne went on from Pittsburgh to Zanesville by horseback. Let's read his own account of his journey from there:

"On Wednesday May 4th left Zanesville with Wm. Wells, Esq., who went with me one days journey on the Licking Road. Passed the rest of the wilderness alone to Franklinton, had a heavy north-east snow storm all the way, and had to swim my horse through two rivers, by which I was completely wet from head to foot as possible, the weather at the same time quite cold. The storm ended with a sharp frost. On Friday the 6th at evening arrived at Franklinton very wet, cold and much fatigued."

The next day he went up the Whetstone River to look over the land. He found that two "squatters" had already settled on it and had started to clear some trees. After some negotiations, in which Rev. Kilbourne agreed to pay them for the "improvements" they had made, they decided to leave.

Returning to Franklinton, he bought supplies: 30 bushels of corn, 80 pounds of pickled pork, 40 pounds of soap, all from Lucas Sullivant; and also bacon, potatoes, two cows with calves and a barrel of whiskey.

That same day the Morrison brothers from Blanford arrived, then Israel Case and Levi Pinney from Simsbury and Adna Bristol from Barkhamsted. All found lodging in Franklinton until they could get up to their "ground" and get busy.

Worthington begins

First a log meeting-house was built, to serve as church, school and general gathering-place, on the spot beside the Green where the Library now stands. On top of it went the bell that had been bought in Fort Pitt.

Twelve crude log cabins were built for temporary shelter, and a well was dug beside the church-lot site. On June 1st, Rev. Kilbourne's brother Lemuel and his family arrived. That day they all began to plow ground to plant corn, potatoes and turnips.

With the work started, Rev. Kilbourne left to go back to Connecticut, to bring out a larger group of families: his own from Berlin; the Ezra Griswolds from Simsbury; the David Bristol and Samuel Beach families from Barkhamsted; and Dr. Josiah Topping and family, his brother's wife and seven children from Granby.

From Blanford, Massachusetts would come the families of Glass Cochran, William Thompson, Nathan Stewart and Alexander Morrison; and Nathaniel Little, who was unmarried. Moses Andrews, a widower, came from Montague, Massachusetts with his children.

Saying tearful goodbyes to friends, the 12 families started out from Granby the middle of September, 1803. Many cherished possessions had to be left behind; only the most necessary things could be brought in the wagons: farm implements, cooking pots, a few pieces of furniture. Three families shared one brass kettle and one sieve; several shared a single chair.

Strong horses pulled all the wagons except that of Ezra Griswold; he hitched up his sturdy team of oxen, and the others laughed. The wagons lumbered across Pennsylvania, stopping each afternoon in time to hunt game for the evening meal. After fording the Ohio River, they followed a rutted path (known as Zane's Trace, for Ebenezer Zane, who had first cleared it,) as far as a little settlement about where Newark is



today. From there, the way led along an Indian path, so narrow that many times trees had to be hacked away to make room for the wagons.

The horses strained to pull the heavy wagons, but Ezra Griswold's oxen pulled steadily through, even coming to the aid of the horses when they faltered. Ezra had the last laugh — as the party approached the clearing on October 29, his ox-drawn wagon led the way!

There was much rejoicing and greeting of friends, with news brought from back East. One wagon would be late in arriving. Near Catfish Camp (later named Washington) Pennsylvania, Rev. Kilbourne's wagon had dropped out of the train for a few days while his wife Lucy gave birth to her sixth child, a little girl they named Orrel. When they finally arrived at the settlement two weeks later, the population of the new town became exactly 100.

A 15-year old daughter of William Thompson described the little "clearing" this way in her diary:

"There were just enough trees cut down to build the cabins we went into. They were of rough, unhewed logs without windows, with puncheon floors, no chimney, only an opening in the roof for smoke to escape . . . We had to send to Chillicothe, 50 miles, for flour, groceries and other necessities . . . We sadly missed the comforts of our eastern home and suffered many privations, but the novelty of the thing made it rather interesting and amusing especially to us young folks."

This little Thompson girl, with her adventurous nature, must have appealed to young Nathaniel Little, who had accompanied Rev. Kilbourne on his first trip; the two were later married. Another Thompson daughter, Mila, left her family's cabin on the west side of the Green one day to go to the well beside the church and got lost - so thick were the trees. Her cries

brought help from a neighbor boy, George Griswold, whom she would later marry!



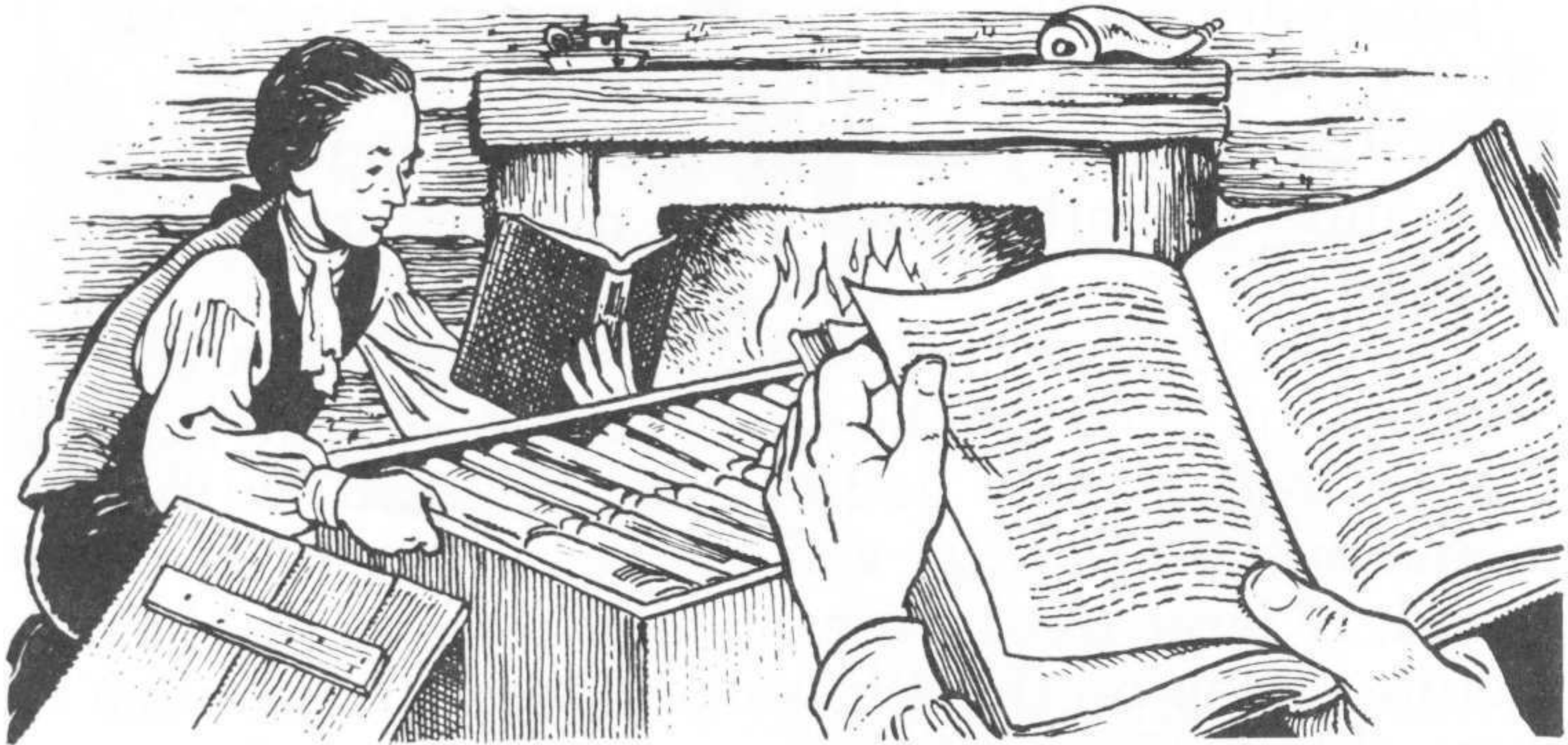
It's difficult to imagine a small clearing, with unbroken forest all the way to Lake Erie on the north, only the Franklinton settlement nine miles to the south, and the nearest large towns Zanesville and Chillicothe. Indians were still living nearby; although they were friendly, their presence made the New Englanders uneasy.

Settling in

Hurrying to beat winter, the new arrivals moved into their rough cabins. They picked berries and made trips to Franklinton for flour and cornmeal.

As Christmas approached, the new community took time off work to celebrate. Two days before Christmas, a box of books arrived, a gift from Dr. Jonas Stanberry. Put in the meeting-house, these books became the town's first library. Members paid to belong, and to borrow books — and there was

always a waiting-list. There were to be several other libraries organized, in various locations, but Worthington's first library started right where the present one stands.



On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the families attended church services. The next day everyone gathered in the meeting-house for entertainment and a big dinner of wild turkey and venison, with cranberries from the marshes. Even the Indians nearby brought maple syrup as a gift.

After dinner, James Kilbourne rose to his feet and proposed a series of toasts. The second one was "to the town of Worthington. While it perpetuates the memory of our worthy friend . . . may it become conspicuous for science, enterprise, and the useful arts!" Rev. Kilbourne wrote to the "worthy friend," Col. Thomas Worthington, the following February, telling him the town had been named in his honor.

Throughout that winter, more trees were cut and moved easily on sleds over the snow, to be cut into lumber for houses. More settlers would continue arriving over the next two years, and the town must be prepared. Streets were laid out according to the plan.

On February 6th, a Protestant Episcopal Society was organized, with Rev. Kilbourne as its Deacon; services were held every Sunday. Rev. Kilbourne would continue to lead the parish and preach, along with all his other public duties and business affairs.

On February 10th, there was much celebrating at the first wedding ceremony in Worthington, a double one. Abner Pinney and Polly Morrison, and Levi Pinney and Charlotte Beach were married in the meetinghouse.

The first long winter over, the settlers welcomed the summer of 1804. On the 4th of July, everyone wanted to celebrate as they had in New England, with cannons. But gunpowder was scarce on the frontier. Instead, 17 large trees were cut almost through, the day before. Then on the 4th, several well-placed whacks brought all 17 crashing down with a great boom — one for each state in the Union. Ohio had just become the 17th!



By August of 1804, more families had arrived. On the way out, Jedediah Lewis's son Elias had kept the travelers' spirits up when they camped each night, dancing to fiddle tunes.



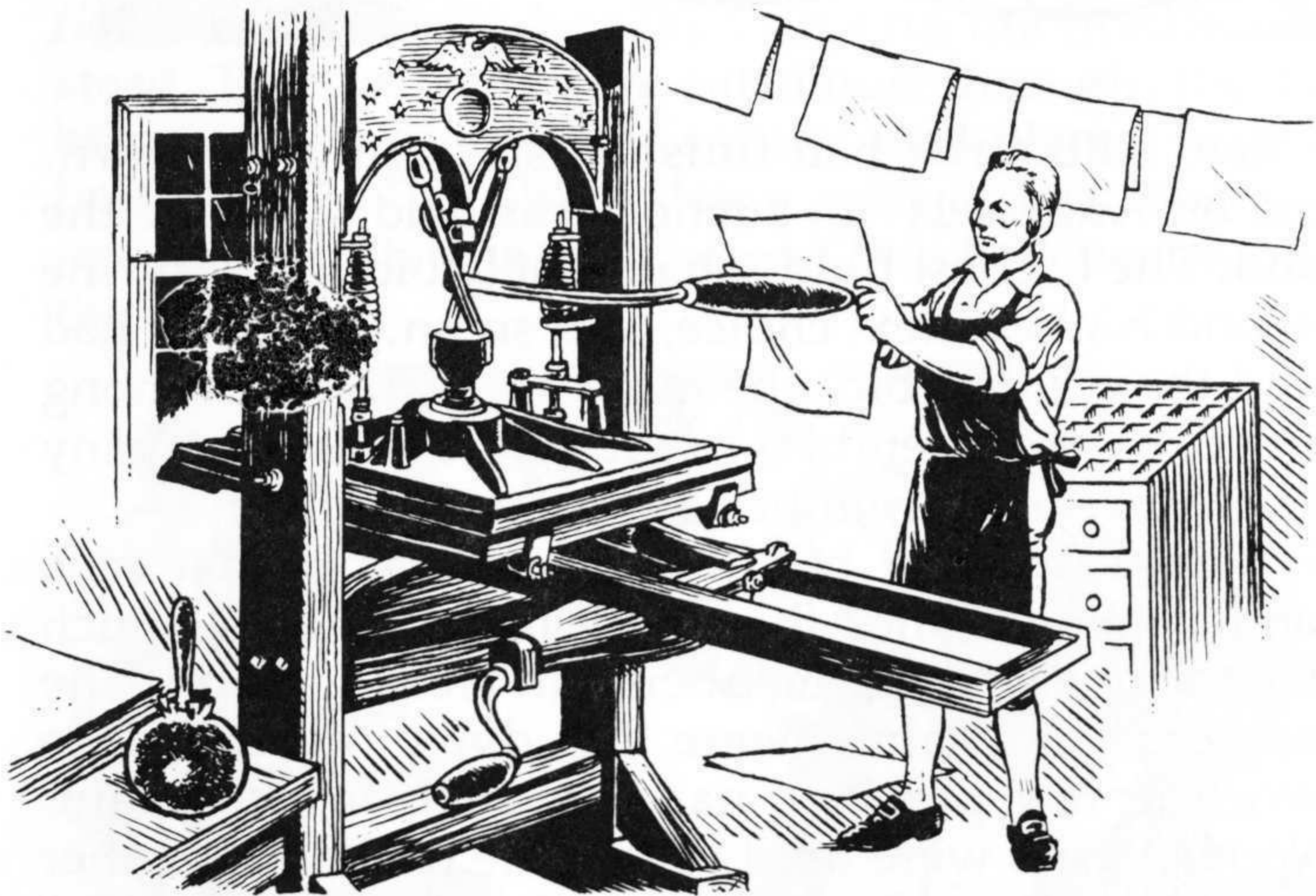
Rev. Kilbourne had finished surveying the town, and on August 11, an auction was held to divide the land. The highest bidder had first choice of plots, the second highest next choice, and so on. When all had paid the amount bid, the money was divided among the 40 original members of the Scioto Land Company according to the number of shares each held.

Then a flurry of building started. Now that each family owned land, they built larger houses, much like the ones they remembered in New England. The temporary log cabins were torn down or burned, to save the few precious nails in them to use again. Wooden pegs were used to join the timbers. Lumber came from the surrounding hickory, beech, walnut and ash trees.

James Kilbourne built the first brick home in 1804, with bricks molded of clay from the banks of the Whetstone River. It was an elegant building, on the south side of the Green, and had an archway for carriages to pass through to the courtyard behind. An addition to this building, facing High Street, is still in use today.

The Kilbournes' busy home

The big house was full of children. Three years after it was built, Lucy Kilbourne died, leaving six children. Rev. Kilbourne then married Cynthia Goodale Barnes of Franklinton, a widow with three children. They had three more, making a total of twelve, and then took in the three orphaned children of Asahel Hart, Rev. Kilbourne's nephew — that made fifteen in all. Many of them would become prominent in Columbus and the rest of the state, or marry into other prominent families.



As if all these children wouldn't guarantee activity enough, Rev. Kilbourne moved in a printing press and began in 1811 to publish the *Western Intelligencer*, the first newspaper to start in central Ohio. He soon sold the paper to young Joel Buttles, his future son-in-law; after changing owners and names several times it eventually became the Columbus Citizen-Journal of today.

The big brick building also served as an inn and a trading post for the Indians. Colonel Kilbourne was often gone, back to New England to bring more settlers out to Ohio; one group would found the town of Granville to the east.

He soon found time to begin establishing education as an important part of Worthington life; his own lack of education as a child made him value it highly. In 1810, he became president of the Worthington Academy, the first secondary school in central Ohio. A new brick building had replaced the log-cabin meeting-house, and classes were held there. The bell from Fort Pitt stayed on top of the new building.

Rev. Kilbourne's nephew, John, came out from New England to become its first principal and geography teacher. After writing two successful books on geography, John Kilbourne left teaching and opened a bookstore in Columbus in 1816. There he published his first Ohio Gazetteer, a book of maps and facts for new settlers — listing roads, towns, rivers, information on banking, education, everything new settlers wanted to know. And there were many of them — Ohio's population doubled in the ten years between 1810 and 1820.

John Kilbourne's Gazetteer played an important part in the state's early growth, and newer Gazetteers appeared regularly until 1841. Today they are used constantly by those interested in the state's history, especially by people searching for records of their ancestors.

Worthington, capital of Ohio?

Ohio had become a state in 1803, but the capital had moved from Chillicothe to Zanesville and back again. The legislature decided the permanent capital should be in the center of the state, so several towns were

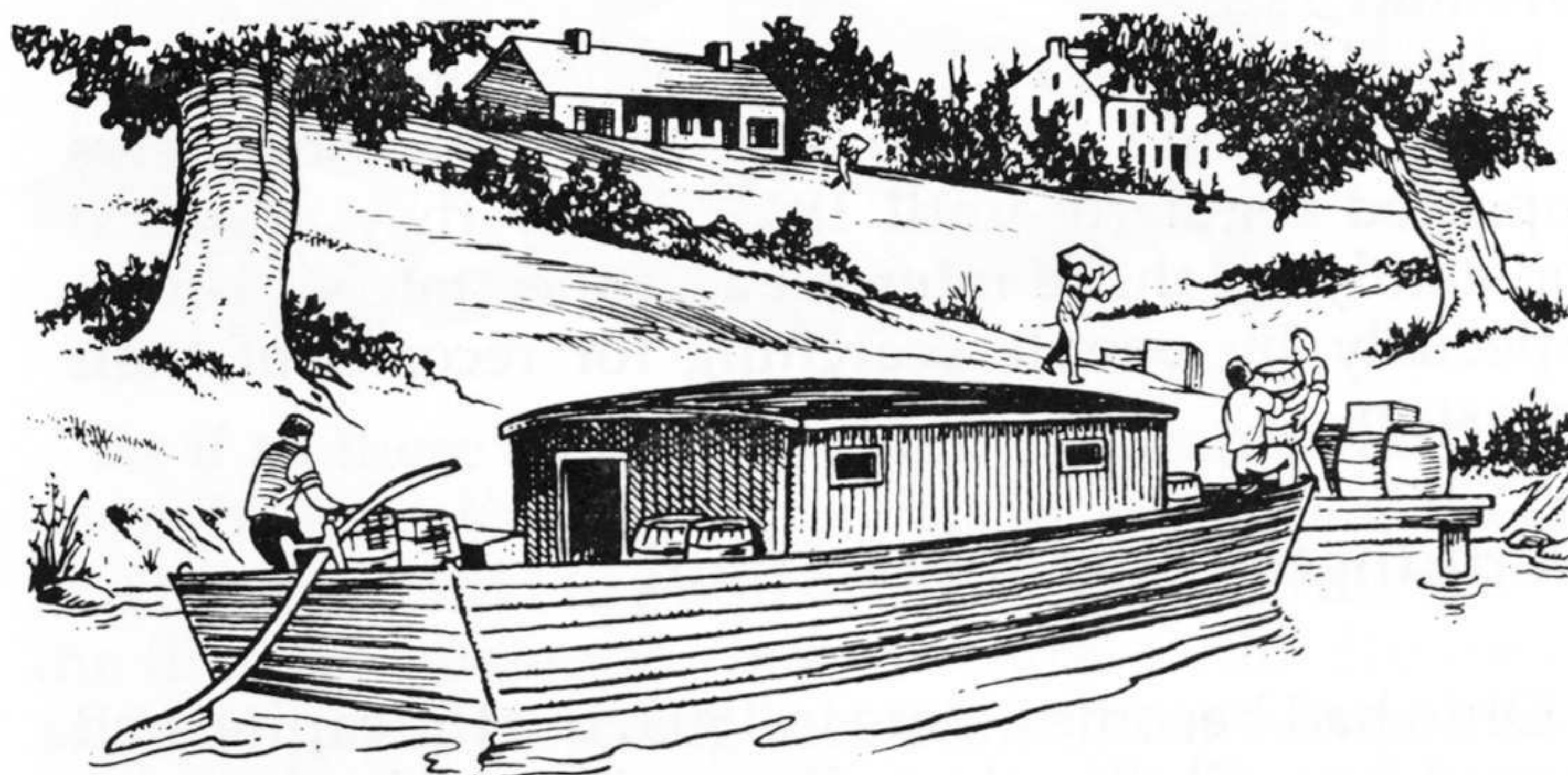
competing for the honor. Worthington had the best chance, with its reputation as an educational center. As early as 1808 the citizens had offered to spend 25 thousand dollars to put up office buildings for state government use if it were selected.

But when the vote was taken in 1812, the decision was to build a new city on a wooded ridge of land across the river from Franklinton. It would later be named Columbus.

Factory Square on South Street

Worthington was nevertheless a busy place. In 1811, James Kilbourne started the Worthington Manufacturing Company, in four large brick buildings on South Street near the river, and opened eight stores around Central Ohio to sell its products.

There was a tannery, making leather that was then made into gloves and saddles. Another factory made hats, and still others made tools, furniture and shoes. Boats tied up at a dock on the Whetstone River to be loaded for shipment down to the Scioto and Ohio Rivers. This was the first manufacturing enterprise in central Ohio.



Perhaps the most successful products were splints of wood, used to set broken bones. One splint-maker

was the same Elias Lewis who danced to the fiddle while his family was journeying to Ohio. He once took a supply of splints on horseback to New England, and spent two years "setting bones" in Connecticut.

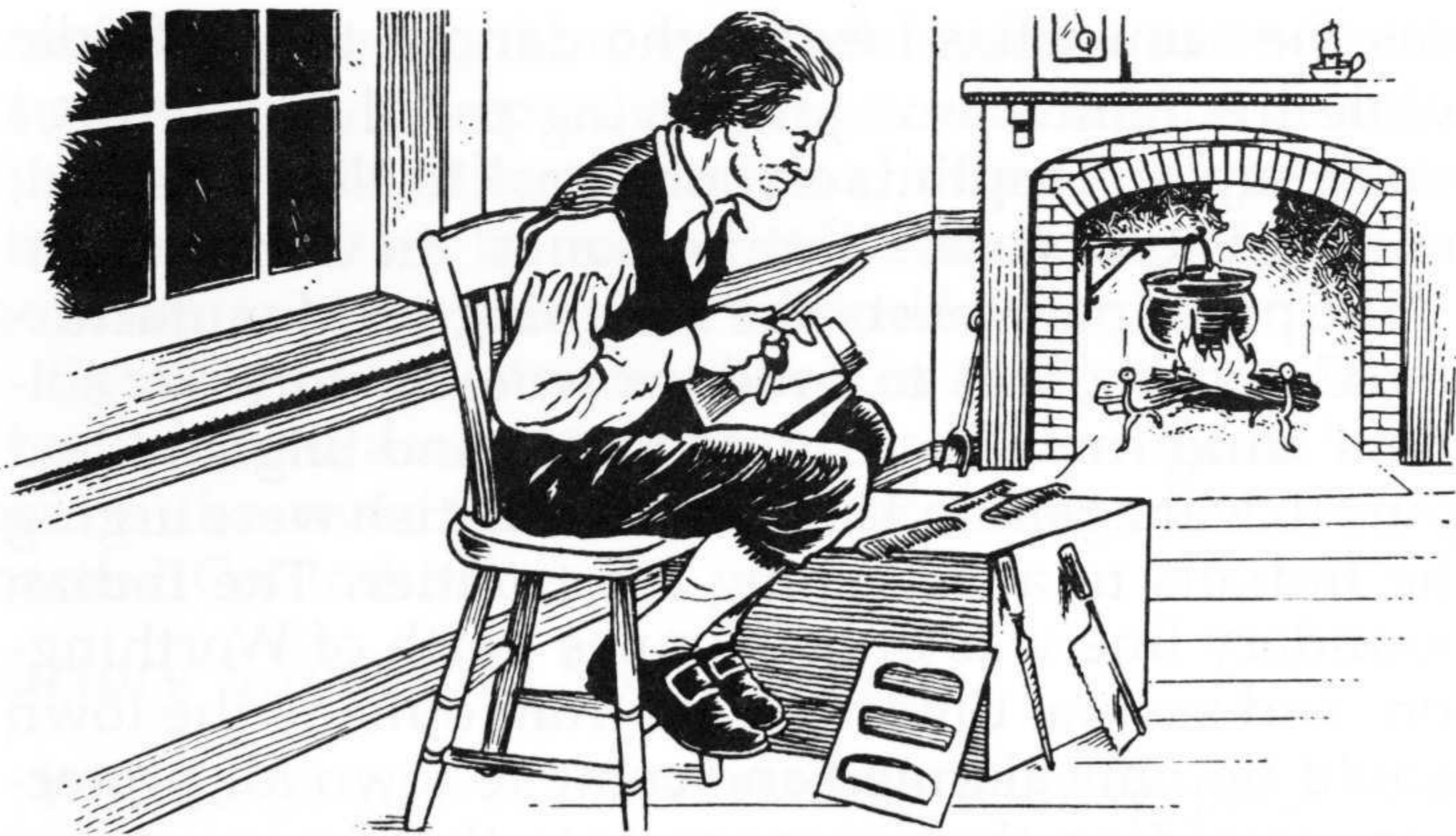
The principal work of the Worthington Manufacturing Company was to produce woolen cloth for soldiers' uniforms. The United States and England had gone to war again in 1812, and the British were urging the Indians to attack along the frontier. The Indian boundary line was only 28 miles north of Worthington, and several times settlers from outside the town would become alarmed and come to town for protection, crowding their wagons onto the Green.

But the Indians nearby remained friendly, in part due to the Wyandot chief, Leatherlips, who was finally put to death by other chiefs because he refused to go to war against the white men. A huge boulder stands beside the Scioto River today, in his memory.

The War brought worries to Worthington, but it also brought business, supplying the armies. High Street was a principal road to the north, and there was constant traffic toward Sandusky.

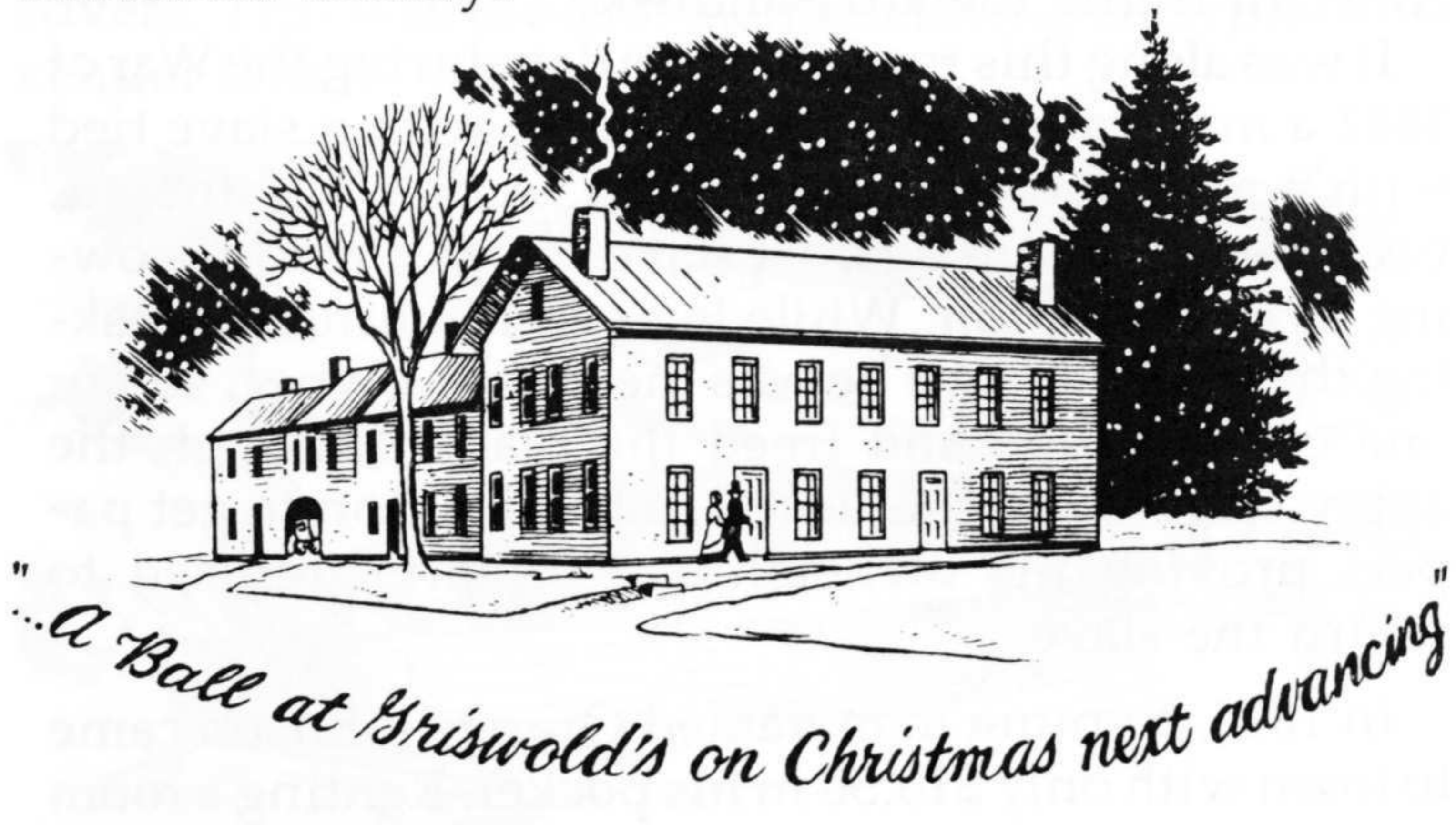
It was along this road that one day during the War of 1812 a man came riding horseback, with a slave tied with a rope and walking behind. A crowd gathered, because sentiment against slavery was already growing in Worthington. While James Kilbourne was asking the man to prove he was the slave's owner, someone cut the rope and freed the man. Although the angry slave-owner returned to Franklinton to get papers proving his ownership, Kilbourne refused to return the slave.

In 1814, a young man named Orange Johnson came to town with only \$16.50 in his pocket. Renting a room in the Kilbourne House, he began to make combs of wood, tortoise shell and bone. His business prospered; soon he married and, in 1816 built a home on



High Street. Later, he added another wing to the front, after becoming Commissioner of the Columbus-Sandusky Turnpike.

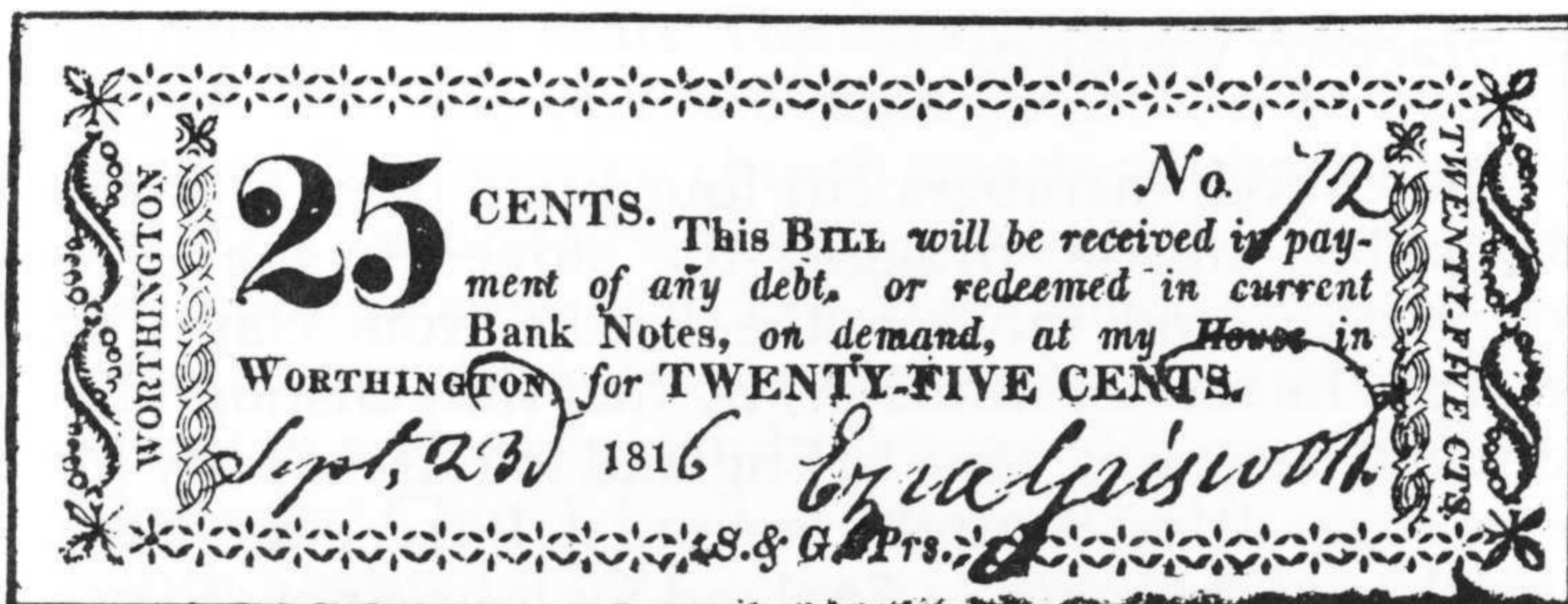
The Johnson house was a typical home of a successful businessman of the day; after years of neglect, it has now been restored and furnished as it might have been when he lived there. Full of treasures from Worthington's past, it is the home of the Worthington Historical Society.



Ezra Griswold built a 25-room brick tavern on the north side of the Green in 1816. It was the center of social and business life for many years. Upstairs was a

large ballroom for dances and parties — there were usually one or two every month, because on the frontier almost any occasion was an excuse to have a party.

President James Monroe stopped at the Griswold Inn in 1817, and some said Johnny Appleseed had been a visitor. Ezra Griswold printed his own money, as did many businessmen, because there was a shortage of United States currency and coins. He printed one and two dollar bills, and paper money worth 50¢, 25¢, 12½¢, and 6-14¢, until someone broke into the print shop and helped themselves.



The Inn stood, and members of the Griswold family lived in it, until 1964; today a modern bank stands there. However, you can still see Griswold paper money, an invitation to a Christmas party at the Inn, and the mail-box with pigeonholes for each family, used when the Inn was the town Post Office — all at the Orange Johnson house.

In 1818 James Kilbourne built a house on the west side of the Green for his stepdaughter, Susan Barnes, when she married Demas Adams. The oldest frame house in Worthington, it still today looks serenely over the Green.

In 1819 Worthington College was founded, the first college in central Ohio. James Kilbourne was, of course its president, as he had been of the Worthington Academy. College classes were held in the Academy building.

Another first, the earliest Masonic Lodge in central Ohio, was chartered in New England and many of the first settlers were members; James Kilbourne was the first Grand Master.

John Snow, who lived in the brick house at 41 West New England Avenue, held meetings in his home and later supervised the building of the Lodge on High Street. The same year that building was completed in 1827, Snow began work on the design and building of a new church for the Protestant Episcopal Society.

A place to worship

The church members cut four huge trees to make the pillars inside, dragged the stones to make its foundation and molded the bricks from clay dug nearby. Its former minister, by that time Bishop Philander Chase, had gone to England to raise money for a college. It is thought he must have sent back sketches of churches in England for John Snow to use as a guide, since St. John's so closely resembles several churches the Bishop visited.

He was successful in his search for money, and named his college near Mount Vernon, Ohio for one of his benefactors, Lord Kenyon. The town of Gambier is named for the other.

St. John's church is today much as it was when completed in 1831, and serves almost as a memorial to its founders. The graves of 18 of the original settlers, their children and grandchildren can be found in its Burial Yard.

The first tombstone placed there was for Captain Abner Pinney, only a year after his arrival. A raised stone marks the grave of Colonel Kilbourne. His first wife, Lucy Fitch Kilbourne, is buried here, and his daughter Laura Kilbourne Cowles. Beside her are the graves of six of her children; five died before reaching

school age. There were frequent epidemics of disease on the frontier, and almost every family suffered the loss of young children.

Fierce winters were a hazard too. In March of 1805, Levi Buttles rode on horseback to Licking County, was caught at night in a blinding snowstorm and contracted a fever. He died in June, and is buried in this graveyard, where other stones bear the names of Morrison, Vining, Case, Beach, Griswold, Pinney, Adams and others of those pioneering families.

Other church groups were organized during Worthington's early years. The Presbyterians began meeting in 1805 and built a church on the Green in 1830. Today's Presbyterian church stands on the same site; in 1927 it was the first building in town to return to the 18th century style of architecture, sparking an interest in restoring other older homes and emphasizing Worthington's New England heritage. There would be a Methodist Church built at the corner of Hartford and South Streets in 1823, later to move to High Street.

Colonel Kilbourne goes to Washington

The town grew. As its leader, James Kilbourne's many interests kept him involved with a growing state and country. He was a trustee of the new Ohio University in Athens, and a Representative to the U.S. Congress from 1813 to 1817. In 1814, he had been elected a Colonel in the Frontier Riflemen by the other officers, as was the custom then. At first he refused the post, not wanting to serve under the group's Brigadier, whom he considered "a perfect booby in military affairs."

He gave in, however, becoming Colonel Kilbourne from then on. He had been active in military life since first arriving in Ohio; most men served in local militia groups to defend the frontier.

Obviously a resourceful man, Col. Kilbourne had the courage to face bad luck. The Worthington Manufacturing Company failed in business (through no fault of his) in 1820, at a time when many businesses were failing. He lost most of his fortune; at the age of fifty, with twelve children still at home, he had to start all over again.

As he later wrote in his autobiography, "Concluding not to hang, drown or get drunk, I took up the compass again and went into the woods . . ." With his usual common sense, he took out his compass and other surveying instruments and went to work for state and county governments, laying out towns and roads, more than any two other men in Ohio.

One of the towns was Bucyrus, and one of the roads was the Columbus-Sandusky Turnpike (a continuation of High Street in Worthington.) Completed in 1830, it was a toll road; travelers paid their toll at a gate that stood next to Orange Johnson's house. Mr. Johnson was one of the Commissioners of the Turnpike.

In his father's footsteps

Just as his father had when young, 17-year-old Byron Kilbourne went to work too when his father needed help. Becoming a surveyor himself, Byron later became one of the founders of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Col. Kilbourne paid off all his debts. Later he was to serve two terms in the Ohio legislature, help to secure land for the Ohio canals, preside at the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol building in Columbus, and become the first Mayor of Worthington when it was incorporated in 1835.

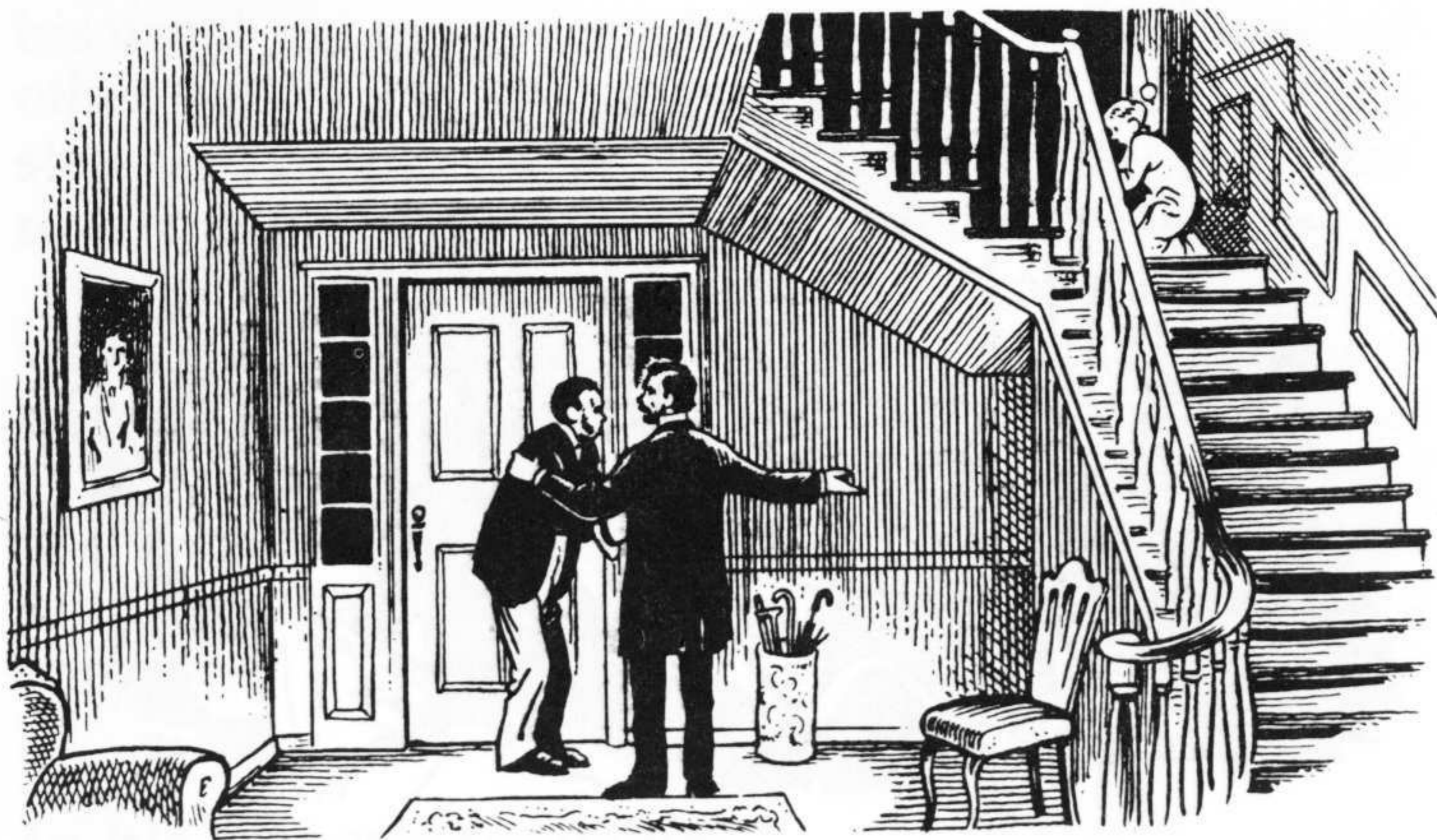
In 1830, he helped found the Worthington Medical College, which shared the Worthington College building. The medical students studied anatomy by dissecting corpses, and an unpleasant rumor arose that the source of supply was a graveyard in Delaware. In 1839 an angry mob came down from Delaware threatening to batter down the door. Dr. Thomas Morrow, the College president, hastily turned over the key and the Medical College soon closed.



One other college, a Female Seminary, opened in 1842; young ladies of the Methodist faith lived and studied in a 3-story brick building that stood just south of the present Methodist Church. After Ohio Wesleyan University began admitting women, the Seminary declined, and closed in 1857. But while it was there, Worthington social life revolved around it, along with literary societies, singing societies and other quiet pursuits.

Some of those pursuits had to be quiet. As early as 1837, an anti-slavery group had formed in Worthington; you will remember that even earlier Col. Kilbourne had refused to return a slave to his master.

As the question of slavery began to divide the country, men like Ozem Gardner and Ansel Mattoon were known leaders in the movement to abolish slavery. Their homes were suspected of being "stations" on the Underground Railway, that secret system in which runaway slaves traveled by night and were hidden in homes by day. Worthington was on one of the main "routes", from the Ohio River to Lake Erie and freedom in Canada.



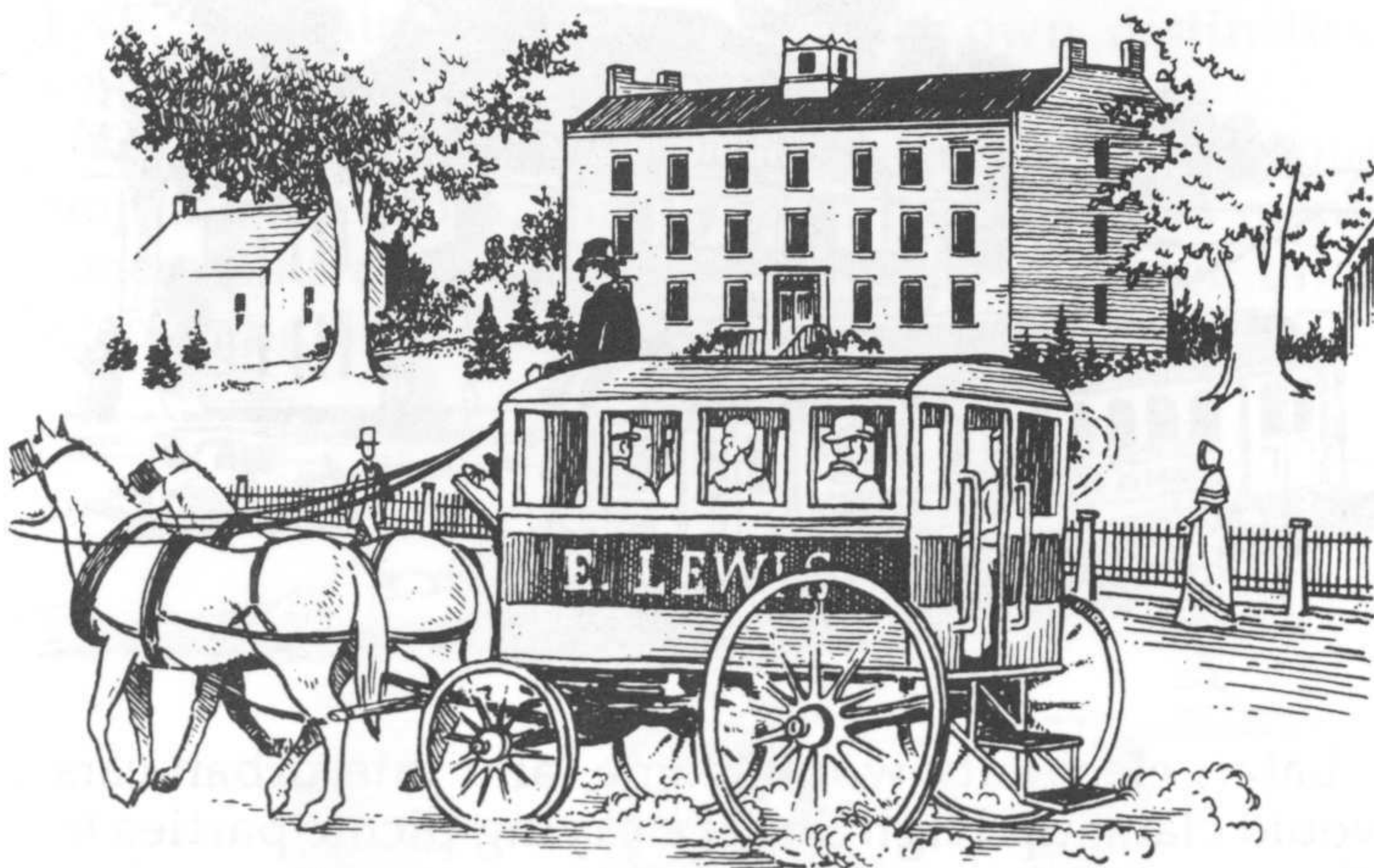
Cynthia Kilbourne Burr of Columbus remembers her grandfather, Charles E. Burr, telling of being awakened one night when he was a small boy, hearing voices downstairs. Peeking from the stairway, he saw his father talking to a black man. Frightened, he crept back to bed, but nothing was said the next morning, so he kept his secret. A day or two later, in his family's barn a missing team of horses and a wagon mysteriously reappeared. Not until years later did he realize his father had sheltered an escaping slave.

When the Civil War came, the old buildings of the Worthington Manufacturing Company became head-

quarters for a tent camp of a thousand men. Practically every man in Worthington joined the Union Army. One became a Confederate General; Roswell Ripley had gone to West Point, but his sympathies were with the South and he served that cause honorably.

“Cap” Skeelee was captured and served time in the notorious Andersonville prison in the South. In later years, he told youngsters of his experiences as he sat on the front porch of his home on Hartford Street.

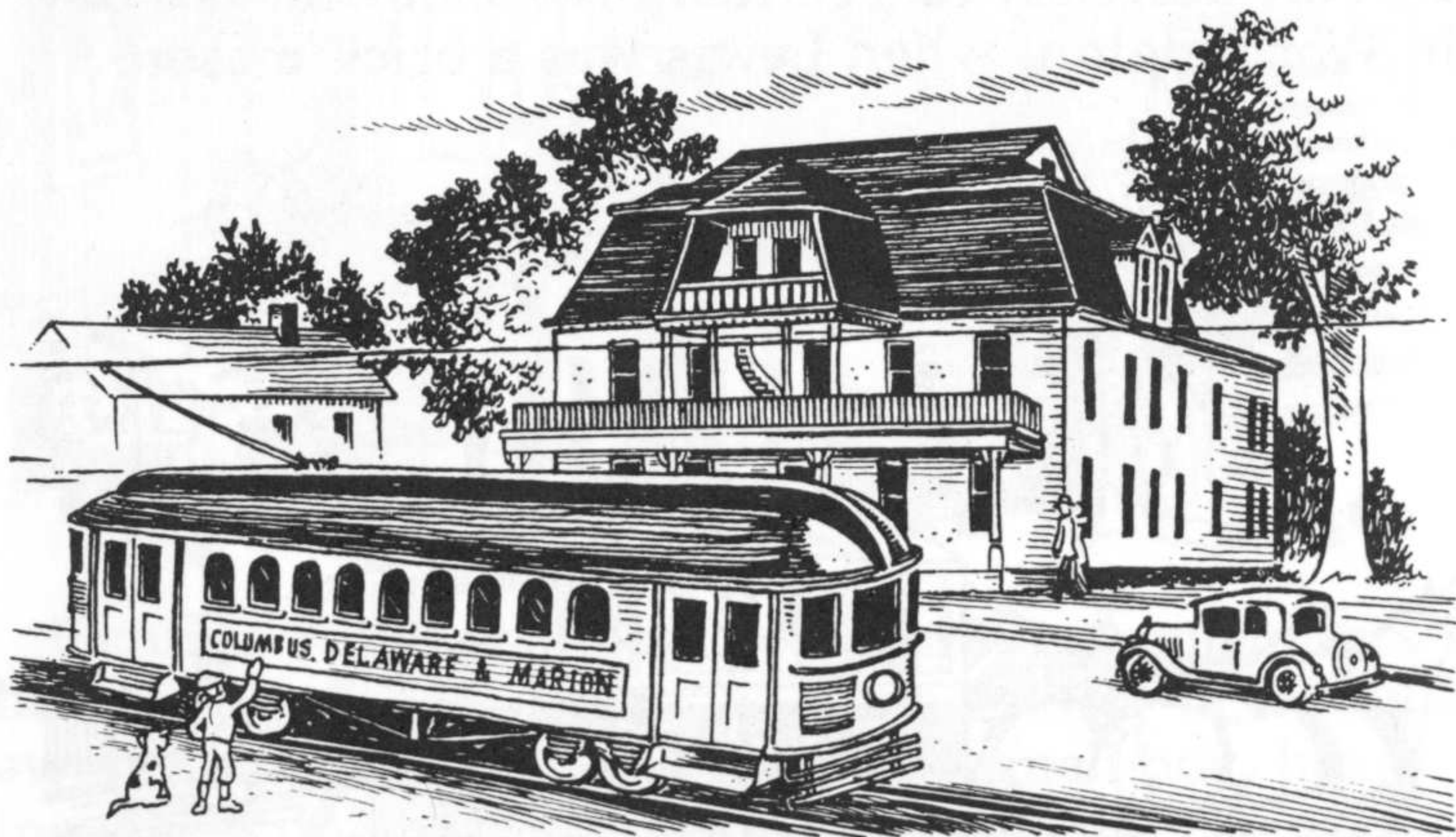
Bishop Philander Chases’s nephew, Salmon P. Chase, became Secretary of the Treasury under President Lincoln. Old Elias Lewis, who now drove a horse-drawn omnibus on schedule between Worthington and Columbus, liked to tell his passengers that the Secretary had carried bricks for him as a boy in Worthington, when Lewis was a brick-mason.



Perhaps because of that omnibus route, Elias named his son Worthington Columbus Lewis, and “Worthy” himself later tried without success to start a horse-drawn railway between Worthington and Westerville.

The quiet era

By now many of Worthington's original settlers had died. With Colonel Kilbourne's death in 1850, and with many of the younger generation moving to Columbus, the excitement seemed to have left the town. Worthington became known for its quiet beauty, and was a welcome stop on the busy Columbus-Sandusky Pike. Around the turn of the century, when the entire population was only 443, horse-drawn tally-ho coaches brought dinner and dancing parties to the Central Hotel.



Later, electricity would come, and interurban cars would clang up High Street carrying picnic parties to Glenmary Park near Flint Road.

In 1927, James Kilbourne's granddaughter, Mrs. William G. Deshler, presented Worthington with a new Library building on the Green, in memory of her grandfather. It stood on the site of the first log meeting-house.

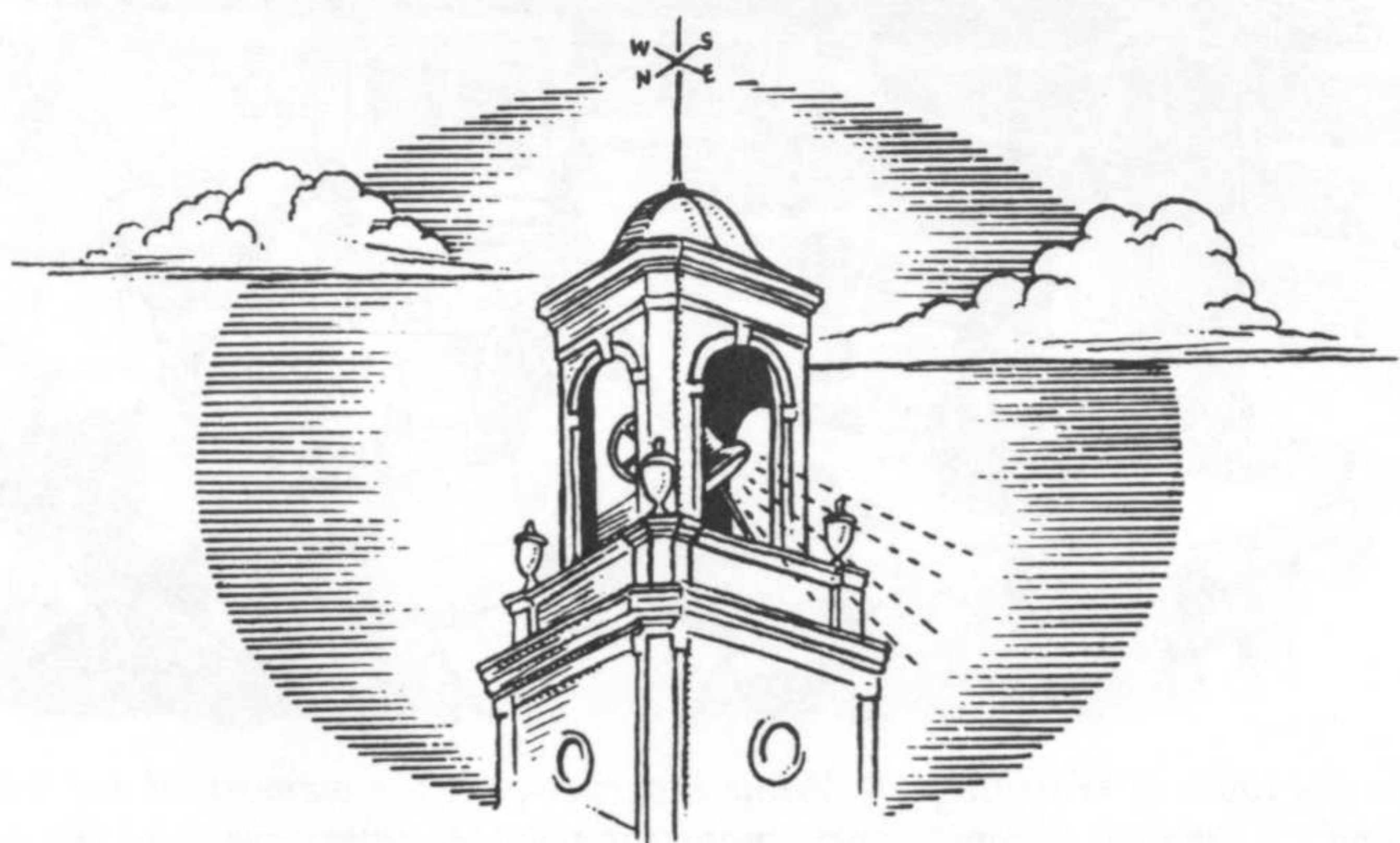
The bell that had hung atop the meeting-house and the college buildings would be moved in 1938 to the steeple of a new school building on Granville Road, the fourth on that same site.

A few years later, in 1941 and 1942, Worthington began a new period of growth, with the homes built in Colonial Hills, later to become part of the village. Population passed 5,000 in 1956 and the village became a city; the next year St. John's church farm lot became Kilbourne Village.

More homes, churches and schools were built, and its nearness to wide freeways would once again make Worthington an important part of the central Ohio business scene. Population would pass 14,000 as the United States celebrated its 200th birthday in 1976.

And when the Nation joined in one great peal of bells at two o'clock on the afternoon of July the 4th, 1976, Worthington would add its own distinctive voice.

The bell James Kilbourne bought at Fort Pitt and put atop the log cabin, the bell that had called so many generations of Worthington children to school, once again rang out across the village Green.



A note to readers:

This is only a brief look at the story of Worthington. A wealth of fact, interesting anecdotes and personal reminiscences can be found in:

- A Walking Tour of Old Worthington*, by Frank Corbin, Worthington, 1969
Shedding Light on Worthington, by the Woodrow Guild, Worthington Presbyterian Church, 1931
James Kilbourne, Ohio Pioneer, by Ann Natalie Hansen, 1950
Worthington Vignettes, by Bill Arter, 1976
Origin of the Name of the Town of Worthington, by Helen M. Dudley, 1943
Worthington, Ohio: James Kilbourn's Episcopal Haven on the Western Frontier, by Goodwin Berquist, in *Ohio History*, Summer 1976
The "Old Northwest" Genealogical Quarterly, 1903 (Thomas Worthington, Scioto Land Company Agreement, James Kilbourne autobiography, letters and journal, other Worthington family genealogies and histories.)

These and many other materials can be found at the Worthington Public Library. Kilbourne and Worthington papers are in the collection of The Ohio Historical Society Library in Columbus, and Worthington history is included in various histories of Franklin County.

In the Orange Johnson House are furnishings and belongings of many early Worthington families and others of the period 1816-1850.

A word about spelling: 18th and 19th century writers spelled largely by ear and as they pleased. Thus you will find many names spelled various ways (Kilbourne, Kilbourn, and Kilborn, Stanberry and Stansbery, Blanford and Blandford), sometimes within the same source.



"To the town of Worthington. While it perpetuates the memory of our worthy friend . . . may it become conspicuous for science, enterprise, and the useful arts!"

Since 1976, when WORTHINGTON:
NEW ENGLAND IN THE WILDERNESS was
first written, the historical records
of the Worthington Historical
Society have continued to be re-
fined and expanded. If this book
were to be written today, some
information would be altered. For
instance, it is now believed that
the Orange Johnson House was
built by Arora Buttles in 1811 and
1819. However, the story of old
Worthington that children enjoy
remains essentially the same.

NOTE: No. 16 on the map, the Old
Rectory, has been moved to
50 W. New England Ave. and
now serves as museum, offices,
and library for the historical
society.

WORTHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



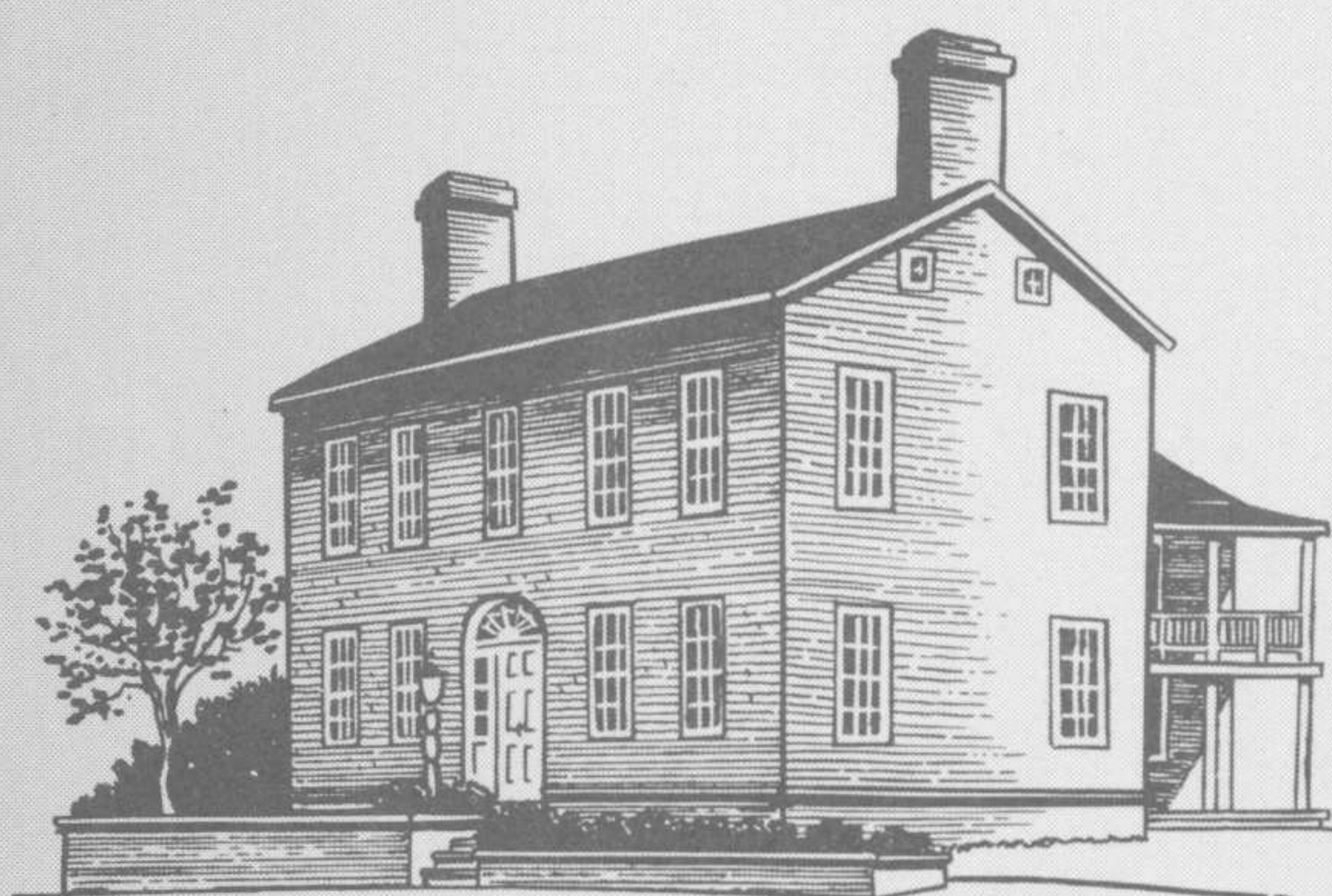
In 1802 a group of Connecticut men led by Colonel James Kilbourne formed the Scioto Land Company to purchase 16,000 acres of land in Ohio for \$1.25 an acre. Having carefully chosen high fertile land, they planned a town with a village green at its center; provided 100 acres of land each to support a school and a church, and land in town to build them on; and proposed a portion for each of 40 families consisting of a town lot of about an acre and an "out-lot" of about 99 acres to farm — all before ever leaving Connecticut.

Arriving in Ohio during 1803 and 1804, these families became the nucleus of a new town that retained its New England flavor in the Ohio wilderness. In the brand new State (Ohio had just become the 17th) Worthington became a business and manufacturing center, coming within one vote of being named the capital in 1812. (At least one historian claims Worthington's winning vote was lured away to a tavern at the crucial moment; a forested spot on the east bank of the Scioto won out, later to be named Columbus.)

Many homes and buildings still standing and in use have stories to tell about Worthington's history and architecture; their locations are numbered to match the sketches, and each is marked with a Heritage Site plaque.

To make your tour more enjoyable, other sites that are part of the Worthington story are designated on the map by letters. As you follow the numbered tour, notice (A) the site of a tavern owned by Ezra Griswold, host to such famous visitors as Johnny Appleseed and President Monroe, setting for dress balls and community gatherings, stood until 1964; (B) the Worthington Presbyterian Church standing on site of original building; this sanctuary built in 1927 began revival of original architectural styles; (C) Worthington Public Library stands on site of first log cabin built upon arrival, to serve as school, church, community building; (D) Worthington Inn, host to tally-ho and sleighing parties in the 90's as the Central Hotel; (E) residence stands on site of original Methodist Church built in 1823; (F) site of Worthington Female Seminary which stood until 1962, now cleared area south of (G) present United Methodist Church; and (H) barely visible behind the north side of Post Office, the President's House moved from the Seminary grounds to become private residence, excellent Carpenter Gothic style.

A Brief Tour of OLD WORTHINGTON VILLAGE

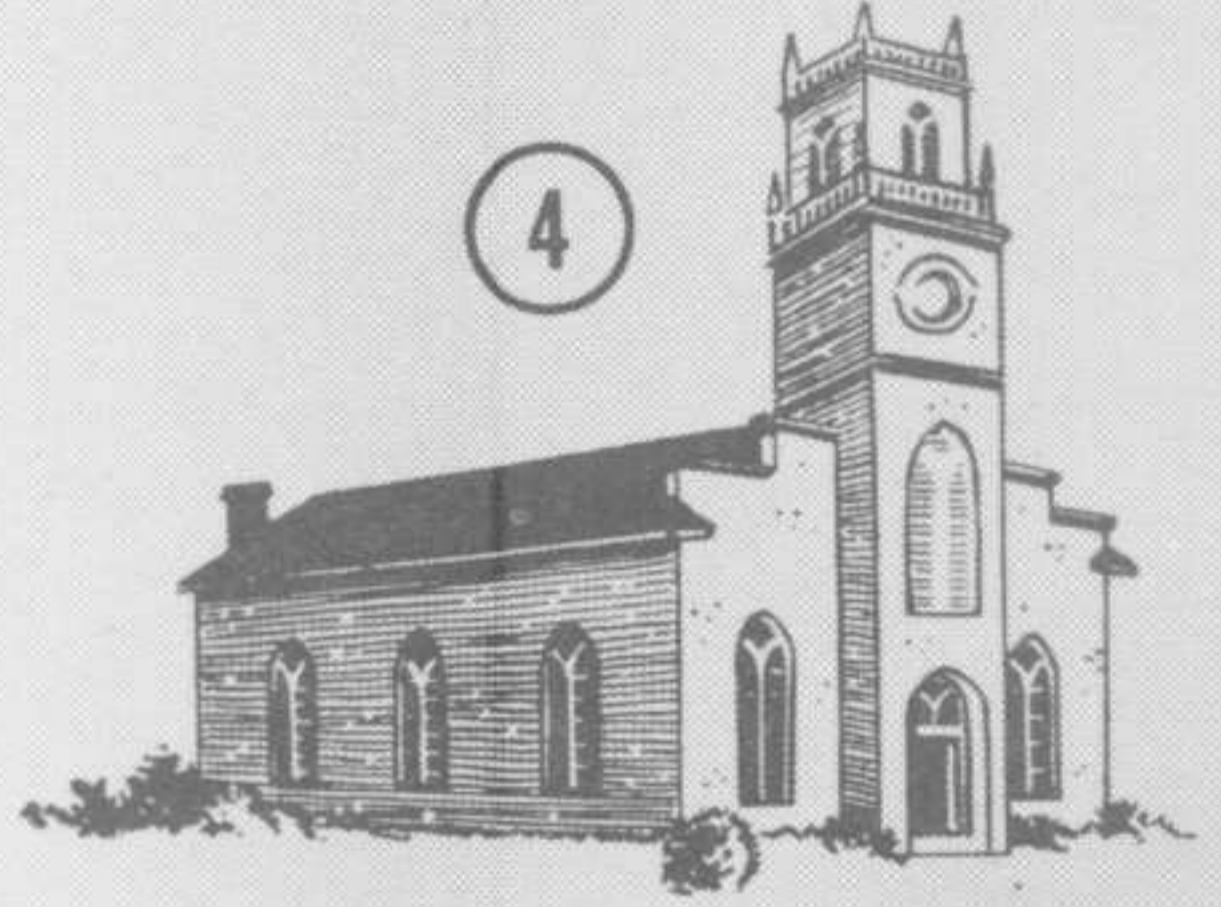


1 Orange Johnson House, 956 High St. Owned by Worthington Historical Society. Home of early manufacturer of combs and prominent Ohio businessman, now restored as a living museum and Society offices. Oldest portion in rear built 1816, addition in front around 1830. Furnishings include many items from early Worthington families, authentic period fabrics and decor. Lower level houses additional Worthington memorabilia (including Col. James Kilbourne's surveying instruments), doll collection, gift shop and information center. (Open Sundays 1-5 p.m. and by appointment; for more information call 885-1247.)

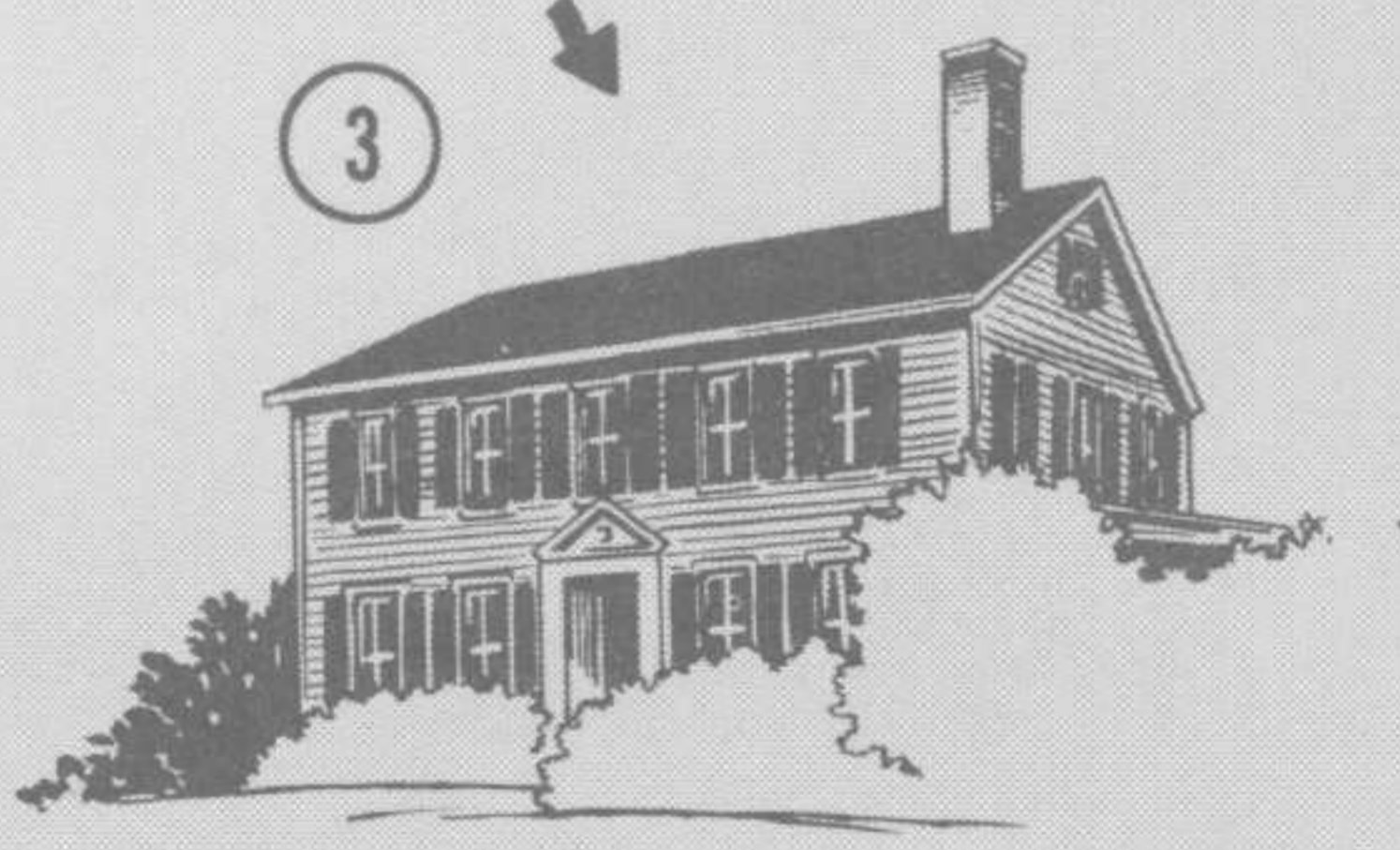


2 Sidney Brown House, 12 E. Stafford Ave. Built in early 1840's. Described in Ohio Historic Inventory as "an architectural masterpiece of its time." Frame wing to east is later addition. (Private residence.)

3 Demas Adams House, 721 High St., facing Green. Oldest frame house in Worthington. Built in 1818 for Adams and bride Susan Barnes, stepdaughter of Col. Kilbourne. Newer wood siding has been added over original black walnut; inside had 10 fireplaces, framing of foot-square hand-hewn beams fastened with hardwood pegs. Once home of Rev. Uriah Heath, Methodist minister who planted many trees still standing on the Green. (Private residence.)

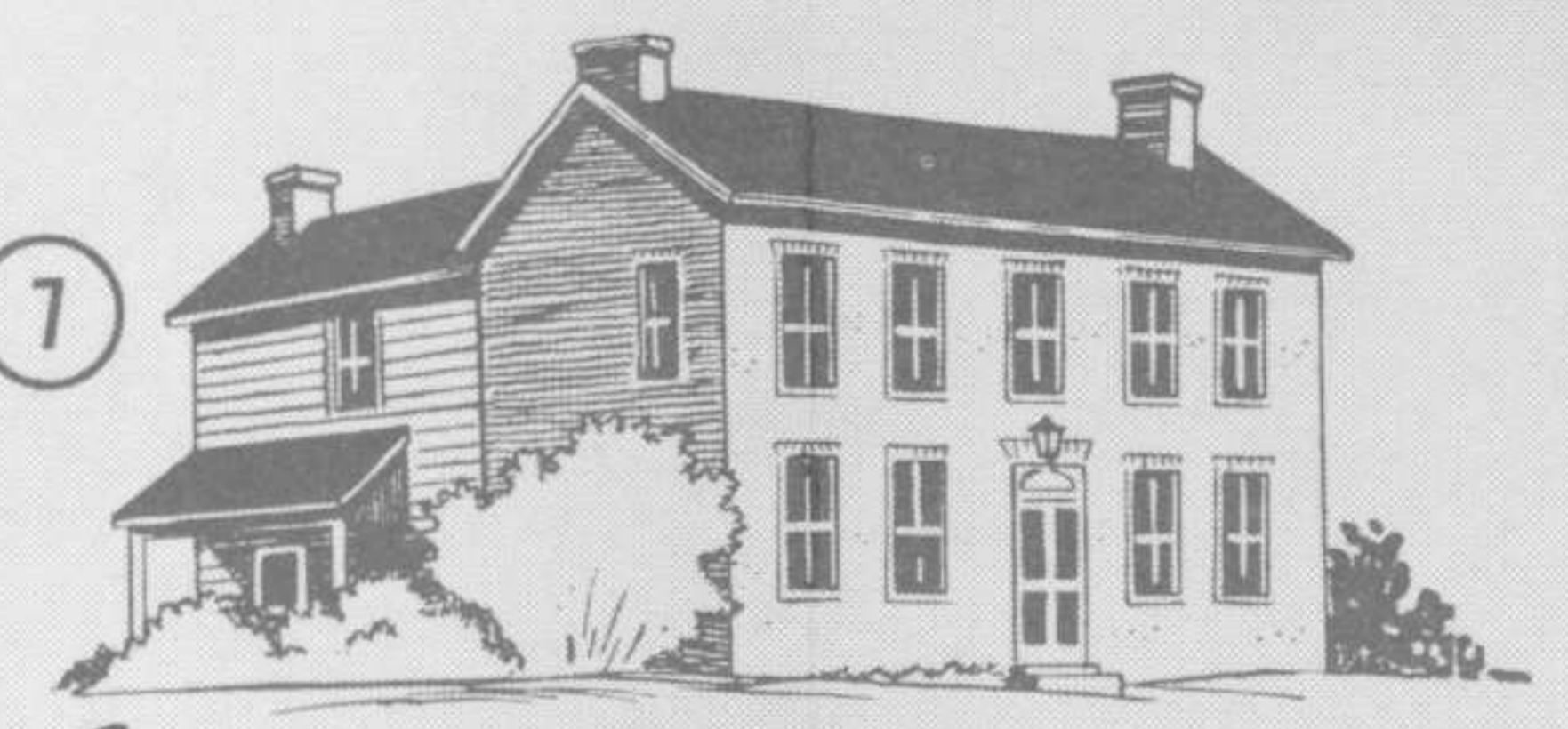


4 St. John's Episcopal Church and Burial Yard, 700 High St., east side of Green. Congregation organized 1804; first Episcopal church west of Alleghenies, building completed 1831. Built from plans for an English church sent back by Bishop Philander Chase from London, where he had gone to solicit funds for Kenyon College, which he organized in Worthington. Interior beautifully restored, original pews serve as choir stalls. Many members of original families buried in graveyard, including Col. Kilbourne, first Deacon of St. John's. (Open by arrangement with Church Office.)

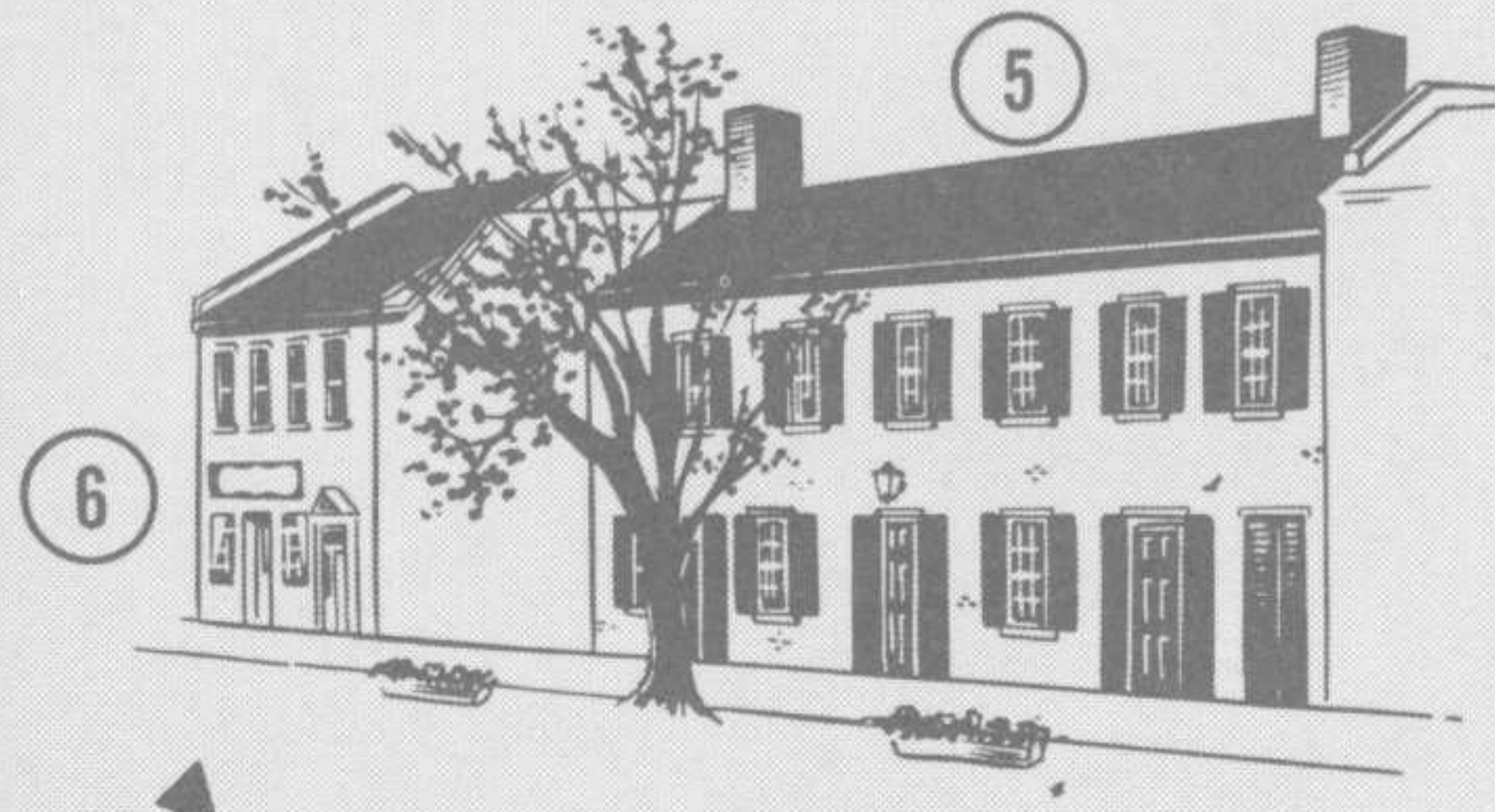


11 Masonic Temple, 634 High St. Northern portion home of New England Lodge #4, one of oldest in state, chartered by Grand Lodge of Connecticut in 1803. Construction of this building began 1820, was supervised by John Snow, dedicated 1827. Now maintained as Masonic museum; newer adjoining portion on south houses offices of Grand Lodge of Ohio, built 1957 in compatible style.

5 The Kilbourne House, 679-681 High St. Built 1804, first brick structure in Worthington. This is portion of elegant Federal home of Colonel James Kilbourne, leader of founding group, Congressman, organizer of Worthington Manufacturing Company. Married twice, father of 12 children, many becoming prominent in Columbus history. Western Intelligencer, first newspaper in Central Ohio, begun here; Orange Johnson began making combs in room on second floor, where ash floors and walnut woodwork remain. (South half occupied by shops; north half private residence.)



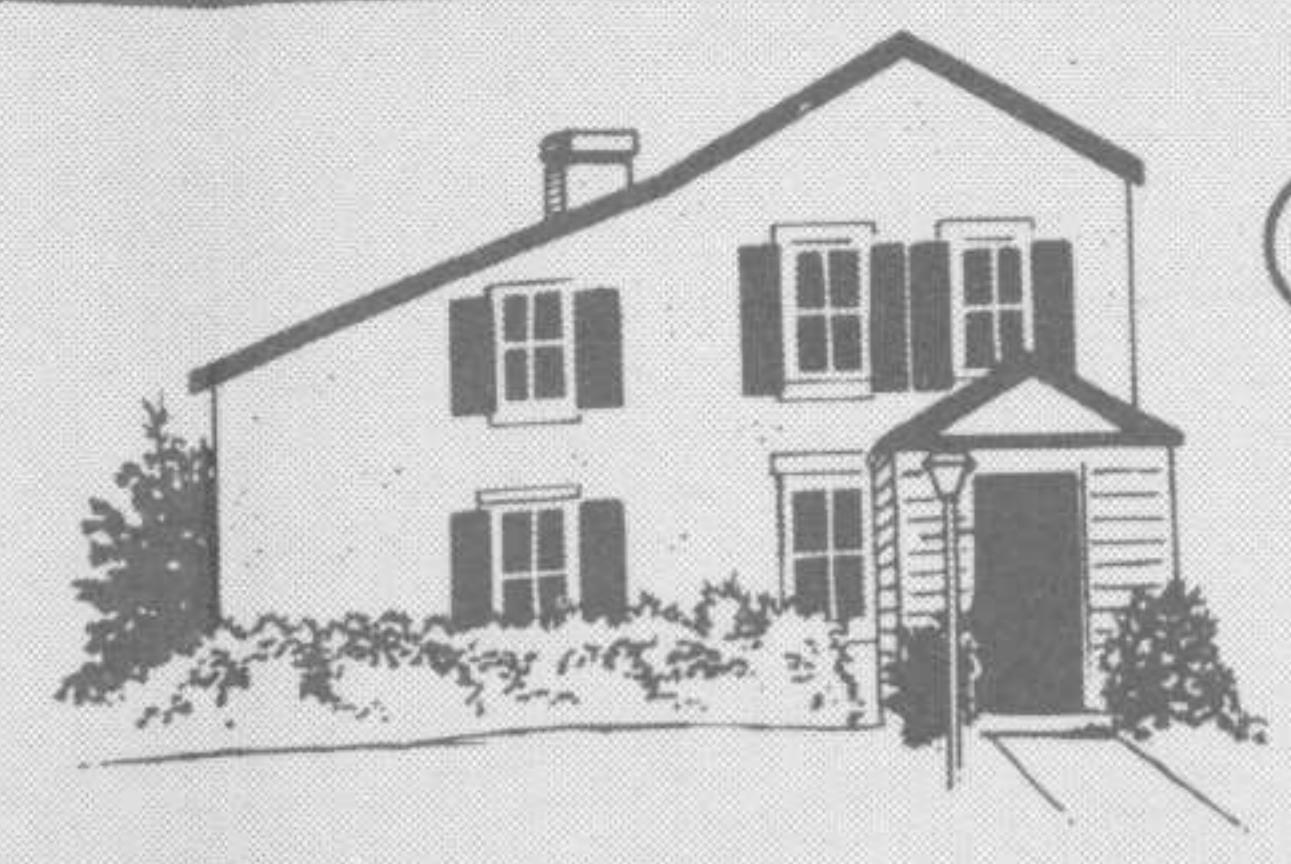
7 John Snow House, 41 West New England Ave. Built 1815, bought in 1817 by John Snow, who later became Grand Master of Grand Lodge of Ohio, organized first Commandery of Knights Templar in Northwest Territory. Arches flanking mantel in west room may be Masonic symbols added by Snow. Note settling of brick wall; center hall stair of black walnut; unpeeled log joints visible in cellar. Back wing added during Civil War. (Now antique shop.)



6 Dr. James Hill House, 673 High St. (now beauty salon). Standing on lot originally bought at auction for \$11.00 in 1804. Built between 1810 and 1818 by Dr. Hill, subsequently occupied by other physicians, including Dr. Thomas Morrow, head of Worthington Medical College. Front of first story altered, but interior and exterior still in good condition.

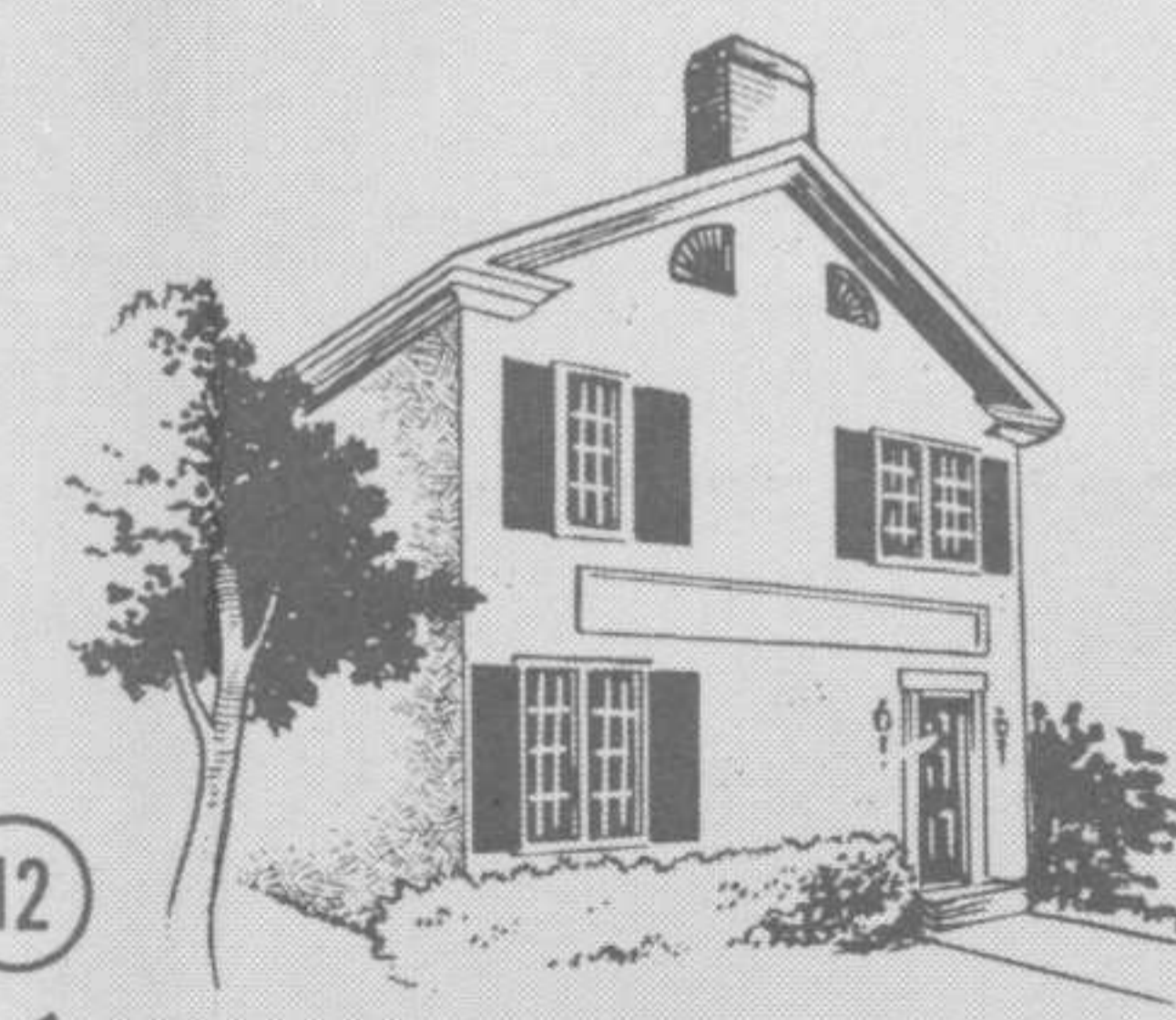


8 Boarding House, 25 Fox Lane. Built about 1812 to house single men employed by Worthington Manufacturing Company when lower South Street was called Factory Street. Tools, woolen cloth, gloves, other products were floated down nearby Olen-tangy (then Whetstone) River to markets. Front is essentially unchanged, wings to west added and extensive alterations made by last three owners. (Private residence.)



9 Elias Lewis House, 26 West South St. Two-story portion built between 1820 and 1825. Lewis was splint-maker, stagecoach driver, lively dancer to fiddle tunes, brick-mason; enjoyed telling how Salmon P. Chase, later U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice, had been his hod-carrier as a youth. (Private residence.)

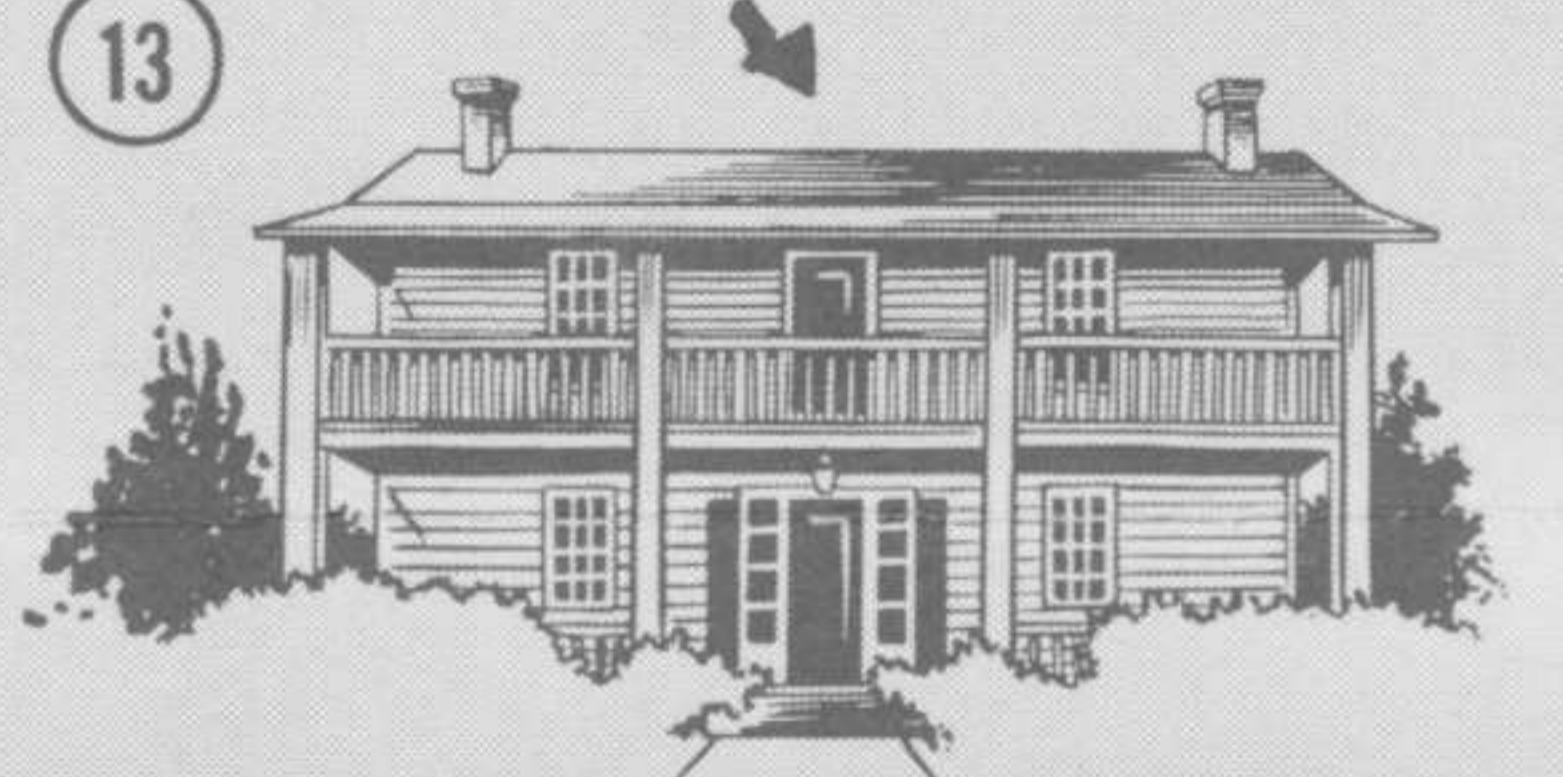
12 Mark Russell House, 5805 N. High St. Main portion built around 1845 on 100-acre "out-lot" assigned to original settler. Excellent example of Carpenter Gothic, charming scroll-work make this "gingerbread house" a favorite with children. Russell, noted artist and stained-glass designer, bought house in 1919, added delightful entryway and half-timbered north wing. (Private residence.)



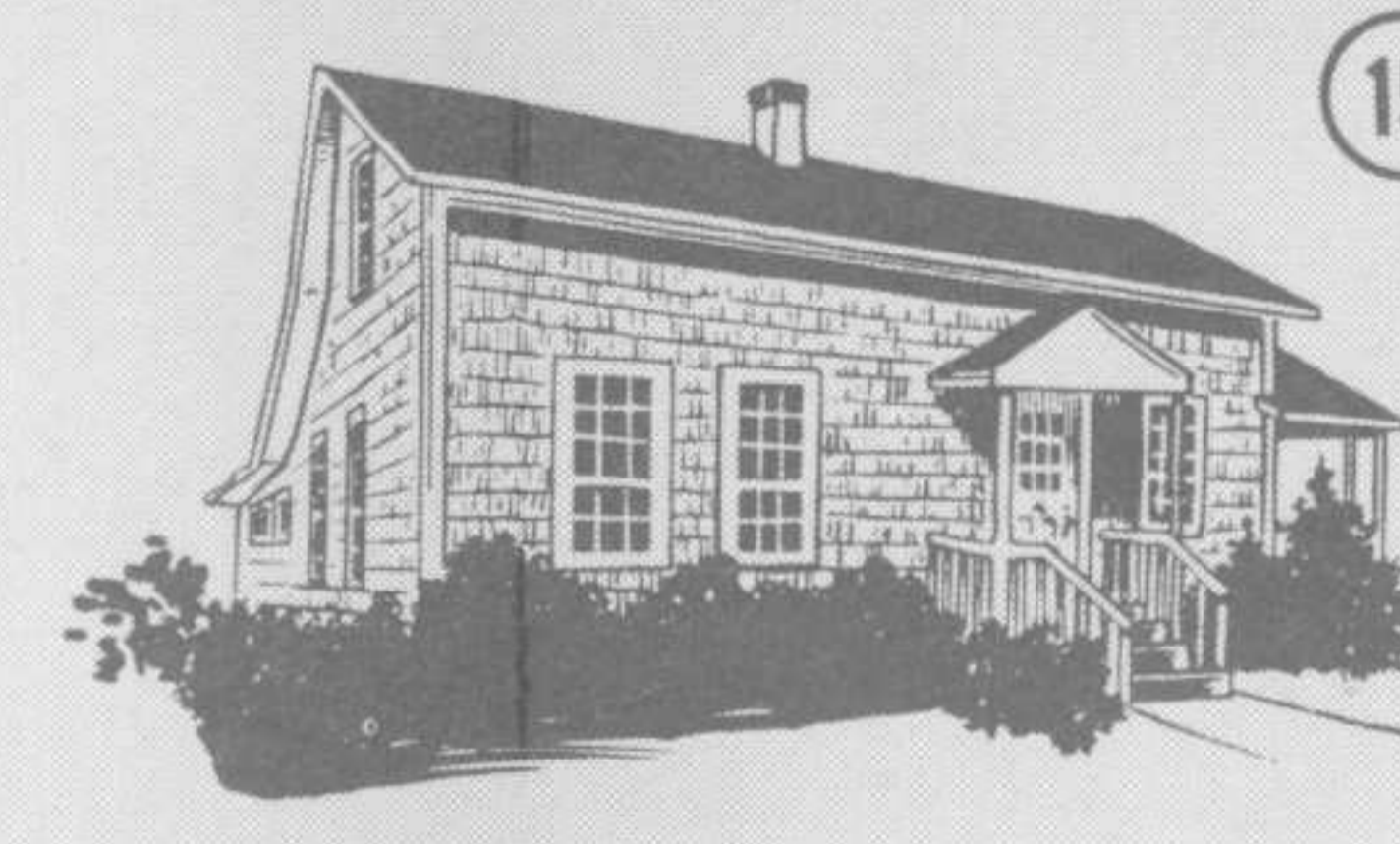
12 Ripley House, 623 North High Street (now gift shop.) Alexander Morrison, Jr. purchased lot in 1804 for 25 cents. House built in 1815, of Federal design, was birthplace of Roswell S. Ripley, West Point graduate in U.S. Grant's class, later a Confederate General. Still in excellent repair, graceful Adams mantel on first floor.



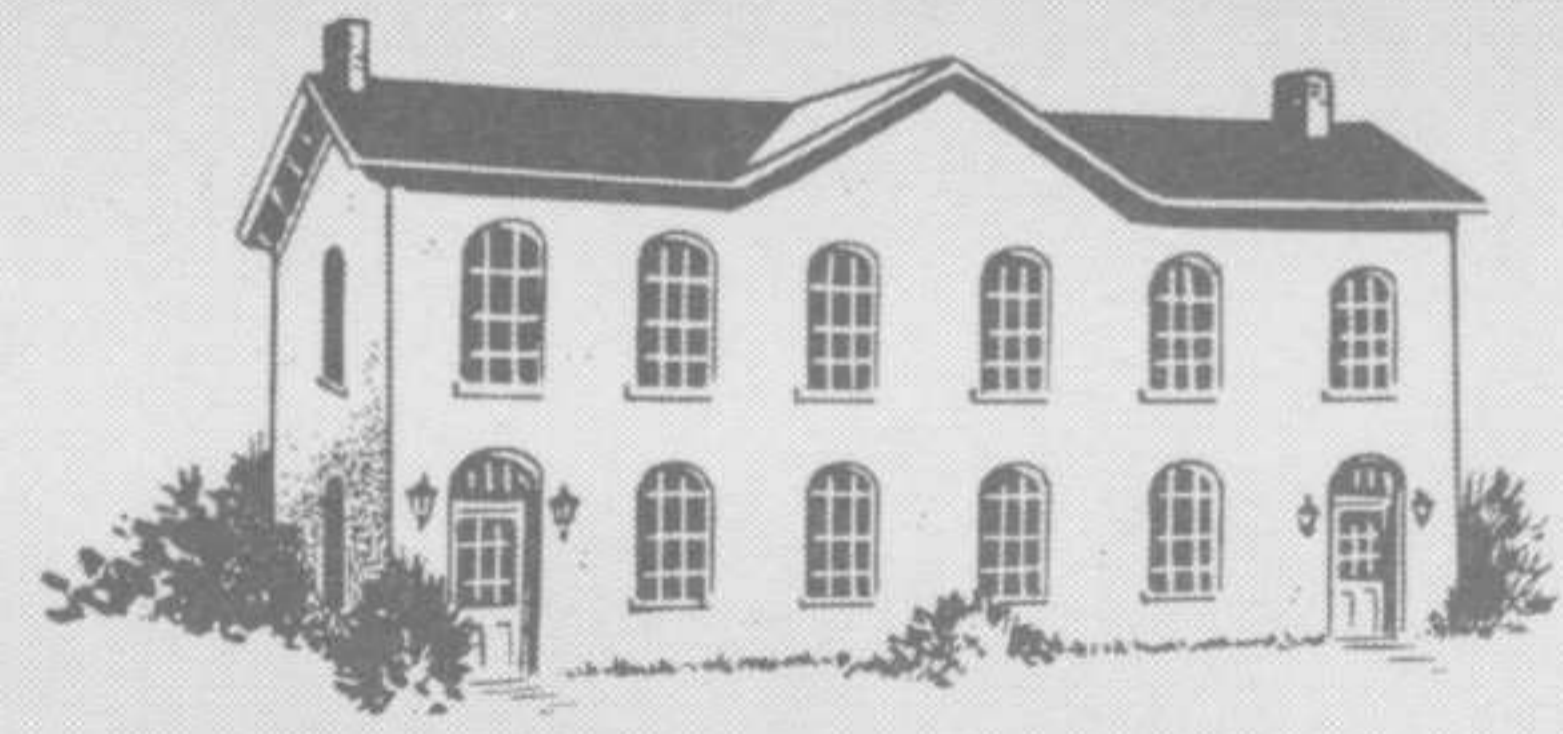
10 Captain Skeele House, 700 Hartford St. Built about 1832 facing Granville Rd., later moved 90 degrees. Skeele was survivor of Andersonville Prison during Civil War, lived here many years. 19th Century double gallery design, has three original fireplaces, original plank flooring and window panes, whole young hickory trees for roof beams. (Private residence.)



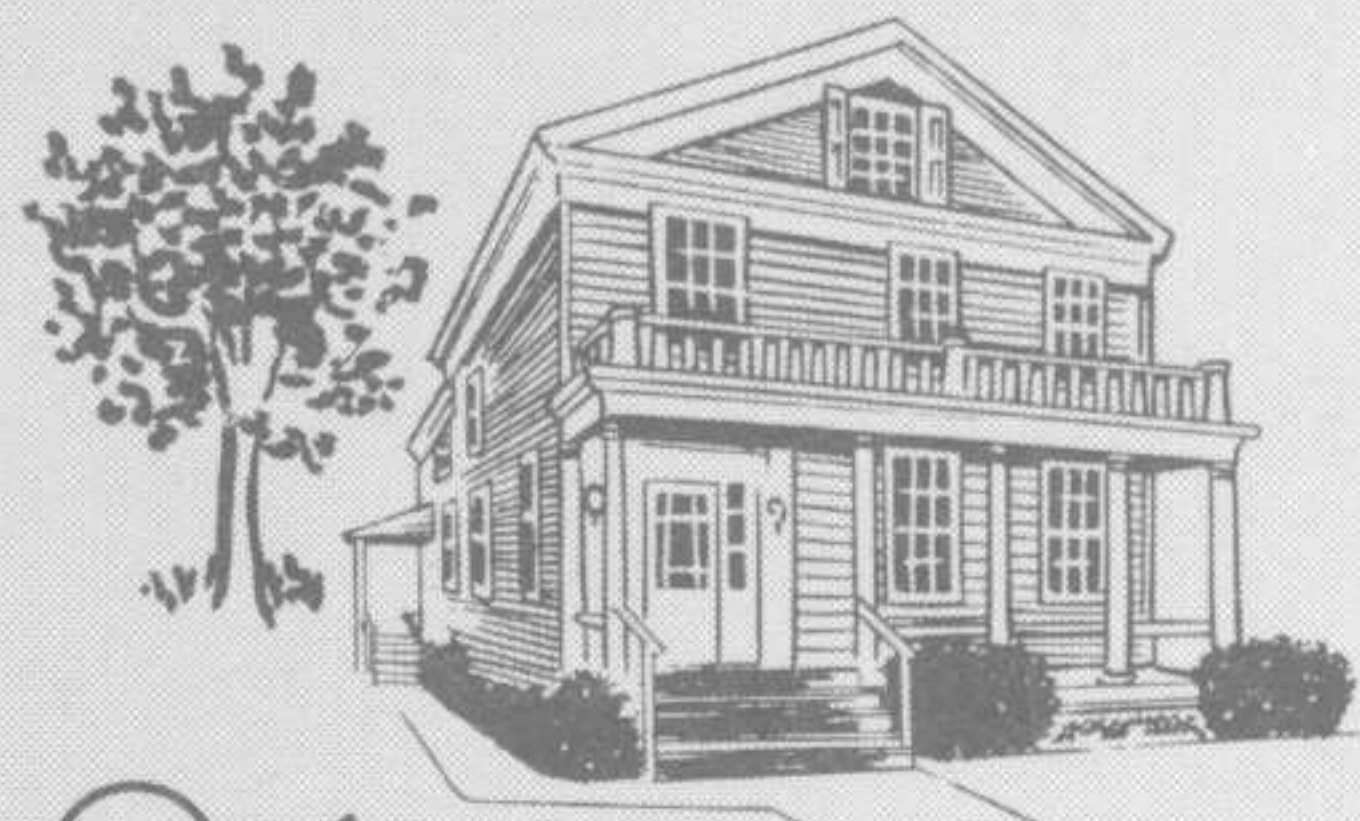
15 Travis Scott House, 72 E. Granville Rd., Built in 1820's, this tiny New England salt-box may have been moved from another spot on the Green. Even though its upper floors sag comfortably with age, it has been lovingly cared for by a succession of owners. (Private residence.)



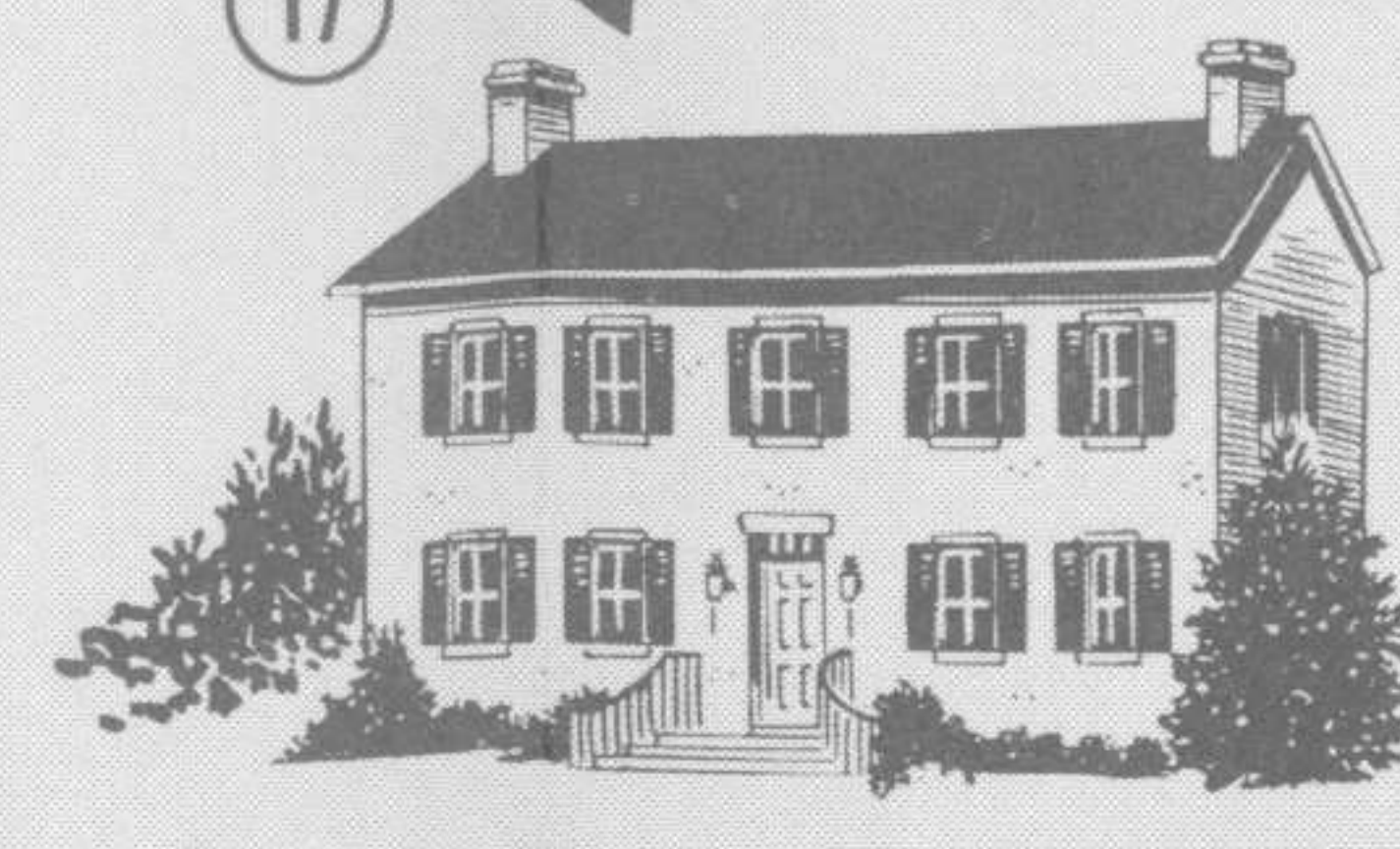
Ladd-Mattoon House, 72 East North St. Apparently built by Caleb Ladd in 1820, stood at southwest corner of North and High Streets until 1932. Since later owner, Ansel Mattoon, was town's leading abolitionist, probably was stop on Underground Railroad. Later resident was Dr. Thomas Woodrow, Presbyterian pastor and grandfather of Woodrow Wilson. Carefully restored, random-width plank floors, cherry stairs. (Private residence.)



14 Sharon Township Hall, southwest corner Granville Rd. and Hartford St. Built 1856 as school, on land purchased from St. John's Episcopal Church. Township Trustees for many years shared use with Odd Fellows Lodge; property once again belongs to St. John's.



16 Old Episcopal Manse, 799 Hartford St. (Worthington Schools Administration Building). Built 1830, was originally home of Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, stood on southeast corner of Green. Ohio Greek Revival Style (note continuous return of cornice on gable end) with original tree trunk beams under first floor. Stairway banister in front hall of pleasing design. Two-story addition in rear is recent.



Heritage Site plaque placed near buildings on tour for identification, adapted from an eagle butter mold used by Mary McGill Wright in 1835. Original can be seen in Keeping Room of the Orange Johnson House.

