Happy 200th Birthday Van Wert County









Native American Tribes located here were migrants: Miamis, Wyandots, Shawnees, and Ottawas. This area was used as sanctuary for women and children away from the war trails.

Great Black Swamp

Northwest Ohio, home of the Great Black Swamp. Formed by glaciers pushing down from the north and then receding. Much of the swamp was covered with an almost impenetrable forest of giant oak, sycamore, hickory walnut, ash, elm, maple and cottonwood as well as mucky swamp.





Mrs. Matilda Brodnix recalls, "There were droves of Indians at the time. As high as one hundred would pass our house at a time, and would water their ponies at our well.... There were Indian tents all through the woods.... When we moved here, I would go and see them nearly every day and take them something." She stated there were numerous wigwams on the south side of Main Street; but the Whites gradually usurped the lands of the Indians. The Northwest Ordinance in 1787 stated the lands were to be divided into 3 to 5 smaller territories; once the population reached 60,000, the people could petition for statehood. Ohio became a state in 1803.



The Northwest Ordinance of 1785 established a procedure for surveying and selling the western lands by dividing the territory into townships.







Isaac Van Wart

Isaac Van Wart was a militiaman from New York. During the American Revolution. John Paulding, David Williams, and Isaac Van Wart captured British Major Jon Andre who was convicted and executed as a spy for consporting with General Benedict Arnold to sell plans for West Point.



The men were honored with The first Congressional Medal commissioned by General George Washington, The Fidelity Medal. Each man also has a counties in northwest Ohio named for them. In the transcribing of the paperwork, Van Wart became Van Wert.







CENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE

General Anthony Wayne was chosen by President George Washington to lead troops in the Indian Wars (1790-1795). On his way to Fallen Timbers where the decisive battle was fought, Wayne and his troops passed through the edge of the county on August 4-7, 1794.



South of Wren was an Indian reservation of 1200 acres granted to John Bapt. Richardville, Chief Miami Nation (1815-1841) by the St. Marys Treaty in 1818.



Wren had its beginnings as "Greenwood." When the railroad came through by 1883, the town had a train depot and general store. The named changed to Wren when a post office came.





In 1837-1838, the first black settlers arrived from Virginia. They were freed slaves of John Randolph whose estate sent two agents to help the freed slaves in settling. The black community faded away in the 1920s as the young moved to the cities and the older died.



"and I have laid out a town." Captain James Riley

In January 1821, a former sea captain, James Riley, moved his family to a plot along the St. Marys River that he purchased from the Piqua US Land Office. He laid out a town and named it Willshire in honor of a British consul in Africa who had freed him from captors.



Riley was the first white man to settle in Van Wert county. In 1822, he built a grist mill, a post office was established, and Willshire became the first county seat.

Riley lived in Willshire for seven years and then due to health issues he was carried to Ft. Wayne for medical aid in 1828. He later returned to his nautical life and then died at sea in March 1940.

Van Wert

In 1835, James Watson Riley, Captain Riley's son, George Marsh, and Peter Augenbach, bought land in what is now Pleasant Township as a land speculation venture. The 240 acres were laid out in 78 plots and called Van Wert.

In 1838, the county seat was moved from Willshire to Van Wert. As dictated by the state, the men had to give land for schools, a courthouse, and a commons in order to make it the new county seat.



Construction on the fifth and present courthouse began in the fall of 1874, dedicated in fall of 1876. The total cost of the building was \$107,407.67





In 1833, Johann Georg Schumm immigrated from Germany to the US with his five living children. In 1838, he purchased a tract of 800 acres for \$1000. At the time, the entire 800 acres were covered by trees and needed to be cleared for homes and farms. The first log hut was one story and had no door; a fire was kept in the large fireplace all night to keep the wolves away.

Convoy

Robert Nesbit was the first real settler in 1848 who hewed a cabin out of the woods. He purchased land, and James Pettit laid it out in lots. Nesbit named it Convoy, after his home town in Ireland. Settlers began to buy plots and constructed homes better than their log houses. The village was incorporated in 1874, with A.B. Penny as mayor.



"Faith and Begorrah This is sho different from the county I came from Strange appearing people called Indians Big black bears So much water What a swamp And such huge trees And there might be rattlesnakes in such wilderness" thoughts of Robert Nesbit







Middlepoint

Incorporated in 1874. It marked the middle point on the rail line between Delphos and Van Wert.

In 1905, the village had three general stores, three coal dealers, two pharmacies, two grain elevators, two barbers, two butchers, a hardware and implement store, a milliner, a lumberyard, and a sawmill.

At the turn of the 20th century, interurban train came through every two hours, stopping for passengers at any country lane or rail crossing. A passenger could go from Delphos to Van Wert for 15 cents, or ride the entire 65 miles from Lima to Fort Wayne for \$1.50.





Ohio City

Established between 1876 and 1882. It was originally known as Van Wert Junction because three railroads intersected in the village. From 1882-1890 the town's name changed to Enterprise. When obtaining a post office, the name changed to Ohio City.

Report of the Operations in the Venedocia Field by The Bulletin's Corres-

---- Jan 11, 190 1

This is an off week for oil news. W. W. Evans is putting gas in his farm residence.

The supply house does a big business.

The power house on E. G. Davies farm will use gas for motive power.

The Ohio Oil Co. has drilled another well on the E. T. Morgan lease.

The J. P. Morgan No. 2 will be in this week. A tank is being hauled in. Work has commenced on the Jervis

No. 3. It is near the power house. The Meredith No. 2, which came in last week, is a good oil well. Almost

as good as No. 1. The operations now cover such a

wide range of territory that it is difficult to keep track of all of it.

The pressure on the Jervis No. 1, the gas well, is going down, but this need cause no alarm, as it is caused by the oil.

. The Skeesicks Oil Co. is having all kinds of wells on the T. T. Jones farm. Their No. 7, just in, is reported to be a good gas well, the first in the bunch.

The Venedocia Oil Co.'s No. 2, on the M. H. Morgan farm, was shot, Saturday, and is as near a dry hole as it can be. This company has a record of no dry holes yet, but this comes very near breaking the record. This well was only one location from the big Pollock well.

R. P. Pollock No. 2 came in, last week, and is a very good well. On this farm so far the wells are among the best in the field. No. 1 is showing excellent staying qualities. North of these wells the adjoining territory is yet undeveloped.



John W. Lambert built the first gasoline powered automobile in 1891 in Ohio City.



The discovery of oil in the early 1900s brought many people to Ohio City and population grew to 1300.



The cornerstone for the Brumback Library was laid on July 18th, 1899 and on January 1st, 1901 the building was dedicated. John Sanford Brumback's family provided the funding; it designed by a well known Toledo architect David L. Stine, and built by J.S. Zook of Van Wert. It was the first tax supported county library in the United States.



Peony Festival

In the mid-1900s Van Wert was known as the 'Peony Capital of the World.' **Thousands came to Van** Wert for the parades and events.











Trains, Planes, Rivers and Canals





St Mary's River









Delphos Ohio Miami & Erie Canal



