

Reunion Folklore

At the 1915 Reunion the elevated platform for the family photos collapsed while several hundred kindred people were on it about to be "took". Luckily, no one was hurt.

John D. Rockefeller, founder of the Standard Oil Co., is said to have been a guest at a Reunion in Cridersville while inspecting oil properties in the area.

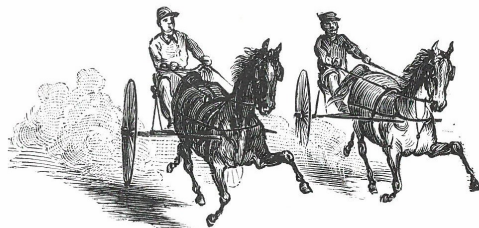
Ezra DeLong treated the young folks at one Reunion when he had a special order of exotic fruit delivered to town on the train. Most Cridersville folks had never seen a banana.



On the trip to the 1899 Reunion in Laurelville, Ohio the train carrying 200 residents from Cridersville was involved in a train wreck. No one was injured—just a good "shake up" for many aboard.

James M. Cox, candidate for Governor of Ohio, was the guest speaker at the 1912 in Cridersville. Cox won the election and ran for President in 1920.

The famous harness race horse, *Dan Patch*, is said to have raced on the track at DeLong's Grove during one of the Reunions. The horse was traveling in a special coach on the C.H.&D. railway. *Dan* won the race!



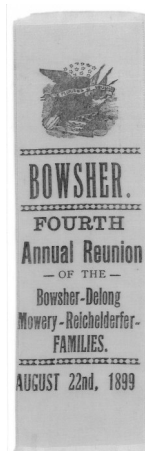
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been some loss of attendance over the years, the genuine spirit of kinship and deep interest is ever present. The Reunions have been crowned with success and reflect much credit to those who have earnestly attended to the incidental details and tendered diligent service. Chief among these were President T.E. Bowsher, E.F. Reichelderfer, W.A. Burkhardt, and Ezra DeLong.

The excerpts above were taken from
The Boucher Family
 from the chapter entitled
A Brief History of the Ohio Reunions
 written in 1917 by
 Franklin A. Burkhardt
 Lima, Ohio



Bowsher Family Photograph—July 1897



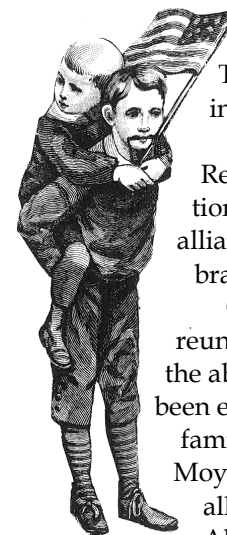
Ezra DeLong's Grove was located in the area of Cridersville that now includes Onalee, Marcella, and Lavina Drives. It was a large, shaded area with a horse race track, pond, and bandstand. It was the site of all the Reunions held in Cridersville.

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THE BIG FOUR REUNIONS

Cridersville, Ohio

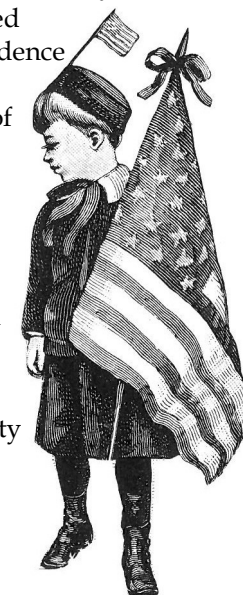


At Cridersville, Ohio on Thursday, July 23, 1896 there was inaugurated a joint reunion of the Bowsher, DeLong, Mowery and Reichelderfer families. The innovation was due to a very close kinship alliance of the four families, or rather branches, which trace back to Berks County, Pennsylvania. While the reunions have been conducted under the above auspices, the meetings have been equally attended by such kindred families as the Harpsters, Stepletons, Moyers, Criders, Ludwigs and others all having origins in Berks County. All these families came to America from the Rhine country of Germany between 1712 to 1755.

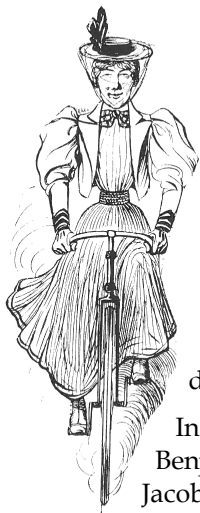
They were the founders of our "Pennsylvania Dutch". Their names are linked with the struggle for Independence and they were reared in the area known as the "Granary of America", the products of which saved Washinton's Army at Valley Forge. The success of the patriot cause is attributed largely to the soldiers, munitions and supplies that came from this district in Pennsylvania.

When the Indians, by the treaty of 1795, were made to vacate their Ohio territories, these people of kindred ties began

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to push Westward. From 1801 to 1810 the pioneer vanguard of these families located in Ross and Pickaway Counties, Ohio.

There they carved out of the wilds a splendid and wealthy community. The towns of Adelphi, Laurelville, Tarlton, and Circleville, are in the district of their selection.

In 1836 a party of 27 people, led by Benjamin and Daniel Bowsher and Jacob DeLong, comprised a party of settlers who located in Shawnee Township, Allen County, also in the woods, near where Cridersville now stands.

Thus was established the first branches of the Big Four families near Cridersville in 1836. Jacob DeLong was one of the early arrivals and established his large family. The Reichelderfers and Mowerys came, having intermarried, so the new colony grew rapidly.

Cridersville was founded in 1856 and soon became the center of the allied kindred families. The close relationship of these multiplying households was a matter of wide comment, so that when in 1896 Jackson Reichelderfer proposed that there should be a reunion, it was readily accepted.

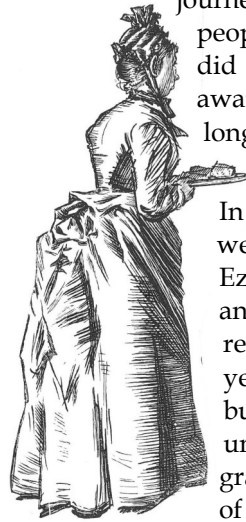
After little preliminary arrangements, the first Annual Reunion was held in Ezra DeLong's Grove on July 23, 1896. It was an agreeable surprise how well this very first meeting was attended by old and young. The countryside turned out like "Fair time" and reunion day was henceforth known as a local holiday.

The meetings of 1897 and 1898 were also held



in Ezra DeLong's Grove, each year the interest and attendance increasing. People came from Ross and Pickaway Counties by the scores, as many as six states being represented in 1898. In 1899 on an urgent invitation from Laurelville, the annual reunion was held in Stump's Grove in Pickaway County. A large delegation of some 200 people from the Cridersville area made the

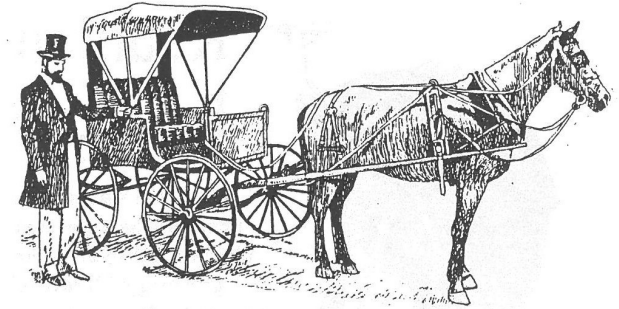
journey back to where our pioneer people had been reared. A splendid outpouring of hospitality awaited them. Some remained longer than 10-day limit on their rail tickets.



In 1901 and 1902 the reunions were held at Cridersville, and Ezra DeLong's Grove was an animated scene, the attendance reaching into thousands. Each year group pictures were taken, but on account of the trees and unwieldy throngs, the photographers "took" only portions of the people at a time.

On the occasion of the 7th Annual Reunion a special train left Lima over the C.H.&D. Railway carrying some 350 people, the greater number of whom were taken on board at Cridersville. The entire train was operated through to Laurelville, and the large party was turned over to entertainment committees. On Reunion Day it was estimated that more than 5,000 people were in attendance.

In 1904 the Reunion was at Dayton, Ohio in the form of a general outing. There was no prearranged program. The Soldiers Home was where all congregated and the excursion parties met and mingled amid the beauties of that state park. There were hundreds who came by train from Ross and Pickaway Counties, but the delegation, or rather deluge, that came from Allen and Auglaize Counties commandeered every



coach available from the C.H.&D. The ticket agent at Lima urgently requested 25 coaches. This proved to be the largest excursion ever negotiated by the railway. It required three ticket clerks to make out the tickets. The agents simply took in the money at a rate of \$1.00 per capita until the cash compartments were overflowing and the silver dollars were simply "raked off" the counter onto the floor. In order to provide a safe and comfortable return for the multitude, the railway provided 34 coaches for the homeward journey of more than 2,000.

The Reunion of 1905 was again held at Cridersville, but in 1906 the outing plan was again adopted and several hundred made the journey to Olentangy Park in Columbus, Ohio. There a unique and pleasant outing was experienced and our people were honored by the presence of Ohio's Governor Andrew Harris.

By mutual consent, the annual Reunions have for some years alternated between Cridersville and Laurelville, two being held at the former place to one at the latter. While there may have

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