

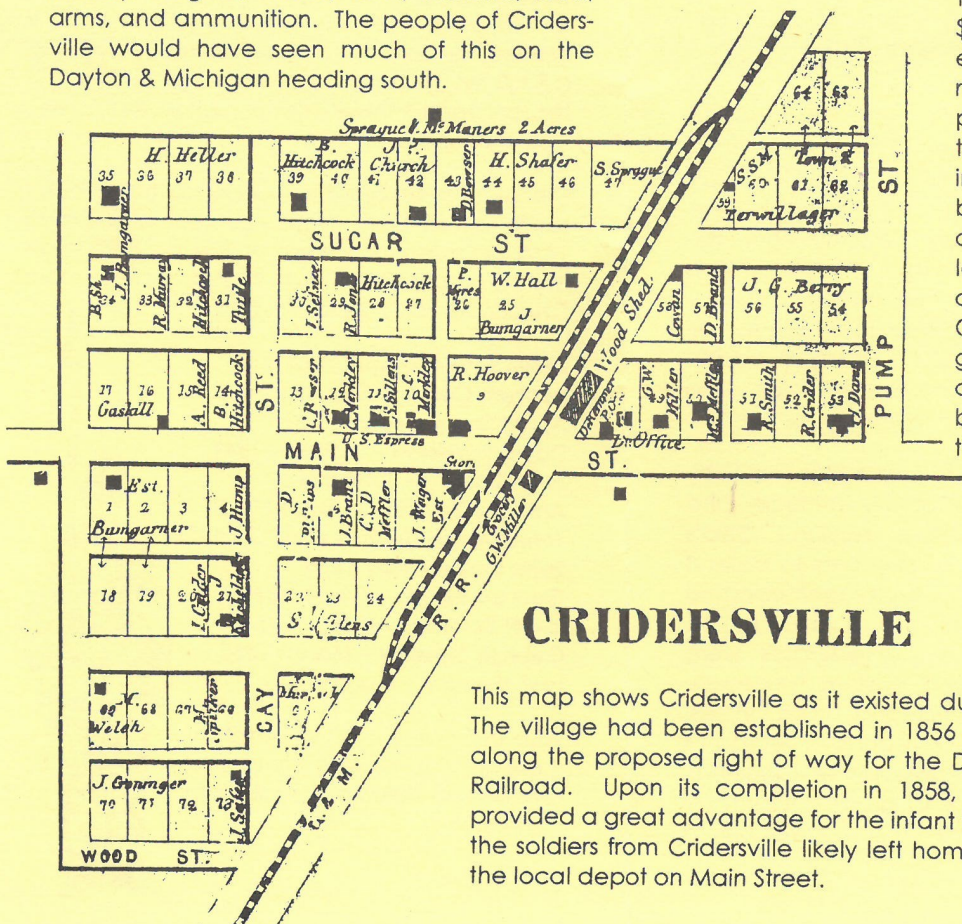
Transportation & Dollars

At the start of the Civil War, Ohio had a system of successful canals and an emerging network of railroads. Effective transportation was an enormous advantage the North had over the South. Cridersville was on one of Ohio's newest railroads, the Dayton & Michigan, connecting Dayton and Toledo. The railroads were busy, not only with troops being sent to the war, but also with tremendous amounts of supplies -- artillery, wagons, horses, tents, uniforms, food, arms, and ammunition. The people of Cridersville would have seen much of this on the Dayton & Michigan heading south.

Ohioans felt the pinch of war, though the strain on their way of life was nothing compared to that of the people in the South. In Ohio many of the comforts of life became scarce. Prices increased and certain items were much harder to obtain -- they were going to the armies. Ohio's industries were mobilized to supply the war. The North's farms needed to help feed over one million men in the Union armies.

Prices for livestock and grain increased sharply. This caused farmers to redouble their efforts to increase production. This outpouring of farm production made for real prosperity in Ohio. Never had there been such a demand for the farmer's livestock, grain, and hay at such high prices. Farm families in the Cridersville area, and throughout Ohio, prospered during the war years.

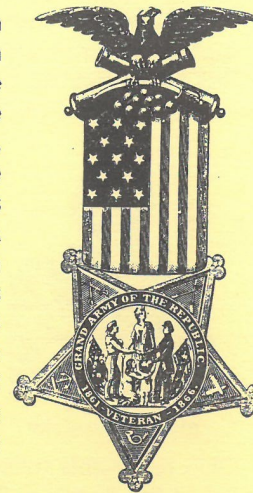
The State of Ohio spent \$10.5 million in the war effort. Increased tax rates on vastly increased property values made that possible. The large increases in business -- both for industry and agriculture -- brought in large sums from taxes of all kinds. The people of Ohio were also very generous in their purchase of Union war bonds to help finance the war.



This map shows Cridersville as it existed during the Civil War. The village had been established in 1856 by Ephraim Crider along the proposed right of way for the Dayton & Michigan Railroad. Upon its completion in 1858, the new railroad provided a great advantage for the infant town. All twelve of the soldiers from Cridersville likely left home for the war from the local depot on Main Street.

After the War

After the Civil War an organization for Union veterans, known as the Grand Army of the Republic, was organized. Local GAR Posts were formed in communities throughout the North. A post was established in Cridersville with meetings held in the lodge hall above the Stepleton General Store. Sergeant John Reichelderfer was selected as the local post commander.



In September 1885 the post at Cridersville held a "grand campfire" and dinner at Delong's Grove complete with a sham battle and fireworks display. John Reichelderfer had been elected a county commissioner for Auglaize County in 1884. It is interesting to note the voting record for Auglaize County in the 19th century. Since its creation in 1848, the majority of voters in the county voted Democratic. This was true during the war years. Although Ohio went for Lincoln in the 1860 and 1864 elections, Auglaize County did not. Auglaize County remained in the Democratic column well into the early 1900s.

To learn more about
Cridersville's history, visit the

Cridersville Historical Museum

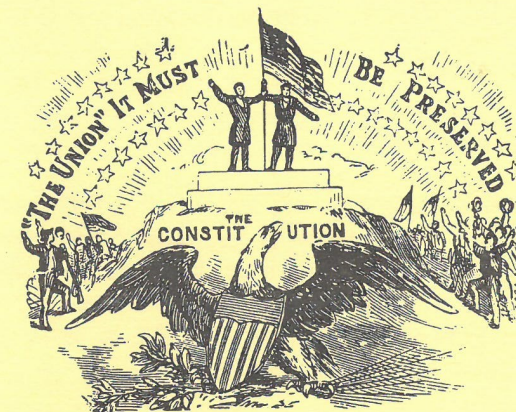
111 W. Sugar Street PO Box 2444
Cridersville, Ohio 45806
419-645-5374

Museum Hours: 1:00-4:00 p.m.
First and Third Sunday of the Month
March through November
Special Group Tours Encouraged

Cridersville

1861-1865

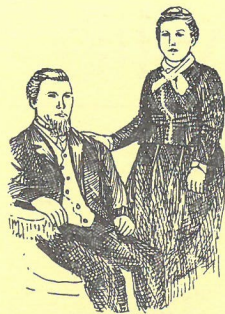
Our Town & The Civil War



At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861 the Confederate artillery in Charleston, South Carolina opened fire on Fort Sumter, located on a small island in the city's harbor. This attack started the American Civil War. Although the causes leading up to war had been festering for decades, the four years of bloody fighting began that morning in Charleston's harbor.

On April 15, newly elected President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers to serve for three months. Most people thought three months would be plenty of time to put down the South's rebellion and restore the Union. Within days Ohio had 30,000 volunteers ready to serve, far exceeding the 13,000 troop quota required in Lincoln's original plan.

One of the first to answer the call for volunteers was Cridersville's Lewis Spyker who enlisted in April 1861 at Lima. In August Albert Shaw and Reuben Crider enlisted at Cridersville. By March 1865 nine others from Cridersville volunteered to help preserve the Union. The war was undoubtedly an issue of great importance and concern to the people of Cridersville. This pamphlet briefly outlines the war's impact on our community.



Ephraim &
Polly Crider

Cridersville Gets Its Start

On April 17, 1856 Ephraim and Polly Crider, along with their oldest son Isaac and his wife Susanna, filed a map of a new town they decided to call Cridersville.

There were only 24 lots on this first town map. They were all on Main Street and High Street in the first block west of the railroad. The lots on Main Street belonged to Ephraim and Polly and those on High Street were Isaac and Susanna's.

The Criders' new town was platted along the right of way for the proposed Dayton and Michigan Railroad. A railroad between Dayton and Toledo had been discussed since 1849. When the line was finally completed in 1858, it meant success for the new town. Within the first two years the village grew to include more lots to the north on Sugar Street and east of the railroad along Main Street. In 1858 a lot sold for \$10 to \$25 depending on how close it was to the railroad. Lots near the railroad were worth more.

By the time of the Civil War, Cridersville had grown to include a dry goods store, two grocers, hotel, saw mill, carpenter, harness maker, blacksmith, shoemaker, two doctors, grain warehouse, steam grist mill, post office, and railroad depot. The first school would not be started until 1866. The uncertainty of the war years may have slowed the town's growth. But in 1869 the people of Cridersville filed a petition to officially incorporate their village. The town's population had grown to 167.

The Folks At Home

As local men volunteered to serve in Ohio's regiments, it often put a strain on the families at home. Farm work had to be done. Bills had to be paid. With husbands, fathers, and sons at war, the burdens of the family farm fell upon those remaining at home. Early in the war, Ohio enacted a state tax for support of families of soldiers in the war. In January 1864 the state raised the tax to two mills. This assistance was truly needed. Often a wife alone had to raise the children, care for the farm and livestock, and make the mortgage payments. The state tax money was usually supplemented by locally raised money. These funds were often the means by which



Mary Bickerdyke

Women at the front

Ohio regiments suffered their first great loss of life at the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862 -- losing 2,000 men killed or wounded. Ohio responded by sending steamboats filled with scores of doctors, nurses, and hundreds of cartons of medical supplies to the battlefield. Modern nursing in the United States began during the Civil War. At the start of the war there was no group of trained nurses in the country, but after the first bloody battles the need for nursing became very apparent.

One of the first Ohio women who went to the aid of troops was Mary Ann Bickerdyke of Knox County. From the start of the war she ignored military red tape as she fearlessly cared for sick and wounded soldiers. Rank meant nothing to her. She risked enemy fire to rescue suffering men, often going out alone at night with a lantern to search for the fallen. She encouraged women on the home front to raise funds and supplies. Many Cridersville women prepared bandages, made shirts, knitted socks, and sent supplies and food to the soldiers.

When the victorious Union armies marched through the streets of Washington, "Mother" Bickerdyke, as she was known by the troops, rode her white horse beside the generals. She received the biggest cheers from veterans along the parade route.

some families survived the war on their own property. No Cridersville veteran returned to find that his family had lost the farm while he was gone.



The War Comes To Ohio

In June 1862 more than 2,400 Confederate cavalry under the command of Colonel John Hunt Morgan terrorized communities in Ohio's southern counties. He and his men were captured in Columbiana County, near the Pennsylvania border. He and his officers were imprisoned at the Ohio Penitentiary, but they tunneled their way out and returned to the South. Morgan's raid lasted only two weeks, but would be remembered for generations. No other Confederate unit operated so far north.

In September 1862 Confederate General Kirby Smith's army seized Lexington, Kentucky and Ohio mobilized for possible invasion. Ohio's Governor Tod called for volunteers to defend Cincinnati from attack. The city soon became an armed fortress under martial law. By the end of the month the Confederates were recalled south to defend eastern Tennessee, then threatened by advancing Union armies. Cincinnati was safe! The reports of Morgan's raids and the possible invasion of Cincinnati were undoubtedly items of great concern for the people of Cridersville. The war was only a hundred miles away.

The Call For Troops

President Lincoln made the first call for troops in April 1861. The response was tremendous, with men volunteering for three-month enlistments. Everyone was certain the war would be over in less than 90 days. Unfortunately that proved to be far from true. During the early years of the war, Union armies suffered costly defeats with very heavy casualties. Some people began to discuss peace with the South. Lincoln was determined to preserve the Union. More and more troops were needed to win the war.

It was a matter of pride in most counties to fill the local quotas with volunteers, but repeated calls for more troops began to drain the pool of volunteers in many areas. In 1863 the Federal Conscription Act went into effect. Any local county failing to fill its quota for volunteers had to make up the difference with draftees. If drafted, a man could avoid service by paying a \$300 fee or hiring a substitute. Some thought this converted the war into "a rich man's war and a poor man's fight."

The men in Cridersville appear to have been ready to volunteer. From April 1861 until March 1865, a dozen local men enlisted. There is no record of any local man being drafted. Our Cridersville volunteers included:

Lewis Spyker – April 1861
Reuben Crider – August 1861
Albert Shaw – August 1861
David Edmiston – October 1861
John Delong – June 1862
Anthony Bowsher – August 1862
John Reichelderfer – October 1862
John Burke – May 1864
George Beeler – March 1865
Israel Bowsher – March 1865
George Mowery – March 1865
Levi Mowery – March 1865

With the grace of God, each of these men survived the war and returned to resume their lives in Cridersville.

