



February 2025

The Village Crier

Preserving and Interpreting the history, Significance, and Traditions of the Strongsville Area

President's Message

What a winter we've been having! Of course, it's actually more of a normal winter, we've been a little spoiled the past few years with unusually mild winters. It's no blizzard of '78 but it's still been cold and we've had that white stuff on the ground for almost every day of the past couple months.

We had another successful holiday season with great attendance at our holiday lighting open house in November, at our Christmas Teas, and at our Christmas in the Village Open Houses in the first half of December. The model trains in the Baldwin House, the gingerbread house making with the Girl

Scouts, and visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus are always the big draws. A fun addition to our decorating this year was two outdoor trees decorated by Cub Scout Pack 157.

We also joined with the Daughters of the American Revolution in December to participate in Wreaths Across America, an annual December event where wreaths are placed on the graves of our veterans in cemeteries across our nation. Believe it or not, this was the first time Strongsville ever participated in this event despite having more and 400 veterans interred in our cemetery. There are plans for this to become an annual tradition going forward.

We have quietly worked on sorting and reorganizing our indoor and outdoor decorations to make the holiday decorating process run more smoothly in future years. We have also been generally reorganizing our storage areas to improve efficiency and open up more space. Many of you may not know we accepted about forty years of physical newspapers when the new Strongsville Public Library was built years ago. This archive was

recently moved from the Lathrop to the basement of the Pomeroy house, opening up significant space in the Lathrop basement for other opportunities!

We look forward to seeing visitors for our first open house of 2025 on Memorial Day. In the meantime, don't forget we rent the Lathrop meeting room if you are looking for a place to host an event.

Scott Maloney



OFFICERS

Scott Maloney, President
Grace Hardison, Vice President
Dan Sage, Treasurer
Terry McGreal, Asst Treasurer
Jan Miller, Corresponding Secretary
Jim Southworth, Recording Secretary

DIRECTORS

John Bedford 23-25	Marty Shaw 24-26
Vacant 23-25	Dennis Dimengo 25-27
Mary Pultz 23-25	Jamie Miles 25-27
Jane Ludwig 24-26	Sylvia Pakish 25-27
Vicki Maloney 24-26	

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2025 Officers and Directors

At the February General Meeting, several Board-nominated candidates were presented to the general membership for a vote to fill three board vacancies. There were no nominations from the floor and the general membership voted to approve the following to fill vacancies: Terry McGreal as Assistant Treasurer (welcome back!); Vicki Maloney to fill the remainder of the 2024-26 Director term vacated when Grace Hardison was elected Vice President; Dennis Dimengo to fill a 2025-27 Director seat due to a resignation. We recently had another Director resignation and will announce the board-recommended replacement at the April General Meeting.

2024 Christmas in the Village—Grace Hardison

I would sincerely like to thank all who worked so hard to once again make Christmas in the Village a success! From those who helped with decorating, and of course, to all the wonderful volunteers who watched over the houses during the open house hours. Scott Maloney, Robb Hollosy, Joe Lynch, and Tom Drost were largely responsible for assembling the outdoor lights and displays. Hopefully you viewed the outdoor trees by the Pomeroy House that were decorated with homemade decorations by Cub Scout Pack 157.

Sylvia Pakish once again did a great job leading the holiday decoration design for the Chapman House. Sonia Reber hosted the Cabin with her great decorations and vast historical knowledge that immersed guests in the early 1800's living. The cabin fireplace was back in action, carrying the wonderful scent of a log fire throughout the village.

Thank You to Terry McGreal for once again making Santa special for the kids. Mrs. Claus made a reappearance for the second year and was a big hit in the Baldwin House thanks to Vicki Maloney and Roseanne Coyne.

Walt Bettcher was back to run the trains in the Baldwin House, and many attendees also made their way to the Baldwin basement to see the ever popular, massive model train layout in full operation. Last but not least, the gingerbread house making with the Girl Scouts was also another favorite activity with the children.

Here's wishing you all a great 2025!

Grace Hardison

Memorial Day—Grace Hardison



On Memorial Day, Monday, May 26th, the Historical Village will once again open our doors for all to visit. After the parade, come visit the Lathrop Dining Room where a white table, also known as a missing man table, will be in the forefront. Our military display is also definitely a must-see. The Lathrop meeting room will feature crafts for kids and a snack. This year, we are excited that the DAR will be joining us to host a kick-off sale for Wreaths Across America for the wreaths we will be placing in December 2025 at the graves of our military veterans. We hope to see you in May on this very important day!

Greetings from the Olds General Store—Marty Shaw

Winter is certainly here with the cold winds and snow but the Olds General Store is toasty warm and cozy. Some items from our holiday weekends still remain on the shelves at 50% off, but we're eyeing springtime.

The store has great gift ideas for St. Patrick's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, baby or bridal showers, wedding gifts, and, of course, graduations. Strongsville pottery and Strongsville afghans make ideal gifts.

Call Marty at 440-409-5925 to schedule a time to shop!



Membership Committee—Vicki Maloney

Become a member or renew your membership to the Strongsville Historical Society!

If you haven't renewed your membership yet for 2025, please do so soon so you don't miss out on future Historical Society newsletters! If you are a Lifetime Member, thank you for your dedication to Strongsville Historical Society and please consider donating in 2025.

Please visit our [website](#) to download our membership form, complete it and return it. We're still working on getting the online tool up and running but will send out a message when it is available for online membership sign-up/renewal and online donations.



Strongsville's First Industrial Park? The Story of Sanderson Corners—Dennis Dimengo

Life in Strongsville was difficult for the first settlers. Creating a homestead and clearing a few acres of land for crops from the surrounding forest took people with great perseverance and self-reliance. But they still needed finished goods and other supplies and materials the land and forest could not supply. A few stores were opened in the township early in its development, but the time it took to bring supplies from the east and the uncertainty about what was stocked in them made them less than reliable. Entrepreneurs soon established a few mills in the township in the Albion and Columbia settlements which used waterpower to do work like grinding grains into flour and processing lumber previously done by hand. A few stores and mills eased the problem somewhat but far from solved it. For many settlers the distance to them and the few poorly maintained and often muddy and rutted roads made getting to the mills and stores difficult and time consuming. As one chronicler of early Strongsville put it, "Roads were more of a barrier than a connection".

In 1818 Apollos Southworth, a 26-year-old from Stoughton, MA purchased all 160 acres of Lot 23 situated north of and fronting what is now Drake Road near its intersection with Hunt Road (then called "Hinkley Trail"). A shovel maker by trade, Apollos was well-versed in blacksmithing, manufacturing, and mill operations. Water-powered mills were multiplying along many rivers in New England, using machinery to process grain and lumber and manufacture finished goods like tools and furniture. Apollos undoubtedly worked with, and probably in one of those mills. In 1820 Apollos married Deborah Fisher who was then living in Newburgh Township, OH (now Newburg Heights in Cleveland). There, he saw another mill complex along a tributary of the Cuyahoga River that was sparking considerable growth and economic activity in that township.

Those experiences and Apollos' selection of Lot 23 tell us a lot about what he had planned for Strongsville. First, Lot 23 contained the Mill Stream Run which ran south to north across the entire length of the lot. Second, there was an existing wagon trail that flowed parallel to the stream. Third, there were already many farms starting up along Drake Road and Hinkley Trail. Finally, those two roads and the wagon trail would mean there would be a good deal of traffic around his property, and that meant customers. All this signaled that Lot 23 was an ideal location for a commercial enterprise. If settlers had difficulty getting to the mills, he would bring the mills to the settlers.

After clearing some land for planting, and building a log cabin, the new Southworth family went to work developing their property. First, Apollos built a blacksmith shop to get the business going – iron implements being in great demand for farming and household chores. He also built a second wagon trail on his property, this one running east-west. He then built an earthen dam across Mill Stream Run creating what would become a mill pond. Next, he built and equipped a watermill near the dam. This mill made wooden shingles and, in the winter when the mill's waterwheel was hampered by ice, it made wooden baskets. Both these products were in great demand, and he was able to create jobs for some of his neighbors.

The Story of Sanderson Corners cont...

While building a business much with their own labor, the Southworths had 7 children between 1822 and 1835, one of whom died in childhood. Believers in the value of education and not wanting their children to walk a great distance to one of the other schools in Strongsville, the Southworths gave the township 1 acre of their land along Drake Rd. for a school. The one-room red brick schoolhouse opened in 1826 and doubled as a community meeting room and church.

In the early 1830s Apollos built a sawmill on Mill Stream Run about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of the first mill. This sawmill was known as an “up and down” sawmill because it changed the direction of the power coming off the waterwheel from rotational to vertical. This type of sawmill cut logs into planks of uniform thickness in a fraction of the time it took to make them by hand. It was this device that likely powered the shift from log cabins to frame houses in Strongsville starting in the 1830s. Not one to rest on his laurels, Apollos began work on a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile millrace to connect both his mills and perhaps lay the groundwork for additional facilities.

In 1837, the Southworths got new neighbors on the south side of Drake Road across from their property. Eri Sanderson, age 40, his wife, Amy (Waite), and their 7 children purchased about 70 acres of Lot 22 which included a working farm. Eri was an experienced millwright from Whately, MA who had been living and working on Grand Isle, VT. He, too, was experienced with mills working in them in Massachusetts and Vermont. Mill Stream Run went through his property also. In short order, Eri expanded a beaver dam on the stream creating a mill pond and built a watermill that manufactured wagons, carriages, sleighs, wagon wheels and furniture. The Sandersons also had a forge and probably a blacksmith shop. The Sanderson mill employed a number of local craftsmen and provided other jobs to the community, as well. With that, this manufacturing center in southeast Strongsville, by then called Sanderson Corners, was in its final form.

After 40 years of operation, Apollos Southworth sold his mills and shop to one of his sons in 1862. Eri Sanderson died in 1876 and one of his sons took over his business. In the late 1870s, however, problems began to plague both enterprises. Water levels and volume on Mill Creak Run began decreasing and the Southworth mills especially could operate only at a very reduced rate. Concurrently, attempts to correct the problem resulted in flooding in the area. This triggered a feud, of sorts, between the Southworths and Sandersons that was eventually settled in court. The result doomed the Southworth mills. But the demise of the Sanderson mill was not far behind. By about 1890, Sanderson Corners was shuttered.

We now understand that the true culprit was the environment. Cutting down the great forest in northeast Ohio exposed the ground to increased evaporation. That and a rapidly growing population's increased demand for water lowered the water table which decreased the water level in the creek, negating its use as a source of waterpower. At any rate, by the early 20th century, the watermill was obsolete having been surpassed by steam and electric power.

For 50+ years the mills at Sanderson Corners provided much-needed services and products that kept the farms working and Strongsville growing especially in the southeast corner of the township. In many ways the vision, work ethic, initiative and determination of the Southworth and Sanderson families contributed mightily to keeping Strongsville on the path to success.

Little remains of Strongsville's first industrial park. The two mill ponds are still there. Some traces of the wagon trails on the Southworth property and the unfinished millrace can be seen. There are also several homes from that period along Drake and Hunt Roads. With a little effort and a keen eye, you can pick them out. Late at night you might even hear the soft swishing of a waterwheel.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 17 (Thursday) 7pm – **Strongsville Historical Society General Meeting**

“What’s Behind That Big Grey Wall? Learn about Gardenview Horticultural Park

Strongsville Public Library, registration is requested

May 26 (Monday) 11:30am-2:00pm **Memorial Day Open House**

Welcome New Members Who Joined in 2025!!!

Judy Bogart

Victoria Harasimchuk

Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki

Price Rite Roofing & Siding

Tanya Reed

Theresa Ritchie

Teresa Drda Saltis

Marie Stritzel

Jerri Zigmont

Remember to renew your membership for 2025—visit the [About Us](#) page on strongsvillehistoricalsociety.org for a link to print our membership form

Strongsville Historical Society

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