

# ROCKY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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<http://rockyriverhistoricalsociety.org/>

A Centennial City

1903-2003

## May 2014 News Edition



## Why is Grandma Gatewood such a legendary hiker?

### GRANDMA GATEWOOD: OHIO'S LEGENDARY HIKER

May 8, 2014; 7:00 pm  
Rocky River Senior Center

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Come hear the story of Grandma Emma Gatewood –an Ohioan who was the first woman to solo thru-hike the 2,050-mile Appalachian Trail in 1955 after raising 11 children and surviving domestic abuse! As if that wasn't enough she went back and did it TWO more times (making her the first person to hike it three times), she hiked the 2,000-mile Oregon Trail in 1959, she helped establish Ohio's Buckeye Trail and, by the time she passed away in 1973, she had hiked some 10,000 miles!

Bette Lou Higgins, our webmaster, will tell this remarkable story at the January meeting. Bette Lou is with Eden Valley Enterprises ([www.edenvalleyenterprises.org](http://www.edenvalleyenterprises.org)) and this storytelling program is part of a larger project being undertaken by Eden Valley with WGTE/PBS and FilmAffects to document Emma's life. Besides the storytelling program, they have already produced an e-book, a DVD of the storytelling program and a one-act play, TRAIL MAGIC, which premiered last August at TrueNorth Cultural Arts. The last part of this project will be the creation of a PBS documentary which will be broadcast on WGTE/PBS Toledo. For complete information about the project, visit their website at <http://edenvalleyenterprises.org/progdesc/gatewood/gtwdinf.htm>



Come be inspired!

\*Photo credit courtesy of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy

# U.S. ROUTE 20

By Gay A. Christensen-Dean

My grandfather once said that you can find anything you want along Center Ridge Road/U.S. 20. I live along it. My mother found a husband on it. My grandparents are buried beside it. The major Cleveland department stores Higbee's and Halle's were found along it. I remember all the fruit and vegetable stands. I have seen gypsy caravans and circus trains travelling on it. So, what else can be found along it?



As for the people who were assembled ready to tell their tales, they were: "first the Landlord I will trace ... Known in all Sudbury as 'The Squire'"; "A youth was there, of quiet ways, a Student of old books and days"; "A young Sicilian"; "A Spanish Jew from Alicant"; "A Theologian, from the school Of Cambridge on the Charles, was there"; "A Poet, too"; and "Last the Musician ... every feature of his face Revealing his Norwegian race".

U.S. 20, at 3365 miles, is the longest road in the United States. The "0" in "20" means that it is a coast-to-coast route. Over time, sections have been re-routed, but this is how it is today in 2014.

It is a non-descript place, Kenmore Square in Boston, Massachusetts, where U.S. 20 begins its westward journey. The highway soon passes the Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts, made famous by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn":

"One Autumn night, in Sudbury town,  
Across the meadows bare and brown,  
The windows of the wayside inn  
Gleamed red with fire-light  
through the leaves  
Of woodbine, hanging from the eaves  
Their crimson curtains rent and thin.

Around the fireside at their ease  
There sat a group of friends, entranced  
With the delicious melodies;  
Who from the far-off noisy town  
Had to the wayside inn come down,  
To rest beneath its old oak trees."

Longfellow visited the inn in 1862 and published his poems of it in 1863. It had been called the Howe Tavern after its first innkeeper David Howe, from 1716. It is still in operation today, with a restaurant and guest rooms.

Continuing westward, U.S. 20 passes through central Massachusetts and into New York State. It crosses the Hudson River and arrives at the state capital of New York in Albany. The present capitol building was built in three phases between 1867 and 1899, due to three teams of architects. The ground floor is in the Classical/Romanesque style. The next two floors are in the Renaissance Classical style. And the legislative chambers, fourth floor and roof are Victorian Romanesque. Originally, there was to be a dome, but it was never completed as the weight of the building was already causing stress fractures and shifting. To stop the movement, a very large and long exterior eastern staircase was added to support the front façade, as well as false ceilings in the interior.

From Albany, the highway passes along the northern edge of New York's Finger Lakes Region, including Canandaigua, New York, where the Gideon Granger Homestead is located, to Buffalo. From here, it parallels the southern shore of Lake Erie, passing through Erie, Pennsylvania, home of the Erie Maritime Museum and the ship "Niagara", a re-creation of Oliver Hazard Perry's War of 1812 relief flagship.

U.S. 20 enters Ohio at Conneaut and follows

along the old glacial Lake Warren beach ridge, through Ashtabula, Geneva, Painesville, and on into the Cleveland area. In Mentor, it passes by the James A. Garfield National Historic Site, purchased in 1876 by the future President Garfield before his election. After his assassination in 1881, Mrs. Garfield returned to the home with the family, and lived there until her death in 1918.

In Willoughby, U.S. 20 follows Euclid Avenue to Cleveland, passes houses of "Millionaire's Row", and the Dunham Tavern at 6709 Euclid Avenue, the oldest building in Cleveland, Ohio. It was built by Rufus and Jane Pratt Dunham starting in 1824, and was a center of social activity, hosting parties, turkey shoots and meetings of the Whig party. It is now a museum.

Continuing through Cleveland, U.S. 20 passes Lake View Cemetery, founded in 1869 and modeled after the garden cemeteries of Victorian England and France. It houses the James A. Garfield Monument, the final resting place of our nation's 20th President. The Monument is made of Berea sandstone and the site was selected by Mrs. Garfield because of its view of Lake Erie, as Garfield had wanted to be a sailor. Other well-known names buried in Lake View Cemetery are: Brush, Case, Crile, Hanna, Herrick, Mather, John D. Rockefeller, Sherwin, Van Sweringen, Wade, Winton.

In the University Circle area, U.S. 20 passes by the private Case Western Reserve University, and the Cleveland Museum of Art; the white Georgian marble building opened in 1916 and is internationally renowned for its collection of Asian and Egyptian art.

Playhouse Square on Euclid Avenue between E. 14th and E. 17th streets in downtown Cleveland is the second largest theater complex in the U.S., after New York City's Lincoln Center. It is comprised of five main theaters. The Ohio and the State, built in the Italian Renaissance style, and the Hanna, opened in 1921. The Allen, and the Palace (French Renaissance) opened in 1922.

U.S. 20 enters Public Square on Euclid Avenue, the first street in the world to be lit by electric street lights (designed by Charles F. Brush). The square is modeled after those in early New England towns of the 1790's and initially served as a pasture for animals. The four-block area is bordered in part by the Terminal Tower, and the oldest building on the Square (1855): Old Stone Church, a Presbyterian church made of local sandstone in the Romanesque Revival style. In the southwest quadrant of the Square is a statue of Moses Cleaveland, dressed as a surveyor. In the southeast quadrant is the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, commemorating the Civil War.

U.S. 20 exits Public Square via Superior Avenue. Continuing westward, it crosses the Superior Avenue Bridge, follows the Cleveland Memorial Shoreway past Edgewater Park, follows Clifton Boulevard in Cleveland and through Lakewood, and then heads south on West Clifton, and west on Sloane Avenue to Detroit Road. It crosses the Rocky River Bridge and enters Rocky River.

From old downtown Rocky River at the western end of the Rocky River Bridge, U.S. 20 heads south along Wooster Road and then west on Center Ridge Road to the Westlake line. It follows Center Ridge Road through Westlake, all the way to Elyria, following the old beach ridge of glacial Lake Whittlesey.

After Elyria it passes by Oberlin and Norwalk, through Bellevue and Clyde, by Fremont, to Perrysburg and Toledo. In Perrysburg, it passes by Fort Meigs, constructed along the Maumee River in 1813 during the War of 1812 by command of General William Henry Harrison, and named after Ohio Governor Return J. Meigs. Today, the Fort Meigs State Memorial, with a 10-acre replica of the old wooden fort, may be toured.

After leaving Toledo, U.S. 20 parallels the Ohio/Michigan border, exiting Ohio at Columbia. Crossing Indiana, it passes around South Bend, home of the University of Notre Dame, and skirts the southern shore of Lake Michigan. It passes through the south and west sides of Chicago and then travels

across northern Illinois through Galena, to where it crosses the Mississippi River at Dubuque, Iowa. Continuing across north-central Iowa past Waterloo, it crosses the navigational head of the Missouri River at Sioux City, Iowa and enters Nebraska. Following through rural north-central Nebraska, it continues on to Wyoming, going through Casper, Greybull, and Cody.

U.S. 20 was not planned to be a coast-to-coast route, and originally until 1940, it ended at the East Entrance of Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming. Now, it continues through Yellowstone, past the northern edge of Yellowstone Lake and "Old Faithful", and exits the West Entrance into Montana for less than ten miles, before entering Idaho. (Technically, U.S. routes are not numbered within boundaries of national parks.)

Travelling south and west in Idaho, it passes through Idaho Falls, and then by Craters of the Moon National Monument, black basaltic lava fields interspersed with numerous volcanic cones, through to the state capital of Boise. It crosses the Snake River into Oregon near Ontario, Oregon and heads west to Bend, and Corvallis, before ending in Newport, Oregon, at its junction with U.S. Highway 101, less than a mile from the Pacific Ocean.

## HELPFUL HINTS

By **Gay A. Christensen-Dean**  
and **Jack Nickels**

In old photographs of Wooster and Beach Schools, the buildings look alike. At first glance, it is hard to tell the difference. Here are some hints to identify which school it is:

1. Tower. The top of the tower of Wooster School is capped by the triangular pediment. The top of the tower of Beach School is rectangular.

2. Sidewalk. The sidewalk leading up to Wooster School rises slightly and includes three steps, far from the front door. The sidewalk leading to Beach School has many steps descending from the street and then angles up, and has a railing on both sides.

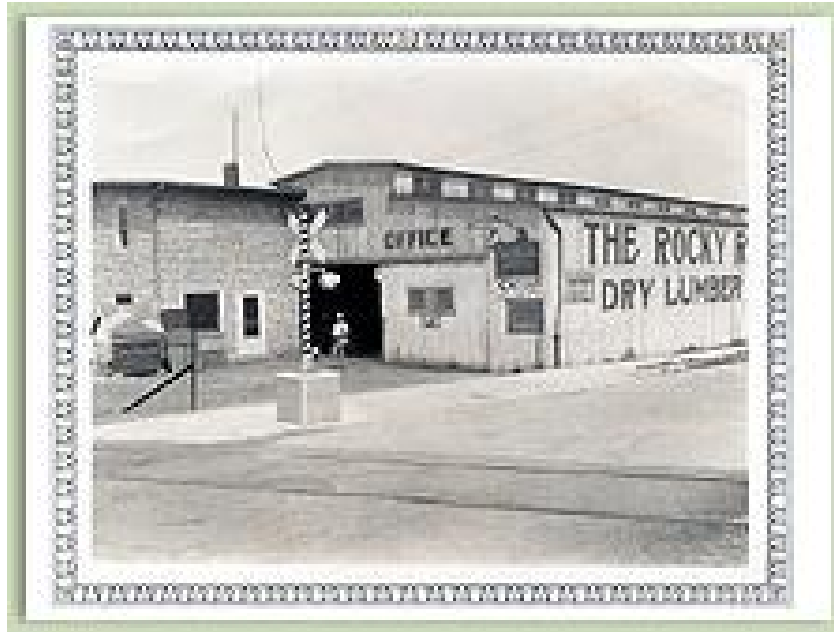
**BEACH SHOOOL**



**WOOSTER SCHOOL**

# SPOTLIGHT ON BEACHCLIFF CABINET AND DESIGN

By Jennifer Dieringer



Prasse Lumber & Material Co.

Established in 1993, Beachcliff Cabinet & Design Company outgrowth of the Prasse Lumber and Material Company which provided quality building materials and remodeling services to the Cleveland community for over 100 years. Prasse Lumber's first location was in The Flats until the Great Depression hit. At that time, the company moved to its present location, 1150 Linda Street, in Rocky River where it operated as a full scale lumber yard. As the lumber industry changed during the late 80's and early 90's, so, too, did the focus of the company. Prasse Lumber & Material Company dropped lumber from its name because it was no longer a retail lumberyard and began to focus on the remodeling industry. Today's Prasse Material Company does business as Beachcliff Cabinet & Design Company specializing in custom kitchens, baths, additions, windows, and doors while doing business the old fashioned way. The former lumberyard has been totally renovated by Beachcliff Cabinet and Design Company and now houses multiple businesses in the heart of historic Rocky River.

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**MEETING DATES FOR 2014**

Meetings are at the Rocky River Senior Center Second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS:**

**May 8, 2014**

**Grandma Gatewood:  
Ohio's Legendary Hiker**

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Rocky River Days : July 12 -13**

**Annual Picnic – August 14**