

# A brief History of Amesville, at the Frank and Catherine Hare Shelter



# Building the Amesville Shelter

- Welcome to Historic Amesville
- Amesville has been the home to many people. Slaves escaping the South walked through Amesville as part of the Underground Rail-road. Its landmarks -- such as the Masonic Hall on Franklin Street -- are important to families living there, as well as visitors to the village. Other landmarks, such as the old Clover Farm Stores building, have been abandoned or torn down, but new landmarks and memories are taking their place.
- Now we hope to add the history shelter and kiosk to the list of significant places located in Amesville.



# Building the Amesville Shelter

The campaign to raise funds for the Frank and Catherine Hare Amesville History Shelter was undertaken to honor the service of Frank Hare, Mayor of Amesville for 20 years and the contributions of Catherine Hare. The shelter and kiosk are intended to encourage passing motorists to stop and enjoy various stories about the history of Amesville, Mudsock and the Coonskin Library.

We thank the Athens Foundation and various local residents for their contributions to this project. The shelter measures 8 feet by 10 feet and is constructed of local, white oak timbers milled by Joe Hershberger of Chesterhill.



# Amesville History

- Amesville is perhaps best known [for the Coonskin Library](#). At an 1803 town meeting -- held to discuss roads -- settlers talked about their desire for [books](#) and their lack of money to pay for them. Most of the business was done by barter, so little money was in circulation. However, the surrounding forest had pelts that could be sold in the East to [buy books](#). In the spring of 1804, Samuel B. Brown was given the pelts and, accompanied by Ephraim Cutler, went east to bring back books for the town. Fifty-one books -- mostly on religion, travel, biography and history -- were purchased for \$73.50. These books were passed from home to home until Ephraim Cutler was elected librarian in 1804.

The original books can be found at the Ohio Historical Society, as well as Ohio University's Alden Library. A commemorative marker, placed by the Nabby Lee Ames D.A.R. Chapter of Athens in 1925, is located near the Community Bank on State Street. The Coonskin Library Museum opened in May of 1994 in the former cafeteria of the Amesville Grade School.



# Amesville

- In 1797, Ephraim Cutler made his home in Ames Township. Other families followed, including George Ewing and his son Thomas, who was in the first graduating class from Ohio University. Sylvanus Ames settled in the area around 1800; he became the second sheriff of Athens County, a trustee of Ohio University, and representative to the 16th and 17th General Assemblies. At the time, these pioneer settlers didn't realize the impact they would make on the future town of Amesville.



# Amesville

- Since 1797 Amesville has grown slowly but steadily. In 1802, the first school built in Ames Township was taught by Charles Cutler. The Amesville Academy was established after the town held a meeting about better education. The first Post Office was located in a brick building at the corner of State and Main Streets in 1821. At the time, the building was also home to a store. The United Methodist Church was formed in 1824, followed by the Amesville Presbyterian Church in 1829.

Unfortunately, the town's location on the bank of Federal Creek and by the McDougal Creek branch have made it prone to flooding. The first flood occurred in 1873. Many floods have followed, including back-to-back floods in 1997 and 1998. Each time, the community has come together to rebuild the town.





# Amesville, Underground Railroad

- Almond Hervey Burrell was a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Ohio.
- Burrell was born on September 18, 1809, in Maine. He married Almira Wilson on May 28, 1832, and eventually fathered two sons with this wife. In 1838, Burrell moved his family, including his two parents, to Alexander Township, in Athens County, Ohio. In 1839, Almira Burrell died, leaving Almond Burrell to care for his two young sons and his parents. Despite his age, Burrell enrolled in Ohio University, earning a college degree. He then became a schoolteacher and also studied medicine under Dr. Timothy Blackstone. In 1842, Burrell married Blackstone's daughter, and the new couple eventually had four children of their own. Burrell soon ended his teaching career and opened a medical practice.
- Burrell became an abolitionist early in his life. Upon arriving in Ohio, he began to give lectures on slavery's brutality. People who opposed slavery's demise, usually because of racism or economic fears, routinely threw eggs and chicken bones at Burrell. By 1846, Burrell also had opened his home to fugitive slaves who were seeking freedom along the Underground Railroad. In 1847, the Burrell family moved to Amesville, Ohio, where Almond Burrell continued his abolitionist activities.



# Building the Amesville Shelter

- In 2014 the Amesville Village Council approved the construction of a shelter to house a history kiosk and designated the land in Gifford Park for this purpose. The entire project was paid for through a grant from the Athens Foundation and local contributions. The white oak was milled in Chesterhill and the structure was built by local volunteers.





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# Amesville

- To find our more about Amesville:
- <http://www.ohio.edu/people/deanr/coonskin.html>
- [http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Coonskin\\_Library?rec=692](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Coonskin_Library?rec=692)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephraim\\_Cutler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephraim_Cutler)
- [http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Almond\\_H.\\_Burrell](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Almond_H._Burrell)

