

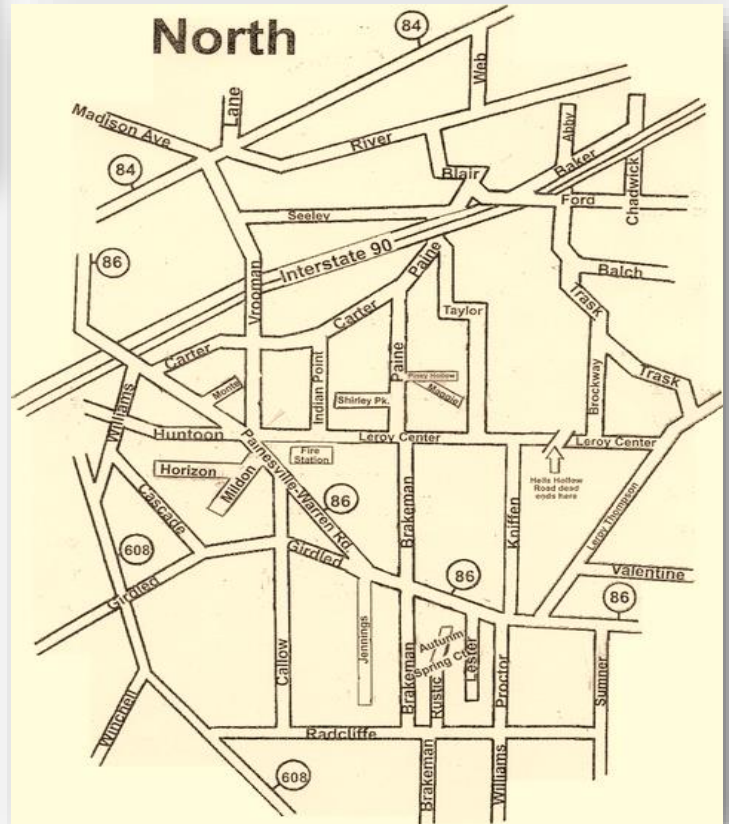
## Leroy Township's Forgotten Stories Remembered

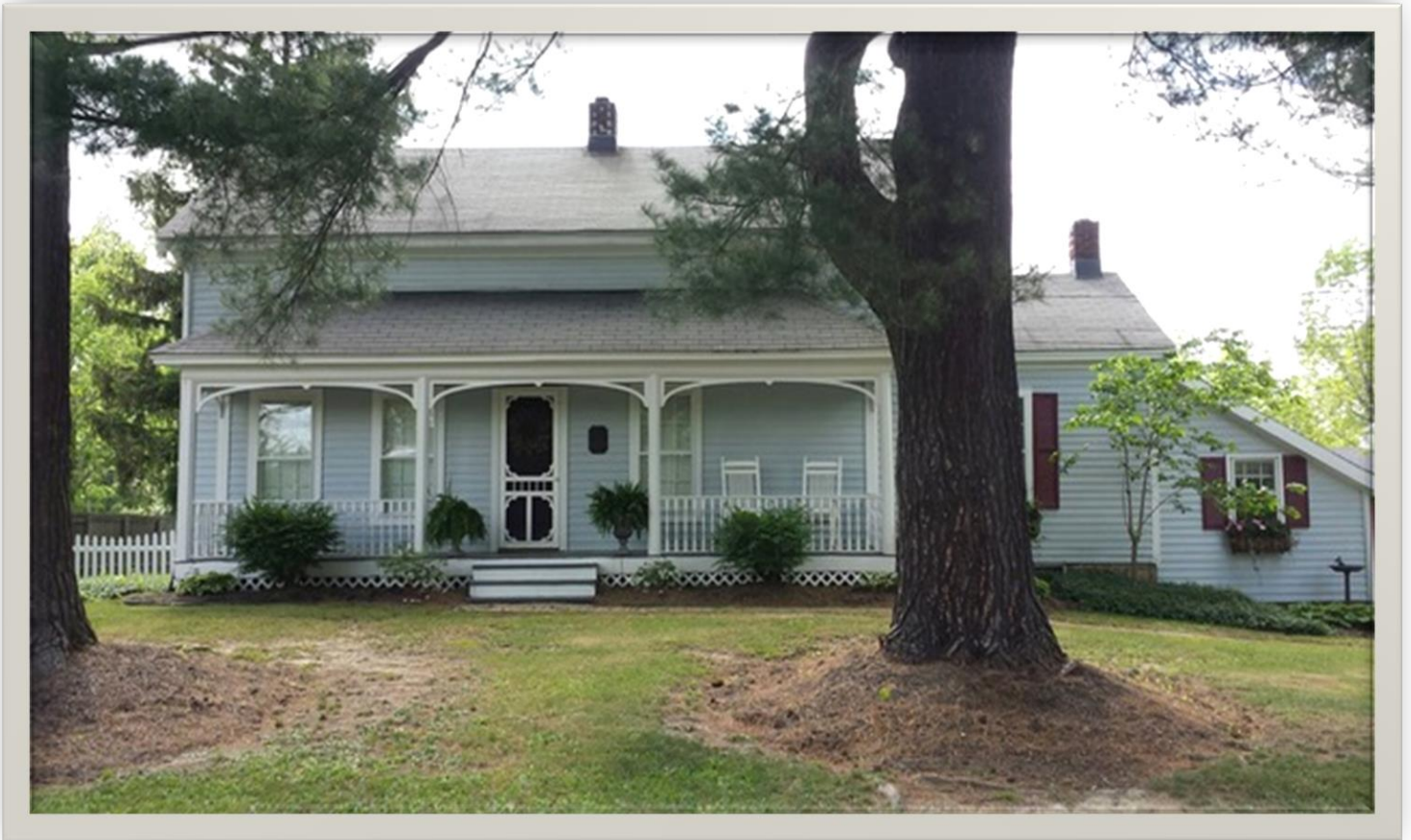


Land Company shareholder **Colonel Amasa Clapp** drew lots in Township #10, range #7. By 1820, the area adopted the name LeRoy. Many of the new settlers had emigrated from Leroy, New York. Sons Elah (Elijah) and Paul Clapp arrived in 1802 to clear six acres of land, build a homestead, and begin a wheat field the following season. From this humble start, more pioneer settlers and familiar road names followed, including Balch, Blair, Brockway, Huntoon, Paine, Kniffen, Seeley, Vrooman and Chadwick. This

### Origins

One of my favorite places to visit in our county is **Hidden Lake** located in **Leroy Township**. With more than 400 acres of land that includes ponds, an archery range, as well as many trails to snowshoe or hike, it is a special locale. What is more so are the forgotten stories and hidden history of Leroy itself, a 25 square mile township situated on the northern boundary of the **Grand River**. Originally named **Chesterfield** when first surveyed by **Seth Pease** for the **Connecticut Land Company** in 1797, lovely Leroy is one of five townships in Lake County. **Girdled Road** was the first commercial path cut through the Western Reserve.





brings us to two often forgotten stories from both the township's and the county's earliest agricultural era.

### **The Carter Family**

46-year-old Newcomb Carter, his wife Alche, and their four sons left Connecticut in 1835, traversing the Allegheny Mountains and Pittsburgh area in 40 days before arriving in LeRoy (1840 spelling). There they settled. By 1870, eldest son

**Samuel Carter** was the wealthiest man in town. He owned and worked 400 plus acres spanning the four-way intersection at Vrooman and Carter Roads which became known as **Carter's Corners**. Sam married **Sophronia Clapp** in 1837, and within three years their family farm was well established.

How did Samuel Carter make his fortune? Hard work! In 1870, his 440 acres produced 80 tons of hay, 140 bushes of winter wheat, 600 bushels of Indian corn, 800



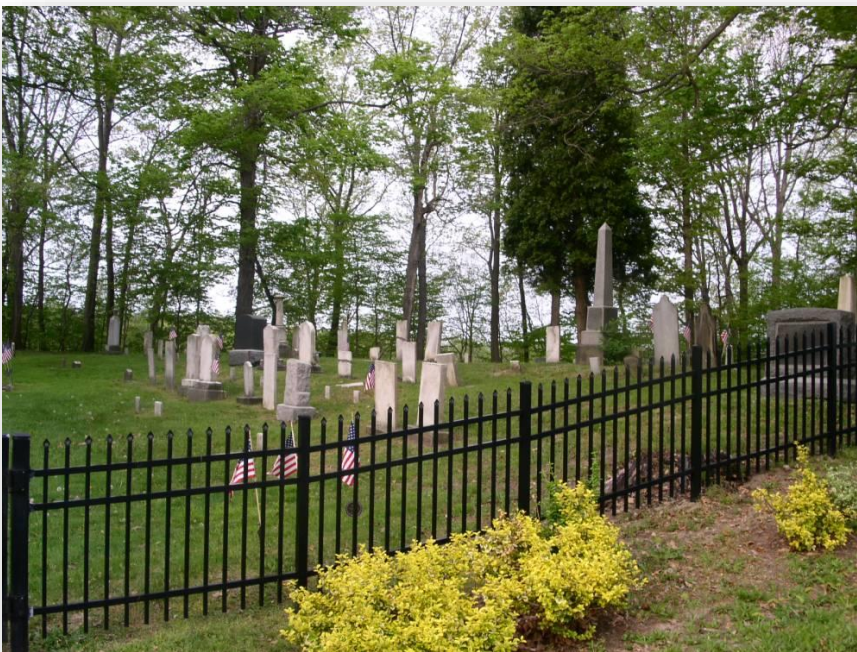
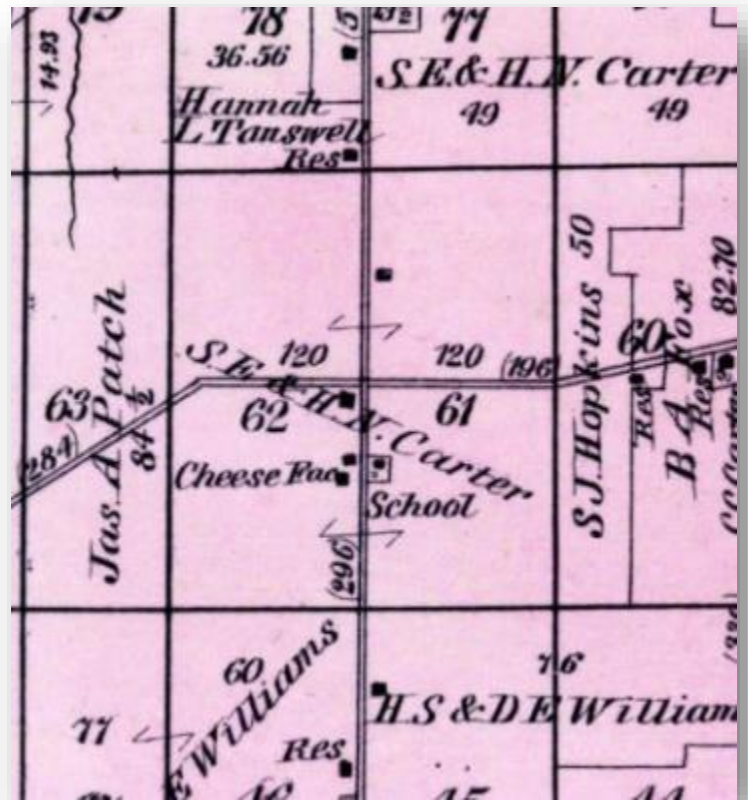


bushel of oats and 600 bushels of Irish potatoes. He owned 5 horses, 38 milk cows, 30 sheep and 4 swine. His sheep produced 150 pounds of wool. He churned 250 pounds of butter and sold 8500 pounds of cheese from his cheese factory on **Vrooman Road**.

On Oct. 11, 1866, the **Painesville Telegraph** announced, "The Carter Brothers took the premium for Best Cheese at our County Fair. Their cheese is becoming celebrated all over the country." Later in the month, "The Ohio State Fair was held at Dayton last week. Messrs. Carter, of this county, were awarded first premium on cheese."

At the Northern Ohio Fair in 1871, Samuel E. Carter & Co. made and exhibited a cheese weighing 1100 lbs! The cheese was sold to parties in Louisville, KY. At this time Samuel was remarried to Emily Buel (his first wife Sophronia having passed in 1851). The family continued living and farming in Leroy until 1882, at which time they departed for the Dakota Territory. In 1894, Sam returned home to Ohio where his ten children resided.

He lived in Madison with his daughter W.F. Vrooman until his passing in 1896.



In LeRoy, Lake Co., on the 15th inst., Mrs. SOPHRONIA A., wife of Mr. SAMUEL E. CARTER, aged 33 years. The death of Mrs. C. was an event peculiarly afflictive to a large circle of relatives and friends. She was highly esteemed for her many Christian virtues and as an excellent wife, mother, friend and neighbor. As the mother of seven children, all of whom are of tender years, her place cannot be filled; and to them especially her death is the severest loss that could be experienced. She was ill but a short time, but she was fully resigned to depart at the bidding of her Father in Heaven.



Samuel Carter is buried in Huntoon Cemetery on Painesville-Warren Road in Concord Township. While the Carter land has long since been

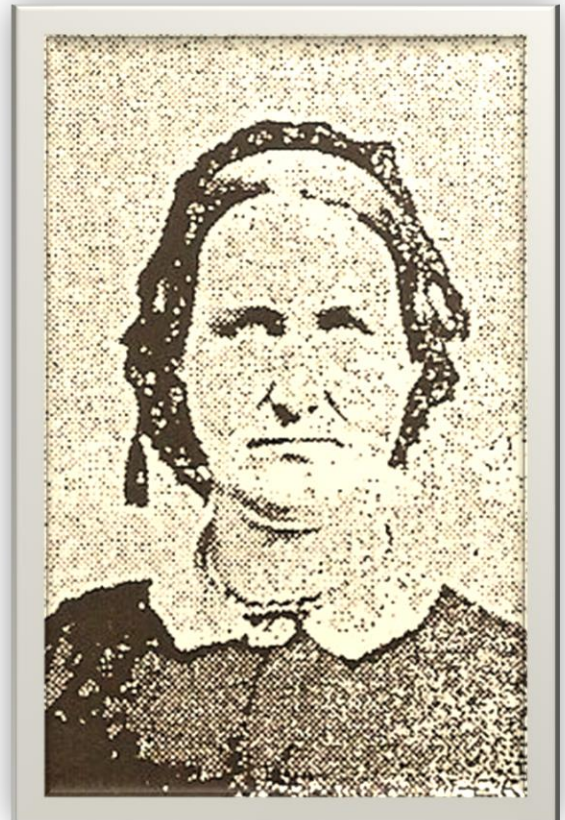
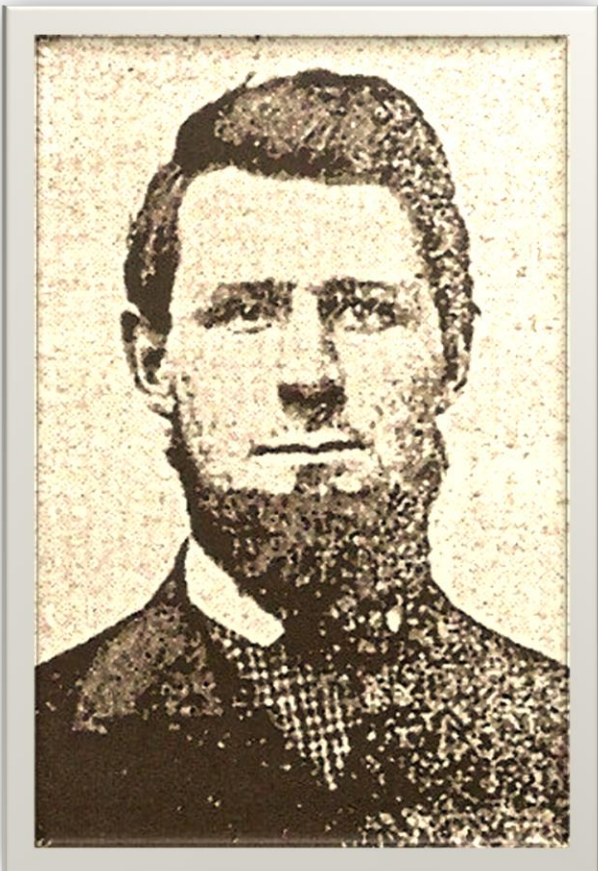


divided and become private homes, the original 1850 Carter house still stands.

### The Isle of Man

A second story revolves around the LeRoy immigrants from the Isle of Man (a 220 sq.mi. island in the Irish Sea). Charles Balch Sr. had arrived in 1835 and purchased a site on the corner of Ford and Trask. He married the girl next door, Electa Covey, in 1838 in Thompson. Only 400 feet had separated their residences. A church stood on

one corner and a schoolhouse on the other. The Balch House on Trask Road sat across from the schoolhouse. It was built circa 1860 and owned by Charles' son Charles Milo Balch. This family farm flourished and in 1870 produced 80





bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of corn and 160 bushels of oats. Additionally, Charles ran the Post Office. During the decade 1860-70, the Balch family sold land to the township for \$20 with the stipulation that a Methodist Church be built. Records show that that was completed in 1860 and the church was located diagonally from the house.

The township's pioneering women were noted in an 1896 Western Reserve publication. By 1930, LeRoy Schoolhouse #3 was moved from its cemetery location and added to the church holdings. The church and schoolhouse were pivotal to the township's growth and importance through 1945 when private owners acquired it.

In closing, it is apparent that agriculture was the major industry in its day, but I leave you with some other

Township fast facts:

- In 1820 LeRoy Township was part of Geauga County.
- Despite its small size, LeRoy sent 40 men to serve in the Civil War under General George McClellan.
- Lake County's last active covered bridge was in LeRoy until it was torn down in 1952.

Lastly, many historic homes and structures still stand, providing everlasting homage to the pioneers who called this picturesque landscape home. Now you know a little more about them.

**Sources:** Leroy Heritage Association (Lori Watson), *Hidden History of Lake County* (by Jennifer Boresz Engleking), Morley Public Library archives, Concord Township archives.

**Submitted by Dan Maxson**

*Local Lore by Max, 2010-2016 - The News-Herald, Community Media Lab - Volunteer Docent, Curator - FHHS / Fairport Harbor Lighthouse & Marine Museum - Volunteer Curator / Docent - Old Stone School, Concord Township. With additional research material by Virginia Jeschelrig.*

