

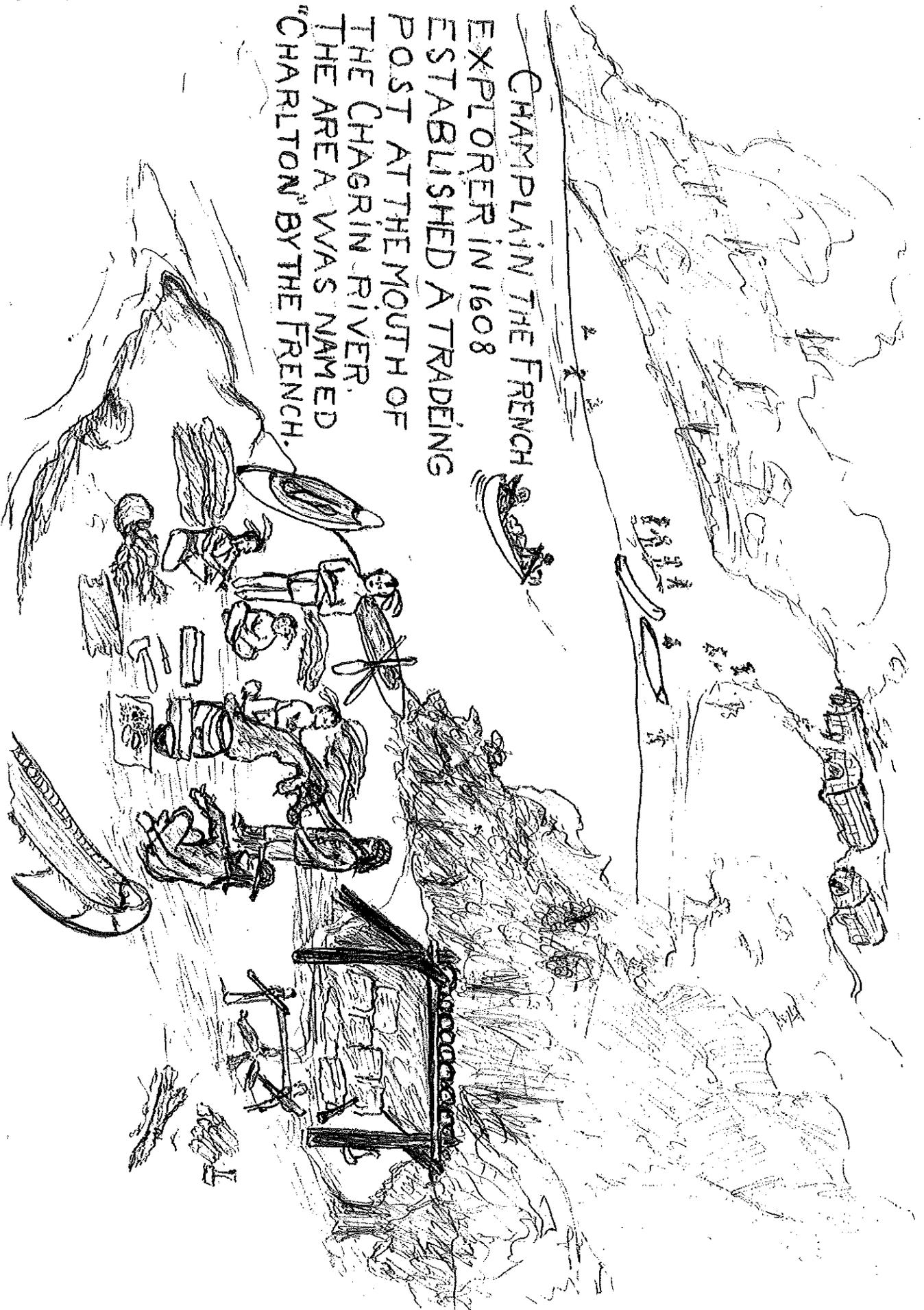
by Eleanor G. Rolf



SKETCHES by Tom Morrison

Nineteenth Century saw mill on the lake shore in Willoughby township was probably the source of lumber for the early homes in this area.

CHAMPLAIN THE FRENCH
EXPLORER IN 1608
ESTABLISHED A TRADING
POST AT THE MOUTH OF
THE CHAGRIN RIVER.
THE AREA WAS NAMED
"CHARLTON" BY THE FRENCH.



- 1750 Charlton, a French trading post, built at the mouth of the River.
- 1763 Treaty ending the French and Indian war.
- 1795 Connecticut put the Reserve lands on the market, except the "Firelands".
- 1796 Charles Parker & co. built, at the river mouth, a cabin and huts for the Connecticut Land Company.
- 1797 David Abbot built a cabin and grist mill at the mouth of the Chagrin.
- 1801 John and Catharine Miller came.
- 1809 Worden brothers came.
- 1830 Settlement of the Plains.
- 1840 Formation of Lake County.
- 1853 Incorporation of Willoughby.

October 6, 1951: Incorporation of Eastlake.

INDIAN HISTORY

In early times, all of northern Ohio belonged to the Erie Indians. The Eries are probably related to the Iroquois. It is not known whether they are descended from, or ancestors of, that nation. Erie territory extended from New York's Genesee River across northern Ohio to the Miami River.

The Eriès named our river "Sha-ga-rin" or "Shaguin", meaning clear water. Their game, the elk, were good engineers, and made our first roads. Their trails followed the easiest grade.

The Evans map of 1755 shows the predominance of elk in our region, calling the Chagrin river "Biche", which is the French word for elk. To the French, the Erie were the "Nation du Chat" or the "Cat Nation". They revered the lynx, or the eastern wild - cat.

The Reeve village site of the Eries, located on a bluff 1/4 mile south of the mouth of the Chagrin, was first visited by Charles Whittlesey in 1877. It originally consisted of two walls of earth. The bluff is*about 35 feet high (*was), and on the east side of the river. Reeve village was dug and mapped by the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society in 1929.

A reminder of our Indian ancestry is the name of Lost Nation Road. There are many stories of the origin of this name, so this will be multiple choice: (1) Indians escaping from a battle that took place at the intersection of the "Salt Trail"(River Road) and the "Flint Trail" (Euclid Avenue) in downtown Willoughby skipped town in canoes they had anchored in the river, and became the Lost Nation. (2) The folks living here are isolated by weather conditions; therefore, cut off from civilization, they become a lost nation. (3) Early settlers, having their own stills, were rowdy and bolsterous, but preferred to be a lost nation.

EARLY SETTLERS

In 1797 David Abbot, the first permanent white settler in this township, received a grant from the Connecticut Land Company. It included land adjacent to the east and west sides of the river. For the site of Abbot's first grist mill there are as many locations as there are authors. The best evidence places it, in 1798, at the intersection of the northeastern channel (known then as the Elk River) with the west branch of the Chagrin. High water here forced Abbot, in 1803, to rebuild about two miles up the river, near the ford at Erie and Pelton.

Another enterprise of Mr. Abbot was the building of the schooner "Cuyahoga Packet" on the Chagrin in 1805. She sailed the lake until she was captured by the British in 1812. David Abbot had sold his mills and property and moved with his family to Milan in 1810.

John and Catharine Miller were among the first settlers, coming here in 1801. Samuel Miller, their son, was the first white child born in the settlement, and his pale face stood out among the papooses along the southern shore of Lake Erie.

EARLY SETTLERS (cont'd)

In 1802 John Miller was killed at a barn raising, leaving the young mother to care for their son. She proved herself equal to the emergencies of pioneer life. One fall the raccoons were so numerous that the corn crop was in danger. Mrs. Miller trapped the critters and salted the hindquarters for winter use. The corn was pounded or cracked for mush and bread, which with the raccoon meat made sumptuous fare for that winter! One day, hearing a noise in the pig pen, she went out and found a bear. Returning for an ax, she went back and quickly dispatched Bruin, then added bear meat to the larder.

The Worden brothers, Noah and James, were surveyors in their early manhood. They came here in 1809 from Groton, Connecticut. Noah married Hannah Grover, who was from New York state, and they build a log house on the Lake Road (former name for Erie Road). They had three children: (1) Joseph, born in 1822. (2) James, who died in 1890. (3) Rachel, who married Dr. J. W. Hamilton, a surgeon from Columbus. When Noah's first wife died he married again, to Mary Bates, the widow of Zophar Warner, who lived in the Warner homestead on Roberts Road. The Worden brothers were pioneer farmers and woodsmen. We owe much to their interest in the preservation of artifacts found on their property near the mouth of the Chagrin. The greater part of their collection was given to the Western Reserve Historical Society.

1898 MAP

The accompanying map shows property owners and buildings in 1898. Many of these buildings are still standing. This map includes much of Eastlake and the area that was called the "Plains".

The map also shows District School No. 1 at the intersection of Lost Nation and Lakeshore, District No. 2 on Reeve Road (still standing, converted to a residence), and District No. 3 at the intersection of Erie Road and Lakeshore. In 1829, the householders in those districts were as follows.

District Number One: Rumsey Reeve, Ezra Stewart, Stephen Johnson, Ansel Stancliff, Robert Fuller, Peleg Simmons, Horace Simmons, and Jonathan Beckwith.

District Number Two: Abenezzer Smith, Cornelius Smith, Noah Worden, John McDwire, Solomon Moore, Jabez Hill, Benjamin Brown, Elijah Woolsey, Henry Woolsey, Richard P. Laite, George Gunn, Abraham Stevens.

District Number Three: James Carrel, Noah Wert, Samuel C. Miller, John A. Henderson, William Humphrey, Lowel Goodman, George H. Morten, Nemiah Allen, Chancy L. Paine, John Stevens, Jacob V. Vial, Alva Beckwith, George W. Card, George Hall, Samuel Richards, Asaph D. Clarke, Roswell Humphrey, Martin Frily, Hiram Brown, Orni Hildreth, Ezra Eddy, John Hall, William Phillips, Horace Humphrey, Julius Brown, Samuel Grover, Daniel Christy, Sally Glines, Charles Williams, Susan Hall, Phineas Spalding, Platt Card, John Young, Orrin Johnson, Ruth Coleson, Elijah Ward, George B. Vial, Stephen Burtis, Samuel Wert, Asahel Hurd, Asa Hall, Rufus Sharp, Richard Woolsey, Thomas Graham, A. McFarlin, Silvester Carroll, Luther Snow, Philip Gravis, Jonathan Lapham, Joseph Card, Hiram Hoys, Elial Farr, Asahel Brayman, Amy Lewis, Polly Johnson, William Downing, and Daniel Light.

PLAINS HISTORY

The Plains, as described by old time residents, began at the W. A. Green farm, the southern boundary crossing Lost Nation Road at Kelley's and Reynolds Road at Hanson's Farm, continuing on the Bert Perry farm and from there to Quincy's Corners, then north along the Quincy Road to Garrett Hill, then following the marsh to Mentor Park.

The first permanent settlers came to the Plains between the years 1830 and 1840, a large majority from "York" state. Farms were bought very cheaply, land selling for \$7 to \$10 an acre. Very little was cleared. Bears, deer, and other small game were in

abundance. Some friendly Indians were still left.

Many of the first settlers built near the lake, using the beach for a roadway. At that time the beach was wide, and no road was open. The road was surveyed out along the highest point of the sand ridge. This road was one of nature's highways. Turnpiking made it a fine road for wagon travel.

Coming from the west, the first farm on the Plains is that originally belonging to Alonzo Green. Mr. Green was born in New York, worked in a cotton factory in Vermont at the age of 12, and came here in August of 1840 at the age of 17. His brother James was living here at that time. He worked at the blacksmith trade for two or three years, and then began farming. In August of 1851 he and his wife, the former Harriet Star, bought 111 acres and built a log house. They lived in the log cabin until 1865, when the Green homestead was built. Their six children were: Linda S. Baker, Ida H. Roe, Clara M. Roe, Hattie N. Parker, Edward G. and William A. Green. Their mother spun flax and wove material for their clothes, and also wove carpets for their home.

Next is the N. P. Downing farm. The first owner was Peleg Simmons, a Revolutionary soldier from Middletown, Connecticut. He married Anna Barrett in 1788. Their seven children were: Amy, Rueben, Peleg, Horace who married Philena Ford, Belinda, John who married Charlotte Beckwith, and Eliza who married William Downing in 1829. The old homestead still stands and is marked with Lake County's "Heritage Home" plaque.

Continuing, the next place is the Captain Joseph Richardson farm. Captain Richardson, a Massachusetts native, earned his title in the War of 1812. He worked as a carpenter for several years while he cleared the land, hauled the timber to the lake, and shipped it in scows as cord wood, ties, rough logs or squared timber. The Captain built one of our first sawmills on a creek on his property near the lake in 1835. His also was the first frame house between his place and Mentor. He was killed at the age of fifty by a team of horses who were frightened and overturned a wagon, upsetting their owners into the lake, where he drowned.

Truman Richardson, Joseph's eldest son, carried on the work of his father's farm. He also ran the sawmill for several years, shipping lumber to Cleveland. He married, in 1837, Maria Gray, and they had six children: Calvin, Morillus, Ella who married William Graves of Mentor, Nettie who married Martin J. Willy, and two who died in infancy.

Tom Morrison's sketch shows a sawmill of the Richardson era.

Andrew Gray moved to Willoughby Plains from Madison County New York in 1837. He built a frame farmhouse after living in a log home for seven years. In 1835 he built a sawmill further up the creek than the Richardson mill. According to David Hodgson's diary, this continued running until about 1900. Andrew Gray died in 1861, and his son Martin came into possession of the farm of 280 acres. Martin married Mary Hopkins in 1844. Their son Andrew married Marie Bostwick, and their three children were: Cora, Nellie, and Frank.

George Newton bought the Ackley farm in 1863. "Newton's Grove", at the back of the farm, was used for many Plains picnics and reunions. Mr. Newton spent much time and money clearing up the grounds and building benches, tables, and a speaker's stand. His daughter Jennie married Nathan P. Downing.

The first telephone line was built through the Plains in the spring of 1900 from Mentor, running as far west as the Chagrin River.

Free delivery was established in 1903 from Willoughby. For many years some good neighbor on Lost Nation Road kept a partitioned mailbox on the front porch, and it was the duty of anyone going to Willoughby to bring down the mail.

PLAINS HISTORY (cont'd)

About 1896 this area began to assume a change. Cleveland people were attracted by its beauty and bought up the farms for summer homes. Buildings were built new or remodeled, grounds improved, and soon much of the Lakeshore property was allotted or owned by summer residents.

One of the outstanding summer homes was the Jesse Fay place. Mary Fay Eiger, Mr. Fay's granddaughter, is still living on Fay property, although not in the main house. There were five homes on the farm. The Fay residence is now the home of the Stepanovic family. Mrs. Eiger's home is the oldest of the group, and was the Fay residence in 1902, having been purchased from the Beaumonts. One of the houses burned, and one was moved to the corner of Shelton and Lakeshore. The fifth is a 1914 prefabricated home that is presently owned by Charles Novince.

The Sidney S. Wilson cottage is now the home of the John Nosan family, and the Flickinger cottage, which belonged to Mr. Wilson's sister, is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Brom and their family.

THE PLAINS CEMETERY

Located on Lakeshore, across from Osborne Park, this is the final resting place for many of the pioneers who settled our area. The inscriptions were copied in October of 1929 by G. P. Rawson and they are listed here.

RICHARDSON Ebebezer Richardson d. Dec. 7, 1856. Leonard E. Richardson d. Aug. fifth, 1850, age 24 years.

GRAY In memory of Jane O., daughter of Martin & Marietta Gray. Died Dec. 21, 1847, age 1 year 7 days.

PARISH Tyler Parish d. Oct. 28, 1862 age 32. Member of Sixth Ohio Battery.

AMES Col. Jeremiah Ames, d. Feb. 18, 1861, age 71 years.

DOWNING Jennie V. Downing 1860 - 1911.

SIMMONS Sally Ann, daughter of H. & P. Simmons. D. Sept 22, 18--. Age 1 yr.

COLE Jonathan Cole died July 3 1865, age 70 years.

HYDE Orthilla, daughter of G. & R.S. Hyde, d. Sept 28 1853, age 1 yr. 8 mo.

VROOMAN Catherine E., wife of John, died April 21, 1865. 39 yrs. 9 mo. 12 days.

SHALES Margaret Shales 1837-1875.

HYDE Corydon Hyde died Oct. 28, 1886. Almira R. Hyde d. Feb. 21 1895.

ABBOTT S. B. Abbott. No date.

BROWNELL S. A. Brownell. No date.

NEWTON No dates.

DOWNING Myron H. Downing died April 14 1861, age 2. William Downing d. Mar. 1 1878 age 74. Eliza, his wife, died Mar. 20, 1883, age 74. Andrew their son died Sept. 23 1864, age 34. Peleg Simmons d. Oct. 1, 1854. age 93. Amy, his wife, died Feb. 3 1855, age 89.

STEVENS

G. S. Stevens, U.S.N. Died October 16 1885 age 68.

BECKWITH

Lydia wife of Jonathan died August 13, 1850, age 71 years.

BROWN

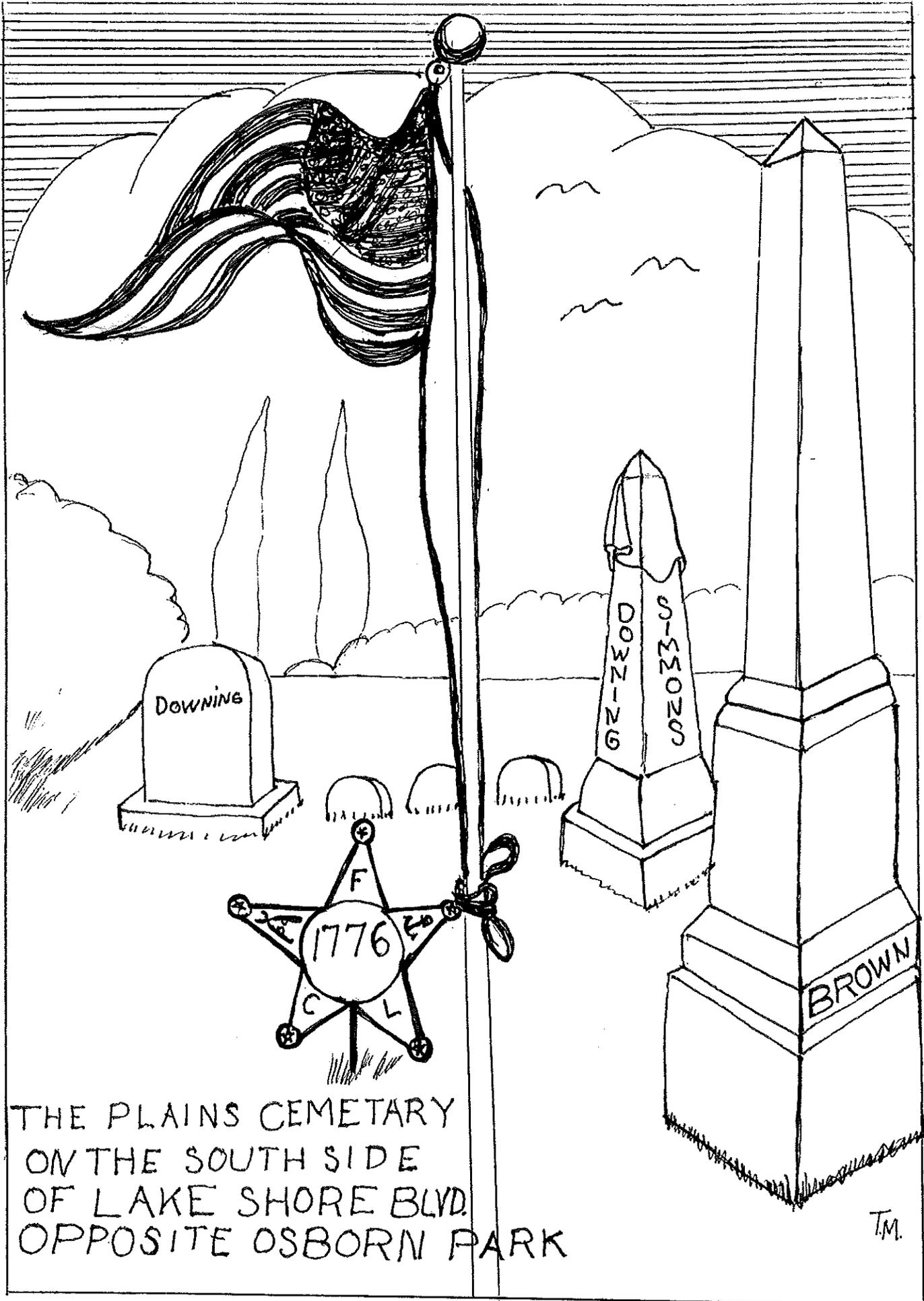
C. Brown, died August 17 1879. Lydia, his wife, d. March 1884.

Adeline, M., wife of Orrin H. Brown, d. Dec. 30, 1878.

Edson D. Brown d. June 11, 1859.

HART Carrie M. died April 1886. Freddy died May 1875, age 1 year. Beryl died 1883, age 1 year. Bertie d. 1883 age 1 year. Freddy, son of J. F. & S. M. Hart, died May 5, 1874 age 7 months.

Sources for this paper: "Pioneer Women of the Western Reserve", "Woodland Erie" by Harry Lupold, 1898 Atlas of Lake and Geauga Counties, "Plains History" by Sam Brown, cemetery records at LCHS and Little Red Schoolhouse, "Willoughby Township Schools",



THE PLAINS CEMETARY
ON THE SOUTH SIDE
OF LAKE SHORE BLVD.
OPPOSITE OSBORN PARK

T.M.