

P A G E A N T

FREEDOM OF THE NORTHWEST

Presented at Amesvile, Ohio

April 11, 1938

FREEDOM OF THE NORTHWEST

Year 1783

Act I-Ordinance 1787

Minuet

Eight girls in
Colonial costumes

Scene I

Setting:

The minuet as you have just seen it characterizes the period of American life which is linked with time of the Revolutionary War.

There are several important facts affecting our lives and homes today that date back to about this same time, 1776. Two of the greatest documents of the ages, going hand in hand with the history of our country, were drawn up and passed at the same time. The convention drafting a constitution of the United States was in session in Philadelphia, and many of the members of this convention were, at the same time, instrumental in the execution of the Northwest Ordinance.

The year 1783, at the close of the Revolutionary war, is a very memorable one in the history of our country. We may easily connect this time in our minds with the popularized martial music.

The army was yet in camp waiting to be discharged and at this time a petition signed by 288 officers was presented to congress, praying that, in fulfillment of the pledge the government made in 1776 to the army, certain tracts of land lying between the Ohio River and Lake Erie and to the west of Pennsylvania should be assigned to them.

"Spirit of 1776"
Three men in costume
playing "Yankee
Doodle" on fife and
drums.

It is not easy to value or even to understand the forces which were at work in America unless we consider what types of people were involved. While most of the colonies were settled by the English, these Englishmen did not have a great deal in common.

The Puritans of New England were as intolerant of the religious beliefs of others as had the church of England been of theirs. These northern colonies differed from those in the South in climate, soil, and customs. It was inevitable that the New Englanders should turn to manufacture and trade while the South should remain faithful to the soil.

In the southern colonies of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia we find a group of pleasure loving folks living in a mild climate and land with many broad fertile acres.

Between these two groups, North and South, were the Dutch of New York, the Swedes of Delaware, and the Quakers and Germans of Pennsylvania.

Although these various types were discordant groups when concerned with religion and social beliefs they had some things in common, first a rebellious spirit toward the mother country, and second an urge to find and locate new lands.

Puritan family in costume crossed stage.

A Southern gentleman and his lady seated themselves on the stage, accompanied by their colored servant. Remained during the singing of "Old Black Joe" off stage.

Dutch girl seated at spinning wheel. "The Old Spinning Wheel" sung by a lady in colonial costume.

In these days a great number of people had what was specifically called "land hunger." There were several claims made on this vast amount of land to the west and after the Revolutionary war the United States had a rather weak claim on the lands north and west of the Ohio River.

The type most likely to settle new land beyond the Alleghany Mountains were the most rugged and fearless individualists from each of the localities mentioned above, North, South, and others.

Several attempts were made to get definite action to settle these land and many people had a share in helping plan the Ordinance 1787 and form the Ohio Company of Associates. To those who have studied the transaction of the Ohio Company of Associates in its various bearings there can be no doubt that through it the Ordinance of 1787 came into existence.

Although several attempts failed the failure of one plan led to the development of a better one. And in about 1786 a convention was held for the purpose of organizing an association by the name of the Ohio Company of Associates. Rufus Putnam was the superintendent of the Ohio Company and through his efforts and the help of George Washington it was finally organized. At this

Character representing Putnam took his place at a table on stage.

convention they talked over the beauty and value of the Ohio Country and devised a plan for filling it with inhabitants. The call for a convention was issued to all who desired to become adventurers.

Another one of the outstanding figures at this time was Manasseh Cutler, who acted as agent before congress for the Ohio Company and finally bought one million and a half acres at about one dollar an acre. He was employed not only to make a purchase of land but to see that the government for the territory was acceptable to his constituents. It was at this time Nathan Dane of Mass., Richard Henry Lee and two others were selected as a committee to work on the ordinance. Cutler made many suggestions proposed ammendments which were accepted.

The Ordinance was fully approved in October 1787. It undoubtedly represented the most advanced thought of that time on the subject of free government. This ordinance irrevocably fixed the character of the immigration and determined the social, political, industrial, educational, and religious institutions of the territory. Comparison of the social, industrial, and educational conditions in the states of the old North West with those in neighboring states not born under the influence of the ordinance creates

Other characters entered as their names were called and all joined in the discussion of the formation of the Ohio Company.

further evidence of the value of the principles enunciated by the ordinance.

So severe were the risks that no women accompanied the party of 48 men who with their plodding ox team took the route west. This was in the later part of 1787, and because of the severe cold and deep snow progress was very slow. The route taken by these men and others who came later, led them from Ipswich, Massachusetts, through Pittsburgh and on to what is now the present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and a portion of Minnesota.

A large map showing the states formed from the Northwest Territory and the route taken by the pioneer settlers was brought onto the stage.

Scene II

THE NORTHWEST TERRITORY

Setting:

Freedom never stands still! Freedom is a road, not a gate. Mankind travels the road of Freedom toward new horizons.

The 43 men who came across mountains landed in Marietta, after numerous difficulties and problems were met and successfully over-come. These men were known in a sense as the first settlers in the Northwest Territory. It is true they were not the first white men to live in the Ohio county, but Marietta was the first legal American settlement northwest of the Ohio River under the Ordinance of 1787.

When the pioneers arrived, they were welcomed by Delaware Indians who were camping at the mouth of the Muskingum to trade furs at Fort Harmar. Their Chief Pipe, assured the white settlers that his people would live at their home at the head waters of the river in peace. Encouraged by this reception, the men unloaded the boards for their houses the first day and set up a large tent in which Putnam had his headquarters.

Indians in costume greet the men, as they enter. Pioneers dressed in fur caps and buckskins.

The town was then carefully surveyed with wide streets, and public parks. One outstanding building of this time was the Ohio Company's Office at Marietta. It was here that the settlers received their deeds.

Never did the first pioneers forget their dreams of the new west. They realized that the dream of a true democracy could not be realized within the space of a few years, but each year they followed the pattern closely and in this way they truly developed religious liberty, free soil, and free men and free schools.

Miniature of the Land Office in Marietta, Ohio.

Miniatures of a log cabin school and church.

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In the early years of 1800 before many had settled in their homes, the people of Ohio saw a strange figure come out of the East. It was a man dressed in rags and tatters. He wore no shoes and the tin pan in which he cooked his corn meal also served as a hat. He came in two canoes that were lashed together and loaded to the gun-wales with apple-seeds. These seeds gave him his name "Apple-seed Johnny" Chapman.

For the next forty-one years he was a frequent traveler on the byways of the Ohio. No one knows what strange quirk of the mind drove him but he started apple orchards all over Ohio, mostly on or near the Muskingum or its tributaries. Practically all the early settlers went to him for apple trees and got them. He took nothing in return except occasional bits of clothing or food. He was a friend to whites and Indian alike and no Indian, even on the warpath, would harm him. On several occasions he warned the settlers of impending Indian attacks.

At last in 1847 he passed peacefully into the Purple Valley but all Ohio owes a debt of gratitude to him for having a big hand in making us one of the leading fruit states. Mansfield has erected a monument to his memory and

Character dressed
as Johnny Appleseed
crossed stage.

Athens county, where some of his trees stood, might well do the same.

Ames township was one of the four original townships into which the county was divided, the county at the time of Ames township's organization, 1805, included more than twice its present area.

The Coonskin library of Ames township, Athens county, Ohio marks one of the very earliest efforts of the settlers of Ohio to provide library facilities for themselves and their children and as such it is of very distinct historical value.

Not many books could be brought on the toilsome journey over the mountains and down the river to the wilderness of these parts near Ames township. The U. S. Gazette, which was published in Philadelphia and arrived once in every three months was loaned far and wide, as was the pioneer custom. The Bible was doubtless found in scattered cabins where no other book was owned.

The Sylvanus Ames home characterizes the typical home activities of this time. Probably Ames township and Amesville were named for this family. The families were large and often times consisted of father, mother several children, as well as grandparents, aunts, uncles and married sons and daughters with their children. A large

Old fashioned home scene with every member of the family busy.

variety of activities were carried on in the homes both during the day and in the early evening.

The evening activities were frequently a combination of work and play, being a time for the entire family to join as a group and yet even at this time the hands and minds were kept busy, sewing, spinning, knitting, quilting and reading the Bible or papers.

These people brought with them from their eastern homes the ideas of the Ordinance of 1787 "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall ever be encouraged. They secured whenever possible the services of a teacher and as early as 1801 a school was taught by Moses Everett, a young graduate of Harvard, in a room in Ephraim Cutler's house.

The subsequent terms of schools were no doubt irregular, but one term closed April 13, 1803 for then a quaint little testimonial was drawn up by the pupils and given their teacher, Charles Cutler, a Harvard graduate and brother of Ephraim Cutler. This little group included the following twenty names of lads and lasses of the early teens:

George Ewing Jr.	Abigail Ewing
Sally Ewing	Rachel Ewing
Hannah Ewing	Thomas Ewing

John Brown	Richard Lenox
Lamuel Brown	Aphia Brown
Patience Brown	Anna Steine
John Toyles	Eleanor Lenox
Joseph Brown	Marten Boyles
Jane Ewing	Abraham Lenox
John Lenox	James Lenox

Some of these no doubt had learned to read during the term just ended, but scanty opportunity would they have to do much more reading.

A few spelling books and arithmetics were necessary in the school room and that was about all.

Of these first pupils we have a record of one in particular who stands out as a student, Thomas Ewing. He was a young boy of about 13 or 14 years of age, but one of the most anxious to read every available source of information.

He was one of the most interested in the development of the Coonskin library both in raising of funds for buying books and then in reading and re-reading the books.

Later on Thomas Ewing became the first graduate of Ohio University. He found it necessary to earn money for his education by farming, employment in salt works and various other ways.

One youth remained on stage to represent Thomas Ewing as a lad.

Thomas Ewing Clark, representing Ewing as a man.

The thoughts of the intellectual needs of this group in Ames township became evident at a public meeting in autumn of 1802 called for the purpose of devising means to improve their roads.

Schools they were indeed ready to sustain but something else they desired, and that was to secure for themselves and their children that culture coming from acquaintance with literature. At this meeting the suggestion was made that a public library be founded.

The men had come to this meeting wearing their every day homespun and buckskin garments. The log cabin where they met would suggest little of art or literature, but they would find time to read because they hungered for it.

The greatest practical difficulty was to get any money with which to buy books. It is hard for us to realize the scarcity of money among these pioneers. Under such conditions the purchase of books for a library seemed like an impossibility, but the subject was discussed by the meeting and it was resolved to attempt it.

Before the end of the year, by dint of economy, and using every ingenious device to procure funds, a sum of money was raised. Mr. Josiah True of the Sunday creek settlement proposed that they catch coons and send their skins to Boston for sale by Samuel Brown, who

Group of pioneer men enter and seat themselves.

Skins exhibited by men.

was expecting to make a business trip to New England soon. He went horseback and took the skins and furs with him to exchange in Boston for such books and goods as were needed.

In the selection of the books in Boston Samuel Brown was assisted by the Reverend Thaddeus Harris and Reverend Manasseh Cutler. The number of volumes purchased was 51.

After an absence of many weeks Samuel Brown brought the books to Captain Benjamin Brown's in a sack and on a packhorse. There was great rejoicing and exclaiming at this time and as many as possible were present.

Later a formal title was given "The Western Library Association," but in Ohio it is better known as "The Coonskin Library".

Books brought in and examined by men.

Scene II

Act III

The world of books is the most remarkable creation of man. Nothing else that he builds ever lasts.

Monuments fall

Nations perish

Civilizations grow old and die out and after an era of darkness new faces build others.

But in the world of books are volumes that have seen this happen again and again and yet live on still young, still as fresh as the day they were written, still telling men's hearts of the hearts of men centuries dead.

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Grand Finale
Entire cast of
fifty join with the
audience in singing
the Doxology.