



Oral History

Pistol Pete

On July 2, 1968, the peaceful little town of Gallipolis, Ohio, located on the beautiful Ohio River, breathed a sigh of relief. The events of the prior week had caused the small community to become alarmed.

This alarming event happened on the other side of the world. A seaboard World Airlines DC8 jet with 231 American servicemen aboard was believed to have strayed into Russian air space and was taken hostage by the Russian government. What did that have to do with Gallipolis, Ohio? A young Gallipolis native was among the servicemen on board the DC8 jet. He was known to the little community as "Pistol Pete." To the Army he was known as Christopher Anderson.

Pete had just turned 21 two weeks before this incident occurred. He had gotten the nickname of "Pistol Pete" at Gallia Academy High School where he won various awards in all three sports in which he participated.

He excelled in football, baseball, and basketball. He played varsity football for three years and lettered in it. He was voted most valuable player in his senior year. He lettered in basketball three years and baseball for four years. He was voted most valuable player in baseball in his junior year. He made the SEOAL (Southeastern Ohio Athletic League) two years and was voted most valuable player of that team. With all this athletic ability, he was known very well throughout the community.

The news spread quickly when Pete's parents received a telegram from the Department of Defense, Washington, D.C., stating that their son, Sp-4 Christopher E. Anderson, was aboard the aircraft forced to land at a Soviet air base.

Our history project was taken from an interview with Pete Anderson about this incident.

*-GME ABLE Center
Gallia-Jackson-Vinton JVSD*

An Interview with Pete Anderson

KANDY: Hello, my name is Kandy Nuce and what is your name?

MR. ANDERSON: My name is Christopher Pete Anderson.

KANDY: Where did you live growing up?

MR. ANDERSON: In Gallipolis on Third Rd. and Fourth Ave. between the 700 and the 800 block, we moved around in that area a couple of times during my youth.

KANDY: Who are your parents?

MR. ANDERSON: My parents are Christopher and Helen Anderson.

KANDY: What values did your parents try to instill in you while you were growing up?

MR. ANDERSON: Well, they always told me to do the best I could do in whatever I attempted to do in life. They always told me to never be a quitter. Their motto was "winners never quit and quitters never win."

KANDY: That's good! What schools did you attend?

MR. ANDERSON: I attended Gallia Academy High School up to the 12th grade. After that I took some courses out at Rio Grande Community College, about 100 hours all together.

KANDY: Did you play sports?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, I played three sports. I played football. I lettered in varsity football. I played varsity football for three years and was voted most valuable my senior year. Also I made all SEOAL, which is all Southeastern Ohio Athletic League. I lettered in basketball three years. I was all SEOAL two years. I was also voted most valuable player of the team. I lettered four years in baseball. I was voted most valuable player my junior year.

KANDY: You really have some great accomplishments in sports. I understand that you had a nickname in sports too. Could you tell us about that?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, I was the quarterback and at that time, we were starting a new era as far as going more to passing. I had a couple of good games, where I had a lot of completions and yards. The name "Pistol Pete" was put on me at that time. On the basketball team I was a point guard and a leading scorer on the team. The name carried over from football to basketball.

KANDY: Are there any sports incidents you would like to share?

MR. ANDERSON: All of my sports activities in high school were special to me. They all hold about the same value to me. I really enjoyed the time I was in high school.

KANDY: When you got out of school, you decided to join the service. Was that on a voluntary basis or were you drafted?

MR. ANDERSON: I volunteered to serve for three years.

KANDY: In what branch of the service did you serve?

MR. ANDERSON: It was the Army.

KANDY: Were you married or single at the time?

MR. ANDERSON: At the time I was single, but shortly after joining the service I did marry.

KANDY: How long were you in the service before this incident happened?

MR. ANDERSON: It was about a year and a half.

KANDY: What year did it take place?

MR. ANDERSON: It was July of 1968.

KANDY: How many men were on the plane?

MR. ANDERSON: I believe it was 231 servicemen, 2 civilians and 6 crewmembers.

KANDY: What was your destination?

MR. ANDERSON: We flew out of Washington state. I believe it was Fort McQuarter and our destination was to be Vietnam.

KANDY: What time of day did this take place?

MR. ANDERSON: The exact time I really could not tell you for sure. We had been in the air 12 or 14 hours approximately somewhere in that range. We went through two or three different time changes. I do know it was during the daylight hours, but an exact time I don't know.

KANDY: What happened right before the abduction?

MR. ANDERSON: We were flying normally, like we had been. It was our last 12 or 14 hours. I was asleep at the time but they tell me that a Russian fighter plane (MIG) flew up to us. There were four of them. They were on each side of us. I guess one of the ones up near the front fired their weapons. It was a machine gun or something of that nature to get the pilot's attention. At that time we did not know what was going on. My first thought was that we must be getting close to Vietnam because we had a plane escort in, but at a second look I noticed there was a Russian symbol. They were Russian MIGs. So at that time I did not know what was going on until the captain came over the loud speaker and told us, we were asked to land at one of their airstrips. At that time he had no further information. He was going to try to go ahead and land the plane. This was a new plane and one of the bigger passenger planes we had in the U.S. He was concerned whether he would have enough space to land or not.

KANDY: Was there any inclination that the airspace was dangerous or restricted?

MR. ANDERSON: No, we had no idea that we were flying into their airspace. Like I said, this was one of our newer planes, and that was its first flight. I don't know whether the instrument panel was malfunctioning or whether they just wanted to bring us down to take a look at it. After we landed we found out we were in their airspace and we were going to be detained until things got worked out.

KANDY: Did the Russians try to warn you not to enter their airspace?

MR. ANDERSON: To my knowledge there was no communication to that effect, no.

KANDY: How did they proceed to escort the plane down?

MR. ANDERSON: The MIGs (Fighter planes) led us to their base.

KANDY: What were your feelings at the time?

MR. ANDERSON: Well, like I said when I first saw the planes, I thought they were ours. After the captain informed us that we would be landing at one of their airstrips and what kind of problems we might have, I did not know what to think.

KANDY: What was the reaction of the other men on the plane?

MR. ANDERSON: Their reaction was basically the same as mine. We talked around and asked what was going on and none of us knew. We knew we were being forced down and at that time we did not know why. We just knew we had to get down, because those MIGs could fly all around us. We flew into a cloud and they were right there. When we came out of the cloud, they were right there. They could come right back. We would have been no contest in a confrontation. The captain did as he was instructed.

KANDY: What happened after the plane landed?

MR. ANDERSON: When the plane landed, there were four soldiers that came aboard the plane. Two of them were more or less a search party while the other two had rifles. They searched the individuals to see if they had any weapons or contraband or whatever. After they searched us, they had us all get out of our seats and we all left the plane. As we exited the plane they took our dog tags (identification tags). Then there was an extensive search of the plane, which lasted approximately 2 hours. At that time we were held outside the plane in a confined area. After the search we were allowed to return to the plane. As we reentered the plane they did return our dog tags

KANDY: How many days did the Russians hold you captive?

MR. ANDERSON: They held us captive for four days. I think this took place on a Saturday afternoon (by our time) and we were released on a Tuesday. During this time we stayed on the plane.

KANDY: What happened the first day after they let you back on the plane?

MR. ANDERSON: The first day we were put back on the plane. At the time there were the serving trays, the trays they use to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner meals. I believe there were enough for two meals. So, at that time they gave us one of the meals. The next meal was on the second day. The first and second days were basically the same. We were told to stay on the plane. From time to time they would come in and get a group that wanted to get out and stretch their legs. That would be done outside of the plane. Also I was told that some soldiers did come on the plane one night. These soldiers asked some people if they wanted to go out and eat. By that time our food was pretty well down to nothing. People were scrounging around trying to eat anything. So, they took them out and took them to a cafeteria, or mess hall, or whatever they called it. There a meal was being prepared. They all talked Russian and none of us spoke Russian. So, they signaled or gestured, "what are we eating?" One of the cooks signaled or gestured by putting her hand about four feet off the ground and going "roof, roof".

KANDY: Oh my, a dog

(PAUSE)

KANDY: What was the U.S. government doing to get you released?

MR. ANDERSON: We were informed that our Defense Department would make contact with their Defense department and find out what we were being held for. They were trying to find out what happened and what it would take to negotiate our release.

KANDY: Did the Russians do any bodily harm to anyone?

MR. ANDERSON: No, no one was threatened or injured in any way.

KANDY: Was your family informed about your captivity?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, the Pentagon sent a telegram to my family notifying them that I was on the plane that had been forced down. They were in the process of trying to get a release for the plane and the crewmembers, and they would get back with them when they had further information.

KANDY: Do you know what day your family received the telegram?

MR. ANDERSON: I believe it was the day after the plane was forced down that they got the telegram.

KANDY: Was the community of Gallipolis aware that the Russians were holding one of its members?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, there was an article in our local newspaper. That gave a short summary of who I was. It did go into detail that I was on a plane that the Russians had forced down. Yes, they were notified. The local newspaper and word of mouth notified them.

KANDY: Did the Russians verbally threaten anybody?

MR. ANDERSON: No, no, they never did threaten anybody that I'm aware of. No, the answer is definitely no.

KANDY: On about day three or four what was the morale of the men?

MR. ANDERSON: Well, our morale was fairly high. We were hoping for an early release, but we weren't sure. We kept our spirits up and we all hoped it would not be another Pueblo incident.

KANDY: Did you at any time feel you or some of the men would be killed?

MR. ANDERSON: No, that was never a thought in my mind and no one ever related that they felt that way to me.

KANDY: How did you finally get released?

MR. ANDERSON: Well, after the negotiations, the U.S. government had to sign a statement saying that our plane had violated Soviet airspace. On that signing our plane was released.

KANDY: Had the Russians done anything to your plane?

MR. ANDERSON: Well, as I stated earlier, this was the first flight for this plane and it was one of our newer models. We did notice people outside of the plane taking pictures and also taking video of the plane. As far as doing any kind of damage or anything like that they didn't. They did give us some jet fuel, because we were running low on fuel and we had to have extra fuel to take off and get on our way. So, they did give us the fuel that we needed.

KANDY: What were your feelings when the engine started and the plane began to taxi down the runway?

MR. ANDERSON: I was elated to be leaving that area. I was praying that the plane would have a safe trip after that.

KANDY: Where did you go, back to the U.S. or to Vietnam?

MR. ANDERSON: We went to a Japanese island. We were permitted to land on the island. Upon landing we were safe.

KANDY: Was this plane seizure broadcast on national television?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, it was. There were several news organizations there. I was asked if I wanted to be interviewed by CBS. They came on and asked me several questions, like how I was treated, and what did I eat? (I told him that we were running out of food and on the third day, they did come on the plane and give us bread and water.)

KANDY: Was there a debriefing in Japan when your plane was taken there?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, as soon as we landed in Japan, they gathered us all up, took us in a room and basically told us what we could and could not say. They told us not to give our feelings, to just basically tell what the facts were and not to do any interpretation.

KANDY: Did you call home?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, when I landed I called home. I called my wife and my mother. I made these calls from the Japanese base.

KANDY: Did your wife live in Gallipolis too?

MR. ANDERSON: No, at that time my wife was living in Renville with her mother. I believe that's in Perry County. She was living with her mother at the time.

KANDY: How soon did you come home?

MR. ANDERSON: From that point we went right to Vietnam and landed in Cam Ranh Bay. In my mind I imagined that there would be bombs shooting, people shooting at the plane as we came in, but actually, when I got there I was surprised at how peaceful it was there. There were men walking around with baseball caps on as opposed to steel helmets. They weren't wearing any life jackets or bulletproof vests. It was a casual atmosphere there. I said to myself, "Hum, I wouldn't mind staying here." After that I got processed, it took 3 maybe 4 hours. Here they divided the men up, and gave them their orders, as to where they were going. At that time I did not know where I was going; my orders were for the first infantry division. After that I got put on a plane. It was a smaller plane. I started flying up (to my destination), I looked down and said, "Oh no. I'll never make it back." I was saying that, but hoping I would (make it back). We landed at another airstrip. Here security was heightened. There were bunkers all around. You would see people wearing steel helmets instead of baseball caps. People had on flight jackets and they were carrying weapons, but it really wasn't that bad there, you know. We were processed. Then they put us in a convoy. We were going back through the jungle. I just thought that's it. I did not know if I'd ever make it back. The Lord took care of me. He got me through my 13-month stay there. I returned home 13 months later.

KANDY: Did you see combat?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, we had some combat. I was a military policeman. Some of my duties were to guard the general and his headquarters. We ran convoys carrying materials and some supplies from one base to another. We also went out in the jungle on search and seizure. We were looking for ammunition or weapons they had stored out there, or if we would see them hauling food or anything of that nature for the Vietcong. There were several times that we were fired upon. Several times when I was in the base camp at night we were under attack, but I made it back.

KANDY: We're glad you did. Did you receive any medals?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, when I was in the service, I received the National Events Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, 2 Army Accommodation Medals, the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Medal with Palm, and the Good Conduct Medal.

KANDY: You've got a lot of medals there. What happened when you got back to Gallipolis?

MR. ANDERSON: When I got back to Gallipolis, as far as having a community party or anything, there was nothing like that. My family held a gathering of family and friends and that was basically it. As far as I know there was nothing in the paper. It was just a nice homecoming.

KANDY: But you were glad to be back?

MR. ANDERSON: Yes, oh yes.

KANDY: Tell me about your life today.

MR. ANDERSON: Well, I am married. I have a son and a daughter. My daughter is married to Bill Smith. They live over in Point Pleasant. She has four children and she is a homemaker. My son is a state highway patrolman in the northern part of the state around Toledo. He has two children. So, I am the grandfather of six. My wife Sharon works at the Bossard Library in Gallipolis. We have been married for 32 years and have six grandkids. That's basically my life.

KANDY: Do you still keep in touch with any of the guys on the plane?

MR. ANDERSON: On that plane like any other plane trip you really are confined to your seat 90% of the time. I got to know the guys that were on both sides (of me). We talked about trying to stay in contact, but at the time, we were on that plane, we did not know exactly where we were going. So, it was hard to say this is where to write me. We exchanged our home addresses, but we would not be back there for another year. I really

don't know if they made it back or not. Like I said, I may have lost the papers, but no, I never kept in contact with anyone.

KANDY: Are there any details I've left out, that you would like to share?

MR. ANDERSON: No, you were pretty thorough and I don't have anything to add to it.

KANDY: Well, I really appreciate you doing this for us and we thank you very much.

MR. ANDERSON: The pleasure is all mine.

3 - The Sunday Times-Sentinel, Sunday, July 7, 1968

Dateline Gallia


BY HOBART WILSON, JR.

WORD of last Sunday's incident in which Russian fighters forced down a Seaboard World Airlines DC8 jet with 231 American servicemen aboard caused little concern here at first, but when it was learned SP4 Pete Anderson, former GAHS athlete was on the plane, Gallia Countians were more than alarmed.

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A couple of remarks heard about town on Monday, after word was received here that Anderson was a passenger on the plane headed for Vietnam, were: "Is this going to be another Pueblo incident?" and "Why don't we treat the Russians the same way they treat us?"

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ANDERSON was not only a three-sports star at Gallia Academy between 1963 and 1966, but he was a well-mannered youth both on and off the field. Odie O'Donnell, who managed "Pistol Pete" in Little League baseball 10 years ago, was somewhat alarmed when he heard about the incident. "Pete can take care of himself," remarked the former Tribune-Times sports editor. "I'm sure they (the U. S. government) won't let this thing develop into another Pueblo crisis." The plane was ordered released around 1 p. m., Tuesday (Gallipolis time.) This brought a sigh of relief to Pete's parents, his wife and many Gallia county friends.

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PETE was interviewed on a CBS television news program Wednesday evening according to Dr. James Orr. "Pete talked very calm, and plain," remarked Dr. Orr. "He said the men were well fed, and plenty of beer-a-d, but they had no meat," continued the doctor.

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"VERY few communities in Ohio, or the nation, have the facilities and beauty you have in Gallipolis for an event of this nature," said Charles Hayes, who served as co-master of ceremonies during the third annual River Recreation Festival boat show here Thursday afternoon. Continued Hayes, "You should be proud of these facilities. It's gratifying to see that the fine people of this community are taking advantage of this wonderful location." Hayes is a member of the Athens Boat and Ski Club which participated in Thursday's boat show on the Ohio River.

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IT'S hard to believe the event, which began as a two-hour boat show in late August, 1966, has now grown into one of the Ohio River's leading festivals in three short years. The first show was sponsored jointly by the Gallipolis Boat Club and Chamber of



JEAN and Jan turned from Wash with the Federal Clarence Miller at Vice President the any of the session whom they visited

Israel Is Promised Missiles

WASHINGTON United States has

Excerpt taken from the *SundayTimes Sentinel*

About Virgil Tackett

Virgil Tackett is my stepfather. I asked him what he remembered about 1952. He told me that he had to work hard, but he had fun, too.

He remembered that life was not as easy as it is now. He did not have the modern conveniences that he has now. He had no indoor plumbing. His mother got water from the well in the yard. To have hot water, she had to heat it on the coal stove. His mom washed their laundry by getting water from a nearby creek and using a washboard to get the laundry clean. Then she hung the clothes on a clothesline to dry.

Because of the lack of plumbing, they had no bathroom. They had a little building away from the house called an outhouse. In the wintertime, he had to wade through snow. When it was raining, he had to wade through mud. In the summertime, it was more convenient to get to, but it did not smell very fragrant.

In 1952 he did have a television set, which was what it was called back then. It was black and white, twenty inches square, and had legs. He watched shows such as the *Lone Ranger*, *Honey-mooners*, *I Love Lucy*, *Roy Rogers*, and *Superman*.

He said his parents raised hogs and chickens and also made moonshine. They would butcher the hogs and chickens for their own food.

He remembers that retail prices were a lot different than they are now. He told me that pop was about \$.05, bread was about \$.30, and a five-pound sack of flour was about \$.25. He could buy candy for a penny and ice cream for \$.15.

My stepfather told me a lot about his life in the 50's and about hard times without a job. It helped me understand him better. When I think life is hard today, I remember what he said life was like in the 50's and then life seems easier today.

-Darlene Meek

Buckeye Hills ABLE

The Beehive Kilns of Nelsonville

The Beehive Kilns still stand, proud of their role in Nelsonville history. There used to be more of them, but today only three remain with their smokestacks from the Nelsonville Brick Co. Once a flourishing business, now just a memory in the mind of old men.

They are less than a mile from the Public Square in town, but probably less than half of the local people know they exist, and even fewer know their history. There is a little plaque on a boulder near by, erected in 1980 when the kilns were one hundred years old.

If you turn off Ste. Rte. 33 onto Rte. 278 (Lake Hope Drive), you will find the kilns in just under a half mile. You can walk inside them, feel the bricks, and see where the fires were built. In the parking area, you can see bricks with the star pattern or engraved with "Nelsonville."

In 1875, one of the many hills was approached by men carrying pick axes and shovels and leading mules. They surveyed the hills and then started digging a long, wide crevice. They were looking for hidden treasure and found it, for the hill was full of clay. Not just any clay, but a residual clay known as Number Five Fire Clay. It was a bedded clay found in lower coal measures, also known as Lower Kittanning over clay. They found a vein approximately eight feet thick immediately above a coal seam. This was a seam of very hard and fine clay up to ten feet wide. It was so hard that chips from a pick axe could cut the hands of a miner.

Soon the hill was swarming with men, horses, mules and wheelbarrows. As the miners started working, other men were laying tracks and mounting barrows on them.

Extraction of Number Five Fire Clay was an underground mining process, done (in the 1880's) by human and animal labor. Both coal and clay were removed through the same pit mouth of the mine when both were present. The coal was removed first, then the clay. Once the coal was removed, the coal miners moved on to another mine and the clay miners took over.

The bulk clay was transferred to the brick making plant by railway. J.L. Evans said, "During the Nelsonville coal and clay heydays, there were 365 miles of railroad lines within a ten mile radius of town."

In preparing the clay for processing, workmen measured it by counting the numbers of shovels full they put in the barrow. Next it was wheeled directly to the mixing room. The clay was dumped into a box of dry-pan-grinder with a specified quantity of surface flint clay to give it the necessary plasticity for molding.

A dry-pan-grinder is a large steam-driven mill consisting of a continuously revolving pan, approximately seven feet wide and one foot deep. In the pan were two large cast-iron wheels fixed on a horizontal axis. The weight of the wheels broke the clay chunks into smaller lumps, then into particles small enough to sift through the metal screen in the bottom of the pan. This process took up to fifteen minutes per "charge," or filling of clay.

Under the pan, the fine clay went into a bin on a mechanical conveyor belt, taking it to the mixing machine, known as the "pug mill." Orton describes a typical steam-driven pug-mill in 1884 as a "trough about eighteen inches wide by eight feet long, and eighteen inches deep. In it works a horizontal axis on which are fixed culling arcs that are arranged spirally, but at such a pitch that their action is slow in moving the clay forward. This process is only one of mixing, no grinding enters into it."

Water was added to the clay by a skilled worker who went by feel to get the right mixture. A process called "soft mud" (or "wet mud") was used to mold the Nelsonville Star brick. Evans says 750 could be molded by hand in a day using a wooden mold. As the plastic clay emerged on the molding table, the worker grabbed a quantity and kneaded it into a lump the size and shape of the wooden mold. This lump of clay was called a "wauk." To prevent the clay from sticking, the mold was dampened and sprinkled with sand before each filling.

The molds were then carried to a building with a drying floor which was covered with wooden or metal pallets. This floor was heated with live steam from wood burning boilers and circulated through cast-iron pipes. After twenty-four hours, the bricks were transported to the bee hive kiln and set inside by hand. Fire boxes circled the kiln and were constantly tended. The bricks were glazed by the fireman first adding a shovel of coal, then a shovel of salt, then another shovel of coal to each fire box. The heat turned the salt into a mist that fell on the bricks. This coating made the bricks water resistant and they would last for many years when used for paving streets or sidewalks. The salt glaze gave the pave bricks a very distinctive and attractive surface.

A total of seven to nine days in the constantly heated kiln was necessary to fire the bricks, followed by two to four days to cool down. From these kilns came pavers with stars, circles and flowers, as well as those with the name "Nelsonville" stamped on them.

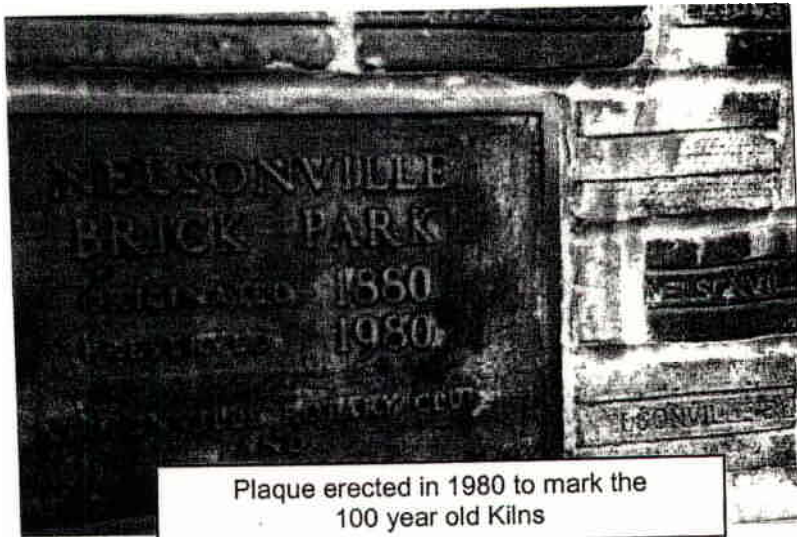
As automobile usage increased in the late twenties and early thirties, smoother and better road surfaces became necessary. Man turned to cement and asphalt for cheaper and better surfacing. However, there are still several streets in Nelsonville where bricks pave the roadway nearly a hundred years later. A stretch of old, old Route 33, known as Dorr Run Road, on the western edge of town is one such road. You can also find streets paved with these brick in the section of Columbus called German Village.

SOURCES;

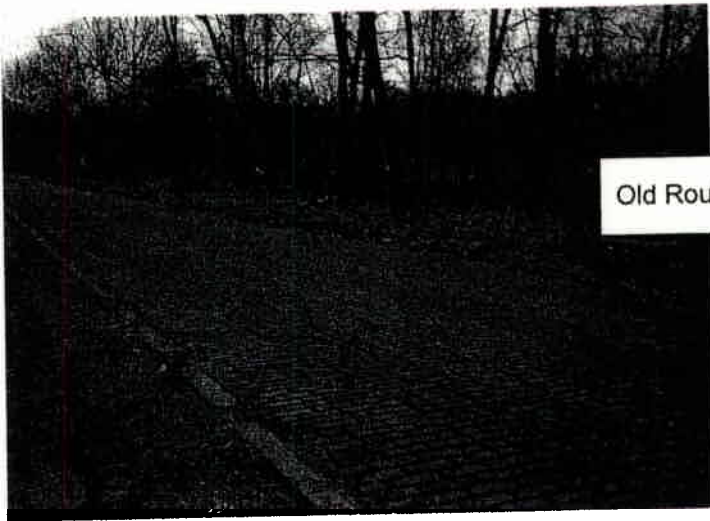
Writings by Edward Orton Jr. and J.L. Evans in Nelsonville Library
Conversations with Jim Barron of Haydenville, Ohio

-Barbara Monk

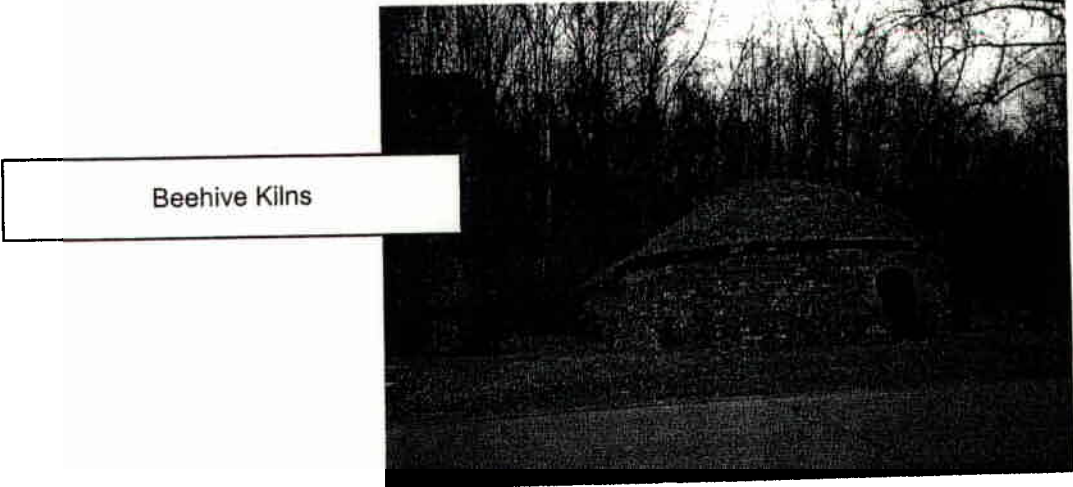
North Education Center-ABLE



Plaque erected in 1980 to mark the 100 year old Kilns



Old Route 33 Known as Dorr Run Road



Beehive Kilns

The Migration to the City

A collaboration between 2 students—Jack Ferrell's story as told to Barbara Monk.

I was only 10 when my Daddy and I boarded a Greyhound bus in West Virginia and headed for Columbus, Ohio. The coal mine had given out its last bit of coal; Daddy was out of work so we moved on. Mama and the other 7 children stayed behind until we found a house.

I'd never seen traffic like Columbus had—so many cars—so many people. Since I had never seen a traffic light, I had no idea why it had red, green and yellow lights or what they meant.

When school time came, I entered Douglas Elementary (at Broad and 17th). Naturally, I walked to school and any place I went. I followed other children from near my home in the Washington and 9th area with no fear of ever getting lost.

We always exited the school by the front door. One day I got turned around and left by the back door. There were no children around so I started walking. I hadn't learned the street names so I didn't bother to check where I was going. I was lost but I didn't know it.

I came to a big building that I had never seen before. The street sign said I was on S. Champion Ave. I looked up to the top of the building and saw twin steeples rising into the sky and a great feeling of calmness and peace settled over me. It was like God said, "I'm right here with you, Jack."

I turned the corner and saw a long row house with people sitting on the steps. One family was black, just like me, so I walked over to them. When I told them where I was headed, the lady said, "Child, you're a long way from home."

They put me in their car and drove me to the area of Washington and 9th until I spotted my house.

-Jack Ferrell's story as told to Barbara Monk
North Education Center-ABLE Programs