

My story starts in 1794, 8 years before the people began pouring over the Appalachian, eager, happy and always hopeful, that Christian Waldschmidt living in Readingtown, Penn, married and the father of one daughter & 3 sons had the urge to investigate the WEST. A group of 11 other men made the initial trip. They headed for Columbia a settlement on the Ohio River. There they met Col. Symmes, who had at his disposal a million acres of land. Col Symmes showed this group his holdings and they selected a site ten miles north from Columbia along the Little Miami River. Ten of the men bought land in varying amounts, from 40 A to 1140

Waldschmidt and Levi Buckingham each bought 1140 acres. Thus Waldschmidt was a large land holder. The price paid was one Spanish dollar per acre. After consummating the deal Waldschmidt arranged for the building of some 20 log cabins to accommodate their families.

In the spring of May 1796 six families left their homes in Penn and headed West. Waldschmidt being one of them. He was 41 and had Catherine 15, the eldest and four sons, the youngest only a few months old. Waldschmidt fought in the revolution as a private under Capt Turch of Berks Co. Infantry. He could speak English but could not read or write it as he had been educated in the German Language.

The party experienced little difficulty crossing Penn to Ohio River but once there had to wait 3 weeks for their boats to be built. The river was low, making progress slow. They drifted by day and camped on the river banks at night. On the way down two of the families decided to seek their fortunes in Ky instead of Ohio for they left the group at the Bracken river and went south into Ky. The remaining 4 families continued on and reached Columbia 7 wks later after leaving their home in Pa. When they reached Columbia and there they found the Little Miami was in flood so it was another 18 days before they arrived at their journey's end.

Their chosen homesite was known as New Germany and the mailing address was BIG BEND or BIG Bottom on the Little Miami River. The village and Waldschmidt House were located 20 ft below the surrounding plateau

The first project in this development was to build a dam across the river and excavate for the race which was to operate the mills which he planned. Soon there was a saw mill in operation and it furnished beams and lumber for the grist mill and the construction of 2 huge vats for the distilling of whiskey, thus in 1797 must 1 yr. after the group had left Pa all this had been accomplished. This same year a young man by name of Matthias Kugler came into the picture to work for Waldschmidt. He could neither read or write but he overcame this handicap when it came his turn to take over this miniature empire.

It is believed that this House was started this same year. 1797. This house the 2nd oldest still standing in Hamilton Co. In the kitchen with the loft above the family is supposed to have lived until the rest of the house was finished. The loft was reached by a ladder in the cupboard at the left of the large fire place, which is the largest in Ohio. The stone in the house was quarried in the rapids nearby.

In 1798 Matthias Kugler 18 married Catherine Waldschmidt 17. They lived in the stone house at the turn of the road So of the Main house.

Dr Kling  
Sheila F.

School was started and an English speaking teacher conducted classes. Waldschmidt taught German. 1803 Waldschmidt was becoming known as an exporter and Cinti becoming a shipping port for goods sent down the river to New Orleans. A Banking & Exporting Co. was formed to facilitate the shipping of goods and Waldschmidt was elected to its Board of Directors.

1804 the stone house was completed. The large central hall with living quarter on the So side for the family and a large trading post on the north side. Mr. Waldschmidt foresaw the need of a full inn mill for bleaching and finishing of cloth and soon this was in operation with Son Peter in charge. Due to shortage of cash this necessitated trading and bargaining. Waldschmidt stocked his store with articles the people needed so he must be certain to take only those products in exchange which he could turn to advantage. He therefore induced the women of the vicinity to raise and spin flax. In 1810 there were 329 looms operating around the settlement.

This same year a paper mill was built. He also taught his friends and neighbors to make barrels in their spare time and the records show he bought 6400 barrels from them in 2 yrs. The settlement at this time contained a grist mill, saw mill, distillery, slaughter house, boat house, school, church and tenant houses for employees. The settlement was growing by leaps and bounds.

While all this was happening to the settlement, the family itself was experiencing changes. In 1801 a son David was born, he died 7 years later. Peter and John were married. In 1810, six years after the house was finished Mrs. Waldschmidt died. The following year Waldschmidt married Magdalena Kern, a 31 yr old widow. They had 1 daughter, Sarah.

Cinti was the biggest city west of Appalachians while St. Louis & Chicago were trading posts. Waldschmidt loaded his flat boats with whiskey, lard, flour and cloth and headed them toward the Miss and New Orleans. Many times the shipments were hampered by small bands of roving pirates and robbers on the Miss, who would steal what they could and peddle it to a man named Pieree La Feen at New Orleans who would sell to his brother Jean La Feen the pirate who operated on a much larger scale in and around the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1814, ten years after this home was finished, Christian Waldschmidt's son John took sick with quick pneumonia and both passed away. Waldschmidt left no will thus Catherine and Matt Kugler came to the fore so by perseverance and hard work they took over the management and finally assumed ownership of the various enterprises. Many changes were made and the settlement was soon to reach its peak.

About this time, the whole country seemed to be taken over with wild enthusiasm for building roads and canals. 1826 John Jacob Astor bought \$600,000 in Miami Erie Bonds and the National Road had reached Columbus, Ohio.

1828 a disastrous fire struck the little community, The saw mill

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and grist mill were destroyed, they were restored, but this gave son John now married to start out on his own. " 2 miles south at M Milford young John began his own business operations.

1837 there was a money panic caused by over extended credit which lasted 7 years. Despite all this the Little Miami Railroad was formed in The first meeting was held in Waynesville. 20 men arrived on horseback for the meeting including Matt Kugler. He was elected as director and subscribed \$10,000. in stock providing the railroad ran within 80 rods of his mills. When you visit Waldschmidt House you see the railroad directly behind the House. The engine was similar to an old threshing machine, with top speed of 10 mph. The engineer stood in the open and often wore a stove pipe hat. The conductor was paid more than the President of the co. He was combined conductor, guard and gentleman host. He wore a frock coat and pointed out the points of interest to his passengers as they passed by. The residents of Cincinnati revolted at the thought of trains speeding through the city so at the city limits the engine was disengaged and draft horses pulled the cars into the depot. A few years later the railroad was extended to Yellow Springs and it then became a popular resort.

In 1844 Peter the last surviving son of Christian Waldschmidt died and two years later 1846 Catherine Kugler died. Four years later the peak of this settlement had been reached. Competitors The mills constantly harrassed by flood waters. Steam power had overtaken and surpassed water power. The mills of the settlement were antiquated. 1848 the paper mill burned and was not replaced. Matt Kugler was an old man and not interested in competing as he had enough for his own needs Mrs. Sarah Given and the last living child of Waldschmidt also had sufficient for her needs.

1849 brought cholera, fire and a great flood. In 1852 Sarah Given the last of the Waldschmidt Children died and Matt died in 1854.

The settlement was definitely on the wane and the end was fast approaching. But a few years later the war between the States brought further prominence to the House. For it was selected as the site for a training camp and the House became the headquarters of General Bates and the induction center for the hundreds of men trained here. The name was changed to Camp Dennison, in honor of the Gov of Ohio.

After the War the house was used as a tenant house later as a barn until 1942 it was purchased by Mr & Mrs. Chester Kroger and presented to the Ohio Daughters of the American Revolution 4 Homes of the early settlement still stand. The frame cottage on the south side where Sarah Given resided. The stone house beyond the turn in the pike Catherine & Mattia Kugler and later the large frame house at top of the hill

1794--urge Readingtown Pa. Catherine, 3 sons.

Col Symmes Columbia 40 A 1140 A Levi Buckingha m  
arranged for 20 cabins for families.

1796 6 families left --41 Catherine 15

7 wks--3 wks boats to be built. 18 days Miami

1st project in dev dam excavate race operate mills  
saw mill grist mill distillery 1 year. 1797.

1797 Matthias Kugler also house believed started.  
Loft above large fire place stone quarried Br rappids

1798 Matthias Kugler 18 married Catherine 17  
School started

1803 becoming known as an exported and Cinti shipping port to New Ol  
Bankin & exporting Col formed and Waldschmidt Board of Directors.

1804 House completed. Describe house pictures.

Fulling mill for bleaching & finishing of cloth

Cash shortage, trading

1810 329 looms

1810 Paper mill, made barrel in 2 yrs. bought 6400

Family changes. 1801 David ~~Wood~~ died 7 yrs later Sons peter & John marr  
1810 six yrs after house completed Mrs. Waldschmidt died. yr later  
Waldschmidt married a 31 yr old widow Kern 1 daugh Sarah mar James Given  
Surveyer.

Cinti trading post for New Orleans Pirated Pieree La Feen Jean La Feen

1814--6en yrs. after this house fin Waldsch & son John died quick pneu  
No will

Catherine & Matt took over management and assumed ownership .

1828 disastrous fir struck saw mill grist mill but restored this gave  
John start on own business at Milford.

1837 money panic

Miami RR meeting Waynesville 20 men Matt 10,000 for 80 rods mills  
Threshing 10 mi. Enginnerr open, teps hat stove pipe hat. Conduc  
guard etc. frock coat etc. Cinti engine disengaged draft horses

1844 Peter last sur son of Christ died and 2 years later Catherine  
4 yrs. later the peak of settlement reach