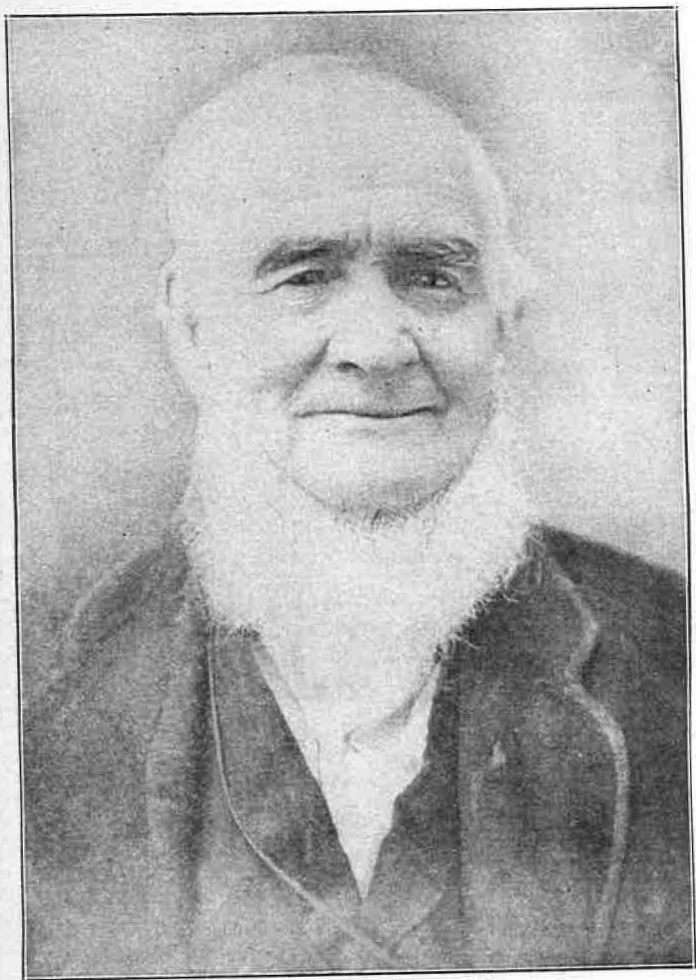


Crooksville History as told by the late Guy E. Crooks



Guy E. Crooks



Jacob Reed

BEFORE CROOKSVILLE EXISTED

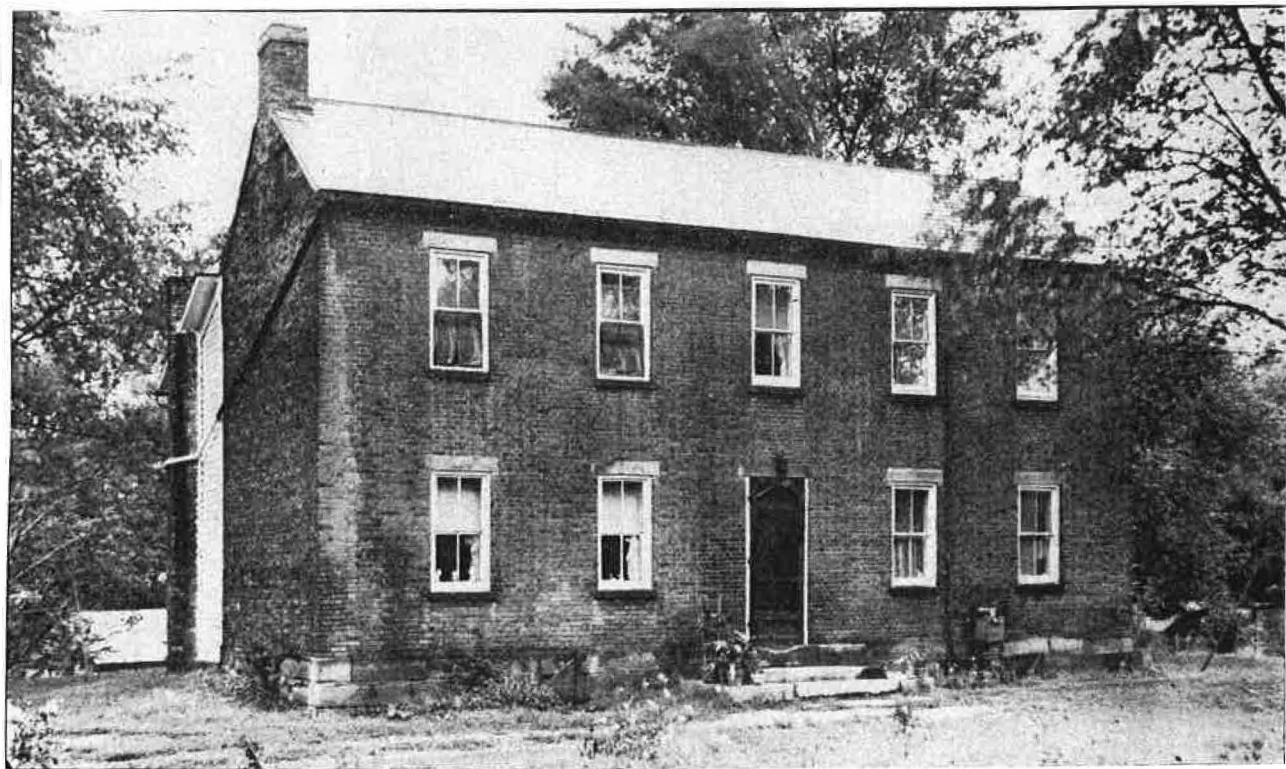
I have often been asked the following questions: "Where did Crooksville get its name? Was it named for you or some of your ancestors? Was there at some time a bunch of "Crooks" located in this community? Do all the crooks come from Crooksville? Is it a crooked town, morally, etc?"

Being one of the oldest residents of Crooksville, and being a resident of the community in which Crooksville is located for seventy-five years, some time before Crooksville was ever thought of or even dreamed of, I will try as best I can to answer the above questions by giving you a brief history of our beloved city "Crooksville."

Some time between 1820 and 1825, there was a young man living somewhere in the New England states by the name of Jacob Reed of wealthy parentage, who inherited quite a large sum of money. On receiving his inheritance, he immediately left his native land and traveled westward seeking a country in which he could invest his money and multiply his fortune. After reaching the state of Pennsylvania, he met a young lady by the name of Lydia Reem. It was a case of real love at first sight. Jacob proposed, Lydia accepted, and the wedding followed. Immediately, Mr. Reed, accompanied by his new bride, continued west until he reached Harrison Township, Perry County, Ohio, establishing a temporary residence near the Iliff Methodist Church. Mr. Reed started out to view the new surroundings by following the South Fork of Jonathan Creek from Stringtown through the heavy timber section to a point where Main Street of Crooksville now crosses that once beautiful stream of pure water, that was filled with all kinds of fish. There he rested, fully convinced that this was his "Promised Land." He proceeded to negotiate with the Federal Government for a parcel of land on the East side of the creek along the section line running East and West on the South side of now Crooksville. He bought and paid for same and received a warranty deed, signed by the late President James Monroe. This deed is in the possession of some of the descendants of Mr. Reed, but cannot be located at this time. Later he purchased another parcel

joining his land on the North from a man by the name of Bell. Each of the two parcels extended over the creek several hundred ards West near the present Buckeye Street. He then purchased another tract of land on the West side of the creek from the State of Ohio, containing one hundred and sixty acres or more making in all between three and four hundred acres of land that he owned. He built himself a humble home on the bank above the creek on the East side near where the residence of Mr. Wilson Winter now stands. It was before the days of steam saw mills and Mr. Reed knew that to dispose of the timber on his land at a profit it must be converted into lumber. He proceeded at once to control the water in the creek by cutting a channel from the main creek at a curve south of where the Zanesville and Western Railroad now crosses this stream to a point north near where Lewis Wright Shoe Shine Emporium now stands. He then built two dams, one across each channel connecting them by a stone wall, making a large basin of water for a mile or more above the dams. Over the east dam, a few feet south of where Tom Maxwell's store building now stands, he constructed a saw mill which operated by water power. He cut and sawed the timber on his land and sold it in the markets. The small strip of land surrounded by the two streams of water was not accessible only at dry seasons in the summer or when the creek was frozen over in the winter. This island was covered with soft maple trees, briars and bushes where drift rubbish would gather after the floods each spring and presented an unsightly appearance. This strip of land in later years was given the name of "Coney Island." (I will mention this island later.) It was no unusual sight to Mr. Reed's family to watch the deer visit a spring below his residence and quench their thirst. This spring is still supplying water today the very best of fresh soft drinking water.

Mr. Reed was a good financier and accumulated a considerable sum of money from the sale of his lumber, and the products of his farm. As he cleared the land and turned the forest into meadows and pasture fields, he multiplied his herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. He and his faithful wife coveted a more palatial home in which to live. They



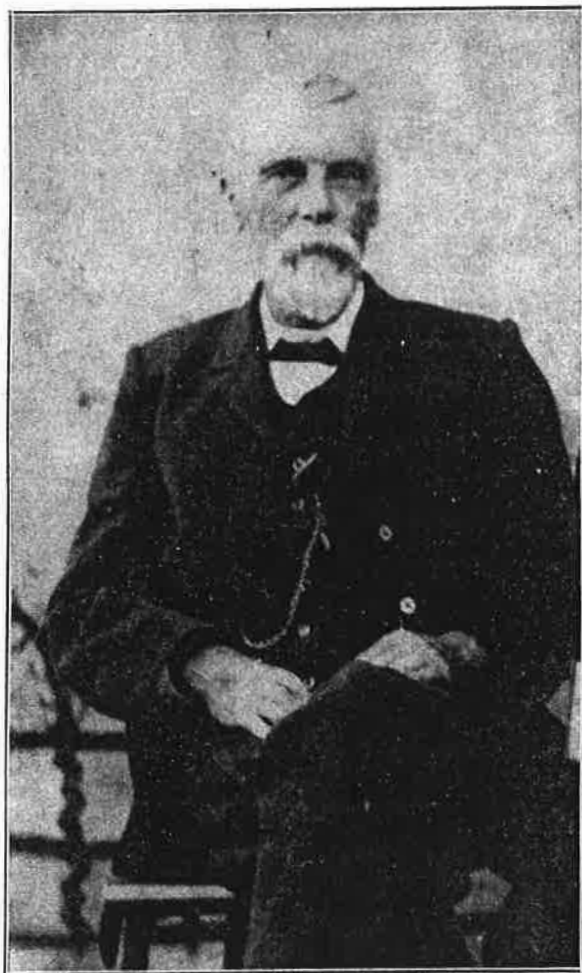
Jacob Ree 's es ence

dreamed of an earthly mansion with all the conveniences and comforts that were in keeping with the times in which they were living. They planned and built a modern brick house joining the frame structure in which they were living at that time. (I am not certain of the year in which it was built.) Mr. Reed, in speaking of this beautiful structure, as long as he lived and in his last Will and Testament of his possessions, referred to it as his brick mansion. This building is still standing in fairly good condition, and is occupied by Mrs. Louis Trout and her family at present.

WHY NAMED CROOKSVILLE

In the year of 1870, my father bought a house and a small strip of land by the side of the railroad across from the siding where Ed Rudolph now resides. He moved into this house, fitted one of the rooms with shelves and counters, and opened a small store. It was because of the conditions above mentioned that my father circulated a petition through the neighborhood, securing the necessary signatures, praying the post office officials at Washington D. C. to establish a post office to be known as "Reeds Post Office," and at the same time made application for the appointment of the office of Postmaster. In due time the post office department reported back favorable to the establishing of the office, and his appointment as postmaster, but advised that due to the fact that there was already a "Reed Post Office" in Ohio, it would be necessary to give it some other name, suggesting that the office be known as "Crooksville." This suggestion was pleasing to my father. The Post Office officials at Washington were so advised, the office established, and Joseph E. Crooks received his commission to serve as Postmaster. As I recall, the fee for his services for the first quarter that he served was less than \$5.00. The last quarter for the year increased to between seven and eight dollars. He served for fifteen years, or until the election and inauguration of the late Grover Cleveland to the Presidency of the United States, at which time he submitted his resignation as Postmaster to the Postmaster General at Washington, D. C., which was accepted and the late Worley Whitehouse succeeded him.

After the post office was established in 1870, the passenger trains did not stop to receive and discharge the mail. The postmaster built a small platform beside the track with a bannister at each end, and on the side next to the track in which he would stand with the mail pouch in hand. As the train slowed down, the mail clerk would grab the pouch and kick out another pouch containing the incoming mail. This was a dangerous transaction, and the railroad officials installed a mail crane instead, enabling the mail clerk to grab the mail pouch with an iron hook at any speed of the train. The patrons of the post office were delighted to receive mail twice each day.



Joseph E. Crooks