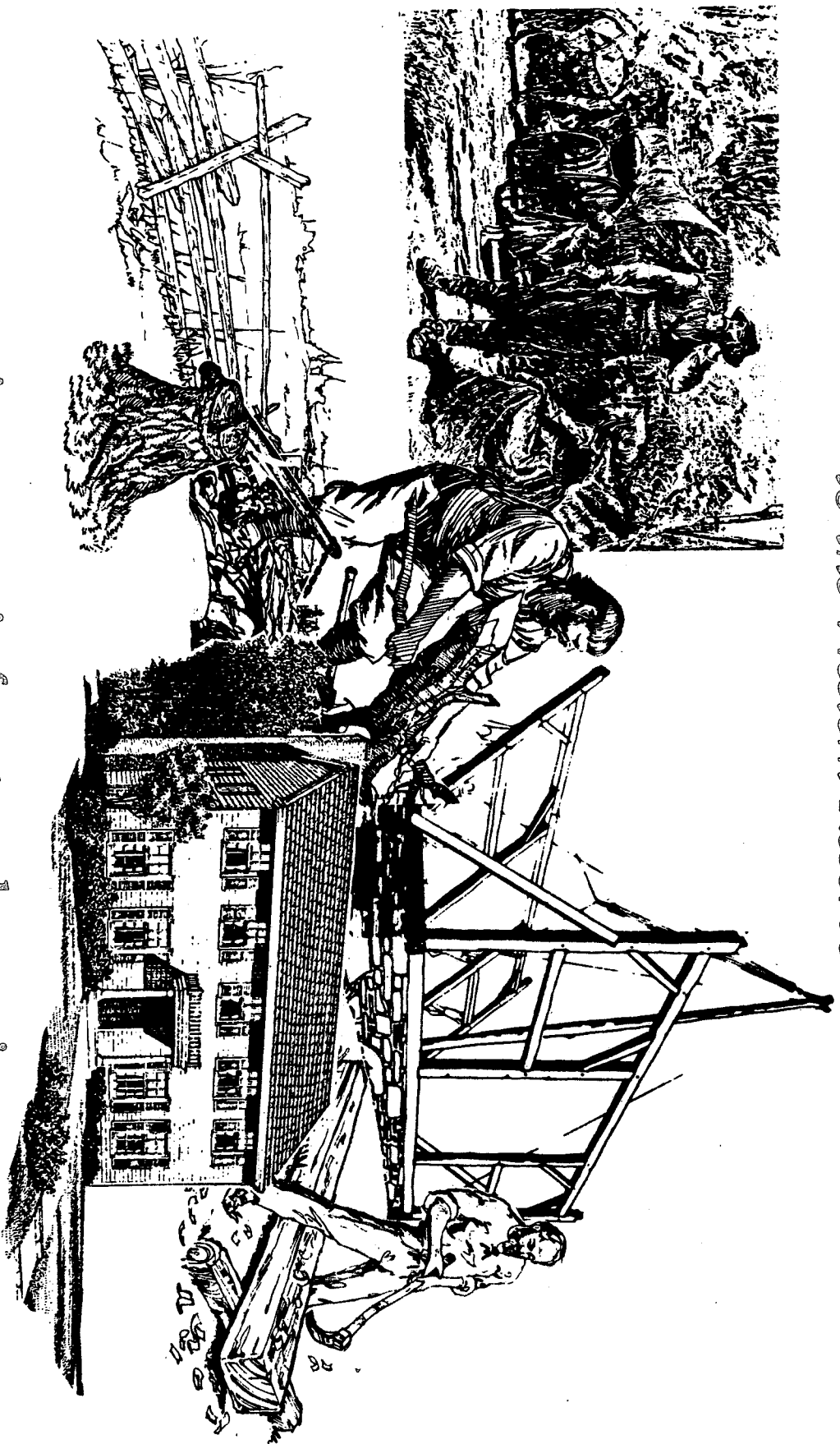
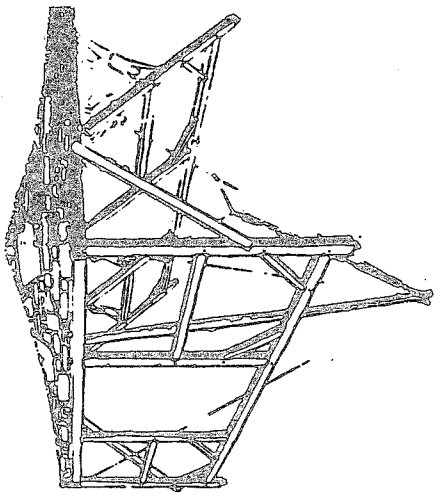


*From New England
to the Western Reserve*



*A potpourri of century homes in
Avon's French Creek Historic District*



By decree of the King of England, Connecticut at one time owned all of the land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

In 1786, following the Revolutionary War, Connecticut gave to the new United States government this stretch of western land — except for a 120-mile-strip bordering Lake Erie in Ohio. The land stretched from the northernmost boundary of Pennsylvania to the vicinity just west of Lorain County and it was kept in "reserve" for the state of Connecticut.

Thus it became known as the Western Reserve.

In 1795 and 1796, the Connecticut Land Company bought most of this strip for about \$1,200,000.

Therefore, most of the settlers who bought land here after 1794 no doubt purchased it

from the Connecticut Land Company.

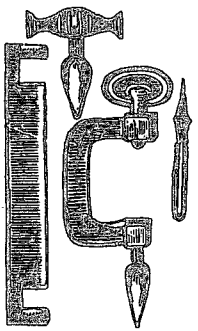
So, although Avon didn't come into existence until the early 1800s, there is a strong emotional genealogy which ties us to the colonists of New England. And their influences on our way of life, our religions, our agricultural practices, our work ethic and our architecture are visible everywhere.

In this brochure, we have selected a few of the approximately two dozen century structures that grace Avon's landscape. Buildings constructed between 1820 and roughly 1880. Many of them are open to the public.

This brochure is published by the Avon Historical Society to help the interested visitor locate and appreciate these historical landmarks, and to learn something of the families who built and lived in them.

SELECTED CENTURY STRUCTURES IN AVON'S HISTORIC FRENCH CREEK DISTRICT (Map on inside back cover for location of homes.)

Structure	Address	Circa	Pages
George Sweet Home	32345 Detroit Road	1820	2-3
Colvin Sweet Home	32135 Detroit Road	1840	4
Johannes Nagel Home	Nagel and Schwartz Roads	1850	5-7
Peter Schwartz Home	34645 Schwartz Road	1878	8-9
Clemens Alen House	36976 Detroit Road	1850	10-13
Wilbur Cahoon Home	2940 Stoney Ridge Road	1825	14-17
Lewis House	1591 Center Road	1843	18-19
Ora Cahoon Home	37821 Detroit Road	1845	20-21
Williams House	37392 Detroit Road	1836	22-24



Jesse and mother Huldah, and other brothers and sisters.

Waterman was active in Avon Township as a farmer and was noted for raising beautiful horses. He also helped plot the township's early roads. In 1825, he was listed as still owning 300 acres, considerable property for those years, which indicates he must have been a "man of some means." He continued to prosper and, in the late 1820s, built a second home — immediately to the west of his original log house. We know this home today as the George Sweet Home.

In 1820, Amy Sweet held the first Methodist Church classes in Avon. They were conducted in their previous log home and Ephraim Keyes Carpenter was the first lay preacher. Many a time, itinerant preachers stayed overnight in the Sweet homes.

Known throughout her life as a "lovely, pious woman," Amy passed away in 1843 at the age of 50 years.

After Amy's death, Waterman continued to live in his second home with his son, George, and in the 1840s, upon retiring from farming, divided his holdings equally between his sons George and Colvin. A portion of this property was sold to the Hursts, where Stone Eagle Farm now stands. Another section just west of that, containing a third Sweet home very similar to that built for Colvin, was sold to the Jamesons. And a fourth Sweet home was to the east of Colvin's home where Miller's Country Place restaurant is now located.

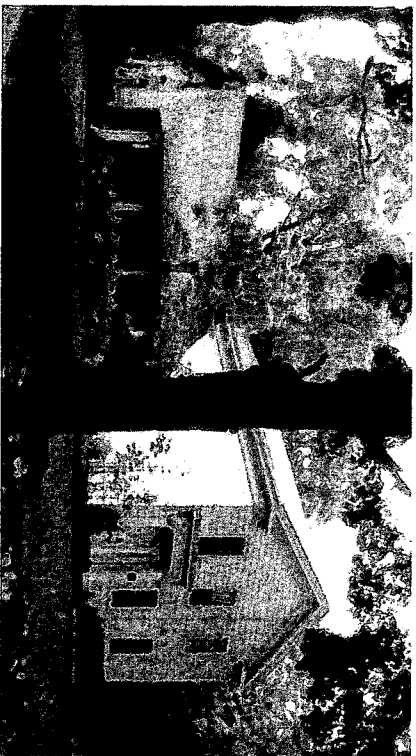
Waterman Sweet passed away in 1872, at the age of 84. He was laid to rest beside his father and mother, and at the feet of Amy, in Mounds Cemetery.

The George Sweet Home 32345 Detroit Road

Listed in the Library of Congress Historic American Homes Survey — a true Western Reserve Colonial.

Built by Waterman Sweet, this structure ranks among the most beautifully styled, classically proportioned dwellings in all of Avon.

According to records in the Library of Congress, the George Sweet Home was



of that period. All the other walls are thin, like

erected in the late 1820s or early 1830s on the site of his original log house. Indeed, on close examination of the walls, one notes that the east wall of the house is exceptionally thick for a house

other frame homes of the time. This leads one to speculate that the *east wall* of the home as it is today was probably the *west wall* of the log house, and was incorporated into the present structure while it was being built — a common practice of the time.

After construction was completed, it is held by some that the family moved into their new home, and then the other three walls of the log house were dismantled. An addition to the main house was added to the east wall in later years.

The house itself is Greek Revival style which was sweeping America at the time, and is colloquially designated as "Western Reserve Colonial." Worth special interest is the recessed main entrance, done in the Federal style of architecture — a feature which disappeared in Western Reserve Colonials after 1840.

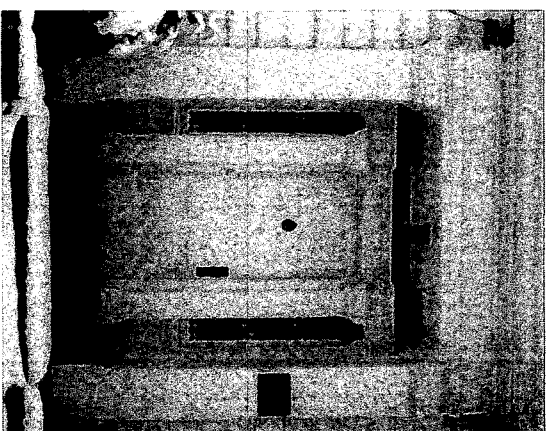
After the death of Charity Williams Sweet, wife of George, the house passed into the hands of the Williams family. The present owner acquired the home in a sadly deteriorated condition.

In recent years, with a generous serving of love, the owners applied a great deal of hard work, rubbing, scraping, sanding and removing partitions to restore the interior to its original condition. They have used pictures and

floor plans obtained from the Library of Congress, on which they have based their beautiful work. An examination of the interior of the structure proves the house to be much more spacious than when viewed from the road.

One comes away deeply impressed by what has been accomplished — particularly the woodwork, staircase, and careful plastering. Many of the original moldings and carvings were uncovered from layers of paint to shine once again, almost as they did when first carved. Especially noteworthy are the swags over the fireplace and the caps at the ends of door jambs. One cannot help but notice, also, the original doors with their unique mold design which was typical in many of Avon's homes of the 1830-1850 period. Floors are of differing heights and windows are of varying sizes, all of which posed some sizable problems in redecorating.

It is a strange feeling to stand in the "borning room" where so many of the Sweets entered this life. And it is heartening to see the restoration work being done so lovingly, so carefully, and so professionally — to preserve this important link with our past: the George Sweet house is now more than three-quarters of the way through its second century, right here in Avon, Ohio.



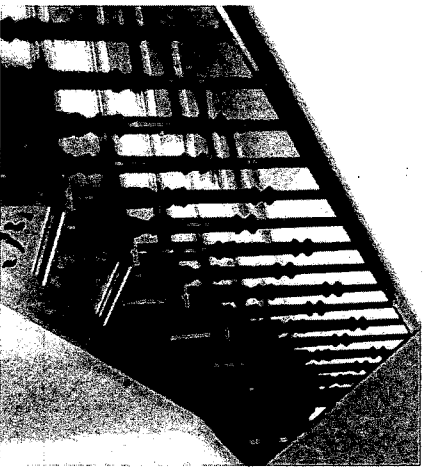
Recessed main entrance done in the Federal style, a feature not seen in Western Reserve Colonial homes after 1840.

Circa:

1820

The Colvin Sweet Home 32135 Detroit Road

The Colvin Sweet house — beautiful example of a Greek Revival farmhouse.



Handsome stairway in Colvin Sweet house showing woodwork that was very fancy for this early period.

It should be mentioned here that Mr. Savage of Avon, Ohio spent two years researching, preparing and writing the story of Waterman Sweet and his descendants. As you read the accounts of the family and the dwellings, you will note that the results of this painstaking effort are clearly reflected throughout the documentation.

Colvin Sweet was born in New York State on June 3, 1812, the second son of Waterman and Amy Bly Sweet. He was brought to Ohio while still a very young boy by his parents when they migrated to the Western Reserve.



Not too much is known of his early years, or how he came to know and marry Bricene Chadwick. Colvin and Bricene had 11 children, all but one of whom survived infancy.

It is known, however, that Colvin was a member of the Methodist Church in Dover Center for quite some time before joining the Avon Methodist Church where he as a steward.

With two large families residing in one house, the need for larger living quarters was pressing, indeed. This may have been part of the reason, along with the passing of Amy, for Waterman to retire from farming and divide his property between his two sons.

Waterman built this house for Colvin in the early 1840s. It is directly east of the George Sweet Home — at the peak of the ridge, set back from the road. This was on the eastern half of the

lands formerly owned by Waterman. The house was designed in Classic Greek Revival style, and is almost a duplicate of Waterman's second home which was built for his son George.

Structurally changed very little since it was built over 140 years ago, its pristine architectural details are a daily reminder of what grand farmhouses were built across the land in those days. It is one of only two houses in Avon to have remained in the same direct line of a family since it was first erected. At the time of this printing (1987), the home is occupied by Colvin's great-great granddaughter and family, assuring our continued enjoyment of its quiet grandeur for decades to come.

Circa:
1840

Researcher: Arnold Savage

The Johannes Nagel Home Nagel and Schwartz Roads

The time: 1849.
The place: Near Sacramento, California.

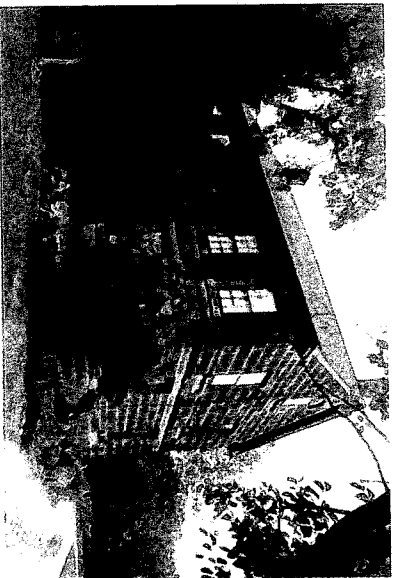
The event: The great California Gold Rush.

And at that same time, some 3,000 miles east of Sutter's Mill, a prosperous, hard-working German immigrant named Johannes Nagel was realizing his own dream. Not of discovering gold, but of acquiring land and building a fine new stone house in the little farming community of Avon, Ohio.

Fifty-one-year-old Nagel, his wife Cristena and their teenage son John came to America in 1840 and, three years later, purchased 100 acres of farmland from George Clifton. In the years to follow, the Nagel farm would grow to 1,100 acres and would extend to the county line on the east and Detroit Road (and presumably beyond) on the north.

The new home was begun in 1849 and is located approximately 100 feet northeast of the log cabin which had been home for his family, and which is located where Nagel and Schwartz Roads now intersect.

It would be 1851 — after a year and a half of hard work, and the



elder Nagel now in his 62nd year — that Johannes, Cristena and their now-25-year-old son John would move into their new home. What a marvelous home it was. And still is.

We can only speculate why Nagel designed and built his home of stone, rather than using the faster, simpler, less-expensive and more popular wood construction. Probably his middle-European upbringing where homes were expected to last not just for generations, but for centuries.

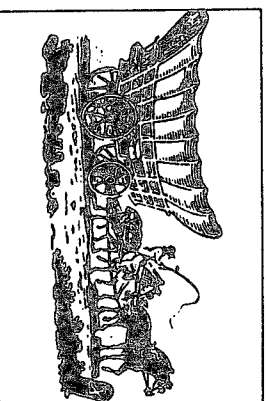
Whatever his motives, sandstone slabs had to be pulled by oxen from nearby quarries (probably Berea) and hauled over the winding road at the crest of "Detroit Ridge" to the site — this being a full day's trip. There, block by block, they would be brought for cutting and chiseling on the premises by stonecutters. Interestingly, pieces of the original sandstone which

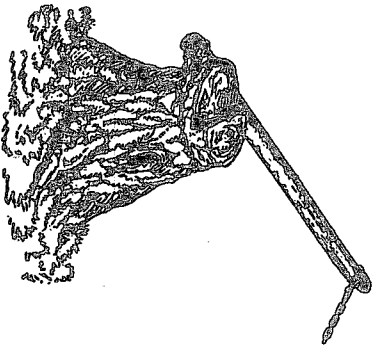
fell from the wagons are still on the property, as are nine of the 12 hand-hewn stone stanchions which supported a corn crib or similar farm structure.

After the father passed away in

Circa:
1850

Nagle House — a pre-Civil War sandstone house, one of several still standing proud in Avon.





1874 at the age of 85, the home continued to be occupied by Nagels — son John, his wife Elizabeth, and their three children — Joseph, Katherine and Peter. John, who lived in the family home from the time it was built around 1850, died there at the age of 75 in the year 1900.

Nagels continued to live in the homestead until 1949, when Joseph (grandson of Johannes) sold the house and 23 acres to the owners of Sample Realty. Within a year, the house — with three acres — was again sold — this time to a widow, Mrs. Clara Foulds.

Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Rathbun purchased the property in 1954.

If you visit the home today, you see a structure that was truly built to last many lifetimes. The walls taper in thickness from 40 inches in the foundation to a first-floor thickness of 24 inches, and 18 inches at the second floor. Windows have wide, wooden sills. Floors are of hard ash planks. The 36-inch-wide front door is surrounded by the original handblown and “rolled” panes of glass. The entry hall extends through to the back of the house where there is another large door — this one being 41 inches wide.

Just inside the front entry is a cherry wood railing which leads to the second floor. Wooden pegs were used throughout the entire house, and mortise and tenon joints are visible in the attic.

The large living room on the first floor stretches from front to back on the north side of the house, although there is strong evidence to suggest that, at one time, this had been two rooms. The original horsehair plaster remains in good condition even today, as does the woodwork. The fireplace was remodeled by Mrs. Foulds in the early 1950s, with the addition of a handsome mantel. And, taking advantage of a gas well on the property, a gas fixture was installed at the same time.

The south side of the house has one large room which was originally the kitchen and is now a bedroom — and what had once been a pantry is now a bathroom.

The second floor is still very much the way it was originally constructed — with two large bedrooms in the front (facing west) and two smaller ones facing east. One of the smaller rooms was converted to a bathroom several years ago, and the upstairs fireplaces were removed to provide needed closet space. In the days of extensive farming on the Nagel property, the hired help would often sleep in one of the small rooms.

A frame structure of four rooms was added around 1900. A new doorway was cut through the two-foot-thick wall between the present living room and dining room. The large wood-burning fireplace was designed by Mrs. Foulds's brother-in-law, Arthur Krumwiede, nationally known local architect and, at that time, owner

of the Wilbur Cahoon home in Avon. The original rear doorstep is now a threshold from the hallway to an enclosed side porch off the dining room. The sandstone stoop shows the wear and tear of many generations of Nagels and their friends.

When the Rathbuns purchased the home, they installed modern heating, plumbing and wiring, and once again the old Nagel residence had a lively, young, growing family within its walls—walls which have stood the test of time, the result of superior materials being used, and the expert craftsmanship that went into their creation.

The Nagel home is featured in "Selected Landmarks" section of the book *Preserving Our Past* which was published by the Lorain County Planning Commission. This is one of Avon's six pre-Civil War stone houses, and one of its finest.

Footnote: Johannes Nagel is the spelling which he originally used. It appears, however, that the Teutonic spelling was somewhat Anglicized soon after he arrived because, in 1840, John (not Johannes) Nagel is listed as one of several Germans who started Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church and parish. Many of the names on gravestones in the old Holy Trinity cemetery are in German lettering — including those of Johannes and Cristena Nagel. Additionally, there was confusion regarding the proper spelling of the last name — and in his own will, Johannes spelled it both "Nagel" and "Nagle".

Researcher: Eleanor Hemminger
Assisted by: Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Rathbun
Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church, Avon
Preserving the Past,
published by Lorain County
Planning Commission

