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Interview with Jim Gibson, Knox County Historical Society President

Adam Sapp

Jim Gibson

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JG: But its primarily maps, and they are self explanatory, but toward the back they have little fold out deals, they are pretty nice actually, you are welcome to borrow this if you promise to take good care of it.

AS: Yeah, definitely, I will.

JG: Then you could copy it, but see how nice it is, and then the dark blue is 500 year flood predictions, worst flood in 500 years, and then the light blue, I don't know, lets see here, this is the intermediate here, so in other words, if you had a 500 year flood, then that would be the overflow, and then the light blue is regional, you know, more occasional flood kind of a deal, but it does take it, you see, page by page, it takes it from where it starts all the up around Marion and then just traces it all the way down.

AS: OK

JG: So, this ought to be fairly useful, not as recreational, but at least it shows how it, uhh, the limitations of the river, you know, why it wouldn't be used for commerce, because I am sure there are places where it's just so shallow,

AS: right, right, right.

JG: so you know, there's that

AS: Thank you.

JG: this, I just found among some photographs, its kind of a nice picture from well,

AS: 30's maybe?

JG: yeah, I am guessing something like that [this is in reference to a picture taken at the aqueduct where two men are fishing along a shallow part of the river in their cloth overalls and white shirts, sleeves rolled up, they are in the river fishing] and that's see that, that's over near where the station break is, and the Dan Emmett House

AS: OK, the viaduct there

JG: Right across from that bridge that's real rusty, that's uhh

AS/JG: Where subway used to be, yeah

JG: So you're lookin' down the river from there, so that's kind of a nice picture, you're working with Howard on this aren't ya?

AS: Uh humm, yeah

JG: I am sure he'll take good care of those then. This, uhh, I didn't find any references in here, and this is from the 60's I think, but I thought this is something that might be useful to ya for some purposes, it's just a bibliography of Ohio references on river waterways, and stuff, so you might run into something you might need. And then do you have this? I wouldn't be surprised if Kenyon has this, we do have two copies of this, and I don't know if that will be very useful to ya, I just copied out of the index, there's that many references to the Kokosing

AS: OK, that's the Geology, OK. [Referring to the geological survey]

JG: That's all geological, I bought myself a copy of this, it has a real nice map, this is more ancient land formations, glaciers, and all that kind of stuff.

AS: OK, kind of like the prehistorically,

JG: right,

AS: all right

JG: And, let me get one more thing here, do you have any flood pictures over there at Kenyon

AS: Uhhh, we have this and that, it's not very extensive, [I really had no clue, but was trying to make it sound as if I knew what I was talking about...so I made a semi-educated guess and supposed we did]

JG: let me look real quick, I forget where these are

AS: OK. This is Adam Sapp, talking with Jim Gibson, the Mt. Vernon Historical Society President, October 27, 1999.

JG: These are snapshots, I have seen a lot of these on postcards, but these, are 1913 flood pictures, and I don't know, I can't even tell ya where this came from, it was donated by somebody. These are snapshots somebody took apparently

AS: OK

JG: And these, this is that same little railroad cross, and then that's looking across, that's

Buckeye Candy Right there, and so that's

AS: And so this was caused by melting snow, I think?

JG: yeah, really fast, it was in January, and it warmed up, we had a big snow and then it got real warm.

AS: wow, so, if I wanna identify, like if I come out and want to get this a little bit later, how would I identify it for you, would I say, it's the one with a lot of pictures in the big frame?

JG: yeap, if you'd make sure I am here when you come back, then I can handle it, and then I think I have some postcards I can show you. [He leaves to get them]. I finally got our postcards in a pretty good order, they were, we had them in notebooks but they weren't organized. This would be we that bed and breakfast that's down on West High Street,

AS: Oh, the Mt. Vernon Inn

JG: Right, so you can see that's this would be taken up close to, maybe the post office, or just down a little ways. Looking away from town

AS: I see.

JG: West High views, are, that's another nice one, fairly rare, in post cards, people didn't take pictures on West High Street, it's usually just the mains streets and East High.

AS: and these are all of 19, the flood of 13.

JG: These are all 13, yeah

AS: Ok yea, then there's that same picture there [referring to a picture of people standing over a bridge while the water rushes underneath it, very high, at any moment about to wash the bridge away, across from them stands the Old Buckeye Candy building located by the current Dan Emmett Expansion and viaduct]

JG: That was umm, Kels...Kelser and Dowds wholesale grocers, thats' in that building, then see where those little archways are, if you look at that now, if you drive by there bricked up with the different color bricks in those days, the bricked, you could drive a little buggy in there, and there was like an open air fruit market, you could drive in that way and then you went out the back and went up Gay Street. It was really neat; somebody oughta do that now since that building's for sale.

AS: yeah

JG: And this was that same area down, right about there, maybe the first block up [in reference to a similar picture taken only a few blocks up] so these are all pretty good,

AS: is that a rail, line, or?

JG: yeah, I trolley line, a trolley went down South Main Street and then, well, I don't know where it looped to, where it ended down on South Main, it must have turned and gone up Gambier or something, but it went up around the square then went up East High and then turned off at Sychar Road, and then

AS: Ok, wow.

JG: and then went out to the fairgrounds, the guy that owned the fairgrounds at that time owned the trolley company too, so he could pick up people at the depot, probably went down to the depot and then went back,

AS: So then, you would you, since that bridge is there and the trolley is there, could you theoretically come up somehow on a boat, and get off there and go from the middle of Mt. Vernon to the fairgrounds or would that part of the Kokosing, not be like, good for transportation.

JG I doubt it,

AS: Or would it be more for city dwellers who just didn't want to walk

JG: and of course this is, these are more those [other pictures] like the ones in there. But what kills me is that these people all went out to, you know, oh, let's get our picture taken, and the river might wash it away any minute you know, we want to be in the picture

AS: definitely

JG: I just love to know, they didn't write on the back who those people were

AS: Oh, def..yeah.

JG: But uhh, we do have a pretty good group [of pictures], this railroad was really really ripped up, and I think there's one on the Gambier Street Bridge,

AS: yeah and this one says Gambier, Ohio

JG: right,

AS: OK, now is that the bridge now that is the infamous jumping off bridge

JG: maybe, I wouldn't want to say for sure about that. And then these are all of Sam Clark [referring to another set of pictures in different album], do you know Sam? Sam was a builder here in town, contractor, he moved houses, he used horse and wagons to move houses, he put up big signs on any project he had, he was a genius at advertising, and he took pictures of every

project he did, and he wrote this on the them all [referring to the inscribed Sam Clark signature on all the fronts of the pictures]
and so, he had

AS: wow, that makes it nice for archiving..

JG: Oh yeah, we just praise Sam, 'cause he took pictures of lots of things being built and moved.

AS: So, what is that then, with the river?

JG: This is the Wagner Bridge in uh, that's probably, yeah that's probably that we're seeing back here that's flooded, it kind a looks like it.

AS: OK

JG: you know maybe...

AS: Oh, OK, so is it like a dyke, or a actual, 'cause I see a bridge in the back and I didn't know...
JG: yeah,

AS: so it's just for construction, non-erosion purposes

JG: yeah, and he was just in the business of just moving, he would haul heavy equipment out and so forth, I don't know if, he worked for Coopers too, he hauled, like when they would build big engines and things he would haul them to the train, so he just kind of a generally hauling guy, uh, this is dry creek, a farm on Dry Creek.

AS: oh and then there's some other of those things [I am referring to a set of large wooden poles set in the bank that look to be the beginnings of some structure unknown, a dyke, or a dock or something, I don't know] would that be a water well, probably not, cause it's right in the middle of the water, well maybe it just puts the logs into the ground or something?

JG: For drilling? Yeah. People who are in the construction business could help me with that, that's whatever that is, that's they use it over and over again.

AS: And then there's the... [referring to house on a wagon being moved by a team of horses]

JG: Oh yeah, and you see, they'd move them on with, with horses and the amazing this is uhh, see, before electricity was generally in use, it was no big deal, but after electric lines went up and traffic lights and things, then moving houses became, put Sam out of business.

AS: oh, right right

JG: But prior to that, I know people, older people that will tell me that they uh, that is wasn't unusual that people would decide that they wanted to live in a different part of town and they just

call Sam and have their house moved, we don't think about that, they liked their house and they just wanted to live on a different street, he did 'em everywhere,

AS: and there's a barge on the river, or?

JG: Uh huh, well, it's probably just a construction, you know, vessel of some kind he just used, I am not sure where this log cabin was I don't think it says, but there are people around that know, and I must get some of this written down. And then that's the Presbyterian Church on North Gay, and you, know, I mean partially constructed,

AS: Uh huh, now, back here there was uh, do you, was that, it seems like, I don't know whether that's a to or a from picture, but I see the river there, was that a prevalent thing for people to move away from the river then after the flood 'cause of skepticism [I am referring to a picture of house being moved that is directly on the banks of the river, I don't know which way it's going, but my theory was that, after 1913, people started to move towards the innards of Mt. Vernon and there becomes marked transition from city to outside city population shift due to the flood]

JG: Yeah that's possible, you know I suppose, although I don't, I, that's certainly makes sense, I don't have any basis for saying that, but it certainly would make sense. People lived out on like Howard Street, you know, those streets near the river. But it didn't flood that often you know, there were a couple of others, in Lorey's history of the county there's a nice section in there on Floods, you oughta look at that because there were some, there was one in 1890s and I think there were a couple, we always think of 1913 and '59 as being the big ones, but there were a few others

AS: OK

JG: So umm, let's see here, we've got a steam engine moving

AS: oh yeah, wow

JG: Like he put up a lot of, like that's the LOM. Loyal Order of Moose and that's an old Moose sign. That is, I believe, I don't know for sure about that, but I think that that is the building up there on West High just on this side of the Post Office that's umm, where the 4-H people meet now, it's just

AS: Vaguely.

JG: It's about a block or two down from the uhh, from the post office

AS: U hmm

JG: And it has a ramp a handicap ramp,

AS:OK OK

JG: [new picture] I think that may be that building but I'm not sure, I think it has some sort of brick facing or something on it now, but I believe that's that building. But, see, [new picture] you can just see Sam was just, just built. I think that's the school, or maybe that's the bridge between the church, probably would have been [new picture]. Oh, there's one their engines that tipped over, see most people would just get their engine back up on it's wheels, but not Sam, he went out and picture of it.

AS: oh, what's that water there? [new picture]

JG: that's probably flood too, but I don't know what that building is

AS: yeah, what the building I'm not sure

JG: The proofs were made, there was a camera that Kodak made called an autographic, and it took, it made a negative this size and then when you finished a roll of film you sent your film to Kodak and they would mail your prints back and these were prints. So it came back with this back on them automatically printed. So, they, I always called them postcard cameras, but they were called autographics, and uh, so Sam probably just had one of those and carried it around. And then the Bridge Company, I'm really interested in it, I don't know if there is any in here [pictures, that is] that uh, it was down along where Coopers is now, and uhh, it was a major major company here in town for the first half of the twentieth century, I am now working on an article for the newspaper on it, and uhh, they had a big fire on Valentines Day of 1939. A monstrous fire down there and it just about put them out of business, but they did come back, and they built, just unimaginatively, unimaginatively, large bridges.

AS: Oh, OK

JG: Across the Mississippi

AS: OH wow!

JG: and hauled them by train there and built them, you know built them up the river and floated them down and walked them into position and stuff.

AS: Did they have any bridges over the Kokosing

JG: Well, probably, and there's some county bridges around that umhh, just you know, dinky bridges across creeks and things that they built too, but uhh, their real bread and butter business were huge bridges.

AS: OK, and so the Kokosing's more of a creek compared to the Mississippi

JG: yeah, people have told me that that bridge that is up there by Subway, that was one of their bridges too.

AS: Oh, OK, OK

JG: see they used to have little brass plaques on them that would say built by Mt. Vernon Bridge Company, and a date, but they have become collectible and people steal them now off of bridges, and so, apparently there aren't very many around in Knox County that still have the plate on them. Uhmm, but several people have told me that they thought the one by Subway was one of them bridges and...you can see [in looking at another picture of the actual fire from 1939] how major that fire was, it really, just about put them

AS: Did they ever find out what started it, or

JG: No..I don't know the answer to that, uhmm, they you know, they fabricated steel and stuff there so they had kind of uhh, I don't know if it was a complete foundry, but they built, that's a Knox County Bridge [in reference to another picture] there, we'll, no it isn't, Floyd Ellis donated it, so, maybe you can get in touch with Floyd, but I am sure those [in reference to another picture] are local bridges

AS: Floyd Ellis..OK and who is Floyd Ellis?

JG: OH I don't know, uhh, 87, twelve years ago he donated the pictures, those were done by my predecessor, you might check the phone book and see if there's a Floyd Ellis.

AS:OK, alright

JG: But at any rate, as far as the river for, for, anything recreational other than just canoeing and so forth, uhm, that seems to me to be it's primary use now, but I have been told that you know, when early people came here, they came by water, or they'd drop things in by water from Zanesville, or from Pittsburgh or that sort of thing, so it was, of course there weren't any locks or any controlling for the Ohio River, so it was pretty dangerous business to be hauling stuff around that way, but they did. And uhh, as far as commerce is concerned I just don't have a strong feeling that is was uhh, any kind of major commercial thing

AS: uh humm, and you don't know of any uhh, like canal systems, other than uhmm, ah Coshocton area

JG: Just up there in the very corner, right, see there's a little just it almost nipped into Knox County up there in where the Walhonding is and that area of near Coshocton County uhmm, so uhm it went Coshocton County, and then down through there and over into Licking County, but it sort of went around the edge of Knox County.

AS: I see

JG: Is the focus of what you are doing just all of the uses of the river? Or?

AS: Uhm...we're just basically kind of getting an historical context of the importance of the river throughout history and from there we will develop our project, which, you know, it's in the

process of being developed now, so

JG: OK, the book on Johnny Appleseed is by uhh, Robert Price, is the man's name. I am sure Howard's aware of that. It was written in the 1950s and it's been reprinted a couple of times. And I, uhh, thought that Dover had done a reprint of it, but I am not certain about that, uhh, it is the real biography of John Chapman and I mean's it's scholarly and very well researched and in that he talks about Johnny coming, you know, coming back from Pittsburgh by canoe and bringing the apples

AS: Do you happen to know how he umm, refers to the creek, or refers to the river, uhh, they uh, like in history, it's been called the Owl Creek, as well as the Vernon River and then now the Kokosing, uh

JG: Somebody mentioned just at our gathering last week that uhh, it was Philander Chase that didn't like Kokosing,

AS: yeah, he liked Vernon

JG: And uhh, it is listed as that on uhh, I am sure you guys have copy of this, this is that booklet I did on the Fair.

AS: Oh yeah, we did get those

JG: See it says Vernon River

AS: Oh yeah, OK

JG: See that's when the viaduct was covered at that time and

AS: And then, dry creek, is that still the name of that creek today?

JG: Uhummm, and then there's another little bridge when you're going out Martinsburg Road South Main Street, you don't really notice it, you notice it more when you are walking than when you are driving, yeah there's another little creek there that runs in,

AS: And so this would have been, Vernon [referring to the map on the back of the History of the Knox County Fair Booklet], yeah this would have been right about the time of Philander Chase.

JG: This is 1870 is when, this map is of 1870

AS: Well, so,

JG: Yeah this was long after, but the name still stuck yeah

AS: DO you happen to know how it changed or how it evolved into and from Owl Creek to Kokosing

JG: No, and I have seen, you know you see funny references to it, uhh, because it was called Owl Creek at times and then you know there was an Owl Creek Bank in Mt. Vernon, Owl Creek was the translation of Kokosing in Indian, in 18... about 1815 there was a private bank that opened in Mt. Vernon, tried to get a state charter, were turned down, went ahead and opened it anyway-- those were called Wildcat Banks, they were uhh, they just, your money was strange at the time, and banks could open and print there own money, and if they were reliable then they survived and if they weren't then they failed. But uhh

AS: Do you happen to have any of that money? Does it have an...

JG: it has an Owl on it

AS: OH, Ok, it has an owl, it doesn't have anything to do with the river

JG: No, it was called Owl Creek Bank and it had a little owl sitting on a branch

AS: that's interesting

JG: They were only in business a few years and uhh, there was some kind of a run and there's was...some people borrowed money and people got nervous about it and then there was a very long court case, uhh, 30 or 40 years it took them to straighten up all the finances, to get people some resolution that if they were holding some of the money, it depreciated greatly in value, people could get like a tenth of what, if they had a hundred dollar bill, or there weren't hundreds, if there was, they had a ten dollar bill, if they could get a dollar back they were happy.

AS: wow

JG: yeah, see, that's why there were Federal currency and uh, that was, maybe in the 1840s began there began to be National banks, and they started simply because of the small banks were just unreliable and a lot of scoundrels were opening them and so,

AS: With uh, with this Vernon River, Kokosing like if uh, have you read any place where you see Vernon River slash Kokosing or Kokosing slash Owl Creek were they used interchangeably at the time or do you think they just evolved...

JG: yeah, I have never seen them with that kind of indication, but I think that yeah probably that some people just called it one thing and some called it the other, but I don't know how long Owl Creek was used but uhhm, Kokosing seems to have kind of stuck.

AS: As far as like early transportation, Indians, can you relate that a little bit to commerce, the trading the fur trapping, anything...

JG: I already told you about that, Gilman Bryant was the man that first, he was one of the first merchants here in town I got a picture of him here I'll show ya, he came here with his father in

about 1806 or so from Cleveland, and then of course there was no body in Mt. Vernon at that time, and uhh, traded. He opened a little general store exactly where the Ben Franklin store is, South Main Street, it was all kind of made of stilts, posts, because of the flooding he had six or so feet the ground, but the Indians would come from the North primarily from Ashland County and Wooster, that area

AS: what would they come down, how would they come down?

JG: well walk probably, they might have come down the river if they came from Marion area, but I think that those Indians rather primarily just walked, but Gilman was known as being an honest store keeper and he traded merchandise for pelts and so they would come from fair distances and the early histories say that because he was well liked by the Indians and uhh, so there wasn't much trouble with the Indians and so...

Mansfield have you know there were massacres and things up there at Mansfield, but not so much here.

AS:OK, as far as uhh, the kind of the evolution of commerce goes, could you talk a little about the mills, you talked about that a little bit on the phone, the evolution of the mills and may the railroad if it played any type of

JG: I'll show you here, [as we walk to a series of maps on the wall that depict early commercial sites on the river] this is our earliest map, this is an 1852 map and

AS: [I notice and point] you can see here the Kokosing or Vernon River.

JG: OK, so it is on both there....and let's see these are, and I am not the best guy to talk to about this but I am learning, first of wall, Water Street is Howard now, so uhh, there's, this is a mill race, that goes up and I don't know why it stops there and picks up, but there was a mill where the, it's where the Shake and Grinder was, its where the

AS: Donatos Pizza

JG: right, there was a mill there, and then the next block down on Mulberry, where they uhh, where you get your oil changed, the quick oil change, there was a mill there, so there was a mill race that ran right up through there and if I understand it went right up past Howard Street, right beside that Buckeye candy building, and it just powered all those mills that were there, and these were man made, they just worked for power, there was enough power there that it would operate the mill, but they could control it so for water to go down there, and then that was kind of the way it operated. I am not much of an engineer to know exactly how that worked..

AS: uhh, me neither, that's OK

JG: But these are man mad devices to use water for power without being the victim of floods and so forth.

AS: What about, I see here, distillery, what was that?

JG: well, there was just distilleries, you're breweries and things

AS: And are these kind of dotted, I see a merchant mill, Norton's mill.

JG: Yeah, a lot of those mills, some were specific, they would just do wool and then there were others that were just general mills, they would do grain or they would do uhh, textile type things or they were set up to do whatever.

AS: oh, alright, like furniture and stuff like that.

JG: uh hmm, and then sawmills and things like that, sure. And then there were uhh, Millwood had a major mill, and that would have been later, but in the real early days of Mt. Vernon there were several Mills down there in that, down around there were Newer Tire and Buckeye Candy were, that end of the...that end of town, they just used..

AS: Now for sawmills, how would they have brought the logs up the river?

JG: Well, I don't if they could have operated sawmills with water, I am not your best guy to talk to about that. See these engines here [as we walk further back into another room to examine their holdings of Cooper engines] these are Cooper Steam Engines. I'll show this one over here, I'll show this one over here especially, uhh, this is one of the real older ones, this was made before the Civil War, probably late 1850s, at Coopers and these were, this never had wheels on it, it was just, horses would drive it on skids out to the site, so they would leave it in place for long periods of time. So this would be used more to power a sawmill, you'd need a blade that was really moving pretty fast, whereas, with uhh, like you know down in Utica you see how the water turns so you don't have...well, these (referring back to the Cooper engine) would turn probably 30 revolutions per minute or something like that, so, this operated, again, my understanding of this technology is pretty limited, but uhh, they operated kind of like a tea kettle operated, you'd just build up a certain amount of water pressure and eventually the pressure would get high and you'd have power. This is an amazing, we got this at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, they had an auction about ten years ago, they were clearing out of their things in their collection.

AS: yeah, I think I remember visiting that when I was a kid.

JG: yeah, we had a guy who heard about and he went up and bid on it, and we got it. Yeah, it came from up there, we bought and Coopers transported it back. Now this one (referring the one on the right that is much larger engine) is the next step up, this is a much bigger engine, but uhh, and then they built it on a farm wagon kind of thing,

AS: oh, for easier transportation, 'cause you can't really take that, you know....

JG: yeah, the horses love this, but as far as what your talking about with the water powered mills, I am kind of sketchy about that I do, we do have a book here on water mills, but it's not about

Knox County, it's just about how mills work, so I'm in the process of studying that myself, to learn a little more, but anyway that shows you, that's a hundred and fifty years ago--they did incorporate water power quite a bit for Mills and there were quite a few mills, we like, there was one that did like linseed oil and I am sure they used some kind of water power in the process, and they didn't have electricity until a long time after that, (referring to a new map): That's what I used for the cover on the fair book, and this for, 92, and you can see, (a new map) Kokosing,

AS: 1890

JG: and you can see, uhh, opp, see the mill here, it's gone, you can see the railroad track, Buckeye Candy.

(Phone rings, conversation stops)

(Conversation resumes)

AS: I see here the fossils (they are sitting in a glass case in the far back near the post office buggy) how uuhmm, how late do these date to?

JG: well, now I'll tell ya, you see, you're asking me about all the things I don't know much about, uhh, I can't answer that, I ran into Mr. Uhh, I'll bet you know him, it's either Schortman or...

AS: uhh, professor of Archeology, at Kenyon? yeah, he's in Honduras

JG: Right, yeah, his son goes to St. Vincent's, my wife teaches there, so I ran into him not long ago and asked him about these, but I need, to, these need to be labeled better, and I need to learn more about them too, so I really can't answer these, dates and things like this...

AS: Uhhh
Flip Tape Side B:

AS: Uhh, what about as far as the uhh, the historical perspective, like you were to think of the river as far as on overall place in history, uhh, or one phrase, or one word, or something, and I know that seems like minimal amount of...

JG: Well, I don't know how to deal with that either, I've lived here for about 30 years, people sort of take the river for granted now, have you talked to someone in the high school?

AS: we're having someone investigate that, and that is yeah

JG: Well, that's got to be an interesting angle, because it's those people that are, are, kind of reinvigorating interest, and of course the bike trail and all that, it's uhh, done that as well, but that whole movement toward environmentalism and I here off and on about efforts of having a theatrical shell there on the river, and down there where the viaduct is, to have performances and

AS: So that would be an extension of Dan Emmett

JG: Uh hmm, yeah, and have a walkway, with a river walk that would extend too...you know a reasonable distance, that people could use. You know, I don't know where that stands but every now and then that topic comes up and I feel like there's interest in that. But, Since it's not involved in commerce, at all, I mean it hasn't been, since I've lived here, people just think of that river as just kind of scenery, but I am sure that in the earlier days of Mt. Vernon, I mean part of the reason they laid the town out where they did was because of the river.

AS: right.

JG: And so uhh, it played a much more important part, some of the early houses in town their furniture, they had a very elegant furniture display and that would be brought up river part way, at least to Zanesville and uhhh, it was carted up here, so that doesn't, speaking specifically positive about the Kokosing, but uhh, there's that River transportation was, but I am sure, matter of fact the founders of the city uhh, said that it was their devotion to George Washington that made them name it Mt. Vernon, but they also said that they had come from Virginia and Maryland area and that the Kokosing reminded them of that area.

AS: Oh, OK

JG: So the connection of the Potomac and Washington sort of made it, there's kind of a nice connection there, it would be interesting to look at that connection from 1805 until now, if the role of the river has steadily declined with the automobile transportation and railroads and planes and all that, then there's no need for river transportation.

AS: Would you say that instead of declining, that maybe we've just shifted focus, and maybe that

JG: uhhh, you know that's what progress is all about

AS: right.

JG: Yeah, that the role of the river would be more for appreciation of nature and environmental

AS: And with that, uhh, going back to the Johnny Appleseed thing, you said that he came up the Walhounding or...?

JG: Well, you'll have to read the price book to get that exactly straight, but my reading of that said that he would walk to Pittsburgh, get more seeds, fill two canoes with them, latch them together, go from Pittsburgh down the Ohio, past Wheeling, all the way down to Marietta, and come up then to Zanesville on the Muskingum and then the Walhounding and the something, form the....and Uhh, Walhounding is one of those, and then he came up the Walhounding and then the Kokosing from that, so it was navigable certainly for canoes it would have been uhh--he used it, there is certainly no question about that, and that would have been between 1805 and it's

about 1828 or so when he left.

AS: So, right about the time Mt. Vernon was settled

JG: OH yeah, he was one of the very original people. And then in 1828, see he owned the lot where the tire company was next to, and he owned in and then another lot that was between it and the river, and uhh, he sold the one where the tire company it, and he never sold the other one, so our story is, he still owns it. And that's where we put the marker recently. In that little drive around next to the river.

AS: Now does he have Apple trees planted on that site.

JG: They are not his, they have been plated recently. Apple trees don't live a real long time. So, I read that like 80 years is a long time for an Apple tree. So when the second history of Knox County, 1881 history, it says, that there may be, as of 1881 there may have been a few trees in Knox County that were original Johnny Appleseed Trees, but none the less, probably a goodly number of the apple trees in this part of Ohio are descendents of Johnny Appleseed's trees. He had huge orchards, there were a few between here and Coshocton they are quite large. He would just sometimes appropriate land, somebody else's land, and they wouldn't use it and he'd just walk out there and plant trees, but uhh, I mean he owned a lot of property. He would by property at times and then he would just appropriate it at other times. Everybody was friendly, and if somebody came along and said that's my land, and he'd just say, we'll I'm sorry...

AS: well, can't do anything about it now...

JG: But there's no question that he did bring, did, come by water from Pittsburgh to here and he would go by foot then from here up to other places, he spend a lot of time in this area, he spent a lot of time here--Ashland, Newark area, and then once an area was settled he would just pick up and move on--he dies in Fort Wayne, he would just keep going further west.

AS: Like, maybe his goal was to get to the Mississippi?

JG: well, he was just trying to keep a head of settlers, and uhh, he wanted there to be apple trees there when they got there. And uhh, so, that's pretty much what he did.

AS: What uhh, what about, and I know professor Sacks knows a lot about this, but what about Daniel Emmett?

JG: As far as the river is concerned, I don't know of any link there, he worked, uhh, his father was a blacksmith, and he worked with his father in the blacksmith shop, he worked on the newspaper here in town, but, when he was about 16 he left this area and joined the army and then, when he left the army, he came back here for a short time, and then , he was in circus type bands and traveled around, so he didn't have a long connection to here at that time. And then he was older and retired, he came back, but uhh, I can't think of a waterway kind of link.

AS: well,

JG: the chapter in Lorey's book, and I think there's a chapter on floods and disasters, would certainly be worth reading, and then I am sure you have a copy of the Hill, the Hill history is the big thick one, and I...I'm pretty sure there is some accounts in there of some kind of tragedy events, I don't remember reading much about the river as much of a, well I haven't read that whole book, that's kind of a book you just read a chapter at a time

AS: yeah, yeah, whatever you are interested in.

JG: But you may find something more about that in there.

AS: Well, good, thank you very much.

JG: if you need anymore of these, (referring to pictures) Mr. Greenslade had a wonderful collection in the archives at Kenyon of just things that were pertinent to the college, so you may find some flood pictures over there, but if you want to have copies of these, I can't get them.

AS: excuse me, yeah

JG: we have a copy machine here, but it's not great for photographs, and I usually take things uptown and you know, if you find several of these that you want to use, I can have you take them up town and make copies.

AS: yeah, thank you yeah, and is there anyway I could come back and do a follow up interview.

JG: yeah, sure, I am always here Friday afternoons and Wednesday evening's, and then I am here other times as well, and if you need a better time we can work something out.

AS: all right thanks very much.

---This part of the conversation is extraneous, but included since it was on the tape---

JG: Also, there's one more thing, you called me about a year ago didn't you?

AS: yeah I did, about a project for my...

JG: For Mr. Sheffield.

AS: Yes

JG: That was right when I was taking over the museum and it kind of fell through the cracks and I want to apologize to you, and

AS: oh no that's OK, it turned out well.

want JG: But, if you still, want, to, you were talking about a little contribution, if you still
to do that, how much were talking about doing?

AS: oh, it was like a hundred dollars or so...

JG: OK, see, if you want to do that, we're accepting contributions to the new building
and anything over twenty five, we have an area for donations, in recognition of somebody
else, so if you wanted to do that we have a little brass plate that would say, you know, I'll
give you a form

AS: please do,

JG: yeah and I saw you in a play in Danville, Little Shop of Horrors?

AS: yeah, that was, it was Little Shop of Horrors...

<END>