

A literature review of the Granger United Methodist Church Parish Property,
Medina County, OH.

By

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For

Granger United Methodist Church

1235 Granger Road

Medina, OH 44256

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Introduction

The Granger United Methodist Church Parish property (GUMC) is in a rural area in the uplands of the Rocky River watershed. The property is approximately one acre in size, with roughly half an acre of mowed lawn in the north, and a house and outbuildings in the south. The home, constructed in 1962, is surrounded by current or recently fallow agricultural fields. Based upon visual inspection of the property, the area with the highest potential for prehistoric archaeological features is in the northern half of the property. Historic features and artifacts related to the residence are most likely concentrated in the southern half of the property. The author conducted a preliminary review of historical documents of the property, and has identified a prehistoric earthwork within the immediate vicinity of the property.

The following background research provides a foundation for the interpretation of the findings and recommendations for further research. It is necessary to understand the region's prehistoric and historic context, environmental setting, and of previous research conducted in the vicinity of the project area to determine potential for identifying sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Environmental Setting

The GUMC property lies on in the uplands of the Rocky River watershed, at the very edge of the drainage basin (Figure 1). To the immediate southeast is the drainage divide for the Yellow Creek/Cuyahoga River watershed. The site is located on a Wisconsin age kettled till plain within the Akron-Canton Interlobate Plateau of the Glaciated Allegheny Plateau (Brockman 1998; White 1982). The soils in the project area consist of Fitchville silt loam (FcB) and Glenford silt loam (GfB). Fitchville soils are poorly drained and prone to standing water and seasonal wetness, while Glenford soils are moderately well drained (Hayhurst et al. 1977).

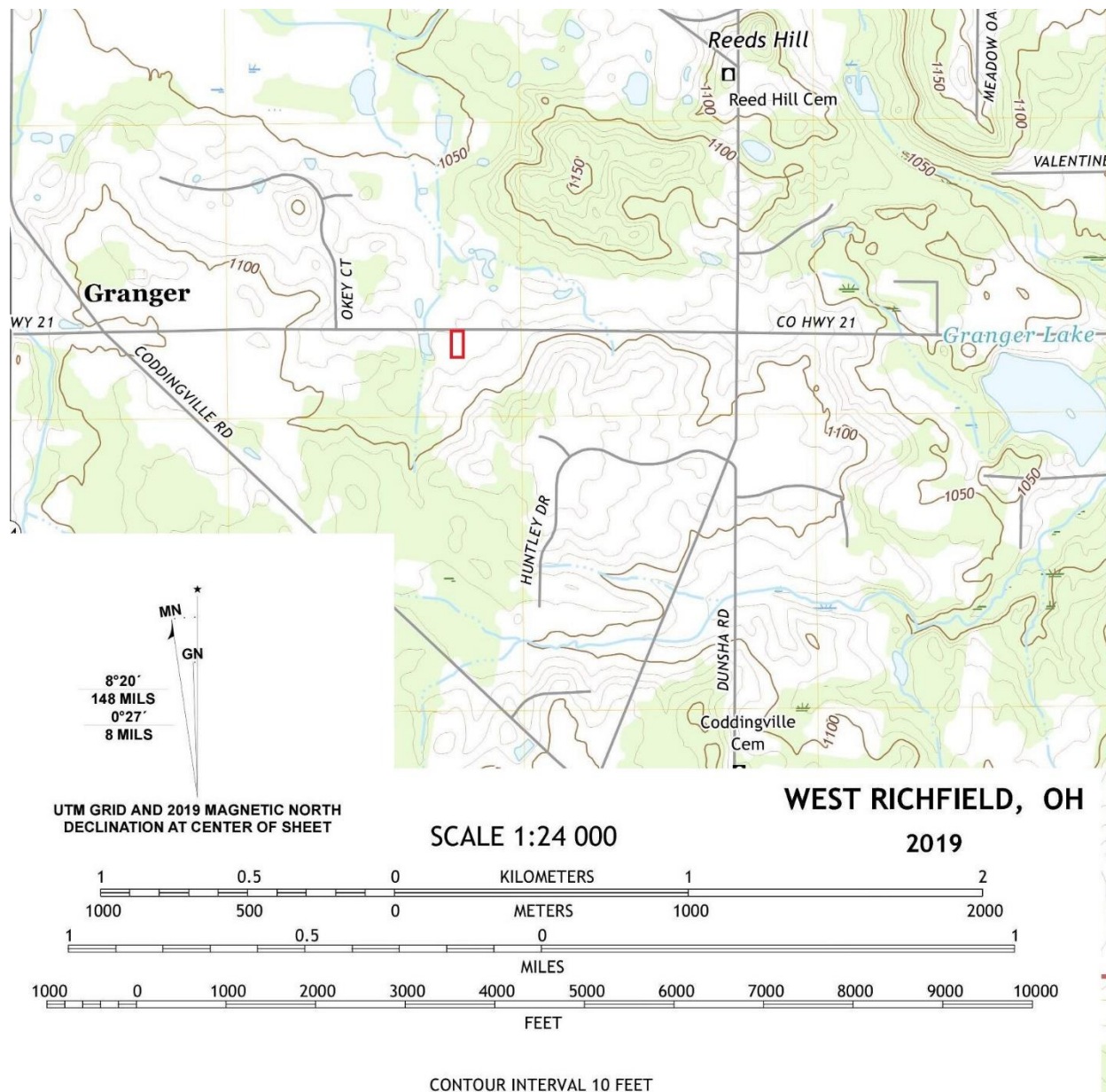


Figure 1: USGS (2019) Topographic map of area, property outlined in red.

Medina County bedrock consists of Denovian, Mississippian, and Pennsylvanian age rock (Bownocker 1981). The Denovian formations consist of Olentangy and Ohio Shales, which lie beneath a narrow portion of the Rocky River Valley in the Northeast of the county. Limestone, sandstones, and Waverly and Maxville shales constitute the Mississippian formation, which lies beneath most of the county, referred to as the Cuyahoga formation. Intermingled with the Mississippian and Denovian deposits are Pennsylvanian age shales, sandstones, Allegheny coal and other similar aged rock. Pennsylvanian limestones contain the only flint or chert strata in the county, though these are mostly in conglomerate form and too small or deep to be accessible to humans without intensive excavation. Within the Pennsylvanian limestone is the Upper Mercer formation, located southeast of Medina County along streams eroding out as small nodules (Stout and Schoenlaub 1945).

The area around the site is composed of mixed oak forests (Gordon 1966). These trees could have provided excellent sources of food, building material, tools, and wood fuel for past populations. Thanks to the excellent preservation conditions of the Krill Cave site (33 SU 18), prehistoric ecological resources can be partially reconstructed. Krill cave is approximately 5.5 km northeast of the property. Local fauna identified at the Krill Cave site include 35 types of mollusks, 10 types of birds, 3 types of reptiles, 3 types of fish, and 2 types of amphibians (Prufer et al. 1989). This region also suited woodland wildlife such as deer, raccoon, squirrel, chipmunk, wolf, bear, bobcat, woodchuck, vole, woodrat, bat, hawk, owl, turkey, passenger pigeon, ruffed grouse, and woodcock. Other sites in the area, including the Mystery Cave site (33 SU 488), have recovered bear, deer, wolf, and fox remains associated with human activities prehistorically.

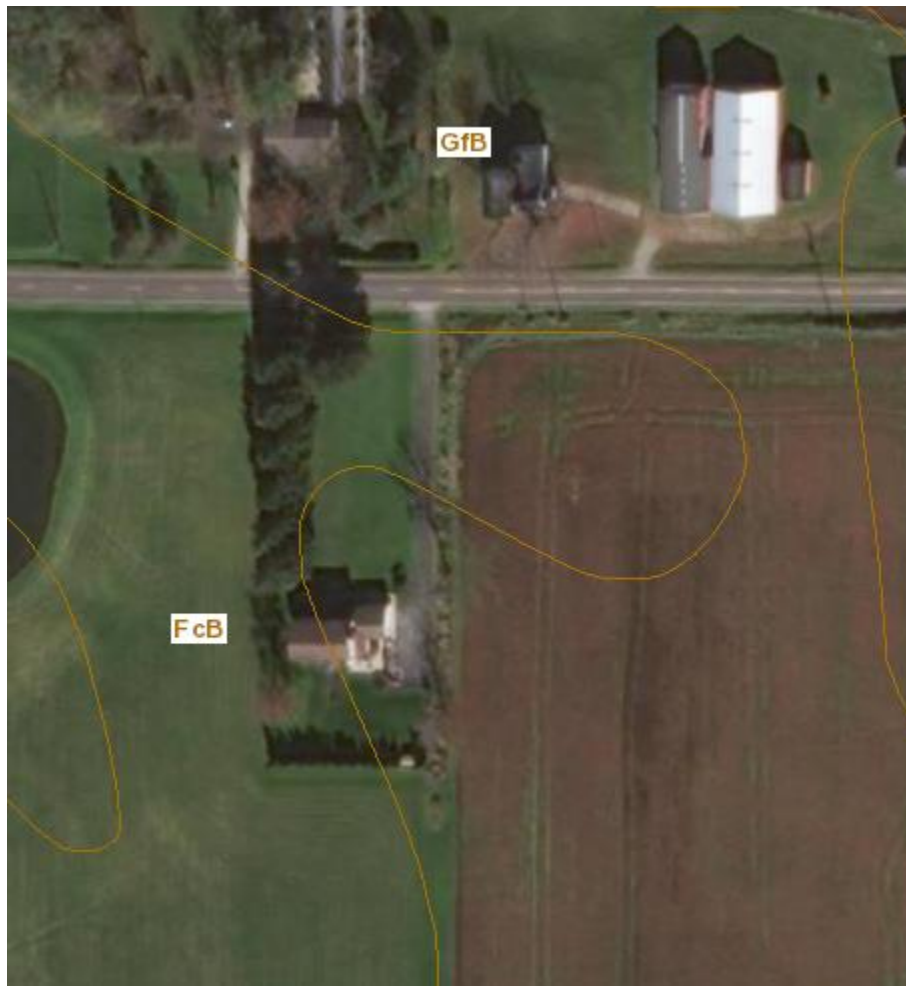


Figure 2: Aerial map of property with soil contour lines (Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Online Mapping System, 2022).

Prehistoric

Humans have been living in Medina County for over 15,000 years before the present. Based on the work of a plethora of previous archaeological theory and investigation, prehistoric cultural periods are divided into the following time units: Paleoindian (13,000-8,000 B.C.E.), Early Archaic (8,000-6,000 B.C.E.), Middle Archaic (6,000-3,000 B.C.E.), Late Archaic (3,000-

1,000 B.C.E.) Early Woodland (1,000 B.C.E. – C.E. 1), Middle Woodland (C.E. 1 - 400), Late Woodland (C.E. 400-1000), Late Prehistoric (C.E. 1000-1550), and Proto-Historic (C.E. 1550-1655).

Within the area immediately around the survey area, there are several prehistoric sites previously documented. Mills (1914) indicates an earthwork site located somewhere in the vicinity (if not within the survey area) of the property (Figure 3). This earthwork was first surveyed in 1850 by Charles Whittlesey (Whittlesey 1850). Whittlesey referred to these earthworks as the “Granger works.” The earthwork consisted primarily of a circular ditch and embankment. Aside from conical mounds, these circular earthworks represent one of the most ubiquitous earthwork types in Ohio (Woodward and McDonald 2001).

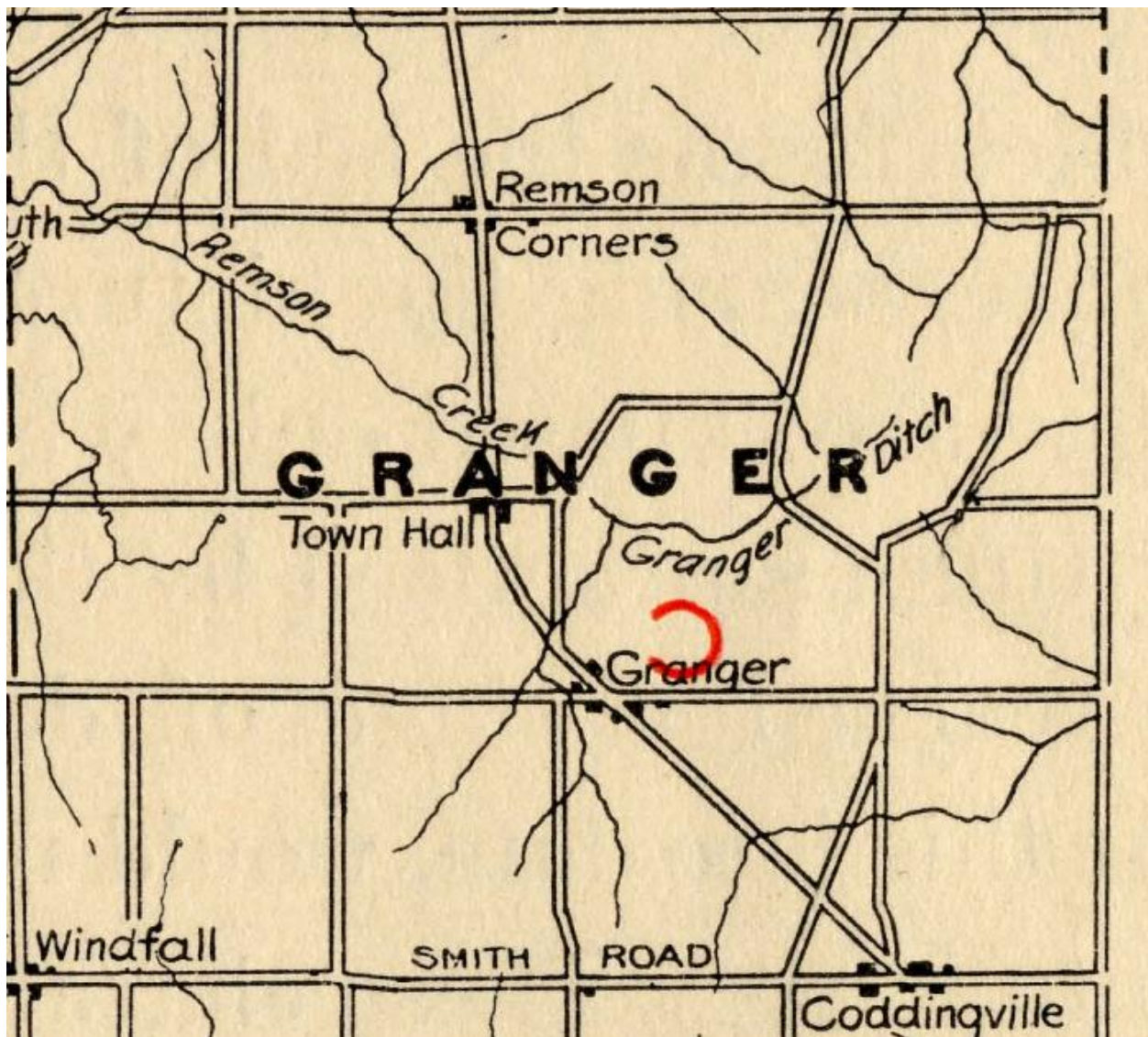


Figure 3: Mills (1914) atlas, including an approximate location of the Granger earthwork.

According to Charles Whittlesey, the owner of the property at the time (not specified but likely either Mrs. N. Hazen or Ezra Huntley) built a barn on the south side of the earthwork, and a house on the west side. The farming on the site has made the embankment almost

imperceptible “by dint of much ploughing and scraping, has nearly demolished the ancient monuments of their labor” (Whittlesey 1850:17). The diameter is listed as “18 rods” or roughly 90 meters (Figure 4).

Both Mills (1914) and Whittlesey (1850) provide very coarse details about the location of the earthwork. There is a high possibility that a portion of the earthwork is within the boundaries of the property since the location has never been investigated since 1850. Mills’ inclusion on the archaeological atlas of 1914 is based on the Whittlesey report, without field checking the site at the time.

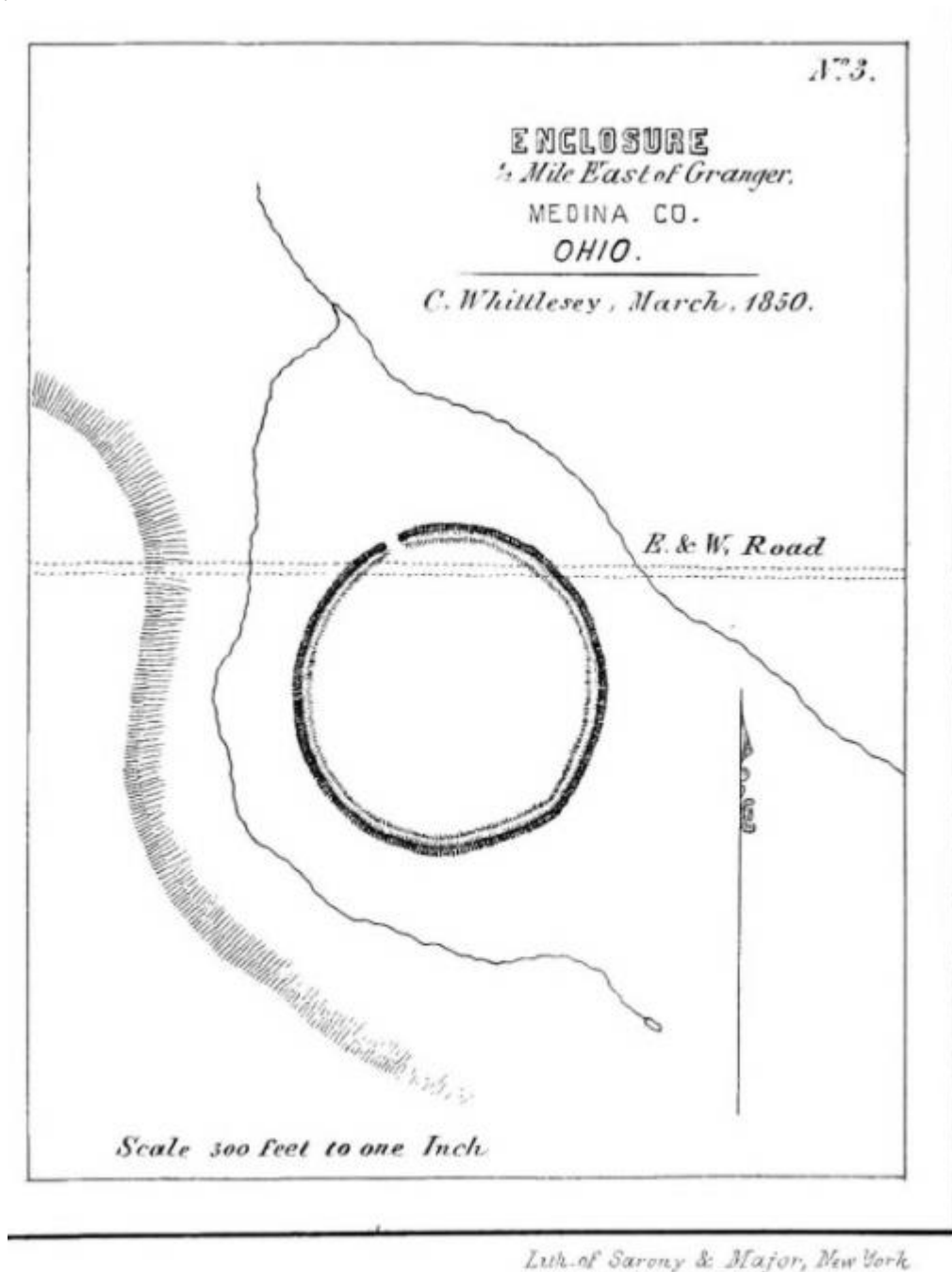


Figure 4: Sketch map of the Granger Earthwork from Whittlesey (1850).

Using historical, georeferenced, aerial photographs, and measuring tools in QGIS software, the author was able to estimate the approximate location of the earthwork. The form preparer for the Ohio Archaeological Inventory (OAI) record for the Granger earthworks (33 ME 1) estimated the location to the northwest of the GUMC property. However, the 1850 sketch map places the majority of the earthwork south of Granger Road.

In the 2006 black and white aerial photograph of the area (Figure 5) there is a faint ditch shaped shadow, forming a circle. This may be earthmoving related to the construction of the pond south of Granger Road. However, the author projected this curved anomaly into a circle, which is roughly 90 meters in diameter. The southwest corner of this circle would intersect with the extant barn on the property west of the GUMC property. Based upon earlier aerial photographs of the 1950s and 60s, a dirt or gravel driveway ran along the western adjacent property (highlighted orange). The anomaly identified by the author on this aerial photograph may represent the remnants of this old access road.



Figure 5: USDA Aerial photograph (2006). Potential earthwork circled red, and old driveway highlighted orange.

Even in 1850, Whittlesey described the Granger works as highly eroded and barely visible. The construction of outbuildings, roads, and ponds in the immediate vicinity has likely destroyed more of the earthwork, wherever its exact location might be. The destruction and lack of visibility of the earthwork was reiterated by Perrin et al. (1881) sometime in the late 1870s or early 1880s. However, as Nolan et al. (2020) have demonstrated, many earthwork sites in Ohio rarely contain much in the way of artifacts or features. These earthworks often represent

organized, cleaned, sacred space devoid of material remains. What is more likely is that activities related to the use of the earthwork are located immediately *outside* the earthwork.

Historic

The historic period in Ohio overlaps with the proto-historic period, with the diaspora of many American Indian tribes in the 1650s (Cardinal and Cardinal 1984:34) because of the ongoing Beaver Wars (Cardinal and Cardinal 1984). European expansion into North America also forced many tribes, such as the Lenape (Delaware), into western migrations. Tribes that lived in Northeast Ohio in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries include Shawnee, Ojibwe, Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, Lenape (Delaware), Miami, and Mingwe/Mingo (Seneca-Cayuga).

The Treaty of Greenville 1795 ceded land east of the Cuyahoga River and the Portage Path trail. However, it was not until the end of the war of 1812 that American colonists began settling in Medina County in earnest (Perrin et al. 1881).

Through historical atlases and county auditor records, the author constructed a very general history of landowner use from the mid-19th century to the present. One of the earliest Euro-American settlers in the vicinity of the survey area were Mrs. N. Hazen and Ezra Huntley (Figure 6). There is an “E. E. Huntley” referenced in Perrin et al. (1881: 913) who herded sheep and was the uncle of livestock trader Carter Huntley. Ezra E. Huntley was married to Catherine Jones in 1854, with the marriage witness listed as William C. Hazen (Ohio County Marriages, 1789 – 2016). The author infers, based on these records and the proximity and quantity of Hazen and Huntley owned property, that the Hazens and the Huntleys were relatives of one another. Ezra Huntley was born in Connecticut in 1815, died in 1882, and was buried at Reid Hill cemetery in Granger Township. Reid Hill cemetery is approximately 1.2 kilometers northeast of the GUMC property.

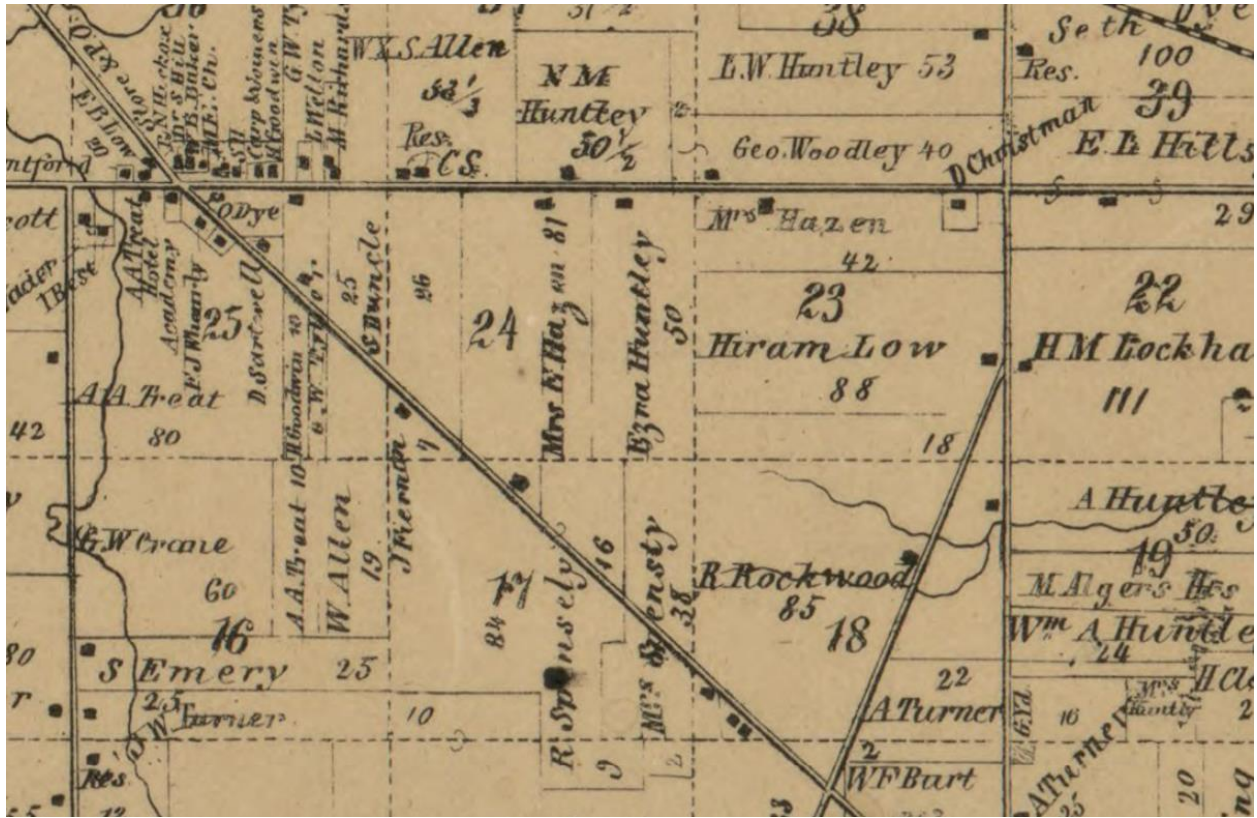


Figure 6: 1857 atlas of Medina County (Matthews & Taintor, 1857).

One of Ezra Huntley’s sons, Ward D. Huntley, was listed as a “general farmer” on the 1910 U.S. Census. Despite the 1874 and 1897 atlas records listing “E.E. Huntley” as the landowner, it was far more likely that his children were running any farm operations on the property, especially since Ezra died 15 years prior to the creation of the 1897 atlas (Figures 7 and 8). On the 1874 atlas, a small orchard is marked in the approximate same location as the GUMC property. Ward died in 1916, and was also buried in Reid Hill cemetery, near his father.

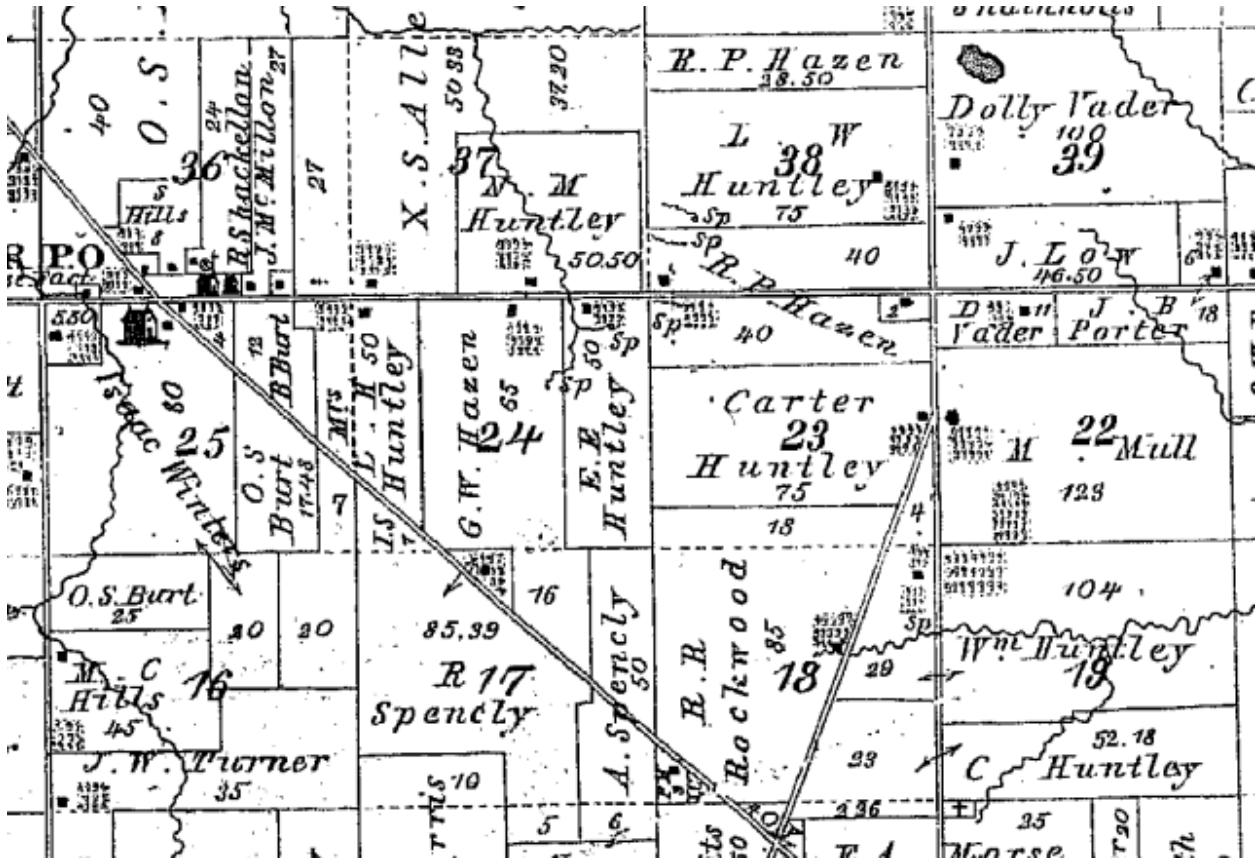


Figure 7: 1874 atlas of the Medina County showing area around the property (Everts, 1874).

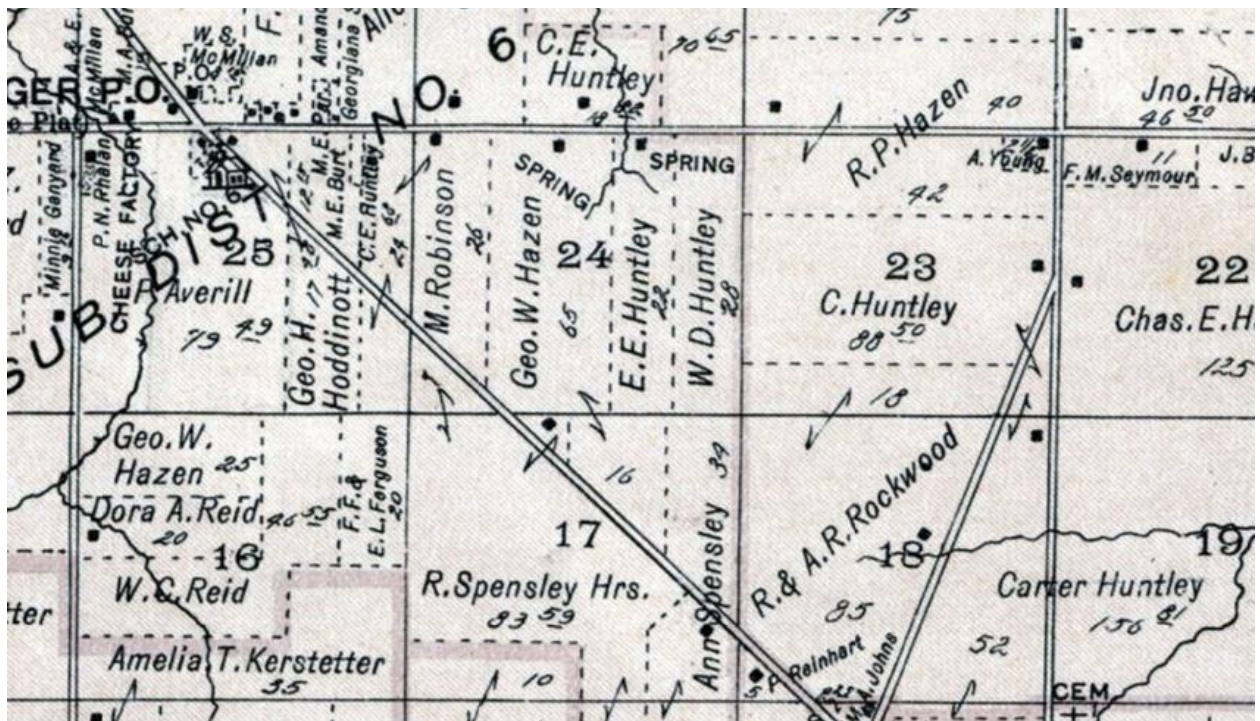


Figure 8: 1897 atlas of the Medina County showing area around the property (American Atlas Company, 1897)

It is unclear from these historical atlases if the building mapped on the Huntley property is the extant building and barn to the west of GUMC property, or if it once stood where the current pond lies. However, based on the distances between the Hazen and Huntley houses on either side of the Granger Ditch, it is far more likely that the building mapped in 1874 and 1897 is associated with the extant barn and home west of the GUMC property.

There is a gap in deed records (digitally archived) between 1916 and 1964. The next known landowner, according to digitized records of the Medina County Auditor, are Charles R. and Lenore C. Bond. The 1940 U.S. census lists Charles Bond as an electrical operator for an electrical company in Akron, residing at 630 Weber Avenue, Akron. Based on the size of the parcels today, listed on the county auditor, it appears the GUMC property was portioned from the larger Huntley estate. The current dimensions of the E.E. Huntley and W.D. Huntley properties in 1897 are extant today on the county auditor's records, if one includes the single acre parcel of the GUMC property. This may be the result of a gift from one of the Huntleys or Hazens to a family member (common as a wedding present or gift of inheritance) or may represent subdividing of the family assets to sell off for a quick profit.

A home was constructed on the single acre parcel in 1962, according to the auditor. Two years later, the parcel was sold to the Granger United Methodist Church, by the Bonds. The property has remained part of the Granger United Methodist Church since this date. According to recent Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) surveys, there is a public water line running from the road to the home, and a gas line running east and parallel to the driveway. The house has a septic tank, located south of the home.

Beyond these underground utilities, there appears to be minimal ground disturbances in the north portion of the property. The property's history includes use as a sheep pasture, an orchard, and may have been plowed at some point beginning in the late 19th and early 20th century. By 1962, the construction of the home would have ceased all ground disturbing activities in the north of the property.

Recommendations

Based on the evidence uncovered during the investigation of historical documents, the author recommends further research in the form of geophysical and archaeological surveys. There is a high potential for intact prehistoric features related to or associated with the use of the Granger Earthworks, which are likely west of the GUMC property. There is a non-zero probability that the earthwork may extend into the property.

Geophysical surveys that would be cost-effective and minimally disturbing include systematic soil probing and systematic metal detection and ground balance recording. These methods have been used effectively to identify subsurface anomalies in other surveys in northeast Ohio (see Olson 2019 and Olson 2021).

Archaeological surveys could include limited excavation units selected based on the results of geophysical surveys. These units would likely be 50x50 cm in area, with the possibility to expand up to 1x1 meters in size. Test units would be hand excavated, at 10 cm arbitrary levels, and screened with ¼ inch mesh screen.

If funding for such research (through organizations such as the Medina County Foundation, Ohio Humanities Council, or the Ohio Archaeological Council), then the author recommends limiting ground disturbing activities in the front lawn area of the property. Ground disturbing activities would include excavation (for utilities, ponds, landscaping), but not include

small intrusions such as posts, poles, and fencing under 10 cm in diameter. Should ground disturbing activities occur, it is highly recommended an archaeologist monitor the activities, if possible.

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