

Voices in the Night
Butternut Ridge Cemetery

Written by Dale Thomas

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2014 ©

A Play Celebrating
The Bicentennial of North Olmsted, Ohio
1815 - 2015

Prologue

The Narrator unlike the characters in the play wears nondescript clothes. The stage is bare through out the play except for table, chairs, sofa and high stool for the Narrator.

Narrator:

The stage is lighted as the Narrator walks about the bare stage.

North Olmsted's Butternut Ridge Cemetery is a history of the community. A native of New Hampshire, Isaac Scales was the first person buried in the cemetery. He lived in North Ridgeville, Ohio before settling on the eastern end of Butternut Ridge Road. In 1819, Scales served as a sergeant in the local militia. Two years later, he died at the age of 35 years, and his family buried him near their cabin. Evidently, Scales never had clear title to the land. Charles H. Olmsted of Connecticut took possession of his property and later donated a portion for a township cemetery in October 1835.

Some of the burials in the cemetery have no gravestones. According to records of the City of North Olmsted, plot 38 contains the unmarked graves of Nat Peake and five other African Americans. They are the descendants of George Peake. In 1809, he became the first African American to settle permanently in Cuyahoga County. His son, Joseph Peake hid fugitive slaves on his Mastick Road farm in present day North Olmsted.

The cemetery today is located in the Butternut Ridge Historic District and contains about 2,500 burials within 5.2 acres. The rural setting has changed considerably since the 19th Century, but there is still a reminder of those earlier times. A split-rail fence around the cemetery separates the past from the present. Motorists on Butternut Ridge Road rarely stop to walk among the gravestones. Descendants sometimes come from out of town to see the graves of their great-great grandparents who settled in the wilderness of Connecticut's Western Reserve.

Our play will look into the lives of nine people buried in the cemetery.

He points to imaginary tombstones.

Samuel Porter, Soldier and Privateer in the American Revolution.

Elsie Kellogg Hendrickson, Letters written to her from John Biggs, a Civil War soldier.

Sam Ames and Amelia Ames, A Civil War veteran and his wife

Fred Tuttle and Allie Tuttle, A Philippine War veteran and his wife

George Biddulph, A murderer.

Helen Briggs Elliott and Cassie Salisbury: Nurses in World War I.

He looks at the audience.

Our play is based on letters, diaries, and journals from the archives of the Olmsted Historical Society.

Lights fade.

Scene One

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right. Narrator sits on a high stool.

The scene is the Court of Common Pleas for Cuyahoga County, Ohio on November 5, 1832. Samuel Porter appears before the court to make application for a pension authorized by the United States Congress in June 1832 for veterans of the American Revolution. Porter and John Adams are the only Revolutionary War veterans buried in North Olmsted. Horace Perry, the court clerk, takes notes for the Pension Commission.

Lights fade and come on at stage center where Porter sits at a small table. The Narrator sits across from Porter. He takes notes while Porter gives his statement.

Perry:

State your name?

Porter:

Samuel Porter:

Perry:

Give the year and place of your birth?

Porter:

I was born in the year 1757 in the Town of Ipswich, Essex County of Massachusetts.

Perry:

Mr. Porter, you must realize that there are many claiming to be Revolutionary War veterans who have no proof of service. In fact, they have never served and now are falsely applying for a pension. My questioning you is not to assume you are lying but only to meet the requirements of the law.

Please begin your statement.

Porter:

After the battle of Bunker Hill in 1776, I continued my service for the United States by enlisting into a company commanded by Capt. Thomas Barns in a Regiment commanded by Col. Mansfield belonging to the Massachusetts line.

Perry:

How long was the enlistment?

Porter:

A term of eight months before being discharged.

Perry:

Where did you enlist and serve?

Porter:

I was a resident of Salem Massachusetts at the time and enlisted in 1777 at Watertown. We were immediately marched to Cambridge. Spent most of the time at Winterhill near Boston. Some time in the spring of 1778, I volunteered for the Navel services of the United States on board the brig *Massachusetts* of fourteen guns. Under Capt. Souter, we cruised against the enemy in the northern latitudes made prize of one English brig.

Perry:

When were you discharged?

Porter:

After four months, I was honorably discharged. I enlisted again in the Naval service in the spring of 1779. This time my captain was Jonathan Harraden on the brig *Tyrannaside*. We cruised in the English Channel five or six weeks. An English Seventy Four chased us into Bilboa in Spain. From there we sailed to Bordeaux in France and took in a cargo of warlike stores and sailed from thence to Salem in Massachusetts. Then to the latitude of Bermuda and Cape Hatteras for a length of time and returned to Salem. I was discharged after serving rather more than six months.

Perry:

Did you enlist again?

Porter:

Yes, some time in the Summer of 1780 on the same brig. Capt. Clark was now in command. Off the Capes of Virginia, our ship was taken by two British frigates and carried into St. Johns in Newfoundland. We were confined on board a guard ship during a few weeks when Eight of us took possession of the small boat and left this guard ship. After rowing a few days, we took possession of a shallop boat and finally landed at Caneau in Nova Scotia where we found an American privateer and enlisted on board of

her sailing from thence we went up the Bay of Chaleur where we took a British schooner lying on shore and loading with fur. We brought the prize into the Port of Boston where I was discharged.

Perry:

Did you ever sail again on a privateer?

Porter:

My best recollection in the winter of 1780 – 1781, I signed up on board the privateer sloop of war *Karsk* mounting fourteen from swivels. I've forgotten the Captain's name but the first Lieut. was David Ropy. We cruised in the West Indies where off the Granada, we were captured by a British brig and carrier into Granada and confined in prison about six weeks.

We thence were carried to England and imprisoned on board the British sloop of war *Captain Graves*. I sailed in this sloop put out of the River Thames and came to New York bringing dispatches from the British government. From there the sloop sailed with orders to cruise on the coast and made prizes of two American privateers.

Perry:

Do you know the names of the privateer vessels?

Porter:

No, I don't, sir.

Perry:

Please continue your declaration.

Porter:

The prisoners shared the hold with me and the English crew. We made an attempt to take possession of the sloop but failed and the sloop immediately sailed for Halifax. There I was transferred to the *Rainbow* of 40 Guns. I petitioned to be considered as a prisoner of war but was refused and transferred to a merchant ship used as a transport in which I sailed to New York. I was able to get a shore and make my escape.

Perry:

Do you have anything more to say?

Porter:

Except that I entered the service in every base herein before mentioned by voluntary enlistment. And my name is not in the pension toll of any state.

Perry:

The evidence in support of your claim will be examined by J. L. Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions. He will notify you of his decision. Thank you for attending this hearing.

Porter leaves the stage and the Narrator returns to stage right.

Narrator:

Three and a half years later, the Pension Commission approved Samuel Porter's pension on May 19, 1836. At the time, he was living with his son, Wells Porter, on what is today Porter Road in North Olmsted. Samuel Porter died at the age of 79 years on August 3, 1836. Recently, a Veterans Administration stone was placed on his grave. The years are incorrect.

Lights fade.

Scene Two

Narrator:

Light comes on at stage right. He sits on a high stool.

John C. Biggs was born in England on July 25, 1839. He came with his family to Lorain County in 1854. Biggs enlisted for three years in the 8th Ohio Infantry Regiment in August 1861. He saw action at Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. A newspaper in Elyria described events during the Battle of Gettysburg,

He holds a newspaper while reading the article.

“He was disabled by a musket ball, which lodged in his arm above the elbow. We well remember meeting him on that bloody field, with his arm in a sling, walking among the dead and dying, although suffering greatly with pain, assisting with his left hand those who were more needy than himself.”

He puts away the newspaper.

After being treated in a camp hospital until September 1863, Biggs was transferred to the U.S. General Hospital in Cleveland. Early the following year, he continued his recuperation in Cincinnati's Woodward Hospital.

Elsie Kellogg's Parents, Hiram and Sally Kellogg, came to Olmsted from Vermont in 1834. Her older sister, Mary, was born in 1838. The family lived on a farm located on Cook Road just west of Fitch Road in northern Olmsted Township. Elsie was 19 years old when the Civil War erupted in 1861. Pvt. Biggs wrote her numerous letters. Elsie had many suitors among the young men from northeastern Ohio who enlisted including John's brother, George Biggs of the 96th Ohio Regiment.

Lights fade on Narrator.

Biggs:

Lights come on at stage center. Biggs is sitting on a bunk writing Elsie a letter. His right arm is lame. He stops writing and reads it.

U.S. General Hospital Ward E, Cleveland, Ohio, Oct 23, 1863

Friend Elsie,

I should have written to you earlier, but this is the first I have written with my right hand and I did not like to write with my left. I intended to visit Olmsted when I was on furlough, but fifteen days passed off so quickly that I had no time to call on you. I have the promise of another furlough in a few weeks when I shall come to Olmsted and remain until my furlough expires.

You wish to know how my arm is doing. I have it in my sleeve and can use it a little but the wound has not healed up because the musket ball hasn't been removed.

Gen. Sigel visited the hospital on election day and addressed us briefly. He said he was glad we had all voted for John Brough and thus shown to the world that we could vote for the Union as well as fight for it.

He writes more then stops and reads it.

On Saturday night last a great jollification meeting came off in Cleveland in honor of the Union victory in Ohio. Gov. Brough and Gen. Sigel made speeches. There was a great display of fireworks at the Public Square which exceeded in brilliancy anything I ever saw. On Sunday they visited the Hospital and took each one of us by the hand and bade us farewell leaving us feeling better for the visit.

On Monday last Orlando Stearns and his wife and Miss Adelaide Stearns called to see me, I have not been out side the guard lines since last Saturday. I expect to visit Cleveland on a pass tomorrow. I do not go out more than once a week.

Lights fade on him.

Miss Kellogg:

Lights come on at stage left. Elsie is seated at a table and writing a letter. She stops writing and reads the letter.

Olmsted, Ohio November 9, 1863

Last week we picked apples and Dad was busy making cider. He will take the cider to town when the weather is better.

I heard from Mrs. Hendrickson that her son is doing okay down in Tennessee with the 103rd Regiment. Jim's foot is better now. He's been driving the ambulance wagon and doesn't have to march. She made him two woolen shirts with the seams lined with cotton to keep the lice out.

The Stearns family is still trying to get over the death of Loring. They are planning to bring home his body for burial in Butternut Cemetery. Rev. Rice gave a fine elegy in the Universalist Church and a newspaper printed it.

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right and remain on at stage left.

“Swept down by the iron ball of a cannon while charging on the enemy works at Vicksburg, Loring Stearns in the 26th year of his life. Thus has another of Freedom’s noble sons been numbered with the countless others who have fallen in defense of their country’s flag. Noble boy, there are many tearful eyes in thy neighborhood because thou wilt no longer be with us, and many sad hearts around that broken fireside, which thou hast so often cheered with thy loving presents. May God shake the heavy dew of sorrow out of the gray hairs of that stricken father and be consoled with the thought that it is better to be the father of a dead hero than of a living traitor.”

Lights fade on stage right and stage left

Biggs:

Lights come on at stage center. He sits on a bunk while writing a letter then reads it.

Woodward Hospital Cincinnati, Ohio. February 21, 1864

My arm has been improving ever since the removal of the musket ball. The doctors in Cleveland were not well enough trained to try such an operation. There are some here with the Small Pox. I had a mild case but now feel better.

Last Tuesday evening I attended a lecture delivered by Miss Annie E. Dickinson of Philadelphia. The young Quaker is a fine lecturer. She paid a noble tribute to the Private Soldier. Some of our Generals she extolled to the highest point, others she spoke of in the most scathing terms. She said McClellan’s whole career could be summed up in one word – Traitor! Her arguments were of the strongest Anti-Slavery character. All of which I approved to be sure.

Tom Thumb and his wife have been on exhibition here for two weeks past. They are small specimens of humanity. Small in stature, I mean.

Have you heard anything about Arthur Paddock? He served in Co. H of my regiment.

Lights fade.

Miss Kellogg:

Lights come on at stage left. She sits at a table writing a letter. She stops writing and stands up and paces while reading the letter.

March 2, 1864

Arthur Paddock is still in a Washington hospital. He wrote a letter to Rev. Rice. Arthur has a swelling of his jaw causing him much pain. Is there any word about the others from the 8th regiment who are in the same hospital?

Mr. Harris had an accident while crossing the railroad tracks. Some say he was drunk. I was horrified.

I'm including a newspaper clipping on the execution of Fred Streeter. He murdered the Coy family in Medina. He was found guilty of stabbing to death Shubal Coy, his wife and eight year-old son. Last Christmas Eve, he escaped jail and remained at large for a week. One rumor had him hiding in Olmsted. We were relieved when they caught him. Some Olmsted people went to Medina and saw him hanged on February 26th. Streeter was taken to the scaffold sitting on his coffin in a wagon pulled by two black horses.

Olmsted smells of boiling maple syrup. Everyone seems to be eating pancakes. Too bad you're not here to partake.

We all hope you are feeling better. Did you get any Valentines?

Lights fade.

Biggs:

Lights come on at stage center as he finishes a letter while sitting on a bunk. He stands up with his left hand holding his right hand with the letter and paces as he reads.

March 9th 1864

Your kind letter of the 2nd came yesterday. My wound is quite painful the greater part of the time. I have no strength in my right arm whatever. I have to hold it with my other hand. I cannot reach my face with it. I have to wash my face, comb my hair, and eat with my left hand. You see by my writing that it is more unsteady today than usual for some unexplained cause.

His face takes on a painful expression.

On the 29th of February I received a beautiful Valentine. One word graced its margin and but few words contain more than that one – Faithful. There is a wonderful meaning in that one simple compound word which I will not take time now to illustrate. I recognized the handwriting and I knew at once from whence it came.

I read the account of Streeter's execution that you sent me. The Coy that he murdered has a brother in my Regiment. I am acquainted with him.

The Small-Pox seems to be spreading -- four have died in this Hospital of late. Two members of my old company died a short time since -- one in Washington of small-pox and the other in the regimental hospital of lung fever.

As to the railroad accident, it would be better for humanity if there were more such accidents. The train can only destroy the body, but whiskey destroys both body and soul. Was this Harris the one that used to live in Hall's log-house and worked for James Fitch?

So, you are making maple syrup. I will come and help you next spring and eat pancakes and sausages. You will invite me won't you?

Lights fade.

Miss Kellogg:

Lights come on at stage left. She finishes a letter sitting at a table then stands up and paces while reading it.

May 2, 1864

The weather today is cold and stormy. We'll probably have a frost again tonight. Fields need to be mowed for hay and plowed for potatoes.

Mr. Nelson is going to Camp Cleveland to say goodbye to Olmsted friends and relatives of the 150th National Guard Regiment. They will be gone for a hundred days protecting Washington from the Rebels. Rev. Rice of the Universalist Church is a lieutenant in Company I. He's nearly forty years old.

As you can imagine, we have a manpower shortage. I think the Olmsted women should put on their bloomers and do some farming. The men left here can't do it all.

Have you been following the news about your regiment? There's been some hard fighting in Virginia. Gen. Grant is determined to destroy Lee's army and take Richmond.

Has the wound on your arm healed up?

How long until you are mustered out of the army?

William McKenzie's daughter got married. There will be many weddings after the war. Olmsted women don't want to be spinsters and they are getting older by the day. And so am I.

You haven't answered my letters. I won't send another until you answer this one.

Lights fade.

Biggs:

Lights come on at stage center. He is lying on a bunk and appears to be asleep. Then he sits up and writes more of the letter.

May 10, 1864

I received your letter five days ago. You will think I have been very negligent in not writing sooner but I have been delaying to see if I could hear something from the Old Eighth as they were moving into northern Virginia and attacking the Slave Power.

The Army of the Potomac commenced to move out of camp at an early hour on the 4th, crossed the Rapidan River during the day and opened the fight on the 5th. On that day the Iron Eighth was engaged with the enemy. I infer from the desperation of the battle that the 8th must have suffered severely for if there is a battle they usually have to take an active part and to bear the brunt of the battle as at Gettysburg and other places.

I have seen the names of none of my regiment yet but am waiting to hear of the casualties with a good deal of anxiety. I almost shudder to think for I know that they must have lost very heavily.

My wound has entirely healed up now and my arm looks better today than I thought it ever would two months ago. It is still quite lame and not much strength in it. I think by the time my term of service expires it will improve a great deal. I have just three months this day to remain and then I will have served three years.

He gets up from the bunk and walks around with his left hand holding his right hand. Then he sits down on the bunk and finishes the letter.

I think the girls had better abide by your suggestion and put on the bloomers and go to the farming. Let me here suggest that Misses Elsie & Hannah be the first to try the experiment. When you try it I will come and see what kind of farmers you make.

Miss McKenzie has entered the state of matrimony has she? Well done I must say, and in war times too. The girls need not despair now, a little patient waiting and they will have an opportunity of joining their fortunes with those of the soldiers who have battled for their country. Maimed as some of us are, we shall most undoubtedly be acceptable as we know that we shall not be rejected on account of having fought for our country. Hence I say again good girls need not despair, let them prove themselves worthy and they will readily find those proposing to them that are worthy of them.

He walks off the stage as the lights fade.

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right. He continues to sit on a high stool.

John Biggs reenlisted for two years in the 9th Regiment US Veteran Volunteer Infantry. After his discharged in April 1866, he bought a farm near the southwest corner of

Butternut Ridge and Fitch Roads. A few miles to the south, Elsie Kellogg continued to live with her parents.

Lights fade then come on at stage left where John Biggs and Elsie Kellogg stand facing one another.

Miss Kellogg:

John -- it's been a long time. You're looking good.

Biggs:

So do you, Elsie. I was going to Olmsted Falls and thought of stopping and saying hello.

Miss Kellogg:

Glad you did. How's your arm?

Biggs:

He slowly lifts his right arm and she gently touches it.

Better, but it'll never be normal again. Farming is difficult enough with two normal arms.

Miss Kellogg:

Let's sit down.

They sit across from one another at a table.

I just got a letter from Jim Hendrickson.

Biggs:

How's he doing?

Miss Kellogg:

Jim's working on his uncle's farm in up state New York. The weather is hot and dry.

Biggs:

Is he planning to live there?

Miss Kellogg:

I don't know.

They look at each other not knowing what to say. Then she looks away,

Why did you reenlist instead of coming home? Your brother wrote me that your mother was very upset. And you had thoughts of getting married, although you weren't specific.

Biggs:

I did think about marriage. But being lame and without the means to support a wife, I decided to reenlist. A bounty from the government would help me buy a farm after I got out.

Miss Kellogg:

She shows him the ribbon in her hair.

Remember the ribbon you gave me?

Biggs:

Of course, Jordan brought it to you when he left the regiment in 1863.

Miss Kellogg:

Where did you get it?

Biggs:

Well, it's not a pretty story, Elsie. Not as pretty as the ribbon in your hair.

Miss Kellogg:

Tell me anyway.

Biggs:

In December of 1862, we were camped across the Rappahannock River opposite to Fredericksburg, Virginia. The Rebel army under Gen. Lee lay on the other side of the river about two miles back from the town. Our men were laying a pontoon bridge across the river to cross over on when daylight should appear but the Rebels opposed it by firing on them. Gen. Burnside then ordered our cannons to fire on Fredericksburg. Next morning, we crossed the river but were not the first ones over so we did not get the best plunder...

Miss Kellogg:

So the ribbon was stolen?

Biggs:

I'm not sure that's the right word to use. There wasn't anyone to steal it from.

Miss Kellogg:

John, I don't understand.

Biggs:

All the residents had fled. We stacked arms and broke ranks and then tobacco loving nature was soon in its glory. There are a great many chewers in the army and tobacco had been very scarce for some time and the men were eager for it. Stores were ransacked and each man had from six to ten pounds of the weed.

Beds were brought out to the streets and thrown on the sidewalks and tread upon. Pianos and melodeons were destroyed. We looted milliner stores and stomped on costly bonnets. We went into banks. Safes were broken open in the streets with pickaxes and their contents taken care of. We quartered in a store that night.

Miss Kellogg:

She shows outrage in her expression and voice.

I could understand taking food but not the stealing and destruction.

Biggs:

We went into houses and took preserves of all kinds and pickles by the barrel. I went into a cellar and brought out two crocks of apple butter – enough to supply my company.

Miss Kellogg:

You soldiers seemed to enjoy it all.

Biggs:

We hated the Rebels – soldiers and civilians. It's another form of war to punish the enemy in this way. The Rebels did the same and worse to civilians supporting the Union in the South.

Miss Kellogg:

I still think it's wrong.

Biggs:

Next day, the order was given to attack. The odds were great against us. The enemy was protected by fortifications on a ridge. We had no protection in the open field. The rebels fired down on us killing a number of men and wounding many more. Men fell all around me. I came close to getting hit. One man a few feet from me lost his head by a cannon ball.

He pauses and looks at her and she stares back in horror.

I shouldn't have mentioned that poor fellow. But maybe you can understand why we looted Fredericksburg. I have no sympathy for those people.

Miss Kellogg:

You're not the same person I knew before the war.

Biggs:

None of us are.

Miss Kellogg:

Do you still go to church?

Biggs:

Not recently. After what I've seen it's hard to be religious anymore.

Miss Kellogg:

I'd rather you take it back.

She takes the ribbon out of her hair and hands it to him.

Biggs:

He reluctantly takes the ribbon and stands up to leave.

I'm sorry you feel this way.

He walks off the stage.

Lights fade out on her and come on at stage right.

Narrator:

In 1868, Elsie Kellogg married Jim Hendrickson. They lived on a farm owned by her parents and later moved to Olmsted Falls, where he worked as a blacksmith. Their daughter, Ella Hendrickson, became a teacher and eventually supervisor of the schools in Olmsted Township. Three of her students were the daughters of a Confederate soldier buried in Olmsted Falls, Dominique Simon.

John Biggs married Emma Clark in 1869. Evidently, farming did not agree with him. In the 1870s, they left Olmsted and settled in Elyria. He became a news dealer in the city.

Lights fade out.

Scene Three

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right. Narrator sits on a high stool.

Samuel Ames was born in Troy, New York on October 30, 1831. His parents, John and Lydia Ames, came from Massachusetts. In 1835, the Ames family moved to Olmsted Township, today's North Olmsted. The Ames farm was located directly east of the township cemetery on Butternut Ridge Road. John Ames became the local coffin maker and undertaker besides being a builder of homes and churches. Amelia Merriam was born in Summit County, Ohio on February 11, 1845. Eight months later, her parents, Edward and Demaris Merriam, moved their family to Dover Township, today's Westlake. They were natives of Connecticut.

After the death of his first wife, Ella, Sam Ames married 16 year-old Amelia Merriam on August 29, 1861. A year later, He enlisted in the 103rd Ohio Infantry but was assigned to the 124th Ohio Infantry. Amelia and her infant daughter, Ellen May, lived with Sam's parents during the Civil War.

Sam Ames saw action in a number of major battles including Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Resaca, Franklin, and Nashville. Most of the time, he worked in the hospital tent, helping with the sick and wounded. The 124th Regiment's losses exceeded 20 percent or 210 soldiers by the end of the war.

The scene is the Ames farm house on New Years Day of 1867, nearly two years after the Civil War.

Lights fade at stage right and come on at stage center.

Amelia:

She sits at a table while reading her diary.

Sam, this was my first entry: "New Years Day on the Sabbath. Last eve the old year 1864 departed into the Kingdom of the past and now we greet upon this beautiful Sabbath day the advent of the bright happy New Year 1865. How full of cheerfulness and sunshine this New Years Sabbath is and though the air is somewhat chilly we may pronounce it a lovely winter day. We have enjoyed a good New Years dinner today all alone by ourselves with no friends outside the family circle."

Sam:

Looking over her shoulder.

We were in camp near Huntsville, Alabama at the start of the year. Hard to believe it's already two years ago, but life goes on.

Amelia:

Remember my poem: "Brave boys are they / Gone at their country's call / And yet, we cannot forget / That many brave boys must fall."

Sam:

I was so sorry when you wrote me that your brother had died.

Amelia:

Henry hadn't yet turned eighteen, and there he was marching with Sherman's army in Georgia. When they reached Atlanta he went into the hospital with chronic diarrhea. But got better and returned to duty. Then he got sick again. My father feels guilty for allowing him to enlist.

Sam:

There were many in our regiment with chronic diarrhea, and some who died.

Amelia:

Remember – I wrote you about seeing that boy in church.

She leafs through her diary.

"I saw sitting directly opposite me a person who reminded me very forcibly of my poor dead brother. We may try and call to mind the constancies of our friends by trying to dwell upon the happy hours we spent with them when they were here present with us, but all our efforts amount to almost nothing. There is nothing (at least to my mind) which will so stir up past recollections and so touch the heart wounded by the dart of affliction as such a resemblance to a departed one found in the person of a stranger."

Sam:

He sits down next to her.

Some survived no matter what happened to them. Henry Zarley came back to us. He almost died from hunger in Andersonville Prison. Said as many as 200, some times more, died in one day. Neither tents or blankets. Some how, he escaped. John Gould from our company wasn't so lucky. Along with the others, they buried him in a mass grave outside of the prison.

Amelia:

I saved the newspaper article listing all of those from northeast Ohio who died in that horrible place. Lucy Hawkins saw her husband's name. I think by then she had just about given up hope after wondering for over a year. She plans to put a memorial stone in the cemetery near her farm.

Sam:

I last saw Nathan Hawkins about a week before Christmas of 1863. Then heard he was captured in January.

Amelia:

She returns to her diary and leafs through the pages.

“March 12th Sunday. Cloudy all day. Ellen May was threatened with the croup this morning in consequence of taking cold yesterday. Staid at home with her. Mother went to the Wellingtons and came home at half past seven in the evening. I went to the Wellingtons to sit up with their sick baby. Found it very sick much distressed and in a dying state. I thought of my own dear child sick at home and the idea came into my mind that I too might soon be called to mourn.”

She starts to cry.

Sam:

Puts his hand on her shoulder.

You had it harder at home than I did at the front.

Amelia:

She takes out a handkerchief and wipes her eyes.

“March 16th Thursday. A very nice spring day. May is no better. The rash is all out. Doctor came in the afternoon and then went away and came again. We pressed him to tell us his opinion of her and he did so. It almost chilled me to the heart.

“Said he, ‘She is an awful sick girl and I thought so when I first looked at her. It is my opinion that she will either grow better or die in forty eight hours.’ I sat up with her last night until four this morning. The doctor came again in the evening to stay all night. Mr. Camp was here also. Mrs. Camp is very kind she either comes or sends herself every day.”

Sam:

The Camps are good people.

Amelia:

She looks at him and nods in agreement then returns to the diary, trying not to cry.

“In the early part of the evening I was sitting upon the settee holding little May in my arms. In turning in my lap she threw up her little hand up and brushed my face. To see what my dear one would say I said, ‘Did you know you struck mama.’ She answered lovingly, ‘I didn’t mean to mama. I want to kiss you.’ And she kissed me fondly two or three times.”

Sam:

Also trying not to cry.

Maybe you should put your diary away for now.

Amelia:

She reads to herself while Sam looks at her. When he stands and gazes at the audience, she turns a few pages.

“March 21st Tuesday. Cloudy, rainy and windy. Our chimney took fire just at night but we put it out before any damage was done. What a sad day this has been and what a night of weary watching we had last night. Our little darling one must leave us – but it is hard, oh so hard to be resigned when our only one is taken. The doctor came but once today. Anna Bond and Mrs. Barnum came in the afternoon. Anna went away and came again to stay all night. I received two letters, one from Sam and one from Frank Frost. Sams letter only added to our grief for he mentioned little May several times.

“March 22^d Wednesday. Very windy with some snow. This is the saddest day of my life. The doctor came in the morning by particular request not that he could do us any good. No one could have been more kind and attentive than he through all. At eleven minutes past five the spirit of our little beloved one took its flight for the realms of mortality.”

Here’s the letter Reverend Smith wrote you about Ellen May.

She takes out the letter that had been folded and put in the diary.

Sam:

He takes the letter from her then reads it to the audience.

“Dear Brother. At the request of your afflicted wife and beloved parents I write to communicate to you the sad intelligence of the death of your dear child, Ellen May. She died of scarlet Fever on the 22nd Inst. After a very brief sickness – only a few days. I have just returned from your father’s house where I have been to attend the burial service. I preached from the words of our Lord in Luke 18:16 – You were remembered in our prayers, as one who in addition to all the trials of army life is now called to feel the sad & bitter sorrow of being separated from your only child without the painful privilege of seeing her in death.”

He silently reads the rest of the letter and hands it back to her.

Narrator:

Lights fade at stage and come on at stage right.

Streptococcus bacterium caused scarlet fever, which spread by contact and usually infected children age two to 10 years old. Doctors had no treatment, and epidemics killed thousands of youngsters. Starting in the 1870s, infectious diseases were traced to specific micro organisms.

As for Sam and Amelia Ames, they would raise a large family of ten children.

Lights fade at stage right.

Scene Four

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right. Narrator sits on a high stool.

Fred Tuttle joined the Navy on June 6, 1899. During the Philippine Insurrection, he served on the *U.S.S. Vicksburg*, which patrolled the Philippine Islands. U.S. casualties would exceed the Spanish American War, 4,234 dead and 2,818 wounded besides the thousands who died of disease. Filipino deaths included about 20,000 soldiers and 200,000 civilians.

After his discharge in 1903, he married Allie Huntington, five years later in New Orleans. They eventually settled in her hometown, North Olmsted Village, where he purchased a truck farm on Porter Road. The setting is the Tuttle farm house on August 27, 1918, their ten wedding anniversary.

Lights fade and come on at stage center. Fred and Allie Tuttle are seated together on a sofa.

Allie:

Why you didn't make a career out of the Navy?

Fred:

Because I wouldn't have met and married you.

Allie:

She laughs.

But you didn't know about me at the time.

Fred:

After laughing with her, he gets serious.

I'm a Navy recruiter in Cleveland for the World War. That's enough for me. I saw horrible things in the Philippines and didn't want to see anymore wars. I still have nightmares.

Allie:

Not as many as before. You've never talked about your nightmares.

Fred:

I didn't want to shock you.

Allie:

We've been married ten years today. Isn't it about time to tell me?

Fred:

I kept a journal.

Allie:

I found it by accident one time but didn't read it – felt it was a private matter on your part.

Fred:

I suppose we shouldn't keep secrets from one another.

He leaves her and returns with his journal. He sits down.

We sailed on the gunboat *U.S.S. Vicksburg* from Boston to the Philippines and arrived in Manila Bay in February 1901. As you know, after the Spanish American War, we had taken over this former colony of Spain. Then an insurrection broke out.

Allie:

Who were these insurrectionists?

Fred:

Aguinaldo, the Filipino leader, went from leading a revolt against the Spanish to fighting the U. S. occupation. Guerrilla wars lead to atrocities committed by both sides.

He opens the journal and looks for a particular page.

“Oct. 22, 1901. Cavite, Philippines. At 3:20 got up anchor and stood bound for Catbalogan, Samar where the battleship *New York* has preceded us taking with her about 300 Marines to the scene of the uprising... Oct. 26. At 5:30 this morning one company of soldiers went up to the fort we were firing on last night. It was deserted and so was the village. Just below is where some of the shells struck and set fire to parts of Balangiga. Here the killing of the 47 men of C. company of the 9th U. S. Infantry occurred some two week's ago. It seems that a Spanish priest and the Presidento of the town planed the

attack as soon as the soldiers landed. Just as the soldiers sat down to breakfast the priest rang the bell and that was the signal for the bolo men to begin the slaughter.”

Allie:

What are bolo men?

Fred:

They carried long, heavy machetes.

Allie:

How horrible!

Fred:

“Three bolo men attacked a sergeant. He managed to get hold of a baseball bat and laid out two of them and broke the other one’s arm. Then he managed to break away from the mob and started for the woods. He was than shot in two places and stabbed in the neck with a dagger. In front of the church, he met the Presidento and brained him as he passed. His body is still lying in the street partly eaten up by hogs.”

Should I read on?

Allie:

She hesitates with a look of revulsion.

Yes.

Fred:

“We have orders to shoot everything that stands on two legs. Today the soldiers found that there were a lot of villages along the river and tonight our ship fired five common shells and a lot of shrapnel over into them.

“Oct 27. At 6.20 anchored about two miles from shore. It being too shallow to go closer with safety. The soldiers all embarked in the boats and the boats crew’s men armed, also had one thousand rounds of ammunition in each boat as there was expected to be a fight.

He stands up and paces while reading.

I managed to get permission to go in the first cutter providing I pulled an oar, which I was willing to do. We left the ship and started for the beach each man with his gun loaded and cocked. When within about 300 yards of the beach, the boats all separated and

pulled in singly at 100 yards. Landing at the foot of the hill, they opened on us with about fifty rifles, I should judge, and how in the world they managed to miss us all I can not guess as the bullets were zipping by like hailstones. Let me tell you those Kraggs have a very ugly sound when you hear them coming.”

Allie:

Kraggs?

Fred:

He stops pacing and looks at her.

Krag-Jorgenson is a rifle. We called them Kraggs, a lousy rifle compared to the Springfield.

He starts pacing again and reading from the journal.

“I always had an idea that I should want to run the minute a fight opened. I confess I was always worried for fear I should show cowardice. But the first sensation I felt was a sort of wonder at there not being anyone falling and the next sensation was an overwhelming desire to close with the enemy and kill the other fellow. It is an impulse you can not control, and I could not see but that everyone else was struck the same way, for hardly had they opened when I found my-self floundering through the water and bushes with the soldiers and going up the hill towards the trenches on top of it. But when we got there every thing was deserted.

“We lined up on top of the hill and fired a couple of volleys to clear the bushes and the soldiers started on there long tramp to a small city inland to burn it and us sailors went back to the boats. The soldiers hardly got back away from the hill when the guerrillas returned and opened fire on us sitting in the boats at the bottom of the hill. The officer in charge would not let us go ashore after them so we started in with the automatic Colts.”

Allie:

Okay, I plead ignorant again. What are Colts?

Fred:

He stops pacing and sits down.

A Colt fires 400 shots a minute when in good working order.

He returns to the journal.

“The rest of us with our Krags made it so hot on the hill that they ceased firing so we concluded we had driven them off the hill. In the meantime the ship moved up the coast about a mile and into a little bay and opened fire on a town there with Six Pounders. When we started back for Balaguiga tonight we had every house along the coast for several miles burning. Little mercy is shown on either side here. You are a dead man if captured and in retaliation every native captured is shot at once. A gunboat came in tonight with three captives. They were taken ashore and shot at once.”

Allie:

“Was there any remorse?”

Fred:

Remorse? Allie, you don't understand.

Allie:

Fred, I'm trying to understand but it all seems so inhuman – the killing, the burning.

Fred:

He reads from the journal.

“Balaguiga Samar, Oct 29. The soldiers went on a little expedition up country and burned two villages and got into some large rice fields. The rice was all cut and stacked like hay and they burned it all which did a great deal more damage than burning the houses. The natives can build a house in double quick time but it's quite a long time to raise and harvest rice.”

Allie:

How did you feel about all of this?

Fred:

Instead of answering your question now, I'm going to read one last passage.

He looks for the passage in the journal.

“This is a very queer country, there are trails running from village to village across the mountains. It is almost impossible to make your way in side of them. The natives know it so they prepare what is called man-traps in English. There are two kind of man traps -- one is a pit dug across the trail or path with the bottom covered with sharpened stakes. The sharpened end poisoned and pointing up and the top covered over so it is impossible

to tell it from the rest of the path. The other kind of trap is a small pit just large enough for a man to stand in. One on each side of the trail opposite one another, a bolo man is stationed in each one of them and nicely covered over but very lightly so he can throw it off quickly and attack with his bolo. Nice pleasant country to fight in -- glad I am not a soldier.”

Allie:

Are you going answer my question?

Fred:

Last night, you read your valedictorian speech and closed with a poem by Whittier.

Allie:

She stands up and looks at the audience.

The tissues of the life to be / We weave with colors all / Our own, / And in the field of destiny / We reap as we have sown.

Lights fade on stage center.

Scene Five

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right. Narrator sits on a high stool.

The grass never looked so green nor the buds so bright on the trees that shaded the home on Butternut Ridge Road. In May 1919, well-kept farms lined both sides of the road in the Village of North Olmsted. The sun came out following a shower. But tragedy of the kind that makes one shudder was concealed behind the vine-clad walls of the house. Coroner P. J. Byre conducts the inquest for Cuyahoga County.

The Narrator walks to a table at center stage and sits across from Biddulph. He takes imaginary notes while Biddulph gives his testimony.

Coroner:

I call William Biddulph.

Coroner:

Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth?

Biddulph:

I do.

Coroner:

Please be seated and give your name and place of residence for the record.

Biddulph:

William Biddulph. I live in North Olmsted Village.

Coroner:

Describe the events which occurred on May 4, 1919.

Biddulph:

I had just dropped off my daughter at the interurban stop at the corner of Butternut and Lorain Roads. Ruth was going to Cleveland. Two women approached me asked directions to the farm of George Biddulph. They were from Cleveland and wanted to visit with his wife Josephine.

Coroner:

Are they the same women who testified before you?

Biddulph:

Yes. I told them George Biddulph was my brother. They accepted my offer to give them a ride to the farm. When we arrived, I knocked on the front door, but no one answered. I went to a side door and found it unlocked. The women went in first and I heard a shriek. One of them said, "They're dead!" My brother lay on the dinning room floor. A pistol was at his feet. I saw the bullet wound in his right temple and assumed death had been instantaneous. Through the doorway of the kitchen, we saw Josephine Biddulph on the floor. A shotgun lay next to her. Her left side was filled with buckshot. She too was dead.

Coroner:

Did you see any evidence of a struggle or anyone else being in the house?

Biddulph:

No, the furniture was undisturbed.

Coroner:

The records show that George was 68 and Josephine 44. Do you think your brother had a motive for his actions?

Biddulph:

Josephine owned a rooming house in Cleveland where she spent a good deal of time. He objected to her being away from home. She had promised to rent the rooming house and spend all of her time in North Olmsted. Considering their age difference, I think George suspected she was cheating on him. But that's only my guess.

Coroner:

Do you know if your brother left a will?

Biddulph:

Yes, he did.

Coroner:

Was his wife named in the will?

Biddulph:

Yes, she was supposed to inherit this house and the farm.

Coroner:

Do you know the person who will likely now be the heir?

Biddulph:

I really don't know for sure but can assume it would be Walter McMahan, her son from a previous marriage.

Coroner:

How many times has she been married?

Biddulph:

Well, her name was Burford when she married my brother and her son's name is McMahan, so I imagine at least three times including my brother.

Coroner:

Thank you for your testimony. Mr. Biddulph, you are excused.

Narrator:

Biddulph leaves the stage and the Narrator returns to stage right.

A neighbor testified that he had not heard any shots on that tragic Sunday. George's son Fred Biddulph said his father had called on him that morning for some milk. He had never seen his father in better spirits. Coroner Byre and Deputy Sheriff Joseph Ball conferred and ruled the case to be one of murder and suicide by the actions of George Biddulph.

On May 7, 1919, a funeral service was held for George Biddulph in the same house where the tragedy had taken place, three days earlier. The minister from the North Olmsted Universalist Church conducted the ceremonies.

Minister:

Lights come on Minister at stage center.

George Biddulph was born in Cleveland, Ohio on May 23rd, 1850 and in a few days would have been 69 years old. He came to this vicinity with his parents in 1864. They settled upon this farm where he has since lived. He was three times married, first to Almera F. Kennedy. Of this union, three children were born, Grace, who died in childhood, Dora, who died several years ago and Fred, now living upon the home place. The first wife died in 1900. In August 1901, he married Stella Kennedy who passed to the higher life in March 1918. He was married a third time in the autumn of last year.

Having spent most of his life here, he was a man favorably known by a large circle of friends and acquaintances, who hold the memory of his life in high esteem. This great sorrow that has come upon the community falls with especial heaviness upon the dutiful and loving son Fred and upon his brother William and three sisters.

By his own request, the body will rest in the family lot between the remains of his first and second wives in Butternut Ridge Cemetery.

After a long pause, he bows his head and holds his hands in prayer.

Let us all throw the mantle of charity over all in his life that we would forget and express our thoughts in the language of the old couplet, "May we be to his faults a little blind / And to his virtues very kind."

Lights fade and come on at stage right.

Narrator:

Four years later, Fred Biddulph, who never wanted to be a farmer, opened a dancing pavilion on land his father had given him when he married Clara Standen in 1912. Originally, square dances were held in the rustic building, which was later modernized and named the Springvale Ballroom. He also constructed a golf course on the former farmland. The City of North Olmsted purchased the property in 1994.

Across Butternut Ridge Road from Springvale, the house of horrors is today used by the Boy Scouts of America. Few if any know of the tragedy that occurred there in 1919.

Lights fade at stage right.

Scene Six

Narrator:

Lights come on at stage right. Narrator sits on a high stool.

Helen Briggs of North Olmsted graduated from the Lakeside Hospital School in Cleveland and became an operating room nurse. She worked under Dr. George W. Crile, one of the founders after the war of the Cleveland Clinic. Miss Briggs was 23 years old at the time.

When America entered World War I in April 1917, Dr. Crile organized the Lakeside Unit, a military hospital contingent. On May 23, 1917, the doctors and nurses were greeted by King George V and Queen Mary in England before leaving for the front. They were assigned to the British sector of the Western Front since American troops had yet to arrive in any great numbers.

The U. S. Army Base Hospital No. 4 would ultimately treat 82,179 soldiers in Rouen, France. Most were from Great Britain and the British Commonwealth.

Ten years older than Helen, Cassie Salisbury graduated in 1909 from Lakeside Hospital's nursing school. She arrived in France in September 1917 and joined the Lakeside Unit.

The time is 1920, nearly two years after the war. Cassie is visiting Helen, who had recently married Reuben Elliott. They are neighbors living on Lorain Road in North Olmsted.

Lights come on at center stage as they fade on Narrator. Cassie and Helen sit at a table and pretend to sip tea.

Cassie:

Helen, I'm glad I could come over today. Thanks for your hospitality.

Helen:

I've hardly seen you during the school year.

Cassie:

Being a school nurse in Cleveland, really keeps me busy. Thank God for the Interurban, I can still live with my parents in North Olmsted.

Helen:

How many schools?

Cassie:

West Tech and three other schools in the district and I sometimes visit sick students in their homes.

Helen:

Cassie, have you thought about returning to hospital nursing?

Cassie:

I'm so used to this kind of work that I wouldn't want to change, although it entails a great amount of work.

Pause as she sips tea.

Helen, why did you become a nurse?

Helen:

The influence of you and Aunt Damie Broadwell.

Cassie:

I'm flattered, but she inspired me and should get all the credit. Her husband's death was a horrible tragedy.

Helen:

Two months married and he died from a gunshot wound to the head. They say it was an accident. She had already resigned from the Army Nurse Corps. Then she left New Mexico right after the funeral.

Cassie:

When did she re-enlist?

Helen:

In the spring of 1914. She was living in Omaha at the time. By August, the Army assigned to a transport ship about to sail for Europe. Instead they reassigned her to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington.

Cassie:

Nice to see her back home and taking care of her mother. I heard Damie is working as a social services nurse.

Helen:

Yes, but she'll probably end up as a hospital nurse again.

Pause as she sips tea.

Can you believe it's been three years since we shipped off for Europe? Your voyage across the Atlantic Ocean was certainly more eventful than mine.

Cassie:

Certainly had us all scared. Our ship had been zigzagging across the Atlantic to avoid submarines. We were near England and the end of our voyage. Nearly every one was relieved. You know we always carried our life preservers in the danger zones. Well as we all sat down to dinner, there was a thump and the ship trembled. Then the siren sounded five times - the signal to stand by the life boats! Oh, Helen, it still gives me the shivers. We were all so frightened! Had the enemy fired on us? No one knew what had happened.

Helen:

I can't imagine such a horrible experience!

Cassie:

Everyone knew this was not a drill and we moved toward the passages and up the stairs to the deck. The nurses, seventeen of us, tried to stay together in the crowd.

Helen:

Did people panic? That would have really frightened me.

Cassie:

Surprisingly, not. There was some jostling and calling out of names, but we had been taught what to do in case of an emergency. I remember the English woman and her little daughter struggling to get up to the deck. An American soldier took the child from the mother's arms and lifted her onto his shoulders.

Helen:

How wonderful of him. Did the child go willingly?

Cassie:

Yes. I saw him later standing beside a lifeboat with the girl still on his shoulders. She was laughing and playing with the cord of his army hat. We watched American destroyers racing around us. The crew stood by to lower the lifeboats. I wondered if a torpedo had really struck the ship. Was it sinking? Time moved so slowly and the tension was unbearable.

Helen:

How long did you wait?

Cassie:

Nearly half an hour. In the mean time, some American soldiers began to sing. "What's the use of worrying? It never was worth while." Then almost two thousand of us joined in the singing. "So pack up your troubles in your old kit bag. And smile! Smile! Smile!"

Cassie doesn't sing the lyrics. Helen starts the song and Cassie joins her. They laugh.

Then we were told the danger had passed.

Helen:

What caused the thumping sound and jarring of the ship?

Cassie:

What we thought was a torpedo striking the ship was actually a German submarine blowing up from a destroyer's depth charge. Now, show me your medal. You are so modest.

Helen:

She stands up and walks up stage then returns with an imaginary box.

I think all of the nurses should get a medal.

She sits down and opens the box then hands Cassie the imaginary medal. Cassie looks at it. Then Helen gives her a newspaper.

There's an article in the newspaper. You may have seen it.

Cassie:

No, I haven't.

She reads the newspaper article.

“One of three nurses the Lakeside Unit to be cited by Field Marshal Haig, under whom they served as members of the British Second Army is Miss Helen Briggs. She, like Miss Nettie Eisenhart, was honored for her conduct when a field hospital in which she worked was under fire. In disregard of the danger of her position, she assisted in scores of operations performed by surgeons of the Lakeside Unit while their hospital was being shelled in January 1918. The citation for a Royal Red Cross medal was signed by Sir Douglas Haig and Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War.”

Helen:

There were many others, bravely doing their duty through out the war.

The sip tea and stare at the audience.

Cassie:

Helen, do you remember how depressing our first Christmas away from home was?

Helen:

Yes indeed.

Taking an imaginary card from box, she hands it to Cassie.

Remember the Christmas card from the North Olmsted Ladies Aid Society?

Cassie:

Of course, I think every lady of the Congregational Church signed it. What else do you have in your Memory Box?

Helen:

She hands a photograph to Cassie.

I sent a card home and included our picture.

Cassie:

We do look rested and ready to treat patients, don't we?

Helen:

She takes a letter from the box.

I wrote this letter home on May 4, 1918 – six months before the Great War ended: “Just a line since it is 1:30 A. M. --- Mother, now aren’t you excited and aren’t you saying to yourself (*She mimics her mother’s voice*) ‘What in the world is that girl doing up at that hour? She’ll get sick from losing so much sleep. Helen, it’s time you were in bed. Now scoot!’ And Alma will say, (*She mimics her sister’s voice*) ‘Come on Sis, why don’t you go to bed? Mother, make her come home before you get anymore excited or worry and get a wrinkle.’”

They laugh.

“I suppose I’d better tell you that I’m on night duty and so I have to be wide awake at this hour. (Do you feel better now?) Ann and I have started our first term of night duty tonight. She has two medical wards over on the other side of camp and I have three surgical tents. They are long 50 bed tents for the slightly wounded and I have some good reliable orderlies on duty so I don’t think it’s going to be bad at all.”

Carrie:

I never liked night duty. Read some more.

Helen:

“I entertain both of us by pulling out Ann’s white hairs. I got quite a bunch and told her I’d thought of sending them home. Then Ann said if I did she would say she got them from taking care of me. Think of that when really it is I who has to take care of her! We’ve had two days of glorious warm weather but are having a thunder storm now.”

The lights slowly fade on them.

Narrator:

The lights come on at stage right.

Cassie Salisbury never married and continued working as a nurse. Helen Briggs married Reuben Elliott in 1919. They had five children. In the 1930s, the Elliott family moved into a house built by Helen’s ancestor, Thomas Briggs, in 1836. The Olmsted Historical Society in 1969 moved the Briggs House to Frostville. Helen Elliott died of leukemia at the age of 48, most likely from exposure to the radiation from hundreds of x rays she took of the wounded. She was a victim of the war as much as all the others who perished.

Lights fade on Narrator