

# **Trumbull County Historical Society**

**Founded 1938**

**P.O. Box 1907, Warren, OH 44482-1907**



## **A Brief History of the Edwards-Webb-Iddings House and Its Residents 303 Monroe Street, NW, Warren, Ohio**

The house was built by John Stark Edwards in 1807. Born in New Haven, Connecticut, on August 25, 1777, Edwards was the son of Pierpont and Frances Ogden Edwards and grandson of Jonathan and Sarah Pierpont Edwards. His father was a shareholder in the Connecticut Land Company and drew as his portion all of Mesopotamia Township plus other holdings.

Jonathan Edwards, John's grandfather, was a noted religious scholar whose sermons and writings are still quoted today. He also served as president of Princeton College for a short time just before his death on March 22, 1758. John's great-grandfather, James Pierpont, is said to have made the motion that Yale College be founded in 1708.

John Stark Edwards attended the Litchfield Law School and was admitted to the New Haven Bar in 1799. That same year he came to Mesopotamia to open up that area, the first resident lawyer of the Connecticut Western Reserve. In 1800 he was appointed the first recorder of Trumbull County by Northwest Territory Governor Arthur St. Clair. At that time Trumbull County consisted of all the land east of the Cuyahoga River to the Pennsylvania border. In 1804 Edwards moved to Warren, as much of his work had to be done at the county court.

Edwards married Louisa Morris of Springfield, Vermont, and three boys were born to them, only one of whom, William Johnson Edwards, lived to maturity. In 1813 Edwards died, and the house was sold to Thomas Denny Webb. In 1814 Louisa Edwards married Robert Montgomery of Poland, making her home there until she died on December 24, 1866.

Thomas Denny Webb was born in Windham, Connecticut, on May 10, 1784, the son of Peter and Tamasin Denny Webb. He graduated from Brown University and came to Warren in 1807, where he practiced law for fifty years before retiring. Webb married Betsy Stanton in 1813.

From 1812 to 1814 Web published the first newspaper in northern Ohio, *The Trump of Fame*. He was twice elected to the state senate but refused the second term. Webb and his

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wife had three daughters. One died in early childhood, one never married, and the third, Laura, married Dr. William Iddings in 1846. They raised six children; the last to live in the house was William T. Iddings who left in the early 1930s to live with his daughter and her family in New York.

The house stood empty for a few years. Then, through the efforts of Dr. James J. Tyler, State Representative Bishop Kilpatrick, and Ohio Governor Martin L. Davey, the house was purchased by the State of Ohio in 1938 and turned over to the Trumbull County Historical Society, which was formed for the purpose of restoring and maintaining the house. The state grant of \$6,500 was soon gone, as major repairs had to be made. World War II intervened in the restoration, and it was several years before the house was completed.

Grace Goulder wrote in an April 4, 1943, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* article about the house,

The Edwards house has a broad hall, flanked by square rooms flooded with sunshine from small-paned windows, fireplaces in every room, and low ceilings upstairs for coziness ... A lot has happened in it. You can feel the overtones of purposeful living and long eventful years as you walk through the rooms. Wise old walls and resolute floors. Old houses, like old furniture, give back so much from their experienced past, I sometimes marvel anybody can endure the new! ... It's good to find such houses left in Ohio, which has allowed too many of its fine landmarks to perish. We need these tangible evidences of a virile worthy past upon which to build the towering shafts of our war-forged future.

In 1955 the house was moved three lots east from where it originally stood on South Street. In 1986 the house was moved again, this time two blocks west and three blocks north to a residential neighborhood on Monroe Street. There it was completely restored by volunteers. The first move was paid for by Helen Hart Hurlburt, publisher of the *Tribune Chronicle*; the second move was underwritten by her daughter, Zell Draz, also publisher of the *Tribune Chronicle*. Both women were active in the Trumbull County Historical Society. Their newspaper, through acquisition, is a direct descendent of Thomas Denny Webb's *Trump of Fame*.

The house was authenticated for a place on the *Ohio Inventory* in 1977 and was placed on the *National Register of Historic Places* in 1978; it lost *National Register* status when moved from South Street. It is still owned by the Trumbull County Historical Society and is operated as a museum of the three families who lived there and as a repository for the society's archives and collections.