

## Prologue

The second Western Reserve Studies Symposium, September 19, 1986, was supported by The Harriet B. Storrs Fund. One may wonder "Who was Harriet B. Storrs?" How might she react to the knowledge that this effort came about as a result of her largesse? I think she would approve heartily! The focus of the Symposium is the Western Reserve. The family of Harriet B. Storrs offers a prototype of those who originally settled and made their fortunes in this northeastern part of Ohio. Harriet B. Storrs provided this account for the Lake County Historical Society records on the early settler of this area.

Jesse Storrs, born in Concord, New Hampshire in 1804 came with his father in boyhood, to Cortland County, N.Y. where he engaged in growing nursery stock, mostly fruit trees. In 1853 he came to Painesville and bought land two miles east of that town. In 1854 he transferred his family and nursery to the newly acquired land where, with the assistance of his three sons, he developed his business. In 1858 a partnership was formed with J. J. Harrison who had already established a small nursery nearby. Later other members were added to the firm, and in 1881 it was incorporated under the name of The Storrs and Harrison Co. The Nursery finally comprised 1500 acres, part of which was rented land. Jesse Storrs died in 1882, leaving his share in the business to his two remaining sons, Willis P. and William G. Storrs. The oldest son, Horatio died in 1865. In 1940 the Storrs and Harrison Co. was sold; the part north of North Ridge to the Industrial Rayon Co. and the part south of the N. Ridge was later sold for nursery purposes.

Harriet Belle Storrs was born September 6, 1874 on the North Ridge nursery property in Painesville where in 1854, her grandfather started a business which by 1927 was not only the largest industry in Lake County but also the largest departmental nursery in the world. She was the daughter of Willis P. Storrs, who with his twin brother William, entered their father's nursery business after returning from the Civil War.

Harriet B. Storrs was educated at Oberlin College and graduated from Hillsdale College in Michigan. For several years she taught at Chardon High School. She lived in the house built by her grandfather on the North Ridge until 1957 when she sold it and moved to 47 Orchard Grove Ave. in Painesville. Three years later, on November 21, 1960 Harriet B. Storrs died at the age of 86. Prior to her death she arranged for a memorial fund, which was created the following year in accord with her wishes.

On April 20, 1961, the Cleveland Foundation announced that for the first time a philanthropic trust fund had been established specifically earmarked for Lake County. Under the trust agreement executed by Miss Storrs before her death she designated the income for "those public and charitable or educational uses . . . to most effectively assist and promote the well being of the inhabitants of the community comprising the city of Painesville and Painesville Township, Ohio."

Throughout her lifetime, Harriet B. Storrs' primary interests were her church, her community, education and young people. She was a member of the Baptist Church, the Chautauqua Study Club and The Lake County Historical Society. She was actively interested in Lake Erie College, the Morley Library and the YMCA.

Gladys Haddad