

Sentimental Sunday: Samuel T. Beerbower to Irene L. Peters



Samuel T. Beerbower portrait, circa 1860s? Posted with kind permission of the Marion County Historical Society (MCHS), Ohio. (Click to enlarge.)

[Beerbower Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

We generally see our ancestors in two dimensions, if we are lucky enough to have an image of them. Sometimes, though, we get to see a third dimension, something deeper, sometimes down to their heart:



Samuel T. Beerbower portrait-reverse, circa 1860s? Posted with kind permission of the Marion County Historical Society (MCHS), Ohio. (Click to enlarge.)

“Yours faithful until death

– Sam”

Such romantic words... What a gift to know that Sam could express himself in such a way, and that he loved Irene enough to put those words on the back of his portrait!

Perhaps this was a portrait Sam gave to Irene before he left for the war on 2 Oct 1861 at age 18?

Or was it given during their courtship? Sam was born in Fairfield County in 1842, but his family moved to Marion when

he was just over a year old. Irene was born in Marion in 1846, so it was likely that they knew each other growing up. Were they 'sweet' on each other during their school years? Had they courted before he left for the war? Or did they fall in love after Sam returned from the war, a man changed physically as well as mentally?

Or was this a gift from around the time of their wedding, on 13 Jan 1867?

We won't know the occasion unless letters or a diary are found, but it is fun to imagine what their lives may have been like.

Identifying when N. Green, the photographer, had a studio on Main St. in Marion, Ohio may help us pinpoint the date. (No luck so far, though found another photo identified as the 1860s with N. Green the photographer. So we are in the right decade.)

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Notes, Sources, and References:

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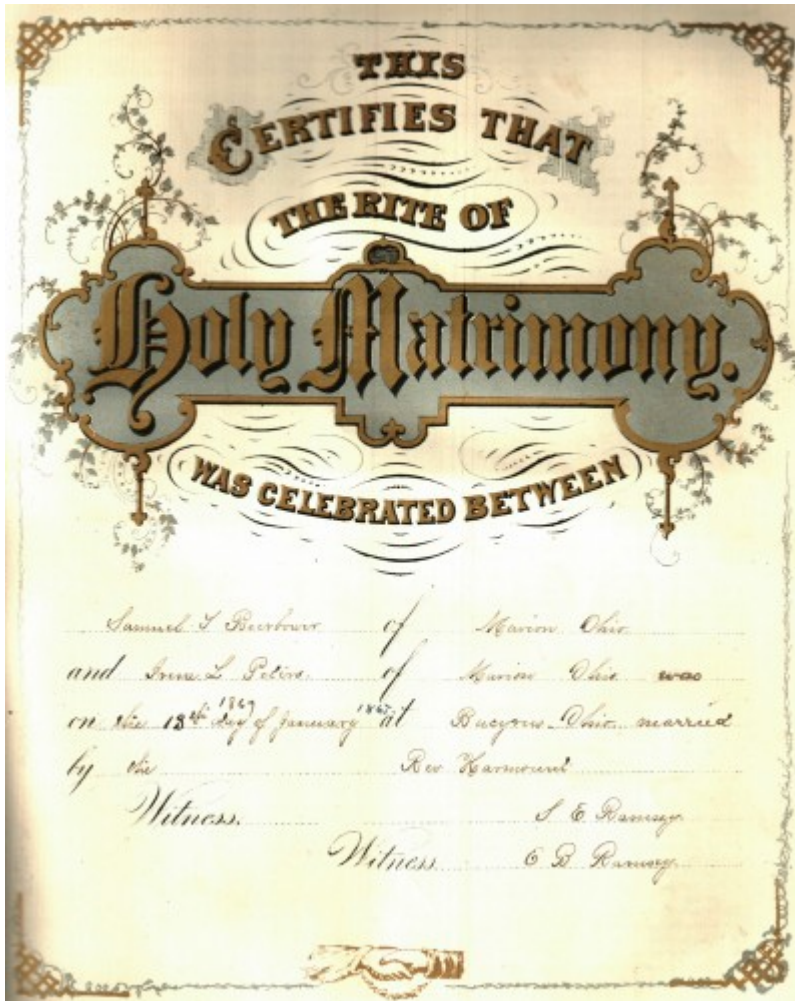
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Wedding Wednesday: Samuel T. Beerbower and Irene L. Peters



Marriage Certificate of Samuel Beerbower and Irene Peters, 18 Jan 1867, Bucyrus, Ohio. Posted with kind permission of the Marion County Historical Society. (Click to enlarge.)

[Beerbower Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

Samuel Taylor Beerbower (1842-1902) was the son of Eleazer John Beerbower and Matilda Louise McKelvey. His bride, Irene Lewella Peters (1846-1924) was the daughter of Nathan Peters and his second wife, Mary Cady Russell.



Marriage record for Samuel T. Beerbower and Irene L. Peters, married January 18th, 1867, in the Samuel T. Beerbower Family Bible. Posted with kind permission of the Marion County Historical Society (MCHS), Marion, Ohio. (Click to enlarge.)

Both Samuel and Irene were Marion natives, so it is curious that they were married in Bucyrus, Ohio. Bucyrus is a bit less than 20 miles north of Marion, but is in another county (Crawford), and the county seat. We are not aware of any family living in Bucyrus. Maybe they could get a license there more quickly, or they eloped?

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) Marriage certificate and Samuel T. Beerbower bible posted with the kind permission of the Marion County Historical Society (MCHS), Marion, Ohio.

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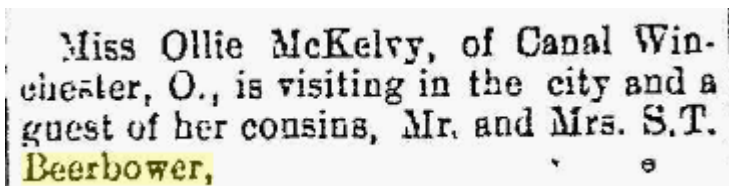
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Those Places Thursday: Canal Winchester, Ohio and the McElvey Family



Miss Ollie McKelvy, of Canal Winchester, O., is visiting in the city and a guest of her consins, Mr. and Mrs. S.T. Beerbower,

Ollie McKelvy of Canal Winchester visiting cousins in Marion, Ohio. *Marion Daily Star* [Marion, Ohio], 04 September 1880, page 81. Posted with kind permission for non-profit use only.

[Beerbower Family](#) (Click for Family Tree)

Transportation is the lifeblood of a nation, especially a young nation such as the United States in the early to mid 1800s. Ways to move people, products, and farm produce (both the vegetarian-type as well as the carnivore-preferred) were necessary for cities and towns to develop, and migration to proceed westward. Commerce was imperative to provide markets to farmers and manufacturers, and to make the US a world

trading partner.

When the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the country overnight, the heavily forested or wide-plained US with its vast distances presented logistic problems for trade and moving people. Our rich waterways had long provided a fairly easy road to markets and new places, but were limiting when an overland portage was required to move a product between two rivers or lake systems. "The Canal Era" began great private and public work projects in 1791, and linked the large expanses of our young country.

By 1830, the US had over 1,000 miles of canals.

By 1840, 3,326 miles of canals had been built at a cost of over \$125 million, and the completed miles of the new railroads was about the same.

Canals allowed the cost of transportation to drop from about ten cents per ton mile to less than one cent, thus increasing profits as well as opening new, more distant markets for producers and manufacturers.

Canal Winchester was a city that developed along the 308-mile-long Ohio and Erie Canal. Completed in 1834, this canal finished the privately financed inland waterway that included the Erie Canal, and stretched from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi River; it essentially linked New York City to New Orleans by water. This opened up settlement in northern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and our McKelvey ancestors were a part of this great era.

In 1828, the Ohio & Erie Canal was planned to go right through the wheat field of Reuben Dove in Fairfield County, Ohio. Although he planned to sue the state, he was instead encouraged to lay out a town as being a more profitable venture, and that he did. He called it Canal Winchester, and we know that at least one McKelvey family lived there in 1880.

The area only had a stagecoach run in the early 1800s; when the first canal boat floated through in 1831, it changed the area completely. The Ohio & Erie Canal brought work: on the canal itself, like barge operators and mates; and work alongside, such as hotels and restaurants, warehouses, and markets. Farmers could increase the size of their fields as they now had a way to transport excess grain, and agriculture thus became big business in the area, changed from mainly subsistence when there was no practical way to get grain to market. The railroad came through in 1869, making the canal less efficient due to the speed and capacity of trains, but the city continued to prosper as it moved with the times.

By 1850, railroads had surpassed the number of miles of canalways, with 2.5 times as many miles.

By 1860, railroads had about eight times the miles of canals, and The Canal Era became The Railroad Era.

Maps are important resources in family history research, and a source we often forget to use to help find clues.

From the newspaper article above, we know that:

*Miss Ollie McKelvey lived in Canal Winchester,
Fairfield &*

Franklin Counties, Ohio in 1880.

Researching the above Canal Winchester, Ohio on maps and checking how far it was to Marion, Ohio, where cousin Sam lived, I realized that Canal Winchester was also close to Pickerington, Fairfield County, Ohio. That place was somewhere some ancestors had lived, I remembered, and sure enough, looking at family group records showed me that Matilda and Eleazer Beerbower most probably lived in Pinkerington, as their infant twin sons are buried there. Son Polaski only lived ten days, and Caspar just short of nine months when he died, so likely the family lived there or nearby during the

year 1840. (Matilda was just 17 when the twins were born on 1 April 1840.) Embalming was not prevalent until the Civil War, so they probably would not have traveled far for burial, and may have been living in the area. It is easy to imagine that, even if they had moved away, in their grief they wanted the twin boys to be together in eternity. Their son Samuel T. Beerbower (the above host to Ollie) was born 10 November 1842 in Fairfield County, and their next child likely was as well: George Beerbower, born 10 August 1844 (in Marion, Ohio per my records, but now that is questionable). □George died just three days later, and was also buried in Dovel Memorial Cemetery with his infant brothers.

Canal Winchester, Ohio, is located southeast of Columbus, Ohio; Marion, where Ollie was visiting, was due north of Columbus. There are about 60 miles between the two cities, but train service abounded in Ohio in those years, so the trip may not have been too taxing. Since Ollie apparently traveled alone, that is another indicator of the ease and safety of the trip.

Samuel T. Beerbower's biography in the *History of Marion County, Ohio*, 1883, notes that his family moved to Delaware County, Ohio in 1849, and from there to Marion, Ohio in 1850, then finally to Indianapolis, Indiana in 1867. It was thus a short window of time (~1839-~1849 possibly?) that the McKelvey-Beerbower family resided in Canal Winchester/Fairfield County, Ohio, but apparently other family lived there, and stayed, as Ollie McKelvey did. Further research in that locality may provide more of the story of the McElvey family.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) An excellent set of pictures of the Ohio and Erie canal-

<http://web.theelms.org/library/eslibrary/SocialStudies/Ohio-Er>

[ie%20Canal.htm](#)

There is a link at the bottom for the Library of Congress' collection of old canal songs.

Also, see <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/ohioeriecanal/oec.htm>

2) Image from Wikipedia article on the Erie Canal-

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erie_Canal#/media/File:Lockport_bartlett_color_crop.jpg

View east of eastbound Lockport on the Erie Canal by W.H. Bartlett, 1839. Public domain.

3) Some Canal Era information:

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/DETOC/transport/canal.html>

<http://www.ushistory.org/us/25a.asp>

<http://www.canalwinchesterohio.gov/191/History>

4) *The History of Marion County, Ohio*, 1883-

<https://archive.org/details/historyofmarionc00legg>

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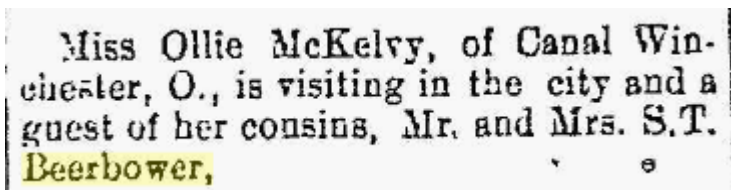
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Wishful Wednesday: The McKelvey Family of Ohio



Miss Ollie McKelvy, of Canal Winchester, O., is visiting in the city and a guest of her consins, Mr. and Mrs. S.T. Beerbower.

Ollie McKelvy of Canal Winchester visiting her Marion, Ohio Beerbower cousins. Marion Daily Star [Marion, Ohio], 04 September 1880, page 8. With permission via Ancestry.com.

[Beerbower Family](#) *(Click for Family Tree)*

The McElvey family has been elusive- possibly because there are so very many ways to spell the name: MacElvey, MacElvy, McKelvey, McKelvy, Mac Elvey, and a host of others I have seen online but my fingers just can't type those letter combinations.

Another reason for being elusive is that it is a maiden name in our line: Matilda Louise McElvey married Eleazer John Beerbower. Add to that a time period before vital records- Matilda was born in 1823 and married in 1839, plus a family that lived in a number of places, and one can understand how

challenging it is to find information on an ancestor's ancestors.

A previous post, [Tombstone Tuesday: Matilda \(Mac Elvey\) Beerbower](#) gives more information about Matilda and her family. Matilda McKelvey and Eleazer John Beerbower married in Winchester, Ohio on 7 March 1839.

Wednesdays are not the only days we have wished for more information on this family, especially the names of the parents of Matilda. So it was exciting when researching the Beerbower family to find the above newspaper article. This was the first document found about the McElvey family, other than those about Matilda as a married woman.

So this article is a good clue- Ollie McKelvey was from Canal Winchester in 1880, called just Winchester in its earliest times and again later, after the canal was not as important. Ollie would have been the child of Matilda McKelvey Beerbower's brother, since she was visiting the family of her cousin, Samuel T. Beerbower. (She couldn't be a child of a sister of Matilda, since she has the family name and a sister would have taken her husband's name.)

Of course, the truth of this assumption would depend on whether or not the word 'cousin' is used in the article as we do today- in earlier times 'Cousin' (as well as 'Aunt' and 'Uncle') were used more loosely, sometimes even for someone not related. Ollie was most probably related though since she had the family name and came from the same town as where Matilda and Eleazer were married- marriages often took place in the bride's hometown.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) Newspaper citation as above.

2) McKelvey-Beerbower marriage information in *House of Bierbauer. Two Hundred Years of Family History, 1742-1942* compiled by James Culver Bierbower and Charles William Beerbower; Published under the direction of Beerbower History Committee, 1942. A note to the county recorder is probably a good next step to see if the marriage record exists, and if so, does it contain the names of Matilda's parents.

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Workday Wednesday continued on Thursday: Tilling the Soil, Part 2



Edward A. McMurray and his mother, Edith Roberts Luck surveying the corn field on their family farm, circa 1980.

Here are just a few of our farming and gardening ancestors that I was thinking of as I worked with the soil and plants on the land we own, and that we can pass on to our descendants, just like our ancestors did:



Frederick Asbury McMurray, circa 1890?

Frederick Asbury "F.A." McMurray (1850-1929) worked on the family farm as a child, with his occupation listed as "works on farm" on the 1870 US Federal Census when he was 19; he was living in the household of his parents, Henderson McMurray and Mary Ann Horn McMurray. Of their 11 children, the boys apparently stayed in school until 14 or 15, though they probably took time off – or school was closed- for planting and harvest. The four oldest boys worked on the farm full-time, and the family boarded a 20 yr old woman who also helped with the housework- a lot of hungry mouths to feed after that hard farm labor, and a lot of dirty laundry.

F. A. married and in 1880 was listed as a farmer in the census. He became an auctioneer about 1880; he cried over 128 sales in 1902 ('cried' is a term for what an auctioneer does as he offers lots for sale), with the very large average of \$2,100 per sale making him an auctioneer in demand- he was very good at getting the prices up for his sellers. (Since he probably took a percentage of the sales, there was good incentive to describe the goods in an enticing way, then encourage more bidders to make a higher offer.) By the 1885 Iowa State Census F. A. was listed as having a Second Hand Store- a good spin-off for an auctioneer, and a lot less physical work than being a farmer. ([McMurray Family Ancestor](#)-click for family tree)



Gerard William Helbling in his garden, August 1934. Family photo album.

Gerard William Helbling loved roses, and had a flower garden he loved. (He never seemed the sort...) He grew some veggies, such as tomatoes, too. ([Helbling Family Ancestor](#)– click for family tree.)



The garden and family dog of Gerard William Helbling, August 1934. Family photo album.

William "Bill" Aiken supposedly had a pecan farm in Tylertown, Walthall County, Mississippi in the 1930s. ([Lee Family Ancestor](#)— click for family tree.)

Samuel T. Beerbower showed livestock at the county fair, so likely grew some of his own hay for grazing. ([Helbling/Beerbower Family Ancestor](#)— click for family tree.)

Sam. Beerbower took the first premium on the largest collection of Poultry exhibited by owner. Also first premium on Jersey heifers.

Samuel T. Beerbower- County Fair Winner. 03 Oct 1879, *The Marion Daily Star*, Vol. II, No. 305, (Whole No. 615), Page 4.

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Notes, Sources, and References:

- 1) Frederick A. McMurray, auctioneer article from the *Daily Herald*, Newton, Iowa, 01 Jan 1903, page 9.
- 2) Samuel T. Beerbower article as cited above.
- 3) Family treasure chest of photos.

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