

# Adena Mansion and Gardens

## THE MCCORMICK HOUSE AT ADENA (THE TENANT HOUSE)

Thomas Worthington employed a number of tenants for a variety of reasons. Some of them managed his gristmills, sawmills, distilleries and cattle operation. They lived in Worthington's houses in various parts of Ross and Madison Counties. While others lived on the Adena farm where they took care of his merino sheep, tended the orchards and gardens, cleared the land, planted and harvested crops. Some of the tenants that were particular craftsman, such as George McCormick, made furniture and did woodworking in the mansion.



**Charles Henderson** was engaged in October 1814 to take care of the sheepfold and to guard against the coyotes that had been attacking the sheep herd. When the family first arrived, they lived in the house of the widow Purnell until the tenant house could be built. By November of that year, his house had been completed at Adena and the family moved in.

**George McCormick** (1769-1850) an Adena carpenter and furniture maker is said to have first worked on the United States Capitol building. Latrobe, who designed Adena, recommended McCormick to Worthington to do the woodwork for the new mansion and to build some of the furniture. He came to Adena with his wife and children and made many of the pieces of furniture at Adena, including the case for the clock that stands in the entryway to the mansion. The banquet table, cradle, sideboard and bureau can be seen in the state dining room today. In 1813, Worthington hired him to work on the statehouse in Columbus. Later, McCormick became the treasurer for Franklin County from 1833-35.

**Joseph Bridges**, another tenant farmer that lived on Worthington estate came to Ohio from Virginia. Worthington provided a house for Bridges and wife and children. In addition, Worthington provided a garden rent-free, pasture for two cows, and firewood at a discount. Sadly, both Bridges and his wife died at Adena in the fall of 1823. Their daughter Rebecca and sons Charles, Royal and the oldest son, Henry were taken in and cared for by the Worthington family.

Adena State Memorial is operated by the Ohio Historical Society, a nonprofit organization that serves as the state's partner in preserving and interpreting Ohio's history, archaeology, and natural history.



Ohio Historical Society, Museums and Interpretation Division, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211-

[www.ohiohistoryteachers.org](http://www.ohiohistoryteachers.org) [www.ohiokids.org](http://www.ohiokids.org) [www.ohiohistorycentral.org](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org) [www.ohiohistory.org](http://www.ohiohistory.org)

## Adena Mansion and Gardens

Several varieties of apples, pears, and plums were grown in the Worthington orchards. A German, **Godfreid Fink** (1815), was hired as a gardener for one year and was to live on the Adena farm. Worthington hired him to plant a vineyard and nursery, to attend to the orchards and in return Worthington supplied him a house, a cow, 1200 pounds of flour, 800 pounds of pork, 40 bushels of corn and \$200.00 per year, if Fink did all that was assigned him.

Other known tenants were **Klein, John Cox, George Mootz and S. Callahan**. John Cox did not fulfill the terms of his contract in 1826, as he did not fence his fields, though Worthington felt he behaved as well as some of the other tenants, therefore, he was allowed to remain for another year. George Mootz (Moots) seems to have been connected with his gristmill operations in 1813. Klein lived on the Adena farm in the 1840 after the death of Worthington, but while Mrs. Worthington still lived.

The tenants raised a great deal of their own food in the gardens allotted them. However, the flour, milk and pork provided by Worthington supplemented their diet. They could further add to their food supply by hunting wild game that was abundant in the nearby woods and fishing in the streams.

For the most part, they had to provide their own clothing. The men worked out of doors in all kinds of weather and therefore needed strong warm clothing.



Since Worthington raised fine wool -bearing merino sheep, it is not inconceivable that the tenants may have obtained some of lesser grade wool. The wool had to be sheared from the sheep in spring. The wool was washed to remove the burrs, dirt and so forth, then greased and pulled through wire teeth to straighten the fibers and fluff it up in a process called carding. The mother then used her spinning wheel to spin yarn. From the

yarn, wool cloth was woven and warm shawls, mittens, and mufflers knitted.

Sometimes the tenant could save enough money or accumulate enough surplus products to trade for fabric in the dry goods store. From the cotton fabrics they purchased, a finer grade of clothing could be made. The clothing made from the “boughtin” cloth was worn on very special occasions.

The flax plant yielded a material from which a lighter fabric was woven. The process of producing this cloth was long and tedious. The seeds were removed and then the plant soaked and dried. The inside of the plant was broken into pieces and then combed. The combed fibers were spun into a thread that was woven into cloth. The rough material that resulted from this process was called linsey. A refining of the process resulted in a better grade of cloth called linen.

The tenant family made soap to be used for a variety of things. Clothes and dishes were cleaned using lye soap. The floors were scrubbed and weekly baths taken with this multi-purpose soap.

Adena State Memorial is operated by the Ohio Historical Society, a nonprofit organization that serves as the state’s partner in preserving and interpreting Ohio’s history, archaeology, and natural history.



Ohio Historical Society, Museums and Interpretation Division, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211-

[www.ohiohistoryteachers.org](http://www.ohiohistoryteachers.org) [www.ohiokids.org](http://www.ohiokids.org) [www.ohiohistorycentral.org](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org) [www.ohiohistory.org](http://www.ohiohistory.org)

## Adena Mansion and Gardens

Every family knew how to make soap. Every mother taught her daughters how to make soap. First, lye was made from wood ashes and mixed with tallow or the fat of an animal. After cooking in a huge iron pot, the mixture was poured into a wooden mold to harden. Then it was cut in bars for use. The cooking process had to be done out-of-doors and was done one or two times a year.

Another periodic activity was candle making. The candle was the primary means of lighting the night. Candles were made of either tallow, which came from animals or from beeswax. Most pioneers and of course the tenants used the fat of animals for making candles, because fat was available to them. Making candles was a tedious activity.

The fireplace in the kitchen was the hub of activity. Cooking was a long and sometimes dangerous process. The pots for cooking were very heavy and would get very hot. Serious burns often occurred.

Foods were either fresh, salted, smoked or dried. In order to prepare meals when no fresh food was available the salted, dried, or smoked food was used. Another way of preserving food was to bury vegetables and fruit in the ground where the temperature is constant. Common garden vegetables were peas (spring), beans, cabbage, okra, turnips, rhubarb, white and sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkin, tomatoes, carrots and onions. Fruits, nuts and berries supplemented the diet. Stews of one sort and another were often eaten. A spring stew might consist of a few potatoes and carrots cooked together with a bit of meat. By spring the vegetables in the burying hill might be rather sparse.

Worthington usually butchered upwards of thirty hogs at a time. The tenant farmers assisted with butchering the animals in December of each year. All sorts of left over meat from the animals were put to use. The fat of the animals especially the pork was cooked a process called rendering. The rendering process was done out of doors, because of the smell and the smoke. The skin left after all of the fat was cooked out was called cracklings. The servants often ate cracklings. Judy Stanley a former enslaved woman and a servant of Worthington was put in charge of rendering the lard. Other parts of the animal; i.e. calf's head, pig's feet, tongue etc. were used to make such delicacies as headcheese, pickled pigs feet and tongue.

As a part of the tenant agreement made by Worthington and some of the tenants a pasture field for feeding a cow or cows was provided. Of course the milk, butter and cheese were necessary to the tenant diet.

Pioneers and tenant farmers used every available material to survive. They often made their own brooms, using special broomcorn grown for that purpose. Buckets, bowls, spoons and such utensils were made from wood.

Almost nothing was wasted. Old clothing was torn into strips and sewed into quilts or woven into rugs.

The work of the tenant was hard and the tasks carried out by them were varied; however their work was necessary in the operation of the Adena Estate.

Adena State Memorial is operated by the Ohio Historical Society, a nonprofit organization that serves as the state's partner in preserving and interpreting Ohio's history, archaeology, and natural history.



Ohio Historical Society, Museums and Interpretation Division, 1982 Velma Avenue, Columbus, OH 43211-

[www.ohiohistoryteachers.org](http://www.ohiohistoryteachers.org) [www.ohiokids.org](http://www.ohiokids.org) [www.ohiohistorycentral.org](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org) [www.ohiohistory.org](http://www.ohiohistory.org)

# Adena Mansion and Gardens

## Sources:

- Worthington, Albert to Thomas Worthington letter Henderson arrives 1814.
- \_\_\_\_\_, James T. to TW House nearly ready November 1814.
- Worthington, Thomas Diary Godfreid Fink arrives 1815.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Diary contract with Joseph Bridges 1819.
- Lowry, Elisha letter Joseph Bridges
- Worthington, James T. to Albert Worthington Death of Joseph Bridges and wife  
1824
- Worthington, Thomas to James T. Worthington Trouble with Jon Cox 1826
- Worthington, Thomas. Memo letter “ What is to be done in my absence”1813.
- Kalman, Bobbie Historic Home Crafts Crabtree Publishing Company 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19<sup>th</sup> Century Clothing Crabtree Publishing Company 1993
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schimpky, David Children’s Clothing of the 1800s Crabtree Publishing  
Company. 1995.
- Rybak, Bob Life as a Pioneer A teacher Resource Book for middle and Upper  
Grades  
Frank Schaffer Publishers. USA 1994.

## Internet

- Museums of West Virginia website. <http://www.museumofwv.org/kids/pioneers>  
Information on pioneer foods. 2003. Sponsor West Virginia Association of  
Museums.

## Interviews

- Brown, Mary Anne Site Manager, Adena State Memorial, Ohio Historical  
Society  
on the tenants June, 2003.
- Hobbs, Stuart D. Historian Ohio Historical Society collection from diaries and  
letters on tenant and servant populations.

Adena State Memorial is operated by the Ohio Historical Society, a nonprofit organization that serves as the state’s partner in preserving and interpreting Ohio’s history, archaeology, and natural history.

