

LBHA HELPS DEDICATE CUSTER HOMESTEAD MONUMENT IN TONTOGAN, OHIO



LBHA Associate Mark Miner, Thomas Ward Custer re-enactor Paul Houser, monument chair Bernard Scott, and Steve Alexander portraying General Custer, at the monument's final home in Tontogany's Centennial Park.

LBHA Associate **Mark Miner** joined Custer living historian Steve Alexander and other state and local dignitaries in speaking at the formal dedication of a bronze Ohio Historical Society marker honoring the "Custer Homestead" in ceremonies in Tontogany, Wood County, on Sun., Aug. 10, 2008. The plaque memorializes the Custer family during their little-known years of residence in Tontogany during the Civil War. LBHA Associate **Joan Croy** also attended the event.

Before a crowd of about 100 attendees, Miner presented his award-winning "Tontogany's Deep Secret" featuring the story of Thomas Ward Custer, Rebecca Miner and their child born out of wedlock, Thomas C. "Tommy" Custer, all former Tontogany residents. Miner authored an article on the topic for the LBHA Research Review in 2005, and it received the 2006 Lawrence Frost Memorial Award for "best article" in the magazine.

The event was held as part of the 2008 Tontogany Festival at the new Otsego High School Auditorium and Performing Arts Center. In addition to Miner and Alexander, speaking at the unveiling were Jim Carter, president of the Wood County Commissioners and past president of the Historical Society of Grand Rapids; Representative Randy Gardner of the 6th District of the Ohio State House of Representatives; Senator Mark Wagoner of the 2nd District of the Ohio State House; Jody Blankenship, manager of outreach programs at

the Ohio Historical Society; Mark Young, president of the American Civil War Museum of Ohio in Bowling Green; James Shank, re-enactor with the 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry; Steve Kryder, president of the Historical Society of Grand Rapids; re-enactor Paul Houser portraying Captain Thomas Ward Custer. Following the unveiling, the Air National Guard Band of the Great Lakes, 555th Air Force Band performed a concert of patriotic music. The marker then was transported in a special procession through a Tontogany neighborhood to its place of permanent enshrinement in Centennial Park for all to enjoy in perpetuity.

The festival was organized by Bernard Scott and his hardworking committee which worked for five years to generate support for the project. Miner assisted the effort in fundraising, and all told, the project raised more than \$2,000, including dedications from several LBHA associates.

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MAY 2008 TABLE OF CONTENTS

One of the most exasperating facets of studying anything diligently, as a "professional" or a genuinely inquisitive amateur, is reference material and especially access to such material. So it was with me when I first read Graham's **The Custer Myth** and Darling's **A Sad and Terrible Blunder**. Attempts to find their sources was most frustrating. Finding material from LBHA, CBHMA, et al was impossible. The Board has graciously allowed us to include sources from other organizations so that "the word" gets around as much as possible. Enjoy...Editor.

"Prelude to Little Bighorn, Crazy Horse and the Fetterman Fight," by John Monnett

"Red Cloud, A Warrior-Statesman's Influence," by Robert W. Larson

"Historic Gateway to Custer Battlefield, The Long Forgotten Entrance Archway," by James S. Brust and Sandy Barnard

"Ribbons, Pins and Badges, Memorializing Little Bighorn Anniversaries," by Douglas D. Scott

"Recalling the Little Bighorn: Stories told by 7th Cavalry Survivors," by Kenneth M. Hammer

"Editor's Call," by Sandy Barnard