

## Some Notes on the Life of Bertram William Woods

The Bertram Woods Branch of the Shaker Heights Public Library, located at Warrensville Center Road and Shaker Boulevard is named for the benefactor who provided the funds for its founding. Here is a brief narrative of the life of Bertram W. Woods.

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The story begins in 19 August 1837 when the State of Connecticut completed the transfer of a tract of land comprising 79 and 65/100 acres in Warrensville Township to the heirs of Benjamin Woods, late of Warrensville, – Benjamin, Jr., and Henry. Benjamin, Jr., died and Henry inherited the property. Not yet of age, they were placed in a guardianship.

Henry Woods was born on the Isle of Man in 1829. In 1850 Henry was living with the family of John Radcliff in Warrensville Township. It was across the road from his deceased father's farm. John Radcliff was a farmer also born on the Isle of Man. Twenty-one-year-old Henry was working as a shoemaker.

After a court battle with the remaining heirs of Benjamin Woods, on 1 March 1854 Henry Woods purchased the 79 and 65/100 acres in Warrensville from them for \$100. After all that, he didn't move there right away.

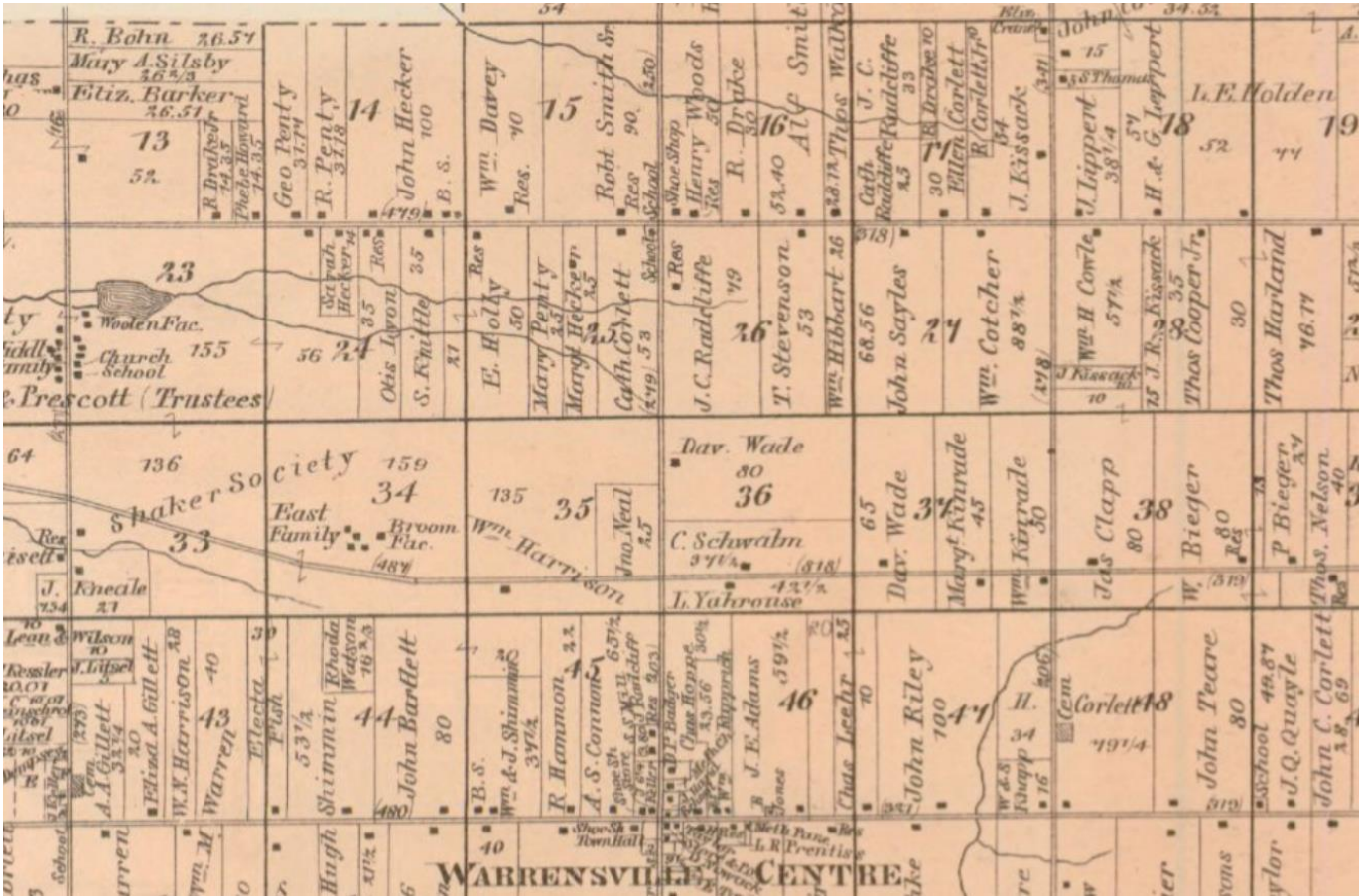
Henry married Margrette about 1854. She was born in Massachusetts in 1833. In 1858 Henry purchased a lot in Dover Township on the far west side of Cuyahoga County. In 1860 Henry and Margrette were living there with their three children, Mary Jane 4, Benjamin 2, and Nathaniel 3 mo. His farm was valued at \$2,500 and his personal estate at \$200. They must not have liked being so far from family and friends. On 30 March 1861, Henry and Margrette Woods sold their property in Dover for \$100 and moved back to Warrensville.

In 1870 Henry, Margrette and two children, Mary and Benjamin, were living on their farm in Warrensville. According to the census, his farm was valued at \$3,500 and his personal estate at \$450. Their other children, Nathaniel, Bertram, Cora, and Leavy, were enumerated nearby at the home of Hart and Abigail Taylor.

Bertram William Woods was born in Warrensville in 1863.

Henry and Margrette had two more children, Florence and Charles. Henry Woods died in the late 1870s. In 1880, his widow, Margrette Woods, was living on the farm with seven of her children. Mary Jane had married. All the other children were in school.

By 1887, Bertram Woods had left home to make his way in the world. He was boarding at 431 Lake Avenue in Cleveland, working as a fireman on a railroad locomotive. By 1891 he had been promoted to engineer and was living at 176 Oregon Street (now 1556 Oregon Ave.)



Segment of Warrensville Township from the 1874 D. J. Lake Atlas of Cuyahoga County. Note the 50 acre farm of Henry Woods at top center. Thirty acres of his land were transferred to Robert Drake according to an agreement made by Henry's father. Note the shoe shop on the corner and Henry's residence next to it. Also, note the brook we now know as Meadowbrook Road crossing Henry's property.

In 1900, Margette Woods, was living on the farm in Warrensville with two children Leavey and Charles. Charles was running the farm. Margette said she had 8 children, all living. Six had married and moved away.

Bertram Woods married the widow Sarah Viola 'Sadie' Massena Aufderheide in 1908, likely in Ashtabula where she had been living. She was born 14 Apr 1875 in Neshannock, Mercer County, Pennsylvania. It was his first marriage (at age 45), and her second. Her first husband had died in 1902.

In 1910, Bertram and Sadie were living 17 Cornell Street in Ashtabula. He was working as a locomotive engineer for the New York Central Railroad. They would live in Ashtabula for the rest of their lives.

After he retired from the railroad, Bertram and Sadie frequently wintered in St. Petersburg, Florida. He died there in February 1948. He was buried at Edgewood Cemetery in Ashtabula.

ST. PETERSBURG — Mrs. Anna M. Plucker, 73; Bertram M. Woods, 87; Henry Logan Griffin, retired Woolworth store manager.

*Miami Herald*, February 10, 1948

Sarah Viola 'Sadie' Woods died 19 October 1951 while living at the home of her sister in Ashtabula. She was buried at Saybrook cemetery in Ashtabula.

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So, though he only attended school through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and left home as a young man and never returned, Bertram W. Woods created a lasting legacy with his gift for a library located only a half mile from his birthplace.