“A Sort of Connecting Link”:
Andrew Squire, James Garfield, and the Village of Hiram
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In 1859, the tiny village of Hiram in Portage County sent James Garfield, its adopted son, to the state senate at Columbus. Dr. Andrew J. Squire, a local physician then living in Mantua, had suggested to Garfield at a rally in Ravenna that he enter his name as the Republican nominee (Garfield, Diaries, vol. 1, 340); it was the turning point in Garfield's career, thrusting him into politics and culminating in his election as President within little more than twenty years. Dr. Squire moved to Hiram a short time later—in 1863—with his young family including his teenage son Andrew, already a pupil at the Eclectic Institute, who appeared destined, like four generations of Squires before him, to become a country medico. The life and career of Andrew Squire, eventually Cleveland's preeminent lawyer, were marked by his connection to Hiram and to Garfield in ways that can tell us much about the impact of a childhood on the Reserve.

To the end of his life, Andrew Squire cultivated the recollection of his youthful encounter with Garfield who was principal of the Eclectic Institute at Hiram as well as one of its teachers. When the Squires moved to Hiram, Andrew Squire entered the preparatory division of the Eclectic Institute, while Garfield was still teaching there. His influence on Squire was pivotal. On the centennial of Garfield's birth (and fifty years after his death) in 1931, Squire addressed a Hiram audience to whom he reminisced about his youthful impressions of the great man:

As a youngerster in my early teens, living in Hiram, I was one of those with whom frequently during his vacations while in Congress, he would sit on an old rail fence near Bonney Castle and talk as if we were his companions. (Squire, A Few Recollections of Hiram, 17)

When he decided not to study medicine, after graduating from Hiram College in 1872, Squire set out for Cleveland in order to study law. In an address to the Cleveland Bar Association in 1924 on the fiftieth anniversary of his practice, he recounted what was to become an oft repeated anecdote:

In July of 1872 I armed myself with a letter of commendation from General Garfield, then Congressman from Portage county district and formerly the head of the school at Hiram, and also a letter from Burke A. Hinsdale, then President of Hiram College. Those letters I still treasure. . . . . Looking back on those two men from the knowledge since obtained, I repeat what I have frequently said that I have never known a man the equal of General Garfield in making a ten or fifteen minute talk in the college chapel to a body of students who could so inspire them and impress them that they could be of some use in this life and in this world if they had ambition to try—and if they did not measurably succeed it was their own fault. (Squire, "Fifty Years")

Andrew Squire's obituary in the Plain Dealer, January 6, 1934, repeats the story that is found throughout the accounts of his move to the city:

Letters from James A. Garfield, then congressman, and Burke A. Hinsdale, president of Hiram College, gave him his introduction to the law firm of Andrew J. Marvin and Darius Cadwell when he tucked his diploma from Hiram under his arm and came to the Cleveland of 1872.

The hagiography attached to the Garfield name was still so important in 1934 in Cleveland that toward the end of the obituary a heading appears: "Garfield is Chairman," pointing out that "James R. Garfield, whose president-father was an intimate friend of Mr. Squire and whose birth was presided over by Mr. Squire's doctor-father, is chairman of the committee." By the end of his life, Andrew Squire often reiterated that he had been an intimate friend of father Garfield, though there is little corroborating evidence of such intimacy. In 1932, Squire wrote to members of the Ohio Bar Association urging them to vote for Herbert Hoover:

It has been my fortune to have been well acquainted with Ex-President Garfield, Ex-President Hayes, Ex-President McKinley, Ex-President Taft, and Ex-President Harding. (Andrew Squire Papers, cont. 1, fold. 2)

Part of the power of the Garfield name well into the twentieth century, at least for Squire's generation, is accounted for by the resonance of his Lincoln-esque background; he was the last President to be born in
a log cabin (in Orange Village); Horatio Alger had perpetuated the myth in his 1901 potboiler From Canal Boy to President. Squire, though, eschewed for himself the legend of the country boy overcoming obstacles to achieve success in the city. In one of the obituaries published on January 6, 1934, the reporter recalled a recent interview with Squire:

A lot of things have happened since I left Hiram college with my sheepskin in '72. But I don’t think I’m a hero out of Horatio Alger’s books. Nothing like that. My great-grandfather, my grandfather, and my father were doctors and they wanted me to be one, too. I wanted to be a lawyer. I swept law offices in Cleveland to become one. I read law and did janitor work in the offices of Caldwell & Marvin. (unsigned obituary, January 6, 1934?)

At the Garfield’s centennial celebration at Hiram in 1931, Squire expressed his affection for Garfield’s memory:

Here I am a sort of connecting link between most of you and the days of the old Eclectic Institute. My connection with Hiram of over seventy years has linked me closely to the place and never shall I forget or regret the great influence upon me of General Garfield, President Hinsdale, and my entire Hiram life. (Squire, A Few Recollections of Hiram, 19)

In a 1928 article in the Town And Country Club News, Carle B. Robbins, while recounting the story of Andrew’s going to Cleveland with Garfield’s letter in hand, suggests that Andrew Squire’s father—not Garfield as the man himself would have it—was the most significant influence on the future solon:

Although his practice was confined to a small village, he was not a “small-town” individual. Dr. Squire was a big man, big of mind and soul, and he possessed those identical attributes of greatness which are so evident in the son. (Robbins 11)

Indeed, Squire’s 1907 entry in The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography describes Garfield as the elder Squire’s “friend and neighbor” (371), without mentioning the story of the Garfield letter borne so hopefully to Cleveland. In Garfield’s voluminous correspondence in the Library of Congress there is precious little to suggest either much intimacy or even contact between Andrew Squire and the General. For instance, more than nine hundred letters between Garfield and his student and confidant Burke Hinsdale have been indexed to the five letters extant there between Garfield and Squire. Separated as they were by a generation—and the Civil War—it is understandable that the younger man so admired the former teacher, laurel-wreathed war hero and eventual President whose early years had so nearly paralleled his experience in little Hiram.

There can be no doubt that the Squire family’s removal from Mantua to Hiram in 1863 was significant in Andrew Squire’s life. Late in life he was to remark that he felt “sorry for anyone who was never a country child; only the country child knows nature” (Kirkwood 13). One of the most peculiar items in the collection of books bequeathed by the Squires to Western Reserve University is an 1883 treatise on phrenology, a kind of early personality assessment instrument that was popular in the nineteenth century. The volume, owned by Special Collections in the Library of CWRU, contains a personalized assessment of Andrew Squire “as given by C. C. Carleton, September 11, 1883.” By assessing the configuration of the skull, a phrenologist was able to determine the strength or weakness of a large number of personal traits. It is startling to read Squire’s assessment, first because the language is not that of charlatanism, but startling in its contemporaneity; second, the 33-year-old Squire already evinces those personal characteristics which were to mark his entire life! The quality of “Inhabitiveness” registered fairly strongly (a 5 on a scale of 1-7):

You manifest considerable attachment to home and country; prefer to live in one place, and surround yourself with the comforts of domestic life; feel some regret in leaving the place of your birth, or of long residence, but can easily change if circumstances require it; and are not likely to get homesick even if compelled to remain absent for a long time.

(How to Read Character 162)

An important part of the telling of his life story was to recall helping his father in building the family home in Hiram; Carle Robbins spoke of it in a profile of Squire in 1928:

Standing today in the little village of Hiram is a fine, square old residence built in the best traditions of the classical New England style. The great door shows the influence of Greek design, with square columns. A miniature entablature forms the lintel, and the characteristic side panes and transom lights are there to be sure.

This was the home and office of Doctor Squire, the boyhood home of Andrew. The first job of constructive work which the boy did was assisting in the building of this house.
Ask anyone in the village today for the Squire House and they will point it out to you.
(Robbins 11)
The house, sad to say, was razed in 1968 for a student union building. But that house very likely had an unexpected impact on Cleveland. In 1895 Squire commissioned Cleveland architect Charles Schweinfurth to build him a great house on Euclid Avenue; uncharacteristically, Schweinfurth designed a Greek Revival mansion (only the second building in classical style he had ever built). Jan Cigiano speculates in Showplace of America that “the patron’s inspiration and point of reference might very well have been his own family's classical New England home in Hiram, Ohio, which he had helped build in 1863” (202). Long after most of the great houses of Euclid Avenue had disappeared, the Squire mansion at 3443 Euclid Avenue remained into the 1960s first as the headquarters of the Red Cross and later the Knights of Columbus.

Dr. Squire, Andrew’s father, had his medical practice and a small pharmacy in the home; here as a boy, Andrew learned the love of plants and pharmacy that would lead to his gift of Squire Valleevue farm to Western Reserve University. Marie Kirkwood, explaining the generous gift of the Chagrin Valley estate, remarked in an issue of Your Garden and Home:

The son of a country doctor, from knowing nature as a child, he drifted into knowing it as a scientist. Dr. Andrew Jackson Squire, born on the day of the Battle of New Orleans, let Little Andrew browse about the office in the homestead at Hiram. Before long the doctor wasn’t quite content to start upon his visits unless he knew that Young Andrew, in the little dispensary at the end of the garden, had compounded the necessary prescriptions and packed them in his father’s saddlebags. For a while Andrew hesitated between the medical and legal professions and today, “Dean of the Cleveland Bar,” he still has leaning toward the healing professions, and is chairman of the Committee on the School of Pharmacy of Western Reserve University and a staunch supporter of the French educational theory that ranks pharmacy highest among the sciences. (Kirkwood 13)

Even among the captains of industry, Squire’s affection for home made itself known. In 1902 a group of prominent citizens feted John D. Rockefeller on the occasion of one of his summer visits to the mansion at Forest Hill. Squire spoke for the group when he pointed out to Rockefeller that

[there are other sides to life in this world than the mere attainment of wealth and power; there is the domestic and family circle; the devotion of man to his home; his love for his home; the cultivation about it, and it is a great pleasure to us to see and meet you upon these beautiful grounds, among these beautiful surroundings ....](Squire, A Visit)

Squire’s first wife, Ella Mott, was his Hiram sweetheart, daughter of Hiram’s bootmaker. The couple had two children, May and Carl. Mrs. Harold T. Clark, wife of one of Squire’s closest law colleagues, addressing the women of Flora Stone Mather College a decade after his death, recounted the tragedy of May’s death in 1891 at seventeen which was the impetus for the eventual bequest of Valleevue Farm to Western Reserve College. But Mrs. Clark also related a light-hearted story about the newly-wed country boy that forms an almost fairy-tale contrast to Squire bearing Garfield’s letter on the pilgrimage to Cleveland:

All through his life he had great physical endurance. As a young man it stood him in good stead, when, at the time of his first marriage, his Father-in-law gave a cow as a wedding present, and he walked all the way from Hiram to Cleveland, one cold, rainy day, leading the cow, so that the milk might be available for housekeeping needs. (Clark 3)

That cow would reappear in Ernestine Alderson’s portrait of Squire shortly before his death:

Fifty-seven years’ work as a lawyer in Cleveland has not diminished Mr. Squire's love of country paths, his keen appreciation of a broad and lovely view, or his delight in pigs, cows, chickens, ducks, turkeys, and all the workings of a first class farm. (Alderson 13)

Despite two honorary degrees from Hiram and his position as a trustee that maintained his connection to his alma mater and the village of his youth until 1930, Squire’s allegiances became more and more Cleveland oriented with the years. Western Reserve College, newly removed to Cleveland from Hudson became one of his projects. As early as 1881 he had written James Garfield in the White House, suggesting that Burke Hinsdale be lured away from the struggling college to accept a chair at Adelbert College; he admits that

Hiram would suffer irreparably in his loss but in my judgment humanity would gain by giving him a chair agreeable to his tastes in the institution, relieve him of all the little de-
tails which must embarrass and annoy him at Hiram, and thus permit him to have more
time to investigate such subjects as he desires . . . (Letter to Garfield, 19 March 1881)
Garfield, on far more intimate terms with his old friend Burke, wrote him to ask, "Was this with your con-
sent? Please write me about it" (Garfield-Hinsdale Letters 494) and more than a month later, addressing
Squire as "Dear Sir:" responded: "Notwithstanding my great interest in Hiram College, I should be glad to
advise Mr. Hinsdale in the manner you suggest if it is agreeable to him" (Letter to Andrew Squire, 30 April
1881). The cool formality of address may have to do with the dignity of the Presidential Office, but one
senses, too, Garfield's hesitation at too quickly depriving Hiram of its leader.

In 1896, George Bellamy, a professor of sociology at Hiram and a group of Hiram students founded
Hiram House, a settlement house aimed at easing the plight of Cleveland's urban poor. Civic and social
leaders supported Hiram's undertaking generously during its lifetime, though Squire's name is not to be
found among them.

As much as he loved the recollection of his youth in Hiram and warmed himself in the reflected fame
of Garfield, Hiram's greatest son, Squire's fortunes were tied to Cleveland. He had come as newly minted
Bachelor of Arts, founded one of the great American law firms, and with his second wife, Eleanor, was a
leader in Cleveland society. His phrenological assessment in 1883 had given him a particularly high score in
"Self-Esteem":

You evince a good deal of self-respect, dignity, and aspiration, but are not proud, overbear-
ing, or greedy of power; are disposed to listen to advice though you seldom follow it, and
prefer the place of a leader to that of a follower. (171).

For half a century, Andrew Squire was the civic leader promised by the accurate prediction made in 1883.
At his death he was eulogized in a Cleveland newspaper:

Cleveland is 138 years old. Mr. Squire was 83 when he died. To have lived in Cleveland for
almost half of Cleveland's existence was something (Andrew Squire came here 61 years ago)
but to have been of the city's outstanding citizens, and a substantial influence in the
life of Cleveland for most of that time, was infinitely more.

The largest part of his estate remained in Cleveland as part of the endowment of its greatest educa-
tional institution; his will provided for the family home in Hiram to go to the college, where it long re-
mained as a dignified reminder of two generations of Squires. All that remains now is a rock with a plaque
dedicated in 1938 by his friend John A. Penton, that already suggested a time when the house would no
longer exist:

When this plaque was erected in 1938
The homestead was still standing.

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