

HAZEL: (IN UNISON) This is the story...

DOT: (IN UNISON) This is the story...

ABBIE: (IN UNISON) This is the story...

HAZEL: ...of the founding of the Tinley's Creek Bridge.

DOT: ...of the Battle of Tinley's Creek Bridge.

ABBIE: It wasn't a battle.

HAZEL: I don't know who would have told you that.

ABBIE: Tinley's Creek was named after Jacob Tinley, one of the original non-indigenous settlers in the area.

DOT: He was a mean old bastard.

HAZEL: He absolutely was not a...that word.

DOT: Bastard.

ABBIE: There are no less than three surviving letters in the Ohio archives calling him exactly that.

HAZEL: Jacob Tinley was...one of the many colorful characters that make up the history of the area.

DOT: And...a mean old bastard.

HAZEL: Unlike the rest of the Founders, Tinley refused to settle in Mount Absalom choosing instead to make his home far outside its boundaries along the far banks of the creek.

DOT: They say he believed the town itself was cursed.

TINLEY: The town itself is cursed. Those fools in Mount Absalom don't want to hear it but it's the truth. That whole land is rotten. There's all manner of witchcraft and devilry about the place. Why on some nights, as I float downstream, I see Ol' Scratch himself on that far bank, watching me with his hellhounds. You'd be wise to steer clear. Me, I'd not step foot on that side of the creek for anything.
(PAUSE) Short of say...ten dollars.

ABBIE: The equivalent of two hundred dollars today.

HAZEL: It was the price everyone had to pay to cross the creek on his ferry. The only ferry.

TINLEY: And just sos you know for when you need to escape that God forsaken place, I charge double for the return trip.

DOT: Basically it was an extortion racket.

ABBIE: Those who couldn't afford the toll or who believed his ghost stories settled at the edge of the creek and became the town of Tinley's Ferry. But for anyone who had business in Mount Absalom, you either had to pay or spend two days riding through the woods to go around the creek.

TINLEY: And not all those who go into the woods come back out again.

HAZEL: Which is why the Founding Families of Mount Absalom decided to build a bridge.

DOT: And that did not sit well with Old Tinley. Not one bit. He stormed into Mount Absalom and interrupted a town meeting about the bridge. Whatever his talk about witches or devils, it wasn't going to get between him and his bottom line.

TINLEY: You can have this land, you Lyles, LaCortes, and Lodges. You're happy to it. And I won't tell you what to plant or what to charge for your crop.

Grow nothing but beets and celery for all I care. But the creek, the creek is mine. And I decide who crosses it and what crosses it. And there'll be no bridge over my creek. As long as I draw breath, there'll be no bridge.

DOT: The town voted unanimously in favor of the bridge.

HAZEL: So the work began. Every morning the people of Mount Absalom would go to work cutting stones and putting them in place...

SFX: PUNTING THROUGH WATER.

ABBIE: And every night, Jacob Tinley would float down river on his ferry and knock the stones loose with his barge pole.

DOT: He then stole the blocks and used them to build a new house for himself.

HAZEL: Which is today the Tinley's Ferry town hall.

ABBIE: So the people of Mount Absalom set a watch on the bridge to try and protect it.

SFX: PUNTING THROUGH WATER.

DOT: So down comes Jacob Tinley on his ferry...

WARREN: Halt! Jacob Tinley. I see you.

TINLEY: Aye, and I see you Chauncy Warren, you overstuffed peacock. I could see you from around the bend with your

shoes all shined like you were about to meet Governor Tiffin himself.

WARREN: Halt! Turn back. Don't approach this bridge.

TINLEY: I've every right to go be on this creek. As much right as you. More so.

A STICK CHIPPING AWAY AT STONES.

KNOCKING PIECES LOOSE.

A MUSKET COCKS.

WARREN: Stop! I mean it.

PAUSE.

STICK HITTING STONES. A LARGE ONE FALLS

INTO THE WATER. TINLEY LAUGHS.

HAZEL: And so Chauncy Warren fired his musket in defense of the bridge.

MUSKET FIRE.

PLUNK OF WATER.

DOT: Which just goes to show the people of Mount Absalom have never been able to aim.

ABBIE: Chauncy Warren was much more successful at using the butt of his musket to push the ferry away from the bridge.

STICKS HITTING STICKS.

TINLEY: Stop it.

WARREN: You stop it.

STICK FIGHT.

DOT: (CRACKING UP) Can you picture it? The two of them.
Just going at each other. Like...

MORE STICK FIGHT SOUNDS.

WARREN: (OFF) Ouchie.

ABBIE: From that night forward, the townspeople brought long poles to defend the construction. Any time Jacob Tinley would show up to damage the bridge...

SOUNDS OF MANY STICKS WACKING TOGETHER.

HAZEL: Finally on June 21st, 1806, the bridge was complete. The people of Mount Absalom celebrated with a parade of wagon rides over the creek which they could now freely cross.

ABBIE: Until the next year when Jacob Tinley was elected county sheriff and placed a ten dollar toll on the bridge.

HAZEL: But that's neither here nor there. The lesson we should take from this is that there is no obstacle the people of Mount Absalom can't overcome when we all work together in the best interests of the town.

ABBIE: While I hate assigning subjective morals to the objective facts of historical events, I would say this story is illustrative of the lengths those with money or power will go in order to maintain the status quo from which they benefit.

DOT: Moral of story: Jacob Tinley was a Mean. Old. Bastard.

END.