



# *Olmsted 200*

Two Centuries and More History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township –  
First Farmed in 1814 and Settled in 1815

Issue 117

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## **Contents**

East Side Asylum Played Role in Olmsted Couple's Lives	1
West View 150 Years Ago Was Proud, Busy and Cold	9
Thomas Brown's Gravestone Was Smaller than Shown	11
Reader Tells Tale of Private Pool from Decades Ago	12
Still to Come	13

## **East Side Asylum Played Role in Olmsted Couple's Lives**

During Olmsted's early years, residents tended to stay close to home for work out of necessity, but by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, leaving the community to pursue employment became more feasible. That pursuit of employment led one woman and one man to work on the other side of the county, but that work also might have brought them together and back to Olmsted.



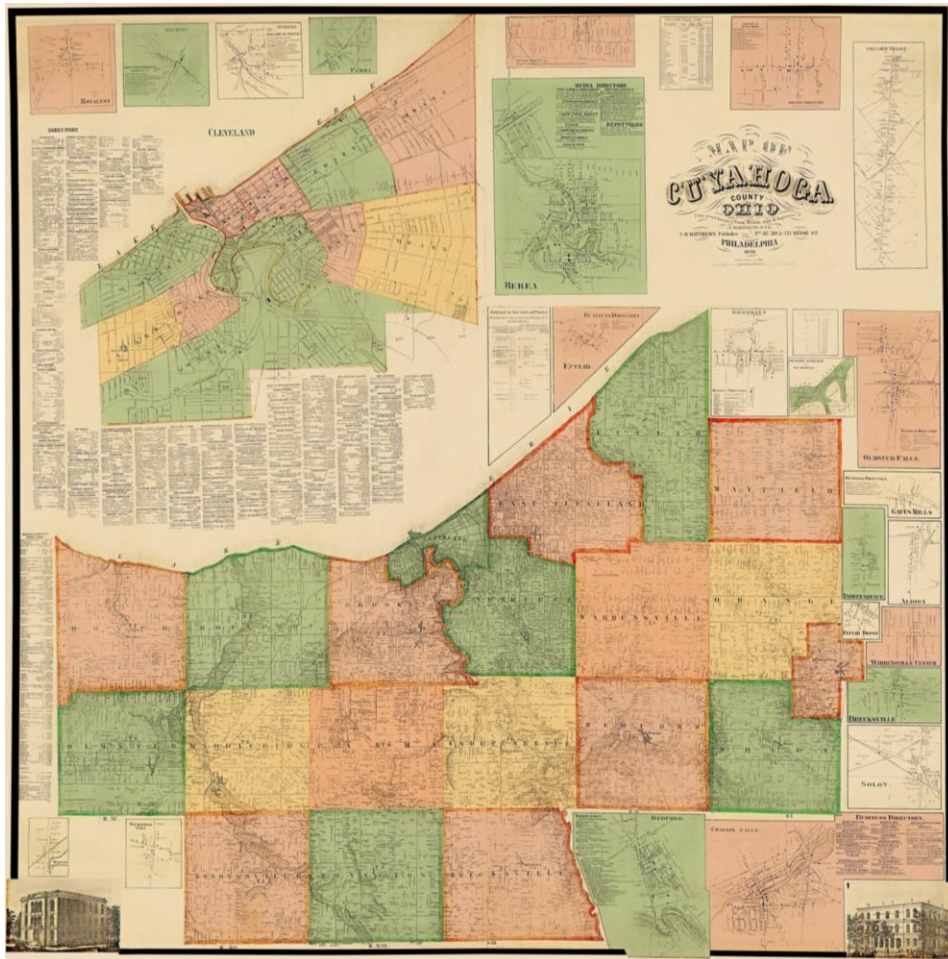
*This building at 7993 Lewis Road, photographed in June 2017, was the childhood home of Hattie Dryden, who returned to it after getting married.*

The development that made leaving Olmsted for employment easier was the arrival of railroads – in 1849 in West View and 1853 in Olmsted Falls and the middle parts of Olmsted Township east and west of the village. By 1855, another new institution lured a young Olmsted Township woman, Harriet Dryden, who went by the nickname “Hattie,” to the eastern side of Cuyahoga County. She went to Newburgh Township

(which later was incorporated into Cleveland) to work at what was known then as the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum.

The asylum's annual reports show Dryden was employed there as an attendant as early as 1855, the year the asylum opened, and she remained there until 1860. She was born on December 5, 1833, in Holden, Massachusetts, so she was probably 21 years old when she went to work at the asylum. Her parents were Captain Cyrus Perry Dryden and Harriet Amelda Howe Dryden, who brought her to Olmsted Township as a young child in 1834. They lived along the east side Seminary Road (now Lewis Road) just south of the railroad tracks in a house that still stands at 7993 Lewis Road.

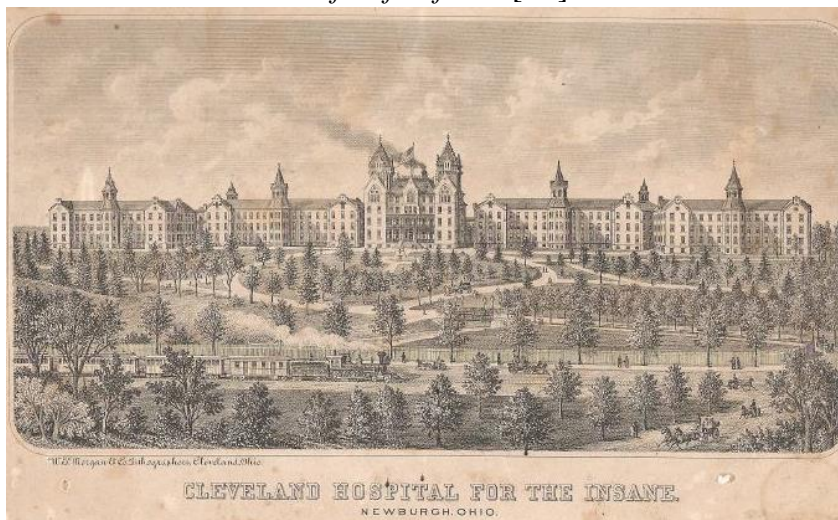
During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century into the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Drydens' house has been home to different businesses. Recently, it has been the headquarters of North Shore Residential Services, which provides services to adults with developmental disabilities at several facilities in the area.



*This 1858 map of Cuyahoga County shows Olmsted Township in green at the lower left. Newburgh Township is the one near the center just southeast of Cleveland, which was much smaller then. They both are also colored green. Most of Newburgh Township became part of Cleveland in 1873.*

According to the asylum's 1860 report, Dryden and other female attendants earned \$10.00 per month. A few others, including their female supervisor, were paid \$13.00 per month. However, male attendants were paid from \$18.00 to \$22.00 per month, and their supervisor was paid \$25.00. They apparently worked hard for their money. This is how the annual report described the jobs of attendants:

*Attendants are expected to devote their whole time to the Asylum, in the performance of the duties required of them by the officers. No attendant will be permitted to leave the Asylum on business, without express permission from the superintendent. They must treat all patients with kindness, set them a good example in all their intercourse with them; address them in a gentle tone of voice, never upbraid them, nor use harsh or abrasive language; answer all civil questions in a proper and becoming manner; grant all reasonable requests; keep cool under every provocation; never scold, threaten, nor dictate, as one exercising authority, and under no circumstances whatever, no matter how great the provocation or abuse, use violent hands or strike a single blow, except in the clearest case of self-defence [sic].*



*This illustration seems to show the asylum in Newburgh Township before a fire destroyed much of it in 1872 and forced it to be rebuilt.*

That wasn't all. Here is more from the description of the requirements for the attendants:

*Each attendant will be held responsible for every patient under his or her care, and must be prepared at any moment to account for and tell where any such patient can be found. They must pay particular attention to the doors of the wards and of the rooms, see that they are all carefully locked and secured at bedtime, and that only such lights are kept burning during the night as permitted by the Superintendent. They must see that the patients have retired to their beds at the ringing of the evening bell, and all their clothing taken out and placed at their doors in the main hall, and everything removed with which they might commit violence upon*



*themselves. They shall in no case retire to their own rooms for the night till the patients are all in bed.*

Although the attendants couldn't count on getting to bed early, they knew they would have to get up early. Here is more of the description of their jobs:

*The attendants will rise in the morning at the ringing of the bell, and see that the patients committed to their care are washed, have their hair combed, and are properly dressed before breakfast. They will see, during the day, that the patients are neat and tidy, adjust their clothes whenever disordered, change them when necessary, avoid all filth, and observe perfect cleanliness in their entire apparel.*

The asylum's 1860 report said it had 784 patients during its first six years: "Of these, three hundred and forty-eight have been discharged as recovered; sixty-four as improved; two hundred and one as unimproved; thirty-one deceased; four not insane; and one non-resident – in all six hundred and forty-nine." The report explained that some individuals had been committed to the asylum more than once, which seems to be why the total number of cases was higher than the total number of patients.

*This Cleveland Press photo of the main building at the asylum was taken on December 28, 1921. It shows how the structure was rebuilt almost half a century earlier after the destructive fire of 1872. The photo is courtesy of the Special Collections of the Michael Schwartz Library at Cleveland State University.*



At the time of the 1860 report, 115 patients were in the facility. Among their occupations, 45 were listed as housewives, 25 as farmers, 10 as servant-girls and 10 as having no employment. The occupations of the others included mechanic, day laborer, physician, shoemaker, clergyman, merchant, manufacturer, tailor, miner, bookbinder, student and clerk.

Those 115 individuals included 62 women and 53 men. The most common probable cause for their mental conditions was ill health for 61 of them, followed by unknown for 19, domestic trouble for 16, intemperance for seven, masturbation for four,

fright for three, religious excitement for two, disappointment for two, and opium eating for one.

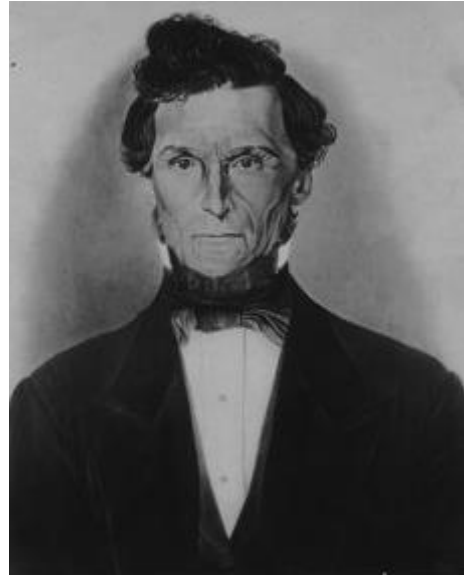
They were listed as having six different forms of insanity: 68 with mania, 39 with melancholia, three with acute dementia, two with senile dementia, two with mania a potu (madness from drinking alcohol), and one with paralysis. Most of them were between the ages of 20 and 50, while 12 were younger than 20 and four were between the ages of 70 and 80.

The asylum was built on land along Turney Road donated by the family of James Garfield, who later became a Civil War general, served nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and then became the 20<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. It later acquired other names, including the Northern Ohio Asylum for the Insane and Cleveland State Hospital. After fire destroyed much of the structure in 1872, a new asylym was built. The facility was torn down in 1977.

It is not known why Hattie Dryden went to work at the asylum, but there were few options for employment for young, unmarried women in those days, so working as an attendant at the institution might have been the best option she saw at the time. It's also not recorded why she left the asylum. The 1860 Census listed her as a resident of Newburgh Township, so she was still working for the asylum then. But by 1861, the year the Civil War began, she was back in Olmsted. She was listed as the secretary of the Olmsted Falls branch of the Ladies' Aid Society of Cleveland, which changed its name to the Soldiers' Aid Society of Northern Ohio late in 1861. That organization made bandages and gathered blankets and other items to send to Union soldiers. (For more about that organization, see Issue 97 of *Olmsted 200* from June 2021.)

Like Hattie Dryden, Augustus P. Knowlton came to Olmsted Township as a child, and like her, he worked for a while at the asylum. He was born in 1831 in Mina in Chautauqua County in upstate New York as the son of Dr. William Knowlton and Charlotte Haskell Knowlton. When they moved to Olmsted Township in 1838, Dr. Knowlton presumably became the first physician to reside in Olmsted.

In his 1966 book on Olmsted history, Walter Holzworth wondered about that move: "It would be interesting to know why the wilderness of Olmsted Township appealed to the skilled and well known doctor of New York state. His wife's family were prominent, and her brother was a member of Congress from the Genessee [*sic*] district of New York."



*Dr. William Knowlton already was a physician in upstate New York before he moved with his family to Olmsted Township in 1838.*



*This drawing of A.P. Knowlton was included in Crisfield Johnson's Cuyahoga County history in 1879.*

According to Holzworth, the Knowltons lived in Olmsted Township “for several years” before moving to Brunswick. However, that might be an error because other records associate him and other members of his family with Brecksville, not Brunswick. (He was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey, so that might have been why Holzworth associated him with Brunswick, Ohio.) Knowlton established a practice at Brecksville in which he rode on horseback to serve many of his patients. He was there when he died on June 7, 1855.

Knowlton's son, Augustus, would have been 23 or 24 years old when his father died. Both he and his younger brother, also named William, followed in their father's footsteps by becoming physicians, and both achieved some prominence in Cuyahoga County. Crisfield Johnson, in his *History of Cuyahoga County, Ohio*, published in 1879, wrote about A.P. Knowlton:

*Somewhat favored by circumstances beyond the common lot of the youth of his time, young Knowlton received the valuable benefits of a thorough educational course at an academy of high repute, and following the bent of his inclination entered the Cleveland Medical College, where he was graduated in 1857. Earnest in his chosen calling, and zealous in urging his skill forward to a state of high development, he became widely known as a capable physician and surgeon, and pursuing his practice in various parts of the State, located eventually and permanently in Berea, where he now resides.*

Although A.P. Knowlton might have ended up in Berea by 1879, that was only after he returned to Olmsted, but more about that later. Another paragraph from Johnson adds this relevant part of Knowlton's biography:

*To his duties as family physician he has frequently added his services in broader capacities, incidental to which it may be observed that he was at one period assistant physician at the Northern Ohio Lunatic Asylum, and has for some time been an active and honored member of the Cuyahoga Medical Society and of the Ohio State Medical Association.*

That doesn't indicate when he served at the asylum. Perhaps he was there as a young physician when Hattie Dryden worked as an attendant at the asylum. However, if they weren't there at the same time, they at least would have had service at the asylum in common when their paths crossed later.



*Augusta Snow became the first wife  
Dr. A.P. Knowlton.*

During the Civil War, Knowlton served with an army medical corps attached to the Sixth Ohio Cavalry until July 1863. Johnson wrote that Knowlton became “seriously disabled by a sunstroke at the battle of Gettysburg,” which occurred July 1-3, 1863, so he was forced to leave the service. Sunstroke might seem minor when compared to the loss of limbs and other injuries soldiers suffered in the Civil War, but it seemed to have affected Knowlton for the rest of his life.

Shortly after he returned from the war, A.P. Knowlton married Augusta Snow of Brecksville. The marriage did not last long because she died on December 14, 1864, when she was 33 years old. (Thus, she was about the same age as Knowlton, and they were Augustus and Augusta Knowlton as a married couple.)

On January 13, 1868, Knowlton married for a second time. This time, his bride was Hattie Dryden. She was 34 years old then. He was about two years older. In 1870, they bought the Dryden homestead, her childhood home, along Seminary Road in Olmsted. While there, they had two children. Their daughter, Constance, was born on August 30, 1872. Their son, Louis, was born on January 30, 1876.

Like his father, grandfather and uncle, Louis Knowlton became a physician. He established his practice in Berea in 1901 and played a role in establishing what became Southwest General Hospital. Holzworth wrote that Louis Knowlton’s memories from boyhood included “the shrill blast of the train whistles as the trains passed within rods” of the family’s home.

Constance Knowlton married John Paul Baldwin in September 1897. Baldwin was the grandson of John Baldwin, who had started the quarrying industry in Berea and helped found Baldwin University, which merged with German Wallace College to become Baldwin-Wallace College, now Baldwin-Wallace University. Constance and John Paul Baldwin spent their winters at his grandfather’s plantation at Baldwin, Louisiana.

In 1876, A.P. Knowlton moved his office to Berea, but, according to Holzworth, he continued to reside in Olmsted for several years. Eventually, the family moved to Berea.

It is a fact that both Hattie Dryden and Dr. A.P. Knowlton worked at the asylum in Newburgh Township. It's not known whether they were there at the same time or whether their service there played any role in kindling the romance that led to their marriage. But their service at the asylum in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wasn't their last connection to the asylum.

*This aerial photo from 1951, when the asylum was known as Cleveland State Hospital, shows how the institution was laid out. It would have looked much like this in the late 1880s, when Dr. A.P. Knowlton returned as a resident to the place where he – and his wife – had worked decades earlier. Photo courtesy of Special Collections of Cleveland State University's Michael Schwartz Library.*



The *Berea Advertiser* on January 18, 1889, published an obituary for Dr. Knowlton that said he had died at what then was called the Northern Ohio Asylum for the Insane in Newburgh on Monday, January 14. The remains were brought to Berea that Wednesday evening. The funeral service was held at the family residence on North Seminary Street in Berea at one o'clock that Thursday afternoon.

The second paragraph of that obituary said:

*The deceased was formerly one of the leading physicians and surgeons of Northern Ohio and one of the most successful practitioners in this section. He was a veteran of the Army of the Potomac, and while on the field of battle received a sunstroke, from the effects of which he never recovered. It is to this cause that is attributed by many his lamentable and strange career during the past five years. His friends never lost faith in him. For a year or two he has spent most of his time at the asylum where he received the best of care, and it is stated that during the past few months he has had the freedom of the building and grounds and took great delight in entertaining those about him. Charity covers a multitude of sins and let his name be revered for the good he has done, and his faults forgotten.*

Much information now lost to the memories of people long gone seems to have been left between the lines of that paragraph.



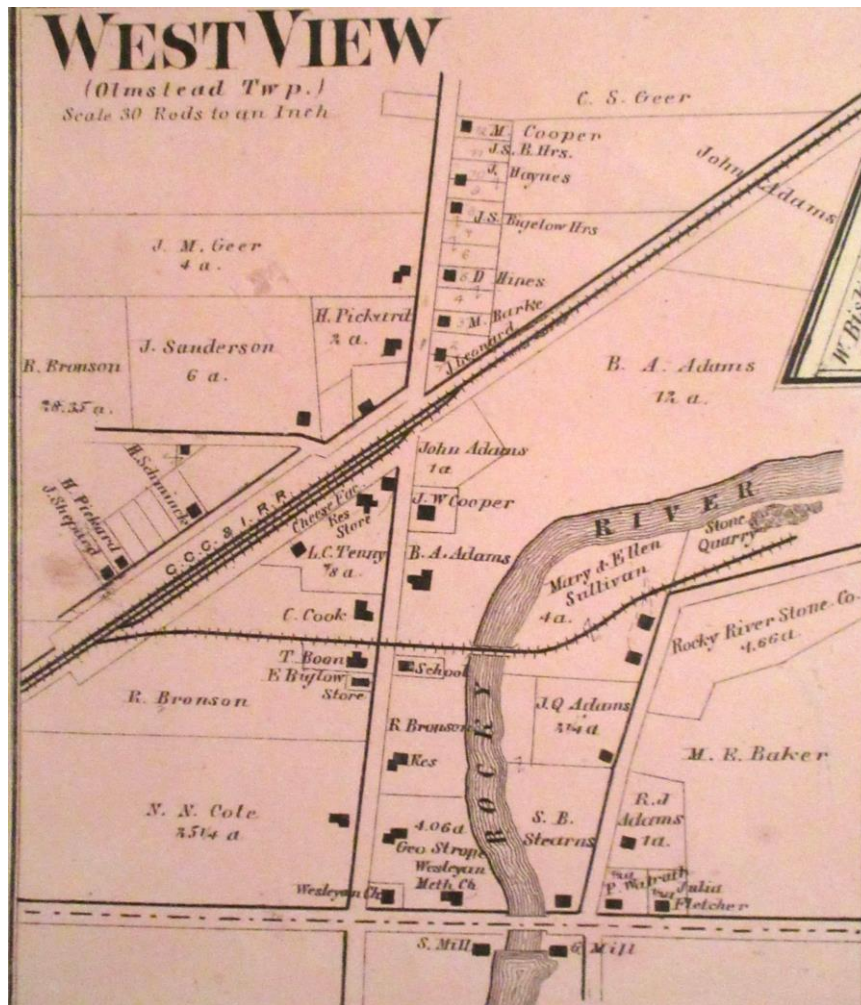
The obituary noted that Knowlton left a widow, a son and a daughter “who have the sympathy of a large circle of friends.” Old army comrades bore his remains when they were taken to the vault at Chestnut Grove Cemetery (Turkeyfoot) in Olmsted.

Harriet Dryden Knowlton died on February 1, 1909, at age 75 in Berea. She also was buried at Chestnut Grove.

*David Kennedy uncovered the connections of Olmsted’s Hattie Dryden and A.P. Knowlton to the asylum in Newburgh Township. He did much of the research for this story.*

## West View 150 Years Ago Was Proud, Busy and Cold

The West View column in the February 7, 1873, edition of Berea’s *Grindstone City Advertiser* gives an interesting glimpse into life in the southeastern corner of Olmsted Township 150 years ago, especially as seen from the perspective of 2023.



*This section of an 1874 map shows the locations of the residences and businesses of some of the people mentioned in the West View column of the Grindstone City Advertiser for February 7, 1873. In particular, note L.C. Tanney’s property near the center of the map and next to the railroad is labeled as including a cheese factory, residence and store. Also note the stone quarry, just below the river on the right side of the map, and its railroad spur.*

One item was a reaction to bragging by a columnist from Butternut Ridge about the number of residents there of advanced ages. The West View correspondent wrote:

*We think this place can compare ages with the Ridge, or any other highly favored locality, according to the number of its inhabitants. Within a little more than one-fourth of a mile of the station are 13 persons over 70 years old as follows: Mrs. Hickox, Rev. R.B. Gardner, Mrs. Hurley, Mr. and Mrs. Tanney, Mrs. Sprague, Mr. and Mrs. John Adams, Rev. Cook and wife, Mrs. Bronson, Mrs. Ransom Adams and Mr. Lucius Adams.*

Obviously, living at least seven decades was unusual enough to be noteworthy back then. Today, the average life expectancy for an Ohioan, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is 75.3 years. Living a century is more notable these days, and it is becoming more common. According to a *U.S. News and World Report* story by Madeline Fitzgerald on July 15, 2022, the United States had about 29 centenarians per 100,000 people – a total of 97,104 people over age 100. That was the 11<sup>th</sup> best rate in the world.

Two other items in that February 7, 1873, newspaper column were about business developments in West View:

- *CHEESE FACTORY – Messers. Tanney & Redfern contemplate raising the store building and use [sic] the basement for a cheese factory. They will ship enough milk to Cleveland to supply their customers there, for which they can afford to pay a little higher price, and the remainder they will make into cheese. Success to them.*
- *NEW QUARRY – A company has been organized and chartered having a capital basis of \$60,000.00 to open a quarry on the side of the one begun by White & McAllen.*

*The company have been prospecting for a side track from this station across the river to their quarry, but owing to the exorbitant price demanded for the right of way by two of the land owners, it is thought they will lay a track on the other side of the river, and make Berea their shipping point.*

As the first item indicates, cheese-making was a common pursuit among certain residents throughout Olmsted Township and Olmsted Falls. Items about local cheese-making ventures appeared from time to time in *Advertiser* columns from Butternut Ridge, Olmsted Falls and West View. In his 1966 book on Olmsted history, Walter Holzworth wrote that L.C. Tanney, who operated a general store, and his partner, Mr. Redfern (no first name given), operated a cheese factory equipped to handle the output of 400 cows in the 1870s. Thus, they apparently had the success the West View columnist wished for them.

To ship milk to Cleveland, they must have taken advantage of the Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Indianapolis Railway. The West View depot was located

across the tracks from Tanney's store. More about the railroads that served Olmsted can be found in Issues 86 through 91 of *Olmsted 200* from July through December 2020.

The announcement of a new quarry was also a sign of the times. The quarrying of Berea sandstone, which began in Berea in the 1830s, expanded to Olmsted Falls, West View and Columbia Township in the 1870s, when several companies started operations. In the mid-1880s, the Cleveland Stone Company acquired most of the local quarries and operated them into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. More about Olmsted's sandstone quarries can be found in Issues 80 through 85 of *Olmsted 200* from January through June 2020.

One other item from that 1873 West View column also is notable, especially these days when people around the world are worried about climate change and global warming: "DURING the extreme cold weather of last week, the mercury registered 31 degrees below zero. This thermometer was hung on a tree in the yard. Others hanging on the sides of houses in the vicinity noted 28 degrees below."

That certainly would have been a remarkable cold snap if the local thermometers were accurate, but perhaps it was possible. Nearby in Cleveland, the temperature on January 29, 1873, was recorded as 17 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The coldest temperature ever recorded in Ohio was 39 degrees below zero at Milligan in Perry County on February 10, 1899.

## Thomas Brown's Gravestone Was Smaller than Shown

Many readers seemed to enjoy the story in Issue 116 of *Olmsted 200* that established that Thomas Brown, the first mayor of Olmsted Falls and proprietor of the Grand Pacific Hotel, did not die during a robbery on the way to a Cleveland bank but instead lived a long life in Lorain County. As Julie Jackson wrote on Facebook: "Pretty cool to challenge an old story & find out the truth!"



*This is Thomas Brown's headstone at Elyria's Ridgelawn Cemetery. Photo courtesy of Jim Boddy.*

However, that story needs a correction for the truth to be told. Jim Boddy, who helped David Kennedy (who did most of the research for that story) and *Olmsted 200* find the graves of Thomas Brown and his family members at Ridgelawn Cemetery in Elyria, recently pointed out that the headstone shown in the story was that of Thomas Brown's daughter, Abigail, rather than that of Brown himself.

Back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a family's patriarch typically had a bigger headstone than members of his family,



but that wasn't so in this case. Abigail had the tall one with the obelisk shown in Issue 116. Thomas had a simpler stone with a curved top. The writing on the stone was well worn from exposure to the elements.



*The photo to the left shows better than the one used in last month's issue that the obelisk goes with the grave of Abigail Brown, not her father. The photo above shows Thomas Brown's headstone on the left and Philena Brown's on the right after Jim Boddy and David Kennedy uncovered it. Photos courtesy of Jim Boddy.*

Kennedy also said he and Boddy couldn't find the headstone for Philena, Brown's second wife, when they first looked for it at the cemetery.

"I brought along a probe on another trip there and on the first stab at the ground I hit something about one inch down," he wrote in an email. "We hand dug it up and it was his wife's! Laying face down for maybe a 100 years or so must have protected the info on it."

*Thanks go to both David Kennedy and Jim Boddy for setting the record straight about Thomas Brown and his family members.*

## **Reader Tells Tale of Private Pool from Decades Ago**

Several people wrote that they enjoyed the story in Issue 116 of *Olmsted 200* about the homes of the Geist and Bustard families along River Road near the Shady Chalet, which was the subject of a story in Issue 115. Among them was Denny Shirer who was especially interested in what last month's story said about the house on the other side of the road that was owned by former Olmsted Falls Mayor Glen Leslie and his family.

"In 1967 their swimming pool was in a poor state and people had been discarding their trash in it," Shirer wrote on Facebook. "After talking to Glen, he allowed Lorinda



Kamer and I to use the pool for the summer if we cleaned it up and got rid of all the trash. Thus began a months-long project draining the pool of sludge, tires, old furniture and dead fish which were among some of the trash we found. We sealed the cracks, painted it and fixed the pump house and cut down all the weeds. The Fire Dept. came and ran a hose from the nearby hydrant to fill the pool. Glen supplied all the chemicals and we and our friends enjoyed the pool for the rest of the summer. Glen was a good guy and a good mayor. I miss those days.”

## Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include more stories about the history of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township.

If you know of other people who would like to receive *Olmsted 200* by email, please feel free to forward it to them. They can get on the distribution list by sending a request to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com). *Olmsted 200* has readers in several states beyond Ohio, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin, and as well as overseas in the Netherlands, Germany and Japan.

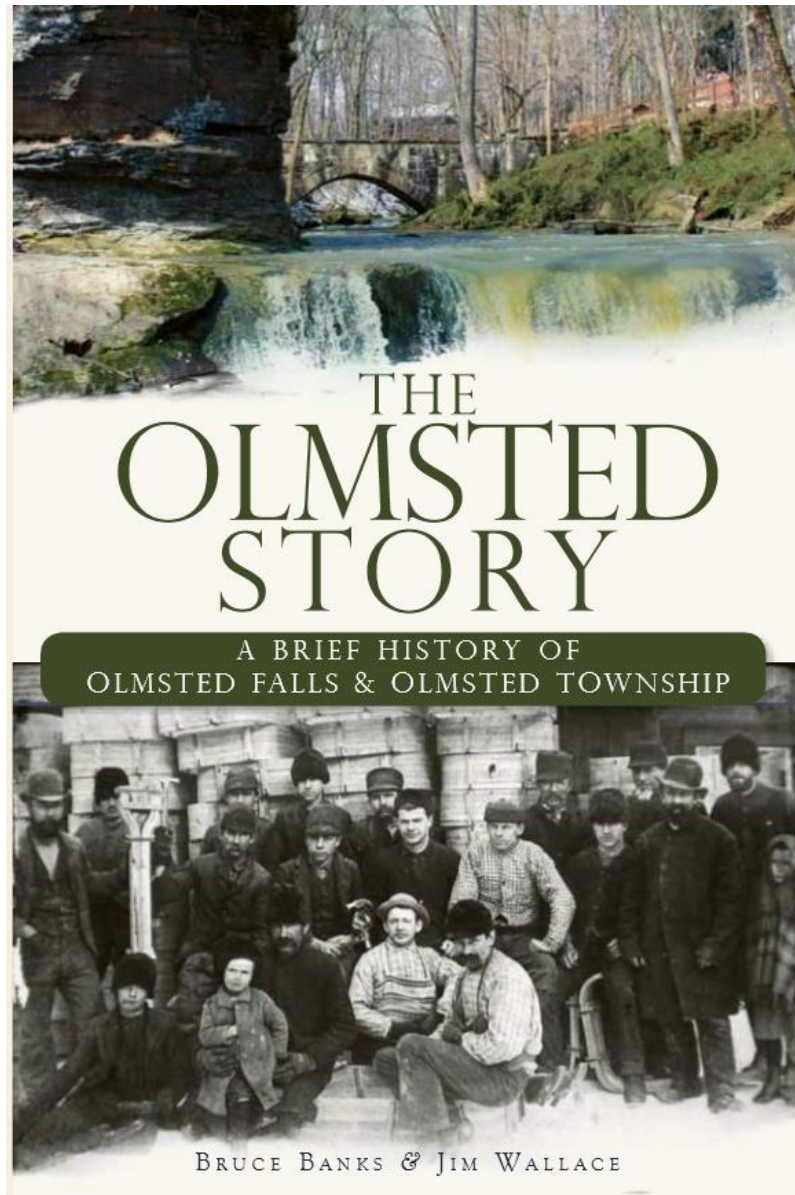
Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted’s history that you would like to have pulled out of *Olmsted 200*’s extensive archives. Or perhaps you have information or photos about the community’s history that you would like to share.

If you have missed any of the past issues of *Olmsted 200* or want to share them with someone else, all of them can be found on Olmsted Township’s website. Go to <http://olmstedtownship.org/newsletters/>. A list of *Olmsted 200* issues is on the right side. Click on the number of the issue you want to read. All of the issues of *Olmsted 200* also are available on the website of the City of Olmsted Falls. Find them at: [http://www.olmstedfalls.org/olmsted\\_falls\\_history/index.php](http://www.olmstedfalls.org/olmsted_falls_history/index.php). A link to *Olmsted 200* can be found on the left side of the page.

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Thanks go to Mary Louise King for help in proofreading and editing many issues. Thanks also go to David Kennedy for frequently contributing research and insight for some stories. Written contributions and photos, as well as comments and questions about items in this newsletter, will be considered for publication. Send any correspondence by email to: [wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com).

*Olmsted 200* is written, researched and edited by Jim Wallace, who is solely responsible for its content. He is co-author (with Bruce Banks) of ***The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township***, published in 2010 by The History Press of Charleston, S.C. ***The Olmsted Story*** is available at Angelina’s Pizza in

*Olmsted Falls and the Berea Historical Society's Mahler Museum & History Center and through online booksellers.*



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