



Olmsted 200

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

Issue 118

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Bradford Family Left Lasting Legacies

Stroll around the old Chestnut Grove Cemetery, also known as Turkeyfoot, and you won't have much trouble finding a section of gravestones bearing the name Bradford. The Bradfords not only were one of the most prominent families in the early decades of Olmsted Township and Olmsted Falls, but they also left some lasting reminders of their lives and work.



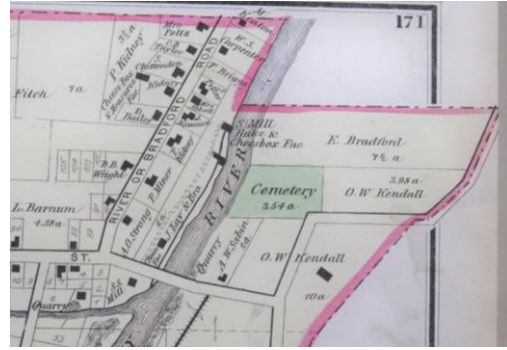
These gravestones (left to right) for Eastman, Philo and Lester Bradford and their wives occupy a section of the old Chestnut Grove Cemetery (Turkeyfoot) where the Bradford family is prominent, as the Bradfords were in Olmsted life during much of the 19th century.

It's appropriate that so many Bradfords were buried at Turkeyfoot. The spot reportedly got the name Turkeyfoot because turkeys owned by the Bradfords liked to

roost there. Eastman Bradford owned the land just north of the cemetery.

One of the oldest roads in Olmsted Falls bore the Bradford name for a while in the 19th century. But sometime in the latter half of the century, Bradford Road became known as River Street. In the 20th century, it was renamed River Road.

Despite that, the Bradfords left their marks on Olmsted through more than just their gravestones. Because of the Bradfords, many of the buildings in Olmsted Falls in the middle of the 1800s were reddish brown, either because of paint made by the Bradfords or bricks they made – and a few of them are still colored that way today. That doesn't mean the painted buildings haven't been repainted since the mid-1800s, but the current colors seem to maintain the historical tradition.



This 1874 Olmsted Falls map shows a time when it wasn't certain whether River or Bradford would be the name of what's now River Road. The map also shows Eastman Bradford's land on the east side of Rocky River.



This 2015 photo shows the building at 7990-7994 Columbia Road when Master Cleaners and the Olde Wine Cellar still were located there. Its paint is the color of that made by the Bradford brothers in the 1800s.

house at 7486 River Road and the Peltz family can be found in Issue 32 of *Olmsted 200* from January 2016.)

Buildings that still have the reddish-brown paint color include the one where Grand Pacific Junction's Millstone Mercantile is located at 7990 Columbia Road, as well as Clint Williams Legacy Properties at 7994 Columbia Road. It once housed the Fenderbosch Saloon and Pool Hall. (More information about that and Olmsted's other saloons can be found in a series of stories in Issues 9, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 of *Olmsted 200* from February 2014 through August 2014.) Another is the house at 7486 River Road that once was home to Florian and Magdalene Peltz and their sons, including Joseph Peltz who went on to operate stores in downtown Olmsted Falls. One of those stores was the Peltz and Simmerer Hardware in the building now known as the Grand Pacific Hotel. (More on the

A big sawmill along the falls on Plum Creek between what now are Columbia Road and Main Street also was coated with the Bradfords' paint. It initially was operated by Levi and Sylvester Alcott. Tom Stokes later joined them and eventually took over the mill. Because of its reddish-brown Bradford paint, it was known as the Big Red Mill.



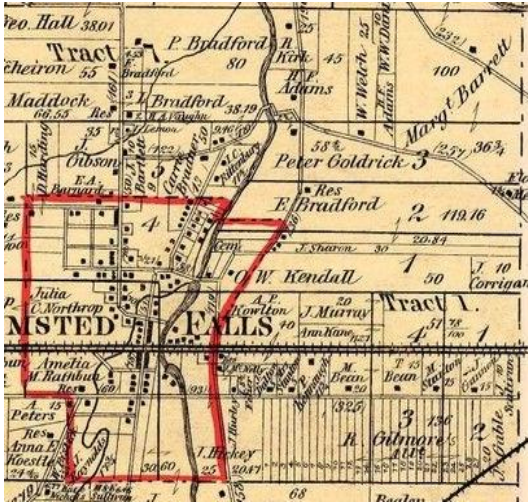
The house at 7486 River Road (left) is painted reddish-brown, a color that could go back to the mid-1800s, when the Bradford brothers made paint that color from shale they found along Minnie Creek. The mill that once operated along the Plum Creek falls was called the Big Red Mill because it had Bradford paint on it, as seen in this painting (right) created by Kinley Shogren.

Perhaps the history of Bradford paint would have been lost if not for an item that appeared in the August 2, 1882, Olmsted Falls column in the *Berea Advertiser*:

Fragments of an old mill and water wheel are left in a ravine on the farm now owned and occupied by Lester Bradford. The locality is quite picturesque, the old creek bed being all covered over with thick foliage. No water was to be seen at all. To our interrogations, Mr. Bradford said: "This spot was covered with a good stream of water 35 years ago. This old wheel was used in the paint mill, built 34 years ago by my brothers, Philo, Myron and myself. We manufactured paint for two and a half years, taking it from the bank in the crude form. The creek furnished power for two sawmills and a paint mill. The sawmills were owned by John Adams and Nelson Hoadley. I operated one mill 10 years, myself. The land about here was all swamp at that time, water standing on it for months, thus giving the supply to the mills. It has since been cultivated and drained so that the water disappears almost as fast as it falls. The supply of water was far superior to that of Rocky river. My two brothers, Myron and Hiram died of consumption, caused by working in the paint mill. [I] Am 63 years old.

That paragraph contains at least two factual issues. One is the name of one of Lester's brothers. Walter Holzworth wrote in his 1966 book of Olmsted history that the brother was named Meriam rather than Myron. Also, the name of Nelson Hoadley was actually Lemuel Hoadley, who built many mills in Olmsted and other communities in the region early in the 19th century.

The *Advertiser* story didn't identify the creek along which the Bradfords made their paint, but it was Minnie Creek, which flows under Columbia Road near where All Saints Lutheran Church now is located. Lester and Philo both owned land north of Olmsted Falls that Minnie Creek flowed through. Their brother, Eastman, owned other land at the northeastern corner of the village.



This 1876 Olmsted Township map shows Philo and Lester Bradford had land north of Olmsted Falls, while Eastman had land northeast of the village with a sliver inside the village border.

In her 1964 book, *Over the Years in Olmsted*, Bernice Offenberg wrote:

The paint factory on Minnie Creek was back of what now is 7194 Gans' House on Columbia Road, on the Monkosky Farm. It had granite mill stones which were probably brought from the east by pioneers, as there is no granite in this vicinity. The mill stones have washed down the creek to the bank of red shale from which this red brown paint was made. There are traces of a mill race here also.

Offenberg credited that information as coming from Theodore TeGrotenhuis, Jr. The TeGrotenhuis family owned the big house at the northeast corner of Columbia Road and Nobottom Road (now owned by Bill and Marty Richner) just south of Minnie Creek.

Further, Offenberg wrote: "Peter Kidney's house on River Road had this red brown paint on it as late as 1922. Several other old buildings were painted with this same kind of paint. This seemed to be the only color that they made."

Another item in the Olmsted column in the September 10, 1874, edition of the *Advertiser*, dates the beginning of the Bradfords' brick-making activities: "BRADFORD & CRITTENDON are preparing a place for making brick and tile about one-half mile north of the village. Success to them."

It's not known who Crittenton was. Holzworth's extensive, 134-page book does not mention anyone by that name. However, about the brick-making enterprise, he wrote:

At one time Lester and Eastman operated a brick kiln. Edward Merriam, a writer of historical notes, mentioned that in 1851 he made bricks for several homes at the Bradford's [sic] brick yard. When Bigelow started his tile works an announcement was made that he had purchased the Bradford interest in brick making.

"Bigelow" was Ephraim Bigelow, who started a drain tile company at West View in 1880. (More on that can be found in Issue 54 of *Olmsted 200* from November 2017.)

About the Bradford brick-making operation, Holzworth also wrote that it was located just north of Chestnut Grove Cemetery, so it must have been on Eastman Bradford's land. He said it employed several men. The bricks had no holes in them.



The onetime home of saloon owner Herman Fenderbosch and his family still stands at 8008 Columbia Road with its side porch restored. The house, which was built before the Fenderbosches bought it, is made of Bradford bricks.

“Several homes in the Olmsted Township area were built of brick from this kiln,” Holzworth wrote. “One in particular, the old Fenderbosch house on Columbia Road still stands across from the Town Hall.”

That house remains there at 8008 Columbia Road. In recent years, a porch on the north side of the house was restored to its 19th century appearance. The former Town Hall now houses the Moosehead restaurant.

The patriarch of the Bradford family was Hosea, who was born in Vermont in 1773. He was a direct descendant of William Bradford, who became the second governor of Plymouth Colony. In 1806, he married Hannah Wheeler, who was born in Vermont in 1784. After moving to Canada, they moved again in 1813 to Brecksville, Ohio, and then to Bath, Ohio, in 1818. In 1820, they moved to the township that later was named Olmsted. They settled half a mile northeast of what became the Village of Olmsted Falls along a trail that later became Lewis Road.



This is Minnie Creek, as seen from Columbia Road. Farther along the creek, the Bradfords found shale for making paint.

Hosea was a shoemaker, so he operated a tannery to provide the leather he needed. He lived until age 90 in 1863. Hannah died at age 85 in 1869. They had seven children, although three of them died in childhood. They included Philo, who was born in 1807, Lester in 1809, Cynthia in 1801, Sally in 1812, Fanny in 1814, Eastman in 1816, Laura in 1818, Orin in 1820, Meriam in 1824, and Hiram in 1824.

Philo married Delight Underhill of Olmsted Township on February 3, 1834. She had been born on January 1, 1813. They bought land from Eliphet Williams of North Hampton, Massachusetts. Williams had bought a large section of township land in 1814. Philo and Delight’s house still stands at 7435 River Road. What became River Road was

just a portion of the main north-south trail along the west side of Rocky River when the Bradford family arrived in the township. Philo died at age 66 on January 14, 1875, during a smallpox epidemic. Delight died on October 27, 1886.



Philo and Delight Bradford lived in this house that still stands at 7435 River Road.

Lester, who married three times, operated an inn at one time near where Nobottom Road now meets

River Road. Holzworth wrote, “This was an advantageous location at the time when these roads crossed. River Road followed the river; its north end came out onto what is now Columbia Road in the approximate site of the care takers home in Sunset Memorial Cemetery.” Also, a bridge over Rocky River once connected the western part of



Near this spot where River Road and Nobottom Road meet, Lester Bradford once operated an inn.

Nobottom Road to the eastern part of the road, so the inn would have truly been at a crossroads location. That spot was where former Olmsted Falls Mayor Glen Leslie and his family lived in the mid-20th century. (More about the Leslies can be found in issue 116 and 117 of *Olmsted 200* from January and February 2023.) Lester was highly regarded in Olmsted and sometimes was referred to as “Uncle Lester” in the newspaper. His farm spanned 47.14 acres, according to an ad published when his son, Freeman, sold it.

Freeman sold milk in the area from his dairy farm in the 1880s, but in 1888, he rented out the farm and moved to Cleveland to work in the grocery business. That move turned out to be unfortunate, at least in one regard. In 1896, his wife, Sarah Brooks Bradford, died when the brick walls of the Kimball Building, which recently had burned out, collapsed and buried her along Cedar Avenue.

Another son of Hosea and Hannah Bradford – Eastman, who was born on June 8, 1816 – made his home with his wife, Mary, and their children along what now is Lewis Road. That land later became part of a farm operated in the mid-20th century by George Rados. Eastman Bradford lived almost 59 years. His death was reported in the April 22, 1875, edition of the *Advertiser*:

DIED on Saturday, April 17th, 1875, Mr. Eastman Bradford, aged 58 years. Mr. Bradford was one of the oldest settlers of the township of

Olmsted. He was born in Brecksville and moved with his parents to Olmsted in the year 1820 and has since resided very near the place where his parents first settled. He has been in poor health for several years, but had been able to attend to his business about his farm until within a few months before his death.

The Bradfords are long gone now, but they left signs of their existence, perhaps in the color painted on some Olmsted Falls buildings and certainly in the bricks used to build a downtown Olmsted Falls home and maybe parts of other structures in the area. But sharp-eyed hikers in David Fortier River Park also can find pieces of Bradford bricks buried in the ground along a path near where Plum Creek flows into Rocky River. It's easier sometimes than at others to spot little bits of them sticking up through the dirt.



In the left photo is the path in David Fortier River Park where bits of Bradford bricks poke out of the ground. On the right are four of the bricks dug up by Bruce Banks and placed next to a yardstick. These photos and the one below are courtesy of Bruce Banks.

The bricks might have been part of a mill that used water from the creek. Other evidence, such as grooves in the rocks, indicate a mill might have been built there, but the story of that mill has not been passed down in historical accounts.

Bruce Banks, the NASA physicist who also has researched Olmsted history and is co-author of *The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township*, once dug up four complete bricks and displayed them next to a yardstick in a photo he used for his historical talks during Olmsted Heritage Days and other occasions. Each brick is about seven inches long, three and three quarters inches wide and two inches high.



These are parts of gears and other machinery Bruce Banks uncovered near the bricks.

“The bricks are sort of hand-packed,” Banks said during an October 14, 2007, historical tour of the park. “They don’t have any holes in them.... They don’t have any holes. They just fired a rectangular brick. You’ll see a lot of those bricks in the ground,

and there's also evidence of gears and machinery and bullets and sharpening tools that were used in this sawmill that was here."

West View Churches Feuded 150 Years Ago

A newspaper item from 150 years ago indicates that West View wasn't as peaceful a little community as might have been expected. The West View column in the March 21, 1873, for *Grindstone City Advertiser* included this item:

PROTRACTED MEETING – A series of meetings are being held in the two churches of this place, which are carried on in a true Christian spirit by both denominations, under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A of Berea. The animosities and warring between the different churches, has long been a stumbling block to outsiders, and we are glad to see this spirit of intolerance gradually giving away to more kindly feelings among the different denominations. We do not refer to this locality in this remark.

At that time, West View was considered to straddle the border between Olmsted Township and Columbia Township, which also was the border between Cuyahoga County and Lorain County. (In 1927, when the Village of West View was incorporated, it was only on the Cuyahoga County side of the border.)



This undated photo shows cows being herded northward through West View along the road (now Columbia Road) with the West View Wesleyan Church in the background.

In 1873, one of West View's churches was just south of the border in Columbia Township. Walter Holzworth wrote in his 1966 Olmsted history book that a Methodist Episcopal church had been built along the Copopa-Liverpool Trail, which became East River Road. The church site was across the road from the land where the Riverside Golf Club operated during much of the 20th century.

Holzworth didn't indicate when the church was built, but he said that prominent early families in the area – the Hoadley, Adams, Geer and Bronson families – were members of the church. It was dissolved in 1896. (A search for photos turned up none.)

The other church, the West View Wesleyan Church, was just north of the border, which now is Sprague Road. The church was founded with 16 or 17 members on April 1,

1843. Holzworth wrote that it was formed because of a rift among members of the Methodist Episcopal church over the slavery issue.

“Mrs. Abbey Kelley, a noted anti-slavery advocate was arousing people in Cuyahoga and Medina County area into more than placid acceptance that slavery did exist and she found many ardent supporters in Olmsted, Strongsville and Columbia area,” he wrote. “James Geer was among them. The Methodist Episcopal Church did not condone slavery, but the governing body considered that the issue was out side the church’s sphere.”

Abby Kelley Foster was an anti-slavery lecturer from Massachusetts who was known for advocating “come-outerism.” That was the belief that abolitionists should leave churches that did not fully condemn slavery.

Whether it was her influence or not, apparently the members who wanted the Methodist Episcopal Church to take a stronger stand against slavery seceded from the church at West View and started a new one, the Wesleyan Church. In 1883, that church’s congregation was reported to number 129 members.



Abby Kelley Foster might have been influential in the split between West View churches.



This photo of the West View Wesleyan Church dates back at least to the early 1900s. This copy is courtesy of Jeffrey Stanley.

The Wesleyan Church building remains standing at the northeastern corner of Columbia Road and Sprague Road, but it might have been long gone by now. In autumn 1974, the congregation abandoned the building for a new church about a mile south of it at 11149 West River Road. That church now is New Life Wesleyan Church.

Jacqueline Kossin, an Olmsted Falls resident, bought the old church building in 1978 and operated a floral shop in it until a fire that broke out on July 21, 1981, that caused moderate damage. She then battled with three insurance companies about compensation for the fire damage.

Late in 1983, Olmsted Falls City Council adopted an ordinance to have the old church torn down because it had been in bad shape. The city even had a signed contract in December 1983 to pay \$2,350 to Harris Wrecking Company to tear the building down.

David Fortier, a city councilman who was about to become mayor, pleaded for the preservation of the building.



This photo of the former West View Wesleyan Church was taken in late March 2014.

“We don’t have enough ties today with our past,” he told the council, as reported by the *News Sun*. “Once this is torn down, it will be gone forever. I just want to make sure we’ve explored all angles.”

According to the *News Sun*, the mayor at the time, David Dunn, said one prospective purchaser had considered renovating the former church for use as a restaurant. “But they ascertained that the renovation costs would be prohibitive,” he said.

In January 1984, Kenneth Fathauer of Medina came forward with a plan to renovate the building, possibly by tearing it apart and reassembling it to restore it to its original condition, perhaps on another site. He told the *News Sun* that two restaurant operators were interested in it. It’s not clear what happened to that plan.

In March 1988, a plan emerged to move the former church to the Olmsted Historical Society’s Frostville Museum, a collection of other buildings from Olmsted (mostly North Olmsted) history in the Metroparks Rocky River Reservation. But that didn’t happen either.

Later, an antique shop operated from the building for a while.

In May 2019, Grand Pacific Junction developer Clint Williams bought the building and began fixing it up. At the time, one of his Grand Pacific Junction employees said Williams wasn’t sure what he would do with the building, but he intended to restore it and figure its use out later. Unfortunately, his death later that year halted that plan. In 2021, the building was bought from Williams’s heirs by James Ellis, according to county records. It’s not clear what the plan for the building will be.

David Kennedy, who lives in Olmsted Falls not far from the site of the old church, wrote recently that he has not seen much activity there lately.

“I’ve not seen any people there or cars parked in the driveway or behind it,” he wrote in an email. “The last two things done were the exterior painting and the new steps on the front of the building. I can’t recall if that work was done last summer or the summer before.”

The past of the old church is well known, but its future remains to be written.

Researcher Seeks to Set Record Straight

The story of John Nichols, the onetime Ohio State University football star who spent his later years in Olmsted Falls with his broadcaster wife, Judy, was told in Issue 114 of *Olmsted 200* last November, but the work goes on for David Kennedy, who provided most of the research for that story. His research turned up OSU and hall of fame records indicating that John Nichols was born in LaGrange, Illinois. Instead, he was born in LaGrange, Ohio, which is in Lorain County, not too far from Olmsted Falls.

Kennedy is trying to get the record corrected. As part of his efforts, he has dug up copies of Nichols’s draft card and 1950 Census information about him.

Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include a story about a significant bicentennial for Olmsted Township, as well as other 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. *Olmsted 200* has readers in several states beyond Ohio, including Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, 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. 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.

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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