



# *Olmsted 200*

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

Issue 134

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## **Film Shows How Students Were Bused Almost 90 Years Ago**

Students attending lessons in their classroom and playing outside the school get plenty of attention in the latter half of the 1936 film of Olmsted Falls, and so does the transportation of those students to and from the school.

Transportation had become a big task for the Olmsted Falls Local School District 20 years earlier when it opened one consolidated school in 1916 to replace five small schools around Olmsted Township and the Union Schoolhouse (which had been declared structurally unsafe in 1914) on the Village Green in Olmsted Falls. Initially, the school system transported those students who lived too far away to walk to and from the new school in horse-drawn, enclosed wooden wagons that had benches along each side. They were called “kid wagons.” The school board bought eight of them at a cost of \$170 each and paid \$45 monthly for each driver and team of horses, as well as \$1,000 for barns to store the wagons.



*Students gather around one of the school buses after its arrival at the school in 1936.*

But as automobiles became more prevalent, the school system replaced the kid wagons with farm trucks by the mid-1920s. As Walter Holzworth wrote in his 1966 book



*Happy students prepare to ride home on a bus one afternoon early in the 1936-1937 school year.*

brothers Bruce and Chester Atkinson, Elmer Cook, Herb Ingersoll, Bert Miller and Howard Wise. In 1934, the school board required all the buses to have steel bodies, so all new buses went into operation that year. Those apparently are the buses seen in the 1936 film. At that time, Chester Atkinson – known as Chet – Elmer Cook and Howard Wise were the remaining owner-operators.



*This boy carries a band instrument (just out of the frame) as he prepares to board a school bus.*

*Olmsted 200 from October 2013.)*

on Olmsted history, the trucks “were converted into a sort of motorized tent with a tarpaulin stretched over a framework and a set of steps from the rear and gate for entrance and exit. Over the years about 30 individuals at one time or other were hired to transport scholars.”

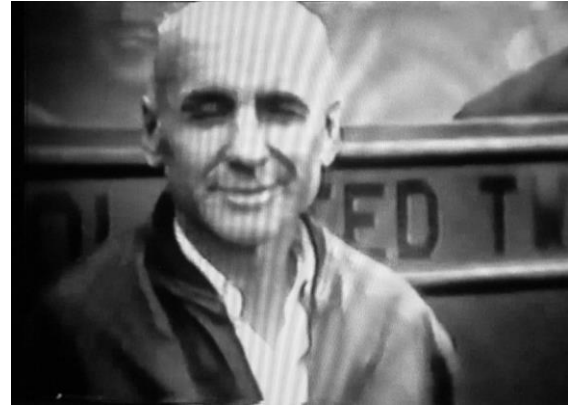
Later, school buses, which were owned by their operators, replaced the modified farm trucks. Holzworth wrote that the first owner-operators included

That remained the situation until 1940, when the school board needed a fourth bus and decided to solicit bids for one person to operate all the buses. Atkinson submitted the winning bid. Under an agreement with Cook and Wise, he bought their buses from them. Over the following decades, the Atkinson family operated a growing fleet of buses they initially kept at the Atkinson home on Columbia Road but eventually relocated to property along Schady Road. (More on the development of busing for the school system can be found in Issue 5 of

As the Harding sisters – Amelia and Clara – commented on the silent film while being recorded by Jim Boddy in 1991, they identified the three bus drivers and the school principal as the film showed students getting ready to ride the buses home in 1936. The principal was Oscar Schmied, who is shown in the film dressed dapperly in a light-colored, three-piece suit with a tie. Holzworth wrote nothing about him, but the 1937 *Senorio* shows he graduated from Cleveland West High School in 1922 and Miami University in 1928. He got a master’s degree from Western Reserve University in 1933.



*The film caught Principal Oscar Schmied, wearing a big smile and a three-piece suit, in the left shot above as he watched students board the buses for home after their day at school. On the right is one of the three school buses.*



*These are the three bus owner-operators in 1936. On the upper left is Elmer Cook. On the right is Howard Wise. On the lower left is Chet Atkinson, who owned and operated school buses until he retired in 1973. By then, the fleet had 13 buses. In 1975, the school board assumed ownership of the buses, but the Atkinson family maintained the buses for several more years. In 1981, the board bought the Schady Road bus facility from Chester Atkinson, Jr.*



*To the left is the still-operating Schady Road school bus garage established by the Atkinson family decades ago.*

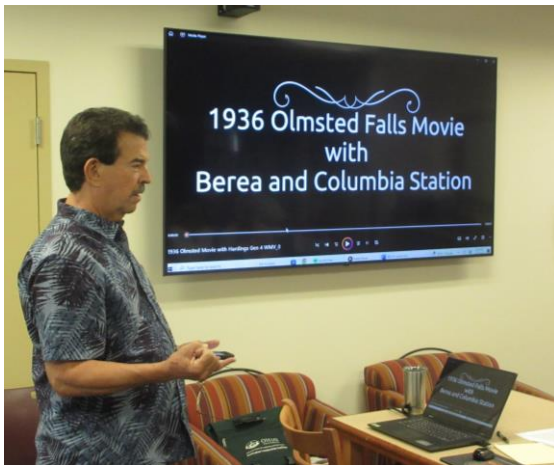
*Buses for the Olmsted Falls City School District now look like this one. It was seen dropping off students along Fitch Road on the afternoon of Monday, June 3, 2024.*



The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include more shots of what Olmsted Falls and its residents looked like in the 1936 film. Among them will be scenes of a high school football practice.

## Scores of People Attend Showings of 1936 Film

Several dozen people took advantage of the opportunity to view the 1936 film of Olmsted Falls (which also included brief scenes in Berea and Columbia Station) with the soundtrack newly added by Jim Boddy at its first two public showings in early June at the



*This is Jim Boddy as he presented the 1936 film on Sunday, June 2, at the library in Olmsted Falls.*

Olmsted Falls Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library. The first showing attracted 31 people on the afternoon of Sunday, June 2, while 40 attended the second showing on the evening of Monday, June 3.

Among those who attended the first showing was Ross Bassett, who has been active in the West Park Historical Society for many years and has taken much interest in the history of the communities of western Cuyahoga County in general. He recounted how he had first seen the film decades ago when the late Dr. Bill Mahoney, a one-time Olmsted Falls mayor, showed it at a pancake breakfast at Olmsted Falls High

School while playing ragtime music.

While everyone present seemed grateful to have an opportunity to see what the people and places around Olmsted Falls looked like in 1936, it was clear that the filmmaker was far from a professional at his craft.

“The person filming seemed to be on a mission to capture as many faces as possible,” Bassett said in a follow-up email with comments that were much the same as those he made at the Sunday afternoon showing. “That has a great deal of value up until



the time almost all these people have passed. Now that they are gone, not so much, so that was just a little disappointing. On the positive side, you were still looking back at some actual film of local history which we both know is pretty rare. I was also very impressed with the sound that Jim added. That took a lot of work and was a big improvement over just playing ragtime. But if that same film were made today, I would hope for many more street scenes with buildings. People come and go but much of that remains for many decades.”



After seeing the film, some of those in the audience shared some of their memories of Olmsted people and places of the past. Several of those recollections will appear in future issues of *Olmsted 200*.

*Ross Bassett offered his thoughts about the 1936 film at the June 2 showing.*



*On the left are some of the 31 people who attended the June 2 showing of the 1936 film. On the right are some of the 40 people who attended the June 3 showing at the library.*

A few people who attended the Best of Olmsted event put on by the Kiwanis Club and the Olmsted Community Center that same weekend on Saturday, June 1, also shared with *Olmsted 200* some memories about Olmsted history. One of them was Tom Kaskey, who added to the story about the 1936 film in Issue 133 of *Olmsted 200* from June. That story showed a photo of longtime teacher Doris Goodnight, as well as several photos of her students in 1936. Kaskey recalled that Goodnight was a member of a local card club that also included his mother-in-law, Lola Kriegmont, who lived on Brookside Drive, as well as Hazel Hoftzyer and Amelia and Clara Harding.

Kaskey said the club met monthly to play games like Pinochle and would rotate the meeting place among the members' homes.

“And it was a great tradition,” he said. “It went on and on and on. They looked forward to it so much. That was their entertainment.”

The name of the club was the Women of Today, but the members referred to it as the “AN Club,” Kaskey said. He said he asked his mother-in-law what “AN” stood for.



*During the Best of Olmsted event on June 1 at the Olmsted Community Center, Tom Kaskey shared some memories of Olmsted's past.*

"And she said, 'The Women of Today,'" he said. "I said, 'Women of Today? How do you get AN out of the Women of Today?' No explanation. Crickets on the other end."

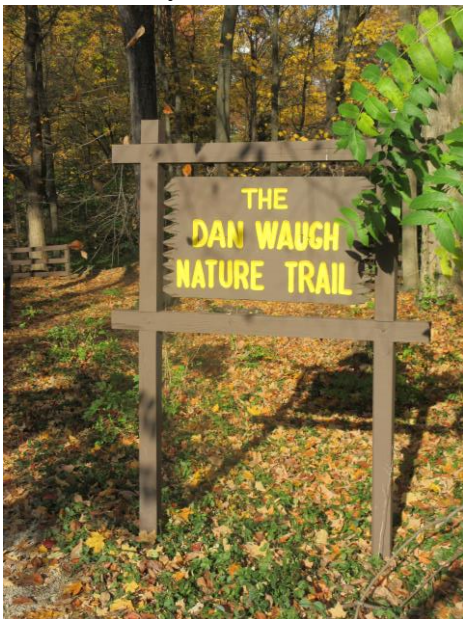
Kaskey said his mother-in-law, Lola Kriegmont, also participated with her mother and others in a quilting group, called the Dorcus Club, at the Olmsted Community Church.

Some people might recall that Kaskey served for a few years as the town crier for Olmsted Heritage Days before Jim Boddy took over for many years. Kaskey's son, Jake, was the festival's first town crier, but when he went to college, Tom Kaskey took his place with his wife as his escort.

"They made fun [of us] because I was the town crier, and she was the 'whiner,' which she didn't appreciate," Kaskey said.

## **Olmsted's Nature Rambler Was Born 13 Decades Ago**

No one could have known 130 years ago this month that a boy born on July 20, 1894, in Trenton Falls, New York, would go on to play such an influential role hundreds of miles away in Olmsted Falls that his name is still commemorated today – 99 years



*The Dan Waugh Nature Trail keeps his name visible three decades after his death.*

after he moved to the community and 33 years after his death. That individual was Dan Waugh. He was the son of the Rev. Daniel Waugh, an Episcopalian minister with pastorates in several upstate New York communities, and Maude Wood Waugh.

Many people have seen the sign behind the parking lot along Main Street (where the local library was located until 2013) that designates a path through David Fortier River Park as the Dan Waugh Nature Trail. Younger Olmsted residents and newcomers to the community likely wonder who Dan Waugh was and why the trail bears his name. But it's no mystery to those who spent decades reading the old *Berea News*, later the *News Sun*, in which he explored his love of nature in a weekly column, "Nature Rambles." However, Waugh did much more than that in his long life.

His early adult years were spent in military service, according to Walter Holzworth in his 1966

book of Olmsted history. By 1916, the year he turned 22, Waugh was a member of the First New York Cavalry when it was federalized and sent to join the U.S. Army in its pursuit of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa whose troop had attacked the border town of Columbus, New Mexico. After Waugh left the cavalry, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines and received three months of training at Parris Island, South Carolina. The Marines then sent him to their base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to train as a scout sniper. But while he was there, he became ill, so he was sent to Quantico, Virginia, to recuperate.

While he was in the hospital, Waugh benefited from donations of magazines and books from many people. He wrote to thank one of the donors – Miss Helen Droege of Cleveland – whose name was on one of those Magazines, and she responded.

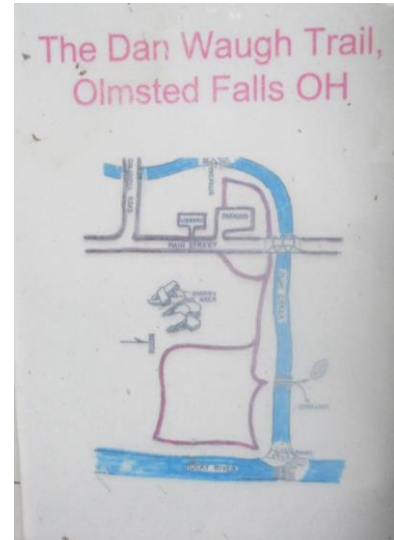
Waugh recovered at Quantico, but when the Marines sent him overseas, he became ill again. That led to his disability discharge from the service. The federal government sent him to Syracuse, New York, to resume his engineering studies. When he was sent to Buffalo, New York, for a physical exam, he called Helen Droege in Cleveland and arranged to meet her in the lobby of the Amsterdam Hotel. Their meeting went so well that they later married in Watertown, New York, with Waugh's father performing the ceremony. The couple eventually had two sons, Robert and Donald.

Waugh received his education at the Suffield School in Suffield, Connecticut, Union College in Schenectady, New York, and Syracuse University. He worked briefly as a newspaper reporter before he made a career as a book buyer. He first was a book dealer in Syracuse and then Erie, Pennsylvania, and then Lakewood, Ohio. Later, he opened a bookshop in Berea.

In 1925, the Waughs moved into a third-floor apartment in the house known as the Shady Chalet along River Road in Olmsted Falls – overlooking Rocky River. (For more on the Shady Chalet, see Issue 115 of *Olmsted 200* from December 2022.) Later, they moved into their own house along Metropolitan Boulevard with a backyard that bordered on Rocky River.

Waugh also worked for 20 years as a book buyer for the Burrows Brothers of Cleveland. Later, he led the book department of the *Cleveland News* branch of the American News Company. He retired from that company in 1959 (the year before the *Cleveland News* quit publishing and its assets were acquired by the *Cleveland Press*).

If that were all he had done, he would have lived a good life but not one that would have been so well remembered in the Olmsted community. His name is still



*This map was posted to show where the Dan Waugh Trail went through the park.*





*This early 20<sup>th</sup> century postcard shows the Boy Scout Cabin on the left in what now is called David Fortier River Park.*

scoutmaster.”

An essay in the *Olmsted Falls Homecoming 1939 Souvenir Program* about the troop noted that “it lacked nothing in ambition and enthusiasm.” The troop members worked with Waugh, their fathers and other men to build a cabin in the park.

“This was a real undertaking, since at the time there was no bridge across Plum Creek and the boys had to use a cable to get the building materials over,” the essay says. “They may justly be proud of their success. The Cabin is a fine meeting place for our Scouts, and in addition has proved to be a source of great pleasure for out-of-town Scouts who for a small fee have obtained the use of the cabin for week-end camping trips.”



*A cement slab is all that is left where the Boy Scout cabin once stood in the park in Olmsted Falls.*

Holzworth wrote that the boys got the materials for the cabin by tearing down an old barn for Henry Hoftyzer. Unfortunately, the Boy Scouts’ cabin has not survived. It reportedly was burned down by vandals in the 1960s.

known because of two of his activities outside of his job. One was his weekly newspaper column, but that came second. The first occurred shortly after he moved to Olmsted Falls in 1925.

“Waugh’s rugged friendly nature and natural leadership appealed to the boys of the neighborhood and they asked him to help organize a Boy Scout troop,” Holzworth wrote. “Troop #201 of Olmsted Falls was formed and Dan Waugh became its first





*As this plaque in David Fortier River Park shows, Boy Scout Troop 201, which Dan Waugh helped to found 99 years ago, has continued to do good deeds well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

Waugh got the Boy Scout troop off to a good start, but he didn't remain scoutmaster for long. In 1926, he turned the troop over to Clarence Simmerer, who served as scoutmaster until 1938, when William Maynard, Jr., who had been one of the charter members of the troop, became scoutmaster for three years. The troop has continued its activities, including projects to improve David Fortier River Park, under many scoutmasters for almost a century now and will mark its centennial in 2025.

More than two decades after he started the Boy Scout troop, Waugh got his chance to write the newspaper column. Barbara Bustard was the Olmsted Falls columnist for the *Berea News* in 1947 when she recommended that Waugh should write a column based on his nature walks. Although her parents, Irving and Edna Geist, took over ownership of the Shady Chalet in the 1930s, that was several years after Dan and Helen Waugh lived there, so it's not clear whether she knew him through that connection, but she was impressed with his love and knowledge of nature.

When Waugh's first "Nature Rambles" column appeared in the *Berea News* in 1948, it was considered an experiment, but the experiment worked out well. After the *Berea News* became part of the Sun Newspapers chain, his column eventually appeared in all 12 of the Sun papers in the Cleveland area, and it ran for decades.

Late in his life, he had two dozen of his more than 1,000 columns published in a booklet titled *Nature Rambles*. A page about him in the front explained his relationship with the natural world:

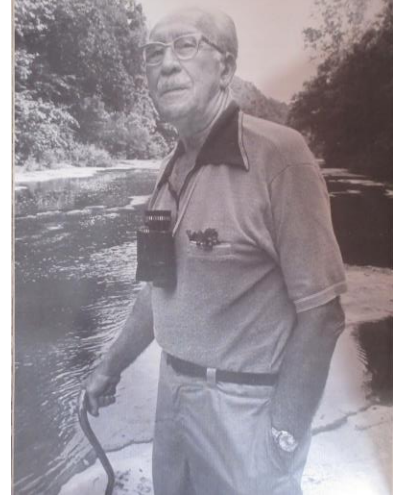
*Dan Waugh....does not claim to be a naturalist. Rather, he is a lover of nature in all its manifestations – a love he shares in his writings with readers of all ages.*

*Dan started his "rambles" after World War I, when he returned from Marine duty seriously injured and was told he should not expect to walk again. He chose, instead, to use walking as a therapy, and it opened to his curious mind a world that has continued to fascinate him ever since.*

*He is on intimate terms with birds, insects, plants, flowers – everything in nature's bounty, and he writes with knowledge, warmth and*

*humor. In his writings he reveals much of his own outlook on life – a life that has been touched by the universal experiences shared by everyman.*

Many of his columns were about the plants and animals Waugh encountered in his walks around Olmsted Falls. For example, in one titled “An Early Morning Walk,” he wrote about the old Chestnut Grove Cemetery (also known as Turkeyfoot): “This cemetery is one of my favorite spots, a sanctuary for birds. One has to overlook the beer cans and litter, and try to understand the thinking of those vandals who get a kick out of overturning gravestones and markers.”



Here is another of Waugh’s columns from the 1970s in its entirety:

*This photo of Dan Waugh is from his booklet.*

#### A PHILOSOPHY OF LIVING

*I loaf and invite my soul.*

- Walt Whitman

*When the river is low below our place, there are certain stretches of dry rock, exposed to the sun which are a favorite hangout for mallard ducks to doze and sunbathe.*

*This Nature Rambler also has a retreat down by the river where he can just keep busy doing nothing in particular but watching the goings on of the birds and wildlife. “Loafer’s Rest” I call it, and it is available for any folks who have a yen to get off by themselves to relax and be quiet.*

*Hardly a day passes that I don’t spend some time there, and now and then I take my lunch along with me and really have a ball. On one of these occasions for a half hour I watched a female mallard duck taking a bath and getting a beauty treatment.*

*I didn’t feel guilty, because she saw me sitting there and selected a spot on the rocks in front of me. She was thoroughly enjoying herself, diving, preening, combing her wing feathers through her bill and giving herself the oil treatment to waterproof her feathers. A half hour – imagine! Truly feminine. Maybe she had a date?*

*During all this another female mallard came sailing down the river, followed by six of her ducklings, all in line like a parade.*

*There were many interesting things going on: a kingfisher sped up the river, sounded off like a banshee; several redwing blackbirds were*

*taking baths in a deep pool, a spotted sandpiper was bobbing about finding something edible along the shore; some killdeer seemed excited and were whirling about, calling their “Killdeer, Killdeer, Killdeer.”*

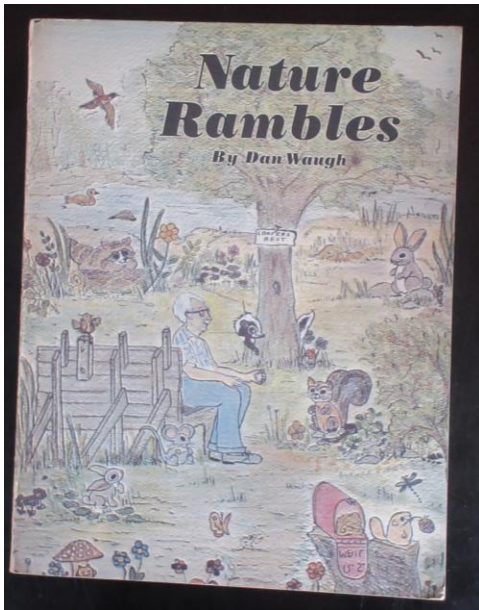
*Never a dull moment here, and in addition I managed to write a letter and make some notes – a grand place for that.*

*Recently I became an octogenarian, and since then I have become the target of a lot of friendly kidding. However, with Horace Walpole, I believe that “Old age is no uncomfortable thing, if one gives oneself up to it with a good grace.”*

*My grandmother lived to be 102, a friend who knew this asked me if I would like to live that long. My reply was that at the moment – yes – but fortunately we don’t know what lies ahead.*

*One of the many blessings that have been given me is an abiding interest in what each day may bring – a forward look, an open horizon.*

*If one can maintain a forward look, can greet each morning with healthy curiosity and some anticipation, and can still see beckoning images on his horizon, then life can be a perpetual challenge.*



*This drawing by his neighbor, Nancy Chubb, was reproduced on both the front and back covers of the booklet of Dan Waugh’s essays.*

*Combined with such philosophy and my love affair with nature, yes, I would enjoy living many more years.*

*Nature’s pitcher, like the one in an old fairy tale, seems never to become empty. Something new is always popping out.*

Because of Waugh’s love for nature around Olmsted Falls and his many years of writing about it, the city named the trail through David Fortier River Park for him. In addition, Baldwin Wallace College (now a university) honored him in 1976 by dedicating Ritter Library’s Dan Waugh Collection of Nature Books.

Helen Waugh died in 1982, but Dan survived almost another decade before he died in 1991. Both were interred in the old Chestnut Grove Cemetery that he had enjoyed visiting so much. His gravestone identifies him as the “Nature Rambler” and as a corporal in the U.S. Marines.



## Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include the next story about the 1936 film of Olmsted Falls, and stories about the completion of two schools – one 150 years ago of a school that stood almost nine decades and one 70 years ago of Olmsted’s first new school building in almost four decades that was the first of several to come.

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, 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 <https://www.olmstedtownshipohio.gov/290/Past-Newsletters-Olmsted-200>. All 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/olmsted\\_200\\_issues.php](http://www.olmstedfalls.org/olmsted_falls_history/olmsted_200_issues.php). A link to *Olmsted 200* can be found on the left side of the page. On each site, click on the number of the issue you want to read.

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Thanks go to Mary Louise King for helping 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 the Berea Historical Society’s Mahler Museum & History Center and through online booksellers.

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