



Olmsted 200

Bicentennial Notes about Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township –
First Farmed in 1814 and Settled in 1815

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Olmsted Couldn't Hold onto the Bagley Road Corridor

The 1980s was a significant decade in terms of determining the boundaries of Olmsted Township and its neighboring communities. Not only did legal battles rage for several years over the annexation of about 200 acres of land owned by the Flair Corporation to Olmsted Falls, as reported in last month's issue of *Olmsted 200*, but another annexation issue opened on a second front to the east.

It began in December 1985, when a group of business owners in the 1.3-mile



Berea's western border moved right up to the eastern edge of Olmsted Falls after a 1980s battle over Olmsted Township land along Bagley Road.

stretch of Bagley Road east of Olmsted Falls and west of Berea began seeking water and sewer services to be included as part of the planned widening of Bagley Road, which was scheduled for 1987. The county's plan was to widen the road from two lanes to four lanes and install sidewalks and storm sewers. The businesses, which then depended on water wells and septic tanks, figured that was the time to also install water and sewer lines to get through all the construction work at one

time. They soon learned that neither city was interested in providing those services to that section of the township without annexing it.

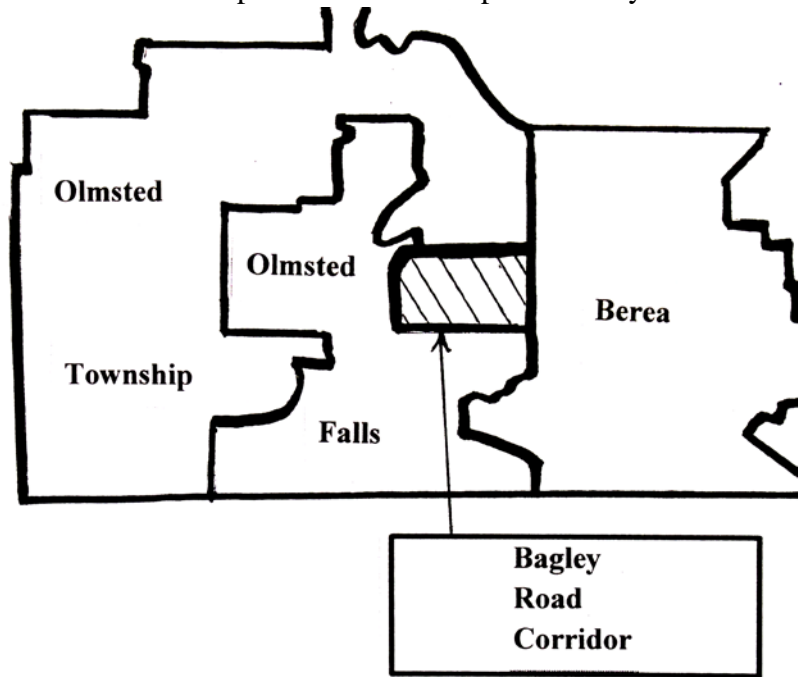
As reported by the *News Sun* on May 1, 1986, Berea City Council President Bruce Hardy confirmed that his city was “in a competitive situation in regard to annexation of this particular piece of what is now known as Olmsted Township.” Meanwhile, Olmsted Falls Mayor David Dunn said his city would do all it could to provide the area with water and sewer services if it could be annexed to Olmsted Falls.

“I welcome the opportunity with open arms,” he told the newspaper.

Of course, township trustees said they would fight any attempt to annex the Bagley Road corridor to either Olmsted Falls or Berea. However, Robert Stackhouse, chairman of the trustees, admitted the township would be able to provide only water service and not sewer service to the area.

After several months of discussions, the group of business owners decided in October 1986 they would rather be part of Olmsted Falls than Berea.

“I think basically, we had the same offers from Berea and Olmsted Falls,” the group’s spokesman, Ray Weekley of Weekley’s Mailing Service at 24584 Bagley Road, told the *News Sun*. “And putting facts aside, we felt that since this is Olmsted Township we are involved in, we felt we should try to remain a part of the Olmsted community, which is Olmsted Township and Olmsted Falls.”



Olmsted Falls and Berea both wanted Olmsted Township’s land along a 1.3-mile section of Bagley Road between Lewis Road and Lindbergh Boulevard.

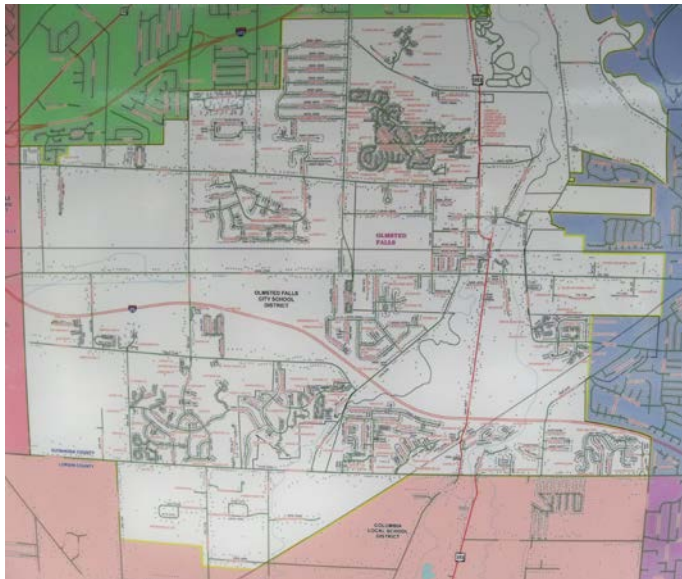
At the time, Olmsted Falls planned to build a \$3 million wastewater treatment plant to serve both the Bagley Road corridor and the Mill River shopping center and condominiums that then were under construction. But Berea Mayor John Whipple wasn’t willing to give up. He said his city could offer a better package of improvements, including water and sewer lines, curb lawns, street lighting and sidewalks. Berea offered

to let property owners tap into sewer lines at no cost, while Olmsted Falls wanted to charge each of them \$150, but Olmsted Falls intended to charge lower monthly fees.

The tide turned at an October 23 meeting of about 75 property owners in the area. Mayor Whipple made a more impressive presentation, and many of the property owners questioned the ability of Olmsted Falls to fulfill its promises. In the weeks that followed, 88 of the area's 94 property owners signed petitions for annexation to Berea. In December 1986, the *Plain Dealer* quoted one business owner as saying his heart was with Olmsted Falls, but his brain favored Berea. Meanwhile, Olmsted Township trustees hired a lawyer to fight the annexation.

Before 1986 ended, Berea City Council voted unanimously to approve the annexation of the Bagley Road corridor. On February 9, 1987, the issue went before the Cuyahoga County commissioners. On March 30, Commissioners Virgil Brown and Mary Boyle voted to approve the annexation. The third commissioner, Timothy Hagan, did not attend the meeting, saying he had a conflict of interest because a relative owned land along the corridor.

In June, Olmsted Township went to court to attempt to block the annexation. On July 16, 1987, Common Pleas Court Judge Lillian Green ruled against the township and let the annexation proceed. But it wasn't a total loss for the township. Green ruled that Berea would have to pay \$140,000 over five years to the township to compensate for lost tax revenue. That dismayed some Berea officials, but nevertheless, they welcomed the opportunity to expand west.



This map of the Olmsted Falls City School District, which hangs in the district's administrative office, shows the district crosses township, municipal – and even county – boundaries. Berea's Bagley Road corridor remains in the school district.

However, they took their time approving the annexation. They wanted to study the financial implications fully and make sure Berea would receive more in tax revenue than it would pay. On September 24, 1987, Berea City Council voted seven to zero to accept the Bagley Road corridor. The annexation became official one month later on October 25. Even before that, two businesses along the corridor – Globe Pipe Hanger Products and Huge Heating and Cooling – announced plans to expand and others were said to be considering it.

In the end, Berea increased its size by four square miles – or

290 acres – from Lindbergh Boulevard on the east to Lewis Road and the Olmsted Falls border on the west. However, it didn't change school district boundaries. Any changes in school district boundaries must be approved by the Ohio Board of Education after a public hearing is held. It's not unusual for school district boundaries to cross municipal and township boundaries. For example, the Olmsted Falls school district has included an almost pie-shaped section of Columbia Township for decades. The Bagley Road corridor remained within the Olmsted Falls City School District, which continued to receive property tax revenues from the area.

By April 1988, Berea's Municipal Plan Commission recommended zoning most of the corridor for light industry, while the area near the intersection of Bagley Road and Lewis Road on the western end of the corridor would be zoned for commercial use and the area just south of that on Lewis Road would remain residential. Subsequently, that's how the corridor was developed – plenty of light industry along with some commercial entities – with increased municipal tax revenues going to Berea instead of Olmsted Falls or Olmsted Township, although the tax revenues for schools remained with the Olmsted Falls City School District.



Since Berea designated the Bagley Road corridor for light industry, many facilities like this one have been established along streets with names like Pelret Industrial Parkway.

Thus, by 1988, Berea and Olmsted Falls, as detailed in last month's issue of *Olmsted 200*, each had annexed about 200 acres of Olmsted Township land. However, those moves did nothing to cool annexation fever. As the 1980s moved into the 1990s, more bids emerged from neighboring communities wanting to take all or parts of the township. In fact, every community within Cuyahoga County bordering the township got into the act. *Olmsted 200* will have more on that next month.

Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Takes Its Place at Village Green

The Village Green in Olmsted Falls is showing a new face to the world since Saturday, June 22. On that day, city officials, veterans and others dedicated the new Olmsted Falls Vietnam Veterans Memorial near the gazebo at the corner of Columbia Road and Water Street. The new black granite memorial shares that spot with a 71-year-old memorial plaque – now mounted on another black granite stone – dedicated to local residents who lost their lives in World War II. Joining them is a black bench donated by the Olmsted Falls High School Class of 1966.

Although the Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors all who served in the military during the years of the Vietnam War, it specifically carries the name of Gary Martell,



Seen shortly after being unveiled, the new memorial for veterans of the Vietnam War period is in the center with the newly remounted World War II plaque to the left and the new bench from the Class of 1966 on the right at the corner of Columbia Road and Water Street on the Village Green.

honor of reading it.

“I was nine months old when we lost my dad, so what I know about him I learned from his family, his friends, his classmates, the people I get to talk to when I come to things like this,” she said. “I was here last year on Memorial Day also, so I’m very thankful that this memorial has come to fruition and this project is completed. It makes me very proud.”

As he prepared to introduce the featured speaker, Mayor Graven noted that many of the American veterans who returned from World War II were greeted as heroes and received parades in their honor, but the country became so divided over the Vietnam War that veterans in those years received more scorn than welcome.

“But more than 45 years after the end of the Vietnam War, the City of Olmsted Falls wanted to rectify the treatment that the Vietnam veterans received after serving our country and putting their life on the line,” he said. “This is a largely belated welcome home ceremony. It’s been a very long time, but I know the people in our community respect our Vietnam veterans. That is why today is so very important – because this memorial over here will stand forever, and I want to emphasize forever, to show our community’s respect and support for those that raised their right hand and served.”

Graven also said, “There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.”

who graduated from Olmsted Falls High School in 1966. He was the only person from Olmsted who died while fighting in Vietnam.

During the dedication ceremony on June 22, Mayor James Graven and three others shared the task of reading in alphabetical order the names of almost 250 men and women from Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township known to have served in the military during the Vietnam War years – except for one. Martell’s name was left for last, and his daughter, Cindy Martell Amweg, had the

The featured speaker was Rick Adler, who like Martell graduated from Olmsted Falls High School in 1966. He was drafted into the U.S. Army on January 27, 1969, along with classmates Larry Lanford and Dave Fenderbosch. After being shot three times in battle, Adler spent 60 days recovering in a hospital in Japan before returning to finish his tour of duty in Vietnam in 1970. For his service, he received the Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart and the Silver Star. As a result of his exposure to Agent Orange during the war, he suffered from Stage III and Stage IV non-Hodgkin lymphoma and received a stem cell transplant before overcoming cancer.



This is the Village Green's new memorial.

“Last year, I was asked to speak at the 2018 Olmsted Falls Memorial Day ceremony,” Adler said, as he explained how the new memorial came to be. “During the process, while talking, while this was taking place, I learned that Gary Martell from the Class of 1966 – my classmate and friend – was never honored for paying the ultimate price on December 27, 1967. When I learned of this, there were many discussions that took place on why this didn’t happen. But the most important thing is that it got resolved, and it got fixed.”



Vietnam War veteran Rick Adler and Olmsted Falls Mayor James Graven spoke during the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Unveiling Ceremony.

How it got fixed was through a fundraising campaign to gather more than \$10,000 in donations, partly through the sale of automobile magnets saying “Olmsted Falls Small Town Big Heart” for five dollars each. Kotecki Monuments, which provided the memorial stones, also helped with “a very, very generous discount,” as Graven put it.

Graven’s initial suggestion was to establish a memorial for Olmsted residents who served in Vietnam, but Adler said he had a different idea. “You know, Mayor, I got a little bit of skin in this game, and I thank you for that, but I think it should be done for all those that raised their right hand and served during the Vietnam era,” he said. “If you remember, this was especially not a good time for those serving in the military and protecting this country. The reason I said for those that raised their right

hand was because, when you got inducted in the military, you did not know where you would be, what you would do or what would happen to you.”

Adler said he and many of his friends did not want to be involved in the military and the turmoil the United States was going through over the Vietnam War. “But when asked to raise our right hand and take the oath, we did what we had to do,” he said. “I think most of us would not have done anything different – at least, I wouldn’t.”

In his address, Adler said more than 58,000 Americans died as a result of the war, including:

- 39,996 who were 22 years old or younger;
- 8,283 who were 19;
- 33,103 who were 18;
- 12 who were 17;
- Five who were 16;
- One who was just 15;
- 997 who were killed on their first day in Vietnam; and
- 1,442 who were killed on their last day in Vietnam.

In May of 1968, 2,415 were killed just that month, which was an average of more than 80 a day, he said. The bloodiest day of the war was January 31, 1968, when 245 were killed in action, he said.

The average number of days a World War II grunt, an infantryman, was engaged in combat a year was 69 days, Adler said, but the average number of days an infantryman was in combat in the Vietnam War was 247 days during his one-year tour.

“There is one who is very dear to us who was killed and happened to be the only one killed in Vietnam from Olmsted Falls,” he said. “His name was Gary Martell.”

Martell was born on May 31, 1948. He and his brother grew up in Olmsted Falls. Martell’s father passed away when he was young.

“For me and most of us, he is remembered as that kid that would always make a joke, never serious, and would always bring a smile to your face, and was at times the class clown,” Adler said. “When he joined the Marines, he became this very serious, lean-looking young man. He was married shortly after high school.”

Martell went to Vietnam on June 2, 1967. He lost his life on the second day of a weeklong battle called Operation Badger Tooth, which lasted from December 26, 1967, to January 2, 1968. He was one of 48 Marines who were killed in that battle. Another 86 were wounded.

“Even though we came home from Vietnam, that war has never ended for us,” Adler said. “And for many of us, we are still there every day and every night. There have

been many of us who, when we came home, brought it home with us in the form of Agent Orange. There have been way too many who have died from it and are still suffering from it this very day, and many of them were our good friends right here in Olmsted Falls.”



This is what the memorial plaque for Olmsted residents who died in World War II looks like since being remounted on black granite.

The project to establish the Vietnam Veterans Memorial also affected the memorial for Olmsted residents who died in World War II. It had been mounted on a big millstone that had been quarried locally. But Joe Borczuch, who has been the city’s service director for 23 years, said the millstone was too big for the newly designed memorial site, so the bronze plaque was remounted on a black granite stone matching that of the new Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Although rumors had circulated that the stone had been destroyed, he said that’s not true, and it will return to the Columbia Road side of the Village Green.

“I don’t know if it will go back up this year or not, but it will be back up here hopefully by springtime,” Borczuch said. “Our intent is to either in the fall try to get it back up, or if not, in the spring. It’s just we have so much catchup to do with all the different events. And of course, the way the weather has been, it’s been very difficult to stay on task.”



For more than 71 years, the World War II memorial was mounted on a millstone at the corner of the Village Green. The millstone is to return to the park soon.

The World War II memorial was dedicated on Memorial Day, May 30, 1948. The Blue Star Mothers, an organization founded nationally in 1942 for mothers of sons and daughters who served in the military, arranged for the creation of the memorial. The plaque contains the names of these 16 men and one woman from Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Township and West View who were among the casualties of World War II: Robert Bislich, Robert Bilskey, Ernest Gabel, Charles Harding, Martin Hodgson, Robert Haury, Wayne Kile, Charles Knuth, Charles Kubasic, George Kusinski, Louis Mliczek, Lester Sadler, Howard Smith, Paul Timke, Edwin Walker, Walter Zimba and Lois Wilson.



This is what the Village Green looked like about two o'clock on June 22, shortly before the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Unveiling Ceremony began at the gazebo near the corner of Columbia Road and Water Street. After a very wet spring, Olmsted Falls was blessed with a sunny day with temperatures in the mid-70s for the ceremony.

The Village Green has served the community as a public space since about 1830, when Olmsted Township built a frame schoolhouse on the land, which was donated by early settlers John and Eunice Barnum. That was 26 years before Olmsted Falls incorporated as a village.

Throughout a few decades in the middle of the 20th century, Schady's Shell Service station across Columbia Road from the Village Green was a popular hangout for many young people. After the memorial dedication ceremony, some of them gathered at the site of Schady's, now home to the Olmsted Falls office of Clint Williams Realty, to reminisce about the days of their youth. Clint Williams even added a vintage Shell gasoline pump in front of the office in time for the gathering. Some of those who gathered shared their memories of Schady's with *Olmsted 200*, which will share them with readers in a future issue. If you also have memories of Schady's you would like to share, please send them to *Olmsted 200* at wallacestar@hotmail.com.



Annexation Stories Stir Readers' Memories and Comments

The recent stories about the merger of Olmsted Falls and West View and the attempts to annex all or parts of Olmsted Township to neighboring municipalities, stirred Facebook comments and discussion. For example, Jennie Smith Wagoner recalled being a kid making signs advocating the merger of Olmsted Falls and West View. One of her

parents served on council and another worked as a teacher. “I felt fully a part of life in OF,” she wrote. “It will always be ‘home’ to me!”

Also on Facebook, Sandra Holt expressed dismay at people who live in Olmsted Township but say they live in Olmsted Falls because “sharing schools, churches and the postal code does not make it simply Olmsted Falls. We surround the Falls. We choose to keep it Township Government.”

However, Holt regretted that the township lost the Bagley Road corridor to Berea.

To that, Steve Harris responded, “Sandra Holt, you choose to keep it the township to a certain degree by not voting to annex to the Falls, but you only have so much control. Berea and N.O. can still chip away at it. It’s a shame but I think at some point if they don’t merge with OF they will eventually be gone, I hope I’m wrong. Best to be OT, but better to be OF than Berea or NO!”

Ann Reichle then added, “Annexation usually occurs to get City services such as sewer and water. That’s what happened to the Bagley Road corridor. The Township has done a really great job lately at getting infrastructure in place to negate the greatest reasons neighboring communities would suggest annexation to neighborhood residents or developers.”

Harris agreed with Reichle but said the possibility of seeing township land annexed to neighboring communities still exists. “I suggest the Township incorporate as a village, if the threat persists!” he said.

In reference to the Olmsted Township sign along Barton Road in a photo in March’s *Olmsted 200*, Doris Karkoff Clare wrote on Facebook, “That was my view from ’61 to ’73. That little part of Barton had a ton of kids of all ages. We spent a lot of time walking up and down the street. It was an awesome place to grow up. About 26 grew up on that short street (with the help of the 7 of us Karkoffs).” For the perspective of another former Barton Road resident, Lisa (Kunberger) Woodcock, see Issue 70 of *Olmsted 200* from March.

Many readers found last month’s story about Raymond Moley, who served as the youngest superintendent of Olmsted schools and the youngest mayor of Olmsted Falls before going on to national prominence, especially interesting.

“That’s a great article on Mr. Moley,” Frank Kalamajka wrote. “Something they ought to be teaching in US history (which I took with Mr. Winters) just as a note of local pride. It’s difficult to imagine any of us present-day Olmsted alumni out-performing Mr. Moley in terms of his contributions to crucial US government programs that helped millions of people at a desperate time. Good reading.”

Likewise, Patrick Carroll wrote, “I really enjoyed the bit about Raymond Moley. “My mother used to mention him many times and knew of his connection with Barnum’s.

The picture of the store in rubble also brought back memories.” [Editor’s note: Moley’s grandfather and father ran a store along Columbia Street – now Columbia Road – just south of the railroad tracks until it burned down. Later, Barnum’s grocery store was built on the same site, but it also burned down in the mid-1960s.]

Carroll, who has shared stories of growing up in Olmsted in past issues of *Olmsted 200*, added that he has “some very down home funny stories from antics about the goings on at Schady’s Shell in the early ‘70s” that he might prepare for use in *Olmsted 200* in the future.

Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include stories about Olmsted’s big homecoming celebration 80 years ago and further attempts by neighboring cities to annex Olmsted Township land.

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 California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, Florida, Wisconsin, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine, as well as overseas in the Netherlands, Germany and Japan.

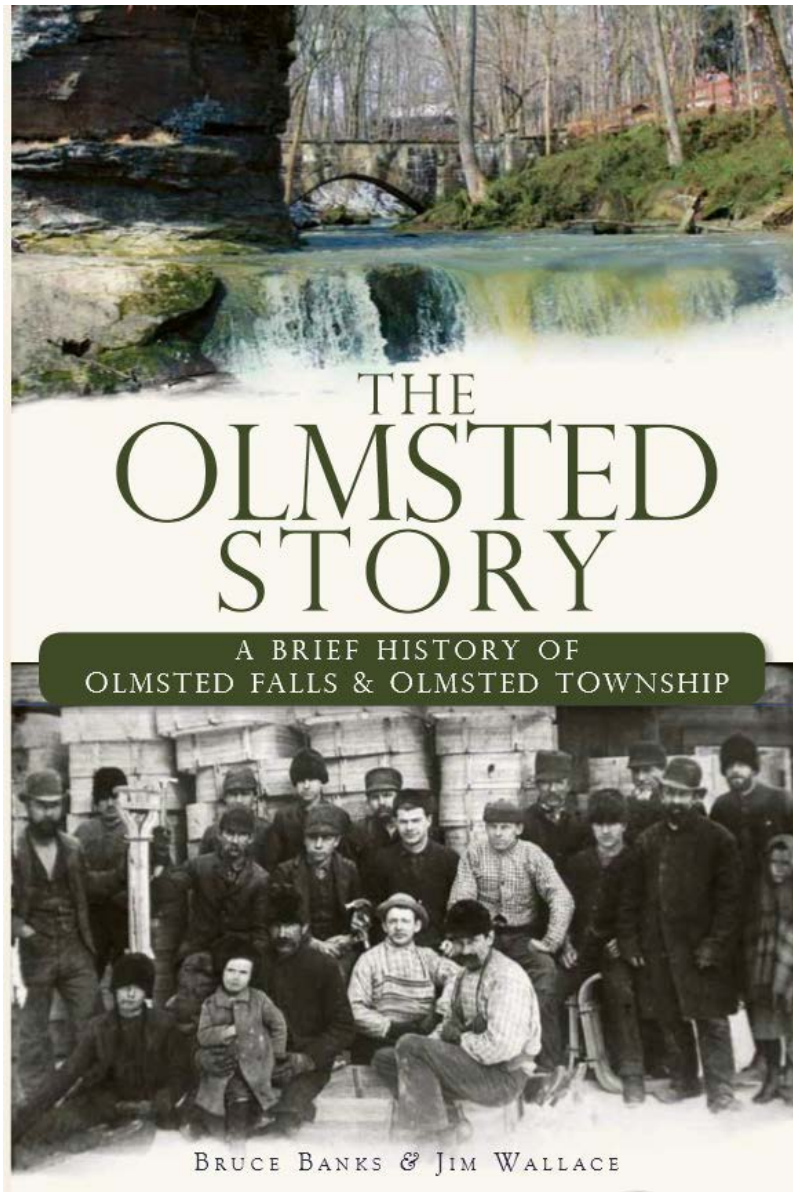
Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted’s history that you would like to have pulled out of *Olmsted 200*’s extensive archives. Or perhaps you have information or photos about the community’s history that you would like to share.

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



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