



# Olmsted 200

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

Issue 78

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## Efforts to End the Township Came and Went in the Nineties

The 1990s were a very active time for various proposals to change the borders of Olmsted Township through annexing all or parts of it to neighboring cities or merging it with a neighboring city. As recounted in last month's *Olmsted 200*, one battle to annex roughly 200 acres of township land to Berea raged on and off for most of the decade before it was defeated. Concurrent with that – and to some degree instigated by it – other efforts popped up to settle the township's status permanently by ending its existence as a separate community. For a while, such acronyms as FOOT and DOOR became common.

Some township residents, who were concerned that the township could be annexed piecemeal by neighboring communities, became active in a group called Future of Olmsted Township (FOOT). On February 28, 1993, about 35 of them met at Lenau Park, the German-American club, to hear merger pitches from officials from both Brook Park and Berea. North Olmsted representatives were invited but did not appear. The group did not invite anyone from Olmsted Falls because that city was prevented by law from again considering a merger issue for another two years as a result of the defeat of a proposed merger commission in the 1991 election.

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## Merger surfaces as topic again

*This headline on a March 4, 1993, story in the News Sun signaled a revival in attempts to merge Olmsted Township with one of its neighboring cities.*

In March 1993, some members of FOOT talked about circulating petitions for a merger with Brook Park. They were encouraged by Mayor Tom Coyne's pitch that his

city already had a strong industrial tax base and had avoided property tax increases for 30 years. He said he was interested in township land for the development of more housing, not industry. Months went by before anything significant happened.

Then in December 1994, North Olmsted Mayor Ed Boyle revealed that he and Berea Mayor Stanley Trupo had been talking since early that year about a plan to divide Olmsted Township between North Olmsted and Berea. North Olmsted would have taken the bigger chunk of township land with about 8,000 residents, while Berea would have taken a smaller piece with about 400 residents – the portion east of Rocky River’s west branch. The plan would have left school district borders unchanged.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1994

1994 BEREAN AND N. OL. 12.8  
1994 NEWS

## **Voters may decide fate of township**

*Joint proposal by North Olmsted and Berea would ask Olmsted Township residents if they want annexation*

*After hearing little about any plans to take township land, many residents first learned in this December 8, 1994, News Sun story that Berea and North Olmsted wanted to divide the township between them.*

In January 1995, a small group of township residents began an effort to join at least a part of the western portion of the township to Olmsted Falls. Soon, members of FOOT began pushing for merging the entire township with Brook Park. Then, two more petition drives emerged to annex parts of the township to Olmsted Falls.

With all that activity going on, a new group emerged at the end of January 1995 called Destiny of Our Residents (DOOR). That group promised to be a clearinghouse that would weigh all the information about the different annexation and merger proposals in a neutral fashion. But some proponents of those annexation/merger proposals questioned DOOR’s impartiality.

By mid-February 1995, the county commissioners had received six petitions for annexation of parts of the township to Olmsted Falls. About the same time, the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections decided the proposed annexations to North Olmsted and Berea would have to be postponed until the general election in November 1995 rather than be considered in the May primary because Olmsted Township had no other issues for the primary. Thus, the township would not have a primary election.

By March, two petitions to annex land to Olmsted Falls faltered after some people who had signed the petitions withdrew their names. The petitions involved a section of the township around Bagley Road and Fitch Road and another around Columbia Road and John Road.

When DOOR held a public meeting at the high school in March 1995, about 600 township residents attended to hear from the mayors of North Olmsted and Berea. Based on what the *News Sun* called a “thunder of applause,” most of them opposed changing the status of the township. That reinforced a poll of 850 township residents taken by DOOR

that found almost 61 percent of them preferred for the township to remain a township, more than 14 percent were undecided, almost 6 percent wanted to study merger with Olmsted Falls, more than 5 percent preferred to study a merger with Brook Park, and only miniscule percentages of them favored annexation to North Olmsted or Berea. Both Mayor Trupo of Berea and Mayor Boyle of North Olmsted said they would ask their councils to drop their annexation plans if residents' attitudes did not change by the end of that summer. In June, Trupo and Boyle announced their cities would withdraw the annexation issue from the November ballot.

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## Annexation plans prove divisive

Surrounding cities maneuver  
*As this January 29, 1995, Plain Dealer headline indicates, township residents were split over whether and how to split up the township.*

But that didn't stop all the activity over annexation and merger. On April 3, 1995, a member of FOOT delivered petitions to the county election board to put on the ballot the formation of a commission to consider a township merger with Brook Park. Another group, the Olmsted Action Committee, sprang into action to oppose that and other attempts to attach township land to neighboring cities.

On April 10, 1995, the county commissioners held a hearing to consider three petitions to annex pieces of the township to Olmsted Falls. One was for the land on the north side of Nobottom Road. The second was for four non-contiguous strips of land that all connected to a section near Usher Road and Sprague Road that Olmsted Falls annexed in 1988. The third was for land on the east side of Columbia Road from Sunset Memorial Park south to the Olmsted Falls border. Subsequently, those proposed annexations did not go through. Neither did the proposed township merger with Brook Park.

In July 1997, a new effort began to put on the ballot another proposal to form a commission to consider a merger of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township. But in the November election, the result was the same as in 1987 and 1991 with voters in Olmsted Falls approving it while voters in the township rejected it. This time, 2,330 township voters were against forming the commission while 881 favored it. In the city, 1,577 voters favored the commission while 427 opposed it.

Since then, proposals to annex little pieces of Olmsted Township to Berea, North Olmsted or Olmsted Falls have come up from time to time with mixed success, but efforts to make all of the township or large portions of it part of a neighboring city have been mostly dormant.

One exception came amid much talk about regional cooperation in northeastern Ohio in 2006 and 2007, when Olmsted Falls Mayor Robert Blomquist and others began talking again about considering a merger between Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township.



*In 2006-2007, Olmsted Falls Mayor Robert Blomquist brought up merger again.*

In a May 29, 2006, interview, Blomquist said he thought demographics had changed enough in the two communities, which already shared a school system and a ZIP code, that it was time to consider merger again.

“Really, as more new people move to Olmsted Falls and to Olmsted Township, the subdivisions are similar, and people don’t make that distinction,” he said. “I think it’s more of the old-time people that make that Olmsted Falls-Olmsted Township distinction.”

Blomquist argued that residents of both communities would pay less for community services by combining them under one government. He suggested that the economies of scale might be enough to overcome township residents’ reluctance to pay the city’s income tax. “That would be a less expensive way to deliver services than what we’re doing now with two small entities,” he said.

Such arguments might have made sense to some people, but they didn’t lead to a merger movement at that time, and nothing more than talk happened for years after that.

In March 2015, talk about possibly changing the township’s status emerged again – this time from an unusual source: the township trustees. They called for volunteers to serve on a Commission to Study Governance Options for Olmsted Township. The options included incorporation, merger with a neighboring city or remaining a township. By August 2015, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission got in on the act. After the county agreed to help fund a new master plan for Olmsted Falls, the commission wanted to find out if residents were interested in having the township merge with the city, but not enough of them did to lead to any change.

After all these years and many attempts to whittle it down or remove it from the map, Olmsted Township still exists as one of only two townships remaining in Cuyahoga County – the most urban county in Ohio. The only other one in the county is miniscule Chagrin Falls Township with just a few dozen households and a population of only 120 people in the 2010 census. As long as Olmsted Township remains unincorporated, it is unlikely attempts to change its borders will end. Early in 2019, a new proposal to annex 72 acres east of Lewis Road and west of Stones Throw Drive to Berea emerged briefly before being



*Olmsted Falls has tried many times to welcome the township into the city, but it hasn’t happened yet.*

withdrawn in the face of opposition from both the township and Berea. Such proposals are likely to pop up again and again to nibble away at township land, but a big change in the township's borders will require a big change in attitude among township voters, who have been reluctant for decades to make such a change.

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will review how the shape of Olmsted Township has changed over the past two centuries.

## **Many People Pay Homage to Clint Williams**

Many words of condolence and tribute have poured out since the September 6 death of Grand Pacific Junction developer Clint Williams.

One of the best tributes was a September 9 Facebook post by Dick Fowler, who wrote about how Williams saved the hometown he fondly remembered from his youth:

*My dad and mom, John and Adelaide Fowler, moved to Olmsted Falls from Berea in 1956. I was 3 years old. We first lived at 8311 Pineway Drive, moving to 25927 Bagley Road in 1962. Four kids and mom and dad just didn't fit in the Pineway house any more.*

*I remember going "Uptown" with my older brother Keith and our friends, both walking and riding our bikes. We got our haircuts from Rudy, a German man who had lots of comics in the shop at the front of his home. It was right next door to (Ed) Scott's drug store where you could get a cherry coke for a dime or a milk shake for \$0.28. (Full disclosure - Mr. Scott would store returned pop bottles under the stairs on the north side of his store. If we were short on cash, we'd grab a six pack of bottles and take them in the store to collect \$0.12 and then spend it on candy....pretty sure he knew what we were up to!). Kaufman's deli and bakery was right next door, followed by Barnum's grocery.*

*Across the street was the National City Bank (where Miss Clara Harding was a teller), then Kucklick's furniture store. At the corner of Columbia and Mill was Simmerer & Sons. Even in the mid 60s you could get a baseball, and hockey sticks and pucks, and pretty much any hardware you needed.*

*Anchoring "Uptown" — St. Mary of the Falls and Robey's Sohio on the south and my family's house of worship, Olmsted Community Church, the Village Hall/Fire and Police Departments and the Masonic Temple on the north (with the Falls Kreme Shop nearby).*

*Idyllic? An understatement.*

*When I headed off to college in 1971, “Uptown” had lost Barnum’s to fire, and many of the other businesses were gone or seemed to be struggling.*

*Clint Williams was the indisputable catalyst for the revival of what we casually referred to as “Uptown.” Along with some entrepreneurs with foresight, Olmsted Falls has become a major attraction for the Cleveland metropolitan area.*

*Thank you, Clint Williams. You will be missed more than you’ll ever know. Thanks to my friend, Ann (Miller) Reichle, and to all of the other Olmsted merchants who bought in to Clint Williams’ dream and continue to make my hometown the vibrant, amazing place it is today.*

In response to Fowler, Rob Post wrote: “Wow! What makes this so poignant for me is my story in Olmsted Falls picks up 5 years after you left for college...when there



*was a Shell station at the northwest corner of Columbia and Water Streets, Brentwood was barricaded at the Falls/Township line, and the Post Office was still on Bagley west of Robey’s Sohio (I can still hear my dad tell the attendant to “fill it up with no-lead”). My first bank account was at NCB when it was next to the train tracks. Unfortunately, I left my hometown before Clint really got his dream going. When I go to visit, I notice all the differences, but the warmth I felt as a kid has gotten warmer thanks to him. He left a wonderful legacy that will hopefully live on for a very long time. It’s true, there’s no place like home.*

*One of Clint Williams’s favorite Olmsted Heritage Days activities was giving away \$100 in cash in the daily five o’clock Butter Churn Drawing. Here he is in August 2014 with an unidentified young volunteer and Jim Boddy, who served many years as the Heritage Days town crier.*

was a Shell station at the northwest corner of Columbia and Water Streets, Brentwood was barricaded at the Falls/Township line, and the Post Office was still on Bagley west of Robey’s Sohio (I can still hear my dad tell the attendant to “fill it up with no-lead”). My first bank account was at NCB when it was next to the train tracks. Unfortunately, I left my hometown before Clint really got his dream going. When I go to visit, I notice all the differences, but the warmth I felt as a kid has gotten warmer thanks to him. He left a wonderful legacy that will hopefully live on for a very long time. It’s true, there’s no place like home.

In another response, Jennifer Miya wrote, “Thank you for the memories! We live on Mill St., a stone’s throw from the Grand Pacific Junction. We so appreciate all that Clint Williams gave to this community.”

Scot Fenderbosch wrote, “He will be missed! He did so much for the city.”

Freda James Forkapa wrote, “So sad to learn of this man’s passing! What an honor for a community to have someone who as an accomplished business

man also had his town in his heart and truly left his great imprint for a better future! God bless his soul! And his family!”



“He was such a kind man,” Ang Mae wrote. “15 yrs ago, he showed my husband and I the Chapel across from Mooseheads when we were looking for a place to get married. I remember it like it was yesterday.”

Gregg Monin wrote, “When we first moved to OLMSTED Falls, downtown was a hard scrabble group of buildings that you just drove by on your way to work. Clint came to the city’s rescue and now it’s a vibrant center of commerce and a jewel to be cherished.”

“Gonna miss him at the Junction,” Valerie Beck wrote. “An amazing man that made OF the beautiful town it is.”

Jean Mayeros Dunbar wrote, “Clint was a very special guy who loved the Falls and is responsible for great development! He will be missed greatly.”



*In his photo from June 24, 2017, Clint Williams is seen sitting outside the Grand Pacific Hotel along Mill Street enjoying a community event.*



*One advantage of being the creator of Grand Pacific was that Clint Williams often was greeted by friends who appreciated his work. In this case on June 27, 2015, he was greeted by Mary Louise King, who proofreads every issue of Olmsted 200.*

From Tony Caterino came this comment: “I miss him coming into the shop every week to talk about old cars and how his feet were hurting and he needed to sit down for a bit. Busiest man I ever knew. Miss you Clint!”

“I miss him, too,” Wayne Peters wrote. “I knew him well!..Worked on his cars!..A very gentle, kind Man.”

Leslie Seefried wrote, “Clint Williams will always be ‘Mr. Olmsted Falls’ to me. I was (and still am) quite disheartened that the GPJ businesses didn’t even honor the man whose vision gave them life. I saw no flags at half-mast, no signs, not a thing. Sad.”

Bobby Sharp offered this memory: “Years ago Mr. Williams hit my father’s mailbox with his car. It was an accident, and my folks were not home. Mr. Williams went up to Home Depot, purchased everything needed to replace the mailbox and post, and did the repair. My father never stopped talking about the rock solid honesty and integrity that Mr. Williams showed in doing this.”

Carol Novak wrote, “He was a Wonderful Man.”

“A man's life is measured by their legacy,” Rick Williamson wrote. “Nice job Clint!”

Rick Adler wrote, “Thank You for everything Clint Williams. R.I.P.”

Finally, last month's story about Clint Williams noted that he enjoyed collecting antique vehicles, and sometimes he displayed during Olmsted Heritage Days one he labeled a “1931 Depot Hack,” which was pictured in the story. That prompted one *Olmsted 200* reader to react in an email.

“Really enjoyed the article,” Terry Woods wrote. “I met Clint at various times as my Dad knew him and did work for him on occasion. I lived in the house next to the park across the street from his ‘gas station’ for a while.”

Further, he wrote, “I collect Model A Fords so will tell you the truck that was called a 31 Depot Hack is actually what was known as a Huckster and was used to sell vegetables, fruit or dairy products door to door. It is a 31 Model A base.”



*This 1922 Vulcan locomotive is among the attractions at Grand Pacific Junction. This photo was taken on March 30, 2014.*



*This is the side of what Clint Williams called a 1931 Depot Hack, but reader Terry Woods says it should be identified as a Huckster, a vehicle with a Model A Ford base.*

If Williams had known that, he likely would have changed the sign on that vehicle. He had made such corrections before. Several years ago, when he was presented with research that showed the locomotive at Grand Pacific Junction that he had labeled as a 1927 Vulcan locomotive had actually been built in 1922, he changed the sign and all handouts that referred to it to show the correct date.





*Although developer Clint Williams is gone, Grand Pacific Junction, which he started 30 years ago, goes on. It now includes more than two dozen businesses and stretches from Orchard Street on the south to just short of Main Street along Columbia Road on the north.*

## **Daughter Shares Photo of Schady's Co-owner**

The recent *Olmsted 200* stories about Clint Williams and Shady's Shell, which Williams converted in 1978 to become the Olmsted Falls office of his real estate agency, prompted Gretchen Christensen Lyon to share a photo of her father, Art Christensen, who co-owned Schady's Shell with Gordon Schady at one time.

At the June 22 Schady's Shell reunion, Williams had asked her for a print of that photo. Unfortunately, she said, Williams passed away before she could get it to him.

The stories about Shady's Shell have included several pictures of the former gas station, as well as items from it, and now a photo of one of its co-owners. They also have included many people's memories of Gordon Schady, but so far, no photo of him has been available. If any reader happens to have a photo of Gordon Schady to share with *Olmsted 200*, please email it to:

[wallacestar@hotmail.com](mailto:wallacestar@hotmail.com). Old photos of the gas station from its heydays in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century also would be welcome.



*This undated photo from Gretchen Christensen Lyon shows her father, Art Christensen, at the pumps when he co-owned Schady's Shell.*

## Olmsted Observed First Armistice Day Commemoration

One century ago on November 11, 1919, the United States observed the first Armistice Day commemoration since World War I ended one year earlier. In its October 30 and November 6, 1919, editions, the *Berea Enterprise* made sure local residents could participate by running this item in its Olmsted Falls column: “The citizens of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township will give a reception to the returned soldiers on Tuesday, Nov. 11, Armistice Day.” The newspaper didn’t specify where that reception was to be held. Nor did it say what the activities would be. Perhaps that was because Olmsted Falls was such a small town back then that an event of that nature would have been hard for anyone in town to miss that day.

In his 1966 book on Olmsted history, Walter Holzworth listed 37 residents of Olmsted – presumably both Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township – as among the Americans who served in World War I in 1917 and 1918. He did not mention any as casualties of the war.

Armistice Day was a new holiday in 1919. In his proclamation for its observance, President Woodrow Wilson said: “To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country’s service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nation.”

The date marked the anniversary of the cessation of hostilities between Germany and the nations allied against it on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of 1918. That ended the fighting, but World War I did not officially end until June 28, 1919, with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in France.

By 1926, 27 state legislatures had declared Armistice Day as a legal holiday, so the U.S. Congress passed a resolution calling for it to be observed throughout the nation. But Congress took until 1938 to pass a law making it a legal holiday nationwide.

After the country’s involvement in World War II and the Korean War, many people thought it was time to broaden the holiday to recognize veterans of more than just



*Many northeastern Ohio residents learned of the World War I armistice from this edition of The Press on November 11, 1918.*



*The morning after the armistice took effect, the Plain Dealer provided more details about the end of fighting in the war.*

World War I. In 1954, Congress passed a new law that changed Armistice Day to Veterans Day, which it has remained.

Many other countries that celebrated Armistice Day after World War I also changed the name after World War II. Those in the British Commonwealth of Nations changed the name to Remembrance Day. Canada, which is one of the Commonwealth nations, already had changed the name to Remembrance Day in 1931.

For several years in the early 1970s, the observance of Veterans Day in the United States was shifted in accordance with the Uniform Holiday Bill, which was signed into law in 1968. That bill moved the observance of Veterans Day and three other national holidays – Washington’s Birthday (now Presidents Day), Memorial Day and Columbus Day – to Mondays to provide federal employees and others with three-day

weekends. But so many people, especially veterans, objected to switching Veterans Day from its traditional schedule of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month that President Gerald Ford signed a new bill into law that moved Veterans Day back to November 11 beginning in 1978.

## Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include stories about how the shape of Olmsted Township has changed over two centuries and the mystery of a photo taken by an Olmsted Falls photographer in the late 1800s.

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

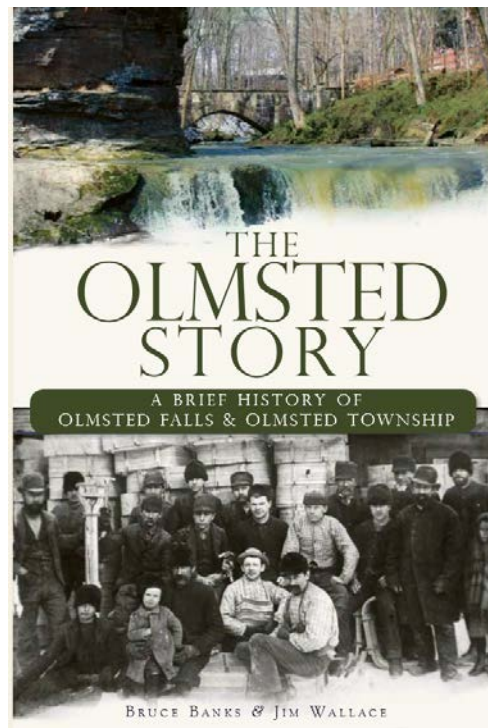
Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted’s history that you would like to have pulled out of *Olmsted*

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



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