



Olmsted 200

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

Issue 9

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Contents

Saloons Once Made Olmsted a Lively Place	1
News of the Past	9
Bulldogs Had a Different Beginning	9
Still to Come	11

Saloons Once Made Olmsted a Lively Place

When people describe downtown Olmsted Falls, they often use the word “quaint” thanks to its restored 19th century and early 20th century buildings. Writer Les Roberts used that word in his 2008 Milan Jacovich mystery, *King of the Holly Hop*. He also wrote that Olmsted Falls “drips charm” similar to Hudson and Chagrin Falls. “It boasts historic houses and a delightful business district called Grand Pacific Junction, with a delicious bakery, interesting and unusual shops, and an amazing French restaurant, *Bistro du Beaujolais*,” he wrote.

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However, those same buildings – along with others that are long gone – were part of a scene in the late 1800s that was not so quaint. With its unpaved streets used by horse-drawn carriages and wagons and hitching posts in front of the stores, Olmsted Falls looked

more like the little towns of movie westerns than the charming suburb it has become.



Olmsted Falls in the late 1800s

Like the towns of the old West, Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township had plenty of saloons, which made the community more colorful but not always in ways appreciated by some citizens. The newspapers from the late 1800s frequently ran items about boisterous saloon patrons and the temperance supporters who tried to get Olmsted to go dry. The Berea newspaper, which began in 1868 as the *Grindstone City Advertiser* but later went through several name changes, initially seemed indifferent or even welcoming to the saloons, a few of which ran ads. But within several years, the newspaper established itself as strongly against the saloons and often was quite vehement even to the point of being amusing in its criticism.

The first mention of the subject in regard to Olmsted seems to have been in the November 20, 1869, edition. The newspaper was still seeking a “local editor” for Olmsted news at that time, but it ran one item from Olmsted: “The Good Templars will present the Temperance drama of ‘The Fruits of the Wine Cup,’ and the Farce entitled ‘Aunt Judy,’ at the Town Hall, Nov. 25th and 26th. Fifteen cents is only charged for admission, which is altogether too little.”

By early 1870, L.B. Adams, a dealer in tinware and stoves, became the Olmsted editor for the paper. In the January 28 edition, he ran this item in his column: “Mr. Jos. Mungaven, of the Olmsted Falls Saloon, has employed the services of a first class Barber, to meet the wants of the people of this place and surrounding country.” That was the first mention of a specific saloon in Olmsted.

By May 1870, the saloon began running an advertisement:

Joseph Mungaven,
Proprietor of the
OLMSTED FALLS SALOON
And Restaurant Keeps always on hand
a fine stock of Wines, Ales and Cigars; also
Oysters in their season.

Apparently Adams and Mungaven were good friends, because in his column in the August 5, 1870, edition, Adams included this item: “Mr. Joseph Mungaven of the Olmsted Falls Saloon, will please receive thanks for those ‘tip-top’ Havanas, we received.”

By then, Mungaven was not alone in advertising a saloon in the newspaper. Above his ad appeared this one:

Dew-Drop Inn Saloon,
J.H. JENNINGS, Proprietor.
Wine, Ale and Cigars.
Also, a full assortment of HOUSEHOLD
FURNITURE constantly kept on hand at
the same place, at reduced prices.

Thus, one saloon had a barber on hand and another sold furniture on the side. But their competition did not last long. The September 9, 1870, edition of the *Advertiser*, included this item: “Mr. Joseph Mungaven is to leave Olmsted for Elyria. He is a gentleman who understands his business well. His many friends will learn with regret his determination to change his location. May his good qualities be appreciated in Elyria.”

It didn’t take him long to leave. Two weeks later, Adams thanked Mungaven “for some very choice cigars” and said he was glad to hear that his friend was pleased with his new location in Elyria.

The Dew-Drop Inn’s ad ran a little while longer, but mentions of Olmsted saloons otherwise disappeared in the newspaper for more than a year. However, the other side received a mention in the November 18, 1870, issue with an item saying the Rev. J.F. Selby would deliver two temperance sermons the following Sunday at the Methodist Episcopal Church (the building that now is the Grand Pacific Wedding Chapel).

By November 1871, the *Advertiser* was running an ad for Mungaven House and Dining Hall in Elyria. Like Mungaven’s former saloon in Olmsted Falls, it sold ales, wines and cigars, but the word “saloon” did not appear.

Judging by the newspaper, issues for and against saloons in Olmsted were quiet during 1872, but the April 11, 1873, edition mentioned that the recent election featured two tickets: one was straight Republican and the other was a mixture of Republicans, Democrats “and so called Prohibitionists.”

In September of that year, an item in the Olmsted column indicated that drinks still were being sold in town. The item was about a 73-year-old German named George Miller who was killed on the railroad tracks just west of the village. The paper said, “He came out of a Saloon and was somewhat intoxicated and noisy, but soon started on his way; but had gone only a short distance when he was struck by what is called the pay car, and was injured so that he died in about three hours.”

By 1873, the newspaper seemed to have turned against the saloons. The items that referred to them tended to express disapproval. One in January complained: "A GOOD many people of this village are crying 'hard times' for money, but there seems to be enough money to keep two or three billiard tables running most of the time." Of course, billiard tables were found in saloons. Later that month, a long item made fun of two young men from Rockport (the township that where Rocky River, Fairview Park, Lakewood and the western end of Cleveland now are) who were so intoxicated while in Olmsted Falls near what is now the Village Green that they had trouble climbing into their wagon and their horses took off without them.

The February 23, 1873, edition included this: "A short time ago there was a little row at the saloon of Nick Nichols, the result being a smashed nose for Nick and a bruise or two for some others who went in to quiet the thing down. Nick had one of the parties arrested and put under bonds to keep the peace. Nick has no cause to grumble, for if he keeps a hell hole he must expect to run against the devil occasionally."

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Women take action.

On April 4, 1874, the *Advertiser* ran a very long piece in the Olmsted column about the adventures of the Women's Temperance League. They began on Tuesday afternoon, March 24, with some singing, prayer and discussion about how to oppose the saloons. "It was not deemed advisable, for the present at least, to conduct religious exercises at the saloons or liquor stores, but we think the ladies have a programme arranged which can scarcely fail of accomplishing much good," the paper reported. "A committee was appointed to visit the ladies of the place and invite them to aid us in the good work, also a committee of young ladies was appointed to present the pledge to the young gentlemen in the village, and a committee to visit the different places where liquor is kept, and talk with them kindly upon the subject to give up the business."

[Please note: The odd spellings and punctuation come from the original documents and are not errors in copying.]

What that course of action meant is clear in the rest of the article:

This committee was out on duty Friday afternoon, they called first at the saloon, the occupants were in the midst of a game of billiards which seemed to come to a sudden termination as the ladies entered. The ladies made known their errand to the proprietor who listened very attentively to their remarks and said whenever they were prepared to buy him out, he

would give up the business and pledge himself never to engage in it again. He acknowledged that it was not a pleasant business, but he must do something to support his family, and could engage in no other business, unless he could sell his interest there. As the ladies were not prepared to transact business of this nature, they passed on to the store of Thomas Pollard, but as he was not at home they left and called at the hotel kept by L. Fitch. He was asked to sign the pledge, but thought there was no necessity in his case; said that he had endeavored to keep a respectable house and that he kept nothing but ale, and did that to accommodate the travelling public, as it would be of no use to undertake to keep the hotel without a bar. He did not seem willing to give up the bar, but treated the ladies in a gentlemanly manner and invited them to call again. The last place visited was the drug store kept by N.P. Loomis. Some have thought that Mr. Loomis had sold to those who were in the habit of getting intoxicated, and the ladies thought it best to notify him of that fact. He acknowledged that he might be imposed upon, but said he had never intended to sell to any one except for medical purpose, that he had been more particular about it of late and meant to be in the future. The ladies left scarcely daring to hope that they had accomplished any good, but with the satisfaction that they had added their mite to the labors of the women who are engaged in this good work.

The article goes on to note that two local preachers had given excellent sermons about temperance that were “calculated to reveal the extent of this great evil” and arouse people to take action. But the article lamented: “Present appearances indicate that here at least, this must be woman’s work as but few of the gentlemen show any decided interest

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in the matter. We have many temperance men who do not hesitate to express their sympathy with the ladies privately if not publicly, but they seem to lack that earnestness which prompts people to act.”

That section of the column concludes by noting that a temperance meeting would be held at the Methodist Episcopal church on the evening of Tuesday, April 7.

That column does not identify the proprietor of the saloon that was the first stop for the temperance women, but it probably was Herman Fenderbosch, a native of Holland who had arrived in Olmsted Falls in 1872. His saloon was in the building that now, appropriately enough, houses The Olde Wine Cellar at 7990 Columbia Road. The hotel, of course, is the building now known as Grand Pacific Hotel. At that time, it was run by Loren Fitch. N.P. Loomis was Newton Loomis, who moved to Olmsted Falls in 1834 and built the house, now at 7850 Main Street, that served as the library from the mid-1950s

until last February. (For more on that, see Issue 6 of *Olmsted 200* from November 1, 2013.)



An early view of the Fenderbosch Saloon before it was expanded. The building now is home to The Olde Wine Cellar.

Just days after the temperance women made their visits, Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township held an election. A report in the April 10, 1874, edition of the *Advertiser* indicated that the ladies did not like the ticket some of the village leaders had nominated for positions in Olmsted Falls, so they came up with their own ticket. (Keep in mind that this was 46 years before the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave women the right to vote.) The article indicated the women’s choice for mayor lost by only one vote, and one of the candidates for village council on their Temperance Party ticket, Joseph Lay, won.

The article said one man even cast a ballot that included the names of some of the village’s prominent women. It said that was “a good thing, for it has made some converts to the Temperance cause, and all the ladies feel bad about, is, that there was not enough votes of that kind.”

New law has unintended effect.

That column also included this item: “There is a petition being circulated here to be presented to the council of this village praying them to pass the McConnellsville Ordinance.” That was an ordinance that became law in McConnellsville in Morgan County in southeastern Ohio when that village took advantage of 1869 Ohio law that granted such authority to municipal governments. The ordinance made it “unlawful for

any person or persons to keep within the said incorporated village of McConnellsville any house, room, shop, booth, arbor, cellar, or place of habitual resort for tippling or intemperance.”

If that wasn't clear enough, the ordinance said: “Be it further ordained, that it shall be unlawful for any person or persons to keep within the said incorporated village of McConnellsville a house, shop, room, booth, arbor, cellar, or place where ale, porter, or beer is habitually sold or furnish to be drank in, upon, or about the house, shop, room, booth, arbor, cellar, or place where so sold or furnished.”

The penalty for violating the first section of the ordinance was a fine of \$10 to \$50 and a jail term of up to 30 days. For violating the second section, the penalty was a fine of up to \$50 and a jail term of up to 20 days. But the ordinance also provided that an offender could remain in jail until the fine was paid. It should be clear why such an ordinance was popular among temperance supporters, who wanted other municipalities like Olmsted Falls to adopt it.

The May 1, 1874, edition of the *Advertiser*, followed up with this item:

The temperance question has engrossed the attention of the people for some time past, and the ladies have not been idle, although they have not inaugurated a crusade yet. They took what they thought to be a better course, they drew up a petition and circulated it, getting as many names as they could, praying the Council to pass the McConnellsville Ordinance.

L.L. Fitch, and Joseph Bartlett, circulated a petition praying for the same object, among the moderate drinkers, and on both petitions were the names of forty-four voters, which were presented to the Council for their consideration. A remonstrance was also presented, containing fifty names, but after the names were sifted by the Mayor, it was found that only twenty-two were names of voters. The Council went to work, and on Thursday evening of last week, the Ordinance passed to its third reading and was adopted, there being only one dissenting vote. We await the result with interest. The saloonists are doing some big talking, but what their actions will be, time will tell.

Another item in the same column said: “We should judge by the appearance of several persons on the street Monday afternoon, that they had read the Ordinance and were improving the time before it takes effect.” That seemed to indicate that some the saloons were expected to close soon, so some patrons were drinking as much as they could before that happened. But a subsequent article on May 8, 1874, indicated that the ordinance passed late in April had not resulted in the closing of saloons:

There was a little row one evening last week, at the billiard room kept by Ezra Bradford, but as both parties were in poor condition to fight, there was no harm done.

There is an effort being made to close the saloons and billiard rooms at ten o'clock P.M., and it will undoubtedly be done immediately. Olmsted will come out all right yet, our Mayor and Council evidently mean business.

In the May 28, 1874, *Advertiser*, this item appeared: "Beer drinkers now go to the saloon and buy their beer by the quart, borrow the measure and a glass, and go out on the sidewalk and drink, that there is a certain class that do this, and unless there is some way to put a stop to it, the liquor traffic will be more of a nuisance than it was before the McConnellsville Ordinance."

The same column also had this item: "The ladies are still engaged in the temperance cause, although they are more powerful in good resolves and determinations, than in numbers."

"Beer drinking on the side-walk, is carried on to such an extent, that it has become a miserable nuisance, and there does not seem to be stamina enough in the place to take any action on the matter."

On June 4, 1874, the story was this: "We are reaping the benefits of the McConnellsville Ordinance with a vengeance. Beer drinking on the side-walk, is carried on to such an extent, that it has become a miserable nuisance,

and there does not seem to be stamina enough in the place to take any action on the matter. There seems to be a difference of opinion as to how far 'about the place' reaches, whether it is inside the saloon or on the steps or side-walk, or half a mile away. But when a man goes out and drinks his beer within three feet of the door, some think that it is about the place, and pretty close at that, but people will differ in opinion, especially where they are interested."

That week's Olmsted column also noted that the Methodist Episcopal church had a temperance mass meeting on the previous Sunday evening. "It is sincerely hoped that the gentlemen of our place will take a stand in this matter with an earnestness which will stamp them as advocates for the right," the paper said.

That summer apparently was a tough one for the opponents of drinking. The September 10, 1874, edition of the *Advertiser* ran this: "There was a petition presented to the Council at their regular meeting on Monday evening, for the repeal of the McConnellsville Ordinance, but they were not in a repealing mood that night."

By the end of the year, a new front opened in the conflict between saloon supporters and opponents. The newspaper's West View column ran this item in the December 10, 1874, edition: "Our sister towns can no longer crow over us, for we too have a beer shop in full blast where the ardent is dealt out to both old and young. It is

surprising to see the number of smart, enterprising young men and youths that frequent the place. The Crusaders are alive and ready for action.”

Thus, as Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township, which included West View, were about to head into 1875, almost 60 years since the first settlers move into Olmsted, it was an uneasy time for residents. The battles were far from over. The story of those battles will continue in the next issue of *Olmsted 200*.

News of the Past

The earliest book now available with the history of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township is Crisfield Johnson’s 1879 *History of Cuyahoga County, Ohio*, which established that the first settlers – James Geer and his family – moved into the township from Columbia Township, where they had been living, in 1815. Although Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township measure their founding from 1814, Geer did nothing more that year than plant some corn in Olmsted. Johnson got his information from Geer’s son, Calvin.

Johnson’s history is valuable for establishing the dates of the corn planting and the subsequent settlement, but an article in the September 9, 1870, edition of the *Grindstone City Advertiser* gave an earlier account – without dates – on what happened 55 years prior to then. The article said that “the first house built in Olmsted was by Mr. James Geer – father of Calvin Geer, one of our present trustees, on the farm now owned by Mr. Albert Bronson. It has long since mouldered into dust, and nothing now marks the spot where once stood the home of our first pioneer and settler. Like it, he too has passed away, and lives only in the memory and hearts of friends and family. On this farm was dug the first grave, and entombed the first white person in Olmsted – a child daughter of Mr. James Geer. Like many other things that ought not to be, nothing marks the spot, and all traces of Olmsted’s first grave is lost to the present generation.”

The article goes on to say: “The second house was built by Mr. Bannel – father of Leonard Bannel, now living in Olmsted, near the present residence of Mr. Wm. T. Hurd. It was constructed of plank, Mr. Bannel bringing them with him for the purpose. The first frame house was built by Major Hoadley, on the farm now owned by Mrs. Barnum. It is recorded as a fact that although the house was quite large, with many heavy timbers, it was raised by the Major’s two daughters and two hired men, while he was away to meeting. This house was torn down a few years ago to give place for a new and more beautiful one. In front, where once stood the the [sic] wild forest tree, now stands the cultivated tree and plant, also a fine hedge which Master Heman B. trims to his own, and we believe the public’s satisfaction.”

Bulldogs Had a Different Beginning

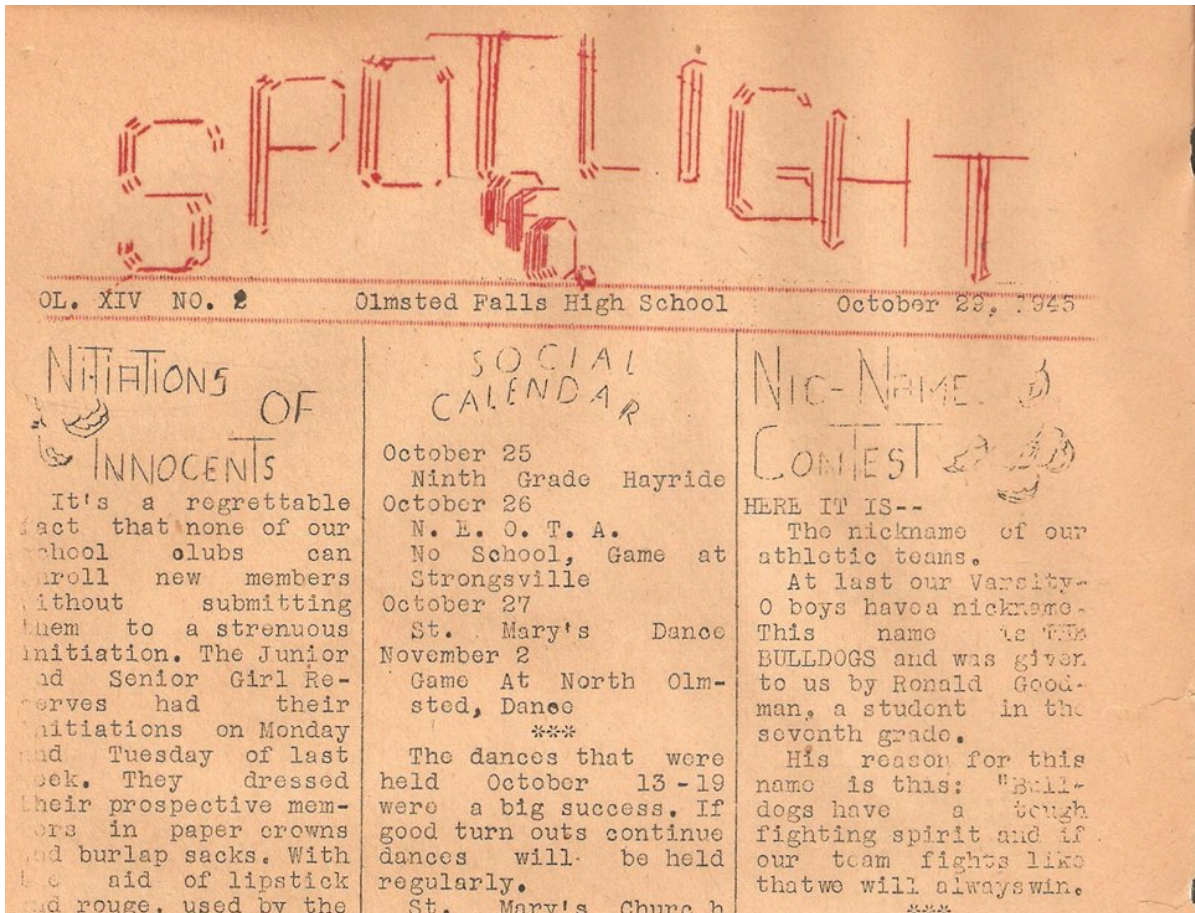
When writing history, it is usually a good idea to go back to the earliest accounts of events to establish what happened and when, such as using Crisfield Johnson’s 1879

history rather than those written in the 20th century to establish that Olmsted was first settled in 1815.

During the writing of *The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township* (co-authored with Bruce Banks) in 2010, the earliest reference I could find to how the sports teams at Olmsted Falls High School got their Bulldogs nickname was from a newspaper article written decades after the fact. Recently, information from the time of the naming surfaced with a slightly different story.

The newspaper article used as a source for *The Olmsted Story* correctly placed 1945 as the year the nickname was acquired and correctly said it was the result of a contest. But it cited Sally Geist of the class of 1948 as offering the winning entry. But the most recent issue of *Alumni Newsletter* from the Olmsted Falls Schools Endowment and Alumni Association revealed that a copy of *Spotlight*, the OFHS student newspaper, from October 29, 1945, reported that Ronald Goodman, who then was a seventh grade student offered the winning entry. His reason for his choice: "Bulldogs have a tough fighting spirit and if our team fights like that we will always win."

Therefore, that seems to be the definitive account of how the Bulldogs got their name. As writer of *The Olmsted Story*, I stand corrected. I wish that 1945 copy of the *Spotlight* had been readily available when I was working on the book.



Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will have more on the conflicts over Olmsted's saloons. Still in the works is an article about the history of Olmsted's greenhouses. Anyone with information about greenhouses, present or past, is invited to share it. Also, old photos of greenhouses or anything relating to them would be welcome.

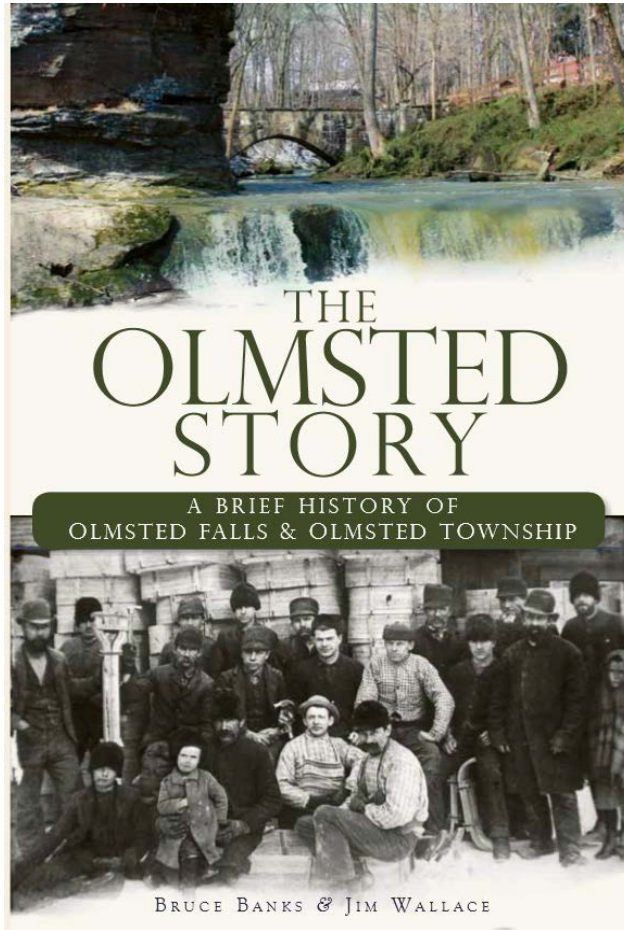
If you know of others who would like to receive *Olmsted 200* by email, please feel free to forward it to them. They can get on the distribution list by sending a request to: wallacestar@hotmail.com.

Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. Perhaps there is something about Olmsted's history that you would like me to pull out of my 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 now can be found on Olmsted Township's website. Go to <http://www.egovlink.com/olmsted/docs/menu/home.asp> and click on "Bicentennial Committee."

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. 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 Clementine's Victorian Restaurant at Grand Pacific Junction and through online booksellers.



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