



Olmsted 200

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

Issue 7

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Photos Show Olmsted Falls from Decades Ago

Olmsted Falls is fortunate that many of its buildings from the 19th century and early 20th century have been preserved. Of course, Clint Williams is responsible for preserving many of them and putting them to new uses as Grand Pacific Junction. Williams acquired most of the GPJ buildings in 1989 from Bill Kucklick, who operated Kucklick's Village Square Shoppe for many years.

But not all of the downtown Olmsted Falls buildings have been saved, especially those that stood on the east side of Columbia Road. Thanks to several photos from the collection of Bill Kucklick's sister, Carolyn Petlowany, we have the chance to see what some of those long-gone buildings looked like as far back as the late 1930s.

Carolyn and Bill's father was Fred Kucklick, who was better known by his nickname, Fritz. Walter Holzworth, in his 1966 history of Olmsted, wrote that Fritz Kucklick, who did electrical work and appliance repair, moved into Olmsted Falls with his family in 1925. When Carolyn was a baby, her father started the Radio Electric Shop in a building attached to the house where they lived. Carolyn's Great Aunt Nettie Moore operated a dry goods store in the same building. That building was the third one south of the railroad tracks on the east side of Columbia Road. Years later, it housed Kaufman's Delicatessen.

In 1940, Fritz Kucklick moved his business across the street into the Depositors Bank Building. He renamed the business Kucklick's. Nettie Moore soon moved her business over there, too.

In 1955, Bill Kucklick joined his father in operating the business, which soon became an appliance store. Under the name Kucklick's Village Square Shoppe, it sold furniture in addition to appliances. Carolyn Petlowany said her father never really retired

from the business before his death on January 16, 1984. Although he spent his winters in Florida, whenever he was in Ohio, he spent most of his time at the store.



This photo from about 1937 shows the house where Carolyn Petlowany lived as a child. It was taken before the barber/beauty shop on the left became Fritz Kucklick's Radio Electric Shop. Note that Columbia Road was paved with bricks at that time.



This photo from about 1938 shows what the store looked like after Fritz Kucklick moved his Radio Electric Shop into the right side and Nettie Moore's Dry Goods shop occupied the left side. This is the building that later housed Kaufman's Delicatessen.



Just north of the Dry Goods store was a Sinclair Gasoline station. The gas station was located immediately south of an automobile dealership owner by Henry Schritz. The H-C in the middle of the sign was Sinclair's brand of high-octane gasoline, which the company introduced in 1926. The photo was taken in 1938 or 1939. The two women are Nettie Moore and Del Kucklick, sister-in-law of Fritz Kucklick, and her son, Joe Kucklick.

This photo looking north along Columbia Road not only shows a few buildings that no longer exist but also Carolyn Petlowany as a child. The closest building is the one that housed Fritz Kucklick's Radio Electric Shop. Beyond that is the sign for the Sinclair Gasoline station, and just beyond that is the sign for Schritz's auto dealership. It seems to indicate that Schritz sold Chryslers and Plymouths, although Walter Holzworth wrote that it originally sold Nash and Whippet cars. North of the railroad tracks on the other side of Columbia Road is the shack for Frank Nickels, the man who tended the railroad gates. Beyond the small building just north of the shack is a large building where Richard and Robert Fenderbosch operated a grocery and lunch counter. A January 19, 1949, fire damaged that building beyond repair. In the building that replaced it, Tom Kucklick, Carolyn's other brother, eventually moved his West View Appliance store, which he had started in West View.





Columbia Road was still paved with bricks when this parade, apparently for Homecoming, passed in front of Barnum's Supermarket. The year the photo was taken is uncertain, but it could not have been earlier than the late 1940s, because Barnum's was in the building that Henry Schritz's auto dealership had occupied for 19 years. According to Walter Holzworth, Schritz moved his dealership to Berea in July 1946. Barnum's Supermarket burned down in the late 1960s.



This photo from the early 1950s shows Nettie Moore, who ran the dry goods store. The bank of snow behind her was along Columbia Road in front of the Depositors Bank Building, where she and Fritz Kucklick had moved their stores. In the background is Baluk's Pharmacy. (It stood just south of the house where Carolyn Petlowany lived as a child – the house attached to what formerly was the Radio Electric Shop and Dry Goods store. By the time this photo was taken, Kaufman's Delicatessen occupied that shop.) The old buildings along the east side of Columbia Road are long gone and replaced by Mill River Plaza.



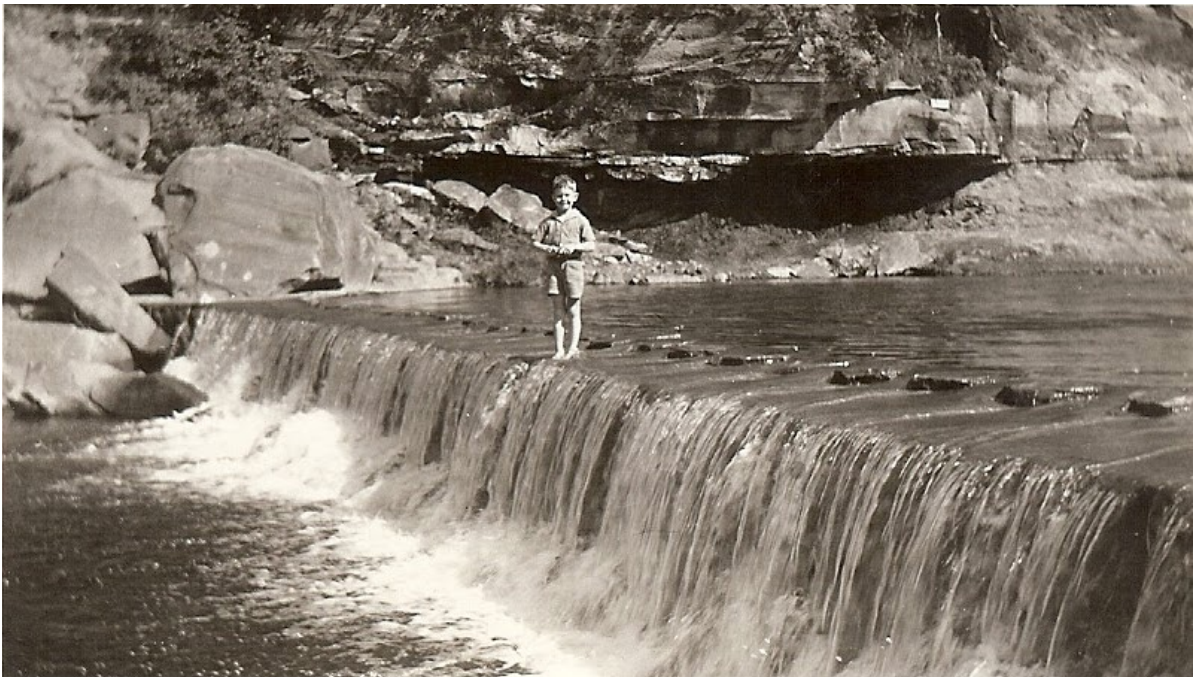
This is what the Depositors Bank Building looked like in 1958 or 1959, when Kucklick's shared it with National City Bank. Note that the side was not open the way it is now. Clint Williams opened up the side to make storefronts and the boardwalk when he created Grand Pacific Junction. This photo and the next two come from Carrie Moore, Carolyn Petlowany's daughter.



By 1964, when this photo was taken, Kucklick's had updated the building's façade and was specializing in early American-style furniture under the name Village Square Shoppe.



In 1962, when this photo was taken, this building served as Olmsted Falls Village Hall and also housed the fire and police departments. The building later was named the Bonsey Building for Charles Bonsey, who was mayor when it was built in the early 1940s. Now it is the home of the Moosehead restaurant and the Roberts Law Firm.



This photo shows the Rocky River dam located in the park (now David Fortier River Park) in Olmsted Falls before the stepping stones washed away. The boy is Bill Kucklick. Carolyn Petlowany believes the photo was taken in 1935-1937.



Bill Kucklick also carved his sister's initials, M.C.K. (for Mary Carolyn Kucklick) into a grindstone serving as a tabletop in the park about 1937. Above the initials is a propeller, which represented Bill's fascination for airplanes and flying.

Many thanks go to Carolyn Petlowany for sharing her photos and for supplying most of the information in this story and to Carrie Moore for sharing three of her photos.

If you have photos from the past of Olmsted Falls, Olmsted Township or the old West View that you would like to share with readers, please send them to wallacestar@hotmail.com along with any information to identify the subjects of the photos and when they were taken.

News of the Past

One century ago, the frequent subject of articles about Olmsted in the *Berea Enterprise* was on the coming of electric power lines. For example, the January 31, 1913, edition included an article that said:

Olmsted Falls, Jan. 28 – The farmers west of town along the Dutch road are holding frequent meetings to consider the best location for the new 2300-volt power line of the G.E. Milligan Co., for supplying current to Olmsted Falls and the quarries of the Cleveland Stone Co., at Columbia and Berea.

It is understood that the company has offered \$5.00 per pole for a perpetual lease for a line ten feet from the L.S. & M.S. right of way line, and has also considered going on a lot line north of the railroad; but in

either case will not deal direct with the residents along the route for supplying current.

It is also stated on good authority that if consents can be secured to build the line along the road they will furnish current direct to the residents, at the rates in force in Elyria, and furnish the meters.

Sentiment along the route seems to favor the latter proposition.

A few weeks later, the February 21, 1913, issue of the *Enterprise* contained this small item in a column of Olmsted Falls news: "Several homes are being wired for electric lights."

March 14, 1913: "Our city dads will certainly have to 'go some' if they expect to light the town with electricity this summer. Quoting one of our newly appointed Directors of Public Works, 'We should worry.'"

April 4, 1913: "A gang of workmen are now engaged in setting poles for the electric light line in the village."

April 11, 1913: "Poles are being distributed for the electric light line."

Also from that same edition: "The G.E. Milligan Co. is trying to secure consents through the village along the Dutch and Irish roads for its 23 000 volt line to Berea. This is a dangerous high voltage to run along public streets, and it would be well to beware." [NOTE: Dutch Road and Irish Road were parts of what now is known as Bagley Road.]

Still elsewhere in that edition, an article about a meeting of Olmsted Falls Council said: "Bills for electric lighting material totaling about \$2250.00 and also various official salaries were ordered paid."

Two weeks later in the April 25, 1913, edition was this item: "Poles are up for the electric lighting installation, and some wires are strong. It looks now as though the village would have its work ready before the G.E. Milligan Co. is in shape to furnish current."

May 16, 1913: "Electric current will probably be turned into the village late in June. Our original guess of the 4th of July isn't so far off."

May 30, 1913: "A special meeting of the council Wednesday night voted to extend the electric light wires to the easterly village limits on the Irish road and the southerly limits on the Columbia-rd."

Also from that same issue: "It appears to be definitely decided now that the rate for electric current to private consumers in the village will be ten cents per kilowatt hour."

An article with the headline, "LIGHTS AT FALLS," and sub-headline, "Current Ready to be Turned on and Olmsted Will Take on New Glory," appeared on the front page of the June 6, 1913, edition of the *Enterprise*. Here is what it said:

Within a few days, the village of Olmsted Falls expects to join the class of metropolitan towns that can boast of the possession of electric lights.

The village has been wired and the lights are in place. Many circumstances in the fight for an electric lighting system will be remembered by residents of Olmsted Falls for many years to come.

The first move in the battle that will finally terminate when the power is turned on, was made about two weeks after Mayor C.R. Moley took office. He appointed a special committee of the council and citizens to investigate the possibilities of lighting the town.

Moley and his colleagues were forced to face opposition at many points before the object of the committee was accomplished [sic]. The bond election carried by three votes. There was strife over the selling of the bonds and the letting of the contract. Many of the old residents said they didn't need lights. At several sessions of the committee and the council, warm words were spoken and harsh murmurings were heard.

During all the trouble, Moley held his committee together. The bonds were sold and the contract let. Now the actual current is all to be turned into the wires.

Moley, who knows something about college athletics, has learned the value of keeping up the fight until time is called. He is an expert basket shooter and won his points by fighting for them and 'being there' first.

"The credit is due the committee," is the way Moley puts it. "We had opposition at first, but I believe now that the people will realize that they have a good thing. It took fighting to do it, but the lights are here and hard facts count.

It is like a game of foot ball or basket ball". [sic] The committee is composed of the following members: R.C. Moley, chairman; Robert Fletcher, A.J. Mitchell, C.M. Durbin and A.E. Atkinson.

The Milligan Company's rate to the village is 3 cents per unit up \$100 worth of current, then 2½ cents up to \$200 and a flat rate of 2 cents for larger amounts. The village erects its own lines and keeps them in repair.

Later in that issue were these items: "A half interest in the electric light poles on two streets was sold to the G.E. Milligan Co. for \$90, and a pay ordinance was passed.

"A special meeting is expected to be called shortly for turning over the electric lines to the Board of Public Service."

An item in the June 27, 1913, edition indicated that the project had not progressed as quickly as some people had hoped: “It is reported that the current for the new lighting system will not be available until the middle of July.”

The next item appeared in the August 1, 1913, issue: “It is positively promised by members of the village administration that the long-awaited electric current will be turned on either tonight or Thursday night. Hurrah.”

However, not all was well after that. This item appeared on September 5, 1913: “There are many complaints by citizens who have their homes wired of their inability to obtain electric service from the village.”

Many of those complaints apparently were addressed, because the paper ran nothing more about them for the rest of 1913. But the February 6, 2014, edition of the *Enterprise* included this item: “Our Board of Public service is composed of Dr. Westbrook, P. Simmerer and Walter Locke. Tell your electric light troubles to any one or all of them.”

All must have been well after that, because the *Enterprise* made no more mentions of electricity troubles in Olmsted Falls for the rest of 1914. The next item about Olmsted electricity appeared on January 15, 1915, and it was positive: “James Scroggie, Jr., is having his house wired for electric lights.”

That is what it was like, at least in the pages of the local newspaper, a century ago when electric power reached Olmsted Falls. Back then, it was a struggle to get it. Today, electricity is ubiquitous. Of course, it plays an important role in making the season bright this time of year.



Grand Pacific Junction during a recent holiday season

Still to Come

As Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township prepare to celebrate their bicentennial, *Olmsted 200* will look at how they marked their centennial. Did they celebrate in 1914, the 100th anniversary of James Geer’s little corn crop that was the first known farming in

the community? Or did they wait until 1915 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of when James Geer and his family moved out of Columbia Township into the future Olmsted Township to become Olmsted's first settlers?

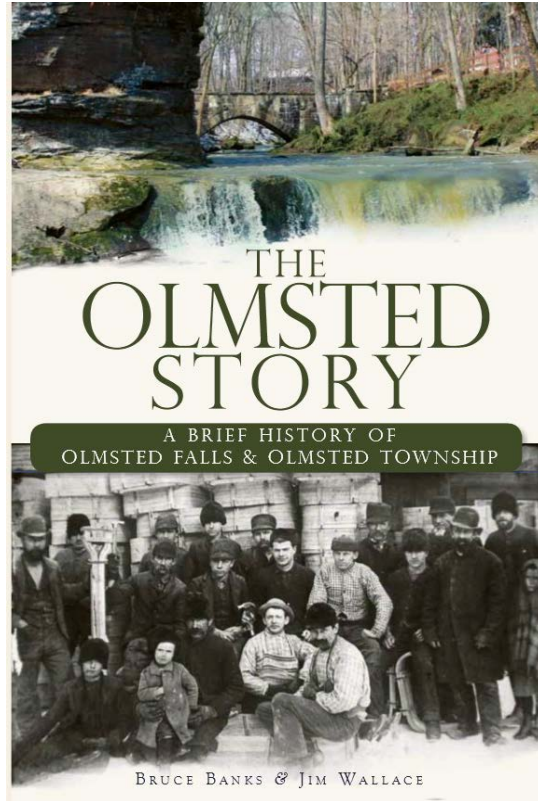
Also in 2014, *Olmsted 200* will include other articles about Olmsted's history, such as the fierce battles that raged over whether the community should allow saloons to operate. They made for an interesting chapter in Olmsted's development.

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. If you are a new reader and would like to receive the first six issues, let me know that at the same address.

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.

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Written contributions, 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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