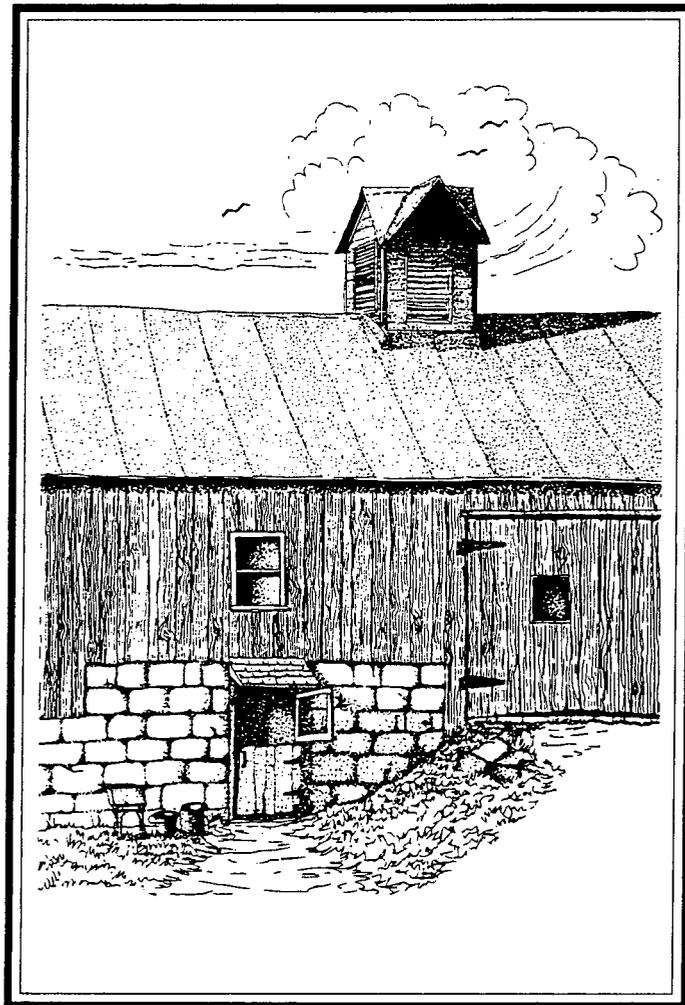


The Village of Walton Hills  
♦  
**TRACING OUR HERITAGE**



BY  
**JEAN KAINSINGER with ROBERT KAINSINGER**

THE VILLAGE OF WALTON HILLS  
—TRACING OUR HERITAGE—

by  
JEAN KAINSINGER  
with  
ROBERT KAINSINGER

PHOTOS and PHOTO REPRODUCTIONS by NINA WOLF

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Founded as Walton Hills Village  
Some thirty and five years ago  
May the community spirit  
Flourish and continue to grow.

*Cover drawing: AN OLD BARN, built c. 1870, stands close to Button Road and the Hemlock  
Creek Picnic Area, Bedford MetroPark. Pen and ink drawing by Nina Wolf*

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## PREFACE

Walton Hills is the special place where we chose to make our homes and raise our families. We were attracted by the beauty of its terrain — the hills, dales, and streams. The cool, fresh-smelling air, the wholesome country atmosphere, and generous lot sizes helped us decide that this is where we wanted to establish roots.

Long before us, during the Ice Age that ended in Ohio fourteen or fifteen thousand years ago, thundering rivers of water from melting glaciers carved out the Cuyahoga Valley. This happened three, or possibly, four times. Each time torrents of water from receding glaciers deposited their rocks and soil on our ridges and dumped their remaining rocks and soil on the newly formed river bottoms. The granite rocks and the quartz lucky stones we find in our yards were brought here from Canada by the glaciers. In addition, top soil originating in Canada helped enrich our land.

Some of our Walton Hills roadways date back to 10,000 B.C. and were created by the bison, or as they are commonly called, the buffalo. When the climate began to warm up, giant mammals moved through our area in search of food. Some of their paths are still used by us today. Dunham Road, from our southern border to Tinker's Creek Road, was a bison path. So too was Alexander Road from Dunham Road to our western border.

The bridle paths we find in our wooded areas and fields were first made by bears, horses, deer, and other smaller animals in their search for food, water, and salt. Their paths led to Tinker's Creek and its tributaries which flow through the village. In fact, one local tributary is Deerlick Creek, named for its saltlicks. As water tumbled down Deerlick Creek's cascade of falls, salty water seeped to the surface through crevices in the rock.

Walton Hills has gone through numerous changes since man first lived in this section of Bedford Township. This book tells about the people who preceded us, what the area was like when they lived here, how they lived, the problems they faced, and the contributions they made to the growth and preservation of our village.

This glimpse of local history was written with the hope that the reader would gain additional knowledge of what came before and thus have a deeper understanding of the community's heritage. The writer feels that it is only through a familiarization of our past that we can appreciate the advantages of residing in the Village of Walton Hills. Through the continued efforts of dedicated and involved villagers, our descendants can also look forward to sharing a bright future in this fine community.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express her sincere appreciation to the following individuals for their assistance in helping piece together the history of the Village of Walton Hills.

To the Mayor and Council who provided the funds for the printing of the Village history, a most grateful thank you: Mayor William Bosway, President of Council James Podojil, and Council Members Dr. Richard Charsanko, Jerome Hornak, Doris Pankratz, Edward Thellmann, and Joseph Tomcik.

A sincere thanks to Thomas Fiore of Bedford Lithograph Corporation, for his counseling and assistance with the printing of the book. Tom and Lucy Fiore lived at 17240 Spanghurst Drive from 1965 until 1984.

The following people graciously allowed themselves to be interviewed so their knowledge about life in the township in days gone by could be preserved in writing. Unless otherwise stated, the person lived in Walton Hills at the time of the interview. Betsy Baker, Kirtland; Charles Balogh; Dorothy Benjamin, Bedford; William Bosway; Dr. David Brose, Museum of Natural History; and Ethel Brown, Valley View. Floyd Carr, Sr.; Gina Carson; Dr. Richard Charsanko; Joseph Check; Robert and Hazel Chvatal; Dorothy Cigany; Steve Ciuni; Ray Conelly; and Bill and Betty Cottrill. Scott Dean; Isabel DeMarco; Florence Drabik; Arlene Duffy; Henry Dzikowski; Helen Eglit; Walter and Lillian Fifer; Howard and Lois Fradette; Laura Frankito; Grace Goad, Maple Heights; and Effie Goodnight. Ted and Jean Hack; Yaro Hesoun; and Charles and Julia Hyrmer. Johanne Irish, Bratenahl; Joseph Jesensky, Akron; Andrew and Lynn Jones, Bedford. Mary Keilman, Bedford; Ronald Keller; Julius and Grace Kerekes; Albe Klukan; Anna Kolis; Ray Kolis; and Lillian Kral. Jack Laing, Hartville; Richard Long and Velda Long, Solon; Matt and Grace Mathieson; Maureen McGinty, MetroParks; Gertrude Means, Valley View; Alberta Mestnik; and Mariam Mills. Eunice Nichols, Bedford; John Orchard, Bedford; Sebastian Parisiliti, Tinker's Creek Tavern; Norm and Betty Pearce, Maple Heights; Barbara Podgurski; James Podojil; and Gus Prinios, Astorhurst Restaurant. Elsie Rada; Lois Rada; Jack Rada; Clarence and Marie Rizer; Steve Romanik; and Elizabeth Romanowski. Tom and Chris Sabo; Jim Salamon; John and Anna Sedensky; Jake and Eleanor Senchur; Frank and Ann Simone; Beverly Sirna; Ruth Soldat, Valley View; Helen Sopko; Al and Alice Spoto; Dick Squire,

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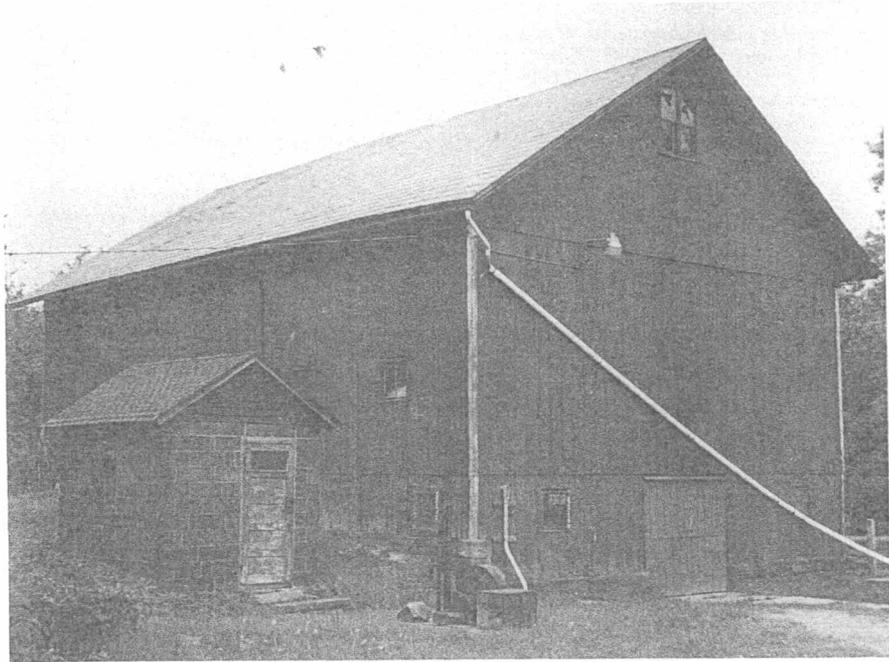
Bedford; and Dean Svec. Eleanore Telischek, Parma; Mary Toth; Jerry Vlach; Florence Wagner, Gainesville, Florida; Betty Walton; Robert Whitaker, Valley View; Jack Willing; Joan Wills; Madeline Wilson, Maple Heights; Elsie Wingenfeld; Frank, Sr. and Emily Wolf; Frank Wolf, Jr.; Richard Wolinski; Thomas and Margaret Young; and Ruth Zeman, Maple Heights.

Several cooperative people gathered pertinent material about the village history which they then made available to the writer. Special thanks to the following: Ralph Berger, Mayor William Bosway, Julie Cindric, Steve Ciuni, Elaine Clements, Patricia Day, Lillian Fifer, Marge Ignaut, Joseph Jesensky, Lois Lambert, Pete Sochacki, Dick Squire, Joseph Tomcik, Betty Walton, Jan Wilhelm, Walter Wingenfeld, and Former Mayor Thomas Young.

There is a chapter in the book about Joseph Jesensky, the multi-talented senior citizen whose lifelong concern has focused on the preservation of the history and ecology of the Cuyahoga Valley area. With those objectives in mind, he has acquainted numerous park personnel and residents with the natural and historic treasures they have at their doorstep. He provided the writer copies of his personal reference material collected and/or written throughout the years.

Nina Wolf reproduced the old photographs, maps, and drawings which are in the book. Recent photographs of older houses in the village and some of the graphics are also her work. Wolf entered the picture featured on the cover of this book in the 1984 Cuyahoga Valley Recreation Area Painting Competition, Pen and Ink Category. Her drawing took first place honors. Wolf's illustrations are an attractive and informative addition to the book. Frank, Jr. and Nina Wolf reside at 6640 Dunham Road.

Robert Kainsinger undertook the task of editing the text to make it more concise and readable. He also graciously accepted his wife's interest in the history of the southwest corner of Bedford Township and made it a family research project. His help and support are sincerely appreciated.



*THE CLEVELAND HILL FARM BARN was erected by Clark Cleveland. In the 1930's the faint lettering on the front of the barn could still be read ... "The Cleaveland Farm." (1986 photograph)*

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## OLD INDIAN TRAILS

The Indians didn't have to cut many of their own trails; they were tramped down years beforehand by the bison who traveled on high ground in single file.

Following bison trails along the ridges had its advantages. Snow didn't drift and pile up on a ridge as it did in valleys, so trekking along a ridge in winter made traveling easier. Trails through river valleys were prone to flooding during periods of thaw and heavy rainfalls, and mosquitos thrived in river bottomland. Thus, the principal bison trails were at the higher elevations.

From as early as 3500 B.C. (Prehistoric Indians) and as recent as the late 1700's (Historic Indians), Indian tribes lived and traveled on trails along our entire stretch of Dunham Road and our west section of Alexander Road.

Tinker's Creek and its tributaries provided Prehistoric Indians a good hunting ground, drinking water, and scattered saltlicks.

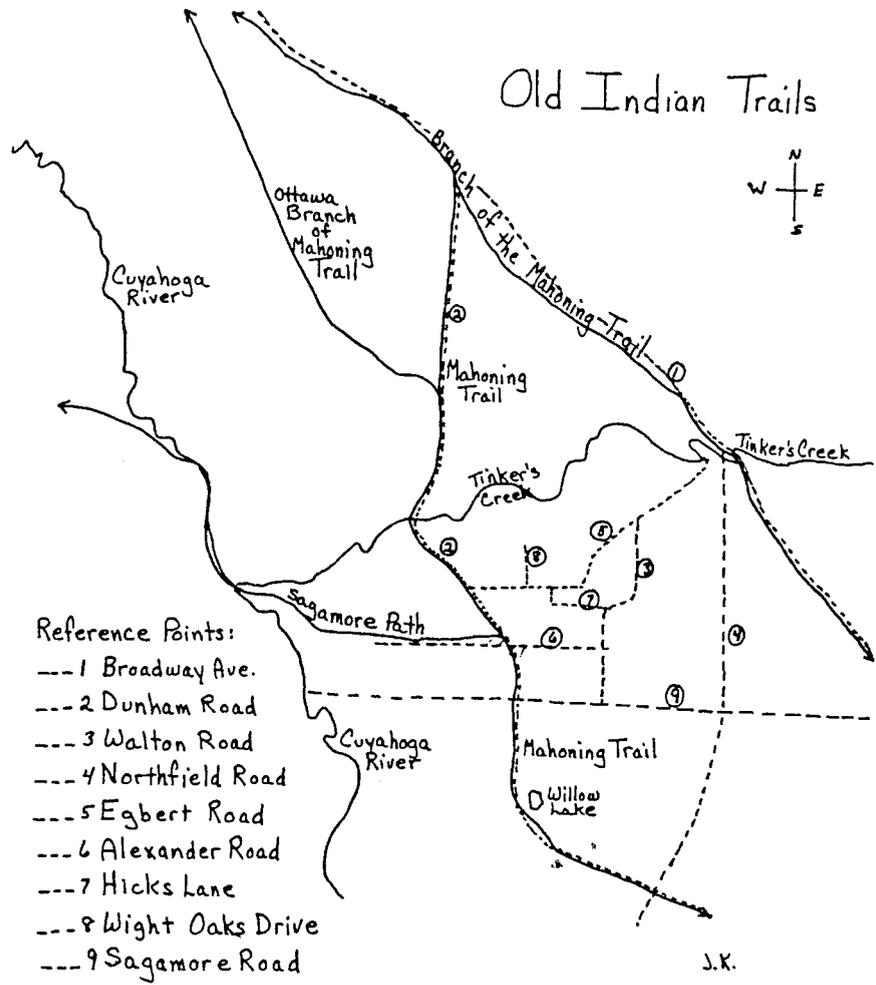
Likewise, more recent Indian tribes were also attracted to our area, using the same trails and water sources. Bands of Indians camped along our ridges near trails, and used both the ridges and bottomland for farming — especially along Sagamore and Tinker's Creeks.

Depending on their purpose, their needs, and their haste, the Indians used alternative paths to get to their destinations. Some paths led to hunting grounds, some were primarily for traveling, others for scouting, and still others were war paths.

French explorers and fur trappers used the Indian trails, as did Moravian Missionaries. Pack trains carrying supplies to western forts and trading posts compacted the ground and widened the trails. Settlers in search of homesites followed those same ruts. Many of those old, well-used trails — straightened, leveled, and paved — serve as our roads today.

From 1914 through the early 1930's a small group of local men who were interested in preserving Ohio history formed the Indian Pathfinders Association No. 1. Using information researched from a variety of sources, they made detailed maps of old Indian trails in our area and in Ohio. Two of the most active Pathfinders were its founder and president, Elmer B. Wight (past owner of the Cleveland Hill Farm on Wight Oaks Lane and father-in-law of Walton Hills' first mayor) and secretary, Virgil D. Allen, Sr. (father of our first mayor).

# Old Indian Trails



## THE MAHONING TRAIL

Dunham Road, from its southern end northward, was one of the main Indian paths. Called the Mahoning Trail, it started where the three rivers met in Pittsburgh, worked its way through Ohio, and ended in Detroit.

A good hunting spot along the way was the Tinker's Creek Valley in today's Bedford MetroPark. Frequently, animals could be spotted near the creek as they sought fresh water and salt.

French explorers, fur trappers, and traders used the Mahoning Trail. However, they apparently kept no written account of their travels, so we have to rely on information from others about the French in our area. It is known that from 1524 to the 1700's the French explored the Great Lakes Region and were seen here by the Moravian missionaries, the English, and were friendly with several bands of Indian tribes.

In frontier years the great trail connected Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit, the two most important outposts in the Northwest Territory.

The French and the English traveled the Mahoning Trail, and probably hunted and camped in the western end of Bedford MetroPark. Also using the trail were commercial pack trains that transported goods between the two forts, stopping at trading posts along the way. Pioneers moving to their western homesites also used the Mahoning Trail.

## THE OTTAWA PATH

From where the Mahoning Trail forded Tinker's Creek and headed north, it was called the Ottawa Branch of the Mahoning Trail. The Ottawa Branch climbed Dunham Road hill and continued to Turney Road. The trail then followed what is now Turney Road through Garfield Heights, to Broadway Avenue, and went on to Lake Erie. Thus, Dunham Road, Turney Road, Broadway Avenue, as well as other main thoroughfares throughout Cuyahoga County were once Indian paths.

## THE SAGAMORE PATH

A well used branch of the Mahoning Trail called the Sagamore Path also went through Walton Hills. At Dunham and Alexander Roads the Sagamore Path followed the northern ridge of Sagamore Creek in a westerly direction along Alexander Road. At the western end of Hub Industrial Park it veered north, followed the ridge, and continued north toward Tinker's Creek.

The Sagamore Path was a supply route to western outposts; provisions and furs were traded enroute.

Moravian missionaries, who set up a temporary village of Pilgerruh near Hathaway and Canal Roads, in 1786 recorded seeing lengthy commercial pack horse trains moving slowly along the Sagamore Path. The missionaries sometimes saw pack trains consisting of ten men leading ninety horses laden with flour, bacon, and other supplies. The pack trains headed for Lake Erie where the goods were shipped by boat to Sandusky and Detroit.

Another alternate Indian route along the Mahoning Trail started where Dunham Road meets Tinker's Creek. It followed the north ridge that parallels Tinker's Creek Road, leading west to the Cuyahoga River.

### THE BUCKEYE TRAIL

The Buckeye Trail is included here to differentiate between the historic trails described above and this modern trail. The Buckeye Trail Association was established in 1959, and is an Ohio non-profit association. The trail is open for all to use for walking, horseback riding, bicycling, and cross-country skiing.

Volunteers who belong to the organization have already planned, marked, and mapped over 1100 miles of trails encircling the State of Ohio. Many of us have seen the blue, six-inch long blazes the volunteers have painted on trees and poles in our area — a method of identifying the trail. Where the trail turns at an intersection, there are two blazes; the top blaze indicating the direction of the turn.

The group works closely with the National Park Service and local parks to plan routes and coordinate efforts. Part of the Buckeye Trail is in Walton Hills, passing through Bedford MetroPark, following Dunham Road, and then continuing on national park land along the ridge of Sagamore Creek.

## STORIES ABOUT OUR OLD ROADS

Today we drive on well-paved roads that, although they mirror the rolling terrain of Walton Hills, can be used with confidence throughout the year. It is difficult to imagine them as the dirt paths or as the plank roads they were years ago.

Records at the County Engineers office show several of our county roads as being among the very oldest in Cuyahoga County. It was only a few years after Moses Cleaveland and his team surveyed this part of the Western Reserve in 1796 and 1797, that settlers came to our area. New ruts were carved in the dirt trails they called roads. The settlers hauled their belongings by oxen teams or by horseback to their new homesteads. Farming families settled along the narrow dirt roadways that twisted around the hills of our part of Bedford Township.

Starting as dirt lanes, the following county roads were planked by 1852: Dunham, Egypt, Tinker's Creek, Button, Northfield, and Sagamore Roads. The listing below indicates when each of these roads became a dedicated County Road.

ROAD	SECTION DEDICATED	YEAR
Northfield Rd.	Union St. to Sagamore Rd.	1803
Tinker's Creek Rd.	Canal Rd. to Dunham Rd.	1811
Dunham Rd.	Turney Rd. to Button Rd.	1820
Egypt Road	Tinker's Creek Rd. to Sagamore Rd.	1820
Button Rd.	Dunham Rd. to Broadway Ave.	1825
Egbert Rd.	Union St. to Dunham Rd.	1833
Walton Rd.	Egbert Rd. to Sagamore Rd.	1836
Phillips Rd.	Canal Rd. to Egypt Rd.	1839
Sagamore Rd.	Canal Rd. to Northfield Rd.	1843
Alexander Rd.	Egypt Rd. to Walton Rd.	1881
Alexander Rd.	Walton Rd. to Northfield Rd.	1940
Alexander Rd.	Northfield Rd. to Pettibone Rd.	1954

Note: Egypt Road is now Dunham Road and Phillips Road is now Alexander Road

### EGYPT ROAD AND DUNHAM ROAD

The section of Dunham Road that starts at Tinker's Creek and continues south to Valley View Road was named Egypt Road for many years. Before

that it was part of a well-used Indian path called the Mahoning Trail. Both Egypt and Dunham Roads were dedicated as county roads in 1820.

Egypt Road got its name from what was thought to have been an Indian Mound sitting back on the eastern hillside, opposite the present day Astorhurst Golf Course. Early settlers thought the mound resembled the shape of an Egyptian pyramid. It follows then that they called the mound, Egypt Mound and the nearby road, Egypt Road.

As you can see from the map, Dunham Road twisted sharply at the bottom of the hill where it met Button Road. Egypt and Dunham Roads did not connect in those days; Egypt Road met and ended at Tinker's Creek Road. In 1907 the two roads were relocated in the Tinker's Creek area, merging to form one roadway.

Egypt and Dunham Roads were part of the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Stagecoach Road. The stagecoach route followed the Mahoning and Ottawa Trails. One stop along the line was at the stagecoach inn owned by Moses Gleeson. Called World's End, the tavern was located close to the road on the east hillside in the field up the hill from 6975 Dunham Road. There, travelers could eat and rest overnight if they chose. The stagecoach inn was designed as two identical houses joined together.

Many old-time Walton Hills residents have stories to tell about Snake Hill, the section of Dunham Road from the higher Maple Heights border elevation which drops down sharply to Tinker's Creek below. The hill, for many years, was a twisting, narrow, very steep road paved with planks and then later with bricks. Today the climb is less severe inasmuch as the grade of the hill was re-engineered for easier driving.

Barbara Podgurski (19005 Alexander Road) recalls how, in the mid 1940's, it was difficult for the school bus driver to coax the bus up Snake Hill. In those days one old school bus was used to transport Walton Hills students of all grades, from kindergarten through high school, to Bedford public schools as well as to St. Mary's School. If the bus got stuck in a rut enroute, the older youngsters would climb out and push. They also got out of the bus at the bottom of Snake Hill and walked up the hill so the old bus could negotiate the grade under a lighter load. On "spring fever" days the bus driver would often have a longer wait before his passengers finally caught up with him at the top of the hill.

Helen Hesoun Eglit (family homestead at 7182 Dunham Road) remembers as a young girl sledding down Snake Hill with the Lytle, Carey, and Hesoun children on a bobsled belonging to Andrew Lytle (6670 Dunham

Road). Despite brakes, as you might imagine, it was an exciting journey down this roller coaster-like track.

### BUTTON ROAD

Button Road, dedicated as a county road in 1825, was one of several early highways of the Western Reserve, connecting Bedford with the Cuyahoga River and the canal. Before that it probably was an Indian path.

Today part of Button Road is closed due to a badly washed out area which was never rebuilt. The western end of the road meets Dunham Road and is shared by the MetroPark maintenance center, the Hemlock Creek Picnic Area of Bedford MetroPark, and one resident. (See THE THIRD RAILROAD HOUSE.) The eastern end of Button Road begins at Circle Emerald Riding Stables and continues to West Grace Street.

The missing mid-section of the road had been a steep, narrow dirt path — a 180-foot incline along a ridge. There was a wooden guard rail, but it offered little protection to the traveler from the steep, unstable hillside. To a team of horses pulling a wagon loaded with goods, the severe grade presented a real challenge. One Little Egypt farmer made extra money by providing a team of spare horses or mules for travelers who needed help up the Button Road hill.

The last time the County Engineers did any repair work on Button Road was in 1915, and by 1923 Button Road was no longer a through road. Portions of the hill section had washed out by then, and the County Road Commissioners decided it was not feasible to rebuild and pave that part of Button Road. As a result the western stretch of Button Road is quite short today.

### EGBERT ROAD

Egbert Road became a county road in 1833, after James Egbert petitioned for its dedication. Considered a minor thoroughfare, Egbert Road remained a winding, narrow dirt lane after several other county roads were planked. Finally, in the late 1920's the surface was graveled. Several times since then the road has been straightened and graded.

Many of today's residents remember when, in 1980, Egbert Road was re-engineered at its west end where it meets Dunham Road. But an earlier generation recalls how the west end went straight downhill past today's Chestnut and Hickory Drives and Overlook Lane. In 1907 when the New York Central Railroad (the Lake Erie and Pittsburgh Line) laid the tracks and built the Dunham Road trestle over Tinker's Creek Valley, the county

rerouted Egbert Road so that only one bridge had to be built in the Dunham/Egbert Roads area.

### WALTON ROAD

Walton Road, from Egbert Road to the county line at Sagamore Road, became a dedicated county road in 1836. Like Egbert Road this minor dirt roadway was bypassed when major county roads were planked in the mid 1800's.

Walton Road was named for the family who owned much of the land along the roadway. The Walton family, beginning with Abner Walton who settled here in 1835, built their homesteads and tilled many acres. In the second half of the 1800's the Waltons owned various farms along Walton Road, from south of what is now Shaner Drive to Logan Drive. In 1860 today's Alexander Road was part of Benjamin Walton's farm. Waltons have lived along the road ever since 1835. Today, Betty Walton's residence is at 7215 Walton Road.

Not only was the road named for the Walton Family, but from the early 1900's on, the section of Bedford Township surrounding the roadway was called Walton Hills.

### ALEXANDER ROAD

Until 1880 Alexander Road was called Phillips Road. Phillips Road was a minor county dirt road dedicated in 1839. It was a relatively short roadway that started at Canal Road and ended at Egypt Road (Dunham Road).

In 1881, when this county road was extended to Walton Road, its name was officially changed to Alexander Road. The road was renamed for the Alexander family who had established a grist mill called "A. Alexander and Son" at the canal near Alexander Road, and also owned a large farm on both sides of the roadway. (The mill was owned and operated by the Alexanders from 1853 until they sold it to the Wilsons in 1899.)

Yaro Hesoun, of 7200 Dunham Road, helped pave Alexander Road from Canal Road east to Dunham Road in 1928. He operated a truck and steam shovel for the contractor who had the job of concreting that section of the roadway. Several local farmers worked on county road crews when they could afford the time. The extra money helped them pay the taxes on their acreage.

In those days the section of Alexander Road from Dunham to Walton Roads was gravel-covered and ended at Walton Road. If a driver in 1874

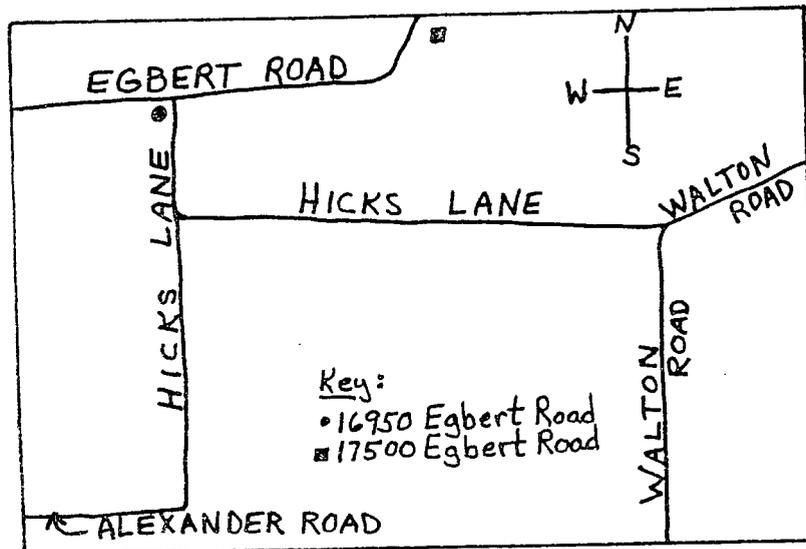
continued east past Walton Road, he would find himself on a driveway leading to a farmhouse. As recently as the early 1900's farms and fields blocked the stretch of Alexander Road east of Walton Road.

It wasn't until 1940 that the stretch of Alexander Road between Walton and Northfield Roads became a dedicated county road. However, even then this new section ended at Northfield Road and was left as a narrow graveled drive. But with the building of the Ford Motor Plant, in 1954 the county engineers widened, paved, and extended Alexander Road from its western line east to Macedonia Road.

Jim Salamon (7677 Dunham Road) recalls how in the 1930's, and in more recent years as well, many cars could not get up the Alexander Road Hill grade from Dunham Road eastward to North Meadowpark Drive. Not only was the incline fairly sharp, but it was a combination of dirt and gravel with many ruts. County engineers worked on that section of the road in 1939, in 1941, and again in 1954, paving the road and filling in the low area to make the slope of the hill less exaggerated.

#### CLEVELAND HILL LANE AND HICKS LANE

One dirt road that was never a county road but was shown on official county maps from 1860 through the early 1900's was Cleveland Hill Lane. For many years it was an access road off Egbert Road to the old Cleveland Hill Farm sitting far back from the road. Cleveland Hill Lane in recent years became Wight Oaks Drive, and in 1985 was recorded as a dedicated road.



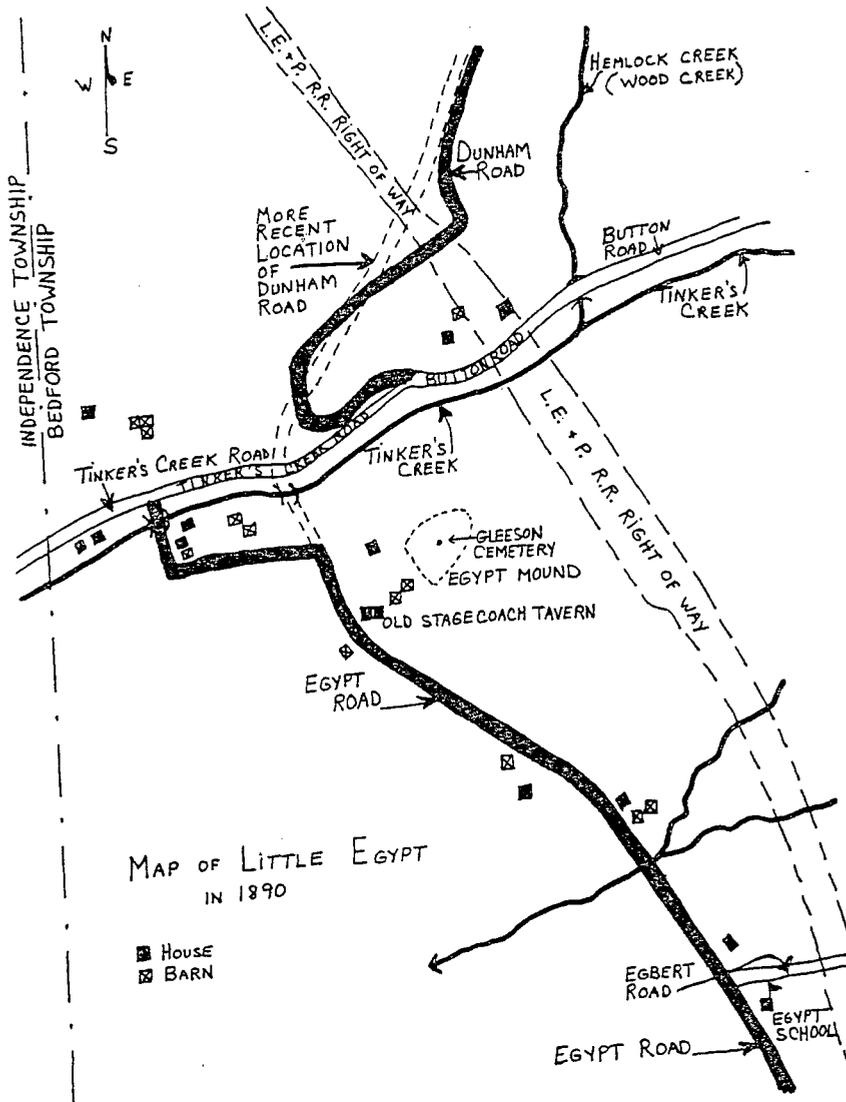
Hicks Lane was a county road over a long period of time and is shown on old county maps in its full length. Hicks Lane connected Egbert Road with Walton Road, and a branch of Hicks Lane went south to Alexander Road. Area farmers used Hicks Lane to take their grain to Alexander's Mill (Wilson Feed Mill, 7604 Canal Road). Hicks Lane began at Walton Road as does Hicks Road today, but the dirt lane extended farther west, then made a sharp turn north to Egbert Road, ending east of the house at 16950 Egbert Road. Today's North Meadowpark Drive is the approximate path of the southern extension of old Hicks Lane.

### OLD OXEN LANES

Some parts of the horse trails and roads in Bedford MetroPark, as well as some of our old village roads, were once oxen lanes used by early settlers. The farmers followed the lanes to the various mills and settlements, hauling their products by oxen teams or pack horses. For added income some farmers cut timber from the wooded hillsides of the park area, then followed the oxen lanes to Dawson's Mill, or other Bedford sawmills. Farmers used the lanes, too, when they hauled logs up out of the valley for their own use.

Berea Sandstone was quarried in several spots along Tinker's Creek and its tributaries. Teams of oxen hauled the stone from the creek beds along trails that led to the roads. One easy to spot old sandstone quarry is the Cleveland Quarry. The remains can be seen a few feet to the north of Gorge Parkway at the Overlook Lane intersection. The oxen lane began at the quarry and went northeast to Egbert Road. The bridle path on the north side of Gorge Parkway (as it winds towards Egbert Road) is the old oxen lane. Another oxen lane that is easily accessible led to a quarry near the Lost Meadows picnic area. The park road leading to Lost Meadows follows this particular lane.

More than fifty years ago Elmer B. Wight charted and mapped the old oxen lanes. (See ELMER B. WIGHT.)



MAP OF LITTLE EGYPT  
IN 1890

■ HOUSE  
⊠ BARN

*THIS MAP OF LITTLE EGYPT shows the original routing of Dunham, Egypt, and Egbert Roads. Little Egypt, the first settlement in Bedford Township, was a busy community in the early 1800's. Egbert Road, as pictured on the bottom right, met Egypt Road just north of Egypt School (7215 Egypt Road)*

## LITTLE EGYPT

The southwest quadrant of Bedford Township officially became the Village of Walton Hills in 1951. But, for many years before then, only the Walton and Egbert Roads area was considered "Walton Hills."

From the early 1800's through 1950 the section of the township along today's Dunham Road, south of Tinker's Creek, was called Little Egypt. The road that went through the area was not only called Egypt Road, until 1907 it was officially listed on county maps as Egypt Road.

For several decades in the 1800's the community of Little Egypt was at the busy junction of four roads: Tinker's Creek Road to the west, Button Road to the east, Dunham Road to the north, and Egypt Road to the south. From the crossroads travelers could reach the canal, the Cuyahoga River, Bedford, and Cuyahoga Falls. A cluster of several houses, a school, mills, an inn, and a tavern formed the nucleus of the community.

Little Egypt got its name from a nearby mound that was a visible landmark on the eastern hillside of present day Dunham Road, opposite the Astorhurst Golf Course. Early settlers probably thought the mound resembled the shape of an Egyptian pyramid. They called the mound Egypt Mound and they called their community Little Egypt.

This was the locale where the first Bedford Township settler built his log cabin in 1813. Although he didn't live in it long, Elijah Nobles' cabin was near Tinker's Creek, on the north side of Tinker's Creek Road, across from today's Astorhurst Restaurant.

This was where the first permanent settlers in Bedford Township established new roots. Stephen and Julia Comstock came from Connecticut to settle on land they purchased from the Connecticut Land Company, building their log cabin on the south side of Tinker's Creek Road on what is today Astorhurst property. Their second child, Sarah, was born here in April of 1815. Sarah Comstock is considered to be the first child born of Bedford Township settlers.

When the Akron-Cleveland section of the Ohio Canal opened in 1827, many Bedfordites traveled through Little Egypt to get to the canal. From the center of Bedford the canal was four miles away by taking Button Road to Tinker's Creek Road. The canal enabled Bedford farmers to market their crops and livestock, and gave businessmen expanded opportunities to sell their products.

## MOTHER PARKER'S TAVERN AND THE LEGEND OF THE LOST DAUPHIN

In c. 1820 Cardeo Parker built an inn and tavern on the property where Bedford Township's first settler, Elijah Nobles, had built his cabin. This public house on the north side of Tinker's Creek Road near Dunham Road was called Mother Parker's Tavern. It was in operation from 1820 until 1846. Mary Ann Parker, Cardeo's wife, operated the business during the 1820's and for a short time after her husband died in 1827. Then she moved to Independence and opened an establishment by the Akron-Cleveland Canal.

The Legend of the Lost Dauphin is a story told about Mother Parker's Tavern. In the early 1820's two young men entered the tavern, and Ma Parker served them dinner and found them a room in her inn. They left the next morning without paying the bill. However, several months later Mary Ann Parker received a letter postmarked from a country in Europe. In the envelope was a sum of money that far exceeded the unpaid bill and a letter identifying the two visitors. The writer requested Ma Parker to keep the contents of the letter secret.

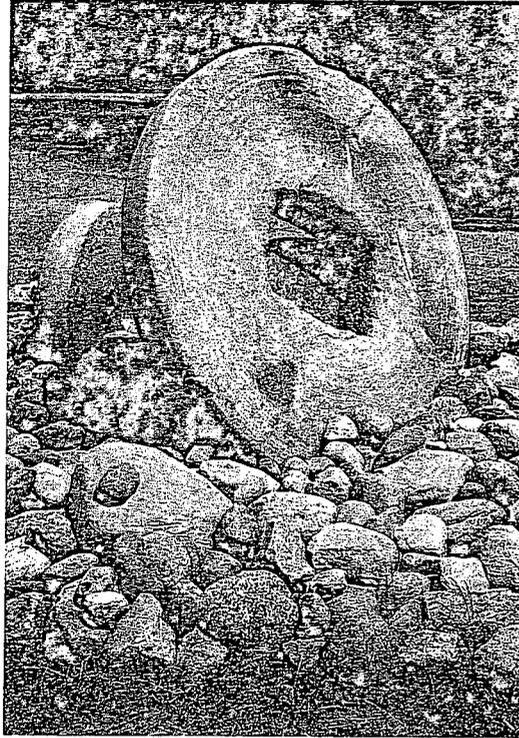
In time the story became public. The Lost Dauphin was Louis Philippe, the oldest son of the King of France, and his companion was his wife, disguised as a young man. Louis Philippe returned to his country to reign as King of France from 1830-1848. It is historical fact that he traveled in Ohio during the 1820's when he was forced to flee his country and live in exile. It is also known that Louis Philippe stayed in two other Ohio cities, Gallipolis and Coshocton, during the early 1820's, so the legend that King Louis Philippe of France slept overnight in Walton Hills is probably true.

Oldtime residents of today may remember this property on the northwest corner of Dunham and Tinker's Creek Roads as the farm belonging to the Mighton, then later the Groh family. Two scenic barns stood at the base of the hillside, but neither is there today. The national government now owns that land; it is part of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

## TWO MILLS

Early maps of Bedford Township show two working mills in Little Egypt, a gristmill and a sawmill.

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS  
IN THE 1800's MOSES  
GLEESON owned a gristmill sit-  
uated behind today's Astorhurst  
Restaurant. These two millstones,  
now part of the decor, were found  
on the site of the old mill. (1986  
photograph)



The first mill in Bedford Township was a gristmill built by Adams and Starr and taken over shortly afterwards by Moses Gleeson. The Gleeson Mill stood behind the present day Astorhurst Restaurant (6980 Dunham Road); on the grounds where there is now a concrete block building used for living quarters. Part of the millrace for the gristmill is visible today. The small stream of water that runs along the south side of the Astorhurst driveway and the pond behind the living quarters remain. The sluice was dug to channel water from Tinker's Creek and provide a constant supply of water to the mill. Two millstones from the gristmill are featured in front of the restaurant. They were found at the mill site by a former owner and moved to the spot where they are today. Records at the Cuyahoga County Archives indicate the mill, with living quarters for the family, was built c. 1840.

Edmond (Cub) Carey, who was born in 1888 and lives today in his family homestead at the junction of Tinker's Creek and Canal Roads, recalls the bridge that crossed Tinker's Creek and led to the gristmill. Iron trusses spanned the creek and supported the wooden planks. This mill bridge was near the township border.

A sawmill was in operation for a span of years, too. It was also on the south side of Tinker's Creek, but in the area of today's Hermit's Hollow Picnic Area in Bedford MetroPark. A steam engine provided the power for the mill, according to Cub Carey.

The Little Egypt crossroads area had many springs, and good fresh water was plentiful. Carey recalls how a distillery operated near today's Astorhurst Restaurant. During a span of years in the late 1800's and again in the early 1900's, spring water was piped from the same hillside spring that fed the stagecoach watering trough to the distillery in the flats below.

### "WORLD'S END"

World's End was the name of an old tavern house on a stagecoach stop along the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Stage Road. It was probably called World's End because it sat on the Egypt Road hillside, overlooking the Tinker's Creek Valley (opposite today's Astorhurst Golf Course). Indeed, from that vista a person could have felt he was on top of the world.

The building, owned by Moses Gleeson, was of unique architecture. It was two houses joined together. One section housed the resident family and the other half accomodated overnight guests upstairs, with a kitchen, dining room, and tavern on the first floor. Another inn, also built by Moses Gleeson and patterned after World's End, is still standing today at Canal



*"WORLD'S END" stood on the east side of the road, on the hilltop south of today's house at 6975 Dunham Road. Joseph Jesensky based this 1976 drawing on his 1931 sketch.*

*His caption read: "The Old Carey Homestead. Once a Stage House along the Cleveland-Pittsburgh Stage Route. The family burials are shown on the summit of a high mound to the right — said to be an Indian Burial Mound called Egypt Mound, after which old Egypt Road was named. The unusual architecture, that of two houses joined together, was patterned after a similar house — the canal Locktender's House near Independence, Ohio. The old house accidentally burned down in 1936 or 1937. The old watering trough fed by a large spring."*

and Hillside Roads. (The National Park Service is currently restoring The Locktender's House for use in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.)

In front of the stagecoach inn, near the road, a spring-fed watering trough provided horses and pack animals with ample, good-tasting water. This long, wooden water trough was a local landmark until recent years.

By the turn of the century the structure was no longer used as an inn or tavern. For a few decades Howard Carey, a descendant of Moses Gleeson, and his family resided in the historic homestead.

A fire which accidentally started in the kitchen destroyed World's End in either 1936 or 1937. The wooden building — over one hundred years old — had to be torn down.

In 1982 the national government purchased the hilltop where once sat World's End, for inclusion in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Soon afterwards the park service cleared the land of structures left standing.

### EGYPT MOUND

Little Egypt and Egypt Road got their names from Egypt Mound, the raised hump of earth across the street from today's Astorhurst Golf Course. The mound has been studied a number of times by geologists, archaeologists, and others who were authorized by the state or national government to determine its origin. The reports conflict with one another, but the most recent archaeological examination declared the mound non-Indian.

At the top the hill is level and roughly triangular in shape, like the bottom of an iron. The two longer sides of the "flat-iron" are about thirty meters long and the shorter end is about ten meters long. It is about eight meters higher than its surrounding land. Rounded rocks are scattered around the base. Today, trees and underbrush conceal the mound's existence from the passerby.

The top of the hillock was used as a cemetery by the Gleeson family in the mid 1850's. The grave and gravestone of Moses Gleeson's son, Edmond, who died at age 44 in October, 1854 are there. A fence that had surrounded the burial plot is now gone, and the slabs of sandstone which supported the fence are barely visible. Although no other grave is in the family plot, in his will Moses Gleeson gave rights to all Gleesons to use the summit of Egypt Mound as a family burial ground, with the stipulation that the mound not ever be sold to strangers.

The rise may have been formed by rocks and gravel dumped by the glaciers more than fourteen thousand years ago. Joseph Jesensky, Cuyahoga Valley Researcher, believes the mound to be of glacial origin.

Three, and possibly four glaciers covered our township during the Ice Age which began at least a million years ago and ended when the last of these glaciers melted fourteen or fifteen thousand years ago. The glaciers first formed far to our north, and as they expanded and moved southward they gathered and carried with them many igneous and metamorphic boulders, rocks, and sediment from Canada. Geologists call these heaped deposits left here by glaciers "glacial kame." Glacial kame can be found on several ridges throughout our village. While the glaciers gave us rocks and sediment that came from areas far to our north, their rivers of melting water carved through our soft sedimentary rock, creating the Cuyahoga and Tinker's Creek Valleys.

Before the Gleesons, it is possible that Indians of long ago also used the formation for a burial mound. Several facts give credence to that possibility; it was close to the Mahoning Trail, it was secluded from the more heavily-traveled Cuyahoga River, and it was located in an area used by Indians. One fort, Indian Point, was located nearby on the hilltop north of today's Bedford MetroPark Hemlock Creek Picnic Area. From Indian artifacts found in the vicinity, it is known that Indians farmed the nearby flatlands and hunted on the hillsides.

A state archaeologist, Mr. Dunkin, visited the mound with Joseph Jesensky in 1931. Mr. Dunkin thought the mound was an authentic Indian mound, but he did not conduct a dig of the mound because of the Gleeson cemetery at the summit. His limited exploration at the base of the mound was inconclusive. The mound was surveyed and mapped in the late 1930's by Elmer B. Wight, who researched and documented local historic sites.

In 1980 The Cleveland Museum of Natural History was formally authorized by the Federal Government to perform an archaeological investigation of Egypt Mound. Dr. John Hall of the Geology Department at Case Western University conducted the investigation. Once again, because the summit of the mound was a family cemetery, only a few superficial test holes were explored. Hall concluded in his report that "neither prehistoric cultural materials nor any evidence of prehistoric cultural construction can be documented at the Egypt Mound."

The mound's "flat-iron" shape is peculiar to the shape of other mounds. Jesensky has a theory of how the mound became triangular shaped. He thinks that when the New York Central crews were seeking landfill to

elevate the track level behind the mound, they used part of the mound. For some reason, maybe because they saw evidence of human bones, they stopped using that fill. The large rocks scattered around the base of the mound could be rocks that were too large to use for fill.

Today the mound and its surrounding land are owned by the national government who bought it in 1982 to include in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Egypt Mound, the local landmark that has kept the curious guessing for many years, will keep its secret identity.

## THE CAREYS

By 1815 Stephen and Julia Comstock were living in their log cabin that faced Tinker's Creek Road on what is today Astorhurst property. At about the same time Moses and Polly Gleeson settled on their land to the west of the township, on Canal Road by Tinker's Creek Road. As the years went by, however, Moses Gleeson became the principal land owner and businessman in the Little Egypt area. In 1848 Gleeson's 38-year old son, Edmond, married the 26-year old Comstock daughter, Charlotte. Although Edmond died only six years later, he and Charlotte had a daughter, Clara.

Dominick Carey came to the township to work on a railroad line that ran through Bedford. During his stay he met Clara Gleeson. In February of 1881 they were married. Dominick and Clara Carey pooled their talents and established a construction company, employing as many as twelve hundred men.

A famed engineer in his day, Dominick Carey was a tunnel builder and a stone works expert. He was contracted to do jobs in other states as well as in Ohio, and once turned down an offer of an important construction job in Switzerland. Carey died in 1892 at the site of one of his construction projects — the Main Street Bridge spanning the Ohio River in Wheeling, West Virginia. He drowned during a storm one night when he was overseeing the flood damage to his bridge. The Main Street Bridge was considered to be the greatest stone arch in the United States at the time.

Dominick and Clara Carey had three children, two of whom stayed in the vicinity. Edmond (Cub) Carey, who was born in September of 1888, lives in the family homestead on Canal Road by Tinker's Creek Road, in Valley View. Howard, who was born in 1886, lived his entire life in what is now our village.

Howard Carey and his wife, Gertrude, lived at the top of Egypt Hill, in the old stagecoach inn called World's End. A gypsy wagon — a well-

remembered landmark — was placed near the road, in front of the Carey house. Howard Carey used the painted wagon as a mobile office and tool shed, for his work as a local road contractor.

Across the street from the house, on what is now the Astorhurst Golf Course hillside, Howard Carey had sheds for his earth-moving equipment and animal shelters for his work mules that pastured in those fields. He was a truck farmer, too, selling his produce in Cleveland, on East 9th Street by Erie Cemetery.

Howard Carey is also remembered as a horse trainer and trader. Dominick Carey had built a training track for trotters and pacers on the Astorhurst land, probably around 1890. The Carey track was called the Maplewood Stock Farm. In the early 1900's, Howard Carey's horses raced at local race tracks such as the Cranwood Race Track near East 131st and Miles Avenue, Grantwood Race Track in Solon, and the Maple Heights Race Track on Rockside Road between Lee and Broadway.

When Howard and Gertrude Carey's daughter (Marguerite Fradette) died shortly after giving birth to their grandson, Howard, they raised the boy. The Careys and young Howard lived in the house that had been the old stagecoach tavern until it was destroyed by fire. Howard Carey then built a smaller house for the family on a site farther back from the road. When the national government purchased the Carey hilltop property in 1982, they razed the Howard Carey house.

Howard Fradette and his wife, Lois, live on the scenic hillside overlooking Tinker's Creek Valley, on land that for generations has belonged to the family. They built their house at 6975 Dunham Road.

### "QUAKER FLATS"

It is told that sometime during the 1800's a group of Quakers farmed the flat bottom land which is now the Hemlock Creek Picnic Area of Bedford MetroPark. There they grew a special type of corn stalk from which they made brooms. The story originated with Chris Foss, the man who for several years until he died in 1929, lived as a hermit in an abandoned Boy Scout cabin across the creek from the flats.

## THE WALTON FAMILY STORY

The Village of Walton Hills is named for the Walton family who settled in the southwest section of Bedford Township, pioneering the area along Walton Road — the road bearing their name. Four generations of Waltons have lived along Walton Road since the mid 1830's.

The local story of the Waltons begins with the tale of two families, the Waltons and the Spaffords.

Hiram Spafford and his growing family moved from Twinsburg, Ohio to this area in 1823. They settled on 160 acres of land along the east side of Northfield Road, north of today's Alexander Road. The family brought with them their few possessions and a yoke of steers. They built a log cabin (where seven of their children were to be born) and proceeded to cut down trees and farm land along Northfield Road. By the mid 1850's Spaffords owned an additional 102 acres on the north side of Sagamore Road, between Walton and Dunham Roads. Years later a granddaughter of Hiram Spafford married Jefferson Walton.

In Lancaster, Pennsylvania a young Quaker man was disowned by his community in 1803 for marrying outside his church. Seeking a married life in friendlier surroundings, Joseph Walton and Sarah, his young Irish bride, packed their belongings and traveled west. They eventually settled down in the town of Bedford, Ohio where they raised five children; Abner, Betsy, Benjamin, Rebecca, and Abigail.

The two Walton sons moved to this part of the township, clearing and preparing land for farming and grazing. By 1846 Abner and Benjamin both owned the Walton Road acreage they had worked. Abner's log cabin was along the east side of the road near today's Carmany Drive, while Benjamin's, also east of Walton Road, was on his land to the south of today's Alexander Road. Within the next decades Walton family members sold some of their fields; however, they also purchased additional land, accumulating considerable acreage along the road.

By 1850 there were enough school-aged youngsters living along Walton and other nearby roads to warrant a grammar school for them. The Waltons donated land to the Bedford Township Schools, and in c. 1854, the township built Walton School at 7307 Walton Road.

The aforementioned Abner Walton, born in 1804, married Almira Hunt, who had grown up in the neighboring town of Northfield. Abner and Almira had three children; Jesse, William, and Thomas Jefferson who later changed his name to Jefferson C. Walton.

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Jefferson Walton, born in 1845, served the 128th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, guarding Confederate prisoners at Johnson's Island. In 1871 he married Julia Spafford. For a time the young couple lived in a log cabin located far back on the east side of Walton Road. Today a house stands on that same spot, but its address is 18136 Jefferson Drive. Jefferson and Julia then moved into the house they built in c. 1874 on Abner Walton's land, on the western slope at a bend in the road — 7228 Walton Road. Near the turn of the century, Jefferson inherited this property from his father.

The Jefferson Waltons had four children, all of whom were known by their middle names; Henry Bird, Albert Roy (born in 1874), Almira Belle, and Laura Maude. Only Roy, who chose to farm, remained on the family land after his youth.

Roy Walton married Mayme Garrett in 1897. They lived in the Walton homestead where they raised three children; Sterling (born in 1898), Benjamin, and Bernice. Benjamin and Bernice moved to Bedford when they grew up. So did Sterling, who lived on West Glendale Street for a number of years, until he moved back to Walton Hills in 1949.



*JEFFERSON AND JULIA WALTON built this house in 1879 at 7228 Walton Road. (1986 photograph)*

None of Roy Walton's three children cared to farm the family land after they grew up, so Maude Walton, Roy's sister who inherited the bulk of the estate, decided to sell. Cyrus Eaton approached her with an "option to purchase" plan in the mid 1920's. Maude Walton accepted the proposal, and Eaton held the deed to her property for a number of years. However, when severe financial losses during the Depression forced Eaton to return the deed to her, Maude Walton sold the land in 1936 to her friend, L. S. Conelly. Maude Walton's land became the first of Conelly's Walton Hills Estates Subdivisions.

Sterling Walton married Elizabeth Fanchally in 1942. Seven years later Betty and Sterling moved into their new house at 7215 Walton Road, on family land across the road from the Walton homestead. The Walton barn stood on this eastern slope, downhill from where Sterling built his house. He used the stones from the foundation of the old barn to face the front of his house and living room fireplace.

Sterling Walton volunteered much time to the newly formed Village of Walton Hills. He accepted the appointment of police chief for \$1 a year pay, and although he had a full time sales job he presided over the village police department. Walton was Police Chief from January, 1952 until his death in May, 1959.

Mayor Allen named Walton to a second non-paying village appointment in 1952, at a time when many villagers were preparing to renovate an unfinished store into a town hall. As Acting Town Hall Improvement Expeditor, Walton's job was to direct the work of the volunteers who remodeled and completed the building for village use. Under his guidance the project was completed in only five months.

Over the years Betty Walton, Sterling's widow, donated much creative craftwork to the Walton Hills Women's Club for their moneymaking projects. In the early days of its incorporation, Betty was the village bookkeeper. She was elected the first Clerk of Council in May, 1951 but soon found she had to relinquish her duties for health reasons. Betty served as a volunteer police dispatcher from 1952 until 1960, making herself available to handle phone calls as they came in -- be it day or night. Then she became a part-time employee in the village administrative offices until 1974, assisting village officials and residents.

Betty was born in Bedford (in 1906) but for a number of her childhood years she too lived in Walton Hills, in the farmhouse at 7095 Walton Road.

## BEDFORD TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

The Little Egypt community had a school at the intersection of Egypt and Tinker's Creek Roads. Located in the bottomland — landfill elevates the banks of Tinker's Creek today — the schoolhouse was prone to flooding. In addition, mosquitos created a health hazard.

In 1880 The Bedford Township Schools built a school at 7215 Egypt Road, on higher land a half mile south of the original school. Egypt School served children living in School District #6, the southwest corner of the township.

During the 1800's and early 1900's Bedford Township opened grammar schools in key locations where sufficient pupils warranted schools. The number of grammar schools in the township varied throughout those years. In 1848 the township operated eleven grammar schools, but in 1878 there were only eight open.

School was in session three terms yearly; fall, winter, and spring. Many of the township students had to help their families with farm chores, especially in the spring and fall. School records show much absenteeism during those two seasons and also fewer students registered for those school terms.

In each school one teacher worked with youngsters aged six to twenty, teaching grades one through eight. Although six was the starting age, some four and five year olds were also on the school register if older brothers or sisters escorted them. Varying numbers of students crowded into the one-room schoolhouses. It was not uncommon for thirty students to be enrolled. In 1910 fifty pupils attended Walton School; twenty-eight boys aged six to thirteen, and twenty-two girls aged six to sixteen.

Teachers in those days were hired for three-month terms and were paid monthly. The Cuyahoga County School Board issued teaching certificates to applicants who passed their examinations. Each teaching certificate resembled a report card with grades given for each of the following subject areas tested; reading, orthography (spelling), writing, geography, grammar, and arithmetic. The pay scale reflected the grade scores and years of service of the teacher. However, men were paid higher salaries than women, and both received extra pay for janitorial services such as sweeping and heating the schoolhouse. Several township teachers taught school when they were only seventeen years old themselves — some of them did so to earn money for college.

The following list names some of the teachers who taught at Egypt and Walton Schools and notes one of their teaching years: J. Culver-1853; J. Ellett-1862; Abner Walton-1864; James Egbert-1868; F. Bellows-1874; Charles Wheeler-1879; Henry Smith-1888; Alice Fahy-1890; Arabelle Forbes-1890; Fred Green-1891; Louise Bull-1892; Minnie Walton-1892; Mame Wilks-1893; George Nichols-1895; Frances Alexander-1908; Ralph Eichenberger-1908; Florence Alexander-1909; Alma Alber-1913; Nellie Dowman-1913; Miss Mylander-1913; Florence Hoffman-1914; and Ray Sharrock-1914.

The Bedford Township School System was separate from the Bedford Village Schools. If a township student wished to continue his schooling after graduating from one of the grammar schools, he could enroll in the village high school. The Township Board of Education would then pay tuition to the Bedford Village Schools. In 1912 the tuition for a three-month term was \$8 per student.

### EGYPT SCHOOL

Wishing to replace the low-lying, old Egypt School with a new school-house, in 1880 the Bedford Township Schools purchased an acre of hillside land from William Black, at today's 7215 Egypt Road. The second Egypt School, built upon the foundation of an old house that sat on the property, was a large, wood frame, one-room grammar school. The pot-bellied stove, which stood in the center of the large classroom, was the source of heat.

One teacher worked with students who ranged in age from six to twenty. School records available today indicate the number of students attending the school varied from year to year, from twelve in 1913 to as many as thirty-six in 1909-1910. The school records also show there was a frequent change of teachers at the school. Perhaps one reason was the remote location of this school from the town of Bedford.

During the 1895-1896 school year George Nichols was the teacher. He was nineteen and taught for the township schools to earn money for his college years at Dennison University. He earned thirty-five dollars a month plus a dollar a week for janitorial services at the school.

In the spring and autumn Nichols walked to Egypt School from his home on Perkins Road (location of today's Heskett Middle School), a distance of about five miles. During the winter months he lived with the Joseph Orchard family. The Orchards had a farm on Egypt Road, north of Alexander Road. In exchange for his room and board, Nichols milked the cows in the early morning and again in the late afternoon.



*THE SECOND EGYPT SCHOOLHOUSE at 7215 Dunham Road was built in c. 1880 on high ground, a half mile south of the original Egypt School. The school served students in Bedford Township School District #6. (1986 photograph shows additions of enclosed porch and upstairs windows)*

By 1920 so few students lived in the Egypt Road area that it was prudent to close District #6 Egypt School and have those youngsters attend the next nearest school. Subsequently, Egypt School and its acre lot were sold to Joseph and Josephine Dolejs. They were the highest bidders at a real estate auction held at the door of the schoolhouse in 1920.

When the Dolejs family bought the one-room schoolhouse, they designed it into a home. They also dug around the old hand-cut foundation stones, laid new sandstone blocks around them, and dug a basement at the same time.

The New York Central train tracks ran along the rear of Dolejs' lot. Dolejs, a retired farmer, took a made-to-order, part-time job with the railroad, checking the line. Their daughter Mary, who married Arthur Hadden, inherited the house and lived there until 1958.

Arthur Hadden's two brothers bought adjacent land and built houses. The three Hadden houses are across the street from the Miles Avenue

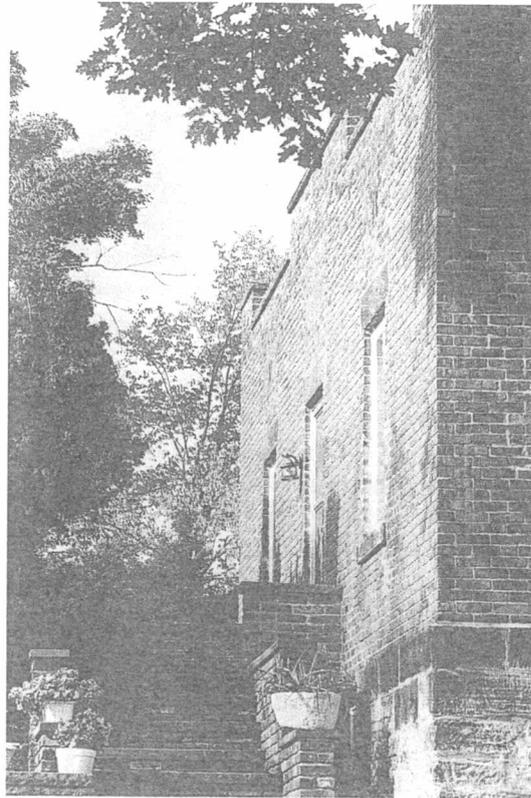
Church of Christ. Patricia Featherstun, who is Arthur and Mary Had- den's daughter, lives in the village today, with her husband, Richard, at 7375 North Meadowpark Drive.

In 1985 Scott Dean, the son of a local family, purchased and moved into the old Egypt School.

### WALTON SCHOOL

By 1850 there were enough school-aged children living in the vicinity of Walton Road for the Township Trustees to open another school, creating School District #7. In c. 1854 they constructed a brick grammar school on land donated by the Walton family at 7307 Walton Road, naming it Walton School.

*WALTON SCHOOL was built c. 1854 at 7307 Walton Road, after The Bedford Township Schools created School District #7 and the Waltons donated the land. (1986 photograph)*



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Although the number of school aged youngsters living in our section of Bedford Township fluctuated from year to year, during the 1910's the enrollment at Egypt School continually dropped. Finally, in 1920 Egypt School was closed, and the remaining Egypt School pupils had to walk to Walton School to attend class.

Then, in the 1930's when it became financially prudent for the trustees to close all the township schools and consolidate with the Bedford Schools, Walton School's windows were boarded and its doors were locked. One school bus picked up all children living in the southwest section of the township and drove them to their Bedford schools. The elementary aged youngsters were dropped off at Glendale School, older students were taken to the high school, and parochial students were driven to St. Mary's School.

Walton School sat idle for a few years until 1937 when it was auctioned to the highest bidder. Johnny and Anna Allen bought the schoolhouse and converted it into a home for themselves. They later obtained additional parcels of land until they owned eight acres.

In 1951 John and Helen Sopko purchased the converted schoolhouse and its acreage. The property holds many fond schoolday memories for Helen. When she was a young girl, Helen (Horvath) attended and graduated from Walton School. She grew up on a farm her parents rented nearby at 17500 Egbert Road.

There were many elm trees on the schoolhouse property when the Sopkos bought it, including the elm tree under which Helen ate her lunch with her schoolmates. Unfortunately, the Dutch Elm Disease was to claim all those tall stately trees. In about 1970 the Sopkos planted several elm seedlings in four rows across the back of their property. The young elm trees are slow growing, but they are thriving.

Helen Sopko, an amateur poet, has been writing creative verse since she was nine. Many of her friends and family members save her work, and several of her poems which she entered in various poetry contests have appeared in print.

## TRAINS AND TRACKS AND TROLLEYS

For several decades in the 1900's train tracks ran along both the eastern and western sides of Walton Hills. To our west were the Lake Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad tracks (New York Central). Toward our east were the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad (Conrail) and the Akron, Bedford, and Cleveland Electric Interurban Railway (ABC). Only one of the lines is active today, the tracks of the other two having been removed.

### CONRAIL

Conrail is still a busy railroad line whose tracks follow a diagonal line along the eastern edge of the village. Starting at the north, the Conrail tracks cross Tinker's Creek over a large tunnel which replaces an earlier stone viaduct, pass under Egbert Road, follow through Krick Road Industrial Park, and cross Northfield Road, heading in a southeast direction. Then, after crossing Alexander Road, the tracks pass through the eastern side of the Ford Motor Company Walton Hills Stamping Plant and continue out of the village and out of Cuyahoga County.

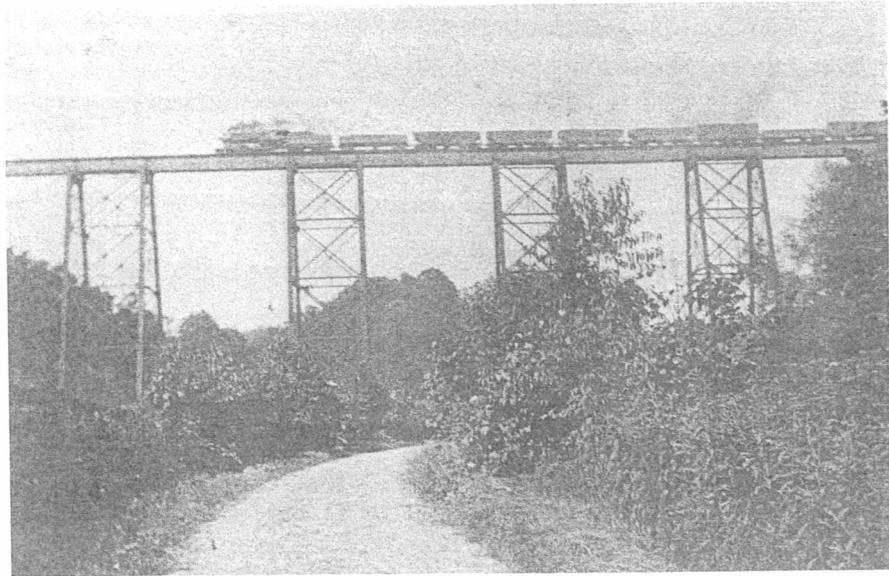
The railroad line went into service in 1852 as the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad. It offered both passenger and freight service. For many years the line operated as part of the Pennsylvania Railroad System. In 1976, when the United States Congress established Conrail, the line again changed names. As Conrail the rail system operates as a freight carrier, and is an asset to area businesses and industries.

### THE NEW YORK CENTRAL

Only memories, graffiti-covered concrete bridge abutments and foundations, and elevated track beds remain of the railroad line along the western side of the village. Its long and high steel trestle — which had spanned the Tinker's Creek Valley and had been a noted landmark in its day — is erased from the landscape.

The freight line, which started operations in 1911, hauled strings of cars laden with coal and other bulky cargo. The familiar whistles of its coal-powered steam locomotives pierced the ears of nearby residents several times daily.

Faced with declining business after a few decades of operation, the NYC stopped using the tracks in the 1960's and tore down the high steel trestle in 1973.



*STARTING IN 1911 New York Central freight trains crossed Tinker's Creek Valley on this trestle-supported bridge. (Date of photograph unknown)*



*THE TRESTLE FALLS. In 1973 the NYC razed the long, high steel trestle.*

The New York Central leased the railroad right-of-way to the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company for a period of ninety-nine years. CEI, in turn, turned over to the local MetroParks the portion of the right-of-way (south of Alexander Road) for a bike and hiking path. Near the start of the path, off Alexander Road, Bedford MetroPark installed a parking lot where people can leave cars and start their walk or bike ride along the scenic trail leading south. The CEI right-of-way north of Alexander Road is lined with large rough stones, making the path difficult to negotiate on foot and nearly impossible by bike. The last four hundred fifty yards of this abandoned track section, which lead to the south trestle abutment, rise to an imposing hundred feet above the surrounding ground level.

The Lake Erie and Pittsburgh Railway dates back to the 1890's when the L. E. & P. bought the right-of-way for its line. At the turn of the century the L. E. & P. was acquired by the New York Central Railroad System, as were many of the smaller railroad lines in this part of the country. Local people referred to the line by both of its names, the L. E. & P. and the New York Central. On official county maps, however, it was listed as the L. E. & P. Railroad for its entire existence.

Work started on the Tinker's Creek section of the line in 1904 and continued for seven years. The Cuyahoga County engineers rerouted Egbert Road in 1907, so that instead of having to build two bridges in the Egbert/Dunham Roads area one would suffice at the new intersection. That bridge supported the two-way tracks as well as the spur. Much work had to be done to prepare the right-of-way for the laying of ties and rails. A long stretch of land was built up, a wide concrete culvert was constructed for Sagamore Creek to flow through, Egbert Road was rerouted, a bridge was built to cross over the newly-created Egbert/Dunham Roads intersection, and, in addition, bridges were constructed over Alexander Road and Sagamore Road.

In 1909 when most of the other construction projects for this section of the line were completed, work began on a steel trestle which would stretch across the Tinker's Creek Valley.

Howard Fradette (6975 Dunham Road) was a young boy who lived in the immediate area when the trestle and abutments were being built. Fradette recalls how, for a couple of years around 1910 when the bridge over the Tinker's Creek Valley was being erected, the superintendent of the New York Central crew and his son who was his foreman rented rooms at the Carey Stagecoach Inn. The tavern, owned at the time by his grandfather, Howard Carey, sat at the crest of Dunham Road Hill across the street from the present day Astorhurst Golf Course.

Fradette tells how the construction project fascinated him. He recalls that there is a buried wooden framework under the concrete in each abutment. The railroad engineers used heavy 12" x 12" timbers for the hidden reinforcement. Then they encased the scaffolding with dirt, gravel, and slag; and, lastly, poured concrete over the mixture for added strength. This superstructure thus formed the foundation for the high steel trestle.

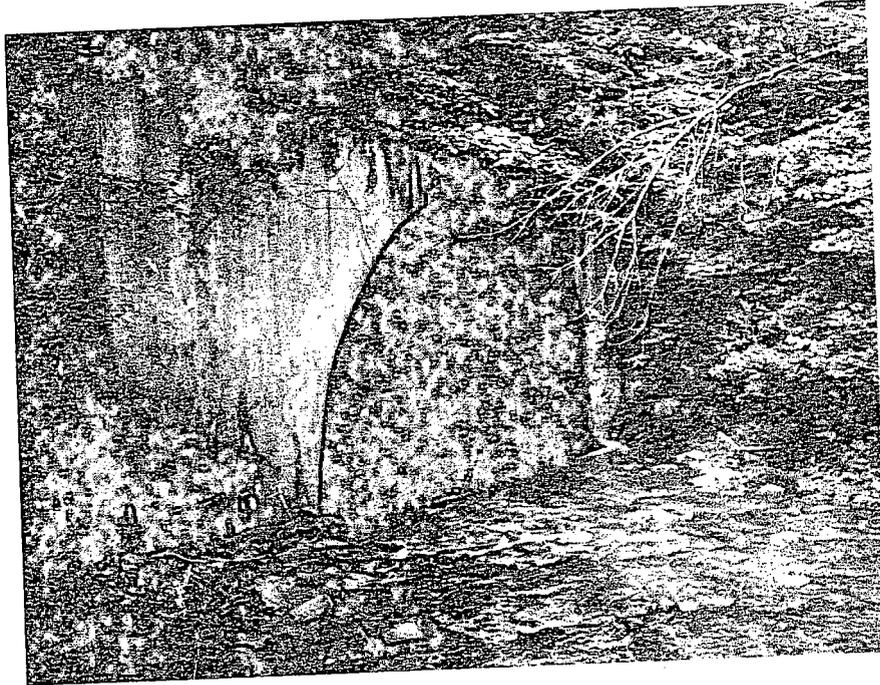
Constructing a railroad bridge to cross the Tinker's Creek Valley was an engineering feat. The natural land elevation at the northwest hillside of Dunham Road was much higher than the hillside level at the southeast. In between the two hillsides was the Tinker's Creek Valley. In order to minimize the grade, the ground level for tracks southeast of the bridge had to be built up with thousands of tons of dirt, concrete, and gravel fill. This build-up covered roughly 450 yards in length. Sturdy bridge abutments on both of the hillsides were needed because the hillsides were made of flaky, unstable shale and soft sandstone. A bridge was required whose span would reach almost a quarter mile and would tower one hundred fifty feet above the valley floor below.

The trestle-supported bridge had two sets of tracks with a narrow walkway in the middle. Several platforms jutted out along the side of the bridge for emergency use. The platforms served as safe havens where railroad workers could stand when trains passed by. Also, on each platform sat a barrel of water. Even though the bridge itself was made of steel, sparks from the steam engines could ignite the wooden ties, causing a fire.

Under the bridge was a catwalk, built so that railroad workers could walk under the tracks to inspect or repair the bridge. This catwalk, as many village youngsters knew, was made of a string of suspended wood planks two inches thick and eight inches wide. Several of our oldtime villagers have lived to tell about their breathtaking walks along the catwalk from one end of the bridge span to the other end — a distance of almost a quarter of a mile. In the event of an approaching train, the youngster scurried up the nearest platform for safety.

While standing on the southeast abutment, high above the natural hilltop, a sightseer has a majestic view of the Cuyahoga Valley.

A railroad spur called the Little Egypt Siding paralleled the main set of tracks in this area. The single-track siding enabled railroad cars to get off the main track for repairs or water, or to allow other trains to pass by. The spur began south of the trestle, to the rear of the property at 7135 Dunham Road, and ended just north of Alexander Road, on what is now C.E.I. property.



*THE NYC CULVERTED Sagamore Creek, and near the culvert built a water tower and pump house for its freight line. (1986 photograph)*

A few feet south of Alexander Road railroad crews constructed a wide culvert through which Sagamore Creek could run, and over which the tracks could be laid. This is yet another long stretch where considerable landfill was required to provide the proper grade.

A large, high water tower and a pump house were built in the ravine on the bank of Sagamore Creek. From the tower railroad workers got their water supply for construction of the line, and later, water for their steam engines and for emergency uses. A coal-powered steam turbine ran the pump. According to Richard Long, son of a New York Central section foreman, it took no more than five minutes for a fireman to fill his water tank at the Egypt stop before the engineer could continue his journey.

The tank (body) of the water tower was made of two and one-half inch thick tongue and groove redwood planking, recalls Howard Fradette. The support for the high water tower was the usual superstructure of concrete and steel. Both the pump house and the water tower were torn down in the early 1940's, but explorers can still find concrete traces of these bygone structures near the still intact culvert.

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In the early days of the L. E. & P. operations, Joseph Dolejs, a nearby resident who was semi-retired, performed two jobs for the railroad. He ran the pump house and was the line walker. Engineers stopped their trains at his pump house station to add hot water to their engines. Dolejs checked the coal supply and made sure adequate hot water was available.

As line walker, Dolejs checked his section of tracks for loose ties, and made sure there was an ample supply of water in each of the barrels sitting on platforms along the trestle. Joseph Dolejs lived at 7215 Dunham Road, with his wife, Josephine.

## NEW YORK CENTRAL RAILROAD HOUSES

Three present day village homes had been utilized as railroad houses for a number of years. At the turn of the century the New York Central purchased all three houses because of their proximity to the railroad right-of-way.

### THE SECTION FOREMAN HOUSE

One of the railroad houses is the house at 7345 Dunham Road. Built c. 1874, the New York Central bought the house for its local section foreman who had charge of the line fifteen miles in either direction. His section of tracks extended north to Marcy, which was in Cleveland, and south to Brandywine.

After purchasing the house the railroad company made the inside as attractive as possible for its section foreman. For instance, the living room featured a large bay window as well as a set of solid oak French doors that separated two rooms.

In 1904 Benjamin Long was transferred to the Tinker's Creek Valley from the state of Michigan to take the job of section foreman. Benjamin, his wife Celia, and their three children lived in the house from 1904 until 1919, when he retired.

Benjamin Long's younger brother, Edward, then assumed the job of section foreman. Edward Long, his wife, Annie, and their eight children were transferred here from Hillsdale, Michigan by the New York Central.

Richard Long, one of Edward's sons who now lives in nearby Solon, has vivid recollections of his days in Bedford Township, living in the section foreman's house and working part-time on the railroad line during his four years at Bedford High School (Moody) and over college vacation periods.

Train tracks ran along the rear of Long's lot. Richard Long recalls how the New York Central insisted that at all times the section foreman have a clear view of the tracks from the house; no underbrush or trees were allowed to obstruct his view. In the 1940's when Dunham Road was widened, a wide strip of frontage was used for the roadway, so that today the house sits much closer to the road than it did years ago.

A small apartment was added on one side of the upstairs of the house. The company built this suite of rooms for an assistant foreman and his family, should there ever be a need for one. There were two coal stoves in the house; one in the living room and one in the kitchen that was used for both cooking and heating. There was an outside pump, an outhouse, and kerosene lanterns illuminated the inside of the house when the Edward Long family moved in.

The New York Central maintained this house as it did the others that were company owned. For instance, the outside of the house was painted at regular intervals by railroad workers. However, the railroad would not pay for major improvements. When the Longs in the mid 1930's wanted the house wired for electricity, the family bore the installation cost themselves.

Paying the railroad company seven dollars a month rent, the Edward Long family occupied the house from 1919 until 1939, which was three years after Edward retired. At that time the NYC gave the Longs the option of purchasing the house or moving. When they chose to relocate the railroad sold the house.

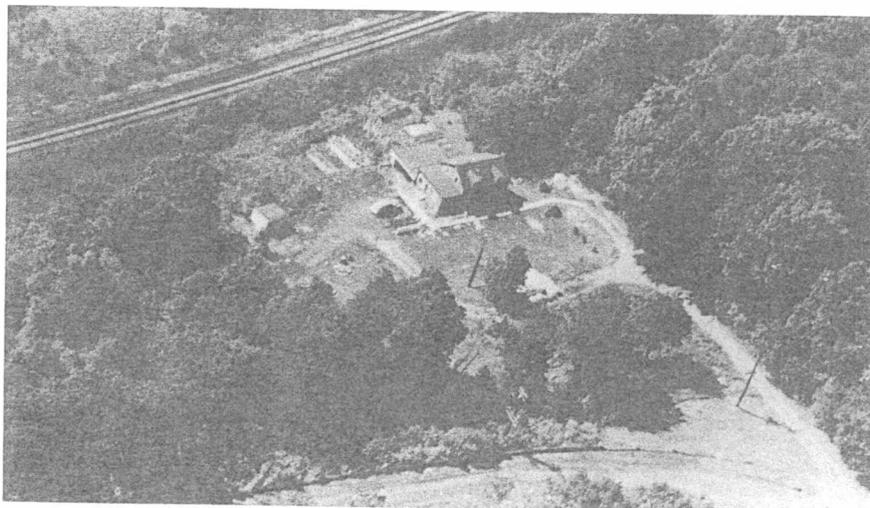
### THE CAMPHOUSE

Jake and Eleanor Senchur's house (15801 Egbert Road), built c. 1880, is also an old railroad house. It was purchased by the New York Central for a camphouse — where the boarding house foreman and his family would live and care for the section crew who would also bunk there. Whereas the section foreman house was west of the tracks, the camphouse was situated on the other side of the tracks.

The house faced Egbert Road, which in those days went sharply downhill past present day Hickory Drive, ending at Dunham Road. When the New York Central was planning its tracks along the L. E. & P. right-of-way, the Cuyahoga County engineers rerouted Egbert Road so that only one railroad bridge would have to be built over Dunham Road. The camphouse property was then bordered by the tracks, the old Egbert Road, and the new Egbert Road.



*FROM 1904 TO 1939 LOCAL SECTION FOREMEN lived in this New York Central house at 7345 Dunham Road. (Year of photograph prior to 1935)*



*THE RAILROAD CAMPHOUSE at 15801 Egbert Road housed the boarding house foreman and the section crew. This aerial view shows the house bordered by the railroad tracks, the new routing of Egbert Road across the bottom, and the original Egbert Road pathway partly visible on the right. (Date of photograph unknown)*

A camphouse foreman took orders from the section foreman and had the job of relaying messages from his boss to the crew, many of whom did not speak English. Richard Long recalls how neither his uncle nor his father — both, section foremen — could speak any language other than English. They had to rely on their boarding house foreman to communicate with the workers. Thus, the camphouse foreman not only had to have a working knowledge of the railroad business, but had to be capable of conversing with the workers in their own languages.

Men in the section crew lived in the camphouse as long as they held jobs with the railroad. Richard Long recalls that many of them were Hungarian immigrants, and that they kept to themselves. Most of the local residents didn't socialize with the men in the section crew. Township people referred to the workers as gandy dancers; a slang term used to describe workers of a section gang who walked with a strained gait after having used a tamping bar along the railroad track day after day.

The upstairs of the house was one large dormitory where the crew slept. The first floor contained the kitchen and living quarters for the boarding house foreman and his family, and a large dining room filled with picnic tables.

The boarding house foreman's wife was paid by the railroad to clean the house and to feed the men. She cooked, served their breakfasts and suppers, and also packed their lunches.

In the early 1930's, when the New York Central no longer needed the camphouse for its workers, they put it up for sale. The house sat vacant for a few years until Norm and Elizabeth Pearce finally purchased it in 1940. The house was situated on a three acre pie-shaped lot on Egbert Road ending at the railroad right-of-way property line.

Norm Pearce, then a Constable for Bedford Township and later Chief Deputy Marshall for the newly-founded Village of Walton Hills, recalls how one of his first projects after buying the property was to reroute the driveway which included the old section of Egbert Road that dropped off abruptly along the north side of his house. Pearce designed the present drive to start south of his house and wind around to the garage.

The house was badly weather-beaten from being vacant a number of years. Pearce put shake wood shingles over the siding, and then rebuilt the inside of the house after stripping the interior walls down to the studs. The camphouse had been basementless except for a cellar. Pearce dug a basement, installed inside plumbing, and had the house wired for electricity.

No electric lines had run along that part of Egbert Road when the Pearces moved into the house. Even though electrical supplies were in short supply during World War II, CEI was able to provide the family with enough wiring to stretch from Dunham Road to their house. The Pearces, however, paid for four CEI poles.

Jake and Eleanor Senchur, who live in the house at the present time, purchased the property in 1958. They now share the old railroad land with their daughter and son-in-law, Judy and Bruce Schroeder, who built a house just downhill from them at 15777 Egbert Road.

The Senchurs enjoyed hearing the whistles of the approaching trains and seeing the freight cars pass through their back yard, although by the late 1950's when they moved into the house, they noted that no more than three trains a day went by. They recall how the sound of train whistles became less and less frequent until the train traffic gradually came to a halt. In time, the track siding was removed by the railroad. CEI now owns the easement that had been the old L. E. & P. right-of-way.

### THE THIRD RAILROAD HOUSE

Jack Willing's house at 14800 Button Road was formerly a railroad house, too.

The Willing house, built c. 1872, originally sat in the path of the Lake Erie and Pittsburgh right-of-way, and also in the path of the soon to be built trestle. The New York Central solved the problem by purchasing the property and moving the house several yards to the east. Instead of using the house for railroad personnel, the company leased it to a local family, the Rudolph and Lena Willings. Jack, their son, has lived in the house since he was a young boy.

Although the Willings lived in the Button Road railroad house nestled in Tinker's Creek Valley, they farmed 172 acres of hillside land they owned at the northeast corner of Alexander and Dunham Roads. They also had a chestnut grove on that farm. Yaro Hesoun (7200 Dunham Road) and other local old timers remember picking the chestnuts in the autumn, giving half back to the Willings and keeping half for themselves. During the depression Rudolph Willing lost the Dunham Road farm, along with the house and barn. Neither that house nor the barn stands today. In their place is the house George and Ann Timko built in more recent years (7525 Dunham Road), but which has been owned by the MetroParks since 1979.



*THE THIRD RAILROAD HOUSE, at 14800 Button Road, was purchased by the NYC because it stood in the path of their soon-to-be-built trestle. They moved the house and then rented it to the Willings. Pictured on their front porch in days of yesteryear are Willing family members.*



*THE OLD RED BARN AND SYCAMORE TREE sketched by Joseph Jesensky in 1926 stands in front of the former railroad house at 14800 Button Road.*

When he lost the hillside farm, Rudolph Willing farmed the Button Road acreage he leased from the railroad. Jack recalls how his dad not only farmed, but used his team of horses to do excavation work. The Willing team of horses was also rented by local farmers to haul chestnut and walnut logs to Dawson's Mill in Bedford, at Taylor and Washington Streets. Dawson's Mill purchased logs from township men and sawed them into planks of rough-cut lumber.

As the house began to show its age, rather than sink money into needed major repairs, the New York Central put the house up for sale. The Rudolph Willings bought the property, and shortly afterwards wired the house for electricity. When Willing's son, Jack, and Jack's wife, Kathleen, took over ownership a few years later, they installed inside plumbing and modernized the interior.

A landmark on this property is the old red barn standing along the driveway leading up to the house. Built around 1870, the large barn is a favorite subject of today's local artists and photographers.

Jack Willing still resides in the house in the valley, where Hemlock Creek (Wood Creek) runs into Tinker's Creek. Even though Jack sold the property to Bedford MetroPark, he can, if he so desires, live out his remaining years in the familiar park-like surroundings.

#### THE A. B. & C. ELECTRIC INTERURBAN RAILWAY

Between 1895 and 1932 a trolley line cut through the section of Bedford Township which later became Walton Hills. Local residents could take brightly-painted red electric trolley cars to stops enroute to downtown Cleveland or to Cuyahoga Falls, and then when the line was extended, riders could travel as far south as Uhrichsville, Ohio.

In 1906 The Northern Ohio Traction and Light Company was formed by the merger of the A. B. & C. and other electric interurban lines. A few years later the company was renamed The Northern Ohio Power and Light Company. No matter what the official name, customers called it the ABC, the Red Car, or the Red Trolley.

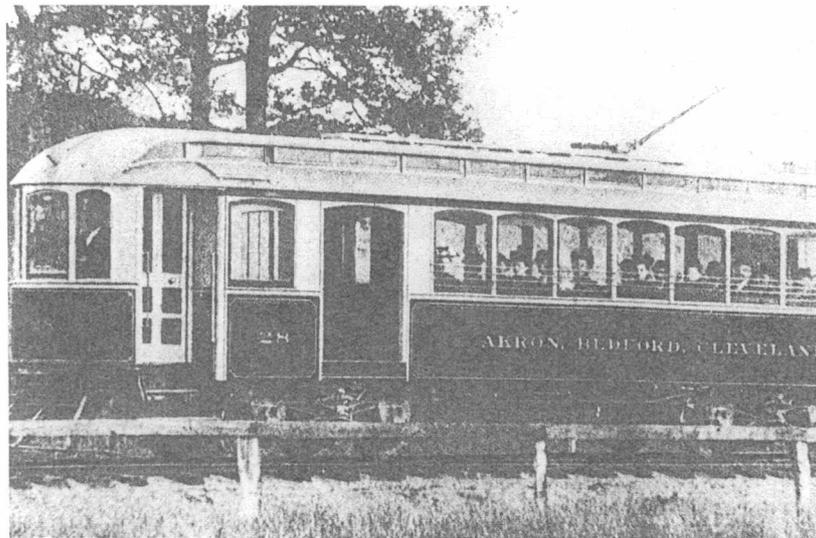
Throughout the thirty-eight years the trolley service was in existence there were changes in the track routing. Locally, the tracks ran along the east side of Northfield Road until 1930 when Northfield Road was converted into a divided highway. At that time the interurban tracks were laid down the center strip of the road.

At the peak of service there were thirty-five stops scheduled daily

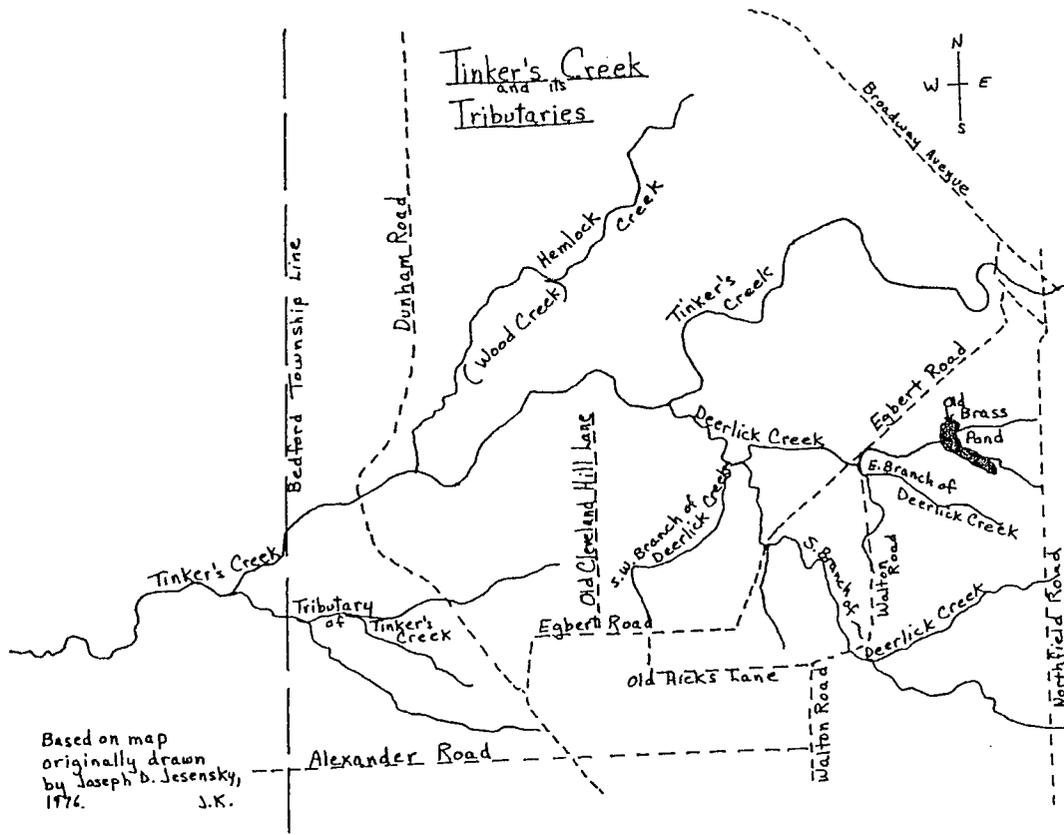
between downtown Cleveland and Bedford. One popular trolley stop was at Bedford Commons and North Park Street — the famous Bedford Glens stop. Carloads of people often got off to go picnicing, dancing, or bowling at nearby Bedford Glens. The stop near Interstate Street and Northfield Road was convenient for McMyler-Interstate Company workers.

Although the line went through “Walton Hills,” the ABC was more often used by people who lived in Cleveland and its nearby suburbs than by local residents. However, several older residents relate that it was the ABC trolley that first introduced them to the southwest corner of Bedford Township. Elsie Wingenfeld (18955 Orchard Hill Drive) recalls stories her father, Anton Pintner, told her about the Northfield Road area. He took the ABC from Cleveland to a stop at Northfield and Sagamore Road each autumn during the early 1900’s. He got off there to pick black walnuts and mushrooms in the woods and fields where Regency, Rashell, and Laurel Drives are today. When his two bushel baskets and bags were filled, he boarded the ABC to return home with his treasures.

The number of trolley riders began to dwindle dramatically in the dark depression days of 1932, thus causing the line to go out of business. The trolley cars, still in good condition, were either scrapped or sold. So ended an era of trolley car service in Bedford Township.



*ABC TROLLEY CARS traveled along Northfield Road from 1895 until 1932. (1906 photograph)*



Based on map  
originally drawn  
by Joseph b. Jesensky,  
1976. J.K.

## CREEKS AND PARKS:

### TINKER'S CREEK

Tinker's Creek is the largest tributary of the Cuyahoga River. It begins near Kent, Ohio in the Twin Lakes area and winds its way westward. It curves through Bedford MetroPark and flows into the Cuyahoga River to our west.

Several streams empty into Tinker's Creek, but two of its major tributaries, Deerlick Creek and Hemlock Creek (formerly called Wood Creek), join the river within Walton Hills. Deerlick Creek's branches — East Branch, South Branch, and Southwest Branch — wind through villagers' properties prior to emptying into Deerlick Creek. Tinker's Creek and its tributaries supply one third of the water that flows down the Cuyahoga River.

Tinker's Creek was named for Captain Joseph Tinker, a member of Moses Cleaveland's surveying party. Tinker was noted for his skill at transporting supplies to the group. Sometimes he led pack horses overland to the surveying party, and if he could reach the men by boat, he used water routes to deliver goods to the surveyors.

In the fall of 1797 Joseph Tinker and two other men were in a boat near the Lake Erie shoreline when it capsized during a storm. All three drowned, but Tinker was given the honor of having a creek named for him by his fellow map-makers.

Old-time residents remember the good fishing in Tinker's Creek. Bass, bluegill, croppie, and catfish from the creek provided the main course for many family dinners. Local mothers often made soup from turtles caught in the creek.

The Bedford Township section of Tinker's Creek is a unique natural treasure. Today our gorge section of Tinker's Creek receives not only local, but national recognition as a national natural landmark.

### BEDFORD METROPARK

When the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District was established in 1917, the Board of Park Commissioners recognized the significance of the Tinker's Creek gorge in Bedford Township and immediately made plans to survey and purchase the land around the gorge. Although privately

owned, the area retained its natural state — steep hillsides made the land economically unfit for farming.

By 1922 the park district owned 712 acres of land around Tinker's Creek, naming it Bedford Reservation. At the present time Bedford MetroPark encompasses 1335 acres of land. A small portion came from within Bedford city limits, but most of the acreage was in the township area that is now Walton Hills.

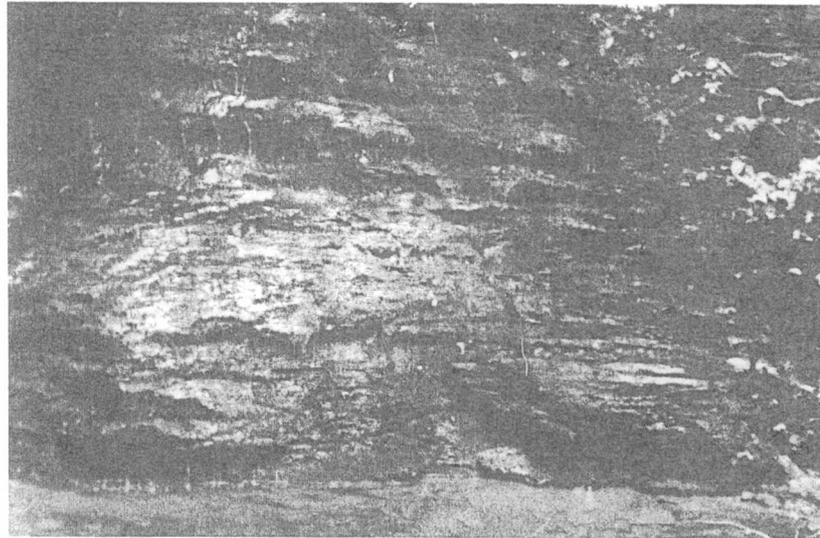
Bedford MetroPark is a distinctive and significant park for several reasons; the Tinker's Creek gorge, the "type locality" rock called the Bedford Formation, and its diversity of plant and animal life.

Except for when it flows through Bedford MetroPark, Tinker's Creek is a calm, slow-moving stream. In our area, however, the river plunges abruptly in a series of cascades and waterfalls. Steep scenic cliffs of exposed sandstone and shale frame its sides. For over 12,000 years Tinker's Creek has been carving out a valley through Bedford Township. Its steep-walled gorge is one-half mile in length and one hundred ninety feet deep at the observation platform. As the river continues to slowly cut through soft and brittle sandstone and shale, the valley will become even deeper in years to come.

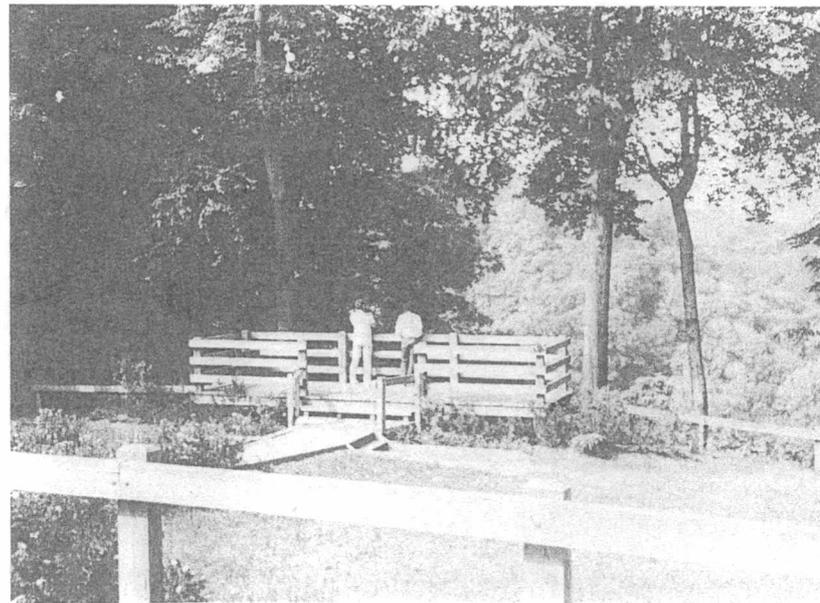
Geologists consider the park a significant site because of the exposure of a Mississippian Era shale and sandstone 300 million years old. They named the unique rock the Bedford Formation. This brittle, soft rock is made of thin layers of shale alternating with thin layers of sandstone. In the Bedford Formation, one can see the ripples or wave marks of the ocean, from when and where it was formed. The rock is visible in the cascades, waterfalls, and rapids throughout the park, and along the walls of the gorge. The Bedford Formation was first described and named here, designating Bedford MetroPark a "type locality." The rock is also seen nearby in other gorges throughout northeast Ohio.

Besides going to the park to see the Bedford Formation, students of geology seek Cleveland Shale, usually found at a lower level, and Chagrin Shale, at a still lower level. Fossils of sharks and other fish can be found in the Cleveland Shale.

Many sightseers enjoy stopping along Gorge Parkway to view the spectacular gorge listed as a national natural landmark. The United States National Park Service saw the need to preserve the area, and in October of 1968, Tinker's Creek Gorge was dedicated as a National Natural Historic Site on the National Registry of Scenic Places.



*THE BEDFORD FORMATION*



*GORGE OVERLOOK became a National Natural Landmark in 1968.*

Bedford MetroPark is also noteworthy for its great diversity of plant and animal life. Many species of trees that are not typical of northeast Ohio grow along the hillsides, as well as several rare or endangered species of wildflowers. Many different kinds of birds live in the area, some of which are not usually found in northern Ohio. Seasoned naturalists and amateurs alike go to Bedford MetroPark to seek and study the wonders of nature the park has to offer.

There are many springs along the creek where fresh water seeps through rocks. The Indians knew about the springs, frequenting the spots for drinking water.

Saltlicks can be found in the creeks, and especially in Deerlick Creek, one of the principal tributaries emptying into Tinker's Creek. In years past animals were regularly seen licking the salty water seeping through rocks at the mouth of Deerlick Creek. Indians, fur traders, and early settlers considered the saltlicks a prime source for wild game, meat, and pelts. Salt deposits were under the rocks, and when the rushing water filtered through the rocks, dissolved salt mixed with the fresh water, thus providing the animals with their mineral salt requirements.

There are over seventy cascades, rapids, and small waterfalls in the park. Many of them are along Deerlick Creek. Bridal Veil Falls, one of the most popular scenic spots in the park, is on South Branch of Deerlick Creek.

On East Branch of Deerlick Creek there is a rocky overhang called Poet's Cave, where travelers found temporary shelter — and where at least one local poet worked at his craft. It is located near a large spring, close to the abandoned Lost Meadows Quarry. On the rocky floor of the natural shelter are two designs etched into the rock. They could be petroglyphs, which are Indian rock inscriptions of animal shapes. If so, one of the designs seems to point to a nearby wild turkey roost of bygone days. They could also be designs scratched into the rock by quarry workers who perhaps lunched there. Over the years the rock inscriptions have been studied by state archeologists and staff members of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Although opinions differ, most experts think it is unlikely that they are Indian petroglyphs.

During the first park years two rangers, Al Gonyol and Harry Vernon, patrolled the park on foot. A few years later Gonyol worked alone, mounted on his horse, Kate. When Gonyol left the park service Scotty Mills became the mounted ranger and Benny Pasternak watched over the park on a motorcycle with a side car.



*PARK RANGER SCOTTY MILLS patrolled Bedford Reservation on horseback for over thirty years, until 1956. Joseph Jesensky sketched Mills in 1929.*

Scotty Mills is remembered by many Walton Hills old-timers for his friendliness and his desire to assist park visitors and nearby residents as well. Mills worked on horseback for over thirty years, until he was 74 in 1956. His favorite mount was a Morgan horse named Mac. Upon becoming a park ranger Mills was issued a gun, but he never carried it. The weapon was stored at home until Mills returned it at retirement. When he died in December of 1961, the Walton Hills Rangers, a local club for equestrians, headed his funeral parade to Bedford Cemetery to show appreciation for all the helpful deeds Scotty Mills had performed not only for them, but for all park users. Today, Scotty's daughter-in-law and grandson, Mariam and Mac Mills, reside at 7400 North Meadowpark Drive, and granddaughter, MaryBeth Marshall, lives at 18137 Jefferson Drive.

In the 1920's Bedford Reservation was a more or less undeveloped park. It was merely acres of hilly forest, winding streams, and a few trails. The acreage along Egbert Road, from the ranger station past Shawnee Hills Golf Course and all the way west to Lost Meadow Picnic Area, consisted of abandoned farmlands and grazing fields.

Before the park was established a Boy Scout cabin was built on a low bluff by Tinker's Creek. The cabin is no longer standing, but the site is behind the bathroom facilities in today's Hermit Hollow Picnic Area. A

path leads from the restrooms to where the cabin stood. The Boy Scouts had used the cabin on weekends and in the summer, and then in the 1920's when they no longer used the cabin, they let an old man stay there as caretaker. Chris Foss, the hermit, died in the cabin in 1929, at the age of eighty-two. The nearby picnic area is now named for the recluse who made the shanty his home for several years.

No paved roadways meandered through the park, but there were ox lanes which led to old, abandoned Berea Sandstone quarries. One ox lane connected Egbert Road and the Lost Meadow Quarry — located on the banks of East Branch of Deerlick Creek, near the Lost Meadow Picnic Area. The lane is now used as a bridle path. Another ox lane connected Egbert Road and the Cleveland Quarry — located on the upper banks of Tinker's Creek, by the present day intersection of Gorge Parkway and Overlook Lane. Today it, too, is a bridle path. The old Wager quarry was also in the park — west of Overlook Lane; its lane led to Dunham Road, and was one of the paths used by Black Beauty Riding Academy.

During the depression years of the 1930's, the Board of Park Commissioners were able to use federal dollars to create the park we recognize today. The Works Projects Administration (WPA) developed Gorge Parkway, complete with scenic stone bridges and stone walls to enhance the park.

The WPA planted many spruce and other evergreen trees in selected areas, and improved bridle paths. Picnic groves with pavilions were also the result of WPA efforts.

During the ten year span ending in 1994, the Board of Park Commissioners plans to spend nearly \$4 million on Bedford MetroPark and Shawnee Hills Golf Course. Major work initially scheduled included a new nature center with a trailside museum, a lake, a demonstration pioneer farm, and a new nine-hole golf course.

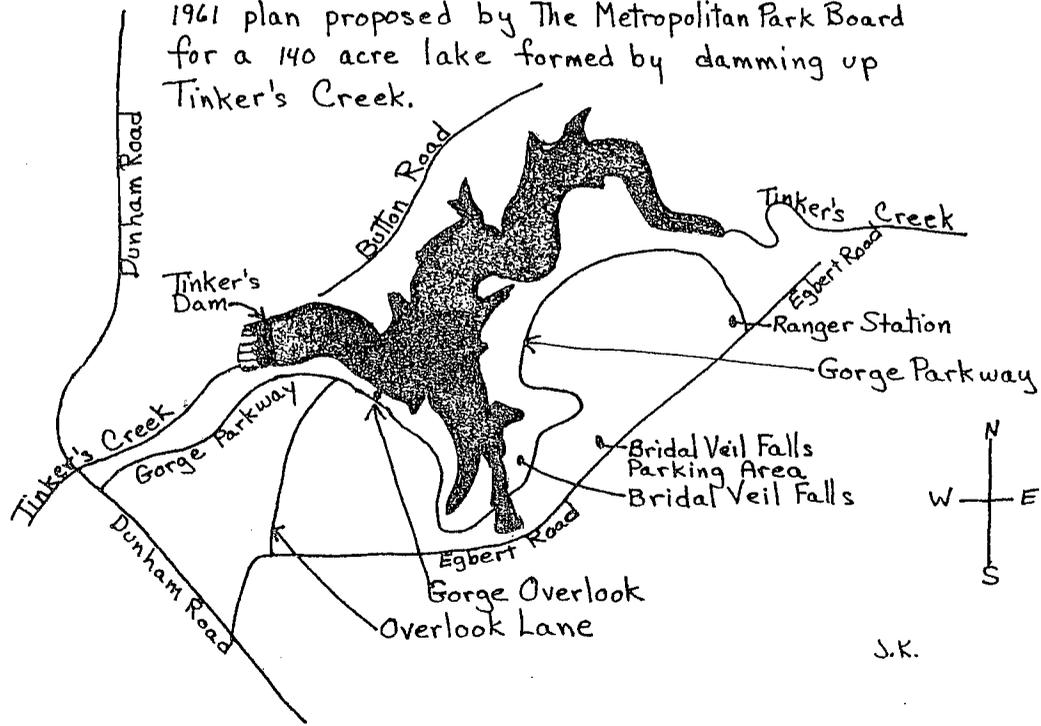
### LAKE SHAWNEE

In 1961 the Park Board proposed a plan to dam up Tinker's Creek near Dunham Road and create a 140-acre lake in Bedford MetroPark. Lake Shawnee was to have been a recreation center for swimming, fishing, boating, and winter sports — the most extensive recreational facility in all the MetroParks.

Lake Shawnee would have been two and one half miles long, stretching from Egbert Road to Dunham Road, the deepest man-made lake in Ohio; indeed, almost as deep as Lake Erie.

# Lake Shawnee

1961 plan proposed by The Metropolitan Park Board for a 140 acre lake formed by damming up Tinker's Creek.



J.K.

The federal government was expected to pay for the building of the dam because it was categorized as a major flood control project, costing \$3,800,000. Since Tinker's Creek and its tributaries supply one third of the water flowing into the Cuyahoga River, the dam would have controlled flooding in the Valley View area of the Cuyahoga Valley.

From the very beginning (in 1961) conservationists, naturalists, and concerned laymen actively protested the destruction of the unique wilderness and historical aspects of the Tinker's Creek Gorge area. William Nimberger, an artist by profession and an amateur naturalist at heart, headed the drive to stop the flooding of the Tinker's Creek Valley. With the help of Russell Hansen of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, he researched and wrote a report about the ecological and geological significance of the valley. His work, over a four year period, was a major factor in the subsequent abandonment of the project by local, state, and federal authorities. Thus, by 1965 the Lake Shawnee project had not yet received federal financial assistance, and in February, 1967 the entire project was dropped by the State of Ohio.

A year later the United States National Park Service proclaimed the Tinker's Creek Gorge a National Natural Landmark, preserving the area from becoming a recreational lake.

### THE CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (CVNRA) is a 32,000-acre national park along the Cuyahoga River, stretching from Cleveland to Akron, and including the western parts of our village that abut Tinker's Creek, Sagamore Creek, and Dunham Road.

Differing from traditional national parks, the CVNRA is not built upon only one natural scenic attraction. It is a combination of many sites that historians, naturalists, and conservationists have pushed to preserve.

Some local parks and private businesses within the boundaries of the CVNRA are allowed to operate independently. An example is Bedford MetroPark which is part of the Cleveland MetroParks System, under the jurisdiction of the Cuyahoga County Board of Park Commissioners. The Astorhurst Restaurant and Astorhurst Golf Club are examples of two privately-owned businesses within the national park.

Greater Cleveland is one of five urban areas in the United States having a national park. The other cities are New York, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Santa Monica. The other urban parks, however, lack the variety of natural beauty, historic significance, as well as the cultural and recreational facilities of the CVNRA.

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## THE CLEVELAND HILL FARM

Of historic interest is the parcel of land at the end of Wight Oaks Drive extending north to Tinker's Creek. The land is now owned by the Metro-Parks, but two former owners of note were Elmer B. Wight, who was instrumental in documenting the Indian and pioneer history of the area, and Virgil D. Allen, Jr., who was the first Mayor of the Village of Walton Hills. The land along the south bank of Tinker's Creek was a valuable piece of property; exposed sandstone proved to be of commercial quality and the acreage at the top of the ridge was fertile, flat, and ideally suited for farming.

The earliest records at the Cuyahoga County Archives show Martin Sheldon owned the aforementioned 162 acres in 1827. By 1837 Sheldon was not only paying taxes on his land, but also on the mill he built on the bank of Tinker's Creek, and on a log cabin located on the south ridge, a short distance from the community of Little Egypt. The site of the Sheldon cabin is a few yards southeast of where Overlook Lane meets Gorge Parkway today.

Records also show that in 1827 a neighbor, Joseph Trumbell, owned 154 acres which abutted the south end of Sheldon's land and extended to Egbert Road. Trumbell built a log cabin for his family at the rear of his property, close to the Sheldon property line. The Trumbells probably created the path (now the East Ohio Gas line) that led not only to Sheldon's cabin, but to another lane which followed the south ridge of Tinker's Creek. That lane led westward to Little Egypt, and, in the other direction, to the town of Bedford.

Within a few years the Sheldons and the Trumbells extended their path southward to Egbert Road. This dirt roadway became an access road drawn on county atlases as early as 1860, called Cleveland Hill Lane. In more recent years it was renamed Wight Oaks Lane, and in August of 1985 Council accepted Wight Oaks Drive for dedication.

## THE CLEVELAND QUARRY

In the 1840's quarrying became a major industry along the banks of Tinker's Creek and its tributaries. By the 1880's the market for commercial grade sandstone seemed unlimited.

Abner Cleveland and his son, James, saw sandstone quarrying along Tinkers Creek as a money-making opportunity. In 1846 they purchased a

piece of property on the banks of Tinker's Creek where exposed sandstone was in evidence. Edmond Gleeson, son of Moses Gleeson, bought adjacent land along the banks in 1851. But, Gleeson died only three years later, at age 44. In 1859 Edmond Gleeson's thirty-two year old widow, Charlotte Comstock Gleeson, married James C. Cleveland, who was then 39.

Soon afterwards James sold his interest in the quarry land to his father, Abner Cleveland. Abner's ~~third~~ oldest son, Clark, who was still in his twenties at the time, ran the quarry.

Clark Cleveland developed the quarry into a prosperous business; and then after his father's (Abner Cleveland) death in 1884, continued as owner. Elmer B. Wight told his daughter and granddaughters that several buildings in downtown Cleveland along Superior Street were built with sandstone blocks from the Cleveland Quarry, and that Clark Cleveland made most of his money from the quarry — not from the farm. In 1929, sixteen years after Clark Cleveland died, the land encompassing the quarry was sold to the MetroParks.

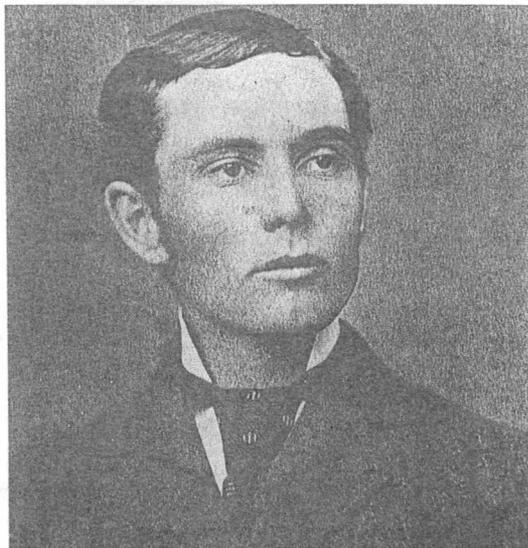
During the quarrying years teams of oxen hauled the cut stone to Egbert Road from its remote location along the banks of the creek. Today, the lane created by the wagons and oxen is the bridle trail between Gorge Parkway and Tinker's Creek.

One can still see evidence of the old stone quarry, by standing on the stonework near the Overlook Lane/Gorge Parkway crossroads and looking down at the carved-out river bank.

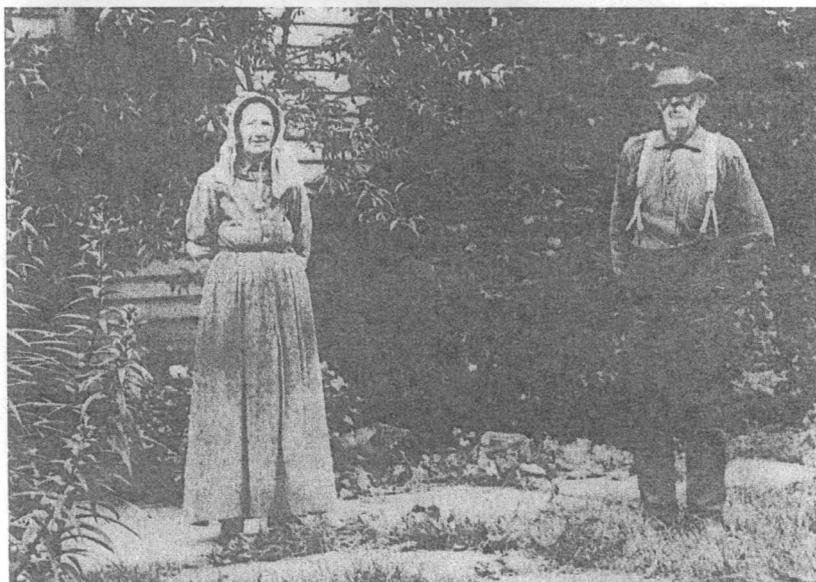
### THE FARM AND HOMESTEAD

Abner Cleveland began purchasing farmland on the ridge south of the quarry in 1846. However, it was his son, Clark, and Clark's ~~sister~~ Fanny Ladiska, who lived on the farm and managed both the farm and the quarry. Clark inherited the property after his father's death (Abner died at age 86, in 1884). Both Clark and Fanny lived out their long lives on the farm; Clark died at age 80 in 1913, and Fanny died six months later, at age 89.

Whereas the Sheldon log cabin was situated on the ridge close to Tinker's Creek, Clark and Fanny Cleveland built a new house for themselves in c. 1854 near the south end of the property, close to their neighbors of the time, the Sheets. The Greek Revival style homestead, which can still be seen today at 16535 Egbert Road, was a popular architectural form throughout the Greater Cleveland area from 1820 until 1860.



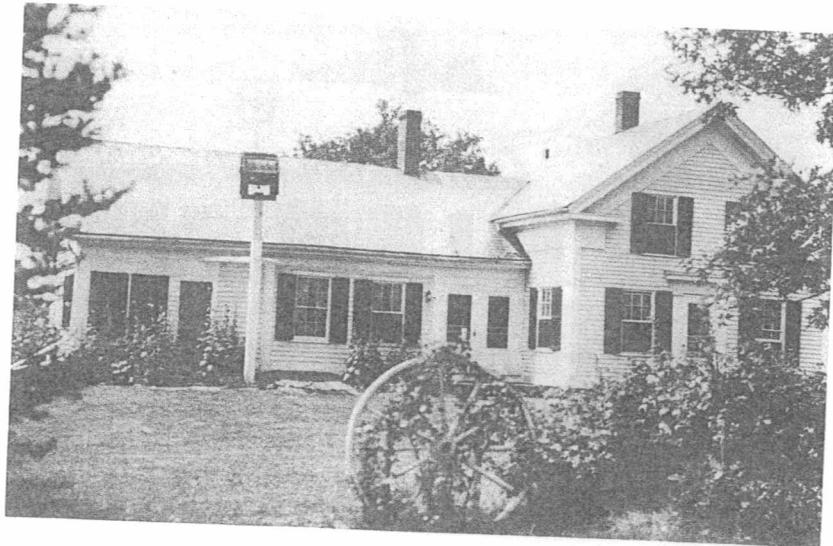
*BORN IN 1832, CLARK A. CLEVELAND operated the Cleveland Quarry and the Cleveland Hill Farm from the 1850's until the 1910's. After his father, Abner Cleveland, died in 1884 Clark owned the estate.*



*CLARK AND FANNY LADISKA CLEVELAND in a 1910 photograph are shown at the north side of their house. Clark died in 1913 at age 80, and Fanny died six months later, in 1914 at age 89. Both graves are in Bedford Cemetery.*



*THE CLEVELAND HILL FARMHOUSE, built c. 1854, stands on Wight Oaks Drive, at 16535 Egbert Road. The Clark Clevelands and the Virgil Allens lived there and in the years between it was the summer cottage of Elmer B. Wight. Above: The house in 1909. The open porch on the south side is visible. Pictured is Fanny Ladiska Cleveland. Below: The house in 1950. The wing at the south side was added around 1920.*



The two-story frame house had a slate roof (until 1986) and pegged wood plank flooring. On the first floor of the original house was a kitchen, parlor, and two bedrooms. Sandstone blocks from the family quarry line the basement walls, and flagstone walkways lead to the house.

In later years a wing was added to the original structure. The one floor addition at the south end of the house was at first divided into a kitchen and a living room for live-in hired help. A narrow staircase led up to their sleeping quarters on the second floor of the original section of the house.

The house has been modernized a few times over the years. The two first floor back bedrooms were replaced by a kitchen, a bathroom replaced the old kitchen at the front corner, and the wing was made into one big living room. More recently, in 1946 when the last private owners not only remodeled but restored the house, they uncovered a fireplace made of stones from the old family quarry, and found the original swinging hook on which cooking pots were hung.

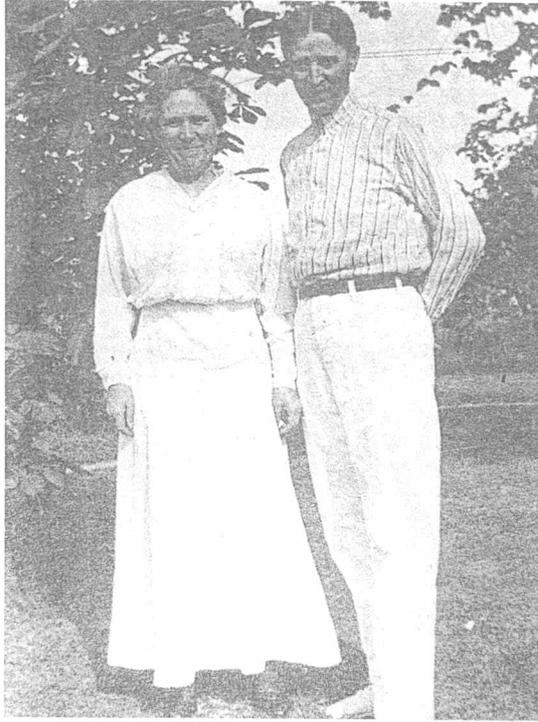
Despite several modifications the original character of the house has been preserved.

### ELMER B. WIGHT

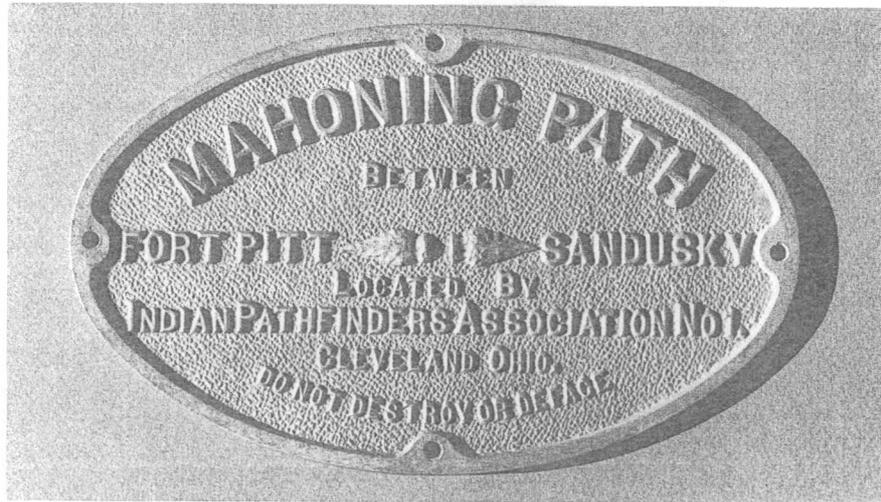
One Cleveland Hill Farm owner of note was Elmer B. Wight, a man who devoted considerable time from 1914 into the 1930's to the documentation of Indian and pioneer existence, not only in the Tinker's Creek Valley, but throughout the Western Reserve and the State of Ohio.

In 1914 Elmer Wight founded the Indian Pathfinders Association No. 1. The goal of the Pathfinders was to draw maps of Indian trails as well as Indian campsites, villages, Indian and non-Indian forts, routes of military expeditions crossing the state, and sites of battles and other historic incidents. To accomplish their objectives, the men spent years researching material in libraries and museums throughout the country, conducting numerous interviews, corresponding and meeting with historians, and retracing the old trails on foot.

Although the Pathfinder membership numbered thirty-eight in 1916, it was the charter members who amassed a library of historical notes about the Indians: Elmer Wight, landscaping and civil engineer; Virgil D. Allen, Sr., engineer; Russell K. Pelton, Manager of the Benjamin Rose Estate; Fed M. Barton, publisher; De Lo E. Mook, attorney and Boy Scout Commissioner, and Charles Orr, Ex-Director of Cleveland Public Schools. The secretary of the Pathfinders group was Wight's friend, Virgil D. Allen, Sr., whose son later married Wight's daughter and who still later became



*ELMER AND ALICE (PRITCHARD) WIGHT bought the Cleveland Hill Farm in 1917, using the main house as their summer cottage and weekend retreat. Alice died three years later in 1920, at age 42. (Date of photograph unknown)*



*ALUMINUM PLAQUES MARKING THE MAHONING TRAIL were nailed to a number of trees in our area in the 1920's, by Elmer Wight and other members of the Indian Pathfinders Association No. 1.*

the first Mayor of Walton Hills. Elmer Wight is credited with drawing the maps and Virgil Allen, Sr. with the bulk of the correspondence. Virgil Allen, Sr. also gave numerous speeches to groups throughout the state on Ohio's Old Indian Trails.

To mark the trails the men nailed cast aluminum plaques — which they designed and purchased themselves — on strategically located trees. All the plaques in our area have been removed from the trees by memento-hunters, but one tablet Wight kept for himself is now in the possession of one of his granddaughters.

Elmer Wight mapped the oxen trails that dated back to the township's pioneer days. At his own expense he had aerial photographs taken of the area so he could more easily chart the old trails. Wight then used the photos to make topographical maps of the Tinker's Creek Valley.

Born in 1869 of a well-to-do Cleveland family, Elmer Wight moved to a farm in Ashtabula County when he was twelve. It was there that the young Wight not only developed skills in dairy farming, but formed an appreciation for local history — an interest that intensified as he grew older.

Wight, a civil engineer who specialized in landscape engineering, was highly regarded by others in his profession. Johanne Irish, one of Wight's two granddaughters, recalls Wight as a very popular man who had a lot of charisma. He learned his trade by apprenticing himself to a civil engineer, as was customary in those days. He designed and engineered the landscaping for the University Circle area, including the unique bridges along Martin Luther King Boulevard. Another Wight project was Lake Shore Boulevard, from Gordon Park to East 185th Street. According to granddaughter Betsy Baker, Wight wanted to create a beautiful road all along the lake front. He also designed Lake View Cemetery on Euclid Avenue near University Circle, and the unique street patterns for housing developments along Merriman Road, in Akron.

In 1917, shortly after Clark and Fanny Cleveland died, Wight bought the Cleveland Hill Farm. He, his wife, Alice (Pritchard), and their daughter, Margaret, used the original section of the house as their summer cottage. Their primary residence was at the corner of Windward Drive and Lake Shore Boulevard, near Villa Angela Academy.

Wight had hoped to move the family to the Egbert Road property, but his plans never materialized; Alice, who was ailing, died at age 42 in 1920. When he married Lina Lane a few years later, they used the cottage

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*CLEVELAND HILLS ESTATES. Before the Metropolitan Park Board bought the northern chunk of his land in 1929, Elmer B. Wight designed a plat layout for the development of his property. In a legend he marked noteworthy spots that made this land significant*

*for inclusion in Bedford Metropolitan Park. Perhaps Wight's intention was to spur the Park Board into action. This drawing is a composite of two of Wight's maps.*

extensively on weekends and summers, but never made it their permanent home.

Mr. and Mrs. Reed were hired by Wight to tend to the farm, the dairy cattle, and the homestead. When some of the cattle became infected with tuberculosis and the whole herd had to be destroyed because of the disease, Wight decided not to start anew.

The Denhams were the caretakers of the property for many years after the Reeds. The genial couple lived in the south wing of the house. Mr. Denham managed the farm and Mrs. Denham cared for the house. She also took pride in maintaining the formal garden that dated back to the late 1800's. Today, family members and friends recall the beauty of that distinguished garden situated along the south slope of the house. Although he favored the formal garden, Wight removed all shrubbery from around the foundation of the house. He also banked the earth against the house so rain water would wash away from the foundation and not seep into the basement.

In addition to the main house, two cottages and a cabin were on the property; today, only the homestead and a cottage remain. A cottage across the lane from the main house was constructed for Wight's weekend and summer guests, but the cottage was leveled after a large oak tree crashed through the roof during an electrical storm.

The second cottage was located at the north end of the old lane, by today's Gorge Parkway. The cottage overlooked the quarry and the gorge, and was chiefly used by hired help. When the Metropolitan Park Board purchased the back acreage from Wight, he moved the cottage to its present location at today's north end of the lane. The relocated cottage still stands today.

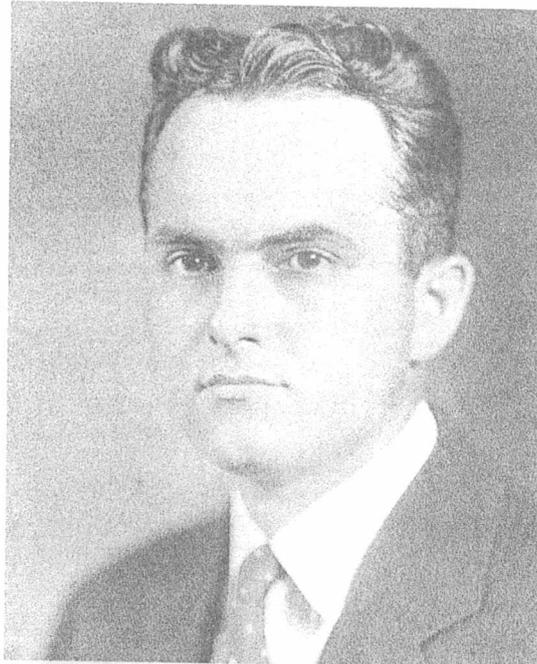
In the 1920's Wight's young protegee, Joseph Jesensky, erected a cabin for himself at the far east end of the property. Years later the abandoned cabin was razed by the MetroParks.

Wight died in 1943 and is buried in Lake View Cemetery.

### THE VIRGIL D. ALLENS

Elmer Wight's only child, Margaret, married his good friend's son, Virgil D. Allen, Jr., after they graduated from college; Margaret from Lake Erie College and Virgil, Jr. from Western Reserve University. The young couple, both born in 1898, built a house for themselves on Wight's Lake Shore Boulevard land. A few years later, in 1926, the Allens moved to

*VIRGIL D. ALLEN, JR., the young man in this early 1920's photograph, in future years was to marry Elmer B. Wight's daughter; lead the drive for township zoning ordinances, organize efforts and work for incorporation of the village, write all zoning ordinances for the new village, serve as First Mayor of Walton Hills from June, 1951 to January, 1954, and persuade the Ford Motor Company to build its stamping plant here.*



*VIRGIL, JR. AND MARGARET (WIGHT) ALLEN moved into the old Cleveland Hill Farm Homestead on Wight Oaks Drive in 1946. (Date of photograph unknown)*

Utica, New York, when Virgil was offered a promising banking opportunity. The Depression interfered with Allen's career plans, however, and in 1933 Virgil, Margaret, and their three children, John, Betsy, and Johanne, returned to their Lake Shore home. Allen became a successful investment counselor in Cleveland while attending evening classes, working toward a degree in law.

The Allens, in the mid 1930's, remodeled and enlarged a cottage on the Cleveland Hill Farm for their weekend and summer vacation home. This cottage, originally built by Wight for his weekend guests, stood across the drive facing the main house. As the years went by the Allen family spent more and more time at the cottage, until, in 1946, three years after Elmer Wight had passed away, they moved into the Cleveland Hill Homestead. About the same time their old cottage was hit and demolished by one of the high old oak trees lining Wight Oaks Drive.

Allen enjoyed the solitude of the Cleveland Hill Farm which contrasted sharply with his busy work schedule as banker, lawyer, and first Mayor of Walton Hills. In 1963 Allen suffered a stroke and died a few days later. (See THE FIRST MAYOR OF WALTON HILLS.)

Margaret Wight Allen was described by people who knew her as a soft-spoken but assertive woman, who shared her father's keen interest in the ecology of the land. Hoping that the Cleveland homestead would eventually become a natural preserve, Margaret Allen sold her property to the MetroParks, and in 1977 moved to Kirtland where she lived out her remaining years with her older daughter, Betsy.

### THE MOSES CLEAVELAND CONNECTION

Claiming to be distantly related by marriage to Moses Cleaveland, Elmer B. Wight purchased the Cleveland Hill Farm as well as two other nearby parcels of land in Valley View that he felt were linked to the Cleavelands. Betsy Baker of Kirtland and Johanne Irish of Bratenahl, granddaughters of Elmer Wight, recall Wight impressing upon them the historical significance of their Cleveland Hill Farm and Valley View acreage.

General Moses Cleaveland was a Connecticut lawyer who, as one of the forty-nine investors, acted as general agent for the Connecticut Land Company. He led the team who surveyed the Western Reserve in 1796 and 1797. He himself, however, only spent the first of the two years with his men. Although he never returned to the Ohio territory, it is known that Cleaveland owned parcels of land in the Western Reserve totaling over six thousand acres.

Moses Cleaveland was born in Canterbury, Connecticut in 1754, and, unmarried, died there at the age of 52, in 1806, ten years after leading the surveying party in the Western Reserve.

According to Wight, Abner Cleveland inherited Moses Cleaveland's acreage along the mouth of Tinker's Creek. Abner Cleveland, born in 1797, moved from his home state of New York when he was a young man, to see his land in this part of Ohio. Elmer Wight purchased a tract of land located south of Tinker's Creek, on the east side of Canal Road. That property, which he traced to Abner Cleveland, is still owned by Wight heirs.

Elmer Wight is quoted as saying his step-grandfather was James C. Cleveland, one of the original owners of the Cleveland Quarry. James sold his interest in the quarry land to his father, Abner Cleveland. Although Abner owned the quarry during his lifetime, and in addition, purchased adjacent farmland, it was his second eldest son, Clark, (James' brother) who developed the Cleveland Quarry into a successful business and also managed the Cleveland Hill Farm. (James C. Cleveland served as Mayor of Bedford from 1860-1862.)

A third historically significant parcel of land Elmer Wight owned for a number of years is located along the ridge north of Alexander Road and west of Hub Industrial Park. It is unclear why he sold the property; perhaps Wight sold it when further research proved the land had never been owned by Cleavelands. The Sagamore Path, a branch of the Mahoning Trail which connected Fort Pitt with Fort Detroit, went through the property and archaeologists marked the area as a site where Indians lived as long ago as 500 BC. This land is now part of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

## JOSEPH D. JESENSKY

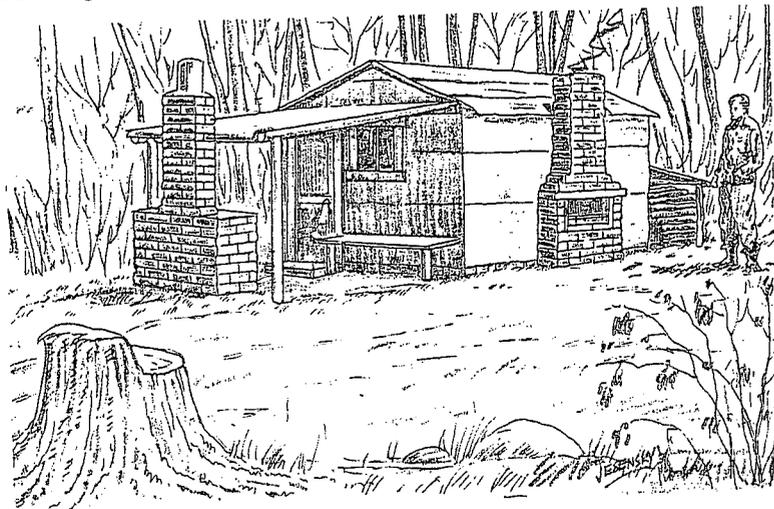
Between 1923 and 1933 a young Cleveland artist spent most of his weekends and vacations hiking, sketching, and taking field notes in the gorge section of Tinker's Creek and the nearby hills and valleys. Joseph D. Jesensky was trained in the graphic arts, but his weekend experiences nurtured his lifelong interest in nature and prompted him to develop the skills of a naturalist, archaeologist, writer, photographer, and map maker.

Probably no one in those days knew Bedford Reservation better than Jesensky. In appreciation of his assistance park guards made him a "Special Deputy," allowing Joe to roam or stay in the park whenever he wished.

Having a friendly and outgoing personality, Joe became acquainted with area farmers. Besides giving the young man fresh milk and water for his weekend stays, local residents also related to him the history of the area. It was that type of information plus his own acute observations that Jesensky relied on to record his extensive field notes.

In 1926 Elmer B. Wight, owner and summer resident of Cleveland Hill Farm, encouraged the twenty year old Jesensky to build himself a shelter on the edge of his (Wight's) property. The next seven years Joe spent weekend nights in his cabin near Southwest Branch of Deerlick Creek. The shanty was small but cozy; and well-decorated by Jesensky and his visiting friends — poets, artists, musicians, and nature lovers.

*BURNTRIDGE CABIN was built by Joe Jesensky in 1926 for his weekend stays in Bedford MetroPark. Jesensky sketched Burntridge Cabin in 1931.*



Undoubtedly, Wight was impressed with the young man and was eager to share with Jesensky his research findings about the history of the area. Wight used aerial photographs he had taken of the area to prepare individual topographical maps. Wight, with Jesensky's able assistance, then made a series of maps showing the topology of the area between 1923 and 1933. Their series of maps marked the farmhouses, lines of fences, old oxen and old Indian trails, roads, and historic and scenic points of interest.

When Jesensky married in 1933, Wight invited the newlyweds to live in a suite of rooms in his Lake Shore home. During the year when Joe and Josephine Jesensky lived with the Wights, the two men spent many evenings working on the "topol" maps and other Tinker's Creek Valley pet projects.

Jesensky worked as a lithographic artist for a private firm and then later for the Metropolitan Park Board. He became a landscape architect for the Ohio Division of Forestry and then caretaker of Akron's Sand Run Parkway. Beginning with the World War II years until he retired in the 1970's, Jesensky was a graphic artist, first with Goodyear Aircraft and then with Goodyear Tire and Rubber.

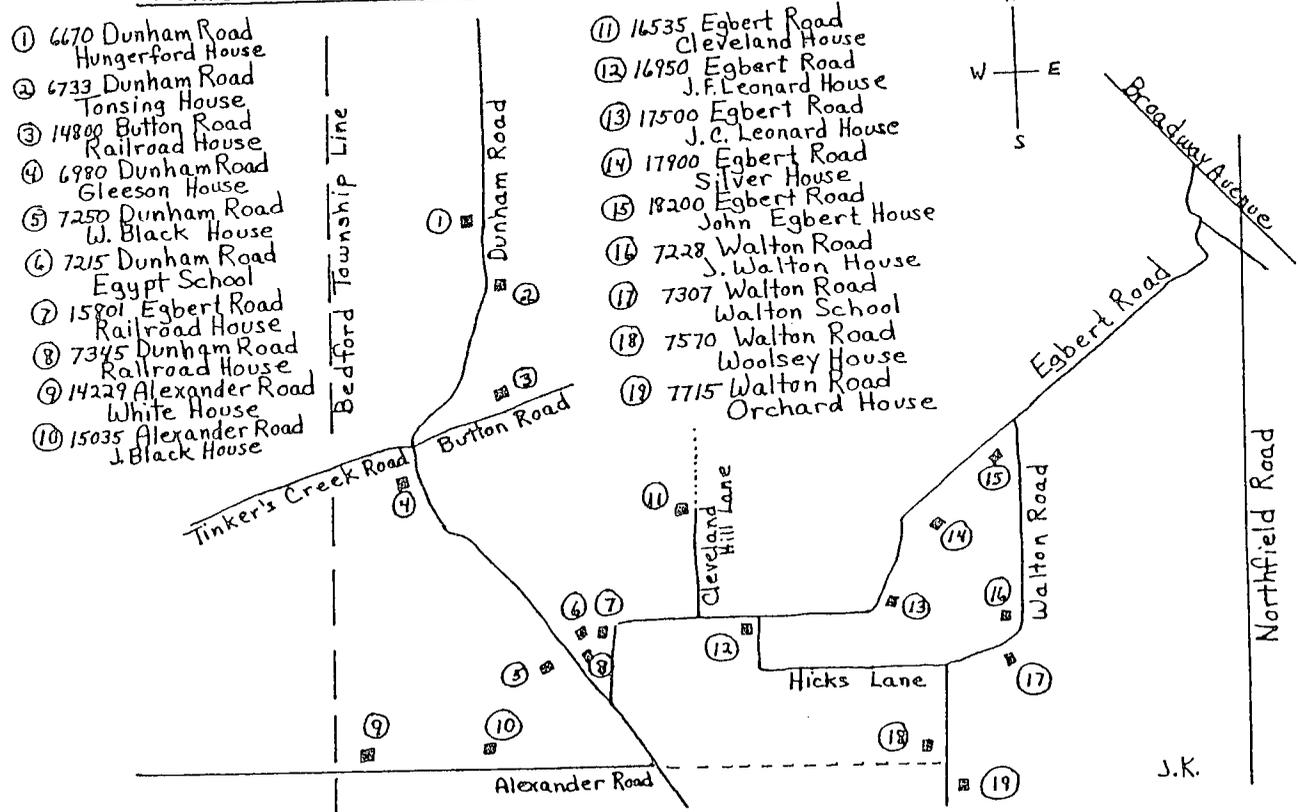
Jesensky's book, *Pages from a Tinker's Creek Valley Sketch Book, 1923-1933*, details the Walton Hills area. It is a historical document of the southwest section of Bedford Township during those years.

Wishing to share with others his papers on the Tinker's Creek Gorge and its environs, Jesensky recently donated his field notes, the series of topographical maps, original sketches, photographs, and copies of his book to the Bedford Historical Museum.



*A LIFELONG CONCERN of Joe Jesensky's has been the preservation of the history and ecology of the Cuyahoga Valley. (1985 photograph)*

# Some Old Houses Still Standing



- ① 6670 Dunham Road  
Hungerford House
- ② 6733 Dunham Road  
Tonsing House
- ③ 14800 Burton Road  
Railroad House
- ④ 6980 Dunham Road  
Gleeson House
- ⑤ 7250 Dunham Road  
W. Black House
- ⑥ 7215 Dunham Road  
Egypt School
- ⑦ 15801 Egbert Road  
Railroad House
- ⑧ 7345 Dunham Road  
Railroad House
- ⑨ 14229 Alexander Road  
White House
- ⑩ 15035 Alexander Road  
J. Black House

- ⑪ 16535 Egbert Road  
Cleveland House
- ⑫ 16950 Egbert Road  
J.F. Leonard House
- ⑬ 17500 Egbert Road  
J.C. Leonard House
- ⑭ 17900 Egbert Road  
Silver House
- ⑮ 18200 Egbert Road  
John Egbert House
- ⑯ 7228 Walton Road  
J. Walton House
- ⑰ 7307 Walton Road  
Walton School
- ⑱ 7570 Walton Road  
Woolsey House
- ⑲ 7715 Walton Road  
Orchard House

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## ALONG EGBERT ROAD

### THE EGBERT FARMS

Egbert Road, named for the man who petitioned for its dedication, became a county road in 1833. Four years later James Egbert purchased 80 acres that fronted on the northwest side of Egbert Road, at the north end of today's Walton Hills. He proceeded to clear the land, farm, and raise his family. By 1846 James Egbert had an operating saw mill on his property, and by 1860 he owned an additional 156 acres of backland. The farm was then divided up for Jane Egbert and John M. Egbert who had title to the land from 1870 to 1900.

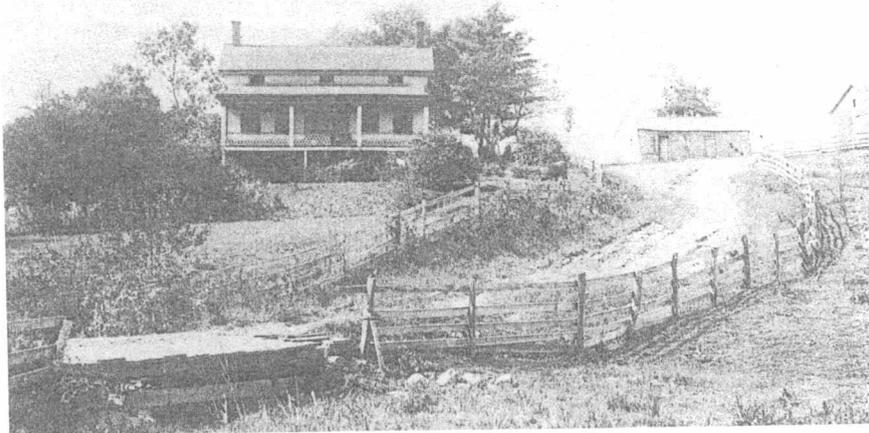
Jane Egbert's farm was north of John M. Egbert's acreage, and included the noted house built by James Egbert. The impressive two-story house sat on a gentle hilltop along the northwest side of the road, overlooking the intersection where Walton and Egbert Roads meet.

The James Egbert house had an ornate front door and threshold, in contrast to the more simple neighboring farmhouses. The roof overhang and the porch that extended across the front of the house were probably added on at a later date. A winding driveway leading up to the house crossed a stream (East Branch of Deerlick Creek) which passed through the front yard. A ten foot long wooden bridge forded the creek.

Several long-time residents recall seeing the upright sandstone slab gravemarker of Hannah Jane Egbert. The infant girl lived from 1840-1843 and was buried in the family front yard on the northwest bank of the stream. Local sightseers frequented the site on their walks through the park.

The Metropolitan Park Board purchased the property in the 1920's for inclusion in Bedford Metropolitan Park. According to Joseph D. Jesensky, when the Park District tore down the house and barn in late 1929, the gravestone was discovered and left standing intact. As the years went by the gravestone got broken, moved, and lost; and the terrain was altered when the stream was rerouted by the MetroParks in 1985-1986.

Today the site of the house is within a cluster of trees in the new nine-hole section of the Shawnee Hills Golf Course. A healthy patch of myrtle and daffodils, a few scattered flagstone slabs, and some foundation blocks of rough-cut sandstone are remnants of the homestead and reminders of years gone by.



*THE JAMES EGBERT HOUSE was built by the man for whom Egbert Road is named. It stood on the northwest side of the road, overlooking the Walton/Egbert Roads intersection. (1910 photograph)*

### THE JOHN M. EGBERT FARM

The property John M. Egbert acquired in 1870 spanned both sides of the road. His homestead was on the southeast side of Egbert Road, a short distance south of where Walton Road intersects. The house standing today at 18200 Egbert Road was built c. 1875 by John M. Egbert.

The John Egbert house has been home to other families over the years. One of the Orchard families lived on the farm for a number of years after the turn of the century, and by 1915 John and Kathalin Rusnak owned the homestead.

When the acreage on the west side of Egbert Road was about to be sold to the Metropolitan Park Board, John Rusnak jacked up the barn that stood there, and with logs and two teams of four horses each, rolled the barn across the street to its present location behind the house.

Charles Balogh, the current owner and resident, became acquainted with the Rusnaks and their Egbert Road farmland when he was a teenager living nearby. He plowed the Rusnak's garden for them, using his family's team of horses and a walking plow.

From the mid 1920's until 1930 the young Charles Balogh lived on Walton Road. His parents, Imre and Rose Balogh, owned a cement block house and ten acres of land at the northeast corner of Walton and Alexander Roads, where the Village Hall stands today.

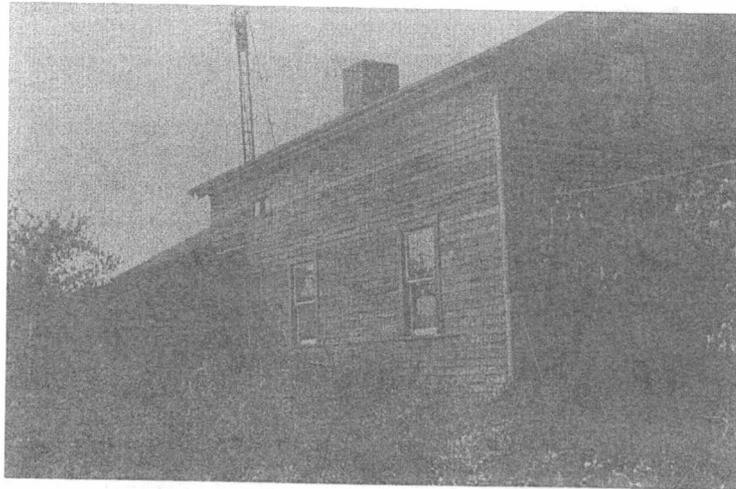
Then in 1941, soon after Charles and Beha (Gena) Balogh were married, they purchased the John Egbert house from the Rusnaks. In the early 1970's the Baloghs subdivided some of their land and sold lots. Charles' step-grandson, Victor Gigliotti, and his wife, Martha, live next door at 18250 Egbert Road.

### THE SILVER FARM

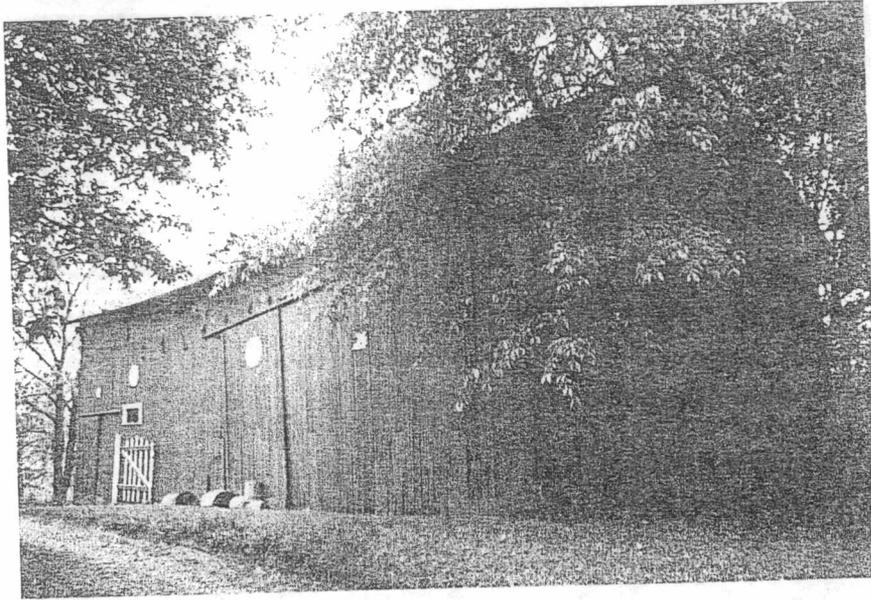
A year after James Egbert bought his land, Amos Silver purchased acreage along Egbert Road (in 1838) which was adjacent and south of Egbert's. He cleared his land, built a log cabin, and raised his family on the farm. By 1860 Amos Silver owned over 100 acres on both sides of the road, retaining ownership until 1905.

Silver built a wood frame farmhouse at 17900 Egbert Road in c. 1854, on the eastern hilltop, far back from the road.

A landmark on the property is the old barn standing at the Kral Drive intersection. Built before 1860, the barn was constructed with planks of hand-hewn oak joined together with wooden pegs. Even the ladder going up to the hay loft was assembled with pegs.



*AMOS SILVER built the house at 17900 Egbert Road in c. 1854. This old photograph shows the original exterior of the house before 1947.*



*THE SILVER BARN, built before 1860, stands at the Egbert Road/Kral Drive intersection. (1986 photograph)*

South Branch of Deerlick Creek runs through the old Silver farm. For few years flagstone was quarried from the banks of the stream, just east of Egbert Road. Local residents in those days called the stream Silver Creek for the Amos Silver family.

From 1905 until 1916 ownership of the Silver farm changed hands a few times. Then in 1916 Kydan and Josephine Scarpete, immigrants from Italy, bought the house and the acreage on the southeast side of Egbert Road. The Silver land across the street eventually became part of Bedford Metropolitan Park.

### THE SCARPETE FARM

The Scarpetes moved into the Silver house at 17900 Egbert Road and settled down on their 52-acre farm. Kydan worked full-time at the McMyler-Interstate Company while the family members worked together to care for their dairy cows, made cheese and wine, and operated a truck farm. Scarpete used his horse and wagon to sell fruits, vegetables, and cheese at the Old Central Market in downtown Cleveland and also door-to-door along Warrensville Road and the Woodland/East 93rd Street area.

Kydan Scarpete died just six years later (1922), when an automobile collided with his horse and wagon. His widow, Josephine, did her best to

hold onto the land. For a few summers she rented out her hilltop back acreage to tuberculosis patients and their families who wished to camp there during the warm summer months. Tuberculosis was a prevalent disease during the early 1900's. At that time one common treatment was for TB patients to spend time outdoors at higher altitudes in the country where the air was crisp and clear.

For five spring seasons Josephine Scarpete rented out her land to a band of gypsies who, for a number of seasons previously, had camped at the City of Bedford borderline (next to the railroad tracks, a short distance behind the tavern on the west side of Northfield Road, just south of Forbes Road). Eager for more privacy and space, the band of nomads moved from their Northfield Road location to the Scarpete land. One spring the gypsies set up their tents in the Scarpete lowlands by South Branch of Deerlick Creek, and the next four springs they camped on her hilltop back acreage, the site of today's Kral Drive houses.

Joe Jesensky recalls his spring visits with the gypsies over a series of years. After gaining their confidence, Jesensky made numerous sketches of the tribe members and their camp, and learned to appreciate their unorthodox customs. Sybella, who at an age approaching 100 was still Queen of the camp, was Jesensky's most intriguing model.

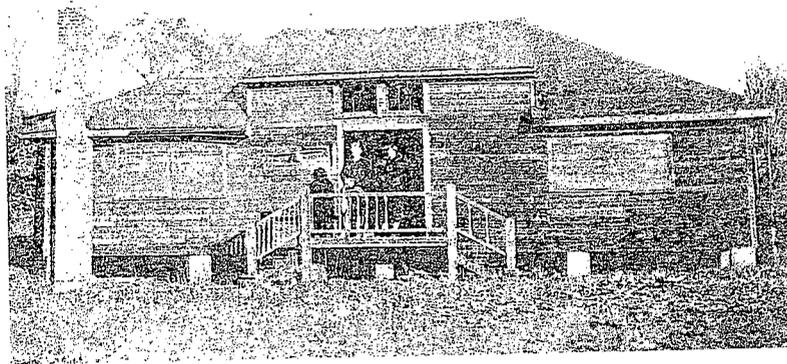


*THE GYPSY CAMP* sketched by Joseph D. Jesensky in 1929.

One year while camping on the Scarpete hilltop land, the gypsies held a wedding celebration. The music and feasting lasted the entire night, and the smell of roasting meat and the sound of their joyful, yet haunting music permeated the air for many hours.

Several area residents, fearful of the tribe of nomads, warned the youngsters not to wander close to the Scarpete gypsy camp, lest danger come to them. Betsy Baker, daughter of Virgil Allen, is not the only 1930s resident who entered the Egbert Road gypsy camp with both curiosity and trepidation.

Another enterprise of Josephine Scarpete was Silver Creek Park, Golden Glens Picnic Grove as it was later called. The park was at the bottom of Egbert Road Hill, in the lowland by South Branch of Deerli Creek, on the east side of the road. There was a large, closed-in pavilion called Golden Glens Dance Hall and two small concession stands on the south side of the creek. Scarpete was proud of the flooring she bought for the dance hall pavilion. The planks came from old Luna Park's dance hall before it was torn down. In front of the buildings, very close to the road were the well and pump. One can still see evidence of the well and pump today. The bridge which forded the stream provided a walkway to an open dance area and to the hillside on the other side. At the entrance to the park were western-style ranch gates. Most of Mrs. Scarpete's customers were church and social groups.



*GOLDEN GLENS DANCE HALL was part of Silver Creek Park, or as it was later called, Golden Glens Picnic Grove. The park, which was in use from the 1920's through the 1950's, was on Egbert Road, southeast of today's Bridal Veil Falls parking area. (Date of photograph unknown)*

As the years went by five of Kydan and Josephine's children divided up and purchased the bulk of the family land, and eventually, the remaining 20 acres were put on the market. Two of the daughters, Lucy Spoto and Marie Morrison, developed Kydan Lane.

Throughout the years several Scarpete descendants built homes for themselves and settled on family land: Grandson Albert Spoto and his wife, Alice, have lived at 7060 Walton Road since 1947; Granddaughter Beverly Sirna and her husband, Leo, have resided at 18171 Kydan Lane since 1967; and from the mid 1960's until the mid 1980's, granddaughter Jane Barker lived at 18265 Kydan Lane.

In 1947 Lillian Kral purchased the old Silver homestead and twenty acres of land that included Golden Glens Picnic Grove. By that time the farmfields were abandoned, the trees in the orchard were at the end of their fruit-bearing years and the old house was in need of major repair.

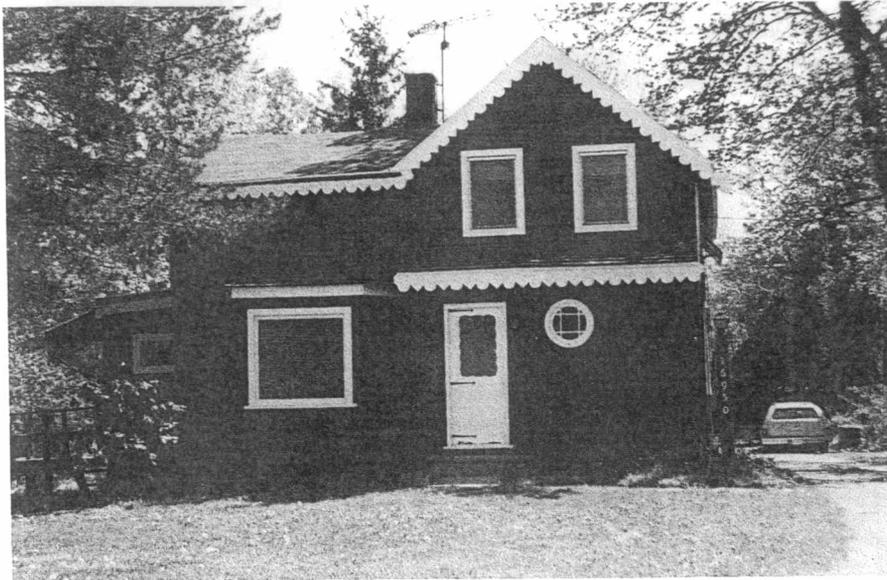
For a number of years Kral enjoyed the work involved with renting out Golden Glens. She sponsored a couple dances, advertising the events in local newspapers and fliers sent to nearby organizations and businesses. The park was more often used by local groups for clambakes and picnics. The Walton Hills Rangers held a few events there, including a Halloween Party. The Walton Hills Women's Club held its organizational meeting at Golden Glens on August 29, 1951 and Cub Scout Pack #417 occasionally met there in 1955. Finally, when the clean-up and the work of keeping the grounds in shape became a chore, the business was abandoned and the buildings were razed around 1960.

With L. S. Conelly's assistance, Lillian Kral developed Kral Drive in 1960. The roadway follows the northern ridge paralleling South Branch of Deerlick Creek, and is on the site of the old gypsy camp. When the writer and her family lived at 7060 Kral Drive from 1961 to 1968, they frequently found old bottles discarded by the gypsies and Golden Glens picnickers.

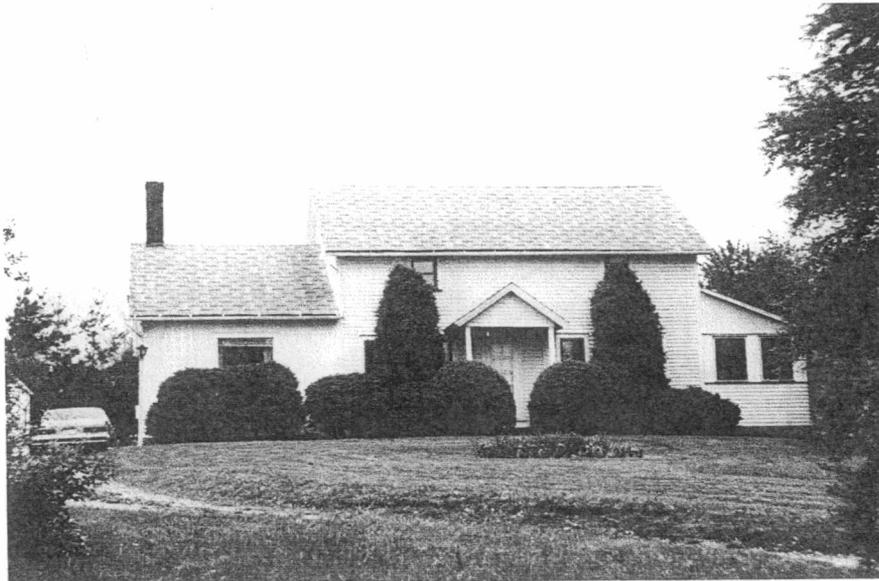
### THE LEONARD FARMS

In the early 1850's Leonard family members bought acreage along Egbert Road and settled down to farm their land. The Leonards lived along Egbert Road for almost forty years.

The farmhouse James F. Leonard built in c. 1854, and Joseph Leonard owned from 1858-1889, still stands today at 16950 Egbert Road. This 119-acre Egbert Road farm was along the south side of the road, extending from the west side of Hicks Lane eastward to Walton Road. Today Stuble Lane and Spanghurst Drive cut through the old Leonard farm. Hicks



*JAMES F. LEONARD built this house at 16950 Egbert Road.  
(1986 photograph)*



*THE JAMES C. LEONARD house stands today at 17500  
Egbert Road. (1986 photograph)*

Lane in those days connected Egbert Road with Walton Road. (See CLEVELAND HILL LANE AND HICKS LANE.)

James C. Leonard purchased 80 acres of farmland abutting the north end of the other Leonard farm in 1856. This Egbert Road farm, facing both sides of the road, was north of where Spanhgurst Drive meets Egbert Road today. An old farmhouse, built c. 1870 by James C. Leonard, sits high on the hillside along the east side of the road (17500 Egbert Road).

By 1890 the Leonard homesteads and acreage were up for sale. The Makronsky family purchased the James C. Leonard house in 1911, and the Kovac family bought the James F. Leonard house a few years later.

### THE MAKRONSKYS

The 34 acres that included the Leonard hilltop house at 17500 Egbert Road changed ownership several times between 1890 and 1911. But in 1911, Joseph and Mary Makronsky purchased the property and lived there for almost two decades. Then, for another span of years, renters farmed the fields and lived in the hilltop house.

In 1951 Theodore and Jean Hack purchased the house, settling there to raise their family. Throughout their years in the village the Hacks were active in civic affairs. Ted Hack served the community as Councilman from 1962 until 1968 and Jean Hack was the Walton Hills Nursery School teacher from 1954 to 1964.

### THE KOVACS

Marton and Terezia Kovac, immigrants from Hungary, purchased the Leonard homestead at 16950 Egbert Road along with fourteen acres of farmland. Old timers don't remember Marton, but they have vivid recollections of Louis Kovac who may have been an adult son. Fruit trees filled his front lawn and his bellowing voice filled the air as he beckoned approaching visitors. For a span of years in the early 1900's when Robert Whittaker of 13518 Tinker's Creek Road knew him, Louis Kovac worked at the McMyler-Interstate Company on Northfield Road by Interstate Street. The young Whittaker was impressed with the fact that Kovac walked to and from work each day even though the distance was considerable. Most of the other McMyler-Interstate workers lived in houses on nearby sidestreets or along the ABC trolley line. Besides his work at the plant, Kovac also tended his farm and dairy cows. Joe Jesensky, who camped nearby on weekends from 1923-1933, recalled his visits with Louis Kovac. Jesensky occasionally stopped at Kovac's to buy fresh milk.



*CARR FAMILY MEMBERS are pictured in front of their Egbert Road barns. (Late 1800's photograph)*

## THE CARRS

In 1884 and succeeding years George W. Carr purchased a total of 166 acres of farmland along the north side of Egbert Road, extending from the bend in the road by today's Spanghurst Drive to the MetroPark's Overlook Lane. But the Carr land can be traced back much earlier than 1884...

The earliest records at the County Archives show the original residents were the Joseph Trumbells who owned 154 acres in 1827. The Trumbells built a log cabin for themselves and cleared the land for farming. The Clement Sheets owned the farm from 1849 to 1865, and from 1864 until 1884 first James Reese, and then his son, John, owned the property.

Although the acreage faced Egbert Road, the log cabin built by Joseph Trumbell (and used by both the Trumbells and then later, the Sheets) sat at the rear of the property. These early settlers packed down a path leading from their cabin northward toward Tinker's Creek. That path went through the property of their neighbor to the north. It met other lanes leading to Little Egypt and Bedford.

To reach Egbert Road the neighboring farmers created a lane through

the Trumbell farm. This pathway, called Cleveland Hill Lane, was marked on the County Treasurer's Duplicate of 1858 as an access road to the property north of the old Trumbell farm.

By the time the Reeses bought the farm in 1864, Egbert Road was dotted with farms and farmhouses. Hence, when the Reeses put up a large farmhouse and barn for themselves in the mid 1860's, they built close to Egbert Road. Both the Reeses and later the George W. Carrs lived in that house.

George W. Carr and his wife, Christina, came from Pennsylvania to live on the farm they purchased, and there they raised their nine children. Although theirs was a producing farm, Carr spent his workday at his feed mill and coal and builders supply businesses in Bedford.

The large barn and the picturesque windmill on the Egbert Road hilltop were landmarks for many year. When fire gutted the house in 1900 and the residents moved into Bedford, the barn, windmill, and granary were silent silhouettes against the sky until the early 1930's. Joe Jesensky described the Carr windmill, by writing, "...the rusty skeleton of an iron windmill. It afforded a surprisingly fine panoramic view of the blue hills of the Cuyahoga Valley in the distance."

Carr family members converted the granary into a cottage and during the first three decades of this century used the cottage for weekend



*THE ABANDONED CARR BARN AND WINDMILL  
stood on the crest of the Egbert Road hill, near today's  
Chestnut Drive. Fire had destroyed the house in 1900. (A 1928  
Joseph D. Jesensky sketch)*

outings and summer vacations. Floyd E., Sr. related how in his youth he eagerly awaited the days when he could stay in the old granary and roam and play in the surrounding woods and fields.

Today Carr family members still own some of the family land along Egbert Road. Floyd E. Carr, Sr., George W. Carr's grandson, built his house on the site of the old homestead foundation, at 16455 Egbert Road. Carrs sold some of their land to L. S. Conelly for his Deeridge Drive Subdivision, some to the MetroParks, and some to individuals. They cut Chestnut, Tulip, and Hickory Drives, and sold lots along those streets themselves.

### THE REESES AND THE ROMANIKS

John and Mary Reese (not to be confused with the aforementioned John Reeses who were Egbert Road farmers from 1864 to 1884) rented three area farms from 1893 until 1914.

The first house the Reeses rented, during 1893 and 1894, was on the south side of Hicks Lane, a distance west of Walton Road. Their farm faced both sides of Hicks Lane. By 1889 the farm, which had originally been part of the James F. Leonard Egbert Road parcel, was placed on the market for sale. Until sold, however, it was available for rent. Finally in 1920 John and Mary Koberna bought this 65-acre Hicks Lane farm.

The Reeses rented the old Silver farm for a couple years (1905 to 1907) from the owners of the time, the B. L. Marble Chair Company. The Reeses had to move when the farm was sold to William and Lucille Wells in 1907.

A third piece of property they rented was the noted Egbert farm. John and Mary Reese and their nine children lived in the stately James Egbert house from about 1906 until 1914. The acreage included Lost Meadow — the original, natural patch of field which is further into Bedford Metro-Park than today's Lost Meadow Picnic Area. In those days the Egbert farm fields approached Egbert Road. The thicket of evergreen trees facing the road today weren't planted until the depression years.

As truck farmers, the Reeses used their horse and wagon to sell vegetables at the old Central Market in downtown Cleveland. During World War I Reese quit farming to work at the McMyler-Interstate Company and the family moved into Bedford.

John and Mary Reese's daughter, Ann, married her one-time Walton School teacher, Ray Sharrock in 1915. The Sharrocks never lived in Bedford Township, but their daughters chose to live here after they married. Dorothy Cigany, and her husband, Larry, reside at 18205 Alexander Road,

and Dorothy's sister, Velma Barr, lived next door for several years (18171 Alexander Road).

Steve and Mary Romanik live at 19749 Alexander Road, on four acres of land they purchased in 1951 from John and Gertrude Means. Within a few years of each other Steve's two brothers, Michael and John, bought neighboring lots and built houses for their families.

Steve and his brothers grew up on three Egbert Road farms his parents rented.

Their first house was located behind today's Bedford MetroPark Egbert Road Ranger Station, and was owned by the Wells. In the 1920's the Wells family owned two farms spaced between the railroad tracks and the Egbert farm. One farmhouse was the aforementioned and the other house sat far back from the road. Bill Wells, remembered by a few old-timers, lived in the family homestead and farmed the land. Wells also raised calves for their veal. He did his own butchering and used his horse and wagon to sell the meat.

A second farmhouse Steve Romanik lived in was the James Egbert house. The Romanik family rented the house a short time after the Reeses moved out, living there until the late 1920's. At that time the land was purchased by the Metropolitan Park Board and the house was scheduled to be torn down.

The third Egbert Road farm the Romaniks rented was opposite Golden Glens Park and extended west of Bridal Veil Falls in Bedford MetroPark. The farm included the fields local residents of that time referred to as the goat farm.

While Steve's dad held a full-time job, the family members pitched in to help with the farm chores. Steve remembers the real "Lost Meadow" and catching fish in Tinker's Creek. He also recalls his boyhood eagerness to find and assist the weekend park visitor, Joe Jesensky. The young Romanik held and moved the tape measure while Jesensky made preliminary drawings for his maps of the Tinker's Creek Valley.

## ALONG WALTON ROAD

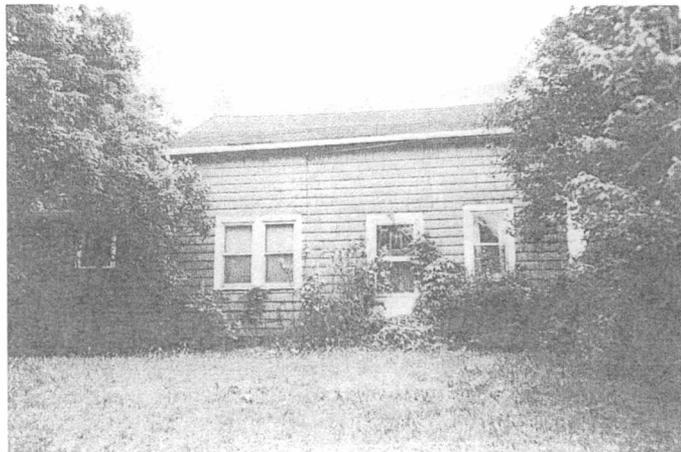
### THE WOOLSEY FARM

Several houses were built in this part of the township during the 1830 and 1840's, but many of them were lost due to fires or were razed intentionally. One very old house still standing is at 7570 Walton Road. Court archives records indicate the house was built c. 1846 by John Woolsey. In 1830 Stephen Tilden bought 44 acres on the west side of Walton Road, today's northwest corner of Walton and Alexander Roads. (However, those days Alexander Road did not extend as far west as Walton Road. Tilden put up a log cabin and cleared the land for farming. In 1839, John Woolsey purchased not only the Tilden farm, but also the land north of Hicks Road, for a total of 155 acres. Woolsey built the frame house to replace the log cabin and added two barns, a shed, and a chicken coop. The Josiah Ellets were the next family to live in the house, owning the farm from 1855 until the 1890's.

Louis Toth, a deaf-mute bachelor, and his mother, Clara, bought the house and seven acres of farmland on the northwest corner of Walton and Alexander Roads in 1924. They moved into the old farmhouse and lived on their land.

Toth's nephew, John Sedensky, lived in Cleveland when he was a boy, but spent most of his weekends and summers on the farm. John enjoyed farming.

*THE WOOLSEY HOUSE, built c. 1846, stands at 7570 Walton Road. (1986 photograph)*



life, and his help with the chores was both needed and appreciated by his uncle and grandmother.

When John Sedensky's mother inherited the old farmhouse and its seven acres from her brother's (Louis Toth) estate in 1941, she sold the bulk of the property to Harold and Anna Athey. Anna Athey is remembered by many villagers for her dedication to civic interests and charitable causes. Numerous nursery school alumni recall how they looked forward to visiting with Mrs. Athey on their walking field trips to her farm.

His uncle's farm meant so much to him that when John Sedensky got married, he and his wife, Anna, bought some of the acreage along Walton Road. John's parents never moved from Cleveland, but for an investment they obtained twenty acres of land along the south side of Hicks Road, west of Walton Road. In 1939 John and Anna bought that acreage to add to their original purchase. A couple years later, in 1941, John and Anna moved into the new house (7500 Walton Road) they built for themselves near the old homestead.

Anna's parents purchased a small corner lot at the northwest corner of Walton and Alexander Roads. However, they sold it to an oil company when their plans for building a house on the parcel failed to materialize.

John Sedensky and Johnny Allen (7307 Walton Road) are credited with bringing electric lines northward along Walton Road, from where the Ohio Edison lines ended at Sagamore Road. After World War II the two men persuaded Walton Road residents to sign a petition promising to purchase electric stoves, ranges, and hot water tanks, and use them for at least five years if Ohio Edison would run electric lines along the road. When Sedensky gave Ohio Edison an easement on his property for poles and lines, electricity was soon made available to the residents.

Sedensky fields south of Hicks Road stood idle until the mid 1950's when L. S. Conelly purchased a good portion of the land, cut Spanghurst Drive, and sold lots. The Sedenskys also sold some lots themselves. One of their parcels on Walton Road was purchased by the Bedford Board of Education in 1967 for an elementary school, should there ever be a need for one. The number of young children in the village never warranted building a school, but the field along the west side of Walton Road across from Jefferson Drive is still owned by the Bedford Schools.

Sixty years after Louis and Clara Toth bought their Walton Hills farm, John and Anna Sedensky's son, John, Jr., and his wife, Diane, purchased the old house from Anna Athey in 1984. John, Sr. is now deceased, but before he died he stated how pleased he was that the homestead was once again owned by someone in the family.

## THE ORCHARDS

The Brown farm, familiar to old-time residents, was on the west side of Walton Road, extending from today's Rauland Drive to Sagamore Road. That farm was part of the 103-acre farm the Durcanskis owned in 1902, but its history dates back farther than that. The 1870 Cuyahoga County Atlas shows the parcel belonged to Simon Orchard at that time, and his house faced Sagamore Road. The Orchard house (located at 17609 Sagamore Road) was torn down in the 1980's to make room for new houses built along the north stretch of Sagamore Road.

The back of the Orchard house was used for a cheese factory from 1870 until the early 1920's. Robert Whittaker (13518 Tinker's Creek Road) remembers his visits to the Orchard cheese factory in its later years of operation. In those days area farmers were frequently not able to get their milk to market before it spoiled. Instead, they took their milk to one of several local cheese factories where the milk was churned into butter or made into cheese.

Simon and Rebecca Orchard were immigrants from England who settled in this area of the township and raised six children; William, Martha, Richard, John, Simon, and Joe. As the years went by Orchards owned property on both sides of Walton Road as well as elsewhere throughout the village. Martha, born in 1857, was a Bedford Township schoolteacher as



*THE ORCHARD HOUSE, built c. 1886, stands at 7715 Walton Road. (Date of photograph unknown)*

was her brother, Simon. When Simon was seventeen years old he taught at Walton School during the 1879-1880 school year. John's daughter, Marian, taught English and social studies at Bedford High School for a number of years.

### THE KELLY FARM

At the southwest corner of Alexander and Walton Roads John Kelly owned a 105-acre farm. It extended west and southward to today's South Meadowpark Drive. In 1915 John Kelly built the house that stands at 7720 Walton Road. Years earlier this farmland belonged to the Waltons and then later, the Orchards. The 1858 Cuyahoga County Atlas shows Richard Orchard owning this land plus eighty acres on the southeast corner that he purchased from the Waltons.

In the mid 1950's the acreage was sold to L. S. Conelly and became a subdivision of his Walton Hills Estates.

### THE KOBERNA FARMS

From 1878 to 1905 the Bartolmay Kerbernas owned a farm in today's Krick Road Industrial Park area, and after the turn of the century a second generation of Kobernas owned two farms along Walton Road in the vicinity of today's Walton, Hicks, and Conelly Roads.

Their first Walton Road farm, 51 acres owned by Mary Koberna, was northeast of the crossroads. The bulk of this acreage had been part of the Amos Silver Egbert Road farm from 1860 until 1895. In c. 1905 the Kobernas built the farmhouse that stands at 7312 Walton Road. Years later, from 1939 through the 1960's, George Graves owned and lived in the Koberna house with his first wife, Leona, and then after she died, with his second wife, Betty. George "Ted" Graves was one of the founders and the second Mayor of the Village of Walton Hills.

Some of the apple trees the Kobernas planted are still standing today in the yards of today's owners. Their chestnut trees are gone, but some older residents may recall the times they helped pick the Koberna's chestnuts in the autumn. John Sedensky was one of the young boys who helped harvest the crop.

The second farm, purchased by John and Mary Koberna in 1920, faced both sides of Hicks Lane. This 65-acre farm had originally been part of the Joseph Leonard Egbert Road farm until 1890. Koberna's land extended from Walton Road westward toward today's North Meadowpark Drive. The farmhouse, built by the Leonards, was on the south side of Hicks

Lane, a distance west of Walton Road. Moving forward in time to the 1930's, Sedenskys owned the abandoned fields along the south side of Hicks Lane.

### A LOG CABIN IN THE 1930'S

Betty Panovich Pearce remembers the log cabin that was still standing in the 1930's, at 7157 Walton Road. Betty was then a young teenager living in the old Walton farmhouse at 7228 Walton Road from 1929 until 1949. Betty recalls how one of her daily chores was to draw water from the well across the street. Near the well stood the old abandoned log cabin.

### ORCHARD LAKE

Through the summer of 1949 there was a swim hole called Orchard Lake located on Walton Road, just south of the old Orchard farmhouse at 7228 Walton Road (on the northeast corner of Walton Road and today's Orchard Hill Drive). The muddy water in Orchard Lake may not have bothered younger children, but the older boys and girls preferred to swim elsewhere, given a choice.

For several years in the 1940's the lake was part of a tract of land purchased by L. S. Conelly for future development. Until the lots were platted and sold, however, families who had purchased lots in other nearby subdivisions were entitled to swim in Orchard Lake. Conelly's plan for his Orchard Hill Drive Subdivision included partitioning the lake into lots, and by 1950 parts of the lake became private property.

Council President James Podojil was a youngster when his parents, James and Eleanor Podojil, owned a lot on McLellan Drive. Although they never built on it, as lot owners they were entitled to use Orchard Lake. Podojil recalls riding to the lake with his parents on hot summer afternoons and parking the car along Walton Road. Today, two generations of Podojils reside in the village; James and his wife, Marguerite, live at Kral Drive, and their son, James, Jr., and his wife, Joanne, live at North Meadowpark Drive.

### THE TOBOGGAN RUN

In the 1940's Struna's hill (7156 Walton Road) was the site of a toboggan run used by nearby youngsters and their parents. The course started at the top of the hill, by the road, and led downhill to what is now Walton Hills Lake.

## POPULATION 98

When Matt and Grace Mathieson's daughter, Bonnie, was born in 1941, Matt changed the Walton Hills Estates signs that were located at entrance intersections such as Walton/Egbert Roads and Walton/Alexander Roads. The signs had read:

"Walton Hills Estates  
Population 98  
and Growing"

Matt crossed out the "98" and painted in "99." The Mathiesons were one of the early Estates owners, building their house at 18646 Carmany Drive.

## THE THANKSGIVING WEEKEND SNOWSTORM

During the heavy Thanksgiving weekend snowstorm of 1950 John Sedensky and Lester Rondina (7370 McLellan Drive), using a converted army vehicle, bulldozed their way to deliver milk and bread to area families with children.

## THE WAGNERS

Two civic-minded residents who lived at 7450 McLellan Drive from 1948 until the early 1960's, were Armin and Florence Wagner. In the early village years Armin worked as Walton Hills Road Commissioner. He hired helpers, but was himself a \$1 a year man. In addition Wagner volunteered as Park Superintendent of the Walton Hills Estates Lake for a number of years.

Florence Wagner, besides being active in the Estates Club and the Women's Club, kept abreast of Village Council meetings and activities. She wrote a weekly column for the *Bedford Times-Register*. Her informative columns entitled "Up in Walton Hills with Country Jane" appeared in the newspaper from 1949 until 1958.

Their two sons grew up in the village and attended the Bedford Schools. Eric became a professor of sociology and Thomas is the noted Dr. Thomas Wagner who, as one of the leading recombinant geneticists in the world, has made several breakthroughs in genetic microbiology. He is also a professor of biochemistry.

## ALONG ALEXANDER ROAD

### THE ALEXANDER FARM

In 1833 at the age of twenty, Andrew Alexander built a log cabin at the western township line between Alexander Road and Sagamore Road. Soon he had several acres of his land cleared and tilled for farming.

As was common practice throughout the area at that time, the Alexanders bought and sold acreage over the years. Early landowners sometimes bought large tracts sight unseen. Once a farmer familiarized himself with his land he knew which sections best suited his needs. When an opportunity arose he sold areas difficult to reach or not needed. Likewise, if he had the money, he purchased additional good acreage accessible to him. The Sagamore Creek and its deep ravine split Alexander's property. By 1858 Alexander had sold his southernmost land facing Sagamore Road, but held onto the 230 acres of farmland he had accumulated on both sides of Alexander Road. Today, The Gospel House Center at 14707 Alexander Road is on part of the thirty acres along the north side of the road.

Andrew Alexander established a grist mill in 1853, on Canal Road just south of Alexander Road. "A. Alexander & Son" was owned and managed by the Alexanders until the Wilsons bought the mill in 1899.

When the Alexanders built a stately farmhouse in c. 1854 to replace their log cabin, the house plans reflected their participation in the underground railroad. For a span of years their house was a safe house for runaway slaves. In a second floor bedroom located at the top of the stairs, there was a door concealed by patterned wallpaper. The door led to a hidden room which was used as a temporary haven for people in flight. If the Alexander residence were standing today, it would be in front of the present house at 14880 Alexander Road.

In Andrew Alexander's day the road was called Phillips Road — a minor county dirt road connecting Canal Road with Dunham Road. Years later, in 1881 when the road was widened and extended to Walton Road, it was renamed Alexander Road for the Alexander family.

Heirs of Andrew Alexander owned the property until 1922, but from 1895 until 1922 a nephew, referred to as C.W.J., leased the farm. C.W.J., his wife, Anna, their son, and five daughters, raised sheep, maintained an orchard, and operated a truck farm. They specialized in tomatoes, melons, raspberries, and strawberries. During strawberry picking season they



*EAST SIDE VIEW OF THE ALEXANDER HOUSE built c. 1854. For a span of years the house was a haven for runaway slaves. If still standing the house would be in front of the one at 14880 Alexander Road. (1940's photograph)*



*THE KITSON HOUSE at 14660 Alexander Road was built in the early 1930's. (Enlarged and remodeled in this 1986 photograph)*

marketed 100 bushels of the fruit every other day. They trucked their fruits and vegetables to the Newburgh Market by horse and wagon.

Tenant farmers helped the C.W.J. Alexanders work the fields. One of the tenant houses built c. 1895 stands today at 15000 Alexander Road. The Alexanders also hired seasonal help twice a year. At those times Anna and her daughters were busy preparing all the meals for the workers.

Four times a year a seamstress was hired to sew clothes for the Alexanders. As was customary, she lived with the family whenever she worked for them. Likewise, when the Alexander daughters went to the high school in Bedford, they boarded with a Bedford family during the school week.

### THE RADAS AND THE KITSONS

In 1922 John and Elsie Rada and Willis and Linda (Alber) Kitson bought the Alexander farm. Both Rada (a bank officer) and Linda Kitson (a young bride at the time) worked at the Harvard/Broadway Avenue Cleveland Trust Branch. They both expressed an interest in the Alexander farm that was for sale. The Radas, who lived in Garfield Heights, were looking for a summer house in the country where they could do a little weekend farming. The Kitsons, who wanted to own their own farm, were familiar with the property because they lived close by at 7250 Dunham Road. Although young, Willis Kitson already had considerable experience as a farmer. He had grown up on his father's truck farm on Tinker's Creek Road, and in addition, was tending a Shaker Heights farm at the time.

The Radas and the Kitsons worked out a deal that satisfied both parties. The Kitsons purchased 30 acres of farmland on the north side of Alexander Road and 33 acres that bordered the west township line along the south side of the road, whereas the Radas bought the adjacent 66 acres, the house, and the two barns. Later, the Radas helped the Kitsons roll one of the barns over to the Kitson's land.

At first the Radas lived in the house only on weekends and during summers, but after they installed a coal furnace for central heating, remodeled a first floor bedroom into a bathroom, and put water lines into the kitchen and bathroom, the family made the house their residence. Elsie Rada recalls her moving day... In those days Alexander Road, from Canal Road to their property, was a severe uphill grade. The moving van could not make it up the hill until the driver turned his vehicle around and backed up the entire hill. The Radas lived in the old homestead until

1962 when they built a new house (14880 Alexander Road) behind the old one.

Before they dismantled the old farmhouse, the Radas donated to the Western Reserve Historical Society any items the organization felt would be valuable additions to its exhibits. As a result, the Alexander hand-blown glass windows and their frames, the thick oak plank flooring, the second floor railing, and the corn husk mattress bed can all be seen on display in homes at Hale Farm and Village.

John and Elsie Rada's three children still live in the village today. Lois lives in the aforementioned Rada house with her mother, John and his wife, Mary, live in the house they built on family land at 14800 Alexander Road, and Don and his wife, Evelyn, live at 7041 Walton Road.

After buying the Alexander acreage in 1922, Willis and Linda Kitson established their farm and for the first few years continued to live in the Alber homestead on Dunham Road. By 1933 they had moved into their newly-built house at 14660 Alexander Road. The Kitson farmhouse, as it stands today, is enlarged and remodeled.

Willis and Linda Kitson worked their acreage into a productive farm, starting with strawberries. As the years went by the Kitsons were noted for their tasty corn, strawberries, and a variety of other vegetables. Area residents, as well as people who lived a distance away, drove to Kitson's to buy produce. Also, on autumn weekends Willis parked his well-stocked truck at the southwest corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads and sold fruits and vegetables to passing motorists.

During the World War II years when meat was scarce and rationed, farmers were encouraged by the government to raise pigs to help with the pork supply. The Kitsons, as well as other township farmers, set aside a chunk of their acreage for pig farming. Twice a day Linda made trips in her dump truck to Shaker Heights restaurants and garbage deposits, to collect feed for her pigs. She and Willis dumped the garbage over their fields. Often included with the garbage were broken dishes and other debris. Today's homeowners along certain sections of Alexander and Dunham Roads may find broken pieces of pottery in their yards after a spring thaw...possible mementos from a World War II pig farm.

### THE RIZERS

When Mathias and Barbara Rizer first came to the township in the 1880's they were about to retire. They bought a small farm off Northfield Road for this purpose. The property sat far back on the west side of the road. The

lane that led to the farm is now part of Krick Road.

Their son, James, and his wife, Sylvia, bought an existing farm along the east side of Northfield Road, building their house on the north side of today's CEI lines. In 1918 James and Sylvia sold the farm and for a few years lived on Tinker's Creek Road, in Valley View.

In about 1925 the Rizers moved back into the township, after James bought 56 acres on the north side of Alexander Road, from the west township border to today's Gospel House Center. The family moved into the farmhouse John White built in c. 1865 at 14229 Alexander Road. The foundation stones of the house and the flagstone walkways came from the nearby Cleveland Quarry, according to Clarence Rizer.

A weekend farmer himself, James Rizer rented some of his fields to local farmers. However, he did sell several lots in order to get electricity along his stretch of Alexander Road. Rizer paid CEI to install the line along the road, and then was reimbursed later as additional houses hooked up to the line. One couple who bought four acres from the Rizers in 1943 was Frank Simone (Walton Hills Police Chief, 1960-1975) and his wife, Ann. They built their house at 14665 Alexander Road.

Until 1985 the three sons of James and Sylvia all lived on Rizer land. Clarence and his wife, Marie, moved into the family homestead (14229 Alexander Road) in 1936 and lived there until 1985. Orwin and his wife,



*THE JOHN WHITE HOUSE, built c. 1865 and enlarged in c. 1890, stands at 14229 Alexander Road. (1986 photograph)*

Irene, live at 14495 Alexander Road, and Ryland and his wife, Bernice, live at 14039 Alexander Road.

### THE RICKS

Rick family members have owned land along Alexander Road since 1900. In 1902 Joseph and Mary Rick owned sixteen acres at the southeast corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads and forty-two acres on the north side of the road along today's North Meadowpark Drive. Their farmhouse stood on their northern acreage, at 16835 Alexander Road.

In the 1930's their son, Andrew, and his wife, Helen, moved into the Rick homestead to help with the farm chores. Besides working full-time elsewhere, Andrew was a truck farmer, selling his produce at the old Central Market in downtown Cleveland. A few years later when their daughter, Geraldine, married James Salamon, Salamon built the Ricks a house on their sixteen acres on the south side of Alexander Road. In exchange, Salamon received from the Ricks eight acres at the southeast corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads. In 1941 the Ricks moved into their new house at 16700 Alexander Road and sold the old homestead and its acreage to Timothy Pope. Salamon, a carpenter by trade, then proceeded to build his house at 7677 Dunham Road.

Geraldine is now deceased, but Salamon and his second wife, Mary, still live in the Dunham Road house. Geraldine's sister, Florence Drabik, and her husband, George, also live in the village at 7470 Woodlake Drive.

Throughout his years in the village, Salamon has generously volunteered his time for many civic and charitable undertakings. During the summer of 1952 he worked more than 400 hours on the Town Hall Improvement Project. When play equipment was needed for the newly organized Walton Hills Nursery School, it was Salamon who made, free of charge, the boat, merry-go-round, small benches, tables, cabinets, wooden toys, and other equipment. Many of those toys and furniture are still used today by nursery school youngsters. Salamon first started working with the Cub Scouts in 1957, two years later becoming Assistant Boy Scout Master and Committee Member of the Greater Cleveland Council of Boy Scouts. Over the years Salamon has actively led numerous scouting activities for the youth of this community.

### THE KOTH FARM

The Frank Koth farm at 14001 Alexander Road sat far back on the north side of the road. Having no frontage on Alexander Road, an easement was

required for a driveway west of 14039 Alexander Road. According to Clarence Rizer who lived at 14229 Alexander Road, the Koths bought the back acreage because they thought Alexander Road was going to be rerouted to pass in front of their property. The Koths, too, had a truck farm, and may be remembered for their specialty crop — garlic. Their house, built c. 1933, has since been razed and CEI lines run through the old farm.

### THE CHAPEK PICNIC GROVE

Many older residents tell about the Chapek Picnic Grove owned by Edwin and Cecilia Chapek, and more recently by their relative, Dr. Clarence Porbe. Church groups and other large organizations used the grounds for summer and fall outdoor events. There were fields for play, paths in the hilly backwoods for scenic walks, and a pavilion with a bandstand and a dance floor.

The grove had been James Black's farm. Like the Koth farm, the Black acreage sat far back from Alexander Road and its long driveway was on an easement. The Black house, built c. 1874 and remodeled in c. 1890, was hidden from the road until recent years when CEI bought the back acreage and the house was moved closer to the road (15035 Alexander Road).

*BUILT IN c. 1874 and enlarged in c. 1890, the James Black house stands at 15035 Alexander Road. (1986 photograph)*



## ALONG EGYPT ROAD

### THE FIRST CHILD CARE CENTER IN THE TOWNSHIP

Philip and Martha Astor purchased their property in 1918 from Mary Alice Carey, a descendant of Moses Gleeson. The Astors remodeled the Gleeson homestead built c. 1840, and opened a childcare center in their house (today, 6980 Dunham Road). Well-to-do Cleveland families, many of whom were Jewish like the Astors, left their children with the Astors prior to leaving on vacations.

Because the parents often picked up their children around the supper hour and stayed to eat, the Astors decided to add a country club type of restaurant to their house. The new business prospered, and before long the Astors closed their childcare center and concentrated exclusively on the dining operation. In 1933 when the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed and prohibition ended, the Astors obtained a liquor license for their business. Constantine Prinios, the current owner of the Astorhurst Restaurant, still has the original 1933 liquor license posted on one of the entrance walls.

When Joseph and Eleanor Dranek and a group of investors purchased the property in 1958, they enlarged and changed the layout of the building. The present day Astorhurst Restaurant kitchen and party room are formed around the old Astor house; the large addition at the front now serves as the restaurant, and the new section at the rear is the lounge bar.

Also on the property is the Astorhurst Picnic Grove with sheltered pavilions, play areas, and cooking facilities for large groups of people. Oldtime residents may fondly remember Fox Grove Pavilion which burned down in the mid 1960's. Local organizations held money-raising parties and dances there in years past.

In the mid 1960's Dranek and a group of investors bought the adjacent land for a golf course. The Astorhurst Country Club, as the golf course is titled, is now an eighteen hole layout owned by John Agresta.

### TINKER'S CREEK TAVERN

Tinker's Creek Tavern, located at 14000 Tinker's Creek Road just inside the township border, has been in operation since the mid 1920's. It has changed hands a few times and has had a series of names. Today its

patrons call it Sebastian's Tavern, but before that, it was called Tinki's Tavern, and earlier, Charlie's. The well-worn log cabin at the rear of the property dates back to the 1920's.

### PARK PLACE

Park Place, an ice cream and sandwich stand that opened in 1985 in front of the Astorhurst Restaurant, is on the same site as a hot dog stand operated by Frank and Sue Mund some forty years earlier. The Munds lived on the premises, at the back of the store. Howard and Lois Fradette recall the times they stopped at the stand after horseback riding for a soft drink and to meet their fellow riders. The Munds also sold fuel from the gas pump that was out in front.

### SAGAMORE HILLS BEER GARDEN

The Sagamore Hills Beer Garden at 7100 Dunham Road was another local gathering place in the mid 1930's and 1940's. It was located on the hillside next to the Astorhurst. The beer garden was primarily a summer attraction and was closed during the winter months. Joseph Silk and his wife, Anna (Hadvabny), managed the family run business from their living quarters in the back of the house. A special feature of the establishment was moonlight dancing on the large inside dance floor. Patrons were served at tables on the enclosed front porch and also under the grape arbor in the back.

*MOONLIGHT DANCING, the country atmosphere, and beer — not necessarily in that order — drew customers to The Sagamore Hills Beer Garden at 7100 Dunham Road, from the mid 1930's through the 1940's. (1986 photograph)*



The Silk's developed their back acreage, which sloped down to the valley, into picnic grounds, and rented the grove to church groups and other local organizations. Their facilities included pop, beer, and food stands, outside picnic tables, and a big pavilion that sometimes served as a dance hall.

The beer garden has since been remodeled into a private residence.

### FROM QUARRY TO RIDING ACADEMY

The Wager Quarry was a noted sandstone quarry in the early 1900's. During the late 1800's and at the turn of the century, Mars Wager purchased acreage along the east side of Dunham Road from Mary Black, Clara Carey, and other land owners. He eventually accumulated over 200 acres, extending from World's End, the Stagecoach Tavern, to Egypt School. Wager quarried Berea Sandstone from his back acreage. Using oxen, his workers hauled cut sandstone from the quarry to Dunham Road. Those old oxen lanes remain tramped-down paths today.

The New York Central right-of-way sliced through Wager's land. When the NYC laid tracks for its freight line sometime between 1905 and 1910, the tracks separated the quarry from the rest of Wager's property. The quarry ceased operations soon after the railroad line opened in 1911. Eventually the Wagers sold the back acreage, including the quarry, to the MetroParks.

Henry and Eleanor Dzikowski purchased about forty acres of Wager land during the mid 1920's and early 1930's. The family liked horses, and wanted a diversion from living in the city and operating their funeral parlor at Harvard and East 71st Street. When they heard about a riding academy going out of business at 7880 Dunham Road, the Dzikowskis bought the Black Beauty Riding Academy (in name only) and six horses from the Clarks. To its patrons, the Black Beauty Riding Academy merely moved from one place on Dunham Road to a new location along the same road, closer to Bedford MetroPark.

The new Black Beauty Riding Academy (7125 Dunham Road) used about sixteen miles of MetroPark bridle paths, including the oxen lanes created by the Wager Quarry. The livery usually had from twenty to twenty-five horses that were mostly standard bred, along with some pintos and a few thoroughbreds. In 1942 when the twenty-five stall barn burned down, thirteen horses perished in the fire. Dzikowski rebuilt the barn at a spot farther back on the property.

Black Beauty had a dance hall pavilion complete with fireplace and

kitchen facilities available for hay rides, church groups, and youth groups. The first council meeting of the newly elected officials of the Village of Walton Hills was held in the pavilion at Black Beauty Riding Academy on Tuesday June 5, 1951.

At the present time the national government is processing the purchase of most of the Black Beauty acreage for inclusion in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area.

Since 1963 Henry Dziczkowski, Jr. and his wife, Joyce have lived in the house they built at 7135 Dunham Road, on four acres of family land that had been part of the Black Beauty grounds.

### THE HESOUNS

In 1913 Michael and Antonia Hesoun left the Broadway and East 55th neighborhood in Cleveland so they could farm and raise their seven children in the country. They rented the 200-acre Wager farm stretching from the Carey property to Egypt School, along the east side of Egypt Road.

Two years later Hesoun was able to purchase sixteen acres across the street and build a house on his own property. The Hesoun home, at 7182 Dunham Road, is now the rectory house for the pastor of the Miles Avenue Church of Christ.

The Hesouns were truck farmers. They grew fruits and vegetables and raised chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys. The family members worked together to farm and market their crop. The older Hesoun children, as well as Antonia, frequently led their horse-drawn wagon down the side streets of East 55th and Broadway to peddle their produce, eggs, and poultry. Yaro Hesoun and Helen Eglit, two of the children, recall the marketing days. Egypt Road as well as several other roads they traveled were dirt roads, full of ruts and holes which were difficult to negotiate. They followed Egypt Road to Tinker's Creek Road to Canal Road and then climbed up the East 71st Street hill to their territory.

Three of the Hesoun children chose to live on the family land when they married. Yaro, the oldest son, bought land in front of his parents' house. In 1946 he built a house (7200 Dunham Road) for himself and his wife, Eleanore, where they still live today.

Joseph and his wife, Anna, bought five acres from his parents and built a house at 7140 Dunham Road. Six years later, in 1941 when his house burned down, he built a new brick one on the same property. Joe's sister, Helen, and her husband, Charles Eglit, now own and live in that home.

Residents may remember Joe Hesoun's fruit and vegetable stand, from the 1930's to the 1960's. Helen Eglit recalls how people came from near and far to buy Joe's prized varieties of peaches, plums, pears, and apples.

### THE KOLISES

The William Black homestead at 7250 Dunham Road dates back to c. 1854. Black built the house on the 100 acres he purchased in 1837.

Linda Alber was born in the house. Her family farmed their land and are remembered by some old timers for their plum orchard and raspberry and strawberry patches. Linda married Willis Kitson. The young couple bought part of the old Alexander farm, but until they built a house on their Alexander Road property, Linda and Willis Kitson lived in the Dunham Road house.

Joseph and Anna Kolis purchased twenty-seven acres of farmland in 1941. Anna and the children pitched in to care for their wide variety of animals, vegetables, hay, and field corn, so Joseph could continue to work full-time at Cleveland Pneumatic Tool. Their animals included horses, cows, pigs, chickens, ducks, turkeys, rabbits, and pigeons. Anna had a very large boar that challenged the riding skills of adventurous neighborhood youngsters.

After rebuilding an old smokehouse found on the property, the family cured and smoked their own sausages, ham, and bacon. On the outside of the smokehouse was an oven which family members regularly used to make bread.

Like most of the other old farmhouses along Dunham Road in the 1940's, there was no inside plumbing nor central heating. The only water going into the house was cranked from a pump in the kitchen. The Kolises tackled the job of modernizing the house.

In the 1950's Joseph started his plans for a nursery that is still in evidence today. As the years continued, he and Anna turned their whole farm into a nursery. Today it is managed by their son, Raymond who lives with his wife, Esther, at 7216 Dunham Road.

Joan Wills, daughter of Joseph and Anna Kolis, also lives on the street where she was raised. Joan bought the William Hadden cottage across the road at 7257 Dunham Road. She has since enlarged and modernized the home that had been one of three houses in a row owned by Hadden brothers.

## THE KADERABEKS

Along Egypt Road there were several cottages owned by families who lived in the city during the weekdays, but who enjoyed spending their weekends and vacation periods working the fields in the country. Most of the couples had children and wanted their youngsters to experience country living. The cottages were more rustic and smaller than their city houses.

One such family was the Joseph and Anna Kaderabeks of 7350 Dunham Road. After their daughter, Albe, married Joseph Klukan in 1935, Joseph and Anna converted their Egypt Road cottage into a permanent home.

Area youngsters flocked to the Kaderabek ice pond when the skating was good. Joan Kolis Wills recalls how Anna Kaderabek frequently invited the skaters into her home for refreshments and warmth on cold winter days.

The MetroParks bought the Kaderabek back acreage in the early 1940's, but the remaining portion still belongs to the family. Two generations of Kaderabeks live in the village at the present time; Joseph and Albe Klukan at 7270 Stuble Lane, and their son, Ronald, and his wife, Rose, at 16975 Spanghurst Drive.

## THE REZACS

In 1920 Joseph and Dorothy Rezac purchased the farm at the northwest corner of Alexander and Dunham Roads. On the property was a house built before the 1880's. The Rezacs were immigrants from Czechoslovakia who lived in Cleveland for a few years before settling here to operate a truck farm. They huckstered vegetables along side streets by East 71st and East 49th Streets, at first using a horse and wagon, then a "Model T" pickup truck. In their smokehouse the Rezacs cured their own meat from livestock they raised.

The Rezac's daughter, Mae, married Dr. Frank Chvatal, a general practitioner whose office was on Broadway Avenue by St. Alexis Hospital. Although Frank most often could not join them, Mae and their son, Bob, enjoyed spending weekends on the farm. Mae pitched in with farm chores and Bob helped sell farm produce with his grandfather. Bob Chvatal recalls the many pleasant hours he spent in his youth riding his Shetland Pony or his Texas Colt throughout the village, along dirt roads and bridle paths. He also recalls swimming in the Sagamore Creek pool... When the New York Central built a pump house along the creek for the line's water supply, they dammed up the creek to contain the water. Little remains of the pump house and the dam, but the site is close to where the MetroPark

hiking trail crosses Sagamore Creek, just south of Alexander Road.

In the 1940's when the MetroParks purchased her land at the northwest corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads, Mae Chvatal bought eighteen acres on the east side of Dunham Road, south of the intersection. Sagamore Creek, or Mason Creek as it had been called, runs through part of the property.

Bob Chvatal, and his wife, Hazel, settled on family land after they married. One interest of the Chvatals was relocating and restoring houses. They moved one house from the northwest corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads to 7775 Dunham Road. They lived there for several years and also at 7745 Dunham Road in a house Bob's mother, Mae, had built. Bob and Hazel currently live in a modern-looking house they moved from Akron to one of their scenic lots along the Sagamore Creek (7755 Dunham Road).

Bob and Hazel Chvatal were instrumental in getting electric and telephone lines installed along Dunham Road, between Alexander and Sagamore Roads.

For the past forty years Chvatal's avocation has been little theater work. By 1985 he had performed in forty-five plays and received eight acting awards. He had also directed sixty plays and musicals, including "Camelot" for the Solon Players. Some of the theater groups he worked with were the Aurora Community Theater, Bedford Community Theater, Brandywine Players, Brecksville Little Theater, Euclid Little Theater, Hudson Players, Kenston Players, and the Solon Players.

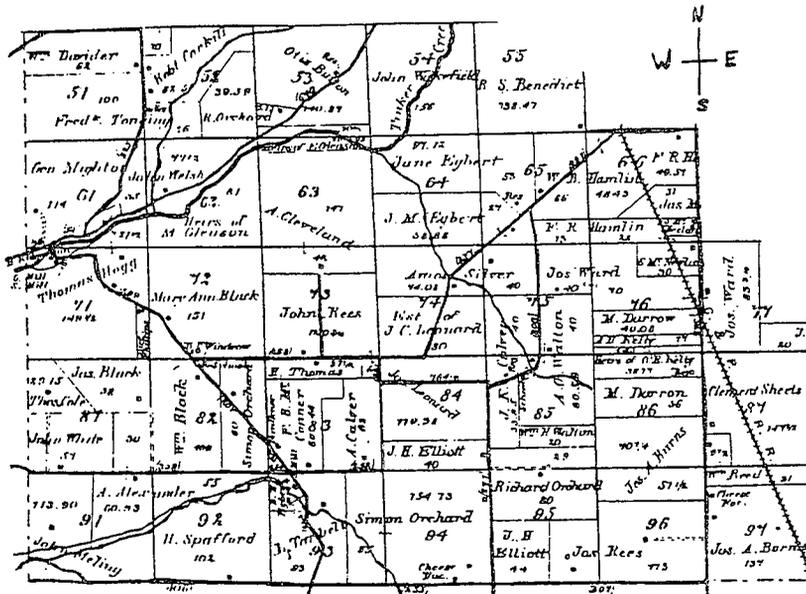
### THE JANDAS

J. and Anna Janda purchased the southwest corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads in 1904. But records in the County Archives indicate the Janda house and barn stood on that land before 1860, when it was owned by James Egbert. The Egberts operated a sawmill there. By 1870 the property was owned by Simon Orchard.

Janda's daughter, Mary, lived her whole life in the village. When Mary married Clarence Shull they continued to live in the Janda house for several years. Older residents have vivid memories of Anna's, and then later, Mary's flower garden that featured a wide variety of plants and spectacular blooms. The Shulls (who are now deceased) in more recent years built a house for themselves at 15153 Alexander Road.

The Janda house and barn sat vacant for almost twenty years. The property is now part of Bedford MetroPark, and no buildings are left standing.

The Southwest Section  
of  
Bedford Township  
1874 County Atlas





## ALONG DUNHAM ROAD

The section of the village along the north hilltop stretch of Dunham Road leading into Maple Heights was settled in the 1820's. In 1826 Nehemiah Hubbard was clearing his land along the east side of the road and Nathaniel Joy, Abiel Newton, and William Williams moved to their acreage on the west side of Dunham Road.

In all likelihood these Dunham Road families north of the Tinker's Creek Valley had more social, church, and business ties with neighbors to their north than with the nearby community of Little Egypt. Although the Dunham Road settlers were only a short distance from Little Egypt, the steep descent of the Dunham Road hill acted as a natural barrier.

### THE OSBORNE HOUSE

On the west side of the road, at 6670 Dunham Road, stands an intriguing old house originally built c. 1847 by Chauncey Osborne.

In 1834, when Asabel Hungerford and Laura Dunham married, they became owners of 100 acres of land and a cabin on this section of Dunham Road, as a wedding gift. Two years later, Asabel was killed by a tree as he was clearing back acreage of the property. A couple years later, Laura moved to Bedford when she married A. Turner Hubbell.

The family sold the Dunham Road property to Chauncey Osborne under a land-contract agreement. In 1847, before Osborne officially took ownership of the property, he tore down the existing house and built the house pictured on this page. County maps show Osborne as the owner of his house and acreage in the late 1850s.

The house has been enlarged and renovated throughout the years by a series of owners, but it still stands on the rough, hand-cut sandstone foundation stones which probably came from a nearby quarry.

Ornate double entrance doors, both designed with hinged glass windows that can be swung open independently of the doors, and screens protected by grids of patterned ironwork, have adorned the front of the house since the early 1900's.

The parcel was split in 1907 when Michael and Maria Manke bought the house and 53 acres of land. Helen Lytle and her husband purchased the house in 1920. Several residents who still live along Dunham Road today recall their childhood friends, the Lytle youngsters.

After buying the property in 1944 the Abner Wachtels parceled off their acreage and sold lots. Then in 1950 they sold the house, barns, sheds, and 35 acres to Donald and Dorothy Benjamin. The Benjamins lived on the property for almost thirty years. Benjamin was a part-time policeman for the young Village of Walton Hills for a number of years. In 1980 Janet Phillips and her daughter and son-in-law, Gina and Geoffrey Carson, moved into the old residence.



THE OSBORNE HOUSE,  
built c. 1847, stands at 6670 Dun-  
ham Road. This 1986 photograph  
features the ornate double  
entrance doors which were added  
to the original house after the turn  
of the century.

### THE TONSINGS

In 1865 Frederick Tonsing purchased the Osborne house and the 100 acres on the west side of Dunham Road. The Osborne house was owned by the Tonsing family for more than four decades, until 1907.

A second generation of Tonsings began purchasing land on both sides of the road. By 1880 Tonsings owned 136 acres along the west and 26 acres on the east of Dunham Road.

John H. Tonsing built his house in c. 1876 on the eastern side of the road, at the top of Snake Hill (6733 Dunham Road). The narrow but deep two-story house is framed with two large, old horsechestnut trees in the front yard and one in the back yard. Two barns, sheds, and chicken coops were near the house until recent years. Although they sold acreage from time to time, generations of Tonsings owned land along Dunham Road for 85 years.



*JOHN H. TONSING built this house at 6733 Dunham Road in c. 1876. (1986 photograph)*

In 1949 Jerry and Pearl Vlach purchased thirteen of Arthur Tonsing's 21 acres on the west side of the street. The Vlachs built their house at 6740 Dunham Road. That same year Jerry's brother, William, and his wife, Carrie, bought the adjacent eight acres to the north, building their house at 6700 Dunham Road. The Vlachs' land was part of the Tonsing orchards and cattle-grazing fields.

### A CEMETERY

Between 1935 and 1954 a cemetery owned by Greenlawn Park, Inc. was situated on the east side of the road, to the north of the present day house at 6589 Dunham Road. Greenway Road, shown on some old county maps, was an entranceway into the cemetery.

Investors had promoted the idea of the cemetery to residents of a nearby community. One coffin, said to contain the body of a woman, was buried in the cemetery, fulfilling the requirement of a consecrated cemetery. As the years went by and no one else was buried in Greenlawn Park, the investment venture failed. The coffin was removed in 1954. Charles and Lydia Svec (their son and his wife, Dean and Barbara Svec, live at 6589 Dunham Road) purchased the six acres at a public auction. Today the only recognizable reminders of the park are some willow trees.

## ALONG NORTHFIELD ROAD

### THE BURNS-MEANS FARM

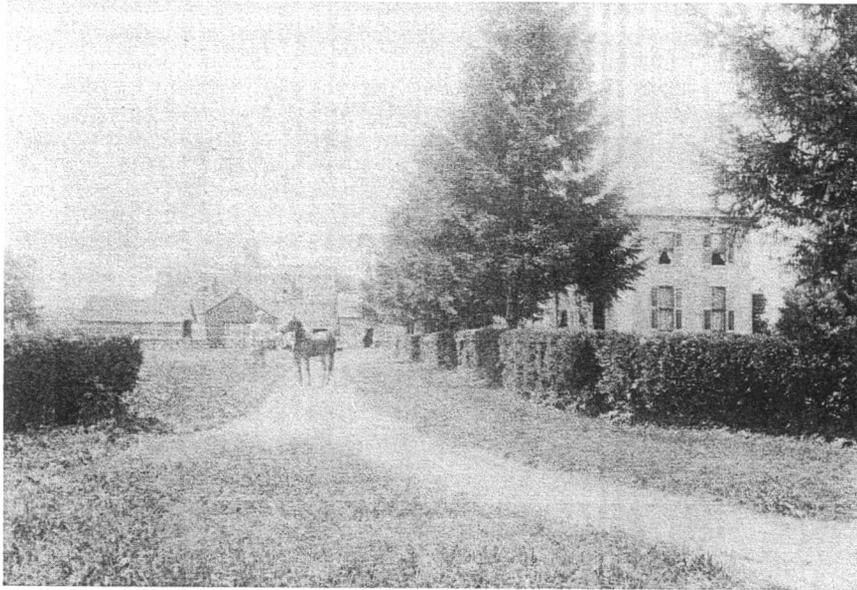
The Burns family owned a stately farm along Northfield Road for several decades beginning in 1860. Joseph Burns' house sat on 56 acres he owned on the east side of Northfield Road. The acreage extended to the Summit County boundary line. Burns also owned 121 acres on the west side of the road, between today's Hannon Parkway and the U.A.W. Local Union Hall. The Burns family bought and sold acreage on both sides of the road until they owned a total of 300 acres of farmland north of the county line, along Northfield Road.

Joseph Burns' daughter, Mary, inherited the 120 acres on the west side of Northfield Road and his son, John, was heir to the 180 acres on the east side. The family members joined together to manage their dairy farm and cheese factory, market fruits from their orchard, produce maple syrup from their sugar bush, work the fields, and raise the usual barnyard animals.

One of the Burns' log cabins stood on the site of today's Wigglesworth building at the southwest corner of Alexander and Northfield Roads. Mary and her husband, Albert Means, tore down the log cabin and in 1890 completed an impressive farmhouse for themselves on the same site. The ten-room house had a bay window in the living room, parlor, formal dining room, side porch off the dining room, kitchen with a pantry, five bedrooms, and a bathroom. A windmill-powered gasoline engine pumped water into the kitchen, bathroom, and also into the largest of several barns. In keeping with its elegance, the house was filled with fine furniture and decorative hedges bordered the house and yard. To the rear of the house were several barns, sheds, and other farm structures.

Soon after moving into their house Albert and Mary Means planted fruit trees for the start of an orchard. Some of the apple trees they planted are still standing in the vicinity of Colonial Court, and Laurel and Regency Drives. They specialized in three kinds of apple varieties and three kinds of pears. A grafted pear tree they developed produced two varieties of pears, one that ripened in mid summer and another variety that ripened weeks later. The orchard also had cherry and plum trees.

In 1927 Albert and Mary's son, John, got married. At that time John and his bride, Gertrude, moved into the large house and John's parents moved



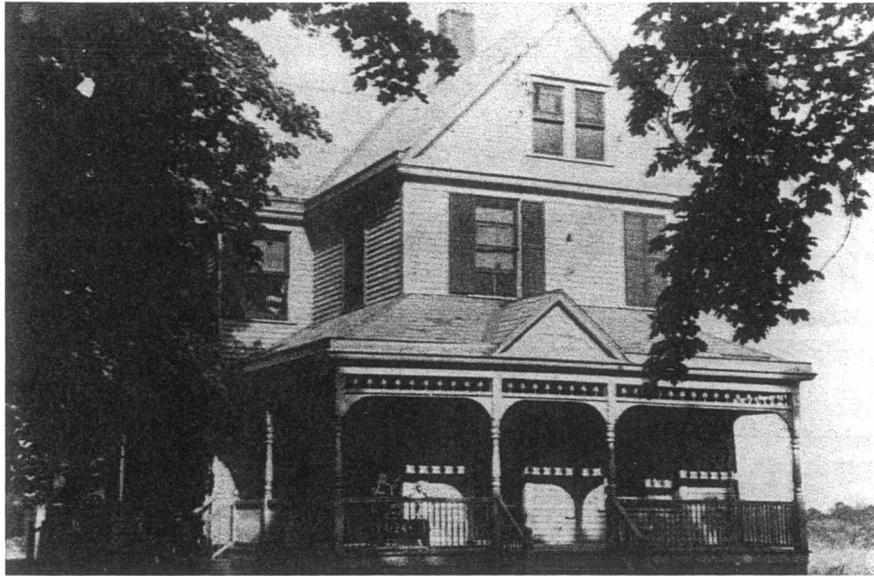
*IN 1890 MARY AND ALBERT MEANS built this ten-room house on Northfield Road, where the Wigglesworth building stands today. A windmill, faintly seen in the center, provided power for a gasoline engine that pumped water into the kitchen, bathroom, and largest barn. (Date of photograph unknown)*

into the Burns' farmhouse across the road, to care for Mary's aging parents and Mary's brother, John Burns.

Three years later while John and Gertrude were attending a Grange meeting in a nearby community, a wooden shingle from the roof caught fire from a chimney spark, and the house slowly burned to the ground. Neighbors ran to the scene and saved much of the family's furniture and treasures, but they couldn't contain the fire. They called the Bedford Fire Department for help, only to hear that the trucks could not cross the city limits into Bedford Township. By the time the Northfield Fire Department responded, it was too late to save the house.

Many people watched as the once spacious house was reduced to a pile of rubble. Besides the nearby residents, passengers aboard the ABC trolley (the tracks ran down Northfield Road) stopped to view the sight.

After the fire the couple moved into Gertrude's parents' home at 12823 Tinker's Creek Road, in Valley View. John died in 1962, but in 1985 Gertrude, at age 86, still lived in her family's homestead.



*THE JAMES AND EDITH REES HOUSE, built c. 1895, was on the west side of Northfield Road, just north of Sagamore Road. (Date of photograph unknown)*

### THE REES FARM

The neighboring Rees house was also large and elaborate. However, unlike the Burns' residence which was built close to the road, the Rees house sat so far back it was hardly visible from Northfield Road.

The Rees farm was at the northwest corner of Northfield and Sagamore Roads. A house and barn stood on 108 acres of farmland when James Rees bought the property in 1860. Years later Rees had a large house (c. 1895) and new barn built in the vicinity of today's Regency and Rashell Drives. James Rizer built the barn for Rees after the old one burned down. Rizer's son, Clarence, who was a young boy at the time remembers helping his dad work on the project. Clarence's father had him haul the old, thick black walnut floor planks from the old house to the site of the barn. The planking was then used for the sides of the barn. At the time, the Rizer family also lived on Northfield Road, where Krick Road Industrial Park is today. (See THE RIZER FAMILY.)

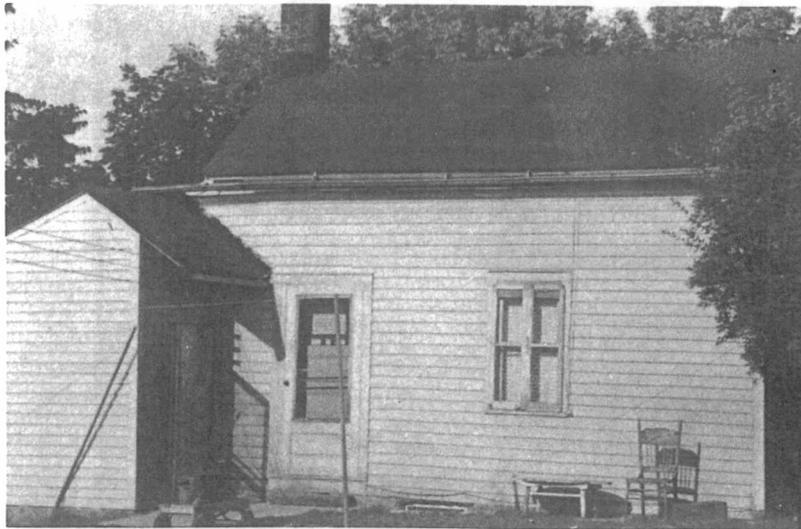
Although they lived in the township the Burns and Rees children, as well as other grammar school-aged students living along Northfield Road, took the ABC trolley to a Bedford Village School. It was cheaper for

Bedford Township to pay tuition for these few pupils to attend a school outside the township than to open another grammar school. However, if the students rode the trolley to school, their families were required to pay transportation costs.

Edith Rees, a daughter who taught in Bedford for many years, continued to live in the house after the property was sold to real estate developers in the 1920's. The majestic old oak trees and huge sugar maple trees in the Rees backwoods were cut down and sold for lumber by new owners in the early 1950's.

### THE EDWARDS

Margaret Edwards Young, wife of former Mayor Thomas Young, is a descendant of Jonathan Edwards, one of the first settlers along Northfield Road. In 1830 Edwards built his log cabin on the east side of the dirt road. The family lived there for a few years and then moved and established themselves in Northfield Township. An Edwards moved back to the township, however, when in 1941, shortly after they married, Marge and Tom Young bought some of the same farmland Jonathan Edwards had once owned. For a number of years the Youngs lived on Northfield Road in a farmhouse north of today's CEI lines. (See MAYOR THOMAS YOUNG.)



*THIS TYPICAL FARMHOUSE, built c. 1874, was owned by John and Marie Thome in 1890. If standing today the house would be seen deep in Hannon Industrial Park, west of Tower and Young Drives. (Date of photograph unknown)*

## LOTS ARE SOLD ALONG ALEXANDER ROAD

In the early 1940's Joseph Burns' grandson, John Means, arranged to sell his acreage along the west side of Northfield Road, where a narrow gravel drive cut through his land. This pathway was an extension of Alexander Road, which in those days was only paved as far east as Walton Road.

The land was platted into deep, multi-acre residential lots that faced Alexander Road and stretched from east of today's Morningside Drive to Northfield Road. The lots included part of the old orchard, some farmland, the sugar bush, and an old ABC trolley easement which was never used. The giant sugar maple trees filling the Means' backwoods were felled for their lumber when that portion of the land was sold.

One of the first families to buy a four-acre lot from the Means was Carl and Violet Podgurski in 1945. World War II had just ended and building supplies were limited. Podgurski couldn't get the needed materials for a house at first, so he put up temporary quarters that now serve as the garage and then gradually built his house at 19005 Alexander Road. Podgurski and his neighbor, Mike Romanik, petitioned CEI for electric lines along their stretch of the road.

That same year (1945) Michael and Effie Romanik bought a two-acre lot from the Means. Soon after they moved into their house at 19000 Alexander Road, the Romaniks spent their spare time starting up a mink farm. Raising these little creatures turned out to be a risky business that proved both time-consuming and expensive. Within a few years they decided to give up the endeavor.

## FROM DOGS TO STOCK CARS TO TROTTERS

In 1927 Bedford Sportsman Park, Inc. bought the chunk of Burns' acreage on the east side of Northfield Road extending south into Summit County. On the land they built the County Line Kennel Club Dog Track. Despite the fact dog racing was illegal in the State of Ohio, visitors to the track nevertheless bet on the greyhound dogs who chased electric rabbits around the oval.

Attempting to stay in business, the club officials painted a white line on the clubhouse floor to mark the county line. If Cuyahoga County Sheriffs were present betting took place south of the line, and if Summit County Sheriffs were patrolling all betting occurred north of the line. Authorities finally shut down the dog racing track.

During the years before World War II the track was used for horse shows, rodeos, and midget car racing. The track was closed during the war, but from 1948 until 1955 Sportsman Park was the scene of stock car racing. Beginning in 1959 Northfield Park, as it is now called, has been the home of harness racing in Northeast Ohio.

### AN AIRPORT IN THE TOWNSHIP: WARD'S FLYING FIELD

For a few years in the 1940's small private planes and a few post-war aircraft could be seen taking off and landing from a nearby airport located where Norandex Building Products operates today at 7120 Krick Road. In 1860 Joseph Ward purchased 70 acres of farmland on the west side of Northfield Road, where he and his family settled. More than eighty years later Jim Ward opened the James Ward Flying Field on family land (1944). In 1947 the Wards sold their property to the Weathertite Corporation. When Weathertite was ready to begin construction a few years later, Jim operated his airport for a time on a field owned by Sportsman Park (Northfield Park).



*WARD'S AIRPORT opened in 1944 along Krick Road. (1948 photograph)*

## THE CONELLY STREETS

General Ludwig S. Conelly was a local real estate broker who realized his dream of developing rural subdivisions in the southwest section of Bedford Township. Conelly's land development ventures began in the mid 1930's when his friend, Maude Walton, wanted to sell her considerable Walton Hills acreage. This was the first of several parcels of land purchased by the Conelly Realty Company. Over the years more than 400 houses were built on land Conelly developed.

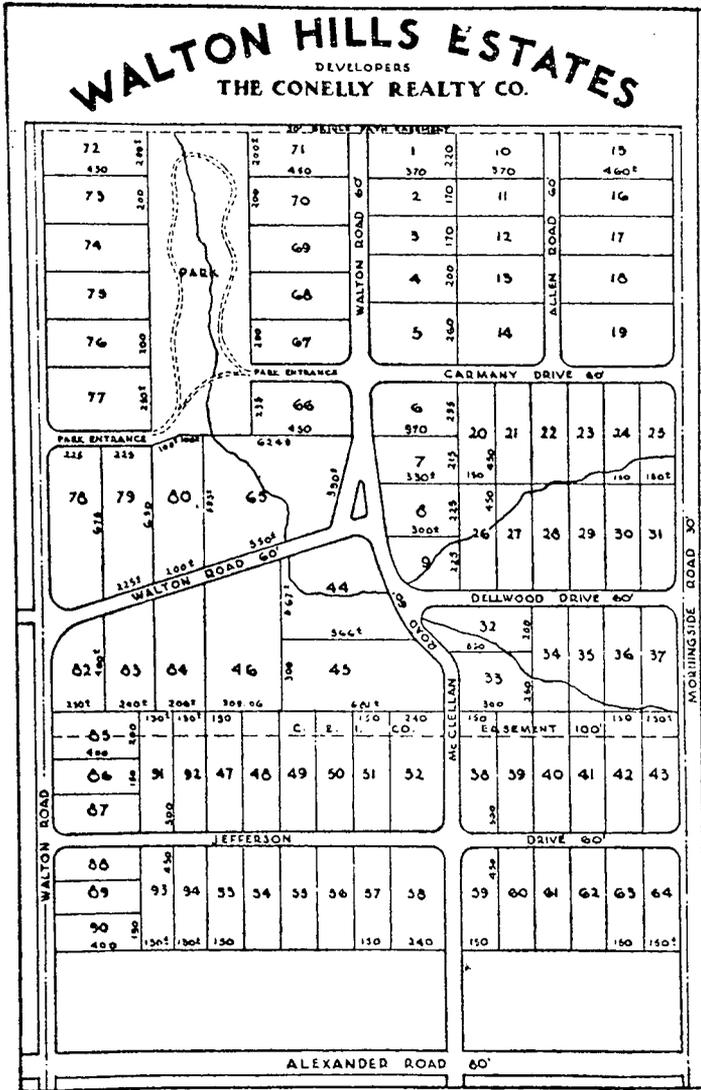
In May of 1938 The Conelly Realty Company put its first full-page ad in *The Cleveland News*, advertising "Exclusive Walton Road Estates, 2 to 10 acres, New Homes for \$4000 and up, Information at Conelly Offices." In those days Conelly had three offices: branch offices in Garfield Heights and Maple Heights, and the main office at his residence on the southwest corner of Wandle Avenue at Center Road, in Bedford.

Between 1938 and the early 1960's many Conelly advertisements about the Walton Hills lots appeared in *The Cleveland News*, *The Cleveland Press*, *The Plain Dealer*, and local papers such as the *Bedford Times-Register*. Conelly's advertising efforts and salesmanship resulted in his selling fifteen subdivisions over the years all with lots at least one acre in size.

Conelly first concentrated on selling lots facing Walton Road. He sold his first lot in 1936 to his friends, the Delmer Mitchells (7270 Walton Road). His next buyer, in 1938, was the Otis Carmany family (7195 Walton Road). The Merlin Bements also bought a lot from The Conelly Realty Company that same year (7242 Walton Road). The fourth Conelly buyers were the Hyrmers, in May of 1939. Charles and Julia Hyrmer still enjoy living in the house they built at 7157 Walton Road. "The woods and the country atmosphere attracted us to Walton Hills and this lot," stated Julia Hyrmer.

By 1939 Conelly had mapped out his first subdivision for the sale of home sites. This subdivision, which centered around Walton Road, included plans for cutting six new streets; Carmany, Dellwood, Jefferson, McLellan, Allen, and Morningside Drives. As one can see from the plat plan, Morningside Drive was to extend north of Jefferson Drive toward the north end of the development.

Carmany Drive was the first street he cut through and graveled; next was Allen Drive. Gradually the Conelly roads were improved sufficiently



THIS CONELLY REALTY CO. AD featuring 1 to 5-acre home sites appeared in the Bedford Times-Register on October 27, 1939. As seen, Morningside "Road" was planned to extend northward past Jefferson Drive. A second entrance to Walton Hills Lake was planned off Walton Road, opposite Carmany Drive. At the top is a bridge path easement.

to qualify for dedication. In 1949 McLellan, Jefferson, Dellwood, and Morningside Drives were completed, dedicated, and recorded as roads by the Regional Planning Board.

In the 1950's Conelly Blvd., Rotary, Spanghurst, Deeridge, Woodlake, North Meadowpark Drives, and Linda Lane were developed by the realty company, as well as lots along existing roads such as Egbert, Hicks, Walton, and Alexander Roads, and McLellan and Morningside Drives. Streets south of Alexander Road included East Lake, West Lake, McLellan, Orchard Hill, and South Meadowpark Drives. The Conelly roads were, for the most part, graveled drives which later had to be built up by the village.

Besides his own ventures which were the Walton Hills Estates Subdivisions, Conelly also assisted some land owners sell their acreage. For example, by developing the first section of Stuble Lane, he paved the way for Carl Stuble to develop his land. He also helped Lillian Kral sell her lots on Kral Drive.

The last street Conelly cut was Shaner Drive, in 1961. The twenty-seven lots faced either Walton Road or Shaner Drive. The five lots at the Shaner cul-de-sac were privately sold, however.

As sales incentives Conelly deeded a ten acre park to the cooperatively-owned Walton Hills Estates Club and, by retaining easements on some of his lots, allowed for a continuous twenty-mile bridle path that included existing paths in Bedford MetroPark.

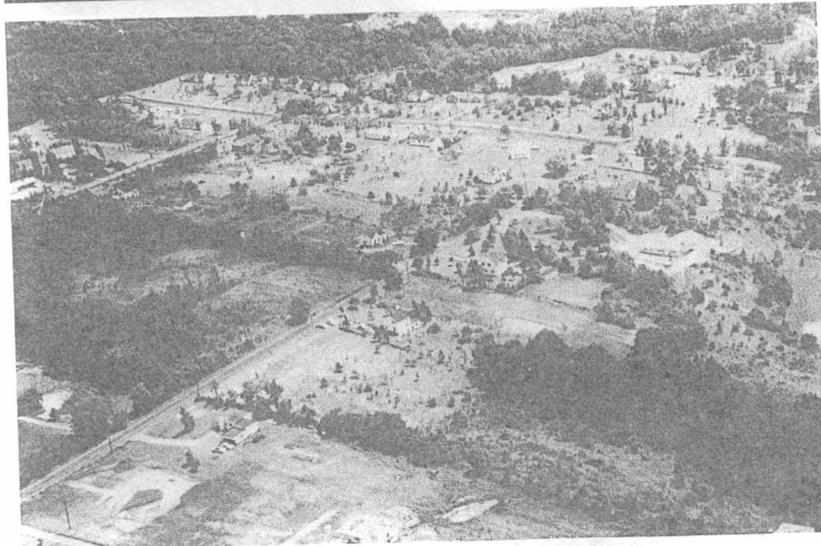
Although General Conelly served with the 37th Division in both World War I and II, and was a Major in World War I and a Brigadier General in the Ohio National Guard in World War II, he considered the development of Walton Hills his most important achievement. In an interview with Bob Brennan of *The Cleveland Press* in October of 1961, Conelly said, "This (the Shaner Drive development) is one more step in making Walton Hills my dream of a village of country homes. This community was an idea born of the depression. It was planned for people who want to get away from the city and live in a country home on rolling, picturesque land."

In 1950 L. S. Conelly built a house for himself and his wife, Sadie, on the crest of a hill at 7181 Conelly Blvd. Conelly lived there from 1951 until he died in October of 1963, at the age of eighty.

The Ray Conellys reside in the village at the present time at 7313 Walton Road. Ray is the youngest of four children of Ludwig and Sadie Conelly.



*GENERAL L. S. CONELLY was a local realtor who developed 15 subdivisions in Walton Hills. Over 400 houses were built on Conelly lots. (Date of photograph unknown)*



*1950'S AERIAL VIEW showing Walton Road from the lower left corner to the upper right. Carmany Drive runs parallel to the top of the picture and Allen Drive is at the upper left.*

## THE NAMING OF THE CONELLY STREETS

Allen Drive — for his friend, Johnny Allen, who bought then lived in old Walton School, at 7307 Walton Road.

Carmany Drive — for the second lot buyer and friend, Otis Carmany.

Conelly Blvd. — for General Ludwig S. Conelly.

Dellwood Drive — for his friend, Delmer Mitchell, who had a Franklin Oil service station on the lot next to Conelly's Bedford house. Del and Jessie Mitchell bought a Conelly lot and built a house (7270 Walton Road). They sold to the Freys in 1948.

Deeridge Drive — for the many deer in the area.

East Lake, West Lake, and Woodlake Drives — for their settings and lakes developed by the Conelly Realty Company.

Hicks Road — for old Hicks Lane.

Jefferson Drive — for Jefferson Walton who built a log cabin along the east side of Walton Road. The cabin sat far back from the road, on today's property at 18136 Jefferson Drive.

Linda Lane — for his granddaughter, Linda, who was his daughter Jeanne's girl.

McLellan Drive — for friends of the family. The McLellans, before the mid 1940's, lived at 7285 Walton Road.

Morningside Drive — for its eastern position in the Walton Hills Estates Subdivisions.

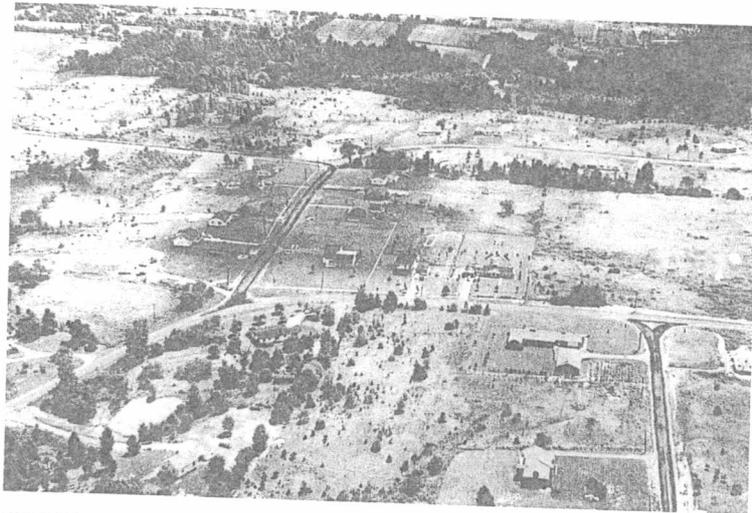
North and South Meadowpark Drives — for the fields and park-like atmosphere.

Orchard Hill Drive — for the Richard Orchards who had owned the farmland for several decades beginning in the 1870's.

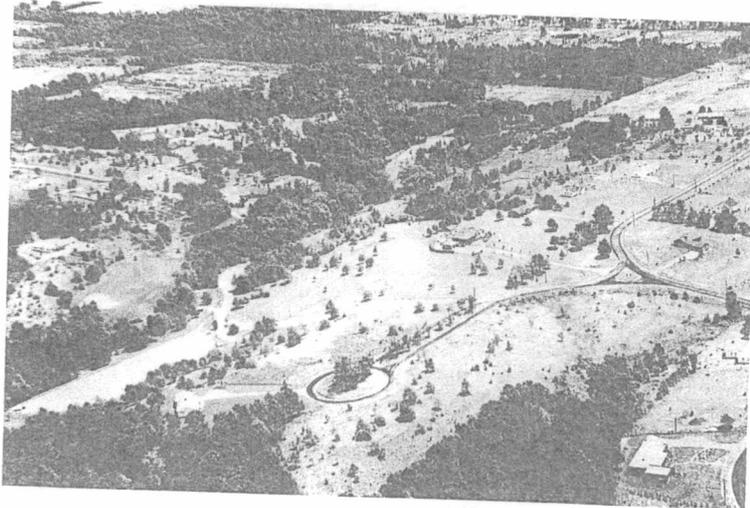
Rotary Drive — for the Bedford Rotary Club, of which Conelly was an active member. Originally he planned to reserve the lots for Rotary members.

Shaner Drive — Ludwig S. Conelly's middle name was Shaner.

Spanghurst Drive — for his son-in-law, Carl W. Spang.



*IN THIS AERIAL VIEW Egbert Road bends across the center of the picture. At the bottom right is Deeridge Drive. Angling off Egbert Road, toward the top right, is Spanghurst Drive. Hicks Road is seen at the left. This photograph was taken before Stuble Lane was developed in 1957.*



*AERIAL VIEW OF ROTARY DRIVE AND WALTON HILLS LAKE. The lake, at the lower left, was formed when water from South Branch of Deerlick Creek was diverted into a low area which was dug deeper to accommodate the lake. (Mid 1950's photograph)*

## THE WALTON HILLS ESTATES CLUB

When L. S. Conelly developed the Walton Hills Estates homesites, as a sales incentive he reserved about ten acres in November of 1946 for a park to be cooperatively owned, managed, and maintained by the families who bought his lots. At the time the land was little more than a low-lying depression with a creek running through it.

The Walton Hills Estates Club, now known as the Walton Hills Lake Club, was formed by interested Conelly lot owners. Procuring recreational facilities was a high priority; however, in the club's formative years the membership actively participated in political affairs affecting the Estates Subdivisions.

The members formed a committee, recognized by the Board of Township Trustees, to approve plans for all new houses in the Walton Hills Estates. They also worked together to correct building code violations, arrange for rubbish collection, and upgrade their streets. The membership elected Ted Graves their first president and appointed General Conelly an honorary trustee. They drafted a constitution and by-laws which were drawn up by Judge Ralph W. Bell, of Bedford. Annual dues were set at a nominal \$2 per member family.

In 1948 the members discussed how they could make the best use of their ten-acre park off Rotary Drive. Conelly had advertised that there would be a lake for his residents, and they were anxious to see him make good on his promise.

Walton Hills Lake became a reality early in 1949 when Conelly had an acre of park land dug out for a lake and club members pitched in to develop it. Underground springs partially filled the newly-dug hole, and water they piped from the creek filled the rest of it. Members built a dam to control the waterflow through the creek which ran through the park. The first big rainfall destroyed their barrier, but the second dam was equal to the task.

First year work projects undertaken by the members included preparing the lake for swimming, grading the hill so cars could drive down to the park, and clearing space for a parking lot. General Conelly culverted the creek and the members built a bridge to span the stream. With a bridge in place, members could cross over to the acreage on the other side of the creek where the men built outhouses, a softball field, and horseshoe pits.

The need for additional improvements was apparent, and as a result,

the membership voted to raise annual dues to \$10 a member family starting the following year.

By 1950 new additions to the park area included two sets of swings, a slide, two sand boxes, four picnic tables, two outdoor cooking fireplaces, and an old cabin which was donated and moved to the property. The cabin was used for storing equipment.

The men graded and then covered the hill roadway with slag, built a gravel filter bed in the creek, and rebuilt the storage cabin. They also bought and raked more than seventeen tons of sand, forming a beach along the water's edge at the south end. The price tag for all the work done that year was \$600.

The low cost and the many improvements were accomplished as a result of the donation of countless hours of labor, materials, and equipment by many members. Acting on behalf of the membership, the trustees sent letters of appreciation to the following families, thanking them for the time and effort they willingly gave to the club: the Merlin Bements, Frank Billingtons, John Brenners, Otis Carmanys, L. S. Connely, Ferd Fishers, Don Floras, Loren Frame, George Freys, Ted Graves, Edward Harrys, John Hills, Andrew Hutchisons, Charles Hyrmers, John Ignauts, Matt Mathiesons, Anthony Mazzones, Joseph Pekars, Donald Ralstens, Arthur Robinsons, Lester Rondinas, Victor Salzanos, Armin Wagners, Wayne Wagstaffs, Sterling Waltons, Harold Weimers, and the Stanley Wizoreks. Although it was hard work and took valuable time away from home projects, the volunteers had the opportunity of meeting new neighbors and developing lasting friendships as they joined together in a common cause.

When Walton Hills became an incorporated village, club members voted to donate a gift to the village. They bought a desk and nine chairs for the Mayor and Council to use in the Town Hall Council Room.

During those first years the women planned and held several money-raising projects and social events. There were barn dances, lawn parties, card parties, field days, holiday dances and parties, cake auctions, bake sales, and craft sales. The ladies met regularly to socialize and help newcomers get acquainted. Because they also played cards, they called their group the Buzz and Shuffle. They paid dues and planned money raising projects, the proceeds of which went to the Walton Hills Estates Club. When the Walton Hills Women's Club was organized in 1951, they discontinued the Buzz and Shuffle to work on similar projects as active members of the Women's Club.

The lake women also organized Tuesday and Thursday supervised play sessions at the lake park. The two mothers scheduled for the day not only planned activities for the youngsters but provided a snack for them as well. Stella Volpe (18477 Orchard Hill Drive), beginning in the summer of 1951, taught the Learn-to-Swim Program at the lake for several years.

For the first nine years membership in the Walton Hills Estates Club was limited to lot owners in the Conelly developments. Finally in 1955 General Conelly expressed his wish, in writing, to extend eligibility for associate membership to all residents in the Village of Walton Hills. Having Conelly's approval, the club members amended their constitution, thereby affording all village families the opportunity to join the lake club.

Three times in the early years of the club, during the 1949-1950 club year, from 1953-1955, and in 1959-1960, considerable thought was given to the building of a clubhouse on the south hillside overlooking the lake. In 1950 the constitution was amended to charge permanent entrance fees and issue building notes for financing the proposed clubhouse. The amendment was repealed later that same year. When a comprehensive Park Development Program costing over \$100,000 was proposed in 1959, there was an unsuccessful drive to sell \$250 eligibility certificates to member families. Each time the membership was divided over the need for such a facility and the price tag to the club.

Although a club house was never approved or constructed, an open-sided pavilion with a large fireplace was built in May of 1973 by a group of about twelve trustees and club members. The only cost to the club was for lumber, shingles, and concrete.

Many improvements have been made at the lake since its founding. A long list of villagers have served as trustees, and like the very first group, over the years members have willingly donated much of their time and talents for the benefit of the lake club.

## THE CONELLY BUSINESS CENTER

Conelly felt there was a need for a store at the intersection of Alexander and Walton Roads. Years previously there had been a store at the northeast corner of the crossroads.

In 1946 Conelly purchased two acres at the southeast corner of Alexander and Walton Roads on which he intended to build a business center. Soon afterwards he saw a Quonset hut displayed at the Cleveland Home and Flower Show. Conelly bought a Quonset hut and had the prefabricated corrugated steel shelter moved to his lot. Part of the building he used for his realty office; the other section he arranged into a small grocery store.

James Petras, a friend of Conelly's, opened his Community Grocery store in the Quonset hut in April of 1953, carrying a complete stock of staple groceries, dairy products, and deli foods. Walton Hills again had a grocery store in the heart of the village.

Conelly, in 1954, built a two-unit commercial building in back of the Quonset hut for a new grocery store and his realty office. The facility allowed for added space in the grocery business, and when he tore down the old structure, there was ample parking space at the front and side of the new building. Four years later, in 1958, he built a four-unit air conditioned addition, with space for a doctor's office, dentist's office, beauty parlor, and barber shop.

The Mestniks were involved with the Conelly business center in various capacities from 1956 until 1981. Steve and Alberta Mestnik owned and operated the grocery store business from 1956 to 1967, renaming it the "Walton Hills Delicatessen." Next they opened a tavern they called "The Villager" — a business they owned and operated for the next ten years. The Mestniks then purchased the commercial building from the Conelly estate, owning it from 1966 until 1981.

In the late 1950's the Mestniks were instrumental in procuring a United States Mail collection box at the Walton/Alexander crossroads. This took some doing, according to Alberta Mestnik. The mailbox was set up in front of their grocery store, remaining there for a number of years. Today two permanent collection boxes are on Village property, along the Village Hall parking lot exit drive.

Steve (now deceased) and Alberta Mestnik moved to the village and into their home at 7300 Spanghurst Drive in 1952.



*CONELLY'S TWO-UNIT COMMERCIAL BUILDING, pictured above, at the southeast corner of Walton and Alexander Roads was constructed in 1954. The sign above the delicatessen reads: "First unit of 10 store Walton Hills Shopping Center. See the Conelly Realty for space." Below: The 4-unit addition was built in 1958.*



Our village dentist, Dr. Richard Charsanko, whose original office was at East 112th and Miles Avenue, opened a second practice in the Walton Hills complex in 1958. As the years went by he closed his Miles Avenue office. Shortly after opening the Walton Hills office, Richard and Rita Charsanko moved into the home they built at 18060 Alexander Road. In July, 1986 Charsanko was appointed Councilman to fill the unexpired term of Harry Mackey, Jr.

Gus Vosgerichian had his barber shop at East 114th and Miles Avenue. He relocated the shop in the Walton Hills business center in July of 1959, and practiced his trade at that location until 1975. Gus and his wife, Mary built a house and moved to the village when Gus opened his local barbershop. The Vosgerichians live at 18477 Alexander Road.

#### OTHER BUSINESSES AT THE WALTON AND ALEXANDER CROSSROADS

The village service building at the southwest corner of Walton and Alexander Roads had been a Gulf Service Station for several years before the village purchased it in 1974. Ronald Duffy owned and operated the station from 1963 until 1966. Ron and his wife, Arlene, were both attracted to the village, and since 1965 have lived in the house they purchased at 7197 Connelly Drive.

The service station at the northwest corner of the crossroads was originally a Sunoco gas station first owned by Jack Rada, from 1965 to 1967. Rada grew up on the old Alexander farm, and he and his wife, Mary, live in the house they built on family land at 14800 Alexander Road.

In 1971 Richard Wolinski took over the Sunoco station business, which he operated until he took ownership of the property in 1986. At that time he changed over to handle Marathon gasoline. Wolinski and his wife, Adele, moved into their new house at 17820 Rauland Drive in 1981.

## BITS 'N PIECES OF VILLAGE HISTORY

During the Revolutionary War days the State of Connecticut claimed three and a half million acres of land in northeast Ohio. They called it their Western Reserve, and our village was part of that land saved for future expansion of Connecticut. Even before the war for independence from England ended, the United States Congress worked on a document to establish policy for organizing frontier territories into states. One principle of this document was that any new state entering the union would not be a "colony" of another, thus states claiming western lands would have to cede them to the national government.

Preferring to profit from their western lands before the Northwest Ordinance was passed in 1787, the State of Connecticut began efforts to sell sections of its Western Reserve. One group organized The Connecticut Land Company and commissioned General Moses Cleaveland to survey the land and map it out into township lots of five square miles. In 1796 and 1797 Cleaveland's surveying party did so. The company knew this western land, being fertile and relatively free from stones, would make excellent farmland.

One of the townships the surveyors mapped out in 1797 was Township 6 in Range 11. In about 1810 it was surveyed again, and the square was gridded into one hundred smaller square lots. A few years later, back east in Connecticut where a committee met to name the Western Reserve townships, Daniel Benedict named Township 6 in Range 11 after his village of Bedford, Connecticut. Walton Hills was part of Bedford Township from 1797 until 1951.

### THE EATON YEARS

The deeds of several local farmers were held by Cyrus Eaton for the Summit Hunt Club which he founded in 1926. If it weren't for Eaton's severe financial losses during the depression, many acres of village land might be privately owned by the club today.

In those days Cyrus Eaton owned large chunks of land and had a country estate to the south of Bedford Township. He organized, with his local friends, the Summit Hunt Club. Eaton and the club members hoped their club would entice other wealthy families to build country estates on club property or on adjoining land.

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For the fox hunts he sponsored Eaton wanted to use the land north of his property to the Bedford MetroPark boundary lines. According to oldtime residents interviewed regarding Eaton, he negotiated an "option to purchase" plan with several local farmers. The farmers allowed Eaton to hold their deeds and, in return, Eaton gave the farmers nominal initial amounts of money and small yearly payments. The farmers were allowed to live and work their fields until Eaton or the club exercised the options by paying in full for the properties.

As the club's Master of Foxhounds, Eaton led fox hunts for his well-to-do hunt club friends. Each year one hunt was scheduled near Thanksgiving Day, but several other hunts also took place during the autumn and winter seasons. Dressed in formal riding attire of scarlet and black, the horsemen followed their hounds, chasing foxes which were released a day or so before the hunt. The foxes usually fled north to the Tinker's Creek Valley, through the fields and woods along Sagamore, Alexander, Walton, and Egbert Roads. In their search for the foxes the hounds and the horses frequently ran rough-shod through planted fields.

Eaton didn't want anything to jeopardize his fox hunts. Several old timers tell how Eaton paid for property damages reported to him by farmers whose deeds he held and to others as well. Eaton reimbursed them (sometimes very reluctantly) for destroyed crops and farm animals affected by the disturbances.

Steve Romanik (19749 Alexander Road) recalls how, when he was a boy living on an Egbert Road farm that is now MetroPark property, the huntsmen raced through his farm. Steve's mother had clothes drying on a clothesline in the back yard that day. One of the horsemen ran right into it, fell off his horse and knocked down the line and the clothes. Steve's mother was upset about her broken line and dirtied clothes, whereas the fallen rider hurt only his pride while being temporarily delayed in his fox-tracking exploits.

Floyd E. Carr (16455 Egbert Road) remembers Cyrus Eaton yelling at him and his friends because they chased one of the foxes, thus interfering with the foxhunt. The Carr farm on Egbert Road was one of Eaton's "options."

When financial losses during the Depression forced Eaton to restructure his monetary holdings, he dropped his options on the farmlands and returned the deeds to the local farmers. Eventually fox hunting throughout our village came to an end.

## ROBINHURST HEIGHTS

At the same time when Cyrus Eaton and the Summit Hunt Club claimed part of the land that makes up the Village of Walton Hills, another section of the village was being prepared for development under the name of Robinhurst Heights, by R. B. Hartwig, a real estate investor who owned over 430 acres of local land from 1922 until December 17th, 1929.

The bulk of Hartwig's realty holdings along the east side of Walton Road and today's Alexander Road were platted into 610 small city-size lots, most of which were 40' wide. Planned in 1922 by the Hartwig Realty Company, and recorded by Cuyahoga County in 1923, the Robinhurst Heights Subdivision extended north to south between today's Jefferson and Orchard Hill Drives and east to west from today's Morningside Drive to Walton Road. The only parcel of land not included in the subdivision was the old Orchard homestead at 7715 Walton Road. The development bordered a planned spur of the ABC trolley line running from Cleveland, through Bedford, and south past Canton. Robinhurst Heights was planned to attract low income families who would require public transportation to get to their place of employment.

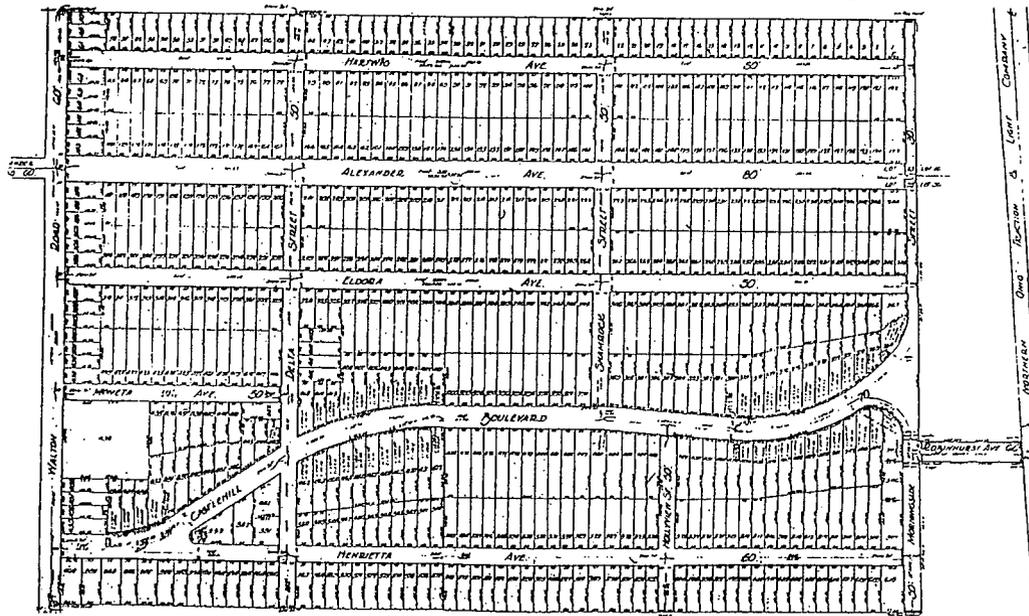
However, the stock market crash of October 29, 1929 altered the Robinhurst Heights Subdivision plans. The Guardian Savings & Trust Company held the mortgage for R. B. Hartwig's land. A month and a half after the Wall Street panic the allotment was vacated.

In 1930 Donald C. Dunlap, another realtor, acquired the Hartwig acreage, and by 1936 a group of realtors who formed the Sagamore Hills Company were making plans to develop the 467 acres of land they owned in the southeast corner of today's Village of Walton Hills.

## THE PUSH FOR TOWNSHIP ZONING

Several local citizens in the 1940's were concerned about small lot sizes in proposed housing developments and discussed the need for township zoning ordinances which would regulate how land could be used. Virgil D. Allen, Jr. (16535 Egbert Road), Ted Graves (7312 Walton Road), Thomas Young (current address 16575 Egbert Road), Joe Burns (lived in Bedford but owned land here), and others took steps to create township zoning laws for this area. Tom Young wanted a three acre minimum put on lot size whereas Ludwig S. Conelly — a local real estate developer who supported this group's efforts — would have preferred to sell one-half acre lots. They both willingly accepted the group's compromise of one acre minimum lot size.

ROBINHURST HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION  
 Recorded 4-11-1923, Lyman O. Newell, Cuyahoga County Recorder



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ROBINHURST HEIGHTS SUBDIVISION, a housing development which never materialized, was planned in 1922. Of the 610 city-sized lots most were 40' wide. At that time Walton Road was the only existing dedicated road. The portion of Alexander Road pictured

here was only a narrow dirt lane. At the right is a right-of-way for a spur of The N. O. T. & L. Trolley Line which ran along Northfield Road. Robinhurst Avenue was a planned access road connecting the housing development with the spur.

The group relied on the legal assistance of one of its members, Virgil Allen, Jr. It was Allen who was instrumental in designing the township zoning ordinances that eventually became law. Allen in those days was a banker who was attending evening classes at Cleveland Law School. In 1948 he received his law degree and was admitted to the bar. His first case involved pleading for township zoning before the Supreme Court of the State of Ohio. Allen assisted Saul Danaceau, a County Prosecutor at the time who was officially representing Bedford Township. Because Allen was so knowledgeable about the issue and was an impressive orator as well, Danaceau gave Allen the first fifteen minutes of the half-hour allotted for verbal argument. Danaceau, with Allen's able assistance, won the case — and township zoning went into effect later that year.

Minimum residential lot size was set at one acre and industrial zones were laid out. Buffer zones were established to separate and protect residential areas from industrial areas.

The aforementioned real estate developers, wanting to sell small lots in the Alexander Road area, did not give up easily. Twice they petitioned to hold elections to incorporate part of the township into an independent town and thus avoid township zoning regulations. The first time the petition included a larger chunk of "Walton Hills" for their new town than the second attempt, but in both instances their efforts were in vain.

With the best interests of the majority of residents in mind, local men and Township Trustee Cecil Braun (of Oakwood Village) felt the urgency to incorporate Walton Hills. A meeting was held at the Bedford Township Hall (now the Historical Society Building) to discuss procedures for forming a new community. L. S. Conelly supported incorporation but he did not get actively involved because of possible conflict of interest. Ted Graves, who was president of the Walton Hills Estates Club at the time, was the spokesman at the meeting. It was he who filed papers with the State of Ohio for Walton Hills to be incorporated as a village; and once again, Virgil Allen was the legal advisor for the group.

### THE INCORPORATION OF THE VILLAGE OF WALTON HILLS

In March of 1951 the Walton Hills voters went to the polls in a special election to determine whether the area would detach from Bedford Township and become the Village of Walton Hills. The boundaries for the proposed village were the Bedford and Maple Heights city lines to the north, Bedford and the Pennsylvania Railroad (Conrail) to the east, the

Summit County line to the south, and the Village of Valley View line to the west. The voting took place in the Quonset hut owned by L. S. Conelly at the southeast corner of Alexander and Walton Roads. As a result of that election, the Village of Walton Hills became a reality.

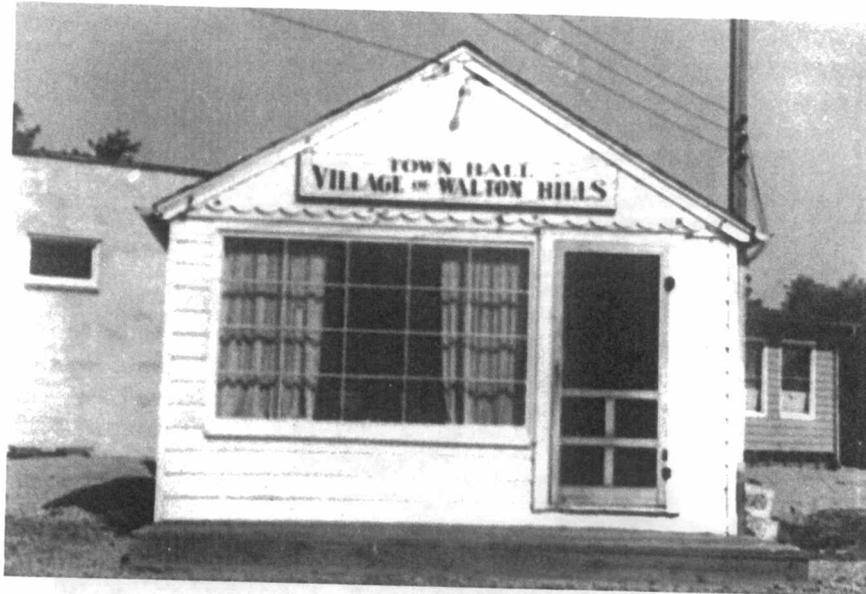
## THE MANAGEMENT OF AN INFANT VILLAGE

In May of 1951, just two months after incorporation, the residents again went to the polls to elect their first village officials. Virgil D. Allen, Jr., running unopposed, was elected Mayor. Also elected were Betty Walton (7215 Walton Road) as Clerk and Charles Clark (7880 Dunham Road) as Treasurer. The six councilmen chosen were: Raymond Brown (7880 Walton Road), Howard Carey (7065 Dunham Road), Otis Carmany (7195 Walton Road), George T. Graves (7312 Walton Road), Paul Pojman (17401 Egbert Road), and Frank Wolf (6650 Dunham Road).

A month later at the Black Beauty Riding Academy Hall which stood at 7125 Dunham Road, a judge from the Court of Common Pleas of Cuyahoga County administered the oath of office to the newly elected officers. As planned their term of office was short; a regular election was set for November of that same year.

During that initial half-year term the newly formed local government officials held numerous meetings. They met at Black Beauty's pavilion and at Mayor Allen's house — and soon recognized the urgent need for centrally located village offices.

On the property at the northeast corner of Alexander and Walton Roads sat two buildings; a partially-completed brick store near the intersection and a small unused 14' x 20' wooden structure that stood nearby. The owner of the land and buildings, Vincent Shoman, agreed to lease the wooden building to the village at a rental of two dollars for two years. Council voted to accept the offer and temporarily used that building until a more appropriate location could be found. The shed was prepared for Council meetings, Mayor's Court, and working space for officials and departments of the village. On September 18, 1951 the Mayor and Council held their first council meeting in the wooden structure, calling it their Town Hall. A donated oil heater provided some warmth to those working there during cold autumn and winter days and evenings.



FOR A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR beginning in September of 1951, this 14' x 20' wooden structure situated on the northeast corner of Alexander and Walton Roads was pressed into service as the first Village Hall. (Date of photograph unknown)

RECEIPTS	ACTUAL 1951	ACTUAL 1952	EXPENDITURES	1951	1952
General Property Tax	\$ -0-	\$ 9910.04	General Fund	\$ 2237.86	\$ 17054.90
Vehicle License Tax	-0-	547.50	Vehicle-Gasoline Tax Fund	-0-	480.75
Gasoline Excise Tax	-0-	-0-		\$ 2237.86	\$ 17535.65
Sales Tax	1666.66	3416.49	Year End Balances	2998.30	17218.62
Liquor Permits	2200.00	2473.08		\$ 5226.16	\$ 34754.27
Building Permits	159.50	1531.43			
Fines and Costs	-0-	12610.50			
Contributions	1200.00	1102.00			
Other Income	-0-	174.93			
	\$ 5226.16	\$ 31765.97			
Prior Yr End Balances	-0-	2998.30			
	\$ 5226.16	\$ 34754.27			

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES of the newly-founded Village of Walton Hills.

At first the only revenue the village had was from the assessing of fines in Mayor's Court. Choosing to work for their community without pay, Council set the salary for elected village officials at \$1 per year. Likewise, most of the appointed officials offered their services to the village for free.

The young village depended on the cooperation and donations of its residents and businesses to sustain operations. Ludwig S. Conelly donated the use of his jeep. In the autumn of that first year Mayor Virgil Allen and Planning Commissioner Thomas Young solicited donations from area businesses for a needed truck and snowplow. With the money they collected the village bought a used truck chassis, an old dump body that was later installed upon the chassis, and a well-worn snowplow blade attachment. Two active community groups provided furniture for the village office. The Walton Hills Women's Club gave Council a four-drawer filing cabinet and also the use of its folding chairs, and the Walton Hills Estates Club gave the Mayor and Council a desk and nine sturdy office chairs.

Just a few months later the first regular November election was held. This time village officials were elected for a full two-year term of office, from January, 1952 until January, 1954. Mayor Allen and Treasurer Clark retained their offices as did Councilmen Carmany and Graves. Merlin Bement (7242 Walton Road) was elected Clerk, the position to which he was appointed when Betty Walton, because of poor health, requested relief of her duties. Newly elected Councilmen were Ferd Fisher (18575 Dellwood Drive), Henry Hadden (7229 Dunham Road), Clarence Rizer (14229 Alexander Road), and Thomas Young.

The village was only a half year old when it had outgrown its cramped quarters. In February of 1952 Council declared its intention to find suitable property for a public hall with adequate office space for Council, village officials, police, and other village departments.

### A REAL TOWN HALL

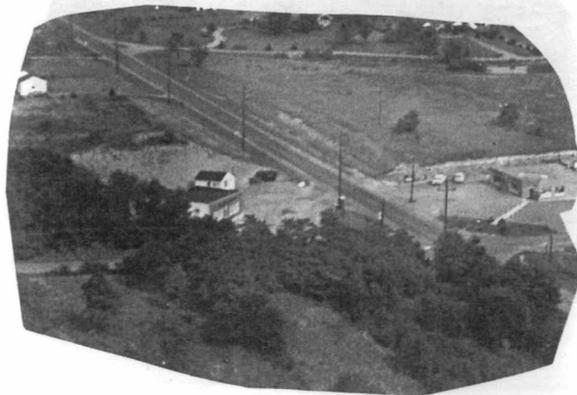
In May of 1952 at a Council Meeting, Mayor Allen reported that a group of villagers was willing to buy the three-acre parcel of land at the northeast corner of Alexander and Walton Roads. On the property sat the small wooden structure the village had been leasing for its offices, along with a partially completed brick building of sufficient size that it could fairly easily be converted into a town hall. After the purchase the group would lease the buildings and grounds to the village, giving the community the option to purchase the property at the same price the group paid for it. A

couple weeks later at a town meeting, villagers voted to recommend that the Planning Commission accept the offer.

The group of villagers quickly pitched in and bought the property for \$17,500. On June 3rd Council voted to lease the property, and appointed Sterling Walton the Acting Town Hall Improvement Expeditor. Walton's job was to direct the work of volunteers as they completed the brick building for village use.

Finishing the town hall was a top priority community effort. Many people volunteered untiringly, devoting the summer of 1952 to the project. Indeed, Walton resigned as expeditor in October of that same year because his work was completed. In an "Up in Walton Hills" column published in the *Bedford Times-Register*, the following people were singled out and thanked for their hours of work: William Babkowski, Ed Bahensky, Frank Barr, Samuel Dickey, Dominic DiSanto, Michael Elco, Loren Frame, Earl Graves, Ted Hack, Jack Kerekes, Ken Kibler, Harry Mackey, Sr., Leo Morrison, Norm Pearce, Bob Prindle, Joe Rukan, Jim Salamon, Victor Salzano, Andy Sanislo, Pete Scimone, Cameron Scott, Jacob Senchur, Howard Shay, Frank Simone, Vern Thiele, Frank Toth, H. B. Tyler, Wayne Wagstaff, and Sterling Walton. Names of women were omitted from the list, but it is known that several village women helped by decorating,

*AERIAL VIEW OF THE WALTON/ALEXANDER CROSSROADS. Alexander Road can be followed from the upper left to the bottom right, and Walton Road across the mid-section of the photograph. The temporary Village Hall and the first permanent Village Hall are both visible at the upper left of the crossroads. The small wooden temporary office stands behind the larger brick building which was renovated for use as a Village Hall in 1952. (Mid 1950's photograph)*



painting, sewing, cleaning, and preparing food for the workers.

The village officials moved into their new quarters, and in January 1953 the village had accumulated sufficient money to purchase the property from the owners, paying them the agreed upon price of \$17,500.

## THE EARLY VILLAGE LEADERS

The individuals who founded the Village of Walton Hills did so with vision, zest, and zeal. Their new village would have sufficient land and industry to provide a good tax duplicate for the citizens, an industrial base located in specific areas at the edge of the village. Diverse industries would be screened as a safeguard to the health of the residents; only selected ones would be allowed to locate within the village boundaries.

Village leaders worked to provide as many benefits as they could for their citizenry. During their first month in office they voted to pay themselves salaries at \$1 a year. It didn't matter to them that their efforts for the village far exceeded any monetary reimbursement, fulfilling their dream of an ideal suburban family community was apparently rewarded.

## THE FIRST MAYOR OF WALTON HILLS

Virgil D. Allen, Jr. was a banker by profession who graduated from law school in 1948 and was also admitted to the bar that same year. The hours of time he devoted to village affairs was at a personal sacrifice of a new law career.

After considerable arm twisting Allen finally agreed to run for the office of Mayor. At first he said he would only accept office for a short term (from June 1951 until the end of the year), but realizing how badly the fledgling community needed his services during the interim, he agreed to run again, this time for a full two-year term. Being Mayor from June, 1951 until January of 1954, Allen served as the village law director. Allen drew up all the original village ordinances, a monumental task.

He was an independent thinker who was not easily swayed by popular opinions. Those who knew him found him to be a very intelligent man who stood by his convictions. Once Allen formed an opinion he would not bend to hypocrisy or compromise. Politicians who considered the strength of any democratic government, thought Allen was tough and outspoken; nevertheless they and lawyers in the area con-

Allen an attorney's attorney, and often sought his advice on legal matters.

Virgil Allen was not only active in village affairs, he was a member of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, and his influence throughout the Greater Cleveland area was an asset to the village.

### THE SECOND MAYOR OF WALTON HILLS

George T. "Ted" Graves, who served as Councilman during the years Virgil Allen was Mayor, was elected Mayor for a two-year term beginning in January of 1954. From 1946 to 1952 he was president of the Walton Hills Estates Club, which at that time was a social and politically-active club open to families who purchased lots in the Walton Hills Estates Subdivisions.

He first presented his plans for incorporation of the village to the Estates Club membership. Shortly afterward in 1950 he organized a meeting which was open to all, to discuss plans for creating the Village of Walton Hills. Graves was the main speaker at the evening meeting held at the Bedford Township Hall. Graves then filed the necessary legal papers in Columbus, Ohio.



*GEORGE T. "TED" GRAVES,  
Second Mayor of Walton Hills,  
served from January, 1954 until  
January, 1956. (Date of pho-  
tograph unknown)*

Graves is remembered for being one of the main forces in the creation of our village. If it weren't for his unrelenting efforts and leg work, the makeup of the village might have been far different than it is today. Virgil Allen, he too was an independent thinker who was not influenced by outside interest groups.

As General Manager and Chief Engineer of the Farval Corp Graves designed hydraulic equipment for the company that manufactured and installed lubrication systems for steamships, cranes, and other heavy machinery. His engineering work took him all over the world, but his concerns were always at the top of his priority list.

### A FORD MOTOR PLANT IN WALTON HILLS

Virgil Allen, Ted Graves, and Tom Young were instrumental in convincing Ford Motor Company top management to locate their stamping plant in our village. One of the primary goals these village organizers set for themselves was to lure desirable industrial companies into building a plant in our village. On one of his business trips, Virgil Allen learned that Ford was looking for a new site for a stamping plant. As soon as he returned home he relayed this news to the village leaders, and the men then looked for sites within the village where a large plant could be situated. The hope was that if they could attract a large company like Ford to Walton Hills, additional industry would be more likely to follow suit.

The committee felt that the property on the east side of Northfield Road at the Alexander Road intersection was a likely location. The land was zoned for industry and was 116 acres of field, with a rock base that could support the weight and vibrations of stamping plant presses. It was planned major highways and the Pennsylvania Railroad line. The committee decided this was the site that should be presented to Ford, and they worked diligently on promotional strategies.

The men had several problems to solve before the deal was consummated. Allen, Young, and Graves worked to make their site suitable for an industrial complex. They had to get water, sewers, and roads to the locality. They convinced the City of Cleveland to extend a 20-inch main from the Solon Road Pumping Station down Forbes Road to the Walton Hills line. Then Walton Hills laid a 16-inch water line south along Northfield Road to the Ford Plant site.

Cuyahoga County agreed to build the County Sanitary Sewer #20 and construct a sewer line from Sagamore Road northward to Northfield Road to Krick Road. The county then built their sewage treatment plant in the Krick Road area. (That sewage treatment

operated until October, 1984 when the sewer line was connected with the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and the county sewage treatment plant was decommissioned.) Alexander Road was a minor road ending at Northfield Road. In 1954 the county extended and paved Alexander Road past the eastern village boundary line. Interstate 271 at that time was still on the state's highway drawing board, but the State of Ohio soon had crews working on the highway system.

In 1953 Ford Motor Company announced its intention of locating its new stamping plant in our village. Ground was soon broken and The Ford Motor Company Walton Hills Stamping Plant was built with little delay.

Since 1954 when the plant began operations, residents have benefited measurably. Money raised from the local income tax of the Ford employees' salaries and wages has provided funding for many services to villagers and has lowered the municipal tax rate as well. Cuyahoga County and the State of Ohio have also benefited financially from the Ford Plant.

#### MAYOR THOMAS YOUNG'S 24 YEARS

Thomas Young was Walton Hills' fourth Mayor, spanning a total of twenty-four years, from January, 1958 until he retired for health reasons in December of 1981. His public service days began long before 1958, however; he assisted Allen and Graves when they were organizing the new village, he served on the Planning Commission, and then was a councilman from 1952 until he became Mayor.

Young's reign as Mayor was at a time when the village was growing rapidly. Young nurtured the industrial complex at the east end of the village. His careful planning and prudent spending of village money put the village on sound financial footing. The municipal tax rate paid by residents throughout the years has been exceptionally low — yet villagers have received many services not provided by other communities, and have had excellent police and fire protection as well.

During the Young administration city water lines were installed throughout the village, the bulk of the cost being absorbed by the village from revenue savings. Likewise, sewer lines were laid to each property line with no assessment charges to the property owners. The \$7 million cost of the sewer project was paid from village funds.

When Young took office many of the village roads were in poor shape, especially the streets cut by L. S. Conelly for the Walton Hills Estates Subdivisions. Those streets had been prepared and dedicated during the

township days when requirements were minimal. Tom Young went to the chief county engineer for advice on how to build up the village roads, and he then followed through on the suggested procedures. The improvements were made without requiring property owners to pay any road assessments.

Tom and Marge Young had bought a farm in 1941 along the east side of Northfield Road, north of the Alexander intersection. Their farmhouse and yard stood near today's CEI power lines. Tom co-owned the Puritan Poultry Farm wholesale egg business with his brother, John. Besides running the business, the Youngs farmed their land and raised herefords and hogs. Much of the farm work rested on Marge's shoulders, especially when Tom was in the service during the later World War II years. In the mid 1950's the Youngs sold their farm and Tom built a house for his family on property they purchased on Wight Oaks Drive.

Near the end of Ted Graves' mayoral term in 1955, Allen and Graves



*THOMAS YOUNG was Mayor of Walton Hills for 24 years, from January, 1958 until December, 1981 — during the rapid growth years of the village. His careful planning and prudent spending of Village money put the community on sound financial footing. (Early 1960's photograph)*

both felt Young was well-prepared for the job of mayor. They asked him to consider running for the office; however, Young declined, saying he could not do the job justice at that time, since he was in the process of building his house and because of business pressures. L. S. Conelly ran instead, and Conelly served his term as third Mayor of the village from January, 1956 until January, 1958. Young ran for Mayor in November of 1957, was elected, and retained the office from January, 1958 until December 15, 1981.

Tom Young is well-respected for his many years of civic service. In 1976, in his honor, the village park was renamed Thomas G. Young Recreation Center.



*KRICK ROAD INDUSTRIAL PARK. A 1953 photograph shows the newly paved "L"-shaped Krick Road, off Northfield Road, ready for industrial development. The Cuyahoga County Sanitary Sewer District #20 sewage treatment plant is at the left.*

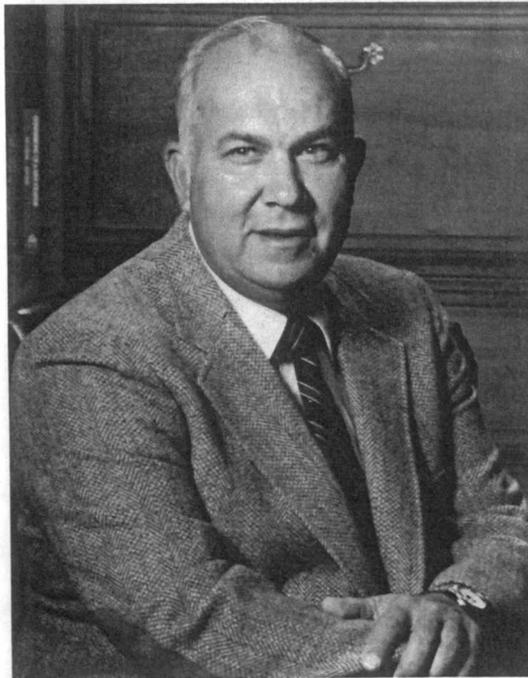
## MAYORS IN MORE RECENT YEARS

Harry A. Mackey, Jr., who had been President of Council when Thomas Young retired, was appointed Mayor to replace Young. Mackey served as the community's fifth mayor until January of 1984. A builder by trade and a talented craftsman as well, in 1958 Mackey constructed the house at 17305 Egbert Road for his wife, Mary (now deceased), and his family.

William E. Bosway, our present and sixth Mayor, was elected and assumed the duties of Mayor of the Village of Walton Hills in January, 1984. For the previous ten years, from January of 1974 through December of 1983, he was a councilman for the community. Bosway, and his wife, Patricia, have lived in the village since 1961, residing at 16250 Tulip Lane.

It is Mayor Bosway's hope that under his leadership the village can continue to maintain and expand the industrial base of the community, which makes possible the numerous services offered to its residents.

To quote Mayor Bosway, "Service is the only product we give to our citizens. It is the dividend our home owners receive for investing in our community." At the same time Bosway is working to keep the municipal tax rate the lowest allowable by state law.



*WILLIAME. BOSWAY, Mayor of  
Walton Hills, assumed office in  
January of 1984. (1983  
photograph)*

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## LAW ENFORCEMENT: PROGRESS AND PERSONALITIES

### POLICE CHIEF STERLING WALTON

Sterling Walton (7215 Walton Road) accepted the part-time appointment of Police Chief of the newly formed Village of Walton Hills, receiving a salary of \$1 a year for his efforts. Walton served as Police Chief from January, 1952 until his death in May, 1959. Although he was a car salesman for a westside Pontiac dealership, he still found time to preside over the police department.

During icy and snowy weather Walton frequently helped village employees by spreading cinders (furnished free of charge by the local Ford Stamping Plant) on Dunham Road Hill and other dangerous streets. Late each autumn cinders were piled along the berms of roads where they

*STERLING WALTON was the first Police Chief of the Village of Walton Hills. (1950's photograph)*



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might be needed by drivers. Walton kept a shovel in his car and to assist travelers who were having trouble coaxing their vehicles over steeply inclined.

In the early years of the village the policemen, the police chiefs, Young (when he was Councilman and also when he was Mayor), Graves, and Road Commissioner Armin Wagner (7450 McLella) shared the work of snowplowing the village roads. Village employees paid for their services — but several of the men who cleared the roads in the evenings, nights, and early hours of the morning during stormy weather did so on a voluntary basis.

#### CHIEF DEPUTY MARSHALL NORM PEARCE

Norm Pearce, Constable for Bedford Township during the 1940's, patrolled this area in his own car, working for wages and mileage. A part-time worker, who also watched over this part of the township, was Chief Constable Walter Tuennerman of Oakwood Village.

*NORM PEARCE was Constable for Bedford Township during the 1940's and the first full-time Walton Hills Policeman. (1950's photograph)*



When the village was created in 1951 Mayor Allen and Council appointed Pearce Chief Deputy Marshall, making him the only paid police officer of the new village. As he did when he worked for the township, Pearce used his own vehicle for police duty the first year he worked for the village. In May of 1952 when a local business donated money to the village to help defray the cost, the village was able to purchase its first police car. Pearce was given that automobile to use for official business.

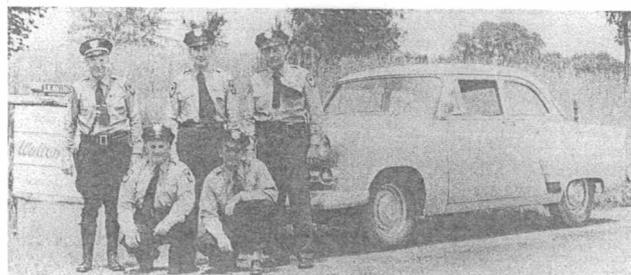
For the first several weeks as Chief Deputy Marshall, Pearce worked without being paid; Walton Hills had no operating funds and revenues from industry, state, and municipal taxes were yet to be collected. Villagers in attendance at a council meeting that summer listened to a discussion about their patrolman not receiving his wages. To resolve the issue Council members and other village officials at the meeting took up a collection and presented Pearce with his first paycheck — in cash.

At home Norm's wife, Betty, and even their children, manned the police phone twenty-four hours a day. Norm responded to phone calls if he was home, but if on duty, his family radiod messages to him in his patrol car.

Norm and Betty purchased and remodeled the old New York Central camphouse at 15801 Egbert Road in 1941, living there until the mid 1950's. They now reside in Maple Heights where they have their family run business, the Maple Heights Cab Company.

Both Pearce and his wife grew up in this area of the township. During his teen years Norm lived with his parents, James and Anna Pearce, in a house they rented from Mae Chvatal at the northwest corner of Dunham and Alexander Roads. Betty and her parents, John and Lydia Panovich, lived in the old Walton house at 7228 Walton Road, from 1929 until 1936.

*WALTON HILLS POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 1953. Standing, left to right: Police Chief Sterling Walton, William Hadden, and Frank Simone. Kneeling, left to right: Norm Pearce and Walter Vance.*



## CHIEF FRANK SIMONE

Frank Simone (14665 Alexander Road) was the second Walton Hills police officer. He was Part-Time Deputy Marshall for a few years prior to patrolling full-time for the village.

A few months after the death of Chief Sterling Walton, Simone was appointed Police Chief. He served in this capacity for sixteen years, from 1960 until retiring in November of 1975. As did the community, the Police Department grew during Simone's reign as Police Chief. When he retired there were six full-time policemen plus three part-timers.

Simone enjoyed his years as patrolman and chief. "It was an opportunity for me to help new residents get settled, help promote goodwill among villagers, and help give the village a positive image," declared Simone. Frank was interested in the welfare of the village youth and helped organize activities for the youngsters. He also participated in the negotiation of local strike issues, helping both factions iron out their differences.

Frank Simone's wife, Ann, Sterling Walton's wife, Betty, and Tom Young's wife, Marge, assisted their husbands and the community as volunteer police dispatchers. During the early village years when the offices in the village hall were closed evenings, nights, and weekends, phone lines were hooked up between their homes and the village offices. Ann Simone, Betty Walton, and Marge Young took turns handling all police calls, at no charge to the village.

The Simones, who built a house in 1945 on four acres of land they bought along Alexander Road a couple years earlier, farmed the fields in their free time. They sold excess crops in front of their house, but their harvests surpassed what they could eat and sell. When the Simones heard that the Vincentian Sisters of Charity at the Bedford convent could use surplus food, they gladly shared their harvests with the sisters.

Later, when the women in the convent offered to help work the fields, the Simones gave the sisters the back acreage. From 1961 until 1973, passersby could see the ten or twelve nuns, dressed in black habits, working in the fields almost daily, from May until the harvest was over. They grew a variety of vegetables for their own use and also for the poor and needy of Cuyahoga County. Simone provided the land, the tools, the seed and fertilizers, and tilled the fields for the sisters. The project came to an end in the mid 1970's when too few sisters and postulantes lived at the Bedford convent to continue with the farming operation.

During those twelve years others joined in on the Vincentian Sisters project. Art and Linn Komorowski, who owned the acreage next to Simone's, allowed the sisters to extend their farming onto their land; and nearby nurseries and other people donated seeds, plants, and fertilizers.

### POLICE CHIEFS IN MORE RECENT YEARS

Michael Ahrens served as Walton Hills Police Chief from 1978 until he retired in 1985. Ahrens and his wife, Julia, live at 18375 Alexander Road.

Police Chief Ronald Keller started his career with the Walton Hills Police Force in 1959 as a part-time patrolman. He had been a full-time police officer for twenty-three years when he accepted the position of Police Chief in June of 1985.

Keller was fourteen years old when his parents, Dale and Ruth Keller, moved to the village in 1949. For a number of years the Kellers owned the old house (built c. 1886) at 7715 Walton Road. The house sits on property that was owned by Benjamin Walton in the 1860's, and the Richard Orchards in the 1870's. Indeed, Keller remembers seeing the faint marking on the mailbox when they moved into the house. The lettering read, "The Orchard Estate."



**WALTON HILLS WOMEN'S CLUB BAZAAR WORKERS.**  
*In 1951 Ladies' Sewing Club members met to prepare for a Village Hall Bazaar. With proceeds from fund raisers, the Women's Club purchased furniture items for the Village Hall. Seated, left to right: Effie Showkeir, Elizabeth Babkowski, Rose Voldrich, Lydia Panovich, and Betty Pearce. Standing, left to right: Geraldine Furst, Jean Hack, Leola Hunt, Mary Shull, and Grace Kerekes.*

## THE WALTON HILLS WOMEN'S CLUB

Only three months after Walton Hills was incorporated as a village and two months after the newly elected officials held their first Council meeting, the area women founded their service organization — The Walton Hills Women's Club. It all started when three women, Betty Pearce, Irene Rizer, and Mary Shull sent postcards to all women in the village inviting them to an organizational meeting at Lillian Kral's Golden Glens pavilion on August 29, 1951.

At that first meeting the ladies chose a name for the club, planned regular monthly meeting dates, set dues at twenty-five cents per meeting, and elected Irene Rizer their president. They selected a motto for the club, "Enjoy what we have and work for what we lack," and also planned their first social event, a community picnic at Golden Glens in mid September.

Members gave willingly of their time and talents for the benefit of the new community. Early in 1952 the women donated a filing cabinet and the use of their folding chairs to the Walton Hills Council, and a rifle and first aid kit to the police department. They painted the interior of the Village Hall, bought lamps, drapes, and venetian blinds for the Council chambers. They equipped the small basement kitchen with a stove, dishes, and silverware. To raise money for materials, appliances, and furniture, the women volunteered their services at numerous club-sponsored money-making events, such as bake and craft sales, dances and card parties.

The first group of women set an example for future members of the Walton Hills Women's Club. And ever since 1951, the club has been organized to serve the village in a variety of ways. The members' contributions are vital ingredients to the growth and success this community has enjoyed.

## THE MEN'S CLUB OF THE VILLAGE OF WALTON HILLS

The Men's Club was founded in September, 1956, with the acceptance of the Articles of Organization. The club was formed primarily to take over sponsorship of the Little League teams, but at the same time offer an organization to the men of the village for social activities and civic causes. The Club's first president was Jack Laing, who lived at 7314 Walton Road and was Councilman for six years beginning in January of 1958.

The Men's Club long-term involvement with providing baseball experience for the youth of the village began in 1955 when Jack Laing and others wished to organize a Walton Hills Little League team. In order to gain membership in the Cuyahoga Valley League it was mandatory that a team have a civic sponsor. The only village organization at the time was the Women's Club, and the club kindly agreed to lend its name to the boys' team. Financial backing for the league fees, uniforms, and equipment was accomplished through proceeds of a raffle. This method of raising money for organized baseball has continued over the years.

The field on the Astorhurst grounds became the first home for the Little League baseball team. This became a reality after Team Manager Laing; Coaches Walter Ford, Chet Ramos, Joe Samson, and Bob Washko; and Wally Fifer, Ken Kibler, Ed Kohn, Les Rondina, and others furnished equipment and labor to construct the ball diamond.

A little later in 1955, through the courtesy of the Walton Hills Estates Club, the same group of men built a ball diamond on lake property which then became the team's new home field. In 1956 the Little League squad plus a Junior League team shared this playing area; the Walton Hills Estates Club providing some financial support by selling refreshments during the games. When Dellwood Park (now Thomas G. Young Recreation Center) opened in 1963, the Walton Hills baseball teams began using the municipal facilities as their home fields.

Since 1957 the Men's Club has sponsored boys' baseball teams in the village, and in recent years, girls' teams as well.

According to Jack Laing, "the one person who has given much time and effort over the years in support of the Men's Club is the long-time officer, Gus Vosgerichian. His enthusiasm makes him more than worthy of special mention."

## THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGE

Since 1958 the *Walton Hills Owl* has been the voice of the village. Throughout the years more than 400 residents have participated in the publication by writing articles and/or working on the staff.

The Walton Hills Owl Association is a non-profit organization which publishes and circulates a monthly (formerly bi-monthly) newsletter to all residents of the village free of charge. All articles of general interest to villagers which are submitted by residents, village officials and personnel, and organization representatives are accepted for inclusion. Staff members type, print, assemble, and deliver the paper house to house. Vowing to keep the *Owl* non-political, Editor Walter Fifer states, "I reserve the right to edit articles if the contents are controversial. Our purpose in the publication is to generate good will among the residents."

At the present time 780 copies of the *Owl* are distributed monthly to residents or mailed to former villagers who prepay the cost of postage.

Originating as a newsletter circulated to members of the Walton Hills Estates Club, the *Owl* was the inspiration of DeWitt and Margarete Noeth, president and treasurer, respectively, of the Estates Club at the time. Early in 1957 the trustees formulated plans for the publication which would be composed by volunteers, with sufficient advertisements to defray printing costs. DeWitt Noeth agreed to serve as Editor and his wife, Margarete, as Co-Editor. By March of that year the first issue was distributed to club members and other interested villagers.

Walton Hills Estates Club members soon realized their newsletter should include the news and coming events of all village functions and should be available to all residents — not exclusively the Estates people. In February of 1958, DeWitt Noeth requested that the *Walton Hills Owl* be separated from the Estates Club to become a Village-wide publication. The trustees voted to turn over the newspaper's assets to the Walton Hills Owl Association for the sum of \$1. Since March, 1958 the *Walton Hills Owl* has been printing the news and activities of all village and club functions.

For over eight years the paper was typed, printed, and assembled in the basement of the Noeth house at 17456 South Meadowpark Drive. When the Noeths were planning to move from the village in July of 1965, Walter Fifer, who had been Advertising Manager, agreed to take over as Editor of the *Walton Hills Owl* if Thomas Sabo, of Circulation, would be his Co-Editor in charge of the printing operation. Tom accepted the challenge,

and since 1965 the two men have shared the monumental task of publishing the newsletter.

From the time Wally Fifer took over as Editor the typing and layout of each issue has taken place in the Fifer basement at 18750 Jefferson Drive. His wife, Lillian, who is the current Business Manager, began working on the *Owl* in 1957. As Society Editor for many years, Lillian personally welcomed all new home owners to the village and interviewed them for her feature articles. Back in 1957 when the paper was being planned, it was Wally Fifer who designed the banner with its logo, "An informed community is a progressive community."

Tom Sabo's wife, Chris, began typing for the *Owl* in 1962. Although Chris is no longer an active staff member she is still very much involved with the publication. When Tom assumed the printing responsibilities in 1965, the old, well-used offset printing machine was moved from the Noeth's into the Sabo's basement. Since then each issue of the paper has been printed at their house, although newer equipment has replaced the old printer. Tom and Chris Sabo reside at 7130 Rotary Drive.

Another couple who have made the *Owl* one of their public service projects is the Cottrills. For the past ten years Bill has been assisting Tom with the printing. Bill and Betty handle the house to house delivery chores, and for more than eleven years Betty has been a staff typist. The Cottrills live at 7025 Walton Road.

The *Walton Hills Owl* continues to exist because villagers are willing to voluntarily write and submit articles, and reliable staff members offer their time to publish the paper. No record is available of the length of service of those who write articles, but several individuals and families have been doing so for decades. For example three generations of Kibler-Annetts, Featherstuns, and Wingenfeld-Kainsingers have been reporters.

A record is kept of the length of service of its officers and staff members. As of December, 1985 the following villagers have been on the staff for more than twenty years: Walter and Lillian Fifer, 28 years; Tom Sabo, 23 years; and Jack Wise, 21 years. Those who worked for more than ten years are: Helen Bedo, Bill and Betty Cottrill, Isabel DeMarco, Arlene Duffy, Bobbi Orth Johnson, Grace Kerekes, Jean Kainsinger, John Kocsis, Laverne Maras, Joe Mazzone, Ruth Money, DeWitt and Margarete Noeth, Marguerite Podojil, Shirley Radu, Chris Sabo, Betty Walton, Rosemary Washtock, and Margaret Wise.

## THE POLLUTION AND CLEAN UP OF LOCAL CREEKS

For many years polluted water filled creeks flowing through villagers' properties. Much of the pollution entered streams from Bedford and Walton Hills businesses situated along Northfield Road. The pollution wasn't confined to our village. From the branches of Deerlick Creek it was carried into Tinker's Creek, and eventually emptied into the Cuyahoga River. The polluted creeks had foam floating on the surface, slime covered rocks, and water that supported little, if any, desirable plant or animal life.

Brass Pond, located at the end of Krick Road Industrial Park, no longer poses a menace to Walton Hills, thanks to the persistence of Former Mayor Thomas Young. For many years, starting in the early 1900's, Brass Pond was a basin of foul odors and toxic wastes. The polluted water from Brass Pond flowed over the dam and into the East Branch of Deerlick Creek.

At the turn of the century Best Foundry (part of today's Krick Road Industrial Park encompasses the foundry site) dug a five-acre pond along East Branch of Deerlick Creek to have a water supply for its plant. A concrete dam was built at the pond's west end to contain the water. The property on which the pond was located is now owned by the S. K. Wellman Corporation.

Perhaps the pollution began with the foundry's manufacturing process, or possibly from liquid wastes created by other nearby plants. The McMyler-Interstate Company, with its industrial complex of fifty buildings stretching along Northfield Road from Interstate Street to the Con-rail tracks, manufactured giant cranes and other heavy equipment. Later, during World War I, they produced munitions and other war supplies. That company could also have contributed significantly to the pollution of the water.

Most likely the problem was created and allowed to accelerate by the several businesses, industries, and residential properties that drained their liquid wastes into the pond over seven decades. Neighboring septic tanks drained into Brass Pond through ditches and natural water sources. The combination of chemicals dumped into the water from many varied sources formed new compounds, some of which were toxic wastes containing high levels of ammonia, nitrogen, iron, phenolic compounds, and aluminum.

Mayor Young conducted many hearings and worked closely with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to solve the pollution problems caused by Brass Pond. After years of effort, in 1978 Mayor Young got permission from the Ohio EPA to drain the pond. Young and Al Spoto (the Road Commissioner and Building Inspector) not only planned the clean-up operation, but they themselves toiled with other workers to drain and clean out the pond. They siphoned most of the water over the dam, draining the pond slowly to prevent flooding of the stream. When the dam could be knocked down a crew from S. K. Wellman provided the machinery and manpower to do the job.

Once the pond was drained and cleaned the Ohio EPA was able to trace and monitor the source of any pollutants entering the stream. As a result the Ohio EPA soon began to ride herd on a few Bedford and Walton Hills companies who were still dumping untreated water into branches of Deerlick Creek.

In 1954, while Ford's Walton Hills Stamping Plant was under construction, Cuyahoga County built the Walton Hills Sewage Treatment Plant to handle the wastes from industries on both sides of Northfield Road. However, as the industrial area grew during the next thirty years, the treatment plant capacity was not sufficient to handle the waste volume and the plant was subsequently abandoned. Krick Road and other local companies are now tied into the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District through the Cuyahoga Valley Interceptor Sewer System.

The Ohio EPA, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the MetroParks are constantly working to prevent liquid wastes from entering the local Tinker's Creek tributaries. It is hoped that when all the local sewers are tied into the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District the pollution level will no longer pose a hazard.

Already there are visible signs that our creeks are cleaner than they have been for years. The rocks have lost their slimy, whitewashed appearance and are more natural looking; and the water can sustain schools of small fish and other animal life once again.

The Village of Walton Hills offers a rich history to its present residents. The well-planned community, complete with an abundance of activities and services, make living here a rewarding experience.

### A FORMULA FOR FRUITFUL FAMILY LIVING

Begin with a dream —  
A dream to live closer to nature.  
Blend with equal quantities of sacrificing and saving.  
This may have to simmer for a few years.  
When the proper consistency is attained  
Add an acre of gently-rolling land,  
(A sprinkling of trees is desirable.)  
Next, add some wood, stone, and sweat  
And mold into an attractive residence.

Add a well-rounded program of activities and organizations  
To satisfy the appetites  
Of adults, teens, and especially youngsters.

Follow these steps for a foundation  
That will support a rich, well-balanced family life  
In the Village of Walton Hills.

Robert Kainsinger  
July, 1965

This poem, printed in *The Cleveland Press*, was a first prize winner in the 1965 WJW Radio Summer Salute Contest. That summer Greater Clevelanders were invited to submit original poems praising their community to the co-sponsors, *The Cleveland Press* and WJW Radio.

Robert and Jean Kainsinger lived at 7060 Kral Drive from 1961 until 1968. They returned to the village from Kent, Ohio in 1971, residing at 18955 Orchard Hill Drive.

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