



Olmsted 200

Two Centuries and More History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township –
First Farmed in 1814 and Settled in 1815

Issue 140

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Old House Gets a Fresh-baked Future

One of the oldest buildings in Olmsted Falls is being prepared for a new role in the new year as both a business and a charity. It comes with a history that stretches almost two centuries.

It's the house at 8134 Columbia Road at the corner of Mill Street. In recent years, it has served as a bistro under two different owners. Plans are for it to serve food again soon, as well as to serve a charity.

But as the building gets ready for its future, this is a good time to consider its long past. It is known as the Waring Homestead because it was built as what then was a stylish home for early Olmsted settler William Waring about in 1830. That was just 15 years after the first settlers of European heritage moved into Olmsted Township and more than a quarter-century before Olmsted Falls incorporated as a village.

Walter Holzworth's 1966 book on Olmsted history provides little information about Waring or the house. But he did write that the house was considered "a pretentious dwelling" in its early days. He also relayed a story from the early 1800s that, on one occasion, a horse ran into the house through a side door and then ran out the back door.



This sign along Mill Street has marked the Waring Homestead for many years.

By 1874, the house had come under the ownership of Sylvester Alcott, who operated a sawmill along the waterfalls on Plum Creek with his brother, Levi. After Sylvester Alcott died in 1882, his widow retained ownership of the house until 1909, when she sold it to James Burns, who operated a store next door on the first floor of the Odd Fellows Hall (now home to Gibbs Butcher and Brews).

In 1936, Edward and Kathryn Graf, who had been living in Lakewood, bought the house and moved into it. More about their ownership of the house and how they helped their daughter, Dorothy, and her husband, Dale Hecker, convert the former stone barn at the corner of Mill Street and Orchard Street into a home can be found in Issue 99 of *Olmsted 200* from August 2021.

Later in the 20th century, the Waring Homestead became an antique store. It might have been a good candidate for inclusion in Grand Pacific Junction because it was right between two of the other old buildings that Clint Williams restored beginning in 1989 – the Grand Pacific Hotel and the former Odd Fellows Hall, which served as the Olmsted Grange Hall during most of the 20th century – but Williams never acquired it.



These photos show the Waring Homestead when Le Bistro du Beaujolais occupied it. The photo on the left shows how some of the original interior structural beams were displayed through a clear panel in one corner of the dining room. The photo on the right was taken during a snowstorm on March 30, 2014.

In the 21st century, the building, which has 3,800 square feet, became a restaurant. In 2005, Georges and Claudie d'Arras, natives of France, opened it as a French restaurant, Le Bistro du Beaujolais. A fire on January 10, 2009, caused about \$350,000 damage, but the building was saved. The restaurant reopened with a renovated interior in October 2009. However, about a decade later, the d'Arrases closed the restaurant in 2020 to return to France.

The building remained idle for more than a year until October 2021, when Marcel Fadul, who had owned other restaurants in the Cleveland area, reopened it as Bistro on the Falls. He operated it as an upscale restaurant until May 2024. *Scene*, Cleveland's alternative news and culture publication, reported that Fadul said he hated to close the restaurant, but health issues forced him to do so.

After Fadul sold the building, it wasn't clear what its fate would be until this past summer, when renovations began. The Waring Homestead has come under the ownership of Awakening Angels, a charity founded in 2012 to improve the quality of life for individuals affected by developmental disabilities, Down syndrome and autism.



These photos from October 18, 2024, show some of the construction preparing the Waring Homestead to become the Twin Bean coffee shop.

"My daughter, Julia, is very involved," developer Tony George said as he oversaw work on the building one autumn afternoon. "She's going to open up a coffee shop called Twin Bean. She's a triplet – two boys and a girl. We lost our son, Mike, who had Down syndrome, to leukemia five-and-a-half years ago."

George has developed other restaurants and bars in the Cleveland area, including the Harry Buffalo at 4824 Great Northern Boulevard in North Olmsted. He and his family have been the subject of much controversy. Details about that can be found online. But he described this new venture in Olmsted Falls as a labor of love, both for the cause it will serve and the way it will do that under the direction of his daughter, Julia George.



Part of the construction work included the erection of a new wall between the parking areas for the two neighboring buildings.

downspouts in. You can see what they're doing here. They're putting a wall here to stop

"It's going to be coffee, bagels, bakery, grab-and-go – just a beautiful place," George said. "People can come in and gather. She's going to employ some of the kids that had developmental disabilities – not just kids [but also] adults."

As he supervised the renovation, George said the building needed much work.

"As you can see, we put drain tile around the building," he said. "We poured concrete around. We repaired any damage that was done to the exterior, all the fascia board. We put all new gutters and

the dirt coming into the parking lot. Then, when they're all done, they're going to pour a dumpster pad there, and then, they're going to bring in the gravel and level it all out. And in the front, we pulled up a patio that was all up and down. We're replacing it with another patio."

George said he hoped the business might be ready to open as early as February, but it needed much work on the inside, too. He said renovating old buildings was nothing new for him and his company.

"We just renovated the First Methodist Church on 30th and Euclid, and we just won a historic restoration award June 22 for that," George said. "I renovated an old building on Playhouse Square in Cleveland in 2017. We also won an award for that. So, we're familiar with these older buildings and what to do with them. You got very delicate work."



This was Tony George as he supervised work to convert the Waring Homestead into a coffee shop.



At the time this photo was taken in October, the life of this buckeye tree was nearing an end.

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Why did George, who grew up in Lakewood, and his daughter take an interest in this particular property in Olmsted Falls?

"Well, I always loved this area," he said. George said he was familiar with Fadul's Bistro on the Falls and even tried to help him keep it going. Now, he is helping his daughter take the Waring Homestead in a new direction.

"It's going to be more than just a coffee house," George said. "She's going to have healthy stuff. She's a very health-conscious person. Everything will be genetically modified free. Everything will be organic and all pesticide free. She's going to have salads, sandwiches, grab-and-go. Also, you can sit here and eat them, too. She's going to have healthy smoothies, that kind of stuff – soups."

Plans for the building also include having outdoor fireplaces, he said.

“We’re going to put three fireplaces out front, so people can come, sit, gather around, and we’re considering some other stuff,” George said. “If there’s enough room, we’re trying to figure out a place to put a pickleball court.”

Pointing to a large buckeye tree near the building that houses the Cutting Garden at 25561 Mill Street, he said, “That tree’s coming down because it’s dying.” He said a couple branches fell from the tree and could have killed someone, so the tree couldn’t stay, but removing it could provide enough room for the pickleball court. At least, that was his hope.

“Because a charity owns the real estate, the contractors have been very generous with their time,” George said. “There are different contractors that are doing different things, but because they know this building benefits kids and adults with Down syndrome and autism, they’ve been very generous.”



Jim Dixon, left, owner of Gibbs Butcher and Brews, seen from the rear on the left and from the front on the right, welcomed the new coffee shop next door.

The new business also intends to have good relations with its neighbors. George said he told Jim Dixon, owner of Gibbs Butcher and Brews, that Gibbs customers could use the Twin Bean’s lot for extra parking in the evening.

“I think it’s awesome,” Dixon said about George’s plans. “It’s going to be brand new, and we got more parking for him. We’re going to make a nice little wall here. He’s been very cooperative and very good helping us.”

Dixon said the two restaurants should complement each other with different operating hours – and more.

“Sure,” he said. “He’s going to be open mostly during the day. It’s going to be like 7 AM to whatever, so he’s really the opposite of me. I’m open at night. He’s healthy. I’m bacon. I’m more bacon, bacon and bacon, and he’s smoothies and coffee and health foods.”

If all goes well, it could be a healthy future for the Waring Homestead as it approaches the bicentennial of its existence.



Even as the new wall went up between Gibbs Butcher and Brews and the Waring Homestead, the old Bistro on the Falls sign still stood out front as a reminder of its recent past.

Reader’s Research Reveals Roadhouse’s Whereabouts

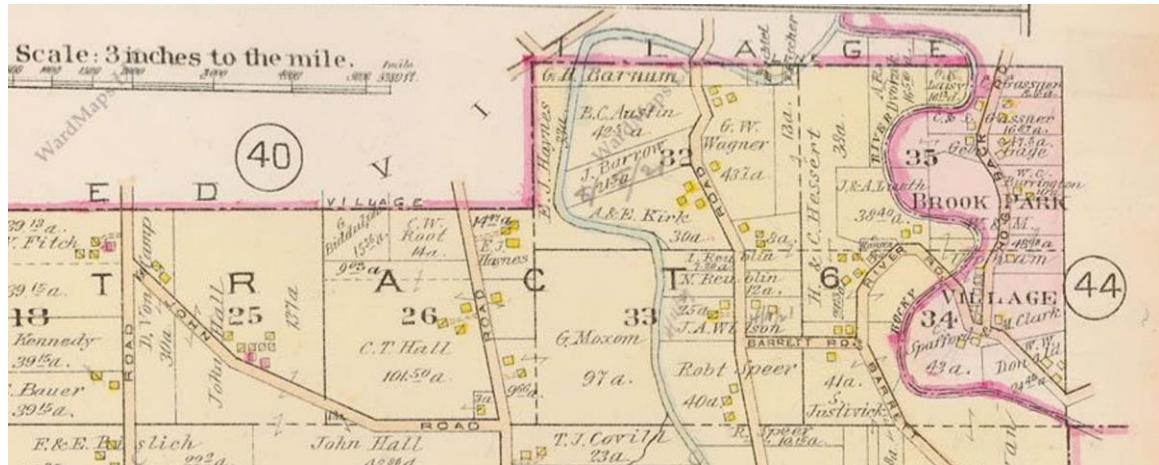
A story last month in Issue 139 of *Olmsted 200* about a Prohibition-era bust of an Olmsted roadhouse 100 years ago in December 1924 left a mystery about where that enterprise was located. But reader Denny Shirer took on the challenge of solving that mystery by digging into old property records and atlases.

The story cited a December 11, 1924, *Plain Dealer* article about the bust that referred to “Coleman Sentenyi, who operates a roadhouse at Olmsted Falls.” But Shirer wrote in an email that the newspaper didn’t get the name quite right and the property was in Olmsted Township rather than in Olmsted Falls:

His first name was Kalman not Coleman but it was probably pronounced the same and the report of that era probably spelled it phonetically. He owned a piece of property in the township along with his wife Julia. They also owned land in Cleveland but the lot in the township was actually two lots #34 and #35 in Tract 6 of the township and located on Barrett Road. They sold the property to Mare Hoch in 1926. This may have been after they were raided and forced to shut down their operations there.

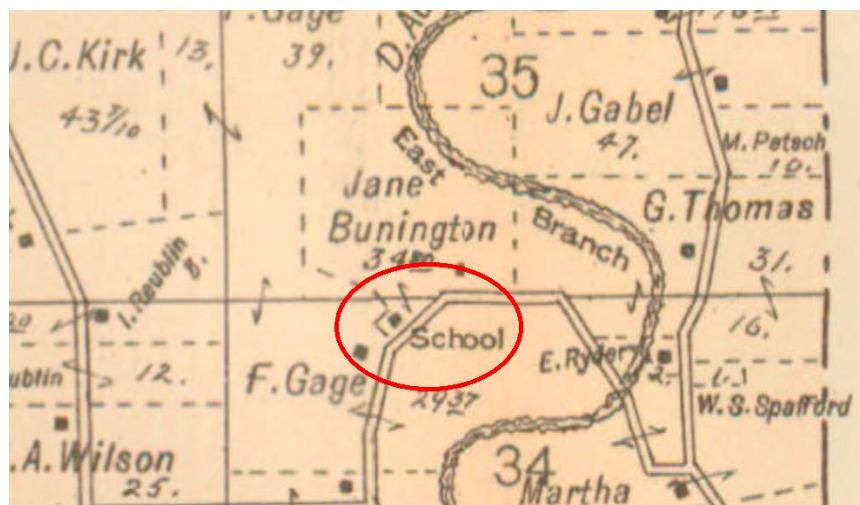
In the 1800s, Lots 34 and 35 were located entirely with the original boundaries of Olmsted Township along the East Branch of Rocky River just south of where it met the

West Branch, but by the early 1900s, the land east of the river belonged to the Village of Brook Park. Shirer figured out from the description in the Sentenyi deed that the roadhouse property probably was on part of a road now known as Spafford Road that leads down into the Rocky River Reservation of Cleveland Metroparks, although a 1920 atlas referred to it as "River Road."



This section of the 1920 atlas shows "River Road" curving right on the boundary between the sections labeled 34 and 35. That might have been the location of the roadhouse that was busted in 1924.

Shirer wrote: "The deed said it was just south of the southern border of section 35, and the short section of Barrett Rd. that connects to Lewis Rd. and then turns south is in the middle of Section 34, so it does sound like it is what the map shows as River Rd."



Circled on this section of the 1903 atlas is the school that might have become the roadhouse two decades later when Kalman Sentenyi and his wife, Julia, owned the property in northeastern Olmsted Township.

A school stood in that area late in the 19th century, and Shirer suspects the old schoolhouse building might have been used for the roadhouse.

"Following the deeds back a few owners, Kalman Sentenyi purchased the lot from Paul Fodor," Shirer wrote. "He purchased it from Charles Hansen, and Hansen purchased it from the Olmsted Board of Education."

Although the section of the 1920 atlas Shirer sent does not show the location of the old schoolhouse, one from 1903 does. After he took a closer look at the 1920 map, Shirer found more confirmation for his suspicion that schoolhouse might have become the roadhouse:

Right where the schoolhouse was located is the word "Hansen" proving the deeds were right and that is where the Schoolhouse was located. The historic aerial images of that area show a structure existed there until at least 1952. Within the next ten years it was raised and in another ten it was grown over. Today a bridal path goes through it, but from the road you can't see a thing. It was right where the road starts to descend towards the park. I imagine in the day when the roadhouse was active, that road was one of a few ways to get across the river, so[it] may have been a good place to attract travelers or imbibers.

That speculation seems reasonable. Where people now head into the park might have been the location of an illegal saloon for a while during Prohibition.

Town Hall Had Many Troubles in Its Early Years

Although some people in the 21st century occasionally warm up using fireplaces, obtaining winter warmth these days usually takes little more than the adjustment of a thermostat. But that wasn't the case in the 19th century, and the effort to get warm turned into quite a troublesome matter for Olmsted Township officials 140 years ago this month, as reported in the Olmsted Falls column of the *Berea Advertiser* on January 9, 1885:

Regular meeting of the Trustees of the township yesterday. The clerk started a fire in the Town Hall but as the chimney had not been turned right end up yet, it positively refused to do duty and all hands were driven out of doors after which the clerk and one of the trustees proceeded to the top of the building and knocked off a part of the top of the chimney and made some other changes, then by a liberal use of coal oil and patience a fire was started and quiet reigned.

The Town Hall at that time was the one the trustees had built just two years earlier in downtown Olmsted Falls to serve as the home of both township government and the government of the Village of Olmsted Falls. It was not



This photo of the former Town Hall, taken shortly before it was torn down, appeared in the Olmsted Falls Homecoming 1939 Souvenir Program.

built well and was the center of many problems. The trouble started well before it was built, and it had long-lasting results.



This 1910 photo shows the Town Hall shortly after a storm caused some damage. To the left is the old Congregational Church. Photo courtesy of Bruce Banks.

problems.

In September 1882, the trustees awarded a construction contract for \$5,510 to William Trayte of Cleveland for a one-story building that would be 76 feet long and 40 feet wide with a main hall with a gallery big enough to seat 100 people. Within four months, the new Town Hall was built.

The elaborate dedication ceremony on Friday, January 19, 1883, included music, speeches, food and dancing, but few people from the Butternut Ridge area attended, as the *Advertiser* reported:

Anticipating a general turnout, and a grand celebration our reporter was on the ground early, expecting to find the town all astir, with banners waving in the breeze and her streets crowded with citizens of Olmsted and adjoining townships. It was ascertained however that owing to certain alleged misunderstandings, between the residents of the north and south parts of the township, that a number of citizens would not participate in the dedication.

We do not propose at this time to enter into a discussion of the merits of these differences. We only wish to say that it is very unfortunate that the township and village could not have united in the dedication of such a

*BEAUTIFUL HALL,
inasmuch as the citizens of adjoining townships had been invited to witness the exercises. The Hall is completed; its costs will be shared by*

In 1882, when the trustees began considering plans to build the Town Hall, residents along Butternut Ridge in the northern end of the township objected. They contended it would be larger than the township needed and would incur too much debt. Despite the opposition, the trustees proceeded to buy a lot for the building in July 1882, have it designed and solicit bids for construction. When construction bids came in at about \$8,000, the trustees worried about the complaints it was too expensive, so they told their architect to rework the plans to make it about \$2,000 cheaper. Perhaps those cutbacks led to later

every taxpayer in the township; it is nicely located although it may be a few rods from the center of the township; it is an ornament to the village and to the township and a credit to all its citizens. These circumstances might have been accepted as accomplished facts and all united in celebrating the completion of one of the most beautiful and substantial public buildings in the state.

A Butternut Ridge resident, D.K. Huntington, denied that northern township residents had snubbed the ceremony, but he confirmed they weren't happy with their more southerly neighbors when he claimed "the fact that this part of the township is 'opposed to everything' in which the south part of the township is interested." That feeling of alienation smoldered over the next quarter century until the northern residents of Olmsted Township, along with some residents of southern Dover Township, voted in 1908 to go their own way by forming the Village of North Olmsted at the beginning of 1909.

That was far from the only problem associated with the Town Hall. The mishap with the chimney in January 1885, two years after the building's dedication, already has been noted, but problems started popping up within days after the dedication. The first was noted in the *Advertiser* in its January 25, 1883, edition – the same one that reported on the dedication ceremony:

It is the weather vane (if that is what they call it) on the Town Hall, that imitates a flock of wild geese when the wind blows. Oil it or shoot it off.

Less than two months later, the Town Hall was the scene of trouble of a different sort. In its March 15, 1883, edition, the *Advertiser* reported it happened when a "mesmerist" – a hypnotist – was booked to perform at the Town Hall the previous Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. For some reason that went unexplained, the man brought a bear with him.

"The animal was kept in the Hall basement during the day, and, bent on mischief, crawled through the aperture made for the heating pipes, and went under the main portion of the building, beyond the reach of any person," the newspaper reported. "Then the side show opened. They coaxed, exploded torpedoes on the floor above, and covered the opening with a quarter of beef – it was useless – that bear could not be dislodged."



This photo from the early 1900s offers a rare glimpse of the Town Hall stage during a commencement ceremony for a high school graduating class of two students. Photo courtesy of Bruce Banks.

At some point, a township resident showed up with a bulldog, “which he claimed would never ‘let-up’ his grip on a pair of pants until he had suspenders, buttons and all.” Using fanciful language, the reporter, who went by the initials A.J.P., wrote that about 30 people gathered inside the Town Hall and gazed out the windows expecting to see the dog drag a dead bear out of the building. Instead, when the bear came up through the floor register, they scurried to escape. “To say there was a stampede does the situation injustice,” the reporter wrote.

The bear, which had not had food or water for about 48 hours, had devoured the dog. However, once the bear was above ground, it was captured by “lassoing him.” The animal’s owner in Cleveland was notified by telegraph and came to retrieve the bear a few days later.



This early 1940s photo shows the Olmsted Falls Village Hall, later named the Bonsey Building, that replaced the Town Hall. The Congregational Church stood next to it. Photo courtesy of Mike Gibson.

However, the bear episode was an exception because most of the problems at the Town Hall were related to its construction. In December 1883 – 11 months after the building’s dedication, the Olmsted Falls correspondent in the *Advertiser* still complained about its noisy weathervane, although he wrote that recent freezing weather had “brought down the tone of the weather vane into a rich, mellow snore.” snore.”

That item also mentioned that the lower part of the Town Hall windows had been soaped to prevent boys from peering through them to see shows for free.

But problems with windows, the weathervane and even a clogged chimney were mild compared to the one the township trustees had to address late in 1884 – the walls of the building were bending outward. The *Advertiser* included this item in its Olmsted Falls column on December 12, 1884: “The township trustees are having an iron rod put through the Town Hall about midway from the ends to prevent the walls from continuing on their outward course.” Perhaps that was an architectural flaw that resulted from the trustees’ decision to cut back on how much they were willing to pay to have the Town Hall built.

One week later, on December 19, 1884, the *Advertiser* reporter wrote, “The leak near the chimney on the south side has been stopped.” That was just a few weeks before the January 1885 incident in which township officials had to knock part of the chimney off to stop smoke from filling up the inside of the building.

Despite those early troubles, the Town Hall served the community for more than half a century. In 1939, the township government built a new Township Hall at the corner of Fitch and Cook roads. Olmsted Falls then tore down the old Town Hall and replaced it with a new Village Hall, which now houses the Moosehead restaurant. For more history about those buildings, see Issue 126 of *Olmsted 200* from November 2023.

Still to Come

The next issue of *Olmsted 200* will include more stories about the history of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township.

Anyone who would like to receive *Olmsted 200* by email can get on the distribution list by sending a request to: wallacestar@hotmail.com. *Olmsted 200* has readers Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin, and as well as overseas in the Netherlands, Germany and Japan.

Your questions and comments about *Olmsted 200* are welcome. So are photos and information to share about Olmsted's history.

All issues of *Olmsted 200* are available in two online locations. One is on Olmsted Township's website at: <https://www.olmstedtownshipohio.gov/290/Past-Newsletters-Olmsted-200>. The other is the website of the City of Olmsted Falls at: http://www.olmstedfalls.org/olmsted_falls_history/olmsted_200_issues.php.

Except where otherwise noted, all articles in *Olmsted 200* are written by Jim Wallace. Thanks go to Mary Louise King for helping in proofreading and editing many issues. Thanks also go to David Kennedy for frequently contributing research and insight for some stories. Written contributions and photos, as well as comments and questions about items in this newsletter, will be considered for publication. Send any correspondence by email to: wallacestar@hotmail.com.

Olmsted 200 is written, researched and edited by Jim Wallace, who is solely responsible for its content. He is co-author (with Bruce Banks) of *The Olmsted Story: A Brief History of Olmsted Falls and Olmsted Township*, published in 2010 by The History Press of Charleston, S.C. *The Olmsted Story* is available at the Berea Historical Society's Mahler Museum & History Center and through online booksellers.

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