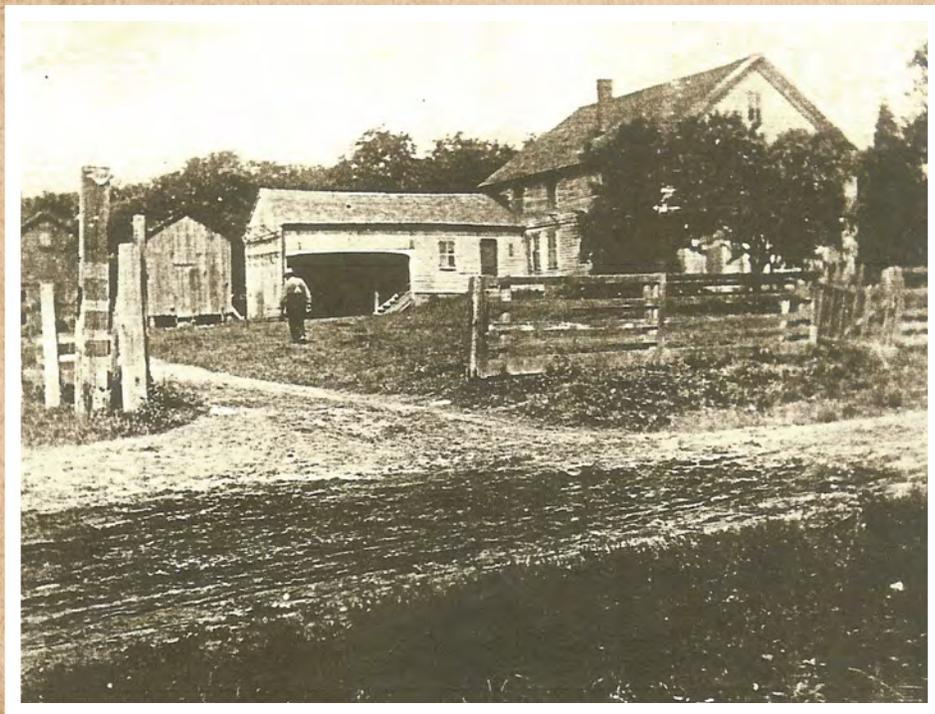


*The Early Years
Before Secession*



The Radway Farm

Canal Boat and Towpath Team



1852 H.H. Blackmore Map

The Cuyahoga River is shown in blue. The Ohio & Erie Canal parallels the river to the north.

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

The Early Years

by Laura Nicklas Hine

Since Cuyahoga Heights was originally a part of Newburgh Township before Cuyahoga Heights was created in 1918, we need to look at histories of Newburgh Township to get an idea of what life was like in the area before 1918. The information below comes from the Newburgh Township section in the *History of Cuyahoga County, Ohio* by Crisfield Johnson, 1879; and the Newburgh Township section in *The History of Cuyahoga County* by William R. Coates, 1924.

Newburgh Township was one of the first townships to be settled in Northern Ohio and was formed on October 15, 1814. In 1879, it was bounded by Cleveland, the Township of East Cleveland, the Township of Independence, the Township of Warrensville, and the Township of Brooklyn. The Cuyahoga River was the western border. Back then, Newburgh Township was strictly agricultural, with fertile soil and profitable farming. There was plenty of pasture land and many dairies. It was a very rural area—an area that prided itself on the fact that there was no place where liquor was sold! Back then, East 49th Street was called Independence Road and East 71st Street was called Plank Road, Brecksville Road or Marcelline.

Philip Brower was an early settler in this area. In 1816, he came with his wife and seven children from New York State to Independence Township. He lived there until 1820 when his wife died, and then settled in Newburgh. His son, David, purchased 275 acres there. He lived there for 54 years and died in 1876 at the age of 85. When the Brower's moved to Newburgh, he was a neighbor of Darius Warner who came from New York in 1816 with five children. When these settlers arrived, they had great difficulty traveling. One man walked all the way from the east coast—a trip that took him 13 days. When this same man used a team of horses—it took him a month! That's because traveling by vehicle in those days was so difficult. Once they got here, they had to cut their way through the trees to the land that they had purchased.

Another name you'll recognize is Edmond Rathbun. He made the journey to the area in the winter of 1817 in a sleigh. He purchased 44 acres of land near where the "five-mile lock" was. By 1818 he had 125 acres of land. Edmund Rathbun sold his Newburgh land in 1854 and went to Solon.

The Ohio Canal was built between 1825 to 1832. It played an important role in the early transportation of the area. A lock was located on old Harvard Avenue near the farm of Philip Huy, and another lock was located at Canal Road and East 71st Street. The English and Germans built the locks and bridges, but the strong, hard-working Irish dug out the canals. Many died doing it. The canal carried rock from the Independence quarries, coal from southern Ohio, and farm products to Lake Erie. The terminus of the Canal was located at Dille Road and Broadway. Construction of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad through the Cuyahoga Valley soon replaced the old Canal. The last boats that plied this waterway prior to World War I carried picnic excursions to Zimmerman's Grove at Rockside Road.

In 1850, over 60 families lived in what is now our village. There were English, German, and a few Welsh and Irish. The village was populated with many farms in 1850, as well as the Landon House (Mrs. Suchocki's home), and a blacksmith shop. By 1870, the Palmer Brothers Organ Factory, Austin Powder Company, Standard Oil Company, and the Union Rolling Mill were founded in Cuyahoga Heights.

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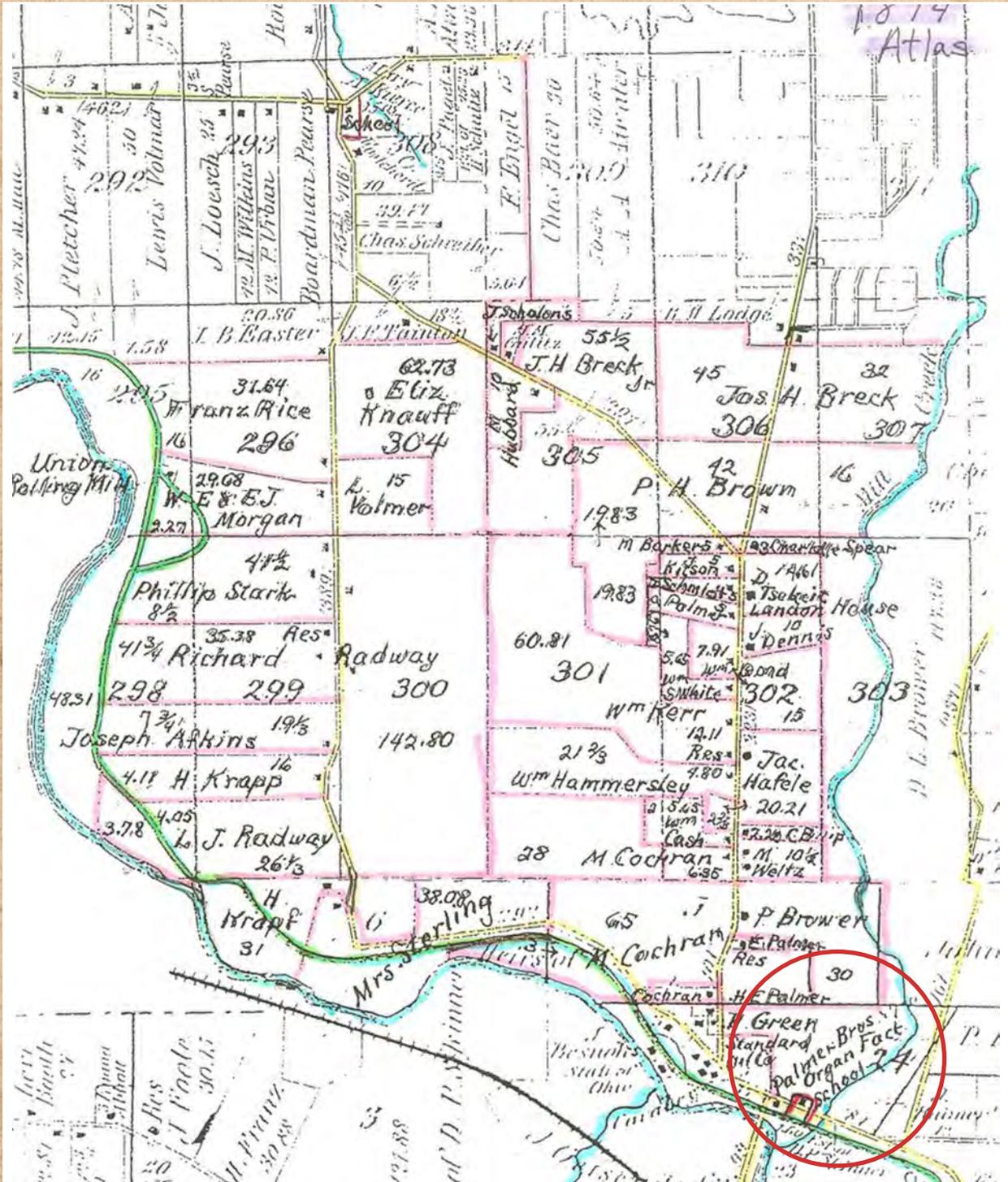
Our area shared in the growth of the oil industry in Cleveland after the Civil War. In 1867, Sloane, Anderson & Company opened the Cleveland Acid Rectifying Works in what was then Independence Township. Yes, the southern part of Cuyahoga Heights was in Independence Township back then. The Acid Works was located where Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District is today and also encompassed the lower part of Willow Freeway, Route I-77. The hill on the southern part of East 71st Street was known as Acid Hill. The company built four of the five company owned homes on the west side of East 71st Street south of what is now Toscana. The Hanousek, Panizzutti, Henry, and Kaczmarek homes were all the same style. The Trevisani house was larger and probably the old Cochran farmhouse. These five homes were later owned by the Newburg Reduction Company. They let workers that lived in them buy them, and that is how the Trevisani's got their home. The Henry house at 4992 East 71st Street is the only original company home left standing.

The Acid Works collected the spent sulfuric acid used in Cleveland's oil refineries, purified it, and returned it for reuse. The canal was used for transport three seasons of the year, with tens of thousands of carboys of acid shipped on canal boats, moving back and forth past the Austin Powder Company. In addition, the Acid Works diverted canal water through a section of their property and had a pipe connection from the canal directly to its facility. The most prominent feature of the Acid Works was the fire visible for miles, created when the by-products removed from the acid were burned in a large lake known as a pitch pond. The pond was located below the works at its west end.

Almost immediately, Cleveland residents living northeast of the plant decried the "intolerable stench," while other residents claimed that the river water had become "unfit for domestic use, being impregnated with the odor and taste of petroleum." The company owner quickly responded, disputing the assertion about the source of the pollution. He further noted, "Our works solve a great difficulty in the very important interest of oil refineries, wherein 8,000 gallons of acid sludge thrown formerly by the oil refineries, daily, into the river, is now turned into acid and oil." R.H. Emerson became the new owner of the Acid Works in 1872, and it appears that another change in ownership led to the company being renamed The Union Acid Company, also known as The Union Acid Restoring Company, in the late 1870s.

By 1879, a number of buildings stood on the site, and the plant employed about 30 men, producing 6,000 carboys of acid per month. The officers of the Union Acid Company were officers of the Grasselli and Marsh & Harwood firms. This ownership relationship continued through the renaming of the company in 1885 as The American Chemical & Manufacturing Company. The company last appeared in the Cleveland City Directory in 1888, after which it became part of the Grasselli Chemical Company. The Acid Works operated through at least 1896, and its demise occurred when the oil industry discovered how to use the by-products that had previously been sent to the facility to be separated from the acid and burned. The exact date of its closing is not known, although it appears to have been shut down before 1909.

Until 1873, Newburgh Township contained the thriving village of Newburgh. In September of 1873, the village was annexed to the City of Cleveland. The remaining citizens of Newburgh incorporated as a township on March 2, 1874.



1874 Atlas Map

The Cuyahoga River is shown in blue. The Ohio & Erie Canal parallels the river to the north.

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Here are a few names we might recognize who were officers of Newburgh Township from 1814 to 1874: James Kingsbury (1815), John Brooks (1830), Philo Ruggles (1835), Charles Evarts (1874) and Amaziah L. Radway (1874).

There were two schools in what is Cuyahoga Heights today back in 1874. The first was at the northwest corner of Canal Road and Mill Creek. It was built in 1867 and was still standing in 1874. On September 23, 1867, Fanny Miles sold the property for the school to Herod Green. Herod Green was the son of William Green who had property right across the canal from the school. William Green was on the Independence Board of Education in 1867. A newspaper article shows that he was in court, being sued by S.B. Gleason, for depositing timber on Gleason's property. This timber was to be used to build a new school. *The History of Cuyahoga County* by Coates stated that William Green was a trustee, and had five sons: Harvey, Elijah, Jeremiah, Herod, and Frederick. The Center School in Independence was built in 1870, and slowly the smaller one-room schools were abandoned.

On November 8, 1886, Emma and Herod Green sold the school property to Newburgh Fertilizer Company. There was one more interesting deed dated July 17, 1899, which referenced the school property. It was W.R. Ryan, administrator of Patrick Keenan's estate (who died May 11, 1898), who sold property to Newburgh Reduction. The description stated it was in the Hamlet of Newburgh, Independence Township Lot 24. The property began at the southwest corner of the schoolhouse lot as conveyed by Fanny B. Miles to the Board of Education (Vol. 149, page 535) and is circled in red on the map shown on page 10.

November 8, 1896 *Plain Dealer* article:

Change in Boundaries – Part of Independence Township is annexed to Newburgh. By a resolution of the board of commissioners of the county part of Independence Township was yesterday annexed to Newburgh Hamlet. The portion cut away is that which lies east of the Cuyahoga River. Last March a petition requesting this change was filed with the board by a number of residents of the transferred section. As grounds for the change they pointed to the river as a barrier and the fact that nature had thereby intended them as a part of Newburgh Hamlet. More particularly, they wanted to get within the school district of the latter place.

The second school in our area was called Forestdale School. It was located at 4910 Harvard Avenue, which was the southeast corner of Harvard and East 49th Street. This school was built in 1879. The land was sold to Newburgh Board of Education by Boardman Pearse, who was on the school board in 1879 and lived on the southwest corner of Harvard and East 49th Street. In 1879 Newburgh had five districts with two being added during 1879. Many attended Catholic Schools in the 18th Ward of Cleveland as well. The five districts were: Northeast, Miles Avenue, Bedford Road, near the California Powder Works (Forestdale School), and Union Street.

A newspaper article states that the "Harvard School in 1904 was in Ward 1, District School #4, at the corner of Harvard and Independence Street. Independence Street was the name of East 49th Street earlier on. Another article calls it by name—Forestdale School. A lot of kids went to Harvard Elementary, just west of East 71st Street on the south side of Harvard. Some went to A.B. Hart for Junior High near East 71st Street and Fleet, and some went to parochial schools.

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March 11, 1904 *Plain Dealer* article:

Newburgh Heights Government Formally Inaugurated — School Board Nominated

The first council meeting of the new village of Newburgh Heights was held last evening in the Forestdale School House at Harvard and Independence Streets. The bonds of the mayor and clerk were approved. The appointment of the street commissioner and two assistants was deferred until the next meeting. The newly elected marshal, George Hecker, resigned and his place was not filled. An informal caucus was held for the nomination of a school board, which resulted in the choice of the old township board consisting of M.J. Walsh, Charles H. Ruff, G. Meyer, Perry Pearse, Henry Bricker and W.M. Scott. The regular election will be held March 19, 1904. Council meetings will be the first and third Tuesdays of the month. At the next meeting steps will be taken toward public improvements in the shape of sidewalks and the village will spend one-half its revenue for road improvements. The hamlet is still a part of Bedford Township, but will withdraw in about two weeks.

September 7, 1908 *Plain Dealer* article:

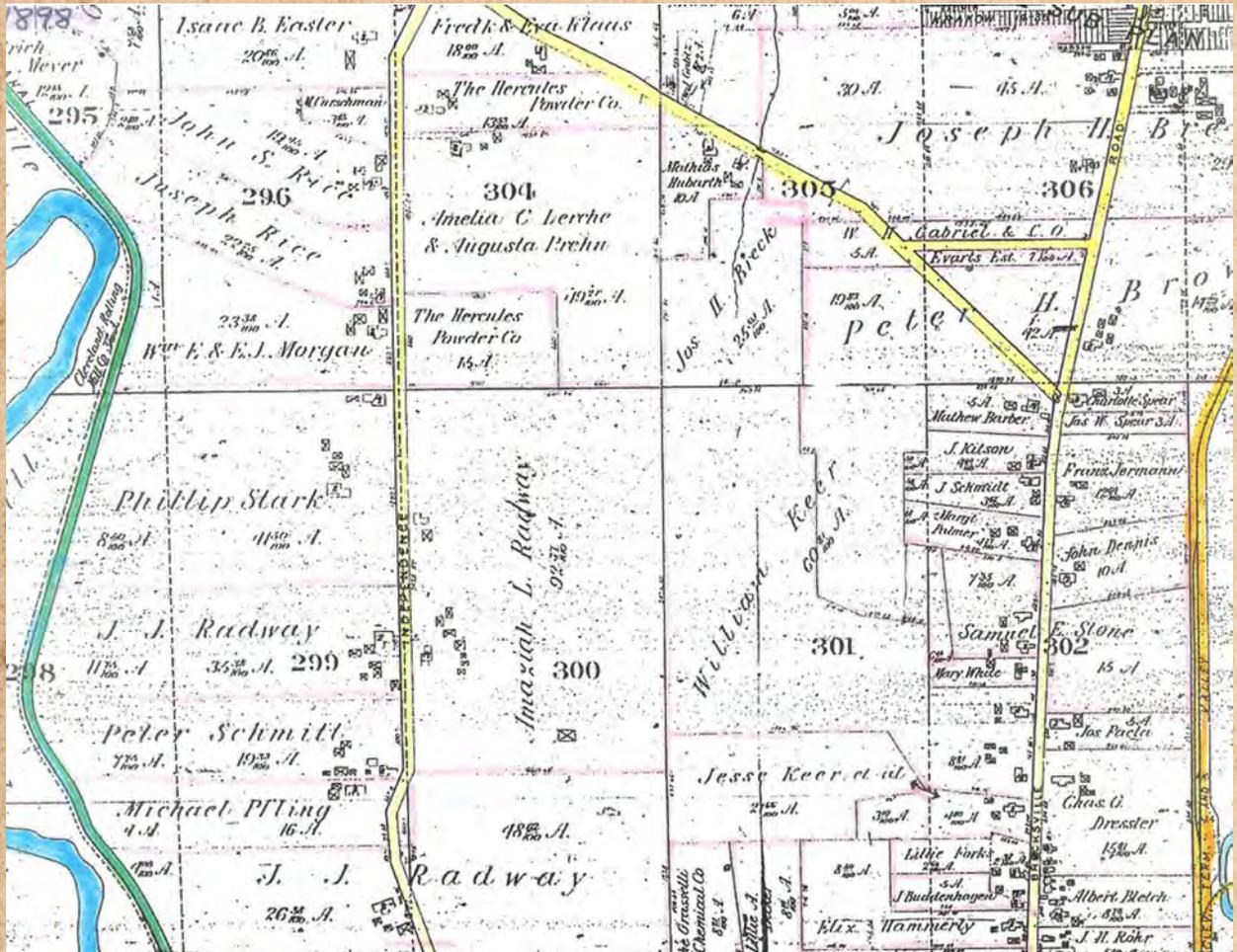
Old Settlers Come Back

Forestdale School, one of the oldest in the city, dating back more than a half century to the times when Newburgh hoped to be the metropolis of northern Ohio, held a reunion of its old graduates Saturday at Forest City Park. Nearly 500 former pupils, many of them coming long distances, attended. Two people came all the way from Georgia. One of the features of the occasion was the presence of Boardman Pearce, 94, and his wife Isabella Rathbun, Newburgh's oldest resident, who is eighty-seven.

July 14, 1944 *Plain Dealer* article:

Mrs. Matilda Feller Bernard

Around the time that President Lincoln was issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, Mrs. Matilda Feller Bernard, daughter of one of Newburgh's earliest families, was born in a log cabin off Harvard Avenue. Yesterday, Mrs. Bernard died at St. Luke's Hospital at 81. She attended old Forestdale School in Newburgh when it was a one-room wooden building and could recall spending play hours on the old canal in the section of town now known as the Flats, where her father owned the canal bridge. When she was first married she and her husband, the late Edward P. Bernard, had to cross the Cuyahoga River on a foot bridge to attend Our Lady of Good Council Catholic Church where Mrs. Bernard was an active member for years. Mrs. Bernard, who lived at 4278 Valley Road, since the death of her husband five years ago, is survived by six sons, Wallace and George of Cleveland, Walter of Parma, Frank of Galion, Ohio, Albert of Valley City, Ohio, and Carl of Ashtabula, 22 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



1898 Map

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

1831	Cochran, Rathburn
1836	Brower
1838	Breck, Brooks
1841	Radway
1842	Palmer
1843	Knauf, Lerche, Prehn
1844	Kerr
1848	Cash, Hammersley
1860	Brown, Easter, Hecker, Knauff, Reis, Schmit, Stark, White

1870	Dennis, Evarts, Hubrath, Kingsbury, Kitson, Morgan, Palmer, Pearse
1874	Krapf, Speers
1880	Buddenhagen, Gallitz, Huy, James, Klaas, Rohr
1898	Bletch, Dressler, Farrar, Focke, Jermann
1900	Baracz, Baur, Crooks, Hecker, O'Malley, Pytel, Schuman, Shatto, Weidner, Weitz
1910	Chapek, Gerdon, Henry, Kaminski, Kennedy
1920	Adorni, Aguzzi, Amari, Angiocchi, Antognozzi, Bacci, Balog, Chase, Chudzinski, Clapp, Davis, Fontana, Freda, Gaida, Guidotti, Hanousek, Heinz, Iacopucci, James, Januszewski, Kaliszewski, Kornowski/Koran, Meyer, Nobili, Pellini, Przborski, Reiger, Schott, Stawicki, Talani, Vamos, Wlotzko, Wojciechowski, Zgrabik
1930	Arndt, Austin, Bartczak, Bass, Billi, Bloam, Bohdan, Caddy, Casavecchia, Cioli, Collecchi, Columbi, Comadoll, Contipelli, Danti, Duszynski, Evans, Fonte, Golembiewski, Grzelecki, Harris, Hess, Humphrey, Jaskowski, Kalfas, Kaczmarek, Knaack, Kollmorgen, Koren, Kreger, Kruzel, Major, Marek, McCandless, McMullen, Miller, Monsinski, Pallini, Ratajczak, Reali, Santini, Schuschu, Slipota, Sweeney, Trevisani, Vaccher, Venchi, Wallace, Wiest
1930 - 1940	Anielski, Attewell, Bass, Biro, Blue, Byrne, Crombine, Derbin, DeSantis, Ezzo, Jackson, Kalish, Klima, Malek, Pasqualetti, Perozini, Podolski, Saunders, Smosarski, Suhy, Traffis, Tucholski, Vincenti
1940 - 1950	Balon, Boing, Bowers, Calcei, Chott, Coe, Cuffaro, Domzalski, Doskey, Fess, Greene, Guilfoyle, Gutfranski, Hazel, Heinz, Hine, Klima, Lipiec, Mantell, Masek, Nichols, Podolski, Preisendorf, Randle, Scott, Snoddy, Unger, Wallace, Wencke, Wessell, Westhoven, Wiskoff, Woodrick
1950 - 1960	Borowy, Feuerstein, Gomolka, Piasecki, Zmija
1960 - 1970	Cerha, Duber, Eliason, Faragone, Fess, Mack, Marsala, Panizzutti, Pritchard, Schab, Shimerka, Skiba, Sonoda, Stankiewicz/Stack, Trusso
1970 - 1980	Schoeffler, Siggia

Village Resident Surnames

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In 1879, The Austin Powder Company was located in Newburgh Township. It was an outgrowth of the firm of Austin & Sons which was founded in Ohio in 1833 and was incorporated in 1868. It was located by the five-mile lock of the canal, where the company owned 130 acres of land. There were mills, tenement houses, and 30 men were employed there. This company produced 400 kegs of powder daily. There was also The California Powder Company, established in Newburgh Township in 1877. They manufactured dynamite or Hercules powder for blasting and had 40 employees. What is the village today could have been a very dangerous place back then. These mills were located very near the Ohio Canal. The Newburgh Fertilizer Company was also in existence and operated by some names that appear on Cuyahoga Heights maps, namely J.R. Peck, J.H. Breck Jr., and E.S. Peck. Their establishment was near the river as well, and manufactured bone dust, super phosphate of lime, and neatsfoot oil.

On East 49th Street, near the road to the old Ohio Canal pump house, the former Mayor of Cleveland, Tom L. Johnson, built a summer cottage and trout fishing troughs. His mayoral years were 1891 to 1895.

During the early 1900s, the factories and steel mills were growing and needed more help. New families moved in, coming from Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. New businesses were taking over the farmland, namely: Hercules Powder Company, Klaas Machine and Gabriel & Company. There were also two, one-room schools—one where the BP station is on Harvard and Interstate 77, and one where Bacci Park is located today. Also by now, the Willow Manor existed—a hotel and tea room. It was originally located in the area of the old tennis courts near the cemetery. In 1938, it was moved to the east side of East 71st Street to make way for the new school. It became the long-time home of Ralph and Rita Contipelli.

A post office was established in 1875 with John Kingsbury as the first postmaster. There was also the Kingsbury General Store where people bought their food and household items. In addition, Trinity Baptist Church, also known as Willow Baptist Church, was purchased by Toscana Club after the church closed. This structure was devastated by fire and leveled. Today, the property is owned by the Fraternal Order of Police. The blacksmith shop evolved into a gas station and garage. Located at 4952 East 71st Street, it is currently named *1 Bacci Place*.

In 1902, The Newburgh Brick and Clay Company was the first brick company to build in the valley. At one time there were seven brick making businesses in the area, most of them being in Valley View. As they grew, they needed more laborers, and that's when the Italians arrived in the area.

Coates also mentioned that Joseph H. Breck was an early settler of Newburgh, a grand nephew of the Brecks, after whom Brecksville was named. He was a farmer and stock raiser and served in the legislature for several terms. He was born in Brecksville in 1831 and came to Newburgh with his father and his wife, Hattie in 1833. He had four children: George, Dr. L.B., William and Mary.

Incidentally, most people may not know this, but Abram Garfield, the father of President Garfield, came to Newburgh in 1820. He did not live in what is Cuyahoga Heights today, but he was in the area near Garfield Park.

The chart shown is a rough estimate of resident surnames first found on maps or in various historical documents. This does not indicate that they were not in the village earlier, but this is the first they were found in actual documents. Although our Cuyahoga Heights Historical Committee did their best to document village families, some may be missing.

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