

BRECKSVILLE

Brecksville Township History from History of Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Part Third: The Townships, compiled by Crisfield Johnson, 1879.

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BRECKSVILLE TOWNSHIP HISTORY

Transcribed by Marlene

Proofed by Denise, County Coordinator

Boundaries - First Proprietor - Soil-First Pioneers - A. Garrisoned House - Rattlesnakes-Hinckley Hunt - Settlements on the River - At the Center - Up Chippewa Creek - In the North - Horse Stealing and Counterfeiting - Pioneers before 1825 - Prominent Men between 1826 and 1835 - First Officers - Items from the Town Book - List of Officers - Town Hall - Tax of 1878 - A log grist mill - Other mills at the center - Saw mills on the Chippewa - The old Fulling Mill - Tanneries and Distilleries - Village of Brecksville - Its Post Office - Stores and Hotels - Schools - First Congregational Church - Methodist Church.

Brecksville is in the southernmost tier of townships in the county. The Cuyahoga River forms its eastern boundary, and beyond it lies the township of Northfield, in Summit County. On the south is the township of Richfield, also in Summit County; while on the west and north lie the townships of Royalton and Independence in Cuyahoga County. It received its name from Robert and John Breck, two of the proprietors, who owned it in common with Reuben Dresser, Lemuel and Asabel Pomeroy, Ebenezer Hunt, Asa White and Welch & Hinckley. The township contains seventeen thousand one hundred and fifty-six acres of land, the surface of which is broken by high hills and deep hollows in the eastern and central parts; but in the south and the west forms an elevated plain. It was originally covered with a heavy growth of timber, and in some localities a liberal supply of common forest trees may yet be found.

The soil varies from a stiff clay to a sandy loam and is most adapted to the raising of the various grains and grasses, the latter being the principal product. Dairying largely engages the attention of the people, although much mixed husbandry prevails. The principal stream, aside from the Cuyahoga, is Chippewa creek, with its tributary brooks. That creek flows east through the township, a little north of its center. It has a small but fertile valley and in some localities its banks form high and almost perpendicular walls of shale, while in others the channel is an unbroken mass of sandstone, its banks being fringed with evergreens and tangle wood, which gives them a wild and picturesque appearance. It affords a limited water power.

Pioneer Settlers

Brecksville was surveyed in 1811 by Alfred Wolcott, Esq., and in June of that year the first settlement in the township was made, by Seth Paine and Melzar Clark who came from Western Massachusetts. The former located on lot sixty-four, in the extreme southwestern part of the township, and died there

before 1818. He had a family of two sons- Oliver N. and S. White-and two daughters. One of them Almira, married Melzar Clark who soon after removed to Royalton. After his death the widow married Henry Bangs of that township.

At the breaking out of the war of 1812 the few inhabitants, for a time, kept up a little garrison at the house of Seth Paine, but as rumors of Indian hostilities became more alarming most of the people fled to Hudson, where they remained until the danger was over. After the war only a few straggling Indians were seen, and these soon abandoned the country, leaving the settlers in undisturbed possession of their homes.

These were of logs, often without a nail or board, and contained but the simplest furniture and household utensils. A single article was often made to do service for cooking, baking and washing, and it is said that, in the absence of any other vessel, one of the pioneer mothers was obliged to milk her cow into a jug. Rattlesnakes were unusually abundant in the township, and would sometimes intrude themselves through the puncheon floors of the cabins of those living near the Chippewa - as many as thirteen of those unpleasant reptiles having been killed in one place.

Game, also, was very abundant. We have described the great Hinckley hunt on page sixty-six of the general history, but we add a few facts not known when that description was written. It originated at the house of Seth Paine, in this township, in December, 1818. A meeting was held and officers appointed; Cary Oakes being captain for Brecksville, John Ferris captain for Royalton, Judge John Newton for Richfield, and 'Squire Freyer for Brunswick. As remembered in Brecksville, the number of deer killed was three hundred and sixty-five; of bears, seventeen; of wolves, five. These figures differ a little from those previously given, but either set shows a very good day's work.

In 1811 another settlement was made in the north-eastern part of the township, by Benoni Brown and Samuel, Almon and Charles Wolcott; most of whom moved away at an early date, the former going to Bedford township. The following year Edward Johnson, a native of Pennsylvania, located on the river, above the settlement just mentioned, rearing there six sons, named Andrew, Joseph, George, William, John and Thomas, some of whom yet live in the township. About the same time William Moody, Thomas Timmins and John Breen located in the same neighborhood. The latter lived at the mouth of the Chippewa and had four sons, named John, Joseph, David and Cyrus. Andrew Dillon was also an early settler on the river. His sons growing to mature years were George, Peter and James. About the time the canal was built many deaths were caused in this locality by bilious diseases.

On the 1st day of January, 1812, Walter Wait and his brother-in-law expectant, Lemuel Bourne, built the third house in the township, near the present center, raising the walls that day and completing it soon after, without using any boards or nails. Although in midwinter, the weather was very pleasant and they did not suffer in consequence of having to live several days without doors or windows to their cabin. Wait soon after moved away, but Bourne settled south of the center, where he resided until his death, in 1874, at the age of eighty-three years. He had three sons, named William, Isaac and Rawson; and two daughters, named Harriet and Mary. The same season John Wait, Chester Wait and Benjamin Wait also settled in that part of the township. The last named was the first adult that died in the township, and in 1818 the wife of John Wait became the mother of the first child...a son, who on reaching manhood moved to Michigan.

About the same time Bolter Colson settled in the south part of the township, where he resided until

1878. He had five sons, Orrin, Chandler, Lyman, Thomas and Newton, the last two being still residents of the township.

To the center of Brecksville came, in 1812, Lemuel Hoadley and Hosea Bradford, the former building there the first mill in the township, the following year. Bradford, who was a shoemaker, lived on the public square. Both removed to Olmstead in the course of eight or ten years. Up the Chippewa Eli and Abijah Bagley located the same year. The latter had two sons, named Russia and Nathaniel. John Adams, Rafus Newell and Aruna Phelps were also settlers of the township, about this period, in the Chippewa Valley.

In 1813 Aaron Rice, with a large family, moved from Franklin County, Massachusetts, to the south-western part of the township. He had seven sons, named, Silas, Aaron, Seth, William, Moses, Myron and Peter, and three daughters. His son-in-law, Ebenezer Rice, came soon after. The latter had three sons, named Dexter, Ebenezer and Aiken. Joseph and Oliver Edgerton came a year or two later. The former had a numerous family, the sons being Joseph, Elias, Erastus, Oliver, and Onick and Austin (twins).

Calvin, Cary and William Oakes came with their families by ox-teams from Massachusetts in 1816, the journey consuming forty-two days. Cary Oaks had five sons, named Caleb, Henry, Francis, Isaac and Cary. The sons of William Oakes were George and William. The same year came Josiah Wilcox and his sons, Ebba, Ambrose and Orrie, also from Massachusetts. Ebba Wilcox had a son named Freeborn. Ambrose died in 1834, leaving four sons, named Edwin, Whitney, Miller and Charles. Orrin had one son named Josiah.

Asa Fenn lived in the same neighborhood, and also died in 1834. He had three sons, Arnon, Plympton and Learno. The same year died Aaron Barnes, another early settler in that neighborhood, who had two sons named Giles and Jesse. In the southern part of the township Lyman J. Frost was one of the earliest settlers, and a short time later John Pomeroy and Eli Osborn were added to the list of pioneers.

In 1817 Jedediah Mesch settled in the northern part of the township, and about the same time came Daniel O'Brien. Both moved away, but the following year Dr. Isaac M. Morgan came to that locality and resided there until his death. He had three sons, Charles, Harris and Consider. A son of the latter, Moses I., now occupies the homestead. Jacob Faller and his sons, Abel, Mathew, Calvin, Quartus, Willis and Samuel, Warren Cole, George W. Marsh, and William, Samuel, Isaac and Abel Varney, were all early settlers in the northern and western part of the township.

On the Warren Cole place, which is at present occupied by Emmet Boyd, afterward lived G. B. Sperring, whose connection with a gang of horse thieves and counterfeiters made his place a resort of vicious characters, and a receptacle of stolen property at hours of the night when his more honest neighbors were asleep. At home Sperring maintained an eminent respectability, but he was at last suspected and arrested. While being taken to Cleveland he effected his escape to Canada. On his farm was discovered an underground stable for stolen horses, and in the house were name evidences of the manufacturers of counterfeit money.

West of this place Daniel Green settled about 1818, and lived there until his removal to Sandusky. He had three sons, named William G., John L., and Charles. A few years later Joseph Hollis, from St. Lawrence County, New York, settled in this neighborhood, but removed to Seneca county. He had two sons named Giles and George W., the latter being at present a resident at the center. At this place in 1817 settled Joseph, Allen and Alexander Darrow; the latter being the father of Nathan, John and Alvah Darrow, all of

whom moved away, though some are now living in adjoining townships. At a little later period, Ezra Wyatt settled at the center, and purchased the interest of Lemuel Headly in the mill property. He had five sons, named Nathaniel, Eliphalet, Darius, James and Lorenzo, some of whom yet live in the county. Besides the foregoing there were among the pioneers of Brecksville, before 1826, David McCreary, Orris Abbott, Joseph Burnham, Thomas Patrick, Andrew Benton, John Johnson, Chester Narmore, John Jenkins, Lewis Adams, Joab Rockwell, Thomas Scott, Gersham Bostwick, Joseph McCreary, John G. Joslin, T. C. Stone, Isaac Packard, Elisha Tubbs, John Pomeroy, Darius Robinson, Johnson Patrick, John Guilford, Reuben Durfee, Alonzo Castle, Chauncey L. Young, William Breckenridge, John Randall, Robert Donaldson and Jonas Haynes. Among the prominent settlers who were in the township before 1835, and who have not already been named, were David Ring, Edward Rust, Augustus Adams, Joseph H. Breck, Theodore Breck, Moses Hunt, Verarms, Lester and Charles Dewey, John Day, Hugh Stephenson, John Dunbar, William Goodell, James Foster, Thomas Sanderson, Belah Norton, Martin Chittenden, Charles B. Bostwick, Edward M. Bartlett, besides others whose names appear in the church history.

Civil Organization

The qualified voters of Brecksville met at the house of Eli Bagley, April 3, 1815, to choose township officers as follows:

Trustee, Aaron Rice, Lemuel Hoadley, Edward Johnson; clerk, John Wait; treasurer, John Adams; constable and lister, Ebenezer Rice; poor masters, Hosea Bradford, Aaron Rice, Walter Wait, Hubert Baker; road supervisors, Lemuel Bourne, Hosea Bradford, Hubert Baker, Ebenezer Rice. Charles Wolcott had been elected constable but he refused to serve and was fined two dollars, which was applied toward paying for a township book, which had been purchased by Lemuel Hoadley for three dollars and seventy-five cents. We transcribe some further notes from the old township books, which may be interesting.

In March, 1816, Seth Paine's heirs sold an estray ox for twenty-five dollars and seventy-five cents, charging the township twelve dollars for his keeping. The balance was turned over to the treasurer, who reported that he had settled the account of Lemuel Hoadley, and that there now remained unappropriated in the treasury, twelve dollars-a very good exhibit indeed. At an election held in October, 1815, to choose county officers, seventeen votes were polled.

In March 1816, Aaron Rice, Eli Bagley and John Wait were chosen grand jurors; Silas Rice and Charles Wolcott, petit jurors. A week later the trustees had a meeting to settle with the road supervisors. They reported "that Hosea Bradford and Ebenezer Rice had done their duty, and that Lemuel Bourne and Hubert Baker were deficient."

At an election for justice of the peace, held February 17, 1817, John Wait received twenty-nine votes; Hosea Bradford, one; and Edward Johnson, one.

In November, 1817, the overseers of the poor, Calvin Oakes and Aaron Rice, commanded Silas Rice, the constable "to order Hubert Baker to depart from the township of Brecksville without delay." He served the writ, receiving therefore thirty-seven and a half cents. Later that season and the following year as many as fifteen persons were warned to depart from the township in order to prevent their becoming public charges.

From 1815 to the present time (1879) the principal officers of the township have been the following:

1816: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Lemuel Hoadley, Hosea Bradford; Clerk, John Wait; treasurer, John Adams

1817: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Lemuel Hoadley, Wm. Oakes; clerk, John Wait; treasurer, Hosea Bradford.

1818: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Bolter Colson, Wm. Oakes; clerk, John Wait; treasurer, Calvin Oakes

1819: Trustees, John Jenkins, Isaac M. Morgan, Thomas Patrick; clerk, John Wait; treasurer, Alex Darrow

1820: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Isaac M. Morgan, Ebba Wilcox; clerk, Nathan B. Darrow; treasurer, Alex Darrow

1821: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Isaac M. Morgan, Ebba Wilcox; clerk, Nathan B. Darrow; treasurer, Edward Johnson

1822: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Daniel Green, John Jenkins; clerk, Martin Chittenden; treasurer, Edward Johnson

1823: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Daniel Green, Aaron Rice; clerk, John Wait; treasurer, Charles Wait

1824: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Daniel Green, Aaron Rice; clerk Isaac Packard; treasurer, Martin Chittenden

1825: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Daniel Green, Andrew Dillow; clerk, Nathan B. Darrow; treasurer, Martin Chittenden

1826: Trustees, Aaron Rice, Daniel Green, Andrew Dillow; clerk Nathan B. Darrow; treasurer, Johnson Patrick

1827: Trustees, Edward Johnson, Daniel Green, William Oakes; clerk, Nathan B. Darrow; treasurer, Charles B. Bostwick

1828: Trustees, Andrew McCreary, Daniel Green, William Oakes; clerk, William G. Green; treasurer, John Wait

1829: Trustees, Andrew McCreary, Aaron Barnes, Aaron Rice, Jr.; clerk, William Breckenridge; treasurer, Charles B. Bostwick

1830: Trustees, Jacob Fuller, Aaron Barnes, Aaron Rice, Jr.; clerk, William G. Green; treasurer, Chauncey L. Young.

1831: Trustees, Isaac M. Morgan, Andrew Dillow, Aaron Rice, Jr., clerk, William G. Green; treasurer, Chauncey L. Young

1832: Trustees, Joseph McCreary, Thomas Patrick, Ebba Wilcox; clerk, William G. Green, treasurer, Chauncey L. Young

1833: Trustees, Joseph McCreary, Edward Rust, Belah Norton, clerk, William G. Green, treasurer, Chauncey L. Young

1834: Trustees, Andrew Dillow, Ebba Wilcox, Aaron Rice, Jr., Clerk, Charles Morgan, treasurer, Darius Robinson

1835: Trustees, James B. Foster, Ebba Wilcox, Edmund M. Bartlett; Clerk, William G. Green; treasurer, Charles Morgan

1836: Trustees, Isaac M. Morgan, Eli Osborne, Asa Fenn; clerk, William G. Green; treasurer, Theodore Breck

1837: Trustees, Joseph Bardwell, Lemuel Borne, Charles Morgan; clerk, Theo. Breck; treasurer, Daniel Currier

1838: Trustees, Aaron Rice, Jr., Russia Bayley, Charles Morgan; clerk, Theo. Breck; treasurer, Daniel Currier

1839: Trustees, Aaron Rice, Jr., William Burt, Charles Morgan; clerk, Theo. Breck; Treasurer, Joseph Bardwell

1840: Trustees, Aaron Rice, Jr. Albert P. Teachout, Charles Morgan; clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, Joseph Bardwell

1841: Trustees, Aaron Rice, Jr, Andrew Dillow, Charles Morgan, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, Joseph Bardwell

1842: Trustees, Ebba Wilcox, Samuel Wallace, Hugh Stevenson, clerk, A. J. Snow, treasurer, C. I. Young

1843: Trustees, John Fitzwater, Moses Hunt, Eliphalet Wyatt, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, Anson Dwight

1844: Trustees, John Fitzwater, Moses Hunt, Cary Oakes, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, Anson Dwight

1845: Trustees, C. P. Rich, Lorenzo Wyatt, Cary Oakes, clerk , George W. Oakes, treasurer, Anson Dwight

1846: Trustees, C. P. Rich, Lorenzo Wyatt, I. H. Ballow, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, Joseph Bardwell

1847: Trustees, C. P. Rich, John Fitzwater, I. H. Ballow, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, Joseph Bardwell

1848: Trustees, E.M. Bartlett, Edward Rush, Wm. Barr, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, John T. Mack

1849: Trustees, C. P. Rich, John Fitzwater, Russ Snow, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, John T. Mack

1850: Trustees, C. D. Rich, John Fitzwater, Russ Snow, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, John T. Mack

1851: Trustees, C. D. Rich, John Fitzwater, I. H. Ballow, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, C. C. Chapin Jr.

1852: Trustees, C. B. Rich, John Fitzwater, Moses Hunt, clerk, Wm . W. Wright, treasurer, C. C. Chapin Jr.

1853: Trustees, C. B. Rich, Aaron Rice, Moses Hunt, clerk, Wm. W. Wright, treasurer, C. C. Chapin, Jr.

1854: Trustees, C. B. Rich, Aaron Rice, John Fitzwater, clerk, John Coates, Treasurer, C. C. Chapin Jr.

1855: Trustees, Theodore Breck, Moses Hunt, John Fitzwater, clerk, R. W. Fairchild, treasurer, C. C. Chapin Jr.

1856: Trustees, Theodore Breck, Moses Hunt, John Fitzwater, clerk , James H. Coates, treasurer, C. C. Chapin Jr.

1857: Trustees, Theodore Breck, Orrin Miller , Peter Goodal, clerk, George W. Oakes treasurer, John S. Thomas

1858: Trustees, Moses Hunt, Orrin Miller, Peter Goodal, clerk, George W. Oakes, treasurer, John S. Thomas

1859; Trustees, Moses Hunt, John Fitzwater, Charles Bateman, clerk, Asa Reynolds, treasurer, John S. Thomas

1860, Trustees, Moses Hunt, Peter Dillow, Levi Booth, Jr. , clerk, E. H. Ely, treasurer, M. N. Young

1861: Trustees, Moses Hunt, Peter Dillow, A. K. Skeels, clerk, Asa Reynolds, treasurer, M. N. Young

1862: Trustees, Moses Hunt, Peter Dillow, O. W. Newcome, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, M. N. Young

1863: Trustees, Daniel Stocker, Peter Dillow, O. W. Newcome, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, William Barr

1864: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Francis Oakes, C. M. Allen, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, J. H. Coates

1865: Trustees, H. H. Snow, O. W. Newcome, C. M. Allen, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, J. H. Coates

1866: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Peter Dillow, F. Oakes, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, J. H. Coates.

1867: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Peter Dillow, F. Oakes, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, J. H. Coates

1868: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Peter Dillow, Alonzo Watkins, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, J. H. Coates.

1869: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Emmett Boyd, Henry Ingham, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, Theodore Breck

1870: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Emmett Boyd, Henry Ingham, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, Theodore Breck

1871: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Moses I. Morgan, Julius White, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates

1872: Trustees, H. H. Snow, Moses I. Morgan, Julius White, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates

1873: Trustees, Henry M. Oakes, Moses I. Morgan, Julius White, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates

1874: Trustees, L. F. Wyatt, L. E. Ring, Julius White, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates

1875: Trustees, Andrew Butler, L. E. Ring, Ira Fitzwater, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates
1876: Trustees, Julius White, M.I. Morgan, Ira Fitzwater, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates
1877: Trustees, Julius White, Lewis T. Rust, Ira Fitzwater, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates
1878: Trustees, Julius White, M. I. Morgan, Ira Fitzwater, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, James H. Coates
1879: Trustees, Julius White, J. A. Fitzwater, Ira Fitzwater, clerk, Charles S. Burt, treasurer, H. E. Barnes

On the 29 of April, 1872, the legislature empowered the trustees of Brecksville to borrow money to build a town hall, and to issue the bonds of the township for the payment of the same. Under this act money was procured to build a very fine hall on the north side of the public square, at Brecksville Center. It is constructed of brick, with a shapely belfry, and was completed in 1874, at a cost of four thousand five hundred and twenty-two dollars.

In 1878 the trustees of the township made the following levies: For township purposes, three-tenths of a mill; for roads, one and one-fourth mills; for grading hills, two-tenths of a mill; for bridges, one-tenth of a mill; for a poor fund, four-tenths of a mill; and for a vault, one mill. The latter has been erected at the center, and the cemeteries controlled by the township indicate a careful attention.

Brecksville has good roads, and the streams are well bridged. The Valley railroad will pass through the township and supply rapid communication; just across the river good shipping facilities are afforded by the canal.

Manufacturing Interests

Owing to the limited water power, but little manufacturing has been carried on in the township. The first machinery of any kind operated by water-power was the log grist mill, put up at the center by Lemuel Hoadley in 1813. The burr stones were of common granite, found in the woods nearby, and may yet be seen near the site of the old mill. In 1820 Ezra Wyatt put up a famed gristmill at this point, and also built a sawmill. In the course of time Robert Prichard supplied steam power. Only a gristmill is operated there at present. It was built by the present proprietor, Thomas Dunbar, and is supplied with two runs of stone.

Below this point, on the Chippewa, sawmills were built in former days, by Ambrose & Ebba Wilcox, by Young and Allen, and by Abbott & Bostwick. Above the center sawmills were also erected by Rufus Newell and Samuel Varney. All have been discontinued. In the northern part of the township, as a small brook, John Randall built a gristmill which is at present operated by Antoine Eckenfells. Near this place, on the west side of the State road, is a large building in which Jackson Janes once had a cloth-dressing establishment. Subsequently wooden ware was made there but the building has long been unused.

Tanneries have been carried on by Darius Robinson, above the center; by Seward & Higgins, at that place, and by George Curtis on the Spring brook, but these, too, have long since passed away. Joseph Edgerton and Ely Osborne had distilleries many years ago, and George Foote carried on the manufacturing of buckskin mittens at the center. For the past eight years a cheese factory has been successfully operated there, and this and the mills at present constitute the only manufacturing interests of the township.

The Village of Brecksville

This is on the south bank of the Chippewa near the center of the township, and is sometimes called Brecksville Center. It is the only village in the township. It has a pleasant location, and contains the town

hall, a very handsome school building, a Presbyterian and a Methodist church, a number of fine residences and the stores, etc. noted below.

T.J. Allen was the first postmaster of the Brecksville office, which received at the time one mail per week. The successive postmasters have been Chauncey L. Young, Asa Reynolds, and J. H. Coates. The office at present has three mails per week from Cleveland, distant seventeen miles.

Charles Morgan had the first store in the place, at the stand now occupied by J. H. Coates. The intermediate merchants there were William Towsley, E. and T. Breck, Breck & Humphrey, and Alling and Fairchild. The brick store was put up by Chauncey L. Young about 1857, and Young & Clark were the first to engage in the mercantile business. J. J. Barms is the present occupant of that stand. A drug store and a harness shop were opened in the same building several years ago by Chauncey Ellsworth, and are still carried on by him.

The first public house was kept by Isaac Packard in a log building which stood on the site of the Presbyterian church. Ezra Wyatt also entertained travelers at his house near the mill. John Randall built the present tavern in 1839, but it was first used as a residence. George N. Hollis has been an innkeeper there many years.

Dr. Chester Wait was the first physician of the township, and was in practice from 1813 until his removal to Brooklyn. Dr. Isaac M. Morgan came in 1818, and practiced until his death. In the same period Drs. Gibb and Cleveland followed their profession. Dr. Edward Buck was in practice many years before his death in 1859, and had a contemporary in Dr. William Knowlton. The latter was followed by his son, Augustus, and he in turn by another son, the present Dr. William Knowlton.

The Public Schools

The first school in the township was taught at the center by Oriana Paine, and was attended by children from the Hoadley, Adams, Bradford and Wait families. Mrs. Benjamin Wait was also an early teacher there. In 1819 a good log building was put up in this locality for school and church purposes. In 1826 the township had three districts, No. 1 having thirty-seven householders; No. 2, twenty-five householders; and No. 3 twenty householders. These districts were soon after divided so as to provide schools in every neighborhood. The building was at first of logs, but as the country was developed these were superseded by framed houses; and nearly all those, in turn, have given way to neat and comfortable brick edifices. The one at the center was erected in 1874, at a cost of \$4,000, and is a model of architectural beauty. For its size it has no superior in the country.

In 1878 the township reported nine buildings, valued at \$12,000. Ten schools were maintained at an expense of \$2,387.75. Twenty-eight weeks of school were taught by nine female and seven male teachers, whose average wages were \$30.00 per month. The pupils enrolled numbered; of boys one hundred and eighty, of girls one hundred and twelve, and the average attendance was eighty-three percent.

The First Congregational (or Presbyterian) Church

In the summer of 1816 the Rev. Wm. Hanford, in the employ of the Connecticut Missionary Society, began preaching in Brecksville, and on the 13th of July organized the First Congregational Church of Brecksville, with sixteen members, namely, John Adams, Lemuel Hoadley, Cloe Hoadley, John Wait,

Bolter Colson, Harriet Colson, Hannah Paine, Lyman J. Frost, Oriana Frost, Zelpha Wait, Lucy Wilcox, James Dickson, Mary Dickson, Joseph Rice, Orrin Wilcox and Abigail Wilcox. Those elected Lyman J. Frost as the first clerk. No deacon was chosen until October 1, 1821, when Bolter Colson was ordained to that office; and the church had no regular pastor until 1840, when Rev. Newton Barrett was ordained and installed.

The Rev. Wm. Hanford supplied the church until 1823, coming from Hudson every four weeks, and under his ministrations the membership increased to forty-six. The next supply was the Rev. Isaac Shaler, who continued until 1829. For the next four years the Rev. J. H. Breck was the supply; but in 1833 he was succeeded by Rev. Joseph Pepoon, who remained until 1834. That year came Rev. Chester Chapin, and continued until 1837.

On the 7th of April, 1840, the Rev. Newton Barrett was installed as pastor, and maintained that relation until 1848. Since that time the pastor and supplies have been the following: 1848-52, Rev. Lucius Smith; 1855-8, Rev. C. B. Stevens; 1859-61, P. S. Hillyer; 1862-6, Rev. Thomas Towler; 1868-70, Rev. Hubbard Lawrence; 1871-4, Rev. G. C. Reed; 1875-9, Rev. J. McK. Pittinger, and since May, 1879, Rev. John M. Davies.

The first meetings were held at the house of Hosea Bradford, near the square. In 1819 a log schoolhouse was built, on what was afterwards known as the Deacon Hannum place, which was used until the fall of 1830 when a small framed house was built for a church, at the cost of \$200. A better place of worship being demanded, the "First Congregational Society" was formed, under the laws of the State, on the 21st of June, 1834, to attend to the temporal affairs of the church. The first officers were Belah Norton, Wm. H. Judd, and Wm. Breckenridge, trustees: William Oakes, secretary; Philip Gass, treasurer; and Darius Lyman, collector. In addition to the foregoing the constitution was signed by Bolter Colson, Moses Hunt, Cary Oakes, E. M. Bartlett, Peter Goodell, Moses Boynton, Francis Oakes, Augustus Adams, William Burt, Theodore Breck, Giles Kellogg, Otis Pomeroy, C. Hannum, Jason Jones, Edward Rust, John L. Thomas, and others. The present trustees of the society are L. T. Rust, O. P. Foster, O. P. Hunt, Michael Rudgers and B. Van Noate; L. R. Ring is the clerk, and J. H. Coates treasurer.

In the fall of 1834, the meeting house was removed to a place near the present cemetery by a committee composed of Thomas Patrick, Jared Clark, Dorus Lyman, Daniel Carrier and William Hurt. Ten years later, work was begun on the present church edifice, under the direction of the following building committee: Augustus Adams, Cary Oakes, Theodore Breck, Joseph Bardwell and E. M. Bartlett. It was completed at a cost of about \$3,000. and was dedicated October 30, 1844.

Subsequent repairs have rendered the house comfortable and attractive, and together with the parsonage, erected in 1842, it constitutes a very good church property. In 1876 the church became Presbyterian in form, and so remains to this day. The present ruling elders are Henry Dunbar, Moses Hunt and Talcott Starr. The former is also clerk of the session. The church has a membership of one hundred and five, and since 1833 has regularly maintained a Sunday school, which at present has one hundred and thirty members. L. T. Rust is the superintendent. In 1866 Augustus Adams, a member of the church donated \$500. to the American Tract Society, on condition that that body should furnish thirty dollars' worth of books yearly to the Sunday school in question. A very good library is maintained.

Some of the other religious denominations held public worship in the township at quite an early day, and sometime after 1830 the Methodists organized themselves into a class, the names of whose members,

owing to the absence of records, cannot be here given. In 1836 the present meeting house at the center was erected, and has been the place of worship of the

Methodist Episcopal Church

of Brecksville, and some of the adjoining townships, ever since. It has been repaired, and is a comfortable place of worship. The trustees who control it are A. Watkins, A. C. Hitchcock, L. F. Wyatt, and James Cleveland. The three first-named are also the stewards of the church. The society at Brecksville has been connected with other Methodist stations in Richfield and Royalton in forming a circuit, but at present is only connected with the church in the latter township. The circuit is supplied by the Rev. Moses B. Mead, of Baldwin University. The membership of the church is small, numbering but sixteen persons. The class leader is T. Norvill. The Sunday school has sixty members, A. C. Hitchcock being the superintendent.

Brecksville Township History from A History of Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland by William R. Coates, 1924.

https://archive.org/details/historyofcuyahog01coat_0/page/46/mode/2up

The part of God's green earth which includes the hills and streams and valleys of Brecksville is included in the Western Reserve, that shrewd acquirement by Governor Winthrop and the Connecticut Colony from the British king, Charles H, in 1662. The famous charter that was hidden in the oak of historic fame included in its description of boundaries this region. Up to the year 1800 and several years thereafter Brecksville was a dense unbroken forest of oak, maple, and other deciduous trees, with some fringes of pine and hemlock along the Chippewa and its branches. The most considerable of this growth was the Pine Woods on the Chippewa, the land on which they stood, now included in the preserves of the "Glen Valley Club."

These magnificent pines met the fate of others of the universal forest, in time, but for years after the township was settled, they afforded a popular picnic ground and their trunks reechoed to innumerable 4th of July orations. As demonstrated by their rings of growth, these giant trees had stood before the caravels of Columbus sailed westward to make his name famous as the discoverer of a new world.

By right of possession this land belonged to the Indians and was theirs to have and to hold. By the divine right of kings transmitted in the Connecticut Charter it belonged to the "Nutmeg State," the successor of the Connecticut Colony, and, through the Connecticut Land Company, was placed upon the market subject to such incumbrance as the Red Man might prove to be. The State of Connecticut appointed a commission, and this commission sold to the Connecticut Land Company, and from this company the original pioneers bought their land. The price per acre varied with the size of the tract purchased, and was at first from 50 cents to a \$1.00.

As we have said, the portion of the Western Reserve west of the Cuyahoga River was designated as Indian country long after that east of the river had been ceded to the white man. The Cuyahoga marks the eastern boundary of the Township of Brecksville. The territory west of the Cuyahoga River, which includes this township, was occupied by the Chippewas until finally ceded to the Connecticut Land Company. It is a matter of history, if not of pride, that trinkets and whiskey cut a large figure in the negotiations by which this tract was finally ceded to the white man. Brecksville was organized in 1814, three years after the organization of the county. It was one of the first townships west of the river to form a local government. Bands of Indians lurked about Brecksville until after the War of 1812, when, as many of their tribe had joined with the Indians of Canada as allies of the British, they were given to understand that their presence was no longer desired.

John Breck, a soldier of the War of 1812 and a native of Northampton, Massachusetts, inherited land purchased by his father from the Connecticut Company. On the division, as arranged by the company, he was given title to parts of townships in several counties. In this township named after him he once held title deeds to half its territory. Like Moses Cleaveland, who gave his name to Cleaveland on the lake, he was never a resident here, but his three sons were residents for many years, Theodore Breck, John Adams Breck and Dr. Edward Breck. Shortly after the death of John Breck, in 1830, the three sons settled in Brecksville.

The original John Breck, who gave his name to the town, was a colonel in the American army, and, at one

time, commanded the forces at Fort Independence, Boston Harbor. His wife, Clarissa Allen, was the daughter of Rev. Thomas Allen, the first settled minister of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. It is related of him, that when General Burgoyne in the Revolutionary war began his campaign of invasion, Mr. Allen heard of it during Sunday service. He promptly dismissed his congregation and left the pulpit to form a company of minute men, who hastened to the relief of the Continental forces.

Dr. Theodore Breck, a great grandson of John Breck, now a resident of Brecksville, gives this interesting genealogy: "In the year 1630, two brothers by the name of Breck landed at the Town of Dorchester, Massachusetts. They came from England, but nothing is known of the family prior to their crossing the ocean; probably, like many others of that time, they had heard stories of the marvels of the new world and were anxious to better their fortunes. They did their part in the building up of the new country, raised families, and prospered more or less like others of the newcomers. Gradually, as the families grew larger, some of the children started out to see the world and settled in other towns so that in a few generations they were represented in Boston and in other points in Massachusetts. Finally, one bolder than the rest followed the old Bay Path to the western part of the state and settled down in Northampton. The family grew and prospered until revolutionary times, when we find Robert Breck a merchant in that busy little town. After the war he was postmaster of Northampton, appointed by Washington, his being the first appointment under the Federal Government. He had several sons who looked after his business while he served for many years as county clerk. Having some money to invest, he bought several tracts of land in the Western Reserve, among them being a tract covering about half of the present Township of Brecksville.

In 1802 Robert Breck died and his property passed to his sons, all of whom, save John, died shortly after, leaving John sole heir to the business and landed property. John had been married, but his wife had died, leaving him a daughter. It was necessary to perpetuate the family name. His brother Robert, at the time of his death, was engaged to marry and in his will provided a legacy for the lady. John, in transacting the business connected with the legacy left by his brother, fell in love with the girl himself and was accepted. This is the romance connected with his marriage to Clarissa Allen, daughter of Rev. Thomas Allen, the militant minister of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

John desired to know more about the western land left him by his father, and employed Alfred Wolcott, of Boston, to go west and survey the lands. Wolcott came in 1811, and, assisted by Seth Paine, made a survey of the land now comprised in the Township of Brecksville. The notes he made give a description of every lot in the township, boundaries and measurements, soil and timber. These surveyors returned and made their report. Wolcott remained but Paine returned, with his family, and became the first settler in the township. John Breck then began to look up likely settlers for his tract of land, and these he found among his acquaintances in his own town, Northampton. This answers the query so often propounded as to why so many of the early settlers of Brecksville came from Northampton and its vicinity.

At the time of the death of John Breck his children were minors and the property in the West was given in charge of John Randall. There were six children, three of whom came to Brecksville, already mentioned. Theodore and Doctor Edward remained until their death, John returned to New England and spent the few remaining years of his life there. Another family of Brecks are identified with the early history of Brecksville. Rev. Joseph Hunt Breck, a cousin of the original John Breck, came to the Western Reserve as a missionary in 1823. As a missionary or itinerant preacher, he traveled through Summit, Geauga and Ashtabula counties, preaching. Following his marriage in 1830, and which occurred in the East, he came to Brecksville. Two years later he moved to Newburgh and located on a farm to regain his

failing health. His son, Joseph H. Breck, was identified with the history of that township more particularly, and we will speak of him in the chapter on Newburgh.

In June, 1811, Seth Paine, his wife, two sons and two daughters, Oliver N., Spencer White, Almira and Lorina, and with them a young unmarried man, Melzer Clark, all from Williamsburg, Massachusetts, settled in the southwest corner of the township. They were the first settlers of Brecksville. Soon after their arrival Squire Carpenter of Richfield was called upon to officiate at the wedding of young Clark and Almira Paine. This was the first wedding in Brecksville. The couple soon began keeping house near the Paine home, at a point later known as Carter's Corners. Seth Paine, who assisted in the township survey, was land agent for Mr. Breck, and held a power of attorney to give title to land sold. Clark, whose housekeeping with his new bride began across the road but in Royalton Township, was agent of the land company for that township. Seth Paine's commission as agent was from a Massachusetts company, consisting of Col. John Breck, Ebenezer Hunt and others. As compensation for his services, he was to choose 200 acres anywhere in the township, with the exception that it should not be bottom land and should not include a mill site. His choice was in the southwest part, as we have indicated. He left his family at a settlement in Newburgh, near what is now the corner of Walker and Broadway in Cleveland, during the winter of 1810 and 1811, while he proceeded to Brecksville to build a log house.

As the first settler, something of his family is of historical interest. He was of the sixth generation from Stephen Paine, who came from Great Ellington, Norfolk County, England, to America in 1638, on the ship "Diligent," and first settled at Hingham, Plymouth County, Massachusetts. In 1661 he and his two sons, with others, purchased a large tract of land near Rehoboth, Massachusetts, from Wainsitta, a son of Massasoit. Other large purchases show in the records of other parts of Massachusetts and of Rhode Island in the name of these Paines. We give this in regard to the ancestor of the first settler of Brecksville because of the general application to all who came to Cuyahoga County in the early days in the face of privations and dangers. They were land hungry by inheritance. Seth Paine and Melzer Clark, both died in 1815 and their unfinished work was turned over to other agents of the land company. Their families, left without their care, remained in the almost unbroken forest. The oldest son of Paine, Spencer, had to take his father's place in supporting the family when he was only fourteen years of age.

Four especial dangers threatened the very early settlers, rattlesnakes, Indians, wild beasts and disease. Rattlesnakes were numerous, particularly near the Cuyahoga River. As many as thirteen had been killed in one place. They would protrude their heads through the puncheon floors of the log cabin. Cattle and horses occasionally died from their bite.

While no deaths from rattlesnake bites occurred to Brecksville settlers, of which we have record, they were a constant source of fear. Miss Rebecca Newell was bitten but recovered. Perhaps her lack of care may have been the cause of the bite. It is related of her that when a small child she was in the habit of taking her bowl of bread and milk out of doors to eat it. No attention was paid at first to this, but it was later noticed that she seemed to be growing thin for lack of nourishment, and looked pale. She was urged to stay inside, but was so unhappy at the restraint that she was again permitted to go out of doors with her porringer of food. She was followed and found sitting by a stump in the clearing with a large rattlesnake eating from the same dish of milk. When the snake put his head in on her side of the dish, she would tap him with her spoon and say: "Eat on your own side, Old Gray." It is said the snake was killed later and that it had thirteen rattles.

Bands of Indians lurked about Brecksville, until after the War of 1812, but were for the most part friendly. The Indians being, in a sense, allies of the British the outcome of that war was watched for its

effect on them and their attitude toward the white man under the Stars and Stripes. At one time Seth Paine's men folks were all away from home for the night, leaving Mrs. Paine and two daughters alone. At nightfall two Indians came to the cabin and asked to stay all night. What to do they knew not, they expected the worst, to refuse they thought sure death, to flee they could not, for they had nowhere to go. They held a counsel and came to the conclusion to let them stay and abide the consequences. The Indians camped on the hearth before the fire, they did not want a bed. At a late hour the women retired to bed behind a blanket. In the night they were thrown into great excitement. The fire had burned down and it was dark. At that time the back log rolled over and a blaze sprang up, giving a bright light, and, peering from behind their blanket, they saw one of the Indians go to the side of the door, where he had left a kind of bark basket, stoop down, take out a large knife, then a long stone and carefully sharpen the knife. The women supposed their time had come and lay in breathless silence and suspense. Soon the Indian stooped again and took out a ham of venison, shaved off two or three slices and ate them, and then went back to the hearth and laid himself down. The women breathed easier. In the morning, before it was fairly light, the Indians left for parts unknown.

Some incidents showing the danger from wild beasts will illustrate their menacing presence. In 1818, Miss Anna Green, while on her way on horseback from her home in Independence to that of Elisha Rice in Brecksville, had a thrilling escape. When she reached the top of Smith Hill, near the Chippewa Creek, a wild place even in later years, a panther's scream woke the echoes near her and her horse broke into a wild run. As she neared the Rice home the family heard her coming and opened their door. Miss Green jumped to the ground and rushed in and the horse followed. The door was closed and barred just as the panther landed on the step. Mr. Rice ran upstairs, took an armful of straw and lighted it and this thrown at the beast frightened it away. "Aunt Tamar" Oakes, with two young children, went through the woods to a neighbor's, Mrs. Edgerton's, about a mile away, to warp a piece of cloth. She was so late in returning home that a pack of wolves, with ever increasing numbers, followed her, coming so near that she could hear their panting at every step. She hurried along, trying to determine which child to drop - Mary, the older, or Francis, the baby. Before the decision had been reached, rescue came in the form of the hired man, Alvin Cooley, with a gun, he having been sent out by Mr. Oakes. One time, when Alvin Waite went to mill, his wife was left alone over night with her sister-in-law, Mrs. John Waite, for company. They were aroused in the night by the squealing of the pigs and immediately divined the cause. Mrs. Waite determined the bear should not carry off the pigs. She got the gun but found it empty. She had been told that three fingers of powder were allowed, and loaded the gun accordingly. She discovered a bear, coming out of the pen with a pig, and fired. For some time after she knew no more, as the gun "kicked" so vigorously that she was left unconscious, but the pig was saved. The bear was wounded, as a trail of blood gave evidence, and we will assume as in the story for little boys, that he refrained from pigs ever afterwards. The guns of the settlers soon thinned the woods of dangerous wild animals, that were so numerous when they arrived. Mrs. William McWade told about the snow being tramped solid about their house by the wolves, and of seeing as many as 500 at one time. Various hunts were organized as residents came in sufficient numbers. One known as the Great Hinckley Hunt was organized at the home of Mrs. Seth Paine in December, 1818. The roundup was in Hinckley Township, Medina County. At the meeting to organize the hunt, Carey Oakes was appointed captain for Brecksville, John Ferris for Royalton, Judge John Newton for Richfield, and 'Squire Freyer for Brunswick. This day has become historical, the day of the great hunt: The posse of men under strict discipline, surrounded the township of Hinckley and gradually drew in the line until every animal either was killed or escaped through the firing line. The net result of the hunt amounted to the following in animals killed: Deer, 365; bear, 17; wolves, 5.

In 1811 Lemuel Bourne came to Brecksville. He walked all the way from Savoy, Massachusetts, in about

four weeks, a distance of some 600 miles. He selected a site for his future home in the southern part of the township on what is now known as the Noble farm on the State Road, now daily passed by much traffic along the brick road to Akron, Ohio. The next year he returned to Massachusetts, walking back, and married Miss Delia Waite. He bought a horse, loaded his bride and such belongings as he could bring upon it, and walking by the side, started on their honeymoon journey to Brecksville, arriving in 1812. In the meantime, Walter Waite had built a log house on property later known as the Stevenson farm. This was the second log house built in Brecksville, Seth Paine's being the first. To this cabin Lemuel Bourne brought his bride. Miss Hattie Bourne, historian of the Brecksville Centennial, relates that the next morning after their arrival Mrs. Bourne "sat in the doorway getting a little acquainted with her new surroundings when she saw a rattlesnake basking in the sunshine a short distance away. Did she scream? Not she. She calmly got a weapon and killed it." On the next New Year's Day Walter Waite helped Lemuel Bourne build his house. It was built without doors, and greased paper served for windows, and wooden pegs were used for nails.

In 1811, also, Benona Brown, Samuel Wolcott, Almon Wolcott and Charles Wolcott, from Massachusetts, settled in the northeast part of the township; and Robert Donalson, Mr. Stanford and David Morton located in the southeast part. Donalson and Stanford came from Pennsylvania, and Morton from Massachusetts. To the little settlement this same year was added Eli and Bijah Bagley and Rufus Newell with their families. These located west of the Center. In 1812, Edward Johnston and wife, with a family of four sons, settled in the east part in the valley of the Chippewa near the Cuyahoga. These boys were great hunters. William or "Bill" was once asked to relate some of his experiences at a pioneer meeting, which was largely devoted to reminiscences of the early days. The chairman said, "You have had lots of tussles with bears and Indians, and we want you to relate some of them." "No," said Bill, "I never had any tussles, I always shot to kill." David McCrary and a Mr. Thompson came this year and located in the eastern part of the township near the Cuyahoga River, and Hosea Bradford, who settled on the farm known as the Rinear farm near the Center. These hardy first corners were not unmindful of the dangers that might be encountered. The Indians were a menace, and a garrison was maintained at the house of Seth Paine of such strength as the sparsely settled country could maintain. The pioneers could distinctly hear the cannonading at the Battle of Lake Erie, and hurried to Paine's. Lemuel Bourne for some reason stayed at home, and soon a man came to his house on horseback and said that Perry was whipped and that the settlers must flee for their lives to Hudson. Mr. Bourne carried the startling news to the gathering at Paine's. The news caused a panic, and preparations were quickly made to leave. Paine had a horse and a yoke of oxen and a cart which was commandeered. Articles were hidden in the bushes. Mrs. Paine had some choice china, brought from the East. This she put in a kettle and buried. They traveled as far as Boston, Summit County, where there was quite a settlement and a block house, built of white oak logs. Here a counsel was held and it was decided to send to Cleveland and ascertain the truth or falsity of the report about Perry. John Waite volunteered to go. In the morning, as related by Uncle Ned Wilcox, they brought out the old horse, fed him some corn, and Mr. Waite mounted with his rifle in front and a flask in his pocket, containing a little something to drive off dull care, and started on his journey. Arriving at Newburgh, he met a man who said it was all a lie, that Perry was victorious. That would not do, he must not go back without accumulative evidence. He rode on to Cleveland, where the good news was confirmed, returned, and arrived in Boston about sunset of the same day. There was general rejoicing. All returned home at once, but Mrs. Paine never found her dishes. The romance of gossip has it that the place of concealment may have been mislocated and that they are still buried on the old Paine farm.

From this time on new arrivals were numerous. Lemuel Hoadley built a gristmill at the Center on Chippewa Creek. This was a great boon as up to this time the nearest gristmills had been at Newburg and Hudson, and many of the settlers crushed their grain for the family use in hollowed stones or

stumps. Hosea Bradford opened a shoe shop at the Center, boot shop would be a better term. Bolter Colson, one of the early arrivals, was famous with the ax. It has been claimed for him that he felled more trees than any other man. He would start on a tree before the previous one reached the ground. He had five sons, Orrin, Chandler, Lyman, Thomas, and Newton. Some of the sons inherited their father's liking for work in the woods. Newton and Thomas engaged in the timber business along with farming the most of their lives. They were also clever hunters and were particularly good at hunting the wild turkey, achieving a reputation for their successes. Hard work did not keep Bolter Colson from preserving his strength. Until his death in 1878 at the age of ninety-three, his ax was his constant companion.

As in the settlement of Bedford we note the large families. Aaron Rice and wife, who came in 1813, had seven sons and three daughters, Aaron Barnes, who came in 1826, had six. There were two sons, Jesse and Giles. Jesse, who was prominent in later years in Brecksville as a merchant and public-spirited citizen, once said that he never had a suit of clothes, until after he grew to manhood, that was not spun, woven and made for him by his mother. This faithful soul, Aunt Roxey Barnes, was nurse to the neighborhood. She created faith in her herb tea and watched by the sick as a neighborly kindness.

We must mention among the early arrivals, Josiah Wilcox, wife and three sons, Moses Hunt, who came in 1833, married in 1834 Miss Emeline Dewey, and located on the extreme southeastern farm of the township; Russ Snow and Henry Snow with their families; Carey Oakes and family, whose first house was built of poles and bark, who was one of the captains of the Hinckley Hunt; Mrs. Mary Timmons and her son Tommy, who located on the river; Capt. John Dunbar, a soldier of 1812, with a large family; Andrew Dillow and family; Hugh Stevenson, who came in 1831 and who married Elizabeth Holland, a cousin of Martin Van Buren, President of the United States; Ezra Wyatt, who built another gristmill and a sawmill; Ambrose and Ebba Wilcox, and Chauncey L. Young, who built mills; Isaac Packard, who kept the first tavern in a log house, where the Congregational Church now stands; and Thomas Allen and wife, Marana, with five sons and four daughters, William, Charles, Thomas, Frank, Sarah, Joe, Lottie and Mary, and May, who was the first postmaster of the town. Isaac Packard sold his tavern site to the trustees of the Congregational Church. There was controversy over the purchase, some of the members holding that it was unhallowed ground. Thomas Allen, while postmaster, received one mail a week. Of his eight children two are living, the twins, Mary and May. Mary is the wife of William Baxter Peck of Denver, Colorado, and May is Mrs. John Stewart of North Evanston, Chicago.

Industrial Brecksville has been left behind by the march of events. At one time before 1840 there were several gristmills, four or five sawmills, three distilleries and a tannery and bark mill on the Chippewa. Peter Goodell had a chair factory and cabinet shop, using the power of a small stream, and Jason Janes a woolen mill nearby that was known as the "spring mill." Later at the Center "Al" Billings operated a harness shop, Robert Crossman and William McWade were rivals in the manufacture of boots and shoes, and James Wyatt conducted a cheese factory. These small industries went out of business, being unable to compete with the larger manufacturing establishments in industrial centers, and the township is, today, almost exclusively an agricultural community.

Following the opening of the Ohio canal in 1826 the bilious fever raged fearfully and there were many deaths. Chester Waite was the first doctor in town. He built the first frame house on the public square. Dr. Isaac Morgan was the second. He came in 1818 and practiced until his death. Then followed Doctors Gibbs and Cleveland and then Dr. William Knowlton, whose two sons, Augustus and William A. Knowlton, later adopted the same profession and practiced in the town, both becoming popular not only as physicians but as orators of unusual ability. Dr. William Knowlton is still living in Cleveland. He married as his second wife Fannie Snow, who has achieved a reputation as a musical composer. Dr. Edward Breck, also one of the sons of John Breck, after whom the town was named, practiced his profession in the

town until his death in 1865. The present physicians are Dr. E. L. Bourne, grandson of Lemuel, and Dr. Theodore Breck, great grandson of John Breck.

An incident of local historical interest occurred in 1856, the Great Sleighride. This occurred in the month of March. It originated in Solon Township, which called on a neighboring town with seven four horse teams and a banner flying, "Beat this if you can." The story is aptly told in the following lines written by Mrs. Allen, then an old lady and a participant in the events narrated:

THE GREAT SLEIGHRIDES

Come listen, young and old, to the story that is told
Of our mammoth sleighride that came off so handy, O.
I will tell you how it begun, likewise how the story run
Old Medina boys for conquering are the dandy, O.

The Solon boys, it seems, got up seven four-horse teams
And had a sleighride that came off so handy, O,
With a banner in the van, that said, "take me if you can,"
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Next Twinsburg boys are seen, driving fourteen four-horse teams,
They're going for the banner now so handy, O.
And they bear the flag away, but alas it cannot stay,
Old Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Old Bedford in the field, and the banner now must yield,
For their teams are counted thirty-four, so handy, O,
But the Bedford boys can't brag, they cannot keep the flag.
Old Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Now Northfield comes in sight, but their numbers are not right,
And they cannot take the banner quite so handy, O,
So they had to give up beat, and homeward did retreat
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Now Brecksville boys are there, and they take the banner fair,
Their four-horse teams are fifty-four so handy, O,
But 'tis only for a day, there are others in the play.
Old Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Old Royalton doth freight, four-horse teams just sixty-eight,
With merry lads and lassies, all so handy, O,
Oh, it is a glorious day, and the flag they bear away,
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Now Boston rallies round, their "canallers" beat the ground,
A motley crew, that they've got up so handy, O,
They go home without the flag, to get a new recruit of nags,
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

My friends, oh do not grieve, you can hear their horses heave,
As they come again to take the flag so handy, O.
Some are blind and some are lame, the poor horses aren't to blame,
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Old Boston turned out fine, four-horse teams they'd eighty-nine,
And they bear the banner home, so neat and handy, O,
Old Boston got her will but the banner can't be still.
Old Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

One hundred fifty four-horse teams the banner bore,
From Boston up to Richfield, all so handy, O.
We will now reverse the case, for the county's joined the race,
Old Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

How the counties rally 'round, oh how sweet the music sounds,
Cuyahoga and Medina are so handy, O,
Summit County played the swine. Said: "The banner shall be mine."
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Four-horse teams oh what a string! and the merry bells do ring,
The snow is deep, the roads are smooth and handy, O.
All the teams if counted true, were four hundred sixty-two,
But Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

It was March the eighteenth day, the Medina boys did say; "
Come let us take the banner, 'tis so handy, O."
Nine hundred the amount, likewise twelve they didn't count
Old Medina boys will conquer-they're the dandy, O.

Into Akron now they pour, and the cannon loud doth roar,
With bands of music playing neat and handy, O,
And the banner we have won, that says, "take me if you can,"
Hark! Medina boys have conquered-they're the dandy, O.

Mrs. Allen was a resident of Hinckley, Medina County, and in the concluding stanzas of this poem written to commemorate the Great Sleigh rides she states that the banner is at the county seat of Medina County and dares any county, "when winter comes again," to come and take it.

Brecksville furnished eighty-eight soldiers in the Civil war, a number equal to half the voting population. In no part of the country did the shots against Fort Sumpter awaken a more active remonstrance than in this little town, and soon men and boys were drilling and the town was like a camp. A little later the women gathered, almost without exception and they met daily and shipped dainties for the hospitals and picked lint to dress the wounds of the injured. The war song, "God bless the fingers picking lint," called down a benediction upon many hands in Brecksville. Logan Post of the Grand Army of the Republic was organized January 25, 1885, with fifteen charter members. L. D. Morse was the first commander. Among those who have served since are Harmon Rinear, Charles Stressing, J. R. Chaffee, O. P. Latimer, T.

J. Rudgers, Calvin C. Hardin and J. F. Reinhardt. As in other places the Post has been the dominant and leading spirit in the Decoration Day exercises and in 1890 a very elaborate series of exercises were brought about by their efforts. Only two of the commanders of Logan Post are now living.

The first school in the township was taught by Oriana Paine at the Center and was attended by children from the families of Hoadley, Adams, Bradford and Waite. In 1826 there were three school districts. In District No. 1 Mrs. Aaron Rice was the first teacher and was to receive as compensation the sum of \$1 per week. She was then unmarried. The district being without funds and discovering that the lady contemplated matrimony she was tendered as payment in full for her services which she accepted, three chairs, a bake kettle and a barrel of whiskey. As an evidence of the thrift of the settlers, it is related that in the Snow district at one time the schoolhouse burned down. A new one was erected with such expedition that fire from the burning embers of the old building were taken to start the first fire in the new schoolhouse.

From the three original school districts the number was increased, with the population, to nine, including the fractional districts. These were formed for the convenience of pupils and included factions of several townships. In one school in the southeast part of the township, pupils, at one time, attended from four townships and three counties. Some of these fractional district schools are still in operation but most of the schools in the sub districts are abandoned and the pupils brought in busses to the one central graded and high school at the Center. This system, first advocated at county teachers' institutes, has now become quite general, replacing the "little red schoolhouse." Among the very early teachers, who taught in the district schools of Brecksville, were Calvin Oakes, Johnson Patrick, Bene Butler, William Warren (father of Warren of the Ohio Criminal Code), Amy Jenkins, Anson Leonard, Eleanor Coates, Abigail Cushman, and Maria Storrs.

The religious sentiment of Brecksville from its earliest history has found expression through two churches, the Congregational and the Methodist Episcopal. The Congregational Church has been, however, Presbyterian during a portion of its history. On the 13th of July, 1816, Rev. William Hanford, a missionary from Hudson, Ohio, formed an organization at the home of Esquire Bradford. A church was organized with thirteen members, John Adams, Lemuel Hoadley, Chloe, his wife, John Waite, Bolter Colson, Harriet, his wife, Hannah Payne, Lyman J. Rost, Oriana Payne, Zilpha Waite, Lucy Wilcox, James Dixon, and Mary, his wife. "The church was formed under that peculiar ecclesiastical system known on the Reserve as the Plan of Union. This was a measure originated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and adopted by the General Association of Connecticut, for the purpose of promoting unity and harmony among the churches in new settlements." January 4, 1817, the church placed itself under the care of the Grand River Presbytery. In 1854 it voted to become an independent Congregational Church. In 1874, under the pastorate of Rev. I. McK. Pittenger and the urgent solicitation of Rev. H. H. Wells, evangelist, it became Presbyterian, joining the Cleveland Presbytery. Reverend Pittenger was shortly after chosen presiding elder of said organization. In 1889, the church again decided to become Congregational and joined the Cleveland Congregational Conference. Since this time, it has been identified with that organization as a Congregational Church. In 1841 it installed its first regular pastor, Rev. Newton Barrett. During his ministry the present church edifice was built. The money was raised by the sale of pews, the bell being given by the Brecks in compliance with a promise made when the town was named. Among the early ministers have been Rev. Joseph Breck, Rev. Chester Chapin, Rev. Newton Barrett, Rev. Thomas Towler and Rev. G. C. Reed.

The first meeting, that finally developed into the organization of the Brecksville Methodist Episcopal Church, was held at the residence of Lemuel Bourne prior to 1823. In 1832 the present church structure

was built on the north side of the public square, facing the Congregational Church building on the south side of the square. Until 1853 the church was lighted by tallow candles in tin reflectors on the walls. Then an agitation began for lamps, and one man, an outsider, sent word that he would sell a cow to defray the expense if necessary. This spurred up the project, and the new lighting was installed without the sale of the cow. Those who sit today on velvet under electric lights will hardly realize the sacrifices of those, who built the first fires and tried to imitate the life of the first teachers. In 1824 Rev. Solomon Minwaer and Rev. John Pardo were circuit pastors. Each received \$100 per year, salary. Among those who have served the church, either as circuit or regular pastors are Rev. Moses B. Mead, Rev. I. W. Dwyer, Rev. A. R. Palmer, Rev. T. D. Stevie, Rev. E. H. Bush, Rev. C. F. Irish, Rev. J. R. Carpenter and Reverend Pollock, afterwards presiding elder.

We have said Brecksville is an agricultural community. In April, 1876, Union Grange was organized. The first officers were: Hollis Barr, master; C. T. Canfield, overseer; O. O. Spafford, lecturer; H. C. Wilcox, secretary; David Bratton, treasurer, and C. C. Hannum, chorister. The Grange bought groceries, hardware and farming tools at a saving to the farmers. A. A. Butler was purchasing agent. This organization was allowed to lapse and in the year 1891 it was reorganized and again disbanded. In March, 1903, Brecksville Grange was organized as a new lodge, with H. T. Bratton as master; C. H. Miller, overseer; L. H. Rust, secretary, and J. E. McCreery, treasurer.

The annual fairs in the '40s and later were interesting occasions. In this new community, united as it was by such close ties of neighborly fraternity, these annual events became occasions of great interest. Everybody exhibited and everybody rejoiced in the premiums awarded, wherever bestowed. It was a gala day for young and old. These fairs became of practical advantage aside from the question of recreation. Methods of plant culture were discussed as well as the breeding of domestic animals. They were agricultural institutes. The young people made more of the day than the rest, for with them it must close with a dance at the Town Hall, and the young men utilized the occasion in securing their respective girls for that occasion. The writer has in his possession a premium certificate of the Brecksville Fair, held in 1848, awarding a premium to John Coates for the best specimen of pumpkins. This was signed by Edmund Bartlette as president and Theodore Breck, secretary of the Brecksville Agricultural Society. These fairs were abandoned about the time of the Civil war.

An Odd Fellows lodge has existed in Brecksville since 1878. It was organized on July 10th of that year with the following charter members: Capt. M. I. Morgan, Dr. W. A. Knowlton, E. L. Hannum, A. A. Butler, A. K. Skeels, M. D. McNaughton, Clifford Edgerton, G. E. Ploss, A. C. Rice, John Rooks, James King, Homer Barnes, W. F. Dillow, S. D. Sherwood, C. T. Canfield, R. E. Garrity, O. O. Spafford, and A. J. Snow. Thirty-six additional members were taken in as members during the year. In 1879 the lodge built a hall on the south side of the square, which was dedicated December 31st of that year.

We have referred to the distilleries as among the early industries of the township. From their establishment one street leading east from the State Road to the Cuyahoga River was named Whiskey Lane. In later years an effort has been made to change the name but it remains, and is more permanent than the sentiment in regard to the commodity. In 1850 a wave of temperance agitation struck the town. A meeting was held "upstairs in the Breck Building" to form a temperance society. From this meeting was organized Chippewa Lodge of Good Templars. This lodge became a popular organization, grew in numbers and held regular meetings quite largely attended. It continued in existence for many years and until the town became free from the liquor traffic, under the local option law. Among those active in the lodge were J. J. Barnes, C. O. Bartlett, Karl Snow, Ed Phelps, Lucian Payne, Julia McWade, Newton Oakes, Elwin Carter, Mrs. James Coates and Mrs. Harriet Dunbar.

We have stated that Brecksville was organized in 1814. The election resulted as follows: Trustees, Lemuel Hoadley, John Adams and Eli Bagley; township clerk, John Wait; justices of the peace, John Wait and Eli Bagley. These were the first officers. At the second election held at the home of Eli Bagley April 3, 1815, the following officers were elected: Trustees, Aaron Rice, Lemuel Hoadley and Edward Johnson; clerk, John Wait; treasurer, John Adams; constable and lister (assessor), Ebenezer Rice; poor masters, Hoses Bradford and Aaron Rice; fence viewers, Ebenezer Rice, Walter Wait and Hubert Baker; road supervisors, Lemuel Bourne, Hosea Bradford, Hubert Baker and Ebenezer Rice. Charles Wolcott, previously elected constable and who refused to serve, was fined \$2, which money was applied towards a township book. The original records show that Seth Paine's heirs sold a stray ox for \$25.75, and that the charge for keeping was \$12.00; that a settlement had been made with Lemuel Hoadley (probably for road work) for \$3.75, leaving a balance in the treasury of \$12. This was added to the record: "a very fine showing indeed." The trustees at the March meeting in 1816 chose Aaron Rice, Eli Bagley and John Wait, grand jurors, and Silas Rice and Charles Wolcott, petit jurors. At a meeting in November, 1917, the overseers of the poor directed the constable to order Hubert Baker to depart from the township without delay. The writ was served and a fee of 37 1/2 cents charged by the constable. In this year fifteen persons were thus ordered to leave the township to prevent them from becoming a public charge.

The present trustees of the township are Joseph Vyrostek, George Ellsworth and Milton Snow; clerk, Carl Burtscher; treasurer, E. E. Wiese; road superintendent, Norris Starr. Among those who have served the township for long periods of time are Trustees Julius White, Holland Snow, John Fitzwater, Ira Fitzwater, and Burr Van Noate. James H. Coates as treasurer, and Charles S. Burt as clerk, served in their respective offices continuously for over thirty years. Charles B. Rich, John Coates, Lewis Rust, Moses Hunt and A. K. Skeels each held the office of justice of the peace for long periods.

The ultimate passing of the township is foreshadowed in that December 20, 1921, the Village of Brecksville was formed. It embraces in its confines a large portion of the original township. Its officers are: Mayor, Burt Harris; clerk, Hugh Ellsworth; treasurer, E. E. Wiese; marshal, J. T. Taul; council, H. T. Bratton, Frank McCreery, Ben Metzger, Earl Rinear, E. W. Rudgers and H. W. Snow. Among the first acts of the village officers was to set in motion the necessary procedure for securing electric lights in the village, by authorizing a bond issue of \$50,000, which was voted upon at a special election held February 28, 1922, and carried by a vote of 214 in favor and 33 against, the lighting to be under contract with the Cleveland Illuminating Company. An application was made to the county commissioners in 1922 to incorporate the remaining territory of the township in the village, thus dispensing with the township organization, but it has not been accomplished.

The early history of Brecksville is replete with interesting anecdotes. Tom Fitzwater for years played the fiddle for dances and was much in demand. His fiddle box was homemade and resembled a child's coffin. One morning after an all-night performance at a dance in which calling off was included as his function in connection with the harmony produced for the occasion, tired and sleepy, his faithful fiddle under his arm, he was "footing it" homeward. His route took him along the tow path of the canal. Just as the first dim twilight of the morning appeared, he passed the cabin of "Widow Falkner," an aged eccentric character, who lived in a lonely part of the valley. She looked out of the window at the apparition, spied the fiddle box, scented a tragedy, and then with piercing shrieks exclaimed over and over: "Oh my God what a wretch!" Long afterward Tom was greeted in the store and the blacksmith shop and on the street with "Oh my God what a wretch!" It was suggested that the widow referred to his performances on the fiddle.

Julius Hannum ("Jule") was a practical joker and the life of many occasions. In the days of the Underground Railroad, Carey Oakes had a station at his house. He was strong in his anti-slavery views and harbored escaped slaves and helped them on to Canada. It was his practice to feed and lodge them and as he sent them on to another station, give each one a dollar with his blessing. Jule Hannum blacked up, palmed himself off as a runaway slave and chuckled home with his dollar and his blessing. It is not recorded whether he finally returned the dollar to "Uncle Carey," but the story got out, being too good to keep.

Brecksville was a whig town and a strong supporter of General Harrison in the days of the log cabin, hard cider campaign. At a great political rally in the interest of Harrison someone put ipecac in the barrel of cider provided for the occasion. The perpetrator of this act was never found out, but it was generally attributed to John Breck, who later was a strong whig supporter, perhaps by way of atonement. The incident is related in the following lines, which were read before a meeting of The Early Settlers' Association in Cleveland:

The news got dull in harvest time,
Most all the reg'lar things were closed,
But still serene, in numbers full,
We loafers by the counter dozed.

Well back in eighteen forty's time
Sim Joynton turned the evening talk,
To when, in presidential year,
A campaign took a sudden balk.

Brecksville was strong for Harrison,
Van's followers were few but set,
Watching the Tipp and Tyler band
With vigils we remember yet.

A final rally had been planned
To sweep the opposition in
And leave Van Buren's following
Too dead presumably to skin.

Brecksville was bright on rally night.
The campaign cider barrel stood
Convenient by the cabin door,
Built up of mammoth logs of wood.

And followers of Harrison,
Each true and faithful, stalwart whig,
Considering the country's weal,
Was asked and urged to take a swig.

Around the borders of the crowd
The opposition forces strolled.
As if they contemplated soon

To join the Tipp and Tyler fold.

Their interest, it seems, was this:
To see how worked the ipecac
They'd put into the cider there
When Dr. Morgan turned his back.

The meeting grew in magnitude,
And time for speaking drew apace,
Enthusiasm mounted high
Illumining each patriot face.

Oh world, thy slippery turns! the whigs,
Who'd worked to throw Van Buren down,
Began with unanimity,
A throwing up, disgracing town.

With faces pale the patriots drooped,
The ipecac had sovereign sway,
The rally faded into naught,
As fades the glimmering light of day.

The old man mused: It's seventy years,
But mem'ry canters easy back
To that campaign in forty, when
We dosed the whigs with ipecac.

Brecksville has produced many of prominence in various walks of life, who have gone out into fields of usefulness. The most noted I will mention first, Prof. John N. Stockwell. His biography appears in another volume of this history. At the time of his death, May 18, 1920, at the advanced age of eighty-nine, he was regarded as one of the foremost philosophers and the dean of American astronomers. Gus Heege, who entertained the pupils of the district school as a barefoot boy, with various unusual performances, and who achieved fame and fortune in the character of Yon Yonson on the stage, should be mentioned. Florence Morse (Kingsley), a small child, when her father and mother taught the higher and lower school in the Center district, famous as a writer of books and as an editor of the Ladies Home Journal, deserves special mention. John Wilcox, a successful teacher in the Brecksville schools, sheriff of the county, and at the time of his death, editor of the Cleveland Press; Frank Wilcox, who refused public office, likewise a successful teacher in the Brecksville schools before he engaged in the practice of law in Cleveland, obtaining an enviable position at the bar. Among the earlier generations, Theodore Breck, who served in the State Senate, as county commissioner, and in other positions of trust, enlarges the list of those who have added greatly to the interest attached to the history of Brecksville. Frank Skeels, who was police prosecutor in Cleveland and a lawyer of standing, and Arthur Skeels, a civil engineer of note, both sons of A. K. Skeels, who served for many years as justice of the peace, made most creditable records. E. J. Phelps (Ed), prominent in the civic affairs of Minneapolis, Minnesota, always kept up an active interest in the days when he taught school in his native town of Brecksville. Dr. W. A. Knowlton, physician of Brecksville for many years, platform orator of more than local fame, at one time president of the Cleveland Medical Association, now at an advanced age, his wife, Fannie Snow Knowlton, musician and composer, were long identified with the town's activities.

The centennial of the first settlement was celebrated in 1911. This occasion was made interesting by the presence of a large number of former residents, who came from all parts of the land. Its inception came from the Brecksville Association, an organization of former residents that held its meetings in Cleveland for many years. At this centennial Hon. Paul Howland was the orator of the day. A boulder, product of the Glacial Age, which had been placed in the public square, was dedicated, commemorative of the first settlement.

Brecksville Township Excerpt from Memorial to the Pioneer Women of the Western Reserve by Gertrude Van Rensselaer Wickham, Under the Auspices of The Executive Committee of the Woman's Department of the Cleveland Centennial Commission, 1896. Parts 1-4.

<https://usgenwebsites.org/OHCuyahoga/Cities/BrecksvilleTwpPWWR.pdf>

All four parts with many other locations are also viewable at:

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/2719949?availability=Las%20Vegas%20Nevada%20FamilySearch%20Library>

Brecksville

Eighty-five years - that carries us back to the time when this section was a dense wilderness. Before the days of steamships, steam car, electric car, and bicycle; before the days of telegrams, telephones and X rays; before the days of stoves, furnaces, coal oil lamps, gas jets and electric lights, before the days of two cents a letter postage; before the days of stenographers and daily papers. About eighty-five years since the first white inhabitants settled in this wild forest region. Old times are they to us, but to these gray-headed mothers and fathers, it seems but yesterday. Starting from Cleveland, near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River, going by the Valley R.R. and following the river in a southerly direction for about sixteen miles, you come to a station named Brecksville. Stopping here and taking the road leading westward about two miles, you come to the village and center of Brecksville township the northeast corner township in Cuyahoga County. The deed of the township is dated April 30, 1807, and was given by the commissioners of the state of Connecticut. It received its name from John BRECK, a native of Northampton, Mass., one of the original purchasers of the Western Reserve lands, and upon the division of the town among different proprietors he held title deeds for one-half the territory of Brecksville.

In June, 1811, Seth PAYNE, his wife, two daughters, two sons, and Melzer CLARK, a young unmarried man, came from Williamsburg, Mass., and located in the southwestern corner of the township. Soon after their arrival Miss Almira, the oldest daughter, was married to young CLARK, this being the first marriage in the township. Mrs. CLARK began housekeeping on the opposite corner from her father and in Royalton township.

In 1810 Lemuel BOURN walked from Savoy, Mass., in about four weeks, a distance of 600 miles; selected the place in Brecksville for his future home; stayed one year, then, because of the sterling worth and highly prized daughters of New England, returned on foot to Massachusetts and married Miss Delia WAIT. He bought a horse, and in 1811 Mrs. Lemuel BOURN mounted it, taking all she could with her and started with her husband, he walking most of the way, for their pioneer life in Brecksville, full of deprivations and hardships, and beset with many dangers, which were bravely met and patiently endured.

She was the mother of seven children, four of whom passed on before to welcome her coming. She was an early and active worker in the M.E. church; lived her three-score years and departed in the faith of a reunion hereafter.

In the spring of 1811, a settlement was made in the northeastern part of the township by the BROWNS, DONALSONS, STANFORDS and MORTONS. In the summer of the same year near the center came the BAGLEYS and WAITS. The following year quite a colony settled in the east part of the township, who had come to Boston township in 1809.

The settlers were greatly alarmed and in fear of the Indians, who roamed through the country, and for a time, a garrison was kept at the house of Seth PAYNE. The settlers could distinctly hear the cannonading at the battle of Lake Erie and hurried to Mr. PAYNE's. Soon a man came from the west on horseback and said Perry had had a fight with the British, was whipped and they must flee for their lives to Hudson. Panic stricken, they gathered together what they could carry, hid some things in the bushes, and some of Mrs. PAYNE's choice china dishes, which she brought from the east, put in a kettle, and buried.

Mr. PAYNE having a horse, a yoke of oxen and a cart, they started for the township of Boston, where there was quite a settlement and a block house of white oak logs, to hold a counsel. They concluded to send to Cleveland to learn the truth. John WAIT volunteered to go. In the morning WAIT mounted the horse, taking his rifle in front of him, and started for Cleveland. He found Perry had been victorious and he returned about sunset.

There was a general time of rejoicing and in the morning, they returned to their homes, but Mrs. PAYNE never found her kettle of dishes. They are supposed to be buried yet on the old PAYNE farm. Mrs. PAYNE was Hannah NASH before marriage.

About 1814 Oriana PAYNE, the youngest daughter of Mrs. Seth PAYNE, taught the first school in the township at the center in a log house, near where the town hall now stands, with the HOADLEY, ADAMS, BRADFORD and WAIT children attending the school. The nearest schoolhouse at that time was in Newburgh. Oriana PAYNE married Symon FROST [\[see note below\]](#) and settled at the center of Brecksville in 1815.

The NEWELS came from the Mohawk Valley to Ohio. They came from Buffalo in a canoe; went ashore for the night, then "paddled their own canoe" in the day, landing in Cleveland, staying a year or more, then looking for the future advantage of their children they removed to Independence, Cuyahoga County. A grandson tells that, while living there, Mrs. Rufus NEWEL (Betsy MATHER) when looking after her cow heard the report of a gun; heard the bullet whiz past her head, then another shot, and a white man came and asked her if she knew how near she came being killed. The first shot was by an Indian at Mrs. NEWEL, the second by the white man killing the Indian.

About 1812 they settled west of the center of Brecksville in the Chippewa valley. Mrs. NEWEL had four daughters. A very curious incident is related in connection with one of them, little Rebecca: For a time, she was in the habit of taking her porringer of bread and milk, or samp and milk, out of doors to eat it. No attention was paid at first to this child's whim, but presently it was noticed that she was growing thin and looked pale.

An effort was made to persuade her to eat within doors, which she resisted, and seemed so unhappy that again she was permitted to go out with her food, but was followed and observed and

found sitting by a stump with a large rattlesnake eating from the same dish of milk. When he put his head in her side of the dish, she would hit him with her spoon and say: "Eat on your own side, old gray." The mother went quietly back and the next day kept Rebecca in, killed the snake, and found he had thirteen rattles. Miss Rebecca was afterward bitten by a rattlesnake. She married Rusha BAGLEY, of Brecksville.

Mrs. Aaron RICE (Pelonial TOMPSON) and her husband, seven sons and three daughters, came from Deerfield, Mass., in 1813. Mrs. Joseph EDGERTON (Candace RICE), her husband, six sons and three daughters came from the same place a year or two later; Mrs. and Mrs. Bolter COLSON (Harriet WAIT) in 1815. These early comers made a home for the families who came after or until they could clear a spot, roll logs together and moved into their own house, with neither door or window.

In March, 1816, Mrs. Carey OAKES, her husband and two children, together with Mrs. William OAKES, her husband, and two children, came from Hawley, Mass., to Brecksville with an ox team, and were forty days on their journey. Once, stopping for the night, an old squaw came in, took up the baby, and said she had made many a meal of a white papoose like that.

Mrs. Carey OAKES' first house was made of poles and bark. Soon after getting settled in her new home, "Aunt Tamar" OAKES took her two children, went through the woods to a neighbor's, Mrs. EDGERTON's, about a mile away, to warp a piece of cloth. She was so late in returning home that the wolves followed her, coming so near she could hear their panting at every step. She hurried along trying to determine which child to drop, Mary, the older, or Francis, the baby.

Just at this time the hired man, Alvin COOLEY, came to her rescue, having been sent by Mr. OAKES to meet her. She was a woman of great determination and thoroughly hospitable; glad to share with, and help all who came to her home.

One of Brecksville's earliest settlers, Mrs. Isaac WAIT, nee JENKINS, was left at home over night with a sister-in-law, Mrs. John WAIT (Susannah LOTHROP) for company, while Mr. WAIT went to Hudson for supplies. In the night they heard the pigs squeal; they knew what that meant; Mrs. WAIT determined the bear should not carry off the pig; she got up, took the rifle, but found it empty; she had heard that three fingers of powder was a load, so she put in powder three lengths of her finger, and as the bear was coming out with the pig, fired, then knew no more for some time, having been knocked down by the backward action of the gun. The bear could be tracked some distance by the blood, and the pig was saved.

In 1813 Mrs. John WAIT became the mother of the first white child born in the township - a son - who now lives in Michigan, and Benjamin WAIT was the first to walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

"Granny TIMMONS," Mrs. Mary TIMMONS, with her son Tommy came from Pennsylvania early in 1812 and made her home in the eastern part of the township, near the Cuyahoga River. She purchased quite a large tract of land and gave the ground for the Eastern cemetery to the township. Her husband was Thomas TIMMONS.

These New England settlers could not remain long without a place for public religious worship. In the summer of 1816, Rev. Wm. HANFORD, employed by the Connecticut Missionary Society, began preaching in Brecksville once in four weeks; his congregation coming from five different townships - Boston, Brecksville, Independence, Royalton and Richfield. In July, 1816, he organized the first Presbyterian church.

Chloe, wife of Lemuel HOADLEY; Harriet, wife of Bolter COLSON, Hannah, wife of Seth PAYNE, and Zilpha WAIT were of the original members. The first church was a log house built on the farm now owned by Irwin EDGERTON; no glass in its windows, boards for seats, the means of warmth a small foot stove carried from home.

The Methodists organized a class in early pioneer days, held their meetings at private houses. Prominent among the early workers in that Society were Delia WAIT, wife of Lemuel BOURN; Martha CLAPP, wife of David KING; Mrs. Ezra and Mrs. Eliphalet WYATT (Lucinda FRAZEE).

There is no estimating the good to us from these early workers in the cause of righteousness. The home of Mrs. Deacon William OAKES (Sally COOLY) was the home of the missionary. When he came the children were sent in different directions to notify the neighbors that there would be preaching.

Eliza OAKES being sent toward the center and going through a slashing came upon sever young deer playing and skipping around. Being frightened and supposing them panthers she gave a fearful scream, which sent the deer bounding away as frightened as the child.

In 1832 Eliza married Luman NORVILLE of Brecksville, thus the town being her home from a child of one year, for seventy-eight years.

Miranda WALLACE was born in Petersham, Mass. 1806, and while a young woman came here with her parents to Ohio. They came from Buffalo to Cleveland in the "Walk in the Water." Miranda fell overboard and was caught by one of the crew. Mr. WALLACE settled in Hinkley, Medina County, for a year or two, then removed to Brecksville. Miranda married White PAYNE, August, 1827.

Mrs. PAYNE and her mother, Mrs. Daniel WALLACE, nee Mary ALDRICH of Massachusetts, pulled flax, hatched, spun, and wove it into cloth. Going to the brook to wash, Mrs. PAYNE would swing her little girl Ellen, Mrs. Julius HANNAM, in a basket for fear of snakes. She had a barrel sawn in two for a tub, and did her washing with a batten board and a batten stick made by her husband, proving "Necessity the mother of invention."

Mrs. Aaron BARNES (Roxey FENN) with her husband and family came from Sharon, Conn. In 1826. Their journey was by team to Albany, Erie Canal to Buffalo, schooner Minerva to Cleveland, then by team to the western part of Brecksville. In a few years Mr. BARNES died, leaving Mrs. BARNES with a family of six children. She took up her work bravely and cheerfully. Her youngest son, J.J. BARNES tells that he never had a suit of clothes until after he grew to manhood, and was a teacher in a public school - that his mother had not spun, wove and made for him. Surely it may be said of her, "She looked well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed."

She combined the character of friend and neighbor, with that of nurse and physician. Was any one sick, Aunt Roxey BARNES was sent for, and she would take her bag of herbs, to go willingly and gladly. Many have cause to remember her on account of her faithful nursing and her skill in administering herbs.

In 1810 Elizabeth FARRER was married in Washington, Penn., to Andrew DILLOW, and about 1830 came with her husband and two children to Brecksville and settled near the Cuyahoga River. She was truly kind and benevolent. No one could look on her face without feeling her perfect sincerity and goodness. A year or two before, in 1826 or 1827, the Ohio canal was opened up through the Cuyahoga Valley, and the bilious fever raged fearfully; many were stricken by death, calls for help were many and urgent. Mrs. Deacon William OATES, Mrs. Jane BREEN and others of those brave women, never failed or faltered, going night after night, day after day, always ready to say: "Here am I! send me."

Mrs. MORTON's father, Daniel McKAY came to Independence, Cuyahoga Co., about 1820 with his wife, Catherine COATS and five children from Genesee County, N.Y. They had a team of horses and a sleigh, and from Buffalo to Cleveland they drove on the ice of Lake Erie. Mr. McKAY was a fur trader and spent much time with the Indians. Susannah, his daughter, when a child, would spend a week at a time in the Indian wigwam and could speak their language quite well. The Indians would give her fine moccasins to wear, and treat her kindly, giving her all sorts of beads and trinkets. In 1832 Susannah married David MORTON and came to Brecksville, living here for some years. Her last days were spent in the city of Cleveland.

Miss Elizabeth HOLLAND was born in 1789 in Columbia County, N.Y. She was a cousin of Martin Van Buren, President of the United States, and was married July, 1817, to Hugh STEPHENSON, of Kenderhook, N.Y.

In 1818 they came west and located in Richfield, Summit County, Ohio, which was a dense forest; afterward removed to Brecksville, 1831.

Miss Lucy BLISS, eldest daughter of Mrs. Ichabod BLISS, was married in Brimfield, Mass., May, 1815, to Captain John DUNBAR, of Worcester, Mass., a soldier in the war of 1812. In the year 1832 they emigrated with their eight children to the western part of Brecksville. Mrs. DUNBAR suffered much from homesickness the first year or two of pioneer life. She was greatly instrumental in the organization of a church at the Corners of the town, which was subsequently transferred to the Presbyterian church at the Center.

Of her eleven children, Theresa died unmarried at the age of twenty-two years, and three remain in Brecksville. Lucy, her youngest daughter the widow of Burr VAN NOATE; Thomas and Charles H. are retired farmers.

Our oldest, if not our earliest inhabitant is Mother Boyd HESS (Elizabeth SAILOR). She was born in Philadelphia, 1801, and has passed her ninety-fifth birthday. She came to Brecksville about 1840. She lives on her own place, in her own house by herself, and doing her own work, another family occupying rooms in the same house. She remembers seeing LaFayette in the great parade in

Philadelphia, in honor of his visit in 1824. She married John BOYD of Pennsylvania; after his death Tobias HESS.

Mrs. Isaac PACKARD was the first landlady, her husband keeping tavern in a log house, where the congregational church now stands. She was a Miss Polly SMITH, of East Charlemont, Mass.

Mrs. William BURT (Thankful STRONG) was a native of Massachusetts, and an early settler of Brecksville. She was quite a successful horticulturist, having many rare and beautiful plants for those early times, her flower garden being the admiration of everyone.

Mrs. Elizabeth STOOPS CLIFFORD was captured by the Indians during their raid through western Pennsylvania during the latter part of the last century, and carried to the vicinity of Sandusky. She was with the Indians four days, then was rescued by a daring man named BRADY, who was made famous by his great leap clearing the Cuyahoga River near Kent, and the place is known today as "Brady's Leap." Mrs. CLIFFORD came to Brecksville in its early history, and soon after married Lot COTTLE of Brecksville.

Mrs. Jason JANES (Wealthy BURT) was a great reader, but in later years suffered entire loss of sight; she sweetly and patiently endured her affliction. She was a true, earnest Christian, as the lovely character of her daughters testify to their early training and her Christian example. Elizabeth JANES married Frank FERRY of Brecksville; Abbie became Mrs. Chester COGSWELL, of Illinois.

One of our earliest and most efficient teaches, Miss Clarinda EDGERTON, came in 1836 from Massachusetts to visit and uncle, Joseph EDGERTON. She was a woman of unusual culture and refinement.

The next year after her arrival she began teaching in Brecksville. In 1839 she married Isaac OAKS, a resident, and now lives in her pleasant home near the Center with her daughter, Florence. She has passed her four score years, but retains more than usual vigor of mind and body for her years. She has lived to see the log school house give way to a neat frame house, and nearly all these in turn to comfortable, brick buildings.

Among the few early settlers who are still with us are Mr. and Mrs. Moses HUNT; they were formerly of Massachusetts. Mr. HUNT came in 1833, and Miss Emeline DEWEY in 1834, and was married in Brecksville, May 27, 1834 to Moses HUNT. They have walked the way of life together for more than three score years. Theirs is one of the homes where everyone, young and old, desires to visit because of their cordial welcome, and their genial ways. Both have reached an advanced age; Mr. HUNT, eighty-five years, but show a lively interest in the works and workers of today.

With Mrs. HUNT I should remember Hermina THORPE, who came to Brecksville and married Edward RUST in 1832. She was a neighbor, and one of the closest friends of the HUNTS through her life. She was ready with her tender kindness and quick sympathy for all who were burdened or sorrowing.

Mrs. Aquilla WILLETT (Louisa SNOW) was born on the shore of the Atlantic in 1812; her father, Henry SNOW, brought his family from Maine to Ohio by private conveyance. The journey occupied

about four weeks. Shortly after her father settled in Brecksville, a log school house was put up and Miss SNOW placed in charge. She became a very popular teacher, and her services were soon sought by the people of Hudson and Cleveland.

Her first work in Cleveland was in the Old Academy on St. Clair Street. A brief and very happy married life was spent in Kentucky. She afterward returned to Ohio and taught in Norwalk Seminary. At the age of seventy-two she went to California, took up a homestead claim of 160 acres in Alpine, and now lives on a fine ranch beautifully located on the highest point of that region. Her life is spent working for others, and she is always cheery and patient, feeling that when the Father considers her work done, He will take her home.

She says of herself as a child:

“One day we were visited by the father of our teacher; he, the father was himself a thorough, old school teacher. He listened to the reading and criticized, I being the smallest, stood at the foot of the class, trembling, for fear that he might find fault with me, but when I got through reading, he said: ‘There is one who will make a good school teacher in a few years.’

“That was the key note to all future ambition. To be a school teacher was the grandest idea of my young life. At fifteen years of age, I began, and Andrew FREEZE, one of Cleveland’s early educators and superintendents was one of my first summer pupils.”

Miss Emily MOSES came from Victor, N.Y. to Independence with a sister, Mrs. NEWLAND, in 1837, and the next year married Samuel WALLACE of Brecksville. He owned a small farm and the canal boat Florida, which he ran on the Ohio canal. She boated with her husband a few seasons, having her children in the care of an aunt, Mrs. NEWLAND.

Mr. WALLACE died in 1850, leaving Mrs. WALLACE and five children in comfortable circumstances. Mrs. WALLACE was a thorough business woman and by her capability and energy accumulated a landed estate of 330 acres, and personal property that made her one of our wealthiest citizens. Among her many good qualities she was pre-eminently charitable. She fully obeyed the scripture injunction “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” She followed all her children down to the mysterious change from life to death, only Susanna, Mrs. Edward McCREERY remaining, who now occupies her mother’s beautiful home just north of the center.

Mrs. Otis POMEROY (Maria SABIN) came from Massachusetts to Brecksville in early pioneer days. Her daughter Ellen tells of her mother having killed in all more than forty snakes in her house. She lived a year without either table or chair, and one pound of sugar; the sweetening in her home was only what her naturally happy sunny temperament supplied. Her husband would have given up and returned to his eastern home, but for her determination to stay and overcome all difficulties, and make for herself and family a home in this grand state of Ohio, and this fine healthy town of Brecksville.

Marana MORGAN was born in East Bloomfield, N.Y. 1808. Her father, Dr. Isaac MORGAN brought his family to Brecksville in the summer of 1816. He had about two years previously bought a farm in the northern part of the town, cleared some land and built a log house ready for the occupancy

of his family. The lingering illness of his aged mother postponed his plans for two years. After her death the family started on their long journey through the woods to their new home in Ohio. Early in the year of 1830, Marana was married to Thomas J. ALLEN. Mr. ALLEN was the postmaster, and for nearly twenty years their home was at the center of the township. Mrs. ALLEN became the mother of ten children, nine of whom grew to manhood and womanhood. Her husband died in 1849, leaving her the double burden, to direct and provide for her large family alone, and a more devoted and self-sacrificing mother never lived.

In 1853 Mrs. ALLEN married Col. John COATES of N. Royalton, who soon afterward removed with his family to Brecksville.

With a courage born of her unselfishness, Mrs. COATS entered upon the task of rearing the young children of her husband in addition to her own. Her strict sense of justice always tempered with mercy added to her kind, sympathetic disposition, made it possible for her to fill her trying position creditably, and carry her work through to a successful close, when death ended her labors. Her children and stepchildren alike "rise up and call her blessed." She was of a quiet, retiring nature, which added to her many cares kept her closely confined to her family, a small circle of friends and relatives. It could be truthfully said of her "Those who knew her best, loved her most." Col COATES died in June, 1873, and Mrs. COATES never recovered from the strain of his long illness, and the shock of his death. After three months of gradually failing health, she passed away September 26, 1873.

Mary FENN O'BRIEN was born in 1795 at Charlotte, Vermont. She was married to Daniel O'BRIEN in 1812. In the spring of 1817, they emigrated to Brecksville; it was long, tiresome journey. They came with a span of horses in a covered wagon and were thirty-two days on the road. The day after they were married, they adopted two children, Lydia and Joseph, who came to Brecksville with them. When Mrs. O'BRIEN came to Brecksville she had three children, aged four, two years, and an infant ten weeks old, which she bore in her arms all the way. They settled in the northwest corner of the town, which was then a wilderness. He built a log cabin after the usual style, which they occupied a number of years. Their home, like other pioneers, was one of hospitality. Mrs. O'BRIEN was the mother of twelve children, five of whom are now living. She endured the toils and privations incident to a pioneer life. She died in Cleveland in 1876.

Mrs. Lucy Dwight JEWETT, born in Northampton, Mass., married Enoch JEWETT. They moved to Brecksville in 1830. She was the mother of four children.

Fanny CLAPP CLARK, born in Easthampton, Mass, 1789, married Capt. Fred CLARK in 1809. She was the mother of ten children, of whom four sons died in infancy. In July 1830, she with her husband and five children emigrated to Ohio and settled on a farm in the northern part of Brecksville, which was then a wilderness. The last day's ride over the roughest kind of road in a journey in a rough, lumber wagon completed the journey to Brecksville. For want of a better place they went into a shanty, kindly offered them by neighbors, until they could build a cabin.

Soon after they came to Brecksville her husband with neighbors was engaged in cutting a road through the woods one-half mile from their shanty. Mrs. CLARK cooked their dinner, and with her children started through the woods by blazed trees to carry it to them; they got there all right and

then went to a neighbor to spend the afternoon. When time to go home the neighbors went with them to start them on the right track; but Mrs. CLARK, so unused to following blazed trees, soon lost her bearings and they wandered about in the woods completely lost. It grew dark, and to add to the dreariness, began to rain. Mrs. CLARK cried for help, and her shrill wild screams rang out through the deep dark woods. After repeated calls she was heard, and answering calls came faintly to them at first, growing louder and nearer, until after a while great was their joy to find they were at last found by the same kind neighbors they had left a few hours before.

Mrs. Armina DILLOW

Chairman and Historian

Brecksville Committee - Mrs. Martha CHAFFEE, Mrs. Sarah RUST, Mrs. Susan McCREERY, Mrs. Ella BRATTON, Miss Florence OAKES, Mrs. Mary BREEN

Note: The original work transcribed above states "Symon" Frost as the husband of Oriana Payne but this is incorrect. Daneille Grimes of Atlanta, Georgia, a descendant of Oriana Payne Frost, has written telling us that Oriana's husband's name was Lyman Frost, not Symon. This is confirmed by checking both the 1820 census of Cuyahoga County which gives us Liman Frost and the Cuyahoga County marriage records which lists the marriage as Lyman J Frost to Oriana Paine.