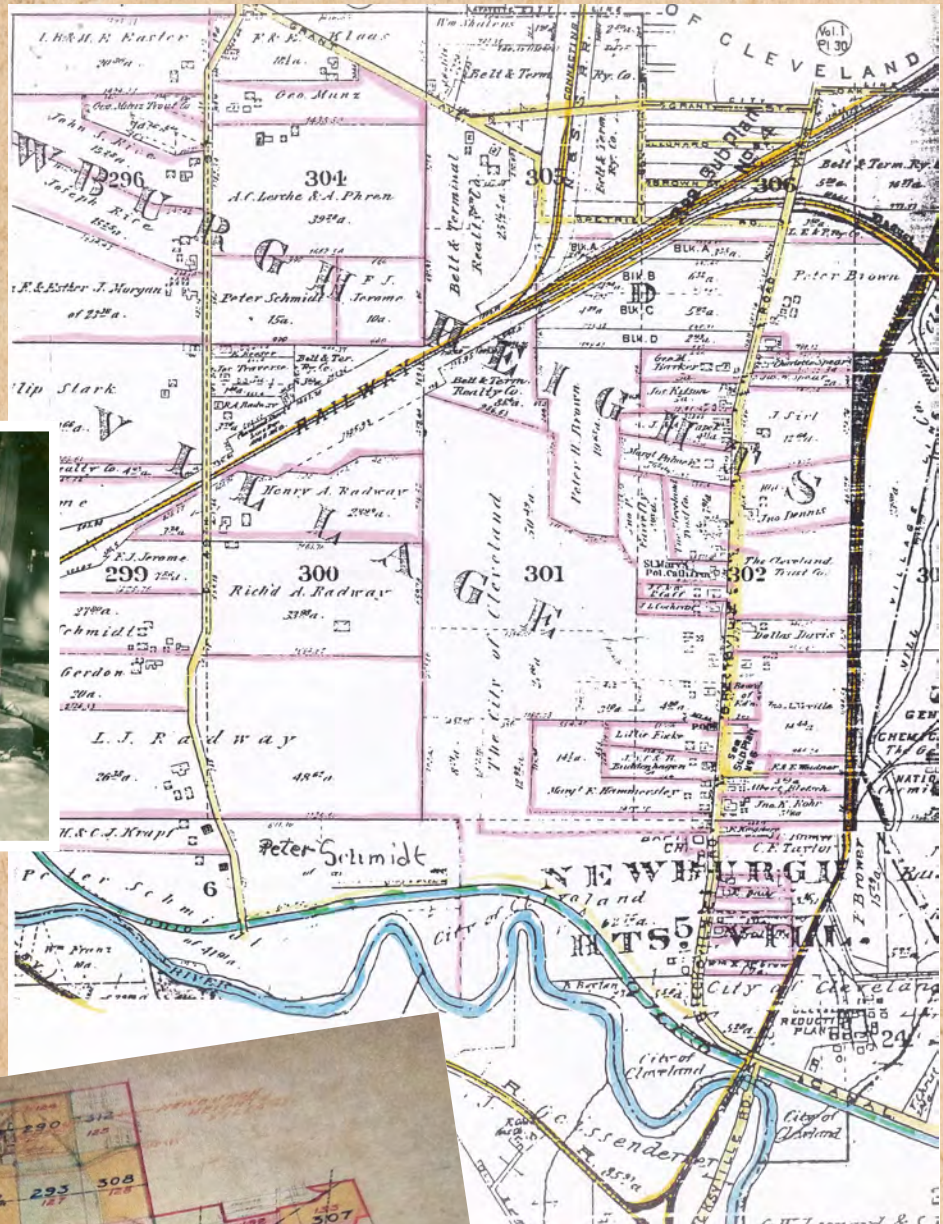


# *Secession and Beyond*



*Original Newburgh Town Hall*

Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Hammersley  
Barn



1919 Map

Willow Township at the time of recession

# Secession and Beyond

by Laura Nicklas Hine

Cuyahoga Heights was established in 1918, and was a quiet, rural community. Agriculture was its major commercial venture. However, industry found the location ideal for expansion and the political climate inviting. The reason that industry found Cuyahoga Heights so ideal was its proximity to the canal, to railroad yards, and an abundance of natural resources such as lumber, sand, and natural gas. Today, with Interstates 77 and 480, and being located right in the heart of Greater Cleveland, industry still finds the location ideal. It had a post office, blacksmith shop, a dairy, a drugstore, two saloons, a dance hall, and many truck farms. In 1918, it had several miles of 10-foot red brick pavement along old Harvard Hill, East 49th Street and East 71st Street. When the automobile arrived, East 71st Street was then called Ohio Route 21. There were massive traffic jams on weekends and holidays at Canal Road and East 71st Street, where the vehicles from Warner Road were funneled across the old East 71st Street bridge that spanned the Cuyahoga River and the Ohio Canal.

When Cuyahoga Heights seceded from Newburgh Township, it took with it the village hall. The first village hall located at 4579 East 71st Street was recently razed. Cuyahoga Heights also ended up with the richest part of the territory—the farmland and industry.

The *History of Cuyahoga County* by Coates in 1924 verifies that Cuyahoga Heights was but recently organized. The officers were: **Mayor Joseph P. Schmidt, Clerk Samuel E. Clapp, Treasurer Robert B. Kerr, Marshal D.L. Davis, Street Commissioner John H. Connors,** and **Council members Charles F. Connors, Clinton W. Gerdon, Isaac G. Kennedy, Elijah Rickard, Al Smith, and Albert Shatto.** The final election was on March 16, 1918. Joseph Schmidt, bachelor and son of a pioneer family which had lived on the same homestead for 60 years, became the village's first mayor.

Samuel E. Clapp was the first clerk of Cuyahoga Heights and also assistant superintendent of the American Steel & Wire Company. He related information about the secession. "Moved by Schmidt, seconded by Hammersley, to hold an election to form a township, as asked by a petition signed by 30 freeholders." What caused these people to want to secede? The residents in what is now the Cuyahoga Heights section were paying higher taxes, yet their area was not improved like the other areas in the township. East 71st Street was only half paved, and East 49th Street had a narrow pavement and faulty sewage lines.

Mayor Anton Linek of Newburgh Heights was asked repeatedly to correct these problems concerning the residents of East 71st Street and East 49th Street, but nothing came of it. Finally, Jesse W. Hammersley, who lived at 4940 East 71st Street for 55 years, gathered 25 citizens in a shed and voted to form the township of Willow, which was the first step necessary before a village could be organized. The election was held on February 2, 1918, and 59 people turned out to vote for secession.

This property later became the Boing family home. The barn shown in the background of the photograph of the Boing girls on page 18 may be the Hammersley barn in which the meeting to secede took place. It is now the home of Frank and Kim Schoeffler.

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The 59 individuals who voted to secede and thus created our Village of Cuyahoga Heights were:

<b>Albert Bletch</b>	<b>Ed Baur</b>	<b>Peter Schmit</b>
<b>George Stark</b>	<b>Louis Farrar</b>	<b>Wm. Baur</b>
<b>J.E. Pennington</b>	<b>Joseph Chapek</b>	<b>W.M. Huy</b>
<b>F.E. Farrar</b>	<b>John Gallitz</b>	<b>C.R. Phillips</b>
<b>S.E. Clapp</b>	<b>J.W. Hammersley</b>	<b>Philip Huy</b>
<b>R.D. Kerr</b>	<b>F.E. Hanousek</b>	<b>Antone Boyert</b>
<b>Joseph F. Schmidt</b>	<b>William Weitz</b>	<b>E. Rickard</b>
<b>C.W. Gerdon</b>	<b>O.M. Carse</b>	<b>Charles Hausman</b>
<b>J.H. Connors</b>	<b>A.E. Batt</b>	<b>R. Lerch</b>
<b>Carl Focke</b>	<b>Thomas Wright</b>	<b>Vincent Crooks</b>
<b>F.W. Clase</b>	<b>George Radway</b>	<b>Antony Wawrzymak</b>
<b>A.J. Schneider</b>	<b>Lou Kennedy</b>	<b>George Vamos</b>
<b>W.M. Morgan</b>	<b>J. Krapf</b>	<b>Charles Kohler</b>
<b>R. Streeter</b>	<b>A. Castle</b>	<b>A. Ray</b>
<b>R.B. Kerr</b>	<b>A.F. Meyer</b>	<b>John Stadler</b>
<b>John Polcen</b>	<b>Ed Lerch</b>	<b>Joe Miller</b>
<b>John P. Walsh</b>	<b>J.C. Pfaff</b>	<b>E. James</b>
<b>I. Kennedy</b>	<b>Julius Schmit</b>	<b>D.L. Davis</b>
<b>Edward Wiedener</b>	<b>W.M. Schmit</b>	<b>A.L. Shatto</b>
<b>Frank Juskolski</b>	<b>John Rohr</b>	

Cuyahoga Heights walked away with four of the five square miles which comprised Newburgh, including the village hall. There was a lawsuit about the village hall, but Cuyahoga Heights won that as well. The lawsuit went further, all the way to the Supreme Court of Ohio, and Cuyahoga Heights came out on top again! No matter that win, there was a downside—Cuyahoga Heights had to assume 83 percent of Newburgh's debts, which were \$270,000+. After 18 years, in 1936, Cuyahoga Heights still owed \$105,000.

During Mayor Schmidt's term, East 71st and East 49th Streets were given new pavement and better sidewalks, and the \$250,000 trunk line sewer on East 71st Street was finally installed. The village built a \$135,000 two-story Georgian town hall during the Depression in 1935, which replaced the original town hall that everyone fought so hard over. The new building served as the heart of government and community center which included a dance hall, auditorium/stage/dressing rooms, club and lodge room, as well as a commercial grade community kitchen. There was a children's playroom and an apartment for the custodian on the main floor. In the lower levels were a bowling alley, billiard tables, and two or three jail cells.

In the early days of the village, truck farms on East 49th Street took their produce and vegetables to the markets in Cleveland. The farms provided plenty of summer work for young men. These men made 10 cents or less an hour but received the bonus of free produce for their families when harvest time rolled around. During the fall canning season, the farmers sold their produce along the streets of the village. Another

## *Cuyahoga Heights Old Town Hall*

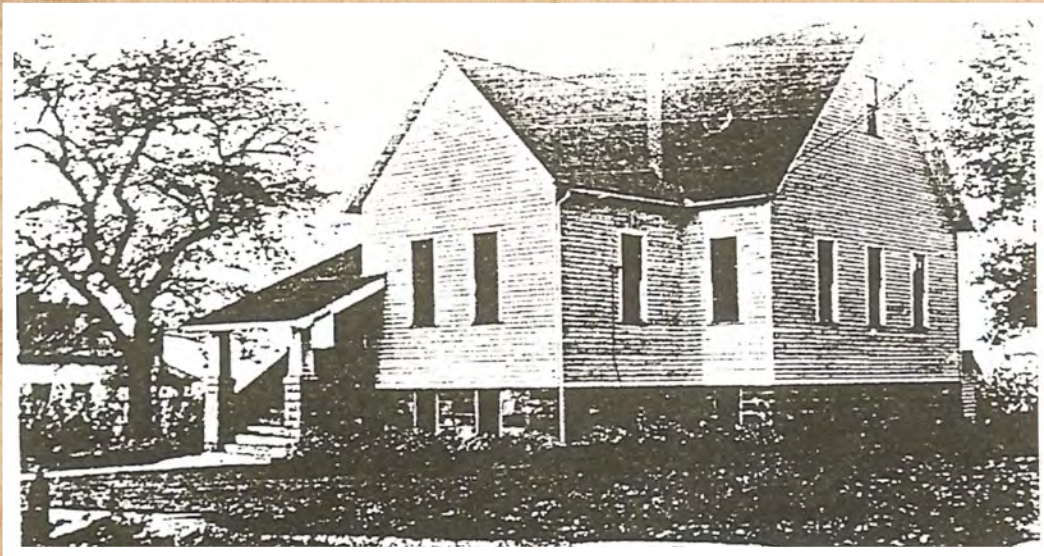


The original Cuyahoga Heights Town Hall was located at 4579 East 71st Street. According to property and tax records, this building was built in 1874. It was not built as a house but probably used as a law or doctor's office, maybe even a bank. It was built 31 years before it became the Newburgh Heights Town Hall. In 1939, Casimiro Pallini bought the building from the village to use as a residence. A number of years ago the building was razed.



## *Original Willow Post Office*

The original Willow Post Office at 4965 East 71st Street was built about 1864. James Kingsbury was the first postmaster.



*Willow Baptist*

Trinity Baptist Church at 4972 East 71st Street was also known as Willow Baptist. The church building was later used for the Toscana Club. The club was destroyed by fire in 1972. The Fraternal Order of Police No. 67 is now located on the property.



*Toscana Club  
1972 Fire*



## Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

interesting tidbit that most are unaware of is that Carl Colombi, one of the founders of Chef Boyardee, was once a treasurer of Cuyahoga Heights Village. The Chef Boyardee plant was located in Newburgh Heights on Harvard Avenue.

The railroad was important in Cuyahoga Heights as well. The New York Central Railroad operated the Marcelline Yards known as Marcy Yards. The Newburgh and South Shore Railroad on East 71st Street served industry in Newburgh and Cuyahoga Heights. The Cleveland Railway Company located its car repair facility and roadbed maintenance facility on Harvard Avenue between East 42nd and East 49th Streets.

The Illuminating Company built a power station at Oak Avenue and East 71st Street. Ohio Bell and the International Telephone and Telegraphy Company established major long-distance centers at East 49th Street and Harvard Avenue. The Pearse brothers operated an ice farm in the ravine near East 49th Street and Harvard Avenue.

The village even had two churches at the turn of the century. The Willow Baptist Mission was erected on the present site of the Toscana Club. Forestdale Presbyterian Church on East 49th Street near Harvard Avenue. Helen Jones, later Mrs. Dustheimer, was the organist and Sunday school teacher at the Willow Baptist Mission. In addition, she taught classes at old Harvard School. The Catholic residents attended St. Joseph on Woodland Avenue; Holy Name Church on Broadway Avenue; Sacred Heart of Jesus Church on East 71st Street; St. Michael's on Brecksville Road; St. Therese Church on Granger Road and several others.

The Kalfas Dairy and Phillips Drugstore formerly stood on the site of the elementary school on East 71st Street. Village residents could buy their gas at the drugstore, which featured a hand-pump in front of the building. The store was later converted into a grocery and meat market by Eugene Jessell. The community store on East 71st Street near Bletch Court served as a post office before the postal delivery service was established. Residents could pick up their mail at the store on their way to buy groceries.

Transportation in and around the village came from the old Forester Bus Line, which was located on East 57th Street and Fleet Avenue. The bus line operated open-air White Motor Company buses manufactured in Cleveland.

The village had always been rich in natural resources and lumber, sand, and gas found in plentiful supply along the Cuyahoga River Valley. During the 1920s, a blight completely destroyed the beautiful chestnut trees. During World War I, the black walnut found in the community, was being used to produce rifle butts.

## Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

When the village was incorporated in 1918, the community was attracting many industries. Some of the operations located here were:

**Angell Nail and Chaplet Company**

**Apex Smelting**

**Austin Powder Company**

**Benjamin-Moore Paint Company**

**Broadhead-Garrett Company**

**Cuyahoga Foundry**

**Dwight-Hinckley Lumber Company**

**Ferro Corporation**

**Gary Lumber Company**

**Harris-Seybold Potter**

**Ohio Crankshaft**

**Pittsburgh Motor Freight**

**Triplex Screw Company**

**Universal Steel**

**U.S. Air Compressor Company**

Successful local ventures in industry included **Klaas Machine Company**, and **Balon Manufacturing Company**. Fred Zenda designed a variety of locally produced metal lamp shades for which he obtained a United States Patent.

Besides farming, local residents found employment at the area brickyards, pottery plants, and the old Cleveland city-owned garbage rendering plant on Canal Road near East 71st Street. In 1898, Ernie Peck and William Macafe started the Newburgh Reduction Company on Canal Road. It became the Cleveland Rendering Company in 1917. Huge gondola cars hauled the food-meat scraps from the West 3rd Terminal to the plant, where giant percolators, digesters, and driers then cooked, steamed, and baked them to reclaim the fatty acid and oils.

The plant was self-sustaining as the oils and by-products were sold to soap manufacturers. The residue and tankage were used for mulching and fertilizing at the truck farms. Many stories of the employees finding silverware from hotel tables, lost jewelry and diamond rings exist. The garbage plant was a source of irritating odors, which penetrated the neighborhoods. It was abandoned in the early 1930s, when the City of Cleveland built a modern incinerator on West Third Street. Garbage and other trash was no longer collected separately. The burning process provided an efficient and economical method of disposal.

In 1917, when the village was part of Newburgh Heights, the City of Cleveland entered into a contract with the village to erect the first sewage waste disposal plant at the Canal Road site. Under the terms of the agreement, the village would receive free sewage treatment services and employment opportunities for village residents. The village administrations were given 50 percent of the job assignments for the area residents when the plant was started during the years 1925 to 1927. The original contract survived three Ohio Supreme Court challenges, but the two villages negotiated their rights and benefits for a cash settlement when federal funding mandated changes. Due to that settlement, both villages were charged for sewage treatment; however, the Village of Cuyahoga Heights continues to pay every resident's sewer bill.



Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



*East 71st Street in the 1920s*

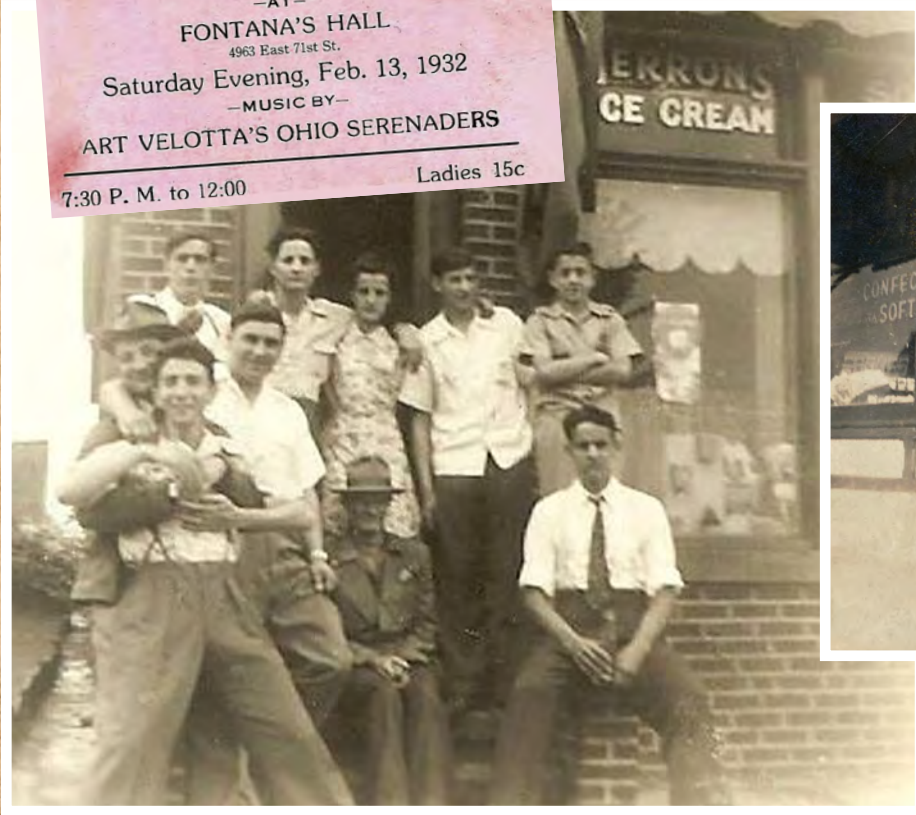
Originally, East 71st Street was a cobblestone road. This picture was taken on the bridge south of Grant Avenue. To the left is Benjamin-Moore Paint Company and on the right is a much larger electric substation. A streetcar is coming from Cleveland and the track shows it could come over the bridge at the time.



*A parade on East 71st Street passing by the Kennedy House and Phillips Drugstore*

## Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial

**DANCE**  
—AT—  
**FONTANA'S HALL**  
4963 East 71st St.  
Saturday Evening, Feb. 13, 1932  
—MUSIC BY—  
**ART VELOTTA'S OHIO SERENADERS**  
7:30 P. M. to 12:00 Ladies 15c



The Fontana Store

## *Kingsbury General Store and Hall*

Kingsbury General Store and Hall at 4963 East 71st Street was built before 1881. The building was later known as the Frank Fontana Store where dances and roller skating sessions were held.

Back Row: Ray Amari, Leo Billi, Sylvia Casavecchia Biro, Unknown, John Pallini

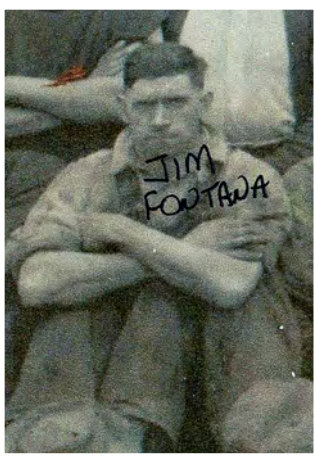
Front Row: Jack Novak, Cleri Adorni, Victor Trevisani, Ed Kruzel, Reno Santini

*4963 East 71st  
Street today*

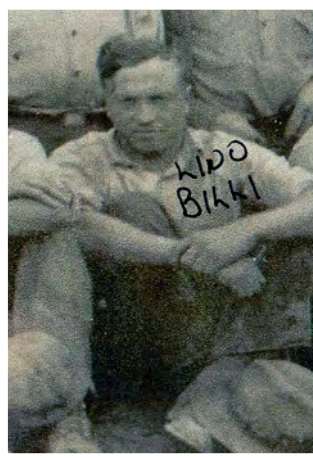
You can see where the original storefront windows and a side door were filled in with brick.



Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial



Jim Fontana



Lino Billi



Placido Pallini

*Workers at the Old Brickyard on May 12, 1931*



*1957 view of the brickyard across Mill Creek*

## Cuyahoga Heights 2018 Centennial