

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 4

Bainbridge Township, Ohio, 44023

Fall/Winter 2010-2011

Bainbridge Road History

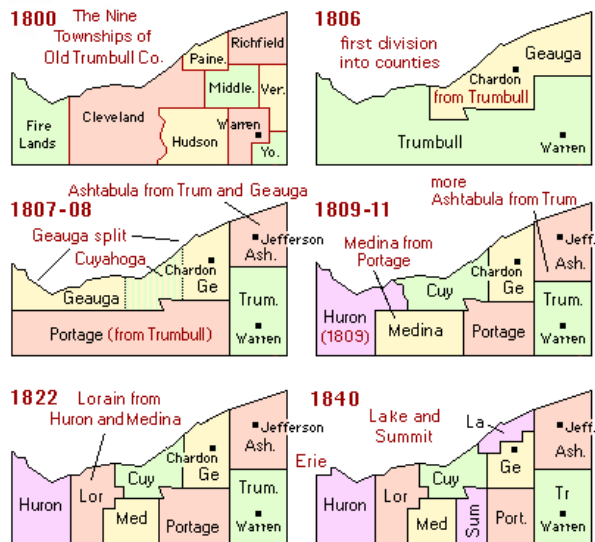
When the Umberfield party arrived in Ohio in 1798, Geauga County did not exist. At that time the area from the Pennsylvania border west to the Cuyahoga River, south of Lake Erie to about Cadiz was called Jefferson County. In 1801 Trumbull County was established and consisted of the land north of the 41st Parallel to Lake Erie and west of the Pennsylvania border to a point approximately south of Sandusky primarily the Western Reserve. It included the present counties of Trumbull, Ashtabula, Lake, Geauga Cuyahoga and part of Huron County.

Land was not selling as anticipated and the Connecticut Land Company had already voted on January 30th, 1798, to lay out their first two roads in the Reserve: namely, the one along the lake shore from the Pennsylvania line to Cleveland (Girdled Road), and the other from Painesville through the northeast part of Jefferson County, (now Geauga County), to the salt springs between Warren and Youngstown.

Pending completion of these roads, General Edward Paine acting in behalf of the Land Company under the road laws of the Territorial Government employed Mr. Abraham Tappan to lay out and open the so-called Chillicothe Road. The road was named after the territorial capitol. This was opened through the Reserve in 1802 thru the centers of Kirtland, Chester, Russell, Bainbridge and Aurora, and continuing beyond the south boundary of the Company's land.

A work crew followed, cleaning the underbrush and felling the trees to allow the passage of a yoke of oxen drawing their supply sled. From such employment little more was then expected or performed than to run a path of least resistance, blaze

Evolution of Ohio Western Reserve Counties



or girdle the trees and clear away undergrowth so that a yoke of oxen and the sled might get through. Fifteen years later, parts of this road were still almost impassable for wheeled vehicles.

Over this road came the early settlers, leaving their homes in western Massachusetts and the adjoining section of New York State to start a new life. They came with increasing frequency as word spread among friends, relatives and neighbors of the fertile, inexpensive land. They came and were warmly greeted by acquaintances already starting to clear the forest and till the land.

In 1806 Geauga County came into existence, so it was no longer necessary to go to Warren with our court and commissioner business, except when it was mandatory that we investigate the records prior to this date. There was a short time when some of the road records of Ashtabula, Lake, and

Cuyahoga counties were recorded in Geauga County. This method of having roads established is still the law of the land, except in the case of subdivisions. When a developer cuts up acreage, he designates where the roads are to be located, builds them to county standards, and dedicates them to the county as public roads, and the county immediately turns them over to the township for maintenance.

If for various reasons the roads are not accepted by the county and remain the property of the subdivision it is responsible for the maintenance and snow and ice removal.

Rules for laying out roads were established by the State of Ohio in 1800. One of the provisions of the state act was that all state roads shall be sixty feet wide. Another provision that each commissioner and surveyor employed to lay out and establish any road was to receive one dollar and fifty cents and all other persons so employed seventy five cents each per day, for their services and the amount of which expenses shall be paid out of the treasuries of the counties wherein such road may be established in proportion to the distance the same may be established.

The width of road right of ways varies. Most widths are stated in the petition, but were omitted on some. So in the late 1800s the state legislature passed a law that established the width of roads. These widths vary between 40 and 66 feet. In the early road building there was nothing specified on the material or the construction of the roads until later in the 1800s.

The early settlers that came to Bainbridge were mostly farmers and the heritage remains in the form of the names of the roads. Taylor-May Road ran past the Taylor and May farms. Haskins Road passed through the middle of the Haskins property. Snyder, Brewster, Giles and Root Roads were also named for early residents.

As time went on and traffic began to change with the automobile coming on the scene, mud roads were no longer acceptable. The question was how to finance and improve the roads. There were two methods suggested and used; one was to assess

the cost on the front foot and the other was by the average acreage benefited in the improvement. The second method was generally preferred and all the land ½ mile from either side of the road was assessed. On some of the larger projects this assessed acreage was extended to one mile on each side.

The county surveyors did the engineering which was normally paid from the general fund or if the road in question was a township charge, the engineering would be paid by the township. Usually a few dollars per mile were taken from public funds, but the bulk of money came from the benefited property. Under this method, many farm owners were forced to sell their property as they experienced difficulty in meeting their assessments.

The outstanding road in Geauga County which probably cost more to build and maintain than any other single road was the "Main Market Road", known today as Rt. 422 through Parkman, Troy, Auburn and part of Bainbridge. This road shows very plainly the different thoughts in road engineering. The original road built in 1918-21 was a 16 foot, ribbon of concrete from Rt. 306 easterly to Warren and from 306 to Chagrin Falls it was brick and was hailed as a super highway at the time.

Remember that when this road was built trucks were running on hard rubber tires and five tons was a big load. There were no tractor-trailer rigs and no semi trailers. Model T was the predominant automobile at that time.

During the 20's and 30's there was a great boom in building roads in the county. The people living on the roads wanted to get out of the mud and dirt and wanted improved roads. Milk trucks, school buses and postal vehicles were traveling the roads daily and maintenance became a real problem. This was also the time of the Great Depression and many were out of work and taxes were a problem.

There was plenty of work for the unemployed to do. Even in the 1930s, the United States still had a largely nineteenth century infrastructure. Rural and secondary roads were for the most part unpaved, and rainy season turned many of them into swamps of mud. The first thrust of the WPA's road-

building program was improving farm-to-market roads and also building new rural roads and bridges where they were needed.

In the early 20s there were no snow plows and the icy roads were opened by the milk truck followed by people with tire chains on there rear wheels.

I have not been able to determine when Bainbridge started an official road department. Going back to the mid 1870's they started to collect a road tax determined by the amount of frontage of property. Records show a tax assessor had been added to the list of township officials. I don't know how that worked out in regard since I was under the impression that the county was in charge of collection of the taxes?

Records also show that we had several road supervisors and they were either appointed or volunteers depending on the portion of the road they lived on. A ledger from the early 1900's shows names of workers from the community that were paid for working on the roads. I remember when I was little that we had the slag pile on our pasture that was accessible by a gate from the road by who ever worked on the road. I found road bonds for all the roads in the township that people who lived on that part of the road where indebted for.

Records show in 1922 a bond of F. H. Minau for Road Superintendant and again in 1926 for Edwin Eames and in 1927 for N.H. Starr. These appointees were apparently responsible for all the roads in the township and worked with the other men in charge of the portion of the road where they lived.

J.W. Scott was Township Clerk in 1927 and he listed in the ledger a mortgage to Milwaukee Harvester Co. and another one to Deering Harvester Co. I would presume one may have been for road grading equipment and the other for a plow. Records also show that most major roadwork was sublet to outside contractors at the time. In 1924 a 2mil levy was okayed for \$12,000 for improvement of Chagrin Road from Bainbridge Center to Chagrin Falls to put slag on the road. Two different companies supplied this.

I found a receipt for a notice in the Chagrin Falls Exponet listing :

Sealed bids will be received until March 10, 1934, by Bainbridge Township Trustees for Road Superintendent for Bainbridge Township Roads. Bids should include local men and not less than one ton truck by the hour.

Said Trustees have the right to reject any or all bids.
BAINBRIDGE TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES.

By Frank Jaros, Clerk

I did not find out who filled this position but I do know that Joe Ziethamel was the road superintendent from 1944 until his retirement in 1968. Dolff Holbrook was his helper and in later year Ronnie Robertson was added to the crew. I remember in Joe's earlier years pulling the grader with the 2 ton truck scraping our roads. A few years later I remember Joe motoring a new big yellow grader and in the winter time they equipped it with a V-blade to push snow. They could not keep up with all the roads of the township with the 2 ton truck.

Later years followed with Howard Benjamin and Howard Eggleston and Alan Halko on the road department. There may have been some others along the way.

Information for this article came from:

1800 State of Ohio Road Description, a hand written document from the State.

History of Bainbridge

History of Geauga County

Gauga County Archives—Bainbridge early 1800 road records.

Roads—Ancient and Modern by Stanlae Merritt, retired Road Superintendent for Geauga County Roads

Bainbridge Township Road Records



Roads in Bainbridge

At a Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Geauga County held at Chardon the fourth day of November the Year Eighteen hundred eighteen. The following petition signed by John Fowler and others. was presented. (to wit)

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners of the County of Geauga We the undersigners humbly Petition that a Committee may be appointed to view the ground and lay out certain Roads in Bainbridge - 1st Beginning on the south line of N^o 6th Range 9th between the Lots N^o 4 and 5 - running North untill it strikes an east and west center Road also an other road beginning near the south east corner of of Lot number two running westerly untill it strikes the bank of a brook. then southwest untill it intersect the road near Mr Hollisters. Also to continue the north and south Road. by Gamaliel Kents to the north line of the Town Bainbridge October 13th 1818 - (Signed) John Fowler. Porter D. McConaughy. William Henry. Orrin Henry. Jonas H. Childs - Jonathan Ely. John Bolles. Joseph Ely. Alexander Osborn. George Smith Asahel North. Eros Kingsley John Henry. Horatio Fowler. Gaml. Kent. Eros Hollister William C. Howard. Elisha L. Kent. George Smith or Robert Smith. ---

There are several of these petitions on file in the archives in Chardon. They are interesting to read. This is one that was proposed in 1818 and was approved. They are all done on legal size paper. I did not print the entirety here.

Follows another proposed road:

To the commissioners of Geauga County, Ohio

We the subscribers inhabitants of the townships of Russell and Bainbridge Townships, hereby pray you to appoint a committee to lay out a road, as follows; commencing at the Northeast corner of said Bainbridge, thence west on the township line to intersect the state road leading to the great falls, in Orange this we shall ever pray January 14, 1836.

This road was approved and surveyed. I presume the road was cleared and used as a road; however it ended up being the right of way for the Interurban railway from Chagrin Falls to Hiram. The right of way is on the Takacs property and we use it as an access road to the back of the property.

Bill Takacs

Officers 2010—2011

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&
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Editor & Publisher

Bill Takacs
440-543-4991

Proof Reading

Harriet Novy

Meetings of the Bainbridge Township Historical Society are held the second Wednesday of the month (September through June) at 7:30 p.m. in the Burns-Lindow Building at the corner of Route 306 and Bainbridge-Solon Road.

**Bainbridge Township Historical Society
P.O. Box 23363
Bainbridge Township**



Town Hall—Circa 1914
Now—Burns Lindow Bldg

Everyone enjoys the refreshments at our meetings so remember when the refreshment sheet gets passed around to be sure to pick a convenient date and add your name to the list. It will make the job of our Refreshment Committee much easier. Barb Phan and Lois Little are our chairmen and will save them time calling around to find volunteers. Please call **Barb Phan, 543-7972**, if you can help.

Thank you to Lois Little for filling in and Hosting the November Meeting.

The December Mtg. (Christmas Party) was cancelled due to weather

Welcome New Members

Nancy Vance

Robert & Sally Lee

Nancy Hammel

David Edmondson

Sally Weinreich

The Geauga Democrat was in error in the below Marriage announcement. **Mr. Artemas Barnard, Jr** should read **Artemas Howard Jr.**

From the Geauga Democrat, January 18, 1871

Married

Marriage Notices, Twenty-five Cents each.

At the Chardon House, January 31, by Rev Van Camp.
Mr. ARTEMAS BARNARD, Jr., and JOSEPHINE M. HASKINS, both of Bainbridge, Geauga County, Ohio.

Just a Reminder—Annual dues are payable in September but no later than December—\$10.00 for singles, \$20.00 for family. Life Membership—\$100.00. Make checks payable to *Bainbridge Township Historical Society*. Pay Marge Cook at the meeting or mail to her at 116 Leaview Ln., Chagrin Falls, OH 44022.

Bainbridge Township Historical Society Newsletter
P.O.Box 23363
Bainbridge Twp.OH 44023-0363

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MATERIAL – PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

2010 - 2011 Meeting Schedule

January 12th 2011 - Marjorie Cook will do a presentation about the Haskins family. The Haskins were some of the first settlers of Bainbridge. They came here in the 1800s.

February 9th 2011—Sylvia Wiggins will speak on “Geauga County Landmarks”.

March 9th 2011—Program needed

April 13th 2011 – Carol Erickson is coming back to talk about how Manfred Klein called her and asked her to assist him in the U.S. in bringing back 24 dragon teeth from the Sigfried Line to Irving, Texas. Manfred Klein was commissioned by the German Government to do this.

May 11th 2011—Gilbert Tru will speak on his 11,000 mile trip across Canada to Alaska Trip

June 8th 2011 - Annual picnic, location to be announced later

Check out our web page www.bainbridgemory.org