

***A look back at Blue Ash History...***

For a rural community like Blue Ash in the 1800s, the railroad played a major role in the evolution of pocket communities throughout the area. The following is a history of suburban development as transportation options were introduced to areas northeast of Cincinnati.

As soon as the railroad tracks were laid and the train operated through Blue Ash, a flurry of subdivisions was approved for the Blue Ash area, often located near a station or along the tracks.



CL&N engine No. 3 and crew at the Cooper Road crossing  
photo courtesy of Arthur F. Gloss

**Terra Alta** - by James W. Sibley, approved on January 19, 1885. Streets in the subdivision, platted on both sides of the railroad, were Belleview, Alpine and Cherry. A station was located just south of Belleview and East Railroad Avenue on Sibley's original subdivision plat. In the 1889 plat of the second portion of Terra Alta by Ellman and Humbrecht, the railroad stop is located on Blue Ash Avenue and Belleview, indicating the East Railroad Avenue had been renamed Blue Ash Avenue.

**Blair & Lewis** - on April 26, 1888, J. A. Blair and William C. Lewis had a subdivision with 308 lots approved along Madisonville Avenue (Kenwood Road today) south from Cooper Road. A long, rectangular subdivision, the lots ran along Madisonville Avenue and Lewis Avenue. The cross streets were Graham, Blue Ash, Boyle and Blaire.

**Archibald Johnston** - Johnston's subdivision was recorded on May 24, 1888 and ran north of Hunt Avenue along West Avenue with Perry and Brown Avenues the cross streets. There were 72 lots approved in the subdivision for Archibald and Mary Johnston.

**Smith** - Smith's subdivision, south of Cooper and north of Brown Avenue, was approved on March 15, 1889, north of Johnston's subdivision. There was 74 lots approved on Highland, Ridgeway and Cooper Avenues. On this subdivision plat, Cooper Avenue runs east and west and turns south to Brown Avenue.

**Meyer's Grove** - James G. Chrispin's first subdivision at Meyers Grove in Section 11 along the CL&N railroad tracks and Vorhees Avenue was approved on April 30, 1889. The 153 lots were approved on the following streets: Brasher, Bell, Meyers, and Grove. This railroad stop was the one used to enter Highland Grove amusement park at today's Kenwood Road.

**Terra Alta Second** - A second subdivision was approved at Terra Alta by Ellman and Humbrecht on April 12, 1889, for 218 lots on the following streets: Ellman, Leslie, Elsmere, Floral, Edward and Victor. This section of Terra Alta is located north of the first subdivision and is south of Hunt Avenue and west of the CL&N railroad. The Terra Alta train stop was located at the southeast corner of the subdivision.

**Conklin** - On July 16, 1890, John T. Conklin's subdivision was approved. It ran from Railroad Avenue west to Conklin Avenue, bordered by Hunt

Avenue on the south and Cooper Avenue on the north. There was 67 lots approved in the subdivision which also ran along Highland Avenue and Perry Street. Anna L. and John T. Conklin signed the plat.

**Arcadia** - Originally part of the Joel Malsbary estate which appears on county maps as early as 1847, Arcadia subdivision was recorded by Ida B. and Wilson Hunt on August 15, 1889. On May 24, 1890, Henry R. Wellman purchased about 26 acres from the Hunts. A title search, made for the purchase by Mr. Wellman, showed that ownership of the land had passed from J. C. Symmes to Joseph Meeker, to Moses Chandler, to Jonathan Dayton, to Theodorus Johnston, to Cornelius Crist, to Abramham Crist, to John H. Piatt, to Phillip Grandin, to Samuel Malsbary.

Samuel Malsbary died leaving three heirs: John, Jacob and Joel. Joel and Jacob executed deeds for their undivided one-third each to Joel, which gave him good title to an entire tract of 150 acres. He held this tract until his death, after which a partition suit was filed in which about 26 acres were given to Lorena Malsbary, the a minor.

Lorena married Harry C. Lang, and on July 26, 1889, she sold the lot to Wilson Hunt for \$6,000. Mr.

Wellman purchased 26 acres but did not develop the subdivision, and only a few houses were built.

**Earndale** - This subdivision, located directly north of Arcadia, was approved in 1890 in a plat signed by A. S. Lowenberg, Fanny Lowenberg and Ralph Braenn. There were 107 lots approved east of Madisonville Avenue (Kenwood Road) along the following streets: Prospect, Fairview, Elberon and Glenway Avenues.

**Little Farms** - William E. Harmon had Little Farms “near Cincinnati” platted in Section 15 on March 25, 1918. Owners of the land were Charles F. Conklin, Alice G. Miller, Alfred Miller, and William H. Harmon. The subdivision had 65 lots approved from the railroad on the east to Cooper Avenue on the west along Conklin, Miller and Northfield Roads.

**Hazelwood** - Consisting of 99 acres, the site was owned by Thomas Smith. Wood, Harmon and Co. platted the subdivision and opened it to the market in 1888. In 1894 there were two stores, a schoolhouse and a population of 100. The subdivision lay along both sides of the CL&N railroad tracks at Cornell Road between Deerfield and Kenwood Roads.

Source: “*History of Blue Ash, Ohio 1791-1991*”,  
by Mary Lou Rose



## Oakwood Park in Hazelwood Dedicated

The dedication of the newly improved Oakwood Park was held on Thursday, June 11. The project consists of a new community shelter and playground, updated basketball courts, new restrooms and additional parking. The BAHS was pleased to contribute to the project by researching the history of Hazelwood and furnishing the photos and text for the new historical marker at the park’s entrance.



## Are There Still Blue Ash Trees in Blue Ash?

Yes, there are - two stately blue ash trees flank the flagpole outside the Municipal Building on Cooper Road. Others are scattered throughout the city, including on UC Blue Ash campus. The name blue ash is derived from the black dye extracted from the tree's inner bark through immersion in water. European colonists and American pioneers used this dye to color yarn for use in the production of textiles, sewing, crocheting, knitting, weaving, and embroidery. Blue Ash wood is used to make flooring, baseball bats, furniture, tool handles, crates and barrels. The city of Blue Ash drew its name from the blue ash trees in the area, the logs of which were used to build many of the community's earliest buildings.

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## Hunt House Update

We are happy to report that the extermination of the pesky wood-eating beetle has been completed. The city will now go to bid for the rebuilding of the house and to make it safe for us to get back in and once again host tours and return to archiving. This process will more than likely take all of summer and go into the fall.



Now that the recreation center opens again we hope to return to archiving in our new temporary quarters in their lower level.

We'll keep you posted on further developments - we can't wait to see you!

## Victorian Era Parlor Games



As we continue to shelter at home and practice social distancing, this would be a good time to enjoy some popular parlor games that would have been played by families and guests in the 1800s. These would have included board games (chess and checkers - known as draughts in the 1800s), card games (Whist, poker, snip-snap-snorum), and standard children's games such as charades, London Bridges, hide and seek, marbles, dominoes, follow the leader, yo-yos, etc.

One interesting card game found in a book from 1881 titled *Cassell's Book of In-door Amusements, Card Games, and Fireside Fun* by Cassell & Company is called Beggar My Neighbor and is described thus:

“This game, although requiring no amount of intellectual power, has been, and no doubt still will be, a source of great amusement. The cards are dealt, face downwards, equally to as many as wish to join in the game. The first player begins by putting down the first card. If it be a one, two, three or anything but a court card, he continues putting down one after another until at last he turns up a court card. If this turn-up be a king, his neighbor must pay to him three cards, if a queen two cards, and if a knave one card. When the payment is made, the first player takes up the whole of the cards that have been laid down, and puts them underneath those in his hand. If, however, among the cards that were paid to the first player the second player should have played a court card, he receives payment in the same way from the third player; and if when the third player is playing he puts down a court card, he receives payment from the fourth player, and so on, the cards being taken up each time by the person who receives his due in ordinary cards.”

Other examples of Victorian era games from this book can be found at [www.gutenberg.org/](http://www.gutenberg.org/) files. Enter the name of the book *Cassell's Book of In-Door Amusements* in the search box. There's also an interesting website, [Petticoats and Pistol.com](http://Petticoats and Pistol.com) that offers many clever suggestions.

Thanks to BAHS member Marlene Morris for bringing this to the attention of our readers!