

# THE HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE OF SUGAR BUSH KNOLLS



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## **DEDICATION**

This history endeavor is dedicated to those who have made the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls possible -- the creators, the improvers, and the maintainers -- without whom the Village would not have become nor been sustained.

James R. Beal  
Nancy K. Stillwagon

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## INTRODUCTION

From the vision of John Davey to the work of Martin L. Davey and Martin L. Davey, Jr., to the organizational efforts of Cyril Porthouse and the early residents of the Sugar Bush Knolls Association, the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls has been created. Its endurance will be determined by you, the residents of the Village, through your enthusiasm and enjoyment in living here and in your continued desire to serve and improve the neighborhood in which you live. For all these reasons and through the efforts of all these people the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls was founded and remains "*a place to call home*".

We have not reprinted herein the original 'History of the Village' as can be found on our Village web site. It is the original and important statement of the history of Sugar Bush Knolls. As such, it should stand on its own.

Looking back into history one may discover how our Village, in its geological, cultural, social, and political sense, fits into it. [Historically, most things change over time; spelling is no exception. We will see Streetsborough become Streetsboro and Cleaveland become Cleveland. Other changes in spelling and names may simply remain a mystery for now.]

## CHAPTER 1

### **THE LAST ICE AGE: Shaping the land around us with rolling countryside and nearby lakes**

The topography of Sugar Bush Knolls Village and its surrounding area is comprised of a broad, gently rolling sedimentary surface dissected by major north-south valleys cut by pre-glacial streams during the Paleozoic era, 600 million to 230 million years ago. Our northern portion of this geologic area is known as the Appalachian Plateau. The Standing Rock in the Cuyahoga River, at the eastern border of the Standing Rock Cemetery in Kent, is a remnant of this Sharon conglomerate as the river made its cut through the sedimentary bedrock.

This sedimentary landscape was then overridden by glaciers during the Pleistocene era, "the great ice age" 2.6 million to 11,700 years ago, that left unconsolidated deposits of glacial debris from these eroded pre-glacial land surfaces. This same geologic action formed our Great Lakes and gave rise to our gently rolling countryside dotted with small glacial lakes such as East and West Twin Lakes. Glacial-born rock or "drift" was also deposited to create many distinct land forms (mounds, hummocks and ridges). These glacial

deposits provided the area with an abundance of sands and gravels that have since developed into numerous surface mining operations.

The ice advanced several times over this area during the Pleistocene Period. The principal glacial ice advances for our immediate area were the Late Wisconsin Woodfordian (also known as the Hiram ice sheet) that entered from the Lake Erie Basin and swept south onto the Appalachian Plateau, and the Navarre or Kent ice sheet. The latter ice sheet formed the great outwash and kame deposit along the course of the Cuyahoga River to the outwash fan from the south in Canton. The sand and gravel mine on Route 43 just south of Twin Lakes is a result of outwash deposits from this Kent ice sheet. The Twin Lakes are the products of abandoned ice blocks left in the Kent kame moraine deposits. The topography surrounding the lakes, and particularly the golf course in Twin Lakes, is an example of the gently rolling nature of the Kent kame moraine, deposited as the ice retreated.

If you travel northward on Route 43 toward Streetsboro, from Twin Lakes to our Village's northern border, you will ascend the hill that is a termination of the Hiram ice sheet moraine. This Hiram moraine geology can be experienced as you continue to drive northward over the rolling hills

on Route 43 toward Streetsboro. This journey takes you from the Twin Lakes edge of the Kent Ice Sheet kame moraine, northward up the Route 43 hill transitioning to the end of the Hiram Ice Sheet. The ice age therefore contributed to the geographic boundaries of our Sugar Bush Knolls and Twin Lakes communities.

While the Kent Ice Sheet was the creator of the Twin Lakes, our Sugar Bush Knolls Village lakes, Lake Martin and Lake Roger, were the man-made products of industrious individuals from the Davey Tree Company. There will be more written about their construction later in this history.

## **RESOURCES**

K/H Geology Field Guide Series - SOUTHERN GREAT LAKES, R. Feldmann, A. Coogan, R. Heimlich, 1977

Glossary of Glacial Terminology, Bruce F. Molina, USGS Open File Report 2004-1216

## CHAPTER 2

### NATIVE AMERICANS: Dwellers and Portagers

#### Pre-settlement era

The oldest Native Americans documented in this area of Portage County were the Adena who occupied this part of Ohio from 800 B.C. to 700 A.D. The Adena were expert artisans in bone, stone, copper and mica. They were also the first of the known mound builders in this area; however, they were not the last. An excavation of an Adena burial mound on the south shore of Lake Rockwell was undertaken in 1955.

The most advanced of the prehistoric people in this area were the Hopewell who inhabited Ohio from roughly 300 to 1200 A.D. An example of their geometric burial mound building can be found nearby in Towner's Woods Park, off Ravenna Road near Lakes Rockwell and Pippin. The mound, overlooking Lake Pippin, was excavated in 1932. Eleven prehistoric burials were discovered there along with large quantities of copper beads, slate ornaments, large sheets of worked mica, and flake knives. Some of the artifacts are in possession of

the Portage County Historical Society. The mound is now marked with a large carved stone.

### **Post-settlement era**

In his *Recollections of an Old Settler of May 1804*, Christian Cackler recounted: "At that time this country was an unbroken wilderness, filled with wild men and wild animals." There were 40 Indians to every white settler and not a single house in all of Franklin Township. Three tribes inhabited this section of the country - the Senecas, the Taways and the Chippeways. Seneca Chief John Bigson had his headquarters in Streetsboro on land owned, at that time, by Samuel Olin.

In his memoirs, Cackler spoke of the hardships the settlers faced and mentioned his respect for the Indians who lived easily and comfortably in a land that proved to be so hostile and daunting to the settlers. In 1804, according to Cackler, farming was a grim enterprise. *"The three acres of corn that we planted was all destroyed by squirrels, blackbirds, coons and porcupines, before it was large enough to roast; not an ear came to maturity."* Later in 1816, he wrote of another year's crop, *"I planted corn and worked it entirely with the hoe. The birds and animals were so numerous that it required*

*constant vigilance to save any of it. It was a constant warfare, and at best I could get but the smallest half. It was trying to a man's patience and courage to work that way. We depended on the woods for our meats and got our bread wherever we could."*

In contrast, the Native Americans had learned long ago to cope with the environment that proved to be so hostile to the settlers. *"In the spring, they (Indians) would scatter out over the hunting grounds, each family by themselves, and build their wigwams for the summer. There were all sorts of game around them, and the Indians were almost as an animal among animals. They did not shoot one of them unless they got close to them, so as to make sure work of it. They were as careful of their game as we were of our cattle; they would kill nothing unless wanted for present use.*

*The Indian was placed in the happiest condition of any race of people that I ever saw. The God of nature had provided everything that the heart could wish for. They had nothing to vex or perplex, or to disturb the mind. They gave no thought for the morrow, but let every day provide for itself. They had no government expenses, no taxes to pay,*

*no jails to build, no locks to buy to secure their property, which was always secure, if they put it out of reach of the dogs and wolves. They meant to make honor and honesty their rule of life, and when they left their camps, they set up sticks to signal that there was nobody at home, and everything was secure.*

*I think the Indian is the happiest man in the world, in the wilderness. He can get up, kill and slay the fattest of the land, and lie down and take his ease, and no one to molest or to make him afraid. I have often inquired why it is, that the man of the forest is so much more honest than the civilized and Christianized world?"* Clearly, for Cackler, the hardships of the life of a settler instilled an admiration for the Indian. Cackler admired how naturally and easily the native coped with his surroundings.

Portage County derives its name from the fact that the Indians would travel through it carrying their canoes amongst the rivers. The Big Beaver Trail, traveled by the native Americans, wound its way from the Mahoning River into Franklin Township where it crossed the Cuyahoga River at Standing Rock in Kent. The Indian presence in our area began at least a thousand years before white settlers came and named the rivers and lands. Our

adjacent land area of Franklin Township was named for Franklin Olmstead, son of Aaron Olmstead who purchased this part of the Connecticut Western Reserve.

Pieces of bark would be tied to the trees growing atop Standing Rock, to indicate the direction the native traveler was headed. The earliest settlers in the county generally lived on good terms with the native American tribes in this area, visiting each others' encampments frequently. Christian Cackler described many visits in his memoires, including trips to John Bigsons's encampment on property owned by Samuel Olin, northeast of the Village, in Streetsboro, between Diagonal Road and the Cuyahoga River.

## **RESOURCES**

Portage Pathways, Loris Troyer, Kent State University Press, 1998

Recollections of An Old Settler, Christian Cackler, 1874, Fifth Printing 1992, Roger Thurman, editor

Portage Heritage, Portage County Historical Society, Sesqui-centennial Edition, 1957

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE CONNECTICUT WESTERN RESERVE**

#### **First Claims**

At the end of the Revolutionary War thirteen colonies became independent of each other and of all other ruling powers of the world. Each colony had been settled under the protection of the King of England by a charter for its government and its rights to land therein. Unfortunately, the King's knowledge of the geography of the new world was very limited. Patents for lands granted often interfered with each other, causing confusion and disputes when the same land or territory was granted to different colonies. Thus, the territory comprising the eleven counties of northeastern Ohio, containing 3,459,753 acres exclusive of the islands of Lake Erie, was granted to New York and Connecticut as well as to Virginia.

In 1662 King Charles II of England granted to the colony of Connecticut all lands contained between the forty-first and forty-second parallels of north latitude, and from the Providence Plantations of Rhode Island on the east to the Pacific Ocean on the west. For many years following the Revolutionary War interfering claims caused considerable acrimony between the Union and the

state of Connecticut. The controversy finally ended because the United States relinquished all other claims and guaranteed to Connecticut the exclusive right to these lands, excluding the waters of Lake Erie. The territory was thus named the Connecticut Western Reserve. Under the terms of the compromise, the United States reserved the right of jurisdiction by which it united the Western Reserve to the Northwest Territory and created the State of Ohio.

Our Ohio Western Reserve, of which Portage County is a part, is bounded on the north by Lake Erie, on the east by Pennsylvania, on the south by the 41st parallel of north latitude which correlates to the southern boundary of Huron, Medina and Portage counties, and on the west by the counties of Sandusky and Seneca. Its width, east to west, is 120 miles. Its length, north to south, is an average of 50 miles. A half-million acres was stricken from the western end of the territory and donated by Connecticut to the sufferers of fire during the Revolutionary War when British Brigadier General Benedict Arnold burned the city of New London in 1781. In local history, these lands are known as the "Fire Lands."

Following separation of the Fire Lands, the state of Connecticut sold its Western Reserve land holdings to the Connecticut Land Company which surveyed the land into ranges five miles wide running north to south. The ranges were then divided into townships five miles in distance east to west. The Connecticut Land Company then sold these townships by issuing certificates in the company. These certificates were principally marketed in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York. Consequently, New England society was transferred to the Western Reserve, and with it came habits of thought, religion, ideas of education, enterprise, industry and well-being. When Trumbull County was formed in 1800, it comprised the whole of the Western Reserve. Geauga county was next created from Trumbull and laid out. Portage County became the third county, on February 10<sup>th</sup> of 1807; it was the second one to be organized from Trumbull.

Although Moses Cleaveland brought the original surveying party into the Western Reserve of northeastern Ohio in 1795, it was Amzi Atwater who led the second surveying party of the Connecticut Land Company in 1796 and laid out Portage County's townships and other areas. Thus, Franklin and Streetsboro townships were formed

and the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls was eventually created from these two townships.

## **RESOURCES**

New Historical Atlas of Portage County Ohio Illustrated, H. L. Everts & co., 1874

Portage Heritage, Portage County Historical Society, Sesqui-centennial Edition, 1957

Portage Pathways, Loris Troyer, Kent State University Press, 1998

**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE GREAT STREETSBOROUGH HUNT OF**  
**1819**

The lands of Franklin and Streetsboro Townships were certainly a very different place in the early 1800s, as told by Christian Cackler in his work, *Recollections of an Old Settler*. The wildlife that dine on our flowers and shrubbery in our yards today seem entirely tame compared to the fierce and relentless creatures that faced the early settlers. In his recounting of the hunt, Cackler gave a sense of the mixed emotions he had about the event, its necessity and outcome. On one hand, the predators of the forest were a constant threat to the settlers and their livestock. On the other hand, he questioned the character and the actions of some of the persons involved and raised doubt as to some of the benefits of such a slaughter of the wild animals. One cannot imagine the magnitude of such an endeavor today. As you will come to understand, those were certainly different times from our present day. Christian Cackler recounted the following:

*"The township of Streetsborough was not settled for many years after those around it. It was all owned by Titus Street, from whom it was*

*named, and who drew it as a member of the Connecticut Land Company in 1798, containing 16,000 acres, being No. 4 in the ninth range. It was a famous place for bears, wolves, wild cats, woolynigs, deer and other smaller animals. The bears killed our hogs, and the wolves our sheep and calves and sometimes our yearlings. We could risk nothing unless our eyes were on it most of the time.*

*The settlers in the townships around Streetsborough, Hudson on the west, Franklin on the south and Aurora on the north, determined to have a big drive, surround the township and kill off the wild animals. A committee was appointed to arrange matters, who marked off thirty or forty acres a little south of the center, where the old sawmill stood, into which the game was to be driven. The men from each township were to be on the line of the township of Streetsboro' next to them, at ten o'clock in the morning. The swamps were frozen, and there was about three inches of snow, and a good day for the hunt. Most of the regular hunters were opposed to the hunt, for the game was all their dependence, and I was one of them. I started out early with my dog, to be on hand when the game started. I took my position on a dry piece of ground a little south of the center, and sat down on a log.*

*I soon heard a crashing noise in a hollow about forty rods off, and walked to a large whitewood tree. Looking up, I saw the head of a huge bear sticking out of a hole in the tree. I drew my rifle on his eye. When it cracked he fell back into the tree with a wonderful kicking and smashing, but was soon still. I saw where three more bears had left the tree and sent the dog after them. In about half a mile he overtook and ran all of them up a tree. When I got sight of them the old one was about forty feet from the ground, on one side of the tree. I took to a tree to shoot her, but before I got there she came down and took to boxing the dog, and finally to hugging him as though she loved him. I ran up to within about two rods, but could not fire without hitting the dog. She would hug him and then ease up, and every time he would work from under her. The dog got loose and came running towards me, and the bear, whirling around, saw me and made as straight for me as a bee line. When she was about eight feet from me I fired, and happening to hit her right, she dropped. I was a little scared, and ran back to load my gun. The dog was worrying her, when she got up and knocked him away. She went about fifteen feet to a big tree and set herself down between its large roots, her back to the tree. There she sat like a person in an arm chair, to keep off the dog. By the time I got my gun loaded she fainted, tumbled over*

*and gave up the ghost. She was the most frightful looking animal I ever saw as she came at me, her bristles sticking forward, her eyes like balls of fire, and her nose turned up, showing her teeth furiously.*

*While we were at the tussle, the other two came down the tree and ran off. I set the dog after them, and in about a mile he treed one of them, which I shot and carried back to the old one. Then I began to hear the horns and bells in different directions, and to see the deer bounding along ahead of the men on the lines. When they came up I fell into the ranks and marched up to the ring or slaughter pen. When it was closed up there was the greatest sight I ever saw. There were over one hundred deer and a large number of bears and wolves. As they ran around the ring the guns cracked like battle. The deer came around in great flocks like a storm. It was a splendid sight to see so many deer with their large antlers. The hunters got together and when the droves came around would make a gap in the lines and let them out. They ran out in large flocks and then the gaps were closed up to keep in the bears and wolves. The firing was kept up till we thought they were all dead but one; he was wounded, and came hopping around the ring, eight or ten rods from the line, everybody hollering "Wolf, wolf, wolf," and firing a perfect*

*storm of bullets. He was shot down before he reached us.*

*Phillip Williard, of Rootstown, and Samuel Curtis, of Hudson, were standing together and both fired at the wolf. He fell and Williard ran up to the wolf; Curtis claimed the scalp as his, and took hold of the wolf. They pulled and hauled the wolf around a while, then dropped him and went at each other with their fists. They were about the same size and well matched. They made the blood flow pretty freely, but after a long and hard pull, Willard outwitted Curtis and got the better of him. When they got up to look for the wolf, he was scalped and gone. A wolf scalp was worth seven dollars, a big pile of money for those times. When all were collected there were over sixty deer, seven bears and five wolves, but a number of wolves got away.*

*The wolf is the most cunning of animals. When they find themselves cornered they hide in tree tops or under old logs. When we went to gather up the game, a number of wolves started off. We thought there were twelve bears and six wolves killed that day, for many that were killed were not brought in. David Grier, Dr. DeWolf, Wm. Frazier and many others followed on horseback behind the line, and what was killed they put aside and went on for more, or it was so said. The same*

*game was played in other directions, and it was not certainly known what game was killed.*

*It was divided into four piles, one for each of the four townships, when they cast lots for choice, and each took its pile and marched away. Franklin township sold theirs for whisky, and had a high time, benefitting nobody by the destruction of the game. Many families suffered in consequence, whose whole dependence for meat was in the wild game of the forest. This country could not have been settled had it not been for the wild animals to furnish meat, and their skins for clothing for us. The beaver, otter, mink and muskrats supplied us with hats or caps."*

With roughly two-thirds of our Village carved from Streetsboro Township's southern border with Franklin Township, one might wonder if the hunters from this event walked our Village land to commence the wild animal drive. Could they have walked through the very property where you live? History knows the answer. Christian Cackler probably knew it too.

## **RESOURCES**

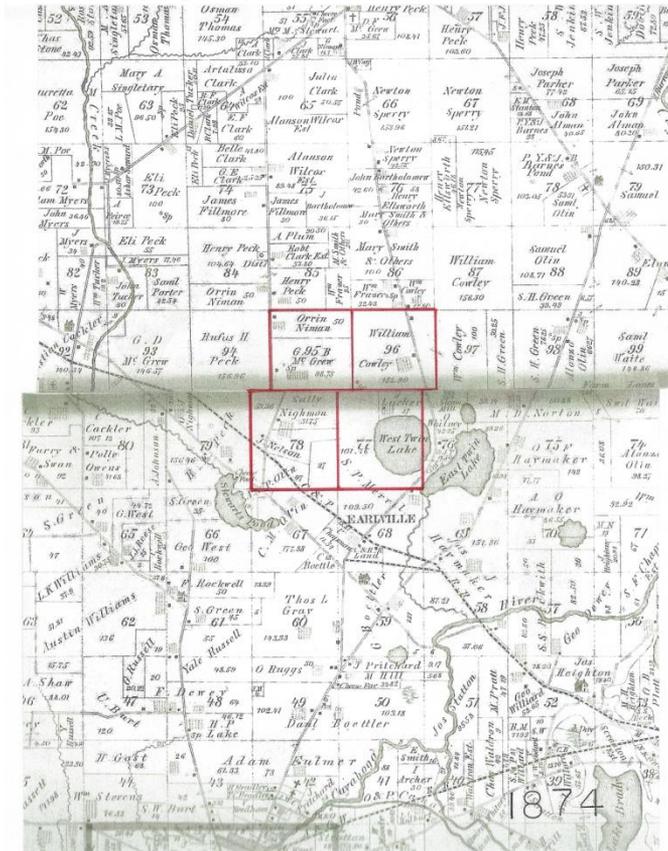
Recollections of An Old Settler, Christian Cackler, 1874, Fifth Printing 1992, Roger Thurman, editor

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FRANKLIN AND STREETSBORO TOWNSHIPS: The Land Divided**

Franklin Township, comprising 16,000 acres, was purchased from the Connecticut Land Company in 1798 by Aaron Olmstead, John Wyles and James Bull, of Hartford Connecticut, for the sum of \$30,000.00. Similarly, Streetsborough (with an extra 'ugh') Township was purchased in the same year from the land company by Titus Street for the sum of \$22,846.00 for its 15,279 acres.

## Early Settlers and Land Owners – See accompanying maps



### 1874 Map

Once the townships of Franklin and Streetsboro had been purchased from the Connecticut Land Company, further subdivision through smaller land

purchases commenced. Land from lots 95 and 96 along the southern border of Streetsboro Township was added to form approximately two-thirds of the northern portion of our Village. According to the 1874 Portage County Atlas, lot 95 was owned by G. B. McGrew. It is shown bordering Ferguson Road and is indicated with symbols for an orchard and a farmhouse (see map). Lot 96 was owned by William Cowley and borders what is now Route 43. It too is indicated with symbols for an orchard and a farmhouse (see map). Land from lots 77 and 78 along the northern border of Franklin Township was added to form the southern third of the Village. Again, according to the 1874 Atlas of Portage County, lot 78 bordering Ferguson Road, was owned by Sally Nighmon and was depicted with an orchard and a farmhouse (see map). Lot 77 was split into eastern and western sections. The eastern portion of lot 95, bordering Route 43 according to the Atlas, was owned by J. Lucker and contained an orchard and a farmhouse (see map). The western portion of lot 77 was owned by S. P. Merrill in conjunction with adjacent lands to the south (see map).

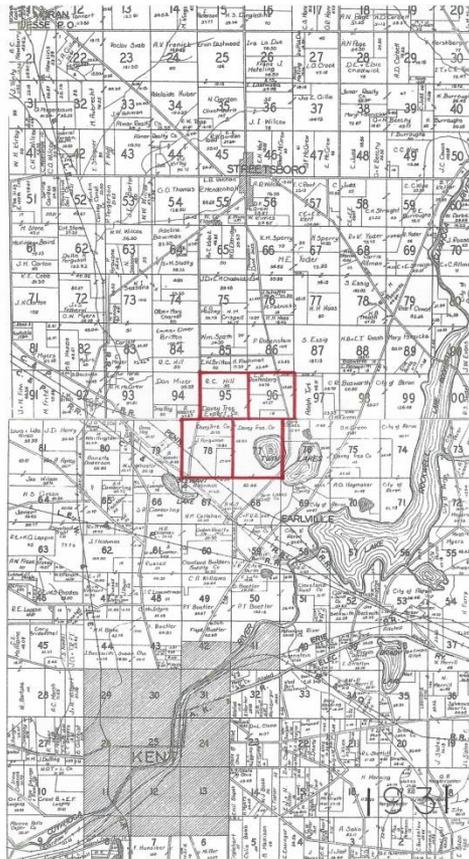


**1900 Map**

By 1900, some new property lot owners entered the picture. Franklin Township lot 78 was now owned by A. Weaver and F.A. Merrill. Meanwhile lot 77 was owned by Tucker and Danimead. Streetsboro Township lot 95 was now owned by



John W. Salter organized the Twin Lakes Land Company late in 1918 and served as its president until it was purchased by Martin L. Davey. Streetsboro Township lot 95 is still owned by the McGrews. Lot 96 was co-owned by The Twin Lakes Land Company and by E.A. Blanchard. A substantial change from the 1900 map to 1924 is the appearance of Lake Rockwell, a watershed property of the City of Akron.



**1931 Map**

By 1931, the Davey Tree Company was organizing land for its tree farm. It owned Franklin Township lots 77 and 78. In Streetsboro Township, Davey Tree Company had ownership interests in lots 95 and 96. The Davey Investment Company was

founded in 1930 by Martin L. Davey, Paul Davey, and Roy H. Smith. Initial property held by the company included Twin Lakes Development (ostensibly the property from John Salter's company) and the East Main Street Allotment in Kent. The Investment Company is the likely owner of Davey Tree lands in lot 77. Our Village Lakes (Martin and Roger) may have been a pipe dream of the Davey Company, but they had not yet appeared. However, all the land that would eventually become the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls was by now under ownership of Davey Tree.



## 1951 Map

The Davey Tree Expert Company continued to own Franklin Township lots 77 and 78. Streetsboro Townships lots 95 and 96 also continued under partial ownership by the Davey Tree Expert Company. According to County aerial maps of

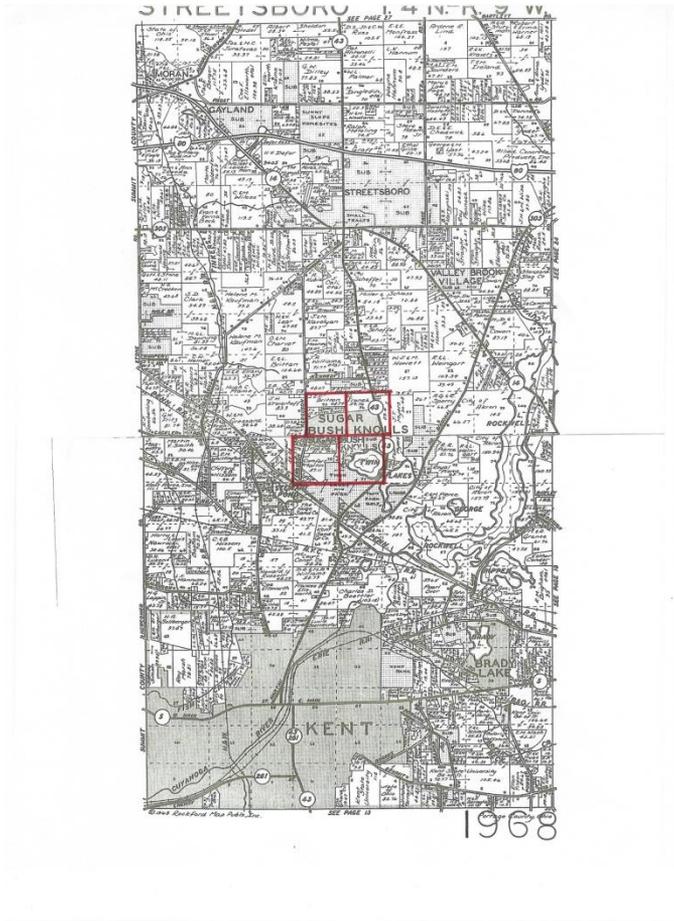
1951, Lakes Martin, Roger and Quincy were created and exist in their original form.



### 1957 Map

By this time the map reflected the naming of Sugar Bush Knolls and its platting as a residential development in Franklin Township lots 77 and 78

and in Streetsboro Township lot 95. Our northern and southern borders were established. The development represented approximately the western two-thirds of what would become the Village. The eastern third of our eventual Village, Streetsboro Township lot 96, was owned by the Davey Investment Company and the wives of three long-time Davey Tree employees. These employees were Misters Jacobs, Swanson and Staples. Mrs. Staples was the wife of 'Biff' Staples who, along with Larry Woodall, was responsible for bringing the black squirrels to the campus of Kent State University. At this writing, the squirrels have also been permanent residents in our Village for decades. Lake Quincy appears for the first time in County plat mapping. Although it was one of three lakes of the Davey Tree Farm and the final site of the Davey picnic pavilion, it was never incorporated into the Sugar Bush Knolls development.



### **1968 Map**

At the time of this mapping, the eastern boundary of our Village had long been established at State Route 43. Village boundaries were complete and would not grow any further.

## **RESOURCES**

New Historical Atlas of Portage County Ohio Illustrated, H. L. Everts & co., 1874

Portage Heritage, Portage County Historical Society, Sesqui-centennial Edition, 1957

Green Leaves, A History of the Davey Tree Expert Company, Robert E. Pflieger, 1977

## CHAPTER 6

### **THE DAVEY TREE FARM: Beginning Boundaries**

The story of the Davey Tree Company and its landholdings that eventually became the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls goes back in time to late 1918 and the organization of the Twin Lakes Land Company by John W. Salter. Salter was placed in charge of the Falls Rivet Company in Kent by Roy H. Smith. At that time, Salter began acquiring land in the Twin Lakes area. Substantial landholdings of his company can be seen on the 1924 plat map around both Twin Lakes, and in lot 96 of Streetsboro Township that would eventually become the eastern portion of our Village. As early as 1927, the Davey Tree Expert Company began to acquire property in lot 78 of Franklin Township and lot 95 of Streetsboro Township.

Davey Investment Company was organized in 1930 by Martin L. Davey, Paul Davey and Roy H. Smith. Initial property holdings of the investment company included property acquired from the Twin Lakes Land Company along with real estate purchased from the City Bank of Kent, where Martin L. Davey was a director. The 1931 plat map now shows the Davey Tree Expert Company and

the Davey Tree Company owning property in lots 95 and 96 of Streetsboro Township as well as lots 77 and 78 of Franklin Township in addition to the property formerly owned by the Twin Lakes Land Company. The only residence on the property of the Davey Farm was an old wood frame farm house on the corner of Ferguson Road and what was to become Lake Martin Dr. The house was occupied by Charles Miller, a Davey employee and early caretaker of the tree farm. This entry drive eventually became the west end of Lake Martin Drive.

The story of the uses of the Davey Tree Farm lands were nostalgically narrated by Dr. John Jacobs in his book, Growing Up in A Davey Family. *"...the Davey Company purchased 150 acres or so north of Kent, off Ferguson Road and extending eastward to Route 43 and Twin Lakes. I expect the main purpose of the property was to provide an area to conduct research on subjects relative to the care of trees. My father became the supervisor of the 'Davey Farm' and eventually became a vice president in charge of research. I recall various projects he conducted there, including those related to root growth, chemical brush control and the control of various tree diseases, including Dutch elm disease."* [One of the projects were the glass

pits were where tree roots were connected to electrical wires coming from the barn on the corner of Birchwood Drive. A glass wall in the pit allowed differences in root growth to be observed.]

*"Being a generous mixture of woods, open fields, and (later) water, the property was ideal for use as a game refuge. Through the efforts of management, my father (Homer 'Red' Jacobs), and a friendship he developed with 'Hen" Schrader, the county game warden, the farm was officially designated as a State Game Refuge. I think Dad had a badge designating him as a deputy warden.*



**Homer Jacobs**

*"It seems inevitable that the farm would be recognized as a place suitable for recreation. And indeed, such was the case. A pond was constructed and called Lake Martin, in honor of company president Martin L. Davey. A picnic area was developed [near 1256 Lake Martin Drive] and*

*several rowboats were available for fishing and just rowing on the pond. Company picnics were held at least on July 4th and at other times.”*



**Davey Tree Company Picnic photo** of 1947 on the shore of Lake Martin. (Evangeline Davey documents collection, Kent State University Library archives) The photo appears to be taken of the employees gathered on the hill that would lead up to 1256 Lake Martin Drive. Company picnics on Lake Martin preceded the establishment of the permanent pavilion on Lake Quincy. A tent was used as a temporary pavilion. Earlier, some Davey employee gatherings were held at the Twin Lakes prior to the creation of Lakes Martin, Roger, and Quincy.

*“In the winter, sledding on the slopes beside the pond and ice skating were popular. Shovels and scrapers and human power were used to clean large areas of the ice. A bonfire was always kindled on weekends to add to the fun. Later two more*

*ponds were built. These were named Lake Roger, after William Rogers Williams, and Lake Quincy (not a part of our Village) after David Quincy Grove."*

Williams and Grove were executives of the Davey Tree Company. Martin L. Davey, the son of the company founder, John Davey, became the president of the Davey Tree Expert Company following the death of his father in 1923. Martin oversaw the development of the Tree Farm and arranged to have the lakes dug out of the swampy areas of the farm. Lake Quincy later became the site of the relocated picnic grounds where a pavilion was erected and playground equipment was installed. See the photo of horse head swings at the Lake Quincy picnic pavilion on page 62.

*"For several years, a number of riding horses were kept in a barn at the south end of the farm on the Ferguson Road side. As I recall, these were used mainly by the executives of the company and were purchased, probably, after Martin L. Davey returned to Kent following his terms in Congress and as governor. Harry Eckert was a sort of stable master and cared for the animals. I believe that after a few years they became more bother than they were worth (read 'expensive') and were sold."*  
-- Dr. John Jacobs, 2012.

The aerial photographs of the Village lands show a clear picture of how the Davey Tree Farm developed over the years. [See [References](#) at the end of this chapter for directions for viewing county aerial photographs.] The first aerial photograph of 1937-38 shows the residual images of agricultural use, the swampy area that would become Lake Martin and the short gravel path, going eastward from Ferguson Road that would eventually become Lake Martin Drive. The tree farm utilized the property in much the same way that our Village would grow, west to east. In stark contrast, the Twin Lakes thoroughfares of North and South Boulevard, south of the Village, were already intact and a number of residences had been built there.

The next aerial photo of 1951-52, shows the tree farm in full swing with grid-like plantings through the western half of the property. Lakes Martin, Roger and Quincy are evident in the photo. It appears that a service road for the tree farm is in use along the northern and eastern boundaries of the property although no connection from Route 43 had been made. This photo represents nearly the maximum use of the property as a tree farm. Before the next aerial photo of 1959, Orin Drive had been carved out of the meadow to serve

as access to another tree nursery north of our existing northern border. This additional property was never incorporated into the Village. The labor shortage for non-essential industries during World War II left the Davey Company without the men to continue to work, maintain and harvest the tree nursery. With stock plantings now overgrown and the death of Martin L. Davey in 1946, the decision was made to abandon the tree farm here and concentrate those operations in Wooster. The Davey Tree Expert Company decided to leave the landholding business and turned the tree farm over to the Davey Investment Company for development of a residential community.

Remnants of the tree nurseries are still evident in the Village in the grid-like planting of what are today mature trees. Examples of pine, oak, maple, sweet and sour gum, birch, cherry, willow, ash, cottonwood, walnut, butternut, hickory, magnolia, beech, larch and dawn redwood can still be found in the Village. And most obviously, the sugar maples grown and nurtured by the Davey Tree Company are responsible for the Village name.

## **RESOURCES**

The History of Kent, Karl H. Grismer, Courier-Tribune, 1932

Portage County Aerial Maps, Portage County Auditor

1874 – 1978 Bicentennial Atlas of Portage County, Ohio, Portage County Historical Society, Inc., 1978

Growing Up in a Davey Family, Dr. John Jacobs, Kent Historical Society Press, 2012

Green Leaves, A History of the Davey Tree Expert Company, Robert E. Pflieger, 1977

Evangeline Davey Documents Collection, Kent State University Library Archives.

If you would like to explore the aerial mapping available from Portage County, please follow the following steps in the browser on a computer.

1. Go to [www.portagecountyauditor.org](http://www.portagecountyauditor.org)
2. Agree to the agreement.
3. Select “Start a Search”
4. Insert search information (property owner’s name or parcel number)
5. Click on “parcel number”
6. Click on “map this property” (right side of form)
7. In “map box”, click on tab for aerials
8. Select from choices of years 1937 through 2016.

## CHAPTER 7

### **PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT: The Road to Residences**

In the mid-1950s the Davey Investment Company decided to establish an approximately 158 acre residential property subdivision of the Tree Farm. The subdivision was to be named Sugar Bush Knolls. The name reflects the stand of sugar maple trees in the area. There are also varying stories of maple sugaring efforts in the days of the tree farm. The subdivision was planned to consist of 111 lots plus a few larger blocks of property. Approximately 80% of this subdivision was contained in lots 95 and 96 of Streetsboro Township. The remaining 20% of the development lay in lot 78 of Franklin Township. Block A, the western half of the proposed development, was first platted into building lots. Block B, the eastern half of the proposed development, was platted later; this was also known as Sugar Bush Knolls Part 2. The dividing line between the two blocks was north/south at approximately the eastern edge of Lake Roger Drive.

Bob Meeker, through his company Meeker Realty, worked with Martin L. Davey, Jr. and the Davey Investment Company to list the residential property lots of the development for sale. Mr. Meeker knew the area well having played on the farm as a boy and having skated on its lakes in

winter. Between the years of 1955 to 1963, eleven sub-lots were acquired by Cyril Porthouse, a local industrialist. Another 25 sub-lots were in the possession of other property owners.

By the time the aerial photo of 1959 was taken, our roads had all been created although they were still just dirt or, at best, gravel. Property was being platted and lots were created for sale. The first eight new homes had been built in the development. Lake Martin Drive had been connected to Route 43, although the first house west of this intersection was at 1395, nearly half way through the neighborhood. Sugar Bush Knolls still had a very rural and isolated appearance from Route 43.

Meeker Realty continued to market property in the development until Mr. Porthouse acquired the remaining lots in Block B. There are several stories about the Porthouse acquisition of property in the Village. A commentary that appeared in the Record Courier several years ago attributed the transfer of property to a card game at the Twin Lakes Country Club between Cyril Porthouse and Martin L. Davey Jr. This is probably the more entertaining story, but the more plausible one comes from interviews with David Porthouse, Cyril's son, and Dick Kotis who was at the Twin Lakes Country Club table with Mr. Porthouse and Mr. Davey when the deal was struck over lunch.

David Porthouse recalls that Mr. Davey honored Mr. Porthouse's right of first refusal to acquire the remaining property in the decision to conclude activity of the Davey Investment Company in the Sugar Bush Knolls sub-development. Mr. Porthouse's acquisition of the remaining Sugar Bush Knolls properties also stemmed from, according to son David, the fear that Franklin Township might try to annex the entire development. Bob Meeker is also mentioned as working with Mr. Davey on plans to incorporate the development into a Village. However, this plan did not gain traction until later.

#### THE SUGAR BUSH KNOLLS ASSOCIATION

On April 18, 1963, residents of the sub-division were notified that they were invited by the Davey Investment Company to a meeting held at the Twin Lakes Country Club on April 25, 1963 to discuss the formation of a homeowners' association. The proposed association would administer and maintain common properties, oversee compliance set forth in the deed restrictions and oversee day to day operation of the sub-division. Twenty-eight persons, representing ownership of 90 of the 114 parcels, attended the meeting. A motion was made and passed to form the Association through articles of incorporation. Thus, the Sugar Bush Knolls Association was born. *[Reference to the number of parcels or lots contained in the Village varies. Originally 111 lots were platted along with*

*several large blocks of property. The number of lots contained in the Village has increased as these blocks of property have been sub-divided.]*

The Association was presided over by Mr. Cyril Porthouse, its first president, at their first Homeowners Association meeting held on June 12, 1963. Association officers and trustees set the standard for future representatives of the Village as they served without compensation. Operating revenue for the Association was raised through the levying of assessments upon each property. Minutes of Association meetings addressed various responsibilities of the Association such as the need for submission and approval of building plans for residences. In September of 1963, the Davey Investment Company transferred ownership of Lake Martin and Lake Roger(s) to the Association. *[The name Lake Roger or Rogers is of interest as it was named for William "Shorty" Rogers Williams. The name of the lake appears as both Roger and Rogers in Association minutes.]*

At the November 1963 Association meeting, President Porthouse suggested to the group that they consider the possibility of incorporating the sub-division as a Village. Discussion followed during which members were very much in favor of this idea. A motion was made and passed to further explore the issue of incorporation as a Village. [See Chapter-8, "Sugar Bush Knolls

Becomes a Village”] Although the sub-division would become a Village, the Homeowners Association would continue to serve common properties and interests of the Villagers for many years to come.

It was announced at the Homeowners meeting of July 1971 that lot 70, on the N.E. corner of Lake Martin Drive, had been purchased by the Association for the sum of \$3,500. Also, a committee was formed to explore the organization of the whole of the Village into the Kent City School District. On July 10, 1971, a meeting with the State Board of Education was scheduled. [See Chapter8, Sugar Bush Knolls Becomes a Village]

In July of 1973, the Association entered into an agreement to purchase lot 71 on the S.W. corner of Lake Martin Drive for the sum of \$4,000.

In September of 1979, the Association members met to approve a motion to dissolve the Association. Once Association business was transferred to the Village, the Homeowners Association would cease to exist. An important step in that direction was the transfer of the titles of lots 70 and 71 from the Association to the Village.

In April of 1980, the titles to Lake Martin and Lake Roger(s) were also transferred from the

Association to the Village. As their last official act, in March of 1981, Association officials agreed to transfer Association funds to the control of the Village. The Village of Sugar Bush Knolls was now the sole responsible entity for all things pertaining to the operation of the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls.

### STREET NAMES

- Lake Martin Drive and Lake Roger(s) Drive received their names from the adjacent lakes.
- Likewise, the Ridgecrest Drive nomenclature is due to its location on some of the highest ground in the Village as properties on the south side drop off steeply toward homes on Jacobs Lane below.
- Birchwood Drive was named for the stand of birch trees that used to border the road. Disease and home construction have all but eliminated the birch trees that once stood here.
- Pin Oak Drive is named for the stand of pin oak trees in the area.
- Jacobs Lane was named for Homer "Red" Jacobs, Davey Tree Expert Vice President for Research.
- Sheppard Drive and Orin Drive were most likely named for executives at the Davey Tree Company; however, company records

no longer exist to prove this assumption. Orin Drive is unusual because it is the shortest thoroughfare in the Village.

- Roberta Drive no longer exists. It was named for the wife of Cyril Porthouse. Its right-of-way was undedicated after the property was acquired for the Porthouse residence. The driveway for the home was constructed on a portion of the old right-of-way.

## **RESOURCES**

Minutes from meetings of the Sugar Bush Knolls Association

“Along The Way,” Record Courier, David Dix, undated

Aerial Photographs, Portage County Auditor

Portage Heritage, Portage County Historical Society, Sesqui-centennial Edition, 1957

## CHAPTER 8

### **SBK BECOMES A VILLAGE: When and Why?**

Although the Homeowners Association provided for the pooling of some services to residents of the Sugar Bush Knolls development, it did not resolve the remaining principle issues facing residents. Maintenance of thoroughfares, snow plowing and road repairs, storm water flooding, street signs, street lighting, and school districts remained in the hands of the two townships and the two city school districts of Kent and Streetsboro.

The following example was cited to illustrate the difficulty faced by homeowners to keep their development maintained. During the winter of 1961-62, Lake Roger Drive became virtually impassible. The drive spans the two townships. Repeated requests to both Streetsboro and Franklin Townships provided no relief. The five residents along Lake Roger Drive paid \$1,000.00 themselves to have the road hard surfaced. It was their contention that the higher local taxes being paid by residents should provide better local service. It should not be necessary for the residents to pay for these services themselves over and above township taxes. Although a first step had been taken with the creation of a Sugar Bush Knolls Association, dues paid by this group amounted to only roughly \$1,200.00 per year. This

was hardly enough to supplement the Township services for which property owners were already being taxed. Attorney Titus Jackman put it very succinctly when he drafted the argument for incorporation of the Village: *"The end result of this is that for any improvement sought by the residents not one, but two, sets of township trustees must be consulted and, as so often happens where there is diversity of authority, where everyone is responsible, no one is."*

Residents of the Sugar Bush Knolls Association recognized the need for better services and were willing and able to undertake the responsibility. In November of 1963 thirty-two of the subdivision resident property owners signed and filed a Petition of Incorporation of the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls with the commissioners of Portage County. A public hearing on the request for incorporation was held by the commissioners on June 8, 1964. The group of 15 visitors (mostly residents) required that the meeting be moved to Courtroom #2 of the Court of Common Pleas. Assistant Prosecutor John Enlow determined that the 32 signatures on the Petition met the law to satisfy requirements for submission. Attorney Jackman spoke on behalf of residents for the incorporation and testimony was heard from some visitors who spoke to counter the proposal. At the end of the hearing Commissioner Brown announced that the Board of Commissioners would

take the matter under consideration and adjourned the meeting. On June 15, 1964 the Board of Commissioners met again and Commissioner Watters offered a motion to adopt the resolution of incorporation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brown. All three commissioners voted 'yea' to approve the motion unanimously. Thus, the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls was born. Notice was also given of a legal petition to the County Commissioners to construct a township identical with the boundaries of the incorporated Village, as required by State law.

Now the real work began. Residents of the Village would need to step forward and demonstrate the desire and ability to administrate their own destiny. They would need a Mayor, Councilpersons, a Clerk, and a planning commission if the Village was to rule itself effectively. Property taxes to pay for needed Village services would have to be levied in place of the dues paid to the Association. Although the cost to residents would be higher, services needed would now be provided. Additionally, the property tax was eligible as an income tax deduction, association dues were not.

There was, however, another critical issue confronting residents. Although the Village was now under its own rule, that didn't bring about an immediate solution to the Village children who attended different school districts. Depending

upon where you lived in the Village, you might have attended public school in Kent while your friends across the street were enrolled in Streetsboro schools. This was the next legal battle for residents and once again Cyril Porthouse hired Titus Jackman to represent Village residents in an appeal to the Ohio Board of Education over the issue of the right to choose a single school district for Village children. Over the protests of the Streetsboro school district, Attorney Jackman and Village residents prevailed in convincing the State board of education that Kent City Schools was the preferred solution. That effort was helped along by the personal testimony of Elizabeth Bujack who appeared at a local meeting with the State Board of Education. Young Elizabeth wondered why she could play with her neighbors across the street, but could not go to school with them. Board members discovered that it was difficult to refute the rational request of a young person. During this period of indecision, several of the children of early Village residents attended the Kent State University School.

Natural gas service came to the Village in the early 1970s and was a boon to development of the eastern half of the Village as was the inception of the county regional sewer system. The Village was included in the plan to bring a regional sewer system to the Twin Lakes area because of our proximity to Twin Lakes and the fact that most of

the storm water from the Village eventually flows into West Twin Lake. Another public utility could have been possible when Village property owners voted in 2016 on the issue of public water. The issue to request County commissioners to bring public water to the Village was defeated by 15 votes.

To this day, the Mayor, Councilpersons and the Village Clerk are all elected positions for which residents cast votes in a general election. Planning Commission members are appointed by Village Council. The mayor, councilpersons and commission members, are all volunteer positions in that they serve without compensation. Their service is given willingly and entirely for the benefit of the Village and its residents. It has been and should continue to be a community in which those who benefit from living here return the favor by giving their service to its governance at some point in their term of residency. *Those who receive shall give.*

Thus, under its own guidance and determination, the Village has moved forward as a local seat of government, an accomplishment for which all residents, past and present, should be extremely proud.

## **RESOURCES**

Portage Heritage, Portage County Historical Society, Sesqui-centennial Edition, 1957

Petition for the Incorporation of the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls, Reasons for Seeking Incorporation, Filed with Portage County Auditor November 30, 1963

Village of Sugar Bush Knolls Council Minutes, 2016

## CHAPTER 9

### **VILLAGE TALES: Stories from long-time residents and some reliable sources**

**Eleonore Snyder** (wife of longtime Village Clerk Phillip Snyder) recalls the early days of the sub-division where voting in elections was done at the Bush home on Birchwood Drive. Mrs. Bush always used this as a learning activity for the children of the Village who would accompany their parents to vote. The children had their own special voting booth and a mock election to parallel the real one. Council meetings in the early days were held in residents' homes. Before the lots to the north and south of Lake Martin Drive at Route 43 were purchased, there were no signs at Rt. 43. This kept the Village at a very low public profile. Mrs. Snyder remembers when neighbors would host coffees for new residents in order to introduce them to the sub-division. She also recalls a number of neighbors pooling their efforts to rent a backhoe for the gas line installation in the 1970s.

**Dick Kotis** (former President of the Homeowners Association) recalled the lunch with Brub Davey and Cyril Porthouse at the Twin Lakes Country Club over which the deal to purchase eastern Village properties was struck out of concern over the rumor of possible annexation of the sub-division by

Franklin Township. This story was also corroborated by David Porthouse, Cyril's son. Mr. Kotis was also a frequent visitor to the construction site of the Porthouse home, designed by Harold S. Casidy, a well-known Akron architect. He mentioned the care, craftsmanship and materials with which the home was constructed. He also recalled a six-wheeled amphibious craft in which the Porthouses and their neighbors would visit each other. Later a dock or bridge was constructed between the Porthouse property and the western side of Lake Martin approximate to the Bush Residence. The structure remained in place for many years.

**Britt McElhone** was one of several residents who grew up in Sugar Bush Knolls. Mr. McElhone recalled the start of construction of his home on Lake Martin in 1955. The family moved there in 1956. At that time, Lake Martin Drive was just a dirt road. The property of the family home, surrounded by maple trees, had been the former site of the Davey picnic grounds before they were relocated to Lake Quincy. Britt's father planted daffodils in the drainage ravine to the west of their property. Some can still be seen in the springtime. Britt remembers camping, as a boy, on the many undeveloped lots in the sub-division and falling asleep at night to the song of the bull frogs. He said, "That sounds kind of nostalgic, but they

actually kept me awake some nights.” Some of their camp-outs were on the high ground of Ridgecrest Drive “...where you could stand and actually see some of the highest buildings on the Kent State University campus.” Orin Drive was just a dirt path that was used to access a tree nursery on property owned by Davey Tree to the north of the present Village boundary. Mr. McElhone recalls the alleged story of a nearby resident, upset at the location of a neighboring home under construction, supposedly shooting a rifle at construction workers to show his dissatisfaction. Mr. McElhone went SCUBA diving, as a boy with the DeWitt family, in Lake Martin where they discovered hundreds and hundreds of clay drainage tiles at the bottom of the lake used to drain the swampy area before Lake Martin was constructed. He also recalls the 6-wheeled amphibious craft used to traverse Lake Martin between the Porthouse and McElhone homes.

**Ted Welser** (retired Kent attorney) spent his summers as a college student (back to 1961) working for the Davey Company trimming trees and landscaping at the tree farm. Mr. Welser served on Village Council for 14 years until 1995. Between working here in the early 1960s and purchasing his property in 1976, Mr. Welser has a personal history here that pre-dates the incorporation of the Village. The authors are

particularly grateful to Mr. Welser for his assistance with the articles of incorporation of the Village.

**James Beal** (Village Mayor 2012 – 2015) recalls learning to row a boat on Lake Quincy at family picnics. *“They let me do this although I am certain that they knew that I did not yet know how to swim. What were they thinking?!”* He is pictured in the 1957 photo next to the Lake Quincy sign and again in the 1957 photo at the horse-head swings behind Ruth Ann (Green) Freeman of the Hall-Green Agency. Her favorite recollection of the area is of the horse-head swings as evidenced by the cowgirl boots she is wearing in the photo. She is pictured third from the left on the swings with her sister Elizabeth and her cousins.



**DAVEY TREE PAVILION LAKE QUINCY HORSEHEAD  
SWINGS 1956**



**DAVEY TREE PAVILION LAKE QUINCY BOAT DOCK  
1956**

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **VILLAGE OFFICERS**

#### **Those Who Serve the Place They Call Home**

The names of the individuals listed below were all officers of the Sugar Bush Knolls Association or The Village of Sugar Bush Knolls. Due to the current state of Village records it is not feasible or possible to locate all officers and members or to include their terms of office. Mayors and Clerk/Treasurers are listed in roughly chronological order. Sugar Bush Knolls has always had a Mayor, Cy Porthouse being the first, a Clerk and a Treasurer, or Clerk/Treasurer, and Council members. There has not always been a full complement of Council members (6) at any one time. Occasionally, members might leave council for various reasons and their term of office completed by an appointed member. Until the 1990s the Village Council met at one of the members' homes. A Village newsletter of September 27, 1973 denotes SBK as the smallest Village in Ohio; as of 1965 there were 13 houses and 26 registered voters. Despite its size, a record number of residents became involved with the governing of the Village, thereby contributing to its improvement and welfare.

**Mayors**

Cy Porthouse  
Virginia Butler  
Phil Snyder  
Ted Welser  
Wendell Binkley  
Buddy Myers  
Ray Vehovec  
Alan Ambuske  
Nancy Stillwagon  
Austin Melton  
Jim Beal  
John Guidubaldi

**Clerk/Treasurer**

H. Clay McElhone  
T.P Long  
Robert Butler  
Bedford Biles  
Phil Snyder  
Don Bobrowitz  
Tom Korloss  
Linda Sandvoss  
Bill Elder

**Council Members**

H. Clay McElhone  
John White  
Jan Rusnak  
Maxine Hartley  
Jeanne Corlett  
Jim Arthur  
Mary Beth Harper  
A. M. Smith  
Jack Dalton

P. G. Hershey	Elizabeth Hartley
Susan Murphy	Virginia Butler
T.P. Long	Suzanne Lipps
Jim Staud	Robert Breckenridge
Cy Porthouse	Carlton Sears
Nora Kegley	John DeWitt
Ann Fjeld	John Palik
Paula Snyder	Joe Bujack
Burton Gorman	Martin Nurmi
Rita Nieman	Terry Meloy
Robert Wilson	Clay Zingler
Barbara Harkness	John White
Dick Kotis	Ted Welser
Derek Damron	Wendell Binkley
Frank Buechler	Buddy Myers
Gary Knuth	Ray Vehovec
Bedford Biles	Austin Melton
Geri Strange	Nancy Stillwagon
Phil Snyder	Jim Beal
Britt McElhone	
Charles Zumkehr	
Gretchen Papka	
Murray Swanson	
Dianne Kauffman	
Roy Orndorff	
Calvin Carstensen	
Alma Bush	
Amey Park	
Charles Sumner	

## CONCLUSION

Compiling the History of Sugar Bush Knolls has been a very interesting project. While we have enjoyed it immensely, it remains simply that, a momentary event. Time moves forward and we move with it. In that sense, the History of Sugar Bush Knolls continues. It will be your task to ensure that its history remains updated for the benefit and the knowledge of future residents. It will be your task to ensure that the efforts of those who have preceded you in creating, improving and maintaining our Village do not fall only to history, but remain a part of the present and the future through your involvement. Please continue to help make sure that the Village of Sugar Bush Knolls will always be “a place to call home”.

James R. Beal  
Nancy K. Stillwagon  
November 2017

