Discover

The Heritage Corridors of Bath

A self-guided tour

2023

History and photos provided by
Libby Bauman, Lee Darst, Elaina Goodrich
and the Bath Township Historical Society and Museum

Bath Township Center 3864 W. Bath Rd.

Brief History of Bath Township

In 1810, the first legal settlers, Jonathan Hale and Jason Hammond, arrived in the Connecticut Western Reserve area then known as "Wheatfield" and renamed it "Hammondsburgh." In 1817, Jason Hammond, John Holmes, and Moses Latta were appointed by the inhabitants to acquire property for a meeting house and burying ground, now known as the four acre property where the Historic Town Hall is located.

In 1818, Bath Township was founded. It was primarily an agricultural community. The mill industry; saw mills, grist mills, and a woolen mill, took advantage of the water power provided by Yellow Creek. The first census of Bath Township taken in 1820 documented 176 citizens. Agriculture thrived due to the proximity of the Ohio and Erie Canal, and later the Valley Railway which connected Bath with other markets for the sale of its goods. Bath's population remained at slightly over 1,000 people from 1860 until 1920.

The development of automobiles "paved" the way for hard surface roads. Improved transportation options led to a more mobile society. After World War II, the country experienced a "building boom" as well as a "baby boom," and Bath was no exception. Farm land was developed into today's neighborhoods. In 1950, Bath's population was approximately 2,000 people. Bath and Richfield Townships consolidated their schools creating the Revere School District to accommodate the continued growth of the communities. The influx of new residents required increased services from the Township: Zoning, Police, Fire and Rescue Departments were created or expanded, and a community park was created. Many community organizations were formed to fulfill the needs and interests of Bath residents. By 1960, Bath had more than doubled its population over 10 years to 4,600 inhabitants. By 1990, the population had doubled again to over 9,000.

As the population increased and the number of farms diminished, Bath became a rural residential community. Its focus has always been to provide the best services to the residents in the most fiscally responsible manner. Bath respects the agricultural heritage and values its open spaces.

1 Bath Nature Preserve

Jason Hammond and Jonathan Hale are recognized as the founding settlers of Township 3, Range 12, of the Connecticut Western Reserve, now known as Bath Township. In 1810, Theodore Hammond, son of Jason and Rachel Hammond, selected 1,100 acres of that land, on behalf of his father, Jason, to be developed for the family, a portion of which is now the Bath Nature Preserve.

When Theodore moved west to Illinois in the 1840s, he sold the land to Jared Barker. The property stayed in the Barker family, passing to his daughter, Mary Davis. It was purchased by Joseph C. Hostetler in the early 1940s. Hostetler was a founding partner of the Cleveland law firm Baker, Hostetler & Sidlo in 1916, later Baker Hostetler in Cleveland. He purchased this large property for his country home.

Raymond Firestone, the fourth son of Harvey Firestone, began to work for his father in 1933 after graduating from Princeton, starting in Los Angeles, then later in Memphis. He served in WWII as a pilot in the Air Transport Command from 1942-1944. He returned to Akron in 1949 to work at the company's headquarters. He served as President of Firestone from 1957 to 1964, as Chief Executive from 1963 to 1973, and as chairman from 1966-1976. He was the last of Harvey Firestone's five sons to serve in active management of the company.

Raymond married Laura An Lisk in 1934. They had two daughters, Christy An and Judith An. In 1952, Raymond purchased the "Firestone estate" for his family. Raymond added additional acreage by purchasing other contiguous parcels, creating "Lauray Farm"-a combination of the names Laura, his wife, and Raymond. They built a relatively modest house, surrounded by the natural beauty of the property. Eventually the farm encompassed most of the land west of Cleveland-Massillon Road, north of Bath Road, east of Hametown Road, and south of Ira Road.

Raymond was an avid sportsman. He held fox hunts and permitted the Bath Pony Club members to ride and hold horse trials on the property.

After the death of Laura in 1960, he married Jane Messler. Upon Raymond's death, in 1994, Lauray Farms, was sold to Ohio State

University on generous terms. Under the agreement, which amounted to a $3 million gift, the school gained possession of the farm.

In 1996-98, Bath Township passed a bond levy and purchased 404 acres of the Firestone estate from John Chlebina who had purchased it from Ohio State University after the passing of the Firestones.

The Hunt on Raymond Firestone's Estate

University of Akron Field Station

4240 Ira Rd.

The township established the Bath Nature Preserve and signed an agreement with the University of Akron in 2002 whereby the University would conduct academic programs, research, and studies pertaining to the biology and ecology of the property. It allows research and teaching on the Bath Nature Preserve in exchange for financial assistance in maintaining the property.

Bath Township built a trailhead for the North Fork Trail which was completed in 2005. It has restored three wetlands and a stream on the property. The Regal Beagle shelter and brick oven were also renovated.

The Bath Nature Preserve has 7½ miles of multipurpose, equestrian and nature trails within 411 acres of woods, meadows, wetlands, streams and lakes.

Regal Beagle Shelter

Brick Oven built circa 1925

Bath Pond Observation Deck

An observation deck was built on Bath Pond in 2011-2013 and a community garden was added to the Bath Nature Preserve in 2015.

Celestial Observatory

In 2018, a celestial observatory was constructed by the Summit County Astronomy Club led by John Shulan and a Solar System Walk was added in 2021.

2 Hale Farm & Village

Early in 1810, Jonathan and Mercy Hale made plans to leave Glastonbury, Connecticut and migrate to the Connecticut Western Reserve lands of Ohio in search of better opportunities for their future. They had three children: Sophronia (1804), William (1806), and Pamelia (1808). Jonathan's sisters, Rachel and Sarah, and their families, also moved to Ohio. Rachel's husband, Jason Hammond, had made arrangements for the purchase of land. Jason and Rachel's oldest son, Theodore, traveled to Ohio with Jonathan in the summer to select the land and prepare cabins for that first winter. Jonathan and Theodore took different routes to Ohio, both arriving in July. Theodore selected the lots for his father. Jonathan selected 500 acres of property which included fertile lands close to the river. Jonathan found mistaken settlers, the Millers, on this property who had already cleared some of the land and built a small cabin, so he rightfully paid them for their effort. They moved to their property in the southwest of the township. Jonathan and Theodore built adequate cabins for living quarters for the rest of the family and worked on establishing the settlement.

In November 1810, the rest of the Connecticut family began the journey to Ohio. The travelers included Jason and Rachel Hammond and their children Rachel, Lewis, Mary, and Horatio; Elijah and Sarah Hale and their young children Eveline and Mary; and Mercy Hale with three young children. They brought as many of the necessities as they could fit on their wagon. When they arrived, it was a joyful reunion of loved ones, but they had quite an adjustment to the privations of pioneer life in the valley. There were sixteen family members that first winter of 1810-1811.

To survive and thrive during those early years as settlers in what was called "Hammondsburgh," it took hard work, strength, bravery and fortitude. Jonathan and Mercy had two more children born in Bath, Andrew in 1811 and James in 1815. The Hales found it beneficial to be kind-hearted to the Native Americans, as they had much to learn about the land. Some were to be feared, but most were peaceful. As more settlers followed, the township of Bath was founded in 1818.

The new Ohio and Erie Canal improved life, allowing for improved transportation of people and goods to and from the area. It opened in 1827. That year the Hales moved into their new home from the cabin that served them well for many years. Jonathan designed and built the brick home with his sons, casting each clay brick and making the mortar with lime. The Federal style home is reminiscent of many left behind in Connecticut and one of the first brick homes in the Western Reserve.

"Old Brick" is the home Jonathon Hale built in 1825-1827 for his family. The Hale Homestead has educated visitors about the history of Northeast Ohio since 1956, when it became a museum of the Western Reserve Historical Society called Hale Farm & Village

The Ohio Historical Marker states: Jonathan Hale Homestead

Land purchased in 1810. Present house built about 1825 and maintained by the Western Reserve Historical Society as a museum in memory of the Western Reserve pioneers.

Hale House built in 1825-1827
2686 Oak Hill Rd.

3 Historic Bath Town Hall, Museum and Cemetery

Bath Township Meeting Hall

Historians note that when Bath Township was organized, Jonathan Hale was a trustee, Jason Hammond was a supervisor, Henry Hutson was Justice of the Peace, and Eleazer Rice was the constable. The property, where the Historic Town Hall stands today, has served the community of Bath since an 1818 log cabin meeting house stood on the site. It has always been the civic and geographical center of Bath, making the location ideal for government services and meetings. In 1834, a frame building replaced the log cabin and served as the meeting hall and government office for the township for 70 years.

Historic Bath Town Hall

The Historic Town Hall was built on the 3.43 acres that includes the cemetery. Bonds were voted and issued for $2,800 over four years to pay for the building.

The Georgian Revival building was completed in November 1905. It originally had a dirt floor. It was later improved by digging out

the basement and installing a wood floor. There were oil lamps for light and a coal stove for heat. There was a cistern for water and two privies out back. This building was much larger than the old hall and accommodated most meetings of Bath citizens.

The township form of government was patterned after the local form of government with which the settlers had been familiar in Connecticut and the other New England states. Three trustees, a clerk, and a justice of the peace served as the elected officials. In 1851, the Ohio Constitution provided the basic form of township government with three trustees serving four year terms. The trustees oversee maintenance and repair of the roads, the Town Hall, and the cemeteries. The township clerk is independent of the trustees and duties include recording all proceedings and keeping records of financial accounts.

Bath Township Museum
1241 N. Cleveland-Massillon Rd.

The Ohio Historical Marker states: Bath Township Hall

A log meeting house, which also served both the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, was constructed here circa 1818. In 1834, a frame structure replaced the log house and served the community and the congregations until 1870, when the property was sold to Bath Township to construct a township hall. It was the seat of township government until 1980 and, among other uses, served as a meeting place for the Grange and other community groups. Although adapted to address new needs throughout the 20th century, the hall was extensively renovated in 2000. In 2005, the Bath Township Historical Society converted the building into the Bath Township Museum. An example of early 20th century Georgian Revival architecture, the township hall was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Bath Center Cemetery

The first burial in Bath Center Cemetery was in 1812, so this cemetery has a long history. According to a deed recorded at the Medina Court House, in 1817, the property, originally part of the Connecticut Western Reserve, was conveyed for $1 by Ezekiel Williams and Abby Williams to Jason Hammond, John Holmes and Moses Latta, a committee appointed by the "inhabitants." This was before the township was established in 1818. The property was to be used for the building of a meeting house and burial ground. The First Congregational Church of Bath was located on this site from December 1831 until around 1855 when the five remaining members asked to dissolve the congregation. The trustees of the church sold the building and four acres for $150 to the township.

Bath Center Cemetery   1241 N. Cleveland-Massillon Rd.

Former Historic Burial Vault
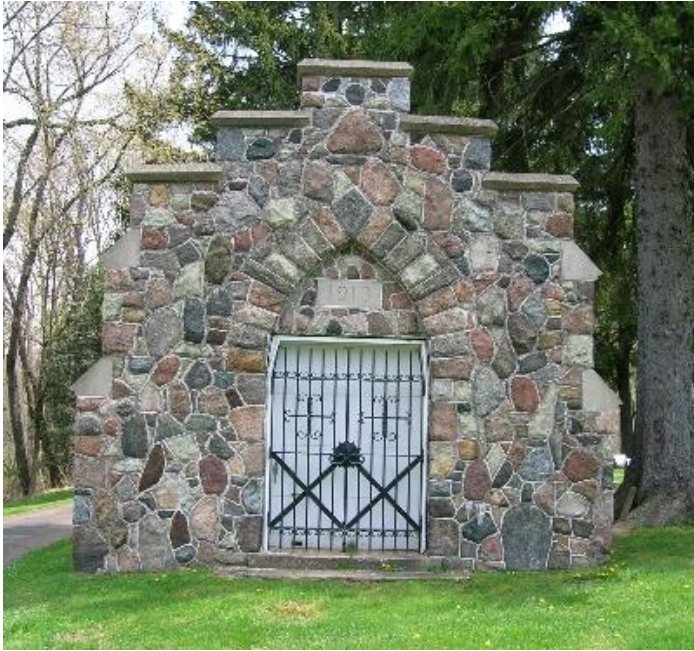
The Bath Township's Board of Trustee minutes prior to 1865 have been lost. According to the township minutes since that time, the first mention of the five cemeteries was in 1879. It stated that:

Expenditures Cemetery Fund   Beginning March 3, 1879
Gave Orders to… H.B. Davis $11.25,
                 Peter Reis $1.50,
                 R. Shaw $3.00,
                 C.O. Hale $36.52
                 J.R. Moon $22.65
                 Total ………$74.92.

It appears that each cemetery was taken care of by the family most closely associated with the cemetery.

In 1890, Bath Center Cemetery was specifically mentioned in the minutes authorizing care and mowing for $15 a year.

In 1916, the Bath Center Cemetery Association was given "full control of the care of the Cemetery at Bath Center, …in instructing the sexton, in the matter of locating graves the Township Clerk shall have the authority to locate the grave in the lot." It was established that this association and the three trustees have a joint meeting each year in May subject to the call of the board of trustees to review cemetery affairs. They agreed to charge $3, $5 and $8 for cemetery lots.   Bath Center Cemetery

Of particular interest was the period during the Great Depression, in the early 30's when cemetery jobs were given to community members that were in desperate need. In 1934, the trustees allotted $150 for this purpose. This association managed the cemeteries until 1940.

In that year the township authorized John Rooy Jr. to receive $620 per year to take care of all five township cemeteries and act as Sexton. By 1961, $2,750 was appropriated for cemetery purposes.

In 1999, a 147 year-old Norway spruce was cut down after "fatal injury" by a lightning strike. A very old unreadable grave marker was found in the core of the tree.

The Ohio Historical Marker states: Bath Center Cemetery

Settlers from New England purchased this land in 1817 for use as a burying ground and to build a meeting house. Located in the center of Bath Township, a part of the Connecticut Western Reserve, the site provided a convenient place for public and religious gatherings and for a cemetery. Out of need, the cemetery was established before the township was founded in 1818. Many of Bath Township's farming families, as well as both owners and operators of businesses of Bath, are interred in the cemetery. In a tradition originating with the Civil War, Perry Alexander marked graves of all veterans with an American flag on Memorial Day as a tribute to their service.

4 Ghent Historic District   Mill on Yellow Creek 1830

Mill on Yellow Creek 1830
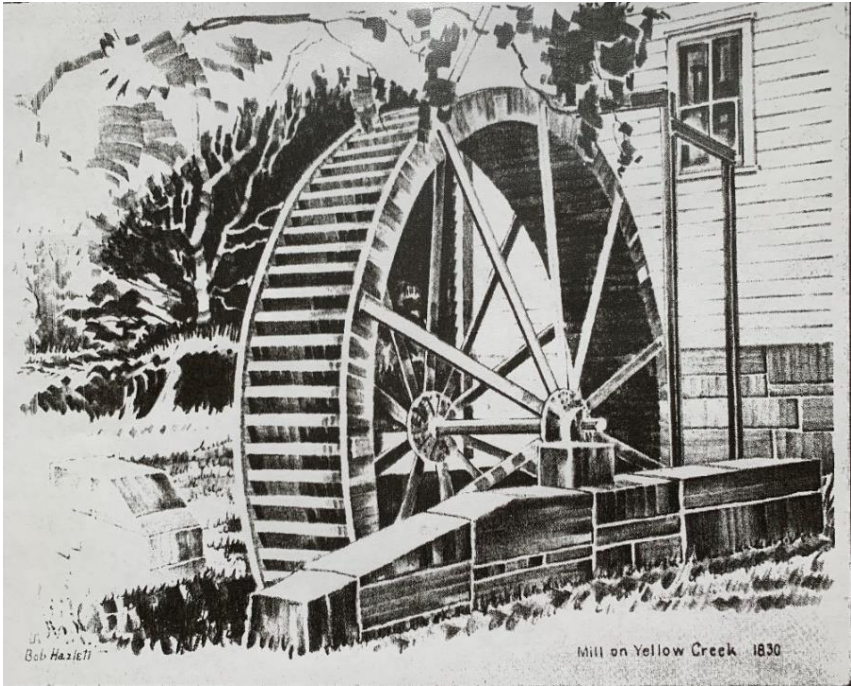
Ghent

      The Ghent area was settled naturally around Yellow Creek and near Center Road (Cleveland-Massillon Road). The natural fall of the water of Yellow Creek as it flows through the township provides the opportunity for several types of water powered mills to thrive. Mills along Yellow Creek to the east and west seemed to need a central location of settlement for commercial enterprises and for employees and tradesmen to live.

      Platted to be a village in 1836 from parts of Lots 65 and 66, the plat had 63 building lots in the traditional rectangular town plan, which was not feasible for complete development due to the topography of land. Ghent always had a variety of industrial, commercial, and residential properties, distinguishing it from the rest of Bath's agricultural areas and even the other "corners" or hamlets, which lacked the industrial component of the mills along Yellow Creek.

Within Ghent a blacksmith created necessary tools, nails, and hardware as well as the traditional horseshoes. A wagon maker and carpenters established businesses there as Ghent continued to grow. There was a merchant, selling dry goods, until someone else was interested in providing that service to the community. Most of the businesses of the Ghent area were created to serve the needs of the farmers of Bath.

Mills

The reason so many mills are built along Yellow Creek is there is a fall of 400 feet over the 8 mile course from west to east through Bath Township, providing reliable water power. Bath had mills along the creek since about 1815, each serving a need for the surrounding community.

There were saw mills along Yellow Creek. Mill owners bought the timber from farmers clearing land, then processed it to lumber for building, which was much better than hewing the timber by hand.

Grist mills processed grain into useful flour, and cooperages made staves for barrels to transport the goods. Now, nature doesn't always provide; sometimes the creek has a small trickle in dry weather, and other times there were raging waters and flooding due to heavy rains.

Another reason mills can be a risky business adventure is the threat of fire. The saw and grist mills that were along Yellow Creek carried a great risk of fire every day. Saw dust, flour dust, gasses from flour decomposition, and saw blade or millstone friction could cause a spark and burn the place to the ground.

The largest grist mill along Yellow Creek was about a mile to the west of Ghent. It processed wheat to flour, and they always needed additional help at harvest time. Once the flour was created, excess flour was sold in general stores or shipped to the city.

Woolen Mill

      Before the canal or the railroad made it easier to transport cloth, local people had to have their own made from their sheep's wool locally.

      The Woolen Mill, with an overshot water wheel, was built in 1832 by Allen and Bloom, sold in 1835 to Alpheus Babcock, who sold to Spafford Brothers. It failed under Spafford Brothers, who sold to Johnson and Fuller, who then sold to James Meyers. The Woolen Mill had marginal commercial success despite adequate water power, likely due to the challenges of raising sheep and due to improved transportation reducing the need for local wool manufacturing.

<div align="center">

Woolen Mill built in 1832

3546 Granger Rd.

</div>

      Alonzo Coffin purchased the mill in 1860 valued at $4,500. It was producing 1,500 yards of cloth valued at $1,200. He operated it successfully for 15 years. The processing of wool was a complicated, labor-intensive task. It required washing and drying of the wool, then carding it, a process of combing raw wool to straighten the fibers.   The carding machine at the mill combed wool in an hour that would take a person a week to do by hand. Then it was dyed, spun into yarn, and

woven into cloth. In 1870, the mill produced 10,000 pounds of cloth that was valued at $6,500--specifically 2,500 yards of flannel, 500 pounds of yarn, and 1,500 yards of cloth. Coffin sold the mill in 1875 to Henry Pardee who invented a waterproofing process. The Ghent Woolen Mill ceased processing wool in 1889.

In 1889, Chester Purdy purchased the mill and converted it to a machine shop with living quarters. The machine shop was later converted into apartments and for over a century this building has been used as residences along Yellow Creek. Note the original Woolen Mill building sign, "Carding and Dressing" may be visible during bright lighting.

Ghent was possibly going to be a growing community in the 1850s as plans for a railroad through Ghent had everyone all excited. It would have changed the growth and the industries, especially the mills that would be able to easily ship goods via the railroad. By 1856, the proposed lines were abandoned due to lack of adequate financing, and Ghent remains the small and steady community it has always been.

The Ohio Historical Marker states: Ghent Woolen Mill, 1832

The Ghent Woolen Mill was one of at least thirteen mills built in the Yellow Creek Valley to take advantage of the water power available in the creek's 400-foot fall across Bath Township. Erected by Messrs. Allen and Bloom in 1832, it was a marginal commercial success and changed hands several times during the 1800s-reportedly because an abundant wolf population in this region made raising sheep a risky venture. In its peak years of operation during the Civil War era the Ghent mill processed as much as 10,000 pounds of wool into finished cloth and yarn annually. It was converted to a machine shop circa 1889 and subsequently into private residence in the late 1890s. The oldest known woolen mill still standing in Ohio. It retains many of its original architectural features.

5 Stony Hill School and Schools in Bath Township

Education has been important to the Bath community since the pioneer days when private schools were run by the neighbors and families involved and classes were held in cabins or other structures available. In 1838, Bath established school sub-districts to organize the township. The school houses or districts served particular areas or neighborhoods within the township. Bath had nine "corner schools", and three school houses that were shared. Stony Hill became District 12 in a shared district with Copley Township. Not all districts operated every year. It depended on the nearby families and how many children were of school age. Traditionally, rural schools had a summer and a winter term. Winter terms were more important and expectations were higher, thus salaries for the teachers were generally higher for winter term.

Stony Hill School built in 1892

Mrs. Laura McMillen deeded one acre of her 44 acre farm for a new school in 1892. The deed stipulated that if the property was ever abandoned for school purposes, it would revert back to Mrs. McMillen or her heirs. The schoolhouse is a frame building with an anteroom to store wood for the stove, outer clothing of the students, and drinking water in a bucket that had a communal dipper. Often the school yards were fenced, but this one is not. There were two privies.

In 1895, the teacher was paid $30 per month and had 18 students, 9 boys and 9 girls, of all ages ranging from 6-17. They had a strict schedule, where students of similar ages and ability performed recitations together, then moved to their independent work and other age groups recited their assignments. They started at 9am promptly, had an hour for the noon meal when some students walked home and others remained at school. They reconvened and continued with lessons until 4 o'clock.

The teacher's responsibilities were the education and discipline of scholars as well as janitorial duties at the school. They included arriving early in the morning to make the fire in the pot-bellied stove on cold days, coming back in the evening to bank the fire so that it would last overnight and be easier to restart in the morning. The teacher was

also responsible for cleaning the school and the two privies, and providing the drinking water in the anteroom, (there was a spring and a pond nearby, so that was not difficult, unless of course the weather was freezing)!

Stony Hill School
built in 1892
49 Hametown Rd.

The Rules and Regulations of the School District were straightforward. Pupils pursued the prescribed course of study, unless excused by the Board of Education. An average of 70%, on examination, entitled a pupil to promotion from one grade to another, provided the applicant had not fallen below 60% in any one branch. Examinations for admission to the High School were held the third Saturday of March and April. Pupils having completed the Course of Study received a diploma from the Board of Education.

The School Board made arrangements with Whitcraft's store in Hammond's Corners to carry the textbooks and workbooks students needed for all Bath District Schools. This simplified providing the necessary instruction materials; although many families passed the books down from older siblings. In 1923 when all Bath schools consolidated, the Stony Hill School property went to the Fryman family (descendants of Laura McMillen), and the school house was purchased at auction. In 1980, the Stein family (descendants) deeded the one acre parcel to the Bath Historical Society for preservation.

School Districts

District 1 was located in Hammond's Corners. School District 2, at Bath Center, was established by the Bath Township Trustees in March 1838. Additional districts were added throughout the township as the school population increased.

A new District 2 school house was erected in time for the 1843-1844 school year. The 19' x 27' structure was built on the lot where the Congregational meeting house once stood. During the winter of 1886-1887, the school house was moved across Bath Road.

The district schools were all elementary or grammar schools covering first through eighth grade. The Board of Education decided to establish a high school to serve the entire township. This was to be a three-year school, and the teacher would also serve as superintendent for the district.
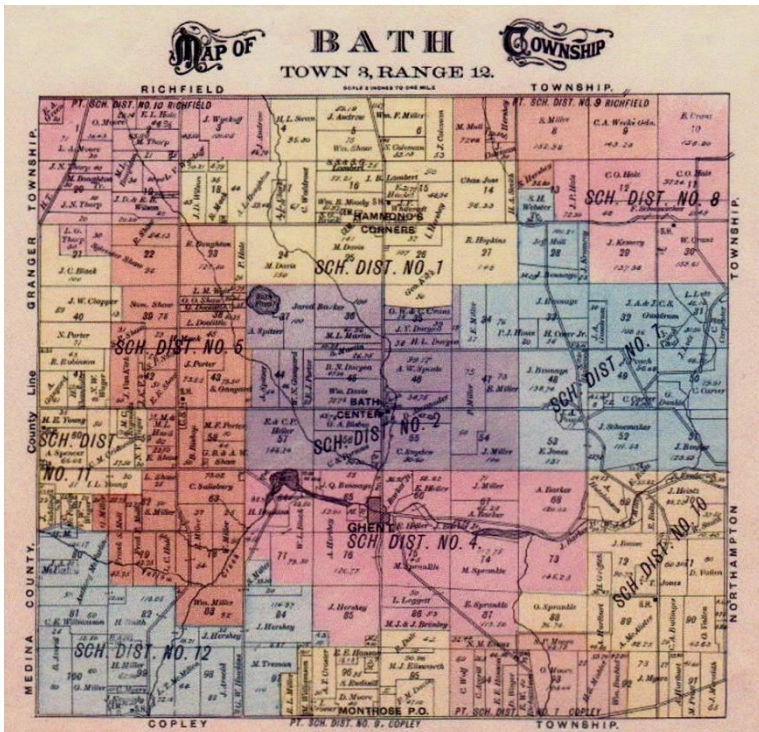
School Districts in Bath Township

The First Bath High School "TEMPLE ON THE HILL" 1895-1923

A new high school building was completed at Bath Center in October 1894. The new two story building was just south of the Town Hall in Bath Center. It had one large room on the second floor and two rooms, a north and a south room, on the first floor.

Students entering high school were required to take a test at the outset of the school year and if they failed the test, they were returned to their grammar school for another year.

The Bath High School building was affectionately known as the "Temple on the Hill." Since it was a three-year high school and had just one teacher for all the high school courses, it was deemed a 'third class' school. The first graduating class of Bath High School in 1895 had 5 students.

If students wanted a fourth year of high school, they traveled to Richfield High School or to one of the Akron high schools. The school board agreed in 1907 to do what was required to upgrade to a 'second class' high school. An assistant high school teacher was added to the staff. Beginning with the 1915-1916 school year, all of the requirements related to curriculum and teaching staff were met and Bath High School was rated 'first class.'

John Woodling, the Bath High School teacher, also served as the superintendent for all the schools in Bath Township from 1895-1900. As superintendent, he had to check on all the school houses in Bath to ensure scholars were receiving proper instruction and discipline. The Bath School Board allowed him the first week of the session to travel to the district schools to advise the teachers. He earned $70 per month for 7 ¾ months of work. For his high school class, he planned the course work. The first year of study included arithmetic, algebra, grammar, history, and spelling. The second year included arithmetic, algebra, rhetoric, physiology, government, botany, and spelling. The final course year included plane geometry, English and American literature, history, and physics. At first it was a three year high school.

Bath Township School 1923-2018

Roy Pugh came to Bath in 1920 to serve as the Bath High School Principal and Superintendent. He oversaw the consolidation of all the district neighborhood schools into the Bath Township School under the direction of the school board. The school was built and opened in the fall of 1923, designed to house grades K-12. Enrollment grew. The building couldn't accommodate all scholars by 1929, so a portable building was added with two classrooms. It provided a well-rounded education for youth and promoted extra-curricular activities for students to explore,

including sports (football and basketball), music (chorus and band), drama (theater productions), and journalism (a school paper). The world was changing at a rapid pace, and the mobility provided by the advent of the automobile had allowed for all students to be educated at this central location.

Transporting students several miles to the central school had its challenges, but it was worth it for the opportunities they received during their education. At first there were hired drivers of "kiddie wagons," a horse drawn modified buggy with long benches to transport students. Then they worked toward having all motorized vehicles to transport students to school, but at times the weather and road conditions were more conducive to the horse for transport.

On December 1, 1930 the school experienced a disaster, which was a tragedy for the entire Bath community. An explosion in the furnace room of the school caused the death of one student, William Haser, and seriously injured several others. The building was repaired, but the loss of life and injury to students took time to heal. Excellence in education has always been a priority for this community; it is woven into the fabric of the past and will continue to inspire all endeavors of this school district, stimulating young minds to achieve high goals for the betterment of our future.

Roy Pugh was challenged near the end of his career to guide the merger of Bath Township School and Richfield Township School to form the Revere Local School District. Mr. Pugh served as the first superintendent of the Revere School District. As more families moved to Bath and Richfield from surrounding cities, there was pressure to consolidate smaller rural districts to provide for the new educational standards and increased number of students. Local voters approved the merger, creating the Bath-Richfield School Board, and passed a bond issue to construct a new high school. Before the new high school building was constructed, the juniors and seniors from both schools spent their mornings at Bath School and afternoons at Richfield School. The freshmen and sophomores had the opposite schedule. The first graduation of Revere High School occurred in June 1952. The new school opened its doors in January 1953.

6 Bath Church

To fulfill their spiritual needs on the frontier of the Western Reserve, the early settlers of Bath Township met in homes to share their faith in prayer and worship until they could build a meeting house and organize a congregation with a minister to guide their spiritual journey. From the early days of the township to this current day, the church has been a center for community and social events. Many early churches were congregational, allowing the members of the church to independently tend to their own affairs.


Bath Church built in 1842
3980 W. Bath Rd.

The Bath Church (Bath United Church of Christ) has the longest history in Bath. Members began meeting in a log meeting house at Bath Center in 1818. A permanent minister for the congregation was not appointed until 1832. A frame building replaced the log structure in 1834 and was used as a town hall and meeting house. The congregation moved north to Hammond's Corners in the late 1860s, utilizing a church built by a Baptist congregation in 1842. The church stood on a rise off the road at the corners and served the congregation for several years. In 1898, the building was moved closer to the road due to concerns over difficulty accessing the building in inclement weather. The new location facing Ira Road provided easy access in a central location for the growth of the congregation over the next 50 years. Eventually the congregation needed a larger place to worship. A new building was planned on property at Bath Center, but it was deemed more fiscally responsible to move the original sanctuary and adjacent buildings than to build new. The big move happened in 1949, and extensive renovations and a rededication of the church took place in 1950!

Bath Township had many small churches over the years. In the late 1800s, it was more common to have a small church serving a specific area than a larger centralized church. Travel could be challenging, and folks knew their nearby neighbors well. Numerous churches met these needs: Ghent Christian Church-met in Ghent School until they built their church in 1901; Montrose Church (1888) and Zion Chapel (1871) merged; several United Brethren Churches-on Everett Road called "The Block" (1874), Montrose Church, and the Church at Hurd's Corners (1861) were active small churches until the 1920s; the Evangelical Church in East Bath near the East Bath Cemetery; Moore's Chapel (1870) served Methodists near the Shaw Cemetery; and several others.

The small congregations of the area churches became very close-knit groups, celebrating life's blessings and sorrows together. With improved transportation, churches also became more centralized for the good of the community. Churches continue to be a center for community and social events.

7 Thomas Pierson House and Octagon Bee House
Thomas Pierson House built circa 1837
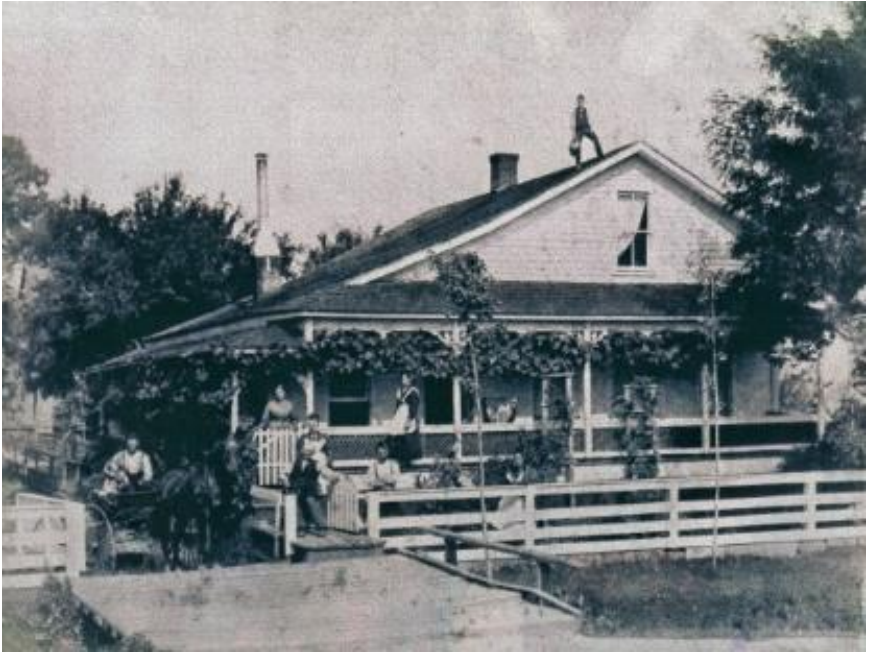
Thomas Pierson built this house circa 1837 for his family. Thomas and Sarah Pierson had five children: Joseph, James, Elizabeth, Frank, and Viola. Thomas was a grocer, a dry goods vendor, a cooper, a Justice of the Peace, and a bee keeper. He took up bee keeping in the 1850s, working with new techniques of the day to house the pollinators and collect honey without destroying the hives. Pierson was regarded with high esteem in the community. The house was later owned by their youngest daughter, Viola Spears. Viola left the home to the country doctor of Ghent, Dr. Robert "Doc" Smith, who practiced there until his death in 1949. The house was home to several families until 1986 when the Bake Shop in Ghent opened there to serve the community.

Bake Shop in Ghent
800 Wye Rd.

Octagon Bee House circa 1859

8 Whitcraft General Store

Joseph Whitcraft bought the general store in 1877. The store was originally built when many Hammonds lived in this area of Bath, and several Hammonds operated the store. Sigel Whitcraft, took over the store at age 26 when Joseph died in 1888. Sigel or SB as he was often called, was the proprietor of the general store and also served as the postmaster for this area of Bath. He was a bit of a character, cultivating friendships as well as customers with his demeanor. The store handled everything that people wanted or needed, from needles to threshing machines. His philosophy was to handle what people wanted. If he didn't have it, he could get it; and if he couldn't get it, they probably didn't need it anyway.

Local farmers would bring their livestock and produce to Sigel to sell or trade for groceries. His workers would take the unsold excess items to Akron or Cleveland to sell at farmers' markets. These people were more than just resources for items to sell for Sigel, they were neighbors and friends. He would allow credit when needed, which was often, and would open his doors for checkers, card games, or just friendly visits.

On January 11, 1912, a cold and snowy night, disaster hit when an overheated furnace pipe started a fire in the store. The fire spread so fast through the large structure; the owners were blessed to escape alive. Within twenty minutes, the 200 foot landmark was a roaring blaze and all was lost. Those good friends and neighbors turned out in force to create

a bucket brigade to save surrounding structures. Those same loyal friends paid their accounts despite all records being lost in the fire. Sigel decided to rebuild a larger, more modern store, which opened in August 1912.

Sigel Whitcraft died in 1934, when the era of the country general store was nearing its end. When Ava Whitcraft, his daughter, married Ralph Andrew, the family name changed. Ralph and Ava Andrew, kept the store open for a few more years. After Ava died, Ralph leased the store. In 1948, Garth and Betty Andrew started an interior design business on the property. By the early 1950s, the business had grown enough that they remodeled and moved into the old store. Whit and Jeff Andrew continued the family business which has been part of the history of Bath Township at Hammond's Corners for over 100 years.

Garth Andrew's Interior Design Store 1969 N. Cleveland-Massillon Rd.

9 Crown Point

The first European settlers arrived in Bath Township in 1810. The Crown Point property was first part of the 1,100 acres owned by Jason Hammond, a farmer, miller and merchant from Bolton, Connecticut. Jason's son, Horatio Hammond, lived in a cabin on the property and farmed the land until 1847.

The Swigarts likely lived in the Hammond cabin until they built the house that now stands. Tax records from the 1800s indicate Jacob and Abigail Swigart built a home on the property in 1854 using hand-hewn wood from the property. Between 1862 and 1879, the property changed hands four times with the final purchase in 1879 by Roswell Hopkins Jr. for $9,300. The Hopkins owned and leased the farm until 1949; however, they never lived on the land.

Crown Point House built circa 1854

3220 Ira Rd.

In 1910, an appraisal of the property indicated the following:
- 110-acres plow land-GOOD
- 23-acres timber-FAIR
- House-FAIR
- Barn-NEW (same barn present today)

In 1949, Hugh and Mary Ann Stoller purchased the farm. The buildings were in desperate need of repair. The original house was stripped down to the posts and beams. The basement, which originally was only four feet deep, was excavated by hand. A living room and bedroom were added. Most of the wood for the restoration was obtained from trees on the property and milled in the barn. The barn was also renovated at that time, replacing the doors on the bank side and adding sturdy oak stalls to accommodate Hereford beef cattle.

The Stollers maintained a large herd of registered prize winning cattle. At its peak there were 87 cows in the herd. The farm was also known for its horses, pigs and large orchard.

In 1962, the highway department purchased 13 acres to relocate Route 21, now Interstate 77. In 1963, a spring fed pond was added to the property.

As Hugh and Mary Ann Stoller reached retirement, they realized that their sons were not interested in maintaining the farm.

At the same time, The Sisters of St. Dominic of Akron were making plans to build a new high school. Realizing that this construction would take the remainder of their property near downtown Akron, the Sisters began looking for land for future needs. In August 1967 the sisters visited the property with the Bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland to see the sights from the "Crown Point" of Bath Township. The Bishop was impressed and offered to buy the land for use by the Diocese if the Sisters did not buy it.

By September 1967 the Sisters had taken the initial steps to purchase the farm from the Stollers. In order to realize an immediate income from the property, the house was renovated and turned into a preschool under the direction of Sr. Kathleen Rachan. During renovations the Sisters tried to maintain the architectural lines of the Western Reserve style. A farm atmosphere was preserved by the presence of cows, ponies, chickens, cats and dogs. The upper part of the barn was used as a gym for the children, and a small playground with a fort and 'lookout hill' was added. The pre-school was in operation from 1968 to 1977. After the pre-school closed, the Sisters continued to reside at Crown Point. The fields were leased to a farmer and the Orchard House

was used as a vacation get-away and place of private retreat. The Sisters were often urged to sell the property as the demand for land grew in Bath. In 1988, the leadership of the Congregation began to study possible uses for the property. The Committee focused on determining the most ecologically responsible use of the land. They also requested that no synthetic chemicals be used on the fields.

Crown Point Ecology Center

In 1990 Crown Point began to offer workshops and study groups to the public and reinvented itself as an education and ecology center. Today Crown Point offers a variety of educational programs for both children and adults. Each year, hundreds of children participate in the Summer Farm & Science Camp, Youth Service Learning Projects, and more. For adults, Crown Point offers an annual Spring organic plant sale, labyrinth walks, outdoor summer wellness classes, retreats, seasonal celebrations, and special events.

Crown Point Barns

In 1997, Crown Point began to grow produce for distribution to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. Since the Foodbank Farm has been in existence, Crown Point has donated more than 140,000 pounds of organic produce to the Foodbank and the farm has expanded to 10 acres.

In 1998, Crown Point also began a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Beginning with only 20 families in its inaugural year, the CSA now averages 100 families each year on this 130 acre farm.

In 2010, Crown Point Ecology Center reincorporated as its own 501(c)3 not-for-profit to expand beyond the umbrella of the Dominican Sisters of Peace and take the first steps to being self-funded and supported by members, programs and donations. While the Dominican Sisters of Peace are still involved, Crown Point has emerged as a "Crowning Jewel" in the area in terms of ecological education, organic farming and sustainability. In this new era for Crown Point, guided by the core values of community, sustainability, spirituality and justice, the mission is to demonstrate the practical applications of ecology and to connect spirituality, social justice and environmental protection.

10 Ira Cemetery

The earliest documented burial is dated 1829. However, Lucius Bierce in his *Historical Reminiscences of Summit County* published in 1854 states, "Notwithstanding the hardships and perils that the first settlers had to endure, there was not a death in the township until two years after the first settlement. In 1812, Adam Vance, an old bachelor from Pennsylvania was drowned in the Cuyahoga (River) as he was crossing it on his way to Hudson to a meeting. He was the first person that died in the township and was buried in what was then the northwest corner of the lot laid out for a graveyard. His brother William was killed a few years later by a fall from a load of hay and lies by his side."

Ira Cemetery   2499 Ira Rd.

The earliest records indicate that Erwin J. Hammond sold the property to William Cranz, excepting and reserving ¼ acre of land which was then conveyed to the Trustees of Bath Township as a burial ground in 1863. Fifteen years later, William Cranz transferred a burial ground, for $1 to the Trustees of Bath Township. Another portion of the cemetery was established around 1871 and deeded to Bath Township in 1879 by Othello Hale.

In the mid-1970s the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area was being planned. Because some of the graves were outside the cemetery boundary, the Bath Township Trustees determined that the township should purchase .2824 acres to make the cemetery whole. So, they purchased the additional land through eminent domain for $3,500. Ira Cemetery now consists of .7 acres.

With the restored Hale Homestead across the street from Ira Cemetery, it becomes apparent that the Hale family members were prominent in this cemetery. The Hammond family also was well represented. Jason Hammond served in the American Revolution and is buried here. However, the Hammond family decided the farming was better in Illinois and sold their farm to the Cranz family. These families played a major role in the early history of the township as three of the most renowned homesteaders to arrive in this part of the Western Reserve.

What was the valley like in those days? In 1810, Jonathan Hale and Theodore Hammond came to the Connecticut Western Reserve to stake claims for their families on property that would later become known as Bath Township. They witnessed the growth of the area from their own arrival by oxen, horse and wagon to the building of the Ohio and Erie Canal in 1827 where farmers and their goods traveled by the slow moving canal boats. Life changed again in January 28, 1880 when the first through train on the Valley Railroad was open from Cleveland to Akron which broadened the horizons of the farmers who lived along it. It spelled the end to the isolation of the countryside.

11 Hammond-Cranz Homestead

Hammond
House rear
section, 1818
front section
1836

This is Jason and Rachel Hammond's homestead. Their son, Theodore Hammond, arrived before the rest of the family and chose where they would settle. The rear section was built in 1818 by Jason Hammond, the front two-story section was built in 1836 by their son, Lewis Hammond. Lewis Hammond's son, Erwin, sold the homestead to William Cranz. In 1863, William and Mary Cranz moved to "Pleasant Valley" with their large family. Of the twelve Cranz children, Eugene was the most interested in farming and horticulture. Eugene Cranz married Nettie Parker in 1893 and eventually took over the management of the farm. Cranz promoted woodland conservation and was a pioneer in forestry work. The house remained in the Cranz family until the National Park Service acquired the home in 1976. The Hammond-Cranz house is the oldest documented house in Bath.

The Ohio Historical Marker states: Hale, Hammond, Cranz Homesteads

This cemetery is the resting place of many of the Hale, Hammond, and Cranz family members who were integral in founding and developing Bath Township. Connecticut natives Jonathon Hale and Jason Hammond were the first to purchase land in the area that would become Bath Township. In 1810, Jonathan Hale and his nephew, Theodore Hammond, arrived at Township 3, Range 12 of the Connecticut Western Reserve. The Hale family lived in this home until 1956, when it became the Hale Farm & Village of the Western Reserve Historical Society. Jason and Rachel Hammond's family started construction of a frame home in 1818 that was completed in 1836. The Hammond property extended from the valley to Hammond's Corners.

When the township organized in 1818, the settlers needed to choose a name. Surveyors called it Wheatfield, but it became known as Hammondsburgh. Jonathon Hale reportedly exclaimed, "O, call it Jerusalem, Jericho or Bath…anything but Hammondsburgh!" Bath was selected as the name of the township. In 1863, William and Drushel Cranz purchased the Hammond homestead and moved their ten children to "Pleasant Valley." They had two more children at the homestead. The family lived there until 1975. Erwin Hammond transferred land for this cemetery when he sold the homestead in 1863. William Cranz and Othello Hale deeded additional property for this cemetery in 1879.

Hammond-Cranz House   2401 Ira Rd.

12 O'Neil Woods Metro Park

Akron, Ohio was dubbed the "rubber capital of the world" in the late nineteenth century, and it was in Akron that the General Tire and Rubber Company was established in 1915. The founder of the company, William F. O'Neil was a native of the city, although his partner Winfred E. Fouse, had first entered the rubber tire business in Kansas City, Missouri. In early 1909 O'Neil and Fouse pooled their capital and established the Western Rubber and Supply Company which only sold already made tires. Both partners, however, had bigger dreams; they were natives of Akron, where O'Neil's father, a wealthy merchant agreed to give the two young entrepreneurs a loan in order to open a tire manufacturing business. In 1915, the General Tire and Rubber company was launched.

William O'Neil, founder of General Tire and Rubber Company, donated the 242 acre family farm to the Summit County Metroparks in 1972. The O'Neil's had cattle and horses, and their old barn which still stands on Bath Road, now holds a small colony of brown bats.
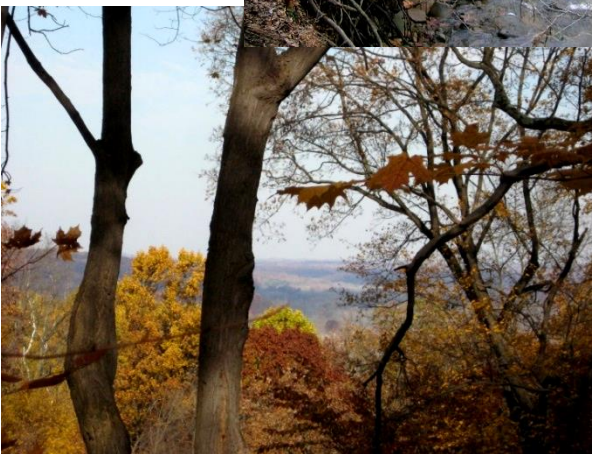

O'Neil Barn   2400 Bath Rd

O'Neil Woods
Metro Park
2550 Martin Rd.

Yellow Creek

O'Neil Woods

13 Moore's Chapel Cemetery

Samuel and Charlotte Shaw were the first Shaws who came to Bath in 1829. Growth in the township was slow for the first 20 years, but the 1830s saw an influx of new pioneers, many from Ontario County, New York. Samuel and Charlotte purchased 145 acres of land, built a home and farmed the land. Samuel's parents, Constant and Mercy Shaw, came to Bath in 1832. Brothers Sylvester, Richmond, Seymour and Philip, as well as other family members followed.

This cemetery was established on Shaw property. Samuel and Charlotte Shaw's daughter, two-year old Charlotte, died in 1833 and is believed to be the first burial on the property. In 1836, the Shaws conveyed ½ acre of land to the township for a burying ground. Samuel died in 1836, and Charlotte then married Lyman Doolittle. Charlotte Hale Shaw Doolittle had five more children with Lyman Doolittle, but only two daughters survived to adulthood. She was an amazing woman who lived to the age of 85. In 1892, Virgil E. and Genevieve Doolittle Shaw sold one acre of their property to Bath Township to expand Shaw Cemetery. Other families moved to this area around the same time, like the Thorps and the Kents, and all contributed to the history of Bath, building a strong community.

The Ohio Historical Marker states: Shaw Cemetery

In 1829, Samuel and Charlotte Hale Shaw came to Bath Township from Bristol, New York. They purchased 145 acres of land where Samuel, a carpenter, built a two-story frame house. They had six children; two died in infancy. Their two year old daughter, Charlotte, was the first to be buried in Shaw Cemetery. They conveyed one-half acre of land to the township for a "burying ground" in 1836.

Samuel died in 1836; Charlotte then married Lyman Doolittle. They had five children; two daughters survived to adulthood.   In 1892, Virgil E. and Genevieve Doolittle Shaw sold one acre to Bath Township to expand Shaw Cemetery.

Samuel's parents, Constant and Mercy Pitts Shaw, migrated to Bath Township along with his brothers and their families.

Sylvester and Harriet Parsons Shaw arrived in 1832 in a wagon drawn by oxen, built a log cabin, and became successful farmers. Their grandson, Leon Shaw, was a noted photographer in the late 19th century. His photographs depicting everyday rural life are frequently on display at the Bath Township Museum.

A Methodist Chapel was built in 1879 adjacent to Shaw Cemetery on land given by Romans Boughton. It was named in honor of Oliver Moore who donated to the construction cost of the chapel. Shaw Cemetery, as it was known locally, became Moore's Chapel Cemetery. The chapel was sold and dismantled in 1912.

In 1999, Linda Swain donated 7.8 acres and sold 4.5 acres to Bath Township for cemetery expansion.

Moore's Chapel Cemetery
1631 N. Hametown Rd.

14 East Bath Cemetery

East Bath was also known as Little Germany because of the many German immigrants who settled in the area. The community focus was the church and the school.

The German Evangelical Church was erected on property owned by John Bennage on the southwest corner of Shade and Revere Roads to serve the citizens of East Bath of German ancestry in 1861. The church has long since disappeared. However, just west of the church a cemetery, which remains, was plotted and the first burial was in October of 1861.

Bennage Home

Some little known facts about this cemetery are that the first burial was in 1861 of a 32 day old girl. East Bath Cemetery has 61 grave markers representing 16 families. Four veterans from the Civil War are buried here. Two people buried here lived to be 91 years of age, one buried in 1904 and the other in 1937. There are 12 burials of children under the age of 12. The youngest to be buried were 16 day old twins who died in 1889. The last burial was an 83 year-old man in 1967.

Bennage grave

East Bath Cemetery
2902 Shade Rd.

15 Heritage Corridors of Bath Wayside Exhibit

The Heritage Corridors of Bath, an Ohio Scenic Byway, connects the nineteenth century hamlets of Ghent, Bath Center, and Hammond's Corners with the historic Hale Farm & Village, the Stony Hill School House, the Bath Nature Preserve and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Early Bath homes, barns, cemeteries, and mills line the byway as it winds through these scenic areas. The Heritage Corridors of Bath Committee was formed to research and apply for byway designation for many of the county roads in Bath Township. The Ohio Department of Transportation designated the Heritage Corridors of Bath, an Ohio Scenic Byway, in 2000 based on its intrinsic historic and scenic qualities. The township was awarded a National Scenic Byway Grant for the Wayside Exhibit in 2011. The byway encompasses 39 miles of Bath Township's county roads.

Heritage Corridors of Bath Wayside Exhibit

1000 N. Cleveland-Massillon Rd.

The mission of the Heritage Corridors of Bath is to preserve and enhance the historic and scenic rural character of the Bath community, creating an enriching and pleasurable experience for those who travel the byway.

The Heritage Corridors of Bath Wayside Exhibit was dedicated in 2015 as a place to stop, rest, and discover the many treasures along the Ohio Scenic Byway in Bath. The property consists of seven acres, part in Lot 56 and part in Lot 65. This is the most northern part of Ghent and the most southern part of Bath Center. For many years the property remained undeveloped, likely due to its location midway between two hamlets. It lacked agricultural development due to the topography of the land and the North Fork of Yellow Creek and Park Creek that cut through it. Local legend says that it was a great place to fish.

16 Chief Logan

Northeast Ohio has a substantial Native American history with many different tribes migrating through and settling in the area. One of these tribes was the Mingo, comprised of members from the Six Nations of the Iroquois. A famous Mingo leader was Chief Logan. During the 1700s a Mingo town was located in the area that would later become Bath Township. According to Bierce's Historical Reminiscences of Summit County, "the remains of their town are yet to be seen in a meadow, a little north of east from Jonathan Hale's."

Local artist Joe Frohnapfel sculpted the Chief Logan statue. It is constructed from a seven ton section of red oak that fell in Fairlawn and was installed at Bath Community Park on June 1, 2006.

Chief Logan at Bath Community Park

1615 N. Cleveland-Massillon Rd.

17 North Fork Preserve of Bath

House and Barn
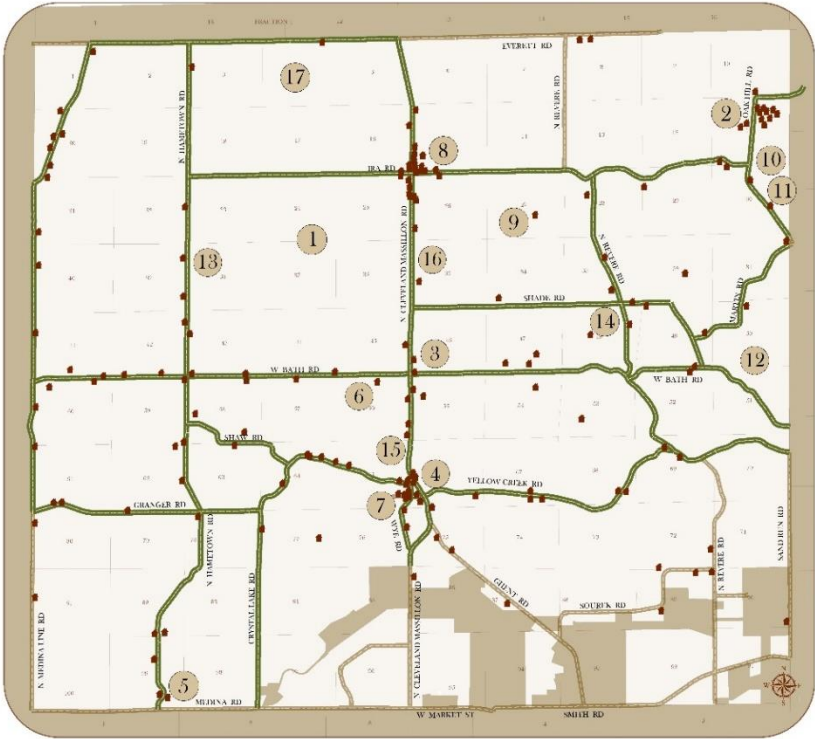North Fork Preserve
of Bath
4400 Everett Rd.

Sam and Asma Nemer began farming this property in 1915 after Sam had worked at a rubber shop in Akron for several years. The farm became the center of Lebanese culture in Northeast Ohio, hosting the annual Lebanese Cultural Festival.

The Lemmon family purchased the property in 1955 and built and moved into their new house in 1958. Dr. James Lemmon, a surgeon, and his wife Betty had six children. They called the property the *Happy Hollow Farm* which was operated as a "Gentleman's Farm," raising chickens, goats, and bees, and growing Christmas trees. Betty operated the *Greenberry Riding Centre* on the property; horses were kept for riding lessons and breeding.

The 78 acre property was transferred from the Lemmon estate to Bath Township in June, 2020. The property consists of 65 acres of forest, nine acres of wetland and four acres for the house, barn and driveway. It features a Triple Loop Trail.

LOCATOR MAP

Heritage Corridors of Bath

- Township Century Homes
- Century Streets
- Original Township Lots
- Scenic Byways

1. Bath Nature Preserve
2. Hale Farm & Village
3. Historic Town Hall, Museum and Cemetery
4. Ghent Historic District
5. Stony Hill School
6. Bath Church
7. Thomas Pierson House and Octagon Bee House
8. Whitcraft General Store
9. Crown Point
10. Ira Cemetery
11. Hammond-Cranz Homestead
12. O'Neil Woods Metro Park
13. Moore's Chapel Cemetery
14. East Bath Cemetery
15. Heritage Corridors of Bath Wayside Exhibit
16. Chief Logan
17. North Fork Preserve of Bath