

When Samuel Martin and James Miller purchased Section 28 from John Cleves Symmes in 1796, they divided it in a rather unique way, on the diagonal from the southeast corner to the northwest corner.

Knowlton's at the Corner

by Robert T. Howe

Each weekday, thousands of Cincinnatians and residents of north-central Hamilton County mumble to themselves as they contend with the traffic congestion at Knowlton's Corner. They creep along the streets approaching this important intersection and see a succession of vacant stores and second-hand furniture dealers which give little evidence that in 1930 this was the third largest secondary shopping center in Hamilton County.¹

In July 1973, the present residents of the northside of Cumminsville celebrated, in a modest way, the centennial of the merger of the Village of Cumminsville with the City of Cincinnati. Of course the official action was that Cincinnati annexed Cumminsville, but the term merger seems appropriate in the light of what the Cincinnati *Times Star* said in an editorial of November 1890, entitled "Cumminsville Always Gets There:"

*There are many people in this day who accept the tradition that the little village located on Mill Creek about five miles from its mouth was once annexed to Cincinnati. The tradition is wrong. It was Cincinnati that was annexed to the village.*²

The writer and his family moved into Northside in 1947. A civil engineer, he quickly became intrigued by the complexity of the street patterns. He began to study the history of the area and became further intrigued by the significance of street names and their relationship to people who once lived in the area. For personal pleasure and professional interest he decided to try and trace the physical development of Section 28 of Millcreek Township from the time of John Cleves Symmes' purchase to the present. Section 28 is that portion of Cumminsville bounded on the south by the centerline of Hoffner Street, on the east by the centerline of Fergus Street, on the north by the rear property lines of parcels facing on Northview, Glen Armand, Robinson Circle, and Otte Avenue; on the west by the easternmost line of Mt. Airy Forest. The southeast corner of the section is in the bed of the Millcreek; the northeast corner is between Parker's Woods and the Northside Woods recently given to the Cincinnati Park Board by the Greater Cincinnati Tree Council; the northwest corner is on the edge of Raeburn subdivision; and the southwest corner is on the edge of the Faye Apartments property.³

Most of the southern half of the section has a gentle slope toward the south, but the remainder of the terrain is quite rugged. Walking around the perimeter, one would start at nearly the pool elevation of the Ohio River and rise gradually to over 600 feet above sea level only to drop again to about 525 feet. On the northline there is a steep climb to 725 feet, then a sharp descent to 525 followed by another climb to 800 feet. Along the west line, there would be a skyline walk for a few hundred feet before descending into the valley of West Fork Creek and then climbing most of the way up to the Faye Apartments; along the south line there would be a very steep descent for a few hundred feet and then a nearly level walk back to the place of beginning. This rugged and varied terrain proved to be very important in the subsequent development of the section.

John Cleves Symmes purchased all of the land between the Miami Rivers in 1788, and had it surveyed over a period of time in accord with the Public Land Act of 1785. Israel Ludlow, his chief surveyor, established his home about 1,000 feet from what is now known as Knowlton's Corner. On March 3, 1796 Symmes sold one half of Section 28 to Samuel Martin for eighty-seven pounds and eight shillings, and the other half to James Miller for \$350.00 or \$1.10 an acre. It is not known whether Miller and Martin were related, but they divided the section between them in a most unusual way. Section 28 was divided on a diagonal from the southeast corner to the northwest corner.⁴ A review of the physical conditions mentioned before might lead one to believe that both men wanted access to the Millcreek, but the actual dividing line was not straight and began 740 feet north of the southeast corner, near the south end of the present Fergus Street. It is more likely that both men wanted access to the "Great Road to Fort Hamilton"—the original Indian trail we now call Spring Grove Avenue.

Although the subdivision line drawn by Miller and Martin still influences life in Cumminsville today and a portion of it forms the northeast corner of the McKie Recreation Center on Chase Avenue, both men gave up ownership of their tracts in less than ten years. Four months after purchasing his 320 acres, James Miller sold 100 acres of his northeast half-section to Enos Terry for \$200.00 and five weeks later Terry sold the same tract to Robert Badgely for \$300.00. This site stayed in the Badgely family for almost a century, and one descendant, Arthur Badgely,⁵ was still living on it at 1717 Martha Street in 1960. Miller sold the remaining 220 acres a year and a half later to Israel Ludlow for \$2,000.00. Ludlow also owned the half of Section 22 immediately east of his new purchase.

Miller did participate, to a limited extent, in a major improvement on the section, for in August 1796 the Court of Hamilton County established the right-of-way for a road "from Coleraine to Cincinnati" through his land. This road began at the Great Miami River, near the present site of the Procter and Gamble laboratories, and followed the alignment of Colerain Avenue to Banning Road, thence along the present Banning Road, Belmont Avenue, and

Hamilton Avenue to the "Great Road leading from Cincinnati to Ft. Hamilton." A portion of Knowlton's Corner is, therefore, a legacy to James Miller, and it may be that this road made the adjoining land worth almost \$10.00 per acre to Israel Ludlow.

There are no transactions on record for the northeast half of Section 28 during the decade of 1800-1810, but two major sales did occur in the southwest half. Six years after purchasing his ninety-three acres John Roll turned the land over to his son, Matthias, who held it for four years before selling it, for slightly more than \$4.00 per acre, to Robert Badgely in July, 1807. This sale made Badgely the owner of 193 acres in the most rugged part of the section.

In September, 1805 Ezekial Hutchinson purchased the remainder of Martin's land, including the present Knowlton's Corner for more than \$10.00 per acre. These 227 acres included a large portion of the tillable land in the section and had the best water supply for they touched on the Millcreek, Badgely Run, and West Fork Creek, and included a large spring which Hutchinson dammed to form a pond. In 1810 Hutchinson's land was improved even more by the opening of "The Blue Rock Road" from a point at which the road to Ft. Hamilton crossed the east line of Section 28 westerly along the present Blue Rock Street to the present Colerain Avenue; proceeded northwestwardly along the present Colerain Avenue to Blue Rock Road, and along this alignment to the Great Miami River. Hutchinson built his home at the northwest corner of the present Hamilton Avenue and Blue Rock Street, the old Northside playground, and operated a tavern there for several years.

From 1813 to 1817 five transactions took place involving the 9.2 acres bounded by present Hamilton Avenue, Blue Rock Street, and the east line of the section. In the first of these Hutchinson sold 8.8 acres to Edward F. and Jacob White for \$800.00, with the following provisions:

And the said Ezekial Hutchinson further covenants and agrees to with the said Edward White and Jacob White, Jr. that they may build and keep in repair a small reservoir between the spring house and the north wall of the fish pond from which they shall have liberty to lay conducting pipes in such a manner as not to interfere with or injure the walls or buildings, the mouth of which pipe is to be covered with a plate of metal containing six circular holes of 1/4" diameter each and no more water is to be taken away than may pass through these holes. And that free liberty be given at all times to relay or repair those pipes and reservoir. It is further covenanted and agreed by these parties and it is an express condition in this contract and sale that no tavern or house of public entertainment be kept upon the premises now granted for the space of ten years next ensuing the date hereof.

The last of these contracts was in 1817 when David Cummins acquired the

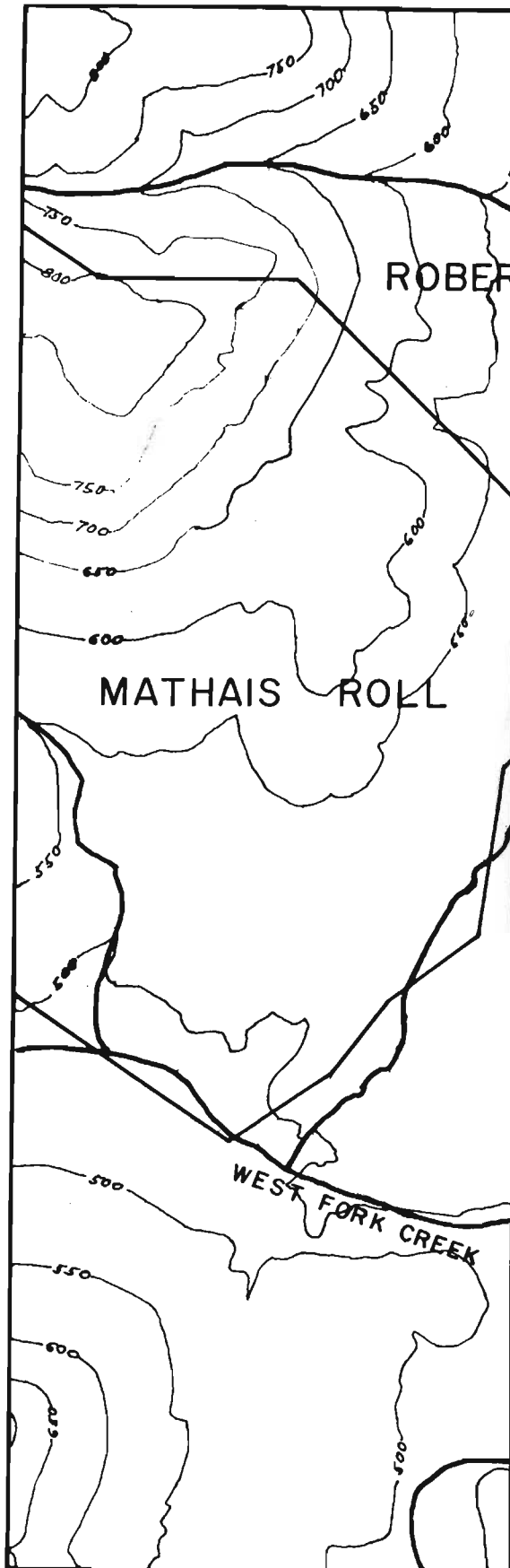
SEC 28, T3, FR2, MP

1805



CONTOURS FROM CINCINNATI TOPOGRAPHIC
SURVEY OF 1912
STREAMS FROM MAPS OF 1869, 1884, & 1912
PROPERTY LINES FROM DEED RECORDS

PREPARED BY ROBERT T. HOWE
DECEMBER 1964



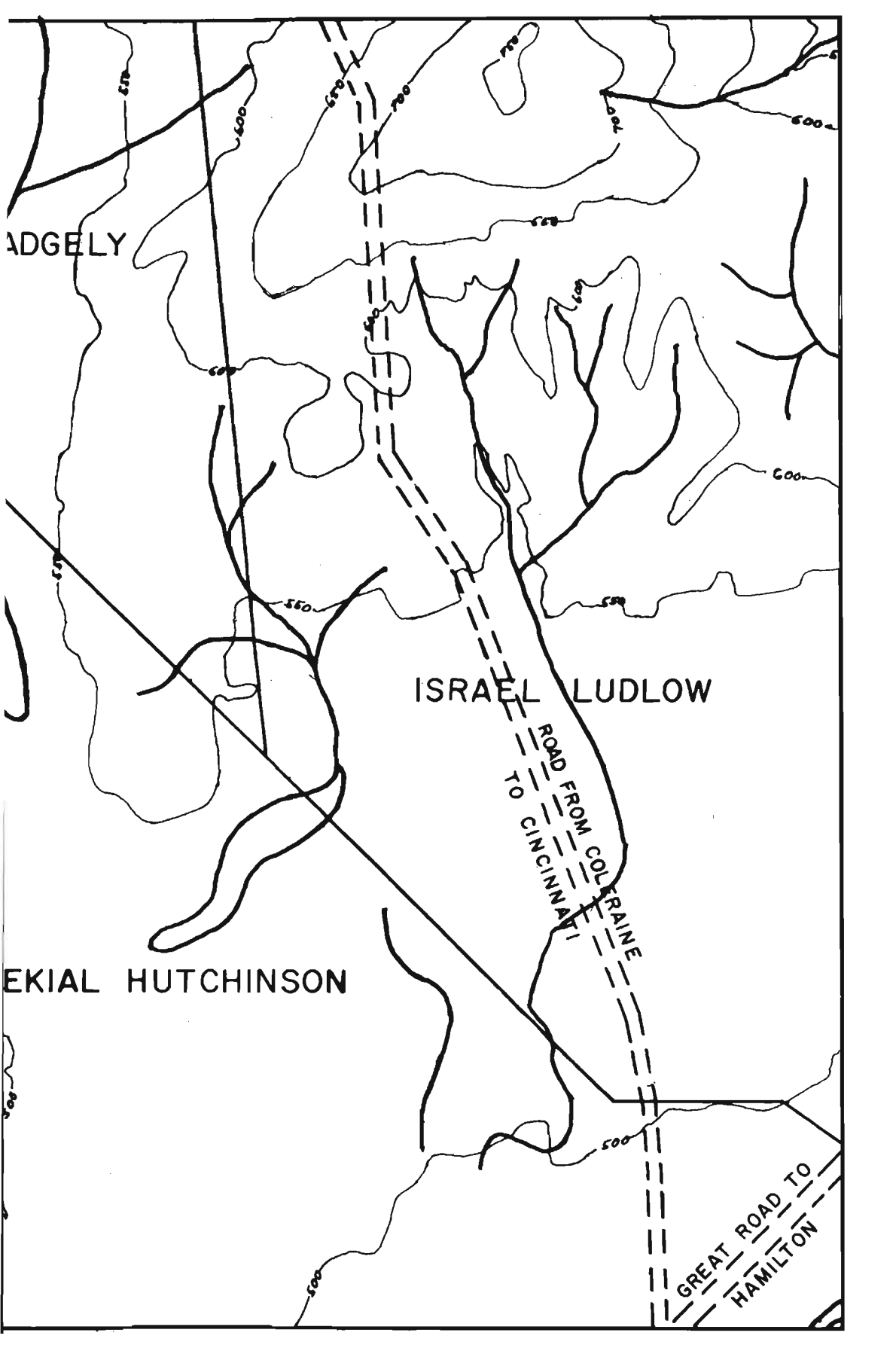
ADGELY

ISRAEL LUDLOW

EKIAL HUTCHINSON

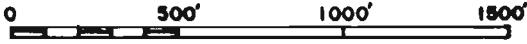
ROAD FROM COLERAIN
TO CINCINNATI

GREAT ROAD TO
HAMILTON



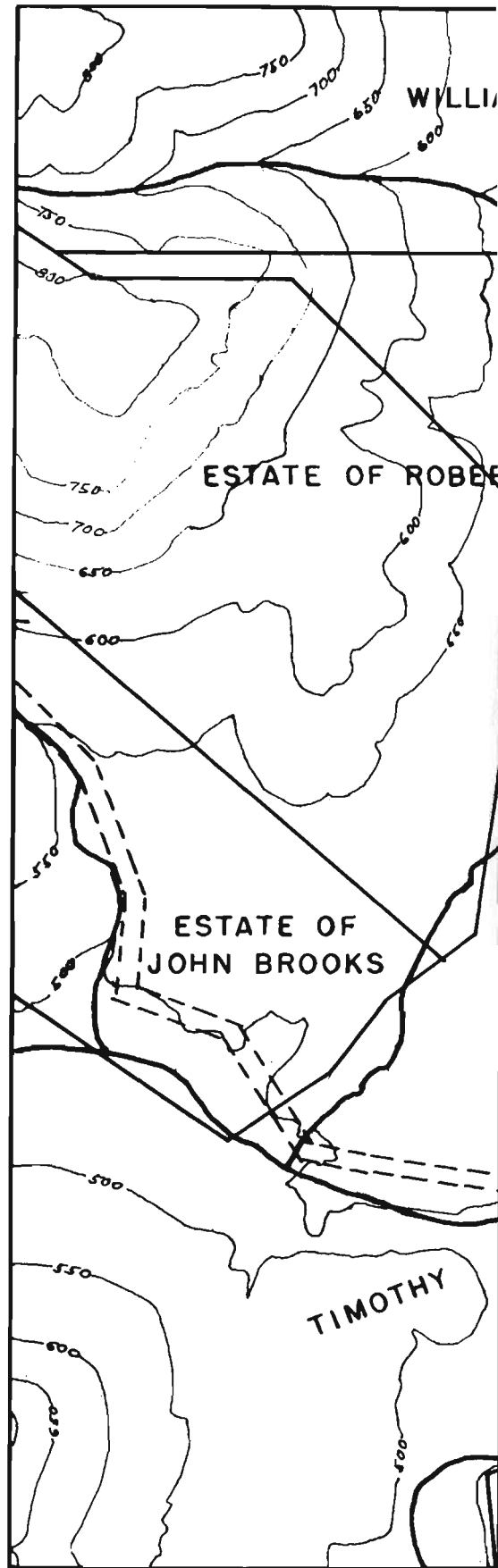
SEC 28, T3, FR2, MP

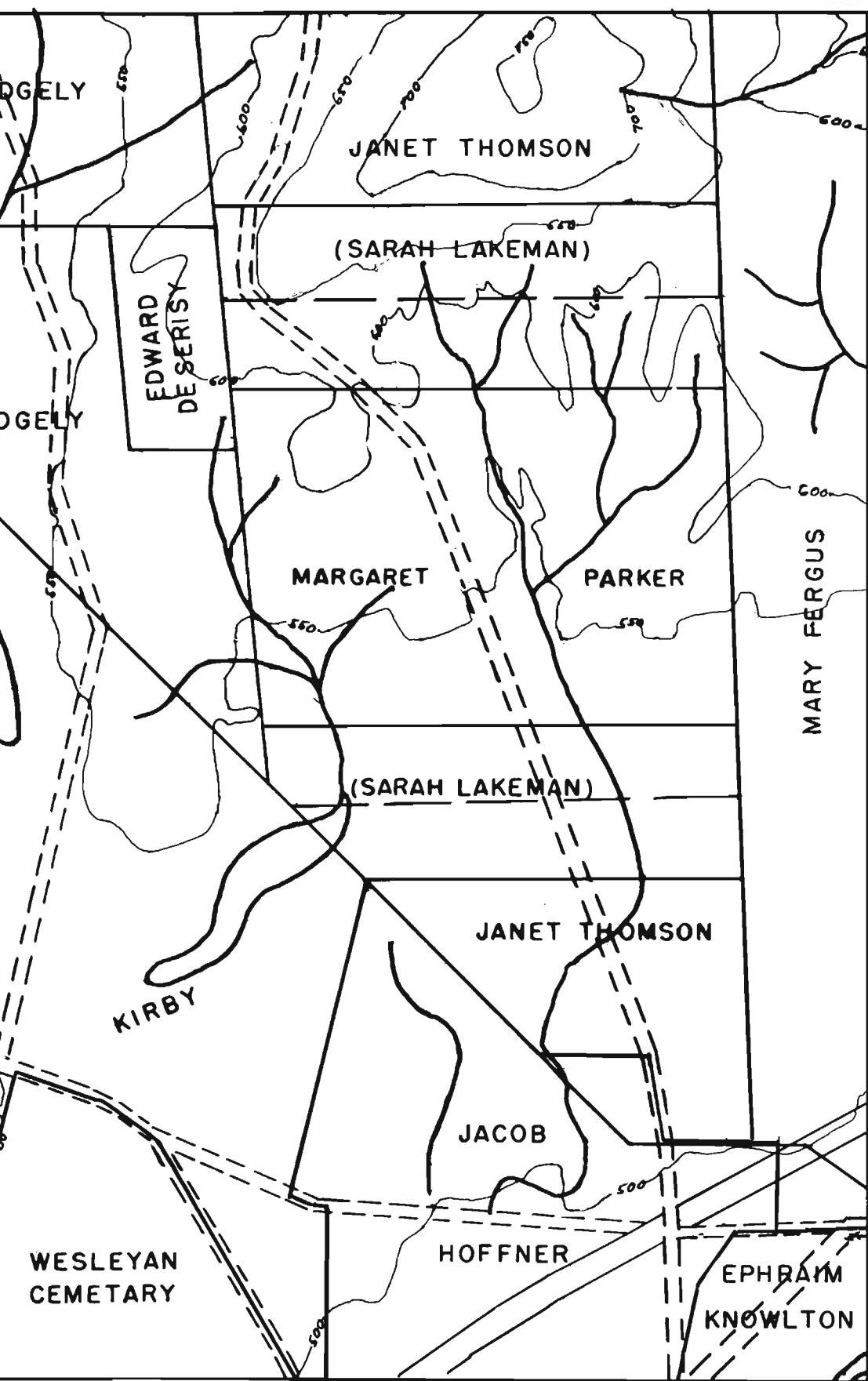
1850



CONTOURS FROM CINCINNATI TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF 1912
STREAMS FROM MAPS OF 1869, 1884, & 1912
PROPERTY LINES FROM DEED RECORDS

PREPARED BY ROBERT T. HOWE





9.2 acres from Jacob White.

One dry summer Hutchinson and Cummins began to quarrel about the water clause in the contract and as the argument dragged on both men apparently borrowed money to finance the dispute and both had trouble repaying the loans. The creditors foreclosed on Hutchinson and, after trying for almost six years to sell the property, in 1829 the sheriff of Hamilton County auctioned Hutchinson's farm to the Bank of the United States for \$25.00 an acre. David Cummins fared better in the foreclosure proceedings and lost only 0.4 acres along present Hamilton Avenue adjacent to Blue Rock Street. His plot was auctioned for \$35.00.

About the time Hutchinson and Cummins began their quarrel, Robert Badgely sold twenty-five acres from the southern tip of his land in the southeast half of Section 28 to John Brooks for \$225.00. On the northeast half of the section Robert Badgely gave fifty acres in the form of a rectangular parcel along the north line to his son, William in 1819. About this same time James Ludlow, son of Israel, sold the Ludlow tract to John Redhead for \$6,533.00. After trading two and a quarter acres on the west side of present Hamilton Avenue to Ezekial Hutchinson for an equal acreage on the north side of Blue Rock Road, Redhead sold his entire remaining 217 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres to Mary Fergus, wife of David Fergus, and Alexander Langlands, husband of Janet Fergus, the daughter of Mary and David, for the same price Redhead had paid Ludlow. The Fergus family and its descendants played leading roles in the development of the section for almost a century, and the current Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the University of Cincinnati, Mrs. Jane DeSerisy Early, traces her lineage to it.

The decade of the 1830's brought many important people to the forefront in Section 28 and produced several major changes in the highway system. David Cummins sold two and a quarter acres, bounded on the north by the Blue Rock Road and on the east by the Great Road to Hamilton, to James and John McMakin for \$1,000.00 and shortly thereafter he moved to Madison, Indiana. In 1833 while living in Madison, Cummins sold the balance of his land in Section 28 to Ephraim Knowlton for \$1,800.00 and Knowlton built a store at the wedge between the present Spring Grove and Hamilton Avenues, a building which existed until after the 1937 flood.

In 1831 the Bank of the United States sold the southeastern forty-six acres of Hutchinson's former farm including his home to Francis Carr for \$6,000. The Bank's descriptions of the two sub-areas making up this tract were so vague that no surveyor could be certain that he was establishing the correct lines. Unfortunately these descriptions carried forward to later sales and affected subdivisions of the land for many years. When Carr died a few years later, his heirs sold the entire tract to Jacob Hoffner for \$4,400.00, and Hoffner became a leading figure in the area for almost sixty years.⁶

Also in 1831 the Bank sold the remainder of Hutchinson's land to Timothy

Kirby for \$8,000.00. Shortly thereafter, Kirby began to lease small parcels of land and to make small subdivisions all with poorly defined boundaries. This practice was followed for almost forty-five years and profoundly affected the street pattern of Cumminsville. One of his first leesees was Joseph Williams, and while the parcel cannot be traced today, it was near the present JoWilliams Street.

In the northeast half of the section, there were no major transactions until near the end of the decade. In 1830 Robert Badgely did sell two acres of land which did not touch upon a public road for \$30.00. Five years later, this small parcel sold for \$160.00, and in 1836 Edward DeSerisy, Sr. purchased it for \$225.00.

The death of Alexander Langlands in 1838 was of great importance because the Fergus-Langlands tract had to be subdivided. This was the first instance in which death took a hand in subdividing the land of Section 28 and many of the present irrationalities of the street pattern can be traced directly to the partition of this estate, as well as to the estates of Robert Badgely, John Brooks, and Timothy Kirby.

Since Alexander Langlands and his mother-in-law, Mary Fergus, owned the 218 acres in the northeast half of the section jointly, the probate court awarded Mary a strip of land approximately 600 feet wide along the east line of the section extending northwardly from the Blue Rock Road to the north line of the section. This land was evidently judged to represent one half of the value of the entire tract. The remaining 152 acres were divided so as to give approximately equal area and equal *value* to Langlands' three daughters, Margaret Parker, Janet Thomson, and Sarah Lakeman. His widow retained *dower interest* in the two southern parcels and in a portion of Margaret's land.

In the 1830's several important improvements were made in the roads crossing the section. The first such change was in February 1830 when the original Coleraine Road (present Hamilton Avenue) was realigned "commencing at the foot of the long hill above Hutchinson's . . . and terminating . . . near W. Nelson's." This section is regularly cursed by modern drivers as they traverse the curves on Hamilton Avenue between North Argyle and Robinson Circle, but when it was made it eliminated forty-five feet of rise and fall in this stretch of road.

In 1834 James Ludlow, Ephraim Knowlton, and W. W. Carey, working as a Board of Viewers appointed by the commissioners of Hamilton County, reported on a proposed improvement in the Blue Rock Road (present Coleraine Avenue between Blue Rock Street and West Fork Road).

In conformity with the above order we proceeded (after being duly qualified) to review the line and rout (sic) of the Blue Rock road. And the result of our examination is that we deem it necessary that certain alternations (sic) should be made in the said road, by which alternations the distance

will be shortened and the road in our opinion placed on better ground. We therefore recommend that it should be opened in accordance with the courses and distances annexed and certified by Garret Vliet, county surveyor.

We further deem it our duty to represent to you the immediate necessity of appropriating \$1,000 to \$1,500 towards improving said road, indeed the alternations we recommend is (sic) in part upon the expectations that such an appropriation would be made, not doubting that when you viewed the contemplated changes your good Judgements and regard for the public Interest would dictate the necessity of such improvements. This road is the only direct communication between a populous portion of our county and Cincinnati. Over it is transported (independent of the Products of the Farmer) great quantities of cord wood, timber, charcoal, and copper stuff yet the road owing to some low ground, slip banks and steep accents is often impassable for loaded Waggons (sic).

Evidently the county commissioners did not have the money needed for the recommended improvements, but they accomplished the task by turning the right-of-way over to a turnpike company. The Colerain & Oxford Turnpike Company took over most of the Blue Rock Road in Section 28 in 1835 and realigned it to the present position of Colerain Avenue south of Blue Rock Street. In that same year, the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Turnpike Company took over the right-of-way of the present Hamilton Avenue through the section.

By the end of the 1840's additional changes had resulted through land purchases and because of deaths. John Brooks who owned thirty-three acres of rugged land on both sides of the Cincinnati Oxford & Brookville Turnpike died. His property was divided into parts of equal value between his children, Sarah Leeper, Daniel, and Rebecca, and each tract straddled the turnpike. Robert Badgely died and his lands seem to have been turned over to Jacob Badgely, as trustee of the estate. In addition to leasing several small parcels, Timothy Kirby, who owned the southwest quarter, sold 25.11 acres along the south section line to the directors of Wesleyan Cemetery for \$2,511.00. Ephraim Knowlton filed a plat for the *Town of Cumminsville*, most of which lay in Section 27, to the south, but which did create the southern half of Hoffner Street along the section boundary line. Through several small purchases from the Parkers and Thomsons the DeSerisy family gained frontage on the west side of Hamilton Pike from what is now Glen Parker Avenue to Frederick Street. Mary Fergus also died during the '40's and her daughter, Janet Langlands inherited her property.

Early in this period a group of freeholders petitioned the county commissioners to open a road from "the Windmill Road" (the present Dreman Avenue) to "the old Colerain Road" (now Belmont Avenue) via the lands of Kirby and

Badgelys. Kirby refused to grant the right-of-way to the south of the turnpike (Colerain Avenue) so there was no connection between Beekman Street and Kirby Avenue until the construction of Interstate 74 in 1974, even though the two streets lie on almost a straight line. Later a road originally called Badgely Road was established on the present alignments of Kirby and Glenview Avenues.

The 1850's brought public transportation to the Town of Cumminsville for in the first year of the decade Jacob Hoffner filed his plat of his *Cumminsville Addition* showing a 100 feet wide right-of-way for the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad Company. The deed read:

Know all men that Jacob Hoffner and Sarah his wife in consideration of the benefits they are to derive by means of the construction of the depots, workshops, and water stations for the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Rail Road as hereinafter mentioned do hereby bargain, sell and convey . . . being part of Hoffner's Subdivision of lots in the Town of Cumminsville. . . .

In addition to the land grant Hoffner inserted into the deed the provision that the railroad was to be permitted to take all of the water it might need from "a certain spring on his land situated in Cherry Street, north of Blue Rock Street." Hoffner's "Addition" covered the area extending from the centerline of the Hamilton Pike to the west line of the lots on the west side of present Delaney Street. This west line was the arbitrary one set by the Bank of the United States to delimit the forty-six acres sold to Francis Carr.

In 1851 Janet Langlands and her daughter, Janet Thomson, subdivided a portion of the southernmost lands of Alexander Langlands and also a portion of the land formerly held by Mary Fergus.⁷ This subdivision created First (now Knowlton) and Second (now Lingo) streets, the southern portion of Langland Street, and the west half of Fergus Street along the east boundary of Section 28.

Timothy Kirby filed in 1853 the first of eight subdivision plats he was to file over a twenty-two year period. The first plat completed the subdivision of land between Hoffner and Blue Rock streets, making Hoffner Street full width from its west line to the Colerain, Oxford & Brookville Turnpike. The fact that Kirby had previously sold land along the southern boundary of the section to the Wesleyan Cemetery accounts for the offset in the alignment of Hoffner Street as it crosses present Colerain Avenue.

Another important land transaction during this decade took place when Hoffner sold 11.67 acres, roughly one half of his remaining unsubdivided land, to Archbishop John B. Purcell for St. Joseph Orphanage. This prime land, including the important spring, cost the archdiocese \$8,220.00. The orphanage remained on this site for almost 110 years. When its building became obsolete, the orphanage moved to a site in White Oak and sold its land



Mrs. Janet Thomson
323a.

Mrs. Janet Thomson
1024a.

F. Parker
1024a.

F. Parker

J.D. & R.B. Pullan

F. Parker
838a, 1655

Mrs. Janet Thomson
838a.

J. Honeywell

(SEE PLATE 26 FOR CUMMINSVILLE)

M I N N O T



Mrs. Janet Thomson
323a.

Mrs. Janet Thomson
1024a.

F. Parker
1024a.

F. Parker

J.D. & R.B. Pullan

F. Parker
838a, 1655

Mrs. Janet Thomson
838a.

J. Honeywell

(SEE PLATE 26 FOR CUMMINSVILLE)

M I N N O T



Mrs. Janet Thomson
323a.

Mrs. Janet Thomson
1024a.

F. Parker
1024a.

F. Parker

J.D. & R.B. Pullan

F. Parker
838a, 1655

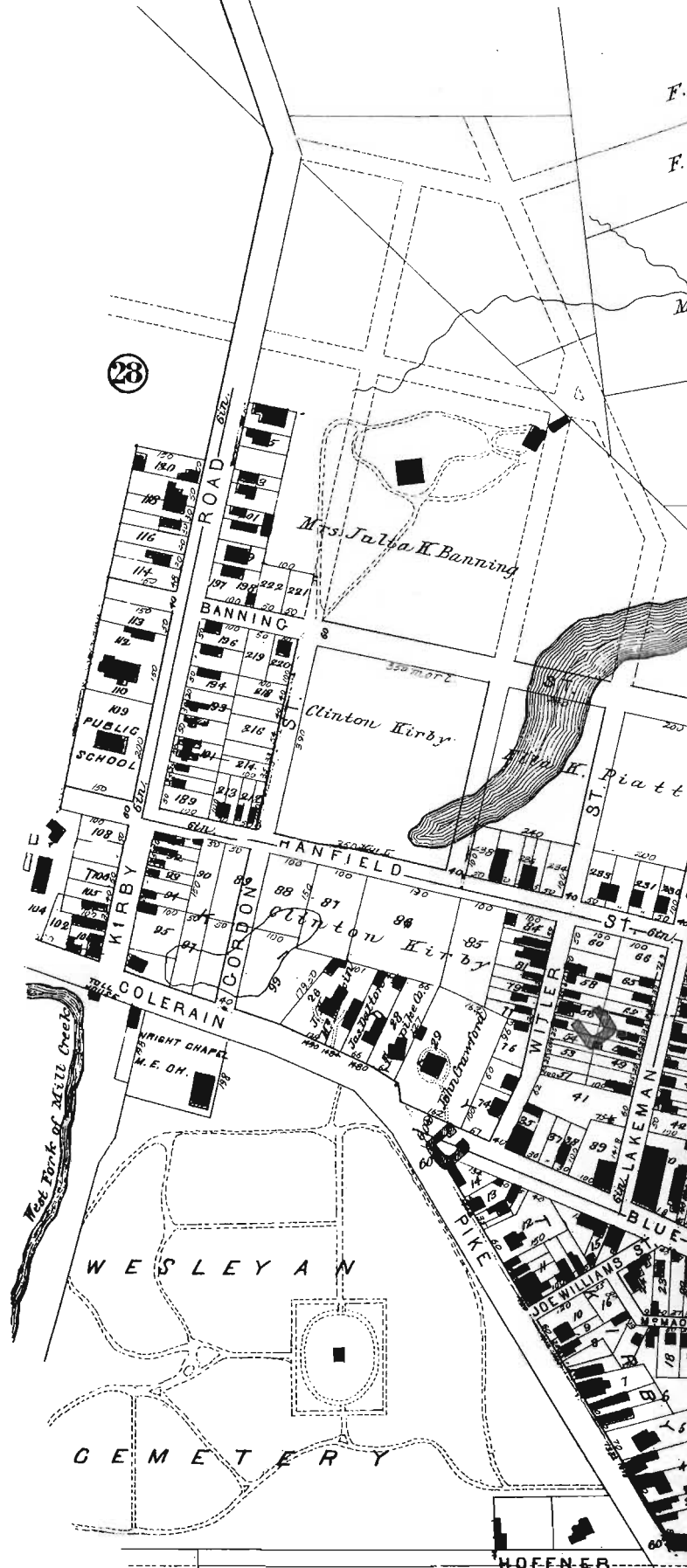
Mrs. Janet Thomson
838a.

J. Honeywell

(SEE PLATE 26 FOR CUMMINSVILLE)

M I N N O T

28



120
180
116
114
113
109
119
PUBLIC SCHOOL

BANNING
197
196
195
194
193
192
191
190
189

Mrs. Julia H. Banning

Clinton Kirby

KIRBY
108
107
106
105
104

COOLIDGE
89
88
87
86
85
84

MANFIELD

Wesleyan Cemetery

COLERAIN

WRIGHT CHAPEL
W. E. O. H.

The Fork of Little Creek

WESLEYAN

G E M E T E R Y

ST. 600

MILL

LAKEMAN

BLUE

JOE WILLIAMS

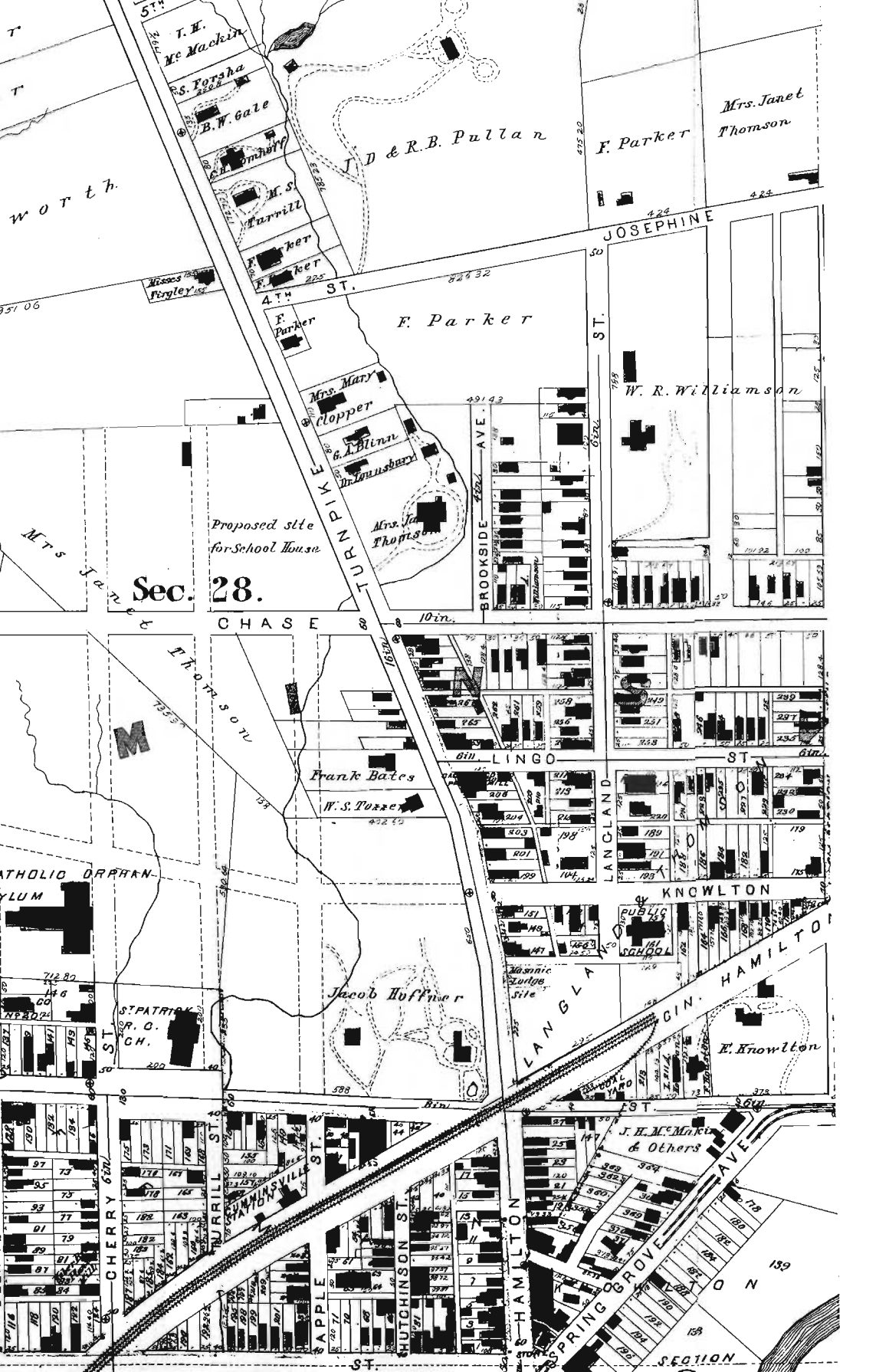
ST. 18

ST. 17

ST. 16

ST. 15

HOFFNER



worth.

T. H. Mc Mackin
S. Foraha
B. W. Gale
M. S. Tarrill
F. Parker
F. Parker
Mrs. Mary Clopper
G. L. Blinn
Mrs. J. Thomson

D & R. B. Pullan

Mrs. Janet Thomson
F. Parker

Sec. 28.

Proposed site for School House

Mrs. Janet

CHASE ST.

JOSEPHINE ST.

TUNBURN ST.

BROOKSIDE AVE.

ST.

LINGO ST.

LANGLAND ST.

KNOWLTON ST.

LANGLA
HAMILTON ST.

CATHOLIC ORPHAN-ASYLUM

ST. PATRICK'S R. C. CH.

Jacob Huffner

E. Knowlton

CHERRY ST.

MURRILL ST.

WILKINSONVILLE ST.

APPLE ST.

HUTCHINSON ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

ST.

SPRING GROVE AVE.
SECTION

J. H. M. Mink & Others

SECTION

to the City of Cincinnati for the McKie Recreation Center on Chase Avenue.

In 1856 the property owners and leaseholders along a line "beginning at a stake opposite the West Fork Road in the northside of the Colerain Pike" and running "to the Badgely Road about 3 rods short of W. Badgely's line" dedicated the right-of-way for a county road which came to be known at various times as Hamil Road, Hamilton Road, and Brooklyn Road, but which has been Virginia Avenue for many years.

Just before the Civil War Spring Grove Avenue was paved as a turnpike, and in 1865 Cumminsville was incorporated as a village covering a small portion of Kirby's property plus all of the land of Hoffner, Thomson, Parker, and DeSerisy in Section 28. The boundary also extended into Section 22 on the east and Section 27 on the south. The Wesleyan Cemetery was specifically excluded from the village although it was surrounded by the incorporated area. In fact the cemetery did not become a part of Cincinnati until 1954 shortly after the Ohio legislature adopted a statute which automatically incorporated all isolated remnants of townships into surrounding municipalities.

The subsequent development of the section must now be examined on the basis of the several family holdings which have been established in preceding portions of this paper.

Badgely Lands

The incorporation of Cumminsville excluded all the Badgely property. The lands of Robert Badgely were almost certainly involved in court action because in June 1866 the remainder of his tract was divided between the ten heirs of Jacob Badgely. In order to award each of the heirs *equal value*, the property was divided into sixteen parcels and each heir was awarded two parcels; one on the steep hillside to the west and the other accessible from either Kirby or Virginia avenues. In order to make the hillside lots nominally accessible the subdivision of the estate created Martha and Quarry streets. The plat also showed Lick Street where the present Glen Parker Avenue connects Hamilton and Kirby avenues.

Twenty years after this basic division of the Badgely estate Samuel C. Cox, an energetic businessman who lived just east of Section 28 in Cumminsville, purchased two lots and divided them to create Bruce Avenue eastward from Kirby Avenue and Innes Avenue northward from Bruce with Innes running parallel to and 200 feet westward from the line laid out in 1796 when James Miller sold 100 acres to Enos Terry. Cox laid out a second subdivision which created Pitts Avenue. This street is also parallel to and 150 feet west from a line south of Bruce Avenue. These subdivisions formed the strange offset in streets at the southeast corner of the Kirby Road school lot.

In later subdivisions of the Badgely estate, various people, including several of Jacob Badgely's children, built the present Badgely and Carlin streets parallel to Virginia Avenue and constructed Tarrant, Kentucky, and Washburn streets

parallel to the sidelines of the original sixteen lots. One of the descendants of Rebecca Badgely Douthwaite still lived in Section 28 in 1960 and a few Douthwaites were listed in the 1970 City Directory.

Charles Schneider purchased one of the Badgely parcels and laid out Schneider Avenue parallel to the original line between the lands of William and Robert Badgely. Frederick W. and Anthony Weber bought the portion of William Badgely's original tract which lay to the east of the present Kirby Avenue and created the present Frederick, Anthony, Otte, and Philomena streets plus a short portion of Innes Avenue. The Weber brothers operated a lumber yard in the section for many years, and a daughter of Frederick lived in Section 28 until 1935.

Janet Langlands

By 1860 Janet Langlands owned the Mary Fergus property and had *dower interest* in portions of her two surviving daughters' parcels. In 1866 she joined with her daughter, Janet Thomson, to build a second small subdivision along the north side of Lingo Street. She and her daughters later gave up the formal subdivision of her land and sold many individual parcels.

William R. Williamson purchased seven and a half acres from the Mary Fergus tract in 1866 and three years later he bought an additional two and three quarters acres thus extending his property from Langland Street on the west, to Chase Avenue on the south, and Pullan Avenue on the north. Williamson built a large house on this property, which still stands facing Langland Street, and extended this street northward. In 1883 he dedicated the entire right-of-way for Williamson Place and the west half of Fergus Street along the section line. The land between Williamson and Fergus streets was subdivided without a formal plat and he sold the land between Langland and Williamson five years later to Abraham Bell. Bell developed two small subdivisions around the Williamson house.⁸

In May 1870 Janet Langlands disposed of the remainder of the Mary Fergus tract by dividing it into four parts and selling two parts to each of her daughters. Janet Thomson received a square parcel in the north plus a narrow strip along the east; Margaret Parker bought the other two similar parcels. Janet paid her mother \$11,899.00 for the nineteen acres she acquired while Margaret paid \$12,893.00 for an equal area. Abraham Bell later purchased the southern half of Janet's strip and constructed the subdivision centered on Beech Hill Avenue, but he failed to provide the right-of-way for the extension of Fergus Street to the north of Pullan Avenue. Schwab Junior High School occupies a portion of this tract.

Janet Thomson

During the years 1870 to 1873 Cincinnati grew by leaps and bounds, annexing Price Hill to the east of Quebec Road, the "Special Road District of Walnut

Hills—Mt. Auburn and Clintonville,” Camp Washington, Mt. Lookout and East Walnut Hills, Columbia, and Cumminsville. The city formed a *City Platting Commission* to layout street systems for the unsubdivided portions of these new areas. This commission platted Apple, Turrill, Cherry, Delaney, and Chase streets on Janet Thomson’s land west of Hamilton Pike. Mrs. Thomson quickly dedicated the proposed streets and promptly began to sell off lots facing these streets without the benefit of a formal subdivision plat. A portion of the original diagonal dividing line of the section still forms the rear line of the parcels Janet Thomson established at the southwest corner of Chase and Turrill streets. Mrs. Thomson sold the northwestern corner of her property to her daughter, Janet DeSerisy, the mother of Thomas DeSerisy and grandmother of the afore-said Jane DeSerisy Early. On Janet DeSerisy’s death her heirs subdivided this tract and extended Otte and Frederick streets eastward to Hamilton Avenue.

When Janet Thomson died in late 1891, she still held title to most of the land in the northeast quarter of Section 28 on the steep hillside. In addition she owned a small parcel on the east section line and scattered lots in the southern portion of her original inheritance. More than four years, 1892-1896, were needed to divide these parcels equitably among her seven surviving children and her two grandchildren. In an effort to provide each heir with equal areas of equal value, the hilly region was overlaid with the rights-of-way for Glen Armand, Janet, Thomson Heights, Glen Parker, Langland, Eastview, Westview, and Fergus streets. The children were then assigned successive lots along these *paper streets*. This division effectively forestalled development of the top of the hill until the 1960’s because the cost of constructing streets and installing utilities for individual lots was too expensive. However, an enterprising realtor eventually purchased enough adjoining lots to build an apartment complex, the Spyglass Apartments, under the existing R-4 zoning. The neighbors, feeling threatened by this type development, petitioned city council to upgrade the zoning to R-3, two family homes. In pursuit of this zone change about 1970, the neighbors also enlisted the help of the Greater Cincinnati Tree Council in saving the huge old trees on the undeveloped portions of the Janet Thomson estate. The Tree Council raised more than \$50,000 and purchased this portion of the Thomson estate plus another twenty acres of heavily wooded hillside immediately to the north. After purchasing this invaluable *climax forest* the Tree Council gave it to Cincinnati for an outdoor nature laboratory.

Margaret Parker

Margaret Langlands Parker and her husband, Frederick, were no better planners than the others in her family, for they too often sold lots at random. In 1866 they sold eight and a third acres for \$9,170.37 on the west side of Hamilton Pike to Ruth E. Dodsworth, whose husband, Caleb owned the Clifton Springs Distilling Company located at the east end of the old Ludlow Avenue Bridge.⁹ This tract extended westward to the Badgely property between non-



In 1937 the Millcreek completely flooded Knowlton's Corner forcing residents to evacuate their homes and use boats instead of autos for transportation.





Narrow row houses built in the early twentieth century, such as these on Williamson Place, can be found on many of the streets in Section 28.



Even today with new expressways and interstate highways Knowlton's Corner is a heavily traveled and a congested intersection especially during morning and evening rush hours.

parallel lines which defy explanation today. Mrs. Dodsworth subdivided this parcel in 1907, shortly after her husband's death, and created Westmoreland Avenue running parallel to her northern property line. In order to tie into Sam Cox's Innes Avenue, she had to buy the southernmost lot in Cox's subdivision and put a bend in Westmoreland so that the right-of-way lines of her street would coincide with the north and south boundaries of Cox's lot.

In 1882 the Parkers sold 15.4 acres to Jesse D. and Richard B. Pullan, the in-laws of their deceased daughter, for \$10,000.00. The south line of this tract was ". . . in the center of a road fifty feet wide projected by Frederick Parker and extending from the Hamilton Pike N69°07' through his land. . . ." Jesse Pullan died in 1894 and Richard in 1902. Their daughters, Elizabeth P. Haight and Jesse P. Quirrell laid out Haight Avenue and Donaldson Place on portions of their inherited land and once again lots were sold without a formal subdivision plat. Their son, Richard, Jr., retained title to the land on which the family home stood, but in 1917 he subdivided this parcel to create Addingham Place. Elizabeth Haight, a music teacher for many years at nearby Chase School, lived on Haight Avenue until 1940.

In 1891 the Parkers attempted to bring some order out of the chaos of lots they had sold along Josephine Street to the east of Hamilton Avenue. They filed a plat for a subdivision of this area including a connection to the stub of Brookside Avenue which Janet Thomson had laid out sometime earlier. They also platted the strip of land lying between Janet Thomson's north line and Ruth Dodsworth's south line, extending present Pullan Avenue westward from Hamilton Avenue to Kirby's land. They laid out Turrill, Cherry, and Delaney streets perpendicular to Pullan in such a way that each would meet the earlier sections planned by the City Platting Commission.

The Parker family made at least two very profitable sales. In 1887 they sold Sam Cox a five and a half acre strip for \$32,106.00 along the north line of the Dodsworth tract and in 1911 Margaret Parker and her children sold 27½ acres to Cincinnati for \$41,233.50. That parcel became the first portion of the park now known as Parker's Woods. The *climax forest* purchased by the Tree Council and given to the city touches Parker's Woods in the northeastern corner of the section.

Sam Cox developed his purchase into a fourth subdivision in the '80's laying out Bruce Avenue parallel to Dodsworth's north boundary until it reached a point at which he had to angle it in to make it match the section of Bruce Avenue which he established earlier on the Badgely lands. When Cox announced this new development, the editor of the *Transcript*¹⁰ was elated and reported in April 1887:

Bruce Avenue will soon be opened across the S. C. Cox subdivision from Kirby Road to the Hamilton Pike, coming out opposite W. R. Bell's residence: and since the Chase Avenue lowlands will hardly be filled this

*summer, this new avenue will be the only crossing north of Blue Rock Street, and south of College Hill; the Lick Street precipice not counting for anything more than a winter toboggan slide.*¹¹

One of Cox's first customers in this subdivision was Andrew Jergens who purchased three lots facing the Hamilton Pike on the south side of Bruce Avenue and built a stone mansion on the site. When Andrew Jergens, Sr. died in 1967, he willed that his home be razed, its Damascus Room be given to the Cincinnati Art Museum, and the property be made into a park and given to the Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners. He also left money to maintain this park and playground so it is the only one in the city which is lighted all night every night. The wrought iron gate and pillars of the main entrance to the property were removed and re-erected at the Linn Street entrance to historic Dayton Street.

Timothy Kirby

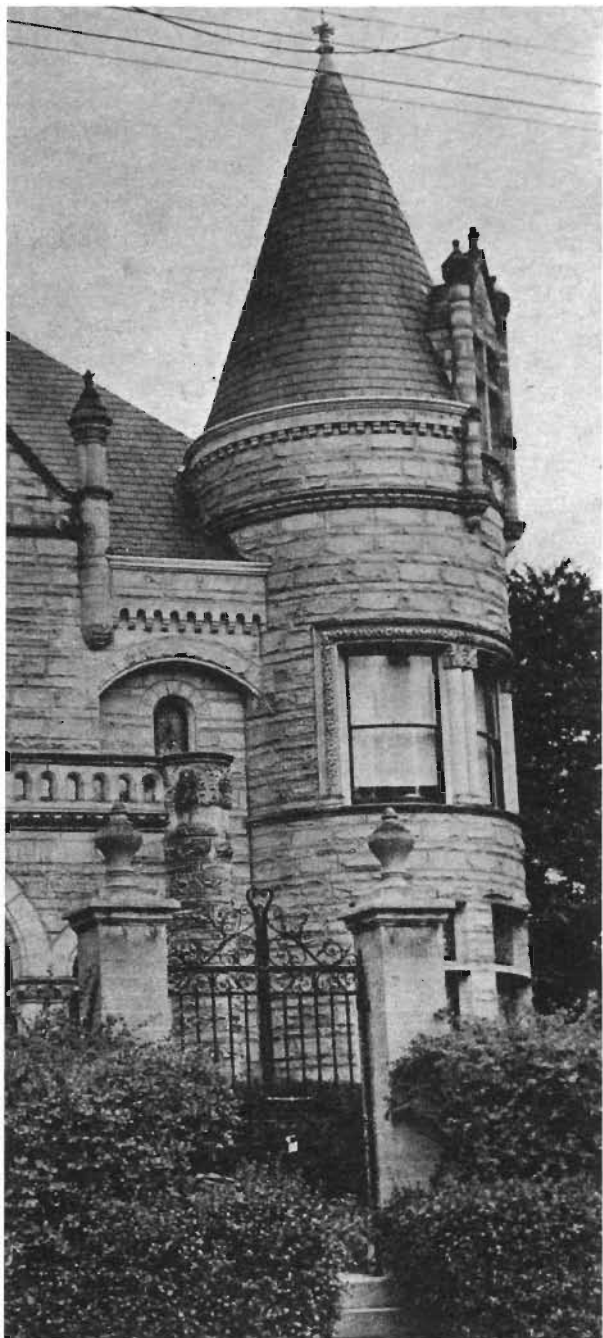
If confusion had been the order of the day in the subdivisions of Section 28 thus far discussed, there may be no word strong enough to describe what happened on Kirby's land.

Timothy Kirby was in the real estate business and played a prominent role in the development of the Mohawk area and Mt. Adams, as well as in Section 28. He moved into the Cumminsville area before 1850 and lived there until about 1877. In 1864 he began to lay out a series of small subdivisions north of Blue Rock Street and along Colerain Turnpike, successively creating Witler and Lakeman streets, realigning Badgely Road and renaming it after himself, establishing Banning Street (now Chase Avenue) to the east of Kirby Avenue, and laying out a portion of Gordon Street and Tozzer Street (now Pitts Avenue) from Banning to Hanfield Street.

Kirby also leased the northeast portion of his unsubdivided holdings to Joseph Kempfries for use as pasture land. In March 1877 the *Transcript* reported that Kirby's pond had been rented to a dairyman and fenced off so that people could no longer walk from Hamilton Pike to Kirby Road. A few weeks later this same newspaper ran an editorial headed "No Chinese Wall in the 25th Ward":

*. . . There are two good-sized pathways or wagon tracks leading across from the Hamilton Pike to the Kirby property. As there is at present no public opened street from Blue Rock street for nearly a mile northward, these open ways have been considered in the light of a thoroughfare and hundreds have used them. . . .*¹²

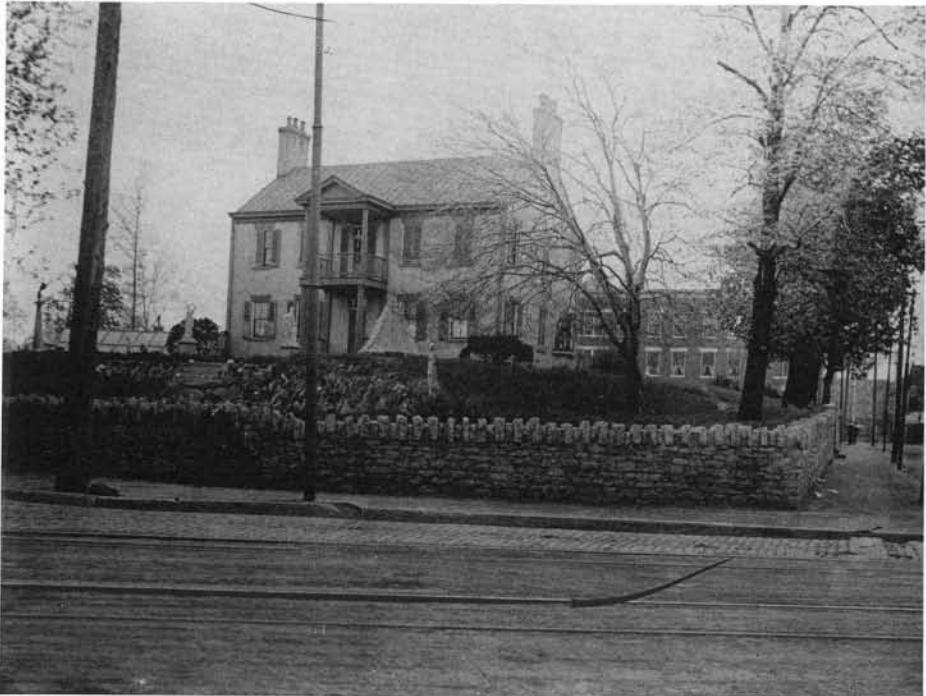
On Kirby's death his real estate holdings were equally divided among his four children. Julia, wife of Henry Blackstone Banning, one of Cincinnati's



Andrew Jergens instructed the executors of his estate to raze his residence on the corner of Bruce and Hamilton avenues if none of his heirs chose to live there. In 1970, a small park known as Jergens Park was dedicated on the site. The park is designed as a playground for young children.



The lions, Mick and Mack, which presently "guard" the entrance to McMicken Hall at the University of Cincinnati were originally posted at the gate of the Hoffner house located on the corner of Blue Rock and Hamilton avenues.





Public transportation played an important part in the development of Section 28 and Knowlton's Corner. The transit company extended lines and refurbished tracks along Hamilton and Colerain avenues in the late 1920's.



forty Civil War generals,¹³ received most of the land north of Chase Avenue between Virginia Avenue and the original Miller-Martin dividing line. In 1902 Mrs. Banning extended Sam Cox's one street (Pitts Avenue) southward and angled it perpendicular to Chase Avenue opposite Tozzer Street. She connected the Parkers' Pullan Avenue to her extension, of Pitts and also built Ella Street. Her husband died in the 1880's but Mrs. Banning continued to live at the site of the present St. Boniface Church until her death in 1916.

Ella, wife of Don Piatt, received the area between Colerain and Chase avenues, from Virginia to Kirby plus several scattered unsold lots. Don Piatt appears only in the 1884 and 1885 City Directories as having an office in the Wiggins building. John Pitts, president of the Standard Publishing Company, bought most of Mrs. Piatt's land. In 1902 he laid out Florida, Georgia, and Jerome avenues and Hanfield Street.

Clinton Kirby, an attorney in Cincinnati and a resident of Glendale, inherited a few lots in the subdivision east of Kirby Avenue plus a large tract in Section 19 to the south of Brighton. He completed the subdivision of land south of Chase Avenue in part by resubdividing some of his father's earlier projects.

Byron Kirby, also an attorney and another of Cincinnati's forty Civil War generals, lived in Mt. Adams until his death which occurred shortly after that of his father. He received the southwest corner of the section lying west of Colerain and north of Wesleyan Cemetery. Between 1904 and 1911 his children laid out three small subdivisions in this area creating Runnymede, Kearsage, and Herron avenues, and the portion of Hoffner Street west of West Fork Creek. During the years 1962 to 1964 Cincinnati bought most of this area and razed the buildings in preparation for the construction of Interstate Highway 74 and its interchange with the proposed Colerain Freeway. Due to a combination of circumstances work on I-74 was not begun until 1972 and it was opened to traffic in 1974. The Colerain Freeway, planned since 1948 to run through Badgely's former land and parallel to Virginia and Kirby avenues, has been delayed even longer.

Four men, Robert Badgely, Matthias Roll, Ezekial Hutchinson, and Israel Ludlow, owned all of Section 28 in 1805 and there were probably only four houses within the area. By 1884 some 450 buildings were in the section with many of these situated on parcels whose subdivision was affected by death and the desire of heirs to receive "equal value and property." Growth continued and the 1970 Census found approximately 8,600 persons living in 3,300 dwelling units in the section. Many lived in apartment buildings constructed during the 1960's. And yet if Badgely, Roll, Hutchinson, and Ludlow were to return to their lands today, each could recognize at least a portion of his property because a total of seventy acres in the four areas is so rugged that it has defied development. But what would Ephraim Knowlton think of rush hour traffic at his corner?

The most drastic change has happened since 1965 to the Knowlton's Corner business district.¹⁴ If present trends continue it may truly become a blighted area, justifying the dire observations of those who escaped to the suburbs in pursuit of the "good life" but still must struggle through Knowlton's Corner twice each day. On the other hand if the energy crisis is real and the cost of operating an automobile continues to soar, the great convenience of location of Section 28 may make it so attractive that upper income families will again seek to live there. It may even be that a newspaper of November 1990 will repeat the century-old editorial "Cumminsville Always Gets There."

ROBERT T. HOWE, a member of the Cincinnati Historical Society, is a Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Cincinnati.

(1) William Applebaum, *The Secondary Commercial Centers of Cincinnati*, University of Cincinnati, Institute of Industrial Research, June 1932.

(2) All quotations in this paper are taken from M. S. Turrill's scrapbooks in the Cincinnati Historical Society collection. Dates in the scrapbook are not always given precisely.

(3) Robert T. Howe, "Brighton the Center, A Case Study of the Development of Section 19 of the Millcreek Township," *Bulletin*, (The Cincinnati Historical Society), Vol. 26, number 1, 1968, pp. 41-64. This study was begun before the research on Brighton but since the development of Section 19 preceded that of 28 the later paper was published first. The vast majority of information in the paper was culled from official deed and subdivision plat records in the Hamilton County Recorder's Office, official road records of the Hamilton County engineer, City Directories from 1880 to 1970, and old maps in the Cincinnati Historical Society. Specific citations to these particular sources will not be given but may be obtained from the author.

(4) Many of Symmes' customers purchased an east or west half of a section, or a north or south half.

(5) Also spelled Badgeley and Badgley in various deeds. Badgely will be used throughout this paper except when a specific person of recent times may use a different spelling.

(6) The last Hoffner to live in this neighborhood was Clifford D., a grandson of Leander P. Hoffner, and he died in 1946. Leander Hoffner was a close neighbor of Jacob for about twenty years, but of unknown relationship.

(7) Thomson is frequently misspelled Thompson in deed records.

(8) W. R. Williamson's name last appeared in the City Directory of 1887. While Abraham Bell, a brick layer turned land developer, lived in or adjacent to his subdivisions until 1898.

(9) This is the present location of the Sabin Robbins Paper Company.

(10) The *Transcript* was a community newspaper published for many years by A. E. Weatherby who had a daughter who still lives in Section 28. Numerous clippings from the *Transcript* were found in the M. S. Turrill scrapbooks.

(11) Lick Street, now Glen Parker Avenue, was first shown on the plat of the subdivision of the estate of Jacob Badgely in 1866.

(12) The *Transcript* in Murrill's scrapbook.

(13) James Barnett, "Forty for the Union: Civil War Generals Buried in Spring Grove Cemetery," *Bulletin*, Vol. 30, Number 2, Summer, 1972, pp. 96, 105.

(14) When the Howes moved into Section 28 in 1947, they were told by a relative, who had lived there since 1910, "Northside is a changing neighborhood."