

# BROWN TOWNSHIP

The land now known as Brown Township has a rich and varied history extending back thousands of years. Although most of the remains of the once glorious native inhabitants' city have been eradicated, slight evidence of their ancient culture has survived despite the destructive hands of the white people. Before the arrival of the early white settlers in 1808, the natives found this to be an excellent hunting area rich in game, especially along the Big Darby Creek, which the local natives called Crawfish Creek. During the pioneer era there were more Haudenosaunee living in the area than white people. The native People were called Mingoes by the white people. The famous Shawanese leader Tecumtha frequented the area, and Jonathan Alder, a white man who was once a captive of the Mingoes, lived most of his life along Big Darby Creek in and near Brown Township.

*To the Hon. The Commissioners of Franklin County. We your petitioners humbly showth the inconvenience we labor under for want of a new township being laid off in the western part of Norwich and Prairie Township. 1<sup>st</sup> as to attending Elections in Norwich many of the inhabitants have to travel ten or twelve miles or sacrifice their suffrage the Elections ever being held at the extreme east. 2<sup>nd</sup> As to common Schools we are deprived of our equitable rights the township being districted in two districts from East & West. The Eastern population being mostly weighty they organize their Schools draw Revenue and strip us of public Patronage. 3<sup>rd</sup> by we the inhabitants of Prairie being few in number situated in the N W corner*

*suff inconvenience Reaching Schools we therefore pray your Honor to grant us a new Township bounded as follows. Vis beginning at the N.W. Corner of Norwich at the County line thence East with the line of Norwich to a point that due fourth line will include John MCCan, thence to a point an Mile and a quarter in Prairie thence West to the county line, thence north with said line to the place of beginning. We in duty will ever pray.*

This petition to create Brown Township was submitted to the Franklin County Commissioners on March 1, 1830. Two days later, on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 18<sup>th</sup> of Franklin County's 19 townships was organized. Brown Township, being the last land to be settled in Franklin County, was created from parts of Norwich, Prairie, and Washington Townships and is the smallest township in the county. The name "Brown" was for Sylvester Brown, a merchant who had opened the first store in the township. Many of the early white settlers were natives of Virginia, settling on land granted to them in the Virginia Military District. This was an area reserved for former Virginia soldiers. All of Brown Township is located within this reserve. The eastern portion of the township was largely settled by the Welsh. At that time a major portion of north central Brown Township was a timbered marsh.

White settlement first occurred along Big Darby Creek and then moved eastward. In addition to Jonathan Alder, who lived here for years prior to white settlement, the first settlers in the future Brown Township were the families of

James Boyd, W. Renier, John Hayden, and John Patterson. Other families who later settled the area were those of George Clover, Chauncey and Obil Beach, Adam Reese, William Walker, John and Thomas Kilgore, John Lloyd, Charles Holmes, Henry

Francis, Adam Blount, James Renier, Knowlton Bailey, James Langton, Joseph Belchey, John Acton, Jacob Rogers, James Huggett, N. E. Fares and Paul Alder, a



*Henry Alder*

son of Jonathan Alder. Jonathan's grandson Henry Alder built the first frame house in the township in 1834.

Henry Francis constructed the first brick house in the township and this home is still standing on the east side of Amity Road between Patterson and Beach Roads. It is likely the oldest house in Brown Township. The Daniel F. Roberts brick homestead was on the south side of Roberts Road, an Ongwaoweh trail, about midway between Walker and Alton and Darby Creek Roads. This house was demolished in 2002.



*Henry Francis homestead*

Big Darby Creek was the source of energy for the first saw mill in Brown Township

built by Isaac Hayden in 1837 about halfway between the lines of Roberts Road and Morris Road.

The second mill was powered by a steam engine and was used to cut timbers for the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad that John



*John Reed Hilliard*

Reed Hilliard was constructing through the township. George Jennings later operated a sawmill at the ravine near the northeast corner of Roberts Road and Hubbard Road after he purchased the Union Seminary property here.



*Richard Jerman homestead on Morris Road*

William Michael operated a blacksmith shop on the east side of Amity Road. This was just south of the Richard Jerman farm on the southeast corner of Morris Road and Amity Road.

Dr. John Rathbun in 1839 was the first physician to locate his practice in Brown Township. In 1841 he built the second frame house in the township. Later came Dr. D. H. Welling.

In November of 1857 Solomon Jackson Wooley, a daguerreotype photographer whose



*Solomon Jackson Wooley*

business was located in Columbus, Ohio, purchased 575 acres of land in Brown Township. He bought the land from Michael Lucas Sullivant, the second son of Lucas Sullivant the founder of Franklinton. Michael owned various tracts of land in the township at that time.

With the advent of the Civil War, Solomon wasn't able to devote much time to his new farm. Photography took him to the south during most of the war years where he engaged in photographing the soldiers and the events of the war. When the war ended, he retired from photography to become variously a farmer, a writer for several magazines, and eventually the author of a book.

with frontage on Scioto & Darby Creek, Davis, and Walker Roads. This land was in poor condition and unusable when he purchased it. It was primarily a tree-covered swamp with standing water on it all year round. Solomon Wooley's friends thought he had purchased a folly, but after years of effort he was able to drain the water off this wasteland and create one of the most productive farms in Franklin County. Being a vegetarian, Solomon first established his farm with a grape vineyard and an apple and peach orchard.



*Appledale Tile Works in 1880*



*Appledale Devon Stock Farm in 1880*



*The site of Appledale Tile Works today*



*The Wooley tree lined driveway as it appears today at 7611 Scioto and Darby Creek Road*

His property was located near the center of the area bordered by Davis, Alton & Darby Creek, Walker and Scioto & Darby Creek Roads

He needed so many tiles to drain the water from his land that he purchased a small set-up to make his own. Shortly thereafter, having discovered a great need for drain tile in his neighborhood, Solomon engaged himself in the brick and field drain tile manufacturing business. He founded the Appledale Tile Works in 1866, and by 1880 this factory employed a staff of 12 men. The driveway to his property, off of Scioto & Darby Creek Road near Langton Road, passed through his 40-acre apple and peach orchard. This may be why he chose the name Appledale. The large factory powered by steam engines was located near the center of his property and south of his home. To meet an ever-increasing demand

for tile in this flatland area, Solomon Wooley used the locally available slate-colored fire clay from his farm and others in the area. From three to eighteen inch tile was manufactured at Appledale.



*Fannie Virginia Cromwell*

On August 30, 1869 Solomon was married to Fannie Virginia Cromwell.

When the Columbus and Xenia Railroad began operations in 1850, J. R. Davis of Columbus, Ohio was employed as its Chief Engineer. A problem that railroads were encountering at the time was with cattle standing on the tracks. They were often impaled by locomotives and carried on to the next stop where this unsightly carcass was the first thing awaiting passengers would see. J. R. was on a train traveling through western Franklin County one day when a farmer plowing a field in Brown Township caught his eye. Watching the plow turn up the earth gave him an inspiration. What if he were to take two plows facing opposite directions and mount them on the front of the locomotive to deflect cattle away from the train? He went to work on this idea and after his device was ready, he returned to the area to test it. Soon enough a bull challenged the locomotive and was swept off the track. His successful creation, which an observer to this event named the "cowcatcher," became a feature on trains throughout the world. Unfortunately for Mr. Davis, he didn't bother to patent this idea and consequently never received a penny for his very useful invention.

In 1825 Welsh settlers came into Brown Township and soon had extensive holdings. One of the first one-room schoolhouses built in 1840

was named the Wales School. A man named Lynn was the first teacher.



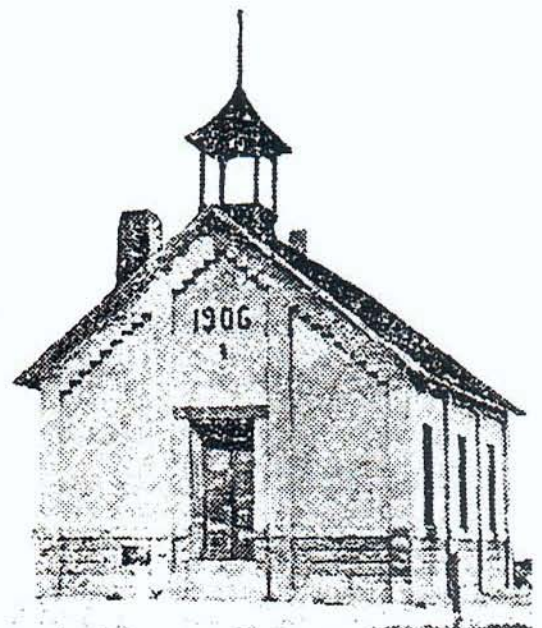
*Huggett School on Amity Road*

The Wales School was located on the site where the present Brown Elementary School is now located. In addition to this school and that of the Union Seminary, there were several other schools in the township at one time or another.



*A pioneer school on Amity Road*

The first Brown Township school opened in 1820. This log cabin schoolhouse was on the



*This, the third Wales School, was demolished in 1931*













