

MUSINGS

November 2018

FROM THE MORELAND HILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

How Long Will a House Last?

by Maureen Geck

In September 2018 we began discussing *This Old House in Moreland Hills*. Five homes were represented at our meeting. Our focus being a Village-wide **Century Home Program** and how to navigate the research required to prove that a home is at least 100 years old. With new resources available online we aim to bridge the gap between the old way of researching, (by visiting the Archives), and newer databases available online.

In 1795 Connecticut sold the eastern half of her Ohio claims to eight Connecticut citizens who had formed the Connecticut land company. Land company surveyors set up townships here in our area. Settlers arrived slowly at first and founded towns: Youngstown in 1796, Warren in 1798, and Hudson in 1799. Ohio was admitted to the Union in 1803 and Orange Township was surveyed in 1813. One of the first settlers to our area was Serenus Burnett who settled near the corner of South Woodland and Chagrin River Road in 1815. By 1820 our population was almost 300 people. It's safe to say most construction in our area is **no more** than about 200 years old.

How long will a house last? The answer, of course is, indefinitely. A house will need repairs, but they will last a *long time*. Life expectancy of a wood frame house with a concrete foundation can be well over a hundred years provided the home has proper maintenance and care. Naturally homes that are built with

See HOUSE | 2

James A. Garfield was an extraordinary, influential man born November 19, 1831 in Moreland Hills.

His near poverty and humble beginnings prepared him for a life of servitude as he rose to become a scholar, a Civil War hero, a congressman, and a President.

Join us when we celebrate the 187th Anniversary of his birth with cake & ice cream!

**Tuesday November 13
6:30 p
at Hiram House Camp
33775 Hiram Trail**



Left: This IS GARFIELD COUNTRY! Thanks to Pepper Pike for having us at their Ice Cream Social and Orange Village for allowing us to participate at their Salute to Orange!

Right: Introducing Aiden Kondik portraying James Garfield. Aiden is a student at St. Rita's school in Solon and volunteers at the James Garfield replica cabin as a student docent. Come meet Aiden next Tuesday at our meeting at Hiram House Camp.



House from 1

quality materials and good workmanship will last longer than ones built poorly.

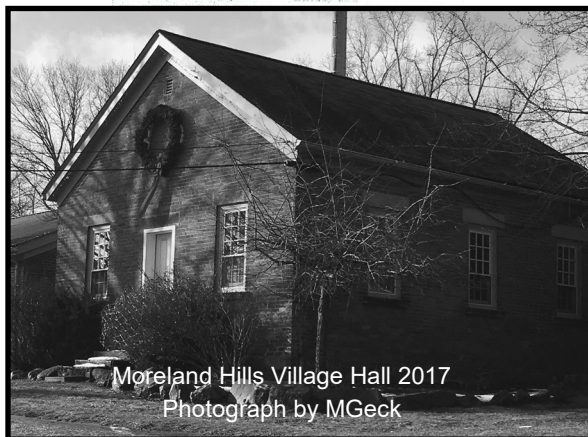
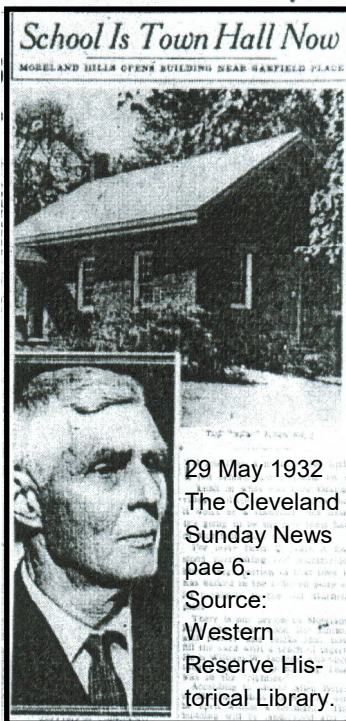
So how old are the houses in Moreland Hills? A team of us set out to answer that question, and frankly we haven't been successful as of YET. Even with current technology research takes time, however, we do have one old structure in Moreland Hills, our Village Council chambers, which has been properly maintained and has become the focus of our attention.

Education has always been a priority for our founders, although many years passed before we actually had an "Orange School" south of Chagrin Blvd. We know from stories that the Garfield children, in the 1830's, attended school in Chagrin Falls. The story goes on to state that Mehitable carried her 4 year old brother, James A. Garfield to school on her back.

It is suggested that James Garfield's older brother Thomas built a frame house for the family around 1849 (located on 30 acres southwest corner of SOM and Jackson). It is also suggested that Thomas dismantled the original wood schoolhouse that stood at the corner of the Garfield property, and used the wood to double the size of his mother's home.

The "new" school was built on a foundation of concrete with a brick exterior with the walls of plaster and the floors of wood. It was remembered as the "little red schoolhouse standing on a knoll". An 1858 map identifies a school on the property of Mr. Samuel Glasier. In 1862 Mr. Glasier paid property taxes for "whole", (118.75 acres on lot 14), "except school house".

We are comfortable dating our one room school house/council chambers to as early as 1858.



The Village of Moreland Hills was incorporated in 1929 and the first meeting was held in the home of Mayor Frank J. Lynch. Meetings were held in the homes of mayors and councilmen until July 1, 1932 when the one room schoolhouse became the home of the Moreland Hills Village Council.

On May 29, 1932 an article was published in the Cleveland Sunday News. Our schoolhouse was described as having stood "75 years overlooking the countryside and for a large portion of that time it has basked in the reflected glory of its proximity to the old Garfield place".

William W. Jackson, was mentioned in the article as having taught school in the building in the "eighties", (that is the 1880's!)

I'm not sure if this building was ever abandoned but of note, by 1884 it appears there was some competition in the neighborhood. In 1884 there is a deed from Henry B. Boynton to Orange Board of Education for parts of his lots 9 & 10 (Jackson near Sterncrest) and an 1892 map of Orange Township confirms this.

In addition from 1923 until 1933 the room was used as a residence. At that time the property was owned by the Chagrin Valley Land Company (Country Club) who allowed their caretaker, Taylor Springer to live on site. Mr. Springer is

listed in the 1930 federal census; Taylor Springer, a widower age 48 rents his home for \$25 and is a Teamster [sic] for the Country Club. He resides here with his children Kenneth, Howard, Carl, and Nellie.

Between 1933 and perhaps 1950 the Village gave the old school house a new look adding the Mayor's office wing as well as a separate wing for administration. In 2000 Mayor Croucher and the Historical Society had the floor re-

placed with the left over wood from the building of the James Garfield replica cabin, and in 2004 Mayor Renda had the room remodeled to reflect the 1880's look we enjoy today.

July 1, 2018 was the 160th anniversary of that building. The Historical Society Board of trustees will nominate this building to be our first Century Home award at our next ***This Old House in Moreland Hills*** meeting in the Spring. Won't you join us? You can find pictures and further documentation on our web site at MHHSOHIO.org.

Begin Your Search with Your Own Oral Histories

letter from Alice (Reed) Lubell

My family and I live in our family house on Mill Creek Lane. My parents always told us the story of Mill Creek Lane, but I called my sister and she in turn emailed our brother (both out-of-town) and we have the same story!

First, on our maternal side, we are descendants of the Jacksons, Stonemans and Murfeits of Moreland Hills. Our parents built our house on the Murfeit Farm (but didn't know it at the time) in 1956. It was pasture land at the time. The Murfeit Family farmhouse still stands facing Chagrin Blvd. I don't know the address as I write this, but I know the house. My sister writes, "...I believe that the pond near the entrance of Murwood Drive (the name was from the Murfiet Farm and our relations) was the millpond fed by the creek running down what is now Mill Creek Lane. ... This would be the millpond driving the farm milling needs." Using common sense, thus Strawberry Lane could easily have been a strawberry patch for the farm. Just as an aside, our property and the surrounding lots had numerous apple trees when we were young.

I hope this little bit of history will help. I know between the three of us, we have more history written down. As I come across things, I will set them aside for your viewing. Just to drop a few more names, we are the descendants (still on the maternal side) of Leuty and Corlett. My sister has much more history on these family members.



In 1900 Charles & Chara Murfett

It was Charles Murfett that owned what we know as Mill Creek and Murwood Drives in the early 1900's. His father Edward Murfett, Sr. immigrated from England in 1835 and settled in Orange Township by 1840 with his wife Sarah (Gilbert) and children; Edward, Jr., Charles, Mary Ann, Sarah, Emeline, and Caroline.

Source: Links at our website to Ancestry and Cle Public Library Plat Book of Cuyahoga County, Ohio Plate 42 (Hopkins, 1914) and Plat Book of Cuyahoga County, Ohio (Hopkins, 1914)



The Orange Senior Center visited the J.A. Garfield cabin and included a robust discussion about local history. Manny & Judi Naft, Jim & Randi Grodin, Annette Jordan, Darlene Montonaro, Rita Moore, and Female

We love to hear from our neighbors! Thanks Alice! If you know something say something!

Thanks also to our members for your continued support. This year we have 35 paying households, (10 of which are new members!) and 13 honorary members (Village Officials, Garfield Family members and Jim Van-Cleef our JAG Cabin Chimney Sweep). We have 7 members who have not reregistered. Please note it is never too late to become a member.

Engraved bricks make a perfect holiday/special occasion gift. Bricks are a meaningful way to honor the memory of a friend, family member, or colleague. In addition to honoring a special person or occasion, These commemorative bricks also support the James Garfield Birthsite Park and help us preserve a place and time in history which should not be forgotten. Order forms at MHHSohio.org.

It is always our pleasure to share the JA Garfield Birth Site park. We're taking reservations for the 2019 season.

We are feeling blessed as 2018 becomes history and as we begin 2019. **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

We Need Advocates!

Our meetings are **open to the public** and are held at the Moreland Hills Community Center, 4350 SOM Center Road on the first Monday of the month (September thru May) at 10:15 a.m. Please join us!

Maureen Geck-President

Marilyn Peckinpaugh-Vice President

Jon Martin-Secretary

Mike Bergschneider-Treasurer

Sandy Cobb-Archivist

John Potwora-Assistant Archivist

Sandra Vodanoff-Cabin Coordinator

Katie Martin-Historical Memory

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Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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www.MHHSohio.org

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