

# 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.



*Appledale Devon Stock Farm in 1880*

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*



*The site of Appledale Tile Works today*

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



*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

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.



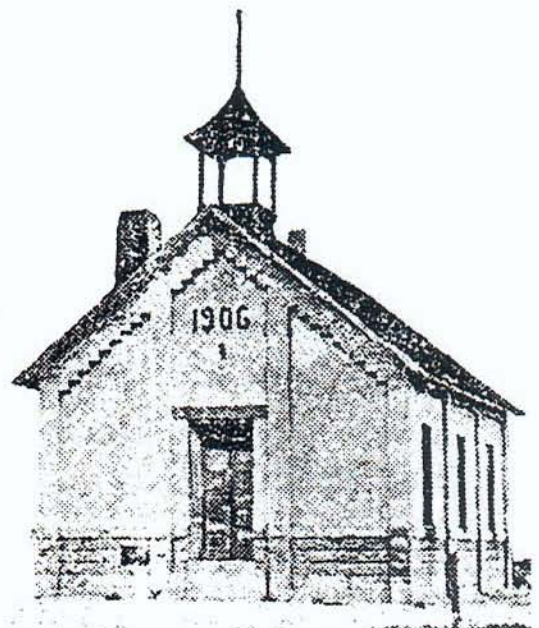
*Huggett School on Amity Road*

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.

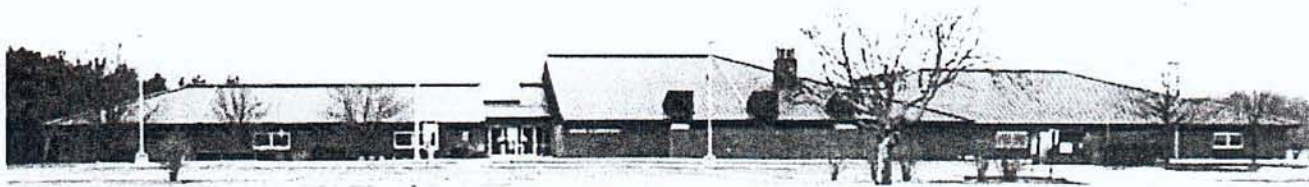


*A pioneer school on Amity Road*

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



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



*The current Brown Elementary School at the northeast corner of Walker & Roberts Roads*

property of Adam Blount who had migrated to the area from Virginia in 1815 and was the father of Jonathan Alder's wife Mary. Marantha Adams was the first teacher here.

Three schools were located on Scioto & Darby Creek Road. One was on the north side just east of Walker Road. West of this school on the same side of the road at the corner of Creek Road was the Bear Den School. The third was on the south side of the road just west of Elliott Road.

A wood frame school was located on the north side of Hayden Run Road at the bend between Langton and Elliott Roads. Another wood frame schoolhouse once sat on the west side of Hubbard Road just south of the first farm south of Roberts Road. This is now part of the Girl Scout camp.

The McCoy School on Amity Road was at the northwest corner of its intersection with Feder Road. Two other schools were located near each other on the west side of Amity Road about equal distance north and south from Patterson Road. One, the Huggett School, was at the bend in the road between Morris and Patterson Roads. Matie Bradley saved this building from destruction when she purchased it in 1931. It is now a private residence. The other was a pioneer school of the Darby Creek Settlement located a little south of the Henry Francis homestead on settler James O'Harra's land. Turning it into a private residence also saved this school building.

There were two schools on Walker Road. One was located at the northwest corner of Alton & Darby Creek Road. The other was on the west side of the road between Davis and Carter Roads.

In 1931 the Huggett School for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades; the Wales School for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades; and the McCoy School for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades were all closed. These three schools were consolidated into one building when the first Brown Elementary School was built on the site of the Wales School. The high school was in Hilliard.

The African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church of Columbus, Ohio purchased 172 acres of land on Roberts Road through their agent, the Reverend M. J. Wilkerson. They paid \$1,720 for the land and created a settlement for free African-Americans who had migrated to Ohio from Virginia.

Shortly thereafter in 1847, with the encouragement of abolitionists, the A.M.E. Church established the Union Seminary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in this community for their children. This church, which was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787, was the first African-American church. Their school then became the first school in the United States to be founded by African-Americans. There were at least four buildings constructed for the Union Seminary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the area between Amity and Hubbard Roads. Reverend Davis served as the Principal of the seminary.

The settlement was dissolved in 1863 during the Civil War. The school, however, did not close. It was relocated to Greene County, Ohio with the new name of Wilberforce University, named for a prominent English abolitionist, and is still in operation today. Wilberforce

University then became the first university in the world owned and operated by African-Americans.

Not far from this Brown Township settlement was the town of West Jefferson—a station on the Underground Railroad. Because of this, it is highly likely that the Union Seminary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church community was also involved in Underground Railroad activities.

A prominent freeborn, black abolitionist, writer, orator, and lecturer, Frances Ellen Watkins, also known as The Bronze Muse, was one of the teachers at the Union



*Frances Ellen Watkins*

Seminary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Frances became its first woman teacher in 1850 when she traveled from Baltimore, Maryland to take this position. While teaching in Brown Township she published the first of her many books. This 1851 book of prose she called *Forest Leaves*. In 1852, while teaching a class of 53 active children, she wrote a letter to her friend William Still, who quoted her many times in his book *The Underground Railroad*. Her letter included the following:

*There are no people that need all the benefits resulting from a well-directed education more than we do. The condition of our people, the wants of our children, and the welfare of our race demand the aid of every helping hand. It is a work of time, a labor of patience, to become an effective school teacher; and it should be a work of love in which they who engage should not abate heart or hope until it is done.*

The Union Seminary of the African Methodist Episcopal Church settlement was located on the north side of Roberts Road. Today Amity Road, Interstate 70, and Hubbard Road all cut through the area where it stood. Their property extended west all the way to Big Darby Creek where a Girl Scout Camp is now located.

Joseph O' Harra was the first Brown Township Postmaster of the private Darby Post Office when it was established in July of 1848. By this time the population of the township had grown to 630. This post office was located on the west side of Amity Road on the slight rise of ground just north of Patterson Road. The address today would be about 2469 Amity Road. This was in the heart of the town then known as the Darby Creek Settlement.



*The Talligewi cemetery on Amity Road*

This settlement was formerly a large First Nation city of the Talligewi People and then the Haudenosaunee People prior to the white invasion. A little north of here across Amity Road from the Henry Francis homestead is a Talligewi Cemetery or what remains of it. This sacred cemetery and another one, which is being farmed



*The Talligewi cemetery on Walker Road*

the Peace, and a Brown Township Trustee.

MUDSOCK

Across the road from the giant barn was the Mudsock Sawmill. Next to the sawmill was George Harlow's Mudsock Grocery & Dry Goods Store, which also had a gas pump at one time. When this closed, the building was used for a time as an antique store. In addition to these businesses, a blacksmith shop, a machine shop, and a Franklin County Engineer's sub-station were located here. By 1941 the population of Mudsock had grown to 15.



*Richard Jones*

with Reverend Henry Culp as its first minister. After this church closed, the building was saved and moved into Hilliard by the Northwest Franklin County Historical Society. It is currently located at the Northwest Village in Weaver Park next to the Franklin County Fairground. Today it sees frequent use for weddings and a variety of other functions. Nearly all of the people who once attended this church were residents of Brown Township.

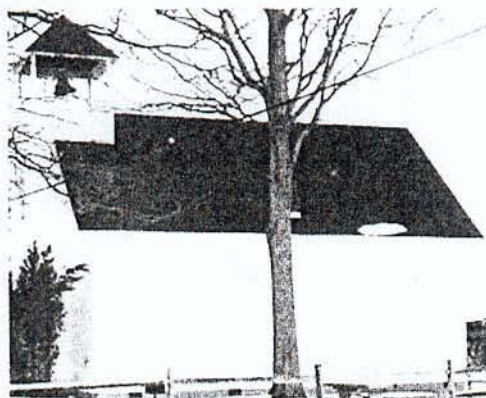
HAYDEN

Hayden had a store, a Baptist Church, the West Hayden Post Office, and the only railroad station in Brown Township. The name Hayden is taken from the Hayden family. At its peak the population of this town was around 25.



*Hayden Baptist Church on Hayden Run Road*

Mudsock also had a house of worship, the Colwell Methodist Church, on the Norwich Township side of Alton & Darby Creek Road



*The Colwell Methodist Church*

right at the south jog of Roberts Road. John Colwell and his wife Ann founded this congregation. For about 25 years the congregation met in the Colwell's home where John would lead the service when no minister was available. In 1876 the Colwell Methodist Church was constructed and opened

right at the south jog of Roberts Road. John Colwell and his wife Ann founded this congregation.

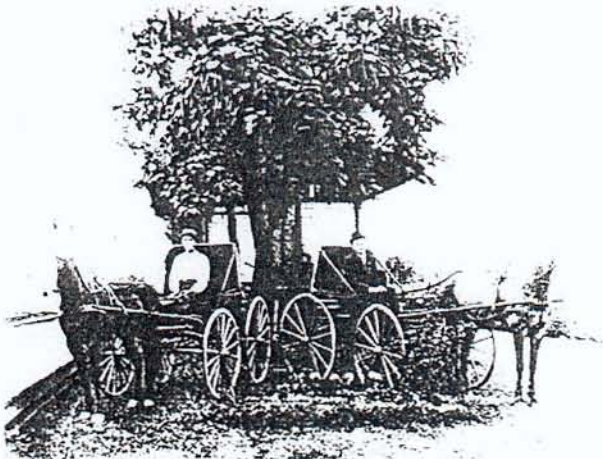
For about

The Hayden Store and West Hayden Post Office are long gone. The Baptist congregation relocated their church because of the close proximity to the railroad. The then busy railroad, with trains on two sets of tracks and three sets next to the church traveling in both directions, was very annoying when the noise frequently interrupted their services. Today an automotive repair shop is making use of the Hayden Baptist Church building. Prior to this, the structure functioned as a granary for the Linworth Fertilizer Exchange, a telephone soliciting company, and an automotive body shop.

The Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad laid tracks through West Hayden where they constructed a train station and named it Brownson Station. This name was taken from Oren Brownson who previously had owned the land where the station was built. The station was



*Brownson Railroad Station in 1895. On the platform left to right is Frank Winterringer, Von Schalle, Harry Barnett and Eli Latham.*



*Two buggies waiting for the train on the north side of Brownson Station*

located about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile south of Hayden Run Road on the east side of the tracks. This was the first railroad station in western Franklin County. The first train passed through West Hayden on the 4th of July in 1853. Eventually the westbound train made one regular stop here daily at 5:23 p.m. Any unscheduled stops were called "flag stops" and occurred only when a flag was put up to signal a passing train. Extending out from this station in both directions were three miles of siding tracks for freight-handling cars. Passenger service ended here in 1944 and then freight traffic was curtailed in 1962. The last train passed through Hayden on May 18, 1984. Today the tracks are gone and the railroad bed has been converted into the Heritage Rail Trail for recre-

ational walking and bicycling.

Two Brown Township towns no longer exist. They are the Union Seminary Settlement, which was developed by African-Americans, and the Darby Creek Settlement, which was the first white settlement in the area.



*The Edward Burt homestead on Morris Road*

At one time there was a park in the township. It was privately owned and operated by a farmer, Robert Reece. This was located at some distance west of Amity Road midway between Carter and Scioto & Darby Creek Roads. This former quarry had a swimming hole in Big Darby Creek and a picnic grounds.

During the history of Brown Township, most of the road names have changed at least once. Some names changed more than once, and some names were different for different locations on the same road. Probably due to frequent lowland flooding at this location, the north end of Amity Road was relocated to higher ground. At one time it made an abrupt turn west just north of the Robert Reece Park. It then turned north and followed the Big Darby Creek. At its intersection with the Scioto & Darby Creek Road, Amity Road connected with and was part of the road now named Creek. Also in this area were two bridges across Big Darby Creek. One was on Scioto & Darby Creek Road and the other on Hayden Run Road.



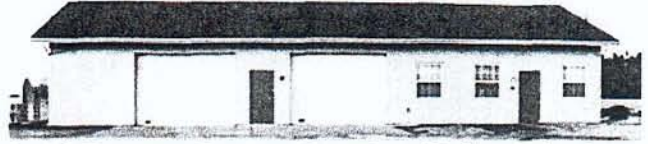
Listed here are some changes in the road names of Brown Township:

- Bynner Free Pike...now Morris Road
- Patterson Free Pike...now Patterson Road
- The Mingo Trail...now Roberts Road
- Darby Creek Central Free Pike...now Roberts Road
- Scioto & Brown Township Free Pike...now Alton & Darby Creek Road
- Alton Free Return Pike...now Alton & Darby Creek Road
- Alton & Darby Creek Free Pike...now Alton & Darby Creek Road
- West Hayden Free Pike...now Hayden Run Road
- Alton & Darby Creek Free Pike...now Walker Road
- Hilliard & Darby Creek Free Pike...now Scioto & Darby Creek Road
- Amity Free Pike...now Amity Road
- Geyer Free Pike...now Feder Road
- Hayden Run Road...now Creek Road
- Amity Free Pike...now Creek Road



*The first Brown Township Hall in 1893 was on 1/4 acre at a cost of \$450. It was moved to 1901 Jones Road and is being used as a hay barn.*

Today there remains no visible evidence of cemeteries for non-native people in Brown Township; however information denotes that there are at least three. A Baptist cemetery is



*In 1969 a new Brown Township Hall was built behind the original one. It was located on 2 acres at a cost of \$40,000.*

recorded at the southeast corner of Jones and Walker Roads. Another cemetery was located on the north side of Scioto & Darby Creek Road between Hilliard and Big Darby Creek. The Fletcher Presbyterian Church Cemetery is recorded in Brown Township at an unknown location. Because information is so sparse on this subject, there may be other unknown burial grounds in Brown Township.

Religion was an integral part of this farming community. There have been at least four early churches in Brown Township. The first was the McCoy Methodist Episcopal Church on the west side of Amity Road just north of Dellinger Road. Next came the Welsh Congregational Church on Walker Road at Roberts Road. The other two were the Mudsock and Hayden churches.

The founders of the Welsh Congregational Church were the families of John Bibb, John E. Rowland and Francis Jones. This congregation held services in the Wales School for many years until they built their brick church in 1860. Reverend James Hoge of Franklinton and Columbus, Ohio

preached here from time to time. This building was later demolished, and in 1893 the first Brown Township Hall was constructed



*Reverend James Hoge*



*Brown Township had previously helped to construct the fire station in neighboring Norwich Township; however this fire station became the first to be located within Brown Township. Situated on 5 acres next to the second Brown Township Hall, it opened in 1999 at a cost of \$1.2 million. In addition to being a fire station, the upstairs is also the current Brown Township Hall. The former Hall is now used for equipment storage, voting poll and various other activities.*



*The Benjamin Davis homestead on Davis Road*

on the same location. After the McCoy Methodist Episcopal Church was abandoned as a church, it was used as a barn. Many of Brown Township's numerous school buildings were also used for church services at various times. It is also likely that the Union Seminary School settlement had a church, having a minister as its principal.

The Williams Brothers history of 1880 tells us about the Welsh Congregational Church located at the Walker and Roberts Road intersection. In this account is the following statement, "As early as the year 1845, services were held in a little log schoolhouse standing near the present

church edifice." Also quoting, "the pioneer schoolhouse in the eastern portion of the township was built in the fall of 1840 and stood near the Welsh Church."

In 1906 the white-frame school building gave way to a gray-white concrete brick one-room school that was located at the front of the lot on the northeast corner of the intersection of Walker and Roberts Roads. In 1931 the concrete brick school was demolished to make way for the new Brown Township Elementary School, which opened that fall. That school, in turn, gave way to the present Brown Elementary School. It is the fifth school to occupy this site.

Brown Township evolved as a prime agricultural territory. It remains so today as evidenced by its scenic rural character. Big Darby Creek, a State Scenic River and the western border of Brown Township, is recognized as one of the "Last Great Places in the Western Hemisphere."

(Contributors to this township were Ray Bradley and Sandy Andromeda. Photographs are from the Sandy Andromeda archives and the Northwest Franklin County Historical Society.)