

Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House



**4302 Porter Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070**

Landmark Designation Proposal

**Prepared by:
North Olmsted Landmarks Commission**





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PROPOSAL STATEMENT

The Landmarks Commission of the City of North Olmsted has researched and assembled the documented historical information contained in this Landmark Designation Proposal. The Commission recommends that the Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House be designated as a Landmark and a plaque signifying such status be affixed to the front of the house, directly adjacent to the existing NORTH OLMSTED HISTORIC BUILDING plaque.

This proposal for Landmark Designation is in conformance with the CHARTER OF THE CITY OF NORTH OLMSTED, ARTICLE 7, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS, SECTION 6, LANDMARKS COMMISSION, Paragraph 165.05 DESIGNATION OF LANDMARKS, which states:

- (a) A building or other structure may be designated by the Commission as a landmark if the Commission determines, on the basis of the evidence before it, that the building or other structure meets two (2) or more of the following criteria:
- (1) It has character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation;
 - (2) It is the site of an historic event with an effect upon society;
 - (3) It is identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society: or
 - (4) It exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historic heritage of the community.

The Knight - Biddulph house, along with the contributions of the Knight and Biddulph families, in Dover Township, Olmstead Township and North Olmsted, Ohio, meet the criteria listed above in items (1) and (4) of paragraph 165.05, for the designation of Landmark status.

This Landmark Designation Proposal is being submitted respectively to the City of North Olmsted Planning Commission and the North Olmsted City Council, for their review and approval, and the granting of Landmark status to the Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House.



**Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House
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SECTION 1

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Architectural Description

- Construction: Stone exterior bearing walls and foundation, wood framing and full basement.
- Year Built: 1860 (year of completion)
- Architectural Style: Moderate Italianate. Only stone house in North Olmsted.
- Design of 1860 House: Two-story structure with living area on first floor and bedrooms on second floor.
- Area of 1860 house: First Floor 1,418 S.F., Second Floor 835 S.F., Total Area 2,253 S.F.
- Area of Kitchen Addition (ca 1982): First Floor 287 S.F., Stair and Second Floor: 287 S.F.
- Area of 2013 house: 2,827 S. F., plus 400 S. F. attached garage added ca 1982.
- Total area of house and garage: 3,227 S.F.
- Additional freestanding garage on property: 800 Sq. Ft.

Italianate Architectural Style

The Italianate style originated in England. It derived from Italy's rambling farmhouses, usually built of masonry with characteristic square towers and informal detailing. By 1830 Italianate had spread to the United States where architects began to transform the style into something truly American, with only hints of the Italian origin. Working in the Italianate style, American architects had a higher degree of artistic freedom than they had in earlier, more rigid architectural styles.

Much of the Italianate style's popularity can be credited to architect Andrew Jackson Downing, whose own Italianate home designs were featured in two books he published: *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), the latter was published the year Richard H. Knight and his brother-in-law Simon L. Beebe divided their property on Lot 4 in Dover Township.



Widely read by home designers and the public alike, his influential book set off a wave of Italianate homebuilding around the country. It is safe to assume that Richard Harrison Knight was aware of Downing's books on Italianate architectural style when he began to design and build his new stone mansion on Porter Road between the years 1850 and 1860.

The typical Italianate design was a two story building, but examples survive of many variations from three-story detached homes with towers and cupolas to urban townhouses. There were six basic categories: box with hip roof, box with a centered gable, L or U plan and L plan with a tower and a front gable. The Knight house most resembles the box design with a hip roof.

The Italianate town houses are identifiable by their wide projecting cornices with heavy brackets and their richly ornamented windows, porches and doorways. Most American examples of Italianate homes mix details derived from both rural models and formal renaissance townhouses. This description fits the Knight house well. The house has a wide projecting cornice with heavy brackets and some ornamental treatment of the main doorway.

Doors occurred in as much variety as windows. Paired and single doors were both common in Italianate homes, often announcing themselves with a large, elaborate hood supported by brackets. Italianate doors were the first to have large panes of glass in the door itself in lieu of side lights with small panes. The Knight house has a pair of entrance doors in a heavy frame.

Italianate window sashes typically had one-over-one or two-over-two glazing. Window trim had exuberant variations including U-shaped crowns with brackets or pediment crowns with decorated hoods. The windows in the Knight house are beautifully placed in a formal pattern in the façade. They are tall rectangular windows. However, they are not the arched and curved windows which were popularized in America by the Italianate trend.

Brick and wood clapboard were the most common building materials for Italianate homes with brick being more expensive. The ornamentation was typically wood and occasionally the brick homes had elaborate, durable cast iron window and door hoods. The Knight house is built with a stone finish on the exterior, a clear step above clapboard, less formal than brick. The exterior ornamentation is wood.

Italianate roofs were low pitched, often with a square cupola on top. Projecting eaves with large brackets in a variety of shapes and spacing dominated the cornice. Arranged singly or in pairs, the brackets were usually underscored with wide decorative bands and sometimes further elaborated with panel moldings. This description fits the Knight house well for the cornice and roof, although there is no cupola on the roof.

Based on the description of the Italianate Style given above, we have used the term "Moderate Italianate" to describe the Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph house.

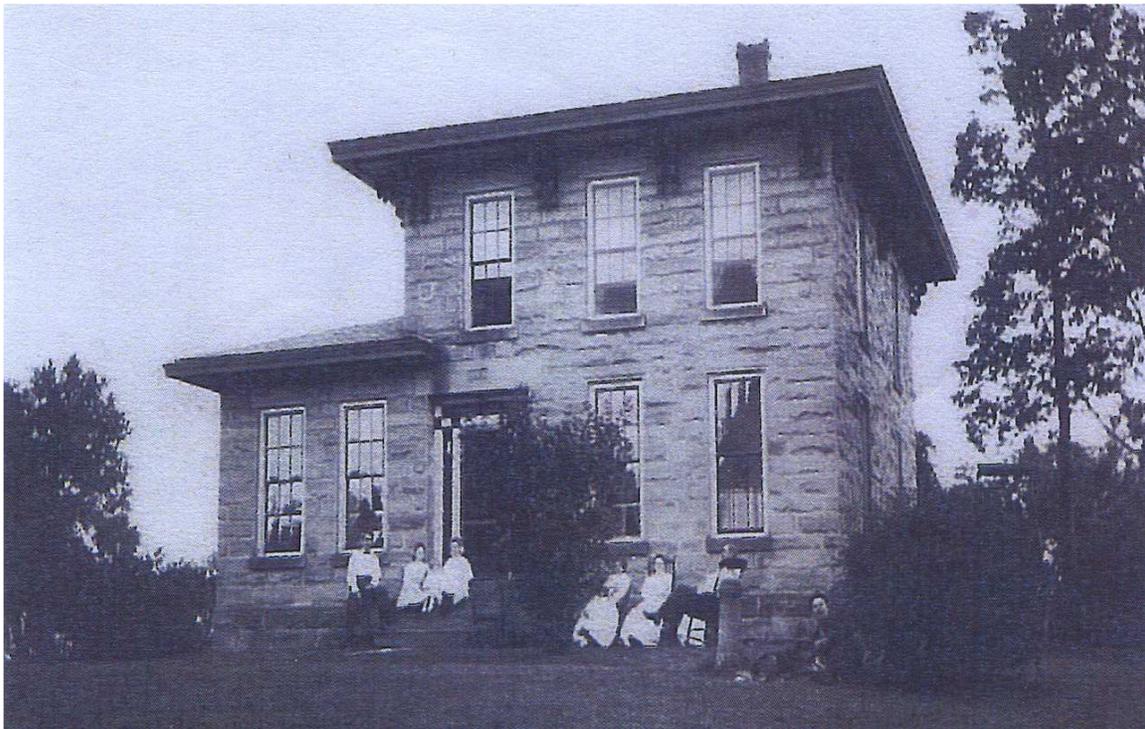
Note: The information contained herein on Italianate Style was adapted from descriptions written by architect Bruce Wentworth AIA.



History of the Knight-Biddulph House

The Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph house at 4302 Porter Road has been an important part of North Olmsted's history for more than one hundred and fifty-two years. It is important for its unique architectural design and style, as well as the history surrounding the lives of its many owners and occupants.

It is the only stone house in North Olmsted. It is Italianate style in design. It was built by Richard Harrison Knight between 1850 and 1860, on Lot 4 in Dover Township. Dover was Township 7 in Range 15 of the Connecticut Western Reserve.



William Biddulph family at the R. H. Knight – Wm Biddulph house around 1900

Richard Knight, who in later years became the publisher of the *Akron City Times* in Akron, Ohio, was the second son in a family of seven children born to Jonathan and Deborah (Barber) Knight of Connecticut. Richard was born November 11, 1813 in Litchfield County in Connecticut. His father, Jonathan Knight was of English descent, but was born in Norwich, Connecticut, where he followed farming until 1832, the year he moved his family to Ohio. Jonathan and Deborah Knight settled in Ridgeville Township, Ohio and resided there until their deaths. They had three sons and four daughters.

On December 31, 1837, Richard Knight, a young man of 24, and Miss Emma Beebe, age 17, of Ridgeville Township, were married. After their marriage, they lived near Emma's brother, Sidney L. Beebe and his wife, Sylva Lucetta (Hickox), in Ridgeville Township.



Richard Knight followed farming and stone cutting in Lorain County for fourteen years, from 1832 until 1846. He worked in various capacities of stone-work in Elyria, in addition to working on the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad.

In 1846 the Knight and Beebe families wanted to relocate to Dover Township in Cuyahoga County. At that time Richard and Emma Knight had two children, a son, Eber, born in 1838, and a daughter, Ellen, born in 1840.

On December 5, 1846, Richard, then 33, and his brother-in-law Sidney, together paid Ebenezer Porter a handsome sum of \$1,600 for 140 acres of the original 160 acres of land on Lot 4 in Dover Township. Lot 4 had previously been owned jointly by Nehemiah Hubbard and Joshua Stow of Connecticut, the original investors in Dover Township when it was surveyed and established in 1806. Hubbard and Stow eventually divided their Dover land holdings equally and Nehemiah Hubbard became the sole owner of Lot 4, along with the other lots he owned in his half of the township. On June 25, 1832, Hubbard sold the 160 acre Lot 4 to Ebenezer Porter for a mere \$400. Thirteen years later, on Christmas day in 1845, Ebenezer's brother, John Porter acquired a 20 acre portion in the northwest corner of Lot 4, through a sheriff's deed issued by Huron Beebe. One year later, Ebenezer made a fine profit on the sale of his land to Knight and Beebe. The Porter brothers were sons of Joseph Porter, a soldier in the Revolutionary War, who was a widower when he came to Dover in 1826.

There was a stone quarry on Lot 4. The quarry eventually became one of the quarries owned by E. C. Harris and William Geiger. It was referred to as having an excellent quality of building stone, much used in the township and elsewhere, and found in the southwest part of Dover. The Harris and Geiger stone quarries long yielded large supplies, "although the former quarry on Lot 4 was not being worked to any great extent as of 1879."

On January 4, 1850, Knight and Beebe agreed by quitclaim deed to divide their 140 acre property between themselves. For the sum of one dollar, Richard retained seventy-one and one half acres on the easterly half of Lot 4. Sidney retained sixty-eight and one half acres on the westerly half of Lot 4. The quitclaim deed reserved a right of way along the north line of the property, one half the trees in the nursery and one third the apples, not to exceed fifty bushels in any one year. The deed also granted unrestricted use of the part of the stone quarry on the land deeded to Knight. The quarry was to be worked in partnership with Beebe, a stonecutter by trade, and the quarry and fruit not to be consigned to any other person.

Between the years 1850 and 1860 the value of Knight's real estate holdings increased dramatically. Richard had begun the design and construction of his new home, presumably using stone cut from the quarry located on his property, and with help from brother-in-law Sidney. The 1860 inscription in the stone lintel over the main front entrance to the Knight house probably, but not necessarily, was inscribed in the lintel before its installation, and before the final completion of construction of the house.

On a map printed in 1858, the location of the stone quarry is shown along with what appears to be another structure surrounded by the quarry on the portion of the land owned by Sidney Beebe.



There is no way to know what the structure was. It may have housed the equipment for cutting and fabrication of the stone blocks used in the house.

In addition to the importance of the Knight's new home, Richard and Emma were early active members of the Olmstead Universalist Church. They had first attended in 1838 when services were held in the Union House of Worship at the southeastern end of Butternut Ridge Road. In 1847 the congregation had built a church at the corner of Lorain and Butternut Ridge roads. Richard Knight and Asher Coe were elected in 1849 to represent the congregation at the Universalist Association's annual meeting at Huntington in Lorain County. Knight served as chairman. On November 5, 1851 Knight introduced a resolution to rent pews for the church in order to defray the expenses of ministerial labor for the coming year. His name disappears from the church records after that date.

Richard Knight was also active in the township, acting as one of the trustees in 1857, along with N. H. Austin, G. W. Laughlin; clerk, Eli Clemens; and treasurer, J. Spencer. Richard and Emma Knight's fourth child, Howard W. Knight was born in 1861, most likely in the new home built by his father.

Sidney Beebe's wife, Sylva, passed away on December 20, 1863, at the young age of 33. Sidney Beebe remarried and, on December 1, 1865, Sidney and his second wife, Adaline, sold Sidney's original sixty-eight and one half acres of Lot 4 to Richard Knight, and his son, Eber Knight for \$3,425. Less than a year later, on November 3, 1866, the Knight's sold Beebe's land, for \$4,000, to William Geiger, owner of many stone quarries. Geiger purchased sixteen acres of Lot 14 from L. G. Porter for \$2,400 on August 19, 1871. Seven months later, on March 19, 1872, Knight and Geiger traded small pieces of land, most likely to give Geiger full control of the stone quarry. Knight deeded a piece of Lot 4 to Geiger, and Geiger deeded a piece of Lot 14 to Knight.

On January 13, 1873 Richard Knight sold his Lot 4 and Lot 14 properties for \$9,300 to Paul and Mahitabel Jenkins, thus continuing the profitable journey, begun by Nehemiah Hubbard, for the owners of the Knight home and property. After the sale, Richard and Emma Knight moved to Akron. Richard eventually became the publisher of the *Akron City Times*, serving in that role "with great devotion" from 1875 to 1883.

Paul Jenkins and his wife lived in their new home for almost two years before selling the house and farm to Clinton and Ellen Fauver, for \$10,000, on December 17, 1874. Fauver owned the house and farm for less than four months, selling it all to Spicer H. and Selina Shaw for \$11,000, on April 1, 1875. Spicer Shaw had previously owned land in Olmstead Township, having purchased 20 acres of land on Lot 5 from Charles Olmstead, on August 5, 1854. Less than two years later, Spicer sold that land on April 21, 1856. Little else is known about Spicer Shaw. His son, Arthur B. Shaw, lived on Railroad Avenue in Olmstead Falls and was described in later years as an efficient and capable station agent on the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railway, in Olmstead Falls, Ohio.



Richard Knight's brother-in-law, Sidney L. Beebe died in 1879. His second wife, Adaline Beebe lived to the age of 80. She died in 1913. Both are buried in Evergreen Cemetery on Center Ridge Road.

On April 14, 1880, William Biddulph bought the Richard H. Knight house, and its seventy-one and one half acres of Porter Road farmland, from Spicer H. Shaw for the surprisingly lower price of \$7,000. Perhaps other undisclosed considerations were included in the purchase agreement. At the time, William, a young man of 32, was a farmer, and married to Thirza (Hubbard) Biddulph. They had two children.

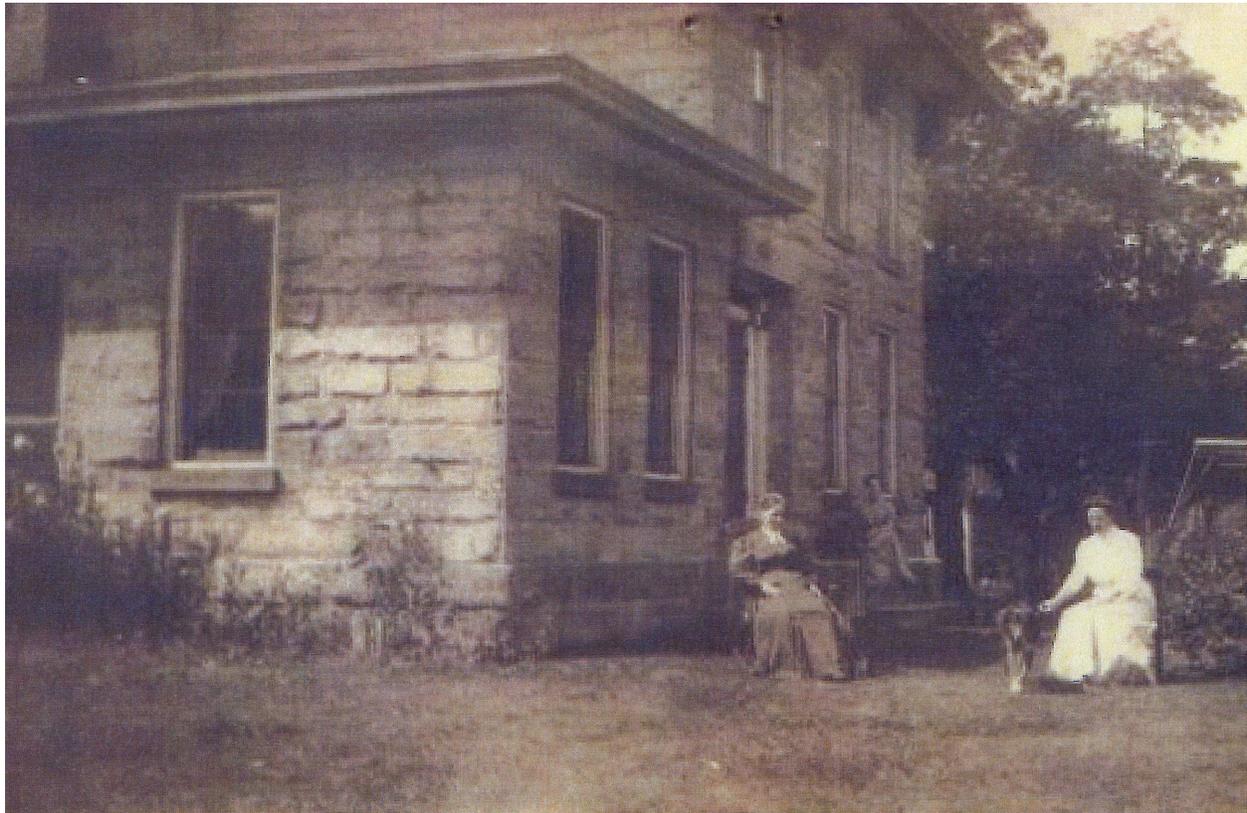
William Biddulph was the oldest child of John and Christina Biddulph. John's father and brothers had a long history in land acquisition and sales in Cuyahoga County. William was named after his paternal grandfather, who lived in Brooklyn Township, Ohio. John and Christina lived on the south side of Butternut Ridge Road, on approximately 100 acres of farm land, in Olmstead Township. John Biddulph had purchased the land on April 24, 1865 and moved there, from Brooklyn, Ohio, with his entire family. In addition to his parents, William had a younger brother, George, and three younger sisters, Louise (Hurd), Caroline (James) and Rose (Sheer).

William and Thirza Biddulph had been married in Berea on March 20, 1872. When they moved into their Italianate stone house in April, 1880, they had two sons, John W. Biddulph, (named after his paternal grandfather) born in 1873 and Franklin H. Biddulph, born in 1875. Daughter Neva E. Biddulph was born January 19, 1883. Their fourth child, Ralph Ray Biddulph, was born February 16, 1885. Both children were born at home.

William and Thirza Biddulph had lived in their new home for only thirteen years when Thirza died on December 12, 1893, at the young age of 43. She left behind a husband of 45, daughter Neva, age 10, and sons John, age 20, Frank, age 18 and Ralph, age 8. Thirza was buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

On January 1, 1895, William Biddulph, age 46, married Anna M. Hunger, age 26 at the Church of Latter Day Saints. Later evidence suggests she was the daughter of Gerhard and Marie Hunger who lived on Lot 5, directly across Porter Road from William. Gerhard and Biddulph exchanged ownership of land on Lot 5 twice in two years, 1905 and 1907. William and Anna's first child, a daughter, Josephine B. Biddulph was born in 1895. Their second daughter, Ruth A. Biddulph, was born in 1897. Presumably, both daughters were born at home, at 4302 Porter Road.

On November 7, 1896, Richard Harrison Knight passed away at the age of 83, in Akron, Ohio. His wife Emma had died earlier that same year, at the age of 76. We do not know for sure where they are buried, maybe Akron, or possibly Ridgeville Ohio.



Knight – Biddulph House ca 1900

In the 1910 Census, William Biddulph's occupation was listed as General Manager of a carriage store. He was 62 years old and had been married to Anna for sixteen years. Their daughters, Josephine and Ruth were 15 and 13 years old, respectively. By 1910 William had built a second house on his property, in the Craftsman style. His youngest son Ralph was 25 years old and had married Lucy Bell Underhill. Ralph and Lucy had no children and were listed in the 1910 Census as tenants in a house on Porter Road, a separate entry from William and Anna. Ralph was farming his father's land and either he and Lucy or William and Anna lived in the stone house. Evidence strongly suggests William and Anna lived in the second house, which eventually became 4322 Porter Road. The house can be seen on a 1920 map of The Village of North Olmsted. It is occupied to this day.

On May 4, 1919, William Biddulph escorted two women who were in need of directions from the train station to the home of his younger brother, George. The women were on their way to see George's wife Josephine. Upon their arrival, the party of three discovered the bodies of William's brother, George, age 69, and George's third wife Josephine (Burford) Biddulph, age 44, inside their home at 25896 Butternut Ridge Road (which was declared a North Olmsted Landmark in December 2011). George had murdered Josephine with a shotgun and then taken his own life with an old fashioned pistol. The motive was not known. It was a sensational story at the time.



Most likely Anna Biddulph at home ca 1900

William Biddulph passed away at age 74, on November 25, 1922. Anna was 54, Josephine was 27 and Ruth was 25, when William died. He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery next to his first wife, Thirza. In June of 1922, five months before his death, William had deeded one acre of his land to Anna. In his will, William “devised” to Anna, the “house in which he currently resides” and the one acre of property that overlapped the northeast corner of Lot 4 and the southeast corner of Lot 14 (now 4322 Porter Road). William’s three sons, John, Frank and Ralph inherited the balance of William’s “property and buildings” on Lots 4 and 14. The property and its buildings can be seen on a 1930 map of North Olmsted Village, and are labeled as being owned by the three Biddulph brothers. The one acre of property given to Anna can also be seen outlined on the map. William’s will, the 1930 map, and the events outlined below, more than strongly suggest that, at the time of William’s death in 1922, he and Anna were living in the 1910 house that is now 4322 Porter Road. Ralph and Lucy, who were by then the parents of three or four children, were almost certainly living in the stone house at 4302 Porter Road.

After his father’s death, Ralph Biddulph and his family lived in the stone house for another two years. Ralph continued farming the land. In 1924, Ralph founded the North Olmsted Basket and Feed Company, and purchased land at 26903 Butternut Ridge Road to build a new home for his family. Ralph and Lucy most likely moved into their new home in 1925. The Biddulph brothers presumably began renting the stone house after Ralph moved out. The tenants, or hired workers, may have farmed the land. Anna continued living in the house she inherited from William.



In 1928, the Biddulph brothers, for the sum of \$1.00, deeded a strip of land, forty feet wide and thirteen hundred and sixteen feet long, along the entire western edge of their property, to the Village of North Olmsted. The land contained one-half the width of the existing “Biddulph Drive” (now known as Martin Drive).

Sometime after William’s death in 1922, (the date is unknown) Anna Biddulph married Arthur E. Weston. Arthur was obviously a man of some means. He owned seven sublots on Lot 47, and a parcel of land on Lot 48, along Hall (Columbia) Road, in Dover Township. Anna and Arthur may have lived in the house she inherited from William.

Anna Biddulph Weston died on April 16, 1933, at age 65. Stuningly, Arthur died just six days later, on April 22nd. Anna’s will directed that her daughters, Josephine Limpert and Ruth Schindler, and her husband, Arthur Weston, each be given one-third ownership of her one acre of property on Lots 4 and 14. The stone house was not described or mentioned in Anna’s will. These events, and the associated deeds, further serve to illustrate that ownership of the majority of William Biddulph’s property, the stone house, and other buildings, had remained with Anna’s stepsons, John, Frank and Ralph. Additional events that occurred after Anna’s death also support this conclusion.

When Arthur Weston died, his will directed that his one-third ownership of Anna’s property be shared by his two brothers, Burton and Charles Weston, and his sister Lucy Scheuring. Three months later, on July 31, 1933, Weston’s brothers and sister deeded their shares of the property to Josephine Limpert and Ruth Schindler.

In 1939, the Biddulph brothers began selling off individual parcels of land located along the western edge of their property, on Biddulph Drive. They named the area containing the parcels “Thirza Park Acres,” after their mother. It appears the sales continued for about eight years, eventually ending in 1947, after the deaths of brothers John and Frank Biddulph.

In a 1940 Census entry, Josephine Limpert, husband Herbert H., and their five children, lived in her mother’s 1910 house at 4322 Porter Road, on the one acre parcel of land that had been carved out of the Biddulph farm by Josephine’s father, William Biddulph. The next entry in the census lists Herbert’s brother and sister-in-law, Fred and wife Louise Limpert, as renters in the house next to 4322 Porter Road at “4320” Porter Road. They lived there with their daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter. The house next to 4322 is 4302 Porter Road. Perhaps 4302 was transposed to “4320” in the 1940 census, or the address of 4302 in 1940 actually was 4320. In any event, it appears the Limperts’ were renting the stone house from their in-laws’ family, the Biddulph brothers.

On April 26, 1944, Ruth (Schindler) Biddulph, then divorced and single, sold her share of the 4322 Porter Road property to her sister, Josephine, for \$2,300. Josephine now had full ownership of the property. Ruth remarried (Maurice Hanning) and lived in Shaker Heights for over thirty years.



In 1944, big changes were in the air. Land description inconsistencies had occurred over many years due to descriptions in wills, and the various land transfers that had occurred between the farm land on Lots 4 and 14, and the one acre of land that was 4322 Porter Road. These inconsistencies were cleared up with a few deed transfers between the Biddulph brothers and Josephine Limpert, for a very important reason.

On June 6, 1944, an important date in history no less, John, Frank and Ralph Biddulph completed the sale of two parcels of land encompassing an area of five acres, and containing their father's stone house. The buyers were David and Catherine Williard, and their son and daughter-in-law. The sale also included a right-of-way, (over adjacent Biddulph land) which was needed to access the five acres of property that was isolated from Porter Road. The Williards owned the property for two years before selling it in 1946.

On June 14, 1946, Eunice Cook (wife of Harrison C. Cook) purchased the stone house and its five acres of land, including the right-of-way, from the Williard family. The Cook family would live in the stone house for eighteen years.

In 1946, John Biddulph had already been dead for two years. He was shot during the robbery of his gas station, on July 23, 1944, in Cleveland. He died the next day, from the wounds suffered during the robbery. John Biddulph, age 71, was buried in Evergreen Cemetery. His wife, Mary died five years later on September 10, 1949, and was buried next to her husband.

November 3, 1947, Franklin Biddulph, age 72, passed away. He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery. His wife, Nettie, lived another twenty-five years. She and Frank are buried near the graves of John and Mary Biddulph.

Ralph Biddulph continued through the years to run his Basket and Feed Company until his death in March, 1950, at age 65. Ralph's widow, Lucy (Underhill) Biddulph, wrote a brief history of the founding of the company, prior to her death in 1975. During his life in North Olmsted, Ralph Biddulph served on the North Olmsted Council for twenty years. He was instrumental in obtaining the first pumper for the Fire Department. His late brother Franklin's son, William M. Biddulph, was the North Olmsted Fire Chief when his uncle Ralph passed away at home at 26903 Butternut Ridge Road. Ralph and Lucy are buried in Evergreen Cemetery, near the graves of Lucy's parents and Ralph's brothers, John and Frank. The graves of Ralph's parents and stepmother are also not far away.

The three Biddulph brothers had all died within a period of six years. On December 21, 1950, their immediate heirs deeded all of the remaining farmland property on lots 4 and 14 to Fire Chief William M. Biddulph, the oldest grandson of William Biddulph. We don't know for sure what the reasons were at the time.

Two years later, Chief Biddulph died in a plane crash, in August, 1952, at the age of 44. He and his father, Franklin, had both owned homes on Porter Road where they had lived with their families. Fire Chief William M. Biddulph's wife, B. Bernice Biddulph, inherited the farmland when her husband died. She sold the land on September 10, 1954 to Edward Helt, who in turn



sold it in 1955 to Libbey Lee, Inc. The land was eventually resold in early 1963 to Milkap Building Co. Infrastructure improvements were added and new homes were built by residential developers, beginning in 1964. The residential development on Porter Road is still known as North Park Estates.

In 1963, Josephine Limpert was a widow and still living in the 1910 Craftsman style house she had inherited from her mother, Anna Biddulph Weston. On March 13th, she sold it and its one acre of land, for \$12,500. We don't know where Josephine lived after that. She died four years later, in June, 1967, and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery, next to her husband, Herbert, who had died in March, 1959.

In 1964, Eunice Cook, by then a widow, sold the Knight-Biddulph stone house to Steve and Alfreda Flagner, of Brooklyn, Ohio. The Flagners used the house as a rental property.

In 1982 several fires occurred in the then "abandoned, dilapidated" old house. Neighbors were very concerned. In February 1984, the city of North Olmsted ordered the demolition of the house. On February 27, 1984, the story of the Demolition Appeal Hearing appeared in the newspaper, along with accounts of childhood memories from Ralph Biddulph's daughters, Dora Adams and Irene Smith. A story on the grim future for the historic house appeared on the front page of the Sun Herald on March 1, 1984. On May 1, 1984 the demolition order was overturned by City Council when the Flagners presented a contract for repair of the house. At the City Council meeting, Alfreda said they had been renting the house to tenants for "twenty years" and planned to live there themselves. The repair work was ordered by Council to be completed in ninety days. However, with the granting of extensions of the deadline over the next three years, the repair work was finally completed in 1985. In July of 1985, architect Steve McQuillin and Landmarks Commission member Betty Lord included the house in the Ohio Historic Inventory survey for the North Olmsted Landmarks Commission. They recommended that the house be placed on the National Register.

On March 9, 2000, William Kraley purchased the house from Alfreda Flagner. Steve Flagner had passed away December 15, 1989. Since purchasing the house, Mr. Kraley has continued to make improvements to the exterior and interior of the house, including a new roof, and upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems.

In 2010, the Landmarks Commission awarded a recognition plaque to the house, designating it a North Olmsted Historic Building. At a meeting of the Landmarks Commission, the plaque was presented to Mr. Kraley.

In light of the strength of the architectural design, the use of native materials and the rich human history that has enveloped the Knight-Biddulph house for over one hundred and fifty-two years, the Landmarks Commission recommends that the Richard H. Knight-William Biddulph house be officially dedicated as a North Olmsted Landmark in 2013.



Knight Family Genealogical History

- 1. Jonathan Knight** born in Norwich, Connecticut died in Ridgeville Township, Lorain, OH
m. **Deborah (Barber) Knight** born in Connecticut died in Ridgeville Twp., Lorain, OH
Jonathan and Deborah are assumed to be buried in Ridgeville Township

Jonathan and Deborah moved from Connecticut to Ridgeville Township, Lorain, OH in 1832. Jonathan was of English descent. He was a farmer in Connecticut and Ridgeville Township, Ohio. Jonathan and Deborah had seven children. Richard Harrison Knight was their second son.

Richard H. Knight, son of Jonathan and Deborah Knight:

- 2. Richard Harrison Knight** b. 11/11/1813 Litchfield, Connecticut d. November 7, 1896 in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
m. **Emma Beebe** b. 1820 d. 1896
They were married on December 31, 1837 in Ridgeville Township, Lorain, Ohio

Children of Richard and Emma Knight:

- 3. Eber Harrison Knight** b. January 1839 d. 6/9/1921 in Birmingham, Jefferson, Alabama
m. Eliza J. Knight, age 17, born in 1843.
They had a son Richard Lahue Knight born in 1864.
They had a daughter Emma, born in 1868.
In 1870 he was married to Florence L. (Taylor) age 21, with a daughter Emma, age 2.
In 1900 he was married to Fannie C. (Johnston) age 35, born 3/28/1865.
They were married in 1888. They had a daughter, Alice, age 12, born in 1888.
Eber was a carpenter. He also lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan
- 3. Ellen Knight** b. 1840 date of death unknown.
She was a teacher. She lived in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
- 3. Clarence Richard Knight** b. 8/9/1850 d. 3/12/1919

Attended Lombard University, at Galesburg, Ill. at the age of seventeen for four years
Attended Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, Ohio, 1871-1872
He came to Akron in 1872 and attended the new Bucheal College
Clarence matriculated and finished the course in 1873
In December 1873 he took charge of the Akron City Times Editorial Department
- 3. Howard W. Knight** b. 1861 Date of death unknown.



Biddulph Family Genealogical History

- 1. John Biddulph** b.9/28/1826 Strafford Shire England d.12/31/1890 North Olmsted, OH
m. **Christina Bliker** b.1830 Germany d.2/27/1901 North Olmsted, OH

John and Christina are buried in Butternut Cemetery. They moved from Brooklyn, OH to North Olmsted in 1865. John acquired the land in April, 1865 from William Collister, who had purchased the land from Charles Stetson. Stetson had purchased the land from William H. Usher, heir of Watrous Usher.

Children of John and Christina Biddulph:

- 2. William Biddulph** born 12/24/1848 in Brooklyn, Ohio d. November 1922
m. **Thirza E. Hubbard** (first wife) on 3/20/1872 in Berea, b. 1/1/1850 d. 12/12/1893
m. **Anna M. Hunger** (second wife) in 1894, b.3/4/1868 d. 4/16/1933
Wm. bought the R. K. Knight stone house on Porter Road on 4/5/1880 from S. H. Shaw.
(See letter from Elma Gifford to Almera Reitz)
William, Thirza and Anna are buried in Evergreen Cemetery
- 2. George Biddulph** born 5/23/1850 in Brooklyn, Ohio d.5/4/1919 suicide
m. **Almera F. Kennedy** (first wife) on 12/24/1876, b.8/29/1849 d.4/1/1900
m. **Stella M. Kennedy** (second wife) on 8/31/1901, b.9/18/1861 d.3/5/1918
m. **Josephine Burford** (third wife) in 1918 b.ca 1875 d.5/4/1919, murdered
George built the house at 25896 Butternut Ridge Road in 1877, on Lot 28
George, Almera and Stella are buried in Butternut Ridge Cemetery
- 2. Louise Biddulph** born 8/21/1852 in Brooklyn, Ohio d. February 1933
m. Albert W. Hurd b.1849 d.6/7/1916
Louise and Albert are buried in Butternut Ridge Cemetery
3. Carrie (Hurd) Crepps
3. Vernon Hurd b.1875 d.5/19/1960 Vernon is buried in Butternut Ridge Cemetery
- 2. Caroline (Carrie) Biddulph** born 1/3/1856 in Brooklyn, Ohio
m. Ralph A. James on 12/13/1877. Ralph was born in Staten Island, NY 4/12/1841
3. Addie C. (James) Hanford
3. Arthur R. James
3. Neva L. (James) Pickard
- 2. Rose A. Biddulph** born 7/2/1859 in Brooklyn, Ohio d. February 1939
m. George D. Sheer d. April 1937 Rose and George are buried in Columbia Station
3. Walter A. Sheer m. Rhea (Green) Sheer Infant son Ralph G. Sheer died September 1923
3. Minnie R. (Biddulph) Bray (Walter)
3. Ralph G. Sheer d. February 1921



Children of William and Thirza Biddulph:

3. John W. Biddulph b.7/7/1873 d.7/23/1944

m. Mary A. Rafferty b.1872 d. 9/10/1949

They lived at 1368 West 83rd Street in Cleveland

John died at home of gunshot wounds suffered during a robbery of his gas station

John and Mary are buried in Evergreen Cemetery

4. Cornelia (Biddulph) Knutsen (Herman)

4. Joyce (Biddulph) Jenkins (Dale)

3. Franklin H. Biddulph b.1875 d.11/3/1947

m. Nettie L. Reublin b.1886 d.1972

They lived at 4881 Porter Road

Franklin and Netti are buried in Evergreen Cemetery

4. William M. Biddulph b.1908 d. August 1952 in plane crash, N.O.F.D. Fire Chief

m. B. "Billie" Bernice Clarke

William and Billie lived at 4733 Porter Road

5. David S. Biddulph b.1933 d.1990 buried in Evergreen cemetery

5. Susan Biddulph

5. Diane (Biddulph) Barber

4. Donald Biddulph b. 1916 (m. Evelyn)

4. Clifford Biddulph b. 1911 (m. Rita) Clifford was a Member of the N.O.P.D.

4. Marion (Biddulph) Eskins (Howard)

4. Louise (Biddulph) Guild (Norman)

3. Neva E. Biddulph b. 1/19/1883 d. December 24, 1962

m. William R. Bowman Jr. d. July 1958 at home

They lived at 3576 West 159th street in Cleveland

Neva died at the home of her sister, Josephine Limpert, at 4322 Porter Road

4. W. Robert Bowman

3. Ralph Ray Biddulph b.2/16/1885 at home in the stone house on Porter Road

d. March 1950 in his home at 26903 Butternut Ridge Road

m. Lucy Dell Underhill b.1888 d. March 1975

Ralph founded the North Olmsted Feed & Basket Company in 1924

Ralph and Lucy are buried in Evergreen Cemetery

4. Rhea (Biddulph) (Beeler) Shaughnessy

4. Dora (Biddulph) (Culliton) Adams

4. Irene (Biddulph) Smith b. 1919-20 (m. Wayne)

4. Raymond Biddulph (m. Catherine)

4. Herman Biddulph b. 1925-26 (m. Helen))



William Biddulph married **Anna M. Hunger** (second wife) in 1894

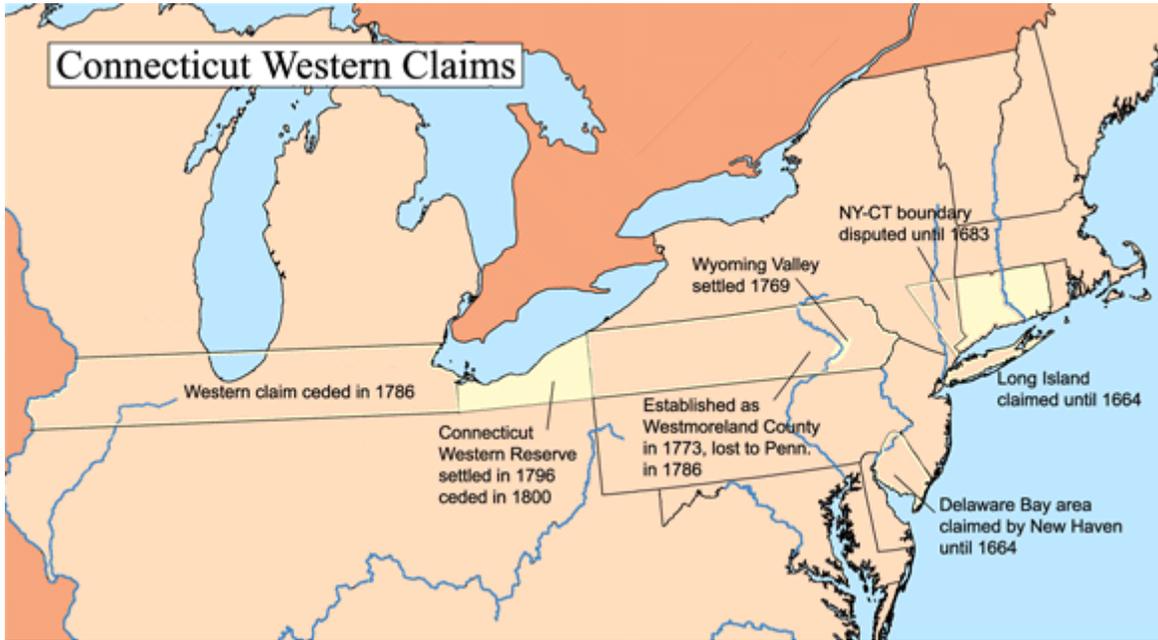
Children of William and Anna Biddulph:

- 3. Josephine B. Biddulph** b. 12/12/1895 d. June 1967
 - m. Herbert H. Limpert b. 1893-94 d. 1959 (age 47 in 1940 Census)
Josephine and Herbert lived at 4322 Porter Road, next to 4302 Porter Road
They are buried in Evergreen Cemetery
 - 4. Helen (Limpert) Bardwell b. 1917-18 (age 22 in 1940 Census)
 - 4. Doris (Limpert) Bish b. 1919-20 (age 20 in 1940 Census)
 - 4. Ruth (Limpert) Leach b. 1920-21 (age 19 in 1940 Census)
 - 4. Shirley (Limpert) Bohn b. 1924-25 (age 15 in 1940 Census)
 - 4. Roger H. Limpert b. 1935-36 (age 4 in 1940 Census)

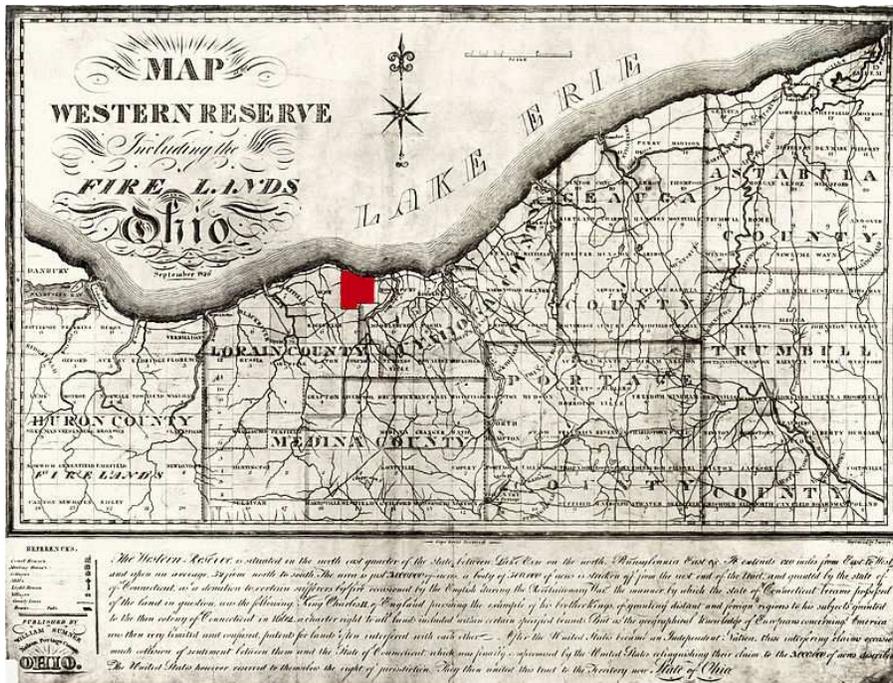
- 3. Ruth A. Biddulph** b. 4/10/1897 d. After 1976
 - m. Herbert J. Schindler
Divorced 1943
They lived on Dover Center Road
 - m. Maurice F. Hanning Before 1953 (div Mary Hanning) d. Before 1975
They lived in Shaker Heights



History of Dover Township



Location map of the Connecticut Western Reserve



Location map of Dover Township 7 in the Western Reserve



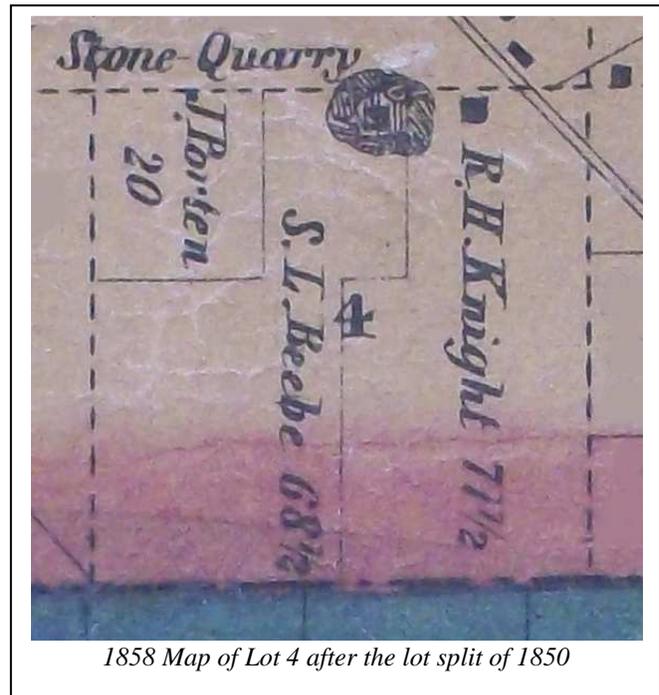
divided into Ranges which were then divided into Townships. Each township was intended to be five miles square, with a total area of 25 square miles.

- Dover was Township 7 in Range 15 of the Western Reserve, located in the northwest corner of Cuyahoga County, immediately north of Olmstead Township 6, also in Range 15. Township 7 was five miles wide and extended approximately 5 miles north to the shores of Lake Erie. It was bounded by Avon to the west and Rockport to the east.
- Dover Center Road was planned to run north and south through the center of the township.
- The original investors in Dover Township were Nehemiah Hubbard and Joshua Stow who lived in Middletown, Connecticut. They received the deeds for their land in 1807.
- Hubbard and Stow had the land surveyed by Joseph Darrow and divided into square lots of 160 acres each, measuring one half mile on each side. The lots ran in rows from east to west and north to south in a checkerboard pattern. They were numbered from 1 to 10 in each row, commencing from the southwest corner of the township.
- It was discovered during the survey that the township was not five miles square and that the lots running north and south along the west side of the township were only 146 acres each.
- From 1807 until 1810, Hubbard and Stow owned all of the township lots together. On May 12, 1810, Hubbard deeded 67.5 acres to Stow to equalize their land ownership in the township.
- Joseph Cahoon migrated to Dover from Vermont, with his wife and seven children. On the morning of October 10, 1810, they settled on land purchased through Datus Kelley, the agent for Hubbard and Stowe. Joseph Cahoon built the first grist-mill west of the Cuyahoga River on what is now called Cahoon's Creek. The frame was raised September 10, 1813, the day of Perry's victory on Lake Erie. Joseph and his son Joel quarried two mill-stones in the creek. They also erected a saw-mill nearby and likewise a distillery, where they made peach brandy. Mr. Cahoon engaged to some extent in peach culture.
- On October 10, 1810, Ashael Porter, wife Rebecca and their children, together with Ashael's nephew, Leverett Johnson, then age 17, came to Dover Township from Massachusetts. Ashael Porter eventually became the first postmaster of the township.
- The civil township of Dover was formed November 4, 1811 and embraced a large tract of land extending nearly 25 miles along Lake Erie. Adjacent townships were annexed into Dover Township over a period of time, creating the larger Dover Township by March 6, 1812. The first township election of trustees was held April 6, 1812.
- Almost immediately after his arrival in Dover, young Leverett Johnson began alone to clear land on Lot 58, while continuing to live with his uncle, Ashael Porter. Two years later, in 1812, Johnson settled on Lot 13, which was diagonally adjacent to Lot 4.
- In 1814, Leverett Johnson married Abigail Cahoon and brought his new bride to the new log-house he had erected on his farm on Lot 13. Leverett Johnson became a prominent member of the township. He was called upon to serve in several important positions. He was Justice of the Peace from 1827 to 1833 and served five terms in the State legislature. He died on the old homestead in 1856.



- In 1815, Nehemiah Porter, his wife, their two children, and bachelor brother Wells Porter, located on Lot 45. After residing with Nehemiah two years, Wells Porter made a settlement on Lot 15, diagonally adjacent to Lot 4. He later moved to Cleveland where he died in 1877. In 1816, another Porter brother, Ebenezer, settled in Dover. Ebenezer and Nehemiah Porter resided in the township until they died. The Porter brothers were all sons of Joseph Porter.
- On December 26, 1816, Joshua Stow deeded land to Nehemiah Hubbard in order to split up their land holdings so that each lot in the township had only one owner. On May 12, 1825, the State of Connecticut also deeded the same lots to Hubbard.
- In 1826 the first sales of land to settlers began.
- Joseph Porter, father of the Porter brothers, migrated to Dover in 1826 with four of his children, Jemima, John, Leonard and Rebecca. They travelled the Erie Canal to Buffalo, then by lake to Cleveland, and the rest of the way by stage. Mr. Porter settled on Lot 14, north of Lot 4. He died there in 1844 and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

- In 1832, Nehemiah Hubbard sold the half mile square, 160 acre Lot 4 to Ebenezer Porter. In 1845, Ebenezer Porter sold 20 acres in the northwest quadrant of Lot 4 to his brother John. In 1846, Ebenezer Porter sold the remaining 140 acres of Lot 4 to Richard H. Knight and Sidney L. Beebe together. On January 4, 1850, Richard Knight and Sidney Beebe divided the 140 acres of land between themselves.



1858 Map of Lot 4 after the lot split of 1850

- After the Lot 4 split of 1850, Richard Knight began the design and construction of a new stone house. He built his house on Lot 4 of the township, sometime between 1850 and 1860, using stone from the nearby stone quarry located on Lot 4.
- R. H. Knight was a trustee of Dover Township in 1856 and 1857. S. L. Beebe was a trustee of Dover Township in 1860.
- In 1901, the northern part of Dover Township broke away and soon formed the village of Bay, which became Bay Village in 1950. In 1908 the southeastern part of Dover Township became a part of North Olmsted when it was incorporated in 1908. In 1911 the village of Dover was incorporated to the south of Bay. It eventually changed its name to Westlake in 1940.
- In 1951, North Olmsted becomes a city when population reaches 5,000 residents.



**Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House
4302 Porter Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070**

SECTION 2

PHOTOGRAPHS

House Photos – Exterior and Interior

1. Front Elevation – View from North
2. East Elevation – View from East
3. West Elevation – View from Northwest
4. West Elevation – Second Floor Detail
5. South Elevation – View from Southwest
6. Downspout Detail
7. Front Entrance
8. Front Entrance Detail
9. Window, Cornice and Brackets
10. Cornice and Bracket Detail
11. Porter Road Entrance Wall
12. View of Front Entry from Dining Room
13. Dining Room
14. Front Room - East Side of House
15. Front Room - East – Fireplace
16. Front Room - East – Door to Exterior
17. Doorway from Kitchen to Dining Room
18. Second Floor – Central Hallway
19. Kitchen – South Wall
20. Kitchen – East Wall
21. Window – Interior Detail
22. Front Entrance Doors – Interior View
23. Southwest Stairway to Second Floor
24. Built-in Bookcase
25. Attic View – Hip Roof Framing
26. Basement Stair
27. Basement Stone Foundation and First Floor Framing

Portrait Photos

28. William Biddulph
29. Thirza Biddulph
30. Ralph & Lucy Biddulph Family Portrait
31. Anna Biddulph
32. Children of John & Christina Biddulph, ca. 1915
33. Josephine Biddulph
34. Ruth Biddulph



Photo 1
Front Elevation
View from North

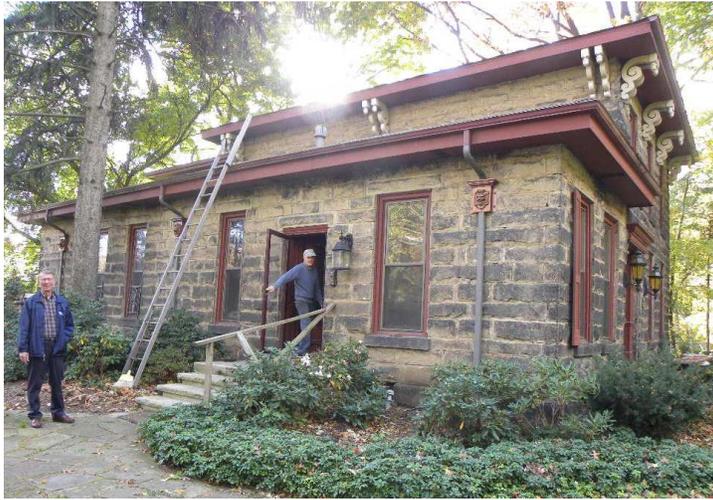


Photo 2
East Elevation
View from East



Photo 3
West Elevation
View from Northwest



Photo 4
West Elevation
Second Floor Detail



Photo 5
South Elevation
View from Southwest



Photo 6
Downspout Detail

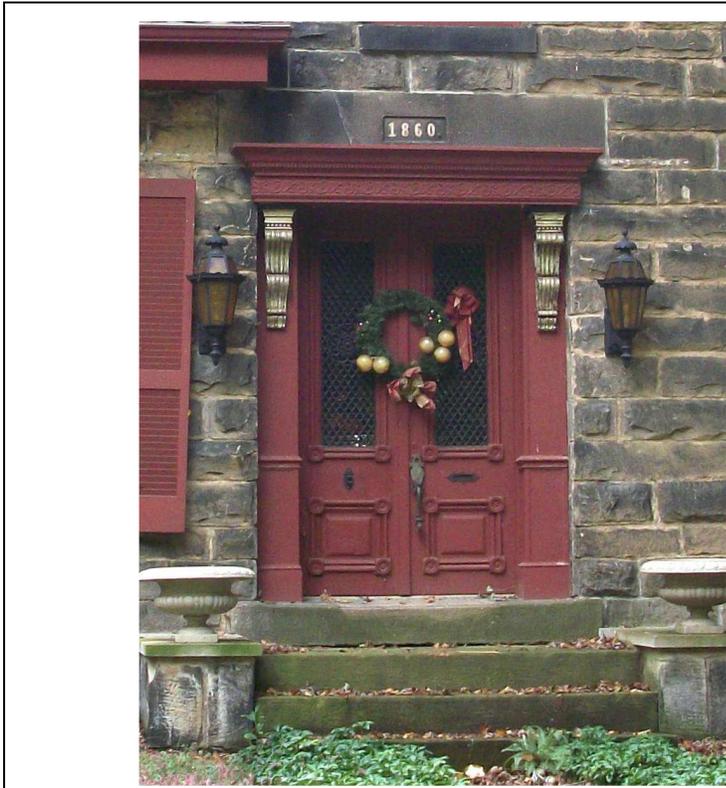


Photo 7
Front Entrance

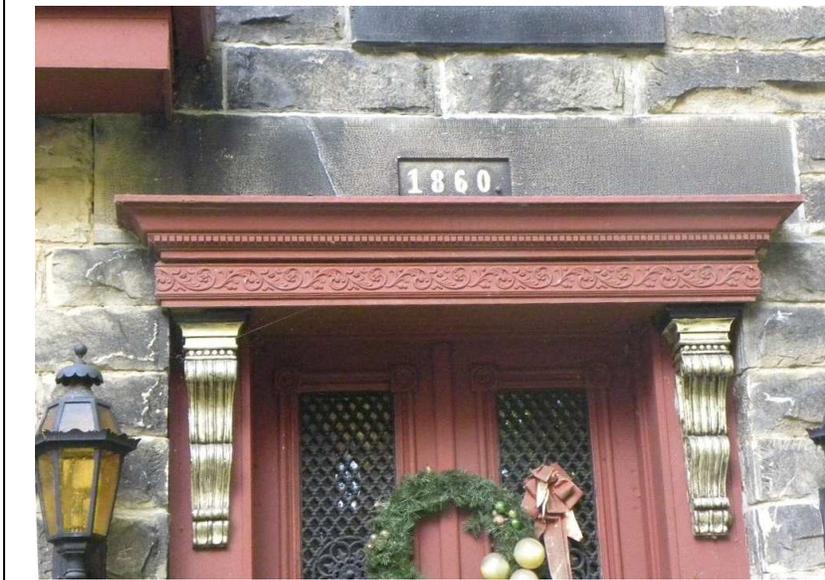


Photo 8
Front Entrance Detail



Photo 9
Window, Cornice and Brackets



Photo 10
Cornice and Bracket Detail



Photo 11
Porter Road Entrance Wall



Photo 12
View of Front Entry from
Dining Room



Photo 13
Dining Room



Photo 14
Front Room
East Side of House

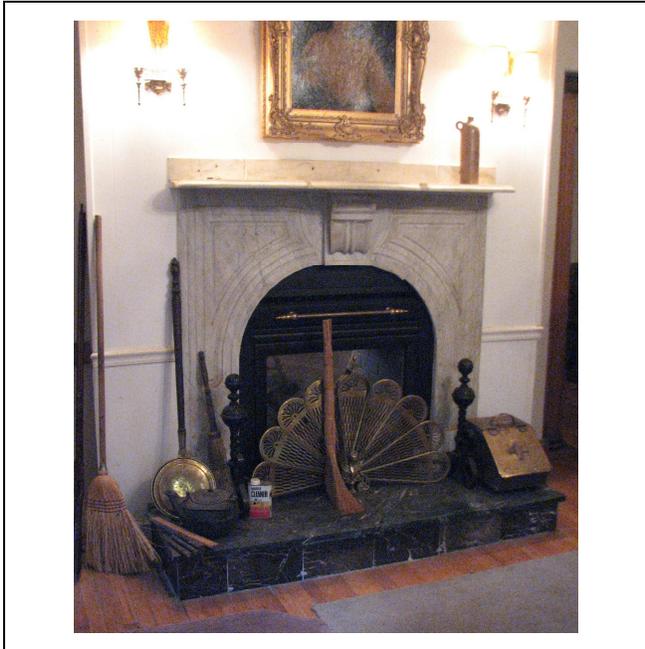


Photo 15
Front Room - East
Fireplace

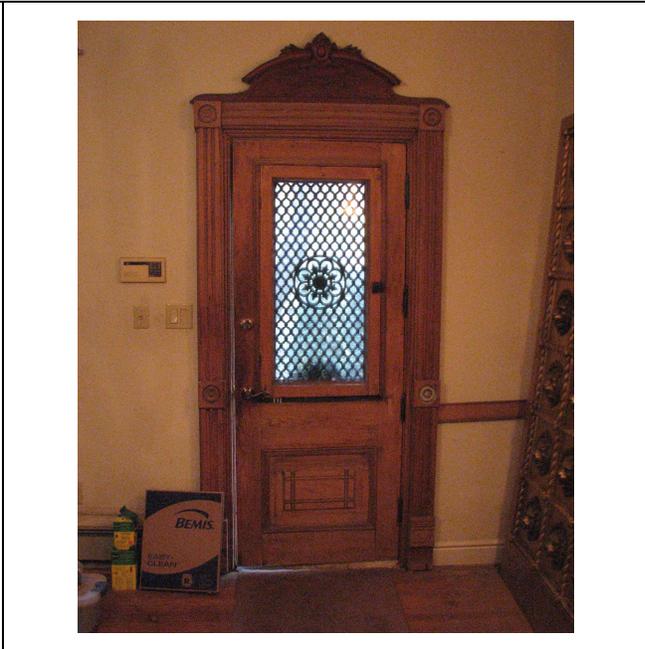


Photo 16
Front Room - East
Door to Exterior

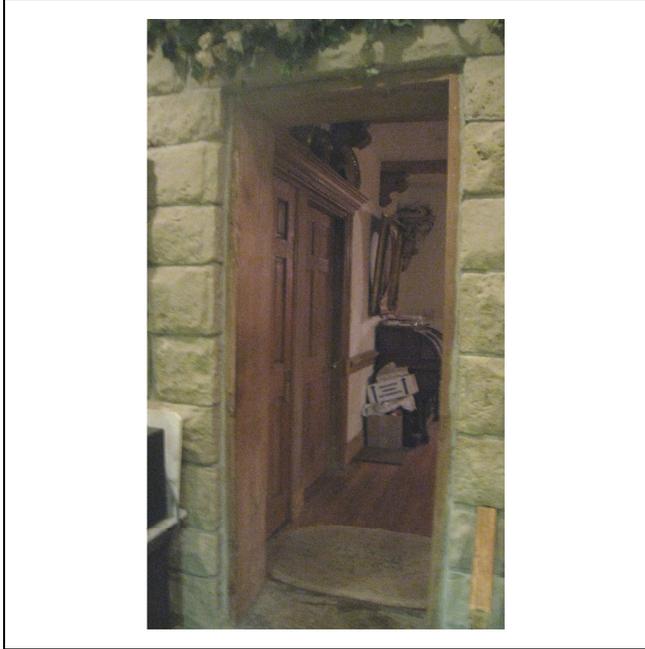


Photo 17
Doorway from Kitchen to Dining Room

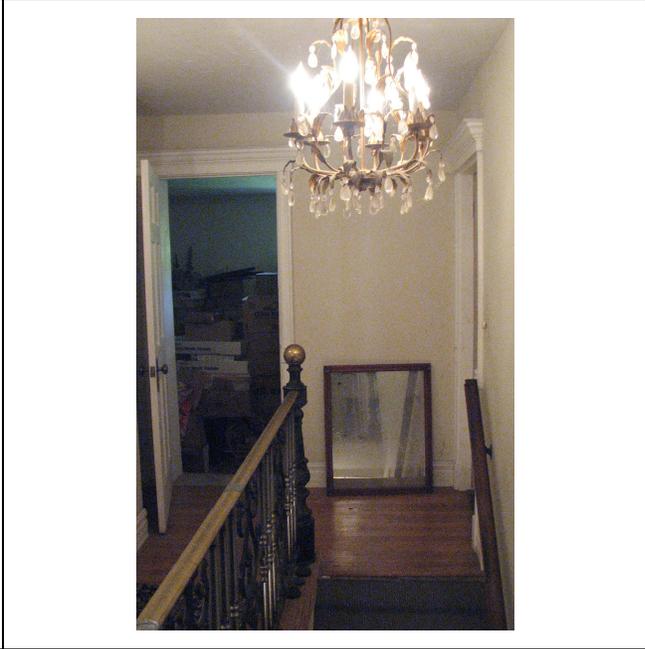


Photo 18
Second Floor Central Hallway



Photo 19
Kitchen - South Wall



Photo 20
Kitchen - East Wall



Photo 21
Window - Interior Detail



Photo 22
Front Entrance Doors
Interior View



Photo 23
Southwest Stairway to
Second Floor

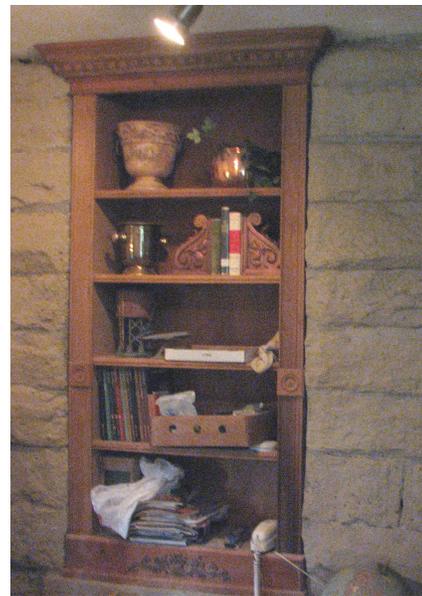


Photo 24
Built-in Bookcase



Photo 25
Attic View of Hip Roof Framing

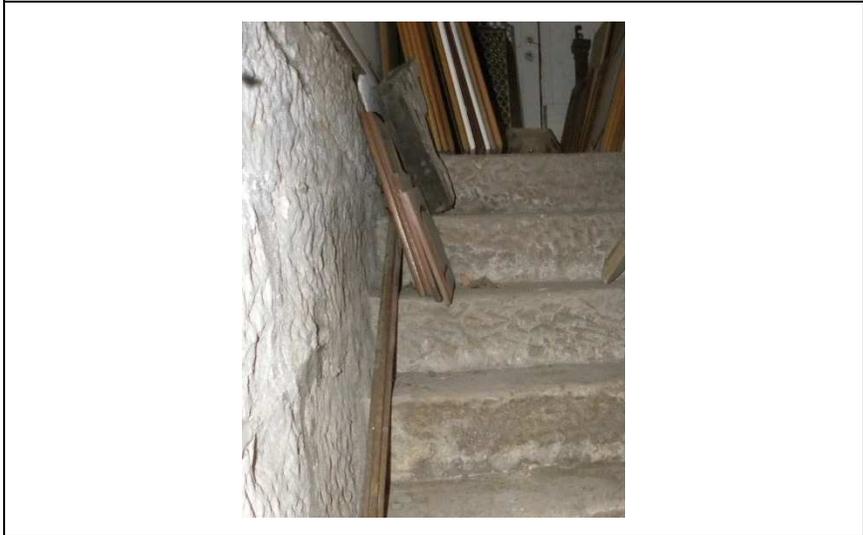


Photo 26
Basement Stair

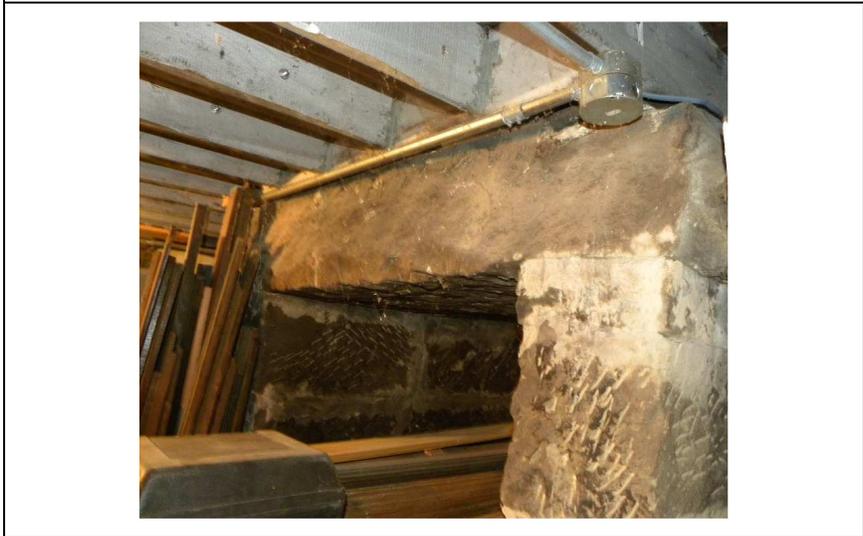


Photo 27
Basement Stone Foundation
and First Floor Framing



Photo 28
William Biddulph (1848-1922)



Photo 29
Thirza Biddulph (1851-1893)



Photo 30
Ralph Ray Biddulph and Lucy Underhill Biddulph with Ray,
Rhea, Dora, Irene and Herman (not pictured)



Photo 31
Anna Biddulph (1868-1933)



Photo 32
Rose Sheer, George Biddulph, Louise Hurd,
William Biddulph, Caroline James



Photo 33
Josephine Biddulph - Oldest daughter of
William and Anna Biddulph



Photo 34
Ruth Biddulph - Youngest daughter of
William and Anna Biddulph



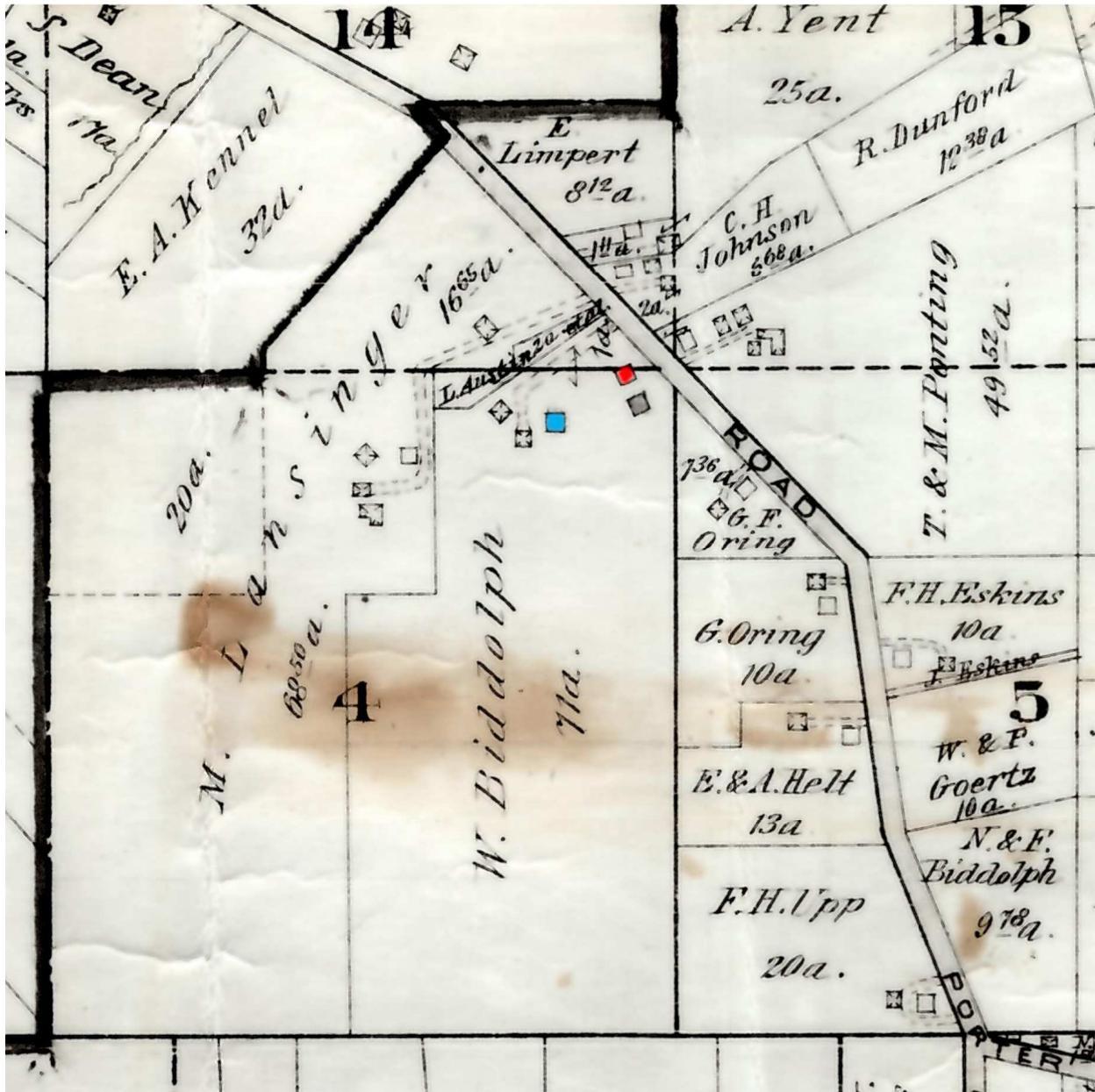
**Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House
4302 Porter Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070**

SECTION 3

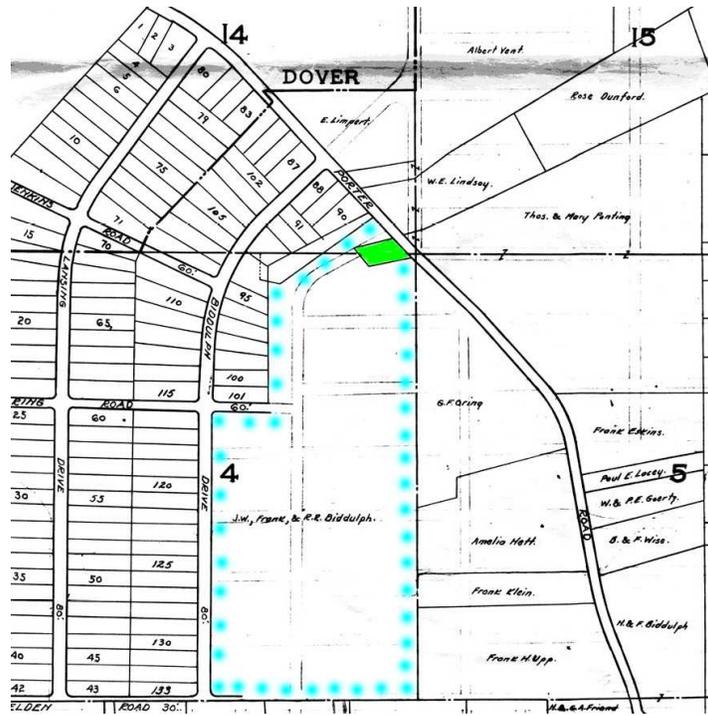
DRAWINGS

List of Drawings

- Lot 4 in North Olmsted Village from a Map dated 1920
- Lot 4 in North Olmsted Village from a Map dated 1930
- Partial Lot 4 in North Olmsted from a 1951 aerial Photograph
- Lot 4 Site Plan drawing of the Porter – Beebe - Knight properties in 1858
- 2013 Site Plan drawing of the Knight – Biddulph property
- 2013 First Floor Plan of the Knight - Biddulph House (now owned by William Kraley)



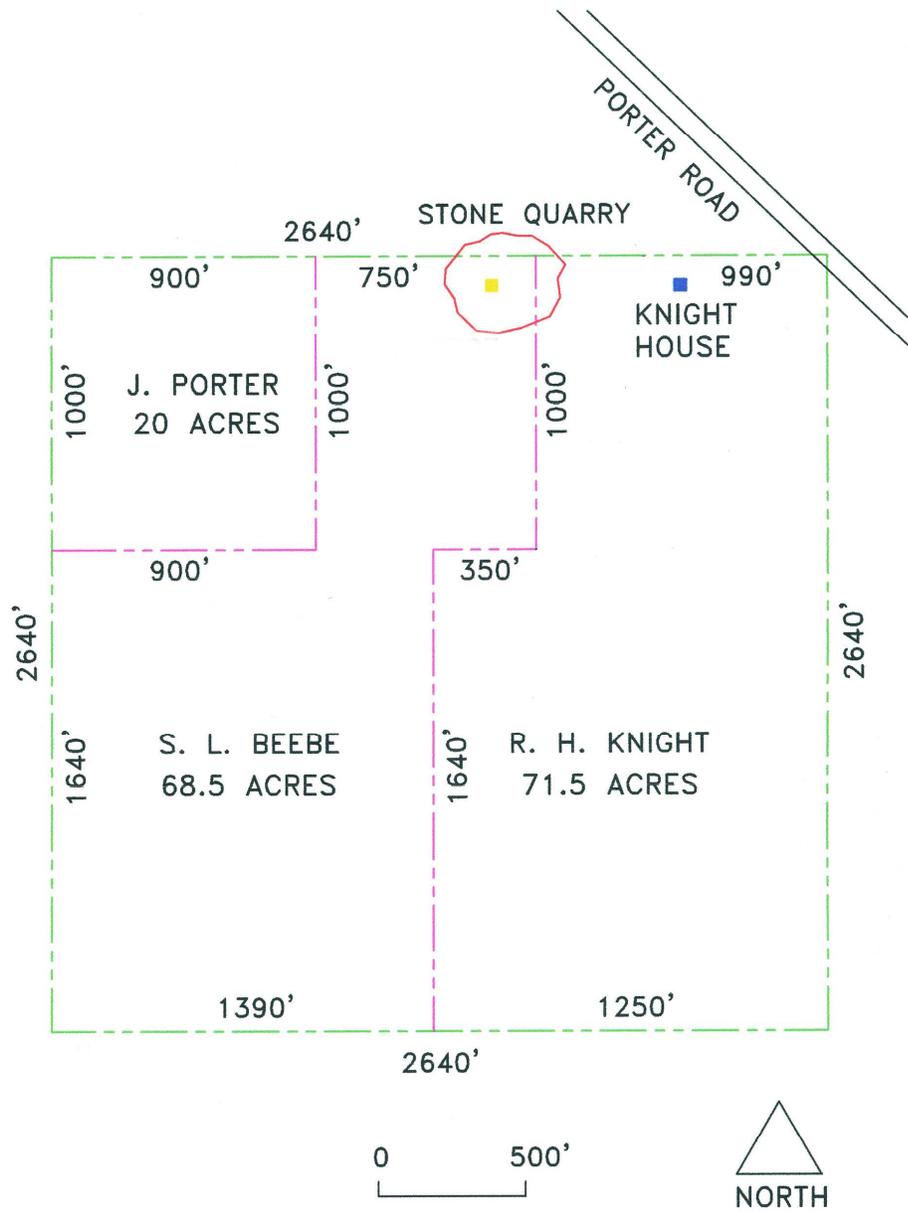
Lot 4 North Olmsted Village from a 1920 North Olmsted Village Map
William Biddulph Property 71 1/2 Acres
Knight-Biddulph House 1860 (Blue) and William Biddulph House 1910 (Red)



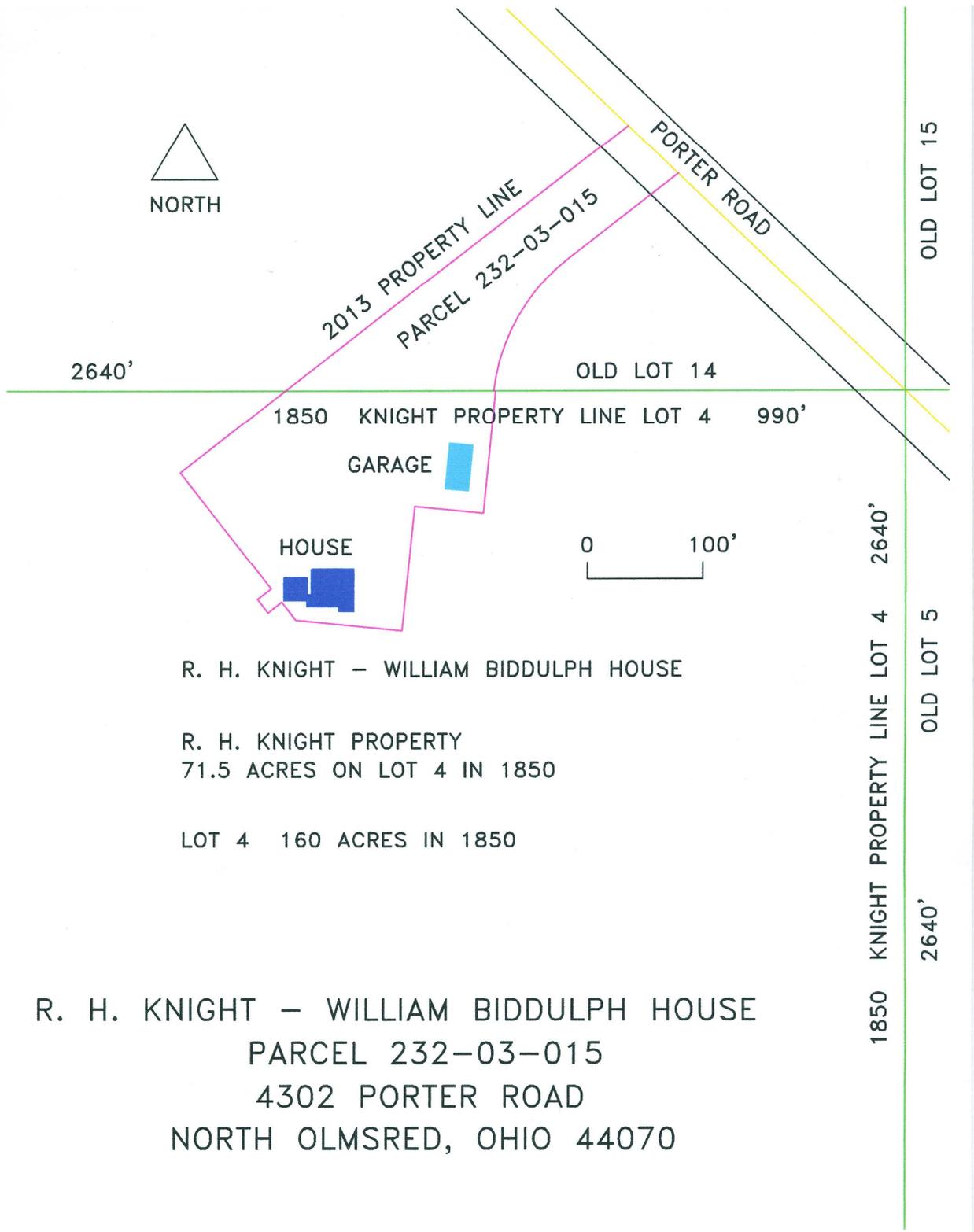
*Lot 4 North Olmsted Village from a 1930 North Olmsted Village Map
Knight-Biddulph House and Farm Property (Blue)
Anna Biddulph Weston House and 1-Acre Property (Green)*



*Partial Lot 4 North Olmsted from a 1951 Aerial Photograph
Knight-Biddulph House (Yellow) and Farm 4302 Porter Road
Josephine Limpert House (Red) 4322 Porter Road*



J. PORTER, S. L. BEEBE, R. H. KNIGHT PROPERTIES
LOT 4 160 ACRES
JANUARY 4, 1850

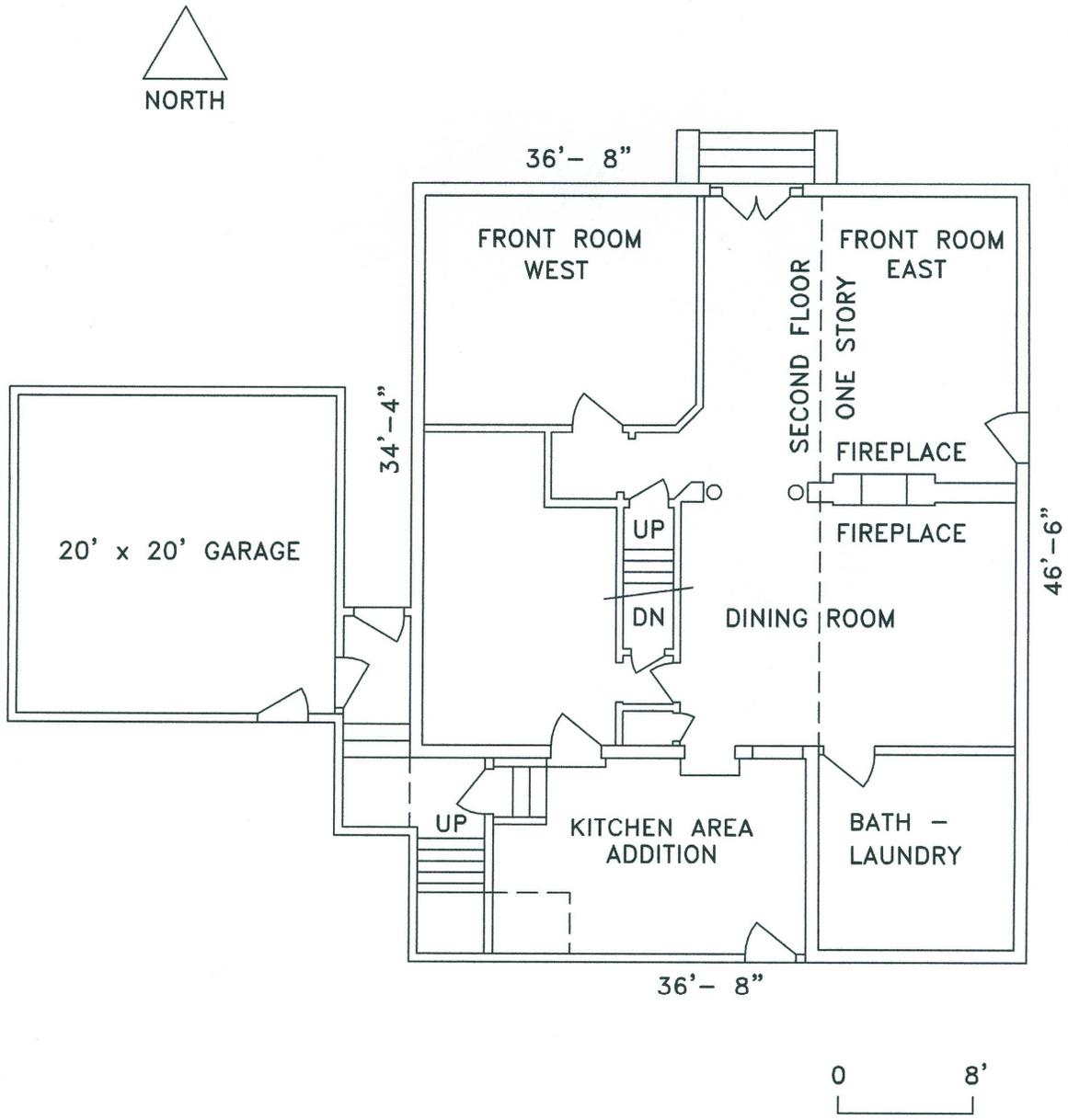


R. H. KNIGHT - WILLIAM BIDDULPH HOUSE

R. H. KNIGHT PROPERTY
71.5 ACRES ON LOT 4 IN 1850

LOT 4 160 ACRES IN 1850

R. H. KNIGHT - WILLIAM BIDDULPH HOUSE
PARCEL 232-03-015
4302 PORTER ROAD
NORTH OLMSRED, OHIO 44070



R. H. KNIGHT - WILLIAM BIDDULPH HOUSE
4302 PORTER ROAD
NORTH OLMSTED, OHIO 44070



**Richard H. Knight – William Biddulph House
4302 Porter Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070**

SECTION 4

REFERENCES

References:

- Biddulph family genealogy information from Fetzer outline notes
- Handwritten early Record of Family Marriages
- Handwritten early Record of Family Births
- The Townships of Cuyahoga County, written about 1880
- Family photo of the five children of John and Christina Biddulph
- News article on deaths of George Biddulph and Josephine Burford from May 1919
- Historical notes by J. C. Gifford, undated (child of Elma Gifford)
- Biddulph Lore, dated 1965
- History of North Olmsted Feed and Basket Co. by Lucy Underhill Biddulph, dated 1968
- Letter from Elma Gifford to Almera (Biddulph) Reitz (Fred K. Biddulph's oldest daughter), dated February 17, 1981. Fred was a nephew to William Biddulph
- Excerpts from a History of the Western Reserve by Harriet Upton 1910
- Ancestry.com Cuyahoga County, Ohio Dover Township History
- A History of Cuyahoga County and the City of Cleveland by W. R. Coates 1924
- Ancestry.com Descendants of Richard and Sarah Rogers Knight and others
- Historical Story of Olmstead Township, Walter Holzworth
- Evergreen Cemetery records, City of Westlake
- Research by Thomas and Sharon Fleming
- Articles from 1984-85 regarding demolition and restoration work
- Census of 1860 for R. H. Knight and Sidney Beebe
- Census of 1870 for R. H. Knight and Eber Knight
- Census of 1910 for William and Ralph Biddulph
- Census of 1940 for the Limperts and Biddulph brothers on Porter Road
- Map of North Olmsted Village dated 1920 for William Biddulph property
- Map of North Olmsted Village dated 1930 for John, Frank and Ralph Biddulph property and Biddulph Drive
- Multiple deeds for owners of Lots 4 and 14 in Dover Township
- Multiple deeds for owners of the Knight-Biddulph house and property, 4302 Porter Road
- Multiple deeds for owners of 1910 William Biddulph house at 4322 Porter Road
- Aerial photo of Biddulph and Limpert properties on Lots 4 and 14, taken in 1951



February 27, 1984



Ch. Telegram
2-27-84

Cindy Leise

**Olmsted
Outlook**

Long story of house: Will it end?

The story behind the story was just about as interesting as the demolition appeal hearing on the 126-year-old quarry stone home on Porter Road, which local history buffs want to save.

Among those hissing when suggestions were made to demolish it were two local women who were born in the house.

Dora Adams of North Ridgeville and Irene Smith of Olmsted Township were the third generation of the Biddulphs, an early Western Reserve settler family, to be born there. They probably were the most emotional individuals in the audience of about 20 who attended the hearing.

Their grandfather, William, built the fortress-like 11-room home in pre-Civil War days and etched 1860, the year of completion, above the front door.

Ralph Biddulph, their father, farmed the surrounding land, raising strawberries and other specialties to be trucked into Cleveland.

The girls skated on the quarry ponds, now filled in, before moving away when they were 6 and 7 years old. During the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s the Cook family called the house home and saw the nearby Park Ridge development rise around its three acres.

CURRENT OWNERS Steve and Alfreda Flagner, of Cleveland, are elderly and in poor health, and may want to sell the home.

Columbia Road resident Henry Reichel offered figures of about \$1,500 to make the house livable by installing new windows and doors. A fire struck the living room two years ago but did not do major structural damage.

However, others at the city Board of Building Appeals hearing insisted the renovation cost would more likely run in excess of \$25,000 once modern plumbing and other up-to-date living needs were taken into account.

The Board of Building Appeals refused to overturn a city demolition order granted at the request of local residents who claim the house is a hang-out for juveniles, and attracts burglars and vandals to the area.

However, board members said they want the house saved. They told the Flagners there is a 60-day appeals timetable to City Council, and if they either start repairs or sell the home to someone who can, the demolition will not proceed.

History buffs who are serious and willing to fork over money for the home and several acres of property, could discuss terms with the Flagners at 661-5681. However, Flagner awaits a triple by-pass heart operation in a week or so and his wife is in poor health too, so they wish only serious calls.



March 1, 1984

See Herald 3-1-84

Future is grim for historic house

By Nancy Wlodarski

NORTH OLMSTED — A piece of North Olmsted's history is being threatened with extinction.

At one time, the vacant stone house at 4302 Porter Rd., was surrounded by acres of farm land. Upon viewing the home, however, the visitor is transported to the Civil War south, expecting a southern belle to flitter out of its front door with a mint julep in one hand and a young gentleman at her side.

The imagination can run wild while standing in the tranquil setting surrounded by towering trees, hidden from the world outside.

But the house, built in 1860 with stone hauled from a Porter and Mill roads quarry, has since been ravaged by age and fire and is now a gathering site for some local teenagers.

"We don't relish the idea of seeing it torn down," said Joe Kazak, a member of the city's building code appeals board who unanimously agreed last Thursday to deny the present homeowners a "stay" in its demolition.

Kazak said the owners, Steve and Alfreda Flagner of Cleveland, have 60 days to appeal the board's ruling to council. If action is not taken to

repair or sell the house within those two months, Kazak said it will be razed.

"We'd like to see the house saved," Kazak said, echoing sentiments from the city's landmarks commission. "But the people in the area have the right to a safe neighborhood."

The home's living room interior was gutted by fire two years ago and has since been the target of vandalism and break-ins, neighboring residents say.

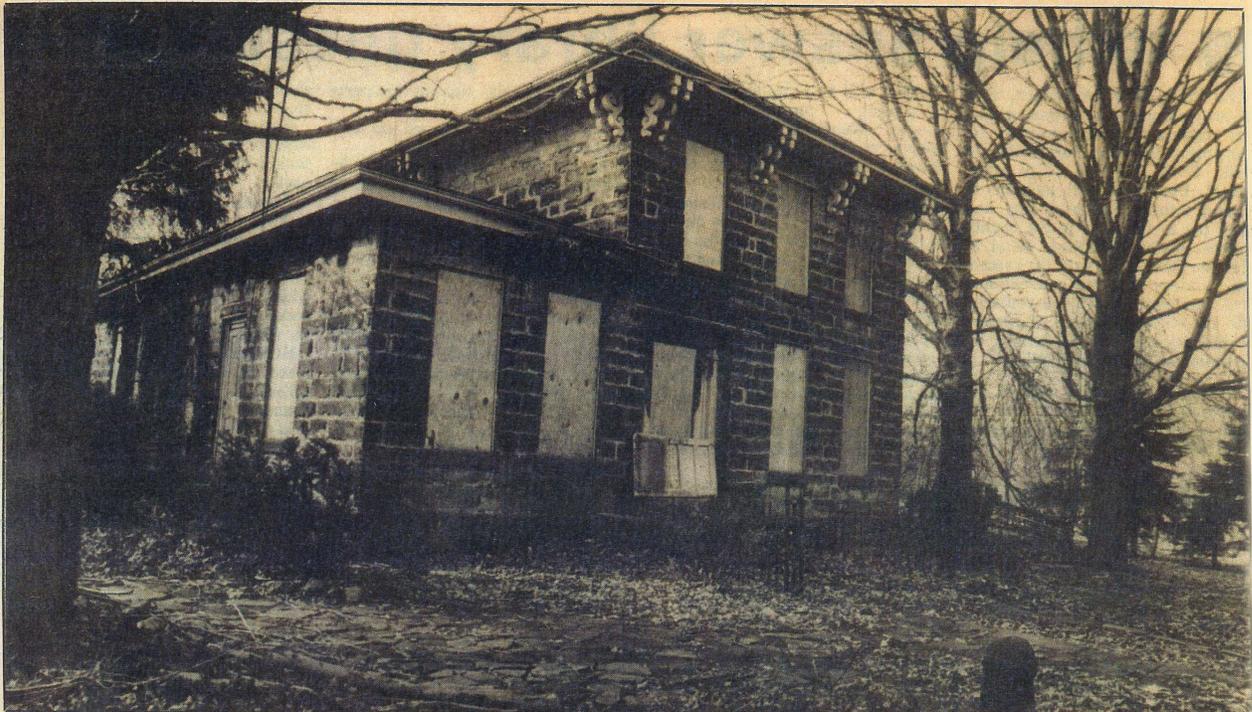
"It's been a constant problem for as long as I've lived here," said six-year Porter Road neighbor Linda

Melda. "Fixing it up and having someone live there would satisfy the neighbors," she said. "We don't want it demolished but fear for the safety of our families," adding she was threatened last fall by trespassers after reporting them to police.

"I'll do everything I possibly can to stop it (from being torn down)," said Henry Reichel, a retired carpenter who boarded up the home's windows after the fire. "That house could be cleaned up and put in A-1 shape for about \$25,000," he said.

Continued on page A8

SUN HERALD Thursday, March 1, 1984 Page A8



Sun photo by Joe Glick

Time, vandalism and fire have taken a toll on the more than century-old stone house at 4302 Porter Rd. The home may face the wrecker's ball if its owners do not take steps soon to save it.

Residents seek new life for home

• From page one

However, one board member challenged that amount, saying it would probably cost between \$40,000 and \$60,000 to make the home livable.

Mrs. Flagner said she and her husband waited to repair the 11-room, two-story house, once used as a summer residence, but were held up in doing so because of health reasons.

Although the home attracted sev-

eral interested buyers before the fire, Flagner said they were unwilling to sell it. "It's a beautiful home and is located in a picturesque spot," she said.

However, Flagner said there is a chance the home could be sold "if

we get a good offer. Who knows?"

Flagner said she left last Thursday's meeting "sort of heavy-hearted. We're doing the best we can," she said. "I definitely want to save the house."



Spring 1984

Old Porter Rd. home: Save it or bash it?

By CINDY LEISE
C-T Staff Writer

NORTH OLMSTED — The massive, two-story quarry stone home in a wooded area west of Porter Road has seen plenty of life since it was built about 125 years ago.

Now, the old structure is in the midst of a fight for survival.

Thursday night the city's Board of Building Code Appeals refused to overturn a demolition order issued at the request of nearby homeowners after a fire rendered the house unlivable.

However, board members said they are as eager as anyone to save the structure.

The living room interior burned two years ago and since then the property has been a target for break-ins and vandalism. Current owners Steve and Alfreda Flagner, of Cleveland, are elderly and in poor health.

Porter Road and Nandina Drive neighbors, young couples with small children, sought the demolition order, saying the house, unoccupied since the fire, endangers them.

ONE NEIGHBOR had \$8,000

of jewelry, including her wedding ring, stolen in a break-in and another young mother was threatened by trespassers after she reported them to police.

Board Chairman Bernard Schulz explained to the Flagners there is a 60-day appeals deadline to City Council, and if they either start repairs or sell the home to someone who can, it will not be razed.

"I saw the home and was amazed at the elegance," Schulz said. "But I'm not much for landmarks unless you take care of them."

Although they love the house and would like to once again use it as a summer residence, Flagner said he may decide to sell it to another history buff.

AMONG THOSE arguing for restoration Thursday were members of the city Landmarks Commission including chairwoman Betty Lord.

"We are not just talking about any building, there is nothing like it on the West Side...it is something that belongs to North Olmsted," she said.

Demolition is

By Nancy Wlodarski

NORTH OLMSTED — The 125-year-old quarry stone house on Porter Road will be restored rather than reduced to rubble.

The home's owners Steve and Alfreda Flagner decided the 125-year-old structure's fate by presenting council Tuesday with a signed repair contract, which enabled officials to grant a stay of demolition.

City council, by a 6-0 vote Tuesday, did grant the stay with the provision work begin or be completed on the house within 90 days.

THE CITY'S board of building appeals last February had denied the

owner's request for a stay in the building's demolition, saying it was in poor condition and, according to neighbors, attracted vandals. The Flagners had 60 days to appeal the ruling.

City council's building, zoning and development committee met last Thursday to review plans to restore the home at 4302 Porter Road and agreed it should be saved if the Flagners could produce a signed contract by last Tuesday's council meeting.

The committee also ordered the repair work to begin within 15 days after the contract was signed and

be completed in 75 days.

"Without the signatures (Flagners' and the contractors') this thing could have continued to drag on," said Councilman-at-large Yvonne Petrigac, a house-saving proponent.

"THE NEIGHBORING RESIDENTS have been pretty patient about the whole situation," Building Commissionr Ernest Gundy said, adding the home has had "sporadic occupancy" since its living room was gutted by fire two years ago.

"That place has been lived in for the past 20 years," Mrs. Flagner told the Sun. She said they plan to

averted

live in the home. The plans for the home call for both repairs and restoration, she said.

"Hopefully, the home can be raised to a level where both the owner's and (neighboring) residents are happy with it," Gundy said.



Summer 1984

Wrecking ball nears N.O. house again

By CINDY LEISE
C-T Staff Writer

NORTH OLMSTED — A 125-year-old quarry stone house, which was saved from the wrecking ball on April 19, again is in danger of being demolished.

The old mansion burned three years ago in February and Porter Road neighbors and residents in a nearby housing development said the house has become a haven for vandals and burglars.

They argued for a demolition order issued last February but historical buffs including a woman born in the house helped arrange a reprieve.

The owners, Steve and Alreda Flagner of Cleveland, promised to get the home repaired, but have not met conditions, city officials told concerned neighbors Wednesday night.

Law Director Michael Gareau said the city should again order the home condemned to spur repairs.

PATTY FINK, of 28300 Nandina Drive, said the renovation "work stopped again in early September."

"Originally we were told the contractor went bankrupt but now we understand there is a contract dispute," she said.

"It's still unsafe and debris is

piled up to a height of 5 or 6 feet," she said, adding the only apparent change is an addition to the rear of the home and a new two-car garage.

Another neighbor said at the very minimum, the city wanted windows and a door put on the home so kids would not go inside and get hurt.

Henry Reichel, 5654 Columbia Road, faulted the city building department for not overseeing the work by the Flagners, who are elderly and in poor health. He said about \$30,000 of work has gone into the home and the windows and doors have not even been replaced.

CITY COUNCILMEN who helped in the first rescue of the home agreed with neighbors that the home should be repaired without delay.

Ronald Tallon, D-1, who represents the ward the home is in, said he favors again seeking demolition because neighbors have been "more than tolerant" and the repairs were supposed to be completed by mid-July.

Gareau recommended the city building department cite the Flagners, saying "everyone can't stand around while two parties resolve a contract dispute.



THIS IS how a 125-year-old landmark home in North Olmsted looked last winter when neighbors, like Henry Reichel above, complained it was a haven for vandals. The owner agreed to renovate the home, but Reichel and others now claim that promise has not been kept. (C-T file photo)

1860

Spring-Summer 1985



Sun photo by Joe Glick

The 125-year-old quarry stone house on Porter Road may be threatened again with a demolition order. The home was saved from the wrecking ball last spring.

Historic home may be razed

By Nancy Wlodarski

NORTH OLMSTED — The 125-year-old quarry stone house on Porter Road, which came close to being reduced to rubble last May, is being threatened with bulldozing again.

"The building department may have to issue a condemnation order on it," said Law Director Michael Gareau at a Nov. 7 city council meeting where neighboring residents complained of a rubbish-covered lawn on a home they claim has not been touched by a contractor since early September.

The home had been saved from demolition last May when its owners, Steve and Alfreda Flagner, presented city council with a signed contract from a company who agreed to repair the home.

ALTHOUGH THE JOB was expected to be completed in late summer, the only work done on the building was construction of an addition to the rear and a two-car garage, according to neighboring Nandina Drive resident Patty Fink.

"I thought they were supposed to start work restoring the old building, not build a new addition to it," she said.

"I appreciate a historic building," she said, "and I don't want to see it demolished. But something must be done about the situation."

Piles of wood, old refrigerators,

Continued on page C4



Repair delays may doom

...e one
...mattresses have dotted
...lawn for the past three
...ink said. "We're upset the
...llowed this to exist for so
...said.
...ING COMMISSIONER ER-

...nest Gundy told the Sun the home's
...owners are apparently having some
...contractual problems with a com-
...pany working on the project.
...Mrs. Flagner would not comment
...on the situation.
..."This is a dispute between the

...homeowners and the contractor,"
...Gareau said. "We cannot get into
...the middle of a legal dispute, nor
...should the residents have to wait
...until it's settled," he said.
...The outside clutter problem, Gun-
...dy said, is one the city hopes to

house

...clear up soon. He said he planned to
...meet with assistant city prosecutor
...Dan Ryan to see if legal action can
...be taken to clear up the mess. Gun-
...dy said he's already notified the
...contractor about the situation.

"BUT THAT'S the only part of
...the problem we can try to get in-
...volved with legally," he said, noting
...the city's building code does not
...have a solution to residents' com-
...plaints about a recurring loitering
...problem in the area.

"There's still people hanging
...around back there," said Porter
...Road resident Linda Melda. "It's
...scary and we're worried about
...vandalism."

Fink said she had her house bro-
...ken into last September and fears
...the culprits may have used the
...Flagner property behind her home
...as an escape route.

Residents are also concerned
...about their children's safety with
...the vacated home. "If somebody
...wanders around in there, they could
...get seriously hurt," she said.
..."There are no walls inside it. It's a
...shell of a home."

1860

Revamp saves 130-year-old house

Stone mansion work nears completion

By CINDY LEISE
C-T Staff Writer

NORTH OLMSTED — Work on the 130-year-old quarry stone mansion off Porter Road is nearly complete.

But acting city Building Commissioner Dave Sanker said the owners, Steve and Alfreda Flagner, of Cleveland, are "not going to make" an April 30 deadline for completion of renovations.

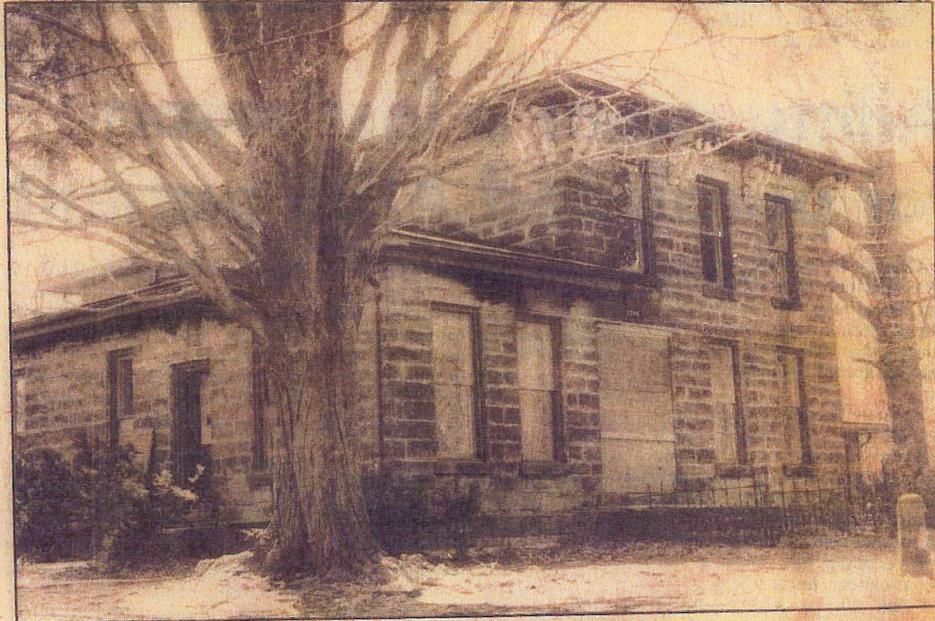
Still, Sanker said no one need worry about the home being demolished.

He said all of the major work has been done on the house, including heating, plumbing, installation of interior walls and windows and a front door.

It may appear the front door is not yet installed, but Sanker said that is because plywood has been used to cover an antique door installed by Flagner.

Sanker said he did tell Flagner to straighten up the interior of the historic house after seeing it cluttered with ladders and other construction materials. Yet he said the renovation now is proceeding at a good pace after years of delays.

THE HOME, which may have been constructed as long as 140



WORK IS nearly complete on the 130-year-old mansion at 4302 Porter Road. (C-T photo by Linda Murphy)

years ago, was damaged in several fires in the early 1980s, but the Flagners continued to insist it would be their dream retirement home.

They constructed a \$37,000, two-car garage addition three years ago, raising the ire of history buffs, and did not proceed with interior repairs until recently.

While teenagers used the

house as a haunt for several years, Sanker said he has not noticed any beer cans or cigarette butts there for some time.

The five-year-old issue of the renovation of the home arose at City Council last week when Linda Meldra, a next-door neighbor, complained of the numerous extensions the city has granted the Flagners for the renovation.

But Meldra, herself the owner of a 1900-era home, said she has been pleased with the recent progress on the home and hopes that the Flagners will move in soon.

SHE SAID her biggest concern was having the home empty. Having someone occupy the home will give everyone peace of mind, she said.