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TOMB STONE TALE

① The tomb stones of our town tell of the past times of the early settlers and weave a chain of historical reference that connects us to the past. We are part of all that we see. This is our town, our nation, our past, our present, and our future.

② Before we can look at the history of the white man in our town we should look at the peoples that came before him. Indians of the Iroquois Tribe roamed this land near Lake Erie, living along the rivers leading to the lake.

③ Rocky River, with its many tributaries, with forests full of bear, deer, wolves and other wild animals provided a good place for the Indians to roam.

④ Signs of these Indians have been found by our farmers as they worked the fields.

⑤ Following the Revolutionary War and before the war of 1812, the lands of northern Ohio, belonging to the State of Connecticut and called the "Western Reserve" began to attract emigration from Connecticut, Vermont, and other parts of New England. These lands were sold by the state to the Connecticut Land Company, and were parcelled out among the members of that organization. Township No. 5 in the 14th Range, as we see it here on the original hand drawn map, fell to the ownership of Oliver Ellsworth of Hartford, Connecticut. This land was inherited by his sons, William and Henry. About 1815 the Ellsworths negotiated with John Strong making a contract to exchange his land in Marlboro, Vermont, and perhaps a few others, for the land in the Ohio Territory.

John Stoughton Strong of Marlborough, Mermont, purchased several thousand acres of Township No. 5 on the 14th Range and came in February 1816 to this area. With him came his son, Emory, also Elijah Lyman, Sr. William Fuller, Guilford Whitney, John Hilliard and his wife, Bernicey, and their daughter Eliza. This party of pioneers traveled to Cleveland by ox cart then to the mouth of the Rocky River and from there to Columbia and on to the first location here, a little southeast of the center. The town was surveyed into 100 lots of 160 acres each. Most of the land was priced at \$2.50 per acre. Soon axes were heard in every direction, and log houses rose in various parts of the township in quick succession.

Let us look at the tomb stones of two leading families of this town to see what we can learn from them and about their contributions to our town.

The two stones are of an obelisk style. One lists all the members of the original family. It can be presumed that this monument marks a general area in the cemetary where some, not all, of this family is buried and that it was placed there after all of these persons had died. Perhaps their first markers were of wood or small stone and deteriorated, later to be marked by relatives in this general nature.

The Strong marker lists some 13 persons. On the West side, by itself is found the name Stoughten, sone of J S and T W Strong who died in 1819 at the age of 19. This young son of John Strong was the first person to die in this community. He had lived in his father's town for only about 1/2 of a year having arrived with his mother and six brothers and sisters in the summer of the year before.

The list of six brothers of Stoughton Strong can be found on the East side of the marker.

The oldest of the Strong boys was Emery who had come with his father to Strongsville in 1816 at the age of 20. He married Miss Mary Olds, the daughter of Col. Benjamin Olds. Of their four children we can see from these small stones that they, Eliza and Almira died at an early age. Their mother also died and their father remarried. Emery later built the first frame store in Strongsville.

Warner Strong was a local merchant and operated a large farm dealing in stock. He held the office of Justice of the Peace and postmaster along with being a Major in the State Militia. It is interesting to note the date of death of Warner, his brother Clark and their mother.....August 1856, the year of the epidemic.

Franklin was a teacher at the school in Bennetts Corners. He later bought 255 acres of land from his father. Franklin Strong died in the Brattleboro Insane Asylum in 1863.

Clark R. Strong moved to Kankakee, Illinois in 1853 after selling his Strongsville farm to Mr. Pomeroy. At Kankakee, he kept a general store, besides managing a 400 acre farm. His death, one day after his mothers, occurred in Kankakee.

John Chipman Strong owned a fine farm adjoining the Center of the town on the Southeast side. He was a good farmer and stock raiser.

Lyman Whitney Strong was born the year before his mother came to Strongsville. He moved to Seville, Ohio in 1840, where he spent most of his adult life.

John Stoughton Strong Jr. was the only Strong child born in Strongsville. After 1846 he spent most of his life in Tecumseh, Michigan.

Both Lyman and John Jr. outlived their father but John Strong Sr. spent more time on earth than any of his children and accomplished more.

It should be noted that the life expectancy was a lot shorter than we know today. Four of these sons had 2 wives during their life time. The short life span of these pioneers can be seen in the life of John Strong's daughters.

Renda Strong Olds, the oldest daughter came to Strongsville at the age of 19 and married Dr. Benjamin Olds, Strongsville's first doctor. Dr. and Mrs. Olds both died with consumption, she in 1821 aged 22 years, and he in 1822 aged 26 years.

The first Lovinia Strong did not survive the first year of life.

The Strong's used the name again for their third daughter.

Lovinia Strong Burrell came to this town when she was six years old.

She was married in 1833 and died in 1837.

Tamar Whitney Strong, born July 9, 1779, was the mother of these 11 children. She had married John Strong at the age of 16, in 1795. She was a person of strong Christian character and was invaluable to the development of our community as well as to her family. She outlived her daughters, dying at the age of 77.

John Stoughton Strong Sr. was a man of many talents. Much time would be needed to cover his 91 years of history. We know that he was the founder of our town, developer of the community both physically and through government. He built mills along Rocky River, an Ashery in the center of town, his house served as a store and post office, he was a leader all his life in the Congregational Church, he worked to develop roadways through the town, each year he drove cattle to the markets in the East. On one of those trips, in 1821, he rode the first steamship on Lake Erie "Walk-In-The-Water", for his return trip home, but the ship went aground in a storm and was destroyed. All the passengers made it to safety. This was one of the most harrowing experiences he ever had.

Show  
stones

The second family marker that we will look at is that of the Pomeroy's. This marker notes only those members of the family that are probably buried there.

Ebenezer Pomeroy and his wife Violaty came to Strongsville in 1822. The pomeroy's did own land here in Strongsville but they are more noted for owning and managing a tavern on the hill in Albion. The early death of Ebenezer as compared with his wife, can be explained by the fact that he was thrown from his wagon and killed. Their daughter, Lorency, who died shortly after her marriage, is also listed here. Other children of this marriage included 4 who moved to other parts of the country and 3 who remained here in Strongsville.

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Following his father's death, Alanson became the head of the family still in Strongsville. Alanson, often called "Judge Pomeroy", was a very active man. He was an enterprising business-man who acquired much land in the town, organized the Bank of Berea and an active person in the government of the town.

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The lasting monument to this man and family is their home, former store, and church that he built facing the commons of our town. He built

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his home, "The Homestead" in 1848, the brick store in 1850 and a year or two later the Congregational Church on the corner of routes 82 and 42. These buildings were of a modified Greek Revival style and greatly enhanced our town.

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To both of these families we owe much for their energy and leadership in establishing a firm foundation for our town on which to grow.

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These monuments mark well the resting place and tell a tale of birth and death but also the life from which our town has grown.

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