

# ROCKY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O Box 16445, Rocky River, Ohio 44116, Ph:440-331-4614  
http://rockyriverhistoricalsociety.org/

A Centennial City

1903-2003

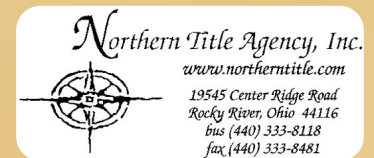
## Summer 2022 Newsletter



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## BRADSTREET'S LANDING

Presented by Carrie Sowden

**Thursday, June 23, 2022**  
**7:00 to 8:00 pm**

at the Rocky River Public Library Auditorium  
1600 Hampton Road, Rocky River

Carrie Sowden from the National Museum of the Great Lakes will share the history of the site and its namesake, Bradstreet's Disaster. Presented by the Rocky River Public Library, in partnership with the Rocky River Historical Society.



Bradstreet's Landing Development Plan  
Image from Cleveland.com

OUR PRESENT BECOMES THE PAST THAT SHAPES OUR FUTURE.



Parker Ranch  
23433 Mastick Road, North Olmsted  
Credit: Gay A. Christensen-Dean



Adele von Ohl Parker  
in North Olmsted  
Credit: George Wasmer

## RIGHT IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

By Gay A. Christensen-Dean

The Adele von Ohl Parker Ranch is located on the cliff edge of Cleveland MetroParks, Rocky River Reservation, at 23433 Mastick Road, west of Clague Road. Who was Adele von Ohl Parker?

Adele von Ohl Parker was born in 1885 in New Jersey, on a horse farm owned by her mother's family. As a teenager, she started performing daredevil tricks. In 1905, at the Hippodrome in New York City, she, atop her horse, jumped from a high platform into a tank of water. That caught the media's attention, including the fact that she straddled the horse and did not ride sidesaddle as a proper woman would.

She also caught the attention of Buffalo Bill Cody, and was hired to perform in his touring Wild West Show from 1907-1909. One of her acts was to pick up a gold coin from the ground, while riding at a full gallop.

In 1909, she married James Letcher Parker, a bronco rider with the show. (They had no children.) In 1910, they left Buffalo Bill and travelled the Vaudeville circuit. She appeared with the Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus, and acted as a stunt woman in Hollywood.

In 1928, she came to Cleveland to perform at the Palace Theater. The show was cancelled. She decided to remain in Cleveland, and at age 42, a little old for daredevil tricks, she started a riding school. The school moved from one location to another, until she settled at the location in North Olmsted of the Henry Giesel farm on Mastick Road, with its bridle paths down into the Valley, renaming it Parker Ranch.

In 1932, Adele and her husband divorced. Then, her brother Percy (a dog trainer) and her sister Nona (an animal trainer) moved onto the ranch. The ranch grew to 34 buildings, 60-70 horses and assorted animals, and a staff of at least 10 people. They started a program for disabled children, a summer day camp for children, children's horse shows, and her own Wild West Show, the proceeds of which went to the Society for Crippled Children (Easter Seals).

Adele continued to perform at Cleveland area riding events well into her 70s. She died in 1966, age 80, and is buried in Sunset Memorial Park, North Olmsted.

An Ohio Historical Marker marks the Parker Ranch. Many people have visited the ranch. The marker states, "Visiting friends included Gene Autry and a circus owner whose elephants bathed in the Rocky River."

Sources: Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, [clevelandhistorical.org](http://clevelandhistorical.org), [remarkableohio.org](http://remarkableohio.org)

# DATUS KELLEY AND SARAH DEAN KELLY



Datus Kelley



Sarah Dean Kelley

After visiting his uncle in Cleveland from New York, Datus Kelley was impressed by the area, and bought a plot of land, 1 mile west of Rocky River, for \$3.18 per acre. His farm extended from Detroit Road to old Lake Road (present-day Avalon), and west to Dover. He returned to New York around 1811 to marry Sarah Dean, and they came back to Ohio, along with Sarah's brother Chester Dean.

In Ohio, Datus organized an anti-slavery society. In 1813, he was drafted for the war, but hired his brother-in-law Chester Dean to go in his place, like one could do in those days. In 1813 also, the surveyor Datus was hired by Cuyahoga County to head a committee to cut a road between the Cuyahoga and Rocky rivers, as it was just an Indian trail. He had his hand in many endeavors. In 1816, along with his brothers, he organized the Cleveland Pier Co. to build docking space for Lake Erie vessels.

In 1817, Datus built a sawmill on the creek that crossed North Ridge Road (present-day Detroit Road), at Elmwood Road. In 1820, he was a Rockport township trustee, having been one for Dover Village in 1816. And, in 1827, he presented a temperance pledge to members for their township meetings.

In 1834, Datus and his brother Irad prospected on Cunningham Island (now Kelley's island), and discovered superior quality limestone. They bought 2710 acres for \$4475.00 and moved there to mine it. Thus, he sold the southern part of his farm to Chester and Samuel Dean, and sold the log cabin to Governor Reuben Wood, who built a home at the corner of present-day Wagar and Avalon.

Datus and Sarah had 9 children.

## **\*\*NEWS FLASH! ST. CHRISTOPHER PARISH COMMUNITY WEEKEND\*\*** **AUGUST 26, 27, AND 28, 2022**

20141 Detroit Rd., Rocky River

St. Christopher will celebrate their Centennial Year with a movie night, live music and dancing, games and activities for all ages. Check it out!

### **\*\*\*FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION\*\*\***

Send your name(s), address, and optional phone number and email address, with your check to The Rocky River Historical Society, P.O. Box 16445; Rocky River, Oh 44116. (Individual = \$30.00, Family = \$45.00)

**For \$250.00 you can become a Corporate Sponsor.** Contact Gay Christensen-Dean, rockyriverhistsoc@gmail.com, for more information.

# PALMER DRIVE

This residential zoned area was purchased by John Struhar Co., an Ohio corporation, through its attorney, George A. (Sunny) Christensen, from his brother, Robert John Christensen, and Palmer N. Myers, Jr., Mrs. Palmer N. Myers, Sr., and a one Mrs. Gaetano, widow, who would sell all or none of her property even though only thirty feet was needed from her to complete the allotment. As part of the consideration for the Myers property, John Struhar, president of the John Struhar Co., orally agreed to name the street after the senior Palmer N. Myers, plus he erected a chain link fence on the Myers and Christensen property, which was reserved from the sale. Sunnyhill Drive was so extended to provide for John Struhar Subdivision No. 7, which includes Palmer Drive for the northerly eleven sub lots.

Palmer N. Myers, Sr. was originally from Brownsville, Pennsylvania, attended Grove City College and Ohio Northern, and was a surveyor and heating engineer. His company transferred him from Pittsburgh to Cleveland in 1937. He laid out the heating plans for the Cyrus Eaton Estate. He purchased a five and one-half acre farm for a residence and took up gardening as a hobby.

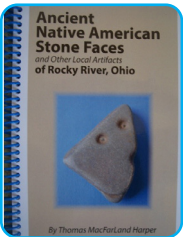
Palmer N. Myers, Senior, and his wife were owners of the property where Palmer Drive is located. He died and his son, Palmer N. Myers, Junior, then became a part owner. He also was employed in the service department of the City of Rocky River Recreation and Parks division; and as a member of the carry out unit in the rubbish division.

John Struhar, a building contractor and his attorney, George A. (Sunny) Christensen, were attempting to purchase Myers' rear property to complete the "West River Estates" subdivision of fine residential single family homes. When the negotiations for such acquisition bogged down, Christensen completed the deal by offering to name that street "Palmer Drive" in honor of Palmer and his father.

Authenticated by George A. (Sunny) Christensen and John Struhar.

## ANCIENT NATIVE AMERICAN STONE FACES OF ROCKY RIVER, OHIO

\$25.00



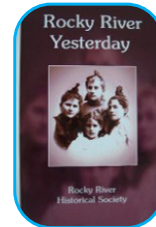
Sold at:  
Pier Beverage and Deli,  
22474 Lake Rd.  
Ace Hardware, 20200 Detroit Rd.  
Ford's Clothier, 19821 Detroit Rd.  
Lake Road Market, 20267 Lake Rd.

## \*\*BOOK SALE\*\*

Contact 440-331-4614 to order.



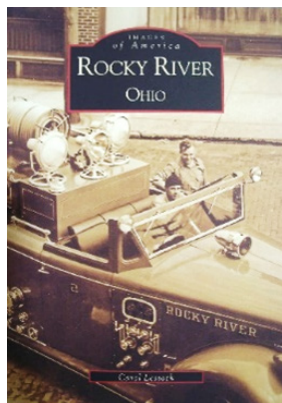
ROCKY RIVER, OHIO:  
WHERE THE RIVER ENDS  
\$25.00



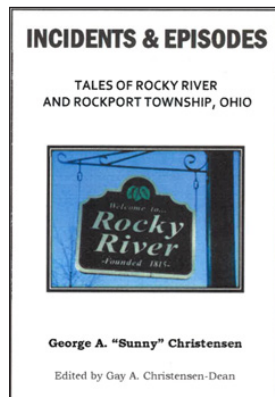
ROCKY RIVER,  
YESTERDAY  
\$15.00



KESWICK GOLF  
the MISSING LINKS  
\$20.00



Rocky River, Ohio  
\$20.00



Incidents & Episodes  
\$25.00

Contact 440-331-4614 to order.