

Restoration of the Claus Family Cemetery

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Having driven by the two white marble gravestones on a hillside overlooking a small creek and the busy highway of State Route 6, I knew a story was to be told. I am proud to have initiated the restoration project of the Claus Family Cemetery. I thank Kate Rivet, and her Cemetery Restoration Services team of Jane and Ron Crandall for making this restoration happen.

Researching the history of this site, partially via historian Dan Brady's blog, "Brady's Bunch of Lorain County Nostalgia," I began to learn the story of this small, final resting place for some of the youngest and earliest residents on this section of the Lake Erie shoreline. An article published in "The Lorain Journal" on November 9, 1956, thankfully recounts some of the little-known history and genealogy of those buried here.

The Claus Family Cemetery, located just east of the old Ford Plant and west of Oak Point Road, was once shaded by a willow tree. When the 1956 article was published, two stones were standing and clearly visible, while a third had broken, and its pieces were laying nearby. Mrs. Florence Claus, noted to be a granddaughter-in-law of the early owner of the land, Adam Klaus, recounted that Klaus had purchased the property from the William Hershing family.

Mrs. Claus noted an interesting story that was passed down over generations, regarding that of Lucy Morgan, an aunt of Hershing's. Morgan's grave still stands, and the story goes as this: "She had come here all the way from England to visit Bill," said Mrs. Claus. "The morning after her arrival she was out on the back stoop looking over the farm, and when she turned to come in she fell and broke her hip. She never recovered." To travel from England to America, to visit a relative was certainly not common in the mid-1800s. Then, to die here and be buried in the family cemetery provides an interesting bit of history of this cemetery.

Other stones in the cemetery are of infants or very young children, such as: a 21-day-old infant, Armine Klaus (a child of "Martha"); a third stone is carved in German from 1866, possibly believed to describe the death of an 11-month-old infant, Anna M. Heideloff. "Mrs. Claus believes this may have been a child of one of the Klaus daughters living in the vicinity."

The article further notes some of the genealogy of Mrs. Florence Claus: "Owner of the property after Adam, was his son Bernhardt, then Bernhardt's son, Henry who was a brother to Mrs. Claus' late husband Adam, namesake of the grandfather. Henry's son, the second Bernhardt, was the last holder of the property, selling out not long ago to the real estate firm from whom the Ford company bought its site."

As a life member of the Brownhelm Historical Association, and having worked with Kate Rivet, of the BHA, assisting in the restoration of Brown's Lake Road Cemetery (just west of the Claus Cemetery), I appreciate the importance of cemetery documentation and restoration. I also serve on the board of the Lorain County Historical Society.

In May 2024, I contacted Lorain Mayor Jack Bradley, regarding restoration of the cemetery. He put me in contact with Jim Sutter, of the Lorain Utilities Department. The City was interested in restoring and properly documenting the cemetery, and they have been extremely helpful in this project.

Kate Rivet, Jane and Ron Crandall, all of Gravestone Restoration Services, along with my father Bill Nahorn, and I met on July 13, 2024 to begin the cemetery restoration, in cooperation with the City of Lorain. Only two gravestones were visible, one of which was badly leaning.

We began by probing for lost gravestones, soon finding a footstone for Lucy Morgan's grave. Her gravestone was one of two still standing, before our restoration project began. Next, we located the gravestone of Carl H. A. Braun, who only lived to be two years old. His stone is entirely in German. This stone also included a footstone that was located. We then found the stone of Wm. Henry Hersching, also an infant who lived only a few months. His footstone was also located. Only the base and a fragment of the gravestone of what is believed to be that of Armine Catherine Klaus can be seen. We have probed for the remainder of the stone, but unfortunately this is the only stone we were unable to fully locate. Probing will continue at another time and in other possible, nearby locations. All stones were re-set, with new foundations, re-mortared to straighten them, and in two cases, we had to completely rebuild the sandstone base.

All of the known stones in the cemetery are of white marble, and several have sandstone bases. On July 21, 2024, our team worked on final cleaning and restoration of the gravestones. A few minor tasks will be completed later. We are proud that we have successfully restored this tiny family cemetery, which once was lost.

Research shows that there are five graves known in this cemetery location (all have been located):

- Carl H. A. Braun (Dec. 8, 1860 – May 12, 1862)
- Anna Margarita Heideloff (Aug. 10, 1865 – July 31, 1866)
- William Henry Hirsching (April 15, 1860 – Oct. 17, 1860)
- Armine Catherine Klaus (May 5, 1866 – May 26, 1866)
- Lucy Morgan (? – April 9, 1855) *Aged 80 years*



Before and after views of the Klaus Family Cemetery restoration.