

John Graham Klinck

One of the more interesting and influential men of Brighton in the nineteenth century was John Graham Klinck. From a young age he was active in the communities in which he lived and, when Fort Sumter was fired upon in April of 1861, he immediately enlisted in the Union Army.

John G. Klinck was born in 1820 in the Madison County town of Smithfield, the home of the famous abolitionist Gerrit Smith whose cause seems to have influenced Klinck's career. Klinck lectured often on the topics of abolition and temperance.

How he came to Brighton is unclear but in 1840 John G. Klinck married Laura Bowen, the daughter of Brighton town clerk Ebenezer Bowen. The couple then moved to Richfield Township, Ohio, where their five children were born and where John became active in local politics, elected town clerk in 1851. When the Civil War began in 1861, John enlisted in the Union Army and was appointed Assistant Quartermaster. Later in the War he was promoted from Captain to Brevet Colonel.

The Klinck family visited relatives in Brighton in 1863. They had purchased land in Rochester as early as 1841 all the while living and being an active part of the community in Richfield. The newspapers at the time of the 1863 visit noted that Colonel Klinck had been "in Louisiana commanding a colored regiment."

Mustered out in 1865, Colonel Klinck moved his family to Brighton, establishing a real estate office in the Powers Building and moving into a house at 1145 Monroe Avenue. The stately Greek Revival building with its Ionic columns stood on the south side of Monroe Avenue at the end of Culver Road. During the post-war years he invested in property in Monroe County and participated in regimental reunions. On October 15th, 1873, for example, in Toledo, Ohio, John G. Klinck gave the toast for the banquet of the Army of the Tennessee with President Grant and General Sherman in attendance.

Also in October of 1873, the local newspaper reported that John G. Klinck had purchased 400 acres of land in Brighton as agent for a colony of "Hollanders" who were expected to settle there in February 1874. Dutch settlers did come to Brighton in the 1870s, settling in what is now called North Winton Village. The area came to be called the Holland Settlement and its occupants became essential workers in the many nurseries that dominated local agriculture.

On the morning of November 5th in 1873, John G. Klinck left his house and went next door to supervise the demolition of a brick building he owned. Not satisfied with the progress, he began to remove bricks himself when, all of a sudden, a wall collapsed on him. He was carried back to his house where he died three hours later. His funeral was held at Brick Presbyterian Church, and he was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. Sometime before 1902, his house on Monroe Avenue was demolished.

John Graham Klinck's name lives on as Klink Road in east Brighton.

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