

# A look back at 200 years of Westlake's history



The Westlake Historical Society was so excited to take part in Westlake's Bicentennial year. We were very happy to see so many attend the full slate of Bicentennial-themed activities and events throughout 2011. All of us had the opportunity to celebrate a history 200 years in the making.

The various events that took place throughout the year had something for everyone. The Evergreen Cemetery Tour in May brought Dover's past to life, with costumed re-enactors telling the stories of Dover's first settlers and prominent citizens. The event was so popular we will present it again in May 2012.

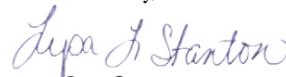
In September, an Ohio Historical marker was unveiled to honor Leverett Johnson – the first settler in the part of Dover that became Westlake – as well as Evergreen Cemetery, for which Johnson gave his land.

On October 22, the community had the wonderful opportunity to take part in the Founders' Walk dedication and bell ringing. I was so impressed by the way so many in the community came out to dedicate this walk and to remember those who came before us.

To all who make up this fine community of Westlake, I would like to wish a very special congratulations on this meaningful and historic milestone.

As president of the Westlake Historical Society during this past year, I consider it a special honor to be a part of this wonderful community.

Sincerely,



Lysa Stanton

President, Westlake Historical Society

Ofentimes a city is defined by its name rather than its people which sometimes can create a perception that the name is more important than the efforts of the people who were behind building and planning the community over the years. I am sure we have heard the phrase "it is all in the name" or branding, as marketers will say.

Well, I disagree, for I firmly believe that Westlake has become a much desired community because of the people who have become involved (past and present) to build a solid foundation for those of us that are here today. Consequently, we are charged with continuing to improve upon those efforts to assure a bright future for generations to come. Thus, I will emphasize the strides we have made over the last 30 years or so.

Westlake has grown from nearly 19,000 people in 1980 to over 32,000 in 2011. We have excellent schools and a nationally ranked public library. In 1986, we had one main public park sitting on 75 acres of land and converted a landfill into a ball diamond field. Now, we have purchased over 225 acres of additional land which encompasses a state of the art recreational center on 85 acres of land. This land also includes a golf course and nature park on 110 acres with another 30 acres in reserve for future uses.

We have separate police and fire facilities along with a community service building. Crocker Park creates an environment of mixed-use residential, office and retail space that has become the town center. Restaurants and shopping experiences are plentiful in Westlake. Our housing stock is well kept and provides choices for all types of income levels.

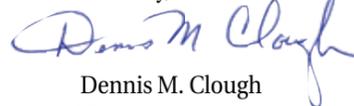
We maintain and encourage green space in every development and continue to be a Tree City USA. We have low tax rates and maintain a very solid strong financial position to assure stability and quality service levels to keep Westlake the safe,



desirable community it has become as a result of the input, involvement and support of its citizens and government officials.

Congratulations, Westlake, it certainly has been a very exciting and enjoyable 200th Bicentennial Birthday.

Sincerely,



Dennis M. Clough

Mayor



# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

## In the beginning: Surveying Dover

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

At the end of the 18th century, a group of investors known as the Connecticut Land Company purchased a large chunk of land in the Western Reserve. The men sent surveying groups into the untamed wilderness to divide the land into townships of 25 square miles. Moses Cleaveland was responsible for much of the surveying east of the Cuyahoga River, while Abraham Tappan is credited with drawing the first township map west of the river.

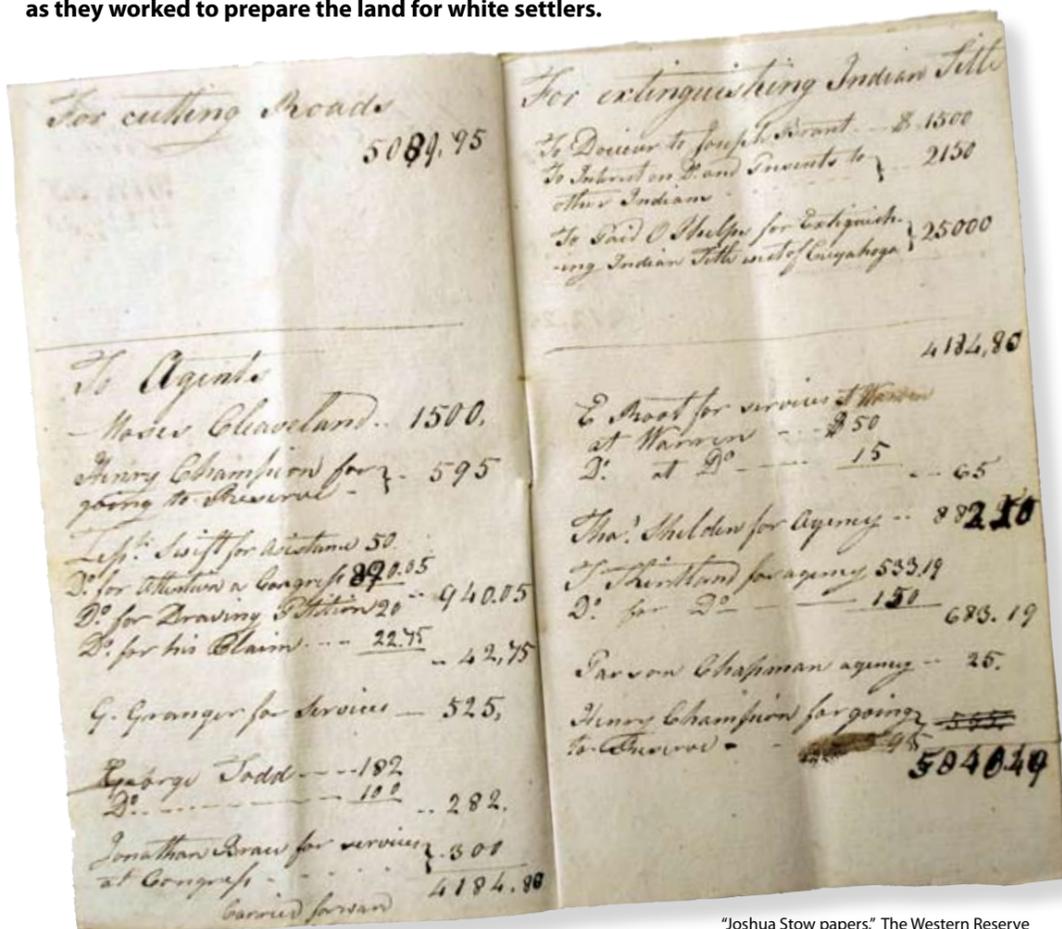
The region was populated by various Native American tribes, many of whom agreed to relinquish their claims to the land in exchange for money and the right to continue to hunt and fish. ●

**RIGHT: Surveyor Abraham Tappan walked the land that would become Dover Township in 1806. He filled pages upon pages of his notebooks with measurements and observations. He often used natural landmarks, once a black oak tree with an eight-inch diameter, to mark boundaries. His field notes also include his impressions of the livability of the land, noting the types of timber, availability of water and condition of the soil. In an excerpt from the notes above, Tappan writes: "Remarks – good, moist land. Handsome grove plumb trees. Timber, oak, hickory, beach. No water."**



"Abraham Tappan papers," The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio

**BELOW: Joshua Stow, a Connecticut Land Company investor as well as commissary manager, was part of the survey party that traveled to the region in 1796. Stow was in charge of distributing supplies to the group, including food, clothing, equipment and lodging. In his notes, Stow recorded the monies owed for expenses and services performed. In the pages pictured below, Stow marks the amount due to several agents, including Moses Cleaveland, for things such as "going to Reserve," "drawing petition" and "services at Congress." Also noted are the expenses incurred "for cutting roads" and "for extinguishing Indian title." While Stow likely did not accompany Abraham Tappan as he surveyed west of the Cuyahoga, his notes provide a glimpse at what these men encountered as they worked to prepare the land for white settlers.**



"Joshua Stow papers," The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio

## Clagues pay a visit to City Council



Walter and Sophronia Clague attended the Westlake City Council meeting on Jan. 6. The pair, played by Dave Pfister and Lysa Stanton, wished the city a happy 200th birthday.



# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

1811-1829

## EARLY SETTLERS

### Leverett Johnson: Founder, pioneer and statesman

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

Leverett Johnson, who was born in Connecticut, was the first to begin clearing land in south Dover, now known as Westlake. Johnson arrived in Dover on Oct. 10, 1810 with his sister, Rebecca (Johnson) Porter, her husband, Asahel Porter, and Reuben Osborn. Almost immediately, the seventeen-year-old Johnson began to clear his land on Lot 58.

Johnson spent his Sundays at the Porters' home, but during the week he lived alone on his land in the wilderness several miles to the south. He was the only settler in that section of Dover. During the first season, his house consisted of a bark roof set against an old log.

He worked at the labor of clearing land and starting his farm, and although Indians and wild beasts were plentiful, he suffered no harm. The Indians were said to be friendly, and sometimes assisted him in his farm labors.



Leverett and Abigail (Cahoon) Johnson

In 1814, Johnson built a log home on his farm at Porter and Center Ridge roads for his bride, Abigail Cahoon. Leverett and Abigail were married on August 15, 1814. They raised nine children.

Johnson later donated land for what is now the Evergreen Cemetery on Center Ridge Road. Both Leverett and Abigail Johnson are buried at Evergreen Cemetery, along with members of their family.

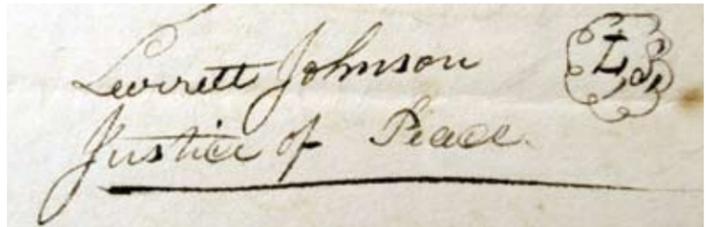
Johnson became a very prominent member of early Dover Township history. He served as Justice of the Peace in Dover Township from 1822 to 1833. He was also a Treasurer/Trustee of the Township most years between 1818 and 1847.

He also served as Cuyahoga

County Commissioner in 1829, and was elected to five terms in the Ohio State Legislature from 1837 to 1856.

Leverett Johnson served as the first director of the Dover Academy. In 1849, as a member of the Whig-Free Soldier Party, he was defeated when nominated for Speaker of the Ohio House.

In 1856, at the age of 61, Johnson died of pneumonia at his home in Dover. ●



This signature and seal of Justice of the Peace Leverett Johnson appeared on a warrant issued on Feb. 28, 1824. The warrant instructed "any Constable of Dover Township" to summon Jacob Shaffer Jr. to appear before Johnson "at my dwelling house" to answer a trespass complaint for \$64 made by Donald McIntosh.

"Asahel Porter papers," Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio

## TRANSPORTATION

### Stagecoaches bring travelers to Dover

Native Americans did most of their travel by foot. The early settlers introduced travel by oxen to Dover. Oxen were known to be very strong and could endure much of what the early pioneers had to endure.

The trip from New England to Dover could take six weeks or more, depending on conditions. Once the roads were surveyed, travel by oxen was replaced by the faster travel on horseback.

In time, roads were improved for the arrival and use of the stagecoach and driver. A portion of

the Buffalo-to-Detroit stage coach route was along Center Ridge Rd. This route helped Dover's population to increase. Jerome Beardsley, a Dover resident, was one of the early stagecoach drivers.

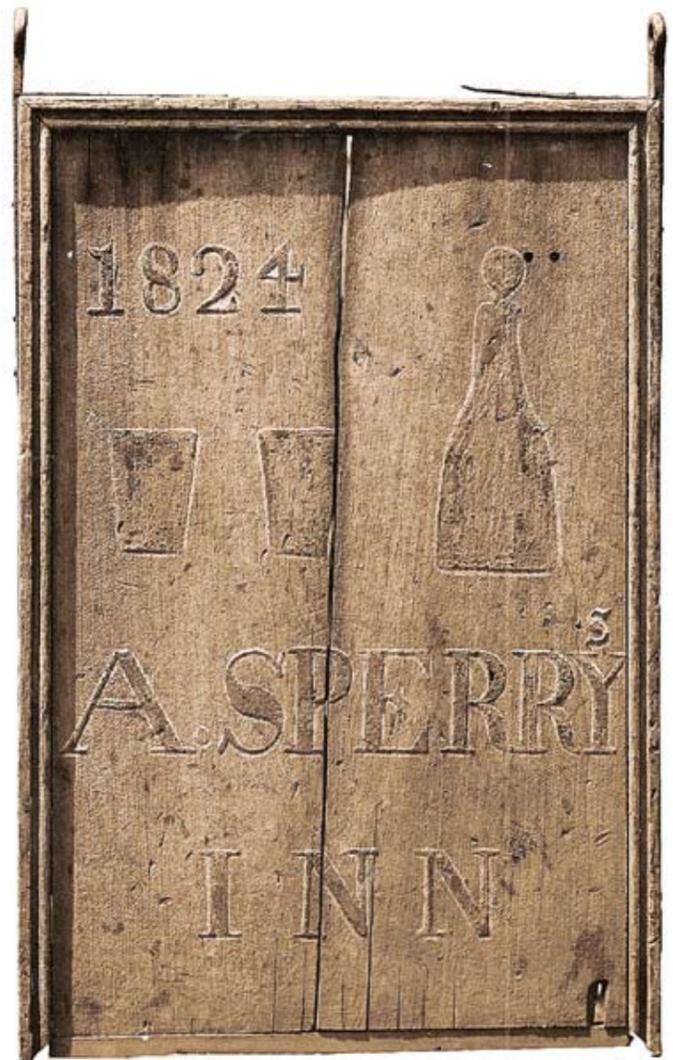
Taverns and inns played an important role along the stagecoach routes, serving the stagecoach passengers. The Sperry Tavern was one of three Dover taverns to accommodate passengers. The tavern was adjacent to the Sperry Inn, located on Center Ridge Rd. east of Clague Rd. ●



The Phillips Hotel was another popular stop on the stagecoach route through Dover. It sat just west of Dover Rd., on the north side of Center Ridge Rd., the present site of the Westlake post office.



A lantern from the Sperry Inn on display at the Clague House museum.



The wooden sign from the Sperry Inn, one of Dover's three establishments for 1800s travelers.

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# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

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1830-1849

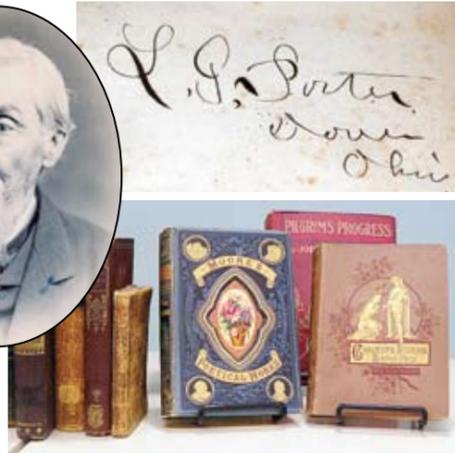
## EARLY SETTLERS

### Leonard G. Porter

Leonard G. Porter immigrated to Dover Township with his family in 1826. He was the 10th of 11 children. He was born on March 6, 1806, making him 20 years old when he came here with his father. Leonard, his father and four younger siblings came here after his mother had died in 1825. His father was Joseph Porter, and his mother was – and this was really her name – Leonard Graves.

He was married on August 26, 1838, to Catherine H. Stevens, daughter of Rev. Solomon Stevens. He had one daughter who died in infancy, and his wife died very shortly after on August 25, 1841, leaving Leonard a widower at 35. He spent the rest of his life alone, never re-marrying. He was a member of the Dover Congregational Church, and served as a Deacon as well as Superintendent of the Sabbath School.

Although his education was limited to common school, with only a couple of semesters



Leonard Porter gave his personal books (some signed) to start a library in Dover.

completed at academy, Leonard taught at the Dover Academy. He also served as Justice of the Peace and a Township Trustee. He left \$1,000 and his personal collection of books in his will to provide for the founding of a library in Dover. That was the beginnings of the Porter Public Library.

Leonard G. Porter, his wife, Catherine, and his daughter, Harriet, are all buried in Evergreen Cemetery. ●

### Robert Clague

Robert Clague immigrated to America and settled in Dover in 1829. A few years later, he returned to the Isle of Man, where he married Margaret Cowell. Robert brought his wife and six-week-old daughter, Ruth, to Dover.

Robert became a farmer and, along



with his nine children, cultivated his land in Dover. The farm consisted of approximately sixty-six acres in what is now Clague Memorial Park.

It was due to Robert Clague's determination that Clague Road was cut through. Mr. Clague took out more than a mile of heavy timber and went to the county commissioners to have it officially declared a road. ●

## INDUSTRY

### The Dover Blast Furnace

One of the largest industries in early Dover was a blast furnace used for making pig iron from bog ore. The furnace was built around 1830.

Large sources of ore were found in different locations north of Center Ridge Road between Rocky River and Elyria. The furnace was located just behind where the Circle K gas station sits, at Dover Center and Center Ridge roads.

Horses and carts were used to pull the coal and ore up to the top of the stack of the struc-

ture. One of the horses used for this purpose was a large, fine-looking sorrel horse named Mike. He was so intelligent and became so accustomed to his work, that he would take his loads up the bridgeway to the top of the stack and deliver them without a driver!

During its existence, the furnace operated seven days a week, even on Sundays and holidays. This was an annoyance to members of the two local churches, who believed no secular work should be done on the Sabbath day.

In 1844, an explosion spewed hot cinders and melted ore, setting the structure on fire and the Dover Blast Furnace burned to the ground. ●

### The Lilly Family

Bethuel Lilly, a Revolutionary soldier from Ashfield, Mass., sent six sons to the Western Reserve of Connecticut, and settled in Dover Township after the War of 1812.

In 1844, a house was built by one of Bethuel's sons, believed to be Austin. Now known as the Lilly-Weston House (or simply, Weston House) is located near the present-day entrance to the Westlake Recreation Center on Center Ridge Road.

Members of the Lilly family occupied the house until 1867,

after which the lot and house had several owners, including George Weston, James Beardsley, and August Trudel. Eventually, Alice Ladanyi, the great-granddaughter of George Weston, deeded the house to the city of Westlake for use as a museum.

Most of the Lilly family are buried in Evergreen Cemetery, though the earlier ones were probably moved there from an older cemetery. Many of the Lilly children married local men and women, so names like Cooley, Hall, Sperry, Stocking, Porter, Rice, Howe, Sadler and Jenkins intermingle in the Lilly lineage.

#### THE LILLY-WESTON HOUSE

The house is made with two-foot-thick sandstone blocks – a rarity at that time – finely tooled and dressed in the front and less elaborately on the sides and rear. The basement is constructed with massive rectangular stone blocks. Thick hewn timbers support the massive roof structure. A brick wing was attached to the east side around 1850.

The sandstone used to construct this house, which displays the skill and craftsmanship of early Ohio builders, came from a local quarry, probably near Porter Road. Sandstone was rarely used to build houses because of the

immense labor to extract, transport and assemble massive stone blocks into a residence.

Wood and brick were more common building materials. This area has immense deposits of sandstone, used for the Canadian Parliament buildings, public buildings in Toronto, plus sidewalks, curbs and buildings throughout Ohio. Several nearby houses are made of sandstone, including a small farmhouse farther west on this road, a finely crafted house at Schwartz and Nagel roads, and Stone Eagle Farm, 33065 Detroit Road, perhaps the region's finest early sandstone house. ●



The Lilly-Weston house was built in 1844 by a member of the Lilly family. The house had many owners and still stands at its original location near the Rec Center on Center Ridge Rd.

## EDUCATION

### Dover Academy

Before the public high schools we know today, students who desired an education beyond the elementary level enrolled in private, tuition-based schools.

In 1845, John Wilson, an Oberlin College graduate, recognized the need for higher education in the Dover community and began a private school. Dover Academy was built 1.5 miles southwest of Dover Center, near Porter Road.

The Dover Academical Society was formed and managed by three directors: Leverett Johnson, Leonard Porter, and Benjamin Reed. Professor Wilson proved to be very popular in the community and had as many as sixty

male students. The city fathers thought Wilson's school did much for the intellectual and moral development of Dover Township, but desired the school to be located nearer to the center of town.

In 1854, Dover Academy was relocated to the west side of Dover Center Road – the present site of Lee Burneson Middle School. John Wilson taught at the new, one-story frame building until his retirement in 1860. In 1862, the academy was disbanded and the building was taken over by the Dover Agricultural and Mechanical Society. The society owned the adjacent seven acres of land and hosted the annual West Cuyahoga County Fair until 1897.

The frame building served as the home of Dover High School from 1898 until 1909, when the Red Brick Schoolhouse was built. ●



This frame building housed Dover Academy, the township's first school of higher learning, after it moved to Dover Center Road in 1854.

James Anderson, Dave Pfister, Zac Springer and Lysa Stanton contributed to the stories on this page. Some text excerpted from: "Porter Public Library: One Man's Dream, The Accomplishments of Many," by W. Wilson Caldwell, "You've Come a Long Way, Westlake..." by William Robishaw, "Pioneers of Westlake, Ohio" by Jeanne Workman, "The First 100 Years of Dover Schools," by May E. Weston, and the Westlake Historical Society website.



# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

1850-1869

## Dover Township and the Civil War

by Mel Maurer

April 12 marks the 150th anniversary of the start of America's Civil War. It was on that day in 1861 that South Carolina, having previously declared itself seceded from the United States, fired its cannons on Fort Sumter, a U.S. fort in the middle of Charleston Harbor.

Those shots reverberated across our country into every community – North and South – including Dover Township. Its people knew that the long-simmering differences between states over “states rights,” principally the right to own slaves, would be settled in battles. These would pitch Americans against Americans and brothers against brothers – every loss, a loss for our country.

Each side called for volunteers to fight its battles. Many were needed as there were only 15,000 men in the U.S. Army as the war began and these would be divided by loyalties. Thousands of young men answered President Lincoln's call to service, including at least 120 men from Dover Township.

These men, divided among several regiments, saw action throughout the war years (1861-1865), engaging in some of the war's most significant battles: Chattanooga – under General Grant in the taking of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge – and at the siege and surrender of Vicksburg which opened up the Mississippi River to Union forces.

They were also sent to guard Washington and were there



This unidentified Union soldier was one of at least 120 Dover men to fight in the Civil War.

Photo courtesy of the William Robshaw Collection, Westlake Public Library.

to defend the city against an aggressive attack, witnessed by Lincoln, not far from the White House.

It's easy to picture life in Dover during those days with parents, wives and girlfriends worried about their men and boys; waiting for letters and any news of their regiments, while fearing to look at the casualty lists printed in local papers after battles. Lists that kept growing as the war went on.

It's believed that 11 Dover men gave their lives in what Lincoln called “the last full measure of devotion” to their country. One of these was John Albert Clague who died at age 23 of an illness after he had fought in the Battle

of the Wilderness. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Other Dover men were wounded and still others survived without physical harm. But no man returned home the same as he had left. In honoring the men and women who serve in any war, we honor those who served in all the engagements of our armed forces over the years.

The Revolutionary War gave us our country but left undefined what that country was: a loose alliance of states or a permanent union of states. Before the war, our country was always referred to in the plural – as in, the United States “are”. After the war, it became the United States “is.” Our Dover men had helped to make our country one Nation. ●

## Dover Fair, 1857-1897



The Dover Agricultural and Mechanical Fair was held each year from 1857-1897 on grounds located behind the current Lee Burneson Middle School on Dover Center Road.

The fair was put on by the Dover Agricultural and Mechanical Society, an organization formed to promote improvements in those two fields. The festival normally lasted two days and was usually held each September.

The Society itself was purely a Dover Township affair, but the fair attracted visitors in large numbers from surrounding towns.

The fair typically included livestock shows, a fine arts hall, horse exhibits, and – the big attraction – a one-third mile horse racing track. Also offered was a “warm lunch” hall, two refreshment areas and a bandstand.

As time went on, a movement began to establish a county fair. The first Cuyahoga County Fair was held in 1896 in Berea (where it remains) and the last Dover fair was held in 1897. ●

## Jack Miner: Westlake's world-famous conservationist

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

Jack Miner was born April 7, 1865, in the section of Dover Township that was known as Dover Center. He lived in a small weather-beaten home with a leaky roof, just south of where Jenkins Funeral Chapel now stands, on Dover Center Road near Westtown Blvd. Young Jack was one of 11 children, born of English parents who made a meager living in the brickyard across the street from their home. Jack's father worked long hours to form the bricks that were sold for \$3.50 per 1,000.

As a young boy, Jack liked to work in the brickyard instead of attending school. He was not fond of school because he was teased for his English ancestry, fiery red hair and freckles. At age 12, Jack returned to school at the urging of his friends, and felt a sense of belonging when his teacher, Miss Minnie Chubb, gave him the job of starting and tending the fire in the schoolroom stove. He learned a few basic reading skills in school, but did not truly learn to read until he was around 35 years old.

Jack spent hours at Cahoon Creek near his home

studying the lessons of nature. The creek was both a laboratory and play-yard. With great enthusiasm, he studied the habits of all that crept and swam. In addition, he learned lessons on birdlife that formed a foundation for his life's work.

When Jack was 13 years old, hard times hit the state of Ohio. The Miner family reluctantly decided to move the family to Kingsville, Ontario, Canada. Although it was difficult leaving friends like Mr. and Mrs. John Cooley and the Pease family, the move provided a new income for the family and supplied new wildlife for Jack.

Jack went on to become a great conservationist (once named the fifth-best-known person in North America) and conceived the idea of reforestation and a sanctuary to protect wildlife.

He began the practice of banding Canada geese to study their migration habits and turned his sprawling farm into one of North America's first bird sanctuaries, earning him the nickname “Wild Goose Jack.” He also lectured throughout the United States and Canada and was the first to use the word “pollution” in the way we



Jack Miner was one of the first to band Canada geese to track their migration.

Photo courtesy of migrationfestival.ca

use it today.

Auto pioneer Henry Ford once said, “Jack Miner's companionship with the birds and his service to them have made his work known and have warmed the hearts of good people everywhere. He has taught us all that there is always something to do for one who looks for something to do.”

In Jack's autobiography, he wrote, “It must be remembered that I was born, and spent my innocent boyhood days, in that

dear old Dover Centre, Ohio; and I love the descendants of the men who were kind to me in my barefoot days... And some day I expect to go there and get a few bagfuls of earth from the spot where I was born, and make a ‘Buckeye’ flower garden under my observation window.”

In 2009, the Westlake Historical Society, in conjunction with the city of Westlake, refurbished the original Ohio historical marker that was placed in 1975 near the site of Jack's birth. With help from the members of Rock Point Church, a memorial planter was built at the base of the huge rock located at the memorial. ●

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# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

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1870-1889

## The Clague legacy

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

In 1829, Robert Clague came to Dover (now Westlake) from the Isle of Man, near Scotland. After a few years, Mr. Clague returned to the Isle of Man, married Margaret Cowell, then brought his young family including a six-month-old daughter back to Dover around 1837.

They had a land grant and were among the earliest of the thousands of settlers from the Isle of Man to come here. Robert built a log cabin and began clearing what is now known

Clague was a school teacher in Cleveland, while Sophronia was a school teacher in the Lakewood schools. Two of the Clague sons served in the Civil War. Thomas served only short time and lived to be 81, but John Clague died from wounds he suffered in the battle of the wilderness.

In 1926, two of the remaining Clague children, Walter and Sophronia, decided to donate the family farm and homestead to the Village of Dover for a park—with the provision that they be allowed to live out the rest of their days in the family home.

Three years later, a monument was dedicated, on the opposite side of Clague Road with this inscription: “Forty years ago, Walter desired

to donate his property for a park when the opportune time came. This desire was realized on Saturday, October 26, 1926, when Dover Village accepted the 78 acres on Clague road for a park to called Clague Memorial Park for all time.”

The Clague family homestead is now home to the Westlake Historical Society, and has been since the late 1960s. The Victorian-style Clague House Museum is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under the National Parks Division of

the U.S. Department of the Interior. It is a fine example of how a rather obscure immigrant couple have made a historic contribution of national significance! ●



Siblings Walter and Sophronia Clague sit for a photograph in the Clague House living room about 1930.

as Clague Road. Mr. Clague prospered as a fruit farmer. His apples were thought by many to be some of the best in the state of Ohio.

The Clagues had nine children. Ruth Ann



The Clagues donated their family home to the city in 1926. Today it houses the Westlake Historical Society.

## 1880s laundry day

After the Civil War, clothing was in short supply. Most clothing was also produced at home. People wore what they had and made do with older clothing, often wearing it until it was worn out. Proper fit and matching patterns were not a concern to the early pioneers.

Women had one or two dresses of a very simple material. They wore a simple hat or bonnet when they were working outside. Scraps of clothing were often recycled and sewn into quilts. These quilts were used to keep warm.

Laundry was done infrequently compared to today's standards. Laundry was done in an open pot over a hot fire. Soap for washing was made by taking the ashes from cooking, water and the fat of a hog and cooking these ingredients together to make lye soap.

Water for the pot would be carried in wooden buckets or a yoke and buckets from a nearby well, creek or stream and poured into a huge iron pot. A fire would be lit under the huge pot to bring the water to a boil. The dirty clothes, sheets and lye soap would be stirred with a wooden paddle in the hot water and then scrubbed on a “washboard.” After a rinse in fresh water, the clothing would be hung out to dry on either a rope or across branches and bushes. ●



A washboard and Iron were staples of pioneer laundry days.

## Early Dover farming

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

Dover was an agriculturally-based community from 1840-1900. The average farmer raised products like corn, wheat and hay. They would grow these items for their family and for livestock, then sell the surplus at the market.

Early farming was very isolating. Crops could be divided by two areas. The first, just outside the kitchen door, you would find what was known as the “kitchen garden.” In it would be various vegetables and herbs. These were raised close to the house for consumption by the family members.

The family garden was tended mostly by the women of the home and the younger children. In addition to cooking, herbs were often given and used for medicinal purposes. Herbs were often seen as the first line of defense against common ailments of the day. Since doctors were often scarce, many depended on the use of these plants. Herb lore was passed from mother to daughter, often as they tended these gardens.



A farmer stands on Center Ridge Road, near Bradley Road.

The other area was a much larger area known as the crop fields, used for both human and livestock consumption. The farmer during this time period was very self sufficient and was expected to provide for much of the needs of his family.

Agriculture was a way of life in Dover. Farmers would load wagons in the evening and would head to the closest big city – Cleveland – to sell their crops. Doverites found that making the trek

to Cleveland was both rewarding and profitable.

Fruit farms were very popular in our area. Apples, grapes and other fruits were grown here in abundance. In fact, many

are surprised to learn that, at the turn of the century, Dover was the second-largest grape producer in the United States.

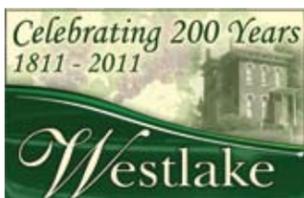
The Juergermeier family came to Dover in the 1860s and were considered the last real farmers in the area. The Juergermeier brothers tilled the soil into the 1980s on the plot of land known as the Promenade today. ●

### Dover Business Directory.

- P. Philips, Proprietor of Union House.
- J. M. Lathrop, Physician and Surgeon.
- J. & C. Pease, Merchants, Dealers in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, Hardware, &c.
- Kirk & Reublin, Proprietors of Steam Gristmill. Flour and Mill Feed kept constantly on hand.
- Wm. Geiger, Proprietor of Quarry containing first quality of Sandstone, two miles S. W. of Dover.
- Peter Hoffman, Merchant, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hats, Caps, Boots, and Shoes; also, House Carpenter and Joiner, three miles W. of Dover.
- John Miller, Proprietor of Hotel and Saloon; also, Stone Quarry, containing first-class stone of all descriptions, three miles S. W. of Dover.
- C. S. Fauver, Proprietor of Steam Sawmill. All kinds of Lumber furnished at low cash rates, three miles S. W. of Dover.
- A. Heinschu, Proprietor of Vineyard.
- D. A. Brown, Merchant, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hats, Caps, Boots, Shoes, and Medicines, one and three-quarter mile N. W. of Dover.
- Louis Kratzert, Proprietor of Harvest Home House, Saloon and Vineyard, one mile N. of Dover.
- John Rupprecht, Pastor of German Lutheran Church.
- H. L. Brakesushler, Professor of the German Lutheran School.
- John Miner, Proprietor of Brick and Tile Yard; tiles made from two to six inches.
- Jas. L. Hand, Postal Clerk on C. C. R. R.
- Orville Alford, Carpenter and Joiner; also, Millwright, Coe Ridge.
- John Pe'lett, Master Machinist.
- Wm. Lewis. Does general Blacksmithing; horseshoeing a specialty.
- Wm. Elliott, Builder and Contractor.

Dover's 1874 Business Directory

Photos courtesy of Westlake Porter Public Library and Westlake Historical Society.



# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

1890-1910

## The division of Dover

by Lysa Stanton

At the end of the 19th century, the city of Cleveland was growing at a healthy pace. Many who lived in Cleveland wanted a place where they could escape the city and summer homes became popular. Many preferred what the lakeside could give them – beaches, cool lake breezes and a vacation style of life.

A number of wealthy families began buying property along the lakeshore in North Dover. As tax rates climbed, those with expensive property closest to the lake did not feel they were equally represented. They petitioned to establish a separate village and on July 20, 1901, the Hamlet of Bay became independent of Dover Township.

From one large community of early Dover we now have two wonderfully unique and different cities.

Dover's borders were redefined once more, in 1908, when a small portion of Dover, approximately 4.5 square miles, became part of North Olmsted. ●

## Dover's first public high school is built

Until 1898, the highest level of public education offered in Dover was the eighth grade. Students wishing to continue their education enrolled in private, tuition-based academies. On May 10, 1898, the Dover Board of Education decided to establish a high school in Dover.

At a board meeting two months later, it was agreed that the high school would be located on the township property known as the fairgrounds at the center of town (now the site of Lee Burneson Middle School). The classes were to be held in the now-vacant Dover Academy building.

Early in the summer of 1898, Mr. C.M. Walworth was hired as Dover's first superintendent. In September 1898, out-houses were built at the school, as well as sheds for stabling the horses.

Once a student graduated from the eighth grade or from one of the eight sub-district schools located in Dover, he or she could attend what was known as Central High School. All nine districts were represented in the first high school. The students came from all over Dover; the farthest being from Coe Ridge (Lorain Road) and Lake Road.

## Early 'bucket brigades' overmatched by raging fires

The first decade of the 1900s saw two major fires in Dover, both resulting in near-total destruction to the buildings. Prior to hand-pumped fire engines, locals would fight fires by passing buckets of water man to man along a human chain in what is known as a "bucket brigade." This method was slow and often ineffective against larger blazes.

In 1906, the Phillips Hotel caught fire. The bell at the Methodist church rang out and the people of Dover ran to assist. The residents formed a bucket brigade and did what they could to save the hotel and the spirits housed in the basement. The liquor fumes fueled the flames and the building could not be saved.

A few years later, the James Hurst Country Store burned to the ground, taking with it the barbershop next door. The store, which also served as Dover's long-distance telephone station and housed the Dover Masonic Lodge on the second floor, was located at the corner of Center Ridge and Dover Center roads (now the site of the GetGo gas station).

On a February day in 1909, several Dover men were taking part in a little sparring (boxing) nearby when the blaze began. They again came running and assembled a bucket brigade, but once again were unsuccessful in saving the structures. ●



Mr. and Mrs. James Hurst are pictured with their children, Russell and Lloyd, in front of their Country Store in 1895. The store burned to the ground in 1909.

## Dover women form helping societies

The women of Dover have a rich history of serving others. 1885 was the beginning of the North Ridge Thimble Society. They would sew, but they also held bazaars as fundraisers for the Lewis District School.

In 1899, The Helping Society was formed. As the name implies, they were in the business of helping others in need. By 1905 they bought land and a building was erected on Center Ridge Road. This ladies'

organization played an important role in the life of many.

They visited the homes of those who were ill and assisted the family with household chores, clothing and food. Fundraising during this time was mainly done by putting on plays and later card parties, style shows and bazaars. ●

**RIGHT: Dover women formed the North Ridge Thimble Society to raise funds for the Lewis District School on Detroit Road.**



Miss Nellie Dodd's sixth and seventh grade students gather for a class picture in front of the Red Brick School in 1910.

In 1902, the Board of Education resolved that at the end of the school year the superintendent would prepare a list of questions for final exam of grammar students as well as the final exam for entrance to high school. It was also decided that the work of the grammar schools be more thorough and the high school consist of four years.

In 1908 the voters in Dover passed a bond issue to construct a four-room central brick building. The Red Brick School opened in fall 1909. In 1913, four additional rooms were completed.

The top floor classrooms were for the upper grades. The lower level was used for the younger grades, and the old Dover Academy building – often referred to as the "cow shed" – was

used by Miss Nellie Dodd for the middle grades.

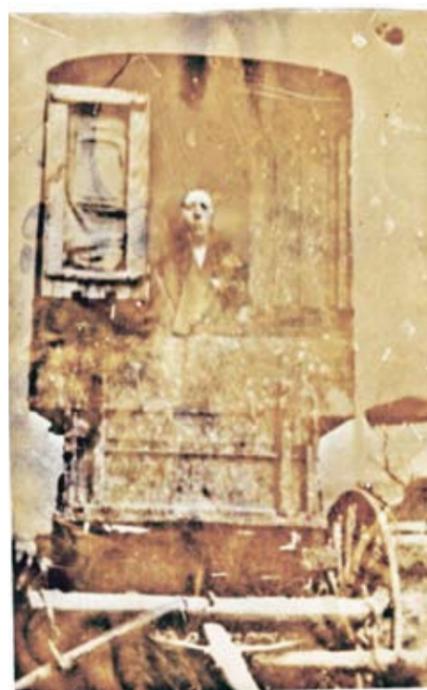
In 1914, the Dover Academy building burned and was torn down. The Red Brick School served as a high school until 1923 when a new high school was erected nearby on the site of the old Academy building.

The Westlake Historical Society has a replica of an old-time school room located upstairs in the Clague House Museum. The school room features a McGuffey's Reader, old-fashioned desks and memories of school days gone by. The museum is open to the public from 2-4 p.m. on the second Sunday of every month. ●

Source: "The First 100 Years of Dover Schools," by May E. Weston.

## Kid Wagons

The centralizing of the schools in Dover during this time period created a need to transport students from their homes to the central school. The "kid wagon," pulled by two horses, was born. The wagon would travel the streets of Dover, and children would run alongside the moving wagon and jump in through the open back door. One could call the "kid wagon" the forerunner of the modern-day yellow school bus. ●



A student is seen peering out the back door of a "kid wagon."

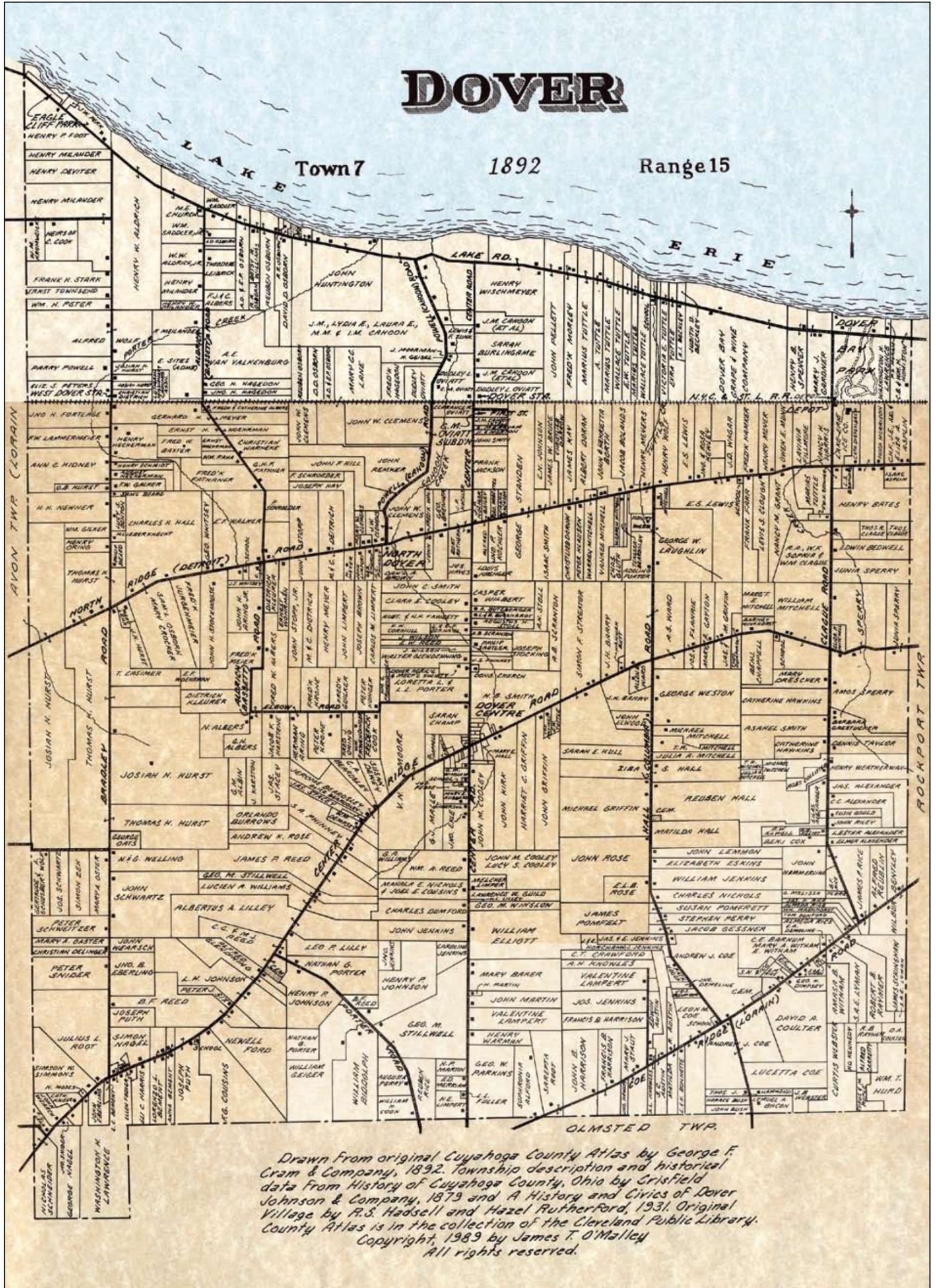


# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

1892 map of  
Dover Township

This map from 1892 shows the original borders of Dover Township. The darker-shaded area represents what is now Westlake, with the lighter shade representing today's Bay Village and a portion of North Olmsted. Residents of North Dover seceded in 1901 to form the Hamlet of Bay, and the southeastern portion of the township joined the village of North Olmsted in 1908.





# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

*A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history*

**1911-1929**

## George Cooley: Champion of the farmer

by Lysa Stanton

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Roger Cooley at their home in Westlake. I wanted them to share the story of Roger's "Uncle George" so I could pass it along to our readers.

George Cooley, affectionately called "Uncle George,"

was born in 1861. He was raised on a farm on Dover Center Road at corner of Hilliard Boulevard. After attending school in Dover, George went on to Ohio Northern University. George came back to Dover to teach for ten years.

He taught at the Osborn School, located in what is now Bay Village, then taught as well in the old Red Brick School on Dover Center Road. George Cooley was a builder and would build many of the homes and barns in and around present-day Westlake. He was also the contractor for the water tower at Huntington Park. At the turn of the century, when Cooley became a contractor, he became very interested in road building, as well.

In 1904, he took his talents to Columbus where he built the pavement of Neil Avenue through the campus of Ohio State University. George was instrumental in his work with the federal government and the development and organization of the state highway departments of California, Louisiana and Ohio.

Having come from a strong farming family and community, George turned his attention to the problems facing farmers. He felt strongly that farmers must organize to protect themselves. In 1915, he organized the grape growers of Cuyahoga County and in 1918, he helped establish the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation.

George could also be found in the state legislature, working, as always, on behalf of the farmers. Mr. Cooley received the second medal offered for service to Agriculture from President Coolidge at a 1929 Farmer's Bureau convention in Chicago.

In 1920, he and Murray D. Lincoln founded the Farm Bureau Mutual Auto Insurance Company, which is now known as the Nationwide Insurance Company. George served as the company's first president until his death in 1939.

In 1971, the Ohio Agricultural Council honored Mr. Cooley by inducting him into the Agricultural Hall of Fame. ●



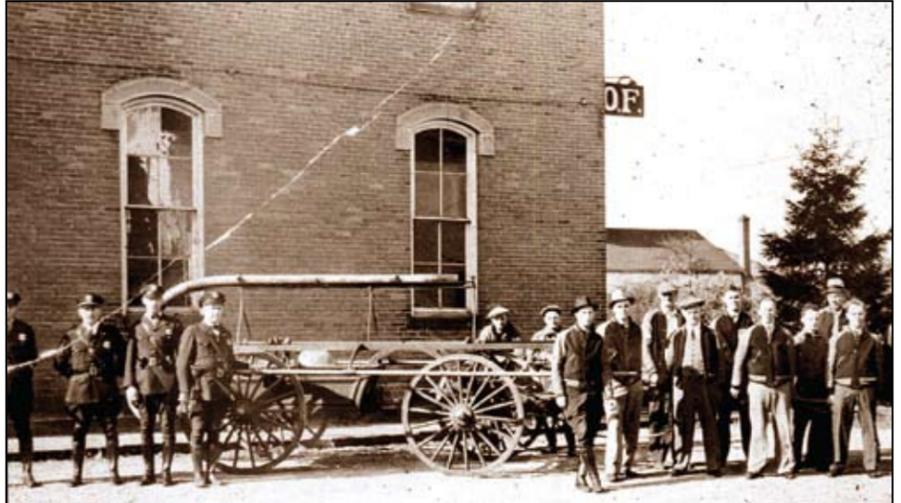
## Dover's fire department comes together

Frank Sauer, a mechanic who owned a garage and auto agency on Center Ridge Road, served as a volunteer fireman in the 1920s. Dover did not have a fire truck so Frank decided to build a pumper for the volunteers. He took the chassis from an old Cadillac, and converted it into the village's first fire engine in 1926. Prior to this, Dover had a hand pump brigade.

In 1937, Frank was hired as Dover's first fire chief. He retired in 1966 at the age of 83 and Edmund Geiger became the next fire chief.

The fire department, always cognizant of the safety of Dover/Westlake's citizens, continued to improve not only services, but equipment. In 1938, a new fire engine was purchased at a cost of \$7,000 and the Sauer-built pumper was retired from service. This Ahrens-Fox model was capable of pumping 980 gallons of water per minute. Today, Westlake's fire department has two engines and two aerial trucks capable of pumping 1,250-1,500 gallons per minute, as well as three medic units.

The 1938 truck can be seen today in our parades, as well as other special events including the annual Antique Vintage & Craft Show held every July at the Clague Museum. Children of all ages enjoy seeing and getting a photo with the engine. ●



The hand pump brigade, pictured in front of the town hall, was modernized in 1926 with Frank Sauer's hand-built pumper.



Frank Sauer sits in the pumper he built from a Cadillac chassis for the volunteer fire department.

## Scouts continue to serve community

The Westlake Historical society is honored to have four young men working with us as they pursue the rank of Eagle Scout. Evan Keleman and Rick Kolar of Troop 208, Brian Amsted of Troop 77 and Jacob Ogonek of Troop 225 are working on various projects to fulfill the requirements for completion of the Eagle Scout. The twelve points of Scout law are "Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent."

We see examples of this from the young men as they work toward the goal of Eagle Scout. ●



The first Boy Scout troop in Dover is pictured in this 1912 photograph.

Photos courtesy of Westlake Porter Public Library and Westlake Historical Society.

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# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

1930-1949

## Dover becomes Westlake

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

What happens when two communities in Ohio both call themselves “Dover”? Confusion! This was the situation for our Dover Village and the other community also known as Dover located in Tuscarawas County.

Because the “other” Dover was more established, our Dover had to come up with a new name in order for the postal service to grant it a post office. A committee of residents was formed to meet the legal requirements necessary to change the name. “Westlake” was chosen as the replacement, and in February 1940 a petition was circulated among the town's residents. The state required three-quarters of the residents to approve the name change, and the petition succeeded.

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections confirmed the name change on August 21, 1940. ●

## Police force in the 1930s and '40s

When Dover incorporated as a village in 1911, a police force was organized consisting of a town marshal, elected every two years, and deputies appointed on an as-needed basis by the marshal and the mayor. The deputies were paid a commission for each arrest and conviction – a system that was ripe for corruption.

The ad hoc deputies were eventually replaced by salaried police officers and by the 1930s, Dover Village had five police officers and a Ford Model-A coupe cruiser.

### LAW AND ORDER IN THE VILLAGE

In the mid to late 1930s, Hilliard was just a two-lane country road with only three to four houses between Bradley Road and the Rocky River line. Since the road was practically deserted, many motorists were tempted to step on the gas as they drove through the village. Dover police became known for nabbing speeders, often hiding behind trees and barns along the road. In 1938, a Cleveland newspaper published a story warning motorists about the Dover speed traps.

The police also took a hard line with amorous young couples. While other communities overlooked the practice, Dover's policemen issued tickets to couples sitting in cars with no headlights on. Driving down a farm road looking for a secluded spot could earn a trespassing charge. In either case, the driver would be taken to jail unless he could post bond. Parked couples caught in an embrace when officers arrived faced a \$31.40 fine for “disorderly conduct in the public view.”

Dover's men in blue also had a few serious



Police officer Ed Hille and his partner, Liberty, stand on the steps of the police station in the 1940s. To help with the manpower shortage during WWII, three German shepherd puppies were added to the ranks as the “canine corps.”

## The Great Depression hits Dover

The year 1929 may forever be known as the beginning of one of the darkest eras in American history. Nearly 15,000 banks had failed by 1933, and the unemployment rate was approaching 25%. On the farm front, crop prices were in a downward spiral. The Federal Farm Board was established to try to stabilize farm prices, but surpluses grew and prices continued to fall.

Dover Village, being a primarily agricultural community, was hit particularly hard. The 1930s were marked by uncertainty. Mortgage payments and property assessments became an impossible burden and many farmers were forced to sell their land or lost it through tax sales. Investors and land speculators purchased hundreds of acres of Dover farm lands, often leaving the land unattended, until better days and higher prices would bring buyers.

The Depositors Savings and Loan Bank, organized during the early 1920s by Doverites, met the same fate of many other banks at this time. It was located in a house at the corner of Dover and Center Ridge Roads.

Federal programs to relieve the situation were active in Dover. Programs like the Works Prog-



The Clague Cabin was built in 1935 as a Works Progress Administration project. The stone was taken from the quarry in Bradley Woods.

ress Administration, Public Works Administration and the National Youth Program provided funds to employ workers, and bring needed money into the community.

Clague Memorial Park received considerable benefit from these programs. The Clague Cabin was built in 1935 by WPA workers, using native stone taken from the quarry at the northeast corner of Bradley Woods. Also, the village was able to purchase approximately 12,000 trees in 1937 to plant in the park.

Dover's Board of Education was facing dire straits as landowners became delinquent in their taxes. Teachers' salaries were slashed in 1931 and again the following year. In 1933, the Board recommended

shortening the school year by four weeks to save money, but the teachers offered to work two of those weeks without pay.

Vincent Cooley and Mida Weston worked tirelessly on a welfare program conducted in Dover. Regular gifts of food and supplies from the federal government were delivered to the old town hall, then Mrs. Weston saw to it that they were properly distributed. She visited people all over town and always seemed to have time for everyone.

Dover did not begin to recover from the effects of the Depression until the start of World War II. Then jobs became plentiful again and people could take care of their families and their community. ●

## Automobiles flood the streets of Dover

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**R. C. HULL**

Westlake 86 Dover Center

A 1930s advertisement for the R. C. Hull Ford Agency on Dover Center Road.

By the 1930s the horse and buggy had been replaced by the horseless carriage. As the gasoline engine was developed and the use of the auto seemed practical, larger vehicles such as trucks were used to transport crops to as far away as Cleveland.

Even though the first automobiles appeared in Dover around 1909, many families owned automobiles by the late 1920s and early 1930s. After Frank Sauer furnished Dover's first mechanical service and gasoline station, many others followed selling new vehicles, gasoline and service.

Roads were constructed with increasing frequency during this time period. The late twenties had seen the building of Canterbury, Rose and Walter roads, as well as the start of Hilliard Boulevard. Center Ridge Road's bricks were re-paved with concrete in 1930. ●

Source: “You've Come a Long Way, Westlake...” by William Robishaw. Photos courtesy of Westlake Historical Society and Westlake Porter Public Library.

good men, but gained a few “best friends.” Some of the village's police officers were called into military service during World War II, creating a manpower shortage. The owner of Beach Cliff Kennels stepped in and donated three German shepherd puppies to the police. After a few months of training together, the “canine corps” began regular patrols with the police in 1942. ●



# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

1950-1969

## Westlake's population explodes in 1950s; village becomes a city

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

U.S. Census figures show the population of Westlake shot up from approximately 4,912 in 1950 to 12,906 people in 1960. By 1970 the population had increased to 15,689.

This influx of new residents, many with families that included small children, caused a need for more homes, schools, shopping areas and better roads. Four new school buildings opened during the 1960s. During the decade, seven operating levies and one bond issue were passed.

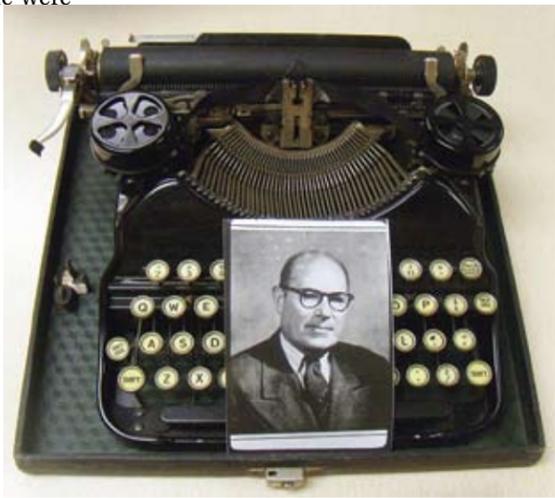
In 1961, two schools were built. The first was a new high school located on Hilliard Boulevard and was dedicated on August 6 of that year. Grades seven, eight and nine were still housed at the old high school that was renamed Lee Burneson Junior High School, in honor of Lee Burneson who served as superintendent of the Dover/Westlake Schools from 1924 to 1963. The second new building proudly opened in 1961 by the Board of Education was Holly Lane Elementary School, in October 1961.

A new football field had been in the planning stages as early as 1947. In 1952, the unexpected death of Westlake High School principal John Read prompted the Booster Club, students and faculty to name the new

football field the John D. Read Field. On Sept. 8, 1952, the school board voted to approve the naming of the field.

The 1953 Panorama yearbook was dedicated in memory of Mr. Read and his efforts to "improve Westlake High School and make it a better place for all of us. ... Although he is gone, John D. Read will forever live in the hearts of the students and teachers - his friends - who knew him and loved him."

Mr. Read was a beloved and admired member of the staff, who had served as



The beloved high school principal from 1926-1952, John D. Read's photo and typewriter are on display at the Clague House Museum.

principal of Dover and then Westlake High School from 1926 until his death.

Growing pains are not necessarily painful when it involves growth of your small community. By Dec. 18, 1957, Westlake Village had grown enough in

population to be incorporated as a city, finally passing the 5,000-resident mark. From that point forward it was officially referred to as the City of Westlake.

In the late 1950s, some longtime residents began to think forward to the city's upcoming 150th birthday. The decision was made to hold a birthday party during the summer of 1961. The celebration stretched over several days and included a frontier ball held in the Dover School cafeteria. Recently, a stash of old-fashioned bow tie souvenirs from that event were uncovered in the attic of the Clague House Museum. The black clip-on ties, with "Westlake Sesquicentennial 1811-1961" printed in gold, are available for purchase for \$5 from the Westlake Historical Society. If interested, call Dave at 440-721-1201.

Following the city's sesquicentennial in 1961, it was decided that the money left over from this celebration should be used to start a local historical society. In 1967 the society began exploring the use of the old Clague House as a home for the new organization. Prior to the historical society taking residence, the Clague House was rented as living quarters to individuals and then to the YMCA. The Bay Players also shared this building for several years until they were able to make the Clague family barn into the intimate Clague Playhouse theater. The rest, as they say, is truly history! ♦

## Westlake chooses 'sinister' mascot

The Historical Society keeps a list of the top 20 questions we are asked. One of the questions on the list that comes up quite often concerns the history of the use of a Demon as the high school symbol.

Back when Westlake was still known as Dover and the high school was Dover High School, members of its athletic teams would proudly wear varsity jackets with the letter "D" sewn on. It was a badge of honor for the young men and those belonging to this exclusive club were known by their peers as the "D-Men."

In 1950, ten years after Dover Village became Westlake, the high school was renamed Westlake High. During that time, team mascots or emblems were growing in popularity, and many schools in the surrounding cities were selecting their own.

Westlake, reluctant to replace the time-honored D-Men nickname, simply transitioned to the Demons. ♦



## Everyone into the pool

In the mid-1960s, Mayor Roman and a number of residents felt that the city of Westlake should have public swimming pool. A committee was formed and community members went to work on making a pool in Westlake a reality.

By June 1966, a group of citizens had established the non-profit organization Westlake Swimming Pool Inc., with Robert Peterson as president. Their goal was to raise \$140,000 for the construction of a pool in Clague Park. The group organized a fundraising drive, col-

lecting just under \$103,000 for the effort.

The pool opened on June 17, 1967. Enthusiastic support was given to this effort by the community members, local businesses and city leaders. ♦



Westlake businessmen (from left) Thomas Hurd, William Reid and Don Brown present checks to Planning Commission Chairman Bernard "Dusty" Miller for the construction of a city pool in 1967.

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# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history

In this issue:  
**1970-1989**

## Industry, development redefine Westlake

by Lysa Stanton

Westlake continued to grow significantly during the 1970s and 1980s, spurred by the construction of Interstate-90 in the early 70s. Beginning with a population of 15,689 in 1970, the city of Westlake grew to a little over 27,000 residents by 1990.

The farming culture that had dominated Westlake's past was fading in the face of growth and development. By the late 1980s, only one major family farm operation remained, owned by the Juergemeier brothers at the southwest corner of Detroit and Crocker roads. That land is now occupied by the Promenade and Crocker Park.

In 1980, nearly 4,700 acres of the city's total 10,126 acres of land was still vacant. In the four-year period from 1985 to 1988, seventeen single-family subdivisions were taking shape, containing nearly 800 homes. Several apartment buildings were also under construction during this decade, especially on Detroit Road west of Cahoon Road.

In 1980, land in the industrial area was selling for \$30,000 to \$50,000



This sign, with an incorrect spelling of "groovy," was placed on Detroit Road near Sharon Drive in 1970 to attract businesses to Westlake.

an acre. With the availability of land within close proximity to highways like I-90, Westlake became a popular place to locate.

Corporations began to move in and Fortune 500 companies moved their regional headquarters to Westlake. In 1982, Union Carbide selected the Detroit Road site for its \$25 million Eveready Battery lab and technical center, creating 400 jobs in the city.

Commercial building began in the late 70s with Westlake's first office building, built by the King James Group, erected in 1977. Commercial development continued steadily into the 1980s and today. ●

## NASA's Overmyer makes Westlake proud

Col. Robert Overmyer, although born in Lorain, moved with his family to Canterbury Road in Westlake as a very young boy and always called Westlake home. Overmyer was a 1954 graduate of Westlake High School. He attended Baldwin-Wallace College, obtaining a degree in physics, and joined the Marine Corps after graduation. He entered flight school, and subsequently earned a master's degree in aeronautics.

In 1982, Overmyer was named pilot of a four man crew that was to be aboard the Columbia space shuttle that year. On Nov. 11, 1982, Overmyer commanded the Columbia Space Shuttle. It was on this mission that the first commercial satellite was launched.

In December 1982, Col. Robert Overmyer returned home in a convoy of cars that zig-zagged through Westlake, providing an opportunity for the Columbia shuttle pilot to again see the town where he grew up. The convoy stopped at Westlake High School where an assembly was held in his honor. Superintendent Roger Holmes introduced him as "Westlake's most honored graduate."



Dean's Greenhouse while he was in high school. Over the next few days, Overmyer made presentations at almost all of Westlake's schools.

On April 29, 1985, Col. Overmyer commanded a seven-man crew aboard the space shuttle Challenger – the same Challenger that suffered disaster, with a different crew aboard, the following January. In addition to launching two satellites, a 23-foot European space lab was in the cargo bay of Challenger. At the close of the mission, the tests performed yielded enough data to fill 44,000 journals of 200 pages each.

Col. Overmyer was on the team that studied the Challenger Disaster. In 1986, he retired from military service and NASA to work for McDonnell Douglas Space Systems. He died in 1996 while testing a new experimental aircraft, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. ●

Overmyer spoke about his experience as a NASA astronaut and even showed some film of the other astronauts playing a game in space. He received a key to the city from Mayor Ted Busch, and talked about how he worked part time at

## Patriotism is in the air: Westlake celebrates nation's bicentennial

In anticipation of the nation's bicentennial in 1976, Westlake Mayor Alex Roman created a Bicentennial Committee and appointed Joe Rossin as chairman in 1975. Soon plans were underway for a full slate of events to commemorate



Items commemorate the nation's bicentennial in 1976.

America's 200th birthday here in Westlake.

Westlake was designated as a Bicentennial Community. A designation given to communities who planned activities to meet the three themes: Heritage '76, studying the past; Festival '76, enjoying the present; and Horizon '76, looking to the future.

Westlake fulfilled its Heritage '76 duties with yearlong open houses at the Clague House Museum. The Horizon '76 obligation of planning for the future was met with an application for federal funds to build a Bicentennial Community Building (although that grant was later denied).

Festival '76, the third phase of the Bicentennial Community designation, came together as a two-day celebration that filled Clague Memorial Park on July 3 and 4, 1976. The party was kicked off with a parade and the community came out to enjoy the booths, crafts and exhibits in the park. Watermelon-eating competitions, bicentennial parade floats and an ecumenical church service and choir were all part of

this wonderful celebration.

At 2:00 p.m. on July 4, bells rang out across the country to symbolize the ringing of the Liberty Bell 200 years prior. Churches, communities and individuals all across the U.S. rang bells. In Westlake, Cliff Geiger rang one of the old Dover fire department bells. That old bell will again ring out during Westlake's Bicentennial Founders Path dedication and celebration Oct. 22.

Westlake schools participated in a very special way, with each school staging a five-minute play depicting a particular event in history. The event was held at the high school's Read Field, the only location big enough to accommodate all of the students. A total of 347 students and 38 school staff members participated in what was a very memorable experience. The event took place on May 26.

(Did you take part in this celebration as a student? The Westlake Historical Society would love to hear your memories of this event. Contact Lysa at 440-721-1201.) ●

## Porter Library grows

On Oct. 18, 1972, the Friends of Porter Public Library organized and gave its first gift to the library. With over 300 charter members the organization was then and continues to be a wonderful asset to the library by providing not only monetary but volunteer assistance to the library.

In October 1974, Porter Public Library had a week-long celebration in honor of its 90th birthday. As Westlake's population increased, the number of library patrons doubled between 1960 and 1980. It became apparent that a new library would be in the best interest of the library and the Westlake community. With the passage of the 1983 bond issue, contracts were accepted and blueprints were drawn for a new facility. Construction began April 1, 1984, and was completed on Sept. 8, 1985.

Porter Public Library began as one man's dream and continues to be one of the best libraries in the nation. It has been ranked in the top ten among libraries serving mid-sized communities every year since 1999, three times finishing first. ●

## Westlake celebrates 175th anniversary in 1986

Judy Burke, Ruth Hopkins, and Jean Dunham co-chaired the event, while Mayor Dennis Clough served as Honorary Co-Chairman. They all put together a wonderful celebration to commemorate the city's 175th birthday. As part of the special year, the Westlake Arts Council sponsored a tour of many of the city's century homes. One of the favorite souvenirs was a limited edition commemorative plate, of which only 288 were made.

On Sept. 27, 1986, the anniversary celebration began with a parade from the high school to Clague Park. Many of the men in Westlake (including Mayor Clough) let their beards grow for several weeks in preparation for the beard judging later that day. It looks like Mayor Clough is sporting another fine beard this year in preparation for the 200th Birthday Celebration beard judging to take place soon!

As you might expect, this celebration included lots of displays, exhibits, and food. The Westlake Post Office even made a special 175th Anniversary stamp for cancelling mail. Many enjoyed the events of the day held at Clague Memorial Park until rain arrived late in the day. ●



# Westlake Bicentennial, 1811-2011

*A yearlong celebration of Westlake's history*

In this issue:  
**1990-2011**

## The 1990s

by Will Krause

In 1993, the Westlake Historical Society published a history of Westlake (and Dover) covering the period from 1930 through 1990 written by William M. Robishaw. The title of the book: "You've Come a Long Way, Westlake...and You've Got a Long Way To Go." Sometime between 1990 and 2011, the Westlake that we know today arrived!

In 1990 the population of the city was 27,018 – over double what it had been in 1960. Except for a service garage on Bassett Road, all city services were delivered primarily from one building – a one-story municipal building, constructed in 1953 at the corner of Hilliard Boulevard and Dover Center Road. The building contained all of the city's administrative offices (except for the Law and Building departments which occupied houses next door) as well as the whole police and fire departments and all of the fire equipment!

The early 1990s saw the construction of several new city facilities including a police station and two new fire stations, as well as the acquisition of a city golf course, now called Meadowood, and the opening of a new city-owned west-side nature park off Bradley Road. The Promenade of Westlake shopping center brought a new array of shopping options to the west side of the city. In 1998, the city built an 80,000-square-foot recreation center in the midst of an 86-acre park (and in 2006 added 19,000 square feet to it).

## The 21st Century

By 2000, the population of Westlake had reached 31,719 and it reached nearly the 33,000 mark just five years later, with a comparable daytime population consisting of students, workers and retirees. In 2003, Porter Public Library expanded to 75,000 square feet, and a new city hall opened. That same year, Cleveland State University located its first ever satellite campus in Westlake and Cuyahoga Community College debuted its first Corporate College. The city's newly remodeled and enlarged center for seniors reopened in January 2004 with a new name: Westlake Center for Community Services.

The largest development in the city's history, Crocker Park, is a cutting-edge, mixed-use town center with retail, office and residential space. A part of Phase 1 opened in November 2004 adjacent to the Promenade, near the intersection of I-90, Crocker and Detroit roads. As originally approved by the Planning Department, it was planned to ultimately consist of 1.7 million square feet of development including the already-built Main Street with first floor shops and apartments and offices above. The civic core of this phase of development is a median park with fountains, chess boards and areas for community events.

By 2008, seventy percent of the original project was constructed or had final approval and the majority of the mixed use buildings containing retail, office and apart-



Westlake's new city hall building opened in 2003.



Westlake Porter Public Library completed a major expansion and renovation in 2003.



Crocker Park opened in 2004 and continues to expand.

ments had been constructed and occupied. In November 2007, voters approved an expansion of Crocker Park with another nearly 400,000 square feet of development, including a hotel, planned for the land east of the Promenade Shopping Center. That approval anticipated a total of 2.1 million square feet of development.

During the worst years of the "Great Recession," development slowed but more recently the for-sale housing has seen a surge of sales and they continue to be constructed and sold inside the western perimeter of Crocker Park. The apartments have been fully occupied since their construction and the existing retail and office space is nearly all leased. A civic plaza and multi-purpose structure are planned as an additional venue for community events west of Market Street.

Other major facilities developed in the city in the last decade include: Hyland Software, which has renovated and occupied three existing corporate buildings and built a number of expansions to keep up with their explosive growth, Five Seasons Country Club, LA CENTRE con-

ference facility, Dave & Buster's, University Hospitals Health System, Cleveland Clinic Lakewood Medical Center Phase Two, Premier Physicians Medical Office Building, Lutheran Home's Concord Reserve continuum of care campus, Westlake Service Center, Security Self Storage, Q-Lab, Crocker Corporate Center Office Building, and Paramount Tennis Club.

In December 2008, Crocker Road was connected with Stearns Road in North Olmsted to provide a long anticipated direct link between I-90 and I-480 and an easier way for Westlake residents and businesses to access the airport and Ohio Turnpike.

In 2009, special design guidelines were incorporated for the Dover Village area of Westlake to build on the mid-century modern style of buildings in the historic center of town, and the city acquired additional open space there.

In 2010, a study of the city's commercial and industrial areas and trade area was done, which shows that the city's non-residential development is evenly divided between retail, office and industrial square footage. The city is also in the midst of updating its bike plan with the goal of making parts of the city more accessible and safe for pedestrians and cyclists.

## The 2011 Bicentennial and Beyond

While the city celebrates its Bicentennial, the careful growth continues with Nordson Corporation's new headquarters occupied in December 2010 and Phase I of Cuyahoga Community College's new Westshore Campus now open. Work continues on Hospice House West and the relocation of a portion of Clemens Road to ease congestion at Crocker and Clemens Road. University Hospitals has begun a \$100-million-dollar renovation of St. John Medical Center.

With the passage of an \$84 million levy by the voters of Westlake in 2010, the Westlake City Schools will break ground on a new 230,000-square-foot high school and a new 100,000-square-foot middle school in 2011. The old middle school will be renovated into an intermediate school in 2012. Also planned are new and renovated elementary schools.

The biggest news in Westlake in 2011 was the announced relocation of American Greetings' 2,000-employee headquarters to Crocker Park. The preliminary plans for this project include the addition of 700,000 square feet of corporate office buildings with first floor retail and reconfiguration of the plans for the southern end of Crocker Park, boosting the eventual build out of Crocker Park to just over 3 million square feet. American Greetings hopes to occupy their new world headquarters, called American Creative Studios, by 2014.

Today, Westlake residential land is almost built out. The community not only survived its residential boom years, it has positioned itself through careful fiscal and physical planning to remain a prestigious place for individuals, institutions, small businesses and large corporations to call home. Once a premier farming settlement, it is now a thriving, friendly, creative suburban community, taking the time to celebrate its history – it truly has arrived! ●

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**DOVER THE BICENTENNIAL BEAR**

## Dover visits Westlake City Hall

by Lysa Stanton and Dave Pfister

*Hey kids (of all ages), meet "Dover," the Westlake Historical Society's wandering Bicentennial Bear. He's been known to leave his Clague House Museum home and visit all sorts of fun and historical places throughout the city.*

*Every month, Dover will visit a different location in Westlake and report back to us on what he finds!*

This month, Dover visited the City Hall of Westlake. Dover learned that Westlake actually began on November 14, 1811, and was called Dover Township at that time. On March 15, 1911, we became incorporated as Dover Village.

The name changed to Westlake Village on August 21, 1940, and was later incorporated as the City of Westlake on December 18, 1957. The name change came about as a result of all the confusion with the other Dover, Ohio, located further



**Dover the Bicentennial Bear visited Westlake City Hall in February. He will make stops throughout the city each month and report his findings in the Observer.**

south in Tuscarawas County.

Dover the Bicentennial Bear figured out that Nov. 14, 2011, is the official birthday of Westlake. ●

## Westlake Porter Public Library

This month, Dover decided to visit the Westlake Porter Public Library, located at 27333 Center Ridge Road.

Dover loves to visit the Westlake Porter Public Library because everyone is friendly and willing to help him. He especially likes the children's area where they have chairs that are just his size.

Dover asked the friendly Librarian why it is called Porter Library. He was told that one



of the early settlers in Dover Township (now known as Westlake) was a man named Leonard G. Porter. Mr. Porter, who was born in 1806, liked to read and so he donated \$1,000 and all of his

personal books to begin a library in Dover when he died in 1884.

In 1935, a member of another early Dover family, Sophronia Clague, donated \$10,000 to the library in her will. She was a school teacher and also loved to read.

Dover also learned that over 1.4 million items were checked out from the library in 2010. Also, almost 487,000 people now visit the library every year. The youth

department had over 49,000 items checked out in 2010.

But most of all, Dover likes to go to Porter Library because it's FUN! ●

## Clague Memorial Park

This month, Dover Bear wanted to get more information about the plans being made to construct a Bicentennial Founders Walk. This special pathway made up of engraved bricks is to commemorate the community's Bicentennial anniversary.

Dover headed directly across the street from the Clague House Museum to Clague Park. Dover wanted to see the Clague Memorial Monument, as well as where the Founders Walk will be located in the park.

Two of the Clague children, Walter and Sophronia, donated their former farm to the village of Dover in 1926. Three years later a monument was dedicated across from the Clague House.

Dover was very interested in what was inscribed on the memorial monument. It read: "Forty years ago Walter Clague desired to donate his property for a park when the opportune

time came. This desire was realized on Sat., Oct. 9, 1926, when Dover Village accepted the 78 acres on Clague Road for park purposes, which park to be called Clague Memorial Park, both name and park for all time."

In November 2010 when the Red Brick School was demolished by the Westlake City Schools, the city decided to purchase 4,500 souvenir bricks.

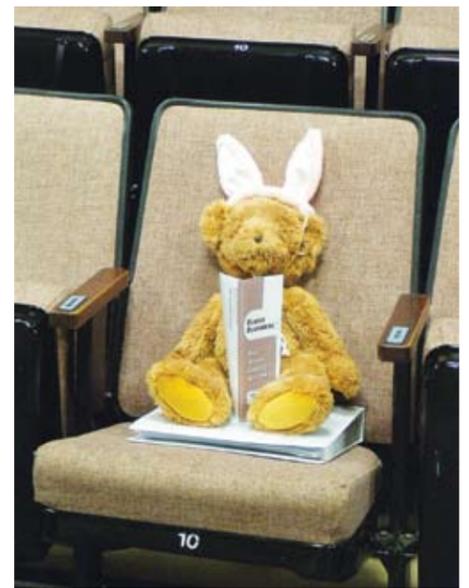
During the Bicentennial year, the Westlake Historical Society and Westlake Kiwanis will sell naming rights for some of the bricks, to be installed in a Founders' Walk at the Clague Memorial Monument.

The 100-foot-long walk and patio area will be dedicated in a ceremony on Oct. 22, 2011.

Larger engraved stones were used to commemorate some of Westlake's prominent past residents. ●

## Clague Playhouse

This month, Dover Bear left the Clague House Museum to see if spring had finally arrived in Westlake. He was happy to see the daffodils and trees blooming on the grounds of the museum. This month, Dover Bear did not have very far to travel. In fact, just across the drive to the Clague Playhouse he went.



He was greeted by a very nice box office attendant and was given a tour of the theatre. Dover was very excited because he decided he might take his talents to the Clague Playhouse stage.

Wearing his bunny ears, he was ready to audition for a future production. During his visit, Dover Bear learned a little history about the Clague Playhouse and how it originally served as the Clague Family Barn. He learned that one of the nine Clague children, Walter was very fond of the barn and spent a lot of time there working on his projects.

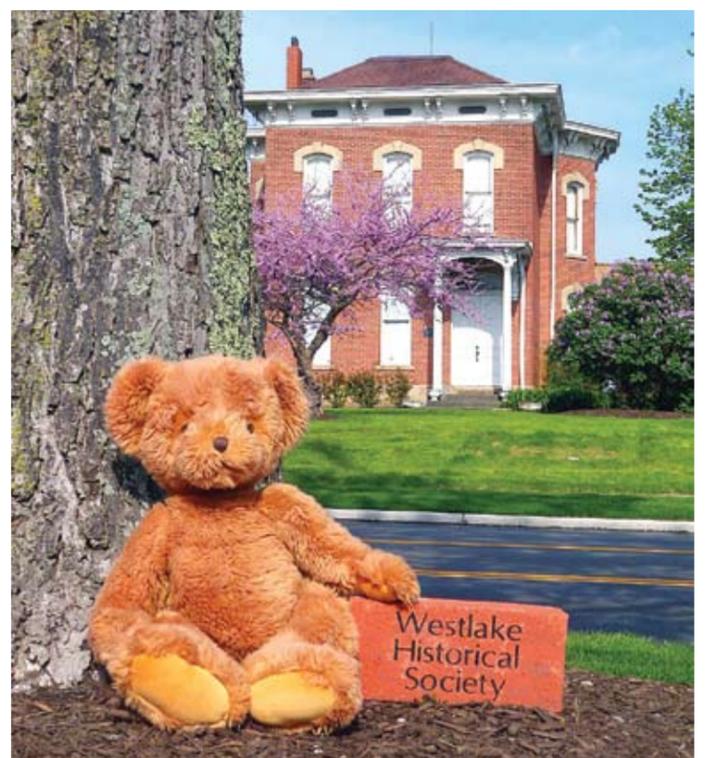
Dover arrived in time to watch a future set being painted. He also enjoyed seeing the stage, as well as finding a comfortable front row seat to watch the action.

Dover also discovered that there are a lot of nice people who volunteer to make every play possible. He wants you to know that you can call the box office at 440-331-0403 to volunteer or to order tickets for the next show.

Dover said he learned a little more about what is meant by, "There's no business like show business"! ●



**The Clague Playhouse at Cahoon Memorial Park.**



## Westlake's farming past

This month, Dover Bear left the Clague House Museum and traveled to Dover Center Road and also to Center Ridge Road. He wanted to learn more about barns and the significant role they played here in Westlake.

Dover Bear also learned a lot about the farming that took place here many, many years ago. He learned that at one time Westlake was the second largest exporter of grapes in the United States.

Dover made his first stop at the Gorski family residence on Dover Center Road, where he was able to see cows. These cows, although not real, were a great replica of the many cows that once were considered prized commodities here.

Dover Bear then visited the Center Ridge Road home of the Wang family. While there, Dover had the opportunity to see the barn on the property. Mr. Wang shared with Dover his knowledge of the history of the barn. The barn is thought to be over 150 years old. Dover realized as he traveled the city of Westlake that there are still barns to see.

The barn symbolizes the way life in Dover/Westlake once was. Take a closer look and you might just see a barn or two tucked in back of a current property or nestled behind a home here in Westlake.

Dover's friends at the Westlake His-



Dover Bear learns about early Dover farming and visits a fake cow.



torical Society have undertaken steps to identify, catalog and photograph all the barns that are still standing. If you know of a barn or are the owner of one of these gems of Westlake's past, please contact the Westlake Historical Society.

Dover would like to thank the Gorski and Wang families for the wonderful opportunity to see some of Westlake's history. ●

## Westlake police station

Earlier this month, Dover Bear saw a Westlake police cruiser checking on the Clague House Museum and was reminded just how hard working and dedicated our police officers are. Since Dover realized he did not know a lot about what happens behind the scenes with the Westlake police, he decided to stop at the station and ask.

Dover met Captain Guy Turner and was given the opportunity to learn more about what the police do and what it means to "protect and serve"!

When Dover sat inside a police car, he was surprised to learn that most have an on-board computer. He also saw the controls for the lights and siren, as well the communication radio and the radar system. Captain Turner was proud to say our Police Department is well equipped!

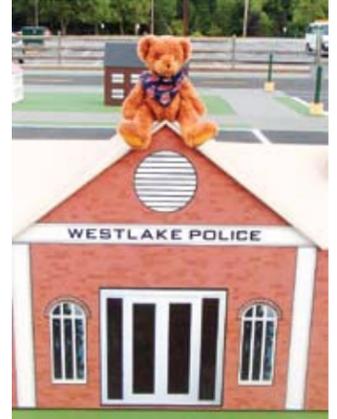
Then Dover met the nice and helpful members of the dispatch department. He noticed several computer screens and a communication system that appeared to be very complicated. Captain Turner said this is a very important department because they help the officers who patrol in the police cars.

After meeting all the friendly people at the Westlake Police Station, Dover went outside to visit Safety Town. There he found a small model of the Police Station and City Hall, as well as lots of other buildings that were more his size. Dover learned that Safety Town is the place where children go to learn about traffic signals and how to be safe when crossing city streets.

Dover also learned the three most important numbers to remember: 9-1-1. He learned that if you ever need help and it is a true emergency, then you can pick up a telephone, dial the numbers 9-1-1, and a nice person will answer the phone and help you! ●



Dover Bear visits the dispatch room during his tour of the Westlake police station.



Dover Bear stops to rest on the Safety Town course behind the police station.

## Jack Miner birthplace rock

This summer has been filled with Westlake Bicentennial activities and there are more to come in the fall. Last week, Dover Bear heard some Westlake Historical Society members making plans for the Jack Miner Day and Rubber Duck Race in August 2012. Dover was fascinated by what he heard about this man named Jack Miner.

To learn more about him, he visited the Jack Miner birthplace rock and Ohio Historical Marker placed on the corner of Dover Center Road and Westtown Boulevard.

Dover read on the marker that Jack Miner was born April 7, 1865, in the section of Dover Township that was known as Dover Center. He lived in a small weather-beaten home with a leaky roof on Dover Center Road near the street we

call Westtown Boulevard today. Young Jack was one of 11 children, born of English parents who made a meager living in the brickyard across the street from their home. Jack's father worked long hours to form the bricks that were sold for only \$3.50 per 1,000.

As a young boy, Jack liked to work in the brickyard instead of attending school. He was not fond of school because he was teased for his English ancestry, red hair and freckles. At age 12, Jack met his new teacher, Miss Minnie Chubb, who gave him the job of starting and tending the fire in the schoolroom stove. This job helped to provide Jack with more of a sense of belonging and he seemed to like school a little more.

Jack spent hours at Cahoon Creek near his home studying the lessons of nature. The creek was both a laboratory and play area. With great enthusiasm, he studied the habits of all that crept and swam. In addition, he learned lessons on birdlife that formed a founda-

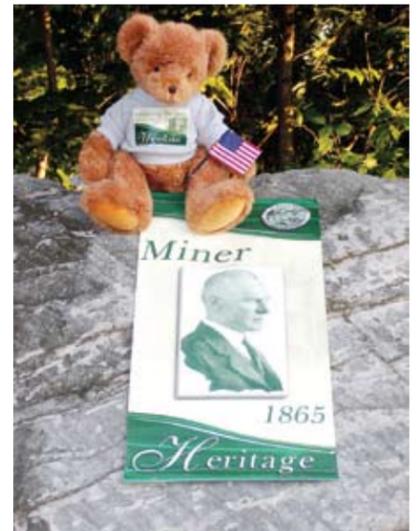
tion for his life's work.

When Jack was 13 years old, the Miner family reluctantly decided to move the family to Kingsville, Ontario, Canada. Although it was difficult leaving friends, the move provided a new income for the family and supplied new wildlife for Jack.

Jack went on to become a great conservationist (once named the fifth-best-known person in North America) and conceived the idea of reforestation and a sanctuary to protect wildlife.

He began the practice of banding Canada geese to study their migration habits and turned his sprawling farm into one of North America's first bird sanctuaries, earning him the nickname "Wild Goose Jack." He also lectured throughout the United States and Canada.

Auto pioneer Henry Ford once said, "Jack Miner's companionship with the birds and his service to them have made his work known and have warmed the hearts of good people everywhere. He has taught us all that there is always some-



thing to do for one who looks for something to do."

In Jack's autobiography, he wrote, "It must be remembered that I was born, and spent my innocent boyhood days, in that dear old Dover Centre, Ohio; and I love the descendants of the men who were kind to me in my barefoot days." ●

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## Tour of Westlake's historic homes and the Weston House

This month, Dover Bear decided to join the historic Lolly The Trolley tour of Westlake. The Community Services Department organized the tour of Westlake's historic homes on Sept. 15. Will Krause, assistant planning director for the city of Westlake, narrated the tour and Lysa Stanton, president of the Historical Society, was also aboard.

Dover had the opportunity to see all the wonderful historical sites in Westlake, and he enjoyed hearing many interesting facts about our town. He learned that Westlake currently has 188 century homes and buildings and there are also many barns located within our city limits. He even had the chance to visit with a real horse.

The trolley was traveling down Center Ridge Road, near the Westlake Recreation Center, when Dover Bear saw a most wonderful sandstone house. He jumped off the trolley to get an even better bear's-eye view of this house.

A very nice member of the Westlake Historical Society let him inside this home, even though it is currently being refurbished. This house is very special and is recognized by the Ohio Historical Society with a beautiful marker in the front yard.

According to the marker, this house is called the Weston House, although it was originally built for Austin and Roxanna Lilly. The sandstone was from a local quarry and is very heavy. The stone section of the house dates back to 1844.

After the last member of the Lilly family left in 1867, several others have called this house home, including stagecoach driver James Beardsley and August Trudel. The home's namesake, George Weston, lived here for many years, before purchasing 120 acres of land where Tri-Cor-



Dover Bear gets a rare glimpse of the interior of the Weston House. The house is being renovated for use as a museum.

porate College now sits.

More recently, the home was purchased by a developer, and then by a descendant of the Weston family. They were kind enough to give this treasure to the city of Westlake for use as a museum. The Westlake Historical Society currently leases it from the city, and is working to develop it into a museum of early Dover history.

Dover learned that this house holds another special



Dover Bear visits with Will Krause, narrator of the Sept. 15 historical trolley tour.

honor. It is one of only two places listed in the National Register of Historic Places here in Westlake (along with the Clague House). A special plaque will be placed here so that everyone will know of this distinction.

The nice person from the historical society told Dover that if anyone in the community would like to help with the refurbishment of the home or donate any funds to help pay for the work, to please call the society at 440-808-1961. ●

## Clague House Museum and introduction of a new Westlake tour guide

It is hard to believe that our Bicentennial year here in Westlake will soon be coming to a close. I have had a lot of fun sharing with all of you many things about Westlake. My favorite place in Westlake, of course, is the Clague House Museum.

The Clague House and homestead included 78 acres on both the east and west sides

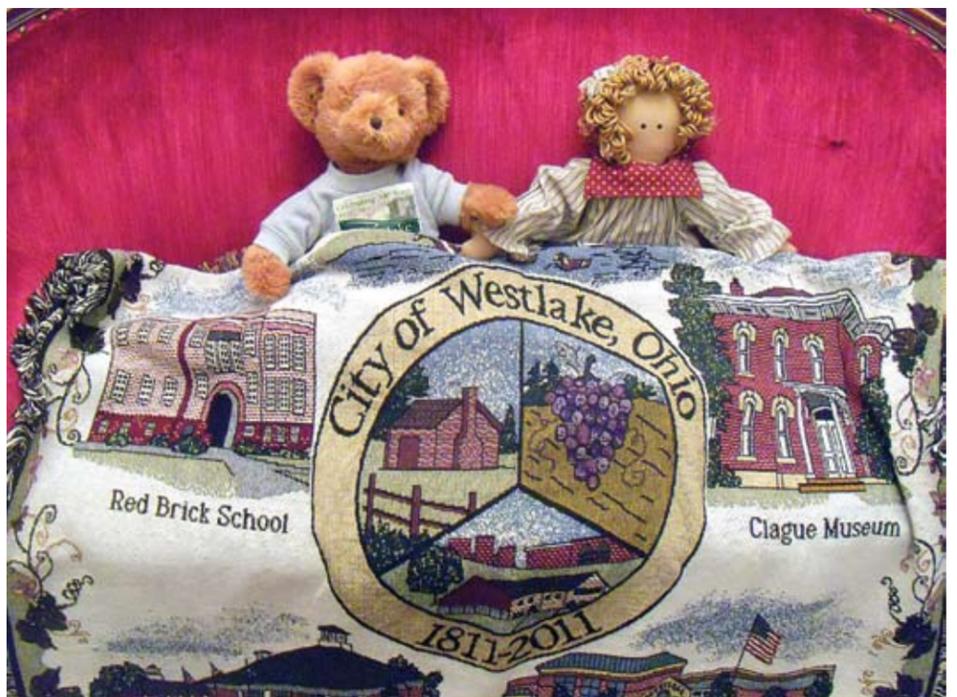
of Clague Road. The brick home is of an Italianate style, and was built in the later part of the 1870s. The home was built as a gift for Mrs. Margaret Clague by her children. To furnish the home, they gave her \$1,000. Mother Clague felt that was an awful lot of money to spend to furnish the home.

In 1926, two of her children, Walter and Sophronia Clague, deeded the home, barn and land over to the village of Dover. It was their wish that the land be used as a park so that the citizens of Dover would have a place to recreate and the children would have a wonderful place to play. They asked that the park be referred to as Clague Memorial Park.



very happy to call the Clague House my home, and will be heading back there to greet all the visitors. Traveling around Westlake in my place will be my friend, "Lilly Weston." Like myself, Lilly just loves the people of Westlake and all the many wonderful places and things to see. Lilly and I put our heads together and decided that it might be nice in the future if she would continue to share Westlake with all the children (and adults). Lilly and I really love our local history and there is still so many sights to share with you.

We are both very excited about the remaining Bicentennial events. We want to remind you to put your green bow on your mailbox or door. We also



Dover the Bicentennial Bear, who traveled across Westlake this year visiting the city's historical sites, is retiring to the Clague House Museum. His friend, Lilly, will take the reins next year.

are looking forward to the dedication of the new Founders' Walk across the street from the Clague House.

The nice people at the Westlake Historical Society are going to have birthday cake and a ringing of the Bicentennial Bell. I wonder if bears can ring bells?

The time capsule items are also being prepared. One thing that I am very excited about is the placement of the Register of Historic Places plaques from the Department of the Interior. There are two buildings in Westlake with this distinction. The sandstone house next to the Rec Center driveway that was built for Austin and Roxanna Lilly carries this honor. The house commonly known as the Weston

House. The Clague House also has this distinction.

My friend Lilly, enjoys visiting me at the Clague House, and we enjoy all the wonderful things that are here to see. It is so wonderful to curl up next to the fireplace. I have given Lilly a list of a few more places to visit next year. She can't wait to share those places with all of you. Thank you to all my faithful readers! Like Lysa and Dave always tell visitors at the Clague House Museum, "Local history matters – so get out there and explore."

Please come visit me at the Clague House Museum sometime soon!



– Dover the Bicentennial Bear