

Chronology of Willowick History

- 1701 - 1785 Negotiation of treaties between settlers and the Wyandotte, Delaware, Chippewa, Ottawa and Iroquois Indians who ceded all land east of the Cuyahoga to the Europeans and relinquished all claims hereto.
- 1794 (?) Violent battle between the Indians and Caucasians occurred at the junction of Euclid Avenue, River Street, and Erie Street in Willoughby. Defeated Indians fled along Lost Nation Road and disappeared.
- 1796 Treaty with Iroquois substantiating the Connecticut Land Company's title to the Western Reserve east of the Cuyahoga.
- 1803 Ohio becomes a State.
- 1804 The Willowick area was incorporated into a new County (Geauga), which also included all of Portage, Ashtabula and Lake Counties.
- 1810 Willowick area and all of Lake County, west of Mentor, switched to Cuyahoga County.
- 1850 Side-wheel passenger steamer, G.P. Griffith, encounters disaster just off Willolbeach.
- 1897 Inter-urban service comes to Willowick with the construction of the Shore Line of the Cleveland, Painesville and Eastern Railway. This line ran from Cleveland out Lakeshore Boulevard, up Vine Street, and joined the inter-urban mainline in Willoughby.
- 1913 The heretofore crooked Vine Street was straightened to parallel the inter-urban railway and paved with brick.
- 1924 Willowick incorporated as a Village . . . population about 300.
- 1950 Willowick celebrates its 15th Anniversary as a Village . . . population now 3,677.
- 1955 Willowick residents started their own library, refurbishing the old Willowick Country Club building on Lakeshore Boulevard.
- 1956 Willowick casts more than 5,000 votes in an election thus qualifying as a full-fledged City.
- 1957 Willowick officially declared a City by Ohio Secretary of State on January 1st.
- 1960 U. S. Census determines 18,749 people in Willowick.
- 1962 New Willowick Library Building completed. This building was financed by a temporary tax of 1 mill for 3 years. (The building was completely paid for when it opened.)
- 1970 Willowick's population is 21,237.
- 1980 Willowick's population is 17,834.
- 2000 Willowick's population is 14,600. Population is growing again with younger families moving in.
- 2010 Willowick's population is 14,171

Willowick's Early Occupants

Wandering Indians, using the heavily forested Willowick area as a hunting ground and the wide beaches for launching fishing expeditions, are the first people that we know of as occupants of this area.

Settlements have been found to the west of Willowick in Cuyahoga County and to the east of Willowick along the Chagrin River, but there is no evidence of any permanent Indian settlement in Willowick itself. However, numerous sub-tribes of Erie Indians manifestly crisscrossed the Willowick area as they went about their businesses of hunting and trading.

Lakeshore Boulevard was originally an Indian trail used by natives to trade with other tribes from as far west as Flint, Michigan.

Earliest memories of Vine Street record it as being a crooked trail through dense woods, probably a branch of the Salt Trail which led from northeastern Ohio down to Licking, Ohio.

Willowick - Part of Several Different Counties

Along with its sister cities which developed out of old Willoughby Township (Willoughby, Eastlake, Wickliffe, Willoughby Hills), Willowick shares the distinction of being the only area in the U.S. which has been included in six different counties.

Originally, this area was in Washington County; then, it became part of Jefferson County when it was established in 1797. In 1800, this area was made part of Trumbull County. In 1804, Geauga County was created and the Willowick area was in its northernmost township. In 1810, the Willowick area was transferred to Cuyahoga County along with the rest of Willoughby Township. When Lake County was created in 1840, this area became part of that County in which it has remained ever since.

The reasons for Willowick's phenomenally rapid growth are not widely known. In the late 1920's and early 1930's, the Village underwent a very short building boom. At that time, some streets without houses were dedicated, paved and supplied with water lines, fireplugs, sewers and sidewalks. The Great Depression smothered the building boom at that time; but after World War II, new developers bought up this area which had the advantage of having a basic trunk sewer system and other improvements ready to use. Because the community was already partially developed, the builders were able to bring a City into being with unprecedented speed. The City's greatest period of growth was from 1946 to about 1959.

A Residential Community

Willowick is primarily residential. According to the 1980 census, there were 5,161 owner-occupied homes out of a total of 5,982 occupied units which included apartments. The average value per home was \$50,000 - \$55,000.

Apartments include the Willowick Towers of 137 suites; Bayridge Estates, Inc. (condominiums) with 136 suits; Cody Park Apartments with 60 suites; Shamrock Park Apartments with 84 suites; and Shoregate Towers with 404 suites.

Government and Administration

On May 6, 1952, the Village adopted a Charter under which the Mayor and a seven-member Council are elected as part-time officials. (The first Council meeting was held around the dining room table in the home of Fred Ayer, located at the northwest corner of Lake Shore Boulevard and East 314th Street -- Mr. Ayer having been elected a member of the first Council). Council now convenes on the first and third Tuesday of every month. There is an appointed, full-time Director Finance, and an appointed full-time Director of Public Service. The City employs a registered Civil Engineer under contract and retains, under contract, the services of a law firm specializing in municipal law as Law Director.

The Charter provides that the government shall have an elected Mayor and an elected Council of seven members. Both the Mayor and members of Council shall serve four-year terms. The Charter provides that the City be divided into wards of approximately equal population. There are three wards in the City of Willowick and two members of Council are elected from each ward. The President of Council, also known as the Councilman-at-Large, is elected by the City-at-Large. The Council President also serves as Mayor in the absence or incapacity of the Mayor. In the event of the death, disqualification, removal or resignation of the Mayor, the Councilman-at-Large shall become the Mayor for the remainder of the unexpired term.

MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

The **Municipal Center** on Lakeshore Boulevard was built in 1976 and houses the Police Department and the municipal offices of the Mayor/Safety Director, Finance Director, and Council offices. A separate building on this site houses the Willowick Fire Department. The city is served by twenty-six officers and eight staff members in the Police Department. The Fire Department handles all medical emergency calls and employs over fifty-eight highly trained, professional part-time firefighters and one full-time support staff. The Fire Chief is a full-time position.

Behind and next to the buildings is the **Willowick Lakefront Park** owned by the city but is leased to Lake Metroparks and maintained by them. It has an incredible view of the Willowick shoreline. The Lakefront Lodge is available to residents for private gatherings. The city sponsors outdoor concerts in this area each summer.

The **Service/Building Department** is housed in a modern, award-winning structure on Vine Street dedicated in 1999. All of the city public works vehicles are housed in one of the largest garages in the county on the Vine Street site. Nearly thirty employees of the Service Department and four employees of the Building/Housing Department work from this facility.

Manry Park is the location for a large public swimming pool, public pavilion, the "Willowick Activity Center," outdoor basketball courts, recreation storage facility, and three baseball diamonds, a football field, walking trail and a picnic/playground area.

Dudley Park is the home of a smaller public pool with a waterslide, a large field house available for use by our residents, three ball diamonds, a picnic/playground area, a tennis court and a "splash park" for younger children.

The beautiful **Willowick Senior Center/Community Center** houses the active Willowick Senior Citizens and a large community room used by the seniors and civic activities. The Community Center is also available for private engagements by our residents.