

## 2 | History

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### 2.1 Introduction

This section provides a synopsis of the history of Painesville Township. The history of this community may allow for a more in-depth insight regarding the formation of the Township, as well as the current characteristics of the Township.

### 2.2 Pre-history: The Erie and the Whittlesey

The Erie Native Americans, sometimes referred to as the “Cat Nation,” inhabited the area south of Lake Erie near Buffalo, and were said to have lived as far west as Sandusky. In 1600, population estimates range from 10,000 to 16,000 inhabitants.

The Erie eluded European contact, and most information regarding the tribe was derived from second-hand accounts which were passed on to historians from other tribes. The Erie purportedly lived in traditional longhouses located in scattered villages. They were farmers and hunters, similar to surrounding tribes. In warmer climates, the Erie grew and harvested corn, beans and squash. Following the harvest, they would embark on the winter hunt and lived in camps designed for the winter climate.

The Erie exhausted their local beaver supply, which they traded with other tribes for merchandise from westernized society. They started to infringe upon other tribes’ hunting areas, which led to warfare. In the mid-1650s, the Erie were joined by many Huron refugees, who fled from the decimation of their Confederation by the Iroquois. In response to this outmigration, the Iroquois demanded that the Erie surrender the refugees. After the Erie refused, a tense, two-year standoff resulted. It escalated when all 30 Erie representatives were killed by the Iroquois at a peace conference.

The Erie inflicted heavy losses on the Iroquois, but were destined for failure without the benefit of firearms. By 1656, the Erie became a defeated population. The few that were not killed were assimilated into the victorious tribes, most notably the Seneca.

A growing group of historians and anthropologists predict that the Erie Nation did not extend beyond western New York. Alternatively, it is hypothesized that the Whittlesey Tradition people were the last protohistoric residents of Northeastern Ohio.

It is predicted that the Whittlesey lived in Northeast Ohio from approximately 900 to 1650. The Indian Point Site, located in Leroy Township, contains the remains of a prehistoric Native American earthen enclosure, officially known as the Lyman site, named after a former property owner. The site contains two earthen walls that are bordered by ditches. Steep cliffs provide natural barriers on two sides of the enclosure. Archaeological digs have uncovered many artifacts here, including pottery shards, tools, pipes and beads. There is evidence that the walls were built around 140 B.C., and that

the site was occupied by the Whittlesey again around 1500 A.D. It is uncertain if the site was a village or was used as a ceremonial center. After 1650 A.D., the area became a neutral hunting ground for various historic tribes.

Between 1200 and 1650 A.D., the late prehistoric Whittlesey occupied villages on high bluffs overlooking rivers in northeastern Ohio. They hunted bear, elk, and deer; fished with bone hooks and nets, and gathered nuts and berries. The Whittlesey were also sedentary and agriculturalists. They grew corn, squash, and beans and made pottery for cooking and storage. Their dwellings were rectangular or oval-shaped and made of saplings and tree bark. The Whittlesey culture disappeared around 1650 A.D. Their name comes from Charles Whittlesey, an Ohio geologist who mapped their sites. With the outmigration of the Whittlesey from the area, other tribes migrated into the area. Clear cutting sections along the Grand River for growing crops, tribes from the Senecas, Wyandots, Ottawas, Chippewas, Cayugas, Tonawandas, Iroquois, and Delawares began to reside in Northeast Ohio.

A Native American village named Shanungas was once located at the bend of the Grand River, north of the present-day City of Painesville. The mouth of the Grand River also served as a location for seasonal tribal meetings.

## **2.3 The Western Reserve**

In addition to occupation by several Native American tribes, the area that would become Painesville Township was claimed by Quebec, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut at different time periods. The French explored and possibly occupied the region in the 1600's and early 1700's, and claimed it by right of exploration and discovery. In search of a westward-flowing river, French explorer and trader René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle (1643-1687) mounted an inland expedition from the south shore of Lake Erie at the mouth of the Grand River in the fall of 1669. Thought to be the first European to see the Ohio River, La Salle journeyed up the Grand River and portaged to a tributary of the Ohio. From there he descended as far as the falls at Louisville, Kentucky. La Salle's explorations both expanded the fur trade and helped to consolidate French claims to the Mississippi River valley. French dominance in Ohio ended following British victory in the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

During the Revolutionary War, pioneers, primarily from Virginia, established themselves west of the Allegheny Mountains, primarily in Kentucky. George Rogers Clark, a Virginian who settled in Kentucky, convinced Virginia Governor, Patrick Henry, of the necessity of obtaining independence for the western lands at the same time the colonies were struggling for their independence. Rogers feared that without a presence west of the Alleghenies, the Colonies would only extend to the mountains if they won independence.

Rogers was commissioned by Patrick Henry to capture the military ports held by the British in the Northwest. He enlisted seven companies of pioneers and defeated the

British. Virginia claimed the territory, including the lands of the Western Reserve. At the Treaty of Peace in Paris in 1783, England insisted that the Ohio River was the boundary of the United States. The colonies sustained their claim to the northwest land on the basis that Virginia was in undisputed possession at the close of the Revolutionary War.

Although Virginia claimed the lands in the Western Reserve, New York claimed the land by its charter granted by the King of England in 1614, Pennsylvania by its charter granted to William Penn in 1664, and Connecticut by its charter granted in 1662. All of the royal charters granted land claims to the colonies westward to the mythical "South Sea." Native American nations also claimed these same lands.



It became evident that the only way to open up the Northwest for settlement would be for the states to grant their claims to the United States. Virginia gave up all rights to the land, and Pennsylvania and New York agreed on western boundaries and released the remaining lands to the federal congress. In 1786, Connecticut agreed to give up its claim to the portion of the land that crossed New York and Pennsylvania, and the remaining land to the west except for a portion west of Pennsylvania lying between 41° and 42° 2" latitude.

In 1792, the Connecticut legislature granted 500,000 acres of the western portion of New Connecticut to citizens whose property had been burned by the British during the war. These lands were called the "Fire Lands." In 1795, Connecticut sold the remaining three million acres of land to John Caldwell, Jonathan Brace and John Morgan, who were Trustees for the Connecticut Land Company. The Connecticut Land Company extinguished all Native American titles to the east of the Cuyahoga River, and in 1796 they surveyed the area and divided it into townships. "Town 11, Range 1 of the second

tier of townships”, the area that would become Painesville Township, was considered an “equalizing portion,” intended to appease shareholders of the Connecticut Land Company who received less than prime grants of their share of the company holdings. Painesville Township was one of eight townships formed in August 25, 1800 as part of Trumbull County, making Painesville Township the first government unit in what today is Lake County.

## **2.4 Early Settlement**

The first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of robust growth for the Township.

Connecticut ceded the Western Reserve in 1800, with the condition that Congress guarantee land titles already granted there. That same year, John Walworth became the Township’s first settler, creating a settlement on the Grand River called Blooming Grove. Later in 1800, General Edward Paine and his family arrived from East Aurora, New York, and settled on the Grand River at Newport.

In 1803, Abraham Skinner and Elazar Paine laid out the settlement of New Market. A grist mill was built along Tiber Creek during the same year. In 1804, Abraham Skinner laid out another settlement for Henry Champion. Located in an area known as Oak Openings, the town bore Champions name for a brief time before it was renamed Painesville, in honor of General Paine. A school was also established that year, along with the Little Red Tavern, said to be the Township’s first frame structure. In 1805, a road was cleared between the Township and Unionville. In 1806, the first tannery was built, along with the first bridge across the Grand River, at New Market. In 1808, Geauga County was divided out of Trumbull County and Painesville Township was included in the new county. The first frame schoolhouse in the Township was built in 1809, followed by the first church in 1810.

Painesville Township became part of Lake County after it was established as a new county in 1840. The 1820 Census counted twice the amount of residents living in Painesville as in Cleveland. Painesville’s establishment as a population center may have been due to its location, as it was located at a convergence point of the region’s burgeoning road system and Lake Erie shipping lanes.

## **2.5 Incorporation and Fragmentation**

In 1832, the central portion of Painesville Township, southeast of New Market, was incorporated by a special act of the State Legislature. In 1851, it became a village, and in 1902 became the City of Painesville.

In 1812, the settlement of Grandon was laid out on the east side of the Grand River at the mouth of Lake Erie. Grandon was established to advance the interests of Painesville by providing an accessible port. Lots were sold, warehouses were built, and the

settlement became a vibrant commercial center. In 1820, the harbor at Grandon was dredged for the first time, creating a safe harbor along Lake Erie. In 1831, the Harbor became the first federally sponsored port facility on Lake Erie. In 1836, Grandon was incorporated as Fairport, and is now named Fairport Harbor Village. Civil government fell dormant in the village in 1869, but was revived in 1889.

Richmond, located across the Grand River from Grandon, was established in 1832 when a land speculator named Thomas Richmond began to sell lots. The settlement was based on the assumption that the future Ohio Canal would terminate at the Grand River. By 1835, Richmond had 2,000 residents, and was a strong rival to Grandon, competing in the shipbuilding industry. When the Ohio Canal was built, it terminated in Cleveland, as opposed to the anticipated Grand River termination. The Panic of 1837 left Thomas Richmond with significant debt, resulting in the abandonment of the settlement and relocation of many of its businesses. Richmond Village was incorporated in 1888, and later renamed Grand River Village.

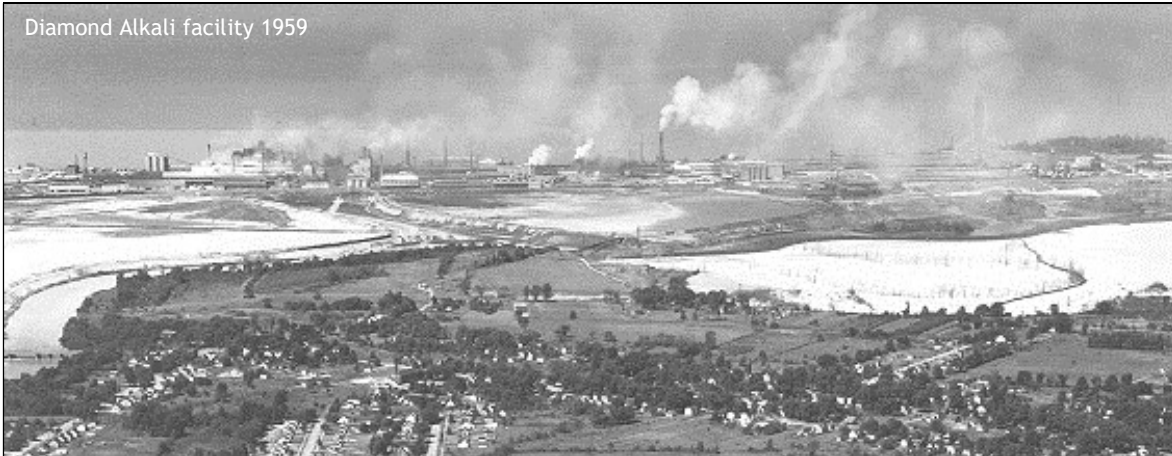
Throughout history, the City of Painesville, Fairport Harbor Village and Grand River Village have expanded through annexation, resulting in the four discontinuous areas that comprise Painesville Township today.

## **2.6 Later Years**

Painesville Township's built environment was heavily influenced by its early New England settlers. In the 1820s and 1830s, Johnathan Goldsmith, a prolific architect from the Township, introduced the Greek Revival style to the Western Reserve. The Fairport Harbor Lighthouse, built in 1825, and the Matthews Home on the Lake Erie College Campus, are two examples of his work. Goldsmith is buried in the Painesville Township Cemetery on Mentor Ave.

Painesville Township is considered to be the origin of Lake County's thriving nursery industry. The Jesse Storrs Nursery, one of the first in the county, was established in 1854.

In 1870, a resort area called Linden Beach was established at the north end of Hardy Road. In 1898, a second resort called the Shore Club was founded west of Linden Beach. Both beach resorts operated until 1925, when the Diamond Alkali Company purchased the property.



In 1910, a group of glass manufacturers founded Diamond Alkali in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to produce soda ash, an important material in the glass industry. In 1912, Diamond Alkali built a large industrial plant in Painesville Township. In 1948, Diamond Alkali relocated its headquarters from Pittsburgh to Cleveland. In 1967, the company merged with Shamrock Oil and Gas of Amarillo, forming Diamond Shamrock. At its peak, 3,000 workers were employed at the Diamond Alkali facilities in the Township, but when it closed on 31 December 1976, 1,200 employees were negatively impacted.

In 1896, the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula Interurban Railroad was extended to Painesville, linking the Township with Cleveland. Competition from steam railroads and personal automobiles contributed to the fate of the Interurban Railroad, and the route was abandoned in 1925.

Casement Airport (PVZ) was built in the eastern section of the Township in 1961. For a brief time, commuter service to Cleveland Hopkins Airport was offered from Casement. In 2000, the last flight departed the 3,800 foot (1160 meter) asphalt runway of PVZ.

Throughout the 1950s, the nation's Interstate highway system began to take form. In 1959, the Ohio Department of Transportation began construction of I-90 between Cleveland and the Pennsylvania state line. Through the 1960s, the Lakeland Freeway (SR 2) and the SR 44 expressway were built, both crossing Painesville Township. Although early post-World War II era development was the result of urban spillover from the City of Painesville, now the Township's fortunes are more closely tied with that of Lake County as a whole. Today, Painesville Township is considered to be more of a suburb of Cleveland than a suburb of the small city it surrounds. Since the 1980s, the bulk of the Township's growth has been east of the City of Painesville, situated near the site of the former Casement Airport. The NE region of the Township has experienced significant growth in the quantity of housing due to the Lake Erie Shores development.