

County Elected Officials

Board of Commissioners

Ted Kalo
Lori Kokoski
Matt Lundy

Auditor

Craig Snodgrass

Recorder

Judy Nedwick

Treasurer

Daniel Talarek

Sheriff

Phil R. Stammitti

Engineer

Kenneth P. Carney

Coroner

Stephen Evans

Prosecuting Attorney

Dennis P. Will

Clerk of Courts

Tom Orlando

Probate Court Judge

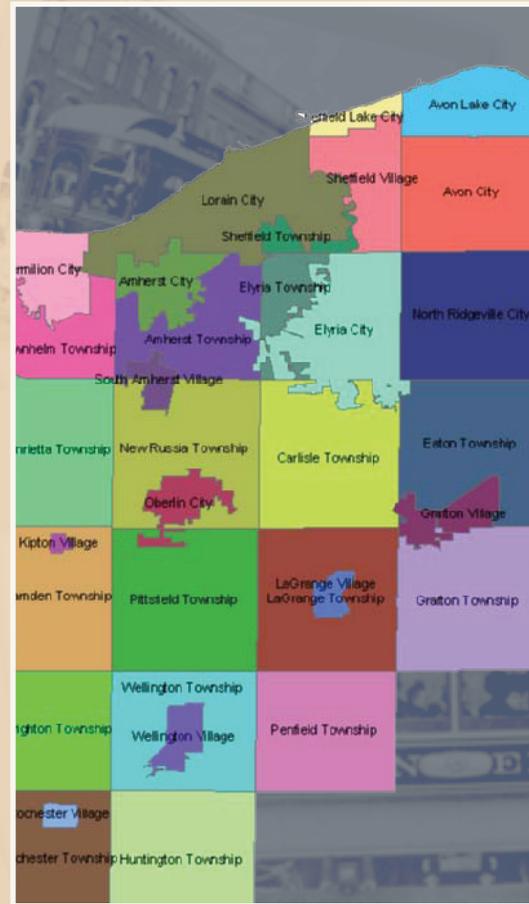
James Walther

Common Pleas Court Judges

Mark Betleski
James Burge
Raymond Ewers
James Miraldi
John Miraldi
Christopher Rothgery

Domestic Relations Court Judges

Debra Boros
Frank Janik
Lisa Swenski



LORAIN COUNTY HISTORY



County Administration

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Historical Land Settlements

The Great Lakes Region Is Claimed

People were probably living in what is now Lorain County as early as 10,000 BC, but County history really began in 1662, when the Connecticut Colony received a charter from King Charles II of England for the "corridor from sea to sea," a strip of land only 73 miles wide. The French disputed this claim, but in 1763 under the Treaty of Paris, England was granted the area of Great Lakes from Pennsylvania to the Mississippi River.

Bands of Indians such as the Erie, Huron, Miami, Shawnee, Delaware and Wyandot, still roamed the great forests. The only white men were fur traders; paddling their canoes along Lake Erie and up the smaller rivers.

The Area Is Named "The Western Reserve"

After the Revolutionary War, the claims of various eastern states were settled by the Ordinance of 1787, creating the Northwest Territory. Connecticut retained a strip of land 120 miles long from Pennsylvania to Sandusky along Lake Erie, called the Western Reserve.



Map of the Western Reserve and the "Firelands" Section in 1826

The "Firelands" section on the western end was reserved for any Connecticut residents whose property had been destroyed by fire during the Revolution. The territory was surveyed and divided into townships approximately five miles square. Subsequently, many of the roads followed township lines.

Historical Land Settlements (cont'd)

In 1805, there were very few Indians living in the region, land was claimed by the Six Nations; they surrendered claims in the Treaty of Fort Industry. In 1796, the State of Connecticut, to get money to start its school fund, sold the Western Reserve to the Connecticut Land Company for forty cents an acre. In 1807, Columbia Township was settled by 30 people from Waterbury, Connecticut. Bela Bronson, whose family owned much of the land, soon conducted the County's first school.

Lorain County Land Is Formed

After the War of 1812 and Perry's Victory on Lake Erie, settlers began coming to the Western Reserve in great numbers, mostly from Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York State. Within the next ten years, most of the townships of the county had residents.

In 1822, having enough residents, County land was formed out of parts of Cuyahoga, Medina, and Huron counties. Black River (now Lorain), Ridgeville, Avon, Sheffield, Amherst, Wellington, Vermilion, and Elyria were developing substantially.

The name Lorain was an anglicized version of Lorraine in France, which Heman Ely had visited. When a committee of the Ohio legislature came to locate the County seat, Ely was able to persuade them to choose Elyria by donating the land for the County building. The first government of the county was organized in 1824.



Land Donated by Ely to Build 1st County Courthouse in 1829

Historical Event Timeline

- **1807:** Columbia has 1st Settlers; 1st to have all 100 lots sold before land was bought from Connecticut Land Company (1st settlers Hoadley, Bronson)
- **1808:** 1st school in Columbia Twp.; 1st mail delivery service also started throughout County (Lake Route)
- **1809:** 1st church in Columbia Twp. (Episcopal)
- **1810:** Ridgeville formed (1st settlers Terell, Beebe)
- **1811:** Amherst (Corners) formed (1st settler Shupe)
- **1814:** 1st post office; “Mouth of the Black River” Avon formed (1st settlers Cahoon, Wilbur, Austin)
- **1815:** Sheffield formed (1st settlers Capt. Jabez Burrell, John Day)
- **1816:** Brownhelm formed (1st settlers Brown, Pease); Carlisle formed (1st settlers Brooks, Johnson)
- **1817:** Henrietta Twp. formed (1st settler Holcomb); Black River (now Lorain City) formed (1st settlers Shupe Quigley); Elyria formed (1st settlers Ely, Beebe)
- **1817 - 1824:** Erie Canal spurs immigration
- **1818:** Wellington Twp. formed (1st settlers Wilcox, Clifford); Huntington Twp. formed (1st settlers Sage, Clifford); Russia Twp. formed (1st settler Waite)
- **1819 - 1970:** Shipbuilding in Lorain
- **1820:** Penfield Twp. formed (1st settlers Penfield, Spencer); Brighton Twp. formed (1st settlers Loveman, Kingsbury)
- **1821:** Pittsfield Twp. formed (1st settlers Whitney, Barker)
- **1822:** Lorain County land formed from parts of Medina, Huron, & Cuyahoga Counties
- **1824:** Lorain County legally organized (1st Commissioners Meeting held May 24, 1824); 1st County Courthouse built
- **1825:** LaGrange Twp. formed (1st settlers Clarke, Holcomb)
- **1829:** 1st Newspaper (“Lorain Gazette” by Archibold S. Park); cost of \$2.00 by mail; delivered for \$2.25 per yr.

Historical Event Timeline (cont’d)

- **1830:** Elyria High founded; becomes 1st chartered high school west of the Allegheny Mountains (Elyria)
- **1830 - 1861:** Underground Railroad era; lines built
- **1832:** Lorain Iron Co. established; Board of Health organized in response to worldwide cholera epidemic
- **1833:** Oberlin Collegiate Institute founded; 1st college to enroll women, later blacks (founders Shepard, Stewart)
- **1836:** “Mouth of the Black River” renamed Charleston (later simply renamed “Black River”)
- **1837:** Steamboat Association formed (Black River)
- **1841:** 1st wagon train departs to west; arrives in Oregon
- **1842:** 1st “real” fire engine built (Elyria)
- **1844 - 1845:** practical refining of aluminum invented by Charles Hall (Oberlin); “Stewart Stove” invented and revolutionizes cooking (Elyria)
- **1845:** Lorain County Agricultural Society formed
- **1846 - 1847:** Mexican War; Lor. Co. mates enlist
- **1847:** 1st County bank built (“Lorain Bank of Elyria”)
- **1849:** Many men from Lorain “go west for gold”; Quincy Gillmore of Lorain graduates West Point; becomes Civil War general
- **1852:** 1st railroad to Elyria built
- **1854 - 1855:** 1st black lawyer in U.S. and 1st black public official elected to U.S. public office (John Mercer Langston, Oberlin) as Brownhelm Twp. Clerk
- **1858:** Underground Railroad Rescue; Oberlin-Wellington citizens seize escaped slave (John Price) from two U.S. marshalls
- **1860’s:** Lorain becomes “Industrial City”
- **1860 - 1870:** Lorain County ranks 1st in Ohio wool production; 6th in cheese production
- **1864:** 1st Public Library built (Elyria)
- **1867:** 1st Street lights powered by kerosene (Elyria)

Historical Event Timeline (cont’d)

- **1872:** 1st Railroad to County (Lakeshore & Tuscarawas)
- **1872:** Swing Bridge replaces Pontoon Bridge over Black River (Lorain)
- **1874:** 1st load of coal to Steel Mills (Lorain); Charleston City also incorporated
- **1875:** Lorain Stone Company - “Magic Chef”
- **1877:** 1st public telephone used in U.S.
- **1879:** 1st class graduates Lorain High School
- **1880:** Avon develops grape vineyards
- **1882:** 1st telephone co. established (Wellington)
- **1883:** Lorain Chamber of Commerce organized
- **1888:** Historical Society formed (331 Fifth St., Elyria)
- **1889:** 1st commercial fishing companies organized; Lorain County Historical Society also established
- **1890’s:** Cars considered a “curiosity”
- **1897:** Lorain City incorporated
- **1903:** Ford Motor Co. founded
- **1908:** General Motors Co. founded
- **1891:** 1st Electric Power & Light Company
- **1892:** 1st hospital opens in Lorain City (St. Joseph’s)
- **1909:** Lorain Lighthouse built
- **1913:** Lorain County Flood
- **1919 - 1921:** Society for Crippled Children founded by Rotarians; national by 1921; now “Easter Seals”
- **1924:** Lorain Tornado
- **1939:** 1st live TV show from New York World’s Fair
- **1940:** Charles Berry Bascule Bridge replaces Swing Bridge over Black River (Lorain)
- **1941:** 21st St. Bridge opens (Lorain)
- **1944:** : 1st County Naval Ship “USS Lorain County” built by American Shipbuilders Co. (Lorain)

Historical Event Timeline (cont’d)

- **1946:** 1st electric computer built
- **1954:** O’Neil Shopping Center opens
- **1957:** 1st park of Lorain County Metropark opens (“Mill Hollow”; now “Vermilion River Reservation”)
- **1960 - 1973:** Vietnam War; 98 people from County die
- **1963:** Lorain County Community College (LCCC) built
- **1964:** 1st patient at Lorain Community Hospital
- **1965:** Pittsfield Tornado; Midway Shopping Mall built
- **1967:** 1st International Festival held (Lorain)
- **1972:** Black River Historical Society established
- **1978:** Lorain Lighthouse (“Jewel of the Port”) built
- **1980:** Stocker Center Arts opens on LCCC campus
- **1983:** American Shipyards closes
- **1987:** Lorain breakwall built
- **1989:** U.S.S./Kolbe Steel merge
- **1991:** “Head Start” program established for families
- **1992:** County flag designed; bug named (ladybug); flower named (spring beauty); bird named (blue jay)
- **1993:** 1st African American (Toni Morrison, Lorain) receives Nobel Prize (Literature) for novel “Beloved”
- **1994:** Lorain High School closes
- **1997:** Ford plant (Lorain) closes “thunderbird” line
- **2001:** Avon Commons Shopping Center opens
- **2003:** Bicentennial Bell casted with ceremony; Bicentennial barn chosen on Ste. Rte. 58; becomes 27th barn painted in Ohio
- **2004:** Lorain County Justice Center built (Elyria)
- **2010:** Lorain County Transportation & Community Center opens (Elyria); renovation of the New York Central Railroad Station completed