



The City of *Westlake* Ohio

Celebrating 200 years

1811 - 2011

# Mission

- To create awareness of and inform residents and businesses about the upcoming bicentennial celebration and to involve as many as possible in planning and commemorating of Westlake's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday

# Steering committee

**Darryl Whitehead, founder and co-owner of Media Madness**

**Cindy Griffiths-Novak, owner, The Belvedere of Westlake**

**Lynn Brady, economic development assistant, City of Westlake**





# The Top Ten Things You Need to Know about Westlake! Volume II!

1. What was the first church congregation in Dover Twp.?



# Dover Congregational Church

- An outgrowth of a Congregational Church in Lee, Massachusetts, June 6, 1811.
- Six of the eight founding members emigrated to Dover soon after – Jedediah and Sarah Crocker, Abner and Rebecca Smith, Jonathon Smith and his wife.
- First log church structure constructed 1822, first frame structure constructed before 1837 on Dover Center Road at site of current church.





# Founding dates of some of the other churches in Westlake

- Methodist Episcopal Church at Dover Center – organized 1825, pictured is 1853 church, still existing on Center Ridge across from Porter library – minus the steeple
- St. Paul Lutheran, organized 1858
- St. Bernadette Catholic Church 1950
- St. Ladislav Catholic Church 1973





**2. Where was our first school?**



# First Dover Township Schools

- The first school building, in what later became Westlake, was constructed between 1816 and 1825, probably near Bassett and Detroit as per May E. Weston, early school historian.
- By 1825, there were five neighborhood school districts.
- The teaching was done by parents or other citizens who had been educated back East and were willing to do so.
- The typical neighborhood school district was literally built, financed, and run by parents and others in the community.



# First Dover Township Schools

- In 1825, the Ohio lawmakers enacted a law which allowed township school districts to levy a ½ mill tax.
- The oldest known existing minutes for a school board meeting in Westlake date to October 1837 for the Dover Center District.
- Separate stone and brick buildings were built for each of the Dover school districts from 1875-1895.



**3. Where was the first high school?**



# Dover Academy – First High School

- In 1844, a Westlake resident attended Oberlin College and opened Dover Academy in 1845.
- In 1852, the academy moved to the frame building shown in upper right, built on land donated by Leonard G. Porter.
- The academy closed in 1862.
- From 1897 until 1914 it was used as part of the Dover Public schools.
- The building was located just north of the current "Old Red Brick."



4. When did Westlake go from little one and two room school houses to a consolidated school building?



# First Consolidated School Bldg.

- The first consolidated school building in Dover was built in 1909.
- We still know it today "the Red Brick School" or "Old Red Brick" at 2260 Dover Center Road.
- Original building consisted of four rooms
- Four additional rooms constructed in 1913
- Recently a group of Westlake citizens have been trying to convert it into a Westlake arts center.

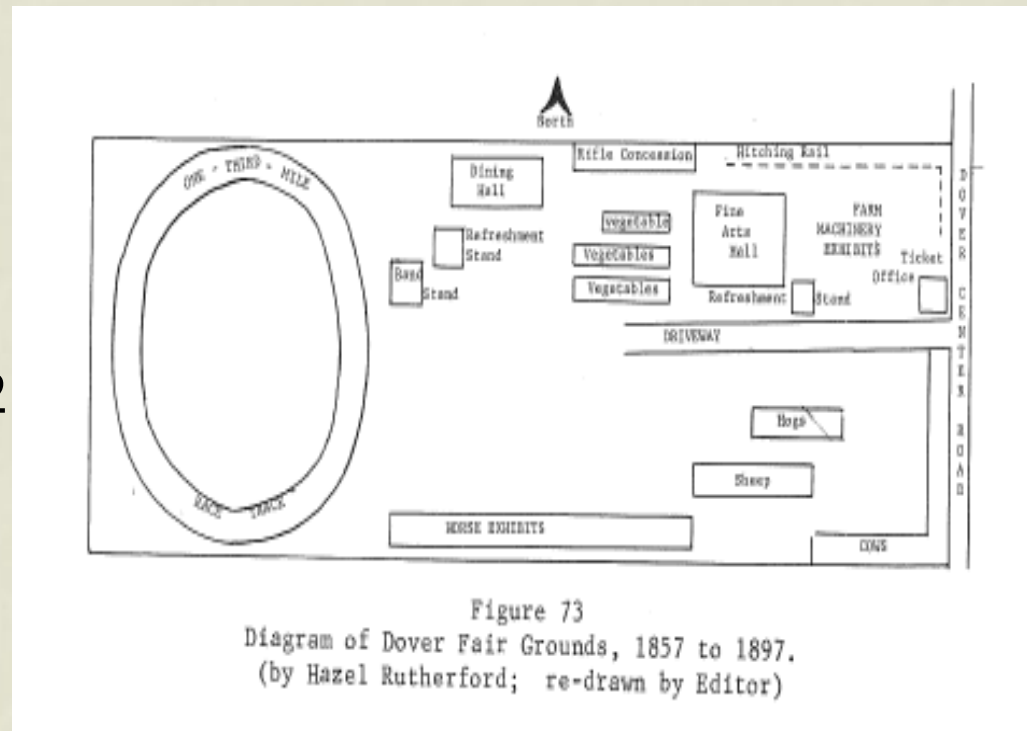


5. What attracted visitors to our community in the 1800s?



# The Dover Fair

- Starting in 1847 it occupied seven acres where the “Old Red Brick” was later built.
- Dover and Chagrin Falls had the two major “county” fairs during the 1800s.
- The fair expanded after 1862 with the acquisition of the closed Dover Academy land and building, which became the Fair’s Fine Arts building.



# The Dover Fair

- In 1897 the last fair was held when the two “county” fairs were consolidated into one fair at new fairgrounds in Berea.
- The Dover fairgrounds were turned over to the township and the former racing track, fields and grandstands were used for athletic purposes.
- The former Dover Academy building reverted to use as a school until it was damaged by fire and torn down in 1914.
- The old Dover Fair grandstands were used at least until 1928.



## 6. First Manufactured Product?

# Early Manufacturing

- As early as 1811 chairs were manufactured by Nathan Bassett in area of Dover that became Bay Village.
- Barrels for whiskey were an early product as were carriages.
- The first production scale manufacturing was probably bricks.



7. What is the story behind the beautifully restored home on the west end of Detroit Road with the Ohio historic marker?

# The Thomas Hurst house, circa 1838

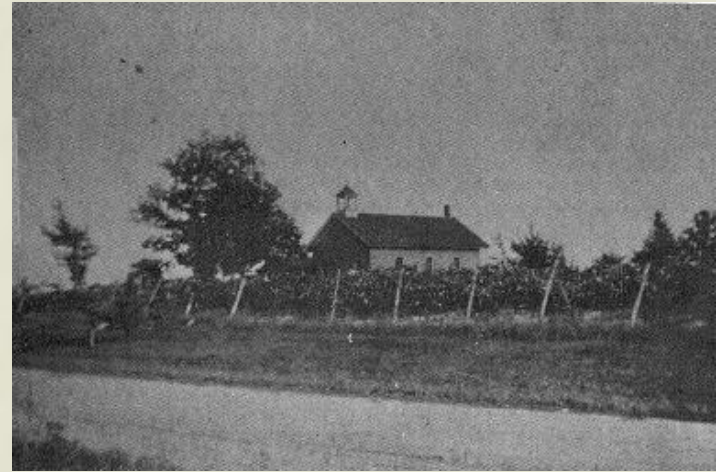
- Mr. Hurst was first Dover resident to emigrate directly from England.
- He was a prosperous sheep farmer with 3,500 acres of land.
- Classic Greek Revival Architecture
- In early 1900s was country home of U.S. Senator Theodore Burton.
- Was a nursing home and then vacant for 10 years
- Westlake Planning department instrumental in saving the structure from demolition.
- Steve McQuillin, a preservation consultant, was called in to examine the structure.
- He purchased the home in 1998 and began extensive renovation of the structure.



8. Where did all the grapes go?

# Grape growing and Dover

- In the late 1800s, Dover was the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest shipping point for grapes in the U.S.
- Much of what later became Bay Village and parts of Westlake were in viniculture at one time.
- With development pressures and suburbanization, the industry died out in the 1950s.
- There are still abandoned vineyards to be found on Concord Reserve property and perhaps a few acres still in production in the city today.





9. Didn't Westlake once have a lot of greenhouses?

# Greenhouses in Westlake

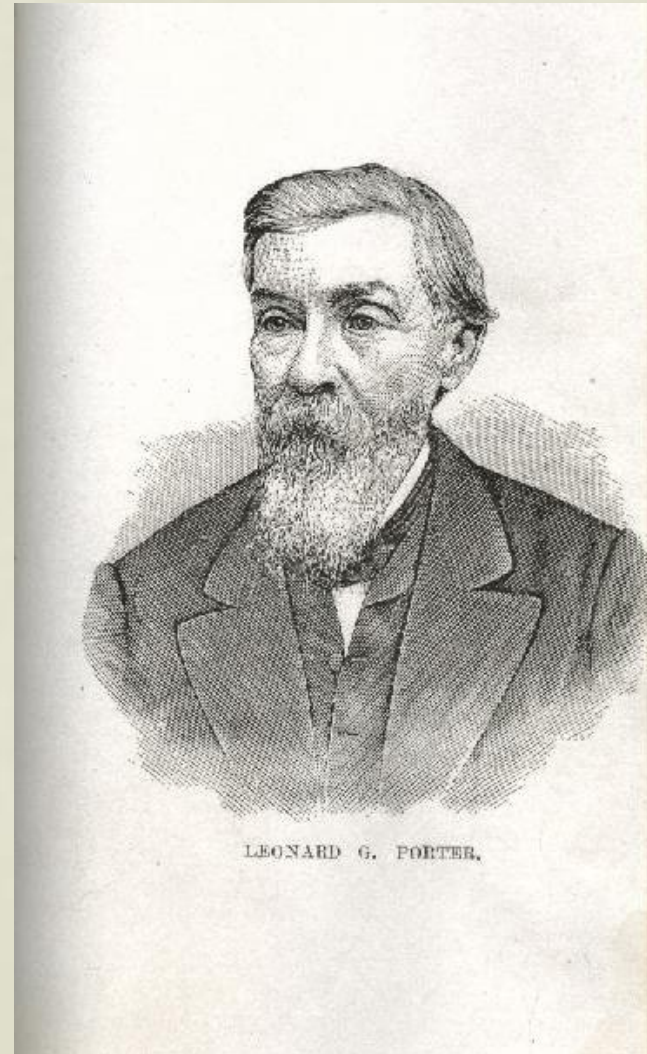
- The former beach ridges of Lake Erie made excellent soil for truck farming and proximity to Cleveland created a market, greenhouses extended the growing season.
- With suburbanization, the growth of global scale food production, and high oil prices the industry declined.
- The last greenhouses in Westlake are Dean's Greenhouse on Porter Road operated by the Dean family and Adams Lee H. & Sons greenhouse.



10. Who is the Porter in Westlake's  
Porter Public Library?

# Leonard G. Porter

- One man can make a huge difference!
- Leonard G. Porter, after the death of his beloved wife and their only child, devoted himself to Dover arguably like no other man before or since.
- He was a Township Trustee, a Justice of the Peace, generous member of Dover Congregational Church, Sunday School Superintendent, donated land for and taught at Dover Academy, and was a guiding leader of the Dover Literary Society.
- As part of his will he left his books and \$1,000 to provide for a public library.



# References

- Sources include:
- *History of Cuyahoga County, Ohio* by Crisfield Johnson, 1879.
- *A History and Civics of Dover Village*, by Reign Hadsell and Hazel Rutherford, 1930.
- *You've Come a Long Way, Westlake and You've Got a Long Way To Go*, by William M. Robishaw, 1993.
- *Images of America: Westlake*, Deborah S. Rossman, 2008.
- *The First 100 Years of Dover Schools*, May E. Weston, 1969.
- Westlake Porter Library Local History photographs posted on their web site.
- City of Westlake and Cuyahoga County records.