

LAKE COUNTY OHIO – HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Visitors to Lake County, Ohio have so many choices of attractions, restaurants and unique experiences, it's difficult to fit them all in. Making your visit special is the sense of place you'll find in Lake County, especially if you enjoy an historical backdrop for your visit. This area was settled in 1797 and over the next fifty years enjoyed a unique settlement history. Unique because the first half-century of Lake County's development was in the hands of almost exclusively settlers from the New England states, primarily Connecticut. These early arrivals built churches, schools, homes and town squares that reflected their life in New England and many survive today giving Lake County a very "New England" look from local architecture to the culture and traditions you will find here.

These early years attracted entrepreneurs because of the rich natural resources. Many of their homes can still be seen in a drive to the eastern end of Lake County, to the Village of Madison. Returning westward on Rt. 20 (Mentor Ave.), you will arrive in Painesville, the County seat and focus of another area of historic homes, districts and B&Bs. Historic buildings and sites give a community its sense of place and Lake County, Ohio's smallest county, has an extraordinary 77 listings on the National Register of Historic Places.

While in Painesville, take time to visit the historic square. Serving as the County seat, Painesville contains one of the only remaining intact New England squares in N.E. Ohio, with its courthouse, churches and all four sides containing a central green. If you enjoy an historic walk about, proceed west on Mentor Ave (which runs east to west throughout the County) through the City of Mentor, a shoppers and restaurant paradise, to Willoughby, Ohio. Willoughby is the perfect place to park the car, and walk the several blocks making up this historic destination. The sidewalks are lined with antique vendors, restaurants, wine shop and galleries. If you would like to visit most of Lake County's historic sites, contact the Lake County Historical Society and get a copy of their "Historic Treasure Hunt" map which will take you throughout the entire county, searching for sites with a unique past.