



## TRUMBULL CO. METROPARKS

CLARENCE DARROW PARK  
CANOE CITY PARK  
CANOE TRAILS PARK  
NATURE AWARENESS PROGRAM



Text researched and written by Dorothy Allamus, Susan Gola, Marty Nosich, Amy Gladd, Daniella Munno, Rebecca Wimoth, Mary Hostetter, Connie Moore, Mark Taylor, Crystal Shiley, Greg Spinis, Stephanie Burnett, Stacy Williams, Tim Quinn, Lorenz Armstrong, Don Eisenbraun, Lana Eisenbraun, Tina Lee Stifle, Kara Bandy, and Jennifer Trask as part of an Ohio History course assignment for Dr. Kenneth J. Bindas, Kent State University-Trumbull. This pamphlet is merely a small excerpt of the students research, their efforts made this pamphlet possible. Thanks.

# HISTORIC CANOE RIDE

DOWNTOWN WARREN  
ON THE MAHONING



A CELEBRATION OF THE BICENTENNIAL



SEPTEMBER 10-11, 1999

## The New Frontier

Through the years, the Mahoning River has been a constant in an ever-changing landscape. The arrival of European settlers began the transformation of the region from a natural wilderness, where the chief lure to the natives was the salt springs (Mahoning is a native word meaning at the salt lick), to a thriving community with all the amenities of a New England community.

While there were only fifteen families living in the entire Western Reserve in 1798, by 1800 some thirteen thousand inhabitants had begun the flood of migration to America's western frontier—the Ohio territory. On July 10, 1800, the entire Western Reserve was proclaimed to be the county of Trumbull with Warren serving as the county seat. As the Western Reserve capital, Warren was the political, cultural, social, and governmental center of the thriving new settlement.

The people that settled in the Western Reserve tended to be single males and young families. When they arrived they had the tough task of building homes and clearing the land. Women were responsible for the general well being of the family. At this time, there was little health care and families relied on home remedies. Disease took hold and many people, especially children, died. Measles, diphtheria, flu, smallpox and fever caused most of the problems. Yet the citizens persevered making the best of their new home.

On July 4, 1800, Warren had its first public celebration. When all were assembled, they found themselves without musical instruments, so two musicians from the group made their own. One made a fife cut from the stem of an elder bush and drummer made his from a hollow pepperidge tree for the base and fawn skin for the heads. This was the first of many community celebrations.

## Growing With the Times

In time the river gave way to other means of transportation. One of the first roads was the turnpike between Warren and Ashtabula, today known as Mahoning Avenue and Route 45 which was no doubt traveled by the Warren-produced Packard automobiles when they were manufactured nearly a century later.

Equally vital to Warren's growth was the building of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Canal, also known as the Mahoning Canal. The eighty-two mile canal linked the Ohio and Lake Erie Canal in Akron to Beaver, Pennsylvania, where boats could then ride the river to Pittsburgh. The canal opened for traffic in 1839, and worked well for a number of years.

Progress brought newer technology, and with the growth of the city came plans to build a railroad. The first Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad train chugged through Warren in July of 1855.

The Iron Horse wasn't the only railroad to pass through Warren. As the issue of slavery became more dominant in national politics, this area became a leader in the success of the Underground Railroad. Trumbull County reportedly had 53 miles of track, making it one of the largest paths to freedom in the state. It is rumored that a tunnel once extended from the original First Presbyterian Church beneath Mahoning Avenue to the riverbank.

The Civil War saw Warren send many of its young into service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. During its four-year tenure, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio traveled a total distance of 27,000 miles and participated in ninety-seven engagements. The 6<sup>th</sup> Ohio served in sixty-one engagements, among them Bull Run, Gettysburg, and Cold Harbor. Their service ended with their witness of Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House.

## The Modern Era

The Mahoning River made Warren an ideal site for gristmills, saw mills, and woolen mills. The river was also instrumental in bringing industry to the region. Warren changed from a farm trade center to an industrial center with the first dam being built in Warren in 1803 to support the mills. As early as 1836, a foundry and blast furnace were in operation in Warren. The first forge built in Warren was in 1862. By 1898, there were 110 commercial and industrial establishments in Warren, employing over 2,000 people.

In 1912, the Board of Trade offered the Trumbull Steel Company a free factory site on the 'flats' along the Mahoning River to the south of Warren. By 1915, the plant had 34 mills.

The demand for steel during World War I sparked a period of industrial and residential expansion to Warren. The area south of Warren along the Mahoning River developed into an industrial and poor residential area. Immigrant laborers, including Irish, Italian, Greek and Slovak poured into the city by the thousands, locating largely on or near the flats. By 1920, Warren's population grew to 27,050 people made up of twenty-eight nationalities.

Steelworkers worked twelve-hour shifts in poor working conditions for less than \$1.40 per day. These conditions encouraged the formation of unions, which met with bitter opposition by steel mill owners. This led to the Little Steel Strike of 1937. After several years of struggle, in 1942 Republic and the other steel companies agreed to allow the USW to represent over 170,000 workers. In the midst of this, Cooperweld Steel Company moved into Warren in 1939.

## Today and the Future

The steel industry closings of the 1970s and 1980s devastated the local economy and social services,

but today citizens and officials of Warren are actively working to revitalize and rejuvenate the community with an eye toward the future. From 1994-1998, the Regional Chamber of Commerce worked with over 140 companies in designing projects which created 4,000 new jobs, retained over 2,200 jobs, and invested \$260 million in the Mahoning Valley. By 1998 the Valley ranked an impressive 12<sup>th</sup> out of 315 as a World Class Community for manufacturing.

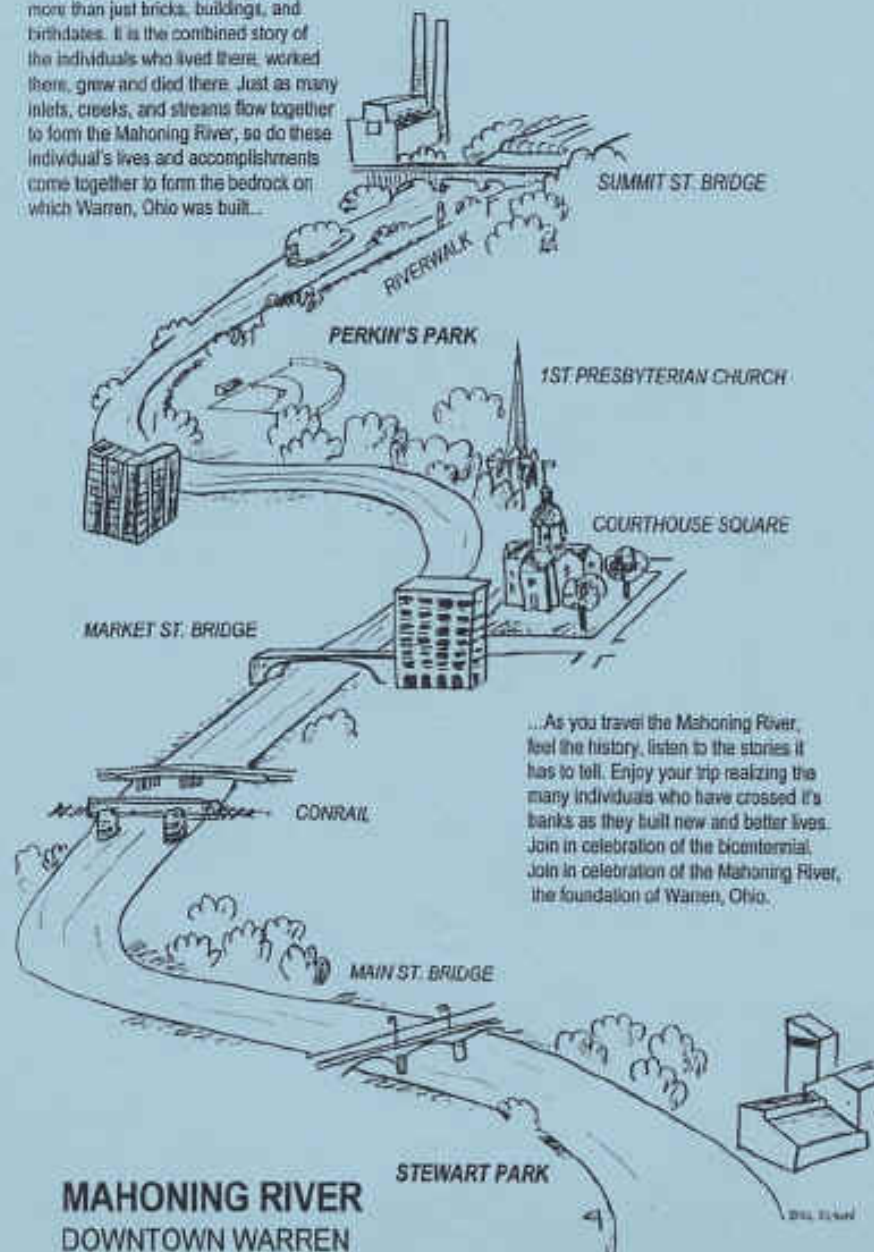
The Kent State University Trumbull Campus has been instrumental in the area's revitalization. With programs like Weekend College and the construction of a new 68,000 square foot, eleven million dollar state-of-the-art School of Technology, Kent-Trumbull is leading the valley into the next century.

Warren's proud heritage is celebrated today in the number of annual festivals like the Celtic Fair, Bavarian Days, the Afro-American Achievement Festival, the Italian American Festival and a host of others which pay tribute to the ethnic contributions in the Valley.

Detailed studies by the US Army Corps of Engineers have been undertaken as part of a serious effort to restore the river to its pre-industrial quality. The river has already shown marked improvement and has allowed for a resurgence of flora, fish, and small mammals.

Perkins Park has recently added Riverwalk to highlight the Mahoning River as a means of exposing this vital link between the river, the people, and history of Warren. The Trumbull County Metroparks system has two parks, Canoe City and Canoe Trails, utilizing the recreational value the river has to offer. The river continues to faithfully fulfill its role as the constant in the ever changing landscape.

The story of any community is about more than just bricks, buildings, and birthdates. It is the combined story of the individuals who lived there, worked there, grew and died there. Just as many inlets, creeks, and streams flow together to form the Mahoning River, so do these individual's lives and accomplishments come together to form the bedrock on which Warren, Ohio was built...



...As you travel the Mahoning River, feel the history, listen to the stories it has to tell. Enjoy your trip realizing the many individuals who have crossed it's banks as they built new and better lives. Join in celebration of the bicentennial. Join in celebration of the Mahoning River, the foundation of Warren, Ohio.