

Lake Erie Program Final DVD Script - April 14, 2006

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Narrator: Lake Erie... is the smallest, shallowest, and warmest of the five Great Lakes. Its waters connect four states and two countries. The Ohio lakeshore is dotted with dozens of cities and towns, from resort communities to working harbors, built by industry and agriculture nurtured by Lake Erie. Lake Erie's impact on American history... is deep and broad... a beacon of freedom and opportunity for those fleeing the bonds of slavery and the immigrants seeking a new life ... an invaluable natural resource that sparked the nation's industrial development, a swift and fluid highway for transporting goods and materials ... a perfect vacation destination... and simply a great place to live.

But habitation brought conflict... exploration led to exploitation... and though its bountiful waters nourished and sustained, provided countless hours of recreation and enjoyment... Lake Erie has been neglected, wounded and ridiculed...but quite remarkably... recovered.

(Title Graphic in)This is the story of Lake Erie, Ohio's Great Lake.

Fade to Black

Brian Redmond: Lake Erie and really all of the Great Lakes were formed as a result of the Pleistocene glaciation. Basically, the great ice masses came, moved to the south at the end of the ice age or the end of the Pleistocene, and they carved out the basins of the lake.

Charles Herdendorf: The most recent glacier (Name Key In) is called the Wisconsinan, because that's where the sediments were first, the glacial till was first identified. And (Name Key Out) that's the one that we see most of the evidence of here in Ohio. The Wisconsinan Glacier reached its maximum extent about 18,000 years ago. And it reached down to about the Cincinnati region.

Narrator: The ice carved through the Great Lakes region... digging deep into eastern Ohio. But when it reached the Lake Erie Islands... the glacier struck limestone and dolomite deposits and merely scraped along the surface. It flattened the landscape of western Ohio and left the exposed bedrock of Kelleys Island scoured and grooved.

Brian Redmond: And then as the glaciers receded, melted back to the north, the melt waters basically filled the lake basins and drained these grooves and depressions that the glaciers had carved out, (Name Key In) so over the course of the end of the Pleistocene you have different shapes and depths to the great lakes including Lake Erie. (Name Key out) And many times much higher than it is today, much more inland, and then a few times at the end of the Pleistocene, much more shallow than it is today.

Narrator: One of those early glacial lakes covered most of northwest Ohio... The water compressed the land and left behind sediment from the lake bottom.

Charles Herdendorf: When the glacier moved off that area, it left then a very flat...poorly drained area that became the Black Swamp and was a great hindrance of course to transport and to early settlement.

Brian Redmond: Yeah, there are a lot of really obvious landmarks today in northern Ohio that mark where the different lake levels were. And most of these are what we call glacial beach ridges. They are ridges of sand and gravel that run kind of parallel to the current lakeshore, from Toledo all the way out to Conneaut near the Pennsylvania border and beyond.

Charles Herdendorf: The beach ridges were sandy, that means they were well drained, and they formed the very first roads then for the pioneers coming in. And so these became very important for the early development and they still remain today as some of our major arteries, east-west arteries.

Jeff Reutter: Lake Erie is divided into three basins, (Name Key In) it's the southernmost, the shallowest, the warmest of the great lakes. Our Western Basin, the (Name Key out) area west of Sandusky has an average depth of only 24 feet.

Herdendorf: The central basin extends from that point near Sandusky, all the way to Erie, Pennsylvania.

Hageman: the (Name Key In) Central Basin has an average depth of about 60 feet. It has pretty much a flat bathtub shape (Name Key out) to it. And then the Eastern basin is the deepest part of the lake, averaging about 80 feet and having some places over 210 feet.

Jeff Reutter: Sounds deep compared to reservoirs in Ohio, but the other Great Lakes are all in excess of 750 feet deep. Lake Superior is 1,333 feet deep, we're really very different than the other lakes.

Brian Redmond: We can trace the presence of humans in this region, near Lake Erie, through archeological research back to about 11,000 years ago.

Larry Nelson: The earliest (Name Key In) inhabitants of this area are Paleo-Indians, who are Ohio's first residents. And we know that they are here in the

shadows of (Name Key out) the glaciers that were here at the end of the last ice age.

Brian Redmond: Some people estimate that there were no more than 500 people in Ohio at that time, living along the lake shore and into the interior as well and along the rivers that were just forming at the end of the ice age.

Narrator: The Paleo-Indians were followed by three other periods of lakeshore habitation ... the Archaic, Woodland and Late Prehistoric. The Archaic lived in northern Ohio as the mammoth, mastodon and other ice age creatures began to disappear. Next came the Woodland People.

Brian Redmond: This is probably one of the best known pre-historic stages to most Ohioans, because this is the time of the mound building groups, most of which lived in southern Ohio. Cultures that we call the Adena, or the Hopewell, but those woodland people also lived in northern Ohio. And along the Lake Erie shore, we have evidence of mound building as well. But those are found at places on points that stick out into the lake and near the mouths of the rivers that run into Lake Erie.

Narrator: The Woodland people were followed by the Late Prehistoric stage. They migrated out of Ohio around 1650, before Europeans arrived to record their name and history. Although we don't know what they called themselves, they left behind evidence of their presence on Lake Erie... Ancient pictographs etched into Inscription Rock on the shore of Kelleys Island... By the late 1600s, the impact of the European fur trade started a new migration into the Lake Erie region.

Don Rettig: Because of the popularity of these furs and (Name Key In) skins, the whole area of New York, became depleted with beaver skins. So the Iroquois began to expand their search for (Name Key out) these very valuable furs, and ended up coming down south and west into the Ohio country and particularly along the southern shores of Lake Erie.

Randy Buchman: The Iroquois start doing that by aggression, thus you get into the Beaver Wars. So this then (Name Key In) became basically, the battleground. And because of that, (Name Key out) they did not perceive this area as a place for permanent settlement. They would come in they would travel through, and those wars lasted almost 100 years.

Brian Redmond: We know that by about the early 1700s, other Native American groups came into Ohio after it had been abandoned. And these were groups like the Ottawa, and the Wyandotte

Larry Nelson: White settlers are moving into this region for the first time and Indians are beginning to move back into the region for the first time. It begins a nearly 60 year period of warfare between Indians and whites.

Narrator: The French and Indian War pitted old world adversaries against each other in the new world... And Native Americans decide for the first time, to take part in a foreign war on their land...

Don Rettig: Native peoples would align themselves with a particular group like the French, only to find themselves basically abandoned by an ally, after their ally lost. As the French did during the French & Indian War, as the British later did.

Larry Nelson: The treaty that ends the American Revolution, the 1783 Treaty of Paris, cedes what is now Ohio to the United States, and as a result, Indians who live here lose virtually all their territory.

G. Michael Pratt: The British and the Americans meet separately and draw the US...Canadian boundary through the Great Lakes, where it is right now. And the Native Americans find that all of the land that they thought (Name Key In) they had been promised by the British at the end of the War, that is all the lands north of the Ohio River, are now (Name Key Out) ceded away by the British to the Americans.

Larry Nelson: And the Indians are astounded when they learn that. They had never lost a battle on Ohio soil, had not been a part of the negotiations that led to the treaty and are simply amazed to find out that they've lost not only the war, but their homes as well.

G. Michael Pratt: And this sets off then all the wars that take place in the 1790s as the Native Americans try to defend land that they believe should still be rightfully theirs down to the Ohio River. The Americans, standing on the treaty that they made with the British, fail to comprehend the Indian claims of ownership, deny the Indian claims of ownership, try to buy it back and then decide, militarily that they're going to take it.

Narrator: After two defeats at the hands of an Indian Confederation Army led by the Miami Chief Little Turtle... President Washington sent General Anthony Wayne into northern Ohio for the climactic Battle of Fallen Timbers.

Don Rettig: He came up through Ohio, built forts along the way, and ended up meeting and engaging the native confederation in between the present day towns of Waterville and Maumee.

Larry Nelson: The battle lasts only a short time. As a matter of fact it lasts such a short time, that Anthony Wayne is convinced that he has only gone through a preliminary skirmish and halts his army before following up his victory, convinced that he's being lured into a trap. But the battle was actually over...with enormous consequences for the future history of the United States.

Narrator: The Native Confederacy signed the Treaty of Greenville, which relinquished their claim to most of Ohio, except for designated areas on the western end of Lake Erie.

Randy Buchman: And when Wayne draws the line and creates that territory which is Indian and that territory which is white, we start the first steps towards the way our government will solve the problem for a long time...Reservations.

Narrator: Ohio became the first state formed from the Northwest Territory in 1803. But much of the Lake Erie shoreline remained an unsettled wilderness because of the continuing tensions between the British, Indians and Americans... It culminated in the War of 1812. The British Navy's presence on the Great Lakes, allowed the rapid movement of troops and supplies and led to early victories at Forts Detroit, Dearborn and Mackinac. American General William Henry Harrison had access to more men but couldn't move or supply them as quickly.

Larry Nelson: Harrison advances to the rapids of the Maumee River, where he begins to build Fort Meigs, a large and imposing facility that is intended as a supply depot in which he can accumulate the men and supplies necessary for him to recoup his army and then carry the war to Canada.

Narrator: **The British laid siege to the outpost in May of 1813, but the Americans held the fort. They attacked the American garrison again unsuccessfully in July after their canons were commandeered by the British Navy for use at the forthcoming Battle of Lake Erie. After attempting to lure the Americans out of the fort, the British and their allies withdrew.**

Larry Nelson: (Name Key In) The British, who had taken up the attack against Fort Meigs, sail down the Maumee, they sail over to the Huron River and eventually (Name Key out) attack Ft. Stephenson in Lower Sandusky, where present day Fremont is, and that attack is repelled by George Croghan. That attack marks the last hostile invasion of Ohio until Morgan's Raid in the Civil War.

Narration: Despite their defeats at Fort Meigs and Fort Stephenson, the British maintained a commanding naval presence on Lake Erie.

Walter Rybka: They had a base at Ft. Malden which was at Amherstburg, across the river from Detroit.

Walter Rybka: They were in a very (Name Key In) disadvantageous position though, because they were at the end of a very long supply line, which was (Name Key out) easily interdicted. The American industry was miniscule by British standards but it was much closer to the front.

Narrator: The Secretary of the Navy ordered construction of an American fleet in Erie, Pennsylvania under the command of Oliver Hazard Perry. Perry's first challenge however was finding a crew.

Walter Rybka: One of the things that most people are unaware of is that there was a significant African American presence in the US Navy and Merchant Marine during this era. We don't know exact numbers or names because the race wasn't recorded, part of this is because the official policy was to recruit only

free white males. But each captain was responsible for filling out his own crew, and if his responsibility is to have a mission capable ship, the obvious answer is to recruit whoever is qualified and willing to serve, and just not tell the Secretary of the Navy who they are.

Narrator: When Perry and the American fleet began disrupting British supply lines, it set up a crucial battle for control of Lake Erie.

Walter Rybka: The battle was fought about 10 miles west of Put-In-Bay, Ohio. The British had six vessels under command of Robert Harriet Barclay. The Americans had 9 vessels under the command of Oliver Hazard Perry.

Sue Judis: Perry needed to get in close range to the British fleet. The British with their long guns could shoot farther, so as Perry was approaching the British line, they started to fire on Perry and his flagship the Lawrence.

Narrator: The Lawrence was named to honor the memory of James Lawrence, captain the USS Chesapeake, who was killed in battle off Boston Harbor. Lawrence's last words to his crew were "Don't Give up the Ship!", a motto that Oliver Perry adopted for his battle flag. As Perry pressed the attack in the Lawrence, his other Brig "the Niagara" held back... Perry's ship was slowly battered to pieces by the British fleet... After his guns were disabled and most of his men killed or wounded, the Brig Niagara finally joined the battle. Perry lowered his battle flag, boarded a lifeboat and under heavy enemy fire, transferred his command to the Niagara.

Walter Rybka: Perry's transfer is one of the best known episodes in US Naval history. His motto flag was "don't give up the ship!" In actuality the only way to win the battle was to give up the ship and go to the next one. The real motto was "Don't give up!"

Narrator: Perry led the crew of the Niagara to victory, and for the first time in naval history captured an entire British fleet. At the conclusion of the battle, Perry, wrote General Harrison, "We have met the enemy and they are ours, two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop. Yours, with great respect and esteem, O.H. Perry."

Walter Rybka: The Battle of Lake Erie forced the abandonment of the British position at Detroit, it broke the Indian alliance with the British, and allowed us to regain the Michigan territory that essentially had been lost at the beginning of the war.

Background Voice: Battery....Fire! (sound of canon firing)

Narrator: The Treaty of Ghent ended the war in 1815. At the centennial anniversary of the Battle, work began on Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial on South Bass Island in remembrance of the Battle of Lake Erie and to celebrate the lasting peace between Canada and the United States.

Narrator: The War of 1812 preserved America's presence on Lake Erie and its control over the Old Northwest Territory and vast undiscovered natural resources buried there.

Larry Nelson: Resources that include water transportation networks, timber, iron, coal, boxite and magnesium. All of which will eventually allow the United States to emerge as one of the world's great industrial powers in the late 19th century. And to a considerable degree, allow the United States to maintain its position as one of the great capitalist democracies throughout the world, to the present day.

Narrator: At the end of the American Revolutionary War, Great Britain ceded its territory east of the Mississippi River to the United States. Much of that land was claimed by one of the thirteen original colonies... Connecticut claimed territory in what is now northern Ohio. In exchange for surrendering its western lands, Congress designated a large parcel in present day northeastern Ohio as the Connecticut Western Reserve.

George Knepper: (Name Key in) Connecticut didn't quite know what to do with this land, it was a raging wilderness. So they succumbed (Name Key out) to the blandishments of land speculators, and sold most of the land in that Connecticut Western Reserve to private land speculators.

Narrator: Connecticut retained what are now the Ohio counties of Erie and Huron for their residents who lost land or goods to British raids during the Revolutionary War.

George Knepper: As a result of this condition, those lands in Ohio were known as the "Fire Lands"...

Narrator: Most of Ohio's early settlers lived along the Ohio River... until the completion of the Erie Canal, which connected Lake Erie near Buffalo to Albany New York on the Hudson River, and opened northern Ohio to commerce and settlement.

George Knepper: Then of course, what Ohio did starting in 1825, the same time the Erie Canal was opened, went out on a limb and started constructing a canal system that would connect the Ohio River with Lake Erie.

John Grabowski: When the first section of that canal was completed between Cleveland and Akron on July 4, 1827, (Name Key in) the price of farmers' commodities rose. They could sell their commodities for (Name Key out) a better price simply because they could finally get it out to a market.

Carol Poh Miller: (Name Key in) With the arrival of the Ohio & Erie Canal and its completion in 1833 as far as Portsmouth (Name Key out) on the Ohio River, Cleveland just boomed. It became the place of transport for products from the Western Reserve of Ohio that were heading east.

George Knepper: It was the trade of the upper lakes, starting with Lake Erie that made New York City, the great bursting commercial center of America.

Narrator: Canals provided access to other markets and their benefits became apparent to all. The small inland town of Milan built their own canal... a 3 mile path connecting to the Huron River. It briefly became one of the largest grain shipping ports in the world thanks to its access to Lake Erie. The Miami and Erie Canal connected Toledo to Cincinnati and opened the northwestern part of the state.

Don Rettig: As word of the canal came, speculators, land speculators began to write letters back to eastern cities. So by 1832, if you picked up a newspaper (Name Key in) in Baltimore or if you picked up a newspaper in Pittsburgh, you would read these glowing reports of this area of northwest Ohio (Name Key out) and the richness of the soil, and how much you could grow, how much corn you could grow and how many bushels of wheat you could grow per acre. Of course, in the east where the land wasn't so rich, this sounded great to people.

Narrator: As those farmers flooded into northwest Ohio they usually found their parcel of rich farmland lay under the Great Black Swamp. These predominantly German immigrants dug ditches and laid clay tiles under the fields, which drained the land.... revealing some of the most fertile soil in the world...The Canals also carried Ohio's earliest immigrants ... first as workers and later as passengers...

John Grabowski: The Irish came and helped build the canals, they stayed on, they unloaded the boats. As there were jobs to be had, as there were customers for businesses, you began to get German immigrants. And the Germans were the most numerous of the groups coming in, in the 1830s, 40s and 50s.

Narrator: They came to Ohio for a fresh start, some for business or agriculture... others for religion...

George Knepper: Ohio was not only attractive to people because of the lands that were available, it was attractive to many in the east because it was comparatively a new land. Free from the cultural domination of established churches.

Narrator: One of the first religious groups to settle in northern Ohio was the North Union Shaker colony near Cleveland...founded in 1822.

Mary Jo Groppe: They lived, we try to remember the 3 Cs; (Name Key in) communally, all their worldly goods kind of went into one pot, (Name Key out) the confession of sin was part of their religious belief, and celibacy was another...strange to the outside world, but a belief that the Shakers had. They believed you should love every human being equally. Not a husband or a wife more than other people, so they did not marry, they did not live as husband and wife. They believed that all the work they did was for the glory of God. So the better you could do your work, the better you'd be serving God. And this meant they were very inventive. They created more efficient ways of doing things.

George Knepper: the Shaker rake, for example was the epitome of a spare, attractive, useful design. Shaker benches, Shaker cabinets, all of these are ultimately are highly valued by collectors.

Mary Jo Groppe: Well they did server the needs of their time by taking in children, orphans...mothers who's husbands had died perhaps and they earn a living on a farm by themselves, would bring their children, and whole families would join. But after they became shakers, the mothers and the fathers didn't live together as married couples. And the children lived in the children's house, the boys and the girls.

Narrator: The Shakers welcomed new members to the colony who were willing to live by their doctrine... even when they knew it would only be a temporary arrangement.

Mary Jo Groppe: There were a lot of sailors, who sailed of the Great Lakes and worked on the ships there. When the lakes would freeze, many of them did come to the shakers, and they were called "Winter Shakers." They were accepted with kindness and open arms if they lived as Shakers.

Narrator: After the Civil War, North Union's membership dwindled, and it disbanded in 1889...The few remaining Shakers moved to other colonies...and the land that they called "The Valley of God's Pleasure" was sold. It became known as Shaker Heights one of America's wealthiest suburban neighborhoods... In Kirtland, just 20 miles from the North Union Colony, Joseph Smith and his followers constructed one of the largest buildings in northern Ohio as their first house of worship.

Barbara Walden: Joseph Smith was the founder of the Latter Day Saint Movement, and considered by many to be one of the most influential religious leaders in US history.

Barbara Walden: The details about his experience we really don't know, but what we do know is that he had a profound spiritual experience and as the years went on these spiritual experiences continued. One of which (Name Key in) led to the publication of the book of Mormon. Another led him to begin a church of his own (Name Key out) called the Church of Christ, which was established April 6th, 1830. and within a year, Joseph Smith and his family move here to Kirtland. They establish the headquarters of the church, here in Kirtland, and by 1833 they begin building their first temple, the Kirtland Temple.

Barbara Walden: This was taking place during what was called the Pentecostal Period. Latter Day Saints are seeing angels and hearing angels, they're writing it down in their journals. Needless to say, it's an exciting time. But by the end of 1836, it wasn't always joyful. Certainly by 1837, they became increasingly concerned about the poor.

Narrator: Church leaders started their own bank to serve their congregation, but were denied a charter by the state.

Barbara Walden: Sydney Rigdon was named the president of the bank and Joseph Smith Jr. was named the cashier. They called it the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company because they didn't receive that charter. And within the same year the bank began, it unfortunately failed as well. By January of 1838, Joseph Smith Jr. and Sydney Rigdon are literally chased out of town. And by the end of that year, hundreds of Latter Day Saints follow them out of Kirtland, packing many of their things. By 1839 the following year, there are only about 100 Latter Day Saints here in Kirtland caring for the Temple. It was a very difficult time in the life of the church.

Narrator: Following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, the church split into several factions...some of which eventually returned to Kirtland and worshipped in the Temple. The Community of Christ held regular services at there from the late 1880s through the 1950s and now preserves the Kirtland Temple as a Historic center.

Barbara Walden: Of the Latter Day Saint community that was here 170 years ago, today there are a number of Latter Day Saint tradition churches that share the common heritage of the Kirtland Temple.

Narrator: Oberlin was founded in 1833 by evangelical protestants, Father John J. Shipherd and Philo Stewart... and was intended as a Utopian Colony, built around a collegiate institute...

Lasser: From the beginning it was (Name Key in) to be a place to civilize what was then looked at as the un-churched west. (Name Key out) The men at the institute were to study theology, the women were to study alongside them to be minister's wives and teachers in the communities. They were committed visionaries, and they really had a notion that working together they could make a little heaven on earth.

Lasser: Stewart and Shipherd had both been very much effected by the Second Great Awakening which had swept through Upstate New York, and both of them had as young men, come into contact with the preaching of Charles Grandison Finney, the great evangelist of the Second Great Awakening, who had preached this very, very powerful message of personal change, of the ability of individuals to save themselves. This in itself was something of a departure from earlier Protestant Theology which had in its Calvinist guise, been pre-destinarian. That is, you were born to a certain fate, and you would die in that fate. New Measure Protestantism said that you can actually work for your own salvation, and more than that, that you had a responsibility to convert other people.

Narrator: Oberlin College struggled financially until Shipherd met with a group of theology students from the Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, who were forced out of the school over their staunch abolitionist activities.

Lasser: The Lane Rebels asked Shipherd to insure for them at Oberlin, complete freedom of speech, since they had been blocked in their anti-slavery revivals

while at Lane. They also wanted a commitment to the admission of students to Oberlin, irrespective of color.

Quinn Smith: (Name Key in) Oberlin College was fortunate because the Lane Seminary was supported by the Tappan Brothers who were philanthropists in New York. (Name Key out) And of course that saved Oberlin so that they could continue to educate and continue with their goals.

Narrator: The movement of the Lane Rebels and the support of the Tappan Brothers brought Charles Grandison Finney to Oberlin....where he became pastor of First Church, a professor and eventually President of the College....

Lasser: Initially, this notion of admission of students irrespective of race, was quite shocking. It took them a while to grow accustomed to the idea, and particularly to the idea that it not only the elimination of slavery, but it was the elimination of color prejudice. The embrace of people of color as equals within this fledgling evangelical community.

Narrator: Oberlin's educational opportunities soon attracted African Americans from across the nation.

Quinn Smith: My family migrated to Ohio because they had heard of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, and they wanted to make sure that their families were educated.

Narrator: But for some blacks Oberlin was only a temporary haven on their search of freedom.

Lasser: It became a well known stop on the Underground Railroad. Through friends, through colleagues, through word that got back to communities of color. It was said that by 1860 there were at least 28 fugitives living somewhat openly above ground in Oberlin on the eve of the Civil War. And these were people who were protected by the town, who sometimes got relief funds from the town. Who were known as residents and respectful people.

Quinn Smith: They were determined that no slave would be returned to slavery. And that was the standard that they abided by.

Lasser: And indeed, that's the case when you get to the story of the Oberlin/Wellington Rescue in 1858. that when the fugitive, John Price is seen being taken south by slave catchers, that the town, college and community, professors and students, townspeople black and white, storm the hotel in Wellington, They spirit him away, they bring him back to Oberlin where he is hidden away until he is able to escape to Canada himself.

Charlotte Lehto: (Name Key in) It was against federal law to help a slave and the Fugitive Slave laws were very strict about returning property to their owners. (Name Key out) The only way they could escape that was to be on what was British soil at the time, Canada, since Canada had outlawed slavery.

Quinn Smith: The rescuers were put in jail. And they, they had a chance to bargain, but they said “no, we will serve our time, because it will bring more attention to the slavery question and get something done and moving” so that they could do away with slavery. And so they served the 85 days.

Cathy Nelson: Ohio was a Free State, Ohio historically as part of the Northwest Territory made it free...However, Ohio was (Name Key in) what I consider, a tricky state. You see, Ohio was settled by southerners and it was also settled in the Northern part of Ohio (Name Key out) by people who came out of New England, you had the Western Reserve mindset, who were people who were staunchly abolitionist. You had people who lived south of Columbus, in the southern counties of Ohio who had come from Kentucky and come from Virginia, and brought their slave mindset with them. And so you have a clash of two cultures in this state.

Narrator: There were many stations that would help people cross over the lake to freedom...Toledo...Sandusky... Lorain...Cleveland and in the heart of the Western Reserve, Ashtabula’s Hubbard House was the terminus of the Underground Railroad.

Charlotte Lehto: The Hubbards themselves, William and Catherine, were very interested in the early abolitionist movement here and were some of the founding members of the local abolitionist societies, and they also opened their home and their farm here to escaping slaves. And Professor Wilbur Siebert, who wrote a book about the Underground Railroad in 1898, believes that about 300 people came through here...through this house.

Narrator: Once the freedom seekers reached the lake, they were relatively safe...and only a boat ride away from Canada and Freedom.

Cathy Nelson: I don’t think that journey was particularly easy at any point in time. You know when you look at that water, and if that water on that lake is just rolling, and that’s the only time you can go...that’s when you have to go. It had to be an extraordinary and a very, very dangerous journey. But if you could only keep in your mind, that “If I can just make it I’ll be free”, that had to have been the only thing they held onto.

Narrator: During the Civil War, over 300,000 Ohioans served in the Union Army. While cities like Cleveland became industrial centers that supplied the Union war effort, Johnson’s Island did its part as a Prison Camp for captured confederate officers.

Bush: Johnson’s Island is a small island in Sandusky Bay. It’s about a mile long and half a mile wide. The Union leased the Island (Name Key in) from Mr. Johnson so they could use it as a military prison. (Name Key out)

Bush: Johnson’s Island was constructed in the fall and winter of 1861, and by April of 1862, there was enough housing to allow prisoners to start coming to the

island. And through the course of the 40 months that it was used as a prison, we had over 10,000 officers that were imprisoned at Johnson's Island.

Narrator: One of the last remaining public areas of Johnson's island is a Confederate cemetery and is the final resting place for over 300 Confederate Officers.

Bush: In 1888, some Georgia businessmen visited Johnson's Island and saw how dilapidated the cemetery had become, and they decided to do something about that. So they went back and purchased some Georgia marble, had the names of the prisoners that they could still read from their headboards engraved on those tombstones and had them shipped up to Johnson's Island and erected. And then shortly after that the United Daughters of the Confederacy became concerned about the long-term preservation of that cemetery and they bought the land from Mr. Johnson. The land was then donated to the Federal Government, which they accepted, and it's been maintained by the Department of Veterans Affairs ever since.

Narrator: By the 1850s, railroads replaced canal boats as the preferred means of transporting materials and passengers cross-country. And the Ohio lake ports became important railroad junctions.

Although the trains permitted the rapid shipment of goods, they couldn't compete with the amount of bulk cargo that was carried on the Great Lakes.

John Grabowski: Grain, limestone, coal, and particularly Iron Ore, the most effective, most cost effective way to ship it is via the lake.

Ryan: (name key in) The Civil War...the requirement for steel, the requirement for iron for canons, is what made (name key out) the beginning of Great Lake shipping history.

Bowlus: As the 19th century progressed and the iron ore sources of Lake Superior became not only known but appreciated, (name key in) the lake provided a very important conduit for that iron ore coming south to various locations where it was processed into iron and steel. (name key out)

Carol Poh Miller: The completion of the Sault St Marie Canal in 1855 really marked the start of ore shipments in quantity, and so you had the infrastructure here for the cheap transport of iron ore by lake boat and the arrival by rail car of coal from the southeastern part of Ohio and the western part of Pennsylvania.

Ryan: And that's what happened in Detroit, in Lorain, in Cleveland, in Buffalo and of course, Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh had the same competitive edge you might say, because they were near the coal fields, we just had to move the iron ore down there, and it came through Ashtabula and Conneaut.

Hirsimaki: (name key in) Prior to 1892, Conneaut was a lake port, but there wasn't much there, they built (name key out) wooden sailing ships and there was

a fishing industry, but there was very little in Conneaut. It started as a port in 1892 and it was specifically built by and for the US Steel Corporation, or at that time, the Carnegie's steel company.

Narrator: The marriage of lake shipping and the railroads transformed Ohio's coastal towns into manufacturing centers. Soon other industries benefited from easy access to natural resources and transportation routes. This industrial build up happened all across the state from Conneaut to Toledo, creating an insatiable need for workers...

John Grabowski: Beginning in the 1870s, 1880s, the chief source of labor was from Europe.

George Knepper: They were Poles and Russians and Hungarians, and uh people from the Balkans. They were Italians in large numbers, Sicilians, Macedonians, Greeks. And these northern Ohio industrial cities became very heavily ethnicized.

Becker: They would build their own homes, and then build their own churches. (name key in) The groups would come together, the different ethnic groups, and build their places of worship, and so you had (name key out) just this whole community developing around different industries.

Narrator: In the northeastern ports of Fairport Harbor, Ashtabula and Conneaut, Finnish immigrants came to Ohio to work on the ore and coal docks.

Hirsimaki: They were manual labor, just like the Irish had been in the mid 1800s. The boats were unloaded by hand, they would lower a bucket into the cargo hold and the guys would fill it with a shovel and they'd hoist it out, put it back in and they'd have a 3000 ton cargo of iron ore, it was all unloaded by hand with shovels. You know it was a dangerous operation. My dad said that when he was chief clerk at the dock in Conneaut, they used to have a ledger. It listed all the casualties on the docks. There would be entries like, "So and so, missing. So and so, crushed by railroad car, so and so fell into cargo hold, killed." He said a lot of men just vanished. They'd fall into a hopper car, get buried under iron ore and go into a blast furnace, nobody would ever know it. So there was a lot of danger involved in addition to a lot of hard work.

Narrator: The immigration cycle continued until World Wars one and two cut off the flow of workers from Europe. Blacks from southern states and whites from Appalachia migrated northward, to take their turn in the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs in the factory.

Narrator: The foundries needed iron ore, coal and lime from limestone to make steel, much of which came from Lake Erie. Northern Ohio is dotted with active quarries and the remnants of once vibrant sites.

James Miller: Limestone that was quarried for the lime business was quarried in Sandusky, some of it was quarried at Johnson's Island, and there was a large facility at the end of the peninsula. And there was a large facility on Kelleys Island. And initially all of this was used for construction or the lime business.

Narrator: Sandusky didn't benefit from the Iron Ore trade as much as Cleveland did. Instead, they relied on their own lake-based industries, seasonal as they might be.

James Miller: The businesses in town were all somewhat interrelated. You had the harvesting of lumber. The lumber was used to either ship out as lumber, or it was used in the production of barrels. The production of barrels was used to ship fish, which the fishermen caught in the summertime or to ship lime. In the wintertime they were harvesting ice.

Susan Cooper: Back before we had air conditioning and refrigerators, there was a big need for ice through the summertime. So they would go out and chop up cubes of ice and ship them to Toledo and Cleveland and Detroit.

Neil Allen Jr: The ice fields would be scored by horse teams, and then ice workers would take large saw and they would saw the ice into blocks.

James Miller: And by hand these fellas would take these saws and cut the grooves to form blocks. These blocks would be about 2 feet wide, four feet long and whatever the thickness of the ice was. Then they would cut a trench in the ice from wherever the ice field was to shore and using long poles called ice poles which they called pike poles, they would push these huge blocks to the shore.

Susan Cooper: which would be stored in very insulated buildings, which were insulated with sawdust or straw. And that ice normally would stay frozen until about the middle of August.

Neil Allen Jr: And during the peak seasons for the ice harvesting, as many as 500 railroad cars would be lined up in Sandusky to transport ice as close by as Cleveland and as far west as St Louis.

Narrator: Immigrants also came to northern Ohio as farmers in search of a fresh start on land of their own. Much of the lakeshore is still covered with crops of all varieties... and orchards full of apples, peaches and other fruit trees. Many of these farms and orchards not only fed their families but the nation as well.

Dan & Barry Bergman: (Dan speaking): They would use horse and wagons to haul their fruit to the fruit houses, which was only a half a mile down the road and they packed them onto train cars and they tiered them up into bushel baskets and they stacked them all the way to the very top, (name key in) and they packed them onto train cars and then they put (name key out) ice from the ice houses that they had cut during the winter and they'd use that for the refrigeration effect inside the train cars.

Narrator: German and Italian farmers also planted thousands of acres of vineyards, especially on the Lake Erie islands and the Ohio lakeshore developed a rich tradition of wine making.

Some of the Island vineyards got their start with Jose DeRivera St Jurgo who owned the Bass Islands...

Cooper: They originally tried to plant corn and to lumber the island, but because of the great weather, the islands stay warmer in the fall, Kelleys Island started planting grapes, and so DeRivera followed suit and he brought in these German settlers and they started to plant vineyards.

Doni Winchell: Well, before prohibition, there were a lot of wineries. Actually the city of Sandusky supported 27 wineries within its city limits, prior to prohibition. But once prohibition came, the grape growers were told that their occupation was illegal, that they were contributing to the devil's work. (name key in) And so almost without exception, these wine grapes were pulled out and replanted with juice and jelly varieties, primarily Concord. (name key out) They were sold to Welch's and to Smucker's for juices and jellies and most of the growers made a fairly good living in the 30s and 40s and 50s. In the 70s, Ohio State University began doing some research in southern Ohio, telling us we could grow wine grapes that we thought were not possible here. And so they began replacing those Concord and Catawba vines with grapes like Riesling and Chardonnay and in some cases Cabernet Sauvignon.

Narrator: The water of Lake Erie itself produces two unique grape growing regions within northern Ohio....

Doni Winchell: First would be North Bass Island or the Island group in the middle of Lake Erie. They have the longest growing season at this latitude, in the eastern United States, so they can produce some exceptional fruit. The soil is limestoney, and they produce really unique flavor components in the fruit. The second area would be the Grand River Valley. It is the area that is four statute miles wide and 22 miles long as the Grand River flows east and west in Lake and Ashtabula County. Literally 65% of the grapes in all of the state are grown in that tiny little area. The Grand River Valley and the Lake Erie Islands have a similar climatic condition and that is all provided by Lake Erie

Narrator: Lake Erie's icy cold water delays the spring growth by more than two weeks, which protects the budding grape vines from late season frost.

Claudio Salvador: During the summertime, the lake warms up. By warming up, these beautiful bodies of water, ok? Prolong our growing season. In the fall we are able to obtain a higher amount of sugar and also we are able to keep the grapes (name key in) longer on the vines, to gain more sugar. So this body of water has a very important part (name key out) in our grape growing.

Melinda Huntley: As the wineries prospered on the islands, steamboats came bringing folks and Harper's Bazaar Magazine did an article on the wine islands of Ohio

Melinda Huntley: It eventually evolved. We had very large resorts, (name key in) Johnson's Island Pleasure Resort, Cedar Point began. And we really kicked off (name key out) all along Lake Erie, a tourism industry that attracted travelers.

Susan Cooper: The whole tourist trade really started with the steamships. The steamships (name key in) out of Detroit and Toledo, and Cleveland and Buffalo, (name key out) started transporting people from city to city.

Narrator: The Steamships that once brought immigrant workers to jobs in northern Ohio, now ferried them across the lake to a variety of burgeoning vacation destinations on the water.

David W. Francis: (name key in) There were at least a dozen Amusement parks and related summer resorts that operated from Toledo all the way to the Pennsylvania border. (name key out) The most famous, the most prestigious, certainly Cedar Point, which is still there today and opened in 1870.

James Miller: They had the beach, they had toboggans. They had rudimentary merry-go-rounds that would take you out over the water. People made day trips, eventually the hotel was built so people could spend more than a day...

Narrator: Euclid Beach and other attractions also developed along the Lake Erie shoreline.

Francis: Lake Erie is what made them. Because there were cool summer breezes, there was swimming, there was boat riding. Eventually there were airplane rides over the lake. So the lake itself was a major attraction and played a crucial role in the summer resorts.

Lakeside began as a Methodist campground in 1873 and quickly grew into a small vacation community complete with summer cottages and a hotel...Following the example of the Chautauqua Institution in Upstate New York, Lakeside offered a mixture of spiritual and secular programs, as well as a swimming pavilion, and venues for concerts and church services for thousands of daily visitors.

Narrator: Many lakefront towns have a rich heritage of commercial fishing. These hard working businesses thrived off the bounty of Lake Erie...

Jeff Reutter: We harvest more fish for human consumption each year out of Lake Erie than the other four Great Lakes combined.

John Hageman: It has species such as walleye, yellow perch, white bass, (name key in) channel catfish, smelt, that are produced in very large numbers (name key out)

Elena Irwin: Commercial fishing...at the turn of the century was the predominant, use of the lake, in terms of fishing. (name key in) Now we're down to just a handful of commercial fisheries on Lake Erie, and by far the vast majority (name key out) of fishing that occurs on the lake is sport fishing, so it's for recreational purposes.

Jeff Reutter: Well in 1975, there were 34 charter fishing businesses on Lake Erie. (name key in) By the mid 1980s and the late 1980s the number of charter captains (name key out) had increased to over 1200. Each one represents a small business. In fact 40% of all the charter captains on the Great Lakes are on Lake Erie in Ohio.

Narrator: Lake Erie has a temper, and can roll and swell with ferocity. Lifeboat rescue stations like those located in Ashtabula and Lorain were common sites along the Ohio shoreline, ready to assist sailors in need. Ohio's Light houses remain a respectful testament to the anger of Lake Erie.

Melinda Huntley: Lake Erie, because it's the shallowest, has been known to kick up rather quickly, and so a lot of the lighthouses were formed because of necessity.

Bob Frisbie: In the early days, your ships were basically wooden ships, sailing ships, there was no need for them to be out in the middle of the lake which is where the present day ships run, wooden ships would be about 300 yards off of the lake shore, (name key in) 500 yards, basically so they could see the shore line and continue down the lake (name key out) without having a lot of need for aids to navigation. But there were days and nights when they would use the lighthouses.

Melinda Huntley: There are 17 different lighthouses that are along just the Ohio portion of Lake Erie. Many of them still serve as nautical aides as maritime beacons...some of them no longer serve quite as much of that function however and they're becoming more tourist attractions

Narrator: Over the years, tourism has become increasingly important to Ohio, especially for the smaller cities and towns along Lake Erie.

Melinda Huntley: Tourism is an industry that is often misunderstood, but along Lake Erie it is a huge industry. Visitors to the Lake Erie counties spend over 8.7 billion dollars each year. And the tourism industry itself, employs over 146,800 full-time equivalent jobs. That's a lot of jobs. I think even more important though is the amount of sales tax that is generated from the tourism industry. Along Lake Erie, we generate over \$350 million dollars each year that go directly to the state tax coffers. These are monies that can be used to fund other programs in the state of Ohio.

Narrator: Despite the countless benefits we've reaped from living near Lake Erie and the abundant resources it still provides the economy, decades of exploitation and neglect ...almost destroyed it.

Jeff Reutter: Previous generations, the way they used the lake, has inhibited some of our uses today.

Carol Poh Miller: (name key in) The pollution of the Cuyahoga River and of the lake dates back to earliest times. In the 19th century (name key out) the river functioned very much as a sewer. There are accounts of immigrants arriving in Cleveland and taking their first look at the river and feeling disheartened by what they saw.

John Hageman: There was industrial pollution. There was whole scale (name key in) farm runoff and sedimentation going on. There was untreated sewage from (name key out) all the cities that weren't at that point yet required to treat their sewage before it went into the lake. And so there was the whole issue of the lake being used as a dumping ground.

Narrator: The critical point for Lake Erie came in 1969 when the entire nation saw the Cuyahoga River, one of its major tributaries...on fire.

Carol Poh Miller: It wasn't the river that caught on fire, it was the stuff being put into the river. And that was a wake up call, not only for Cleveland which suffered horrendous embarrassment over the incident, and became the butt of jokes because of it, but it became a wake up call to the entire nation.

Jeff Reutter: The following year, NOAA is formed, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. EPA is formed. It really was the beginning of the environmental movement in this country. We have the first Earth Day. And I think you can trace it all back to the burning of the Cuyahoga River in 1969.

John Hageman: With the Clean Water Act of 1972, many of those issues have been dealt with, and Lake Erie has made a dramatic recovery.

Jeff Reutter: Our Generation has done a good job of improving the lake, And really our economy has benefited tremendously from the improvements that have occurred.

Melinda Huntley: It was the people (name key in) who saved Lake Erie, it was people who formed and helped fight to form some of those organizations. (name key out) And we say that if it wasn't for that national exposure and the jokes that were made, that perhaps people wouldn't have been motivated to do what they did quite so soon.

Narrator: Lake Erie has made a remarkable comeback but still struggles with a number of issues including invasive species which enter in the ballast tanks of Ocean going ships. These and other water quality concerns are the subject of research by the Sea Grant Program at the Ohio State University.

Jeff Ruetter: Part of our Sea Grant program is Stone Laboratory. Stone Lab is the oldest freshwater biological field station in the country. We started in 1895. We've been at our current location on Gibraltar Island in Put-In-Bay, since 1925.

Narration: In addition to its research programs, Stone Labs hosts hands on field trips that introduce students of all ages to the wonders and worries of Lake Erie.

Matt Thomas: (name key in) They have the opportunity to do everything a water scientist, a lake scientist would do (name key out)

John Hageman: They're looking at water clarity with a Seki Disc. They're looking at mud samples that they bring up from the bottom. They're given a chance to get their hands wet...and that's the type of activity that they're going to remember for the rest of their lives.

Melinda Huntley: There's a strong connection between tourism and preservation, which is a partnership most folks really don't consider. But in order to get an emotional tie to a place, in order to form a connection to a place, and really be proactive in its preservation or stewardship, you have to experience that place. And that's where tourism can be a partner in preservation.

Narration: Lake Erie's waters reflect a remarkable past... it was the gateway to the West...crucible of industry... a beacon of freedom to the oppressed. Lake Erie also rises and crests on unabated waves... moving toward a hopeful and promising future.

Elena Irwin: The role of the (name key in) lake as a natural amenity in attracting people in terms of a quality of life will just become greater and greater. (name key out) And as people are attracted to that region, so will firms ...More now than ever, Lake Erie is a critical of the regional economic viability.

George Knepper: In my view its very difficult (name key in) to over, over estimate how important Lake Erie has been to the development of Ohio, (name key out) the water issue comes to mind immediately.

Jeff Reutter: 11 million people getting their drinking water every day from the Lake Erie...It is worth so much to the state (name key in) to the region, to the country. Clearly it's Ohio's most valuable natural resource; the most productive lake in the world; (name key out) the most important lake in the world; Millions of people using its beaches. 100,000 people trailering boats back and forth; we have more docks in the Catawba Island area, than they have in San Diego, California. This is a tremendous resource, something that we should be really proud of, and something that we should all work really hard to protect.