



Early Settlement and Industries in Concord Township (Abridged Form)

Northeast Ohio before 1800 was very much the land of woodland bison, wolves, elk, black bear, timber rattlesnakes and mountain lions. Native Americans traversed the area now known as Lake County mostly as hunting grounds. No tribe is thought to have established a permanent presence. The late 1790s find the Western Reserve surveyed and Girdled Road becoming the first road cut from the western Pennsylvania line to Cleveland / Cuyahoga River. Some incorrectly drawn maps put some acreage under Lake Erie as the movement west began. Concord Township's first settlers Messenger and Jordan arrived in the early 1800s but their stories remain for another day.

N.E. Ohio had many rivers and streams making it a perfect source for water powered industries. Along Concord's Big Creek and tributaries a Chair Factory, grist mills, iron furnaces, woolen mill, carding mill, clock works, flour and feed mills, turning mills and tanneries soon rose to prominence. David Mills Pease, Eber Howe, Lewis Morley, Uri Seeley, James Paine and other settlers soon established major industry along Concord's Big Creek corridor. Most chores were initially done by hand i.e., Grinding grain for flour took 2 hours per day per person.

By 1850 most forests in Lake County were cut down, wood for fuel depleted as well as local bog iron ore. Listed below are five of Concord Township's leading industries 1800-1890s.

Stickney-Fay Gristmill:1805

It was located on Big Creek at Fay Road. Built by Robert Martin, sold to Jonathon Stickney, sold to Fay (Mr. Stafford served as miller), it used a 12'x12' overshot wheel. The dam upstream was 1/4 mile away from site. The property is a private residence today.

Pease Mill: 1850

David Mills Pease founded a woodturning business at Cascade Falls in Concord Township's Cascade Valley area. His wood hollowing technique is still reknown to this day and Peaseware in demand among collectors. Pease sought to bring utilitarian focus to his business as sock darners, spice jars, storage containers and needle cases were his mainstays.

Concord Furnace:1826

The Cleveland Herald reported “this furnace made wrought iron of the best quality.” Products fabricated here included ‘pot-ash’ kettles, caldrons, stoves and stove plates as well as castings of all kinds. The factory burned down in 1835 and was not rebuilt.

Thompson Chair Factory:1830s

Located at Jordan Creek on the former Camp Klein property, it started out as a forge for shovels, hoes, forks and other tools under the ownership of James Oviat and Son. Mr. Cooledge succeeded him and used the mill for manufacturing wooden bedsteads. Its mill wheel was rumored to be 5’x32’ in diameter, an era best. A 1878 Cleveland Herald article reported “This was built for a hoe and fork factory by Messrs.Ovett & Son. Mr. Thompson is running a factory in a small way, and turns out a substantial class of work.” The site was destroyed by fire in 1893 and never rebuilt.

Tannery (A.P. Morse):1826

Also located on Jordan Creek, the tannery included a building 60’x80’, 26 vats and employed four workers. Improvements were made in 1852 and 1871 which included adding a 15 hp engine. Annual business totaled 1600 heavy hides and 400 calf skins. More than 66% of the hides were finished as harness leather and the remainder marketed in Boston.

These industries and more stories of Concord Township’s past may be found at the Old Stone School museum on Ravenna Road. Visit concordtwp.com for specifics and public hours.

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