

Lake County History Grab Bag – Part 2/3

The Interurban

From the late 19th to the early 20th century, electric rail systems came to most towns and villages across the United States. Ohio and more specifically Lake County were no strangers to this new type of transportation. In a short period of time, these local trains connected neighborhoods, regions, and a tri-state area to over 17 million people. They were known by the names trolleys, streetcars, subways and interurbans.

In Lake County and across northern Ohio, these changes would influence our county footprint forever. The first electric railway system, developed in 1896, ran from Cleveland to Painesville. Shortly thereafter it stretched into Ashtabula and, in 1910, beyond Buffalo. The C.P.& E.

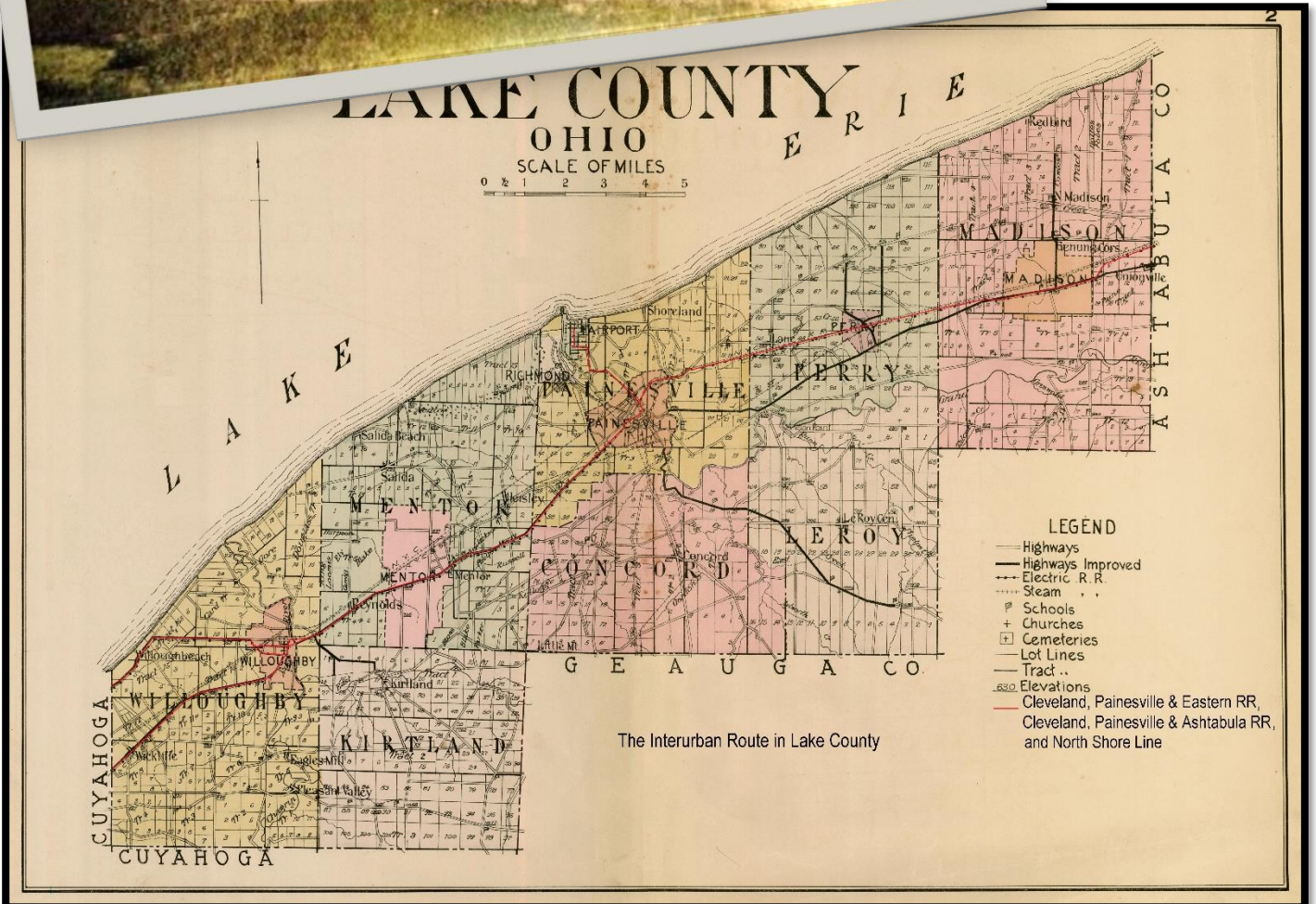


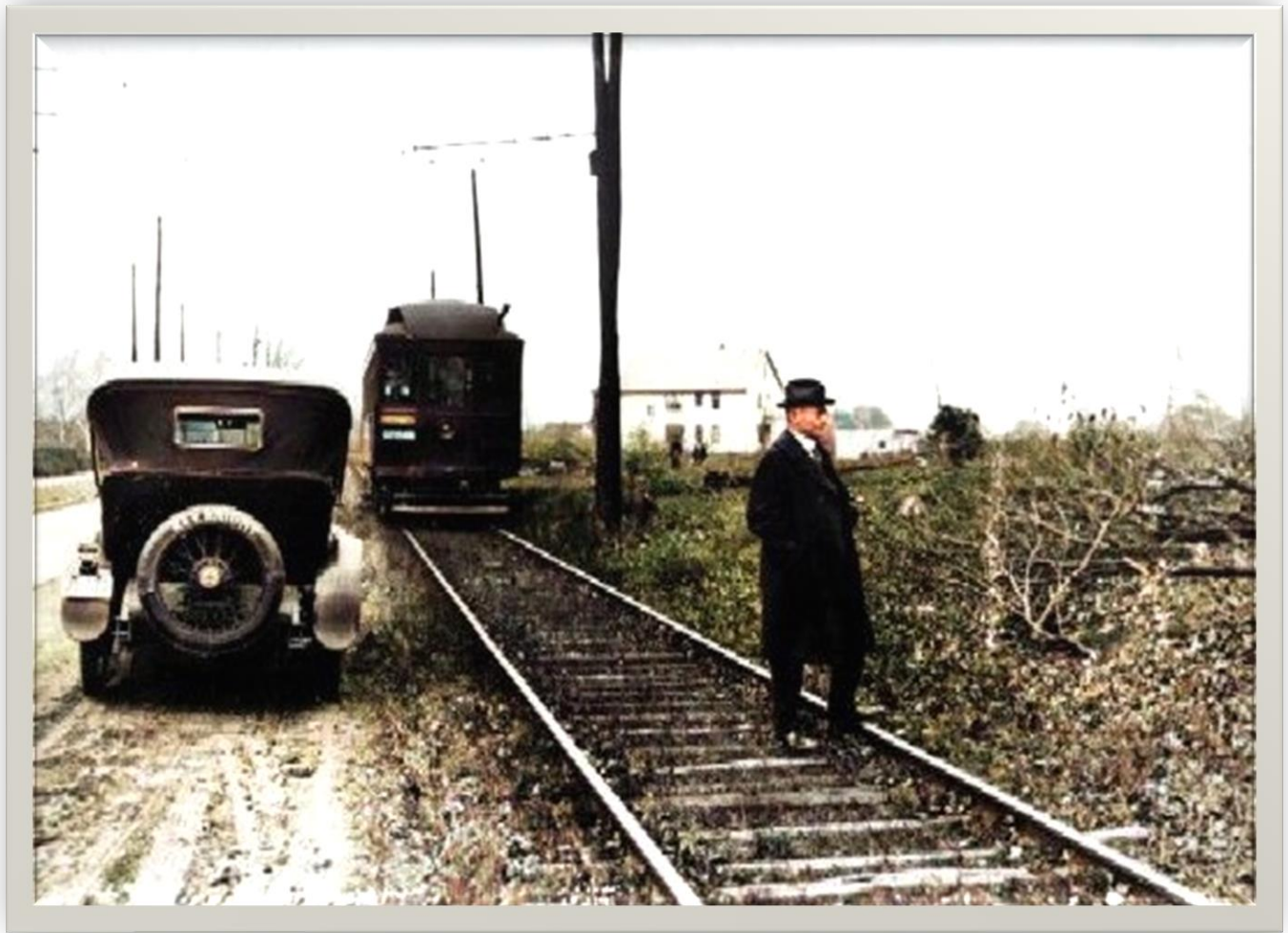
(Cleveland, Painesville and Eastern Railroad) and the C.P. & A. (Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula Railroad) were their official names. Their hub was located in a depot in downtown Willoughby. Also located at the depot/barn hub was an electric generating plant which offered power for purchase by local residential and commercial customers.



This railway syndicate was conceived, developed, and operated by two local gentlemen: Edward Moore and Henry Everett. In time, this partnership added the LSE line (Lake Shore Electric) to their venture. By 1901, the routes covered Cleveland to Toledo and spanned passenger lines to Willoughbeach Park (on Lakeshore Blvd. in Willowick), Fairport Harbor, and Painesville. The main line ran from Cleveland's Public Square to Painesville. Stops 40-49-55-89 traversed Lake County. The Allchin Home and Stop 51 on the interurban line was located just west of the Great

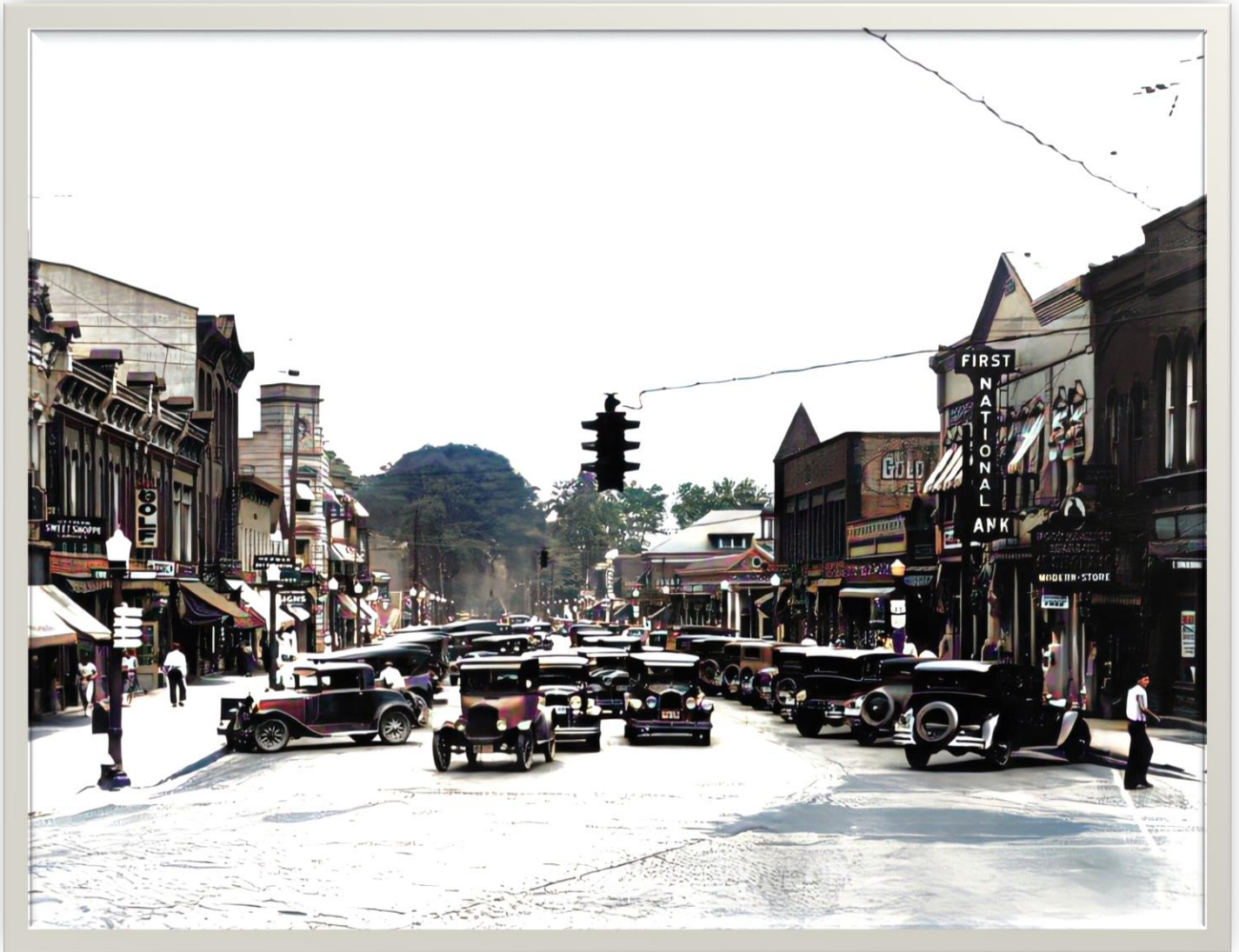
Lakes Mall on Mentor Ave. It was razed in 1978, and today a dry-cleaning store stands on the site.





By the 1920s, the automobile changed everything. The interurban mode of transportation proved to be transitional. Instead of heralding the future of travel, it was Henry Ford's innovations in assembly line manufacturing that put the ultimate freedom of automobile ownership within reach of the ordinary household. Roads and interstate highways were improved so that the car came to dominate the United States landscape. The change in American public opinion from thinking of cars as wildly dangerous vehicles to having a "love affair with the automobile" was no accident. It followed a serious push by

carmakers to change people's beliefs and habits. Getting pedestrians out of the streets was a key first step. Then Americans grabbed their free-wheeling freedom and never looked back.



"I will build a motor car for the great multitude...constructed of the best materials, by the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise...so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one-and enjoy with his family the blessing of hours of pleasure in God's great open spaces."

Henry Ford

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