



Brandywine Falls

Photo: Kevin C. O'Neil

## Valley

European explorers and trappers arrived in the 17th century, and early surveyors put the Cuyahoga River on the map. News about the valley spread. Traders and settlers moved in and soon appreciated the river's potential as a source of livelihood, as the American Indians before them had. The Moravian village of *Pilgerruh*, the first, but short-lived European settlement in the valley, was located near the confluence of Tinkers Creek and the river. In 1786, Connecticut "reserved" 3,500,000 acres in northeastern Ohio for settlement by its citizens. Known as the Western Reserve, it still has a distinctive New England look. Ten years later Moses Cleaveland arrived to serve as a land agent for the Connecticut Land Company and helped lay out the city that bears his name. By treaty between the young United States and Indian tribes, land west of the river was Indian territory until 1805. In 1810 homesteader Jonathan Hale noted that the land was as "good as anyone could wish for."

The Ohio & Erie Canal opened in 1827 between Cleveland and Akron. It paralleled and was partly watered by the Cuyahoga River, and it replaced the river as the primary transportation artery. An engineering feat, the canal was far more than a new waterway—it was a boon to the development of commerce in the Midwest. The towns of Boston and Peninsula boomed with canal-related industry. Cleveland and Akron flourished. More people moved in, looking for jobs and fortunes. By the 1860s, railroads had become prevalent and within a few years replaced the canal as the major route for commerce, industry, and travel. Running through the valley, the railroad led to the eventual demise of the canal, yet contributed to the growth

of the cities. As the cities grew, the Cuyahoga Valley took on a new significance. The valley became a place of refuge—a place to refresh body and spirit.

### A National Park For All People

Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) preserves 33,000 acres along 22 miles of this crooked river between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. In the early 1960s spreading development threatened to take over this valley. Individual citizens joined forces with state and local governments to save the greenspace and historic features. Their efforts crossed paths with the National Park Service, which was then establishing urban recreation areas as a way to bring national parks to people living in cities. In 1974, Congress created Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area as an urban park of the National Park System. In 2000, the recreation area became Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The National Park Service manages the park in cooperation with others who own property within its boundaries, including Cleveland Metroparks and Metro Parks, Serving Summit County, both of which administer several units within CVNP. Together they protect the natural landscape, preserve remnants of the area's human history, and provide a place where you can relax, play, and learn new things in a beautiful outdoor setting.

