

# Travel



U.S. F-12CLP-C-11C.R.W.G-58)

O&E Thursday, October 11, 1984

## Urban park is Cleveland's playground

Three hikers follow the marked trail through Cuyahoga National Recreation Area (CNRA). Soon, ice skaters and cross country skiers will leave clouds of winter breath above the skating rinks and under the trees of this national urban park, one of three such parks established by the National Park Service in the 1970s.

Cuyahoga doesn't look a bit like Yellowstone. Like its sister parks in New York City and San Francisco, it was created to bring National Park Service facilities to city-dwellers who may never visit America's natural wonders.

CNRA is a 30,000-acre park that stretches for 22 miles between Cleveland and Akron. Some local pundits predict that it will someday be the "central park" of a gigantic Cleveland/Akron mega-city. Meantime, it provides nature, history and recreation around the Cuyahoga River, paralleling what is left of the historic Ohio and Erie Canal.

WHEN THE park is in full summer swing, you can ride a steam train between the two cities, visit a restored 19th century village and attend regular events at Blossom Center, summer home of the Cleveland Orchestra.

In winter, the park is a wonderland for those who like to cross country ski, skate, follow nature trails or participate in activities offered by park rangers.

Canal Visitors Center, on Canal Road at the Cleveland end of the park, offers indoor programs, primarily related to the old canal. Happy Days Visitors Center, on Route 303 at the Akron end of the park, offers a regular Lyceum series at 7:30 p.m. Friday nights, free programs that range from speakers and fiddling contests to plays.

WARM-WEATHER activities begin in May when Hale Farm and Village



one-of-a-kind traveler

Iris Jones

contributing travel editor

opens, recreating the life and work of Western Reserve farmers, housewives and tradesmen of the mid-1800s. There is lots of activity: candle-dipping in the farmhouse, glass-blowing and weaving in the craft studios, events in the village church.

To savor the village fully, however, you must slow down to a 19th-century pace. Sit on a rock beside the old footbridge, set in a field between the farm and the church. Hear birds clattering, smell the dust of a summer day, watch insects bend the heads of foxgloves.

Restored villages are always a little too well-run to be true, but this one is a credible reflection of rural life. There are no fences around the site, no polished Williamsburg-style scenes, just rustic costumed townfolk moving purposefully through rough grass on either side of a country road.

A LINE of vintage railway cars, pulled by a 1918 Mikado steam engine, will chug along to the village on its regular Saturday run through the park. It is operated June 16 through Oct. 20, except for Labor Day weekend, by the Midwest Railway Historical Foundation.

Otherwise, you go in by road from either Cleveland or Akron, as you do when you join music lovers at Blossom Center in summer season. They picnic

on the grass or buy seats under cover to hear the Cleveland Orchestra or musical events featuring national performers.

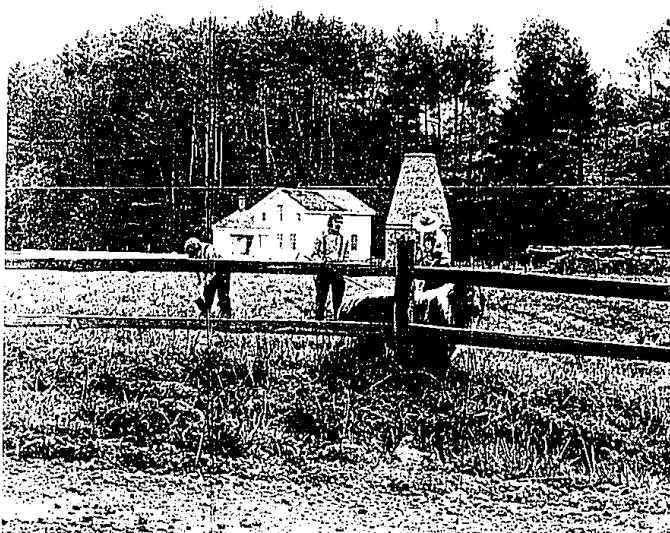
Fall or winter, consider a stop at the Tavern of Richfield, a white clapboard inn in the old canal days. Richfield was once a stagecoach stop between Cleveland and Akron. Today The Tavern is a popular lunch or dinner stop 20 minutes drive from either city, eight miles from Cuyahoga National Recreation Area.

IT DECLINED from an inn to a bordello to a dilapidated bar before Mel Rose restored it as a tavern in 1977. It has since earned four-star rating from Mobil Guides. The tavern is especially popular for Sunday brunch.

For further information, contact Hale Farm and Village of the Western Reserve Historical Society, 2688 Oak Hill Road, Bath, Ohio 44210, call (216) 861-4573 in Cleveland or 666-3711 in Akron. Cuyahoga Valley Preservation and Scenic Railway Association is in the park at P.O. Box 49, Peninsula, Ohio 44264.

The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, P.O. Box 158, Peninsula, Ohio 44264; call (216) 656-2825 in Cleveland, 650-4636 in Akron.

You can also get general information from the convention and visitors bureau in either city.



MICKY JONES

Costumed workers till the soil on the Hale Farm, Cuyahoga National Recreation Area between Akron and Cleveland, Ohio.

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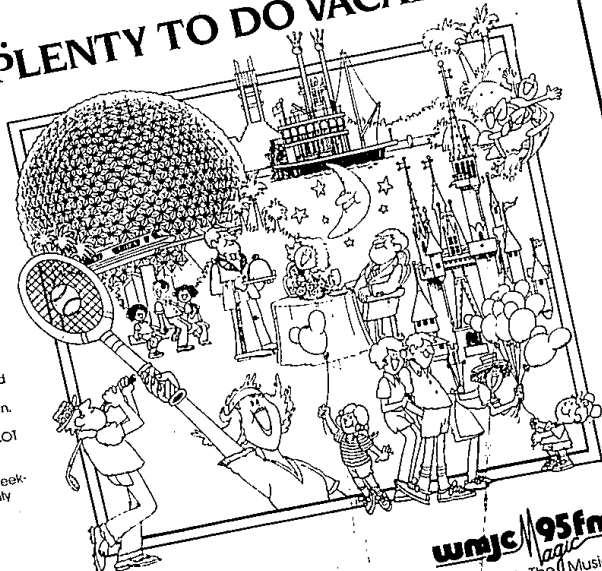
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\*All trips must be taken January 12-16, 1985. See Submissions.



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