



Horseshoe Lake dam from downstream – 1900. Photograph by L. Baus. From the collection of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

*This land was heavily timbered. — and a prodigal use was made of its contents. Little did we dream then of Cleveland's rapid growth, would in a few years demand all our saw timber, and a great deal more than we could produce. A deep regret was felt at the time of being obliged to burn up so much valuable saw timber to clear the land. But this was the best could be done at that time — we needed the land more than we did the timber.*

— Shaker Elder James Prescott

*The History of North Union: Containing the Origin, Rise, and Progress of the Community, from 1822 to 1879*

Around 1800, several cities began to emerge slowly from the unbroken wilderness on the south shore of Lake Erie. Moses Cleaveland established one of these early settlements near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River in 1796. Mosquitoes that inhabited the river's swampy mouth tormented the first pioneers who came to this settlement, which was to become the city of Cleveland. Miserable, ill, and plagued with malaria, some of the settlers soon sought a healthier environment.

Within three years of Moses Cleaveland's arrival, some of these refugees from the ague founded a settlement near a small brook about four miles to the east of the Cuyahoga River. This village and the adjacent stream took on the name of the first settlers, the Doan family. Doan's Corners and Doan Brook were born. For the next 100 years, Doan's Corners — and the other communities that were soon to appear along the brook — prospered and maintained identities distinct from the larger city to the west. The brook was a critical resource for the early settlers, who relied on it for water and power and harvested the natural resources it supported.

Eventually, the thriving city of Cleveland expanded and merged with the communities in the Doan Brook watershed. The stream suffered as the city grew, but the brook continued to serve as the focus of an impressive park system, and its valley drew many of Cleveland's cultural institutions. This is the story of our predecessors in the Doan Brook watershed and of how they molded the watershed and the brook into the shape we see today.

## 2.1 Who Was Here First? Pre-European History

The first European settlers who came to the Cleveland area entered an uninhabited landscape with few traces of earlier occupation. They followed Native American trails through the area and encountered some Native Americans of the Ottawa tribe, but found no settlements of any kind in the immediate vicinity of Cleveland. The closest Native American settlements lay west of the Cuyahoga River and to the south along the Middle Cuyahoga.

Although few obvious traces remained to be found by the first Europeans, there is evidence that Native Americans had once lived in north-east Ohio, possibly beginning as long ago as 12,500 B.C.E.<sup>1</sup> Some of these people, whose ori-

gin is unknown, may well have made the Doan Brook valley their home. Sand ridges along the Lake Erie shore, the shores of small ponds and bogs, and the headwaters of small streams such as Doan Brook would have been attractive locations for the spring agricultural camps of the hunter-gatherers who occupied northern Ohio between about 100 and 700 C.E.<sup>2</sup> More permanent communities, which began to appear in the area around 1000 C.E., tended to be strategically located on steep-sided promontories overlooking the Cuyahoga Valley. The modest Doan Brook valley was probably ill-suited for the settlements of this period. Mysteriously, occupation of the permanent Native American sites near Cleveland seems to have stopped around 1640 C.E., without evidence of deliberate destruction or any European contact. After these settlements were abandoned, the area

<sup>1</sup> Before the Common Era. Equivalent to B.C. when used with dates.

<sup>2</sup> Common Era. Equivalent to A.D. when used with dates.

## Definitions and Orientation

The fold-out figure in Chapter 3 shows an overall map of the Doan Brook and its watershed that supplements the maps in this chapter. The *watershed* is the area of land that drains into the stream. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed definition. The *upper Doan Brook* is the part of the brook that lies on the higher land upstream from the steep hill that cuts across the brook near the intersection of North Park Boulevard with Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard. The *upper watershed*, which lies mostly in Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights, is the part of the watershed on the high ground east of this hill. The *lower Doan Brook* runs north from University Circle through Rockefeller Park and into Lake Erie in Gordon Park. The *lower watershed* surrounds the brook in these areas. The *Doan Brook gorge* is a deep channel (as much as fifty feet deep) that the stream cuts into the rock as it makes its way between the upper and lower watersheds. The gorge lies between the Lower Shaker Lake and University Circle.

remained essentially uninhabited until a few members of the Ottawa tribe migrated from the west in about 1740.

The Native Americans who passed through the Doan Brook watershed left little physical evidence of their presence. Among the few definite signs remaining when Europeans arrived were the Indian path that crossed Doan Brook at what later became Euclid Avenue and an earthen vessel filled with arrowheads that was found in the mid-1800s near what is now the intersection of Ansel and East 101st Streets. These tokens seem sadly insignificant to be the only reminders of the many peoples who may have lived here at different times over a period of more than 14,000 years. Other evidence of their lives may have been destroyed by early European settlers and later construction, or it may still lie within the watershed waiting to be found.

## 2.2 European Explorers: Moses Cleaveland and the Surveyors

The surveyors of Moses Cleaveland's 1796 Connecticut Land Company surveying party were the first known Europeans to explore the Doan Brook watershed. Although exploration of an untamed wilderness seems romantic, Cleaveland's party came to northeastern Ohio for purely commercial reasons. The Connecticut Land Company was in possession of property it wished to sell, and that property had to be divided into townships and lots before sales could begin. The task of the surveyors was to partition the land for sale.

The territory belonging to the Connecticut Land Company consisted of a sixty-mile wide strip of land extending along the Lake Erie shore

from the eastern boundaries of what are now Sandusky and Seneca Counties to the Pennsylvania border. In 1786, Connecticut reserved this land for development by the state, and in 1795 the state sold the area, which came to be known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, to the Connecticut Land Company.

Although the Iroquois had previously ceded the portion of the Connecticut Western Reserve east of the Cuyahoga River to the King of England, a party of Iroquois claiming title to the land intercepted Moses Cleaveland's surveying party as they neared the Western Reserve. In negotiations near present-day Buffalo, New York, Cleaveland repurchased the tract for \$1,250 (New York trade currency), two beef cattle, and one hundred gallons of whiskey.

Cleaveland's surveyors began their work in the Western Reserve in 1796 and returned in 1797 (without Moses Cleaveland) to complete the survey. They worked in the Doan Brook watershed in both years, with most of its survey apparently completed in 1797. The surveyors' interest in the watershed was purely professional — it was merely one small part of the immense and difficult landscape they were hired to traverse. As they trudged back and forth across the area, laying down the grid of townships and lots for their masters in Connecticut, they dutifully recorded the condition of the country they encountered.<sup>3</sup>

*Friday 9 June 1797 — Cleaveland: Major Shepard & Esq. Warren returned from their tour. They report that... they travelled on the South & the East part of No 7 — 11th Range [the northern part of the upper Doan Brook watershed]. Also over the North part of S[ai]d town. They Report that their whole rout on this town was over Choice Land gentle Rises & descents plenty of small Creeks or runs of water not sufficiently large for mill — timber*

<sup>3</sup> Some punctuation and capitalization have been added for clarity.

*Chestnut some Hard Maple. Plenty White wood. Elm. Ash, butternut, some beech. Maple. Elm, Hickory, Oak Red & White, Bass, Cucumber, Cherry & vast quantity of Grape Vines & a fine growth of herbage — Creek have all stoney bottom & excellent water...*

— Surveyor Seth Pease, 1797

Although much of the land the surveyors encountered appeared to them to be suitable farm land, they had no doubt that it needed to be tamed before it would be comfortably habitable. For themselves, they found conditions difficult and deadly in the dense forest that was pock-marked with swamps and inhabited by bears, rattlesnakes, wolves, and malaria-bearing mosquitoes. The surveyors' journals intermingle accounts of mundane details with those of hardship and death:<sup>3</sup>

*Monday 12th June [1797]. . . Atwater came up with the horses. . . He just before had killed 8 Rattle Snakes — 6 of which he brought with him to cook. . . Thursday morning 22nd of June. . . we were much troubled with Pond & Swamps on our line. We run but about 1-1/2 Miles — & Incamped by a bad Swamp<sup>4</sup> — Musketoos & Gnats very troublesome. . . Friday 7th July — Mr. Redfield took the compass — I was so ill as not to be able to assist. I took some Reubarb<sup>5</sup> but it did not operate. . . Saturday 15th July — Our men are employed in washing & mending their clothes. This day our old friend Pontiock came to our Camp with 2 other Indians — & a Squaw & 3 pappooses . . . Sunday 16th July. . . This morning our horse called Copperbottom died of the blind Staggers. . . Wednesday the 19th, 1797. . . Saml Spafford found a swarm of Bees in a tree. The men soon cut down the tree & took the honey — which was sufficient to give us a meal. Monday 24th July. . . Miner Bicknals [Minor*

*Bicknall] . . . [was] taken of a violent fever. They were conveying him on an horse litter to the Cuyahoga River. . . I immediate made preparation to have them met by a boat at that Place. . . Tuesday 25th — The boat. . . arrived at the appointed Place about 3 OC PM — Atwater had reached the River with Bignal [Bicknall] about 2 hours before their [the boat's] arrival. He died about 10 minutes after they got him to the River. They buried as decently as their situation would permit. . . Sunday 6th August 1797. . . Peleg Washburn (an apprentice boy to Mr. Doane) died at 1 hour & 30' PM of the Dysintery. We buried him at evening. . .*

— Surveyor Seth Pease, 1797

In October 1797, the second surveying party, still including many ill, sailed east along Lake Erie to return to the civilized country on the Atlantic coast. In spite of the report of an inhospitable land that some of the surveyors must have given when they returned home, there were many in the east who waited eagerly for an opportunity to make some portion of this new country their own. Only three years after the initial survey, the Connecticut Land Company sold a parcel in the Doan Brook watershed to Nathaniel and Sarah Doan, who settled there with their nephew and six children.

### 2.3 First European Settlers: Nathaniel Doan and the Lower Watershed

Nathaniel Doan (or Doane) was a blacksmith for the 1797 Connecticut Land Company surveying party. In spite of all of the surveyors' hardships, he must have liked what he saw of the Connecticut Western Reserve, because he

returned to the area with his family in 1798. They settled first on Superior Street near the Cuyahoga River on property granted to Doan by the Connecticut Land Company on the condition that he operate a blacksmith shop there. However, the mosquitoes and resulting malaria quickly drove the family away from its land grant on the river. After less than a year, they resettled on one-hundred purchased acres on the north side of what is now Euclid Avenue between East 105th and 107th Streets (see Figure 2-1). This spot (now occupied by the Ronald McDonald House) became known as "Doan's Corners" and soon became a gathering place for other local settlers. It was also the ford where travelers along the main east-west artery between Buffalo and Cleveland crossed Doan Brook.

Although the community at Doan's Corners grew steadily, the surrounding wilderness isolated it from the still-small settlement at Cleveland. At first, the Doans' only neighbors were a few families on Woodland Hills Avenue (now Woodhill Avenue) to the south and a single settler near what is now Euclid and East 55th Street. Wolves are reported to have attacked travelers between Doan's Corners and Cleveland as late as 1820.

There was soon a sizable village at Doan's Corners, as well as a number of farms in the lower watershed in what are now the Cleveland neighborhoods of Glenville and Hough.<sup>6</sup> Nathaniel Doan and his neighbors were quick to open businesses to support the growing community. Shortly after he settled at the Corners, Doan built a hotel and tavern to serve travelers along the Buffalo-Cleveland road. He and other settlers quickly built a store, a blacksmith shop, a church and school, and a saleratus (baking soda) factory near the ford.

4 Caroline Piercy indicates in *The Valley of God's Pleasure* that this camp was near the current location of the Lower Shaker Lake. Careful examination of the surveyors' notes indicates that this is not the case.

5 Rhubarb (spelled reubarb by Pease) has a laxative effect. It and other similar herbal laxatives and emetics were used by the surveyors to combat fever and chills and a variety of other ills. It is not clear what Pease's illness was, but he complained of headache, back ache, and fever and may have been suffering from malaria.

6 The lower watershed north of Superior Road lies in Glenville. South of Superior, the western edge of the lower watershed lies in Hough, with the remainder in University Circle.

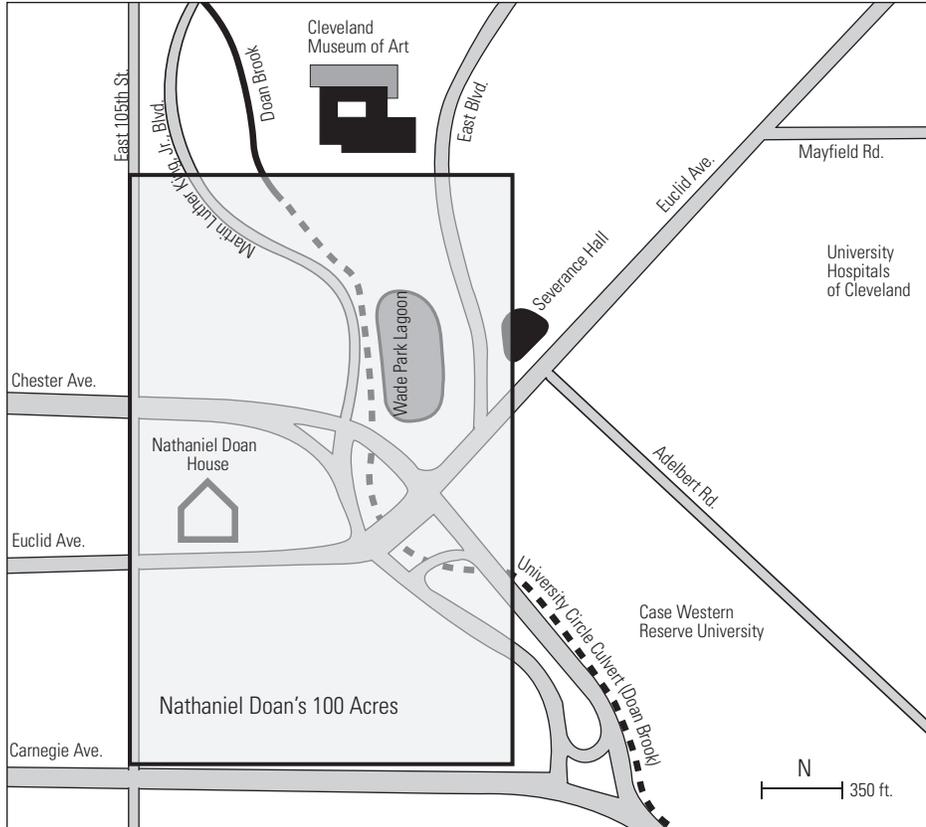


Figure 2-1 Nathaniel Doan's Original Land

The growth of industry was not far behind. Since processed grain and sawn lumber were fundamental to the society, a grist mill and a sawmill were among the first industries. The grist mill was located near the current Wade Park Lagoon and was operated by Samuel Cozad. The Crawford dam and sawmill were located near Superior Avenue. A tannery, a clock factory, a plant for the manufacture of oil from coal, a malleable iron foundry, a mowing machine company, and a sorghum mill were also established in the lower watershed at various times before the mid-nineteenth century.

An attempt was made at some point to drill for oil in Wade Park, resulting in nothing but an oily smell and some natural gas at a depth of 1,300 feet. Sandstone was quarried from the Doan Brook gorge near the top of Cedar Glen.<sup>7</sup> In 1834 or 1835 the first railroad in Cleveland was built to carry stone from the quarry to Public Square. Gravity pulled the loaded cars down the hill from the quarry. Elsewhere, the cars were pulled along the tracks by horses. The line, which crossed the brook on an embankment at Euclid Avenue, met with limited success and was abandoned after a few years.

A number of springs fed Doan Brook near Doan's Corners. One, in what is now the Cleveland Botanical Garden's Japanese Garden, was long used as a source of drinking water (see Section 3.3). Another, which came from the escarpment just north of Cedar Glen, had a high sulfur content and was believed to have therapeutic properties. Dr. Nathan Ambler and Daniel Caswell built the Blue Rock Spring House on this site (now the location of Case Western Reserve University's Emerson Gym) in the 1880s. The spring house, which had baths carved into the rock of the escarpment, was used first as a resort and then as a sanitarium offering patrons the "water cure."

Even as the community and industry around Doan's Corners grew, the lower watershed continued to be dominated by farms. The area north of Doan's Corners was settled first by farmers from New England, then by immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, and England. Around 1870, the Village of Glenville came into its own as the hub of the thriving farming community. Centered at East 105th Street and St. Clair Avenue, the village was surrounded by truck farms (owned primarily by German-Americans) that supplied produce to Cleveland. At the same time, the village became the home of the later-famous Glenville Racetrack, located along St. Clair between East 88th and East 101st Streets. During the 1890s, the picturesque landscape of the lower Doan Brook valley, the racetrack, and the nearby Lake Erie shore made Glenville a fashionable summer residence for wealthy Clevelanders.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Doan's Corners and Glenville retained their own village characters and the lower watershed

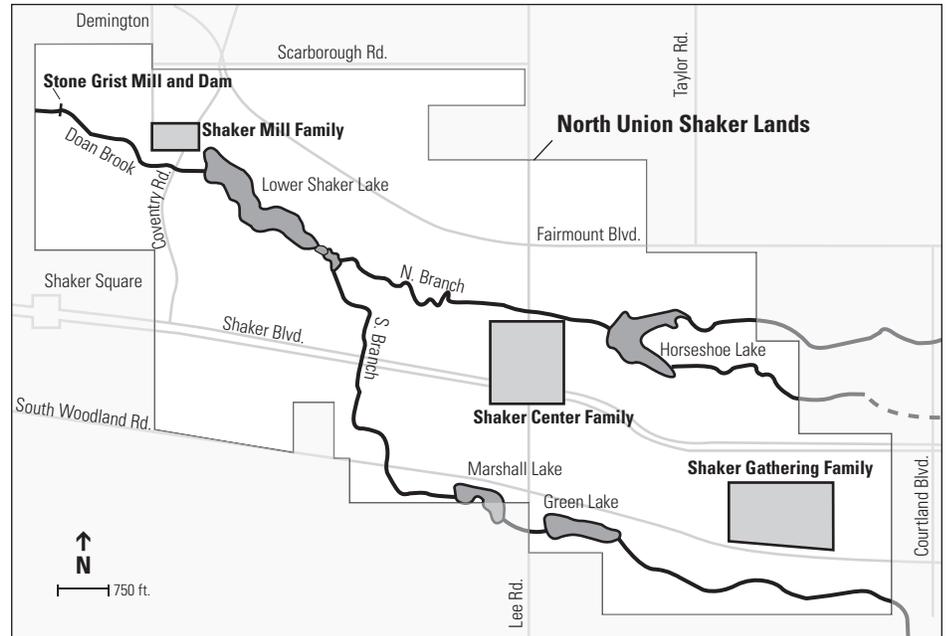
7 Cedar Glen is the steep valley along Cedar Road between the intersection of Cedar with Euclid Heights Boulevard and the point where Cedar passes under the rapid transit and railroad tracks. A tributary to Doan Brook that once flowed through this valley is now hidden in a sewer beneath the road.

remained largely rural. The villages served as important meeting and trading points for people living in the surrounding areas, including the Shakers and others who lived in the upper Doan Brook watershed. By 1900, however, the city of Cleveland had begun to absorb the villages, gradually eclipsing their original identities. Doan's Corners evolved into the University Circle cultural center, while Glenville became an affluent Cleveland garden suburb.

## 2.4 The Valley of God's Pleasure: The Shakers and the Upper Watershed

While Nathaniel Doan and his neighbors were settling in the lower watershed, a rather different community was making its home along the upper reaches of Doan Brook. Beginning in 1822, the Shakers, a utopian Christian sect, lived and farmed along the brook between today's Warrensville Center Road and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. They were the primary occupants of the upper watershed for almost seventy years.

Although the Shakers were eventually the upper watershed's principal land-holders, they were not its first settlers. In 1810, Daniel and Margaret Warren settled near its southern boundary, close to the current intersection of Lee and Kinsman Roads. In 1811, the Warrens were joined by eight members of Margaret's family, the Prentisses, and in 1812 twenty members of the Jacob Russell family settled about a mile farther north, near the current intersection of Lee Road and South Park Boulevard, just south of Doan Brook. The township was named Warrensville Township in 1816 in honor of the first settlers.



**Figure 2-2** North Union Shaker Lands and Communities

Based on Mead 1961 from the collection of the Shaker Historical Society, Nord Library, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

The hardships of the early settlers are best seen through the eyes of Melinda Russell, granddaughter of Jacob Russell, who was about eight years old when she arrived in Warrensville Township in 1813:

*Our journey was attended with great suffering, my youngest sister was sick all the way, dying three days after our arrival. . . . Father was taken sick with ague the next day after we arrived, so our house was built slowly, and with the greatest difficulty mother hewed with an adze the stub ends of the floor boards, and put them down with the little help father could give her. We moved in the last of November, without a door or window, using blankets for night protection. At that time two of the children were sick with ague. Father worked when the chills and*

*fever left him for the day, putting poles together in the form of bedsteads, and a table, upon which to put the little we could get to eat, and benches to sit upon; there was no cabinet shop at that time where such articles could be purchased.*

*. . . The only flour we could get. . . was so disgusting to the taste, that no one could eat it unless compelled by extreme hunger. I was then eight years old and not sick, so I had to satisfy my hunger with it, and give the others more of a chance at the scanty corn meal rations. . . . I once or twice obtained surreptitiously a little cold mush, father said that although he could never countenance stealing, he did not blame me for that. I often wondered why he cried when he sat down at the table, and looked at the food; the johnny-cake*

## Who Were the North Union Shakers?

The Shaker order is a Christian sect, formally called The Millenium Church of United Believers, founded in England by Mother Ann Lee during the latter part of the eighteenth century. The fundamental principles of the order are commitment to God, separation from the secular world, celibacy and sexual equality, confession of sin, and communal living. Those who joined the North Union Shakers committed themselves to daily religious observance, a communal life with those of the same sex, strict separation from those of the opposite sex, and hard work under the direction of community leaders.

At North Union, Shaker men and women met each other only in groups, could not touch each other under any circumstances, and could not correspond with each other. The children of families who joined the Shakers were treated well, but they were separated from their parents and taken to live in the community's "children's houses." The Shakers also took in and cared for many orphans.

All Shaker activities were directed by elders and eldersses. The leading elders of the North Union Shakers were appointed by church authorities in other Shaker communities, and they frequently came to North Union specifically to assume leadership positions.

The Shakers' beliefs were carried out in the plan and construction of their communities.

The commitment to communal living is reflected in the presence of a relatively small number of large dwellings in a typical Shaker village. As one observer remembered the North Union Center Family settlement in about 1870, there were four dwelling houses in the village. One housed the elders and eldersses (in separated quarters), another the adult "family" members, another the boys, and still another the girls. A large meeting house where religious services were held was the focus of the community.

The Shaker commitment to industrious labor is indicated by the large number of "shop" buildings in each village. The North Union Center Family village included a woolen mill and broom factory, a blacksmith shop, a tannery, a carpenter shop, a bee house, a cheese house, a smoke house, numerous barns to support the community's agriculture, and a plant nursery. The Shakers were known for their honesty, and their work was known for its quality and well thought-out, sometimes innovative design. They believed that all work was performed for the glory of God and therefore strove for perfection in every task.

Today, Sabbathday Lake, Maine, is the only remaining Shaker community. Fewer than a dozen Shakers make their home there.

*and mush appeared so luscious to my hungry eyes... Toward the end of February... father and one of his brothers started out for Aurora ... [where] they paid ten shillings a bushell for corn and two dollars and a quarter for wheat, bought an iron kettle for making sugar... A glorious surprise awaited them in the woods in the form of a bee-tree, from which they obtained nearly one hundred pounds of honey.*

— Melinda Russell, 1880

Nine years after Melinda came to Warrensville Township, Jacob Russell's extended family formed the nucleus of the North Union Shaker community. In 1820, Ralph Russell, one of Jacob's sons, had become involved with the Shakers at Union Village, Ohio. He visited Union Village in 1821, intending to move there with his family to join the community. To his surprise, a different vision awaited him when he returned home to Warrensville:

*... [the vision] consisted in a strong, clear ray of light, that proceeded from Union Village, in a perfectly straight, horizontal line until it reached a spot near his dwelling [in Warrensville], about where the center house<sup>8</sup> now stands, and there it arose in a strong, erect column, and became a beautiful tree.*

— J. P. MacLean, 1900

Ralph followed his vision. He stayed in Warrensville Township, and in 1822, with the approval and assistance of Union Village, he established the North Union Shaker community on the Russell property adjacent to Doan Brook.

Over the next sixty-seven years, the Shakers developed their land in the upper watershed. They cleared most of the unbroken forest within

8 The center house was the dwelling house at the heart of the North Union Shaker community.

their 1,366 acres and replaced it with orchards, mills, three communities, and small manufacturing operations. They centered their villages around Doan Brook, giving their home in the stream valley the religious name of “the Valley of God’s Pleasure.” Two of the North Union “family” settlements were located on the brook itself and based their industry on power supplied by the stream (see Figure 2-2). First built was the Center Family village (see Figure 2-3), located between the brook and Shaker Boulevard along what is now Lee Road. A few years later, the Mill Family village was begun on the brook about a mile downstream (west), near the point where the brook now crosses Coventry Road (see Figure 2-4). The third community, the Gathering Family (also called the East Family), was located a bit farther from the brook, northwest of the intersection of Claremont and South Woodland Roads (see Figure 2-5). The Shakers built with an eye to quality, simplicity, and permanence, constructing some very impressive buildings in North Union (see Figures 2-6 and 2-7).

Shaker industry in North Union had begun in earnest by 1824, by which time a sawmill was in operation near the location of what is now the Lower Shaker Lake dam.<sup>9</sup> Prior to the construction of the sawmill, the community had no means of sawing logs into boards, and all family members were living in small log cabins near the intersection of South Park Boulevard and Lee Road. Since communal living was part of the Shaker ideal, and board lumber was required to build communal houses, an operating mill was a necessity.

In 1829, the original sawmill was joined by a grist mill about a quarter-mile downstream. A small dam near the location of the current Lower Shaker Lake dam was built to power this

mill and the sawmill. This dam was enlarged a number of times over the years to power a succession of mills. The most notable rebuilding took place in 1831, when the dam was rebuilt using large quantities of stone and earth from the south bank upstream from the dam, and in 1837, when the dam was again completely rebuilt. After the 1837 work, the reservoir is reported to have covered an area of about twenty acres.<sup>10</sup> In 1843, the Lower Shaker Lake grist mill was replaced by an impressive stone grist mill farther downstream (Figure 2-7).

At the beginning of the 1850s, there was great demand for Shaker-manufactured brooms and woolen goods. The Elders at North Union decided to build a powered woolen mill and broom shop to meet the demand. Once again, their power source was Doan Brook, and in 1852 they built a dam on the brook to form Horseshoe Lake. This dam, which was enlarged in 1854, was an impressive stone structure with a finished stone spillway and ashlar-stone upstream face. Although it has been modified and repaired many times, traces of the original dam can still be seen. Water from the dam was carried to the woolen mill via a series of wooden troughs along the south side of the brook valley. At the woolen mill (see Figure 2-6), located just east of Lee Road and north of South Park Boulevard, the water turned an overshot wheel, which in turn powered machines for carding, spinning, and weaving wool and lathes for turning broom handles.

The 1850s marked the peak in the prosperity of the North Union Shakers. The community grew to a maximum of about 300 members and had land holdings of 1,366 acres and 60 buildings. After the Civil War, however, North Union began to decline, as did Shaker communities all over the country. In 1889, when there

were only twenty-seven members remaining, the North Union community dissolved, and the remaining family members dispersed to other Shaker villages. In 1892, the Shaker lands were sold to a development syndicate.

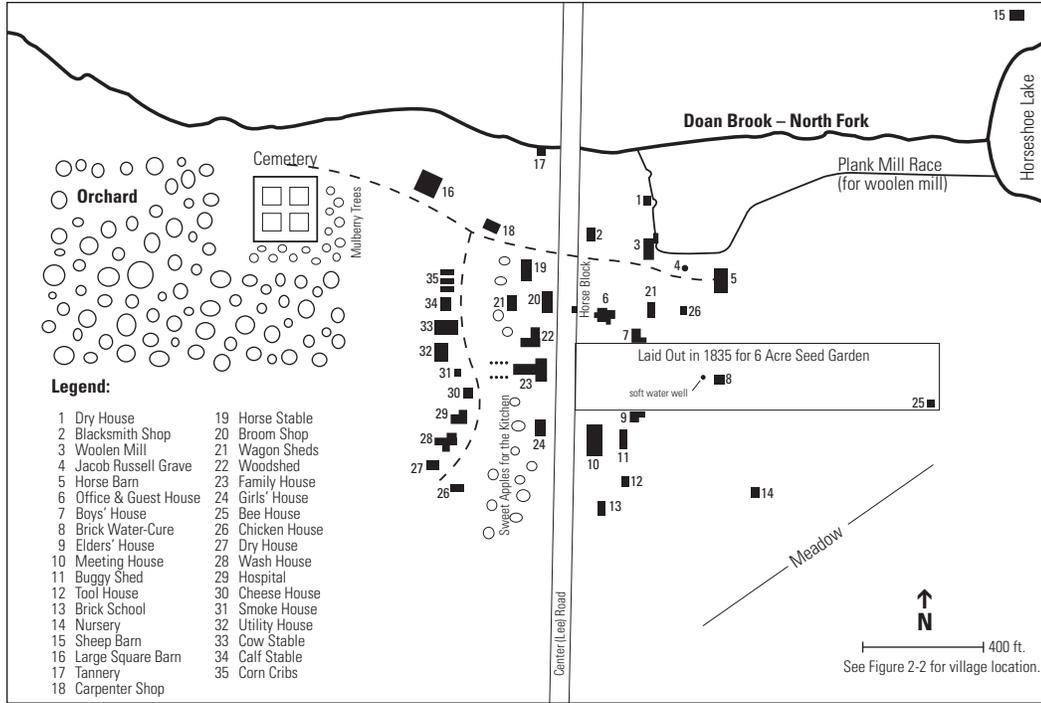
Sadly, almost all traces of the Shakers were obliterated by the later development of their land. The Shaker buildings were neglected during the sect’s decline and after the last members moved away. The structures that remained when the land was sold were razed. The Shaker cemetery was moved from its original location (south of South Park Boulevard about 300 yards west of the intersection of South Park and Lee Road) to the Warrensville West Cemetery at 3467 Lee Road. The Shaker Lakes and their dams are the only intact features of the Shakers’ life along Doan Brook, although even the dams have been modified over the years. Appendix C describes some other remaining traces of the Shakers.

## 2.5 The City Moves East: Development of the Watershed

Although urbanization of the Doan Brook watershed began when Nathaniel Doan settled there in 1799, development did not begin in earnest until around 1900, when Cleveland’s eastern border reached almost as far as Doan’s Corners. After this time, both the lower and upper watersheds rapidly became the urban and suburban neighborhoods we know today. The story of the city’s arrival is outlined here. The impact that development had on the brook is explored in more depth in Chapter 5.

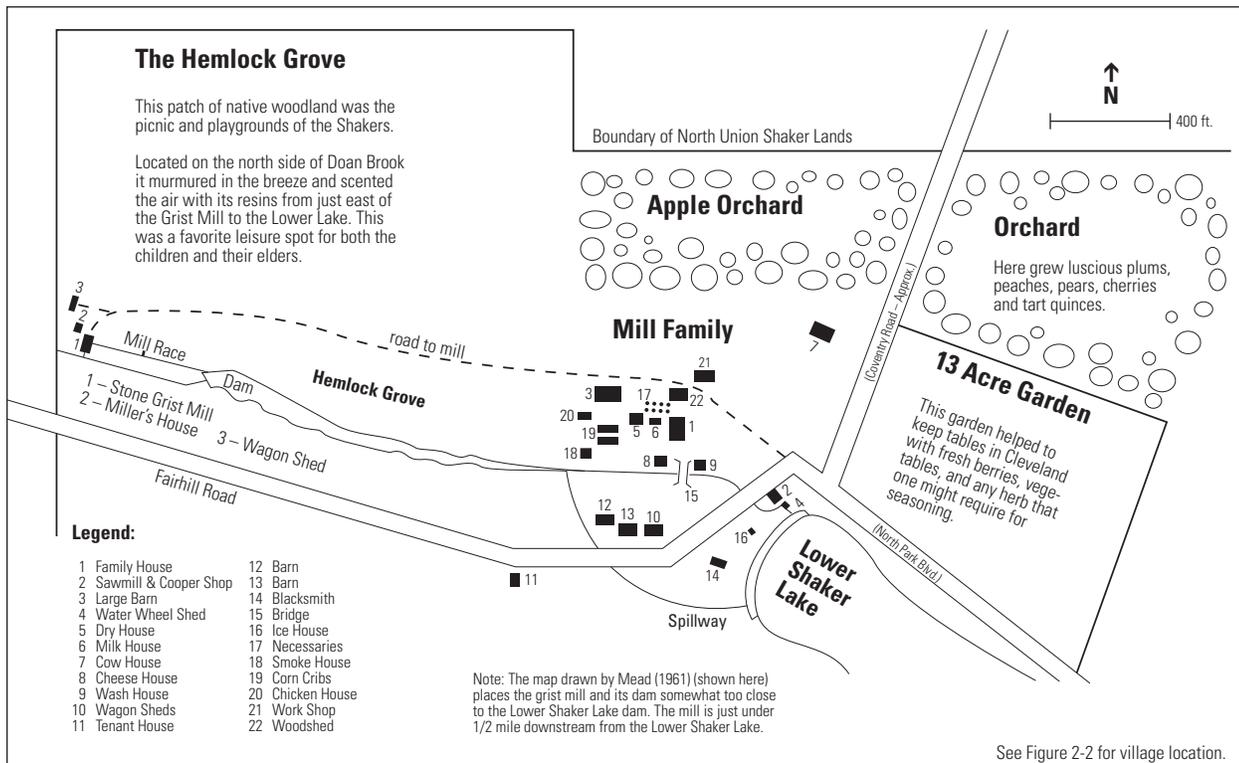
9 It is not clear whether this sawmill was powered by the normal flow in the brook or, more likely, by the first dam on Doan Brook.

10 Some accounts give an area of thirty acres for the lake completed in 1837. Given that the current combined area of the Lower Shaker Lake and the adjoining marsh is 19.2 acres, and that there are no other references to a much larger lake, these accounts appear to be erroneous.



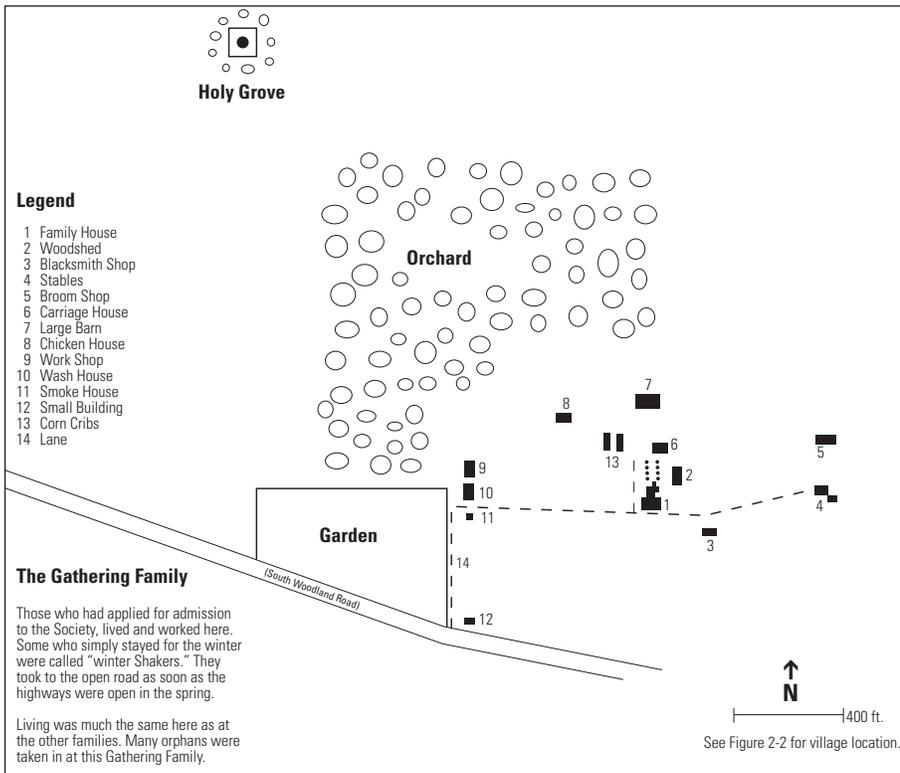
**Figure 2-3** Shaker Center Family Village – ca. 1870

Based on Mead 1961 from the collection of the Shaker Historical Society, Nord Library, Shaker Heights, Ohio.



**Figure 2-4** Shaker Mill Family Village – ca. 1870

Based on Mead 1961 from the collection of the Shaker Historical Society, Nord Library, Shaker Heights, Ohio.



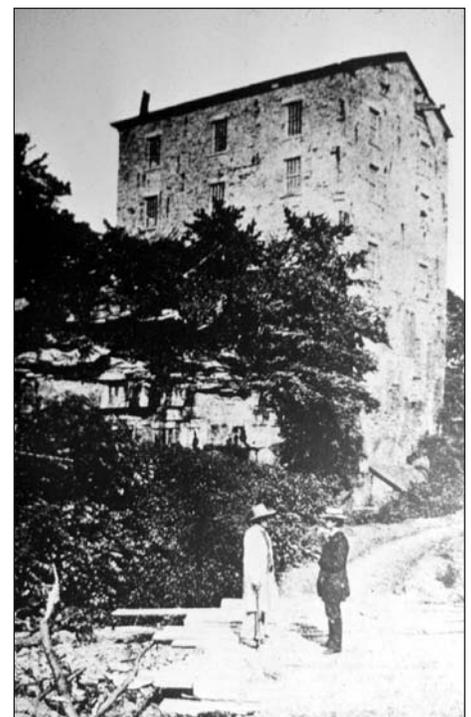
**Figure 2-5** Shaker Gathering Family Village – ca. 1870

Based on Mead 1961 from the collection of the Shaker Historical Society, Nord Library, Shaker Heights, Ohio.



**Figure 2-6** Shaker Woolen Mill

Built in 1854 in the northwest quadrant of what is now the intersection of Lee Road and South Park Boulevard. Photographer unknown. From the collection of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.



**Figure 2-7** Shaker Stone Grist Mill

Built in 1843 on the edge of the Doan Brook gorge opposite the current intersection of North Park Boulevard and Roxboro Road. Photographer unknown. From the collection of the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

## The Rise and Fall of the Great Stone Grist Mill

The North Union Shakers' mills and dams were the foundation of their industry and were their most impressive building achievements. The stone grist mill that was built in 1843 was by far North Union's greatest building (see Figure 2-7). Located on the north edge of the Doan Brook gorge about one-half mile downstream from the Lower Shaker Lake dam, the grist mill was described by Shaker Elder James Prescott as follows:

*In 1843 a new stone grist mill was built standing on the north side of the creek, a little west of the hemlock grove. On the south end it was four stories high. Its massive walls of the basement story were built of sand stone, four feet thick, quarried on the spot, or near by — the gearing was mostly of cast iron — the penstock was hewn out of solid sand stone, fifty feet deep, the front was laid with heavy blocks of stone, mitred in, laid in hydraulic cement — three run of stone — cast iron shafts, fifty feet long, running from the stones above down to the cast iron, arm [?] wheels below — two new bolts and screen smut [?] mill, and a place for grinding coarse feed etc.*

*When it was built it was pronounced by good judges to be one of the best flouring mills in the State of Ohio. It stands as a durable monument*

*of solid masonry and workmanship, and like the old mill has an extensive patronage from the surrounding country, and is one of the principal resources of the community.*

— James Prescott, 1880

Power for the mill was not supplied directly from the Lower Shaker Lake. Instead, a third dam was built across a narrow point in the Doan Brook gorge, about 0.45 miles downstream from the lake. This dam, constructed of forty-foot-long 2-foot by 2-foot timbers morticed into the sandstone on either side of the gorge, was about 30 feet high. A flume cut into the stone at the top of the north side of the gorge carried water from the reservoir behind the dam to the grist mill, about 400 feet farther downstream. This arrangement took advantage of a natural abrupt fall of the stream bed between the dam and the mill, so that the mill was powered by water falling from the top of the gorge to the floor of the gorge a full 50 feet below.

The grist mill served the Shakers well for many years, but the slow decline of the Shaker community and the gradual transition of milling to steam power eventually overtook the mill and made its continued operation uneconomical. By 1876 the mill had been

converted to steam power, but this conversion failed to keep it running for long. In 1886, the mill and the land on which it stood were leased to Charles Reader to be used as a sandstone quarry. The machinery was removed from the mill building and taken to the sawmill at the Lower Shaker Lake, where it was used for a few more years.

Reader, who needed to demolish the grist mill in order to quarry the stone beneath it, decided to make the mill's destruction spectacular. He planned to dynamite the building as part of a public Fourth of July celebration held on July 5, 1886. Over 4,000 people attended the festival, which included the firing of cannons, re-enactment of the Battle of Bull Run, tightrope walking over the gorge, and entertainment supplied by several brass bands. Dinner, lemonade, and gambling at cards were provided by various enterprising organizations and individuals. The celebration culminated with the dynamiting of the mill, which tumbled into the Doan Brook gorge with the American flag tacked to a staff on the roof. A very few remains of the great grist mill can be seen as you walk along the north edge of the Doan Brook gorge today (see the Historic Watershed Tour in Appendix C).

### 2.5.1 The Lower Watershed

The first hint of the modern lower watershed came when the Case School of Applied Science and Western Reserve University moved to Doan's Corners in the 1880s. The universities and the expanding city to the west brought the beginnings of an urban neighborhood. Between 1900 and 1918, the surrounding farms gave way to opulent residential neighborhoods in Glenville and in University Circle, and by the 1920s a number of hotels, shops, and businesses were located at Doan's Corners. Several vaudeville theaters added their attraction to the area and were later joined by movie houses. The Cleveland Museum of Art and the Western Reserve Historical Society came to the lower watershed during the early part of the century, soon to be followed by an impressive array of other cultural institutions (see Appendix D).

Through the early part of the twentieth century, the various attractions of Doan's Corners brought a weekend crowd of shoppers and museum and theater-goers to what had become Cleveland's "second downtown." The parks along the lower Doan Brook (see Section 2.6) drew city dwellers seeking a break from the noise, dust, and smoke of increasingly industrial Cleveland. At the same time, the urban center at Doan's Corners drew citizens from rural areas to the east who were in search of city amenities. The importance of the Doan's Corners/University Circle area as a weekend haven for east-siders seeking shopping and entertainment continued through the 1950s.

While Doan's Corners became an urban center, the Glenville<sup>11</sup> residential neighborhoods to the north remained more suburban, with inter-mixed single-family homes and commercial centers. The population of the area changed,

becoming largely Jewish by the 1930s and then largely African-American by the 1950s. In 1968, a shootout between a black militant group and Cleveland police triggered several days of social unrest in Glenville, including looting and destruction of a number of businesses. Repair of the damage has been slow, and some parts of the neighborhood have suffered from declining population and neglect by absentee landlords. Other parts of Glenville have continued to be stable neighborhoods of owner-occupied single-family homes, with the more opulent sections of the old garden district along the Doan Brook valley retaining some of their original glory. Home values rose sharply in the late 1990s as interest in high quality housing stock relatively close to downtown Cleveland revived.

The urban decline that struck much of the east side of Cleveland beginning in the 1970s was more dramatic in the residential areas around University Circle than it was in Glenville. The decay began to reverse in the late 1980s, when major expansions of the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals transformed much of the area. The hospitals, Case Western Reserve University, and the museums located in and around Wade Park now dominate the University Circle section of the Doan Brook watershed.

### 2.5.2 The Upper Watershed

A few years after Nathaniel Doan and his neighbors began to create a village in the lower watershed, the Warrens and the Russells began to turn the forests of the upper watershed into farmland. When the Shakers established their villages there, they worked tirelessly to clear and tame their land and to use the resources it

offered to make their living. Although the watershed left by the Shakers bore little resemblance to the original wilderness, it remained a rural farming community during their tenure.

Real urbanization of the upper watershed did not begin until about 1895, when Patrick Calhoun and John Hartness Brown began to develop the "garden suburb" of Euclid Heights north of Cedar Road and west of Coventry Road. By the early 1900s, development of the western edge of the upper watershed was well under way, as Daniel Caswell and William Ambler began to build Ambler Heights (now known as Chestnut Hills) between Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard, North Park Boulevard, Cedar Road, and South Overlook. The Van Sweringen brothers began their early real estate ventures along Fairmount Boulevard at about the same time.

The Shakers' land (see Figure 2-2) remained largely undeveloped during the first urbanization of the upper watershed. The Shakers sold their 1,366 acres to a group of Cleveland businessmen in 1892. This group soon resold the land to the Shaker Heights Land Company, a syndicate headed by H.W. Gratwick and J.J. Albright of Buffalo, New York. Gratwick and Albright began the work of laying out lots and streets in preparation for lot sales, but the economic conditions of the late 1890s did not favor their venture, and the work stalled. In 1905 and 1906, the Cleveland brothers O.P. and M.J. Van Sweringen bought the land from Gratwick and Albright and began to lay the groundwork for Shaker Heights. The Van Sweringens developed Shaker Heights as one of the first planned communities in the United States. Their intention was to provide a suburb with superior services and an aesthetic environment to attract the moderately to extremely

11 A small part of the lower watershed between University Circle and Glenville is located along the eastern edge of Cleveland's Hough neighborhood. This area shares some characteristics of University Circle and some of Glenville.

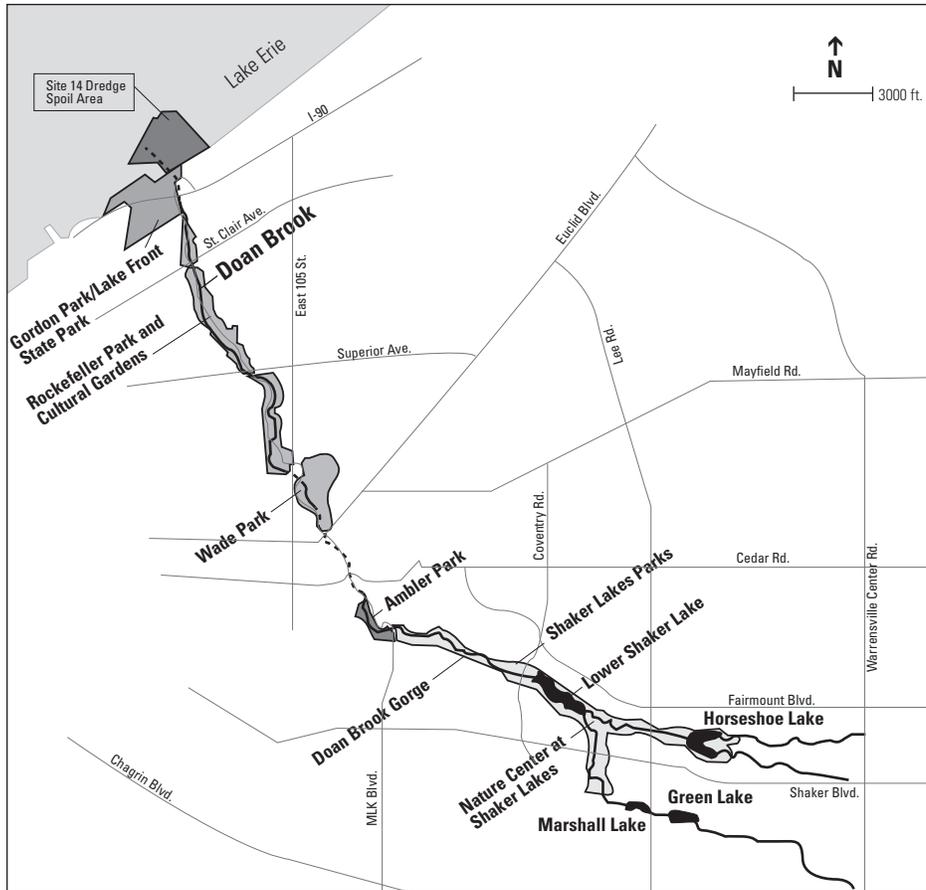


Figure 2-8 Doan Brook Park Lands

## 2.6 Preserving the Land: The Story of the Parks

One of the striking features of Doan Brook is the almost continuous line of park land that surrounds the stream from its mouth to Horseshoe Lake. The parks begin at Gordon Park on Lake Erie, continue through Rockefeller and Wade Parks in the lower watershed, climb the escarpment through Ambler Park, pass along the Doan Brook gorge in the western part of the upper watershed, follow the brook along the Lower Shaker Lake and Horseshoe Lake, and extend up the south fork of Doan Brook almost to Marshall and Green Lakes (see Figure 2-8). The nearly unbroken ribbon of green leads us to wonder how such an interconnected system of parks came about.

Preservation of the Doan Brook park land began in 1882 when Jephtha H. Wade presented Wade Park to the City of Cleveland with the provision that the area be permanently maintained as a park. This first donation was followed in 1893 by the donation by William J. Gordon of 122 acres on Lake Erie at the mouth of the brook. Gordon had begun to develop a park there in 1880, with the intent of its eventual donation. Wade's and Gordon's gifts were followed by further donations of land along the brook by Jephtha Wade, the Shaker Heights Land Company, John D. Rockefeller, Laura Rockefeller, Patrick Calhoun, and Martha B. Ambler. The City of Cleveland also bought some parcels of land to complete the park system.

By 1897, enough land had been granted or purchased to allow the formation of a continuous park along Doan Brook from Lake Erie to Horseshoe Lake. Cleveland city planners embraced the idea, and by 1900 a street network

wealthy of Cleveland. Building was steady but gradual at first: the village had a population of 200 in 1911 and 1,600 in 1920. The expansion of Cleveland and the Van Sweringens' construction of the Shaker Rapid Transit system, which began operating in 1920, accelerated growth so that the population of Shaker Heights was 18,000 by 1930.

Cleveland Heights shared the boom of the 1920s, and by 1930 Doan Brook's upper water-

shed was almost completely developed. The total 1930 population of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights was 70,000, over eighty percent of the current population.<sup>12</sup> Further growth has been slow, consisting mostly of the gradual addition of more housing in scattered vacant lots, the construction of some additional high-density housing, and the evolution of commercial areas to incorporate more parking and make other adjustments to modern life.

12 The total population of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights includes the populations of some areas that are not within the Doan Brook watershed.

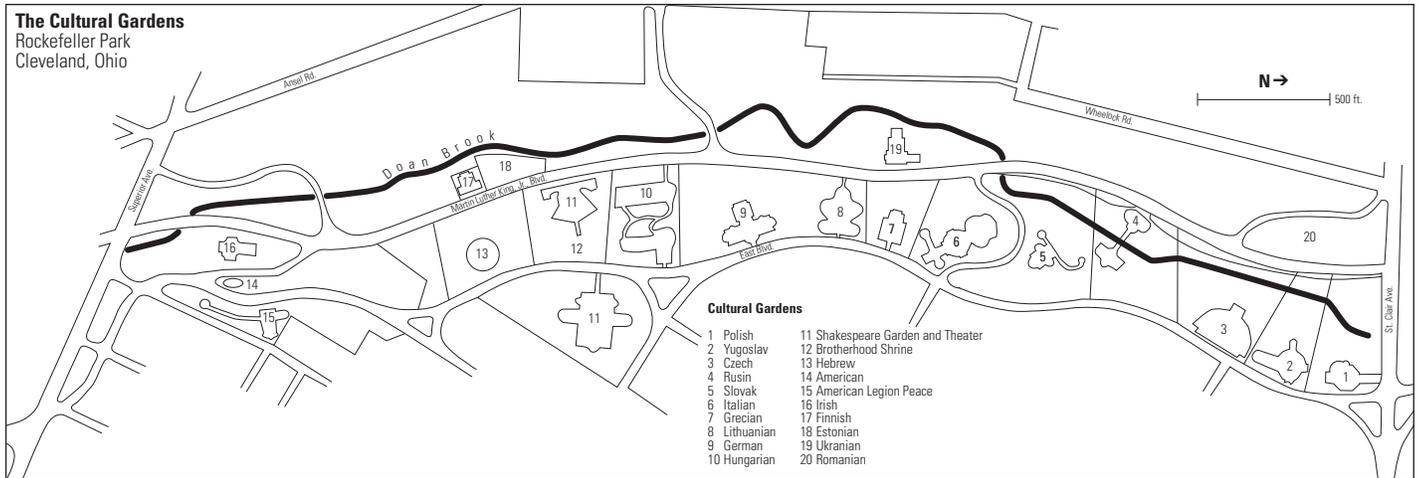


Figure 2-9 Rockefeller Park Cultural Gardens – 1939

linking the parks in the upper and lower watersheds had been designed and built. Stone bridges at Wade, St. Clair, and Superior Avenues had been built to carry streetcars across the brook valley. Shore protection, including three jetties and two piers, had been installed on Lake Erie at Gordon Park. Streetcar lines made the parks in the lower watershed readily accessible to people in rapidly growing downtown Cleveland.

The new parks were evidently a success, since the Rockefeller Park area was reportedly used by almost 44,000 people on one sunny Sunday afternoon in 1896, and Gordon Park became a popular bathing beach. The originally forested area along the brook in the lower watershed was gradually developed as playing fields and picnic facilities.

In 1916, part of Rockefeller Park between Superior and St. Clair was landscaped to form the Shakespeare Garden and planted with English vegetation to commemorate Shakespeare’s work. In 1926, an adjacent area

was transformed into the Hebrew Garden, and the idea of a series of gardens honoring Cleveland’s different ethnic groups and nationalities was conceived. By 1939, a total of twenty different cultural gardens had been landscaped, and the Cultural Gardens were formally dedicated. Figure 2-9 shows the 1939 configuration of the Cultural Gardens. Although the gardens have suffered from some neglect in the past twenty years, interest in reclaiming them has recently arisen.

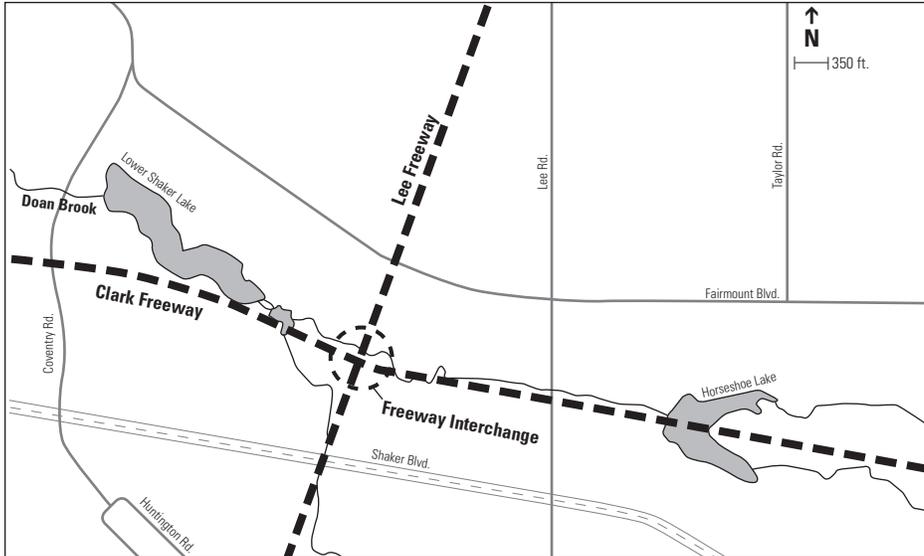
## 2.7 The Brook in the City: Citizen Activists and the Fight for the Doan

The foresight of Gordon, Wade, Ambler, Rockefeller and others left us an unbroken ribbon of undeveloped land along Doan Brook. This *riparian corridor*<sup>13</sup> has, to some extent, protected the brook as the city grew around it. However, the expanding city has eroded the

*The wild romantic valley through which Doan Brook takes its sinuous way from Doan Street to the lake, a distance of three miles, is a natural park as nature has formed and adorned it; a comparatively small expenditure would render it one of the very finest parks in the country.*

Annual Report of the Cleveland Parks Commission, 1890

13 A riparian corridor is a strip of undeveloped land immediately adjacent to a stream that buffers it from the surrounding area. See Chapter 4 for more discussion of Doan Brook’s riparian corridor.



2-10 Proposed Alignment of the Clark and Lee Freeways

integrity of the original park system. Some threats to the Doan Brook parks have been deflected by the strenuous efforts of citizens who live in the watershed, while efforts to prevent other damage have been less successful.

The construction of the University Circle culvert was the first major break in the chain of the Doan Brook parks. The culvert grew slowly, beginning as one short pipe to carry the brook under a road here, another short pipe under another road there. By 1950, development in University Circle was so dense — there were so many roads and buildings — that the brook had disappeared. The many short culverts had been connected to form the long culvert that now carries the brook for almost a mile between Ambler Park and Rockefeller Park. Over the top of the culvert, the brook’s riparian park corridor had become road medians and parking lots, and even the location of the stream was forgotten.

A few years after the slow disappearance of the brook in University Circle, the proposed construction of the Clark (I-290) and Lee Freeways threatened to suddenly engulf most of the upper watershed parks. The alignment of the freeways was to take them directly over the Shaker Lakes (see Figures 2-10 and 2-11). Faced with an obvious assault on a beloved park, the citizens of the watershed took action. In 1965, a group of women from local garden clubs, spearheaded by Mary Elizabeth Croxton, Jean Eakin, and Betty Miller, formed the Park Conservation Committee,<sup>14</sup> an organization dedicated to stopping the freeway construction.

The Park Conservation Committee’s opposition to the freeways began with the usual political tactics — they contacted public officials, wrote letters, and held meetings. The committee was not satisfied with the conventional approach, though. To increase the

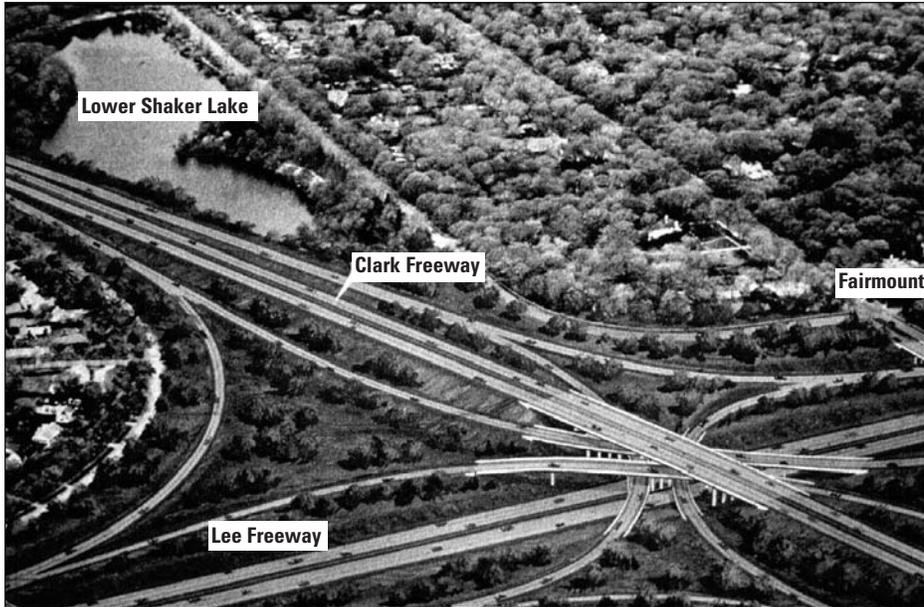
chances that they would succeed in blocking the freeways, they threw the historic Doan Brook parks squarely in front of the freeway-building bulldozers. In 1966, they founded the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center,<sup>15</sup> and in 1968 the Nature Center leased 5.5 acres of land at the proposed location of the major freeway interchange.<sup>16</sup> Here they proceeded to build the Nature Center building and associated trails. In 1971 the United States National Park Service, at the urging of the garden club ladies and others, named the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes a National Environmental Education Landmark. City governments in Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights and other eastside communities rallied around the Nature Center’s founders and joined their opposition to the freeways. Ohio’s Governor, James Rhodes, withdrew state support for the freeway plan in 1970, and approval for the freeway construction, which had once seemed inevitable, was finally withdrawn in 1972.

Efforts to protect the brook and the adjacent parks from less grave threats have not been so successful, and there has been some slow erosion of the park system over the years. When the storage reservoirs at the Baldwin Filtration plant were built, excavated material was placed in the lower part of Ambler Park, and an additional section of the brook was buried. Some time in the 1970s, an area immediately downstream from the Lower Shaker Lake dam (maintained as a wildflower garden by the Shaker Lakes Garden Club) was filled in, possibly to make the dam more secure. Cleveland also permitted debris from construction in University Circle to be dumped along the south side of the Doan Brook gorge opposite the intersection of Kemper and Fairhill. This dumping, which took place in 1959 and again in 1969, was a poorly-engineered attempt to

14 Sometimes called the Greater Cleveland Committee for Park Conservation.

15 Now called the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes.

16 The interchange was to be located on the site of the current Nature Center, near the intersection of South Park, North Park and North Woodland.



**2-11** Clark and Lee Freeway Interchange at Lower Shaker Lake.  
From the Nature Center at Shaker Lake collection.

repair slope failures (see Section 5.1.4). Citizen opposition eventually helped stop the dumping and forced a proper slope repair, but not until much damage had been done.

When Interstate 90 was built along the Lake Erie shore, the freeway cut across the brook and divided Gordon Park in half. The park was greatly degraded, and yet another culvert was built to carry the brook under the freeway. In the 1970s, the Corps of Engineers further damaged the brook in Gordon Park by beginning the placement of dredged material in a confined disposal facility<sup>17</sup> on the lake shore at the mouth of the stream. The I-90 culvert was extended to carry the brook under the dredge fill area all the way into Lake Erie. Access to the waterfront was eliminated in a large part of Gordon Park. Local awareness and opposition

to the site that had been chosen for the Corps of Engineers dredge spoil area came too late to have any impact.<sup>18</sup>

The latest major project in the Doan Brook parks was built in 1997, when the City of Cleveland built a flood detention structure on the brook in Ambler Park immediately downstream from Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard (MLK). This structure was originally to be built upstream from MLK in the heart of the Doan Brook gorge. Citizen action once again changed the fate of the brook, but this time only by a small amount. The citizens and city government of Cleveland Heights opposed the construction of a detention basin on land in the scenic gorge that was leased by Cleveland Heights. Their opposition prompted Cleveland to move the structure downstream

from MLK onto City of Cleveland land. As will be discussed in Chapter 7, the need for the detention basin was poorly studied, and its effectiveness in providing downstream flood control will be minimal.

As this account demonstrates, the story of citizen action on behalf of Doan Brook is mixed. Had it not been for the efforts of those who formed the Park Conservation Committee to oppose the freeways, there would be very little of Doan Brook left for us to preserve. However, other assaults on the park corridor have not been stopped by public opposition. Still others have raised little outcry. As the life of the city continues around the brook, proposals for projects that will eat away at the riparian corridor and at the brook itself will continue to arise. Citizens must make the health of the brook a priority if the stream and the park system are to survive and thrive in the future.

<sup>17</sup> The confined disposal facility is essentially a landfill for disposal of material that is dredged from the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie in order to keep navigation channels clear.

<sup>18</sup> The complete name of the dredged material disposal facility is the Diked Disposal Facility Site No. 14. The area is commonly referred to as Site 14 or Dike 14.