
Waite Hill Village History

William Waite of Onondaga County, New York, purchased 629 acres of the western half of the plateau between the branches of the Chagrin River. It was prime land for farming with fine and fertile soil, abundant water from gushing springs, and wood for building houses, cooking and heating. His deed was dated November 20, 1820, and the price was \$1,572.80. Thus the first recorded valuation of land in what was to become Waite Hill Village was \$2.50 per acre.

Over the next two years the entire Waite clan, which consisted of William, his two sons and two daughters and all of their spouses, moved here to settle the land. At first it was dangerous, and there were years of drudgery, but they made this into a prosperous farming area, which lasted several generations. The names Waite and Otis (William's son-in-law) were still much in evidence when things began to change at the turn of the century.



With improved transportation, prominent Clevelanders noticed the pleasing scenery and began to look to the east for sites for their summer and year-around homes. One such was John Sherwin. Deeds dated July 10, 1907, show he bought 105 acres from Eliza Waite, George Waite, et al., and there were similar purchases over the next several years. Friends joined Mr. Sherwin, and it was the foresight of these men, which made Waite Hill the unique place it is today. They decided that interests would best be served if the community became established as a legal entity. Kirtland Township trustees incorporated Waite Hill as a Village at an election on June 16, 1928. There are familiar names among the first Village officials who were elected July 14, 1928: Edward Bruch, Dan Hanna, John Sherwin, Charles Otis, Warren King, and Mrs. John Sherwin, Wilson Hobart, Walter Metcalf, John Sherwin, Jr., and John Newell, Jr.

It is interesting to note the matters of concern at the first Council Meeting, held August 7, 1928, as evidence by the legislation:

1. An ordinance designating public places for the posting of ordinances.
2. An ordinance prohibiting trespassing on private property.
3. An ordinance regulating traffic.
4. An ordinance to prevent the destruction of private property.
5. An ordinance appointing a Deputy Marshal.
6. An ordinance applying for funds from Kirtland and Willoughby Townships.
7. An ordinance establishing a Planning Commission.

At the next Council Meeting they decided to hire a full-time policeman, at the salary of \$110.00 a month.

July 14, 1928, Mayor Edward P. Bruch hired John Newell, Jr. as the Village Marshal.



June 3, 1929, the Village purchased its first police vehicle a Ford Coupe.

March 9, 1931, a full-time Deputy Marshal was hired, Edwin O. Rockefeller.

March 9, 1931, eight other Deputy Marshals were hired without pay:

- David Walker
- Seaton Wasser
- Fred Woods
- Ben Mahuke
- Clifford Radcliffe
- Harry Greenwood
- Mathew Leggatt
- John Heinig

Each of the above had to pay the Village a \$500.00 bond to ensure their faithfulness and loyalty to the Village with fulfilling their duties.

In the year of 1931 another Ford Coupe was purchased and a phone was placed in the Marshal's home.

November 6, 1931, the Village's first and only murder to this date was committed. The victim, a resident, was Griffin D. Fenton. Residents and Council members of the Village offered a reward of \$500.00 for the arrest and conviction of the person(s) involved.



As the years passed, the Village hired eleven other Deputy Marshals and eventually started paying the Marshals.

February 25, 1934 the Village hired a new Marshal, M.H. Wilson, Jr. It has been undetermined if the first Marshal, John Newell, Jr., stepped down or retired.



May 5, 1935, the Village purchased a Plymouth coupe instead of the Ford.

February 7, 1937, the Village contracted with the City of Cleveland and placed police short wave radios in the police coupes.

February 28, 1937, the Village incorporated Watchman's clocks and placed police sirens in the police coupes.

February 29, 1937, Judges Charles Manchester, Frank O. Reynolds, and Charles Alexander found that Stella Elliott and Vernon M. Wells were to be paid \$500.00 each as reward for the information leading Village officials to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) involved in the Fenton murder.

Also as the years passed by, Council also had changes in the Mayoral status:

1944-1951 was Mayor Richard Lux
1952-1957 was Mayor Francis Sherwin
1958-1962 was Mayor Charles Doron
1962-1965 was Mayor Francis Sherwin
1966-2012 was Mayor Arthur D. Baldwin II
2012-present is Mayor Robert Ranallo



President Roosevelt created the Office of Civil Defense to oversee and assist America's Communities. Men and women volunteered and organized themselves involving the entire community here in Waite Hill. Many of the residents were involved in the training throughout the 1950's.

To this date the only documented traffic fatality was Mrs. Lutz on August 7, 1949 on Eagle Road west of now Gardenside Drive.

The year of 1949 there was a reorganization of the police department. The Marshals were renamed to Chief of Police and Police Officers.

In 1950 the creation of a municipal court was developed with the Townships of Willoughby and Kirtland. Waite Hill took part in this creation as it does today.

Throughout the years there were changes in the police department as well as the position of Chief of Police. The following is a list from the past to the present:

1931 – 1949	Edwin O. Rockefeller
1949 – 1959	Roger Ludwig
1959 – 1981	Laddie Masek
1981 – 1997	Keith Rohrbaugh
1997 – 2012	Arnold E. Stanko
2012 – Present	Keith A. DeWitt

Unfortunately, there was a fire at Town Hall some years ago and this is all that could be found as far as history for the Village and Police Department.