

My Fascination with Western Reserve Town Squares

By Wally Huskonen

I grew up in Andover, Ashtabula County, Ohio. This village bordering the Ohio state line with Pennsylvania has a square exactly in its middle. The village square requires travelers on U.S. Route 6 (east-west) and Ohio Route 7 (north and south) driving through or into the village to circle what is called the Andover Public Square. It takes up an area of approximately 1 acre and features a bandstand in its southeast quadrant.

During my growing up years, I enjoyed attending the annual Andover Street Fair during which food booths and concession rides filled the Square.

If you live in a city, village, or township in the Western Reserve, you may be interested in a little bit of research I did on these features of our region. I asked CoPilot (Microsoft's AI app) "How many town squares are there in the Western Reserve?"

CoPilot's answer: There is no definitive count of town squares in the Western Reserve, but dozens of communities—especially those founded before 1850—feature traditional New England-style village greens or public squares.

The Western Reserve, a 3.3-million-acre region in northeastern Ohio settled primarily by New Englanders, was deliberately laid out with town centers modeled after Connecticut and Massachusetts villages. These typically included a central green or square surrounded by civic buildings like churches, schools, and town halls. While not every settlement retained its original square, many still do, and some have restored or commemorated them.

Town Squares in the Western Reserve: What We Know

- **Historic Planning Influence:** The Connecticut Land Company, which surveyed and sold land in the Reserve starting in 1796, used New England town planning principles. This often included a central square or green.
- **Known Examples:**
 - Hudson: Its green is one of the most iconic, with a layout directly inspired by New England towns.
 - Twinsburg and Streetsboro: Both retain village greens with churches overlooking them, echoing their Connecticut origins.
 - Kinsman: Features a square with a Congregational Church modeled after New Haven's Old North Church.
 - Gates Mills: Though more secluded, it preserves the aesthetic of a New England-style civic center.

- Other Likely Candidates: Towns like Norwalk, Greenwich, New Haven, Dorset, and Andover (bingo—my hometown) —named after Connecticut towns—were often laid out with similar features, though some squares may have been lost or altered over time.

Estimating the Total

- The Western Reserve includes over 500 townships across 14 counties in northeastern Ohio.
- If even 10–20% of these retained or restored their original squares, that would suggest 50 to 100 town squares or greens with recognizable civic layouts.
- However, no centralized inventory exists, and many squares have been repurposed, paved over, or absorbed into modern development.

Much of the above was extracted by CoPilot from a website named ArcGIS StoryMaps. You can check it out for other historical information by clicking on [The Western Reserve: New England in Ohio](#).

A final note: An important square not mentioned by CoPilot is Cleveland Public Square. I intend to conduct research on its history and compose an article at a later date.



IMAGE: 1923 Postcard shows northwest corner of Andover Public Square. From author's historic postcard collection.



IMAGE: Dated screen capture of live video feed of Andover Public Square from northeast corner hosted by Village of Andover. Note bandstand in southeast corner.