



# West Side Story Tour

**A tour of historic automobile sites on the West Side of Cleveland including stops at Frostville Museum, Clifton Beach, and sky-line views of Cleveland.**

## **Introduction**

This is a story of the Cleveland automobile history and the entrepreneurs who made it possible. From Automobiles to Chewing Gum to Prohibition, Cleveland was booming in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Follow the journey below to put yourself back in time, and enjoy the magnificent Cleveland coast line.

**Starting at the Strongsville Holiday Inn, turn right out of hotel lot onto Royalton Rd. Rt. 82**

**Turn left onto Valley Pkwy. light.**

**Pass the Metropark's Chalet Toboggan run.**

**Pass Albion Rd. intersection. Remain on Valley Pkwy.**

**Pass Pearl Rd. intersection traffic light. Remain on Valley Pkwy.**

**Pass Whitney Rd. intersection. Note covered bridge on Whitney Rd. to your left. Stay on Valley Pkwy.**

**Make left turn by Metroparks sign to remain on Valley Pkwy. Do not go straight onto Eastland Rd.**

On your right is Baldwin Lake. This area was the site of Berea Ohio's sandstone quarries.

By the Mid 19th century, great fortunes were being made in the Berea sandstone quarries. The Berea sandstone was a fine uniform grained stone particularly suited for grinding wheels and the architectural stonework popular in the rapidly growing Cleveland area. One of the families, who made its fortune in Berea's stone quarrying business, was the family of Frank B. Stearns. This fortune enabled young Frank to finance and develop one of America's first sporting cars, forming the F.B. Stearns Co. in 1898. In 1911 he introduced the Knight-Knight, produced in Cleveland until 1929.

**Pass the arched stone bridge on Quarry Ln remaining on Valley Pkwy.**

**Pass through light at West Bagley Rd. Valley Pkwy. temporarily changes name to Nobottom Rd. after this intersection.**

**Pass under railroad bridges and turn right onto Barrett Rd. and an immediate right back onto Valley Pkwy.**

**Cross Spafford Rd. intersection staying on Valley Pkwy.**

**Turn left onto Cedar Point Rd. at traffic light.**

As you pass over the bridge, on your left is the confluence of the East and West Branch of the Rocky River, one of the only pre-glacial river systems in the U.S. You will be following the Rocky River north to Lake Erie through the Metroparks.

**Turn left into Frostville Museum's lot.**

Most of the buildings in the village were relocated and restored here as examples of 19th century Western Reserve life. The weekly farmer's market features locally grown produce and will be open toward the front of the village. Restrooms are in the front of the village near the road.

**Leave Frostville out the front drive turning right back onto Cedar Point Rd.**

**Turn left at light back onto Valley Pkwy.**

**Pass under Brookpark Rd. high level bridge.**

**Pass Mastic Rd. intersection at traffic light and continue on Valley Pkwy.**

**Pass Bid Met golf course on right, once site of Two Minute Farm.**

The rolling green acres of Big Met Golf Course looked much the same one hundred years ago when it was the site of a horse breeding farm called Two Minute Farm. The farm included almost all the land in the valley as far as the eye can see and included a half mile track and several stables. It was the showplace of the wild spending William J. White [no relation to the automobile building family]. White's claim to fame was his discovery in 1884 of a way to make flavored chewing gum from chicle. Along with Dr. Edwin Beeman, he formed the American Chicle Co. and by 1887 was selling five million sticks of chewing gum annually. More on chewing gum White later.

**Pass under Lorain Rd. high level bridge.**

When built in 1936 it won a national award for its beautiful design.

**Pass Tyler Barn along road on right.**

The old barn on your right is the only remaining building in Washington Tyler's country estate. He was a founder of the Tyler Elevator Co., a pioneer in production of wire cable. His 200 acre farm in the valley was a working "gentleman's farm" whose output was donated to local hospitals. In 1921, four years after Tyler's death, a 75 acre parcel was donated to form this part of the Metroparks.

**Pass under high- level Hilliard Bridge.**

This bridge was built in 1926 as part of a future interstate highway system that was never built, a victim of the depression.

**Straight through light at top of the hill across the Detroit Rd. intersection and onto Sloane Ave.**

**Left at flashing light onto Sloane Subway and go under railroad trestle. SHIFT TO SECOND GEAR BEFORE TURNING!**

**At top of hill, turn right at stop sign onto Clifton Rd.**

You are now entering Clifton Park, an early executive subdivision easily accessible to Cleveland by electric streetcar. From the 1890's to the 1920's this area became the home to many movers and shakers of Cleveland industry.

**Pass home of Benjamin Hopkins, vice-president of the Grant Motorcar Co. on left at 18150 Clifton Rd.**

The Grant Motor Company, formed in 1912, moved to Cleveland in 1916. They produced mid-priced "assembled cars". While producing over 10,000 cars in 1918, the post war depression in 1920 put them into difficulty, and they were gone in 1922.

**Pass the home of Alexander Winton at large yellow brick home at 18102 Clifton Rd.**

This home was the final residence of Alexander Winton, one of Cleveland's best known auto pioneers. By the time he purchased this home in 1924, he was out of automobile manufacturing but still very active in diesel engine production. He died in this house one day after his 72nd birthday on June 21, 1932.

**Through light over Clifton Blvd., and immediately bear left past triangle onto Lake Ave. passing yield sign.**

**Bear right at stop sign, staying on Lake Ave.**

**Turn right onto Beach Rd. (about 200 ft. before traffic light.) SHIFT INTO SECOND GEAR and go downhill to Clifton Beach.**

**Check in at guard house. This is a private park, so the guard may or may not let you pass. The road ahead is a drive along the beach. At 830 Beach Rd. is Alexander Winton's boat house.**

The original portion of this beautiful stone home was built in 1912 as a storage building for Winton's 145 ft. yacht La Belle powered by engines of Winton's own design. Later, a second story was added so the Winton children were able to use the boat house as a place to change for bathing on Clifton Beach. It was here in the Clifton Lagoon that Winton developed some of his most innovative engine designs and applied them to racing boats. The house was then sold to George Codrington, his general manager and vice-president at Winton Engine Co. Codrington then sold the property to Vernon Stouffer who made frozen foods a way of life for busy Americans. It was during Stouffer's ownership that the home was rented to Eliot Ness, also an avid boater and party host, who had been hired by the city of Cleveland as safety director to help clean up organized crime. Ironically, during prohibition and before Ness moved to Cleveland, the Clifton Lagoon was a very popular destination for thousands of gallons of illegal liquor. During the 1920's, this was a very busy place! You are at the mouth of the Rocky River. The Cleveland Yacht Club is on the island in the river just south of the river's mouth.

**Leave the beach and head back up Beach Rd. hill and turn left at stop sign onto Lake Rd.**

**Bear left at stop sign, staying on Lake Rd. Before you go through the stop sign, look ahead at the large cream colored wood shingle home at about your 1:00 position at 18131 West Clifton Rd.**

This was the home of Walter Baker of the Baker Electric Motor Co. Among one of the unique features of Baker's home is a large disc in the floor of the garage. This was to turn around Mr. Baker's electric car after charging.

The Baker was Cleveland's first electric automobile, starting production in 1898. Baker lived here with his wife Frances, who was the daughter of Rollin White of White Motors.

**At the flashing light at Webb Rd., turn right and immediately left to remain on Lake Ave.**

**Pass Lakewood city park to your left.**

At 12576 Lake Ave. is a low yellow brick fence. This was in front of Alexander Winton's original estate. Note on the gatepost "Roseneath", named by Winton after a castle in his native Scotland. Today it is the site of the high rise condominium Winton Place, named after the automaker. The other stone fences along Lake Avenue were the sites of lakefront estates belonging to other industrial giants of Cleveland's Gilded Age.

**Turn left onto West 117th St. at traffic light.**

**Turn right onto Edgewater Dr. at traffic light.**

**Turn left onto West 115th St. and immediate right onto Harbor View.**

**The large white home on your left at 11320 Harbor View is the Bramley home.**

M.F. Bramley was the president of Templar Motors Corp., started by a group of Cleveland investors in 1916. The name was adopted by the military-religious order, famous in the medieval crusades. The car was built in Lakewood, and we will be stopping at the factory shortly.

**Continue around the bend and turn left back onto Edgewater Dr.**

While at the stop sign, look over the hedge to your right. This is Mrs. Seltzer's modern sculpture garden, a very unique and valuable collection of one of Cleveland's biggest art patrons.

**At second stop sign, turn left onto Cliff Dr. Bear to your right and see a great view of Cleveland's harbor and skyline as you circle around the shoreline.**

**Cross over Edgewater Dr. and turn left at the light onto Lake Ave. DO NOT GET ONTO EXPRESSWAY RAMP which is also to the left.**

**Pass under railroad bridge, turn left off Lake Ave. onto West 80th St.**

The large brick building on your right was the body division of the Baker Electric Co. in 1907 and later, the Rubay Body Co.

Leon Rubay came to Cleveland in 1915 to work for White Motors but left shortly to establish his own company to build high quality automobile bodies here at 1318 West 78th St. the Leon Rubay Co. built custom closed bodies for White, Lozier, Stearns, Chandler, Franklin, Duesenburg, Templar, and others. In 1922, he announced production of his own Leon Rubay Automobile but produced fewer than 75 units. In 1924, the plant was absorbed by Baker-Raulang Co. body division and Rubay returned to France. From 1927 on, Baker-Raulang produced thousands of Ford Model A bodies in this building.

**Turn left on Baker St. for about 500 feet. This was the site of the Baker Rauch & Lang Co. and The American Ball Bearing Co.**

On the top of the building, note the clerestory windows on the roof. Now roofed over, these windows had skylights facing north to keep the building well lit before the days of efficient electric lighting.

As stated earlier, Walter Baker sold his first electric car in 1898. But Baker's founding of the American Ball Bearing Co. in 1895 got him started in the early automobile industry when he supplied ball bearings for electric motors and street cars.

Baker also developed the steering knuckle for automobile front wheels, the “full floating” rear axle, and the first rear axle bevel gear later adopted by the whole automotive industry. At one time axles for Cadillac, Packard, Lozier, Pierce-Arrow, Peerless, Ford, and Mercer were built here. For many years, Baker was close friends with Thomas Edison who thought enough of Baker’s product to choose a Baker Electric as his first car. Baker moved production to this site in 1906, producing bearing products in the west building and autos in the recently demolished east building. After a merger with Rauch & Lang in 1915, the company became known as Baker-Raulang. At this time, the company developed the Owen-Magnetic, a gas powered car with a magnetic ignition and a spiral bevel drive. Baker Material Handling Corp. was still making lift trucks here until the late 1980’s.

**Turn right turn onto West 83rd St.**

**Take West 83rd St. two blocks to Detroit Ave. and turn right onto Detroit Ave.**

Note large empty lot on left at 9301 Detroit Ave. This was the site of The Ohio Blower and Body Co.

Ohio Blower and Body Co. occupied this site from 1919 to 1927. During this time they made closed car bodies for such makes as Gardner, Diana, Jordan, Moon, Owen-Magnetic, and Stearns. Their real money maker though, was a custom closed body designed for the Ford Model T built under the trade name of “Master” and “Lindividual”. With Ford’s introduction of the Model A in 1927, their business failed by September of 1927. The building has recently been demolished.

**Bear slight left off Detroit Ave. onto Berea Rd. at the light just before the railroad underpass.**

As you wait to turn left onto Berea Rd., look ahead over the railroad bridge at the five story brick building on the left side of Detroit Rd. This is the site of the American Chicle Co., the world’s first chewing gum factory in 1888. Remember chewing gum White’s Two Minute Horse Farm in the Metroparks? This building is where he made his fortune, and then lost it due to his lavish spending-- yachts, horses, women, fine art, etc. We’ve seen it before. Human nature has not changed! He died penniless in 1922.

**On the right side of Berea Road, starting at about West 104th St. and going around the corner of Madison Ave., is the brick factory complex of the Winton Motor Carriage Co.**

The first buildings went up in 1902 and contained all that was necessary to build a Winton. There were foundries, wood shops, sheet metal shops, machine shops ----- all integrated into this one property. There was even a 7/8 mile wooden plank test track, which ran around the building about where the sidewalks are today. By 1903, Winton had produced 850 cars in his new facility, which was used for Winton production until the end in early 1924.

**Turn right onto Madison Ave. at the first traffic light and go under the railroad bridge.**

As you wait for the light to change at the corner of Berea and Madison, you are at the site of what was probably once the epicenter of west side Cleveland’s auto industry.

The large fenced in open area to your left was until recently the site of Parish & Bingham Co. founded in 1894 and later becoming Midland-Ross Steel. It quickly became the largest producer of automotive frames and axle housings in the country. There were even blast furnaces here to produce their own steel. They supplied steel frames to the industry here until 1986. The buildings have been recently demolished.

Look to the back left side of that property. The old two story brick building with the row of upper windows was the Winton Engine Co. at 2160 West 106th St. With the successful trials of the engines Winton built for his own yacht La

Belle, Cox & Stevens Shipbuilders persuaded him to enter the large engine business in 1912. By 1913, Winton decided to experiment with diesel engines and is credited with making the first all American made diesel engine on this site. The diesel division continued on after Winton stopped building automobiles, and in 1930 was purchased by General Motors becoming Cleveland Diesel and later General Motor's Detroit Diesel and Electro-Motive Divisions.

Now if the traffic light hasn't changed yet, and you are still fascinated by the history of this corner, look straight ahead past the open field. The street running south is West 110th St. One of the buildings just before the railroad tracks was the home of the Guide Motor Lamp Mfg. Co., the major supplier of auto lighting for most of the Detroit auto manufacturers. Remember the names Tilt-Ray and Multibeam? These were Guide products produced here until purchased by GM in 1928.

A few doors down at 2130 West 110th St. Standard Products developed automotive window channels and weatherstrips, which they made in Cleveland until 1995.

After you finally get through this intersection onto Madison Ave., look to your left before you go under the railroad bridge. These buildings were the original home of Glidden Paint. It was here in 1947 that Glidden labs developed latex paint. They remained here until 1979.

**After crossing West 117th St. on Madison Ave., the large factory complex on your left was National Carbon. They manufactured carbon products for the electric lighting and battery industry.**

This neighborhood along Madison Ave. in Lakewood is known as "Birdtown", because many of the streets are named after birds. This area was originally built as a factory town in the late 19th century for the many workers at National Carbon. Inhabited by European immigrants, almost every block had its own church to serve the various nationalities.

**Turn left onto Halstead Ave. at light.**

**Go two blocks on Halstead Ave. and turn right onto Athens Ave. The large brick factory on your left was originally the Templar Motor Car Co. Drive past the building and turn left into the parking lot. Park opposite Dock Area 4.**

This building now is the home to multiple artists' studios. Many can be visited by entering the door marked "Central Stairs".

Restrooms on site.

**Leave the Templar Building by way of the back gate (the opposite side of the property you came in).**

**At gate, turn left on Waterbury Ave. and immediate right at light onto Lakewood Heights Blvd. Stay on Lakewood Heights Blvd., running parallel to I-90, for six lights. Get into the left lane before the sixth light.**

**Turn left at light at McKinley Ave. and cross over I-90.**

**Turn right onto Riverside Dr.**

**Turn left onto Metropark's Hogs Back Ln when Riverside Dr. makes a sharp right.**

In the 1820's, Hogs Back Hill led to one of the very few river crossings out of Cleveland to points west. In 1824, a post road was established, and stage coaches came down this hill, crossed the Rocky River via a small wooden bridge, and back up the west side of the valley connecting to what today is Center Ridge Road.

**At the bottom of the hill, turn left onto Valley Pkwy.**

**At traffic light, turn right onto Mastic Rd. hill.**

**On your left at 23433 Mastic Rd. is the Parker Ranch.**

**Mastic Rd. merges into Columbia Rd. at light. Bear left onto Columbia Rd.**

**Turn right at Butternut Ridge Rd.**

**At light, turn left at Great Northern Blvd. which then turns back into Columbia Rd.**

**Bear right over railroad tracks and turn right off Columbia Rd. onto Mill St. to Grand Pacific Junction. Park in lots off Mill St. This is a railroad themed group of interesting locally owned little shops.**

Stop for ice cream, restrooms, and shopping.

**Leave Pacific Junction out Mill St. and turn right back onto Columbia Rd.**

**Continue on Columbia Rd., over the Ohio Turnpike, through the Sprague Rd. intersection. Columbia Road changes name to West River Rd. at this point.**

**Turn left on Ohio Route 82**

**Proceed east on Route 82 back to Holiday Inn, just past I-71**

Hope you enjoyed the trip.

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