

## 13.0 Arts and Recreation

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### 13.1 Introduction

Leisure, recreation, and entertainment became an essential component of American life and culture during early suburbanization in the early twentieth century, as the work week decreased from 58.4 hours in 1901 to 48.4 hours in 1921, and evolved into a larger market nearing the mid-century, where the reduction in work hours leveled off at 40-hours per week (Anderson 2015:67). Leisure, a key component of recreation, had become more attainable as the automobile industry boomed, which, in itself, was a contributing factor to post-war suburbanization. By becoming more affordable, automobiles provided World War II veterans with the opportunity to relocate their families from blighted city centers to the outskirts of the city, where they could easily commute to work in the city, and take road trips on weekends. Furthermore, families no longer had to rely on public transportation, which gave them the freedom to seek out recreational activities and entertainment in areas that were once inaccessible, setting the impetus of shopping centers, drive-ins, and mall theaters, as well as increased outdoor recreation and professional athletics as spectator sports. The following sections highlight these recreation settings.

### 13.2 Suburban Drive-In Theaters

In the 1950s, with the automobile more affordable and attainable than ever before, families relocated from the city to the suburbs and began seeking new forms of entertainment. The excitement of going to the movies, coupled with the popularity of the automobile, motivated certain companies to invest further in the already extant drive-in theater concept. Drive-ins catered to wide-ranging audiences because they were virtually hassle free, where patrons could watch a wide-screen movie with high-power sound systems and be served concessions from the comfort and privacy of their own cars (Electronics 1933:209). While there were many drive-in theaters in Cleveland

constructed between 1940–1970, suburban theaters moreso reflected the idealized notions that contributed to the ethos of the “American Dream” (Library of Congress 2017).

The East Side Drive-In in North Randall, was Ohio’s first ‘open-air film house’. It ran from 1938–1972 (Slavic Village 2011:34). In 1940, the West Side Drive-In opened in Brookpark, but was forced to close in 1955, for the impending Hopkins (International) Airport construction and related freeway projects, the Outerbelt South Freeway (I-480) and Berea Freeway (I-71) (Historic Aerials 1952, 1962, 1970; Slavic Village 2011:27). The Fairview Outdoor Theatre opened in Rocky River on September 5, 1947, with the capacity for 500 cars. Owned by the Co-operative Theaters of Ohio Booking and Buying Agency, the theater expanded in 1950 and increased their automobile capacity to accommodate 700, and abruptly closed only a few years later ca. 1952 (Slavic Village 2011:36). The decline of drive-in theaters impacted each establishment differently because their closures resulted from a variety (or combination) of circumstances; infrastructure development byway of urban renewal that began in the late 1940s, the prevalence of large-scale indoor mall cinemas in the 1960s, and the advent of color television and VCR’s in the 1970s (Reid 2008).

### 13.3 Mall Cinemas

Many cinema buildings constructed throughout the mid-century were either attached or detached additions to the retail hubs that predated them. Thoughtfully implemented, cinemas were expected to benefit from the commercial activity catalyzed by shopping malls and centers. The first cinema in the Greater Cleveland area was Southgate Cinemas, which opened in February 1964. Southgate Cinemas (detached from Southgate mall) was located on Northfield Avenue, adjacent to the Southgate

Mall. It was owned and operated by the General Drive-In Corporation and hosted a single screen theater with 1,184 push-back seats (CPD 1964b:4-BB). The Severance Theater opened at the Severance shopping center in March 1965, in an attempt to capitalize from the parking and shopping inducements the location offered (CPD 1965e:16). Construction on the Parmatown Twin Theaters, in Parmatown Center, was completed in 1967, following the trend of cinema being located near retail centers. The Parmatown theater was said to have a staggered seating plan to allow unobstructed visibility of the screen from any of the 2,400 push-back theater seats. Developed by General Cinema Corp., everything from the parking lot and box office designs to the projection and sound equipment was modernized for the comfort and convenience of patrons (CPD 1966b:25-D).

Cinema II, adjacent to the Southgate Mall, as well as four-plex Cinema City in the Westgate Mall both opened in 1971, were designed by William Riseman Associates, and owned by the General Cinema Corporation (GCC). GCC's theaters offered free parking in their asphalt lots, smoke loges, an art gallery, and pushback seats to movie-goers (CPD 1971a; CPD 1971b:6-H). Also owned by GCC was the Randall Park Mall Cinema triplex, which ran movies from August 1976, until it closed in the 1990s (Randall Park Cinema 2017). The advent of multiplex movie theater chains transformed the cinematic experience for Americans by providing concessions and comfortable spaces for patrons, including modern amenities like air conditioning, and offering a variety of films for patrons to choose from. These multiplex entertainment venues were also easily accessible to suburban residents, as their locations near indoor malls and outdoor shopping centers would suggest. By constructing cineplexes (multiplex cinemas) near concentrated shopping areas, companies like GCC could benefit from business drawn-in by their affiliation and proximity to retail shops and restaurants. Cineplexes remained extremely

popular throughout the second-half of the twentieth century, but fell into despair when theater chains overdeveloped in an already competitive market, and were forced to release many of their holdings in the late 1980s (CPD 1990:8-D).

## 13.4 Parks and Recreation

Since the 1910s, Cleveland's park and recreation departments have operated as separate entities, serving different functions. The city's Division of Recreation was founded with the intention of maintaining public recreational sites, while the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, also known as Cleveland Metroparks, was established for "the conservation of natural resources by the creation, development, and improvement of park districts" (Cleveland Metroparks, 2017). Between 1940 and 1974, the Cleveland Metroparks underwent many changes, as the park system acquired a zoo, several golf courses, and a park reservation.

### 13.4.1 Cleveland Metropolitan Parks District

Often referred to as the *Emerald Necklace*, Cleveland Metroparks consists of twelve interconnected reservations, including the Cleveland Metropolitan Zoo, that surround Cleveland resembling a green necklace. In this case, the reservations are tracts of public land set aside of recreational uses, except for hunting. Many of the reservations that constitute the Emerald Necklace were developed in the early twentieth century, and were engineered by William Stinchcomb, who served as Metroparks director from the park's inception until he suffered a stroke and retired in 1957 (Cleveland Metroparks 2017). Stinchcomb's inspirations for Cleveland's Emerald Necklace derived from Fredrick Law Olmsted's historical landscape architectural designs of Boston's Emerald Necklace (Rogers 2001:350). The reservations that pre-date 1940 include Rocky River (1919), as well as, Huntington, Big Creek, Euclid Creek, Hinkley, Brecksville, Bedford, and North and

South Chagrin Reservations, which were established in the 1920s (Marmolya 1993).

Between 1940 and 1970, the Cleveland's Metropolitan Parks District was essentially on a hiatus in respect to parks and reservations. Post-dating 1970 was the Mill Stream Run Reservation (1976), located 16-miles southwest of downtown Cleveland. The 2,307-acre wide valley reservation featured activities, such as camping, fishing, biking, and hiking within its lush meadow landscape. The reservation was part of a floodplain and was characterized by dense woodlands with "deep ravines cut by streams" (Marmolya 1993). Many other parks were added to the Cleveland Metropolitan Park District's Emerald Necklace, however they opened in the late twentieth century (Cleveland Metroparks 2017).

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, was known as the Cleveland Zoological Park until 1975. Between the 1940s and 1970s, Cleveland Zoological Park system underwent a series of operational and branding changes. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History managed day-to-day operations of the zoo from 1940–1957, where they oversaw the zoo's expansion. By 1957, the zoo's land size reached 110 acres, new buildings had been erected, and the Cleveland Zoological Society became operating supervisors of the park until 1970, when it was absorbed into the Cleveland Metropolitan Parks District to become a part of the city's Metroparks system (Cleveland Metroparks 2017).

### 13.5 Golf Courses

The popularity of golf grew in the United States following World War I, and again after World War II (Cleveland Metroparks 2017). The mid-century golf movement expanded rapidly after World War II, which coincided with suburbanization, byway of the booming post-war economy in America. Between 1946–1964, Americans witnessed a nationwide increase in golfers, with 2.5 million golfers in 1946, 3.5 million in 1955, and over 7 million

by 1965. The growing number of golfers throughout the 1960s resulted in 300 to 400 golf courses being constructed throughout the United States between 1955 and 1965 (CPD 1965f:10-C).

In Cleveland, the golf movement began as a privatized sport, often played at country clubs. Specifically targeting the upper class, early twentieth century country clubs like the Shaker Heights Country Club (1913) and Pepper Pike Country Club (1925) were strategically placed in expanding suburbs to attract further development around the areas they were located (Grabowski 1992). Throughout much of the twentieth century, golf in Cleveland paralleled the nationwide trends, where recreation and leisurely activities were discouraged during the world wars. In 1925, the Cleveland Metropolitan Park Board proposed a chain of municipal golf courses to surround the city and enhance the suburbs, keeping with the park district's Emerald Necklace landscape design concepts. By the mid-twentieth century, some privately owned golf courses were made public. For example, the golf courses at Sleepy Hollow Country Club (1924) and Manakiki (ca. 1928) became public in the early 1960s (Grabowski 1992). Even though private golf courses continued to be constructed after the mid-century, they were mostly associated with country clubs, therefore not attainable for the average citizen. As suburbs continued to grow, the city's local government offered an alternative to exclusive clubs by expanding their Metropolitan Park System to include easily accessible and affordable golf courses for public use (Cleveland Metroparks 2017).

After the mid-century, when the second wave of golf courses began to be constructed in Cleveland, the Cleveland Metropolitan Park System established the Golf Department (Cleveland Metroparks 2017). The growing popularity of golf in the 1950s and 1960s resulted the Metropolitan Park District acquiring private golf clubs for public use, as well as constructing new municipal golf courses as a

means to expand the presence of golf and encourage recreation at their public facilities.

In April 1953, Highland Park and Seneca golf courses were opened for public use in Highland Hills and Broadview Heights, respectively (CPD 1953:19). Seneca, which was designed as private club in 1940, by city landscape architect A. H. Alexander (CPD 1961a:8-C). Highland Park opened as a private club in 1912, and by 1954, the public 18-hole golf course hosted the Cleveland Open (Deegan 2013).

Shawnee Hills Golf Course opened in March 1959 in the Bedford Reservation of the city's Metroparks system, although the land had been acquired in 1927 (CPD 1959b:33). Designed by architect and turf expert Ben Zink, Shawnee Hills was complete with a driving range and a club house with service facilities, such as a ticket office, pro-shop, and restaurant (CPD March 1959b:33). When the nine-hole Mastick Woods Golf Course opened in the Cleveland Metroparks' Rocky River Reservation in March 1965, it was publicized in the newspaper alongside the exclusive Parkway Country Club in North Olmsted, which opened on the same day (CPD 1965g:4-C). All the aforementioned municipal golf courses have maintained operations throughout the second-half of the twentieth century, have remained intact, and are still extant.

### 13.6 Bowling

Prior to the twentieth century, before bowling was introduced into modern American culture, the bowling alleys were stigmatized as places that were, "frequented principally by hustlers, touts, hangers-on, cheap gamblers, and disreputable individuals" (CPD 1975). Throughout twentieth century, the sport grew exceedingly popular and, by the mid-century, no longer had the reputation of being an establishment for scoundrels and miscreants. By the mid-century, the allure of bowling alleys attracted diverse clientele. In Cuyahoga County, bowling alleys sprang up near mills and factories, as well as in the suburbs, drawing in

families, laborers, and bowling leagues (Grabowski 1992).

Bowling became exceedingly popular by the 1940s, as the pastime rejuvenated the moral of wartime employees during World War II. Some manufacturers even sponsored industrial leagues. Bowling leagues soon became an essential part of a weekly routine for many, open from 8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. and the number of bowling alleys jumped from 59 in 1939 to 106 in 1945 (ECH 2017ww).

The invention of the automatic pinspotter, developed by the American Machine and Foundry Company in 1945, revolutionized the sport of bowling by using machines to do the labor-intensive work required to play the game. However, it was not commercially used until 1952 (American Society of Planning Officials 1958). The automated pinsetter reduced costs associated with operating a bowling alley, by eliminating the need for pin boys, whose job it was to set up the pins for game play. It was the automated pinsetter that served as the impetus towards the mass construction of bowling alleys in suburban areas; however, it was also the numerous amenities offered in modern bowling establishments that drew in customers week after week (American Society of Planning Officials 1958).

Suburban bowling alleys constructed in the mid-century did not have the bar room atmosphere commonly found in bowling establishments in urban areas. These "bowling centers", as they came to be called, refuted the negative implications of the term "alley" by replacing barrooms with retail spaces complete with concessions, cocktail bars, and pro shops (American Society of Planning Officials 1958). Some of these establishments were adamant that nurseries and all-purpose rooms were necessary to include in the design of mid-century modern bowling venues. Air conditioning and parking accommodations became more common throughout the mid-century, as a 1958 American Society of Planning Officials report indicated, 73 percent

of those surveyed have air-conditioned facilities and 68 percent provide parking lots for patrons to park their vehicles (American Society of Planning Officials 1958).

In May 1960, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* listed 91 participating facilities as members of the Bowling Proprietors' Association (BPA) of Greater Cleveland, four of which were surveyed; these extant bowling venues are Ambassador Brookpark Lanes (now Freeway Lanes) (CUY 1146017), Southgate Lanes, Inc. (CUY 1134924), AMF Brookgate Lanes (CUY 1145915) and Yorktown Lanes (CUY1149317).

Ambassador Brookpark Lanes, Inc. opened in 1959 under the name Dorsel's Ambassador – West Bowling Alley. Managed by Ray Shank, the venue offered league play and concessions, including a small lounge and bar area, as well as a space to accommodate large groups for parties (CPD 1962:15). Along with other chain Ambassador locations in the Cleveland area, nurseries were added to their facilities so that mothers with children could participate in the sport without having to worry about what to do with their kids, which was beneficial because it offered opportunities to reach a new demographic and grow their clientele (CPD 1959c:16). Although the mid-century bowling facility has remained in operation since its opening, it is now known as Freeway Lanes. The building, located in the Brookpark suburb, was strategically constructed in proximity to commercial and industrial areas for the convenience of the target audience: suburban dwellers and blue-collar factory workers. Clad in brick, the two-story, rectangular building features a flat roof and lacks fenestration on the ground floor. Characteristically, bowling establishments constructed during the mid-century followed this form to accommodate numerous bowling lanes, as well as modern conveniences and amenities, such as air conditioning, concessions, and accessible parking.

Construction on the Southgate Lanes building began on March 3, 1959 in Maple Heights, opposite the Southgate Shopping Center on Southgate Park Boulevard, between Northfield Road and Warrensville-Center Road (CPD 1959d:8–B). Designed by Sidney H. Morris & Associates and built by Zehman-Wolf and Serman Construction Company, the \$1-million “bowling center” was to have 48-AMF automatic pinspotters, 24 of which were to be completed by August 1960 (CPD 1959e:25). Its rectangular shape allowed for an open plan, which included a snack bar, coffee shop, and liquor lounge. The lack of fenestration allowed for the interior lighting to be consistent and placid through artificial illumination. The establishment provided modern conveniences, such as air conditioning and accessible parking, which were becoming standard in bowling centers by the late-1950s and early-1960s (1959e:8–B). At the date of survey, the building was undergoing renovations, but was slated to reopen soon and continue its use as a bowling alley.

Located at 14950 Snow Road, the \$1-million bowling center in Brook Park, known as Brookgate Lanes, opened within the Brookgate Shopping Center on July 29, 1961 (CPD 1961b:10–C). The owners were the Consolidated Bowling Corporation who, at the time, was said to be the largest operator of ten-pin lanes in the country (CPD 1961b:10–C). The company also owned Shoregate Lanes in Willowick, Lake County and Parmatown Lanes in Parma, Cuyahoga County (CPD 1961b:10–C). The building still operates as a bowling facility and, although under new ownership, does not appear to have undergone many exterior alterations. The most striking feature of the one-story, brick clad building is the primary entrance, which is covered by a segmented butterfly roof projection with supporting columns – a element characteristic of mid-century modern, architecture. Similar to other bowling establishments, Brookgate Lanes offered, and continues to offer, ample parking for patrons, concessions, and air conditioning. When it opened, the venue was advertised as

having an added feature: a League Secretary Key Club Room, which was equipped with typewriters, duplicating machines desks, telephones, and televisions (CPD 1961b:10–C).

Construction on the 40-lane bowling and recreation center, Yorktown Lanes, began in 1959, and was completed the following year (CPD 1959f:32). Located at 6218 Pearl Road in Parma Heights, the bowling center continues to maintain its original function. The large, rectangular, brick clad building with blue-painted concrete pilasters and corner columns was constructed by Yorktown Lanes, Inc. The establishment was managed by its president, James Cottrell (CPD 1959g:32). Prior to being built, the 3.5-acre tract of land had to be rezoned from residential to commercial use (CPD 1959f:16). The grand opening of Yorktown Lanes occurred on July 30, 1960, and had an exhibition series featuring female Cleveland bowlers and two nationally recognized male bowlers from Detroit (CPD 1960:18). A second exhibition game, played that day, included the mayor of Parma Heights and nine other mayors of surrounding localities. Celebrations began at 6:30 a.m. and continued for 24-hours (CPD 1960:29). The \$1.5-million bowling center was complete with fully automatic Brunswick lanes and pin setting equipment, 16 billiard tables, a restaurant, cocktail lounge, snack bar, sports shop, shoe rental service, meeting rooms, a nursery, locker rooms for men and women, and a parking for (CPD 1959g:32). Prominent features characterizing the building as a bowling center are the lack of fenestration, the large, arrowhead-shaped sign with “Yorktown Lanes” in neon lettering, and the metal signage with the name of the building written on the face of the brick on the southwest wall.

Another significant technological advance in modern bowling was the Brunswick automatic scorer, which was introduced to the game in the early 1970s and, benefitted patrons by keeping score via a computer, so one player on a team didn’t have to sit out the game to keep score.

With a 1,000-year memory, the computer scorers offered an added convenience to bowlers (CPD 1975). Even with this new advancement, the leisure sport witnessed a decline in the number of bowlers by the mid-1970s, and by the mid-1980s, participation in the sport was down 13 percent countrywide and 22 percent in Cleveland. The decrease in bowlers and bowling leagues after the mid-century was caused by lifestyle changes including, but not limited to, women seeking jobs outside the home, competition from other recreational and professional athletics, and the unwillingness to commit to league bowling (ECH 2017ww). The seemingly concurrent demise of shopping malls, movie theaters, and bowling alleys provides evidence to the fact that recreation, leisure, entertainment, and amusement were emerging post-World War II trends and were greatly tied to the mid-century suburbanization movement.



Figure 13-1. View of Parmatown Lanes (no longer extant), Parma (Cleveland Press Collection, Michael Schwartz Library, Cleveland State University).

### 13.7 YMCAs

Although Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) branches in Cleveland date back to 1854, it was suburban development in the 1950s that expanded in the mid-twentieth century. When they were first established, YMCAs in Cleveland sought to alleviate the

social pressures accompanying unhealthy living and working conditions brought on by the Industrial Revolution throughout much of the nineteenth century (YMCA of Greater Cleveland 2017). Following World War II, with Cleveland's environs expanding quickly into other parts of Cuyahoga County, YMCAs were constructed outside the city center and became a cornerstone of many of Cleveland's suburban communities. The construction of YMCA's throughout the mid-century coincided with the modern recreational and social movements associated with post-World War II suburbanization.

While many YMCA buildings were constructed within the Cleveland metropolitan area throughout the 1950s, many of the suburban branches were created with the help of the "Y" expansion fund, which included six branches with "shared operations" between the YMCA and Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) (CPD 1956:5). Among these YMCA/YWCA extensions were the Hillcrest Branch in Lyndhurst (1956) (CUY 1128022), Southeast Branch in Bedford (1956) (CUY 1139715), and Southwest YWCA (1960) (CUY 1139715). These branches served their respective suburban communities by offering a variety of recreational and social activities, such as sports, club, and community programs (CPD 1957a; CPD 1957b).

YMCA's and YWCA's gradually shifted their religious affiliations to, more so, embrace social offerings and athletic facilities. Architecturally, many of Cleveland's mid-century YMCA's honored their Christian principles by hiring local architect Travis G. Walsh to accurately depict the organization's mission and accentuate their ecclesiastical venerableness through architectural design. Walsh designed many public buildings and Episcopal churches, such as Outhwaite Homes public housing estate (1937) and Parma South Presbyterian Church (1951) prior to taking on YMCA projects in Cleveland. Walsh was the architect for seven YMCA buildings, including the Hillcrest and Bedford branches (CPD 1978).

## 13.8 Professional Sports

When America went into World War II, many professional sports teams lost players, as many enlisted or were drafted to fight overseas. By the mid-century, recreation, leisure, and entertainment had become an integral part of American culture. The entertainment of professional sporting events, coupled with the leisure offered to spectators, served as a recreational outlet (Grabowski 1992:83).

### 13.8.1 Baseball

By the mid-twentieth century, baseball had become the most popular professional sport in the country (Grabowski 1992:85). In June 1946, Bill Veeck purchased the Cleveland Indians, of the American League, for one million dollars. Veeck transformed baseball in Cleveland by promoting the team through giveaways, cheap beer, and firework displays (Grabowski 1992:85). Within one year, attendance increased to such an extent that games had to be played at the larger Lakefront Stadium (later called Municipal Stadium) (1931); prior to the move, the Indians played at League Park (ca. 1891 with substantial additions in 1909) (Grabowski 1992:85). In 1948, the Cleveland Indians won their first World Series championship in over 25 years, which was said to have been "the most fitting climax to a dramatic season" (Grabowski 1992:87). The team left Municipal Stadium in 1992, moving to the new Jacobs Field facility (now Progressive Field) in 1993.

Between ca. 1942 and 1948, the Cleveland Buckeyes baseball team played in the American Negro League (Grabowski 1992). Bill Veeck worked relentlessly to find talented African American baseball players from the American Negro League to desegregate the American League. After winning the Negro League's World Series championship in 1945 at the League Park venue, Veeck signed Larry Doby from the Buckeyes to the Indians in 1947, and began playing for the team a year later (Jedick 1980:73). Doby was the first black player to join

the American League; however, he was the second African American to play for a major league team in the United States, the first being Jackie Robinson who signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1946 (Grabowski 1992:90).

### 13.8.2 Football

The Cleveland Rams served as the city's professional football team between 1935–1946. The Rams were first part of the American Football League (AFL), and then reformed when the National Football League (NFL) was established in 1946. In the same year, the Cleveland Rams dissipated due to financial reasons and competition from the Cleveland Browns team, who were part of the NFL (Grabowski 1992:54). As televisions become more common in households in the 1950s and 1960s, football, a cold weather sport, became more favorable to watch indoors, rather than attend outdoors. This, in turn, helped the sport gain popularity amongst Clevelanders to help the sport thrive in the years to come (Grabowski 1992:97). The Browns won several NFL championship titles in the 1950s, and another in 1964. The team also had successful seasons between 1966 and 1972 when they made five playoff appearances during these seasons (NFL 2012).

The Browns also played in Municipal Stadium. Many cities in the mid-twentieth century had combined stadiums that accommodated both baseball and football games. Since the sports' seasons have a short overlap, the fields did not require constant changing and made economic sense to have one facility that served multiple functions. The Browns remained at Municipal Stadium through the 1994-1995 season, even after the Indians relocated to Jacobs Field. That season was also the last for the Browns, as then-owner Art Modell moved the team to Baltimore to become the Baltimore Ravens. The Browns team was reactivated for the 1999-2000 season as an expansion team and under new ownership. They also began to play in a new stadium, first called the Cleveland Browns

Stadium, and now known as First Energy Stadium.

### 13.8.3 Basketball

Later in Cleveland's history, the city added a professional basketball team to their sporting options. The Cleveland Cavaliers joined the National Basketball Association (NBA) in 1970 as an expansion team. Between 1970 and 1974, the team played in the Cleveland Arena, and moved to the Richfield Coliseum between 1974 and 1994. The Cleveland Arena was originally constructed in 1937 along Euclid Avenue. When the Cavaliers left the arena for the new Richfield Coliseum, the building fell into disrepair, and was demolished in 1977. The Richfield Coliseum was located in Richfield, Summit County, between the cities of Cleveland and Akron. Built in 1974, the coliseum remained in use until 1994. It was demolished in 1999 and the land was absorbed into the Cuyahoga Valley National Park as meadowland. Since 1994, the Cavaliers play in Quicken Loans Arena in downtown Cleveland.



Figure 13-2. Inaugural Cleveland Cavaliers basketball team coached by Bill Fitch (Cleveland Press Collection, Michael Schwartz Library, Cleveland State University).

### 13.8.4 Sports and Urban Renewal

In Cleveland, following the advent of commercial television, sporting event broadcasts ca. 1950 became exceedingly popular, convenient, and even preferable to attending sporting events at Municipal Stadium,



Cleveland Arena, and League Park during the mid-century (Grabowski 1992:95). Although the sporting events, themselves, continued to remain popular in Cleveland, economic activity around these venues dissipated. By the 1970s, the City of Cleveland was financially unstable and was beginning to have the reputation of being a dirty city. It wasn't until the early 1980s, that the construction of a new sports stadium could be the catalyst needed to spur redevelopment (Chapin 2004:22). The pursuit, led by downtown development companies found that the old Central Market area, a once popular market that had deteriorated in the 1970s, was a suitable location to capitalize and catalyze the area they dubbed "Gateway". It wasn't until the late 1990s to early 2000s that "The Gateway District" became a commercial, residential, and entertainment hub (Chapin 2004:22). It can be argued that without Cleveland's mid-century decline and continued interest in sports, itself, the Gateway redevelopment plan may not have transpired. Despite people's disinterest in physically attending sporting events throughout the 1970s, the urban renewal catalyst of a sporting venue in the 1990s and 2000s is directly linked to the popularity of sports in the mid-century – if it wasn't for the tremendous strides in professional sporting between 1940–1970, there would be no impetus for constructing a new sporting venue, let alone using the development as catalyst for the renewal.

## 13.9 Conclusion

The emergence of "car culture" on the American psyche represented freedom for many Americans around the mid-century. Automobiles allowed those who could afford to move out of the city center to relocate to the suburbs, and served as a literal and figurative vehicle to escape the stresses of life. From leisurely activities, such as shopping, to seeking out recreational facilities like parks, country clubs, and YMCA's, Cuyahoga County residents could easily take a short drive from their homes in the suburbs to a myriad of establishments and spaces developed for

leisure, recreation, and entertainment between 1940 and 1976. Suburban residents in the twentieth century had access to many types of everyday resources – stores, churches, jobs, churches, etc. – within a short distance. In addition to these resources, suburban areas also offered more recreational options for families to spend leisure time.

Already mentioned in Section 6, shopping malls became surrogate community centers since their large, open spaces were conducive to gatherings, either for families or small groups to walk around the shops or for special events, like visits with Santa Claus or train rides/displays for children to enjoy. The fully enclosed buildings offered places to meet up during rainy and snowy weather and on hot days when the air-conditioned mall was a place to escape the heat and sun. Food courts even provided cheap dining choices and a large area to relax. The long hallways and multiple levels allowed "mall walkers" to exercise without paying a membership fee to a gym and offering a comfortable atmosphere.

Churches and schools also provided recreation options, including for those who were not members or students. Most church events, such as festivals, bake sales, dinners, and raffles, encouraged public participation as these festivities usually served as fundraisers for the parish. School sporting events, concerts, and plays provided students with extracurricular options.

### 13.9.1 Drive-In Theaters

Other recreation options expanded during the modern-era mainly due to the growing popularity and accessibility of automobiles. People could typically find a range of options close to home, but still required a vehicle to get there. One such activity was attending the drive-in movie theater. At one-time, Cuyahoga County had drive-in movie theaters in at least Middleburg Heights, Garfield Heights, and Warrensville Heights (ironically, this location on

Miles Rd. now includes the subdivision called Cinema Park), but each of these is no longer present (Ohio's Forgotten Drive-Ins 2017). While no drive-in theaters appear to exist within the county, the survey team located one just over the western county boundary in Lorain

County in North Ridgeville (LOR 0231904). This resource was included in the survey because no drive-ins were found in Cuyahoga and as this one is so close, many of its western residents likely frequented the theater.



Plate 44. Aut-O-Rama Twin Drive-In Movie Theater (LOR 0231904), constructed in 1965, 33395 Lorain Rd., North Ridgefield.

### 13.9.2 Bowling Alleys

Another recreational activity that gained popularity in the mid-twentieth century was bowling. Bowling alleys were located throughout the suburban areas of Cuyahoga

County. The four bowling alleys surveyed as part of this report are in standalone buildings; however, some alleys were designed within shopping centers, often at the rear of the building at the basement or lower ground levels. All four alleys surveyed continue to serve their original purposes.



Plate 45. Yorktown Lanes, bowling alley (CUY 1149317), constructed in 1960, 6218 Pearl Rd., Parma Heights.

### 13.9.3 YMCAs, YWCAs, and Masonic Temples

YMCA and YWCA facilities offered suburbanites a place to exercise, take part in organized sports, attend day camps, along with other recreational and educational activities. The YMCA organization had a building campaign during the modern period, constructing at least six in Cuyahoga County. Three of these were recorded as part of this report, and comparison of the buildings show they followed similar plans with slight variations on building size, likely to accommodate the size of the parcel. The YMCA

surveyed retains its original function, while both YWCA buildings no longer serve the organization.

One mid-century Masonic Temple was surveyed in the county. While the Masons date to the early nineteenth century and their greatest building campaign of large structures was in the early twentieth century, some temples and lodges were constructed in the modern-era to accommodate membership ranks who moved into the suburbs. The temple in Berea maintains Classical style architectural elements, but also uses modern elements, including smooth brick veneer walls and minimal detailing.



Plate 46. Hillcrest Family YMCA (CUY 1128022), constructed in 1955, 5000 Mayfield Rd., Lyndhurst.



Plate 47. Masonic Temple (CUY 1142515), constructed in 1953, 366 Eastland Rd., Berea.

### 13.10 Survey Recommendations

Fieldwork documented ten resources in Cuyahoga County and one in Lorain County primarily associated with arts and recreation during the mid-century period. Of these resources, three were YMCA or YWCA facilities, four are bowling alleys, and one each were a Masonic temple, athletic complex, amusement park for children, and one drive-in movie theater. Other surveyed resources that are included in this report may also be included in this category, such as shopping malls and centers, restaurants, and social halls that are within church complexes.

While fieldwork did not include survey of properties owned by Cleveland Metroparks, the

recent *Cleveland Metroparks Historical and Cultural Resources Management Plan* accessed 355 resources within the 18 reservations of Metroparks (Lawhon & Associates 2017). This report and its supplemental resource forms may be utilized by future researchers of mid-century park facilities in the area.

Additional survey of other arts and recreation resource types is recommended for a broader picture of the topic during the mid-century period. Further survey should include private golf courses. These resources will likely require advanced notice and/or owner permission to enter the property and take photographs to fully document these resources, which was not possible for this survey effort.