In 1923, Cleveland inventor and entrepreneur Garrett Morgan sold his patent for the Traffic Signal for $40,000. This was instrumental in Morgan establishing the Wakeman Country Club, one of the earliest African-American recreation clubs in Ohio. Advertised as “a village of our own,” the club offered African Americans the freedom to enjoy safe outdoor recreation.

Located 1 mile south of Wakeman near the intersection of State Route 60 and Chenango Road, the country club consisted of 121 acres on the Vermilion River. Club membership was obtained by purchasing one of the 247 lots. Activities included hunting, fishing, swimming and horseback riding. A restaurant, dance hall and amphitheater provided space for cultural activities and boxing events. Activities waned during WWII and there are no remaining buildings from the country club era.

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3 Statement with list of early African-American recreation clubs in Ohio and USA.
4 Promotional Material, Box 1, Folder 6, MS 3534 Garrett A. Morgan Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.
5 Huron County, Ohio, Deed Book 106:54-55.
6 Huron County, Ohio, Deed Book 107:11-12.
7 Huron County Map Department. [Map Showing Wakeman Community Park and Wakeman Country Club], 2022, Norwalk, Ohio, https://huronoh-auditor-classic.ddti.net/Map.aspx
8 Promotional Material, Box 1, Folder 6, MS 3534 Garrett A. Morgan Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.
9 Huron County, Ohio, Deed Book 117:103-104.
Suggested Marker Text

Title: Garrett Augustus Morgan (1877 – 1963)

Born in Kentucky, Morgan moved to Cleveland in 1895 where he blazed a trail for African Americans with his inventions and social activism. Frustrated by the local race climate, Morgan joined other Black businessmen in 1908 to form the Cleveland Association of Colored Men which merged with the NAACP. In 1920, Morgan founded the African-American newspaper, the Call. Morgan used his patented Breathing Device to save lives in the 1916 Cleveland Waterworks Tunnel Disaster. The US Military and fire departments purchased version of this invention which later became the modern gas mask. General Electric bought Morgan’s traffic signal patent in 1923. After establishing the Wakeman Country Club in 1924, Garrett and his wife Mary Hasek Morgan spent the remainder of their lives enjoying weekends and vacations in Wakeman.

Side 2 – 128 words

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