

## LAKE ABRAM, BEREA, OHIO

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Among the geological formations of the Berea, Ohio, Quadrangle, left at the close of the Glacial Period, is a depression just northeast of the village of Berea in Cuyahoga County, which is filled with water and surrounded by muck lands. It is found at the top and near the middle of the old bed of the Rocky River and is drained by Abram Creek into the present Rocky River.

When the glacier passed over this region the old channel of the river was filled up, with the exception of the places occupied by Lake Abram and other water-holes or depressions in the quadrangle known as Duck Pond, etc. A large disk of ice was probably left in the present location of Lake Abram which interfered with the filling-up process and, when melted, formed the original lake. On the recession of Lake Erie, which was comparatively shallow in this vicinity, currents of water formed the sand ridges, found in this locality, out of the debris left by the glacier. In the water, bars were composed of the sand, gravel, stones and other material which now compose the ridges.

The muck land about Lake Abram is at least 25 to 30 feet deep. A fence board 16 feet long has been pushed down into it in some places without reaching the bottom. The muck runs out from the center to a shallow edge. The pond is gradually filling up with clay, etc., washed in by the intakes, from fields now plowed. Formerly the water was clear. When the bottom of the Lake is touched, it is found to be of pebbly boulder clay, and on the ledge in places underlying the muck is the original shore-line of the original lake. It consisted of a pond of clear water with a shore of white pebbles and sand. Next to the bottom are great quantities of marl, greenish in color and made from the shells of freshwater snails, clams, etc. There is a marl bed under the whole country in the vicinity of Lake Abram. Years ago the Lake was three fourths of a mile in diameter and from two to three miles in circumference, being irregular in outline; now it is less than a mile around it.

The farms in the vicinity have been drained. For years the farmers had lawsuits pending against the Big Four Railroad Company, claiming that the tracks prevented the drains from carrying off the water. The railroad company had built an arch under its tracks, which rests on oak timbers eighteen inches square that were sunk into the ground below the Lake outlet. As year by year the drains failed to carry off the water, the farmers blamed the railroad company, not realizing that when their land was drained the muck soil had shrunk and sunk below the level of the timbers, which are now exposed at the foot of the arch. The drain is consequently nearly four feet below the timbers, since the general level of the muck has sunk from four to six feet. The lake, however, is still at its former level, except that it is gradually filling up.

Vegetation about Lake Abram consists of alders, elms, ashes, maples, pond-lilies, cat-tails, and mosses, which have formed the muck. The region to the north-east of Berea, although at present dry land, was a swamp in the recollection of the older citizens. Podunk Swamp, as it was called, extended to the present town of McKinley, about half the distance to Cleveland. The country was so low and wet that corduroy wagon roads were once in evidence. Heavy forest timber extended along the Big Four tracks, and when the Railroad used wood for fuel in its locomotives, cord wood that the Company bought up was piled along the tracks for long distances.

A few years ago a railroad line was surveyed to connect Youngstown, Cleveland, and Lorain. The plan was to make a fill at the northern end of Lake Abram. Thousands of yards of dirt were taken from lots in Berea and dumped upon the muck; but it soon sank in, forced itself down, and disappeared beneath the surface, leaving a water-hole. As the dirt went down it crowded up the muck a distance away. Although quite an excavation still exists in Berea where the dirt was removed, no effect was visible at Lake Abram and the project had to be abandoned.

An early story of old Lake Abram is told of a man who rode out to the lake and, after hitching his horse to a tree, commenced to converse with a friend, who after a while asked him how he had come out. He replied: "On horseback". "Where is your horse?" said his friend. On looking around he said he had tied him to yonder tree. The horse had disappeared beneath the surface of the earth.