

# Timberlake History:

The formation of our community began about 10,000 years ago. When the last ice age ended, this area became the depository of debris scooped out of Lake Michigan.

In time, the terrain softened into low hills, many ponds, and an occasional mammoth boulder. Testifying to our dramatic origins, great oak and hickory trees began to dot the fertile landscape. Soon a huge forest stretched from Harlem Avenue on the east to Highway 53 on the west. The northern boundary was Plainfield Road and the southern boundary was the Des Plaines River.

Although many nomadic Indians came and went, about 700 years ago the Potawatomie tribe from central Wisconsin were the first to settle here. They fished, hunted and trapped wolverine, beaver and Great Lakes elk. Their only enemies were American Black Bears which weighed up to 500 pounds.

In 1836 the construction of the Illinois-Michigan ship canal began. During the dozen or so years of its digging, many workers came to the Timberlake area. Most of the laborers lived

in tiny shanties down by the river.

In 1848 the canal was dedicated and with the exception of a few married men, the laborers moved on. Soon the remaining families were joined by other immigrant families and they began clearing the great forests and planted crops. Two of these families had dairy farms covering almost all of the present day Timberlake.

The descendants of two of the original settlers, the McKenzies and the Nelsons still live in our area.

In 1948, 100 years after the canal was opened, there were about 20 homes in now urbanized Timberlake. In the early 1950's the Timberlake Civic Association was formed and consisted of about a hundred homeowners. The mass movement to the area had its effect on Timberlake which now covers about 620 acres with 2500 residents residing in over 700 homes.

**Timberlake Now:** There is a wide variety of house designs and styles to be seen with most situated on large lots. There are even a few horse farms.

Timberlake's lake, located at 87th Street and Lakewood Drive, was named so by one of the early developers, referring to the area as Timberlake Estates. However, this

body of water was not given to us as a result of the Ice Age. It was carved out as a result of a need for land fill elsewhere. The large hole that was left was shaped to provide an attractive shoreline and it filled with natural ground water.

Timberlake has 9.5 miles of paved streets that fall into three categories: sidewalks and curbs - curbs - open ditches.

On the south and southwest sides, Timberlake borders on Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve. Covering about 2500 acres, it surrounds Argonne National Research Laboratory.

Waterfall Glen is a beautiful recreational resource with over 10 miles of trails that were designed for a variety of uses including hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, and cross country skiing.

Traces of the original structures built by the canal workers can still be seen in Waterfall Glen. It is also home to a wide variety of wildlife.