

Cuyahoga river

[Environment](#), [Pollution](#)



The Cuyahoga River The Cuyahoga River is located in northeastern Ohio running through the major cities of Cleveland and Akron. The river is 100 miles long and empties into Lake Erie. It was said to be formed by the advancement and retreat of ice sheets during the ice age. The final retreat caused the river to flow north ward which had flowed southward before.

(Michael) In more recent times, the Cuyahoga River was known as “ the river that caught fire. ” This is because the river was polluted from industrial companies spilling their waste into the river during the late 1880’s all the way up to the mid 1900’s.

The river had a top layer of oil coating it which got thicker as years went by. People who worked on the river had a goal of not falling overboard into the river. One Cleveland mayor, Rensselaer R. Herrick, of the 1880’s even stated, “ It is a sewer that runs through the heart of the city. ” (Michael & The) The river was so polluted that it was like a cauldron to most. Even rats had been seen flowing down the river. Residents near Cleveland said they could feel the pollution. (Michael) Richard Ellers was a resident in Cleveland. He states, “ Back in the '60s ...

I went on a news excursion on the river downtown to show how bad the pollution was. I remember we could see a layer of crud on the water but didn't appreciate its thickness of the pollution on Cuyahoga River until I dipped my hand into it. ” (Cuyahoga) The river was devastating to live by, but much worse to be around. It was so contaminated that it caught on fire multiple times. The fires had started ever since 1868. River fires became the most occurring incidents on the river. These occurrences quickly gave Cleveland a tarnished name and a realization for all about how unclean the

river really was. Michael & The) As the dirty river got worse over time, so did the fires. The Cuyahoga River fire of 1969 happened in June of that year beside Campbell Road in southeastern Cleveland near the Republic Steel Mill. (Michael) There were large amounts of debris soaked of oil that were just waiting to all burn up in flames one day. It was said to be either sparked by a passing train or molten steel. (Ohio & The) The fire grew enough for flames to be leaping up from the water. (Michael) It could've burned down Cleveland if not tamed.

It was swiftly doused by local firefighting tugboat crews. It was safe to know that it did not cause maximum damage or any fatality. Fortunately, it was also the last river fire to happen. (Ohio & The) This incident became known all over the country. The U. S. was becoming more eco aware of the environment. Cleveland started taking strides in protecting the river and cleaning it up. Residents passed a bond that granted 100 million dollars to clean it up. Cleveland was still the symbol of environmental degradation even though it was taking steps towards pollution control though. Ohio) " The thick pollution on the water and the fire became a convenient example of what 'bad' really is," said Frank Samsel, whose company aided in early 1970s cleanup efforts. " And the more you talked down about how terrible it was, the more the press and news jumped on it. But it also made people aware of the fact that things could be different. " Cleveland was wide awake about how bad they let things get. (Cuyahoga) Time magazine wrote an article about the incident which put pressure on Cleveland about hygienic regulation.

They already had enough pressure due to their bad reputation about the unhygienic river. (Ohio) Mayor, Carl Stokes, started to become very active in the situation. He could see how it affected the city and used that to make positive changes. (Cuyahoga) Carl Stoke's brother got involved as well. US representative, Louis Stokes, urged federal involvement. The legislature passed the National Environment Protection Act (NEPA) which was signed into law Jan 1st, 1970. It was an act that formed the agency Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which led to the put forth of the Clean Water Act of 1972.

It mandates that all rivers in the United States be hygienic enough to allow mass amounts of swimmers and fish in the water by 1983. (Cuyahoga & The) The progress became very noticeable to not only the residents near the Cuyahoga River but to the country as well. The legislature had invested 3.5 billion into the purification of the river and new sewer systems. (Ohio) The Cuyahoga River became safer and residents felt at ease again. Most importantly, the country was educated and thought more about the environment in which they lived in. Michael) The Cuyahoga River of 1969 brought positive change after all. The U. S. hasn't seen a river fire since 1969. The water quality improved greatly. (The) Today, it is a playground to fish and swim in like most rivers. The river is now home to 60 different species of fish as well. The river fire reshaped Cleveland and the realities of life.

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