

The Coast Guard Station

In 1939, just prior to World War II, the U.S. government had concerns for the safety of our region and the Great Lakes. These concerns prompted them to locate a site for a Coast Guard station to monitor activities on the Great Lakes.

The Coast Guard found a property in Gates Mills, along County Line Road just north of Battles Road, and a half-mile south of where Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties meet. This remote Gates Mills plateau was far removed from heavily populated areas with electrical interference, which would interrupt the station's sensitive short-wave receivers. They acquired the 102-acre property on October 10, 1941 from Riverside Farms and operated the station as the "Cleveland Radio Station Chesterland, Ohio" until it was decommissioned on June 30, 1969.

In 1958, according to Coast Guard Commander, Herschel A. Drury, "It is the main radio station of the 9th Coast Guard District – the U.S. portion for all the Great Lakes. Thousands of Great Lakes boaters owe their safety and peace of mind to an 18-man Coast Guard contingent in landlocked Gates Mills. It is one of the most vital of the 117 installations in the area. Coast Guard radiomen stand constant watch over five frequencies serving merchant shipping and pleasure boating."

The 18-man base had a road through the center with a main blockhouse building on the left and six barracks along the right. The crew monitored all traffic on two code channels and three different voice channels, listening, answering and logging every contact. The station made two weather broadcasts each day, using the direct teletype reports it received from the weather station at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. Each trouble and emergency call meant that one of the shore stations had to send out a life boat or cutter to render assistance.

On August 14, 1972 the Federal Government deeded the property to the Mayfield City School District, stipulating that it be used for educational purposes for a minimum of 30 years. The Mayfield School Board established the Mayfield VEPD, Vocational Education Program District, for horticulture on the property during the 1973-74 school year. The program created a vocational path for students to learn horticulture, landscaping and floral design. The facility is now known as the Gates Mills Environmental Education Center, Excel TECC.

On December 12, 2019, The Gates Mills Historical Society and Mayfield City Schools commemorated the 28-year existence of the United States Coast Guard Station, with a plaque on the site.

