



Paw Paw is a tree of the custard apple family that is native to the eastern United States having oblong leaves and fleshy fruit. Paw Paw Lake was the idea and development of Wade McIlrath. McIlrath chose to call it Paw-Paw Lake because of its close proximity to a large grove of the not-too-commonly known fruit trees. It was originally intended to be for summer cottages and plans called for forty-five one-acre lots: 44 for home sites and one set aside for the water supply, a huge flowing spring having been found on that spot after being surveyed. The remaining fifty acres contained the lake and surrounding land that became common park property belonging to the homeowners association.

Plotted on January 19, 1921, a group of five lot owners, together with McIlrath, formed a company that incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio, and was known as The Paw Paw Lake Home Company. Each lot owner is a stockholder in the company that entitles the owner to the privileges of the lake and park property, and is assessed an amount annually that is set according to the needs of the company, in order to maintain the lake, park, water system and roadway.

To complete the tranquil get-away setting, the early stockholders paid for electric lines to be brought out down Bell Road from Chagrin Falls to the subdivision, a distance of about four miles. A three-inch cast iron water main was laid throughout the subdivision, a water tower erected and pumps installed in a large pump-house, all to carry water to the homes from the natural deep spring. In 1942, a sudden cloudburst destroyed the original dam and a year later it was rebuilt with other general improvements paid for by assessments against the stockholders.

The Paw Paw Lake subdivision, with the amount of families and children living in the development, has been considered to have been a big contributing factor for the Village of South Russell separating from Russell Township and becoming incorporated. Residents wanted their children to have the unusual distinction of attending school in Cuyahoga County, at the Chagrin Falls Exempted Village Schools.

This subdivision is still a private lake development and a private road, not a village dedicated street.

There are 41 homes in this development. Currently all homes are on septic systems and this development still has its own private water system including wells, pump house, water tower and water main that supplies each residential home in the private community.

**Voting** is in **Precinct B** located at the Gurney School.