

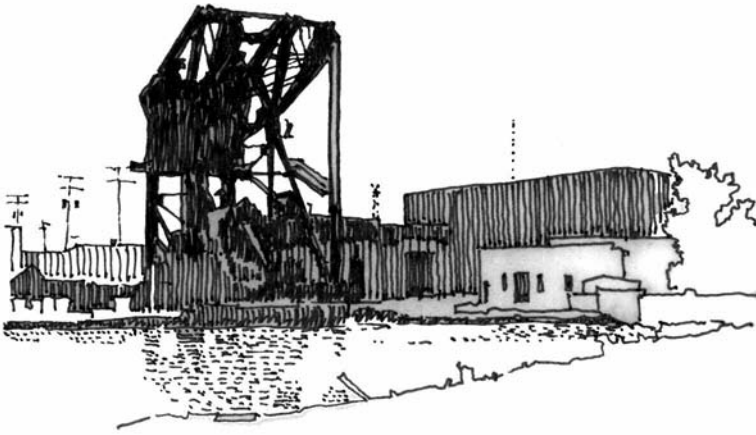


cule bridge over the Ashtabula River in the harbor area, it is likely to fall into a much larger set of related things. The bridge is simply the most distinctive item in a distinctive section.

The districts of Ashtabula Harbor formed around natural features and successive additions as, one after another, farmers sold their land. An 1874 plan shows a critical moment when new growth was imminent. Farms were already being subdivided so that large sets of needed housing could be added to the existing village. The way these additions were made, their geometry and succession, established the future parts of the town and determined their working links to each other.

The central feature on the 1874 map is the harbor with its river and riparian lands. Here, as the harbor developed, the first to be surveyed on the Great Lakes, boats entered the river mouth and tied up, safe from fickle Canadian storms. Loading and unloading were made easy by close proximity to railroad tracks laid on the level sediments of the estuary. The railroads occupied most of this flat land and held it for future expansion.

Stretching westward from the harbor is the vestigial village.



Bascule Bridge:  
Ashtabula Harbor.

Here, along high ground overlooking the lake, traces of earlier development have survived. There are perhaps 20 or 30 houses, all identified with a family name. Two stores, a school, and a blacksmith shop complete the typical set. The 1874 plan shows the village remaining as one of the parts of a much larger arrangement.

Starting from the village, new parts were added under the influence of war and trade. An early addition, bounded by Walnut Street on the north and Division and Mulberry on the south, expanded the village southward in a regular grid. The opposing streets, between Ashtabula on the west and Water on the east, enclose uniform blocks that are numbered and subdivided for future development. Streets are named but blocks and lots are only numbered. Each new part appears on the map with a separate geometry. The one on low, flat land east of the river is laid out on cardinal points. Another on higher and rougher land west of the river shifts geometry again to an entirely different orientation. Each different part remains visible today, tracing the early steps of growth.

Ashtabula Harbor Today.

