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History[ edit ] This area had long been inhabited by indigenous peoples. The success of this military effort resulted in more European Americans entering Ohio and nearby territories. The site of Ashtabula was settled by such European Americans beginning in 1796. The city was incorporated in 1803. This informal, secret system was the means by which anti-slavery supporters helped escaped African-American slaves reach freedom in Canada in the years before the American Civil War. While Ohio was a free state, many refugee slaves still felt at risk of slavecatchers here, particularly after the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 was passed. It required enforcement and cooperation by residents of free states to return escaped slaves and was biased toward slavecatchers, requiring little documentation of their claims. Among the Underground Railroad sites in Ashtabula is Hubbard House, one of the handful of former surviving termination points. Refugee slaves stayed in a basement of the house adjacent to the lake and then left on the next safe boat to Canada, gaining their freedom once they arrived in Ontario. Lake steamers and barges, built at shipyards along the Great Lakes and setting new records for size and tonnage, delivered cargoes of iron ore from the Mesabi Range in Minnesota. This continues as a coal port; a long coal ramp is visible in the harbor. Industrial jobs have declined since the late 20th century with much steel manufacturing moved offshore. An electric street railroad was built by Captain John N. However, in July 1887, the city council dispossessed him of the street railroad and associated franchises via a disputable court decision. Shortly after, men started to tear up and remove the tracks under the cover of darkness. Ethnic rivalries among these groups were once a major influence on politics and daily life in Ashtabula. In 1892, Ashtabula became the first city in the United States to adopt a form of voting called proportional representation. This was an addition to the council-manager charter, originally passed in 1887, and served as a model for the National Municipal League. Voters repealed the system in 1901, using it for the last time in 1901. The population in the City of Ashtabula grew steadily until 1900 but has declined in recent years due to industrial restructuring and loss of jobs. Since the late 20th century, the city has become a destination for Hispanic or Latino immigrants, who by the census made up 9%. Tragedies[ edit ] Construction of railroads connected Ashtabula to a national network that contributed to its success as a port. A fire was started by the car stoves, and of the people on board, 92 were killed and 64 were injured. The resulting explosion destroyed a restaurant and five other buildings. During the 1800s, the area experienced growth with an expanding chemical industry and increasing harbor activity, making Ashtabula one of the most important port cities of the Great Lakes. Other historical industries in the area included a Rockwell International plant on Route 20 on the western side of Ashtabula, which manufactured brakes for the Space Shuttle program, and the extrusion of depleted and enriched uranium at the Reactive Metals Extrusion plant on East 21st Street. Due to such industrial uses, however, there was extensive environmental contamination. The Ashtabula River and harbor were designated as a significant Superfund site by the Environmental Protection Agency in the late 20th century. A multi-year process of environmental cleanup of toxic wastes and soils was needed; cleanup concluded with river dredging in 1995. This Blessing of the Fleet began as a practice of priests for Catholic Portuguese and Irish fishermen and tugmen who had settled in Ashtabula. During the 1800s, the Blessing was a small, almost private affair in early April conducted by a few tugmen, their parish priest, and an acolyte, according to their traditions. It took place annually when the Great Lakes were free enough of ice to be open for regular traffic. By 1900, this event was held as a public ceremony under the auspices of Mother of Sorrows parish. Norfolk Southern used the port for one of its coal piers. The coal pier became idled in 1980 due to declining demand for coal. The Ashtabula Harbor was a primary coal harbor and still serves to ship. It has two public beaches: Part of the city lies in Ashtabula Township, and part lies in Saybrook Township. Much of the snow comes from lake-effect snow bands from the Great Lakes.

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*Ashtabula County [ÄiÉftÉ™È`bjuÈ•lÉ™] is the northeasternmost county in the U.S. state of Ohio. As of the census, the population was , [1] The county seat is Jefferson. [2].*

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*The Ashtabula County 4-H program celebrated another successful year of 4-H programming Monday, October 1 at Brant's Apple Orchard. 4-H Volunteers, Youth and their Family attended the event and dinner hosted by OSU Extension and the Ashtabula County 4-H Advisory Committee.*