

HONORING OUR HERITAGE

Piketon's Atomic Boom 1952-1956

TIMELINE

1940

1950

1960

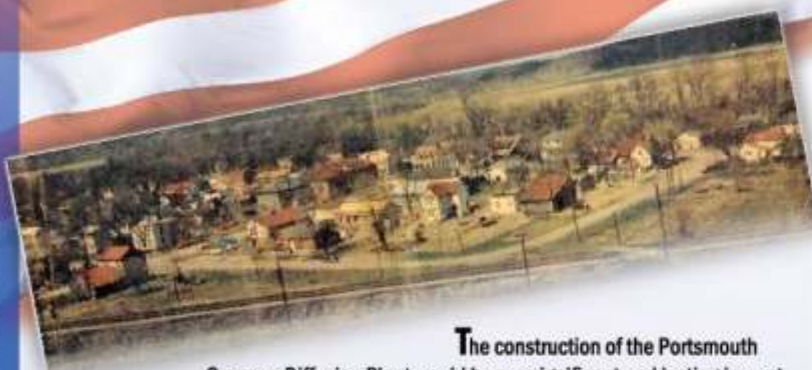
1970

1980

1990

2000

2010



The construction of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant would have a significant and lasting impact on southern Ohio. However, at no other point was that impact more powerful than 1952-1956, when an estimated 50,000-90,000 workers and their families converged on the area to construct the plant.

1952 The Portsmouth area is selected as site of the nation's newest Gaseous Diffusion Plant; immediately the Army Corps of Engineers opens an office in Waverly to start acquiring land in the Piketon area.

1953 HOUSING - With thousands of workers moving into the Piketon area, the Federal government begins constructing permanent and temporary homes in and around Piketon, Waverly, Portsmouth, Jackson, and Chillicothe.

City	Development	# of Homes
Waverly	Waverly Heights	115
	Waverly Estates	445
	Waverly Place	75
	Bristol Homes	325
Portsmouth	Soloto Terrace Manor	106
	Forrest Heights	134
Jackson	Jackson Heights	145
	Town & Country Homes	10
Chillicothe	Western Hills	160
	Chillicothe Manor	140

Temporary housing communities with hundreds of homes and trailers are located south of Waverly (Ohio 220 and 124) and east of Piketon.

SCHOOLS - With workers come families and local schools quickly become overcrowded. Some school districts even go to two half-day sessions to accommodate twice as many children. The U.S. Office of Education appropriates more than \$3.4 million to construct permanent and temporary buildings in the following local school districts: Piketon, Waverly, Clay, Valley, Minford and Jackson.

1954 TRANSPORTATION - To alleviate traffic congestion, sections of US Route 23 are widened to four lanes to accommodate the additional cars. An overpass is opened to assist with the ingress and egress of drivers coming to and from the plant.

HOUSING COSTS

Rent for single-family homes in the newly constructed housing developments ranged from \$75-\$97 a month, purchase prices for the same homes were around \$10,000. Temporary homes and trailers rented for \$57 and \$44 respectively.

1956 With construction complete, thousands of workers move out of the area. What once was a housing shortage is now a surplus and homes are sold at bargain prices in the newly constructed developments in Piketon, Waverly, Portsmouth, Jackson, and Chillicothe.



1950's Bristol Homes in Waverly



1954 Worker camp



1954 Construction of access road on US Route 23



1954 Quitting time



1953 House being moved for US Route 23



1953 Overcrowded schools



1953 Piketon Cab Co.



1953 Village of Piketon



1954 Worker camp aerial view



1950's Downtown Waverly

HOUSING HYSTERIA

At the outset of the project, there were literally no homes available for workers who had moved into the area. Entrepreneurial locals rented makeshift lots on their property for privately owned campers and trailers. They rented rooms in their homes and even turned garages, barns and chicken coops into livable quarters for temporary workers.

"Some families have become rich overnight by selling or leasing land for trailer camps, business places, motels and other temporary installations necessary to house and serve thousands of strangers." *Columbus Sunday Dispatch Magazine 1953*

