



*a history of*  
**Hell Hollow**

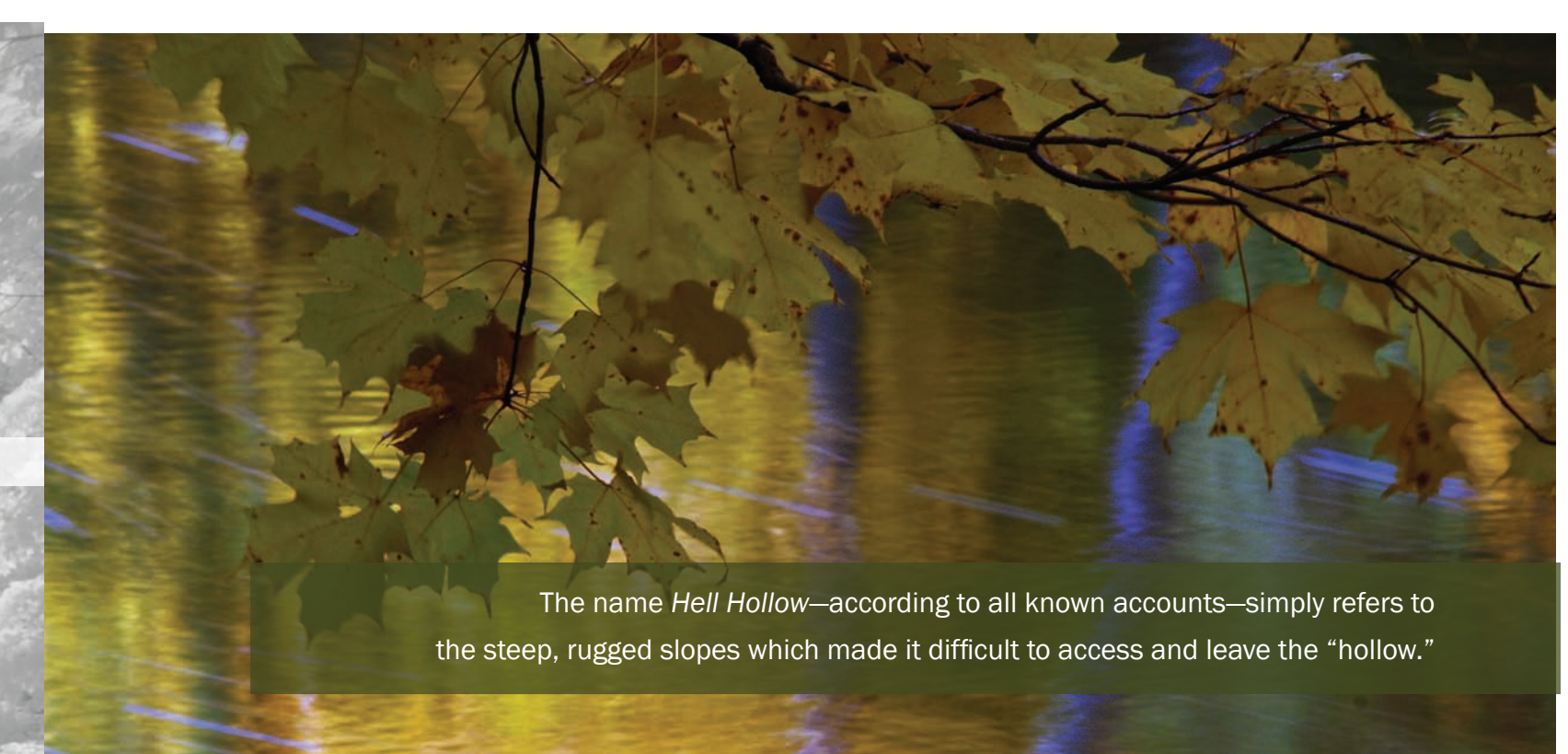
*by Sharon Metzung, Publications and Graphics Manager*

**Hell Hollow Wilderness Area**

14435 Leroy Center Rd. • Leroy Twp., Ohio 44077

Hell Hollow Wilderness Area has a high cliff top with a loop trail and 262 timber steps that provide a dramatic descent to the creek valley. The more than 100-foot-deep ravine was carved thousands of years ago by Paine Creek after glaciers retreated from Ohio. This park offers impressive views of the 360-million-year-old Chagrin Shale cliff above a deep river valley. Audubon Ohio has designated this park as an Important Bird Area.

*photos by Paul Newman*

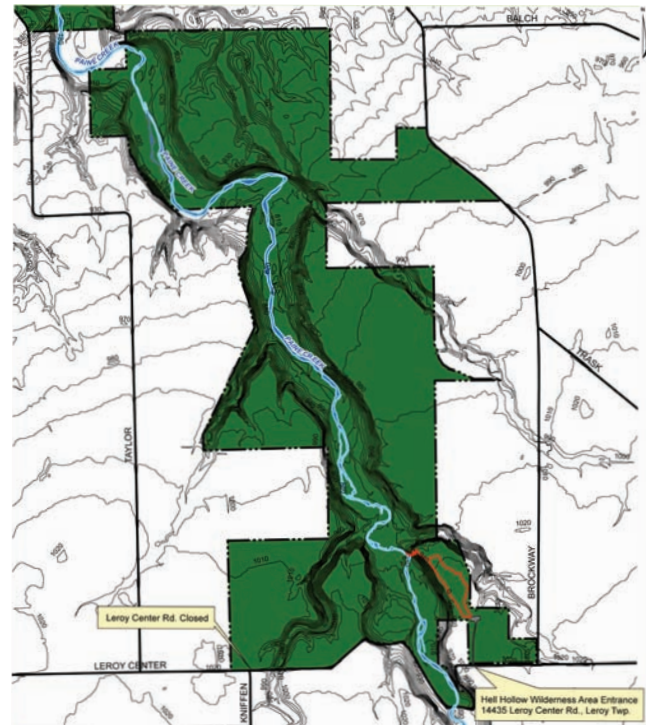


The name *Hell Hollow*—according to all known accounts—simply refers to the steep, rugged slopes which made it difficult to access and leave the “hollow.”

#### **HELL HOLLOW WAS NOT ALWAYS ISOLATED AND REMOTE.**

While never as bustling as nearby Paine Falls, 19<sup>th</sup> century Hell Hollow supported a substantial rural economy based on agriculture, resource extraction and the processing of commodities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hell Hollow’s return to wilderness was aided by economic shifts, transportation advances, movement away from water power, agricultural decline, land preservation and other factors.

- Several structures were once located within the confines of today’s Hell Hollow Wilderness Area. Today, a number of foundations are still present and interesting stonework still survives.
- Three sawmills had a major impact on Hell Hollow. Two were within current park boundaries, and one was just south of Leroy Center Road in Camp Lejnar. The mill in lot 30 just outside Hell Hollow maintained a dam and millpond that undoubtedly impacted the flora and fauna of Paine Creek. This mill was probably visible from Leroy Center Road. In addition, two more mills (grist and saw) and another dam were once located two miles south of Hell Hollow on Bates Creek (a tributary of Paine Creek).
- According to the 1850 manufacturing census, Leroy Township was once a major logging center. In 1850, 11 sawmills existed in Leroy. The largest of these sawmills produced 400,000 feet of lumber in 1850.
- In 1865, oil exploration began at Hell Hollow. We know that this exploration was of the pioneering variety because Edwin Drake developed the first commercial oil well in 1859 at Titusville, Pennsylvania.
- Two 19<sup>th</sup> century Leroy schools were located in the vicinity of Hell Hollow—one on park property, and one adjacent to park lands.



**HOURS:** Sunrise to one half hour past sunset.

**AMENITIES:** 783 Acres. Picnic area with grills. Picnic shelter. Restrooms. Hiking trails. Playground. Ball/game fields. Camping area available for groups by special permit only.

**DIRECTIONS:** Take I-90 to Vrooman Rd and go south for ½ mile to Carter Rd. Turn left (east) for about 2 miles to Paine Rd and turn left (north). Proceed north on Paine Rd to Blair Rd. Take Blair Rd for about 1 mile to Ford Rd and turn right (east) for about 1 mile to Trask Rd and turn right (south). Continue south on Trask to Brockway Rd. Follow Brockway Rd one mile to Leroy Center Rd. Turn right and the entrance to the park is on the right.