

History of Bolivar

In the early 1820's, when the Ohio Canal was surveyed, the center line was on the west side of the river. Consequently, Lawrenceville, on the east, declined and Bolivar was established in 1825. Before the canal was built, grain had to be hauled to either Cleveland or Pittsburgh by horse and wagon. The shipping costs were greatly reduced via the canal and Bolivar became a shipping center. Farmers from as far away as Magnolia would bring their grain to Bolivar for shipment. Wagons waited in lines a mile long to be unloaded into a horse-powered elevator and was raised up into the mill.

During the Canal Era, there was a great influx of people to the area. The Sandy-Beaver Canal was planned to connect Pittsburgh and Bolivar. The Yant Allotment was laid out at that time. In the 1830's, the Sandy-Beaver Canal project failed and growth slowed.

Bolivar's first mill was operated by James F. Evans. It was later modernized and last operated by the Farm Bureau. The mill was later moved to an industrial park area where it still stands unused.

Bolivar is also the home of Fort Laurens State Memorial. In 1779, a garrison of fewer than 200 Americans with stood a siege of British and allied Indian forces at Fort Laurens, a tiny outpost on the Ohio frontier. Through the long winter, the troops fought off the enemy and the threat of starvation with the loss of twenty-three patriots. Their sacrifice is honored in the Fort Laurens museum and in the Tomb of the Unknown Patriot of the American Revolution, the final resting place of one of the fallen defenders of the fort.

If you wish to receive more information on the History of Bolivar contact the Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau at 124 East High Avenue, New Philadelphia, Ohio, 44663, call (330) 602-2420, or visit our website at www.ohiotimelessadventures.com. For further information contact the Tuscarawas County Public Library in New Philadelphia at (330) 364-4474 or the Tuscarawas County Historical Society at the Tuscarawas Campus of Kent State University at (330) 339-3391 Extension 47494.