

## Chester Ohio

Chester, Ohio	Facts
Area	9.52 Miles
Population	12,950 (1950 Census), 20,982 (2000 Census)
Founded	1915
Industry	Plastics, Tourism
Temperature	High: 104 F (40 C), Low: -109 F (-78 C)

Chester is a sleepy little town in Meigs County, Ohio. Its home to the Parsons Plastics factory – the major employer in the town, and several smaller manufacturing plants. The economic dips that have come and gone since the Great Depression have somehow passed Chester by, and people like it that way.

The 20,000 people who call Chester home love it; its small town flavor has not been marred by the modern bustle of city life.

Life goes on there much in the same way as it has for the last seven decades.

It's also home to the mound. Ohio has long been known for the Great Serpent Mound; an earthwork thought to have been created almost 3000 years ago; it's the largest earthwork in the world. Chester is about 118 miles from that, but it has a mound of its own, as do several other smaller towns in Ohio.

The Chester mound draws tourists, and add a lot of local flavor. It's a series of interlocked earthworks totaling nearly 650 feet in length; also supposedly built by the Adena. From the air, it's clearly visible – three snakes pointing inward, tongue-to-tongue, undulating out in a bizarre triskelion. This symbol is everywhere in Chester, from the town seal to the local Baseball team the Chester Serpents.

The people love their mound.

### Chester History

In 1908, Malcolm Chester, a mason from Chicago, quit his job and formed an artists' community located at his grandfather's farm — which he inherited — in the center of what is today, modern day Chester, Ohio.

Malcolm was convinced that such a community would flourish in the valley, which he fell in love with as a child. He spent four summers there in his youth, and his grandfather took him to visit

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the local Serpent Mounds in the 1880's. Unfortunately, sculpture and pottery—Malcolm's principle obsession— proved to be a poor fit for the valley.

For three summers, the community waxed and waned, and eventually, other small households and shops set up in the area; slowly buying land from Chester from his grandfather's vast holdings. Even as the artist community failed, a town sprung up around the Chester farmhouse. In 1912, as Malcolm Chester became the center of the growing community in the area, the Crescent Machine Company approached him to purchase a large lot of land to the northwest of the farm, with access to an offshoot of the Meigs River. In this, Malcolm Chester saw his chance.

He sold the land for a low sum, and in exchange, the company assisted in incorporating the town in 1915 as Chester Ohio. With their help, over the next twenty years, it was built up into a small but bustling, modern town.

In 1923, in an incredible transformation, a local drunk—Arthur Hunt—suddenly became the town's resident genius. Drawing reporters from all over the state, Hunt went on to form Hunt Electrodynamics in Chester, patent sixty significant electronic inventions and then leave the town; all in a matter of four years.

But Hunt left a large Hunt Electrodynamics plant behind, which rapidly supplanted the waning fortunes of the Crescent Machine Company as the number one employer in town. By 1943, with the death of Malcolm Chester, a new company arrived in town through the workings of Hunt Electrodynamics – Parsons Bakelite Company; a plastics manufacturer for the war effort. This small business exploded over the next two years of the war.

When the Hunt plant closed in 1953 during the restructure of Hunt Electrodynamics following the death of Arthur Hunt; the Parsons Company expanded their holdings, and became the town's chief employer. Renamed Parsons Plastics, they have remained the #1 employer in Chester for the past fifty years, producing light sockets, plastic tubing, and cheap plastic screws.

Since the late 1950's, Chester has slowly expanded to incorporate several smaller towns that surrounded it. In 1961, the city of Chester was incorporated by the state, and became the third largest city in Meigs County.