

**The Mentor Marsh, 1901-1903:  
A Standoff! Peter M. Hitchcock vs. United States Steel.  
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The beginning of the twentieth century was the starting point for an enormous industrialization period in the United States. Huge corporations, like United States Steel, were formed and began to consider new geographic areas for expansion. The Great Lakes region became an area of interest to U.S. Steel, especially Northeast Ohio. Northeast Ohio possessed natural resources and an advanced transportation system that made it a leading area for development. Mentor, Ohio was nearly swept up in this industrialization. For a brief period, Mentor was considered to be the next site for “smokestack” expansion by U.S. Steel. Major railroad systems serviced Mentor, and its lakefront location would have made it an ideal industrial port, similar to Cleveland. But, delays in lakefront land acquisition caused by Peter M. Hitchcock, a Mentor industrialist, prompted U.S. Steel to find another location for their ore port and tube mill. Clearly, Hitchcock’s refusal to sell his land to U.S. Steel is what prevented the industrial development of the Mentor Marsh in 1901. Hitchcock was not acting out of environmental or community concerns. In fact, Hitchcock was initially involved in the marsh development project. There was also widespread support for the U.S. Steel project in Mentor. The natural beauty of the marsh wetlands would come to be appreciated as a resource only later in the century. The long-term result of Hitchcock’s decision is clear—he prevented Mentor from becoming the Lorain of the east side of Cleveland.