Birdie Smith was born in Alliance, Ohio in 1922; her father was a teacher who became the principal of a school in Canton. Smith now leads nature walks.

Volunteered with Holden Arboretum with school groups before the park existed, Margo Jackson asked Birdie to volunteer in the park when it first started.

Volunteered with both for some time, then exclusively with the park for several days a week.

Lack of visitor centers in the early days of the park, volunteers met school buses on Canal Road, communicated with kids on buses by bull horns, drove through the park on Canal Road, stopped at several places, Phraesey-Hinton House, Brandywine Falls, Virginia Kendall, half-day program, lots of time on bus, stops were chance for kids to run or stretch legs, fun for tour guides, too.

Beaver Pond usually as far as they went. In 1974, President signed bill to make Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. Smith started in 1975.

Mid-seventies bus tours started, volunteers trained by chief of interpretation, Ron Tollman, and Sue Garland, also in the interpretation department. Bill Birdsoll was the superintendent of the park at that time. Bill blamed for "rough tactics" used when the land was acquired for the park.

The Army Corps of Engineers was involved in land acquisition, not as kind as Bill. Many people wanted to keep private property, but park took land and people had a certain length of time to live on it.

Peninsula, Independence, Brecksville, all affected by land acquisition, valley threatened by hamburger stands, small factories. Smith was not involved in the original acquisition.

Rockside Road is the northern boundary of the park, down to Ira and Bath roads some people agreeable to selling land, others not so much, a dump close to Ira Road and Beaver Pond, had old autos and junk.

Beaver dams near Jait, park headquarters. Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects, said the valley should be preserved in 1800's, in 1970's Janet Hutchinson, Margo Hunt, Jim Jackson saw encroaching development on the valley.

League of Women Voters bus to Washington to lobby for valley, President Ford signed the law at the end of December in 1974.

Occasional properties are still bought by the park, trails being created in other areas to connect to towpath, Bedford Metropolitan Park at Tinkers Creek Road, old road from Bedford was original road for people from Bedford to use to access canal, canal opened up state of Ohio.

Communicated with kids on buses by bull horns, drove through the park on Canal Road, stopped at several places, Phraesey-Hinton House, Brandywine Falls, Tinkers Creek scenic overview at Bedford Reservation.

Smith moved from Canton to Walton Hills after her husband got out of the army after WWII, graduated from Case as a electrical engineer, built house in Walton Hills; Smith interested in natural history as a child.

Smith attended Mt. Union, studied pre-med as major, minors in geology and music, memories of coal truck deliveries and interest in geology.
science majors had to have arts minor, Smith played violin in string group with college

President's wife and French professor
Bedford Historical Society luncheon, Smith's husband grew up on farm and attended one
room school; Canton YMCA bus trip for area high school seniors to Washington DC,

Smith met her husband on that trip
husband in army signal corps; then became pilot while Smith was in college
they married just before he shipped out overseas during WWII, Smith worked for
gophysical lab during war in Washington while husband overseas,

lived in Cleveland while husband attended Case, bought lot in Walton Hills because they
both appreciated outdoors

Smith now working on historic resource files for Park, also guides train trips for

schoolchildren, canal lock demonstrations
changes over 30 years of park: visitors centers, Happy Days history from estate to visitor
center, CCC buildings, Virginia Kendall building

built used dying chestnut trees, stone in park cut from valley, important geological area,

Appalachian plateau

preservation of valley important due to unique natural history of area, opportunity for city

kids to observe nature, some children feared woods

early problems of places to take visitors
social history of area with regards to canal, Ohio was bankrupt when canal opened;

people came and cleared land and raised crops, but not roads, no way to transport goods
Lake Erie as minimal transport, walking with animals
transportation needed to connect Ohio back east, Cuyahoga River used for canal water

from Cleveland to Portsmouth

canal enabled goods to be transported to major rivers and then to states east and west;
canal began 1825, Cleveland Akron portion completed 1827; 4th of July celebration for

first boat
by 1832 canal completed to Ohio River, all done with hand digging; canal towns became
important; mid Ohio became wealthy

train put canal out of business, pleasure boats continued for a while on the canal,

Jonathan Hale picked up passengers on canal to visit Hale Farm
boat repair places along the canal, Frazee House entertained guests of canal boats

future of canal way; tourist attraction helps little towns along canal,Clinton, Canal Fulton,
Massillon, tow path trail through towns,
Canal Fulton offers canal boat tours,
roads used by farmers to canals, many still in use not give access to park
visitors center on old canal road
park gives people accessability to natural and social history of the area

Cleveland and Akron area are lucky to have metro parks and national parks to get out of

the city

Joe Chizinski(sp) importance to park and valley
Tinkers Creek Sketch Book and Joe's Place (about the valley)

conclusion