

# **DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR CIRCLEVILLE, OHIO**

Court & Main Street to Mound Street, to Scioto Street and back to Main & Court and on to High Street for a final stop at Wittich's.

**Compiled by W. W. Higgins & the Pickaway County Welcome Center & Visitor's Bureau**

## **Your tour will begin at Court & Main Streets.**

The original Octagonal Court House stood where the two streets cross. It was the center of a huge Prehistoric circle. The area around the Court House was a circle, not a square. The open space around the court house stretched from the gray stone E.F. Anderson Building (124 E Main Street) on the east to the first alley west of Court and Main Streets, and from the alley north of the Crist building (101 N. Court) and south to the Masonic Hall (113 S. Court).

The outer edge of the circular earthwork was defined by Circle Street, which crossed at the Genealogical Library (210 N Court) on the north, the alley beyond the present Court House on the south and to R& M Tires (150 E Main E. Main) on the east and Treasure Isle (155 W. Main) on the west. The Circle was squared between 1837 and 1856.

## **Walk down the east side of Court Street headed south**

Peck's Hall (101 W. Main) on the southwest corner of Court and Main, was built in 1856 to square the last quarter of the circle.

The I.O.O.F. Building (109 E. Main) was begun in the 1850's and added to later.

The Masonic Temple (113 S. Court) dedicated in 1877, is an example of the exuberant style of the "Gilded Age." Much of the decorative detail is cast iron.

The Bella-Zari Building (122 S. Court) also has a decorative cast iron front from around the 1870's. It was formerly a saloon and a print shop.

City Hall (133 S. Court) on the northwest corner of Court and Franklin, was designed by William Doan, a local carriage builder. It was dedicated in 1861. The cupola is cast iron. The ground floor once housed the Fire Department and the Mayor's office. Around 1900, the Cadet Band practiced on the third floor. Ted Lewis (age 10) played the E flat clarinet.

The old jail, built in 1889, is the building behind the Court House on W. Franklin Street.

## **Court House**

When the Octagonal Court House was razed, in 1840, a Greek Revival Court House arose on this site (1846). By the 1880's it had deteriorated and become rather passé'. The structure was remodeled in the Neo-Romanesque style of the period (1884). Not since the squaring of the Circle had there been such uproar. Structural problems led to the off-centered tower – one of the unique features of the building.

The parking lot on the southeast corner of Court & Franklin and across from the Court House was the site of the town's earliest inn, the Spread Eagle Tavern. It was also the first post office. The first Methodist congregation also met there.

The red brick building (210 S. Court) across from the Court House was the old Florence Hotel. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Florence Nightengale who married Oscar Dunton, MD ran the hotel. Oscar died in 1929 and Florence died in 1939.

The Post Office (224 S. Court) is on the site of the last of the pioneer hotels. Founded before 1920, it was the Brick Tavern, the Bently House, the Henry House, the Harrison House, the Pickaway House and at the time of its demise, the Boggs Hotel.

On the southeast corner of Court and Mound Streets is the Moore House (304 S. Court) William Moore built the first house on the site between 1818 and 1820. Some of the present house may date from that period but most of it dates from between 1840 and 1870. In 1870, a tower was added between the two sections. It was toppled in the great storm of 1886 and never rebuilt. Between 1850 and 1860 this was a safe house on the Underground Railroad. It once belonged to the Historical Society and is now the property of Michael Hess.

To the left of the Moore House, the large Queen Anne (109 E Mound St) was built in the 1890's by Mrs. Wellington White. From 1912 to the 1930's it was the home of the Friedman's, Ted Lewis' parents. Today it is The Dream House, an Event Center.

### **The two houses south of the Court House on South Court Street**

The house at 223 S. Court Street was begun at the back in the 1820's by Guy Doane, the Italianate front portion was added in the 1850's by Josiah Renick

The house on the northwest corner (225 S. Court St.) was also built in several sections. The part facing Mound Street was built in the late 1830's; the main structure, facing Court, was added in 1844 to serve as a female seminary. The stonework around the windows is unusual in Circleville, but the founder of the school, Mansfield French, came from Granville, Ohio, where this is fairly common. When the school closed, in the 1850's William Renick, Josiah's brother, purchased it. It remained in the family until 1915.

The house on the corner of southwest corner of Court & Mound (305 S. Court), in spite of its new siding, dates back to the 1839's. The gingerbread details were added later.

### **Walk west on the north side of West Mound Street**

The Episcopal Church Rectory (127 W. Mound St.) was built as a private residence by Mrs. Lemuel (Georgie) James early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was based on a colonial home that she had seen in New England. She left it to the church in her will.

St. Phillip's Episcopal Church (129 W. Mound St.) was built on the site of a huge prehistorical burial mound which the early settlers called "Mt. Gilboa". The first church there (1834) stood on the flattened top of the mound some 30 steps above the street. When the present building was constructed in 1866 the mound was leveled completely. The style is English Gothic.

St. Joseph Catholic Church (134 W. Mound St.) and the adjoining rectory were built in 1920 through the enthusiastic efforts of father John Hanna. It replaced a brick structure completed soon after the Civil War. The stone construction and the pre-World War I German stained glass are unusual.

The Jacob House (145 W. Mound St) was built in the 1830's. Elizabeth (Lillie) Darst was born in 1846 here. Nationally known as editor of the Circleville herald, she was also well known as a poet. She died in 1883 at the age of 37.

(160, 162 W. Mound St) The 1850's double on the north side of mound Street. Legend has it that part of it was moved there when the Circle was squared. The Victorian structure next door (168 W. Mound St) was once the Catholic convent.

The two houses on the southeast (163 W. Mound St.) and southwest corners of mound and Scioto were both supposedly built by Charles Crouse; the western one in the 1830's and eastern one in the 1840's. As the latter house is definitely Federal style, some will question the late date of construction. Circleville builders, however, were conservative, and elements of the Federal style lingered in their work into the 1850's.

The house on the western corner (203 W. Mound St) was owned in the late 1830's and into the 1840's by Philip Doddridge, an abolitionist. It was a "station" on the Underground Railroad during that period. His brother, Joseph, lived just across Mound on the northwest corner (233 S. Scioto).

Turning north on the east side of Scioto Street, you will come to an early house (218 S. Scioto) 1910-in cement block. Charles Stribling. Who was born in the Federal style home was a local architect who experimented with many styles. He is known to have used cement block around 1900.

The red brick building (225 S Scioto) was an early neighborhood grocery from the 1870's. In the 1920's, there were 30 or 40 neighborhood grocery stores all over Circleville.

Steve Helewagen's office is one of the oldest houses on Scioto Street. (211 S. Scioto) It was built in the 1820's or 30's by General Hoel Lawrence, a wealthy local merchant. The house was later owned by the Bierce and Weldon families. It has a Victorian bay window on the north end.

As the town moved toward the west after the canal was built, Scioto Street became an elegant neighborhood and many fine homes were built there. The house facing Franklin (203 S Scioto) where it dead ends into Scioto was built in the 1840's by William Martin. It was later the home of Judge William Wallace Bierce, local entrepreneur and businessman. He was the cousin of the author, Ambrose Bierce who may have lived here briefly before moving to Indiana. This home has Federal influence.

The home on the northeast corner of Scioto and Franklin (180 W. Franklin) is a simple two-story, a workingman's cottage of the 1850's and is an amazing example of survival and conservancy.

The big Federalesque residence at 121 S. Scioto, often called the Roger-Gregg House, was the home of Noah Gregg, wealthy merchant and father of George Gregg who built the Octagon House. This home dates from the 1830's. Notice the elegant cast iron pineapple grill under the eaves. Scioto Street became less exclusive once the railroad was constructed in the 1870's.

The three story (201 W. Main) building on the southwest corner of Scioto and Main was built by Jacob Lutz around 1839. His business was on the ground floor. The rest of the structure was his rather elegant dwelling. The house behind (113 S. Scioto) was originally used as a warehouse. After Jacob died in 1844, the family rented out the big house and store. The warehouse was remodeled as their home.

On the south side of W. Main, east of Scioto, stood a block of buildings called "Commercial Row". The two end units have been razed but the rest of the block is still standing. They were constructed in the 1830's. From 1840's to 1930's (155 W. Main) was the Fickhardt's Drug Store. The alley east of this unit marks the place where Circle Street crossed W. Main.

Across the street (164 W. Main) is a restored structure from the 1820's or 30's. The three buildings east of the alley on the north side of the street belong to the 1850's. (154 W. Main, 152 W. Main and 150 W. Main)

The three buildings on the south side of Main beyond the alley are fronted as one block; 151 W. Main was built in 1859, 149 W. Main was built in 1860; and 147 W. Main was built in 1861. The brick for the front was imported from the east and all three units originally had French plate glass windows.

The western unit was built by Dr. Nelson Jones, and three generations of Joneses practiced medicine in the front rooms downstairs. Dr. Nelson, Dr. Howard and Dr. Lloyd (who spelled his name "Jonnes"). The famous "Nests and eggs of Ohio Birds" was produced in this house and in the barn which once stood behind it between 1878 and 1885.

Further down the south side of main we find the Marfield Bank (135 W. Main). It was built in 1849 before the southwest quarter of the Circle was squared. The back section is still pie-shaped to accommodate the lot. The Ted Lewis Museum has occupied the east side of the building for many years.

The Seitz Building (138 W. Main) on the north side of Main was built in the rather exuberant style of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has housed a music store, a bank, and several restaurants.

At 132 W Main is where Ben Friedman opened his first clothing store. His son, Theodore, better known as "Ted Lewis", was born in the second floor flat on June 6, 1890. A beautiful example of an 1850's commercial building is located at 126 W. Main.

### **South side of West Main**

Lindsey's Bakery (127 W. Main) is in a building which was once a saloon. The little one-story building next door (125 W. Main) was the home of Caddy Miller's Men's Wear from the 1830's to the 1980's. The next two buildings (121 & 123 W. Main) once housed Friedman's Bazaar, a ladies' clothing store which was in business for about a quarter of a century until it closed in the early 1930's. It was operated by the parents and brothers of Ted Lewis. As the fashions came straight from New York, many Central Ohio ladies were customers.

The three-unit structure (115, 117, 119 W. Main) was built in 1839 by Edson B. Olds. The Masons once met on the third floor.

On the north side of main, from the alley where the inner "Circle" began to Court Street, stood another Edson Olds structure. Built in 1840 to square the north-west quarter of the Circle there were originally seven

units which looked just alike. Over the years, extreme changes occurred in the first four units, but the three nearest the alley would still be recognizable to the builders.

A handsome structure at 109 W. Main was once Germain Joseph's clothing store, one of several Jewish businesses which flourished in Circleville.

Notice that the Wittich Building (107 W. Main) is just half of the original building dated about 1859. In the 1920's, the Third National Bank bought the western half, tore it down and built the building now owned by John Rankin.

### West side of North Court.

Walk two blocks north to High Street. Turn left headed west.

At 117 W High Street will be WITTICH's Fine candies. In 1839, Gottlieb F. Wittich started a confectionery in old Circleville. The Wittich family still operates the finest combination of old-fashioned, handmade with high grade ingredients. Let them prove it to you----try some. They also have a soda fountain and ice cream.

Circleville has many interesting and unique structures and we hope you have enjoyed your tour.

