

Walking Tours
of Historic
Hamilton

Ohio



R
917
.7175
W
CMR

Table of Contents

<i>The history of Hamilton</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Three historical districts and Downtown Hamilton</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Dayton Lane tour</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>German Village tour</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Downtown Hamilton tour</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Rossville tour</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Map of Hamilton</i>	<i>48</i>

Each tour is approximately one mile in length.

This booklet was prepared by the Greater Hamilton Convention
and Visitors Bureau Historic Districts Committee.

Jackie Parrish, Chairman

George Bitner, Dayton Lane

Pat Brown, German Village

Warren Tryloff, Rossville;

Marilyn Collmer, Greater Hamilton
Convention and Visitors Bureau

Jim Blount, Historical Consultant

Printing:

American Printing and Lithographing, Inc.

Photographs:

Pat Brown

Design:

Karen Sullivan

Maps:

Rick Kuhl, City of Hamilton Planning
Department

Special Thanks to Accent Hamilton! a Hamilton Chamber of
Commerce/HEDC/City of Hamilton ongoing promotional effort.



Visit
Hamilton...
Visit History!

*“The Greatest
Manufacturing City
of Its Size in the
World.”*

That was one description of Hamilton, Ohio, about 1900 when the county seat of Butler County proudly boasted of being the home of the world's largest machine tool factory. Hamilton's world-class credentials weren't the creation of an imaginative promoter. They were legitimate, the product of powerful elements: an array of bold entrepreneurs. Visionary civic leaders pushed Hamilton to the forefront of transportation advances with bridges, canals, and railroads, and developed utilities, starting with a hydraulic canal system to power mills and shops.

“More skilled artisans are to be found in Hamilton than in any other city of equal size in all the world.”

But Hamilton was more than a hard working town to William Dean Howells, a renowned author and editor. “It seems to me that [it] was a town peculiarly adapted for a boy to be a boy in,” said Howells, who reminisced about his joyful years in Hamilton in *A Boy’s Town*.

Among the legacies of Hamilton’s success is an accessible assortment of architectural and historic treasures. Hamiltonians, proud of their history, have preserved and polished structures which represent a cross section of the city’s cultural and economic past.

Three compact historic districts – plus scenic downtown Hamilton – showcase homes large and small along with a variety of business, industrial, and public buildings. Walking or driving, these glimpses into the past can be enjoyed one at a time on separate trips that fit neatly into a busy schedule or one after the other during a single visit. The unique restaurants and shops in or near all four areas will make you especially welcome during your visit.

This booklet is your personal guide to a tour of Hamilton’s remarkable history.



Three Historical Districts and Downtown

Dayton Lane

Listed on The National Register of Historic Places in 1985, the Dayton-Campbell Historic District, commonly called Dayton Lane, represents the residential neighborhood of choice for Hamilton's prominent industrialists at the turn of the century. Campbell Avenue was named for Lewis D. Campbell, advisor to Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, and a principal landholder who donated a stretch of land, previously used as a race course, to the city for use as Campbell Avenue Park.

Its 210 structures represent a variety of architectural styles from the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth century. The 1868 Titus Atlas of Butler County shows that the area contained within the district was only sparsely settled. Not until the 1870s through the 1890s was there a major stimulus to the development of the district with many new industries relocating or being founded in Hamilton. These industries were attracted by an abundance of inexpensive land and water power. Dayton Lane area, lying just east of the many new

industries, provided a convenient location for founders and managers of these companies. With the influx of these wealthy industrialists, most of the prominent residences are found on Dayton Street with several on Campbell Avenue. The proximity to the factories provided convenient residences for the factory workers as well.



616 Dayton Street

German Village

Hamilton's German Village is a nine-block historic district located immediately north of the city's central business district and adjacent to the Great Miami River. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

It was the first residential development outside of Fort Hamilton and was included in the original layout of the City of Hamilton.

Construction in the early 1800s was mostly frame and reflected several different periods of 19th century architecture: Queen Anne, Italianate, Eastlake, Gothic Revival, and Greek Revival. The neighbor-



224 Dayton Street

hood housed both prominent businessmen and laborers, resulting in a number of significant and unusual buildings. By the 1840s and the completion of the nearby Hydraulic Canal, a wave of German immigrants had arrived and Hamilton was becoming a prominent industrial center. Today lamp posts, red brick sidewalks, and window boxes provide nostalgic atmosphere.

Since 1973, preservation and restoration of historic structures has been encouraged. Many of Hamilton's important community institutions are located in German Village, including Lane Public Library, the YWCA, the Community Foundation, the Butler County Historical Museum, St. Julie Billiart Church, United Way, and the Board of Education. Hamilton's German Village, Inc., headquartered at the Carriage House at 131 Village Street, works to provide leadership for continued rehabilitation and improvement of German Village.

Downtown Hamilton

A small detachment of soldiers built a lonely frontier outpost along the east bank of the Great Miami River in September 1791. Fort Hamilton—about the size of a football field in length and width—supplied frontier troops for less than five years.

Before its abandonment by the U.S. Army, the log fort had become the nucleus of a town. An adjacent trading post attracted settlers, soldiers, and Indians who traveled the old Indian trails and the new military roads which met at the river ford at the fort's main gate. When the soldiers left, settlers recycled some of the fort's timbers into cabins. One of its surviving buildings housed the first county court. When the first Ohio legislature formed Butler County in 1803, Israel Ludlow's donation of land east of the fort site secured the county seat for Hamilton.

The Butler County Courthouse remains a centerpiece of downtown Hamilton. But it is just one of an interesting blend of buildings in the area. Structures here range from a pioneer log cabin to a monument built by civil war veterans, an Art Deco municipal building erected during the Great Depression, and a locally-financed, high-tech creative arts complex which highlighted Hamilton's bicentennial when it opened in 1991.



Rossville Historic District

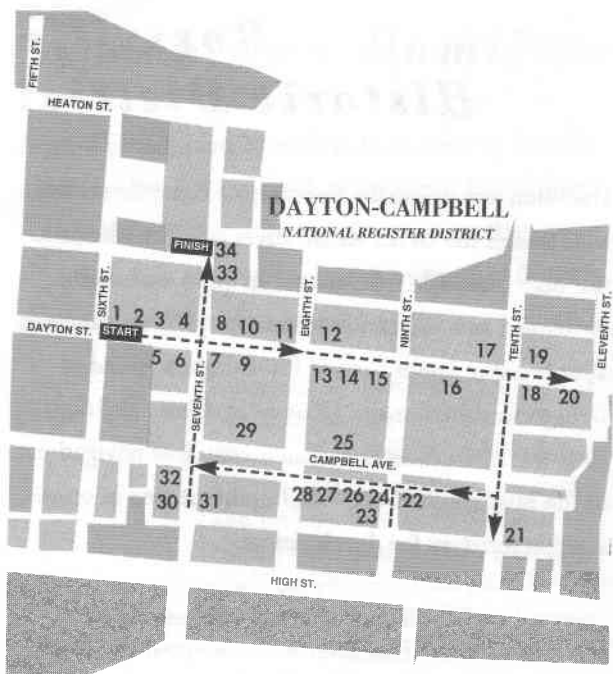
Hamilton was originally two towns: Rossville on the west side of the Great Miami River and Hamilton on the east. Rossville was laid out in 1804 and soon developed as a mercantile community. It was named after Senator James Ross of Pittsburgh, a friend of George Washington and General St. Clair. In 1803, Ross was instrumental in establishing free navigation of the Mississippi River – an important step in opening this territory for development.

The first union of Rossville and Hamilton was attempted in 1829, but political jealousies and conflicts prevented a permanent union of the two towns until 1855.

Because the west side of the river was less susceptible to flooding, more buildings of the past survived in Rossville. The ten and one-half block Rossville Historic District has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a rather unusual distinction, since 1975. The structures in the district represent a wide range of architectural styles common to the period from 1830 to 1920.



341 South D Street



Dayton Lane

610 Dayton Street

(1) The house and carriage house are one of the finest examples of Queen Anne architecture in the City of Hamilton. It was built for Robert McKinney, President of Niles Tool Works, which was the largest machine tool manufacturing company in the world at the turn of the century.

616 Dayton Street

(2) This Italianate building features rounded arch windows and keystones with the original shutters. It was built in 1885 for Charles Hilker of Hamilton Machine Tool Company. It is known as the Peter B. Holly House, after its second occupant, a prominent Hamilton attorney.

622 Dayton Street

(3) This building was the home of J.E. Wright, Vice President of the Columbia Carriage Company. This house was originally designed in the Italianate mode and then extensively remodeled in the Second Empire style in the early 1900s. It then became the home of Ben Strauss, a leading Hamilton merchant. The red tile mansard roof is a noticeable part of the remodeling efforts.

644 Dayton Street

(4) This Victorian home was built in the 1870s as the residence of John McKee, postmaster. It later became the home of attorney Allen Andrews, a member of one of Hamilton's prominent families.

633 Dayton Street

(5) Henry Sohn built this Italianate Victorian home for his family in 1882. It was the Sohn family residence for 75 years. Inside there are six Italian hand-painted slate fireplaces, which furnished the only heat in the building at one time. Sohn was one of the original partners in the Sohn and Rentschler Company.



633 Dayton Street

643 Dayton Street

(6) This home was designed by Charles Eisel in 1882 for George Adam Rentschler. George Adam was the founding father of one of Hamilton's most illustrious families. Remodeled in 1900, its special features include a variety of woods, a cherry staircase, eight fireplaces, and unique parquet floors.

709 Dayton Street

(7) This mansion is the former home of Major J. F. Bender, a contractor, and noted community leader. It was built in 1892 and is considered a striking example of Queen Anne architecture. Its interior is noted for a multitude of jeweled stained glass windows, parquet floors, and ornately carved fireplaces.

712 Dayton Street

(8) This 8,200 square feet Italian villa was built in 1910 by William Shuler, of Shuler and Benninghofen. The home's exterior brick was fired in Belgium and arrived individually paper wrapped. Interior features include quartered oak molding, a Rookwood fireplace, and a solid mahogany beamed ceiling.

712 Dayton Street



723 Dayton Street

(9) This Queen Anne home was built in the late 1880s for Linus P. Clawson of Black-Clawson Manufacturing Company. Architectural details on the interior include beveled glass windows, Rookwood tiles and six hand-carved wood fireplaces.

730 Dayton Street

(10) This Italianate brick home originally built in 1870, was substantially updated near the turn of the century with the rounded tower and elaborately detailed wood porch. Interior features include fretwork between rooms, ornate wood fireplaces, and an entrance foyer complete with elaborate oak wooden arches.

730 Dayton Street



734 Dayton Street

(11) This house built in 1885 is a very good example of residential Italianate architecture. The recent multi-colored paint scheme highlights the distinctive brackets at the roof line. The porch was added later in the Colonial Revival style.

806 Dayton Street

(12) This home is a good example of Prairie style architecture popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright. It was built around 1920 by Charles Griesmer, a partner in Griesmer-Grim Undertakers. Interior features include built-in bookcases, china cabinet with leaded glass doors and tile murals in the kitchen.



806 Dayton Street

807 Dayton Street

(13) This home was built in the 1890s for Christian Benninghofen, a prominent industrialist. Construction began in 1890 and was completed in 1892. It is considered to be one of the finer examples of turn-of-the-century Queen Anne style. The interior features parquet floors and distinctive woodwork.

819 Dayton Street

(14) Built by the Bender Construction Company, this modest Queen Anne home was purchased by David W. Heiser for \$1,800.00 in 1890. Hamilton's first radio station (Station Q, founded in 1909) was located in the rear of the house. It features beveled glass windows and cove ceilings on the first floor.

825 Dayton Street

(15) This Queen Anne style home illustrates the variety possible within the style. The house was built for Max and Marie Reutti in 1900. Some of the features which add to its charm include a dining room bay seat window, a built in pantry and cupboard, and the hand-painted mantel in the parlor.

937 Dayton Street

(16) This large Queen Anne duplex features a variety of wood siding, a recessed second floor porch, and a turret.

936-944 Dayton Street

(17) The Fitton apartment building is in the Colonial Revival style. There are Georgian features, especially in the formal arrangement and symmetrical composition. Note the columns and pilasters, the pedimented entry and the palladian windows.

1003 Dayton Street

(18) This Colonial Revival residence features many Queen Anne details such as the arched stained glass windows and the wrap-around porch.

1008 Dayton Street

(19) This was the home of John Schweizer, the manufacturer of carriages. It has elements of the Prairie style with clean, crisp lines, earth colored bricks and geometric patterns in the entryway.

1045 Dayton Street

(20) The President of Hamilton Ice and Cold Storage Company, J. Fred Bender, resided here. The simple Queen Anne style home features palladian windows, beveled glass, massive chimneys and roof ornamentation.

42 North Tenth Street

(21) Built in the late 1880s, this Colonial Revival home was the residence of the prominent realtor Charles Martin. It was remodeled to create apartments in 1936 and it features ornate fireplaces, parquet floors, and oak woodwork.

903 Campbell Avenue

(22) Built in 1890, the Daniel Hensley house is a rather elaborate example of Queen Anne architecture. Hensley was Hamilton's postmaster. The house features a turret with art glass windows and decorative Eastlake porches. The interior features six fireplaces and two staircases.



903 Campbell Avenue

25, 27, & 29 North Ninth Street

(23) This former commercial building first appeared in the tax records as the Miami Valley Hosery Mill. In 1892, owner Charles Zwick added extensive brick and frame additions and converted the building into three row-house style residences.

841-843 Campbell Avenue

(24) This Queen Anne style home was built in the mid-1880s by Charles Zwick, probably as a residence for his employees at the Miami Valley Hosiery Mills, the brick building to the rear. The residence was nearly destroyed by an arsonist in 1986, but was rebuilt featuring fish scale shingles and decorative porches.

838 Campbell Avenue

(25) The Reister house was originally built in 1909 for August Fischer, Vice President of Ohio Tile Company. It represents the Georgian Revival style which includes an elaborate entryway and porch with columns topped by terra cotta capitals. The interior features a beveled glass entry and numerous stained glass windows. Four mantles display unusual tiles.

838 Campbell Avenue



835-839 Campbell Avenue

(26) Built in the late 1880s, this charming Victorian duplex was part of the land developed by Charles Zwick, owner of Miami Valley Hosiery Mills. The vibrant exterior colors are reminiscent of the unrestrained color palette used in the Queen Anne period.

829 Campbell Avenue

(27) Built in 1887 by William Hoel, this home is typical of the narrow residential homes of the era. Decorative wood elements such as the turned porch posts and large board add detailing to the house.

817 Campbell Avenue

(28) William Stumph purchased this property from William Beckett and built this home in 1886 for an estimated cost of \$1,160. The second floor porch was added when the property was duplexed around 1918.

720 Campbell Avenue

(29) This structure was built circa 1870-75 and is described as an Italianate influenced commercial style. The building was originally used as a carriage house - livery stable. A delivery wagon for the grocery store fronting 7th Street was kept here. During the holiday seasons, chickens and turkeys were dressed here for delivery to homes in the area.

27 North Seventh Street

(30) Mary Hawthorne was the original owner of this six room, two-story brick home built around 1877. The building had been condemned during the 1960s and 70s, but has been recently renovated as a single family residence.