

1800's and early 1900's. The large Union Block building {18} built in 1876 housed a hardware store, confectionery and grocery store while the telephone exchange and a dentist had their offices on the second floor. Another large warehouse stood across the street from Union Block (the building burned down and the site is now occupied by a one story brick building – you may notice the silhouette left by the old building on the wall of the Oddfellow's Building next to it).

Leaving the square and continuing east along Canal Street, you will be able to distinguish the Oddfellow's Building and its neighbor, both displaying Italianate features. Here were located a men's clothing store, a meat market and several shoe stores. It took a lot of business to keep a town running!

In the house across the street, lived the town doctor. His office was in the blue Greek Revival style building next door to it. This style is often characterized by its forward facing gable, extended roof return and its symmetry. Although almost seeming to be one building, there are actually two, one built in 1847 and the other in 1870.

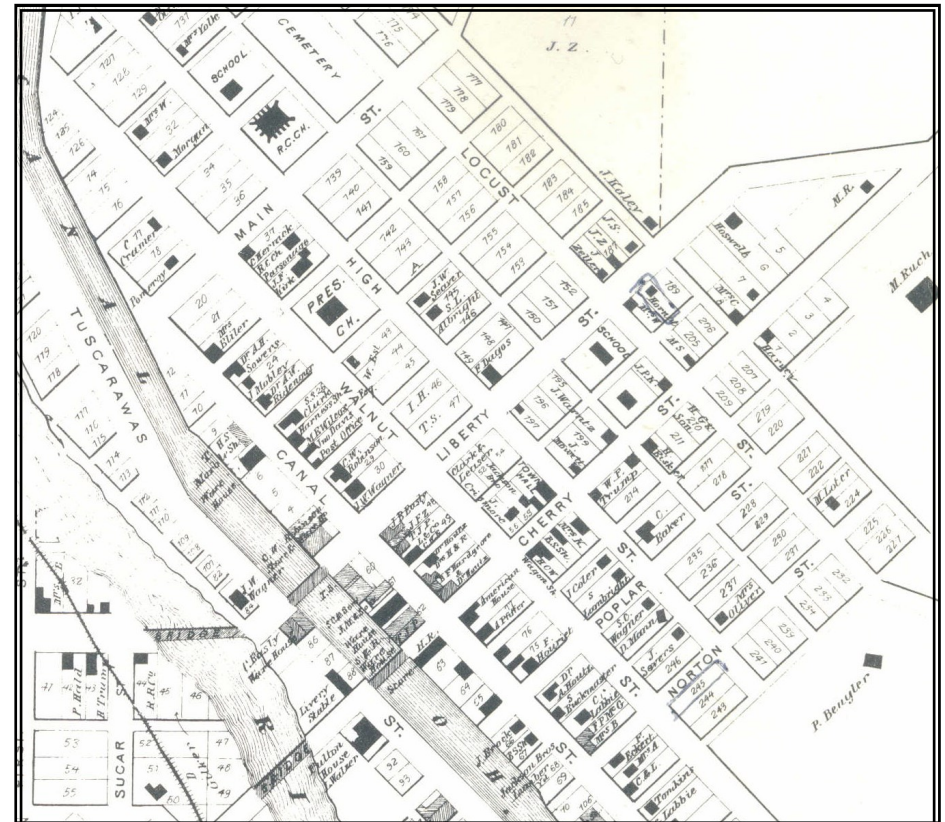
On your right were large frame warehouses. At the corner of the street was the Great Western Warehouse {19}. Standing six stories high, it was reportedly the tallest building in Ohio when built in 1833. In 1873, the top floors were converted into an opera house, becoming the cultural center of the community until fire destroyed it in 1930. Its auditorium could seat 500 people with no obstruction of view. Theatrical troops from as far away as Europe entertained local residents and visitors.

Finding yourself back at Brimstone Corners, you can now make your way back to the Museum. From here you can proceed with Tour #3 or come back to continue it another day.

Canal Fulton Heritage Society's

Self-Guided Walking Tour #2

Historic Downtown Canal Fulton



The above diagram is from our photo album 'Canal Fulton, OH: The Canal Era 1814-1913.' It is from a reprint of the 1870 Beer's Stark County Atlas.

You may note that several of the historic buildings - mostly along Canal and Cherry Streets - within Canal Fulton's Federally recognized Historic District are still standing today.

For more local history and resources visit our website at: www.cfheritage.org

Your tour begins at the Heritage House Museum (**refer to insert map {1}**) in St. Helena Heritage Park {2}. Walk deeper into the park toward the Canalway Center. Once bridged by high trestles that led from the coal banks in the hills beyond the railroad tracks, the Harmon Foundation (of New York) gave the land for the park to the Village of Canal Fulton in 1926. Why did a foundation from New York get involved in the affairs of a small town in Ohio? To quote from a letter dated 1926, “to promote the moral and physical growth of boys and girls into self-respecting men and women and responsible citizens.” There were more than fifty-four Harmon Fields set up around the United States in the 1920’s.

Walking south along the Towpath you will see the partially-restored Ohio & Erie Canal {3}. Construction began on the canal in 1825 and Canal Fulton would start seeing boat traffic in 1828. Produce could now be transported from local farms to markets in the east with efficiency and needed manufactured goods could be secured at reduced cost to the local citizens. Wagons from as far away as Mansfield and Ashland lined the roads leading to Canal Fulton with grain to be shipped on the canal boats. At one time there were five grain warehouses, some as high as six stories tall, to store wheat before shipment. Running from Cleveland in the north to Portsmouth in the south, the canal was 308 miles long and contained 146 lift locks. Canal prosperity reigned until the advent of the railroad in 1869.

Passing by the boat dock for the St. Helena III {4}, you will be able to see a reproduction of the old freight boat that traveled up and down the canal. The St. Helena III is operated regularly during the spring, summer and fall. Saving the boat ride for later, continue walking down the towpath.

Soon you will come to a footbridge {5} that spans the canal. Formerly located over the canal along Cherry Street, it was moved to its present site in 1937. The bridge is an excellent example of the wrought iron arched bridge and is believed to

reminiscent of Bavaria and was built in 1880. Across the alley, the Trinity Church {14} was originally the United Presbyterian and dates back to 1842. In 1966, the congregations voted to merge. Up ahead rises the spire of Saints Philip & James Catholic Church {15}. Originally constructed in 1868 from bricks produced by parishioners in kilns just east of town, the church was the scene of a tragic fire in 1937. Now rebuilt, the spire once again appears as a beacon to direct people approaching Canal Fulton from all directions. The parish house next door is a red brick high Victorian Gothic and seems to step right out of history.

Turning left on Water Street, you will head back toward Canal Street, passing old Barn Alley (Walnut Street), so named because of the many barns that lined the back of the properties facing Canal and High Streets. As you reach Canal Street, the Ohio & Erie Canal is just across the guardrail and down the embankment. Although this part of the canal is not restored for boat traffic, the Towpath Trail and the Buckeye Trail that lead through the area are a part of statewide networks of trails that connect many of Ohio’s natural areas.

Proceed left onto Canal Street. Within this part of town are several more examples of 19th century American architecture... and the flagstone sidewalk again. A small brick building {16} on your right once housed a tombstone maker. The building is the only reminder of a fire that swept the block west of Public Square in 1910. On your left is the tan frame Robinson House {17}, once the home of one of the town’s principal grain buyers and warehouse owners. The Exchange Bank building, built in 1898, once stood on the northwest corner of Canal and Market Streets. It was built when the town’s banking facilities, which had at the time been at the grocery store across Market Street, proved inadequate.

You are now at Public Square. The solid brick buildings that encircled it were the site of much business and trading in the

Turning your attention back to the south side of the street, you will pass a small frame building of the 1800's and next to it at the corner sits the one remaining grain warehouse {9} from the canal days. Although one of the smaller warehouses, it gives a picture of days gone by. A pulley hanging under the eaves would hoist grain into the opening above the second floor.

You are now standing at Brimstone Corners, the popular gathering place for canalers and later coal miners. The buildings here were all famous – at least locally – and liquor could be bought at each corner. This intersection also marked the finish line for footraces and the scene of occasional fisticuffs. It was said the townspeople preferred to do their business at the more respectable Public Square one block west of here.

Turning right and walking north along Cherry Street, you will pass the site of the Lawrence Township Hall {10} (now the parking lot beside the gas station). The building originally served as the town hall but due to disrepair had to be torn down. One block further on the opposite side of the street is the Oberlin House {11} (look for the blue “salt-box” house). The home was given to the Heritage Society in memory of an early family who traveled here from Lancaster, Pennsylvania by ox-cart. It has been restored and furnished by local townspeople.

Return to High Street and proceed west toward the Canal Fulton Public Library {12}. Once a stately old home, it continues to be the site of much activity and local pride. It was along this brick section of High Street that many of Canal Fulton's merchants and community leaders lived. Examples of 19th century architecture include Italianate, Queen Anne and Gothic Revival. The latter is characterized by much mill work applied to the exterior as well as pointed arches and lines.

Continuing along, on your left stand two of the town's early churches. The Salem Evangelical and Reformed {13}, seems

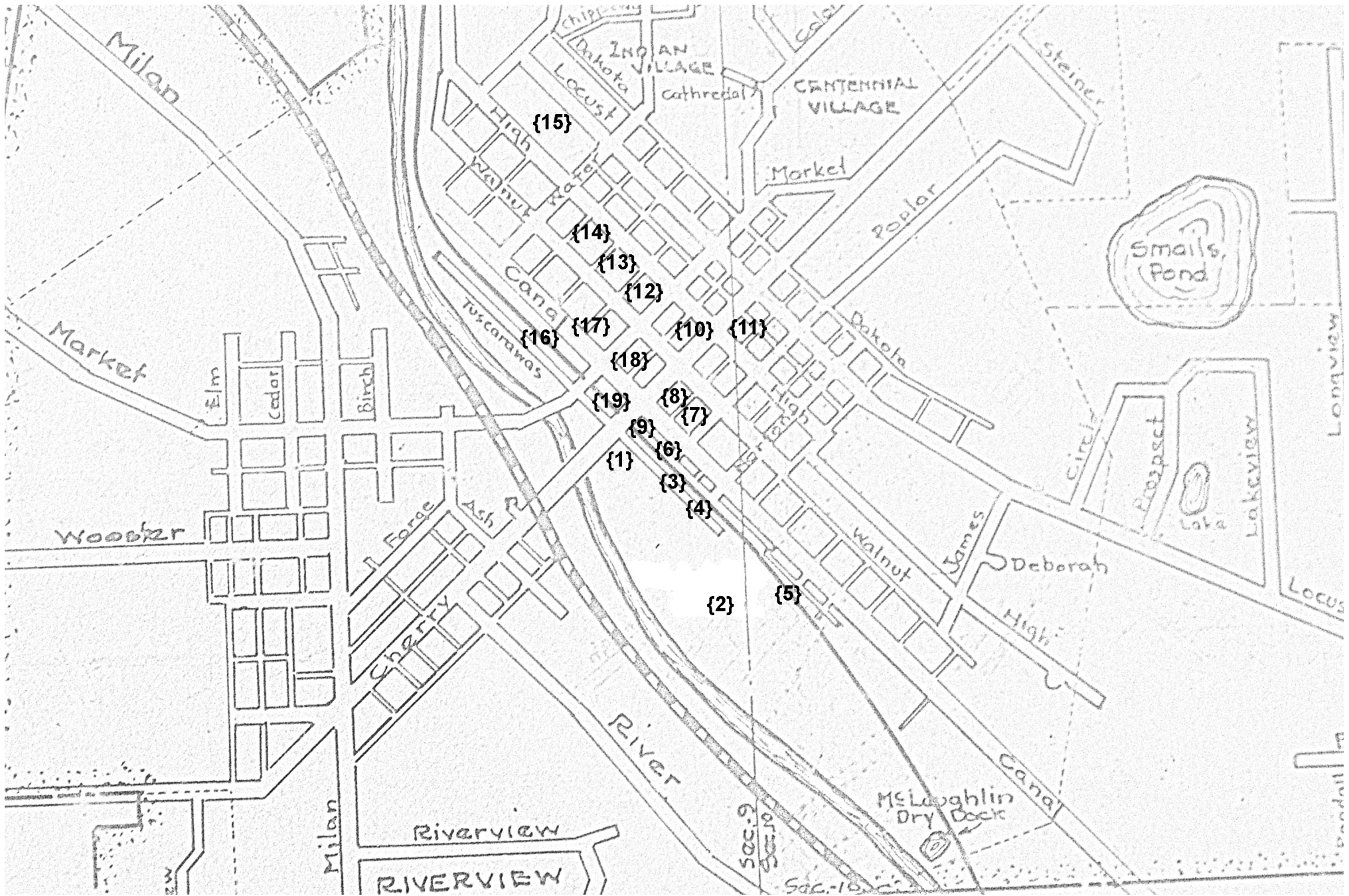
have been constructed by the Fort Pitt Bridge Company of Massillon. Crossing over this bridge gives you a good view of the path the St. Helena takes from its berth at the park before going forth to Lock 4.

Walk up the alley to Canal Street. Look around the area at the various types of architecture. Canal Fulton shows traces of some 18th century “salt-box” houses as well as various 19th century homes of Greek Revival and Italianate influence—these will be described in more detail later. Many of the barns around town that graced each household have been torn down but some of the original flagstone sidewalks remain. Turn around and proceed to the downtown district.

Entering the downtown business district you will see four Italianate buildings {6} on the left. Characterized by the elaborate carved brackets under the eaves and carved window cornices, this style was very popular around the turn of the century. While the first two buildings have had some of their original features covered, the other two still display many of these characteristics. West of these four buildings, on the site of the one story brick building, stood the Fultonian Movie House where silent films entranced local audiences in the early 1900's.

On the opposite side of the street stands an excellent example of Queen Anne style Victorian architecture. This house {7} built for William Blank and his wife Harriet in 1901, shows some elaborate wood detail (which was a product of the Gilcher Lumber Company). Mr. Blank was a member of the Fultonian Imperial Marching Band and used the flat porch at the front of his house for band concerts. Turrets and different exterior siding patterns characterize Queen Anne architecture. Just beside the Blank home, at the northeast corner of Cherry and Canal Streets, stood the American House Inn {8}. Although re-sided and having some of its windows modified, it still retains the lines of an early inn of the 1840's.

Note: over the years, various colors or other features of sites mentioned within the tour may change - textual context matched with map indicators below should help locate each tour site.



The above diagram has been adapted from a portion of a 1978 Canal Fulton plat map drawn by Clyde Gainey.