

Canal Fulton Heritage Society's

Self-Guided Walking Tour #3 *A Visit to West Fulton*



The above photo was taken during the 1904 flood. In the middle left of the photo you can just make out the arches of the bridge that spanned Cherry Street over the Tuscarawas River. The building to the right housed a Broom Factory.

The hill in the background shows that Whitmeyer's Grove as well as the surrounding lands were not so heavily forested then as they are now—affording then a much better view of the countryside from there.

We hope that this brief tour has inspired you to learn more about our historic town and the importance of preserving its unique history.

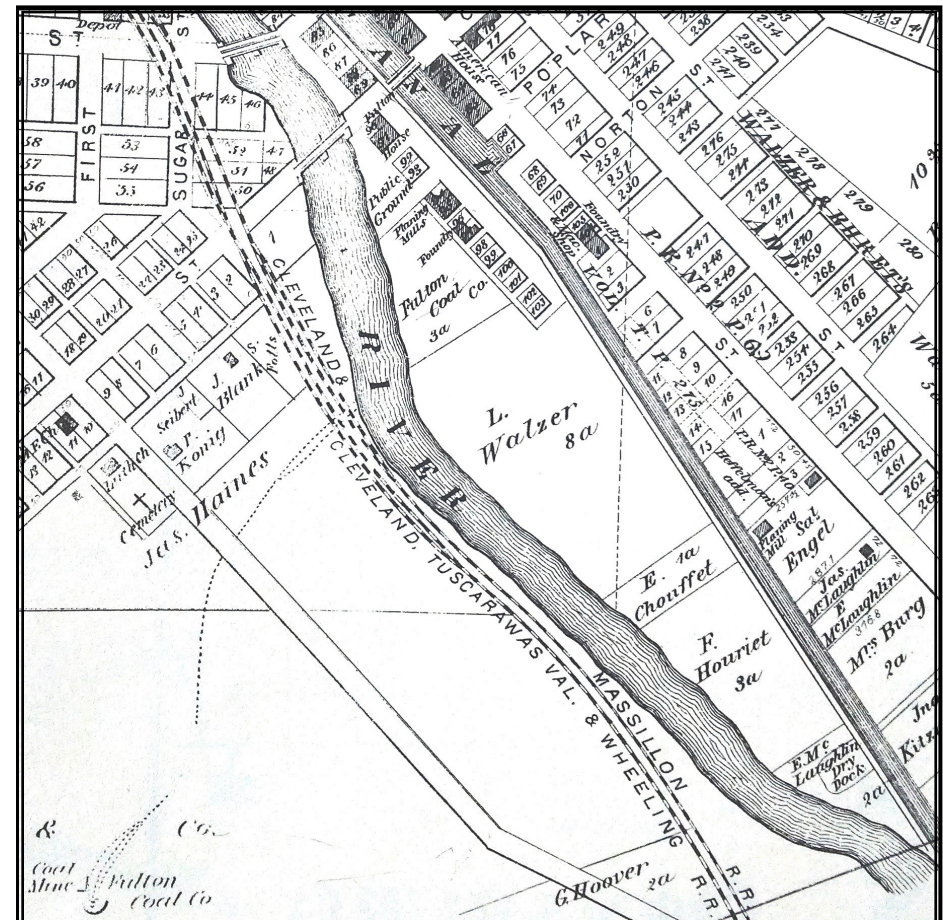
Be sure to look for our other self-guided tours as well:

Walking Tour #1: Discovering Milan

Walking Tour #2: Historic Downtown Canal Fulton

Walking Tour #3: A Visit to West Fulton

These, and much more information, are available in print form at the Heritage House Museum located at 103 Tuscarawas Street, Canal Fulton OH, 44614 or can be downloaded from our website at www.cfheritage.org > Programs & Activities > Self Guided Tours



The above partial diagram is from the 1875 L.H. Everts Stark County Atlas.

Notice how spurs of coal trestles once ran from the hill side above the park to connect to the canal. Note also that within what is now the park a number of businesses once lined either side of the canal.

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

You will be starting your tour at the Heritage House Museum **(refer to insert map {1})** in St. Helena Heritage Park {2}. Developed during the 1920's and renamed in honor of our canal boats, the park is located in downtown Canal Fulton between the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Tuscarawas River. It contains the Canal Fulton Canalway Center, a playground, picnic pavilions, soccer fields, baseball field and softball field. From May through October you can ride the St. Helena III, a reproduction of the old freight boats that traveled up and down the canal between 1825 and 1913.

The Heritage House (the larger one story portion of the building) once stood just west of the Stone Arch Bridge on Market Street but was moved to this location in the 1970's. Formerly it was the middle structure of a complex that housed a dance hall, saloon and owner's quarters. It now contains various Heritage Society collections and memorabilia that showcase the canal and Canal Fulton history. Beside it is the Old Canal Days Museum. Moved to the park through the efforts of volunteer labor in the spring of 1979, the Old Canal Days Museum was the work of Clyde Gainey. Mr. Gainey first displayed his collection of Canal Fulton memorabilia in 1964 when the village celebrated its sesquicentennial. His collection of local artifacts and photographs kept growing and his tiny summerhouse became a popular tourist attraction for visitors to our town. Adjoining with the Heritage House, the two buildings now comprise the Society's Heritage House Museum.

Near the Museum is a marker for the Babst Tavern, a popular stopping point for canal travelers between Portsmouth and Cleveland - the site hosted three presidents: William Henry Harrison, John Quincy Adams and James A. Garfield.

Leaving the park, turn left [south] along Cherry Street. Laying just beyond the Museum you will see the St. Helena II {3}, the first authentically-built canal boat since the end of the canal era in 1913. As you are crossing over the Tuscarawas River {4},

below. On your right is a farmhouse moved to its present location from the Elias Miller farm – moved that is in the middle of the 19th century – and looking very much at home with its barn and out-buildings.

Coming down the hill and around the curve, you will see a green and white farmhouse, the home of E.J. McLaughlin {13}, proprietor of the McLaughlin Dry Dock (the dock is visible just through the trees on the far side of the river) from 1875 to 1913. Mr. McLaughlin kept a row boat tied at the bank of the river across the field from his home and would row to work rather than walk all the way back to the bridge in town. The field used to be known as Heuriot's Pasture and was used by the townspeople's cows for grazing. Most families kept a cow, and the gentle tinkle of cowbells would be heard morning and evening as the cows moved between home and the pasture.

Beyond McLaughlin's, the road crosses a creek and the site of another trestle railroad {14} that brought coal down from the old Fulton Slope on the Hoover Farm back up the hill. River Road once extended south from here to Newman and on to Massillon, but is now closed off at Route 21. The first railroad came to Canal Fulton in 1869 and marked the decline in canal traffic as well as the eventual decline of Canal Fulton as railroad centers like Akron and Canton passed it up. Across the tracks runs the Tuscarawas River and beyond this is the canal. Young Joe Miller, who lived around 1815 on what is now River Road, described seeing many Indian canoeists paddling past his farm as they fished the waters of the river.

Unless you are game for a long walk in the country, turn around and retrace your steps along River Road and Cherry Street for the journey back to the Museum. We hope you have enjoyed all of these walking tours and we encourage you to stop in the various business and attractions that you have been by. Be sure also to take a ride on board Canal Fulton's St. Helena III canal boat and learn even more about this area's fascinating history!

Directly opposite the church parking lot, in the white house with the fence once lived Wilbur George the station-master. Legend goes that the tall pine trees to the rear were unclaimed freight from California. Every house in town used to be surrounded by a fence to keep run-away horses and cows from trampling gardens and lawns.

Later, across the street from these early homes, more stately residences were erected nearer the close of the century. An excellent example of Carpenter Gothic is the green house {8} next to the Methodist Church's parking lot. Its intricate gutter roof and porch trim have long made it a town landmark. It was constructed by Frank McGee, a local painter and decorator.

Proceed down the alley next to the parking lot and turn left to get to River Road. On your right you will pass a brown frame house {9}. During the last part of the 19th century, horses and their rigs were tied to a hitching pole that extended along the south side of the lawn as their owners attended church service. Turning to the right onto River Road you will see the Old Pioneer Cemetery {10} containing the graves of some of Canal Fulton's earliest settlers. Walk in and wander among the stone markers. In this shady and peaceful spot you can learn some about life on the early frontier.

Leaving the cemetery, continue down River Road and cross over the small ravine {11}, the site of one of many tramcar railroads that carried coal from local mines down to the canal and railroad below. Coal was discovered here in 1865 and at one time over thirty mines operated around Canal Fulton, attracting miners from Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and later from Germany. Coal wages in 1888 were \$1 a day for a ten hour workday.

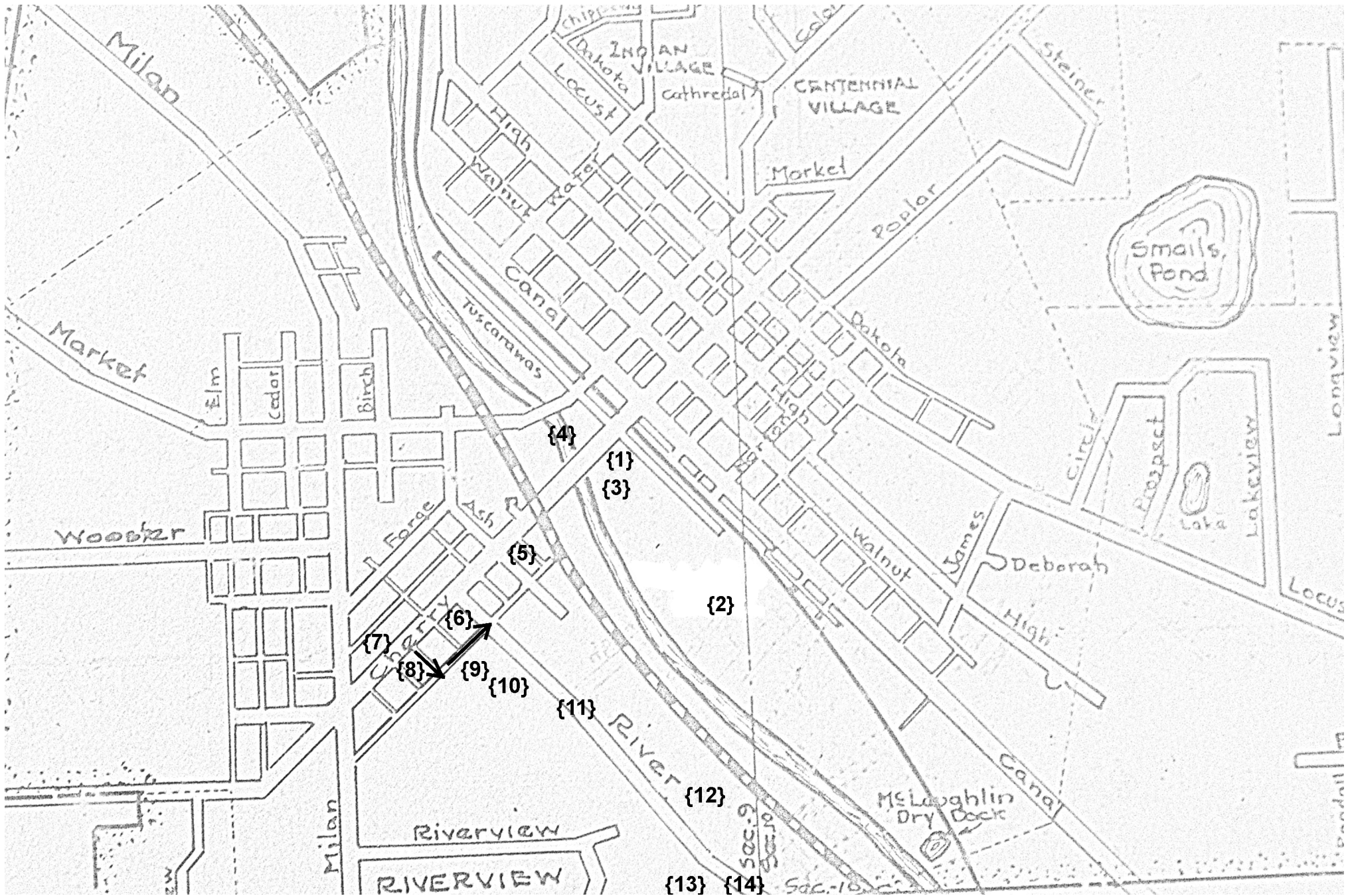
As you continue east, you will see a wooded hill on your left, now the site of several private homes. In the late 1800's, this was known as Whitmeyer's Grove {12} and was a popular picnic site, affording a beautiful view of the town and valley

you will notice to your right is the Stone Arch Bridge, one of the most photographed views in Canal Fulton. Originating in several small streams in Summit and Medina Counties, the Tuscarawas was used as a route by the early French explorers who traveled down the Cuyahoga River from Lake Erie, crossed the portage to the Tuscarawas and from there went down the Muskingum, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers as far as New Orleans. Modern canoeists can enjoy the beauty of the Tuscarawas from canoe liveries here.

Continue down the street, across the railroad tracks and walk up the hill. You are entering what used to be known as West Fulton, established in 1832. Houses here are typical of 19th century Ohio. There are several "salt-boxes," so named for their resemblance to the containers that hung near stoves in the 1800's. Two stories high, they were characterized by sloping rear roofs that incorporated another room on the ground level. They usually have a central chimney and some have shorter windows on the second floor. They were economical to build and heat and were used by many early coal miners and others connected with canal business. In contrast, an Italianate white frame {5} on your left was built by Henry Brevard, proprietor of the drug store in the Great Western Warehouse. Continuing uphill you will reach the intersection of Cherry and River Road and the United Methodist Church {6}. The main part of the church was built in 1856 and remains much as it was then.

Proceeding a bit further you will be able to see the last house {7} on the northwest corner of the intersection of Cherry and Milan Streets. The house dates back to around 1840 and was once lived in by an elderly Dutchman who rode his box sled into town on snowy winter days, steering it with his cane. On that same side of the street are several early log houses, their exteriors now covered with siding but revealing their origin by the thickness of their exterior walls.

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.