



Walking Tour of Mantua's Historic Business District



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Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, Mantua's Historic Business District is comprised of commercial buildings on two acres of land in what originally was known as Mantua Station.

This self-guided tour includes brief descriptions of the history and architecture of the buildings on the site.

A picture is included for each property and information is included even if the building itself has not survived into the twenty-first century.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

To take the walking tour, begin just north of the Main Street Blocks on the east side of Main Street (State Route 44) also known as Painesville-Ravenna Rd. The circled number next to each building block pictured corresponds to a location on the map on the back of the brochure.

MANTUA VILLAGE HISTORY

Mantua Station was created by the location of the Cleveland-Mahoning Railroad crossing on Painesville– Ravenna Road (State Route 44) when it opened in 1856. The site became the commercial center of Mantua Township superseding Mantua Corners two miles to the north. The Village of Mantua was incorporated in 1898.

Business establishments prospered and succeeded each other. At various times these buildings housed general merchandise, hardware, meat markets, dry goods, groceries, furniture, tailoring, jewelry, flour feed, coal and provision businesses.

C.H. Thompson, who was an energetic and versatile businessman, built many of the blocks beginning in 1873.

Built over a period of nearly three decades, their appearance is nevertheless very harmonious and unified.

References:

National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form prepared by Eric Johannesen January 1974.
Adelaide Ling, *Mantua Home Coming* (Mantua, 1909), 58, 63-72.
Historical Atlas of Portage County (Chicago, 1874).
History of Portage County (Chicago, 1885), 483.
http://www.abandonedrails.com/Leavittsburg_to_Mantua

1

C.H. Ray Block Main Street

The site is a flower garden today, but before the buildings burned on March 1, 1985 Weber Hardware was a popular destination for many people needing to purchase hardware and discuss local news.

The block was built by C.H. Ray in 1886. Col. C.H. Ray had been in the dry goods business at Mantua Corners since 1867 until he built his new block at Mantua Station.



2

Bowen Block Main Street

Happily these buildings survived the 1985 fire.

The group of blocks on the east side of Main Street and north of Prospect Street was erected in five stages. The first building of this block, built by C.H. Thompson in 1873, is on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and Prospect (to the far right in the picture). It was taken over in 1876 by William H. Bowen and called the Bowen Block. The north half of the Bowen Block was added in 1877, the next two blocks north in 1881 and 1885.

The height and outline of their facades varies but all have corbeled brick cornices and iron structural columns so that the general impression is one of unity.

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3

Pelletiere
Thompson
Block

Prospect
Street



These buildings were built fifteen years after the Bowen Block buildings. The facades have a more consistent stepped outline and instead of a flat plane, the block is articulated by slightly projecting piers or buttresses. The corbeled brickwork and generally open effect of the ground story windows relates them to the Main Street blocks. Furthermore, there is a change of grade proceeding east on Prospect Street so that the pleasing irregularity of the facades is further enhanced.

The blocks on the southeast corner of Main and Prospect Streets including the Pelletiere Block were rebuilt after a fire in 1901.

4

Mantua Grain
and Supply

C.H. Thompson
built the Thomp-
son Block in 1884,
and the grain ele-
vator in 1898.



This block served as a warehouse and is related in design to the Main Street blocks. Behind it rises a grain elevator, a large rectangular shaft with a gabled roof and a secondary shaft with its roof. Visually this structure forms the climax and the terminal to the entire district.



5

Mantua Station Depot

The building is a gable-roofed, one-story, frame structure. There is a double window centrally placed in the west end and three doors, evenly spaced, on the south facade. There are two chimneys inside.

The depot served first the Cleveland-Mahoning Valley Railroad beginning in 1856 and later the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad that passed from Leavittsburg through Mantua and on north to Cleveland, Ohio.

Much produce like potatoes grown in the local fields and passengers traveled the railroad, which was one of the principal rail routes into Cleveland. The passenger service portion of the line was run by the Atlantic and Great Western Railroad. However, due to declining passengers and the increasing use of trucks for hauling produce, the segment from Leavittsburg to just west of Mantua was abandoned in the late 1970s. The tracks were removed in the 1980s.

Now the former tracks serve as the Headwaters Hike & Bike Trail that starts west of Mantua Village and continues east to the Village of Garrettsville. Parking for trail use in Mantua is behind McDonalds or at the Mantua Village Park on E. High Street.

For additional information on Mantua Village history

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Mantua Station Brick Commercial District

