

History of Mantua Village

Today, if you live in any of the surrounding three million acres, you are living in what was once the great Connecticut Western Reserve. The post-Revolutionary War American government permitted Connecticut to retain 500,000 acres as recompense for the property losses suffered by Connecticut residents due to the British raids during the Revolutionary War. These lands were aptly known as both the Sufferers lands and the Firelands. Eventually, the state of Connecticut would sell a vast majority of this land to the Connecticut Land Company.

The Connecticut Land Company appointed Moses Cleaveland to survey their property, and so, with 52 men, he traveled west and arrived at present day Conneaut, Ohio on July 4 1796. Amzi Atwater, a member of this surveying company, purchased property in present day Euclid, Ohio, but he was dissatisfied with the land and traveled south-east to present day Portage County. He purchased 200 acres on the west end of lot #41. That lot contained what is today most of Mantua Village and the surrounding township.

The Mantua area developed in three different locations. The first was present day Mantua Center (Mantua Center Rd and State Route 82). The second is Mantua Corners (State Routes 44 and 82). The third is Mantua Village on State Route 44 and the Cuyahoga River.

The growth of the third area truly blossomed with the arrival of the railroad system in 1857. It became known as Mantua Station and became Mantua Village in 1898. The arrival of the railroad created a need for homes, hotels, eateries, bars and livery for visitors.

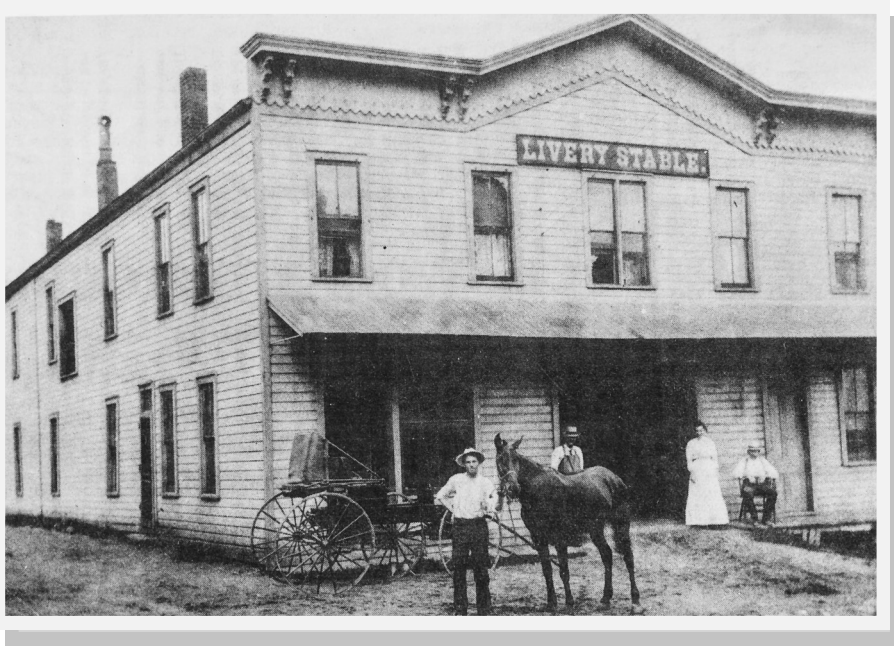
State Route 44 runs north/south and Prospect Street runs east/west. Remember that these properties are privately owned. Do not disturb the homeowner or their neighbors and please stay on the sidewalk at all times.

*Note: an * by the number indicates it's on the National Register of Historic Places.*

Tour

1) Livery (pictured to the left)

Let's begin this tour with the only remaining livery in the Village. Head east on Prospect Street. The Livery is located at 1st and Prospect. It is believed to have been built in the 1850's.



Historic Home Walking Tour

Mantua Village

Mantua, OH

The Livery, which could provide a horse, buggy, carriage or a sleigh was vital to many passengers arriving by train who needed further transportation to reach their final destinations. When facing the front of the Livery, the train station is less than one quarter mile behind you to the south.



The east side of the Livery is packed with history. Originally, the horse stalls were on the lower level of this side. In fact the lower level retains some of the stalls, and the open area along this same side provided a pasture and natural spring for the horses. Inside we find an interior stair well from the lower level to the first floor, which eliminated the need to go outside in bad weather. The east side also houses an angel door on the second floor. As no stairs provided access to the door, only angels could reach and use it; thus the name! Originally a block and tackle hung over this door which would have helped raise and lower heavy items to and from the second floor.



As you face the front of the Livery, the office is to the left and you will notice a chimney that once vented a heating stove. To the right two small rooms likely stored saddles, bridles, reins, and other accoutrements necessary for riding horses, driving buggies or managing sleighs. The large open area on the first floor was a storage space for surreys, carriages, wagons and sleighs. If the Livery is open, access to the upper floors is not permitted due to the weakness of the floors and steps. Nor are the interior steps to the stable permitted to be used.

*2) As you leave the Livery, head west on Prospect, cross St. Rt. 44 and head up the hill. Take notice on the south side the Craft office building, which was at one time the Post Office. Notice the stained glass window above the door on the right.



At the top of the building is WM H Craft, while in the middle of the façade is International Order of Odd Fellows No. 752, a charitable organization.



*3) Our third stop is 4624 W Prospect also known as the Hine House. Horace L. Hine, a prominent banker in Portage County who desired a home befitting his position, built Hine House in 1888. While showing its age, the home remains a lovely example of a Queen Ann design.



Thomas Edison designed the gas lighting for the 26 rooms, and of the 100 windows, three—located on the front, upper level — are Tiffany-style stained glass. The inside of the home boasts some extraordinary wood including beech, chestnut, birch, oak and cherry woodwork. The stunning staircase is chestnut. Over the last century the home has been a private residence, an antique shop and an auction house.

Proceed west up the hill taking notice of the various home styles from brick federalist to simple frame homes.

4) Our fourth stop is at the Hilltop Church at 4572 West Prospect. This church, originally the Disciples of Christ Church of Mantua Station, was organized on April 14, 1889 by Rev. R.M. Marshall. Charter members numbered 33. At times over the years, the disciples and local Methodists joined in fellowship and worshipped here. The original building was 34 x 52 and was constructed December 1, 1889. In February 1926 the building was remodeled and extended southward. At this time the property west of the church was purchased. In 1957 an education wing was added. In 1981 the original clapboard on the



church's exterior was sided in aluminum siding to help protect the wood. Note that the steeple sweeps down at its base then appears to flare slightly upward. This will be mentioned again later.

5) Our fifth stop is 4550 and 4548 Prospect St. These two homes have, on occasion, been referred to as the twin sisters. Originally these lots fronting Prospect St. ran south to Regan Street. Over the years the lots have been subdivided into separate parcels. These homes are believed to have been built in the late 1920's and are Sears & Roebuck catalog homes.



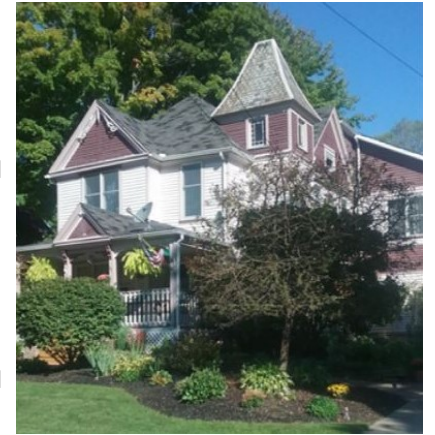
6) Take a few more steps up the street to our next stop at 4540 Prospect St. This lovely home and carriage house radiate 19th century charm and warmth. It is similar to a New England style farm house, which was popular throughout the United States from the late 1880's until the early 1900's.



Zeba and Mary Haupt built the house and the carriage house in 1890. Besides the cozy charm of the home, the existence of the stable and carriage house, though difficult to see, add additional charm and interest.

The house and carriage house sport sandstone block foundations. Both had wooden clapboard siding, which ages, cracks, shrinks, splits and rots with time. By the 1950's the house's clapboard was covered with asbestos shingles.

7) Now cross Prospect and head straight to our sixth stop at 4591 Prospect. This lovely box Queen Ann style house was built in 1870. Mrs. Park, one of the prior owners in the 1970s and 80s, advised us that there had been a stone foundation that was believed to have once supported a carriage house.



The building had either collapsed or had been removed. Mr. Park removed the foundation and constructed a stone wall in the backyard with the stones.

Mr. Jack Schafer, a member of the Historic Landmarks Commission, pointed out that this home's turret sweeps down at the base and flares slightly upward in a manner similar to the steeple on the Hilltop Church across the street. Perhaps the church's architect admired the turret and copied it for the church!

*8) Proceed further down the street to 4619 W Prospect. This Empire style home was built in 1882.

Originally owned by 19th century businessman and politician, William H. Craft, the home's roof is a mansard which is characteristic of the second empire style. Its wide eaves with double bracketed frieze and dentils support the roof. The gabled roof dormers also have brackets and dentils. The veranda, which



was added at a later date, has matching architectural details.



Carriage stone in front of the house.->

<-Craft barn on St. Rt. 44 south of the railroad station depot .

9) A short walk on St. Rt. 44 north takes you to our final destination at 10783 St Rt. 44. Dr. Edgar H. Knowlton purchased the property in 1910, building his home four years later in 1914. The home is a reflection expressing the new optimism of the twentieth century. Automobiles were replacing the horse drawn carriage, telephones, though not common yet in every home, were moving from a rarity to more commonplace.



The interest here is not the house, rather it is the brown concrete block building to the rear of the home. In 1900 Harmon S. Palmer created the first commercial machine to produce concrete masonry blocks. Cement, which is a component of concrete, having been around for centuries, no one thought of using it to make structural building blocks. The idea of concrete block was, perhaps, motivated by the great fires of Chicago and San Francisco. Wooden structures can burn intensely with great heat allowing the fire to literally leap from one wooden structure to the next causing a fire to spread rapidly and destruction to soar. The hope was that the concrete block structures would not burn as intensely as wood. When the old carriage house and stalls behind this house caught fire and burned, Dr. Knowlton purchased a mold from Sears and Roebuck and built his new carriage house with concrete blocks. This is possibly the earliest concrete block structure in the Village.



This concludes your tour.

Thank you for joining us today,

The Historic Landmark Commission of Mantua Village.

2018

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The late Jack Schafer, Mantua Historic Landmark Commissioner.

This pamphlet was written by the Historic Landmark Commissioner, Nicholas J. Ehlert.

Resources used are:

Mantua Homecoming 1799-1909 by Adelaide Ling

Hilltop Christian Church Centennial Celebration by Hilltop Church

Rediscovering Mantua, Portage County, Ohio by Elmer F Pfaff, esq.

Diamond Jubilee 1898-1973 by Village of Mantua

Copies of Historical Manuscripts Mostly Unpublished by Orrin Harmon and published by the Mantua Historical Society

While the information contained in this narrative is accurate to the best of the writer's knowledge and capacity, it has no legal bearing and should be relied on as nothing other than historic narrative.

Should you be interested in local history, consider joining the Mantua Historical Society.