



The Burton Historic District



**WALKING TOUR GUIDE AND MAP
BURTON, OHIO**



A Brief History of Burton

Burton is located within the Ohio territory historically known as the Connecticut Western Reserve. During the 17th and 18th centuries, western colonial boundaries were ill-defined and extended westward indefinitely. Connecticut's western boundary overlapped New York and Pennsylvania and the colonial territories argued over land claims and boundaries. After the Revolutionary War, in 1786, Connecticut withdrew its claims to western lands, with the exception of a swath of present-day northeast Ohio. In the late 1790s, the Connecticut Land Company purchased and oversaw the settlement of the eastern two-thirds of the Western Reserve in Ohio, including Geauga County.

As the earliest settlement in the county, Burton is known as a quintessential Western Reserve town. Beginning with the Umberfield family who arrived here in 1798, many early settlers to Burton came from Cheshire, Connecticut. The settlement grew quickly, with two mills operating by 1800, a public school established in 1803, and a collegiate facility, the Burton Academy, completed in 1806. Later development was facilitated by a Baltimore & Ohio railroad station, built in 1874. Although the depot was located two miles away at Burton Station, twice-daily wagon service connected Burton residents to the station. By 1895 the town had grown sufficiently to be incorporated as a Village.

Never dominated by industry, Burton did acquire some small-scale manufacturing interests after the Civil War. Cheese factories and the Burton Handle Company were the most notable. Two cheese factories were operating in 1880, providing an outlet for the area's many dairy farmers. One was located at the natural spring where the Umberfields had first settled.

Burton's post-Civil War "boom" lasted until 1903, when a local bank failure caused decline. The bank's collapse resulted in several long-standing businesses failing, including the Burton Handle Company. Burton's economic recovery was due, in part, to the Belle-Vernon Creamery, which replaced its old factory on Spring Street with a new larger facility in 1905. Throughout the remainder of the 20th century, Burton has realized economic and residential stability. Since 1890, Burton's population has not deviated dramatically from 1,200 inhabitants.

Burton History & Architecture Walk

Welcome to Burton. You are invited to take a self-guided History and Architecture Walk through this charming 19th century village in the heart of Ohio's Western Reserve. The tour includes both a short stroll around the Village Park (#1-16) and a slightly longer walk to visit historic sites within the original town (#17-39). Depending upon your pace, the Village Park Tour takes roughly 25 minutes and the complete Village Tour takes roughly 60 minutes. The best place to start your tour is from the Log Cabin at the south end of the Park, where parking and restroom facilities are located. Then, take a leisurely trip through history, stopping along the way to admire the architecture and enjoy the Village that in 1899 the *Geauga Leader* called the "hub of Geauga County."

As you walk, be sure to notice the Ohio Historical Markers that are found in several locations. Because of its character and significance, the Village Park and immediate surrounding buildings were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Other National Register listings are noted in the tour. On many homes in Burton, you will also see Century Home plaques, a designation by the Geauga County Historical Society for houses over 100 years old. Within this brochure, properties are identified by the names of their original or historic occupants.

Photo above: Burton Log Cabin and Sugar Camp Located on the Village Green



Below: Peppers House (#2) historic photo

Maple Sugaring

Burton has been a center of maple syrup production since the early 1800s, with producers regularly holding conventions here during the 19th century. By 1900 the Burton firm of Tuttle and Harmon was considered "the most extensive dealers in maple syrup and sugar of any in the world." Through Tuttle and Harmon, Burton's maple products were supplying hotels and caterers across the United States. A second

Burton firm, the Ohio Maple Products Company, was formed by Albert Thrasher and H.F. Johnson in 1893. In 1894, this company created a maple display in Washington D.C. for the Agriculture Department.

Today's municipal maple sugaring tradition has its roots in an 1874 citizens' initiative, when a maple grove was planted in the Village Park. Sugaring activities became a popular tourist activity by the early 20th century, resulting in the Chamber of Commerce constructing a log cabin sugar house in 1931 and planting an additional 60 maple trees in 1944. Since 1951 a pancake breakfast, complete with fresh maple syrup, is served every Sunday in March, resulting in the Village being trademarked as Pancake Town USA.

Numbered Tour Listings (see map for location)



1. Burton Log Cabin and Sugar Camp ~ 14590 E. Park
The Burton Chamber of Commerce built the log cabin in 1931. A working sugar house, the cabin was a tourist site, attracting visitors during maple production season. The structure has been cited as being the only municipally owned sugar camp in the world. The cabin was partially reconstructed in the 1950s, due to fire, and an addition was added in 1962.



2. Peffers House ~ 14656 S. Cheshire
James Peffers came to Burton in 1829 and began serving as postmaster in 1830. When this Greek Revival house was built in 1840, the northeast room served as the post office. Four generations of the original family lived in this house through the early 1970s, although the name changed from Peffers to Russell when Lucy Peffers married William P. Russell in 1863. The glassed-in porch was added about 1925 when the house became a popular inn and tavern. The enormous chimney on the east side was added at a later time.



3. Hickox Brick ~ 14653 E. Park
A Connecticut native, Eleazar Hickox settled in Burton in 1804. A merchant trader, Hickox was instrumental in bringing goods and livestock to the fledgling settlement. Hickox served in a number of local offices, as well as the state legislature in 1822-23. After decades of residing in his store, he built this brick house in 1838. The house is an example of the Federal style; note the delicate fanlight in the front gable and the recessed door with



4. Latham House ~ 14629 East Center

Built by Edward P. Latham in 1881, this house is an excellent example of the Italianate style. Note the elaborately carved brackets at the cornice (top of the walls) and the iron cresting at the "widow's walk" at the top of the roof. Latham built this house after accumulating wealth as a cattle buyer and cheese factory owner following his service in the Civil War. Although he was seriously injured following the battle of Cumberland Gap, he was not limited by his injury and was known around town for the skill and daring he displayed while driving his magnificent team of horses.



5. Carlton House ~ 14605 E. Park

A Burton area native, Almon B. Carlton, built this house in 1863. Carlton was a carpenter by trade and was known to have built several houses in Burton. He also contributed to the interior finish work on the 1830s portion of the Congregational Church. During the 1860s, Carlton served as the Geauga County tax assessor for the federal government. The house is an example of the Italianate style.



6. Ford House ~ 14585 E. Park

This magnificent Queen Anne residence was built in 1891 by George H. Ford, member of a prominent Burton family, a leader in county and state politics, a bank officer and businessman. He was the first mayor of Burton after the village was incorporated in 1895. His father, Seabury Ford, served Ohio as Governor in 1849-1850. One of Burton's ladies' social clubs, The Tuesday Club, was organized here in 1895 with Corinne Ford, George's wife, as president. Note the elaborate Victorian detail in the front gable. The gazebo, added in the late 20th century, was once used as an ice cream store.

Village Park

Burton's central Village Park is a symbol of its Western Reserve heritage. The founders brought the cultural tradition of the "village green" from New England to their new settlement. The 10-acre park was dedicated in 1803 and has since served as the community's gathering place. The present-day road encircling the park is actually within the deeded boundary of the public space. A split-rail fence enclosed the central portion of the park until 1888 and grazing sheep were used to control the grass. Military musters were held in the park in its early decades but, after the Civil War, the land was increasingly used for recreational activities. A bandstand was added to the site by the end of the 19th century. Members of the community organized the Burton Band, performing weekly concerts in the summer. In the 1920s horseshoe pits were in the park, along with a miniature golf course in the 1930s. A water tower has been in the park since 1909, when a wooden one was erected at the southern end for \$448. The present 135-foot water tower was built in 1957, the third one in the park. Many plaques and memorials can be found throughout this important early





Umberfield Spring

For further adventure, walk or drive to Umberfield Spring, found in the cul-de-sac at the foot of Spring Street. When Burton's first settler, Thomas Umberfield, arrived here with his family in 1798, he located their simple log cabin to the southwest of the spring. The spring often can be seen flowing today.

MAP KEY:

- National Register Historic District Boundary
- Tour Stop
- Other Building
- Village Historic District Boundary



This limestone carriage step was placed here by Dr. Benjamin F. Ray, a Geauga County physician who came to live in Burton in 1882. This step, a rare survivor from Burton's horse and buggy days, was used to climb in and out of carriages. Dr. Ray's name is carved onto the street side of the stone.



Century Village

Be sure to continue your walk in Century Village where the Geauga County Historical Society maintains a collection of historic buildings for educational purposes. Century Village had its beginning in 1940, when the Hickox Brick

(map #3) and 5.63 acres of land were purchased by Frances Bolton, congresswoman, and donated to the Geauga County Historical Society. The society relocated here from its former home on the 2nd floor of the Burton Public Library

in 1941. Since that time, a variety of historic houses, shops and public buildings have been moved to the site, restored, and opened to the public. The Society also maintains an archive in the Shanower library in one of the buildings.



*Burton Village Park
horseshoe pits were in the park,
miniature golf course in the 1930s.*





Geauga County Fairgrounds

The Geauga County Fair was founded in 1823 and is credited with being the oldest continuously operating county fair in Ohio. The fair began as a project of the Geauga County Agricultural and Manufacturing Society, the first such society formed in the Western Reserve. The county fairgrounds were permanently established in Burton in 1853. Two buildings, the 1889 Domestic Arts Hall and the 1890 Flower Hall, were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

7. Griswold House ~ 14573 E. Park

Edward Griswold built a shop at this site in 1834 and built this typical Western Reserve house the following year. Griswold and Silas Gaylord, pioneers from Cheshire, Connecticut, were business partners who dealt in tin ware and brass kettles. Gaylord owned the house after 1844, later selling it to Dr. Chloe Cleveland in 1856. The home continued to be used for medical practices in later years by such community notables as Dr. William Reed.

8. Gaylord House ~ 14563 E. Park

Silas Gaylord arrived in Burton in 1834 and built this house while his business partner Edward Griswold was building the house next door. During the Civil War, Gaylord was engaged in a general mercantile business in Burton and also served as a county commissioner. After his death in 1872, the house was willed to his daughter, Ellen Gaylord Hawthorne, and her husband who continued to live here into the early 20th century. The next owner of the house was F. H. Crittenden, a Burton merchant, who was responsible for changing the Western Reserve character of the house to its Bungalow appearance. For most of the early to mid 20th century, the house was a funeral home operated by John Dingman.

9. East Commercial Block ~ 14529-14549 N. Cheshire

On December 5, 1871, several wood-frame commercial buildings in this location were destroyed by fire. As a result the Burton Building Company, a stock company, was formed to raise funds for the construction of a new commercial building. This block, containing seven separate storefronts, was constructed in 1872-73. In 1884, from north to south, the building housed Cleveland & Crittenden's drug store, the Post Office, Nash dry goods, Hinkston & Sons shoes, Langerwisch jewelry, Gridley dry goods, and Sheldon & Company drugs. Doctors, dentists, lawyers, and dress-makers represented typical tenants on the second story

Left: Old Town Hall (#12) prior to renovation and the school house (#13) before the tower was removed.

Right: Historic photo of West Main Street (#10), photo courtesy: Geauga



10. W. Commercial Block~14528,14530,14538-14548 N. Cheshire
The commercial block on the west side of N. Cheshire Street consists of four buildings. The southernmost building at the corner of Park St. (14548 N. Cheshire) was originally occupied by Parmelee Brothers hardware in 1881. The abutting building (14538 N. Cheshire) was built the same year, with Tuttle and Thrasher, a clothier, as the original occupant. Next in the row is the frame building at 14530 N. Cheshire, constructed c.1890. It is interesting for its western-style boomtown front. In the early 1900s, it housed a bakery and lunch counter operated by Jack Stiffler. The northernmost building in the row at 14528 N. Cheshire was constructed c.1900 by the Burton Building Company. Due to the local bank failure of 1903, the building remained empty for a number of years. In the 1910s, it housed Ludlow groceries and was later owned by Fred Talcott who operated a similar business, adding a soda fountain along with a bowling alley and pool room on the second floor.

11. Boughton, Ford & Co. Bank ~ 14522 N. Cheshire

The Boughton, Ford & Co. Bank was originally founded in 1872 at this location; this is the second building on the site. Built in 1887, the bank is a commercial example of the Italianate style. A landmark event that occurred at this site (in the earlier building) was the establishment of the first telephone line in Ohio in 1877, when service was established between Burton Station and the Boughton, Ford & Co. Bank. Not surprisingly, the Burton Telephone Company offices were located on the second floor for many years. In 1903, the Boughton, Ford & Co. Bank failed, creating an economic catastrophe for many village businesses.

12. Old Town Hall ~ 13828 Spring

This brick building was Burton's second Town Hall, built at a cost of \$6,500 in 1881 to replace the original town hall on the village park. As in many small communities, the town hall also functioned as the village Opera House. In addition to theatrical entertainment, the hall's large room accommodated political debates, conventions, and high school graduations, among other events. Motion pictures were shown here after WWII. In 1957 the building was renovated to its current appearance as a home for the village Fire Department, which had its start in the basement of the building as a volunteer department with one truck and 17 men in 1926. The changes included the removal of a tower that marked the southwest corner.

13. School/IOOF Building ~ 13822 Spring

Completed in 1868 for the sum of \$4,000, the present building served as a union school. A high school curriculum was established by the township in 1866 and those students occupied the second story. Course work included elocution, composition, philosophy, and languages such as Latin, Greek, and German. This school was originally located on the west side of the green, but was moved here in 1884, when a larger school building was constructed in its place (present library). The Independent Order of Odd Fellows took over the building shortly after relocation and used it as a lodge until the mid 20th century. The former school was converted to commercial uses by the late 1900s.



What Style Is It?

Federal: In vogue before 1840, the Federal style is derived from English precedents and typically has a refined elegance. The building itself is straightforward with evenly spaced windows and doors, but there can be delicate semi-elliptical fanlights or sunburst designs that provide evidence of the Federal design. (See map #s 3, 29)



Greek Revival: Burton has many fine examples of this style, which was popular in Ohio's Western Reserve in the 1830s and 1840s. Greek Revival buildings have bold features and classical details. As the name suggests, the "Upright and Wing" house type has a vertical main block with smaller wing to one side, often with a porch. Look for the signature "returns" at the front gable roofline and classical entrance treatment. (See map #s 7, 28, 32.) Burton's temple front Greek Revival house (map #35) is a rare find.

Italianate: This style was very popular in Burton from the 1860s to about 1890 and is found in commercial, residential and public buildings. It is characterized by height and vertical lines; look for tall doors and windows, brackets at eaves, a heavy roofline, and projecting tall bay windows. (See map #s 4, 23.)



Stick Style/Queen Anne: These two Victorian styles, popular at the very end of the 19th century, are most often found on residential buildings, but they were used for other property types as well. For Stick Style buildings, look for applied decoration on the exterior that expresses the building's framing, such as diagonal boards on walls. (See map #s 22, 24.) Usually large in scale, Queen Anne buildings are easy to spot: they use a variety of towers, turrets, bays, wall treatments, roof dormers, and porches to express the style. (See map #s 6, 26, 27.)

Burton has a Historic District Architectural Review Board that was authorized by a local historic district ordinance. The board reviews exterior alterations to properties that are locally designated as historic, thereby maintaining Burton's architectural heritage. The Village of Burton is a Certified Local Government, making it a historic preservation partner with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Ohio Historical Society, and the National Park Service.



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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