

A SELF-GUIDED WALK THROUGH WYOMING'S HISTORIC VILLAGE DISTRICT



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A Walking Tour

The Wyoming Historical Society welcomes you to this self-guided tour through part of Wyoming's historic "village" district. The district, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in September 1986, includes more than three hundred buildings in the heart of Wyoming. It has been described by the Ohio Historical Preservation Office as "a one-of-a-kind community with an extremely impressive array of architecture."

The origin of Wyoming's transformation from forest to farmland to commuter suburb can be traced to changes in transportation – first horse and buggy, then the canal, then the railroad, and later the streetcar and the automobile. The Miami-Eric Canal opened in 1828, followed by the Cincinnati Hamilton & Dayton Railroad in 1851, then by the streetcar on the Pike in 1900. These changes made Wyoming's attractive country atmosphere increasingly accessible to commuting businessmen to build their homes.

Lovely old trees and wide expanses of green lawns have blended the vertical lines of nineteenth century styles with the more horizontal lines of twentieth century architecture. Twenty-first century architecture is now being added to the array. The community which evolved has special charm and historical significance. We hope you will enjoy this walk in Wyoming.

The route is a loop which can be walked in approximately an hour. The reference numbers follow the route on the map. You may start anywhere.

1-4 Corner of Springfield Pike and Wyoming Avenue

Three large, early farms came together here – the Wilmuth farm lying to the northeast, the Burns farm to the southeast, and the Riddle farm to the west.

1. The Robert Reily Historical Marker (in front of the Wyoming Branch Library)

The marker is situated on the southwest corner of what was the Thomas Wilmuth farm. The Wilmuths acquired 40 acres here from their relatives the Penderys, another pioneer family. Mr. Wilmuth died in 1860 at the age of 100; his second wife, Jane Wyatt Wilmuth, who married him when she was 15, also lived to be almost 100. She was present the night in 1861 when Robert Reily called his neighbors together and selected the name "Wyoming" for the small rural settlement. Reily made a fortune as a Cincinnati merchant and retired at 31. He chose the rustic hills of the upper part of Isaac Riddle's farm, overlooking the Mill Creek Valley, as the setting for his retirement home. Just weeks after the naming meeting, Reily joined the Union side of the Civil War, eventually promoted to Colonel, and died from a wound received in the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863.

2. 507 Springfield Pike, the Riddle-Friend House

The acreage on which this red brick home stands, across from the Wyoming Branch Library, was first purchased with land grants of the type issued to Revolutionary War soldiers. The house is near the site of one of the first cabins erected after the "New Road", now called Springfield Pike, was cut through the wilderness in 1806 as a shortcut to Fort Hamilton. The road followed a section line that had been measured off when the Northwest Territory was first surveyed in 1785. At that time, Miami and Shawnee Indians still hunted in the area.

Isaac Riddle and his wife built the house in 1835 as a simple farm home. After the railroad came through, the Riddles began to sell off parcels of their farm land. George Friend, co-owner of Friend & Fox Paper Co. in Lockland, bought the house and enlarged it in the popular Italianate style. In the 1920's, it was remodeled as a Georgian Revival home, but the center-gable roof and tall windows reveal the earlier style.

3. Mile Marker, in Centennial Park

From Spreen's Corner, once the northwest corner of the Archibald Burns farm, an old mile marker can be seen across the Pike in Centennial Park. Such markers had an important function when the New Road was widened and improved by local farmers in 1834, and toll was charged for its use. Can you tune out the traffic noise of today and imagine the sounds of horse-drawn coaches, wagons, and cattle and hogs being driven to market along the dusty road?



In the upper left corner of Centennial Park is the Ohio Historical Marker "Stearns and Foster Company". George S. Stearns was an important figure in Wyoming's development.

4. 1 Wyoming Avenue

In the 1880's, this was a grocery store owned by Mr. Jacoby; after him Gus Spreen operated it for many years, thus the name Spreen's Corner – note the plaque on the west wall of the building. The original part of the building can be distinguished from later additions by the simpler early brick work and the limestone lintels over upper story windows.

5. Wyoming Avenue Schools

This five acre parcel between Wyoming and Worthington Avenues has been the home to four school buildings. First was an 1842 wooden structure to the east. In 1880, an eight room school was built facing Worthington Avenue. Shortly thereafter a "Tower" High School was built facing Wyoming Avenue on the western part of the property. The current building, constructed in 1928, in its original rectangle configuration housed K-12. This building has been added to and remodeled over the years and in 2013 a total renovation and addition brought it up to 21st century standards to serve the Middle School students, grades 5 through 8, for many more years.

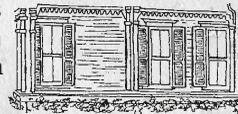
6. 129 Wyoming Avenue, the Stearns-Compton House (c.1870)

This house was built but not occupied by George S. Stearns who owned a cotton wadding and batting factory, a lumber mill and an ice box manufacturing company in Lockland. It was built for A. Compton. The original Italianate building has had a colonial style porch added, as well as successive additions to the back of the house. The barn, which has nicely scrolled trim, sheltered horses. Hay was stored in the upper loft.

Take the "Boulevard", this one originally called "School Way" due to its nearness to the school, to the next point of interest on the map, #7. Wyoming has a number of mid-block walkways between two streets which run along-side resident's side yards. As you are walking toward Worthington, notice the "coffin" windows on the boulevard side of the next house (#7).

7. 200 Worthington Avenue

This Italianate house was built just after the Civil War. Its roof has projecting eaves supported by unusually ornate brackets. Three "coffin" windows, visible from the Boulevard, extend to the floor of its side porch. The term dates back to the days of home funerals when pallbearers wearing tall silk hats would sometimes carry the coffin through windows like these.

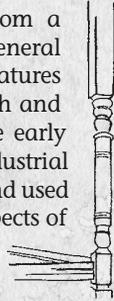


8. 205 Worthington Avenue, the Judson Harmon House

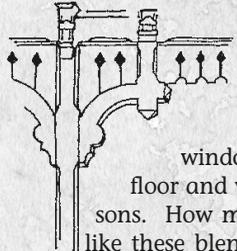
In 1865, when this house was built as an unpretentious farm house, Worthington was merely a lane bordering fields and pastures. Judson Harmon, one of the former occupants, was the village's most distinguished public servant. He served as Wyoming's third Mayor, Judge of the Superior Court in Cincinnati, U.S. Attorney General under William Howard Taft, and Governor of Ohio (1909-1913). Coincidentally, Wyoming's 14th Mayor (1924-1926), John MacKay, also lived in this house.

9. 212 Worthington Avenue

The Townley family built this house in the 1880's from a popular pattern book design of that period. The same general floor plan can be found in other homes in the district. Features of its Eastlake style, such as the turned posts on the porch and the panels beside the double windows in the bays, were early examples of mass produced mill work, products of the Industrial Revolution. The Victorians delighted in ornamentation and used contrasting shades of paint to enhance the decorative aspects of their homes. Subsequently, many houses were repainted white or another single color.



10a-c. 218, 226, and 232 Worthington Avenue



These three "sister" houses were all built in the late 1860's, before the village was incorporated. The house at the corner looks different only because its porch was removed and a turret added in the late 19th century. The variations between their Italianate brackets, window moldings, and jigsaw fretwork under third floor and veranda roof lines make interesting comparisons. How many differences do you see? Older structures like these blend with other 19th century homes and large shade trees to form one of Wyoming's finest streetscapes. Lewis Worthington, a New York investor who financed the Lockland and Wyoming Improvement Association, could never have envisioned the enduring charm of the avenue named for him.

11. Site of the Woodruff Building and Lockland-Wyoming Train Station

In the days when residents commuted to downtown Cincinnati on the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad, this area was the commercial center of the village. The CH&D Station was here as

was the Woodruff Building. In the colorful history of the area, the first post office, the first telephone, a livery stable, feed mill, roller skating rink and a general store were located here. Read more on the Historical Marker found at this location.

12a-c. The 300 Block of Grove Avenue

This neighborhood, within easy walking distance of the station, was developed in the 1890's and became more valuable as train service to Cincinnati improved. Several of the houses were built as duplicates. The Queen Anne wrap-around porch and the turret at 323 Grove (12a) were installed at the turn of the century to distinguish it from the others.

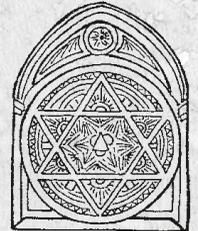
Notice the "built-in" shingle style porches on the first and second stories of 318 Grove (12b) and the rounded Queen Anne window with small colored panes at 302 Grove (12c on the Cooper Avenue side).

13. 233 Burns Avenue

This simple country home, built in 1865, has two fine coffin windows flanking the front door. Note the unusual tin roofing and decorated center gable.

14. Corner of Burns and Waverly Avenues, Wyoming Baptist Church

This outstanding 19th century church was designed by the noted Cincinnati architect A. C. Nash. In 1882, John Tangeman, a Reily Road resident and Lockland paper mill owner, donated half the cost of its construction. Dominating the exterior are the graceful slate-covered tower and "Rose Window" with a Star of David pattern. Inside, the pews are of walnut and the wainscoting of red gum.



The building is an important part of Wyoming's heritage and all changes have been sensitively handled so as to maintain its architectural integrity. The congregation is the only one which still worships in its original edifice. Additions have been added to the rear. A beautiful beech grove known as the Baptist Woods once surrounded the church.

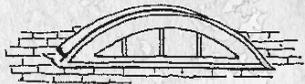
15a-b. 159 Burns Avenue

Despite the conversion of this home to Colonial Revival style in the 1920's, it still shows certain signs of its earlier style – tall windows and strong vertical lines.

A number of other vintage houses are found on this side of the street (formerly the eastern edge of the Burns farm), some “modernized” and some looking much as they did in the 1870's when moving to Wyoming meant living in the country. 107 Burns (15b) is a simple but elegant Vernacular home which has changed very little.

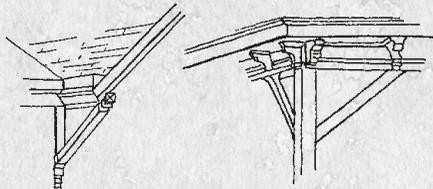
16. 30 Burns Avenue (c. 1895)

This is a shingle style dwelling with a turret, an arched porch roof and, high up on the roof to the left, an “eyebrow” dormer. Next door to the left is an old Eastlake carriage house (c. 1880), left standing when “Sunnyside”, an earlier home, burned down.



17. 27 East Mills Avenue (c. 1875)

The house with the wooden “Stick Style” braces connected between the porch and roof is one of the village's few brick Victorians.



Next, turn back to Elm Avenue and enter the area which was Wyoming's first attempt at zoning, a carefully planned, tightly restricted development which started in 1870. The promoters of this area named several of the winding lanes after native trees.

18a-b. 50 Elm Avenue, the Albert Ault Home

Horse-drawn carriages used to clatter up this driveway, unload passengers under the Porte-cochere, then proceed to the carriage house to be unhitched and put away. The house, built about 1900 by Mr. Ault who was an important Cincinnati industrialist, encases an earlier home constructed by Mr. George George in the 1870's. George built eight of the homes on Elm Avenue, several were for members of his family. For his own house at 115 Elm (18b), he used material made in his brick yard in Cincinnati.

19. 204 Elm Avenue

Here is an example of the 20th Century Bungalow style, which emphasized harmony with nature. Its compact, low sweeping lines contrast with the older homes on either side.

20. 50 Walnut (Corner of Elm & Walnut)

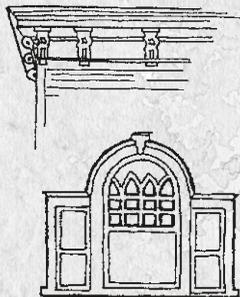
Built by Grant Burroughs, a Cincinnati carriage manufacturer, this home reflects the romantic feeling and exuberance that 19th century owners put into their dwelling places. You are looking at the side of the home. Originally a lane, leading in from the Pike, apparently swung around to the current backyard. Note the complex roof lines on the tower, the profusion of decorative accents, and that the bay-type windows still have some of the original leaded glass in the upper sections. This is often referred to as the “Gangster House” as it is rumored that John Dillinger lived here at some point in time. Continuing along Walnut, notice the different shapes of wooden shingles, the remaining slate roof, the use of dormers, bay windows, and the variations in chimneys and doorways.

21a-b. Beech Avenue

Try to spot traces of old narrow sidewalks leading up driveways or along foundation shrubbery. At 314 Beech (21a corner of Beech & Walnut), you can see that this home, which was originally Victorian, was later stuccoed and “Tudorized”. At 324 Beech (21b), notice the square tower topped with a finial, and the decorative spindle valance hanging along the porch. The valance was discovered after being hidden for many years while plainer architecture was in vogue.

22. 105 Stearns Avenue, corner of Beech, the Josiah Dwight House (c. 1870-1900)

This was the home of the former station agent in charge of the Lockland-Wyoming railroad depot. It is another house which encloses an earlier home. Today its Colonial Revival features include an upper story Palladian window over a large first story window with pediment, a rounded porch with columns, and a matching rounded bay window. Note the dentils under the roof lines of the rounded bay and porch and the brackets under the 2nd story roof.



23. 127 Stearns Avenue, the Alfred Stearns House

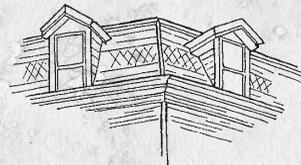
Notice the hitching post with the house number in front of the house. The house was built around an earlier structure and its façade has been greatly altered, but some of its original foundation stones can be seen, as well as the carriage house in back to the left.

24. 313 Burns Avenue (Corner of Stearns & Burns Avenues), the Gideon Palmer House

Set back on a prominent knoll, this impressive 1860's Italianate house is distinguished by its projecting roof gables, iron balconettes, and dominant stone hoodmolds over most of the windows. The classically styled porch and center door were added after the turn of the century. This house remained in the same family for four generations.

25a-c. 304, 312, and 320 Burns Avenue

The two “sister” houses at 304 (25a) and 312 (25b) Burns Avenue are in the Eastlake style. The “imported” front porch at 312 was found in another county on a farm house that was being demolished; its motifs are different from others in this district. It was skillfully attached to replace the original porch which has been removed by previous owners. The house at 320 (25c) Burns Avenue has a distinctive feature in its mansard roof. Typical of the second Empire style, this boxed type of roof is rare in Wyoming's historic district.



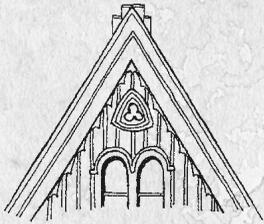
26. 310 Wyoming Avenue, the George House House

Look toward the railroad tracks and across the street (northeast) at this elegant frame home. The enormous oaks that originally graced this front yard have been replaced with newer ones as the older oaks died. It was built in 1868 by Col. House, a Civil War veteran who co-owned Palmer Bros. & House Flour Mill on the nearby Miami & Erie Canal. It once had a square tower above its front entrance, in the Italian Villa fashion of the day.

27. Corner of Burns and Wyoming Avenues, the Presbyterian Church of Wyoming

This church, dedicated in 1890, is the work of Samuel Hannaford, a Cincinnati architect who gained national recognition for designing Music Hall, City Hall, the Chapel at Spring Grove Cemetery, and other Cincinnati landmarks. It is constructed of sandstone in the Romanesque Revival style, sometimes called Richardsonian Romanesque after the famous Boston architect who popularized it. Its arched windows and entrances are characteristic of the style. The first church (1870) on the site was similar in style to the manse next door.

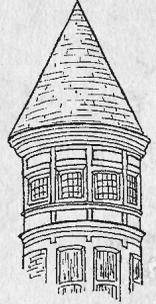
28. 217 Wyoming Avenue, the Presbyterian Manse



This architectural gem is an example of Wooden Gothic, an American adaptation of the Gothic Revival styles which used design elements from castles and cathedrals. This style was popular for country living in 1870, when the co-founder of the Stearns and Foster Company, George S. Stearns, built this six room house for his daughter. Vertical lines are emphasized by the board and batten siding. The scallops at the top of the siding gave the illusion of 'gingerbread' at the roof line. Small windows with a trefoil pattern are found in the third story gables. A separate kitchen and a wash house in back were eventually connected to the house. The Presbyterian congregation used it as a parsonage for many years. Recently, due to a change from residence to business, changes and additions have been made. They do, however, mirror as much as possible the original architecture.

29. 212 Wyoming Avenue, the Addison A. Taylor House

Across the street stands a fine example of "high style" Queen Anne architecture. The house was a wedding present from "Double A" Taylor to the new Mrs. Taylor, Lida Cowing. Taylor was Mayor #11, 1902-08. The contrast of building materials and ornamentation creates a striking visual effect: the first floor is clapboard, the second shingle, and the third stucco with timbered braces! An earlier wooden porch was replaced after the turn of the century by one with a stone foundation, thus adding a fourth texture to the surface. A storybook tower was curved glass windows is a focal point both inside and out. The carriage house to the rear still has a sliding wall which partitioned off the horse stall.

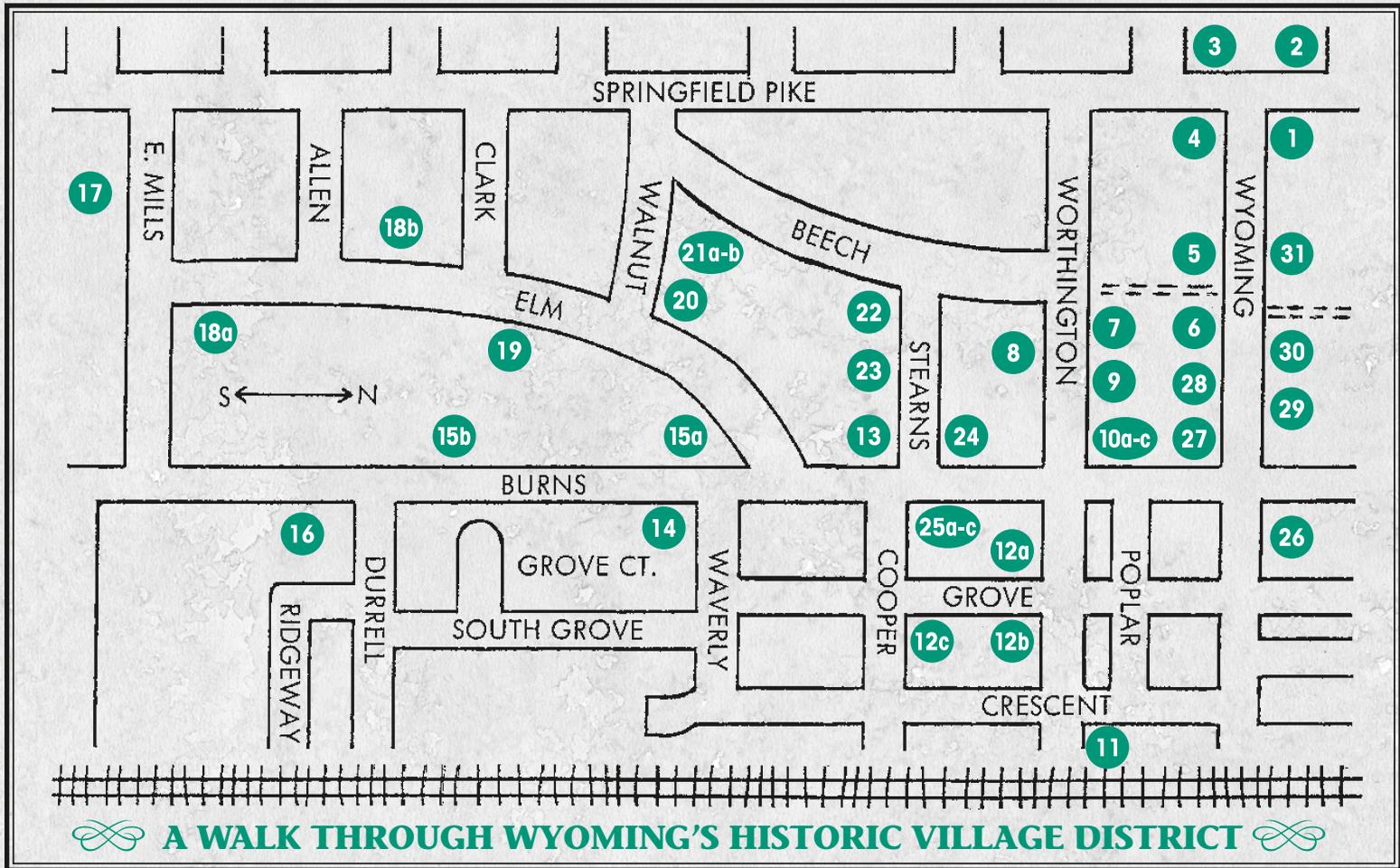


30. 132 Wyoming Avenue, the John Wilmuth Hill House

This stately home with unusual shiplap siding was built by Mr. Hill in the 1870's on property that had been part of the farm of his grandfather Wilmuth. Hill was instrumental in building Wyoming's and Cincinnati's Waterworks. When porches came into vogue, a Colonial Revival porch was wrapped around one corner; its columns are topped with Ionic capitals. A two-story carriage house commands attention at the end of the driveway.

31. 104 Wyoming Avenue

This house is an elegant example of the American Four Square style, built in Wyoming just after the turn of the 20th century. Note the characteristic hipped roof and symmetrical "boxy" look.



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