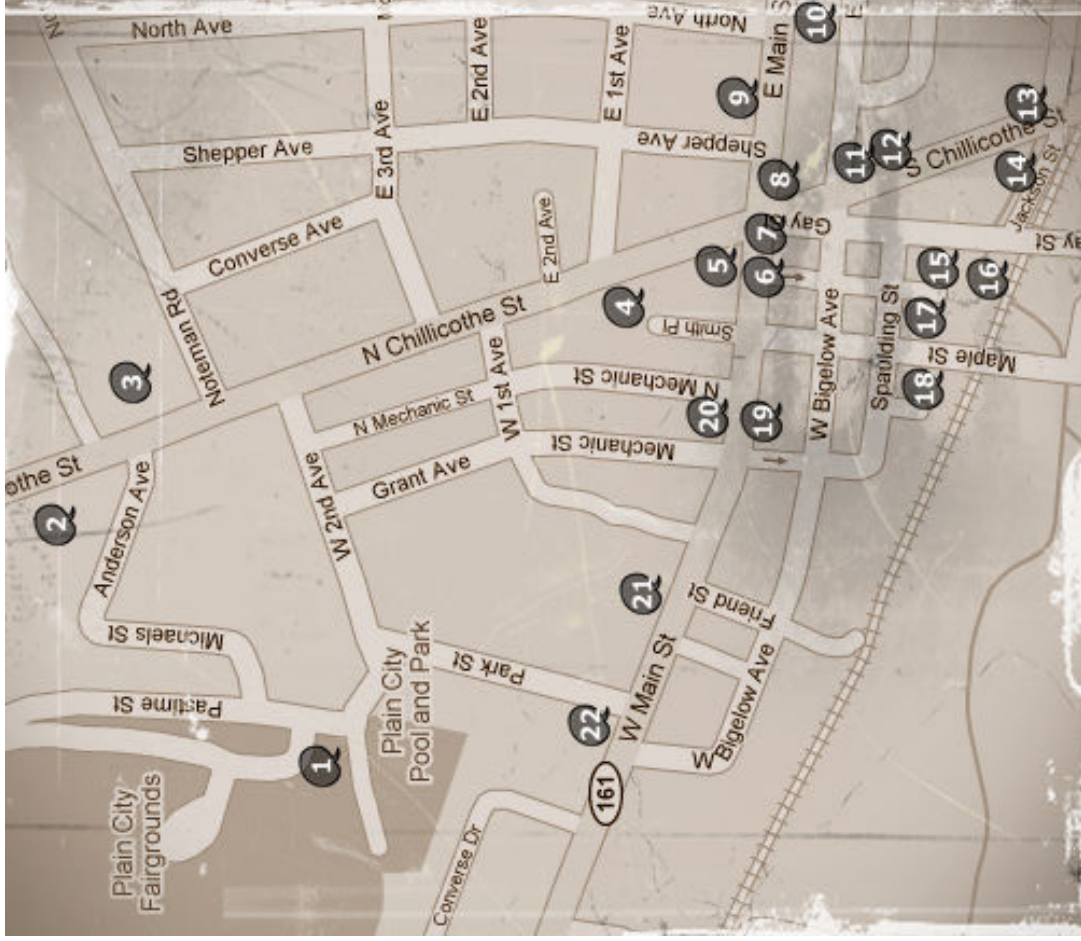


Welcome to Plain City



A Stroll through Historic Plain City

Welcome to beautiful Plain City, a community where history is around every corner. This self-guided, self-paced stroll is sure to find you stepping back in time as the hustle and bustle of modern life fades away. While on your tour you will see our community's scenic tree-lined neighborhoods, quaint Uptown, and plenty of friendly faces. We are proud to share our hometown with you!

When you are finished, we cordially invite you to dine at our lovely restaurants and visit our shops and attractions. Be sure to also visit the Plain City Historical Society to learn more about Plain City's rich history, view historic artifacts and photographs, and talk to residents who have a passion for our community and its history.

This brochure was created by the Union County Leadership Institute with special oversight from the Plain City Historical Society.

We hope that you enjoy your visit to Plain City, and remember—you always have a friend here!

1. Pastime Park

Pastime Park now serves as Plain City's park and recreational area. Records indicate that a fair was first held at this site in 1868. A few years later, in 1869, The Pleasant Valley Farmers' Club was created and officially held the first Plain City Fair in 1871. Fairs were regularly held at this site until 1985. Today, the park serves as Plain City's municipal park and is home to the renowned Miami Valley Steam Threshers Show.

2. Elephant Barn

This barn was first used by Thomas Jones and was part of a 300 acre farm known as the Pleasant Valley Stock Farm. This unassuming barn was later used by Johnny Minshall and Wick Leonard as a winter home for elephants and other exotic circus animals.

3. Pleasant Valley Stock Farm

Once comprising over 300 acres, the Pleasant Valley Stock Farm is known as the earliest and most successful breeders of Percheron horses in the United States during the mid-1800s.

4. Plain City Methodist Church

The Plain City Methodist Church was constructed in 1901. Prior to the construction of the current building, the site has been the location of a Methodist Church since 1850.

5. The Bank of Plain City

This building once housed Plain City's first bank, the Bank of Plain City (later known as the First State Bank). The bank's massive vault is still visible today. The Bank of Plain City was one of many banks that collapsed during the Great Depression.

6. Plain City Historical Society

The Plain City Historical Society was established in 1982 with a membership of six. Currently the membership is 271 and their mission is "Saving The Past For The Future." One objective of the society is to establish and maintain a museum and historical research library.

7. The Farmers Bank of Plain City

Built in 1902, this building was once home to the Farmers Bank of Plain City. It now houses Citizens National Bank. It is important to note the impressive (bullet proof) windows that adorn the first floor of the building.

8. The Town Clock

On November 15, 1902, over 3,000 residents gathered for the dedication of the Town Clock. Sammy Taylor purchased the clock for the town and the building was constructed to house the clock and the Barto-Keiser Hardware Store. The dedication ceremony included a parade, guest speaker, and an ox roast.

9. The Ferguson Funeral Home

The Ferguson Funeral Home was established in 1925 by Jay D. Ferguson. His father, Charles D. Ferguson was a pharmacist, furniture store owner, an embalmer and funeral director. Jay's son, Charles Jay Ferguson, also became an embalmer and funeral director and operated the same funeral home as his parents. Charles Jay enlarged the funeral home in 1968 when he purchased the adjacent property. Now a fourth generation owner, Jay Ferguson continues to operate the funeral home.

10. Plain City United Presbyterian Church

The Plain City United Presbyterian Church was dedicated on October 13, 1895. The structure remains relatively unchanged since it was built.

11. Underground Railroad House

During the 1850s, Plain City was an important stop on the Underground Railroad. It is believed that this house once served as a station and safe house for slaves that were escaping to Canada.

12. Original Town Commons

The parcel of land once served as Plain City's main public gathering space and outdoor entertainment venue. Today the site is home to Village Hall and other public offices.

13. Universalist Church

The Universalist Church was built in 1889 and has been utilized as a Farm Bureau, Grange Hall, Mennonite Church, and The Church of God. The church suffered heavy damage during the 1912 tornado, one of several that have struck the village.

14. The Old Brick House

This striking home was built by the Roby family and then sat vacant for many years. Some recall this as a haunted home until the Wurschmidt family purchased the home and restored it to its original condition. Today this is the house of Dr. Allen and his veterinary practice.

15. Plain City Opera House

The Plain City Opera House was constructed in 1890 by the Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias. The building could house up to 800 people. It was here where Elsie Janis began her career. The Opera House was visited by many popular troupes such as the Harry Shannon Players, the Treligan Players, and the Kickapoo Indians Medicine Company. The building still stands today.

16. Railroad Depot

On July 4, 1849, the first train passed through Plain City on the newly-established Columbus, Piqua and Indian Railroad. In 1865, the funeral train of President Abraham Lincoln passed through the village. The depot was located on this site until it was razed in 1980 after being abandoned by the Pennsylvania Railroad. The tracks were removed in 1984, but the railroad bridge can still be seen today.

17. Moulton Umbrella Factory

Walter Moulton from Geneva, Ohio established the Moulton Umbrella Factory. This building (built in 1902) and the company it housed was once considered to be one of the three largest employers of Plain City. Mr. Moulton was an inventor and holds the patent for the wireless umbrella. An avid fisherman, Moulton went on to perfect fishing equipment with the Tru-Temper fishing company.

18. The Hotel Smith

The Hotel Smith was owned and operated by James Smith and was known for its first class amenities. The original structure has since been transformed into an apartment building.

19. The Rialto Theatre

Construction on the Rialto Theatre building began in August of 1927 and the grand opening was celebrated on November 3rd. The Rialto Theatre was established by a businessman's society and Plain City. The Rialto was the first motion picture studio with sound. Adults could enjoy a movie for 25 cents while children were admitted for 10 cents. This was only proven to be a break even business and later became an antique store in the 1990's and is currently a youth hall.

20. Princess Theatre

The Princess Theatre was constructed in 1909 and was marketed as "an up-to-date playhouse for the theatre-going public." The theatre was once able to seat up to 400 people.

21. Plain City Elementary School

The Plain City Elementary School (as exists today) was constructed in 1936-1937 and officially opened in 1938. The building is a great example of Art Deco architecture that was prevalent in the 1930s. This building replaced another school building that was built upon this site in 1891.

22. The Horn House

The Horn House was constructed in 1908 by Adolph Horn, the father of Lee and Bert Horn. The Horn House is an exact replica of Adolph's original home in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Did You Know...

Plain City was the third and final name given to this village. When the village was originally platted in 1818 by founder Dr. Issac Bigelow, the name Westminster was given. A few years later, when Westminster was officially incorporated in 1823, it was given the name Pleasant Valley. Finally in 1877, town residents petitioned to have the village renamed to Plain City.

Memories of the Past: Discovering Historic Plain City

