

Montpelier MPD, Williams County

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Introduction

Montpelier, Ohio is a pleasant community of approximately 5,000 people located within a mile of the geographic center of Williams County, the county which forms the northwest corner of Ohio. Still the only community in Superior Township, Montpelier lies along the east bank of the St. Joseph River, which rises in the northern portion of Williams County and flows southwest out of the county, across a corner of Defiance County, and into Indiana. State Routes 107 and 576 meet near downtown Montpelier, while State Route 15 and U.S. Route 20A pass two miles east of the village. An interchange between State Route 15 and the Ohio Turnpike three miles northeast of the village ties Montpelier into the national Interstate Highway system. Montpelier is served by Norfolk Southern Corporation's Norfolk & Western Railway, though there is currently only limited local rail traffic.

Montpelier's physical setting is similar to that of numerous communities in northwestern Ohio. This portion of the state, to the west and southwest of Lake Erie, was the last area of Ohio to be settled. Known for decades as the "Black Swamp," the land here was under the waters of a much larger Lake Erie at the end of the last glacial retreat some 12,000 years ago. As the lake waters gradually lowered to current levels, the flat former bottom emerged as marshy land rich in agricultural nutrients but difficult to settle and farm. Other parts of the state more amenable to settlement were occupied first, however, between 1870 and 1920, thousands of miles of open ditches were built which lowered the water table to ground level. "*By 1920, 15,000 miles of open drains in northwest Ohio had improved nearly 5,000,000 acres of land.*" (Wilhelm, "*Draining the Black Swamp,*" Northwest Ohio Quarterly, Vol. 56, No.3) Today northwestern Ohio remains largely rural and agricultural, boasting some of the state's finest farmland.

Montpelier sits on the vast and generally level plain that emerged from the Black Swamp. The land is not table-flat; it has some relief and varies from flat to gently rolling. There are, however, no abrupt level changes or extremes of topography. In and near Montpelier, elevations range from 850 feet above sea level, just west of the St. Joseph River, to 911 feet at the intersection of routes 107, 15, and 20A two miles east of town.

The local topography had a strong influence on Montpelier's physical layout. The community's generally flat site facilitated use of a simple grid street pattern, while the character of the St. Joseph River determined where the earliest settlement would occur. The river had the long, meandering loops

typical of watercourses crossing level land, and it happened that at one of these loops there was sufficient fall from one end to the other that the site created a head of water that could be harnessed for power generation. For this reason, milling was established at the site of what would become Montpelier in the 1840s; the generally higher land east of the St. Joseph River dictated that the town's later development would occur almost entirely east of the river.

Montpelier's physical development in the century following the mid-1840s followed patterns typical of many small Midwestern communities. From its earliest days, the community's commercial core developed primarily along today's Main Street, State Route 107. This street ran east-west, and it and North Monroe Street, which ran north out of town, provided Montpelier's connections to the outside world in those early days. Early development tended naturally to occur along these transportation routes and marked what would become the core of the community's downtown area. The natural spread of development was to the south and east, away from the boundaries set by the river on the north and west. Both the construction of individual commercial and residential buildings and the platting of larger, primarily residential, developments spread out from the original transportation axes. The expansion of the town, which grew rapidly over a relatively short period of time in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, continued the simple grid pattern in the original town plat. With the exception of what was described as a "public park" surrounding the Town Hall on an 1894 atlas map, there is no evidence of planned landscaped parks or boulevards integrated into newly platted areas of the city. The one public space that was established early in the town's history was the fairgrounds at the eastern edge of town, which by 1894 had only a racetrack and stands but later developed a number of agricultural buildings and provided the location for public activities and celebrations. Industrial development tended at first to be confined to areas close to the river on the north and west sides of town, and later such development would occur close to and along the railroad that became so much a part of Montpelier's character.

Montpelier's Settlement and Early History, 1845-1874

Superior Township in Williams County, Ohio was established on June 22, 1839. At the time there were few white settlers in the area, there were no churches or schools, and the land was heavily forested. Native Americans had a camp near the present site of Montpelier.

Because much of the land in northwest Ohio was once under a larger post-glacial Lake Erie, it was flat and poorly drained. Before large-scale settlement could occur, the land had to be ditched and drained, and as a result this portion of Ohio was among the last areas to develop. One early Williams County history states that 60 to 70 drainage ditches were constructed in the county between 1872 and 1882;

and that in 1882 there were 20 tile companies in the county meeting the demand for drainage tile. Even today, long, deep drainage ditches are a common landscape feature in this part of the state.

The water power offered by the St. Joseph River drew entrepreneurial people to the future site of Montpelier. Exact dates are not certain, but by 1845 John Bryner and Jesse Tucker had built a grist mill on what would become North Monroe Street just south of the river. A mill race running from east to west powered the mill with water backed up behind a mill dam located east of where Monroe (or Mill Street, as it would be known at first) crossed the river.

The mill's location near the county's center and the suitability of the surrounding land for settlement must have been strong incentives for the mill founders to move beyond milling. In May of 1845, Tucker and Bryner had a town surveyed just south of their mill. Consisting of 41 lots and a public square, the new town was located entirely north of Main Street and extended eastward several blocks to around Cranberry Run, a small stream that flowed into the St. Joseph from the southeast.

Tradition holds that the new community was named for Montpelier, Vermont's capital, by a doctor who gave the surveyor a ride to the site of the proposed town.

Eighteen forty-six saw establishment of Montpelier's first post office, something any ambitious town could not do without, and about the same time the community's school moved from an old log building into a frame structure. Development of the community was slow, however, with the population estimated at around 200 by 1853, and only about 400 more than a quarter-century later in 1880.

In the early 1870s, the Chicago and Canada Southern Railroad made a survey of a proposed route that would have passed through Montpelier. In anticipation of the growth that would occur as a result of the railroad construction, the citizens of Montpelier petitioned the county to incorporate the village. The Williams County Commissioners approved the petition in May, 1874, although the first election did not take place until the following April.

Montpelier's Early Development, 1875-1907

The failure of the Chicago and Canada Southern Railway to construct a railroad line through Montpelier was only a temporary setback, since the village would see the construction of a railroad within a few years. Nevertheless, the village was optimistic about its future and moved forward and purchased an old school for use as a town hall. It was repaired and moved to the public square, which was bounded by Monroe (originally Mill Street), Water, Madison (originally Main Street -- an 1874 map shows two Main Streets, parallel and a block apart!), and Jonesville Street. The jail occupied the west side of the building, and the east side was used for public meetings. The original town plat included 41 lots, with

the southern boundary formed by the north side of the current Main Street (see attached map). A number of businesses were located south of town -- an oar works, a sawmill, a foundry, and a tannery, all close to the river.

An ashery was one of Montpelier's first businesses, a facility where potash and pearlash were made (these were employed, among other uses, in soap-making). This business relied on local citizens to deliver wood ashes, which were traded for goods.

Montpelier's fortunes began to change significantly when the Detroit, Butler & St. Louis Railroad (later known as the Wabash and more recently as the Norfolk Southern) passed through the village in 1881. The railroad provided Montpelier with an efficient means of transportation for the area's agricultural products and its manufactured goods and it spurred rapid growth in the population as the village counted over 1200 people (nearly tripling the 1880 census figures) in the 1890 census.

After incorporation and the introduction of the railroad, Montpelier began to develop as a commercial and industrial community surrounded by prime agricultural land. The home at 307 North Monroe Street was reportedly the first general merchandise store in town, dating from the 1840s and operated by Conroy Mallory. The first post office was also located in part of the home. Montpelier's first hotel was the Empire Hotel built by Leonard Merry c. 1848 and located at the southeast corner of Madison and Monroe Streets. It was moved twice with the second move to a location on West Main Street near the river. The building was used as a feed store by 1916 and became the Farm Bureau offices in 1941. Rundown and no longer used, it was burned in 1981 to make way for new municipal garages.

Originally, the St. Joseph River along the west side of Montpelier followed a different course than the one today. It had a small island, which was used as a park, and one had to cross three bridges to enter the town from the west. In the early 1900s, the river was diverted and the island was eliminated, but even today it is possible to pick out the river's old course. It served as a source of both water and power for early industries.

In the early years following incorporation, Montpelier was beginning to take the traditional form of a small town that served a rural hinterland. Commercial development took place primarily along Main Street in the form of individual structures or small groupings. These were interspersed with residential buildings and vacant lots, giving the streetscape a varied and even spotty look; this might be expected of a still-young community. The infilling of the commercial core and the separation of land uses into fairly distinct residential and commercial areas would come later. As noted, industrial enterprises were both north and south of the developing downtown, generally close to the river.

A study of the dates of various real estate plats gives some sense of the pace and patterns of development in Montpelier. The original town plat stood alone with no additions for six years, until 1851, when Merry and Bryant's First Addition was platted. This was located south of Main Street and continued the street pattern and names already in existence on the north side of Main, extending southward about two-and-a-half blocks; it was known simply as "First Addition."

No other additions were recorded until 1872, when Bechtol's Addition was platted south of the First Addition. Perhaps in anticipation of a railroad-induced boom when the Canada Southern was planned, by 1874 several other plats -- Snyder's First and Second Additions -- had been added; they extended the community still further south, to the north edge of what is today's Court Street. In addition, the separate community of South Montpelier had been platted, located east of Bryant Street and north of the railroad, but it was soon absorbed into the growing Montpelier.

From the early 1880s on, when railroad transportation for Montpelier became a real thing, new additions were platted on a fairly regular basis, particularly in the 1880s and 1890s and in the early 20th century. There were about 80 additions to the 41 lots laid out in the original plat, extending into the early 1970s.

Business and Industrial Development

As was noted, Montpelier's first grist mill was established about the time the village was platted. Originally powered by water from the river, it was converted to steam power in 1881. In 1884 the Montpelier City Mills were built south of the first mill, which was torn down in the 1890s. The City Mills operated until the 1920s but were torn down for the Storrer Court housing development that stands on the site today.

This pattern of establishment, growth and expansion, and eventual disappearance of local industrial enterprises was repeated in some other businesses, but by no means all; some older enterprises -- or at least the buildings they once occupied -- remain in Montpelier today.

The ready availability of wood and the convenient location of the St. Joseph River attracted several kinds of small businesses. Among these was an oar factory that utilized the abundant supply of ash trees in the area; this firm used the river as a means of transporting logs to the factory for processing. The firm also made ash broom handles, and the market for its goods extended all the way to Europe and Asia. This factory closed in 1895.

Prior to 1900, Montpelier also had several factories making staves and heads used in barrel-making. These included the J.H. Moore Stave and Head Factory, established in 1880, and the Montpelier Stave & Heading Co., which was founded in 1889 but operated only until 1890.

Jacob Good established a sawmill in 1870; Jacob Snyder established another in 1873. The Boone Lumber Company was established in 1886 and its building was later purchased by the Jacob Good mill. The Boone Lumber Co. continued in business, suffering a fire in 1914 and another a few years later. The sawmilling portion of the business was discontinued, but the retail business lasted until the 1970s in the 600 block of Mill Street and could claim ownership by the same family for nearly 100 years. One building associated with this firm still survives.

In 1876 the Gratz grist mill was built at 206 West Main Street. After six weeks of operation, an explosion destroyed the building. A new mill was built on the site in 1878 and discontinued operations in 1890.

In 1865 Lewis Wingert established a foundry at the present site of Bungalow Court to manufacture iron columns for buildings in Montpelier and the surrounding towns (some of these columns -- marked with the foundry's name -- are on display at the historical society facility at the fairgrounds, and others can be seen in the storefronts of some downtown buildings). This foundry later manufactured and sold furnaces under the trade name "Home Comfort." Wingert's house at 301 South Jonesville Street was built in 1880, and a former foundry building survives on Monroe Street, now used as a residence.

As the town began to grow an increasingly dense cluster of frame and brick structures along Main Street firmly established it as the heart of the downtown area. In the 1870s two general stores were established -- Oscar Lowry's at 401 West Main Street, and Jacob Leu's across the street at 325 West Main. Leu's store burned in the 1890s.

In 1880 one of the first brick business blocks, the Baldwin Block at 215-217 West Main Street, was built by Joseph and Ambrose Baldwin, and incorporates locally-made cast iron columns in the storefront. In that same year more than 50 houses were built in Montpelier. In spite of this remarkable growth of the housing stock, an 1881 newspaper article stated that at least 100 more new houses were needed for families coming to work in the oar and handle factory. It was forces such as this -- creation of new enterprises and construction of homes for their workers -- that contributed to a tripling of the community's population between 1880 and 1890, from about 400 to nearly 1,300 residents.

According to Goodspeed's 1882 *History of Williams County, Ohio*, the value of grain, wool and livestock markets, and of goods received and manufactured goods shipped, made Montpelier one of

the most important towns on the Wabash Railway line, which opened in 1881 and connected Detroit and St. Louis.

Among the important brick blocks constructed during the 1880s were the Baldwin Blocks at 215-217 West Main and the Haggerty Block at 417 West Main Street. In 1881, Dr. Haggerty added another brick block to the east which became the Haggerty Opera House. The same year, the impressive brick block located at 220-224 West Main (southeast corner of Main and Empire) was built by Moores, Loudon, Foltz & Burlew. It housed drug stores, dry goods and numerous other businesses over the years. The Letcher Block started the same year and was attached to the west of the Baldwin Blocks. It was left uncompleted and was an eyesore for several years until it was sold in 1883 and completed as the Gamber Block. In 1887, the bank block was built at 302 West Main Street at the southwest corner of Main And Empire, thereby establishing Main and Empire as the center of town. Between 1891 and 1897, nine brick buildings were constructed along West Main Street.

By the turn of the 20th century, most of the frame commercial buildings had been replaced by more substantial brick structures, and the business directory of the community had expanded in concert with its physical development. Among the late 19th century businesses on Empire Street were Fink Brothers Carriages (123 Empire); Brannon & Son Agricultural Implements; Franks Feed and Lumber Company; Lantz Dressmaker; Cannon & Bundy Photographers; Wingert blacksmith; Jackson Tonsorial (barber shop) and Bath; Shaffer Harness Shop; Donovan Millinery; Drs. Williams, Weitz & Hogue offices; Hall's Bakery and Lunch Room; Zeiter's Livery; and the Lattanner Hotel (221 Empire). Near the depot (in the 600 block) were a number of restaurants, the Wabash Saloon and three meat markets.

The Loudon Opera House was located at the northwest corner of Main And Platt Streets with Cranberry Run flowing beneath it. Built in 1884, it was a source of great pride in Montpelier until it was destroyed by fire in 1894. Madison Street (original Main Street) also had hardware, cooper, blacksmith and wagon shops.

Several hotels were located near the depot. The closest was the Montpelier House at 415 Empire. The Daniels Hotel, built in 1907, was located on west side of Empire Street north of the depot and is still standing. The Gause Hotel, later known as the Smith Hotel, was built in 1900 on the east side of Empire Street north of the depot. It was destroyed by fire in the 1960s.

In the 1880s a stock company was formed to create the Montpelier Creamery, which was located in a frame building at the northwest corner of Monroe and Water streets. In 1903 a large frame structure was built and later moved near the river. It was replaced in 1915 by the current brick building.

Montpelier's first bank was Citizens Bank, located at 108 Empire, which was organized in 1882. By 1884, it was known as the Montpelier Banking Company, and it moved into a building at 215 West Main for a few years until 1887 when the new brick building at 302 West Main Street was completed. Today, known as the National Bank of Montpelier, it has continuously occupied the same building since 1887. The Farmers and Merchants Bank was established in 1889, but it merged with the Montpelier Banking Company in 1890s, and the name Montpelier National Bank was adopted in 1900. In that same year, the First National Bank was organized and was located at the southeast corner of Main and Empire streets.

Railroad Development

Montpelier's railroad lines were the primary driving force behind its growth from a modest hamlet to a bustling business and manufacturing center in the late 19th century. A period of only about 20 years -- 1880 to the turn of the 20th century -- saw Montpelier grow from about 400 to nearly 1,900 residents. The community's incorporation as a village occurred because it was anticipated that the town would be on the line of a projected railroad. Its eventual location along the Wabash Railroad and that line's later expansion served to stimulate further industrial and population growth. All measures of economic activity, from house construction, to real estate plats, to business creation and expansion, to population growth, were closely tied to transportation development.

In 1881 the Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railroad, which would later become the Wabash Railway, opened for service through Montpelier. The original Wabash line connected Detroit and St. Louis, but the company expanded rapidly. By 1883, with completion of the Wabash's Montpelier-Chicago route, Montpelier had become a junction point and was the focus of the eastern half of the Wabash's operations.

In 1893 the railroad built a locomotive roundhouse on a 25-acre site south of downtown Montpelier, near where the two rail lines joined, and in 1895 the company built a new passenger depot. Some sense of the importance the Wabash attached to Montpelier was indicated by the fact that the company hired Theodore C. Link, architect of the great and just-completed St. Louis Union Station, to design the new depot. Montpelier's depot was, unfortunately, demolished in 1982 by the Railroad although there were efforts by the local historical society to save it.

As the century turned, Montpelier's importance to the railroad grew. In 1901 a new line to Toledo was completed, and the community now was at the crossing of two major through rail lines. The resultant rail traffic increases by 1906 made it necessary to build a steel viaduct over the tracks along the line of Platt Street. That structure in turn was replaced by the present one in 1962.

Schools and Churches

In 1874 a new two-story school was built at 320 South Monroe Street, and in 1881 another was built next door, later becoming Montpelier High School. By 1887 Montpelier's rapid population growth required a larger school building, so the community built the Union School, which was considered to be "out in the country" at the time; this building received an addition in 1902. After the new high school was built in 1915, Union School was used as the elementary school. It was demolished 1939 and replaced by the Platt Street Primary School, now known as Robert A. Storrer Elementary.

Among Montpelier's religious congregations, the Methodist Episcopal Church was an early one, having been organized in 1839. The congregation built its first church in 1870; the present St. Paul's Church was built in 1892. The parsonage to the south dates from 1893-94; and there were additions and alterations to the church in the 1950s.

The Lutherans had come to the area as early as the 1850s. St. John's Lutheran Church was organized in 1867; in 1879 the congregation purchased a lot and built a frame church. Prior to 1900, services at this church were in German. The original frame church is now the east wing of St. Paul's Methodist Church which faces Wayne Street.

In 1869 the United Brethren built a church in the 300 block of South Jonesville Street on the west side of the street. In the 1890s the congregation split and each branch built a new building; the one at the northwest corner of Broad and Lawrence streets is the Central United Brethren Church, and the 1893 United Brethren Church is at the northeast corner of Jefferson and Empire streets. It later became the Church of the Nazarene -- now the House of Prayer.

In 1886 the First Presbyterian Church was organized in Louden's Hall. This congregation's 1887 church was built on Washington Street \$1,800; in 1936 an addition known as the "Fireside Room" was added. The congregation built a new church in 1960.

Public Improvements

Various additions to Montpelier's community infrastructure were put in place during the last two decades of the 19th century. In 1881 mail messenger service was established between the post office and the railroad depot. The fire department was established in 1881, and in 1895 village voters

approved installation of electric lights and construction of a waterworks; in December of that year, 30 arc lamps were turned on for the first time, bringing the electric age to Montpelier. The current town hall was built in 1892 and in 1902 rural mail delivery began.

The Montpelier Hospital, the town's first, was located at 415 Empire Street in 1904.

Communications

In 1880 the Montpelier *Enterprise* was first published, and in 1889 the Montpelier *Leader* began publication. In 1881 the Short Line Telegraph Company installed its lines in Montpelier, and in 1897 the village council granted the United Telephone Company the right to erect and maintain poles and lines in the village.

Social Developments

As Montpelier's population grew, so did its social networks and organizations. Societies and lodges representative of a settled and permanent community rapidly increased in number in the late 19th century, lending a social and cultural depth and richness to what still was only a young community.

In 1883 Montpelier became the first community in Ohio to adopt prohibition, while in 1884 the Ladies Historical Society was formed to pursue general and literary studies -- though with a 25- member limit. In 1885, the Society formed a small library at Miller's Bakery.

1888 saw the founding of the Women's Relief Corps, established to aid military veterans. The WRC, was an auxiliary of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the organization formed to assist the nation's rapidly aging population of Civil War veterans. The GAR building, built in 1894 at 303 West Main Street, had a Memorial Hall on the upper floor and business space below.

Population Figures

Montpelier's population growth figures can be correlated with major events such as the opening of the first railroad line; the influx of businesses and industry following the railroad's completion; and expansion of the railroad and its facilities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The 1870 census did not, of course, list Montpelier since it had not yet been incorporated. By 1880 the young village had 405 residents. The effect of the railroad in the following decade could be seen in the 1890 census figure of 1,293, which by 1900 had further grown to 1,869.

By the turn of the 20th century, then, Montpelier had progressed from a raw settlement around a water-powered mill to a well-established community with a sound economic base and vital transportation links to other parts of the county, region, and state. In addition to serving its resident population, Montpelier served as the market town and primary trading center for a busy and prosperous rural population within a radius of seven to ten miles. The community had built a new Town Hall on the original Public Square in 1892, giving it a sense of pride and identity.

The town's physical character and architecture reflected its steady economic progress and population growth. The downtown area, focused on Main Street between Monroe and Broad and extending a block south along Empire, had become a densely-developed commercial district.

The spotty mix of commercial and residential buildings, often separated by not-yet-developed lots, had given way to the traditional continuous streetscape of side-by-side commercial buildings, all of which shared a common setback and similar height and scale but which were otherwise distinctive and varied. Employing materials such as brick, stone, terra cotta, wood, sheet metal, and cast iron, Montpelier's downtown buildings covered the range of late 19th century styles, from Italianate Commercial to High Victorian styles and the beginnings of revival styles such as Renaissance Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, and touches of Colonial Revival. Most dated from the 1880s and 1890s, but many were from each decade from 1900 to 1930. Taken together, these buildings represented a half-century of investment in the heart of Montpelier.

In the nearby residential areas, which were primarily south of Main Street but which extended a little north as well, the community's residential architecture also reflected the passage of time and the progress of the town's fortunes. Prosperous businessmen built large, impressive houses in the latest styles such as Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, clustered primarily on South Jonesville and Empire streets. Between and among these "landmark" homes were many other more modest residential structures, some in earlier styles such as Italianate, but many of them simple and sturdy vernacular structures with no pretensions to style.

Beyond the residential areas, primarily along the railroad, were the various industrial enterprises that underpinned the community's prosperity. From foundry work to motor truck manufacture to railroading and its associated crafts, these enterprises assured a well-paid, steadily-employed population.

Among those credited with designing and/or building Montpelier structures during this period were: architects W. C. Malcomson (Montpelier Banking Company, 214 West Main Street, 1887) and W. D. Davis (Wingard Building, 314-326 West Main Street, 1903); and builders W.S. Boon (303-305 West Main Street, 1895), Joseph and Ambrose Baldwin (Baldwin Block, 215-217 West Main Street, 1880), and Samuel Martin (Town Hall, 1892; 327 Empire Street, c. 1880; and 321 Empire Street, c. 1900).

The Wabash Railway Years, 1908-1950

A major stimulus for population growth and expansion of the business environment was due to additional investment by the Wabash Railroad during the first two decades of the 20th century. In 1908 the Wabash repair shops were moved to Montpelier from Ashley, Indiana. More importantly, the Wabash's division offices were moved to Montpelier in 1917. J.D. Hill, local attorney for the Wabash Railway Company, is credited with bringing both the shops and the division headquarters to Montpelier.

The division offices were originally located above the Farmers' and Merchants' Bank, but in 1936 these offices moved into new space adjacent to the passenger depot in the south end of town; one of the railroad structures associated with this period remains standing. The influx of railroad employees caused by the move of the division offices to Montpelier had a significant effect upon the village's physical appearance -- it stimulated extensive construction of new housing -- and upon its level of economic activity.

The first two decades on the 20th century, when the railroad facilities underwent major expansion, saw a doubling of the population from 1,869 in 1900 to 3,708 in 1920.

Business and Industrial Development

In 1909, a year following the relocation of the Wabash repair shops to Montpelier, the Farmers & Merchants State Savings Bank was organized and chartered in 1910. The bank began operating in the Samuel Martin Building on the south side of Main Street. In 1917 the bank moved to a new building at 225 W. Main Street. In 1916 the First National Bank and the Montpelier National Bank consolidated, keeping the name of the latter.

In 1917-18, the same year the Wabash division offices moved to town, Len Lantz and Roy Rundell built Bungalow Court off the west side of Monroe Street at Jefferson. They also converted a nearby foundry building into apartments, a building that serves the same role today. Electrification of industry and location of rail facilities toward the south end of town facilitated a move away from the traditional

industrial area along the St. Joseph River and conversion of former industrial land to other uses, primarily residential.

The Winzeler Stamping Company began in Bryan in 1919 and moved to Montpelier in 1923. The company produced metal stampings to replace bentwood dowels in wicker furniture. In the 1970s the company made a variety of stamped metal products, and it remains in business today as a major local employer, located on the south side of town.

In the early 1920s Al Krider added a concrete block addition to the west side of his engine shop at the southwest corner of Main and Monroe streets for the City Dairy, a structure that has since been demolished.

The Kaufman Theater was constructed in 1929 at 205 West Main Street. The Paramount Theater dated from 1936 and was at 218 West Main Street. Other early theaters included the Colonial, the Empire and the Pastime; the latter was located at 312 West Main Street.

In the 1920s the City Mills ceased operation and were torn down for a housing development known as Storrer Court (the Storrer brothers were the last owners of the mill). This development further represented the trend toward residential development of former industrial land.

In 1929 Lloyd and Boyd Clark established the Montpelier Canning Factory on East Wabash Avenue. This facility canned hand-packed tomatoes and operated only between August and October. During that time it employed 150 people, and many women only worked during those months and looked forward to the extra income each year. In the off-season, Lloyd was a stationary boiler man for the Wabash Railway, and Boyd served as a Montpelier village commissioner. The canning plant closed in 1947 and was demolished in 1970; where it stood is now the site of a public housing project.

Some industries established during this period are still in operation today including: Hause (machine shop), from 1942 and located at 809 South Pleasant; Robinair (air conditioning components), established in 1959 at 1224 Robinair Way; Hellers (wood library furniture) at 201 W. Wabash Avenue, dating from 1906; Powers (machine shop), which began in 1933 at 410 West Main Street and moved to a new building in an industrial park in 1989; and Richmond Machines (auto steering gear arms), founded in 1940 and built a new factory in 1967 east of town at the corner of Main Street and Airport Road.

Schools and Churches

In this time period there was some further development of church and school facilities in Montpelier. In 1908 the First Church of Christ built a chapel on land just south of the present church. In 1938, the house on the corner was moved to the chapel location to become the parsonage as it remains today. The chapel was moved to the corner location where the house had been. A new church, incorporating the chapel, was then constructed.

In 1915 the community selected the 300 block of East Main Street as the location for a new high school. After completion of the new school, the Union School was used as the elementary school. In 1939 the old Union School was demolished and an addition was built on the high school. The addition, a WPA project, was designed by Toledo architect Carl Britch and included the gymnasium.

Public Improvements

Street paving began during the second decade of the 20th century. In 1911 Main and Empire streets were paved with brick. By 1916-17, Montpelier became the first community in Williams County to use asphalt paving. The first streets paved were Jonesville, Washington, Broad, North Monroe, Court and East Avenue. The gradual spread of paved streets and roads in this period led directly to a rapid increase in auto ownership and an equally rapid decline in public -- primarily rail -- transportation. Today, none of the brick street paving is visible.

The Wertz/Hogue Hospital was located at 211 West Washington Street and Dr. Wertz's started his hospital at 314 N. Pleasant Street, in 1909, later moving it to 315 Empire. The W.S. Boone residence at 335 Empire became the Hogue Hospital and has been a funeral home since 1932. Williams County General Hospital, located at 909 Snyder Avenue, opened in 1952. It is now combined with the Bryan Hospital and known as the Community Hospitals of Williams County.

During the 1920s the G.A.R. building housed a small library; in 1927 the first official Montpelier Public Library opened in a room in the high school. The library later moved to a downtown building, where it remained until a new library building was constructed in 1958 and completely renovated to the present structure in 1985.

In 1940 the village passed a \$36,000 bond issue to construct a public swimming pool. However, World War II soon interfered, and the pool was not built until 1957 on Platt Street.

Social/Fraternal Organizations

In 1908 the Montpelier Masonic Lodge was established. Its temple was built at the northeast corner of Empire & Washington streets in 1912.

The Comfort Club held its first meeting on March 13, 1913. It was dedicated to lending a helping hand when needed and promoting good will in the community. Members visited the sick, sewed and knitted for the Red Cross, and planted a garden at Riverside Cemetery.

Montpelier Grange was formed in 1916 and had its first exhibit at the Williams County Fair in 1918. The Grange Hall was in a moved and remodeled church building on Brown Road. Other early 20th century organizations included Profit and Pleasure Club in 1916, which made quilts and presented them to one of its members; and the Montpelier Community Garden Club in 1930. This organization helped to landscape the Williams County General Hospital, the Public Library and the Williams County Fairgrounds.

In 1930 the G.A.R. was disbanded, but the WRC continued in existence. In 1931 the Study Club was formed by young women to discuss various topics and to disseminate knowledge among its members. A similar organization, the Crescent Study Club formed in 1935 with 25 members to pursue cultural and educational interests; 1945 it joined the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs.

Conclusion

At the middle of the 20th century, Montpelier did not look significantly different from how it looked at the century's start. It was somewhat larger: population had hit just over 3,700 in 1920 and in the next half-century or so would rise about another 1,300; but clearly most of the community's population growth had already occurred. There was physical expansion, primarily the residential development of the area south of the railroad, and also to the east. However, Montpelier was much as it had been for many decades. Its heart still was the busy downtown core of densely-built commercial buildings, and this core still was the daily destination of people from within and from outside the community for a variety of business activities. The pleasant residential neighborhoods had seen some change -- the wide use of Bungalow style and Bungalow-inspired designs was one of the most obvious occurrences since the century's start -- but these and other newly-built homes blended in well and quickly became part of the residential streetscape.

In the nearly 50 additional years since mid-century, change has continued to come slowly. Montpelier remains a true destination for the daily activities of many people. It has avoided much of the edge-area development that has sapped the strength of so many communities, and as a result its downtown core remains unusually vital. There have been losses of historic structures such as the

railroad depot and some early commercial buildings, but the downtown core survives remarkably intact and still communicates a sense of the busy and prosperous years around the turn of the 20th century and just after.

The same is true in the residential neighborhoods. Most of large, impressive high-style homes have been purchased and rehabilitated in recent years, and the housing stock generally is well-maintained and consists primarily of early 20th century buildings, with occasional late 19th century structures interspersed.

Taken together, Montpelier's commercial and residential districts, together with historic places such as the Williams County Fairgrounds and the relatively unspoiled farmlands still at the edge of town, retain the character and physical presence of a self-reliant late 19th century Midwestern community. That character lives today, reflecting pride in the past and confidence in the future.

G. Geographical Data

The Multiple Property Documentation form for the Historic and Architectural Resources of Montpelier, Ohio 1875-1950 encompasses the entire incorporated area of the community. These boundaries include all of the historic and architectural resources associated with the contexts included in the nomination.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The Montpelier Multiple Property Documentation National Register nomination was initiated by the Montpelier Village Homes Association, in an effort to identify and protect the historic resources in the community. The organization originally planned to nominate a single historic district to the National Register. However, upon review by a historic preservation consultant, it was decided that while there are a number of significant buildings in the community they are widely spaced and do not lend themselves to a historic district designation. The exception to this is the downtown area which is a compact and cohesive collection of late 19th and early 20th century commercial structures.

The historic preservation consultants met with representatives of the Ohio Historic Preservation Office to determine the best course of action to identify and nominate multiple properties to the National Register of Historic Places. It was decided that the Multiple Property Documentation form was the most efficient and effective way to assist the community in nominating properties in the future.

Historic preservation consultants have worked with the Montpelier Village Homes Association for two years to gather local history and conduct a windshield survey of the community to identify possible property types. The consultants also reviewed previous survey work (Ohio Historic Inventory forms from the late 1970s to the early 1990s) and the 1984 Survey Report prepared by Sandra Davies, a staff member of the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. An outline of the Multiple Property Documentation Form, with property types identified, was reviewed by both the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and the Montpelier Village Homes Association before the nomination was written.

The evaluation criteria for each property type was developed based on the number of surviving resources in each property type and their condition and level of integrity. That is, if a surviving example of a property type was very rare, then the criteria allowed for more flexibility in evaluating the level of integrity. For resources with many surviving examples, the requirements for listing were more stringent.

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