

A Walking Tour of Spring Valley



Town Hall from the Mound

This tour focuses on the architectural and historic features of buildings in Spring Valley's Main Street Historic District and indicates other points of interest. A glossary of architectural terms is included.

Main Street, between Elm Street on the west and Bellbrook Pike on the east, was designated a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. The District represents a wide range of the commercial and residential building styles popular between 1845 and 1920, the period of the town's commercial prosperity.

This guide was first published in 2004 by the Spring Valley Historical Society, and updated in 2011.

Spring Valley was founded in 1844 by Edward Walton and his son Moses, Quakers from Virginia. The town's location at the crossroads of two early transportation routes, the Cincinnati-Xenia Pike and the Little Miami Railroad, allowed Spring Valley's founders to establish an agricultural marketing and processing center for the surrounding area. Prominent among these early families were the Barretts, farmers and landholders who arrived in Spring Valley from New York in the 1840s. George Barrett started a woolen mill in the town and a large flour mill northeast of the village. Moses Walton and Isaac M. Barrett, George Barrett's son, were partners in the production and national distribution of smoked meats and woolen and flax products.

By 1860, the village was thriving, with a hotel and livery, a tannery, coopers shop, two blacksmiths, a carriage and wagon maker, two grocers, a shoemaker, three dry goods merchants, two cabinetmakers, and two physicians.

Built on a slope rising from the banks of the Little Miami River, Spring Valley benefited from many natural springs. In the early 20th century, an interurban trolley line conducted passengers from Dayton and Bellbrook to Spring Valley to enjoy the area's natural beauty and to partake of bottled "Okee" brand water from the springs.

Although some of the village's early structures have been lost or altered, architectural intrusion has been minimal. The Little Miami Railroad stopped operations and has been converted to the Little Miami Scenic Bike Path. In 1954 State Route 42 was re-routed to bypass Main Street's steep hill, allowing Spring Valley to retain the quiet character of a nineteenth century community.

Begin your tour at 104 West Main, several houses southwest of the intersection of the Little Miami Scenic Bike Path and Main Street, and proceed northeastward, up the hill.



1. 104-106 West Main, Dwelling/Store, 1850

This 2-story frame dwelling features a hipped and gabled roof and an L-

shaped plan. The 1 story 3-bay shop addition on the west side was an early cobbler's shop. The gabled east end conforms to the I-house configuration. The center entrance has sidelights and the 2nd story windows are asymmetrical, with 6/6 and 4/4 windows.

2. 107-109 West Main, Moses Walton-built House, 1847

This frame, 5-bay I-house features 6/6 windows and the typical flush eaves and end chimneys, and historic (not original) entries in the 2nd and 4th bay. The I-house was a popular building style favored by the Walton family, and is a typical Spring Valley style.

Other I-houses in Spring Valley include:

- 113 West Main (the Torrence-Luce House, 1850)
- 108 West Main (1848)
- 102 West Main (Edward Walton-built, 1848)
- 13 West Main (Jason Neeld House, 1848)
- 2-4 West Main (Silas Riddell House, 1850)
- 14, 16, and 18 West Main (Samuel Walton-built, 1847)
- 3 East Main (1849, with a 1-story shop addition built in 1870)
- 203 East Main (Abraham Byrd House, 1851)



3. 100 West Main, The Old Hotel and Livery, 1848

This 2-1/2 story frame building adjacent to the bike path boasts

4 entrances, serving the former dining room, public rooms, sleeping rooms and owner's quarters on the second floor. The principal entrance features a Greek Revival columned door surround with a scroll molding, sidelights and transom, and a small wrought iron balcony. The hotel livery (rebuilt as a dwelling in 2007) still stands behind this building. The hotel served as a home base for drummers – regional traveling salesmen – who arrived by railroad and rented horses and buggies from the livery stable to make their rounds throughout the countryside.



Drummers beside Tracks outside Old Hotel

4. 19 West Main, Pork House, 1874

This brick agricultural processing plant/warehouse stands next to the former railroad, south of the intersection of Main Street and the Bike Trail. The attic story of this gabled 2-story building was damaged by fire and replaced with wood. The building features segmental arched windows and an ornamental brickwork frieze band.



5. Woolen Mill, 1844

To the north along the Bike Trail, set back on a lawn opposite the livery stable,

stands a long building constructed of river stone and mortar. Built in the 1940s, the barn incorporates the remainder of the Woolen Mill, where George Barrett produced blankets and yarn from locally raised wool in the 1850s.

6. 17 West Main, Moses Walton-built Dwelling/Store, 1847

This building is one of the earliest of Moses Walton's businesses, a general store. Rear and side additions have altered what was originally a frame, 5-bay I-house. Now an ice cream shop and antique mall, the building has housed several commercial establishments over the years, including a hardware store.



7. 20-22 East Main, Alexander Building, 1860

This brick, 3-story gabled building has an unusual V-shape

plan. The window openings are original, although the frameworks are altered. Fixed shop windows flank the double storefront entry. Faded remnants of a grocery store sign, advertising "highest cash for eggs," can be seen on the west side of the building. The second floor had living quarters, and the third floor was a large meeting room.

8. 15 West Main, Bank Building, 1910

A 1970 remodeling removed the neoclassical detailing and filled in the pediment that once graced this 1-story brick gable-fronted building. This building housed the Spring Valley National Bank, which served Bellbrook and Spring Valley residents.



9. 7-9 West Main, Spring Valley Town Hall, 1888

This 3-story brick building has housed a grocery store, government offices, and a social hall and lodge hall. The

second floor has a stage and balcony. Although the building has lost its pressed metal cornice, it retains its cast-iron Eastlake storefronts (manufactured by McHose & Lyon of Dayton, Oh.), iron gates, and ornamental masonry, and features the massive arches typical of Romanesque Revival style. Note the old public water pump on the east side of the building.



10. 5 West Main, Jr. Order of United American Mechanics Hall, 1865

This 2-story brick store and second floor meeting hall

(now a residence) has a historic 1-story frame jail addition in the rear (the windows are still barred). The Jr. Order of United American Mechanics was an anti-immigrant society formed in 1853. The letters "Jr OUAM" are still visible on the wooden sign.

11. 1 West Main, The Charles Hartman House, 1850

This Greek Revival influenced, 2-story brick dwelling was home to one of Spring Valley's two physicians. It features a 3-bay gable front, a rear addition with a shed roof, and return eaves. The hip-roofed 1-story porch across the façade is a 1930 addition; the door is not original.



12. 2-4 West Main, Silas Riddell House, Dwelling/Store, 1850

The commercial storefront portion of this frame, 4-bay I-house features

historic classical detailing.



13. 2-4 East Main, George Barrett Concrete House, 1844 and 1853

This is one of the first poured concrete homes in the Midwest, with a gable

front and a frame el. It features a Greet Revival-style 2-story portico with a second story porch across the façade, and has frame rear additions. George Barrett wrote a book explaining his design and methods of construction, "*The Poor Man's Home, and Rich Man's Palace, or, the Application of the Gravel Wall Cement to the Purpose of Building*". Spring Valley ACTS, a non-profit organization, is restoring this building.



14. 6 East Main, Arch Copsey House, 1911

This frame, 1-story dwelling has a gable front with a setback, a wrap-around

1-story porch, and paired and cottage windows. The porch, return eaves, and entry exhibit Greek Revival influence.



15. 100 East Main, Senator Isaac M. Barrett House, 1850

This brick, 2-story cross-gabled dwelling with a rear

addition was home to George Barrett's son Isaac, and features Greek Revival elements. The rear addition, wrap-around porch addition, and brick piers were added around 1910.

I.M. Barrett built a large flour mill northeast of Spring Valley, was a pork and grain dealer, and took over the woolen mill from his father George. He was Spring Valley's first mayor, and served in both the Ohio Lower House and Senate in the late 1880s. I.M. Barrett also maintained a summer home opposite his flour mill, currently 1879 St. Rt. 725.

16. Mound

Behind the Barrett and Copsey houses is a large



glacial mound. I.M. Barrett partially excavated the mound and installed tanks from which pipes fed fuel oil to heat and

light his home. For that reason, the two sets of paired brick chimneys of the I.M. Barrett house do not terminate in hearths. The presence of Native American artifacts in the glacial debris has led to the consecration of the Mound.

17. 101 East Main, 1890

This frame, 2-story dwelling features a hipped roof with a pedimented wall dormer centered above a second-story oriel. Note the recessed entrance and full-façade porch with spindle work. The 1-story east side office extension is original. A 2-story gabled barn stands behind the house, and a storage building/summer kitchen is adjacent to the rear of the house.

18. 102 East Main, 1904

This frame, 2-story L-shaped home features modest Queen Anne decorative details and a gabled entry porch.



house from Sears Roebuck. It features wall dormers, a hipped roof, and a full façade 1-story porch.



19. 104 East Main, 1912

The current owners believe that this frame, 2-1/2-story Four Square with Prairie influence was a mail order

20. 106 East Main, Fulkerson House, 1890

This eclectic 2-story dwelling features a hipped roof with gabled

projection, a wrap-around porch with fluted Doric posts, fish scale shingle detailing, and decorative glass.

21. 201 East Main, once the Protestant Methodist Church, 1859

This frame, 1-story, side-gabled building was altered in 1922 to a Craftsman Bungalow style dwelling. It has a shed dormer, a full façade porch, and simple brackets.

22. 108 East Main, 1870

This frame, 2-story home has an irregular plan and a hipped roof. Its setbacks and elongated windows exhibit Italianate influences, although the truncated eaves and porch addition compromise the style.

23. 202 East Main, 1890

This frame, 2-story, gable-fronted home features shaped window surrounds. The gabled entry porch is a replacement, and the additions to the side and rear are modern.

24. 204 East Main, 1873

This frame, 2-story dwelling with side gables and a front cross gable features shaped window surrounds, spindle work and dentil detailing on the porch.

25. 208 East Main, 1888

This frame, 2-story dwelling has a gabled el with clipped gables, a hipped porch roof in a re-entrant angle, and a 1-story rear addition.

26. 210 East Main, Samuel Dyke House, 1884

This frame, 2-story dwelling features a gabled el, shaped window trim, and an east side oriel. The flat roofed, 1-story wrap-around porch has scroll-sawn ornaments and brackets (the scroll saw was patented in 1880).

27. 301 East Main, 1870

The simple mansard roof, dormer windows on the cupola, eve brackets, and windows with bottom scrolls are typical of the Second Empire style. The projecting entry pavilion has an unusual faux ashlar face, and the porch details are Italianate.



Old School, Grades 1-4, 1926-1927

28. Old School, 1905 - 1907

Look up the hill from the top of Main Street through a tree-lined driveway to catch a glimpse of Spring Valley's second school. This building has an overall fortress-like design typical of the Romanesque style, and speaks to a strength and simplicity becoming of a public structure of its time. It has a simple hipped roof. The front façade is asymmetrical, and the main entry is off-center and recessed. Atypically, the windows are not recessed, and the top sashes have a unique six-pane arrangement.

29. 210 Mound Street, Spring Valley Baptist Church, 1860

Follow the signs at the top of Main Street to this church, formerly the Friends Church. This unusual structure features reversed piking on the gable end treatment, and vertical board and batten skirting which is consistent with Gothic Revival style (although the roof pitch is shallow for the type and the windows are not arched). In keeping with the style, it was probably originally painted with several colors (polychromatic).



30. 1 West Walnut Street, Spring Valley Methodist Church, 1850

Proceed back down Main Street toward

the bike trail. As you approach Town Hall, turn left on Vine Street and walk two blocks to Walnut Street, where the Methodist Church occupies an imposing building. Its strong massing, round-headed "Romanesque" arches, recessed entrances, and rustic ashlar blocks are typical of the Richardson Romanesque style.



Methodist Church under Construction

Other Points of Interest



31. 5 Clay Street, Former One-room School, 1900

As you walk up Main Street toward

the hill, Clay Street intersects Main Street on the right. This modest brick building housed Spring Valley's old one-room schoolhouse, in use prior to the building of the larger Old School (ca. 1905-07) located on top of Main Street's hill. Note the modest return eaves and simple stone lintels above the windows and door. The front and rear porches are later additions.

32. Many Springs



Proceeding down Bellbrook Avenue toward the bike trail and St. Rt. 725, note the "Many Springs" sign.

Victor Darnell, inventor of the adjustable hospital bed, once lived here.

33. Spring Valley Packing Company, 1905

This factory, at the intersection of Bellbrook Avenue and the bike trail, was one of the last businesses begun in Spring Valley's heyday, when wagonloads of corn and other vegetables lined Bellbrook Avenue, awaiting canning using local spring water.

Glossary

4/4, 6/6: windows with 4 panes over 4 panes, 6 panes over 6 panes.

ASHLAR: a squared building stone.

BALUSTER: any of the singular posts of a railing.

BAY: a division of space that is repeated within a building. A three-bay house would have three spaces repeated along one side, as in two rooms and a hall.

BRACKET: a supporting feature under an eave line or raincap, usually decorative.

COLUMN: a cylindrical support consisting of a base, shaft and capital (cap).

CORNICE: a horizontal molding projecting along the top of a building or wall.

CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW: typically 1- to 1-½-stories, with a long sloping roofline, a wide, sheltering overhang and a wide porch. Interior woodwork is heavy and dark, but is usually square or simple.

CUPOLA: a small structure situated on top of a roof, often domed, with solid walls or four arches, covering a circular or polygonal area.

DENTILS: small tooth-like projections adorning an area under an overhang; square blocks in series under a cornice.

DORIC COLUMN: a Greek-style column with only a simple decoration around the top, usually a smooth or slightly rounded band of wood, stone or plaster.

DORMER: a structure projecting from a sloping roof, usually housing a window or ventilating louver.

EASTLAKE: a nineteenth-century style characterized by a distinctive type of ornament, largely the product of chisel, gouge, and the lathe, and somewhat like ornamentation of furniture during the period.

EAVES: the underside of a sloping roof projecting beyond the wall of a building.

FAÇADE: the face of a building.

FRIEZE: a decorative band in a stringcourse near the top of the building, below the cornice.

FOUR SQUARE: a house style with emphasis on solidity and balance, square in plan, 2 stories high, with a pyramidal hipped roof, front dormer, usually including a columned porch and sometimes featuring a large off-center doorway.

GABLE: Used in roof design. A flat wall surface which continues up to the ridge of a roof; creates a triangular shape.

GOTHIC REVIVAL: this style emphasizes vertical lines; its main objective is visual effect rather than balance and symmetry. Typically 1-1/2-story buildings feature pointed arched windows and door openings; sharply pitched roofs with numerous gables; use of decorative “gingerbread” wood trim or vergeboards along eaves. Much trim was mass-produced by machine.

GREEK REVIVAL: a style with emphasis on straight lines and symmetry, 1-½- or 2-½-stories; medium or steeply pitched gable roof or hip roof, often featuring a central pedimented porch and a center door accented by a rectangular transom and dentils, return eaves, pilasters, and flat or pedimented hoods over windows.

HIP ROOF: a roof design which forms a ‘pyramid’ look, created by matching sloped sides of the roof. The line where two slopes of a roof meet is called a ‘hip’.

I-HOUSE: two interior chimneys at either end give the roofline an “I” shape when viewed from above. These homes resemble the vernacular English-influenced I-houses of early Virginia (the Walton’s home state). They are minimally embellished, but feature quality construction, with coursed limestone foundations, entries with transoms and sidelights, and flush eaves.

ITALIANATE: Italianate homes are two stories high, blocky and square in appearance, often include a square tower or projecting central section, a low-pitched hip roof, wide eaves with prominent decorative brackets, round-headed window and door openings as decorative accents, and often feature a porch and cupola which crowns the main structure.

MANSARD: a roof having two slopes on all sides with the lower slope steeper than the upper one.

NEOCLASSICAL: characterized by monumentality, strict imitation of Grecian columns, and sparing ornamentation.

OCULAR: a round window or opening (shaped like the eye).

ORIEL: a projecting bay window supported from below with brackets or a corbel (stone bracket).

PEDIMENT: a low-pitched gable or decorative triangular piece on the front of a building above a doorway.

PIKE: a sharply pointed element, like a spear.

PILASTER: a column integrated within a wall.

PORTICO: a porch or covered walk consisting of a roof supported by columns.

PRAIRIE STYLE: a style popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright, emphasizing horizontal lines and open interior spaces.

QUEEN ANNE: a home style that is eclectic and asymmetrical in outline, with a steep roof and tall chimneys, two or more stories high, often including 2-story bays, a circular tower usually offset with a candle-snuffer peaked roof, prominent projecting or eyebrow dormers, a shaped porch, and the façade, especially the front gable, covered in a variety of contrasting decorative shingle patterns.

RETURN EAVES: a molding which extends from the eaves and continues around the corner of the house to simulate a partial pediment.

RICHARDSON ROMANESQUE: a style of Romanesque Revival (see below) popularized by American architect Henry Hobson Richardson.

ROMANESQUE REVIVAL: a style largely confined to churches and administrative buildings erected in the post-1800 period, featuring heavy rough-textured masonry and wide arched windows and door openings, heavily accented with ornate detailing.

RUSTICATED: usually rough-surfaced masonry blocks having beveled or rebated edges producing pronounced joints.

SECOND EMPIRE: This style is characterized by a mansard roof which permits full use of a top floor space and eliminates the sloping ceilings of a gable roof; an irregular building outline, sometimes including decorative iron cresting on rooftops, and sometimes featuring projecting center towers and 1st or 2nd-story bay windows.

SEGMENTAL ARCH: a circular arch in which the inner curve is less than a semicircle.

SIDELIGHT: windows placed on either side of another window or door, which are narrower than the center opening.

TRANSOM: the horizontal framing member between a door and a window above; also refers to the window above a door.

VERGEBOARDS: decorative trim along gable ends of a roof or dormer, sometimes called “bargeboards”.

References:

National Registry of Historic Places

McAlester, Virginia & Lee, *Field Guide to American Houses*, 1984

Harris, Cyril M. (ed), *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*, 1977

Ohio Historic Inventory Listings