

This tour was planned by the Edgerton Historical Society for the Bicentennial celebration.

The locations of historical sites numbered 1 through 10 are shown on the map of Edgerton at right.

The locations of sites numbered 11 through 27 are shown on the map of St. Joseph Township at left.

The route of the tour is marked by a dark line which comes out of Edgerton toward the southwest and circles the township in a clockwise direction. The numbers of the sites may be found along this route.

EDGERTON-ST. JOSEPH TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL TOUR

VILLAGE HALL (See map at right.)

Built in 1884 by Von Behren and Shaffer of Stryker. Once known as the Park Opera House, it served the town with a place for stage entertainment, lectures, ceremonies, meetings and voting.

* The second house west of the corner of Indiana and Oak was the site of M. C. McGuire telegraphic institute in 1870. He was also operator and agent for the L.S. & M.S. Railroad.

* On the east corner of Indiana and Oak stood the Hotel Mortland, built in 1854 by Anson Crosby, later known as the Crosby House. In 1881 it was the Hotel Arlington, still later named the Hotel Edgerton. It was dismantled in 1939.

2. SITE OF RAILROAD DEPOT

The depot was built to serve the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad, the land being donated by William Trevitt and A. P. Edgerton. The line was completed to Edgerton in 1855. On June 8, 1857, the first timetable was issued. This stretch of track from Toledo to Kendallville being without turn or curve enabled the trains to travel at a high rate of speed, thus the name "Air Line" was used. The next companies changed the name to New York Central, Penn Central, and now to Conrail.

3. FARNHAM BRICK BLOCK

This business site was established by Dan Farnham when in 1855 he built a storeroom. In 1872, he erected a three story brick building which housed his business and also a large ballroom on the third floor.

* West on Indiana St. where there is now a vacant lot stood the Edgerton Telephone Exchange (1905). The first telephones were installed earlier (1899). This company was sold to Ohio Standard Telephone in 1932; and thereafter many changes in ownership.

* On the south side of Indiana St. the electric power plant was located where Caseberes' garage is now. This was later moved to Bement St. at the Oak Mfg. Co. site. The power plant was built by Emmett Geauque who first turned the power on in 1903 so the Methodist Church could be illuminated for their dedication ceremony.

4. SECOND SCHOOL SITE

This is the site of the second school built in Edgerton, the first being on the present site. Later, the building you see here was built to serve as restaurant, pool room and barber shop. This is the only original store front left in the business section.

5. LOT 190

First lot to be sold in Edgerton. Prescott Sawyer sold this lot to James D. Sleiter on Dec. 3, 1842.

6. OAR MANUFACTURING COMPANY — 1860

Oars and ironing boards were made here. The factory burned after a few years. This location was then used by Edgerton Provisions and then Air Line Mfg. in 1928.

7. WHEAT HILL

A man made earthen ramp enabling area farmers to unload their grain into storage bins with a minimum of effort. The grain was then shipped via railroad. Here was also the first freight office in the township in 1857.

8. OAK MFG. CO. — 1890

Also known as "the Basket Factory" the company was started here after being destroyed by fire in its Ash Street location. Many types of baskets were made here, some of them woven by hand. Logs were purchased locally from farmers and were hauled to this site where they were cut into proper lengths. They were steamed in vats to soften the wood making it easier to remove the bark. From the vats they went to the veneering machines where the veneer was peeled from the logs. This was then cut into splits of appropriate widths for the various types of baskets. They were formed then stapled by machine into baskets. The baskets were then stacked in drying sheds. When ready they were hauled to local retailers or shipped to various buyers around the country.

9. BEMENT SCHOOL

The fourth school built in Edgerton, the fifth school district. This was a two story brick building and served from 1867 until 1905, when the present building was erected.

10. MAPLE GROVE CEMETERY

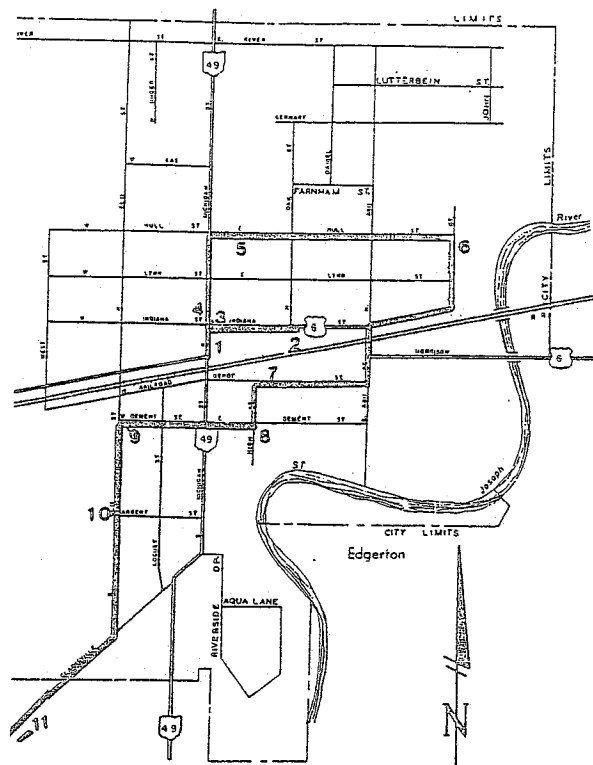
Established in 1858. It is a joint property of the township and the town. It is said the first person buried here is a William Preston whose grave site is located in the middle of the north side. Most of the graves from the town of Denmark were moved to this cemetery, among them the prominent Judge Parker and family.

11. CLARKSVILLE CEMETERY (See map at left)

This cemetery served the Clarksville area for many years. There are many Civil War dead here in unmarked graves. Dr. Ladd, a Clarksville physician, is buried here. Ladd's Lake, located on the Ubald Dietsch farm was named for the doctor who owned the property at that time.

12. CLARKSVILLE

In 1835 Thomas Green, one of the first settlers in



the area, laid out a trail to the Bellefontaine Road at Williams Center. With settlers arriving in the area Miller Arrowsmith surveyed and Elisha Clark and Jacob Wilder platted Clarksville in October 1836. In 1837 the first house was built and a mill constructed. The first school in the area was held in 1837 on the Blair property. The first store was opened by Guy Noble in 1839, and the next year he built the ashery. In 1844 Jeradet Ball built the first bridge over the river. In its prime Clarksville had a church, two taverns, two stores, two doctors and about eighteen houses. The mill and bridge were destroyed by an ice flow on the river in 1886 and only the bridge was rebuilt in 1888, this one being replaced in 1976. Nothing remains of Clarksville today due mainly to the coming of the railroad through Edgerton.

13. BLAIR FARM

Homesteaded in 1837 by James Blair and willed to his sons Seth and Wright. The farm was later divided and acquired by Frank and Wilson Blair, sons of Seth. J. Arthur Blair, son of Frank, now owns the combined farm.

14. SANDERS HOMESTEAD

Francis A. Sanders, born 1825, in Prussia, came to America in 1840. In 1868 he purchased this property. Son John C. acquired the farm in 1896 and his son, Charles B. purchased it in 1924. The farm is now owned by Charles' wife, Frances.

15. FARNHAM CEMETERY

Sally Farnham, mother of Daniel, picked this for the Farnham burying ground. Sally died in 1844 and

was one of the first to be buried here. It also served the Edgerton community for many years. Daniel bought the iron fence and reserved one third of the ground for his descendants.

16. DANIEL FARNHAM FARM — 1860

In 1837 Daniel Farnham brought his mother and two sisters from New York to Ohio, having built a house the previous fall on government land he had purchased to add to his many acres. In 1860 and 1862 he purchased this farm. Myron C. acquired part of it in 1887 and the balance in 1897. Meade purchased the farm in 1919 and Ron M. acquired it in 1970.

17. MARVIN BURKHART FARM — 1869

Tobias Burkhardt purchased this farm from Samuel Holton in 1869. Sons Samuel F. and Frank, acquired the farm in 1890. Later Samuel purchased Frank's share. Charles, a son of Samuel acquired it later. Marvin and wife Katherine purchased the farm in 1959.

18. HOLTON MILL SITE

Samuel Holton settled here in 1827 and built the first saw mill in the township. It is recorded that this mill built about 1830 stood on the banks of Fish Creek about twenty rods upstream from the bridge. The first child of a pioneer settler born in this township was that of the Holtons. Nothing now is left of the Holton home or the dam, but directly in front of the site marker and down along the bank of Fish Creek can still be seen the wood pilings and stone remains of the mill.

19. DENMARK

This village was founded and laid out by Judge Payne C. Parker in 1834 on the north side of the Bellefontaine Road. He built a frame house and moved his family here in 1836. Denmark had a public square, store room, ashery and schoolhouse. The town also had the first post office and tavern in the township. Denmark was also the first village in the county.

20. BELLEFONTAINE ROAD

This is the only Indian trail in the area officially surveyed and made a road. This survey was in 1831. The original road exists to the west between here and Hamilton, Indiana. Looking southeast, the front driveway of the Dietsch farm is a section of the road, which originally extended diagonally through the farm. The house faces this old road thus explaining its acute angle to the county road in front of the house.

21. FRANK A. DIETSCH FARM — 1875

The Dietsch farm is located adjacent to the south side of the Denmark Bridge one mile east and three miles north of Edgerton. Frank A. Dietsch purchased this farm (160 acres) Feb. 13, 1875. It is believed the house was built in 1885 with brick that was made

locally. The original house did not have the large front porch or the back room on the east side. These being added by son, Charles A. who also modified the original barn by doubling its size for cattle feeding. The west side of the barn has a large V trim, the left side of this being the original roof line. In 1918, B. Franklin Dietsch, third generation, planted a large cherry and apple orchard which he kept until 1955. This farm was well known as Riverside Orchard and earned many state honors for quality fruit. The large concrete building was used as a cold storage for apples. It was built in 1940.

Marvin Dietsch, fourth generation, his wife, Martha Jane and their four children now own and reside on the farm. The original 160 acres is now part of their 900 acres grain farm. The soil type is predominantly a sandy loam characteristic of a narrow border along the St. Joseph River.

22. THOMAS CEMETERY

This cemetery was started on the property belonging to Michael Thomas. Many of the early family names will be found here. In later years it became known as the Brown Cemetery.

23. CLAY HOMESTEAD — 1862

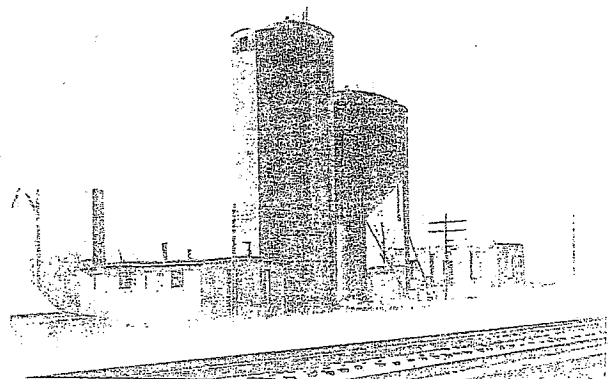
Andrew Clay, great-grandfather of Marion Monosmith, purchased this farm April 25, 1862. His son, Adam, acquired it in 1888. Clarence and Pearl (Clay) Monosmith purchased it in 1937. Marion and wife Lucille purchased it in 1972.

24. GIPE HOMESTEAD — 1862

Michael Geib homesteaded this farm in 1862. He later changed his name to Gipe. He died in 1872 and left the farm to his wife and family. Son, Tobias, purchased the farm in 1883, Blanche, daughter of Tobias, married Samuel Keppeler and they purchased the farm in 1939. Marvin, one of six sons, now owns the farm.

25. BELLEFONTAINE TRAIL

From here the trail angles south and eastward to the Scioto River. The trail was surveyed only between Bellefontaine, Ohio and White Pigeon, Michigan.



26. MINA

In 1908 a water tank and coal chute were installed here to serve the trains of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad. This being considered the halfway point between Cleveland and Chicago.

27. CLOSSON FARM

In 1837 John Closson was given a land grant signed by President Martin Van Buren, this being the present farm. Mr. Closson lived on another land grant in Savannah, Ohio. He sold the farm in this area to his son, John Phillip who moved his family here. He first built a log cabin then made the bricks and built the present house in 1882. Son, Frank, bought the farm in 1926. Martin and Carman Closson Wolfrum bought the farm in 1947.

*Alice Kinzer
Pres. Edgerton His. Soc.
Tour Guide Bicen.*