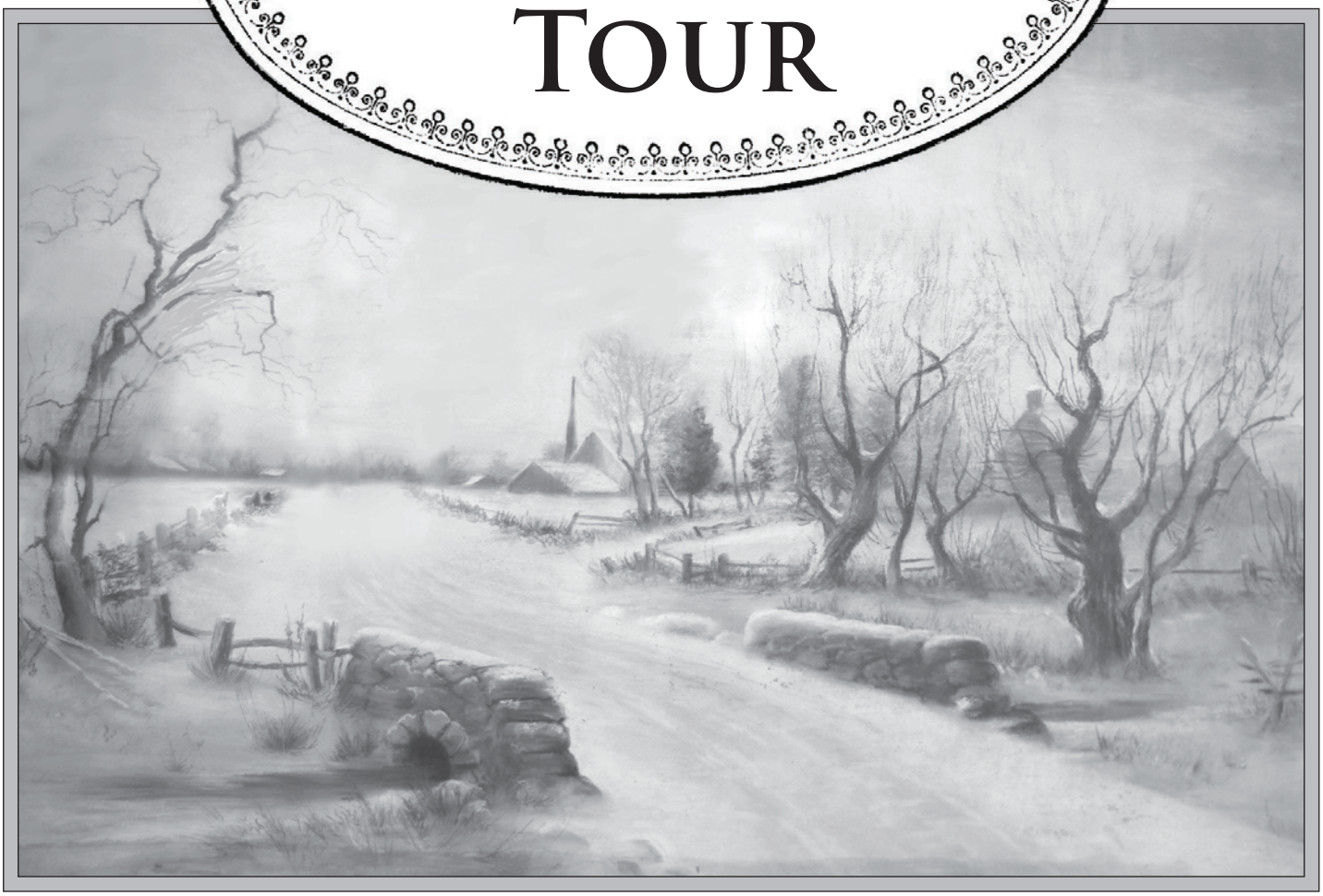
Mason Historical Tour



An early view of Mason, painted circa 1900 by Lou Wikoff Van Harlingen, granddaughter of Maj. William Mason
Original painting is in the collection of the Mason Historical Society

Presented by
The Mason Historical Society &
The Mason Bicentennial Committee

START YOUR TOUR HERE:

1 **Alverta Green Museum**, 207 W. Church St.
This beautiful 19th-century Victorian "painted lady" was the residence and antiques shop of life-long resident Alverta Green. In 1988, Mrs. Green bequeathed her home and property to the Mason Historical Society for their exclusive use as a Museum and archive/resource center. Filled with treasures from Mason's past, this gem in the heart of the downtown historic district is a must-see attraction.

2

Methodist Church, 200 W. Church St.
In 1837, Rev. Joseph Hill purchased this large lot from the William Mason estate and donated the S.E. corner to the newly-formed Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation built this lovely church in 1875 and honored Rev. Hill in the carved inscription above the entrance. Stained glass, exterior stucco and an annex were later added.

3

McClung Residence, 101 E. Main St.
Built in 1873 as a residence by John McClung, the building is rumored to be haunted by John's wife, Rebecca, who was brutally murdered in her upstairs bedroom in 1901. The home was purchased in 1911 and became The Modern Hotel, where the basement was said to be a speakeasy during Prohibition. Changing hands again in 1920, the building became a boarding house. It is affectionately known as "the old hotel."

4

Rebold's Hall, 105 E. Main St.
Built in 1905 by Jack Rebold, using the bricks from an old church, this building housed his general store on the bottom floor. What became known as "Rebold's Hall" was upstairs. This was THE place to be for the Sat. night dances held here in the early 1900s. Later tenants included First National Bank, the town's Post Office, W.N. Cox Hardware and Thompson's Hardware; the latter being a fixture in town for over 37 years.

5

Mason Canning Company, Buerkle Dr.
Founded by W.R. Chace in 1904, the company was located on 7 acres and was a very busy place during harvest. Farmers from all over would come to sell their crops. All the work at the processing plant was done by hand and brought many jobs to the town. The smell and waste from the operation made it unpopular with its neighbors, but it was the emergence of field canning and frozen foods that caused the company to close in 1950. Several of the original structures still stand.

6

Mason Central School, 211 N. East St.
Built on the former ground of the town's original cemetery, Mason High School was opened in 1912 as a solution to the overcrowding at the old school on E. Main St. It housed all grade levels at that time, despite the "Mason High School" carved above the portico. Additions included a 1936 stage and gymnasium, and a 1951 classroom annex. When a new high school was built in 1959, this building was used for all other grades and became known as "Central" No longer used for classes, it now houses the school district's administration offices.

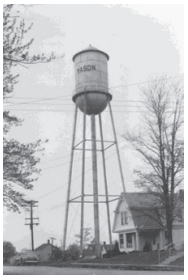
7

Weisman's Hatchery, 202 N. East St.
Ray & Emma Weisman started their chicken hatchery business in the basement of their home at 112 W. Church Street before moving it to this location in 1937. Their son, Dale, ran the business from 1955-1965. The building was renovated into apartments in the 1970s.

8

Universalist Church, 300 W. Church St.
The oldest church in Mason was built in 1835, and has been home to a number of different congregations during its existence. The old 1906 parsonage still stands next door.

9



Water Tower Site,
300 block of W. Church St.
Located next to the Univ. Church parsonage, Mason's first water tower was a necessary addition to the town in 1934. It was dismantled in 2003 when the Kings Mills Road tower was built.

10

Sprinkle's Opera House/The Mason Bank, 225 W. Main St.
Built in 1886 by Samuel Sprinkles as an entertainment venue, the upstairs Opera House was the center of Mason's social activities for over 50 years. Many a Vaudeville show, graduation, concert, and operetta graced its stage to the delight of all. The downstairs housed The Mason Bank (later First-Mason Bank) on the left and various merchants on the right. The 5/3 bank, still using original 1888 vault now encompasses the entire building, and uses the retired upstairs Opera House as storage.

11

Mason Lumber Company, 503 W. Main St.
From 1890 to 2002, this lumber and coal business was the oldest and continuously operating retail business in Mason. In the early days, deliveries were made by horse and wagon, and the horses were boarded in a stable across the street.

12

Miller Funeral Home, 529 W. Main St.
This stately home was built in 1897 by mortician Charles C. Miller as a residence and place of business until the mid-1930s. It was one of the first funeral parlors in the area to have space for funerals and visitations. Renovations in the 1950s, divided the home into apartments and the circular porch was enclosed.

13

Mill/Train Depot Sites, Western Ave.
The Mason Mill, formerly located behind the Lumber Co. specialized in "faultless" flour and was strategically located near the depot. The train depot was located across Western Ave. from the mill. The CL&N used this route to carry both freight (including mail) and passengers from Cincinnati to Dayton. The train service and the depot, were the life blood of Mason from c. 1885 until the depot was torn down in the early 1960s.

14

Presbyterian Church, 221 S. Forest Ave.
It's unknown when this church was built, but members were meeting here as early as 1846. Starting in 1886, there have been several renovations and additions to the original church.

15

St. Susanna Catholic Church, 500 Reading Rd.
This little mission church, which could only hold 160 people, was built in 1938. The congregation had 235 parishioners at the time, so they practically outgrew it from the start. In 1959, when a new church was built, it was repurposed as classrooms and later a gymnasium. It's the oldest church building in town that's still owned by its original congregation.

16

WLW Tower, Tylersville Rd. at Rte. 42
This iconic Blaw-Knox-designed radio tower for WLW (once known as "The Nation's Station") has been the pride of Mason ever since it was erected in 1934. WLW owner Powel Crosley, Jr. gained permission to experimentally operate at 500,000 watts, 10x the power of any other station in the country. On May 2, 1934, President Franklin Roosevelt pushed a ceremonial button on his desk and the tower roared to life. The transmitter was so powerful that locals picked up the broadcasts in their bed springs, metal fences, water pipes, and even tooth fillings.

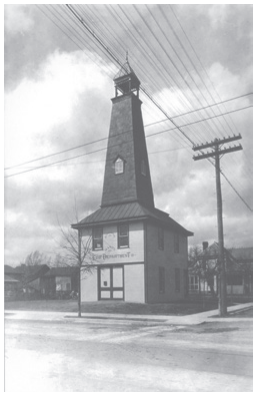
17

Dodd Residence/Dry Goods Store, 300 & 304 W. Main St.
Number 304, built c. 1849, is one of the oldest retail buildings in town. It was built by E.C. Dodds for his dry goods store. Mr. Dodds residence was located next door at number 300. In 1878, he tore down the small home on the corner, and built a much grander home which is the building you see today.

18

Confectionery, 214 W. Main St.
In the 1930s and 40s, this Confectionery with its soda fountain and variety of sweets, was THE hang-out spot for young and old alike. The back room was once used for pool and cards. There used to be a Greyhound bus stop out front and the "liars' bench" next to the stop was a great place to tell tales, gossip, or just pass the time.

19



Town Hall, 202 W. Main St.
The first fire station and town hall was erected on this site in 1893. Affectionately known as the "potato masher" because of the unique design of the building, it was razed in 1938 to make way for a new Municipal Building. The building still stands today as a restaurant.

20

Kroger Store/Dinner Bell Restaurant, 127 W. Main St.
Built in 1901, this building has a very diverse history. It started out as a saloon with a bowling alley in the basement. It housed overflow school classrooms from 1907-1911, and then became a 5&10¢ Variety Shop. In the 1940s, it was a Kroger grocery store (their 3rd location in town), and in the 1950s until the 70s, residents dined here at the popular Dinner Bell restaurant.

21

Oldest Building, 125 W. Main St.
Built between 1800 and 1830, the oldest building in Mason has served as a residence, hotel, and barber shop, among many other things, in its c. 200-year history.

22

Butcher Shop, 115 W. Main St.
In the late 1800s, this was the home of the Thompson family who were "hucksters." Hucksters would transport chickens, dairy and produce from area farmers down to the markets in Cincinnati. In 1915, Nick Brewster, and his brother-in-law John Brown, opened the "Brewster's Daily Meat Market" here, which was a fixture in downtown Mason for 60 years before closing in 1975.

23

Garage/Theater Sites, Northeast corner of Main St. and Mason-Montgomery Rd.
Two buildings with unique character, built with an unusual concrete design, have been lost to history. On the corner lot was a garage and body shop that was built in 1915 and razed in 2002 for road widening. Directly to its right was the beloved Dream Theater, which entertained several generations of moviegoers. After suffering significant damage in the 1974 tornado, the structure was torn down.

24

The Great Fire of 1930, 125-131 E. Main St.
In the early afternoon of July 19, 1930, a fire of devastating proportions engulfed the east end of town. The fire started in the back of an auto paint shop and quickly spread due to high winds – it was reported that 26 buildings were ablaze at once. Muddy Creek, cisterns and wells were pumped dry trying to fight the blaze. In all, there were no serious injuries but Mason's worst fire claimed three homes and four businesses, and forever changed the look of the east end.

25

Cox & Scull Hardware/Drug Store, 128 & 200 E. Main St.
Number 128 was built c. 1870 by R.M. Cox for his Cox & Scull Hardware and Agriculture Store. Mr. Cox built many of the buildings in the east end of town. Number 200, built in 1878 by J.C. Bennett for his Bennett's Drug Store, replaced a small wood structure. This building was later Fuhr's Tin Shop and narrowly escaped destruction from the 1930 fire.