

THE CHILDREN'S HOME

425 S. D Street, Hamilton

The Civil War created orphaned and impoverished children across the nation. To establish a home for area children, a group of Hamilton women met with Reverends Thane Miller and Benjamin W. Chidlaw in January 1869. By May, the women had rented a house on North C Street. Five years later, a new house was needed. Local businessman Clark Lane and Elbridge G. Dyer pledged a combined \$10,000 to purchase the property at 425 South D Street. The one condition of the gift was that the home's operators had to raise an additional \$2,000 to cover expenses. The newer, larger home opened in September 1875. In 1902, Robert and Eleanor Beckett McKinney donated funds to build a hospital on the property, named Ruth Hospital, in honor of their deceased infant daughter. Mrs. McKinney and her mother, Martha Beckett had longed supported the home's work. To alleviate overcrowding, a new dormitory was built behind the mansion in 1909 to house up to 40 boys in two "cottages" named for benefactors Lane and Dyer. The estate of Charles E. Heiser, a president of the Second National Bank, gave funds to install a swimming pool at the home in 1921. Under the direction of Superintendent Raymond Brane, older boys built a slaughterhouse in 1937, which provided meat and lard for the home. In 1977, the home became the Miami Valley Children's Center. It closed in 1985 for lack of funds. Approximately three decades later, New Oaks Community reopened the facility as The Father's House, a center for families who adopt and provide foster care for area children.



Directions to Next Marker: Turn around and go south on South D to Ross Avenue. Turn right.



ROSSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

SE Corner of Ross Ave and S B St, Hamilton

Rossville was settled in April 1801 shortly after the U.S. Government initiated land sales west of the Great Miami River. Its original proprietors - John Sutherland, Henry Brown, Jacob Burnet, James Smith and William Ruffin - named the town in honor of Pennsylvania Senator James Ross (1762-1847), who favored Ohio statehood and advocated free navigation of inland rivers. These founders envisioned Rossville as a shipping port for the rapidly growing population of farmers settling west of the Great Miami. The most practical outlet for

their products was by flatboat down the Great Miami, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans. The town of Rossville was founded in 1804, the year after the Louisiana Purchase, which made the Mississippi River a United States possession. The first Rossville post office opened in December 1819 in a store at

northwest corner of Main and B Streets. From about 1805 ferries connected Rossville and Hamilton on the river's east bank. The first bridge, the privately built Miami Bridge, opened in 1819. This 380-foot "double-barrel" covered bridge, designed by James McBride, washed away in a flood in September 1866. In the 1850 census Hamilton counted 3,210 inhabitants and Rossville 1,447. Voters in the two towns approved their union in April 1854, and the merger was completed in February 1855. In October 1975 the Rossville Historic District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.



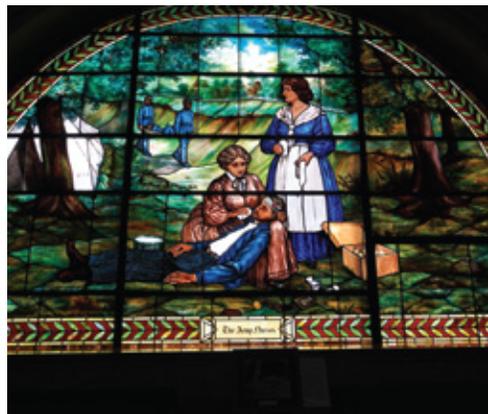
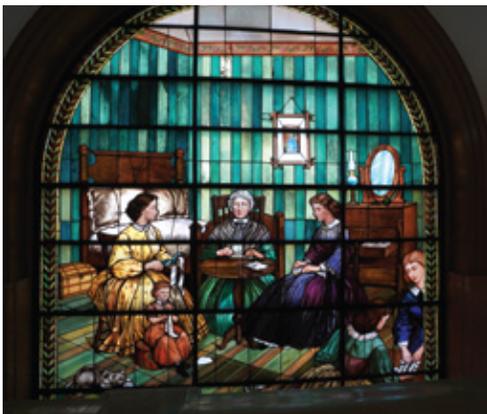
Directions to Next Marker: Continue east on Ross Avenue, at the bridge, merge onto High/Main Street (right). Immediately across the bridge, turn right (south) on Monument Avenue. Both of the next two markers are right there.



SOLDIERS, SAILORS & PIONEERS MONUMENT

1 S. Monument Street, Hamilton

The Soldiers, Sailors, and Pioneers Monument was planned and promoted by Butler County Civil War veterans and financed by a county levy in 1899. The monument, built of Indiana Limestone, is near the center of the site of Fort Hamilton, built in 1791 and named in honor of Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury in President George Washington's cabinet. The monument includes two large, colorful windows that recognize the contributions of Butler County women during the Civil War. Featured speaker at the July 4, 1906 dedication was Governor Andrew L. Harris, a Butler County native and Civil War veteran. His name is one of more than 4,300 carved into the interior marble walls.



The statue atop the monument is officially entitled "Victory, the Jewel of the Soul," but is better known as "Billy Yank," the name given the common Union soldier during the Civil War (1861- 1865). The 17-foot, 3,500-pound bronze figure is the work of Rudolph Thiem, a local artist whose design was selected in national competition. The soldier's informal pose represents his reaction to victory and peace at the end of the Civil War. His foot is on an unexploded shell, while his right hand clasps his musket. His cap is uplifted in his left hand. His mouth is open as he shouts "Hurrah!" at the relations that fighting has ended.

The statue was placed on the monument in December 1904.



WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

Historic Log Cabin, S Monument St., Hamilton

Author William Dean Howells (1837-1920) spent his boyhood from 1840 to 1848 in Hamilton. Called the “Dean of American Letters,” Howells wrote 35 novels, 35 plays, 34 miscellaneous books, 6 books of literary criticism, 4 books of poetry, and hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. He shaped the destiny of fellow writers by editing their work for *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*. His autobiography entitled *A Boy's Town* fondly recalls growing up in Hamilton. Throughout his life, he broke in new pens by writing “W. D. Howells, Hamilton, Butler County, Ohio.”



Make sure to take time to check out the additional markers and sculpture in the area. There is information on the pioneer house, Fort Hamilton and several sculptures for you to enjoy! Across the street is the old city municipal building. Lentil Park is located there and the artwork on the building's exterior was created by Robert McCloskey, who we'll meet later in the tour.



Directions to Next Marker: Continue south on Monument to the first intersection: Court Street. Turn left (east) on Court. Go one block and turn left (north) on Front Street. Go one block and turn right (east) on High Street. The marker is in the middle of the block on your right.



THE BUTLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

101 High Street, Hamilton

Butler County was created on March 24, 1803, about three weeks after Ohio became a state. Hamilton won the competition for the county seat, thanks to Israel Ludlow, Hamilton's founder. Ludlow's donation of the public square secured the county seat. The first Butler County trial court met in July 1803 in a tavern before moving to a two-story military building located at what had been Fort Hamilton (1791-1796). The county built the first courthouse on this public square in 1810. The two-story stone building contained a jail on the first floor and a courtroom on the upper level. A new brick two-story courthouse was built on this square in 1817 at a cost of \$10,000. A four-sided clock was added to the top of the building in 1837. A cupola topped the 1817 courthouse, giving the building a total height of 110 feet. A bell inside the cupola signaled the start of court and public occasions and warned of emergencies. The courthouse was used until 1885 when it was demolished to



make way for the present courthouse, the third on this site. Its cornerstone was placed on October 29, 1885. The \$305,000 four-story structure, with a similar four-sided clock that had been on the former courthouse, was completed and occupied on February 4, 1889. The courthouse, which has experienced several cosmetic alterations, has survived fire, flood, and many storms. Three Hamilton firefighters died in a fire in the tower on March 14, 1912. The courthouse was a temporary morgue when more than 200 people died in the area in the 1913 flood from March 25-26.



Directions to Next Marker: Continue east on High Street to Second Street, turn left. Proceed on North Second to Dayton. Turn left. The marker is in RiversEdge Park at the end of Dayton. It is on your left by the guitar.



JOHNNY BLACK

Rivers Edge Park
116 Dayton Street, Hamilton

John Stewart Black (1891-1936) was a Vaudeville performer and songwriter who penned the classic song "Paper Doll." He is also remembered for "Dardanella," which he called "his gift to the musical world." "Dardanella," recorded by the Ben Selvin Novelty Orchestra, debuted in 1919 and is believed to have sold more than five million copies. In 1942, the Piqua-born Mills Brothers recorded Black's tune "Paper Doll." It sold over 6 million records, was number one on the Billboard charts for twelve weeks in 1943 and became one of the most memorable records of the World War II

era. Many artists, including Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby, recorded "Paper Doll" and the song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998. "I'm gonna buy a Paper Doll that I can call my own; A doll that other fellows cannot steal. And then the flirty, flirty guys with their flirty, flirty eyes Will have to flirt with dollies that are real. When I come home at night she will be waiting; She'll be the truest doll in all the world. I'd rather have a Paper Doll to call my own Then have a fickle-minded real live girl..." Written by Johnny S. Black, 1915. Recorded by the Mills Brothers, 1942. Lyrics used with permission from the Edward B. Marks Music Company.



Directions to Next Marker: At the intersection of Dayton and Riverfront (at the Great Miami River) turn right (north). Stay on Riverfront to Village Street (T intersection) and turn right. Stay on Village to North 3rd Street. Turn right (south) on Third. Both markers are across the street from each other.



LANE-HOOVEN HOUSE

319 N. Third Street, Hamilton



James Elrick, a local carpenter, built the Lane-Hooven House in 1863 for Clark Lane (1823-1907), a Hamilton industrialist and philanthropist. Lane, who first came to the area at the age of twenty-one as a blacksmith, resided in the house for more than eleven years. In 1866, Lane built the library, also originally an octagon, across the street. In 1868, he conveyed the library to the city. The C. Earl Hooven family resided in the house from 1895 to 1942., In 1943, Bertrand Kahn purchased the residence and presented it to the community for civic and charitable uses. It was donated as a memorial to his father, Lazard Kahn, a Hamilton industrialist and civic leader. The Lane-Hooven House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The house has eleven rooms and was built in the Gothic Revival architectural style, which was popular in Ohio from approximately 1835 to 1870. Accordingly, the house features a sharply pitched roof and decorative barge-board under the eaves. Exterior features also included a greenhouse, formerly on the south side of the house; and on the front lawn, a fountain believed to be the first in Hamilton. The plan of the dwelling, an octagon, made its appearance in Ohio in the 1850s and was intended to advance house design by centralizing household activities and improving heating, lighting and ventilation. Inside, a circular open stairwell extends from the basement to the third-floor turret. Other highlights of the house include a cast-iron fence with a stone base, a Tudor style entrance with carved wooden doors framed by stained glass, and ornamental cast-iron balconies.



CLARK LANE & THE LANE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Lane Public Library - Hamilton Branch
300 N. 3rd Street, Hamilton



Clark Lane (1823-1907), industrialist and philanthropist, was a son of John Lane (1793-1880) and Rosanah Crum (1795-1877). John came with his family to the Ohio Country when it was still part of the Northwest Territory. As a young man, Clark worked in his family's blacksmith shop, and eventually helped found Owens, Lane & Dyer Machine Company in 1854. It built agricultural machinery, sawmills, paper-making machines, and other products, initiating Hamilton's prominence in metals manufacturing. Lane funded the Butler County

Children's Home, an orphanage, for over a century, and constructed an octagon house as his residence on Third Street. He built this library in 1866, also as an octagon, and donated it to the people of Hamilton. A 19th century admirer wrote, "The name and generous deeds of Clark Lane will never fade from the memories of a grateful people who have been recipients of his favor." Clark Lane built this library in 1866 and donated it to the people of Hamilton two years later. The 1913 Great Miami River flood catastrophe damaged much of the building and many of its books and records. The refurbished library reopened in 1914 and was dedicated as the "Lane Public Library." A fire five years later did considerable damage, but library leaders responded in the years following by enlarging the building, establishing community outreach locations and, in 1938, offered a bookmobile service to rural areas. After World War II, the library expanded into a system that, as of 2015, served over 187,000 people in western Butler County with libraries in Hamilton, Fairfield and Oxford, the Smith Library of Regional History, the bookmobile, and a community technology center.



Clark Lane



Robert McCloskey



Literary Library
Plaque

While you are at the Lane Public Library, check out the plaque on the front of the library honoring Hamilton hometown boy, Robert McCloskey. Two-Time Caldecott Award winner Robert McCloskey (1914-2003) walked through the doors of this library many times as a child. McCloskey was born in Hamilton and his first book, *Lentil*, featured several Hamilton scenes including this library. Published by Viking in 1940, it told the story of a boy much like himself who played a harmonica (you can see a sculpture featuring *Lentil* across from the Butler County Courthouse). This plaque in honor of United for Libraries Children's Book Week was dedicated by the library as a literary landmark in 2015.



The huge sculpture located near the Lincoln marker is the Hamilton Gateway. The sculpture takes the form of an open doorway, a visual metaphor for democracy. The doorway is an image of both welcome and arrival at a key place of entry into the city. A foundation of stone is represented by a carved stone column in limestone and granite. The black, polished granite reaches the height of the historic high-water mark on the site during the Great Flood of 1913. Carved in a rippling water surface, this stone column recognizes the last importance of the Great Miami River and is symbolic of the enduring, yet fluid and adaptable nature of democracy. Above the water surface, carved drapery moves in heavy, undulating folds. The stainless steel bridge section is based upon traditional steel bridges that have crossed the Miami River. It is a visual illustration of the industrial uses of the river over the years. The bridge section with its swirling lines and rippling arcs represent the power of currents and eddies in waterways. The stainless steel

sculptural elements are taken from 19th century engineering drawings of gears, waterwheels and machine elements and paired with native fish species. The weathering steel in the main tower is folded and curved as if made from paper. Made strong by their connection to each other these two elements are a reference to both the importance of the paper industry in the community and to the historic growth of Hamilton and Rossville, two towns that became one community. Sweeping forward in space, the tower looks toward the future, but is connected to the past. The blue lamp is a beacon symbolic of the vital qualities of a democracy, vigilance, truth-seeking and justice.



Directions to Next Marker: At the intersection of High and Martin Luther King, turn left. At the intersection of Martin Luther King and Village/Heaton Street (traffic light), turn right, cross the railroad tracks and continue on Heaton. Village became Heaton when you turned right. The cemetery will be on your left and take the first entrance



WARREN GARD

Heaton Street entrance to Greenwood Cemetery, Hamilton

Warren Gard (1873-1929), son of Samuel Z. Gard and Mary Duke, was born in Hamilton, Ohio. He established his practice in Hamilton after graduating from Cincinnati Law School and being admitted to the Ohio Bar in 1894. Gard served as Butler County Prosecuting Attorney from 1898-1903, and as a judge on the Court of Common Pleas from 1907-1912. In 1910, he married Pearl Zuver Woods (1875-1946). In 1912, he was elected as a Democrat to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving from 1913-1921. Gard delivered a eulogy for his friend, Warren G. Harding, on August 8, 1923, the national day of

mourning for the deceased president. Gard had been a 35-year member of the bar when he died. He is buried next to his wife in the Gard plot in Greenwood Cemetery. During his service in Congress, Representative Gard was a member of the House Judiciary Committee, worked to prepare legislation that authorized America's entry into WWI, and fought to repeal wartime prohibition. In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson appointed Gard to a commission charged with investigating independence for the Philippines, then an American colony. Accompanying Gard on a fact-finding trip to the islands was his wife, Pearl, and their niece, Kathleen Neilan (1908-1973). One of Representative Gard's accomplishments was introducing and securing the passage of H.R. 755, which incorporated the Boy Scouts of America. Congress passed the bill unanimously, and President Wilson signed it into law on June 15, 1916.



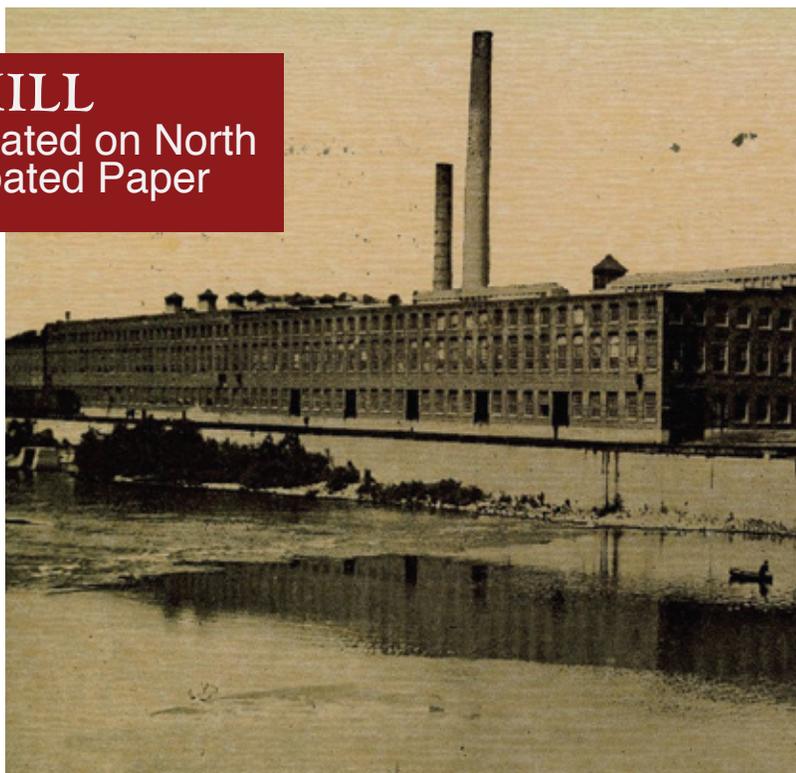
Directions to Next Marker: Turn right out of the exit from Greenwood Cemetery onto Heaton. Continue on Heaton to the traffic light at the intersection of Heaton and Martin Luther King Drive. Turn right (north) and continue to the next traffic light which is Black Street. Turn left (west) onto Black Street, cross the Black Street Bridge and the “missing” marker was formerly at the intersection of Black and B Streets.



CHAMPION PAPER MILL

The Missing Marker! Previously located on North B Street in front of Champion Coated Paper

The Champion Paper Company began production here in Hamilton on April 15, 1894, with nine employees under the direction of Peter G. Thomson (1851-1931), a Cincinnati businessman, who had incorporated the firm in November 1893. Thomson, previously a bookseller and publisher, recognized that recent progress in half-tone printing would increase the demand for coated paper. In 1891 he purchased 187 acres west of the Great Miami River to develop into subdivisions. When a recession contributed to a housing slump, Thomson used some of the land along Seven Mile Pike (now North B street) to build the plant which coated paper produced by other paper mills in Hamilton. The first coated paper was shipped from the mill May 4, 1894.



By 1900, Thomson had doubled the capacity of the original Hamilton plant five times. In June 1902 the company manufactured paper for the first time in Hamilton, opening a new paper mill simultaneously with a rebuilt coating plant. By 1910, the Hamilton mill was regarded as the largest coated-paper mill in the world. During its first 20 years, the mill survived two floods (March 1898 and March 1913), two fires (December 1901 and March 1913), several business cycles, numerous technological advances, and market changes. Under Thomson, the company also opened mills in North Carolina and Texas. As the mill observed its 100th anniversary April 15, 1994, it was part of the Champion International Corporation, a leading paper and wood products manufacturer. The remaining buildings are currently undergoing refurbishment to become the Spooky Nook Sports Champion Mill complex, including a hotel and convention center, with plans to open in 2021.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING OUR TOUR OF HISTORIC HAMILTON. PLEASE ENJOY OUR OTHER TOURS THROUGH HISTORICAL BUTLER COUNTY.

The Butler County Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Butler County's rich heritage. Visit our website at bchistoricalociety.com or find us on facebook to learn more about the other resources and programming our organization has to offer, and learn how to become a member!

Photo Credits: Many of the photos and text are courtesy of Ohio History Connection / RemarkableOhio.org, from the Butler County Historical Society/Kathy Creighton. Additional photos courtesy of Jack Armstrong and the City of Sculpture.