



HUDSON LIBRARY
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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HUDSON LIBRARY & HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Walking Tours

Hudson History



Historic Dow:

Hudson was originally part of the Connecticut Western Reserve, a 120 mile strip in the northeast corner of what is now the State of Ohio. Claimed by Connecticut until 1795, the land in this region was sold to pioneers by the Connecticut Land Company through a land lottery. David Hudson and five business partners purchased land rights to the township, designated Range 10, Town 4 in the Western Reserve. In 1799, David Hudson set out from his home in Goshen, Connecticut, to survey and establish his acquired land. In 1802, the town was officially named "Hudson" to honor its founder.

Hudson, renowned for the prominent role it played in the abolition movement, is perhaps most famously known as the childhood home of abolitionist John Brown. Hudson was an active stop on the Underground Railroad and many citizens hid fugitive slaves in their homes. A detailed brochure on specific Underground Railroad sites in Hudson is also available.

Western Reserve College was founded here in 1826; the first institution of higher learning in northern Ohio. Eventually, the college moved to Cleveland to become Case Western Reserve University. A devastating fire consumed many North Main Street businesses in 1892, and most of the buildings in that block were built shortly thereafter. Further improvements resulted from the efforts of industrialist James Ellsworth to make Hudson a model town; his final gift was the city's iconic clock tower.

With two National Historic Register districts, Hudson continues to preserve its history and charm while keeping pace as a great place to live or visit. We hope you enjoy this tour of a few of Hudson's historic locations.

33) 9 Aurora Street (1853) The Brewster Mansion The Brewster Mansion was built on the site of abolitionist John Brown's childhood home. Local merchant Anson Brewster purchased the original home from John's father Owen and lived in it until it was destroyed by fire in 1842. When the Brewsters rebuilt, they hired architect Simeon Porter to design a Gothic Revival "castle" for them on the town square. After the Brewsters, the building served as a hotel for almost fifty years. The 22-room "Park Hotel" was especially busy at the turn-of-the-century to accommodate the many Pennsylvania Railroad employees. In the 20th century, it served as a nursing home, and then as an office building, and is still housing businesses today.

34) 93 College Street (1838) The Loomis Observatory is the second-oldest observatory still standing in the United States, built only three months after the oldest observatory at Williams College. Simeon Porter built the observatory of Professor Elias Loomis, chairman of the mathematics and natural philosophy department at Western Reserve College, was responsible for the design. Loomis spent a year in Europe acquiring the scientific instruments, which included a transit circle, telescope and astronomical clock. All of the original equipment exists in the observatory today.

35) 318 N. Main Street (1806) The David Hudson House is the home of the town founder and is oldest frame house in Summit County. Hudson was the town's first postmaster and his home served as the site of the first post office. It has been said that a tavern was once located in the kitchen. The home is a perfect replica of a Connecticut farmhouse, some believe Hudson modeled it after his own home in Goshen, Connecticut. The site was selected to build because of the existence of a natural spring on the property.

Want to learn more about Hudson's history or see stops on the Underground Railroad?

Visit The Historical Society in the Library at 96 Library Street (off Clinton, two blocks west of the clocktower) or explore online at www.hudsonlibrary.org (select "Historical Society")

ntown Hudson

29) 140 North Main Street (1892) the Miller Brothers Building

Butcher George V. Miller rebuilt his butcher shop after it was destroyed in the 1892 fire. He shared this shop with his brother, Ralph Miller, who operated a bakery. Acme supermarket, an Akron-based supermarket chain, opened its 26th store location in 1916. Acme moved to Hudson Plaza in 1963.

30) 144-148 North Main Street (1892) The Campbell Building

After the 1892 Main Street fire destroyed his first harness shop, Cornelius Campbell built this brick building. The building has been home to many businesses throughout the years including Sawyer's Market, Dodd's Department Store and Kroger Grocery.

31) 160-164 North Main Street (1839) The Saywell's Building

The American House Hotel, built in 1832 by Julian Lusk, once stood on this site. In 1866, the American House underwent a major remodel, which included the addition of a third story. In 1878, the third floor was converted into an auditorium known Adelphian Hall, which included a stage with a seating capacity of more than 600. It is said that actress Effie Ellsler (1854-1942) was the first to perform at Adelphian. The building was destroyed in the 1892 Main Street Fire. Clinton Street, to the north of this building, marks the point where the fire stopped. The block of buildings to the north is constructed of wood and the reconstructed block is brick.

32) 5 Aurora Street (1839) The Brewster Store

Built in 1839, it is the oldest commercial structure still in use today. This Federal-style building was built by Leander Starr and originally housed Kent and Brewster's Dry Goods Store. In 1908 James Ellsworth opened the National Bank of Hudson in this building. The movement to save this building from destruction in 1962 led to the founding of the Hudson Heritage Association.



1) 47 Aurora St. (1865), The First Congregational Church was founded in 1802 by 13 charter members, including town founder, David Hudson. Famed abolitionist John Brown was also a member, who famously vowed during an 1837 prayer meeting that he would dedicate his life to abolishing slavery. The first church building was erected in 1819/1820 at the site of the present **Town Hall (27 E. Main St.)**. Simeon Porter, a well-known local architect, built and designed the present church building in 1865 and John W. C. Corbusier designed the 1919 addition. In 1836, the Church became involved in the slavery debate, which eventually divided the congregation. While most of the congregation felt that slavery should be abolished, the congregation disagreed over what should happen to the freed slaves. A group of 11 members, including John Brown's father Owen Brown left the church and formed the **Free Congregational Church**. Most of the members eventually returned in the 1850s.

2) 19 Aurora St., Christ Church Episcopal was founded in 1842 with 37 charter members, including dry goods merchant Anson Brewster, Jr. (1807-1864) and Dr. Israel Town (1791-1853). In 1846, a wooden Gothic church building was constructed, which was demolished in 1930. The replacement, a Colonial Revival structure, was modeled after St. Christopher's-by-the-River in Gates Mills, Ohio.

3) 30 Aurora St. (1826) The Whedon-Farwell House was built in 1826 in the Greek Revival style. Benjamin Whedon, a deacon in the Congregational Church lived here. In 1830, Whedon was excommunicated for hosting "a Ball" in the home as church members were prohibited from having dancers and fiddlers in their homes. A pair of doors actually separates two front rooms in the home that theoretically could be opened for large events. Blacksmith Charles Farwell took possession of the home in 1873. Farwell operated his blacksmith shop on the property in a separate building, which was razed in 1913.

23) 84 North Main Street (1892) Lockhart's Saloon was rebuilt after a fire originating there on April 28, 1892, spread and destroyed Hudson's downtown. Proprietor A. W. Lockhart used insurance money he received after the fire to construct the present building, which today houses a restaurant. Rumors circulated at the time that Lockhart started the fire; the cause was never found.

24) 96 North Main Street (1920) The Old Post Office Building was once the site of a bowling alley and arcade, as well as the Hudson Post Office. Prior to the Main Street fire in 1892, the Mansion House Hotel stood at this site. The Mansion House was built by Judge Van Rensselaer Humphrey, a renowned lawyer, state legislator and Ohio judge, who was also known for his Copperhead leanings.

25) 112-116 North Main Street (1892) The Wehner Building Henry Wehner constructed a new building to house his dry goods store after the first was destroyed in the 1892 fire. Wehner and his family, who lived upstairs, managed to escape the fire, but over \$3,000 in uninsured goods, which were just delivered, were destroyed. The original part of the building to its south, was built in 1953.

26) 120 North Main Street (1893) The Marrott Building was built in 1893 to replace the building destroyed in the Main Street fire. It once housed Lewis Marrott's men's clothing store. Marrott, a Hudson postmaster, later operated the Hudson post office out of the basement of this building.

27) 124-126 North Main Street (1892) The Sebastian Miller Block was built in 1892 after the fire. Miller operated a shoe store here. Many businesses have had their home in this building, including Gott's Hardware and Western Auto.

28) 134 North Main Street (1892) The Mead Block was built in 1892 after the Main Street fire. John G. Mead ran a harness shop here. For many years, a pharmacy operated here. The second floor was once the home of the Knights of Pythias Lodge.

19) The Boy Scout Cabin (1931) was built out of chestnut wood salvaged from Camp Manatoc as the headquarters of Boy Scout Troop 321, Hudson's first Boy Scout troop (founded in 1917). The cabin was conceived by E.R. (Edgar Ray) Seese (1888-1956), the troop's scoutmaster, who felt that the Scouts lacked a suitable meeting location. Construction on the cabin, which was done primarily by Seese and the Scouts, began in February 1931 and was dedicated in August 1931. Seese constructed the stone chimney himself.

20) 36 North Main Street (1825). Baldwin-Buss-Merino House Augustus was the brother of Frederick Baldwin (49 East Main) and Harvey Baldwin, who was married to founder David Hudson's daughter, Anner Maria Hudson. A historic marker in front of the Augustus Baldwin House commemorates the site of the first formal worship service in Hudson in 1800, which occurred on June 8, 1800, one day after David Hudson returned to Hudson with a group of settlers.

21) Near the Hudson Bandstand is a historical marker that commemorates the site of the cabin, which served as the first schoolhouse and the site of Hudson's first election.

22) 72 North Main Street (1962) The Hudson Square Building was built on the site of the Baldwin-Buss store. Augustus Baldwin and his heirs built three structures on this site: one in the early 1800s, another in 1829, and a Greek Revival building in 1842. English immigrant John Buss later owned the store selling a variety of dry goods. The building was destroyed in the great fire of 1892. Charles Buss, John's son, rebuilt on the site in the summer of 1892. In the 1930s, the building sat empty and unused and was completely remodeled and restored for use as a movie theater. On May 4, 1941, the 442-seat theater officially opened. The first film shown was "Slightly Honorable" starring Pat O'Brien. The theater was torn down in the 1960s.

4) 49 East Main St. (1834) The Baldwin Babcock House was built by Frederick W. Baldwin and served as a home to several families, including Caroline Baldwin Babcock, founder of the Hudson Library & Historical Society and Sylvester H. Thompson, Hudson Mayor and later State Representative. In 1922, the Hudson Library & Historical Society bought the property and, after renovations, opened the facility on New Year's Day in 1925. In June 2005, the library moved to 96 Library St. The building today houses several community organizations.

5) 22 Aurora St. (1924) This structure was originally built as an addition to the library when located in the Baldwin Babcock House.

6) Corner of Main and Aurora Streets (1912) The Hudson Clock Tower was built in 1912 as a gift to the community from wealthy industrialist James W. Ellsworth. The clockworks, built by the E. Howard Clock Company of Boston, run on gravity. Originally, the tower had water fountains on its west and north sides. The tower stands 42 feet and nine inches tall.

7) Ohio Historic Underground Railroad Marker on the green honors Hudson's role in the anti-slavery movement and was the first marker of this type in Northern Ohio, dedicated in May 2000.

8) The Bicentennial Walkway at this location was installed as part of Hudson's 200th birthday celebration in 1999.

9) 41 East Main St. (1841) The Edgar Birge Ellsworth Store was built by Leander Starr for Edgar Birge Ellsworth, who operated a commission merchant business. Ellsworth served as mayor of Hudson from 1853 to 1855 and was father to James W. Ellsworth, a wealthy industrialist who worked to make Hudson a "model town."

10) 35 East Main St. (1891) The A. W. Lockhart House was the home of A.W. (Abraham Wilbeck) Lockhart, the proprietor Hudson Bakery, moved the first house sitting on this property (now 30 Division) in 1889 and built a Victorian-style home on the old foundation. The home was greatly modified in the 1930s with the addition of many Federal elements. Lockhart later owned a saloon on Main Street (84 N. Main), which was destroyed in the great fire of 1892.

11) 33 East Main St. (1824) The Town-Shields House was originally constructed in the Greek Revival Style by Dr. Israel Town, one of Hudson's earliest physicians. In 1890, the Shields family remodeled the house in the Queen Anne style, which was fashionable at that time.

12) 27 East Main Street (1879) The Hudson Town Hall was built on the former site of Hudson's First Congregational Church. In 1970, James Johnson, owner of the neighboring Johnson Funeral Home, enlisted an Akron marble and granite company to sandblast "Hudson Town Hall" into the archway. The Town Hall was once home to the fire department and the Hudson Players, a local theater company. The hall underwent major renovations in the 1970s, including the removal of the stage and seating, and the fire truck door (which is still visible on the façade).

13) 19 East Main Street (1836) The Town-Neibel House was built in the Greek Revival style by Leander Starr for Dr. Israel Town, one of Hudson's earliest physicians. In the late 1800s, the Neibel family extensively remodeled the house in a Victorian style, adding the decorative wood trim seen today. During the remodel, two wings were removed. One wing is now a smaller house at 25 Streetsboro St. and the other wing is thought to be part of the home at 30 Church St. or 26 Streetsboro St.

14) 13 East Main Street (1877) The Sebastian Miller House Sebastian Miller, a Main Street shoe merchant, built this home in the Italian Revival style. Laura Post, a descendant of one of Hudson's early families, operated a beauty salon here. The family of James Johnson, who owned the funeral parlor next door (19 E. Main), also once lived in the home.

15) 7 East Main Street (1825) The Captain Heman Oviatt House This home with Federal and Greek elements was built in 1825 for Captain Heman Oviatt, a Hudson pioneer and well-known citizen. Oviatt operated the first store in the territory and was elected Hudson's first mayor in 1837. Oviatt also helped found Western Reserve College and the Congregational Church. The home was at one time owned by Rev. Mason Grosvenor, pastor of the Congregational Church. In 1888 St. Mary Church purchased the home and converted it into a rectory. The home is again a private residence today.

16) 1 East Main Street (1860) Old Saint Mary's was originally located on Railroad Street (now Maple Avenue) and was moved to its present location in 1888. The church was built around 1859 or 1860 for the influx of Irish-Catholics who came to Hudson in 1840s to construct the railroad. St. Mary Church moved to a new building on N. Main St. in 1970. Now known as the "Old Church on the Green," the building has housed businesses and local community organizations.

17) 5 East Main Street (1842) The Free Congregational Church was built in 1842 with funds supplied by Owen Brown. Established as an abolitionist church, it was originally a one-story building. It was in front of this church that John Brown gave his last appearance in Hudson before the raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859. In the first half of the 20th century, the building was the home of the Hudson Ornamental Iron Works, run by Angelo Lavelli, father of Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Dante Lavelli.

18) The Hudson Bandstand (1976) The Green has hosted to three bandstand throughout its history. The first bandstand on the Green was constructed around 1880 and was an octagonal gazebo-style bandstand. The second, was a roofless platform version, torn down between 1948 and 1952, probably due to deterioration. The present day bandstand, styled as a gazebo referencing the original, was built in 1976.