

## Camp Sherman Facts

The U.S. needed training camps when it entered World War I in April 1917. Chillicothe was chosen as a site for one of the 16 army “cantonments” to be built, on 2,000 acres of land along what is today Ohio 104, just north of the city.

Camp Sherman was named after Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman, a native of nearby Lancaster.

The camp - 2,000 buildings which could house two divisions (40,000 men) - cost \$4 million to build. The land was originally leased at a cost of \$20 an acre, but by 1921 the federal government had bought all of the land. After the war a small part of the camp was used to provide job training for returning veterans. Most of the buildings were demolished and sold as scrap during the 1920s. Today only one original structure remains - the Camp Library, which is used for storage and farming by the nearby prison.

The Base Hospital, 40 buildings that could accommodate 2,000 patients, accounted for one fourth of the total cost. Nevertheless, the medical facilities were overwhelmed by the Spanish flu outbreak in October 1918. The outbreak claimed some 1,154 lives in the camp, including soldiers, doctors, nurses and civilians.

Today, the land that once encompassed Camp Sherman is home to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Hopewell Culture National Historic Park, Chillicothe Correctional Institute, Ross Correctional Institute, Unioto Schools, the Gateway Industrial Park and more.

# Walking Map and Guide To

## Chillicothe’s Past: Camp Sherman



*Compiled and Designed by the*

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## Ross County Health District

This brochure is a publication of Heart Health of Ross County and the Ross County Health District.

The Chillicothe City Health Department was formed in 1882, and the Ross County General Health District in 1920. In 1979 the two merged.

Our goal is to protect and improve the health of the citizens of Chillicothe and Ross County. One of the best ways to do this is to promote a healthier lifestyle for all.

Walking is an easy and enjoyable way to improve your health. It burns calories and builds a strong heart.

Unlike jogging, walking is something almost anyone can do and benefit from. Before you begin your walk make sure that you are wearing comfortable shoes and weather-appropriate clothing. Also, extreme care should be taken when crossing streets.

We hope that this brochure will be used by our local residents and by visitors alike. Not only can it be used as a method for improving health, but also as a way to expand knowledge and interest in Chillicothe and its rich history.

Be sure to look for our other brochures: Main Street Church Walk; Historic Paint Street Walk; Chillicothe’s First Capital District Walk; Old Second Street; and Walking and Biking in Ross County.

*\*Much of the information included in this brochure is from “The Rise and Fall of Camp Sherman: Ohio’s WWI Soldier Factory” by Richard Peck.*

*\*\* A number of the photos are courtesy of the Ross County Historical Society.*

*\*\*\*Many of the photos can be purchased at Vickers Studio, 32 E. Second St., near the Majestic Theatre.*

## Health Facts - Walking

Walking regularly can offer many benefits to your body... and your mind.

Consider these facts:

- ⇒ Walking for 20 minutes a day can burn off around seven pounds of body fat per year.
- ⇒ Walking can extend your life: For every minute you walk you add 1-2 minutes of life.
- ⇒ Shorter, faster walks are best for conditioning your heart and lungs, while longer, slower walks work best when trying to lose weight.

Here are some benefits of walking:

- ⇒ Builds healthier heart and lungs
- ⇒ Burns body fat
- ⇒ Increases metabolism
- ⇒ Reduces cholesterol
- ⇒ Lowers high blood pressure
- ⇒ Can help control and prevent diabetes
- ⇒ Helps you sleep
- ⇒ It may also help control your appetite, increase your physical energy, relieve stress, slow aging, reduce the risks of some kinds of cancer, help you recover from a heart attack or stroke, promote intestinal regularity, and reduce stiffness from arthritis.

Healthy  **Ohio**  
The State of Living Well.

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10. The Majestic Theatre was built in 1853 as the Masonic Hall. It was remodeled in 1917 and offered live (Vaudeville) shows as well as picture shows. In October 1918, it was put to another use: serving as a site for the embalming of many of Camp Sherman's Spanish flu victims. The seats were removed from the theater and bodies laid out on the floor. The stage was used for embalming. Body fluids escaped the theater and ran into the alley bordering the theater to the east, which at times is referred to as Blood Alley.

*NOTE: Please use caution when walking.*

7. Army Club No. 2 was located on the alley behind Chillicothe's City Hall (7A), 26 S. Paint St. In the city's earlier days a farmers market was held in the alley - hence the name Market St. Built in 1875 it looks very different than it originally did (7B).

8. Built in 1906 as the Chillicothe Post Office, local boys who were drafted into service boarded a bus here and were then taken to Camp Sherman for their training.

9. In 1918 when word came that Chillicothe would be awarded a training camp, the Warner Hotel (9A) added 30 rooms. (9B shows it's original appearance, circa 1854.)

4. 76 and 78 N. Paint were home to the Star and Queen theaters respectively, where soldiers and civilians alike could go to see shows.  
5. The Elks Club, 42 W. Second, served as a temporary home to some 300 soldiers who, during the 1918 Spanish flu outbreak at the camp, participated in the embalming that took place at the Majestic Theatre and other sites around the city. Some 1,154 lives were lost at the camp during the outbreak.

6. The Ross County Courthouse served as an information center for civilians, locals and visitors, who were seeking information about the army and Camp Sherman.

**Sites of Interest (X = Begin or End Here)**

1. The Sherman Theater was built in early 1918 as a place soldiers could go to see movies. It was sat on the old canal bed and tow path, which is now the northern half of Water St.

2. Winter Garden was also on the old canal bed and for many years was a popular venue for a wide variety of live musical acts and other entertainment.

3. Army Club No. 1, on the upper floors of the Wissler Bldg., had a library, pool room, concert/dance hall (the round windows), barber shop and more.

