

## **History of the Trotwood-Madison Community**

### **Where Two Hearts Beat As One**

From its humble beginnings, the Trotwood-Madison community has grown to be known for its entrepreneurial spirit and civic pride, commercial success and governmental excellence, small town charm and big city advantages. From the establishment of Madison Township in 1809 to the Village of Trotwood's incorporation in 1901 to their merger in 1996, today's Trotwood has always been a unique community where two hearts beat as one.

Long ago, the famous mound builders known as the Hopewell Indians inhabited this southwest Ohio area. Their prehistoric relics and utensils have been found in Sycamore State Park as well as in the caves and tunnels around the Zerkle House, from where it is believed they set their signal fires. Later came the Shawnee and Miami Indians. Folklore has it Mrs. Iams, matriarch of the family that started today's pet food empire traded her baked goods for their rabbits, birds and venison from the kitchen of the Iams House, built from 1830-35 and now home to the Trotwood-Madison Historical Society.

Wolf Creek Pike itself reportedly follows an old Indian Trail. In 1801, the first pioneer families to arrive in the area settled along the famous creek, and on November 2, 1802 its namesake Leonard Wolf made the area's first recorded land purchase near there. In 1807 a large colony of German Baptist Brethren and Old School Baptists from Pennsylvania also settled along Wolf Creek.

On March 7, 1809 the Montgomery County Commission granted township status to the new Madison Township, formed from parts of Randolph and Jefferson Townships and the growing community had its first formal government body. According to early records a meeting was set at Martin Weybright's house for April 14 that year to elect the first 3 Township Trustees.

In 1824, Daniel Weymeyer began building a sawmill, gristmill and still house along the north fork of Wolf Creek. Due to financial difficulties the complex was sold at a sheriff's sale to Amos Higgins, the community's first successful entrepreneur. As the area's earliest known commercial enterprise the Mill operated until 1908. Union Road itself developed from part of the trail farmers used when they took their grain to the gristmill.

The Greenville-Dayton railroad was completed in 1854. Seeing the commercial opportunities it represented Amos built a railway station, tavern and inn behind the former meat locker and named it Higgins Station. Here trains were refueled and supplied with water from a pond on the present site of J.W. Devers & Son, Inc.

By the time fellow entrepreneur Lewis F. Pfoutz was operating a general store on Post Town Road near Little Richmond and collecting mail for his customers when he traveled to Dayton for supplies. With Higgins Station in place he moved his store and set up business on the corner of Main Street and Broadway where today's Olde Town train depot sits.

In 1866, the year after Civil War ended Pfoutz applied for a post office franchise, only to discover there was already a Higgins Station in Ohio. Having just read Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield*, he submitted one of its characters names, Aunt Betsy Trotwood, and the rest is history. To this day Trotwood is the only place in the U.S. so named.

Pfoutz was appointed the area's first postmaster, and in that same year the first Trotwood-Madison school was built. With its Township government, first post office and first school now in place an era of great civic progress began. That year also ushered in great economic progress for the business community when the American Express Company Office opened.

A flurry of entrepreneurial and civic activity soon followed. In 1879 the area's first printing office opened, in 1882 its first hotel was built. In 1893 the first high school was built, and in 1895 Devers & Son opened their body shop on the site of the Village's first blacksmith shop. In 1896 the Trotwood Lumber Yard opened, and the area's first grain elevator opened in 1900. To this day Devers is the community's oldest operating business.

The first example of planned development occurred in 1898 when the town of Trotwood was platted by Misters Pleasant and Worley, who later had streets named for them. Ironically that same year several dwellings were destroyed by fire. This tragic event led a few civic-minded individuals to purchase some basic firefighting equipment with their own funds, and with that the community's first fire department was formed.

With the turn of the century the area's second local government officially came into being. On September 16, 1901 the Village of Trotwood was incorporated by the State of Ohio. This Statutory Village Government provided for a Mayor, 6-member Council, 3-member Board of Public Affairs, Clerk-Treasurer and Marshals. By then the Madison Township Government had grown into a 3-member Board of Trustees with a Clerk, Treasurer, Health Officer, Justice of the Peace, 3 Constables, and 4 Road Superintendents.

By the early 1900s civic and business progress were continuing apace. In 1902 the area's first telephone service was made available. Farmers and Citizens Bank opened for business in 1909, and when Vaniman Ford opened in 1910 the Village of Trotwood's population was 348 people. In 1912 the area's first electric service was made available, and in 1913 Madison Township purchased its first road equipment, a roller costing \$2,215.

With the advent of the nation's depression, the Trotwood-Madison community suffered like the rest of the nation. And yet in 1932 another entrepreneurial milestone occurred when Trotwood Trailers opened as one of the first recreational vehicle manufacturers in the U.S. A large part of it later burned in the same fire that destroyed the first Village Hall.

By 1950 the Village's population was 1,066 people. By then the nation's post World War II prosperity began taking hold, and the Salem Avenue Corridor began its ascent as one of Montgomery County's prime retail shopping attractions, a tradition that continues today.

In April 1953, while responding to an accident at the South Broadway Bridge four Madison Township Fire Department volunteers were alarmed by the bridge's poor condition and the potential for its collapse. They decided the community needed rescue services for potential civic disasters, Trotwood Rescue, Inc. was born. By December that year Trotwood Rescue had announced its readiness to serve with American Red Cross-certified volunteers, two-way radio communications, emergency telephone service and a truck converted into a rescue vehicle. Much of the equipment was donated or paid for by its volunteers.

By 1957 the Trotwood-Madison community was rapidly becoming one of Dayton's prime suburbs. By 1958 the Village of Trotwood had a Police Chief, one full-time Officer and two part-time patrolmen. By 1960 Trotwood's population had grown to 4,992 people.

In the early 1960s the community's various fire departments merged to become the Madison Township Fire Department, and the transition to paid-on-call staff began. Stations 72 and 74 were built on Miller Avenue and West Trotwood Boulevard, which meant the community had a total of three stations. Soon after the first Madison Township Police Chief is hired.

On November 3, 1964 Trotwood's first Village Charter was approved, which became effective January 1, 1966. It established the Council-Manager form of government comprised of 7 City Council members empowered to select a City Manager as chief executive officer. By 1965 Trotwood's population was 6,400 people.

On May 13, 1969 the Village of Trotwood annexed the Salem Mall, new crown jewel of the Salem Avenue Corridor from Madison Township. Trotwood then defeated a prolonged annexation attempt by the City of Dayton for jurisdiction of what was already Montgomery County's second largest regional shopping center. For the next quarter century the mall essentially became Trotwood's center of commercial and social interaction.

With its population having reached 6,997 the Village of Trotwood became eligible for City status, and on February 13, 1971 Trotwood was officially incorporated as a City. Jan Upp designed the City Flag with its five arrows symbolizing industry, business, housing, schools, and farming. In 1973 the City purchased the 3035 N. Olive Road site where City Hall now stands. By 1980 Trotwood's population had reached 7,802. In June 1981 the Madison Township Fire Department hired its first 6 full-time personnel, and by mid-1989 Trotwood Rescue had hired its first 6 full-time personnel.

The 1990s brought huge changes to the nation and the area. Based on a rapidly increasing trend for centralized government, in November 1993 voters approve the establishment of the Trotwood-Madison Township Merger Commission, empowered to study combining both governments while preserving the Trotwood-Madison School District's boundaries. On August 3, 1994 its final report was adopted, and on January 1, 1996 the merger of Trotwood and Madison Township became official.

The merger made Trotwood Montgomery County's 2nd largest City with over 28 square miles and its 4th most populated with nearly 30,000 people. At that time the newly merged Trotwood Police department had 54 full time officers, 9 full time dispatchers, and 4 clerical support staff with 22 marked patrol cruisers. The respective fire departments were also combined, and on January 1, 1999 the Trotwood Fire Department and Trotwood Rescue Inc. formally joined forces.

By this time the Salem Avenue Corridor had been northwest Montgomery County's primary retail trade hub for nearly 50 years. But, in suffering the same fate as numerous indoor malls nationwide, by the mid-90s the Salem Mall had begun a steady decline. When successive owners failed to reverse the mall's fortunes, Trotwood City Council began defining its own vision for turning things around. After forming a redevelopment plan based on extensive market research, on October 6, 2004 the City of Trotwood purchased the former mall site. By early 2005 it was shut down.

Demolition of the site's remaining buildings began in early 2006. At the time of this writing, the City of Trotwood's leadership featured: Mayor Donald K. McLaurin; Vice-Mayor and Ward 1 Councilwoman Joyce Sutton Cameron; At-Large Councilwoman Barbara J. Staggs; At-Large Councilman Darreyl D. Davis; Ward 2 Councilman Rap Hankins; Ward 3 Councilman Ronald Vaughn; Ward 4 Councilwoman Mary A. McDonald; and City Manager Michael J. Lucking.

During 2007 Trotwood's New Town Center, The Landmark will be under construction. Sears and Home Depot are remaining as anchors and being joined by a third major anchor store as well as smaller retailers, top restaurants, a multi-cinema complex, mid-sized office space and market rate housing. The public sector elements will feature advanced education facilities, a new public library branch and a new City Hall.

Today, the City of Trotwood's leadership is paving the way for tomorrow's public-private success. In that same community long defined by its entrepreneurial spirit and civic pride, commercial success and governmental excellence, small town charm and big city advantages. In Trotwood – where two hearts beat as one.