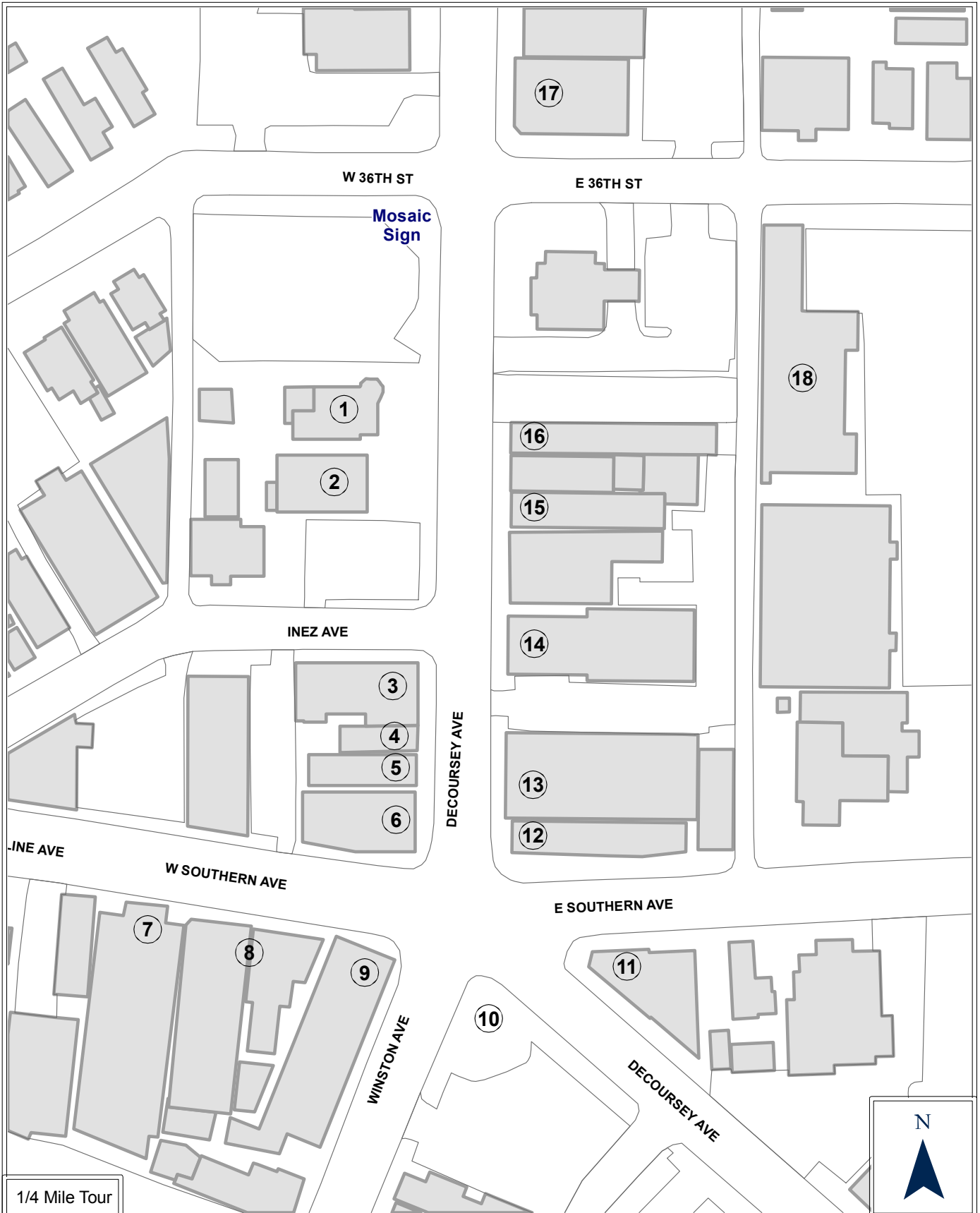




LATONIA WALKING TOUR



1/4 Mile Tour

Latonia Walking Tour

The City of Covington would like to welcome you, as you embark on one of seven tours designed to celebrate our thirteen National Register Historic Districts. The National Register of Historic Places, established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, is a listing of "districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American History, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture." The City of Covington is proud of its abundant collection of important structures; they are a treasure that we wish to share and keep alive, both for our citizens and the many visitors who come to our city each year. We thank you for your interest and are confident that you will find your experience in the Ritte's Corner Historic District to be informative, enjoyable and positively memorable!

HISTORY

Prior to its annexation in 1909, Latonia was an independent municipality, named after a nearby spring and ante-bellum spa. In the late nineteenth century, this area was home to several mills, distilleries, and a ferry across the Licking River to Campbell County. Latonia is probably best known, however, as the home of the Latonia Racetrack, located here from 1880 to 1939.

By the turn of the century, Latonia had experienced a great population explosion. With this expansion came a new image for the city as the original modest structures at the intersection of Southern, Decoursey and Winston Avenues were replaced by handsome two and three story brick buildings, most of which remain today.

This confluence of thoroughfares, named Ritte's Corner, continued to experience new growth until World War II, when the changing industrial base, re-routing of railroad and highway routes and the closing of the racetrack all began to take their toll on the community. However, thanks to the efforts of local businesses, professional leaders, and citizens, Ritte's Corner has retained its identity, viability and much of its original urban and architectural character.

On this tour, you will discover Latonia's commercial district, known as Ritte's Corner because of Ritte's Saloon, once located on the northeast corner. This five-way crossroads has been the professional, financial, commercial, and social core of the community for over a century.

Your tour will begin at the intersection of Thirty Sixth Street and Decoursey Avenue.

1. 3611 Decoursey Ave. c. 1910
Now used as an office building, this later addition to the Ritte's Corner streetscape is the only structure originally built for single family, non-commercial use. It was built as the home of Slade Carr and his family. Carr ran an elegant saloon located near the northwest corner of 36th Street where the Huntington Bank building stands now. Similar in scale to the homes of nearby Wallace Woods, this eclectic Classical Re-

vival house combines elements from many popular styles of the era. Of particular note is the commanding wrap-around porch and Queen Anne decorative dormer with its circular radiating window.

2. 3613-3615 Decoursey Ave. c. 1920
This double house is the most recent addition to the Ritte's Corner District. Notice the heavy, bracketed eaves and entrance canopy that suggest the Arts and Crafts style of architecture.

3. 3625 Decoursey Ave. c. 1930
This commanding brick building with opulent stone trim was originally built to house a local bank. Closed only a few years after its completion, it has served as Runyon Memorial church since the economic failure of the Great Depression. The church was named for Brother Runyon, longtime pastor of Latonia Christian Church. This church was an off-shoot of Latonia Christian, and they decided to honor their popular late minister in naming the church. Erected in a neoclassical style, this structure boasts fine three dimensional columns that introduce its recessed Greek façade.

4. 3627 Decoursey Ave. c. 1930
This location was best known as Evans Jewelers which occupied the space for a long time. It also featured a beautiful rock garden patio in back, created by building owner, Dr. Lucas Lee, in the 1930s. Remnants of the garden still remain.

5. 3629 Decoursey Ave. c. 1930
This modest, two-story pressed brick building is a good example of a depression era commercial structure. Unlike the more decorative buildings of an earlier era, this example is adorned with simple features, including a parapet or false roofline with intermittent stone details.

6. 3631-3633 Decoursey Ave. c. 1900
This charming structure flanking the corner of Decoursey and Southern Avenues may be the most picturesque building in Latonia. Originally built as a bank, this corner anchor boasts an eclectic façade, adorned with a curvaceous Flemish roofline and pinnacle Queen Anne corner turret. This was the First National Bank of Latonia, which at one time even issued its own currency. The rear of the building was an early home of the Latonia Post Office, and the second-floor cupola was office space for well known Latonia doctors and dentists.

Continue WEST on Southern Avenue

7. 15 West Southern Avenue c. 1930
This Art Deco movie theatre, known as "The Kentucky", with its brick and tile false façade, is a typical example of a mid-twentieth century movie house. It was one of several movie houses in Latonia. Despite many recent alterations, this building continues to dominate this otherwise modest streetscape.

8. 5-11 West Southern Ave. c. 1940
These two later commercial buildings are significant for

their glazed tile storefronts. Like the theatre next door, these two structures serve to exemplify the continuous growth experience by Latonia until the 1950s. The building closest to Ritte's Corner is built onto the front of an old frame home, which was long known as Mrs. Ryle's boarding house. The house still stands behind, and is the only remaining example of what Ritte's Corner streetscape was like in its early days.

9. 1-3 West Southern Ave. c. 1900
This three story, multi-use brick building, known as the Bird Building is the most prominent structure, both in scale and location, on Ritte's corner. Done in the Neo-Classical style, this building once housed a lodge hall, as well as the flats and storefronts that remain today. Note the commanding pilasters that adorn the bays of the eastern façade, as well as the simple classical cornice, both indicative of this style. The building was built by Dr. Bird, a prominent Latonia physician. He had his office there, and encouraged the opening of a pharmacy in the front for the convenience of patients. It was Pope's Drug Store from opening until 1946, then Schulte's Drug Store until the early 1980s. The third floor hall was used by several benevolent societies, including the Freemasons, and was initial home to several Latonia churches. It was made into apartments in the early 1940s.

10. Korean War Memorial Plaza c. 2004
The Korean War Memorial Plaza was a partnership project between the Ritte's East Neighborhood Group and VFW Post 6095, assisted by the City of Covington. The plaza was dedicated in 2004. The plaque on the wall lists the names of Latonia men who were killed in the Korean Conflict. The fountain was produced by Stewart Ironworks, as were the antique gates on either end of the brick wall. The plaza design was contributed by Covington architect, Andy Piaskowy, and the masonry work on the wall and the fountain basin was contributed by members of the stonemasons and bricklayers union. The plaza was designed to compliment the historic architecture of Ritte's Corner.

As you stand at Ritte's Corner, look to your east before returning north on Decoursey Avenue.

11. 1-3 East Southern Ave. c. 1930
This wedge-shaped commercial and residential building is set directly on the sharpest angle in Ritte's Corner. Neoclassical in form, this building boasts many elements of the Arts and Crafts style, as seen in the tiled roof and square tower that houses the elevator shaft. It was built by Oscar Boeckley to house his drugstore which previously had been located on the southeast corner. He established his pharmacy on the first floor, and intended the upper floors to be doctors' offices, though that never materialized, and they became apartments. Boeckley's Drug Store in that location was a Latonia institution for over 60 years. Both Boeckley's and Pope's pharmacies had soda fountains into the 1950s.

12. 3634 Decoursey Ave. c. 1880
This Italianate structure, known as the Ritte Building, gave Ritte's Corner its present name. One of the oldest remaining structures in this district, this building served as a saloon and grocery for many years. First it was Weber's Saloon, but was

owned by Henry Ritte during Latonia's heyday, prompting the use of his name for the heart of the community. During Prohibition, Ritte tried to stay in business serving soft drinks, but failed. Note the cast iron storefront and bracketed cornice that date this building to the late nineteenth century. The Ritte family home still stands nearby at the northeast corner of Church Street and Southern Avenue, though it has been modernized.

13. 3628-3632 Decoursey Ave. c. 1880
This large brick building once served as a bowling alley and billiard room for Ritte's saloon next door. It was owned and run by Walter Ritte, Henry's son. Notice the use of a parapet or false front wall on this structure. A popular design element, this technique was used on several other buildings in the Latonia commercial district, in hopes of giving modest buildings a grander façade. Walter built a Tudor-style home at the back of the family property at Church and Southern. It remains unaltered.

14. 3622-3634 Decoursey Ave. c. 1900
This austere turn of the century structure was also owned by the Ritte family. Note the pressed brick Neo-Classical façade that seems to be mounted on a simple building of fired brick. This practice of using finer materials on the façade was common during this era, in that one could achieve the effect of wealth from the street without exceeding the budget.

15. 3616 Decoursey Ave. c. 1920
This modest building, adorned with a buff and red brick patterned panel, housed a hardware store for 90 years. It opened as Martin's Hardware in 1905, became Martin & Holian's, then Holian's after Martin retired. Holian's closed in 1995. Some other hardware stores were Flake's, and Landwehr's.

16. 3612 Decoursey Ave. c. 1915
This two-story brick building with a remodeled storefront is significant for its Arts and Crafts style details. The addition of paired corbels supporting a superimposed cave are suggestive of this locally popular style. It has been the Latonia Bakery since it opened in 1917. First owned by the Barfknechts, it was bought by the Schliff family in 1929. Both men had emigrated from Germany. The Schliff's daughter, Helen, and her husband, Charles Petty, took over the bakery in 1945.

17. 3530 Decoursey Ave.
Mary Carroll had the building constructed in 1917, thus accounting for the C over the door. The commercial building provided her with income after her husband's death. It was home to a bakery/delicatessen, Fenton's dry cleaners, and Dierke's Grocery, which was later Acra's Grocery. In the back was Charlie Sam's Chinese Hand Laundry. The site had been occupied by a pool hall Mary owned with her husband, as well as their former home. Billy Carroll had been a well known jockey.

18. The Holy Cross Church and school Complex c. 1910-1940
This impressive group of five structures on the 3600 block of Church Street is a visual and architectural landmark of

Latonia. The complex consist of an early nineteenth century Romanesque church building a rectory, two school buildings, and convent. Each erected in a different style and time period, these structures represent the nature and growth of the whole Latonia community. Over the years the complex has changed. In 1978 the convent left and then Catholic Charities came to the complex in 1979. The church was built in 1910, the Elementary School was built in 1906-1908, the High School was built in 1930, the Covent was built in 1941, and the Rectory was built in 1924.

This ends the Latonia Walking Tour. Please stop by the Economic Development and Community Relations Department at 638 Madison Avenue, Rm. 407, to pick up the other Walking tours. There are seven tours in all and each is unique in its own way.

*Downtown
Latonia
Licking Riverside
MainStrasse
Mutter Gottes
Seminary Square
Wallace Woods*