

Kenilworth Avenue Historic District

Welcome to a self-guided walking tour of the Kenilworth Avenue Historic District in Dayton, Ohio. When designated, Kenilworth Avenue was the city's twelfth official historic district, and its eighteenth National Register district.

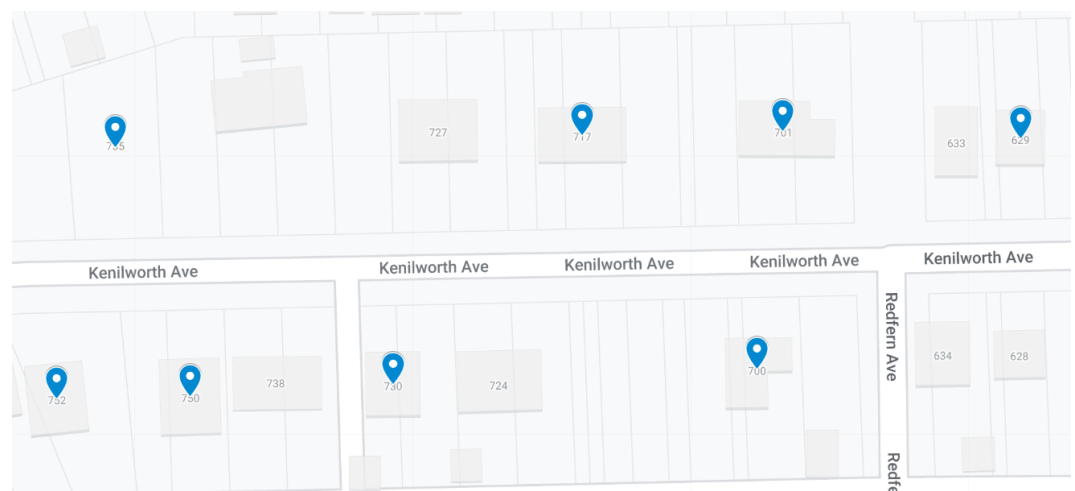
This walking tour will highlight the architectural and historical features of the area. Three other locally designated historic districts including Five Oaks' Squirrel-Forest and Grafton-Rockwood-Wroe areas, as well as the Grafton Hill district, are just a few blocks to the southeast and also await your discovery.

The tour is intended to provide a leisurely walk through this National Register District, allowing ample time to pause and appreciate its irreplaceable architecture and streetscapes. Please walk carefully, as streets and sidewalks can be uneven, and it's important to observe the terrain while you appreciate the area.

We recommend that you allow approximately one hour to complete the tour.

Kenilworth Avenue is flanked by Salem Avenue to the west and Old Orchard Avenue to the east. Cross streets from the west are Redfern Avenue, Bellevue Avenue, Richmond Avenue, and Grafton Avenue. To begin, start near the intersection of Kenilworth and Redfern on the north side of Kenilworth at house number 629. You will then walk west towards Salem Avenue for the tour.

- 📍 629 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 700 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 701 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 717 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 730 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 735 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 750 Kenilworth Ave
- 📍 752 Kenilworth Ave



629 Kenilworth Avenue

Adjacent to the Kenilworth Historic District, this asymmetric cottage revival home is primarily brick and stucco. It features a steep sloping roofline that hangs low on the west side. A small porch with arch entry door greets guests on the east side. The house features original multi-pane casement windows.



In August 1927, a building permit was issued to Mrs. A. D. Shellabarger for the construction of a single residence at 629 Kenilworth at a cost of \$9,570. W. W. Wilson Construction built the home.

In September 1936, the ladies of Kenilworth Avenue, Mrs. A. D. Shellabarger of 629, Mrs. Charles Wagner of 701, and Mrs. W. R. Yount of 633, were hostesses at a luncheon at the home of Mrs. Shellabarger. The ladies mentioned were all sisters living on the same street

In March 1955, the house was listed for sale in “Upper Dayton View” with this descriptive ad: A custom-built house of six rooms designed for present occupant. Near both schools and transportation. Double tiled walls with cement exterior finish having the built-in extras and all in excellent condition. First floor entrance hall with fine lavatory, wood fireplace in large living room, fine dining room and roomy breakfast room, attractive kitchen, three fine bedrooms and tiled bath on 2nd floor, large attic, 2-car garage, carpeting and some draperies included at the realistic price of \$23,500. Shown by appointment.

In March 1956, Robert and Ann Wourms welcomed home a son born at Good Samaritan Hospital.

In May 1969, a photograph by Robert J. Wourms was selected for display at the 78th annual exhibition of professional photography in New York. The exhibition was sponsored by Professional Photographers of America, Inc. Of the 3,800 photographs submitted, only 719 were accepted for the championship display. Wourms winning photograph was of his son, Richard, who was dressed in a navy-blue turtleneck, a windbreaker and a Dutch cap. The photograph was titled “Dick.”



The Journal Herald
May 21, 1969

700 Kenilworth Avenue

Built in 1919, this two-and-a-half story Tudor style home has a multi-gabled roof line and original multi-paned diamond patterned casement windows. A dominate chimney and an arch covered porch welcomes the residents into a home featuring ornately trimmed wood interior and multiple arched doorways.



IN October 1927, Orion E. Bowman, a Dayton attorney of prominence and well-known for his activities in religious circles, died at his home on Kenilworth Avenue. He was 48 years old. He was in association with attorney John H. Shively, having an office in the American Building in downtown Dayton. He was also associated with the First Brethren Church for about 20 years and served as its superintendent of the Sunday School for about six years.

Mr. Bowman was born in New Lebanon, Ohio in 1879. His father, Rev. John J. Bowman, was a minister in the Church of Brethren for forty-three years. Orion was a graduate of both Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio and the American School of Law in Chicago. He was a deputy probate judge of Montgomery County from 1909 to 1916 and assistant prosecuting attorney in 1918. He specialized in probate and corporation law. Mr. Bowman was a member of all Masonic fraternities and the Junior Order of American Mechanics. He was survived by his wife Della Mae and a son, Byron.

In April 1929, Dayton attorney Albert H. Sharrer purchased the residence from Mrs. Della Mae Bowman and in April 1939, Mr. Scharrer celebrated his 53rd birthday that was recognized in *The Dayton Herald* newspaper. They reported that he was a prominent attorney who had spent his entire life in Dayton. He was a leader in civic and legal circles. He served as assistant prosecuting attorney from 1919 to 1923 and was elected prosecuting attorney and served in that office until 1927. Afterwards he went back into private practice. He served as president of the board of directors at the Montgomery County Children's Home and was member and past president of the Civitan Club. Albert Sharrer was a graduate of Steele High School and studied law under Charles H. Kumler.

In July 1955, the All-Dayton Committee announced its endorsement of three candidates for the Dayton Board of Education. They were Robert E. Kline, Lowell Murr, and Marvin E. Farrier. The committee stated that Kline and Murr were chosen on the strength of their records as board members and that Farrier, a contracting engineer, because of his experience, could guide the board on spending a \$20 million bond issue that had been approved in May. Robert Kline, before joining NCR, had taught for two years in Jefferson Township Schools where he had graduated from. He was a past president of the Dayton Foreman's Club, chairman of the Education Committee of the Dayton Chamber of Commerce, and member

of the Ohio Conference Committee on Education. In November 1955, Kline, Murr, and Farrier were successful candidates and earned education board posts.

In January 1956, Gwen Kline, wife of Robert E. Kline and Montgomery County Republican Chairman, announced that she was running for Clerk of Courts. Mrs. Kline was born in Harrison Township, a graduate of Steele High School and Dayton Normal School, and a teacher at Northridge School for twelve years. She was a member of the Board of Directors of the YWCA and a former board member of the United Church Women's organization.



Journal Herald Photo

*Robert and Gwen Kline
The Journal Herald
October 28, 1965*

In August 1956, Mrs. Kline was named a delegate-at-large to the ninth biennial convention of the National Federation of Republican Women which was held in Chicago. Several republican speakers were slated to speak with Vice President Richard M. Nixon topping the list.

In March 1957, it was announced that Mrs. Kline was one of 125 Ohioans attending the fifth annual Republican Women's Conference in Washington, D. C. in April.

In November 1961, Robert was nominated as a candidate for the Montgomery County Charter Commission. The *Dayton Daily News* offered this bio: For a man without a college degree, Robert E. Kline has gone a long way in the field of education. He is director of education and training at the National Cash Register Co. and president of the Dayton Board of Education. A lifelong series of courses and self-education have put him where he is. These included studies at YMCA college in Chicago, conservatories of music in Dayton and St. Louis, and special seminars on human relations and industrial psychology. In the early 1920s Kline taught music at his alma mater, Jefferson Township High School. Now 62 years old, Kline lives at 700 Kenilworth Avenue in Dayton. He is a Republican.

In February 1962, Gwen was recommended to serve on the Montgomery County Board of Elections, the first woman to hold that post.

In September 1963, Robert was named to a state board post by Gov. James A. Rhodes. He was picked as a member of the new 11-man Ohio Manpower Advisory Committee, which implemented the manpower development and training programs of the Ohio Bureau of Unemployment Compensation.

In October 1965, Mr. Kline was the recipient of the "Citizens Legion of Honor" award by the Presidents Club of Dayton. The award is given for distinguished service to the community and the award is still given today.

In January 1966, Robert, president of the Dayton Board of Education and assistant president, industrial relations, for the National Cash Register Company, declared that he would run as the Republican nominee for the Montgomery County Commission. Kline won the race and became a County Commissioner. He served two terms from 1966 to 1974.

In March 1988 Robert E. Kline died. He was born on the Fourth of July in 1899 in Liberty, Ohio. Between 1924 and 1975, he played the organ for the Saturday morning Children's Concerts at the NCR auditorium, Dayton High School commencements and Sunday evening concerts at the Deeds Carillon. He played the carillon bells on many sunrise services at Carillon Park. Mr. Kline retired from NCR after 42 years, was a Montgomery County Commissioner, and served 14 years on the Dayton School Board, twelve of them as president. His wife Gwen preceded him in death in 1983. Robert was buried in Bear Creek Cemetery.

701 Kenilworth Avenue

This wood-sided 1929 historic American Colonial echoes homes of historic Salem, Massachusetts. A symmetrical home, it has original multi-paned double hung windows arranged primarily in eight over eight and six over six. It is flanked by an attached garage and breakfast room on either end. Notice the two chimney's that also lend to the home's symmetry.



In June 1935, George W. Good died at this home, the home of his daughter, Nancy Wagner. George was associated with his brother, Harry Good, in the operation of the Empire Livery stable located at the present site of the Third Street Arcade. He was buried in Fairview Cemetery in Englewood.

In October 1935, Charles Wagner, husband of Nancy, signed *The Journal Herald Safety Driving Pledge* which holds the signer to pledge themselves to drive safely in the interest of accident prevention. There were seven points they pledged to:

1. To drive at moderate speed and on my own side of road.
2. Not to pass cars on curves or hills.
3. To stop at stop signs.
4. Not to jump traffic lights.
5. In city traffic to be particularly watchful for pedestrians stepping into the line of traffic from behind parked cars.

6. Always to give hand signals showing my intention of turning to the left, to the right, or stopping, and not to leave the curb from a parked position without giving a signal.

7. To be fair to other drivers in all respects and to refrain from reckless driving.

In May 1937, Charles E. Wagner died at home at the age of 56 after a short illness. He was president and general manager of the S. W. S. Chevrolet Co., located at 108 North Jefferson Street, and the West Side Chevrolet Company, located at 820 West Third Street. He had been in business with his brother-in-law, A. D. Shellabarger, the secretary-treasurer of the business, for 15 years. In his younger years he worked as a salesman at the National Cash Register Co. He then joined the sales force of the Willys-Overland company and subsequently various Chevrolet companies. He was a member of all Masonic fraternities, the Rotary Club and the Engineers Club.



Charles E. Wagner
The Dayton Herald
May 17, 1937

In October 30, 1942, Frances M. Good died at the home of her daughter, Nancy Wagner. Frances was born in Montgomery County and spent most of her life near Phillipsburg in the northern part of the county. Surviving were daughters Mrs. Wagner of 701 Kenilworth, Mrs. A.D. Shellabarger of 629 Kenilworth, and Mrs. W. R. Yount of 633 Kenilworth.

On August 31, 1958, Nancy Wagner died at the age of 78. She had become president of the S. W. S. Chevrolet Co. in 1937 after the death of her husband, Charles. She was a member of the Grace Methodist Church, the church board, Little Garden Club, Altrusa Club, and Dayton Women's Club.

In December 1976, James and Judith Hayes welcomed home a newborn son to this Kenilworth home.

In March 1979, Jim Hays was the neighborhood spokesman at a Dayton city commission meeting when it became known that the Dayton Free Clinic had plans to move from North Main Street to the former Rothenberg Medical Building at 1127 Salem Avenue. Hays stated that the Free Clinic would disturb the residential nature of his neighborhood by drawing increased "transient traffic."

"We are not opposed to the Free Clinic," Hays told the commissioners. "We are opposed to its location in a family-oriented residential section."

"It's not like we're against people who can't afford medical help having a place to go," said Judy Hays, wife of Jim. "There's a real need for that and I think that's pretty well recognized all around. But why our neighborhood?"

In August 19, 1979, during the arguments on whether or not the Free Clinic would move to Salem Avenue, this description of the neighborhood was offered in the *Dayton Daily News*. "Katydid chirp in the boughs of tall trees leaning over the old, broad homes on Kenilworth

Avenue in the Five Oaks section of Dayton. The hum of cars on Salem Avenue mixes with the shouts of kids playing in the yards.

It's a peaceful neighborhood, the residents say, a stable, friendly place to live."

717 Kenilworth Avenue

This 1929 Chateausque style home features a symmetrical masonry façade, polychromatic stonework, clay-tiled roof, and flamboyant detail over the entrance archway and windows. A pedimented column door hood on ionic columns offers elegance not seen often in homes in the neighborhood.



In January 1929, several lawyers and a judge were confined to their homes due to attacks of influenza. The ill lawyers were Robert R. Nevin, Conrad J. Mattern of 717 Kenilworth Avenue and Judge Robert C. Patterson of Rockwood Avenue.



*Conrad J. Mattern
Dayton Daily News
February 19, 1938*

In October 1936, a fire causing \$10,000 damage swept through the home of Conrad Mattern. He awoke to heavy smoke and fought his way down the flame ridden stairs and across a blazing floor before he made it to safety. The fire destroyed his personal library and about 500 books representing 35 years of collecting and worth several thousand dollars. Included in the book collection were many rare and first edition volumes, as well as sets of classics. The home sustained heavy damage on the first floor and threatened the second floor. Also destroyed were oriental rugs, antiques, and many pieces of fine furniture. Firemen reported that a short-circuited reading lamp wire in the library caused the blaze.

In February 1938, Conrad J. Mattern was found dead in his bed after suffering a minor stroke the day before. Mattern was born on October 14, 1860, in Pomeroy, Ohio. His family moved to Dayton in 1888. He obtained his law degree at the Cincinnati law school and was admitted to the bar in 1891. He accepted an appointment as a deputy clerk in the common pleas court where he served for four years. He then took an appointment in the police court where he served for three years. He became a defense lawyer and was selected to represent Albert Frantz in one of Dayton's most infamous cases, the murder of Bessie Little. Although his client was sent to die in the electric chair, he was noted for his brilliant defense strategy. Mattern represented more than 20 people charged with murder. In 1893, Conrad married Jessie Whitehurst of Yellow Springs, Ohio. A son, Guinn, died in San Diego, California in April 1918 when his plane crashed into the ocean during a training operation.

The October 15, 1942, headline in *The Dayton Herald* read: “Three Physicians To Leave Dayton For Army Posts.” The article included a photo of Dr. Robert M. Craig who had received an Army commission as a First Lieutenant. He closed his offices in the Fidelity Building in preparation for reporting to duty with the United States Public Health Service, a branch of the Army in wartime.

Dr. Craig was a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University in 1934 and the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine in 1938. He interned at Miami Valley Hospital and began practice in general medicine in 1939.

Craig was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Albert E. Craig. Robert’s wife and daughter, Nancy, aged 3, remained in Dayton while Robert served in the Army.

In January 1949, Albert Craig was elected president of the Ohio Bakers Association. He was the president of the Dayton Bread Co. located at 913 South Patterson Boulevard.

In October 2011, the house was put up for sale at a public auction. The home was appraised at \$84,000 and was described as improved as a two-story single family residence, brick interior, 8 rooms, (4 bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths), tile roof, gas/hot water steam, central air, full semi-finished basement, two or more woodburning fireplaces, detached two car garage, built in 1929.

In April 2012, the house sold for \$82,000. In 2024, Zillow.com estimated the house at \$193,200.

730 Kenilworth Avenue

In June 1925, a permit was issued to Charles F. Frazer for the construction of a single house and garage at 730 Kenilworth Avenue. The handsome American Foursquare house was estimated at \$10,000 and the garage at \$495. It too features polychromatic brick and has a unique turret-like column of windows.



An ad for an Executor’s Sale to settle the estate of Aloys A. Mueller, who died in 1938, was placed in *The Dayton Herald* in October 1941.

A public auction was to be held in late October.

The home at 730 Kenilworth Avenue was described as a very desirable two-story pressed brick residence of eight rooms with all modern conveniences. A vapor heating system, insulation, asbestos tile roof. Lot 80’x130’ with a two-car pressed brick garage with side



Left: Dr. Robert M. Craig
The Dayton Herald
October 15, 1942

drive. An exceptionally fine home and in a choice location. The best material and workmanship were used in the construction of this property.

Walter and Leona Dahm and family were living at 730 Kenilworth as reported by the *Dayton Daily News* on February 20, 1943. Their 7-year-old daughter, Marilyn E. Dahm, died after a short illness. She was survived by her parents and four brothers: Robert, James, William and Jerome.

Walter F. Dahm died on Friday, October 23, 1981, at the age of 81 in his long-owned home at 730 Kenilworth Avenue. He was the co-founder of The Dahm Bros. Co., Inc., a local roofing contracting company established in 1926.



Leona died at the age of 97 on December 27, 2007. She and Walter had been married for 50 years. Mrs. Dahm was a member of Corpus Christi Catholic Church for over 65 years. Her life was her family and her home.

735 Kenilworth Avenue

This Craftsman-style home was built in 1911. It features massive stone columns and a rustic stone base. The second floor of the house features Tudor-style half-timbering, exposed rafter tails and wide overhanging eaves. Notice the decorative arrangement of panes in the upper window sashes. You might think it is Prairie style, but it doesn't have the relative refinement of that style, which tends to employ brick, siding, or stucco. The Prairie style home is not typically this rusticated. Also, this home does not have the extreme horizontality and low-slope roofs which are typical of higher-style variants of Prairie.



In April 1915, William H. Darrow advertised lots for sale on Kenwood Avenue. In 1917, William and his wife, Agnes, lived at 735 Kenilworth Avenue.

In February 1927, Mrs. Darrow was the winner in the garden contest conducted by the *Garden and House Builder* magazine. Agnes submitted photographs and a 1000-word description of her garden which also featured a small pond. She won, and her photos and description were scheduled to appear in the May issue of the magazine. She donated the prize money she won to the Little Garden Club of which she was a member.

In December 1933, Agnes was named alternate director of region no. 8, its headquarters in Dayton, of the Ohio Council for Roadside Improvement. The purpose of the organization

was to promote roadside beautification as part of a national project headed by Mrs. W. G. Mather, representing the Garden Club of America.

May 1973, William H. Darrow died at the age of 88. He was a retired contractor and former member of the Dayton City Club, the 49ers, and Miami Valley Golf Club.

750 Kenilworth Avenue

This home is a classic bungalow style that features rustic stone cladding on the porch columns and chimney, a low wide arch over the porch opening, and a relatively squat but welcoming dormer projecting from the gently sloping roof.



In July 1924, Mr. and Mrs. James A. Atwood left their bungalow-style home for a two-week vacation at Yellowstone Park.

In January 1942, James, aged 59, head of the James A. Atwood Electrical Construction company died at his residence after a year's illness. He was a native of Burlington, Vermont where he graduated from the University of Vermont. At the age of 19, he worked for the Hobart Manufacturing Co. in Troy, Ohio and a few years later was employed as an estimator by the Tyson Co. in the electrical business in Dayton. He went into the electrical construction and engineering field for himself before the 1913 flood. Mr. Atwood was a member of the Dayton City Club, the Rotary Club, and the Miami Valley Golf Club.

In September 1952, the home was being sold and the real estate listing read: "Beautiful 1½ -story modern frame home, 30' beam ceiling, living room with large stone fireplace, dining room, large sun room, 3-bedrooms and modern bath, full basement with extra toilet, large new furnace and garage."

In October 2003, the home was once again up for sale and the listing price had soared to \$136,900. The description: "Charming Historical Mission Home – located in Dayton's first Urban Conservation District. Quiet street, lined with tall mature trees. Loads of updates, electrical, plumbing, kitchen. Beautiful hardwood floors. Built in bookcase, woodwork, stone fireplace highlight in large living room. Delightful sunroom, fireplace in master bedroom. Three bedrooms. Walk-out basement. Attached garage. Custom stone walk. Large front porch.

752 Kenilworth Avenue

Built near the second decade of the 1900s, this eclectic style home features a Swiss chalet-style motif. The three-story home exhibits a variety of construction material including stone, stucco, and frame. A noticeable feature is the hip roof.



For nearly 3 decades, Frank and Mina Watt lived at 752 Kenilworth Avenue. The Little Gardens Club met at the home in which Mina was a gracious hostess. In June 1950, Frank E. Watt, a retired salesman for the Western Tablet and Stationary Co., died at the residence at the age of 76.

In November 1950, the Little Gardens Club once again met at the home of Mina Watt and Mrs. John Aull gave a talk on “The Story of Corn.” Mrs. John Aull was Marie Aull, the founder of Aullwood Audubon Center in Englewood.



In October 1979, Mark Lamantia, got his fifteen minutes of fame when he was photographed cementing the top of the Dayton Art Institute that ran on page 3 of *The Journal Herald*. Mark was an employee of Schriber Sheet Metal & Roofing Inc. and was now living at the home with his parents.

In August 1986, Dick Lamantia was the proprietor of Dick's Smoke Shop, a magazine and gift shop in the lobby of the Belton Inn, the former Holiday Inn in downtown Dayton on First Street. Dick, a native of Lima, was a former NCR salesman and sales instructor for 25 years. He gave up the gray flannel suit, white shirt and club ties for shorts, t-shirts and sockless docksiders. His son found a plaque and hung it over the shops' cash register. It proclaimed in gold that R. J. Lamantia was among NCRs Retail Systems Salesmen of the Year for 1970. Dick says he is happy as a hog in a mud puddle every morning he opens his shop. He said, “I always enjoyed my years at NCR but there is a certain frustration level of going to work at NCR every day. I got a hankering to do something different...I just wanted to get out of the rat race.”



*Dick Lamantia
Dayton Daily News
August 24, 1986*

At one point, when he was much younger, he thought of going into the priesthood, but his father was injured in a serious automobile accident and he put that on hold to help his mother. A year later, he enlisted in the U. S. Army, serving as an agent with the counterintelligence corps in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania from 1952-53, and in Lima until 1955. He began working at NCR in 1957. He was a “victim of cutbacks” and a change in technology at NCR in 1981. He then taught three classes per quarter in marketing and

advertising at Sinclair Community College. By 1986, he had been married to his wife Polly for 34 years and they had seven children, several who helped their father at the shop.

This concludes your walking tour of the Kenilworth Avenue Historic District in the Five Oaks Neighborhood. If you have any questions about this remarkable residential neighborhood, please contact the Five Oaks Neighborhood Improvement Association via their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064422170723>.

The bios of the residents of the homes come from the newspapers *Dayton Daily News* and *The Journal Herald* found on newspapers.com. Photos of the homes come from websites Google Maps and Zillow and from photos taken by Preservation Dayton volunteers.

This walking tour is a project of Preservation Dayton, Inc. Preservation Dayton is a grassroots alliance of neighborhoods and individuals who actively promote preservation and historically sympathetic revitalization of the Dayton community. For more information, visit the Preservation Dayton website at www.preservationdayton.com.

Preservation Dayton gratefully acknowledges the funding for this tour from a City of Dayton Mini-Grant.

We hope you'll join Preservation Dayton and explore Dayton's other exciting, locally designated and National Register historic neighborhoods.