

The City of Dublin is a thriving community located in northwest Franklin County, Ohio. Dublin has undergone tremendous growth in the last three decades, with the population increasing from a village of approximately 700 in 1970 to nearly 35,500 in 2004. Still, the historic district area retains the character, scale, and feel of a traditional village center.

The history of Dublin and Washington Township are closely intertwined. Washington Township is in the extreme northwest corner of Franklin County, along the Scioto River, flanked by high bluffs running from north to south along the eastern edge of the township. Fertile farmland abounds throughout the township. Even before Ohio became a state in 1803, land was purchased in the area that was to become the Village of Dublin. Peter and Benjamin Sells came from Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, to purchase land for their father, three brothers and themselves. The 400 acres purchased for their brother John were located on the high west bank of the Scioto where Historic Dublin now stands. The brothers also purchased land north and south of the original village boundaries.

The settlement of Dublin started slowly, with John Sells and his family settling on his land in 1808 and his establishment of the first tavern in the area in 1808 or 1809. Sells began to survey lots to establish a town by 1810 and conferred the honor of naming the new town upon his surveyor, John Shields. Shields named the future village after his birthplace, Dublin, Ireland. By 1818, Sells advertised 200 town lots for sale in the Columbus newspaper. He listed the excellent building stone, clay for brick and pottery, and an offer of three years' credit as inducements to purchase lots in the new town. Settlement continued slowly as the community gained residences, a gristmill, a distillery, sawmills and other businesses that served the local population and the farmers from the surrounding area. As evidence of Dublin's permanence as a settlement, a post office was established in 1820.

As the community and the township grew, better transportation became a necessity. Lacking a railroad, which spurred development in many Ohio communities in the 19th century, Dublin was dependent on its system of roads. The need for a bridge to span the Scioto River became critical for Dublin so that it could be physically connected to Worthington to the east and Columbus to the south. The first bridge in 1840 was a wooden covered bridge. It was later replaced with a steel span bridge in 1880, and the present Works Progress Administration (WPA) concrete arch bridge was completed in 1935.

An effort was made in 1855 to incorporate the village and establish a local government, but the idea was rejected. The issue was revisited in 1881, and in September the Village of Dublin was incorporated. With local government, public improvements became possible. Among those undertaken in the late 19th and early 20th

(Photo 1) Dating from about 1848 to 1850, this building once stood at the southwest corner of Bridge and High streets in what is today Historic Dublin. The multi-paned windows and beveled siding were typical of the period; the roof was either wood or slate shingles. The sign over the corner door advertises “Oysters.”



(Photo 2) This view dates from about 1890 and shows a two-story structure built as an addition to the south end of the building at the southwest corner of Bridge and High streets. Dublin’s post office was in the right half of the first floor, while an agency of The Mansfield Buggy Co. occupied the left half.



(Photo 3) One of Dublin’s relatively few commercial structures built in a traditional commercial form, this building was at the northeast corner of Bridge and High streets. The photo dates from the 1880s. Note the extra tall four-pane commercial display windows with wood bulkheads, and the abundance of street furniture.



centuries were the installation of gas street lamps in 1888, followed by carbide lights in 1907 and finally electric lights in 1920. By the early 20th century, the local economy was largely based on agriculture and quarrying, and Dublin businesses were largely dependent on the local population.

Dublin maintained a relatively stable population, with very little growth in population during the first seven decades of the 20th century. This changed abruptly in the early 1970s with the construction of Interstate 270 around Columbus and the development of Muirfield Golf Club and Muirfield Village by golf champion Jack Nicklaus. This innovative planned community was located about four miles north of the village core. During the last three decades, the City has grown to fill in the spaces between the historic center of Dublin and Muirfield Village, as well as expanding to the south, east and west. The current boundaries of Dublin encompass 23 square miles.

In spite of the tremendous growth that has taken place in recent years, the physical form of Historic Dublin is distinctive and clearly reflects the early history of the community. A comparison of the historic maps from 1857 and 1872 shows very little change in the size and layout of the village. In fact, the form of the village at that time is still very much in evidence in Historic Dublin today. The major north-south road (High Street, also known as SR745) runs parallel to the river on a high bluff, with another parallel road (Riverview Street) running along the river. The main intersection is High and Bridge Streets, as it was historically, and the bridge crossing the Scioto still connects east and west Dublin.

Dublin residents and public officials have long appreciated the special character of Historic Dublin. Much of Historic Dublin, along with individual properties and stone walls throughout Washington Township, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 based on both architectural and historic significance. The City of Dublin took steps to protect and preserve the historic core of the community as well as other historic sites throughout the community in 1970 through the establishment of the Architectural Review Board. Credit for the preservation of Historic Dublin's special character must also be given to the stewardship of generations of Dublin property owners who have maintained and improved the buildings and their physical environment.

Today, Historic Dublin forms the historic heart of the community. It continues to be a thriving mixed-use neighborhood, with residences concentrated along Riverview and Franklin Streets and commercial, institutional, and residential uses intermingled along High and Bridge Streets. The Dublin Vision for the 21st Century recognizes Historic Dublin as a special place which "...graciously welcomes both residents and visitors to a unique blend of historic preservation and modern vitality..." It also contains specific recommendations to ensure Historic Dublin's long term vitality.

(Photo 4) A view from about 1878 showing the original 1840 Scioto River bridge being dismantled. The high hill in the background and the ice-breaking angle on the upstream side of the channel pier indicate that this view looks east from what is today Historic Dublin.



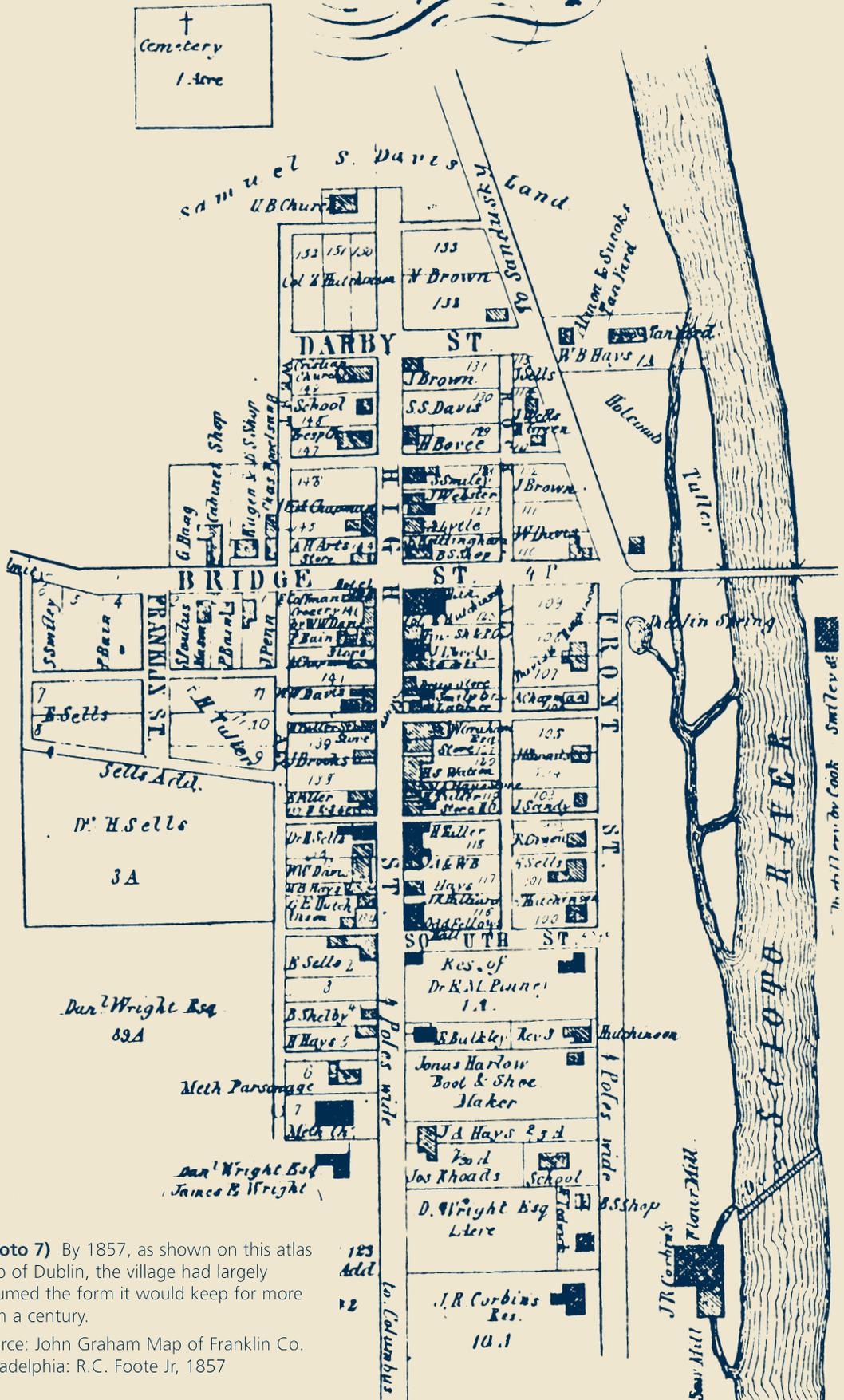
(Photo 5) Looking west into Dublin from about the center of the 1880 steel bridge that replaced the 1840 wood covered bridge. This photo was made on March 24, 1935, the day before work began on the bridge that still crosses the Scioto today.





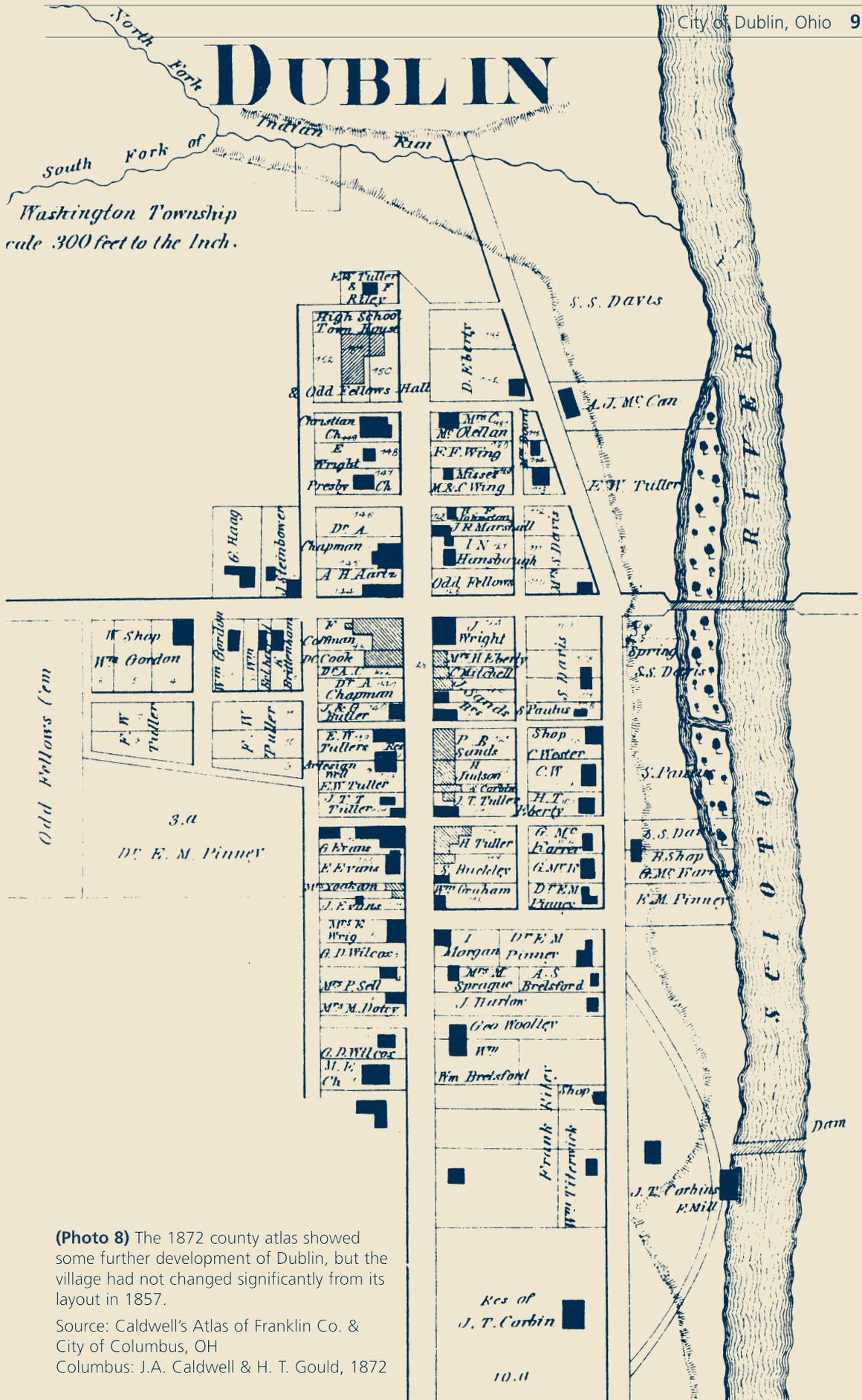
(Photo 6) This 1947 aerial photo shows how little Dublin had changed in the preceding 75 years. North is at the top of the picture. The 1935 bridge carrying Bridge Street over the river is clearly visible, as is the recently-built Franklin Street, the light-colored stripe through the farm fields at the left side of the photo. At this time only one house had been built on Franklin.

DUBLIN



(Photo 7) By 1857, as shown on this atlas map of Dublin, the village had largely assumed the form it would keep for more than a century.

Source: John Graham Map of Franklin Co. Philadelphia: R.C. Foote Jr, 1857



(Photo 8) The 1872 county atlas showed some further development of Dublin, but the village had not changed significantly from its layout in 1857.

Source: Caldwell's Atlas of Franklin Co. & City of Columbus, OH
Columbus: J.A. Caldwell & H. T. Gould, 1872