



Powell, Ohio is a small community in Liberty Township of southern Delaware County. It was originally part of a 4,000 acre tract granted to James Parker in 1800. During its early years it was known as Middlebury and later, Halls Corners after Thomas Hall opened a general store in 1850. Around 1857 Judge Thomas W. Powell was instrumental in the settlement being granted its own post office. In appreciation, the community was renamed Powell. For many years the village of Powell consisted of Hall's store, a telegraph office, two churches and a one-room schoolhouse. Its population stabilized at approximately 350 until the mid-1980's when the Columbus population began its explosion northward into Delaware County. At that time Powell still retained its rural atmosphere, some of its original buildings and had become a center for excellent antique and craft shops.

As more and more farmland was sold for home sites, albeit of a fine quality and attractive to affluent professionals from the Columbus area, the local families became concerned--very concerned. There was no wish to impede development but there was a desire to control and plan its course and retain the character and personality that had made Powell such an attractive community to grow in. There were also individuals much interested in saving the historical heritage of southern Delaware County while materials and information were still available. To that end, in 1986, the Powell-Liberty Historical Society was formed.

This Society's function is to discover and collect materials which help to establish or illustrate the history of our area, its exploration, settlement, development, progress, education, arts, science, agriculture, manufactures, trade and transportation. It collects printed materials and objects which illustrate life, conditions or events of the past and present.

The Society provides for the preservation and accessibility of such materials for examination and study. It maintains interest and works towards the preservation of village and rural life sites, buildings, monuments and markers. A major function is to take an active role in education for schools, the various media and the general public. It also holds meetings, conducts programs and plans events to inform and awaken public interest.

A major opportunity for the Historical Society arose in 1987 with a generous gift from Multicon Builders, Inc. and George W. Banning Associates, Inc.--no less than the Martin-Perry Homestead on Olentangy Street. The Homestead is unique in that it is the only home in Powell in nearly original condition. Even the woodwork still has its original finish. The house was the home of Albert and Mary Lowry Martin in the late 1800's and is typical for the period. It contains a kitchen, pantry, dining room, birthing room and small and large parlors on the first floor and a large master bedroom with a dressing room, a small storage or sewing room and another bedroom on the second floor. Interestingly enough, electricity and running water were added in 1928 but a bathroom was never included. Mrs. Erwin Perry lived in the house until 1979, after which the house was unoccupied until acquired by the Historical Society. It is still equipped with the original outhouse.

The beginning of the restoration process was made possible through the generosity of individuals and organizations who either lived or had an interest in the Powell area. There were two anonymous gifts totaling \$13,000. Harold Conklin contributed a generous check in the amount of \$6,000. Bartholomew Run Associates provided \$15,000. Jeff Johns Company and Planned Communities, Inc. contributed \$9,500 and a \$500 document case and M.I. Schottenstein, Inc. donated a cash gift of \$1,000.

Through the faith and support demonstrated by these initial leadership gifts and some that followed, work is well in process at this time. The major thrust of the Society is the completion of the Homestead project and its opening to the public.

With its restored, furnished and equipped rooms and display areas, the house will serve as the center for the Historical Society and as a major focal point for the community and southern Delaware County historians. It is anticipated that it will be manned by docents from the Society during public hours who will be available to conduct tours and provide local information. The plan includes parking areas for school buses and visitors.