

Marion Voices Folklife + Oral History presents ...

the Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project (CHAMP)



Marion County CHAMP Report: Southern Marion County Communities: Prospect, Waldo, & Green Camp For more: marionvoices.org/CHAMP



This report details community feedback, findings, & discussions from our June 23rd, 2024 Southern Marion County CHAMP Session, held at Prospect Community Park in the heart of of Prospect, Ohio, on the banks of the mighty Scioto River. Report findings are ultimately only reflective of the participants at each session; but provide a useful starting place for thinking about future investments in arts, culture, & community in Marion County!

Thank you to all who participated in the Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping process!

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AMPLIFYING MARION COUNTY'S
UNDERHEARD HERITAGES ...
FOR MORE JUST FUTURES <3

Marion Voices Folklife + Oral History's



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Contact Us:
marionvoicesfolklife@gmail.com
marionvoices.org | Tel. 614.573.3907
Director: Jessa Lamar Reece Holler

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Marion County CHAMP Report: Southern Marion County

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Session Summary & Participants: Southern Marion County -- Prospect, Ohio

Our Southern Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Session was held in June 2024 in downtown Prospect, Ohio at the historic, WPA-built Prospect Community Park: a community gem that was repeatedly cited by CHAMP session participants as a cornerstone of Southern Marion County culture. This intimate session drew just two participants -- both active long-time community organizers in Prospect -- alongside two Marion Voices team members. Both community participants are involved with downtown revitalization efforts: including historic preservation, small business incubation, festival design, & place activation. One grew up in Marion & relocated to Prospect to open an art studio & gallery after launching a successful career in historic building restoration; & the other is a homesteader & gardener who founded Prospect's Farmers' Market. This session's participants mapped cultural assets & fostered a discussion about the heritage & futures of Southern Marion County, with key themes including the importance of downtown historic preservation, getting policy changes to make it feasible for historic small-town building owners to revitalize & reinvest, cleaning up & rehabilitating the legacy of the Scioto River following its Superfund designation, & utilizing festivals & community events to keep downtown Prospect's vibrant spirit alive.

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marionvoicesfolklife@gmail.com

marionvoices.org | Tel. 644.372.5907

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Cultural heritage assets mapping projects lead to lists // directories of cultural assets organized by community, as well as lots of good ideas about how to better activate, network, & build on our resources. They often also surface projects & demands for funding: community needs that Marion Voices can bring to municipal, non-profit, & philanthropic leaders as a part of our advocacy efforts to grow arts- & culture-based economies for Marion County.

In short: your ideas & contributions will help us build more just, more abundant futures for everyone in Marion County ... starting with our diverse local heritages! **Let's goooo!**

Cultural Assets Mapping Resources, Thank-Yous, & Citations

We are grateful to a number of municipal, non-profit, & community Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Projects across the country for sharing resources, guides, & materials, which helped our Marion Voices team develop our folklife & cultural arts-based Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project kit, facilitation plan, & materials! We are especially grateful to the City of Austin's Cultural Assets Mapping Project (CAMP) & CAMP Kit, which served as a model for this packet!

Thank you to our funders, the **Ohio Arts Council**, **Ohio Humanities**, **National Endowment for the Arts**, & private Marion Voices donors, for helping to make the Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping process possible for Marion County! Additional thanks to the **America-250 Ohio Semiquincentennial Commission** for support for the project's next phase: the North-Central Ohio Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project, helping bridge this work with our regional neighbors!

Project Team -- Credits & Acknowledgements: Jess Lamar Reece Holler -- Project Director, Lead Facilitator & Analyst, Graphic Design; Jeff Nagle -- Maps, Session Notes, Graphic Design, & Research; Johnnie Jackson -- Outreach & Strategic Lead; Danlaly Pavón -- Translation, Interpretation, & Language Justice; CHAMP Community Liaisons -- Irene Tron (Western Marion County), Danlaly Pavón & Evelyn Olivios Lisiacki (Latine Communities); Ms. Linda Sims & Ms. Katie Reese-Hairston (Marion City & Suburbs); Ms. Jessie Thompson (African-American Communities); Shannon Pegg & the Marion Area LGBTQ+ Coalition (Queer/Trans* Communities); April Morrison & Cody Higley (Eastern Marion County); Tim Gorenflo & Susan Ann Rhodes (Southern Marion County);).

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Thank you for being CHAMPs for Marion County Culture!



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🏆 What is cultural heritage assets mapping? 🏆

Cultural heritage assets mapping is a tried-&-true participatory process used in communities across the United States & world to guide communities in identifying our cultural, historic, arts, natural, & community resources; & making plans for their protection. Cultural heritage assets mapping projects can surface what we have in our community -- cultural heritage assets. Knowing what we have is the first step in organizing & advocating together to better invest in these resources. Cultural heritage assets mapping can also identify resources we used to have, & lost -- & can lead to important discuss about why those losses occurred, how we can repair them, & how we can build different futures that reflect all histories & meet the needs of all community members. **Our goal is to set a blueprint for our county's cultural futures!**

🏆 What is a cultural heritage asset? 🏆

Cultural heritage assets are resources related to arts, culture, or heritage that are present in our communities & on the landscape. Some cultural heritage assets can be mapped -- physical locations, for example. Others -- what folklorists call "intangible cultural heritages" -- may be connected to a place in a more abstract or general way: like a regional foodways dish that is present across multiple restaurants or dairy bars, or an association (Marion & popcorn; Bucyrus & bratwurst.)

Some general categories of cultural assets we invite you to consider in our Marion County CHAMP process include:

- Organizations
- Performance Venues
- Galleries & Museums
- Foodways Establishments
- Businesses
- Religious Spaces

Tip: See our Marion Voices CHAMP Packet for more details on how to lead your own Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project!

Ultimately, there is no "right or wrong" or when it comes to identifying cultural heritage assets in our communities. You are the expert. If you think a resource is important to your community, say so ... & we'll include it!

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🏆 Historic Contexts: Southern Marion County 🏆

Southern Marion County -- at the southern edge of the historic Sandusky Plains prairie formation -- is bounded by the Scioto River to the West (crossing thru the Village of Prospect), & the Olentangy (Whetstone) River to the East, near Waldo. Like other parts of Marion County, Southern Marion County was historically a Wyandot, Lenape, & Shawnee hunting ground similarly shaped by white settler-colonialism in the early 19th-century (including the history of fortification of the region, in white settlers' ongoing violences against indigenous peoples) & the mid-19th century development of railways. Uniquely, however, the close confluence of Southern Marion to Union & Delaware Counties have meant these three counties share a long-strnding pattern of cultural, commercial, & economic exchange. Like Marion County's other Villages, the Southern Marion County Villages of Waldo & Prospect once hosted their own village schools. An extended battle for consolidation in Pleasant Township in the 1960s, however, meant that Waldo students -- while geographically very close to Pleasant Township -- were eventually bussed to Northeastern Marion County to attend the new River Valley Schools in Caledonia. Prospect also successfully evaded consolidation for a while, before students finally were routed to Elgin Schools in Northwestern Marion County. The Village of Waldo's fate has been shaped by the development of US 23: making Waldo the only Marion County Village to be located on a four-lane highway. This boost in traffic has kept downtown Waldo -- and especially, its beloved G&R Tavern, famous for its fried bologna sandwich -- commercially viable, when other village downtowns have struggled. Prospect's proximity to the Scioto River shaped its downtown development: including thru its 19th-century sanitarium hotel where guests could "take in the waters," through the catastrophic 1913 flood, which wiped out much of the town; & through the legacy of the Little Scioto Superfund Site, which has impacted water quality & cultures of recreation, foodways, & festival on the river to this day. Today, artists & entrepreneurs are working to revitalize Prospect's unique two-street downtown through festivals, events, historic preservation, & place activation.

🏆 Cultural Contexts: Southern Marion County 🏆

- **Indigenous History & Heritage: Wyandot, Shawnee, Lenape (removed to Oklahoma & Kansas; but with strong connections to this region even today)**

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Community Trends: Southern Marion County

Participants in our Southern Marion County CHAMP session -- echoing themes identified by participants at CHAMP sessions across the County -- shared memories of the vibrant culture of Southern Marion County's downtowns, but also discussed the way that school consolidation in the 1960s helped to kill downtown Prospect: moving people and, especially, youth, out of the downtown, had a ripple effect on local businesses, restaurants, & fraternal organizations. Participants reflected on the contract between a declining downtown & Prospect's increasing status as "the most expensive of Marion County's Villages," & an in-demand bedroom community for commuters to Delaware & Columbus. Participants celebrated the role local festivals, both extant & extinct -- from the Carp Tournament on the Scioto River to Prospect's regionally-beloved annual Fourth of July Celebration // Fireman's Festival -- have helped keep the community alive.

Participants also identify Prospect's Community Park -- built by the WPA in the 1930s, with iconic stone walls, a now-covered healing spring, & adjacent to Prospect's Sun Swim Pool -- as one of the community's most enduring resources. The park's grand size, infrastructure, & span make it, by far, the grandest community park in Marion County. Participants noted that two of the biggest negative transformations in Prospect's social & cultural community life have been the loss of Prospect's Knights of Pythias Lodge -- which historically held a popular annual fish fry; the recent (Summer 2024) closure of Prospect's dairy bar, Pastimes, & the loss of restaurants & food venues in downtown Prospect, save pizza restaurants, & the White Swan American & Chinese restaurant located in a house in the countryside. Finally, participants shared active visions & strategies for revitalizing Prospect's downtown, but noted the economic & code challenges of adaptive reuse & historic preservation.

Cultural Resources: Southern Marion County

Participants named the following cultural heritage assets as important to the cultural landscape of Southern Marion County:

- The Scioto River & Scioto River Traditions & Historic Businesses: Carp Festival, Hanley Hydrojets Fire Boats Factory
- Prospect Community Park: including WPA-era stone wall, (now closed) natural spring, & shelterhouses // pavilions
- Prospect Fourth of July & Fireman's Festival, held at the Prospect Community Park, with famous chicken barbeque
- Prospect Sun Swim Pool: the only Marion Village pool located immediately within the village, in close walking distance
- Prospect's Heritage Manufacturing Businesses: Hercule Locks & Mike's Roofing
- Prospect's Knights of Pythias Lodge
- Prospect's Dairy Bar (Past Times)
- Dexter's Grocery Store (formerly, Dexter's IGA): the only remaining locally-owned grocery store in a Marion County Village
- Prospect Downtown Murals
- the Prospect Farmers' Market
- White Swan Chinese & American Restaurant, in an old house in the countryside surrounding Prospect



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Future Community Cultural Assets

Speculation, scheming, & dreaming from our CHAMP session on what Southern Marion County could use; or ways to creatively re-imagine existing cultural heritage & community resources!

Historic Preservation in Downtown Prospect

Participants expressed dismay at the decline in commercial, restaurant, & social offerings in downtown Prospect, & the sharp rise in vacant buildings. Participants themselves are actively involved in downtown historic preservation & revitalization, but note the steep building code challenges for adaptive reuse projects, & the enormous cost of preserving old buildings. Marion County & its Villages should invest in historic preservation, to make revitalizing Marion's Village downtowns more accessible to entrepreneurial residents: meeting those residents halfway. Listing Prospect's downtown to the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district could also unlock historic tax credits.



Prospect History Museum

Participants emphasize that the "kiss of death" for downtown Prospect was the consolidation of Prospect's local schools. To rekindle a sense of local identity, participants want to use Prospect's old Kindergarten Building as a local history museum: interpreting Prospect's rich history as a way to grow sense of local identity & pride, & to kickstart local reinvestment & revitalization.



Clean-Up & Liveries on the Scioto River

Participants emphasize the Scioto River as one of Southern Marion County's most significant heritage & recreational resources. Long underused due to concerns about the Superfund site, participants want to see Marion County invest in truly cleaning up the river, so that entrepreneurs can build liveries along the river, & so that river-based festival traditions like the annual Carp Tournament can be revived.



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Spotlight on Key Community Cultural Assets

Southern Marion County CHAMP session participants describe these three cultural assets as defining features of their community:

the Scioto River



As in Eastern Marion County along the Olentangy (Whetstone), Southern Marion County residents identified the mighty Scioto River as a critical cultural/natural heritage resource. In particular, participants cited a long legacy of recreational watersport, industrial-manufacturing, & festival/foodways traditions along the Scioto -- all of which have been throttled by the Little Scioto's Superfund declaration. The Scioto River's devastating 1913 flood also looms prominently in Prospect.



Prospect Community Park

Participants identified Prospect's unique community park -- which functions as its own 501(c)(3) entity -- as a precious community cultural asset, & centerpiece for Southern Marion County community life. Built by the WPA in the 1930s, with an extant stone wall, the park & its unique shelterhouses is a hub for both community amateur sports & recreation, & is the home of Prospect's beloved annual Fourth of July & BBQ celebration.

Historic Downtown Prospect

One of only three intact historic 19th-century commercial districts in Marion County, downtown Prospect features a unique two-street commercial district, & a collection of Italianate mixed-use structures: many with original or near-original storefronts. While several downtown Prospect builds have been maintained in active use or have been revitalized by community preservationists & entrepreneurs, Prospect, like Marion County's other historic villages, faces an uphill challenge with rapidly-aging, vacant historic structures. Prospect community members have bold visions for their downtown & for adaptive reuse of these buildings to bring back a thriving commercial core; but also cite red tape & financial challenges involved in rehabilitation.

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Discussions & Major Themes: Southern Marion County CHAMP Session

Our Southern Marion County CHAMP Session focused on the erosion of the Village of Prospect's downtown since the 1960s, the history & potential of the Scioto River -- including the challenges of both ecologically & culturally reclaiming a river that has been an active Superfund site since the 1970s -- as a source of revitalization, community, & recreation for locals & tourists alike, & the impacts of burnout and lack of intergenerational collaboration for long-time community organizers in Prospect, who juggle multiple roles across the community. Participants reflected on Prospect's location at the intersections of Marion, Union, & Delaware County; & its status as both the most historically prosperous of Marion County's Villages, & as a growing bedroom community with a "small town feel" for commuters from Delaware & Columbus. Participants celebrated Prospect's rich legacy, once-vibrant downtown, & unique community amenities: including, especially, Prospect's majestic WPA-built Prospect Community Park, & the Prospect SunSwim Pool: the only Marion County Village pool to be located entirely within city limits. Participants also noted the power of festivals, events, & other gatherings -- like Prospect's long-time, regionally-popular Fourth of July & Fireman's Festival (featuring a chicken barbeque) & annual Prospect Yard Sale tradition -- to spark interest in Prospect's downtown, & future; as well as the role the Prospect Farmers Market (founded by Susan Ann Rhodes) & art-based place activation (organized by Tim Gorenflo) can play in reawakening downtown.

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Southern Marion County CHAMP session liaisons & participants
Tim Gorenflo --
 an artist, community organizer, preservationist, & handyman --
 & Prospect Farmers Market Manager
Susan Ann Rhodes
 map Village of Prospect cultural resources.

Southern Marion County CHAMP session participant Susan Ann Rhodes helps map cultural heritage resources onto a map of the Village of Prospect: including the location of the Village's old local schools. Participants discussed how school consolidation impacted the viability of Prospect's commercial downtown.



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🏆 Key Takeaways: Southern Marion County 🏆

Here, we summarize key takeaways to each of the eight discussion questions which formed the heart of our Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping session, with participant recommendations for community investment & action.

- **Question 1: What important cultural, arts, & heritage resources did we used to have in our community; & what happened to them?** Participants -- like others at CHAMP sessions across Marion County -- shared a consensus that Southern Marion County had lost "third spaces": facilities & organizations like churches & fraternal groups that lost membership, & petered out, beginning in the 1970s. This loss has left a downtown Prospect with fewer places to meet & organize as a community. Participants noted that Prospect Community Park remains an important resource; & is home to an unbroken baseball tradition -- started, originally, by local Prospect resident Larry Barnett who was a professional umpire. Participants also praised the investments of local entrepreneurs Larry & Mike Barnhart of Mike's Roofing on keeping Prospect Community Park beautiful.
- **Question 2: What cultural heritage assets in our community are currently threatened; & what would protecting them look like?** Participants named the Scioto River -- which still needs cleaned-up, after a century of toxic aggregation & designation as a Superfund Site, local history, & Prospect's downtown historic buildings as among the most threatened local resources. Participants identified *place activation* as an exciting strategy to "wake up" extant spaces, generate community interests, & revive downtown Prospect. One participant wants to approach businesses in town to sponsor themed artists' window decorations in underutilized storefronts downtown, for example.
- **Question 3: What cultural assets do other communities have that Prospect does not? Why?** Participants noted that Prospect could use a business association to actively organize local businesses & encourage entrepreneurship; & also a volunteer downtown beautification committee. Participants noted that neighboring counties, like Union County, provide grants & other support to villages to help fill vacant buildings in commercial downtowns; Marion County does not.
- **Question 4: What cultural assets define our sense of place & help make our community & local landscape distinct from other communities?** Participants identified the Scioto River, Prospect Community Park, & the Prospect Sunswim Pool as defining aspects of place, as well as Prospect's traditions & festivals -- 4th of July; & annual yard sales; & the Farmers' Market, which is really working to provide a marketplace for local vendors.
- **Question 7: What connections are possible between the assets identified on our CHAMP session map?** Participants noted the exhaustion of always being the community organizers; & cited this generational burnout as a reason other organizations like the Knights of Pythias have collapsed. Participants want to connect generations & organizations to make lighter work for everyone working to revitalize Prospect.
- **Question 8: What would you like to see this map look like in 5, 10, 15 years?** Participants imagine more tourism -- including bicyclists; more people walking downtown; a revitalized downtown with new storefronts, a cleaned-up, non-toxic Scioto River, & a resurgence of biodiversity!

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Marion County CHAMP Report: Southern Marion County

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This report details community feedback, findings, & discussions from our June 23rd, 2024 Southern Marion CHAMP Session, held at Prospect Community Park -- a scenic, original WPA-era park & pool complex in the Village of Prospect, Ohio. Report findings are reflective of participants at each session; but provide a starting place for future investments in arts, culture, & community in each geographic or identity community!

Thank you to all who participated in the Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping process!

Recommendations for Cultural Investment: Southern Marion County

Based on community Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping, discussion, & recommendations at our CHAMP session, Marion Voices makes the following top three recommendations for investment in the cultural heritage landscape of Eastern Marion County, with three additional recommendations below:

Cultural Heritage Recommendation #1	Kickstart Downtown Preservation with Place Activation	
	Description: Prospect Downtown Preservation & Revitalization leader Tim Gorenflo suggests catalyzing investment & interest in Prospect's historic downtown through arts-based "place activation" strategies: like organizing a competition for painted or decorated window displays in vacant storefronts. These time-tested strategies "wake up" downtowns & whet appetites for possibilities for adaptive reuse: critical imaginations for revitalization.	
Cultural Heritage Recommendation #2	Resources or Policy Change Needed: Community Organizing; Local Business Support; Artist Involvement; Prize Money	Potential Changemakers: Local Preservation Visionaries; Local Businesses & Building Owners; Community Artists
	Description: Continue to organize not only for the physical clean-up of the Scioto River downstream of the Little Scioto Superfund site, but to reintroduce "clean-up" species, & to rehabilitate the legacy of the Scioto River in Prospect as a safe & possible resource for culture, recreation, & tourism. Festivals & recreational modes like fishing, canoeing, kayaking, & additional engagements like environmental education & fish, wildlife, & macroinvertebrate survey can help "activate" the Scioto as an overlooked but critical resource for Prospect's future.	
Cultural Heritage Recommendation #3	Resources or Policy Change Needed: Environmental Survey; River Clean-Ups; Marketing the River; Revitalizing River Festivals & Events	Potential Changemakers: Ohio // Federal EPA, Village of Prospect, ODNR, OSU-Marion Biology, Local Environmentalists
	Nourish Intergenerational Collaboration & Succession	
Cultural Heritage Recommendation #4	Description: Support long-time community organizers & ensure the future of community revitalization in Prospect through intentionally cultivating intergenerational organizational & project teams, & investing in succession planning. Prospect CHAMP participants reported high degrees of burnout, the same "usual suspects" involved in community revitalization efforts, & a recent loss of key organizations due to the same.	
	Resources or Policy Change Needed: Intergenerational community organizing; collaboration across existing organizations & groups; training in succession planning	Potential Changemakers: Non-Profit Leaders; Millennial, Gen Z, & Gen Alpha Prospect Residents, "Old Guard" Legacy Prospect Community Organizers & Groups

Additional Recommendations: Southern Marion County

- Recommendation #4 -- Continue to Activate & Amplify Prospect Community Park as a Community Cornerstone:** Maintain & expand investments in the WPA-era Prospect Community Park through ongoing festivals, & historical interpretation: such as a walking tour, audio guide, or Ohio Historical Marker, sharing the unique history of the park in the community
- Recommendation #5 -- Organize & Advocate for More Support for Local-Led Historic Preservation:** Work proactively with Village, County, & Regional leaders to seek grants & technical assistance to support resident historic preservation leaders in revitalizing, restoring, & reimagining vacant historic building downtown
- Recommendation #6 -- Celebrate Local History & Identity for Local Pride & to Attract Heritage Tourists:** Prospect is well-positioned to codify & share its heritage as identity, & to market that heritage to tourists from Central Ohio, & beyond

the Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project (CHAMP)

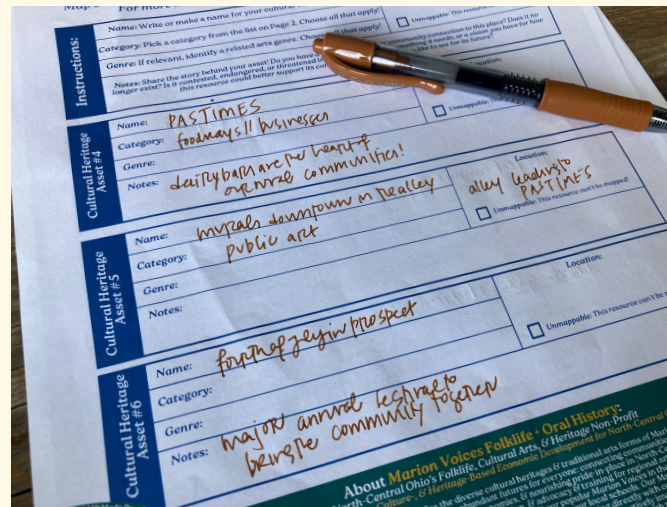


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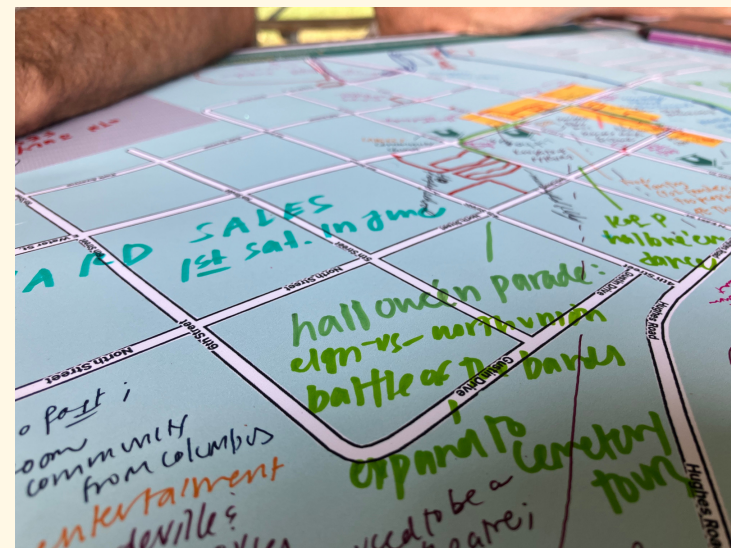
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Detail view of part of a fully-annotated Prospect Village CHAMP map, showing resources ranging from Prospect's annual festivals & traditions (yard sales;) to new ideas for place activation through heritage festivals (Tim Gorenflo's excellent idea for a downtown Halloween parade, Battle of the Bands, & cemetery tour)



A Southern Marion County CHAMP session participants brainstorm area cultural heritage resources in a CHAMP packet during the first part of our Southern Marion County CHAMP Session, held at the historic WPA-Era Prospect Community Park.

Marion Voices Folklife + Oral History presents ...



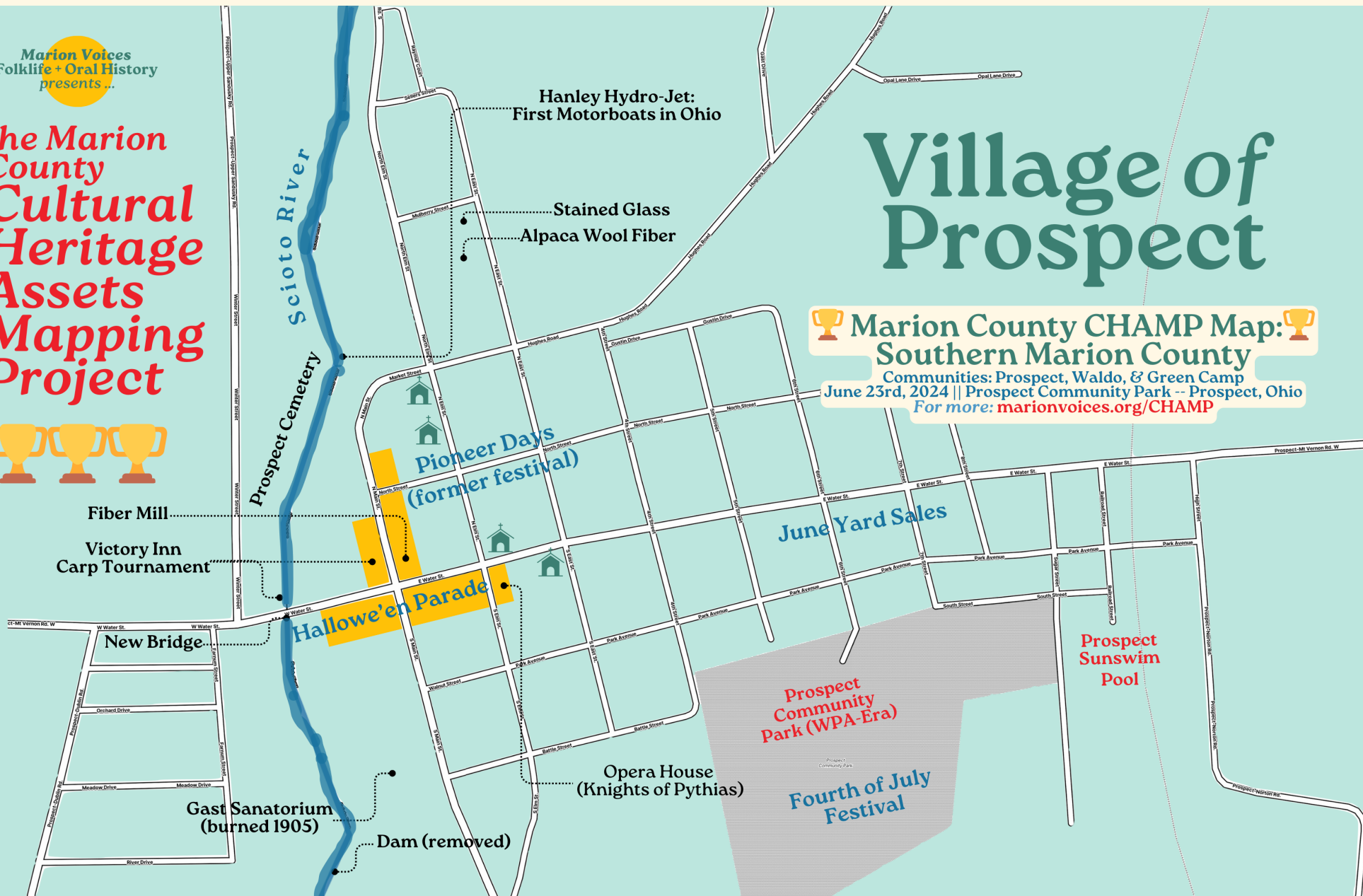
Marion County CHAMP Map: Southern Marion County



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Folklife + Oral History
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the Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project



Village of Prospect

Marion County CHAMP Map: Southern Marion County

Communities: Prospect, Waldo, & Green Camp
June 23rd, 2024 || Prospect Community Park -- Prospect, Ohio
For more: marionvoices.org/CHAMP

About Marion Voices Folklife + Oral History:

North-Central Ohio's Folklife, Cultural Arts, & Heritage Non-Profit
Champions of Arts, Culture, & Heritage-Based Economic Development for North-Central Ohio!

Founded in 2017, Marion Voices amplifies the diverse cultural heritages & traditional arts forms of Marion County & North-Central Ohio to build more just, more abundant futures for everyone: connecting communities & building solidarities across difference, growing arts-based economies, & nourishing pride-in-place in North-Central Ohio. Our core programs include exhibits, festivals, historic preservation, & advocacy & training for regional artists through paid performance opportunities, a folk arts apprenticeship program, & our popular Marion Voices in the Schools R-12 arts residency program bringing community cultural artists across genres into our local schools. Our Marion County Cultural Heritage Assets Mapping Project (CHAMP) takes us back to our roots: partnering directly with communities across Marion County to survey our cultural, arts, & heritage resources, share stories, & collectively imagine more just, more abundant futures for all. In late Summer/Fall 2024, we're excited to take this work regional with the launch of our North-Central Ohio CHAMP process & a new folklife survey in twelve neighboring North-Central Ohio counties. Join us!!

MARION VOICES
FOLKLIFE + ORAL HISTORY



Contact Us:

AMPLIFYING REGIONAL CULTURE
FOR EVERY VOICE