

# History Of Williamsburg

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Located in the heart of Clermont County, Ohio, the charming Village of Williamsburg has a rich history that dates back to its founding in 1796. Established by William Lytle, honoring Williamsburg, Virginia, the village changed its name and reflects the spirit and determination of its early settlers, before Ohio became a state.

Williamsburg holds the distinction of being the first county seat of Clermont County, a role that helped shape its development and community life. Its storied past and quaint atmosphere make it a noteworthy gem in Ohio's tapestry of small towns. This year, America celebrates 250 years, and Williamsburg celebrates 230 years.

Originally, the land that now comprises Brown County was part of Clermont County, with Williamsburg at its center. Over time, leadership divided the land, leading to the establishment of a new county.

For a brief period, the county seat was New Richmond. Later, Batavia formed from Williamsburg Township, which became geographically more central within Clermont County.

In 1824, the population designated Batavia as the county seat and has remained in that role since that time. However, that does not diminish the importance of Williamsburg in Ohio's history.

The Underground Railroad ran through the village, allowing Williamsburg to be a part of the very movement that eventually led to the freedom of enslaved people. While the primary demographic of Williamsburg remains white, all races live and thrive in this town.

Recently, the town demolished the former Williamsburg High School. The first graduation class was in 1924, and the last graduation class was in 1997. While the building may have had its share of ghost stories (urban legends not uncommon for small-town schools), it is undeniable that many talented students emerged from this institution and went on to achieve remarkable things.

After the school stopped holding classes, the building was still used for sports practices and various events. The school held grades 7 through 12 when it was active, but some sources say it was at one point a K-12 schoolhouse.

Students had the option to go into the town for lunch, regardless of what grade they were in. The school had a pay phone available where students could call their parents. Many claim that the building would hold in a lot of heat and odor, due to sports being held on the base floor.

Although the building was far from perfect, it was in the center of town, on the same ground that the old courthouse used to reside. Several amazing students walked the halls of the Old High School, where exceptional staff members worked to foster brilliant minds that went on to do great things.

Many families have lived in this town for generations, keeping a sense of tradition while also accepting new ideas that contribute to its development.

And its influence expands beyond the borders of the village. Just beyond the village's Hilltop gas station is the Williamsburg Junior Athletic Association (WJAA), a prominent center for school sports. Additionally, the famous Haunted Woods at the WJAA grounds attracts people from near and far.

Many students and residents volunteer their time there to create spooky memories for thrill seekers. Over the course of time, many local establishments have come and gone in the village. The number of local businesses and successful Williamsburg students and graduates is a testament to how much innovative and ambitious spirit is encouraged and curated in Williamsburg.

Current shops and restaurants in town include The Wild Pop Shop, Los Compadres, The Flour Bee, The Chill-Out, and The Mercantile.

The current principal of Williamsburg Elementary School is Kevin Dunn, who was part of the 1997 senior class. During the groundbreaking that occurred on April 2, 2026, the entire elementary school attended the capsule opening ceremony.

Citizens could also watch from outside the property as village council, Congresspersons, and Board of Education members gave heartfelt speeches about Williamsburg Local Schools and village history.

Staff discovered a time capsule created during the 1920s in the walls of the old high school. Members of the Board of Education and Harmony Hill Historical Society opened the stone and showed the artifacts one by one, handling them with grace and care.

The time capsule contained many different items from the citizens of Williamsburg. The artifacts of the time capsule include letters addressed to the current mayor, who is now Jim Weaver, and the Historical Society, a pocketwatch, items from an old bank that is no longer here, and many other artifacts connected to different families that reside in the area.

Ceremonial figures turned dirt with the large shovels placed near the mound. Then, each student had the opportunity to use little shovels to turn the dirt, marking the start of the construction for the new Williamsburg Elementary School. The building is set to complete in 2027, marking a new era of growth for the entire community.

We interviewed the following people: Stephanie Sutton, Guy & Candy Bainum, Kristin Dalton, and Daniel McKibben. Stephanie Sutton is the Williamsburg School Nurse, and she is descended from General William Lytle. Guy Bainum, a Williamsburg High School graduate of the old building, serves as a Trustee for the community of Williamsburg, contributing to major village decisions, and Candy Bainum is his loving wife, who is a staff member in the high school.

Kristin Dalton grew up here and currently teaches in the middle school. Daniel McKibben also grew up here and teaches US and World History at the high school. We are grateful for their contributions to this project.