20 South Main Street



East side of street

This, the oldest wooden building in Clarkston's commercial district, was the Village's first inn opened by tailorJohn Hertwig who came to Clarkston in 1842.

This Greek Revival style structure, with gable ends at right angles to the street, was John Hertwig's property in 1842 according to history books. Oakland County tax records began to list Hertwig for this site in 1846 with an assessed value of $80. By 1847 the value rose to $130. The change in value indicates the construction of a building or major improvement to an existing structure. The property extended to the east all the way to Buffalo Street by 1848. Hertwig first worked in Clarkston as a tailor and later opened a tavern with overnight accommodations in this the oldest commercial wooden building in the Village . Historian Maurice Cole, author of a book about Michigan inns, in a 4/1/76 Clarkston News article, wrote that an early newspaper referred to this inn as the Clarkston House. Jacob Walter replaced Herwig in the tax records for this property by 1850. (However, 1860 census records listed "John Herwig" as a 40 year old tailor from Germany. Wife, Margaret, 35, was born in New Jersey. [Another source listed Margaret as seven years younger than John.] It is not clear where John conducted business between 1850 and 1860 when according to Independence Township Lakeview Cemetery records and the tombstone for Daniel

Scadding & family, John died June 1, 1860. John's widow, Margaret married Daniel Scadding.) In 1860, the tax entry for inn owner, John Campbell, listed Lots 7 & 8 as "occupied together for a hotel & Co". This building is on Lot 7. By the time D. S. Johnson was the proprietor, the property also included a lane from Church St. north to a barn which was 12' x 75'. According to Maurice Cole, at the time the inn was known as the Johnson House, owner D. S. Johnson, two buildings were joined to make the one seen now. Cole wrote that half of Nicholas Bonaparte Smith's building which stood on the northeast corner of North Main and East Washington St., was moved to join the original structure here. The building has two separate basements supporting this information. Tax records for this site do show a substantial increase between 1881 when the assessed value was $1500, owner D. S. Johnson and 1885 when the assessed value rose to $4800, owner, Frank Walter. (Earlier tax records listed a substantial increased assessed value between 1852, Wm. Norrin, owner, assessed value $260, and 1855 when the assessed value was $800, John H. Dresser, owner. This would seem to indicate the construction of a large building or a major addition. (Dresser was an insurance agent with property on the site of 15 S. Main 1865-1892. His residence was the house at 24 Buffalo St.) James Wooster owned this inn from 1906 until 1915. (Wooster was also the owner/proprietor of the Wooster House on the northwest corner of N. Main and West Washington St, formerly the Demerest House.) In the 1940s, this building saw some renovation. The first floor was used for several small shops while apartments occupied the second. Since then a number of businesses have shared the first floor. In 1961 Clarkston Radio and T.V. Service, was at 24 South Main. In 1964 the Carriage Trade Yarn Shop, Wick and Candle, and the Young Villager's (a clothing store) were located here, as well as Dr. Denne's dental office. New owners in the late 1970s restored some of the exterior entrance details which were applied to the original Greek Revival style structure in the 1920s. At that time the doorways were given Classical Revival style details, half round engaged columns supporting pediments. Photos from the turn of the century, Heritage, pg.62, show porches at the entrances of the Classical style also. The aluminum siding was removed revealing the original wood clapboard and wide broken pediment entablature of the second story gables typical of the original Greek Revival style.

Official Property Description

- Lots 7 & 8 Block 1 of Nelson W. Clark's Original Plat of the Village in the Southeast 1/4 of Section 20 in Independence Township
- Lot 56 of the Assessor's Plat.

Significant Property History

- 1844 John "Harwig", Lot 7 Block 1, assessed value $125. Jeremiah Clark III, Lot 8 Block 1, assessed value $5.
- 1846 John Hertwig, Lot 7 Block 1, assessed value $80. Jeremiah Clark III, Lot 8 Block 1, assessed value $5.
- 1847 John Herwig, Lot 7, assessed value $130 and Lot 8, assessed value $10.
- 1848 John "Harwig" Lots 7 & 8 " Block 1, assessed value $190.
- 1849 John "Harwig" Lots 7 & 8 "occupied together", assessed value $185.
- 1850 Jacob Walter Lots 7 & 8, assessed value $195
- 1852 Wm. Norrin Lots 7 & 8, assessed value $26
- 1855 John H. Dresser, as above, assessed value $800
- 1860 John Campbell Lots 7 & 8 including a piece between his property and Lot 9. "occupied together for a Hotel & Co.", assessed value $900
- 1881 D. S. Johnson Lots 7 & 8 Block 1, a lane to the barn & the barn, and 12'x75' off the southwest corner of Lot 6 Block 1, assessed value $1500
- 1885 Frank Walter, assessed value $4800
- 1896 James O'Roarke, assessed value $4500
- 1904 as above, assessed value $600
- 1906 J. Wooster Lots 7 & 8 Block 1, assessed value $700
- 1915 as above.
- 1917 C. S. Bliss, as above.
- 1919 Bert Tuxworth, Lot 7, assessed value $2000.
- 1923 Mrs. David McClelland, assessed value $2300.
- 1930 McClelland Syndicate Lot 7.
- 1935 Bridget Cashman, Lot 7 Block 1.
- 1937 Wm. J. Berry et al., Lot 7 Block 1.
- 1940 Ernest Squier.
- 1954 Ernest Squier.

Architecture Style
Greek Revival Style