

Where Did That Street Get It's Name?

The following is a brief history of how some of the streets in Portsmouth were named:

Chillicothe Street was once named Chillicothe Pike, as it was the route to Chillicothe, Ohio. In 1915, Chillicothe Pike (a.k.a. Main Market Road no.8) was changed to Scioto Trail. In 1927, U.S. Route 23 was completed from Columbus to Portsmouth. Scioto Trail was now known as a National Road (U.S. Route 23).

Gallia Street was named after its original destination to Gallipolis, Ohio—Gallipolis Pike. The name was shortened in the 1800's to Gallia Pike. Gallia Pike was the road to Gallipolis outside the city limits while the road inside the limits was called Gallia Street.

Gay Street was originally named Barr Street after John T. Barr, who never lived here but invested in much real estate in the area.

Note: his father Samuel Barr was killed by Indians in 1793 in battle with Simon Kenton with Tecumseh. The name was changed in 1872 when Barr Street was extended past Gallia to the north. Why the name was changed is not known. At one time, an attempt was made to change the name to Cleveland Avenue, after Francis Cleveland. However, it was voted down.

Offnere Street was named after Dr. Jacob Offnere who was born October 4, 1775 in Virginia and came to the area in 1806 to live on a farm along the river. In 1816, he moved to Portsmouth and lived on Front Street. After that period, he no longer worked at his profession, but instead invested in real estate and served in many civic offices. He died in 1859.

Waller Street was named for Dr. Thomas Waller. Dr. Waller was born in Stafford Co., VA, in 1774, and was the first physician in

Portsmouth. Dr. Waller arrived in Alexandria on horseback in 1801. In 1803, when the city was platted, Dr. Waller settled in Portsmouth. He died in an epidemic in 1822. Dr. Waller was first in many offices in Portsmouth: First doctor, first councilman, first president of town council, first town surveyor, president of the first bank in Portsmouth. He held many other offices and interests in Portsmouth.

In early days, often major streets would be named for symbols of power and authority, like presidents or local prominent people. Sometimes heroes of war would have a street named for them. Portsmouth named many streets this way, and of course we recognize the presidents in Madison, Jefferson and Washington Streets...but Monroe, no one is sure if that street is named for President James Monroe.

Bond Street was named for William Key Bond, who was a Baltimore man who was connected with Francis Scott Key; the writer of our national anthem- The Star Spangled Banner. He fought in the Virginia Militia as a Colonel, and was educated as an attorney. Bond was an Ohio Representative for Pike, Ross, Jackson, Fayette and Scioto Counties from 1835-41. He came in the early days to invest in real estate east of Chillicothe Street.

Sinton Street was named for David Sinton who was a pig-iron industrialist, born in County Armagh, Ireland. He became one of the wealthiest men in America. He owned land in the Barr Edition (Gay Street). Sinton is better known for beginning the Ohio Furnace in Green Township. He lived in Cincinnati and was worth \$10,000,000 in 1881. He was well known as a philanthropist.

Campbell Avenue was named in honor of Francis Campbell, a well-known attorney from Chillicothe, OH. He owned much property in Portsmouth's East End. He was known to spend as much time in Portsmouth as Chillicothe.

Raynor Street was named for William Raynor who was a Civil War Union Brevet Brigadier General. He enlisted in the 1st O.V.I. as soon as the Civil War began, and was commissioned later as a 1st Lieutenant in the 56th O.V.I. The street name was changed to Lincoln in 1913.

Thompson Street was named for Moses Thompson. Born 1784 in Pennsylvania, Thompson came to Portsmouth from Wheeling sometime in the 1840's. He was elected twice as the Justice of the Peace. He died in 1861. On January 27, 1911, the street name was changed to Glover.

Glover Street was named for Elijah Glover who was born in Portsmouth May 11, 1811. He was educated in the printing profession and was the editor and publisher of the Portsmouth Courier for 6 years. He then studied law and in 1840 served as the county auditor for 6 years. He was also a school teacher, lawyer and sheriff. He farmed his land that extended from Gallia to Fourth and Offnere to Glover. Glover was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives three times- in 1863, 1865 and 1869. As previously mentioned, Thompson Street was changed to Glover in 1911.

Scioto Street is known as the first and shortest street in Portsmouth. This street was named for the Scioto River as it was the closest to the river.

Massie Street was named for Henry Massie, born in Virginia in Feb. of 1768, and was the founder of Portsmouth but never became a resident here. His interest here was as a land investor. Massie platted Portsmouth in 1803 with initially 258 lots. He often came to Portsmouth to sell land. Massie died on his 300 acre farm outside of Louisville, KY.

On May 4, 1838, Portsmouth street names were changed by city ordinance. The following changes were made:

Water Street changed to Front, Front to Second, Second to Third, and Third to Fourth and so on to Ninth. East Street changed to Court, First East to Washington, Second East to Chillicothe, West Street to Jefferson, First West to Madison and Second West to Massie. Scioto and Market Streets did not change.

Robinson Avenue was named for Joshua V. Robinson who came to Portsmouth in 1829 and became one of the most successful men in early city history. He was instrumental in building the Scioto and Hocking Valley Railroad and was on the school board. He was a director of almost every early business enterprise including, the Commercial Bank and State Bank of Ohio branch (of which he was also president).

Hutchins Street was named for Wells Hutchins. In 1842, Hutchins moved to Portsmouth, where he served as member of the Ohio State House of Representatives in 1852-53. He was a member of the Whig Party while in Portsmouth. He was the city solicitor from 1857-61. He was an unsuccessful candidate in 1860 to the Thirty-seventh Congress. During the early part of the Civil War, he was the United States Provost Marshal for the state of Ohio in 1862. Hutchins was elected as a Democrat to the Congress and served March 4, 1863-March 3, 1865. Hutchins resumed the practice of law in Portsmouth and died here January 25, 1895. He married the daughter of J.V. Robinson.

Kinneys Lane was named for the Kinney family. Aaron and Mary Kinney came to this area in 1804 and purchased 178 acres of land just north of Portsmouth. He chose to build his homestead on this land because of the natural spring that flowed to the east (Kinney Spring). He built a tannery on his property and became the first such business in Portsmouth. It was very profitable. He served as overseer of the Poor from 1809-1811.

His son, Col. Peter Kinney was prominent in his own right with holding many city offices and serving in an important role in the Civil War.

Coles Boulevard was named for Captain Amos B. Cole who was born in Portsmouth, December 13, 1827. He served in the Mexican War in 1846, and in 1862 he became Captain of Company F, 1st Ohio Heavy Artillery in the Civil War.

After the war, he was an insurance agent. He was Clerk of Courts from 1873-1879.

He represented Scioto County in the Ohio House of Representatives from 1880-1882, and in the State Senate from 1888-1892. He died in 1897.

Lawson Street was named for William Lawson, an early pioneer of Portsmouth, who came to Alexandria in 1799, then partnered in land purchases with Henry Massie, Jeremiah McLene, Nathaniel Willis and Gen. Thomas Parker. He and the others sold out to Massie who thus obtained credit as the founder of Portsmouth. After Massie patented the land, Lawson paid the government for 454 acres and built his cabin. When the town was being surveyed for lots, Massie offered to give prime land in Portsmouth free to Lawson but he declined. He believed the town would be a burden and never amount to anything. Lawson held the office of Scioto County Commissioner when the county was formed in 1803. He also served as Overseer of the Poor in 1809 and 1814.