

545 S. Center St. (house)  
African-American Historic District  
Springfield  
Clark County  
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2423

HABS  
OHIO  
12-SPRIE,  
29-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Great Lakes Systems Office  
Department of the Interior  
1709 Jackson St.  
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

(house)

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Location: 545 South Center Street, Springfield, Clark County, Ohio

Significance: The architectural character, relatively large size and brick construction of this house all lend distinction. In addition, it appears to be one of the oldest houses in this near south side neighborhood. Stylistically, the building is a relatively rare example of transitional Greek Revival-Italianate residential architecture. Its bracketed cornice and ornate hood moldings, especially those in the arched attic windows, add character to the building. The house has an unusual and seemingly early two-story gabled rear wing which recalls the Greek revival style. It flanks on one side a two-story side porch that is also unusual. The projecting box bay on the opposite side of the house is richly detailed and is an impressive feature.

Description: This two-story three-bay house is constructed of brick which has been painted and rests on a foundation of rock-faced limestone. Its broad lateral gable roof has bracketed eaves in front that are fairly simple. Arched attic windows have unusually elaborate hood moldings. A brick two-story gabled rear wing faces the side street, projecting out from the plane of the side elevation. A two-story side porch adjacent to this wing seems like a later feature, perhaps from the turn of the century period. A long low gabled frame rear wing is clapboard-sided. Windows have two-over-two wood sash. A fire escape on the north side suggests that the house in more recent years had been converted to apartments.

History: Mr. Ross Mitchell was a businessman whose name appeared in the 1898 city directory in boldface. He maintained an office at 9 Mitchell Block and lived with Sarah A. Mitchell at 138 East High Street. It seems likely that he did not live at this address but was probably simply the owner of this house when it was connected to city water lines. He probably rented out this house as an investment. His association with the Mitchell Block, presumably named after him, suggests that Ross Mitchell was involved in Springfield real estate. The house seems like it dates from the 1860s as it is a fairly early example of Italianate architecture, with Greek Revival proportions. It appears to be one of the oldest houses in this neighborhood. It was probably originally a single-family residence.

H. Desormoux Co., 70 South Market Street, took out the permit to connect the house to the city's water system in 1898.

By 1915 this was the residence of William J. and Clara Burch. He worked as a barber, with his shop at 130 1/2 S. Center St., not far from here. Elizabeth Foley, the widow of William Foley, also lived here. In 1917 apparently seven households were listed at this address, but by the 1930s there are three separate residences here. The house has been vacant since about 1990.

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Sources: 1883, 1915 and later Springfield city directories, Springfield city water tap records (1883). The building stands within a proposed African-American Historic Preservation District, which has been determined as an area potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the Ohio State Historic Officer. Copies of information used to make this determination of eligibility for National Register status are at the Springfield Department of Planning and Development and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office.

Historian: Steven McQuillin, preservation consultant to the City of Springfield, 1997