



Brief History of: Fairborn, Ohio

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Fairborn, OH

(55 Years Old & Still Growing)

A City With Deep Roots & Room To Boom

Fairborn's roots in the soil of the Miami Valley go deep. The settlement known today as Fairborn was established in 1799, with the erection of the first log cabin. More building followed, and dozens of families flocked to the area. By the time of the War of 1812, the new community—now dubbed "Fairfield," contributed significant numbers of men to the war effort. In 1816, the village of Fairfield was formally laid out on the road between Dayton and Springfield.

In 1850, the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad extended its line through the area, missing the now-thriving Fairfield by a mile. To take advantage of the economic activity presented by the railroad, a new village was laid out immediately adjacent to the right-of-way. This new village, named Osborn after the railroad superintendent, grew rapidly and was incorporated in 1876.

The two towns continued to grow and expand. Following a flood in 1913, the Miami Conservancy District bought out most of Osborn's landowners and designated the area as floodplain. With much of its area no longer usable, the village of Osborn was faced with a big problem—and solved it in a unique way. In 1921, the villagers literally moved their dwellings "roof and rafters" to a location adjacent to the village of Fairfield. As one commentator put it, "everything was moved but the basements."

Following the creation of the new twin cities, the two towns continued to grow and prosper side by side. For 28 years, each town had its own government and identity. Eventually, growth caught up with the village of Fairfield. Unable to expand, Fairfield looked instead at merging with Osborn. In 1949 a proposal to merge with Osborn was put to the vote, and was passed overwhelmingly by the electorate in both towns.

In 1950, a new charter was delivered, and the new name of Fairborn came into being. As far as is known, it is the only city of its name in the United States. In August of 1950 the Ohio State Legislature designated the town the City of Fairborn, and the community has kept that designation to this day.

Technology and Progress

From its inception, Fairborn has been associated with progress in cutting-edge technology. First the railroad, then the airplane, and then the aerospace industry have all been embraced by Fairborn and have in turn played major roles in its development.

Following their historic first flight in North Carolina, the Wright brothers did most of their development work at the Huffman Prairie site just west of town. It was here that the airplane matured from a spectacular scientific breakthrough to a practically useful machine that could be utilized on an everyday basis. Thus, Fairborn is truly the Schoolhouse of Aviation.

In 1916, the War Department purchased 25,000 acres for a flying school and aviation depot. With the advent of World War I, the depot's importance vastly increased as both a training and supply center. Within a short time, the Fairfield Air Depot became a unique and integral part of the nation's defense structure, and as Wright-Patterson Air Force Base remains so to the present.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base

- ❖ The birthplace, home, and future of aerospace
- ❖ Is managed and maintained by the 88th Air Base Wing.
- ❖ Wright-Patterson is home of the Aeronautical Systems Center, the Air Force organization responsible for developing, acquiring, and sustaining the world's best aerospace systems.
- ❖ Is in many measures the largest, most diverse and organizationally complex base in the Air Force. Missions range from acquisition and logistics management, to research and development, education, flight operations, and many other defense related activities.
- ❖ Is home to the foremost aeronautical and aerospace research organization in the Air Force, the Air Force Research Laboratory.
- ❖ Has a workforce numbering approximately 21,000 people, making it the fifth largest employer in the state of Ohio and the largest employer at a single location. Nearly 12,600 of these people are civilians.
- ❖ Supports more than 125 organizations here and at separate locations in the nine state area representing a host of Air Force and DoD missions.
- ❖ Home of the Air Force Institute of Technology, which trains thousands of students each year, and the National Air Force Museum of the United States, which receives more than one million visitors a year.
- ❖ Has some of the finest family oriented recreational programs in the Air Force.
- ❖ Has a very modern commissary-base exchange complex with nearly four acres under one roof, making it one of the Air Force's largest and best.
- ❖ Has approximately 1,530 facilities on base.
- ❖ Pays out nearly \$2.68 million in salaries every day of the year – a payroll of approximately \$978 million annually.
- ❖ Has the second largest medical center in the Air Force.
- ❖ Employs almost 1 of every 20 people working in the greater Dayton area.
- ❖ The past, present and future of Wright-Patterson AFB are all inextricably linked with the Wright brothers' legacy. The stories of the brother's early years, their bicycle shop, their printing business and their early aviation efforts are in evidence throughout the greater Dayton area.

- ❖ The Wright brothers call Dayton, Ohio, home and Daytonians have long since called their city the “Birthplace of Aviation.” It was here in 1904 and 1905 on the Huffman Prairie Flying Field where the Wright brothers (in their own words) “really learned to fly.” Today, just off the end of runway 23, a marker, sign and replica of the Wright brothers’ 1905 hanger and catapult launcher commemorate the exact location of the brother’s early aviation accomplishments. Here, they flew the first turn, circle, and figure eight. The brothers returned to Huffman Prairie in 1910 and operated a flying school until 1916. Among their 199 students were Henry “Hap” Arnold who commanded the Army Air Forces in World War II and H. Roy Brown, the Canadian ace who was credited with shooting down the Red Baron in World War I. Huffman Prairie Flying Field is part of the Aviation Heritage National Historic Park and is open to the public.
- ❖ The military presence began here in 1917 when Wilbur Wright Field was opened on the site of today’s flightline during World War I. A depot also began operating here. Aviation research and development continued to flourish as well. First at McCook Field near what is now the intersection of State Route 4 and Interstate 75, then at Wright Field, which opened in 1927 on land donated by the community.
- ❖ Wilbur Wright Field and depot area became Patterson Field on July 6, 1931 in honor of Lt. Frank Patterson, who was killed in a flightline crash while conducting a test flight in 1918. In 1948 Wright and Patterson fields were merged to create Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.
- ❖ Today, as in the early 1900s, Wright-Patterson is where weapons systems of the future are conceived, modified, and tested until worthy of acceptance as part of the most responsive force in the history of military aviation.
- ❖ Birthplace – Home and Future of aerospace. That’s what Wright-Patterson is about. The heritage of a legendary past spurs aerospace acquisition specialists, scientists and engineers, and logisticians, educators and trainers to “keep’m flying,” faster, higher, farther and safer than man has ever flown before.

Education

From initial settlement to the present, area residents have actively embraced education and have recognized the benefits of schooling. Today, that commitment is shown through the large and modern Fairborn City Schools system, parochial schools, Wright State University, and various vocational and training schools both military and civilian.

Wright State University serves more than 16,000 students and features more than 100 undergraduate and 46 Ph.D., graduate, and professional degrees. Besides being home to the nation’s oldest civilian aerospace medical training program, Wright State continues to produce large numbers of highly-qualified graduates who distinguish themselves in a wide variety of fields. The University also sponsors basic research in many scientific disciplines and is one of only three universities in Ohio to host the state’s program to improve teacher education. Its School of Medicine has been rated among the country’s top 50 primary care schools.

Quality of Life and Places to Live

With a population of 32,052, Fairborn offers the accessibility and friendly atmosphere of a small town. At the same time, it provides residents and visitors an array of cultural, artistic and historical attractions normally associated with much larger cities.

In addition to numerous yearly festivals and celebrations, Fairborn offers access to various exhibitions and performances on the campus of Wright State. Local cinemas offer the latest first-run movies. Restaurants are numerous and range from fast food to fine dining. Shoppers find plentiful opportunities to browse and buy in large malls and small, inviting boutiques. The Nutter Center offers performances by national-caliber entertainers.

Fairborn's location is convenient to four airports—Springfield Municipal, Greene County, Dayton International and Columbus International. The area's extensive and modern road system allows for easy commutes to work, as well as quick access to the state and national highway system. Dayton and Columbus are just minutes away, and many major cities are within a day's drive. Fairborn is located in the "90-minute" market.

In addition to many large and modern apartment complexes, Fairborn residents can choose from many new home developments that continue to spring up in and around the City. Housing in Fairborn is quite affordable, and whether renting, buying or building, residents can find locations and prices to fit almost any lifestyle and budget.

Incoming military personnel have the option of taking civilian housing, but more and more often are taking quarters in The Properties at Wright Field. The Properties are located within minutes of Wright-Patterson AFB, Wright State, and I-675. The development currently houses 1500 active military residents, and is adding 789 newly-built homes to its roster of available quarters. Rents consist of the Basic Allowance for Quarters, and include all utilities. The Properties are built to be family-friendly, with Tot Lots, picnic areas with grills, hiking and biking trails, and a skate park and tennis courts.

Respecting the Past, Looking to the Future

Fairborn, a city proud of its history and happily looking at the future, eagerly anticipates the new century and all its promise. From its inception, Fairborn has embraced technological and social progress and then put her own unique stamp upon them. By doing so, Fairborn has entered the 21st Century firmly grounded in those timeless values that provide a sense of community, while remaining poised to take advantage of new ideas, new technologies.

The City of Fairborn extends an open hand to new visitors and neighbors. Won't you join us?

Demographics

Population (2000 Census)	32,052
Elevation	830-1000 ft. above sea level
Households	52% owner, 48% renter
Median Age	31.3 years
Median Home Value	\$92,000
Median Household Income	\$36,889
Median Family Income	\$44,608
Major Industries	Education, High Technology, Light Manufacturing, Defense Research
Value of Building Permits	\$32,472,554 (2004)
Municipal Bond Rating	A-1
Streets	288.807 lane miles
Parks	18
Wright Bros. Huffman Prairie Bikeway	3.2 miles
Total Park Land	651.57 acres
I-675	4.831 miles
SR 235	2.1 miles
SR 444	2.42 miles
SR 844	1.2 miles
Railroad	Norfolk Southern
Cable	Time Warner Cable
Electricity	Dayton Power & Light/First Energy
Natural Gas	Vectren
Telephone	SBC
Water & Sewer	City of Fairborn

We invite you to visit the chamber's website at www.fairborn.com there are community links to the City of Fairborn and Fairborn City Schools websites.

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The chamber serves as the Community Visitors Center for the City of Fairborn.

PREPARED BY: John Dalton, Executive Director, Fairborn Area Chamber of Commerce