

Properties

The Galion Historical Society, Inc. owns several properties clustered at the intersection of West Walnut and South Union Streets in Uptowne Galion.

Brownella Cottage and Historic Grace Church

This narrative is taken from the listing of Brownella Cottage, its outbuildings including the carriage house and study, Grace Episcopal Church and the Grace Church Rectory on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Brownella Cottage-Grace Episcopal Church & Rectory complex is significant not only for its unique architecture but also for its associations with Bishop William Montgomery Brown, one of the most fascinating individuals in Galion's history and probably in the history of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the twentieth century, for he was, according to his obituary, "the first Bishop of his communion to be tried for heresy since the

Reformation, and the first of any creed in America to be disposed for heretical teachings."



Brown's conversion from the orthodox Episcopal priesthood as a missionary to Grace Episcopal Church from 1883-1891, as author of *The Church for Americas* (1895) to explain the beliefs of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and as Bishop of Arkansas from 1899-1912 to his interest in Marxism, socialism, and Communism in the 1910s and authorship of *Communism and Christianity* (1920) dramatically increased and challenged his influence in the church, leading to his heresy trial in 1924-25. He tried to prove to his fellow Bishops that they did not believe in a strict interpretation of the Bible any more than he then did. While awaiting the final verdict on his deposition as

Bishop in October 1925, he had himself ordained as Bishop in the Old Catholic Church in his study (originally St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church built in 1866) in Galion, thus enabling him to retain the title of "Bishop." Brown felt his real ministry began at age of 71 when he started lecturing to the working class and writing a variety of books until his death in 1937.

To further his dreams to "Banish Gods from the skies and Capitalism from the Earth," the subtitle of *Communism and Christianity*, he left money in his will to keep his publications in print and to further the work of the Communist party.

Brownella Cottage was Brown's home from its construction 1885-1887 to his death in 1937. Although he lived in Arkansas as Bishop of Arkansas, the Bishop and Ella still spent several months of the year at Brownella Cottage. Mary Scranton Bradford, Ella Scranton Brown's adoptive mother and wealthy philanthropist of Cleveland, had the house built as a wedding present for Brown and his wife. Brownella Cottage is a reflection of the Bradford wealth and high style of the 1880s architecture in the United States. The house is totally unlike any other house of its period in Galion, and it is clear that no expense was spared in its construction.



The house is the design of Cleveland architect Clarence O. Arey. Architecturally, the cottage complex (house and carriage house) is important as an example of late nineteenth century architecture unique to Galion but similar to the large suburban cottages being built through New England by architects like McKim, Mead, and White or to country houses in England built at this time. There are Queen Anne style features in the tower, but it is not a pure example of this style. There are also Stick and Shingle style elements represented, as well.



building was erected in 1881.

The enclosed glass walkway, connecting the house to the study, was built in the 1920s. It was during this time, when the Bishop was in his early 70s, that the Bishop's physician told him that he was too fragile, from poor health and suffering from diabetes, to be walking outside in the elements. A restroom was also added on to the study. A telephone intercom system was present in the study and throughout the house so that the Bishop, Ella, servants, and groundskeeper were always within reach.

The large lot and spacious setting of the house, with the house, carriage house, and study interconnected by glass-enclosed walkways, adds to the suburban setting of the complex, which is just a few blocks from uptown Galion. The study was originally the second home of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Galion and was built in 1866; it served as the church until the third Catholic Church

