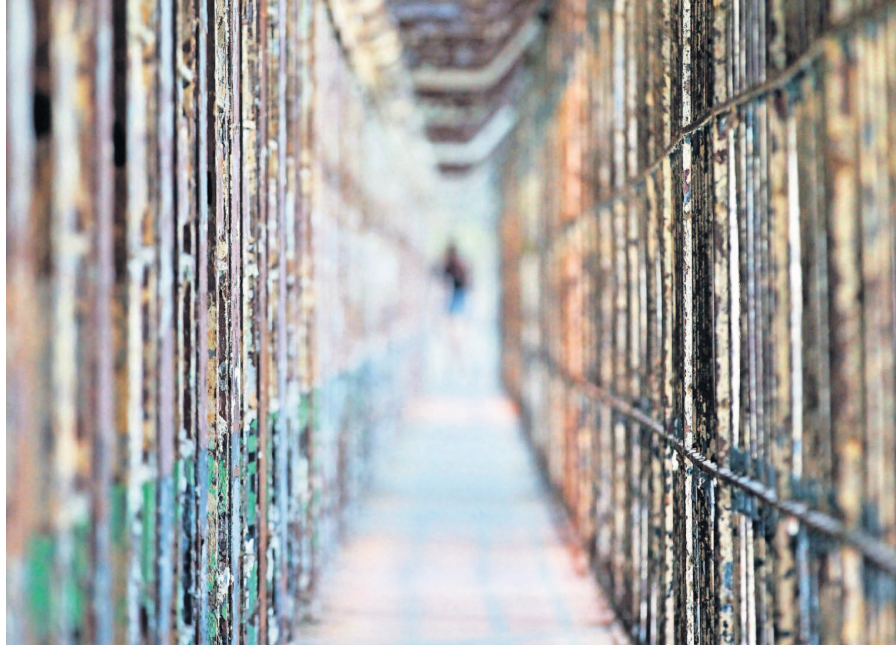


Travel

Visiting Europe's
time warp homes. K3

History meets Hollywood: Touring Mansfield's historic Ohio State Reformatory, celebrating 25 years as prison scene for the movie 'The Shawshank Redemption'



'Salvation lies within'

Susan Glaser sglaser@plaind.com

MANSFIELD — A painted yellow line on the prison floor marks the exact spot where new prisoner Andy Dufresne first comes into contact with evil Warden Norton. • It might also be considered the spot where the historic Ohio State Reformatory was converted from condemned eyecore to spectacular tourist attraction. • Closed by court order in 1990, the prison was slated to be torn down in the days leading up to the filming of "The Shawshank Redemption," which was released in 1994. • This year marks the 25th anniversary of the movie, which some rank as the best movie of all time. • It's also the silver anniversary of the rescue of the Ohio State Reformatory, the real-life penitentiary in Mansfield that stands in for fictional Shawshank Prison in Maine. • Today, the prison, built in 1896, is open for tours and special events, attracting film fans, history buffs and ghost hunters. • But it's best known as the place where two fictional inmates forged a remarkable bond over decades of incarceration — and where hope never dies.

SEE REFORMATORY, K2

"These walls are funny. First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on them."

Added in 2010, the Eastern cell block is made of six floors and 600 cells at the Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield. The passage of time is seen everywhere inside the historic site where the movie "The Shawshank Redemption" was filmed. The reformatory, which opened in 1896 and closed in 1990, is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the film with "Shawshank 25" on Aug. 16-18. *Lisa DeLong/The Plain Dealer*

TRAVEL

Following the Shawshank Trail, from the Ohio State Reformatory to the felled oak tree so key to the film

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MANSFIELD — The path to redemption winds through north-central Ohio, from Mansfield to Ashland to Upper Sandusky and beyond.

The most spectacular site on the Shawshank Trail, without question, is the Ohio State Reformatory, the 1896 prison that is the setting for much of the 1994 film. But numerous other sites in and around Mansfield are also featured in "The Shawshank Redemption."

Many are planning special events next month, Aug. 16-18, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the film.

Bill Mullen, a business owner in Upper Sandusky, came up with the idea for a Shawshank reunion tour in 2008, the 15th anniversary of its filming in 1993. (The celebration has since shifted a year to commemorate

SEE TRAIL, K2



Site of felled oak tree, Pleasant Valley Road near Malabar Farm

Unfortunately, the tree, a symbol of hope in the film, no longer stands, knocked down by high winds in 2016. A Shawshank Trail sign commemorates the site, currently a field of corn, on private property.



Crosby Advisory Group: 19 W. Main St., Ashland

This former Huntington Bank building now houses an investment/insurance group. In the film, it stands in as Maine National Bank, where Andy, using the name Randall Stevens, withdraws \$370,000 of Warden Norton's money. During business hours, visitors can check out the vault at the rear of the building.



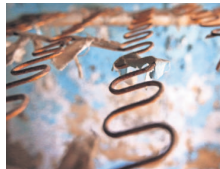
Pugh Cabin at Malabar Farm: 4050 Bromfield Road, Lucas.

In the movie's opening scene, Andy sits in his car, gun in hand, contemplating his life and his wife's infidelity, with Malabar Farm's Pugh Cabin in the background. While at Malabar, take a tour of the farm and Big House, the former estate of author Louis Bromfield, now a state park.

Travel



The old library inside the Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield. The reformatory, which opened in 1896, closed in 1990. Photos by Lisa DeJong, The Plain Dealer



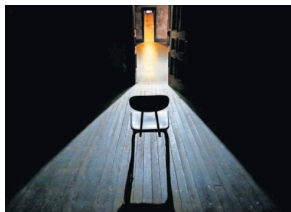
Baby blue paint strips away from the ceiling and falls onto the rusty bed springs that are left inside the tiny cells of the prison.



Designed by architect Levi Scofield, the Ohio State Reformatory opened in 1896.



A shirt with a prison number on it worn by an actor in film is on display at the Shawshank Wood Shop.



A lone chair is illuminated by a hallway light inside the Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield. According to tour guide Tom Clark, this chair mysteriously moves to different sides of this windowless room.

Reformatory

FROM KI

The reformatory will be a star attraction next month during a weekend of special events, Aug. 16-18, celebrating the anniversary of "The Shawshank Redemption," including re-enactments, photo opportunities, panel discussions and more.

Numerous actors from the film will be in town for appearances, including Bob Gunton (Warden Norton), William Sadler (Heywood), Mark Rolston (Bogs), and others.

As of this writing, neither Tim Robbins (Dufresne) nor Morgan Freeman (Red), the movie's top stars, had committed to return.

"You don't need to be a fan of the movie to tour the prison, but a recent watching of the film will certainly enhance the experience.

Guide Tom Clark, the prison's "Shawshank specialist," has the film loaded onto his phone, watches it an average of once a week, and can recite entire scenes as he leads visitors through the building's maze of rooms and corridors.

"These walls are funny," Clark said, quoting Red, as he walked through the front door. "First you hate 'em, then you get used to 'em. Enough time passes, you get so you depend on them."

Though there have been other movies filmed at the prison — "Fargo and Cash" (1989), "Air Force One" (1997), and the just released "Escape Plan: The Extractors" — "Shawshank" is by far the best known and biggest draw.

Fans come from long distances to see the room where Andy hijacked the prison audio equipment to blast Mozart into the prison yard, where Red asked the parole board (repeatedly) for early release, where Andy tells Red about a buried treasure at an oak tree near Buxton.

"The sense of joy when fans come through here — it never gets old," said Clark.

The prison, of course, didn't start out as a place of joy, or a movie set.

Constructed during the height of the 19th-century prison reform movement, the facility was built to house first-time offenders, people whom society thought could be "reformed" via exposure to God, education and work.

Combining several architectural styles, Cleveland architect Levi Scofield designed the building to look like something other than a prison — a castle, perhaps, or a college, with turrets, angular roof lines and imposing stone walls.

"Whatever your mind says a prison should be like, this isn't it," said Clark.

Eventually, the reform movement fell out of favor. In 1930, a fire at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus forced the relocation of hundreds of violent prisoners to Mansfield.

"The devotion continued into the 1960s," said Clark. "By the 1970s, the living conditions were so bad, prisoners started filing lawsuits." One of those lawsuits eventually forced the closure of the prison in 1990.

In 2000, the Mansfield Reformatory Preservation Society bought the building from the state, and started the long, expensive job of restoring it. Much of it remains unfinished; Clark advises visitors to clean their shoes after tours because of the lead paint inside.

Among the "Shawshank" spaces here: Norton's office, the parole board room and the staircase where Andy pleads for additional library funding.

Much of the furniture here is not original to the film — the crew took set pieces with them, according to Clark. But the safe in the wall of Norton's office is still intact. Not original to the prison, it was added by the film crew in 1993.

"We make sure there's a Bible inside," said Clark, complete with Andy's final message to the warden: "You were right. Salvation lies within."

Said Clark, "I've been told these sometimes go missing."

Among the most poignant places on the tour: the room where Brooks ends his own life, after finding life too difficult outside of prison.

In the movie, the scene takes place at a halfway house called the Brewer, the exterior of which is the historic Bissman Building in downtown Mansfield (a stop on the Shawshank Trail; see related story). The interior, however, was filmed inside the prison. A wood ceiling beam includes the carving: "Brooks was Here" and "So was Red."

Clark used to recite Brooks' final words as he guided our groups through the space. "It would burn everybody out so I stopped doing it," he said.

From the spacious, well-appointed front half of the prison, visitors cross into the rear, more sinister space.

Two large cell blocks jut to east and west, housing 154,000 inmates over 90-plus years of operation. Dubbed the Hilton, the west cell block, with five floors of cells made of brick, was the more humane.

The east wing, still the largest self-supporting steel cellblock in the world, housed six floors of 100 cells each, 8 feet by 5 feet wide, with as many as three inmates in each during overcrowded stretches.

"They look like human cages. The conditions were horrific," said Clark. "Hollywood loves it because it's so terrifying."

As creepy as they are, "Shawshank" director Frank Darabont did not use the prison cell interiors here in the movie. He wanted cells that faced each other, to enhance communication among the inmates. The cells here are outward facing, opening toward exterior walls.

Instead, film crews created a massive cellblock in a downtown Mansfield warehouse, which has since been torn down.

Other spots from the movie on the prison tour:

- ▶ The shower where Andy first encounters sadistic Bogs. The prison didn't have running water when the film was shot, so the fire department hooked up hoses for the scene. The water was so cold, the scene was shot in one take, according to Clark.
 - ▶ The Central Guard Room, used as the prison cafeteria in the movie, and now used for weddings, corporate meetings and special events.
 - ▶ The tunnel and sewer pipe used in Andy's escape were props used in the movie that are on display inside the reformatory.
- Outdoor access to the former prison yard, shown extensively in the movie, is limited on most tours because it is adjacent to Richland Correctional Institute, built not long after the Ohio State Reformatory was closed. (Take the

Behind the Bars tour for more outdoor access, plus a trip up the guard tower.)

The tour ends in the Intake room, where Andy first encounters Warden Norton, who famously recites the rules of the prison. (Rule No. 1: No blasphemy; "the other rules you'll figure out as you go along.")

"Fans like to line up on the line and have their photo taken," said Clark. "This is a sacred place for Shawshank fans."

Indeed, the entire prison is sacred space for some Shawshank fans, who make pilgrimages to Mansfield from near and far to see where Red and Andy found hope amid so much despair.

Clark likes to point out that the reformatory, created more than a century ago to give its inhabitants a second chance, wouldn't exist today if not for the movie.

"A movie about hope literally helped save a building about hope," he said. "That's an ending Hollywood would appreciate."

Touring the Ohio State Reformatory

Where: 100 Reformatory Road, Mansfield

When: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. daily April through September

Tours options: History Meets Hollywood, Beyond the Bars, Inmate Tour (led by former inmate Mike Humphrey). Self-guided tours also available. Check website for schedule.

Also here: The reformatory houses the several-room Ohio State Corrections Museum, which features numerous artifacts from Ohio prison history. Among the items on display: Old Sparky, the electric chair used at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus from 1897 to 1963.

The reformatory is also working to establish a Shawshank Museum inside the building, featuring props and artifacts from the film.

Admission: \$15-\$20

Information: mrps.org, 419-522-2644

Trail

FROM KI

the anniversary of the movie's release, in 1994.) He used the reunion to raise money for the restoration of the historic, deteriorating Wyandot County Courthouse, featured in the film.

Not long after, Destination Mansfield developed a brochure listing 15 local filming sites, dubbing the route the Shawshank Trail. "We would have people call and stop in our office who wanted to know where the tree was, where the Ohio State Reformatory was located," said Jodie Snavely, group tour manager with Destination Mansfield. "We felt it was important to connect all these locations."

She estimates that a half-million people followed all or some of the route between 2013 and 2017. Mullen owns one of the stops on the trail, the Shawshank Woodshop, where Red (Morgan Freeman) and others worked while incarcerated.

The woodshop is the former home of Stephens Lumber, a long-time Upper Sandusky business that closed in 1998.

Bill and April Mullen have gradually converted it into a Shawshank museum, with posters, costumes, photos and props on display. Mullen has even acquired several vehicles used in the film, including the 1937 Ford Bluebird bus that transports Andy Dufresne (played by Tim Robbins) to Shawshank.

Visits to the woodshop, at 226 S. Eighth St., are free, open by appointment.

Other stops on the Shawshank Trail:

Wyandot Courthouse: 109 S. Sandusky Ave., Upper Sandusky. The historic courthouse, built in 1900, is where Andy Dufresne is convicted of murder in the film's early scenes. The court-

room used in the movie is on the third floor and can be viewed when not in session.

Bissman Building: 193 N. Main St., Mansfield. The historic Bissman Building in downtown Mansfield does double-duty in the movie, used as the exterior for the Brewer Hotel, where Brooks and Red stay after being released from prison. The interior was also used as an office of the Portland Daily Bugle near the end of the film.

Carousel Antiques: 118 N. Main St., Mansfield. This downtown Mansfield storefront substitutes as the pawn shop in the film, where Red peers in and sees the compass that leads him to the oak tree.

Brooks' Bench: Central Park, downtown Mansfield. This isn't the original bench used by bird-feeding Brooks Hatlen after his release from Shawshank. But it's an accurate reproduction and a popular spot for photos.

Renaissance Theatre: 138 Park Ave. W., Mansfield. The theater doesn't actually appear in the film. Rather, it's where the movie premiered back in September 1994. During the 25th anniversary events Aug. 16-18, the theater will show the film and host several panel discussions.

KV Market: 359 W. Fourth St., Mansfield. The newest stop on the Shawshank Trail, the KV Market recently opened in the space that's called Food-Way in the movie. It's where Brooks and Red work bagging groceries after their release.

Corner of Snyder Road and Hagerman Road, Butler: Another photo opportunity — walk in the steps of Red after he exits the pickup



This scene near Lucas is part of the Shawshank Trail. It's featured near the end of the movie, when Red is on a bus en route to Texas. Susan Glaser, The Plain Dealer

truck, en route to the oak tree.

Hagerman Road and Ohio 95, Butler: A Trailways bus, transporting Red to Texas, travels along this road, past the red barn.

Revivals 2 Thrift Store: 345 Orange St., Ashland. This store stands in for the Trailways Bus Station, where Red buys his ticket to Fort Hancock, Texas.

Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuge: St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. You'll need an airplane

ticket to access this location, in the middle of the Caribbean Sea. At the end of the movie, Andy and Red reunite in Zihuatanejo, Mexico. The scene was actually filmed in St. Croix. Bill Mullen made the trip to the Virgin Islands in 2017 to erect a Shawshank Trail sign in the sand.

For more information on any of the sites on the trail, maps and more: shawshanktrail.com

For details on 25th anniversary events: shawshanktrail.com/events/25th-anniversary-2019/schedule-of-events