

# VILLAGE OF MEDINA

## SELF-GUIDED HISTORY TOURS

**These tours are comprised primarily of private property. Please be respectful and responsible by staying on the sidewalks. Also, be sure to practice social distancing while out walking and be vigilant crossing streets. Alternatively, these tours can be done in a car or even by using Street View in Google Maps. Here is a link to [Google Maps Street View Instructions](#)**

**Tour 3** (Four corners of Main St to Medina Falls (near Horan Rd. Bridge - 0.6 mi one way))

1. This tour begins at the four corners where Main St. and (E. and W.) Center St. bisect. Being in the heart of downtown, there is plenty of history surrounding you. We will begin by looking at the four corners and then proceed west down W. Center St. The northwest corner was originally known as Bent's Hall or Bent's Opera House. This fine example of Medina Sandstone was built in 1865, by Don C. Bent. The corner of the first floor was used for quite a while by a succession of drug stores, most prominently, Wright & Ross and then Armstrong's Drug Store. W.T. Grant Co. also occupied the rest of the first floor for decades. It also served as a bank for many years. The second floor was traditionally occupied by offices, but also featured a bowling alley, meeting space for fraternal organizations, as well as the original location of the Medina Daily Journal (Journal Register). Originally, a flight of stairs ran from the W. Center St. entrance to the second floor. This served as the entryway to the opera house that occupied the third floor. Generations of Medinans were entertained and feted in the opera house. The building is currently being restored by Talis Historic Renovation. The plans are to have a restaurant on the first floor, a boutique hotel on the second, and an events space on the third.
2. Our next stop, even though we do not have to move, is the northeast corner of the intersection. This building was built in 1871, and was the long-time home of Landauer's (clothing), then J.C. Penney's, and since 1996, Blissett's Specialty Shop.
3. Now looking at the southeast corner, you see what is today known as Rotary Park. For approximately 130 years there was a commercial building at this site. The last businesses to occupy the site were DiGuilio's Family Shoe Store, H & R Block, and Medina Market (meat). However, in 1971, the building burned and had to be taken down. In 1985, the Rotary Club spearheaded an effort to turn the site into a park, which came to fruition in 1991.
4. The last corner we will look at before moving on is the southwest corner. This site was originally occupied by the Medina House, later renamed the American Hotel, which burned down in 1856. A new hotel was built on the site that went by a succession of names – the Paddock House, Moore's Hotel and then finally back to the Medina House. In 1875, this parcel was bought and occupied by the Union Bank which operated at this location until falling victim to the Great Depression in 1931. The next business was A & P grocery store. In 1940, it became Jay's Drug Store, which operated until 1984. It then became Mark & Dale's Clothing, and is now Avanti Pizza.
5. Now begin moving east on E. Center St. Upon reaching the end of Rotary Park, you have reached Race Alley, named for the fact that a mill race ran through here in the nineteenth century. The raceway actually began just south of Maple Ridge Rd. where Oak Orchard Creek was dammed to make a pond, used to feed the raceway but also as a source of ice blocks for refrigeration. The raceway ran along the creek to Butts Park, then turned and crossed S. Main St. and ran along the west side of this street until reaching Park Ave. (Mill St. at the time). At that point it cut across Main St., ran through the Evans Mill and then split behind the building, with one branch running east to Orient St. and the other running behind the building and crossing over E. Center St. at this location. It then ran through another mill behind 109 E. Center St. This mill was owned at one time by David E. Evans, then William R. Gwinn, and finally Levan Merritt. The raceway was made large enough in that area so boats could make their way up from the Erie Canal to this mill. In 1884, this whole block on the north side from Race Alley to Church St. was destroyed in a fire. The building at 109-111 was re-built the same year, and 113, currently Kwandrans Tae Kwon Do, was added to this in 1889. If you look closely you can see the two separate buildings. There were two more fires at 113 E. Center St. – in 1962, when it was Corrieri Norge Village Laundromat, and 1992.

6. The next building, to your right is 108-114 E. Center St. It was built by Michael Cooper in 1875. Cooper was originally a blacksmith, but later was in the grocery business. He also built the buildings at 439 and 514 Main St. At 110 was Vine's Restaurant, Hotel Kenwood, John B. Cobb (radios), Beauty Parlor, Steward D. Case Wallpaper and Paint, Harvey Robbins Firestone Store, Radioelectric Shop, Browse Around, and Cooky's Take-Out; at 112, Ideal Restaurant and Medina Taxi Cab; at 114, there was Collins Restaurant, Maui Inn, Third Base Inn and most recently Meggie Moo's Ice Cream Parlor. When it was the Maui Inn, many patrons were sportsmen and this is where the idea was hatched for what became the Junior Wilson's Sportsman Club, named in honor of a founding member who had died. The club found a permanent home on Bates Rd.
7. Next door at 116 E. Center St. is Ashlee's Place today. This site was originally occupied by the Davey Carriage Co. who built a three-story building in 1874. Maher Bros. bought the building in 1899, but the structure was destroyed by fire in 1903. At the time, the building was occupied by the Medina Manufacturing Co., the Circular Back Suspender Co., Hanlon Bros., and A.H. Mileham. The last two were salesrooms for carriages – and the former ran an ad in 1900, proclaiming to display the first automobile seen in Medina, although this is disputed. The owner of the Medina Manufacturing Co., D.A.A. Buck was credited with saving four young ladies from the fire by leading them through a window onto an adjoining roof, so they could be rescued by ladder. The current building encompassing 116-120, was built in 1903, and became the second home of the Medina Daily Journal (Journal Register), at 120 from 1903 until 1919, when it purchased the rival Medina Register and its building at 413 Main St. Various parts of the building have been occupied by a bowling alley (run by Sid Allen, then Pete Theodorakus, then Sam Ranallo), The Scenic Theater, the American Legion, Corky's Bakery and various restaurants.
8. The empty lot to your left was the Red & White Store (groceries) and then Britt's Cash Market. The building must have been removed because this was the location of a lunch car from the early 1930s. The old railway car (removed in 1985), with the wheels still on it, was originally called The Lunch Car, then Skip's and finally Lisa's Diner.
9. Next to that, at 121 E. Center St., the small wooden structure over the years operated as the home of Platts Bros. and then Roberts Monuments. It has also housed Medina Floor Covering, White & White Attorneys, Barclay Fowler/Wolfe Heating and a church. It has undergone a recent exterior transformation.
10. Continuing on the north side, 123-127 E. Center St., was the site of heading mill (tops and bottoms of barrels) owned by Charles M. Simonds that burned down in 1896. It was replaced by the concrete block building at a later date. Businesses located at 123 have included Al Morgan Hardware, R.N. Parsons & Son (fuel oil), Village Sports, and Dancenter; at 125 was Hoffman Piano Co., Dawn Dairy, Park Dairy, Medina Self Service Laundry, and the Clip Joint; at 127 was Billy Baker's print shop, Miller's News Room, Orleans Travel Bureau (with Greyhound Bus Lines station) and McElwain Refrigeration Air Conditioning and Appliance Service.
11. The area of 122-128 E. Center St., on your right, was struck by fire in 1907, taking two buildings with it. One housed I. Jaffe's junk store and the other was a saloon operated by John Smith. That same year the current building was constructed. Through the years, at 122, have been The Manufacturer's Outlet Co., D.W. Wilson & Co. Hardware, R.N. Parsons & Son, Hemingway Jewelers, and Van's Pic-N-Pac (convenience store); at 124, Ross Dry Goods Co., Clark H. Butts (autos), The Surprise Store (clothing), Medina Nash Store (autos), Steve's Variety Store, and John Knox's pool room and ice cream stand; at 126, Brust Tailoring, Steve's Variety Store (expanded), and Medina Gas Heating Service; at 128, Medina Laundry, Punch Specialties (wholesale snack food), Lake Motor Sales, Medina Tailors and Cleaners, Steve's Variety Store (expanded again), Muzzleloader's Shop, McElwain Refrigeration & Appliance, and Bernie's Laundromat. It appears that 128 is a separate building, but this could not be confirmed.
12. The parking lot east of this building, at one time was 132-134 E. Center St. It was a variety of new and used car dealers from 1907 through the 1950s. In 1960, the Auto and Collision Shop was in business when the building burned to the ground.
13. To your left, is 135 E. Center St. It was previously the Medina House and then the Kelly House (hotels), J.S. Kelly Bottling Works, J. Jay Walker (farm and auto sales), Anderson & Funnell (autos), The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., Bramer Electric, Canal Country Artisans, and today it is Filomena's Favorites.

14. The empty space between Filomena's Favorites and Captain Kidz had a building on it until a 1917 fire. At 139 E. Center St. was Gellman Co. (ladies' apparel), and then J. Susco Market (meat).
15. Speaking of Captain Kidz, this building at 143 E. Center St. was built in 1989, by Richard Cichocki. It replaced 141 and 143, and was originally an ice cream stand before becoming a restaurant. At 141, throughout the years has been Professor Joseph J. Plovino's music studio (lessons), Coveny Restaurant, The Style Shoppe (clothing), and Adelaide Lenahan (clothing); at 143, The Rochester Surprise Clothing Store, W.T. Conway Plumbing and Heating, Welfare Seating Co., and Mac's Laundry.
16. Looking to your right, at 142 E. Center St., is The Medicine Shoppe. It was formerly Rochester Clothing and Shoe Store, Brooks Drug Store, Modern Dry Cleaning Co., Cichocki's Esso Station, Al's Repair Service (small engine), Medina Radiator Service, and Engle-Harrison Used Car Lot.
17. The church in the middle of the road is St. John's Episcopal Church, built of Medina sandstone quarried from the banks of nearby Oak Orchard Creek. This church began to be built in 1828, four years before Medina became a village. The spire was removed after it was weakened by wind damage in 1867. Until the widening of the canal in 1913, Church St. extended across the canal by a bridge. More information about the church can be found on the historical marker.
18. To your left, the building at 201 E. Center St. was built for Jake's and Son Dyna Service, in 1982. Previously on the site was Walirmo Tire Co., W.B. Slattery (tires), Charles E. Foster's Service Station, Plummer Sunoco Service Station, Powers' Super Service, Field's Super Service, Top Gun Construction and currently Matt C.M. Contracting.
19. At the corner of E. Center St. and Church St. (VFW parking lot) was Top Service Station, Wheatley's Service Station and then Jim's Auto Sales.
20. Speaking of the VFW, at 216 E. Center St. is the current home of Lincoln Post #1483. This former home was one of the earliest residences in Medina, possibly dating as far back as the late 1820s. It was likely built by Justus Ingersoll, who was a tanner and shoe maker by trade, but was also appointed by President Andrew Jackson as the local Indian agent and first postmaster of the village. Admiral Joseph E. Craig owned the house for a brief time period. He was in the Navy at the time, so it is not likely that he lived here, but his wife's family owned it before him and she lived here for years. He was a native of Medina who rose to be the Commander of the U.S. Naval Academy in 1890. In 1913, it was sold to William J. Gallagher. He first made money being an early-adopter of motorized trucking. He also made money paving over 300 miles of roads in Western New York and building a 400-foot bridge over Oak Orchard Creek at The Bridges in Carlton. In addition, he was a horse and cattle breeder, owning four farms, including the one on N. Gravel Rd. where generations have sledged in winter. After moving to his new home at 730 W. Center St., in 1925, he leased the building. One tenant was Van's Grill. Upon Gallagher's death in 1945, he deeded the property to the William J. Gallagher & Son Memorial Veterans Club (Vets' Club). At one point, the building was jointly occupied by the Vets' Club, Lincoln Post, VFW Women's Auxiliary, American Legion (Butts-Clark Post #204), and the Disabled American Veterans Club (Leo Grabowski Chapter #202).
21. Orient St. was the last street to the east (orient means east) that was originally part of Medina. The original village boundary line was the west side of Oak Orchard Creek.
22. Across Orient St., at 304 E. Center St., is Lyon's Collision. In the past it was Hellert's Gulf Service, Nudd and Ward Service, Al's Gulf Service, Halstead's Pop Shoppe, Ramar Welding-Fabricating, and Hi-Tech Service.
23. Next door at 306 E. Center St. was Justus Ingersoll's tannery and then Medina Union Mills (flour). Later it became Zimmerman Motor Co. (auto sales) , a laundromat, Medina Paint & Decorating Center, East Center Beverages and More and then East Center Stop and Shop.

24. Across the street at 305 E. Center St. is Medina Lumber & Hardware. The site was hit with fires in 1880, 1884, 1941, and 1943. The first business was a mill, utilizing the canal spillway (stone building in back), then Bennett Lumber Yard, Hedley Mills, Bidwell Bean Thresher Co., Beach, Newell & Neill (Robert H. Newell Co.), O'Donnell Bros. Lumber Yard (which had delivery trucks designed to look like yellow houses), Newell Lumber Co., Maine Lumber, and Somerset Lumber.
25. The ravine to the east was the home of Beach & Company (plumbing parts foundry), and then S.A. Cook Furniture factory. The building was demolished in 1941.
26. Evans Ace Hardware's address is 342 E. Center St., but the property actually encompasses what was 342-354. At 342 was the Iroquois Washing Racks (car wash and tires), Arthur Bensley Service Station, Iroquois Hotel, Sinclair Refining Co., T.E. Barhite (gas), Ken's Collision, and Gordon Plummer Garage. Between 342 and 354 were a couple of houses. At 354, it was the home of A.J. Richards (photographer) and O'Reilly & Son Funeral Home. In 1966, 342-354 were taken down to make way for A & P, Super Duper, and Jubilee (all three were supermarkets).
27. Carefully cross the street to picturesque State Street Park. This site was originally occupied by what was called the Burroughs Mansion. The gothic style home was built around 1850, with beautiful gardens and fountains. Silas M. Burroughs was a prominent businessman, State Assemblyman, and general in the NYS Militia. A later owner, Dr. William H. Chamberlain dubbed the property Chamberlain's Grove and even installed a weather observatory. Not long after the property was sold to the village in 1916, the dilapidated house burned under suspicious circumstances and another home that sat on the southeast corner of the property was removed. With the area clear, Charles A. Ingersoll drew up plans for what originally was called City Park. For years there was a water tower in the northwest corner and a wading pool near the southwest corner.
28. Make your way to State St. Our first stop is 108 State St., the second house from the corner. This house actually used to sit on a corner, but not on this side of town! It was originally at the northeast corner of Park Ave. and Catherine St. (.8 mi away), but was moved here in 1898, to make way for a new home.
29. Next door at 110 State St. is the former home of Chancellor Ensign Mead. He inherited the entire area bounded by State St. on the west, Mead Ave. on the east, Elizabeth St. to the north and E. Center St. to the south. This area became part of the village in 1914, despite the fact that Elizabeth St. and North St. further to the north of this tract had already been incorporated into the village in 1889, and Chadwick St. (between North and Elizabeth) in 1893. To better market the area, it was referred to as Brooklyn Heights and the current streets were created. Mead Ave. was named for the family, Roseland Ave. for Mead's wife Rose, Ensign Ave. for Mead's middle name, Elwood Ave. is of unknown origin, Worthy Ave. for Mead's father, and Elizabeth St. for Mead's sister. Chancellor and his wife Rose also later resided next door at 116 State St.
30. Proceed north to the corner of State St. and Horan Rd. At this point you have a decision to make. There is an historical Medina sandstone home at 203 State St. that is 0.2 miles away. This home was built approximately in the 1830s. The original canal bridge linking State St. with Horan Rd. was here and named after the property owner, Isaac Bennett. It is also rumored that this home was a stop on the Underground Railroad, though it is hard to establish this, since the whole enterprise of shepharding slaves to freedom was built on secrecy.
31. If you have chosen not to take the extra walk (or if you did and have now returned), you can proceed over the Horan Rd. bridge. Upon reaching the other side be cautious as the sidewalk ends and you will need to walk on the shoulder of the road to reach Medina Falls, located where Oak Orchard Creek runs under the Erie Canal. This area was historically referred to as Paddy Hill, since the area was settled by the Irish. The area north of this was known as the English Settlement. A drive down Maple Ave. will reveal stone fences reminiscent of the English countryside.
32. The tour concludes at the Medina Falls. If you recall from earlier, before the widening of the Erie Canal in 1913, this area was accessed by a bridge at the end of Church St. (look southwest). Speaking of the canal widening, it is reported that engineers spent more time designing the aqueduct over this valley, than any other aspect of the widening across the state. The falls was first used by Samuel Gear for a sawmill in 1805. Later, the area was also occupied by the Weld & Hill or Medina Falls Mill (flour), and then A.L. Swett Electric Light & Power Co.