

Wabasha WALKS

An Historic Tour

Historic Neighborhoods

Distance: 5 miles

Highlights: This route winds along the river and through the small river town neighborhoods. Five city parks, an historic cemetery, the old railroad district, and St. Elizabeth Medical Center campus are highlighted.



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The yacht "North Star" owned by the Doctors Mayo out of Rochester was a common presence along this section of Lawrence Boulevard.



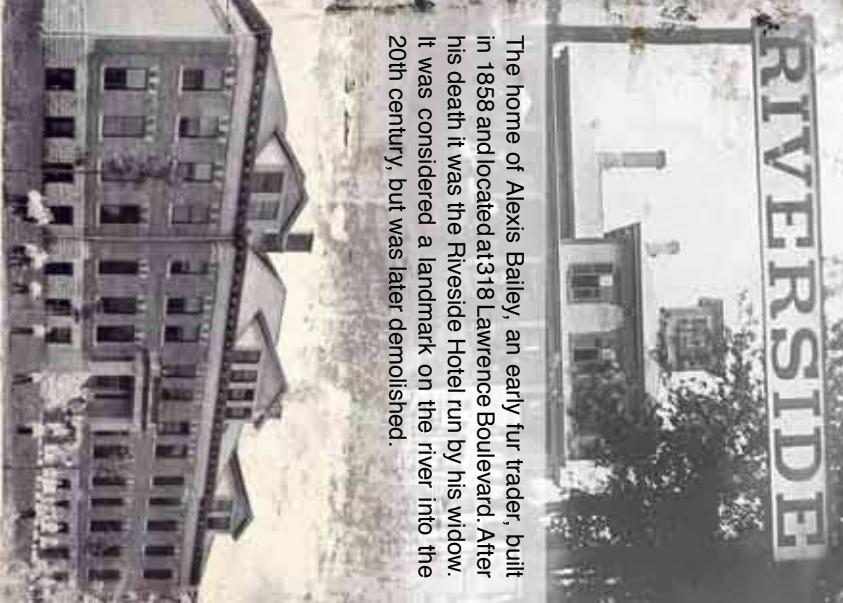
The passenger depot near Bruegger Park served the community for many years.



West Side School 1911



The home of Alexis Bailey, an early fur trader, built in 1858 and located at 318 Lawrence Boulevard. After his death it was the Fiveside Hotel run by his widow. It was considered a landmark on the river into the 20th century, but was later demolished.



St. Joseph Orphanage which was part of the hospital complex

French Hill from the river
(note: hospital on the right edge of the photo)

Lumber Rafts on the Slough near the Grant Street Bridge



Wabasha's West Side c. 1800's





Legend

- Neighborhood Route (5 miles)
- Downtown Historic District
- Paved Off-street Trails
- Cemetery
- City Parks
- Railroad Tracks
- Highway 60 Bridge & Approach
- Bouquet Fountain



Take a right on Campbell and follow for two blocks, cross 5th Grant and go two blocks more.

8. Hospital

St. Elizabeth's Medical Center began as a small hospital in 1898 in the home of Dr. F.H. Milligan, an early Wabasha physician. The home was turned into a hospital and had the capacity for 10 to 12 patients. In 1905 a three-story brick building was built, providing room for 25 to 30 patients and offices. The addition of a three-story wing was constructed in 1918, doubling the capacity.

In 1905 St. Joseph Orphanage was constructed providing room for 85 to 90 children. The three story brick building adjoined St. Elizabeth's Hospital and both institutions were operated by the Sisters of our Sorrowful Mother. The Orphanage was closed in 1943 and later demolished.

9. French Hill

Traveling down 3rd Street, French Hill is on the right. Bordered by the westerly side of the slough, at the turn of the 20th century (c. 1900) workers at Peters Boat Yard (near Beach Park) would cross the railroad trestle between work and home. The area's name of "French Hill" is derived from the descendants of earlier French fur traders who continued to live there long after fur trading ceased.

Cross the pedestrian bridge over the slough and follow the trail to Main Street. Cross Main Street and go one block, take a right on Lawrence Boulevard.

10. Hungry Point

The neighborhood bordered by the slough, the river, the feed mill (now Gerkins) and Bridge Avenue was once known as Hungry Point, sometimes simply referred to as "the point." While not known for certain, it is thought that the name comes from the fact that this is the location of the earliest settlement in the city and there were likely times of hunger experienced by those who lived here. By the later part of the 1900's the area bustled with railroad traffic, boat building, warehouses and industry.

Follow Lawrence Boulevard to the trail and continue on trail back to the National Eagle Center and the start of the tour route.

Upper Lawrence Boulevard is characterized by the wide road right of way that was once the location of both the street and the railroad that served the flour mill once located downtown on the river.

End at National Eagle Center.

Start at the National Eagle Center/Bouquet Fountain. Follow Lawrence Boulevard down river.

1. Lower Lawrence Boulevard

The homes are examples of architectural styles from the late 1800's and the 1900's; most prevalent are those from ca. 1919 to 1950. Included is that of James G. Lawrence, owner of the Wabasha Roller Mill, for whom the street was named.

A sign posted on the street "No Commercial Vehicles" indicated that all deliveries and service people were expected to come to the back door of these fine residences.

An alley between 318 and 330 Lawrence Boulevard was the location of the "narrow gage" railroad line that went south out of Wabasha toward Kellogg and then west. The railroad was abandoned in the 1930's.

At the end of Lawrence Boulevard, the Oschner Subdivision was platted in 1985 in a swampy area filled in by the Army Corps of Engineers with sand dredged from the river. As the route turns right, this is the vicinity of the "gypsy camp."

Turn right at the end of Lawrence Boulevard and then follow Washington Avenue (veering toward the left) up the hill. Turn left on Rustic Lane entering into Rocques Addition.

2. Rocques Addition

This neighborhood was platted in 1860. Plans to build a new Catholic church on the land now occupied by the St. Felix cemetery were formulated by Father Felix Tissot when he was appointed pastor of Catholics in Goodhue and Wabasha counties in 1858. The land for the project was donated by Joseph Rocque (son of Augustine Rocque, an early fur trader). The Church was built in 1859, but due to the fact it was too far from the center of the city the bishop decided not to dedicate it and insisted that the church be a more centrally located. St. Felix church was built "downtown" at the corner of Pembroke and 3rd Street.

Follow Rustic Lane to Angelique and turn right. Cross County Road 30/Hawatha Boulevard and proceed down 12th Street (straight ahead).

3. 12th Street

This was the southern boundary of town up until the 1980's. Notice the Tenny/Kreye brick farmhouse to the left at the end of Broadway built in 1889 by Jake Tenny.

Follow 12th Street to Bailey Avenue and turn right. You are now entering "Cowtown."

4. Cowtown

Cowtown was known as such because it was characterized by large lots with gardens and livestock from the 1920's to the 1950's. The area was made up predominately of families of German descent who were largely self-sufficient. It was not uncommon to see cow grazing along side the road and slough. Public gathering places of the neighborhood included Pierson Kirk's Dance Hall at the corner of Hiawatha and Pembroke Avenue, a Grocery store on the corner of old 61 (Hiawatha Drive) and Franklin, and a Gas Station/Restaurant known as Heavens Half Acre located on a triangular piece of land on Hiawatha Drive (intersection of Hiawatha, Washington Avenue and 8th Street). Nearby Heavens Half Acre was a log cabin with a large arrow pointing to "Downtown Wabasha".

Follow Bailey Avenue and cross Hiawatha Drive. Turn left on Hiawatha/County Road 30.

5. Athletic Field

The old Wabasha County Fair Grounds were located here in the 1970's. The area along Bridge Avenue (landward side) was once a city dump into the 1960's. Bridge Avenue was a bridge/causeway with slough on both sides through the 1930's.

Cross the slough using the Hiawatha Drive Bridge.

Turn right on the trail into Malone Park and follow to the parking area. Take a left on Church Street, follow for two blocks and take a right on 7th Street (vehicles follow Prospect to 7th and take a left). Follow 7th Street to Bruegger Park.

6. The Slough

These backwaters of the Mississippi River were once connected to the Zumbro River as part of its vast delta emptying into the Mississippi River, although likely never the main channel. A wood mill and warehouse (located at the present day City Campground), used the slough for a connection to the river and the transporting of goods.

7. West Side

In 1857 one year after the original City of Wabasha was platted, an addition was platted on the west side of the slough by a company comprised of some of Wabasha's earliest and most prominent settlers. The future of Wabasha and growth on the "west side" looked promising, but a national recession that year devastated the company and its investors. The west side was given up and the land divided among the proprietors in 1860. The west side did eventually grow into its own unique neighborhood, much of it based on the presence of the railroad which arrived in Wabasha in 1871.

Remnants of the important railroad industry can still be seen in the vicinity of Bruegger Park with the Merchants Hotel (now an apartment building), the railroad Round House, and the railroad spur line (now paved trail) that served the mills and other industry near downtown.