

Walking Tour of Fowlerville's

Historic Homes and

Downtown Buildings

Fowlerville has a rich history as an agricultural and manufacturing community, with beautiful, turn-of-the-century homes and traditional-style churches surrounding four blocks of New England-style brick buildings in the downtown area. As you stroll through the business district, feel free to peek in windows or do a little shopping. And, as you admire the privately-owned historic homes, please respect the owners' privacy.

This walking tour begins at the southeast corner of East Grand River and South Grand Avenue as shown on the map at the back of this pamphlet, starting at the two-story building facing East Grand River (#1).



Fowlerville Train Depot (Picture ca 1906)

#1. C.D. Hamilton & Co. 100 East Grand River

For 60 years starting in 1903, C. D. Hamilton offered household items and dry goods such as linens and towels as well as ladies' wear, while milliners, doctors, and dentists rented rooms upstairs. (Picture ca. 1925)



#2. S.T. Blackmer's Clothing Store 118 then 124 East Grand River

Blackmer & Minto opened their menswear store in 1896. After several moves, in 1906 they moved to 124 where Utters Men's and Women's Wear was established in the 1960's and was open until 1991. (Picture ca. 1945)



#3. Tomion's Dairy 130 East Grand River

In 1922, Walter Tomion opened Tomion's Dairy supplying milk and ice cream to the community. For 40 years, his soda fountain was a favorite for young and old.

#4. G.A. Newman Building 134 and 136 East Grand River

This brick structure was built in 1904 by G.A. Newman (note name above the doorways) after a devastating fire destroyed all of the wooden buildings along this street. Containing two storefronts, it has housed a bank, jewelry and electronics repair, bakery, post office, and retail.

#5. Line's Dime Store 140 East Grand River

By the mid-1900s, penny candy, toys, and household items could be purchased at this variety store. Before that it was known as the Vaudeville, where silent movies and then "talkies" were shown.

#6. Eaton's Standard Service Station Parking lot at South Second Street and East Grand River

In the mid-1900s there was a service station to meet your auto's every day needs. Years earlier, Dr. Byron Defendorf's two-story house, with attached office, stood at this corner (see #38).



(Picture for #3, 4, 5 and 6 ca. 1930)

#7. St Agnes Church, now the Village Chapel 123 South Second Street

The first Catholic Church was built in 1891. On May 15, 1909, a devastating tornado tore off the roof and crumbled the walls but, by October 20, 1909, a new cornerstone was laid here. (St. Agnes is now located at 855 East Grand River.)



#8. First United Methodist Church 201 South Second Street

The original church was a white, wooden frame building dedicated in 1868. The current building's cornerstone was laid in 1916. (Year unknown)



#9. 132 East Frank Street

This square Italianate home was built circa 1872 by Edwin E. Walton, an early dentist in Fowlerville. In 1926 Tom Woods of Woods Drug store lived in this house. (Current day photo)



#10. 245 South Grand Avenue

A.D. Benjamin, whose father, Delsey, was an early settler of the area, built this hip-roofed Victorian/Italianate house in 1873. (Current day photo)



#11. Carey Centennial Baptist Church 214 South Grand Avenue

The first Baptist church was built in 1873 on Ann Street and, in 1875, relocated to 435 East Grand River (see #34). The new church was dedicated in 1894.



1896

#12. Lockwood Exchange/Hotel 141 South Grand Avenue

The Lockwood Hotel was built in 1901 after a fire destroyed the previous wooden structure. It was a place to stay, have a meal, be treated by traveling physicians, get a haircut, or even visit with a clairvoyant. (picture, ca. 1903)



#13. Morlock Basket Factory (Current Curtis Grocery parking lot)

In the mid 1900's, Floyd Morlock along with eight employees, created nearly 500 floral and funeral baskets weekly, in at least 30 different styles, from Indonesian reeds and Argentine willows. The two-story building was torn down in April, 1971. (no picture)

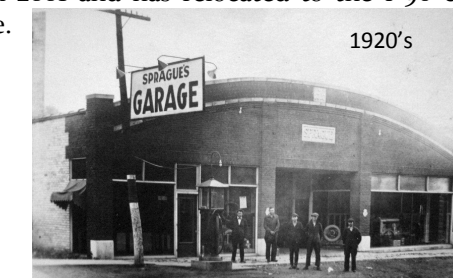
#14. Former Hotel then Service Station Southwest Corner

In 1880, the Commercial Hotel was built to replace the Reason House, which had been destroyed by fire in 1878. Traveling salesmen could show their wares in areas provided on the first floor known as "sample rooms." The hotel was torn down in 1937 and a Hi-Speed (then Pure, then 76) gas station stood at this corner for many years. (Picture 1937)



#15. Roy T. Sprague Ford Garage 103 West Grand River

The Ford garage was completed in 1917. Local legend holds that Henry Ford designed this curved-roof building for his automobile showrooms. The Bob Smith Ford dealership was sold in 2001 and has relocated to the I-96 exchange.



1920's

#16. Fowlerville Hardware Store 110 West Grand River

Shortly after the Civil War, J.L. Cook began a hardware store. By 1891 the arched-stone building was built and continues as a hardware store. The building on the left was used for farm implements and buggy repair. Then, from 1940 until 1956 it was the Orr Theatre. (Picture ca. 1915)



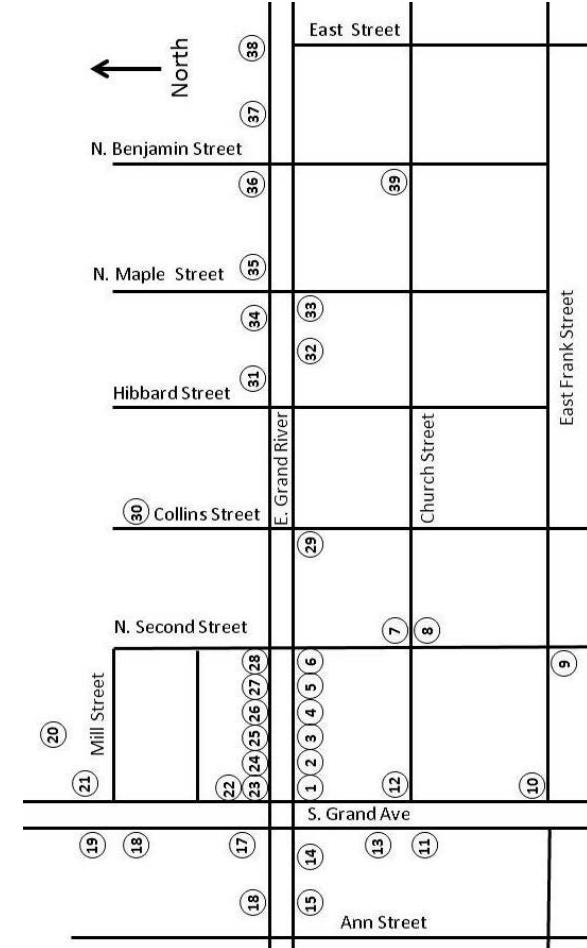
#17. Palmerton Block 100 West Grand River

This is the third structure on this site because fire destroyed the first two buildings in 1876 and 1891. Originally called the Palmerton block, it was renamed the Sidell block in 1945, and now houses Harmon Real Estate. (Picture ca. 1890s)



#18. Current Handy Township Hall 135 North Grand Avenue

Site of Lovely's Opera house until destroyed by fire in 1891, Newly dedicated in 1899, it has seen a variety of uses over the years, including: The First Ladies library, fire department, the Masons and the community center containing meeting room for organizations. (Picture ca. 1890s)



Total Walking Distance:
Approximately 1.5 miles round trip

#19. Vogt's Funeral Home
223 North Grand Avenue

Vogt's Undertaking and Furniture business was owned and operated by John Vogt, the first president of the Commercial Club in the mid-1900s. He and his family lived and worked at this location into the 1950s. (Picture ca. 1910s)



#20. Centennial Park – Behind Fire Department and Library buildings

When the schools were located on North Collins Street, this was Centennial Field used for football and baseball games, marching band practice, and a perfect area for an ice skating rink. In 1998 it became Centennial Park.

#21. Livingston (Birdsall) Mill – Corner of North Grand Avenue and Mill Street

This early grist mill, for grinding wheat and corn into flour, became Birdsall Mill in the 1920s. In 1949, it was sold and became the H. M. & G. Feed company. The mill was closed in 1961 and used as an intentional burn exercise (pictured) by the fire department.



#22. Frank's Market and Bell Opera House
East Side of North Grand Avenue

The Bell Opera house, located on the second floor (first seven windows from the left), was a busy meeting hall into the 1920s for community meetings, orators, plays and concerts. In 1921, Clyde Curtis opened a grocery store. Clyde sold it to his son Frank in 1946. In recent years, The Decorating Center was located here; now Maria's School of Dance. (Picture ca. 1950s)



#23. Spencer's Drugs, then Woods Drug Store
105 East Grand River

J.P. Spencer opened his drug store in 1886. From the mid-1920s until 1969, it was known as Woods Drug store. Thomas Woods would fill prescriptions, sold ice cream and soda fountain drinks, and stocked health and personal items. (Picture ca. 1950s)



(Picture for #24,25,26 and 27 ca. 1940s)

#24. Spagnuolo's Confectionery Store
115 East Grand River

In December, 1924, George Spagnuolo purchased the Novara Confectionery, changed its name, and delighted customers with candies, ice cream, soda fountain drinks, and fruits until the late 1960s. Here you could find the second refrigerated soda fountain installed in Michigan (1926) and the first Coca Cola machine in the village.

#25. Fowlerville Pharmacy
119 East Grand River

In the early 1900s, Clayton Fenton owned and operated Fenton Drug store. It is said, Mr. Fenton and Thomas Woods would help each other by trading off which store would stay open on the weekends. Now known as Fowlerville Pharmacy, it has also been Tim's Pharmacy and Proos.

#26. Sweet Sensations
129 East Grand River

In 1946, George and Ellen Spagnuolo converted the rear of the store into their manufacturing plant for candy and ice cream while using the front for a small wholesale business.

#27. Twin-Q Inn Restaurant
131 East Grand River

Before and after World War II, the Twin-Q Inn Restaurant took up two storefronts (Detroit Edison and Home Restaurant). It is said Detroit residents would take road trips here for the elegant dining. Years later, the west half became Howard's Market (now Save-On) and the old bar area, the Bloated Goat.

#28. Lepard Chevrolet
145 East Grand River

The two-story building (at right) has been many things; in 1896, the first location for Blackmer & Minto, then a sales room for Lepard Chevrolet in the mid-1900s, and for many years, the dance studio for Maria's School of Dance. (Picture ca. 1910s)



#29. 226 East Grand River

Fred Kuhn built this Victorian-style house ca. 1890. After his death in 1935, it became the office and home of Dr. B.H. Glenn and wife, Nellie, who was the village historian for many years. (Picture ca. 1910s)



#30. Collins Street Elementary
(Current site of Senior Center)
203 North Collins Street

The Collins Street Elementary was opened September 19, 1949, with five classrooms and an office area. The Fowlerville High School opened in 1923, and was located across the street. (Torn down in 1996) (Picture ca. 1930s)



#31. 421 East Grand River

This stately red brick Georgian Revival house was built sometime between 1922 and 1935 by Deo Blackmer, son of S. Thurlow Blackmer, the original owner of the men's clothing store at the turn of the century. (Current day photo)



#32. 422 East Grand River

This Craftsman bungalow was built in 1916-17 by A.J. Beebe, undertaker, furniture and coal dealer, and co-owner in stave factory. In the 1950s, LaRaine Jones had a dance studio in the basement.



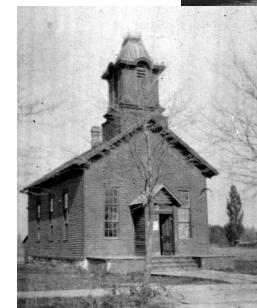
#33. 434 East Grand River

F.H. Starkey built this large Italianate villa 1881-83. Years later, Judge A.E. Cole resided and died here, passing away in the front room from a heart attack. The house has undergone extensive expansion and renovation since 1992 when the current owners converted it back to a single-family dwelling. (Current day photo)



#34. 435 East Grand River

This rental house served as the original Baptist church, built on land donated by Ralph Fowler on Ann Street in 1873. It was moved to this location in 1875 and used as a church for an additional 19 years.



#35. 501 East Grand River

This 1896 Victorian style has Queen Anne elements and contains extensive original oak woodwork. The date was carved in the foundation, presumably by the local lumberyard owner, who also may have built the house at 425 East Grand River. (Current day photo)



#36. 525 East Grand River

This Craftsman bungalow, built in 1921 as a mail-order Sears & Roebuck catalog house, contains original built-ins such as a breakfast nook and cabinetry. (Current day photo)



#37. 621 East Grand River

This Italianate-style home can be found on an 1862 plat map at the southwest corner of a 40-acre farm, with this property at the eastern edge of the town. The original cemetery was just to its east until 1884. Fencing sections for the cemetery have been found. (Current day photo)



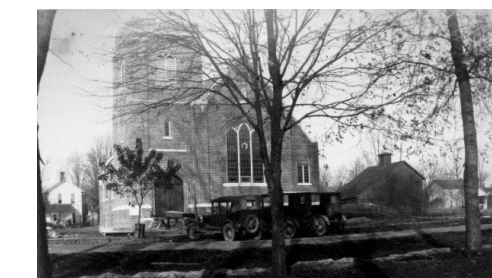
#38. 701 East Grand River

This Greek Revival-style house, built in 1857, is known locally as the Daly-Eaton House. It was originally located at the corner of South Second Street and East Grand River (bank parking lot, #6); moved around 1926. Indian burial remnants have been found on this property. (Current day photo)



#39. St. John's Lutheran Church
132 South Benjamin Street

In 1898, a wooden church stood at this location. Services were held in German until 1903. The present church was built in 1928. (Picture ca. 1930s)



As you have wandered through the village, looking at businesses, homes, and churches, please realize this is only a very small portion of the vast history of this village. For more information, visit *The Fowlerville Observer* at www.fowlerville.blogspot.com or *Fowlerville's History* at www.fowlervillehistory.org where you can read a longer version of this brochure. Books are also available for purchase through both websites.