

# 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 5** (West Ave. from Eagle St. to Maple St. (1.1 mi one way))

West Avenue pre-dates the incorporation of the village by at least six years. It was originally called West Street and ran from Mill Street (Park Avenue) to Canal Street (Pearl Street). It expanded over the years as the village expanded. The name was changed to West Avenue in 1899, at the request of residents.

1. The tour begins at Holy Trinity (St. Mary's) Catholic Church. This is a great example of Medina sandstone, built from 1902-1904. The first recorded Catholic service in Medina was in 1832 in a private home on N. Main St. This is the third Catholic Church on the property. The first church was a frame building bought from the Presbyterians in the late 1830s, and moved from the northeast corner of West Ave. and Pearl St. to the area at the west end of the current parking lot. The second church, made of stone, was built in 1854 and stood on Eagle St. nearly 300 feet from West Ave. Bishop Timon came from Buffalo to lay the cornerstone. The reason that these two churches were not built where the present church is was because they did not own the property then. However, by 1875, the land and a home were bought by the church. The home, which was at the corner of West Ave. and Eagle St., was then serving as St. Mary's Academy. The rectory, located behind the church was built in 1906 and the school west of the parking lot was completed in 1926. The school closed in 1969.
2. Heading south on West Ave. you come to 325 West Ave. on your left. This home was built in 1891, for Kate Stanton who was in the saloon and grocery business. In the early 1930s the rear building was used as Eskleson's Dairy.
3. Moving along to the intersection of West Ave. and Pearl St., the northeast corner where Kwik-Fill is today, was the original site of the Presbyterian Church, from 1832-1836. When they built a church at their current site on Main St., the building on this site was converted into a school. As mentioned previously, this building was moved by St. Mary's Church to their property. A home stood here for several decades until it was torn down and replaced by Rotary Service Station in 1977, which then turned into Kwik-Fill in 1984.
4. At 119 Pearl St. on the southeast corner, is a brick commercial building that was utilized by Nichols-Hepp Auto Parts Co. for several decades, beginning in 1953. The site was originally the home of Simeon Bathgate, who originally had built a home that sat in the middle of what is today Main St. in front of NAPA Auto Parts. When the village wanted to extend the road north, they told Bathgate he could select any other unclaimed property in the village. His wife selected this site because it "was as far in the woods as she cared to live." Bathgate was originally a millwright, but built a foundry in what is now the Canal Basin. He was also active in politics and the Neptune Fire Company – one of the fire crews that early on protected the village from fires. Their daughter, Margaret, and her husband George Shattuck inherited the home in 1862, and lived in it until they built a grander home on the site in 1877. The Loyal Order of the Moose bought the home in 1934 and used it as their lodge for the next seventeen years. This home was taken down to construct the current building. Shattuck was an expert in penmanship and his textbooks on the subject sold over 80,000,000 copies around the world. His collection on the history of penmanship is now in the New York Public Library collection.
5. Across the street on the southwest corner is 400 West Ave. This property was originally owned by John Ryan, the first person to commercialize the quarrying of Medina sandstone. He did not build on the site, but sold it to Hiram M. Beers who likely built this home around 1860. Beers had a "boot and shoe" shop on Main St. at approximately 417 Main St, which was destroyed in a fire in 1869. The next owner was Daniel G. Fuller who built 440 Main St., next door to Bent's Opera House. It was then purchased by Michael Slack, who was in the grocery, quarry and construction businesses at various times. He was the builder of both 408 and 426 Main St. The home remained in his family for the next eighty-four years.

6. The Medina Historical Society is located next door at 406 West Ave. This was originally a home built for Levan and Cynthia Merritt in 1841. He was the owner of a flour mill, active in politics and helped lay out Boxwood Cemetery. He is also credited with setting out the first shade trees in Medina and helping to organize the first fire company in the village. The property remained in the family until 1958, when it was purchased by the Village of Medina. It was then sold two years later to the Town of Ridgeway, which used it as the Town Hall, until the Town built the current building behind this one in 1979. It has since been the home of the Medina Historical Society.
7. Next door, at 414 West Ave., was originally the home of Arthur W. Newell, a dry good merchant. It was later sold to Edmund Pitts, a local attorney and State Senator. It was made into a Masonic Lodge in 1923, and the western portion of the building was added. It was turned into the Islamic Center in 1986, but has been vacant for several years now.
8. Across the street, to your left, is 415 West Ave. This building was built in 1951 for the Loyal Order of the Moose. This fraternal organization's first meeting in 1921, was on the second floor of the Fuller Block at 428 Main St. They then moved to the second floor of Bent's Opera House and next, to the old Shattuck home mentioned above (4). Due to growth, they bought three houses that occupied the present property (including the parking lot). The Moose Club resided here for several decades. It has since been converted to commercial space.
9. You now come to the intersection of West Ave. and West Center St. To your left, on the northeast corner, is the Post Office which was opened in 1932. The site was the former home of Isaac K. Burroughs who helped raise his nephew S. Mainville Burroughs, in that house, through his teen years. S. Mainville Burroughs went on to start a pharmaceutical business in England that grew into GlaxoSmithKline.
10. Across the street where the former drive-thru bank, and current Canal Village Farmers' Market is located, was the original burying ground in the village. As the village expanded, the bodies were removed to the new burying ground (current Gwinn St. Park). A home was built here by Asa Stanford, the brother of Leland, who built Stanford University. He eventually sold it to John R. Weld, his business partner in the Medina Falls Mill. Weld also helped found the Union Bank, which at one time employed his future son-in-law, George Kennan as a cashier. Kennan and his wife, Emeline, retired to this home, but not before George made a name for himself as the nation's foremost nineteenth century expert on Russian affairs after having spent time there mapping a route for a telegraph to connect Europe with North America, and later writing an exposé on the Russian exile system. The house diagonal (to your right) was owned by George's brother John, who was president of the Union Bank.
11. Last, but not least at this corner is the First Baptist Church, built of Medina sandstone and dedicated in 1872. The bell was moved from the previous church, on W. Center St. where The Sandstone is now, but after forty years of service, it was melted down and used in the making of the new bell. Then in 1890, the basement was excavated to provide more space for church activities.
12. Passing the farmers' market, at 511 West Ave. was the former home of Dr. D.E. Spoor and then Dr. Edward Munson. Munson bought the home from Spoor in 1888, and lived and worked here until his death in 1926. Munson also served as the chief of the medical staff at Medina Memorial Hospital and as the county coroner. This building has also housed various dentists and is currently the Bunk Haus hostel.
13. On your right at 510 West Ave, was the former parlors of Madam and Prof. Stanley: Royal Astrologers, Psychics and Life Readers, in 1915. In the 1930s-1950s, this building was known as the Gates Apartments.
14. The home next door at 512 West Ave. was built in 1886 for Samuel Rice, Jr., a Main St. merchant who also built 437 Main St. Upon his death, the home was inherited by his daughter Grace Bickle and her husband Harry. Harry was a partner with his brother in Bickle Brothers, a store in the Odd Fellows Building at 108 W. Center St., and later operated an ice cream parlor and restaurant in the Cook Block on Main St. He was also the owner of 419 Main St., which bears his name, although he was not the builder. During WWII he was the chairman of the Orleans County Selective Service Board. This home was recently converted into Brushstrokes Studios.

15. Now proceed to the intersection of West Ave. and Park Ave. The Grace Baptist Church property on the northeast corner was purchased in 1942, by its precursor, the Fundamental Gospel Tabernacle – a group that split from the Shelby Baptist Church in 1931. The former residence and doctor’s office burned in 1951, forcing the group to meet for the next two years at City Hall. The existing building was rebuilt and expanded beginning in 1952. After meeting in the basement as rebuilding continued, the church was dedicated in 1959, and the name was changed in 1964.
16. The empty lot on the southeast corner used to be Maxol Service Station, Wespark Service Station, and Ward’s, then Bloom’s, Kendall Service (gas).
17. On the northwest corner is 200 Park Ave. which was the home and office of Dr. Angelo F. Leone, Mrs. Leone’s Studio (ceramics), and Lee’s Ceramics.
18. On southwest corner at 201 Park Ave., was the home of W. Richard Curry, who owned Curry’s Toggery Shoppe (women’s apparel) at 541-543 Main St., in the building built by his father and namesake.
19. Moving just south, at 525 West Ave. is what most people refer to as the Walsh House, or Walsh Hotel. Previously on the site was the Clark House. In 1903, Eugene and Lena Walsh bought the property and the next year completed the building you see here. In a glowing article printed in 1938, *The Medina Tribune* claimed that the Walsh House had a reputation throughout Western New York for fine dining – in fact saying that its food quality helped it survive Prohibition even as all the other local hotels were forced to close. Recounting the history of the place, it said that the opening featured a speech from the balcony by Francis Burton Harrison who was running for Lieutenant Governor and would go on to be the Governor General of the Philippines. The article goes on to say that many of the key figures in the famous Stielow murder trial frequented the place in 1916. Other guests included Inez Millholland, a leading suffragette who held a mass meeting at the Diana Theater, and William Jennings Bryan who made a name for himself in politics, running on the Democratic and Populist tickets in the 1896 and 1900 presidential elections. Ownership has changed hands several times and it is now owned by Tim Cooper who is making renovations.
20. Behind the Walsh House used to stand a building that originally served as a school, and was later converted into an arsenal by Silas M. Burroughs. According to Ciel White’s *Medina: Past and Present*, although their equipment was of inferior quality, “the militia did serve in quelling a strike among canal laborers in Middleport who started a march to Medina. When met by the militia in their regimentals and shouldering arms, they about-faced and returned to work.”
21. Next door is the old freight depot. It is the third depot on the site. The first was built in 1852, and served as both a passenger and freight depot. The second one was strictly a freight depot and was used from 1862 to 1905. The current one was built in 1905, by the New York Central Railroad. In 1963, it was sold to Thomas and Helen Hickey who eventually turned it into a furniture store. When they retired, they sold it to Marty Phelps, in 1991, who opened the doors on the current Medina Railroad Museum in 1997.
22. Across West Ave., to your left is the passenger depot that was built in 1908. This replaced a previous passenger depot that sat where the parking lot is now. The old building was put on rollers and moved to the Dye Cold Storage property (large stone building across the railroad tracks) to be used for offices, at 106 North Ave.
23. Moving just across the tracks you come to the third home of Lee-Whedon Library. The library is named in honor of William U. Lee, who directed that part of his estate be used to establish a public library for the benefit of the community, and his daughter, Mary Lee Whedon who carried out his wishes. The first location was established in 1928, in the Medina High School on Catherine St. The second location, the old Central School building at the southeast corner of Ann and South Academy Sts., was occupied in 1958. The current building was opened in 1967, on the site of the former William Boyd coal yard.

24. Walking up a block to the corner of West Ave. and West Oak Orchard St., on your left is 813 West Ave. The home was built by Samuel Ide and his sons Warren and Alfred around 1869. Samuel owned a window and door sash manufacturing business and his son Warren built several homes throughout the village and 539a-545b Main St. They sold the home in 1873, to Stanley Filkins, a local attorney and one of the trustees of the Medina Gas Light Company, which first brought street lighting to Medina in 1868.
25. At the southwest corner is 900 West Ave. This is the former home of Charles D. LeVan who was one of the builders of the Cook Theatre, which eventually became the Diana, at 601-611 Main St. He also was the owner of LeVan's Furniture at 511 Main St., and one of the founders of the Medina Ad Club, in 1916, the precursor to the Chamber of Commerce.
26. Moving just past Hedley St., on your left is 1011 West Ave., built by Charles Hedley who was in the lumber business with his father, William, who lived next door. The next owner, attorney Albert Coe, built an addition to the house and replaced the veranda. Another long-time resident was Marcia Tuohey, former village mayor and county legislator.
27. As mentioned, next door at 1023 West Ave. is the home built for William Hedley, in the 1850s. He and his brother Edward purchased from William R. Gwinn, what became known as the Hedley Tract – Gwinn St. to the west bank of the race (which ran along Main St.) and from the railroad tracks to Highland Ave. In an 1879 interview with a Rochester reporter that was subsequently printed in the *Medina Tribune*, he claimed to have built over seventy buildings in the village. According to Ed Grinnell, in *Medina: Here's to Our Heritage*, the only three houses that can be positively identified are this one, and two houses he built for his daughters at 133 and 137 Hedley St. Two other prominent owners were Irving Rowley (coal dealer at 611 Main St. and cold storage owner at 613 Main St.) and de Coursey Cleveland (manager of Medina Iron & Brass on East Ave. where the Medina DPW is located).
28. Across the street at 1018 West Ave. is a home that was started by Lewis Pierce, but finished by Dr. Edwin Healy in 1861, after Pierce's wife became ill and they sold the property. The house remained in the family for three generations. His daughter, Julia Gates added the Medina sandstone veranda. His granddaughter who lived here was Flora Webb, the long-time director of Lee-Whedon Memorial Library.
29. At 1114 West Ave., on your right, is the former home of Arthur Soucie, who along with Frank Mallison, were the contractors on the railroad passenger depot (see 22 above), three cold storages, the Armory, City Hall, Medina Memorial Hospital, the Masonic Lodge (see 7 above), S.A. Cook buildings on East Ave. and Main St., and the Downs & Kearney Block on W. Center St.
30. Moving down the block to 1212 West Ave., you come to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Lutherans first began to meet in 1885, in Medina. After meeting for a few years on the third floor of 415 Main St., the congregation erected their church on this site in 1889. Services were entirely in German until 1901, and then German and English until 1936, when the switch was made to English only. The church underwent extensive renovations and enlargement in 1951. The parsonage was built soon after at 1214 West Ave.
31. The home at 1340 West Ave., on your right, was built by and for Frank J. Balcerzak. As the owner of FJB & Son Company, he built the current Hartway Motors, Orleans Ford, St. Peter's Lutheran Church (see next stop), Oak Orchard Elementary School, the Moose Lodge (see 8 above), Medina Lanes, Wise Middle School, Lee-Whedon Library (see 23 above), Maple Ridge Plaza, Ace Hardware, Lakewood Village Mobile Home Park, Orchard Manor Nursing Home, many private residences and other buildings in Medina and around Western New York.
32. The last stop is at 1357 West Ave. – St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church. This group began meeting in December 1897, at the home of Fred Boots on Maple Ridge Rd. In March of 1898, it was reported in *The Medina Tribune* that they had purchased one of the frame buildings that was replaced by a sandstone school on W. Oak Orchard St. (in the 200 block), and moved it to this site. That building was replaced by the current church in 1948.