

1. Audubon Mill Park - Riverfront

(Second St & Water) John James Audubon came to Henderson on a flatboat in 1810 to establish a retail business. He was far more interested in birds than business and his business did not prosper. He left Henderson with a determination to paint all the birds of America.

When the Ohio River roared 19 feet out of its banks during the 1937 flood, Henderson claimed to be the only completely dry river town between Point Pleasant, W. Va., and Cairo, Ill., thus the saying: "Henderson: On The Ohio River, But Never In It". During the flood, a flotilla of Coast Guard vessels and private boats brought people and animals to Henderson's high ground for safety.

2. Chamber of Commerce & DHP Offices

(Second St & Main) This Bedford Stone building, completed in 1903, has a distinctive corner entrance. In addition to providing quarters for another bank, Farmers Bank & Trust beginning in 1921, it was the temporary home of Henderson's municipal government while the new Henderson Municipal Center was being completed in 1974. This was the site, during the Civil War, of James Rankin's store.

3. Thomas Soaper Bldg-Frank G. Schmitt

(213 N Main St) Known as the Thomas Soaper building in the 1890's, it provides examples of Mesker Steel. Many buildings of the period had plain fronts and it became popular to decorate using prefabricated steel store fronts. Because Mesker Steel was an Evansville-based company, many Henderson businesses used their store fronts. The buyer sent in his building measurements, his choice of design and his money and the store front was delivered to him by rail or boat within 2 to 3 weeks. In some designs, \$300 or less could buy a whole store front.

4. Farmers Bank-Crafton Wilson & Co LLP, CPA

(233 N Main St) Henderson's oldest bank, Farmers Bank & Trust, was located here as early as 1876. The Crafton Underwood firm now operates from this location.

5. L&N Bed and Breakfast, Ltd.

(327 N Main St) The L&N Bed and Breakfast, Ltd. was built in the 1890's by John O'Byrne, an Irish immigrant building contractor. The other houses on the same block have a similar floor plan and were built about the same time.

6. Katterjohn-Reid House

(503 N Main St) Paul Semonin built this house around 1858, shortly after he constructed the steamboat, "Governor Powell". In 1868, Stephen Phillip Smith, a tobacconist, from Virginia, bought the house. The Greek Revival front door was added after a fire in 1894.

7. Jarvis-Sullivan House

(517 N Main St) This yellow brick Victorian house was built just after the turn of the century by Arthur and Minnie Jarvis. Mr. Jarvis had come from England to operate a tobacco factory in Henderson at Third and Water.

8. Blackwell-Vaughn House

(525 N Main St) Judge Paul Alexander Blackwell built this Chateausque house in the 1890's. He owned a hardware, agricultural business. The original metal ornamentation remains on the house.

9. Millet Hill House

(711 N Main St) This house called Millet Hill, was built on Lot 26 of the original 1797 survey map of Henderson County between 1855 and 1862. It contains a large basement where the family's slaves may have lived. The kitchen in back was not attached to the house.

10. Eisfielder-Gravette House

(733 N Main St) Built in 1874 for \$2,800, this simplified Queen Anne Style home has a unique hand-sawn and turned trim above the porch. Frederick Eisfielder, who built this house, managed a brewery at the southwest corner of 8th and Main.

11. Talbot-Gadient House

(626 N Main St) This Italianate house was built in 1867, the same year that Main Street was paved from Sixth to Eighth. All the walls are solid brick, 13 inches thick.

12. Rankin-Royer House

(616 N Main St) The owner of an older structure at this site, James E. Rankin, also owned a business downtown and was murdered there during the Civil War by a band of outlaws associated with neither the North nor the South. Two confederate soldiers were executed in connection with Mr. Rankin's death, though Union sympathizers pleaded for their release.

13. Soaper-Esser House

(612 North Main) This large Queen Anne brick was built by William Soaper between 1884-1887. All the bricks for the house were made on the property. In 1991, it was used for scenes in the Columbia Pictures' 1943- period film, "A League of Their Own", starring Geena Davis, Tom Hanks and Madonna, and directed by Penny Marshall.

14. Soaper-Preston House

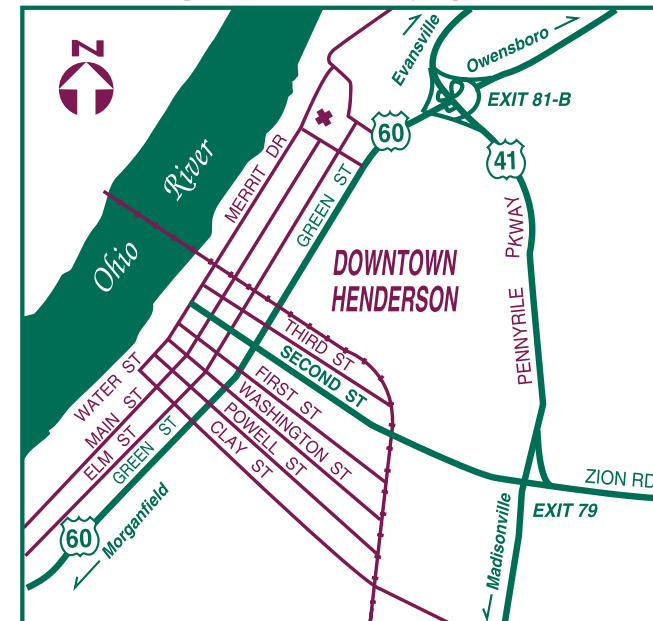
(Corner of Fifth & Main) This corner was the site of two tobacco factories, the Soaper Tobacco Factory, (on the northeast corner), built sometime between 1840 and 1880, and another owned by John Barrett (on the southwest corner) which was dramatically destroyed in a 1914 tornado. The Soaper-Preston home was originally the tobacco factory's office.

HISTORIC HENDERSON

Henderson's unique place in world trade at the close of the 19th century—largely due to the tremendous dark tobacco exporting business located here—provided the setting for the construction of a rather surprising number of expensive homes, given the size of the community. A location on the Ohio River above flood level, an unlimited fuel energy supply and fertile land were also attractive to settlers seeking a place to put down their roots. The properties on this walking tour were chosen because of some unusual or special feature of architectural charm or for historic value. They represent pre-Civil War architecture, the Italianate built around the 1860's and 1870's, and the fancier asymmetric Victorian built at the close of the century.

Material for this tour was drawn from "Old Henderson Homes and Buildings" edited by Boynton Merrill, Jr., and Friends of the Henderson County Public Library and "Currents: Henderson's River Book" written by Gail King and Susan Thurman.

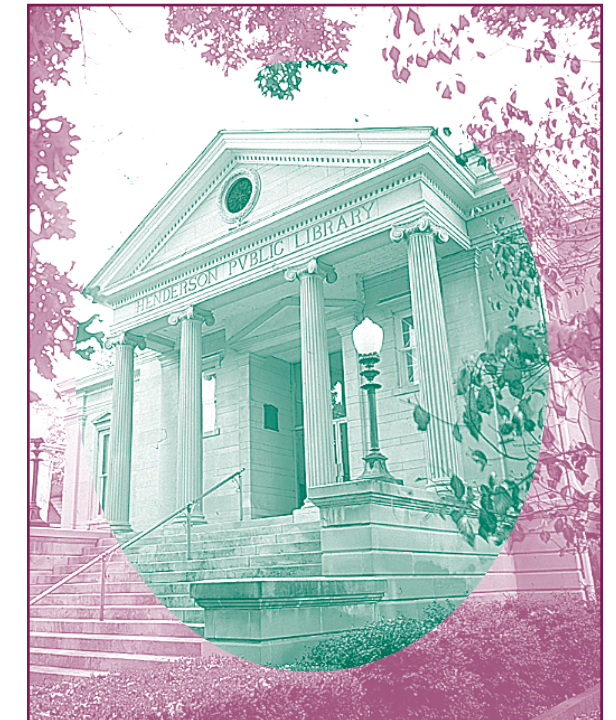
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Henderson HISTORIC Walking Tour

www.hendersonky.org



Henderson Annual Events

Tri-Fest APRIL

W.C. Handy Festival JUNE

Bluegrass in the Park AUGUST

Halloween Festival OCTOBER

Christmas in the Park DECEMBER

Shrine Christmas Parade DECEMBER

