

# NAPERVILLE

## *Historic Walking Tour – West*



## *Brief Summary of Naperville's Past*

In 1831, Captain Joseph Naper traveled from Ashtabula, Ohio, to the fertile soil of Illinois, approximately 30 miles west of Chicago, near the DuPage River. He brought along several families and individuals as well as plans and provisions for establishing a community. By early 1832, Naper's Settlement had 180 people dwelling in it, along with a trading post, mills and a school. The following year saw a post office and frame homes erected.

Naperville's early development was possible because a road connecting Chicago and Ottawa, and the Galena Road (now Aurora Avenue), passed through town. Naperville was home to the county seat from 1839 until 1867, when Wheaton contested and gained the rights. Completion of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad through Naperville in 1864 helped spur growth and was responsible for opening the Chicago market to the town's already flourishing nurseries, breweries and quarries. The railroad also enabled the Naperville Lounge Company (later Kroehler Manufacturing Company) to grow into one of the world's largest furniture manufacturers.

The west side of Naperville contains the oldest homes in the city. Many of the modest working-class homes in this neighborhood were built from the 1830s to the 1870s, when the land was still rural. They were built to house farm workers, and later, brewery and quarry workers and furniture factory employees.

Most homes in this tour area are frame, two-story single-family dwellings, though some of masonry can be found. The predominate style of home on the west side is the Folk House or National Style popular between 1850-1890. This style used local building materials, generally wood frame construction, and is easily identified by five specific floor plans: Gable front entrance, Gable front and wing, Hall and Parlor, I-house and side Gabled Entrance. Other home styles include Dutch Colonial Revival, Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival Stick, Queen Anne and Folk Victorian.

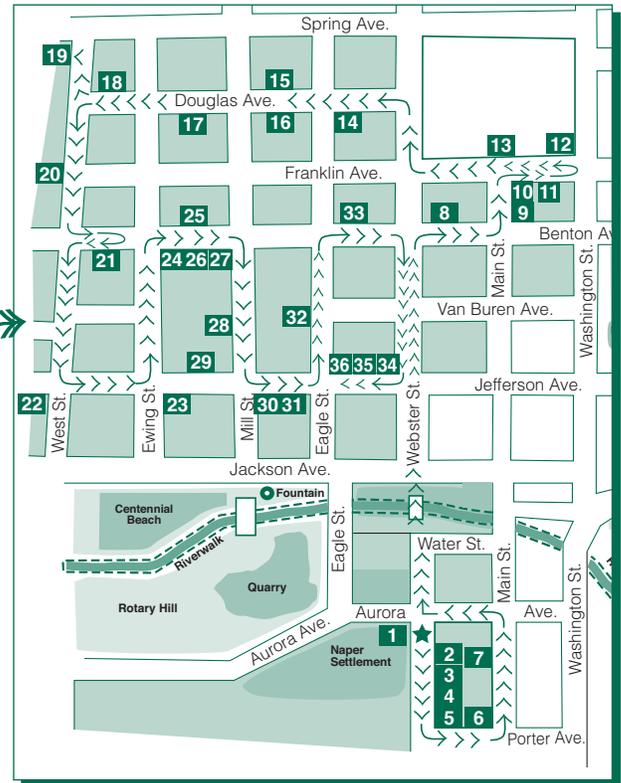
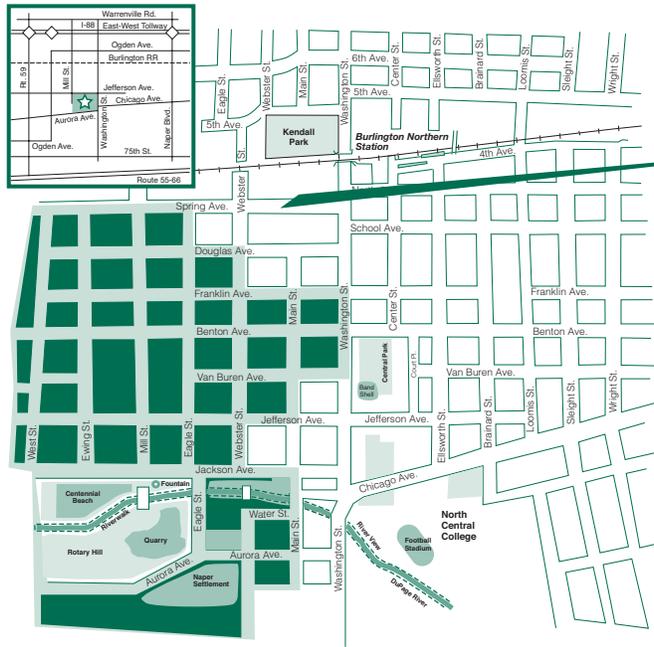
### *Walking Tour Credits*

*This project is partially supported by a grant from the City of Naperville's Special Events & Cultural Amenities Fund.*

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Additional brochures highlighting Naperville's east side and downtown historic architecture are available. Stop by for free copies, or call for more information.

**Naper Settlement**  
 523 S. Webster Street • Naperville, IL 60540  
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[www.napersettlement.museum](http://www.napersettlement.museum)



## WEST SIDE WALKING TOUR

### Introduction

By Joseph C. Bigott, Assistant Professor of History at Purdue University Calumet, also author of "From Cottage to Bungalow: Houses and the Working Class in Metropolitan Chicago," 1830-1930.

The settlement of Naperville predates the railroad era. Consequently, the west side differs from most early settlements in DuPage County. The town's focal point is a river and not a railroad station. Because of its age, Naperville's west side also contains some of the oldest houses in metropolitan Chicago. The simplest residential buildings were two-room, rectangular structures, typically identified as hall-and-parlor houses. A few of these

buildings remain. However, they have been modified by the addition of a larger wing to form a T-shaped house. These structures became the most common farmhouses in the Midwest.

By the 1850s, T-shaped houses competed with another form of house that became common in more urbanized portions of metropolitan Chicago. Often identified with the Greek Revival, these rectangular houses had a gable facing the street and varied in size from modest to substantial structures. Like most of the oldest sections of Chicago, Naperville's west side contains a mixture of rural and urban house forms.

"NHS" featured after the building's address signifies that the structure has received a plaque for historic or architectural significance from the Naperville Heritage Society.



**1** 523 S. Webster St.  
Pre-Emption House

Built in 1834, the original Pre-Emption House stood in the center of Naperville, at the corner of Main and Chicago, as the first hotel and tavern west of Chicago. The building was added onto over the years as it served as the county courthouse, sample room for local breweries and marketplace for monthly horse trading. Prior to the Homestead Act, lawyers met there to help settlers file land claims by "pre-empting" 160 acres at \$1.25 an acre. The building was demolished in 1946 to make way for new development. It was reconstructed at its present site in 1997, matching the original plans, materials, and detailing. Today, the Pre-Emption House serves as the visitor center and gateway to Naper Settlement, a 19th century outdoor history museum.



*Pre-Emption House at its original location, 1917*



**2** 526 S. Webster St. NHS  
Louisa Steward  
Residence  
c. 1874

This house can be identified as a Folk House in the National Style. A vernacular building tradition from the 1850s until the 1890s that included a variety of floor plans such as: the "ell" with intersecting gable wing; front facing gable entries; hall and parlor; the I-house; and side gable entries.



**3** 532 S. Webster St.  
c. 1875

The design of this house is commonly referred to as a “shotgun” house. The construction is long and narrow. Very often, the interior doors are lined up between the rooms. It is joked that if one were to fire a shotgun from the front door the shot would pass all the way to the rear of the home without hitting anything.



**4** 548 S. Webster St. NHS  
Les Schrader House  
and Studio  
c. 1927

This house was the former home of Lester Schrader, local sign painter, amateur historian, and self-taught artist. Over the years, Les created over 40 paintings depicting the history of Naperville. Les’ studio (the garage at the back of the lot) has been recreated in the *Brushstrokes of the Past* exhibit at Naper Settlement, where his paintings are on display. The plaque on the home commemorates land ownership of George Smith.



**5** 554 S. Webster St. NHS  
Copenhagen Post Office  
c. 1865

Originally the Copenhagen Post Office, this structure was moved to Naperville by ox and horse teams from Route 59 and 83rd Street in last half of 19th century. At one time, David B. Givler (originator of the “Naperville Clarion” newspaper) was postmaster at the Copenhagen settlement.



**6** 565 S. Main St.  
c. 1915

This house is an example of the American Four-square Style, popular between 1900 and 1920. This Style is noted for its rigidly square design, sweeping front porch, attic dormers, and low pitch roof. The American Four-square Style often incorporates elements of Queen Anne, Prairie School, and Colonial Revival Styles.



**7** 519 S. Main St.  
c. 1910

The double-hipped or gambrel roof and front gabling identify this house as an example of the Dutch Colonial Revival Style popular from 1895 to 1915.



**8** 129 W. Benton Ave.  
All Saints Anglican  
Church  
1907; enlarged 1924

This clapboard church, with its pointed arch and Gothic windows, was originally built by the Bethel Church of the Brethren, who desired to return the church to sincerity and simplicity. The Brethren called their church the “meeting house” and the building, with its spare ornamentation, reflects the goals of their faith.



**9** 12 N. Main St. NHS  
Dr. David Hess  
Residence  
1846

Simple, classic lines intended to suggest a Greek temple, along with features such as the pediment roof, raking cornice, Doric columns, pilaster corner boards, and sidelights around the entrance make this house an outstanding example of the Greek Revival Style. The house originally stood on the site of the old Nichols Library on Washington Street, and was moved to its present site in 1898 when construction on Naperville’s first library began.



**10 26 N. Main St.**  
Dier/Stoos House  
c. 1865

Built around 1865 for Paul Dier, this house is most noted for homeowner Charles “Ed” Stoos. Stoos moved his family and business to this house around 1881. In the basement of this house, Stoos manufactured and bottled flavored soda water that became a Naperville favorite. The pump on the south side of the house was the source of water for the family and the bottling works.



**11 34 W. Franklin Ave. NHS**  
George C. Miller  
Residence  
c. 1867

This Folk House was built using the I-house floor plan. It stands amid the few remaining original brick sidewalks found throughout the neighborhood.



**12 101 N. Washington St.**  
Willard Scott, Jr. NHS  
c. 1886

Willard Scott, Jr. was a Civil War major, successful businessman and one-time Naperville mayor. He was the son of one of the original settlers of Naperville. The Scott house was for years the center of Naperville’s social life. One couple wrote that they had watched the glow from the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 from the widow’s watch at the top of the house. The ornate wrap-around veranda is one of the Italianate villa’s most distinctive features. The wrap-around porch, cupola or widow’s watch, and bracketed eaves are classical examples of the Italianate Style. This style, so named for its similarities with Italian villa construction, was predominate from 1865 – 1885. Originally this home was parged, that is, a mortar coating was applied over the common brick, incised and beaded to imitate brickwork. Very few examples of this technique are extant in Naperville today. The Martin Mitchell Mansion at Naper Settlement is also parged, though in a rare black bead.



**13 101 W. Franklin Ave.**  
Alois Feldott  
c. 1941

This house was constructed in a little over two days. Once the foundation was poured, the pre-fabricated walls, windows and roof were brought in and assembled. This type of housing was typical for post-World War II GI housing.



**14 W. Douglas Ave.  
between Eagle and  
Webster Sts. ...**

...contains many American Four-square homes. Although the trees may be larger now, this neighborhood remains very similar to the way it looked when constructed around 1900.



**15 305 W. Douglas Ave.**  
c. 1880

This is an example of the Folk Victorian Style, which derived elements from, but was less ornate than many Victorian Styles including the Queen Anne. The carpenter and owner, who selected decorative elements from the many available pattern books and catalogues, often designed these houses together.



**16 312 W. Douglas Ave.**  
c. 1915

This Craftsman Bungalow has features — wide eaves, broad porch, and simple wood detailing — which were common to small wood-frame houses of this style. Often these houses were purchased through a mail-order catalog, then delivered and assembled on site.



**17** 430 W. Douglas Ave.  
1946

This house is typical of Post-World War II GI housing. The large numbers of soldiers returning from the war caused a housing shortage. Many homes were constructed quickly using a variety of styles with simple one-story floor plans. This home was constructed using a modified Cape Cod or Colonial Revival Style.



**18** 515 W. Douglas Ave.  
c. 1905

American Four-square houses such as this began to appear around 1900, and became a common Midwestern house type of the early 20th century. The massive, boxy form (typically with two full stories and a large attic dormer) along with the spare detailing, marked a return to the symmetry and simplicity of houses before the Victorian era.



**19** 241 N. West St. NHS  
Built by John Stevens  
c. 1857

The Stevens family owned 160 acres of farmland that extended west of West Street to across the DuPage River. This was one of several houses in the area built by Stevens. The enclosed porch with Federal Style elements was a later addition to this Folk House.



**20** 27 N. West St. NHS  
Built by John Stevens  
c. 1834

The central two-story section of this Greek Revival Style house was built by Capt. John Stevens for his son Sylvester and his family. The south wing, containing two rooms, was added in 1860 to accommodate a larger family. The north wing was added later to provide a parlor and a bedroom. Lastly, an extension was added to the back of the house for the kitchen.



**21** 518 W. Benton Ave. NHS  
George Haight Residence  
c. 1860

This simple Hall and Parlor Style home is typical of the 1850s and early 1860s. It is a style that predominated west side homes. These modest structures can be found "buried" beneath additions and layers of cosmetic alterations. The block between West Street and Mill Street contains several homes retaining the original look and feel of early Naperville.



**22** 602 W. Jefferson Ave.  
c. 1904 NHS  
Built by John Dado

This modest Folk Victorian is ornamented by turned spindlework and scroll-saw cut brackets on the corner veranda.



**23** 438/440 W. Jefferson Ave. NHS

This contemporary duplex stands on the site of the first log cabin schoolhouse in Naperville. The 1832 schoolhouse was a small square building, about fourteen feet square.



**24** 440 W. Benton Ave.  
Jacob Strohecker  
c. 1864

Jacob Strohecker, immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1843. He settled in Ohio before moving to Naperville in 1855. Strohecker was a farmer and he wove rugs. By 1877, his rug weaving was in such demand that he left farming to weave exclusively.



**25 427 W. Benton Ave.**  
Peter Bonifas  
c. 1863

Like Numbers 21, 24, and 26, this house incorporates elements of the I-house and Hall & Parlor floor plans, which were standard in the 1860s. A range of variations

exist including end facing gables, one and one-half verses two stories, different window placements and trim work.



**26 428 W. Benton Ave. NHS**  
Patrick Costello  
Residence  
c. 1866

The center portion of this structure dates to the 1860s. It was built for Patrick Costello, an Irish immigrant working as track hand for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad.



**27 414 W. Benton Ave. NHS**  
Isaac Rubreich Residence  
c. 1860

This front-gabled Folk House has a front entrance with Greek Revival sidelights and pediment, as well as elongated first floor windows

typical of the Italianate Style, but much more simply detailed.



**28 49 S. Mill St. NHS**  
Thomas Naper Residence  
c. 1856

This house was built by town founder, Joseph Naper for his son Thomas and daughter-in-law

Julia. Thomas constructed a two-story addition in 1864 to accommodate his growing family. With the death of Joseph Naper in 1862, his wife Almeda moved from their original homestead to this house, where she lived until her death in 1885.



**29 407 W. Jefferson Ave.**  
c. 1850, addition c. 1872

This house was built with a Hall & Parlor floor plan for or by Wendel Bortles around 1850. In 1863, S.P. Stephens moved his

family and business into the home. He was a druggist who later formed a partnership with M.B. Powell. The large addition was constructed around 1873 as a duplex to accommodate both the Stephens and the Powell families.



**30 SE Corner of Main St. and Jefferson Ave.**  
Joseph Naper  
Homestead Site

This grassy lot is the location of Joseph Naper's first log cabin and homestead. In the early part of 1831, Joseph Naper had a cabin built for his arrival in July 1831. A few years later a frame house was built. This second home was replaced with a larger home around the turn of the century. Since its demolition in the mid 20th century, the lot has remained vacant. In 2006, the City of Naperville acquired the property to commemorate the original homestead of its founding father.



**31 306 W. Jefferson Ave.**  
c. 1890

The Queen Anne Style is most noted for prominent corner turrets, wrap-around verandas, and a variety of gables, bays and window types. Queen Anne Style was popular from 1880 – 1910.



**32** 39 S. Eagle St.  
Naper School  
c. 1928-29

This Federal Revival Style building was built on land donated by town founder, Joseph Naper. It replaced the Naper Academy built in 1852.



**33** 239 W. Benton Ave.  
Michael Traffler  
Residence  
c. 1856

NHS

This was the home of Hannah Ditzler Alspaugh, local artist, teacher, librarian and historian, who taught at Naper Academy for several years. Her diaries are now an important source of information on Naperville's history.



**34** 209 W. Jefferson Ave.  
William Rose Residence  
c. 1850

NHS

Although this structure has been modified numerous times, the original gable front and wing floorplan of the Folk House Style (1850 - 1890) can still be observed. William Rose was a tailor for more than 30 years before entering the life insurance business.



**35** 221 W. Jefferson Ave.  
Philip Strubler Residence  
c. 1870

Philip Strubler was a prosperous businessman, sheriff of DuPage County and Postmaster of Naperville. This house features the boxy shape, low-pitched roof, heavy roof brackets and elongated windows with decorative hoods typical of the Italianate Style, so called because it looked to the country villas of northern Italy for inspiration. The elaborate wrought iron roof cresting is a notable detail.



**36** 237 W. Jefferson Ave.  
"Middleton House"  
Charles E. Heydon  
Residence  
c. 1908

This home is an interesting variation of the American Four-square and Queen Anne Styles with the crenellated tower and textured ornamental concrete block creating a castle-like effect. Pattern books containing a variety of styles and designs for homes, garages, barns, and commercial buildings in concrete block were widely available from 1890 - 1930.

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