

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official national list of historic properties in America worthy of preservation. Through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's NRHP is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

What is the State Register of Historic Places?

The State Register of Historic Places (SRHP) is Wisconsin's official list of state properties worthy of preservation. The SRHP was established in 1989 and is managed by the Division of Historic Preservation at the Wisconsin Historical Society. The state register uses the same criteria for listing as the National Register except that the special considerations are not applicable.

The Marshfield Register

Several individual properties as well as five districts comprising hundreds of properties are listed in both the SRHP and the NRHP in Marshfield. The districts include the Central Avenue Historic District, Pleasant Hill Residential Historic District, Upham House Historic District, West Fifth Street – West Sixth Street Historic District and the West Park Street Historic District. The individual properties listed include the Central Wisconsin State Fair Round Barn, Marshfield Senior High School, Willard D. Purdy Junior High and Vocational School, Governor William H. Upham House and the Wahle – Laird House.

Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee

The Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) is made up of seven members appointed by the mayor and approved by Common Council; one architect, one historian, one plan commission member, and three citizens. The HPC serves to recommend and designate historic structures, sites, and districts as well as review, recommend, and approve legislation and programs that benefit historic preservation.

Walking Tour Brochure Series

by the Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee:

- Central Avenue Historic District
- Pleasant Hill Residential Historic District
- Upham House Historic District
- West Fifth Street – West Sixth Street Historic District
- West Park Street Historic District

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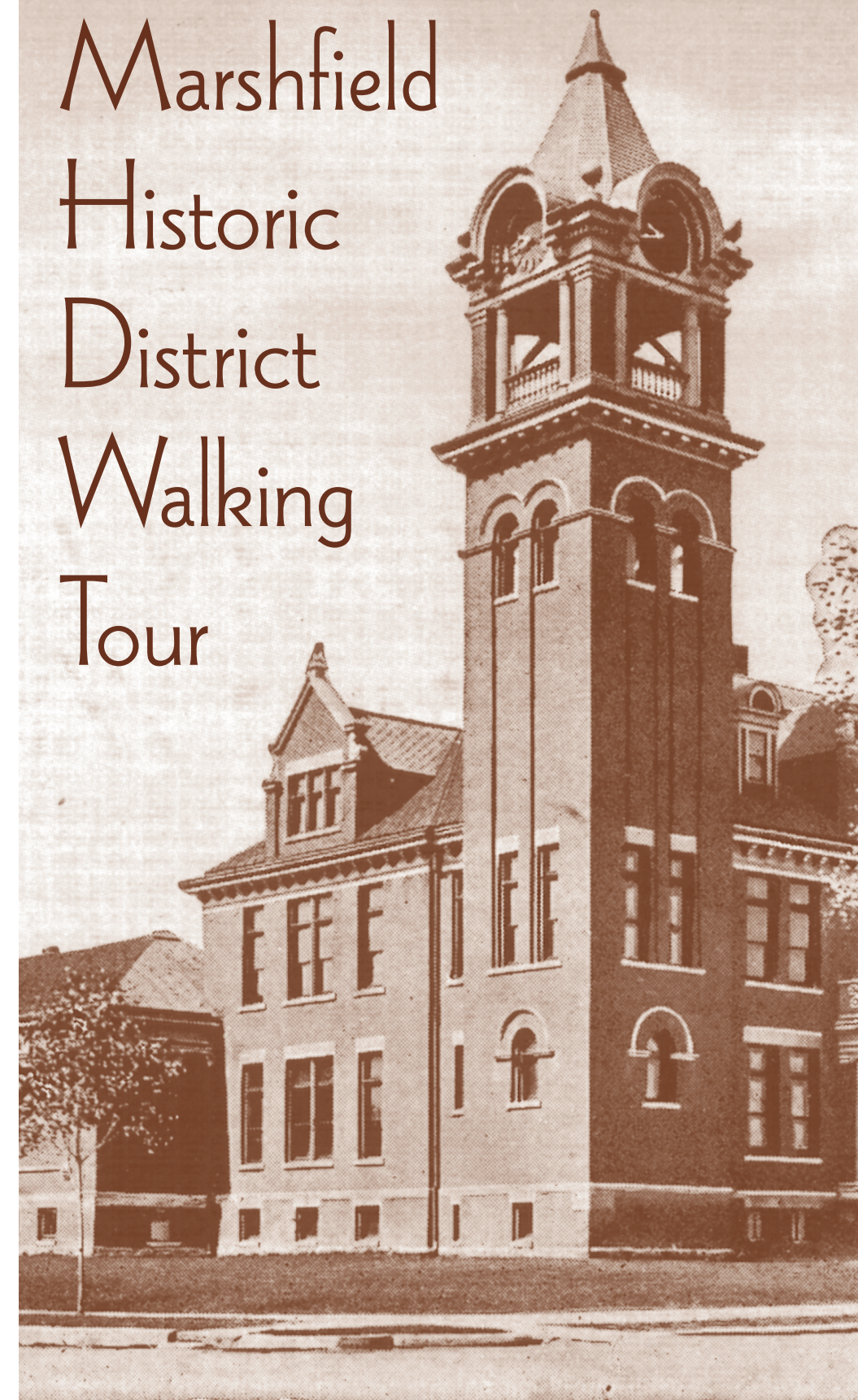
Marshfield Convention and Visitors Bureau

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CITY HALL AND LIBRARY, MARSHFIELD

Marshfield Historic District Walking Tour



CENTRAL AVENUE

How To Use The Brochure

This brochure is a self-guided walking tour of 1 of 5 Historic Districts in the City of Marshfield. Inside the brochure you'll find a map of the District and its historic resources. Several properties are featured with photos, architectural information and other interesting facts.

For each tour, we've mapped a recommended starting point and walking route. Distances and estimated tour times are provided. On street parking is available at the starting points. The walking routes will bring you past the most historic sites within the districts.

We encourage you to read the story of each District and reflect back in time as you stroll through Marshfield's Historic Neighborhoods.



Roddis Lumber and Veneer Company, Early 1900's

Most of the houses in the Districts are private residences and are not open to the public. Please respect the owners' privacy and avoid trespassing on private property. Please view these properties only from the public right-of-way.

Brief History of Marshfield

More than anything else, the city of Marshfield grew out of the marriage of the railroad and lumber industries. Surrounding hardwood forests, patches of pine, and the need to transport logs, frontier labor and goods, provided a commercial incentive for individuals to carve a railroad path through the area. In 1872, Louis Rivers built a double log cabin near the corner of what is now North Chestnut and Depot Streets, determined to capture the potential of an inn business that came with the projected path of the Wisconsin Central Railroad. Rivers purchased the land from John J. Marsh, whom the city is said to be named after.

With the railroad's arrival in July 1872, a few more settlers moved to the roughly hewn village to start new lives and businesses. With the construction of the community's first sawmill, which William H Upham and his brother Charles opened upon arriving in 1878, many more workers could be employed and related businesses grew briskly.

The fledgling city was jeopardized by a fire that started in the Upham Company lumber yards on June 27, 1887. The blaze spread rapidly, ultimately claiming 250 businesses and homes. It brought devastation and financial ruin to much of the community. When Upham raised his flag the next morning to indicate that the lumber plant would be rebuilt, he set the tone for Marshfield residents' renewed energy and resolve.

The community recovered and gained strength after the fire, adding numerous buildings to meet growing

needs. Railroad traffic also increased: The volume in lines and users was second only to Milwaukee, earning Marshfield the nickname of "Hub City."

After the turn of the century, some notable shifts took place in the city's economy. Dr. Karl Doege and five other doctors formed a group medical practice, now known as the Marshfield Clinic, in the downtown Thiel building. And, after most of the hardwood stands were cleared, agriculture – notably cheesemaking – became more prominent. However, lumber-related industries still retained a strong presence in Marshfield.



Parkin Dairy, Early 1950's

Marshfield's historic buildings, in various architectural forms, remain solid witness to the hard work and commitment of individuals seeking to better their lives in a different time. These buildings give us a glimpse of Marshfield's past, an understanding of location and form, and pleasure in their unique presence in our community.



1. 203-205 S Central Ave

As indicated by the name block, this building was constructed for Edgar M. Deming, a well-known lawyer, between 1891 and 1904. The Deming Building is a two story brick Commercial Vernacular building containing two storefronts, each with a central entry and window bays. The cornice wraps around the building to trim both elevations (walls). While the entire upper story windows are capped by straight stone lintels, the (main) west elevation windows display metal awnings and are rhythmically grouped. The building also housed a dry goods, shoe and clothing business with professional office space upstairs. In 1924, F.W. Woolworth Company 5 and 10 cent Store occupied the first floor.



2. 211 S Central Ave

Currently, this two story Art Deco building features a sandstone veneer and four sculptured metal relief panels depicting individuals at work. In 1898, however, the German American Bank, later known as the American National Bank, displayed a distinctive Richardsonian Romanesque arched façade on this structure. During the financially troubled times of 1933, the American National Bank folded. But in 1934, the newly formed Citizens National Bank paid off creditors of the folded bank and located here until 1971.



3. 301 S Central Ave

Built in 1887, the cream brick Thiel Building is a Commercial Vernacular style structure with Italianate details. The cornice is highlighted by a corbelled series suggestive of dentils. A meat shop, with an ice locker located in the center, first occupied the store. From 1916 to 1926, the newly formed Marshfield Clinic with its unique group practice settled on the second floor. By 1946, a store occupied the front of the structure while the Plaza Hotel was situated in the back.



4. 110 E Second St

Originally built as Marshfield's City Hall (currently known as Tower Hall) and constructed of locally kilned Marshfield brick, this building exhibits predominantly Romanesque features. The building housed the library, fire and police departments, and all city administrative departments. The main entry of Tower Hall fronts Second Street; the original library faces Maple Street. Gables project from the top roof as do the clock and fire towers. The original city Hall entrance was flanked by four massive stone columns, removed in the 1930s. With plans drawn by the firm of VanRyn and De Gelleke, construction began in 1900 for a "City Hall, Engine House and Library" which was completed in 1901.



5. 112 E Veterans St

This single story American Craftsman passenger and freight depot is located next to the Wisconsin Central Railroad tracks. A rustic stone-masonry building, its large hipped roof has wide eaves and is supported by wooden brackets. The bay window was used by the station master to sell tickets and to observe incoming and outgoing trains. Depots served as a channel for commerce and agriculture. This depot was rebuilt by 1910 after an earlier one burned in 1907.



6. 103 S Central Ave

An example of Commercial Vernacular style with Italianate details, this three story building was constructed in 1887 after the fire. Windows, although boarded up, are capped with arched lintels. Original cast iron pilasters stand at the main entrance, which is set at an angle. The cornice wraps around the structure indicating the importance of both Central Avenue and the railroad to the hotel. From 1887 to 1904, it was called the Thomas Hotel. In 1912, it was known as the Juneau Hotel. A 24-car garage addition in the rear, now gone, was part of the property when it was a store in 1925.



7. 119 S Central Ave

The Noll Building is a large two story brick masonry Commercial Vernacular building. The building was constructed in two stages with the north portion constructed after the fire in 1887 and the south portion built between 1887 and 1891, thus explaining the upper story differences. The peaked parapet name block was probably relocated to the center after the southern addition. William Noll directed his son Frank to open a hardware store and warehouse in Marshfield in 1887. Frank Noll operated the business for more than 40 years and served actively in community organizations and government.



8. 170 S Central Avenue

Built about 1925, this imposing hotel building is a Commercial Vernacular mix of Neo-Classical and Early 20th Century Commercial Style design. Executed in red brick with contrasting beige concrete features, the building features a cornice with decorative crowning parapets, denticulated pediments that define the window areas, and three belt courses that separate the stories. This Marshfield centerpiece was built by Charles Blodgett, prominent citizen, entrepreneur and cheese maker. President Kennedy stayed here while on the campaign trail and country singer Patsy Cline stayed here while touring. It is also believed that the famous bank robber John Dillinger stayed here while he was hiding out from the FBI.

Map produced by: Department of Planning and Economic Development
Marshfield, Wisconsin

Photos by: Ken Wood