

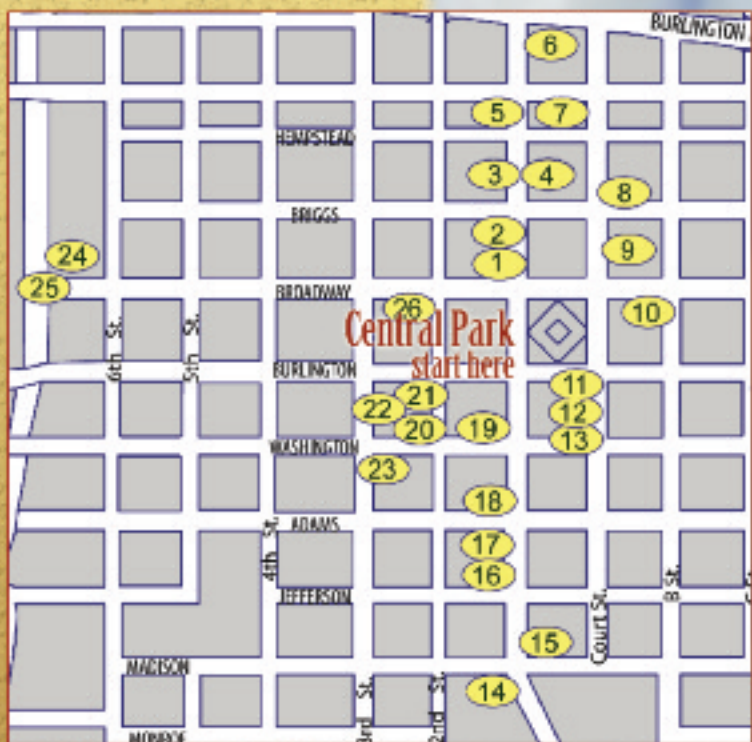
# Fairfield Cultural & Entertainment District



# Walking Tour



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## Walking Tour Map



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# Welcome to the Fairfield Cultural & Entertainment District Walking Tour

(See Map included on back of this brochure.)

*This Walking Tour includes:*

- A downtown Square recognized by WHO-TV as the “Best in Iowa”
- The first of a total of 1,689 Carnegie Public Libraries in the United States
- An architecturally distinctive Barry Byrne-designed prairie style home inspired by the Frank Lloyd Wright school (one of the best in the Midwest)



## Start at Fairfield's Central Park .....

Fairfield's Central Park was originally round, but in 1902 the streets were paved with brick into a square. Before streetlights were installed it was dark in town. So in 1882 a 185-foot tower was built in the center of the square to light up the town — spectators came from miles around to see it. The six electric arc lamps had to be changed daily — kids clamored to help. Fairfield's first electrical plant closely followed Thomas Edison's New York City installation of the first large central electric-power plant. But the tower became potentially dangerous and it was dismantled in 1910. By then streetlights helped light the square. The tradition of lighting up the square continues today with the annual Christmas lighting displays.

Many events that take place on the Square include monthly Fairfield's 1st Fridays Art Walk. Cultural District status was approved by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs in November 2005.



*Coop Statue. William Henry Coop was the first pioneer settler born in Jefferson County (1836). He and his young friend have been sitting in Central Park since 1981 (sculptor: Christopher Bennet).*



*Queen Anne commercial building on the north side of the square.*



*In 1969 this bandstand replaced the 1907 bandstand.*



*Evangelist Billy Sunday in a wagon on the square. The man standing in front of the wagon is believed to be William Coop.*



*Central Park, July 1910. The six electric arc lamps at the top of the 185 foot tower had to be changed daily; kids clamored to help. Dismantled in 1910. Viewed from the southeast corner of the square.*

As you look around the square, you will see that although many of the buildings have had their facades changed through the years, the skyline is remarkably similar to how it appeared around 1900.

A building boom in the 1890's caused all the frame buildings to be replaced by brick by 1913. Sadly, many of the pressed-tin cornices have been stripped away or covered up.

On the north side of the square, the three-story building with the turret has changed very little, and is unusual because few commercial buildings were built in the Queen Anne style.



The North side of the Central Square along Broadway Ave. Main Street is to the left. Nov 2007.



Gothic-revival tower on north-west corner building.



Mortar and pestle finial detail.

On the northwest corner of the square a mortar-and-pestle finial is still on the top of the Gothic-revival tower. It refers to the building's original function as a pharmacy. Drugstores were housed in this building from 1857 until 1996, when Brown's Pharmacy closed (southwest corner of Broadway and Main St) Nov 2007.

The Davis and Palmer Real Estate office is much like it was in 1883 except for a discordant wooden shake-shingle canopy added in 1973. It hides the top of the cast iron Corinthian columns. Look for the four faces staring out from the cornice at the top.



J. Crawford Building (now housing Davis and Palmer Real Estate)

The Thoma building at 104 W. Burlington (off the southwest corner

of the square) is one of the few storefronts that has not been tampered with since 1893. The facings of the first floor are cast iron; the second-story pilasters and cornice are embossed and soldered metal. A few minor pieces have disappeared. Repainted in 2004.



Iowa Historical Marker, Caravan to State Fair. A marker on the southwest corner of Central Park tells the story of a covered wagon caravan to the Iowa State Fair in 1954 to commemorate the First Iowa State Fair held in Fairfield in 1854. Another caravan took place in 2004.



The Elks Club on the West Side of the square (54 N. Main St) is of note for the Louden ventilator on the roof (best seen from the back of the building; look from the corner of W. Burlington Ave and 2nd Street). William Louden (1841-1931), founder of the Louden Machinery Company, was the first Exalted Ruler of the Elks Lodge. Louden Machinery Company was a very important presence in Fairfield, one of its largest employers for many years.



Elks Club ventilator. Photo taken in 2003.

## 1. Commercial Block (circa 1872) 106, 108, 110 N. Main Street.....

Italianate in design, this building is a local rarity for having an original facade that is intact. The cast iron columns and the exuberant arches and capitals were made locally. "Louden Mfg Works Fairfield Iowa" is cast into the bottom of the columns, which predates the Louden Machinery Company. The paneled millwork under the windowsills is original. Many of the buildings around the square had this style of storefront in the early days. Typically an awning was above the store windows, with the sign above the awning.



106-110 N Main Street. "LOUDEN MFG. WORKS FAIRFIELD IOWA" is cast into the base of the column.

## 2. The Tribune Printing Company (1915) 101 W. Briggs Ave, SW corner of N. Main St. ....

This building, on the southwest corner of Main & Briggs, although not its original home, houses one of the three oldest continuous businesses in Iowa (each started in 1847). June 12, 1847 marked the start



of the Iowa Sentinel, the Tribune Printing Company being a direct lineal descendant. This building housed a car dealer, a grocery store and other businesses before the printing company moved here and covered the brick façade. (*J. Franklin Produce Co., Cream, Eggs, and Poultry* is painted on the bricks, now covered by metal siding.) The Tribune Printing Company printed early catalogs for the Louden Machinery Company. William Louden was president of Tribune Printing at one time.



*Tribune Printing 1903; wood engraving of a Louden catalogue page*



*The Stephen Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts, southern wing of the Fairfield Arts & Convention Center.*

### 3. Fairfield Arts & Convention Center (2007) 200 North Main St.

The new Fairfield Arts and Convention Center opened in December 2007. It also houses the Stephen Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts. See details at [www.fairfieldacc.com](http://www.fairfieldacc.com). Although it is modern, the design complements the historic courthouse across the street. Energy efficient materials and methods were used in its construction, following LEEDS certification guidelines.

The photo shows how the courthouse is reflected in the front doors. Walk around to the west side to see the "Jigsaw Puzzle" mural. An ArtLife Society Project, the mural was created by Colorado native Eleanor Yates, assisted by several artists from Fairfield.



*The "Jigsaw Puzzle" mural on the west wall of the The Stephen Sondheim Center*

### 4. Jefferson County Courthouse (1893) Main & Court Streets

Built in the fashionable Richardsonian Romanesque style, the courthouse design centered on a 142-foot high corner clock tower, but the top and some other details were removed due wind damage in 1948. A new steeple was installed on the clock tower in Nov. 2004 to replace the one that was removed. The terra cotta bas-relief sculpture on the west wall is an allegory of Blind Justice, flanked by Harmony and Strife. The courthouse in Red Oak, IA, is almost identical, but reversed (both designed by H. C. Koch).



*South side of Jefferson County Courthouse*



*Jefferson County Veteran's Memorial, Main Street, on the Courthouse grounds*

A memorial honoring veterans from the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and National Guard was dedicated on November 11, 2005 on the west side of the Courthouse lawn.



*Mural on the West side of Jefferson County Courthouse*



### 5. The Mainstay Inn (1890) 300 North Main Street .....

The Inn, housed in the 1890's Lucien Marcy House, is one of Fairfield's grander buildings. Built originally by a wealthy industrialist in the Queen Anne style, it is filled with fine detailing, most of which has been preserved. The living areas are trimmed with the original butter-nut wood detailing, stained glass panels, and sliding panel doors with the original hardware. Tall ceilings and fine proportioned rooms lend an elegant backdrop for high end furnishings, including Persian carpets, crystal chandeliers, fine European wallpapers and original art. Tours can be arranged by appointment. Website: [www.mainstayfairfield.com](http://www.mainstayfairfield.com).



### ..... 6. Howard Park bounded by Main St, Grimes Ave, Court St. & BNSF RR



Civil War Plaque

During the Civil War this land was used as a mustering area (see the plaque in the southwest corner). The Franklin School was here from 1868 to 1913. In 1912 the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad bought the land for a new train station and was persuaded to give the remaining land back to the city (with the proviso that it remain a park). It was later named Howard Park in honor of Elmer A. Howard, a vice-president of the railroad. The first train had arrived on September 1, 1858, a very important event for Fairfield (the original station was at 6th Street). The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad eventually became today's BNSF. Amtrak passenger service to Fairfield ceased on May 1, 1971.



### 7. McElhinny House (1851) 300 N. Court Street .....

One of the oldest buildings in Fairfield, it perfectly fits the general picture of a two-story clapboard house-type found throughout much of the country from 1830 through 1850. The design is late Federal in style, accompanied by a few Greek Revival details. In 1931 it was restored by the Women's Club to nearly as possible to its former elegance and is still used as their meeting house.



McElhinny House, 1851



### 8. First Methodist Church (1924) 201 N. Court Street .....

Designed in the Tudor Revival style by Guy Carpenter, an architect with the "Louden Barn Planning Service." Its design included a Louden ventilating system, an early attempt at air-conditioning. The fans proved too noisy, however, and fell into disuse, possibly because it was not used correctly. The Louden Ventilator Cupola on the roof, of a type usually reserved for a barn roof, can be best viewed from the north driveway of the courthouse.



Note the Moorish influence



### 9. Iowa State Bank (1955) NE Corner of the Square .....

An excellent example of Streamline Moderne design, it replaced the old bank building in 1955. The red lettering on the south side exterior is original, as is the clock, and the blond woodwork interior. See photos of the 1955 construction inside the bank. Another example of Streamline Moderne is the Fairfield High School at 605-607 East Broadway, although it is subdued. Completed in 1938 by the WPA, it replaced one that burned down.



Streamline Moderne bank building



## 10. Armory (1910) 122 E. Burlington Ave .....

The Armory, built by Company M of the 54th Infantry of the Iowa National Guard by selling shares of stock to company members and from donations, served Fairfield well until a new armory was built on Stone Street in 1958. Many community events were held here, probably the largest being an appearance by Aimee Semple McPherson, one of the most famous female evangelists in the world. In 1934 about 2500 people waited hours for her to arrive from Des Moines. It was remodeled in 2004 to be used for present day community gatherings.



Armory looking from the northwest.



## 11. Wilson Building (1876) 106, 108 S. Court Street .....

Very much unchanged from the original façade, the classic Italianate commercial front includes cast iron ground floor elevations and bracketed cornices, as does the building next door. Both buildings were built by U.S. Senator James Wilson.



Building #11 and #12 were both built by United States Senator James Wilson.

*James Falconer Wilson was first elected to the U.S. Congress in 1861 to fill a vacancy, and was subsequently reelected to four consecutive terms, until 1869. Beginning in 1863 he proposed and supported an amendment to abolish slavery throughout the United States. He was also one of the managers appointed by the House of Representatives in 1868 to conduct the impeachment proceedings against President Andrew Johnson. President Ulysses Grant tendered the position of Secretary of State in the Cabinet, but Wilson declined. In 1869 he was appointed by President Grant as government director of the Union Pacific Railroad and served for eight years. In 1882 he was elected to the U.S. Senate and served from 1883 to March 3, 1895 and remains the only U.S. Senator from Fairfield. In 1891 he convinced Andrew Carnegie, a friend of his, to subsidize a permanent home for a library in Fairfield, and he donated the land for the it. His home is still standing at 805 S. Main Street. He died in Fairfield on April 22, 1895; interment in Fairfield at the Evergreen Cemetery.*



## 12. former U.S. Post Office Building (1876) 110 S. Court Street .....

“Louden Fairfield Iowa” is cast into the bottom of the cast iron columns. Casting skills had increased greatly by this time. The south wall was recently rebuilt by the owner to help preserve the building. Every effort was made to respect the integrity of the building with the choice of appropriate materials and the reuse of corner bricks.



## 13. Former Fairfield Public Library with Carnegie Museum (1893) S. Court St. & E. Washington .....

In December 1891 Carnegie agreed to fund a library in Fairfield at the urging of his friend, Fairfielder, Senator James Wilson. (The library had been in many different locations since its founding in 1853). This marked the first time that Carnegie had funded a library in which he had no personal ties or investments, and led to his funding another 1,689 libraries in the United States. (In 1894 there were only about 400 public libraries in the entire country, with only 46 of them west of the Mississippi River). Public libraries became the social centers, architectural landmarks, and the cornerstones of the educational system of a town. No wonder the Grand Opening celebration in Fairfield was such a spectacular event, with guests from as far away as Des Moines. In the 1920's the heavy Mansard roof was removed, as an underground stream was causing this heavy building to sink. The 1950's brought an extensive stabilizing project. The front entrance was remodeled in 1966, but the “1853,” the owl, and the “1892” remain. The Carnegie Museum is still on the third floor, although the library moved to a new building in 1996. Andrew Carnegie also made an unconditional gift for a library building at Parsons College (dedicated in 1907, now gone), but this was not a public library. T. D. Foster



Library statue by Christopher Bennet



Former Fairfield Public Library, dates over the front door. The Fairfield public library was founded in 1853. This building was completed in 1893.

secured the gift while a fellow passenger on a ship crossing the Atlantic in 1905. (The new Fairfield Public Library opened in 1996, with its entrance at 104 W. Adams Ave.)

**Now walk one block west on Washington Ave, then walk south on Main Street to Madison Ave. Here you will find the next building (#14) on the Walking Tour, one of the "most architecturally distinctive homes in the Midwest."**

 **14. James F. Clarke House** (1915-16) 500 S. Main Street .....

One of the most architecturally distinctive homes in the Midwest, it was designed by the prominent Prairie Style architect F. Barry Byrne, who had gained his uncommon skills working for Frank Lloyd Wright. Byrne engaged the prominent artisan Alfonso Iannelli to design the furniture, carpeting, light fixtures, and wall stenciling for the interior, in order to create a complete environment for their client, Dr J. F. Clarke. This house has been published in magazines and architectural history books. Details of the house can be found in the Fairfield Public Library's copy of *The Prairie School: Frank Lloyd Wright and his Midwest Contemporaries* (724.9 Brooks).



*James F. Clarke House, photo taken 2004.*

 **15. Residential Home** (1898) 405 S. Main Street .....


A Queen Anne style with a Palladian window in the third story, a ballroom on this floor hosted many social activities. The stones for the foundation came by rail from quarries in Burlington.



 **16. Pierson House** (c. 1900) 306 S. Main Street .....

This is one of the best-preserved frame homes in Fairfield. The porch decorations are unique for their inventive use of standard late Victorian bric-a-brac.



 **17. George A. Wells House** (1883) 304 S. Main Street .....


A vernacularized Greek revival style combining brick veneer and frame structure. The front is balanced by opposing bays, although they are built differently. Take a close look — the stone window headings are unique in Fairfield.



**18. Residential Home** 206 S. Main Street .....

This is the only surviving home in Fairfield with scalloped verge boards, a Carpenter Gothic motif.



 **19. R. B. & Lizzie Loudon House** (1871) 107 W. Washington Ave., at S. 2nd St. ....

Built in 1871, R.B. and Lizzie Loudon purchased this house in 1897. A radical remodel (1928-29) saw the original open, wrap-around porch removed and replaced by the enclosed sun porch and formal entrance. A barn to the rear of the house was razed and a two-story brick garage, designed by the "Louden Barn Planning service," was built on the north side of the house. In the 1970's a one-story garage was built next to the two-story garage and the Loudon "AROUND-THE-CORNER" Garage Door Set was moved to it. According to company catalogues these "space-saving doors featured roller bearing, adjustable trolleys with high carbon steel track." (The doors are no longer used).



*R. B. & Lizzie Loudon House, here showing the Loudon garage doors.*

Since William Loudon (founder of Loudon Machinery Company) wished to concentrate on the engineering side, his younger brother, "R.B.," agreed to become president in 1892 and served in that capacity until his death in 1940.



## 20. Residential Home (c. 1860) 201 W. Washington Ave. (corner of 2nd St) .....

Changed little since its construction in 1860, this workingman's style home, with two stories in front and a one-story rear addition, gave the impression of a larger structure. The design is transitional; the symmetrical façade shows Colonial influence, and the porch, which may have been added later, has Victorian decorations. Century-old plantings still bloom in the yard. The wood shed is believed to have been constructed out of materials from a barn which originally stood along the north alley. It is typical of 19th century out-buildings. The windows are from the 1840's.



**The next house is just north, on 2nd St.**



## 21. Craftsman Style House (c. 1915) 104 S. Second Street ..... (just north of house #20)

A good example of the many Craftsman Style houses built in Fairfield. This was a rebellion against the formality and excesses of the Victorian period and the advent of modern industrial design (disguised as a return to nature). Careful restoration included appropriate colors.



*Craftsman Style House*

**Now return to Washington Ave and walk west to the next building (#22), then turn north on 3rd Street to see #23.**



## 22. Albert H. and Mary Neller Home (1890) 300 W. Washington Ave., at S. 3rd St. ....

A middle-class house with Queen Anne influence, note the turret and variety of wall textures. It was designed to be viewed only from the street sides. Albert Neller, William Louden's pattern maker, was a key to the success of the Louden Engineering Department during the 1910's and 20's. Louden and Neller shared the patent on several inventions between 1908 and 1914. Neller himself took credit for nine patents in 1908.



## 23. Greek Revival House (c. 1840's) 105 S. Third Street (On Third Street just north of Washington Ave.)



*Greek Revival House*

This home has been restored to a near original condition. The transom, side-lights, and the decorative treatment around the front door are distinctive. In the early 1900's this Greek Revival house was moved here from the lot to the south.

**For safety, cross Burlington Ave using the traffic signal at 2nd Street and walk one block north. Then you may want to walk 4 blocks west on tree-lined Broadway Ave. to the historic Louden Building and the old Rock Island Railroad Station (Louden Depot).**



## 24. Broadway (Louden) Building (c. 1892) 607 W. Broadway Avenue .....

Formerly the offices and manufacturing plant of Loudon Machinery Company, this is the key building on the Loudon Tour. Today it contains a coffee bar and restaurant among other businesses and apartments. Loudon-related photographs are in Vivo's bar. Note: Displays of Loudon photos and drawings can be seen at the Carnegie Museum (corner of S. Court St and E. Washington Ave.) and the County Extension Office at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds on West Burlington.



*Broadway Building, 1911 postcard. Third floor was added later. (Top photo above was taken in 2003.)*



**25. Loudon Depot Community Credit Union** (rebuilt 1940's) 611 W. Broadway Avenue

This former train station served the Rock Island Railroad. In 1870 the Fairfield city fathers lobbied the Chicago & Southwestern Railroad (which became the Rock Island) to come through Fairfield instead of Ottumwa to provide competition for the C. B & Q. The Loudon Company became one of the largest shippers in the Mid-west. The Rock Island carried freight and passengers until its demise in 1980. Other parts of the abandoned railroad roadbed are now used for a bike/hiking trail. The deluxe passenger rail cars and cabooses you may see belong to Rail Merchants International.



*Former Rock Island Train Station*

**Now walk back on Broadway Ave (eastward).**



**26. Fairfield Post Office** 200 W. Broadway Avenue

Walk into the Post Office lobby (corner of 2nd Street) to see two restored WPA murals.



**Continue east on Broadway Ave to return to Central Park Square.**



*Looking east on Broadway from the Post Office to the square.*

*On this tour we have been happy to highlight some of the many historical buildings in Fairfield's Cultural District. You are invited to continue your exploration. For more historical photos and information, go online to [www.fairfieldculturaldistrict.org](http://www.fairfieldculturaldistrict.org); and visit the Carnegie Museum in the former Fairfield Public Library at the corner of S. Court St. and E. Washington Avenue.*

**Thank You**

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