

# HISTORIC DISTRICTS WALKING TOUR

## INSTRUCTIONS

This brochure is a self-guided walking tour of Oregon's downtown historic district. Below is a map and a brief description about the properties on the tour. We suggest you start from the Welcome Center/ Pump House and return to that point at the end. Historic plaques are on some buildings and locations. We encourage you to read the historic plaques and reflect on what has changed over time. Parking is available on nearby streets, the Hitching Post parking lot, and the Village Hall parking lot near Waterman Park.

## HISTORY OF OREGON

### EARLY SETTLERS (1840's)

The first settlement in the area can be attributed to Bartley Runey, who built a log cabin in 1841 just south of the present day Village of Oregon at the junction of Union Road and Old Stage Road, located along the "Old Lead Trail." The tavern that he established there became a favorite stopping place for teamsters hauling lead from Mineral Point to Milwaukee. It was also located along the mail route from Janesville to Madison.

Robert Thomson, the first settler in what was to become the Village of Oregon, built a log cabin in 1842 along the banks of what is now Thompson's Creek, near Janesville and S. Perry Parkway. A large Victorian farmhouse built on the property in 1889 by Robert's nephew, George Thomson, has since been moved to a site outside the village.

C.P. Mosely was also one of the first settlers. He built a part log, part frame house and tavern in 1843 near the site of the present day water tower on Janesville Street. It served as a place for religious and business meetings for the early settlers and became the nucleus of the central village area. It was later purchased by I.M. Bennett and operated as a country general store and tavern.

## HISTORY OF OREGON (CONT.)

### THE RAILROAD COMES TO OREGON (1864-1865)

The Beloit and Madison Railroad (later part of the Chicago and North-western) extended the line through the village. The railroad was very significant for Oregon to become the center of settlement in the area. Oregon became an important hub of trade, as a shipping point for livestock to the Chicago market (1890-1930). At the height of rail activity about 15 carloads of livestock per week went out of Oregon. Grain shipments of wheat and oats numbered about 100 cars a month.

### SUMMARY

Oregon was primarily settled in the mid-1850's and became a thriving farming community. Oregon became the center of a much enlarged trade territory. Merchants, artisans and tradesmen set up shop in the village and served the needs of the population. The village was the center of economic and social life for the area residents. As the village grew and became more central to the people, the outlying settlements soon declined (Lakeview, Oak Hall, Union, Rutland, Storytown). Very significant changes came after World War II. The coming-of-age of the automobile for transportation, and the new highways and roads clearly marked Oregon's transformation from an agricultural community to a vibrant "bedroom" community.

It is "community" that makes Oregon a special place. Oregon is what we call home.

## REFERENCES

- Miller, Elizabeth L. and Joan M. Gefke (2000). *South Main Street Historic District*
- Paulson, Florice (1991). *A Walk Back in History: Did You Know? Oregon Area Historical Society*
- Sesquicentennial Celebration Booklet of the First Presbyterian Church.



# Explore Oregon, Wisconsin

## Oregon Historic District's Walking Tours and Oregon Bike Trails

## OREGON, WI BIKE TRAILS

Currently there are more than 5 miles of paved bike trails in the Village of Oregon. They are open to bicyclists, joggers and walkers. A new 3-mile stretch of scenic trail sponsored by the Oregon Rotary Club connects the Village to Fish Hatchery Rd., offering commuters a safe bike ride into Madison.

Parking is available at 460 W. Netherwood Rd.

## SAFETY FIRST!

It is very important to put safety first and to beware of the riders and vehicles around you.

1. Obey all traffic laws.
2. Wear ANSI/SNELL approved helmets at all times.
3. Ride on the right and pass on the left side only.
4. Communicate with fellow riders with terms such as "on left."
5. Do not brake suddenly - maintain a straight path as much as possible.

## PRESERVING THE PAST

### FOR THE FUTURE

Oregon Area Historical Society - Mission to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of the Oregon area.

Oregon Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 262, Oregon, WI 53575  
OAHS Museum is located at 159 W. Lincoln St.  
Website: [oregonareahistoricalociety.org](http://oregonareahistoricalociety.org)  
Email: [oaahs@frontier.com](mailto:oaahs@frontier.com)

Friends of the Historic Oregon Water Tower  
Website: [www.oregonwatertower.com](http://www.oregonwatertower.com)

Village of Oregon  
Oregon Historic Preservation Commission  
117 Spring St.  
Oregon, WI 53575  
Website: [www.vil.oregon.wi.us](http://www.vil.oregon.wi.us)  
Phone Number: (608) 835-3118

Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce  
117 Spring St.  
Oregon, WI 53575  
Website: [oregonwi.com](http://oregonwi.com)  
Phone Number: (608) 835-3697

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, scan one of the following QR codes with your smart phone or tablet.



Oregon Pump House and Watertower



Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce

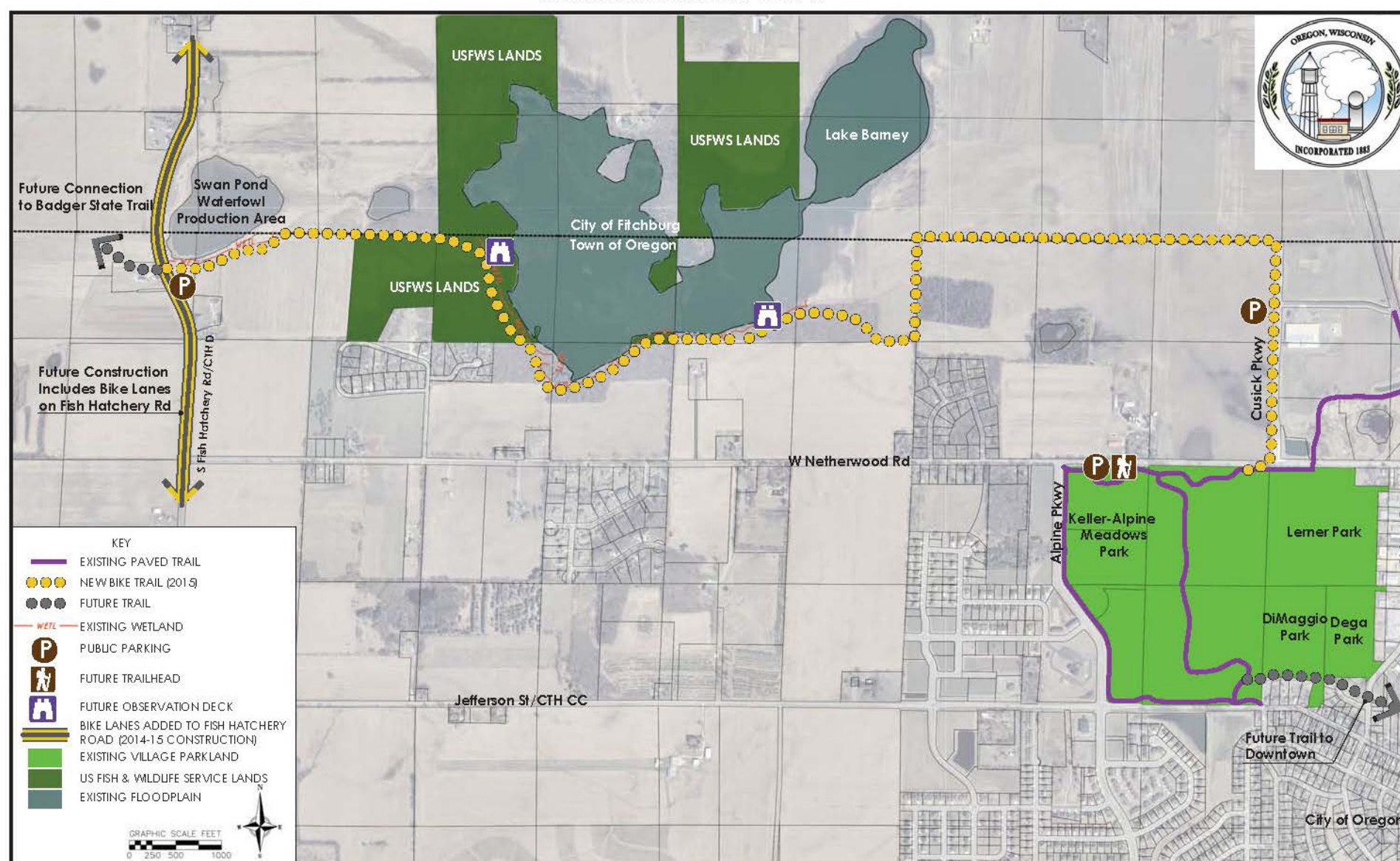


Oregon Area Historical Society Website

Produced by the Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce

## BIKE TRAIL MAP

OREGON ROTARY BIKE TRAIL  
OREGON TO BADGER STATE TRAIL



# SOUTH MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT- Including other historically significant properties.

**1. 134 JANESVILLE ST.**  
Welcome Center - Pump House



The pump house was built in 1899, the same year as the water tower. It was restored and transformed into the Oregon Welcome Center on May 16, 2015.

**2. 134 JANESVILLE ST.**  
Water Tower



In 1891 a deep well of water was discovered, which led to the construction of a steel tower with a 15,000 gallon wooden tank in 1899. This tank was replaced by a steel tank in 1921. The water tower and pump house operated until 1981.

**3. 116 JANESVILLE ST.**  
Hausmann Brewing Company Saloon (1900, c. 1945)



The Housmann Brewing Co. Saloon was erected in 1898/1900. William Hayes had a harness making business here from 1919-1928. After that, several barbers had businesses at this location.

**4. 112 JANESVILLE ST.**  
Montgomery & Martin/Observer Building (1899)



George Montgomery and Charles Martin operated a saloon here from 1903 until 1910. E. F. Kramer moved the offices of the *Oregon Observer* here in Feb. 1910. The paper continued in business at this location until about 1998.

**5. 104 JANESVILLE ST.**  
C.W. Netherwood Building (1898/1952)



Charles W. Netherwood had this two-story Romanesque Revival building constructed in 1898. Numerous businesses have been located here over the years.

**6. 134 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
Grady Grocery Store (1915)



A butcher shop was on this site first. In 1895, part of the Oregon school was moved here and it became the Village Hall (moved again in 1915). Grady operated a grocery store at this location until 1935.

**7. 123 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
Isaac Howe Rental Building (1880, c. 1945)



The original building was cream brick. The front facade was changed in 1925. The building housed a general store; first by M. Terwilliger and J. J. Lindsay, and later by Grant Shampnor. By 1909 Kivlin and Kern had a hardware and plumbing business here.

**8. 121 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
Isaac Howe Drugstore (1880,1907, 1940)



The original building was cream brick with Italianate-influenced decorative brickwork. It was updated in 1907 and again in 1940. A. M. Anderson and Arthur Ames had grocery and general stores at this location.

**9. 117 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
Marvin Hardware/ Masonic (1898)



This Romanesque Revival building was built in 1898. The second floor was occupied by the Masonic Lodge until 1961. H. H. Marvin had his hardware store here until 1912, followed by Earl Prichard and Patrick Cusick until 1940 and then by George Peterson until 1971.

**10. 115 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
C.E. Powers Building (1877)



This building was erected by C. E. Powers in 1877 for his confectionery and jewelry store. By 1908 Arthur Criddle's drugstore was here and in 1945 it was purchased by Axel Johnson. The upstairs was the site of the first library (1908-1914).

**11. 111 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
T.B. Cowdrey Tailor Shop/White House (1878/1911)



This building was erected in 1878 for Thomas B. Cowdrey's tailor shop. Cowdrey and Buche had a clothing and shoe store, calling it the White House. In 1911, the original facade with cream brick and Italianate-influenced brickwork was changed.

**12. 109 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
McDermott Building (1899)



This Romanesque Revival building was erected for Bernard McDermott in 1899 for his general store. He was succeeded by his sons, George and William until 1918. Later other stores, Kroger, Felix, Gamble and Ben Franklin were located here.

**13. 101 SOUTH MAIN ST.**  
J.P. Connor's Building (1900)



Built in 1908, it housed J. P. Connor's General Store. His sons continued the business until 1924. In 1926 Edward Booth and son, Gerald, purchased the building and began their furniture and undertaking business there.

**14. WORLD WAR I MONUMENT**



The World War I monument is believed to be the first tribute to WWI veterans in the U.S. It was dedicated on June 10, 1920. It now honors all veterans.

**15. 113 NORTH MAIN ST.**  
First National Bank of Oregon



The First National Bank opened for business in 1914 and moved into their new facility at 113 N. Main St. in January of 1915. The bank closed during the Great Depression. Oregon's post office was located in the building for many years.

**16. 172 NORTH MAIN ST.**  
The Presbyterian Church



The first church was constructed on this site in 1855 as a joint effort of the Presbyterians and Methodists. In 1895 the church was rebuilt which included the addition of a steeple. An educational wing was added to the north side of the church in 1988. The Presbyterian congregation occupied the site until 2011, when they moved to a new facility.

**17. 200 NORTH MAIN ST.**  
Red Brick School Building



The Red Brick School was built in 1922. It housed the high school until 1963. In 2007 it was sold to Gary Gorman who restored it for the headquarters of Gorman & Co. Its name "Red Brick" originated at the time it was built, when a late 1880's yellow brick school was located nearby.

**18. HITCHING POST**



This space was established in 1906 when the hitching posts in front of stores were removed, making for a cleaner as well as a safer environment for downtown shoppers. Rural residents arriving in town would now have a place to hitch their horses and buggies.

**19. 117 SPRING ST.**  
Village Hall



Oregon's Village Hall was completed in 1941; its present site. The WPA project cost \$50,000. Over the years it has housed governmental offices, the library, first and second grade school classes, and a community room. A north wing once housed the police and fire departments. The remodeling of the building in 1984 included a new entrance.

**20. WATERMAN PARK**  
Triangle Park



The park is named for the Waterman family who donated the land. From Civil War times down to the present day it has been the site for many community activities.

**21. 142 JANESVILLE ST.**  
Badger Bicycle Factory



The Badger Cycle Company was established in 1891. In 1898 the local factory was producing 1,000 bicycles a year. The Oregon plant ceased operations in 1900.

## ARCHITECTURE OF SOUTH MAIN ST.

The South Main Street Historic District is architecturally significant as an intact and visually distinct grouping of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings. These buildings create a distinctive downtown area. Eleven buildings in the district were built between 1877 and 1915. The World War Memorial was erected in 1920.

This area also has the largest concentration of architecturally significant historic commercial buildings in Oregon, including two notable examples of Romanesque Revival (Netherwood Building and the Marvin Hardware/ Masonic Lodge). A third example of a Romanesque Revival-type building is the McDermott Building.

This area served as the core of Oregon's business district from 1877 to 1948. Many of the most important businesses were located in the South Main Street district.



## HISTORIC LINCOLN STREET AREA PROPERTIES

**405 NORTH MAIN ST.**  
Chandler House



Style: Queen Anne  
Built for Warren B. Chandler (1855-1942) and his wife, Amanda

**121 WEST LINCOLN ST.**  
Palmer House (c. 1879)

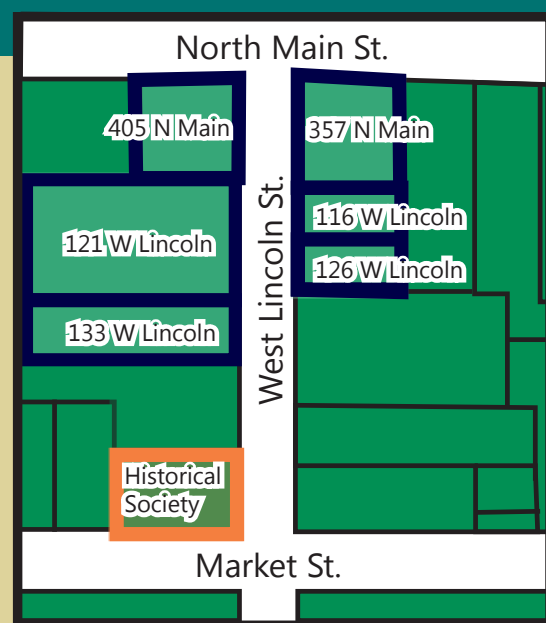


Style: Gothic Revival  
Built for Oliver M. Palmer (1821-1898) and his wife Huldah (Hall) Palmer

**133 WEST LINCOLN ST.**  
Rose House (c. 1894)



Style: modified Queen Anne  
Built for Oliver Rose (1820-1886) and his wife Edna



Please Note: Many of the stops along the West Lincoln Street route 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.

**357 NORTH MAIN ST.**



Style: American Queen Anne  
Built for John Gilbert (1861-1956) and his wife Flora B. (Lockwood) Gilbert

**116 WEST LINCOLN ST.**  
Gilbert House (c. 1890-1900)



Style: vernacular frame house  
Built for John Gilbert's (1861-1956) parents, Schuyler and Hansy (Hill) Gilbert

**126 WEST LINCOLN ST.**  
Warner House (c. 1871)



Style: Modified Queen Anne  
Built for Jacob Warner (1822-1879) and his wife, Mary (Werlich) Warner