

# HISTORIC NEWBURGH WALKING TOUR

You are about to experience a walk through time. Settled by John Sprinkle, a blacksmith in 1803, the historic town of Newburgh has evolved from the first town settled in Warrick County, Indiana to a busy riverport between Cincinnati and New Orleans (1850) to a quaint and charming 21st Century community still firmly anchored to its early 19th Century beginnings.

The steamboats are long gone, of course—the Lexington, Columbian, Bostona, Atlantis, Oregon, the Alexander Scott, and the Gem—steamboats that brought gentlemen of fortune and their fancy ladies to the riverfront, where vagabonds loafed and locals bartered their produce and wares. But their shadows linger.

Gone too are the saddlers and harness makers, the coopers and blacksmiths, the flour mills and saw mills, the drug stores and coffin makers, and the music school where the piano forte and guitar were taught for ten dollars a quarter.

Even so, many of the structures remain, along with the historic homes of the tanners and tinners and druggists and millers and steamboat captains of long ago. They are as they were for the most part. That's the beauty of Historic Downtown Newburgh.

So, yes, there is history in Newburgh, history that might have been relegated to books somewhere and forgotten had this been another town. But it's not. It's Newburgh, Indiana, where you're welcome to walk with us through time—anytime.

*"The gilded homes  
Of yesterday  
Keep their vigil  
Along the way  
Behind stone walls  
And flowering hedge,  
Winding down to  
The river's edge."*

Martha Sansom Greenlee®



Preservation Hall



This walking tour guide is made possible by a grant from the Women's Club of Newburgh  
www.womensclubofnewburgh.org



Historic Newburgh, Inc.  
9 W Jennings Street  
Newburgh, IN 47630  
Phone (812) 853-2815  
www.historicnewburgh.org



**1** *Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Preservation Hall*

200 State St.

Construction of this building to house the Cumberland Presbyterian Church began in 1851. The lower level was occupied from 1853 to 1857 by the Delaney Academy. During the Civil War, the bell tower was rung to call the Home Guard when danger threatened. A National Guard detachment was housed here when martial law was in effect during the 1937 flood. In 1965, the Presbyterian Church congregation built a new building east of town. From then until 2006 the building served as town hall. Today, Preservation Hall has a public meeting room on the upper level and the Newburgh Museum on the lower. This building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on May 23, 1978.



**2** *The Baker Building*

116 State St.



Mr. George Fuquay ran a department store here from 1860-1884. The

building housed both bakeries and grocery stores, and at one time, the telephone exchange was on the second floor.

**3** *Phelps Block*

100 State St.

A successful mercantile and shipping merchant, in Newburgh, A.M. Phelps, built this building prior to 1837, as a residence. The upper structure was the house proper. The ground level brick



floor was added when the hill was cut away in 1837. Speakers at political rallies addressed listeners below from the upstairs porch on State.

**4** *Exchange Hotel*

1 West Jennings St.



Built in 1841, this building was a popular hotel and tavern in the early history of the community. In its day, it housed traveling salesmen, itinerant workers, and cross-country travelers providing them with warm beds, fine food, and ample spirits. A third floor west wing was added in 1854 to accommodate a constant overflow of guests. Its chair-lined veranda was always filled with men, making the ladies of Newburgh wary of passing by on a windy day fearful of exposing an ankle. During the Civil War, the hotel was used as an armory and a hospital. After the Confederates' raid on Newburgh in July 1862, one of the "informers" was shot and killed in front of the hotel in view of the town citizens.

**5** *Original Site of Delaney Academy*

10 West Jennings Street

In 1842, the Newburgh Cumberland Presbyterian Academy was founded. The



frame building has two rooms and a basement. The Academy held two sessions, each lasting five months at the cost of \$5.00 to \$10.00 per session. Good boarding with private families was available for \$1.25 to \$1.50 per week. The academy trained future ministers and teachers.

**6** *Abshier Ice House*

17 West Jennings St.



This building was erected in 1878 for the purpose of storing natural ice cut from the Ohio River and nearby frozen ponds. The building was enlarged in 1925 and now houses a restaurant.

**7** *Newburgh-Ohio Township Public Library*

23 West Jennings Street



Newburgh's first public library

established in 1897, was located in

the Township Trustee's office. It was known as the Ohio Township Library. Later, a free "reading room" was opened in the Town Hall. In 1916, the town applied for and received a grant from the Carnegie Corporation to build a structure according to Carnegie specifications. Land was donated by the Reverend Dr. W.J. Darby, and the northeast wing of the present building was constructed.

**8** *Darby-Cook House*

125 West Jennings Street



This Greek Revival home was built in 1855 by John V. Darby, grandson of Newburgh's founder, John Sprinkle. The home was occupied by Sprinkle descendants until 1970.



**9** *Thompson House*  
200 West Jennings Street



Built in the mid-1800's, this Greek Revival town house was home to Dr. William P. Thompson at the turn of the century. Sold in 1944 to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Evansville, it was used as a convent for the Sisters of Providence until 1947.

**10** *James R. Tillman House*



201 West Jennings Street

Dr. Tillman graduated from Evansville

Medical College in 1850. In 1860, he attended the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. During the Civil War, he was in charge of the two Union hospitals in the area. The original rear wing section of this house was built in 1820 by Samuel and Susan Short. The house, which burned in 1870, was restored with an American Gothic front porch.

**11** *Prof. Durgin House*

210 West Jennings Street



Built in 1873. Home to Professor Henry B. Durgin who began Newburgh's largest private school in 1851. His wife Mary was granddaughter to early area settler and

woodsman, Bailey Anderson. During the 1920's this was home to Herbert Ellis and wife Eula, pianist for the Princess Theater.

**12** *Nicholas Schuetz House*

217 West Jennings Street



Built in 1845, this full Colonial Cape Cod is an excellent example of the type of home popular in early Newburgh. Built of locally fired brick, the front porch was added at a much later date.

**13** *Weis House*

3 Market Street



This is the oldest brick house in Newburgh, built in 1839. The original floors were packed earth. Mr. Weiss was a saddle and harness maker. Later, he helped to build St. John Catholic Church across the street from his house. St. John's first services were held in this house.

**14** *St. John the Baptist Catholic Church*

224 West Jennings Street



The church was dedicated in July 1867, with about thirty families attending. A white bell tower rose above the roof with a golden cross atop its spire. In 1952, the church began an expansion program

purchasing eleven acres on Frame Road. The congregation moved in 1958. In 1964, Marilyn and Kurt Kluger purchased the property for the Newburgh Country Store. The original choir loft and steps remain intact, and many of the original stained glass windows are to be found in area homes and businesses.

**15** *Newburgh Tobacco Co.*



110 Water Street

This building was built prior to the Civil War. In 1917

Ernest H. Koch, Sr. and Henry H. Powell organized the Newburgh Tobacco Co. to make smoking and chewing tobacco. Their slogan was "The Twist that put Newburgh on the Map". In 1946 the building was made into apartments.

**16** *Princess Theatre Building*

5 State Street



In 1915 this building was constructed by Herman

Schumacher. He and others formed the Newburgh Amusement Company to show the latest movies. Since the films were silent, a pianist played music to match the mood of the scenes. A player piano, installed years later, required pumping along with manual changing of the musical rolls.

**17** *E.S. & N.*

12 East Water St.



The Evansville Suburban and Newburgh Railway Company built this passenger and freight station in 1912. The trains were first operated by steam and later by electricity. In 1930, they were replaced by bus service, and the station became a residence



**18** *Thomas F. Bethell House*

6 Sycamore Street

In 1855, Thomas Floyd Bethell built this fashionable Italianite structure. He had a river trading business on French Island up the river from Newburgh. He married Maria Gilford, an English woman of considerable education and dowry. She bore her husband five daughters.



**21** *Bates-Walden House*

115 E. Jennings St.

Salvin Bates built this early American style house in the 1840's. The original house had four large rooms two down and two up with a central hall. Each room had a fireplace and a fine view of the Ohio river. Mr. Bates was one of the leading merchants in Newburgh. The house was later sold to Dr. William M. Walden in 1887.



Farmers and People's Bank. The building still contains two walk-in vaults.

**24** *Kriekhaus Building*

101-103 State Street



This building has a diverse past. In Newburgh's early days, it served as a grocery, pharmacy, furniture factory, and coffin maker. It was owned and operated by the Hulvershorn family who lived on Water Street.

The first licensed undertaker in Newburgh was Verner Kriekhaus, who operated his business from here until he moved to Evansville in 1929, Young boys hired by Mr. Kriekhaus were often assigned to go to various locations where a death occurred to bring the body back to the Kriekhaus building for placement in the coffin. It is doubtful any funerals were ever held in the building, since funerals were generally held in the home of the deceased.

A pharmacist, Herman Brizius, operated his pharmacy here for many years. Brizius was a graduate of the Purdue School of Pharmacy.

**25** *Herscher-Litzenberger Building*

119 State Street

Sarah Bates, wife of the postmaster, sold this lot to Philip Herscher in 1870. The building has served as a grocery, shoe shop, millinery shop and meat market. It served as the temporary Post Office during the 1937 floor.



**19** *Miner-Raleigh House*



200 East Jennings St.

This spacious classic Greek revival house was built by

Luther Marshall Miner in the early 1840's. He operated a mercantile business and owned a wharf boat.

**22** *Rutledge House*

18 East Jennings

During the famous raid on Newburgh by Adam Johnson's guerillas in July 1862, Johnson was tipped off by southern sympathizers in the town to a stash of weapons stored in this house. Johnson and his men confiscated the entire arsenal. The house was built in 1860. During the Civil War, it became a convalescent hospital for wounded soldiers. The first Methodist Church services in Newburgh were also held here.



**20** *Thomas P. Gunnell House*

114 East Jennings St.



The Federal home was built around 1841 by Thomas Gunnell. The broken pediment arch over the door, copied from a model in Yorkshire, England, was added in the 1920's. Mr. Gunnell was a blacksmith and community leader.

**23** *Citizens Bank Building*

11 State Street

Completed in 1901, this building housed Indiana

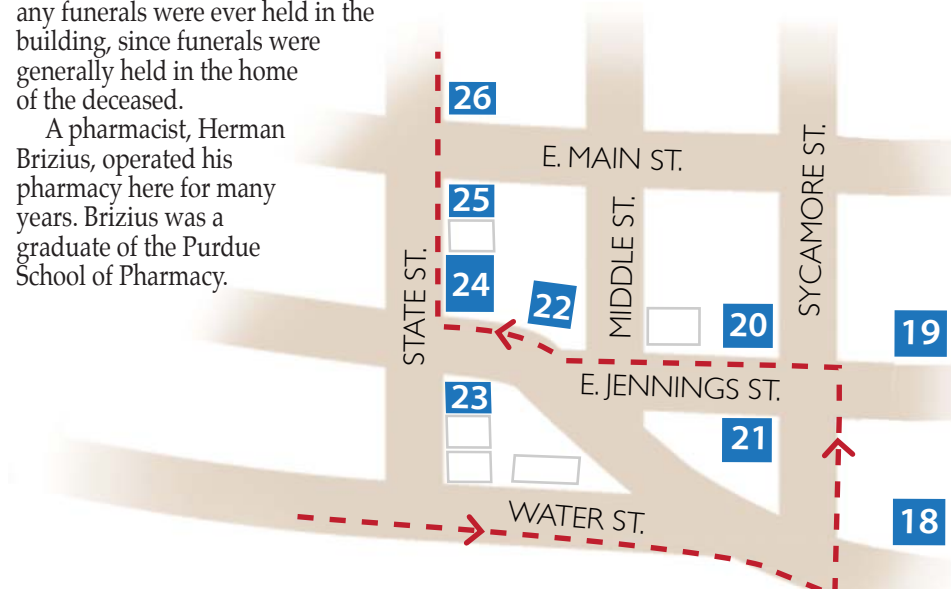


**26** *Robert Slaughter House*

205 State Street



A fire of March 1888 started in an identical home on the corner and destroyed both after a heroic battle of neighbors and townsfolk fought hard to save the block. Both homes were rebuilt to resemble original structures. Prior to the fire, this was home to Dr. Robert Slaughter.



**27** *Louis Pepmiller House*

211 State St.

Built in 1846, this was known the "Sill" house, because of the



enormous sills that run the entire length of the home. Mr. Pepmiller was a partner in the Eagle Brewery which supplied Newburgh with fine German beer.

**28** *Samuel R. Weed House*

217 State Street



This charming frame home was for years the home of "Marryin" Polly Castle, whose nine marriages (that we know of) made her a Newburgh legend.

**29** *Stokes Garwood House*

221 State St.



This Greek revival was originally the home of the village blacksmith, Williams Stokes

Garwood, who made wagons and plows. The stone wall in front is the work of William Butterworth, an early Newburgh stonecutter.

Mr. Garwood, a heavy-set man

with dark hair, full beard and mustache, accidentally shot himself and died on March 1, 1881. Legend has it his ghost still roams the house in the dark of night.

**30** *Corneal McCormick House*

224 State St.



This stately two-story brick house was built in 1869 by Mr. McCormick, a merchant and violin maker.

**31** *Dr. Mary E. Phelps House*

218 North State St.



Dr. Phelps was the first female physician to practice medicine in Newburgh. Beginning her practice in Canon City, Colorado, she returned home to Newburgh in 1910 to set up her home and her medical office. She died in 1927.

**32** *Phelps-Hopkins House*

208 State Street



Built in 1850 by Abraham M. Phelps, philanthropist, builder and merchant. There was never any formal architectural plan to the house. The builders put four stakes

in the ground, strung string between them and began to lay bricks.

The foot-thick walls reach from basement to roof and the rear porches on the first and second floors are ninety feet in length. The total cost of the house was \$15,000. In the beginning the ground took up the entire block and included stables and servant quarters. During the great flood of 1937, the house became a refuge for the homeless, housing as many as twenty-seven at one time.

*Historic Home of Note.*



*Old Stone House*

Built in 1834 by Gaines Head Roberts, the house took three years to complete. Built of sandstone, the stones were brought by river barges and hauled on land by oxcarts to the building site.

The walls of Old Stone House are three feet thick in the basement, two feet thick on the first floor and eighteen inches thick on the second. A dining room and kitchen are situated on one side of the first floor. A parlor and a sitting room are on the other. All four bedrooms on the upstairs level have their own fireplace and cypress woodwork.

In 1931 the property was purchased by Thomas and Ruth Morton after the Roberts family lost it after non-payment of a debt. The Mortons restored it to its original splendor. A member of the Board of Trustees for the University of Evansville, Morton and his wife gave the house to the University in 1969 and it was turned into a guesthouse.

On December 30, 1975 the Old Stone House was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

