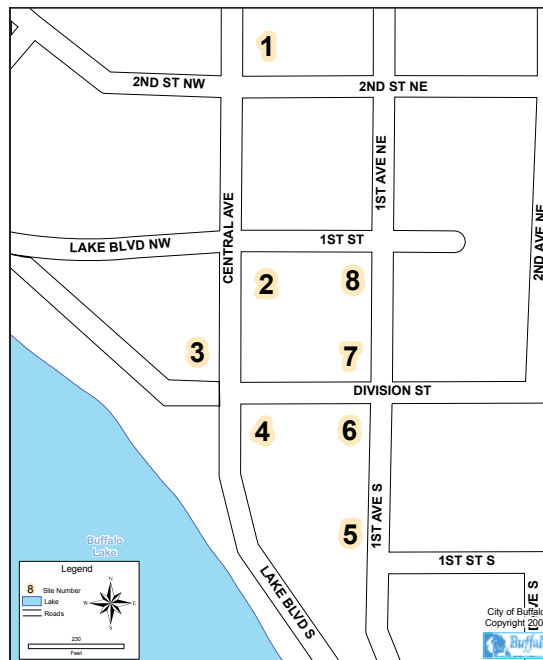


A Walking Tour of Buffalo's Historic Central Business District



Buffalo Drive 1942





View from Court House tower, looking up Court House Ave., Buffalo hotel in foreground early 1900s.

1. For a number of years (1900-1940's) Bacon Street (now 2nd St. NE) was one of the busier streets of the village. Built in 1897 as the Odd Fellows Lodge at **#200 Central Avenue**, this wooden structure has served a succession of businesses, including Olson's Garage from 1932-1945; and now being greatly remodeled it has a restaurant and office suites. The large red brick building **#2-4 2nd St. NE**, built in 1903 by Dr. Shannon for his medical practice has long been the home of the Masonic Lodge on the second floor and various businesses on the first floor – including being the Post Office from 1953 through 1965. **#6 2nd St. NE** is a small brick building (newly remodeled) that was the first site of the Buffalo State Bank. Bacon Street had a number of businesses including an Egg & Produce company, grocery store, appliance store, and on the far corner a gas station and the town's first drive-in fast food business.



Huber Hotel 1920 - 1945

2. For 26 years **#32 Central Ave** served as the town's Post Office (1902-1928), and the first phone company offices were on the second floor until 1913. In 1931 the building was remodeled to serve as the Purity Dairy – where milk was bottled and ice cream was frozen for local customers. It then served as a corner grocery, and most recently has had a variety of businesses. The Buffalo hotel **#27 Central** was built in 1895. Originally known as the Park hotel, it was an elegant three-story brick structure, extremely fine when first opened. After numerous owners it became the Huber Hotel in 1920 and later the Anderson hotel from 1945-1960. It is now a rooming house. One business from 1913 through 1981, Beutner Drug (**#10 Central Ave**) had a long history in our city. A main feature was its elaborate soda fountain and tin ceilings. The phone company was upstairs from 1913-1964. With the closing of the drug store, the building has held a variety of businesses.

3. **#1 West Division** was built in 1899 as a saloon by the



West Division Street 1987

Minneapolis Brewing Company. In the early 1900s Buffalo was one of the leading advocates of prohibiting liquor sales. Eventually saloons were outlawed in the village in 1913 and the Buffalo State Bank was then located here – the bank vault can still be seen. With the demise of the State Bank, the Post Office was located here from 1928-1953. Many retail businesses have been located here since that time. Dr. Buselmeier had his dental offices upstairs for many years. **#9 West Division** was the Peterson Feed & Implement business built in 1919 and in 1937 **#3 West Division** was added as their new showroom. Later it was Leinbach Equipment, then Trueman-Welters Equipment before they moved out to Hwy 55 about 1969. **#2 West Division** was a gas station first built in 1929, then replaced in 1953. In the early 1970s it was converted to a restaurant.



1st Ave NE 1940

4. **#2 East Division** was built in 1888 and was the Wright County Farmers Cooperative Store from 1908 through 1921, and then was the Leader Grocery for over 25 years. It then has held a series of department stores (Edelman, Boyd, and finally Johnsons) and then it became an antique store until recently expertly remodeled and preserved by Nelson Builders, **#11 East Division**, now the home of Country Lane Clothing and Wreath of Franklin, is a part of Division that has long been the site of



West Division Street 1987



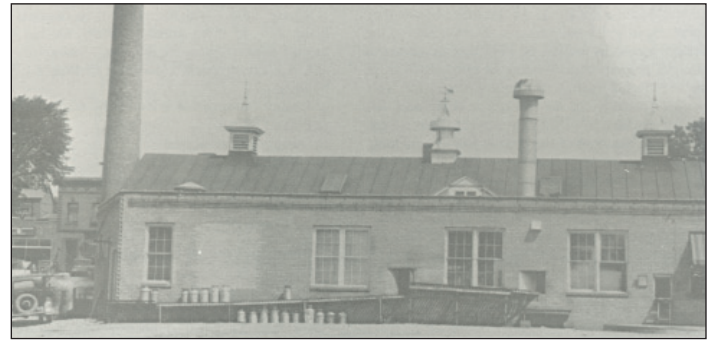
Post Office, 1902 - 1928

important retail businesses. O.L. Dudley built his Opera House here in 1886. The large three story building had a general store, barber shop and bank on the first floor. The Opera Hall on the second floor had a large stage and a high ceiling that allowed for basketball and other sports events, and a seating area for several hundred people (Says the advertisements). Torn down in 1922, it was replaced by the Schaefer Building in 1939 – a five store complex. Cohen’s Clothing Store began as one of these stores and then grew to encompass the entire complex with remodeling and additions. Already having a long history in the village, Oakley Bank opened its new building at **#15 East Division** in 1922 – moving here from the Dudley Building next door. There were then additions in 1966 and in 1973. (Now owned by Klein Bank) **#8 East Division** was built in 1909 as a jewelry store and most of its history has had that purpose - Green’s, Pelant’s, and since 1948 Setterberg’s Jewelry. **#12 East Division** was built in 1915 and for many years was Reider’s Meat Processing and Market. **#22 East Division** was also built in 1915, replacing the older Shimmin Drug Store built in 1888. Upstairs was the offices of Dr. Catlin and his “hospital” until the hospital was built up on the hill in 1951. The first floor was the Schmidt Drug Store (1915-1950), succeeded by the Wagner Drug Store until 1971. Since then it has been a hardware store, an appliance store, gift shop and now a restaurant.



Swenson & Peterson Lumber Company 19xx

5. A swamp/wetland area until the course of the Willow Creek was diverted through an underground culvert in 1956, this area now encompasses some of the newer buildings in the business district. The Buffalo Creamery was a large industrial complex from 1896 until 1958 that covered the area now taken by the parking lots and the Holmquist/Szarke building. The various buildings built in the 1960s and 1970s as part of that redevelopment were the National Bank and the Holmquist Supermarket in 1961, the Buffalo Cleaners in 1960, the Gallery



Buffalo Co-op Creamery, 1910

Building (**#114 1st St. So**) - then a hardware store - in 1974, and the City Liquor Store/Dollar Store (**#120 1st St. So**) in 1971 – then a Ben Franklin Variety Store.

6. From this busy corner you can see several stages of Buffalo business development. At **#1 1st Ave So** you now find Edward Jones Investment co. On that corner was the Standard gas Station from 1930 – 1985. Across the street at **#2 1st Ave so** was a Skelly Gas Station from 1923 – 1970s. The building had been rebuilt in 1951 and now houses a delicatessen/restaurant. The buildings to the east and to the south of that building were all built in the 1950s in another era of redevelopment, replacing earlier blacksmith shops, lumberyard areas, etc. **#12 1st Ave So** was Holmquist’s first efforts as a “Supermarket” being earlier in a smaller store on 1st Ave NE. This building was built in 1950



Division Street 1992

and later was a Ben Franklin (1963-1971) and Wagner/Snyder Drug Store (1971-1990s) and now an Ace Hardware Store. **#14 1st Ave So** was built in 1951 as a bakery, with Hallmark taking over the store in 1975. Many will remember the Bridgeman’s Restaurant and later My Gal Sal’s Restaurant being at #110 Division. At **#114 Division** Truax Radio & TV was built in 1951. It later became Buffalo Appliance and then Doc’s Appliance.



Division Street 1927



1st Avenue NE, looking north 1987

The Cota Garage (#111 Division) was built in 1920 as an auto repair shop and Hudson Auto sales dealership. It was remodeled and became Esau's Supermarket in 1953. It now has returned to its roots and is an automobile parts store.

7. The drug store at #25 East Division was built in 1975, replacing a number of earlier smaller businesses including the Buffalo hardware and the Christian Meyer building. The National Bank of Buffalo was built in 1917 at #2 1st Ave NE and was at this site until 1961. The building then became a part of the Burkland Retail Complex. Touted as a 'modern' department store, the Burkland Store was built in 1910 at #10 1st Ave NE. It was very large and had men's, women's and children's clothing and also had a grocery department. Growing over the years, it came to incorporate its surrounding buildings. Wayne's Hardware took over the building from 1984-1991. The various buildings in the complex have since housed a variety of businesses.



A long time Chevrolet salesroom, the building now housing Jones Cable 1934

8. The Schmidt building located at #25 1st Ave NE was built in 1923 as a Ford automobile salesroom and a dance hall. It was remodeled in 1944 for Allied Manufacturing Company which produced children's clothes – later known as Wonderalls. Bergstrom Furniture was here from 1968 – 2006. This building stands on the half block that was the first park in the city, privately owned by Mr. Dudley. The area had been mostly swamp land, and in 1895 he filled it with gravel and dirt, planted trees, built a bandstand and installed a fountain around an artesian well. Due



Buffalo Drive Lake

to its "swampy" character, Mr. Dudley soon gave up his park and sold off the buildable lots along Central Avenue to other businesses. The remaining lowlands are now city parking lots and still have an occasional flooding problem. #30 1st Ave NE began as a general store in 1902. In 1920 Owen Haugland changed the old store into a service station, and in 1923 it became Buffalo Motor Co. which sold Chevrolets. Remodeling in 1931 put in the diagonal front that faced its new gas pumps. In 1963 that auto dealership was moved to Hwy 55, and this building has served a number of businesses since that time.

The earliest business district was on the hill to the south of Willow Creek. When the Court House was moved to its current location in 1878, the business district shifted to that area also. After a succession of disastrous fires destroyed those wooden structures, the more substantial brick structures mentioned in this tour were built in this 3rd business area. As seen in this tour, the downtown has had several periods of redevelopment, and now again faces a time of potential change and redevelopment.



Old Buffalo Journal Press Building 1989