

BUILDINGS, BRICKS and BRIDGES TOUR- Developed/prepared by Ron Campbell, AIA & Jackie Hoist, AIA
Be A Tourist in your town Tour: AIA/Flint

◆ Suggestion on to where to stand to be better heard.

STOP #1- NORTH - EAST CORNER OF SAGINAW AND 4TH STREET

◆ 4th St. south side off of Saginaw.

Introductions; Who/What is AIA/Flint; tour format

STATION #1.1 – Saginaw Street/Saginaw Trail

Native Americans - Architect

Saginaw Street, Dixie Highway, M24, M1, Woodward Avenue, call it what you will, but is was originally known as the Saginaw Trail, one of only three public thoroughfares in MI that were originally Indian Trails dating back at least 300 years; one of the oldest known Indian trails in North American. It may also be the oldest in the US to bear its original name. In part it was the reason Flint was settled by the Europeans in the early 1800's.

The Native Americans, who created the trail would use it to not only to bring furs to trading posts in Flint, Saginaw and Detroit, The Saginaw Trail runs from Detroit to Saginaw through Pontiac and Flint. In 1816 Michigan Territorial government authorized the building of a road from Detroit to Saginaw following the trail.

In 1829 it became a military road. It evolved from a dirt path to gravel, to a corduroy road in 1831 to 1' thick wood blocks and finally to the bricks we see today. The Detroit to Flint section was finished with the wood blocks in 1833, and the Flint to Saginaw section was finished in 1841.

In 1848 and 1850, the Michigan government determined it was too expensive to maintain the road, and therefore turned it over to a private company who maintained it, in return for tolls to travel on it. Tolls on the road were regulated by the state legislature. A charge of two cents a mile was made for a wagon or carriage drawn by two horses. In 1910, the leases expired and the road returned to state control, and the tolls were lifted.

1899 the first bricks went in replacing the wood blocks. The road was rebuilt in 1936, with a new roadbed but reusing the bricks by turning them; MDOT Director at the time stated that is was the finest road the state had ever built and predicted it would provide another 50 – 70 years of durable pavement. In 2014 we are at year 78 and still counting. The brick-paved section of Saginaw Street from Court Street to the River is a National Registered Historic Site in addition to the State and local historic designation.

The arches were first installed in 1899; They were installed as street lighting, each arch had 50 lights; they replaced the old gas lanterns At midnight half of the lights were turned off. Two additional arches were added to celebrate 50th anniversary of Flint in 1905, these were the arches that said 'Vehicle City', to salute Flint's large Horse-drawn Carriage Industry (not autos). The arches were removed in 1919 and contrary to popular belief the arches were not removed for scrap metal for WW I, they were actually taken down in 1919, one year after WWI ended (11/11/1918) The city replace them with boulevard street lighting with twin heads.

The arches seen today were by the Genesee County Historical Society, using private funds donated for engineering, fabrication and erection. GAV Associates were the architects.

STATION #1.2 – Masonic Temple

In the spring of 1905, representatives of the five Masonic bodies in Flint met to draft articles of incorporation for the Masonic Temple Association. The Masons spend two years raising \$10,000 to purchase this site and \$79,000 for construction. With its cornerstone laid on October 22, 1909, the Temple was opened for Masonic activities by March of 1911. Its design is in the Renaissance Revival style by architect Hugh B. Clement. The Temple is a National Registered Historic Site, in addition to State and local historic designation.

STATION #1.3 – Halo Burger/Vernors Mural

This Italianate style building was built in 1929 and served as the Vernors Retail Store and Sandwich shop complete with an outdoor court where the parking and drive is now. The ‘Garden Court’ provided outdoor dining. The mural was an idea by Vernors to dress up the outdoor dining area while promoting their product. In 1932, sign painters John Gonsowski and Keith Martin. Mr. Gonsowski was born in Poland showed his European sensitivity in regard to his painting style. He painted smiling Vernors gnomes working out of a castle, stacking oak barrels which say "flavor mellowed 4 years in wood" on the mural. Gonsowski painted other Vernors advertising signs in more than a dozen locations but this is the only one remaining. He also created Vernors gnome mascot, featured in the mural.

In 1951, Vernors moved the oak barrels from the site and James Vernor II sold the sandwich shop to Bill Thomas who ran the Kewpee Hotel - Hamburg chain Hotel Restaurant which was located on Harrison Street. In the mid 1970's when the name changed to Halo Burger.

Option:

There are conflicting stories about how Vernors ginger ale first began. The most popular story, and one found frequently in the Vernors Company's own literature, says that James Vernor, of Detroit, began experimenting with a formula for ginger ale prior to leaving for the Civil War. Upon returning from the war, he opened a wooden cask of his extract, thinking that it would be spoiled and found instead the taste he had been hoping to discover. The secret combination of ingredients, along with the four years of aging in Oak casks, perfected his ginger ale.

STATION #1.4- GFAC & THE VERNORS MURAL

After the Peerless Furniture store burned, the building was to be demolished by the insurance company, public outcry and intervention by a group of citizens saved the portion of the building that serves as a canvas for the Vernors mural. In order to save the mural, the building was saved and rehabilitated to become the home of the Greater Flint's Art Council.

STATION #1.5 – Courthouse (can't see in from this Stop, so it could be optional if you mention it)

The Courthouse was designed by Fredrick D. Madison in 1926. It is constructed of granite, marble and limestone. The Neoclassic style is best seen in its symmetrical shape, Ionic columns and classical entablature. It is the fifth courthouse to have stood on this site; the others date from 1838, 1839, 1867, and 1904.

STOP #2- SOUTH - EAST CORNER OF SAGINAW AND 3rd STREET

◆ Speak from the steps of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

STATION #2.1 – St Paul's Episcopal Church

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, one of the earliest in the region, was founded in 1839 by the Reverend Daniel Brown, who had come to Michigan from Wisconsin. The church shared temporary facilities with other congregations until 1843 when the first St. Paul's Church was completed. The limestone façade was quarried in nearby Flushing, hauled to the site in winter for easy of transporting the material. Designed by G.W. Lloyd of Detroit, in the Gothic Revival style. A parish house and other auxiliary buildings were added over the years. The Tiffany windows, date from 1915 - 1930. The cross on the steeple was forged by William A. Patterson the local carriage and automobile manufacture who's factories once stood to the east of St Paul's where the parking lot is now located.

STATION #2.2 – First Presbyterian Church

Initially organized as a Congregational church on May 7, 1837, this church family adopted a new form of government, becoming the First Presbyterian Church of Flint on August 7, 1841. This is the 3rd site since its founding. The current church building was dedicated debt free on November 13, 1885. It is constructed of Limestone from Ionia and Sebawaing, WI with base relief of terra cotta and Tiffany windows. The cost in 1885 was 46,000. It was designed by Lawrence Valk; the 1987 addition on the north was by SSOE Architects/Engineers.

STATION #2.3 – Floyd J. McCree Building Courts and Human Services Building

Former City Hall Site show images found on the last two pages.

STOP #3- NORTH – EAST CORNER SAGINAW AND 2nd STREET

◆ in the green space of the corner

RUN & TALK –

Metro-PCS - A bit of De Stijl – Popular in the 1920's. Characterized by the use of the Primary Red Yellow and Blue, Squares, Rectangles and Overlapping Lines.

The Cork – Renaissance Revival – Terracotta, Arches, Cornice

Paul's Pipe Store

Paul Spanola left school in 1928 when he was 15 years old and opened a pool hall and tavern. He moved the operation which had evolved to just the pipe Shop to this location in 1944. He worked in the shop until his death on August 27, 2013 at age of 100. The family still own and run the store that Paul started. There's a museum upstairs of pipes the store was in been in business since Known internationally for their pipes and tobacco blends Hundreds of custom blends for their clients. He taught Rita Hayworth how to smoke a cigar for a movie.

STOP #3- NORTH – EAST CORNER SAGINAW AND 2nd STREET (in the green space of the corner)

STATION #3.1 – Capital Theater

The Capitol Theater Building is a combination theater and commercial block. The structure's facades are faced with buff brick base and terra cotta trim. Decorative piers, florid window surrounds, spandrel panels and medallions, all executed in terra cotta. Built between 1927 and 1928 in what its promoters referred to as "fifteenth-century Hispano-Italian style," the Capitol Theater is an atmospheric-type theater whose interior design incorporates diverse Mediterranean architectural elements, executed on a grand scale.

.John Eberson, was the architect, who specialized in the Movie theaters. He designed theaters in more than 160 cities across the United States. His designs took of various exotic themes and romantic places. For the Capital he choose the Hispano-Italian style for the exterior and for the interior he choose for a Roman Garden theme complete with his trade mark "Atmospheric" Interior that includes Roman garden with statues, topiary, domed sky-blue ceiling, twinkling stars and wisps clods produced by the fog machine. Castle towers, colonnades and roofline cresting. It originally seated 2000. The marquee was restored for the Will Farrell movie filmed here a few years ago.

STOP #4- MOTT FOUNDATION LOBBY

◆ go in the lobby using the doors under the sign and glass canopy

STATION #4.1 – Mott Foundation / Union Industrial Bank

Built in 1929-30, the Mott Foundation Building is an impressive 16-story Art Deco building at the corner of First and Saginaw Streets in downtown Flint. As a premier office building and historic landmark, it has been the main headquarters of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation since 1944 and is also home to numerous other legal financial and professional offices. It was designed in the popular Art Deco style by architects Smith, Hinchman & Grylls from Detroit, the oldest architectural firm in the United States which is still in businesses. It took one year to complete at a cost of approximately \$2M. Original design included seven retail stores on the first floor and included men's rooms on every floor, but women's restrooms only on every other floor. Note art Deco features in the lobby – Elevator doors, Mail box, hand rails, etc. Also note the construction and early photos.

STOP #5- SOUTH – EAST CORNER SAGINAW AND 1st STREET

◆ in the flat lot south end

STATION #5.2 – Flint Journal Building

The building was completed in 1924 in the Renaissance Revival style. Albert Kahn was a world renowned architect based in Detroit Michigan. Known for his revolutionary design of factories in the early 1900s, he was also architect for a wide variety of structures ranging from over 500 factories in the Soviet Union, the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House and the Fisher Building in Detroit. Publishing/Newspaper mogul George Booth commissioned Kahn to design this earthquake resistant newspaper office and printing building. Stone carvings are specifically unique with relief figures in the round medallions representing Knowledge, Research and Literature along the north the figures are repeated and joined in relief's representing Science, Art, Music, Printing, and Engraving – rectangular relief's on either side of the round medallions represent the attributes of a Free Press, Vigilance, Wisdom, Truth, Accuracy and Industry. Below the upper floor windows are reliefs of the marks of the prominent printers from Europe's 300 year printing history.

STATION #5.3 – Flint Farmers Market (new Home)

Originally design as the printing facility for the Booth Newspaper chain in 2004 the facility was obsolete within five years because of the rapid changing life styles and technology. It became home to the Flint Farmers Market which opened on June 21, 2014 when they relocated from their former location of 74 years to these facilities. The original architect was Dario Architect/ FUNchitecture were the rehabilitation architects.

STATION #5.4 – First National bank/ First Street Lofts

Arthur G. Bishop, the Bishop for whom the Airport is named was president of the bank when it opened. This 7 story classically inspired building is terra cotta faced. The building reflects the supremacy of the auto industry in Flint during the 1920's. JW Cook was the architect /builder in 1924. The rehabilitation architects were GAV Associates.

STOP #6- NORTH – EAST CORNER SAGINAW AND KEARSLEY STREET

◆ in the flat lot north end

STATION #6.1 – University of Michigan Flint

The Flint campus becoming the first campus in the University of Michigan System to be formed outside of the city of Ann Arbor. The original UM building was located on Mott Community College campus. It moved to the River front location in 1977.

Campus Master Plan - Sasaki Architects & Planners
1977 – First Building CROB by Sedgewick & Sellers
1979 - UCEN by Ulrich Franzen and THH
1994 – *Francis Wilson Thomson* Library by Gunnar Birkerts
???? – Murchie Science by Kessler and Associates

STATION #6.2– UM Pavilion

Built as a food court/retail center and modeled after other similar food courts developed around the country in the early 1980s and late 1970s. It now functions like a student union and houses the UM-Flint academic offices, restaurants, and bookstore. Rouse developed this model in Toledo and Baltimore. The Pavilion designed by developer/architect James Rouse, who pattern the design off of the successful and similar development in Baltimore. A near identical market was built in Toledo, OH. (Toledo is now a children's museum). The Flint Pavilion opened in 1985 closing a few years later.

STATION #6.3– Genesee County Savings Bank

In 1917 the Genesee County Savings Bank was expanding and acquired the First National Bank and this new building was built, opening in 1920. It was also known as the 'Bank Branch Two'. Designed by Hodgson Brothers of New York, the Limestone exterior was said to depicts the functionality of the interior uses. The banking room, mezzanine and the first floor are articulated with cornices that emphasize the length of the building. Rental office floors are punctured with large windows admitting natural light into the interior. The top two floors consist of a colonnade around the executive offices. A deep cornice crowns the building. Upon a closer look, the Saginaw Street façade, appears to have undergone remodeling with an Art Modern style being introduced which is not consistent with the Kearsley Street façade.

STATION #6.4– Citizens Bank & the Weather Ball

Headquarters of Michigan’s largest banking institution. Greek Revival design (duplicated for smaller branch locations) opened in 1928

The Weather Ball was installed in 1956, it was not the only weather ball nor the first, but it is unique and definitely a Roadside Attraction today. Through several stylized graphic interpretations it became the corporate symbol and recognized logo for Citizens Bank. First Merit bank recognized a good thing and has kept it part of Flint’s skyline. It was built on site over a four month period. The ball is 15 feet Diameter and 47 feet circumference; 667 feet of neon lighting; 800 sf of Plexiglas. It can be seen for 25 miles and can wind stand winds of 120 miles per hour. It now operates with the technology of 1956, just as it always has; the lights are turned on manually and the color selection is made based on the US weather report.

*When the Weatherball is red
Higher temperatures ahead*

*When the Weatherball is blue
Lower temperature is due*

*Yellow light in the Weatherball
Means there'll be no change at all*

*When colors blink in agitation
There's going to be precipitation*

STOP #7- NORTH –

◆ Riverfront Park between the river and the River Residences Hall

STATION #7.1 – River Front Residences Hall

Slated to be ‘The New Image of Flint’, the horizontal strip windows and brown brick was part of a “Design Criteria” for a downtown master plan for Flint prepared Sasaki (the same design criteria was also used on the MI State Office Building just east of here). River Front Residences Hall was originally design for the Hyatt hotel chain complete with conference facilities and shops when it opened in 1980. A large atrium inside included (these were popularized by John Portman who designed Peachtree Plaza and the Detroit Renaissance Center). After the failure of several hotels in this location, 2009 and 2010 brought redevelopment of the hotel into a housing development for students. Privately developed, it is open to Students from any our Flint’s universities - U of M, Mott, and Kettering University and Baker. In 2011 some of the former hotel areas were also redeveloped to house the U of M School of Business.

STATION #7.2 – Flint River / Flint development history/River Bank Park

We are at the southernmost part of the Flint River, as such, this was the natural stopping point of the Native Americans to pick up the Saginaw Trail. For a shrewd business man like Jacob Smith, it was the natural place to establish a trading post, a point to get the first pick of the best of the furs before the Native Americans headed to Detroit to sell/trade their furs.

Jacob Smith died in 1825 at age 45 at his cabin here in Flint which is believed to have been located near Garland and First Ave. Jacob Smith became close and trusted with the Native Americans, and became instrumental on behalf of the Chippewa's during the treaties of 1807. After this he had more influence with the Chippewa's than anyone, he was the only white trader allowed to visit Neome's Village in Montrose. He was eventually adopted by the Chippewa's and his five children were given Native American names (his wife had died earlier).

Another treaty in 1819 set aside 11 sections of lands for the Native Americans, surrounding the river, 5 of the 11 sections bore the Native American names that had been giving to Jacob Smiths children. When Smith died, 5 sections of land bearing the names of his children became embroiled in a legal dispute that lasted for 40 some years, "Were these sections intended to go the named children or the Chippewa tribal members with the same names?" This tied up the development of the land north of the Flint River so the center of commerce in Flint was established south of the River. The land north of the river lagged in development from the land south of the River, since the beginnings of Flint and has struggled ever since.

The first bridge to cross the river was wood was in 1865 and was installed near Grand Traverse street. The first steel bridge opened 1901.same year as the arches.

The river at this point, was also a source of flooding, which impacted downtown. The army corps of engineers solution was a concrete lining to the river, but over a protest by the Flint citizens, the army corps conceded and this allowed the city to hire Lawrence Halprin to address the flooding. Lawrence Halprin (1916 – 2009) was an influential American Landscape Architect, Designer and teacher whose work can be seen around the world. He became especially known for his designs of urban fountains and water projects. His design for the Flint River Flood Control produced the unique River Bank Park and related fountain that has been described as his most outstanding example of his work.

STATION #7.3 – Saginaw Street Bridge/Carriage Town Pedestrian Bridge

The first bridge across the Flint River was built in 1834 by Jeremiah Davis, who was under government contract. It stood near we are now, until 1848 when replaced. The first bridge ended reliance on Todd's ferry/canoe to ferry people across the river. It also aided in further settlement and development Since that first bridge a series of bridges have been built over the years, the most recent being Saginaw Street, Harrison as part of the flood control project in the mid 1970s and the most recent being the bridge over Garland Street.

For a time the Flint River was being considered to become a Navigation Port of the Great Lakes. The efforts did allow the river to become a means of transporting logs for the Lumber Industry which was Flints first venture into industry. In fact the Flint and Saginaw Navigation Company did care passengers and cargo from Flint to Flushing beginning in March of 1850; but the coming of the Railroads and plank roads (Saginaw Trail and Fenton Road) ended the company and any further talk of ports and canals.

The Steel Truss Pedestrian Bridge linking downtown with Carriage town was designed by THA architects as part of Public Area Site Improvements recognizing Carriage Town history.

STATION #7.4 – Union Bank/Northbank Center

Savings Bank Building is an L-shaped brick building reflecting a commercial interpretation of the Second Renaissance Revival style. It was designed by New York architects Davis, McGrath and Kiesling, who also did Applewood, C.S. Mott's estate. Did I mention that Kiesling was the brother-in-law to C.S. Mott.

The exterior of the building features a three-story base delineated by fluted pilasters and columns of Indiana limestone, granite rustication, and multi-paned windows. The brick is expanded into seven floors of office space with a simple and balanced fenestration framed by granite quoining. The crown includes an eleventh floor with casement windows, a wide copper cornice line punctuated with anthemions and lions' heads, and a recessed twelfth floor. Exterior alterations have been limited to several arrangements of new main entry doors, varying storefront treatments, and the addition of a fire escape and a two-story delivery area.

The Industrial Savings Bank Building, a fine example of the Renaissance Revival style, is significant both because of its association with pioneers of Michigan's automobile industry and as the home of the Industrial Mutual Association (IMA), an early Flint benefit society that provided carriage and later automobile workers with the equivalent of health and life insurance. Walter P. Chrysler, founder of the Chrysler Corporation, Charles W. Nash, who founded the Nash Motor Company that grew to be American Motors Corporation, A.B.C. Hardy, Flint's first automobile manufacturer, and Charles Stewart Mott, the inventor of an auto axle assembly that established his fortune and his position as a philanthropist, were just a few of the people who served as the Industrial Savings Bank's founders, early officers, and members of the board. With the stock market crash of 1929, the bank became the focus of an embezzlement conspiracy that had repercussions throughout the national financial community. The upper stories of the building housed the IMA and served as a center of IMA workers' recreational activities. During the Depression, the facility served as a center for workers' emergency care and assistance. The structure was designed by the firm of Davis, McGrath, and Kiesling of New York City

STATION #7.5– Carriage Town - Factory, Office, Bridge, Neighborhood (GM Birthplace)

Carriage town is a historic district that spans 3 centuries. Its southern boundary is the river, and extends as far west to Grand Travers Street, as far east as Harrison Street, and 5 blocks north to Fifth Avenue. It has played a important role in Flint history beginning with the river the first European settlement, it was the site of Flint's first industry (lumbering), site of Flint's second industry(carriage making Factory 1 the original Road Cart company and also the site of Flint's 3rd industry (automobiles) and is the site of Genesee County's only National Landmark Structure. Tours are also being conducted in Carriage Town.

Former Flint City Hall. Station 2.3



5. CITY HALL, PLINT, MICH.

