

Historic Galesville



Your Tour



By Foot and Bike or Car



Welcome

Galesville, Wisconsin Downtown Historic District



Start on the west side of the public square across from the Gazebo styled bandstand. You are in front of the two story wooden storefront with a large, decorative cornice, now home to the **Past and Present Gifts and Picture Gallery**. The **Treasure Chest** and **The Common Market**, pictured above, are to the south. **Nickles Furniture** is on the southwest corner. **Jackie O's Coffee House** is a place to get coffee and dessert on the east side of the square. **Renaissance Breads and Pastries** is in the 1896 A. H. Czepull Harness Shop. You can get their bread and baked treats at the Common Market. These businesses are all in historic buildings.

Downtown, Ridge Avenue and the Gale College Historic Districts are all on the National Register of Historic Places. Eastside Farm is a site on the National Register of Historic Places. We will point out additional sites on our tour. This booklet will guide you to each historic district, our "Garden of Eden" and other places of historic interest as we tell some of our stories. Look for additional site specific brochures in our shops and some other businesses.

Strike up the Band

Spirited Galesville people erected the bandstand in 1912 as a center of celebration. It is still used on Memorial Day, and musicians play here for Farmers Market on summer Saturdays. The whole square is alive for Apple Affair every first Saturday in October. You're welcome to go up into the bandstand and let your imagination take you to the era of "The Music Man." Share the joy these people had as they marked the progress they saw all around them when they came downtown. Faith, progress and entrepreneurship lived in partnership in the souls of our people as they moved their commercial ventures forward. Those were the days when the most prominent business people of any town would be honored when the church asked them to be Sunday School superintendent. Progressive people founded colleges both to prepare people for faithful living and to discover and use new technology. First generation pioneers Judge George and Gertrude Gale and their friends would have been proud of the faith and development later generations were bringing to Galesville.

Galesville's well preserved, decorative buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflect the wealth that agricultural development and the regional mill brought to our town. Many of the people could well remember wooden sidewalks and storefronts, simple homes and a pioneer life that was a lot harder. We were all sad when the Grover Block burned early in 2005 leaving the vacant building space on the east side. Enjoy your walk around our square. **Additional businesses in this district that serve tourists are Garden of Eatin', Tom's Bar and Mike's Bar. Duffy's Lounge is a block north of the square on Davis St.**

Other businesses in the historic district are **United Auto Supply, Solutions Hair Care, Bank of Galesville and Debra Ray Insurance Agency, Inc. on Hwy. 53; The Galesville Republican on Court Ave.; Critzman Auto Body, Law Office of Robert Longwell, Jr. and Ristow Insurance on Davis St.; and the Law Office of Allan Ohm, Brady's T.T.T. Taxidermy and Galesville Dental on E. Gale Ave.**

Van Slyke Statue Our Garden of Eden Story



Go south along Highway 53 to the Van Slyke statue and park. You will pass **Franciscan Skemp's Galesville Clinic and the Galesville Pharmacy**. Let the **Masonic Lodge**, on the east side and the **Galesville City Building, Galesville Library** and the **Gale Laundromat** on the west side evoke memories of the 1950's and 1960's. The library and Laundromat were originally a movie theater and a restaurant. Movie then ice cream — remember that? This was a rockin' place. You can see that these buildings are distinctive, and they're getting close to the fifty year mark when it's possible to achieve the "historic" designation. That's a scary thought for some of us. You may want to check out the arrowhead collection at the library.

Just past the Masonic Lodge you'll find the park with the Van Slyke Statue at its center. Rev. David O. Van Slyke was the Methodist farmer preacher of the mid to late nineteenth century who gave Galesville our Garden of Eden story. He believed with all his heart that this region is the original, biblical garden. In the age when archeologists were starting to search out the roots of history, nobody had found evidence of the garden anyplace else. His "proof" was the region's configuration of rivers and lush agricultural production. He published a booklet in 1886 to "prove" his point, but the

progressive people of the Victorian era met his argument with skepticism. In later years he carved out his own tombstone and carried it to the top of Pine Cliff Cemetery where he is buried with his generation of pioneers. The statue by Galesville sculptor, Elmer Petersen, portrays Rev. Van Slyke extending his welcome to you with an apple in one hand and the Bible in the other. You can still buy a copy of Van Slyke's booklet in some of our shops.

Mill Road

You may want to turn north on Mill Road to see what's just up the street. Look for **Phoneco** with its telephone museum that reminds us of advances in telecommunications. You can also see the broadcasting tower at the northeast corner of town that is one of the tallest man-made structures in the world. The tower equals the height of the Sears Building in Chicago. The old Davis Mill, located north of Phoneco, burned in 1962. It had produced a well known brand called "Peach Blossom Flour." The present mill for **Andersen Feeds** that has replaced it is the longest running family business in Galesville.

Picture Mill Road as the main thoroughfare into Galesville for a number of years after the city was platted. Development of the public square came later. A train track came along Beaver Creek just to the east of the buildings to serve passengers and shipping. The building where Phoneco is located was the Riverside Hotel. There was a livery stable close by. Farmers who brought grain to be milled could stay there until their feed and flour were ready to take home. Business people came and went. It got even busier when people started coming for fun on Lake Marinuka. The Phoneco museum has pictures to show how the building morphed from a hotel—to the modern factory building that housed Schilling Electric—to Phoneco. Eventually Schilling Electric and other factories located larger plants at the west and south edges of town. The old building on the right as you go back to Van Slyke's little park is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was the Bartlett Blacksmith shop in its earliest days, and it became the Scandinavian Hotel. In 1945 the building became a dairy to bottle milk.



Now come back to the Van Slyke statue, and face east to view the high cliff. When Rev. Van Slyke stood at the top of this cliff, he thought he was at the edge of the biblical garden. Here you get to make a choice. Walk across the Swinging Bridge to High Cliff Park (**Do not jump on the bridge**) or follow Highway 53 back to the bandstand, where you will turn left on Ridge Avenue and walk or drive to the Ridge Avenue Historic District. (See middle of page 8.) Parking is easy to find.

The High Cliff Park Walk through Time at the Garden's Edge

Cross the intersection to the south where you'll find a sign at the park's entrance and see the swinging bridge. This walk through the park along the path and back to the bandstand should take about 20 minutes. Allow more time if you go into the Pine Cliff Cemetery. Cross the swinging bridge into the park and a lush world of nature much like people have known since the beginning of time. One of the sandstone layers is named for Galesville. It starts with these cliffs and trends southeastward to underlie much of Indiana and Kentucky. The upper path at the north end of the park will lead you to a natural grotto. Find it, and let yourself be with God. Native Americans enjoyed the wonder of this place for ages before Europeans came. These surroundings nurtured Chief Decorah. His granddaughter, Marinuka, is buried at the north end of Lake Marinuka, which is named for her.

Beaver Creek Dam Economic Power Source

Lose yourself in the natural foliage as you follow the path from the sandstone grotto to the Beaver Creek Dam. The waterfall over this dam powered the mill that brought Galesville into the progressive era. It generated the first electricity for Galesville. Our town's pioneers and their children embraced advancing technology and the commerce that came with it. They also supported new ideas and educational developments. We've already noted that the old stone mill is gone now. You'll find a sign giving its history farther along this path.

Pine Cliff Cemetery Green Pastures and Still Waters

When you reach the Pine Cliff Cemetery you can find your way to the hilltop for a vista of downtown Galesville next to the green pastures and still waters that still feed our soul. Go to the cemetery gate on Highway 53, follow the short drive into the cemetery and go on up the hill. Turn right after you pass the stand of trees on the hillside, then walk to the top of the cliff. Here lie the pioneers who started this town, founded Gale University and built our churches. (Judge George Gale and his family are buried in a small plot near Old Main in the southwest part of town.) There's no better place to contemplate the dynamic tension between nature and progress than at the edge of "The Garden of Eden."



Lake Marinuka Our Scenic Lakeside

*Follow the sidewalk along Highway 53 to find your way back to the public square. You will get a magnificent view of Lake Marinuka as you cross the highway bridge. Check out the historic pictures on the kiosk at the triangle park. Our time capsule is buried close by. Galesville's historic downtown district is just beyond the **Express Mart**.*



Ridge Avenue Historic District

*Turn west at W. Ridge Avenue then go down beside the lake and continue up to N. 4th St. You may want to drive for this part of the tour so that your car is available to head on out to Old Main. Here you will find Galesville's historic homes, a place for picnics at Cance Park and churches that are both historic and contemporary. You will feel that you are walking through a painting by Norman Rockwell or Thomas Kinkade. This is the neighborhood where people who gave Galesville its thriving businesses made their homes and went to church. Their children played in the park together. Today the old **Clark house is an attractive bed and breakfast**. The house pictured on the next page is the R. Cooper House built in 1866.*



The First Presbyterian, Zion Lutheran and St. Mary's Catholic churches located around this park would all welcome you at worship. The Berean Baptist Church is located four miles north of town to the west of Highway 53. To find Bethel Lutheran Church and Kingdom Hall, take Highway 53 south and cross the main highway at the stop light south of town. Turn right on Winnebago Road. The street becomes McKeeth Road when it bends to the south. You will find Kingdom Hall at the intersection with Church Lane; take Church Lane to the right to Bethel Lutheran. They extend their welcome too.



Galesville, Wisconsin



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Gale College Historic District

*Continue west on W. Ridge Ave. and turn south at S. 9th St. then west on West Gale Ave. You will pass **Sunset Gardens** on the left. When you come to 12th St., turn south, and you will come to the historic Galesville University campus where “Old Main” is located. The name was changed to Gale College in later years. Judge George Gale came to La Crosse with a progressive vision for a university in western Wisconsin. Finding no support there, he came north and founded Trempealeau County and the city of Galesville. Twelve other Wisconsin people joined him in a petition to the Wisconsin legislature for a charter to found Galesville University. The charter was granted in 1854. Judge Gale was elected the first president of the institution, and classes were held at the court house in Galesville. The frame building stood downtown where Express Mart is now. The first principal was Rev. Samuel Fallows, who later became chaplain of a regiment in the Civil War and a popular Episcopal Bishop. The “Main” building was begun in 1859 and completed in 1862. The university held its first classes there at the start of 1863. Education was still important on the home front during the time of the*

deepening Civil War crisis. The building reflects our progressive, pioneer interest in education. The university did have a struggle through the time of the Civil War, and it was necessary for the Methodist Episcopal Church to assume direct control when the war was over.

The Presbyterian General Assembly took control of the university in 1877. The institution petitioned the United States War Department to provide an instructor in military tactics in 1878. The War Department sent Lieutenant John Lincoln Clem. Johnny Clem became a popular instructor. The third floor was added in 1880 to accommodate the program. Johnny Clem was a motherless Ohio boy who started to tag along with the Army at age 9, and he enlisted at very early age. He distinguished himself when he was twelve years old at the Battle of Chickamauga in Georgia, where he was the drummer boy. He killed a Rebel Colonel who was about to capture him. Later in the same battle he was captured with others in his unit but managed to escape in the confusion. Clem was called to another position in 1882, and the program continued for another year with a different instructor sent by the War Department.

Fire gutted the main building in 1884. The bell that could be heard all the way to Trempealeau was destroyed with the roof, but the walls remained standing and solid. People who cared rallied to raise \$10,000 to rebuild the inside, and the school continued its operation.

The school remained under Presbyterian control until 1901 when it was transferred to the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church for \$6,500. The Lutherans closed the school in 1938 because of financial difficulties and later sold the property to the St. Louis Province of the Society of Mary. They began operating it in 1941 to be a novitiate for training young brothers and priests. The novitiate left in 1973, and the order continued to operate it as a retreat center. The City of Galesville purchased the property in 1995, and the Garden of Eden Preservation Society obtained the building in 2000 with a 50 year lease. Presently the building is an historical and community arts center. (*Old Main is several blocks out so you may want to drive.*)

Princess Marinuka's Grave Site

Go back to W. Ridge Avenue and take N. 4th St. to the north, which follows the west shore of Lake Marinuka to the Arctic Springs Supper Club. This is where the **Lions and Lioness Clubs** meet. Turn right on County Road T, and just beyond the supper club is a small trout hatchery fed by the artesian spring, with parking and a shelter close by. These are operated by the **Galesville Volunteer Trout Club**. There is a pond, with handicap accessible fishing, where **you can fish** with the club's encouragement to catch "the big one." Princess Marinuka's grave site is near the shelter.

Return to Ridge Avenue on N. 4th St. Travel at a slow pace so you can catch wonderful views of the lake and the marsh set among bluffs at the edge of town. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Lake Marinuka was a vacation resort with an excursion boat crossing from a pier near downtown Galesville to a party pavilion on the other side. A lot of people came from La Crosse for vacations and good times.

Canning Factory Complex

When you return from Arctic Springs on N. 4th St., turn east on Ridge Ave., to 2nd St., then turn south. Second Street will take you to Mill Road. If you look south from the south end of South 2nd St. you will see the smokestack of the old creamery that used to keep the town supplied with milk, butter and cheese. The historic iron truss bridge on the National Register of Historic Places has been demolished. In its day this Second Street Bridge brought people to the hub of Galesville activity on Mill Road. *Turn right to find the canning factory complex on the right hand side of the road.* A display of the factory's history is located at **Mean Gene's Pizza**. The large canning factory began operation in 1921. The mill, the creamery and the canning factory represent Galesville's place in agricultural development. The canning factory operated until 1981, when

the main building burned. The remaining buildings are now in use for small manufacturing enterprises. A prisoner of war camp was also located in this area during World War II. Barenthin's Gas station building still graces the street east of the canning factory on the north side with a look that belongs to the earlier part of the twentieth century. Straight across from the gas station is Reception Park, where the Lions Club host a celebration every Fourth of July, and fans cheer their ball clubs to victory throughout the season. People have found other uses for the old lumberyard farther east on the south side. Manufacturing plants in the south and west parts of town benefit our present economy.

*Before viewing our last sites you may want to know about two other businesses that serve the needs of visitors. They are the **Sonic Motel and Wason's Supper Club**, located on the north side of Highway 93/54 just past the corner where County Roads T and K meet.*

Take Highway 53 north from downtown Galesville. If you want to take in the fairground with its quaint ticket stand, main building and a red country school, turn to the left on Park Drive.





The Eastside Farm Historic Place

*Continue north on Highway 53 past **Subway and Central Builders Supply** to Silver Creek Road and turn right. **The Piggly Wiggly grocery and the Pig Stop are at the intersection** where you turn.* The brick, Italianate farm house sits on the hillside east of the store. Alex A. Arnold built the 15 room house in 1874. He was an influential Galesville pioneer known for his work with purebred livestock. The home has a three story tower at its entrance from which Mr. Arnold could keep track of what the farm hands were doing and watch for the visitors who would come. Mary Douglas Arnold, his wife, loved it as a place for solitude, and she could see exactly where the workers were when it was time to take lunch or something to drink. The ruby red glass window in the front door is very distinctive. A model of the impressive New York style barn that stood east of the house is in the front room. Tours are offered on Sundays, June through August from 2 to 4 p.m. or call 608-582-2804 to arrange a tour by appointment.

Alex Arnold was one of three vice presidents of the first Trempealeau County Agricultural Society when it started the Trempealeau County Fair in 1859. The first fairs were held on the square in front of the courthouse. In later years Arnold made the land available where the fair is now held. Masons will want to know that he was master of

Decora Lodge #177 F. and A. M. in Galesville in its early years. He also served as state senator for a time. Captain Arnold was very proud of his military service during the Civil War.

A. A. Arnold became a trustee of Galesville University when the Presbyterians assumed control of the school in 1877, and he was instrumental in bringing Lt. Johnny Clem to establish the military program in 1879. The progressive nature of Captain Arnold's farming, his service to his country, his state, his county, the college, his church and his lodge reflect the interests of a lot of small town leaders in his generation. If you go back to your own town and look for the stories, you will find Victorian leaders a lot like Captain Arnold and Judge Gale. They were innovative, defining figures of the Progressive Era. Their story is the song of a time when business leaders held a vision of what the life of their developing town could mean in the larger scheme of things.

The Garden of Eden Preservation Society, formed in 1983, cares for both the Eastside Farm and Old Main.

Decorah Peak

*If you continue on Silver Creek Road you will catch beautiful views of Decorah Peak to the south. Farther on, **The Craft Barn** is on the left. It still has the stanchions for milking cows. The road will cross a hill as it turns south, and you can just take it back to Highway 53 or turn right on Highway 54 and follow it to the intersection where it joins 53. The historical marker on Highway 53 east of Galesville gives information about Decorah Peak. Note **Decorah Valley Gardens** north of Highway 53 as you come back into Galesville.*

Chief Decorah ruled the large Winnebago village situated between Decorah Peak and the Black River near what is now Highway 53 when white settlers came to the region. A Sioux tribe came upon the village to destroy it some years before that. Some say the enemy tribe was Chippewa. Decorah was wounded early in the battle. He found refuge on the peak that is named for him, and he watched as the invaders won the battle. Late in the day Chief Decorah slipped down to the Black River, found a

hidden canoe and paddled to a place on the Mississippi where others of his tribe were camped. He came back with reinforcements as the invading tribe was celebrating its victory, and he won the day with the fresh braves. White settlers picked up the story about the chief who cared so much about his people, and they kept telling it. The Masons gave Decorah's name to their Lodge in Galesville. Princess Marinuka derives her status from being the great chief's granddaughter. The collection of arrowheads and stone tools at the library is gathered from this region, and it reminds us how far back the story goes of people in this garden.

We hope this has been a trip for your soul through our green pastures and beside our still waters. Thank you for sharing our cherished vision of the Garden of Eden, and our journey of progress through time.

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Old Main Web Site: www.oldmain.org

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Gifts

*We want to thank the following businesses
and people who stand in a proud tradition
to offer you this booklet.*

Arctic Springs Supper Club
Bank of Galesville
Co-op Credit Union
Critzman Auto Body
Clark House Bed and Breakfast
Debra Ray Insurance Agency, Inc.
Charles and Becky Forster
Franciscan Skemp Galesville Clinic
Gary's Automotive
Jackie O's Coffee House
Robert Longwell, Attorney
Norwin Company, Inc.
Allen Ohm, Attorney
Past and Present Gifts and Picture Gallery
Marty and Bill Pemberton
Phoneco
Piggly Wiggly/Pig Stop
Renaissance Breads and Pasteries
Jim and Martha Riley
Ristow Insurance
Bob Smith
Bill and Carolyn Spencer
Sunset Gardens
The Common Market
The Craft Barn
The Galesville Republican
The Treasure Chest
Dorothy Twesme
Chris Wason and Sarah Livermore
WestfaliaSurge
Ron and Mary Winn

