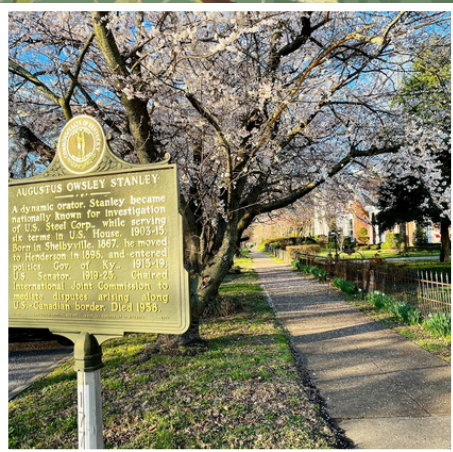


The background of the entire poster is a repeating green floral pattern. In the top left corner, there is a small illustration of a pink rose with green leaves. In the bottom right corner, there is a larger, detailed illustration of two birds perched on a branch with several large pink roses and green leaves. One bird is facing left with its beak open, and the other is facing right.

# HISTORIC HENDERSON

*Downtown Walking Tour*

# Our STORY



Named one of Southern Living Magazine's Top 20 Friendliest Towns in the South, set your sights on Henderson, where delicious food, vibrant festivals, and the comfort and creativity of our river town retreat feed the soul, all with nature and history as its backdrop. Home to legendary naturalist John James Audubon, the "Father of the Blues" W.C. Handy, and others who created beauty, art, commerce, and built lasting legacies, Henderson is where you, too, can discover your nature.

Henderson's unique place in world trade at the close of the 19th century, largely due to the tremendous dark tobacco exporting business that started here, provided the setting for the construction of a rather surprising number of expensive homes, given the size of the community.

A location on the Ohio River above flood level, an abundant timber supply, and fertile land were also attractive to settlers seeking a place to put down their roots.

The properties on this walking tour were chosen because of some unusual or special features of architectural charm or for historic value. They

represent pre-Civil War architecture, charming Italianate architecture, and the fancier asymmetric Victorian style built at the close of the 19th century.

Today, Hendersonians embrace our rich history while looking toward the future. With an appreciation for art, commerce, community, and the nature that inspired our earliest settlers, we welcome you to our river town retreat and know you'll find the historic streets of our downtown district to be just as enchanting as we do.

SO...  
*what will you discover?*

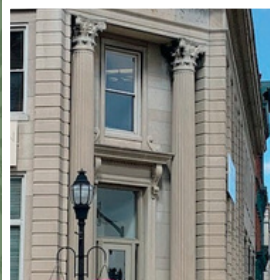




1

## Audubon Mill Park - Riverfront

*(Second St & Water St)* John James Audubon came to Henderson on a flatboat in 1810 to establish a retail business. Some of the stones from the foundation of his mill and the grinding stone are still visible in the park. He was far more interested in birds than business and actually papered the walls of his mill with his drawings. When his business did not prosper, he left Henderson with a determination to paint all the birds of America.



2

## Union Bank & Trust

*(Second St & Main St)* This Bedford stone building was home to Union Bank & Trust Co. and then to Farmer's Bank & Trust. Designed by architects Shoppell & Harris, the building was completed in 1904. Its columned corner entrance is one of the most distinctive architectural features of the building.



3

## Frank G. Schmitt Bldg

*(213 N Main St)* This property provides excellent examples of Mesker Steel. Many buildings of the period had plain fronts, and it became popular to decorate using prefabricated steel store fronts. Because Mesker Steel was an Evansville-based company, many Henderson businesses used their store fronts. The buyer sent building measurements, choice of design, and money to Mesker, and the store front was delivered by rail or boat within two to three weeks.



4

## Farmer's Bank & Trust

*(223 N Main St)* In 1876, Farmer's Bank & Trust, Henderson's oldest bank, was located here. This building is classic Federal style, built from rectangular stone with decorative rounded windows and doorway, featuring corbels above and below the second floor windows.





5

### Gallery Gifts & Bridal

(311 N Main St) Strange things have happened in this home-turned-retail-property. Tenants complained of furniture being moved, ladies' voices heard talking in the night, and water running from upstairs faucets. The store owner dressed mannequins in bridal gowns and veils only to find the veils, originally covering the faces, were "thrown back" overnight. Twelve large fish living in a tank disappeared, one each week, until all 12 were gone. After water from an upstairs bathtub ran down the first floor walls, not once but twice, the bathroom was removed and the owner had a serious conversation with the "spirit" in the building. That seemed to have done the trick, for the time being.



6

### L&N Bed and Breakfast

(327 N Main St) The L&N Bed and Breakfast, as well as three other houses on the same block, were built around 1896 as spec houses. They have similar floor plans, but each has certain features that give it individuality. Each has its own distinctive roof trim, frieze, and brackets. Three have Green River limestone window headers, and two have stained glass panels in the front windows.



7

### Jarvis - Clifford House

(517 N Main St) This Georgian style yellow brick house was built in 1898 by Arthur and Minnie Jarvis. The large front porch still offers the original tile flooring and wood columns. Jarvis had come from England to operate a tobacco factory in Henderson at Third and Water Streets.



8

### Blackwell - Vaughn House

(525 N Main St) Judge Paul Alexander Blackwell built this Chateausque house in the 1890s. He owned a hardware/agricultural business. Although the house has had several owners, much of the original floorplan and trim remain intact. The stained glass and metal ornamentation are original to the home.





9

### Millet Hill - Banna House

(711 N Main St) Built between 1855 and 1862, this house is located on Lot 26 of the original 1797 survey map of Henderson County. Because it is built into a steeply sloped lot, it appears as two-story in front and one in back. The original unattached kitchen was housed in a back building. The house contains a large basement that served as slaves' quarters.



10

### Eisfielder - Dixon House

(733 N Main St) Built in 1874 for \$2,800, this simplified Queen Anne style home has a unique hand-sawn and turned trim above the porch. Frederick Eisfielder, who built this house, co-owned a brewery across the street at the southwest corner of 8th and Main. Old letters found in the cellar of this home, now framed and part of the decor, refer to parties held here to introduce gentlemen from Indiana and Illinois to their potential "Kentucky sweethearts."



11

### Nunn House

(638 N Main St) Shelby Nunn purchased this land for \$2,000 in 1866, built structures and made improvements, then sold it to Col. Jackson McClain in 1871 for \$14,000. It sold at auction to settle the McClain estate in 1898 to Mrs. Bessie Clay whose husband was a distinguished attorney, state senator, and congressman. The 2 1/2 story Italianate home is solid brick with impressive detailing, such as tall arched windows with prominent hoodmolds above them and a tie ring post on the brick sidewalk.



12

### Talbott - Gadiant House

(626 N Main St) When A. H. Talbott had this Italianate home built in 1867, it was the height of fashion for Henderson architecture. During this same year, Main Street was paved from 6th to 8th Street. The home features 13-inch solid brick walls, a "widow's watch," and it has been painted pink since the late 1950s.





13

### Soaper - Fruit House

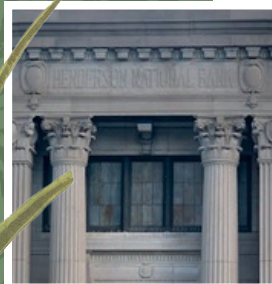
(616 N Main St) This Italianate style home, built in the early 1880s, was home to Fannie Rankin, widow of James Rankin, a prosperous merchant who was mortally wounded by outlaws in 1864 during the Civil War. Although having nothing to do with the attack, two Confederate soldiers were executed for this crime. Before his death, Mr. Rankin pleaded for their release. The original frame structure has been replaced with brick veneer, but the house retains all other original exterior elements. The interior features five iron fireplaces and cherry inlaid floors.



14

### Soaper - Liles House

(612 N Main St) This large Queen Anne brick was built by William Soaper between 1884-1887. All bricks for the house were made on the property. The eyebrow window on the roof repeats the curved motif also used on the porch arcades. In 1991, the home was used for scenes in the Columbia Pictures' 1992 film *A League of Their Own*, starring Geena Davis, Tom Hanks, and Madonna.



15

### The Vault

(208 N Main St) This corner green space was once owned by John James Audubon and was the site of his general store and cabin. It opened as a bank in 1893 and the renovated space retains features original to the bank including the vault, marble fixtures, and chandeliers.

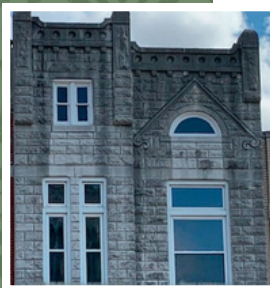


16

### Field & Main Bank

(Corner of Second St & Main St) Completed in 1904, this is the most impressive building of its type in Henderson. It was the city's first so-called "fireproof" building, as there is no wood in the structure. The fifth floor was originally used by The Cumberland Telephone Company, the city's first telephone company. The antique clock on the corner of the building was erected around 1917 by the bank and was restored to working condition in 1989.





17

### Planters State Bank

*(130 N Main St)* Originally built for use as a bank, this distinctive Romanesque design was an attempt to resemble a fortress or castle to emphasize the bank's security. The original atrium has been restored.



18

### Wilkerson Building

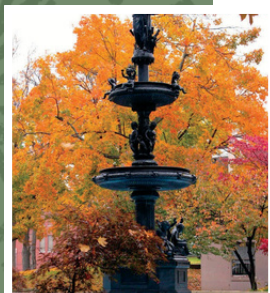
*(114 N Main St)* One of the oldest and largest commercial structures on Main Street, this Victorian Italianate building has been home to a tailor shop, Masonic Hall, and movie theater. The building was built in 1870. The heavy window trim was generally shipped by rail, so it would have been installed after construction of the original Henderson railroad bridge.



19

### Simon's Shoe Store

*(100 N Main St)* Three generations of the Simon family have done business at this corner building built in the 1870s. Jacob, a native of Lithuania, followed two older brothers to Henderson. After working as a door-to-door peddler and in several other business ventures, he opened a shoe store on this corner. He was joined in business by his son, Larry, in 1949. Jacob's grandson, Bruce, joined the business in 1979. Over the years, various businesses have rented space here; today Simon's incorporates three buildings at this corner.



20

### Central Park

*(Center of Washington, Main, Elm and First Streets)* Central Park is believed to be the oldest municipal park west of the Alleghenies. The Transylvania Company, which founded Henderson, provided for it in the town's 1797 plat. This plat was laid out in a series of squares, which accounts for the symmetry of Main and Elm and the downtown cross streets. The original fountain was erected in 1892 and cost \$2,400, while the present fountain, a replica, was erected July 25, 2003.



21

### Stone - Jones House

(117 S Elm St) This Late Victorian style home was built on part of Lot 178 of the original plat of Henderson. The three-story rounded turret is one outstanding feature of the home. The Green River limestone used on the exterior was quarried at Bowling Green, Kentucky. The builder of the home, Clarence Winstead, moved his mistress into the home, hoping that such splendor would encourage Hendersonians to include her in the social life of the day. The ploy did not work; the builder's mistress was never accepted as a "lady."



22

### Perkins - Wilder House

(116 S Elm St) This house was built in 1884 by Capt. Charles G. Perkins, who came to Henderson during the Civil War as the commander of the Union gunboat *Brilliant*. He courted and married Miss Annie Terry in 1863, whose family had settled on this land. He ran the Henderson-Evansville railroad transfer boat until the railroad bridge was completed in 1885.



23

### Ingram - Farris House

(124 S Elm St) Built around 1820 by Wyatt Ingram, who settled in Henderson in 1804, this is one of the oldest houses in Henderson. Mr. Ingram was a successful tobacco merchant who shipped his goods to New Orleans by flatboat. He would ride down with the boat and walk back to Henderson. He made the trip 13 times. Ingram and neighbors built here on Elm rather than on the river because it was higher ground. This house has served as an Episcopal manse and as a popular boarding house.



24

### Dallam - Norment House

(205 S Elm St) This Italianate house was built immediately after the Civil War by Henderson banker and farmer L.C. Dallam. Legend has it that the 12 x 12 foot floored room in the northwest tower was used to signal riverboats. Many interior features are original to the house. The Norment family has lived in the house since 1957.





25

### Powell - Wilder House

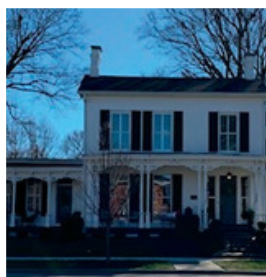
(218 S Elm St) This house, known as the "Governor Powell House," was built around 1818-1820 by Captain Lazarus Powell, father of Lazarus Powell who served as governor of Kentucky from 1851-1855. This two-story Georgian home originally had two large rooms on each floor. The one-story addition on the south side was built by Gov. Powell for his law office. The Powell family recalled the ex-governor pacing back and forth in this room as the nation became embroiled in the Civil War.



26

### Wilson - Eargood House

(226 S Elm St) The three bay two-story section of this home was begun in 1818 and is one of the oldest remaining structures in Henderson. Built by James Wilson, this Federalist style home features a Flemish bond brick pattern. Prior to the Civil War, a single story parlor wing was added, and the front entrance was moved from Clay Street to Elm Street. Wilson's grandson, Young E. Allison, established Henderson's first newspaper, *The Chronicle*.



27

### McCullough - Jameson House

(304 S Main St) This house was built around 1847 as the residence of John McCullough, a Presbyterian, who organized Sunday Schools throughout the South. This house served as the main building of the Henderson Female Seminary, an institution founded "to equip young ladies for society's severest tests."

McCullough's daughter Mary served as principal of the school from 1880-1886.

A fire damaged the interior in 1982; repairs didn't change the basic plan of the house, and most of the woodwork remains original.



28

### Oberdorfer - Christopher House

(235 S Main St) This house was built in 1880 by Hanna Oberdorfer, a German Jew who had come with her husband through the port of New Orleans upriver to Henderson. He ran a hotel here, and after his death she built this house. The meeting to organize the local Jewish congregation was held in her parlor.

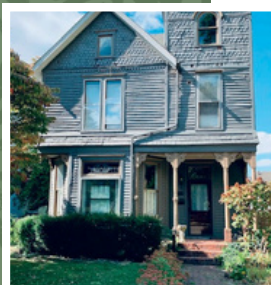




29

### Alves - Mauzey House

(232 S Main St) The original home consisted of two log cabins connected by a dogtrot hallway. The dogtrot was later enclosed making an entrance hall with two large rooms. Logs were covered with clapboard and additional rooms were added. Mary Towles Sasseen Wilson, a Henderson school teacher and originator of the idea of Mother's Day, lived here probably between 1861- 1893. She celebrated Mother's Day in Henderson in 1887 and later published a pamphlet promoting her idea of a national celebration. Ironically, Mary died in childbirth and her child did not survive.



30

### Bach - McCollom House

(211 S Main St) This Victorian shingle house was built in 1891 by J. M. and Henrietta Bach. Professor Bach, a native of Switzerland, came to Henderson in 1883 to take a position as organist at the First Presbyterian Church and as music director for the Henderson Female Seminary. Mrs. Bach taught piano and led the 200-member German Singing Society. Henderson was a music center and was famous for this singing group. Father of the Blues, W. C. Handy, served as the Bach's gardener.



31

### Rash - McDaniel House

(115 S Main) This ornate Italianate two-story brick home was built in 1878 at a cost of \$3,000. The lower floor of the centered three-story square tower serves as the entry for the house. Architectural details include segmental and round-arch windows, brick hoodmolds, stained glass original to the home, and a wooden porch with pierced parapets. The gables are decorated with a sunburst pattern made from cut and sawn wood. This dentil work pattern is the only one of its kind in Henderson.



32

### Henderson Public Library

(101 S Main St) This is the oldest public building in Henderson that is still used for its original purpose. The library opened in 1904 and has undergone three major renovations. The rotunda in the oldest section of the library features four murals depicting the Greek Muses of art, science, music, and literature. Ten original Audubon prints are displayed here. Edward Asher Jonas, publisher of the local newspaper, secured a \$20,000 donation from the Carnegie Foundation to help build the library during a golf outing with Mr. Carnegie.





33

### Klee - Dodson House

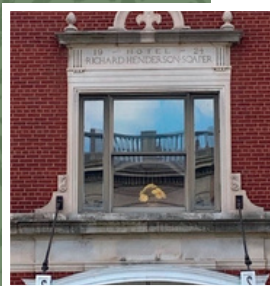
(23 S Main St) William A. Klee built this house at the corner of Washington and Main in 1899 to be convenient to his undertaking business next door. The 2 1/2 story Queen Anne was built on an asymmetrical plan, with stone, wood and terra cotta exterior details of notable quality and with both square and octagonal towers. The double entry door has an excellent sampling of leaded glass.



34

### Homecrafters

(129 N Main St) Built in 1873, this Italianate commercial property features a good sampling of Mesker steel. Almost any combination of metal architectural features could be manufactured by Mesker. Some designs for a whole storefront could be purchased for as little as \$300.



35

### Soaper Hotel

(141 N Main St) In 1924, Richard Henderson Soaper, a tobacco processor, began construction of a modern hotel in downtown Henderson at the cost of \$285,000. This six-story structure with 104 rooms had every convenience of the most modern hotel, including a coffee shop, assembly hall, ballroom, barber shop, drugstore and beauty parlor. During the Civil War, this was the site of James Rankin's general store, and this neoclassical building has been the home of many downtown businesses throughout the years.





Welcome  
Center

Audubon  
Mill Park

1



## Red Banks Park

Clay St.

Washington St.

Second St.

100

Sixth St.

Eighth St.

28

31

34



10

7



29



101

15



1

101



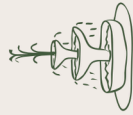
14



1

20

Central  
Park



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