

BEGIN at (1) Galena River Levee and Floodgates:

Built by the Army Corps of Engineers 1948-51, this large earthen levee with gates protects the downtown business district from periodic flooding, the worst of which was in 1937. This flood left up to five feet of water along Main Street.

Continue north on Water Street approximately 2

blocks until you see the **(2) U.S. Customhouse and Post Office** on your left.

The U.S. Customhouse and Post office Is the second oldest continuously owned and operated Post Office in America. The Second floor served as Customhouse and first floor as a Post Office, which is characteristic of the first standardized style to be used by the government throughout the nation. The Post Office is still as solid as when it was built in 1857-1859.

Leaving the U.S. Customhouse and Post Office and continue west down Green Street. **(3)**

DeSoto House Hotel is located on the north side of the street on the corner of Main and Green Streets.

Opened in 1855, the DeSoto is the oldest operating hotel in Illinois. It was named for Hernando DeSoto who discovered the Mississippi. Both Lincoln and Douglas spoke from the balcony, although on separate occasions, and Grant's presidential headquarters were here in 1868. The original structure had five floors and 225 rooms, but the lack of business, foundation settling, and fire insurance problems led to the top two floors being removed in 1880. [\(MORE INFO\)](#)



Continue north up Main Street and cross over Washington Street. The **(4) Newhall Drug Store** is on Main Street just halfway done the block.

Was built in 1843 by Galena physician Horatio Newhall, a Yale graduate, who also published Galena's first newspaper, "miner's Journal." But his most notable work was treating cholera victims during the dreaded 1832 and 1848 outbreaks. His observations about the disease and its spread are considered some of the best of the period. The Newhall drug store has changed hands, but is still in operation as the oldest in Illinois.

After stopping in at Newhall Drug store, continue north on Main Street and you should come across **(5) Hempstead Store**, which is on the same side of the street.

Built in 1846 and named after First Mayor of Galena, Charles Hempstead, who elected in 1841. Prior to this, a board of trustees and a town president governed the town. "City" status was given to Galena by an act of the legislature; Jo Daviess County has one other "city", which is East Dubuque - all other towns in the county are villages. The second floor of the store

Details

Start: Galena River Levee & Floodgates

End: Grant Park Footbridge over the Galena River

Parking available just north of Levee

Total Distance Walked = 2.66 miles

Highlights Historic Galena Including:

- ?? Ulysses S. Grant home
- ?? Jo Daviess County Courthouse
- ?? Washburne home
- ?? Grant Park
- ?? Liberty Engine #1 Firehouse

also housed the law office of John A. Rawlins, one of Galena's nine Civil War generals, who became Grant's Chief of Staff.

Continue up Main Street until you reach **(6) Perry Street**, and take a stroll down the quaint cobblestone street

Also known as a "cobblestone" street, although the stone was laid down as a deterrent to erosion, rather than as a paving stone. Maintaining control of horses and wagons on steep hills was a constant danger in early Galena.

Return to Main Street and continue your walk north until you reach Franklin Street and then turn left. On the corner of Franklin and Bench Street is the **(7) Jo Daviess County Courthouse**.

Started being built in 1839 and took nearly five years to complete amid shortages of materials, labor and finances. Cost overruns pushed final expenditures to nearly twice what was projected. Original structures had a beautiful Greek Revival portico with four large columns but it was removed in 1900 when the Second Empire Front was added. In 1970, 1976 and 2000 additions were added to the rear of the building for public safety facilities. The population of Jo Daviess County when the courthouse was complete was about 15,000. Today it's about 22,000. [\(MORE INFO\)](#)



Now continue south down Bench Street until you reach **(8) Union Baptist Church**, located just a short distance from the Courthouse.

Built in 1854, the church failed to prosper. In the early 1900s a concrete block porch was added, hiding the original front of the building. Today it home to both the Odd Fellows and Masons.

Bench Street is full of churches, and the next church you will come to is the **(9) First Presbyterian Church** located just a short distance down Bench Street.

Built in 1838 (with the front spire added in 1855), this church could well be in New England. In fact, the steeple is said to have been copied from the Old South Church of Boston. The Galena church was established by Rev. Aratus Kent, who was educated at Yale and asked to be sent "to a place so hard that no one else will take it." They sent him to Galena. [\(MORE INFO\)](#)

Continue south on Bench Street and you will come across the **(10) First Methodist Church**.

Designed in 1857 by architect Oliver Marble. Ulysses S. Grant and his family worshipped her upon their arrival in 1860, and if you enter the church their pew clearly identified. Methodist Episcopal churches became part of the United Methodists in the 20th century. The stairway, known locally as the "Firebell Steps," leads up the hill towards Grants pre-war residence, which is now privately owned.

On the corner of Washington Street and Bench Street is the **(11) Liberty Engine #1 Firehouse**.

This 1851 Italianate structure is the oldest of its type in Illinois. It houses the city's original 1854 fire engine which was pulled by horses and pumped by hand.

Just a few steps more down Bench Street is the **(12) Daniel A. Barrows House.**

Home to the Galena Historical Society Museum since 1938, this ornate Italianate was built in 1858 by a prominent businessman who owned a confectionary store, distillery and lumberyard. The architect was William Dennison, who also designed the U.S. Grant Home on Bouthillier Street. A strong Republican and supporter of Lincoln and Grant, Barrows had a window smashed by rocks during a Democratic rally and march down Bench Street in 1864. In 1922, the Odd Fellows purchased the building and added the rear addition as lodge space and community hall. The City of Galena purchased it in 1938; the front two rooms served as City Hall until 1967. The hillside rock terraces were gardens during the 19th century.

And a bit further down Bench Street is **(13) St. Michael Catholic Church.**

Built in 1856 after the previous church had burned to the ground in Galena's worst fire. Designed by Father Samuel Mazzuchelli and completed in 1863. Parish established in 1832 by Father Mazzuchelli and made up largely of Irish working class families.

Continue south on Bench Street a short ways and you will come to the final church on the tour, **(14) Westminster Presbyterian Church.**

Dedicated to worship in 1848, this church organized after a split among the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church at 106 N. Bench Street. Steeple replaced in 2002 with one made of steel and aluminum.

The **(15) Galena Public Library** is in close proximity of the Westminster Presbyterian Church and is also located just south on Bench Street.

Built in the neoclassical style with funds from Andrew Carnegie and the estate of local banker B.F. Felt in 1907, the library was first established in 1894. Felt had stipulated that four of the nine trustees be female. His accomplished daughter, Anna, was one of those four and served until her death in 1953. The first Rules Committee determined no anarchistic, atheistic, or immoral books were to be tolerated.

Follow the curve in the road and then turn right and find the **(16) U.S. Highway 20 Bridge,** which crosses the Galena River.

Since 85% of Galena is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, both state and federal projects must not adversely impact the district. The bridge, built in the 1980s, was required to blend in with the rest of the district. To comply, the piers were faced with limestone, period railings/lights were added and concrete was dyed a buff color to match the native limestone, the latter costing an additional \$27,000.

Once you have crossed the river turn right on Park Avenue until you reach the **(17) Belvedere Mansion.**



This 1857 mansion with the massive cupola (also called belvedere) was built by J. Russell Jones, prominent businessman and part owner of the Galena and Minnesota Packet Steamboat line. Friend of Lincoln and Grant, he was appointed Minister to Belgium after the Civil War. Like many of Galena's wealthy business leaders, he moved to Chicago with the town's decline. The home is open seasonally for tours.

Head back in the direction you just came so that you are on U.S. Hwy 20 and continue east until you reach Third Street. Turn left on Third Street where you will find the **(18) Washburne**



House.

This home started out as a modest one-story house in 1844. Elihu Washburne arrived from Maine in 1840 to practice law. He was elected to the U.S. Congress in 1852 and joined the new Republican Party in 1856. He did more to further Grant's political career than any other - Grant learned of his election to the presidency in 1868 while in the Washburne library.

Washburne briefly served as Secretary of State, and later Minister to France during Grant's Presidency.

The **(19) Aldrich House** is just a short distance away and is located at 900 Third Street.

First part built by stage agent Cyrus Aldrich in 1846. Prominent businessman J. Russell Jones added a large addition in 1853. Lawyer Robert McClellan purchased the property in 1858, served in the State House and Senate. Local tradition holds U.S. Grant trained Galena's first Civil War volunteers on the lawn between here and the Washburne House.

Turn left on Lafayette Street and then right on Park Avenue. Soon you will spot the **(20) Old Train Depot** on the left side of the street.

The original 1857 passenger depot built at a cost of \$8,000. The railroad, which benefited Chicago financial interests, hastened the demise of Galena's river trade after its arrival in 1854. Currently the Old Train Depot serves as the area's Visitor Information Center.

Continue north on Park avenue and turn right on Bouthillier Street where you will find **(21) Ulysses S. Grant Home** located at 500 Bouthillier Street.

The home was given to Grant by residents of Galena as thanks for his war service in 1865, and has been maintained as a memorial to Grant since 1904. Located on Bouthillier Street, the house today is owned by the state of Illinois and managed by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. The home was constructed in 1859 - 1860 and designed by William Dennison. The home was designated a National Historic Landmark on December 19, 1960 and added to the National Register of



Featured Walking Tour Galena, Illinois

Historic Places upon its inception in 1966. It is also an Illinois State Historic Site open to the public and contains many of the original Grant family furnishings.

Backtrack and make your way back down Bouthillier Street until you reach Park Avenue again and turn right. **(22) East Galena Town Hall** is located on the right side of the street.

Built in 1871 this still serves as the official voting and meeting place for residents of East Galena Township.

Cross over Johnson Street and you will find **(23) Grant Park** on the left hand side.



Established in 1891 as a place for the bronze statue of U.S. Grant, who died in 1885. The gazebo, originally called the bandstand, was completed in 1901. The park has been the scene of a multitude of celebrations, orations, picnics and weddings. This Park spreads 3.5 acres along the Galena River on Park Street. The city of Galena also owns and maintains five others parks. For more information on Grant Park or other recreational areas in Galena, please visit: <http://www.cityofgalena.org/recreation.cfm> [Note the cannons, particularly the Civil War Blakely.

It is a rare rifled piece, part of the Confederate battery, which fired on Fort Sumter in 1861, signaling the beginning of the Civil War.]

After strolling through Grant Park you can hop back on the walking path that run through the park and cross over the **(24) Galena River Footbridge**.

In 1982 the footbridge was built, which connected Grant Park to downtown.

Once you have crossed the footbridge head down Water Street to the right and you will end up at the Levee, the first stop on our walking tour. The walking tour you just completed was 2.66 miles, not including any sites that might have peaked your interest that you decided to spend more time at an explore. If you would like more information on sites you have seen today you can stop by the Old Train Depot, where the visitors center is located or visit the Galena History Museum's website: <http://www.galenahistorymuseum.org/>. Thank you for taking Walk Across Illinois' Featured Walk of Galena, and don't forget to log your miles at [www.WalkAcrossIllinois.org!](http://www.WalkAcrossIllinois.org/)