

# Iowa Falls

THE  
"SCENIC CITY"



**HISTORIC TOUR**  
a walking tour  
of our friendly,  
Historic  
Downtown



This walking tour around the historic downtown area of Iowa Falls will explore the properties listed on The National Register of Historic Places.

Iowa Falls was founded in 1856 and grew quickly into a burgeoning frontier town. This was followed by more growth as three railroads intersected here in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Iowa Falls benefited greatly from its many successful and philanthropic citizens. The most prominent of which was E.S. Ellsworth. This name will appear several times during this tour.

Iowa Falls is proud of its heritage and works hard to keep its town an attractive place for people to visit.

## 1 St. Matthew's By-The-Bridge Episcopal Church



This is an example of Tudor revival design. The church designer, Robert Layton, was an industrial arts teacher in the Iowa Falls public schools. He visited his native England in 1912 and made sketches of several village churches. From these sketches he drew plans with assistance from two of his students, Louis and Ernie Welden. The Church was built in 1913. Open to the public by appointment.

## 2 Ellsworth-Jones Building Nissly & Nissly

This building was constructed in 1901 to house the extensive real estate and loan business of E.S. Ellsworth and L.E. Jones. The firm had offices in Boston and Chicago, selling land throughout Iowa and other mid-western states. Inside, there is a three story safe and hand painted murals of Ellsworth properties. Mr. Ellsworth founded the Ellsworth Community College. The building is not open to the public except by appointment.



## 3 Metropolitan Opera House

Built by E.S. Ellsworth in 1899. It was considered the most attractive and complete opera house in the State. It evolved from live performances to films in the



1920's. The stage was used by Ellsworth College area students and for town meetings. In 1994 the building was remodeled by Bob Fridley, an entertainment company owner from Des Moines. The opera house was recently purchased by John Whitesell of Iowa Falls.

## 4 First National Bank Iowa Falls State Bank



Built in 1918, it demonstrates the strong growth in Iowa Falls after the turn of the century. This was the first bank to reopen after the banking collapse in 1932 that ushered in the depression. The rich surface pattern was achieved through the lavish use of terra cotta - a clay product made to look like granite. The interior features a cashiers' counter and side wall of green veined cream colored marble. The bank is open to the public during normal banking hours.

## 5 The Princess Cafe



This is an outstanding example of the 1930's art deco style. Inside you will find the original soda fountain made of Carrara Marble. The booths and display cases are all made of walnut and mahogany woods. Open to the public during normal business hours.

## 6 McClanahan Block Building Raezy Paiges

Built in 1913, it is a good example of simplified commercial design. The store front features a deeply recessed entry flanked by glass display windows. Marble panels are found below the glass and the original prism glass transom is fully revealed. The interior pressed metal ceiling is fully visible. The building is currently occupied by a gift specialties merchant and is open to the public during business hours.



## 7 Women's Relief Corps (W.R.C.)/American Legion Hall The Bernard Firm

The Women's Relief Corps was created to serve the country's veterans. Members were responsible for decorating veterans' graves. In 1898 the Iowa Falls location was completed. The W.R.C. deeded the building to the American Legion.



It served the Legion from the 1920's till the 1980's. It houses a law firm and is not open to the public.

### 8 Sentinel Block Building Edward Jones Investments

The building is a good example of a 1900 romantic revival style commercial building and it illustrates the importance of newspapers in the late 19th and early 20th century. The paper moved to Iowa Falls in 1865. The major feature of the building is the crenellated parapet on the oriel. The building is not open to the public.



### 9 Federal Building U.S. Post Office



The Iowa Falls Post Office (1914), occupies a dominant location across from the city's centrally located Estes Park. The building is reminiscent of "Monticello", the home of President Thomas Jefferson, and the design style was a result of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The facade features four monumental Doric columns, of 30" diameter and 22' high.

Above the entrance is a beautiful Della Robbia type swag. The lobby's white oak, marble floors, vaulted ceiling and boxes are all original. One landscaping element is of note. The U.S. Government purchased the land from Sarah Estes Foster in 1909. Sarah had planted peonies in the south lawn, which are still there today.

### 10 Estes Park Band Shell



The Band Shell (1931), is located in the public square located in the center of town. The park was donated by the town founders and was originally named in honor of pioneer surveyor, engineer and teacher, Jason Estes. The Band Shell is an unusual example of Spanish Colonial Revival design. The north elevation is symmetrical with the stage flanked by projecting bell towers. The South elevation holds the memorial names of our WWII veterans lost in action/pow. The stage area was designed to hold between 50-60 musicians at a time. The Band Shell continues to be a center of entertainment activity, and has been re-named the Bill Riley Band Shell after the famous Iowa Amateur Talent promoter.

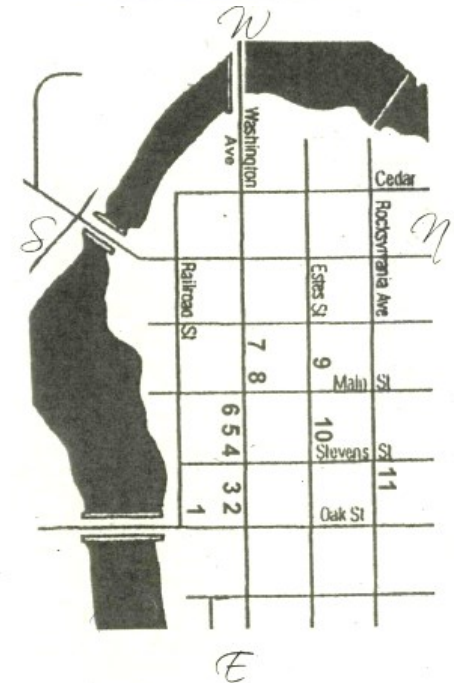
### 11 Carnegie-Ellsworth Public Library Chamber/Main Street Offices Art Exhibit/Historical Museum



The library (1904), is one of 100 public libraries in Iowa constructed with Carnegie grant money. This library also received additional money from E.S. Ellsworth. It is one of the more elaborate buildings of its size and type. The front is dominated by a large and lavish entrance pavilion. The interior features a stained glass dome and oak woodwork is used throughout. The building is currently the headquarters of Chamber/Main Street and houses the Pat Clark Art Exhibit and Historical Museum. The building is open to the public during business hours.

*Iowa Falls*

THE  
"SCENIC CITY"



IOWA FALLS CHAMBER/MAIN STREET  
520 ROCKSYLVANIA AVENUE  
641.648.5549

