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VISIT FORT COLLINS COLORADO

a historic walk

PHOTO: The Linden Hotel in historic old town square by Sam Cox

A One-Hour Tour Through Old Town

Adapted from "Historic Walking Tour - Old Town," by Wayne C. Sundberg, SundDay Research Associates

Legend has it that in the early 1800s, French-Canadian fur traders were caught by a tremendous snowstorm. To lighten their load, they buried large amounts of gun powder ("poudre" in French) in a hiding place ("cache") along the banks of the Cache la Poudre River, which runs through modern-day Fort Collins. In 1862, Camp Collins was built by the 9th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry to protect travelers and settlers along the Colorado branch of the Overland Trail. A flood in June 1864 sent the soldiers to higher ground near present-day downtown. Less than three years later, the fort was abandoned.

The Colorado Central Railroad arrived in 1877, and Fort Collins became a thriving agricultural center. Colorado Agricultural & Mechanical College constructed its first classroom building, later called Old Main, in 1879, further establishing Fort Collins as the economic and cultural center of the region. The school was renamed Colorado State University in 1957.

Thanks to the efforts of local citizens and the City's historic preservation program, visitors can stroll back through time to the town's earliest days. The Old Town district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978; the majority of the buildings on this walking tour are part of national and locally designated historic districts, and Fort Collins was named a Preserve America city by the White House in 2005.

1 ■ The Fort Collins Museum

200 MATHEWS STREET: A 1903 Carnegie Library building is the perfect place to start your Old Town exploration. Constructed of native sandstone, the building served as the Fort Collins Public Library until 1976. Today, the Fort Collins Museum and Discovery Science Center features regional cultural and local history exhibits in three galleries. The beautiful Heritage Courtyard features a plaza, seating areas, xeriscape landscaping and four historic cabins illustrating Fort Collins history.

2 ■ McHugh House & Hospital

202 REMINGTON ST.: Currently home to St. Peter's Fly Shop. Referred to as the "House of the Mayors," this castellated sandstone structure was begun in 1885 by Lars Kemoe, a stone mason, but wasn't completed until 1888. The second owner, C.B. Andrews, added the carriage house. Two other owners, Jessie Harris and Peter J. McHugh, were mayors of Fort Collins. McHugh, a doctor, converted the carriage house into a hospital.

3 ■ Armstrong Hotel

259 S. COLLEGE AVE., FORMERLY THE MOUNTAIN EMPIRE HOTEL: In 1923, architect Arthur Pringle designed this lovely three-

story brick structure for Charles Mantz, who named it for his wife's father, Andrew Armstrong. The hotel's 41 guest rooms and two large dining rooms catered to the newly popular "long-distance automobile tourism." This landmark was restored in 2004, welcoming guests and housing an array of restaurants at street level. Contact: 970-484-3883, TheArmstrongHotel.com

4 ■ Old Post Office

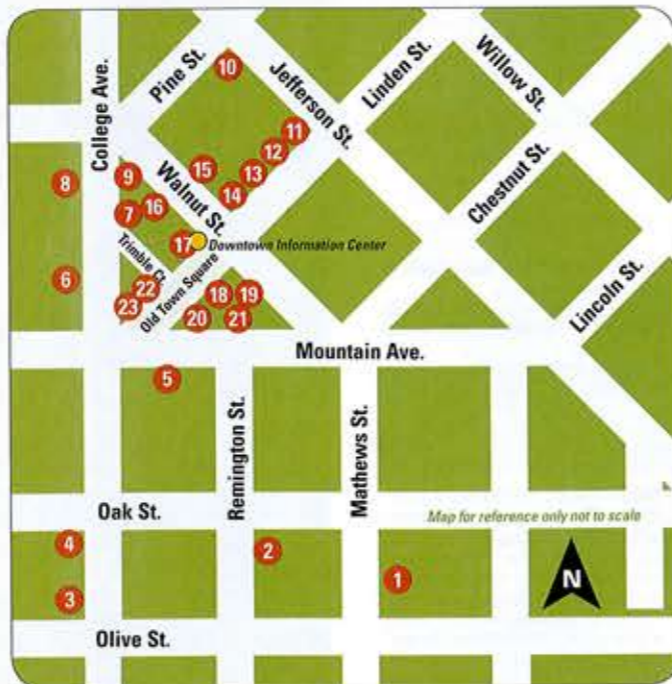
COLLEGE AVE. AT OAK ST.: Currently home to the Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art. This was the first structure to be built as a post office in the town. Constructed in 1912 in the Italian Renaissance style, it occupied the site of the original military cemetery. The post office moved to the new Federal Building in 1972.

5 ■ Kissock Block

117 EAST MOUNTAIN AVE.: Local architect Montezuma Fuller designed and built the original building for A.C. Kissock in 1889. Edwards, Kissock and Abbot, abstractors, were the structure's first occupant. After a fire severely damaged the building in 1895, it was rebuilt.

6 ■ Opera House Block

119 N. COLLEGE AVE.: Built in 1880-81, this building is part of



a business block that originally housed the Welch Dry Goods Store, Franklin Avery's Larimer County Bank and the Windsor Hotel. The structure hosted traveling performers and served as a social center, opera house, courtroom, the scene of political rallies and avenue for high school graduations. In 1917, the building underwent extensive remodel-

ing and the name was changed to "Central Hall."

7 ■ Commercial Bank & Trust

146 N. COLLEGE AVE.: Designed by architect Arthur W. Garbutt, this Classical Revival-style building was completed in 1907. It was one of the first financial institutions to be controlled by owners from outside the community. It

was the location of Home Federal Savings and Loan for many years.

8 ■ Old Miller Bottling Works

173 N. COLLEGE AVE.: Constructed in 1881, this was where Robert Miller bottled "Golden Lager Beer," an early Coors Brewery product.

9 ■ Northern Hotel

172 N. COLLEGE AVE.: Hotels have occupied this site since the early day. First the wooden Agricultural Hotel, then the ornate brick Commercial Hotel stood here. In 1905, a major renovation completely altered the Commercial Hotel. A stained glass dome was installed in the dining room and the name changed to the Northern. The fourth floor was added in 1924, and the Art Deco façade was an alteration of the 1930s. The latest renovation of the Northern began in the 1990s, and in 2001 it reopened as affordable senior housing, with retail establishments on the street level.

10 ■ Jefferson Street Block & Vandewark Building

200 BLOCK OF JEFFERSON ST.: This group of brick buildings was built between 1879 and 1881. Denver architect William Quayle designed this block as well as several other structures. These buildings were part of the main business center of Fort Collins in the 1880s, when Jefferson and Linden streets were the main commercial intersection.

11 ■ Original Stover City Drug Building

261 LINDEN ST.: In 1882, Frank Stover tore down "Old Grout," the original sutlers store from the Fort Collins military post, to make way for his new "City Drug" store. Just as his new store was being completed, it burned to the ground. It took him five years to rebuild a single story building. He added a second story in 1905, giving us the present structure, which was renovated in 1983.

12 ■ Original Poudre Valley Bank Building

235 LINDEN ST.: William Stover and Charles Sheldon built the first story of this structure in 1879. Their banking business, Poudre Valley Bank, moved to the corner of Linden and Walnut streets four years later. The second story and rear first story were added by 1904.

13 ■ Reed-Dauth Block

223 LINDEN ST.: This ornate structure was designed by Denver architect William Quayle in 1881. It had the first plate-glass front in Fort Collins. E.W. Reed, a jeweler, and Louis Dauth, a baker, were the original owners and occupants.

14 ■ Loomis & Andrews Block

250 WALNUT ST.: Abner Loomis and Charles Andrews had this imposing structure built in 1882-83, to house the banking firm of Stover, Sheldon & Co. (Poudre Valley Bank). The Mason occupied the upper two floors for the first few years. Between 1917 and 1983, the Linden Hotel shared the building with many other businesses. It was a keystone structure to the renovation of the Old Town area.

15 ■ Original Fire House & City Hall

232 WALNUT ST.: As the town grew in its early days, the need for a city hall and fire station increased. This building met both those needs when completed in 1882. City offices remained here until 1958, while the fire station stayed until 1973. The bell tower was rebuilt and the facade restored in an extensive renovation project between 1979 and 1982.

16 ■ Whitton Block

15 OLD TOWN SQUARE: In 1905, Irishman John Whitton built this building for his J. Whitton & Co. Clothing, Furnishings, Boots and Shoes. For many years various hotels occupied the second floor. One of the most interesting businesses to occupy the first floor was the Anti-Trust Fruit Store, named for the many anti-trust suits brought against major corporations in the early 1900s.

17 ■ McPherson Block

19 OLD TOWN SQUARE: John McPherson, a Scottish immigrant, erected this block in 1884. It featured windows bordered with stained glass and an ornate pressed metal cornice. Woetz Bros. Clothing Co., an early occupant, featured top-of-the-line merchandise displayed in solid oak wall cases and clothing tables.

18 ■ Miller Block

11 OLD TOWN SQUARE: Frank Miller, a Danish immigrant, came to Fort Collins from the mining town of Black Hawk in 1882. This building, partially completed in 1888 and finished by 1894, was designed to house Miller's Liquor Business and

a dry goods store called The Fair Store, which served the community for 52 years. Miller's Liquor Business disappeared in 1896 when the town went dry.

19 ■ Seckner/Forrester Block

317 WALNUT ST.: Steven H. Seckner and W.L. Forrester built this business block in 1905. Seckner was a prominent photographer in Old Town and his many photos give excellent glimpses of the early town and its citizens. The structure served as his photographic studio.

20 ■ Howard Block

3 OLD TOWN SQUARE: Built around 1902, the second story was added in 1907. In its early years, it housed a grocery store and the office of the Poudre Valley Gas Co. Later, H.C. Bradley's bicycle business occupied the building.

21 ■ J. L. Honstein Block

5 OLD TOWN SQUARE: Currently home to CooperSmith's Pub & Brewing, the Linden Street (plaza) side is the oldest portion of the building, having been constructed in the late 1880s. Albert Damm operated a bakery and grocery out of it for a number of years after 1891. The Mountain Avenue side, dating from 1904, had among its occupants a chiropractor, Emma Aubrey (1913-14), who advertised "No Surgery - No Medicine - No Faith - No Osteopathy."

22 ■ H. A. Crafts Block

25 OLD TOWN SQUARE: Built in 1882-83 as the second home of the Fort Collins Express, the town's first newspaper. Its many early uses included a hardware store, bar and restaurant. One later owner added a bowling alley on the second floor and named the establishment "Ed's Three B's ... Bowling, Billiards and Beer." Later an archery range replaced the bowling alley.

23 ■ Avery Block

106 E. MOUNTAIN AVE.: Completed in 1897, this imposing structure became the home of Franklin Avery's First National Bank. Avery was responsible for laying out the city's wide streets when the town was established in 1873. The Avery family home at 328 W. Mountain Ave. was the first structure in the city to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

