

## Elizabethtown History

Elizabethtown was settled about 1779, when pioneers built three forts in the area. It was designated as Elizabeth Town in 1797 when lots and streets were laid out by one of the original settlers, Colonel Andrew Hynes. The town was named for his wife Elizabeth.

The Hardin County Courthouse currently stands in the center of the town square. The building was erected in 1934 after its predecessor, which stood for more than fifty years, was destroyed by fire. Its Palladian window and Corinthian columns are interesting features. The downtown area from Mulberry Street to Quince Alley, along Dixie Avenue and the Public Square, constitutes a historic district and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Genealogists visiting the community may find reference material either at the Brown-Pusey House, the Hardin County Library or the Elizabethtown Community and Technical College Library. A day in Elizabethtown is never enough to visit all the attractions, so plan to remain overnight.



*Elizabethtown  
Tourism &  
Convention  
Bureau*

1030 North Mulberry Street  
Elizabethtown, Kentucky 42701-2183  
(270) 765-2175 or 1-800-437-0092

[www.TourEtown.com](http://www.TourEtown.com)

E-mail [reception@TourEtown.com](mailto:reception@TourEtown.com)



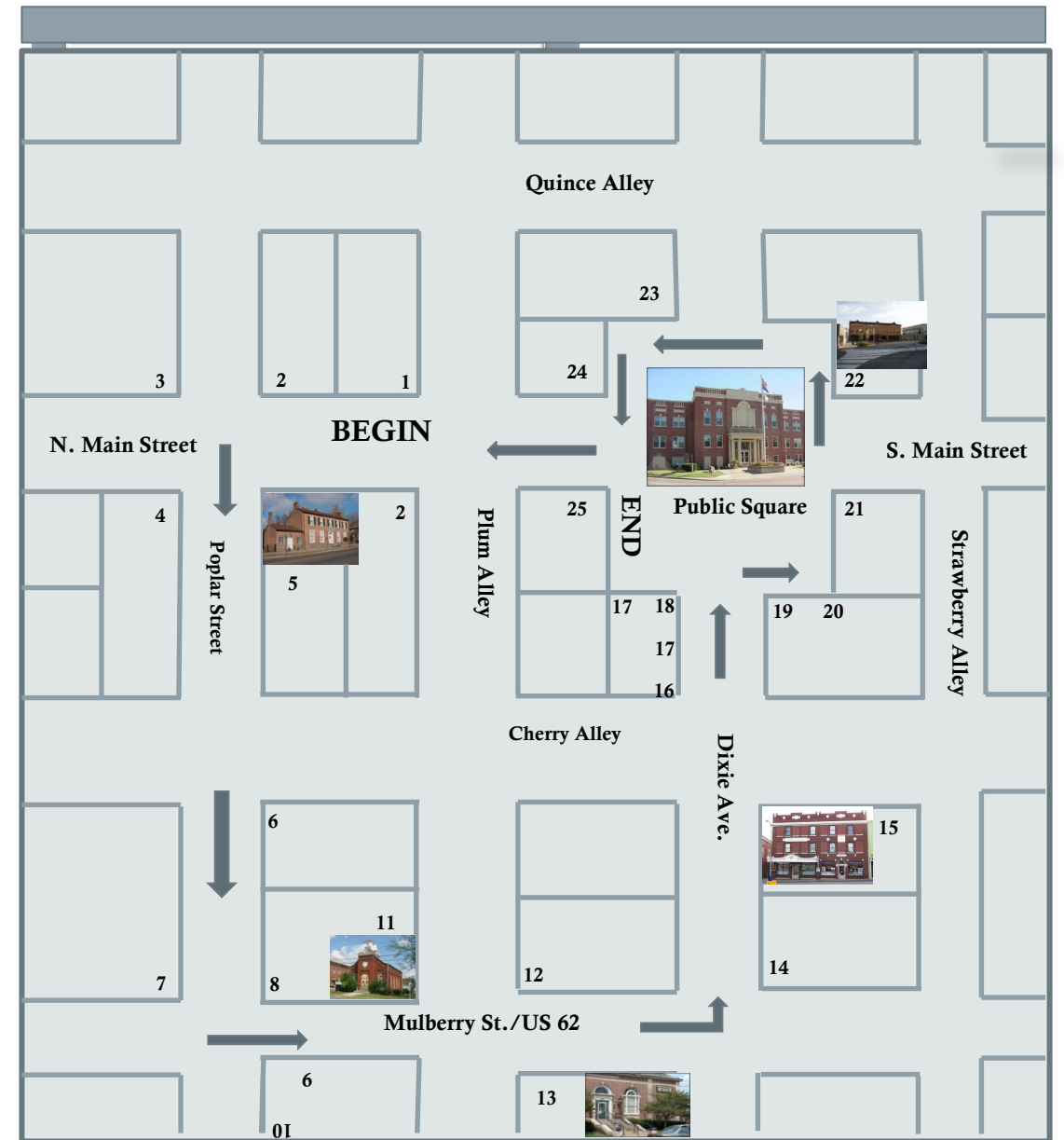
## Elizabethtown Tourism & Convention Bureau



## Self-Guided Historic Walking Tour of Elizabethtown



Special costumed character tours each Thursday, 7 p.m. on the Square during summer months. Call (270-982-2209)



Our tour begins on the corner of North Main and Plum Alley and ends on the Public Square. Parking is available on both sides of Cherry Alley and around the downtown square. Please use crosswalks while crossing the street. Enjoy the tour!



**#1.** 117 North Main St.: On this site stood a large log house where, on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1819, Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Johnston were married. The house was purchased in 1835 by Dr. Harvey Slaughter and remodeled into one of the most attractive in town. It was destroyed about 1920.

**#2.** 122 & 127 North Main St.: These are examples of attractive residences built before World War I. Note the iron fence, which is the original and characteristic of the period.

**#3.** 201 North Main St: In 1802, Major Benjamin Helm built on this site the first brick building in town as his residence. Bricks were burned on the place and planks were sawed at water mills or whip sawed by his hand. Major Helm rode 90 miles to Lexington for wrought shingle nails: he carried 30 pounds of them back in his saddlebags. In 1822, it became the home of Samuel Haycraft Jr., the local historian who wrote History of Elizabethtown and its surroundings. The original building burned in 1883. The present structure, built in 1886, stands on a portion of the original foundation.

**#4.** 202 North Main St.: This old house, which is built of half timber and brick noggin, was constructed between 1818 and 1824. It is probably the only house ever constructed in this manner in Elizabethtown. Jonathan Hills, who came from Virginia, purchased the property in 1824, It was owned and occupied by his descendants until 1971.

**#5.** 128 North Main St.: This brick building was erected in 1825 by John Y. Hill as his residence. It is a very conservative style of colonial architecture, standing midway between the Federal and the Greek revival periods. The eaves, which are of curved brick, are very unusual.



About 1840, Hill made some additions and converted the building into a hotel called The Hill House. It has figured prominently in the life of the town. During her second stopover in 1851, Jenny Lind sang from the steps in response to popular requests. General George

Armstrong Custer boarded at The Hill House during his stay here in 1871-1873. Troops of Custer's Seventh Cavalry occupied several other areas in Elizabethtown during their stay here.

In 1923, Mrs. Drs. William A. Pusey and Brown Pusey purchased the property, developed it into a community house and gave it in trust to the town. The garden is a popular spot for summer weddings and receptions. An excellent history and genealogy library is maintained here. The building is open to the public.

**#6.** 110 West Poplar St.: This church has stood since 1834 when it was built by John Y. Hill for the Severns Valley Baptist congregation. The pilasters, characteristic of the Greek Revival period, are a unique feature of the building. It has undergone extensive remodeling: the steeple is a later addition. Until the time of the Civil War, white and black members (slaves) worshipped together. The building at that time had a side entrance for the slaves. In 1897, it was sold to the First Baptist Church, and, in turn, to the Riasok Shrine Club in 1971.



**#7.** 115 West Poplar St.: This residence was built about 1830, and was home of the Jacob Warren LaRue family. Mrs. LaRue was Eliza Helm, sister of Governor John L. Helm. This house, which has had some additions, is in an attractive state of preservation; Eaves and window treatments are characteristics of the style and craftsmanship of the 1830's.

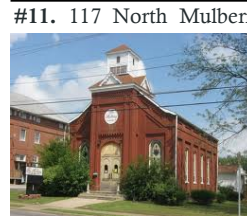
**#8.** 125 North Mulberry: The Masonic Temple was built in 1913 at a cost of \$20,000. Features are the brick inlays, probably standing for the letter "M". The attic windows are characteristic of the classical style immediately prior to World War I. It is the home of all affiliated Masonic bodies.



**#9.** 202 West Poplar St.: Christ Episcopal Church was built about 1850. The original building is virtually unchanged except for the bell tower, which was added in 1878. The parish hall, which adjoins, is a recent addition. The pews within the church were made from the original benches.



**#10.** 206 Poplar St.: This house was built between 1835 and 1840. It was the home of Judge William D. Vertrees, a Mexican War veteran and his family. Mrs. Vertrees was the first music teacher in town.



**#11.** 117 North Mulberry St.: In the 1860's a serious split occurred among the members of the local Presbyterian Church over the question of slavery. The anti-slavery faction withdrew in 1868 and erected this building as its house of worship. In 1883, the dissenters returned to their parent church, and this building was sold to the African Methodist Episcopal congregation for the sum of \$770. It was named Embry Chapel in honor of their Bishop J.C. Embry. It is currently home to Iglesia La Vina Church

**#12.** 109 North Mulberry St.: This is the building in which Luke B. Schmidt, who came to Elizabethtown in 1920, started the first Coca-Cola bottling works in the area.

**#13.** 201 West Dixie Ave.: The Hardin County Library building was constructed in 1931, during the presidency of Herbert Hoover, for use as the Elizabethtown Post Office. The building is of attractive proportions. The style is a combination of the Georgian and the Classical, and the outstanding features are the arched windows. Note also the pilasters, James Wetmore, architect for this building, also designed the Federal Triangle in Washington D.C. and other post office buildings throughout



the country. The building now houses the Hardin County History Museum.

**#14.** 134 West Dixie Ave.: This large two-story building, located at the corner of West Dixie and South Mulberry, which was built about 1840, is one of the older houses in the downtown area. It was built as a residence, and was badly damaged in the fire of August 1869. It was rebuilt by Sanford J. Poston and remains largely unchanged from a century ago. Note the attractive relationship of the main doorway and the high windows.

**#15.** 114 West Dixie Ave.: The Taylor Hotel, built in 1930, remains relatively unchanged from its original design. Of interest are the inlays on the eaves and the front of the building.



**#16.** 111 West Dixie Ave.: The City Hall (now the Chamber of Commerce) was built in 1906. It has been remodeled.

**#17.** 107 West Dixie Ave.: This wrap-around building with an identical entrance at 35 Public Square, was built in 1888. The cast iron façade, unique in Elizabethtown, remains essentially unchanged since the turn of the century. On the interior, the metal ceiling and the floor plan are also essentially unchanged. The interior cabinetry reflects the art-deco style of the 1932's.

**#18.** Corner Public Square and West Dixie Ave.: This building was erected in 1887 as the home of the Bank of Elizabethtown. In 1911, that bank was merged with the first National Bank and became the first Hardin National Bank. A cannonball fired into town by Morgan's Raiders in 1862 was imbedded in the wall of the building formerly on this site. It was replaced in the wall of the present building when it was reconstructed.

**#19.** 102 West Dixie Ave.: This building was erected in 1921 as the main office of the First Hardin Bank.

**#20.** 45 Public Square: This building was erected ca. 1875 by Phillip Arnold as a home for his banking business. The exterior has undergone some renovation, but the bank vault is still intact in the interior.

**#21.** 52 Public Square: The Gilded Age Building was built in 1877 by Phillip Arnold, who was

widely known for his connection with the diamond fraud of the 1870's, built the Gilded Age Building in 1877. This has been a landmark in the town's business life for over a century. The original character of the building is somewhat preserved along its sidewalk.

**#22.** 63 Public Square: The Joplin Hotel Was built in 1923. It has been remodeled into apartments for the elderly. Worthy of note are the portico and the brickwork around the doorway. This is the site of the Chalfin House (log) and later the Showers House, the most pretentious hotel in the town until it burned in May 1918.



**#23.** 2 Public Square: This building at the corner of the Square and East Dixie Ave. was erected shortly after the fire of 1887. An earlier building, destroyed in that fire, was a three-story business house of John B. Helm, used later as a residence and a storeroom. It was damaged by cannon fire by Morgan's Raiders in 1862.

**#24.** 14-20 Public Square: Hardin County Government Complex: This block of buildings was acquired in 1987 by Hardin County for use as offices for county officials.

The Stewart Building (red brick) was built in 1907. The ground floor was formerly used for retail stores. The Stewart Opera House (second and third floors) was the scene of political gatherings, entertainment and other public gatherings. The auditorium and stage area have been transformed into offices in a manner sympathetic with the original design.

The Helm Building (white brick), many times remodeled, was erected by Ben Helm and occupied by Helm and Duff Green as merchants until 1817, and after that by various retail establishments. The rear section of this building along Plum Alley is probably the oldest business building in town.

**#25.** 23 Public Square: On this corner of the Public Square was located "Sign of the Lion" Tavern, built about 1798. In the early days, it was the site for the meeting of the town's Board of Trustees and other important gatherings. The hotel at this site was operated under different names for many years, among them the Eagle House, The Smith Hotel and The Lion Hotel. Jinny Lind stayed here.