

Walks Through History, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Main Street Eureka Springs

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By: Holly Hope



Introduction:

Welcome I am Holly Hope, Special Projects Historian with the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Thank you to Main Street Eureka Springs for sponsoring our tour today. Also, thank you to Mayor Butch Berry for opening the courthouse for us and to our volunteers from the City of Eureka Springs Bob Thomas and Melissa Greene for assisting us. Jared Craig from the AHPP and Riley Hope will also be assisting so watch for them. Thank you also to Mr. John Cross and the Eureka Springs Historical Museum for making their archival information available to me for the tour today.

We are touring the Main Street area of the National Register listed Eureka Springs Historic District with the concentration on commercial buildings of Main Street.

We will head from the courthouse on this side of the road to the Historical museum and then backtrack, staying on this side down to N Main. We will travel about 3/10ths of a mile to Gadd Springs.

From there we can continue down to the intersection and view the Round house, the Power Plant or ice house and the Train Depot. If you wish to keep walking down to the train depot that will make it a little over a mile one way. It is not a loop so you will have to walk back up to the point of origin, making it a 2 mile walk. From Gadd Spring it is about 7/10ths of a mile.

The modern attractions of Eureka Springs are obvious to those who visit here in the 21st century. The beauty of the hills, the historic architecture, art, music and shopping, but in the 19th century it was one thing that drew settlers to the area – and that was water. Not just water to drink, but water that was thought to offer a cure to those who couldn't get help from medicine; or as author Joyce Zeller described it, those who had been offered little more than a cure “somewhere between folklore, faith healing and superstition.”

The formation of Eureka Springs evolved from the discovery of multiple natural springs. The count of those documented is 62, of which about 12 have been restored and are accessible. One spring in particular, Basin Spring was the catalyst for the development of the town. Prior to its discovery, this was an extremely remote area. The woods you see today were more jungle-like in the 19th century and were described as impenetrable; add to that the wildlife and primitive trails through the woods and hills and you can see why it was said that a trip to the spring from Berryville could take all day; figuring in a detour at certain times to cross the Kings River, which had no bridge until 1931.

A doctor named Alva Jackson from Missouri is credited with discovering the Basin Spring on a hunting trip to the area circa 1854. Dr. Jackson's son was suffering from an eye condition and when he got dirt in his eyes his father urged him to wash them out with the water from the spring. The infection cleared up, which Dr. Jackson attributed to the water and which inspired him to take some of the spring water home and market it as “Dr. Jackson's Eye Water.”

Even though he was selling it in Missouri, he kept the location of the spring a secret until after the end of the Civil War. At that time the doctor brought wounded veterans to an overhang above the spring to treat them in a makeshift hospital. Still, this was not the beginning of the boom times for Eureka Springs.

This didn't occur until 1879. In that year Dr. Jackson persuaded his friend, Judge C. Burton Saunders of Berryville, to go to the spring to cure erysipelas, a skin infection. Saunders reported that because of the water his infection was cured and to top it off, his grey hair returned to black and he lost 33 pounds. This was enough for Saunders and his family to relocate to the spring and build a cabin on the site, making them the first residents in the area.

Word was spreading quickly that there was a healing spring in Northwest Arkansas. Even though the area was remote the state of medicine at the time contributed to the quick transmission of the news. People were not getting the relief they needed from the forms of medicine available. There were also a lot of Civil War veterans suffering from diseases and debilitating conditions resulting from bullet wounds and lack of sterile instruments, so people were desperate.

Because of this, in 1879, 20 families were soon camped at the site in tents or shacks. At that point the name of Eureka Springs was decided on for the future town. By 1880 there was a large population of people living around the spring and besides those camping, there were 500 dwellings that could be called houses. Boardinghouses and shacks were placed on any vacant land. There were no boundaries, lot lines or streets so houses faced every direction.

This gave rise to insecurity about who owned what. The Federal Homestead Act stated that anyone could file a claim to a piece of surveyed land, pay one dollar, receive a receipt and put up

a dwelling and if they lived there it was considered theirs. Because Eureka Springs had received so much attention, people besides those looking for a cure showed up. This included those looking to profit from the cure. Among them were timber interests, miners and speculators who were buying up as much land as they could in order to make a future profit.

At this point, it was recognized that there was a need for organization and protection of the town site. The first town committee met in October 1879 and petitioned the county to incorporate as a town. The new City Council had previously appointed Isaac Newton Armstrong of Benton County to survey 40 X 40 lots and 30 foot wide streets with 80 feet between them. People followed Armstrong around and as soon as a lot was surveyed they paid a dollar and were recorded as the owner. Fifteen hundred lots were surveyed by the end of 1879 and Eureka was granted incorporation in 1880.

This sounds like things were falling in place; however, the opposite was true.

Because Armstrong was a bit of a thief he sold the same lots to several different people before being leaving town. This added to a growing dispute over who actually owned the land. It took five years for the disputes to be settled.¹

Before incorporation, speculators filed homestead claims at the land office in Harrison for any land that included a spring. Prospectors moved in also, filing for mineral rights in the town, which caused friction between the original settlers and the earlier speculators. So you had three groups vying for the town site in 1880. The early speculators were claiming that the land was agricultural and the miners claimed the land was mineral in character, while the residents were interested in protecting their claims and the waters. In that year the federal land office in Harrison designated some of the town as mineral. Because of these issues the town still had no corporate existence. It also meant that no taxes were being collected so sanitary issues and improvements were not being addressed.

In 1881 Eureka Springs became a city of the first class with a population of 5,000. This granted the city more authority to govern; however at the same time the land office would not officially grant the town site application until the legal problems over classification of the site were settled. In the meantime, the residents and the City Council did the best they could, whether it was considered legal or not, by passing ordinances to protect the springs, collect revenue and appoint a Board of Health. In 1882 the Secretary of the Interior reversed the decision of the office in Harrison, declared the land agricultural and directed the case to the General Land Office to decide whether a community was in place before the farmers or the miners came to the area.

The new mayor of Eureka Springs, John Carroll went to Washington D.C. in 1881 to make the case for the citizens' town site claim. He accomplished a determination that the agriculturalists were not entitled to their claim but the mineral claim was allowed; however he remained

¹ Joyce Zeller, "Hidden History of Eureka Springs," (The History Press: Charleston, London, 2011), 12-14, 17-25.

optimistic that the residents would get their application stamped because the miners had not received a payout on their claims.²

As all this was transpiring another group surfaced that was eager to get a piece of Eureka. This group was led by Powell Clayton, governor of Arkansas from 1868 to 1871 and U.S. Senator from 1871 to 1877. Clayton moved to Eureka Springs after he retired in 1882. At this point the town didn't really have a clear identity - the struggle just to become a town was what had been occupying the residents. Clayton recognized this shortcoming and he and his partners stepped in and began to mold Eureka Springs into a town with an identity and potential. In 1884 Clayton formed the Eureka Improvement Company and joined the legal battle over the town site title. The improvement company began proceedings in the U.S. Court of the Western District of Arkansas to determine the outcome of the town-site title. A compromise was entered into in a meeting between Mayor Carroll and Clayton's group and an official decree was handed down by the United States District Court on April 6, 1885. It stated that Eureka Springs won the right to proceed as a city and the improvement company was granted franchises to establish a gas works, an electric company, an electric street railway and the stipulation that all unclaimed property would revert without compensation to the Eureka Improvement Company after a certain period of time.

In February, 1885, an act of Congress deeded 320 acres to the city of Eureka Springs with authority to dispose of the land as it saw fit. Prior to moving to Eureka Springs, Clayton had acquired experience with incorporating small towns. His vision for Eureka Springs was that of a luxury resort, catering to the beautiful people and offering the type of amenities that larger towns enjoyed. He expressed his intentions for the town as such – "Eureka Springs, one day, will be a magnificent city with beautiful drives and country clubs on a scale beyond belief." He set to work beginning with the transportation issue. His experience told him that current access to the town was not conducive to bringing such people to the waters.³

There were no hard surfaced roads in Northwest Arkansas and only a few miles of graded roads. The only access was an hours-long coach, wagon or horseback ride or walking through the mountains. So, as he and his partners were invested in railroads, it was logical to him that the first improvement project for Eureka Springs should be a passenger railroad. The St. Louis, San Francisco Railroad from Springfield, Missouri, had reached the Mo-AR border by 1880. But it still took five hours to reach Eureka Springs by coach. Clayton filed articles of consolidation with the Mo and AR portions of a proposed line to Eureka Springs and formed the Eureka Springs Railway, which reached the town in 1883. Needless to say this was a major assist to the economy and its reputation as a tourist destination.⁴

² June Westphal, Catharine Osterhage, "A Fame Not Easily Forgotten; An Autobiography of Eureka Springs," (River Road Press: Conway, 1970), 21-22; Charles Cutter, "Cutter's Guide to the Eureka Springs of Arkansas," (Cutter and Trump: St. Louis, Mo, 1884), 68.

³ Zeller, 24-25, 27, 29, 37-38.

⁴ Edwin Tolle, "The Eureka Springs Railway: A Short-line Railroad to a Little Town: As it Is," (Self-published, 1992), online at http://books.eurekaspringshistory.com/es_railway.htm ; Zeller, 29.

In this era taking the baths was a popular vacation agenda, and the improvement company and railroad company catered to those wealthier groups who participated. Tally-hos, large wagons with liveried drivers, would meet visitors at the railroad station to be dropped off at the numerous hotels in town or to be taken on excursions in the hills. Increased numbers of tourists and residents improved Eureka's civic development, which also benefitted Clayton and his partners. The improvement company bought a rock quarry near the town of Beaver, which supplied demand for rock retaining walls and new construction.⁵

In the earlier compromise agreement between the improvement company and the city they agreed that the company would get the option on operating streetcar lines and gas lines for 50 years. They created the Interstate Gas Company in 1885 and the city was supplied with gaslights. They also created the Eureka Springs Electric Light and Street Railway Company in 1891, which received a franchise to build a power plant. The remains of the power plant still stand at the end of Main Street.

Clayton next was appointed to a board of commissioners charged with developing a water system. In 1894 bonds were issued to build a reservoir and waterworks at Bass Lake and install mains and fire plugs. Other municipal improvements for Eureka Springs were the creation of a board of health, a city sewage disposal system, wooden sidewalks and pedestrian bridges and the construction of the Crescent Hotel in 1897.⁶ In 1888 the town received a force-pump appliance to bring water from Arsenic Spring through steam pumps to a standpipe, which still stands in the parking lot of the Best Western Inn of the Ozarks. In 1895 a water system was in place and the town had an operational municipal fire department and 3 hose companies. So, under Powell Clayton's influence from 1885 to 1910, the town emerged from a scattered group of shacks with no sanitary services or passable roads to a spa town that enjoyed city services and displayed elegant Victorian stone and frame architecture.

An example of such improved architecture is the building we're meeting in today.

44 S Main - In 1880 when Eureka Springs was incorporated, the only courthouse was in Berryville. Because of the difficulty in access from Eureka Springs to Berryville the residents petitioned for a courthouse in town. The General Assembly enacted legislation in 1883 for the creation of the Western Judicial District of Carroll County. Court was held in a rented room until 1906, when Mayor Claude Fuller and the residents began to feel they needed a more substantial courthouse. In order to do that the town had to get all members of the quorum court to approve an appropriation for construction. The night before the appropriation was to be presented to the court the mayor found that two members were not in attendance so he sent the chief of police of Eureka Springs out with two horses to find the men and get them to Berryville. The vote for the appropriation was tied, but the tie was broken by a friend of Fullers' and the town provided \$2,500, which secured the courthouse and allowed the city ownership of the bottom floor with

⁵ "The Complete Map & Guide to Eureka Springs," (Crescent Park Press: Eureka Springs, 1979); Zeller, 34-35.

⁶ Zeller, 34; Westphal, "Eureka Springs: City of Healing Waters," (The History Press: Charleston, SC, 2012).

the upper two floors used for county business.⁷ The courthouse was designed in the Italianate style by William Octavos Perkins and Sons and was completed in 1908.

Perkins designed several homes and commercial structures in Eureka Springs.

Italianate architecture is displayed in the use of narrow arched windows, wide eaves supported by decorative brackets and the central tower. The original tower was destroyed by fire and was replaced in 2001.

Today you'll see a lot of changes in architectural character and building uses that indicate how Eureka Springs evolved. Luckily, as we walk you're going to be able to see remainders of eras of development, which help to connect the different stories of the town that I'll tell you about today.

The main forms of transit in 1891 were mule-drawn streetcars, which evolved to electric streetcars in 1898. These types of transportation and Clayton's railroad modernized the town and influenced what kind of businesses Main Street held. At the turn of the century Main Street went through another transformation. By 1917 there were 25 Eureka Springs residents who owned cars. Increasing car use was tied to the process of changes in Eureka Springs, economically, culturally and architecturally.

Besides securing Eureka's new courthouse, Mayor Claude Fuller arranged a bond issue to raise money for paving streets. Up to this point Eureka Springs had no paved roads but under Fuller five miles of road were paved, including all of Main to the train depot. Fuller also took advantage of a state law allowing the Department of Transportation to build highways through towns if that town paid half. Fuller was able to get the state to designate Main Street as Arkansas Highway 23 and then persuaded the state to redeem all the bonds so the paving came at no cost to the citizens. Fuller was elected to Congress in 1928 but he did not forget Eureka Springs. He knew that the attraction of the spring waters was waning and Eureka Springs needed to be transformed from a health spa to a new type of tourist destination. He was not unlike Powell Clayton in that he knew access was important to the growth of a town. He also knew that the auto was part of a sea change in tourism and a road that connected Eureka Springs to other parts of the United States would be a necessary item. He began with obtaining convict labor from the state to construct a road to Eureka Springs.

What is now U.S. 62 had begun as a logging road that led to timber mills at the top of Main Street. Roads were originally privately maintained and they had names rather than numbers. U.S. 62. was known as the Ozark Trail and the Ozark Skyway. It was also part of the Jefferson Highway from New Orleans to Winnipeg. In the 1930s the Transcontinental Highway System was passed by the legislature and it became U.S. 62. So Eureka Springs was literally put on the map with more convenient access.⁸ This also meant that those street cars and horse drawn tally hoes were being replaced with busses and cars. The railroad was less of a moneymaker because freight and passenger revenue had fallen off. At this point the town began to transform itself into

⁷ Zeller, 86.

⁸ Zeller, 86-87, 89; Glenna Booth, "Eureka Springs Arkansas: Eureka Springs Historic Street Vignettes," CD, (Eureka Springs Historical Museum: Eureka Springs, AR, 2013).

a destination for auto tourists with buildings on Main Street that catered to cars rather than wagon yards and livery stables.

We're going to head up the street to the area of the Historical Museum. After we finish in that area, we'll stay on this side of the road and backtrack to the north on Main.

The Main Street you see today is very different in architectural character from the early 19th century Main Street. As I mentioned, Eureka Springs was filled with wooden structures in the beginning; wooden houses and wooden businesses and wooden sidewalks. Of course, this is fodder for fires, which had a major impact on commercial construction.

At the beginning of the boom years a road was cleared in the area of what is now Main Street for the construction of commercial buildings and this became the business nucleus of the town. In 1881 there were 57 boardinghouses, one bank, 33 groceries, 12 saloons, 12 real estate offices, 22 doctors and one undertaker.

In the first five years of the town's existence there were no major fires. Eventually, it had a major impact. Because of the narrow width of the passages between buildings there was not enough room for fire-fighting equipment, which was of the most basic type. In addition there was little water available for fighting fires. The first of four major fires the town experienced in the 19th century occurred in 1883. The second fire was in 1888. The third fire in 1890 began at the Perry House Hotel, which was on the site of the current Basin Park Hotel on Spring Street. The fire jumped Spring Street and damaged or destroyed all buildings on Main, southward from the Grand Central Hotel. In 1893 a fourth fire impacted Main, destroying both sides of the street, all of Center and the Spring Street intersection. At this point the town council passed an ordinance stating that all the buildings downtown had to be built of stone. If you remember, Powell Clayton had purchased his quarry so he was in a position to take advantage of the situation to install the more elegant buildings he felt Eureka Springs should display and the town began to look more like what you see today.

The commercial area in the form of warehouses, hotels and shops spread from here all the way down to the train depot. This is also when stonemasons flocked to town and you begin to see their work in the form of cut-stone business buildings, hotels, houses and dry-laid limestone retaining walls and benches. It is estimated that there are between 44 and 75 miles of stone walls in Eureka.⁹

In this spot you can see a few things here that contributed to the character of 19th century Eureka Springs. This would be the limestone construction of the late 19th century stonemasons in the architecture of the three buildings here, one of the springs that contributed to the development of Eureka Springs and a building connected to the celebration of Ozark arts and crafts.

By 1886 in roughly this area, running to the north there were several dwellings, grocery stores and hotels as well as tenements.

⁹ Zeller, 19, 21, 103, 104-105; "Conflagrations," online article www.hostelrieseureka Springs history.com, accessed 09/27/2016.

By 1909 many of the tenements had been joined by smaller livery stables and other transportation-related businesses and it retained that character through the early to mid-20th century.

90 S Main Street - We'll begin with the rock building on this side of the road with the gable roof, which was a blacksmith shop. The building, now an office supply store, was constructed in 1906 and it has undergone changes to the roofline.

At the point this building was constructed horse driven transportation was still prevalent.

82 Armstrong - The two-story limestone building behind us was built in 1900 and was a residence. The building has large additions to the side that connect it to the Cathouse Lounge but it was constructed in the Italianate style like the courthouse with decorative brackets, narrow windows and wide roof overhang. In 1980 it had a one-story porch, which is more likely how it looked originally.

It actually has an Armstrong Street address but I wanted to point it out because this building would be an example of some of the numerous dwellings that lined the road here.

95 S Main - We're looking now at a building that is more reminiscent of a later period of development in Eureka Springs. In the 1930s through the 1970s, rural Ozark themed destinations were big draws for tourists. You know the type – Dogpatch, Booger Hollow, Ozark Folk Center - If you will look across the street you see a small log cabin that is a related to the early years of that type of tourism.

The building was moved here from Mills Hollow at Bays Spring, which was the home of Cora Pinkley Call and her husband Miles.

Call was a writer, naturalist, herbalist, folklorist and Eureka Springs historian and booster. She achieved statewide and national prominence in 1935 as the founder and lifetime president of the Ozark Writers-Artist Guild.

Cora wrote several books about life in the Ozarks. In the 1940s she wrote the script for a movie about Eureka Springs. She was also connected to the springs of Eureka through her claims of a cure from the waters.

In 1930 the Calls built a small log cabin as a studio for Cora to produce her books celebrating Ozark culture. They used logs from the circa 1830 James Seaton Cabin at Blue Spring and various other area cabins. The hearthstone and door are from G.W. Pinkley's 1865 homestead.

Cora died in 1966 and the guild was disbanded shortly thereafter. The studio cabin was moved to the Eureka Springs Historical Museum grounds in 1997.¹⁰

¹⁰ Dianne Worrell, "Cora Pinkley Elizabeth Call (1892-1966)", Encyclopedia of Arkansas History, online at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=3723> ; Eureka Springs Preservation Society, "Walk Eureka

95 S Main - The limestone Second Empire Eureka Springs Historical Museum was built in 1889 for Samuel Calif and it is another example of the dwelling types of Main Street. It served as the family's home, a boarding house and general store. In 1948 it was converted to a meeting hall for the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks. By 1970 it was known as the Elks Lodge.

The Elks relocated and in 1971 the director of the Ozark Folk Festival bought the house for use as a museum. In 1980 the Eureka Springs Historical Museum, Inc., assumed ownership and the original second story porch and storefront were rehabbed.

If you will look to the right of the museum building you see a small round rock structure. This is Calif Spring.

Calif Spring was originally known as Table Rock Spring, which referred to the rock formation above it. It was established as a spring reservation in 1886 by city ordinance. When Calif built his house here he was given a 99 year lease on the land and it was then referred to as Calif Spring.

Even from the earliest days the government knew the springs needed to be protected for the people and the economy. So they established spring reservations on the hillsides around and above the springs.¹¹ Not all of the springs in Eureka have that structure on top and some of them are missing now, but it was added to Calif Spring in 1920.

They were added because in that year sixteen people in town contracted typhoid and it was tied to the spring water. The suspected reason was sewage leakage. So the public was warned against using the spring water and an ordinance was levied to raise a tax for improvement and protection of the springs as well as purification and filtration.

The town decided on electronic treatment to save the springs. The RUV Company of New York (RUV stands for Radiation Ultraviolet) erected treatment devices on 6 springs including Calif.

The equipment consisted of Model A-1 machines and high capacity sterilizers placed on the springs. A structure near the springs contained a motor generator and the RUV machines were placed in the rubble masonry structures at the discharge point. A study of the outcome by the US Department of Agriculture and the Arkansas Board of Health showed "satisfactory reduction in bacteria and removal of gas producing organisms." It is currently maintained as a park.¹²

It is unknown what the small building across the street next to the spring was used for, but it is thought to have been built in 1920.

91 S Main - The building that houses the Aquarius Tacqueria was built in 1960 as a house originally and was later a Christian Science Reading Room.

Springs: Exploring Eureka Springs Historic Structures, Eight Walking Tours," Eureka Springs Preservation Society, 3.

¹¹ Wayside exhibit at Eureka Springs Historical Museum, 95 S Main Street, Eureka Springs; Wayside exhibit at Calif Spring, 95 S Main Street, Eureka Springs.

¹² Westphal, "Eureka Springs, City of Healing Waters."

When the Elks were in the Calif house they stored items in this building and there is a small bluff at the rear that features Elks –related mosaics in tile.

89 S Main - The Rock House has been altered somewhat in recent years. This is an example of an early stone structure, being constructed in 1889 likely as a house rather than a business.

70 S Main - We are standing next to the Cornerstone Bank. In 1886 around the site of the bank there were widely spaced dwellings and a few businesses.

In 1892 there was a large wagon yard called Sawyer's in the area among other livery businesses. From 1892 to the 1930s it was the site of transportation structures that included livery buildings.

The Eureka Springs Bank relocated from Spring Street to this site in 1967. This was the first new building to be constructed downtown in decades and it had the first drive up window in the county.

It replaced the McGinnis Livery Stable which was in business until 1930.

In 1979 the city celebrated its centennial and the bank was expanded and remodeled to reflect the turn of the century architecture common to the town using brick and rubbed stone with stone detail on the windows and decorative brick corbelling detail at the cornice. The interior also displays historic furnishings and besides serving as a functioning bank it is a bank museum.

The 1984 Trolley Depot was built on the site of the 1917 Mattock's Garage, a commercial structure that evolved from horses to cars with a sales floor and repair shop.

The trolleys disappeared in the 1920s but in 1978 they introduced modern trolley cars to celebrate the centennial.

The site of the trolley depot, like the bank, was in the area of dwellings and tenements in 1886.

By 1892 it was part of the large Sawyer's Wagon Yard complex, which was gone by 1897 – likely due to the fires. In 1904 the site was occupied by a horse yard and a blacksmith and a livery had been built by 1909.

85 S Main Street - Now looking back across the street, the two-story red building was built in 1900 but the exterior wall treatment is very likely a 1950s or 1960s alteration.

The 1892 Sanborn map, which is a fire insurance map that recorded streets, lots and structures, shows a building that corresponds very closely to the shape of this building in the area so it could have been built earlier.

I say this because of the stone segment on the left. It was originally designated as a dwelling but by 1937 it is designated as a combination of house and store.

75 S Main Street – Amigos, the log building across the street was built in 1936 and served as Walker Wilson American Legion Post 9, which is one of the earliest posts in the nation. In the Depression years you began to see a lot of log structures being built because of the influence of

New Deal park structures as well as a “back to the land” movement because of people having to simplify their lives.

71 S Main - Local Flavor has undergone quite a few changes to the front. It was originally a log structure, built in 1925 and you can see a little bit of the logs from the patio area but it has largely been enclosed with several large additions.

In 1886 this area held several hotels including the Kirk Hotel and Sawyer’s Hotel.

In 1892 there was a short group of commercial buildings on the site that featured a grocery store and hay and feed store.

In 1909 a livery had been installed. By 1937 a filling station and tire service was on the lot, which was there up to the 1980s.

69 S Main - The Tattoo Parlor was built c. 1920. Since 1980 the front doors have been changed. I’m not sure that the display window is original but it is just a very minimal building, which is not unusual for such commercial structures in the 1920s.

67 S Main - Spry Girls was built around 1910 and displays another type of minimal commercial architecture executed in stone.

You can see a difference in the display windows compared to the tattoo parlor because of the depth of the windows and the wooden surround, which would indicate to me that they are possibly original.

This was another auto-related business in later years.

65 S Main - Sonya’s leather shop was built in 1985. There was an attempt to make it look historic by using the stepped parapet on the second floor.

The site of this building was occupied by a grocery in 1904, the livery stable by 1909 and the filling station in 1937. So this is another site that has ties to the early transportation hub of Main Street.

44 S Main - In 1886 the area of the courthouse held grocery stores, produce stores and a tenement. In 1892 the courthouse lot was occupied by a building offering provisions and hay as well as the Ferguson Hotel. After 1897 the area was vacant until the construction of the courthouse.

36 S Main - The City Auditorium and Gymnasium straddles Leatherwood Creek like the courthouse. In 1886 there were grocery stores and a tenement on the lot. By 1892 the site of the auditorium held the Holman Hotel and the Western Hotel and other lodging and grocery stores.

From that point to 1928 there were no structures on this area of the street.

Mayor Claude Fuller saw an auditorium as an important asset to the new Eureka Springs at the turn of the century and he pushed for its construction.

The limestone theater with 1,500 seats was designed by A.O. Clarke. The building was completed just weeks before the stock market crash and it displays Italianate architecture in the use of arched windows.

At the opening of the facility John Phillips Sousa was engaged to play and Judge Burton Saunders flew his bi-plane over the building. There were not enough tickets sold to pay Sousa so the bank had to be opened to get funds to pay him.

The basement of the auditorium held a basketball gym and skating rink, which the high school kids used until the 1960s.

The auditorium was renovated in 2004 with a Save America's Treasures grant.

The block of stores you see across the street were originally hardware, grocery and feed stores and other auto-related structures.

63 S Main - The lot of the Mud Street Store held a grocery store in 1892. By 1897 it was gone but a grocery store reappears on the Sanborn maps in 1909.

In later years it held the Earl Crow Motor Company.

The building is a Standard 20th century two-story commercial building but it is a little unusual because of the combination of brick and stone. The entry features cast-iron detail, which would be an original feature but it has been infilled with a smaller door.

The second floor displays rubbed stone lintels over the windows and decorative corbeling on the cornice, which is what you see on the Cornerstone Bank building.

53 S Main - San Francisco Music Box Co. is a small example of a 20th century Standard Commercial building.

Very simple, and it has the appearance of a late 19th century building. In fact it is very similar to one built in that time that we'll see in a minute.

The Eureka Springs Fire Department, Station No. 1 does not appear on the Sanborn maps until 1937. The building is very minimal but interesting because of the use of neatly laid cut stone on the lower area and uncut stone on the cornice.

The Sanborn map notes that at that time there were stone walls here but no roof.

I would not be surprised if it wasn't built for an auto-related business because of the building that was constructed next door and because it's very industrial.

61 S Main - the Hussey-Arbuckle Building was constructed in 1925, which is noted on the date stone at the curved cornice.

On the 1937 map for Eureka Springs the building is designated as an auto repair business.

Again transportation-related.

55 S Main – The Holistic Pain Relief Center was built in 1950 but it was very likely remodeled at a later date to look like a Victorian structure with gingerbread trim.

51 A S Main and 49 S Main - Tummy Ticklers and Just Between Friends next to it were part of a tire and supply store with Otasco garage. It was built in 1975 and was owned by the Hussey family until the 1980s.

The two buildings have also been extensively altered. Notice that the Husseys who built the earlier auto building are connected to these two buildings.

In 1923 a small filling station is situated on this spot, so it evolved from one auto-related building to another that fit the needs of the time.

43 S Main - The two-story Babes and Blades store is another example of stone construction that would have resulted after the fires.

In 1892 this part of the block held various commercial buildings, including a tin shop and a carpenter shop.

Roughly in this area was also a two-story boarding house. After the fires this area was empty until 1937 but something could have been built in the years between 1923 and 1937 because there is a 13 year gap in the maps

41 S Main - The T-shirt Emporium is another minimal building like some of the smaller ones that we've seen.

Like the two-story building next door it appears between 1923 and 1937 as a general storage building.

37-39 S Main - Café Main Street and Treasures of the Golden Lotus is an early example of Standard 20th century commercial architecture. The building was built in 1901.

It retains its cast-iron detail but there has been major infill on the first floor storefronts.

In 1892 the two-story Kirk Hotel was on this site. By 1897 there was a hay and feed store here. It is unclear whether it's the same building, it might have been rebuilt by 1904 when it shows up on the Sanborn map as a grocery store and warehouse.

By 1937 the side of the building that holds Café Main Street was a restaurant.

33 S Main – Two Dumb Dames Fudge Factory started out as a cobbler in 1892. In 1897 a grocery store was on the site. In 1904 the building held a harness store and by 1914 it held a paint and hardware store.

This is a Standard 19th century commercial building executed in brick with rubbed stone window lintels on the second story and decorative corbeling at the cornice.

29 S Main - Judge Roy Bean's Old Time Photos and Weddings is an excellent example of turn of the century architecture. The stone building was constructed in 1900 as the Commercial Bank and was later a wholesale grocer.

In 1892 there was a two-story building on the lot that held a harness store and a saddlery. In 1897 the lot was vacant. In 1909 the building was a wholesale grocer and this building and the one next door were noted as having an Elk's club on the second floor.

In 1937 part of the building was used as a bus station.

This building is one of the more ornate structures on Main Street with its pressed tin cornice and extensive cast iron detailing and beveled entry.

The stairs next to the funnel cake building are actually a city street called Rock House Avenue and they lead to the Rock House Cave where Dr. Alvah Jackson treated Civil War soldiers.

Spring Street was filled and graded many times as was Main Street. When the street level got too high in some places they would build staircases between the buildings, but they would be referred to as streets. We'll see a few more examples down the road.

In 1886 this part of the block now called Chandler's Block held several grocery and produce stores.

In 1892 there were notions, a gentlemen's clothing store, a butcher, hardware store and lodging along this strip. In 1904 a footbridge and a platform showed up in this area, which was indicative of the steep drop off over Leatherwood Creek, which is under this section of Main Street and I'm going to talk a little more about that in a minute.

28 S Main - This small brick building would have been part of that historic strip and is dated at 1890. In 1892 it was a meat market.

It has the appearance of a turn of the century Standard commercial building, very minimal but still features decorative corbelling with a likely original storefront. The recessed entry and wraparound display window would have served to keep your attention and draw you into the door by making products highly visible.

More recently it was an antique store.

26 S Main - The Freeman Building (Parts Unknown) had a two-story porch at one time. It was built in 1890 also, but stucco was applied later and the windows appear to have been changed out with smaller openings.

In 1892 it was a stove and hardware store that sold stoves. It remained a hardware store until 1914 when the building held a grocery store.

In 1952 it became Eureka Springs' first modern grocery store.

22A S Main - The James and Beck Building is a beautiful example of Eureka's stone architecture in the 19th century. It was a clothing store in 1892. The 1897 Sanborn map notes that the building had folding iron shutters over the windows.

In 1909 there was a second hand store in the building and in 1914 it sold hardware, paints and oils.

22 S Main - The Mud Street Café and Romancing the Stone Store was built in 1888 and is one of the older buildings downtown. It displays Italianate architecture in the use of arched windows and heavily decorative window drip molds as well as the contrasting stone quoins on the corners and brick corbelling. The entry is highly decorative as well with its use of beveled entrance and display windows. In 1897 it was a meat market and grocer with a wooden footbridge leading from the street to the rear of the building over Leatherwood Creek. In 1904 it was a tinworks and restaurant. In 1914 it held a jeweler.

In 1979 this building and the James and Beck Building next door were restored.

22 S Main - The centennial mural called "Rebirth of a Town," was painted in 1979 by the Eureka Springs Guild of Arts and Craftspeople and was designed by artist Louis Freund.

22 S Main - Because of the creek and the fires this side of Main Street had a lot of gaps in the streetscape; however, there was an opera house on the site of this parking lot in 1892.

Prior to that in 1886 there was a large skating rink on the site.

In 1897 the opera house also included a jeweler. In 1914 the Sanborn maps notes it as an electric theater. Before it was destroyed in 1923 because of neglect a Pentecostal Mission occupied the building.

12 S Main - In 1886 Abyss Tattoo was a general merchandise store and it held various businesses through the 1930s.

This building would be one of the rare frame structures in downtown as the fires took out most of them.

6-8 S Main - The original Basin Spring Bathhouse was built by Dr. Alvah Jackson's son, Thomas in 1879 and it held several small storefronts on the first floor including a cobbler.

The frame building was destroyed by the fire of 1888 and was rebuilt in limestone and brick. It continued as a bathhouse and storefronts for many years but by 1923 the Sanborn map no longer notes it as such.

In 1986 the brick building was heavily damaged by fire but it was restored to its historic appearance using appropriate materials. The quarry that originally provided the stone was utilized for window sills and lintels and a section of the bridge railing that survived the fire was used for a mold to fill in damaged areas.

The building had a pedestrian bridge to the rear and the front and the one you see over Main here is one of two that remain among the several the town held at one time.¹³ There was a building next to the bathhouse called the Cook Building, which shows up on the 1904 Sanborn. Previously on the lot there was a small building holding a cobbler.

The Cook Building started out as a restaurant and bakery but when the Cooks saw that automobiles were taking over from wagons and horses they turned it into a service garage and gas station.

After 1914 the building was gone but the lot was then used as the Cook & Border Car Dealership.

UNDERGROUND EUREKA

6-8 S Main - I'm going to talk here for a bit about what is referred to as underground Eureka because if you look into the grate here on the sidewalk you can see a remnant of it.

Originally this side of the road was situated on the top of a gully created by Leatherwood Creek, so it dropped off sharply.

As we are walking down Main we're over Leatherwood Creek, which runs under the east side of the road. Nineteenth century Historian Professor Kalklosch noted that there were underground passages beneath Main and Spring streets in 1881.

Recent explorers in the city refer to these as sidewalk tunnels, which can sometimes be located by glass blocks and grates in the sidewalks.

A separate system of tunnels are storm drain systems and a creek routing system, which is mainly what we have been walking over.

¹³ "History-Eureka Springs," online article at http://hostelries.eurekaspringshistory.com/basin_bath_house.htm, accessed 09/07/16; Sanborn Maps, Eureka Springs 1886-1937, online at <http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.library.arkansas.gov/cgi-bin/auth.cgi?command=AccessOK&CCSI=7054n>, 09/2016.

At the same time Major Armstrong was surveying lots he was also surveying streets. The first street that was surveyed was Main and the first area of commercial development was located along the gully. The street also went by the name Mud Street because water would gravitate there after it ran off the hillsides and became a puddle.

The town began a program of street improvements in 1890 to deal with the mud problem and increasing traffic. This was when the creek area was built up, filled in and smoothed for a wide surface on Main and Spring Streets. The roads were also raised to the second level of the commercial buildings and the first floor, including doors and windows would open underground onto a retaining wall. So what was once the first floor would become the basement level and then some would still have actual basement floors under that.¹⁴

And that is what you can see through this grate.

The creek routing system, which still exists under the buildings runs north from where we began down toward the Grand Central Hotel, where it exits briefly then runs underground a short distance under some commercial buildings and re-emerges along the road and can be seen all the way down to the depot.

The routing system was laid in 1890 and constructed of dry laid stone, using no mortar. When a concrete system was developed later it was connected to the historic stone system.

When we get to the Grand Palace we'll also have the opportunity to see an example of one of the stone tunnels.

N Main

2 N Main - The small building across the street next to New Dehli Café began as a gas station in 1927. Since then it has been various storefronts.

The building across the street with the New Dehli Cafe fronts on Spring Street but it was featured in Ripley's Believe it or Not as one building with five addresses. There were three on the Spring Street side, one on the side of the building, which is actually Basin Spring Avenue, which was one of those streets that became stairs when the roads were built up, and the address for the New Dehli space.

In the early 19th century this section of Main was very sparsely developed with only a handful of commercial buildings.

11 N Main - In 1892 there was one two-story commercial building in this area, which is the middle structure that you're looking at.

The building was a wholesale grocer originally and in later years it was the Greenlee Funeral Home.

¹⁴ "Underground Eureka Springs," online article at <http://undergroundeureka.com/>, accessed 09/07/2016.

The arched windows give it an Italianate architecture but the first floor has been infilled.

9 and 13 S Main - The two buildings on either side (Angels of Eureka and vacant building) were later construction in the 1930s and 1950s and were used by the funeral home.

35 N Main - The Walker Brothers Department Store was built in 1890 and has a very long history as a department store up to circa 1990s. It would be considered Italianate because of the arched windows

37 N Main - The Grand Central Hotel was built in 1881 as a stagecoach terminal and it was originally a three story wooden building.

That hotel was destroyed by fire in 1883 and it was rebuilt as the first brick hotel in town. It was also the first to have running water on every floor piped from Onyx Spring.

The hotel went through some hard times and went by other names and owners for several years. At one point it was known as the Deal Hotel.

By the 1980s there were businesses only in the first floor and the building was slated for demolition. Luckily it was decided to rehab the building in the late 1980s and it once again became a destination hotel.

34 N Main - The green stucco building across the street was built in 1910 but it has been heavily remodeled.

But if you look at the cornice you can see one clue that you're looking at an older building.

38 N Main - Vintage Jewelry is another very recent building, likely 1980s.

The stairway that leads between the buildings is known as Tibbs Alley.

50 N Main - The white building is the Harken Building (now the Inn Convenience Store). It shows up on the Sanborns in 1892 as a saddle and hardware store.

In the 1960s the owners modernized the building by bringing the first floor flush with the upper porch and enclosing it in brick. In 2007 it was reopened and given a more appropriate entry.

Tunnels under the road

37 N Main - When I mentioned that Leatherwood Creek ran under Main Street and emerged at the Grand Central Hotel, this is where it comes out.

Historically this part of N Main had an industrial character as compared to the transportation-related areas on the south.

There were a lot of laundries, shanties, cobblers, yeast and soap makers in this area.

This is called the Bergdorf Block.

53 N Main - The Messerschmidt Building (now the Stringed Instrument Peddler), was built in 1890 as a meat market and it is another example of an early frame building in town.

55 N Main - The blue building (Vacant) is noncontributing because it was built in 1965. In the 19th century there was a barber and feed store on the site.

61 N Main - Fain's Herbacy was a second hand store in 1892 and by 1904 it was a restaurant. In 1909 it was a hay and feed store and it has continued since then as a storefront.

63 N Main - This is a wonderfully intact grocery store from the 1890s. Harp's Grocery Store was in continual operation until the 1980s and it retains its historic details and storefront. Today it is Eureka Fine Art Gallery.

65 N Main - The Bergdorf Building dates from the 1880s and its brick construction is attributed with enabling it to survive the fires in Eureka. It was historically a grocery store and within the last few years it had fallen into disrepair but the Main Stage was installed to promote the arts to children and it was appropriately rehabbed.

The vacant lot across the street was the site of the Landaker Hotel, constructed in 1892. It made it to the 1980s when it was destroyed by fire.

On this block to the north there were commercial structures continuing down toward the depot as well as dwellings.

104 N Main - The small house across the street is the Gadd House, built in 1880. The Gadd family built a grocery store next door and the spring was named Gadd Spring. This is one of the springs that received the ultraviolet treatment, but the rock structure doesn't survive.

The spring runs into the house, which is now Mountain Eclectic gift shop and is visible on the first floor.

The remains of the 1891 power plant or Ice House are next to the depot by Grand Avenue. This was the structure that was built by Powell Clayton's group to provide Eureka Springs with electricity.

In 1904 it was owned by the Citizen's Electric Company and served as the city light and power plant, ice factory and cold storage.

The ice house produced four tons of ice daily. In the 1940s it was home to Ozark Food Processing Company and they produced Bunny Pot Pies.

The building exhibits wonderful Italianate cut stone architecture but is missing windows, doors and roofs at this point.

The cut stone Roundhouse is across the street. It is actually a round building of cut stone and it was built in the 1890s.

It was constructed as the Eureka Springs Gas Light Company and this was another of the Clayton's ventures. The walls of the building are 18 inches thick and they contained a round metal tank to contain coal gas.

William Duncan took over the holdings of the Eureka Springs Improvement Company and installed the Eureka Water Company in the building and the stone building next door to sell water from the springs under the brand name Ozarka Water.

The company bottled water from local springs and shipped it in glass-lined railroad tank cars at 25 to 30 rail cars per month.

This was a very important enterprise to Eureka Springs and brought in lots of money to the town.

Unfortunately the town hit a recession and ten years later they were only shipping 22 carloads a year. The company closed in 1971.

There is still an Ozarka Water Company but it is not locally owned nor piped from Eureka Springs.

The Roundhouse was used for different businesses including apartments, art galleries and restaurants and nightclubs. It remained vacant for a number of years but was renovated in 2002 and a second story was added. It is now a bed and breakfast.¹⁵

¹⁵ Sanborn Maps, Eureka Springs 1886-1937, online at <http://sanborn.umi.com.ezproxy.library.arkansas.gov/cgi-bin/auth.cgi?command=AccessOK&CCSI=7054n>, 09/2016; "History of the Roundhouse," online article at http://esroundhouse.com/history_roundhouse.html, accessed 09/06/2016.