

THIS ONLINE version of the Trumansburg Walking Tour can be printed. It is in somewhat different form here than the official print version, available at the village office, as well as businesses and community locations in and around Trumansburg.



Discover TRUMANSBURG

A Walking Tour

AT THE HEART OF THE FINGER LAKES...

TRUMANSBURG is a small enough village to walk all around easily, but it has a big story to tell about how this part of upstate New York evolved over the centuries.

The earliest cemetery for white settlers was said to be on a native American burial site near the corner of today's Main and Elm Streets. That suggests an Indian village was probably here at some point, along the creek that attracted Trumansburg's founder, Abner Treman.

Treman was part of the Sullivan-Clinton campaign against the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people during the American Revolution. For his service he received 600 acres of "Military Tract" taken from native American land. He brought his wife Mary, their children, and Mary's teenage brother John McLallen here through the wilderness in 1793. They built a log cabin where South Street now intersects Main, and started harnessing the water power of the creek for a gristmill.

Behind the stores on East Main, the banks of Trumansburg Creek show remnants of dams and mills—more than a dozen lined the creek as the village grew into a local manufacturing center. Throughout the 1800s Trumansburg became home to factories producing yarn, flour, carriages, farming implements, shoes, barrels, tin cookware, cabinets, chairs, hats, mirrors, silverware—and making small fortunes that built the grand houses, churches and public buildings enriching the village today.

Two fires wiped out the original wooden stores on Main Street, in 1864 and 1871. They were quickly replaced with brick commercial blocks, at a time when cast iron storefronts with expansive glass were coming into vogue, giving the village an elegant, harmonious streetscape curving across the creek.

On the surrounding residential streets you'll find charming homes preserving architectural styles that changed as Trumansburg matured—Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Colonial Revival. Notice the many stone hitching posts with iron rings still waiting to tie up horses, and the stone dismounting blocks, as well as the slabs of shalestone, some enormous, quarried nearby for stoops and sidewalks (careful where they cross roots of T-burg's magnificent trees!).

Today, in some ways the village is a satellite of Ithaca but with its own distinct community identity. It is home to a mix of professionals, academics connected with Cornell University and Ithaca College, farmers, restaurateurs, artists, shopkeepers, winemakers—all proud and protective of their town's heritage.

The map inside lays out a numbered route around the village, about two and a half miles long. Sample any part for a shorter tour. Whatever you choose, take your time to savor the quiet charm of this quintessential upstate village.



MAIN STREET, c. 1890s: Even with dirt streets and some altered buildings, the shape of the village center is easy to recognize.

LET'S WALK!

1 7–55 East Main Street (c. 1865)

The fire of 1864, preceding construction of these commercial blocks, destroyed everything on the north side of Main Street, from the bridge to the Presbyterian Church. There are a number of fine examples of Italianate cast iron and plate glass facades. **Number 49 Main** is notable as the 1960s home of R. A. Moog & Co., where Robert Moog, the electronic music pioneer, developed the Moog synthesizer.

2 Village Hall (c. 1830s)

56 East Main Street. The dignified Federal-style entryway recalls this building's early 19th-century start as a more restrained private residence before its Queen Anne makeover added an exuberant veranda and pergola. Look for similar fanciful porches added to houses throughout the village in the late 1800s. Skeptics called this "the White Elephant" when the village saved the old house and remodeled it into offices.

3 Masonic Temple (1871)

59 East Main Street. Built as a hotel by Leroy Trembly, this monolithic (for T-burg) Italianate was first known as Trembly House, later as The Cornell House. The cast iron balcony and massive slate stoop filled up with guests viewing the village's frequent parades. But the hotel was never profitable and the Masonic Order has owned



The Masonic Temple.

WALK...

the building for more than a century. Over the years it has housed high school classrooms, the Ulysses Philomathic Library, the town historical society, dance studios and barber shops, but the bones of a hotel remain.



Gothic Revival at 68 South Street.

4 64-66 East Main Street (1828)

These large twin apartment blocks were built as warehouses (the portico is a late-1800s addition). Village founders Abner Treman and Hermon Camp were early owners. The rather erratic fenestration, scrambled over the years, includes some original 12-over-12-pane sashes. During upstate's anti-Masonic movement in the early 1800s, T-burg's defiant Masons held secret meetings in #64; the floor of a second-story room is stuffed with six inches of tree bark, presumably for soundproofing.

5 First Presbyterian Church (1850)

69 East Main Street (shown on the cover). A wood-framed church, the first in T-burg, was built on this site in 1819 from boards milled at a sawmill directly downhill on the creek. This brick church replaced it while salvaged material from the original was recycled to build the smaller frame chapel next door. The Greek Revival structure is relatively unaltered in its simple dignity (it still has no plumbing). It was saved from Trumansburg's devastating 1864 fire by wet rugs spread across the roof and a lucky shift in the wind. ★

6 United Methodist Church (1853-57)

80 East Main at South Street (see inside page). Building only a few years after the Presbyterians across Main Street, the Methodists broke away from the Greek architectural model

and introduced the new Gothic Revival to T-burg. Pointed arch windows, a steep-pitched roof and soaring steeple underline the building's vertical motif. Compare this to the substantial, earthbound look across the street. In 1911 the church's interior was reconfigured with a raised floor; the original stairs to a balcony now lead to the sanctuary. A rope hanging inside the front door still rings a three-foot-diameter 1840s church bell.

7 68 South Street (c. 1830s)

This Gothic Revival showcase got its surprising start as a discreet Federal-style residence. A makeover with embellished front gables and a tower transformed the house in the late 19th century into Trumansburg's finest example of this architectural style. The tower had already been removed when a fire destroyed the house's upper story in 2014. The owner chose to repair the house, honoring its splendid Gothic detailing and design, and recreating the tower with the help of old photographs.

8 The Camp House (1845)

2 *Camp Street*. Soon after Trumansburg was settled, 18-year-old Hermon Camp walked into the one-horse hamlet, bought its first store

and became the dominant figure in the village for half a century as postmaster, county sheriff, state assemblyman, banker, and cavalry colonel in the War of 1812.

His Greek Revival mansion, with its grand portico and crowning balustrade, has the look of a Southern plantation manor house. He planted the grounds with every native tree of this region, a setting that grows more impressive through the years. ★



The Camp House.

9 Juniper Hill (1916)

16 *Elm Street*. Another stately mansion, from a very different period. It was designed by Clinton L. Vivian, the architect behind more of our walking-tour highlights, and many prominent buildings in Ithaca and on the Cornell University campus.

10 4–27 West Main Street (c. 1872)

This commercial row followed the calamitous fire of 1871. Most of the cast iron storefronts and window treatments were made at the nearby Gregg Foundry, once at the corner of Route 227. Mid-block, the Rongovian Embassy brought a

KEEP WALKING!

👉 certain fame to T-burg as a favorite 1970s watering-hole for local artists and Cornellians. **Number 17 Main** contrasts with its neighbors. It was designed in 1912 by Clinton Vivian (after yet another, smaller fire) for Trumansburg's classy Biggs department store. Note the entry floor, paved with glass prisms (once-clear, now lavender, and sometimes illuminated from below), now leading into separate businesses.

11 38 Old Main Street (c. 1820)

This is one of the oldest structures in Trumansburg. It was a home of settler John McLallen on the old road between Ithaca and Geneva, overlooking the hamlet known then as Shin Holler. Behind the house was the McLallen Hill family farm. Massive slabs of local bluestone lead up to the austere, classic Federal. Its large cellar contains a 10-foot-long bake oven.

12 4–6 Washington Street (c. 1835)

In early days this brick and wood double house (or at least part of it) was called the McLallen Homestead. It was just outside the edge of the village's 1871 fire. John McLallen's widow moved out after the fire and the homestead was remodeled into the aptly named Phoenix House hotel, now apartments locally known as "Heartbreak Hotel." The odd conjunction of two dissimilar structures remains a mystery.

13 22 McLallen Street (1848)

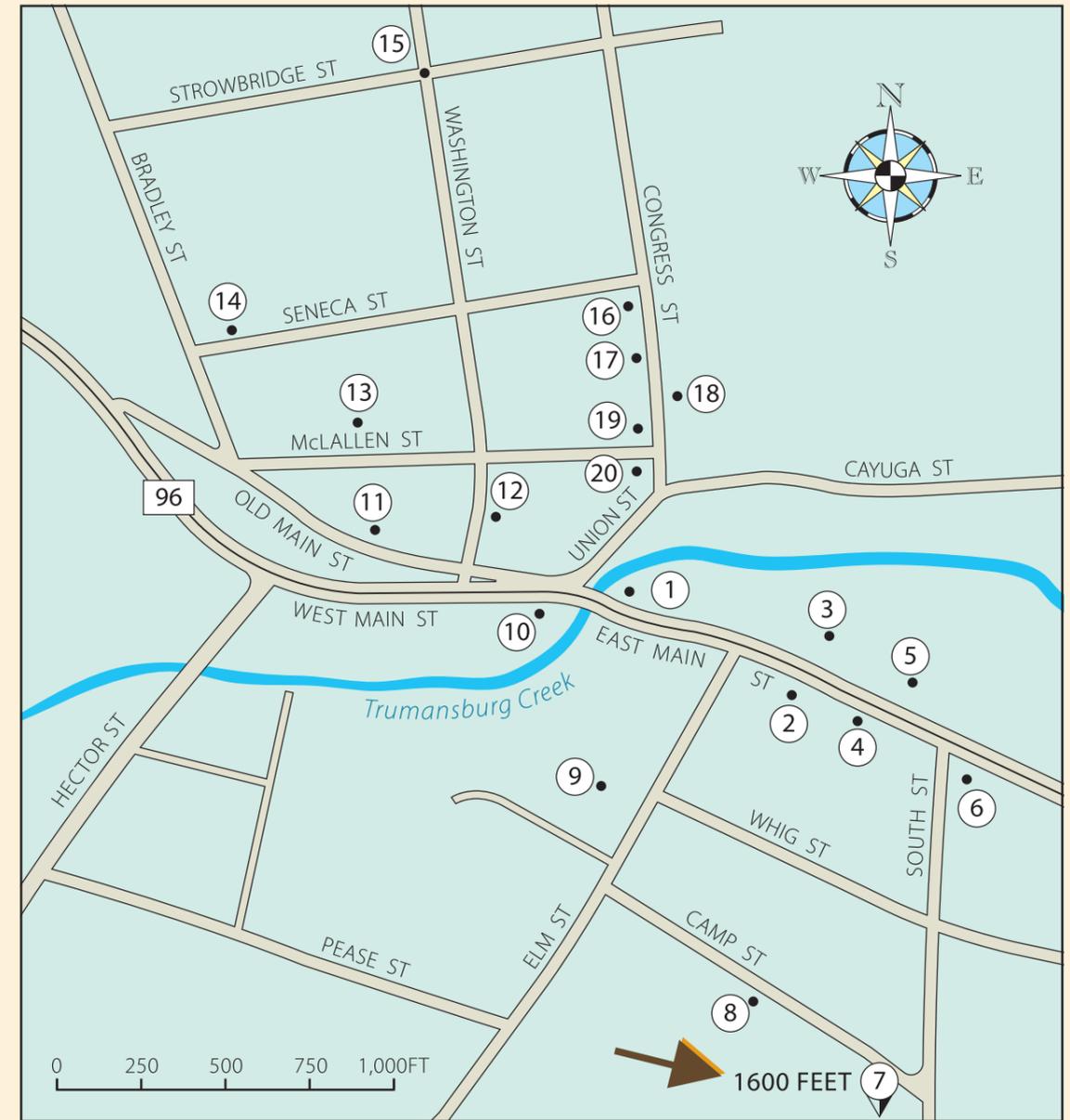
It's known in town as "the mud house." It might be called "the cheap house." William McLallen built it with sun-baked bricks (i.e., adobe), leaving a gap in the thick walls for insulation with straw. A product of village-founder John McLallen's second marriage, William never attained the status or prosperity of his half-brothers. Adobe houses are rare in upstate New York.

14 34 Seneca Street (c. 1870)

At the corner of Bradley Street is Trumansburg's fine example of Second Empire architecture, formally identified as the William Austin House. The wrap-around porch and window treatments are exceptional stylistic embellishments. A playful mini-mansard roof on the porch includes mini-windows, arched or gabled to match windows on the first and second floors and in the main mansard roof. Deep cornices conceal nifty built-in gutters. ★



METHODIST CHURCH: An early stereocard view shows ornate roof trim, now removed. (Tour stop #6; see first page above.)



MORE TO EXPLORE...

- ULYSSES PHILOMATHIC LIBRARY—74 E. Main St., trumansburglibrary.org | 607-387-5623
- ULYSSES HISTORICAL SOCIETY—39 South Street, www.ulysses.ny.us/history | 607-387-6666
- HISTORY WALL/Photographs—Tompkins Trust Co., 2 W. Main Street; in bank entrance lobby
- SMITH WOODS—a rare old-growth forest, 32 acres at south edge of village, between Main and Cemetery Streets; trailheads at southwestern and northeastern corners
- TAUGHANNOCK FALLS STATE PARK—south of the village at Cayuga Lake; the magnificent 215-foot waterfall, taller than Niagara Falls, is easily viewed from the Falls Overlook, or walk to its plunge pool along the level, easy walk along the gorge floor. Follow Taughannock Park Road (see park-to-village map)
- TRUMANSBURG FARMERS MARKET—Main and Hector Streets. Good food, live music and locally produced offerings (Wednesdays 4-7pm, May thru October)



ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Identified by a ★



- The First Presbyterian Church of Ulysses (No. 5) The William Austin House (Second Empire) (No. 14) •
- The Camp House (No. 8) The Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts (No. 20) •

15 Italianate Corners (c. 1860s)

Strowbridge and Washington Streets. There are good examples of four-square, hipped-roof Italianate architecture all around Trumansburg; three cluster at this intersection of residential streets. **Numbers 37 and 38 Washington** have the characteristic wooden cupola above a low-pitched roofline with deep eaves supported by decoratively carved brackets. The oculus over triple-arched windows in the cupola at **#37** is a fanciful touch. **Number 39** lacks a cupola but more than compensates with the gravitas of elegant iron window and door treatments, probably cast in Trumansburg's own Gregg Iron Works.

16 19 Congress Street (1905)

An elegant example of the turn-of-the-20th century Colonial Revival, this is another work by architect Clinton L. Vivian. It features beautiful stained glass, a front bay with curving windows, and richly patterned siding.

17 11 Congress Street (c. 1835)

Perhaps the best specimen of the Federal style in Trumansburg, this is one of more than half a dozen surviving houses built by members of the pioneer McLallen family in the neighborhood known early on as McLallen Hill.

18 Comstock House (c. first decade, 1800s)

6 Congress Street. Oliver Comstock was one of the village's first physicians, its first postmaster, and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, hence the name of his street. His house has grown incrementally over the years; the south section is the original, with giant slabs of slate in the front walk.



photo/The History Center

TRUMANSBURG CONSERVATORY: *The prodigious steeple and belfry, original to the building, are no longer in place.*



photo/Richard Figiel

3 CONGRESS STREET: *An intriguing blend of Federal and Greek Revival shows up in this house, marking a period of stylistic transition.*

19 3 Congress Street (1834)

The second son of John McLallen built his brick house at a time of transition when Federal design gave way to Greek Revival. The corner location presented an opportunity to mix the two styles with a note of irony. The Greek Revival facade on Congress Street has an entrance treated with a classically Federal, elliptical fanlight, while the doorway on the Federal facade facing McLallen Street sits under a Greek Revival transom-light. Next to the house, on McLallen, a small temple-form building was originally a lecture hall for the Baptist congregation across the street. The doorway was widened when the building was used to sell early automobiles.

20 Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts (1851)

Congress & McLallen Streets. Originally the Second Baptist Society of Ulysses and for much of its life serving as the First Baptist Church, this Greek Revival temple is unique in Tompkins County in its classical detailing of the entablature above the massive portico columns. It started life with an enormous steeple and belfry (incorrect for Greek Revival), removed during the 20th century. The church narrowly escaped the disastrous village fire of 1871 when, in the midst of the holocaust, someone remembered a fire engine had been stored in a nearby barn years before. The imposing structure was saved again in 1982 when the church moved out and local visionary Calista Smith established it as a center of performance and arts instruction. ★



A LIVELY VILLAGE

In addition to its notable past, TRUMANSBURG has a lively and attractive life in the present, offering entertainment, sustenance and services to enhance any visit. Comprehensive info can be found thru the village's active Chamber of Commerce, on the web at trumansburgchamber.com Among the area choices...

- a range of **LODGING** options, from camping to luxury B&Bs;
- **RESTAURANTS** from snack stands to pizza to artisan farm-to-table, from natural foods deli to homey cafe and stylish fine dining;
- full-service **GROCERY**, as well as stores with extensive **LIQUOR** and **WINE** selections, from local to imported;
- **GAS** stations, **AUTOMOTIVE** supplies and repair services;
- a retro **BOWLING ALLEY** and an 18-hole **GOLF COURSE**, both with food and drink available;
- carefully stocked **ANTIQU**E and **GIFT** stores;
- complete **BANKING** services, **LAUNDROMATS**, **MEDICAL** and **PHARMACY** services;
- as well as **ANNUALLY** —
- In July, the four-day **GRASSROOTS FESTIVAL**, bringing world-class music & dance in all genres to the T-burg fairgrounds for over 25 years. www.grassrootsfest.org
- In August, the **TRUMANSBURG FAIR**, over 165 years old, with everything from head-spinning rides & games, to prize Jersey cows and blue-ribbon canned goods
- The first weekend in December, the village's **WINTERFEST**.

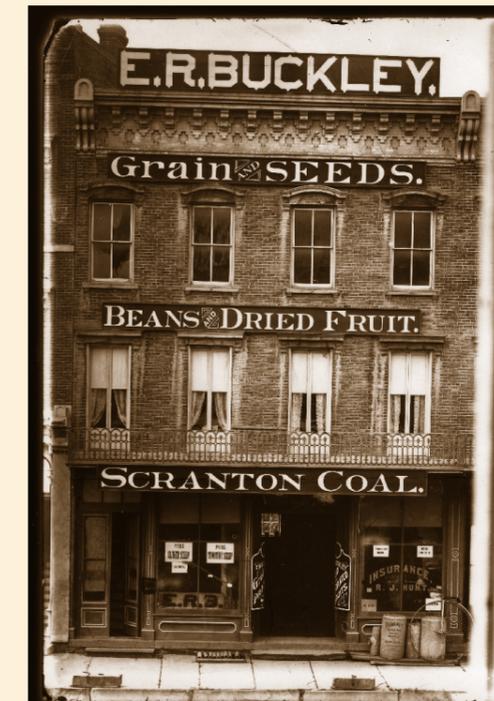
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A Walking Tour

VILLAGE BUSINESS & SERVICES

Include interesting & diverse dining, snacking, shopping & lodging options



photo/Ulysses Historical Society

(L) WEST MAIN COMMERCIAL BLOCK: *Early view of the building that became the renowned bar, the Rongovian Embassy to the U.S.A.*



BROCHURE CREDITS
Concept: Richard Figiel
Text: Richard Figiel with Michele Mitrani, John Wertis, S.K. List
Maps: Jim Houghton/
The Graphic Touch
Design/Layout: S.K. List