

***WALKING  
TOUR  
OF***



***BALDWINVILLE  
NEW YORK***

# WELCOME TO BALDWINSVILLE

Situated on the banks of the Seneca River, the Village of Baldwinsville overlaps two townships, Lysander and Van Buren and was part of the Military Tract, land that was given to veterans for their service in the Revolutionary War. John McHarrie and his wife Lydia became the first permanent settlers in the area in 1794. McHarrie built his cabin on the south side of the river and made a living by helping travelers negotiate their boats around the rapids in the Seneca River.

In 1798 Dr. Jonas Baldwin and his wife Betsy came through and decided to purchase land on the north side of the river. While the Baldwins did not settle in the area immediately they eventually established their home in Baldwinsville and started several business enterprises.

Over the years Baldwinsville has flourished with industries such as flour mills, flower farms, tobacco farms and the manufacturing of pumps to name a few. The village, which is rich in examples of fine architecture, includes buildings designed by such notables as Ward Wellington Ward, Archimedes Russell and Horatio Nelson White.

The river was an important part of the development of the area from the first boat that John McHarrie helped around the rifts to the industries that drew their power from the river. Baldwinsville has entered the twenty-first century with a spirit of renaissance, from the restoration of older buildings to the thoughtful design of new construction. As part of the renaissance the river is still an important asset as it is now a recreational focal point. Through all the changes it is important to remember that what Baldwinsville is today and will become in the future is built on the foundation of those who came before us. This walking tour is designed to give you a sense of the rich history of Baldwinsville. We hope you enjoy your tour and if you are interested in learning more about Baldwinsville be sure to visit the Baldwinsville Public Library, 33 East Genesee Street, and the Museum at Shacksboro School House, located in McHarrie Park on Canton Street.

## **1. WHILE STANDING AT LOCK 24:**

1. Look across the river to Mercer Park – during the time of the Native Americans this area was called Ste-ha-ha (Stones in the Water) because of the rifts. It was the only place for miles that a person could cross the river.
2. John McHarrie, the first permanent settler, built his log cabin behind this site off towards the cemetery. When John McHarrie was the only settler here and was helping travelers to ford the rapids in the river, this place was called McHarrie's Rifts, later as more cabins built up around his, it became known as Mackville.

## **2. PROCEED UP WATER STREET TO THE BARGE CANAL BRIDGE, CROSS IT, AND GO ON TO PAPER MILL ISLAND:**

1. This was land, until the digging of the Barge Canal (1907). The building on the southeast of Syracuse and Water Street originally stood where the bridge and locks are now located.
2. The Quinlan Hotel once stood on the land where the east side of the Barge Canal Bridge is now located. It also was moved to make room for the canal.
3. Paper Mill Island once had paper mills, a boat yard and New Process Gear as well as other businesses.
4. Mercer Mill is located to your right. It was built in 1830-1 by Stephen Baldwin and John McHarrie (Jr.) The original timbers still exist. Another mill stood behind this site.
5. If you're lucky, a boat will be going through the locks – take the time to watch it lock through.

### **3. PROCEED TO THE SENECA RIVER BRIDGE:**

1. Look to the east and you will see the abutments in the river that were for a railroad bridge. The tracks went only from here to Amboy. The company lasted for a short time in the late 1800's.

#### River bridges on this site:

- Baldwin Bridge – built by Dr. Jonas C. Baldwin (1807-1809) - it was a toll bridge
- Covered bridge (1809-1837)
- Double truss bridge (1837-1900)
- Trolley bridge (1900-1936)
- Present bridge (1936-present)

### **4. PROCEED TO THE RAMP AND GO DOWN IT, THROUGH THE PARKING LOT, OVER TO THE BEND ON RIVER STREET AND STOP AT THE FEMALE CHARITABLE SOCIETY:**

1. This organization is here to help all people in the Baldwinsville School District - free of charge. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest women's organization in the United States. Started in 1817 after the "Year Without a Summer" it has all kinds of sick equipment for people to borrow: hospital beds, walkers, commodes, crutches, wheelchairs, canes, etc. It is open from 10am–2pm Monday thru Friday.
2. This is also the site of Dr. Jonas Baldwin's first house – a log cabin.
3. Baldwinsville was called Columbia on this side of the river at that time (1807). After Dr. Baldwin built his bridge, it was called Baldwin's Bridge. (The name Baldwinsville came when we got our first post office (1817).

**5. PROCEED WEST ALONG RIVER STREET TO MERCER PARK:**

1. Imagine a swimming area here. For many years up until the 1960's this was the site of much fun for residents in this area. There was a large float in the middle of the river to use for diving, a catwalk designating the shallow area from the deep area, Red Cross swimming lessons, a lifeguard and a bathhouse with changing rooms and refreshments. It was closed because of pollution and the Polio threat (before everyone was vaccinated against polio) in the early 1960's.

**6. PROCEED TO NORTH STREET AND FOLLOW THAT TO THE END WHERE IT MEETS WEST ONEIDA STREET - TURN WEST (TO YOUR LEFT) AND GO TO THE CORNER OF SUNSET TERRACE AND W. ONEIDA STREETS: (YOU ARE NOW IN OUR NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER DISTRICT - located on the north side of West Oneida St. and down both sides of Oswego Street. Most of these homes have had few owners and still have many of their original fine architectural features intact.)**

1. 16 West Oneida Street—the house at the corner of West Oneida and Sunset Terrace. This house was called Windy Hill. It was the summer home of Jacob Amos who was a prominent businessman and one time mayor of Syracuse. It was built in 1895. The river could be viewed from here at that time.
2. Near this house on Sunset Terrace is Applecrest. The famous architect Ward Wellington Ward built this house in 1925. It has many unique features.

## **7. PROCEED EAST ALONG WEST ONEIDA STREET TO OSWEGO STREET:**

1. The house located at 8 West Oneida Street was built in 1820 and is one of the oldest in the village.
2. The house located at 6 West Oneida Street was called "The Terrace." It was built in 1837 for William F. Morris, founder of Morris Pumps. He was also the Village President (Mayor) in 1878 and Vice-President of the First National Bank. This house originally had porches across the front.
3. Northwest corner of Oswego and Oneida Streets was the site of the first Presbyterian Church. This was called the Union Meeting House and was used as a house of worship by other denominations. It was erected in 1830. Several years later it was moved down town and used as a theater known as Herrick's Hall. Later it was moved eastward near the railroad station on East Genesee Street, where it burned.
4. The house at 83 Oswego Street on the NW corner of the intersection was built in 1845. Colonel Isaac T. Minard, an early attorney and surrogate (judge) of Onondaga County (1840-1844), lived here. He organized the village's first force of firefighters.
5. One of the residents of the house at 73 Oswego Street had an interesting hobby, astronomy. On the north roof of the house he had a small revolving observatory with a telescope. This was built around 1860.
6. This house at 1 East Oneida Street is known as the Squire Munro House. It was built in 1837. He was a pioneer in tobacco farming and was commissioner of bridge construction in 1836. (The farm land included the school grounds.) There is also evidence that Native Americans lived around this spot.

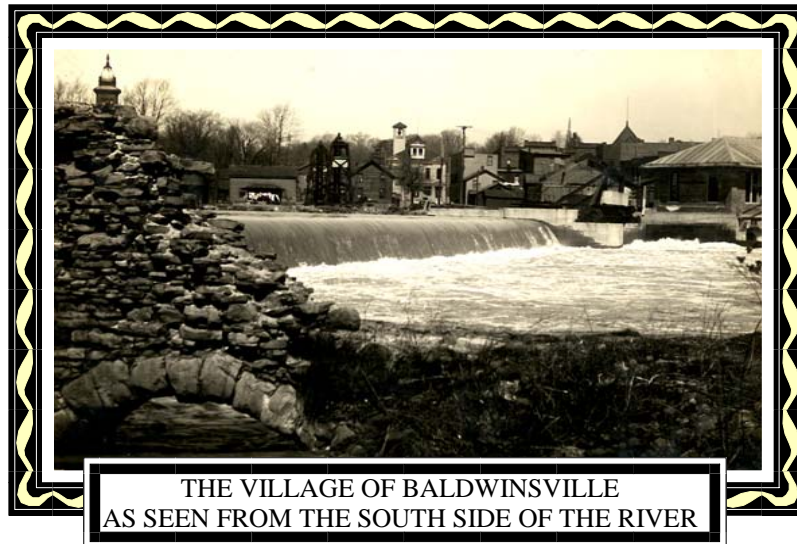
7. The houses at 82 and 80 Oswego Street were both built in 1880. There is an interesting story about these houses. Mr. Wallace Tappan wished to acquire the then vacant lot, which Mr. W.F. Morris owned. But Mr. Tappan and Mr. Morris were not friendly so Mr. Tappan induced Mr. James Connell to buy the land and divide with him. Though they outwitted Mr. Morris, they did themselves and the neighborhood a disservice by erecting two large and substantial brick houses where one on a single corner lot would have been impressive.
8. Look down Oswego Street – picture yourself in the late 1800's and on a winter day with the right side of the street iced for bobsled rides. They would ice this side of the street from January to March. Many industries that were located here had their own 'bobs'. It is said that on a good run the bobs could go from the top of the hill to the canal bridge in 30 seconds. (Baldwin Canal. The Barge Canal was not built until 1907) .
9. The walkway behind the houses on the right side of Oswego Street north of the intersection was the site of the original road. If you follow this sidewalk to the last house you can see that the front of it is facing down the street sort of towards the lower "road/walkway". The story goes that whoever was in power in the village decided where the road would be.

## **8. PROCEED DOWN OSWEGO STREET:**

1. 74 Oswego Street – the house with the cupola on top – this was the home of Dr. Kendall who was a surgeon in the Civil War. It was built in 1866. The barn for this property has been moved to the corner of East Oneida and Virginia Streets and made into apartments.
2. The house at 65 Oswego with the mansard roof (slanting inward with the flat top) was built in 1870. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor had a raised platform for musicians and was used for parties and dancing. The owner, Mr. Fuller, along with his father built 68 Oswego St., 1 East Oneida St. and the First Presbyterian Church.
3. Judge Otis Bigelow had the house at 70 Oswego Street built in 1852 as a wedding gift for his daughter, Mary. It originally had a verandah (wrap around porch) all around the front and the downtown side of the house.
4. Judge Otis Bigelow also had this house at 68 Oswego Street built as a wedding gift. This was for his daughter Marie Louise.
5. The Payn Bigelow house at 61 Oswego Street was built in 1847. This also was a wedding gift. His daughter's name was Olivia. It originally had a porch all across the front.
6. The house at 59 Oswego Street was built in 1860 by a Mr. Ham of N.Y.C. for his sister Mrs. Norton McClenton also as a wedding present. The property used to include the property to the south. It also had a porch across the front. At one time there was a fence in front along the wooden sidewalk.
7. The house at 55 Oswego Street was built in 1820 by Mr. Hamill. Judge Bigelow purchased it in the mid to late 1820's. Judge Bigelow was postmaster from 1828-1840, a merchant, Justice of the Peace and member of the State Assembly in 1831. The front section of the home was used as a store and post office in the early years. A large two story ballroom, now demolished, was built on the back of the home for a wedding. This home has been in the same family since the 1820's.



8. First Presbyterian Church – this building was built in 1865 and was designed by the noted architect Horatio Nelson White.
9. The large brick office building across from where Elizabeth Street intersects with Oswego Street was a warehouse first for tobacco then paper and later it was used as a furniture store. It is made out of Baldwinsville brick, which was made in several places around the township. One brickyard was near the campus of the present Baker, Durgee, and Elden schools at the site of the school bus garages on East Oneida Street. The brick is not good quality; it is soft and therefore does not withstand sand blasting well. This was also the site of the First Methodist Church, a wooden edifice that was dedicated in December, 1844. Mark Twain once spoke there.



**9. PROCEED EAST ALONG ELIZABETH STREET TO THE LARGE BRICK STRUCTURE ON YOUR LEFT:**

1. This is now the Word of Life Assembly of God Church. It was formerly Baldwinsville Academy and later Elizabeth Street Elementary School. The present structure opened in 1923 to house the Junior and Senior High School, kindergarten and library. It made Baldwinsville have the first village school in the county with an auditorium and gymnasium. Elizabeth Street School closed in June, 1981, after 58 years of service. The original academy that stood behind this building was completed and dedicated on December 7, 1867. The brick used in the original part was from the Hax Brickyard on East Oneida Street near Tannery Creek (the school bus garage site). This is also the site of Dr. Jonas Baldwin's large framed house. It is said that two rows of locust trees bordered a driveway southward to the river bend. This home was moved to East Oneida Street, where it was split to make numbers 6 and 8.
2. Across from the academy/church is the Knights of Columbus. Their parking lot is the site of the first Grace Episcopal Church (1860-1960). It was the first church in America to be lit by electricity (1886) thanks to Morris Machine Works where the power was generated. In 1960, an arsonist burned it down. The Knights of Columbus building was once the site of a home used as a station for the Underground Railroad.
3. The house at 15 Elizabeth Street was built by Isaac Baldwin, a grandson of Dr. Baldwin. The back was used as a schoolhouse for the Baldwin children.
4. Next to 15 Elizabeth Street and to the corner of Virginia Street stood the North Side Intermediate and Primary School, a large brick structure in operation from 1846-1923.

**10. AT THE CORNER OF VIRGINIA AND ELIZABETH STREETS TURN SOUTH AND PROCEED TO EAST GENESEE STREET NEAR THE BALDWINVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY:**

1. NW CORNER OF VIRGINIA AND EAST GENESEE STREETS Formerly Morris Pumps, then Morris Machine Works and finally Gould Pumps was located on this site for well over 100 years. Centrifugal pumps, which were invented in Baldwinsville, were manufactured here. These pumps, which help control water, are still in use all over the world.
2. The present Baldwinsville Public Library, built in 1995, is located on the site of a former office building of Morris Machine Works and a tobacco warehouse.
3. Across the street was the Baldwin Canal. Built by Dr. Jonas C. Baldwin in 1809, this canal which allowed travel around the rapids in the river. It ran from River Street along E. Genesee Street and turned to run along Lock Street and then out into the river again. In the 1960's, it was filled in because of disuse and the fact that it had become a health hazard due to stagnant water and garbage. (East Genesee Street was originally called Canal Street)
4. Right across from the library was the Frazee Mill. This flour mill started operation in 1859 and lasted until It burned in 1957.
5. Dr. Jonas C. Baldwin built the first mill on the corner of Albert Palmer Lane and East Genesee Street in 1807. It was not successful because there was not enough waterpower.
6. Many other businesses have been located on this stretch: a wagon works, The Sash and Blind Company, a tannery, a creamery and another flour mill. On Lock Street there was the American Knife Works and the Penn Springs Works.

7. Trolley tracks ran along this street – the route was from Syracuse to Baldwinsville - along the side of Maple Road (Cooper Street), along Syracuse Street turning at the Four Corners to go along E. Genesee Street down Albert Palmer Lane (the trolley bed) and on to Fulton and Oswego. It is said that one could go to Syracuse from Baldwinsville in 15 minutes.
8. If you look across the street and out onto the river you will see stone abutments again. The land between the river and the street was used for the railroad yard and depot.
9. On the site of the (former) firehouse stood the Amos Mill. At its peak it produced 500 barrels of flour a day. Baldwinsville had the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest flour milling industry in the US (before wheat was grown much out West.) This company even made their own barrels.

**11. PROCEED WEST ALONG EAST GENESEE STREET TO THE FOUR CORNERS (INTERSECTION OF W. AND E. GENESEE STREETS AND OSWEGO STREET):**

1. At the time of the first settlers, this area was swampy. When Dr. Baldwin's men were building his canal many of them died of malaria due to the mosquito-infested land. The level of this swampy area has been raised many times.
2. NW Corner – 3 different Seneca Hotels have stood on this site
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Seneca Hotel – wooden structure – 1832-1883
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Seneca Hotel – brick structure, no clock in top 1883-1889
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Seneca Hotel – brick structure, clock in the top 1889-1935

All of these structures were very large and covered a large section of that corner. They all burned. Remnants of the last hotel can still be seen in the first brick structure located to the west of the corner.

3. NE Corner – The first building on this site was the Bigelow General Store. The American Hotel (1831 – 1889) another large hotel also stood here. Another large store that stood here was the Corner Pharmacy 1891-1977.
4. Up the street from the site of the American Hotel stood the Howard Opera House and the Connell Department Store. The first newspaper and bank were here as well as several other department stores .
5. At one time we had a movie theater on this street. It was where the Seneca Federal drive-in theater is currently located.
6. Chappels Department Store had its beginning on the SW side of West Genesee Street (this is the forerunner of the Bon Ton Stores now located in the Syracuse area).
7. Note the Police Station – the first building on this site was the first fire station. The present building was also used as a fire station. The garage doors were located where the picture window is now.
8. The First United Methodist Church was built in 1870 by Horatio Nelson White. At the point where the sidewalks meet at Charlotte and West Genesee Street, the Baldwin Willow grew. (Betsy Baldwin stuck her willow riding crop in the ground after a ride, took root and lasted for about 100 years). Later the Soldiers Monument, currently in the Riverview Cemetery stood here.
9. The dentist office located in the brick building at the corner of West Genesee Street and River Streets was originally a post office. It was built during the Depression when FDR helped many people find work under the WPA (Works Progress Administration).

**12. PROCEED FROM THE FOUR CORNERS SOUTH CROSS THE BRIDGES BACK TO THE BARGE CANAL. AFTER CROSSING THE CANAL BRIDGE GO PAST THE BAPTIST CHURCH AND TURN RIGHT, PROCEED TO THE FIRST CROSS STREET (CANTON STREET) AND TURN LEFT:**

1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> house on the right was the original Baptist Church (1841-1871). It was moved by the congregation via the river from the Cold Springs area. This is now an apartment house.
2. Continue on Canton Street to Downer Street, cross Downer and just a little way on your right is the Shacksboro Schoolhouse Museum. The hours for this museum are 12-4 Wed. – Sun. Be sure to stop for a visit. Exhibits are changed several times a year. It also has a very fine gift shop. Its site was once the Southside School (the museum, a one room schoolhouse once stood a couple of miles further down Canton Street).
3. After leaving the museum head back to Downer Street and turn right to view several other fine architectural gems in our village. When you reach Syracuse Street turn left, go about 2 blocks and you will be at the Barge Canal again **OR** you can cross Downer Street onto Canton and continue the way you came to get to the Barge Canal.
4. If you travel up Tappan Street to McHarrie Street you will see the structure that was the original Catholic Church (1851-1940). It also is an apartment house.
5. Further up Tappan Street is the entrance to the Riverside and Riverview Cemetery. If you go in the gate by the vault and turn right into the old part (Riverside), you will see the burial sites of many of our early settlers.





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