

Seward Historical Walking Tour Map



Orange Icon locations have an interpretive sign

Blue Icon locations have no interpretive sign

Enjoy this walk through Seward's fascinating history. Please respect the owner's privacy and only go into those buildings that are active businesses or public facilities.



Walking Tour Locations

- 1 – 300 First Ave Jan van Emple House, 1925
- 2 – 335 First Ave, Brownell House, 1904
- 3 – 235/239 Second Ave, St Peter's Episcopal Church/Rectory, 1906
- 4 – 315 Second Ave, Captains Oldow House, 1918
- 5 – 318 Second Ave, Manthey House, 1920
- 6 – 1111 Second Ave, Stucco Johnson Historic Homesite, 1916
- 7 – 125 Third Ave, Mary Lowell Homestead/The Line/AK Transfer Co.
- 8 – 319 Third Ave, Wayne Blue House, 1920
- 9 – 235 Third Ave, The Tides Inn, 1941
- 10 – 417 Third Ave, Holland House, 1905
- 11 – 420 Third Ave, Norway Maple, 1943
- 12 – 429 Third Ave, Hale House, 1905
- 13 – Third Ave and Dairy Hill Lane, Benny Benson Memorial Park
- 14 – 209 Fourth Ave, Brown & Hawkins, 1904
- 15 – 218 Fourth Ave, Urbach's Clothiers, 1942
- 16 – 219 Fourth Ave, Orlander Building, 1916
- 17 – 222 Fourth Ave, McMullen Building, 1930
- 18 – 225 Fourth Ave, Seward Commercial Company, 1908
- 19 – 227 Fourth Ave, Generations/Sexton House, 1911
- 20 – 237 Fourth Ave, Kawabe Park/Fourth Ave Business District
- 21 – 1200 Fourth Ave, Seward Mariners' Memorial
- 22 – 212 Fifth Ave, Heritage Sitka Spruce
- 23 – 217/221 Fifth Ave, Hotel Seward, originally 1905
- 24 – 232 Fifth Ave, Mt. Marathon Apartments, circa 1906
- 25 – 327 Fifth Ave, Swetmann House, 1916
- 26 – 338 Fifth Ave, Private Residence, 1930
- 27 – 219 Sixth Ave, Government Cable House, 1905
- 28 – 239 Sixth Ave, Seward Community Library & Museum, 2011
- 29 – 313 Sixth Ave, Malloy House, 1928
- 30 – 308 Sixth Ave, Dryden House, 1920
- 31 – 400/408 Sixth Ave, WWII Quonset Huts, circa 1941
- 32 – 308 Adams St, Van Gilder Hotel, 1916
- 33 – 410 Adams St, 1867 AK Purchase Centennial Year Sitka Spruce
- 34 – 500 Adams St, The L.V. Ray Building, 1916
- 35 – 504 Adams St, IOOF Hall, 1918
- 36 – 611 Adams St, Standard Oil Manager's House, 1928
- 37 – 302 Church St, Resurrect Art Coffee House, 1917
- 38 – 208 Brownell St, Home Brew Alley, 1932
- 39 – Jefferson St and Ballaine Blvd - Sign: 1940 Lowell Creek Diversion Dam
- 40 – 401 Railway Ave, Hoben Park, 1923
- 41 – 501 Railway Ave, Seward Railroad Depot, 1917
- 42 – 613 Railway Ave, Founders Site & Fourth Ave Wharf
- 43 – 411 Washington St, Old Solly's, 1916
- 44 – Lowell Canyon Road, Mount Marathon Race, 1915
- 45 – Salmon Creek Road & Moat Way, Woodlawn Cemetery, 1916
- 46 – Aspen Lane & Coolidge Drive, Seward Cemeteries, 1927



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Welcome to the Seward
Historical Walking Tour.

Visit www.cityofseward.us/walkingtour
for additional
information, sources,
and our partners and
contributors.



Follow the map and enjoy
learning more about Seward's
fascinating history. Please
respect the owner's privacy and
only go into those sites that
are active businesses or public
facilities.

The narratives to the right are
for locations that do not have
interpretive signs.

...but wait, there's more!

First Avenue

#300 • Jan van Empel's House, 1925

- 1 Van Empe, 1880-1940, was a famous Dutch/American artist from the early 20th century. He traveled to Seward in 1924. He lived here for two years while he painted his first sacred picture, "The Resurrection" for the back wall of Saint Peter's Episcopal Church. He used Seward residents and himself as models.

Second Avenue

#315 • Captains Oldow House, 1918

- 4 Notable residents include Captain Don Oldow, captain of the Alaskan ferry Tustemena, and his wife, Captain Pam. The two of them pioneered excursions to the Kenai Fjords National Park starting in 1980.

Third Avenue

#125 • The Mary Lowell Homestead, The Line, and Alaska Transfer Company

- 7 This corner was once a bustling center of activity. It originally was the site of the Mary Lowell homestead. Frank Ballaine had a house built for her here. Later the house was the home of Lydia and Al Peel and known as the Peel House. He was a manager of the Alaska Transfer Company, located where the parking lot is now. His wife was associated with Seward's notorious red-light district known as The Line, where the line of cottonwoods now stands. Behind the cottonwoods there once were 21 little houses owned and operated by local businesswomen. The Line closed down in the mid-1950s.

#319 • Wayne Blue House, 1920

- 8 Wayne Blue purchased this lot in 1916 and the house was built around 1920. Wayne Blue was a manager at the Alaska Transfer Company, an agent for the Seward Water and Power Company, and a business manager for the Seward Gateway paper.

#420 • Norway Maple, 1943

- 11 Beautiful old Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*). Mrs. Amend bought this beautiful tree through the Sears catalog in the late 1930s and planted it as a sapling. It may be the largest Norway Maple tree in Alaska.

Fourth Avenue

#218 • Urbach's Clothiers, 1942

- 15 Urbach's has been in business since 1915 when Leon Urbach founded it in a different location. In 1921, he opened his new store where it is today. When a fire destroyed the original building in 1941, Leon wasted no time and rebuilt it in 1942. Leon had the only radio receiver strong enough to get the national news and would write up bulletins and post them on the window of his house to keep Seward up to date. The Urbach home was the meeting place for statesmen and Leon was one of Alaska's unofficial leaders. When Leon retired, his son, Larry, and his wife Dorothy, took over running Urbach's. Dorothy Urbach continued the family tradition of leadership. In 2020 she received an award from the mayor for her 30 years of leading the Friends of the Library and her many years of service to the Seward community.

#1200 • Seward Mariners' Memorial

- 21 This lighthouse memorial honors the names of mariners lost at sea or who have passed on after a lifetime of love for the ocean.

Fifth Avenue.

#212 • Heritage Sitka Spruce

- 22 Note the huge, beautiful open-grown Sitka Spruce tree. Likely over 70 years old, it is the most outstanding tree in Seward for its history, exemplary shape, beauty, and size. Note the sidewalk curves around it.

#217 and 221 • Hotel Seward, originally 1905

- 23 William McNeiley built the Hotel Seward around 1905. In 1909 the hotel was advertised as a first-class hotel with rates of \$1 and up. The hotel burned down in 1941 and then was rebuilt in 1944. Different wings have been built over time. Come in and walk through its history.

#338 • 1930

- 26 This 405 square-foot cottage was a typical size for many homes in the 1930s.

Adams Street

#500 • The L.V. Ray Building, 1916

- 34 Built by the Harriman Bank of New York, it served as a bank until 1922, then as the local high school from 1925-28. L.V. Ray, a prominent pioneer attorney, bought the building for his home and office and lived there until his death in 1946. His wife, Hazel, converted it into apartments.

#504 • International Order of Odd Fellows Hall, 1918

- 35 The IOOF hall was completed and opened to the public with a dance and basket social in 1918. It was one of the favorite dancing and grand ball locations in Seward through the 1940s, and served as a community center for many years.

Interesting Sites If You Drive A Little

Woodlawn Cemetery

Salmon Creek Road and Moat Way, 1916

- 45 In the early days, the dead were buried in numerous places around Seward as there was no official cemetery. In 1916, the city purchased this land for the Woodlawn Cemetery. For \$30 each, remains were dug up, transported, and reburied here. When Salmon Creek changed course in the 1920s, the water table rose too high to continue using the land as a cemetery. It was abandoned around 1926. Many of the remains were exhumed and relocated to the current cemetery. Some of Seward's earliest residents, including Mary Lowell, are buried here.

Seward Cemeteries

Aspen Lane and Coolidge Drive, 1933

- 46 In 1933 the City acquired a 40-acre Cemetery Reserve and deeded land to the organizations that had initiated the idea of creating this cemetery. Many graves were relocated from Woodlawn Cemetery. To this day, the American Legion, Masons, and Pioneers of Alaska maintain their cemeteries. The City maintains the Oddfellow and Jesse Lee Home Cemeteries located in the NW corner of the city parcel. View the Memorial Garden created by the Seward Rotary Club near the Aspen Lane entrance, and the Jesse Lee Home Cemetery interpretive sign nearby.