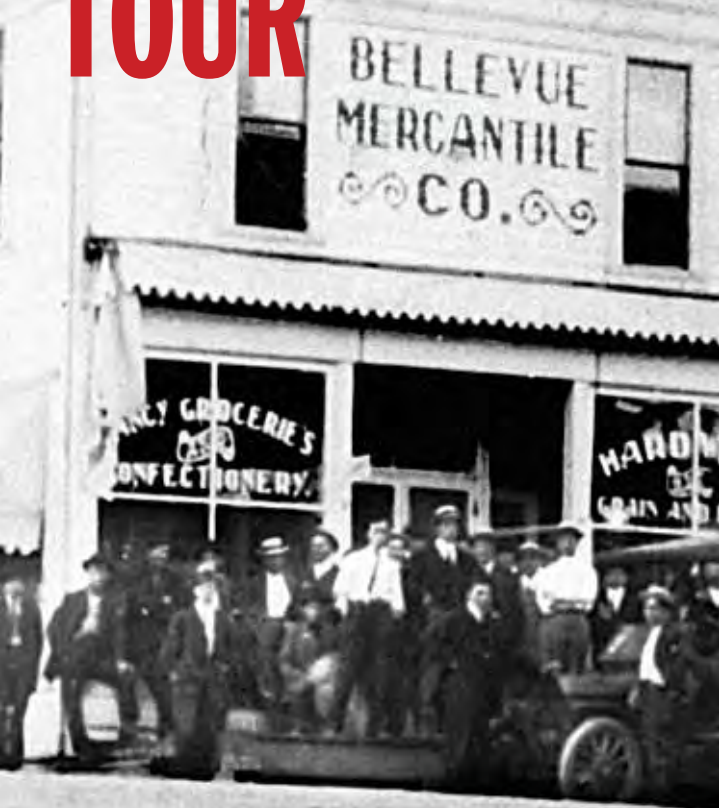


# EARLY BELLEVUE WALKING TOUR



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## WELCOME

**BEFORE GLASS TOWERS** defined the skyline and shoppers bustled across busy pavement, Bellevue was a quiet town of dirt roads and scattered homes. The first settlers from Seattle began to drift across Lake Washington in the 1860s.

Join us on a walking tour as we discover the hidden history throughout downtown Bellevue. Plan on about 2-3 hours of easy to moderate foot travel (challenging routes are marked).



Looking north from Moorland, over Meydenbauer Bay towards Bellevue, 1911 (OR/L 79.79.126)



*The McKee Building, on the north side of Main Street at Main and 101st, about 1940.*

**#1** You are standing at the intersection of NE 8th St. and 104th Ave. NE (also called Bellevue Way), the center of Bellevue's modern commercial district. This tour will take you to the original center of town, the intersection of Main St. and 100th Ave. NE, now called "Old Bellevue." As you travel between these two points, you will pass many locations where Bellevue's past is still visible in the modern landscape.



*Bellevue Way and NE 8th St., looking southeast, 1937. (1994BHS.017.001)*

**#2** The wooden sculpture that wraps around the fireplace inside the lobby of The Lodge is called "Full Circle." In 2008, Anna Hanson carved the piece from the wood of a red cedar that grew in Bellevue Square for many years. She was also paying tribute to her grandfather Dudley Carter, who created the sculpture "Forest Deity" for the Square in 1947. This older carving is still visible on the NE 8th St. side of the Square.



*"Forest Deity" at Bellevue Square, 1947. (Carl Pefley Collection 1997.027.052)*

**#3** At the intersection of Bellevue Way and NE 6th St., you can see a major pedestrian entrance to Bellevue Square on the right and Bellevue Arts Museum on the left. Public art came to Bellevue about the same time as the Square. The Crabapple Restaurant at the Square began hosting an Arts and Crafts Fair in 1947, only one year after the shopping center opened. The Arts Fair is still a major summer event in



Bellevue, and public art is scattered throughout the city. Can you see any pieces at this intersection?



*Crowds at the Arts and Crafts Fair at Bellevue Square in the 1950s. (Carl Pefley Collection 1997.027.005)*

**#4** The wide, flat land in what is now downtown Bellevue was excellent for farming. Local residents started a Strawberry Festival in 1925 to attract visitors to the area. Eastside Heritage Center revived the Festival in the 1980s and still celebrates it every June.

**#5** At the north entrance to Downtown Park, walk past the fountain to the edge of the concrete railing. You should have a good view of the entire area. To your left, you will see something that looks like a low wall in the grass. This marks the outline of the Overlake Elementary School, which opened in 1942 and was torn down in 1986. Plaques within the park mark the approximate locations of this and other early Bellevue schools. The Bellevue School District used to own most of what is now Downtown Park.



*Overlake Elementary School, 1940s. (94.05.02)*



*Strawberry pickers at the Warren family farm near Bellevue Way, 1903 or 1904. (OR/L 79.79.216)*

**#6** Directly in front of you is a small grove of trees. In 1920 the Bellevue Minute Women planted three elm trees in honor of three Bellevue citizens who served in World War I. On Nov. 11, 1926, they dedicated a flagpole and a memorial plaque. Although the flagpole is gone, the stone base and metal plaque still remain. One of the elm trees is smaller than the others — this is a replacement that was planted after one of the original elms came down in a storm in 2006.



*Dedication of memorial plaque and flagpole on Nov. 11, 1926. (L 86.009.2)*

Those who wish to explore the Park a bit more can venture inside to **Site #6A**. Otherwise, just move directly to **Site #7**.

**#6A** In 1993 the City of Bellevue planted cherry trees in the formal garden at the northeast corner of the Downtown Park to recognize the many contributions of Bellevue’s Japanese-American community. Prior to World War II, about 60 Japanese-American families lived in the greater Bellevue area. Most of them were farmers, like much of Bellevue’s population at the time, and they provided the majority of the berries for the Strawberry Festival.



*Left to right: Tok Hiroataka, Taki Masunaga, and Cano Numoto at the Downtown Park cherry tree dedication, May 20, 1993. (Eastside Heritage Center Japanese-American Collection, photo courtesy Yoko Sawano)*

**#7** In 1915 the citizens of Bellevue constructed a community clubhouse on the northwest corner of the intersection of NE 1st St. and 100th Ave. NE. Over the years it was a popular meeting spot for both business and pleasure. Early Bellevue residents recall the childhood enjoyment of weekly silent movies at the clubhouse for 10¢-15¢. The Boys and Girls Club (then called the “Boys’ Club”) moved into the building in the 1950s. In 1976 that organization tore down the first clubhouse and replaced it with a new structure.



*Looking north on 100th Ave. NE from NE 1st St. The first Bellevue Clubhouse is on the west (left) side of the street. (1996.12BHS.04)*

**THE NEXT SECTION OF THE TOUR INVOLVES STAIRS AND STEEP HILLS. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SKIP OVER THIS PART, TURN AHEAD TO SITE #15.**

**#8** A set of stairs will take you into Meydenbauer Beach Park, which was constructed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935. Although it was popular at first, Bellevue forgot about the park in the 1940s. Blackberries and other brush filled in the ravine, hiding the first park buildings, and blocking access to the beach. Workmen rediscovered it in 1954, and the park has undergone several expansions and renovations since that time.



*Meydenbauer Beach Park, about 1936. (L 84.013)*



*Earlier Meydenbauer Bay Bridge dedication, Feb. 11, 1950. (1994.32.07)*

**#9** Two stairways beneath the bridge will take you up to Lake Washington Blvd. NE. This bridge has also been renovated several times. The structure that you are standing on now is the third version; it dates from 2002. Another bridge used to cross the ravine at NE 1st Street.



*View from Meydenbauer Bay, early 1900s. (OR/L 79.79.555)*

**#10** As you enter Bellevue's marina, look out at the water. Take a moment to compare the modern view with this earlier image above. If it is a clear day, you should be able to see the Moorlands district across the bay to your left and Medina's Groat Point to your right. Early Bellevue resident Norman Blye recalled that he and his brother once swam across the bay using a wooden plank as a flotation device.

**#11** Now look downhill towards the marina. In 1919 William Schupp bought this property to be the winter headquarters for his American Pacific Whaling Company fleet. The actual whaling took place in Alaska, but Bellevue provided freshwater moorage for the seven boats where they could be repaired efficiently and protected from marine corrosion and organisms. The building on the dock was the main office and machine shop; the one to the right of the wharf was a garage. The fleet hunted for the last time in 1941, and the buildings were converted to the Bellevue Marina between 1956 and 1958.



*American Pacific Whaling Company dock in Bellevue, 1920s. (L85.039.002)*

**#12** This intersection was the site of Bellevue's ferry dock. Before the first Lake Washington Floating Bridge, boats were the easiest and fastest way to travel from Bellevue to Seattle. Ferries provided scheduled service to Bellevue from 1892 through 1921. After that point, service from Seattle to Medina continued until August of 1950, and Bellevue residents could take a shuttle bus to the Medina dock.



*Auto ferry Leschi at the Bellevue dock, about 1915. (L 83.076.008)*





*Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club, 1990's (Eastside Heritage Center Research Collection)*

**#13** On the left side of Meydenbauer Way SE, you will see the Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club. In the early 20th century, this building was part of Wildwood Park, and it provided space for dancing, roller-skating, and other indoor recreation. William Schupp purchased the parkland, including the dance hall, in 1933. He intended to convert the hall into a mansion but died before he could complete construction. The Yacht Club incorporated in 1946, purchased the building from Schupp's son-in-law, and transformed it into the structure that you see today.

**#14** Wildwood Park, which originally extended all the way to the waterfront, was established in 1906. Owners Henry Cade and Louis Carlson used their steamboat "Wildwood" to bring visitors from Seattle to Bellevue. The park operated until the early 1930s, providing dances, music, boxing matches, canoeing, roller skating, and probably some illegal liquor during Prohibition. In the middle of the 20th century the property was subdivided and passed into private hands for a few decades. (As we have seen, the dance hall became the Meydenbauer Bay Yacht Club.) The City of Bellevue purchased this parcel in 1970 and reopened the park in 1979.



*Picnic at Wildwood Park, about 1900. (2007.048.002)  
Inset: Flyer for Wildwood Park, 1928. (2012.009)*



*Coffee Mill Antiques, about 1960. (2011.033.004)*

**#15** In the first half of the 20th century, Main Street was the retail center of Bellevue. Thomas Daugherty's grocery store stood on the south west corner of the intersection of Main St. and 101st Ave. Constructed in 1916 or 1917, the structure was also a hardware store, a bicycle shop, and the popular Coffee Mill Antiques before it was torn down in 2000.

**#16** Built in the 1890s, the clapboard Philbrook House at 10133 1/2 Main St. (now 10135) is the oldest structure on the street. It has functioned as a private home, a bakery, a restaurant, and many different stores. Another building partly encircles the Philbrook House, but you can still see the porch from Main St. and the back from a parking lot on 102nd Ave. SE.



*Philbrook House as a restaurant, 1930s. (Burrows Collection 1996.11BHS)*

**#17** The shop at 105 102nd Ave. SE is actually a collection of smaller buildings under a single roof. Details are unclear, but the oldest part of this structure may date from 1918. Another section was probably built on the north side of Main St. and moved to this location in the 1940s. If you examine the north side of the building, you can see the gap

between the two sections. The building served as the offices of Bellevue Realty, founded in 1925 by Charles Bovee who became Bellevue's first Mayor.



105 102nd Ave. SE, 1992. (Bellevue Historical Survey Collection)

**#18** The building at 10203 Main St. was originally built in 1929 as the Bellevue State Bank, but it closed after only two years due to the stock market crash. Pharmacist Meta Burrows later purchased the property and adjacent units (10213 through 10217) as the home of Lakeside Drugs for over 40 years. Meta Burrows' soda fountain was a favorite gathering spot for the entire Bellevue community. The Bank building has also housed the first office of the Bellevue American newspaper and the "City of Paris" jewelry store.



Employees and customers at Meta Burrows Pharmacy and soda fountain, 1940's (1996.11.107)



Main Street and 102nd Ave NE looking east, 1970's (Preuss Collection, 1998.25.50)

**#19** The Bellevue Barber Shop was constructed at 10251 Main St. in 1927 or 1930 (sources differ). Most other buildings in the area served multiple purposes over the years. However, this one remained a barber shop until 2009. It was torn down only a few years later in 2013.



Wright's Barber Shop, about 1940. (Burrows Collection 1996.11BHS.23)



Bellevue Barber Shop, 1992. (Bellevue Historical Survey Collection)





*Eastside Glass & Paint owners and employees, 1953 (1998.100.001)*

**#20** The building at 10246 Main Street was originally built in 1920. It has served many businesses over the years, including a meat market, a shoe repair shop, and a tavern. In 1946 it became the home of Eastside Glass Co., owned by the Vander Hoek family. Paul Vander Hoek was instrumental in starting both the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce and the Bellevue Downtown Association, and he was often called the “Mayor of Main Street”. The Eastside Glass retail store remained in the building until 1986.



*Hanson's Garage on Main St., about 1925. (2002.129.001)*

**#21** George Hanson owned the first garage on Main St. (the second in Bellevue). The building stood on the north side of the street near the intersection with 102nd Ave. It was destroyed by fire in the 1920s, a common fate for Bellevue's early buildings since the nearest fire station was in Kirkland.

**#22** The McKee Building, on the north side of Main Street and 101st consisted of six retail units. Many merchants and organizations passed through here over the years, including Younger's Candy Shop, Mrs. Roger's Variety Store, the Post Office, Puget Sound Power and Light, and Maynard's Drug Store. The McKee building was replaced by an apartment complex in the 1990s. However, the owner of the complex sought to retain the character of the location by putting shops in a similar configuration on the lower floor.

*RIGHT: Interior of Younger's Candy Shop, the McKee Building. (2002.125.004)*



*BELOW: Looking east at the McKee Building, about 1940. (Burrows Collection 1996.11BHS.32)*



*The McKee Building in the 1970s. (Preuss Collection 1998.25.73)*

**#23** Main St. and 100th Ave. used to be the central intersection in Bellevue. A general store on the northeast corner went through multiple owners and names, but early Bellevue residents could usually purchase groceries, hardware, and animal feed here. One of the owners also sold penny candy, which was popular with the children who attended school across the street. Running in front of the store and along the north side of Main Street was a wooden sidewalk. Children used to look underneath for coins that fell between the slats.



*Bellevue Mercantile Co., 1917. (L 83.076.010)*

**#24** One of Bellevue's first schools stood on the southeast corner. The Main Street School, as it was known, was built in the early 1890s for \$1,500. Initially the school only had two rooms, but it expanded over time, and in 1923 it became Bellevue's first four-year high school. The building was last used as a school in 1942. It became a VFW Hall, and then, after Bellevue incorporated in 1953, the City Hall. (The Police Department was on the lower level.) The building was condemned in 1965, and a gas station replaced it.



*The Main St. School, about 1900. (OR/L 79.79.089)*



*Bellevue City Hall, 1950s. (City of Bellevue Photo Collection 2004.022.028)*

**WE HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED** this trip through Bellevue's past. Even a relatively modern city like this one has a history, and if you look closely, you can see where previous generations have left their mark. We encourage you to visit other areas of Bellevue, especially the parks, with this in mind. You may be surprised by what you find.



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