

Branch County Historical Society  
**Architectural Home Tour Walk**

1.) **11 E Chicago Street**  
**Putnam Funeral Home**  
Colonial Revival **Built: 1859**

1900-1929\* Simplicity was the goal of the 20th century and the Colonial or Georgian Revival style borrowed from the classical forms of the earlier Georgian and Federal periods. This style was popularized after the Centennial Exposition in 1876, but did not become widespread until 1900. Though using the earlier traditional style as a starting point, these houses were designed as contemporary homes. They were generous in size with comfortable interior arrangements and equipped with the latest in plumbing, electric lights, central heating, refrigerators and stoves, symmetry, shuttered windows and end porches were all part of this very popular style.

This brick and mortar structure was built in 1859, by Dr. John H. Beech, respected citizen and skillful surgeon. In 1870, Dr. Beech offered the parlors in his home for the use of the newly formed "Ladies Library Association". In 1874, he presented the association with a building in the rear of his dwelling. The home was remodeled in 1908. Grace and Horace Kitchel, owner, and Frank and Lulu McConkey established the McConkey Funeral Home. Eleanor and Ken Putnam purchased the business in 1946.

2.) **52 Marshall Street**  
**First Presbyterian Church**  
Romanesque Revival **Built: 1866-1869**

1880-1900\* The Romanesque Revival style is monochromatic brick or stone. It features towers and semi-circular arched windows and doorways. The arch is also used decoratively in bands under the eaves or lower to mark horizontal divisions. Churches, governmental and institutional buildings saw the most frequent application of this style. This Building was started in 1866 and completed in 1869 for a total cost of \$40,104.21, and is of the Romanesque Revival style. Note the stone hood moldings and corbeled tables of brickwork. The steeple is the highest in Southern Michigan, measuring 158 feet.

3.) **162 Marshall Street**  
**Thomas Dickenson House**  
Italianate **Built: 1873**

1840-1875\* The Italianate differed from the Italian Villa style in its symmetrical facade and roof top cupola. Similar characteristics were the low hipped roof, under eave bracketing, bay window and tall narrow windows that were often rounded. The Italianate style sported a central one-bay on a long porch.

Thomas Dickinson was the first resident of this fine Italianate home built sometime prior

to 1873. An addition doubled the size of the house and another remodeling done in 1898 added the two porches. Interestingly, the entire porch foundation for this and the house next door was made from one huge stone brought from the Thomas Cain Farm in Union Township. At Dickinson's death in 1904, his unmarried daughter Evelyn, inherited the house and lived there until her death in 1944.

#### 4.) **53 East Chicago Street**

##### **Henry C. Lewis House**

Italian Villa **Built: 1855**

1840-1880\*This style is based on the irregularly massed farmhouses of the Italian country side. The asymmetrical villa was composed of one or more towers with wings. Its characteristics include balconies, verandahs, shallow hipped roofs with bracketed projecting eaves, and round-topped windows which were often grouped in twos or threes.

The ideal exterior finish was smooth stucco. Henry C. Lewis was a successful businessman and benefactor of Coldwater. Among his gifts to the city was an art gallery which was next door to his beautiful Italianate home on E. Chicago Street. The exemplary characteristics of the Italianate style are evident in the high round topped windows and doors, the bracketed eaves and the hip roof. And, as befits a leader of the community, the first indoor plumbing in Coldwater was installed here in 1864.

#### 5.) **27 E. Chicago Street**

##### **St. Mark's Parish House**

English Tudor Revival **Built: 1915**

1910-1930\*This style is partly derived from the half-timbered houses of the 16th and 17th centuries. The quaint Tudor style is also reminiscent of the 19th century romantic style. Irregular shapes, steeply pitched roofs, multi-paned windows, and rough-hewn materials are typical of this rustic style.

In 1915 the educational wing or Parish House was added to St. Mark's Church. It was constructed at a cost of \$10,000.00

#### 6.) **23 E. Chicago Street**

##### **St. Marks Episcopal Church**

Gothic Revival **Built: 1880**

1840-1870\*The novels of Sir Walter Scott fired the nation's imagination into story book structures for everything from cottages to castles. Emphasis on vertical lines merged the medieval theme with cathedral over-tones. This vertical effect was achieved through tall narrow windows and multiple pointed gables, often topped by slender finials. Lacy wooden bargeboards along the gable edges and under the eaves contributed to romantic feelings of the fairy-tale style.

The first Episcopal services in this area were held in 1832. A frame building was built in 1862 and a brick structure in 1876 to house the services. The cornerstone for the present

building was laid in 1880. Most of the interior furnishings and windows were given as memorials. The butternut pews were built by Ball Brothers Planing Mill at a cost of \$15.00 each. The Sunday School children gave their pennies to buy the church bell and in 1895, the congregation purchased the Johnson Tracker organ which is still in use. The building survived a 1973 fire with minor interior alterations.

**7.) 17-19 N. Monroe Street**

**First Post Office**

Commercial Italianate **Built: 1882**

The Italianate style was so popular that it was often applied to commercial and industrial buildings. The round-arched windows and bracketed eaves provided storefronts with a common denominator. Occasionally a columned arcade distinguished some more affluent shopkeepers. At first, these columns, brackets and window-hoods were cut from stone. Enterprising businessmen soon saw a chance to duplicate them in cast iron or pressed tin and the style spread everywhere.

This commercial building is in the Italianate style. Note the round windows on the upper level through which, Flora Root, the young daughter of the Post Master, was held up high to see out of.

**8.) 36 W. Pearl Street**

**US Government/Post Office**

Second Renaissance Revival **Built: 1910**

1890-1920\*The later Renaissance Revival is distinguishable from the earlier (1840-1890) Renaissance Revival style mainly by size and scale. The large buildings are divided in horizontal divisions by belt or string coursed. Enriched and projecting cornices as well as balustrades highlight the roof line.

**9.) 113 E. Chicago Street**

**The Townsend House**

Queen Anne **Built: 1890**

1876-1900\*Introduced to this country at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, this non-symmetrical style spread quickly across the country. The style manifests a variety of forms, texture, material, and colors. Architectural details include turrets, towers, tall chimneys, horizontal decorative bands, balconies, spindle work porches, bays and encircling verandahs. The many varied windows often exhibit colored glass panels. This richly decorative style was undeniably an exuberant visual display.

Dr. Frederick Townsend, educator and writer, built this Queen Anne style home in 1890 at a cost of \$4,000.00. His father Hosea Townsend, lived just east of his property. These three properties comprised "Townsend Corner."

**10.) 26-28 W. Chicago Street**

**The Coldwater Municipal Building**  
Beaux Arts **Built: 1929**

1890-1920\*This large and grandiose style displays an exuberance of detail and a variety of stone finishes. Colossal columns, often grouped in pairs, frame projecting facades. A popular success at the 1893 Colombian Exposition in Chicago, the style was employed to express corporate wealth or civic pride.

Coldwater National Bank and Branch County Savings Bank merged in 1935 and occupied the quarters which had been built in 1929. In 1962 a two-story addition on the east was completed. This property remained the site of the Branch County Bank until 1977. In 1978, the city administration offices moved into the building.