

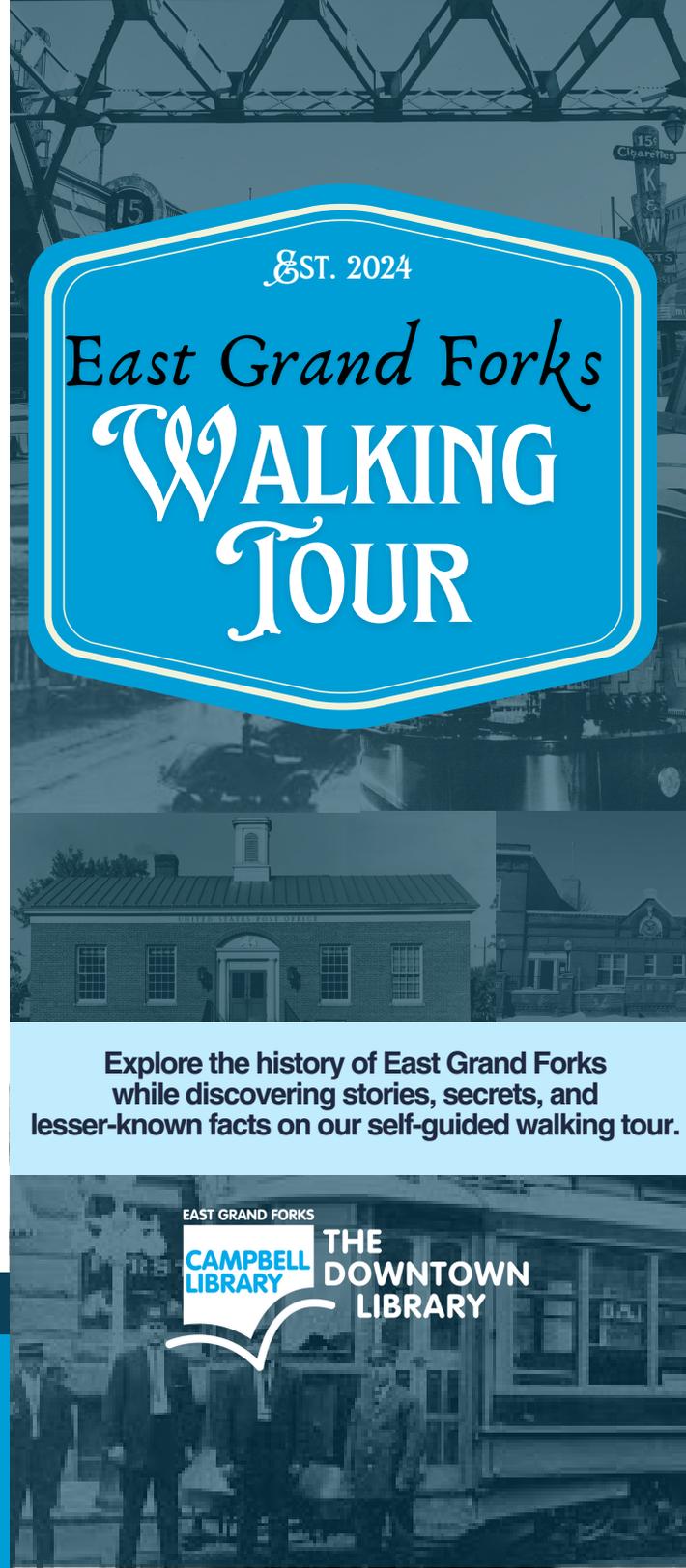
History of EGF

Before European settlers arrived, the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes inhabited the area. In 1871, settlers began establishing East Grand Forks, MN (EGF), named for its location east of Grand Forks, ND. The city's identity was solidified with a post office in 1883 and official incorporation on April 13, 1887. EGF became a trade and agricultural hub due to its fertile valley along the Red River. The city developed around the Red Lake River, with its northern section as the community's heart and the southern area, known as "The Point," serving as a residential zone at the river confluence.

Flood of 1997

A defining moment in East Grand Forks' history was the devastating flood of 1997, which inundated both East Grand Forks and Grand Forks with over 54 feet of water. The entire city faced mandatory evacuation and nearly every home suffered damage.

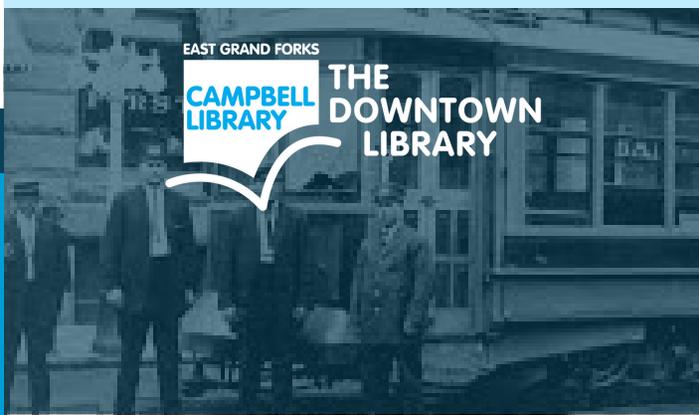
Post-flood recovery was a testament to the community's resilience, with significant rebuilding efforts and the clearing of flood-prone areas along the rivers. Today, the City of East Grand Forks stands stronger with improved flood protections and a renewed sense of community pride.



EST. 2024

East Grand Forks WALKING TOUR

Explore the history of East Grand Forks while discovering stories, secrets, and lesser-known facts on our self-guided walking tour.



Take the Tour

Download the self-guided audio tour app on your GPS-enabled mobile device.



Interested in a guided tour?

CONTACT US

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Bridges

In 1871, John Fadden established a ferry service across the Red River with a flat-bottom boat. By 1878, Capt Alex Griggs replaced the ferry with a toll bridge on DeMers Ave, facilitating steamboat navigation. Tolls were 5¢ per person, 15¢ for horse and buggy, and 25¢ for horse teams.

Greenway & Invisible Wall

Running parallel to the Red River, the stunning 2,200-acre Greenway Trail was made accessible to the public in 2003. As you stroll south from the Sorlie Bridge along River Street or the trail, glance to your left to catch a glimpse of a section of the 1,040-foot "Invisible" Floodwall.

Old Library Site

When you make the turn from River Street onto 3rd Avenue NW, you'll notice a brick column on your right, which signifies the site of the pre-flood public library. In 1997, the library, encompassing 4,800 square feet, along with its entire collection, was severely damaged by floodwater and debris that nearly reached the ceiling.

States Theatre & Ballroom

The States Theatre and Ballroom, located near Sorlie Bridge (now River Street), served as the only acceptable venue for single women and families in downtown EGF during the 1920s and 1930s, offering meals and entertainment without alcohol. It hosted famous musicians like Louis Armstrong and featured a unique design with a rotating bandstand, space for two orchestras, a polished dance floor, and fresh air circulation.

Red River State Recreation

Located in northern downtown, the Sherlock Park neighborhood experienced severe flooding in 1997 causing extensive damage and made the area unlivable. Rather than rebuilding, the community decided to turn the land into the Red River State Recreation Area.

Blue Moose Bar & Grill

On November 6, 1998, the Blue Moose Restaurant in downtown EGF relocated from its previous spot by the Sorlie Bridge to a new site on Second St. NW. This move was essential because the former location was on the "wet side" of the floodwall that was being constructed.

Whitey's Wonderbar

In the 1920s and 1930s, Whitey's was a standout spot known for its colorful collection of slot machines and bustling atmosphere reminiscent of Chicago's nightclubs. One of its most remarkable features was the first ever stainless steel horseshoe-shaped bar, a unique design still a part of its location today.

Demers Ave

In the late 1930s, EGF was known for its vibrant neon lights on DeMers Ave, designed by Louis Buckner, which attracted visitors and gained recognition from "Ripley's Believe It or Not."

Prohibition

North Dakota became a dry state in 1889. Minnesota went dry in 1852, but it was declared unconstitutional that same year, benefiting EGF as North Dakotans crossed the Red River to drink. With over 35 bars, saloons, and gambling halls, EGF entertained farmers, railroad workers, and travelers.

Post Office

William C. Nash and his men transported mail by pony cart in summer and huskies in winter along one of six federally authorized routes in Minnesota in 1851. By 1863, the EGF site was a trader camp called Wolf Point.

Hamm's Brewing Company

Between 1880 and 1915, city revenue relied heavily on its liquor industry. In 1890, the Hamm's Brewing Company of St. Paul established a cold-storage facility in EGF, but quickly outgrew it, moving in 1897 to the corner of DeMers and 4th St NW, expanding in 1907.

Railroads

In the late 1870s, the charming region of NW Minnesota faced some tough challenges in its journey to build a positive reputation. Back in 1872, the knowledgeable General Hazen, an expert on the upper Midwest, described the Red River Valley as "a barren waste."

Sherlock Forest Park

Located on 4th Ave NW, Sherlock Forest Playground was created in 2003 with the help of local elementary schools and built by community volunteers who contributed their time, along with donations and grants. Sadly, on May 27, 2011, a fire destroyed much of the playground.

Campbell Library

After the 1997 Flood damaged the library on 2nd St temporarily relocated to Nash Park and operated with nationwide book donations until the new Campbell Library opened in 2001 on 4th St NW, at the former A & L Potato Warehouse site.

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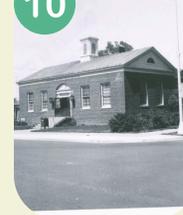
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