



# A WALKING TOUR IN THE BOSTON- EDISON HISTORIC DISTRICT

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This tour of the Boston-Edison neighborhood focuses on the homes of some of Boston-Edison's most historically prominent residents and those that have significant and unique architectural styles. The tour covers Zone A of the district, which is bounded by Edison Avenue, Boston Boulevard, Woodward Avenue, and Hamilton Avenue. This area contains the oldest houses in the Historic District. The entire tour covers a little over two miles from start to finish.

Begin your tour at Voigt's Park at the corner of Edison and Second Avenues. Proceed down the south side of Edison Avenue toward Woodward Avenue.

## EDISON AVENUE

- 151** Home of Walter Hartman; built in 1909, the house features a slate roof, imposing fluted columns and white ceramic brick which was advertised as being "self-cleaning.
- 121** Home of Ernst Kern of Kern's Department Store and "The Kern Block." Built in 1916 in the Colonial Revival style.
- 111** Home of William Fisher, one of the Fisher brothers of "Body by Fisher" fame. Built in 1916 in the Tudor Revival style.
- 51** Home of Charles Tolsma; a curious combination of Tudor Revival style with Dutch-style roof. Built in 1909. Subsequent owners included the Zuckerman and Goldfinger families.

Cross the street and return toward Second Avenue.

- 26** Home of Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, Rabbi of Temple Beth El from 1899 till 1941. Built in 1911. Rabbi Franklin organized the United Jewish Charities, edited The Jewish American, and founded the Temple Arts Society.
- 90** Home of Horace Rackham; built in 1907 in the American Eclectic style with Prairie School influences. Mr. Rackham was one of the original twelve shareholders in the Ford Motor Company. In 1903, as a young attorney, Mr. Rackham bought 1000 shares in Henry Ford's new automobile company for \$5000; in 1919 he sold his stock for over \$12,000,000. Mr. Rackham's philanthropies included endowing the Graduate School of the University of Michigan, providing land for the Detroit Zoo and Rackham Golf Course, and constructing the Rackham Auditorium in Ann Arbor, and the Rackham Engineering Society Building in Detroit's Cultural Center.
- 112** Home of James Knox, a noted publicist; built in 1908 in the Georgian Revival style. Subsequent owners included Judge Franz Kuhn, Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court and Mr. Willie Horton of Detroit Tigers fame.

- 140** Home of Henry and Clara Ford; built in 1908, the year the Model T went into production, in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Edsel Ford had a workshop above the garage; Mrs. Ford's Detroit Electric car was housed in the single story part of the garage. The State Historic Site marker provides information regarding the world-changing innovations developed by Henry Ford while living on Edison Avenue.

From the Historic Site Marker proceed one block north on Second Avenue to Longfellow Avenue. Proceed toward Woodward Avenue.

### **LONGFELLOW AVENUE**

This is one of the most charming blocks in the City of Detroit . Each home was custom designed and carefully constructed. An array of styles are represented including Tudor, Colonial, Georgian, Mediterranean, Craftsman and American Vernacular.

- 610** Home of Mr. James Couzens; built in 1910 in the Tudor Revival style. Mr. Couzens was a shareholder and Treasurer of the Ford Motor Company. This is one of several homes in Boston Edison designed by world renowned industrial architect Albert Kahn, the principal architect for the Ford Motor Company. Mr. Couzens was a business wizard and played an essential role in the early success of the Ford Motor Company. He later became Police Commissioner and Mayor of Detroit and concluded his career of public service as U.S. Senator from Michigan.
- 160** Home of S. D. Waldon, Vice President of Packard Motor Car Co.; built in 1915 in the Colonial Revival style.
- 120** Home of Albert F. Purdith; built in 1904 in the Georgian Revival style. One of the earliest homes in Boston Edison and noted for its superb proportions and excellent attention to detail.
- 100** Home of Ernest Venn; built in 1908 in the Mediterranean style; designed by Albert Kahn; one of his few stucco houses.
- 36** Home of Charles D. Bennett; built in 1906 in an eclectic style. Subsequently owned by Frank Navin, early owner of the Detroit Tigers and builder of Tiger Stadium.

Return to Second Avenue and proceed one block north to Chicago Boulevard.

### **CHICAGO BOULEVARD**

From the corner, note the diverse styles of the houses on each corner.

- 155** Home of Eugene H. Sloman; built in 1916 in the Tudor Revival style. Note the high parapeted gables, two-story bay windows and ornate door surround with garland flanked coat of arms.

- 130** Home of Edward C. Kinsel; built in 1912 in the American Eclectic style. This house incorporates such diverse elements as Romanesque serpentine columns and 18' Century Adam style door surrounds and abundant wrought iron work. The Kinsel Drug Store, the city's first twenty four hour drug store, was a Detroit landmark at the corner of Griswold and Michigan Avenues.
- 610** Home of Charles W. Munz; built in 1913 in the American Vernacular style. This house, in contrast to its neighbors, eschews ornamentation for simplicity; its symmetry, sturdy proportions and simple lines give it a substantial appearance. Mr. Munz was born in Germany and was successful in furniture manufacturing and the early movie theater business; he built the Michigan Palace.
- 605** Home of Mr. Alanson A. Moore; built in 1911 in the American Eclectic style.

Walk down the north side of Chicago Boulevard to -

- 664** Home of Meyer L. Prentis; built in 1925 in the Tudor Revival style. Mr. Prentis was Treasurer of the General Motors Corporation. Prentis family philanthropies include the Meyer L. Prentis Cancer Center at the Detroit Medical Center and the Meyer and Anna Prentis Building at Wayne State University.
- 631** Home of Alfred O. Dunk; built in 1911 in American Eclectic style. Mr. Dunk was engaged in a number of enterprises including the Detroit Electric Car Company. Clara Ford enjoyed the benefits of Detroit Electric: quiet and clean and they did not require cranking.

Return to Second Avenue, continue north to Boston Boulevard West and walk toward Woodward.

### **BOSTON BOULEVARD WEST**

- 121** Home of Clarence M. Burton; built in 1914 in the American Eclectic style inspired by Italian Renaissance influences. The elegantly detailed entry features paired fluted and tapered Doric and square columns set off by ornamental brackets and fine dental work. Mr. Burton was President of Burton Abstract & Title Co. and a noted local historian. He was the founder and first president of the Detroit Historical Society. Mr. Burton gave his collection of books and papers relating to the history of Detroit and Michigan to the Detroit Public Library where it formed the nucleus of the Burton Historical Collection.
- 51** Home of Jacob Siegel; built in 1919 in the American Eclectic style with a variety of traditional influences. The basic proportions are Georgian, the stone work reflects Renaissance influences and the large windows are French inspired. Mr. Siegel was born in Germany in 1842, came to the United States in 1886 and was founder and president of American Lady Corset Company.

Cross the street and return toward Second Avenue; proceed all the way to Hamilton.

- 70** Home of Sebastian S. Kresge; built in 1914; designed by Meade, Hamilton Architects. Mr. Kresge was founder of the S.S. Kresge Co. the predecessor of the present day K-Mart Corporation. The stucco house is sited on the largest lot in the Boston Edison Historic District and has numerous out buildings and appurtenances on the grounds.
- 150** Home of Benjamin Siegel; built in 1915; designed by Albert Kahn. Mr. Siegel established the B. Siegel Company in 1895; under his leadership the company became the largest women's clothing store in the Midwest. The house is in the Italian Renaissance Revival style and is constructed entirely of limestone. The strict symmetry and grand proportions of the facade endow the house with a sense of importance.
- 610** Home of Joseph Siegel; built in 1915; designed by Albert Kahn. Note that its facade is similar to that of the Jacob Siegel home at 51 Boston Boulevard.
- 611** Home of Charles Lambert; built in 1912 in Italian Renaissance Revival style. Mr. Lambert was President of the Regal Motor Car Company. However, the most notable owners of the house were Ossip Gabrilowitsch, the first permanent conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and his wife, Clara Clemens, mezzo-soprano and daughter of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain). An internationally recognized pianist as well as conductor, Maestro Gabrilowitsch instigated the construction of Orchestra Hall and raised the DSO to national stature during his tenure as conductor from 1918 until 1936. An unpublished manuscript by Mark Twain, Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer Among the Indians, was discovered in the attic by subsequent owners and is now in the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library.
- 650** Home of John W. Drake, President of Hupp Motor Car Company; built in 1911 in the American Eclectic style. Subsequent owners of the house were also involved in the early automobile industry. They were C. Harold Wills, who helped design early Ford cars, including the Model T, and later built his own cars including the Wills Sainte Claire, and Ira Grinnel (of Grinnel Brothers - the music store) who was president of the Grinnel Electric Automobile Company.
- 670** Home of Charles T. Fisher, President of Fisher Body; built in 1922 in the Tudor Revival Style. The Fisher Body Corporation was a major supplier of car bodies to many major car manufactures and was purchased by General Motors in 1926. The Fisher Brothers commissioned Albert Kahn to design the Fisher Building on Grand Boulevard. The house is said to be the largest in Boston-Edison.
- 700** Home of Walter Briggs, President of Briggs Manufacturing; built in 1915 of field stone. W. O. Briggs was a major manufacturer of car bodies and one-time owner of the Detroit Tigers and Briggs Stadium.
- 872** Home of F. C. Teal; built in 1915 in the "Cottage Style." This large stucco home was subsequently owned by Charles Feinberg, President of Argo Oil Corporation and noted bibliophile. Mr. Feinberg amassed a world renowned collection of books and manuscripts on Walt Whitman and donated it to the Library of Congress.

- 892** Home of Edward T. Fisher; built in 1923 in the eclectic Renaissance Revival style. The facade is predominately Italian Renaissance with Venetian and Tudor influences. The serpentine columns are Venetian, as are the graceful tripartite arches above the entry. The house contains 10,000 square feet, twenty-eight rooms, including eleven bedrooms.
- 918** Home of Nels Michelson; built in 1917 in the Italian Renaissance revival style. Mr. Michelson was born in Denmark. In Michigan he became highly successful in the timber business and in real estate. The adjacent pool house is connected to the home by an underground tunnel. The home was purchased by Berry Gordy, Jr. of Motown Records in 1967.

Cross the street to the south side and return toward Third Avenue.

- 961** Home of Stanley Hong; built in 1959 in the International style; designed by Nathan Johnson, noted African-American architect and resident of Boston-Edison. The interior of this house features a generous use of glass and stainless steel.
- 859** The home of John Wagner; built in 1911 in the American Eclectic style. The former Wagner Bakery Company recently was converted to the Motor City Casino.
- 803** Home of Harry A. Stormfeltz; built in 1915 in the Tudor revival style. Mr. Stormfeltz was a major real estate developer and sold some of the land in the Joy Farms Subdivision that was developed as part of Boston-Edison. Mr. Elias Baker, the Postmaster General of Detroit, resided in the house in the 1960s.
- 751** Home of Frank H. Goddard; built in 1911 in an eclectic style. Mr. Goddard was in the construction business and was general contractor for Henry Ford's home on Edison Avenue. Mr. Ford so admired the limestone used in this house that used stone from the same quarry for the construction of Fair Lane in Dearborn. The house is referred to locally as "the Castle."

Turn onto Third Avenue and continue back to Longfellow Avenue and Voigt's Park.

We hope you have enjoyed your walking tour of a small part of the Boston-Edison Historic District in Detroit. If you have additional information regarding the history of Boston Edison or know someone who does, please contact the Historic Boston-Edison Association at [bostonedison@gmail.com](mailto:bostonedison@gmail.com)

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