

A walking tour is a great way to **discover** and **learn** about our local history. The slower pace and closer view allows us to see things from a much different vantage point than when driving in our car. Recently, our History Matters Team of Detectives explored downtown Gaylord on a rainy Saturday morning. The 90 minute walking tour included nearly 35 points of interest throughout the central business district. We discussed how the alpine motif came about, the importance the railroad played in Gaylord’s early development, and how the town adapted to changes over time.

A couple of special features was a sneak peek at the renovation project at the Quick / Dr. Saunders House, a brief visit with lifelong resident “Grandma” Lillie Bell Simpson, and an impromptu tour of the Rectory next to the Mt. Carmel Centre.

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Each participant received a photo album containing pictures of historic buildings as they once appeared. This “then and now” comparison helped bring history to life. One photo that received a lot of attention was when the Big Boy statue occupied the northeast corner of Main and Otsego. Check out [What Was There](#) for a few more before and after photos that shows how downtown Gaylord looked years ago. It’s free of charge and you can add historic photos to the web site.

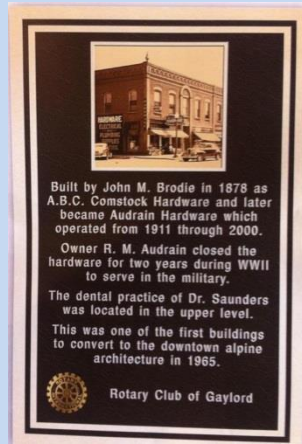
You can also **discover** many interesting places using the self-guided walking tour brochure available at the Museum and on-line. Here’s the [link](#).



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Barb Switalski **shared** some of what she has **learned** from researching the history of St. Mary Church. The red brick church has been a landmark in Gaylord since 1901. The state historical marker, its cornerstone in 3 languages, and beautiful stained glass windows all help make this former church a treasured gem.

Also, the bronze plaques recently placed on 10 historic buildings by Rotary of Gaylord will help people milling around downtown **learn** about our city’s past.



Learning about St Mary Church from Barb Switalski

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Brian Pearson, Gaylord Community Schools Superintendent and member of the History Matters steering committee (shown to the right) **shared** information about the history of Gaylord Schools and Claude Shannon. The first school in Gaylord was located on West Main. Later, a brick building was constructed on the southeast corner of South Center and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Claude Shannon’s mother, Mable Wolf Shannon, was a teacher and principal. She was also the first coach of the girls’ basketball team. Claude Shannon will be the topic of an upcoming History Matters Update.

