Grand Historic
Shreveport-Bossier, LA
Downtown Walking Tour

Featuring
Online Interior Views

Step Into History

Instagrammable Spots & Historical Locations
Shreveport and Bossier City’s story starts in the early 1800s when settlers from the Carolinas moved into the region already occupied by Caddo Native Americans. These first settlers were mostly a blend of Scotch-Irish, German and Welsh.

They were affected by a 165-mile logjam in the Red River that blocked commerce. The federal government hired Captain Henry Miller Shreve to clear the river in 1833. Two years later, the federal government would enter into a treaty with the Caddo Native Americans, who occupied the land that was roughly the whole modern Caddo Parish and a part of DeSoto Parish. In exchange, the tribe received $80,000 in goods and horses, plus $50,000.

An 1840 census showed Caddo Parish’s population as 2,416 whites, 2,837 enslaved Africans and 29 free African Americans. By 1860, there were 4,733 whites, 7,338 enslaved Africans and 69 free African Americans. The main commodities were cotton, timber and petroleum.

Bossier City’s early beginnings date back to the 1830s. Mary Bennett Cane and James H. Cane established Elysian Groves, a plantation on the east bank of the Red River. The plantation was a trading post which shipped cotton, corn and sweet potatoes to market. Its population was 600 and remained that way until 1907, when the area was incorporated as Bossier City, which got its name from General Pierre Bossier, a former Creole general, cotton farmer and one of the area’s earliest settlers. In the 1930s, Barksdale Air Force Base was built and the community has grown ever since.

Today, Shreveport-Bossier is the cultural hub of the region known as the Ark-La-Tex. Healthcare, tourism, agriculture, and oil and gas thrive in the sister cities. There are six historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, five in Shreveport (Downtown, Ledbetter Heights, Highland, South Highlands, and Fairfield) and one in Bossier City (Barksdale Air Force Base). This brochure concentrates on historic sites and landmarks in easily walkable areas in and around the Downtown Shreveport and Ledbetter Heights historic districts.

This pamphlet is designed to give our visitors a glimpse of Shreveport and Bossier City as they began (1939-1875), as they grew (1875-1940), and as they are today.

**SOURCES**

Eric Brock’s Shreveport, KSLA News 12, Shreveport Times Archives
Louisiana State University Noel Memorial Library Collection
Historic photos provided courtesy of the Northwest Louisiana Archives at LSUS.
LOCATIONS

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Downtown Shreveport Visitor Center
2. Commerce Street
3. Spring Street Museum
4. Shreve Square
5. Old C.N.B./United Mercantile Building
6. Shreveport Chamber Plaza
7. Holy Trinity Catholic Church
8. Slattery Building
9. Shreve Memorial Library
10. Hutchinson Building
11. YMCA
12. Shreveport Water Works Museum
13. First United Methodist Church
14. Justin Gras Building
15. Shepherd-Blanchard Building
16. Strand Theatre
17. Scottish Rite Cathedral
18. B’nai Zion Temple
19. Holy Cross Episcopal Church
20. Central Artstation
21. Shreveport Municipal Auditorium
22. Oakland Cemetery
23. Logan Mansion
24. Austen Place B&B/Ogilvie-Wiener Mansion
25. Antioch Baptist Church
27. Hebrew Rest Cemetery
28. Star Cemetery
29. St. Joseph Cemetery

Check each location in the brochure for the estimated walking distance from the Downtown Shreveport Visitor Center.

Map located in center of brochure.
DOWNTOWN SHREVEPORT VISITOR CENTER
629 SPRING STREET

Built 1895 for the C. C. Hardman Company, the business office building has housed numerous businesses through the years including a carriage and wagon dealership, a saddlery company, a livery stable, and others. Since 1979, it has housed the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau, the official destination marketing organization for Caddo and Bossier Parishes. On the side of the building is one of the most beautiful murals promoting all the fun things to see and do titled “A Call to Action” by Ali Bahler. It’s lit up at night and a popular spot for photos.

INSTAGRAMMABLE!

COMMERCCE STREET

ONE BLOCK FROM THE RED RIVER

Historically known as “The Levee,” this street was once the bustling location of cotton factories, merchants, and livery stables. It was to this point that Texans herded their ox-drawn
wagons filled with cotton and hides, exchanging them for tobacco, salt, molasses, coffee, and whiskey brought up by steamboat from New Orleans. At one time there could be as many as 25 steamboats regularly docked here. Today, nightclubs and the Red River District fill some of those spaces.
**SPRING STREET MUSEUM**

526 SPRING STREET

One of the best preserved early structures in Shreveport, this building was finished in 1865. Listed on the Register of Historic Places, the museum houses exhibits and memorabilia of the early days of Northwest Louisiana. The lower floor was employed as a banking and brokerage facility by the builder, Martin Tally. Subsequently it was rented to three other banking operations, and it was here that the original First National Bank of Shreveport was located at 525 Spring Street.

**SHREVE SQUARE**

UNDER THE TEXAS STREET BRIDGE

Nestled under the Texas Street Bridge, this area coincides with the earliest town site in the 1830s. Surviving structures date from 1865–1895. The city’s first stores, hotels, and saloons were built here. The alley bisecting Shreve Square is called Green’s Alley to the north and Martin’s Lane to the south. In the early 1970s, the area was restored as an entertainment district though several of the historic structures that were its cornerstone were destroyed by a tornado in April 2000. Today, visitors can dine at the Blind Tiger and dance at Chicago, a nightclub.
OLD C.N.B. / UNITED MERCANTILE BUILDING
509 MARKET STREET

This building is architecturally significant with terra-cotta embellishments. It dominated the skyline when it was completed in 1910. Originally it was the Commercial National Bank of Shreveport and later the location of the United Mercantile Bank, both important local institutions now gone. Today, the building has been restored and turned into apartments and office space. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

#DOWNTOWNSHREVEPORT

SHREVEPORT CHAMBER PLAZA
400 EDWARDS STREET

Until 1922 the home of Thomas T. Williamson, a member of the Shreve Town Company, stood on this site. Built in 1923 to house Shreve Memorial Library, Shreveport Chamber Plaza is an excellent example of early Italian Renaissance architecture. Renovated in 1984, the building is now home of the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Several movies have been filmed here including The Pardon, Disaster Movie and W.
HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH
315 MARSHALL STREET

Designed by noted U.S. architect Nicholas Clayton and built in 1896, this is the third building of the first Roman Catholic parish in Shreveport. The church is of Romanesque Revival design with the main altar of white Carrara marble. Particularly significant are the windows, including five memorializing the Catholic priests who died ministering to the population during the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1873, and the stained glass windows of the eight beatitudes. In 1944, the Garden of Our Lady was dedicated as a tribute to Americans serving in the Armed Forces. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Group tours are available.

THE SLATTERY BUILDING
509 MARSHALL STREET

Shreveport’s tallest building when constructed was built by 80-year-old John B. Slattery in 1924, a testament to his faith in the future of the city. At the time of its opening, it was the largest office building between St. Louis, Missouri and New Orleans. During excavation a flatboat in perfect condition, as well as a wooden pier, both dating from the 1830s, were discovered 12 feet down. These testify to the fact that the now-vanished Silver Lake once extended to this point.
SHREVE MEMORIAL LIBRARY
424 TEXAS STREET

The first Shreveport library was run by a group of women who organized a subscription library service in 1890 for a fee of $2 per year. The current site of the main library first served as the location of the “Old” Custom House, which included a post office, customs house and federal court. The building was designed by Architect N.S. Allen and was completed in 1887, standing for 23 years before being razed in 1910. In 1978, Walker & Walker architects began a renovation that lasted until 1980, culminating in relocation of the Shreve Memorial Library main branch from the original building at 400 Edwards Street to the current site at Texas and Marshall Street. The Italian Renaissance building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

HUTCHINSON BUILDING
504 TEXAS STREET

This six-story structure with its unique terra-cotta façade was built in 1911 to house the Hutchinson Brothers Music Company and Jewelers. The builders required that the building be constructed within a strict deadline and when the contractor failed to do so he was obligated to add two floors at his own expense. It later became home to Grayson’s Department Store and was restored in 1977-1978. It is now a commercial office building and home to The Missing Link, a craft hotdog restaurant.
YMCA
400 McNeill Street

The first YMCA in Shreveport was established in 1888. In 1922, the heirs of prominent banker Edward Jacobs, co-founder of the First National Bank of Shreveport, gave the family's home to the YMCA for the purpose of erecting a new state-of-the-art facility. The old Victorian mansion was demolished and the present Italianate building, designed in the style of a Renaissance palazzo, was built. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991.

Justin Gras Building
507 Louisiana Avenue

Although reportedly built as a hotel in 1900, the Justin Gras Building was actually a brothel and gambling saloon. Painted on the rear of the building is an original sign for the “Big Casino Hotel.” It was renovated in the early 1980s to house offices. It also was the home to the Gilmore News Company, a notable local institution from 1919 to 2000.

Shepherd-Blanchard Building
611 9th Street

Originally it was created as two separate buildings built in 1900 and 1901. The original tenants were offices, a men’s clothing and accessory store, and a hotel. This corner was once an important commercial area for Shreveport and was across from the old City Hall and city market.

Strand Theatre
619 Louisiana Street

This performing arts center was built in 1925 and was the headquarters of the Saenger Theatre Corporation which operated more than 300 theatres, vaudeville houses and cinemas throughout the southern U.S., Central America and Caribbean. Closed in 1977, the Strand reopened in 1984 after extensive restoration and renovation. It is the Official State Theatre of Louisiana. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today’s patrons can see off-Broadway productions, comedy shows and concerts.
17 SCOTTISH RITE CATHEDRAL
725 COTTON STREET
Designed by Edward F. Neild and Clarence Olschner, and constructed in 1915, this building houses the Shreveport Consistory of the Scottish Rite, the highest order of the Freemasonry. The sumptuous interior with its ornate theater and social hall was designed by Paul Heerwagen. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is occasionally used as a venue for the Louisiana Film Prize.

18 B’NAI ZION TEMPLE
802 COMMON STREET
Designed by Edward F. Neild and built in 1914-1915, this was the home for the B’nai Zion congregation, Shreveport’s Reform Jewish Temple, until 1956. The Knights of Columbus later acquired this building, using it as their hall until 1992. The immense stained glass windows by LaFargue were installed in 1920.

19 HOLY CROSS EPISCOPAL CHURCH/ OLD ST. MARK’S CHURCH
875 COTTON STREET
Built in 1905 as St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, it was founded in 1839 when Bishop Leonidas Polk held the first religious services in a warehouse on the riverfront. The present church was the congregation’s second, though many elements of the first including its altar, pews, French glass windows, chancel rail, and credence table were all incorporated into this building and remained fixtures of its chapel. The cornerstone of its previous church on Fannin Street is also embedded in the chapel wall. Since the 1950s, when St. Marks moved to Fairfield Avenue, the building has been home to the Holy Cross Episcopal Church.
**CENTRAL ARTSTATION**

801 CROCKETT STREET

Built in 1922, this building housed the Central Fire Station. Today the Shreveport Regional Arts Council operates from here. Visitors to the new Central Artstation are greeted by “Art,” a 19-foot-tall statue. He is said to be the guardian of the arts in northwest Louisiana. During the day, he is a white statue of a Dalmatian, but at night his spots light up. This location is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**INSTAGRAMMABLE! 📸**

**OAKLAND CEMETERY**

MILAM STREET & ELVIS PRESCLEY AVENUE

Oakland Cemetery, founded in 1847, was the second cemetery established in Shreveport. It boasts marked graves dating back as far as 1842 and is the oldest intact burial ground in Shreveport. Buried here are 16 mayors, 2300 Confederate veterans, approximately 800 victims of the Yellow Fever Epidemic, as well as thousands of ordinary citizens, enslaved Africans and free citizens, Christians and Jews, foreign-born and native. A quarter-acre section in the northeast corner of the cemetery contains the first Jewish burial ground in Shreveport. Dating from 1859, it was the fifth established in Louisiana. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977.
SHREVEPORT MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM

705 ELVIS PRESLEY AVENUE

Designed by Samuel G. Wiener and Seymour Van Os and completed in 1929, the auditorium is a monument to the veterans of World War I. The Louisiana Hayride, a popular live radio show, was held here weekly from 1948 to 1960, and it helped launch the careers of stars like Kitty Wells, Johnny Cash, and Elvis Presley to national attention. Today, statues of Elvis Presley and his guitarist, hometown musician James Burton, are located outside of the auditorium. One of Louisiana’s most significant Art Deco buildings, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. It is also a National Historic Landmark. Today, after extensive renovations, it is a premier concert and entertainment venue. Group tours are available.
LOGAN MANSION
725 AUSTIN PLACE

This 2,000-square-foot Victorian mansion was built in 1897 by beer and ice distributor Lafayette Robert Logan. The 17-room mansion has been restored to its former glory and features original handcrafted woodwork, stained and beveled glass and a beautifully-restored grandeur mahogany staircase. The house is reportedly haunted by the spirit of a little girl who once lived across the street in a now demolished home next to the Austen Place Bed and Breakfast. Local legend claims she fell to her death from the attic window while playing. However, historians cite her dying on the way to Texarkana while seeking medical treatment for yellow fever.
Built in 1896, the Austen Place Bed and Breakfast is the largest Queen Anne-style historic mansion in north Louisiana. The 9,000-square-foot mansion was originally a private home. In 1951, the family leased the house and it was remodeled and opened as a private supper club called The Florentine Club. The upper-class establishment featured entertainment by nationally known performers, such as Perry Como, pianists Ferrante and Teicher, Big Band orchestras, and many others. Among the famous that patronized The Florentine were John Wayne, Bette Davis, Doris Day, William Holden, and Ethel Merman, just to name a few. The mansion is also famous for being in the opening credits of the television show “True Blood.” This property is currently being restored and is open for tours.
25  
**ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH**  
1057 TEXAS AVENUE

Founded in 1866, this is the oldest black Baptist church in Shreveport and is the city’s second-oldest church building. The present Romanesque Revival church was designed by nationally known Shreveport Architect N.S. Allen and built in 1902. In 1983 it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**INSTAGRAMMABLE!**

26  
**“THE AVENUE”**  
800-1100 BLOCK OF TEXAS AVENUE

Black businesses and social life concentrated along the 800-1100 blocks of Texas Avenue during the 1910s and 1920s. Black professionals, merchants, and restaurants such as Freeman and Harris Café thrived here. Entertainers such as Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington played on the rooftop of the Calhanthean Temple and at the Plamoor Dance Hall. Other Avenue institutions included the Star Theatre. Few of these businesses and none of the homes remain, though a few of the buildings still stand. Today, “The Avenue” is home to many beautiful murals and is also the new site of the Caddo Common Park.

27  
**HEBREW REST CEMETERY**  
1437 TEXAS AVENUE

The second of Shreveport’s four Jewish cemeteries, Hebrew Rest was founded in 1886 by the Reform congregation of B’nai Zion. One mayor, Ben Holzman, who served from 1899 to 1902, is buried here. Simon Goldstein, father of the Caddo Parish public school system, is among the notable figures buried here.
28 **STAR CEMETERY**

2100 TEXAS AVENUE

Located behind and adjoining St. Joseph Cemetery, Star Cemetery was the first cemetery established exclusively by and for black citizens. Founded in 1833 when ten acres of land were purchased by the Star Cemetery Association, the cemetery ultimately became the burial ground for many of Shreveport’s first black citizens, though many were still buried in church graveyards in rural areas. Former slaves, soldiers, professionals, and clergymen can be found buried here. Among notable burials is Samuel Armstead, Louisiana’s only black secretary of state, who lived to the age of 108.

29 **ST. JOSEPH CEMETERY**

2300 TEXAS AVENUE

Founded in 1881, St. Joseph is the city’s oldest Roman Catholic Cemetery. Many earlier graves from Oakland Cemetery were relocated here after its consecration, including those of the martyr priests who died in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1873. The main aisle contains numerous impressive monuments of pioneer Catholic families of northwest Louisiana. Inscriptions in many languages, especially French and Italian but also some Greek, German and even Arabic, are found on gravestones at St. Joseph Cemetery.
DOWNTOWN
SHREVEPORT
EARLY 1900s

28

29
Thank You!

For more to do in Shreveport-Bossier, come see us!

Shreveport-Bossier
Louisiana's Other Side

Downtown Shreveport Visitor Center
629 Spring Street, Shreveport, LA
318.222.9391  1.800.551.8682

Historic photos provided courtesy of the Northwest Louisiana Archives at LSUS.

www.shreveport-bossier.org

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