

A Walking Tour of Meridian, Idaho



EARLY HISTORY:

The forty acres that became the center of Meridian was originally homesteaded by Eliza Zenger. Following the receipt of her ownership land patent, Eliza's husband, Christian Zenger, filed the original town site plat under the name of "Meridian." Previous to this, the settlement had been known as "Hunter," named by the railroad in honor of one of its local superintendents. The postal drop was called "Hunter" from September 11, 1888, until April 3, 1894, when it was re-named "Meridian."

After filing of the original town plat, Eliza began to sell lots for commercial and residential development. The primary commercial street, originally called Railroad Street or Front Street, was located on what is today E. Broadway Ave. The first public building was a two-story I.O.O.F. Lodge Hall located on the corner of E. First and Broadway facing south. The lodge rooms were on the upper floor, and D.M. Stokesberry's General Mercantile Store occupied the ground floor. This building and its neighbors were destroyed by fire in 1923.

Meridian was incorporated as a village in 1903 after obtaining permission from the Ada County Commissioners. In 1910, the town boasted three general stores, a hardware store, a meat market, a drug store, a pharmacy, a barber shop, a tailor shop, a bank, a loan company, a land office, and a saloon, as well as schools, churches, and a creamery. The first licensed physician, Dr S.M.C. Reynolds, arrived in 1897 from Saubria. From 1895-1948 fruit raising and drying was an important local industry. Dairy products were produced locally for many years, starting with the first Meridian Creamery in 1897 and ending in 1970. At one time the town was also the site of the Meridian Pine Company and a Boise-Cascade Corporation housing component plant.

Rapid population growth has long been a challenge for Meridian school facilitators and city planners. Since 1902, area school facilities and city services have been coping with successive waves of new residents.

Year	Meridian Population
1920	1,000
1930	1,004
1940	1,465
1950	1,810
1960	2,082
1970	2,616
1980	6,686
1990	9,596
2000	34,919
2008	73,000+

TOUR DESCRIPTION

The walking tour will take you past most of the town's early business district and residential area and includes some of Meridian's oldest surviving structures. Divided into two separate tour paths, the walk encompasses roughly a five block area.

West Tour

W Begins at N. Main St. and goes south to E. State Ave. It then proceeds west on E. State Ave., south on Meridian Rd., east on Idaho Ave., and then south on Main St., ending at the former Wechtbaugh elevator.

East Tour

E Begins at E. Broadway Ave. and goes north along E. 2nd St., ending at Cole Valley Christian School.

We hope you will enjoy this brief tour through Meridian's past. For more information, contact the Meridian City Hall at (208) 888-4433 or visit the Meridian Historic Preservation website at:

http://www.meridiandcity.org/city_clerk/historic_preservation_commission/index.asp

Meetings are generally held the first Thursday of each month, at the Meridian City Hall. Visitors are welcome.



Walking Tour Map

