### Waypoint 1 – Welcome to Plainfield

**Coordinates:** (N 41° 36.507', W 88° 12.307')

Welcome to downtown Plainfield! During the summer of 2008, the village put considerable effort into improving Lockport Street and making the area more pedestrian friendly. Hopefully, you will enjoy your time here.

The earliest settlers in this area were Native American. Unfortunately, there is little recorded history from their time, although the Potowatomi and European cultures did overlap during the early 1800s. Therefore, we begin our story with the Europeans. Vetel Vermette, a French Canadian fur trader, may have been the first of European descent to live in the area, perhaps as early as 1796. However, details about his life are sparse, and he apparently left before his death.

Jesse Walker, a Methodist circuit rider, first came through this area in 1826. Two years later, his son-in-law, James Walker, came with his family and others in order to establish a sawmill. The permanent settlement which grew up around the mill became known as Walkers’ Grove. It was located just south of the present village and was the first such settlement in what is now Will County.

Business at the mill was quite good, and the community thrived. One resident, Reuben Flagg, hauled lumber from the mill to Chicago for what would become that city’s first frame home. Samantha Flagg, born to Reuben and his wife, Betsey, in 1830, was the first child of European descent born in Will County.

The village of Plainfield, as we know it today, was platted by Chester Ingersoll a few years later. And that brings us to the first stage of this multicache…

**Instructions:** Assuming that you are standing near the posted coordinates, you should be able to find the four digit year in which Mr. Ingersoll laid out the town as we see it now. (Look for the “established” date.) The third digit is ‘A’ in the final waypoint.

### Waypoint 2 – Fort Beggs

**Coordinates:** (N 41° 36.083', W 88° 12.631')

The marker at this location commemorates “Fort Beggs”. The fort was a hastily constructed defense for the European settlers in the area against the anticipated approach of the Native American leader, Black Hawk, and his followers during the Black Hawk War. The settlers tore down the barn of the Rev. Stephen Beggs in order to obtain the needed materials.

It turns out that the settlers acted in panic. The local Potawatomi people refused to join Black Hawk, and the fort was not needed.

**Instructions:** Find the four digit year in which Fort Beggs was erected. The final digit is ‘G’.

### Waypoint 3 – Halfway House

**Coordinates:** (N 41° 36.691', W 88° 12.252')

**To the best of my knowledge, this waypoint is on private property. You can obtain the necessary information without leaving the sidewalk. Please use proper respect!**

Halfway House, sometimes known as Plainfield House or Wight House, was originally built as an inn and tavern for Squire Arnold. It is one of three Plainfield structures on the National Historic Register. Dr. Erastus Wight leased the property, expanded the building, and painted “Plainfield House” on the side. However, its location – halfway between Chicago and Ottawa on the stage line – gave the house its more common nickname and made it an ideal stop for travellers. The common rooms were on the lower level, and sleeping quarters were on the second floor and in the attic.

Early in its history, Halfway House also housed the first government post office in the area that would later become Will County. Plainfield founder, James Walker, served as the first postmaster.

While you’re here, take note of the house next door to the southwest. It is known as the Flanders House. Built in 1841, it is the second of three Plainfield spots on the National Historic Register.

**Instructions:** According to the sign in front of the house, what was the last year in which the building served as a post office? The final digit in this year is ‘E’.
**Waypoint 4 – Plainfield Cemetery**  
(N 41° 36.115’, W 88° 12.107’)  

**B** = _______

*Obviously, this waypoint is in a cemetery. Please use proper respect!*

This pioneer cemetery is the final resting place of Plainfield’s founders and earliest residents. The coordinates will bring you to the grave of Jesse Walker, the Methodist minister. Stephen Beggs and James Walker are also buried at these coordinates. To the southeast, you can also see a miniature cabin – a memorial to the Flagg family. The latch string on the door is out – a sign of welcome and hospitality for any visitors stopping by.

*Instructions: On the memorial stone for Jesse Walker, you can find the date that he (together with Stephen Beggs) conducted the first Methodist service in Chicago. Convert the month into its numeric equivalent. The result is ‘B’.*

**Waypoint 5 – Early Industries**  
(N 41° 36.829’, W 88° 12.025’)  

**C** = _______

These coordinates will bring you to the home of the Plainfield Historical Society (currently closed for renovation) and a millstone from the Red Mill. Milling was one of the most important industries in the early Plainfield community. The Red Mill was constructed directly north of this location on the southern bank of the DuPage River. During the last two decades of the 19th century, a cheese factory stood directly to the east of the mill. The factory was built by the local dairy farmers, so that they could develop a market for their milk.

*Instructions: Find the year in which the Red Mill was constructed. The final digit is ‘C’.*

**Waypoint 6 – Village of Churches**  
(N 41° 36.517’, W 88° 12.197’)  

**H** = _______

At some point in its history, Plainfield received the nickname “Village of Churches” for having a large number of places of worship relative to its size. Perhaps this is not surprising given the prominent roles that Jesse Walker and Stephen Beggs had in the early community. In fact, the congregation that they founded in 1829 (the Plainfield United Methodist Church) still meets just one block south of the coordinates for this waypoint in a building constructed in 1866.

The coordinates for this waypoint will bring you to another of Plainfield’s old church buildings. It originally housed the Plainfield Congregational Church, founded in 1834. The building is now home to the Plymouth Congregational Church.

*Instructions: This building was dedicated the year after construction was completed. Find the year of the dedication. The final digit is ‘H’.*

**Waypoint 7 – Electric Park**  
(N 41° 36.424’, W 88° 12.565’)  

**J** = _______

Electric Park was developed by the Aurora, Plainfield, and Joliet Railroad Company. The company opened the park in 1904 for the public enjoyment and, of course, to increase business for the railroad. There was something for just about every taste: an auditorium, boating, bowling, dancing, baseball, and a horse track. Cottages and a campground were also available for those who were interested in an extended stay at the park. Initially, forty cottages were available for around $20 per month, but even more were built as their popularity increased.

In 1923, the railroad company went out of business, due in large part to the growing popularity of the automobile. The new owner gradually sold off lots from the park, and by 1975 the only remaining building was being used as a warehouse and bus garage.

The waypoint will bring you to the park as it is today. You won’t find any of the previous attractions, but it is a pleasant spot.

*Instructions: Look for a brick sponsored by the Plainfield Masonic Lodge. (You may have noticed their building on Lockport Street: it has the gold, onion-shaped dome and was built in 1892.) On the brick, you’ll find the year that the local lodge was chartered. The final digit is ‘J’.*
Anyone who has examined satellite imagery of the area surrounding Plainfield will recognize that stone quarrying has contributed to the local economy. The quarry that is now Lake Renwick started as a small supplier for the needs of the town in the later part of the 1800's. However, the operations expanded, and eventually most of the gravel left the Plainfield area. Through the years, the pit also supplied ice during winter and recreation during the warmer months. Now it is “by far the most valuable rookery in all of Illinois,” according to the Illinois Audubon Society.

There wasn’t always water in the pit. A sign at the waypoint briefly describes an “incident” between a steam shovel and an underground spring that led to the filling of the pit (although my understanding is that quarrying was able to continue, at least to some extent, afterward).

**Instructions:** Find the year in which the steam shovel met the underground spring. Add the final two digits together. The answer is ‘D’.

Automobiles arrived in the early 1900’s, and with them came the gas stations. The third (and final) Plainfield building on the National Historic Register is the Standard Oil station on Lockport Street.

**Instructions:** Find the year in which this building was constructed, according to the sign at this location. The final digit is ‘I’.

These days, it seems to me that most people in the Chicago suburbs know Plainfield for the 1990 tornado, a F5 magnitude storm that claimed 29 lives, injured 350 others, and caused $165 million in damage, including the destruction of the St. Mary Immaculate Church and the Plainfield High School.

Markwell created a multicache (GC3D8B – now archived) about the storm. I suggest you take some time to read the stories there.

The location of this waypoint is the tornado memorial.

**Instructions:** Find the year in which this memorial was dedicated. The final digit is ‘F’.

You are looking for a small Lock ‘N Lock. It is hidden with permission.
This map shows the relative locations of the ten waypoints around downtown Plainfield.