

WASHINGTON SQUARE



1. Union Station*, Washington Square, Select #1 - This grand Beaux Arts Classical-style train station was built in 1911 and is one of Worcester's most imposing buildings.
Extended version - Brief History
To continue on to the next site, follow the signs inside Union Station to the parking garage. Pass through the garage and exit onto Franklin Street. Turn right and proceed to Harding Street. At the corner, turn left onto Harding Street and continue one block south to Temple Street. Turn right onto Temple Street and walk to St. John's Church.



12. Heywood Boot & Shoe Company*, Wachusett Building*, 68-80 Winter Street, Select #12 - This factory was built in 1879 for the Heywood Boot & Shoe Company. Boot and shoe manufacturing was Worcester's third largest industry.
Extended version - Harding and Winter Street Manufacturing District
At the corner of Winter and Harding streets turn right and proceed north up Harding Street to return to Union Station. While following this path, keep in mind that the Blackstone Canal remains buried under this street.



2. St. John's Catholic Church* and Rectory, Temple Street, Select #2 - This mid-19th-century Greek Revival style church was built by the first Roman Catholic parish in central Massachusetts. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Extended version - Worcester's First Catholic Priest and College of the Holy Cross
Continue down Temple Street to Green Street and turn left at the corner. Proceed to the second building on the left, a two-story Italianate-style mansion with a bracketed roof cornice.



11. 82-88 Winter Street*, Select #11 - Built around 1898, this building has housed a variety of businesses. One of the first was Worcester Stained Glass Works, upstairs at No. 88.
Extended version - Anarchist Emma Goldman and Ice Cream
Proceed west down Winter Street to No. 70. This is the Heywood Boot & Shoe Company's Wachusett Building.



3. John T. Cahill House, 42 Green Street, Select #3 - This building was once a grand mansion completed in 1852 as the home of an Irish-born railroad contractor.
Extended version - Irish Community Leader, Tobias Boland
Directly across the street from the Cahill House is a small park at the intersection of Canal and Green Streets. Cross over to the west side of Green Street to enter the park where you will find the statue of Tobias Boland and Benjamin Wright.



10. J.H. & G.M. Walker Shoe Company*, 28 Water Street, Select #10 - This factory was built for the J.H. & G.M. Walker Shoe Company in 1870. This company is considered to be the "Father" of most of Worcester's 23 other late-19th century boot and shoe manufacturers.
Proceed north to the corner of Water and Winter Streets. Cross over to 88 Winter Street to view the next site.



4. Tobias Boland and Benjamin Wright Statue, 45 Green Street, Select #4 - Hear about these two men who helped transform Worcester's future with the building of the canal.
Proceed two blocks south on Green Street, crossing first over Canal Street and then Plymouth Street to reach site No. 5. A four-story brick building once stood at number 89 Green Street.



9. W. H. Hill Envelope Company*, 48 Water Street, Select #9 This factory was built for the W.H. Hill Envelope Company in 1890. Envelopes were Worcester's second largest industry. This building can be viewed from both the Water Street side and the Harding Street side, where the loading docks were.
Proceed north to the very next factory building at 28 Water Street.



5. The Cove, 85-91 Green Street, Select #5 - Hear about some of the notable bands that have played in clubs at this site and put this building on the "map."
From the Cove building proceed two blocks south to the corner of Green and Ash Streets. Walk up Ash Street to view the brick building on the right at the crest of the hill.



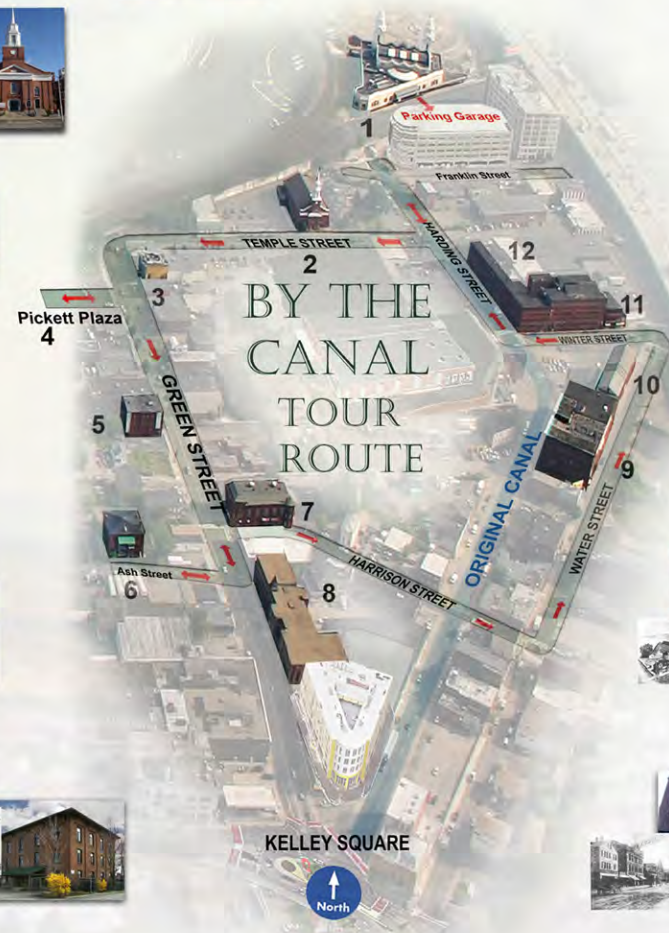
8. Crompton Loom Works*, 132-142 Green Street, Select #8 - This factory was built in 1860 for the manufacture of textiles and looms. It is one of the oldest surviving factory buildings in Worcester.
Extended version - Homes of George Crompton and Playwright S.N. Behrman
*Proceed to the corner of Green and Harrison streets. Turn right on Harrison Street. Continue east along Harrison Street for two blocks until you reach Water Street.
 NOTE - Along the way you will pass over Harding Street, which follows the route of the Blackstone Canal. The canal is now buried beneath this street. Once you have reached Water Street, turn left and walk one block north. The brick Hill Envelope Company factory is on the northwest corner.*



6. Ash Street School*, 4 Ash Street, Select #6 - Built in 1850, this is the second oldest surviving school building in Worcester.
Extended version - Early Childhood Home of Poet Laureate, Stanley Kunitz
Walk back down Ash Street to the corner of Green Street. Across the street, to the left is a multi-story brick building at the northeast corner of Green and Harrison Streets. Cross over Green Street and proceed to this corner. This building's street address is not visible, but the word "Acadia" appears in the stained glass transom above the front door.



7. Father Matthew Hall (White Eagle Building), 116-120 Green Street, Select #7 - Originally home to an Irish temperance society, this building is now owned by a Polish social club.
Extended version - Irish Temperance Societies
Staying on the same side of Green Street, proceed south, crossing over Harrison Street, to reach the Crompton Loom Works factory building. The number



Scan the QR code to access the audio tour.
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*Listed on the U. S. National Register of Historic Places

THE TOUR

In the Canal District's streets and buildings the By the Canal Tour uncovers surprising stories about people, events, and the economy that made Worcester the city it is today. The tour highlights eleven buildings that reflect the history of both the city and the neighborhood. Nine of them were built before the canal was covered over in the late 1800's. All retain much of their original architectural design.

PRESERVATION WORCESTER

Preservation Worcester is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to maintain for future generations the sites and structures that are significant to the culture, history, and architecture of the city. Through advocacy, education and action, the organization promotes the reuse of valuable architectural resources, instills pride in our community and encourages excellence in future design.

Credits:

More information on Worcester history and the Blackstone Canal can be found at the Worcester Historical Museum, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Worcester Public Library, all of which provided generous assistance and historical materials used in preparing the By the Canal Tour and brochure.

Historical view, John T. Cahill House

Courtesy American Antiquarian Society, Worcester

All other historical images

Courtesy Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester

Background image on brochure cover,

View of Worcester from Union Hill, 1838

From the Collection of the Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester



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BRIEF HISTORY

Built between 1824 and 1828, the Blackstone Canal offered a new and convenient transportation route between Providence, Rhode Island, and Worcester, Massachusetts. In those days, Worcester was a small agricultural town nestled among green hills and farms. Clapboard houses, both large and small, and a few inns and businesses lined Main Street. Overlooking the Common were a steepled meeting house and a brand-new brick town hall. At the opposite end of the street, at Lincoln Square, was a dignified brick court house topped with a graceful cupola. Only a scattering of dwellings and businesses could be found along the few other streets in the town center. Even though the town was the county seat, its population numbered only around 3,000.

Yet, from these small beginnings, Worcester was transformed over the course of the 19th century, into an industrial giant - producing a wide variety of manufactured products, and playing a major role in the development of the nation's industrial might.

The catalyst for this dramatic change was the Blackstone Canal, which offered the landlocked community a transportation link to the seaport of Providence, Rhode Island.

Opened in 1828, but in operation for only 20 years, the canal had a remarkable influence on Worcester's future.

- Within the first ten years, the population doubled and business grew dramatically
- In 1835 a railroad line opened between Boston and Worcester
- By 1848 four more railroads linked the city to other New England communities and beyond
- Industrial development, initiated by the canal and encouraged by the railroads, soon drew streams of workers to jobs in Worcester factories


Since the 1820's, not only the landscape but also the ethnic makeup of Worcester has changed dramatically. To this White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant community first came Irish canal and railroad builders. The pioneer Irish, who beginning in the 1830's made their homes in the area around Green and Water streets, were joined at the end of the century by Eastern Europeans, including Jews, Poles, and Lithuanians.

By the 1920s, Worcester had grown to become a wealthy industrial center with a population of nearly 180,000. This section of the city was then a densely settled, multi-ethnic, urban, immigrant neighborhood. Its bustling streets lined with three- and four-story tenement buildings with stores on the ground floors, were nestled around the numerous factory buildings here.

During the second half of the 20th century, the decline of manufacturing, the construction of Interstate 290, and the flight of second-generation immigrants to more suburban locations, brought physical, cultural, and economic upheaval to this neighborhood. Today, with the successful repurposing of much of its surviving historic fabric for both commercial and residential uses, the district offers family-oriented entertainment and has also become a nighttime hotspot. This success has spurred major construction projects, including Polar Park and new high-rise, mixed-use buildings, which are quickly changing both the economic and architectural face of the neighborhood. Yet, tangible reminders of the city's industrial and immigrant past still shape its image.



THE CANAL DISTRICT

In recognition of the key role that the Blackstone Canal played in the growth and development of the city, the City of Worcester officially designated this area as the Canal District in 2002. The core of the district is bounded on the north by Union Station, on the south by Brosnihan Square, on the east by Interstate 290, and on the west by Quinsigamond Avenue. The By the Canal Tour focuses on the northern section of Worcester's Canal District.



BY THE CANAL

Canal District Walking Tour



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