

BY THE CANAL



Canal District Walking Tour



2. St. John's 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



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



4. 91 Green Street, Select #4 - Hear about some of the notable bands that have played in clubs at this site and put this building on the "map."



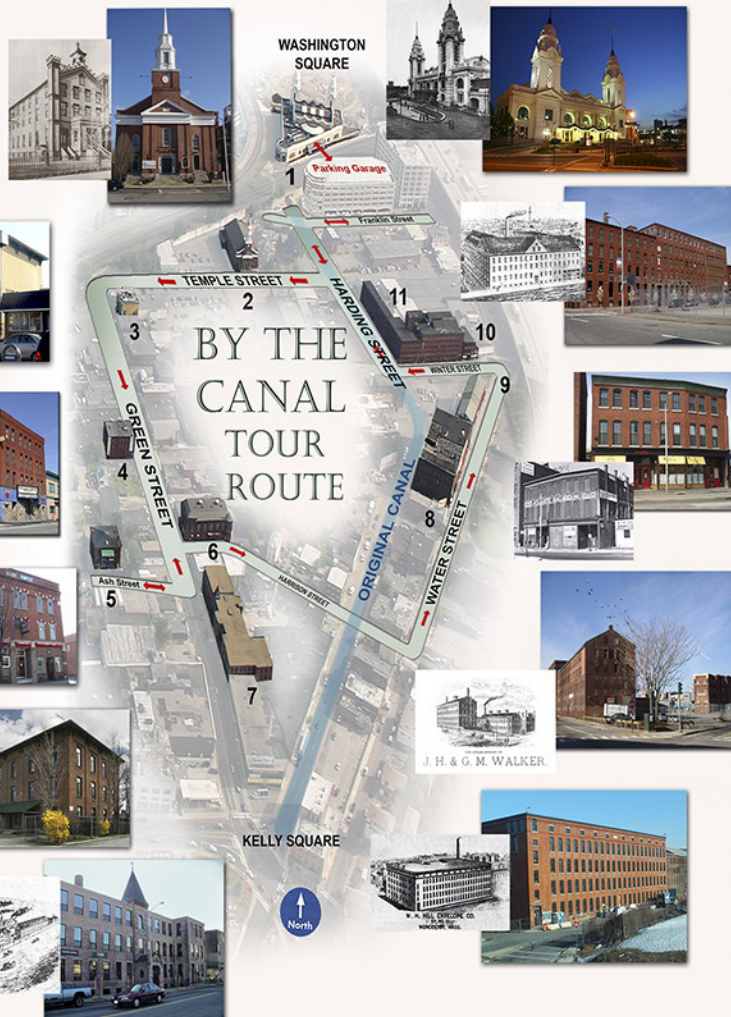
5. Father Matthew Hall (White Eagle Building), 116-120 Green Street, Select #5 - Originally home to an Irish temperance society, this building is now owned by a Polish social club.
Extended version - Irish Temperance Societies



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



7. Crompton Loom Works, 132-142 Green Street, Select #7 - 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



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



11. Heywood Boot & Shoe Company, Wachusett Building, 68-80 Winter Street, Select #11 - 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



10. 82-88 Winter Street, Select #10 - 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



9. J.H. & G.M. Walker Shoe Company, 28 Water Street, Select #9 - 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.



8. W. H. Hill Envelope Company, 48 Water Street, Select #8 - 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.

TOUR INSTRUCTIONS:

See the map in this brochure for the By the Canal tour route. All tour versions are designed to be used with this map. Sites along the route are listed in numerical order. Walking directions are indicated in green.

For an audio version of the tour, use a smartphone or iPod. For a "device-free" tour, visit www.preservationworchester.org to download a printable tour, or pick up a printed version at Preservation Worcester. With smartphones or iPods you may take a "virtual" tour wherever you are, simply by selecting the barcode tags or site numbers of your choice shown on this map.

Extended Versions of the tour provide extra information on some sites. Look for them under the site's numerical heading. Smartphone and iPod users will be alerted when extra information is available for a site.

Smartphones

For a smartphone tour, download the free Tag Reader app by visiting <http://gettag.mobi>. To begin the tour, access the Tag Reader app. Position your phone's camera to line up with the Tag Reader's viewfinder. The Tag Reader will instantly scan the tag for the site (shown on the map or on the on-site display). The audio-visual presentation for the selected site will begin. To access Extended Versions provided for some sites, select from the options of choice on your screen.

iPods

Go to www.preservationworchester.org to download the By the Canal tour and map for an iPod tour. To begin the tour, go to the first tour site and play the track that matches the site number shown on the map (or on the on-site display). Your audio tour will begin. To stop a site narration before it is finished press pause. To resume the narration, press play. To end narration, press back or choose a different track. To access Extended Versions provided for some sites, select from the options displayed on the device.

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 steeped 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 1920's, 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.

Today in this mostly commercial district, some buildings have been replaced by vacant lots, while the upper stories of many others have been lost. Yet, reminders of the city's historic industrial economy still survive and traces of the immigrant cultures of those who settled here can still be found along the streets of the Canal District neighborhood.

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.