

BY THE CANAL:

CANAL DISTRICT WALKING TOUR

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

Download the By the Canal Tour Route Map to view the route of the tour and to find the locations of the sites along the way.

It is recommended that you start your tour at Union Station, 2 Washington Square, viewing both the outside and inside.

Site 1

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

UNION STATION, WASHINGTON SQUARE

Built in 1911 of white glazed terracotta, Union Station is a powerful symbol of Worcester at the height of its industrial prosperity. This Beaux Arts Classical style building is modeled after the ancient Basilica of Maxentius in Rome, but with the addition of two ornate baroque-style towers that break the skyline as they rise high above the main facade. Inside, the station's grand hall is one of the city's most dramatic interior spaces – with a soaring vaulted ceiling, stained glass skylights, ornate plasterwork, and marble trim.

Today's station replaced a very handsome Victorian Gothic style Union Station, opened in 1875, which stood nearby on Washington Square. With ground-level tracks, that station became obsolete in the early 20th century when it became necessary to elevate the tracks to avoid traffic problems. Special engineering was required to construct the foundation for the new building because underneath it ran the Blackstone Canal. The old station was demolished, but its tall stone tower was left standing until it was removed in the late 1950s for the construction of Interstate 290.

After World War II, with the increasing use of the automobile, fewer and fewer people relied on train travel. Gradually, the station fell into disuse and was closed in 1972.

By the 1990s, Union Station was an abandoned ruin – its roof open to the rain. The stained glass ceiling fell in and seedling trees grew up through cracks in the masonry. But, public sentiment called for its preservation. Under the auspices of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, the station interior was completely rebuilt. The glazed terracotta exterior was cleaned and repaired. New towers were built to reproduce the originals. Now of fiberglass, they are strong and light enough to withstand the vibrations caused by passing trains. In July of 2000, after a \$32 million restoration, the station reclaimed its role as the city's key transportation hub – and one of Worcester's grandest buildings.



Site 1 – Extended Version
By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

BRIEF HISTORY

Built between 1824 and 1828, the Blackstone Canal offered a new and convenient transportation route between Worcester and Providence, Rhode Island. In those days, Worcester was a small agricultural town set amidst outlying farms. 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 at Providence. Opened in 1828, but in operation for only 20 years, the canal had a remarkable influence on Worcester's future.

With the opening of the canal, the population soon doubled and business grew dramatically. A railroad line opened between Boston and Worcester in 1835 and, by 1848, four more railroads linked the city to other New England communities – and beyond. Initiated by the canal and encouraged by the railroads, flourishing industries drew streams of workers to jobs in Worcester factories.

Not only Worcester's landscape, but also its ethnic makeup changed dramatically. To this White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant community first came Irish canal and railroad builders. These pioneer Irish, who, beginning in the 1830s, 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 1920, this section of the city was a densely settled, multi-ethnic, immigrant neighborhood. Its bustling streets were 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 immigrant cultures can still be found along the streets of the Canal District neighborhood.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:
By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 1 (Union Station) to Site 2 (St. John's Church)

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.



Site 2

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH AND RECTORY, TEMPLE STREET

Built in 1846, St. John's Church is Worcester's oldest Roman Catholic Church and one of the oldest Catholic churches in the state. It is also the city's only church in the Greek Revival style. St. John's is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, not only for its architectural significance but also for its role in the development of the community.

Irish immigrants who came here in the 1820s to build the Blackstone Canal were Worcester's first group of Roman Catholics. By the 1830s they had settled in the Green Street area. To meet their spiritual needs, a Roman Catholic parish was established in 1834. The first Catholic parish in Worcester, it was also the first in central Massachusetts. The present St. John's Church stands on the approximate site of the original wood church, called Christ Church, which was built by the parish in 1836 to serve 118 adults and children. As the Irish immigrant population here quickly swelled, it became necessary to build the present, much larger, church.

A rectory and school later became part of the church complex. A portion of St. John's School still stands directly across from the church on Temple Street. The school was closed at this location in 1961 and transferred to Shrewsbury, where it is still in operation today as St. John's High School, a college preparatory school for boys.

The number of residences in the parish has dwindled over time, due, in part, to the construction of Interstate 290 in the late 1950s. Nonetheless, St. John's Church is still in active use today.

Site 2 - Extended Version

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

WORCESTER'S FIRST CATHOLIC PRIEST AND COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS

Worcester in the 1820s was a homogenous community of Yankees, largely Congregationalists. From the beginning, the arrival of Irish Catholic canal builders had been of great concern in town. To avoid their intermingling with town folk, these workers were restricted to camps in the Meadows, which today is the western-most end of Shrewsbury Street. While most were here only temporarily to build the canal, some of these Irish immigrants did settle in Worcester permanently.

In 1833, a Roman Catholic priest, Father James Fitton, was appointed to establish a Catholic parish here. He noted when he arrived that there were as many as 100 Catholics in the Worcester vicinity. On April 6, 1834, Father Fitton gathered his flock together to collect funds for building a church and soon raised \$500 -- quite an impressive sum for that time. A short time later, Fitton purchased a building lot at the corner of Salem and Franklin streets. Yet, when the owner of the land discovered the intended use, he immediately took back the deed and burned the document in the priest's face. However, with the help of sympathetic community members, Father Fitton was finally able to acquire a lot for his church on Temple Street.

(continued on next page)



Father Fitton was also responsible for the establishment of two Catholic schools in Worcester. One was a parish school, associated with his church on Temple Street. The other, on Pakachoag Hill, was Mount St. James Seminary, which we now know as College of the Holy Cross. Founded on June 13, 1843, it was New England's first Roman Catholic college.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 2 (St. John's Church) to Site 3 (John T. Cahill House)

Continue down Temple Street to Green Street and turn left at the corner. Proceed to the second building on the left. From the sides, it appears as a yellow building with broad, bracketed eaves, but its front façade is hidden behind a windowless, pierced metal grill.

Site 3

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

JOHN T. CAHILL HOUSE, 42 GREEN STREET

With its facade now hidden behind a 1960s metal screen, it is hard to imagine that this Italianate-style brick mansion was once among Worcester's grandest houses. Completed in 1852 for an extravagant Irish-born railroad contractor, John T. Cahill, it was designed by Elbridge Boyden, the architect responsible for Mechanics Hall on Main Street.

During this era, when the nation's railroad network was growing quickly, railroad contractors could make a lot of money, which Cahill must have done. The cost to build this house was more than \$9,000 – an enormous sum in its day. The furnishings were lavish, too. No expense was spared. But Cahill's extravagance soon caught up with him. According to Richard Flynn, Worcester's 19th-century Irish historian, "The furnishings alone cost \$75,000, and proved far beyond Cahill's means. As he could not pay his bills, he had to flee his creditors and so the house, and contents, passed away from him."

Nevertheless, Cahill's grand house continued to play a role in the life of the city's Irish community as home to three Irish physicians who lived in it consecutively from 1860-1948. After World War II, it became the headquarters and clubhouse of Worcester's Polish American Veterans, who, in the 1960s, put up the current metal façade, to give the building a "modern" look, and added a meeting hall at the rear. Remnants of the building's grandeur can still be seen in the ornate brackets under the eaves in the front and along the sides of the house.

After the Polish club vacated the building in the 1990s, it stood empty for several years. Threatened with demolition for a parking lot in 2003, it was included on Preservation Worcester's "Most Endangered" list and the Worcester Historical Commission issued a "demolition delay." Fortunately, in 2005, the building found a new use as the home of the Worcester Hibernian Cultural Center, which celebrates Irish heritage and culture. The organization hopes to restore the facade to its historic appearance.

See next page for more information on this site: Site 3 – Extended Version



Site 3 – Extended Version

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

IRISH COMMUNITY LEADER, TOBIAS BOLAND

In 1824 work began on the Providence end of the Blackstone Canal. Yet, these earliest efforts soon failed, leaving the work to experienced Irish-Catholic immigrant contractors and laborers, who provided the necessary know-how. When contracts were awarded for the construction of the Worcester end of the canal, Irish-born contractor Tobias Boland got the job. Arriving in Worcester in July of 1826, Boland brought with him Irish-Catholic laborers, many of whom, like him, had experience building the recently completed Erie Canal.

After the opening of the Blackstone Canal in 1828, Boland, as well as many of his workers, settled in Worcester – becoming the town's first immigrant population. In the early 1830s, Boland received important contracts to build some of the first railroad lines in the nation. These contracts made him a prime job source for his former canal workers.

During this era, Boland became a leader of Worcester's Irish community. Influential in the establishment of a Roman Catholic parish here, he also pushed for educational institutions. His wife ran a school in their home and Boland contributed funds and labor to construct the first two buildings of Mount St. James Academy, which in 1843 became the College of the Holy Cross. In the Green-Temple Street Irish neighborhood, he provided rental housing for his co-nationals and also operated a grocery store.

Boland left Worcester for Boston in 1847, becoming a major building contractor there. By this time, his influence and social contacts had earned him the honor of being a guest at White House soirees. When he died in 1883, Tobias Boland was one of the nation's leading contractors, with homes in Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C.

In 1851 Boland sold his home on the corner of Green and Temple streets to Irish railroad contractor, John T. Cahill, who soon built himself a brick house next door (on what had been Boland's ample side yard.) Today, Boland's home is gone and only the Cahill House and St. John's Church survive as reminders of this early Irish neighborhood.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 3 (John T. Cahill House) to Site 4 (91 Green Street)

Cross over to the west side of Green Street and proceed to No. 91.



Site 4

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

91 GREEN STREET

This four-story brick building was built around the turn of the 20th century, with commercial space on the ground floor and apartments above. This is one example of the type of building that used to line Green and Water streets. It is a rare survivor of the mixed use, commercial/tenement buildings that were so common in this immigrant neighborhood through the first half of the 20th century.

Over the years, the ground floor of this building has housed a variety of commercial uses – a Chinese laundry, a glass shop, a sporting goods store, a wholesale tobacco and candy vendor, and a used furniture store, to name a few. Since the 1980s, it has been home to night clubs – Sir Morgan's Cove, in the 1980s and '90s and, since 1999, the Lucky Dog Music Hall.

This building's greatest claim to fame is an "unforgettable" Rolling Stones concert held here at Sir Morgan's Cove in 1981. In a club that hosted Aerosmith, Boston, Korn, Godsmack, Staind, and other GREATS, this is THE night to remember. The Stones were ending a stay at Long View Farm, a recording studio in nearby North Brookfield, where they were rehearsing for an upcoming world tour to publicize their latest release "Tattoo You." It is said that they picked Sir Morgan's Cove as a venue because there was a Union Jack painted on the side of the building.

Whatever the reason for their choice, the world-famous rock group chose to play its first live concert in over three years at Sir Morgan's Cove in Worcester! 350 Rolling Stones fans were crammed into the club as hundreds more stood outside in the rain to hear what they could. The group opened with "Under My Thumb" and played classics including "Satisfaction," "Honky Tonk Woman," and "Tumblin' Dice," "Some Girls," "Emotional Rescue," and "Tattoo You." They played for two hours.

The following week the Stones were playing for a crowd of 90,000 in Philadelphia's JFK Stadium. For those who were at Sir Morgan's Cove that evening in 1981, the excitement of this nearly "private" concert in Worcester is still ELECTRIC – even all these years later!

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 4 (91 Green Street) to Site 5 (Father Mathew Hall)

Continue south along Green Street to a brick, multi-storey building at the northeast corner of Green and Harrison streets. The street address is not visible, but the word "Acadia" appears in the stained glass transom above the front door.



Site 5

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

FATHER MATHEW HALL (WHITE EAGLE BUILDING) 116-120 GREEN STREET

Father Mathew Hall stands on the northeast corner of Green and Harrison streets, in what was a traditionally Irish neighborhood. The building was built in 1888 as the home of an Irish temperance organization, the Father Mathew Mutual Benevolent Total Abstinence Society. Its estimated cost was \$20,000.

On the upper floors were the society's clubrooms, a library, and space for a variety of organized social, athletic and other recreational activities that offered an after-work alternative to the saloon. On the ground floor were a billiards hall and a "confectionary" store.

Although the first Irish temperance societies appeared in Worcester in 1840, the movement really got underway in 1849 when Irish priest, Rev. Theobald Mathew, visited the city while touring the United States preaching against the evils of drink. He pledged 400 Worcester Irishmen to total abstinence and a few weeks later, some of these men formed a Worcester chapter of the society.

At the time this building was built, there were approximately 1200 Irish temperance men in Worcester, belonging to several different societies. The Worcester chapter of the Father Mathew Society continued in operation until about 1930.

The date 1849, carved in stone at the top of the main facade, reflects the year when the Worcester Father Mathew chapter was first established. The roofline was given its present flat appearance in 1931 when the decorative central gable of the front roof parapet was removed.

Since 1937, the building has been the home of a Polish club, the White Eagle Association of Worcester. Shortly after taking possession of the building, the club renovated a former paint shop on the ground floor to create a bar and casual dining room with a recreational area for billiard tables at the back. On the upper floor is the "Acadia Ball Room." This hall has been used for theatre productions and special events, and has even been set up as a basketball court.

Site 5 – Extended Version

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

IRISH TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES

The temperance movement held sway in the United States from the last three quarters of the 19th century into the early years of the 20th. The Irish supported temperance societies with a view toward personal self-betterment and because the stereotype of Irish drunkenness was a blemish on the image of their ethnic group. For many years, the Father Mathew Society was the single strong pro-temperance voice in Worcester's Irish community. Eventually, there were others, but by 1917, most of them had disappeared. Perhaps the advent of cheap popular amusements, such as motion pictures, contributed to the decline of the temperance movement in the early 20th century.



WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 5 (Father Mathew Hall) to Site 6 (Ash Street School)

Proceed 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.

Site 6

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

ASH STREET SCHOOL, 4 ASH STREET

Built in 1850 on the crest of a hill on Ash Street, the former Ash Street School overlooks the Canal District below. Before the late-19th century, when Worcester became crowded with taller buildings, this three-story school (with cupola on top) was a local landmark – easily visible from many parts of the city.

Constructed at a cost of \$11,000, this was one of nine new Worcester schoolhouses built between 1848 and 1855, a period of great growth and development in the city. The architect was Elbridge Boyden, who later designed Worcester's renowned Mechanics Hall.

The building's Italianate architecture is identified by its boxy shape, the panel and pilaster treatment of the walls, and its broad eaves with decorative brackets and brick corbelling. Originally, there were side-by-side entrances on both the north and south facades; one for boys and one for girls. The main entrance was on Ash Street, with the schoolyard behind. Two school rooms per floor occupied the square plan, for a total of six.

An early, long-time principal of the school was Miss Mary Jane Mack. Said to have been born on a ship traveling to the United States from Ireland, she trained as a teacher at the age of sixteen, and was assigned to this school in 1859. Miss Mack taught at Ash Street School for fifty-five years – serving most of those years as principal. She died in 1917 at the age of eighty-three.

The residential neighborhood this school once served was transformed, long ago, into a commercial district. Today the schoolhouse serves as a rare reminder of that earlier era. Closed as a school in 1956, the building was auctioned off in 1958. After serving for years as a warehouse, Ash Street School was converted to apartments in 2002.

Today, Ash Street School is Worcester's second oldest surviving public school building. The oldest, Oxford Street School, on the corner of Oxford and Pleasant streets, was built in 1848, only two years earlier.

See next page for more information on this site: Site 6 – Extended Version



Site 6 – Extended Version
By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME OF POET LAUREATE, STANLEY KUNITZ

During the late-19th and early-20th centuries the Green Street neighborhood was not only home to the Irish, but also to many Jewish and other recent immigrant families, as well.

At the southwest corner of Ash and Green streets once stood a tenement building numbered 133 Green Street. There, United States Poet Laureate, Stanley Kunitz was born in 1905. At the age of five, he attended Ash Street School. His widowed mother, Yetta Kunitz Dine, operated a dry goods store in a building that no longer survives at 79 Green Street.

Over the years, Stanley Kunitz would write fourteen poems about Worcester. Green Street is mentioned specifically in the poem “Halley’s Comet.” In it, he tells of his first grade teacher’s fear that if the comet “wandered off its course and smashed into the earth, there’d be no school tomorrow.”

Look for me Father, on the roof
Of the red brick building
At the foot of Green Street –
That’s where we live, you know, on the top floor.
I’m the boy in the white flannel gown
Sprawled on this coarse gravel bed
Searching the starry sky,
Waiting for the world to end.

Stanley Kunitz graduated in 1922 from Worcester Classical High School. Under a scholarship from Harvard University he earned a bachelor’s degree in 1926 and a master’s degree in 1927. After working briefly as a reporter for The Worcester Telegram, he left Worcester in the late 1920s, not to return until he accepted an honorary degree from Clark University in 1961.

Over the years he received many other honors. Among the most notable are the Pulitzer Prize of 1958 and United States Poet Laureate received in 2000, at the age of 95. Stanley Kunitz died in 2006, aged 100.

During his later childhood, Kunitz lived at 4 Woodford Street on Vernon Hill. That house has been designated a Literary Landmark by the American Library Association and is open to the public once a year under the auspices of the Stanley Kunitz Boyhood Home Docent Program.



WALKING DIRECTIONS:**By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour****From Site 6 (Ash Street School) to Site 7 (Crompton Loom Works)**

While on Ash Street turn and face Green Street. Directly across the street is the Crompton Loom Works factory building. The address 138 Green Street appears above the main entrance.

Site 7**By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour****CROMPTON LOOM WORKS, 132-142 GREEN STREET**

This factory building was built as Crompton Loom Works for English-born manufacturer George Crompton in 1860. Established in 1851, the company produced looms based upon the "Crompton Loom" invented by his father, William, in 1837 and patented in both the United States and England. The first power loom capable of weaving fancy patterns, it was one of the most important inventions of the 19th century.

George Crompton improved upon his father's invention and, in 1857, also designed a broad loom, himself. Its success quadrupled the company's productivity, rapidly expanded the business, and required major additions to the factory. The demand for more space was so great that Flagg's Pond, located directly behind this building, was filled in to create space for expansion.

In the early days, Crompton competed heavily with Worcester's other major loom manufacturer, Lucius Knowles, and his L.J. & F. B. Knowles Company. In 1897, after the deaths of both founders, the two companies merged to become the world renowned Crompton & Knowles. The Crompton family sold their interest in the new company in 1900, but Crompton & Knowles remained one of the city's most important manufacturers until the 1970s.

The Green Street factory was closed after 1915, when business was consolidated at the company's South Worcester manufacturing complex. Although the Green Street building has been significantly altered, the earliest section, to the right of the main entrance, dates to 1860, making this structure one of the oldest surviving factory buildings in Worcester. Today, the Crompton building is being renovated as mixed-use – retail and residential units.

Site 7 – Extended Version**By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour****HOMES OF GEORGE CROMPTON AND PLAYWRIGHT J. N. BEHRMAN**

Like many other 19th-century factory owners, George Crompton lived close to his work. His home, "Mariemont," was a 12-acre estate situated at the top of Vernon Hill on Providence Street, just east of today's Interstate 290. Described by some as a "castle," it was a large brick mansion surrounded by a gray stone wall. When George Crompton died in 1886, he possessed one of the city's grandest estates. His home was torn down in the 1950s to be replaced by St. Vincent Hospital, now also largely demolished.

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Another notable figure from this neighborhood was playwright, S.N. Behrman, the son of Jewish immigrants, born on Water Street in Worcester in 1893. While a small boy, he moved with his family to the third floor of a three-decker on lower Providence Street. It was in this house that Behrman began his journey to success as a Broadway playwright and Hollywood film writer. The house was demolished in the late 1950s when many properties in this area were removed to make way for construction of Interstate 290.

In 1954 Behrman wrote The Worcester Account an autobiography and a first-generation-in-America story, recalling the people and places of his childhood in this immigrant neighborhood. His family's three-decker on Providence Street provided much of the setting both for the book and for his Broadway play adapted from the book, "The Cold Wind and the Warm." Behrman died in 1973.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 7 (Crompton Loom Works) to Site 8 (W. H. Hill Envelope Company)

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. (continued on next page)

Once you have reached Water Street, turn left and walk one block north. The brick Hill Envelope Company factory is on the northwest corner.

Site 8

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

W. H. HILL ENVELOPE COMPANY, 48 WATER STREET

This building was built in 1890 for the manufacture of envelopes by the W.H. Hill Envelope Company. Established around 1869, the Hill Company inherited the business of Worcester's first envelope manufacturing concern, founded by Dr. Russell Hawes. Hawes, a Worcester physician, had patented the first practical envelope-folding machine in 1853. His machine could produce 2,500 envelopes in an hour. Prior to this invention, envelopes were hand folded.

Thanks to Hawes' invention, Worcester became a key player in the development of the manufacture of machine-made envelopes in the United States. With easy availability, ready-made envelopes became more widely used and envelope manufacturing grew. During the second half of the 19th century, envelope manufacturing became Worcester's second largest industry.

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In 1891, the Hill Envelope Company moved into its new 4-story building on Water Street, where it manufactured both envelope machinery and envelopes. Incorporated the following year, the company became a division of United States Envelope Company in 1898. U.S. Envelope absorbed ten of the leading envelope manufacturers in the United States, including four from Worcester, to produce 90 per cent of the commercial output of envelopes in the country. At that time, W.H. Hill Envelope Company was the oldest envelope manufacturer in the United States. As late as 1970 the firm remained in this building.

The Chevalier Furniture Company owned the building from 1975 to 2010. This 90,000 sq. ft. 4-story structure is currently being restored as a 64-unit, mixed-income residential development.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 8 (W. H. Hill Envelope Company) to Site 9 (J. H. & G. M. Walker Shoe Company)

Proceed north to the very next factory building at 28 Water Street.

Site 9

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

J.H. & G.M. WALKER BOOT & SHOE COMPANY, 28 WATER STREET

The J.H. & G. M. Walker Boot and Shoe Company built this four-and-a-half-story brick factory building and a one-story office on the corner of Winter Street in 1870. Its early date of construction, in comparison to the adjoining Hill Envelope factory, can be seen in the gable (rather than flat) roof and smaller windows.

Boot and shoe manufacturing was Worcester's third largest 19th century industry (after wire and envelopes) and this company and its building played an important role in the history of that industry. Joseph H. Walker began his career in boot and shoe manufacturing with his father, Joseph, an early Worcester shoe manufacturer, who came here from Hopkinton in 1843.

The younger Walker believed he could produce boots on a large scale without an individual fitting to the customer and eventually left his father's business. In 1862, with his brother, George, he formed the J.H. & G.M. Walker Boot and Shoe Company – becoming one of the city's first large-scale boot manufacturers. Walker is considered the "father" of most of Worcester's twenty-three late-19th century boot and shoe manufacturers and this building is seen as the symbolic nucleus of the local boot and shoe industry.

By 1868 the Walker brothers had become so successful that they opened a tannery in Chicago. A two-and-a-half story building known as the Walker Storehouse was built behind this factory, at 73 Winter Street, in 1879, for "aging" the boots. By 1880, more than 300 employees worked in the Water Street factory, producing heavy boots, which were widely sold in the American West. In 1888, the Walker Company was bought out by F.W. Blacker, who continued making the "Walker Boot" in a different location.

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The storehouse and office building were demolished around 1999, but the outline of the vanished storehouse can still clearly be seen on the rear wall of the Harding Street side of the factory building. In the early 1890s, this building was owned by Hamblin & Russell, manufacturers of wire. By the 1920's they diversified and by the 1960s, the company was incorporated as the Arrow Wholesale Company, Incorporated.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 9 (J. H. & G. M. Walker Shoe Company) to Site 10 (82-88 Winter Street)

Proceed to the corner of Water and Winter streets, noting the back façade of the Walker Shoe Company. Cross over to No. 88 Winter Street to view the next site.

Site 10

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

82-88 WINTER STREET

Built around 1898, this rather plain, three-story, brick building is distinguished by a front façade that is angled to follow a bend in the street. Under the awnings above the ground floor display windows, are leaded glass transoms. In them, the stained glass numbers, 82, 84, and 86, recall the fact that three separate stores originally occupied this commercial space. These transoms are attributed to Worcester Stained Glass Works, which was located on the second floor of the building, at No. 88.

David Welch, a Boston trained craftsman, founded this company around 1885 and the business was in operation at this location from about 1898 until 1941. During the late-19th-early-20th century period, stained glass was very popular in the United States, not only for churches and grand houses, but also for middle class dwellings and even three-deckers. In business during the period of Worcester's greatest growth and industrial success, Worcester Stained Glass Works found a large market in this rapidly growing city, as well as in cities and towns throughout New England.

Also at No. 88, but located on the third floor, was Atlantic Bag Company, makers of burlap bags. The company occupied this space for a number of years through the mid-1960s.

It is interesting to note that this building was originally much larger, extending to the corner of Grafton Street. That portion of the building was removed in the early 1960s, during the construction of Interstate 290.

At the rear, on Burt Street, can be seen clear evidence of this building's commercial and manufacturing use. To view that façade, proceed to the corner of Winter and Grafton streets, turn left and walk past the one-story building there, then, turn left onto Burt Street and look to your left. There, extending out from the top floor is a winch used to raise and lower palettes of goods and stained glass through large loading doors. Today, only the third floor loading door survives.

Number 82-88 Winter Street was renovated in 2002, for commercial use on the ground-floor and condominiums on the floors above.



Site 10 – Extended Version

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

ANARCHIST EMMA GOLDMAN AND ICE CREAM

The site of Number 82-88 Winter Street is associated, by tradition, with two young immigrants from Europe, Emma Goldman and her lover Alexander Berkman. The couple is believed to have moved to Worcester in 1891. Here they are said to have run an ice cream shop for about a year on the ground floor of a wood frame building on the site of the present building. However, as dedicated members of an Anarchist movement, their goal was to try to earn enough money to return to Russia to further the revolution brewing there.

Their plans changed, though, when Goldman heard about a contentious strike at the Carnegie Steel Plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Labor trouble had erupted between steelworkers and the chairman, Henry Clay Frick. As a result of Frick's determination to stamp out the union, some striking steel-workers were killed and hundreds were injured. Goldman was "inflamed" at the brutal bluntness of these attacks approved by Frick. Berkman and Goldman quickly agreed that Frick, whom they saw as the ultimate symbol of capitalistic greed, must be assassinated.

Here in Worcester they plotted their deadly plan. Then, Berkman traveled to Pittsburgh and on July 23, 1892, pretending to be a strikebreaker, he burst into Frick's office and shot him. Frick survived and Berkman was sentenced to twenty years in prison. Goldman was implicated in the assassination attempt. (continued on next page)

In her time, Emma Goldman was the most famous radical agitator in America. A forceful speaker, she espoused causes such as union organization, the eight-hour work day, free love, birth control, and equality and independence for women. She returned to Worcester in 1907, to give a speech; yet, when she attempted to speak here again in 1909, she was barred from doing so. Miss Goldman was eventually deported and barred from entering the United States. She died in Canada at the age of seventy.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 10 (82-88 Winter Street) to Site # 11 (Heywood Boot and Shoe Company)

Proceed west down Winter Street to No. 70. This is Heywood Boot & Shoe Company's Wachusett Building



Site 11

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

HEYWOOD BOOT & SHOE COMPANY, WACHUSETT BUILDING, 68-80 WINTER STREET

This large brick factory building was built in 1879 for Samuel R. Heywood, owner and head of the Heywood Boot & Shoe Company. Boot and shoe manufacturing was one of Worcester's major 19th century industries. Samuel Heywood came to Worcester from nearby Princeton in 1855, to work in the wholesale boot and shoe business of fellow townsman Edward A. Goodnow. He purchased Goodnow's business in 1856 and in 1864 the firm began the actual manufacture of boots. The company name was changed to S. R. Heywood & Company in 1873.

Heywood began to manufacture finer grades of shoes in the 1880's. The company had switched over to shoe-making, exclusively, by 1899, with a capacity of 1,000 pairs a day. The "Heywood Shoe," known for its excellent quality, was sold throughout the United States and abroad. After Samuel Heywood's death in 1913, the business remained in the hands of his family until 1941. The company ceased manufacturing operations here at that time, but operated a shoe outlet in the building until 1961.

The Winter Street facade is marked with a disk-shaped granite plaque inscribed "Wachusett Building – 1879." The pitched roof that originally rose above the plaque was later removed for the addition of a flat-roofed extra story, but the plaque still survives in its original location. Over time, in order to accommodate Heywood's growing business, additions were made to extend the building to the right of the plaque. To allow further rear additions, houses and tenements that stood behind the factory were displaced.

Today, this former factory building serves mixed-uses. The upper floors are currently being converted to residential condominiums, while businesses occupy the ground floor. On the west end of the four-story Harding Street facade can be seen a neighborhood landmark – the ghost of a painted wall sign advertising the Heywood Company.

Site 11 – Extended Version

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

HARDING AND WINTER STREET MANUFACTURING DISTRICT

If you had been standing in this location in 1870, you would have looked out over the waters of the Blackstone Canal. The canal company officially ceased operation in 1848; yet, the canal waterway remained open for many years afterward. Gradually, new streets and buildings were built over the canal, here and there. Then, in the late 1860s, while many sections of the waterway were still open, the canal was integrated into the city's new sewer system. Harding Street, which follows the route of the canal, did not exist until this section was finally covered over by sewer construction in the 1890s.

Look south down Harding Street and imagine the scene in the 1830s as canal boats passed this way, drawn by horses plodding along the towpaths that flanked the waterway. Imagine, too, when the open canal became part of the city's sewer system, how rancid the smell!

(continued on next page)



Beginning in the early days of the canal, this once-swampy section of Worcester was gradually built up with a mix of factories and houses on lots virtually bare of trees and grass. Over time, more and larger factories were built, sometimes replacing earlier buildings on the same site. The three-to-six-story brick factory buildings you see here today were built between about 1870 and 1910. In them, a wide variety of products were made -- as was typical of Worcester's industrial diversity: boots and shoes, envelopes, looms, and more.

During this period of great industrial prosperity, many smaller, earlier houses and commercial buildings along Water and Green streets were replaced with rows of multi-story brick tenement blocks with stores on their ground floors. A variety of foreign languages could be heard on these bustling streets as immigrant neighborhood residents shopped for groceries, services, and the wealth of ethnic specialties that reminded them of home.

During the second half of the 20th century, this entire neighborhood changed dramatically. Several causes worked together to fragment this vibrant urban neighborhood: Many neighborhood buildings were lost to the construction of Interstate 290 in the late 1950s. Manufacturing declined in Worcester and second generation immigrants, who now saw themselves as Americans, preferred to live in more suburban locations. Today, Water and Green streets are mostly lined with one-story buildings and empty lots; but, if you close your eyes, you may be able to imagine the teeming life that filled these streets a century ago.

WALKING DIRECTIONS:

By the Canal: Canal District Walking Tour

From Site 11 (Heywood Boot & Shoe Company) back to Union Station

At the corner of Winter and Harding Streets turn right and proceed up Harding Street to return to Union Station. While following this path, keep in mind that the Blackstone Canal remains buried under this street.

END OF TOUR

