By The Canal

The Blackstone Canal, which opened for business in 1828, provided a commercial link between the City of Worcester and the sea at Providence, R.I. Although it was abandoned as a commercial enterprise 20 years later, it stimulated significant economic growth and left its imprint on the city's steel network. It also hastened the advent of the railroads and introduced an influx of Irish immigrants, who had been hired to dig the canal. Archeological work in the 1970s discovered the canal still flows beneath a current day Ward Street.

The Canal District subsequently became the locus of myriad waves of immigration to the city, providing a first-stop home to numerous ethnic groups who later prospered and relocated to the three-decker hills to the east and to the city's growing west side.

While no current day buildings date from the actual Blackstone Canal era, the District is home to numerous properties that were prominent in its aftermath, an age of vigorous commercial/industrial growth and multi-ethnic settlement.

While in the Canal District, discover our hidden canal in Worcester. With the Blackstone Canal Historical Museum, its fleet of Compton Plants, 13th Green St., 1st floor west, Worcester, MA...The Walking Tour below, accessible through an easily downloadable smartphone application, paints the history of the District through the investigation of eleven of its historic properties. It was produced by Preservation Worcester (www.preservationworcester.org) with grants from both the Canal District Alliance (www.thecanaldistrict.com) and the John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission (www.nps.gov/bvcc).

Download a QR Code reader, using the QR Code reader line up the code in the camera's viewfinder. The Reader will instantly scan the code for a narrative of the property and further historical information.