

Genesee River South Loop Walking Tour

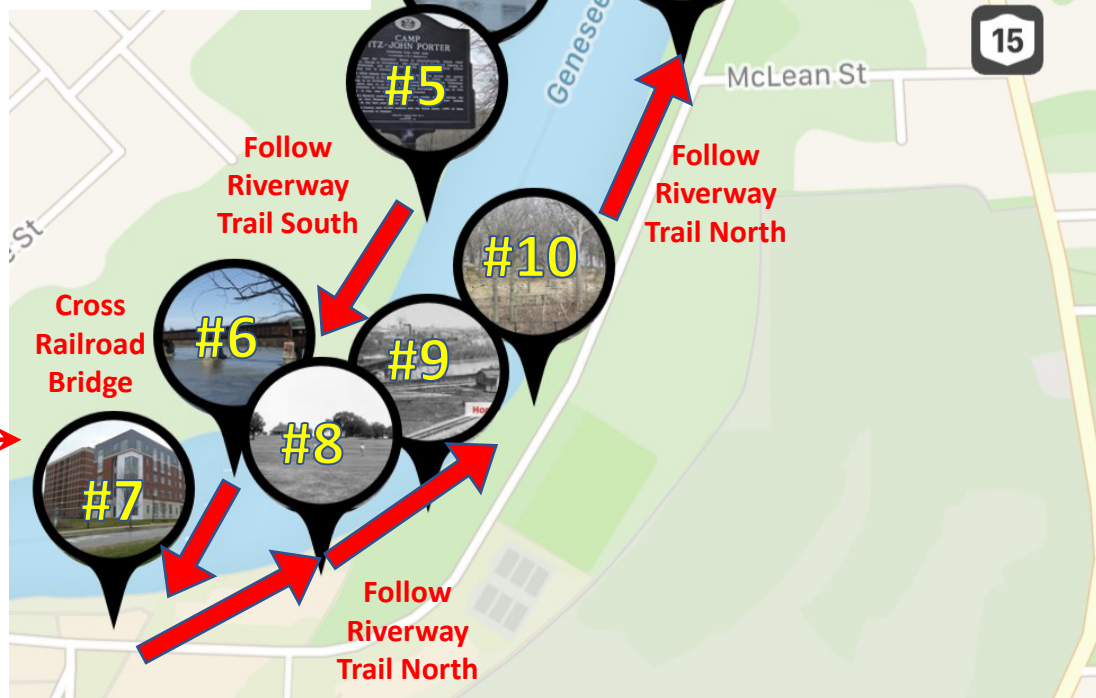
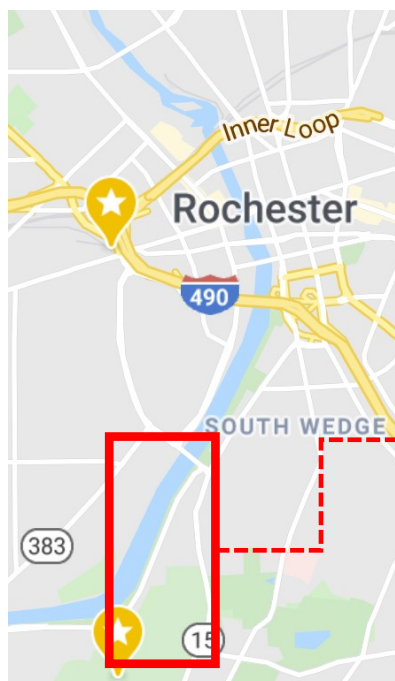
This tour begins on the western bank of the Genesee River, near the historic Clarissa Street Bridge, now called the Ford Street Bridge.

You'll walk south along the west bank of the river and walk north along the east bank to return.

As you walk south, you'll see where Rochester's Civil War recruits trained, and learn how petroleum-based lubricants, invented by Vacuum Oil, led to the invention of gasoline powered autos.

These toxic chemicals created a brownfield, so please stay on the trail.

You'll cross to the east bank on a historic converted railroad bridge and walk back while learning about a historic golf course, a hospital used to quarantine patients with small-pox, a Victorian cemetery, and the distillery which created "Corn Hill Rye" whiskey.



Healthy precautions:

- Stay home if you're not feeling well
- Stay on the trail, since the Vacuum Oil area is a brownfield site
- Wear a mask if people are nearby, and stay at least six feet away from others
- Don't touch, sit on, or lean against, benches, fences, and other objects during your walk
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when returning home

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#1 Church of Love Faith Center – A hundred years ago, the Delaware & Hudson Coal Yard was located here, where the church and parking lot are today. The trail you'll be following south along the river was once the Erie Railroad track, which served passengers and freight.



#2 Genesee Valley Canal - The low land west of where you are standing was once part of the Genesee Valley Canal. This canal, which ran south for 107 miles all the way to Olean, operated between 1840 and 1878. It included 106 locks, to accommodate a 911 foot change in elevation. North bound canal boats brought gypsum and lumber, as well as wheat and other crops, to the Erie Canal in downtown Rochester. Many then continued east or west along the Erie Canal and beyond.



#3 Vacuum Oil Refinery – A refinery and petroleum storage facility operated here from the 1860's to the 1930's. Vacuum Oil, now part of ExxonMobil, first produced leather-softening materials for horse collars and then developed kerosene for lamps and high quality industrial lubricants used in early internal combustion engines.



#4 Rochester Skyline View- This lookout, at the river bend, offers one of the best views of the Genesee River and the Rochester skyline. The river starts from a spring on a farm in northern Pennsylvania and is one of only 33 rivers in the world that flows north.



#5 Civil War Camp – In 1862, a recruiting camp for Civil War soldiers was built to the west of this spot, on flat land above the Genesee River and the Genesee Valley Canal. It was named after Fitz-John Porter, a Union general, and was the initial training ground for the 108th and 140th New York infantry regiments. Both fought at Gettysburg and were at Appomattox when General Lee surrendered.



#6 Erie Lackawanna Railroad Bridge - This bridge was constructed in 1915 to carry the Rochester branch of the Erie Railroad over the Genesee River. The heavy plate girder structure is supported by cut stone piers. It was converted into a pedestrian bridge in 2011 and now links the University of Rochester's River Campus and Rochester's 19th Ward.



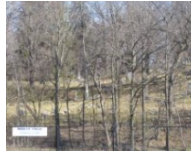
#7 University of Rochester – From the east end of the railroad bridge, you can see the north end of the University of Rochester's River Campus. The nearby red brick buildings are student housing. The main quad lies to the south, along the river. The University of Rochester was initially located on Prince Street, where it still hosts the Memorial Art Gallery. The main campus was moved here in the early 1930's.



#8 Oak Hill - The renowned Oak Hill Country Club, now located in Pittsford, was formed here in 1901. Golf was a new sport in America at the time and the original course, on 85 acres located here along the East Bank of the Genesee River, had only 9 holes. Members paid a \$25 initiation fee and yearly dues of \$20. The original clubhouse was a converted farmhouse.



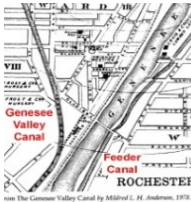
#9 Hope Hospital – The hospital, located here between 1868 and 1903, was used to quarantine patients with infectious diseases. From 1902-03, a small-pox epidemic spread to more than 500 Rochester residents, with 87 deaths.



#10 – Mount Hope Cemetery - Beneath the trees above the sports fields across the road, you can see the western edge of historic Mt. Hope Cemetery. One of the most beautiful Victorian cemeteries in America, it's the final resting place for Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony. There are over 350,000 people buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery, more than the current number of residents living in the city of Rochester.



#11 Highland Crossing Trail - The Highland Crossing Trail, a new multi-use neighborhood connecting trail, begins here at McLean Street, passes Highland Park, and connects to the Erie Canalway Trail. Up the bluff to the east is the former home and private gardens of George Ellwanger, who joined with Patrick Barry to form the Mount Hope Nursery in 1940 and later donated the land which became Highland Park.



#12 Feeder Canal - You're walking on what was once the Lehigh Valley Railroad bed, which was located between the Genesee River and a "Feeder Canal". The Feeder Canal fed water from the Genesee River into the Erie Canal in downtown Rochester. It also provided a detour for canal boats, in case the Broad Street Aqueduct was broken.



#13 Episcopal Church Home – This nursing home, located on the east side of the road, was founded in 1868 by four women in order to help orphans and widows. After a fire in 1937, the Episcopal Church Home decided to focus care on older adults. The original building was replaced in the 1960s.



#14 Wolcott Distillery Site - The Wolcott Distillery was established in 1827, and the building shown in the photo was built in 1840. Their products included "Corn Hill Rye" whisky and "Malted Wheat" whisky, as well as denatured alcohol. The distillery was located on the southeast end of the old Clarissa Street bridge, and the bridge railing was attached directly to the Wolcott building.



#15 Clarissa Street Bridge - There have been four Clarissa Street Bridges at this site. The first was built in 1844, the second in 1862, and the third, a steel truss bridge, was built in 1892. The current bridge, built between 1917 and 1920, featured concrete pylons with frosted electric light globes.

You can use an iPhone to take a guided tour of the Downtown Riverfront



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