Walk Learn & Explore

New Brunswick, New Jersey

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

1 **New Brunswick Train Station** – Constructed in 1903, the last remaining Pennsylvania Railroad station for a mid-sized city in NJ.

2 **People's National Bank** – Originally opened in 1887 and moved into the former New Brunswick Savings Institution in 1924.

3 **City Hall** – This example of an Old Colonial Meeting House was designed by Alexander Merchant and completed in 1927. Public meetings are held in Council Chambers on the second floor.

4 **Bayard Street Post Office** – Built in 1936 as a National Relief Project under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. The foyer contains three murals painted by George Biddle, a founder of the New-Deal Federal Arts Project.

5 **Bayard Street Presbyterian Church** – Originally called Hungarian Presbyterian in 1904, the name was changed in 1955 as requested by the congregation. Once home to the St. James Methodist Church.

6 **Joyce Kilmer House** – Home to Joyce Kilmer, author of the poem "Trees," from 1886-1892. The poet joined the US Army and was killed in action during World War I.

7 **The Nativity of the Virgin Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church** – Built in 1893 as the Livingston Avenue Baptist Church, it features a large Tiffany stained glass window.

8 **Public Library** – Built with a $50,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie in 1903. Features stained glass skylights and original metal shelving. The library is the downtown gateway to the Livingston Avenue Historic District, an 8-block district of largely late-19th century and 20th century homes and offices, extending from Morris to Hale streets.

9 **Henry Guest House** – A New Brunswick alderman and associate of President John Adams and author Thomas Payne, Guest built this stone farmhouse, originally located between Livingston Avenue and George Street, in 1760.

10 **Willow Grove Cemetery**—Founded in 1851. The final resting place for many prominent City residents from the 18th and 19th centuries including former City mayors, New Brunswick's Unknown Soldier, and the first Japanese exchange student to the U.S.

11 **Mt. Zion AME Church** – The present church dates only to 1984, but the congregation is the oldest historically-black religious group in Middlesex County, founded in 1827. The congregation worshiped at a building on Division Street for over 150 years.

12 **Monument Square** – Dedicated on Nov. 15, 1893. Erected to honor soldiers and sailors who participated in the U.S. Civil War. Refurbished in 2007 and re-dedicated to all veterans.

13 **State Theatre** – In 1921, Reade's State Theatre opened as a silent film palace. Later used to show vaudeville acts, and remained a popular venue until the 1970s. It reopened in 1988 and underwent extensive renovations in 2003 to return it to its original grandeur.

14 **United Methodist Church** – This congregation was founded in 1811 and the church was completed in 1896. Considered a classic example of Gothic architecture from its time period.

15 **Poile Zedek Synagogue** – Literally translated as "Men of Righteousness," this congregation was founded in 1901. Construction was completed in 1924.

16 **First Reformed Church** – "Town Clock Church" is home to the oldest congregation in the City. Built in 1812 to replace a church damaged by the British Army during its occupation of the City in 1776–77.

17 **The Frog and the Peach Restaurant**– Former industrial building dates back to 1876. Originally housed printing presses for *The Home News*, the City's local paper and predecessor to *The Home News Tribune*.

18 **Christ Church** – Built in the 1740s, its bell tower called citizens to the 1776 reading of the Declaration of Independence nearby on Albany Street. The third oldest congregation in the City, its cemetery is the final resting place of General Anthony White (1750-1803), aide to George Washington.

19 **Old Bay Restaurant** – Built in 1857, it housed the Bank of New Jersey until 1910. The oldest commercial building in the City that's still in use.

20 **LaGrange's Tavern Site** – Tavern served as Gen. Washington's headquarters during his brief stay in New Brunswick in 1776.

21 **Reading of the Declaration of Independence Site** – The Declaration had its third public reading from a table platform set up nearby in the middle of Albany Street on July 9, 1776.

22 **Red Lion Tavern Site** – First home of Queen's College (Rutgers University), the eighth oldest college in the U.S.

23 **Johnson & Johnson** – In 1886, the Johnson brothers began producing individually wrapped surgical dressings in a converted wallpaper factory at this site. The company's world headquarters is now just two blocks away at George and Albany streets.

24 **Voorhees Hall** – Zimmerli Art Museum – Constructed in 1903 and originally housed the Rutgers College Library. Now home to a large collection of Russian Art. **Call 732-932-7237 for museum hours and info.**

25 **William the Silent** – A gift from Fenton B. Turck in 1928, the bronze statue of William the Silent (1533–1584), Count of Nassau, Prince of Orange, is a reminder of the university's Dutch heritage.

26 **James Suydam Statue** – A former trustee of Rutgers University, Suydam was a benefactor of the Theological Seminary, donating over a quarter of a million dollars during his life. He was a businessman and director of several large financial institutions. This bronze statue was donated by his friends in 1873, not long after his death.

27 **New Brunswick Theological Seminary and Gardner A. Sage Library** – The oldest in the nation, it was founded in 1784 and was first located in New York City, moving to New Brunswick in 1811. The Sage Library was built in 1875 and contains rare manuscripts and several books from the 15th century.

28 **New Jersey Hall** – State funding for an "Agricultural Hall" enabled this building to be constructed in 1889. In 1903, it was partially destroyed by a fire, but restored to meet the original design without essential changes.

29 **Schanck Observatory** – Built in 1865, it was modeled after the Tower of the Winds in Athens and originally used for astronomical observations.

30 **Hamilton Cannon Battery site** – In early December 1776, Alexander Hamilton, who later served as the first Secretary of the Treasury, positioned a battery of artillery here to guard the retreat of the Continental Army led by Gen. George Washington across NJ.

31 **Kirkpatrick Chapel** – Built in 1873, it is named after Sophia Astley Kirkpatrick. Originally housed the college library on its second floor.

32 **Old Queen's Administration Building** – Home to Rutgers University President's office, completed in 1811.

33 **Geology Hall** – Built in 1872, today the Geology Museum is located inside, displaying minerals, fossils, Native American artifacts, and an Egyptian mummy. **Call 732-932-7243 for hours of operation.**

34 **Van Nest Hall** – Rutgers' second instructional building, built in 1845, and named for Abraham Van Nest, a New York City merchant and devoted trustee. The third story was added in 1893.

35 **Winants Hall** – The University's first dormitory was completed in 1890 and named after philanthropist Garrett E. Winants, who donated $75,000 for its construction. Famed Rutgers University graduate Paul Robeson lived here.

36 **St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church** – This Gothic Revival brownstone church was built in 1856 to serve the growing Catholic population in central NJ.

37 **Johnston Hall** – Built in 1830, it is the second oldest structure at Rutgers, and was the original location for the Rutgers Preparatory School.

Explore
Three Centuries of New Brunswick

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the Historic Downtown Walking Tour of the City of New Brunswick, New Jersey. We are proud to share with you some of the stories of our treasured past, and we hope that this tour will help you discover the important role our City has played throughout our nation's history. From Queen's College to the State Theatre and beyond, we invite you to explore three centuries of New Brunswick history.

Sincerely,

Jim Cahill

Jim Cahill, Mayor

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

Come take a walk and explore the rich history of downtown New Brunswick.

In the late 1600s, individual families began to settle in the New Brunswick area. A group led by John Inian purchased 10,000 acres of land from the Lenni Lenape in 1681, using stockings, rum, shot, wampum, and other items as currency. This area would later become the lower edge of New Brunswick along the Raritan River. In 1730, the City was named in honor of the English royal house of Brunswick. Queens College was founded in 1766, named in honor of Queen Charlotte – wife to King George III of England. We know it today as Rutgers University.

By 1776, New Brunswick was a busy port and stagecoach stop. The city had a ferry service across the Raritan River, which made it an appropriate place for the public reading of the Declaration of Independence. In November 1776, George Washington and the Continental Army rested here briefly during their retreat across New Jersey.

In the 19th century, New Brunswick saw tremendous industrial growth fueled by trade on the river, the Delaware and Raritan Canal's opening in 1834, and the first railroad in 1839. Numerous industries took root in the "Hub City" including surgical bandage manufacturer Johnson & Johnson, founded in 1886.

In the first half of the 20th century, New Brunswick was a small developing industrial city. But after World War II, New Brunswick – like all urban centers in New Jersey – began to decline, losing jobs and residents. In the mid-1970s, City leaders embarked on an ambitious program of redevelopment that has created a remarkable renaissance led by the rise of New Brunswick's healthcare industry and the expansion of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Today, New Brunswick is one of the fastest growing urban centers in New Jersey.

Created with the assistance of the New Brunswick Historical Association. Funding in part has been provided by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission/Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of the Department of State.

Now you're ready to start your walk!

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

Follow the path indicated on this map of New Brunswick's Historic Downtown Walking tour to ensure you don't miss a stop, or feel free to find your own way through the history of our great City. Inside you'll find descriptions of each location. We hope you enjoy the tour.

Key

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New Brunswick
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