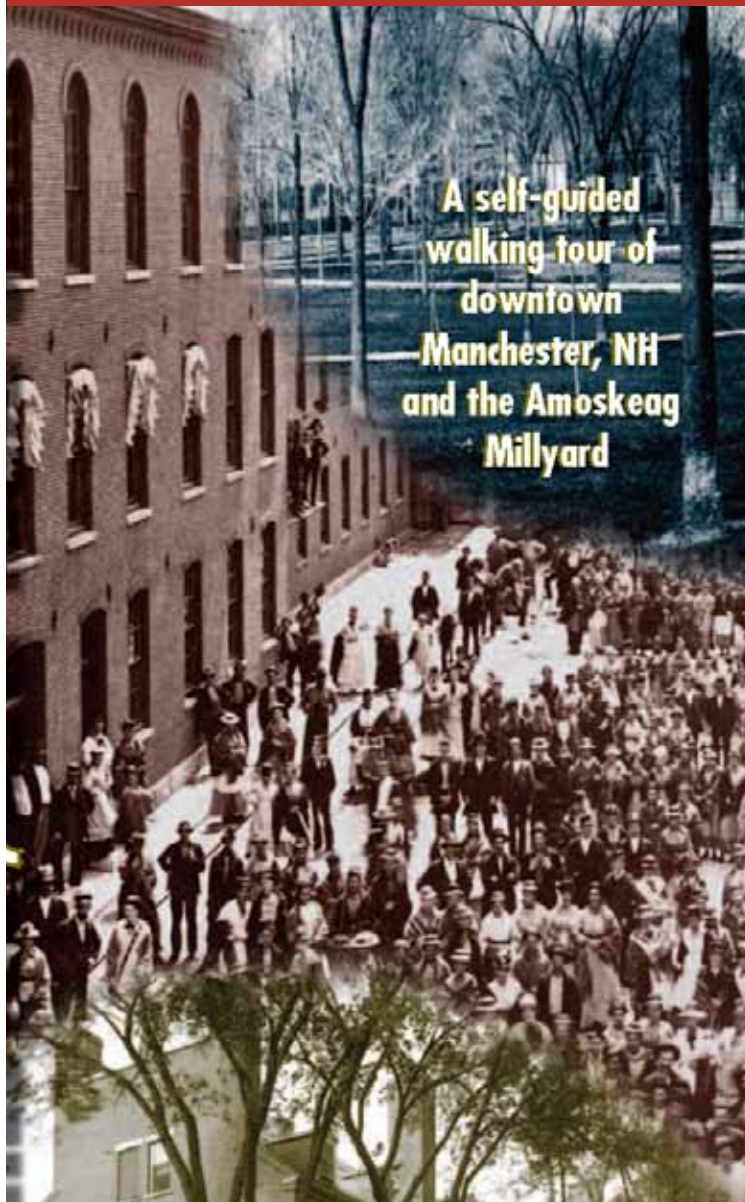


Manchester On Foot

A stroll through history The Millyard

A self-guided walking tour of downtown
Manchester and the Amoskeag Millyard



Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
54 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH 03101
www.manchester-chamber.org

Walking Tour #1 - The Millyard - 2.41 miles without scenic loop or 3.16 miles with scenic loop - total time without stops 1.5 hours - total time with stops 3.5 hours

The Tour begins at the Manchester Information Center located on the corner of Elm Street and Merrimack Street. Upon leaving the Information Center, cross over to the west side of Elm Street and walk south to Pleasant Street. Take a right on Pleasant Street.

Key stops may include:

1. Millyard Museum – 30-50 minutes
2. Jefferson Mill – 15 minutes
3. Overlook Falls – 15 minutes
4. PSNH lobby – 20 minutes
5. City Hall – 20 minutes

Wear comfortable shoes, and always cross at crosswalks. Use the pedestrian crossing lights whenever possible.

Many of the buildings on this walk are public buildings or are otherwise open to the public. Take advantage of this whenever you can. View the interior architecture, learn more about the history of the building and see how it is being used today.

Along the tour, you will see signs for the New Hampshire Heritage Trail. When completed, this will be a 230-mile walking path from Massachusetts to the Canadian border. The program is administered by the New Hampshire Division of Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Trails. More information is available at www.nhtrails.org.

The First People to live in the area that is now Manchester were members of the Abenaki tribe, who fished at the falls on the Merrimack River 11,000 years ago. The first European settlers to the area came from Scotland and Ireland in the 1720s and in 1751 settled and incorporated the village of Derryfield, a modest community on the edge of the frontier. In 1810, its citizens changed the town's name to Manchester, in honor of England's great industrial city. They were looking toward a future they could barely imagine, as the only industry here at that time were the traditional small saw and gristmills.

The Manchester we know today is a product of the Industrial Revolution. The city's creation and growth are largely the legacy of one entity: the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company (The Amoskeag). The Amoskeag was incorporated in 1831, and operated for more than a century before closing its doors in 1935. In the early 20th century, the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company was the largest producer of cotton textiles in the world. The company's owners also bought the waterpower rights to the swift-flowing Amoskeag Falls and purchased 15,000 acres of land from farmers on the east side of the river. This enabled the company to control the future shape of its millyard, and also to shape the growth of the city that would support its industrial operations.

The Amoskeag laid out the city's streets and built mills, canals and housing for workers. It then sold over 14,000 surplus acres of land for business blocks and residential neighborhoods. The company gave parkland to the city and sold lots at low cost for municipal buildings, schools and churches. The result is Manchester – the largest planned city in New England, and a true success story of early urban planning in America.

The red-brick "mile of mills" that stretches along the east side of the Merrimack River still anchors the city firmly to its industrial past. But there is much more to Manchester's history than the story of one company. The thriving city has always been a magnet for ambitious entrepreneurs, hopeful immigrants, and a long line of imaginative dreamers, planners, and doers. The evidence of Manchester's rich past is everywhere around us, most notably in the buildings, monuments and other sites you will see today.

1. Pleasant Street

At the corner of Pleasant and Elm note the old signs imbedded in the wall bordering the grassy area in front of the hotel. (.01 miles)

The signs you see are all from buildings that were near this intersection in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Continue west on Pleasant Street.

Pass the old New Hampshire State Union Armory on your left. The armory was built in 1904 and was used to train militia units from all across the state. Today it serves as a meeting and function room for the adjacent hotel.



View of the Amoskeag Tenements on Pleasant Street looking north east.

On your right you will pass a number of housing units. These were once part of Amoskeag Corporation's Worker Housing and are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Over a period of 80 years, the company built tenements and boarding houses, overseers' blocks for middle managers, and six single-family homes for the agents, or senior managers. Many have been destroyed, but what remains comprises one of the most important collections of 19th century workers housing in North America. There are five separate blocks of corporate housing. You will pass several of them on your walk.

The architectural styles of these housing units varied according to the tastes of the times from Greek Revival to the Mansard Style (also called French Second Empire) which was a short-lived style that was popular after the Civil War.

On this street and throughout this district, you will notice the simple black cast iron stair railings and brackets that support the front door canopies. These were made in the Amoskeag's own foundries.

On your left you will see the R. G. Sullivan building. Constructed in 1913, this building housed the 7-20-4 Cigar Company, one of the premiere cigar makers in the country. The company operated from 1875 to 1963. The name comes from the company's original address at 724 Elm Street.



View of the Wading Pool with ten boys getting ready to jump in looking north east. Behind the playground is the R.G. Sullivan Cigar Factory.

When you reach Canal Street cross the northbound lane at the cross walk, go down the stairs, and continue over the southbound lane to the remaining portion of Pleasant Street. Walk to the corner of Pleasant and Commercial Street.

Look north and locate the large number "3" along with the sign for the Millyard Museum on the corner of the nearest mill building. This building is Mill No. 3 and home to the Millyard Museum and the New Hampshire Scenic and Cultural Byway Visitor Center. Manchester's millyard is the only urban byway in the state. This building and several others have prominent towers. These housed the main stairways, and most of the towers also served as bell towers. The bells would be rung to announce the starting time, lunchtime, and closing time for the workers. Take a right on Commercial Street and begin walking toward the museum entrance.



View of Franklin Street Grammar School at the intersection of Franklin and Pleasant Streets.

Take a right on Commercial Street and begin walking toward the museum entrance.

2. Scenic and Cultural Byway Visitor Center and the Millyard Museum

Enter the Scenic and Cultural Byway Visitor Center. (.4 miles)

Once inside you will see life-size images of mill workers and their children along with some basic historical information on Manchester and the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company. If you have time, consider a visit to the Millyard Museum. This museum will provide you with a wonderful overview of the history of Manchester, from the Native Americans who first settled here to the men and women who worked and ran the mills. The Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Return to Commercial Street.

Look back at Mill No. 3. Notice the decorative caps on the ends of the metal tie rods in the outside walls of this and other buildings. These secured the building's cross beams to the walls. This helped the building to withstand expansion and contraction due to temperature changes and helped it to hold up under the constant vibration of the machinery.

Across Commercial Street is the Waumbec Mill. The building, constructed in 1900, was built on the site of two earlier buildings. Waumbec Mills, Inc., the firm that took over this building after the Amoskeag closed, made rayon (artificial silk). Waumbec became one of Manchester's largest employers.

3. The Amoskeag Millyard

Founders of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company came to Manchester for one reason: the 54-foot drop in the river at the falls had the potential for 16,000 horsepower of energy. The Amoskeag complex eventually became the largest cotton mill in the world, covering over 700 acres on this side of the river with additional operations on the west side, totaling 8 million square feet of floor space. In 1912, the company made 5 million yards of cloth per week, the equivalent of 150,000 miles of cloth per year. The company had its own foundry, print shop, saw mill, and fire department. At various times during its history Amoskeag also produced steam fire engines, rifles and locomotives.



View looking north west at the South Upper Canal Building in the foreground and the North Upper Canal Building in the background. The Upper Canal runs along the east side of the buildings.

The company produced cotton cloth here for 100 years, reaching its peak from about 1910 to 1920. Shortly after that, the company began to decline. Newer mills and lower labor costs in the South made the Amoskeag less competitive. In 1922 the Amoskeag's workers struck for nine months to protest longer hours and lower pay. The Great Depression of the 1930s hurt business. Finally in December 1935, the company shut down, with plans to reorganize. But, in March 1936, the Merrimack flooded; the water reached the second floor of the mill buildings causing extensive damage. The Amoskeag was ordered by the bankruptcy judge to close its doors for good. Thousands of Manchester residents suddenly found themselves unemployed. Shortly after that, about 100 Manchester citizens got together to form a new company, called Amoskeag Industries. This company acquired all the buildings in the millyard at auction, then sold or leased them to a variety of manufacturing operations. Manchester became known as "The city that would not die."

The millyard in its prime looked very different from what you see today. Rows of brick mill buildings, closed in by iron fences and gates, ran along the river. Two canals ran between the buildings, crossed by streets and footbridges. Overhead walkways connected many of the buildings, and railroad tracks and service alleys branched throughout the complex. In the 1960s and 70s the canals were filled in, about half of the buildings were torn down, and streets

and parking lots were built to accommodate a new era of activity.

As you walk up Commercial Street, you are actually following the path of the Lower Canal, which is buried under the street. The graceful curve of the street echoes the curve of the canal.

Continue up Commercial Street. Stop at "Stark Street Crossing" and the Mill Girl sculpture. (.86 miles)

4. The Mill Girl

The Mill Girl sculpture represents the thousands of women who worked in these factories during the 19th century. The first mill girls came here from the farms and small towns of New England to earn their own way in life and enjoy new social and educational opportunities. This 1988 sculpture by artist Antoinette Schultze has become a symbol of Manchester and its industrial past.

From here you can look east toward Canal and Stark streets where the main gate to the millyard once stood. Through that iron gate poured thousands of workers, many of whom were immigrants who had come to America to find a better life. The Irish and French Canadians came first, and other workers from Germany, England, Scotland, Scandinavia, Poland, Greece and many other countries soon followed. In the early 20th century 17,500 people worked in the Amoskeag millyard. 7,000 of these were women.

Across the street and to the right is University Center, the Manchester campus of the University of New Hampshire. This was the Amoskeag's machine shop, built in 1890 on the site of the earlier (1848) machine shop. During the Civil War, when the company could not get cotton from the South, the machine shop manufactured rifles for the Union Army. To protect these operations a brass field cannon was mounted where the Mill Girl sculpture is today.

Cross to the west side of Commercial Street and take a left, walking south until you see 324 Commercial Street. Stop between 340 and 324 Commercial Street. (.91 miles) Notice the overhead walkway, similar to the walkways that once connected many of the buildings in the millyard.

5. Gingham Mills

The two factories connected by an overhead walkway are known as the Gingham Mills. These mills were dedicated to the spinning and weaving of gingham, a fabric where the yarn is dyed before the fabric is woven (plaids, for example). The Amoskeag began gingham production in 1865 when 53 English weavers were brought in. In 1868 and 1870 the company brought in skilled gingham weavers, mechanics and dye experts from Scotland.

Walk between the two Gingham Mills, under the overhead walkway, to the back of the building. You are now at the edge of the Merrimack River. Walk north along the riverfront path.

To the south you can see the piers from a covered footbridge that allowed workers a shortcut to the west side of the river. The shorter piers to the north once carried a steam pipe. The mills on the west side of the river were developed by the Amoskeag when steam electric power replaced water power.

6. Arms Park & the Merrimack River

This area of the Merrimack has been inhabited for over 10,000 years. The series of islands just upriver from here at Amoskeag Falls was a favored fishing place for the Pennacook Indians. The word "Amoskeag" means "place of many fish" in the Algonkian language.



View of Lower Canal Northern Division looking north from the McGregor Bridge. The Amory Mill Store House is on the right, before the Boiler House was added.

The parking to your right was once the site of the Amoskeag's Mill No. 9 where, in 1957, an outbreak of anthrax occurred. Anthrax was once considered an occupational hazard in textile factories,

where the disease could be contracted from handling wool or goat hair. In 1957 nine Arms workers were infected; four of them died. Coincidentally, an anthrax vaccine was being tested among the Arms company workers at that time. The mill was closed in 1968 and then decontaminated and torn down. During the 1980s a combination of private and public investment led to many improvements in the Millyard, including the designation of this area as Arms Park (1.07 miles) which serves as a recreational area, provides access to the river for water sports such as kayaking, and is a popular staging ground for public events and festivals.

Continue to follow the pathway north, under the overpass.

To your right, and the first mill building north of the overpass, is the Bag Mill, built in 1915. The once famous Amoskeag Seamless Bags were manufactured here. They were woven in one piece, without seams, so as to hold a great deal of weight without splitting.

Continue north following the path along the back side of the mills until it ends. Take a right and head east between the two buildings toward Commercial Street.

Straight across Commercial Street you will see a wall made of granite blocks. This is the side of the Lower Canal, which is buried under the street. The building to the north with the distinctive clock tower is the Jefferson Mill, also called Mill No. 10. It was constructed in 1886 and was the first building in the millyard that used steam power in addition to water power.

Take a moment to explore the lobby of the Jefferson Mill, 670 Commercial Street. (1.4 miles)

Note the old photos of the mills and the cast iron stairway. Straight ahead is the clock tower. If you look up the clock tower shaft you can see the old weights that ran the clock.

After exiting the lobby of the Jefferson Mill you may choose to visit the scenic overlook at the falls or skip this and continue on with the tour. If you choose not to visit the overlook, cross to the east side of Commercial Street and take the stairs on the north side of the mill building (to the left of Fratello's restaurant). At the top of the stairs, walk south through the parking lot to Dow Street.

Scenic Overlook Loop (.75 miles)

Continue north on Commercial Street. At the north entrance to the Jefferson Mill, where the road curves right, bear left off the brick walkway and take the path toward Public Service of New Hampshire.

The building to your left is Public Service of New Hampshire's headquarters. This structure was built in 1909 as a steam powerhouse for the Amoskeag. The building was later acquired by PSNH, and was expanded in the 1940s. In 2002 it was renovated as PSNH Energy Park.

Follow walkway to a stairway on your left. Continue up the stairs to the overlook

The mills were powered by water channeled from the Merrimack River into the canals. The water flowed from the canals into the buildings, where it turned large turbines that provided power for the belts, pulleys, shafts and gears that operated the spinning machines, looms and other equipment used to make cloth.

Follow pathway back to Commercial Street. Take a moment to view Public Service of New Hampshire's lobby. Cross to the east side of Commercial Street and take the stairs on the north side of the mill building (to the left of Fratello's restaurant). At the top of the stairs, walk south through the parking lot to Dow Street.

7. The Amory Mill, One Dow Court (1.45 miles w/out loop)

At this location you can view the massive Amory Mill (now called One Dow Court) built in 1886. Denim was made in the building. Amoskeag was famous for its denims, which were used in the first patented "riveted overalls" or jeans, made by Levi Strauss and Company in 1873.

Turn east on Dow Street and walk up the stairs and across the railroad tracks to Canal Street. Cross to the east side of Canal Street and head south on Canal to Hollis Street. Take a left onto Hollis. (1.65 miles w/out loop)

This is the newest block of Amoskeag Corporate Housing, built in 1916. It replaced blocks of older wooden tenements.

Take a right between the second and third housing buildings and follow the pedestrian walkway south to Kidder Street. Take a left on Kidder and walk to Elm Street. Take a right on Elm Street and head south.

When you cross Bridge Street you are entering the heart of downtown Manchester. When the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company built its first cotton spinning mills along the new Upper Canal in 1838, this part of town was covered in fields and scruffy woods, with a few scattered farmhouses. The population in the area was less than 1,000, and the small village center was located nearly four miles from the river, near



View looking north east down Elm Street.

today's Interstate -93. But the owners of the Amoskeag had something much different in mind. In 1838 Ezekiel Straw, a 19-year-old Amoskeag engineer, sketched out the street plan for the new business district. The streets were laid out on a grid system, following the points of a compass. The heart of the new commercial district was Elm Street, running parallel to the river and the millyard. The central part of Elm Street was laid out in 1838, and was extended several times over the years. As you walk along Elm Street you will notice that many of the city's Victorian era business blocks still exist. The names of the owners and the dates of construction can be seen on the upper floors.

Walk south on Elm until you reach Stark Street. Take a right on Stark Street.

On your left is the Hillsborough County Court House. (2.12 miles w/out loop) It was designed by noted Manchester architect William Butterfield in the Classical Revival style and built in 1904. In 1971 the city took it over and renovated it as the City Hall Annex. Today it is known as the West Wing of City Hall.

Follow the brick pathway to the right of the County Court House to Market Street.

To your left is City Hall (2.2 miles w/out loop). If you look right toward the river you will see more of the Amoskeag Corporation's Worker Housing.

At this point you may either walk past City Hall to Elm Street, taking a right on Elm Street back toward the Information Center, or you may continue with the Downtown Tour, which starts at City Hall.

