

DOWNTOWN AKRON SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR



MARCH 2021 TOUR: Luck of the Irish

Sláinte! (slawn-cheh)

an Irish greeting for health, often said as tapping beer glasses

Explore downtown this month and learn about Akron's Irish heritage.

For information on where to park and ways to extend your experience in downtown through dining, shopping and events, visit DOWNTOWNAKRON.COM.

MAP KEY

● TOUR STOPS

P PARKING



THE
SUMMIT COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF AKRON, OHIO



1 An Ghorta Mhóir

Location: On the left as you go up the steps between the Ghost Boat and Akron Children's Hospital.

This memorial is dedicated by the ladies and gentlemen of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Mark Heffernan Division, Akron, Ohio, to commemorate all those who suffered, died in the Great Hunger in Ireland, 1845-1850. The Great Hunger is also known as the Potato Famine when a fungus-like organism called *Phytophthora infestans* (or *P. infestans*) caused the ruin of half the potato crop in 1845 and about three quarters of the crops for the next several years.

2 Ghost Boat at Lock 2

Location: Lock 2 sits along the Ohio and Erie Canal between Canal Park and Akron Children's Hospital.

Have you ever wondered what the inside of a canal boat looked like in the 1800s? Thanks to Akron Civic Commons and New Territory's augmented reality experience, you can see and move about a canal boat with your smartphone. Download the NT One app on your phone, then scan the image on the side of the ghost boat to start your experience.

3 O'Neil's Department Store

Location: 222 S. Main Street at the corner of Main St. and State St.

When the Pennsylvania & Ohio canal was filled in mysteriously one evening in the late 1870s, it paved the way for Akron's Main Street to become the main shopping thoroughfare that you know it for today. Two Irishmen, Michael O'Neil and Isaac J. Days, came to Akron in 1877 with experience as owners of dry goods stores. First established as O'Neil & Days, their original store, which they soon outgrew, was at the southwest corner of Main and Market. In February 1889, they built a four-story building on Main St. that burned to the ground only eight months later. Construction began on a new Main St. location in 1890. In 1928, the newest version of the store, then owned by the May Company, was opened at the corners of S. Main and State St. The site is now home to law firm Roetzel & Andress and the Barley House, a sports bar where you can get a great Irish beer or meal.

4 Akron's St. Patrick's Day Parade

Location: Main St. in front of Lock 3

While this Akron tradition has been canceled for the second year due to the pandemic, don't let that stop you from celebrating your real (or just for the month of March) Irish heritage! In 2017, Akron was recognized as one of the top ten places in the nation to celebrate the holiday. Typically held the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day, the parade is organized by the City of Akron and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Downtown Akron Partnership can help you celebrate this year with its #PictureYourselfonMain, St. Patrick's Day programming. Visit downtownakron.com to learn more.

5 St. Vincent de Paul Church

Location: Stand at the corner of Main and Market and look west up the hill on Market St. to see the church's bell tower.

St. Vincent Church, Akron's oldest parish, was started by Rev. Father John Martin Henni who came to Akron from Cincinnati on horseback in 1824, just prior to Akron's founding. The first Catholic Church, St. Vincent DePaul, was a mission established 1837 (making it ten years older than the Cleveland Diocese) on Green Street on land donated by Judge Edwin Green. The current St. Vincent Church cornerstone was laid on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1864, but the church wasn't finished until after the Civil War. To learn more about St. Vincent St. Mary High School, visit downtownakron.com/walkingtours.

6 Fran McGovern

Location: 47 N Main Street - the former Ohio Edison Company Building

Fran McGovern (1927 - 2004), was an attorney at old Ohio Edison Company Building, previously the Northern Ohio Traction and Lighting. Armed with a degree in economics from The University of Akron, Ms. McGovern went on to earn her law degree from Case Western Reserve University Law School in 1949. She was elected to the Ohio General Assembly in 1954 representing Summit County. She won reelection in 1956 and 1958 as chairwoman of the House Judiciary Committee. In 1961, McGovern was appointed to fill a vacancy at the Ohio Public Utilities Commission (PUCO), making her the first woman in the county to hold such a position.

Eventually, she became chairman. She became an attorney for Ohio Edison in 1965 and retired in 1989. She is also the author of several books: *Fun, Cheap and Easy*; *Written on the Hills: the Making of the Akron Landscape*; and *Joe's Place: Conversations on the Cuyahoga Valley* which was a collaboration with Joe Jesenky with Russ Masarra, Dr. Lynn Metzger and illustrator Chuck Ayres.

Fun Fact: The surname of McGovern is Mag Shamhrain in Irish Gaelic meaning descendant of the summer person.

7 Old Dublin and the Irish Cemetery

Location: 27 Ridge Street - Akron Northside Station

Standing at the northeast corner of the Akron Northside Station, look to your right towards today's Cascade Village. Irish immigrants to the area during the canal era helped dig both the Ohio & Erie and Pennsylvania & Ohio canals through Akron. Long hours and little pay rewarded these workers who connected Ohio's wilderness to the rest of the world. They lived in little shanty villages along the rough and tumble overgrowth and then buried their dead on the high bluff above the Cuyahoga River. The establishment of this location was the third such burial ground in Akron after the "Old Cemetery," known today as Middlebury Cemetery, and Spicer Cemetery. The residents of the cemetery were eventually moved to Akron Rural Cemetery, est. in 1838, which is known today as Glendale Cemetery.

8 Dr. Thomas McEbright

Location: 60 S. High St. - Akron Summit County Public Library

Dr. Thomas McEbright, one of Akron and Summit County's early physicians and surgeons, first established his practice on Howard Street before moving to High Street. He and his family, wife Nancy and daughters Kitty and Carita, lived at what was then 168 S. High Street. Today, that address is the southern segment of the Akron-Summit County Public Library. Dr. McEbright studied medicine in Wooster and Columbus before becoming a Brigade Surgeon, appointed during the Civil War by Gov. Tod, the brother of Akron's Grace Tod Perkins. In 1864, McEbright established his practice. Dr. McEbright served as a member of the Akron Board of Education for many years and an elementary school was built and named in his honor in 1920.

9 Mayor Dan Horrigan

Location: Akron Municipal Building on High St. between Bowery and Church St.

The 62nd Mayor of Akron was sworn in at Greystone Hall in downtown Akron on January 1, 2016, and was elected for a second term that started in January 2020. Mayor Horrigan is proud of his Irish heritage and his family history in Akron's North Hill neighborhood. With a BA in Economics from Kent State University and an Education degree from the University of Akron, Horrigan taught social studies for the Fighting Irish at St. Vincent St. Mary High School. He served on Akron City Council from 1999-2007 before becoming Summit County Clerk of Courts and eventually Mayor.

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