Walking Tour of Downtown Trenton

TCNJ Honors Program
Downtown Walking Tour Map
**Legend**

1. Begin Tour at Capitol Complex, 137 West State Street
2. Higbee Street School, 20 Bellevue Ave
3. Train Station, 260 N Willow St (behind building)
4. The Battle Monument, 350 N Warren St
5. Cathedral of Saint Mary, 151 Warren St
6. Saint Michaels, 149 N Warren St
7. First Presbyterian Church, 120 E State St
8. Mill Hill Park, 165 E Front St
9. The Douglass House, 165 E Front St
10. Mill Hill Playhouse, 205 E Front St
11. Friends School, 151 Mercer St
12. Christian Science Reading Room, 9 W State St
13. War Memorial, 1 Memorial Drive
14. Trenton Barracks Museum, 101 Barrack St
15. WWII Veterans Day Memorial, 136 West State St
16. New Jersey State House, 125 W State St
17. End Tour at Capitol Complex, 137 West State Street
Begin your tour at the The Capitol Complex

Higbee Street School (Nixon School)

20 Bellevue Avenue

The Higbee Street School, a brick Greek Revival building constructed in 1857, is the first school built specifically for the free public education of African American children in the City of Trenton. The building itself was a departure from previous schools. It followed design concepts of 19th century education reformers and is probably one of the first African American schools to embody those innovations. By 1872 the student population had already outgrown the Higbee Street building and the students were moved to a temporary building while a new one was constructed.

TURN LEFT ON NORTH WILLOW STREET. Pass through at 270 N Willow St

Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Freight Station

260 North Willow Street (rear of building)

The Philadelphia and Reading Railroad (P&R)
was one of the first railroads constructed in the United States. It was more commonly known as the Reading Railroad and reached eventually to Atlantic City, landing the line a place in the game of Monopoly. This freight station was built for the railroad in 1888.

4

**Trenton Battle Monument**

Intersection of North Broad Street and Warren Street

The Trenton Battle Monument commemorates the American victory at the first Battle of Trenton, which occurred on December 26, 1776. It was here that the American artillery was placed. From this vantage point, the artillery dominated the streets of Trenton, preventing the Hessian troops from organizing an effective counter attack. With 6,000 troops situated along the west bank of the Delaware River, General George Washington planned his march on Trenton where approximately 1,400 British forces were stationed.

Three divisions of the Continental Army would cross the Delaware River on Christmas night, attacking the British from three directions. Colonel Cadwalader's division would move north from Bordentown. General Ewing would attack at Trenton Ferry. Washington, with approximately 2,400 men, would lead the main attack from the north. But due to a cold, snowy night, his planned
three-pronged attack failed to materialize. Cadwalder and Ewing were unable to cross the Delaware as directed due to heavy river ice and extreme weather conditions. Unknowingly, Washington would engage the enemy with only a third of his forces.

Hessian colonel Johann Gottleib Rail was in command of the British forces in Trenton. Despite reports of an American attack, Rail, who considered the Continental Army to be little more than loosely organized group of farmers, ignored the warnings. He, along with his fellow officers, continued to celebrate the Christmas holiday, which was a fatal mistake. As dawn approached, the American troops surprised the British forces occupying Trenton. In less than an hour, Washington's army met with victory. Thirty officers, 918 prisoners, 1,000 muskets and rifles, six cannons, six wagons, and 40 horses were captured. Colonel Ralllay, mortally wounded, died a day later. Not a single patriot was killed in the conflict.

The victory at Trenton was a strategic military success. It also served to boost the morale of a dwindling and dispirited Continental Army and to galvanize the resolve of those Americans who still believed in America's war for independence. The significance of the patriots' victory at Trenton was not forgotten in the ensuing years. Three years after the battle, colonial secretary of state for King George III, Lord Germain, told Parliament "... all our hopes were blasted by that unhappy affair at Trenton."

The Trenton Battle Monument was designed by John H. Duncan, the architect of President Grant's Tomb. It is a triumphal column of granite 148 feet high. Considered to be an early example of the Beaux Arts style, it is a Roman Doric column with a large base decorated with acanthus leaves. The capital of the monument has a ring of stars crowned by an observation platform with a railing. Above the platform is a circle of 13 electric lights, representing the 13 original colonies.
On October 19, 1893, elaborate dedication ceremonies were held, with an estimated 20,000 people attending the commemorative exercises. Another 100,000 crowded the streets of Trenton. Cannons boomed, bands played patriotic music, and souvenir ribbons sold for 25 cents. One of the day's highlights was the unveiling of three bronze plaques for the base of the monument. These plaques were funded by the states of Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut whose home troops had participated in the Battle. Although President Cleveland was unable to attend, Governors of eight of the 13 original states did. The monument opened to the public on December 26, 1896.

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WALK SOUTH N NORTH WARREN STREET ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE MEDIAN.

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5

Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption

151 N. Warren Street

The site of the Cathedral is the place where Col. Johann Gottlieb Rail, commander of the Hessian troops, had his headquarters in December 1776 during the Battle of Trenton. St. Mary's was built between 1866 and 1871 to serve Catholics living north of Assunpink Creek. In 1878 a 256-foot spire was added, but was removed in 1953 because of safety concerns.
St. Michael's Episcopal Church

140 N. Warren Street

Founded by 1703, St. Michael's began as a congregation open to all Protestant denominations a little north of Trenton in what then was known as Maidenhead (now Lawrenceville). Sometime between 1703 and 1748, according to a church summary of its history, the original St. Michael's Church was built in Trenton at its present location at Warren and Perry Streets. The original building was significantly rebuilt and enlarged in 1819. The crenellated towers were designed to honor of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose residence, Lambeth Palace in London, sports a very similar façade (fantasy Gothic is the term usually applied to this architectural style). St. Michael's is the burial spot of David Brearley, a signer of the Constitution and the State of New Jersey's first Chief Justice. It also is the final resting place of a niece of Napoleon Bonaparte.
7

First Presbyterian Church

120 East State Street

As the settlement at the Falls of the Delaware river in Trenton grew, there came demand for a chapel that the people on the river would not have to go all the way to Ewing for worship. A plot of ground was deeded in 1727 for church purposes, where the First Presbyterian Church now stands. Some years later an additional plot was added. It seems that the first building was erected in 1726, before title was given. The cornerstone for this church building was laid in 1841.

Buried on one side of the graveyard in an unmarked site are the Hessians who died in the First Battle of Trenton; on the other side is buried Rev. John Rosbrugh, the first American Army Chaplain to die in service to his country.

8

Mill Hill Park

165 E Front St,

Mill Hill Park is one of the public open spaces in Downtown Trenton. It serves the
recreational needs not only of Mill Hill residents, but also of downtown workers and visitors. Features include a creek-side amphitheater, walking paths, a large open lawn area and a plaza located between the historic Douglass House and the Mill Hill Playhouse (home to the Passage Theater).

Mill Hill is a mid-nineteenth century residential district but its historical significance reaches back to the late seventeenth century. Indeed, its name refers to its importance as the area's first industrial site, a grist mill (a mill for grinding grain), erected in 1679. During the American Revolution, the ground adjacent to the mill was, on January 2, 1777, the site of the Second Battle of Trenton. The northern perimeter of Mill Hill was thus the site of one of the three major encounters of the ten-day Trenton-Princeton Revolutionary War Campaign. A significant portion of this battlefield has is part of Mill Hill Park.

While the name Mill Hill was applied to the area at least as early as 1821, relatively little beyond the original mill had been been built in the area. In the late 1830s and 1840s, the opening of the Delaware and Raritan, Camden and Amboy, and Philadelphia Railroads evidently served as the impetus for industrial development on the periphery of the district. Residential construction commenced in the 1840s and 1850s.

9
Alexander Douglass House

165 East Front Street
at Montgomery Street
Alexander Douglass served as Quarter Master to the Continental Army. When Washington's troops fought the British on January 2, 1777, Douglass's small home served as the General's headquarters. That night Washington faced a most difficult decision—how best to survive the following day? Come the dawn, the Americans would find themselves trapped. They were outnumbered by British troops on the opposite bank of the Assunpink Creek and to their backs was the Delaware River and no boats. His use of a deserted road to slip out of town in the dead of night earned him the nickname, The Sly Fox, by British General Lord Cornwallis. This is not the original location of the Douglass House—Mill Hill park is its fourth location in town.

10

Mill Hill Playhouse

205 East Front Street

Built in 1873, this former Lutheran house of worship withstood a tremendous fire in the 1970's. Restored by the City of Trenton it is now home to Passage Theater Company.
When Mahlon Stacy and other Quakers arrived in the area in 1679, Trenton was known as "The Falls." Stacy was instrumental in establishing the Chesterfield Monthly Meeting in 1684, which included Friends from Crosswicks and Trenton. In 1686, Quakers in what became Trenton, organized the first local charity, which assisted Friends who had met with misfortune. After William Trent purchased land from the Stacy family in 1714, the town was called Trent's-town, sometimes Trent-town, and finally Trenton. In 1827, the Society of Friends in the United States divided into two major branches, one known as Orthodox or conservative, the other known as liberal or Hicksite, after Elias Hicks. The meeting house at Hanover and Montgomery Streets in Trenton, finished in 1739, was retained by the Hicksites. The Orthodox Friends, who had been meeting in homes, started building the brick meeting house on Mercer Street in 1857 and completed it in 1858.
12
Christian Science Reading Room

9 West State Street

The first Christian Science Reading Room was established in 1888 by Mary Baker Eddy to make her book, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, more widely available. Ms. Eddy is also the founder of the newspaper, The Christian Science Monitor.

There are more than 1,500 Christian Science Reading Rooms in 50 countries, serving their communities by offering books, publications and other materials for the exploration of spirituality, prayer and health.

13
War Memorial

Memorial Drive

Opened in 1932, The War Memorial was built as "a great community center" dedicated to the memory of the soldiers and sailors
from Mercer County who died fighting World War I. The building is a National and State Historic Site. The aim of the founding War Memorial Committee was to combine "beauty, dignity, and civic utility." The building houses an 1,807-seat, fully equipped theater for performances and assemblies, and also a number of stately rooms for other purposes such as meeting and conferences.

The War Memorial is owned by The State of New Jersey and operated by The Department of State. The Court of Honor, the grand portico from which one enters the building was funded by schoolchildren. During the War Memorial's recent restoration, schoolchildren once again funded the Court of Honor.

14
Trenton Barracks

101 Barrack Street

The two-story stone barracks are the only surviving Colonial barracks in the United States. Constructed in 1758 for the French and Indian War (because New Jersey citizens refused to put British soldiers up in their houses), it was occupied by British, Hessian and American troops during the American Revolution. It was these barracks that Washington targeted in the Battle of Trenton.

The Old Barracks, with the exception of a part of the main section, stands today practically the same as when it was originally erected in 1758.
New Jersey World War II Memorial

136 West State Street

Dedicated on Veterans Day, 2008, the Memorial is designed to capture the courage and grace of the World War II generation. The centerpiece of the plaza, a dramatic 12-foot, one-ton bronze sculpture of Lady Victory stands atop a foot pedestal, wielding a sword in her left hand and holding high a wreath of peace, in her right. As she strides forward, her left foot crushes the swastika flag of Nazi Germany while her right trods upon the rising sun flag of Imperial Japan. Behind Lady Victory stands another sculpture, the Lone Soldier, a bronze life-size figure designed to represent any soldier, Marine, sailor or airman. The helmeted figure moves forward to meet the enemy, his M-1 rifle at the ready. Also featured is the symbol of the fallen warrior– a sculpture of a bronze rifle planted by its bayonet in the dirt, a helmet resting atop the butt. The sculptures are the work of Jay Warren of Rogue River, Oregon, who had a studio in New Jersey for more than a decade.
The New Jersey State House began modestly in 1792, in a $400 capitol built by Jonathan Doane. The building was two and one-half stories high and consisted of seven bays radiating off a center hall. A bell-tower was situated in the center of the roof. The legislative chambers were located on the first floor—Senate (then the Legislative Council) in the west and the General Assembly in the east. The Governor's and judicial offices occupied the second floor.

For decades the State House remained unaltered until a major addition was constructed in 1845 under the direction of John Notman, a well-known Philadelphia architect. Norman created a one, two and three-story stepped office wing on the north side of the original building, facing what is now State Street. The new entrance had a two-story porch and six fluted Doric columns. A grand rotunda with a stairhall connected the old and new wings. This area was capped by a spherical dome and cupola. A two-story portico with pairs of Corinthian columns and a classical pediment was added to the riverside facade.

Early in the morning of March 21, 1885, a fire broke out and raced through the empty building, totally destroying the State Street wing. Lewis Broome of Jersey City was selected to plan the reconstruction. He designed the building in a simplified style with three stories and limestone facing. He also added a new rotunda and dome that were more proportional to the scale of the building. In 1903, under the
direction of Merchantsville architect Arnold Moses, the Senate wing was reconstructed in a style to mirror the Assembly quarters.

The New Jersey State House is the third-oldest state house in continuous legislative use in the United States; only the Maryland State Capitol in Annapolis and the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond are older.

17
New Jersey Capitol Complex

137 West State Street

Filling out the plaza in the Capitol Complex are a number of state buildings, fanning out to the west of the State House. Directly next door is the State Library, built in the 1920s, and State Judiciary. Today Capitol Complex contains legislative committee rooms and offices. A recent restoration included refurbishing period details and adding several commissioned artworks, including a skylight featuring special places, people and events in New Jersey history. Moving down West State Street are the NJ State Museum, Planetarium and the Department of State Building.
Some Places to Eat

A  Café 128, 128 W State St
B  City Deli, 9 N Willow St
C  Gyro Express, 7 E State St
D  Dunkin Donuts, 47 E State St
E  Sunrise Luncheonette, 26 S Warren St
F  Hummingbird Café, 29 S Warren St
G  East Front Café, 13 E Front St
What do you think?

Now that you have taken the walking tour of Downtown Trenton, what were your first thoughts about the city? Were they mostly positive or negative and if so, why? Did the tour change any previous opinions you had about Trenton? Were there any challenges you experienced along the route? If so, what were the challenges? if not, was there something in particular that stood out for you? How will you use this experience in the future?