



**About this tour:** This tour is divided into two parts. The entire tour, including 16 stops, is just under a mile loop. During most of the 20th century, the center of Rochester's downtown was its department stores. While the stores are gone, the buildings survive, as does the nation's first urban shopping mall, **Midtown Plaza (1)**. On this walking tour you will visit one of Rochester's most fabulous banks (**8**), a Romanesque Revival church (**12**), and a former church (**9**), now a tranquil and unusual downtown park.

**Historic Highlights:** In 1766, a liberty pole was raised in Manhattan to celebrate England's repeal of the stamp act. Rochester first erected a liberty pole in 1846. Our current **Liberty Pole (6)** was erected in 1965.

**Significant Architecture:** **Charter One Bank (8)**, (formerly the Rochester Savings Bank) at 40 Franklin Street. **One East Avenue (3)**, (now Fleet Bank), is an excellent reflection of its time and **Sibley's Building (2)** (now called Sibley Centre), is an outstanding example of the Chicago School of architecture.

**Parks:** **Liberty Pole Plaza (6)**, **St. Joseph's Park (9)** (interior not open in the winter), **Schiller Park (15)**.

**Churches:** **The Lutheran Church of the Reformation (12)**, 111 N. Chestnut Street, 454-3367, **Community Bible Church (16)**, 284 Andrews Street, 232-4575; Salem United Church of Christ, 60 Bittner Street, 454-5973.

**Downtown Living:** Apartments and lofts are being created in the **Temple Building (7)**, the **Michaels-Stern Building (11)** and in other downtown buildings.

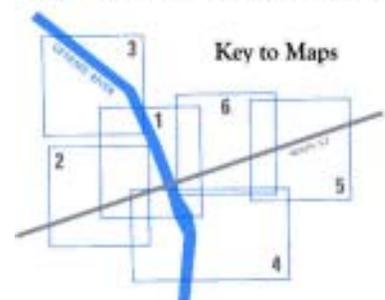
**Eating and Entertainment:** There are several restaurants and night clubs along this tour route or on nearby streets.

**Major Employers:** Chase Bank.

Special Note: The intersection of Main Street and South Avenue, where you can see the Hyatt Regency Rochester, Riverside Convention Center and the Four Points by Sheraton, is part of the Central City Tour.

Information about our city can be found at the **Greater Rochester Visitors Association**, 45 East Avenue, 546-3070.

Map 6. Liberty Pole and City East Loop Tour



- 1. Central City Tour
- 2. Hundred Acre Tract Tour
- 3. High Falls-Brown's Race Historic District Tour
- 4. The Southern Gateways Tour
- 5. East End and Cultural District Tour
- 6. Liberty Pole and City East Loop Tour

1. **Midtown Plaza (1)**, designed by Victor Gruen Associates of Los Angeles, and built in 1962, was the nation's first major urban shopping mall, and became a much-publicized early example of downtown redevelopment. Midtown comprises the interior of an entire city block and was developed atop several levels of underground public parking that connects existing buildings.

Directly opposite Midtown Plaza on the north side of E. Main is **Sibley Centre (2)**, 228 E. Main Street, an important early-20<sup>th</sup>-century retail building.



*Sibley Centre with Liberty Pole in foreground*

2. **Sibley Centre (2)**, 228 E. Main Street, between N. Clinton Avenue and Franklin Street, was designed by J. Foster Warner and built in 1905 as a major downtown department store. Construction of the present Sibley's started after a disastrous fire destroyed the Sibley, Lindsay and Curr Company's former store. In 1911, the building was extended to Franklin Street; six stories were added to this addition in 1926 to create the Sibley Tower Building, the city's largest office building at the time. The imposing, long-cherished landmark is a handsome example of the Chicago School of architecture. Constructed of slender Roman-style bricks with granite trim, the clarity and simplicity of its design was very progressive for its time. Only the landmark clock tower, with its copper dome, displays ornamental detail. **Sibley's Place (2)**, formerly Sibley's Department Store, closed in 1989; in 1992, the Damon City Center opened here as the downtown campus on Monroe Community College. Today, in addition to the college, the building houses offices, and retail establishments.

*Continue east on E. Main Street, cross Euclid Street to East Avenue. Where East Avenue splits from E. Main Street is an office tower and bank.*

3. **One East Avenue (3)**, built in 1962, was originally constructed for the Security Trust Company. It is now Fleet Bank. This striking example of 1960s architecture consists of a two-story glass-enclosed public banking facility, an adjoining 11-story tower, and an outdoor plaza. The public banking facility is notable for its imaginative roofline, glass walls, and Rochester artist John Menihan's 130-foot-long mural, a symbolic tribute to the diversification of Monroe County's economy. The Tower building, resting on stilts, is notable for its band of quartz aggregate and gray-tinted glass.

*Looking down E. Main Street, you will see two distinctive late-19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial buildings.*



*Sibley Triangle Building,*

4. The **Sibley Triangle Building, (4)** 20-26 East Avenue, at the southeast corner of E. Main Street and East Avenue, was designed by J. Foster Warner and built in 1897. Occupying a prominent site at the intersection of East Avenue and Main Street, this triangular five-story building was constructed by Hiram Sibley – realtor, banker, philanthropist and heir to the fortune amassed by his father, the builder of the Western Union Telegraph Company. Its Neo-Classical and Romanesque design includes large brick arches, a decorative cornice, and an arcade of Roman-arched windows on the fifth floor.

5. On the northeast corner of East Avenue and Stillson Street, at 52 East Avenue, is the **Cutler Building (5)**, built in 1897.

This Italianate-style office building was designed and owned by the famous Rochester architect and mayor, James G. Cutler. In 1882, Cutler patented the Cutler Mail Chute, used in virtually all of America's early skyscrapers. The building features classical Italianate detailing, a bracketed cornice and copper-clad tower.

*Across from the Cutler Building, at 45 East Avenue, is the office of the Greater Rochester Visitors Association. Stop in or call them at 546-3070.*

*Cross E. Main Street and walk north along the east side of Franklin Street for a good view of the Liberty Pole, on the northwest corner of E. Main and Franklin Streets.*

6. The **Liberty Pole (6)** was designed by Rochester architect James H. Johnson and built in 1965. This modern steel sculpture is symbolic of earlier wooden liberty poles that stood on the site between 1846 and 1889. This 20<sup>th</sup>-century work is expressive of a Colonial American custom that originated in 1766, when the first liberty pole in America was raised in Manhattan to celebrate England's repeal of the Stamp Act.

*From the Liberty Pole, the East End and Cultural District tour starts three blocks east on E. Main Street. On the northeast corner of Liberty Pole Way is the Temple Building, 14 Franklin Street.*

7. **The Temple Building (7)** was designed by Gordon & Kaelber and Carl R. Traver and built in 1925. Featuring pinnacles, pointed arches and decorative tracery, it is Rochester's only example of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Neo-Gothic skyscraper. The building is unusual in that it was developed for both religious and office use. The Second Baptist Church, founded in 1834, had a previous church on this site that no longer accommodated its needs. They built a new 14-story structure that served both religious and office functions and occupied it until 1965 when the Baptist congregation relocated to Brighton.



*Charter One Bank*

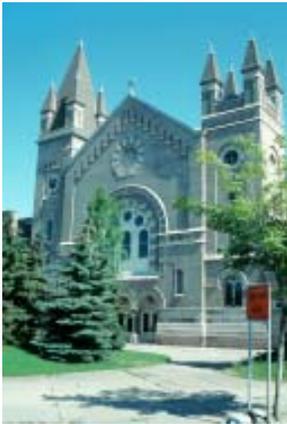
*Go down Franklin Street to **Charter One Bank (8)**, originally Rochester Savings Bank, at 40 Franklin Street. The bank is on the corner of Franklin Street and Liberty Pole Way.*

8. **Charter One Bank (8)**, 40 Franklin Street, was designed by McKim, Mead and White of New York with J. Foster Warner of Rochester and built in 1929. This outstanding example of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine architecture exemplified the traditional banking house "temple of commerce" theme. The restrained exterior belies the grandeur of the interior glass wall mosaics, marble pavement mosaics,

decoratively painted wood-offered ceiling, and monumental Rouge Antique marble columns. The painted ceiling and the mosaics are the work of Ezra Winter, the American muralist whose work also decorates the Eastman Theatre interior.

At this point you can choose a side trip which will take you past four important historic sites and one of the

city's original park squares, or you can skip to **THE MAIN ROUTE #9**, to take the shorter route back to Main Street. The side trip adds about 2/5 of a mile to the shorter loop. The numbers on each tour stop match the numbers on the map, and the distances between stops are very short. You will not get lost.



*The Lutheran Church of the Reformation*

### **SIDE TRIP**

*If you choose the side trip, walk to the corner of Liberty Pole Way and turn left. Continue north, walking one block to Pleasant Street. Turn right. At the corner of N. Chestnut and Pleasant streets, you will see The Lutheran Church of the Reformation (12).*

**12. The Lutheran Church of the Reformation (12)**, 111 N. Chestnut Street, built in 1900, was designed by William Brockett, a nephew and onetime partner in the architectural firm of A.J. Warner. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the brick and stone church is architecturally significant as a fine example of Romanesque Revival design influenced by the German building tradition known as “Rundbogenstil.” Established by German immigrants, this congregation continues to offer services in German.

Across the street, the corner of N. Chestnut and Grove streets (and off the tour map) is **Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church**, 60 Grove Street. Built c. 1850, this Romanesque Revival building was originally the First German Lutheran Church and featured a tall central spire above the front gable.

*After viewing the churches, turn left and continue walking north on Chestnut Street until you come to the intersection of Chestnut and Andrew streets. Turn left on Andrews Street and look for the **Fire Department headquarters (13)**. The narrow front of the building is actually located on the corner of Andrews and N. Chestnut streets.*

**13. Fire Department headquarters (13)**, 185 N. Chestnut Street. Architect Joseph P. Flynn designed the Rochester Fire Department headquarters on the corner of North and Andrews streets with its stylized Art Deco carvings of firemen at the entrance. The two buildings that make up the headquarters were built from 1935 to 1937.

*From the Fire Department (14) go next door to view Harro East.*

**14. Harro East (14)**, 400 Andrews Street, is located on the south side of Andrews Street at the corner of Liberty Pole Way. Built as the Jewish Young Men's & Women's Association, the “JY” opened its doors in 1936. Today, the triangle-shaped building, now Harro East, a private athletic club, with office space on the top floors, and a theater on the main level, attractively anchors this corner of downtown. The Georgian Revival-style building, designed by architect Sigmund Firestone, features decorative woodwork, interior plaster and exterior stonework. In the 1970s the “JY,” now called the Jewish Community Center, moved to Brighton and the building was sold to the Freddie L. Thomas Foundation.

*Continue walking west on Andrews Street and stop at Schiller Park.*

*Just north of Schiller Park and across the Inner Loop expressway is the monumental U.S. Post Office Building, 216 Cumberland Street.*

**The U.S. Post Office Building**, on the northeast corner of Joseph Avenue, was built as the city's main post office in 1933. This block-long, limestone building was designed by the Rochester architectural firm, Gordon and Kaelber, as a W.P.A. project. Its design features a distinctive use of innovative decorative ideas, combining streamlined Classic and notable Art Deco details executed in brass, marble and oak. A branch post office since the late 1970s, the building still retains its handsome decorative interior and exterior features.

**15 Schiller Park (15)**. Originally named Franklin Square when laid out in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Schiller Park was one of the first neighborhood parks established in the city, much larger than the small tree-lined plot you see today. Walk into the park for a view of a limestone statue of late 18<sup>th</sup> century German poet, Frederick Schiller.

For better viewing, now cross Andrews Street and continue west on the south side of Andrews Street until you arrive opposite the **Community Bible Church (16)**, 284 Andrews Street.

**16. Community Bible Church (16)**. One of Rochester's first German Baptist churches, this Romanesque Revival-style edifice was built in 1870. Today, the building is the oldest surviving Baptist church in the city.

*Continue west on Andrews Street to the corner of Clinton Ave. From this intersection you will have a good view of the **Salmon-Nusbaum Building (10)** and the **Kirstein Building (16)**.*

**10. Salmon-Nusbaum Building (10)**, 148 N. Clinton Avenue, northeast corner of Andrews Street (circa 1876). The *1877 History of Monroe County* describes this building as "one of the finest business blocks in the city." The Second Empire-style building is one of Rochester's most interesting Victorian-era structures and remains virtually unchanged from its original appearance. The handsome exterior includes the original cast-iron storefront and carved stone lintels and sills. Note the slate mansard roof, corbelled chimneys and ornamental brackets.



*Salmon-Nusbaum Building*

*From here, look across the intersection at the **Kirstein Building (16)**.*

**17. The Kirstein Building (17)**, 242 Andrews Street, is located at the corner of Bittner Street. Built in 1910 for the Kirstein and Sons Optical Company, this utilitarian, wedge-shaped building in the Chicago style is characterized by large rectangular windows and little exterior decoration.

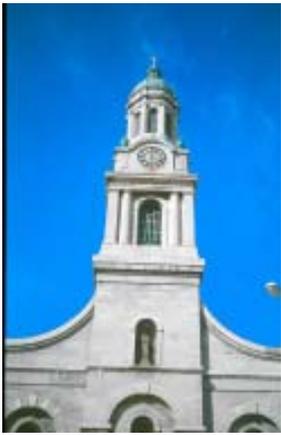
After viewing the Kirstein Building, go south on Clinton Avenue to Pleasant Street, and turn left to view St. Joseph's Park.

*To rejoin the Main Route, walk south on Clinton Avenue to Pleasant Street and turn left. Continue with **St. Joseph's Park (9)**.*

## THE MAIN ROUTE

*If you have chosen to stay on the **MAIN ROUTE**, from **Charter One Bank** (Rochester Savings Bank) **(8)**, walk north on Franklin Court toward the church tower of **St. Joseph's Park (9)**, on the north side of Pleasant Street between Franklin Street and N. Clinton Avenue.*

**9. St. Joseph's Park (9)** is located inside the remains of what was the city's oldest Catholic church, destroyed



*St. Joseph's Park*

in 1974 by a disastrous fire. The church was built in 1843 by German immigrants and became the mother church of nine other German parishes in western New York. The bell tower was constructed in 1909. The park was created by determined citizens and institutions who felt that the distinctive tower was an irreplaceable feature of the Rochester cityscape. Now, with its enclosed courtyard and fountain, the Landmark Society-owned **St. Joseph's Park (9)** provides a welcome quiet space downtown. Opened in 1980, the park renovation was designed by Handler/Grosso Architects.

At N. Clinton Avenue, look north just one block, toward Andrews Street. You will find a distinctive mansard-roofed commercial building, the **Salmon-Nusbaum Building, (10)**, 148 Clinton Avenue. Just to the left of Salmon-Nusbaum in the distance (and just off the tour map) is the **Salem United Church of Christ (18)**, 60 Bittner Street.

**18. Salem United Church of Christ (18).** Distinguished by its twin towers and arched windows, this Romanesque Revival-style church, founded by Germans and designed by architect Charles Coats, was built in 1873 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. During a 1929 renovation, the tall spires were removed and the present brick facade was installed.

*Then look across intersection to the **Michaels-Stern Building, (11)**, 87 N. Clinton Avenue, at the corner of Pleasant Street.*

**11. Michaels-Stern Building (11)**, 87 N. Clinton Avenue, was built in 1893. This building is one of the survivors of the once diversely built-up garment district that occupied the area between N. Clinton Avenue and St. Paul Street. Built during the era when clothing manufacturing was Rochester's most important industry, this building housed the manufacturing, office, wholesale, and retail functions of the Michaels-Stern Company, a ready-to-wear clothing business from the 1890s until 1972. The Michaels-Stern Building is designed in the Romanesque Revival style, with Beaux Arts detailing around the front entrance, corner quoins and cornice. With its eclectic use of stylistic elements, the Michaels-Stern Building is the only surviving commercial structure designed by the Rochester firm of Nolan, Nolan and Stern.

*To return to Midtown Plaza, cross Pleasant Street and walk south along the east side of N. Clinton Avenue.*



*Midtown Plaza, Sid Burton, photographer.*