

# A HISTORY OF DISCOVERY

Welcome to Albany, the Capital of New York State. Albany traces its development to the year 1609 when Henry Hudson, an English explorer, set sail on a voyage of discovery aboard his ship The Half Moon. Hudson was hired by the Dutch to find a shorter route from Europe to the silks and spices of Asia. The voyage ended near what later developed into the city of Albany.

This walking tour begins at the Discover Albany Visitors Center. The Center houses a staffed information center and an exhibit that briefly highlights the city's history. Plan time to visit the Center's gift shop for uniquely Albany items and locally made products. Enjoy your stay in Albany, NY!

1600

1609 - Henry Hudson's Voyage of Discovery aboard the Half Moon

1613 - Jamestown is settled

1614 - Fort Nassau constructed as the 1<sup>st</sup> documented European trading house built in NYS

1620 - Plymouth Colony is established by the "Pilgrims"

1623 - Establishment of New Netherland, including areas of present day New York, Connecticut & New Jersey

1624 - Fort Orange is established as a trading post

1626 - Dutch Settlement on Manhattan

1652 - Establishment of Beverwyck

1664 - Fort Orange, Beverwyck and Rensselaerwyck renamed Albany after James, Duke of York and Albany

1686 - Dongan Charter: Albany becomes a city

1700

1754 - Albany Plan of Union is drafted

1797 - Albany named capital of NYS

1825 - New York State Erie Canal opens

1831 - First railroad in NYS opens to connect Albany to Schenectady

1863 - A convention to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation was held at Israel Methodist Episcopal Church in Albany

1899 - Present New York State Capitol completed after nearly three decades of construction

1900

1973 - The monumental Empire State Plaza is dedicated by Governor Rockefeller

2004 - The University at Albany's College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering opens as the first college in the world devoted exclusively to innovative nanoscience.

2009 - 400th Anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage

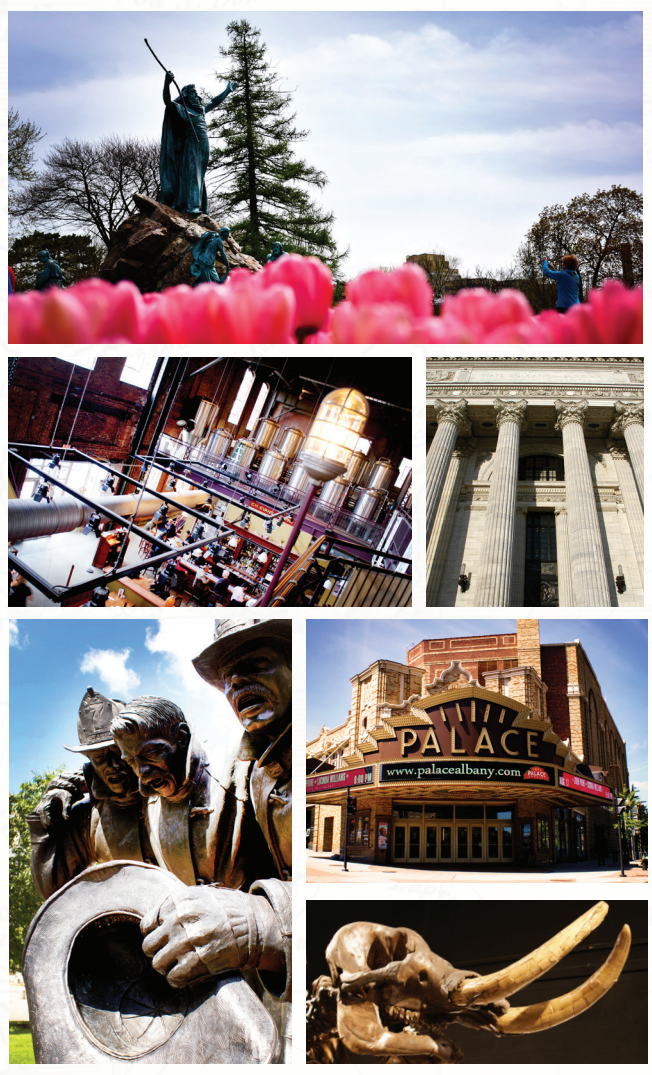
2014 - Fort Nassau's 400th anniversary

2000

## DISCOVER ALBANY VISITORS CENTER GIFT SHOP



The Discover Albany Visitors Center Gift Shop is stocked with many uniquely Albany gifts as well as locally handcrafted items that range from artwork, jewelry and accessories, home décor, gourmet food gifts and much more!

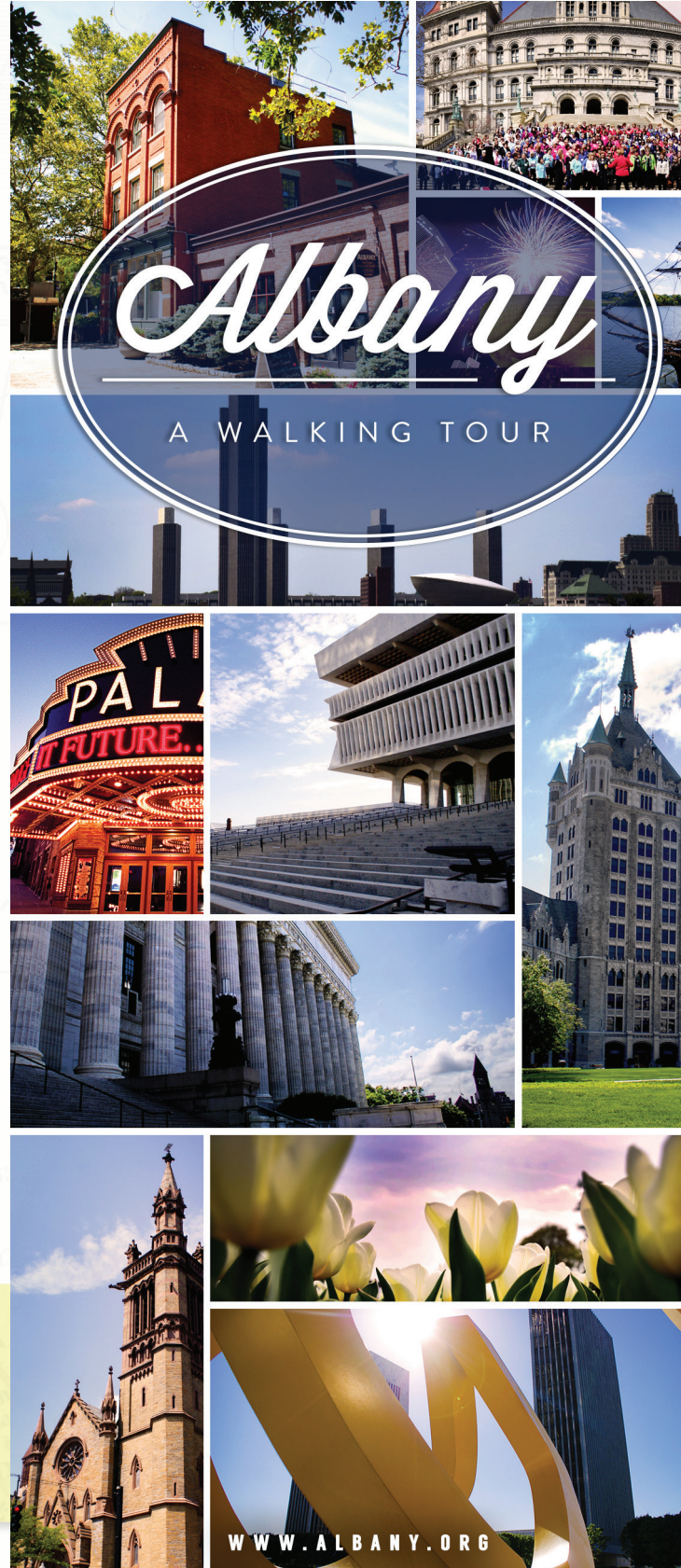


The Albany Heritage Area is one of 20 State Heritage Areas that honor and celebrate the significant natural, historical and cultural resources in New York State. [www.nysparks.com](http://www.nysparks.com)

An audio version of this tour can be downloaded at [www.albany.org](http://www.albany.org).



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1 DISCOVER ALBANY VISITORS CENTER

The Visitors Center is comprised of two historic buildings, the former Albany Pumping Station built in the 1870’s, and a former townhouse built in 1852. Water was pumped from the Hudson River to the Pumping Station where it was filtered and pumped to Bleecker Reservoir. In the 1980’s this historic district was renovated and the area became known as Quackenbush Square. The former townhouse and a segment of the Pumping Station became the home of the Discover Albany Visitors Center.



2 QUACKENBUSH HOUSE

The Quackenbush House is named after the family that occupied the building as a home for nearly 150 years. Peter Quackenbush, an avid brick maker, was the first family member to arrive to this area from Holland. The Quackenbush House is the second oldest building of Dutch architecture that still stands in Albany today. The section of the building closest to Broadway is the original section of Dutch architecture, c. 1730’s, and may have been built from bricks molded at a brickyard located on this site. The rear portion of the building is Federal style architecture, dating to the late 18th century.

3 THE PALACE THEATRE

The Palace Theatre opened in 1931 as one of the jewels of the RKO movie theatre chain, with a stage for live vaudeville acts between feature films. After surviving the advent of “talkies”, it became the city’s premier movie house until after WWII. The theatre is now a performing arts venue, and is home to the Albany Symphony Orchestra. In 2003, extensive renovations were complete and a new marquee that replicates the original was installed.



4 CLINTON SQUARE

Clinton Square was named after Governor DeWitt Clinton, sponsor of the Erie Canal. The Canal connected the waters of Lake Erie in the west to the Hudson River. Today, the New York Canal System consists of the Erie Canal and 3 branches, the Champlain, the Oswego, and the Cayuga-Seneca canals. At Clinton Square, take note of an 1832 structure of Federal-style architecture located to the far left of this row of buildings. It was here that Herman Melville, famous author of the classic book Moby Dick, lived for a short time during his youth.

5 THE FIRST CHURCH

The congregation of the First Church in Albany, part of the Reformed Church in America, was established in 1642. It is the second oldest congregation in New York State. The fourth and current building was built in 1798 under the design of renowned New York State architect, Philip Hooker. The Hour-Glass Pulpit inside the sanctuary of the church is the oldest pulpit in the United States, imported from Holland in 1656. Also on display is the 1720 Charter of Incorporation, the Weathercock from the previous “blockhouse” church and the Sarah Faye Sumner Memorial Window which is the work of Louis Comfort Tiffany.



6 THE KENMORE HOTEL

The Kenmore Hotel was built between 1876 and 1878, and was one of the finest hotels in Albany. The hotel nightclub, The Rain-Bo Room, hosted big bands on the travel circuit and was a favorite spot of notorious gangster and bootlegger, Legs Diamond. The Kenmore was rehabilitated and converted to offices in the 1980’s.

7 STEUBEN STREET

At the corner of Steuben Street stands the Steuben Athletic Club, formerly the YMCA. The architects of this building, Fuller and Wheeler of Albany, became known nationally as specialists in this type of building structure and were consulted on the construction of the YMCA in Paris, France. Begin your ascent along Steuben Street and notice the white line painted on the walkway signifying the protective stockade wall that once surrounded Albany. This line was painted in 1986 during Albany’s Tricentennial. Albany became a city in 1686. Note the cobblestones that line Steuben Street. The stones were used to even out cargo weight on ships that brought goods to Albany’s port during the 19th century.

8 ST. MARY’S CHURCH

The structure you see today is the third St. Mary’s church, dedicated in 1869. When St. Mary’s congregation was established in 1796, it became the second oldest Roman Catholic parish in New York State, superseded only by St. Peter’s in Lower Manhattan. At the top of the bell tower is a weathervane of Angel Gabriel. Inside the church, frescoes by Italian artists date 1891-1895.

9 ALBANY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The Courthouse, completed in 1916, is constructed of granite and limestone in Neo-Classical design. Built on a slope, there are four stories at the front of the building and six in the back.

10 THE COURT OF APPEALS

The Court Of Appeals, New York State’s highest court, was completed in 1842. The architecture is Greek Revival. The courtroom, designed by renowned architect Henry Hobson Richardson, is constructed of carved-oak and was moved to this building from the New York State Capitol.

11 ACADEMY PARK

Academy Park is named after Albany Academy, the school that originally occupied the building in the center of the park. The building is today officially known as the Joseph Henry Memorial, named after the Academy’s best known professor. Professor Henry pioneered the telegraph, electrical motor and telephone while discovering magnetic induction at the Albany Academy. The City School District of Albany now occupies the building.

12 ALBANY CITY HALL

Albany City Hall was constructed between 1880 and 1883 by the design of Henry Hobson Richardson. The Carillon, the first municipal carillon in the United States, was equipped in 1927 with 60 bells. It is still played today. The statue located in front of City Hall is the likeness of General Philip Schuyler, whose mansion is located in Albany. Schuyler was quartermaster general of the Northern Department of the Continental Army during the American Revolution.



13 NEW YORK STATE CAPITOL

Construction of this building began in 1867 and was completed in 1899 at a staggering cost of \$25 million, or approximately a ½ billion U.S. dollars in current day standards. The Capitol was designed by leading architects of the day, Thomas Fuller, Leopold Eidlitz, Henry Hobson Richardson and Isaac Perry. The architecture varies from Italian Renaissance to Romanesque to French Renaissance.

One of the most prominent features of the building interior is the Great Western Staircase, also known as the Million Dollar Staircase, designed by Henry Hobson Richardson. The staircase took fourteen years to complete, features 444 steps and reaches 119 feet high. Guided tours of the Capitol are conducted by the Empire State Plaza Visitor Center.

14 THE EMPIRE STATE PLAZA

The Empire State Plaza was the vision of Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller. It is situated on what was once 40 city blocks. The outdoor plaza is built upon three levels of parking and a concourse of shops and cafeterias. All of the buildings at the Plaza are faced with marble except for the concrete, spherical performing arts center affectionately referred to as The Egg. Corning Tower, a 42 story tower and the tallest on the plaza, is named for Albany’s long-time mayor, Erastus Corning. On the 42nd floor is a public viewing area. A modern art collection, the New York State Museum, Library and Archives, and a convention center also reside at The Plaza.



15 ST. PETER’S CHURCH

Anglican services were first held in Albany in 1708, primarily for British soldiers. Construction of the present day St. Peter’s Church was completed in 1860. Of particular note on the exterior of the bell tower are three prominent gargoyles each weighing three tons and each extending eight feet beyond the walls of the tower. The interior of the church is decorated with works by leading artists of the day including the rose window over the State Street entrance, designed by the Tiffany Company.

16 STATE STREET BANKS

The growth of banking in Albany in the early 19th century was due to the city’s progress in commerce and transportation and the location of state government. Banks lined both sides of State Street. Albany is still an important regional financial center. As you proceed down State Street, notice the exquisite architecture. Of particular note is 69 State Street, originally home to the New York State Bank. The façade of the original building which was erected in 1803 was incorporated into the design of the current building, constructed in 1927. This building is the oldest bank building in the city of Albany and the oldest building in the United States erected for and continually used as a banking house.

17 STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

What once was the administrative offices of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad is now occupied by the State University of New York. The gothic style building was constructed between 1914 and 1918 at a time when Albany was a busy river port as well as a major railroad center. The copper weathervane at the top of the central tower is a replica of The Half Moon, Henry Hudson’s ship. To the right of the D&H building is the former ticket office for the Hudson River Day Line, one of America’s most successful steamboat passenger lines that provided regular service between Albany and New York City.



18 JAMES T. FOLEY U.S. COURTHOUSE

The James T. Foley U.S. Courthouse opened in 1934 and originally served as a post office, courthouse and customs house. Federal offices, including the courthouse, still occupy the space.

The building is an excellent example of Art Deco design which incorporates modern design with ornate decorative detail. Eagles, standing 8 feet tall and produced from a 17 ton Vermont marble block, are carved above the two main entrances. A frieze encircles the building showing the activities of the postal service and customs and the duty of the courts.

19 HUDSON RIVER WAY

The Hudson River Way is a pedestrian walkway connecting Albany’s historic downtown to the banks of the Hudson River. One of the features on the bridge is its illustration of Albany’s history through a series of paintings.

20 UNION STATION

Union Station originally served as the passenger station for the NY Central and Hudson River, the Boston and Albany, and the Delaware and Hudson railroads. The station received 96 trains per day in 1900 and 121 per day during World War II. The station closed in 1968 and sat abandoned for a number of years. It was renovated and saved by Norstar Bancorp in the 1980’s.



21 TRICENTENNIAL PARK

Tricentennial Park was dedicated in 1986 to mark the city’s tricentennial. The statue at the center of the park is the Albany Seal of the City, which represents Albany’s history of trade and commerce. The word Assiduity at the center of the statue means ‘diligence’, which characterizes the city’s original colonists and reflects the development of Albany over the last 400 years. Tricentennial Park is also home to a memorial to former Albany Mayor, Thomas M. Whalen III.

22 600 BROADWAY

This building formerly housed offices of the United Traction Company, which operated Albany’s streetcar system. Building construction was completed in 1900. Architect Marcus T. Reynolds designed the building in Beaux-Arts style.

1 RETURN TO THE VISITORS CENTER

