



RIVER WALK

From the Stone Arch Bridge looking south...

The Stone Arch Bridge. This bridge was built during 1876, 1877 and replaced a two lane covered bridge erected in 1837. There is some indication that a single lane covered bridge originally occupied this location but was eventually replaced with the two lane bridge. The dam and canal lock were built by German Stone Masons during 1836-40 for use by the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal.

The dam created a slackwater pool above the dam and the canal locked into the river and used the river as part of the canal since the east bank was solid rock and did not lend itself to being dug out for the canal. This meant that the river at the point of Brady's leap (north of the dam) had to be widened, made flat bottomed and the east wall had to be made vertical.

1. The Erie Depot was built in 1875.
2. The dam and a portion of the lock is still in place. Both were built between 1836 and 1840 by the builders of the P & O Canal. The canal went from Akron where it connected with the Ohio and Erie canals (Cleveland to Portsmouth), to a connection with the Beaver division of the Pennsylvania Main line canal near Newcastle, Pa.

Proceed down the steps and read the signs along the dam.

Continue up the steps to the walk going south. The path here is right on top of the mill race that ran from the dam to serve the silk mill, Kent's flour mill and the Tannery.

1. The silk mill built in 1852 and never a success as a silk mill, later became a furniture factory, a box factory and now restored as apartments and offices. A 40 foot deep pit was chopped out of solid rock to hold the mill wheel which powered the machinery inside the mill. The mill race and the wheel pit were between the mill and the river.
2. Walk on south towards the Stow Street bridge. Just before you get to the bridge look to your left and see the foundation stones from Mr. Zenas Kent's flour mill. The mill stood until the 1930s when it was torn down. The mill was between the mill race and the river.
3. Keep going south and just across Stow St. where the parking lot is now which was the site of the Tannery. The mill race went between the tannery and river and then emptied back into the river.

From the Stone Arch Bridge looking north....

1. Descend the staircase at the NW corner of the bridge.
2. The old Bissler building (now offices) is built on the site of a quarry that provided stone for many of the foundations, buildings, etc. in the Kent area. Toward the rear of the building (North side) notice the drill marks made to loosen the blocks of stone. Some shards of block are still laying around.
3. Proceed up the path north and notice the wall across the river. When this was formed the B&O RR was double tracked in the 1903-05 period. This solid stone bank was the reason the canal could not be built on the east bank of the river. Many tons of stone were removed when the RR was double tracked. Most of the double track work was done except for a section between Main St. and Grant St. This single track section was kept for about 3 years until the stone was removed making the sheer wall you see today.
4. The flour mill used steam for many years and used water from the river. The water intake pipe can still be seen across the river.
5. Walk a bit farther north to where the river begins to narrow. This is the area where Mr. Christian Cackler (first local historian) says was the location of the first bridge across the river. The people from Ravenna and Hudson got together and built this bridge to enable them to use the road connecting the two communities. This bridge would have been very crude, probably a couple of logs laid across the river and then planked.
6. Walk farther north to the marker which locates the site of Brady's leap. This portion of the river was much narrower at the time of Brady's leap. When the dam was built a slackwater pool formed behind the dam which made it necessary to widen the river at this point in order for the canal boats to negotiate the canal which had now become part of the river. Holes were drilled in the bank with star drills. The drills were usually held by young boys and two or three men took turns hitting the drill with sledge hammers. The drill holder had to turn the drill a quarter turn between each strike so that the drill would not hang up. The hole was then filled with black powder and the rock blown loose. Look carefully at the far bank and you can see many places where this drilling was done. It was necessary to make the East bank perpendicular and the bottom flat so the boats would have the four foot depth necessary to get through this area. If the water is low you can easily see the straight wall and the flat bottom. You may be able to see some cable lying on the bottom of the river. This came from the pedestrian (swinging) bridge used between the end of the canal (1870) and the double tracking of the B & O in 1905. This was used primarily by the employees of the Railway Speed Recorder Co. on N. Water St. This bridge meant that west side employees did not have to walk to either Crain Ave. or Main St. going to and from work. This bridge just north of Brady's leap location.
7. The area between where you are now and the Crain Ave. bridge was home to many industries over the years. Nothing is left of them to see now.