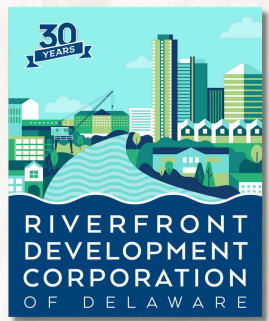


# Riverfront Self-Guided Audio Walking Tour



## Stop 1 Tubman- Garrett Riverfront Park

Welcome to the Riverfront Self-Guided Audio Walking Tour.

As you begin here at Tubman-Garrett Riverfront Park and start walking along the Christina River, you're stepping into a place filled with history, community, and transformation.

This park represents an important part of the Underground Railroad.

Wilmington played a role in helping enslaved individuals escape to freedom. One of those people was Thomas Garrett, who helped guide hundreds to safety. He worked closely with Harriet Tubman, one of the most courageous leaders of the Underground Railroad.

Imagine moving through this area quietly, often at night, guided by trust, bravery, and hope.

As you begin your walk, you may notice how close you are to the train lines nearby.

Railroads have been part of this area since as early as 1837, when tracks were built along the Christina River, connecting Wilmington to cities up and down the East Coast.

Today, Amtrak trains still pass nearby, continuing that connection between Wilmington and the rest of the country.

As you continue along the Riverfront, you're not just following a path, you're stepping into 30 years of transformation, where history, community, and new experiences come together.



## Stop 2 Riverfront Market

You're now entering one of the most active areas along the Riverfront.

The Riverfront Market is a place where people gather today, where food and flavors from around the world are shared and enjoyed every day.

But before this became a place filled with energy and community, this area was part of a busy industrial waterfront.

In the 1800s, ships filled this river, carrying goods and materials that helped Wilmington grow. By the late 1800s, ships built here were traveling as far as South America, connecting Wilmington to the world.

This peaceful Riverwalk was once part of a much busier and more hardworking shoreline.



## Stop 3 Near Docklands

As you move just beyond the Market, you're stepping into what was once the heart of Wilmington's shipbuilding industry.

Over a hundred years ago, this shoreline looked completely different. Instead of people walking along the Riverwalk, this area was filled with workers, tools, and massive ships being built piece by piece. This is where Wilmington's industrial story really began, right along the Christina River.

This was a time when Wilmington was rapidly growing, with shipbuilding, railroads, and manufacturing all working together along this river.

Companies like Harlan & Hollingsworth and Pusey & Jones built ships here that helped shape American industry.

At first, ships were made from wood. But over time, builders began using iron and steel, creating bigger, stronger ships than ever before.

These shipyards became known for their craftsmanship, building not only ships, but also machinery and railcars used across the country.

Imagine huge metal frames rising into the air, taller than a house, the sound of hammers and machines, and workers moving all around you as ships slowly took shape right along this river.

As you continue walking, you'll move into an area where this busy, hardworking riverfront begins to feel very different today.



## Stop 4 Delaware Children's Museum & Riverwalk Mini Golf

As you continue walking along the Riverfront, you're now moving into one of the most lively and family-focused parts of the area.

You might see the bright yellow building of the Delaware Children's Museum nearby, along with Riverwalk Mini Golf and people exploring the Riverfront in different ways.

This part of the Riverfront tells a different kind of story.

The Delaware Children's Museum opened in 2010 and is the only children's museum in the state.

Today, it's celebrating 16 years of welcoming families and giving kids a place to learn through hands-on play and exploration.

For many children in Delaware, this is their very first museum experience, and since opening, it has welcomed over one million visitors.

Just beyond the museum, you'll find Riverwalk Mini Golf, which opened in 2015.

You might see families playing mini golf, kids laughing, or even people riding by on bikes.

You can rent a bike right here and ride along the Riverfront, seeing even more of the area as you go.

This space was designed to bring people closer to the river in a completely different way.

Not for work, but for fun, movement, and discovery.

And as you walk through this space, it's a reminder that the Riverfront has continued to grow, from a place where ships were built... to a place where memories are made.

But the river beside you still holds stories that reach far beyond Wilmington.



# Stop 5 Ships That Traveled Beyond Wilmington

(Big Fish Riverfront Grill)

One ship built here carried a story far beyond Wilmington. After World War II, a ship called the President Warfield was sold and converted to carry thousands of people seeking a new home.

What started as a ship built along this river became part of a much larger global story. Another ship connects this Riverfront to an even earlier history. In 1997, the Kalmar Nyckel, a full-scale replica of the original Swedish ship that first brought settlers to this region, was launched right here along the Christina River. During the summer months, you may even see it docked along the Riverfront.

And even more exciting, the Kalmar Nyckel still sails today, giving visitors the chance to step aboard and experience what life was like on a historic ship. As you continue walking, think about how ships built along this river didn't just stay here; they carried people, stories, and history across the world.



# Stop 6 The Cranes on the Riverfront (Hyatt Place)

As you continue walking, you'll see several large cranes standing along the Riverwalk. These cranes are some of the last visible pieces of the Riverfront's industrial past. In fact, this is one of the last places in the country where you can still see original cranes like this, standing right where shipbuilding once took place. Take a moment to notice their size and shape. Even though they're no longer in use the way they once were, they still give you a sense of just how active this riverfront used to be. As you walk, you might also notice lines in the ground beneath your feet.

Those lines mark where tracks once ran, guiding equipment like these cranes along the Riverfront.

Today, the Riverwalk is calm, open, and designed for people to enjoy, with the river flowing beside you. But small details like these, cranes and the patterns in the ground, help tell the story of what used to be here.

They are reminders that even as the Riverfront has changed, pieces of its past are still all around you. And just ahead, you'll step into one of the places where that history was made.



# Stop 7 Dravo Plaza

You're now walking through one of the most important areas of the Riverfront's history.

This was part of the Dravo Shipyard, one of the most important shipbuilding sites in the country during World War II. At its peak, more than 10,000 workers filled this waterfront, making it feel like a city within a city. People from all backgrounds came together here, men and women, experienced workers and beginners, all working toward one shared goal. To build ships as quickly as possible to support the war effort and save lives. The ships built here carried soldiers, equipment, and supplies across vast stretches of ocean.

Dravo workers built Landing Ships, Tanks, Destroyer Escorts, and Landing Ships Medium (LSMs).

One of those ships was the very first of its kind, built right here in Wilmington and launched in 1944.

The speed of production was incredible. Workers went from building ships in months... to building them in just days. At one point, they were launching a new ship every 3.2 days.

Their motto said it all.

"Today. Not Tomorrow."

As you keep walking, the space around you begins to feel different.

You're now stepping into Dravo Plaza, a place created to remember the people and the work that once filled this waterfront. Take a moment to look down as you walk.

The patterns in the ground form a compass rose, and the names of ships built here are set into the design.

This plaza was created in 1999 to honor the workers who helped shape history right here along the Christina River. Today, this space is calm and open, but it carries the memory of everything that once took place here.

It's a reminder that behind every ship, every structure, and every moment in history, there were people who made it possible. And as you continue walking, you'll begin to notice the Riverfront changing once again.



# Stop 8 Russell W. Peterson Wildlife Refuge

As you reach the final stop, take a moment to look out over the Christina River and the wetlands around you.

This area was once known as the Old Wilmington Marsh, later called Dravo Marsh.

Today, it has been transformed into a 238-acre freshwater marsh along the Christina River, now named after former Delaware Governor Russell W. Peterson. This space once filled with industry now supports wildlife. You may see birds like herons, ducks, or even spot animals like muskrats, beavers, and otters. These wetlands help filter pollution, reduce flooding, and protect the river. Take a moment to pause and listen.

The sounds you hear now are very different from the shipyards that once stood here.

As the Riverfront celebrates 30 years of transformation, this final stop shows how the story continues, through restoration, balance, and nature.

From industry... to renewal... to restoration, the Riverwalk tells a story that is still being written.

Thank you for joining us on the Riverfront Walking Tour and for being part of our 30th anniversary celebration.

Each year, millions of visitors come to the Riverfront to dine, explore, enjoy entertainment, and experience the beauty of the Christina River.

We hope this walk gave you a new perspective on the history, transformation, and community that make this place so special.

We look forward to welcoming you back again soon!



# Riverfront Self-Guided Audio Walking Tour Map

