

**Pringle Creek/Shelton Ditch
A Self-Guided Walking Tour**

2.68 miles

Our Pringle Creek virtual tour on the Shine website contains many more photographs of this walk (including a visit to Deepwood Estate) and may be viewed as a companion to this guide.

This Pringle Creek walkers' guide traces the waterway through urban institutions and parks, offering different experiences according to the season: bright camas and delicate wildflowers bloom in spring; cool woodland shade is welcome in the summer; the fall is bright with color; the winter is majestic with towering bare trees and unexpected vistas. The waterways reveal or submerge landscapes along their shorelines.

Historical notations are in italics.

To begin:

Walk south on the left side of the Commercial Street Bridge

The waterpower of this creek has been valuable since the founding of the city. As early as 1865 there was a mill here where the creek emptied in to the Willamette River. Industry covered the creek until recently. With the present redevelopment, the creek is “daylighted” here for the first time in 145 years.

At the end of the bridge, turn left, enter the City Hall Park by the paved walkway. Continue on the path nearest the Civic Center. The Mirror Pond is on your left; Liberty Street Bridge underpass is ahead.

The underpass offers a view of Pringle Creek, flowing toward you. Beyond the underpass, a path leads along the creek.

At the end of the path, stop and read the interpretive sign about Chinook salmon in the creek. The construction of the Salmon Run

Condominium and frequent high water in the creek destroyed the path here that once wandered along the creek.

The tour now continues to the left, between the Salmon Run Condominium and the Pringle Parking structure. At High Street, turn right toward the next underpass. Continue under the High Street Bridge with the creek still to the right.

Emerge into a path to Church Street. Beyond the creek to the right is Fry's Hill and the Gaiety Hill/Bush's Pasture Park Residential Historic District.

Gaiety Hill was a name given to the residential area north of Mission Street between High and Church Streets, south of Pringle Creek. Fine homes were built around this property of Daniel Fry ('Fry's Hill'), particularly in the 1920s. South of Mission Street was the 1877 home of Asahel Bush and his daughter, Miss Sally, set on 100 acres of land along High Street. This land was originally a land donation grant to pioneer David Leslie. The family "pasture" south of the Bush mansion was part of the city's Bush property purchase in 1953. The homes of Virgil Pringle and other prominent early Salem citizens are adjacent to the Bush property. The two areas were united in a successful 1976 nomination for the National register of Historic Places. There is a Shine website virtual walking tour of this district.

At Church Street, the path divides at a triangle. Turn to the right and onto this historic 1929 bridge. Conde McCullough, the designer of the Columbia Gorge highway and bridges, is thought to have designed it. (His home was three doors down on this side of the street)

On the right side of the bridge, Shelton Ditch (to your right) can be seen as it is absorbed into Pringle Creek. .

Pringle Creek is natural. Shelton Ditch is a man-made waterway built in the mid-1800's to increase waterpower for the city. It flows through the southern

edge of downtown Salem and continues along the north side of Pringle Park before merging with Pringle Creek.

Cross the bridge, heading for the stairway between the two lampposts. Carefully descend the stairs, taking the path to the right along Pringle Creek. The Community Hall is seen ahead. Take the next path to left, leaving the creek.

As the hospital campus grew, the construction of Building B extended over the creek. Walkers must circle to the left around to Winter Street to pick up the creek again.

As the path crosses the park, Shelton Ditch appears to the left. Turn right to walk to Winter Street with B Building at your right.

Salem Hospital began as the Deaconess Hospital in 1916, founded by members of the Mennonite church. The hospital began with 12 beds housed in the old Salem Hotel on Winter Street. By 1936, Salem Deaconess Hospital was expanded to 100 beds.

The hospital was turned over to the Salem community in 1947, a new board of trustees was named and a not-for-profit corporation was formed under the name of Salem Memorial Hospital. In 1969, Salem Memorial Hospital and Salem General Hospital merged to make better use of buildings, equipment, and personnel. The Center Street site continues to be remodeled and expanded.

On Winter Street, walk to your right passing in front of the building. The entrance is now closed to the public, but formerly one could walk inside the see a mural depicting the history of the hospital. (You can see it on the Shine Pringle Creek virtual tour.)

Just ahead, on Mission Street, the former Oregon School for the Blind was located. That area is now a parking lot and playground.

Because of the dwindling number of student and a statewide movement toward “inclusion” of disabled students into public schools for the general population, it was closed by the state in 2009.

To your right, as you walk past the corner of B Building, you will see Pringle Creek flowing from beneath this hospital building.

Carefully cross Winter Street. Pass building 720 and you will see, to the left, a covered walkway. Take it and cross another bridge over Pringle Creek.

At Mission Street turn left and cross at the Capitol Street pedestrian protected traffic light.

Walk to your right toward the entrance to the parking lot for Bush Pasture Park. There is a selection of paths to your left, but the bark covered one is more secluded ~ and easier on the feet.

You will see Pringle Creek on your left, the current flowing toward you. This path leads through beautiful woodland. You will begin to see larger trees in the forest solitude. The path strays away from the creek.

Further along, the creek appears again near houses on the opposite shore. A natural water hole attracts waders in the summer.

Another path now turns left down to a bridge across the creek, but that is for the return. Glance down that way, but continue on the bark path.

Up an incline, the path joins a paved one. Continue to the left. A playground is to the right.

You will leave the woodland behind as you approach Leffelle Street. The parking lot there offers an interpretive sign describing Bush Pasture Park features “Pringle Creek and Bioswales”.

The source of Pringle Creek is far to the south, but it follows 12th Street for several blocks.

Begin the return here. You will now be walking in the direction of the flow. When the paved path joins another, choose to walk on the bark-covered one again.

You may choose to continue on this path all the way to Mission Street, retracing your steps.

Or descend the steps now, where houses can be glimpsed through the trees. A bench welcomes walkers who want to pause and enjoy peaceful the view from the picnic area.

As you enjoy this relaxing moment, you will see to your left a path along the creek leading back in the direction you came. If you are adventurous (and have a companion), you may choose that way back to Mission Street. But be aware: this path can be hazardous as it twists around washouts and tree roots. However, there are several places to pause and enjoy the natural beauty of the waterway. The path joins the one on which you began the walk into the park.

In former years, we used the bridge across Pringle Creek to begin a route to Deepwood Estate. (see yellow line on chart). The front gate, which was our exit from that property to Mission Street is now closed and so not convenient for this walkers' guide.

Historic Deepwood Estate is an 1894 Queen Anne Victorian Home situated on approximately 4 acres of manicured gardens and nature trails. The home was placed on the National Register of Historic Homes in 1973. The museum disseminates information about the home and document life in Victorian times. The gardens, partially designed by Elizabeth Lord and Edith Schryver, are open daily, dawn to dusk free of charge.

Repeat your path back to Mission Street. Cross at Capitol Street, as you did before, and turn right. The hospital buildings will be on your left. Cross Oak Street, heading for Shelton Ditch. The walk leads to your left.

The landscaped path, with Shelton Ditch to your right, is a beautiful and peaceful stroll.

At Winter Street, walk left a few steps to right and cross the street at the traffic light. Notice the the interpretive signage describing Salem history. One side depicts “Historic Bridge Locations”. The other side “ Civic Bridge Building in the Capitol City”.

Take the path behind the hospital clinic. The stream is now to your left. This path continues leads to a bridge. The dedication is to Sue Miller, the first woman to serve as Mayor of Salem.

Remain on the path north of the ditch and Pringle Park. The Church Street Bridge, where Shelton Ditch is lost in Pringle Creek, soon appears through the trees. To the left a few steps lead down to a historical artifact and then to your right, the path rises to Church Street.

At the sidewalk, cross Church Street and continue the walk by way of the underpasses. The triangle of paths guides the way. You will be walking toward High Street on the familiar path, Pringle Creek flowing to your left. The incline after the bridge takes you back to the Salmon Run Condominium.

Return to Liberty Street following this driveway, passing under the bridge again. There is a beautiful view of Civic Center Park from the walkway.

Take the path to your right as you enter the Civic Center Park. Here the pool empties into Pringle Creek by way of broad stepping

stones. Look to your right to see a waterfall where the Millrace empties into Pringle Creek.

At your left is the 1972 Civic Center. Continue until the path meets the sidewalk and, turning right, you are back on the Commercial Street bridge.