

Begin Your *Walk Thru History* in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

by Linda Morzillo

Walking thru history will begin in Portsmouth for the Volkssporters! The first pre-walk on June 9, 2019, will take place in the area first explored and written about by Martin Pring in 1603. The English settled on the west bank of the natural harbor at the mouth of the Piscataqua River. Shipbuilding, lumber and fishing were the economic mainstays of the area along with part of the Triangle Trade. By 1653, the town was incorporated and named for the colony's founder, John Mason. He was a ship's captain from Portsmouth, in the county of Hampshire, England. That is how both Portsmouth and New Hampshire acquired their names!

There are two 5k walks planned: The City Walk and the Non-City Walk. Volkssporters who complete 10k will walk both of these historic, scenic and cultural routes which overlap in places. Starting at the Little Harbour School, the City Walk will help Volkssporters explore many different parts of Portsmouth. Sights will include views of the Atlantic Ocean, South Mill Pond and the Piscataqua River. Many historic buildings are along the walk route, especially in Portsmouth's Center. Fortunately, for walkers who enjoy visiting historic buildings, many are open to visitors on Sundays! Some do charge admission and many welcome visitors to explore the grounds without charge.

One of the outstanding features of many towns across the United States, especially in New England, are tall church steeples. The North Church of Portsmouth (Congregational, first built in 1657, rebuilt in 1854 and restored in 1978), and St. John's Episcopal Church (built in 1807 and the first brick church in New Hampshire), are the tallest steeples in the city of Portsmouth.

All walkers will pass through lovely Prescott Park. The land for this ten-acre waterfront park was donated to the City of Portsmouth by the Prescott sisters in 1940. There are extensive flower gardens and it is a beautiful venue for weddings.

The Non-City Walk will take Volkssporters to Four Tree Island (technically not an island because it's connected to Pierce Island by a pedestrian causeway), which is part of Prescott Park. Walkers will enjoy closer views of the Memorial Bridge, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Piscataqua River and the Portsmouth Fishing Pier.

After walking in Portsmouth on Sunday morning, Volkssporters may consider walking nearby events in Exeter, NH (16 miles), Concord, NH (60 miles), Kennebunk, Maine (30 miles), or at a location near the next day's walk in Danvers, Massachusetts (Ipswich, Gloucester, Beverly and Salem).

The Convention is almost upon us and the Empire State Capital Volkssporters are ready to greet you!