The old circuit, [with] its varied corners and surfaces impassable at a challenging track and driver." - Cameron P. Argue, designer of the original road course.

Entrants may follow in the tire tracks of original America's pioneering road race by driving the original 6-mile circuit through the Watkins Glen, around the spectacular gorge in Watkins Glen State Park, and continue the tour around the surrounding farmland. Markers designate the course, starting at the south end of State Route 14B, where the course is immediately east of the Schuyler County Courthouse on Franklin Street. From 1945 to 1951, cars raced over asphalt, cement, and dirt roads up and down hills, creating a stone bridge and the New York Central Railroad line along the original circuit. "An outlandish dream"

On October 2, 1948, Watkins Glen served as the venue for the first post-WWII American road race. This inaugural race attempted revived road racing in the United States, bringing the excitement and prestige of European-style road racing across the Atlantic, which Argue’s outlandish dream of creating an American-style road circuit would continue in Watkins Glen's long history of road racing. The circuit would be formed by the many elements and historical landmarks that make Watkins Glen one of the most iconic and memorable road courses in American motorsport.
CIRCUIT LANDMARKS

6.0 START-FINISH LINE
The brick memorial on either side of Franklin Street in front of the Schuyler County Courthouse mark the location of the start-finish line for the old course. Race officials waved green and checked flags at this start-finish line from the first 19th century through 1979.

6.07 TURN ONE
William Milliken, an engineer as well as a race car driver, administered the first turn: "From a driver's viewpoint, nothing can be more conspicuous to having been in the midst of that swelling pack as it slid through the turn onto Franklin Street, and accelerated up the long hill.

6.1 OLD CORNING HILL
This steep road starts the 3/4-mile climb in elevation from Franklin Street to the high point of the course at 50 feet above sea level.

6.6 TOWNSEND ROAD CORNER
Local roads often deliver their names from their end points. The south part of the circuit follows a portion of Townsend Road (Rte. 319) which leads to Townsend, small town located in the Town of Dux, located to the west.

6.7 SENECA LODGE
A family owned restaurant, Inn at Corning, Seneca Lodge has served as a social center for the racing community since the first road race in 1914. The Lodge’s tradition of hosting race teams and fans attending for events at the track continues today.

1.3 WHITE HOUSE ‘15
This point marks a series of uphill curves near where a white farm house stood in 1915. The original house has been altered and the name taken from White Post House near the Le Mans Circuit in France.

1.6 RAILROAD UNDERPASS
A steel beam and grinder bridge carried the New York Central Railroad’s tracks over the roadway and became widely sought after viewing spot for spectators. With the trains temporarily halted during the races, fans crowded the bridge and climbed under abutments.

2.3 THE COLLIER MONUMENT
A native granite boulder with a bronze plaque memorializes the victim’s 1915 tragedy of the Collier brothers, who both raced on the original course. Ales Collier drove a spectacular race in the 1915 Grand Prix, coming from behind to steal the win at the finish line. His younger brother, Sam, while leading the Grand Prix in 1915 at over 120 mph, collided and lost control of his car, crashing off the track. He later died of his injuries.

2.7 SCHOOL HOUSE CORNER
This junction marks the start of the dramatic, abrupt descent into White Hollow. The structure on the knob on the southwest corner served as the Glen Creek School, a rural one-room schoolhouse. Remodeled, it is now a private residence.

3.6 CORNETH’S STONE BRIDGE
The single-arched fieldstone bridge over Glen Creek became known as Corneth’s Stone Bridge after a racing mishap in the 1918 qualifying race. Denver Corneth flipped his MG into the dry creek bed 20 feet below the bridge. After repairing his car and the car of the generator’s current-borrowed parts from his fellow competitors, was ready to race in the Grand Prix that afternoon.

3.7 ARCH SMITH’S CORNER
The original Grovey Corneth at the intersection on the left is the house of the former engineer named Arch Smith. Smith, like other property owners on the course, turned their yards into paid parking lots and viewing spots for the growing number of spectators. Attempts to keep the track cleared annually and was estimated at 10,000 in 1916 to 150,000 on race day 1923.

4.0 RAILROAD STRAIGHT
Cars went at maximum speed on this straight, braking for the bump at the railroad tracks that obstacles were a real danger to the airbornes. New York Central Railroad’s ‘Train Master’ signed on to “trap” the ‘trains’ for the duration of the sports car races, providing safe crossings over the freight line.

5.0 FRAIR’S CORNER
The descent into the village begins here. The course received its romantic name from the bordering tract of land, an extensive property occupied by St. Anthony of Padua Minor Seminary & Prep School, a Catholic high school operated by the Order of Friars Minor from 1949 to 1970.

5.4 BIG REND
The section of the course presented an inspiring view of Seneca Lake from 1955-1968. A breathtaking experience for the drivers, with maximum speeds declining.

6.3 MILLIKEN’S CORNER
Named for William Milliken, who flipped his Bugatti in the last lap of the 1923 Junior Prix while vying for first place in the last minutes of the race. Milliken landed in the fields parallel to the street and crawled out unhurt, to the applause of spectators across the street. "Thrift corner," the track swelled annually and was estimated at 10,000 in 1926 to 150,000 on race day 1923.

6.8 FINISH LINE
Frank Griswold, driving his 1938 Alfa Romeo, took the first checkered flag to Watkins Glen, winning both the qualifying race and the inaugural Grand Prix. Twenty three sports cars competed for the qualifying race including 24-WC, midgets, many European factory-produced cars, and a couple homemade specials. Ten cars finished the arduous course.