

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL SKETCH

The area that was to become Waltham was first explored by Governor Winthrop in 1631, shortly after the settlement of Boston and the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By 1640, the area had become a precinct of Watertown, and most of its land divided up into grants to individual families. Settlement, however, did not occur rapidly. Scattered meadows in Waltham's forest were used as remote pastures for the Watertown cattle herds. Following the end of King Philip's War in 1676, which put an end to fears of Indian attacks, settlement in the area accelerated. By 1700 there were homes and farms established throughout what was to become Waltham north of the Charles River. By 1738, the population had grown large enough for the precinct to break away from Watertown and become incorporated as the separate Town of Waltham. Long before European settlement in New England, the route followed by Main and Weston Streets had been the major Indian trail going inland west from the coast. By 1673, this route had become part of the system of trails followed by post riders between New York and Boston, later called the Boston Post Road. As colonial communities were settled west from Boston, the trail was widened by the heavy commercial traffic of horses and carts bringing produce to Boston. Regular stage coach service was started in 1772, peaking between 1820 and 1840, after which railroads dominated long distance travel. In the early 1800s there were almost as many taverns and inns along the route as homes. In 1814 the Boston Manufacturing Company built its first textile mill on the Charles River where Moody Street now crosses it. The mill was an instant financial success, kick started the American Industrial Revolution, and began the conversion of Waltham from a sleepy agricultural town into a thriving industrial village. The area near Central Square became the commercial and cultural center while outlying parts slowly changed through the 1800s from farms to residential developments.

This tour starts at the Waltham/Watertown line and travels westward along Main Street, through the center of Waltham, and then out along Weston Street to the Waltham/Weston line.

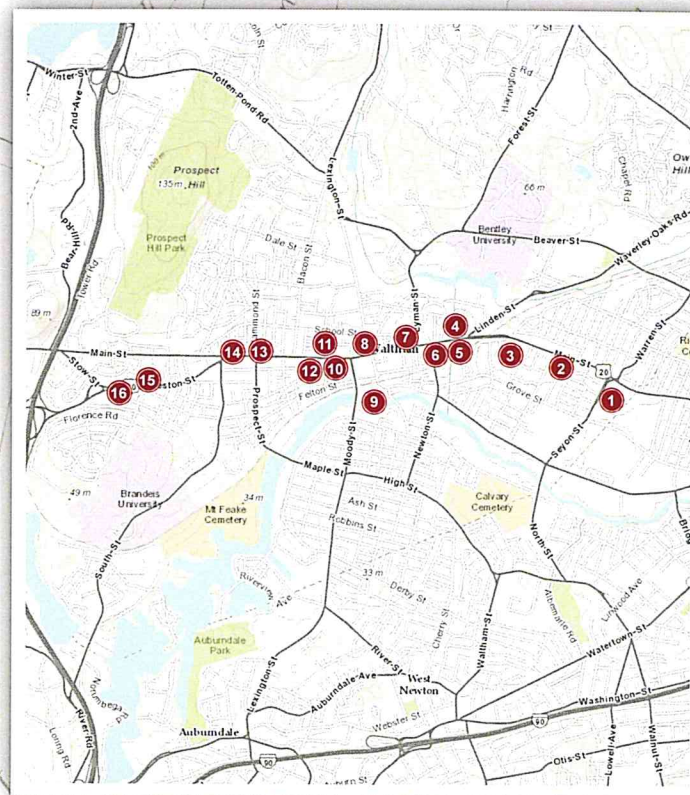
TOUR

1. Gore Place (fields behind fence on south side of Main St., opposite Warren St., as you enter Waltham; entrance off Gore St on left), 1805, **Federal Mansion:** The Gore Estate, built in 1805-06, is considered the finest example of a Federal Period mansion in New England. Its design is based on that of European country estates. In 1796 President Washington appointed Christopher Gore to the commission in London whose mandate was to settle Revolutionary War claims by American merchants under the Jay Treaty. Following his return from Europe, Gore served in the Massachusetts Senate, then as Governor of Massachusetts, and, finally, as a United States Senator. The Gores used the Waltham mansion primarily as a summer residence. After the Gores, the estate changed hands many times. In 1911 Charles H. Metz bought the estate, which consisted of 120 acres at the time. Before World War I, the Metz Company was the largest automobile manufacturing company east of Detroit, and Metz used the Gore mansion partly for the company's executive offices and partly for his family's residence. Currently, the Gore Place Society owns the estate, and it is open to the public for tours at specific times.

2. 176 Main St. (cr. Lafayette St.), Robert M. Stark House, 1890, Queen Anne: This house ranks among the finest, most elaborately detailed Queen Anne houses in Waltham, and provides a glimpse of the home of a well-to-do late 19th century Waltham lawyer. The house was designed by Waltham-based architect, George E. Strout, around 1890. Mr. Strout was active in the Waltham building trades from the 1890s through the second decade of the 20th century. Robert M. Stark's law office was located in the Central Block, Waltham. He was the city solicitor in 1903, served on the school board for one year, and was the license commissioner for two years.

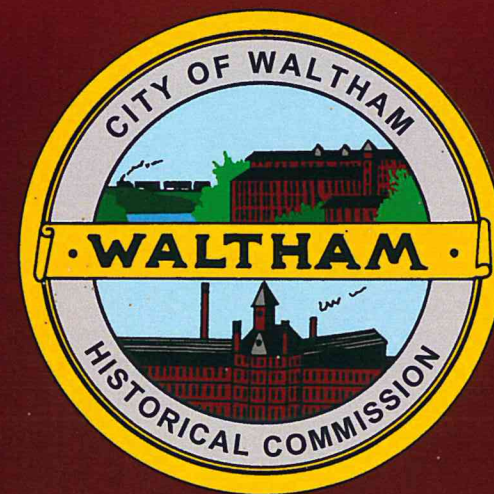


THE OLD BOSTON POST ROAD MAP



For more information on these and other sites in Waltham please contact the Waltham Historical Society at

www.walthamhistoricalsociety.org



A Sampler of the HISTORIC SITES ALONG THE OLD BOSTON POST ROAD IN WALTHAM

This tour is just a small sample of the historic sites along Main and Weston Streets in Waltham. For a much more complete area history and an extensive collection of individual site descriptions, histories, and pictures please see the Waltham Historical Society's publication *A Ramble Through Waltham On The Great Country Road* available from the Waltham Historical Society at walthamhistoricalsociety.org.

Also available from the society are historic tours of many other sections of Waltham.

This tour of the historic sites along Waltham's Main and Weston Streets may not include all buildings which could be considered to be historically significant. It is not a legal document.

3. Grove Hill Cemetery, 1703: Since this burial ground's first interments in 1703, Grove Hill Cemetery has grown from 2.3 acres to its present nine acres. This cemetery is the last resting-place for many of Waltham's leading 18th and 19th century families. It also provides for a comprehensive survey of Boston-area gravestone craftsmanship from the early 18th century to the present day.

4. 411 Main St. (on north side of street just west of railroad bridge and traffic light at Linden St., now Kirsch Insurance Agency), Hager-Mead House, 1795, Georgian: This handsome late Georgian house is one of the very few in the city. It is typical of the houses along Main Street in the late 1700s. The house was built in 1795 by Samuel Hager, a Watertown farmer, and sold in 1796 to Stephen Mead, a local blacksmith. The house remained in the Mead family until the middle of the 19th century.

5. 426 Main Street (now part of Eden Vale Condominiums), Lyman Reed House, 1844-1845, Greek Revival (Temple-Front): Although some of its original features have been lost when it was incorporated into the modern condominium development, the essence of this classic Greek Revival house still remains and shows that historic houses can be repurposed in modern developments and do not necessarily need to be demolished in the name of progress.

6. 446 Main St. (cr. Townsend St.), Charles P. Nutting House, 1900, Colonial Revival: This house, an excellent example of a cross-gabled Colonial Revival, was built about 1900 for Charles P. Nutting, who owned the famous dance hall called Nutting's on the Charles. At the time this house was built, Townsend Street was laid out and an earlier house, which stood on the site, was moved back to its current location a few houses in on the right side of Townsend Street. That house, which still exists, was originally built around 1790 and was occupied by Samuel Townsend, Waltham's first postmaster, in the early 1800s. It then functioned as the parsonage for the first two ministers of the forerunner of today's Trinity Church, and still later as the home of George H. Maynard, Waltham's honored recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor. On the opposite side of Main Street is Pleasant Street, which was laid out in 1669 as a cattle path along a colonial lot line from 1636. Along Pleasant Street were built the parsonages of Waltham's first three resident ministers, two of which still exist, one from 1759 and one from 1818.

7. 519 Main St. (next to diner), Royal S. Warren House, 1851-1853, Italianate: This house, the most high-style Italianate in the city, was built by Royal S. Warren between 1851 and 1853. He was a physician and, later, a representative to the state legislature in 1868-69 and also a member of the Waltham school committee. Later on, the house was acquired by St. Peter's Parochial School, and then used as a rectory by St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, standing next door. Most recently it was extensively renovated and converted back to a private residence.

8. 617-627 Main St. (north side of street directly opposite City Hall), Central Block (originally Miller's Block), 1856, Italianate: This three-story red brick commercial block with symmetrical façade was one of the first commercial blocks in Waltham, the oldest surviving brick commercial/public building in the city, and the oldest building on Waltham Common. Its architect was Henry W. Hartwell, Waltham's most famous local architect and the son-in-law of the building's original owner, George Miller. Through its history the building has housed a hotel, civic offices, and the first telephone exchange in Waltham. The Waltham City Hall opposite this building was finished in 1926, replacing an earlier wooden building called "Rumford Hall", which was originally built by the Boston Manufacturing Company in 1827, and used for a town and city hall from 1849 to 1924. Next to City Hall is the "Waltham Common". It was never a common pasture for cattle of a closely surrounding colonial village, but a landscaped public park formed between 1813 and 1886 via gifts and purchases of land from the Boston Manufacturing Company.

9. Francis Cabot Lowell Mill (large smoke stack and red brick buildings down Moody St. on left, next to the river behind the Common and train station; access from public parking lot off Pine Street on south side of river; now senior citizen housing, artist lofts, and the Charles River Museum of Industry at rear), 1814: The Boston Manufacturing Company mill complex on the Charles River is a National Historic Landmark. The original mill was constructed in 1814 by Francis Cabot Lowell and Patrick Tracy Jackson (with technical assistance by Paul Moody, for whom Moody St. is named). It was the first textile mill in America to incorporate water powered weaving as well as spinning, and was the first manufacturing company based on a modern corporate structure. Its immediate financial success launched the American

Industrial Revolution. The original mill building from 1814 still stands on its original site, although now much modified and converted into housing for the elderly. It is the segment of the long five-story red brick building closest to Moody Street and the river. The mill complex now also houses a condominium development, the Waltham Mills Artists Studios, and the Charles River Museum of Industry and Innovation. The museum has an extensive collection related to the history of the mill, the textile industry, and other Waltham industries.

10. 730 Main St., Trinity Church, 1870-71, Romanesque/Colonial Revival: The corner stone of the Trinity Church building was laid on July 19th, 1870. This building replaced an earlier one built farther east on Main Street in the 1820s. Trinity Church can trace its roots back to Watertown's first Puritan church of 1630, and the first religious society in what would become Waltham in 1722. In the early 1800s there were divisions in the congregation between those living near the mill and the rest of Waltham, and between Unitarians and Trinitarians; and this church descended from the Trinitarian faction.

11. 735 Main St., Francis Buttrick Library (Waltham Public Library), 1915 (additions 1933 and 1994), Georgian Revival: The Waltham Public Library was established in 1865, and its initial book collection came from three previous, private lending libraries dating back to as early as 1798. The present building owes its existence to a bequest made in 1894 by Francis Buttrick, the largest real estate owner in the city at the time.

12. 750 Main St., Christ Church Episcopal, 1897-98, English Country Gothic: Following the Revolutionary War, the Episcopal Church became the official name of the Anglican Church in the United States. Christ Church was established as a mission church in 1849 in a small wooden building on Central Street. The present church building was erected in 1897, with the field stones used in its construction being a gift of Robert Treat Paine from his estate in Waltham. The Paine Estate, also known as "Stonehurst", still exists on Beaver Street; now belongs to the City of Waltham; and is open for tours at specific times.

13. 11 Hammond St. (large white frame structure just down Hammond St. on the right, behind stores on Main St.), Prospect House, 1839, Greek Revival: The Prospect House is the last remaining

structure that was built as a stage coach inn along the Boston Post Road in Waltham. It was built in 1839 facing on Main Street and was rotated to face on Hammond Street in the early 1900s.

14. 935 Main St. (across Main St. from Banks School), Gale-Banks House, 1798, Federal: The Gale/Banks House is a well-preserved example of an early Federal farmhouse. It is most notable, however, as the home, after 1855, of Nathaniel P. Banks, Waltham's most famous mid-nineteenth century citizen: a Governor of Massachusetts, Congressman, Speaker of the House, and Civil War General.



15. 177 Weston St. (also numbered 8 Caldwell Rd., seen on rise just west of cr. Caldwell Rd. behind building and trees on Weston St., better view from Caldwell Rd.), Edwin C. Johnson House, 1847-1853, Greek Revival/Italianate: This house is a stately example of a late 1840s/early 1850s Greek Revival/Italianate house. Its most illustrious owner was Charles H. B. Caldwell, who bought it in 1863. Caldwell served in the U.S. Navy for 38 years, including especially heroic action during the Civil War that led to the capture of New Orleans. He retired from the service as a commodore.

16. 244 Weston St. (yellow gambrel-roofed house on south side of street), Smith-Jones (David Smith) House, 1774 (rear, dormers, and porch added after 1850), 18th century gambrel-roofed vernacular: This house is the oldest surviving house on Weston Street. It originally stood on the opposite side of the road and very likely witnessed the passage of General Gage's spies on their way from Boston to Concord in 1775 when the British were planning their raid on Concord, which triggered the start of the Revolutionary War.