

The Melrose Historical Society invites you to become a member. Its mission is to preserve and celebrate the history of Melrose, and to promote a better understanding of local history in general. The Society holds three public meetings each year with presentations on a wide variety of topics. For further information, send a post card to:

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**Melrose Walks**

**THE VILLAGE**

**COURTESY OF THE MELROSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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--- AREA COVERED BY WALK

See inside for detailed view

## The Village: Overview

This walk begins at one of Melrose's three B&M railroad depots, Wyoming Station, and crosses a second, Melrose Depot. The Boston & Maine came to Melrose in 1845. Within a few years of its arrival, the sleepy village of North Malden had become a desirable suburb.

This is an easy walk over streets that are level, passing through both residential and commercial areas. Cottage Street is unique in retaining a row of Greek Revival houses that are largely unchanged since they were built in the 1840s. The Beebe Estate is a fine example of a Federal mansion with many Greek Revival details. With its renovated Victorian barn, which is now the Melrose Senior Center, this property is one of the most pleasant public areas in the city.

The intersection of West Foster, Florence and Vinton Street is what was known in the eighteenth century as "the village." Before there was a Main Street business district, the residents of North Malden gathered here. An ancient elm

once stood on the corner of Gooch Park. The local Minutemen met here on their way to Lexington.

Vinton Street leads into an area of large Victorian homes. They represent many styles: Queen Anne, Italianate, Second Empire and Shingle. You can take a side detour into Cedar Park, an early Victorian neighborhood.

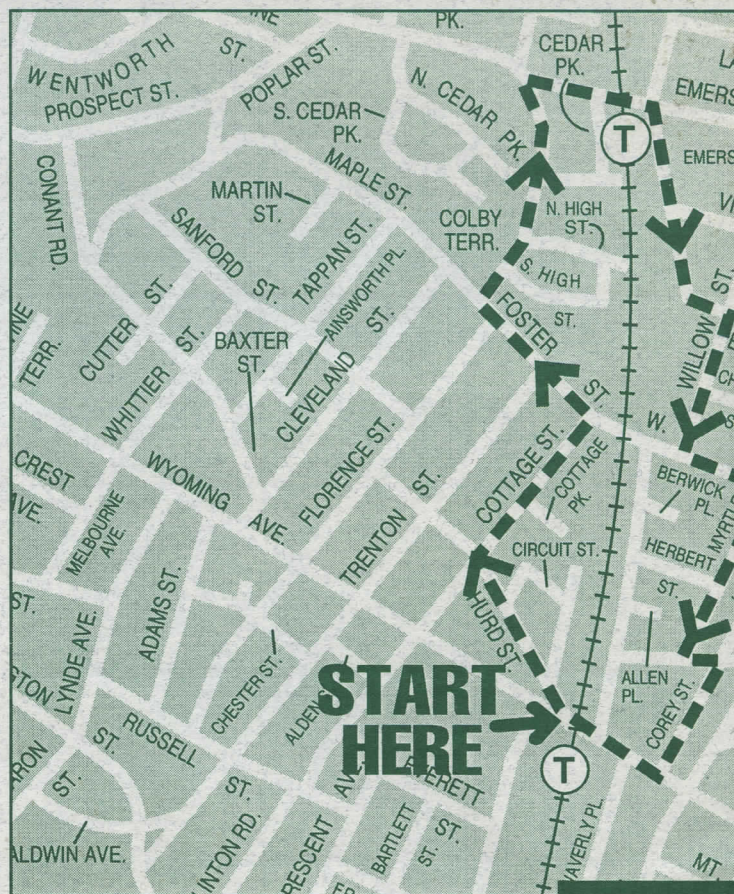
You will pass the businesses near the Melrose Depot train station that sprang up to serve the needs of commuters, and those that used the proximity of the railroad line to ship and receive their goods.

You will also pass the First Congregational Church on West Foster Street and St. Mary's Church on Myrtle Street,—both of which have served as centers of the community for more than a hundred years.

Before you know it, you will be back where you started.



- **Leave Wyoming Station parking lot and walk down Hurd Street to Cottage.**
- **Turn right on Cottage Street.** You are following one of the ancient roads in North Malden, from Hurd, to Cottage, to West Foster, to Vinton. Travelers took this "by-pass" of Main Street to avoid the marshy land south of Ell Pond.
- **Cottage Street.** The row of Greek Revival cottages on the west side of the street were all built in the late 1840's, just a few years after the arrival of the B&M. Original residents here were among Melrose's first commuters.
- **The Fuller House and The Levi Gould House.** The two large apartment houses on the right were built in the 1960's and 1970's as housing for Melrose's elderly.
- **Straight ahead is the Beebe Estate and the Milano Senior Center.** Walk down the driveway on the right to observe the property from several sides.
- **The Beebe Estate.** This house was built a summer house in 1828 (on the site of an earlier Sprague house dating from 1720) by William Foster (1772-1863). It was one of the grander houses in North Malden. Mr. Foster was a businessman and writer who lived on Beacon Hill in the winter. From 1854 to 1963, this property was owned by the Bigelow and Beebe families. Katherine Bigelow married Decius Beebe in 1879 and they raised eight children here and in the Victorian mansion they built next door (on the site of the present Beebe School). Both families were active in organizing and supporting the Melrose Hospital Association.
- **The Milano Senior Center.** The barn of the Beebe Estate has recently been renovated and expanded to serve as the Melrose Senior Center. It is named in honor of James Milano, Melrose's long time mayor.



## The Village

- **Continue west on West Foster Street** past the Beebe School.
- **"The Village."** The intersection of West Foster, Florence, Maple and Vinton Streets was known as "the village" in the eighteenth century. There was a public well here, and in the immediate vicinity were half a dozen houses owned by the Sprague and Barrett families. Farmers gathered here to share the news of the day, and talk politics. The original Sprague homestead, dating from the 1650's, was located about a hundred yards down Maple Street.
- **The Phineas Sprague House, 1798.** This Federal style house was built on the site of an earlier Sprague house, ca. 1692. Phineas Sprague (1725-1805) tried unsuccessfully to get to the Battle of Bunker Hill. On the corner opposite (by Gooch Park) he and his fellow Minutemen from North Malden met to go to the Battle of Lexington.





## Age: Tour

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- Follow Vinton Street** as it bends to the right. This area was developed in the second half of the 19th century by prosperous newcomers. The large houses on the left demonstrate Victorian Melrosians' preference for "a view."
- At Cedar Park, take a detour to the left** and make the loop up North Cedar Park and down South Cedar Park. This neighborhood, surveyed in the 1850's, was one of the first Victorian "developments" in Melrose.
- Back on Vinton, turn left** toward Emerson Street, and then right.
- The Samuel Gooch House.** The Italianate style house on the rise overlooking Bowdoin Park was once the home of Samuel Gooch, a six-term US Congressman and prominent Melrose civic leader.
- Bowdoin Park.** This small "vest-pocket" park is one of several in the city that were designed as part of Victorian neighborhoods.

- Melrose Depot.** The second railroad station we pass. At each of the three B&M depots, a mini-business district grew up to service the commuters who used the trains.
- Turn right on Trenton Street** after crossing the railroad tracks. A hundred years ago, there were several livery stables on this street and on Vine Street (the first left).
- Deering Lumber.** This Melrose business was established in 1872, and moved to this location in 1921. It has been run by the Deering and Perkins family for four generations.
- Turn right on Willow** after Trenton Street bends to the left.
- The William Boggle House, ca. 1850.** The brown house on your right was built by William Boggle—who is one of several people credited with suggesting "Melrose" as the name of the newly incorporated town.
- Turn left on West Foster, and then right** on Myrtle Street. You will pass...
- The First Congregational Church** on your left. First founded in 1849, the present church was built in 1969 after the previous church building, dating from 1870, burned to the ground.
- Saint Mary of the Annunciation Church,** the first Catholic parish in the city, was completed in 1894. The property now includes a rectory, a parish center (formerly a convent) and St. Mary's School.
- Follow Corey Street** to West Wyoming.
- This section of Corey Street** was the site of the original Friend's Baked Beans factory, where the Moulton Curtain Company is now located. Victor and Leslie Friend founded the company in 1872.
- Turn right on West Wyoming** and return to your starting point