

# Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail



A Walking Tour of Arlington's Past



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# Preface

There is no question of the significance of the roles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. In Lexington, the Regulars killed farmers, and in Concord, the local militia killed Regulars.

It was in Arlington that the running battle being waged against the Regulars as they made their way back to Boston reached its peak. By late afternoon, enough time had elapsed to allow significant numbers of militia from the many towns, who responded to the alarm, to converge on the retreating column.

According to *The Battle of April 19, 1775*, by Frank Warren Coburn, of the 49 Americans killed on that day, 25 died in Arlington, and of the 65 British who were killed, 40 died in Arlington. Of the 25, Jason Russell and 11 others were killed in his house and yard. “In Arlington, then, as the casualties show, the battle reached its climax.”

Lexington and Concord could be seen as unfortunate sets of accidents, which could possibly be reversed by skillful diplomacy. In Arlington, the fierce combat between the forces, the murder of innocents, the looting, and burning were no accidents. It sealed the fate of the British force occupying Boston. The Siege of Boston would soon begin.

Howard B. Winkler  
Arlington Historical Society

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# Directions to the Trail

*From Route 2 East or West:* Take exit 59 (Route 60, Pleasant Street). If coming from the east, take a right at the end of the ramp. If coming from the west, take a left at the lights at the end of the ramp. You will now be on Route 60, Pleasant Street. Follow Pleasant Street for approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. At the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street, continue straight through the light. (After the light, Pleasant Street becomes Mystic Street.) The entrance to the Municipal Lot will be on your right approximately 500 feet from Massachusetts Avenue.

*From Route 128 N or S:* Take exit 29 (Route 2 E to Arlington). Then refer to the above directions for Route 2 East (from the West).

*From the North on Route 3:* Follow Route 3 into Arlington where it becomes Mystic Street. Follow Mystic Street through the intersection of Summer and Mystic by going straight. The Arlington Community Safety Building will be on your right. Continue further along Mystic Street until approximately 500 feet before the intersection with Massachusetts Avenue where you will take a left into the Municipal Lot.

*From Areas West of Arlington (Lexington):* Follow Massachusetts Avenue to the Arlington town line. Continue on Massachusetts Avenue for about  $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles. At the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street/Mystic Street (Arlington Center) take a left. After approximately 500 feet, take a right into the Municipal Lot.

*From Areas East of Arlington (Somerville, Cambridge):* Follow Massachusetts Avenue into Arlington. Continue on Massachusetts Avenue for a little over one mile. At the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street/Mystic Street (Arlington Center), take a right. Then, after approximately 500 feet, take a right into the Municipal Lot.

# Parking and Restrooms

## **Parking**

The main parking area is the Arlington Municipal Lot, which is located right next to the start of the Trail. It is metered parking so make sure to have coins so you can purchase a parking voucher from the machine. In the unlikely event that this lot is full, additional parking may be found on streets nearby.

To reach the start of the Trail from the Municipal Lot, walk uphill towards the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street, to the front of the Jefferson Cutter House, the white single-family house at that intersection.

## **Restrooms**

Public restroom facilities are available at various points along the Trail, including the Dallin Art Museum (Jefferson Cutter House), Robbins Library, Town Hall, Jason Russell House, and Old Schwamb Mill, when these buildings are open for operation. In addition, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, or other business establishments may have restroom facilities to use if needed.

# Trail Attractions

Several historical buildings and museums along the Trail are open to the public. Their current hours of operation are as follows, but please call ahead as the hours are subject to change.

The Cyrus E. Dallin Art Museum at the Jefferson Cutter House  
1 Whittemore Park  
781-641-0747  
[www.dallin.org](http://www.dallin.org)  
Hours: 12 noon to 4 pm, Tues.-Sun. Closed Mon.

Jason Russell House and Smith Museum  
7 Jason Street  
(781) 648-4300  
[www.arlingtonhistorical.org](http://www.arlingtonhistorical.org)  
Hours: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Sat. & Sun., from mid Apr - Oct  
Entrance Fees: Adults \$3.00, Children \$1.00

Old Schwamb Mill  
17 Mill Lane at 29 Lowell St.  
(781) 643-0554  
[www.oldschwambmill.org](http://www.oldschwambmill.org)  
Hours: 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tues. & Sat.

Many of the other historical sites along the trail are privately owned, and some are now family residences. Please respect private property by remaining on the sidewalk along the Trail.

# Trail Safety

The Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail is a four-mile walking route along sidewalks and a bike trail. To ensure your safety, please observe the following safety rules.

1. Obey all traffic and parking rules. Remember that even though Arlington does not have meters for street parking, signs may indicate that you have a two-hour limit on parking.
2. Cross streets only at the crosswalks. Please do not jaywalk as it is especially dangerous. When crossing streets, remember to look both ways and do not assume that traffic will yield to you.
3. Although this Trail has been designed to avoid busy intersections, you should treat with special caution the intersections of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street/Mystic Street (the start and end of the Trail) and Massachusetts Avenue and Park Street (the middle of the Trail). Only cross with the walk light. Be careful as many motorists, unfortunately, will not yield to pedestrians as they are required to do.
4. Please walk in small groups because many of the sidewalks along this Trail become easily congested. Likewise, please stay to one side of the sidewalk and walk single file when needed to allow others to pass.
5. Groups of youth walking this Trail should have adequate and qualified adult supervision.
6. When walking on the Minuteman Bikeway, be sure to stay to the right side of the trail. Look carefully in both directions before entering the Bikeway. For your safety, stay in either a single or double file line while on the Bikeway.
7. Remember to wear clothing appropriate for the weather conditions and bring something in case the weather turns inclement.
8. Dogs must be kept on a leash. Please pick up after your dog.
9. In case of an emergency, dial 911. You may also contact the Arlington Police Department at 781-643-1212 or the Arlington Fire Department at 781-316-3800.

# Introduction to Arlington History

Welcome to the Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail! You are about to embark on a journey that will take you through major historical periods of Arlington history spanning nearly four hundred years. The primary focus of this Historical Trail is the series of events that occurred in Arlington on the opening day of the Revolutionary War. In 1775, however, this area was sparsely populated, so as you follow the trail today, through the densely built town of Arlington, you will learn about many other interesting aspects of the town's history.

When English settlers began arriving in this area in the early 1600s, they were met by the Massachusetts Indian tribe led by Squaw Sachem (which means "woman leader"). Although she had a reputation as a fierce leader, Squaw Sachem did not oppose the English settlers and in fact exchanged with them a large portion of her land in this area. She traded land for, among other things, the promise of a new English coat every year for the rest of her life.

In 1635, a man named George Cooke arrived from England and took up residence as Squaw Sachem's neighbor, settling into what were then adjacent sections of the towns of Cambridge and Charlestown that created an informal community known as "Menotomy." Although the exact origins of the name Menotomy remain unknown, some historians have suggested it may be a native word meaning "swift-running water."

Cooke obtained about 20 acres of land and set out to build a much-needed mill to grind the settlers' grain, which was completed by 1637 by damming Mill Brook to power it. Some of the major streets in Arlington, such as those where this Trail begins, developed as cart paths to Cooke's mill.

By 1692, about two dozen taxpayers had settled into Menotomy. Departing from customary practice at the time, they built a school in 1693 before building a church. In 1732, Menotomy became the "Second Parish" of Cambridge, which was a political subdivision also known as a precinct, which gave the village many aspects of local self-government.

Over the next four decades, the Second Parish grew slowly as a community of small farms and mills. Menotomy was a simple, rural community whose importance in history would hinge on it becoming the scene of remarkable events, both at the beginning and end of the first day of the Revolutionary War, April 19, 1775.

Paul Revere rode through Menotomy on April 18, 1775, while on his famous ride to warn the citizens of Lexington and Concord. You will be following Revere's route as you walk the first half of this Trail. British soldiers marched along the same route in the early morning of April 19, 1775. The village's residents awoke to the sound of the marching and Captain Benjamin Locke, commander of the Menotomy Minutemen, ordered his company to service. Although the most famous engagements of the opening day of the war occurred in Lexington and Concord, equally significant conflicts took place in Menotomy as British troops retreated from Concord.

The first capture of British soldiers in the war occurred here — with critical roles played by a man of color, David Lamson, and a woman, Ruth Batherick (most often referred to today as “Mother Batherick”). Menotomy also saw some of the largest and bloodiest skirmishes, such as those that occurred at the home of farmer Jason Russell and at the Foot of the Rocks, both of which are stops along this Historical Trail.

Following the Revolutionary War, the population of Menotomy continued to grow. By 1807, the Second Parish became the independent town of West Cambridge, with 900 residents spread across a much larger territory than Arlington's present five square miles. West Cambridge included much of present-day Belmont and a section of Cambridge that extended to the middle of Fresh Pond. In 1842, the territory further increased with the addition of a section of Charlestown that extended the northern boundary of West Cambridge well into present-day Winchester. The creation of the towns of Winchester in 1850, and Belmont in 1859, resulted in the boundaries of Arlington that we know today.

In the 1830s, West Cambridge opened the first children's public library in the nation. In 1867, the town of West Cambridge changed its name to Arlington, by act of the Massachusetts legislature. The name Arlington had no local historical associations; it is generally accepted to have been chosen in honor of the nation's Civil War soldiers buried at what is now Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

As the nation's industry expanded in the mid-1800s, Arlington's economy began to change. The railroad bustled through Arlington beginning in 1845, and each winter Spy Pond supported one of the nation's largest ice-cutting operations. Many mills operated along Mill Brook (which runs parallel to Massachusetts Avenue through Arlington, creating the Mill Brook Valley) using a series of manmade ponds. Mill owners, such as the Cutter family and the Schwamb brothers, played key roles in Arlington's growth from the 19th Century and well into the 20th Century.

Arlington began to grow as a residential suburb following establishment of the horse car line in 1859. By 1900, there were four electric trolley car lines passing through town and the previously agricultural town rapidly transformed itself into what would be called a “streetcar suburb.” By the 1930s, Arlington’s population had reached about 30,000 people and continued to grow over the next four decades.

Today, Arlington is home to about 42,000 residents and is a thriving community supportive of education, entertainment, and recreation. The Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail will bring you past some of the major landmarks in Arlington’s industrial and modern periods, as well as giving you the opportunity to walk along the old railway route on what is now one of the most popular walking and bicycling trails in the country, the Minuteman Bikeway.

Usage Note: This guide uses contemporary terminology to make learning Arlington history more accessible. For example, although this guide uses the term “Minuteman,” in 1775 the conventional usage was “Minute man,” as two words. In addition, this guide uses “colonists” to refer to the future Americans and “British troops” or “British soldiers” to refer to what would have been known at the time as the “Regulars” or “King’s forces.”

# Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail

*The Trail begins at Whittemore Park, located just outside the Jefferson Cutter House at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant/Mystic Street (Rte. 60). This small park contains the first two stops on the Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail.*

## **Jefferson Cutter House and Railroad Tracks**

The park you are standing in contains several points of interest. One of these is a section of a once busy railroad. Originally built in 1845, this railroad covered approximately 7 miles connecting West Cambridge with Lexington and the Fitchburg Railroad. By 1900, 38 trains a day ran through Arlington. Business was steady until after World War II, when the automobile diminished the need for the railroad. Service deteriorated and prices increased. By the 1950s, rail stops in Arlington were discontinued, although they were later restored on a much more limited basis for the next two decades. After a severe storm in 1977, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) decided to terminate the service completely. The tracks have now been replaced by the Minuteman Bikeway, which you will later travel over on your return here to complete the Trail.

Next to the railroad tracks is the Cyrus E. Dallin museum, located within the old Jefferson Cutter house found in this park. Jefferson Cutter was a member of an extended family of considerable historical significance to Arlington. His house, originally built in the early 1800s about two miles away from here, was moved to its present location in 1989 and restored to become the home of the Cyrus E. Dallin Museum.

The museum celebrates the life and works of artist Cyrus Dallin, a famous sculptor who lived in Arlington for almost his entire career. Among Dallin's many famous works is the Appeal to the Great Spirit, a sculpture that stands in front of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. He also created the Paul Revere statue behind the Old North Church in Boston. Many of Dallin's works focus on Native Americans, such as the Indian Hunter statue that you will see later on this Trail. For museum hours, please see the Trail Attractions section of this guide.

*Proceed to the southeast corner of the park. Visible from the sidewalk on Massachusetts Avenue, a stone marker stands to commemorate the heroism of Samuel Whittemore. This is the next stop on the Trail.*

## Whittemore Marker

The text on the Whittemore Marker tells only a piece of the man's story. Samuel Whittemore, a decorated war officer from the French and Indian War, was an 80-year-old farmer during the British retreat from Concord. On April 19, 1775, Whittemore learned of the fighting and loaded his musket. He grabbed his musket, two pistols, and a sword and told his family that he was going to fight the British. He waited behind a wall at Mystic Street.

When the British troops arrived, he fired his musket, killing one of them. He then fired both his pistols, killing one more soldier and mortally wounding another. Then he pulled out his sword and slashed away at the furious soldiers that surrounded him. He continued even after being shot at point-blank range in the face that tore his cheek away. He received thirteen bayonet wounds, and was clubbed in the head by muskets. The British soldiers also drove the butts of their muskets into his body as they passed.

To the town residents' surprise, Whittemore was still alive. He tried to load his musket for one more shot. A doctor who examined Whittemore soon after this incident noted that he should have already bled to death. However, the stubborn old man, bandaged by the doctor, lived for another eighteen years to the age of 98.

The Whittemore Marker has been relocated several times since it was erected in the late 1800s. It commemorates an event that took place in this general vicinity, rather than marks the precise point where Whittemore was wounded.

*Proceed west to the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant/Mystic Street. Observing the walk signal, carefully cross this intersection staying within the crosswalks. Your destination is the corner located diagonally across from the Whittemore Marker. Use the crosswalks until you reach the corner nearest to the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, the white church with a modern tower for its clock and bell. This corner is the next stop on the Trail.*

## Wagon Capture

A little after 1:30 in the afternoon on April 19, 1775, several hardy residents of Menotomy who were not fit to serve in the militia captured British wagons full of supplies and reinforcements at this intersection.

The story of the wagons' capture began earlier that morning, when British Lord Hugh Percy began marching about 1,000 men and two artillery

pieces over Boston Neck through Roxbury with the goal of relieving the beleaguered Lt. Col. Francis Smith and his column returning from Concord. Percy's reinforcements had been delayed passing through Cambridge at the place of a bridge that had been disassembled by the colonists. Although the British soldiers quickly reassembled the bridge so that infantry could easily cross, it was not strong enough to hold the heavy supply wagons that followed behind the troops. As a result, the convoy of supplies became separated from the main force.

A message was sent to Menotomy to inform the militia and minutemen of the wagon train and its situation. A group – numbering twelve - later known as “the old men of Menotomy” who were up in years and unfit for military duty, met at Cooper's Tavern to form a plan for capturing the wagons. They chose David Lamson, a courageous man supposedly of African and Indian descent to lead them in their attack on the convoy. The band hid behind a stonewall to wait for the convoy's arrival. As it passed, Lamson and his men jumped up, leveled their muskets and ordered the British troops (one officer; thirteen soldiers) to surrender. When they refused to comply and instead hurried their horses to gallop away, Lamson and his men fired, killing a few horses and wounding some of the soldiers.

Frightened, the British soldiers abandoned their wagons and a number ran to Spy Pond, throwing their weapons in the water so that the colonial militia could not capture and use them and to hopefully avoid being fired upon again as they were unarmed. These soldiers walked around the pond until they met an old woman, Mother Batherick, who was digging dandelion greens so the story goes. They surrendered to her, begging for safety. Mother Batherick led them to the house of Captain Ephraim Frost, saying to her prisoners, “If you ever get back, you tell King George that an old woman took six of his Grenadiers prisoner.” The men were treated well and returned to British military control.

Later, English critics of the war would remark, “If one old Yankee woman can take six Grenadiers prisoner, how many soldiers will it take to conquer the colonies in America?”

*Proceed west one block along the sidewalks on Massachusetts Avenue past Library Way. (Be aware of cars exiting the library as you cross this street.) Robbins Library will be on your left. Built in 1892, Robbins Library houses the oldest continuously operating children's public library in the nation. The construction of the original library building was funded by Mrs. Maria C. Robbins, who dedicated it to her husband Eli.*

*Continue on the sidewalk along Massachusetts Avenue. Just as you are about to pass the library, look for a brick pathway leading off the sidewalk through an opening on your left in the wall marked by two large posts.*

*Follow the brick path in a direction away from Massachusetts Avenue along the side of the library. When the path forks, take the right fork until you come to a large reflecting pool. You are now in the Arlington Town Hall area, which is home to a large garden and several monuments.*

## **Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden**

The Robbins Memorial Garden, like Arlington's Town Hall and Robbins Library, were built on land donated by the "Robbins Sisters," the three granddaughters of wealthy poultry merchant Nathan Robbins. The garden was designed in 1913, and re-designed in 1939 more or less to its present appearance.

In front of you, at the rear of the reflecting pool, kneels the "Indian Hunter" statue, a large bronze statue created by Cyrus Dallin in 1913. It depicts a native American leaning over to get a drink of water from a stream after killing a goose.

To your left, set back from Robbins Library (on the opposite side from Massachusetts Avenue), stands the large Whittemore-Robbins House, which was built around 1795 by Samuel Whittemore's grandson, William. In the mid-1800s, Nathan Robbins bought the house. His granddaughters donated it in 1931 to the town of Arlington, which now uses it for town offices.

*Continue along the brick path away from the library and toward Robbins Memorial Town Hall, designed by architect R. Clipston Sturgis and dedicated in 1913. When you reach another fork in the path, take the right fork toward Massachusetts Avenue. You can either follow the brick path to your left or return to the sidewalk on Massachusetts Avenue and turn left. When you get to the front of Town Hall, you will have the opportunity to observe its many architectural features, among which are the fountains that flank the main entrance.*

*Be sure to follow the path to the large flagpole and observe its base, which is another sculpture created by Cyrus Dallin. The base of the flagpole contains four main figures: the mother and child represent honor, Squaw Sachem represents liberty, the Puritan divine represents obedience, and the Minuteman represents patriotism. The statue at the top of the flagpole is also by Dallin.*

*Continue west along Massachusetts Avenue past Academy Street until you reach Jason Street. Cross Jason Street carefully, being sure to observe the walk light. The Jason Russell House is the yellow house on your left.*

## **Jason Russell House**

Jason Russell, a lame man of age 59—which was considered elderly in his time—sent his family to safety as soon as the British soldiers approached Arlington, but he stayed behind to look after his house. He barricaded the door, piled shingles as a buffer, and hoped for the best. A group of colonial soldiers then took up defensive positions in and around Mr. Russell’s house. A unit of British Light Infantry flankers surprised and attacked the colonists from behind. Being lame, Russell could not escape, and as he reached the door of his house, he was shot twice and bayoneted eleven times. Upon her return, his wife found her deceased husband in that position, bodies of other soldiers in and around the house, and blood inside up to her ankles.

Standing at this spot now is the preserved farmhouse built in 1740 in which Jason Russell lived. A yearly reenactment of the battle takes place on the front lawn of the house. This battlefield was restored in the 1960s by the removal of three buildings that had been built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Adjoining the house is the George Smith Museum, operated by the Arlington Historical Society with the purpose of interpreting and preserving Arlington’s history. For information about visitor hours at the Jason Russell House and the Smith Museum, see the Trail Attractions section of this guide.

*From the Jason Russell House, continue west on the sidewalks along Massachusetts Avenue. As you reach the intersection with Bartlett Avenue, stop and look across Massachusetts Avenue. There you will see the stone building of the First Baptist Church, a good place to introduce you to the Cutters and Schwambs, families whose names you will see again along the Trail.*

## **First Baptist Church of Arlington**

The Cutter family arrived in Menotomy in the 1630s. Originally farmers, by their second generation the Cutters had gained control, through inheritance, of much of the land grant and mill privileges given to George Cooke, the original settler of Menotomy. By the time of the battle at the Jason Russell house, the Cutters operated three mills in town, including a sawmill not far from where you are now standing.

On that famous day in April 1775, it was a Cutter – Ammi Cutter – who came across Massachusetts Avenue to warn his neighbor Jason Russell to leave for safety. Russell refused to leave, declaring that an “Englishman’s home is his castle.” So Cutter returned across the road, but as the retreating troops approached, he tripped, fell, and was shot. Fortunately for him, the British soldiers gave him up for dead and he recovered from his wounds.

The church you see across the street is a more recent example of the Cutter influence in Arlington. It is actually the fifth meetinghouse of the Baptists in Arlington, the third to be built on this site. The land on which the current church is built was donated in the early 1800s by Mary Cutter, the widow of sawmill owner Stephen Cutter. Along with the land, she reportedly gave the Baptists the right to conduct baptisms in Cutter Pond, an 8-acre pond located behind the church.

Like the Cutters, the Schwambs were mill owners in town and they too had a connection with this church. But their history in Arlington dates back only to the 1830s, the decade after the Baptist Society built their first church on this site. Five Schwamb brothers – Charles, Peter, Jacob, Theodore, and Frederick – emigrated from Germany and opened industrial operations that you will see later along the Trail. In the mid-1800s, the Schwambs traveled on Sundays right past where you are now standing, to worship at the First Baptist Church.

The church building that you see today was built in 1902. It replaced a building built in 1851 that burned down in 1900.

*Continue westerly along Massachusetts Avenue, carefully crossing three streets (including Bartlett Avenue). At this point (after crossing Churchill Avenue), if you stop and look across Massachusetts Avenue, you will see Arlington High School. The structure facing you is the original building, designed by Arlington architect Howard Prescott and constructed in 1915.*

*Continue again westerly along Massachusetts Avenue, carefully crossing another six more streets (not including Churchill) until you are across from the Highland Fire Station. Along the way, you should feel free to read the following description about Paul Revere’s famous ride.*

## **Paul Revere’s Ride**

The route you are following along Massachusetts Avenue is the route followed by Paul Revere on his famous ride to warn the colonists that the British soldiers were heading to Concord. On the night of April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren asked two men to ride out to Lexington to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock who were staying the night there after a meeting of

the Provincial Congress in Concord. The riders were also supposed to spread the alarm to Concord. One of those men was Paul Revere; the other, William Dawes. Dawes started first and took the longer route by land over Boston or Roxbury Neck through Cambridge and then into Menotomy, also traveling on this road.

Revere crossed the Charles River from Boston by boat to Charlestown where a group of fellow colonists waited with a horse for him. Revere galloped off, but soon found he was being chased by two British officers. They may have been tipped off by the lantern signal Revere had instructed be given from the steeple of the Old North (Christ's) Church in Boston. Fortunately, Revere knew the area well and lured his British pursuers into a clay pit where their horses got stuck.

Freed from pursuit, Revere continued through Medford and into Menotomy on today's Medford Street. He turned onto Massachusetts Avenue (then known as Concord Road), not far from the intersection where you started this Trail, heading west toward Lexington in the same direction you are heading now.

*After you cross Walnut Street, which is the sixth street you will have crossed since Arlington High School, look for a fire station on the opposite side of Massachusetts Avenue.*

## **Highland Fire Station**

The Highland Fire Station was built in 1928 borrowing many architectural details from Boston landmarks of the 1700s and early 1800s. For example, the steeple is modeled after the one on the Old State House, and the cupola and gilded grasshopper weathervane are borrowed from Faneuil Hall. The inside of the fire station features ornate woodwork produced by the Theodore Schwamb Company, as well as a bronze relief of a former fire chief by Cyrus Dallin.

*Continue westerly along Massachusetts Avenue, carefully crossing four more streets. You will see the Robbins Spring House on your side of Massachusetts Avenue, just as you cross Robbins Road.*

## **Robbins Spring House**

Originally just a one-story building, the house now standing at 1090 Massachusetts Avenue was built in 1895 for the Robbins Springs Water Company's bottling operations. About fifteen years earlier, Nathan Robbins discovered a mineral spring up the hill along what is now Robbins Road.

Although Robbins died before he could make any money from his discovery, a company bearing his name was later formed and a pipe was laid to this bottling house at the bottom of the hill. The mineral water from this spring was sold to fine establishments throughout Boston.

Up the hill behind the house and beyond Gray Street was a resort hotel, the Robbins Springs Hotel, which opened as a small guest house in 1898. The success of this small operation led to construction of a huge annex that expanded operations into a year-round hotel. The hotel had forty-five guest rooms, a golf course, tennis courts, croquet lawns, pool tables, and bowling alleys. The combination of the hill and the height of the hotel's tower meant that guests at night could see the lighthouse at Minot's Ledge, off the Cohasset shore, about 25 miles away. The hotel was demolished by 1950. Today, it is hard to imagine that just a hundred years ago guests could stay at an extravagant hotel on this hillside.

*Continue westerly along Massachusetts Avenue, carefully crossing two more streets. The Gershom Cutter House is on your side of Massachusetts Avenue, before you reach the intersection with Pine Court.*

## **Gershom Cutter House**

Well before this part of Arlington became known for its mineral spring and spa resorts, it was home to several milling operations. In the late 1700s, for example, Gershom Cutter (the 4<sup>th</sup>) built a tool-grinding mill on the opposite side of Massachusetts Avenue from where you are now standing. The house at 1146 Massachusetts Avenue was built by his grandson, Gershom Cutter (the 6<sup>th</sup>), in the 1830s.

Records indicate that an earlier house near this site had been broken into by British troops on their retreat from Concord. Furniture was damaged and the house was set ablaze. However, local residents extinguished the fire and saved the house. A British soldier who died in the skirmish is reportedly buried in a meadow behind the house.

Before you continue, look around you, especially across the street. Can you imagine what this area looked like with mills and only a few houses?

For years, Jefferson Cutter operated the tool-grinding mill originally built by his grandfather Gershom Cutter. His house was located across the street from where you are now standing. In 1989, the house was moved to its present location in Whittemore Park, where you began today's walk.

Both the Jefferson Cutter house and the Gershom Cutter house are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Arlington has two other Cutter

houses listed on the National Register: the Ephraim Cutter house at 4 Water Street, and the A.P. Cutter house at 89 Summer Street.

*Continue westerly along Massachusetts Avenue, carefully crossing Pine Court. Before you reach the next street, at 1166 Massachusetts Avenue, you will have a good view of the Theodore Schwamb Co. factory set back some distance from the other side of Massachusetts Avenue. Look across the street for the words "Theodore Schwamb Co." in faded paint at the top of the brick factory building.*

## **Theodore Schwamb's Factory and Home**

During 1853-1862, the five Schwamb brothers ran a piano case manufacturing business near here. One brother, Peter, died suddenly in 1858. Four years later the other four brothers went into mostly separate businesses. Charles and Frederick opened a mill together that would manufacture picture frames, a mill that you will encounter later on this Trail. Theodore and Jacob opened different piano-case companies. Jacob's new business was located in West Medford; Theodore's operations were located across the street from where you are standing.

The Theodore Schwamb Company employed German cabinet makers who specialized in the production of high quality piano cases. Schwamb's business grew and by 1898 had become the largest business in Arlington. To keep up with demand, the company in 1905 built the four-story brick factory that you see in the distance. However, by the 1920s, radios began to replace the piano as the principal form of home entertainment, causing demand to fall. In response, the Theodore Schwamb Company switched to making architectural woodwork, such as window sills and door frames, moldings, and other products for building interiors. The company remained in operation up to the 1970s.

Immediately across the street, at 1171 Massachusetts Avenue, stands a restored version of Theodore Schwamb's home, built in 1845. Schwamb's orchard stood next to this house.

*Continue west on the sidewalk along Massachusetts Avenue for another block until you reach Appleton Place and Appleton Street. These two Appletons intersect with Massachusetts Avenue at two angles. Following the marked crosswalks, cross Appleton Place first and then Appleton Street.*

*As you cross Appleton Street you will find a marker on the corner for Capt. Joseph X. Grant, an Arlington resident who received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism and ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. Continue*

*up Appleton Street along the sidewalk on its northwestern side. Your next stop will be the first house facing Appleton Street (just past the large house on the corner).*

## **Benjamin Locke House**

Located at 21 Appleton Street, this house is named after former occupant Benjamin Locke, Captain of the Menotomy Minutemen company in 1775. The house was at one time a store, a stagecoach stop, and the First Baptist Church. On the night of April 18th, 1775, Paul Revere paused at this house to alert Captain Locke that the British soldiers were on the march. Captain Locke then awakened his Minutemen and they congregated on the large hill near here.

*Continue along Appleton Street in a westerly direction. As you cross the next street, Richardson Street, you will see a large Victorian style mansion on your right at 53 Appleton Street. When it was built in 1894 “Idahurst” mansion, was the most expensive building in Arlington. Built with money inherited by the brother of Mrs. Maria Robbins when she died, it was the site of extravagant and elegant social events at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*

*Continue along Appleton until you reach a fork in the road; bear to the right on Paul Revere Road. The 8-mile marker, one of only a few colonial-era stone markers indicating the distance from Boston to various suburbs that is still standing, is located near this intersection. In 1775, the portions of Appleton Street and Paul Revere Road you follow on this Trail were part of Concord Road (or what is now known as Massachusetts Avenue).*

## **Paul Revere’s Ride ... Again**

Paul Revere continued down this road further than you will go on this Trail, to where the road rejoins with the present-day Massachusetts Avenue. He continued to Lexington, where he arrived around midnight and warned Adams and Hancock. Dawes met up with him there and they proceeded together toward Concord, but never made it. Near Lexington Common, Dr. Samuel Prescott who had been courting his fiancé joined them. At the Lexington-Lincoln line a patrol of British army officers waylaid the trio. Revere was taken prisoner, Dawes fled back to Lexington and Prescott escaped, spreading the alarm to Lincoln, Concord and westward to Acton and Groton.

*Continue along Paul Revere Road past the old Locke School on your right. When you reach Park Avenue, turn right and walk one block to the intersection with Massachusetts Avenue. Observing the walk signal, carefully*

*cross Massachusetts Avenue and turn right (in an easterly direction). Just before the next intersection, you will see three historical markers on your left, near the sidewalk. You are now at the Foot of the Rocks.*

## **The Foot of the Rocks**

The historical markers you see before you commemorate the largest engagement on the opening day of the Revolutionary War. Approximately 1,800 British troops and about the same number of colonial minutemen and militia soldiers fought on this spot on April 19th, 1775.

The colonists lay in wait on the hill near Appleton Street, initially engaging a British flanking party. Then, as the main unit of British troops marched past, the colonists engaged them and pursued them all the way back to Charlestown.

The reason there were so many American soldiers at this location was that it was the gathering point for responding militias from all across Massachusetts. At the time, the hill was the highest point along the road from Charlestown to Concord, and therefore it was an excellent place for an ambush.

The muskets employed by both sides – British and American – were very inaccurate (40-50 yards effective range). They were slow to load generally and often took many firings or firing at a close distance to hit a target. Since dozens of deaths and an even greater number of casualties occurred in this engagement, both sides must have fired thousands of bullets over a short period of time.

The Battle at the Foot of the Rocks launched a series of ongoing engagements between the British army and the colonial militia that lasted throughout the rest of the day until the Regulars reached Charlestown around dusk. After the ambush, the British soldiers began attacking the civilians they encountered and burning the buildings they passed. These tactics only escalated the violence in and around Boston, which exploded at the Battle of Bunker Hill just two months later.

*Continue down Massachusetts Avenue for a few yards until you reach Lowell Street. Turn left (around the monuments) and cross Lowell Street, and then proceed westerly (doubling back slightly) for two blocks until you reach Mill Lane. Continue walking down Mill Lane to the Old Schwamb Mill, which will be the large red building about 30 yards down on your right. Mill Lane is a quiet road but there is no sidewalk on this very short portion of the Trail, so please stay off to the side of the road and be alert for cars.*

## Old Schwamb Mill

In 1864, after some of the Schwamb brothers went into separate businesses, Charles and Frederick bought the mill you see here. They installed the latest lathe technology to convert the former spice-grinding mill into a woodworking operation that made oval portrait frames – a very popular item at the time. The mill, powered by a huge, 18-foot diameter waterwheel fed by a holding pond in front, allowed skilled craftsmen to produce large numbers of perfectly shaped ovals of all sizes. The Schwamb Mill became the foremost manufacturer of oval portrait frames in America. The building was twice enlarged to its present appearance by 1873.

The mill's pond would have been located where you are probably now standing in front of the mill (in what is now the parking lot). The pond was drained some time after 1872, when the Town of Arlington diverted brook water to construct the town reservoir and the mill consequently converted to steam power.

As demand for oval frames declined in the 1880s, when square picture frames returned to vogue, the mill adapted its operations by making square frames. By the 1950s, it switched from steam power to electricity.

Today, the Schwamb Mill is not only a historical landmark and museum, but it also continues as a woodworking operation, where oval picture frames are still made on a custom basis. As such, it is the oldest continuously operating mill site in the country. Frames and moldings made here can be found in prominent locations around the world, including major art museums as well as the White House and the Vatican.

To learn more about the history of the Old Schwamb Mill and the process of making oval picture frames, tours of the mill are available. For visitor hours, please see the Trail Attractions section of this guide.

*Continue down Mill Lane through the parking area behind the Mill, being alert for cars. Look for a paved path through an opening in the bushes to reach the Minuteman Bikeway. Once on the Bikeway, you will find a historical marker with more information about the Battle at the Foot of the Rocks. (There are two different short paths that lead up to the Bikeway; the historical marker is located on the Bikeway between these two paths, so look for it several yards away from you, either on your right or your left.) The Trail now leads along the Minuteman Bikeway in an easterly direction, back towards the start of the Trail. Please make sure to walk on the right side of the Bikeway so as to avoid bicyclists and other traffic coming in the other direction. You should see on your left a two-story home with distinctive stone arches.*

## **Minuteman Bikeway**

You are now on the Minuteman Bikeway, which many residents of Arlington and visitors from surrounding areas enjoy year round. This Bikeway was built along the path the railroad once followed through Arlington. Passenger and freight service ran along this route from the 1840s to the 1970s. The history of this railroad was explained at the beginning of the Trail because it played a significant role in the development of Arlington.

Beginning in 1981, the Rails-to-Trails conservancy began converting the railroad line into a bike path. When it was completed in 1993, the Minuteman Bikeway was the 500th trail in the Rails-to-Trails program. This Bikeway is important to the Town of Arlington because it allows people to easily walk from one end of Arlington to the other. Many citizens simply know it as “the bike trail” where many people come and go daily, especially during the summer months.

The Arlington section of the bikeway, which is named for Donald Marquis who served as Arlington town manager for 35 years, is only three miles long, but the whole bikeway extends 11 miles from Cambridge through Arlington to Lexington and Bedford.

*Continuing toward the east on the Minuteman Bikeway, you will walk across the first of three bridges built over streets. Some distance after crossing the first bridge, and just before crossing the second one, look on your right for a red brick building with a large round smokestack, located only about ten yards from the bikeway. This is a pumping station operated by the Metropolitan Water Resource Authority (MWRA).*

## **Brattle Court Pumping Station**

The Brattle Court pumping station was built in 1907 by Boston metropolitan water authorities. The brick smokestack was originally the exhaust for the coal-fired boilers that ran the pumps. The railroad (whose bed you are following) was the main source of the coal. Today, the pumping station remains in operation, run by electricity.

More than just an old brick building, this pumping station symbolizes the transition of Arlington from a mill town to a populated residential community. For much of its history Arlington depended on brook water to support industry. But in 1872 the town government took control of the brook to build a reservoir for the supply of public drinking water. The reservoir water, though, turned out to be less than pleasant and unlikely to attract the extensive development planned for the Arlington Heights area. In

1899, Peter Schwamb, stepson of Theodore Schwamb, played a key role in securing Arlington's admittance into the Boston metropolitan water district. This pumping station was built here eight years later.

*Continue east along the bike trail crossing two more bridges over streets. These railroad overpasses were built in 1900 to increase safety in Arlington by eliminating the frequent street-level train crossings west of Mill Street. On your left will be a small resting area with benches. Near this will be a plaque in honor of Lt. Eugene McGurl.*

## **Lt. Eugene McGurl Memorial**

In 1942, the United States was engaged in war against Japan, with little end in sight. The US military needed a morale booster, and thus the idea for the Doolittle Raid was borne. Led by Colonel Doolittle, 16 B-25 bombers took off from the carrier USS Hornet -- with Tokyo as their target. Lt. Eugene McGurl and Lt. Howard Sessler, both from Arlington, navigated two of these bombers to their target. All the bombers dropped their explosive payload, but they did not have enough fuel to return. The crews of all but one plane ended up crash landing or bailing out. McGurl and Sessler managed to return safely following the raid. Although the actual damage to Tokyo from the Doolittle raid was slight, the psychological effect on the Japanese was dramatic and the American military hailed the raid as a huge success.

*On the other side of the Bikeway you will see the Arlington High School sports fields, created by filling in the Cutter Mill ponds. That's why the Bikeway is on such a high embankment, relative to the fields below. When the oldest part of the high school was built in 1914, it was essentially on a lakefront location.*

*Continuing further along the Minuteman Bikeway in the same direction, you will come to Mill Street. Carefully check for cars before crossing Mill Street. After crossing Mill Street, turn right and proceed until you reach the intersection with Massachusetts Avenue. You should be able to see the Jason Russell House across the diagonal on the opposite corner.*

*At the intersection with Massachusetts Avenue, turn left and continue down Massachusetts Avenue in an easterly direction. Not far from the intersection, look for a small plaque on one of the small marble fence posts, noting that near this location John Cutter's house was set on fire by the retreating British troops on the opening day of the Revolutionary War. After the British retreated still further, residents came out of hiding and successfully extinguished the fire. The house remained standing until the early 1900s,*

*when it was torn down to make room for commercial development that preceded the modern residential use that you see here today.*

*As you proceed along Massachusetts Avenue, you are passing on your left the Central Historical District, a historical area that includes a large white church built in Greek revival style. Although the church now has a different name and religious affiliation, it was originally built by the First Universalist Society.*

## **First Universalist Society Church**

The church to your left is Arlington's oldest, continuously used house of worship. It has been home to three separate churches: Universalists, Greek Orthodox, and evangelical, non-denominational Christian. It was built in 1841 following a rift in the First Parish Congregational Church, which was located at the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street, across from where you began today's walk.

In the mid-1800s, two movements grew up in the Congregational churches throughout New England, the Unitarians and the Universalists. Both groups had similar but alternative Christian views, with the Unitarians rejecting a belief in the Trinity and the Universalists rejecting a belief in eternal damnation. In 1840, after losing a key vote that gave the Unitarians possession of the First Parish land, the Universalists withdrew from the local parish and built the church you see here.

With the passage of time, the Universalists grew closer to the Unitarians and by 1961 the two churches nationally merged to form the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Unitarian Universalist Church is now situated at its original First Parish location (though with the new, modern-style building constructed after the former one burned down in 1975).

*Continuing easterly along Massachusetts Avenue, you will cross Central Street, Court Street, and Water Street (where you will see a historical marker about George Cooke, who built the first mill in Menotomy). Shortly after crossing Water Street, look on your left for a marker in a building wall noting the location of your next stop.*

## **Thomas Russell General Store**

At the site of this modern day business block, Thomas Russell operated a general store in the 1700s. This store was ransacked and pillaged by retreating British troops on April 19, 1775, the first day of the Revolutionary War. The British opened casks of molasses and left them running, which is

one of the more colorful aspects of their trail of destruction as they retreated. Although the old grocery store was a significant Revolutionary War site, historic preservation was not a priority when it was torn down in 1907 to make way for the present building.

*Continuing along Massachusetts Avenue in an easterly direction, the next street you will come to is David Lamson Way.*

## **David Lamson Way**

This street, originally named Railroad Avenue, was renamed in the 1990s to honor David Lamson, an early hero of color of the Revolutionary War. (Lamson was reportedly of African and Indian heritage.) The older men who captured Lord Percy's supply train on April 19, 1775 designated Lamson to lead them. His leadership led to one of the first victories by the colonists on that day.

*Continue in an easterly direction along Massachusetts Avenue and turn left at the intersection of Mystic Street. On your left, set back from the sidewalk, will be a large statue of Arlington's most well known patriot.*

## **Uncle Sam Memorial**

The famous American symbol, Uncle Sam, is based on Samuel Wilson who was born right near here in Menotomy on September 13, 1766. Paul Revere rode by his house on the way to deliver his warning to Lexington when Samuel was eight years old. On that opening day of the war, Samuel's father and two of his older brothers took up the call with the Minutemen and fought in the "Battle of Lexington." According to one account, Samuel himself is said to have helped in the fight led by David Lamson that resulted in the capture of the British supply train.

After Samuel's father was injured in the Battle of Bunker Hill, the family moved to Mason, New Hampshire, where Samuel and his brother Ebenezer learned how to make bricks. Seeking a better life, Samuel and his brother later moved to Troy, New York, where they eventually built a prosperous brick making business that later branched out to include a general store, slaughterhouse, and a major meat packing operation. Samuel treated his employees well and they affectionately referred to him as "Uncle Sam." During the War of 1812, he served as the meat inspector for the state of New York. When barrels of meat supplied for the troops were stamped U.S. (for United States), the joke among those who knew him was that these letters stood for "Uncle Sam." The joke spread and eventually soldiers everywhere

called their meat products “Uncle Sam’s.” For most soldiers, who never knew Samuel Wilson, the words “Uncle Sam” simply referred to the U.S. government. The symbol was born.

As early as the 1830s, Uncle Sam became a common cartoon figure, eventually portrayed wearing red, white, and blue clothing and sporting grey whiskers. The real Samuel Wilson, though, was always clean-shaven. The most well-known drawing, of a bearded Uncle Sam wearing a star-decorated top hat and pointing at the viewer, was created by artist James Montgomery Flagg in 1916 and has been used ever since on military recruiting and other posters.

In 1961, the U.S. Congress passed an official resolution recognizing that Uncle Sam was born in Arlington. Around that same time, an Arlington town historical committee held a competition to create a monument in Samuel Wilson’s honor. This statue, created by sculptor Theodore Barbarossa of Belmont, was dedicated on September 14, 1974.

### ***Congratulations!***

***You have completed the Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail.***

*Before you leave the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Mystic/Pleasant Streets, you may wish to cross Massachusetts Avenue to explore Arlington’s Old Burying Ground (located adjacent to the rear of the First Parish Unitarian-Universalist Church) where many of Arlington’s first settlers and revolutionary war veterans have been laid to rest. Notable historical figures buried there include Jason Russell, Samuel Whittemore, and several members of the Cutter Family. The Old Burying Ground is located behind the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church and features a monument to those who died in Menotomy on the opening day of the American Revolutionary War.*

## Other Places of Interest

In the vicinity of the starting point of the Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail, you will find many shops and places to purchase refreshments. In addition, you can find other sites of historical interest throughout these and other nearby parts of Arlington.

### **Black Horse Tavern**

The Black Horse Tavern, commemorated by a marker at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Tufts Street, was a tavern from the colonial times. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, 1775, the day before the British pillaged and set fire to many buildings in Menotomy on their retreat from Concord, the Black Horse Tavern served as the meeting location for the Committee of Safety. The Committee of Safety was a colonial organization that resisted British rule. That night, as the British troops marched out to Concord, several members of the Committee who slept in the tavern awoke to British soldiers knocking on the door wanting to search the building. They quickly escaped and eluded their pursuers by hiding in a cornfield behind the tavern.

### **Civil War Memorial**

The Civil War Memorial, located at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway, was dedicated in 1887 to those living in Arlington who fought, were wounded, or died in the American Civil War. The monument has a circular base, above which rises a column that is topped by an eagle. Every Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Veterans' Day this area is the site of ceremonies honoring all of Arlington's veterans.

### **Cooper's Tavern**

Cooper's Tavern, commemorated by a stone tablet at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Medford Street, played a role in many of the events of April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1775 in Arlington. Early that morning, Paul Revere rode right past Cooper's Tavern, delivering his warnings. Later that day, twelve men too old to fight met there and decided to ambush the British supply wagon that they noticed was approaching Menotomy. Finally, during their retreat from Concord, British troops stormed the Tavern and killed Jabez Wyman and Jason Winship, both of whom were unarmed at the time, before pillaging the tavern. The site where Cooper's Tavern once stood is now marked by a stone tablet honoring these events.

## **Menotomy Rocks Park**

With its main entrance on Jason Street near the intersection with Brantwood Road, Menotomy Rocks Park represents another part of Arlington history. Originally referred to as “The Devil’s Den,” Menotomy Rocks Park was established in 1896 during an era when the importance of recreational woods and park lands was supported as part of major public planning initiatives at the local, regional, and state levels. Purchased for a mere \$14,731.38, the park was originally far from the main population. Today, this 35-acre park is Arlington’s largest park, containing hiking trails and a small pond. The legend of the name “The Devil’s Den” describes the Devil as making his way toward Spy Pond with an apron full of boulders. As he walked, his apron broke and spread the boulders across the hill that now makes up the park.

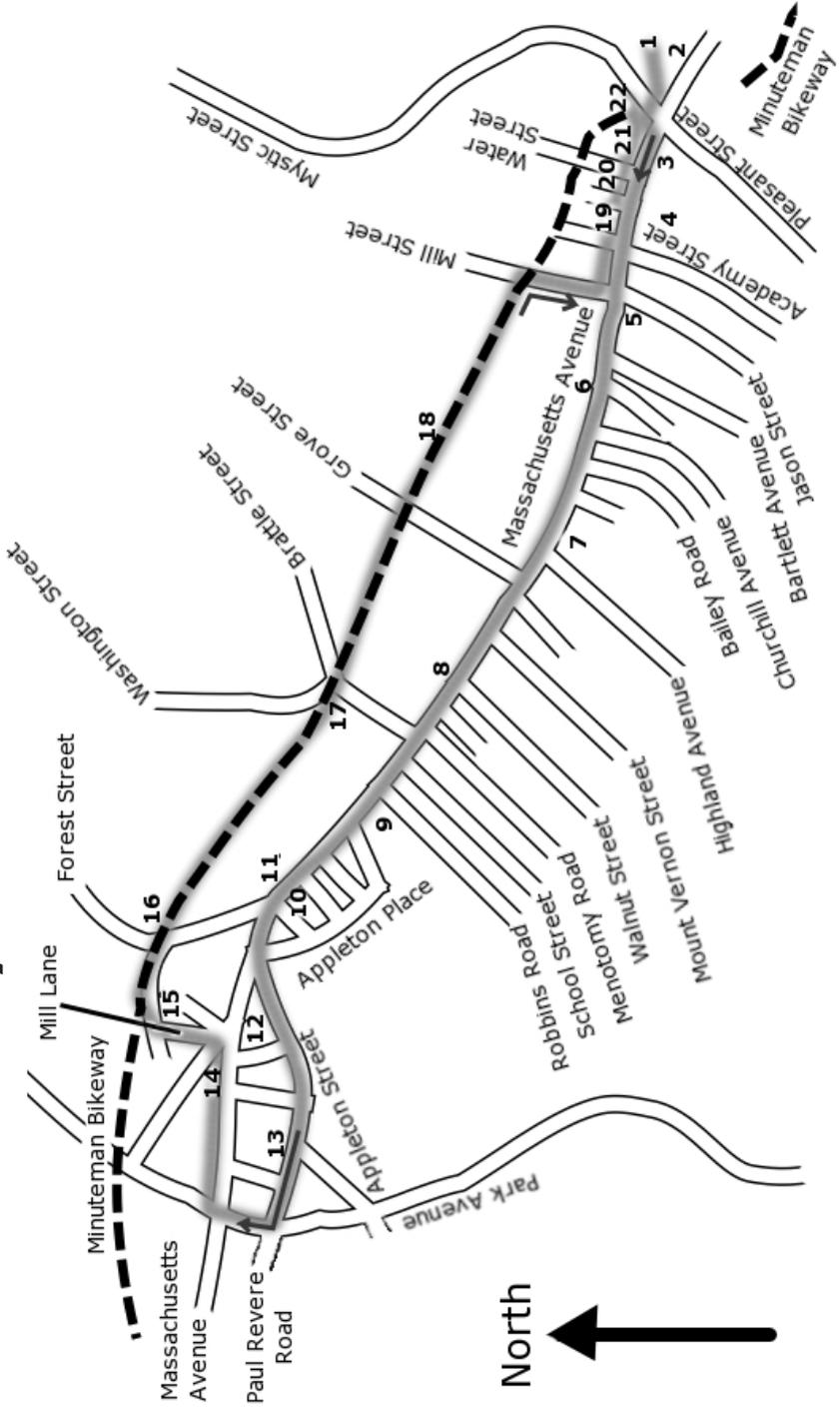
## **Prince Hall Cemetery**

The Prince Hall Cemetery is located in East Arlington on Gardner Street. It was founded in 1864 as a burial ground for black Masons. It was restored in 1987 and rededicated in 1990 as the Prince Hall Cemetery. It is owned by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in Boston, the first black Masonic Lodge in the country. It is named after founder Prince Hall. Every year on Memorial Day, members of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in Boston come for a ceremony including addresses by the President of the Arlington Historical Society and the Grand Master of Prince Hall Grand Lodge.

## **Spy Pond**

Spy Pond is a 100-acre glacial pond located south of the start of the Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail. In addition to being the site of the capture of British soldiers on the opening day of the Revolutionary War, the pond holds historical interest for the role it played in the Arlington economy in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the pond was the location of major ice cutting operations. Prior to refrigeration, ice was used to keep food cool. Ice cut from Spy Pond was packed with sawdust and shipped all around the world. A ferocious fire in 1930 completely destroyed the last huge Arlington ice cutting and storage facility. With the development of modern refrigeration around that same time, Arlington’s ice-cutting business was never rebuilt. Today, Spy Pond provides exceptional recreational opportunities for boating, fishing, and bird watching.

# Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail



## Legend

1. Jefferson Cutter House & Railroad Tracks
2. Samuel Whittemore Marker
3. Wagon Capture Marker
4. Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden
5. Jason Russell House
6. First Baptist Church of Arlington
7. Paul Revere's Ride
8. Highland Fire Station
9. Robbins Spring House
10. Gershom Cutter House
11. Theodore Schwamb's Factory and House
12. Benjamin Locke House
13. Paul Revere's Ride....Again
14. The Foot of the Rocks
15. Old Schwamb Mill
16. Minuteman Bikeway
17. Brattle Court Pumping Station
18. Lt. Eugene McGurl Memorial
19. First Universalist Society Church
20. Thomas Russell General Store
21. David Lamson Way
22. Uncle Sam Memorial

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*In addition to the above listed references, a number of unpublished clippings, pamphlets, and manuscripts from historical files at the Robbins Library, Arlington, Massachusetts were consulted in creating this historical trail guide. Additional information about Arlington's history can be found on-line at the website for the Arlington Historical Society, located at <http://www.arlingtonhistorical.org>.*

## Ordering Trail Patches

The round patch depicted below and in color on the front of this guide is available to anyone who walks the trail. To obtain information about how to order patches, including a downloadable order form, please visit the website:

<http://www.menotomytrail.com>

Current information about the Menotomy Minuteman Historical Trail can also be found at this website, as well as instructions on how to obtain more copies of this trail guide.



