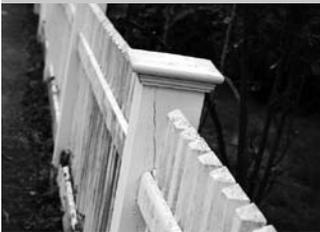
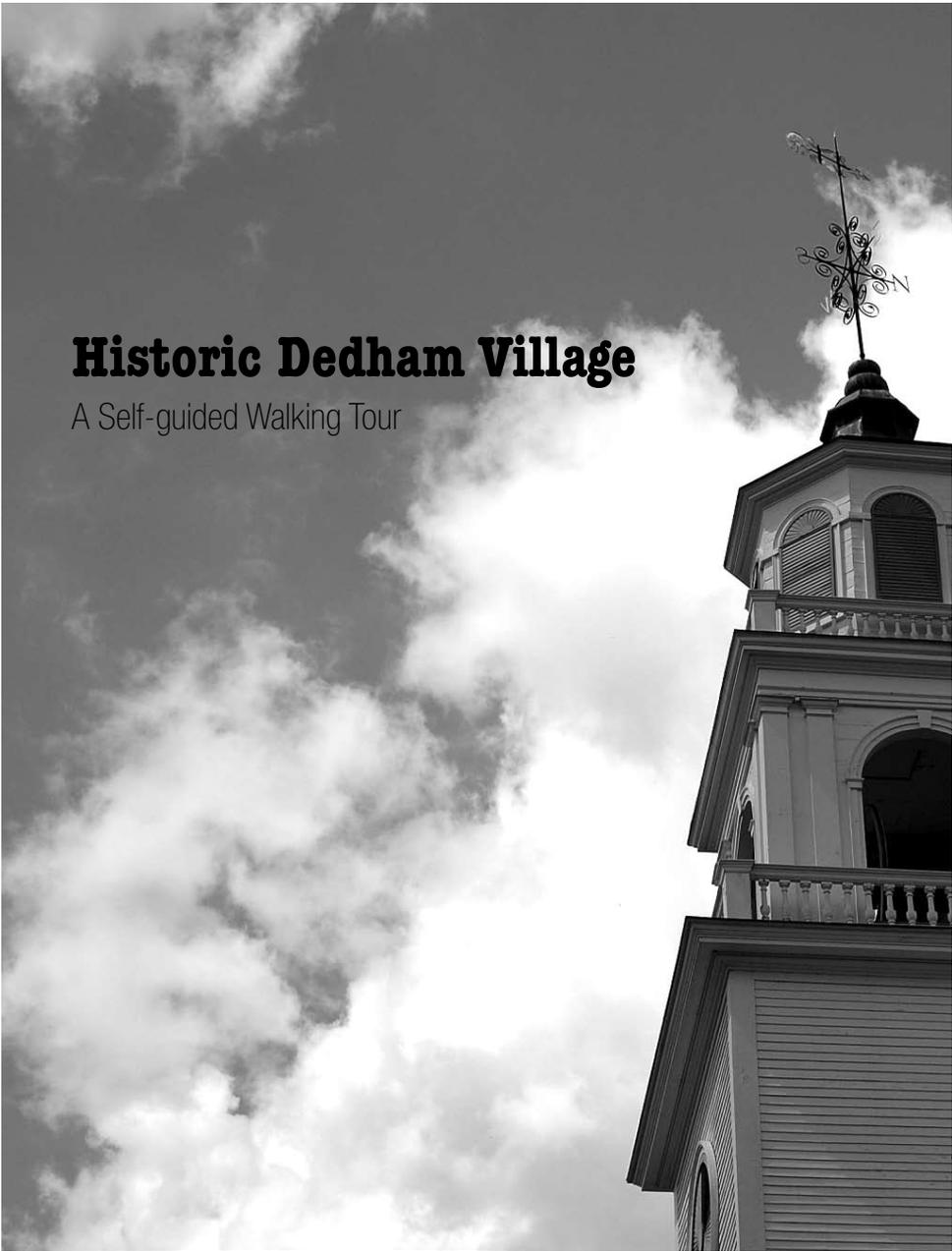


# Historic Dedham Village

A Self-guided Walking Tour



## A Brief History of Dedham

Dedham was founded in 1636 by a handful of families from Watertown. It was one of the first inland settlements by the new English colony to provide land for a growing population and protection from the Dutch and the Pequot tribe in Connecticut. The settlers called the area “Contentment” and were known for their unwavering faith, signing a covenant to live “in Christian love and charity.” Dedham originally encompassed over 200 square miles, stretching from Wellesley and Mendon to the Rhode Island border. As the population increased, over a dozen new towns were incorporated and divided from the original settlement by the mid-1700s.

Dedham played a role in key moments of U.S. history. In the 1640s, Dedham was the first town in the U.S. to establish a free, tax-supported public school, and was the site where a dispute over selection of a minister led to the separation of the Congregationalists from the Unitarian church in the early 1800s. During the Revolutionary era, it was home to several political leaders and a backdrop for key events of the Revolutionary War, including a meeting that led to the colonists’ Declaration of Independence, as well as an overnight stay by George Washington.

A bequest of land to the Episcopal Church in the 1750s by a young colonial soldier and heir to several Dedham families catalyzed Dedham’s transition from an agricultural society to an urban community – the land was eventually subdivided for the construction of homes and businesses, creating the basic plan of the town center that remains today. When Dedham was named the seat of Norfolk county in 1793, it became host of the county court system, where judges and lawyers would stay for weeks at a time while the court was in session. And as transportation evolved, Dedham became a major transit point for travel between Boston and Providence RI, Hartford CT, and points beyond – first for stagecoaches and later for trains (at one time over 60 trains a day ran through Dedham Square). This gave rise to an active tavern scene, which attracted presidents and foreign dignitaries, as well as rowdy travelers and well-known lawyers.

In addition to its role as a legal and transportation hub, Dedham’s economy was supported by textile mills along Mother Brook, one of the first man-made canals in the U.S., and the wealth of bankers and merchants who settled their families on Dedham estates. In the early 1900s, the town became known for the production of distinctive blue and white crackled Dedham Pottery, still a favorite of collectors. Dedham has been home to Congressman Fisher Ames, education reformer Horace Mann, and Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis.



## Walking tour

The tour takes about an hour to complete (though there are a few shortcuts if you’re pressed for time). The tour route is accessible for strollers and wheelchairs.

### 1. 612 High St., Dedham Historical Society

One of the oldest historical societies in the United States, the Dedham Historical Society houses a library, archives, and museum. It also owns one of the foremost collections of Dedham Pottery. This was the original site of Jeremiah Shuttleworth’s home, Dedham’s first Postmaster in the late 1700s. The home served as the town’s Post Office and a dry goods store. Jeremiah’s daughter, Hannah Shuttleworth, bequeathed the house and funds to the Dedham Historical Society for the construction of the current Romanesque building in 1888.



Dedham Historical Society



Shuttleworth House, 18th Century

### 2. 619 High St., Nathaniel Ames House and former Christian Science Church



Fisher Ames and his sister, Deborah Ames

Nathaniel Ames Jr. (1708-1764) was a physician, but was most famous for writing New England’s leading almanac. He was the father of Fisher Ames, who was elected to the first U.S. Congress in 1789, beating Founding Father Samuel Adams. He was also the father of Nathaniel Ames III, also a physician, (1741-1822) who built this house in 1772 and carried on the tradition of

the “Ames Almanack” until 1775. The federal style house is now overwhelmed by the mass of the former Christian Science Church, constructed in 1946 and recently converted to a gallery and event space.

3. 622 High St., Nest



Looking west down High St. past Nest toward the courthouse, 1920s.

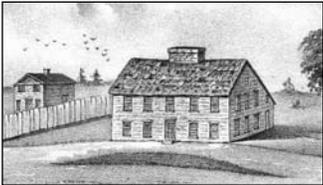
One of the few remaining wood frame commercial structures on High St. that is still in use. The flat front and large display windows are typical of commercial structures of that time. Another example of a 19th century store front is around the corner at 20 Court St.

4. 4 Pearl St., Insurance Company Building

The Norfolk & Dedham Insurance Company was established in 1825, moving into this building in 1847, in response to the town's increasing losses from fires. (Note that the building is constructed of brick.) Built in the Italianate style, the building has over the years housed insurance companies, banks, law offices and, at one time, a public market.



5. 649 High St., Norfolk County Registry of Deeds



Ames Tavern, 18th Century

Built in 1905, the Registry occupies a site adjacent to where the Woodward Tavern stood. The Tavern was the site of the second of three meetings leading to the publication of the Suffolk Resolves in 1774, a document that framed the colonists' grievances and is viewed as a precursor to the Declaration of Independence. The tavern was previously called the Ames Tavern, owned by Nathaniel Ames, Jr. starting in 1745, and was renamed when Ames' widow married Richard Woodward.

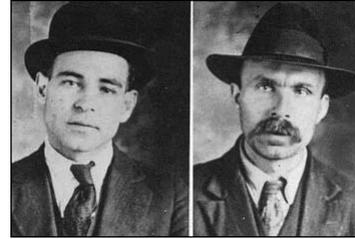
6. 650 High St., Norfolk County Courthouse

The courthouse was built in 1827 in the Greek Revival style by Solomon Willard, the architect who designed the Bunker Hill monument. A renovation in 1863 added the front two symmetrical wings and a dome. A later renovation in 1895 added the two back wings and replaced the dome with the one visible today. The Sacco and Vanzetti trial (1921-27) remains the court's most famous – the men were immigrants and



Norfolk County Courthouse

anarchists who were controversially accused and convicted of killing two men in a robbery. They were later executed in Charlestown.



Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti



Iron bell cast by Paul Revere in 1796 that hung in the Norfolk County Courthouse for nearly 100 years

7. 671 High St., Haven House / Dedham Community House



Judge Samuel Haven

Built in 1798 for Judge Samuel Haven, the house is rumored to have been designed by early American architect Charles Bulfinch, who built the U.S. Capitol rotunda and dome in Washington DC. Judge Haven's daughters invited many famous friends to visit, including writer Nathaniel Hawthorne. In 1848 a young Abraham Lincoln, then a U.S. Congressman, had lunch here before giving a campaign speech for presidential candidate Zachary Taylor at Temperance Hall on Court St. (which burned down in the 1890s). The Haven House was purchased by a charitable association of Dedham residents in 1922 and converted to a community center.

**8. 19 Court St., Norfolk Tavern**

Built in 1801, the Norfolk Tavern provided food and lodging to the many people frequenting the courts, as well as those traveling on the Norfolk & Bristol Turnpike. The Turnpike passed through Dedham on High St. and Court St., connecting the older portions of Washington St. to the north and south (the section of Washington St. in Dedham Square was built later). The tavern was considered one of the great stage coach stops of its day with one of the best ballrooms in New England. The Norfolk Tavern hosted President Andrew Jackson and Vice President Martin Van Buren for lunch as they passed through town in 1832. The Marquis de Lafayette, a French aristocrat who fought with the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War and was invited by President James Monroe to tour the United States in 1824-25, is said to have stopped here on his way to Boston to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. The tavern was also a local gathering place where, in 1810, a group of angry Dedham residents established the "Society in Dedham for Apprehending Horse Thieves," and is the oldest such organization in the country.



The Former Norfolk Tavern

**9. 680 High St., First Unitarian Church**



This church occupies the site of the first Dedham meeting house, constructed in 1638 and used for the town's civic meetings until 1827. Originally constructed in 1762, much of the current church building dates to the mid-1800s. The green in front of the church was the site of the first school of Dedham, established in 1648. Dedham had the first free public school in the U.S. supported by public taxation. In 1766 the local Sons of Liberty, a group of American patriots, erected a 10' pillar on the church green topped by a bust of Englishman William Pitt, "America's friend in Parliament," to commemorate the repeal of the Stamp Act.

**10. 683 High St., Allin Congregational Church**

Built in 1818 on land granted in 1637 to John Allin, Dedham's first minister, after the Congregational Church split from the Unitarian Church across the street over political and religious differences. At around the same time, the Unitarians moved the church entrance to face the green, away from High St. and the Congregationalists.



**11. 699 High St., Samuel Dexter House**

Built by merchant Samuel Dexter in 1761, this house held the books of the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds during the 1776 siege of Boston. George Washington slept here on April 4, 1776, on his way to New York after the British were driven from Boston. Originally a hipped roof, two-story Georgian, the Dexter house was changed in 1901 with the addition of a third story and balustrade. Dexter's son (also Samuel) was a U.S. Senator, Secretary of War and Secretary of the Treasury under President John Adams.



Samuel Dexter



Samuel Dexter House

**12. 734 High St.**

Originally built in the Italianate Style c.1855, this house previously had an asymmetrical design with a 4 story tower to its left. It was completely remodeled in 1915 in the Colonial Revival style.

**13. 759 High St., Quincy House**

Built in 1799 by Edward Dowse, a prominent China merchant, this house is a mix of Federal and Georgian styles. After the death of Dowse and his wife, the house was owned by the Quincy family until the 1930s. The Quincys' friend, poet and reformer James Russell Lowell, was so taken with the home's view of the Charles River that he named the estate "Bankside" and wrote an ode to the house: "You are still lovely in your new-leaved green; the brimming river soothes his grassy shore..." The house also hosted President James Madison on his 1817 tour of the northeast.

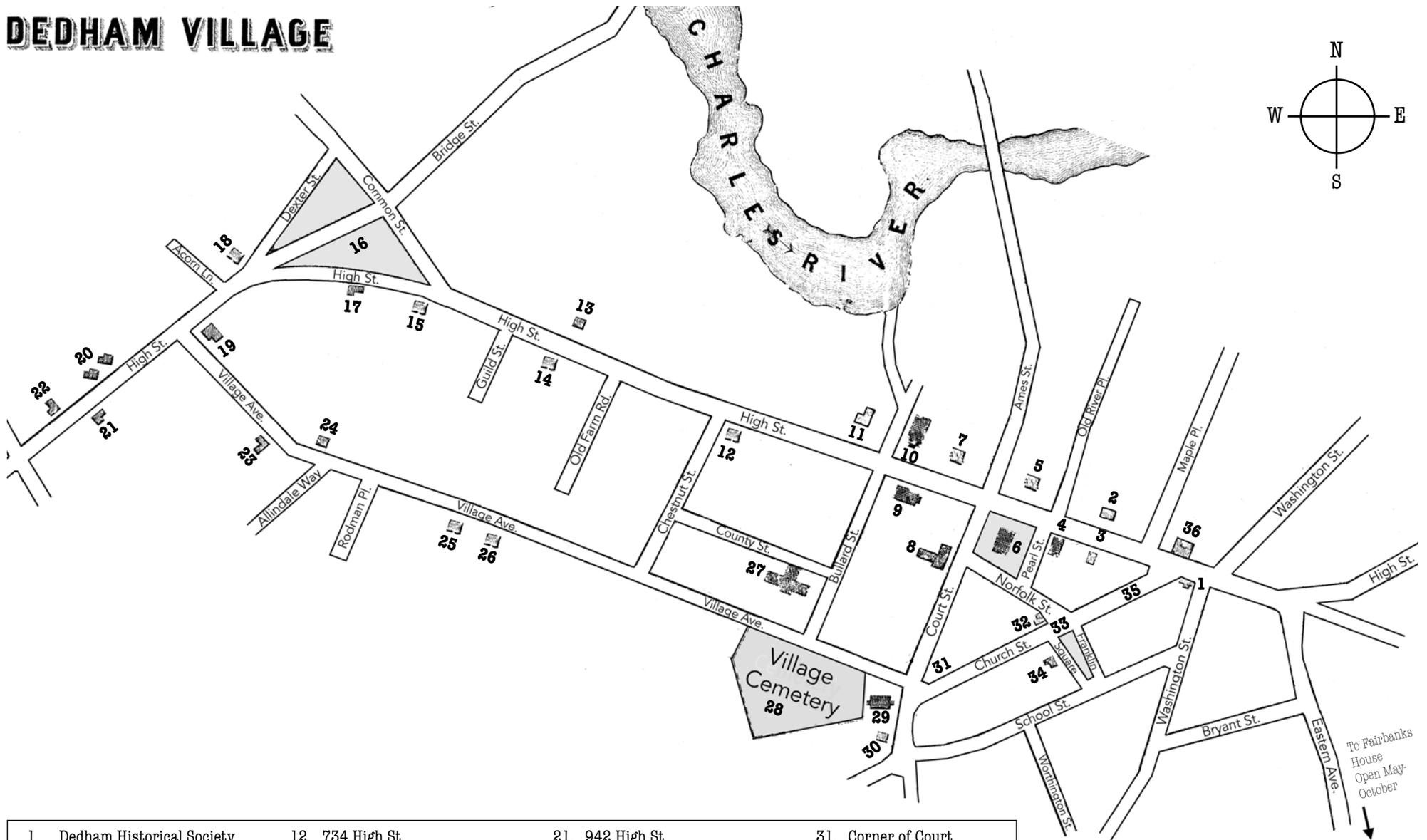


Quincy House

**14. 774 High St.**

Built c.1790 in a classic Federal style by Reuben Guild on land purchased from Reuben Richards. Guild was a hatter who maintained a shop at Connecticut Corner, further down High St.

# DEDHAM VILLAGE



- |                              |  |                             |                                    |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Dedham Historical Society | 12. 734 High St.                                 | 21. 942 High St.            | 31. Corner of Court and Church St. |
| 2. 619 High St.              | 13. Quincy House                                 | 22. 943 High St.            | 32. Dedham Public Library          |
| 3. 622 High St.              | 14. 774 High St.                                 | 23. Brandeis House          | 33. Franklin Square                |
| 4. 4 Pearl St.               | 15. 810 High St.                                 | 24. Towle-LeBlanc House     | 34. Noyes-Guild House              |
| 5. Registry of Deeds         | 16. The Common                                   | 25. Jeremiah Richards House | 35. Church St.                     |
| 6. Norfolk County Courthouse | 17. Samuel Pond House                            | 26. 100 Village Ave.        | 36. 601 High St.                   |
| 7. Dedham Community House    | 18. Dexter School                                | 27. Norfolk County Jail     |                                    |
| 8. 19 Court St.              | 19. Ira Russell House                            | 28. "Old Village Cemetery"  |                                    |
| 9. Unitarian Church          | 20. White Diamond House and Yellow Diamond House | 29. St Paul's Church        |                                    |
| 10. Congregational Church    |  | 30. Gay Tavern              |                                    |
| 11. Dexter House             |  |                             |                                    |

**15. 810 High St.**



This large shingle-style house was built c.1890 by Joseph Guild, a local cotton merchant and descendant of John Guild, one of Dedham’s founders. The shingle style was popularized in areas where the newly wealthy had country homes, such as Newport RI and Saratoga Springs NY. Joseph served in the Civil War and was on his way home at the end of his enlistment in mid-1863 when he

met another Dedham regiment headed south and decided to join them in the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg. Guild purchased 9 acres of land from Reuben Richards, keeping this lot for his own house and subdividing the remaining property (on what is now Guild Street). The lots were large and were sold with requirements for a minimum building size and expenditure.

**16. The Common – also known as the Training Field**

This area was set aside in late 1640 for the practice and training of the local militia.

**17. 848 High St., Samuel Pond House**

Directly opposite the training field, this early 19th century house belonged to Samuel Pond, a Dedham yeoman. It was altered in 1827 to extend the front windows to full length in a Greek revival fashion.



**18. 27 Dexter St., Dexter School**



Built in 1846, the Dexter School was named for Samuel Dexter but was originally known as “Connecticut Corner School,” referring to a nearby commercial area named for a group of tin smiths from Connecticut. The school housed multiple grades on two levels and originally had a school bell in the cupola. It was converted to a private residence in the 1970s.

**19. 902 High St., Ira Russell House**



Ira Russell House

Built c.1847 for Ira Russell, of the Russell-Baker Furniture Company. This house was built in a style similar to his business partner David Baker’s house at 914 High St., which also served as the company’s offices. The Russell-Baker Furniture Company factory was located behind the two houses, but burned down in 1853 and relocated close to the train depot in Dedham Square. The factory included a large room that was once used as a dance hall and assembly room.

**20. 927 and 935 High St., White Diamond House and Yellow Diamond House**

In 1798, the White Diamond House was built for Eliphalet Baker based on a design he had admired in the South. His neighbor Amasa Guild admired the unique clipped corner façade so much that he requested Baker build a duplicate for him the following year.



White Diamond House

**21. 942 High St.**

Originally located at 759 High Street, this 1770 house was moved to its current location in 1800, when it served as a hat shop and grocery store. The house was one of the many commercial buildings that were considered part of “Connecticut Corner,” including a fire station at 25 Westfield St. and a broom factory at 1041 High St., which have since been converted to residential use.

**22. 943 High St.**

Originally two c.1800 buildings, a blacksmith on the left and a baker on the right, which were later combined by the Dedham Polo Club.



Dedham Polo Club c.1888

**23. 194 Village Ave., Brandeis House**

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis purchased this house in 1900 as a country home close to the train line he rode to work at his Boston law firm. Brandeis was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1916 after years of work, often without pay, on progressive causes, including fighting business monopolies and defending labor. Brandeis sought to escape his busy work life in Dedham, writing to his brother that “Dedham is a spring of eternal youth for me. I feel newly made and ready to deny the existence of these gray hairs.” Rosina Sacco, Nicola’s wife, lived in the house during her husband’s trial starting in 1921.



Louise Brandeis, c. 1900

**24. 181 Village Ave., Towle-LeBlanc House**

This c.1770 farmhouse was relocated to its current site from Common St. sometime after 1840 due to changing road conditions around the Training Field. The wood for the construction of this house was cut and milled locally.

**25. 136 Village Ave., Jeremiah Richards House**

Built c.1805, this federal house originally stood on the river side of High St. and was later moved to its present location. Jeremiah Richards was a member of a prominent, early Dedham family.

**26. 100 Village Ave.**

This Italian Renaissance Revival house was designed by Boston architect Henry Alden for Frederick Nourse in 1909. The formality of the style and its stucco exterior contrasts with the older, smaller homes in the area.

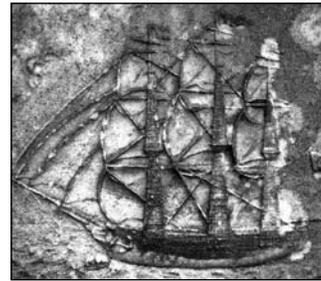
**27. 47 Village Ave., Norfolk County Jail**



Norfolk County Jail

Originally constructed in 1816, the jail underwent substantial renovations in 1850 and 1875 by noted Boston architect J. Gridley Bryant. The massive granite structure remained a jail until the early 1990s, when it was converted to residential use. Early inmates included Sacco and Vanzetti.

**28. Village Ave. at Bullard St., “Old Village Cemetery”**



Memorial for Lost Sea Captain

The cemetery behind St. Paul’s Church is the oldest in Dedham, dating to the town’s first settlement in 1636. It is the final resting place of many of Dedham’s earliest settlers. Among the most interesting sights are the ministers’ monument and Fisher Ames’ grave near the Village Ave. wall. Beyond the oldest graves, there is a stunning bas-relief memorial to a local sea captain lost off the coast of Nahant in the 19th century, as

well as a state-owned plot for the Civil War soldiers who died at a training camp in nearby Readville.

**29. 59 Court St., St. Paul’s Episcopal Church**

After an earlier, wooden church on this site burned in 1856, this one was erected. Built in the Gothic Revival style, the church is made of Dedham granite quarried near the current location of Route 128. The bell tower houses 10 bells, the largest of which weighs over a ton. Like many other churches, St. Paul’s rented its pews to parishioners until 1926, when all pews became free.



**30. 73 Court St., Gay Tavern**

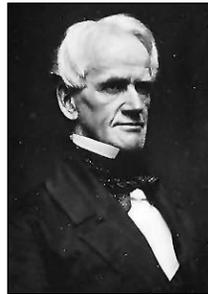


The Gay Tavern was another of the many taverns that provided food, drink and lodging to travelers passing through Dedham. The tavern was established in 1745 by Benjamin Gay, whose grandfather John was an original settler of Dedham in 1636. Benjamin went into direct competition with his brother-in-law

Nathaniel Ames Jr., who owned the Ames Tavern on High St.

**31. Corner of Court and Church St., Horace Mann office**

Horace Mann came to Dedham as a young lawyer in 1823, opening an office at 45 Court St. and boarding in the Norfolk House nearby. He was active in the local School Committee and soon married his college sweetheart, moving to a house at the corner of Church St. and Franklin Square in 1830. After his wife's early death in 1832, Mann left Dedham for Boston, and later New York, to pursue his passions for law and education reform.



Horace Mann, 1850's

**32. 43 Church St., Dedham Public Library**



Dedham Public Library

Built in 1888, this Romanesque Revival structure originally had its entrance on Norfolk St. It is constructed of Dedham granite, like the Norfolk County Jail and Episcopal Church. The demolition of the Dedham Railroad Station in 1952 provided additional granite for the library to add a children's wing and relocate the entrance to Church St.

**33. Franklin Square**

After an early Episcopal Church was removed from this site in 1845, the remaining grassy area was named Franklin Square. Homes around the square held various commercial and professional offices as well as residences. This land was part of a bequest to the church by Samuel Colburn, a young military soldier descended from several prominent Dedham families, who died in 1757 with no heirs. The church subdivided the land in the early 1800s, which was later developed to form a modern town center.



**34. 14 Franklin Square, Noyes-Guild House**



A classic brick end federal house built in 1817 by Samuel Noyes and sold to Joseph Guild in 1827.

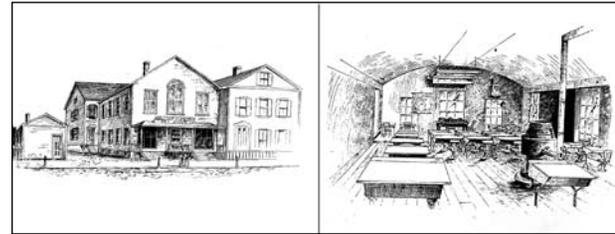
**35. Church St., Franklin Square to Dedham Square**

Densely developed, the houses along this block of Church Street were both commercial and residential. They include:



View of Church St. toward Dedham Square

**25 Church** – Built in 1829, it variously housed a private school, a dry goods store, and was later the home of Dedham's first high school.



Store front

School interior

**22 Church** – Home of Sanford Carroll, who ran a saddlery and harness shop up the street. His eldest son was Captain of a Dedham company in the Civil War and was killed at the Battle of Bull Run.

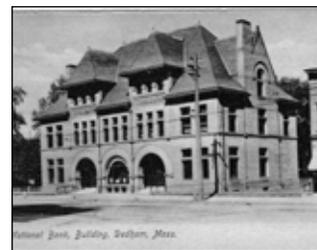
**20 Church** – Housed a tailor's shop.

**17 Church** – Housed a barber shop and served as a social gathering spot for men.

**14 Church** – Home of Charles Russell, owner of a hardware store in Dedham Square.

**13 Church** – Housed a paint store.

**36. 601 High St., Bank Building**



Bank Building, Dedham, Mass.

Built in 1892 in the Romanesque style, this imposing brick structure was designed by Hartwell and Richardson of Boston, who were well-known for the many churches, schools, and other civic buildings built in a similar style throughout the area.

## Presented by:



Dedham Historical Society  
612 High Street  
Dedham, MA 02026  
[www.dedhamhistorical.org](http://www.dedhamhistorical.org)  
(781) 326-1385

### Hours:

Tues - Fri: Library 9am-4pm • Museum 12pm-4pm  
Even-Dated Saturdays: 1-4pm



The circle of friends who  
care about the Square

Dedham Square Circle  
P.O. Box 593  
Dedham, MA 02027  
[www.dedhamsquarecircle.org](http://www.dedhamsquarecircle.org)  
[dedhamsquarecircle@gmail.com](mailto:dedhamsquarecircle@gmail.com)

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