

Part 2

Break: Fresh Pond Reservation

Start / End: Main Library
Joan Lorentz Park

Part 1

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS

BY H.F. WALLING,

Civil Engineer

1854

Engraved on stone by David A. Lord, No. 20 West 57th Street

PUBLISHED BY GEO. L. REX,

11, 13 & 15 NASSAU ST.

NEW YORK

1854

Cambridge St

Memorial Dr

Western Ave

River St

Pulham Ave

Chestnut St

Erie St

Waverly

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Vassar St

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1. MILLERS RIVER

A wide section of the Millers River once divided Cambridge and Charlestown and connected today's Union Square in Somerville to the Charles River. During the 1800s, dumping in the Millers River was so extreme it led to the enactment of laws giving the state the power to regulate uses of tidal waterways. The river was filled over time in the 19th and 20th centuries, though a small estuary still exists under I-93 that can be accessed via a pedestrian walkway. An inlet of the original river ran along Lambert Street in East Cambridge, where today's Millers River apartments are located.

2. EAST CAMBRIDGE

When East Cambridge was first settled in the early 1800s, it was essentially an island, bounded to the north by the Millers River, east by the Charles River, and the south and west by swamp land that is now modern-day Kendall Square. It was connected to the rest of Cambridge by a causeway that is now Cambridge Street.

3. KENDALL SQUARE/LONGFELLOW BRIDGE

What is now Kendall Square was originally a large marsh that stretched between Charles Street and the Broad Canal north to south, and Cardinal Medeiros Avenue and the Charles River west to east. It was filled in the late 1800s to construct the West Boston Bridge, now called the Longfellow Bridge. Upon completion of the bridge in 1907, masted schooners were no longer able to travel upriver.

4. BROAD CANAL

Until to 1950s, the Broad Canal extended parallel to Broadway all the way into a factory complex where today's One Kendall Square stands. The canal had a narrow connection to the Millers River parallel to the modern Cardinal Medeiros Avenue. There was also a smaller canal that ran along the side south of Broadway. By 1980, the Broad Canal had been filled in to where it exists today. The boardwalk was built in 2009.

5. GRAND JUNCTION/AREA 2

When constructed in 1853, the Grand Junction Railroad in Cambridge ran mostly on top of marshland that is now the Area 2/MIT neighborhood. In the late 1800s, this land was initially filled and a seawall built by the Charles River Embankment Company. After the company folded in 1893 the City finished the seawall and the parkway. Later owners sold much of the land to MIT, which opened in 1916.

6. FORT WASHINGTON PARK

Fort Washington Park was once a peninsula, before the marshes around it were landfilled. Given its prominent position overlooking the Charles River basin, George Washington ordered fortifications to be built here in 1775, with earthen berms to protect two emplacements of cannon.

7. HOYT FIELD

This area was used as a tidal mill pond until being filled in the 1880s. By the early 20th century it had become a City-owned park called "Mill Pond Playground."

8. CAMBRIDGE RESERVOIR

In 1855 the Cambridge Water Works built a granite reservoir at the intersection of Reservoir Street and Highland Street. Superseded by Payson Park Reservoir in Belmont in 1898, part of the foundation of the original reservoir still remains as the retaining wall at 30 Reservoir Street.

9. FRESH POND

The Cambridge Water Works, a private company, first began supplying customers with drinking water from Fresh Pond during the 1850s. In 1865 the City of Cambridge purchased the waterworks business, and in the 1880s annexed the whole shore surrounding the pond (much of which had belonged to Watertown and Belmont) and started clearing shoreline industry. The Fresh Pond Hotel was moved from what is now Kingsley Park to 234 Lakeview Avenue, where it still stands today as a condo building.

10. ALEWIFE ("THE GREAT SWAMP")

Today's Alewife area was once a large swampland. In the early 1900s the state seized this land and drained it for mosquito control in response to the malaria epidemic. Over the following century the state sold off parcels of the land for private development. Based on the current sea level rise forecast, by 2070 a ten-year storm is likely to flood the entire Alewife Area north of Fresh Pond and west of Alewife Brook Parkway.

11. JERRY'S POND

In 1867, Irish immigrant Jeremiah McCrehan (for whom the pond is named) and Garret Neagle leased this land as a clay pit for their brickyard business. Within three years the pit was exhausted of clay and filled with water, becoming a local swimming hole. Despite polluted water and occasional drownings, people continued to use the pond until 1961, when the City built a public pool nearby, which is still in use and named after Jeremiah's son Francis J. McCrehan.



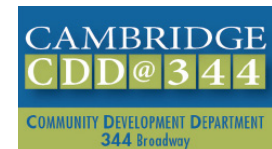
With special guest speaker

Jim Wilcox

Director of Engineering Services
Cambridge Dept. of Public Works

Saturday, May 18, 2019

Joan Lorentz Park (Main Library)
449 Broadway



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