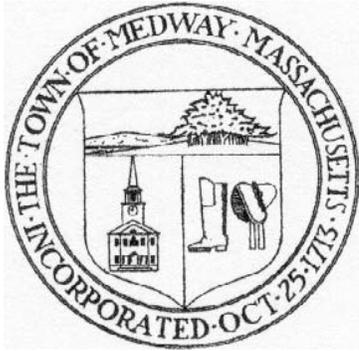


A  
walk around  
**MEDWAY VILLAGE**  
National Historic District



Prepared by Timothy Dobday for the Medway Historical Society,  
to fulfill the requirements for the B.S.A. Eagle rank  
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### Introduction

Medway Village historic district is located along the Charles River in the southeast corner of the town of Medway. The area was designated as a National Historic District in December, 2008 and includes over two hundred historic buildings on approximately 60 acres of land. The area is bounded by the river on the south, the railroad bed on the north, Oakland Street on the east, Holliston Street on the west and extends along Village Street to Legion Avenue.

Medway Village was the first area in the town to see significant growth and increased density with the establishment of small textile mills on the falls of the Charles River at the end of the eighteenth century. The area was known historically as Factory Village by the 1830s. The development of the Medway Village area corresponded with the industrial expansion along the Charles River during the nineteenth-century. A variety of manufacturing establishments, rather than a single firm, fueled the expansion of the village, attracting additional businesses as well as an economically and ethnically diverse community.

The arrival of the railroad in the 1860's along the northern edge of the area attracted additional factories and further propelled expansion north of Village Street.

### Walking Tour:

**Start at the parking lot behind Medway Town Hall  
(155 Village Street)**  
**Total Walking Distance – 1.6 miles**

1.) Medway's town hall's official name is Sanford Hall. Constructed in 1912 it replaced the first Sanford Hall of 1872, which burned down. The

new hall was built in the Second Renaissance style and originally combined commercial uses on the first floor including a grocery and tobacconist, as well as the post office, library, a bank, and the police station. The second floor was used as a meeting hall and on occasion as a movie theater too. Sanford Hall was renovated in the 1980s, and converted into the Medway town offices.

### Turn right at Village St.

2.) St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church is a Gothic Revival structure built from 1876 to 1885. The spire was added in 1890 and had to be removed in 1993.



**ST. JOSEPH'S CHURCH**  
**(circa 1890)**

### Turn right at Sanford St.

- 3.) On the right at 6 Sanford Street stands the elegant Gothic Revival Clark-Monroe House.
- 4.) Going further down the street you come to the Sanford Mills complex: one of the few industrial structures remaining in Medway Village. This site on the Charles River was occupied by mills as early as 1711. The current complex consists of the main mill, built in 1881 in the Italianate style with rear ells constructed between 1910 and 1922; an adjacent office located at the entrance, was built between 1884 and 1887. The dam and falls that provided waterpower at this site are still visible. The mill was originally used for the manufacturing of textiles. The complex housed manufacturing operations until the 1980s, when it was converted to condominiums.

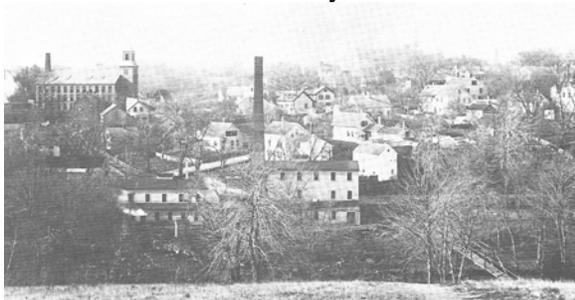
### Carefully cross Sanford St. and go down River St.

5.) The three two-story end houses at 8, 10 and 12 River St. were constructed by E. C. Wilson between 1852 and 1858, presumably to house people employed in his mill.

### **Stop at the corner of River and John Streets.**

- 6.) Looking east from this location at River and John Streets you can see what remains of a network of dry canals that had furnished waterpower to the mills. The Charles River can be seen through the woods to the south. To the east were located several mills and factories that extended down to Walker St.

The mills located along this stretch of the Charles River included the first wadding mill of 1817, the J. W. Thompson Boot Factory, built in 1873, Captain William Feltt's cotton mill, and the Barber Mills, later known as the Eaton and Wilson Mills. From 1869 until Eaton's death in 1883, Eaton & Wilson manufactured a variety of textiles.



**A view from the Franklin side of the Charles River looking towards Medway Village, the Eaton & Wilson mills are in the foreground and the Sanford Mills are in the background towards the left.**

### **Turn left at John St.**

- 7.) The Cary-Finnernan House at 7 John Street (1852-1858) and the Cary-Barton House at 110 Village Street (1831-1852) were two of the many houses throughout the village owned by William H. Cary in the middle of the nineteenth century and presumably rented to mill workers.
- 8.) 5 John Street was once Henry F. Cooper's house, a foreman at Ray & Wilson, who operated a florist business out of his small end house nearby.
- 9.) The large white house on the corner John and Sanford Street is the Philo Sanford Mansion, said to date to 1811. It is a large well-preserved double house with a Georgian plan distinguished by two tiers of rooms on either side of a center stair hall. The original owner was one of the founding partners in the Medway Manufacturing Company.

### **Turn right at Sanford St.**

### **Turn right at Village St.**

- 10.) On the corner of Sanford and Village Street we come to what was once the Cowell Fisher Block. In 1845 Amos Fisher built two large Greek Revival buildings which combined businesses and residences. Of the two almost identical buildings that made up Fisher Block only 131-135 Village Street remains though greatly altered. The building on the corner of Sanford Street burned down in 1932. The original Fisher Block building has lost its colonnade.



**Cowell Fisher Block**

### **Use the crosswalk to cross Village Street**

- 11.) On the corner of Village and Barber Street is the William H. Cary mansion built in 1852. William H. Cary was a successful textile manufacturer and land holder. The Cary house has been St. Joseph's Rectory since 1886.
- 12.) Looking across Village St. next to the Cowell Fisher Block, is 127 Village Street. This vacant store was built between 1815 and 1817 by Sewall Sanford as two separate buildings, one a home and the other a store. The two buildings were joined many years ago and most recently housed Medway Hardware.

### **Continue down the hill.**

- 13.) The large yellow building at 118-120 Village St., gable-end to the road, was once known as the "White House." It probably got its name from its association with the affairs of the White Mill, forerunner of the later Sanford Mill. The White House was built to house mill workers. It was built around 1812.
- 14.) Looking to the opposite side of Village Street is the oldest store building in Medway known as the Cary block, and now No. 119 Village Street; built around 1816. It was used as a store and a dwelling. It was owned by Captain William Feltt and William H. Cary.

- 15.) Also on the south side of Village St., on a site now occupied by new tan condominiums at 115 Village St., once stood the J. W. Thompson Boot Factory,

built in 1873. In the 1950's, it was occupied by the Lucoflex Plastic Fabricating Company, and then the Pontollilo Hat Co.



**J. W. Thompson Boot Factory**

**Turn left at School St.**

16.) At 12 School Street is a Pink Italianate house built between 1876-1884. It was built by Orion A. Mason, a prominent Medway merchant. He was the treasurer of the Medway Savings Bank and for many years the town clerk and treasurer.

17.) At 14 School Street is the Christ Episcopal Church. Originally named St. Clements, it was designed by Worcester architect Steven Earle and built in two stages in 1874 and 1899.

18.) On the corner of School and North streets, a playground now marks the former site of the Medway High School and the Lillian Hodgson Elementary School, which were razed in the 1960s.



**Old Medway High School**

**Cross North St. and take a left**

19.) An altered Village schoolhouse survives at 29 North Street. Constructed in 1816, the school was originally located on Village Street between the present locations of Sanford Hall and St. Joseph's Church. It was taken down and relocated when construction of the church began around 1876.

**Keep going straight and then turn right at Broad St.**

20.) On the corner of Broad and North Street; 28 Broad Street is an example of a four-square, a house form

that became popular nationally in the early decades of the twentieth century.

21.) Across the street at 29 Broad Street is the Wilson-Thompson House, a large two-story double house with an ell built in 1827 which originally stood at the northwest corner of Village and Broad streets and served as both a residence and store.

22.) The brick building on the right was built by the Medway Lumber in 1927.

**Turn right at Winter St.**

23.) On the left side of Winter Street where there is now a vacant lot was once the location of the Medway Village railroad station. Train service started in 1861 but the tracks that once ran from Woonsocket to Boston were abandoned and finally ripped out in 1967.



**The old New York & New England RR Depot**

24.) On the south side of Winter Street between Barber and Broad Street was the location of the Seavey Brother's boot factory. At one time it had 300 employees. In 1965 a fire destroyed the factory, a home, the railroad station and the offices of the Medway Coal & Grain Company.



**The Seavey Brother's factory**

**Turn right at Barber St. Cross North St. and continue up Barber St.**

25.) The eastern side of Barber Street was developed in the third quarter of the nineteenth century with a number of modest Greek Revival and Italianate

end houses. However the Ichabod Hawes house at 12 Barber Street, was built in 1750 on the corner of Village and Barber St. but moved to its current location during the construction of the Cary mansion. Across the street at 9 Barber Street is another example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century four square

**Turn right at Village St.**

26.) The Lovering-Cary mansion was located on the corner currently occupied by a car repair shop at 136 Village St. This mansion was three stories high, with half-circle fanlights over the double front doors, contained huge fireplaces, marble stairs and mantels, inside shutters, glistening hardwood floors, ivory wainscoting and rooms papered with imported wall coverings. The house had two circular stairways leading off the front hall. The grand Lovering-Cary mansion, too large for single-family occupation and too expensive to operate and maintain, occupied a prime commercial spot, and was torn down many years ago.



**The Lovering-Cary mansion and the William H. Cary house at the far right**

27.) At the northeast corner of Village and Broad Streets, where there now stands an apartment building, was once the location of several Medway hotels. Originally it was the site of the Job Harding-Collins Hathon tavern built in 1784, which accommodated Medway's first post office. In 1853, the old tavern was cut in half, and the two sections now stand as apartment houses on Peach and North Street. An inn and hotel named the Quinobequin was built on the site, and in 1891, its name was changed to The Gladstone. The Gladstone was destroyed in a fire in 1899, and construction was immediately begun on the new Gladstone Hotel, which was later renamed the Medway Hotel, and finally, the New Medway Hotel. Most of what remained of the New Medway Hotel burned down in 1999.



**The New Medway Hotel**

**Turn right at Broad St.  
Continue down Broad Street**

28.) We soon come to 8 Broad Street. Once known as Wilder's Block, it provided lodging above dry goods, boot and shoe, and grocery stores in the nineteenth century. One feature that gives away the fact that it was once a general store is its raised false front.



**Wilder's Block**

**Turn left at North St.  
Turn left at Pine St.**

29.) 6 Pine Street: The Greek Revival home with the large colonnade on the left is the Ray/Dewire house originally located next to Sanford Hall but moved to Pine Street in the 1940's when Medway Saving's Bank built its first bank building.

**Turn left at Holliston St.  
Turn left at Village St.**

(Optional – turn right on Holliston St., the historic district continues to the railroad right-of-way just north of 24 Holliston St.)

(Optional – turn right on Village St., the historic district continues west to Legion Ave.)

30.) To the west, on the corner of Holliston and Village St., stands the hip-roofed Partridge-Hodgson House at 180 Village Street (1867-1876.) By the 1880s this house was owned by Samuel Hodgson,

one of the original incorporators of the Sanford Mills Corporation and the first manager of the mill.

- 31.) In the empty lot between 3 and 5 Church Street once stood the Fisher Straw Shop. In 1935 the factory burned down in a spectacular fire.



**Fisher Straw Shop**

- 32.) The Gothic Revival house at 5 Church Street (1858-1876) was built by Charles W. Seavey, a boot manufacturer at Seavey Brothers and later a bookkeeper at various boot manufactories.
- 33.) Across Village street the five two-story end houses at 169, 171, 173, 175, and 177 Village Street (1831-1852) were built for foremen at the Fisher Straw Shop.
- 34.) On the north side of Village St is the Village Evangelical Congregational Church. The large Greek Revival structure was constructed in 1836 and was the first church in the Medway Village. It was built at the cost of \$5,800. The original spire was knocked down in the 1938 Hurricane.
- 35.) The building next to the church, at 166 Village St. is the Partridge-Wilder House. The distinctive mansard-roofed house was built between 1858-1876 by the boot manufacturer Clark Partridge. The Partridge-Wilder House, built at the cost of \$15,000, including the site and furnishings, was the “finest private dwelling in town” at the time.

**Use the cross walk to cross Village Street. Tour ends back at Medway Town Hall**

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A listing of all the buildings located in the Medway Village National Historical District is available from the Medway Historical Commission, Sanford Hall, 155 Village St., Medway, MA 02053

More information on the Medway Village National Historical District is available at the Medway Historical Society, 223 Main Street, Medway, MA 02053, [www.MedwayHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.MedwayHistoricalSociety.org)

References:

- *A History of Medway* by Francis D. Donovan
- *Images of America: Medway* by Grace G. Hoag and Priscilla N. Howker
- *The Middle Post Road in Medway* by Francis D. Donovan
- The presentation for the nomination of the Medway Village Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places
- <http://www.medwayhistoricalsociety.org/>
- <http://medwaylib.org/History.htm>

MEDWAY VILLAGE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
WALKING TOUR

