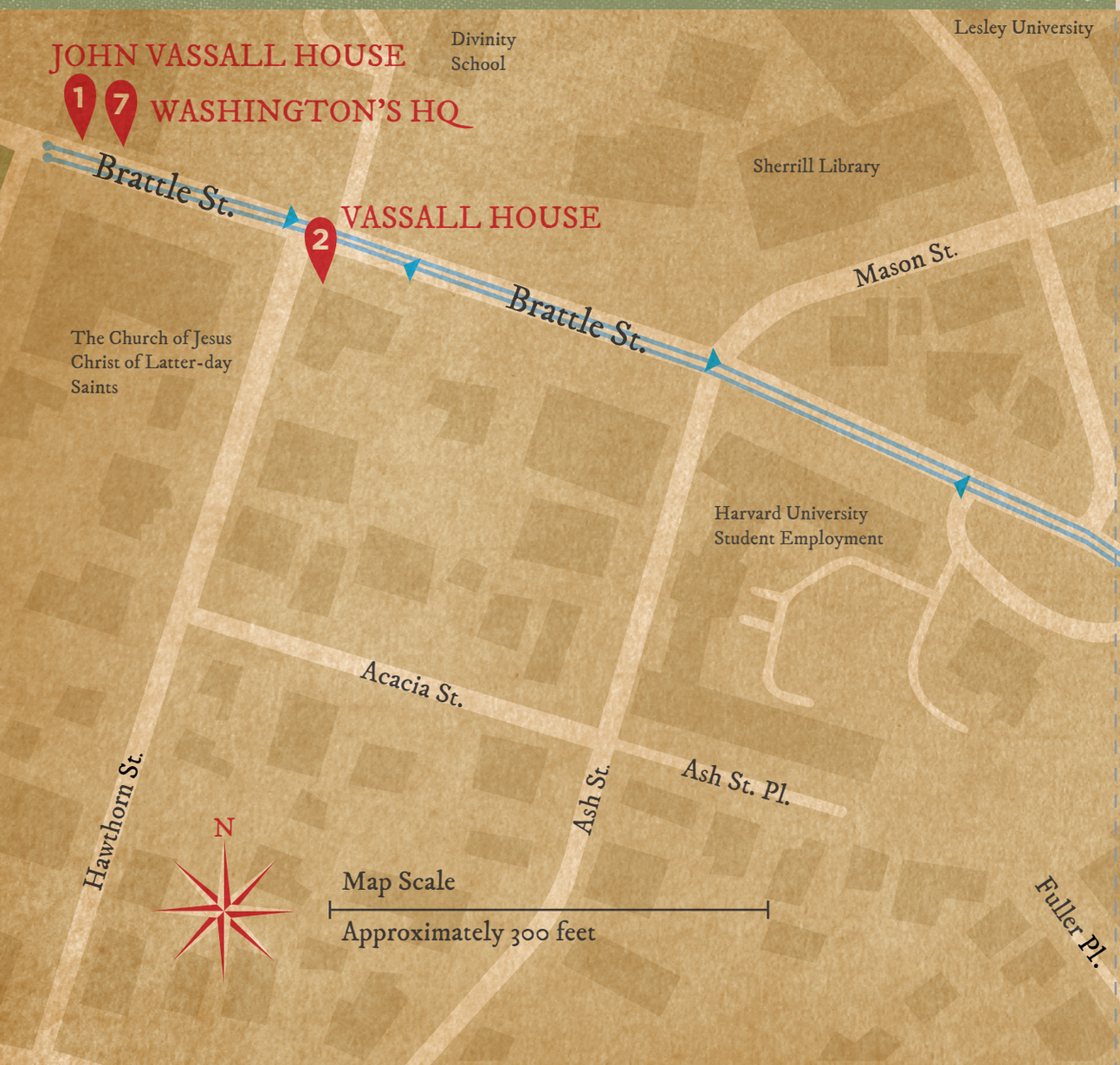
Longfellow House -
Washington's Headquarters NHS

THE Road TO Revolution

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Use the map below and follow the directions on each page to proceed to each stop along the Road to Revolution. Near the directions you will find a small map showing you the steps to the next location as well as a picture of what you will find there. The first and last stops are the same house.

THE Road TO Revolution



Introduction

Cambridge 1774
On the Eve of the Revolution

The year is 1774 and the colonists are angry.

But they hadn't always felt this way. Jump back about ten years and the people of Great Britain and Britain's American colonists had a whole lot in common. Most colonists considered London their capital city, English was the main language on both sides of the Atlantic, and many colonists proudly called England "home." Also, in 1763, the English empire had just witnessed its greatest triumph after defeating the French in the Seven Years War. To most observers, the ties between England and the American colonies could not have been stronger.

So what happened to change all of that?

By 1774 tensions had been boiling for a while. It all started with money and the rights of subjects. The war against France had been very costly and a standing army remained in America to protect the colonists from the attacks of Native Americans. The English Parliament looked to the colonies to pay more in taxes to support the army.

This was where the dispute arose. Colonists were already paying some taxes, though much less than people in England. However, English tradition said that there should be no "taxation without representation." This meant that citizens could not be taxed unless they were able to elect representatives to the English government. Colonists felt like they didn't have a voice. What was to stop the government from creating even more taxes?

LONGFELLOW HOUSE

BOSTON MASSACRE DEPICTION

Brattle Street

Tensions flared. Some colonists stayed loyal to the Crown and wanted to obey its laws. Others called for revolution. Many just wanted to stay out of the fight altogether.

Cambridge, 1774. On the eve of revolution.

Right now, you're standing on what became known as Tory Row. This street, Brattle Street, was famous for the wealthy people that lived here who would stay loyal to the Crown throughout the revolution. They were also known as Tories, or Loyalists. This big yellow house here was important to both the Loyalists and the Patriots. Before you meet the people who lived here right before the revolution, when the story begins, take some time to read the instructions on the next page.

Instructions

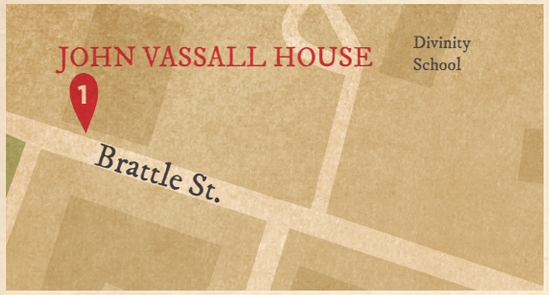
Use this booklet as a group activity or a self-guided exploration of historic Cambridge, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the country. You will need about one hour for this easy mile-long walk. Follow the map to each of the seven stops on our neighborhood tour. When you reach a stop, take time to learn about the destination and complete the activity. Imagine what it would have been like in the 1770s.

EXPLANATION OF DIRECTIONS: *At the top of each page, you will find directions on how to proceed to the next stop. Near the directions you will find a small map showing you the steps to the next location as well as a picture of what you will find there.*

- Bring a pencil with you
- There are bathrooms at Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters NHS and at several locations near Harvard Square
- Make sure you stay together as a group and follow all traffic laws when crossing streets
- When you are done, return back to the Visitor Center at Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters NHS to receive your Junior Ranger badge and certificate
- Many of the sites you will be visiting are privately owned and occupied. Please respect the owners by staying on public walkways and sidewalks.

STOP 1

John & Elizabeth *Vassall House*



DIRECTIONS: *You'll begin your tour at the front of the house. From the Visitor Center, walk back around the house toward the sidewalk at the front gate and pause to look back at the house and survey the scene.*

A Gentleman's Estate

Summer of 1774

John Vassall was a very wealthy man. He built the house that you are standing in front of right now in 1759 as his "country home." Back then, Cambridge was much different than it is today—it was quiet, peaceful, and very few people lived here. In fact, there were only seven homes along what is now busy Brattle Street (the street in front of the house). The river was also much closer than it is now, making the scene even more beautiful.

John and his wife Elizabeth built a very comfortable life for themselves and their children from the money they received from the sugar plantations they owned in the Caribbean. Because of this, John Vassall's wealth relied heavily on trade with Great Britain.

For most of his life, John stayed out of politics. By 1774, however, tensions with Great Britain were dividing the colonists. He and other wealthy families living on Brattle Street would have to make an important decision. It was becoming very dangerous in Cambridge for those people who stayed loyal to the Crown.

JOHN VASSALL HOUSE

JAMAICAN PLANTATION

Cambridge: *Then and Now*

Part of historical study involves thinking about what has changed from the past and what has remained the same. John Vassall's house remains here, but Cambridge has changed in many ways since the 1770s.

→ Write down 3 things that you can see that John Vassall would have seen in his time.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

→ Write down 3 things that John Vassall would not have seen when he lived here.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Now, take 30 seconds to listen to the sounds around you.

→ What are three sounds that John Vassall might have heard in his time here?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

→ What are three sounds that he would not have heard?

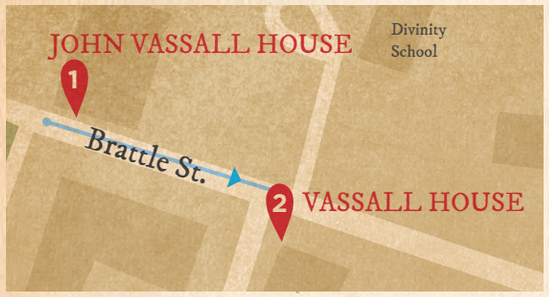
1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

STOP 2

Henry & Penelope *Vassall House*



DIRECTIONS: *From the front of the house, cross Brattle Street toward Longfellow Park using the crosswalk. Turn left and continue down Brattle Street for one block until you come to the large gray house with the red door (94 Brattle St.)*

Powder House Alarm

September 1774

September 2, 1774. Tensions erupt. Colonists discovered that the British Governor had taken away their gunpowder and hid it in Boston. It was time to act and reclaim what was theirs. 4,000 men (enough to fill 80 school buses!) marched past this very house, which belonged to Penelope Vassall (the widow of John's uncle, Henry). The crowd then surrounded some of the Brattle Street mansions and demanded the men inside resign from their government positions.

The situation was tense.

On one side, the colonists felt the government was unfair and they were fed up; on the other side, the terrified people who lived on Brattle Street didn't want to lose their place in society, their lives, or their homes. Both sides knew the situation could quickly turn violent.

But it didn't. Instead, the next day, the men resigned and their families fled. Penelope Vassall herself left as the situation worsened. She moved to her land in the Caribbean and the house was taken over for use by patriot forces as a hospital.

The colonists were satisfied—for now.

HENRY VASSALL HOUSE

JOHN VASSALL BOOKPLATE

PENELOPE VASSALL

The Vassall Wealth

The wealth and prestige of the Vassall family was in large part tied to vast plantations they possessed in Caribbean islands like Jamaica. On plantations, trade goods such as sugar (in the Caribbean) or tobacco (in North America) were grown and then shipped to markets in Europe. In Britain, manufacturers were producing goods such as cloth and clothing, trinkets, dishes, and more.

Plantations like those of the Vassalls were worked by slaves who were shipped over from places in Africa. This network of trading is what some call the "Triangle Trade," which involved colonies and trading posts on three other continents. See if you can list the Places (black lines) and Resources (red lines) in their correct positions on the map. Then draw lines connecting the three parts of the "Triangle Trade."

WORDBANK

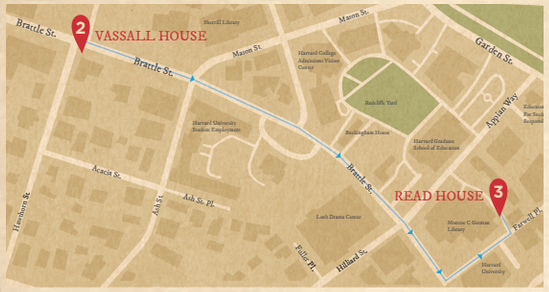
Places: North America, Caribbean, Africa, Atlantic Ocean, Europe

Resources: Slaves, Sugar, Manufactured Goods, Tobacco

**Hint: Re-read the paragraphs above for clues*

STOP 3

Read House



DIRECTIONS: *Continue down Brattle Street in the same direction (away from Longfellow House) and turn left onto Farwell Place. Just past the library and before a blue house, you will see a brick path to your left. Follow it a few steps to the yellow house with a green door.*

Lexington and Concord

April 1775

By 1775, three generations of Reads had called this place home and would continue to do so after the Loyalists fled from Cambridge. They stayed because they considered themselves Patriots, and James Read would prove this on April 19th, the day on which "the shot heard round the world" was fired.

After this event, known as the Battle of Lexington and Concord, Cambridge was full of soldiers. This was no longer Tory country. Tory families (including John and Elizabeth Vassall) fled their homes for safe havens in Boston or other English colonies that offered them the protection of the British soldiers. Families now had to pick sides: the Vassalls remained Loyalists, the Reads became Patriots.

The colonists were forced into making a very difficult decision. Much was at stake, including the loss of their homes, money, jobs, and even family members who may decide to join the other side. Many also tried to remain neutral and stay out of the fight while continuing their lives as normally as possible.

READ HOUSE

BATTLE OF LEXINGTON

Patriot or Loyalist?

Colonists disagreed over many issues in the 1770s. Which viewpoint (Patriot or Loyalist) would each statement below represent? Draw a line from the quote to either the Patriot or Loyalist side.

Colonial Population during the War:

Patriots	40%
Loyalists	20%
Neutrals	40%

A.
"His Majesty the King and the Parliament have the right to tax the colonies and to make laws for the colonies. The laws they create are above those created by the colonies."

B.
"Only our elected representatives in our colonies have the right to tax us."

C.
"We have every right to protest and resist unfair laws. We tried to use peaceful measures like petition and boycotts."

D.
"People are bullied into obeying the boycotts of tea and other English goods. Am I not allowed the freedom to purchase what I want?"

E.
"The national debt is due to the French and Indian War which was fought to protect us from the French. We should contribute taxes to help pay off this debt."

F.
"The streets of Boston are in chaos. We need the British troops here to restore and keep order."

G.
"Our taxes should be kept here in the colonies. They should not be used to pay royal officials or pay off England's debt."

LOYALIST

Loyalists were those opposed to the ideas of rebellion and/or independence

PATRIOT

Patriots felt the King had violated their rights and started considering independence in 1776

STOP 4

Christ Church

DIRECTIONS: *Return down the path to Farwell Place. Turn left and continue toward what looks like a dead end. Go to the right corner between a house and the rear of the church and you will find a path that will take you to Christ Church and the Cambridge Burying Ground. Make your way to the front of the church first.*

An Influx of Soldiers

Summer 1775

Remember John Vassall, who built his home on Brattle Street in 1759? When he and his family built their home in Cambridge, there was no church for them to attend. As members of the Church of England, they had to travel all the way to Boston on Sundays.

This church—the oldest surviving church in Cambridge—was built in 1760 for wealthy Anglicans like John Vassall. By 1775, after its members had fled, it was abandoned. Christ Church sat empty.

After Lexington and Concord, troops from all over New England were arriving here in Cambridge. They needed a place to stay. Some stayed in Harvard College's big brick buildings. Some stayed in empty homes of Loyalists like John Vassall. The Sons of Liberty, who marched from Wethersfield, Connecticut, used this building, the abandoned Christ Church, as their barracks. The building provided the shelter they would need for the difficult days ahead.

PATH TO CHURCH

CHRIST CHURCH

Life during the Siege

Continue this soldier's letter home. What sort of activities do you think you would have done every day? What do you think it would be like to sleep in an abandoned church away from home and family? Would you be concerned for your safety or the well-being of your family? Do you stay for the whole siege, no matter how long it takes?

My Dearest,

6/5/1775

Since we arrived in Cambridge, we have been housed in the Old Tories' church. The pews have all been removed and we sleep on the floor—some of the men don't even have blankets. I would take this over other situations—some of the abandoned homes sleep 20 men to a bedroom! Resources are scarce and the rations we were given back home may not last if we have to stay longer than twenty days...

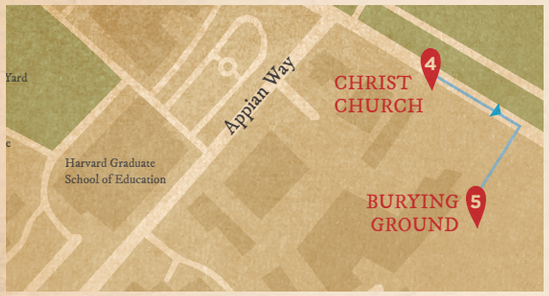
Hope to see you soon.

Your affectionate,

_____ (*Sign your name here*)

STOP 5

Cambridge Burying Ground



DIRECTIONS: *From the front of the church, return back toward the path you arrived at to find the entrance to the Cambridge Burying Ground. Upon reaching the entrance, take the path to the left and see if you can find the gravestone of a soldier that fought at the Battle of Bunker Hill..*

Bunker Hill

June 1775

The Cambridge Burying Ground was established in 1634 and is the resting place of many soldiers of the Revolutionary War.

On June 16th, word got out that the British planned to claim territory in Charlestown. In the night, American forces crept up a hill there, digging trenches before the British could arrive. The next morning, the British were surprised to find the area taken. Throughout the day, British forces attacked the Americans and fired cannon into Charlestown. Eventually, with powder supplies low, the Americans retreated.

Though the Battle of Bunker Hill was technically a victory for the British, it came with heavy loss of life that was not worth the land gained. More importantly the Americans had also sent a clear message to the British: we are serious and we will fight.

If the battle was a defeat, why is it remembered today as heroic? Because the soldiers were willing to face tremendous odds to preserve their way of life and their rights. Some of these men are buried here.

BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

CAMBRIDGE BURYING GROUND

Field Journal

Historians and archaeologists both study the past. Historians use written evidence like journals, newspaper articles, and letters, while archaeologists use artifacts. Cemeteries are full of artifacts: gravestones! Archaeologists use gravestones to learn about people from the past. They include important information, like who lived here and when, who they were related to, and the community's ideas about life and death. Being careful to walk on the paths, find a gravestone that you like and study it using this field journal.

FIELD JOURNAL →→→

NAME ON GRAVESTONE:

DATES:

AGE OF GRAVESTONE:

EPITAPH (WRITING OR MESSAGE):

Sketch images on gravestone in space below:

STOP 6

Cambridge Common

DIRECTIONS: *In front of Christ Church, turn left and go down Garden Street. Use the crosswalk at the corner of Garden and Appian Way to cross over to the Common. Then turn left and head toward the Elmtree and cannons.*

Washington Comes to Cambridge

July 1775

The day before the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Continental Congress in Philadelphia elected a commander-in-chief of the newly formed Continental Army. This man was a Virginian with previous military experience in the French and Indian War. His name was George Washington.

When General Washington learned of his new command, he left immediately and travelled to Cambridge. It took over two weeks for him to get to this spot, Cambridge Common, which had become the center of the Continental Army. Tradition has told us that on July 3, 1775, the day after he arrived in Cambridge, Washington formally took command of the army under the Washington Elm (although most historians today consider this a myth).

There were many things that needed to be done to turn these men into an army. Washington had to figure out how to supply his men with weapons, ammunition, and food. He had to train his soldiers in proper fighting techniques. No less importantly, he wanted to make sure his men looked like an army.

CAMBRIDGE COMMON

WASHINGTON AT DORCHESTER HEIGHTS

Dressing the Part

Dressing the Part

Washington was tasked with turning a collection of local militiamen into a professional army. This was no easy task! To start, the colonial "army" had no uniforms. Men wore whatever they had available before leaving their homes.

A Hat Dilemma

There was no standard helmet or hat worn by the colonial army. Examine some of the hats to the right that were worn by Washington's army in Cambridge and then design your own hat or helmet for the soldier below.

The officers looked the same as the enlisted men so Washington decided to have the officers wear ribbons so everyone would know their rank. Which color would you assign to each rank? Draw a line to each. Then, look below to find out what colors Washington assigned.

Commander	Purple
Major General	Light Blue
Brigadier General	Green
Aides-de-Camp	Pink

TRICORN (OFFICERS)

STRAW HATS

FELT HATS

BANDANA

Commander (light blue); Major General (purple); Brigadier General (Pink); Aides-de-Camp (Green)

STOP 7

Washington's Headquarters

DIRECTIONS: *Return back to the crosswalk and follow Appian Way back toward Brattle St. At the end of the road, turn right on Brattle and make your way back to Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters NHS.*

Home and Headquarters

July 1775

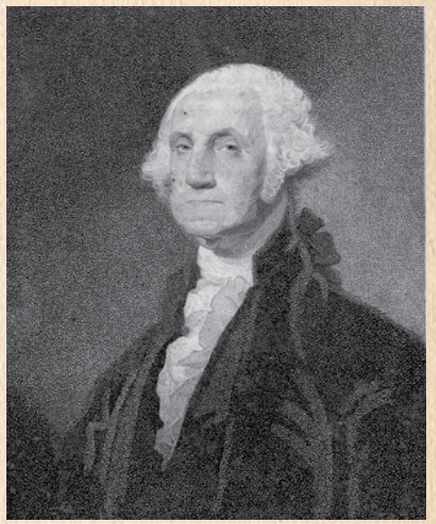
When General Washington came to Cambridge, he needed a place to stay. First, he was taken to the house of the Harvard President. Within a few days, however, Washington realized he needed a larger house to accommodate his sizeable staff and the flurry of daily activity.

By the middle of July, 1775, Washington had relocated to 105 Brattle Street. There are many reasons Washington probably chose to make this building his headquarters—and home. Here, Washington could live much like he would have at his plantation in Virginia, and there was more than enough room for him and his large staff.

Also, Washington's use of this house was important symbolically. Less than a year ago, this big house had been a Loyalist's mansion. Now, the General of the colonial rebellion was sleeping in it peacefully each night. Now, Washington was talking about plans of attack with his generals in John Vassall's dining room. Things had changed in Massachusetts.

This is the end of our story. Washington arrived in Cambridge and took command of the Continental Army. Loyalists like John Vassall fled while Patriots like James Read came together under their new general's command. Men gave their lives at Lexington and Concord and the Battle of Bunker Hill.

For the story of the American Revolution, however, this was just the beginning.



GEORGE WASHINGTON

Longfellow House -
Washington's Headquarters NHS

LET IT BE KNOWN THAT

HAS EARNED THE TITLE

Junior Ranger

JUNIOR RANGER
EXPLORE • LEARN • PROTECT

This project was made possible by a grant from the National Park Foundation through the generous support of ARAMARK through the Yawkey Foundation and the Fernandez Pave the Way Foundation.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

JUNIOR RANGER
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