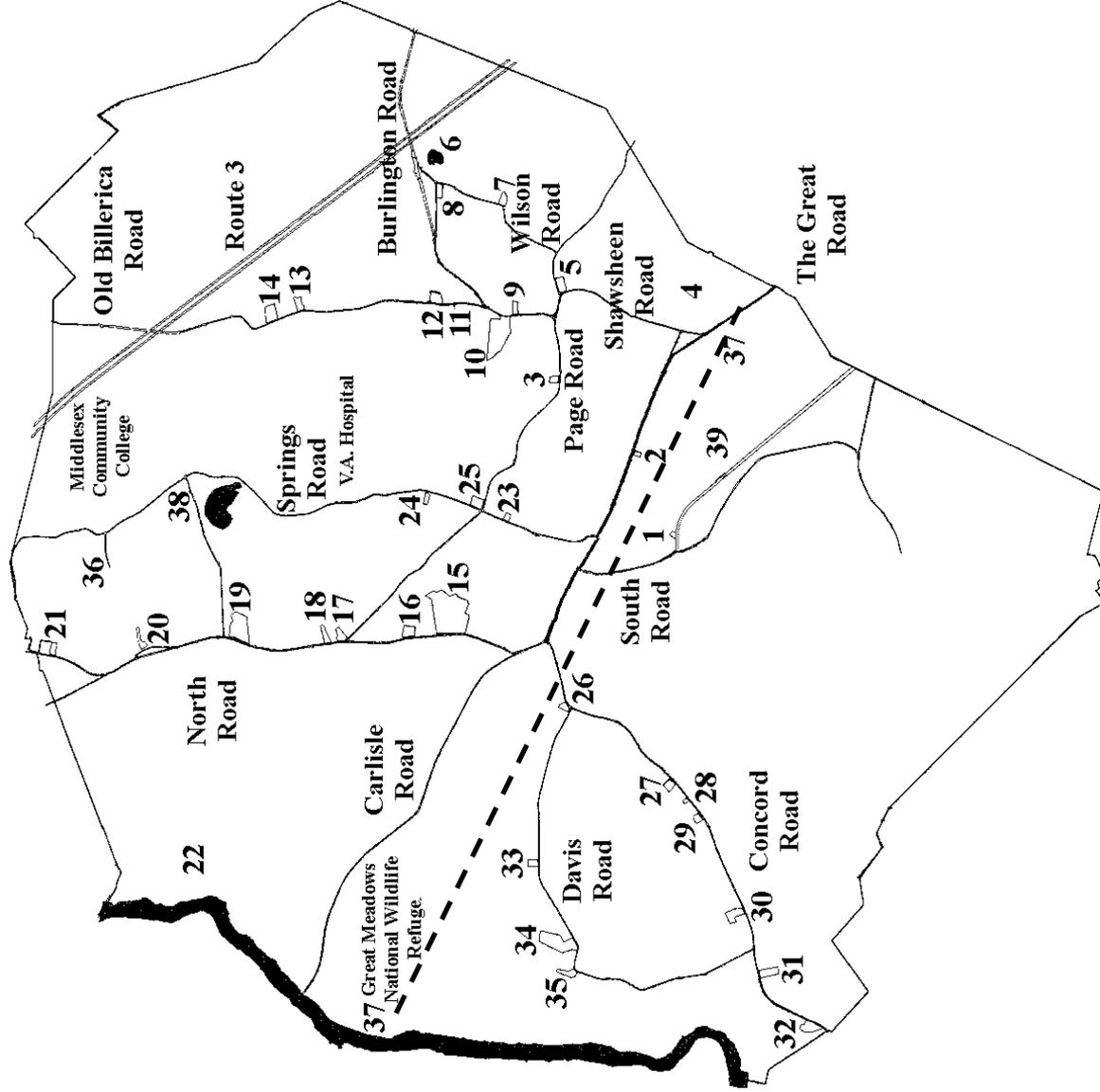


Beyond the Historic District



Beyond the Historic District you'll find the oldest houses in town, mill sites, railroad beds, fields bounded by old stone walls, and much more.

1. Bedford Depot Park & vicinity, South Road area, 1874. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

With the coming of the railroad in 1874 this area became the town's economic powerhouse. Businesses operating here included warehouses, a grain elevator, a pickle factory, a lumber company, and a safety razor company. The neighborhood saw a good deal of residential development after the railroad arrived. The depot building was built in 1874. In 1877 the Freight House and a narrow gauge line to Billerica began operation.

2. Lydia Pinkham House, 227 The Great Road, ca. 1850, Greek Revival

Briefly the home of Lydia Pinkham, later one of 19th-century America's most famous businesswomen. From this house she dispensed what became her Vegetable Compound, a highly popular patent medicine for the treatment of "female complaint."

3. Nathaniel Page Homestead, 89 Page Road (red house), 1688, Colonial

Home of Cornet Nathaniel Page, the standard bearer for the Minutemen and the keeper of the Bedford Flag, believed to be the only flag carried into the battle on the North Bridge in Concord and recognized as the oldest battle flag in the U.S. The Flag was stored here until Page's grandson donated it to the town. The house was relocated to its current site in about 1887; it formerly stood on the other side of the barn. A surprising number of old houses were moved from one location to another.

4. Shawshreen Cemetery, 1848, Shawshreen Road (corner of The Great Road)

Created when the Old Burying Ground became overcrowded, it offered family plots and spacious, carefully landscaped grounds. A

Beyond the Historic District (continued)

number of graves were moved here from the older cemetery. A grove of white pines stands at the entrance and what may be the largest grove of sugar maples in Bedford stands at the center.

5. Danforth-Webber Inn, 137 Shawsheen Road (corner of Page Road), ca. 1700, Colonial

This was a tavern at the time of the town's incorporation and also served as a station on an early stagecoach route between Lowell and Boston. It may have been the site of the Shawshine House, an Indian trading post known to have existed ca. 1642.

6. Site of Old Wilson Mill, Wilson Road, ca. 1675. Designated a National Register Historic District.

This area, with its two mill sites (see #11), was the town's original industrial zone. Note that the flow of water here at Vine Brook was much greater before Route 3 was built. This mill began as a grist mill, later joined by a saw mill. Wilson Road was built as a route to the mill. A dam at the sawmill created an artificial pond; ice was harvested up to the late 19th century. A paper mill built at the site in 1840 burned down in 1846 with a devastating effect on the local economy. In 1847 there was a saw mill that manufactured blinds and sashes. Stone foundations can still be seen at the site.

7. Francis Wilson Homestead, 69 Wilson Road (top of hill), ca. 1750, Georgian with later Greek Revival details

The house is distinguished by a projecting porch with Ionic columns. It remained in the Wilson family, owners of the Wilson Mill, until 1851.

8. Nathaniel Bacon Homestead, 118 Wilson Road (bottom of hill), ca. 1740, Georgian. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

One of two "brick-enders" in town, with clapboards on the front and back walls and bricks on the end walls. It features a hipped roof and four corner chimneys. A millstone from the old mill is thought to form part of the front steps.

9. East School House, 37 Old Billerica Road (red house), 1845, Greek Revival

Before the Union School was built in 1891, Bedford operated a district school in each of the four quarters of the town, including this one for the East section, and a fifth in the center.

10. Christopher Page Homestead, 50 Old Billerica Road (now 2 Meyers Place, yellow house), ca. 1735, Colonial with Federal and Colonial Revival enhancements

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One of the oldest houses in Old Billerica Road area.

11. Bacon-Fitch-Ashby-Clark Mill Site, Old Billerica Road (look for sign by roadside), ca. 1663
The first mill at this site on the Shawsheen River was a grist mill, followed by corn and sawmills. The mill buildings burned down in 1890, after which the mill owner took a portable sawmill around town. The dam was blown up in 1947 to improve drainage for Hanscom Field, through which the river passes.

12. David Fitch Homestead, 109 Old Billerica Road (across from Willard-Carleton Village), ca. 1780, Colonial with Victorian eclectic additions

The Fitch family operated the sawmill on the Shawsheen River. This farmhouse was acquired by the Frances E. Willard Settlement in the 1920s and used as a summer camp for children and young people. Later it became a nursing care facility called the Marietta Worthen Memorial Home.

13. Michael Bacon Homestead, 229 Old Billerica Road, ca. 1860s, Colonial

Believed to be the oldest building in Bedford, it housed many generations of the Bacon family. It may be the actual Shawshine House but this is uncertain. Jonathan Bacon was one of the founders of Bedford and its first Moderator. The Bacons operated the Bacon-Fitch Mill until they sold it to the Fitches in 1732. So many Bacon descendants lived in this neighborhood that it became known as Baconsville.

14. Wilson Estate, 261 Old Billerica Road, third quarter 18th century

The home site of Jonathan Wilson, Captain of the town's Minuteman company, who had the sad distinction of being the only Bedford man killed in

battle on April 19, 1775. Additions to the current structure make it difficult to tell how much, if any, of the original house remains.

15. Lane-Penniman Homestead, 97 North Road, ca. 1740, Colonial

Stone walls and two sets of gateposts front a heavily wooded property with a house that is not easily visible from the road. "At the end of a long driveway stands a rambling house with seven doors and no front door" (from *The Bedford Sampler*).

16. David Lane Homestead 137 North Road (one-story red house), 1781, Federal

On April 19, 1775, David Lane, a 16-year-old fifer in the town's militia company, along with several other members of the extensive Lane family, marched to the Battle of Concord. He built this house after his marriage. Unlike most other houses built around that time, it has only one story.

17. Oliver Pollard Homestead, 197 North Road
The construction date is uncertain; 1660 and 1740 have been suggested. Oliver Pollard, Jr., a militiaman during the Revolution and a housewright, may have built this house.

18. Lane-Clark House, 217 North Road, 1st quarter 19th century, Federal and Colonial Revival

Bedford began as a farming community and farming remained the principal economic activity throughout much of its history. This property was a working farm until 1947. It may be older than the 1860 construction date listed in the assessors' records.

19. Job Lane Farm Museum, 295 North Road, 1713, saltbox-style Colonial. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Open to the public on 2nd and 4th Sundays, May-October. This is one of the oldest houses in Bedford. The land was part of the homestead of the first Job Lane in 1664. The oldest part of the house was built by his grandson, also named Job Lane, ca. 1713; the western half was built ca. 1825. Monochrome murals in the Federal parlor

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are credited to Rufus Porter, itinerant artist and founder of *Scientific American* magazine. A lean-to room was used as a schoolhouse ca. 1735-92. The last resident, Lillian Dutton, ran an herb business from this house.

20. Stephen Lane Homestead, 375 North Road (on bypass behind skate shop), ca. 1750, Colonial with Colonial-Revival additions

This structure, with its complex of barns and other outbuildings attached to the house, presents the picture of a typical old New England homestead. The property was known as Sunny Side in the late 19th century and as Cock Horse Farm in the 1920s.

21. Caleb-Farley Homestead, 461 (house) and 463 North Road (barn), house ca. 1700, Colonial with Colonial Revival additions

This house, which may have served as a garrison during colonial times, has belonged to the Kimball family since 1911. Charles Kimball ran the property as Red Feather Farm, an egg farm. Later, the family established a candy factory, known as the Red Feather Candy House, in the barn. The construction date of the barn is unknown but its hand-hewn chestnut beams pegged with oak suggest an early date.

22. Two Brothers Rocks, East bank of Concord River, 1638

John Winthrop, the first governor of Massachusetts, and his deputy Thomas Dudley met at this site to divide the enormous tracts of land granted them by the Massachusetts General Court. They chose the two large boulders to mark the dividing line. Neither is known to have lived on his grant. The names Winthrop and Dudley and the date 1638 were engraved on the rocks in 1894 during an upsurge of interest in the town's history, which also saw the formation of the Bedford Historical Society. The site is now part of the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge.

23. Nathan Bowman House, 107 Springs Road, 18th century or 19th-century reconstruction?

The origins and history of this handsome house are somewhat mysterious. The house was partially destroyed by fire and rebuilt. Its brick-lined walls suggest that it may have been used as a garrison house.

24. Capt. Smith Farmhouse, 180 Springs Road, ca. 1818, Federal with Colonial Revival enhancements
This house has an unusual profile, with one end salbox and the other side-gabled. It was moved from the opposite side of the road to make room for the VA Hospital in the 1920s.

25. A. E. Brown Homestead, 145 Page Road, ca. 1810, Federal

Boyhood home of Abram English Brown, a self-educated man from a modest background, who became a devoted public servant and historian of the town of Bedford. His 1891 *History of Bedford* remains the standard work on the subject. (Copies are available for purchase at the Bedford Free Public Library.) The house was probably built by A. E. Brown's great-grandfather, Nathaniel Bowman Brown.

26. Thaddeus Fitch Homestead, 71 Concord Road (corner of Davis Road), 1779, Georgian with salbox form

The little red building on property is said to have been a soap business; more recently, it was a candle shop.

27. Moore Homestead, 191 Concord Road (corner of Warren Avenue), ca. 1680, Colonial with Colonial-Revival remodeling

The home of John Moore, Captain of Militia on April 19, 1775 and of a slave, Cambridge Moore, who also served as a Revolutionary soldier. It was a rallying place for the Bedford militia before the battle.

28. Second West School House, 209 Concord Road, 1845, Greek Revival, Victorian eclectic

This is the former West School. Like the East School, it became surplus after the Union School was built in 1891.

29. Timothy Jones Homestead, 231 Concord Road, ca. 1775, Georgian

Designed by Ruben Duren, who also designed the Penniman-Stearns house at 26 The Great Road. The two houses have similar stylistic features. Timothy Jones served as a Second Lieutenant in the Bedford Minuteman company. His freed slave, Caesar Jones, also served in the Revolution.

30. Eleazer Davis Homestead, 297 Concord Road, ca. 1775, Georgian

Eleazer Davis, who was raised at 225 Davis Road, was a schoolmaster. He is said to have introduced the first blackboard in the Bedford schools.

31. Oliver Reed Jr. Homestead, 380 Concord Road, ca. 1767

This house may have been moved from a site across the street.

32. Richard Wheeler Homestead, 445 Concord Road (dark brown house), ca. 1695, Colonial

The last house before the Concord line, it is believed to be the oldest building on Concord Road. Of all the colonial houses in Bedford, this has the oldest "look." Note in particular the slight overhang of the second story on the front and sides. Richard Wheeler and his father-in-law were among the petitioners for establishment of Bedford.

33. Zachariah Fitch Homestead, 145 Davis Road (stone wall and large trees in front), 1733, Colonial

One of three remaining 18th-century farmhouses on Davis Road. The house belonged to the Fitch family for some 150 years. Jonas Fitch, a son of the builder Zachariah Fitch, became well-known as a Groton clockmaker. In the 1950s or 60s a missile radar site and barracks were constructed on part of the site.

34. Hastings Homestead, 245 Davis Road (white house, red outbuildings) 1734, Colonial, Victorian eclectic

Daniel Hartwell was a fourth-generation descendant of William Hartwell I, who came to the country in 1636 and settled in Concord. Though a farm, the house also has associations

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with Bedford's shoemaking industry: William Hastings, who owned the property ca. 1857, was a shoemaker, as was his son.

35. Samuel Davis Homestead, 255 Davis Road (yellow house, yellow outbuildings) 1696, Colonial

One of the oldest houses in Bedford. The original wing of barn may date back to ca. 1680, earlier than house. The house was built by Samuel Davis or his son Eleazer. The house belonged to Davises until late 19th century, usually by an Eleazer. It has been a farm for three centuries. In the early 20th century the property included a picnic grove and seasonal cottages along the Concord River.

36. Abbott Site, Springs Road, 1760s-1840s

One of the few remaining intact 18th and 19th century farm sites in Massachusetts. Only foundations remain. The site is under preservation restriction.

37. Concord Old Line, 1635

Bedford was founded in 1729 from portions of Concord and Billerica. This line marks the former Concord-Billerica border. Note that the town's founders located the church and Common at the center of the new town, in fairness to the former residents of both Concord and Billerica.

38. Bedford Springs site at Fawn Lake

Bedford was once a thriving resort town. In 1856 Dr. William R. Hayden bought the site, including mineral springs that had long been used by Native Americans, and built a commodious resort hotel. Visitors from Boston took the narrow gauge line to the hotel's own depot and disembarked to spend the summer and take the waters. An artificial lake, now known as Fawn Lake, was created at the resort. Hayden also moved his extensive pharmaceutical business here and set up a factory where he manufactured more than 300 products. The factory building still stands as Sweetwater Place condominiums.

39. Boston & Lowell R.R. railbed (now Minuteman Bikeway), 1873

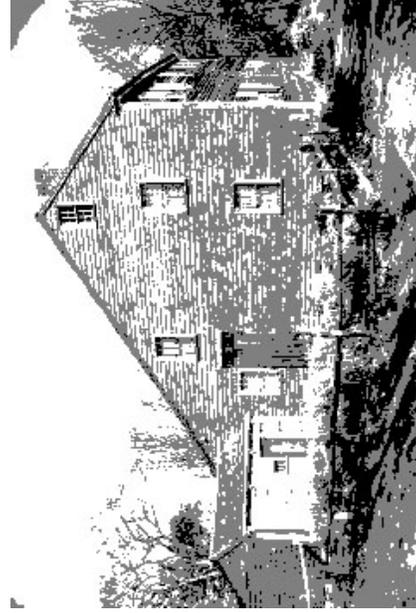
The coming of the railroad in 1873-74 opened the farming community to the wider world. A narrow-gauge branch line to Billerica was added in 1877. Today's Minuteman Bikeway is said to be the most heavily used rail trail in the USA.

Historic Properties of Bedford

Maps and Guide



Old Town Hall



The Job Lane House

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***Old New England...
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