NTRODUCTION

1 CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

OLD CAMBRIDGE WALKING GUIDE

his Guide covers the original village of "Newtowne," which as established as a fortified town in 1630 by the founders of the assachusetts Bay Colony.

he early settlers chose not to establish their seat of government on oston's exposed peninsula because of the need to protect the overnor and his assistants from attack. The site they chose was a nall defensible hill between the Charles and the path from harlestown to Watertown, far enough up the River to be accesole to the sea but difficult to approach by surprise.

he customs and institutions of the first residents of Newtowne are ill discernible in Harvard Square which was laid out according to nglish precedent: a meetinghouse and a marketplace (now Winrop Square) in the center, surrounded by house lots with kitchen ardens and commonland for grazing animals, and on the fringes f the settlement, farms and pastures. The original street plan urvives almost intact today.

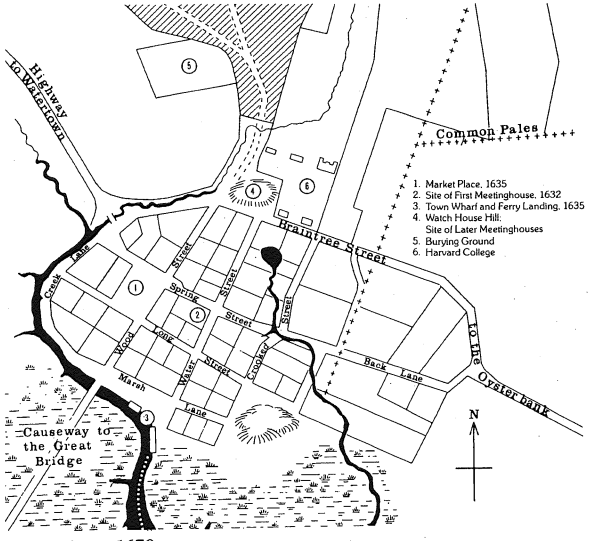
he new colony needed Puritan clergy and political leaders, and larvard College was founded in 1636 to train them. The town was hen renamed "Cambridge," recalling the English University hich many of the settlers had attended.

he years 1774–1776 saw the peak of patriot activity in Cambridge. fter the Battle of Lexington and Concord in April, 1775, provinal militias from throughout New England gathered on the Camridge Common. In July, General George Washington took comhand of the Continental Army and his headquarters remained in ambridge through the Siege of Boston, until March, 1776. After he Revolution, the construction of bridges over the Charles River hade Old Cambridge more accessible to Boston and opened ambridgeport and East Cambridge for development. In 1846, ambridge was incorporated as a city, and with successive waves f immigrants over the next 100 years the remaining land gradually lled with homes and industries.

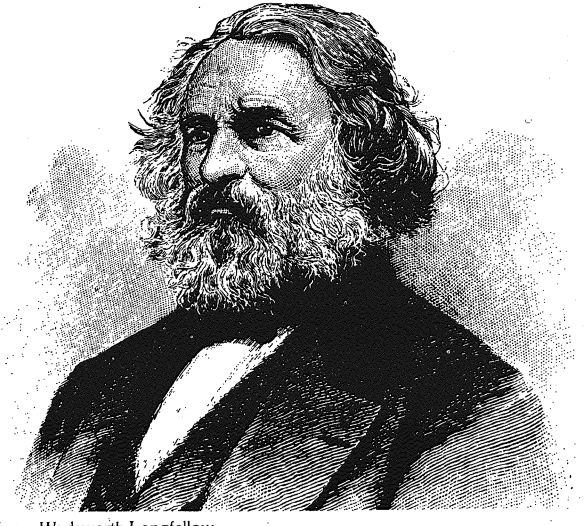
ld Cambridge remains a residential, commercial, and academic enter. The buildings on this tour span four centuries of Cambridge istory, and have witnessed the development of a wilderness vilage into an international community.

OLD CAMBRIDGE WALKING GUIDE

The Washington Elm in 1839



Cambridge in 1670



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

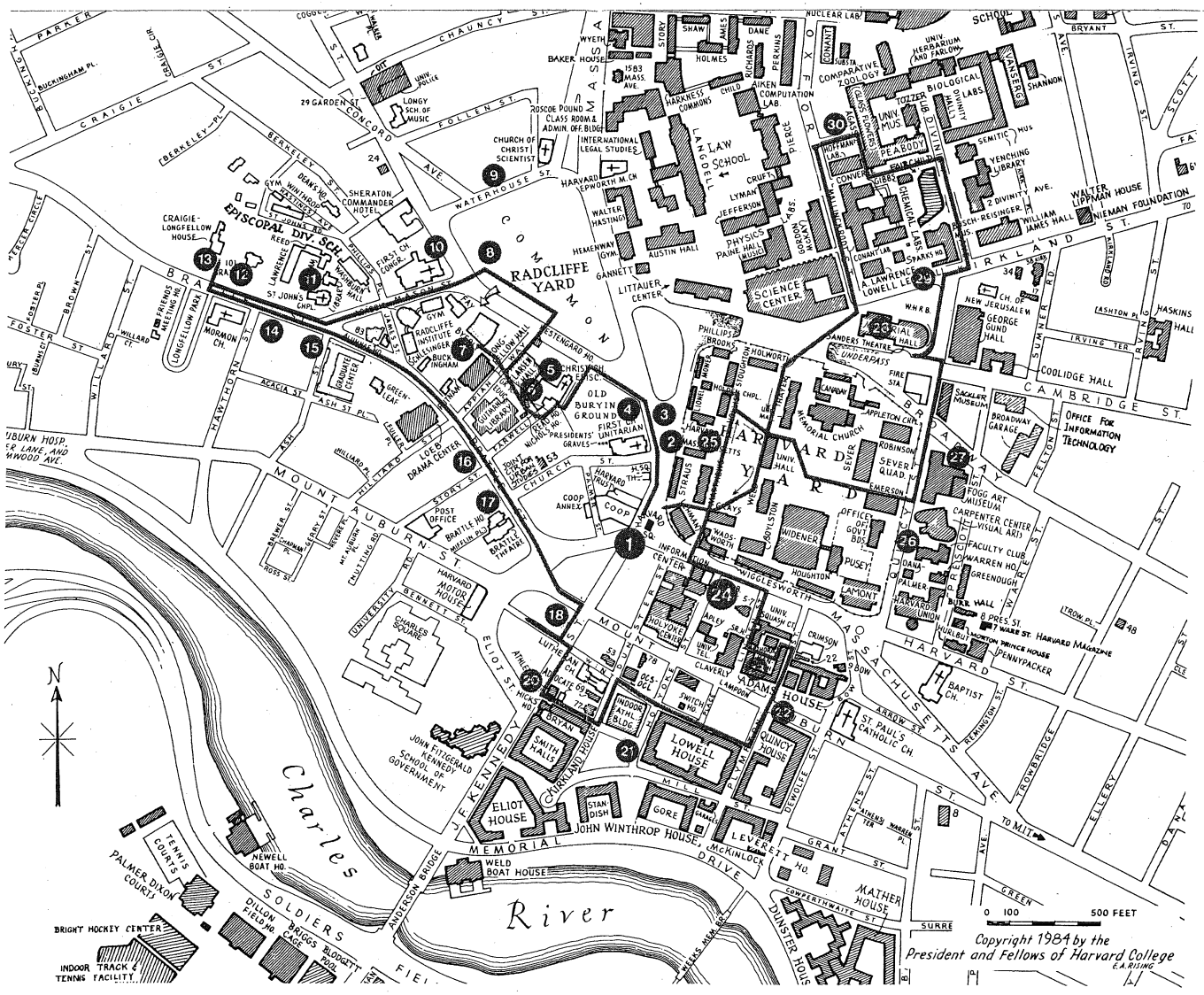
Harvard College in 1839, With Harvard, University and Massachusetts Halls.

(1) The Old Cambridge Walking Guide begins at *Harvard Square* (Harvard Station on the MBTA Red Line), once merely a wide space in the road adjacent to the College, between the Cow Common and the village center. On the present site of the Harvard Coop stood the courthouse, where, on September 2, 1774, patriots forced the resignation of Judges Danforth and Lee from the King's Mandamus Council. Opposite the Coop, in the Harvard Yard, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Meetinghouses successively occupied Watch Hill. In 1774, the provincial congress met at the Fourth Meeting House to organize resistance against British rule, and formed the Committees of Correspondence and Safety to take over civil and military government. In 1779 the first popularly elected constitutional convention met here to frame the oldest constitution still in effect. It became the model for the U. S. Constitution and is the one that governs Massachusetts today.

(2) From the MBTA Station, walk one block up Massachusetts Ave. to the wooden *First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist* (weekdays 9-4:30, Sun. 9:00-1:00) at the corner of Massachusetts Ave. and Church St. The First Parish Church was designed in the Gothic Revival style by Isaiah Rogers and built in 1833 with funds partially contributed by Harvard College in return for pews for student use.

(3) North of the First Parish is the *Old Burying Ground,* also known as *God's Acre,* set aside from the public common lands before 1635. Here are buried the earliest Harvard presidents and ministers, and many colonial settlers, such as Stephen Daye, the first printer in the colonies. Several veterans of the Revolution, including two black soldiers, Cato Stedman and Neptune Frost, also lie here.

(4) (5) Follow the iron fence past the *1734 Milestone,* with its conflicting statements, to reach *Christ Church* (9:00-5:00 every day), the oldest church building in Cambridge. It was designed in 1761 by Peter Harrison of Newport, R.I. America's first trained architect, who also designed King's Chapel in Boston. When most of the Tory congregation was forced to flee Cambridge in 1774, the church was used as a barracks by Connecticut troops, and the organ pipes were melted down for bullets. The church was reopened for services on New Year's Eve, 1775, when George and Martha Washington worshipped here.



Cambridge Historical Commission
831 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

Written by Erica Funkhouser Beal.

Copyright Cambridge Historical Commission 1975, 1985. Published by Cambridge Discovery, Inc. with the assistance of W.R. Grace & Co , Construction Products Division

Cover: The Burgis View of Cambridge, with Boston and Charlestown in the foreground. 1743

(6) Take the narrow pathway between the church and the graveyard to Farwell Place. Halfway down the block, on the right, stands the *Nichols House* (1827), the home of John Nichols, a noted surgeon who served in the northern army during the Civil War. The brick path to the right of the Nichols House leads to a small courtyard and the *Read House* (c. 1772), one of the few remaining houses of a patriot family in Cambridge. The Reads were tanners; James Read marched with the Cambridge militia on the day of the skirmishes at Concord and Lexington.

(7) Continue west on the brick path across Appian Way, and go through a gate in the brick wall into *Radcliffe Yard.* Radcliffe College was begun in 1879 by Arthur Gilman to provide an education for women; instruction was given by Harvard faculty members. Harvard and Radcliffe are now integrated. As you enter the Yard, the second building on the right is the *Radcliffe Institute,* a center for professional women. It contains the *Schlesinger Library,* which holds major collections of the works of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Susan B. Anthony, and Julia Ward Howe.

(8) Return to Appian Way, turn left, and walk to Garden St. Across the street is the *Cambridge Common,* the focal point of political, religious, and social activity in Cambridge for nearly 350 years. The land was first set aside in 1631 for grazing cattle, training militia, and holding assemblies. Public elections were held annually under the "Election Oak"; under another tree, the "Whitefield Elm," George Whitefield delivered his controversial sermons in the 18th century. The Common was the training ground for the Cambridge militia and the center of rebel activity in the early years of the Revolution. When General Washington arrived in Cambridge on July 2, 1775, the Common was already the main camp of the new Continental Army. Opposite this entrance to the Common is the *Civil War Monument* (1869). To the left stand three cannon captured from the British by patriots in 1775. Nearby, a bronze tablet and a scion of the "Washington Elm" mark the site where, according to legend, George Washington took command of the army on July 3, 1775. The only buildings fronting on the present Common that survive from the Revolution are

(9) Christ Church and the *Waterhouse House* (c. 1753), the grey wooden house at the northern end of the Common. For many years it was the home of Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse who, in 1800, first introduced smallpox vaccination into this country. Near this house, in the northwest corner of the Common, barracks housed troops during the Revolutionary War. The Common, once cut by thoroughfares, was enclosed as a public park in 1830.

Beyond the cannon is a walk that follows the route of the early Charlestown-Watertown Path. By it, recross Garden St. to Mason St. and follow Mason St. past the stone

(10) *First Church, Congregational* (1870. Mon.–Fri. 9–12:30, 1:30–5). The Congregational Church and the First Parish, Unitarian Universalist, are the oldest congregations in Cambridge. Originally the two churches were united, but a religious controversy early in the 19th century caused a

split. The tower is topped with a gilded weathercock (1721) by Shem Drowne, who also made the grasshopper weathervane on Faneuil Hall in Boston.

On the north side of Mason St. and Brattle St. stands
(11) *Episcopal Divinity School,* marked by *St. John's Chapel* (1868. Hours irregular), designed by William Ware and Henry Van Brunt. The statue at the base of the Chapel of a man grieving is dedicated to a former student and civil rights worker who was shot in Alabama in 1965.

(12) The next house on the right, at 101 Brattle St., is *Hastings House* (1845). Oliver Hastings, lumber merchant and builder, constructed this building as his own home; it now contains apartments for Divinity School faculty.

(13) At 105 Brattle St. is the *Longfellow National Historic Site* (Charge. 9–4:45 every day). The Longfellow House was built in 1759 by John Vassall, Jr., whose family were wealthy West Indian plantation owners. At the beginning of the Revolution, Vassall fled Cambridge and the house served as quarters for General George Washington throughout the Siege of Boston (July, 1775–March, 1776). In 1791 the estate was purchased by Dr. Andrew Craigie, the first Apothecary General of the American Army and an important land speculator who developed East Cambridge. When he died in 1819, Craigie was so deeply in debt that his widow was forced to rent rooms. The poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow came to the house as a lodger in 1837 and became the owner after his marriage in 1843 to Frances Appleton of Boston. The Longfellow descendants maintained the house until it was turned over to the National Park Service in 1974.

A half mile west among the Loyalist mansions that gave Brattle Street the name Tory Row is the *Hooper-Lee-Nichols House* (1688), headquarters of the Cambridge Society and the oldest house in Cambridge. (Charge. Tues. and Thurs. 2-5 P.M.)

Return to Harvard Square on the south side of Brattle St.,
(14) passing the *Henry Vassall House* at the corner of Hawthorne St. An 8-foot-square chimney in the house dates from the mid-17th century. During the 18th century the house was remodelled by the Vassall family, who lived there until 1775, when the last Loyalist Vassall fled Cambridge. The house then served as Army medical headquarters. Replicas of 18th century patriot flags are usually displayed.

(15) At the corner of Ash St. stands the shingled *Stoughton House* (1882–1883), designed by the famous architect, H. H. Richardson, who also planned Austin and Sever Halls at Harvard and Trinity Church in Boston.

Continue on Brattle St. past the Radcliffe Graduate Center
(16) and the Loeb Drama Center to the *Dexter Pratt House* (1808), which is set back from the street behind a terrace. This was once the home of Longfellow's "village blacksmith." A granite marker indicates the site of the famous "spreading chestnut tree."

Continue toward Brattle Square, passing the red frame
(17) *Brattle House* (1727), built for William Brattle, a prominent Cambridge citizen who served, at various times, as physician, preacher, lawyer, and attorney general. He was an officer of the local militia until he was forced to flee Cambridge because of his Tory sympathies. During the Revolution, the house accommodated Major Thomas Mifflin, Commissary General of the Continental Army.

Walk down Brattle St., cross to the traffic island, and walk over to Mt. Auburn St. where, after one block, you will reach
(18) *Winthrop Square,* now a City park. During the 17th and 18th centuries, this area was the open marketplace of the village. A detour down Winthrop St. leads to an unusual view of the topography of ancient Cambridge. Near the end
(19) of the street, on the left, is a *stone wall* dating from the 18th century. The wall reflects the original grade of the hill that rose from a tidal creek in Eliot Square to Winthrop Square.

Return to Boylston St., turn right, and cross to South St.,
(20) where the frame *Hicks House* (1762) occupies the southeast corner. John Hicks was a carpenter who, according to family tradition, took part in the Boston Tea Party. He was one of three Cambridge patriots killed during a skirmish in North Cambridge with British soldiers retreating from Concord on April 19, 1775. His house is now the library of Kirkland House, one of Harvard's undergraduate houses.

Walk east up South Street and left onto Dunster St. Between the frame house at 17 South St. (1826) and 69 Dunster St. (1829) is a granite marker on the site of Gov. Thomas Dudley's home in 1630. When Gov. Winthrop and most of his company moved the seat of the colonial government to Boston in 1634, Dudley was one of the few government officials to remain in Cambridge.

Continue north on Dunster St. and walk one block to Winthrop St. to another of Harvard's undergraduate houses,
(21) *Lowell House* (1929). The steps along the north side of Lowell House lead down Plympton St. where, at the end of the street, you can see the banks of the *Charles River.* Turn
(22) left on Plympton St., passing *Quincy House* (1958) on the right, and the "Castle" of the *Lampoon* (1909), Harvard's undergraduate humor magazine, on the left, just across Mount Auburn Street.

Beyond the Lampoon, halfway up Plympton St. and sur-
(23) rounded by other buildings, is the white frame *Apthorp House* (1760); pass the gate at the granite marker and follow the brick path around to the front of the house. Built for East Apthorp, the first rector of Christ Church, the lavish structure was nicknamed "The Bishop's Palace" by Cambridge Puritans. It sparked a religious and political controversy so intense that Apthorp soon returned to England. During the Siege of Boston, the house accommodated troops of the Continental Army. General Burgoyne and his officers were quartered here after their defeat at Saratoga.

Cross through the courtyard to the Linden St. gate, turn right on Linden St., and then left on Massachusetts Ave. A block away, between Holyoke and Dunster Sts., is
(24) *Holyoke Center* (1961-65). The *Harvard Information Center* (Mon.-Sat. 9-5, Sun. 1-4), just off the plaza, provides a more comprehensive guide to Harvard than that which follows.

Across Massachusetts Ave. from the Holyoke Center Plaza is *Harvard Yard,* called "Yard" because the original "colledge" building was bordered by cowyards. The yellow frame house facing the street to the right is *Wadsworth House,* erected in 1726 by the colonial legislature as a residence for presidents of Harvard.

Walk between Wadsworth House and Lehman Hall to enter
(25) Harvard Yard. Here stand *Massachusetts Hall* (1718), Harvard's oldest existing building, *Hollis Hall* (1762), a dormitory, *Harvard Hall* (1764), which housed the first classroom of the college, and, tucked in the small quadrangle behind Harvard and Hollis, *Holden Chapel* (1742).

Also in the Yard are *Stoughton Hall* (1804) and the granite *University Hall* (1813-1815), both designed by the noted Boston architect, Charles Bulfinch, and an idealized statue of John Harvard by Daniel Chester French.

Beyond University Hall stand *Memorial Church* (1931, open) and *Sever Hall* (1878), designed by H. H. Richardson. *Widener Library* (1913, open), with its great steps, contains panoramic models of Harvard and Cambridge in 1667, 1775, and 1936.

The gate across the quadrangle beyond Sever Hall leads
(26) out to Quincy St. On the right is the modern *Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts* (1961), the only building in North America by the distinguished Swiss architect, Le Corbusier.
(27) To the left of Carpenter Center stands the *Fogg Art Museum* (1925. Free. Mon.-Fri. 10-5, Sun. 1-5).

Continue along Quincy St. past the *Sackler Wing* of the Fogg Museum (1983) and the Graduate School of Design's *Gund Hall* (1969) on the right, to the great red
(28) brick *Memorial Hall* (1876. Open). Memorial Hall was designed by Ware and Van Brunt as a memorial to Harvard's Civil War dead.

At the corner of Kirkland St. and Divinity Ave. is the
(29) *Busch-Reisinger Museum* (Free. Tues.-Fri. 12-5, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 1-5) of art and architecture of northern Europe. Just beyond Divinity Avenue is the *Semitic Museum* (Free. Mon.-Fri. 11-5 P.M., Sun. 1-5).
(30) Continue down Divinity Ave. to the *University Museum* (Charge. Mon.-Sat. 9-4:15, Sun. 1-4:15), which houses four separate museums in addition to the Ware Collection of Glass Flowers ($.50).

To return to Harvard Square, turn left on Oxford St. and cross Kirkland St., walking between Memorial Hall and the new Harvard Science Center, to reenter Harvard Yard.