

Walk 3 May 27

Direction: North to South

Washington Street Norwood Central Train Stop to Foxboro

8:56am: We left Norwood Central Station's parking lot, onto store-lined Washington St., and crossed into Walpole.



Walpole Parks honoring Daughter and Father in the Bird Family

Above right, we read about **Mary Bird** celebrated for her mid-19th century achievements including forming a group that found the first public library and her leadership in abolitionist activities.

Also from Walpole was her father **Francis William Bird**, an industrialist and an abolitionist in whose honor the park (at right) was designated in 1925. A century later, we walked on the park's one-mile path, a pleasant alternative to sidewalks.



Washington Walkers at FW Bird Park

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We exited the park onto Woodland Rd. and crisscrossed the border between Norwood + Walpole a couple of times as we headed southwesterly in East Walpole.

We circled back to Washington Street, pictured at left on a short break.

Washington Street runs in a straight line again, residential and conservation lots alternating in equanimous rhythm.

Sidewalks were wide, reliable for walkers; most well paved and in good shape.

Bravo Norwood and Walpole!
General Washington would approve.

In this lush, spring-fed area, we spotted two ponds although we passed several camouflaged from view. The winding Neponset River fed many marshes and streams.

Nestled just west of and below the road was the Edward Delaney Water Treatment Plant quietly doing its job.

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Meanwhile, we paid close attention to traffic on the two-lane, relatively high-speed road. Only grass paths served as sidewalks at this point.



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To borrow from poet Robert Frost, when we came across a good sidewalk, we took it. Here we paused near a fertile lawn.

Weather conditions were fine. 60+ degrees with mostly cloudy skies made it easy for us to steadily exert and retain energy for the long haul.

What conditions did colonial soldiers have to deal with as they marched here in April 1776?

We bet at the 18-mile mark from Boston came questions: "How much farther? "Have I got enough left to make it?"

Because right along here now - we asked ourselves the same questions.

Several thousand newly organized soldiers, many of whom had never seen this part of Massachusetts, marched forward on April 4. Horses, officers, a few women in carriages and supply carts clattering away logged the first 50 miles to Rhode Island.

Rocks, water, marshland surrounded this single, rough road, forcing teams to form a thin line of march, slowing progress.

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What dominated their minds: revenge for losses at Lexington and Bunker Hill? Or was it doubt about the path ahead? Or was it both?



A hidden bridge covers Stone Meadow Pond under this stretch of Washington St., undetectable unless on foot

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There were neither fifes nor drums here announcing our 2026 arrival and departure.

Well disciplined, we grabbed onto silence to push forward.

Chief Navigator Dwyer at right checked the wind direction to estimate our destination arrival time, given the resistance we were up against.

He was right on target.



Washington Street turned into Washington Place going straight and leading into a cemetery.

Instead, we turned left onto Water Street which took us to the town-line shown at left.

Our stroll was coming to an end.

Here Washington Street converted into modern times, going from a residential street into a three-lane highway, co-named Route 1 a hundred years ago.

It joined many others famous for traffic that always exceeds speed limits. Everybody's in a hurry.

Except us.

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We crossed Route 1 at the Washington Street crosswalk, where sidewalks supply room for crowds to go from parking lots to Foxboro Stadium.

This scene contrasted with 250 years ago when marshy plains stretched for miles in every direction.

Straight on the Post Road – built a few feet above the marshes on both sides - was the only feasible route for the colonial army to follow.

Walking next to a shopping mall and a stadium, concrete everywhere, brought us back to the present and to our destination for the day.

Thinking about the colonial army's 1776 march, their mental attitude, their increasing fatigue, their expectations on the likelihood of defeat, we asked ourselves:

What were the General and his soldiers thinking as they rolled through this sparse, unmarked area mile after mile?

One good guess: keep moving

