

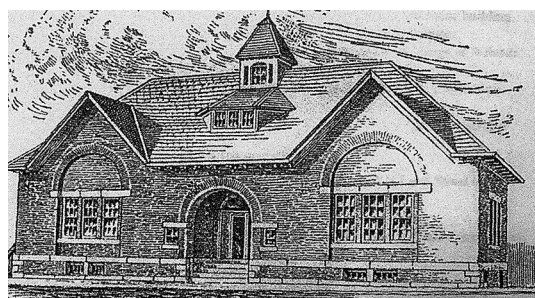


Pratt House, destroyed along with the Congregational Church in the great Dudley Hill Fire of 1890.



Wm. Allen House (c.1840) Dudley Southbridge Road.  
Non extant.

Below is the Black Tavern. This inset image is a photo of the Methodist church pictured to the left of the Tavern.



Pictured is the former Dudley Hill Grammar School (1892). The building is now the Nichols College Currier Center.

The information in this brochure was obtained from the proposal for the Dudley Hill Historic District, voted by the Massachusetts Historical Commission on September 11, 2019 for submission as a Registered National Historic District. A copy of the full proposal is available at the Pearle L. Crawford Memorial Library.

A good source for Dudley history is *Early History of Webster, Dudley, and Oxford*, by Paul J. Macek and James R. Morrison (2000).

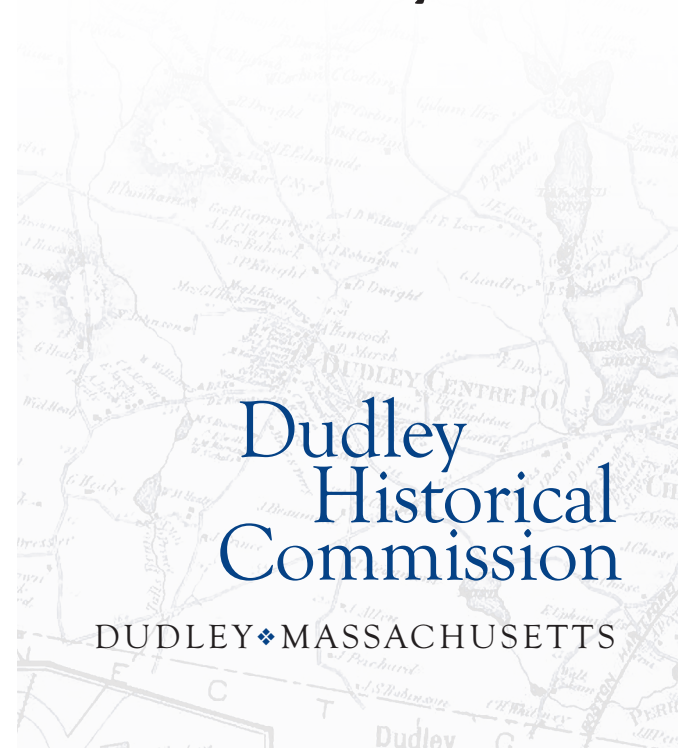
## Dudley Historical Commission 2019

Funding for the printing of this brochure was provided by a grant from the Dudley Cultural Council, a local agency that is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Brochure design provided by  
Studio K Design, Dudley, Massachusetts



# A Walking Tour of Historic Dudley Hill



Dudley  
Historical  
Commission

DUDLEY ♦ MASSACHUSETTS

The Town of Dudley was established in 1732, by act of the General Court, after families living in the area petitioned to have their own church "convenient" to them. Prior to that time, local inhabitants were part of Oxford and required to travel along the "Woodstock Trail" north to Oxford center or south to Woodstock to a place of worship. That "pathway" is still used today and on Dudley Hill is named Center Road.





Starting at the **Dudley Town Common (1)**, at the top of Dudley Hill, you are at the center of early Dudley where religious, governmental, educational and social life thrived. The **Congregational Church (2)** of today is the third structure to occupy the land which was given by the Nipmuck Indians to the newly established town to erect a meeting house for worship, governmental and social use. From this location spread the homes and businesses of the community. The signage on the Common explains the various surrounding buildings.

Face east toward the **Black Tavern (3)** (1804). Cross the street and walk carefully down Tanyard Road, named for the tannery once located at the bottom, to see the former **District One “Old Stone” School (4)** on the left (c.1825). Return to Center Road and imagine the road continuing across to the right of the church. That was the Rattlesnake Trail, where stagecoaches headed west after stopping at the tavern. Read the information about the Black Tavern on the sign near the corner, and the postings on the porch. Take this time to also check out the Annex and Barn of Dudley’s first National Register Historic Structures. The stone monument to Dudley’s industrial past was created from parts of the original Stevens Mills built along the French River in the Marino Village section of Dudley.

Cross the street to regain the sidewalk and travel north, to the **Grange Hall (5)**, originally Washington Hall (1849) and located south of the church, then moved to this location when the **Dudley Hill Grammar School (6)** was built in 1892. The next building was formerly the **Moses Barnes Store (7)** (c.1804) and site of Dudley’s Post Office for many years. The house to the right was the **Moses Barnes House (8)** (c.1825). Looking across the street, the vacant space once had a Methodist church, the Phinehas Bemis House and the Bemis store. This was a very crowded and busy center of the town.

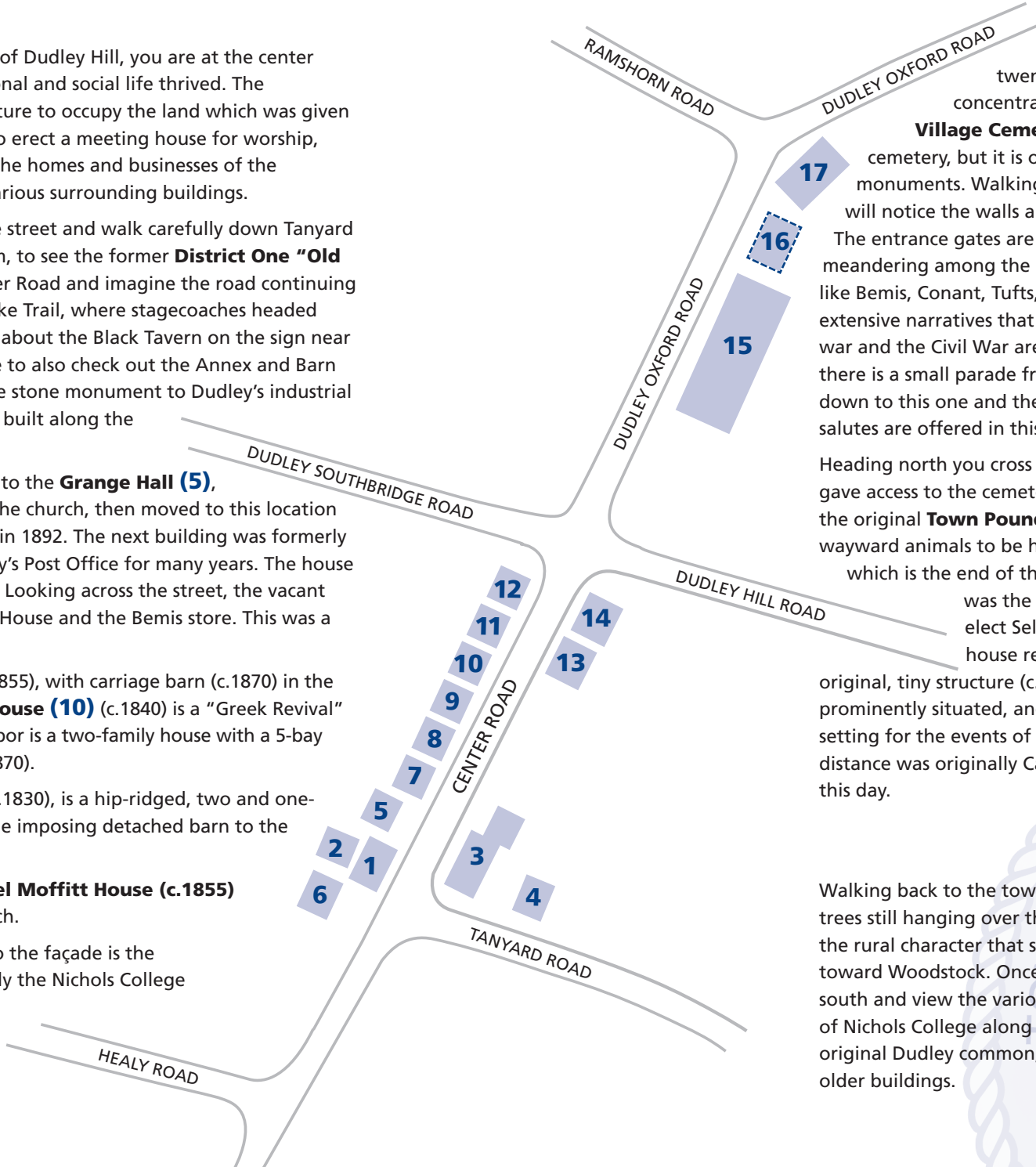
Walking north is the **Leavens Boarding House (9)** (c.1855), with carriage barn (c.1870) in the rear. Continuing north, the **Leonard and Polly Baker House (10)** (c.1840) is a “Greek Revival” style\* cottage with a barn to the rear. Its northern neighbor is a two-family house with a 5-bay symmetrical façade. It was owned by **H.W. Pratt (11)** (1870).

The **Betsy Maynard House — Old Parsonage (12)** (c.1830), is a hip-ridged, two and one-half story house with hipped porch across the façade. The imposing detached barn to the rear is a two-story cross-gabled form.

Across the street is another Greek Revival home, the **Ruel Moffitt House (c.1855) (Parsonage) (13)**, owned by the Congregational Church.

The corner brick house with the 1841 numerals bolted to the façade is the **William Hancock-Cady Webster House (14)**, currently the Nichols College President’s House.

\*Greek Revival style usually incorporates columns and a formal, gable fronted, appearance, and was popular in the 1800’s, after the war of 1812.



Many of the houses in this neighborhood are of twentieth century construction, and we will concentrate on the older elements. Head toward the **Village Cemetery (15)** (1832). This was not the first cemetery, but it is one of the most interesting due to its location and monuments. Walking along the narrow sidewalk as it rises up, you will notice the walls are constructed of field stone with granite “caps”. The entrance gates are especially notable. It is worth entering and meandering among the monuments with names of early Dudley residents like Bemis, Conant, Tufts, Healy and Corbin. Some large stones have extensive narratives that are still readable. Veterans of the revolutionary war and the Civil War are interred in this cemetery. Each Memorial Day there is a small parade from the older Corbin cemetery on Ramshorn Road down to this one and then on to the town common. Prayers and military salutes are offered in this quintessential ancient graveyard.

Heading north you cross a small driveway. This was “Hearse Lane”, which gave access to the cemetery. In the next section of land was constructed the original **Town Pound (16)**, an area that had an enclosure for wayward animals to be held. It was part of the original Carter family farm, which is the end of this historic walk. The original **Carter House (17)** was the site of the first gathering of the town in 1732 to elect Selectmen to lead them into the future. The present house reflects many additions over the years to the original, tiny structure (c.1726). It is now an imposing structure, prominently situated, and serves as an important reminder of the historic setting for the events of nearly 300 years ago. The golf course in the distance was originally Carter farmland and remains a visual delight to this day.

Walking back to the town common, enjoy the view south, with the large trees still hanging over the road, allowing a brief moment to appreciate the rural character that still exists on this ancient pathway heading toward Woodstock. Once back at the common, you may wish to proceed south and view the various older brick buildings that now make up part of Nichols College along the elm tree lined green area, part of the original Dudley common, which provides a wonderful setting for these older buildings.