

## The Wickford Walk

This walking tour starts at Updike Park on Brown Street in downtown Wickford Village. There is free public parking throughout the village.

Stop	Location	
1	Updike Park at the corner of Brown Street and West Main	<p>Our tour starts at the marker in Updike Park.</p> <p>Welcome to Wickford, Rhode Island, one of the oldest preserved Colonial seaside towns in the country. Join us in a walk back in time to learn about the diverse and often surprising history of Wickford Village. The historic markers that make up “The Wickford Walk”, offer stories of ship building, Narragansett settlers, steamships and grand architecture. This project was made possible by Historic Wickford, Incorporated as part of their ongoing commitment to protecting and preserving this very special place. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Facing the Marker, turn right. Take the crosswalk at the corner and head down Main Street. You will find the "Grand Highway Marker" in front of 17 Main Street, about 500 feet.</p>
2	Main Street in front of 17 Main Street	<p>You should be facing “The Grand Highway” marker and able to gaze down Main Street.</p> <p>Most of Wickford’s grand homes, seen here stretching up and down the “Grand Highway” which is now known and West Main, Main and Pleasant Streets are the result of an thriving era of maritime and trading center growth from the 1770s to 1836. Local builders constructed these beautiful homes for ship captains, bankers and merchants. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Walk down to the end of Main Street to the “Gateway to Newport” marker just before the Town Dock and Gardner’s Seafood.</p>
3	End of Main Street	<p>You should be facing “The Gateway to Newport” marker with a view of the marina and Narragansett Bay in front of you.</p> <p>Several events brought Wickford’s maritime period to an end in the mid 1800’s but the village was rescued from decline in the 1870s with the installation of the Newport and Wickford Railway and Steamship Line. The train left Wickford Junction on a regular basis making the short run south to Poplar Point and stopping at Belleville and Wickford Village. At Poplar Point a luxurious steam ferry set sail directly to Jamestown and Newport. The railway brought new money, jobs and visitors to Wickford. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Turn around and walk back up Main Street and take the first right onto Pleasant Street to the “Founding of Wickford” marker which is on the left side of the street.</p>
4	Beginning of Pleasant Street	<p>You should be facing “The Founding of Wickford” marker with a view of the house across the street.</p> <p>Captain Lodowick Updike was the first to envision a commercially profitable seaport and ship building town on the site of Wickford Village. In 1709, Updike planned roadways and platted out his future seaport town in the style of colonial Boston. It was initially called “Updike’s New Town” but later became known as Wickford Village. Look across the street at this grand Georgian Colonial style home at 19 Pleasant Street which was built sometime before 1745 for one of Updike’s descendants. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p>

		<p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Turn and walk back to Main Street. Turn right and walk back toward shops at Brown Street continuing until you reach the side street immediately before Wickford Kitchen Factory Outlet. Take a right on the side street and walk straight onto the path leading into Bush Hill preservation. Look for the marker “The People of Small Point” on your left.</p>
5	Path behind Wickford Kitchen Factory Outlet	<p>You should be facing “The People of the Small Point” marker with the salt marsh in front of you.</p> <p>Human settlement of the area we now call Wickford Village, began some 30,000 years ago during the post-ice age or Paleolithic period with Indigenous people living a hunter-gatherer lifestyle. At some point in time as the climate warmed, the Narragansett people settled into a more permanent style of living in large semi-permanent coastal villages surrounded by extensive fields which they cleared for cultivation. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Turn around and go back down the path you just walked. When you reach West Main Street, cross the street, turn right and look for the “A Maritime Center” marker.</p>
6	West Main Street by Academy Cove	<p>You should be facing “A Maritime Center” marker with Academy Cove in front of you.</p> <p>Since Colonial times, land based travel around coastal Rhode Island was grueling and slow. Between the early 1700s to the early 1860s, Wickford developed into an important and thriving maritime center. Hundreds of sailing vessels from small dories and catboats to substantial brigs, schooners and sloops were crafted at five separate shipyards by numerous craftsmen and tradesmen. You are looking at Academy Cove which was the location of a major builder. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Continue walking up West Main Street. At the crosswalk marker, take a left and follow the path that leads to the North Kingstown Library. Walk past the Library and parking area and down to Boone Street. Take a left on Boone and a left onto Phillips Street walking toward Wickford Elementary School. Look for the “Washington Academy” marker on the left next to the playground.</p>
7	Phillips Street by Wickford Elementary	<p>You should be facing the “Washington Academy” marker with the school building in the distance.</p> <p>The Washington Academy was founded in 1800 by educationally minded wealthy landowners and merchants in Wickford and Newport. It was once the second oldest institution of higher learning in the state of Rhode Island, eclipsed only by Brown University. It built specifically to educate and train young men for careers as teachers, land surveyors, and celestial navigators; all skill sets that were in high demand at the onset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Turn around and walk back to Phillips Street taking a left to walk toward the village. Cross the street at the intersection of Brown and Phillips and look for the “Hussey Bridge” marker on your left.</p>
8	Hussey Bridge	<p>You should be facing the “Hussey Bridge” marker with the town harbor and bridge in front of you.</p> <p>Young Clarence Hussey was a hot shot engineer straight out of MIT when he was hired by Rhode Island as its first state bridge engineer. He was given a tiny office in the basement of the Capitol building and carte blanche to bring the state’s bridges up to safety standards. By 1925,</p>

		<p>when Hussey's priority list brought him to the rapidly deteriorating Hamilton Bridge in Wickford, he had already gone a long way towards that goal. Sadly though, this was to be Hussey's final bridge. Just prior to its completion, Hussey died at the age of 42 years old. His obituary noted that he was known across America as a premier designer of bridges. Take a moment to read the details on the marker.</p> <p><b>CONTINUE ON:</b> Turn left to walk back to the intersection and take a right onto Brown Street walking until you pass Shayna's Place on the right and into Library Park. Look for the large stone with symbols carved in it.</p>
9	Library Park on Brown Street	<p>Some believe that this enigma in stone is a record of a visit to Narragansett Bay by the Vikings, Norsemen, other Icelandic explorers or a voyage by the Knights Templar. Some believe it was more likely rendered by immigrants to our area out of national pride in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although no one can say with complete certainty exactly by whom or when these intriguing Runic symbols were carved, it is safe to say, as quoted from Professor Henrik Williams of Uppsala University in Sweden, the rune stone is "of considerable cultural significance to Rhode Island and New England, not the least because of the controversy, mystery, and even intrigue connected with it."</p> <p><b>This is the end of our Historic Markers walking tour. We hope you enjoyed your stroll through history. Please feel free to peruse the shops, restaurants and public common areas of our village. Please come back and join us for other historic walking tours.</b></p>