



ARLINGTON (WEST CAMBRIDGE OR MENOTOMY),
1633-1807

SIGNS of a crisis, a coming appeal to arms, appeared in all the towns near Boston. If you had passed through Cambridge to Menotomy (Arlington) on the 18th of April, 1775, perchance you might have encountered an English officer in disguise mapping out the roads, or overheard the boast of one of the ten sergeants posted by General Gage hereabouts, to cut off communications, that " five regiments of regulars could easily march across the continent." To-day, crossing Alewife Brook, the Cambridge boundary line, let us halt under the mighty solitary elm, which, with its companion, long marked the east gateway of Arlington, and review the situation on the day before the first shot was fired. On pretence of drill, the British were gathered on Boston Common, at the foot of which the transports awaited the embarkation of Lieutenant-Colonel Smith and his grenadiers. Warren at once dispatched a message to Hancock and Adams at Lexington, and the Concord supplies were hastily concealed. Paul Revere was on the *qui vive*. Five minutes before the sentinels received at sunset the order to let no one pass, Revere's small boat glided under the grim bows of the British man-of-war *Somerset*.¹ He set out over Charlestown Neck for Medford, stopped at the Porter mansion on Ram's Head Lane,² to rouse the captain of the Minute-men, and crossed the Mystic twice before reaching Menotomy (Arlington).

¹ Afterwards sunk off the treacherous coast of Cape Cod. More than one hundred years later the battered hulk was uncovered and eagerly sought after by the relic-hunter.

² At the corner of Rural Avenue and High Street.



*The Samuel Bowman-Whittemore House, Massachusetts Avenue,
Arlington. Pre-Revolutionary.*



56 Old Paths and Legends of New England

About two by the clock the red-coats—"Lobster-Backs" the mob called them at the Boston Massacre—silently crossed the sluggish, winding Charles to Lechmere Point, landing near the County Court House at East Cambridge. Over the Charlestown Road, or "Milk-Row," they marched to Menotomy, the Second Parish of Cambridge. Just under the elm gateway, Samuel Whittemore was "awakened by the stir in the street, and, looking out, saw bayonets glistening in the moonlight." ' His grandson, Amos, repaired the old flintlocks in preparation for the fight. Hard by stood the Black Horse Tavern, which the troops searched in vain for the Committee of Safety. Vice-President Elbridge Gerry and Colonels Lee and Orne escaped by the back door, and lay concealed in the corn stubble. The house is still standing where Lieutenant Sam Bowman answered a soldier's request for water with "What are you out at this time of night for?" So they turned to the house opposite (destroyed), where they were sure of hearty welcome, because its whitened chimneys betokened a Tory inmate.

On the corner of Winchester Road (Mystic Street) the troops knocked roughly at the village shoemaker's, asking why the candles burned at this unseemly hour. The gude-wife replied that she was making herb tea. The shoemaker's "herb tea" was a concoction afterwards absorbed by the red-coats in the form of solid material, sometimes-known as "Yankee bullets," made from the household pewter. Captain Locke mustered the Menotomy men, and they marched to Lexington. The "Exempts" did duty bravely,

'Address of Samuel Abbot Smith on West Cambridge in 1775. Mr. Whittemore was over eighty years of age, yet he refused to seek safety with his wife, but took up his stand behind a stone wall on Mystic Street,, and did deadly work against the retreating British regulars. They bayoneted him and left him for dead, but he was borne to Cooper's tavern,, attended by Dr. Tufts of Medford, and lived to ninety-eight years of age—Amos Whittemore invented the cotton and wool carding machine.

seizing Earl Percy's military supplies in front of the Town House, the first capture of the Revolution. The women fled to "George Prentiss on the hill." Lame Jason Russell was warned to fly by one Ammi Cutter, but instead barricaded his tavern (Jason Street corner). At this hour the



Procession of Birches, Mystic Lake, Arlington.

*" Cream birches, yellow-curtain'd, break
The cloudless, pale blue sky, and shake
Their sprays to the pellucid lake."—J. E. NESMITH.*

Danvers and Salem Minute-men were watching up the road to harass Earl Percy's men on the retreat. Suddenly a flanking party attacked them in the rear; they rushed into the tavern, and eleven were killed, with Jason Russell and two English.



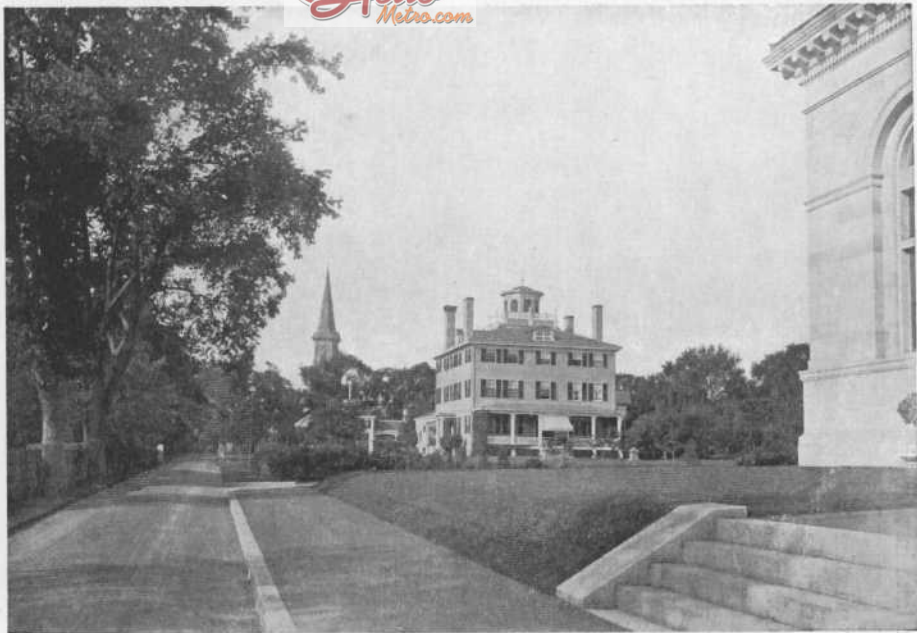
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The Americans hastened down the hillside to the "foot of the rocks." (You may define this spot on your way toward Arlington Heights by the old Locke houses and the Lowell turnpike.) With Gen. Heath and Dr. Warren they pressed the flying British closely. The loss of the crestfallen regulars was 273 men; the Americans one third as many, twenty-two of whom were killed in Menotomy. As the last red-coat crossed the Alewife Brook into Cambridge, the men of Menotomy, who had waked up that morning as King George's subjects, slept as American patriots.

A visit in Arlington is not complete without a peep at the district of the "Flobeenders," by way of Pleasant Street, which leads past the Trowbridge residence to Spy Pond and beautiful Belmont, and also a ride to Winchester in view of the Mystic Ponds. Of course you will like to see "The Partings," the ancient shoal which divides Mystic Pond. The shad have deserted their haunts since the intrusion of the Water Works. The fish way is under the care of the Massachusetts Fish Commission.¹

It was the lovely Spy Pond which impelled J. T. Trowbridge to take up his habitation in Arlington, for no landscape is complete to him without water. Every boy knew how Jack Hazard found *A Chance for Himself* in the days when *Our Young Folks* was edited by Mr. Trowbridge and Lucy Larcom. His story of *The Medal* was suggested by an adventure of the author himself on Mystic Lake, when he rescued a boy from drowning, and for which the Humane Society surprised him with a medal. Longfellow, walking with his host, Mr. Trowbridge, on the shore of Spy Pond, said: "Have you never put this lake into a poem?" *Menotomy Lake*, was his answer:

¹ For details of delightful walks along the Reservation Parkways in this vicinity, see Bacon's *Walks and Rides About Boston*.



The Robbins Mansion.

Robbins Memorial Library.

*Formerly Squire William Whitemore House, 1800.
View from Arlington Green.*



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" I row by steep woodlands, I rest on my oars
Under banks deep embroidered with grass and young clover;
Far round, in and out, wind the beautiful shores,
The lake in the midst, with the blue heavens over."

Beyond the Soldiers' Monument, on which stands the " Heater Piece," the buildings of the square represent interesting contrasts of architecture: the First Parish Church of 1847 and the Robbins Memorial Library (1892), the first free library in Massachusetts. Its lofty frescoed reading-room, with bronzes and the valuable portraits, are most interesting. Conspicuous is the stately Squire William Whittemore house of 1809, now the Robbins mansion. The Russell store, of four generations, where the British pulled the plugs out of the molasses barrels, is opposite the Cutter homestead on Water Street, that ancient mill-lane over which the Watertown corn was brought to be ground at Captain Cooke's mill on Vine Brook.

Massachusetts Avenue is the Paul Revere route, except for a short distance, where the old road, now Appleton Street, makes a circuit back to the avenue. Arlington Heights was a part of the Welsh Mountains. A view of the fields of Middlesex and the entire stage of the siege of Boston may be obtained by following Park Avenue to the water tower.