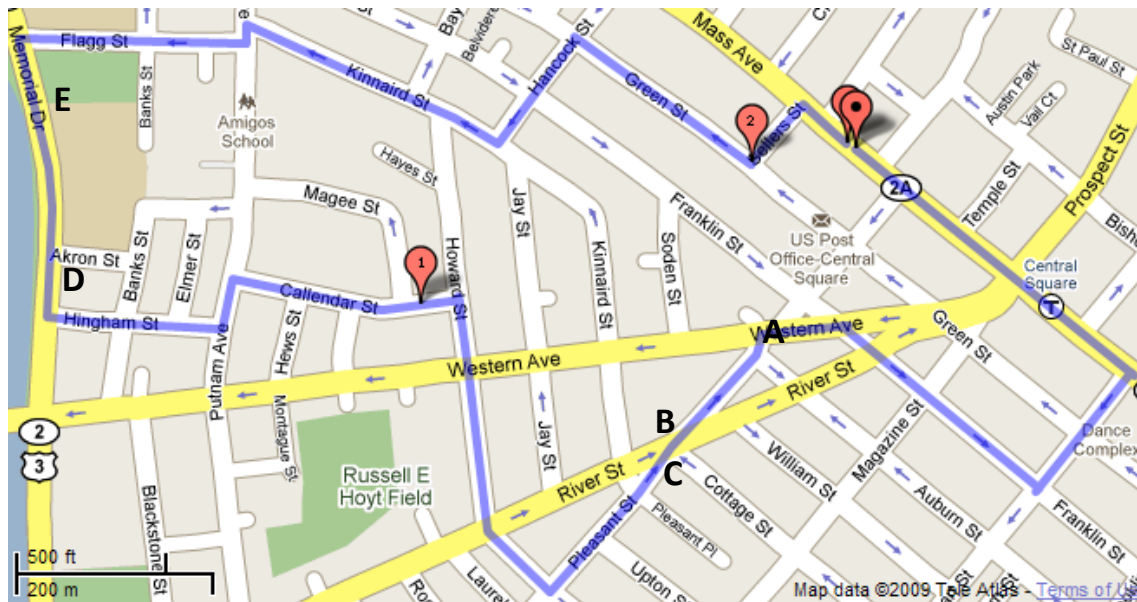




4. Riverside/Cambridgeport Women's History Walk – 2.1 Miles



- 1.) Start at City Hall, walking east on Mass Ave. towards Central Square (.25 miles)
- 2.) Cross Mass Ave. and turn right onto Pearl St. at the CORT/Putnam Furniture Rental (.1 miles)
- 3.) After 2 blocks, turn right onto Franklin St. at the Cambridge Public Library - Central Sq. Branch (.2 miles)
- 4.) After crossing Magazine St. and River St., turn left onto Western Ave. (.05 miles)
- 5.) Take 1st left onto Pleasant St. (.2 miles)

(Women's Historical Site A; Sarah Sprague Jacobs, 19 Pleasant St., corner of Western Ave. and Pleasant St.)

(Women's Historical Site B; Florence Luscomb, 37 Pleasant St., intersection of Pleasant and River Sts.)

(Women's Historical Site C; Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., other side of Pleasant and River intersection)

- 6.) At APA Automotive, turn right onto Kelly Rd., which becomes Howard St. once you cross River St. (.2 miles)

- 7.) At Abundant Life Church, turn left onto Callendar St. (.1 miles)

- 8.) Turn left onto Putnam Ave. and take first right onto Hingham St. (.2 miles)

- 9.) Turn right onto Memorial Drive (.2 Miles)

(Women's Historical Site D; Memorial Drive Takeover, 888 Memorial Drive, b/w Hingham and Akron Sts.)

(Women's Historical Site E; Isabella (Curtis) Halsted, Led campaign to open up Memorial Drive to foot traffic.)

- 10.) After basketball courts, turn right onto Flagg St. (.1 miles) Cross Putnam Ave. and take a slight left to continue on Kinnaird St. (.2 miles)

- 11.) Turn left onto Hancock St. (.1 miles)

- 12.) After 2 blocks, turn right onto Green St. There is no street sign, but there is a blue house at the corner (.1 miles)

- 13.) Turn left into Sellers St. and right onto Mass Ave. at City Hall. (.1 miles)

Memory Lane Walks created by the



CAMBRIDGE COMMISSION
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

In Collaboration with:



Community Development
Department



Office of the Mayor

Please use crosswalks and use caution in construction areas.*

*May affect length of walk.

More information, including references, along with many other women's histories, can be found on the **Cambridge Women's Heritage Project Website** (<http://www.cambridgema.gov/cwhp/>)

A. Sarah Sprague Jacobs (b. March 17, 1813 in Cranston RI, d. 14 May 1902 in Cambridge)

Politician (one of first 2 women elected to Cambridge Sch. Comm.); Teacher; Author; Poet; Copy Editor

Born in Cranston, Rhode Island, Sarah Sprague Jacobs was the eldest child of the Reverend Bela Jacobs and Sarah ("Sally") Sprague Jacobs. Rev. Jacobs was the first pastor of the First Baptist Church at 5 Magazine Street. In 1837, Sarah Jacobs published a memoir of her father. She also wrote many poems published in various sources, as well as a number of books for young people, including *Nonantum and Natick* (Boston 1853), a history of the Indian tribes of New England and the missionary work of John Eliot among the Indians.

From 1818 to 1909, the Jacobs family resided at 19 Pleasant Street, a sizable wood-frame house built for the Rev. Jacobs. After he died, his widow and children continued to live there; later, nieces and nephews expanded the household.

By 1900, the household was considerably smaller, comprising Sarah, her sister, a young nephew, Allen, and their servant, Mary Needham. Sarah Sprague's brothers were well known in Cambridge. Justin Allen Jacobs became City Clerk (and briefly City Auditor); Bela Farwell Jacobs was an attorney and warden at St. Peter's Episcopal Church. A niece, Isabel, was an assistant at the Cambridge Public Library; her nephew, Allen, became the assistant pastor at Christ Church.

In 1879, the Massachusetts Legislature passed a law allowing women to vote in school committee elections. That same year, Sarah Sprague Jacobs (at about age 66) and Phebe Mitchell Kendall became the first two women elected to the Cambridge School Committee. Miss Jacobs served until 1885, when she resigned.

Jacobs transcribed Cambridge's earliest public records and prepared the copy manuscripts for publication in two volumes. The first was *The Register Book of the Lands and Houses in the "New Towne" and the Town of Cambridge with the Records of the Proprietors of the Common Lands being the Records Generally Called "The Proprietors Records"* (1896), and the second volume was *The Records of the Town of Cambridge (Formerly Newtowne) Massachusetts 1630-1703* (1901). This laborious undertaking no doubt consumed many years of her time. She was 83 years old at the time of the publication of the first volume and 88 years old when the second volume was published. She died at home on 14 May 1902 age 89 years and was buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

B. Florence Luscomb (b. February 6, 1887 in Lowell, MA, d. October 27, 1985 in Watertown, MA.)

Suffragist, social activist, peace activist

Florence Luscomb was a committed believer in world peace, women's liberation, and workers' unions, and a familiar figure at protest marches and rallies throughout her long life. She attended Chauncy Hall, a private secondary school, and then went on to MIT, graduating with a B.S. in Architecture, the first woman to do so at MIT. Her interest was primarily in Landscape Architecture, a study that echoed her life long love of the outdoors.

In 1918, Luscomb left architecture to become executive secretary for the Boston Equal Suffrage Association, and began to sell copies of the *Women's Journal* on Boston Common, and to give speeches on suffrage throughout New England. After 1920, she found full-time work in various socially concerned organizations. She was a founding member of the Boston League of Women Voters. She also worked with the Massachusetts Civic League, where she initiated prison reform, and was a significant member of the Joint Board of Sanitary Control, concerned with factory safety, and the Massachusetts branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom with which she was associated for the rest of her life. She found employment as a labor organizer in Boston, and in 1927, she was inspector of safety conditions for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

She lived with her mother until her mother's death in 1933, when a small legacy from her grandfather allowed her to give up paid employment and devote herself to social reform and political activism. She worked for the Boston wing of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, and the American League for Peace and Democracy, among other organizations. By the late '40s, she set up a co-operative household in Cambridge that offered like-minded women, including Radcliffe graduate students, a nurturing environment. She continued this style of cooperative living with a new groups of young people into her nineties when illness compelled her to give up independent living.

Luscomb ran for public office at least four times, first for Boston City Council in 1922, losing by less than one percent of the vote. She was a candidate for the US House of Representatives on the People's Labor Party. Most notably, when the Massachusetts state chair of the Progressive Party, she ran for governor in 1952. At the age of 71, she turned out for a "March for Peace" in 1958 to the United Nations, walking from New Haven to Manhattan to appeal for an end to nuclear weapons testing. In the early 1960s, she traveled to Cuba, attended a peace conference in Moscow, and then went on to China, in spite

of US policy forbidding such travel. On her return, she lectured on China and continued to work for peace movements. In her eighties, she was rediscovered by the women's movement as one of its "foremothers" and began a new lecture career, speaking throughout the country. She also was active in the anti-Vietnam War movement, joining marches and speaking out on behalf of the peace movement. During this period, she continued to work for improved racial relations and on behalf of school busing. She reminded her fellow feminists that women included poor and minority women, and served as a consultant to the young women organizing the professional labor union, Nine to Five. At a celebration of her ninetieth birthday in 1976, she was feted by leaders of all the organizations with whom she had worked. On this occasion, she urged her listeners to think about social justice with the words: "It's time for a second American revolution." In her mid-nineties, ill health forced her into a nursing home in Watertown, where she died at the age of ninety-eight.

C. Cambridge Women's Center (www.cambridgewomenscenter.org)

In 1971, a large group of women seized an abandoned, Harvard-owned building on Memorial Drive (see Women's Historical Site C). Inspired by their actions and subsequent organizing efforts, many local supporters generously contributed toward the purchase of 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge - the Women's Center. The Women's Center offers a number of services to women. They provide crisis intervention and peer support counseling for women in crisis through their Helpline and in person at the Center. They provide this service for women dealing with a number of issues including battering, homelessness, the aftermath of sexual assault, coming out, and suicidal thoughts and feelings.

The Women's Center provides assistance to women in finding the programs and resources that they need locally. They have an extensive information, resource, and referral system, as well as 1:1 assistance of volunteer staffers. They offer support and a safe space to women in crisis and provide a small kitchen facility containing donated food products, so that women may prepare a light meal or snack for themselves, while at the Center.

Periodically, the Women's Center hosts readings by local women authors in addition to our regular line-up of support groups and workshops.

D. 888 Memorial Drive Takeover

On March 6th, 1971, women from across Massachusetts gathered in Boston Common to celebrate International Women's Day by marching from Boston Common, up Massachusetts Avenue, to Harvard University. As the parade entered Cambridge, the crowd turned down a side street and stopped at a building owned by Harvard University (corner of Memorial Drive and Akron St.). For ten days, before being forced out, the women occupied the building to highlight the lack of services and support available to them. Inspired by their actions, local supporters in Cambridge went on to found the Cambridge Women's Center (see Women's Historical Site B), now the longest continually operating Women's Center in the United States.

E. Isabella (Curtis) Halsted (b. May 8 1907 in Manchester on the Sea, MA, d. December 13 2006 in Cambridge) Activist, Business Woman

Isabella Curtis Halsted was the daughter of Charles Hopkinson, a Cambridge born portrait artist who painted over thirty members of the Harvard faculty, and Elinor Curtis, who was related to the Longfellow family. As a child, her mother spent her winters at the Longfellow House. Although she lived in Boston, Isabella also stayed in Cambridge while attending the Buckingham School. She attended Bryn Mawr College for two years in the mid-1920s and then studied at the Art Students League in New York City for two more years. In 1930, she married James Halsted, a physician, after which she lived in Boston, Cleveland, and Dedham. After the marriage ended in divorce in 1951, Isabella Halsted returned to Cambridge and decided to learn typing and stenography. Isabella worked as a dean of residents at Radcliffe, as a membership secretary at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and eventually as director of the newly formed Boston Center for International Visitors in 1961. There she hosted foreign guests of the State Department, welcoming them into her home in Cambridge and learning about their cultures. Isabella Halsted also initiated and led a campaign to open Memorial Drive to foot traffic, during the summer months (Riverbend Park) for which she was celebrated with a memorial stone bench along Memorial Drive. Some of her letters from her father are held in the Charles Hopkinson collection in the Smithsonian Archives of American Artists. The Curtis family papers in Schlesinger Library include some material written by her mother.