

WALK A MILE THROUGH PORTSMOUTH HISTORY

SEE THE REVERSE SIDE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CORRESPONDING HISTORIC SITES.

1. LIBERTY EAGLE, PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Start the mile-long route at the stairwell in the heart of the library and look up at the hanging statue of a golden eagle.
- Walk out to Parrott Ave and take a left.
- Continue East past the Middle School and take a left onto Rogers Street.
- Turn right onto Court Street and cross the street at the next crosswalk.
- Walk into the African Burying Ground.



2. AFRICAN BURYING GROUND

- Exit back onto Court Street, turning left.
- Walk to the Corner of Pleasant and Court Streets.
- Turn to the left and note the plaque on the white building which reads “site of the Daniel Webster residence c. 1808 – The Great Fire of 1813”.
- This was the site of the first library in New Hampshire, the Social Library at Portsmouth.

3. FIRST LIBRARY AND DANIEL WEBSTER RESIDENCE

- Cross both Pleasant and Court Streets.
- Continue right along Pleasant Street.
- Stop when you reach the Governor John Langdon house on your left.

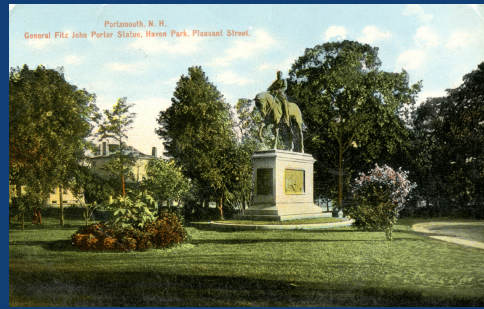
4. GOVERNOR JOHN LANGDON HOUSE

- Continue along Pleasant Street and cross the street into Haven Park.
- Walk inside and toward the statue at its center.



5. EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF JOHN FITZ PORTER, HAVEN PARK

- Exit Haven Park back onto Pleasant Street and cross over onto Hancock Street at the crosswalk.
- Follow this Street to the Strawberry Banke Museum where you'll see the Daniel Webster House.



6. DANIEL WEBSTER HOUSE, STRAWBERRY BANKE

- Continue down Hancock Street.
- Take a left onto Marcy Street.
- Cross into Prescott Park at the crosswalk.
- Directly in front of the Trial Gardens lies the Liberty Pole, with a replica of the Liberty Eagle you saw earlier in the stairwell at its top.



7. LIBERTY POLE, TRIAL GARDENS

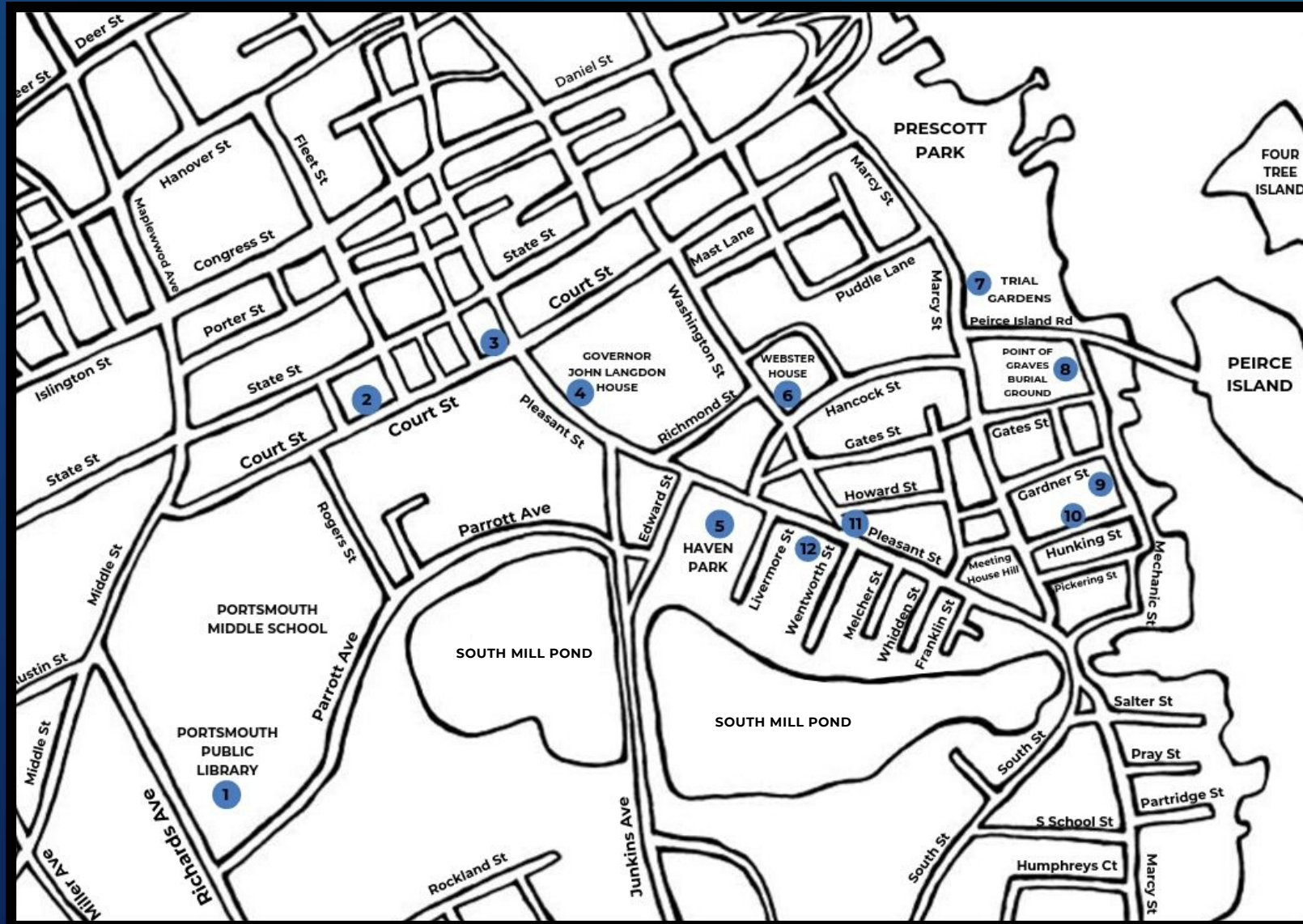
- Exit Prescott Park by crossing Mechanic Street into the Point of Graves Burial Ground.

8. POINT OF GRAVES BURIAL GROUND

- Walk along the bend in Mechanic Street making sure not to continue straight onto Pierce Island.
- Take care as there are no sidewalks here. The Wentworth-Gardner House is two blocks down on the right.



MAP AND DIRECTIONS



9. WENTWORTH-GARDNER HOUSE

- Turn right onto Hunking Street.
- The Tobias Lear House is on your right.



10. TOBIAS LEAR HOUSE

- Continue up Hunking Street. Take a right onto Marcy Street.
- Cross and take the next left onto Meeting House Hill Road (which has no street sign).
- Take a right onto Manning Street. Turn Left onto Howard Street.
- Stop at the brick building, once the office of Daniel Fowle, on the left at the corner of Howard, Washington, and Pleasant Streets.

11. OFFICE OF DANIEL FOWLE

- Just across Pleasant Street is the Governor John Wentworth Mansion.

12. GOVERNOR JOHN WENTWORTH MANSION

- Turn right and walk along Pleasant Street, toward Haven Park.
- When you reach Haven Park, take the path that cuts diagonally through the park.
- Cross Edward Street and Junkins Ave at the crosswalk.
- Continue walking along Parrot Ave until you arrive back at the Portsmouth Public Library.

13. RETURN TO THE LIBRARY

Visit the Library's Special Collections Room to learn more about any of these historical sites, or any element of Portsmouth history.

All images are from Portsmouth Public Library collections, many of which can be viewed online at portsmouthexhibits.org.

HISTORIC SITES

1. THE LIBERTY EAGLE

Boston artist and sculptor Laban Beecher is the likely creator of the Liberty Eagle. Carved from pine and gilded with gold leaf in 1824, the Liberty Eagle sat atop the Liberty Pole, now located in Prescott Park, for many years as a symbol of freedom from tyranny. The harsh sea and weather necessitated its relocation to the Library while a replica sits in the park. The Eagle recently underwent further conservation, to have the dust build-up properly cleaned and preserve it for years to come.

2. AFRICAN BURYING GROUND

In 2003, while contractors were making infrastructure upgrades here, at Court and Chestnut Streets, they unearthed thirteen coffins. The following research and historical and archaeological analysis confirmed the location as the former African Burying Ground, which had been noted in historical documents since 1705. The site is likely the resting place of as many as 200 people, who were paved and run over for decades until their rediscovery. Thirteen years after the discovery, the monument—created by Georgia Artist Jerome Meadows—and memorial were finally opened and consecrated. The African Burying Ground stands now as a reminder of Portsmouth's often overlooked black history and a place of public art.

3. FIRST LIBRARY AND DANIEL WEBSTER RESIDENCE

The white building on the corner of Cross and Pleasant Streets bearing the plaque is where the first library in Portsmouth and in the State of New Hampshire, once stood. The Social Library at Portsmouth was housed in the residence of Daniel Webster and was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1813. In 1871 the Young People's Union began to gather books which became the beginning of the Portsmouth Public Library's collection when it opened in 1881 in a small room in the Post Office.

4. GOVERNOR JOHN LANGDON HOUSE

John Langdon was born to a farmer in 1741 and as a young man became an apprentice at an accounting house and a merchant in his own right. After the Revolution, he was appointed to the Continental Congress as the Representative from New Hampshire while he invested personally in privateering. As a wealthy merchant who bettered his status through service in the war, Langdon was looking to improve his social status and perception in town. In service of that goal, in 1784 Langdon built the house before you. The Georgian style matches that of the homes of the pre-revolutionary elite. The Langdon Mansion contains some of the finest examples of Piscataqua furniture starting with the elaborate Federal styles characterized by detailed inlays.

5. THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF JOHN FITZ PORTER, HAVEN PARK

Reverend Dr. Samuel Haven (1727-1806) served as pastor at South church for 54 years, his home once sat on the land where Haven Park now stands. Upon Haven's death his family donated 25000 dollars for a park. The Equestrian Statue at the park's heart depicts Major General Fitz-John Porter, housed in Haven Park because its first proposed home in Haymarket Square annoyed residents who didn't want to look out their windows at a horse's rear—even if it was only copper.

Porter was one of the most controversial figures in Portsmouth history. Porter was found guilty of insubordination, cowardice, and misconduct for failing to support General John Pope in Virginia at the Second Battle of Bull Run. Though President Grant later remitted a portion of his verdict that prevented him from holding office and Porter was later reappointed to the army as a colonel, controversy followed the installation of the statue.

6. DANIEL WEBSTER HOUSE, STRAWBERY BANKE

Daniel Webster is New Hampshire's best-known orator as well as a lawyer, senator, and Secretary of State. This home was Webster's last residence in Portsmouth, where he lived for only ten years before moving to Boston in 1816. The Webster House was relocated from its original location on High Street to its current residence as part of Strawberry Banke Museum.

7. LIBERTY POLE AND TRIAL GARDENS, PRESCOTT PARK

The ten acres of land that comprise Prescott Park originally housed warehouses and wharves, which fell into increasing disrepair in the 1930s. The Prescott sisters slowly bought up properties along the water with their inheritance and donated them to the city in honor of their brother in 1939. Atop the Liberty Pole overlooking the gardens is the replica of the Liberty Eagle currently housed in the library's stairwell. The pole and Eagle were erected in 1824 to oppose the Stamp Act which required colonists to pay taxes on all printed goods.

8. POINT OF GRAVES BURIAL GROUND

Point of Graves has the oldest grouping of gravesites in NH, fourteen of which pre-date the 18th century—making it the oldest cemetery in the state of New Hampshire. Notable figures from prominent founding Portsmouth families are buried here—including the Lear, Wentworth, Rogers, and Vaughan families. Beneath the Vaughn family tomb there lies a crypt with 28 bodies, which have yet to be identified.

10. WENTWORTH-GARDNER HOUSE

The Colonial Georgian home before you was a gift from Mark Hunking Wentworth to his son, Thomas. The home was purchased after the Revolution by Major/Col. Gardner. This home is an excellent example of Colonial architecture and boasts one of the best Colonial halls of its period. The decorative pediment on the exterior features a golden pineapple, a symbol of hospitality.

10. WENTWORTH-GARDNER HOUSE, CONTINUED

The Wentworth-Gardner House remains in such good condition due to the restoration undertaken by Wallace Nutting in 1915. Nutting was a minister, photographer, and preservationist who resided in the home.

11. TOBIAS LEAR HOUSE

A 1740, Georgian style home, the Tobias Lear House was built by Captain Tobias Lear III and was the home of Tobias Lear V. Lear became the private secretary to President George Washington, who once visited him at the home.

The Tobias Lear house has changed hands many times over the course of its existence. Moving from family to family then to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (now called Historic New England) and then on to the Wentworth-Gardner and Tobias Lear House Association. It was recently sold to a private citizen and is in the process of being converted into a two-bedroom inn.

12. OFFICE OF DANIEL FOWLE

Daniel Fowle was forced to flee Massachusetts in 1756 after being accused of anonymously publishing a pamphlet entitled, "The Monster of Monsters, by Tom Thumb, Esq." He was arrested due to the inflammatory nature of the pamphlet and struggled with his printing business and Royalist authorities before ultimately relocating to Portsmouth. Fowle published the first edition of the New Hampshire Gazette from a wooden building on this corner. The press was the first in New Hampshire and allowed The New Hampshire Gazette to print and become the oldest newspaper in the United States. The Gazette is still in print but in a different location.

The Office of Daniel Fowle is also a site on the Black Heritage Trail, where Primus the Pressman worked. Primus was enslaved to Fowle and set the type for The Gazette for over 50 years. He became the first black man with an obituary in the NH Gazette.

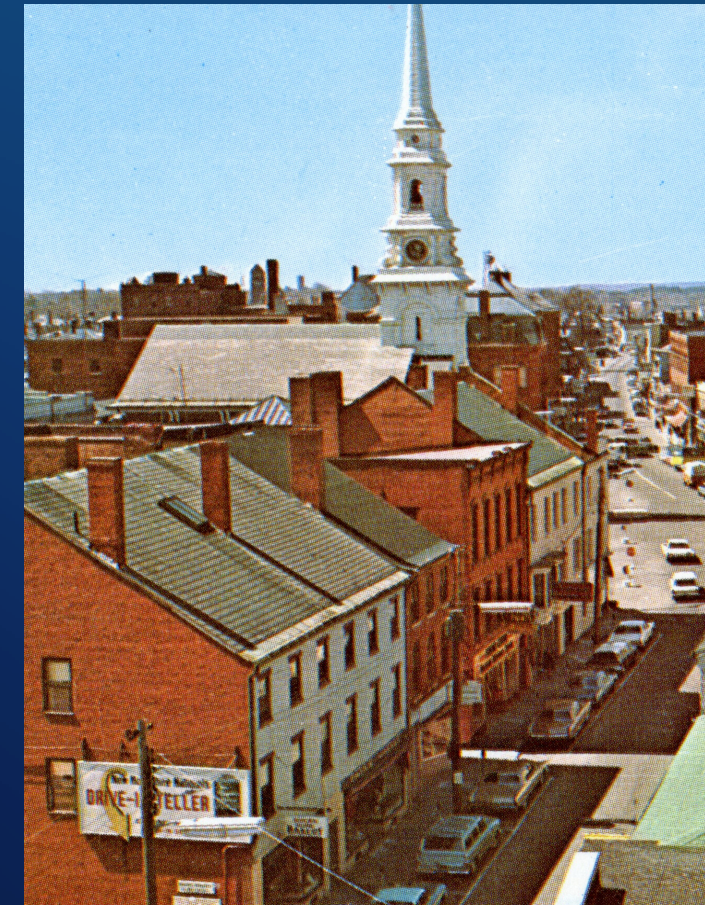
13. GOVERNOR JOHN WENTWORTH MANSION

The Wentworth Mansion was built in 1763 for Portsmouth merchant Henry Appleton and sold to Mark Hunking Wentworth for 4000 pounds the next year. He purchased it for his son, Royal Governor John Wentworth. Governor John Wentworth's family had long resided in Portsmouth—his uncle preceded him as Governor—and he oversaw several historic events during his tenure, including the hanging of Ruth Blay and the division of New Hampshire into its five counties.

The Wentworth Mansion was notably the site of a cannon-armed attack by an angry mob of Portsmouth citizens in 1775. Governor Wentworth housed the outspoken British Royalist John Fenton and patriots threatened to storm the house if Fenton did not surrender. Though he did surrender, the house was ransacked while Wentworth and his family escaped out the back, fleeing to Fort William and Mary and later to England, never to return. Presently, the Wentworth mansion is called the Mark Wentworth Home—an assisted living community for seniors.

PORTSMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS



SELF-GUIDED

WALKING TOUR

OF HISTORIC

PORTSMOUTH