



West Stockbridge, Massachusetts

HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR



Old Town Hall

Town of West Stockbridge
West Stockbridge Historical Commission
West Stockbridge, MA

*For info or to join, contact:
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West Stockbridge – The Early Years

West Stockbridge—a tranquil and fertile valley fed by the Williams River—was incorporated in 1774. At that time, it was home to 40 families and a vital farming community.

The original town center was located on the western edge of town on what is now West Center Road. Here, the first meeting house was built in 1788 – without windows or heat. Originally shared by Baptists and Congregationalists, it later became the West Center Congregational Church. It burned to the ground in 1956 as a result of a lightning strike. An outdoor stone chapel now commemorates the church.

While farming thrived, it was the mining of marble, iron and lime that shaped the destiny of the town. Between 1790 and 1830, there were 30 quarries, 5 marble mills and several lime kilns. With such extensive industry and proximity to New York, West Stockbridge became the first railroad terminus in Berkshire County.

During this time, commercial activities shifted to the current town center because of access to both the river (for power) and the railroads (for transportation). Today, West Stockbridge retains its picturesque, small-town character. It is home to almost 1,600 full-time residents.

1. Amasa Spencer House

7 Stockbridge Road

Amasa Spencer moved to West Stockbridge from East Haddam, CT in 1791. As a joiner, he likely built his own house. He later became a member of the Mormon Church and moved to Utah. His son, Amasa Spencer, Jr., expanded the house in 1810, and was appointed village Post Master that same year. The house is privately owned.

2. The Marble House

2 Stockbridge Road

Built in 1828, the Marble House is a 2-1/2 story Federal home with an exterior wall of random-laid ashler marble. It has a 9-window front, side-lighted entry with marble corner quoins, and a marble water course and lintels. It was built by Henry B. Boynton as part of a mill complex that spanned the Williams River and included the Marble Saw Mill (on your right, partially hidden by shrubs). Both properties are privately owned.

3. Congregational Church*

45 Main Street

The West Stockbridge Congregational Church was built in 1882—replacing a Greek Revival structure that burned in 1881. The present church is of stick-style construction and uniform in shape. Other than its white color, it is just as it was originally constructed. Four memorial windows honor former town minister, Rev. Nathan Shaw, Sylvester and Rena Spencer, Marcus Trusdell and daughter, Mary Bell, and Matthew Freedley.

4. Card Lake Inn

29 Main Street

Originally called the United States Hotel, this 2-1/2 story Greek Revival building was constructed by D.B. Campbell and F. Tobey in 1840, and has operated almost continuously as a tavern and inn

for more than 150 years. It is locally-owned and operated as the Card Lake Inn.

5. Old Town Hall*

9 Main Street

The Old Town Hall, another Greek Revival structure, was built in 1854 for \$3,700. Initially, it housed the offices of the Miner’s Savings Bank, an institution that served miners and quarrymen who worked in and near the town. Since the bank’s closing in 1900, the building has been used for a variety of town affairs, including town offices and library, and earlier, as a venue for high school graduation, dances, sports, and plays. It is currently the home of the West Stockbridge Historical Society.

6. The Grange*

5 Swamp Road

The Grange began life in 1838 as the Methodist Episcopal Church. Like many town buildings, it is built in the Greek Revival style—with Gothic arched windows and wide pilasters and cornices. Church services were discontinued in 1910, and in 1918, the building was sold to the Grange, an organization that supports local farmers. It continues to be used in this capacity despite its sale to a private party in 2007.

7. Shaker Mill

1 Depot Street

Shaker Mill—first known as the Grist Mill—was built in 1804 by E.W. Thayer. It was sold to the Tyringham Shakers in 1821. The property continued to operate as a mill for 60+ years, though it changed hands several times. At that time, James Bossidy purchased the mill and added a dynamo room at the end of the building over the dam. This “power plant” supplied the town’s first electric lights.

8. Train Station

6 Depot Street

West Stockbridge has a rich railroad history—with the first railroad in western Massachusetts to deliver marble to the Hudson River for shipment countrywide. It was located in an area called State Line, west of the village on Rte. 102. A branch line ran from State Line to the Hudson Ore Bed and into the village, stopping in front of this building. In 1842, the Boston & Albany RR connected through State Line, and in 1854, the Housatonic RR made West Stockbridge its northern terminus.

9. Charles Baldwin & Sons

1 Center Street

Originally a wagon shop, Charles H. Baldwin & Sons purchased the building in 1920, and converted it into a maple syrup lab and processing factory. The first processing was said to be done in a room that had been “knee deep with wood shavings from Mr. Scism’s wagon wheel carvings.” The firm still sells its famous Vanilla Extract and is in its 5th generation of family ownership.

10. Baldwin’s Hardware

2 Center Street

This 2-1/2 story “salt box” was built about 1842 and may be the best commercial example of Federal architecture in the village. The builder, Morgan L. Boughton, originally operated a stove and tin shop in the building. It has also served as a general store, an undertaking and coffin shop, a furniture store, a livery stable, and a plumbing supply store. It is locally-owned, operating as Baldwin’s Hardware since 1864.

** National Register of Historic Places*