

Cambridge Street Names

Compiled by the Cambridge Historical Commission
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This is an informal compilation of information on the origins of Cambridge street names.
Additional streets will be listed as their origins are discovered.

Other sources on this topic, not referenced here, are Lewis M. Hastings, "The Streets of Cambridge," Cambridge Historical Society *Proceedings*, vol. 14; Francis H. Eliot, "The Romance of Cambridge Street Names," CHS *Proceedings*, vol. 32; and Samuel Atkins Eliot, *A History of Cambridge, Massachusetts 1630-1913* (Cambridge, 1913)

Unless otherwise noted, many citations are from the Cambridge Historical Commission's forthcoming book, *Old Cambridge*

Aberdeen Avenue

originally McDonald Street, after Alexander McDonald, property owner; renamed Aberdeen Nov. 20, 1895 (Annual Documents, 1895, 277)

Acacia Street

after the 100 acacia trees that made a hedge along the Brattle Street side of the Samuel Batchelder (formerly Henry Vassall) estate, cut down in 1870 when the street was widened (*Historic Guide to Cambridge*, DAR, p. 95) (see also Acacia and Hawthorne streets)

Agassiz Street

apparently after Louis Agassiz, the naturalist, if not Alexander A.

Allston Street

After Washington Allston, artist

Appleton Street

after John Appleton, owner of 163 Brattle Street

Arlington Street

after Arlington, the estate of Gen. Robert E. Lee, captured in the Civil War and in part became a cemetery (*Cambridge Chronicle*, Dec. 15, 1866). (cf. Mount Vernon Street and Washington Avenue)

Ash Street

perhaps named after the trees of the Samuel Batchelder estate (see also Acacia and Hawthorne streets)

Auburn Street

Originally designated "Third Parallel Street," renamed "not long after 1834 and within my personal recollection" (Lucius Paige, *Cambridge Park Commission Report*, 1894)

Austin Street (now Bishop Allen Drive)

After Jonathan Loring Austin, owner of the Ralph Inman estate 1801-1826 (Sibley, Class of 1766)

Bates Street

after Jacob [Hill?] Bates, early landowner

John Francis Bellis Circle (formerly Bolton Street)

After John Francis Bellis, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, September 30, 1946; rescinded December 17, 1951 and reinstated for former Bolton Street west of Sherman Street only)

Berkeley Street

after philosopher Bishop George Berkeley; named by R. H. Dana II (*A Cambridge Boyhood*, p. 19)

Bishop Allen Drive (formerly Austin Street, renamed ca. 1980)

After Bishop Richard Allen of Philadelphia (1760-1831), a founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church

Bismark Street

See Foch Street

Blakeslee Street

after Edward Gervase Blakeslee, Lt. Cdr. U.S.N., d. Feb. 26, 1919, London, England. Congressional Medal of Honor winner for staff work in communications during W.W.I. (Casualty List, WWI)

Bond Street

after Harvard astronomy professor George Phillips Bond, who lived at 99 Garden Street

Bowdoin Street

named by John Barnes, a former member of the Bowdoin Street Society (Church) in Boston (Saunders Ms.)

Boylston Street (formerly Wood Street, now John F. Kennedy Street)

Probably after Ward Nicholas Boylston (1747-1828), the son of Benjamin Hallowell and Mary Boylston; he took the Boylston name as the only surviving heir of his uncles Thomas and Nicholas Boylston, wealthy Boston merchants. Boylston spent the years 1775-1800 in London, but on his return became a major benefactor of Harvard University and a variety of other New England institutions.

Brewster Street

after John Brewster, property owner and developer

Brown Street

after Daniel Brown, Boston real estate broker and early resident

Bryant Street

Probably after Brookline engineer Henry Bryant, who laid out the extensions of Francis Avenue and Irving Street between 1911 and 1913

Buckingham Street

After Joseph T. Buckingham, Boston newspaper editor, who moved from 28 Quincy Street in 1857

Burns Court

after Timothy Burns, grocer, owner, and developer

Burns Road (formerly Dale Street)

After Daniel James Burns, USNR, WWII KIA

Cadbury Road

After Henry and Lydia Cadbury, prominent Quakers

Callender Street (formerly Grigg Street)

After George Duncan Callender, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, October 18, 1948)

Camelia Avenue

After Charles M. and Phineas B. Hovey's camellia house, constructed in 1849 at the end of a broad path that is now Camelia Avenue. Camelia Avenue was laid out in 1892 by William E. Doyle, a Boston florist who lived at 1501 Cambridge Street; the misspelling appears on the subdivision plan. (see also Leonard Avenue)

Carver Street

After John Carver, Plymouth Colony's first governor, thought to be an ancestor of John Gorham Palfrey, 19th century landowner and developer

Chalk Street (formerly Park Street)

After Lawrence E. Chalk, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, August 3, 1948)

Chauncey Street

After Charles Chauncey, second president of Harvard

Chilton Street

After Mary Chilton, who came over on the Mayflower and was the first American ancestor of a late 19th century landowner, Gen. Edward W. Hincks.

Coolidge Hill/Avenue

After the Coolidge family, which owned a large farm on the site until the early 20th century

Corporal Burns Road (formerly Dale Street)

After Cpl. William H. Burns, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, October 25, 1948)

Cowperthwaite Street

After Joseph Cowperthwaite, Philadelphia bookseller who married landowner James Brown's daughter Mary

Craigie Street

After Andrew Craigie, Revolutionary War Apothecary General and land speculator

Cushing Street (formerly in Belmont)

After John Perkins Cushing, owner of "Bellmont", the estate from which the town took its name

Cutler Avenue

After Isaac Cutler, former Alderman, or George Henry Cutler, ca 1827-1904, both builders

Dana Street

After Mass. Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Francis Dana, landowner

Decatur Street

After Capt. Stephen Decatur, commander of the *United States* in its victory over the British ship *Macedonian*. One of six streets named after people and events associated with the War of 1812: Erie, Decatur, Lake (now McTernan), Lawrence, Niagara (now part of Dana Park), Perry.

DeWolfe Street

After Dr. John J. DeWolf, a Providence physician, who married a daughter of John Winthrop, an heir of William Winthrop, the landowner in 1790-1825. Note that there is no 'e' at the end of DeWolf.

Dike Street (now Riverview Avenue)

After a dike erected by Thomas Stearns and Solomon Sargent in 1856 to allow a marsh to be drained and filled for development

Dinsmore Court

after James Dinsmore, owner and builder of houses there

Eliot Street

Renamed from Spring Street between 1856 and 1857 directories, possibly after Samuel Eliot (father of the President), who purchased the Shady Hill estate in 1821 for his daughter Catherine (check)

Erie Street

After the Battle of Lake Erie. One of six streets named after people and events associated with the War of 1812: Erie, Decatur, Lake, Lawrence, Niagara, Perry

Eustis Street

After Gov. William Eustis, property owner ca. 1813-1867

Everett Street

Formerly the way to the Pine Swamp; named after Edward Everett, President of Harvard and Lincoln's Secretary of State, who owned the Pine Swamp ca. 1824-1831

Fayerweather Street

After Thomas Fayerweather, Revolutionary-era landowner

Felton Street

After Cornelius Conway Felton, Harvard professor and President, sometime resident of Ware Street

Fernald Drive

after Merritt Fernald, curator of the Gray Herbarium

Flagg Street

After Augustus Flagg, a partner in Little, Brown & Co. (The Riverside Press), who purchased land from the heirs of James Brown and laid out the street as an investment

Foch (formerly Bismark) Street

Originally named after Otto von Bismark (1815-1898), Chancellor of Germany 1871-1890. Laid out over the land of William Muller, German immigrant and tannery proprietor, 1892. See also Gladstone and Newman Streets.

Follen Street

after Prof.. Charles Follen

Foster Street

after Bossenger Foster family and descendants

Franklin Street

Presumably after Benjamin Franklin, but initially called "Second Parallel Street," renamed "not long after 1834 and within my personal recollection" (Lucius Paige, *Cambridge Park Commission Report*, 1894)

Francis Avenue

After Ebenezer Francis Jr. (d. 1886), housewright and first Harvard superintendent of buildings and grounds, who built 1 Francis Ave. ca. 1836

Fulkerson Street (formerly Ninth Street)

After George William Fulkerson, "who lost his life in WWII" (City Council Order, May 24, 1948)

Gerry Street/Landing

After Elbridge Gerry, Vice President of the U.S. and landowner

Gibson Street

after John Gibson, Gardiner Hubbard's gardener

Gladstone Street

After William Gladstone (1809-1898), British statesman and Prime Minister 1868-1894. Laid out over the land of William Muller, German immigrant and tannery proprietor, 1892. See also Foch and Newman Streets.

Gold Star Road (formerly Yorktown Street)

After nine Gold Star Mothers (City Council Order, May 19, 1947, and *Cambridge Chronicle-Sun*, May 22, 1947)

Gold Star Road Court (formerly Yorktown Court)

After nine Gold Star Mothers (City Council Order, May 19, 1947, and *Cambridge Chronicle-Sun*, May 22, 1947)

Robert E. Goodman Road (formerly Alden Road)

After Robert E. Goodman, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, February 24, 1947)

Gorham Street

After Mary Sturgis Gorham, mother of John Gorham Palfrey, 19th century landowner and developer

Gracewood Park

after Thomas Grace and Arthur Woodbridge, developers

Gray Gardens

after Asa Gray's garden (the Botanic Garden)

Grozier Road

after Edwin Grozier, owner and publisher of *The Boston Post*, died c. 1924

Green Street

Presumably after James D. Green, first Mayor of Cambridge, but initially called "First Parallel Street," renamed "not long after 1834 and within my personal recollection" (Lucius Paige, *Cambridge Park Commission Report*, 1894)

Gurney Street

after Edward F. Gurney, Dean of Harvard College 1870-76 and property owner

Hamilton Street

After the Battle of Hamilton, Ontario, during the War of 1812 (see also Erie, Decatur, Lake, Perry streets)

Hammond Street

After Mary Ann Hammond, wife of John Gorham Palfrey, 19th century property owner and developer

Harrington Road (formerly Wilbur Street)

After William Harrington, killed in France, November 15, 1944 (Veterans Department list, 1991)

Hawthorn Street

After the hawthorn hedge that ran along the west boundary of the Samuel Batchelder estate (DAR, 95; see also Acacia and Ash streets). The City Engineer's *List of Streets and Ways* gives it as Hawthorn from the 1920s through the 1990 edition. The street signs and the city's current electronic maps show it as Hawthorne, incorrectly commemorating the poet, rather than the shrub.

Holly Avenue

after Patrick Holly, liquor dealer residing on Concord Avenue

Holyoke Street

Formerly Crooked Street or Lane, renamed by 1854 for Harvard President Edward Holyoke (1689-1769), who acquired the Joseph Cook house and 2 acres in 1761; Holyoke Place (1836) opened this property to development.

Howland Street

Possibly after Pilgrim John Howland, who came to America in December 1620 (see Carver Street); named by John Gorham Palfrey, 19th century landowner and developer

Hubbard Park

after Gardiner Green Hubbard, father in law of Alexander Graham Bell, early official of the Bell Telephone Company, and landowner

Humboldt Street

apparently after Baron Friedrich Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt, German naturalist (1769-1859)

Hurlbut Street

After Jane Hurlbut Clarke, wife of Henry Martyn Clarke, the landowner 1867-1882

Hurley Street

After James Joseph Hurley, Sergeant, U.S.A., KIA Haumont Wood, France, October 16, 1918 (Casualty List, WWI)

Kelly Road (formerly Warland Street)

After Cpl. Gerald L. Kelly, "who lost his life" in WWII (City Council Order, November 29, 1948)

R.C. Kelley Street (formerly Tuttle Street)

after Robert C. Kelley, Torpedoman's mate 2nd class, U.S.N.R., resident of 40 Sherman Street. KIA in WWII (City Council Order, June 14, 1948, designates it as "Kelly Street")

Kennedy Road

passageway to stable of Frank A. Kennedy, resident of Highland Street

John F. Kennedy Street (formerly Boylston Street)

Renamed 1982

Kenway Street

after Allen & Kenway, architects of at least three houses in Hubbard Park and of Gardiner Greene Hubbard's house in Washington (see Hubbard Park).

Kinnaird Street

Probably after Helen, the daughter of the 6th Baron Kinnaird, and the wife of Edmund Dana (1739-1823). See Sibley XIV, 414-418

Kirkland Street

After Harvard President James T. Kirkland

Lambert Street (now Upland Road)

Probably named by William Lambert Whitney, son of Abel Whitney, owner of the Prentiss house at the southwest corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Upland Road. William was a real estate promoter, omnibus proprietor, and investor in the Harvard Branch R.R., which operated a stable on the northwest corner.

Langdon Street

after Samuel Langdon, Harvard President 1774-1780

Laurel Street

Laid out before 1846 and originally named Harrison Avenue, probably after William Henry Harrison (1773-1841), a Whig who was ninth President of the US. Renamed Laurel Street in 1873-74; a new Harrison Avenue was opened in North Cambridge a few years later. The origin of the present name cannot be determined.

Lawrence Street

After Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's ship *Lawrence*, itself named after Captain James Lawrence, whose dying words were "Don't give up the ship" in a naval battle on June 1, 1813. One of six streets named after people and events associated with the War of 1812: Erie, Decatur, Lake (now McTernan), Lawrence, Niagara (now part of Dana Park), and Perry.

Leonard Avenue

After Anne (Leonard) Fitzpatrick, the mother of William E. Doyle's wife Catherine Agnes Fitzpatrick. Doyle subdivided that portion of his nursery with 24 houselots in 1892 (see also Camelia Avenue)

Linden Street (1803)

After the species of tree, balancing Chestnut (now Plympton) Street on the other side of the Apthorp-Borland-Simpson house

Linnaean Street

after the Swedish botanist, Carolus Linnaeus (re: Botanic Garden)

Edward J. Lopez Avenue (formerly Lowland Avenue)

After Edward J. Lopez (City Clerk, August 7, 1947)

Lowell Street

after James Russell Lowell

Manasses Avenue

after Fr. Manasses Dougherty, first priest of St. Peter's Church

Matignon Avenue (formerly Guyette Road)

After Fr. Matignon; changed 1947 (City Clerk, August 7, 1947)

McNamee Square

After Cambridge's first Irish Catholic mayor, 1902-1904

William F. McTernan Street (formerly Lake Street)

After William F. McTernan, KIA Peleliu Island, September 16, 1944 (Veterans Department list, 1991). Lake was one of six streets named after people and events associated with the War of 1812: Erie, Decatur, Lake, Lawrence, Niagara (now part of Dana Park), Perry.

Meacham Road

After George Meacham (d. ca. 1886), landowner and developer of Meacham and Dover Street

Mellen Street

After Martha Fitch Mellen, wife of Rev. John Mellen (1752-1828), and daughter of Katherine Brattle Wendell

Memorial Drive (formerly Charles River Road)

After those killed in WWI. Renamed 1922 when Cambridge's Charles River Park was taken over by the Metropolitan District Commission.

Mercer Circle

named by Gardiner Hubbard after his wife, Gertrude Mercer Hubbard; see Hubbard Park

Mifflin Place

after Thomas Mifflin, of Philadelphia, Commissary-General, who was quartered at 42 Brattle Street during the Siege of Boston

Mill Street

After a planing mill built by the developers of the area, Thomas Stearns and Solomon Sargent, ca. 1860

Mount Auburn Street

The road to Mount Auburn Cemetery, founded in 1830. The name of the cemetery derives from the nickname "Sweet Auburn" given to the Stone farm in Watertown by Harvard students about 1801. The nickname comes from the poem, "The Deserted Village," written by Oliver Goldsmith in 1770 (Blanche Linden-Ward, *Silent City on a Hill*, 1989).

Mount Vernon Street

apparently after George Washington's estate (cf. Arlington Street and Washington Avenue)

Muller Avenue

After William Muller, German immigrant and tannery proprietor, 1892. See also Gladstone, Newman, and Foch (formerly Bismark) Streets

Museum Street

The road to the Harvard University Museum; formerly the right of way of the Harvard Branch Railroad

Newman Street

After Cardinal John Henry Newman (1801-1890), an Anglican convert to Catholicism. Laid out over the land of William Muller, German immigrant and tannery proprietor, 1892. See also Gladstone and Foch Streets

Msgr. O'Brien Highway (formerly Bridge Street)

After Rev. John O'Brien, pastor of Sacred Heart Church, 1868-?

Niagara Street (closed; now part of Dana Park)

After the ship *Niagara*, a 20-gun American brig in the Battle of Lake Erie; sister ship to the *Lawrence*. One of six streets named after people and events associated with the War of 1812: Erie, Decatur, Lake (now McTernan), Lawrence, Niagara (now part of Dana Park), Perry.

Old Dee Road

After the Dee family, which operated a large nursery on this property; the former Dee house is at 35 Larchwood Drive

Orrin Street

Apparently after Orrin Sands, relative of John L. Sands, brickmaker and property owner

Perry Street

After Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, Commodore of the victorious American fleet in the Battle of Lake Erie. One of six streets named after people and events associated with the War of 1812: Erie, Decatur, Lake (now McTernan), Lawrence, Niagara (now part of Dana Park), Perry.

Phillips Place

After Willard Phillips, who laid out the street and built a house in 1842.

Plympton Street (1803)

After Dr. Sylvanus Plympton, husband of Mary Bell Warland, owner of Aphorp-Borland house; formerly Chestnut Street (to balance Linden Street on the other side of the house)

Prentiss Street

After Mary Prentiss Saunders, wife of William A. Saunders, property owner

Quincy Street

After Harvard President Josiah Quincy

Raymond Street

After Zebina L. Raymond, Mayor of Cambridge (CHS Proceedings, vol. 38, p. 117)

Reed Street

After Samuel G. Reed, Boston merchant and land developer

Remington Street

After Judge Jonathan Remington (1677-1745) and his descendants, who married into the Dana, Trowbridge, and Ellery families

Riedesel Avenue

After Baron and Baroness von Riedesel, who were quartered at 147 Brattle Street after the Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga

Roberts Road (formerly Baldwin Street)

After Warren F. Roberts, changed 1947 (City Clerk, August 7, 1947)

Robinson Street

After Benjamin Robinson, curator of the Gray Herbarium

Roseland Street

After the former Roseland Nurseries (*Plan of Building Lots and Land in Cambridge and Somerville*, 1863)

Sacramento Street

Commemorates the experience of Charles F. McClure, a 49'er who returned and developed the property traversed by this street

Sergeant Richard H. St. Saveur Court (formerly Cushing Court)

After Sergeant Richard H. St. Saveur, "missing in action since 1953" (City Council Order, May 2, 1955)

Sciarappa Street (formerly Fourth Street)

After Nicholas Sciarappa, killed in France, December 14, 1944 (Veterans Department list, 1991)

Seagrave Road

After C. Burnside Seagrave, Cambridge Chronicle editor (*Cambridge Chronicle*, n.d.)

Sellers Street (formerly Vernon Street)

After John R. Sellers, killed Italy May 12, 1944

Shea Road (formerly Frank Street)

After Cdr. John J. Shea, USN, MIA 9/15/1942. Name changed 1943 (City Clerk, August 7, 1947)

Shepard Street

after Rev. Thomas Shepard, 17th century minister

Sparks Street

after Jared Sparks, 19th president of Harvard (1849-53)

Michael Speridakis Terrace (formerly Pearl Terrace)

After Michael Speridakis, KIA in Germany, WWII (City Council Order, June 27, 1949)

Sullivan Road (formerly Bird Street)

After Edward T. Sullivan, KIA in Korea (City Council Order, December 18, 1950)

Taylor Square

after Francis Joseph Taylor, Electrician First Class, U.S. Coast Guard, drowned Sept. 26, 1918, in sinking of cutter *Tampa* in Bristol Channel (Casualty List, WWI)

Theriahult Court (formerly Neil Court)

After Joseph R. and Leo Andrew Theriahult, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, October 18, 1948)

Thingvalla Avenue

After a kettle hole, natural geologic feature, thought by Prof. Eben Horsford to be a Norse amphitheatre. Thingvalla was the Norse name for the site where the Icelandic parliament began meeting in the 10th century.

Tierney Street (formerly Oliver Street)

After Daniel Raymond Tierney, KIA in WWII (City Council Order, June 28, 1948)

Trall Street

after English ancestor of the James Russell Lowell family

Trowbridge Street

After Judge Edmund Trowbridge (1709-1793), who was an uncle of Francis Dana, whose estate the street was laid out over

Tufts Street

After Peter Tufts (1774-1825), surveyor, whose house was on the corner of Magazine Street

Upland Road

Descriptive of the climb up Avon Hill; formerly Lambert Avenue (q.v.) “The street surely leads over upland and the innovation of calling a street a ‘road’ is, if only a fad, one that possesses quite a charm after all” (*Cambridge Chronicle*, Oct. 22, 1898)

Vassall Lane

Originally extended from Brattle Street to Fresh Pond. The section between Brattle and Huron Avenue was renamed for Jared Sparks (q.v.)

Walden Street

Opened in 1857, and probably named to commemorate the publication of Henry David Thoreau’s book, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*, in 1854.

Walker Street

After James Walker, President of Harvard 1853-1859

Washington Avenue/Street

Apparently after George Washington (cf. Arlington and Mount Vernon Streets)

Waterhouse Street

After Dr. Benjamin Waterhouse

Wendell Street

After Katherine Brattle Wendell (17xx-1821), property owner

Williams Square (Brattle, Fayerweather, Elmwood)

After Bertram Williams, First Lieutenant, Army Air Service, killed in aerial combat September 13, 1918, near Chambly, France (Casualty List, WWI)

Winthrop Square

After John Winthrop; renamed from Market Place “not long afterwards, and within my personal recollection” of its enclosure as a park in 1834. (Lucius Paige, *Cambridge Park Commission Report*, 1894)

Winthrop Street

After John Winthrop; renamed from Long Street “not long afterwards, and within my personal recollection” of the enclosure of the market place as a park in 1834. (Lucius Paige, *Cambridge Park Commission Report*, 1894)

Woodbridge Street

After Samuel F. Woodbridge, Boston marketman and developer of this street

Wyman Road

after Dr. Morrill Wyman, property owner, founder of Mount Auburn Hospital

Yerxa Road

after Henry Deitrick Yerxa, president of the Cambridge Park Commission in 1892-97. His volunteer work on the park commission was thought to be instrumental in achieving its proposal to take the entire riverfront by eminent domain and create the parkway system that is now traversed by Memorial Drive.

Yerxa was born in York County, New Brunswick, in 1847. He became a member of the Boston firm of Cobb, Bates & Yerxa, which in 1896 was said to be the largest retail grocery concern in New England. He built the house at 37 Lancaster Avenue in 1887, and died in January 1919.