

**Pre-1630:** Area is inhabited by the Wampanoag Indian Tribe.

**1630:** The first Puritan settlers arrive in Roxbury, led by William Pynchon (1589-1661), three weeks after the founding of Boston. The town is originally called Rockberry. It includes what is now West Roxbury as well as what are now several other neighborhoods and towns. The town is named after the unique rock outcroppings later called Roxbury puddingstone. All the other Roxburys in the United States from the town of Roxbury in New Hampshire to Roxbury Drive in Beverly Hills have their origin in Roxbury, Massachusetts. What is now West Roxbury is first called the Spring Street neighborhood of the town of Roxbury.

**1632:** The first meetinghouse and burial ground are constructed in what is now the John Eliot Square (Roxbury Highlands) section of the town. All parishioners travel to the meetinghouse for church including those who live in the West Roxbury section of the town. [Reverend John Eliot](#) (1604-1691) is the minister. Eliot is known as "The Apostle of the Indians" for his efforts to christianize the Native American population.

**1635:** Reverend Eliot founds the Roxbury Latin School. It moves to West Roxbury in 1922.

**1643:** Joseph Weld, one of the first settlers of West Roxbury, is granted a large tract of land by the Massachusetts Bay Company stretching from Forest Hills to Brookline as a reward for negotiating a treaty with the Pequot Indians.

**1652:** Approximately 120 houses are in town. Most dwellings are in John Eliot Square, named after the preacher who wrote the first bible in the Algonkian Language that was instrumental in converting many Native Americans to Christianity.

**1662:** Centre Street is laid out as the main route between Boston and Hartford, Connecticut.

**1683:** The Westerly Burial Ground is located on Centre Street, in the area of the original Roxbury settlement.

**1706:** Approximately 45 families settled around Jamaica Pond form the independent town of Jamaica Plain although they don't receive official recognition from the colony.

**1710:** The area from Jamaica Plain to Dedham is known as Jamaica End or Spring Street. The area from Roslindale (known as South Street) out is

**1711:** West Roxbury residents build The Second Church of Christ on Walter Street to avoid having to travel to the meetinghouse in John Eliot Square, Roxbury. They also establish the Walter Street Burial Ground. Today the site of this defunct house is located in the Arnold Arboretum.

**1733:** The congregation moves to a building on Centre Street. Today it is the Theodore Parker Unitarian Church.

**1767:** Jeremiah Richards donates money to build the first school in town.

**1776:** General George Washington (1732-1799) uses Weld Hill for rallies. Residents attempt to establish themselves as a separate town called "Washington" after the

General but their petition is denied by the colonial government.

**1805:** Washington Street is laid out. Originally called Dedham Turnpike, it is later renamed for General George Washington and is the main route connecting Dedham to Boston.

**1835:** The Old South Evangelical Church is built on Mount Vernon and Centre Streets. Reverend Christopher Marsh is the first pastor. The church is later replaced by the West Roxbury Congregational Church (1891) and now is a branch of the Boston Public Library.

**1837-1846:** Reverend Theodore Parker is minister of the Second Church of Roxbury. He is a staunch abolitionist.

**1841:** The pastor of Purchase Street Unitarian Church, George Ripley, comes to Roxbury with his wife Sophia. They establish Brook Farm, a utopian community organized under the tenets of Transcendentalism on the dairy farm of Charles Ellis. Nathaniel Hawthorne is briefly a member of the group that he writes about in [The Blithedale Romance](#). Other prominent visitors include: Horace Greeley, A. Bronson Alcott, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Brook Farm is later auctioned off (1849) and used as a Civil War camping ground for the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, and the Martin Luther Home German orphanage (1870). The farm also includes a section of Roxbury Puddingstone (Drumlins or hills created by retreating glaciers) called "Pulpit Rock" where John Eliot preached to the Native Americans in the seventeenth century.

**1848:** The Boston and Providence Railroad creates stops at Central (Bellevue) Street, West Roxbury Village, and Spring Street. Increased access to town causes the area's population to expand and, in turn, urbanizes this previously rural farming community. At this point in time West Roxbury has three sections: West Roxbury Village (Center Street), Mount Bellevue, and Germantown (Washington and Grove Streets) where Germans from East Dedham settle.

**1849:** Park Street and La Grange Streets are laid out.

**1851:** West Roxbury breaks away from Roxbury in an attempt to remain rural. West Roxbury includes Roslindale and Jamaica Plain.

**1856:** West Roxbury is connected to Roxbury by horse drawn streetcars.

**1863:** Colonel Robert Gould Shaw is killed along with 255 of his troops after an attack on Fort Wagner, South Carolina. A West Roxbury native, Shaw is the leader of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first all black company of soldiers in the Civil War.

**1873:** West Roxbury is annexed to Boston.

**1890:** The Wesley Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church is built on Park Street. Designed by Oscar Thayer, it is now Saint Matthew's Syrian Orthodox Church.

**1893:** The Emmanuel Church is built on Stratford Street and Clement Avenue.

**1899:** The Theodore Parker Church is completed on Centre and Corey Streets. It is now a historical landmark.

**1902:** A group of Jewish families establish a farm co-operative modeled after Brook Farm. They raise cattle and horses on Washington Street but soon have to close down for economic reasons.

**1909:** The Elevated Railway runs to Jamaica Plain with streetcar lines into West Roxbury.

**1911:** The West Roxbury Woman's Club forms to educate and unite women.

**1920:** Three quarters of the current buildings in West Roxbury are built after this date.

**1922:** The Roxbury Latin School (founded by Reverend John Eliot in 1635) moves into the Codman Estate on Centre Street from Roxbury.

**1927:** The Holy Name Church is established on Centre Street.