

WASHINGTON'S 1789 JOURNEY THROUGH MALDEN

By Frank F. Russell

In October, 1789, George Washington was making a tour through the northeast. On October 29, 1789, he journeyed from Boston to Marblehead with several stops in between. Because Corey's *History of Malden* ends in 1785, it does not discuss his 1789 visit. Washington apparently had visited Malden before, according to Corey's history, stopping sometimes to visit Captain Dexter at his house on the Medford Road.

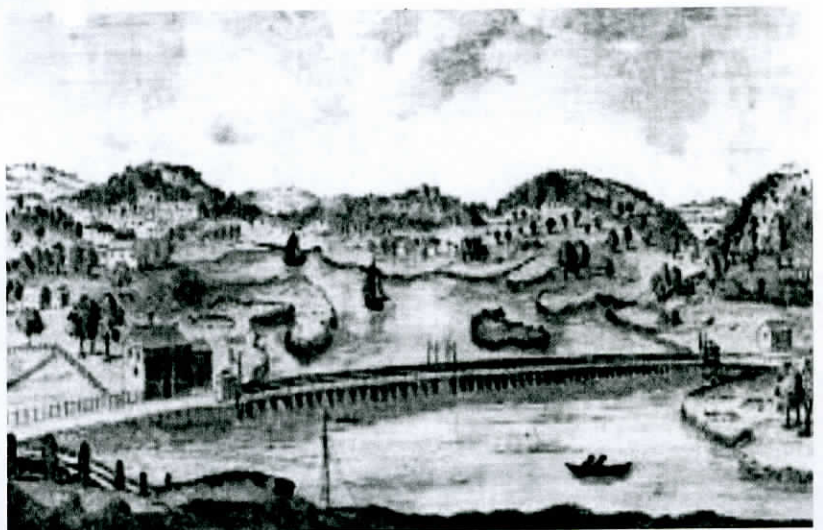
One of the purposes of Washington's visit on October 29, 1789, was to view the Malden Bridge between Charlestown and Malden. The bridge was relatively new having opened in 1787. From there, he traveled to Cambridge then back through Medford, Malden, and Lynn, on his way to Marblehead. His party was accompanied by a throng of citizens and the Boston Corps of Horse. It must have presented a magnificent scene as it traveled through Malden on the Medford Road (Pleasant Street) to Malden Centre and thence to the Salem Road (Salem Street) into Lynn. Here are the relevant excerpts from Washington's diary for October 29, 1789:

Left Boston about 8 o'clock.
Passed over the Bridge at Charles
Town, and went to see that at
Malden...The Bridges of Charles

town and Malden are useful and noble—doing great credit to the enterprising State. From Boston, besides the number of citizens which accompanied me to Cambridge, and many of them from thence to Lynn, the Boston Corps of Horse escorted me to the line between Middlesex and Essex County....After leaving Cambridge, at the distance of 4 miles, we passed through Mystick—then Malden—next Lynn...

The line between Middlesex County and Essex County was that between Malden and Lynn; Saugus was still a part of Lynn until 1815.

One wonders if Washington again stopped along the way at Captain Dexter's. Perhaps the town's selectmen came out to greet him as he passed through Malden? Did he pause at Waite's Tavern on the Salem Road for refreshment? All are possibilities but the diary is silent. Perhaps he simply rode straight through Malden.



Birds'-eye view of the Malden Bridge over the Mystic River from Bunker's Hill, 1790, engraved by S. Hill.