

# The Flower Hill Historic Trail



**Manhasset Route Guidebook**

# The Flower Hill Historic Trail – Manhasset Route Guidebook

This guidebook provides a description and brief history for each location on the Manhasset Route of the Flower Hill Historic Trail. All of the locations are listed in the order of their stop numbers, starting with the Webster Avenue Bridge and ending with St. Francis Hospital. See map for more details.

1. **Webster Avenue Bridge:** The Webster Avenue Bridge was originally built over the Long Island Rail Road's track in order to connect with *Sunset Hill* – the former estate of Alfred and Alice Grace D'Oench (hence why it was historically known as the D'Oench Bridge).

Eventually, it would become a major access route between Plandome Road in Manhasset and Flower Hill.

By the 1980s, the bridge was starting to show its age, and was closed temporarily for repairs.

As of 2021, the bridge is again in a state of disrepair, and is slated to be replaced at some point during the 2020s.

2. **Flower Hill Women's Club Green:** The Women's Club of Flower Hill is our village's philanthropic and charitable organization, which was founded in 1949. Over the decades, the Women's Club of Flower Hill has sponsored many community improvement projects and contributed to many children's charities, and in the 2010s, they landscaped this traffic island during its reconstruction project; a plaque was placed to commemorate their work.
3. **Pinewood Road:** Pinewood Road's name reflects the fact that it is one of the streets which was built as part of the Pinewood at Flower Hill subdivision, which was developed by Meadows-Tierney in the 1950s.

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4. **Nelson Olmsted Green:** In the late 1940s, actor Nelson Olmsted purchased home here in Flower Hill, located on Mason Drive. Olmsted was known to take great pride in his home's garden, as reported by *Newsday* on May 7, 1949.
5. **Bridge Road:** Bridge Road's name reflects the fact that it connects directly with the Webster Avenue Bridge.
6. **Parkwoods Road:** According to early plat maps for the D'Oench Estate residential subdivision, Parkwoods Road originally was to be called Beechwood Road. The name was changed to Parkwoods Road at some point during the planning stages in the 1930s, as indicated by records. It is unknown why the name of this street was changed.

The boundary between Flower Hill and Plandome runs along the center of Parkwood Road's park strips for the road's entire length.

7. **D'Oench Green:** This traffic circle was built in the 1930s as part of the D'Oench Estate subdivision, which was developed by the Mott Brothers; the subdivision is split between Flower Hill and Plandome. Although early plat maps for the subdivision indicate that the circle was to be called Dale Circle, the name has seldom been used over the years.

The name of D'Oench Green reflects the fact that Alfred and Alice Grace D'Oench once owned this land.

8. **Dartmouth Road Dead-End:** The dead-end on this end of Dartmouth Road was never supposed to be a dead-end. When the Mott Brothers were originally planning the D'Oench Estate subdivision, they initially were going to build a road called Glenrock Road, extending from Dogwood Lane to Manhasset Woods Road; Glenrock Road would have followed the

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approximate route which Walter Lane follows today. The small portion of Dartmouth Road east of the traffic circle was to extend another couple hundred feet to the east, ending at Glenrock Road.

Additionally, early plat maps for the subdivision indicate that this portion of Dartmouth Road was to be called Dale Lane. However, that street name has seldom been used over the years, and it is typically considered to be part of Dartmouth Road.

9. **Sunset Drive:** Sunset Drive's name reflects the fact that the area was once part of the D'Oench family's estate, *Sunset Hill*.
10. **Romola Bowditch Green:** Romola Bowditch, who lived a few houses to the east of this traffic triangle on Sunset Drive, was one of the Manhasset Public Library's five founding board members, as well as one of the first two females to hold the position. In May of 1945, Bowditch famously received Manhasset's first library card.
11. **Sunset Hill Green:** This very spot marks the approximate location of the former mansion at *Sunset Hill*, which was designed by and for Alfred D'Oench and his wife, Alice Grace D'Oench.
12. **Mason Drive Oak Tree:** Near this intersection is one of the oldest oak trees on Long Island. Known as the "Mason Drive Oak Tree", this massive tree is believed to have been standing for over 400 years.

A ceremony was held by Flower Hill for Arbor Day 2018, honoring and celebrating this tree.

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13. **Stephen H. Mason Green:** Stephen H. Mason, the third Mayor of Flower Hill (serving between 1937 and 1940), owned an estate nearby. His estate would be developed into the Sunset Hills and Stratford Woods subdivisions in the 1930s and 1960s, respectively.
14. **Nassau Avenue:** According to early plat maps for the Sunset Hills subdivision, Nassau Avenue was originally to be a northern extension of Thayer Road, utilizing that name instead of Nassau Avenue.

Thayer Road is named for the late American artist, Abbott Handerson Thayer. This is due to how when the Metropolitan Museum of Art had Munsey Park developed, they opted to use a street naming convention using the surnames of famous American artists.

However, at some point during the planning stages for Sunset Hills, the map was amended, and the northern extension of Thayer Road was renamed as Nassau Avenue, thus making it the northern extension of that road. It is unknown why the name of this street was changed.

Additionally, the barrier on this Nassau Avenue at the Flower Hill-Munsey Park border was erected by Munsey Park in 1936 (along with the one on Eakins Road) as a means of limiting through traffic; the barriers were extremely controversial when first planned in 1935, and were ultimately upheld by the courts as constitutional in 1936.

15. **Mason's Overlook:** From the top of this hill, one can see the New York City skyline on a clear day. Although partially obstructed by trees during warmer months, the location is high enough for the tips of the Empire State Building, One World Trade Center, and other New York skyscrapers to be seen.

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The view of Manhattan from this part of Flower Hill was featured in a New York Times article from the 1930s, in an article on construction in the area.

The name of this scenic overlook reflects the fact that this very part of Flower Hill was once owned by Stephen H. Mason, Flower Hill's third Mayor.

16. **Mason Drive:** The name of Mason Drive reflects the fact that Stephen H. Mason, Flower Hill's third Mayor, once owned a large estate in this area, and had Mason Drive constructed in the 1930s as part of the Sunset Hills subdivision.

17. **Eakins Road:** Eakins Road is named for the late American artist, Thomas Eakins. This is due to the fact that when the Metropolitan Museum of Art had Munsey Park developed, they opted to use a street naming convention using the surnames of famous American artists.

The barrier on Eakins Road at the Flower Hill-Munsey Park border was erected by Munsey Park in 1936 (along with the one on Nassau Avenue) as a means of limiting through traffic; the barriers were extremely controversial when first planned by Munsey Park in 1935, and were ultimately upheld as being constitutional by the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 1936.

18. **Dogwood Lane:** According to early plat maps for the Sunset Hills subdivision, Dogwood Lane was to be named D'Oench lane. This was due to the road's proximity to the D'Oench family's estate, named *Sunset Hill*. The name of D'Oench Lane was changed to Dogwood Lane at some point during the planning stages in the 1930s, as indicated by records. It is unknown why the name of this street was changed.

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19. **Colonial Estates Entrance:** When originally built in the 1930s, this entrance to Colonial Estates featured an abundance of flowers, which was noted by the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. According to the April 10, 1938 edition of that paper, two thousand tulips, lilies, and other bulbs were planted at this very location, with each of Dogwood Lane at the eastern part of the intersection featuring one thousand bulbs.
20. **Manhasset Woods Road:** Manhasset Woods Road's name is likely due to how this area was historically forested.
21. **Walter Lane:** Walter Lane's name is due to how John W. Walter, Flower Hill's fourteenth Mayor, once owned the entirety of what is now the Manhasset Glen subdivision. Walter had this portion of his estate developed in the 1990s, and Walter Lane is the sole street in this subdivision.
22. **Hawkins Residence:** A significant, historic home built for the Hawkins family.
23. **Elderfields Road:** The name of Elderfields Road reflects the fact that this land was once owned by shipping executive Carlos W. Munson, Flower Hill's founding father. Munson named his estate *Elderfields*, and this name has been used ever since the subdivision was developed by T.B. Ackerson in the 1920s and 1930s.
24. **Charles Bagley Wright Green:** Around 1940, a child by the name of Charles Bagley Wright moved into a home on Elderfields Road, located slightly to the south of this traffic triangle.

Wright would eventually become a major real estate developer and philanthropist, and was one of the five main developers of the Seattle Space Needle.

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25. **Carlos W. Munson Green:** This area of Flower Hill was once owned by Carlos W. Munson, a shipping executive and Flower Hill's founding father.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Munson would sell off large portions of his estate to developers, who would construct new residential developments on the land. Due to his guidance, generosity, and leadership in incorporating Flower Hill as a village, he was offered the position of Flower Hill's first Mayor. However, Munson declined the offer, and instead accepted the position of Village Trustee.

At the first board meeting following his death in 1940, the Trustees held a moment of silence for Munson, and spoke about his life and the gratitude felt towards him by Flower Hill. Their closing line was the following:

“He [Carlos Walter Munson] was the First Citizen of Flower Hill and it is fitting that his name be in some way indelibly impressed upon this Village for the perpetuation of his memory.”

26. **Boone/Pulitzer Residence:** This Aspinwall and Simpson-designed home at 193 Elderfields Road was built for Rodney E. Boone. It would eventually be purchased by Ralph Pulitzer, Jr.

27. **Elm Lane:** According to early plat maps for Strathmore at Flower Hill, Elm lane was originally to be called Peachtree Lane. However, this name was changed during the planning stages, likely due to the fact that a Peachtree Lane already existed in the Broadridge section of Flower Hill.

Additionally, this subdivision would ultimately be built by Country Estates, Incorporated as opposed to Levitt & Sons after the latter cancelled their plans and sold the property.



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28. **St. Francis Hospital:** When Carlos Munson and his wife Mabel first moved to Flower Hill around 1900, they were soon alarmed when they took an evening stroll and noticed “the tumble-down buildings and the carousing of drunken men” which plagued the area at the time. This resulted in Carlos purchasing large portions of land to remove the drunks and the derelict buildings.

It was around this time that two sisters from the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary visited the Munsons to try and sell hand-made goods for charity. The Munsons quickly formed a friendship with the nuns, and offered them 15 acres of his estate. The offer was accepted, and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary established the St. Francis Home in 1922 as a summer camp for poor children.

In the 1930s, after learning that many poor New York school children suffered from rheumatic heart conditions, they would turn it into a sanatorium for children with rheumatic heart conditions.

In 1954, St. Francis would begin taking in adults as well as children, and they would continue to expand and grow.

Today, Saint Francis Hospital is one of America’s leading heart care centers and is New York’s only specialty-designated heart care center – and it is all thanks to “the carousing of drunken men” and a friendship.