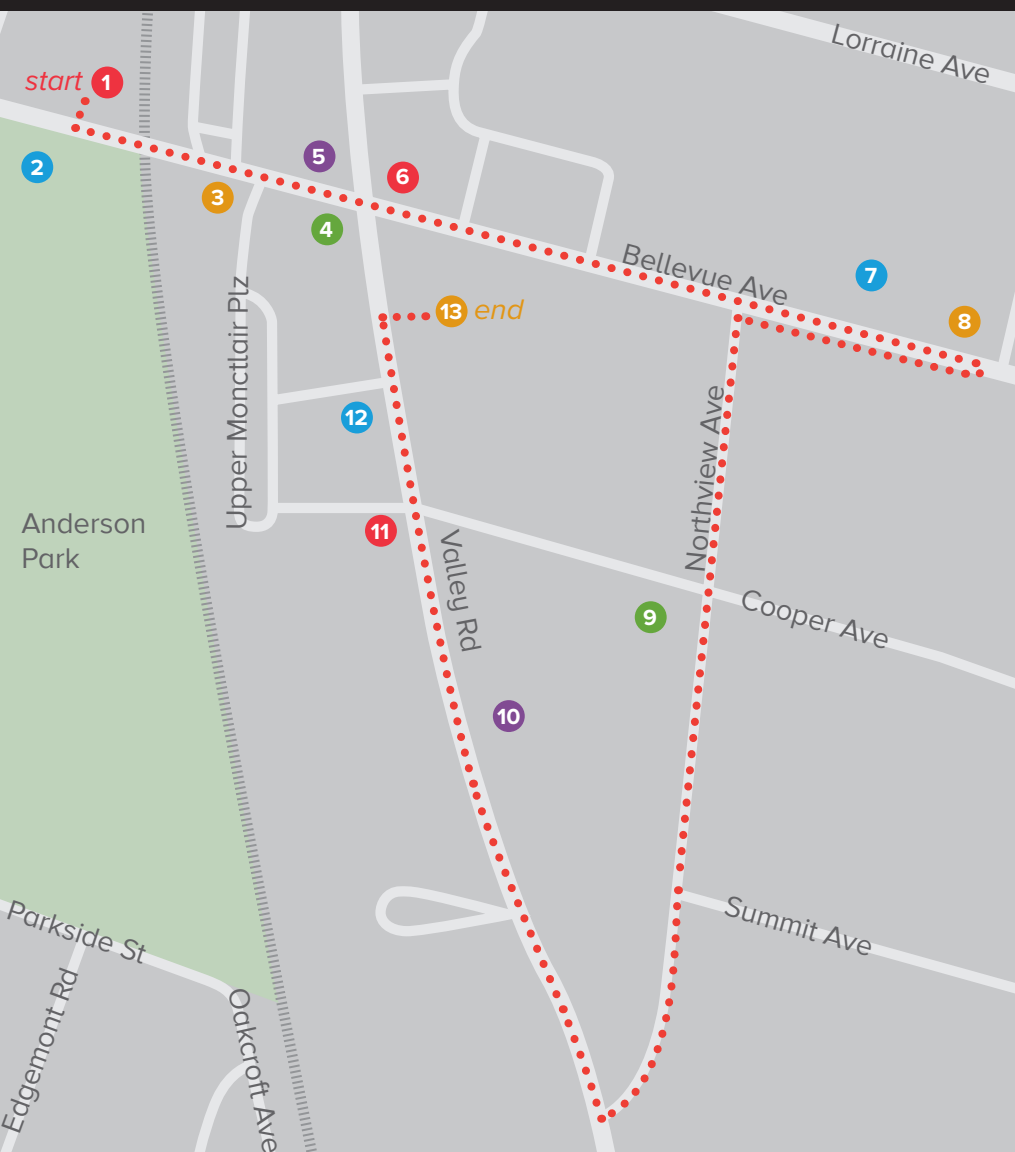


# UPPER MONTCLAIR HISTORIC DISTRICT < 1 MILE

An early 20th century transit-oriented business and residential hub



Boasting both a train station and the Valley Road trolley, the **Upper Montclair Business District** was a convenient place to go shopping, see a movie, picnic in the park, meet with like-minded friends at a club, and even go to church. However, for some Montclair residents, particularly people of color, Upper Montclair was off-limits in the early to mid-20th century. Like the Watchung Avenue Business District, this business district is bordered by commuter suburbs that developed along the rail lines.

Start on Bellevue Avenue near Anderson Park and the train station, walk towards Valley Road.

## 1 UPPER MONTCLAIR TRAIN STATION, 1896 275 Bellevue Avenue

This station was one of five Montclair stations on the Greenwood Lake line of the Erie Railroad. Service was first introduced here in 1873. This building replaced a small station. Destroyed by fire in 2006 and rebuilt in 2010, it is on the National Register of Historic Places.

## 2 ANDERSON PARK, 1905

In 1903, Charles Anderson donated this land for a park. John Charles Olmsted, of the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architecture firm responsible for Central Park's landscape, designed this park and many others in Essex County. Like all Olmsted parks, winding walkways smoothly transition people through a variety of landscapes, all of which seem to be natural and organic to the setting.

## 3 BELLEVUE THEATER, 1920s 260-264 Bellevue Avenue

If you attended the Bellevue's first show, you saw "Orphans of the Storm," a silent movie accompanied by an organ. Designed by John H. Phillips in the Tudor Revival style, the theater replaced the Trunk Building, so named for its rounded third floor. It is one of several buildings developed by the Anderson family in this area.

The Trunk Building was razed to make room for the Bellevue Theater.



## 4 242 BELLEVUE AVENUE, 1918

When F. A. Nelson, an architect, designed this building, his Picturesque Tudor Revival style set the tone for the business district. It was originally a post office.

## 5 600 VALLEY ROAD, 1914

The brick, Neoclassical style First National Bank building replaced an older woodframe building on this corner that served as Park Pharmacy. The Howard clock was erected between 1915 and 1918.

Cross Valley Road and continue on Bellevue Avenue.



Murphy & Pearcer Grocers was most likely on the southwest corner of Valley Road and Bellevue Avenue, c. 1890, near 4.

## 6 597 VALLEY ROAD, 1890-1906

Formerly the site of J. H. Laubenheimer's Pharmacy, the earliest pictures of this building featured outdoor wooden counters where people could enjoy ice cream. It remained a pharmacy until the mid-1950s.

## 7 ST. CASSIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1995 187 Bellevue Avenue

The church building is new, but the congregation was first formed in 1895 as a place for the Irish Catholic "help" working in Upper Montclair homes to worship, so they wouldn't have to trek all the way to Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church near Bloomfield Avenue. The original shingle-style church built in 1900, which fronted Norwood Avenue, was called "St. Cassian in the Wilderness;" the present church is on the site of the parish's former rectory. Both structures were demolished in 1992.

## 8 BELLEVUE BRANCH LIBRARY, 1914 185 Bellevue Avenue

"He that loveth a book will never want for a faithful friend." A quote from an English theologian and mathematician graces the entrance to this Neo-Classical library. This library building was made possible through funds from steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who donated millions to communities for libraries.

Cross Bellevue Avenue at Norwood Avenue. Walk back towards Valley Road and turn left on Northview Avenue.

## 9 WOMAN'S CLUB OF UPPER MONTCLAIR, 1914 200 Cooper Avenue

By 1900, when the Woman's Club of Upper Montclair was founded, there were already countless clubs, societies, and leagues people could join to further their passions in sports, literature, drama, music, philanthropy, and more. The Woman's Club focused on personal and civic betterment and invited speakers like Margaret Sanger (1926) and Eleanor Roosevelt (1931). The building has Colonial Revival exterior and Tudor Revival interior.

Turn right on Valley Road.

## 10 HISTORIC MARKER, 1938 551 Valley Road

In October 1780, the Marquis de Lafayette stayed in Montclair with American troops, planning a surprise attack on the British in Staten Island, which ultimately never took place. It is said that Washington stayed at William and Mercy Crane's home on Valley Road and Claremont Avenue; Lafayette stayed in a log cabin on this site. Both houses have been razed. Only these historic markers tell us about the history that happened here.

## 11 BOND'S, 1934-1973 570 Valley Road

Bond's, purveyors of ice cream and frozen food, was the home of the Awful Awful milkshake and a beloved hangout. When Bond's closed, the owners sold the trademark to Newport Creamery, a Rhode Island based chain, where you can still indulge in an Awful Awful today.

## 12 FIRE STATION, 1902 588 Valley Road

Architect E. R. North designed this Queen Anne style firehouse of rusticated brownstone, originally known as Cliffside House No. 4. This area was known as Cliffside in the mid to late 1800s. North, formerly of the famed Mead, McKim, and White firm, also developed the Erwin Park neighborhood. Horses were used to pull the trucks until 1918.

"Cliffside Hose Company No. 4 was organized February 7, 1888...its first apparatus was the old Rumsey pump and reel." – Henry B. Whittemore, 1894

## 13 ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 1878 583 Valley Road

Built as Cliffside Chapel in 1878 on land donated by the Presbyterian Church, this church was an independent, non-denominational "Christian Union" until 1888 when it became an Episcopal church. In 1919, a Memorial Bell Tower replaced the original steeple to honor seven congregants who died in World War I. If the church is open during your walk, peak inside and look at the beautiful stained glass windows.