

This bouldering guide is intended to assist H-R climbers new to the Boston area; especially those lacking transportation. Many of these areas make up in convenience what they lack in aesthetic beauty, so while travelling far away from Cambridge on weekends may be the ultimate goal, practical considerations may limit one's aspirations to local areas. Moreover, for an afternoon frolic to stay in shape, these areas can't be beat.

Two publications, Climbing in Eastern Massachusetts by Hendrick and Streibert (\$3.95) and Climbing Guide to the Quincy Quarries by Crowther and Thompson (about \$2.00) are the major sources of information on local climbing. These guides can be examined or bought at Backpacker's Country on Mt. Auburn St. or at EMS on Commonwealth Ave. The books are by no means complete or absolutely necessary for enjoying climbing in Boston. It would be beyond the scope of this guide to repeat the information given in the books; instead we concentrate on comparing the areas and describing in detail how the careless climber can reach the more popular ones.

Note: for all of these areas, a bicycle is faster than the T. The only exceptions might be the Quincy Quarries and Rattlesnake Rocks, but for these one can bring a bicycle on the train, though it is not allowed. If you bike, take a good set of maps, e.g. Arrow Street Map Atlas at the Coop--\$4.00.

Happy bouldering, future Harvard rock-stars !

- I. Quincy Quarries
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- VII. Black and White Rocks
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I. QUINCY QUARRIES

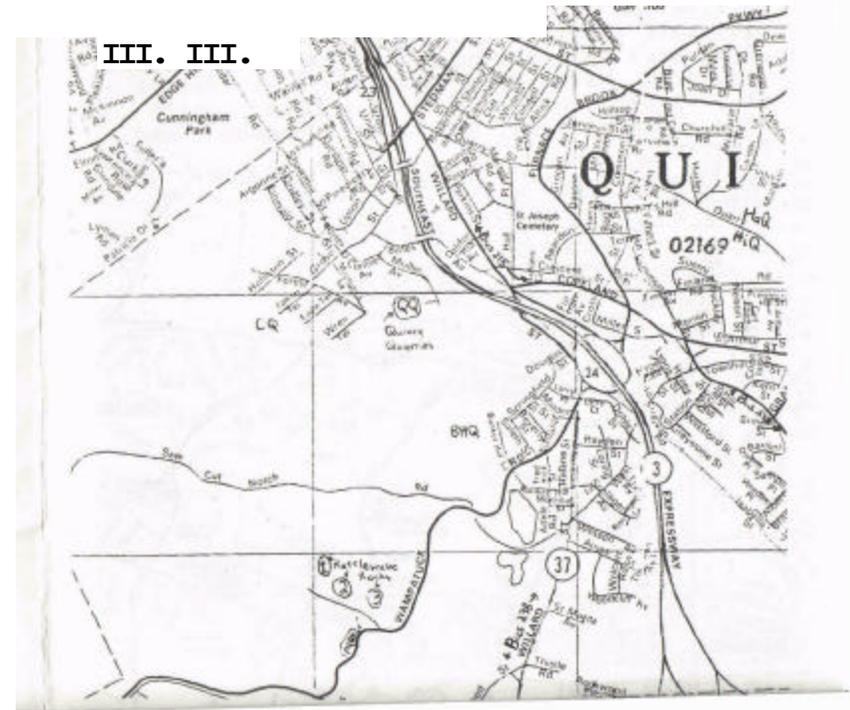
Difficulties range from 5.2 to desperate 5.10's, all top-roped. The new guidebook lists about 100 climbs, but this includes a few variations two feet apart that share "allowed holds" with their neighbors. Climbs average from 20 to 80 feet high, and this area has the most climbs in lower grades (5.2-5.6) of all the Boston bouldering areas. Quarrying stopped in the late 30's, but the rock is still sharply fractured; the only erosion has been due to the repeated use of the same small holds. Because of much traffic on the routes, holds have become greasy and polished, and some key flakes have disappeared. The rock itself is extremely frictionless, and there is virtually no crack climbing. Willie Crowther established many of the routes in the early 60's, and climbers from MIT and Harvard (notably Kevin Bein) added many of the more difficult routes.

Take the Red Line to Wollaston and walk 30 minutes west on Beale and Stedman Sts. Cross Route 3 and head south to the obvious pile of blocks on the skyline. Or, take the Red Line to Ashmont, then bus #215 to Robert-son or Bates Sts. Call the MBTA to synchronize the subway with the bus. Both alternatives cost the same. A ride back can usually be had from other climbers at the Quarries. Allow 1-1½ hours for this approach.

II. RATTLESNAKE ROCKS

This area features 22+ routes on natural granite, with half being 5.6 or easier. There are four crags hidden in the trees NW of Wampatuck Rd. From Wollaston (Red Line) head for the Quincy Quarries, but when you reach Willard St., go south and under the expressway instead of crossing on Stedman St. Follow Willard under the expressway and branch right on Wampatuck road. The area is at the top of the hill where many cars park on the right. Consult diagram for the location of crags in the woods.

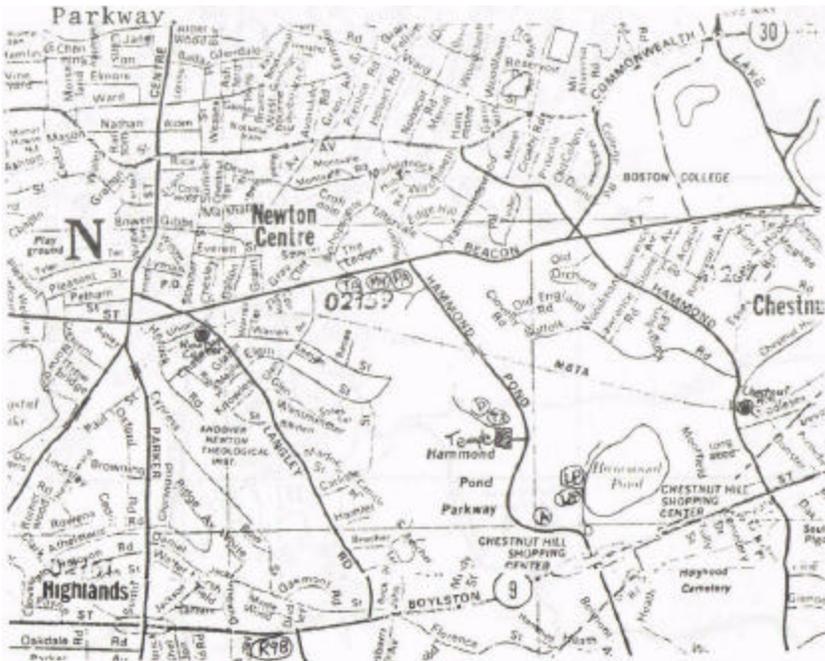
Another way to Wampatuck Rd. is bus #238 from Quincy Center (Red Line).



III. HAMMOND POND AND ROUTE 9 BOULDER

Climbs are spread between 5.0 and 5.12. 72 short top-rope climbs exist from 10 to 30 feet, with roughly half being 5.7 or easier. Imbedded pebbles make for inobvious face and overhang climbing. There are also severely overhanging routes which lend themselves to gymnastic solutions. Very long runners are needed to protect your rope from destruction from running over edges.

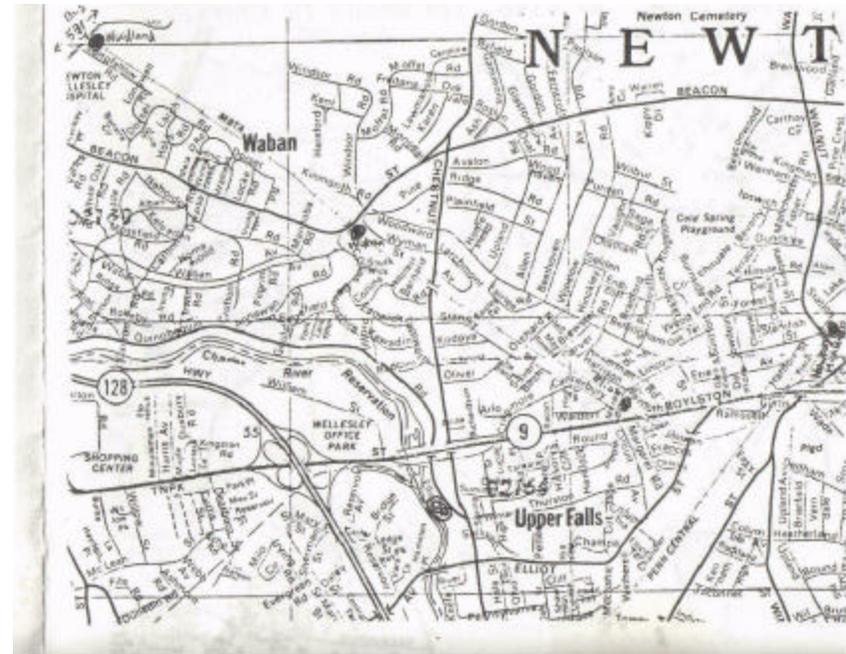
Take the Riverside Green Line to Chestnut Hill. Go left (south) on Hammond St. to a shopping center on Route 9, which is traversed to the pond areas. Consult Hendrick's guide to find the individual outcrops. The approach will take about 1¼ hours. It takes only 30 minutes by bike, however (3-speed). Street sequence: Harvard St., Western Ave., Market St., Washington St., Lake St., Commonwealth Ave., Hammondswood, Beacon St., Hammond Pond Parkway.



IV. ECHO BRIDGE

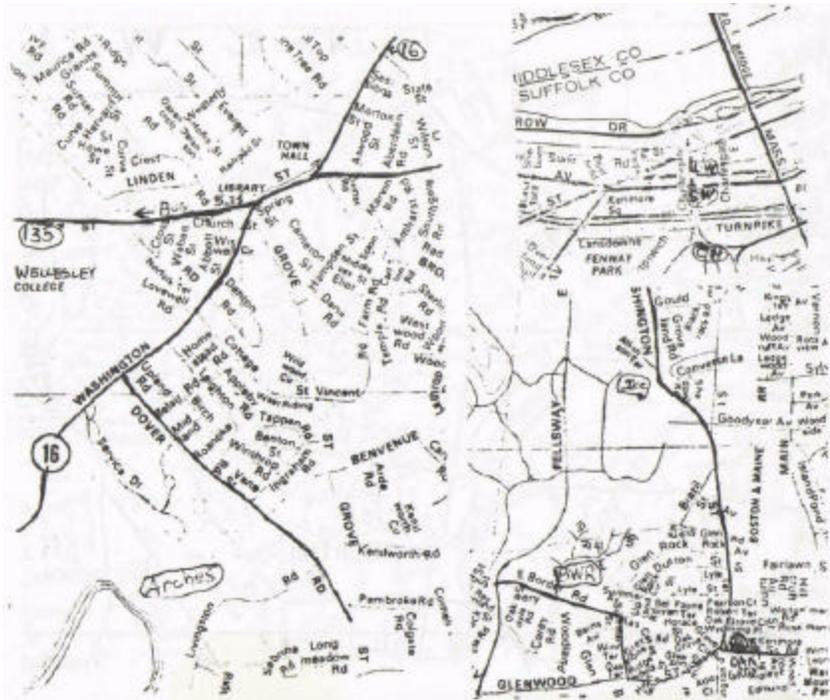
This area offers sustained vertical climbs demanding finger and arm strength, if not excellent technique. On the harder climbs, an optimistic attitude assists in the race to reach the top before one's arms become useless. The easiest is about 5.8. Ten separate routes exist, each with many variations. The Bridge is an aqueduct made of granite blocks, and features a small ceiling at the top.

Take the Riverside Green Line to Waban, then walk back along the tracks until you reach Chestnut St. Turn right and go about a half mile to the Bridge (which spans the Charles River) going under Route 9 at one point. Bike time is 1 hour. Follow the street sequence to Hammond Pond, but continue on Beacon to Chestnut.



V. WELLESLEY ARCHES

These arches are just like those at Echo Bridge, except most climbs are longer, making these arches generally harder. Sometimes inaccurately called the Waban Arches, the aquaduct is just southeast of Wellesley College, by a golf course. Go to Woodland on the Riverside Green Line, and take the Wellesley bus (#531) along Route 16 to Wellesley Center, where the bus leaves Route 16 for Route 135. Then walk southwest on Route 16 to Dover St., where a left turn soon brings one to the golf course parking lot. Go up on the embankment and walk southwest to the Arches. A more dubious possibility is the MIT-Wellesley shuttle bus. The trip is a major undertaking by public transportation, requiring at least 2½ hours via the Green Line. By bike, its about 1½ hours, 14 miles via Route 16.



VI. KENMORE SQUARE AND CHARLESGATE

This difficult bouldering area features only one 5.7 and five 5.8 climbs for the intermediate climber. Thirty more thin face climbs, requiring the use of small sharp holds, attract the advancing boulderer. Some climbs, especially on the Long Wall, involve desperate moves high above the ground. Beware of broken glass left by the bums, and of some fingerholds nearly as sharp. The short wall can be descended by jumping into the pine tree or by climbing down either end of the wall.

Bike, or take the Dudley bus down Mass. Ave. past MIT and across the Harvard Bridge. Get off at the first light and walk right to the overpass. The long and short walls are on opposite sides of Commonwealth Ave., just to your left. If traffic on Mass. Ave. is heavy, the Green Line to Kenmore Square might be faster than the bus.

Several of the hard climbs are protected from the rain, providing an alternative to a rained-out weekend trip.

VII. BLACK AND WHITE ROCKS

This area provides twenty climbs on frictiony rock in a pretty locale. It's a fine beginners' area, with only five of the climbs harder than 5.5. The rocks are short, being about 20-80' tall.

Go out the Orange Line to Oak Grove, then west on Winter and Glenwood Sts. about five blocks to Summer St. Three blocks north on Summer St., then left two blocks on East Border Road. Then a dirt road leading uphill into the Middlesex Fells Reservation is obvious on your right.

VIII. HARVARD VICINITY

Note: Climbing on Harvard buildings is not allowed. There have been close calls with the Ad Board, so don't treat this guide as a license for indiscrete building.

Holyoke Center Squeeze Chimney--5.8,20'.

In the tunnel between Mass. Ave. and Mount Auburn St. are two twin split pillars.

Baker Library, Business School--5.8,70'.

The NE corner has been toproped. It's strenuous.

Dudley Tree--5.8,12'.

Between Matthews and the statue by Dudley House is a deceptively easy looking tree. Finding the route is no easier than reaching the first limb.

Lionel Wall--5.6,15'.

Between Lionel and Harvard Hall is a short wall offering a 5.6 chimney on the Mass. Ave. side. The Lionel side has a corner requiring delicate balance (5.7). The corner is done without using the window ledge, and can also be done one-handed. In the latter case, the contrived mantel at the top is the crux (5.9).

Harvard Hall Ivory Tower--5.4,70'.

More a mountaineering ascent than a bouldering route, this climb was pioneered by two freshmen at night. After finding a hidden trapdoor and staircase, a headlamp showed that the direct inside route had been bricked up years ago. Undaunted, a route was forced up the Hollis fire escape to an exposed but secure step over space to the Harvard roof. A quick

scramble up the roof ends in the tower, which presents a great view of Harvard Square.

Canaday Shield--5.9,15'.

By G-Entry, on the Broadway St. Wall, is a face climbing area to the left of a gate. One climb has been completed, on the right hand side.

Widener Pillar-- 5.7,90'.

Chimney between the pillar and buttress, then pull over two or three overhangs to the roof. This committing route has had only one known ascent. There are two direct starts or separate boulder problems. 1) The brick corner underneath the chimney can be surmounted with an amazing lunge. 2) The buttresses on either end of the steps are overcome by a dynamic move off of finger holds.

Baptist Church--5.7,5.6,5.5,20'.

The climbs are situated on the east side of the church, which lies between Harvard St. and Mass. Ave., near Hurlbut. 1) Stand on the 7 foot high upper ledge and traverse (without using the screen on the windows). 2) Traverse the lower ledge in the same manner--5.6. 3) Climb any of the 20 foot high buttresses up to the gutter. None of these have been completely done, but they are generally rated 5.7. 4) Climb the obvious chimney up to the gutter. 5.5.

Wigglesworth Gate-- 5.8 , 25'.

Climb the North Face of the East Pillar inside the gate across from Widener's back entrance. Using desperate bear-hug handholds on sides of the pillar and small footholds between bricks, ascend pillar straight up to the cement bowl of fruit. (top-roped).

Pusey Moat--5.8,15'.

Climb the left inside corner at the end of the moat around Pusey, next to Houghton. Using window pane friction and dubious cement footholds, gain an undercling above the window and extend your reach to the top of the corner.

Varsity Club--5.6,5.7,5.8,20'.

Three climbs will be found at the Varsity club. 1) Located on the left (or right) column of the Varsity Club entrance. Crack climb or squeeze chimney to the top of the pillar and ascend the slight overhang to the top of the balcony, 5.6. 2) Located on the north side of the Varsity Club, across from Warren House. Mantle up on a low ledge and, pressing against the balcony above, lean out to gain the end of the balcony and ascend. Don't use the cement balcony supports. 5.7. 3) On the Prescott St. side, mantle on sloping ledge just above one's reach. Don't use ledge above you. 5.8.

Hurlbut Traverse--5.7,50'.

Start on the north face of Hurlbut, by the door. Traverse the obvious ledge out onto the west face.

William James Hall--200'.

Two 200' laybacks exist on the north side. They start out at 5.7 and never let up. A top rope is recommended, even for the most confident. A complete ascent has not been recorded. There is also a seven foot wide chimney by the layback. One person got ten feet up this unique obstacle.

Gibbs Layback--5.7,90'.

Enter this secluded area between

Malinckrodt and Conant. The crack behind the pillar can be laybacked and descended by chimneying.

Lowell Finger Crack-- 5.8,15'.

By the entrance to Lowell Lecture Hall is this all too obvious shallow, narrowing crack. Try starting with a layback on this frictiony rock.

Son of Foops--5.9,15'.

On Hoffman Labs, by the Geological Lecture Room is a ceiling with a ledge just above. By standing on the bicycle rack, a rightward lunge can be made to the ledge. A hand traverse continues to the corner, where one pulls up to stand on the ledge. Descend by traversing left around a corner to an alcove and a small drop.

Doorjam--5.9,15'.

On the right side of the south face of Hoffman are some grey double doors. Use the hinges and finish to the ledge with a quick dynamic reach. Don't let anyone open the door, or you'll be in a jam.

Austin Hall--5.7-5.11,50'.

Good face climbing is available on the left side of the sunny south face. An eliminate move around the drainpipe is reportedly 5.11. Don't use chalk here or on any Harvard building.

The Common Climb-- 5.7,40'.

The stone monument in the center of the Cambridge common has been ascended. The first gutsy move involves scrambling up the corner of the roof. If you can do that, you're doing well.

NW Corner of Hilles-- 5.8,15'.

A fun undercling or fingertip layback brings one to the lip.

Central Pillar of Hilles-- 5.9,17'.

A nice pillar supports the east ramp entrance to the library. Up the flaring chimney and over the three-foot roof.

Cabot Fingertrip--5.9,12'.

On Walker St., the right hand side of the entryway provides ten feet of hard laybacking to grab a bucket.

Concord Crack-- 5.9,50'.

On the way to the Observatory, between two buildings on the left side, lies this six-inch crack. The backside is an ugly squeeze chimney.

Porter Square Commuting Wall-- 5.5-5.9,200'.

This wall provides a good workout for climbers at all levels. It is the wall overlooking the platform for the Porter Square Commuter Rail Station on Somerville Ave., SE of Porter Square. The left half of the wall is fairly easy, while the right half has some very strenuous and difficult sections with few rests. Jamming technique may be perfected at the several rests stationed along the wall. A complete right to left traverse starting from the end of the platform has been accomplished. However, as the wall stretches to infinity to the right, there will always be new goals. The wall catches the afternoon sun, so it is an excellent place to get one's hands and forearms in shape for ice climbing. Stay low, keep your cool, and watch out for flying strawberries! Save some strength to hold your knife and fork at dinner afterwards.

MIT-Chapel Wall Traverse-- 5.6-5.8,70'.

Just west of Mass. Ave., across from the main MIT building is this good practice area. A long traverse on moderate holds gives a good workout.

Geology Gap--5.7,200'.

A long chimney on this building east of the Chapel Wall provides a serious climb.

IX. ICE CLIMBS

Radio Activity--25-35'.

The only significant vertical ice in Boston that appears every winter, this climb forms on the northernmost corner of the leaky cooling tower next to MIT's nuclear reactor. Begin the approach on Mass. Ave. between Albany and Vassar Sts. Hike southwest along the railroad tracks for 50 yards and you're there. Put on your crampons before tackling the chain link fence.

West Face of Delphic Club--20'.

What else can be said?

Black and White Ice--20'.

This ice flow forms regularly during Boston cold spells. There is a lot of ice here, so it's a good place to check out your technique. Take the Orange Line to Oak Grove. Go west half a block on Winter St., then north on Washinton St. for about half a mile. Once you reach Atkinson Terr. on the left you can see the ice in a valley about 50 yards off the road (to your left).