Chartered in 1749, Bennington was the first town created in Vermont. In June of 1761 twenty-two settlers from Massachusetts came to Old Bennington, in the wilderness of Vermont, under the leadership of Captain Samuel Robinson to form a Congregational community centered around a village green and a meeting house. The community grew rapidly, hosting many fine homes, schools, a cemetery, post office, and courthouse. It was a self-contained community with many local artisans and merchants to provide services. The Green Mountain Boys ventured out from here to fight for their land and freedom in the Battle of Bennington. In July of 1777, the Council of Safety met in Bennington and wrestled with the affairs of the newly created Republic of Vermont. At the meeting house they discussed the new Vermont constitution, prohibiting slavery and offering near universal male suffrage. Bennington produced six Vermont governors.

However, as industry grew, activity began to shift downhill along the Walloomsac River which provided power to operate mills and machinery. Government offices and business soon followed, leaving Old Bennington behind as a quiet residential community.

Old Bennington reflects a history of change; homes have been taken down, moved, and renovated but the character of individualism and freedom remains and continues in the spirit of Bennington and of Vermont.
Pliny Dewey House 1800

Built by son of Jedidiah Dewey, a carpenter and the first pastor of the First Church. Pliny ran a cider mill by the brook behind the Federal style house.

Hiram Waters House 1820

Waters was a carpenter and built the house at the head of town. Part of the building was added later, and was connected to the home. Both buildings are in the Greek Revival style with the carpenter’s own embellishments such as the starburst on the pediment.

Isaiah Hendryx House 1830

In this brick house the front door and the Palladian are in the Federal style while the Gable with its pediment reflect the Greek revival style showing the changing architectural styles of the period. Hendryx was a tailor, one of the many tradesmen and merchants that worked in Old Bennington providing goods and services to the community.

Jedidiah Dewey House 1763

Built by Jedidiah Dewey, a carpenter and the first pastor of the First Church, this is one of the oldest frame buildings in Vermont. This house was located nearby the original “Minister’s Lot” of 320 acres that was granted to him by the town propitiously and stretched all the way to the Walloomsac River.

Roberts House 1895

Built in the Colonial revival style it reflects the earlier Federal and Greek style of the other streets in the town, it is the home of novelist John Gardner who was taught at Bennington College.

William Lloyd Garrison Marker

William Lloyd Garrison, the great abolitionist, briefly ran a newspaper, the Journal of the Times, in Bennington from 1828 to 1829 before moving on to establish The Liberator.

Col. Nathaniel Brush House 1775

Colonel Brush commanded two companies of the Vermont militia at the Battle of Bennington. The home was renovated in 1824 and again in the early 1890s.

Walloomsac Inn 1771

Originally the Dewey Tavern, it was built by Elijah Dewey, son of Reverend Jedidiah Dewey. During Bennington’s heyday as the jumping-off point for settling the Vermont frontier, the Walloomsac Inn was in continuous operation as an inn into the 1970s and may be the site where the Walloomsac River.

Site of Bennington Meetinghouse 1763

On the site stood the original Meetinghouse. The building was 40 x 30 feet and served as a school, a church, and Town Hall. Prisoners from the Battle of Bennington were held here. The Vermont legislature convened here in 1778, it was dismantled after the completion of the new church and parsonage used in other dwellings in the area.

Site of Bennington Courthouse 1847

This was the third Courthouse to be built in Old Bennington. It burned in 1869 and was rebuilt in a location on South Street, moving the base of power from Old Bennington to what is now downtown Bennington. In Vermont a Shire Town is a county seat, and Bennington and Manchester both share that distinction. The June term of the County Court convenes at Bennington and the December term at Manchester. Ethan Allen’s home, built in 1769 was next door.

Ethan Allen’s House 1769

Ethan Allen lived here from 1769 to 1776. He is best known as one of the founders of Vermont and frequently used Fort Ticonderoga early in the Revolutionary War. A historic marker is located a few feet north of the house.

Asa Hyde House 1787

Asa Hyde, a skilled cabinet maker, came to Bennington from Norwich, Connecticut, in 1805 to work with the building of the First Church. He is responsible for many of the features of the church, including the columns, pewes, and pulpit.

Site of the Catamount Tavern 1767

Originally the Stephen English Tavern, the building stood on this site and served as the headquarters of Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys, who left from here in 1775 to capture Fort Ticonderoga. General Stark, who commanded the American forces in the Battle of Bennington, conferred here with the leaders of Vermont prior to the Battle. British officers captured in the Battle were housed here for a short time.

Old Academy 1819

This two story brick building having a step gable front was originally built as a school; later it served as the town library, with the fire department in the basement. Just after it was built a windstorm blew off the belfry, and part of the facade had to be re-shingled. The difference in the brickwork on the front.

Site of Samuel Robinson’s Log Cabin 1761

Robinson was the founder of Bennington and leader of the first settlers who succeeded in having land titles originating from a grant made by Governor Bennington Wonwam of New Hampshire in 1749.

Samuel Raymond House 1821

Built of locally made brick, this was the residence of the president of the first bank in Bennington, which was located next door on Bank Street. Extensive renovations around 1903 included a two-story addition and a sunporch.

General David Robinson

House 1795

General David Robinson was one of the sons of Samuel Robinson. This late Georgian house has elegant columns supporting a facade above our regional version of the Palladian window.

Richard Carpenter House 1819

One of the many tradesmen in Old Bennington, Carpenter operated a tailor shop with Isaiah Hendryx. The triple window above the door shows renovations carried out in the early 1900’s when it was doubled in size, had its roof line changed and the triple windows added above the door.

The Uel Robinson House 1826

Uel was the grandson of Samuel Robinson. The house is a Federal style / Greek Revival clapboard home. Notably, two of Uel’s sons moved to South Carolina and served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

Ellenwood-Daniel Conkling House 1810

This home was enlarged and embellished in the Italianate style in 1859. At one time it sported a cupola. Ellenwood’s carriage shop was next door.

The Fay-Brown House 1871

This is the only stone building in the area and was built as a blacksmith shop. It was converted into a dwelling in 1857 and underwent remodeling in 1957.

Governor John Robinson House 1860

Robinson, the first Democratic Governor of Vermont, was elected in 1855. The house was built in the vernacular style that combined both Greek Revival and Federal features.

Captain David Robinson House 1790

Robinson was a grandson of Samuel Robinson, one of the founders of Bennington. Upon his death he deeded his house to the First Congregational Church for use as a parsonage.

The Bennington Battle Monument 1891

Built to commemorate the Battle of Bennington, it is located near the site of the Continental Storehouse which was the object of the British attack. The limestone memorial is 306 feet high, making it the tallest structure in Vermont. President Benjamin Harrison attended its dedication in 1891 on the 100th anniversary of Vermont statehood. Memorials to General Stark, Colonel Warner, and printer Anthony Haswell are located nearby.

Monument to Colonel Seth Warner

Seth Warner was a resident of Bennington. He was a captain in the Continental Army and leader of Green Mountain Boys. Later, when the Green Mountain Boys became a Continental Army regiment, he led them to victory at the Battle of Bennington.

Monument to General John Stark

John Stark, one of the heroes of Bunker Hill, raised 1400 volunteers from New Hampshire and was the overall commander at the Battle of Bennington. Rallying his troops before the battle he said “There they are, boys! We beat them today or Mully Stark dies before dawn tonight!” The sculpture shows General Stark pointing to the battlefield.

Special thanks to Robert Jorgent and the Bennington Historical Society for donating their time and knowledge to create this walking tour.