

## Roxbury Audio Tour Transcript

- Begin your tour by International Village. Head East on Columbus Ave and turn right on the Melnea Cass Blvd.
- Continue down Melnea Cass via the side path
- Melnea Cass was a Civil Rights activist who spent much of her life advocating for residents in Roxbury. This earned her the nickname: The First Lady of Roxbury. She encouraged black women to cast their votes after the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified in 1920. She also organized many local programs, including Action for Boston Community Development which is currently in action all around the city.
- Dudley Square and the station are named after the influential Dudley family. Arriving in Roxbury in 1630, Thomas Dudley came from England with the title of Deputy Governor. His political term was quite vast, as he served as Governor of the Mass Bay colony four times and Deputy Governor thirteen times. During his term, Governor Dudley provided land and funds to start Roxbury Latin School, founded Cambridge, MA, and signed the charter that eventually established Harvard. Thomas' son, Joseph, also served as the Governor of both Massachusetts and the newly established New Hampshire. Both Joseph and Thomas are buried in the Eliot Burial Ground.
- Ruggles Station, which is a transportation hub for the Orange Line, buses and the commuter rail, as well as bridging both sides of the Northeastern campus, is named after the Ruggles Family that also played a large role in the development of Roxbury. Some members of the Ruggles family arrived in Massachusetts on the same trip that the first members of the Dudley family did in 1630. Sarah Ruggles, related to the original Ruggles, eventually married Peter Parker of the Parker Family, making them one of the most well-known families in Mission Hill and Roxbury.
- After Shawmut Ave is Ramsay Park/Jim Rice Field on your left.
- Jim Rice was a legendary Red Sox outfielder who played for the team between the years of 1974 and 1989. Rice became involved with Major League Baseball's Reversing Baseball in Inner Cities program and this park was named after him when it opened in 1999.
- On your right is Tropical Foods, a great local and affordable place to shop. Recently renovated, the market carries food used to make cuisine from many different cultures. It is the premier supermarket for Spanish, African American, West Indian, and African cuisine.
- Make a right on Washington St. Walk on the right side of Washington.
- On the left side of the street is the silver line. Prior to the existence of the Silver Line, the precursor to the Orange line known as the Washington Street Elevated Line used to run above Washington St. from downtown Boston to Forest Hills station from 1901 to 1987. It was the last elevated section of the Orange line to remain as tunnel projects sent the rest underground. In 1987, the aging and rusting elevated line was closed as the Orange line was rerouted to its current location in the Southwest Corridor. With local residents along Washington St. deprived of a rapid transit option into the downtown, the Silver Line was

introduced in 2002 after attempts of a new subway/trolley line along Washington St. failed.

- Keep walking on Washington St. After Walgreens is the Central Boston Elderly Services, stop here.
- Founded in 1974, this nonprofit helps elderly individuals remain in their homes independently by providing short and long-term care. The organization emphasizes the dignity and respect their clients deserve.
- To your left is Dudley Station, which was built in 1901 as a trolley car and elevated subway station and is now a transportation hub for the buses and Silver Line. Parts of the original station were lowered and make up the existing station while the rest was constructed for additional bus platforms. Dudley Square is an important economic and cultural center.
- In 1996, after thirty years of offering meals to the homeless in Boston's South End, the Haley House began teaching baking skills to clients in their soup kitchen after meal hours. It's a great place to come for a meal/coffee/giant cookie.
- While this Haley House location serves as the main bakery and café for the neighborhood, there is another location on Dartmouth Street where the main offices and soup kitchen are located. It is also the site of the Live-in Community. Here, Community members receive free room and board in exchange for managing a variety of Haley House services. This is a full-time commitment that includes living simply and communally with 4-9 other members while contributing primarily to the day-to-day running of the Soup Kitchen.
- Continue on Washington St. Make a left to Dudley St. Stop at the intersection with Warren St.
- On you right, behind the library, is the Yawkey Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston. They provide more than 14,000 children and teens with a safe place to go, ongoing relationships with caring adults, and life enhancing programs and experiences that build strong character and leadership qualities.
- Turn around and continue to Malcom X Blvd.
- You will see The Faces of Dudley Mural on you right. It was painted in 1995 by the Boston Youth Mural Fund Crew. The mural includes Malcom X, who was also a one-time resident of the area. The Silver Slipper Restaurant behind the mural was featured in the movie Gone Baby Gone.
- The Dudley Branch Library is part of the Boston Public Library system and features a large collection of books that cover the African American experience from before the Civil War. This branch was opened in 1978 and replaced the Mount Pleasant Branch. They offer daily programming for children of all ages, as well as, special programs and exhibits featuring visiting authors and musicians.
- Across the street from the library is the Urban League. Founded in 1917, the Eastern Massachusetts branch of the Urban League strives to improve the community and advocate for civil rights. Their purpose is to "build stronger communities by providing local residents with education, job training and placement at no cost." The organization has strong community and corporate ties which helps them to achieve their goals.
- Walk down Malcom X Blvd, staying on the right side.

- On your right are two major area high schools, John D O'Bryant School of Math and Science and Madison Park. Both schools are public. O'Bryant is an exam school, which means that to be eligible for attendance, students in the Boston Public School System must earn a certain score on a standardized test.
- Along the left, you will see sets of stairs leading up the hill at the traffic light. At the top of these stairs is the Roxbury Heritage Park. The park is home to the historic Dillaway Thomas House which was built in 1750 and named for two of its occupants, General John Thomas and Charles K. Dillaway. Thomas is notable for being a general during the American Revolution and Dillaway was headmaster of the Boston Latin School in the 1830's. The white steeple at the top of the stairs is now a Unitarian Urban Ministry, but used to be First Church of Roxbury from 1631.
- Madison Park is a Vocational-Technical High School on you right.
- Keep walking down Malcom X Blvd. Stop on the side of the green roof building, this is Reggie Lewis Track Center.
- Reggie Lewis was a Northeastern student who later played for the Boston Celtics. He passed away during practice at the age of 27. Many big events including state sports championships and ACC tournaments take place there. Community members and schools in the area also use the facilities.
- On the left is the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, which is the largest Islamic center in New England. Aside from being a mosque, the center is also home to a school, a library, an interfaith center, an exhibition space, and a café. The center is run by the Muslim American Society and provides a range of services both to the Muslim and non-Muslim community.
- After the ISBCC is Roxbury Community College, which has buildings on both sides of Malcom X Blvd. Roxbury Community College is one of two community colleges in Boston, the other being Bunker Hill Community College located in Charlestown. The college offers an array of courses to provide their students with an Associate's degree or certification depending on the program of study.
- Cross at the intersection to Roxbury Crossing and walk into the Corridor to get back to International Village.
- The Southwest Corridor Park was originally a project designed to bring an eight-lane highway (I-95) into the city of Boston. A nearly 5-mile stretch of land was cleared, and acres of houses in the South End, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plains were razed in preparation for the Southwest Expressway. However, local residents did not want the highway in their community and so they organized and protested the highway's construction. Ultimately the governor conceded in 1969 and the community won. Instead the Orange Line was rerouted to this location and the Southwest Corridor Park was done in conjunction. The Corridor has become a vibrant space for pedestrians, bicyclists, dog-walkers, amateur sports leagues, and community gardeners. The Southwest Corridor Park Conservancy helps maintain gardens, run summer youth projects in the park, and keeps a website with maps and photos. The drastic change from could-be highway to community space is a testimony to using urban space for development and community.