

the factories that manufactured fabric for military uniforms for the Civil War through World War II. And there's the Ayer Clock Tower. Built in 1910, it's still one of the world's largest; its four glass faces are only slightly smaller than those on Big Ben. The heritage park's museum, located in a restored 1840s mill-workers' boarding house, lays out the city's history and is well worth a visit.

Yet industry came at a stiff price. Koehler, whose father ran the boathouse during the

1980s and 1990s, says his older board members tell stories of how the river used to "run in colors"—most often vivid green—from vats of dyes dumped by textile firms. "In the 1950s and 60s, the parents would check behind their kids' ears to see if they'd been swimming in the river," he explains, "because the kids would wash themselves off in front of a mirror, and never remember to get out the ink or dye behind their ears."

Today, "the river is cleaner than it used to

be," he says. Steering away from the dam, up the river, he turns into a creek and touts the wildlife: American bald eagles, deer, nesting Canadian geese, dam-building beavers. Turtles lay eggs in the boathouse's yard. Once the hatchlings have emerged and "are trying to make their way to the water, across the backyard where a hundred kids are about to run around," he, the staff, and the children gently move them to the shore of the creek. For city kids, Koehler notes, the riv-

ALL IN A DAY: A Rural Retreat

Just 19 miles from hot and congested downtown Boston lies the bucolic town of Lincoln. Even before postwar suburbia arose, Lincoln's leaders and residents eschewed sprawl. As a result, more than 38 percent of the community is protected land. Eighty public trails, some of which begin at the MBTA commuter-rail station, skirt Walden Pond and wind through farmland, woods, and meadows.

The star cultural destination is the 30-acre **deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum**, dotted with 49 works. Jonathan Gitelson's existential billboard asks: *Are You Here?* (2016). Visitors walk right into Dan Graham's *Crazy Spheroid—Two Entrances* (2009), a half-circle of two-way mirrored glass, and they play *The Musical Fence* (1980), a vertical aluminum xylophone by Paul Matisse '54. Easy walking paths lead to a café, picnic spots, and shady lawns; the museum's stone terrace overlooks Flints Pond. On exhibit inside, through September 17, is "Expanding Abstraction: New England Women Painters, 1950 to Now," celebrating contributions by Natalie Alper, Reese Inman '92, Katherine Porter, and Barbara Takenaga, among others.

Not far away is a modernist enclave anchored by the **Gropius House**, the former family home of Bauhaus architect and influential Harvard Graduate School of Design professor Walter Gropius. It's now owned by Historic New England, and open for tours, as is the **Codman Estate** nearer to the town center. Beautiful gardens



A summer exhibit at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum (above) highlights abstract art, including the atmospheric *Untitled* (1979), by Jeanne Leger. Clockwise, far left: the formal Codman Estate; Gropius House; and Codman Community Farms



surround a Georgian mansion built by judge and politician Chambers Russell, A.B. 1731, A.M. '66 (who left it to a Codman relative). Russell also was instrumental in the founding of Lincoln in 1754; it's named for his ancestral home in Lincolnshire, England—not for the American president.

A short trail walk leads to the town-owned **Codman Community Farms**. Visit the barnyard, take classes, volunteer to work, or buy eggs, meats, produce, and flowers. Nearby, on a larger scale, Mass Audubon's **Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary** runs an animal farm and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, along with year-round events and workshops. For food and drinks, head to Lincoln's only commercial cluster, next to the train station. Dip into **Donelan's Market** or the **Trail's End Café** for picnic fare, or sit down for a meal at **Lincoln Kitchen**.

~N.P.B.

The Lincoln Land Conservation Trust and Rural Land Foundation
<http://lincolnconservation.org/trails>

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HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND



COURTESY OF GODMAN COMMUNITY FARMS

COURTESY OF THE DECORDOVA SCULPTURE PARK AND MUSEUM (2)