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CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT  
FOR BATTLE ROAD UNIT

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

VOLUME I: SITE HISTORY, EXISTING CONDITIONS, AND ANALYSIS &  
EVALUATION





# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR BATTLE ROAD UNIT MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

*Volume I:*

HISTORY

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EXISTING CONDITIONS

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ANALYSIS

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Cover Photo: Bedford Lane looking north toward the Battle Road. (National Park Service, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation)

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## INTRODUCTION

Located sixteen miles west-northwest of Boston, Minute Man National Historical Park's Battle Road unit is spread across portions of the eastern Massachusetts towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington. Between Meriam's Corner in Concord and Fiske Hill in Lexington, the linear unit of nearly eight hundred acres preserves the first four miles through which British Regulars fled under colonial fire on April 19, 1775, the opening day of the Revolutionary War (Figures 1-2).

As the name of the unit suggests, the battleground landscape is defined by its relationship with the Battle Road, a meandering colonial highway in 1775. Today, Route 2A, a major commuter artery, overlays a significant portion of the historic road. Traffic, noise, and other features of modern life associated with the road detract from the historical character of the park, as do aircraft from the neighboring Laurence G. Hanscom Air Field.

Although the process has been expensive, lengthy, and controversial, the park has successfully assembled the Battle Road Unit from hundreds of privately owned parcels. Initiated in the late 1950s, this bold undertaking was seen as the last opportunity to preserve and regain a meaningful fragment of the historic Battle Road landscape, compromised by post-WWII suburban sprawl. Since land acquisition began, over two hundred modern structures within the Battle Road Unit have been removed and thirteen buildings dating prior to 1810 were preserved, as well as many important colonial landscape features including several agricultural fields that have been under cultivation since the seventeenth century. Numerous other historic structures and features, unrelated to the battle yet part of the area's agricultural heritage, also remain intact. While a few agricultural fields remain open, most have succumbed to reforestation; a process initiated on abandoned fields and subdivided parcels in the twentieth-century that continues today.

Forty years of federal planning, land acquisition, and preservation has created a historical park from suburbia, yet the park's current relationship with Route 2A is threatening its future. Early National Park Service master planning assumed Route 2A traffic would eventually be rerouted, allowing for better preservation and rehabilitation of the landscape's historic character. This has not transpired, and the present failure to plan regionally for local and through traffic lies at the heart of the park's most serious problems. Route 2A's legal right-of-way and roadbed continues to be managed by the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), with decision making shaped by values unrelated to historic preservation. Further approval of commercial air carrier routes between the civilian Hanscom Airfield and other eastern U.S. cities will only increase automobile traffic over the historic road and aircraft noise over the historic landscape. As determined by a 2002 traffic analysis prepared for the park, road is already operating at approximately fifty-percent above its optimal traffic volume for the desired visitor experience and visitor safety.<sup>1</sup> The expansion of military and civilian facilities organized around the base and airfield will be possible only through widening, traffic signals, and other modifications to the historic road and the adjacent battleground landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> Volpe National Transportation Center, "Minute Man National Park: Rte 2a Traffic Analysis and its Impact on the Park's Visitor Experience," (U.S. Department of Transportation, Cambridge, MA: June 2002).

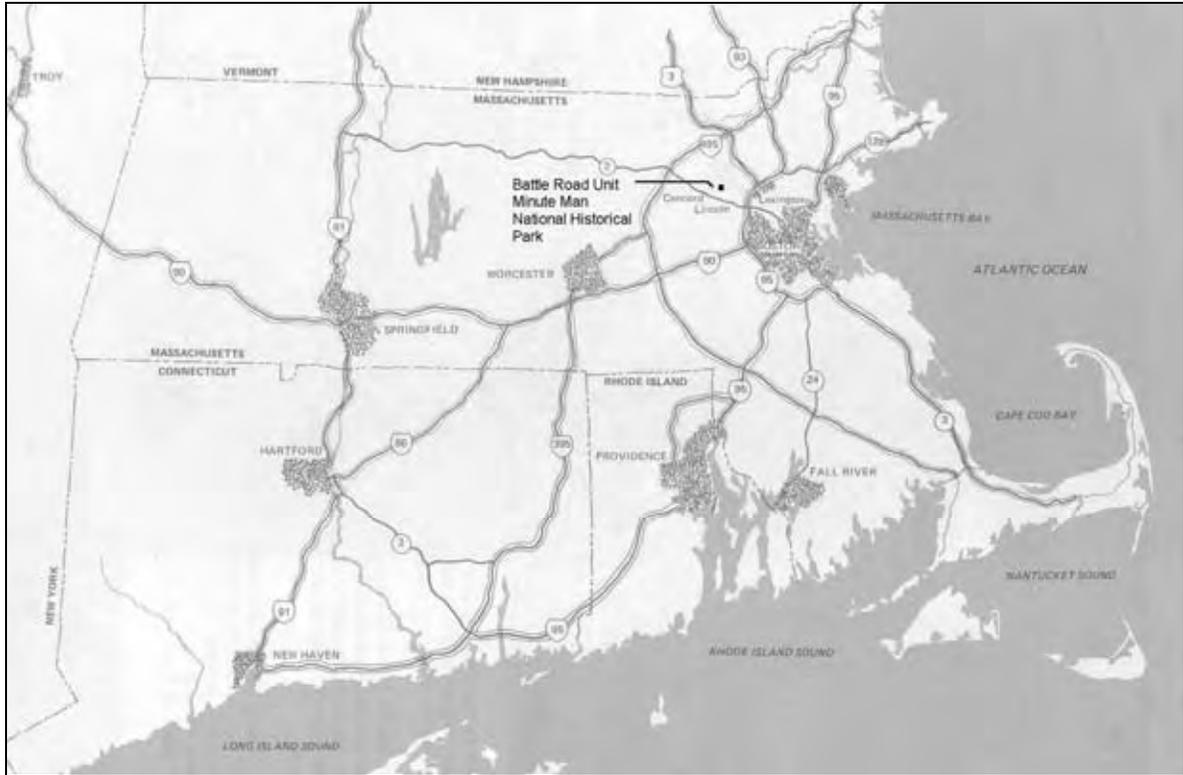


Figure 1. Location Map.

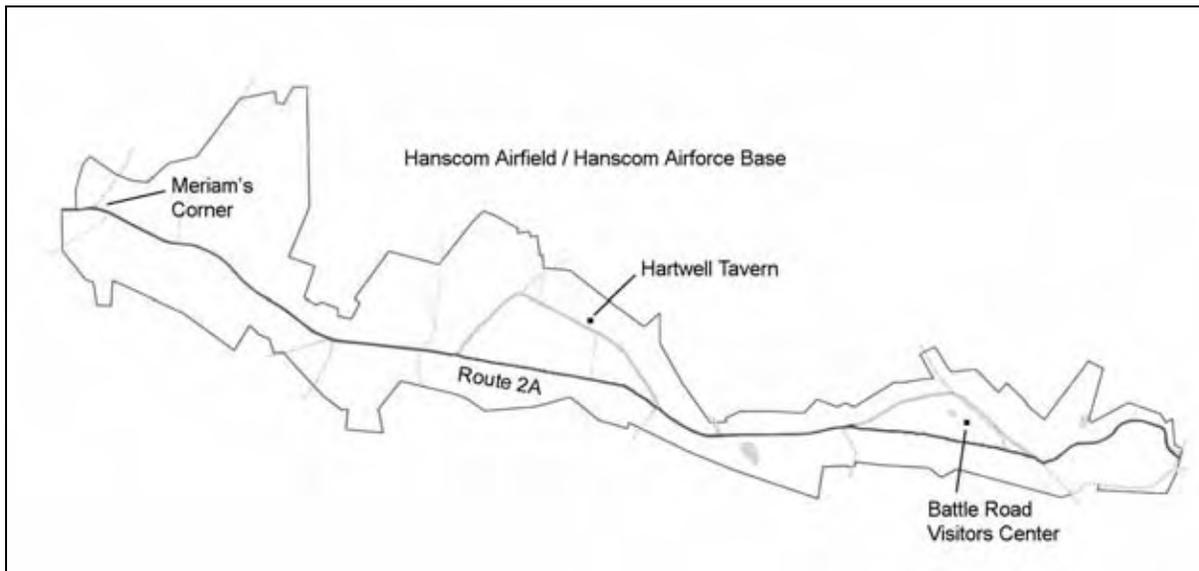


Figure 2. Map of the Battle Road Unit. (OCLP)

The fast pace of change during the last century has provided many examples where historic preservation efforts became energized only upon the imminent loss of something wonderful. Over the past forty years something often described as "sacred ground" has been preserved - in many ways created - at the park's Battle Road Unit. Now that the progress of forty years is threatened, providing for the park's viable future will require a new act of creation. The park's future will depend on successfully developing a supportive coalition of agencies and individuals working to solve complex problems and address heretofore-intractable transportation issues. The following report is intended as an important initial step in educating and informing those who will make up that new coalition.

The Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the Battle Road unit will be completed in two volumes. This report, Volume 1, includes a comprehensive study of the Battle Road Unit landscape from the seventeenth century to present. It identifies and documents landscape characteristics and features of the 1775 battleground landscape, as well as significant landscape features from subsequent time periods. The report is divided into three sections: site history, existing conditions, and analysis & evaluation. An understanding of these features will provide the basis for Volume 2 of the CLR for the Battle Road Unit, a management/treatment plan of the Battle Road Unit to be completed in the future.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The site history documents broad landscape changes that have occurred within the Battle Road Unit since the 1600s, and depends heavily on the synthesis of existing reports and research. Many of the reports examined are located in the park library. Included in this group are numerous historic structure reports, historic grounds reports, and archeological research reports completed by National Park Service staff and others since the early 1960s. These reports document the history of extant buildings and features present in 1775. Research reports consulted concentrate primarily on the colonial landscape. Included among this group and instrumental to an understanding of the colonial landscape is the scholarly work "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow: Husbandry in Concord, Massachusetts, 1635 – 1771," by Brian Donahue, Brandeis University. Secondary sources consulted for later periods included published histories of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington.

Primary resource material and graphic images were obtained, as the scope of the project allowed. These resources add detail and richness to the synthesized report. Records and correspondence at the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA) in Waltham and the Massachusetts Historical Society provided a better understanding of Landscape Architect Arthur Shurcliff's contribution to preserving the Battle Road. Photographic collections in the park library and archives, Historic New England (formerly the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities), the Lincoln Public Library, and the Concord Free Public Library provided valuable images of the landscape from c. 1885 to the 1970s. Maps located at the NARA in Waltham, the Massachusetts Archives, the State Library of Massachusetts, the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds Plan Department, the Carey Memorial Library, the Lincoln Public Library, and the Concord Free Public Library depict landscape features, land use, land ownership, and roads within the Battle Road Unit from the early 1700s to present. Also key to understanding the development of roads within the Battle Road Unit are Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord town meeting

reports (1600s – 1830s), Middlesex Court of the General Sessions of the Peace reports (1600s - 1830s), Middlesex County Commissioners reports and plans (1830s to the 1940s), and Massachusetts Highway reports and plans (1890s to the 1940s).

Based on information compiled in the site history, and found on historical maps, plans, and aerial photographs, periods of significance were identified and illustrative period plans were developed. A comparative analysis of the period plans versus existing conditions allowed a determination of the sites overall integrity and identification of significant landscape characteristics and features.

## PLACE NAMES

Since the English Puritans first settled within the Battle Road Unit in the early 1600s, landscape features have acquired numerous names and were sometimes known by more than one name at a given time. To ease reader confusion, a limited number of place names have been selected for inclusion within the report, based on the criteria below:

- All names of extant historic houses and structures are based on the names listed in the park's National Register of Historic Places documentation.
- All names of non-extant historic houses and structures are based on either "The Scene of the Battle, Historic Grounds Report, Minute Man National Historical Park" or "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow: Husbandry in Concord, Massachusetts, 1635 – 1771."
- When a feature name is quoted in the text by another name, the standard CLR name will be placed adjacent to the quoted name, in brackets.

Example:       Hardy Hill (Brooks Hill)  
                  Great Country Road (Battle Road)

- When appropriate, the text will enclose subsequent names in parenthesis, immediately following the standard text name.

Example:       Bull Tavern (now known as Benjamin Tavern)

While early colonial documents generally refer to the road as the Bay Road, later documents call it various names such as the "Country Road" and the "road from Concord to Boston." By 1754, the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington each individually referred to the segment of road within its boundaries by one or more names.

In the early 1800s, two large bends in the Battle Road were separated from the primary east-west route from Concord to Lexington, by-passed by new (straight) road segments. The by-passed sections of the Battle Road remained as secondary roads, and over the years took on names of their own (Old Bedford

Road, Virginia Road, Nelson Road, and Marrett Street). The newly configured east-west road continued to be known by various names as assigned by the towns. To simplify, the text will refer to this new road configuration as the “North Great Road,” a name the town of Lincoln commonly called it (Figure 3).

In the 1890s, the Massachusetts Highway Commission laid out the North Great Road from Meriam’s Corner east to the Bluff as a state road, by-passing the portion that ran over Fiske Hill. The new state road proceeded from the Bluff, following Marrett Road, towards Lexington center. The term “state highway” will be used when referring to this alignment in the text. The by-passed section of the Battle Road remained as a secondary road, known today as Old Massachusetts Avenue (Figure 3).

When appropriate, the term “Battle Road” appears in post-1800s discussions, especially in reference to specific sections of the colonial road or features along it. The term “Battle Road corridor” also appears within the text in reference to the linear landscape adjacent to the colonial route (Figure 3).



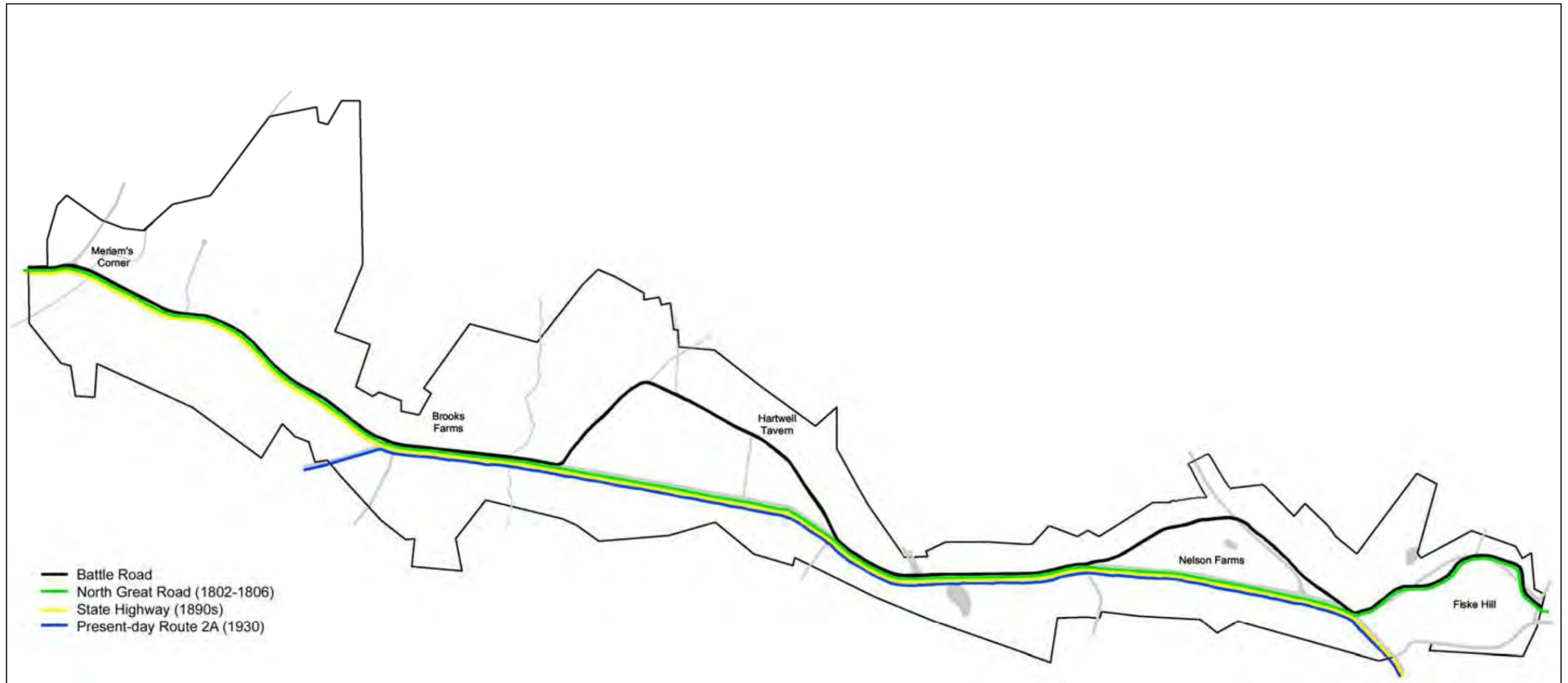


Figure 3. Map of the Battle Road Unit depicting the location of standard road names used in the text. (OCLP)



## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### Early Land Use

For at least one thousand years prior to European settlement, Algonquin people had been planting crops and fishing along the Musketequid River (Concord River) in what would become known as the Concord Plantation.<sup>2</sup> In the winters, Native American men hunted game in the vast woodlands surrounding the river. Using fire, they managed the woodlands to promote easier hunting and traveling, and to increase production of edible fruits and nuts. By the 1630s, diseases introduced by early European settlers decimated the Native American population within the present-day Battle Road Unit.

### Colonial Settlement

In 1635, a handful of Puritan families ventured inland sixteen miles to settle within the newly established Concord Plantation, and in 1640 the town of Cambridge extended west to the Concord Plantation's eastern border. The newly settled land was known as Cambridge Farms.<sup>3</sup> In 1713 Cambridge Farms separated from Cambridge, becoming the town of Lexington - and in 1754 the town of Lincoln formed, its boundaries including portions of Concord and Lexington.

Settlement within the present-day Battle Road Unit occurred along the Bay Road (Battle Road), the primary east-west road connecting the Concord Plantation and Cambridge Farms (later the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington) to Boston. Agricultural fields in the early to mid-seventeenth century were commonly held in large tracts a distance from the farmhouse. Farm production was subsistence based, each family producing enough food for personal consumption and perhaps a small amount for local trade. As the century progressed, the common field system began to dissolve and fields clustered closer to the farmsteads. By 1775, tilled fields, pastures, and meadows divided by fences and stone walls occupied most of the acreage along the Battle Road. Intermixed were small woodlots, orchards, farm buildings, taverns, and a number of small home-based businesses.

### American Revolution

In response to growing colonial resistance and the stockpiling of arms, British General Thomas Gage ordered the confiscation of colonial arms supplies in Charlestown, Cambridge, and Salem, and then finally in Concord. Two colonists, Paul Revere and William Dawes, aware of the impending seizure, rode ahead of the British troops during the early hours of April 19, 1775 to warn Concord of the British advance. In Lexington, the men were joined by a third rider, Dr. Samuel Prescott. Near an opening to a pasture in Lincoln along the Bay Road (Battle Road), British officers captured Paul Revere. Escaping, Dawes headed back to Lexington and Prescott pressed on to Concord to spread the alarm.

After a clash between British Regulars and colonists in Lexington, the Regulars advanced to Concord where they occupied the town center and seized control of the town's two bridges. Seeing smoke rising from the center of town, colonial militia and minutemen, assembled in a field overlooking the North

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<sup>2</sup> Land in Concord and a portion of Lincoln included within the present-day Battle Road Unit was within the bounds of the Concord Plantation.

<sup>3</sup> Land in Lexington included within the present-day Battle Road Unit was within the bounds of Cambridge Farms.

Bridge, descended to the bridge to confront the British. Shots ensued, men on both sides fell, and the overmatched British troops retreated to the center of town.

From a ridgeline north of Concord Center, militia and minutemen watched the British troops as they reassembled and began their twenty-mile march back to Charlestown. At Meriam's Corner, where the Old Bedford Road and the Bay Road (Battle Road) intersect, the colonists confronted the outnumbered British Regulars in what would become the first of many skirmishes along the Battle Road between Concord and Charlestown. Fighting from behind trees, stone walls, and buildings, the colonists persistently assaulted the retreating British troops, engaging them in several skirmishes within the present-day Battle Road Unit at sites known as Brooks Hill, the Bloody Angle, the Hartwell farms, the Nelson farms, the Bluff, and Fiske Hill. After passing out of the present-day Battle Road Unit, the scattered British troops reassembled in the center of Lexington and then proceeded east, continuing to be assaulted by colonial militia and minutemen until they reached the safety of Charlestown.

The war would continue until the treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, and many of the men who fought in the opening day of the American Revolution would serve in additional battles, including the siege on Boston.

#### Rural Economy

In the early 1800s, Middlesex County straightened the Battle Road, by-passing portions of the historic road to provide a more direct route to Boston, and subsequent road improvements decreased the grade of the road by reducing hilltops and filling low-lying areas. The improved road allowed farmers to more efficiently carry goods to market, fueling a change from subsistence to commercial farming.

Introduction of railroad lines in the mid-nineteenth century also accelerated this change. No longer able to compete with inexpensive grain brought east by train from the Midwest, Battle Road farmers began to specialize in perishable products easily transported to regional urban markets, which were in need of farm goods to sustain a growing workforce in textile mills and factories. The landscape reflected these changes. Large tracts of fancy fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, and dairy herds were plentiful along the Battle Road. While the road remained a viable transportation route, the railroads also profitably transported goods to regional markets.

By the 1880s, most descendants of the earliest Battle Road settlers had left their ancestral farms, many leaving for the promise of more fertile land in the west. While some of the farms reverted to woodland, others were cultivated by European immigrant farmers. Transportation between the towns and Boston was further enhanced in the 1890s when large portions of the Battle Road were improved and incorporated into Massachusetts's first state highway system. The road bed was regraded and resurfaced - improvements that allowed for maximum use by new modes of transportation. By the end of the century, horse-drawn carriages and wagons were joined by bicycles and motor cars.

### Twentieth-Century Landscape

The train and the motor car brought increasing numbers of tourists and commuters to the Battle Road countryside. Drawn primarily by the North Bridge battleground, tourists also visited four monuments commemorating the events of April 19, 1775, placed by the towns along the Battle Road in the 1880s-1890s. The efficiency of commuting resulted in the most profound and lasting landscape change within the present-day Battle Road Unit. With the new residents came new homes, businesses, and residential roads. While a number farms remained under cultivation, many more reverted to woodland. Farmers that remained adapted to the new environment, taking advantage of increased road traffic to sell their produce from small roadside stands.

The first concerted effort to preserve historic sites along the Battle Road occurred in 1924, when a commission appointed by the governor of Massachusetts proposed acquisition of land along the Battle Road as part of a proposed memorial in honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening day of the American Revolution. Unfortunately, the memorial was never established and suburbanization of the historic agricultural fields proceeded at a rapid rate, especially after World War II. Adding to the suburban congestion was activity associated with the Hanscom Air Field, located just north of the present-day Battle Road Unit. In addition to being an Air Force base, the field served as a high-tech research center, both uses drawing more traffic and needed services to the area.

### Minute Man National Historical Park

Public Law 86-321 established Minute Man National Historical Park on September 27, 1959. The law resulted from the efforts of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission, a commission appointed in 1955 by the federal government to investigate the possibility of establishing a coordinated program between federal, state, and local governments to preserve the most important colonial properties in and around Boston.

The Battle Road Unit landscape today is not only the result of centuries of cultural landscape evolution, but it is also a product of forty-five years of park development and historic landscape rehabilitation. Assembled from hundreds of individual agricultural, residential, and commercial tracts, the landscape includes historic features, including houses, barns, stone walls, fields, and roads dating from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth century. Non-historic features include twentieth-century vegetation, roads, a few remaining residences associated with suburban development, and NPS features added for interpretation and visitor use.

The Battle Road remains the central landscape feature. The NPS has rehabilitated several portions of the road by prohibiting vehicular traffic, removing asphalt, rebuilding adjacent stone walls, and by rehabilitating portions of the surrounding landscape. Unfortunately, large sections of the historic road underlies Route 2A, a fast-paced two-lane commuter route, which connects communities to the west with Boston and which provides direct access to the Hanscom Airfield and Air Force Base.



## CHAPTER 1: SITE HISTORY

### PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD (to 1634)

#### Landscape Processes

As many as twenty glacial expansions and withdrawals have occurred over the past two million years, each carving the landscape as they moved across the earth's surface. The last glacier to cover New England layered as much as a mile of ice upon the present-day Battle Road Unit. Its advance and retreat, between fifteen and eighteen thousand years ago, moved and scraped the earth's surface, creating the topography managed by Native Americans for hundreds of years and settled by English Puritans in the 1600s. The western portion of the present-day Battle Road Unit lies within the nutrient-rich geologic depression of glacial Lake Concord. Less fertile uplands composed of till characterizes the eastern half of the present-day Battle Road Unit (Figure 4).<sup>4</sup>

#### Interacting with the Native Landscape

Human habitation in the region dates back twelve thousand years when early people hunted large game animals grazing among open spruce forests. Early people supplemented their diet consisting primarily of mastodon, mammoths, and caribou with small animals and plants. About ten thousand years ago dense forests dominated by white pine replaced the open spruce forests and large game animals, such as mammoths and mastodons, disappeared from southern New England. Living within the pine forests were smaller animals such as moose and deer.<sup>5</sup> Two thousand years later as the earth's atmosphere continued to warm, oak forests dominated the southern New England landscape. Associated habitats included wet meadows, wooded swamps, and forests of northern hardwoods, hemlocks, and white pine. The landscape was highly productive; it provided early Native Americans deer, small game including squirrel and turkey, and a variety of tree nuts. About three thousand years ago, a cooler climate led to declining productivity of the northern hardwood forest and a sparser Native American population. Over the next two thousand years, Native Americans gradually developed new survival strategies.<sup>6</sup>

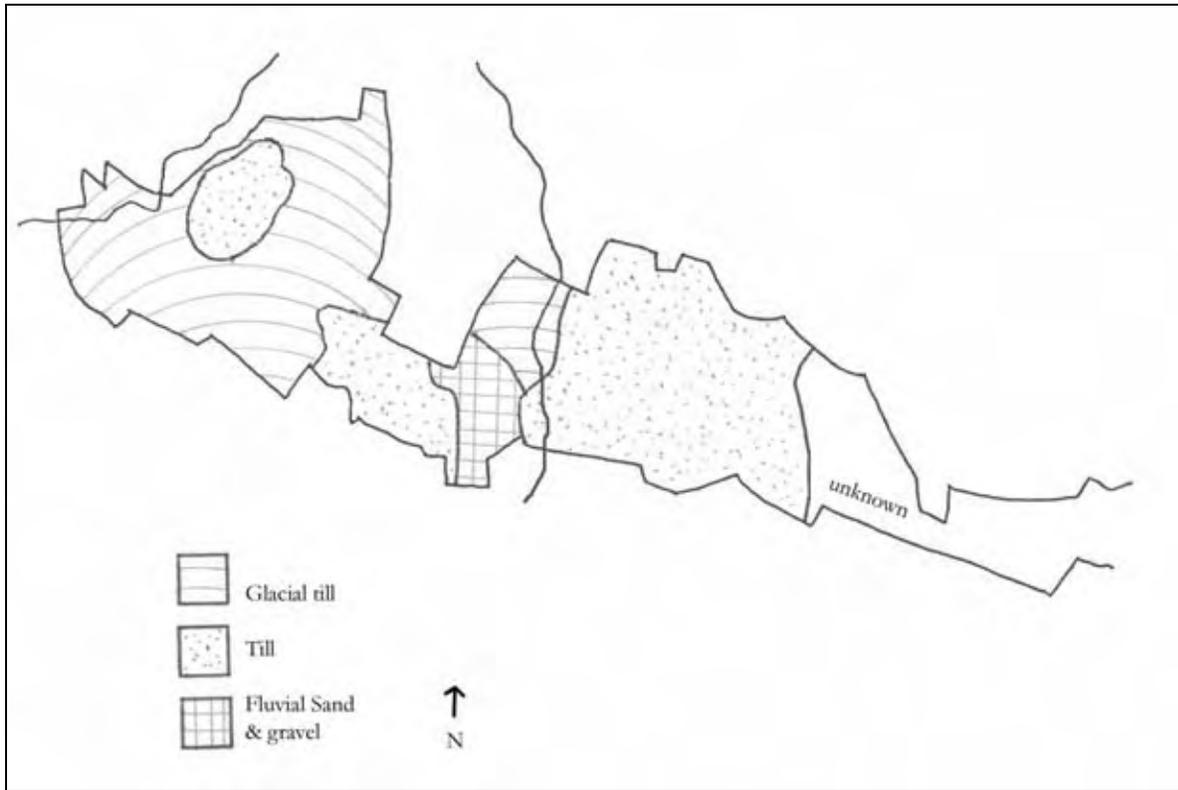
Pre-colonial Native Americans learned to exploit the diversity of their environment. As the seasons changed, Native Americans in southern New England traveled between established hunting, fishing, gathering, and agricultural grounds. By the early seventeenth century, Algonquian people had been planting crops and making fishing weirs along the Musketequid River, known today as the Concord

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<sup>4</sup> Brian Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow: Husbandry in Concord, Massachusetts, 1635-1771" (Ph.D. Diss., Brandeis University, 1994), pp. 35-45; Brian Donahue and Heidi Hohmann, "Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner, Minute Man National Historical Park (Boston: National Park Service, Division of Cultural Resources Management, North Atlantic Region, 1994), p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow," pp. 64-65.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-71.



**Figure 4. Map showing surface geology of the Battle Road Unit. (OLCP, based on "Concord-Surface Geology" map in "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow")**

River, for about a thousand years.<sup>7</sup> “Musketequid” was a Native American word meaning “grass-ground river” or “meadow river” (Figure 5).<sup>8</sup>

Native American women were responsible for growing crops, corn being the most important. A single woman could produce between twenty-five to sixty bushels of corn by cultivating an acre or two. Native American’s cleared land by setting fire to wood piled around tree trunks, destroying the bark and eventually killing the trees. The women planted corn seeds saved from the previous year’s harvest among the dead, leafless trees. As years passed, many of the trees fell and were removed from the field. Typically, the same field would be planted for eight to ten years, until it became unproductive. To colonial settlers, Native American fields appeared unkempt. Beans wound around cornstalks, squash vines extended everywhere, and by the end of summer, the entire field was a dense tangle of plants. Despite its appearance, densely planted fields preserved soil moisture, prevented weed growth, and produced high crop yields. At least one agricultural field is believed to have existed within the present-day Battle Road Unit when English Puritans established the Concord Plantation (Figure 6).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Concord Historical Commission, “Historic Resources Masterplan” (1995, updated 2001), pp. 13-14; Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” p. 72.

<sup>8</sup> William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), pp. 37-38; Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 72-73, 75.

<sup>9</sup> Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 43-44, 48.

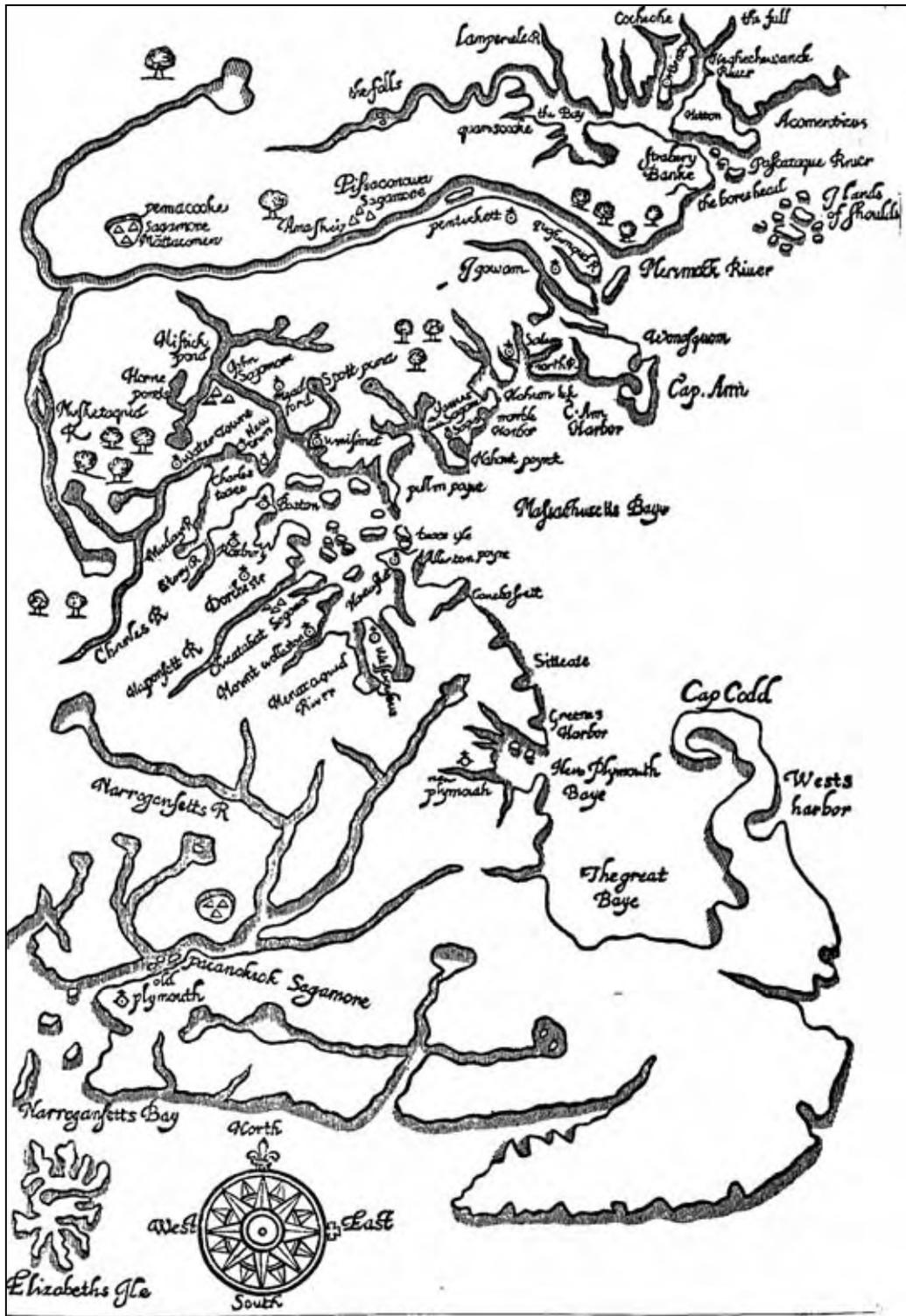


Figure 5. "South part of New-England, as it is Planted this year, 1634." Musketequid is located on the left side of the map, near the top corner. (*New England's Prospects*)

Native American men built fishing weirs along the Musketequid River and fished the spring spawning runs. Grassy meadows grew along the banks of the river and along other streams in the plantation. Native Americans gathered tubers, wild rice, and cranberries from the wet grassy meadows to supplement their diets, and reeds for weaving mats and baskets. Extensive meadows were located at the western end of the present Battle Road Unit.<sup>10</sup>

In autumn, Native American men hunted large game in the surrounding forests, which covered ninety percent of the future Concord Plantation. Oaks, chestnuts, and scrubby pitch pines grew in dry upland forests and conifers within river floodplains and swamp forests. Using fire, Native Americans managed the forest to simplify hunting, increase production of edible fruits and nuts, and to facilitate inland travel. Once or twice a year, they burned extensive sections of dry upland forest to remove underbrush.

Sometimes known as ‘sprout hardwoods,’ species such as chestnuts, oaks, and hickories regenerated themselves after fire. Other species, such as hemlock, beech and juniper, tended to die out from repeated burning. Large, widely spaced trees, few shrubs, and a covering of grass and herbaceous material characterized the forests managed by fire. Selective forest burning not only made hunting easier, but it also attracted and increased the numbers of game animals who foraged on grass and herbaceous material

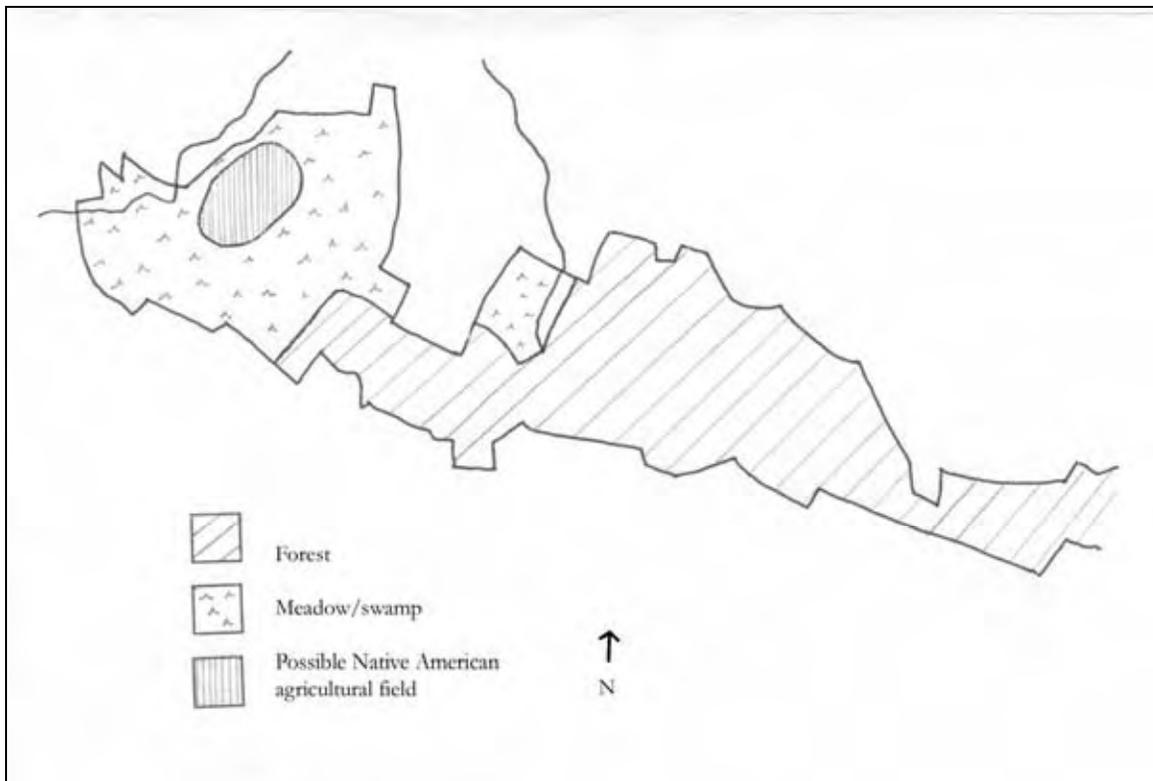


Figure 6. Map depicting the Battle Road Unit native landscape. (OCLP, based on "Concord-Native Landscape 1600" map in "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow")

<sup>10</sup> Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow," p. 82; Donahue and Hohmann, "Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner," p. 45.

in the fire-managed forests and sought cover in adjacent dense forests. Only a small area within the present-day Battle Road Unit has been identified as open forest altered by naturally occurring or Native American fires during the Pre-Colonial Period.<sup>11</sup> Dense forest covered most of present-day Battle Road Unit prior to European settlement. The thick-canopied forests included species of oak, hickory, chestnut, maple, and ash, and probably pine, beech, birch and hemlock.<sup>12</sup>

Like European settlers that would inhabit the land along the Musketequid River in the early 1600s, Native Americans manipulated and reshaped the landscape to increase food production. Although less intrusively than methods later employed by Europeans, Native Americans cleared agricultural fields, dammed rivers, and managed forests with fire. Heavy use of seasonal village and planting sites also changed the landscape. Southern New England villages of up to two hundred people produced large amounts of refuse, gathered food widely, and consumed great quantities of firewood.<sup>13</sup> Pre-colonial Native American settlement along the Musketequid River ended in the 1630s, as European-introduced disease decimated the population and European settlers moved into their hunting, fishing, gathering and agricultural grounds.

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<sup>11</sup> Concord Historical Commission, "Masterplan," p. 14; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>12</sup> Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow," p. 85.

<sup>13</sup> Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, p. 48.



## COLONIAL PERIOD (1635 - 1783)

Colonial settlement in North America is generally defined as the period between the settlement in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 and the conclusion of the Revolutionary War. In Massachusetts, this period began with the arrival of the English Puritans in 1620, seeking to create a political and religious refuge near Plymouth along the Massachusetts Bay coastline. In an unsettled land, the use of boats along the coast and within tidal estuaries was obviously the most efficient means of transportation. Beyond the relative security and convenience of the shoreline, transportation, and life in general, was more difficult. Inland, Massachusetts was a wilderness to Europeans, inhabited by strange native peoples, occupied by dangerous wildlife, and shrouded by a dark forest. Despite danger, some Puritans turned their back to the coast and ventured west along a network of Native American trails to establish inland settlements.

### Early Settlement (1635 - 1699)

While settlement along the Massachusetts coastline had taken place for fifteen years following the arrival of the first English Puritans, inland settlement began when the Puritans established the Concord Plantation on the Musketequid River in 1635. The plantation was laid out over six miles square, its eastern boundary approximately sixteen miles from the coast. In the early 1640s, Cambridge extended its western border to the eastern edge of the Concord plantation. Known as Cambridge Farms, the land began near the center of present-day Lexington and continued northwest as far as the Concord and Merrimack Rivers (Figure 7).<sup>14</sup> The Concord Plantation included portions of Concord and Lincoln within the present-day Battle Road Unit and Cambridge Farms included portions of Lincoln and Lexington within the Unit.

Although there have been numerous reports and books written about the early settlement of Concord, less is known about Cambridge Farms except that in the early years most land within the farms was held in common, serving as woodlots and hayfields for farmers residing in Cambridge.<sup>15</sup>

### Concord Plantation -First Division

The Massachusetts General Court ordered the bounds of all settlements to be within one-half mile of the town meetinghouse, the center of worship and government. The earliest settlers supported the rule, believing strongly that constant surveillance prevented temptations, such as strong language and drink, disrespect for authority, and not attending church. By 1636, the town began allocating houselots along the base of an east-west ridgeline (known today as Revolutionary Ridge) about a mile south of the Concord River (Figure 8). The earliest dwellings were earthen burrows dug into the ridgeline. This initial

<sup>14</sup> The Concord plantation included portions of several present-day towns, including Lincoln, and Cambridge Farms was later incorporated as the town of Lexington.

<sup>15</sup> Charles E. Hudson, *Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts from its First Settlement to 1868*, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, vol. 1 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), pp. 22-23.

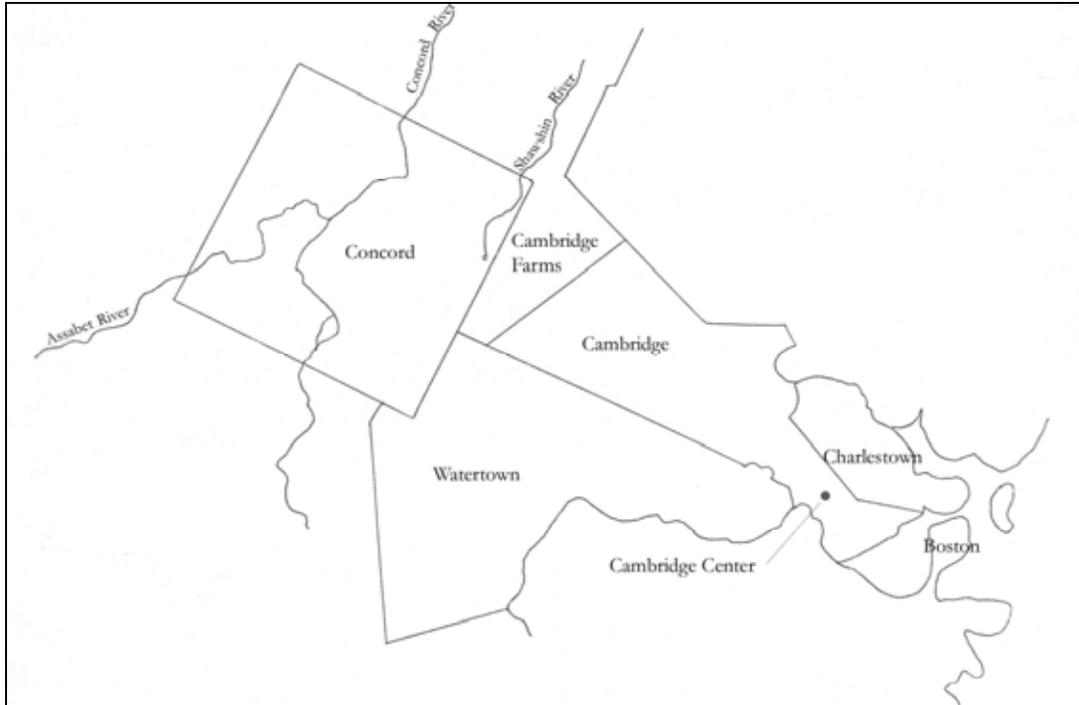


Figure 7. Map of Concord Plantation and Cambridge Farms, c. 1642. (OCLP, based on "Cambridge, Watertown, and Concord Grants" in *A Rich Harvest*)

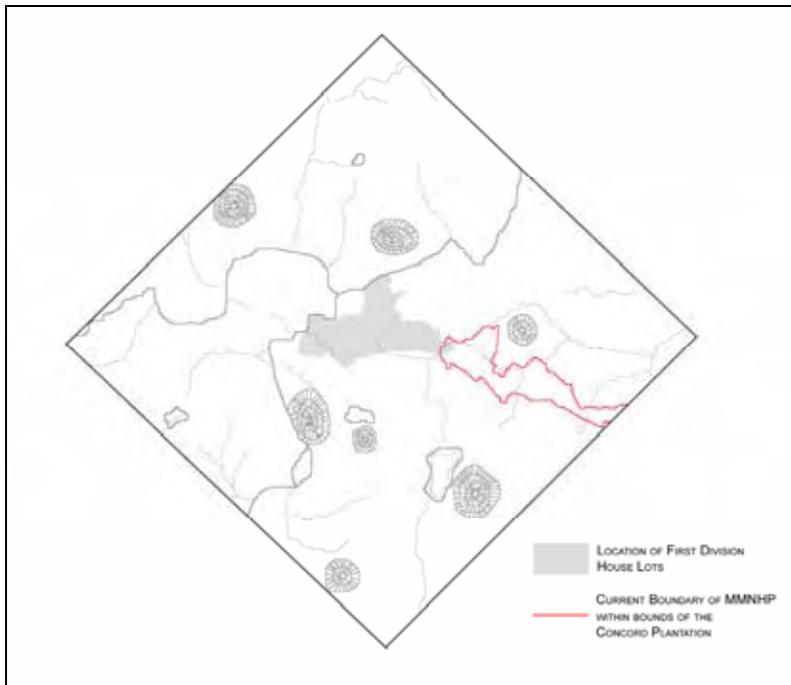


Figure 8. Concord Plantation, c. 1636-1652. (OCLP, based on "Map of Concord in the Colonial Period" in *Concord in the Colonial Period* and "Concord-Common Landscape 1650 in "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow")

apportionment of land in Concord, which came to be known as the First Division, extended to the western edge of the present-day Battle Road Unit. The court order dictating settlement bounds was only enforced in Concord for about eight years, after which settlement expanded further from the meetinghouse.<sup>16</sup>

Town records indicate that by 1636 a road “four Rodes [rods] broad (16 ½ feet)” ran parallel to the east-west ridge line, bisecting the First Division houselots. This section of road would later be incorporated into what is now known as the Battle Road.<sup>17</sup>

Concord’s First Division houselots typically included six to eight acres. Each included a house, barn, and outbuildings; a cowyard; a garden; and often an orchard. Depending upon the soil and terrain, houselots might also include tillage land, pasture, meadow, and woods. Small meadow lots of two to four acres and upland lots of up to ten acres adjoined many houselots.<sup>18</sup> Joseph Meriam is believed to have received a one and one-half acre lot during Concord’s First Division. Known today as Meriam’s Corner, the site was at the easternmost boundary of the First Division settlement.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to houselots, colonists received First Division agricultural lots within commonly held wet meadows, tillage fields, and special pastures. The remaining acreage within the plantation, known as the “commons,” served as communal pastures for livestock.

Each First Division landowner held thirty to fifty acres of wet meadow located within four to six common meadows scattered throughout the plantation along waterways. The large meadows, divided into individual lots, supplied winter fodder for livestock. One of the common meadows, known as Elm Brook Meadow, was located within the present-day Battle Road Unit on the north side of the Battle Road just east of the Job Brooks house.<sup>20</sup> In 1634, William Wood, an early observer and author of the book, *New England’s Prospect*, described the native meadows used by European settlers:

There be likewise in diverse places near the plantations great broad meadows, wherein grow neither shrub nor tree, lying low, in which plains grows as much grass as may be thrown out with a scythe, thick and long, as high as a man's middle, some as high as the shoulders, so that a good mower may cut three loads in a day.<sup>21</sup>

The commonly held tillage fields consisted of a number of privately-owned, rectangular lots of several acres, clustered together and fenced to protect the crops from free-ranging livestock.<sup>22</sup> Early colonists grew corn as their principal bread grain because it was adapted to grow in the poor soil first available to

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<sup>16</sup> Lemuel Shattuck, *A History of the Town of Concord* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1835), p. 9; Robert M. Thorson, *Stone by Stone: The Magnificent History in New England’s Stone Walls* (New York: Walker & Company, 2002), p. 82; Brian Donahue, “Appendix C: Battle Road Unit Historical Landscape Analysis” in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Hosmer Walcott, “Concord Roads.” A rod is approximately 16 ½ feet long.

<sup>18</sup> Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” p. 161.

<sup>19</sup> Donahue, “Appendix C” in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>20</sup> Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 174-175.

<sup>21</sup> William Wood, *New England’s Prospect*, ed. by Alden T. Vaughn (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), pp. 33-34.

<sup>22</sup> Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 165-166.

the colonists, among tree stumps within partially cleared fields, and in the hot dry New England summers. The largest field, known as the Cranefield, was located north of the village houselots. Colonists accessed the field from the east through the “Cranefield Gate,” located near John Meriam’s houselot. A smaller field, known as the Brickiln Field, was located within the present-day Battle Road Unit on the north side of the Battle Road east of Meriam’s Corner. The field was named for nearby claypits and a brick kiln.<sup>23</sup>

Fencing also enclosed the special pastures, which may have served to separate stock from the general herd, as convenient temporary containment, or to protect livestock from native predators. One such pasture, known as the “Ox Pasture,” was located along the Battle Road on the south side of the road just east of Meriam’s Corner.<sup>24</sup>

Wood was the most widely used fencing material in early colonial settlements. Although stone walls were built, they were comparatively rare. The availability of wood, the relatively stone-free locations of early colonial settlements (bordering tidewater estuaries and rivers), and the need to quickly assemble protective fencing around newly planted crops promoted the construction of wood fences.<sup>25</sup>

The undivided “commons” was primarily forested, although pine plains covered a portion of the terrain. William Wood also described New England forests:

The timber of the country grows straight and tall, some trees being twenty, some thirty foot high, before they spread forth their branches; generally the trees be not very thick, though there may be many that will serve for mill posts, some being three foot and half over. And whereas it is generally conceived that the woods grow so thick that there is no more clear ground than is hewed out by labor of man, it is nothing so, in many places diverse acres being clear so that one may ride ahunting in most places of the land if he will venture himself for being lost. There is no underwood saving in swamps and low grounds that are wet . . . Of these swamps . . . being preserved by the wetness of the soil wherein they grow; for it being the custom of the Indians to burn the wood in November when the grass is withered and leaves dried, it consumes all the underwood and rubbish which otherwise would overgrow the country, making it unpassable, and spoil their much affected hunting . . .<sup>26</sup>

Livestock foraged through the forest, consuming the understory. Although the “commons” provided necessary food for livestock, the forests previously managed by Native Americans for grazing animals, such as deer, were not as suited to cattle, which thrived on grass. The commons also provided wood for construction of buildings, for fuel, and for fencing.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 164, 167.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 184-185; Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, p. 79.

<sup>25</sup> Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, pp. 75-78, 99.

<sup>26</sup> Wood, *New England's Prospect*, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 186-187; Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, p. 91.

### Concord Plantation-Second Division

In 1643, and again in 1645 the Concord settlers petitioned the Massachusetts General Court requesting more land. They expressed dissatisfaction with the “povertie and meanness of the place,” especially within “those lands we now have interest in.”<sup>28</sup> In the 1643 petition the landscape was described as “very barren” and the meadows “very wet and unuseful.”<sup>29</sup> And the 1645 petition stated “maney houses in the Towne stand voyde of Inhabitants, and more are likely to be . . . if more go from us we shall neither remayne as a congregation nor as a town.”<sup>30</sup> By the mid-1640s about a seventh of the population left for Connecticut.<sup>31</sup>

During the winter of 1652-1653, Concord finalized plans for its Second Division of land. Newly acquired land, abandoned land, and land previously held in common was re-distributed among the remaining settlers. To facilitate distribution, the town divided into three ‘quarters,’ the North Quarter, the South Quarter, and the East Quarter. Concord’s East Quarter included land within the present-day Battle Road Unit. Land was re-distributed among landowners within each quarter, three acres of Second Division land for every acre of First Division land. Re-distribution took a decade, and when complete houselots once confined to the town center extended throughout the six-mile square plantation. In addition to a houselot, each Second Division farm typically included a dozen tillage, pasture, and meadow lots, totaling several hundred acres and scattered throughout the Quarter. While the common field system began to dissolve as land held in common was distributed during the Second Division, it would be decades before farmland significantly consolidated around the houselot.<sup>32</sup>

### Cambridge Farms

Although most land in Cambridge Farms remained unsettled for decades, a few settlers established early farmsteads along its borders. David Fiske settled at the western end of the land grant c. 1655, within the present-day Battle Road Unit.<sup>33</sup> In the 1690s, Cambridge hired Fiske to survey undivided common land in Cambridge Farms, in preparation for sale. Fiske’s survey divided the land into nine quadrants, each eighty rods wide (about a quarter mile) and separated by a one-rod rangeway left for access. The survey further subdivided each quadrant into smaller rectangular lots known as ranges or squadrons, each generally under forty acres. The lots were often too small to support a farm and most original owners subsequently sold their squadrons. Others purchased contiguous lots to create farms.<sup>34</sup> Unlike property division in Concord, based on equitable distribution of meadow, field, and forest, Cambridge Farms land division was uniformly based on an imposed grid, irrespective of natural features.

<sup>28</sup> Petition to the General Court, May 14, 1645 as quoted in Shattuck, *History of the Town of Concord*, p. 16; Petition to the General Court, September 7, 1643 as quoted in Shattuck, *History of the Town of Concord*, p. 15.

<sup>29</sup> Petition to the General Court, September 7, 1643 as quoted in Shattuck, *History of the Town of Concord*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>30</sup> Petition to the General Court, May 14, 1645 as quoted in Shattuck, *History of the Town of Concord*, p. 16.

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Adams Drake, *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, Publishers, 1880), p. 381.

<sup>32</sup> John C. MacLean, *Rich Harvest: The History, Buildings, and People of Lincoln, Massachusetts* (Lincoln Center, MA: Lincoln Historical Society, 1988), p. 54; Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 221, 226.

<sup>33</sup> Hudson, *Town of Lexington*, vol. 1, pp. 22-23; Hudson, *Town of Lexington*, vol. 2, pp. 208-209; David H. Snow, “Archeological Research Report: The ‘Left. David Fiske’ Site, Minute Man National Historical Park” (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 1969), p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 34; Donahue, “Appendix C” in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 170.

### Early Colonial Roads

The full length of the Battle Road (commonly known during colonial times as the Bay Road) within the present-day Battle Road Unit was laid out by 1666, although possibly much earlier. It extended from Concord through Cambridge Farms. Woburn town records from 1666 state: “The Highway from Concord town, the highway to the bay, over the great hild [hill, possibly Fiske Hill] to the foot thereof, from thence as we have marked it out to Oburne [Woburn] town.”<sup>35</sup> Where possible, road construction avoided high ground and lowlands. When unavoidable, road construction adapted to the terrain. In these locations hillsides were excavated, such as the section of road leading east to the Hartwell farm and causeways were constructed across wetlands, such as the swampy area east of Meriam’s Corner. Broad meadows, low wetlands, and undulating hills characterized the land on both sides of the Battle Road.<sup>36</sup>

In 1684, the bounds of the Battle Road right-of-way “from the house where John Mack now dwelleth to elmebrooke [Elm Brook]” were restaked, “there having been complaint of som incroaching upon the said way.” The bounds were renewed “as the fences now stand except in several locations,” including “from the fence and stake eastward as the trees are now marked till it come to Gershom Brookes his field and so on as his and Joshua Brookes’s fences now stand to elme brook.” The dimension change of the right-of-way running in front of the Brooks Farms was not recorded.<sup>37</sup>

Several other roads within the present-day Battle Road Unit are known to have originated during the seventeenth century. Among the earliest was the Billerica Road (today known as Old Bedford Road), intersecting with the Battle Road at a site known today as Meriam’s Corner. The road existed prior to 1684.<sup>38</sup> Another early road, present-day Mill Street, dates back to the early-1600s and is thought to have been one of the earliest access roads serving Concord.<sup>39</sup> The new roads connected Second Division houselots to Concord center, Cambridge Farms, and other neighboring towns, via the Battle Road. In addition to established roads, public right-of-ways often cut through commonly held and privately owned fields, pastures, meadows, and woodlots.

### Seventeenth-Century Land Owners along the Battle Road

Topographical features and the location of the Battle Road directed placement of houselots within Concord’s East Quarter and Cambridge Farms. Settlers sought the best terrain for their houselots, building their houses on dry, level land along the road, primarily facing south. By 1700, houselots lined the entire length of the Battle Road within the present-day Battle Road Unit. From east to west, families living along the road included the Meriam family (c. 1636), the Brooks family (c. 1650-1660), the Hartwell

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<sup>35</sup> Walcott, “Concord Roads.” Walcott’s notes referenced Concord Town Records (Concord Free Public Library).

<sup>36</sup> Joyce Lee Malcolm, “Scene of the Battle, 1775, Historic Grounds Report, Minute Man National Historical Park” (National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources, 1983), p. xiii.

<sup>37</sup> Concord Town Records, October 16, 1684 (Concord, MA: Concord Free Public Library Microfilm, vol. 1-3, roll 001). The bounds were renewed along the Battle Road east of Concord center, included through the western portion of the present-day Battle Road Unit, from Meriam’s Corner to Elm Brook. In 1684 Joshua Brooks’s house stood at the approximate location of the extant Samuel Brooks house, and Gershom Brooks’s was just to the west.

<sup>38</sup> Walcott, “Concord Roads.” After 1775 the road was commonly known as the Bedford Road, and today it is known as Old Bedford Road. Donahue and Hohmann, “Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam’s Corner,” p. 55.

<sup>39</sup> Edwin B. Worthen, “A Calendar History of Lexington, Massachusetts, 1620-1946” (Lexington, MA: Lexington Savings Bank, 1946), p. 44.

family (1690s). Cambridge Farms houselots in the early 1700s, from east to west, included those of the Fiske family (c. 1655) and possibly one at the future location of the Nelson farm (pre-1716, owner unknown).<sup>40</sup>

### Changing Land Use Patterns

After Concord's Second Division, the town's common field system began to dissolve, as the town continually transferred commonly held land to individuals. Houselots on the outskirts of town, including along the Battle Road, tended to include more private fields. The shift from collectively owned and managed fields, pastures, and "commons" to privately held land was American, rather than colonial in style, because it emphasized individual self reliance rather than group cooperation. In some areas individually held tillage fields and wet meadows continued to be managed collectively. One such collective effort resulted in a signed agreement between Noah, Job, Daniel, and Joseph Brooks in 1695, which called for construction of a new ditch connecting Elm Brook to a swamp drained by Mill Brook to the west. Common herding also remained in some areas, although all "commons" in Concord's East Quarter appears to have transferred to private ownership after the Second Division. In contrast to the "commons," privately owned pastures were generally clear-cut (except perhaps a few solitary trees to shade livestock) and enclosed by walls or fences, constructed to keep livestock in, not out. Of all land uses, Concord's forests were the most privatized. Under individual ownership, some were managed as woodlots while others were cleared for tillage fields and grassland.<sup>41</sup> By the mid-1600s, sown varieties of English grasses began to replace native grasses.<sup>42</sup> While thirty percent of Concord's forests had been cleared by 1700, the percentage cleared along the Battle Road may have been much higher. Donahue's study in 1994 "A Management Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources: The Minute Man National Historic Park Case Study" identifies only two expanses of woodland along the road in 1700, one south of the Hartwell farm and the other on the north side of the Battle Road at the eastern end of Concord.<sup>43</sup>

### Early Stone Walls

Although specific information about the configuration of early stone walls is outside the scope of this project, scholarly research of stone walls in New England suggests that the number of stone walls within the Battle Road Unit increased as the settlement expanded westward, as land transferred into private ownership, and as forests were removed for fields and pastures. According to Robert M. Thorson in *Stone by Stone, the Magnificent History of New England's Stone Walls*, early colonial settlements, such as

<sup>40</sup> Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow," pp. 256-260, 270; Mary Kate Harrington, et al., National Register Documentation, Minute Man National Historical Park (PAL, November 29, 2002), sec. 8 pp. 14-17; Snow, "The 'Left. David Fiske' Site," p. 4; David H. Snow, "Archeological Research Report, The Thomas Nelson, Sr. Farm, Minute Man National Historical Park" (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Department of Anthropology, 1969), p. 4. Both the Hartwell and Smith houselots were located in Lincoln after 1754, the year the town separated from Concord and incorporated.

<sup>41</sup> Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow," pp. 186-188, 217, 246, 262.

<sup>42</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, *Climate of Man* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1941), p. 164.

<sup>43</sup> Concord Historical Commission, "Masterplan," p. 16; Brian Donahue, "Typical Land Use 1650-1900" (maps) in *A Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources: The Minute Man National Historical Park Case Study* (Amherst, MA: Massachusetts Agricultural Experimentation Station, 1993), p. 51; Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, pp. 83, 89.

Concord, generally occurred in low-lands along rivers. In these areas, wooden fences were typical. As settlements expanded into the uplands, such as during Concord's Second Division, properties often included erratic boulders and pockets of stony ground. Although construction of stonewalls proved more labor intensive than construction of wooden fences, stone walls were a more permanent way of dividing fields and demarking private property. By far the most compelling reason for the proliferation of stone walls was the abundance of stones unearthed by the removal of the upland forests. Prior to clear-cutting, the upland soil under the old growth forests had been accumulating organic and inorganic material for at least twelve thousand years. The early settler would initially find few stones in this mix. Deforestation, however, reduced the insulating value of the topsoil, which promoted frost heaving that pushed buried stones to the surface. Initially stone was often piled in the middle of a field or pasture, but over time stone was generally moved to the field edge, often against an existing wooden fence. As more stone accumulated, it was often managed by stacking crudely to conserve space, resulting in what is referred to today as a "tossed wall."<sup>44</sup>

Early stone walls also materialized during road construction. Roadsides were a convenient place to deposit stones unearthed during road construction.<sup>45</sup> Stonewalls, fences, and gates also served to protect agricultural crops adjacent to the roads from wandering or herded livestock.

### **Eighteenth-Century Landscape (1700 - 1774)**

During the eighteenth century, new houselots developed along the Battle Road and old houselots passed to fourth and fifth generations. Through inheritance, large seventeenth-century properties were subdivided, and as more land became privatized, fields and pastures were consolidated around houselots. With these changes came the construction of new roads. Political boundaries also changed. In 1713, Cambridge Farms separated from Cambridge and incorporated as the town of Lexington. The town of Lincoln was established in 1754, its boundary including portions of Concord and Lexington located within the present-day Battle Road Unit (Figures 9-10). While the communities remained overwhelmingly subsistence oriented, a complex system of local exchange and several commercial enterprises would develop.

#### Land Owners and Agriculture along the Battle Road

By the 1770s, approximately twenty-five houselots were located along Battle Road. Descendants of the area's earliest settlers owned many of the houselots including members of the Meriam, Brooks, Hartwell, and Fiske families. A typical houselot averaged sixty to eighty acres, significantly larger than the six to eight acre houselots of Concord's earliest settlement. In addition to a barn and several outbuildings, houselots often included a small garden and an orchard.<sup>46</sup> At least fifteen orchards were located along

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<sup>44</sup> Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, pp. 84, 95, 197, 124-125.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>46</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 155-156, 175; Concord Historical Commission, "Masterplan," p. 16; Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 173; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 403. No specific information regarding Lexington agriculture, probably similar to agriculture within Concord and Lincoln.

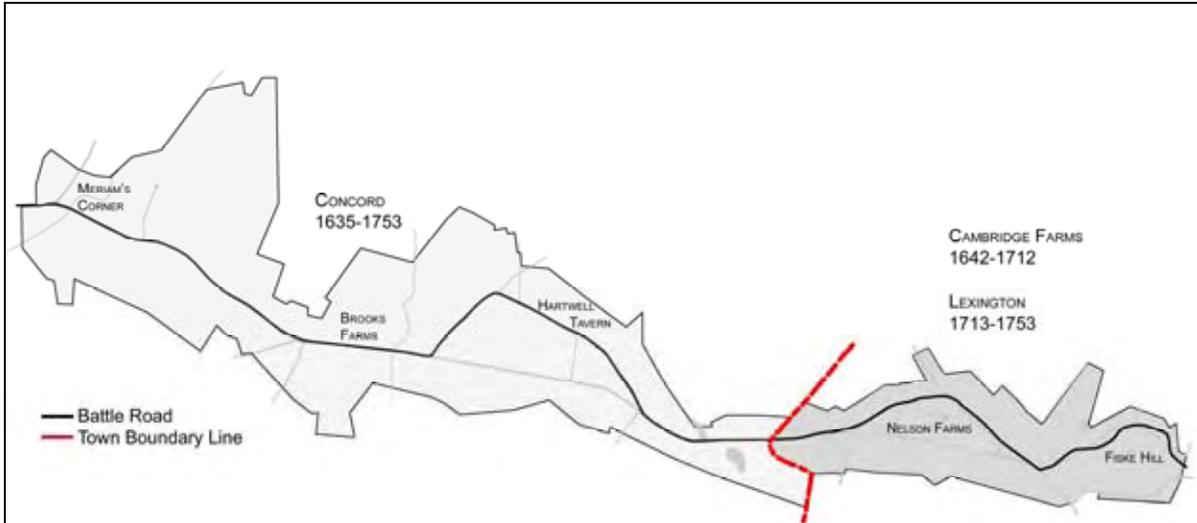


Figure 9. Map of Battle Road Unit depicting the boundary between Concord and Lexington after incorporation of Lexington (formerly Cambridge Farms) in 1713. (OCLP)

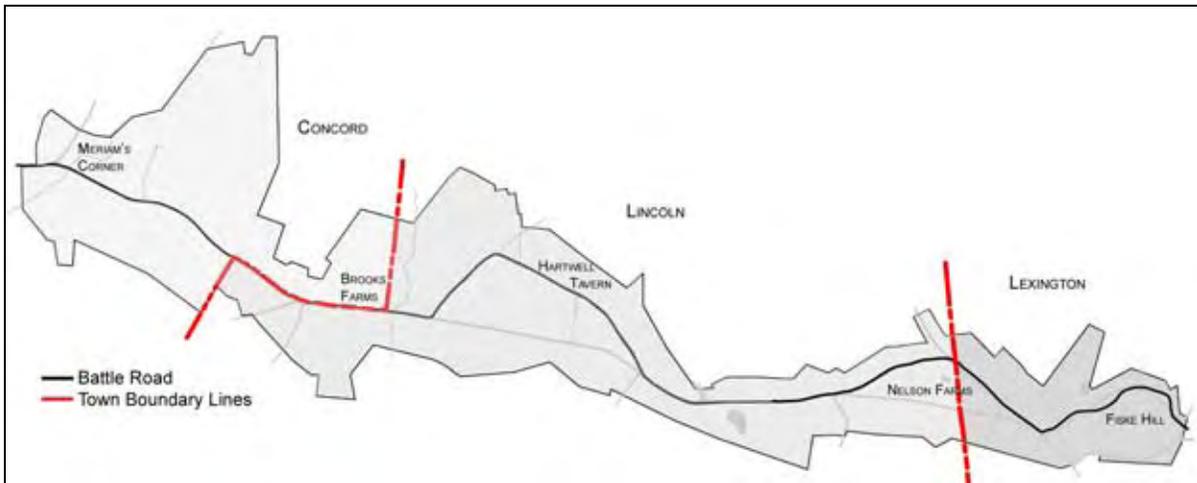


Figure 10. Map of Battle Road Unit depicting the boundaries between Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington after incorporation of Lincoln in 1754. (OCLP)

the Battle Road in the 1770s. The large number of orchards corresponds to the popularity of hard cider in the eighteenth century. Fruit trees could grow on the marginal upland soil typically found along the Battle Road that was less suited for grain, making it less expensive to produce than beer, the early colonial favorite. In 1767, Massachusetts residents consumed more than a barrel of cider per capita.<sup>47</sup>

Captain William Smith was one of the largest landowners along the road, owning a 120-acre farm in the 1770s that included a house, two barns, tillage, meadow, pasture, woodland and an old orchard. His livestock included two horses, two oxen, nine cows, four pigs, and twenty sheep. Smith is one of three landowners along the Battle Road known to have owned a slave. Ephraim Hartwell and George Minot, each owning over eighty acres, also owned slaves. In contrast, Nathan Stow owned only seventeen acres in 1771. His property included pasture, tillage, upland meadow and wet meadow, two cows, and a pig.<sup>48</sup>

Livestock, easily transported to market on hoof, was one of only a few agricultural products traded for English goods during the Colonial Period. Cattle production required ample supplies of winter fodder and high quality hay. To increase hay production and to make wet meadows accessible for mowing and hay removal, eighteenth-century farmers continued to drain and improve their wet meadows. Colonists continually diverted water from the meadow adjacent to Elm Brook to the west and north, following the natural lie of the land as it descended into the swampy center of glacial Lake Concord. The manipulation of the system diverted a large portion of Upper Elm Brook flow from one watershed to another, and restricted wet summer flooding of the meadow.<sup>49</sup>

In the uplands, the slow process of converting forests to pasturage also continued. The glacial till with a boulder clay base that underlain a large portion of the upland forest within the present-day Battle Road Unit was an excellent soil for growing European “Herd’s grass” or “Timothy Grass,” which became one of the colonies most important sown hay crops in the 1700s.<sup>50</sup> Clearing forest also yielded timber, essential locally for building construction, fencing, and fuel. Wood was also an important material for small local trades such as staves for barrel construction and bark for tanning. Timber, like cattle, was also one of only a few local products traded in Boston. While forest clearing served an immediate need, and supplemented the agricultural economy, it ultimately depleted local timber supply, and dramatically changed the landscape.<sup>51</sup>

Expansion of tillage fields in the eighteenth century also required forest clearing and meadow drainage. By 1775, all cultivable land within the present-day Battle Road Unit contained subsistence crops of Indian corn, rye, and other grains.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Author unknown, “History of Cider.” in Green Mountain Cidery [electronic bulletin board]. Middlebury, VT [cited August 2001]. Available at <http://www.woodchuck.com/history.html>; Author unknown, “Cider in Early America.” [electronic bulletin board]. Available at [http://pconline.com/~pubcats/HISTORY\\_CHAP/colonial.htm](http://pconline.com/~pubcats/HISTORY_CHAP/colonial.htm).

<sup>48</sup> Malcolm, “Scene of the Battle,” pp. 54-55, 58, 95, 99.

<sup>49</sup> Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” p. 262.

<sup>50</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Climate and Man, 1941 Yearbook (Washington D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, 1941).

<sup>51</sup> Donahue, “Appendix C” in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 172.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172; USDA, *Climate of Man*, p. 164.

According to Robert M. Thorson in *Stone by Stone, the Magnificent History of New England's Stone Walls*, an increasing population and private land ownership lead to territorial tension between neighboring colonists. Required by English law, marked boundaries between properties included slashes on trees, small piles of stones, wooden stakes, and if enough stone was available – a boundary wall. Although the legal ‘fence’ height in New England was generally four to five feet, many stone walls stood only thigh-high, their height governed by the ergonomics of lifting and tossing stone. Also, as mentioned previously, stone walls served functionally as a holding place for stones removed from the fields, the amount of stones in the field often determining the number of walls and their proximity to each other – thus the size of the fields.<sup>53</sup>

### Eighteenth-Century Roads

Colonial roads were difficult to travel in the winter and often impassable in the spring. They were unpaved, often muddy, and generally in need of repair. A wide right-of-way provided some relief, allowing the roadbed to shift as areas became rutted or muddied. The width also allowed an efficient passage of livestock herds in route to market. Stone walls or wooden fences generally separated the public right-of-way from private property, preventing livestock from wandering off the road and to discourage trespassing.<sup>54</sup>

To provide better transportation to neighboring towns, to market, to agricultural land, and between houselots, the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington improved existing roads and laid out new roads within the present-day Battle Road Unit. Highway taxes, payable in labor, funded colonial road construction and repairs. Towns appointed road surveyors who oversaw road improvements and reported all non-paying landowners. Several men residing along the Battle Road in the mid-1700s served as Lincoln Road surveyors including Joshua Brooks Jr., Noah Brooks, and Josiah Nelson.<sup>55</sup>

In 1720, Concord selectmen ordered the layout of a two-rod (33') driftway from the southeast corner of John Jones's [Farwell Jones] houselot at the “Country Road” [Battle Road] north and easterly to the “Brickill-Island” [Brickiln Field]. The purpose of the road was for “carting and driving creatures to pasture etc.”<sup>56</sup> The following year, Concord laid out a second two-rod driftway “in the East part of . . . Town, from the Country Road [Battle Road] until it come to the Land of John Fasset.” In the 1700s, the road was known as Bedford Road or Fasset's Road. It has also been known as Old Bedford Road.<sup>57</sup>

In 1736, Concord laid out a road between “the Country Road near the Dwelling house of Daniel Brooks [Samuel Brooks house] to the Dwelling house of Thomas Wheeler.” The road, known today as Brooks Road, began “four Rods from ye northwest corner of Samuel Brookses stone wall,” and ran south four rods wide until it came to “Samuel Minotts Land,” where the road narrowed to two rods and continued

<sup>53</sup> Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, pp. 6-7, 87.

<sup>54</sup> John Luzader, “Historic Grounds Report, Battle Road: Fiske Hill Area, Minute Man National Historical Park” (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, n.d.), pp. 1-2, 12-13.

<sup>55</sup> Lincoln Town Records, March 1756, p. 14; March, 1757, p. 28 ; March 7, 1763, p. 59, as quoted by unknown researcher (1/31/1966 research notes at MIMA library).

<sup>56</sup> Concord Town Records, July 29, 1720 (Concord, MA: Concord Free Public Library Microfilm, vol. 1-3, roll 001).

<sup>57</sup> Concord Town Records, February 28, 1720/1 (Concord, MA: Concord Free Public Library Microfilm, vol. 1-3, roll 001). This “Old Bedford Road,” should not be confused with the other present-day ‘Old Bedford Road’ at Meriam's Corner. The section of the road added in 1720 extended north from the Battle Road at the Bloody Angle.

south. Landowners along the proposed road supported its construction, which they claimed make travel to Concord center more convenient.<sup>58</sup>

Between 1755 and 1756, the newly incorporated town of Lincoln began laying out roads, including two that intersected the Battle Road. In 1755, a road two rods wide (33') was laid out "beginning at the road leading from Concord to Lexington [Battle Road] at . . . [Ephraim] Hartwells house and extending towards the meetinghouse in Lincoln." Today, this road is known as Bedford Lane. A second two-rod road, first laid out in 1755 although not accepted by the town until 1756, intersected the Battle Road just east of Bedford Lane "at the corner of Mr. Ephraim Hartwells wall." This road, known today as Bedford Road, joined with Bedford Lane south of the Battle Road.<sup>59</sup>

### Changes to the Battle Road

Town records indicate that the Battle Road right-of-way was surveyed several times during the 1700s. The surveys provide a view of the eighteenth-century road and the landscape surrounding it. They also reveal what appears to have been a continual problem during the Colonial Period - neighboring landowners extending their property boundaries into the commonly held right-of-ways.

In 1716, Concord appointed a committee to "search ye Records and settle ye Lines of the High wayes from Ensigne Jones to the See or Lexington Line." The survey extended along the Battle Road starting west of the present-day Battle Road Unit and extending east to the Nelson farms, the location of the Concord-Lexington town border in 1716 (Figure 11). It recorded the width of the Battle Road, which got progressively wider as it traveled east from present-day Heywood Street in Concord to the Lexington Line:<sup>60</sup>

. . . foure Rods [66'] wide . . . eastward unto the merriames: and from thence 8 Rods [132'] wide unto ye Ealme Brook and from thence as hereafter \_\_\_ till wee come to ye Heape of stones at the corner of sar[gent] Joseph fletchers Lott there the minesterall Lott of Ten Rod way begins: the sayd 10 Rod way or ministerial Lott there beginning Runs 10 Rods [165'] wide till it comes to Lexington Line.<sup>61</sup>

Landscape recorded in the survey include barns, houses, fences, stone walls, a bridge, a well, meadows, a garden, claypits, ditches, and a variety of tree species including walnut, maple, white oak and chestnut.

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<sup>58</sup> Concord Town Records, March 2, 1735/6 (Concord, MA: Concord Free Public Library Microfilm, vol. 1-3, roll 001); Walcott, "Concord Roads." Daniel Brooks died in 1733, although the house appears to have still carried his name in 1736, when his son Samuel owned the house. The house is extant and is known today as the Samuel Brooks house. Maureen K. Phillips, "Historic Structure Report, Samuel Brooks House, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, Massachusetts" (Lowell, MA: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Building Conservation Branch, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Lincoln Town Records, March 31, 1755 and March 31, 1756 (Lincoln, MA: Lincoln Library Microfilm, Town Records 1754-1806); Middlesex County Court of General Sessions of the Peace Records, October 5, 1756 (microfilm, Massachusetts Archives).

<sup>60</sup> In 1716, the Concord-Lexington town line cut north and south through the Battle Road just west of Mill Street.

<sup>61</sup> Concord Town Records, November 13, 1716 (Concord Free Public Library). Ministerial lots were commonly held properties that supported the town minister, through sale of natural resources located on the property or by leasing the property for agricultural land. From just east of Elm Brook to the Lexington Line, both the ministerial lot and the Battle Road [10 Rod way] shared the same boundaries, which explains the right-of-way's generous width.

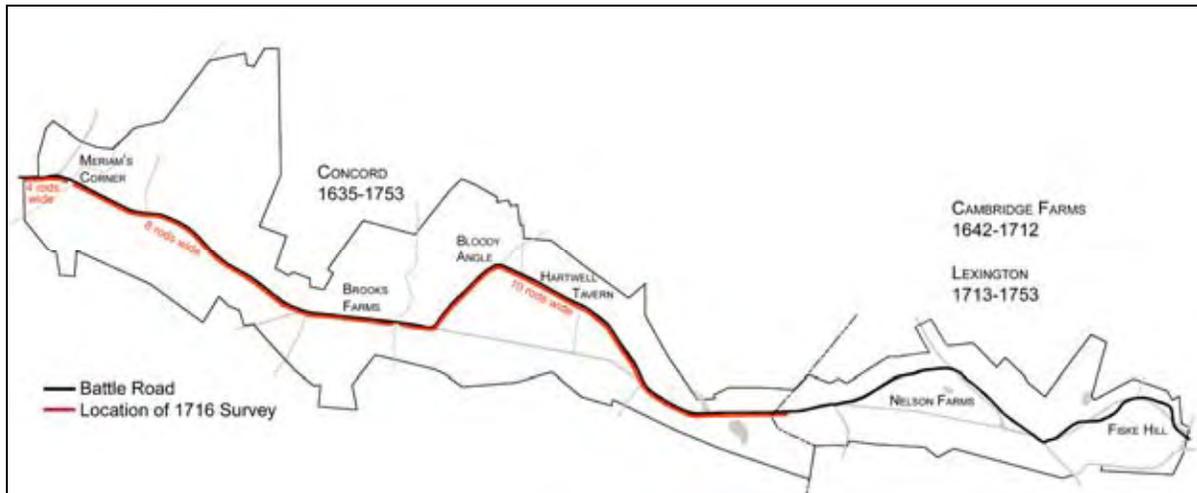


Figure 11. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the portion of the Battle Road surveyed in 1716. (OCLP)

In 1735, Concord landowners petitioned to reduce the width of the Battle Road. The petition stated that the road was eight rods wide, which may indicate that the portion of the road (and the ministerial lot) had been narrowed by two rods since the 1716 survey. The owners proposed narrowing the road and selling the excess land to defray the cost of improving other town roads, which were “so narrow they are very much taken notice by Travellers to the Dishonour of the Town . . .”<sup>62</sup>

In the 1740s, a portion of the Battle Road in Concord (and present-day Lincoln) was narrowed, although it is not known if the earlier petition played a role in its alteration. Town records from 1747 indicate that the bounds of the road from Elm Brook to what is known today as the Bloody Angle were surveyed to “prevent all further Diferance and Contrevasie for the future.” Receipts found in Concord town records indicate that Hugh Brooks, a previous owner of land on both sides of the highway, had encroached upon its right-of-way. At the time of the survey, Thomas Brooks, Job Brooks Jr., and Joshua Brooks Jr. owned the abutting land (Figure 12).<sup>63</sup> The following year, the town voted to sell the “over-plus of the Highways . . . all above four Rods wide in any part of Concord where such overplus may be found. . .” A receipt dated February 27, 1748, recorded the “sale of the overplus” to landowners adjacent to the road and indicates that the right-of-way was narrowed from Meriam’s Corner to what is known today as the Bloody Angle.<sup>64</sup> The receipt did not include sale of land within the right-of-way to landowners east of the Bloody Angle, which may indicate that the highway from the Bloody Angle to the Concord-Lexington line had already been narrowed to four rods prior to 1748 (Figures 13-14).

<sup>62</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 100.

<sup>63</sup> Concord Town Records, July 20, 1747 (Concord, MA: Concord Free Public Library Microfilm, 1747-1762, roll 014); Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 329-330.

<sup>64</sup> Concord Town Records, February 27, 1748 (Concord, MA: Concord Free Public Library Microfilm, 1747-1762, roll 014); Donahue, “Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow,” pp. 321, 330, 333.

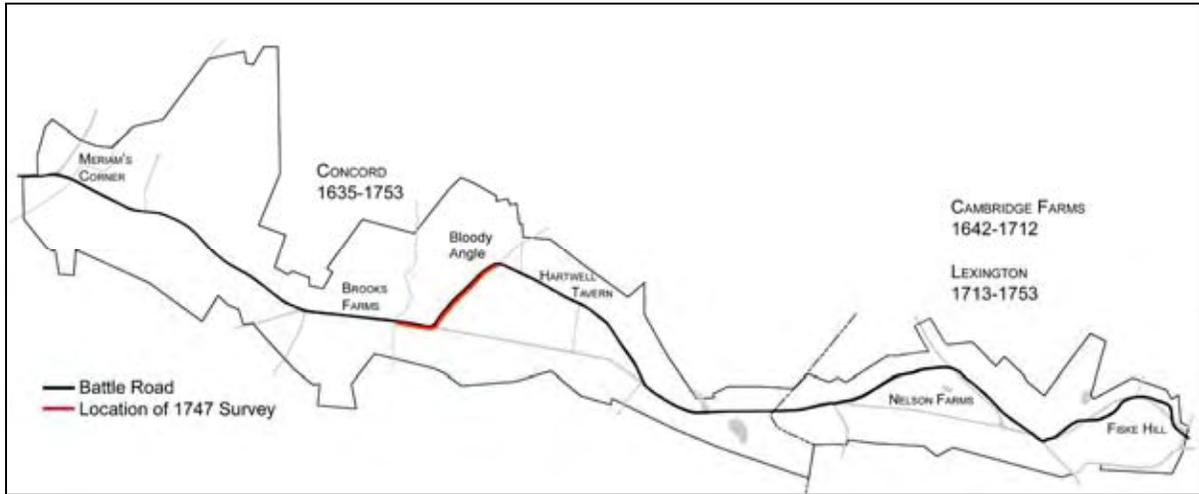


Figure 12. Map of the Battle Road Unit depicting the portion of the Battle Road surveyed in 1747. (OLCP)

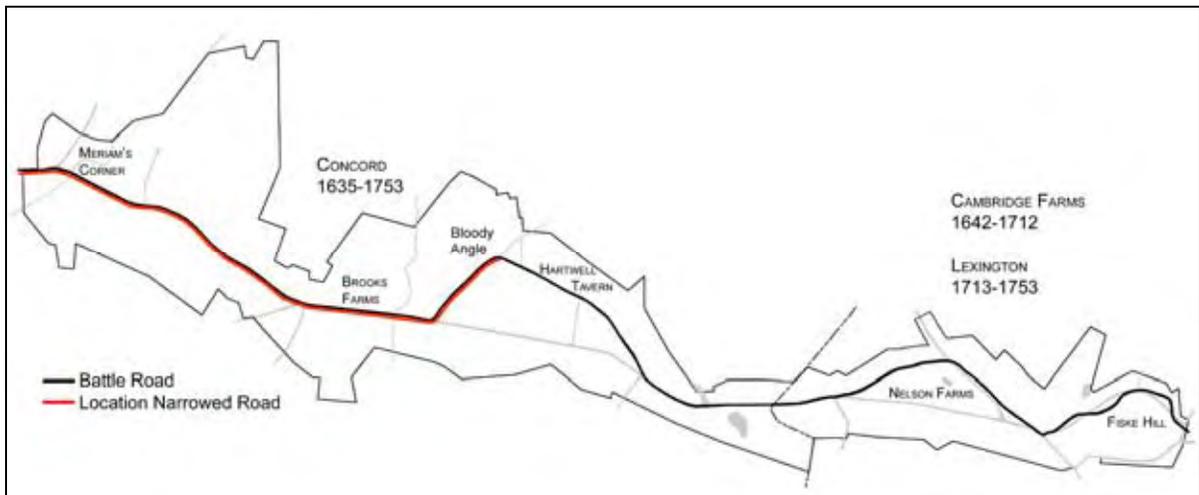


Figure 13. Map of the Battle Road Unit depicting the portion of the Battle Road narrowed to four rods in 1748. (OCLP)

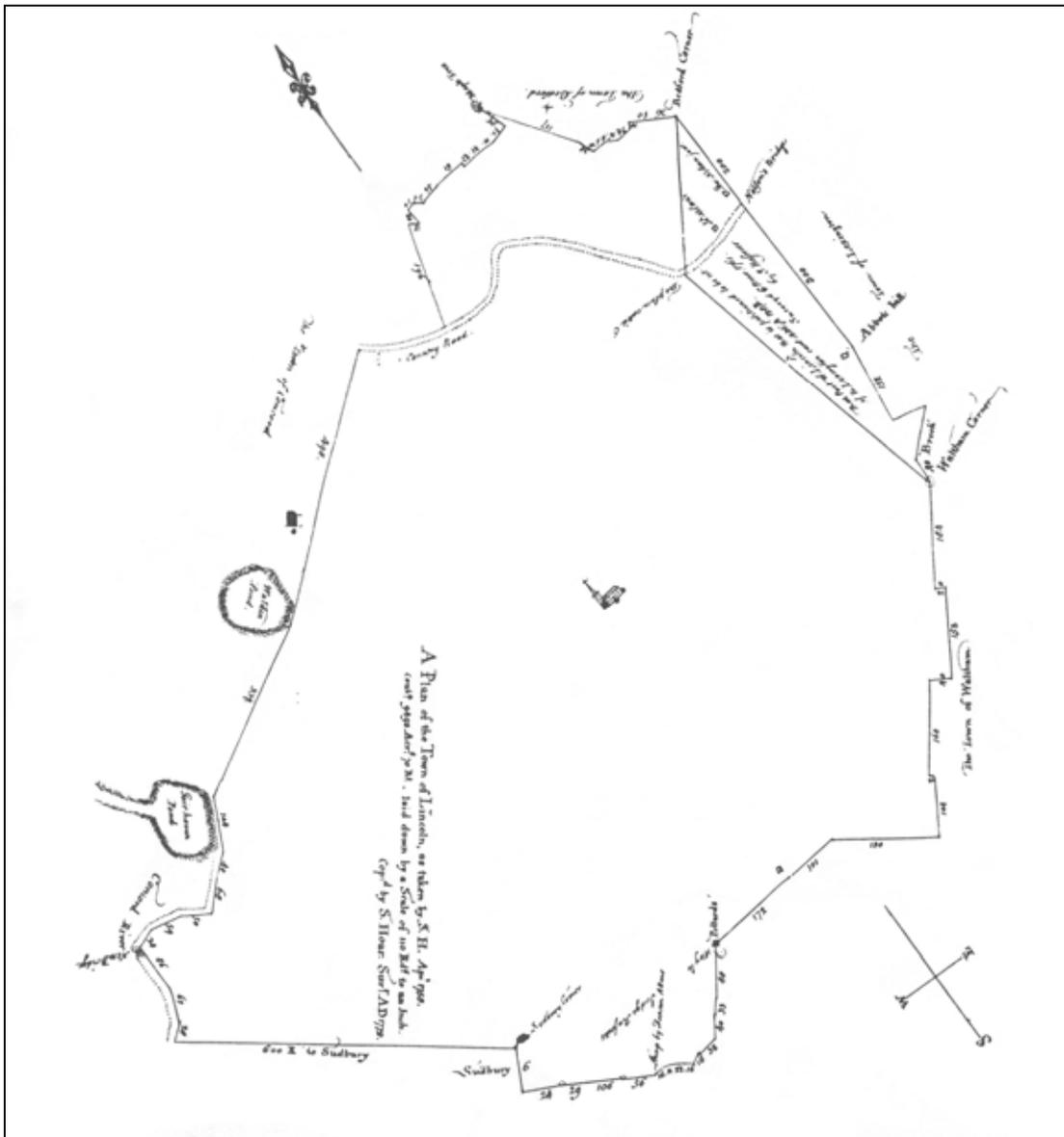


Figure 14. A 1772 copy drawn by S. Hoar of "A Plan of the Town of Lincoln," surveyed by Stephen Hosmer in 1758. The map includes a section of the Battle Road (labeled Country Road) narrowed to four rods by Concord in 1748. (Lincoln Public Library)

Lexington also surveyed the Battle Road right-of-way. In 1738, the town chose a committee to “renew the bounds of the great Country road leading from Cambridge to Concord in the bounds of Lexington.” As surveyed, the road right-of way was four rods wide (66’) from the Concord-Lexington Line until it ascended Fiske Hill, where it widened to seven rods (116’), and a short distance further reduced to six rods wide (99’). Just before Ebenezer Fiske’s house the right-of-way returned to four rods wide. Landscape features mentioned in the survey included numerous fences, several stone walls, a ditch bank, an orchard, four tree stumps and several black and white oak trees (Figure 15).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Lexington Town Records, March 10, 1737/8, October 30, 1738 (microfilm, Carey Memorial Library)

In 1773, a portion of the Battle Road running over Fiske Hill appears to have been significantly altered. Lexington voted to purchase land from Ebenezer and Benjamin Fiske “lying on the North Side of the Country Road [Battle Road] on Fisks Hill (so called) to be laid open to the Country Road for the better accommodation of Travelling,” indicating that the roadbed was shifted north (Figure 16). The town purchased the land for 26 pounds 14 shillings and 4 pence, and voted to spend “80 pounds to repair the High Way [ ] of the Way from Mr. Parkhursts to the West End of sd Fiske Hill.”<sup>66</sup>

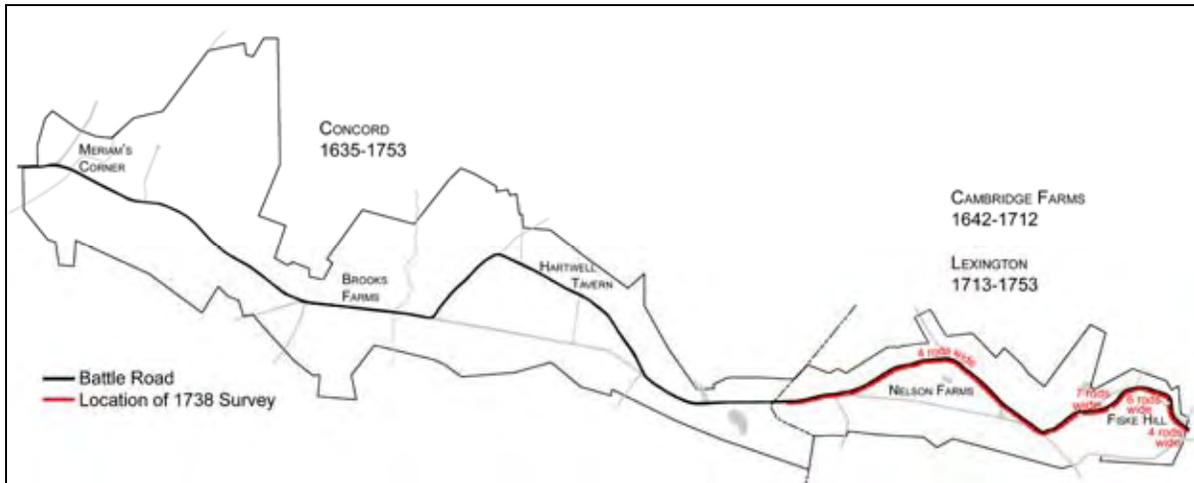


Figure 15. Map of Battle Road Unit showing portion of the Battle Road surveyed in 1738, based on 1738 road bounds survey and width of right-of-way depicted on the 1907 Middlesex County Map “Plan of a Portion of Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, as ordered by the County Commissioners.” (OCLP)

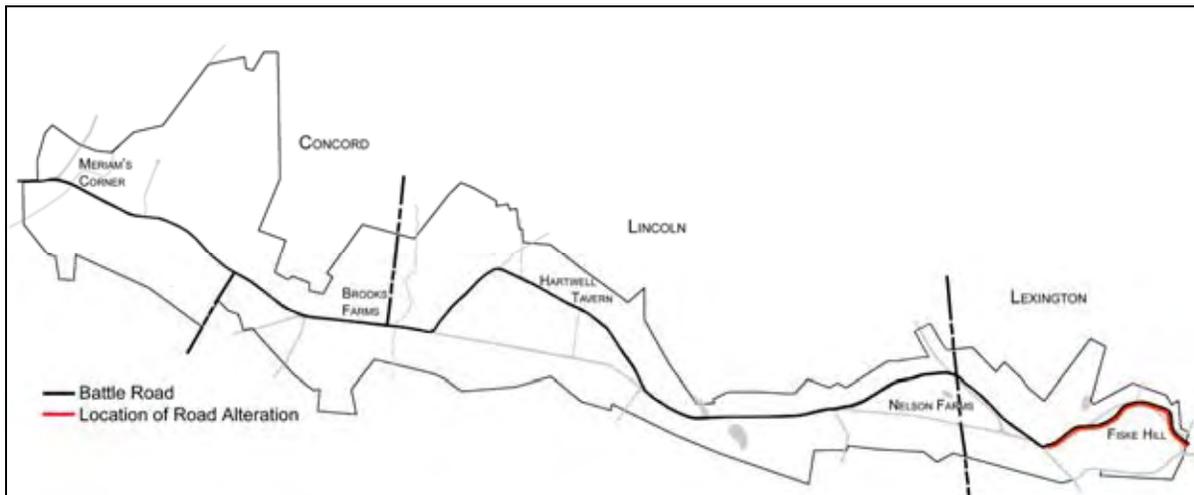


Figure 16. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the approximate location of the Battle Road alteration in 1773. (OLCP)

<sup>66</sup> Lexington Town Records, May 10, 1773 (microfilm, Carey Memorial Library). In 1790 John Parkhurst purchased “the hill field and pasture of 29 acres and 126 rods from Benjamin Fiske’s widow. Robert D. Ronsheim, “Historic Grounds Report, Ebenezer Fiske Farm and Benjamin Fiske 25 Acres,” Historic Section, September 1, 1965, p. 7.

### Trades and Taverns

Towns along the Battle Road had reached an integrated system of land use by the mid-1700s. Local trades along the Battle Road included the Brooks Tannery, several blacksmith and locksmith shops, and a cider mill on the Jacob Whittemore farm. Four taverns were also located along the Battle Road in the 1700s: the Bull Tavern and a tavern operated by the Fiskes in Lexington, Hartwell Tavern in Lincoln, and a tavern presumably built by Thomas Nelson for one of his sons, also in Lincoln. In the eighteenth century, taverns began to replace the puritan churches as centers of civic influence. Local colonists and travelers visited the taverns to rest, drink, and to discuss politics.<sup>67</sup>

### Landscape Summary (1635-1774)

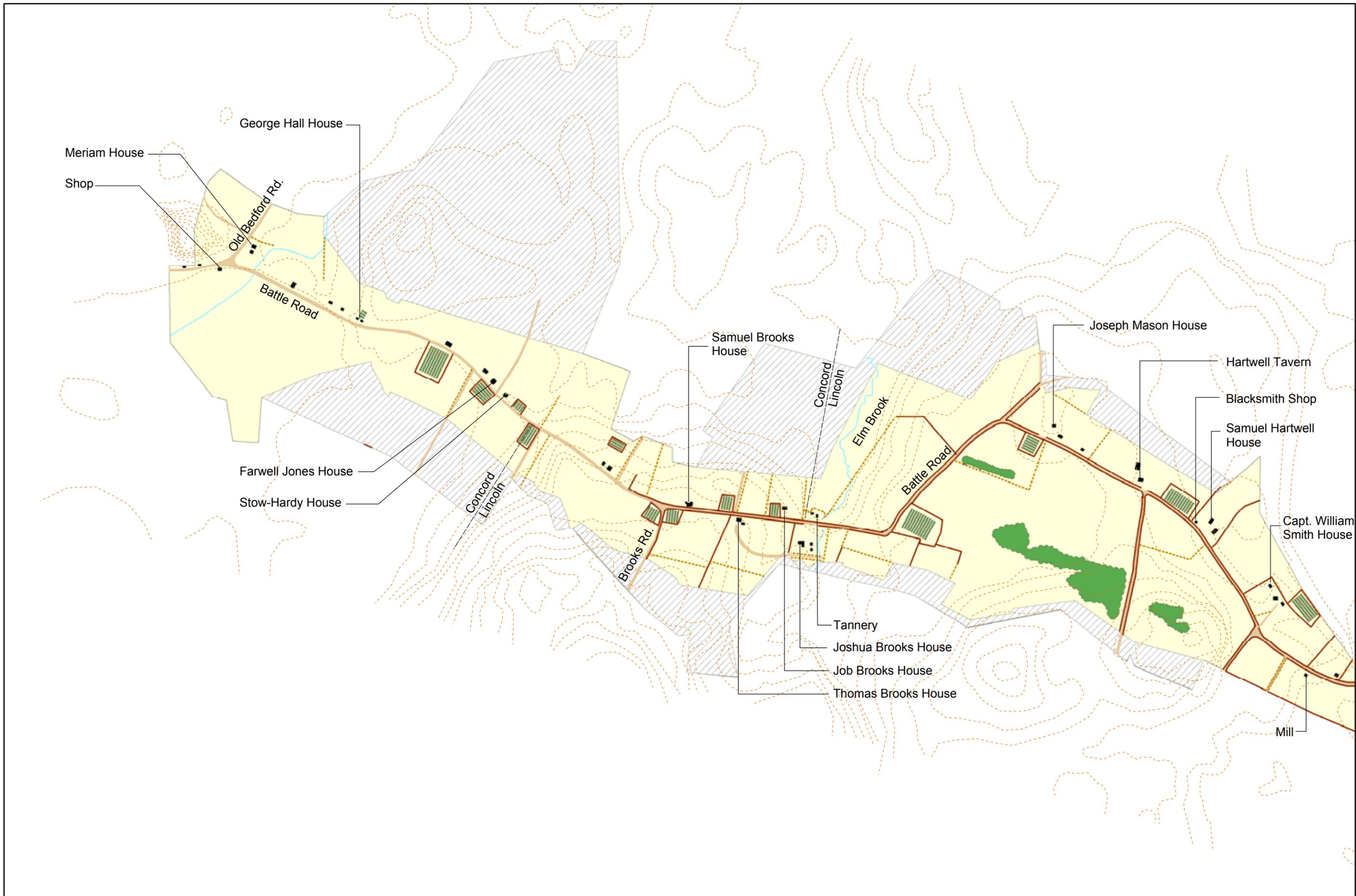
By the 1770s, the entire landscape within the present-day Battle Road Unit was settled and under agricultural production. Generations of families, some for over one hundred years, had worked the land, taming the wet meadows and clearing the forests. While agricultural fields and pastures were often scattered across the landscape, a remnant of the early common field system, property was significantly more condensed around the houselots than that of the seventeenth century. Since the mid-1600s, the Battle Road was the primary east-west road leading from Concord to the shoreline. The road was undoubtedly a busy space, occupied by horse-drawn carts, pedestrians, lone horsemen, and livestock herds.

Views from the road in the 1770s would include expansive farm fields lined by stone walls and wooden fences, grazing animals, orchards, houses and barns, taverns, small gardens, blacksmith and locksmith shops, and farm crops. In addition to the Battle Road, a developing system of roads connected houselots, farm fields, and neighboring towns (Figure 17).

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<sup>67</sup> Donahue and Hohmann, "Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner," p. 11; Edward P. Bliss, "The Old Taverns of Lexington," in *Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society*, vol. 1 (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Historical Society, 1890), pp. 78-79; Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, p. 83.







1775 Period Plan  
Figure 17

Cultural Landscape Report  
Minute Man  
National Historical Park  
Concord, Massachusetts  
Produced by  
National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for  
Landscape Preservation



Map Sources:

Maps 1-4, "Scene of the Battle, 1775, Historic Grounds Report, Minute Man National Historical Park," 1985.

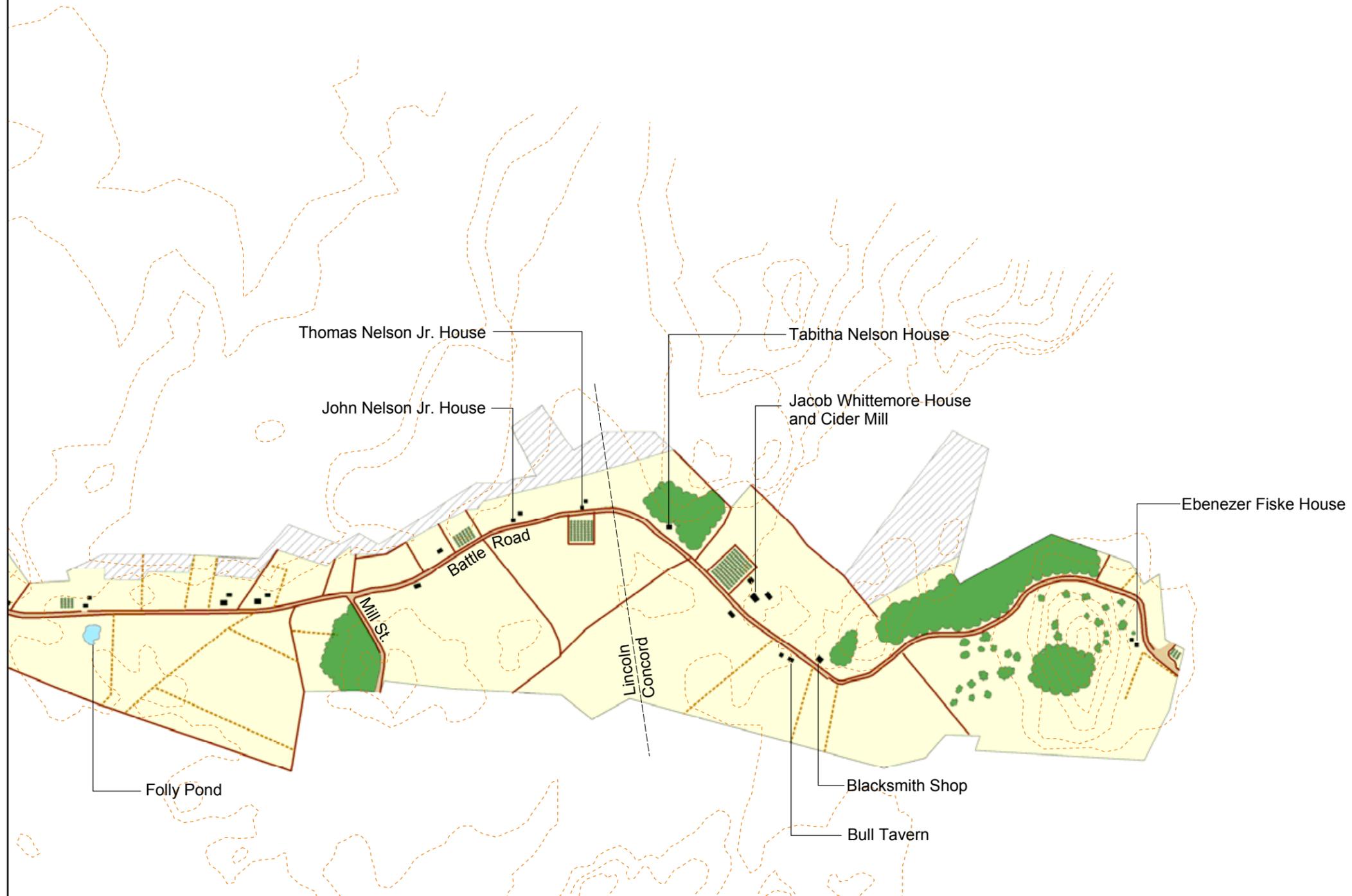
Notes:

Plan drawn using ArcMap GIS 8.3, by L. Laham, NPS.

Legend:

- Stone Wall
- Fence
- Herbaceous Vegetation: Field, Wet Meadow or Maintained Lawn
- Woody Vegetation: Tree Canopy or Remnant Orchard
- Orchards
- Building or Structure
- Road or Farm Lane
- Water
- Unknown

Not to scale





## The Revolutionary War (1775 - 1783)

Dramatic events of April 19, 1775, a conflict on Lexington Common, a battle at Concord's North Bridge, and a running battle along the road from Concord to Boston, marked the opening of the Revolutionary War. Upon an unusual battleground, twenty miles of winding, hilly road connecting Boston to Concord, discontent smoldering in the American colonies under British rule flared into open hostilities. For a year, British Regulars had occupied Boston, to suppress escalating colonial resistance to British economic policies. The British army under direction of General Gage began a campaign to confiscate colonial arms and supplies. His first two targets, a large store of gunpowder in Charlestown and two brass field pieces in Cambridge, were successfully confiscated in secrecy, without gunfire. News of the raids spread quickly, serving to strengthen the resistance of the colonies. In September 1774, colonists reorganized the Massachusetts General Court as the Provincial Congress. This illegal body met in Concord and served as the government of Massachusetts outside of British-controlled Boston. The Provincial Congress recommended that locals organize themselves into companies, elect officers, and drill for military action. The colonial troops, trained to be ready on a minute's notice, were known as minutemen.<sup>68</sup>

In February 1775, Gage ordered troops to Salem to raid a stash of cannons. This time Gage was unsuccessful. Colonists spied the British Regulars as they marched towards Salem and removed the cannon from their hiding place. Met by an angry mob in Salem, the British Regulars abandoned their mission and returned empty-handed to Boston. General Gage redirected his proposed strikes into the interior towns of Massachusetts. In April he ordered British troops to march "with utmost expedition and secrecy to Concord" to seize and destroy all arms, ammunition, and provisions. On April 15, Paul Revere and other patriots notified the Provincial Congress meeting in Concord that British Regulars were preparing to advance.<sup>69</sup>

### First Day of the Revolutionary War (April 19, 1775)

On April 18, under cover of night, British Regulars crossed the Charles River and began their eighteen mile march to Concord. Earlier in the day, General Gage positioned patrols along the road to Concord to protect the mission's secrecy, further alarming colonists. A Lexington contingent of colonists guarded patriots Samuel Adams and John Hancock, perceived targets of the British Regular advance, and another to scout the movements of British patrols. Within an hour of departure, a British patrol captured the colonial scouts in Lincoln, holding them under guard in a pasture on the north side of the Battle Road.<sup>70</sup>

Along the road just east of the capture site, noise of passing Regular patrols awoke Josiah Nelson. Nelson rushed out of his house to determine the source of the noise and received a gash on the side of his head from a Regular's sword. He was detained, but later released and ordered to remain in his house with his light out. Despite threats to burn down his house, Nelson dressed his wound and rode north,

<sup>68</sup> Harrington, et al., National Register, sec. 8, pp. 3-4; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 2, p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> Harrington, et al., National Register, sec. 8, pp. 3-4.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, pp. 4-5.

sounding the alarm in Bedford. Nelson probably reached Bedford along a bridleway, marking the boundary between Thomas Nelson's houselot (Josiah's father) and Jacob Whittemore's land.<sup>71</sup>

The same evening two men, Paul Revere and William Dawes, left Boston and rode west, spreading news of the British advance. The men met in Lexington and, accompanied by a third rider, Dr. Samuel Prescott, headed west on the road to Concord. Near the pasture opening, where the Lexington scouts had been captured earlier, British officers captured Paul Revere. Prescott and Dawes, riding behind Revere, escaped. Dawes headed back down the road towards Lexington; Prescott escaped by jumping his horse over a stone wall and went on to carry the alarm to Concord.<sup>72</sup>

Early in the morning on April 19<sup>th</sup>, British forces led by Major John Pitcairn, numbering about two hundred men, reached Lexington. About seventy-seven colonial men under the command of Captain John Parker confronted them in the center of town on the Lexington Common. As the British Regulars advanced, Parker ordered his men to disperse, but some were unwilling to back down. A shot from an unknown source was fired, and the British Regulars let loose several rounds into the militia lines. A brief clash resulted and eight militia were killed or wounded.<sup>73</sup>

After reassembling, the British Regulars resumed marching west along the road to Concord. Notified of the British advance, two minute and two militia companies from Concord and at least one or two companies from Lincoln marched out of town, east along the road to Meriam's Corner. Observing the British Regulars descending Brooks Hill, the colonists moved to the ridge bordering the north side of the road (Revolutionary Ridge). As the British entered Concord the colonists marched before them. According to one account, the colonists and British played their fife and drums in unison. In Concord town center, the colonials assembled and crossed the North Bridge and went on to Punkatasset Hill, about a mile north of the town center.<sup>74</sup>

British Regulars entered Concord center and seized control of the town's two bridges crossing the Concord River. Aware that minutemen were assembling north of town, British command sent seven companies to Concord's North Bridge. While one company held the bridge, and two others guarded their flank, four companies proceeded two miles past the bridge to Barrett's farm, where there were reports of cannon and large stores of ammunition. The minutemen, whose ranks were steadily increasing as men from neighboring towns arrived, moved down off Punkatasset Hill to take up positions on the hill west of the North Bridge. Observing smoke rising from the center of town, caused by burning gun carriages and then spread by accident, Colonel Barrett, commander of the Concord militia, ordered about 150 minutemen and militia to advanced toward the bridge, which was guarded by ninety-six British Regulars. The advance surprised the British Regulars and the British command ordered a retreat back toward Concord. A shot rang out, generally believed to have been fired, without orders, by one of the British Regulars; this was followed by the discharge of several other pieces. The colonists continued to

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<sup>71</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 264-265; Malcolm, "Scene of the Battle," p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Harrington, et al., National Register, sec. 8, pp. 5-6.

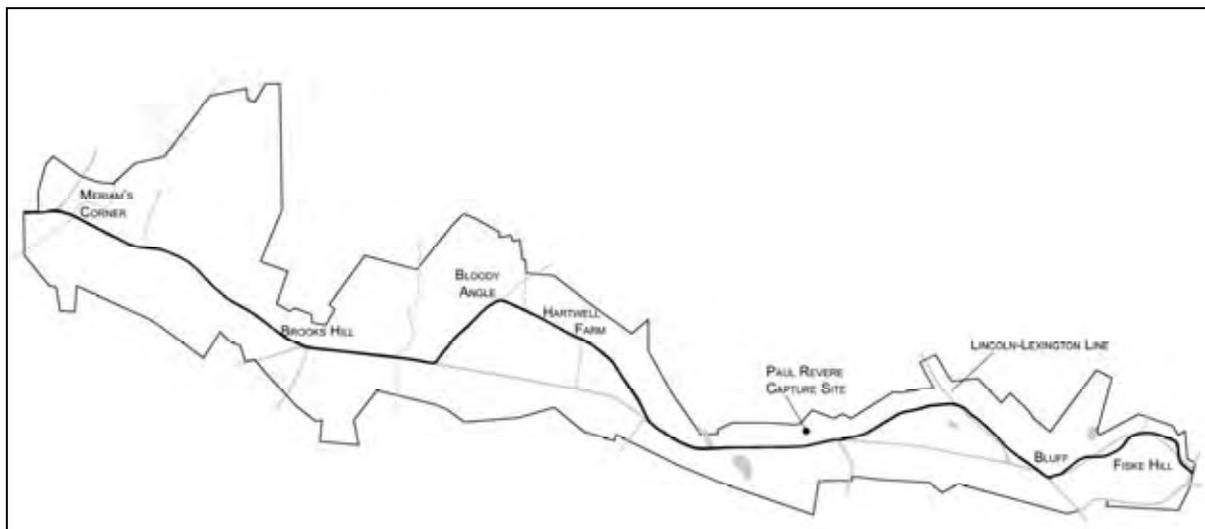
<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 8, pp. 7. Text includes information provided by Lou Sideris, Chief of Interpretation, Minute Man National Historical Park.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 8, p. 7. Text includes information provided by Lou Sideris, Chief of Interpretation, Minute Man National Historical Park.

advance and when within fifty yards of the British troops, opened fire. The British Regulars, seeing they were over-matched, turned and ran back toward Concord center. Two militia and nine British Regulars were casualties of the fighting at the North Bridge.<sup>75</sup>

As the British Regulars reassembled and marched down the road towards Boston, colonial troops pressed ahead in an attempt to cut off their retreat. The out-numbered militia and minutemen used guerilla tactics to gain advantage, hiding behind trees, stone walls, and buildings. The locals took advantage of the circuitous layout and rolling topography of the Battle Road to ambush the British Regulars. A number of skirmishes between the colonials and the British Regulars occurred along the Battle Road between Concord and Lexington (Figure 18).

The first conflict site was at Meriam's Corner, where Old Bedford Road and the Battle Road intersect, at the western boundary of the present-day Battle Road Unit. About sixty minutemen from Reading, along with men from the North Bridge fight, were positioned around the outbuildings and stone walls at the Meriam house when the British forces reached the intersection. The British flankers on the north side of the road descended the ridge to join the main force crossing a small bridge that lead over a stream southeast of the Meriam house. In the firing that ensued, several British Regulars were wounded before the British column moved out of range (Figure 19).<sup>76</sup>



**Figure 18. Map of the Battle Road Unit depicting the site of Paul Revere's capture and April 19, 1775 Battle Road skirmish sites. (OLCP)**

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, pp. 7-8. Text includes information provided by Lou Sideris, Chief of Interpretation, Minute Man National Historical Park.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 9.



**Figure 19.** Sketch of the April 19, 1775 skirmish at Meriam's Corner. Nathan Meriam house in the Background, on the east side of Billerica Road (Old Bedford Road). (*Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex*, 1874)

Waiting for the British Regulars about 1 ½ miles east of Meriam's Corner, were one or two companies of militia from Sudbury and one from Framingham. The colonists were lying on the south side of the Battle Road in ambush, on Brooks Hill. The British discovered the ambush before they were within range of the colonial guns and were able to mount an attack on the hill. The fighting was intense, especially in the Brooks farms area; the British Regulars ultimately pushed through the trap set by the militia.<sup>77</sup>

The British Regulars continued east along the road as it descended and crossed Elm Brook, then rose again. A short distance later the road turned sharply north. At this point colonial militia had positioned themselves behind trees and stone walls along the east side of the road leading north from the bend. The colonials also had a topographical advantage. Years of use, rain, and a recent road excavation had lowered the grade of the roadbed below their strategic position. When the British Regulars reached the curve and made the turn north, men from the Woburn militia fired into the British column. Five hundred yards further east, at another sharp curve later called the Bloody Angle, colonial forces again waited in ambush. Patriots fired upon the British column from all directions. British troops sustained about thirty casualties along the stretch between the first curve and the second. Despite their losses, the desperate British quickened their pace and broke free of the trap.<sup>78</sup>

British Regulars remained under constant threat from long-range firing as they made their way east of the Bloody Angle. At the farms of Ephraim and Samuel Hartwell militia companies from Bedford, Woburn, Sudbury, and Billerica confronted the British Regulars. The colonists took positions behind the Hartwell

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 9; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 2, p. 41.

houses and outbuildings, firing with deadly effect straight into the British column. Several militia men were also killed in the skirmish.<sup>79</sup>

The Lexington Company waited on a low hill on the north side of the road at the Lincoln-Lexington line (Nelson farms) to take revenge for the early morning clash on Lexington Common. Some of the men took advanced positions in a rocky pasture on the north side of the road, harassing the approaching column with sniper fire before being driven from the field by a British flanking party. As the British approached within close distance, the colonials fired into the column. Shocked by the attack, the column halted momentarily then charged the hill – clearing the militia from their position. Both sides suffered casualties.<sup>80</sup>

Crossing into Lexington, the British regrouped and continued their retreat. Colonists were positioned a few hundred yards beyond them on a steep, thickly wooded hill known as the “Bluff.” British command sent one or two companies ahead of the column to secure the site, and after a hard fought skirmish over difficult terrain, they drove the militia from their position.<sup>81</sup>

Fiske Hill, at the eastern boundary of the present-day Battle Road Unit, was the eighth and final obstacle between the British retreat and Lexington center. When British Regulars came into range, colonial militia positioned on the hill fired and killed several more British Regulars. At this point, the British column began to come apart. British Regulars who were not wounded were completely exhausted and were being fired upon from all sides. Troops along the road were running in a desperate attempt to escape and flanking parties became separated from the main unit. Officers attempted to block the road to reform the column for a more orderly retreat, but most of the soldiers kept running toward Lexington.<sup>82</sup>

In Lexington, the harassed British were saved by a relief force of one thousand troops. After regrouping, the British Regulars proceeded on to Boston. As they marched toward Menotomy (Arlington), the colonials continued to attack when circumstances were favorable. The most brutal skirmish occurred in Menotomy (Arlington) where the British were subjected to almost continuous fire from houses and outbuildings over a one and one-half mile stretch of road. Proceeding on from Menotomy, the British Regulars entered Cambridge and found that the only bridge across the Charles River was partially destroyed and held by colonial forces. British command made an unexpected move and took a secondary road to Charlestown, catching the militia by surprise and breaking the circle of fire they had endured since leaving Lexington. About 7:00 p.m., seven hours after they left Concord center, the British column crossed Charlestown Neck and then across Charlestown Common to Bunker Hill. After observing the Regular’s strong defensive position atop the hill, colonial troops called off their attack, ending the first day of what became an eight-year fight for independence.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 10.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 10. Text includes information provided by Lou Sideris, Chief of Interpretation, Minute Man National Historical Park.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., sec. 8, pp. 10-11.

### The War Continues

The towns of Lincoln, Lexington, and Concord, which had witnessed and participated in the battles on April 19<sup>th</sup>, supported the ensuing Revolutionary War by periodically supplying specified quotas of men and by providing requested resources and goods to the colonial army. Minutemen and militia from the three towns served in numerous campaigns including the siege on Boston, and the Battles at Fort Ticonderoga, Bennington, White Plains, Saratoga, and Monmouth.<sup>84</sup> Various systems determined how towns met their soldier quota, but ultimately each town paid for their service. The towns were also required to send wood, textiles, shoes and agricultural goods to the colonial army, again at the expense of the individual towns. Lincoln town records state that between 1776 and 1781 the town provided at least thirty-five blankets, seventy-six sets of shirts, shoes, and stockings, and over sixteen-hundred pounds of beef to the army.<sup>85</sup> On January 15, 1776, Lexington voted to cut three hundred cords of wood for the army, including “wood on the road to Fiske’s hill, so called.”<sup>86</sup>

While the army’s demand for soldiers and supplies generally caused financial hardship within the towns, some individuals benefited through the sale of surplus agricultural products. Money paid to soldiers and for the purchase of supplies for the army necessitated higher taxes, and extensive wartime printing of paper money resulted in inflated prices. By 1780, monetary inflation had caused the original cost to rise to 480 pounds per man. Lexington eventually resorted to paying soldier bounties in cattle— five mature cows for three years service.<sup>87</sup>

Other impacts of the war included local agricultural and commercial changes. In Lincoln, the acreage of labor-intensive tillage fields decreased slightly, while the amount of pastureland almost doubled. The war and its aftermath also significantly altered commercial transactions. Few imported goods were purchased and local businesses were scrutinized for their loyalty to the fight for independence. Between 1777 and 1785, Lincoln did not issue liquor licenses, although local taverns, including Ephraim Hartwell’s, continued to serve rum.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 618; Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 2, pp. 587, 620; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 391; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 2, pp. 26, 42.

<sup>85</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 308; Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 618.

<sup>86</sup> Lexington Town Records, January 15, 1776 (microfilm, Carey Memorial Library).

<sup>87</sup> Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 618; MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 307-309.

<sup>88</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 308; Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, pp. 307-308.

## RURAL ECONOMIC PERIOD (1784 - 1899)

The first century of the new American nation witnessed westward expansion, agricultural and industrial innovations, and improved transportation. As some New England farmers ventured west along newly constructed roads, canals, and railroads, eastern cities expanded and industrialized. Between 1790 and 1830 the nation's population rose from just under four million to almost thirteen million, largely due to increasing numbers of European immigrants. Although some followed Yankee farmers west, others settled in New England, constructing canals and railroads, working in factories, mills, and on farms. Local farmers welcomed progress and initially benefited from it, however, a century of change would ultimately threaten the agricultural landscape along the Battle Road.

### Market Economy Landscape (1784 - 1843)

For a brief period after the war, economic hardships persisted. Taxes remained high, paper money was practically worthless, and debts for some were insurmountable. Rural landowners were the hardest hit; many local farm fields and buildings were neglected. In 1791, Concord had five fewer houses, thirty-two fewer barns, seventy-seven fewer cattle, and cultivated 419 fewer acres than in 1781, despite a larger population.<sup>89</sup> Massachusetts's economy recovered in the 1790s and flourished in the decades that followed. Colonial manufacturing businesses accelerated production following the 1808 British trade embargo and as a result of the high tariffs imposed on British goods following the War of 1812. The lack of imported wool, iron tools, and leather stimulated the growth of large textile mills, tool manufacturers, tanneries, and shoe factories in Massachusetts. Farmers increasingly raised sheep to supply the textile mills, and produced livestock to sell to the emerging urban centers.<sup>90</sup>

### Changing Agricultural Landscape

Beginning in 1820, an explosion of pasture clearing and hayfield planting began along the Battle Road, to support increased herd sizes. By the mid-1800s, only ten percent of local forests remained. Expanding agricultural land use in the early 1800s significantly altered the balanced allotment of woodland, pasture, meadow, and tillage of earlier substance-based colonial farms. Of the non-forested acreage in the mid-1800s, ten percent was tilled, fifty percent was grazed, and twenty-five percent was considered unimproved or abandoned fields. The structure of the farmstead also changed as farmers constructed larger barns and grain storage structures to support beef and dairy production.<sup>91</sup>

Improved transportation also supported the increasing shift from subsistence farming to commercial farming. With the new century came better roads and bigger wagons, together providing efficient, more reliable transportation of agricultural products to urban markets. Regionally, maritime profits funded

<sup>89</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 309, 319, 326; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 391.

<sup>90</sup> Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, pp. 101, 136-138.

<sup>91</sup> A. Bradford Smith, "The Concord Turnpike" in *Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society*, vol. 3 (Lexington, MA: Lexington Historical Society, 1905), p. 110; Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, pp. 174, 176, 183-184; Donahue and Hohmann, "Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner," pp. 11-12.

industrial development in Waltham and Lowell, and financed construction of the Concord Turnpike and the Middlesex Canal. Towns along the Battle Road benefited from the growing economy. Profits earned by local farmers and professionals supported civic improvements in the towns bordering the Battle Road.

Around 1800, the first market-wagon, drawn by a team of six oxen and a horse, appeared in Concord, and by 1830 they were an essential part of most farm inventories. Before market-wagons, farmers transported agricultural products to coastal cities in horse-drawn carts or panniers, large baskets carried over their shoulders or on the back of animals. The advent of the large market-wagons and of stagecoaches traveling between Concord and Boston by the early nineteenth century required better roads.<sup>92</sup>

### Improved Roads

While secondary roads remained in poor condition, privately funded turnpikes were built and main roads, such as the Battle Road, were improved to support vehicle traffic and livestock drives. In 1806, the Cambridge Turnpike was constructed south of the Battle Road. Unlike the layout of the Battle Road which respected the topography, construction of the turnpike proceeded in a straight line, disregarding the hilly glacial terrain. Steep inclines limited stagecoach travel and in 1828, after years of low profits, the county assumed jurisdiction of the turnpike. Although not within the bounds of the present-day Battle Road Unit, its presence altered traffic flow along the Battle Road by the mid-1800s, and a twentieth-century realignment of the turnpike, known today as Route 2, played a significant role in early park planning of the present-day Battle Road Unit.<sup>93</sup>

In 1800, the Middlesex Court recommended re-alignment of the Battle Road, at the request of local citizens who stated the road was “very crooked and circuitous” (Figure 20). Between c. 1802 and 1806, the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington straightened several sections of the road. The most significant alterations occurred in Lincoln and Lexington, where two large bends in the road, one leading to the Hartwell farms (Lincoln) and another leading to the Nelson farms (Lincoln/Lexington) were by-passed. The two large by-passed bends in the road remained as secondary roads and have held various names over the years. For the purpose of this report, the name “Battle Road” will still be applied when specifically referring to the original route of the primary east-west road through the present-day Battle Road Unit, or portions of it. For the remainder of the Rural Economic Period, the name “North Great Road” will be used when referring to the road as constructed between c. 1802-1806 (Figures 21-23).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 334-335; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 394.

<sup>93</sup> Walcott, “Concord Roads;” MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 326; Smith, “Concord Turnpike,” in *Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society*, vol. 3, pp. 114-115.

<sup>94</sup> The road and sections of the road went by many names during this period. The name of the road often differed within the three towns. Lincoln references generally refer to the road as North Great Road.

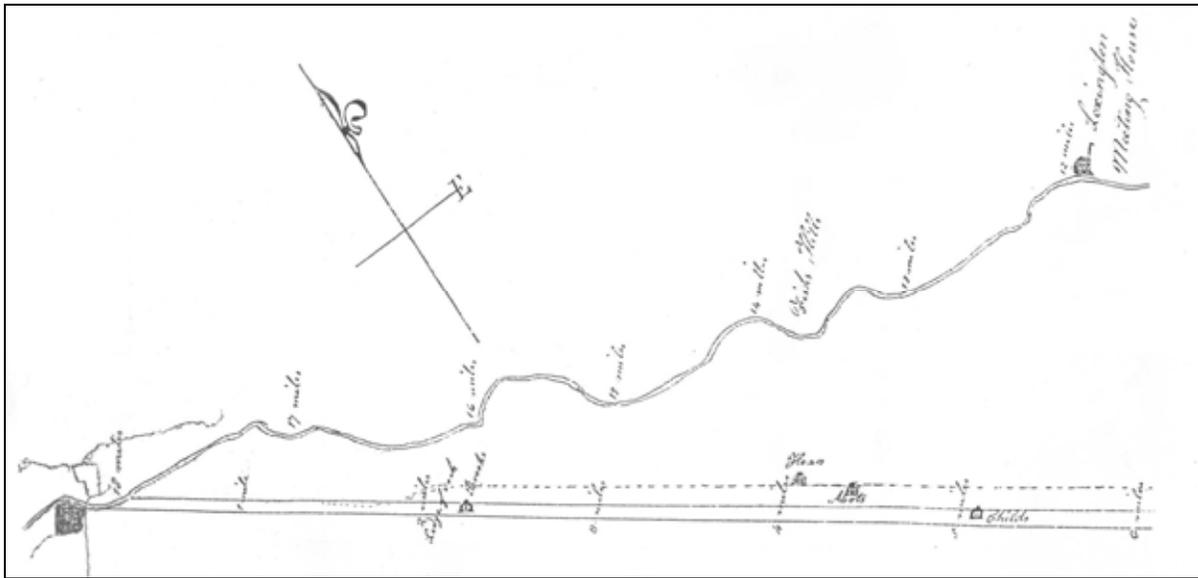


Figure 20. Portion of the "Plan of the Road from Concord to Cambridge" drawn by Peter Tufts, December 4, 1801. The image depicted a section of the "very crooked and circuitous" Battle Road from Concord center to Lexington center. (Lincoln Public Library)

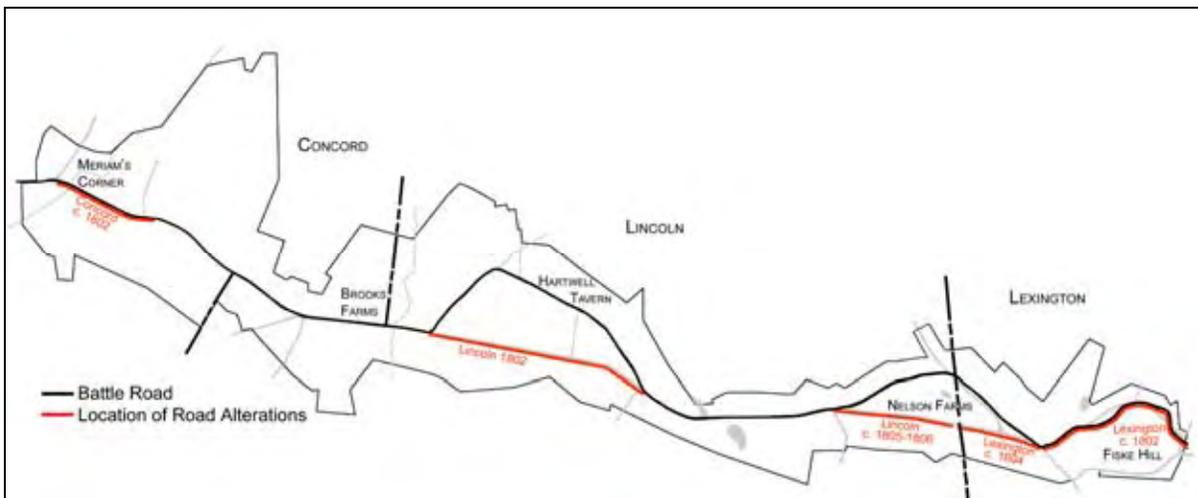


Figure 21. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the location of road alterations as completed by the Towns of Lincoln, Lexington, and Concord, 1802 to c. 1806. (OCLP)



Figure 22. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the North Great Road as constructed c. 1802 - 1806. (OLCP)

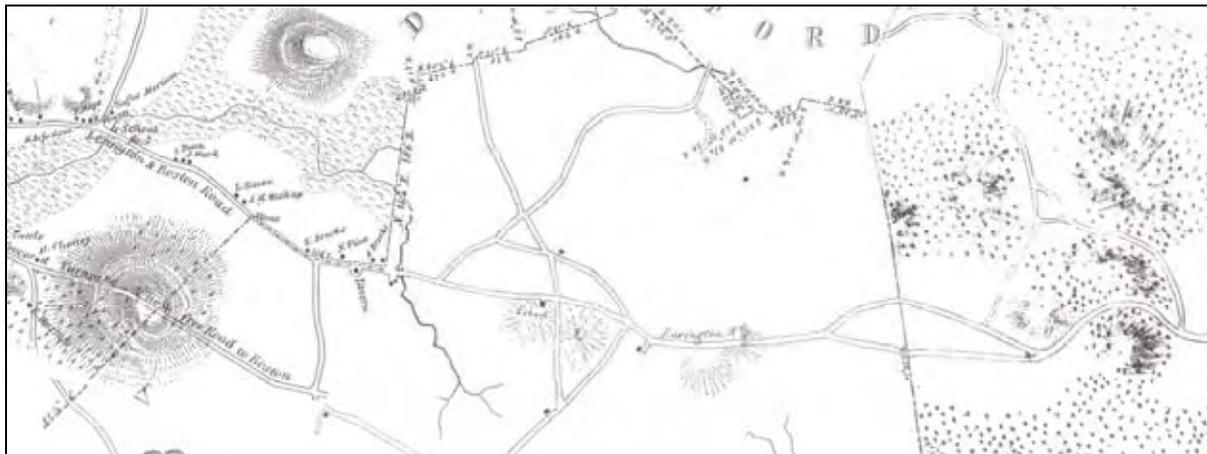


Figure 23. Map of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington depicting c. 1802 - 1806 road alterations. (1830 maps of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington by John G. Hales, digitally combined)

In c. 1804, Lincoln reduced the width of the c. 1802 by-passed bend in the Battle Road in Lincoln, running from Mr. Caldwell's Gate (Captain William Smith house) to Capt. Joshua Brooks Tanyard. The town sold land within the right-of way, presumably to neighboring landowners. As surveyed, the right-of-way was narrowed on average by one rod (16 ½ feet). The survey also noted landscape features adjacent to the road including a blacksmith shop, a schoolhouse, a wall, a pasture, and the "Road leading from Bedford [Old Bedford Road]" (Figure 24).<sup>95</sup>

Between c. 1816 and 1818, Lexington reduced the slope of the c. 1802 re-aligned section of the Battle Road (North Great Road) running over Fiske Hill. By 1819, the town had also constructed a new road that intersected the North Great Road just south of the bluff. Construction of the road resulted from an 1817 agreement between Amos Marrett and the town of Lexington, which stated that if Marrett consented to let a schoolhouse be moved onto his land, the town would construct a road from the schoolhouse to North Great Road. Today the road is known as Marrett Road.<sup>96</sup>

In September 1836, landowners petitioned the Middlesex County Commissioners to straighten and widen "the main road leading from Concord to Lexington (North Great Road)" in several places because it was "circuitous & hilly." In April 1838, the county commissioners ordered repair of the highway at specific locations including the "ascent of Hardy's hill (Brooks Hill), "the lowest point in the valley at Brooks' tanyard," "Hartwell's Hill," and a "small hill between the house of John Nelson & the line of Lexington" (Figure 25).<sup>97</sup> In general, all road repairs included raising low areas or leveling high points, so that no areas exceeded an "angle of [three to four] degrees with the horizon." All "stumps, stones & other obstructions" were to be removed and the road "so shaped, that the center shall be eighteen inches higher than the sides, by a regular curved surface." The road as altered was twenty-four feet wide "throughout the whole" making it "safe and convenient for the passage of oxen, horses, carts, waggons, carriages & teams of every description with customary loads."<sup>98</sup> All three towns voted to repair their section of the road as ordered by the county commissioners.<sup>99</sup>

In addition to improved roads, construction of the Charles River Bridge significantly improved travel efficiency between towns along the Battle Road and Boston, making commercial agriculture within the present-day Battle Road Unit more viable. Access across the bridge shortened mileage between Lexington and Boston by half, to only seven miles.

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<sup>95</sup> Lincoln Town Records, August 1804.

<sup>96</sup> Lexington Town Records, October 7, 1817, April 12, 1819 (microfilm, Carey Memorial Library)

<sup>97</sup> Numerous repairs were also ordered in Lexington, one or more might have been within the present-day Battle Road Unit. More land owner information from this time period is needed before the location of road changes in Lexington can be determined.

<sup>98</sup> Middlesex County Commissioners, May 8, 1838 (Middlesex County Commissioners Record Books, 1835-1842, p. 282, microfilm, Massachusetts Archives)

<sup>99</sup> Concord Town Records, August 9, 1838 (Concord Free Public Library); Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the Town of Lincoln, 1839-1846; Lexington Town Records, November 26, 1838 (microfilm, Carey Memorial Library).

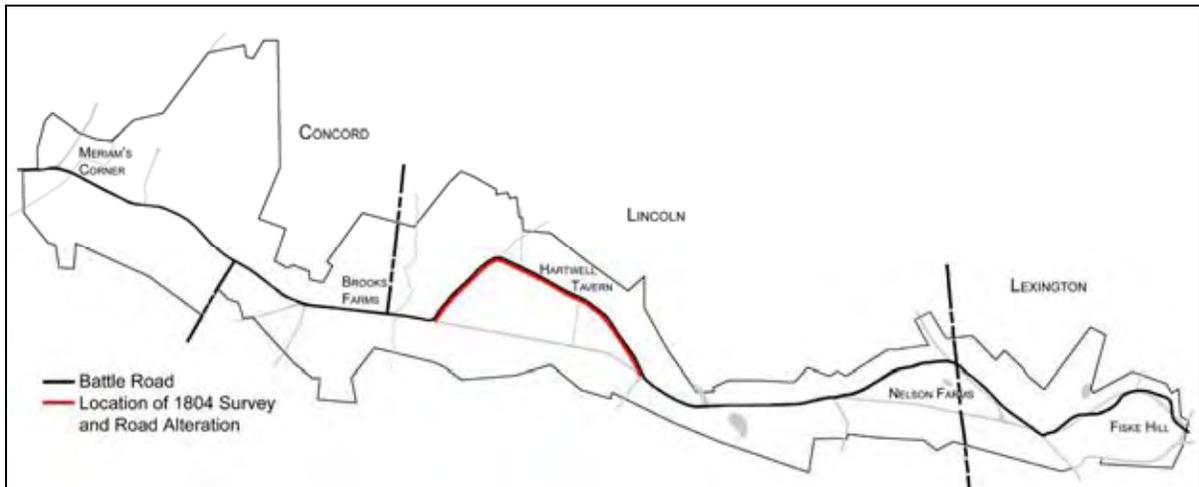


Figure 24. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the portion of the Battle Road surveyed and narrowed in 1804. (OLCP)

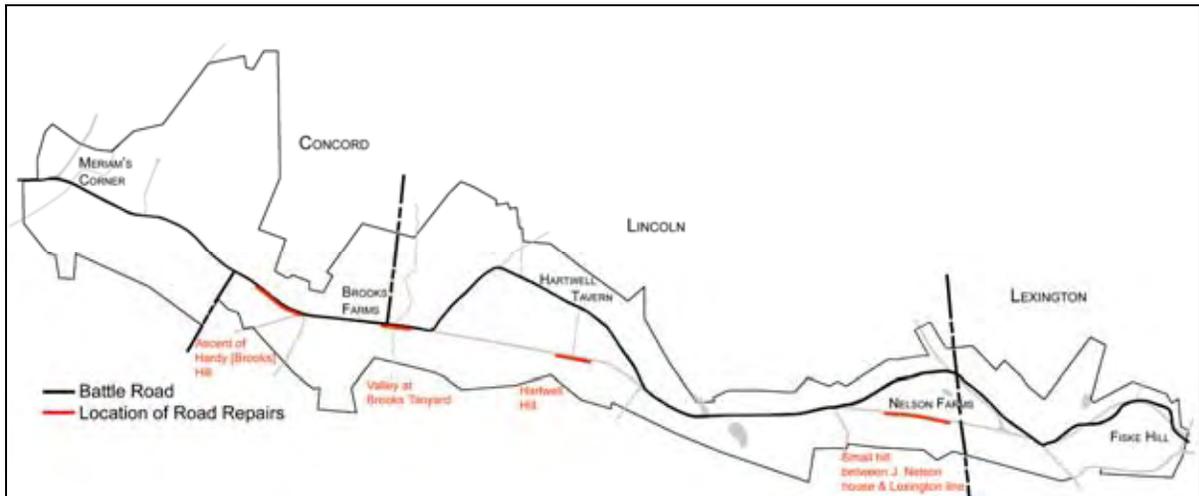


Figure 25. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the location of county road repairs on the North Great Road, c. 1838. (OLCP)

### Decline of Trades and Taverns along the Battle Road

Initially, local manufacturers benefited from the 1808 British trade embargo and the high tariffs imposed on British goods following the War of 1812. A number of small industries manufacturing a variety of necessary goods were located in Concord, including manufacturers of pencils, soap, woodenware, and brick. In Lincoln, one-third of working-aged men in 1820 were either tradesman (tanners and shoemakers the most prevalent) or businessmen. However, by the mid-1800s most farm-based manufactures in the towns bordering the Battle Road had closed, including the Brooks Tannery, which closed in 1829. The small towns did not have sufficient water flow necessary to support large-scale operations, thus they could not compete with larger manufacturers.<sup>100</sup>

In the early 1800s two taverns were located along the Battle Road: the Noah Brooks Tavern and the Bull Tavern. Noah Brooks Jr. received an innkeeper's license in 1798, and built a new structure to house the tavern in 1810. The Bull Tavern, known by 1792 as the Benjamin Tavern and by 1818 as Viles Tavern, had been in operation since before the Revolutionary War (Figure 26). Three other taverns in business before the Revolutionary War appear not to have been in business in the early 1800s, including the Hartwell Tavern. The tavern passed into the hands of John Hartwell in 1793 and records indicate his economic activity was limited to farming. The taverns were a stopping point for farmers herding livestock and poultry to the Brighton Stockyard, or others transporting wagons of produce to Cambridge or Boston. Herdsmen who stopped for the night at a tavern would pasture their livestock in neighboring fields.<sup>101</sup>



**Figure 26. Sketch of Bull Tavern (Benjamin Tavern), 1827. (*Tracing the Past in Lexington*)**

<sup>100</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 325-326, 451; Maureen K. Phillips, "Historic Structure Report: Noah Brooks Tavern Site, Brooks Tavern, Hartwell Carriage House, and Rogers Barn, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord Massachusetts" (Lowell, MA: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Building Conservation Branch, 2000), pp. 3-4.

<sup>101</sup> Phillips, "Brooks Tavern, Hartwell Carriage House, and Rogers Barn," p. 4; Bliss, "Old Taverns of Lexington," pp. 78-79, 86; John Luzader, "Historic Grounds Report Hartwell Tavern, Minute Man National Historical Park," (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, n.d.), p. 5-7.

Both the Noah Brooks Tavern and the Vile Tavern (Bull Tavern) went out of business by the 1840s. Organization of the temperance movement in the early 1800s is the most compelling explanation for their demise. While consuming large quantities of alcohol during the Colonial Period was considered accepted behavior, by the early 1800s it was perceived as a social problem. Additionally, construction of the Cambridge Turnpike (approximate alignment of Route 2) undoubtedly diverted clientele away from the North Great Road.<sup>102</sup>

As the nineteenth-century drinking habits changed, so did the composition of the orchards along the Battle Road. By the 1830s, farmers along the Battle Road began to replace their cider orchards with dessert fruit orchards. Although widespread planting of fancy fruits did not occur until later in the century, Josiah Nelson operated a nursery on his farm in Lincoln (next to the Thomas Nelson Jr. house) as early as the 1830s, selling fancy fruit trees to his neighbors. In 1831, Nelson advertised for sale about five hundred peach trees, one hundred apple trees, as well as pear, cherry, quince, and other various fruits.<sup>103</sup>

### Schoolhouses

In addition to farm buildings and local businesses, in the late 1700s and early 1800s there were also a number of schoolhouses located within the present-day Battle Road Unit. In 1763, Lincoln constructed a schoolhouse on the Battle Road “8-10 rods west of Joseph Masons Barn [west of Harwell Tavern].” Five years later the town moved the schoolhouse to an unknown location, possibly along the Battle Road near the Job Brooks house. In 1791, Lincoln built a new schoolhouse in North Lincoln near or on the same location of the schoolhouse constructed in 1763. The town sold this schoolhouse in 1816 and replaced it with a brick schoolhouse erected at the southwest corner of North Great Road and Bedford Lane. Concord constructed its first school, the First East Quarter Schoolhouse, along the Battle Road in 1789 on the north side of the road just east of Meriam’s Corner.<sup>104</sup>

### Landscape Summary (1784-1843)

For several decades after the end of the Revolutionary War, a diverse economy existed along the Battle Road. Fueled by a lack of British goods, local manufactures and farm-based industries prospered, as did Battle Road farmers who increased their livestock herds to provide wool and beef to the emerging textile and manufacturing centers. However, as farmers continued to expand their commercial operations, the local tradesmen ultimately succumbed to their competition in the industrial towns.

One of the most lasting and important landscape changes was the realignment of the Battle Road. The straightened road, which benefited nineteenth century travelers, separated portions of the original road from what became the North Great Road - making twentieth century restoration of the abandoned roadbed and its surrounding landscape feasible. Although improved, by the mid-1800s the importance of the North Great Road as a major east-west thoroughfare had declined as traffic diverted to the newer Cambridge Turnpike. Less traffic, combined with a growing temperance movement, ultimately lead to

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<sup>102</sup> Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 399; Phillips, “Brooks Tavern, Hartwell Carriage House, and Rogers Barn,” p. 5; Edwin B. Worthen, *Tracing the past in Lexington, Massachusetts*, ed. Anita P. Worthen (New York: Vantage Press, 1998), pp. 85-86. *Rich Harvest*, p. 334.

<sup>103</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 443.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149, 370, 614; Donahue and Hohmann, “Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam’s Corner,” p. 62.

the loss of the taverns along the North Great Road. This, in turn, resulted in the decline of cider orchards and a proliferation of fancy fruit orchards bordering the road.

The 1840s landscape along the Battle Road would have included many similar features found in the colonial landscape – stone walls, fences, pastures and fields, orchards, houses, and barns – although their configuration was undoubtedly different. A view of the nineteenth-century roadside would include larger pastures, barns, and outbuildings necessary to support commercial dairy production, a mix of cider and fancy fruit trees as farmers responded to the decline in alcohol consumption, and the absence of local trade and tavern establishments

Although the regional importance of the re-aligned road had diminished, it continued to be a locally important transportation route. Large oxen-drawn wagons and herded livestock would have traveled on the road in route to market, and local farmers to and from their fields. In contrast, traffic along the two large by-passed bends in the road would have been much quieter, used primarily by the families residing on them.

### **Expanding Commercial Agriculture (1844 - 1899)**

Advances in agricultural technology, western migration and the advent of the railroad brought additional changes to the agricultural landscape. The expanding number of colonial descendents found it increasingly difficult to farm the limited agricultural space in the rocky uplands bordering the Battle Road. New agricultural implements, designed for the flat, fertile soils of the mid-west, were less efficient in the stone strewn New England soils. Many left to establish farms in the mid-west, and after the advent of the railroad, flow of settlers traveling west was matched by car loads of inexpensive meat and grain traveling along the rail lines to eastern cities. Unable to compete with mid-west products, local farmers adapted production, specializing in perishable produce transported by local rail to the growing urban markets. The convenience of the local rail lines also transported urbanites to the countryside. By the end of the century, a significant number of Bostonians owned homes and country estates in the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington. Tourists also traveled by train into the towns to visit the April 19, 1775 battlegrounds, some of which ventured along the Battle Road.

#### New Agricultural Markets

As farmers increasingly commercialized operations, they relied more heavily on wage laborers. Filling this need was a growing population of European immigrants arriving in Boston, of which the Irish were among the most prevalent in the mid-1800s. By the 1860s, many of the immigrant families began purchasing farms of their own, generally, although not always, on marginal or abandoned agricultural

land.<sup>105</sup> The 1880 U.S. Census reported at least seven Irish immigrant families owned or rented farmsteads within the present-day Battle Road Unit, and of the twenty Battle Road households identified within the census, eleven housed and employed at least one farm laborer or house servant, of which more than one-half were Irish or Canadian.

Among commercial products produced for the urban markets were milk and other dairy products, hay, poultry and eggs, apples, cucumbers (for pickling), strawberries, grapes, asparagus, and potatoes. Milk grew in popularity during the latter half of the nineteenth century, after the temperance movement of the early 1800s stifled the production and consumption of hard cider. By 1865, more than eight hundred cans of milk departed Concord daily for Boston.<sup>106</sup> Raising large herds of dairy cattle required substantial amounts of grain and hay, most of which arrived by train from the Midwest. Western grain provided inexpensive, high-protein feed for New England cows.

Farmers adapted their farm buildings, structures, and field configurations to support the new agricultural economy. Silos, which came into use for the first time in the 1880s, provided a way to maintain green fodder for dairy cattle throughout the winter. Large chicken houses also appeared on farmsteads, in response to an increasing demand for fresh eggs and poultry. To use new, large-scale mechanized farming equipment, farmers enlarged their fields by removing stone walls. They used the dismantled walls to fill low spots, line underground drains, and construct new building foundations. Stone walls along improved roadways were often crushed, than laid as road surfacing. Walls that stood in reforested woodland or were too massive to remove remained.<sup>107</sup>

Information obtained for five Battle Road farmsteads provide examples of the changing agricultural landscape.

Noah Brooks Farm: In 1857, Samuel Hartwell, who had grown up on the Hartwell farms up the hill, purchased the Noah Brooks farm and planted orchards. By 1880, Hartwell had planted ten acres of apple trees and five acres (500 trees) of peaches, with plans to plant more. As evident in Figure 27, he also grew corn. Hartwell reportedly had a gross higher income and expenses than his neighbors. In 1880, four laborers boarded at the farm: two from Ireland, one from Nova Scotia, and one from Massachusetts. He also had an Irish house servant.<sup>108</sup>

Job Brooks Farm: Emelius Leppelman, who was from Denmark, purchased the Job Brooks Farm in 1847 and kept a substantial herd of dairy cattle. In the late 1850s, Charles Sawyer from New Hampshire purchased the farm and raised fancy livestock. By 1885 Sawyer had constructed a new barn and carriage house on the farmstead, and built a large addition on the house. Additional features added by Sawyer included a windmill on the brook and a drinking trough near the roadside (Figure 28).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 177; MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 509

<sup>106</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 449; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 403.

<sup>107</sup> Thorson, *Stone by Stone*, pp. 171, 175-176.

<sup>108</sup> Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 177; MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 525-527; 1880 U.S. Census Report.

<sup>109</sup> Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 174; J.S. Keyes, "Houses in Concord in 1885" (manuscript, Concord Free Public Library).



Figure 27. Noah Brooks farm when owned by Samuel Hartwell, c. 1883-1907. The Battle Road (North Great Road, today known as Route 2A) is in the foreground. Job Brooks entrance drive is at the bottom of the photograph. Note the corn crop and the orchard (background). (Hosmer Photographic Collection, Concord Free Public Library)



Figure 28. Job Brooks farm when owned by Charles Sawyer, c. 1890s. The Battle Road (North Great Road, today known as Route 2A) is in the foreground. (Photographic copy located in MIMA library, location of original photograph unknown)

Ephraim Hartwell Farm: In the 1870s, Edwin McHugh, who was from Ireland, purchased the Ephraim Hartwell farm, operated a dairy and an orchard. In 1880, one Irish laborer boarded on the McHugh farm (Figure 29).<sup>110</sup>

Samuel Hartwell Farm: John Dee, also from Ireland, purchased the Samuel Hartwell farm in the 1870s. He also operated a dairy and an orchard. In 1880, two Irish laborers boarded on the Dee farm (Figure 30).<sup>111</sup>

Meriam's Corner: In 1871, Thomas Burke, also from Ireland, purchased the core of the Meriam farm and operated a small dairy, selling his milk in Concord. In 1880 he owned five cows and five calves. He also sold eggs and produce (Figure 31).<sup>112</sup>

With the influx of inexpensive hay and grains from the Midwest, farm acreage contracted geographically onto better soils, and worn out land reverted to woodland. A declining need for fuel also contributed to the rejuvenation of local forests. Efficient Rumford fireplaces and Franklin stoves increasingly replaced



**Figure 29. Ephraim Hartwell Tavern when owned by the McHugh family, c. late 1890s. The Battle Road (portion by-passed in the early 1800s) is in the foreground. (Photographic copy of an original owned by Mary McHugh, MIMA library)**

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<sup>110</sup> Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 177; 1880 U.S. Census Report.

<sup>111</sup> Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 177; 1880 U.S. Census Report.

<sup>112</sup> Donahue and Hohmann, "Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner," p. 33.



Figure 30. Samuel Hartwell house when owned by the Dee family, c. late 1800s. The Battle Road (portion by-passed in the early 1800s) is in the foreground. (Photographic copy located in MIMA library, location of original unknown)



Figure 31. Nathan Meriam farm when owned by the Burke family, c. late 1800s. Billerica Road (Old Bedford Road) in the foreground. (Historic New England Archives)

colonial fireplaces, and coal replaced wood. By the late 1800s, woodlands expanded to cover forty percent of Concord's marginal stone-filled soils, and a similar percentage covered the western half of the present-day Battle Road Unit. The eastern half, lying on low fertile land, remained open.<sup>113</sup>

### North Great Road

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century repair and alteration of North Great Road continued. In 1868, local residents petitioned the Middlesex County Commissioners to repair the "old County road [North Great Road]" because it was "circuitous, hilly, sandy, stony and unfit for travel" (Figure 32). In response, the Commissioners ordered Concord and Lincoln to "lay open, construct, and complete" alterations to the North Great Road "between the house of Michajah Rice in Concord, through the town of Lincoln to the Lexington line." The repaired road was to be "25 feet in width . . . throughout the whole" and the "center shall be 12 inches higher than the sides by a circular curved surface." All "greater rises and hill" were to be reduced to "an angle not exceeding two degrees with the horizon," and permanent stone monuments were to be placed at each end and at each angle, presumably to mark the bounds of the road as altered.<sup>114</sup>

Middlesex County Commission records for repair or alteration of the North Great Road in Lexington were not found, however recollections of landowners along the Battle Road in Lexington indicate the road may have also been altered in the 1860s. In an interview with NPS historian R. D. Ronsheim in 1963, Martin Bashian, who at the time lived in the Ebenezer Fiske house, remembered:

. . . the old road went up the hill in about the location of the present road. But it had not been cut. There was a natural depression near the top, on the east side. . . the current 'old road' – the one abandoned at this date was put in about 1860 to help the wagons. . . earlier there was little or no team hauling, just one horse carts.<sup>115</sup>

A second account was written in c. 1897 by Rev. Houghton, who, as a child lived just east of the Fiske house. In a letter to a member of the Lexington Historical Society, Houghton discussed the location of several British graves and included a brief description of an earlier road alignment::

. . . the old road used to run to the left of the present one. . . There was a trail there years ago. Between the trail and the present road was a grave of a soldier who was killed or shot at a blacksmith shop that was on the right of the road a few rods this or Lexington side of Viles tavern.<sup>116</sup>

Houghton included a sketch with his letter, depicting Battle Road, the graves of the soldiers, and landscape features along the road related to his account of the British graves (Figure 33).

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<sup>113</sup> Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, pp. 177, 184, and map in same document on page 51; Concord Historical Commission, "Masterplan," pp. 19, 21.

<sup>114</sup> Middlesex County Commissioners, September 1, 1868 (Middlesex County Commissioners Record Books, 1866-1869, p. 402, microfilm, Massachusetts Archives).

<sup>115</sup> Robert D. Ronsheim, interview-Martin Bashian, 4/14/63 (MIMA library).

<sup>116</sup> Rev. Houghton to Lexington Historical Society, letter and sketch, c. 1897 (Lexington Historical Society microfilm roll 1, Carey Memorial Library).

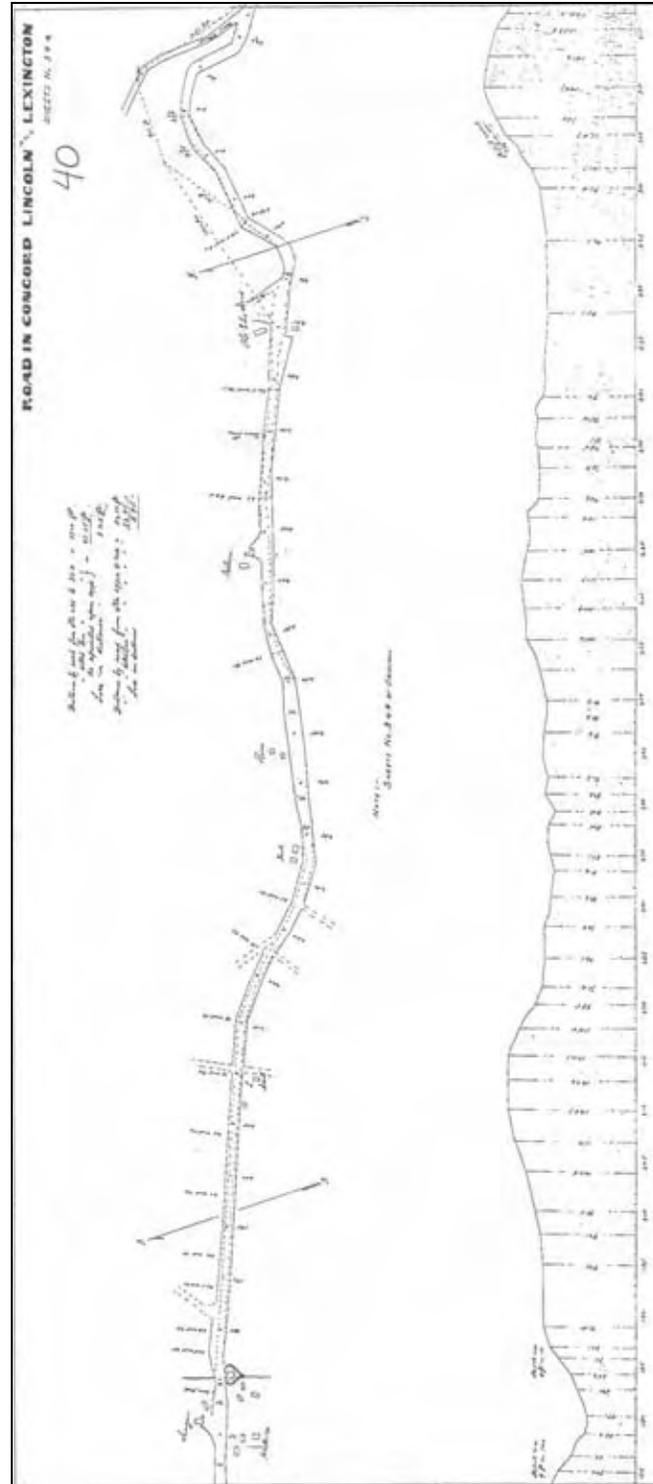


Figure 32. Map of North Great Road (1864) prior to c. 1868 road improvements. The map includes sheets 3 & 4 (of 5) traced from the original in 1913, and includes the road layout from Elm Brook to Fiske Hill. (Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, Plan Department)

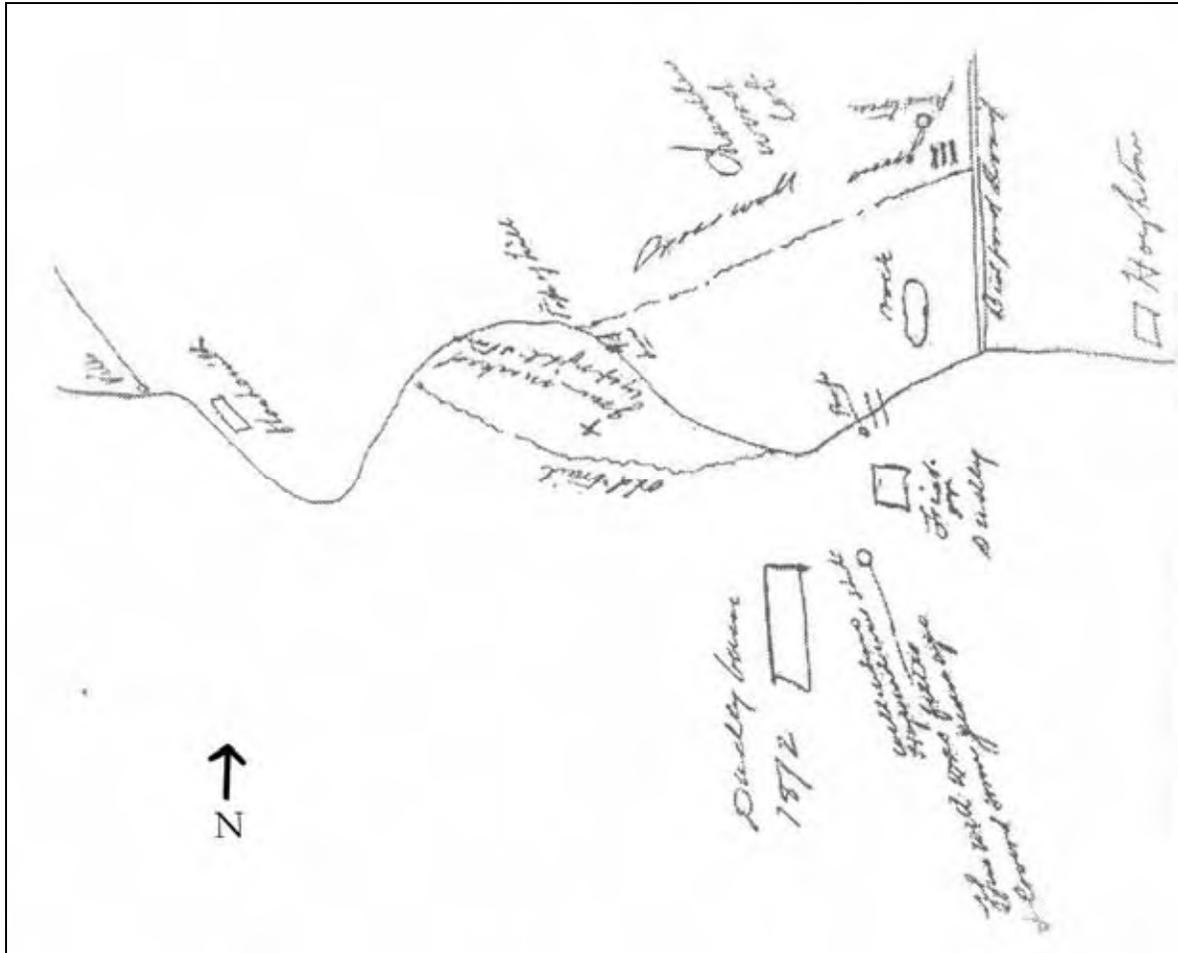
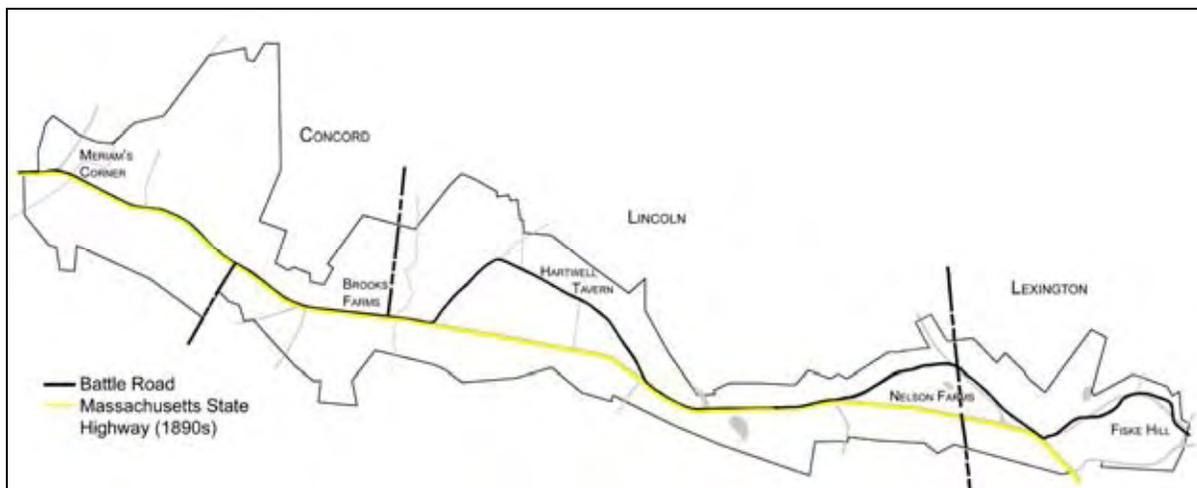


Figure 33. Map of the Fiske Hill area drawn by Rev. Houghton, c. 1897 (north arrow added). The map depicts the Battle Road and the old road (old trail) as Houghton remembered the site c. 1872. (Microfilm, Cary Memorial Library).

### State Highway

During the mid- to late-1890s, the Massachusetts Highway Commission laid out the North Great Road from Meriam's Corner to the Bluff, and then along Marrett Road as a state highway (Figure 34). The Massachusetts Highway Commission, the nation's first state highway commission, was organized in 1893 after vigorous lobbying by bicyclists. The Commission was responsible for establishing both state and county routes, by recommending appropriate construction methods and maintenance practices, and by estimating their approximate cost. Highway commission layout plans indicate road construction in Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington progressed in several sections between 1895 and 1898, beginning in Lincoln (near Captain William Smith house), then extending east and west towards Lexington and Concord.

As designed by the Commission, the roadbed stood fifteen feet wide, had three-foot gravel shoulders – all of which was located within a fifty-foot right-of-way. The new roadbed was created by layering and steam-rolling broken stone. It replaced the older road surface constructed of sand, clay and gravel. The commission sought to reduce all road grades “wherever possible to a maximum of five feet to the hundred” and to raise roadbeds “above the level of swamps or freshets.” They specified removal of all “brush, stones and other unsightly material” along the roadway to leave the road in “a neat and workmanlike condition,” and placement of six-foot stone markers with the letters M.H.B. (Massachusetts Highway Board) along both sides of the road at all angles, curve tangents, and at a minimum of one-thousand feet intervals along straight portions of the road. The Commission recommended using broken local fieldstone for the new roadbed and gravel for the shoulders (Figures 35-37).<sup>117</sup>



**Figure 34. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the location of the Massachusetts State Highway, as laid out by the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1895-1898. (OLCP)**

<sup>117</sup> Massachusetts Highway Commission (MHC), “Third Annual Report of the Massachusetts Highway Commission” (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., January 1896), pp. 17-23; MHC, “Fifth Annual Report” (1898); MHC, “Sixth Annual Report” (1899); Collection of Massachusetts Highway Commission layout drawings August 1895 to September 1898 (Boston: Massachusetts Highway Department).

In 1898, Edwin Bacon mentioned the new state highway in his book *Walks and Rides in the Country Round about Boston*. He described it as “a pleasant road” and suggested it was an appropriate route for a “bicycle run.” His text also mentioned several historic sites along the road including Meriam’s Corner, the Hayward Well, and the Bluff (see Commemoration of April 19, 1775, p. 64).

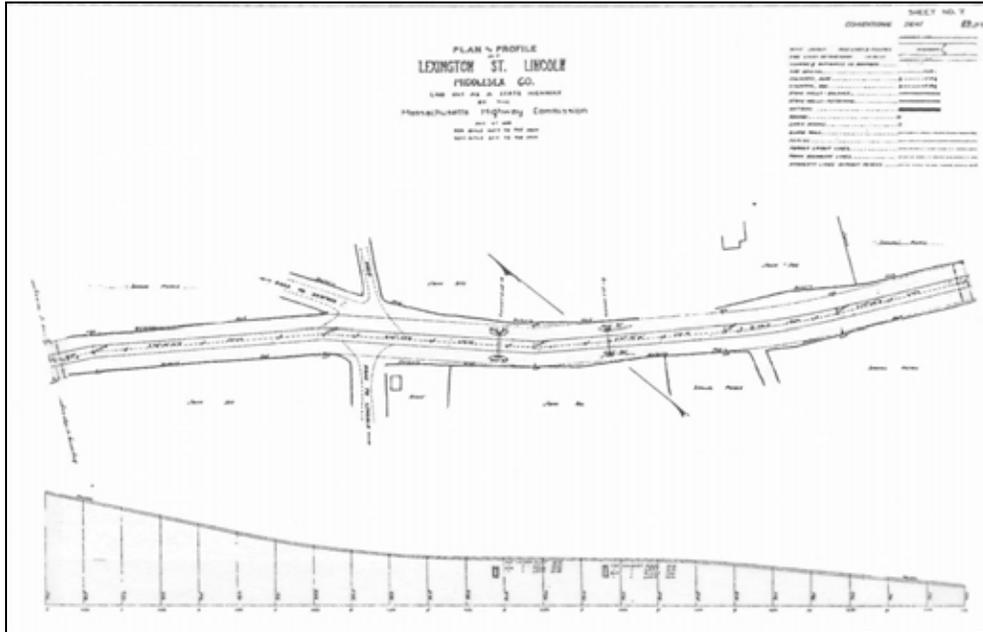


Figure 35. “Plan and Profile of Lexington St., Lincoln, Middlesex Co., July 6, 1896.” (Massachusetts Highway Department) Map depicts a small section of the road (today a portion of Route 2A) as laid out by the Middlesex County commissioners. (A complete set of maps is located in the MIMA library)

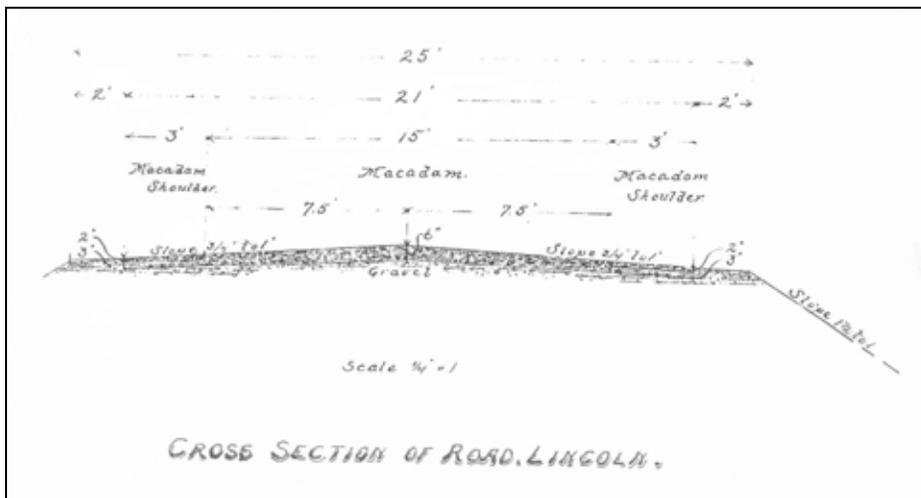


Figure 36. Cross section of the state highway as depicted on "Plan and Profile of Lexington St., Lincoln, Middlesex Co.," c. 1895. (RG 79, Minute Man National Historical Park, NARA Waltham)



**Figure 37. View west of the state highway, c. 1899. Field to the right is the approximate location where Paul Revere was captured. (*Historic Mansions and Highways around Boston, 1899*)**

### Suburban Residences

By the 1870s, a steady migration of Bostonians began purchasing agricultural fields and pastures within the towns bordering the Battle Road, converting them into large estates. The wealthy landowners spent their summers in the countryside, commuting daily to Boston by rail or along improved roads and returning to their urban homes during the winter. By the late 1800s, middle-income Boston merchants and businessmen began purchasing agricultural land within the present-day Battle Road Unit for smaller homes, and the construction of grand summer estates declined. As permanent residences, men from these families commuted daily to and from Boston, primarily by train. By 1880, Lexington had five passenger stations, and by the late 1800s nineteen trains passed daily through Concord and Lincoln, the fastest traveling to Boston in only thirty-two minutes from Concord.<sup>118</sup>

By the 1880s, Boston commuters owned at least two colonial homes along the Battle Road. Frank Smith occupied the Stow-Hardy farm, which he called “Elm Farm.” In addition to working in Boston, Smith raised and sold fancy livestock. A Mr. Tuttle occupied the George Minot farm. Tuttle, a trader in Boston, reportedly was building new outbuildings on his farmstead in 1885.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>118</sup> MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, pp. 529, 556-557; Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 606; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 12; Laurence Eaton Richardson, “Concord at the Turn of the Century” (Concord, MA: Concord Antiquarian Society, 1960), p. 11

<sup>119</sup>Keyes, “Houses in Concord.”

Commemoration of April 19, 1775

Lexington was the first town within the present-day Battle Road Unit to physically commemorate the opening events of the Revolutionary War. In 1799, the town erected a monument in the center of town commemorating the early morning skirmish on the Lexington Green. About thirty-five years later, Concord constructed a monument commemorating the battle at the North Bridge at the site of the bridge, and followed with a second monument and a commemorative bridge in the 1870s.<sup>120</sup>

In 1885, as part of a larger recognition of historic sites in Lexington, the town placed two memorial stones, one known today as the Bluff Monument, and the other as the Hayward Well Monument. Both of the stones were rough-cut granite with gilded inscribed lettering. The town placed the Bluff Monument at the base of Fiske Hill near the site of the old Viles Tavern (junction of Route 2A and Marrett Street). The monument marked the location of the eighth and final skirmish along the road within the present-day Battle Road Unit. The Hayward Well Monument was placed within a stone wall in front of Samuel Dudley's house (Ebenezer Fiske house) near a well where a colonist and a British soldier reportedly simultaneously fired upon each other – both were killed (Figures 38-39).<sup>121</sup>



Figure 38. Bluff Monument, c. 1888. (*Old Concord, Her Highways & Byways*)

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<sup>120</sup> Hurd, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, p. 618; Drake, *History of Middlesex County*, vol. 1, pp. 398, 402.

<sup>121</sup> “Historical Monuments and Tablets Erected by the Town of Lexington, 1884,” pp. 8-10. (Lexington, MA: Carey Memorial Library).



**Figure 39. Hayward Well Monument inset in the stone wall in front of the Ebenezer Fiske house in the c. late 1800s, when occupied by the Neville family. The Battle Road (North Great Road, today known as Old Massachusetts Avenue) is in the foreground. (Photographic copy located in MIMA library, location of original unknown)**

In 1885, as part of its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, Concord inset a granite monument within a stone wall at Meriam’s Corner, owned by Thomas and Rose Burke. The monument, which marked the starting point of the running battle, was one of seven placed at historic sites within the town. Through a legal agreement with the Burkes, Concord retained ownership of the monument, known today as the Meriam’s Corner Monument, and assumed responsibility for its maintenance (Figure 40).<sup>122</sup>

The last major monument placed along the road was erected by the town of Lincoln in 1899. The large Quincy granite monument with bronze tablet, known today as the Paul Revere Capture Marker, was inset within a stone wall at the approximate location where Paul Revere was captured in the early hours of April 19, 1775. The location chosen for the monument was based on local tradition and the recommendations of a committee lead by a ‘local authority.’ After examining the terrain and noting subtle changes in the road alignment since 1775, the committee was determined it had found the location of the capture site, within a few yards (Figure 41).<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10; “Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Incorporation of Concord, September 12, 1885” (Concord, MA: Published by the Town), p. 21; Burke & ux to Concord Inhabitants, 517:1734 (Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Southern District, Middlesex Courthouse, Cambridge, MA).

<sup>123</sup> “An Account of the Celebration by the Town of Lincoln, Massachusetts, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1904, of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its Incorporation” (Lincoln, MA: Published for the Town, 1905).



Figure 40. Meriam's Corner Monument, c. late 1800s. The Meriam house is in the background, the Battle Road is located in the foreground, and Billerica Road (Old Bedford Road) is located on the left side of the photograph. (Hosmer Photographic Collection, III.147, Concord Free Public Library)

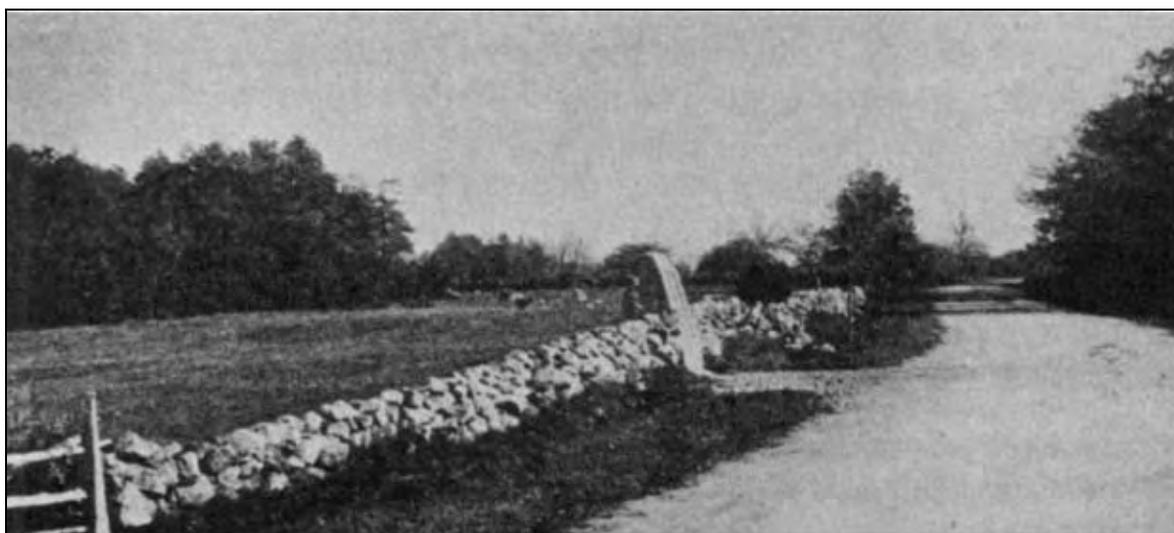


Figure 41. View east of the Paul Revere Tablet inset in stone wall along north side of the Battle Road (North Great Road, today known as Route 2A), c. 1890s. (*New England Magazine*, 1904)

### Tourism along the Battle Road

The monuments and yearly celebrations marking the anniversary of April 19, 1775 drew tourists to the Lexington Green, the North Bridge, and to the Battle Road (Figure 42). The first anniversary celebration occurred in Lexington a year after the battle, and the first known celebration in Concord occurred in 1824. Beginning in 1825, the fiftieth anniversary of the battle, both Lexington and Concord held large celebrations every twenty-five years. Construction of railroad lines within both towns elevated the 1850 and the 1875 celebrations to regional events.

Also enticing tourists to the battlegrounds were articles printed in newspapers, magazines, and guidebooks that described battle sites and their significance. The published descriptions of the battlegrounds generally included less information about sites along the Battle Road, probably indicating they were less visited than the Lexington Green and the site of the North Bridge. This seems probable, since the locations remained in private ownership and as such, they could only be experienced from the road. Nevertheless, several references to the Battle Road have been found.

In 1874, Samuel Adams Drake described the road in his *Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex*:

The road over which the troops marched and retreated is in some places disused, except for the accommodation of the neighboring farm-houses. Fiske's Hill, a high eminence a mile and a third from Lexington, is now avoided all together. Another segment of the old highway, grass-grown and roughened by the washings of many winters, enters the main road at an abandoned lime-kiln before you reach Brooks Tavern. In this vicinity was one of the severest actions of the 19<sup>th</sup> of April was fought.<sup>124</sup>

In a second passage, Drake describes the landscape along the road:

Preceding onward, a farm-house almost always in view, there seemed a sort of foundation in the old, moss-grown, tumbled-down stone walls. No great stretch of imagination was necessary to convert them into the ramparts of a century ago, behind which the rustic warriors crouched and levelled the deadly tubes.

The following year, Sarita M. Brady described the Ebenezer Fiske house and the Hayward Well site in an article published in *Appleton's Journal*:

It is an unpretending place, faded to that greenish brown which unpainted wood always assumes, and at one side stands an old pump—a very old pump, decrepit and tottering with age; and it is evidently many years since the handle, creaking over that rusty hinge, poured a clear stream into the trough that lies on the ground. It is over a hundred years old.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Samuel Adams Drake, *Historic Fields and Mansions of Middlesex* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1874), p. 371. The passage refers to the c. 1860 alteration of the Battle Road over Fiske Hill and the 1802 by-pass of the section of the Battle Road that ran past the Hartwell and Smith farms.

<sup>125</sup> Sarita M. Brady, "Centennial Concord," *Appleton's Journal*, April 24, 1875, p. 527.



**Figure 42. View east of a horse and buggy in front of the Meriam's Corner Monument, at the intersection of Billerica Road (Old Bedford Road, foreground) and the Battle Road (North Great Road, today known as Route 2A, right), c. late 1800s. The Second Quarter Schoolhouse is in the background. (Historic New England Archives)**

In his 1885 guidebook *Concord, Historic, Literary and Picturesque*, Concord resident and author George B. Bartlett mentions tourist traffic on the Battle Road:

Many tourists in barges [large tourist carriages] and on foot take the great road [from Concord] to Lexington if they wish to follow the track of the flying British. The citizens of Lexington have marked the most important places with descriptive tablets, showing where the enemy tried in vain to make a stand, and the well [Hayward Well] at which each one of the combatants fell in single combat.<sup>126</sup>

An article that appeared in the Cambridge Tribune in 1891 described the Battle Road and the bordering landscape:

The road mounts and descends through a thickly wooded country, which probably has not materially altered in appearance during the past century. Gradually the houses increase in number [from east to west]: We pass Fiske's Hill, the site of the Brooks Tavern, the Merriam House . . . at all of which points there was either actual fighting or exchange of shots . . . and descend into the pleasant but, we should imagine, exceedingly dull old town of Concord.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> George B. Bartlett, *Concord, Historic, Literary and Picturesque* (Boston: Lothrop Publishing Company, 1885), p. 12. The book does not mention the Merriam's Corner Monument erected by Concord in 1885, indicating the text was written before the monument was set in place.

Landscape Summary (1844-1899)

While the article quoted above is probably accurate in its general description of the landscape, it inaccurately states the landscape had not been “materially altered in appearance during the past century.” In fact, the landscape had dramatically changed. The open, agricultural landscape of 1775 was significantly reduced in size by the end of the 1890s, as pasture land decreased due to the import of inexpensive hay from the Midwest, as farmers left New England to establish more profitable farms in the Midwest, and as those that remained condensed their farms onto the most workable, fertile soils.

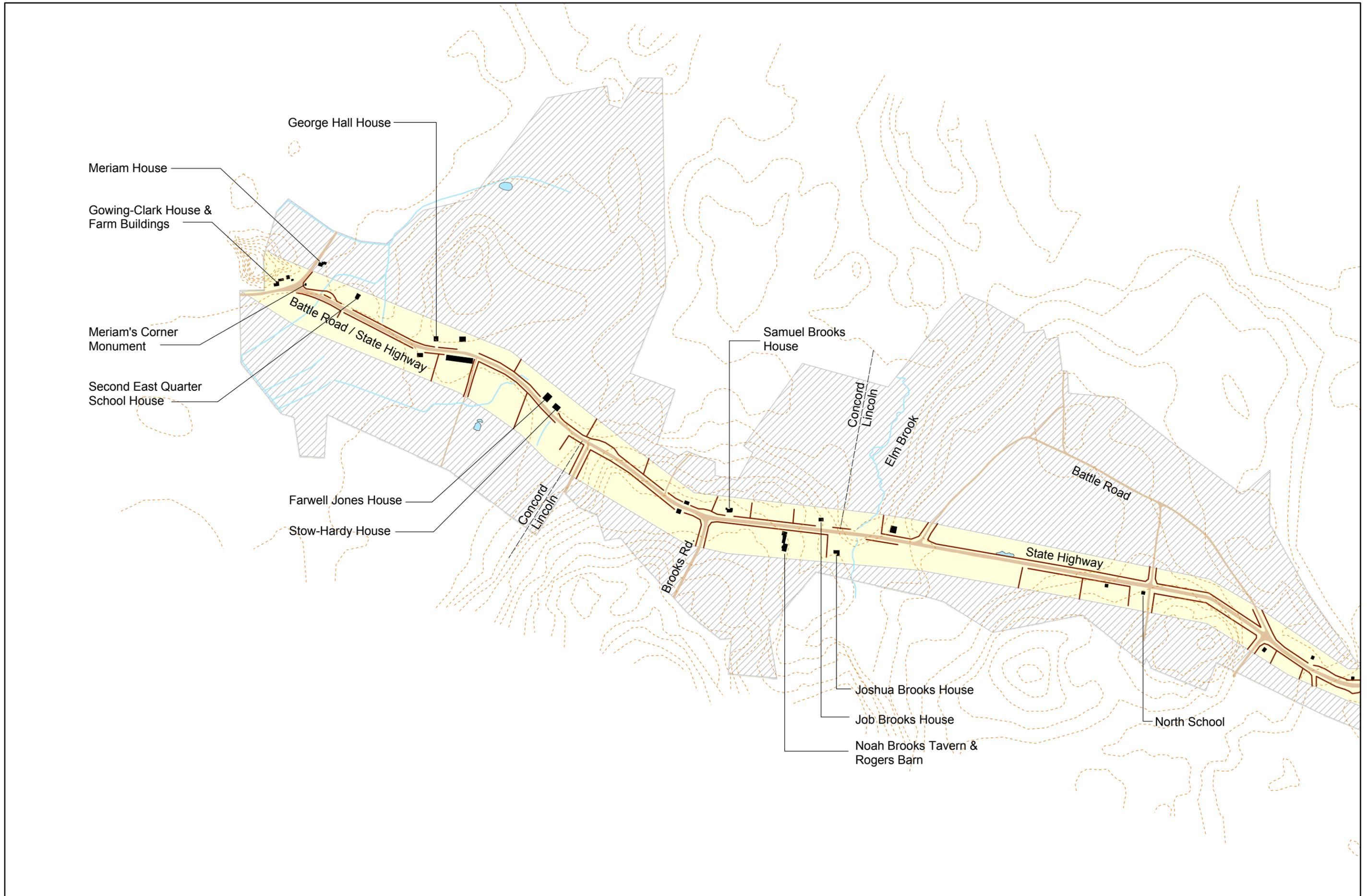
Other, more subtle changes would have included the four commemorative monuments placed along the Battle Road, increased acreage of fancy fruit orchards (apples and peaches) and expanded field production of small fruits (strawberries, grapes, etc.) and vegetables (asparagus, cucumbers, potatoes, etc.). Similar features to both the early 1800s and the latter half of the century would have included houses, barns, and outbuildings; stone walls and fences, and dairy cattle.

In the 1890s, a large section of the North Great Road (which included large sections of the Battle Road) was improved and established as a state highway. As constructed, the fifteen-foot roadbed was about half its colonial width. Its sophisticated construction of compacted stone provided more efficient travel to and from Boston and allowed for more pleasurable use. Turn-of-the-century travelers would have included farmers hauling produce to market, tourists in carriages and omnibuses, bicyclists, and the occasional wealthy estate owner driving a motor car. The two large bends in the Battle Road by-passed in the early 1800s continued to serve as secondary roads (Figure 43).

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<sup>127</sup> “An Historic American Road,” *Cambridge Tribune*, April 4, 1891. (Events Scrapbook, Concord Free Public Library).







# 1890s Period Plan

Figure 43

Cultural Landscape Report  
Minute Man  
National Historical Park  
Concord, Massachusetts

Produced by  
National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for  
Landscape Preservation



## Map Sources:

Plan of road in Concord locally known as Lexington Road laid out as a state highway by the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1897.

Plan of road in Concord locally known as Lexington Road laid out as a state highway by the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1898.

Plan and profile of Lexington Street, Lincoln laid out as a State highway by the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1895.

Plan of road in Lincoln locally known as the North Country Road laid out as a state highway by the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1897.

Plan of road in Lexington laid out as a State highway by the Massachusetts Highway Commission, 1898.

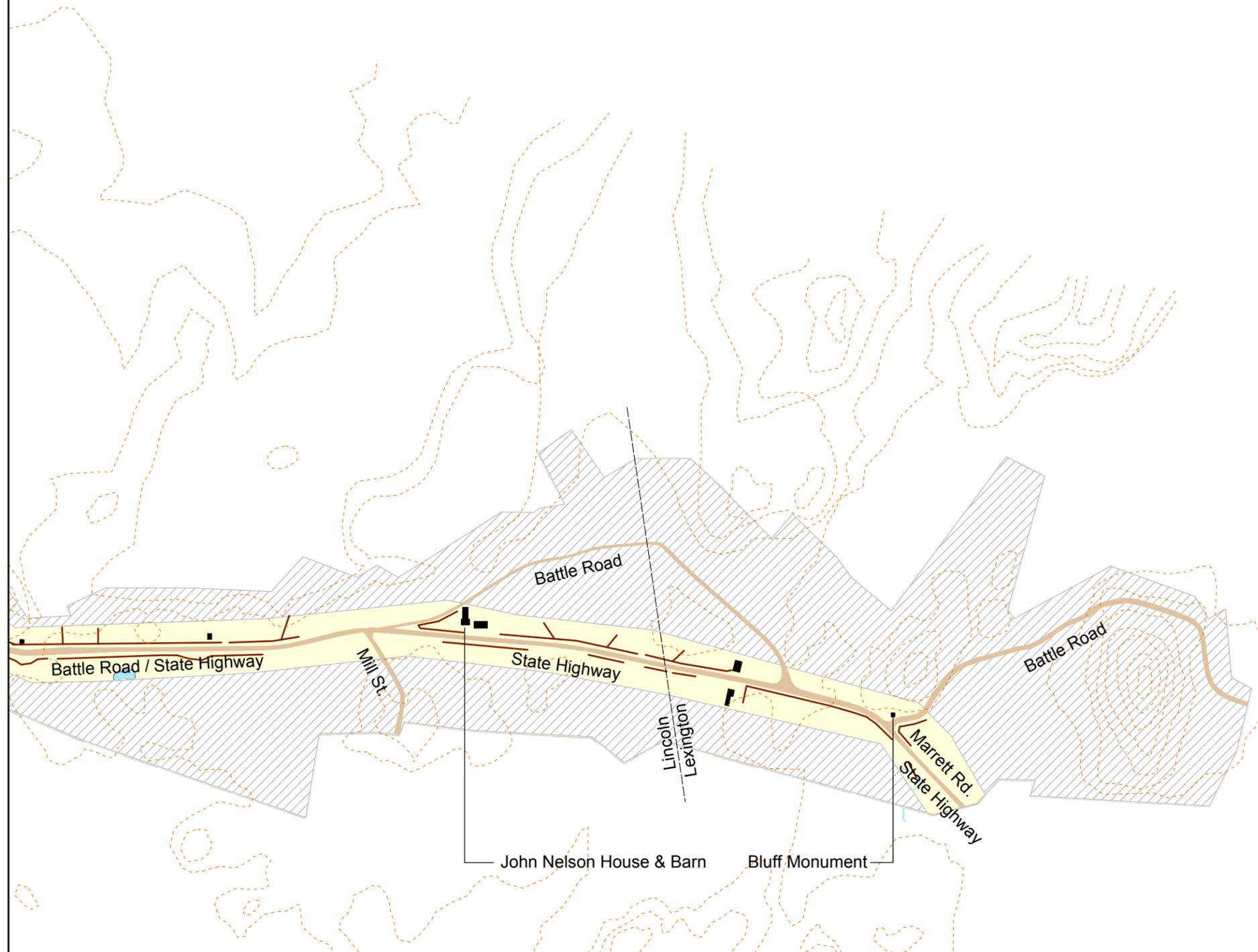
## Notes:

Plan drawn using ArcMap GIS 8.3,  
by L. Laham, NPS.

## Legend

- Stone Wall
- Herbaceous Vegetation: Field, Wet Meadow or Maintained Lawn
- Building or Structure
- Unpaved Road
- Water
- Unknown

Not to scale





## SUBURBANIZATION OF THE BATTLEGROUND LANDSCAPE (1900 - 1958)

As railroads had in the nineteenth century, increasing automobile traffic in the early twentieth century changed the landscape along the Battle Road, although far more dramatically. The advent of the automobile necessitated smoother, straighter roads able to accommodate higher speeds. Automobiles and better roads shortened travel time between Boston and the communities along the Battle Road, which in turn attracted more residential and business development, and more tourism to the battleground. As land changed hands, remaining farmers, some descendants of the earliest settlers, struggled to adapt to the new agricultural environment, and to new neighbors.

### Pre-WWII Landscape (1900-1942)

Although the configuration and proliferation of individual landscape features had changed since the 1600s, the type of features present in the early 1900s and the character of the landscape closely resembled that of earlier centuries. However, by the 1940s, dramatic changes would occur. Intermixed between the historic farm houses and buildings, fields, stone walls, and orchards were modern residences, paved roads, roadside stands, tourist booths, and gasoline pumps.

#### Early Twentieth-Century Agriculture

The late nineteenth-century trend toward fewer farms on more compact acreage continued into the early twentieth century. Although dairy farming had passed its nineteenth-century peak and agricultural production in Massachusetts was generally declining, farmers along the Battle Road continued to profitably sell their milk and produce to the urban markets, and at the same time began locally marketing fruits and vegetables at roadside stands.<sup>128</sup>

In the early 1900s, the Nelson family (John Nelson house) ran a dairy, grew corn and tomatoes, and managed a large apple orchard. The family transported their produce to Boston— first by horse and wagon, and then around 1916 by truck. Although their farm included most of its original acreage, much of it had reverted to woodland. Around 1920, the family began to sell produce at a roadside stand. They reportedly did a significant amount of business to passing motorists in the fall.<sup>129</sup>

The popularity of ‘motor touring’ provided an increasing customer base for the roadside stands. As an example of their profitability, a 1933 highway layout map (turnpike cut-off) depicts five roadside stands along the Battle Road within a one-fifth mile segment - the most easterly stood directly in front of the Samuel Brooks house (Figure 44).

<sup>128</sup> Paul Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill: Man and the Land in a New England Town* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), p. 528.

<sup>129</sup> Ruth Moulton Ragan, *Voiceprints of Lincoln: Memories of an Old Massachusetts Town and its Unique Response to Industrial America* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), pp. 146-147.



**Figure 44. Roadside farm stand in front of the Samuel Brooks house in 1934, when owned by the Paine family. (Concord Department of Public Works August 5, 1934, Concord Free Public Library)**

Compared to 1880, when nearly one hundred percent of the landowners within the present-day Battle Road Unit were farmers, by 1930 only about 67 % operated farms. Another significant change was increased ethnic diversity. The 1930 U.S. Census reported that in addition to Irish and Canadian immigrants listed on the 1880 census, families within the Battle Road Unit came from Germany, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, Russia, Poland, Armenia, and Holland. Many of these families, as well as second generation Scottish, Irish, German and Canadian families, owned and operated the farms and roadside stands. Agricultural professions reported on the 1930 census included general farmer; truck farmer; roadside stand proprietor, manager, laborer, and salesgirl; fruit and market farmer; dairy farmer; and hatchery manager.<sup>130</sup>

The Palumbo's settled in 1926 on land historically owned by the Meriam family, just east of Meriam's Corner. The family lived in the Second East Quarter School, converted into a residence by James Burke (the former owner) in 1903. According to Joe Palumbo, who grew up on the farm, his father purchased the land because it was "dirt cheap." The land had not been cultivated for years, and the fields were overgrown with trees and brush. Initially the family produced food for themselves and a little extra to sell in a stand along the road, later they transported produce to Boston, including the wholesale market at Fanueil Hall.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> In a few households, only the husband or the wife was foreign born. The American born spouse was often the child of an immigrant.

<sup>131</sup> Massachusetts Agricultural Census, 1920, as quoted in Edwin P. Conklin, *Middlesex County and Its People*, vol. 2 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc.), p. 758; Donahue, "Appendix C" in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, p. 178; Steven M. Parish, Ph.D., "In Praise of Sweet Corn: Contemporary Farming at Minute Man National Historical Park in Massachusetts" (National Park Service & Boston University, CA# 1600-5-004, 1996), pp. 23, 29. According to Palumbo, the family used stones from a nearby wall to construct their roadside stand.

### Suburban Landscape

Since the Native Americans first began farming, the Battle Road landscape has continuously evolved as agricultural practices changed. This process continued into the twentieth century; however, occurring simultaneously was the growth of a second land use – the suburban landscape. The 1930 U.S. Census reported there were about twice as many households within the present-day Battle Road Unit and about 33% of all property owners/renters (husband and/or wife) were employed in non-agricultural businesses. The growth of non-agricultural jobs and the consolidation of farming onto smaller acreage provided excess land for residential construction. The land within the present-day Battle Road Unit was among the most desirable, given its short commuting distance to Boston. Over half of the new house construction between 1924 and 1940 occurred along the portion of the c. 1804 by-passed section of the Battle Road leading to the Hartwell Tavern and within a twenty-five acre parcel on the north side of the road at Fiske Hill.<sup>132</sup>

Among the professions represented in 1930 within the present-day Battle Road Unit were carpenter, electrician, mason contractor, and building painter – professions that supported development of the residential landscape. Additional non-agricultural professions recorded in the census included aviator, light plant grounds man, telephone operator, druggist, chef, restaurant proprietor, secretary, teacher, salesman, janitor, pressman, prison officer, landscape gardener, truck driver (road construction), insurance agent, florist (nursery), and roadside stand cook.

Land use within the present-day Battle Road Unit reflected this change. Depicted on a series of 1937-1939 WPA maps were farmsteads (general, dairy and poultry), semi-agricultural properties, residential properties, zoned industrial and commercial areas, commercial buildings, commercial greenhouses and nurseries, and vacant land (Figure 45).

### Roads

The state highway (Route 2A), which included a significant portion of the nineteenth-century North Great Road and a large portion of the colonial Battle Road, remained the major east-west route connecting Concord to the coastline. The section of the Battle Road around Fiske Hill remained a county highway, and as such was altered twice in the early 1900s. In c. 1907, Middlesex County ‘relocated’ the road around Fiske Hill. The road was widened in several places, which required removal of several sections of stone wall and a portion of the Bluff and Fiske Hill.<sup>133</sup> A more dramatic realignment occurred in 1930, when the county obliterated most of the pre-1907 alignment and the 1907 realignment. As shown on Figure 46, construction of the new road occurred primarily south of the old bed, although it connected with the historic route at several locations and crossed it once. Numerous sections of fence and a significant portion of Fiske Hill were removed during the realignment, as well as a portion of the Bluff. The new wide-curve provided safer passage for automobiles.

<sup>132</sup> “Soil Map: Middlesex County, Massachusetts” (Field Operations, Bureau of Soils, 1924); “Concord Quadrangle, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, 7 1/2 Series,” (Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, 1940); “Existing Land Use Plan, Minute Man National Historical Park” (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Recreation Resource Planning Division, Region Five, January 1960); Luzader, “Battle Road: Fiske Hill Area,” p. 4.

<sup>133</sup> Middlesex County Commissioners, September 3, 1907 (Middlesex County Commissioners Record Books, 1904-1907, p. 33, microfilm, Massachusetts Archives).

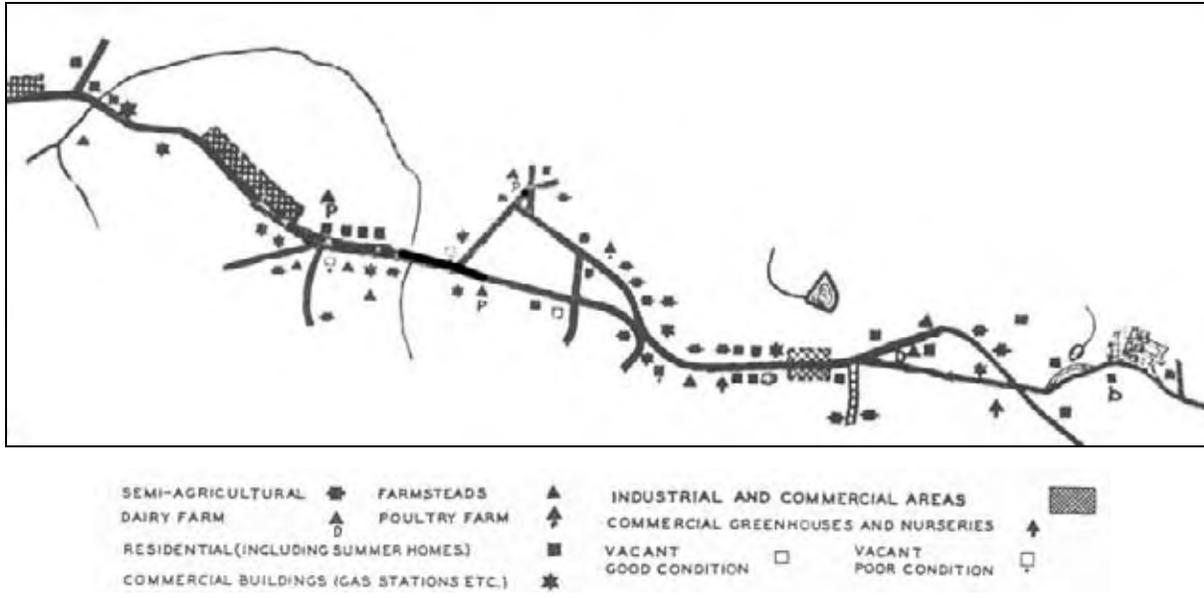


Figure 45. Businesses and residences within the present-day Battle Road Unit, as depicted on 1937-1939 WPA “Roads and Buildings” maps of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington, digitally combined. (Massachusetts Archives)

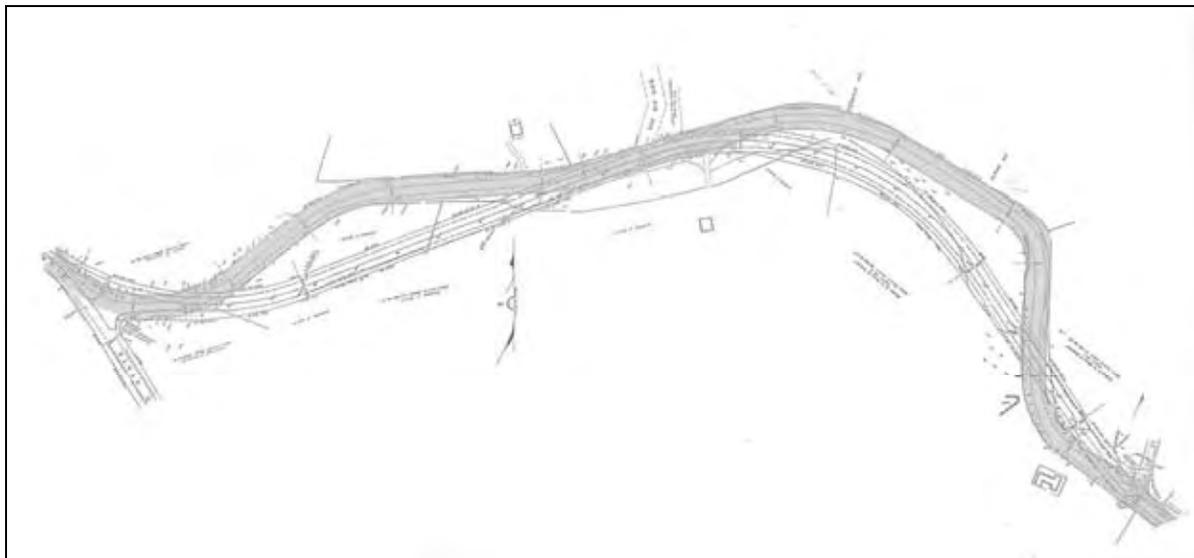


Figure 46. “Plan of Change of Location of a Portion of Massachusetts Avenue as ordered by the County Commissioners (sheets 5, 6, and 7 joined),” 1930. The map depicted the c. 1907 realignment (gray) and the 1930 proposed realignment. (Plan Department, Middlesex South Registry of Deeds)

Between 1924 and 1940, a number of new secondary and private roads leading to residential properties were constructed, included Shady Side Lane (Concord), Sunnyside Lane (Lincoln), Alpine Street (Lexington), and Bonair and Fairview Avenue (Lexington). Also constructed during this period was a by-pass to the Concord Turnpike (Route 2). Constructed just west of the Brooks Farms in c. 1933-1935, the by-pass lead directly through the John Primack farm. The new road became a portion of the state highway (Route 2A) and diverted traffic away from the center of Concord (Figures 47-48).<sup>134</sup>

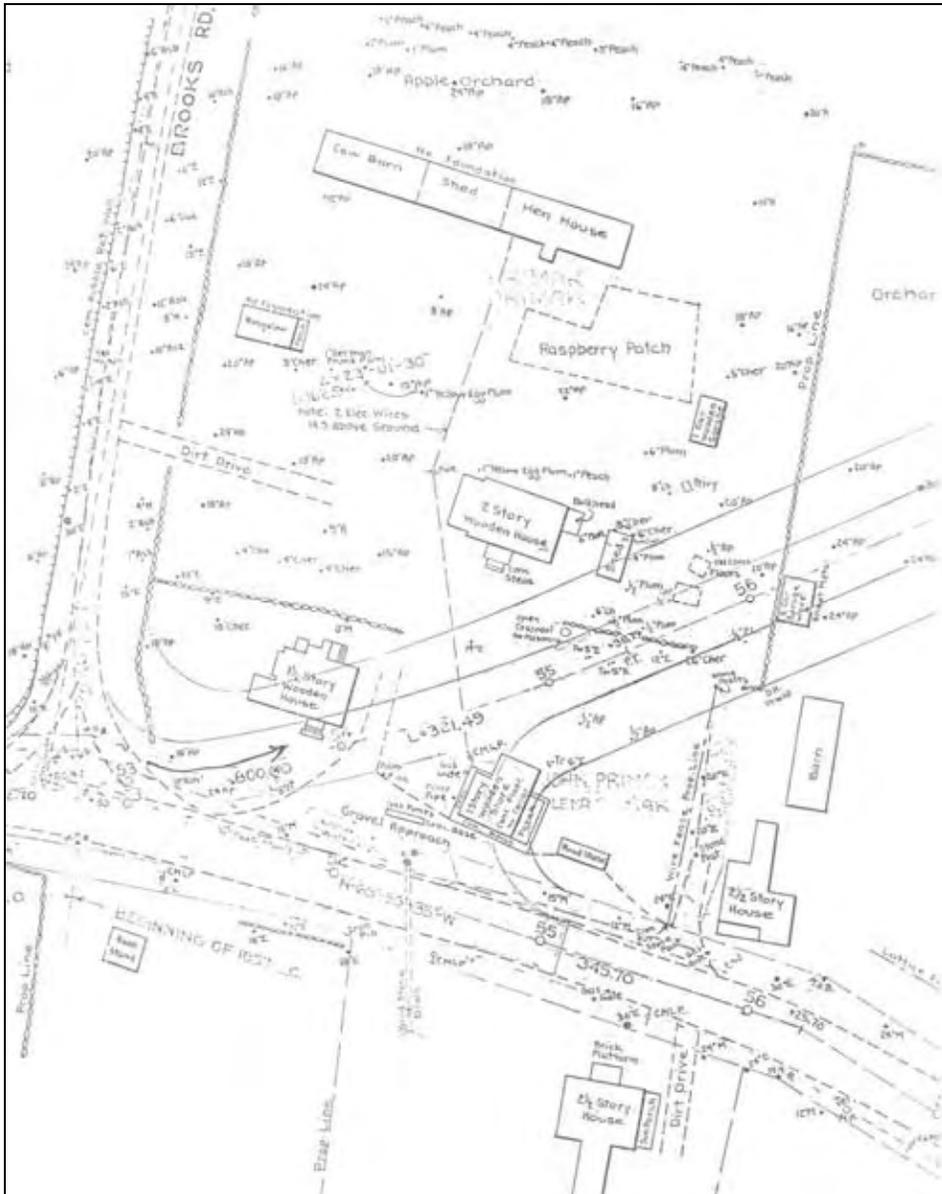


Figure 47. "Lexington Rd. to Concord, Federal Aid Project No R-29 N.R.A., sheet 3, 1933. The map depicts the route of the proposed turnpike by-pass, through the John Primack farm.

<sup>134</sup> Brooks, *View from Lincoln Hill*, p. 228; MacLean, *Rich Harvest*, p. 567.



**Figure 48. View east of Route 2A, 1934. The John Primack farm is on the left, prior to construction of the turnpike bypass. (Concord Department of Public Works August 5, 1934, Concord Free Public Library)**

### Tourism

Tourism that had begun in the 1800s continued into the twentieth-century. During the summers of 1906 and 1907, the Lexington and Concord Sight-Seeing Company operated two large busses from Boston, and by the early 1920s, there were “fleets of sightseeing busses . . . make regular trips [through the battleground] in mild weather.”<sup>135</sup> Many others would have arrived on their own by earlier methods such as train or buggy, or increasingly by automobile. In addition to roadside stands, a number of small businesses along the road supported tourism. Among these were “vending stands, small roadside restaurants, resting rooms, and oiling stations.”<sup>136</sup>

The main attraction for tourists visiting and traveling along the Battle Road continued to be the commemorative monuments placed by the towns during the late 1800s. One of the most photographed sites was Meriam’s Corner and the Meriam’s Corner Monument. In 1903, the Burke family removed the stone wall surrounding the Meriam’s Corner Monument, along Lexington and Bedford Roads at Meriam’s Corner, and incorporated stones from the wall into the foundation of a new house (Burke house) across from the Meriam house (Figure 49).<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Arthur A. Shurtleff, “Report of Arthur A. Shurtleff to Commission on the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Revolution,” January 5, 1925 (copy in MIMA archives).

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.; Worthen, “Calendar History of Lexington,” p. 107.

<sup>137</sup> Donahue and Hohmann, “Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam’s Corner,” p. 64.



**Figure 49. Meriam's Corner, c. 1939.** A large portion of the wall surrounding the Meriam's Corner Monument was removed in 1903 and used in the construction of the Burke house foundation. The Battle Road is in the foreground and Old Bedford Road on the right. The Burke house is along Old Bedford Road, just outside the photograph. (*Lexington and Concord, 1939*)

### Early Preservation Efforts

By the turn-of-the-twentieth century, as modern improvements began replacing historic homes and obliterating historic sites, thoughts of preservation emerged. In the forward to his book *Historic Mansions and Highways around Boston*, (1899) historian Samuel Adams Drake wrote:

. . . we, of this generation, can for little concept of the value which every visible token of our ancestors, however humble, will have for those who shall come after us. . . we, of today, are but the passing custodians of all those visible and authentic memorials which Time and Progress have yet spared to us.<sup>138</sup>

In October 1924, a nine-person commission appointed by Massachusetts Governor Channing H. Cox recommended the commonwealth establish a “permanent memorial” honoring the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution. Originally organized to recommend a program for the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the commission decided that responsibility for celebrations of a “temporary nature” should remain within the towns and cities where the significant events of the war occurred. By early December 1924, the commission had consulted Landscape Architect Arthur Shurtleff (later known as Arthur Shurcliff),<sup>139</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Samuel Adams Drake, *Historic Mansions and Highways around Boston* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899).

<sup>139</sup> Arthur Shurtleff changed his name to Shurcliff in 1930 in order, he wrote, “to conform to the ancient family spelling.” Charles Birnbaum and Robin Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000) p. 351.

and later that month Shurtleff and commission member James S. Smith traveled to Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington to examine sites along the Battle Road for a “proposed Memorial Highway.”<sup>140</sup>

In the 1920s, Arthur Shurtleff served as a town planning advisor to both Concord and Lexington, as well as to many other towns and cities in the Boston metropolitan area. Earlier in his career, Shurtleff was employed at the office of Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr. in Brookline, Massachusetts. While at the Olmsted office, Shurtleff assisted Olmsted in founding the country’s first four-year landscape architecture program at Harvard University, where he also taught until 1906. In 1904, Shurtleff opened his own office in Boston. In addition to advising local municipalities, Shurtleff’s early work included highway studies for the Boston Metropolitan Improvement Commission and the Massachusetts State Highway Commission, and industrial community designs in Bemis, Tennessee and Hopedale, Massachusetts.<sup>141</sup>

In his January 1925 report to the Commission on the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Revolution, Arthur Shurtleff noted that significant landscape changes had occurred along the Battle Road since the early 1900s. Reflecting back to the early 1900s landscape, Shurtleff stated:

Many of the dwellings of the Revolution still remained, and the roadside walls, trees, open fields, and woodlands were also essentially unchanged. The narrow winding gravel road bed retained its original character . . . and a great number of other important topographical features which marked the memorable events of the march could be seen in approximately their original state.<sup>142</sup>

In contrast, Shurtleff described the 1925 landscape:

During the past decade changes have taken place which have transformed a large part of the roadside [Battle Road] and many of its nearby landscapes to such an extent that visitors cannot review the ancient line of march and the sites of the local conflicts with a clear picture of the conditions which surrounded those events. . . in the less thickly settled portions of Lexington, Lincoln, and Concord, modern dwellings are increasing in number, and naturally enough these structures distract attention from historic houses and at the same time interfere to a certain degree with a view of the fields, pastures and woods of the skirmish lines. Roadside shrubbery, trees and stone walls have been removed in places.<sup>143</sup>

Shurtleff concluded that although a large portion of the roadbed had been widened, straightened, evened and surfaced with “bituminous macadam,” significantly altering its historic character, “the opportunity to preserve nearly two miles of the original line of march essentially in its original condition still [remained].”<sup>144</sup> The area Shurtleff recommended for preservation included the two bends in the Battle

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<sup>140</sup>*Resolve Relative to a Proper Observance on the Part of the Commonwealth of the Approaching Sesquicentennial of the War of the American Revolution* (Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts, Chap. 42, 1924), pp. 601-602; A. A. Shurcliff Diary, Monday December 8, 1924 and Monday December 22, 1924 (A. A. Shurcliff Collection, Box 18, Massachusetts Historical Society).

<sup>141</sup> Birnbaum and Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, pp. 351-356; Arthur A. Shurcliff to Boston National Historic Sites Commission (BNHSC), June 5, 1956 (RG 79, BNHSC Box 1, NARA, Waltham, MA).

<sup>142</sup> Shurtleff, “Report to Commission, 1925.”

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

Road by-passed in the early 1900s (Hartwell and Nelson farm areas) and a third small bend bordering Hastings Park in Lexington (not within the Battle Road Unit). He stated these areas “detoured in the construction of the modern straight road” had “escaped the modernizing influences which [had] transformed so large a part of the line of march” (Figures 50-51).<sup>145</sup>

In addition to preserving the three sections of the Battle Road, Shurtleff recommended acquisition of four hundred feet on each side of the road “for the preservation of the roadsides and the landmarks of the nearest fields and stretches of woodland.” On a grander scale, Shurtleff suggested acquisition of additional acreage, surrounding and connecting the two by-passed bends within the present-day Battle Road Unit. He noted that a larger “taking” could provide “protective backgrounds,” additional parking for tourists, and acreage for the construction of additional roads that would “preclude for all time the transformation by widening or by modern paving the ancient line of march (Figure 52).”<sup>146</sup>



Figure 50. View towards the Bloody Angle, c. 1930. A portion of the Battle Road Shurcliff recommended for preservation. (*Heroes of the Battle*)

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.



Figure 51. View west of boulder field located south of Nelson Road, c. 1930. (*Heroes of the Battle Road*)

Despite interest from state and local associations, including the American Society of Landscape Architects, The American Institute of Architects, the State Highway Commission, as well as the towns of Concord and Lexington, the Memorial Highway was never established.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid.; Boston National Historic Sites Commission (BNHSC), “Interim Report of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission” (Boston: June 16, 1958), pp. 34-35.

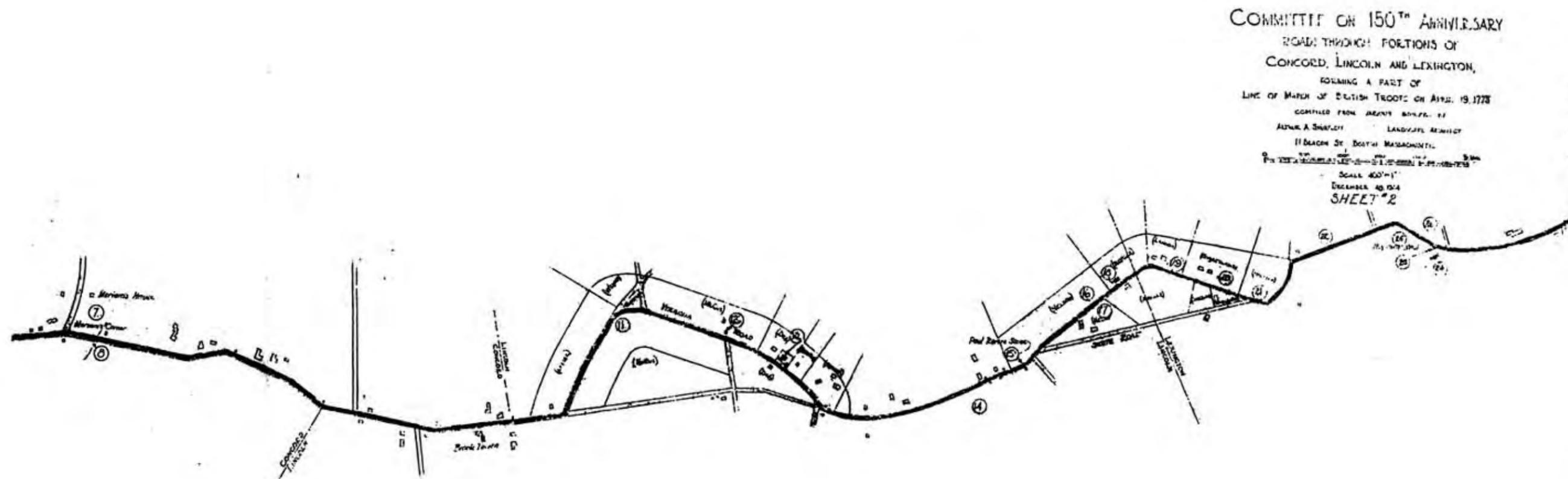


Figure 52. "Committee on 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Roads Through Portions of Concord, Lincoln and Lexington, Forming a Part of Line of March of British Troops on April 19, 1775," Arthur A. Shurtleff, December 29, 1924. (Sheet 2 and a portion of sheet 1, of three, joined and graphically enhanced to depict the portion of the plan within the present-day Battle Road Unit.) According to the report accompanying the map, also prepared by Shurtleff, the map depicts existing conditions, proposed memorial sites, and land that should be preserved. (Copy located in RG 79, Minute Man National Historical Park, NARA Waltham, location of original unknown)



In 1941, sixteen years after the failed attempt to preserve portions of the Battle Road landscape, the federal government, in cooperation with the Massachusetts Planning Board, recommended federal acquisition and development of several historic sites in Massachusetts, including preservation of the Concord battleground (North Bridge) as a “national historic site monument.” The two agencies, in a joint report titled “Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Study,” identified eight deficiencies in the State’s recreational system, including a need to preserve outstanding historic sites. The report listed Lexington and Concord among the state’s principal points of historic interest because of their role during the opening day of the Revolutionary War.<sup>148</sup> Although the report did not directly lead to designation of the battleground (North Bridge), it may have influenced the federal government’s later decision to designate the Concord battleground (North Bridge) and the Battle Road landscape as a national historical park (see National Park Service Period, p. 99).

### Hanscom Airfield

Known initially as the Boston Auxiliary Airport, construction of the Laurence G. Hanscom Airfield began in 1941, just prior to the United States entry into World War II. Conceived to support national defense and to serve as a secondary regional airport outside of the coastline fog belt, the airport served as a training ground for Army Air Force squadrons during the war. The southern edge of the airport bordered the present-day Battle Road Unit, north of the Hartwell Tavern.<sup>149</sup>

### Landscape Summary, 1900-1942

The advent of the automobile and its increasing popularity brought associated changes within the present-day Battle Road Unit. Able to travel longer distances in less time, urban dwellers purchased lots on former agricultural fields and built suburban residences. The speed of travel also brought tourists from further distances, increasing the amount of visitors traveling to the site. Persistent farmers, many of whom were first and second generation immigrants, took advantage of the automobile traffic by constructing roadside stands to sell their produce. While the automobile did not completely replace the horse and wagon, by the 1940s the primary mode of transportation on Route 2A would have been the automobile. Accompanying changes included new roads leading to modern houses with groomed landscapes, abandoned farm fields reverting to woodlands, and an increasing number of commercial businesses along Route 2A, including gas stations, restaurants, offices, and a motel. And overhead, airplanes flew above the corridor in route to Logan Airport (then known as the Commonwealth Airport) or to the Laurence G. Hanscom Airfield.

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<sup>148</sup> Massachusetts State Planning Board, “Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Study” (January 1941), pp. iii, xi-xiii, 23-24.

<sup>149</sup> E. Michael Del Papa, “A Pictorial and Narrative History of Hanscom Air Force Base” (Bedford, MA: History Office, Electronic Systems Division, Hanscom Air Force Base, 1991), pp. 1-7.

### Post WWII Landscape (1943-1958)

Modernization within the present-day Battle Road Unit accelerated after World War II. As had continually occurred since the earliest settlement, improved transportation drove the change. More automobiles allowed more urban dwellers to move into the countryside, and the growing population required new homes and more commercial services. Development within the historic corridor proceeded unchecked until a proposed Air Force housing development threatened two significant Revolutionary War sites along the north side of the Battle Road (Nelson farm area). Under the direction of a federally appointed commission charged with preserving Revolutionary sites in the Boston area, the federal government preserved the two sites by designating an eight-acre parcel along the north side of the road as a national historic site.

#### Hanscom Airfield/Hanscom Air Force Base

After the war, the Laurence G. Hanscom Airfield developed into a research center for military electronics, especially radar. In 1946 the Massachusetts Department of Works constructed a road from Route 2A to the Hanscom Air Force Base. Known as Airport Road, the road cut through the historic Bull Tavern site and across the Battle Road between the Thomas and Tabitha Nelson house sites (Figures 53-54).<sup>150</sup>



**Figure 53. View south of Airport Road (right), the Battle Road/Marrett Street (left), and Massachusetts Avenue (Route 2A, in the distance), c. 1956. (BNHSC photographic collection, MIMA archives)**

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<sup>150</sup> Del Papa, "History of Hanscom Air Force Base," pp. 14-15; "Plan of the Road in the Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, as laid out by the Massachusetts Department of Public Works, February 19, 1946 (Massachusetts Highway Department).

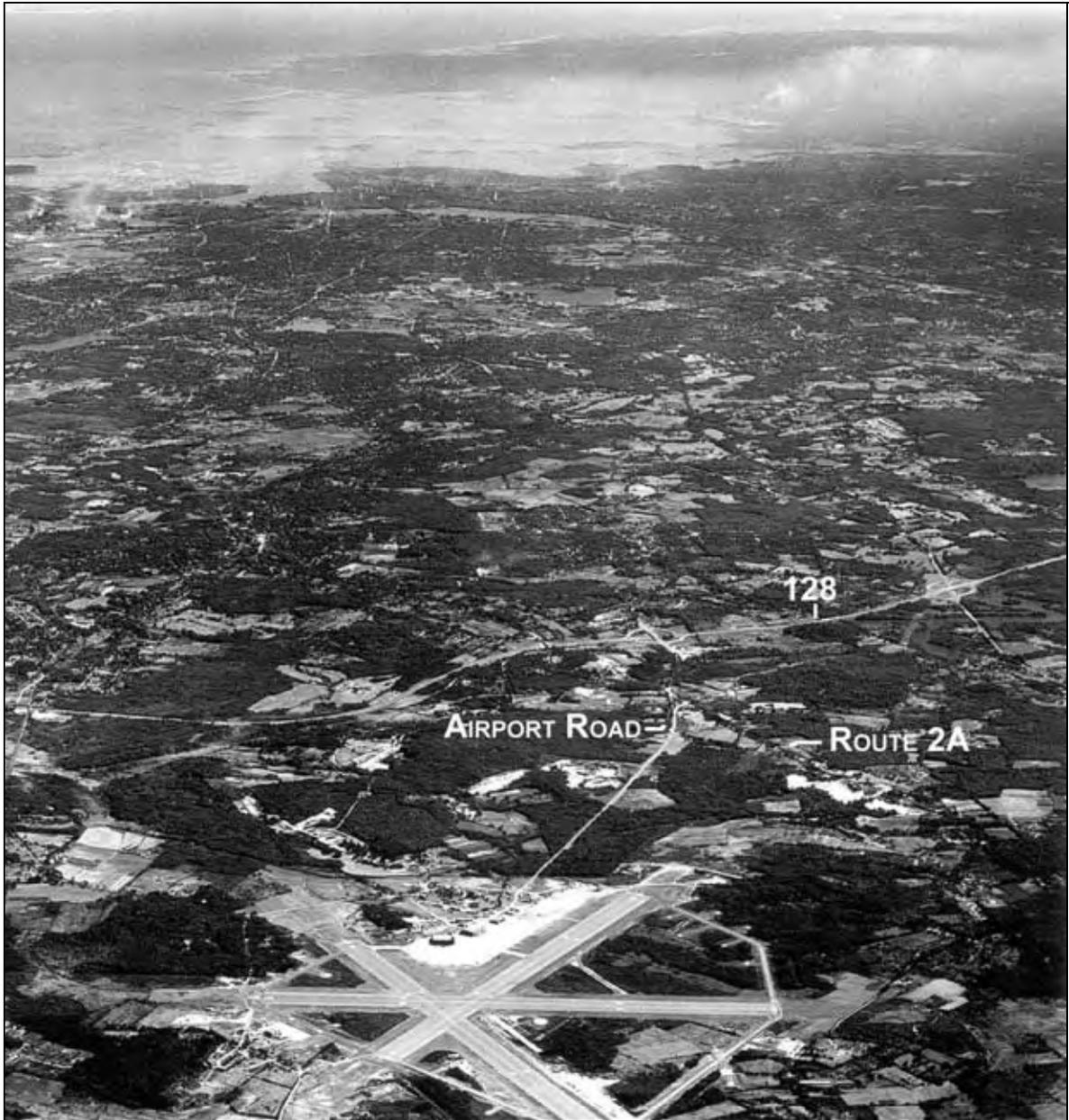


Figure 54. Aerial view east of the Laurence G. Hanscom Airfield (bottom of photograph), Airport Road, Route 2A, and Interstate 128, 1951. (Lowry Photograph, Hanscom Air Force Base History Office)

Suburban Development

Residential construction that had virtually ceased during World War II accelerated after the war. A growing workforce at the Hanscom Airfield and a regional need for suburban housing continued to transform former agricultural fields along the Battle Road into residential lots, a trend that had begun earlier in the century. Accompanying the new houses were groomed lawns, ornamental plantings, and expanding woodlands. Also expanding were the types and numbers of commercial businesses within the corridor. These commercial landscapes included a variety of features such as parking lots, sidewalks, signs, and gas pumps (Figures 55-59).



**Figure 55. View northwest of a contemporary house along Route 2A in Lincoln. The Captain William Smith house is to the left, in the distance. (HABS/HAER photograph, 62-65, MIMA library)**



**Figure 55. View north of a contemporary house along Virginia Road (Battle Road), between the Hartwell Tavern and the Samuel Hartwell house. (02-113, MIMA land files, c. 1960s)**



Figure 57. View northwest of the Paul Revere Motel along Route 2A (Battle Road). (02-157, MIMA land files)



Figure 58. The Country Garage at the intersection of Route 2A and the turnpike by-pass. (03-169, MIMA land files)



Figure 59. View northwest of the Buttrick Ice Cream restaurant and parking lot. (HABS/HAER photograph, 62-55, MIMA library)

Agriculture

In the midst of increasing suburban development, immigrant families continued to successfully farm land within the present-day Battle Road Unit. The Palumbo family, who first settled in Concord along the Battle Road in the 1920s, farmed property near Meriam's Corner. After World War II, their farm operation shifted from semi-subsistence to commercial production through mechanization and by leasing additional fields. Parsnips and carrots were the primary crops grown on the farm in the late 1950s. In 1946, the Nowalk family from Poland purchased the Farwell Jones farm in Concord, then known as Maplewood Farm. The family operated a dairy and grew crops including sweet corn, potatoes, and strawberries that they sold at a roadside stand. Other agricultural businesses known to have existed in the late 1950s included greenhouses, poultry farms, and a tree nursery (Figures 60-61).<sup>151</sup>



Figure 60. View southwest of the Nowalk farm in Concord. (04-101, MIMA land files)



Figure 61. View southeast of the Hinds poultry farm in Lexington, along the Battle Road/Old Massachusetts Avenue. (01-138, MIMA land files, 1960)

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<sup>151</sup> Parish, "Praise of Sweet Corn," pp. 30-31, 37-40; Documents and photographs located in MIMA land files.

I 128

In the early 1950s, the federal government completed construction of Interstate 128, the first limited access highway in Massachusetts. The highway provided for the first time high-speed access around greater Boston's most congested districts. Along with safer, more comfortable cars and inexpensive gasoline, the convenience and speed of Interstate 128 contributed to the spread of suburban residential development within the present-day Battle Road Unit. And because the interstate exited onto Route 2A, it funneled automobiles onto Route 2A, congesting the roadway during the weekday morning and afternoon commutes.<sup>152</sup>

Boston National Historic Sites Commission

In 1955, the federal government created the Boston National Historic Sites Commission (BNHSC) for the purpose of:

... investigating the feasibility of establishing a coordinated program in which the Federal Government may cooperate with local and State patriotic societies for the preservation and appreciation by the public of the most important of the Colonial and Revolutionary properties in Boston and the general vicinity thereof which form outstanding examples of America's historical heritage.

Public Law 75 – 84<sup>th</sup> Congress – Chapter 144 – 1<sup>st</sup> Session – S. J. Res. 6.

Local politicians supported the bill, recognizing the need for preservation and planning in anticipation of the Bicentennial celebration of the battle in 1975 and of the Declaration of Independence in 1976. Commission members included businessmen, historians, politicians, and Conrad Wirth, Director of the National Park Service. As part of its comprehensive study of the colonial and Revolutionary sites in the Boston area, the BNHSC identified the entire Battle Road from Boston to Concord as significant, however, it indicated that Route 128, which severed the road just east of Fiske Hill, was “the dividing line between the retrievable and irretrievable past.” Despite twentieth-century changes, the commission considered land within the present-day Battle Road Unit worthy of preservation.<sup>153</sup>

Arthur Shurcliff's Recommendations to the BNHSC

In 1956 the BNHSC contacted Arthur Shurcliff (formerly known as Arthur Shurtleff), who had completed a plan and report for the Commission on the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Revolution, to discuss his 1925 plan and to solicit his opinion regarding their study. In a letter to BNHSC Shurcliff stated:

Even more today than in the days of 1925 the need to make a sufficient number of such intervening incidents has become essential. Why today? – because rapid changes in the Roadside appearance are now beginning to engulf and blot out many of the most important landmarks.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> Tony Hill, “Route 128, the Baby Boomer of highways, turns 50,” *Boston Globe*, August 19, 2001.

<sup>153</sup> BNHSC, “Interim Report,” p. 13; Charlene K. Roise, Edward W. Gordon, and Bruce C. Fernald, “Minute Man National Historical Park, An Administrative History” (unofficial), 1989, pp. 5-6.

<sup>154</sup> Shurcliff to BNHSC, 1956.

Shurcliff proposed “preservation of considerable mileage of The Road from Fiske Hill toward Concord,” and suggested that the cost of land taking would not be excessive since “much of the bordering land is fortunately undeveloped.” He made specific recommendations for the Fiske Hill and Bluff areas, including construction of “old fashioned country walls and fences,” preservation of great boulders that had served as breastworks, removal of modern dwellings, provisions for parking, acquisition of enough land to “give a setting sufficiently wide to prevent modern developments from overwhelming the old landscape.”<sup>155</sup>

BNHSC and the Air Force Housing Development

In 1955, the Air Force developed plans for 670 military housing units, to be constructed on 185 acres of land in Lincoln, just north of the Battle Road near the site of the Josiah Nelson farmstead. In January 1957, the BNHSC met with the Air Force, to discuss the proposed housing project. The commission expressed concern that development, as planned, would obliterate the site of Josiah Nelson’s dooryard, where a Regular from a British scouting party struck Nelson on the head with a sword the night of April 18, 1775 before he rode north to notify the town of Bedford that the British were advancing. The development would also stand within yards of a large boulder (Minute Man Boulder) from behind which a colonist fired upon and killed two retreating British Regulars on April 19, 1775. A month earlier, the BNHSC had written George F. Hines, Special Representative of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, requesting preservation of these sites located within an eight-acre parcel (1,360 feet by 250 feet) situated between the proposed housing development and the Battle Road (Figures 62-63).<sup>156</sup>

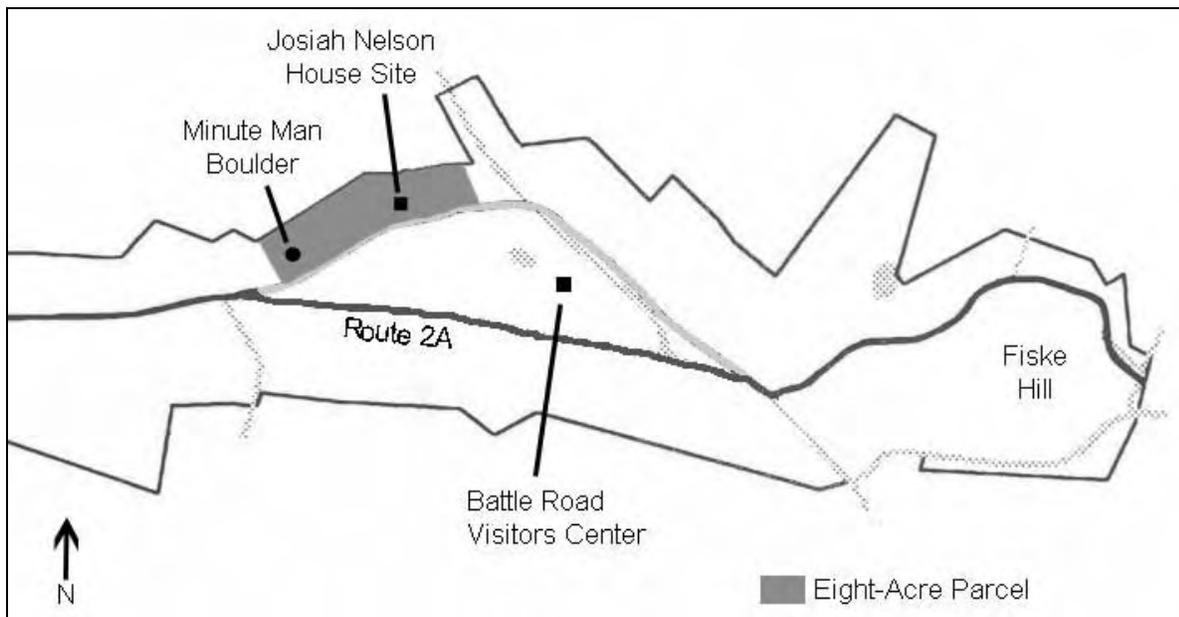


Figure 62. Map of the eight-acre site the BNHSC recommended for preservation. (OCLP)

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup>Francis G. Walett, “Appendix C – Minute Man Boulder and Capehart Housing,” p. 28, in Julius King Jr., “History of Air Force Cambridge Research Center, 20 September 1945 – 30 June 1959;” Roise et al., “Administrative History” (unofficial), p. 9; Edwin Small to George F. Hines, December 28, 1956 (RG 79, BNHSC Box 3, NARA, Waltham, MA).



**Figure 63. View west along the Battle Road/Nelson Road, c. 1956. The stone wall borders the eight-acre parcel the BNHSC recommended for preservation. (BNHSC photographic collection, MIMA archives)**

The Air Force expressed concern that the project had proceeded too far and that relinquishing the eight-acre parcel would necessitate re-locating thirty to forty houses. Over the next several months, the Air Force offered two compromise proposals, but both were rejected by the BNHSC. The first offer proposed placing a fence and landscaping around the Minute Man Boulder, permanently memorializing the site, and the second offer proposed relocating the planned housing units eighty to one hundred feet behind the boulder.<sup>157</sup>

In May 1957, the Air Force announced the number of proposed housing units at Hanscom Field would be reduced from 670 to 447 units, citing a reanalysis of housing needs and economic factors as the reason for its reduced plan. As constructed, the Air Force housing development included 395 units and an entrance road from the Battle Road (Nelson Road) to the housing development (Figure 64). During the same month, the Under-Secretary of the Interior requested that the eight-acre parcel be transferred to the Department of the Interior.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Walett, “Appendix C” in King “History of Air Force Cambridge Research Center,” pp. 40-41; Roise et al., “Administrative History” (unofficial), p. 11.

<sup>158</sup> Roise et al., “Administrative History” (unofficial), pp. 11-12; Walett, “Appendix C,” pp. 40-41.



**Figure 64.** Aerial view northwest of the Air Force housing development and entrance road during construction, November 12, 1958. The John Nelson house is in the foreground, between Route 2A (photo bottom) and the Battle Road/Nelson Road. (Base Photo Lab, Hanscom Air Force Base History Office)

#### BNHSC's Interim Report

In June 1958, the BNHSC submitted an interim report to Congress. The report contained several broad recommendations including establishment of a national historical park, to be known as “Minute Man.” The proposed park would include “a continuous four-mile stretch of the historic route [Battle Road] and adjoining properties,” from Route 128 in Lexington to Meriam’s Corner, and would include the eight-acre Air Force parcel scheduled for transfer to the Department of the Interior (Figure 65).

The commission also recommended inclusion of a separate parcel, adjacent to Concord’s North Bridge, within the proposed national historical park. Other broad BNHSC recommendations included placing a uniform system of historical markers along the entire Battle Road from Boston to Concord to “adequately and properly” mark sites significant to the American Revolution and formation of cooperative agreements with local governments and societies in order to “mutually benefit and safeguard” historic properties of national significance. The report proposed that administration of Concord’s North Bridge would fall under such an agreement.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Roise et al., “Administrative History” (unofficial), p. 12; BNHSC “Interim Report,” pp. 4-6, 13, 15.

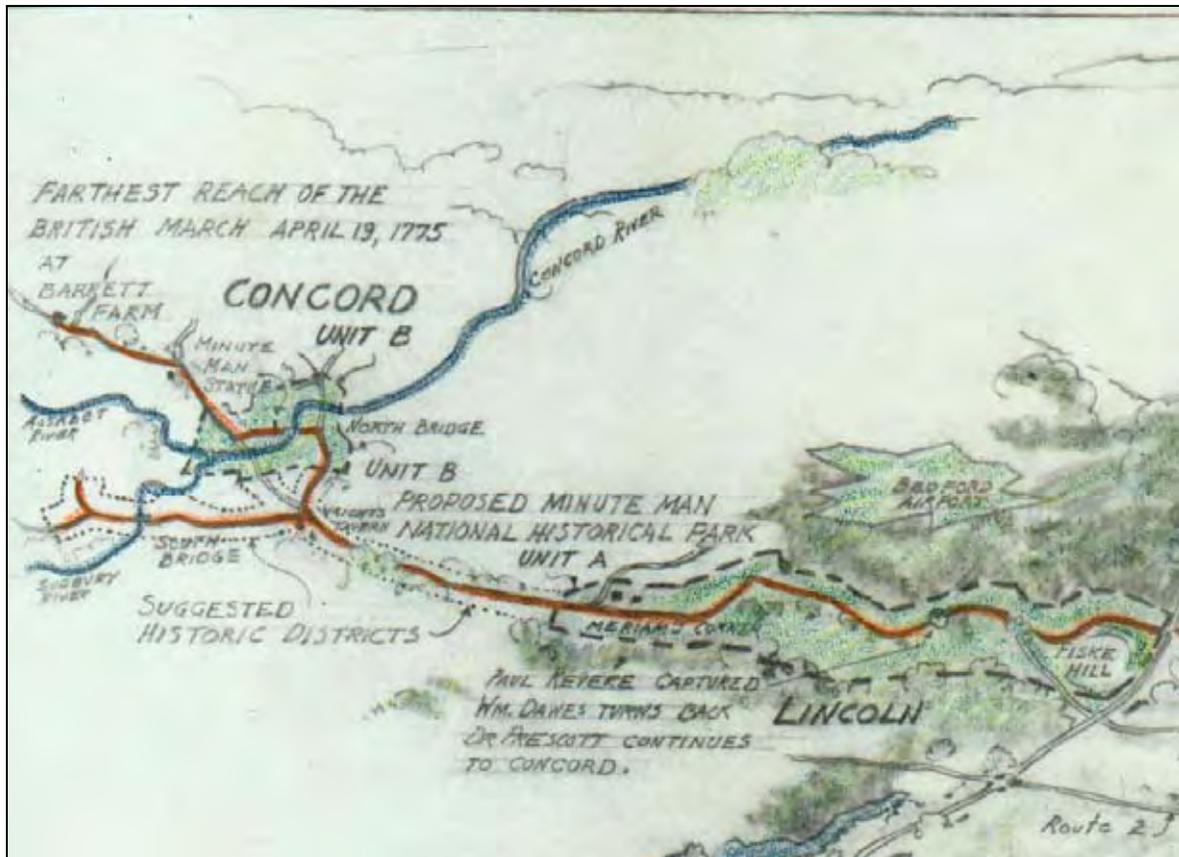


Figure 65. A portion of “Bird’s Eye View of the Historic Area Embracing Boston, Lexington and Concord” that depicts the plan for proposed Minute Man National Historical Park, c. late 1950s. Edgar J. P. Walker, BNHSC, Construction Architect. (RG 79, Boston National Historic Sites Commission, NARA Waltham. A copy of the map appears in the “Final Report of the Boston National Historic Sites Commission to the Congress of the United States,” June 16, 1960, located in the MIMA library)

The BNHSC report stated preservation of the Battle Road corridor would afford “the very last opportunity to regain and pass on to future generations any appreciable and meaningful segment of the setting and environment in which the War for American Independence was born.” Looking towards the bicentennial anniversary of the April 19<sup>th</sup> battle, the BNHSC stated there could be no contribution that “would pay a more appropriate, reverent and lasting homage to the past . . . afford a more inspiring, sagacious and rewarding example of planning and accomplishment for the future” than the preservation of the Battle Road corridor.<sup>160</sup> The BNHSC supported its argument by comparing the significance of the April 19, 1775 battleground to that of established Revolutionary national historical parks, stating the proposed Minute Man National Historical Park, the birthplace of the American Revolution, was equally as significant as Saratoga National Historical Park that commemorated the turning point in the war, and Colonial National Historical Park at Yorktown, that marked the successful conclusion of warfare on land.<sup>161</sup> The report also called attention to the significant number of tourists who made “patriot pilgrimages to the Greater Boston area” from all parts of the country, and stated that many tourists were

<sup>160</sup> BNHSC “Interim Report,” p. 19.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

struck by the inadequate attention and treatment given to sites associated with the American Revolution. Included in the report was a letter submitted to the Boston Sunday Globe, by a recent tourist, who, among other complaints stated: “Is that tiny area all the space in Lexington and Concord you have to spare to commemorate the epic events that occurred there? Has the world forgotten?”<sup>162</sup>

On December 8, 1958, the National Park Service gained possession of the eight-acre parcel adjacent to the Minute Man Boulder and on April 19, 1959, the 184th anniversary of the Battle, the federal government officially designated it as a national historic site.<sup>163</sup>

#### Landscape Summary, 1943-1959

By the late 1950s, Route 2A was a fast-paced commuter road congested with modern homes and businesses. Intermixed with the new development were remnants of the past: stone walls, nineteenth-century orchards; barns and farm stands, and colonial homes. Some of these features were still in use; others had been abandoned or seriously neglected. Only land with the most fertile soil remained under agricultural production. Agricultural fields no longer under production reverted to huckleberries and pines, meadows grew up in purple loosestrife and swamp maples, and land surrounding new residences grew into woodlands of red maple, white pine, red oak, and ash (Figure 66).<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Editorial, *Boston Sunday Globe*, July 15, 1956.

<sup>163</sup> Roise et al., “Administrative History” (unofficial), p. 12.

<sup>164</sup> Donahue, “Appendix C” in *Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources*, pp. 179-180; Concord Historical Commission, “Masterplan,” p. 22.



George Hall House

Burke House & Garage

Meriam House

Gowing-Clark House & Barn Foundation

Meriam's Corner Monument

Palumbo Farm Buildings

Albano House, Farm Buildings & Foundation

Farwell Jones House, James Carty Barn & Nowalk Farm Buildings

Stow-Hardy House

Inferrera House & Farm Buildings

Samuel Brooks House

Joshua Brooks House

Job Brooks House & Charles Sawyer Barn Foundation

Noah Brooks Tavern & Rogers Barn

Ephraim Hartwell Tavern & McHugh Barn

Samuel Hartwell House (Hartwell Inn)

Capt. William Smith House



# 1958 Period Plan

## Figure 66

**Cultural Landscape Report  
Minute Man  
National Historical Park  
Concord, Massachusetts**

**Produced by  
National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for  
Landscape Preservation**



### Map Sources:

Minute Man National Historical Park,  
Topographic sheets 1-12 NHP-MM/ 301S,  
U.S. Department of Interior, Division of  
Engineering, 1964.

Aerial photograph, New England  
Survey Service Inc., Boston, Mass., 1954.

### Notes:

Stone walls depicted on map represent  
only a portion of the walls extant in 1958.

Plan drawn using ArcMap GIS 8.3,  
by L. Laham, NPS.

### Legend

- Stone Wall
- Herbaceous Vegetation: Field,  
Wet Meadow or Maintained Lawn
- Woody Vegetation: Tree Canopy  
or Remnant Orchard
- Orchards
- Building or Structure
- Archeological Ruin
- Monument
- Unpaved Road
- Paved Road
- Water

Not to scale



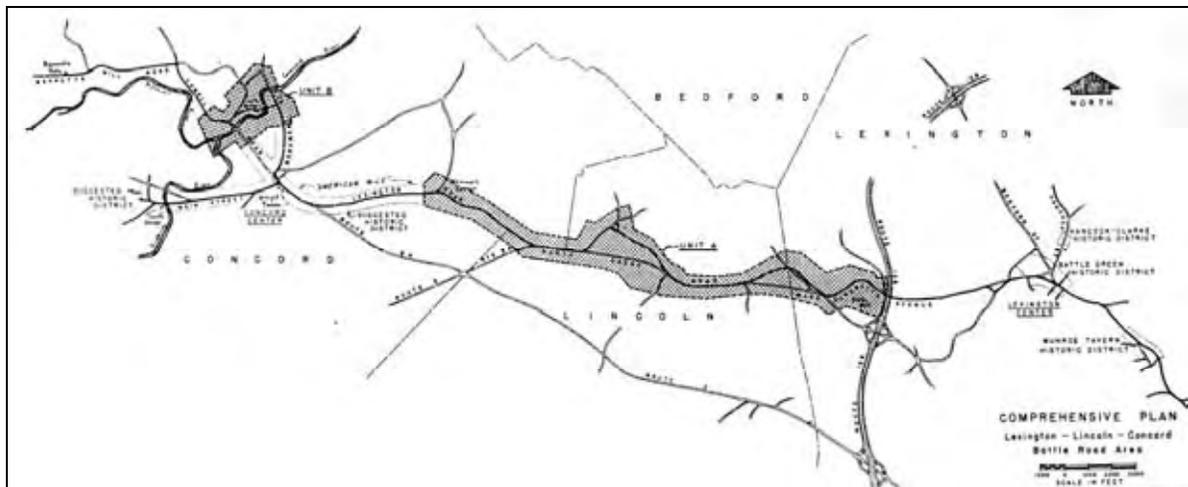


## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PERIOD (1959 - Present)

On January 21, 1959, the Boston National Historic Sites Commission submitted the Commission's Interim Report (completed in June 1958) to Congress. In a cover letter accompanying the report, Department of Interior Secretary Fred A. Seaton stated:

Transformation and change, in the form of both suburban growth and defense activities, are proceeding at a pace which the commission considers alarming, and the commission believes it is important that a permanent plan and feasible solution to the problem of the Battle road be presented for consideration without delay.

On September 27, 1959, Public Law 86-321 established Minute Man National Historical Park. The new national park included the eight-acre park designated as a national historic site six months earlier. The enabling legislation stipulated that the Secretary of Interior could designate no more than 750 acres within the area defined in the Interim Report along the Battle Road and around the North Bridge (Figure 67). A maximum of five million dollars was authorized for land acquisition and three million dollars for park development. The legislation specified that Minute Man National Historical Park was created “in order to preserve for the benefit of the American people certain historic structures and properties of outstanding national significance associated with the opening War of the American Revolution.” The park opened to the public in 1960.<sup>165</sup>



**Figure 67. Comprehensive Plan, “Boston National Historic Sites Commission’s Interim Report.”** The plan depicts (gray shading) the proposed park acreage within the North Bridge Unit (Unit B) and the Battle Road Unit (Unit A).

<sup>165</sup> Minute Man National Historical Park (MMNHP), “Record of Decision, July 6, 1989,” p. 2.

Public Law 86-321 also specified establishment of the Minute Man National Historical Park Advisory Commission, the first commission of this type mandated by Congress. For the next fifteen years, the Commission coordinated park planning and land acquisition, and facilitated communications between neighboring towns and the park.<sup>166</sup>

### **Early Park Planning and Development (1959-1979)**

#### Boundary Studies & Land Acquisition

Development of Minute Man National Historical Park presented an unprecedented challenge for the Minute Man National Historical Park Advisory Commission and for the National Park Service. Earlier national parks were generally established on land already owned by federal or local governments or by an organization, and were generally sparsely populated, if populated at all.<sup>167</sup> Land identified for inclusion in MMNHP was located in a long-settled area on the fringe of Metropolitan Boston, bordered to the North by a growing airfield and bisected by well-traveled roads. Assemblage of the National Park necessitated the acquisition of hundreds of small tracts from individual owners.

The park's first formal boundary study was completed in 1960. The report delineated minimum park boundaries (within the 750-acre limit) that would provide maximum protection to the area's historic integrity. The report concluded that the amount of land necessary for the development and interpretation of the park was evident, what was not clear was how the park could adapt their proposals to the planning needs of the region and at the same time satisfy National Park Service planning standards. The boundaries recommended in 1960 were restudied and revised in 1962. In addition to recommending new park boundaries, the boundary study recommended, as the Boston National Historic Site Commission's Interim Report had several years before, removing through traffic from the Battle Road and rerouting it south of the park, via the proposed relocation of Route 2.<sup>168</sup>

By June 1964, the park had acquired one-third of the land designated in the proposed boundaries and by November 1965 sixty buildings. Most of the vacated lands were leased to local farmers or allowed to revert to second growth woodlands.<sup>169</sup> By 1976, the National Park Service owned 656 acres of the original 1959 land acquisition ceiling of 750 acres. Of the remaining acreage, fifty acres were located in Route 2A, twenty-nine acres were under option for NPS purchase, and fifteen acres were still under private ownership.<sup>170</sup>

#### Historical Research

In the early to mid-1960s, a number of buildings and landscapes were researched and documented to give park staff a basic understanding of the historic properties and to serve as a foundation for preparation of

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<sup>166</sup> Roise et al., "Administrative History" (unofficial), pp. 19, 135.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-30.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., pp. 25, 29; MMNHP, "Record of Decision, July 6, 1989."

<sup>170</sup> Roise et al., "Administrative History" (unofficial), p. 108.

the park's first Master Plan. Specific goals included establishment of 1775 land ownership and the identification and documentation of historic houses, house sites, and landscape features.<sup>171</sup> Types of reports completed included historic structure reports, historic grounds reports, archeological studies, and Historic American Building Survey (HABS) documentation of historic buildings. Among the earliest properties researched were the Josiah Nelson, Jacob Whittemore, Job Brooks, and Ebenezer Fiske properties. Additional properties researched during the 1960s and 1970s included the David Fiske, the Samuel and Ephraim Hartwell, the Josiah, Thomas Jr., and Thomas Sr. Nelson, the Stow-Hardy, the Farwell Jones, and the George Minot properties.<sup>172</sup>

### 1965 Master Plan

The Master Plan was formally adopted in 1966. The plan reiterated, in more specific terms, the purpose of the park as stated in the 1959-enabling act:

The purpose of Minute Man National Historical Park is to consolidate and bring into focus retrieved and yet retrievable portions of the Lexington-Concord Battle Road and associated structures, properties and sites so that the visitor may better appreciate and understand the beginning of the War of the American Revolution.<sup>173</sup>

The plan specified rehabilitation of the 1775 historic scene, including stabilization, limited restoration, and selected reconstruction of period structures and related outbuildings, along with other historic man-made features including stone walls, fences, farm paths and public ways where appropriate. It also stated that authenticated cellar holes, ruins, and missing buildings should be uncovered, stabilized and preserved, and that historic farmstead vegetation should be planted around these home sites to suggest the historic setting.<sup>174</sup>

An important component of the plan was the treatment of vegetation along the Battle Road. The plan specified demarcation of woodlands, pastures, croplands, and orchards was essential to suggest the historic scene. Also necessary was the removal of intrusive non-historic structures and features, except where desirable for park operations. It also recommended reclamation of residential landscapes, borrow pits, construction scars, and the dumpsite at Folly Pond.<sup>175</sup>

To evoke the 1775 landscape, the master plan, as had the earlier boundary studies, called for the relocation of Route 2A. By providing an alternate route for through traffic, the new road would allow the separation of local and park traffic; allow for the proper restoration and treatment of selected portions of the Battle Road as pedestrian ways; and permit the closing of local feeder roads that lead into existing Route 2A.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>172</sup> Copies of the reports are located in the MIMA library.

<sup>173</sup> "The Master Plan, Minute Man National Historical Park" (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, March 1965), p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

### Historic Motor Trails and Disposition of Structures Study

In 1968, the NPS Office of Resource Planning in Philadelphia prepared a special study building upon objectives of the 1965 master plan. The plan identified buildings and structures within the park boundary to be retained, removed, or demolished, and it explored the establishment of historic motor trails within the park.<sup>177</sup>

At the time of the study, the park owned six historic buildings: the Jacob Whittemore house; the Hartwell Tavern; the Samuel, Joshua, and Job Brooks houses and the Daniel Taylor house (Gowing-Clark house). It also owned 57 non-historic buildings and structures, which included barns, outbuildings, farm stands, residences, garages and the Buttrick Ice Cream restaurant. Historic buildings identified for future acquisition included the John Nelson house, the Captain William Smith house, Noah Brooks Tavern, the Widow Olive Stow house (Stow-Hardy house), the Farwell Jones house, the Meriam house and the Minot-Perry house (George Hall house), all of which have since been acquired. Non-historic buildings and structures to be acquired included a veterinarian hospital, an automotive dealership garage, restaurants, residences, garages, barns, outbuildings, and farm stands. Although most of late-nineteenth century/twentieth century buildings and structures were removed as recommended in the report, a few remain. Among these are nineteenth and twentieth-century agricultural buildings and structures located on the Albano and Nowalk (Farwell Jones) farms.

The report recommended routing the historic motor trail along Route 2A and then looping traffic from Route 2A through the by-passed section of the Battle Road passing through the historic Nelson farms (Nelson Road & Marrett Street) back onto Route 2A. Traffic from the two other portions of the Battle Road separate from Route 2A (Hartwell farm area and Fiske Hill) would be eliminated and only foot traffic permitted. As planned, the blacktopped surfaces of the three road segments would be removed and the roadbeds would be restored to their original grade and surface. Implementation of the motor route as recommended depended upon the relocation of Route 2.

### Proposed Relocation of Route 2

In 1970, Congress enacted H. R. 13934, a bill to amend Public Law 86-321 that had established the park in 1959. The bill authorized relocation of the park's southern boundary in anticipation of Route 2 relocation closer to the park boundary and it raised the amount of money authorized for land acquisition by \$5.9 million. The passage of the bill initiated new land acquisitions and further development within the park.<sup>178</sup>

Two studies, one previous to the amendment to Public Law 86-321 and one after the amendment passed, looked at alternative locations for Route 2 relocation. In 1965, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works commissioned a Location Study for Route 2 (completed in 1966) and in 1972 the U.S.

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<sup>177</sup> "Special Study, Historic Motor Trails and Disposition of Structures in Minute Man National Park" (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Philadelphia Planning and Service Center, Office of Resource Planning, February 1968).

<sup>178</sup> Roise et al., "Administrative History" (unofficial), p. 45.

Department of Transportation commissioned an Environmental/Section 4 (f) Statement (Figure 68).<sup>179</sup> In both of these documents, the basic layout of the proposed re-alignment of Route 2 resembled a realignment negotiated between the Boston National Historic Sites Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Public Works in the late 1950s. Relocation of the road was debated locally and at the state level. Opposition against the relocation of Route 2 cited a lack of committed state highway funds, the expected loss of natural areas, the displacement of families, and the opinion that the roadway was adequate. Those in favor of the proposed alignment stated the new route would meet projected transportation service demands and would divert commuter traffic from Route 2A, which would allow the park to develop the Battle Road Unit according to its 1965 Master Plan. The debate ended in 1977, when the state transportation secretary declined construction of the proposed relocated Route 2.<sup>180</sup>

### Park Development

In 1970, the NPS completed a Development Concept Plan (DCP) for Fiske Hill, which included plans for a Battle Road Visitor Center in Lexington. Construction of the Battle Road Visitor Center began in August 1974 and dedication occurred on May 8, 1975, a month prior to the bicentennial of the

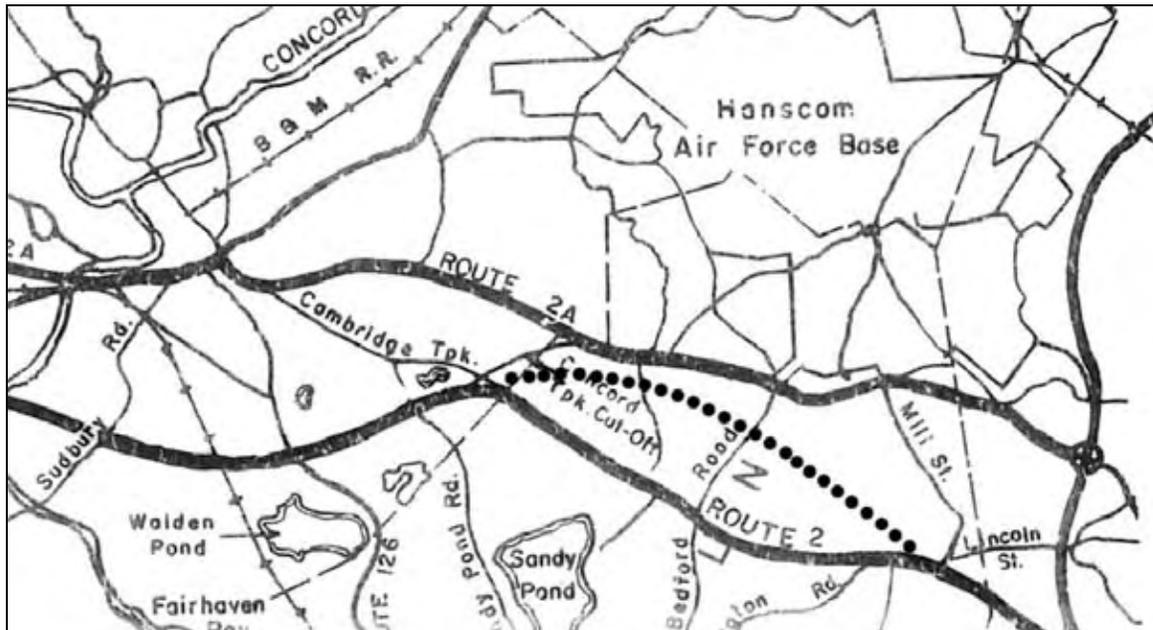


Figure 68. Proposed realignment (dotted line) of Route 2, as presented in Massachusetts Route 2 Location Study prepared for the Department of Public Works, Commonwealth of Massachusetts by consulting engineers Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff (HNT&B), December 1966. (Massachusetts Transportation Library)

<sup>179</sup> Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff (HNT&B), Consulting Engineers, "Massachusetts Route 2 in Towns of Acton, Concord, Lincoln and Lexington – Location Study," 1966; Howard, Needles, Tammen & Bergendoff (HNT&B), "Draft – Environmental/Section 4 (f) Statement for Route 2 in Acton, Concord, Lincoln, & Lexington," August 1972.

<sup>180</sup> Roise et al., "Administrative History" (unofficial), pp. 136-139; HNT&B, "Route 2;" HNT&B, "Draft – Environmental/Section 4 (f)."

April 19, 1775 running battle. DCPs were also completed during the 1970s for Meriam's Corner, Brooks Tavern, and Old Bedford/Virginia Roads properties. Additional properties were researched in the early 1970s and historic structure reports were completed for historic farms bordering the western end of the Battle Road including the Stow-Hardy, Farwell Jones, and George Hall properties. Landscape management in the mid-1970s included field clearing along the Battle Road.<sup>181</sup>

### **Recent Park Planning and Development (1980-2005)**

Traffic and neighboring development issues present during the initial stages of park planning continued into the 1980s, 1990s, and today. Several studies and reports completed in the 1980s addressed these issues and set the ground work for the park's first General Management Plan, approved in 1990.

An informational paper titled "Battle Road: Memorial or Arterial?" published and distributed in 1983 by the National Park Service, explored the future of the Battle Road, in response to proposed plans to widen Route 2A to accommodate increased traffic volume (Figure 69). At the time of the report, the National Park Service had spent nearly ten million dollars acquiring land, preserving historic buildings, and removing non-historic homes and residences to enhance the character of the battleground. The paper noted that if traffic on Route 2A was not curtailed the character of the park "may be irrevocably destroyed."<sup>182</sup>

Also completed in 1983 was a comprehensive historic grounds report by historian Joyce Lee Malcolm. Through an extensive review of primary source documents such as tax rolls, wills, and deeds, Malcolm documented and mapped the landscapes of the North Bridge and Battle Road Units as they appeared in 1775.<sup>183</sup> Additional research documents completed since 1980 include historic structure reports, historic grounds reports, and archeological studies on numerous buildings, properties, and archeological sites.<sup>184</sup>

In 1985, a landscape architecture design studio from the Harvard Graduate School of Design published a study of alternative development concepts for Minute Man National Historical Park. Three alternatives were presented in the study, each with a varying degree of landscape restoration and all emphasizing the need to minimize visual and audio intrusions within proposed restoration areas. While none of the three alternatives were adopted in full, elements of the proposed plans would appear in the General Management Plan.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Roise et al., "Administrative History" (unofficial), pp. 52, 105, 132, 134, 141.

<sup>182</sup> "Battle Road: Memorial or Arterial?" (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, North Atlantic Region, 1983)

<sup>183</sup> Malcolm, "Scene of the Battle."

<sup>184</sup> Copies of the reports are located in the Minute Man National Historical Park Library.

<sup>185</sup> "Alternative Futures for Minute Man National Historical Park (Harvard University, Graduate School of Design, Department of Landscape Architecture, 1985).

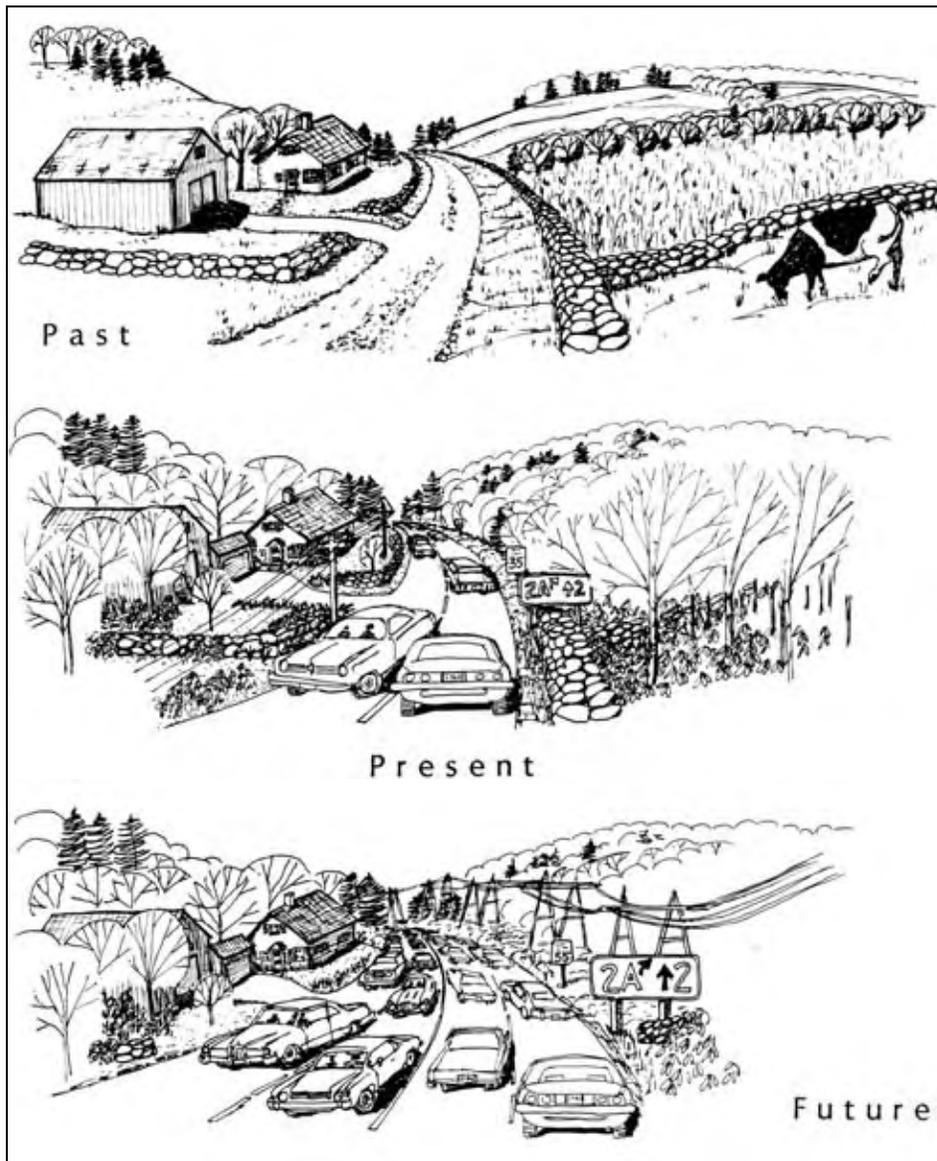


Figure 69. Graphic from “Battle Road: Memorial or Arterial?” depicting Route 2A in the past, in 1983, and after proposed road improvements.

#### General Management Plan

On July 10, 1990 the General Management Plan (GMP) for Minute Man National Historical Park was approved. The GMP recognized and addressed the increasing volume of commuter traffic on Route 2A and expanding development abutting the park boundary. While the GMP accepted the presence of 2A, relocating traffic from the Battle Road remained a long-term goal.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>186</sup> “General Management Plan (GMP), Minute Man National Historical Park” (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 1989); Regional Director, North Atlantic Region to Superintendent, Minute Man National Historical Park, April 17, 1991.

The GMP directed a “selective restoration of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century environment [to] provide a flavor of the physical conditions on April 19, 1775 without requiring detailed replication of the entire landscape.” It opposed widening Route 2A and supported closing to traffic and restoring sections of the Battle Road to their eighteenth-century appearance. Sections proposed for restoration included Old Bedford Road, Virginia Road, Marrett Street, traces of the road on Fiske Hill, and the short segment of original road alignment at Meriam’s Corner. To protect the historic setting of the landscape, the plan recommended acquisition of approximately two hundred and fifty acres of additional land to screen visual intrusions. It also recommended development of a plan to guide landscape management, which included selective clearing and restoration of representative orchards, gardens, tilled fields, meadows, pasture, stone walls, and woodlands.

The GMP specified the removal of all post-1920s buildings and structures and the relocation of utilities underground. The plan recommended linking together the park’s historic resources by a continuous trail system that would aid in interpretation of British and American troop movements during the battle and the socio-economic nature of the area in 1775. According to Thomas Boylston Adams, a direct descendant of John Quincy Adams and a former president of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the park’s management plan would allow visitors to “see forgotten sacred spots that have been hidden by natural growth as well as by the processes of modernity.”<sup>187</sup> The GMP was amended in March 1991. The revised plan included a number of small changes including a reduction in the number of additional acres requested from two hundred and fifty to two hundred.<sup>188</sup>

#### Post-GMP Development

Implementation of the GMP goals began in the early 1990s and continues today. In 1992, the park’s boundaries were expanded and new property acquisitions included fields north of Meriam’s Corner that have been continually farmed for over three hundred years. In 1995, construction of the Battle Road Trail began, which today spans the entire length of the Battle Road Unit from Meriam’s Corner to Fiske Hill. The trail, designed by Carol R. Johnson Associates, includes segments of the historic Battle Road closed to automobile traffic. Placed along the new trail were a series of granite markers identifying the locations of archeological sites, the approximate locations of British soldier graves, and marked distances to Boston. Additional landscape development included orchard and field restoration, removal of non-historic buildings and structures, construction of visitor parking lots along Route 2A, repositioning and structural enhancement of the Paul Revere Capture Marker, and construction of the Battle Road Trail tunnel under Hanscom Drive (Figures 70-72)

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<sup>187</sup> Thomas Boylston Adams, “Uncovering Six Miles of American History,” *Boston Globe*, June 4, 1988.

<sup>188</sup> “General Management Plan Errata Sheet, Minute Man National Historical Park” (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, May 1990).



Figure 70. View south of the remnant orchard east of the Noah Brooks Tavern. Woodlands surrounding the remnant apple trees were removed in 2003. (OCLP)



Figure 71. View southeast of the Paul Revere Capture Monument (center), 2003. The NPS turned the monument towards the Battle Road Trail and constructed the accompanying decorative stone walls and waysides in 2000, as part of the Battle Road Trail project. (OCLP)



**Figure 72. View east of the pedestrian tunnel (Battle Road Trail) under Hanscom Drive, 2004. (OCLP)**

Landscape Summary (1959-2005)

The Battle Road landscape has changed dramatically under park management. Since 1960, approximately two hundred modern structures have been removed including residences, farm structures, and commercial businesses. Only a handful of post-1920 buildings, planned for removal, are still occupied by their former owners. Although second growth woodland has overtaken many of the untended farm fields and residential lots, evidence of their existence are present in the landscape. Remnant stone walls define old field patterns, lilacs and daylilies mark residential gardens, and abandoned roadways lead to razed house sites (Figure 73)



George Hall House

Burke House & Garage

Meriam House

Gowing-Clark House & Barn Foundation

Old Bedford Rd

Manuel Dr

Battle Road / Route 2A

Meriam's Corner Monument

Second East Quarter School House

Palumbo Farm Buildings

Concord Lincoln

Albano House, Farm Buildings & Foundation

Farwell Jones House, James Carty Barn & Nowalk Farm Buildings

Stow-Hardy House

Inferrera House & Farm Buildings

Turpike By-Pass

Brooks Rd

Beattey House

Samuel Brooks House

Concord Lincoln

Elm Brook

Thomas Brooks Farm Foundation

Barker House

Swartz House

Comfort Station

Ephraim Hartwell Tavern & McHugh Barn

Capt. William Smith House

(Old Bedford Rd.)

Battle Road (Virginia Rd.)

Route 2A

Bedford Ln

Bierlich House

Moodey House

Joshua Brooks Tannery Site

Joshua Brooks House

Job Brooks House & Charles Sawyer Barn Foundation

Noah Brooks Tavern & Rogers Barn

Rego House

Samuel Hartwell Farm Cellar Hole

Bedford Rd



# Existing Conditions

Figure 73

**Cultural Landscape Report  
Minute Man  
National Historical Park  
Concord, Massachusetts**

Produced by  
**National Park Service  
Olmsted Center for  
Landscape Preservation**



## Map Sources:

USGS Map, Maynard, Massachusetts, 42071-D3-TM-025, 1987.

Battle Road Trail Site Plan, Carol Johnson and Associates, 2001.

Minute Man National Historical Park National Register District Map, NPS Field Technical Support Center for GIS, URI, October 2000.

MIMA NHP Geographical Information System.

Aerial photograph of the Battle Road Unit, 2001, (MIMA NHP).

Field survey completed by OCLP October 2003.

## Notes:

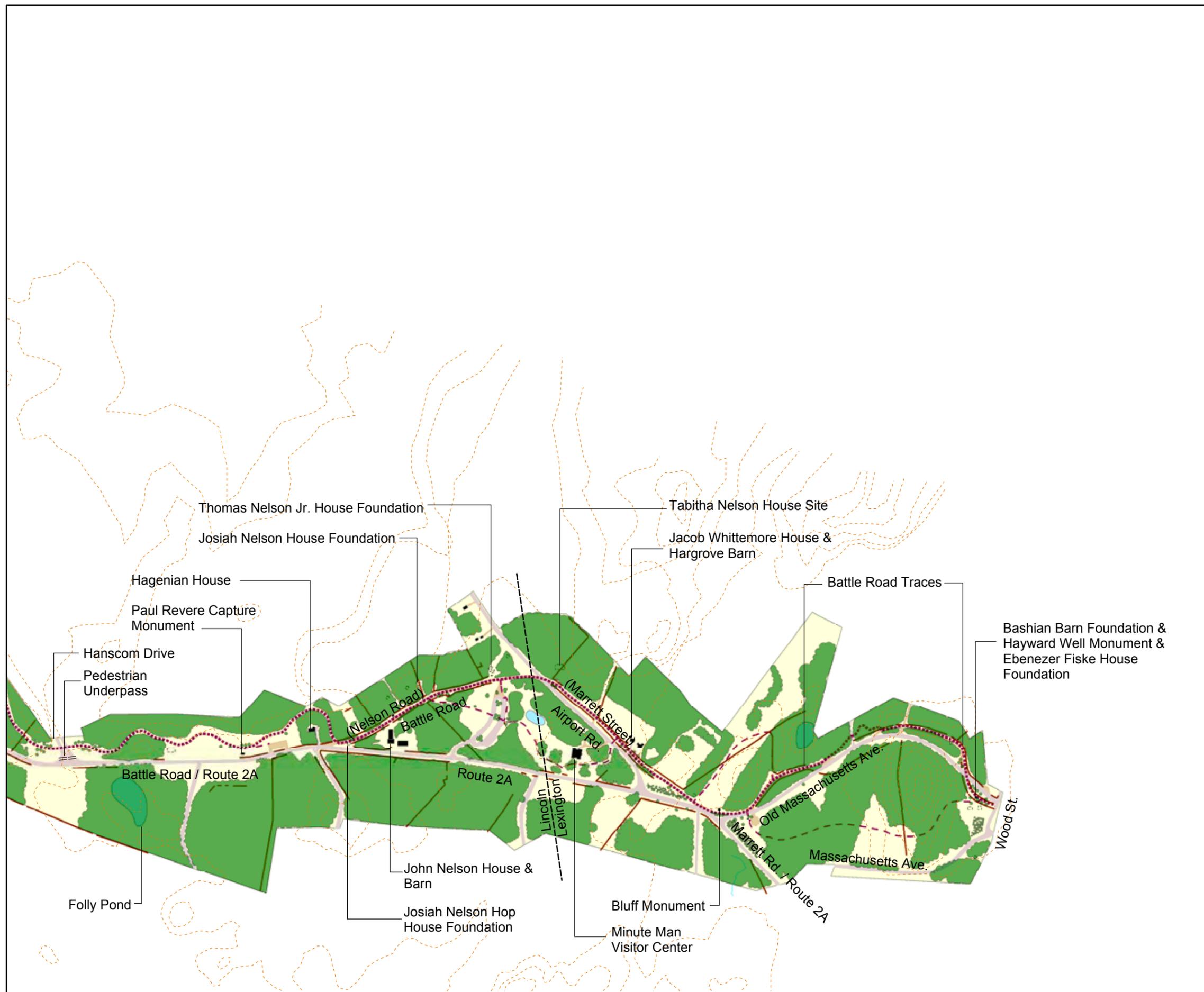
Stone walls depicted on map may represent only a portion of existing walls.

Plan drawn using ArcMap GIS 8.3, by L. Laham, NPS.

## Legend:

- - - - - Battle Road Trail
- - - - - Walking Trail
- Stone Wall
- Herbaceous Vegetation: Field, Wet Meadow or Maintained Lawn
- Woody Vegetation: Tree Canopy or Remnant Orchard
- Building or Structure
- Archeological Ruin
- Unpaved Road
- Paved Road
- Water

Not to scale





## CHAPTER 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

The present-day Battle Road landscape is the result of over one thousand years of human activity. Since the earliest colonial settlement in the seventeenth century, subsequent landowners have reshaped the landscape to serve evolving needs and purposes. Features from these historic layers, separated by decades or centuries, exist side by side within the Unit. While many of the features are evident, some are obscured by vegetation and modern improvement, and others are yet undiscovered.

Heavy traffic along Route 2A (significant portions run in common with the historic Battle Road) prohibits safe pedestrian crossing between the landscape north of the road to the landscape south of the road, rendering historic landscape features south of the road generally inaccessible to visitors (Figure 74). With the exception of the area surrounding the Joshua Brooks farm and the Noah Brooks Tavern, park amenities (parking lots, comfort stations, etc.), rehabilitated landscapes, pedestrian trails, and interpretative waysides are located on the north side of Route 2A.

The Battle Road continues to be the most significant feature within the landscape since the 1600s. For centuries the road served as the primary east-west road linking Concord and neighboring towns to Boston, and the running battle which occurred on the road in 1775 forever secured its place in American history. As a major circulation route, the road has undergone numerous realignments and alterations – each change modernizing the road for new generations and new modes of transportation. The road today and the surrounding landscape reflect those changes. In areas, where the grade of the historic roadbed has been lowered, remnant stone walls stand high on hillsides adjacent to the road (Figure 75).



Figure 74. View east of oncoming traffic on Route 2A, 2004. The Paul Revere Capture Tablet is to the left (north), in the distance. (OCLP)



**Figure 75. View east of remnant stone wall on top of hillside bordering Route 2A, east of Bedford Lane, 2003. (OCLP)**

And the opposite is also true. Stone walls bordering the road are often buried or half buried by layers of soil placed to raise the road above low-lying wetlands.

More modern road improvements, necessary to support an ever increasing amount of commuter traffic along Route 2A, include sections of road widened at the intersection of Hanscom Drive for a turn lane and the installation of a traffic signal. Changes made by the NPS are also evident. Sections of the road by-passed in the early nineteenth century have been rehabilitated to reflect their character in 1775.

Branching off Route 2A are secondary roads and farm lanes dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Some of the roads and lanes remain in use, while others remain only as road traces defined by stone walls. Within one of these traces is a small stone slab bridge, believed to date prior to the American Revolution.

An important NPS addition is the Battle Road Trail. Located north of Route 2A, the 5.5 mile trail spans the entire length of the park from Meriam's Corner to Fiske Hill. It passes over hills and through forests, crosses wetlands and historic farm fields, and in sections overlies old farm lanes and rehabilitated sections of the Battle Road (Figures 76-77). Portions of the trail are bordered by stone walls, and in areas where the trail diverges from historic routes it often bisects historic walls.

Many of the park's historic features are accessible from the trail. Among these are homes and farm buildings dating from the eighteenth century to the mid twentieth-century, including the Minute Man Visitor Center built by the NPS. Also present along the trail are archeological sites, including above



Figure 76. View west of the Battle Road Trail north of the Farwell Jones farm, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 77. View west of the Battle Road Trail crossing the wetland east of Elm Brook, on the north side of Route 2A, 2003. (OCLP)

ground foundation and chimney ruins, and below ground sites identified by stone markers. Hidden from view and generally inaccessible is a network of open wetland drains, constructed by earlier settlers to improve the agricultural production of wet meadows. In a number of areas, landscape rehabilitation has enhanced the character of the Unit. In the Hartwell, Smith, and Brooks farm areas, woodlands have been cleared to reveal historic field patterns and remnant orchards (Figures 78-79). And throughout the park, colonial homes have been rehabilitated and historic stone walls rebuilt.



Figure 78. View northeast of the Captain William Smith farm, September 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 79. View east of a reconstructed wall bordering the west side of Old Bedford Road (Battle Road) and field restoration in back of the wall, November 2003. (OCLP)

The trail is a popular route for bicyclists, runners, and walkers, and it is used by both local citizens and out of town tourists. Its compacted stone dust surface also makes it easily accessible for wheel chairs and baby strollers. The most visited tourist site along the trail is the Hartwell Tavern, located along a by-passed section of the Battle Road. The rehabilitated landscape surrounding the tavern is the best representation of the character of the 1775 landscape within the Battle Road Unit (Figures 80-81).



Figure 80. View west of joggers on the Battle Road Trail in front of Hartwell Tavern, October 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 81. View northeast of the rehabilitated Hartwell Tavern landscape, October 2004. (OCLP)



## CHAPTER 3: ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

### REVIEW OF NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION

#### National Register Documentation

The park was administratively added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Although National Park sites listed on the National Register were not initially required to submit documentation identifying features and qualities deserving preservation, many have done so since. On November 29, 2002, National Register Documentation was accepted for the park. The nomination includes properties within park boundaries within the Towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington, Massachusetts. It also identifies significant buildings, structures, sites, and objects within the park dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries

Landscape significance is determined through an identification and evaluation method defined by the National Register of Historic Places program. According to the National Register, historic significance may be present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history.
- B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. Yields or may be likely to yield information in prehistory or history.

The park possesses significance under National Register criteria A, B, C, and D. The North Bridge Unit also holds significance under National Register criteria consideration B.

- B. Property removed from its original or historically significant location can be eligible if it is significant primarily for architectural value or it is the surviving property most importantly associated with a historic person or event.

The park was established in 1959 because of its significance as the site of the first battles of the American Revolution. The areas of national significance identified for the Battle Road Unit relate to military history and commemoration. The park has local significance in the areas of agriculture, archeology, and architecture. Features significant within the areas of archeology and architecture will be discussed within the report only within the context of the other areas of significance. For example, the

report will not determine the architectural merit of a building or structure, it will only determine if the feature contributes to other areas of significance, such as military or agriculture. The following discussion of significance is presented to outline the reasons, or criteria, on which the listing is based.

Area of National Significance- Military The Battle Road Unit is nationally significant as the site of the running battle on the opening day of the American Revolution. The park's landscape and features played a decisive role in the outcome of the battle. Extant features within the Battle Road Unit contributing to the significance of the 1775 battleground include the natural terrain, the Battle Road, colonial houses, and over seven hundred acres of former agricultural land. The military landscape is included under National Register Criterion A and D for its association with broad trends in our national history and its potential to yield prehistoric or historic information.

Area of National Significance- Commemoration The Battle Road Unit is nationally significant for its association with the nineteenth-century American Revolution commemorative movement. Four granite markers are located adjacent to, or in close proximity to the Battle Road. They commemorate the site where Paul Revere was captured by British Regulars in the early hours of April 19, 1775 and three skirmish sites along the Battle Road. The commemorative landscape is included under National Register Criterion A for its association with broad trends in our national history.

Area of Local Significance- Agriculture The Battle Road Unit is locally significant in the area of agriculture. Most of the landscape was under agricultural production from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries. Extant features that contribute to the agricultural significance include roads, farm buildings and structures, open fields, stone walls, remnant orchards, and archeological sites. The agricultural landscape is included under National Register Criterion A and D for its association with broad trends in our national history and its potential to yield prehistoric or historic information.

### **Period of Significance**

The National Register documentation states the period of significance for the park begins in 1655 and ends in 1959, the year the park was established. Based on research and analysis conducted for this CLR, the period of significance for the Battle Road Unit landscape should extend from 1635 to 1959, in order to recognize the earliest date of agricultural land use by European settlers within the park boundaries.

## LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its historic identity or the extent to which a property evokes its appearance during a particular historic period, usually the period of significance. The National Register of Historic Places recognizes seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Aspects of integrity deemed most important for evaluation are based on a property's significance under National Register criteria. Retention of these aspects is essential for a property to convey its significance, though not all seven aspects of integrity need be present to convey a sense of past time and place. Collectively, these aspects help foster an understanding of the landscape's historic character and cultural importance.

As illustrated in Table 1, an analysis of the seven aspects of integrity reveals that the Battle Road Unit retains overall integrity in the areas of military, commemoration, and agriculture. The Military landscape retains integrity of location, setting, and association. The aspects of integrity that are diminished include design, workmanship, materials and feeling. Diminished integrity is the result of centuries of addition, removal, and alteration of landscape features, in response to changing agricultural practices and suburban development. NPS rehabilitation projects, which have removed post-colonial buildings and structures, repaired colonial houses, and which have cleared woodland vegetation to reveal historic fields and stone walls (which probably do not date to 1775, but reflect the character of the landscape at the time of the battle), have improved the integrity of design and feeling.

The commemorative landscape retains integrity of materials, workmanship, and association. The aspects of integrity that are diminished include location, design, setting, and feeling. Each of the four nineteenth-century commemorative monuments lacks integrity in one or more of these aspects. While the engraved granite monuments are intact, several have been moved from their original locations, and the stone walls in which some were originally positioned have been removed.

The agricultural landscape retains integrity of location, setting, and association. The aspects that are diminished include design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. Diminished integrity is the result of suburban development and NPS stewardship. Since federal land acquisition began in the 1960s, the NPS has continually removed agricultural and non-agricultural buildings and structures c. 1920s and earlier. While the removal of the more modern agricultural buildings has enhanced the character of the military landscape, it has also diminished the integrity of the agricultural landscape. Additionally, integrity has been lost as agricultural fields have been allowed to revert to woodlands. NPS rehabilitation projects have also improved the integrity of design and feel, including the repair of colonial and post-colonial houses, the removal of contemporary houses and businesses, and the clearing of woodland vegetation to reveal historic fields, stones walls, and remnant orchards.

**Table 1: SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY  
BATTLE ROAD UNIT, MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK**

<b>Aspects of Integrity</b>	<b>Military 1775</b>	<b>Commemoration 1836 to 1959</b>	<b>Agriculture 1600s to 1959</b>
<b>Overall</b>	Retains Integrity	Retains Integrity	Retains Integrity
<b>Location</b>	Retains Location	Diminished Location: Two of the four markers have been moved - the Paul Revere Capture Monument recently by the NPS	Retains Location
<b>Design</b>	Diminished Design: The majority of colonial roads have been retained. Some houses remain, but colonial building clusters and field patterns have been lost. Spatial organization has also been interrupted by the construction of additional roads and the growth of woodlands	Diminished Design: Three of the four monuments were originally embedded within stone walls; the walls surrounding two of these monuments were removed. An NPS designed wall/wayside area surrounds the Paul Revere Capture Monument	Diminished Design: Most of the colonial, nineteenth-century, and twentieth-century agricultural buildings and structures are lost. Several farm clusters remain. Stone walls define field patterns, but many fields have reverted to woodland. In a few areas, fields are still under cultivation, some since the 1600s. Agricultural roads and some farm lanes are retained.
<b>Setting</b>	Retains Setting: The landscape retains significant large-scale physical features including undulating hills, rock outcroppings, wet-lands, and creeks. The rural setting is disrupted by the presence of heavy automobile traffic on the Battle Road/Route 2A.	Diminished Setting: The setting of the Paul Revere Capture Monument has significantly changed. Originally facing the Battle Road, it now faces inward, towards the Battle Road Trail.	Retains Setting: The landscape retains significant large-scale physical features including undulating hills, rock outcroppings, wet-lands, and creeks. The rural setting is disrupted by the presence of heavy automobile traffic on the Battle Road/Route 2A.
<b>Materials</b>	Diminished Materials: Many of the colonial buildings and structures, stone wall, and road surfaces have been lost. Non-colonial buildings and structures, roads, trails, stone walls, and commemorative markers have been added.	Retains Materials: The four rectangular granite monuments remain, although the original stone wall surrounding two of them has been lost, and a NPS designed stone wall/wayside surrounds the Paul Revere Capture Monument.	Diminished Materials: A number of eighteenth to twentieth-century agricultural buildings and structures is present, but many more have been lost. Agricultural roads, farm lanes, and stone walls remain. Non-agricultural buildings, roads, trails, stone walls and commemorative markers have been added.
<b>Workmanship</b>	Diminished Workmanship: Many colonial buildings, structures, and stone walls have been lost. Several colonial houses remain, some of which have been significantly altered. A few colonial stone walls and stone-lined drainage ditches may remain.	Retains Workmanship: The four engraved granite slabs remain intact; although the original stonewalls surrounding two of them have been lost.	Diminished Workmanship: Many of the agricultural buildings have been lost. Over fifteen miles of stone walls are present, a portion of which are NPS reconstructions or are extant historic walls significantly rebuilt by the NPS

<b>Feeling</b>	Diminished Feeling: The feeling is diminished by the loss of colonial buildings clusters, agricultural fields, and cider orchards. Although most or all stone walls do not date to 1775, their presence reflects the character of the military landscape. The feeling is further diminished by the noise and visual intrusion created by heavy automobile traffic on the Battle Road/Route 2A, and the noise of airplanes taking off and landing at Hanscom Airfield.,	Diminished Feeling: Automobile Traffic on the Battle Road/Route 2A and the current positioning of the Paul Revere Capture Monument prohibits visitors from accessing and reading the monuments from the road, as originally intended.	Diminished Feeling: Although the landscape retains a number of farm buildings, stone walls, remnant orchards, and open fields (some under cultivation), overall the landscape has diminished feeling, due to the loss of a significant number of agricultural buildings, fields, and orchards.
<b>Association</b>	Retains Association	Retains Association	Retains Association

## LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

This chapter analyzes the extant condition of select landscape feature types through a comparison of their historic and existing conditions, and evaluates the significance of each feature type. The format of the analysis and evaluation is as follows:

Historic Condition: A brief outline of the history of the feature type including information documented in Chapter 1: Site History as well as additional details.

Existing Condition: A brief description of its physical condition.

Evaluation: A determination of whether the feature type contributes to the significance of the landscape in the areas of Military, Agriculture or Commemoration. Features are determined **contributing** if they were present during the period of significance and are associated with each of the areas of historic significance. Features are determined to be **non-contributing** if they were not present during the periods of significance or if they did not contribute to the significance of the area. If the exact history of a feature type is unknown, its significance is identified as **undetermined**.

### Topography & Hydrology

Historic Condition: The pre-settlement topography consisted of undulating hills of glacial deposits and low wetlands. Since the earliest settlers, landowners have made minor changes to the topography and hydrology of the Battle Road Unit. Construction of houses and farm structures altered the landform as did the construction and subsequent improvements of farm roads. During the eighteenth century and possibly earlier, wet meadows were drained, converting fringe meadowlands into cultivatable soil. Diverted water from the meadows

traveled through a network of constructed ditches and culverts into neighboring brooks and wetlands. More recent changes include terrain alterations associated with the construction of NPS buildings, parking lots, and the underpass providing pedestrian access under Hanscom Drive.

Existing Condition: While the overall topography of the Battle Road Unit remains unchanged, in areas altered topography is evident. Extant foundations and stone walls provide evidence of raised or lowered roadbeds, deposited soils, and they depict the footprints of early farmsteads. Early drainage features, some of which may date to the colonial period, are extant; however, more research and fieldwork is necessary to understand the extent of the system.

Evaluation: Undetermined (Military), Contributing (Agriculture, Commemoration)  
Topographic and hydrologic changes associated with the pre-1959 agricultural landscape are historic features of the agricultural landscape. Further research may reveal that some of these are also historic features of the military landscape. Topographic and hydrological changes associated with non-agricultural alterations, such as those associated with modern residential or with NPS construction are non-contributing.

## Spatial Organization

Historic Condition: During the mid-1650s, when most of the land within the present-day Battle Road Unit was initially settled, the landscape was organized by roads, fences, stone walls, and agricultural fields, as well as by natural features such as woodlands, wetlands, and rolling terrain. A few cleared tillage fields were located along the Bay Road (Battle Road), but most of the landscape surrounding the road remained wooded. Most of the commonly held tilled fields, meadows, and pastures were located a distance from the farmhouse. By 1775, the Bay Road (Battle Road) was the primary east-west road leading from Concord to Boston. The road generally followed the natural contours of the landscape, winding past tilled fields, orchards, meadows, and a few isolated woodlands. A developing system of farm roads branching off of the Battle Road further delineated the landscape.

In the early 1800s, sections of the Battle Road were straightened, and in the 1890s the straightened road was laid out as a state highway. At the turn of the twentieth-century, some of agricultural land on the uplands adjacent to the road had reverted back to woodland, as farmers sought more fertile land, and as the need for heating fuel in the urban centers promoted timber growth. However, the majority of the landscape remained primarily open as farm fields, pastures, and meadows. Interrupting the open landscape were farm clusters, large commercial orchards, and a network of roads, stone walls, and drainage ditches.

Agricultural land use continued to decrease in the 1900s, as more descendants moved to more fertile land or sought occupations other than farming. By 1958, approximately half of the former agricultural fields had reverted back to woodlands, and others had become subdivided as

suburban lots or commercial properties. Providing access to the suburban residences and businesses were new roads, drives, and parking lots. Entwined with the modern houses and businesses were agricultural buildings and structures, fields, and orchards, some under production and others abandoned. The network of stone walls prevailed, although some stone walls or wall sections were removed during construction.

Existing Condition: The Battle Road Unit is spatially divided by Route 2A, which includes large sections of the Battle Road. Secondary roads, including by-passed portions of the Battle Road and the networks of stone walls and drainage ditches further divide the landscape. Although defined by stone walls and natural barriers, such as topography and streams, historic field patterns are generally obscured by woodland vegetation covering most of the site. Isolated patches of active agricultural fields, fields maintained as open space, and fields recently cleared by the NPS, provide openings in the otherwise enclosed landscape. Intermixed within the fields and forests are historic and contemporary buildings and structures.

Evaluation: Contributing (Military, Agriculture, Commemoration)

Overall, the landscape reflects its historic spatial organization, defined by the Battle Road, other historic roads and road traces, topography, streams and wetlands, and stone walls, despite the loss of openness created by the growth of secondary woodlands.

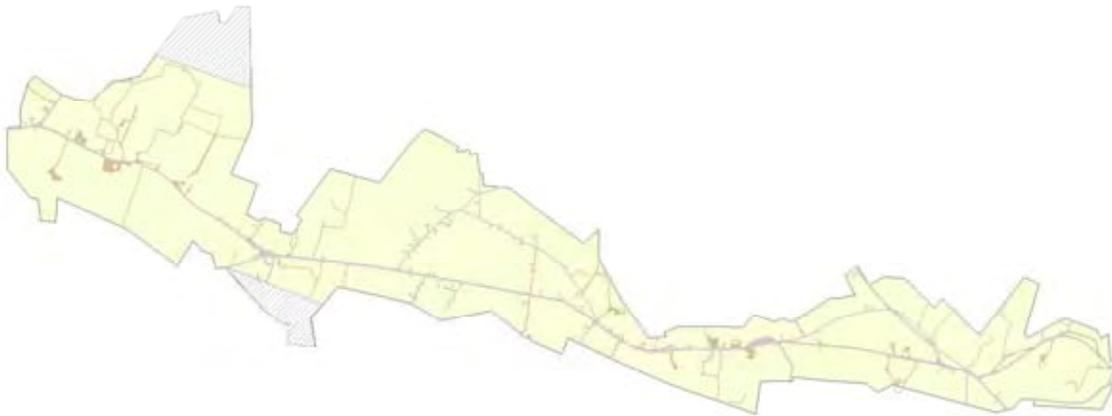
## Circulation

Historic Condition: Colonists generally referred to the Battle Road as the Bay Road, the “Country Road,” or the “road from Concord to Boston.” The full length of the Bay Road extending from Boston to Concord was laid out by 1666, although possibly earlier. Several early roads such as Billerica Road (Old Bedford Road) and early public right-of-ways connected the Bay Road to privately owned fields, pastures, meadows and wooded areas (Figure 82). Colonial roads were unpaved, muddy and generally needed repair. To provide better means of transportation, the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington funded repairs for existing roads and new road construction within present-day Battle Road Unit between 1720 and 1756. Improvements included widening the Bay Road (Battle Road) and the construction of new roads such as Bedford Lane and Bedford Road. In 1773, a portion of the Bay Road (Battle Road) running over Fiske Hill was significantly altered to improve travel. Town records indicate that by 1775, the Battle Road right-of-way, for most of the road’s length within the present-day Battle Road Unit, had been narrowed to 4 rods (66’) from widths as wide as 10 rods (165’) earlier in the century. Portions of the road around Fiske Hill may have remained up to 6 rods (99’) wide.

**1775 Circulation**



**1958 Circulation**



**2005 Circulation**



Figure 82. Battle Road Unit circulation: 1775, 1958, and 2005. Since 1775 portions of the Battle Road have been incorporated into state highways and the Battle Road Trail. (OCLP)

In the early 1800s, the towns of Concord, Lincoln and Lexington straightened the Battle Road by constructing new road segments that bypassed two large bends in the road, after which the by-passed sections served as secondary roads. Between 1816 and 1836, repairs and improvements to the North Great Road, the name used in this document for the road as straightened, included straightening and widening the roadbed, raising the bed in low areas, and leveling it at highpoints. In 1868, the Middlesex County Commissioners ordered the North Great Road to be crowned in the middle and a common width along its entire length, and in the 1890s the Massachusetts Highway Commission laid out the road as a state highway (50' right-of-way) from Meriam's Corner to the Bluff, then aligned the new state highway along Marrett Street, bypassing the Fiske Hill. The portion of the Battle Road by-passed during state highway construction was realigned and modernized in 1907 and again in 1930, each time requiring the removal of a section of the Bluff, and repositioning of the Bluff Monument.

Between 1920 and 1959, a number of secondary roads, including Shadyside Lane, Sunnyside Lane, Alpine Street, Bonair Avenue and Fairview Avenue, were constructed leading to suburban residential properties. Two secondary roads leading to Hanscom Airfield were also constructed during this period: Airport Road (1946) and a short road segment leading to the 1958 Air Force housing development north of the Minute Man Boulder. More recent was the construction of Hanscom Drive, a major road connecting Hanscom Airfield/Air Force base to the Battle Road/Route 2A. Traffic flow along the Battle Road/Route 2A increased significantly in the 1950s, after the construction of Route 128. The expressway continues to feed increasing amounts of commuter traffic directly onto Route 2A (Figures 83-88).

As the federal government acquired properties after the establishment of the park in 1959, the NPS began removal of modern secondary roads. By the mid 1990s, most of the roads constructed between 1924 and 1940 were removed or closed to vehicular traffic. In addition, the NPS closed large sections of the Battle Road by-passed in the early 1800s and removed the asphalt surfaces, and uncovered portions of the Battle Road around Fiske Hill, abandoned during the 1930 realignment of the road. In 2000, the NPS incorporated the rehabilitated portions of the Battle Road within the Battle Road Trail, a pedestrian route spanning the length of the park from Meriam's Corner to Fiske Hill, except for a break where it intersected Hanscom Drive. In 2004, construction of an underpass under Hanscom Drive connected the two trail segments, by providing safe pedestrian crossing under the road.

Existing Condition: Extant circulation routes date from the 1600s to present. Circulation types include major and minor roads, farm lanes, road traces, rehabilitated roads (pedestrian traffic only) driveways, parking lots, and trails. All open public roads and the Minute Man Visitor Center entrance and parking lot have asphalt surfaces; other circulation features are covered by gravel, stone dust, or boardwalk.

Evaluation: Contributing (Military, Agriculture, Commemorative)

Roads, road traces, and farm lanes present at the time of the battle are historic features of the military, agricultural, and commemorative landscapes. Roads, road traces, and farm lanes constructed after the battle and before 1959 are historic features of the agricultural and commemorative landscapes. Twentieth-century residential roads and driveways, and NPS pedestrian and vehicular circulation are non-contributing features.



**Figure 83. View west of Route 2A/Battle Road, 1934. The Paine house (Samuel Brooks house) and roadside stand are on the north (right) side of the road. (Concord Department of Public Works August 5, 1934, Concord Free Public Library)**



**Figure 84. View west of Route 2A/Battle Road, 2005. The Samuel Brooks house is on the north (right) side of the road. Features similar to those depicted in the 1934 photograph (Figure 83) include the road width and surface material, the stone wall bordering the road on the south (left) side of the road, and the Samuel Brooks house. The roadside produce stand depicted in the 1934 photograph is no longer extant. (OCLP)**



Figure 85. View west of the intersection of Marrett Road/Route 2A (left, foreground); the Battle Road/Old Massachusetts Avenue (right); the Battle Road/Marrett Street (center) and Route 2A (left) at the Bluff, 1956. (BNHSC photographic collection, MIMA archives, no box number)



Figure 86. View west of the intersection of Marrett Road/Route 2A (left); the Battle Road/Old Massachusetts Avenue (right); and Route 2A (center) at the Bluff (right), 2005. Note: Marrett Street/Battle Road is closed to vehicular traffic. (OCLP)



Figure 87. View east of Route 2A, towards the future intersection of Hanscom Drive and Route 2A, 1963. (HABS/ HAER photograph, 63-173, MIMA library)



Figure 88. View east of the Battle Road/Route 2A towards the intersection of Route 2A and Hanscom Drive (left), 2005 The Battle Road had been widened to 3 lanes at the intersection, and a traffic light has been installed. (OCLP)

## Vegetation

Primarily wooded in the 1650s, the landscape also consisted of commonly held lands for pastures, meadows, and tillage fields. By the 1770s, as the common field system dissolved and more private fields were created, the majority of the landscape within the Battle Road Unit was settled and cultivated. After the American Revolution and through the 1800s, the agricultural landscape changed as farm production shifted from subsistence to commercial operations. Fields were enlarged, fancy fruit orchards replaced cider orchards and dairy cattle grazed in the pastures. By the first quarter of the twentieth century, dairy farming was in decline and the larger field operations were replaced by smaller market gardens, condensed on the most fertile soil. Following WWII, more farms were abandoned and more pastures and fields reverted to woodland. Accompanying many of the suburban residences and businesses along the road were ornamental plantings and groomed lawns (Figure 89).

### Open Fields, Wet Meadows, & Woodlands

#### Historic Condition:

By 1775, with the exception of isolated woodlots retained for farm use, the landscape within the present-day Battle Road Unit had been cleared for agricultural use. Although the configuration and types of agricultural uses changed over the decade in response to less expensive grains arriving by train from the Midwest and because of a demand for perishable farm products from expanding urban centers, the landscape remained primarily open into the mid-1800s. Some reforestation occurred in the mid-to late 1800s, as wood became a profitable product, sold to urban centers as heating fuel. By the turn of the twentieth-century the landscape began to significantly reforest, as farmers moved west to farm more fertile land and as suburban households and other non-agricultural uses became established within the Battle Road corridor. By 1959, about half of the Battle Road Unit was covered by woodland.

Existing Condition: Only about twenty-five percent of the Battle Road landscape remains open, either as fields or wet meadows. The largest concentration of open landscape is located at the western end of the park. Some fields in this area have been continually farmed since the seventeenth century and perhaps earlier by Native Americans. Other small fields are located throughout the Unit - some are leased by local farmers, some maintained as open space, and other fields have been recently cleared. Between 2001 and 2004, the NPS leased a herd of sheep to maintain the park's open fields, to control exotic invasive plant species, and to evoke the character of the 1775 landscape (Figures 90-91).<sup>189</sup>

<sup>189</sup> Stephen Hagen and Greg Turner, "Sheep Set to Groom Minute Man Grounds," *Lincoln Journal*, July 2001.

1775 Vegetation



1958 Vegetation



2005 Vegetation,



Figure 89. Battle Road Unit vegetation: 1775, 1958, and 2005. Note some remnant orchards are known to exist in wooded areas of the park. (OCLP)



Figure 90. View of cultivated fields and pastures west of Farwell Jones farm, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 91. Sheep grazing north of the Farwell Jones dairy barn, 2004. (OCLP)

Woodlands cover the remaining seventy-five percent of the landscape. The secondary growth covers former agricultural land uses such as fields, pastures, and orchards; and razed suburban home and business sites (Figure 92).

Evaluation:

Contributing (Military, Agriculture, Commemoration – open fields and wet meadows)

All open fields and wet meadows, especially those that remain under cultivation, are historic features of the military, agricultural, and commemorative landscapes.

Contributing (Military, Agriculture - woodlands)

Woodlands in areas forested in 1775 are historic features of the military and agricultural landscapes. Woodlands in areas forested between 1775 and 1959, and associated with farms (non-suburban development) are historic features of the agricultural landscape. Woodland growth associated with suburban development (residential/commercial) prior to 1959, and all growth post-1959 is non-contributing.



Figure 92. View south of woodlands along road trace located near Albano farm, 2003. (OCLP)

## Orchards

Historic Condition: By the 1770s, at least fifteen orchards were located along the Battle Road. The number of apple orchards corresponds to the popularity of hard cider in the eighteenth-century. Beginning in the early 1800s, the number of cider orchards began to decrease, in large part in response to the temperance movement. Farmers adapted by planting fancy fruit orchards, a profitable product easily sold in nearby regional markets. At the time the park was established in 1959, at least six large active or remnant commercial orchards were located within the Battle Road Unit (Figure 93, see also Figure 27).

Existing Condition: Remnant fruit trees and orchards are in several locations within the Battle Road Unit, at least one of which is now located within woodlands. Others may exist, however more research and fieldwork is necessary to locate undiscovered orchards. Recent woodland clearing in the Brooks farm area has revealed a number of mature fruit trees (Figure 94). The NPS has also recently planted several young orchards, some in the general area of known 1775 orchards.

Evaluation: Contributing (Agriculture)

The remnant orchards are historic features of the agricultural landscape. NPS orchards are non-contributing features.



Figure 93. Noah Brooks Tavern, c. 1857-1906. Note orchard trees on the right side of the photograph. (Photographic copy located in MIMA library, original photograph located in Hosmer Photographic Collection, III-279, Concord Free Public Library)



**Figure 94. View south of the remnant orchard trees east of Noah Brooks Tavern, 2004. (OCLP)**

#### Ornamentals

Historic Condition: Existing conditions indicate some ornamental plants, such as weeping beeches and lilacs, have historically been planted on farmsteads within the Battle Road Unit. However, the majority of ornamentals were introduced during the early to mid -twentieth century in association with suburban, non-agricultural residences. Nurseries, such as the Brisson Plant Nursery located along North Great Road, supplied suburban homeowners with flowering trees and shrubs, perennials, and groundcovers (Figure 95).

Existing Condition: Remnant ornamental vegetation from suburban house sites remains throughout the Unit, although most of the associated buildings have been razed. Many of the non-native plant species used as ornamentals have become invasive, infiltrating native habitats. Fourteen primary invasive plant species are located within the landscape; of these glossy buckthorn is the most problematic - followed by purple loosestrife, honeysuckle, multi-flora rose, and Asian bittersweet.<sup>190</sup> Additional ornamental species noted during fieldwork include vinca, daylily, and yucca.

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<sup>190</sup> Brad Agius, "Revolutionary Changes to an American Landscape: Invasive Plant Species at the Minute Man National Historical Park" (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Northeast Region, Northeast Temperate Network, 2003), p. 8.



Figure 95. Brisson Nursery sign, c. 1960s. Note the ornamental shrubs planted next to the sign. (02-132, MIMA land files)

Evaluation: Contributing (Agriculture)

Ornamental vegetation associated with pre-1959 farmsteads is an historic feature of the agricultural landscape. Ornamental vegetation associated with pre-1959 suburban development, and ornamental vegetation planted by the NPS are non-contributing features.

### Buildings & Structures

Historic Condition: At the time of the battle, there were approximately twenty-five houselots along the Battle Road. A typical houselot consisted of a house, barn and several outbuildings. Also associated with several of the farms along the Battle Road were tanneries, cider mills and blacksmith shops. By the mid-1850s, these home-based businesses succumbed to competition from nearby industrial towns. At the same time, as farmers shifted from subsistence-based agricultural production to commercial production, they began constructing grain storage structures and larger barns to support beef and dairy production. As additional buildings and structures were added, distinct farm clusters developed.

By the early 1900s, Bostonians were purchasing agricultural lands and commuting to the city from former farm houses along the Battle Road Unit. Farmers that remained grew crops to sell to the urban markets and from small road side stands. Other agricultural structures typically found in the early 1900s within the present-day Battle Road Unit included large hen houses and brooders. Between 1924 and 1940, the number of houses along the Battle Road more than doubled with the majority of new construction taking place along the north side of Fiske Hill and in the area surrounding Hartwell Tavern. Additional building types present included gas stations, offices, a hotel, restaurants, an animal hospital, and a geophysics research facility.

After the park was designated in 1959, the NPS began acquiring properties and removing contemporary buildings and structures. To date, the NPS has removed or demolished over 200 residential, agricultural, and commercial buildings and structures, many dating from 1920-1959. Buildings constructed by the NPS within the Battle Road Unit include an information station (Fiske Hill), Minute Man Visitor Center and a comfort station.

Existing Condition:

Included in the landscape are buildings and structures dating from before the American Revolution to the 1990s (Figures 96-100). While most of the later nineteenth and twentieth-century buildings and structures have been removed or demolished, a few examples remain. Residential buildings and structures include houses (colonial to contemporary) and garages (early 1900s to contemporary). Agricultural buildings and structures include barns (some rebuilt or moved), roadside stands, sheds, a chicken coop, and a silo. While most of the former farmsteads include only a farmhouse and possibly a barn, several sites (Farwell Jones, Palumbo, Inferrara farms) retain multiple farm buildings and structures. Extant NPS buildings include the Minute Man Visitor Center and the comfort station near Hartwell Tavern.

Evaluation: Contributing (Military, Agriculture)

Houses extant in 1775 are historic features of the Military and Agricultural landscapes. Agricultural buildings and structures constructed between 1775 and 1959 are historic features of the agricultural landscape. Twentieth-century suburban buildings and structures, and NPS buildings are non-contributing features.



Figure 96. View northeast of the Job Brooks house (c. 1760), 2003. (OCLP)



Figure 97. View west of the Downing house, 2003. (OCLP)



Figure 98. Edward Nowalk produce stand on the Farwell Jones farm, constructed c. early 1960s. Note the dairy barn, silo and garage to the right of the produce stand, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 99. View southwest of the Palumbo farm buildings and cultivated fields, 2003. (OCLP)



Figure 100. View north of the Minute Man Visitor Center, 2003. (OCLP)

### Small-Scale Features -Stone Walls

Historic Condition: Although specific information concerning the configuration of early stone walls are outside the scope of this CLR, scholarly research of stone walls in New England suggests that the number of stone walls within the Battle Road Unit increased as the settlement expanded westward, as land transferred into private ownership, and as forests were removed for fields and pastures. Initially, stone was piled in the middle of a field or pasture, but over time was generally moved to the field edge, often against an existing wooden fence. Stone walls served a variety of purposes such as protecting orchards and agricultural crops from livestock and marking property boundaries. Later, farmers constructed stone walls to confine the livestock herds. During the battle, militia and minutemen used stone walls and other objects for cover from British Regular musket fire.

By the mid-1800s, the landscape along the Battle Road had not changed significantly since the time of the battle. It continued to include colonial landscape features such as stone walls, orchards, fields, houses and barns. As farming evolved through mechanization, stone walls were dismantled or demolished to enlarge fields, allowing the use of larger farm equipment. Walls were also dismantled to construct new house foundations and as fill material for roadways. As subdivisions were constructed in the twentieth century, sections of stone walls were removed to provide access for driveways and new roads. Under the NPS, extant stone walls have been repaired and rebuilt, and new walls have been constructed in historic stone wall locations.

Existing Condition:

Stone walls and stone wall remnants border fields and roads and cut through woodlands. Walls within the Battle Road Unit were constructed to mark property boundaries; to define fields; to keep out, or to contain livestock; and to retain grade changes. Structurally, the stone walls within the Battle Road Unit consist of thrown walls and laid walls. A thrown wall is comprised of a simple arrangement of stones, often one stone wide. This type of wall typically separates fields. A laid wall takes longer to construct, and is general used for fencing near the farmhouse or along roads. Laid walls may be capped with large, flat stone tops or faced with at least one flat side to the wall.<sup>191</sup>

Both of these types of stone walls can be constructed as free-standing or as retaining walls. Free standing walls are the most common type of wall found in the Unit. These walls were constructed to mark property lines and enclose spaces. Most of the free standing stone walls are thrown walls that border fields, former fields now covered by woodland, and roads. The Battle Road Trail provides access to many of these free standing stone walls that would otherwise be inaccessible to the public. Retaining walls retain grade on the uphill or downhill

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<sup>191</sup> Susan Allport, *Sermons in Stone* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1990), p. 100.

side of a slope. A number of retaining walls are located within the Unit along roads, bordering wetlands, and near houses. A large section of dry laid retaining walls are found along North Great Road in the Brooks farm area. Additional laid retaining walls are located near George Hall and Inferrara houses. A good example of retaining walls along wetlands is found just east of the Job Brooks and Joshua Brooks Jr. houses. A more contemporary retaining wall is located in front of the Moodey house, c. 1956 (Figures 101-104).

Walls rebuilt or repaired by the NPS and the Massachusetts Highway Department are located throughout the Battle Road Unit, although typically located adjacent to the Battle Road. Many of these walls are easily identifiable by the uniform-sized stones used in construction, and often by the color of stone. Most NPS walls were reconstructed or rehabilitated on sites where a wall is believed to have stood in 1775, or in areas known to have had a wall in the 1800s (Figures 105-107).

Evaluation: Contributing (Agriculture, Commemoration), Undetermined (Military)  
Stone walls constructed on pre-1959 farms are historic features of the Agricultural landscape. Further research may reveal that some of the walls are also historic features of the military landscape. The remaining portion of the stone wall surrounding the Meriam's Corner monument is an historic feature of the Commemorative landscape. Stone walls associated with suburban development (residences/businesses) prior to 1959, and all NPS constructed walls are non-contributing features.



Figure 101. View south of stone walls bordering a field in the Brooks Hill area, 2004.



Figure 102. View south of a stone wall bordering the Battle Road Trail, just west of the Farwell Jones farm, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 103. View north of the laid retaining wall in front of the George Hall house, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 104. View south of the laid retaining wall in front of the Moodey house, 2003. (OCLP)



Figure 105. NPS reconstructed thrown stone wall along Route 2A, east of Meriam's Corner, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 106. Thrown stone wall restored by the NPS along the Battle Road Trail at Hartwell Tavern, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 107. NPS reconstructed thrown stone wall (left) along the Battle Road Trail near the Bloody Angle, 2004. (OCLP)

## Small-Scale Features- Monuments and Markers

### Commemorative Monument & Markers

Historic Condition: The towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington erected four granite markers along the Battle Road in the late 1800s, memorializing the events of April 19, 1775: the Meriam's Corner Monument (1885), the Hayward Well Monument (1885), the Bluff Monument (1885), and the Paul Revere Capture Marker (1899). The Meriam's Corner Monument, the Hayward Well Monument, and the Paul Revere Capture Marker were all placed within existing stone walls along the Battle Road. The Bluff Monument was placed at the base of a bluff, just west of Fiske Hill.

Both the Bluff Monument and the Paul Revere Capture Marker have been repositioned. The Bluff Monument was moved slightly north several times, when portions of the bluff were removed during repeated realignment of the road. The Paul Revere Capture Marker, which was originally located within a wall facing the Battle Road, was placed by 1956 adjacent to the Buttrick Ice Cream restaurant parking lot, perpendicular to the road and not far from its original position. The NPS moved the marker in 2000, facing it away from the road (toward the Battle Road Trail) and surrounding it with a semi-circular stone wall and several interpretive waysides. The Hayward Well and the Meriam's Corner Marker are believed to be in their original position; however, the original wall surrounding the Hayward Well Monument was removed sometime before 1962. The NPS has constructed a low stone wall around the Hayward Well Monument.

Existing Condition: The Bluff Monument is located on the northern side of the Battle Road/Route 2A. The small rectangular granite marker reads: "THIS BLUFF WAS USED AS A RALLYING POINT BY THE BRITISH APRIL 19 1775/ AFTER A SHARP FIGHT THEY RETREATED TO FISKE HILL FROM WHICH THEY WERE DRIVEN IN GREAT CONFUSION." (Figures 108-109)

The Meriam's Corner Monument is located at the corner of the Battle Road/Route 2A and Old Bedford Road. The monument consists of a plaque set into a granite slab embedded with a stone wall. The plaque reads: "MERIAM'S CORNER/ THE BRITISH TROOPS RETREATING FROM THE OLD NORTH BRIDGE WERE HERE ATTACKED IN FLANK BY THE MEN OF CONCORD AND NEIGHBORING TOWNS AND DRIVEN UNDER A HOT FIRE TO CHARLESTOWN." (Figures 110-112)

The Hayward Well Monument stands along the southern edge of the Battle Road/Old Massachusetts Avenue in Lexington. The small rectangular granite marker stands approximately three feet tall and is surrounded by loose rocks. The marker reads: "AT THIS WELL/ APRIL 19 1775/ JAMES HAYWARD OF ACTION MET A BRITISH SOLDIER WHO RAISING HIS GUN SAID YOU ARE A DEAD MAN AND SO ARE YOU REPLIED HAYWARD/ BOTH FIRED/ THE SOLDIER WAS INSTANTLY KILLED & HAYWARD MORTALLY WOUNDED." (Figures 113-115)

The Paul Revere Capture Marker is located on the northern side of the Battle Road/Route 2A, along the Battle Road Trail. The marker is incorporated into a low-lying semi-circular stone wall enclosure. The inscription on the tablet reads in part: “AT THIS POINT ON THE OLD CONCORD ROAD AS IT THEN WAS ENDED THE MIDNIGHT RIDE OF PAUL REVERE.” (Figures 116-118).

Evaluation: Contributing (Commemoration)

The Meriam’s Corner Monument, the Hayward Well Monument, the Bluff Monument, and the Paul Revere Capture Marker are historic features of the commemorative landscape.



Figure 108. Bluff Monument, c. 1930. (*Heroes of the Battle Road*)



Figure 109. Bluff Monument, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 110. Meriam's Corner Monument, c. late 1800s. (Hosmer Photographic Collection, 111.147, Concord Free Public Library)



Figure 111. Meriam's Corner Monument, c.1939. A portion of the wall surrounding the monument was removed in 1903. (*Lexington and Concord*)



Figure 112. Meriam's Corner Monument, 2005. A portion of the wall removed in 1903 has been replaced by the NPS. (OCLP)



Figure 113. Postcard of the Hayward Well Monument postmarked 1907. Note the pump behind the stone wall. (Private Collection)



Figure 114. Hayward Well Monument, 1962. Note the stone wall surrounding the monument has been removed. (HABS/ HAER photograph, 62-18, MIMA library)



Figure 115. Hayward Well Monument, 2004. Note a portion of the wall surrounding the monument has been reconstructed. (OCLP)



Figure 116. View west of the Paul Revere capture site, c. 1899. The arrow points to the location of the marker within the stone wall, along the north side of the Battle Road (Route 2A). (*Historic Mansions and Highways around Boston*, 1899)



Figure 117. View west of the Paul Revere capture site, 1956. The arrow points to the marker at the edge of the Buttrick Ice Cream restaurant parking lot. The marker faces toward the Battle Road (Route 2A). (“Photographs to Accompany Proposed Plans for Lexington-Concord Battle Road,” no box number, MIMA archives)



Figure 118. View west of the Paul Revere capture site, 2004. The arrow points to the marker located within the field. The marker faces away from the Battle Road (Route 2A), towards the Battle Road Trail. (OCLP)

## National Park Service Markers

Historic Condition: As part of the Battle Road Trail project, the NPS erected granite markers along the trail in 2000. The markers include Battle Road Markers, Milestone Markers, British Grave Markers, and Archeological Site Markers.

Existing Condition: Battle Road Markers are placed in pairs at locations where the road enters/exits Route 2A or where the road is separated by an intersecting road. Each of the tall granite markers are inscribed “BATTLE ROAD, APRIL 19, 1775” and the pair is connected with an iron chain (Figure 119).

The Milestone Markers are located adjacent the Battle Road. The tall granite markers are inscribed with the distance in miles from their locations to Boston (Figure 120).

The British Soldiers Grave Markers are located at the approximate location of British soldier graves. The markers consist of a plaque reading “NEAR HERE ARE BURIED BRITISH SOLDIERS” set into a granite boulder (Figure 121).

The Archeological Site Markers are located at known archeological sites or ruins of structures present in 1775. The granite markers are inscribed with the name of the site. Locations marked include the Ebenezer Fiske house site, a blacksmith shop, the Thomas Nelson Jr. house site, and the Josiah Nelson house site. (Figure 122).

Evaluation: Non-contributing



Figure 119. Typical Battle Road Markers, 2004.



Figure 120. Typical milestone marker, 2004.



Figure 121. Typical British grave marker, 2004.



Figure 122. Typical archeological site marker, 2004.

### Massachusetts Highway Board (M.H.B.) Markers

Historic Condition: The Massachusetts Highway Board Markers were placed every thousand feet along both sides of the newly designated state highway in the 1890s, as part of the highway construction project. Only about one foot of the granite markers was exposed, the remaining six feet was buried under ground. Engraved into the rectangular markers were the initials M.H.B.

Existing Condition: A few of the M.H.B. markers are still extant. That is, only a few of the above ground portions of the markers are still intact; most or all of the underground sections are presumed extant, just not visible (Figure 123).

Evaluation: Contributing (Agriculture)

The M.H.B. Markers are historic features of the 1890s agricultural landscape.

### Town Boundary Line Marker

Historic Condition: Unknown

Existing Condition: The tall granite pillar is located on the southern edge of the Battle Road/Route 2A, at the Concord-Lincoln town line. (Figure 124)

Evaluation: Unknown



Figure 123. Typical M.H.B. marker, 2004



Figure 124. Concord-Lincoln town line marker, along southern edge of the Battle Road/Route 2A, 2003.

## Small-Scale Features - Miscellaneous

### Oxen Pasture Stone Bridge

Historic Condition: The small field stone bridge may have been built before 1775, on a path running along the eastern edge of Concord's seventeenth-century oxen pasture.<sup>192</sup>

Existing Condition: The Oxen Pasture Stone Bridge is located southeast of the Stow-Hardy house, and south of the Battle Road/Route 2A. The bridge consists of a large uncut stone slab approximately nine feet in length, nine feet wide, and six inches high, positioned atop fieldstone abutments (Figure 125).<sup>193</sup>

Evaluation: Undetermined (Military), Contributing (Agriculture)

The Ox Pasture Stone Bridge is an historic feature of the agricultural landscape. Further research may reveal that it is an historic feature of the military landscape.



Figure 125. Oxen Pasture Stone Bridge, 2002. (OCLP)

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<sup>192</sup> Harrington, et al., National Register, sec. 7 p. 19.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., sec. 7 p. 19.

### Meriam's Corner Area Stone Culvert

Historic Condition: Research indicates that there was a small bridge or culvert that carried water from the wetlands north of the Meriam property under the Battle Road at the time of the battle. In 1898, the Massachusetts Highway Commission built a large granite culvert at this location as part of the state highway construction.

Existing Condition: The large fieldstone culvert is inscribed with the date "1898." (Figure 126).

Evaluation: Contributing  
The stone culvert is a historic feature of the agricultural landscape.

### Minute Man Boulder

Historic Condition: By the 1950s, the large glacial rock located on the Nelson property (north of the Battle Road) was known as the Minute Man Boulder. The boulder is significant as a location from which a colonist took shelter as he fired upon and killed two retreating British soldiers during the battle.



Figure 126. Stone culvert at Meriam's Corner, 2004. (OCLP)

Existing Condition: The boulder remains undisturbed in its natural setting along the Battle Road Trail (Figure 127).

Evaluation: Contributing (Military, Agriculture)

The Minute Man Boulder is an historic feature of the military and the agricultural landscapes.

### Views and Vistas

Historic Condition: In the 1600s, woodland cover prohibited expansive views. At the time of the running battle in 1775, over a century of tree clearing had opened expansive views. While the openness allowed colonial militia and minutemen clear view of the British retreating along the Battle Road, it forced them to take cover behind stonewalls, buildings, and a few remaining trees. Well into the nineteenth-century, farming practices maintained open views to and from the Battle Road.

By the late 1800s, agricultural production significantly declined and uncultivated fields reverted to woodlands, creating visual barriers across the formerly open landscape. Expansive views were still possible; however, more often views were foreshortened by woodlands bordering or encircling cultivated fields and pastures.



Figure 127. View north of the Minute Man Boulder from the Battle Road/Nelson Road, 2003. (OCLP)

When the park was established in 1959, about fifty percent of the former agricultural fields were covered by woodland, which significantly shortened views. Also blocking views from the Battle Road were numerous contemporary buildings and structures, which lined extensive portions of the road. Views were somewhat enhanced beginning soon after the federal government began to acquire property within the Unit, as many of the modern buildings and structures were removed. However, most woodland growth remained unchecked, and tree growth on abandoned fields and pastures continued.

Existing Condition: Woodlands cover approximately seventy-five percent of the Battle Road Unit, blocking expansive views from the Battle Road. In a few areas where the landscape has remained open through agricultural leases or park maintenance, open views remain. In many areas, views along the Battle Road are blocked by woodlands. In most areas, where non-agricultural contemporary uses border the park, tree growth blocks the non-compatible uses.

Evaluation: Contributing (Military, Agricultural, Commemorative)

Views across open fields and wet meadows are historic features of the military, agricultural, and commemorative landscapes. Views blocked by secondary woodlands not present during the historic period, and views of non-compatible uses are non-contributing.

### **Archeological Sites**

Historic Condition: Since early settlement, buildings and structures have been demolished by their owners, by neglect, or destroyed by hurricane or fire. The NPS has conducted numerous archeological investigations within the Battle Road Unit since the 1960s, unearthing and preserving a variety of features such as building foundations, chimneys, and abandoned portions of the Battle Road. Most of the sites investigated and/or preserved within the Battle Road Unit are the remains of features extant in 1775 (Figures 128-137).

Existing Condition: Both exposed and unexposed archeological sites are located in the park. Exposed sites include eighteenth-century house foundations and chimneys, and nineteenth-century barn foundations.

Evaluation: Contributing (Military, Agriculture)

Archeological sites of features extant in 1775 are historic features of the military and agricultural landscape. Archeological sites of features built from 1775 to 1959, excluding features associated with suburban development, are historic features of the agricultural landscape.



Figure 128. View northwest of the Josiah Nelson house, c. 1905. (Photographic copy located in MIMA library, negative 75-242)



Figure 129. View northeast of Josiah Nelson house site in 1908, after a fire. The chimney is the only portion of the house remaining after the fire. (Photographic copy of an original owned by Mr. W. Newton Nelson, MIMA library)



Figure 130. Josiah Nelson house chimney ruin, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 131. View northeast of the Charles Sawyer barn on the Job Brooks property, n.d. (Photographic copy of original owned by Mrs. David Rogers, Brooks Road, Lincoln Mass., MIMA library)



Figure 132. View northeast of the Charles Sawyer barn foundation on the Job Brooks property, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 133. View east of the Charles Sawyer barn foundation and Job Brooks house, 2004. (OCLP)



Figure 134. View east of the Samuel Hartwell house, c. 1890s. (*Heroes of the Battle Road*)

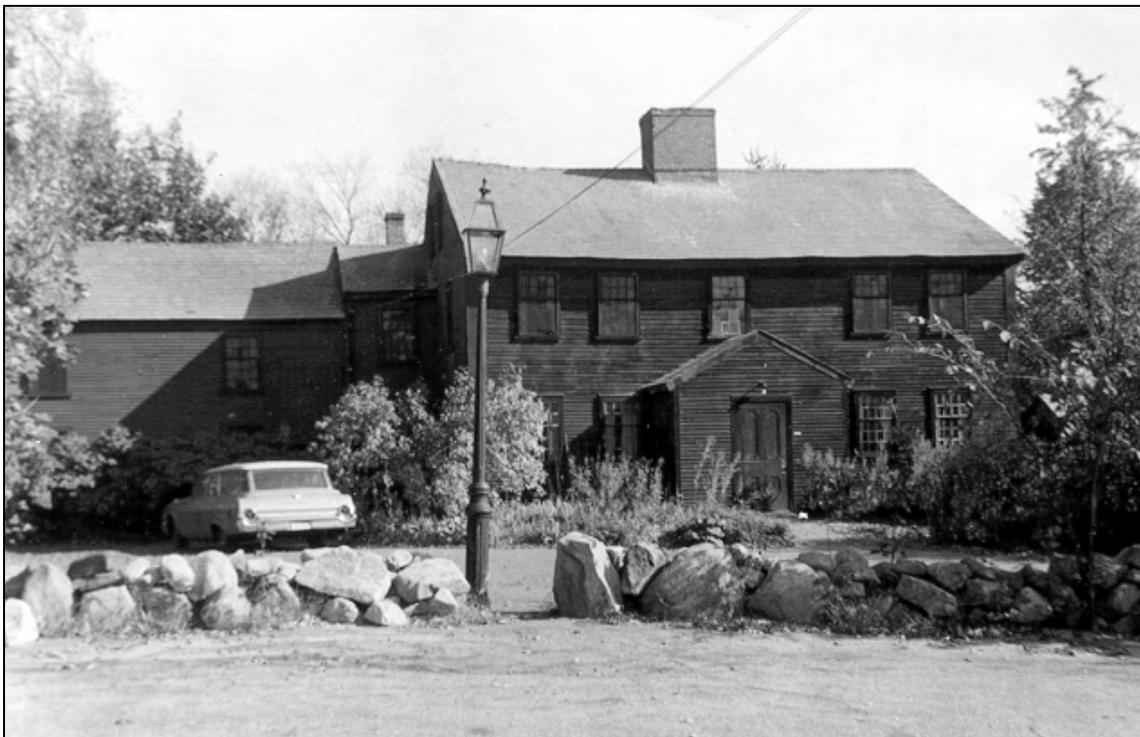


Figure 135. View northeast of the Samuel Hartwell house, 1960s. (MIMA land files, folder 02-140)



Figure 136. Ruins of the Samuel Hartwell house, after the fire in 1968. (MIMA land files, folder 02-140)



Figure 137. View east of the Samuel Hartwell chimney and the NPS constructed protective frame structure, built on the footprint of the Samuel Hartwell house, 2002. (OCLP)



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## Repositories

Cary Memorial Library  
1605 Massachusetts Avenue  
Lexington, MA 02450  
781-862-6288  
town records, historic maps

Concord Free Public Library (CFPL)  
129 Main Street  
Concord, MA 01742  
978-318-3300  
town records, historic maps, historic photographs  
Lincoln Public Library  
Lincoln, MA 01773  
781-259-8465  
town records, historic photographs, Eleazer Brooks Papers, Historic maps

Massachusetts Archives  
220 Morrissey Blvd  
Boston, MA 02125  
617-727-2816  
WPA and other historic maps, Middlesex Court of General Sessions's records, Middlesex County Commissioners records, State Road Commission records

Massachusetts Highway Department  
Ten Park Plaza, Room 6210  
Boston MA 02116  
617-973-7533  
state road layout plans

Massachusetts Historical Society  
1154 Boylston Street  
Boston, MA 02215  
617-536-1608  
Shurcliff Collection

Middlesex South Registry of Deeds  
Plan Department  
208 Cambridge Street  
E. Cambridge, MA 02141  
county road layout plans

Minute Man National Historical Park (MIMA) Library and Archives  
Contact: Terrie Wallace  
978-318-7841  
park reports, including numerous historic grounds, structures, and historic research reports; copy of Arthur Shurcliff's 1925 report; BNHSC photographs and other historic photographs, copies and transcription of town records and other reports (on microfilm) related to roads within the Battle Road Unit.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

New England Regional Office

380 Trapelo Road, Waltham, MA 02452

Contact: Denise Pullen

781-647-8104

BNHSC records, including letter to BNHSC from Arthur Shurcliff (1956), MIMA plans, historic maps relating to Battle Road Unit

Historic New England (formerly Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, SPNEA)

Archives

Otis House, Boston, MA

617-227-3956

historic photographs

State Library of Massachusetts

Special Collections Department

Massachusetts State House

617-727-2595

historic maps

State Transportation Library

10 Park Plaza

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Boston, MA 02116

617-973-800

State Highway Commission Reports





