National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2012

Revised: 9/2025



Nelson Farm Area

Minute Man National Historical Park

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Introduction

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

General Information

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name: Nelson Farm Area

Resource Classification: Component Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 650043

Parent Landscape: 650037

Inventory Status: Complete

Park Information

Park Name: Minute Man National Historical Park

Alpha Code: MIMA

Park Organization Code: 1820

Park District: MIMA

Region: Northeast

Restricted: Yes

Landscape Description:

The Nelson Farm is part of Minute Man National Historical Park (NHP), located in Middlesex County, sixteen miles northwest of Boston, Massachusetts. Established in 1959, the park preserves the sites of the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775 and the “shot heard round the world” that began the Revolutionary War. Four discontiguous management units of Minute Man NHP (Battle Road, North Bridge, Wayside, and Barrett’s Farm) comprise an area of approximately 1,040 acres of land in the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington. The largest of the units, the 800-acre Battle Road Unit, preserves part of the route along which British Regulars fled back to Boston under relentless Colonial fire. The Battle Road is the spine of the unit running in an asymmetrical, linear route along present-day Lexington Road (Concord), North Great Road (Lincoln), and Massachusetts Avenue (Lexington), parts of which are also designated as State Route 2A. The Battle Road is set within a landscape of farmhouses, barns, stone walls, fields, woodlands, and hedgerows, all remnants of the area’s agricultural past. While there are some areas of post-historic development associated with private residences and park operations within the boundaries of the Battle Road Unit, it nonetheless retains much of its historic low-density, agricultural appearance. This contrasts with areas immediately surrounding the unit that have been heavily developed, such as Hanscom Air Force Base just to the north and its associated military housing areas.

The 123-acre Nelson Farm area is located in the eastern portion of the Battle Road Unit, in the towns of Lincoln and Lexington. The focus of this area is a section of the original Battle Road (Nelson Road and Marrett Street) that was the scene of several skirmishes and now identified by historic monuments and contemporary markers. This part of the Battle Road was bypassed in the early 1800s by the North Great Road (Route 2A) and is now part of the unpaved pedestrian-only Battle Road Trail. Among the historic houses along the Battle Road at Nelson Farm are the Colonial style Jacob Whittemore House (pre-1775) and the Federal/Georgian-style John Nelson House (1808-1810). Early 19th-century barns are located next to both houses. There are also stone foundation remnants of other Nelson family residences, a blacksmith shop, and a hop house. These resources are set within lawns and meadows dotted with shade trees and wetland areas. Stone walls still line the Battle Road and demarcate the old agricultural fields. Some of the fields have been restored to their open condition, while many others are now dominated by successional woodlands.

The close proximity of Hanscom Air Force Base and Hanscom Field to the Nelson Farm area makes much of the existing forested areas extremely important as a visual and physical buffer between Hanscom and the park. This woodland screen masks most views of the surrounding development and maintains the site's historic character. The park has removed most of the contemporary private residences and businesses built when the region became suburbanized in the early- to mid-20th century, and today only two remain. The Minute Man Visitor Center (1975), parking lot, and small amphitheatre are located near the middle of the Nelson Farm area. The park has placed interpretive waysides along the Battle Road Trail, further enhancing the visitor experience.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Early Land Use and Colonial Settlement:
For at least one thousand years prior to European settlement, Algonquian people planted crops, fished, and hunted along the Musketequid River (Concord River) in what would become known as the Concord Plantation, a portion of which now comprises the Battle Road Unit of Minute Man National Historical Park. By the 1630s, diseases introduced by early European explorers had decimated the Native American population within the present-day Battle Road Unit.

Colonial settlement began in 1635 when Puritan families ventured inland to settle within the newly established Concord Plantation, and in the following year house lots were allocated along an east-west ridgeline as part of Concord's First Division. In 1640 the town of Cambridge extended west to the Concord Plantation's eastern border, and the newly settled land was known as Cambridge Farms. The farms would separate from Cambridge in 1713, becoming the town of Lexington. The town of Lincoln formed in 1754, its boundaries including portions of Concord and Lexington. (Cultural Landscape Report--hereafter CLR--2005: 9)

Settlement within the present-day Battle Road Unit occurred along the Battle Road, the primary east-west road paralleling the ridgeline and connecting the Concord Plantation and Cambridge Farms (later the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington) to Boston. The road then was called by other names including the Bay Road and Country Road, and is now known as the Battle Road or the North Great Road. On both sides of the road were agricultural fields, which in the early to mid-17th century were commonly held in large tracts a distance from the farmhouses. 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 dissolved and agricultural fields were 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, and taverns. Additional roads were constructed throughout the 18th century. (CLR 2005: 9)

The Nelsons and Other Early Families:
Thomas Nelson purchased 50 acres of upland, meadow, and a house and barn in the Nelson Farm area in 1724. The Nelson family added to their holdings in the Nelson Farm area throughout the 18th century, with Thomas' sons, Thomas, Jr. and Josiah, both establishing their own farms. People from whom the Nelsons bought land included Daniel Brown and Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. Thomas Nelson, Sr. died in 1770, and his children received shares of their father's property. Daughter, Tabitha, inherited 10 to 12 acres of pasture and woodlot north of the Battle Road, with the original family home and barn. (Archeological Research Report--hereafter ARR--1969: 4; Malcolm 1985: 27-28)

Jacob Whittemore inherited a large amount of property in Lexington (at the east end of the Nelson Farm area) upon his father's death in 1755. He kept a barn south of the Battle Road, and fences and stone walls would have enclosed the various portions of his land. A blacksmith shop was also located across from and east of the Battle Road on Jacob Whittemore's property, though Whittemore does not appear to have owned the blacksmith shop. (Malcolm 1985: 15)

While the Nelsons and Jacob Whittemore owned the majority of the land in the Nelson Farm area around the time of the American Revolution, at least a few properties did not belong to either of those families. In the 1770s, Martha Salisbury mortgaged the 40-acre Bull Tavern property, located west of the blacksmith shop and the junction between the Battle Road and present-day Route 2A, from Josiah Mansfield. Salisbury leased the tavern to John Muzzy and his son, Isaac. Whether the Bull Tavern was actually operated as a tavern around the time of the Revolution is unknown. Just south of the tavern and blacksmith shop lay the land of Amos Marrett. Only a small portion of Marrett's land lined the Battle Road, abutting Jacob Whittemore's meadow on the west. (Malcolm 1985: 12-13, 17)

The American Revolution:
On April 19, 1775, colonists fought British Regulars, engaging in what would become the first battle of the American

Revolution. From Meriam's Corner the Battle of Lexington and Concord progressed east through the fields and around the homes of Nelson Farm area. From behind what is now known as the Minute Man Boulder, William Thorning shot and killed two British Regulars. Additionally, a skirmish took place directly at the Nelson Farms when the Lexington Company waited on a low hill on the north side of the road at the Lincoln-Lexington line to take revenge for an earlier, deadly clash on Lexington Common. This battle became known as Parker's Revenge. As the British continued their retreat east through Lexington, Colonists were positioned on the steep, thickly wooded hill known as the "Bluff," located at the eastern edge of the Nelson Farm area on Jacob Whittemore's property. After a hard fought skirmish, the British drove the militia from their position. Though the fighting in this area was limited to one day, the war would continue until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783. (Administrative History--hereafter AH--2010:1; CLR 2005: 41-42, 45)

The Nelson and Whittemore Farms:
Tabitha Nelson died in 1778. In April, Thomas sold his sister's dwelling house to his son-in-law, Samuel Hastings. In the eastern portion of the Nelson Farm area, Martha Salisbury continued to lease the Bull Tavern property before selling it to Benjamin Danforth in 1782. Meanwhile, nearby Jacob Whittemore sold his homestead in April 1779 to Ezekial Hall. The plot north of the road contained 60 acres of pasture, tillage, orchard, woodland, a mansion house, corn house, and the aforementioned blacksmith shop. South of the road, the property included a five-acre meadow and 43 acres of other land with a barn just south of the Battle Road. Though he had only owned it a year, in 1780 Ezekial Hall either leased or sold the property to John Muzzy, Sr. Jacob Whittemore died the same year. (Hudson and Bks. 39 & 222 as cited in ARR 1969: 4-5; Malcolm 1985: 12-17)

Rural Economy:
Between 1802 and 1806, portions of the Battle Road were straightened, by-passing historic sites such as the Nelson Farm area properties. The realigned route was called the North Great Road. Farmers could more efficiently carry goods to market on the improved road, fueling the change from subsistence to commercial economy. Introduction of railroad lines in the mid-19th century also compelled Battle Road farmers 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 as large tracts of fancy fruit orchards, vegetable gardens, and dairy herds were plentiful along the Battle Road during this time. Fancy fruit orchards also replaced the apple orchards used for cider production, as drinking habits changed in the early 1800s. (CLR 2005: 10, 49, 53-54)

Post-1783 Thomas Nelson, Jr. enlarged his home in Lincoln by moving his sister Tabitha's house (constructed in 1754 by Thomas, Sr.) directly next to his own. Thomas, Jr.'s daughter Lydia and her husband Samuel Hastings then occupied the 1754 structure, and Hastings eventually inherited the entire home from his father-in-law. The only Nelson house remaining in Lexington was the original structure belonging to Thomas, Sr. in the 1720s, which burned down in the early 19th century. Meanwhile, in 1808 construction began, south of the by-passed Battle Road and west of the Josiah Nelson (Sr.) House, on what would be known as the John Nelson House. The house was occupied by Josiah Nelson's sons, Josiah, Jr. and John. (Malcolm 1985: 28-30; John Nelson Historic Structure Assessment Report--hereafter JNHSAR--2008: 2-3)

In 1818 Joel Viles purchased the Bull Tavern property from Joseph Simonds. Just north of the Battle Road, John Muzzy, Jr. took over the Whittemore property upon his father's death in 1824. He would transfer around 50 acres with house, barn, wood shed, shop, and chaise (carriage) house to Captain Daniel Chandler in the summer of 1838, and the property would continue to change hands during the 19th century. (Malcolm 1985: 12; Jacob Whittemore Historic Structure Report--hereafter JWHSR--1963: Historical Data Section, Appendix 1)

The Nelson properties also transferred to new owners throughout the mid- and late-19th century. In 1837, Samuel Hasting's sons, Thomas and Oliver, sold the Thomas Nelson, Jr. property outside the Nelson family to David Miller. Martin Neville purchased the property from David Miller at an unidentified date, and, between 1895 and 1900, a modern house was constructed on the site. Meanwhile, in 1855, the last of the Nelsons occupying the Josiah Nelson (Sr.) house died. George Nelson became sole owner of the John Nelson House in 1859, and George's son, J. Walter Nelson, occupied the house towards the end of the 19th century. (JNHSAR 2008: 4-5; Research Report--hereafter RR--1966: 3; Archeological Research Report--hereafter TNARR--1973: 3)

By the 1880s, most descendents 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 use by bicycles and motor cars. (CLR 2005: 10)

20th Century Landscape:
The train and the motor car eventually brought tourists and increasing numbers of commuters to the Battle Road countryside. With the new residents came new homes, businesses, and residential roads. While a number of farms remained under cultivation, many more reverted to woodland. In the Nelson Farm area, W. Newton Nelson (J. Walter's son) ran a dairy, grew crops, and managed an orchard on the John Nelson property, but much of the land became wooded. (CLR 2005: 11, 77; John Nelson House & Barn Historic Structure Assessment Report--hereafter JNHSAR--2008: 4)

The Josiah Nelson house burned down on July 4, 1908, leaving only the brick chimney with part of its fireplaces and hearths intact. In 1924, the sons of Martin Neville purchased the modern house on the Thomas Nelson, Jr. property from their father. Meanwhile, between 1868 and 1907 the Whittemore property had generally been transferred as "forty-seven acres and two-acres." By 1910, the size of the property transferred was greatly diminished to "fifteen acres and two acres." By the 1920s the Jacob Whittemore property had been altered from its late 1800s appearance, and more outbuildings had been built west of the house. (RR 1966: 3-4; TNARR 1973: 3; JWHSR 1963: Appendix 1)

Early Preservation Efforts and Minute Man National Historical Park:
New residential and commercial development compelled people to begin focusing on preservation of the historic properties of the area. 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 150th anniversary of the opening day of the American Revolution. 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, an Air Force base and high-tech research center constructed in 1941 just north of the Nelson Farm area. This development brought both needed services and more traffic to the Battle Road Unit. (CLR 2005: 11, 89)

In 1955, the Boston National Historic Sites Commission (BNHSC) was appointed 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. In January 1957 a conflict arose between the BNHSC and U.S. Air Force, as the Air Force was constructing a large military housing project near the Josiah Nelson farmstead. The BNHSC requested preservation of an eight-acre parcel including the Nelson home and a witness boulder. In May 1957, the Air Force reduced the housing project size, and the Under-Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI) requested that the parcel be transferred to the DOI. In 1958, the BNHSC completed an interim report for submission to Congress the following year. The report recommended establishment of a national historical park that would include the eight-acre parcel and four miles of the Battle Road from Meriam's Corner in Concord to Route 128 in Lexington. The park would be known as "Minute Man," and the National Park Service gained possession of the eight-acre parcel on December 8, 1958. (Shurcliff to BNHSC as cited in CLR 2005: 96-100)

Public Law 86-321 established Minute Man National Historical Park on September 21, 1959 incorporating much of the Nelson Farm area. By this time more trees were growing along the roads in the Nelson Farm area, and an access road to the Hanscom Air Force Base had been constructed in the area. Several colonial properties and structures were acquired, researched, and documented between the 1960s and 1970s, with the Josiah Nelson and Jacob Whittemore sites being some of the first. (CLR 2005: 11, 105-107)

In 1968 the modern house on the Thomas Nelson Jr. site was razed. Construction of the Battle Road Visitor Center in the Nelson Area began in August 1974, and the building was dedicated in May 1975. In the late 1970s, archeologists supervised the repair of the brick and stone fireplace at the Josiah Nelson house site. Around 1979, a structure known as the Hargrove Barn was moved to the Whittemore site to screen the vehicles owned by park personnel. (TNARR 1973: 3; CLR 2005: 109; Administrative History--hereafter AH--2010: 137, 204)

The mission of Minute Man National Historical Park is to "approximate the cultural environment that existed in 1775 and preserve and interpret individual resources that contribute to understanding the events of the Battle of Lexington and Concord." The Nelson Farm area of the Battle Road Unit contains a number of those individual resources and helps visitors interpret both events of the battle and the general history and function of the Battle Road. One of the largest changes made to the Battle Road in the Nelson Farm area was the restriction of the road to pedestrian traffic.

The asphalt was removed beginning in the 1980s, and the Battle Road Trail was constructed in 1996 according to designs by the landscape architectural firm Carol R. Johnson Associates. While both the Nelson Farm area and Battle Road have been improved, large sections of the historic road underlie Route 2A, a fast-paced two-lane commuter route which connects communities to the west with Boston and also provides direct access to the Hanscom Airfield and Air Force Base. (Battle Road CLI 2007: 5; CLR 2005: 11, 112)

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

Minute Man National Historical Park (NHP) possesses significance under National Register criteria A, B, C, and D. The park has national significance in the areas of Military History, Commemoration, and Literature. Its primary significance as the site of the 1775 Battle of Lexington and Concord, which marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War and ranks among the most significant events in American history. Among the extant properties relating to the battle are the Lexington and Concord Battlefield, thirteen buildings present at the time of the battle, and a number of historical archaeological sites that constitute the remains of homes of people or events associated with the fight. The importance of the battle to the creation of the United States was recognized during the early years of the republic, and the area subsequently became one of the first hallowed places in the new nation. The placement of monuments and plaques to formally commemorate the event began with the construction of the Battle Monument in 1836, and over the course of the ensuing century a number of other objects designed to mark the site of important aspects of the battle were erected. The significance of the place in the area of commemoration culminated with the creation of Minute Man NHP in 1959. Two properties in the park, the Wayside and Old Manse, also possess national significance for their association with prominent literary figures of the 19th and 20th centuries. Both properties have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. The Literary significance of the district extends from 1834 when Ralph Waldo Emerson began his short residence at the Old Manse, to 1924 when Harriet Lothrop left the Wayside. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 1)

The park also possesses local significance under National Register criteria A, C, and D in the areas of Agriculture, Architecture, and Archaeology. The history of the district is inextricably tied to agriculture, which was the primary economic activity carried on there through the 17th through 19th centuries. The period of significance for Agriculture begins in c.1635 when plantation period settlement and agricultural land use in Concord began to 1951 to encompass farm properties in Concord that were involved in market gardening and dairying during the early and mid-20th century. Architecturally, the district embodies a collection of dwellings that are representative of local building trends from the early 18th century through the mid-20th century. The period of significance for Architecture extends from c.1705 when the Meriam House was constructed to 1946 when the Beatteay House was completed. (Note: The c.1705 date is from the 2002 National Register documentation. Future revisions and updates to the documentation should revisit this date because the William Smith House dates to c.1693). Numerous historical archaeological sites have been investigated at the park and have yielded or are likely to yield significant information pertaining to early settlement in the area and further information relating to the appearance of the area at the time of the battle on April 19, 1775. The period of significance for Archaeology extends from c.1665 when the John Meriam House was constructed to 1951. (National Register 2002, Section 8:1-2)

There are two overall periods of significance that encompass the park's resources: 7,500 to 500 years ago, and c.1635 to 1959. The first period acknowledges archeological resources, which are beyond the scope of this CLI and are therefore not addressed beyond information provided in National Register documentation. The second period begins with the settlement and agricultural development of the area and ends when the park was established.

The Nelson Farm area is within the Battle Road Unit, the largest of the park's four discontinuous units, and contains part of the historical Battle Road along which Colonial militia pursued and attacked the retreating British during the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Numerous historic buildings, structures, stone walls, monuments, and over 800 acres of former farm land contribute to the military, commemorative, agricultural, architectural, and archeological significance of the Battle Road Unit under the National Register criteria A, C, and D.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The physical integrity of the Nelson Farm area is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (c.1635 to 1959) with current conditions. Though they have evolved over the years, many historic characteristics and features of the site are intact. The original route of the Battle Road still exists along Nelson Road and is now part of the Battle Road Trail, a pedestrian and bicycling path closed to motor vehicles. The trail passes by the historic Bluff Monument, one of four commemorative markers installed along the Battle Road in

the late 19th century. The 1946 Airport Road (Access Road) connects Hanscom Air Force Base to Route 2A and helps maintain the historic layout and circulation pattern of the Nelson Farm area. The restoration of several fields reflects the historic land use pattern of fields and woodlands. Also reinforcing the original patterns of roads and agricultural fields is the system of stone walls, many of which have been repaired and restored. Most notably, the Federal-style John Nelson House and Colonial era Jacob Whittemore House still stand in their original locations, and have been restored to their historical appearances. Extant barns and foundations of older Nelson family homesteads and other farm structures can still found and reinforce the historical agricultural character of the Nelson Farm area.

While historic characteristics and features remain in the area, many changes have also occurred. In the 1970s, a road was constructed south of Route 2A to access an adjacent school. An old barn was moved to the Jacob Whittemore site in 1979. In the 1990s, the Battle Road was turned into an unpaved trail, altering its function from a simple means of travel to a recreational and interpretive corridor. To support those uses, the National Park Service constructed a visitor center, parking lot, walkways, amphitheatre, and signage. Though some stone walls have remained untouched, many have been reconstructed with imported stones. Suburban land uses also affected the Nelson Farm area, although today only a few modern homes remain. Although the landscape has not been returned completely to its Revolutionary War appearance, it retains a rural and agricultural character. As such, the Nelson Farm area retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The condition of the Nelson Farm area landscape is “good.” There is no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is re¬quired to maintain its current condition.

Landscape Hierarchy Description:

Minute Man NHP is comprised of four landscapes: Battle Road, Wayside, North Bridge, and North Bridge Visitor Center. The Nelson Farm area is one of seven component landscapes within the Battle Road landscape. The other components are Meriam’s Corner, Jones/Stow Farm, Brooks Farm, Hartwell area, Paul Revere site, and Fiske Hill.

Landscape Type:

Historic Site

Other Names:

Other Name:	Battle Road Unit	**Other Name Type:**	Current
Other Name:	Minute Man Visitor Center	**Other Name Type:**	Current
Other Name:	Battle Road	**Other Name Type:**	Historic
Other Name:	Nelson Farm	**Other Name Type:**	Current

Site Plan



Site plan for the Nelson Farm area. (Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation--hereafter OCLP--2012)

Concurrence Information

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 09/18/2012

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

A draft Level II CLI was completed in 1995 for the Battle Road unit of MIMA. That draft was revised and entered into the CLI database during FY99. The North Bridge Unit and Wayside Unit was also inventoried and entered at that time.

This CLI is partly based off Deborah Dietrich-Smith's "Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for Battle Road Unit: Minute Man National Historical Park," completed in 2005. The CLR was produced through extensive research of primary and secondary source materials, including town meeting reports, historic structure reports, and various photographic collections. This CLI incorporates CLR text with Nelson Farm area-related information found mostly in other National Park Service reports. In June 2012, Historical Landscape Architect John Hammond and Student Conservation Association Intern Stephanie Weyer updated site maps and existing conditions photographs. The park contact for the CLI is Curator Terrie Wallace, who may be reached by telephone at (978) 318-7841 or by email at terrie_wallace@nps.gov.

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Attachment File Path

SEP-18-2012 01:47P FROM:MIMA NHP CRC 1 978 318 7840 TO:816172235172 P.2

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
CONCURRENCE FORM

Nelson Farm Area
Minute Man National Historical Park

Minute Man National Historical Park concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Nelson Farm Area including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Nelson Farm Area is hereby approved and accepted.

Nancy A. Nelson 9.18.12

Superintendent, Minute Man National Historical Park Date

Park concurrence form, September 18, 2012.

Cultural Landscapes Inventory
CLI Updates Certification Form
2025

Minute Man National Historical Park
Battle Road, Brooks Farm, Fiske Hill, Hartwell Area, Jones-Stow Farm, Meriam's Corner, Nelson Farm Area, North Bridge, The Wayside

Minute Man National Historical Park certifies the CLI updates for Battle Road, Brooks Farm, Fiske Hill, Hartwell Area, Jones-Stow Farm, Meriam's Corner, Nelson Farm Area, North Bridge, The Wayside, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT:
Good – Battle Road
Good – Brooks Farm
Good – Fiske Hill
Good – Hartwell Area
Good – Jones-Stow Farm
Good – Meriam's Corner
Good – Nelson Farm Area
Good – North Bridge
Fair – The Wayside

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI updates for the sites listed above at Minute Man National Historical Park are hereby approved and accepted.

SIMONE MONTELEONE Digitally signed by SIMONE MONTELEONE
Date: 2025.09.16 13:43:07 -04'00'

Superintendent, Minute Man National Historical Park Date

Park concurrence form, September 16, 2025.

Revision:

Revised By	Type of Revision	Revision Date	Revision Narrative
Jeff Killion	CLI Update	09/16/2025	Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the Nelson Farm Area CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park.

Geographic Information

State and County:

State	County
Massachusetts	Middlesex County

Size (Acres): 123

Land Tract Number(s)

Boundary Description:

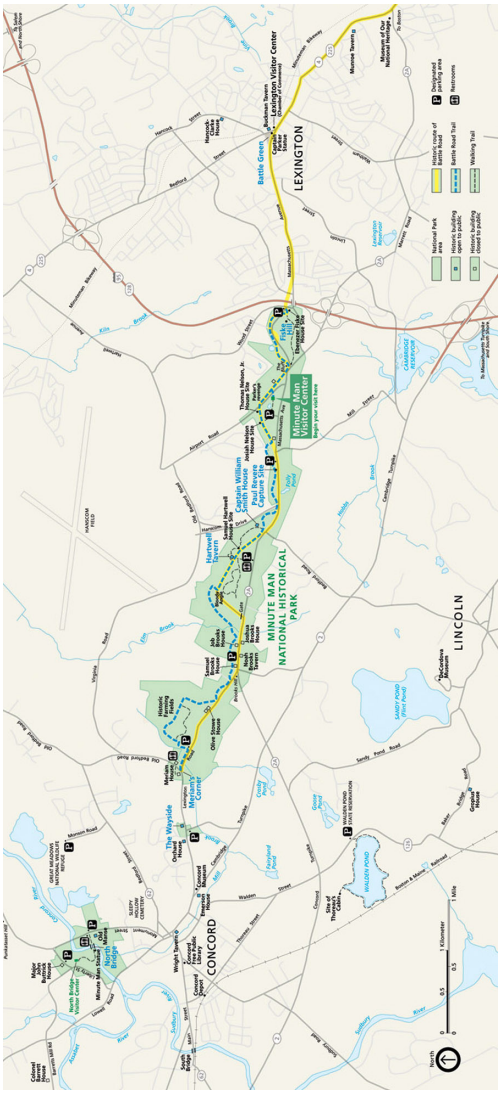
The Nelson Farm area is a triangular-shaped area within the park's Battle Road Unit. It is located along the North Great Road, or Route 2A, in the towns of Lincoln and Lexington, Massachusetts. Nelson Road and Marrett Street (both now part of the Battle Road Trail) meet within the Nelson Farm area at the northern (top) part of the triangle, and both roads intersect with Route 2A as it runs east-west across the southern portion of the area. The approximately 123-acre Nelson Farm area includes 35 parcels, five of which are privately owned.

The Nelson Farm area CLI boundary follows part of the Battle Road Unit boundary. Hanscom Air Force Base is located directly northeast and northwest of the Nelson Farm area. The eastern boundary of the Nelson Farm area extends past Airport Road and the Battle Road Trail, stopping at some Lexington residences. Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School lies south, and the Paul Revere site lies west of the Nelson Farm area.

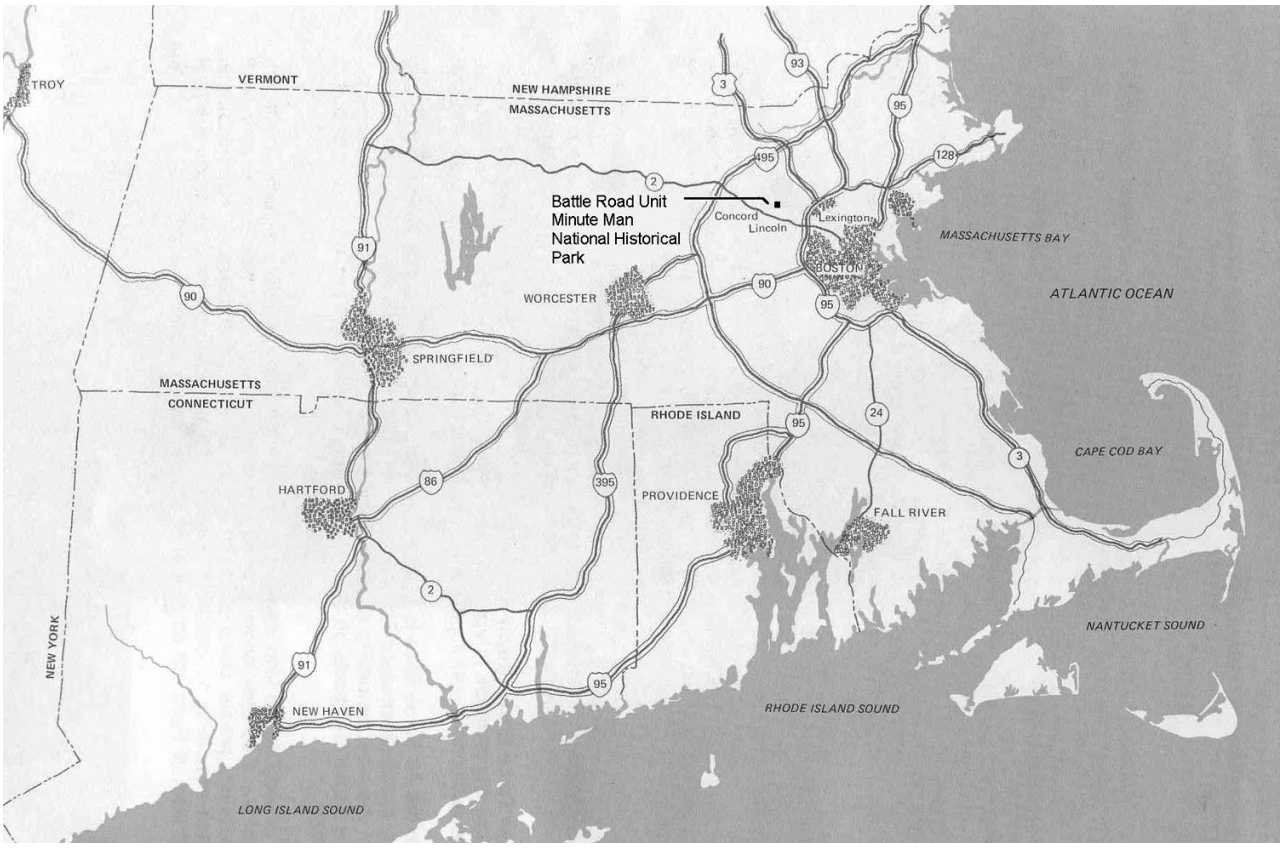
Boundary Coordinates

Source	Type of Point	Latitude	Longitude	Narrative
	Area	-71.2637164134191	42.4491003721545	
	Area	-71.2648585673743	42.4477270001325	
	Area	-71.2650005599782	42.4452567336043	
	Area	-71.2693033408381	42.4462252100889	
	Area	-71.2709990874363	42.4463807206782	
	Area	-71.271919385551	42.4459392242794	
	Area	-71.2727411652721	42.446472249755	
	Area	-71.2776623546135	42.4467167213379	
	Area	-71.2774453514397	42.447774657539	
	Area	-71.2781185423038	42.4492381451911	
	Area	-71.2775523376554	42.449384482381	
	Area	-71.2769506553334	42.4495585378332	
	Area	-71.2754926646474	42.4502629042175	
	Area	-71.2751278020535	42.4502611451853	
	Area	-71.2750844104992	42.4504060919263	
	Area	-71.2739851593463	42.4506080222725	
	Area	-71.2734503979792	42.4509518320549	
	Area	-71.2727454029915	42.4516322132258	
	Area	-71.2724689564362	42.4513855482001	
	Area	-71.2721135242309	42.4516447466786	
	Area	-71.2701443259928	42.4516657731466	
	Area	-71.2688255200902	42.4505031960385	
	Area	-71.2682296484627	42.4508391864082	
	Area	-71.2651587969555	42.4482974052999	

Location Map:



Map of the park and surrounding context. (National Park Service)



Map of Minute Man National Historical Park location. (OCLP Files)

Regional Landscape Contexts:

Type of Context: Political

Description:

The Nelson Farm area is located in Lincoln and Lexington, Massachusetts. Within the Nelson Farm area, the original Battle Road, now the Battle Road Trail, curves around the northern portion of the area, while the North Great Road, or Route 2A, runs through the southern portion of the Nelson Farm area (see Regional Landscape Context graphic).

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Minute Man NHP generally contains flat plains and low rolling hills composed of glacial till. The Nelson Farm area contains mostly forested uplands. Small areas north of the Battle Road Trail might be suitable for agriculture. To the south of the Battle Road in the central part of the Nelson Farm area are wooded wetlands, a state-listed rare species habitat not suitable for agriculture. At the far eastern end is a landform called the Bluff, which served an important role during the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

The Nelson Farm area is named after the Nelson family, who owned land in much of the area during the 1775 Battle of Lexington and Concord. Thomas Nelson, Sr. purchased 50 acres of upland and meadow in the present-day Nelson Farm area in 1724. His children, Thomas, Jr., Tabitha, and Josiah, all ran different households in the Nelson Farm area by the time of the revolution, with Tabitha inheriting her father's original dwelling and barn. Meanwhile, Jacob Whittemore inherited much property in the eastern portion of the Nelson Farm area in 1755. After passing through many owners in the 19th and 20th centuries, the various Nelson and Whittemore properties were acquired by the National Park Service during the 1960s and 1970s.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 09/18/2012

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The Nelson Farm area falls under the same management category as the Battle Road Unit, and the Battle Road Unit meets several criteria for the “Must Be Preserved and Maintained” management category. The preservation of the site unit is specifically legislated; the site is related to the park’s legislated significance; and the site serves as the setting for a nationally significant structure or object.

The 1959 enabling legislation for Minute Man NHP stated that the park was established to “preserve, selectively restore, and interpret portions of the Lexington-Concord Battle Road, as well as its associated structures, properties and sites so that the visitor may better appreciate and understand the beginning of the American Revolution…” Congress expanded that initial mission in 1992 to include more than interpretation of specific events associated with April 19, 1775: “the purposes of the Park shall include the preservation and interpretation of (1) the historic landscape along the road between Lexington and Concord, [and] (2) sites associated with the causes and consequences of the American Revolution.” (“Environmental Assessment for ‘Save Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes’” 1999: 2)

Management Agreements:

Type of Agreement: Interagency Agreement

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

License agreements with the United States Air Force for land use near Patterson Drive (USAF parking), and NPS use of USAF lands for the Battle Road Trail.

Type of Agreement: Other

Management Agreement Expiration Date:

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

Conservation easements from the Town of Lincoln.

Legal Interests:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Narrative:

Type of Interest: None - Privately Owned

Narrative:

Located in managed wilderness?: Unknown

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

Adjacent Lands Narrative:

National Register Information

National Register of Historic Places

Documentation Status: Entered Documented

Documentation Narrative Description:

On April 14, 1959, the 8-acre Nelson Farm was designated a national historic site. The Nelson Farm was included within the boundaries of Minute Man National Historical Park (NHP), which was established September 21, 1959. On December 29, 1962, two properties within the park boundaries were designated as National Historic Landmarks: the Wayside and Old Manse. On October 15, 1966, the entire park was administratively listed without documentation in the National Register of Historic Places with the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In 1996-1997, consultations between the National Park Service and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (SHPO) identified numerous contributing and non-contributing resources in the park. Within the Nelson Farm area, contributing resources included the Daniel Brown-Nelson Property Stone Walls, Hargrove Barn (now Barn at Whittemore House), Jacob Whittemore House, John Nelson Barn, John Nelson House, Josiah Nelson House Foundation, Tabitha Nelson House Foundation, and the Thomas Nelson Jr. House Foundation. Non-contributing resources were the Battle Road Visitor Center, and the BRVC Temporary Shed (since demolished). The SHPO suggested that additional research should be conducted on the Josiah Nelson Heirs Stone Walls, Josiah Nelson Jr. Hop House Foundation, Josiah Nelson Property Stone Walls, Nelson Road, Nelson Road Stone Walls, and the Thomas Nelson Jr. Property Stone Wall. Additionally, the SHPO recommended the need to develop documentation of the park's resources in the National Register and that a period of significance should extend "well into the 20th century to reflect the continued significance of this site as an important reflection of our nation's founding and how we commemorate, venerate, and interpret it."

On November 29, 2002, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places accepted documentation of the park as a historic district, which addressed many recommendations from the SHPO. Significance was identified under criteria A, B, C, and D and Criteria Considerations B (Moved Properties), F (Commemorative Properties), and G (Significance Within the Last Fifty Years). The park is nationally significant in the areas of military, literature, and other (commemoration), and locally significant in the areas of agriculture, archeology, and architecture. The period of significance was listed on the cover sheet as 1655 to 1959, dates that correspond to the expansion of the town of Concord and settlement of Fiske Hill, and the establishment of the Minute Man NHP, respectively. Contributing features described in the documentation for Nelson Farm area included the Josiah Nelson Jr. Hop House Foundation (National Register map no. 115), John Nelson House (116), John Nelson Barn (117), Josiah Nelson House Foundation (120), Nelson Road (no number), Thomas Nelson Jr. House Foundation (121), Tabitha Nelson (Thomas Nelson Sr.) House Foundation (123), Jacob Whittemore House (125), and the Barn at Whittemore House (126). Portions of other contributing features that spanned all four park units —the Battle Road, system of stone walls, and system of fields—were also identified in the Nelson Farm area. Contributing archeological sites were described and included Site 22 and 23 (118), Daniel Brown House and Shop Site (119), Site 24 (122), Jacob Whittemore Blacksmith Shop Site (127), and the Barn Foundation Site (128). Along with portions of the Battle Road Trail, the other non-contributing feature included the Battle Road Visitor Center (124).

On December 2, 2002, the Keeper accepted a Supplementary Listing Record for the National Register documentation that amended the archeological area of significance to "Archeology: Prehistoric" and "Archeology: Historic-Non-Aboriginal," and added "7,500 to 500 years ago" to the period of significance. On October 25, 2006, the Keeper accepted a resource count change and technical corrections primarily related to building names (noted above), addresses, and dates of construction as well as subsequent research.

Through a series of emails in January 2009 between the park and the NPS Northeast Region History Program, the beginning date of the period of significance for the district was clarified as being c.1635 due to inconsistencies in the 2002 National Register documentation. On the cover sheet of the documentation, the beginning date was listed as 1655. However, internally in the documentation, c.1635 was identified as the beginning of the agriculture area of significance. Additionally, c.1635 is the date when English settlement began in the area and the town of Concord was established, and the date of several archeological sites in the park: Thomas Flint Site (14), Battle Road/North Bridge (21), and Battle Road/Fiske Hill (130). A Supplementary Listing Record will be submitted to the Keeper in the future to correct the cover sheet.

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the areas and periods of significance for the Nelson Farm area are adequately documented in existing National Register documentation. The existing documentation also adequately describes the site's numerous historic resources that contribute to its significance. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the Nelson Farm area is considered "Entered-Documented."

Eligibility: Eligible -- Keeper

Concurrence Eligibility Date: 10/25/2006

Concurrence Narrative:

Significance Level: National

Contributing: Contributing

Classification: District

Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Minute Man National Historical Park (NHP) possesses significance under National Register criteria A, B, C, and D. The park has national significance in the areas of Military History, Commemoration, and Literature. Its primary significance as the site of the 1775 Battle of Lexington and Concord, which marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War and ranks among the most significant events in American history. Among the extant properties relating to the battle are the Lexington and Concord Battlefield, thirteen buildings present at the time of the battle, and a number of historical archaeological sites that constitute the remains of homes of people or events associated with the fight. The importance of the battle to the creation of the United States was recognized during the early years of the republic, and the area subsequently became one of the first hallowed places in the new nation. The placement of monuments and plaques to formally commemorate the event began with the construction of the Battle Monument in 1836, and over the course of the ensuing century a number of other objects designed to mark the site of important aspects of the battle were erected. The significance of the place in the area of commemoration culminated with the creation of Minute Man NHP in 1959. Two properties in the park, the Wayside and Old Manse, also possess national significance for their association with prominent literary figures of the 19th and 20th centuries. Both properties have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. The Literary significance of the district extends from 1834 when Ralph Waldo Emerson began his short residence at the Old Manse, to 1924 when Harriet Lothrop left the Wayside. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 1)

The park also possesses local significance under National Register criteria A, C, and D in the areas of Agriculture, Architecture, and Archaeology. The history of the district is inextricably tied to agriculture, which was the primary economic activity carried on there through the 17th through 19th centuries. The period of significance for Agriculture begins in c.1635 when plantation period settlement and agricultural land use in Concord began to 1951 to encompass farm properties in Concord that were involved in market gardening and dairying during the early and mid-20th century. Architecturally, the district embodies a collection of dwellings that are representative of local building trends from the early 18th century through the mid-20th century. The period of significance for Architecture extends from c.1705 when the Meriam House was constructed to 1946 when the Beatteay House was completed. (Note: The c.1705 date is from the 2002 National Register documentation. Future revisions and updates to the documentation should revisit this date because the William Smith House dates to c.1693). Numerous historical archaeological sites have been investigated at the park and have yielded or are likely to yield significant information pertaining to early settlement in the area and further information relating to the appearance of the area at the time of the battle on April 19, 1775. The period of significance for Archaeology extends from c.1665 when the John Meriam House was constructed to 1951. (National Register 2002, Section 8:1-2).

There are two overall periods of significance that encompass the park's resources: 7,500 to 500 years ago, and c.1635 to 1959. The first period acknowledges archeological resources, which are beyond the scope of this CLI and are therefore not addressed beyond information provided in National Register documentation. The second period begins with the settlement and agricultural development of the area and ends when the park was established.

THE BATTLE ROAD UNIT / NELSON FARM AREA

The Nelson Farm area is within the Battle Road Unit, the largest of the park's four discontinuous units, which contains part of the historical Battle Road along which Colonial militia pursued and attacked the retreating British during the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Numerous historic buildings, structures, stone walls, monuments, and over 800 acres of former farm land contribute to the military, commemorative, agricultural, architectural, and archeological significance of the Battle Road Unit under the National Register criteria A, C, and D.

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION A

Military History:
The Nelson Farm area is nationally significant for its role in the Battle of Lexington and Concord, which marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War and ranks as one of the most important events in the history of the United States. Significant resources include the Battle Road used by the British for both their advance on and retreat from Concord, and numerous stone walls that were often used for cover by the militiamen during the fight. The British retreat along the four-mile stretch of road within the Battle Road Unit was characterized by a series of running engagements during which the British were placed under almost constant fire by the American militia forces. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 3)

After the British retreated through the Hartwell area, they came under fire again along another stretch of restored battle road now known as Nelson Road. The fight along Nelson Road was known as Parker's Revenge and was led by Captain John Parker and his Lexington company, which had suffered the first casualties of war on Lexington Green earlier that day. In this area of the Battle Road Unit are several foundations of buildings that were present during the battle, including the house sites of Josiah Nelson, Thomas Nelson, Jr., and Tabitha Nelson. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 16)

The two final actions of the day associated with the Battle of Lexington and Concord Battlefield occurred at "The Bluff' and Fiske Hill. The Bluff, a steep, thickly wooded hill on the north side of Marrett Street, was occupied by a small force of militia that poured fire down on the advancing British column. Major Pitcairn sent his reserve of Royal Marines to clear the hill, and the British were able to escape. The c.1750 Jacob Whittemore House is part of the landscape within the area of the Bluff. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 17)

Commemoration:
The Nelson Farm area is nationally significant for its role in commemorative activities recognizing the

importance of the 1775 battle, which culminated with the establishment of Minute Man NHP by an act of Congress in 1959. In the Nelson Farm area, the Bluff Monument was erected in 1885 to commemorate the British use of the Bluff as a rallying point. During the early part of the 20th century, visitation to this and other areas began to increase, leading to the erection of roadside stops along the Battle Road, both in and outside of the future park, and the improvement of roads throughout the area. With the creation of the park in 1959, the National Park Service began a multi-decade program of "restoring" the character of the park to its 1775 appearance. Interpretive markers and programs were set up to tell the story of the battle through extant sites within the district. The Bicentennial celebrations of 1976 brought tens of thousands of visitors to the park for commemorative events. It was during this period that the Minute Man Visitor Center was constructed in the Nelson Farm area. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 17, 22-23)

Agriculture:
The Nelson Farm area is locally significant for its role in agricultural land uses that characterized Lincoln, Lexington, and the surrounding areas. By the mid-18th century, these towns were dominated by farmsteads with fieldstone walls that marked property boundaries as well as internal divisions based on land use. The systems of stone walls remain as significant examples of this former agricultural landscape. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 37)

In the early 18th century, Lexington was a new town formed in 1712 from a rural section of Cambridge known as Cambridge Farms Parish. The local economy was based on agriculture and livestock grazing; supplemented by lumbering and some peat mining in local bogs. Research by Joyce Lee.Malcolm along the section of Battle Road in Lexington indicates that two farms, a tavern, and a small rural industry were located on Concord Road (Marrett Street). They included from west to east; the Tabitha Nelson (Thomas Nelson Sr.) House (map no. 123), a bam and cider mill on the Jacob Whittemore Farm, the Bull Tavern, and a blacksmith shop (Malcolm 1985). The 114-acre farm inherited by Jacob Whittemore in 1754 contained a mosaic of pasture, meadow, uplands and orchard. It was probably typical of farms in rural areas outside the town center. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 40)

Lincoln was part of Concord until its incorporation as a town in 1754. In the mid/late 18th century, the town contained a rural settlement pattern with scattered small farms. Some of these, such as the Josiah Nelson House Foundation, Thomas Nelson, Jr. House Foundation, and Sites 22 and 23 were located along the North Great Road (Route 2A) and Nelson Road. Forest products were a source of income to Lincoln farmers with firewood and lumber sold to the Boston market. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 40)

In the mid-19th century, a regional rail transportation system drove the change from production of agricultural and dairy products for strictly local use to the supply of larger markets in urban areas like Boston and Lowell. Farms such as those of Thomas Nelson, Jr. and Josiah Nelson engaged in less general, subsistence production and more truck or market gardening. Some of the produce from these towns such as the milk from Lexington dairy farms was shipped by rail to places well outside the Boston metropolitan area such as northern Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. Through the end of the 19th century, Lexington farms focused on commercial production of milk and other produce, particularly in locations along highways. By 1875, Lexington was one of the largest milk producing towns in eastern and central Massachusetts, with the barn at the Jacob Whittemore House serving this purpose. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 44-45)

In the early to mid-20th century, the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington became an outer suburb for the Boston metropolitan area, triggering a change in land use. Local farmers began to focus on market gardening, orchards, and dairy operations. Because these efforts concentrated on areas with better soils, worn-out upland pastures reverted to woodlands. Additionally, the advent of the automobile led to development of some older farms for residential uses. Suburbanization, increases in land prices, competition from more distant agricultural producers, and advances in farming practices combined to decrease the amount of acreage in active agricultural use. For the most part, local farmers could not afford to maintain their farms, and the local agricultural economy shrank, while the landscape became increasingly dominated by forests, residences, and roads. The towns of Concord, Lincoln and Lexington became an outer suburb for the Boston metropolitan area and there was an increase in residential development. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 45-46)

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION C

Architecture:
The Nelson Farm area is locally significant for dwellings representative of local building trends from the early 18th century through the mid-20th century. The Jacob Whittemore House was constructed prior to 1754 and is one of several buildings in the district that retains a relatively high degree of Colonial period integrity. During the 19th century a number of architecturally significant properties, including the Federal-style John Nelson House (1808-1810) were added to the district. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 23, 27)

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERION D

Archeology:
As stated in the 2002 National Register documentation, archaeological research has served an important/key role in Minute Man NHP from its initial development in the early 1960s. Investigations have occurred at 23 archaeological sites and at portions of historic roadways in seven sections throughout a 23-year period in the park from 1963 to 1986. These studies located sites occupied in 1775 and a large collection of artifacts, which were conserved and catalogued during a project begun by the National Park Service in 1983. Most of the sites were farmsteads or residences known or assumed to have been part of the setting for the events of April 19, 1775. Located in a village setting in the town center of Concord, the North Bridge vicinity and outlying rural areas along the Battle Road corridor in Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington, the sites had been occupied by persons involved in the events of April 19, 1775 or were the scene of particular incidents on that day. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 47)

In 1989 and 1990, an intensive level archaeological survey was conducted within Minute Man NHP by The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Recent archaeological investigations in Minute Man NHP have been carried out on several historic period sites in compliance with Section 106 review. These surveys were done in advance of proposed construction or other alterations to the settings of these sites from 1994 to 1998. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 54-55)

Specific resources identified in the Nelson Farm area include Site 22 and 23, Daniel Brown House and Shop Site, Site 24, Jacob Whittemore Blacksmith Shop Site, and the Barn Foundation Site (National Register 2002, Section 8: 69-71)

National Register Significance Criteria:

Significance Criteria A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Significance Criteria C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Significance Criteria D - Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history

National Register Criteria Consideration:

National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):

Time Period: BCE 5498 - CE 1502

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Peopling Places	Post-Archaic and Prehistoric Developments	Eastern Farmers	
Peopling Places	Post-Archaic and Prehistoric Developments	Hunters and Gatherers	

Time Period: CE 1635 - CE 1959

Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet	Other Facet
Developing the American Economy	Agriculture	Farming For Local Markets (Dairying, Fruits, And Vegetables)	
Developing the American Economy	The Farmer's Frontier	Farming the Northeast	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Colonial (1600-1730)	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Craftsman (1890-1915)	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Federal (1780-1820)	
Expressing Cultural Values	Architecture	Period Revivals (1870-1940)	
Shaping the Political Landscape	The American Revolution	War in the North	
Transforming the Environment	Historic Preservation	Regional Efforts: New England, 1860-1900: Regionalism And Preservation; Private Historical Societies; Society For The Preservation Of New England Antiquities	

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Agriculture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Architecture

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Archeology

Area of Significance Subcategory: Historic-Non-Aboriginal

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Archeology

Area of Significance Subcategory: Prehistoric

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Military

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative:

Area of Significance Category: Other

Area of Significance Subcategory:

Explanatory Narrative: Commemoration

NRIS Information:

NRIS ID:	66000935
Primary Certification Date:	10/16/1966
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy
NRIS ID:	02001445
Primary Certification Date:	11/29/2002
Other Certifications and Date:	MM/dd/yyyy

State Register Documentation:

Identification Number:	LIN.F and LIN.G
Name:	Minute Man National Historical Park
Listed Date:	10/15/1966

National Historic Landmarks:

National Historic Landmark? No

Theme:

Contributing:

NHL ID:

NHL URL:

Date:

Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:

World Heritage Site:

World Heritage Site? No

Category:

WHS ID:

WHS URL:

Date:

Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape: No

Chronology and Physical History

Chronology:

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
BCE *	Farmed/Harvested	Human habitation begins in the region 12,000 years ago.
CE 600 - 1630	Farmed/Harvested	Algonquian people inhabit the area, planting crops and constructing fishing weirs along the Musketequid River (Concord River).
CE 1635	Established	Puritans establish the Concord Plantation along the Concord River. This marks the beginning of European settlement and agricultural development.
CE 1636	Settled	Nelson family ancestors move to Massachusetts from Rowley, England. They do not settle along the Battle Road.
CE 1636	Land Transfer	By 1636, Concord Plantation begins allocating house lots along the base of an east-west ridgeline (known today as Revolutionary Ridge). This initial apportionment of land in Concord is known as the First Division.
CE 1636	Developed	By 1636, a four-rod (66') wide road runs parallel to the east-west ridgeline, bisecting the First Division house lots.
CE 1640	Expanded	In the early 1640s, Cambridge extends its western border to the eastern edge of the Concord Plantation. The extended area is known as Cambridge Farms.
CE 1666	Developed	By 1666, the road bisecting the first Division house lots is extended west through the entire length of the present-day Battle Road Unit. The Bay Road (as it was known during early colonial times) is the primary route between Concord and Boston.
CE 1690	Platted	Cambridge hires David Fiske to survey undivided common land in Cambridge Farms. His survey divided the land into nine quadrants and many smaller squadrons, regardless of the natural features of the land.
CE 1700	Altered	By 1700, thirty percent of the Concord Plantation forests have been cleared.
CE 1713	Established	Cambridge Farms separates from Cambridge and incorporates as the town of Lexington.
CE 1720 - 1725	Built	The Bull Tavern is constructed sometime in the early 1720s.
CE 1724	Land Transfer	Thomas Nelson, Sr. purchases 50 acres of upland and meadow from Samuel Ames. The property includes a house and barn.
CE 1727	Land Transfer	Thomas Nelson, Sr. inherits 23.5 acres from his father-in-law, Josiah Hobbs. However, Thomas appears to live on the land he earlier bought from Ames.
CE 1738	Platted	A survey of the Battle Road (Country Road then) in Lexington indicates the width of the road is four rods (66') where it runs through the Nelson Farm area.
CE 1739	Land Transfer	Daniel Brown purchases about 30 acres of property west of Josiah Nelson's future land.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1740 - 1760	Built	A cider mill is located on Jacob Whittemore's farm in the mid-1700s.
CE 1746	Land Transfer	Thomas, Jr. buys a 40 acre tract north of Concord Road in Lincoln bordering his father's land on the west.
CE 1748 - 1770	Land Transfer	Josiah Nelson purchases 24 acres in Flint's Great Meadow in 1748, 20 acres in Lincoln from Nathaniel Whittemore in 1750, and about 2 acres in 1752 bordering the Concord-Lexington line. Josiah continues to add to his holdings until 1770.
CE 1754	Established	The town of Lincoln is established. Included within its boundary are the portions of the Concord Plantation and the town of Lexington within the present-day Battle Road Unit.
CE 1754	Built	Thomas, Sr. is supposed to have built a new house for his family in 1754, in addition to the 1720s house already on the site.
CE 1754	Land Transfer	Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. inherits 35 acres along Nelson Road when his father dies. He also probably buys the house of Daniel Brown around this time.
CE 1755	Land Transfer	Thomas, Jr. and Josiah exchange 21-acre parcels of land. Josiah Nelson perhaps receives his house in this trade, or he constructs a new house around 1755. It is a rectangular-framed building with a central chimney and southern entrance.
CE 1755	Land Transfer	Jacob Whittemore inherits his 114-acre Lexington and Lincoln property when his father, Nathaniel, dies in 1755.
CE 1756	Built	Whittemore's house is constructed sometime before 1756.
CE 1756 - 1757	Built	Thomas Nelson, Sr. and one of his sons build a smaller house across the road from the 1754 construction. This new house is likely occupied by Thomas, Jr., his wife and children.
CE 1757	Land Transfer	Thomas, Jr. purchases a woodlot east of Mill Street.
CE 1763	Land Transfer	Thomas, Jr. purchases land from Daniel Hager.
CE 1757	Land Transfer	Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. begins to sell his inheritance.
CE 1765	Land Transfer	Josiah Nelson purchases 15 acres from Jacob Whittemore and Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr.
CE 1767	Land Transfer	Thomas Nelson, Sr. gives son, Josiah, 39 acres in Lincoln so Josiah may access a watering pond for cattle.
CE 1768	Land Transfer	Thomas, Jr. sells a half-acre orchard to Josiah. The brothers both buy land around this time.
CE 1769	Land Transfer	Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. no longer owns any property in Lincoln, though he still lives next to and west of Josiah Nelson.
CE 1770	Developed	About 25 house lots are located along Battle Road. The typical house lot is 60 to 80 acres, includes a barn, several outbuildings, orchard, and small garden.
CE 1770	Land Transfer	Thomas Nelson, Sr. dies. Tabitha receives the house, barn, and 10 to 12 acres.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1771	Farmed/Harvested	Jacob Whittemore owns 15 acres of pasture, six of plowland, six of upland meadow, and 8 acres of fresh meadow – an average holding. Whittemore also owns an orchard.
CE 1772	Land Transfer	Josiah Nelson, Sr. purchases land in Lincoln from Daniel Brown.
CE 1772 - 1779	Land Transfer	In 1772 Moses Reed, Jacob Whittemore's son-in-law, sells the 40-acre Bull Tavern property to Josiah Mansfield, who never lives on the farm. Mansfield mortgages out the property, eventually to a Martha Salisbury, a widow of Acton. John Muzzy and his son, Isaac, are likely Salisbury's tenants until 1778/79.
CE 1773	Farmed/Harvested	Josiah is taxed for three acres of tillage, 13 acres of meadow mowing, 1 acre of orchard, and 15 acres of pasture.
CE 1774	Farmed/Harvested	Thomas is taxed for 1 acre of tillage, 1 acre of orchard, 13 acres of meadow mowing, and 10 acres of pasture. He probably also owns much wasteland.
CE 1775	Farmed/Harvested	By 1775, all cultivatable land within the present-day Battle Road Unit supports subsistence crops of Indian corn, rye, and other grains.
CE 1775	Land Transfer	By 1775 William Thorning and his father probably live in the former Nathaniel Whittemore house.
CE 1775	Military Operation	On April 19, 1775, colonists engage in battle with British Regulars, starting the American Revolutionary War. Colonial minutemen and militia confront the British troops along the entire length of the road from Concord to Boston, with skirmishes taking place at the Nelson Farms and the Bluff. William Thorning shoots two British soldiers from behind today's Minute Man Boulder.
CE 1778 - 1779	Land Transfer	Martha Salisbury owns the Bull Tavern property and leases it out. Between 1778 and 1779 a Lexington blacksmith, Benjamin Danforth, evicts Salisbury's current tenant (probably John Muzzy) and moves onto the Tavern Farm himself.
CE 1779	Land Transfer	In February, Thomas Nelson, Jr. quitclaims eight acres of Tabitha's property and the east end of the barn to their younger brother, Josiah. In April, Thomas sells Tabitha's dwelling house to his son-in-law, Samuel Hastings.
CE 1779	Land Transfer	Jacob Whittemore sells his homestead in April to Ezekial Hall.
CE 1780	Land Transfer	Ezekial Hall either leases or sells the Whittemore property to John Muzzy.
CE 1782	Land Transfer	Martha Salisbury wins a suit against Benjamin Danforth. She then sells the Bull Tavern property to Nathan Danforth.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1783 - 1790	Expanded	Post-1783, the Nelson family is supposed to have moved to the smaller house built between 1756 and 1757, and Thomas, Jr. likely moves Tabitha Nelson's house (the one constructed in 1754) and joins it with the smaller house. The enlarged home probably houses Thomas, Jr., his daughter, Lydia, and her family. The 1720 home then remains on the original Thomas Nelson, Sr. lot.
CE 1785	Land Transfer	Samuel Hastings, Thomas Jr's son-in-law, sells 10 acres of the Nelson property.
CE 1802 - 1806	Altered	Between 1802 and c.1806, the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington realign portions of the Battle Road to provide more efficient travel between Concord and Boston. Subsequent chronological entries will refer to the road as realigned 1802-c.1806 as the North Great Road. The Nelson Farm Area is by-passed by the new road.
CE 1806	Developed	The Cambridge Turnpike (known today as Route 2) is built south of the Battle Road (outside the Battle Road Unit).
CE 1808	Built	Josiah Nelson, Jr. begins construction on today's John Nelson House.
CE 1808	Destroyed	Thomas, Sr.'s 1720 house burns down.
CE 1810	Land Transfer	Josiah Nelson, Sr. dies, and his descendents begin to occupy the property.
CE 1818	Land Transfer	Joel Viles purchases the Bull Tavern property from Joseph Simonds. The deed places the Bull Tavern farm buildings on the triangle created by Battle Road and the early 1800s by-pass (North Great Road). Some 39 acres of property is still located south of the new road.
CE 1818	Land Transfer	Josiah Nelson, Sr.'s property is divided among his heirs. Joshua receives his father's house and property on the north side of Nelson Road. John receives 5 acres of pasture in Lincoln along with the west end of the John Nelson House. Josiah, Jr. receives 19 acres of land and the east end of the John Nelson House.
CE 1820	Farmed/Harvested	Beginning in 1820, pasture clearing and hayfield planting significantly increased along the Battle Road, to support larger cattle herds.
CE 1821 - 1824	Built	The original section of the John Nelson Barn is constructed between 1821 and 1824.
CE 1824	Land Transfer	John Muzzy, Jr. inherits the Whittemore property after John, Sr. dies.
CE 1826	Land Transfer	Josiah, Jr. is declared insane, and his land is sold in large sections to help pay off his mounting debts.
CE 1830	Farmed/Harvested	As a result of the temperance movement of the early 1800s, the consumption of hard cider decreases. Farmers within the present-day Battle Road Unit begin to replace cider orchards with fancy fruit orchards. Josiah Nelson operates a nursery on his farm, selling fancy fruit trees to his neighbors.
CE 1831	Land Transfer	Josiah, Jr. mortgages 4 acres and his part of the John Nelson House to Mrs. Joan Locke of Lexington.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1835 - 1840	Land Transfer	Josiah, Jr. dies, leaving his heirs his portion of the house. John Nelson improves the barn during this time.
CE 1837	Land Transfer	Having inherited the house from their father, Samuel, Thomas and Oliver Hastings sell the Thomas Nelson, Jr. house to David Miller.
CE 1838	Rehabilitated	In April 1838, the county commissioners ordered repair of the highway at specific locations, including at the “small hill between the house of John Nelson & the line of Lexington.”
CE 1838	Land Transfer	John Muzzy, Jr. transfers 50 acres and most all the structures on the Whittemore property to Captain Daniel Chandler through a mortgage deed.
CE 1846	Land Transfer	John’s only child, George Nelson, purchases the eastern portion of the house from Josiah, Jr.’s heirs.
CE 1849 - 1950	Land Transfer	In June 1849 Daniel Chandler transfers the mortgage deed to the Whittemore property to Nehemiah Ball. Almost 15 more individuals possess the property before the mid-1900s.
CE 1850	Farmed/Harvested	By the mid-1800s, only ten percent of forest lands remain.
CE 1850	Farmed/Harvested	By the 1850s, farmers along the road begin adapting farm buildings, structures, and field configurations to support commercial agricultural production. Crops raised are sold to neighboring industrial towns.
CE 1855	Land Transfer	The last of the Nelsons occupying the Josiah Nelson house dies.
CE 1859	Land Transfer	George Nelson inherits the western part of the John Nelson House from his father, making George sole owner of the house.
CE 1860	Settled	By the 1860s, immigrant families begin purchasing farms along the Battle Road on marginal land or land abandoned by colonial descendents who have relocated to more fertile agricultural land in the Midwest.
CE 1874 - 1897	Land Transfer	Leonard A. Saville buys the Whittemore property between 1874 and 1877. He owns the property for 20 years, much longer than the other mid-19th to mid-20th century owners.
CE 1890	Farmed/Harvested	By the late 1800s, woodlands cover approximately forty percent of the western half of the present-day Battle Road Unit. Farm acreage has decreased geographically onto better soils, such as the eastern half of the present-day Battle Road Unit.
CE 1890	Land Transfer	By the late 1800s, middle-income Boston merchants and businessmen begin purchasing agricultural land within the present-day Battle Road Unit for homes.
CE 1890	Altered	The North Great Road is converted into a highway in the 1890s.
CE 1895 - 1900	Land Transfer	Martin Neville has purchased the Thomas Nelson, Jr. house at some time, and, between 1895 and 1900, a modern house is constructed on the site.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1897	Land Transfer	Leonard Saville sells the Whittemore property to Charles McMahon. Two large elms are located in front, or south, of the house at this time.
CE 1900 - 1950	Farmed/Harvested	John Nelson's grandson, J. Walter Nelson, occupies the John Nelson house in the early 20th century. The Nelsons run a dairy, grow corn and tomatoes, and manage a large apple orchard. Much of their farm has reverted to woodland.
CE 1908	Destroyed	The Josiah Nelson house burns down July 4, leaving only the brick chimney with part of its fireplaces and hearths intact.
CE 1910 - 1920	Land Transfer	The Whittemore property is greatly reduced in size by its transfer in 1910. By 1920 the property has been greatly altered, and more outbuildings lie west of the house.
CE 1924	Established	Massachusetts Governor Channing H. Cox establishes the nine-person Commission on the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Revolution (The Commission) to recommend a commemorative program for the 150th anniversary of the opening battles of the American Revolution.
CE 1924	Planned	The nine-person Commission appointed by Governor Cox recommends establishment of a permanent memorial honoring the one hundredth and fiftieth anniversary of the American Revolution. In consultation with Landscape Architect Arthur Shurtleff (later known as Arthur Shurcliff), commission members examine sites along the Battle Road for a proposed Memorial Highway.
CE 1924	Land Transfer	The sons of Martin Neville purchase the modern house from their father.
CE 1925	Planned	In January 1925, Arthur Shurtleff submits a report to The Commission in which he recommends preserving nearly two miles of the original Battle Road that include the two large bends in the road bypassed in the early 1800s. He also recommends acquisition of four hundred feet or more on each side of the road to preserve the character of the rural road. The state does not act upon Shurtleff's recommendations.
CE 1930 - 1940	Altered	Middlesex County realigns a significant section of the Battle Road at Fiske Hill to provide safer passage for auto users, and additional roads are constructed in the area by 1940.
CE 1930	Farmed/Harvested	In comparison to the 1880s U.S. Census, the 1930 census includes a more ethnically diverse immigrant population. Family nationalities include Irish, Canadian, German, Italian, Swedish, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, Armenian, and Dutch. Many of these families operate farms and roadside produce stands.
CE 1941	Built	Construction of the Laurence G. Hanscom Airfield starts. The airfield borders the northern boundary of the present-day Battle Road Unit, just northwest of the Nelson Farm area.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1946	Built	The Massachusetts Department of Works constructs Airport Road, connecting Route 2A and the Hanscom Air Force Base. The road cuts through the historic Bull Tavern site and across the Battle Road between the Thomas and Tabitha Nelson house sites.
CE 1950 - 1979	Land Transfer	W. Newton Nelson, great-grandson of John Nelson, occupies the John Nelson property until he sells the house, barn, and land to Minute Man National Historical Park in the 1970s.
CE 1950	Built	In the early 1950s, the federal government completes construction of Interstate 128, the first limited access highway in Massachusetts. Easy access to the highway from Route 2A promotes residential development within the present-day Battle Road Unit.
CE 1955	Established	The federal government establishes the Boston National Historic Sites Commission (BNHSC) 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.
CE 1955	Planned	The Air Force develops plans to construct military housing units near the site of the Josiah Nelson farmstead and Minute Man Boulder, causing alarm amongst members of the BNHSC.
CE 1956	Planned	The BNHSC consults with Landscape Architect Arthur Shurcliff (formerly known as Arthur Shurtleff) regarding their study. In a letter to the BNHSC, Shurcliff recommends preserving a portion of the road from “Fiske Hill towards Concord.”
CE 1957	Planned	In May, the Air Force announces a reduction in the number of housing units, and the Under-Secretary of the Interior requests that the eight-acre Nelson Farm parcel be transferred to the Department of the Interior.
CE 1958	Planned	The BNHSC completes an interim report to Congress in June 1958. The report recommends establishment of a national park, to be known as “Minute Man.” The proposed park would include four miles of the Battle Road from Meriam’s Corner in Concord to Route 128 in Lexington.
CE 1958	Land Transfer	The National Park Service (NPS) gains possession of the 8-acre Nelson area parcel in this year.
CE 1959	Planned	On January 21, 1959, the BNHSC submits the Interim Report.
CE 1959	Established	On April 14, 1959, the federal government officially designates an 8-acre unit including the Josiah Nelson house and Minute Man Boulder as a national historical site. The site is completely overgrown with trees and ground vegetation.
CE 1959 - 1960	Established	On September 21, 1959, Public Law 86-321 establishes Minute Man National Historical Park. The park boundary also includes the 8-acre parcel designated as a national historic site 6 months earlier. The park opens to the public in 1960.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1960	Planned	The first official park boundary study is completed. The report delineates minimum park boundaries within a 750-acre limit specified in the enabling legislation.
CE 1960 - 1980	Planned	In the early to mid-1960s several colonial properties and structures are researched and documented. The reports serve as a foundation for preparation of the park's first master plan.
CE 1961	Land Transfer	On February 20, 1961, Russell and Vivian B. Wolfe transfer the title to the Jacob Whittemore House to the NPS. By this time the property includes tall, symmetrically placed shrubs and other decorative plants.
CE 1962	Planned	The 1960 boundary study is revised. The study also recommends removing through traffic from the Battle Road and rerouting it south of the park.
CE 1962 - 1966	Stabilized	Vincent Foley and Leland Abel conduct archeological research at the Josiah Nelson house. Trees are removed, vegetation cut, and loose architectural artifacts removed, tagged, and stored. The house and barn foundations are excavated and stabilized.
CE 1965 - 1966	Planned	The park's first master plan is completed in 1965 and formally adopted in 1966. The plan specifies rehabilitation of the 1775 historic scene. It also proposes relocation of Route 2A.
CE 1968	Planned	The NPS Office of Resource Planning prepares a special study that identifies buildings and structures within the park boundary to be retained, removed, or demolished. The Whittemore House has been previously acquired, and the John Nelson house is identified for acquisition.The study also discusses establishment of historic motor trails within the park, proposing to loop traffic around the Nelson Farm Area.
CE 1968	Demolished	The modern house on the Thomas Nelson, Jr. site is razed.
CE 1970 - 1980	Land Transfer	W. Newton Nelson sells the John Nelson house, barn, and land to the NPS.
CE 1970	Planned	Congress enacts H.R.13935, a bill amending Public Law 86-321. The bill authorizes relocation of the park's southern boundary in anticipation of the Route 2 relocation closer to the park boundary.
CE 1974	Built	Construction of the Battle Road Visitor Center in the Nelson Area begins in August.
CE 1976	Land Transfer	By 1976, the park has acquired 656 acres within the proposed 750 acre park.
CE 1977	Planned	The state transportation secretary declines relocation of Route 2.
CE 1979	Rehabilitated	The John Nelson barn lean-to is rehabilitated, and the park has a team of archeologists make recommendations for stabilizing five sites, including the Josiah Nelson House. The brick and stone fireplace at the Nelson house is repaired.

Year	Event	Major Event Narrative
CE 1979	Moved	An old barn (Hargrove Barn) is moved to the Whittemore House site to hide the vehicles owned by park personnel.
CE 1980 - 1990	Restored	Archeological work along Nelson Road uncovers the original Battle Road surface, allowing for its restoration.
CE 1989 - 1990	Planned	The park's first General Management Plan is completed in 1989 and approved in 1990.
CE 1992	Land Transfer	The park's boundaries are expanded and new land is acquired.
CE 1993	Planned	In its December 1993 Visitor Access Proposal, the park asks for funding to preserve three historic structures, including the Whittemore House. (AH 2010: 294)
CE 1995	Built	Construction of the Battle Road Trail begins. Designed by Carol R. Johnson Associates, the trail spans the entire length of the Battle Road Unit from Meriam's Corner to Fiske Hill.
CE 2007	Established	On February 7, 2007 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts designates the Battle Road Scenic Byway.

Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. Much of the material is excerpted from the 2005 "Cultural Landscape Report for Battle Road Unit: Minute Man National Historical Park." Graphics associated with this section are located at the end of this report.

Road Names:
Since its construction in the 17th century the Battle Road has been given various names, such as the Bay Road and Country Road. The portions by-passed in the early 1800s have gained names of their own, such as Nelson Road and Marrett Street in the Nelson Farm area. For the purposes of this document the term "Battle Road" is used when describing the road as it existed in the 17th and 18th centuries. The road configuration formed between 1802 and circa 1806, which by-passed the Hartwell and Nelson Farm areas, is called the North Great Road. All other roads are called by their present-day names.

PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD, to 1634

Between 15,000 and 18,000 years ago, the last glacier to cover New England created the topography managed by Native Americans and settled by English Puritans. 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 characterize the eastern half of the Battle Road Unit. (Cultural Landscape Report--hereafter CLR--2005: 13)

Human habitation in the region dates back 12,000 years when people hunted animals grazing among open spruce forests. The forests evolved as the earth's atmosphere warmed, and, about 8,000 years ago, oak forests dominated a productive landscape that provided early Native Americans with deer, squirrel, turkey, and a variety of tree nuts. Five thousand years later, a cooler climate led to declining productivity and a sparser Native American population. Native Americans gradually learned to exploit their environment, however, and those in southern New England traveled between seasonal hunting, fishing, gathering, and agricultural grounds. (CLR 2005: 13-14)

By the early 17th century, Algonquian people had inhabited the area along the Musketequid River, today's Concord River, for about a thousand years. Native Americans cleared forest land by fire, and the women planted corn seeds among the dead trees, which were removed from the fields as they fell. Native American men fished in the spring, and people gathered tubers, wild rice, and cranberries from the wet grassy meadows along the river to supplement their diets. In autumn, the men hunted in forests that covered ninety percent of the future Concord Plantation and Hartwell Area. The thick-canopied forests included species of oak, hickory, chestnut, maple, ash, and probably pine, beech, birch, and hemlock. (CLR 2005: 14, 16-17)

Like European settlers who would inhabit the land along the Musketequid River in the early 17th century, Native Americans manipulated and reshaped the landscape to increase food production. Pre-colonial Native American settlement along the Musketequid River ended in the 1630s, as European-introduced disease decimated the Native American population, and European settlers moved into their former hunting, fishing, gathering and agricultural grounds. (CLR 2005: 17)

COLONIAL PERIOD, 1635 – 1783

Battle Road and Nelson Farm Area Development, 1635–1699:
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 settlers in 1620. (CLR 2005: 19)

Inland settlement began when the Puritans established the six-mile-square Concord Plantation on the Musketequid River (Concord River) in 1635. The Concord Plantation included portions of present-day Concord and Lincoln townships within the present-day Battle Road Unit. 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 to the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. Cambridge Farms included parts of Lincoln and Lexington, where the Nelson Area is located, within the Battle Road Unit. (CLR 2005: 19)

In 1636, Concord Plantation, or simply Concord, allocated house lots along the base of an east-west ridgeline (known today as Revolutionary Ridge) about a mile south of the Concord River and extending to the western edge of the present-day Battle Road Unit. A road 'foure Rodes [rods]' (66 feet) wide paralleled the ridge line. This section of road would later be incorporated into what is now known as the Battle Road, which was fully laid out by 1666 and extended from Concord through Cambridge Farms. By this time, David Fiske was one of the few farmers to have settled in Cambridge Farms. Little is known about Cambridge Farms during this period except that farms were held in common, serving as woodlots and hayfields. That same year, an ancestor of the Nelson Farm Area Nelsons moved to Rowley, Massachusetts from England. (Nelson Family Papers; CLR 2005: 19, 23-24)

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, regardless of natural features, each eighty rods wide (about a quarter mile) and separated by a one-rod (16.5 feet) road 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. Within both Cambridge Farms and Concord, commonly held land was gradually divided among individuals. (CLR 2005: 23)

Throughout the early Colonial period, farm production in the Battle Road area was subsistence based, each family producing enough food for personal consumption and perhaps a small amount for local trade. By the mid-17th century, sown varieties of English grasses began to replace native grasses. By 1700, thirty percent of Concord's forests had been cleared. The amount cleared in Cambridge Farms is unknown. During the 18th century, Colonial settlement would continue to alter the landscape of the Battle Road and Nelson Farm Area. (CLR 2005: 9, 25)

Battle Road Area Development, 1700–1774:
During the 18th century, new house lots developed along the Battle Road, and old house lots passed to fourth and fifth generations. Through inheritance, large 17th-century properties were gradually subdivided, and as more land became privatized, fields and pastures were consolidated around house lots. 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. (CLR 2005: 26)

By the 1770s, about 25 house lots were located along Battle Road. A typical house lot averaged sixty to eighty acres. In addition to a barn and several outbuildings, house lots often included a small garden and an orchard. At least fifteen orchards were located along the Battle Road in the 1770s, the large number probably due to the popularity of hard cider in the 18th century. Fruit trees could grow on the marginal upland soil that was less suited for grain, making hard cider less expensive to produce than beer. (CLR 2005: 26, 28)

While the communities remained subsistence oriented, a complex system of local exchange and several commercial enterprises began to develop. Towns along the Battle Road had reached an integrated system of land use by the mid-18th century. Local trades along the Battle Road included the Brooks Tannery, several blacksmith and locksmith shops, and a cider mill on the Jacob Whittemore farm. Taverns began to replace Puritan churches as centers of civic influence; local colonists and travelers visited taverns to rest, drink, and discuss politics. Four taverns were located along the Battle Road, including the Bull Tavern in the Nelson Farm Area of Lexington. (CLR 2005: 26, 35)

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. (CLR 2005: 29)

Existing roads were altered and improved and new roads laid-out throughout the 18th century to provide better transportation to neighboring towns, to market, to agricultural land, and between house lots. Towns appointed road surveyors who oversaw road improvements and reported all non-paying landowners. Several men residing along the Battle Road in the mid-18th century served as surveyors, including Josiah Nelson. The portion of the Battle Road running through Lexington was fully surveyed in 1738, and the Battle Road was four rods (66 feet) wide where it ran through the Nelson Farm Area. (CLR 2005: 29, 34)

Nelson Farm Area Development, 1700-1774:
Thomas Nelson, a farmer and carpenter, was the first Nelson recorded as buying property in the present-day Nelson Farm Area. Nelson fathered twins, Thomas, Jr. and Tabitha (born 1721), before purchasing 50 acres of upland, meadow, and a house and barn from Samuel Ames in 1724. In 1726, Thomas' second son, Josiah Nelson, was born. Just a year later, Thomas, Sr. inherited 23.5 acres, house, and barn from his father-in-law, Josiah Hobbs. The Nelsons appear to have remained living on the Ames land. (Malcolm 1985: 27)

East of the Nelson property, the Bull Tavern was constructed sometime in the 1720s. In 1739 Daniel Brown, a shoemaker, purchased about 30 acres west of the Nelson property stretching both north and south of the Battle Road. The seven acres north of the road contained pastureland and a small orchard and house lining the Battle Road. (CLI 1995: 10; Malcolm 1985: 36)

In 1746 Thomas Nelson, Jr. bought 40 acres north of the Battle Road in Lincoln bordering his father's land on the west. Thomas' younger brother, Josiah, purchased 24 acres of meadow in 1748, 20 acres in Lincoln in 1750, and about two acres bordering the Concord-Lexington line in 1752. Thomas, Sr. apparently built a new house for his family in 1754. Josiah would continue to add to his holdings until 1770. (Malcolm 1985: 28, 31)

While the Nelsons expanded the size of their holdings in the mid-18th century, other changes occurred in the Nelson Farm area. Notably, the town of Lincoln was established in 1754, its eastern boundary running through the center of the present-day Nelson Farm area and west of Thomas, Sr.'s house. Also in 1754, Nathaniel Whittemore bequeathed 35 acres along Nelson Road (the western portion of the Battle Road as it ran through the Nelson Farm area) to his son, Nathaniel, Jr. This property had been in the Whittemore family for 34 years, most of the upland and pasture parcel being located south of the Battle Road. Whittemore's land was bordered on the east by land that would eventually belong to Thomas Nelson, Jr. Around the time that Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. inherited the family land, he bought the homestead of his western abutter, Daniel Brown. (CLR 2005: 26; Malcolm 1985: 37-39)

In January 1755 Thomas, Jr. and Josiah Nelson both sold 21 acre parcels to each other. Thomas, at least, received meadow and upland. Josiah perhaps received a house in the trade, or he soon constructed a new one. The house was a rectangular-framed building with a central chimney. It

faced south and was located on the southern slope of a low ridge. In the same year Josiah bought a one and three fourths acre parcel of plowland, meadow, and swamp from Jacob Whittemore. (Abel 1966: 1, 6; Administrative History--hereafter AH--2010: 95; Malcolm 1985: 31, 33)

Though his relationship to the previously-mentioned Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. cannot be established, Jacob Whittemore inherited property in Lincoln and Lexington (at the east end of the Nelson Farm area) upon his father's death in 1755. Jacob inherited a house and around 114 acres of upland, pastureland, orchard, and meadow. He also bought ten acres of meadow in Lincoln from Nehemiah Abbott in the same year. In The Scene of the Battle, 1775, Joyce Lee Malcolm describes the Whittemore property thus:
"Around sixty acres of Jacob's land lay north of the Battle Road and contained his orchard, woodland, a 'mansion house,' a corn house, a blacksmith shop, and a cider mill. Fences 'yards' surrounded the house, corn house, and cider mill. South of the Battle Road Jacob inherited a forty-three acre parcel of improved land and woodland with a barn on it, and a five-acre meadow bounded on the east by Fiske land and on the west by the Bull Tavern farm." (Malcolm 1985: 15)

Whittemore's house was probably built before 1756. Probably in the late 18th or early 19th century, a two-story wood addition would be made to the back of the house. (Malcolm 1985: 15; Jacob Whittemore House Historic Structure Report--hereafter JWHSR--1963: 2)

Meanwhile, between 1756 and 1757, Thomas Nelson, Sr. and one of his sons built a smaller house across the Battle Road from the 1754 family home. This new house was likely occupied by Thomas, Jr., his wife and two children. The house would be moved, at an unknown date, north of the Battle Road and west of Thomas, Sr.'s property in Lincoln. In 1757, Thomas, Jr. purchased a woodlot east of Mill Street from Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. In 1763 Thomas, Jr. purchased four and a half acres from Daniel Hager, probably just west of the Nelson Farm area. Josiah Nelson purchased 15 acres collectively from Jacob Whittemore and Nathaniel Whittemore in 1765. (Malcolm 1985: 28, 31, 33)

In 1767 Thomas Nelson, Sr. gave his son, Josiah, about 39 acres in Lincoln so Josiah would have access a watering pond for cattle. In 1768 Thomas, Jr. bought a two-acre parcel just north of his woodlot. He sold a one-half acre orchard to his brother, Josiah, in the same year, and Josiah bought a separate 9-acre woodland parcel as well. In 1770 Josiah purchased over four acres of Daniel Brown's property. Thomas Nelson, Sr. died in 1770, apparently intestate, though his children received shares of their father's property. Tabitha inherited 10 to 12 acres north of the Battle Road, with the original family home and barn. Her land was divided into three acres of upland pasture or mowing and a five-acre woodlot bordering the Battle Road. Thomas, Jr. certainly received property, though the exact amount is unknown. If anything, by this time Thomas, Jr.'s house had been moved to its Lincoln location, and, though he may have owned property in Lexington, it was not taxable. (Archeological Research Report--hereafter ARR--1969: 4; Malcolm 1985: 27-28, 30-31, 33)

While Thomas Nelson, Jr. did not own taxable property in Lexington, Nathaniel Whittemore, Jr. no longer owned any real estate in Lincoln. Probably due to financial troubles, he sold all his Lincoln property by 1769. However, Nathaniel did remain in his home, probably renting from the next owner. (Malcolm 1985: 38)

In the 1770s, the only structure Jacob Whittemore is known to have owned south of the Battle Road was his barn. North of the road, it is probable, though not certain, that Whittemore's cider mill was still standing. Other structures would have been present as well, of course, along with the Whittemore House. According to Joyce Lee Malcolm:
"In 1771 [Jacob] Whittemore owned fifteen acres of pasture in Lexington, six acres of plowland, six acres of upland meadow, and eight acres of fresh meadow. This was an average holding and typical distribution of land use. He also had an orchard on the north side of Concord (Battle) Road, probably west of his house for an orchard was situated near the road there in 1738. There is no record of the size of Whittemore's orchard, but the average orchard was between three-fourths and on acre in size and an orchard of one acre could be expected to produce some twenty barrels of cider a year. The parcels both north and south of the road are described as having 'improved land' and woodland. 'Improved land' could have included both plowland and pasture, hence a portion of his six acres of plowland was on each side of the road. The plowland on the north side of Concord Road was

probably located east of the house; plowland on the south side of the road was situated close to the barn. The eight acres of fresh meadow, usually swampy land, was doubtless south of the road where the land is more marsh, while the six acres of upland meadow may have been north of the road where the land is decidedly higher. The bluff must have formed some of Whittemore's woodland. (Malcolm 1985: 16-17)"

The bluff is a natural feature located at the eastern edge of the Nelson Farm area that was entirely wooded in the late 1700s. Fences and stone walls would have enclosed the various portions of Whittemore's farm. Stone walls also lined both sides of the Battle Road as it ran past the Whittemore property. In fact, walls likely extended along the entirety of the Battle Road where it ran through the Nelson Farm area.

Just as stone walls were heavily present on Whittemore's land, several stone walls also existed on Thomas Nelson, Jr.'s property. Stone walls divided Thomas's land from Josiah's both north and south of the Battle Road. A wall also ran along the portion of Thomas' property that bordered the old Lexington-Concord Line. Finally, a stone wall divided Thomas' property from that of his eastern neighbor, Jacob Whittemore. (Malcolm 1985: 32)

In 1772 Thomas Nelson, Jr. received a license as a retailer of liquor. He likely supplied all the local taverns with beer that was brewed at the hop house located on Josiah's land and located at the junction of the present-day Nelson Road and Route 2A. One may assume that this business helped Thomas support his family, as a 1774 tax record suggests that Thomas' property afforded him only a meager living. In 1774, Thomas was taxed for 28 acres total – one acre of tillage, one acre of orchard, 13 acres of meadow mowing, and ten acres of pasture. The remaining acreage was untaxed and likely considered waste, as it was located where a wet, marshy area stands today. The record also shows that Thomas owned only one horse, three cows, a one pig, a small amount of livestock. He had no need for oxen as he owned only one acre of tillage. One conflict with the tax record exists, however. According to descriptions of land purchases provided in the previous pages, by 1774 Thomas would have owned more than 28 acres. Either he was undertaxed, or much of Thomas's property was woodland or wasteland. (Malcolm 1985: 30-31)

Also in 1772 Josiah Nelson purchased land in Lincoln from Daniel Brown. According to Lincoln tax rolls of 1773, Josiah possessed three acres of tillage, 13 acres of meadow mowing, one acre of orchard, and 15 acres of pasture. Most of Josiah's plowland was on his home lot near his house, probably to the north and west. Land at the western edge of Josiah's property that he had earlier bought from Daniel Brown contained orchard and upland. Most of the land south of the present-day Nelson Road seems to have been pasture. Additionally, the northern border of his property above the Battle Road was woodland. Josiah's man-made structures included his house and barn, which was probably located to the east of the house, and his hop house. A stone wall stood at the western boundary of Josiah's property and on the eastern boundary between his and Thomas's land. The four acres Josiah bought from Daniel Brown were bounded by walls and had a cross wall running east to west. South of Nelson Road a wall divided Josiah's land from his brother's. (John Nelson House & Barn Historic Structure Assessment Report—hereafter JNHSAR--2008: 5; Malcolm 1985: 30-31, 33-35)

While the Nelsons and Jacob Whittemore owned the majority of the land in the Nelson Farm area around the time of the American Revolution, at least a few properties did not belong to either of those families. In 1772, Jacob Whittemore's son-in-law, Moses Reed, sold the 40-acre Bull Tavern property to Josiah Mansfield. The Bull Tavern building was located just west of the junction between Marrett Road (the Battle Road as it ran south east in the Nelson Farm area) and present-day Route 2A (Figure 1). The tavern property probably contained a large house, barn, and a cider mill. Mansfield never lived on the tavern property. Rather, he mortgaged it out, eventually to Martha Salisbury, a widow. Martha leased the property, most likely to John Muzzy and his son, Isaac, until circa 1779. Whether the Bull Tavern was actually operated as a tavern around the time of the Revolution is unknown. Additionally, a blacksmith shop was located across from and east of both the tavern and Battle Road on Jacob Whittemore's property, though the Whittemores do not appear to have owned the blacksmith shop. Finally, just south of the tavern and blacksmith shop lay the land of Amos Marrett. Only a small portion of Marrett's land lined the Battle Road, abutting Jacob Whittemore's

meadow on the west. Marrett's property along the road was fenced. (Malcolm 1985: 12-13, 17)

Battle Road and Nelson Farm Area Development, 1775-1783:
On April 19, 1775 colonists engaged in battle with British Regulars, starting the Revolution. Colonial minutemen and militia confronted the British troops along the entire length of the road from Concord to Boston, part of which is today's Battle Road.

Isaac Muzzy was one of the day's casualties. Additionally, notable battle events took place in the Nelson Farm Area. By 1775 seventeen-year-old William Thorning and his father occupied the former Nathaniel Whittemore house. On April 19, 1775, from behind what is now known as the Minute Man Boulder, William Thorning shot and killed two British Regulars. The soldiers would eventually be buried south of the Battle Road in an orchard. (Malcolm 1985: 39; AH 2010: 1)

According to Nelson family tradition, Josiah Nelson called out to British soldiers upon hearing the sound of horses passing his house after their capture of Paul Revere. Responding in anger, one of the soldiers apparently stuck Nelson on the head with a sword, drawing the first blood of the day. After Nelson's wife bound his head, Nelson continued to spread word of the British advance in Bedford, probably by using a bridleway marking the boundary between Thomas Nelson's house lot and Jacob Whittemore's land. (AH 2010: 6; CLR 2005: 42)

Additionally, a skirmish took place directly at the Nelson Farms when the Lexington Company waited on a low hill on the north side of the road at the Lincoln-Lexington line to take revenge for an earlier, deadly clash on Lexington Common. Some of the colonials took advanced positions in a rock 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, and this small battle would become known as Parker's Revenge. (CLR 2005: 45)

Crossing into Lexington, the British regrouped and continued their retreat. Colonists were positioned a few hundred yards beyond them on the steep, thickly wooded hill known as the "Bluff," which was located at the eastern edge of the Nelson Farm area on Jacob Whittemore's property. 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. (CLR 2005: 45; Malcolm 1985: 15)

The Revolutionary War continued until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783, with men from the Battle Road area towns participating in numerous campaigns. Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington all supplied specific quotas of men and requested goods to the colonial army, bringing financial hardship to these local economies. Money paid to soldiers and for the purchase of army supplies necessitated higher taxes, and extensive wartime printing of paper money resulted in inflated prices. Monetary inflation eventually rose high enough that Lexington resorted to paying soldier bounties in cattle– five mature cows for three years of service. (CLR 2005: 10, 46)

Tabitha Nelson died in October 1778. In 1779 Thomas, Jr. quitclaimed eight acres of Tabitha's property and the east end of her barn to Josiah Nelson. In April, Thomas sold his sister's dwelling house to his son-in-law, Samuel Hastings, who had married into the family the previous year. Around this time Thomas, Jr. moved and joined Tabitha's home (the Thomas Nelson house built in 1754) with Thomas, Jr.'s 1756 house (Figure 2). (Hudson and Bks. 39 & 222 as cited in ARR 1969: 4-5; Thomas Nelson, Jr. House Archeological Research Report-- hereafter TNARR--1973: 3; Malcolm 1985: 28-29)

In the eastern portion of the Nelson Farm area, Martha Salisbury continued to lease the Bull Tavern property. In either late 1778 or early 1779 a Lexington blacksmith, Benjamin Danforth, evicted Salisbury's current tenant (most likely John Muzzy), and Danforth moved onto the tavern farm himself. Meanwhile, nearby Jacob Whittemore sold his homestead in April 1779 to Ezekial Hall. The plot north of the road contained 60 acres of improved land (pasture, tillage, etc), orchard, and woodland lying in Lexington and Lincoln. The land contained a mansion house, corn house, and

blacksmith shop, though the blacksmith shop apparently did not belong to Whittemore. South of the road, the property included a five-acre meadow and 43 acres of improved land and woodland with a barn just south of the Battle Road and bounded west by Nelson land. A two-acre meadow was located east of those parcels. Though he had only owned it a year, in 1780 Ezekial Hall either leased or sold the property to John Muzzy. Jacob Whittemore died the same year. Martha Salisbury successfully sued Benjamin Danforth in 1782 and then sold the Bull Tavern farm to Nathan Danforth. (Malcolm 1985: 12-17)

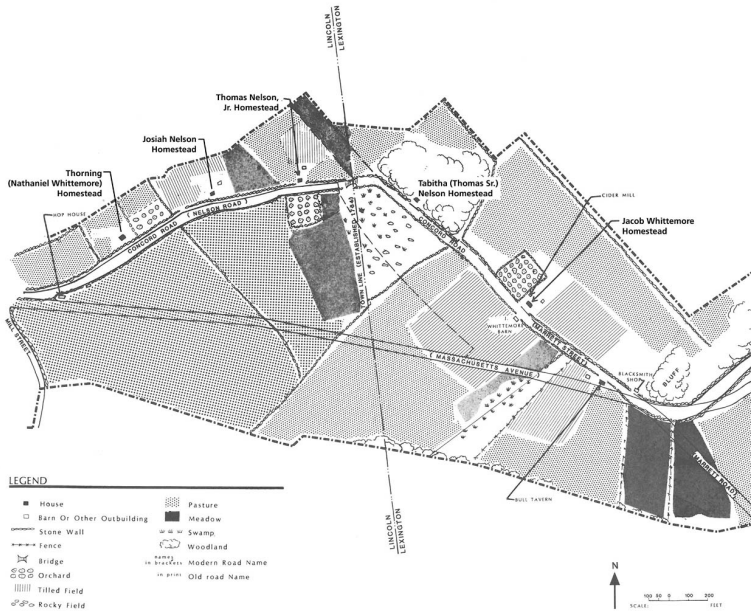


Figure 1. Nelson Farm area land use (circa 1775). (Joyce Lee Malcolm's The Scene of the Battle, 1775)



Figure 2. View north at the Thomas Nelson, Jr. house, c.1895. It includes the home built by Thomas Nelson, Sr. (1754) and Sr. and Jr. (1756). (Lincoln Public Library, photographic copy of original located at Historic New England, Halliday Collection)

RURAL ECONOMIC PERIOD, 1784 - 1899

Battle Road Area Development, 1784-1843:
Economic hardships persisted for a brief period after the war, but Massachusetts's economy recovered in the 1790s when high tariffs imposed on British goods prompted the growth of domestic industries such as textile mills, tanneries, and shoe factories. A number of small industries were located in Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington. New England farmers also benefited from industrialization, as they raised sheep for use in textile mills and livestock to sell in emerging urban centers. Beginning in 1820, woodland clearing for pastures and meadows significantly increased along the Battle Road to support larger cattle herds. By the mid-19th century only ten percent of local woodlands remained. Farmers along the road began adapting farm buildings, structures, and field configurations to support commercial agricultural production, and crops raised were sold to neighboring industrial towns. (CLR 2005: 47-48)

While secondary roads remained in poor condition, larger roads were improved, and new roads were constructed to support vehicle traffic and livestock drives. The Battle Road was greatly altered between 1802 and 1806, as the towns of Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington realigned portions of the road to provide more efficient travel between Concord and Boston (Figure 3). The Nelson Farm Area bend was by-passed, rerouting traffic away from the houses. The straightened sections became part of the North Great Road, and their construction would make 20th-century restoration of the by-passed portions and surrounding landscape feasible. Also in 1806, the Cambridge Turnpike (today's Route 2) was constructed south of the Battle Road. Although not within the bounds of the present-day Battle Road Unit, the presence of the turnpike altered traffic flow along the Battle Road by the mid-19th century, and a 20th-century realignment of the turnpike influenced early planning of the present-day Minute Man National Historical Park. (CLR 2005: 48, 55)

In April 1838, county commissioners ordered repair of the North Great Road at specific locations, including at the "small hill between the house of John Nelson & the line of Lexington." The improvement of the North Great and Battle Roads and construction of new roads did not bolster area industry for long. The small towns did not have sufficient water flow necessary to support large-scale industry and could not compete with locations such as Lowell at the confluence of the Concord and Merrimac Rivers. Battle Road area taverns also went out of business by the 1840s. While consuming large quantities of alcohol during the Colonial Period was acceptable, by the early 1800s drinking was perceived as a social problem. Additionally, the construction of the Cambridge Turnpike undoubtedly diverted clientele away from the taverns along the Battle Road and North Great Road. By the 1830s farmers along the Battle Road began to replace their cider orchards with dessert fruit orchards. (CLR 2005: 51, 53-54)

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 undoubtedly different. A view of the 19th-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 declining cider consumption, and the absence of local trade and tavern establishments. Josiah Nelson operated a nursery on his farm, selling fancy fruit trees to his neighbors. (CLR 2005: 54-55)

Nelson Farm Area Development, 1784–1843:
Post-1783 Thomas Nelson, Jr. enlarged his home in Lincoln by moving the house constructed in 1754 (Tabitha's home) directly next to his own. Thomas' daughter Lydia and her husband Samuel Hastings then occupied the 1754 structure. The only Nelson house remaining in Lexington was the original structure belonging to Thomas, Sr. in the 1720s. As previously mentioned, Thomas, Jr. may have owned property in Lexington, though it was not taxable and must have been waste or woodland. In 1785, Samuel Hastings sold ten acres of Nelson property in Lexington, which may have belonged at one time to Thomas, Jr. (Malcolm 1985: 28-30)

The 1802 to 1804 construction of the North Great Road greatly increased traffic in the Battle Road area, and the Nelson Farm area homes were completely by-passed. In 1808 Josiah Nelson's son, Josiah, Jr., perhaps anticipating his 1809 marriage to Anna Hoar, began construction on his father's land of what would be known as the John Nelson House. The house was located south of the by-passed Battle Road and west of the Josiah Nelson (Sr.) House. Also in 1808, the 1720s Nelson

home in Lexington burned down. In 1810, Josiah Nelson, Sr. died, and his descendents began to occupy the property. The Nelson heirs divided the property in 1818. Joshua received his father's house and property on the north side of the Battle Road. John received five acres of pasture in Lincoln along with the west end of the John Nelson House. Josiah, Jr. received 19 acres of land and the east end of the John Nelson House. Josiah was assessed $15 for his house every year between 1810 and 1818. (JNHSAR 2008: 2-3; Malcolm 1985: 28-29; Research Report: Archeological Excavations at the Site of the Josiah Nelson House--hereafter RR--1966: 3)

In 1818 Joel Viles purchased the Bull Tavern property from Joseph Simonds. The deed placed the Bull Tavern farm buildings within the wedge created by the Battle Road and the early 1800s by-pass (North Great Road). Thirty-nine acres of tavern farmland were located south of the new road. Just north of the Battle Road, John Muzzy, Jr. took over the Whittemore property upon his father's death in 1824. He would transfer around 50 acres with house, barn, wood shed, shop, and chaise (carriage) house to Captain Daniel Chandler through a mortgage deed in the summer of 1838. (Malcolm 1985: 12; JWHSR 1963: Historical Data Section, Appendix 1)

John Nelson married Lucy Viles in May 1820. In 1821 John was assessed $12 for his half of the John Nelson House. Josiah, Jr. was assessed $9 for his half. John's larger assessment indicates that he may have improved and expanded his side of the house. Between 1821 and 1824 the original section of the John Nelson Barn was constructed. In 1826, Josiah, Jr. was declared insane. Though he continued to own half the house, his land was sold in large sections to help pay off his mounting debts. In 1831 Josiah, Jr. mortgaged four acres and his part of the house lot, though apparently not the house, to Mrs. Joan Locke of Lexington. Josiah, Jr. died in 1835, leaving his heirs his portion of the house. Tax assessments from the 1830s indicate that John Nelson improved the barn during that decade. (JNHSAR 2008: 3, 247)

The history of the Thomas Nelson, Jr. house during the early 19th century is not known. At some point Thomas and Oliver Hastings inherited the house from their father, Samuel (husband of Lydia Nelson). In 1837, Thomas and Oliver sold the Thomas Nelson, Jr. property to David Miller. (TNARR 1973: 3)

Battle Road Area Development, 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 Midwest, were less efficient in the stone strewn New England soils. Many left to establish farms in the Midwest, and after the advent of the railroad, the 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 Midwest products, local farmers adapted production, specializing in perishable produce (milk, apples, cucumbers, etc.) transported by local rail to the growing urban markets. (CLR 2005: 55)

Farmers adapted structures and field configurations to support increasingly commercialized operations. Stone walls were often dismantled, for instance, to enlarge fields upon which mechanized farming equipment would be used. Local farmers also 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, immigrant families begin purchasing farms along the Battle Road, generally on marginal land or land abandoned by colonial descendents who had relocated to more fertile agricultural land in the Midwest. (CLR 2005: 55-58)

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 as efficient Rumford fireplaces and Franklin stoves increasingly replaced colonial fireplaces, and coal replaced wood. By the late 1800s, woodlands covered approximately forty percent of the western half of the present-day Battle Road Unit. The eastern half remained open. (CLR 2005: 59-60)

By the late 1800s, the open, agricultural landscape of the Battle Road had changed. Farms were much more condensed, and four monuments commemorating the April 1775 battles had been placed along the Battle Road. These monuments and the battle sites and witness structures drew an increasing number of tourists to the area. By the 1870s, wealthy Bostonians had purchased agricultural fields and pastures within the towns bordering the Battle Road, converting those properties into large summer estates. By the late 19th century, middle-income Boston merchants and businessmen purchased agricultural land within the present-day Battle Road Unit for smaller, permanent residences. Men from these families commuted daily to and from Boston, primarily by train. However, the North Great Road was converted into a highway in the 1890s, and its sophisticated construction of compacted stone provided more efficient travel to and from Boston and allowed for pleasurable use. The highway would primarily serve farmers hauling produce to market, tourists in carriages and omnibuses, and bicyclists. (CLR 2005: 65, 69, 71)

Nelson Farm Area Development, 1844–1899:
The Nelson properties all transferred to new owners in the mid-19th century. In 1846 John Nelson's only child, George, purchased the eastern portion of the John Nelson House from the heirs of Josiah, Jr. George would inherit the western part of the John Nelson House from his father in 1859, making George sole owner of the house. His son, J. Walter Nelson (born 1863), would occupy the house towards the end of the 19th century. Meanwhile, in 1855, the last of the Nelsons occupying the Josiah Nelson (Sr.) house died. Martin Neville purchased the Thomas Nelson, Jr. house from David Miller at an unidentified date, and, between 1895 and 1900, a modern house was constructed on the site (Figure 4). (JNHSAR 2008: 4-5; RR 1966: 3; TNARR 1973: 3)

The Jacob Whittemore property also changed hands during the mid-19th century. In June 1849 Daniel Chandler transferred his mortgage deed to Nehemiah Ball. The record of ownership for the Muzzy, or Jacob Whittemore, property from 1849 to the mid-1900s is long and not descriptive of the physical characteristics of the land. Of importance to note, however, is that Leonard A. Saville received rights to the property between 1874 and 1877. Saville owned the property for 20 years, much longer than the almost 15 other Whittemore property owners of the 19th century. Saville sold the Whittemore property in 1897 to Charles McMahon. At the time two large elms were located in front, or south, of the house near its corners (Figure 5). They must have been planted by the Muzzys or Whittemores. (JWHSR 1963: Appendix 1, Illustration No. 1)

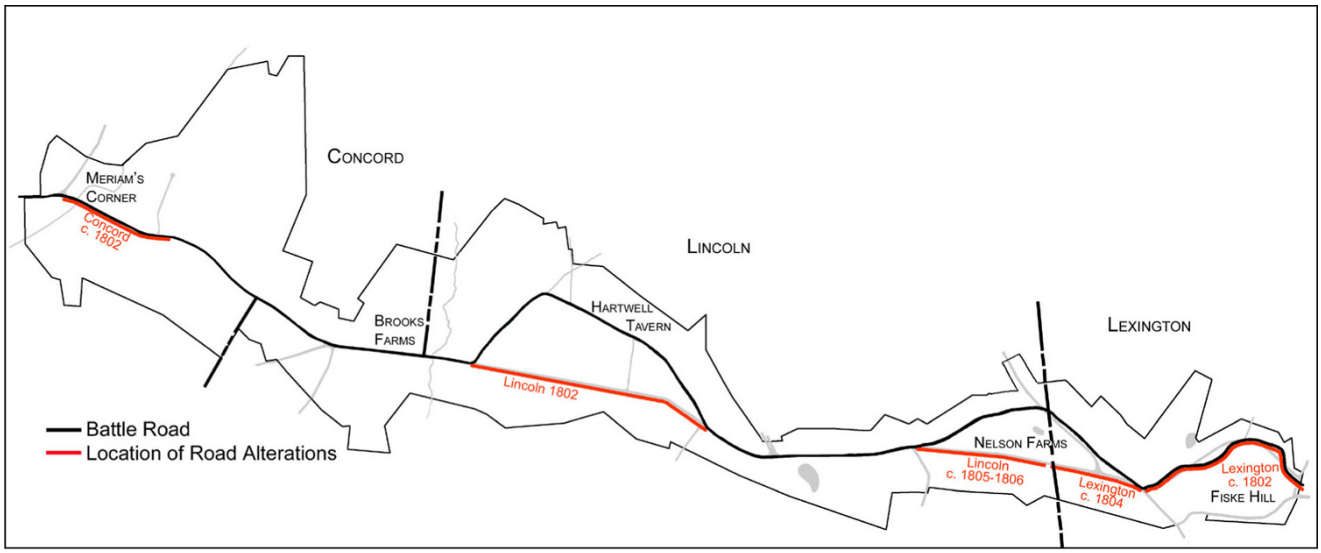


Figure 3. Map of the Battle Road Unit showing the location of road alterations as completed by the Towns of Lincoln, Lexington, and Concord, 1802 to circa 1806. (OCLP)

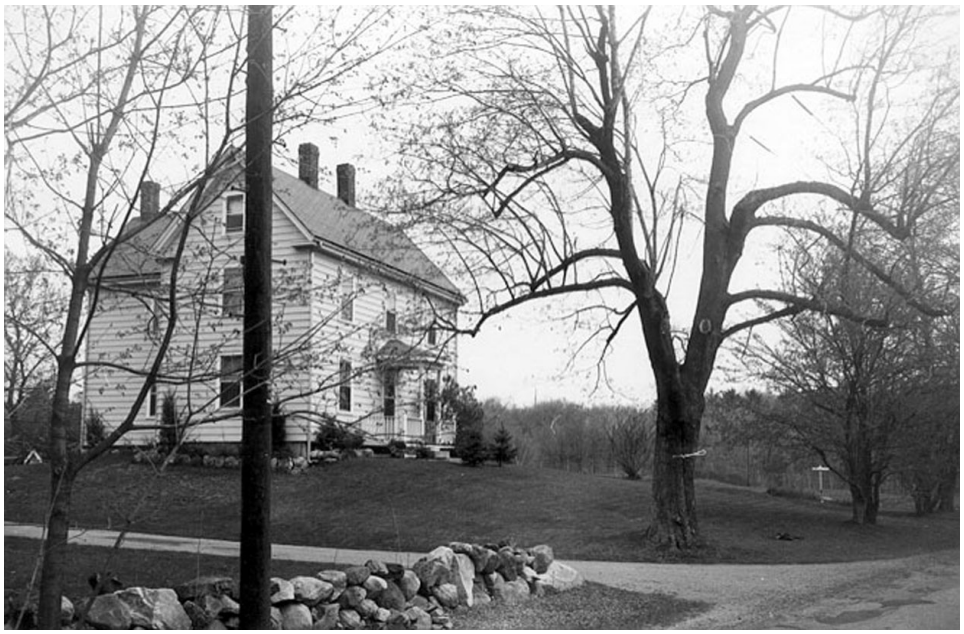


Figure 4. View east toward the Neville House, probably in the 1960s or 1970s. The Neville House was constructed between 1895 and 1900 on the Thomas Nelson, Jr. House site. (OCLP)



Figure 5. View looking northeast toward the Jacob Whittemore House in the 1890s. (Boston Athenaeum Old House File)

SUBURBANIZATION OF THE BATTLEGROUND LANDSCAPE, 1900 – 1958

Battle Road Area Development, 1900-1958:
Dramatic landscape changes occurred between the early- and mid-1900s. In 1880 almost 100% of landowners in the present-day Battle Road Unit were farmers, and only Irish and Canadian immigrants were listed in the census. By 1930, however, only 67% operated farms, and families came from Ireland, Canada, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Portugal, and numerous others. Twice as many non-agricultural households existed in the Battle Road area by that time. (CLR 2005: 77-79)

The state highway (Route 2A), which included a significant portion of the 19th 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 by-passed section of road around Fiske Hill was significantly altered by 1930, and many roads were also constructed by 1940. The highway and new roads supported ever increasing tourism. (CLR 2005: 79-82)

As modern improvements replaced historic homes and obstructed historic sites, a preservation movement emerged. In 1924, Massachusetts Governor Channing H. Cox established a nine-person commission to recommend a commemorative program for the 150th Anniversary of the American Revolution. In consultation with Landscape Architect Arthur Shurtleff (later known as Arthur Shurcliff), commission members examined sites along the Battle Road for a proposed Memorial Highway. In January 1925, Shurtleff submitted a report to the commission in which he recommended preserving nearly two miles of the original Battle Road that include the two large bends in the road (Hartwell and Nelson areas) bypassed in the early 1800s. He also recommended acquisition of at least 400 feet on each side of the road to preserve its rural character. The state did not act upon Shurtleff's recommendations. (CLR 2005: 83-84)

In 1941, just prior to World War II, construction of the Laurence G. Hanscom Airfield began north of the Hartwell Tavern. The airport served as a training ground for Army Air Force squadrons during the war, and became a research center for military electronics after the war. While farming in the area continued, the growing workforce at the Hanscom Airfield and a regional need for suburban housing accelerated the transformation of Battle Road agricultural fields into residential lots with groomed lawns, ornamental plantings, and expanding woodlands. New commercial businesses came with parking lots, sidewalks, signs, and gas pumps. The Massachusetts Department of Works

constructed Airport Road in 1946, connecting Route 2A and the Hanscom Air Force Base. The road cut through the historic Bull Tavern site and across the Battle Road between the Thomas and Tabitha Nelson house sites. In the early 1950s, the federal government completed construction of Interstate 128, the first limited access highway in Massachusetts. Easy access from the interstate to Route 2A promoted traffic congestion along the highway and residential development within Battle Road area. (CLR 2005: 89-95)

In 1955 the federal government established the Boston National Historic Sites Commission (BNHSC) for the purpose of exploring how to preserve the most important colonial properties in and around Boston. The BNHSC identified the entire Battle Road from Boston to Concord as significant. However, Route 128, which severed the Battle Road just east of Fiske Hill, was seen as 'the dividing line between the retrievable and irretrievable past,' and the commission only considered land west of I-128 as worthy of preservation. (BNHSC as cited in CLR 2005: 95)

In 1956, the BNHSC consulted with Landscape Architect Arthur Shurcliff (formerly Shurtleff) regarding their study. In a letter to the BNHSC, Shurcliff recommended preserving a portion of the road from 'Fiske Hill toward Concord,' and he made specific recommendations for features to remove, preserve, and construct. In January 1957 a conflict arose between the BNHSC and U.S. Air Force, as the Air Force was constructing a large military housing project near the Josiah Nelson farmstead (Figure 6). The BNHSC requested preservation of an eight-acre parcel including the Nelson home and a witness boulder. In May 1957, the Air Force reduced the housing project size, and the Under-Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI) requested that the parcel be transferred to the DOI. In 1958, the BNHSC completed an interim report for submission to Congress the following year. The report recommended establishment of a national historical park that would include the eight-acre parcel and four miles of the Battle Road from Meriam's Corner in Concord to Route 128 in Lexington. The park would be known as "Minute Man," and the National Park Service gained possession of the eight-acre parcel on December 8, 1958. (Shurcliff to BNHSC as cited in CLR 2005: 96-100)

Nelson Farm Area Development, 1900 - 1958:
Little is known about the character of the Nelson or Whittemore properties in the early 20th century. The Josiah Nelson house burned down on July 4, 1908, leaving only the brick chimney with part of its fireplaces and hearths intact (Figures 7 and 8). J. Walter Nelson continued to occupy the John Nelson House into the early 20th century (Figure 9). J. Walter's son W. Newton Nelson was born in 1905, and, at some point, the John Nelson property was transferred to him. The Nelsons ran a dairy, grow corn and tomatoes, and managed a large apple orchard, and they would begin selling produce at a roadside stand in 1920. Although their farm included most of its original acreage, much of it had reverted to woodland. Woodland began to succeed fields in other parts of the Nelson Farm area as well (Figure 10). In 1924, the sons of Martin Neville purchased the modern house on the Thomas Nelson, Jr. property from their father. (RR 1966: 3-4; CLR 2005: 77; TNARR 1973: 3)

Meanwhile, between 1868 and 1907 the Whittemore property was generally transferred as "forty-seven acres and two-acres." By 1910, the size of the property being transferred was greatly diminished to "fifteen acres and two acres." By the 1920s the Jacob Whittemore property had been altered from its late 1800s appearance, and more outbuildings had been built west of the house (Figure 11). The house was remodeled by its owners around 1950. (JWHSR 1963: Appendix 1, Illustration No. 2, 2)



Figure 6. View northwest at the military housing project at Hanscom Air Force Base in 1958. The John Nelson house is in the foreground. North Great Road (Route 2A) runs in front of it, and the Battle Road behind. (Hanscom Air Force Base Photo Lab)

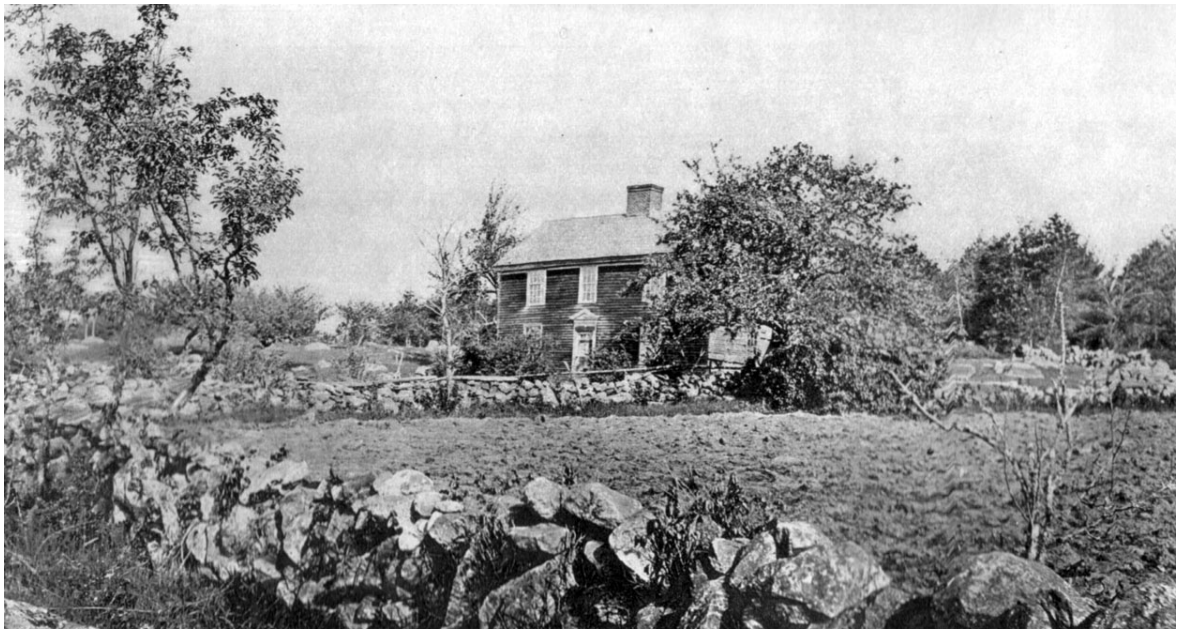


Figure 7. View northwest toward the Josiah Nelson house from the Battle Road in 1905. (An Account of the Celebration by the Town of Lincoln Mass, April 23rd, 1904, of the 150th Anniversary of its Incorporation, 1905)



Figure 8. View southwest toward the remains of the Josiah Nelson House after 1908. (Mnute Man NHP Library, photographic copy of an original owned by Mr. W. Newton Nelson)



Figure 9. View northeast toward the John Nelson House in 1935. (Minute Man NHP Library, photographic copy of original at Lincoln library)



Figure 10. Aerial view of the Nelson Farm area in 1938. The site is mostly open and contains agricultural fields, but woodland surrounds the outer limits of the area. (OCLP)



Figure 11. View northwest toward the Jacob Whittemore House, circa 1923. (Minute Man NHP Library, photographic copy of original owned by Lexington Historical Society - Hancock - Clark House)

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PERIOD, 1959 – PRESENT

Battle Road Unit and Hartwell Area Development, 1959-present:
On January 21, 1959, the BNHSC submitted the Interim Report to Congress. The federal government officially designated the eight-acre Nelson Farm unit as a national historic site April 14, 1959. The parcel was incorporated into Minute Man National Historical Park, which was established

through Public Law 86-321 on September 21, 1959, and opened to the public in 1960. By this time more trees were growing along the roads in the Nelson Farm area, and an access road to the Hanscom Air Force Base had been constructed in the area (Figure 12). Several colonial properties and structures were researched and documented between the 1960s and 1970s, with the Josiah Nelson and Jacob Whittemore sites being some of the first. The Thomas, Jr. Nelson and Thomas, Sr. Nelson sites were studied later on. (CLR 2005: 105-107)

Russell and Vivian B. Wolfe transferred the title to the Jacob Whittemore House to the National Park Service on February 20, 1961, and the house served as the temporary lands acquisition office and headquarters for the Historic American Buildings Survey student team during the following year. By November 1961, the house was occupied by the park historian and his family. By this time the landscaping around the house included tall, symmetrically placed shrubs and various other decorative plants. Large additions flanked the west side of the historical structure.¬¬ Research on the house began in 1962, making the Jacob Whittemore homestead the first building in the park to be studied by park staff (Figure 13). The Whittemore House is now the only historically significant building in the Lexington portion of the park still extant. Remains of a rectangular foundation exist north of the house. (JWHSR 1963: Appendix 1, i-1, 11)

During the 1962 to 1966 investigation of the Josiah Nelson house site, trees were removed, vegetation cut, and loose architectural artifacts removed, tagged, and stored. The house and barn foundations were excavated and stabilized. In all, eight building or structure sites were found on land that once belonged to Josiah Nelson:
1) the Josiah Nelson house
2) the Josiah Nelson barn, located behind and slightly east of the house
3) an unidentified small structure in front of the house
4) an unidentified small structure in front and to the west of the house
5) a house site about 11 yards west of the Josiah Nelson house (probably the Thorning homestead)
6) the site of a shed or workshop to the rear or north of that house
7) the site of a house dating from the early 18th century, located in the meadow some 200 yards east of the Josiah Nelson house
8) a barn site south of Nelson Road, opposite 6) and 7)

Numerous colonial stone walls remained in the Josiah Nelson house site as well, though a number had been degraded due to locals stealing stones. (JWHSR 1963: Forward; Josiah Nelson Farm Historic Structures Report--hereafter JNFHSR--1967: 2-4)

The park's first master plan was completed in 1965 and adopted in 1966. The plan specified rehabilitation of the 1775 historic scene, including, stabilization, limited restoration, and selected reconstruction of period structures and relate outbuildings, along with other historic manmade features – stone walls, fences, farm paths, and public ways where appropriate. Proposals recommended that the Battle Road be turned into a pedestrian way where it ran through the Nelson Farm area. A parking lot would also be located there, and the plan proposed that the access road to the Air Force Base be tunneled under park land. The Jacob Whittemore House was supposed to be restored to its historic appearance, and the John Nelson house was designated for preservation. A central interpretive facility, now the visitor center located in the Nelson Farm Area, was then planned to be located just east of Nelson Farm near Fiske Hill. (CLR 2005: 107; Master Plan 1965: 8, 15, Development Analysis)

In 1968 the modern house on the Thomas Nelson Jr. site was razed. Also in 1968, the National Park Service Office of Resource Planning prepared a special study that identified buildings and structures within the park boundary to be retained, removed, or demolished. By the time of the study the National Park Service already owned the Jacob Whittemore house. The John Nelson property was slated for future acquisition. 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 Farm area back onto Route 2A. Vehicular traffic would be eliminated from the Battle Road in the Hartwell Area and Fiske Hill, making way for foot traffic only. The blacktopped surface would be removed from both the pedestrian areas where the Battle Road ran through the Nelson Farm area. Implementation of the motor route depended on the relocation of

Route 2. The state transportation secretary would decline the hotly contested relocation in 1977. (TNARR 1973: 3; CLR 2005: 108-109)

In 1970 the National Park Service 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 in the Nelson Area began in August 1974, and the building was dedicated in May 1975. (CLR 2005: 109)

Sometime in the 1970s, W. Newton Nelson sold the John Nelson house, barn, and land to the National Park Service. In 1979 the John Nelson barn lean-to was rehabilitated after it collapsed from heavy snow. In the same year the park had a team of archeologists make recommendations for various park sites, including the Josiah Nelson house site. The archeologists supervised the repair of the brick and stone fireplace at the Nelson house site. (JNHSAR 2008: 4; AH 2010: 204)

In either 1979, a structure known as the Hargrove Barn was moved to the Whittemore site to hide the vehicles owned by park personnel. Sometime in the 1980s archeologists working along Nelson Road uncovered the original Battle Road surface, allowing for its restoration. (NFCLI 1995: 11; AH 2010: 137, 210)

The park's first General Management Plan (GMP) was completed in 1989 and approved July 10, 1990. Besides addressing traffic problems, the GMP directed a "selective restoration of the 18th-century environment [to] provide a flavor of the physical conditions on April 19, 1775 without requiring detailed replication of the entire landscape." It opposed a proposition to widen Route 2A and supported closing to traffic and restoring sections of the Battle Road to their 18th-century appearance. The Marrett Street section, or eastern portion, of the Nelson Farm area was identified for restoration. (CLR 2005: 110-112)

Implementation of the GMP goals began in the early 1990s and continues today. In 1992, the park's boundaries were expanded and new land acquired. In December 1993 the park asked for funding to preserve three historic structures, including the Whittemore House. Construction of the Battle Road Trail began in 1995. The trail, designed by the landscape architecture firm Carol R. Johnson Associates, includes segments of the historic Battle Road closed to automobile traffic. Additional landscape development included orchard and field restoration, removal of non-historic buildings and structures, construction of visitor parking lots along Route 2A, etc. On February 7, 2007 roads, approximately following the route of the April 19, 1775 British retreat, were together designated the Battle Road Scenic Byway. (CLR 2005: 112; AH 2010: 294; BR CLI 2007: 84)



Figure 12. The Nelson Farm area in 1960. More trees are visible along the roads than in 1938. The access road to Hanscom is located just west of the Battle Road and North Great Road junction. A pond is visible near the center of the photo. (OCLP)



Figure 13. View looking south toward the back of the Jacob Whittemore House in 1962. (Minute Man NHP Library, photo by Jack Boucher)

Uses

Functions and Uses:

Major Category	Category	Use/Function	Historic	Current	Primary
Agriculture/Subsistence	Agricultural Field	Agricultural Field	Yes	Yes	No
Agriculture/Subsistence	Agricultural Outbuilding	Barn	Yes	Yes	No
Defense	Battle Site	Battle Site	Yes	No	Yes
Recreation/Culture	Museum (Exhibition Hall)	Historic Furnished Interior	No	Yes	No
Transportation	Pedestrian-Related	Interpretive Trail	No	Yes	No
Domestic (Residential)	Hotel (Boarding House)	Lodge (Inn, Cabin)	Yes	No	No
Recreation/Culture	Monument (Marker, Plaque)	Monument (Marker, Plaque)	Yes	Yes	No
Recreation/Culture	Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Recreation	No	Yes	Yes
Domestic (Residential)	Single Family Dwelling	Single Family House	Yes	Yes	No
Agriculture/Subsistence	Woodlot/Forest (Managed)	Woodlot/Forest (Managed)	Yes	Yes	No

Public Access:

Public Access: Other Restrictions

Public Access Narrative:

The park grounds are open sunrise to sunset. Some private residences exist in the Nelson Farm area and are not open to the public.

Associated Ethnographic Group

Ethnographic Study Status: No Survey Conducted

Ethnographic Narrative:

In 1996, a research report for the National Park Service Ethnographic Program entitled “In Praise of Sweet Corn: Contemporary Farming at Minute Man National Historical Park” was completed by Steven Parish.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Landscape characteristics identified for the Nelson Farm area include natural systems and features, land use, spatial organization, circulation, topography, vegetation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, small-scale features, and archeological sites. Many of these characteristics have associated with them features that contribute to the site's overall historic setting significance and identity, as well as features that do not contribute. The features that do contribute were either present during the period of significance or are in-kind replacements of such historic elements.

The physical integrity of the Nelson Farm area is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance (c.1635 to 1959) with current conditions. Though they have evolved over the years, many historic characteristics and features of the site are intact. The original route of the Battle Road still exists along Nelson Road and is now part of the Battle Road Trail, a pedestrian and bicycling path closed to motor vehicles. The trail passes by the historic Bluff Monument, one of four commemorative markers installed along the Battle Road in the late 19th century. The 1946 Airport Road (Access Road) connects Hanscom Air Force Base to Route 2A and helps maintain the historic layout and circulation pattern of the Nelson Farm area. The restoration of several fields reflects the historic land use pattern of fields and woodlands. Also reinforcing the original patterns of roads and agricultural fields is the system of stone walls, many of which have been repaired and restored. Most notably, the Federal-style John Nelson House and Colonial style Jacob Whittemore House still stand in their original locations, and have been restored to their historical appearances. Extant barns and foundations of older Nelson family homesteads and other farm structures can still found and reinforce the historical agricultural character of the Nelson Farm area.

While historic characteristics and features remain in the area, many changes have also occurred. In the 1970s, a road was constructed south of Route 2A to access an adjacent school. An old barn was moved to the Jacob Whittemore site in 1979. In the 1990s, the Battle Road was turned into an unpaved trail, altering its function from a simple means of travel to a recreational and interpretive corridor. To support those uses, the National Park Service constructed a visitor center, parking lot, walkways, amphitheatre, and signage. Though some stone walls have remained untouched, many have been reconstructed with imported stones. Suburban land uses also affected the Nelson Farm area, although today only a few modern homes remain. Although the landscape has not been returned completely to its Revolutionary War appearance, it retains a rural and agricultural character. As such, the Nelson Farm area retains overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

INTEGRITY

Location:
The Nelson Farm area encompasses a number of landscape features that were present during at least the historic period of significance. Those features – buildings, structures, stone walls – remain in their same locations as in the historic period of significance. Additionally, the Battle Road Trail follows the same route as the original Battle Road, and Airport Road continues to follow its original route.

Design:
Throughout the historic period of significance, lands within Nelson Farm area were transferred to numerous people, and the owners adapted their properties to their needs. Design integrity was diminished during the mid-20th century by suburban development, but most of the non-historic residences and businesses have been removed. Additionally, park restoration projects have improved historic structures and sites. The Jacob Whittemore House has been restored to its Colonial-era appearance, while the Federal-style John Nelson house reflects its historic appearance as well. The road and stone wall systems reflect their original designs, and the present road system closely follows the layout of the road system developed in the 18th century and expanded up through the mid-20th century.

Setting:
The Nelson Farm area retains a rural setting that was present throughout the period of significance, though some notable changes exist. In 1775 the Nelson Farm area was mostly open, characterized by farm fields with

few trees. By the mid-20th century much of the Nelson Farm area was forested, as the area lost its agricultural character and became more residential. Today, the Nelson Farm area is mostly forested, though with enough houses removed and open fields restored to suggest that the primary function of the area is rural rather than residential. The Battle Road is now part of the unpaved Battle Road Trail, a feature that enhances the rural setting of the Nelson Farm area.

Materials:
Though much of the Nelson Farm area was altered throughout and after the historic period of significance, some original materials remain, and restoration work has included materials that approximate those of the Colonial era. Of notable material evolution is the Battle Road, which was both unpaved and then paved during the period of significance. Today, the sections of the road that are included in the Battle Road Trail are unpaved, more closely approximating the materials of their 1775 form. However, as the Battle Road Trail was designed for recreational use and efficient drainage, the materials making up the trail today are not entirely the same as those making up the road in 1775. The sections of the Battle Road that lie under modern-day Lexington Road and Route 2A remain paved.

Workmanship:
The Nelson Farm area retains workmanship characteristic of its development throughout the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. The Jacob Whittemore and John Nelson Houses were both restored in a manner and with materials that approximated those of their original construction. The original stone walls in the Nelson Farm area reflect Colonial workmanship. However, the reconstructed walls generally do not.

Feeling:
Because the Nelson Farm area retains Colonial-era and Federal-style buildings, stone walls, and agricultural fields, the historic feeling has been retained. Signage helps reinforce where certain actions took place and how the colonists lived. The unpaved Battle Road Trail allows visitors to separate themselves from modern vehicular noises and high-speed travel. Additionally, though the forest did not exist in 1775, the trees help screen visitors from the sights of cars, modern structures, and Hanscom Airfield.

Association:
The Colonial-era houses, stone walls, agricultural fields, Battle Road Trail, and archeological ruins all help link the site to the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Monuments and signage provide information about the battle, reinforcing the association of the site with the April 19, 1775 events.

The section that follows presents an analysis of Nelson Farm area landscape characteristics, their associated features, and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether each feature contributes to the area's National Register eligibility for the period of significance (prehistoric: 7,500 to 500 years ago, and historic: c.1635 to 1959), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is non-contributing or undetermined.

In the tables of features that follow, features marked with an (*) are described in National Register documentation.

Landscape Characteristic: **Natural Systems and Features**

Historic and Existing Conditions:
Prior to European settlement, the Nelson Farm area was covered almost entirely by forest. During the 17th and 18th centuries and at the time of the April 1775 battle, most trees had been cleared and the land converted into agricultural fields. As the trees were cleared numerous boulders and smaller stones rose to the surface, some of which provided cover during the battle. Woodlands would overtake the area again once farm production declined and suburban homes were constructed along the Battle Road.

The Nelson Farm area is still mostly forested today, and some of the large boulders still exist in their original locations, such as a particularly large rock known as the Minute Man (Thorning) Boulder that served as cover for the colonists as they fired on the British (Figure 14). The woods and large boulders contribute to historic natural character of the Nelson Farm area. A wooded wetland ecosystem also exists in the Nelson Farm area. Near the visitor center, the wetlands support habitat for a state-listed rare species. The wetlands contribute to the historic character of the site. (Garvin, et al. 1993: 144; CLR 2005: 96)

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
Woodlands	156305	Contributing					No
Wooded Wetlands	156307	Contributing					No
Large Boulders, including Minute Man Boulder	156309	Contributing					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 14. View northeast toward the Minute Man (Thorning) Boulder off of Nelson Road and the Battle Road Trail. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: Land Use

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
Before European settlement, the Nelson Farm area was covered mostly in forest, but by 1775 agriculture was the primary land use. The Nelson Farm area was a mixture of tilled field, meadow, orchard, and a large amount of pasture defined by stone walls. Additionally, a small amount of swampland existed in the central portion of the site, just southwest of the Tabitha Nelson homestead across the Battle Road. During the 20th century and particularly after World War II, the Nelson Farm area became more residential, and woodlands began dominating former agricultural land.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Today the Nelson Farm area includes two private residences of no significance to the historic character of the site. Some open meadow exists along the Battle Road Trail, and the land surrounding the John Nelson and Jacob Whittemore homes remains open. The property southeast of the Jacob Whittemore House, south of the Battle Road Trail and north of Route 2A, was planted with apple trees. As the Battle Road has been turned into a trail, the Nelson Farm area is now used for recreation and contains a visitor center and parking lot.

Landscape Characteristic: Spatial Organization

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
Early development within the Nelson Farm area occurred along the Battle Road, a route fully laid-out by 1666 that connected Concord residents with Boston. The Nelson family owned much of the land in the western portion of the area, while Jacob Whittemore owned most in the eastern portion. From west to east, the Josiah Nelson House, Thomas Nelson, Jr. House, Tabitha Nelson House, and Jacob Whittemore House were all constructed on the north side of the Battle Road before the Revolution. The John Nelson House was constructed just after the war on the south side of the Battle Road. Though swampland was located in the central portion of the Nelson Farm area, there were fields, pastureland, and orchards spread throughout, with the orchards generally located near homesteads. All the separate land uses were delineated by stone walls.

The Battle Road was greatly altered between 1802 and 1806, when sections of the road were widened and others, as in the Nelson Farm area, completely bypassed. The new alignment was called the North Great Road, and it diverted much traffic away from the northern part of the Nelson Farm area along the original Battle Road. When post-World War II suburbia extended into the area, houses and businesses were built along both the Battle Road and North Great Road (Route 2A). Airport Road was constructed in 1946, connecting Hanscom Air Force Base with Route 2A. As the area became increasingly residential, agricultural fields were succeeded by woodlands.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
Certain spatial organization elements remain intact while others have been altered. Woodland extends across much of Nelson Farm area today, so historic field and pasture patterns are not as visible across much of the site. However, almost all suburban homes and businesses have been removed, reestablishing the open meadow and organic spatial organization of the land lining the Battle Road, which is visible from the Battle Road Trail. The land surrounding the John Nelson and Jacob Whittemore houses remains open. Stone walls also continue to demark old property lines and former agricultural fields. The foundations of other Nelson houses are still visible in their original locations, and the area roads have not been realigned.

As the Battle Road is now a trail, visitor services have been introduced into the Nelson Farm area. A large parking lot is now located in the center of the area, and a modern visitor center is located south of the Battle Road Trail just east of center. New pedestrian paths have been introduced as a result, connecting visitors to the Battle Road Trail, parking lot, and visitor center.

Landscape Characteristic: Circulation

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
Extending from Boston to Concord, the full length of the Battle Road was laid out by 1666, and development occurred along the road throughout the future Battle Road Unit and Nelson Farm area. In Nelson Farm area, the western portion of the Battle Road was known as Nelson Road, and the eastern portion was called Marrett Street. In the early 1800s, sections of the Battle Road were straightened through the construction of two new road segments, including one in the Nelson Farm area. The straightened road was called the North Great Road, a name by which it is known today, along with its designation as State Route 2A. The by-passed Battle Road sections became secondary, less-traveled roads. More recent construction included a major road connecting Hanscom Airfield/Air Force base to the North Great Road/Route 2A. This road, Airport Road, ran northwest from Route 2A across the peak of the Battle Road Trail. Traffic flow along the Battle Road/Route 2A increased significantly in the 1950s, after the construction of north/south Route 128/Interstate 95 outside the area.

Post Historic and Existing Conditions:
Route 128/Interstate 95 continues to divert increasing amounts of commuter traffic onto the North Great Road/ Route 2A, making the southern portion of the Nelson Farm area heavily traveled. In the 1970s, a road was built south of Route 2A to access Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School. In the 1990s, after years of planning, the by-passed portion of the Battle Road in the Nelson Farm area was closed to motor vehicle traffic, stripped of its asphalt surface, and covered with stone dust. The road was made part of the Battle Road Trail in 2000, along which pedestrians and cyclists may view historic houses, open fields, and orchards (Figure 15). The Battle Road route is considered contributing to the site's historic character, but the Battle Road trail itself is non-contributing. Other non-contributing features include the visitor parking lot and a sidewalk leading from the parking lot to the visitor center and Battle Road Trail. Also, an earthen trail leads northeast from Marrett Street near the Tabitha Nelson House foundations.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
* Battle Road (present North Great Road/Route 2A) (1-173)	156311	Contributing	000919		Location	107006	No
* Nelson Road (1-119-A)	156313	Contributing	040170		Location	64227	Yes
Visitor Parking Area	156315	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	64228	Yes
* Battle Road Trail	156317	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	65167	No
Sidewalk from Battle Road Trail to Visitor Parking to Visitor Center	156319	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	113759	Yes
Trail from Marrett Street northeast around Boulders	156321	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Road to School	156323	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 15. View looking east along the Battle Road Trail. Stone walls line the road. Along the right side is a milestone marker. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: Topography

Historic Conditions:
The pre-settlement topography of the Battle Road Unit consisted of undulating hills of glacial deposits and low wetlands. The Nelson Farm area contained small, steep hills in its eastern portion, one just northeast of Marrett Street at its northern end (site of Parker's Revenge), and another northeast of Marrett Street at its southern end near the Bluff Monument. Lower lying areas were located in the central and southern parts of Nelson Farm. Construction of houses and farm buildings likely required the alteration of the landforms, though exact changes made are generally unknown.

Post Historic and Existing Conditions:
The present Nelson Farm area topography mostly reflects its historic appearance. The steep hills remain in the eastern portion of the site, and lower lying swamp areas are located in the central and southern areas (Figure 16).

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 16. View southeast toward a foot path and rocky hilltop at the site of Parker's Revenge. The Tabitha Nelson House (Thomas Nelson Sr.) Site is located in the woods to the left. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
By 1775, with the exception of isolated woodlots retained for farm use, the landscape with the present-day Battle Road Unit had been cleared for agricultural use and orchard planting. Within the Nelson Farm area were woodland, meadow, tilled fields, and pasture. Cider orchards were maintained in the early history of the Battle Road, with at least one located south of the Thomas Nelson, Jr. homestead and one located west of Jacob Whittemore's house. Those apple orchards were gradually replaced by fancy fruit orchards, as cider drinking became less popular in the early 1800s. The configuration and types of agricultural uses and crops also changed over the years in response to changing markets, but the landscape remained primarily open into the mid- to late-1800s. By the turn of the 20th century, the landscape began to reforest as farmers abandoned worn-out fields and households were built throughout the Battle Road Unit and Nelson Farm area. By 1959, about half of the Battle Road Unit was covered by woodland. More trees grew along the Battle Road and Route 2A in the Nelson Farm area, but much of the land still remained clear.

Large elm trees were present in front, or southwest, of the Jacob Whittemore House during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as evidenced in photographs. Ornamental vegetation was planted around the various Nelson Farm area homes in the 20th century.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:
The Nelson Farm area is mostly forested, with some open areas cleared as part of field restoration. Part of a system of fields located throughout the park, the Nelson Farm area fields, though not planted with harvestable crops, contribute to the historic character of the area's agricultural past. Most of the plants in the Nelson Farm area do not contribute to the historic character of the site, however. As leaders of successional growth, hemlocks, cedar trees, and other conifers are located near the remaining buildings and house foundations. Conifers also provide shade near the visitor center in a small picnic grove. Southeast of the Jacob Whittemore House, two masses of apple trees have been planted directly north of Route 2A, welcoming drive-through visitors to the park. The orchard located south of Marrett Street (the Battle Road Trail) and east of Airport Road contains 25 apple trees, and the orchard directly south of the Bluff Monument contains 15 trees (Figure 17).

Reminders of former modern homes, a group of day lilies still grows just north of the visitor parking lot, and vinca and other ornamental plants grow in the woods near the Tabitha Nelson House Foundation (though mostly hidden from the view). Other ornamental plants exist near the John Nelson House, with a magnolia, lilac, and crabapples in front, or south, of the house. Many trees have recently been cut down near the eastern boundary of the Nelson Farm area to keep the land unobstructed for overhead power lines. Meanwhile, many invasive plants, such as Japanese knotweed, are filling other areas northeast of the Battle Road Trail that have previously been cleared of woodland (Figure 18). None of the ornamental or invasive plants contribute to the historic character of the site.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
* System of Fields (portions)	156325	Contributing			Asset	35688	No
Picnic Grove Conifers	156327	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Apple Trees	156329	Noncontributing – Compatible			Asset	1026115	Yes
Ornamental Vegetation	156331	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 17. View east at some of the apple trees near The Bluff along the Battle Road Trail and North Great Road (Route 2A). (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 18. View southeast toward invasive plants, such as Japanese knotweed, taking over a formerly open field. This area is located along the Battle Road Trail near the Jacob Whittemore House. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
At the time of the battle, at least five Colonial homes were located in the Nelson Farm area. These included the Daniel Brown House, Josiah Nelson House, Thomas Nelson Jr. House, Tabitha Nelson House (Thomas Nelson Sr.), and the Jacob Whittemore House. A typical house lot consisted of a house, barn, and several outbuildings, though the specific building and structure count on each area farm is unknown. A blacksmith shop existed southeast of the Jacob Whittemore House on the east side of the Battle Road. The Bull Tavern was also located along the Battle Road, but on the west side across from and adjacent to the blacksmith shop. Additionally, the Nelson family maintained a hop house in the western portion of the Nelson Farm area, where the Battle Road meets the North Great Road.

Between 1895 and 1900 a modern house was built on the site of the Thomas Nelson Jr. home, and both the Tabitha Nelson and Josiah Nelson Houses burned down by 1908. Meanwhile, more structures were added to the Jacob Whittemore property and house in the early 20th century. Between the early and mid-20th century modern residences were constructed as agriculture uses declined in the region and Boston suburbs expanded. However, the majority of house construction in the Battle Road Unit occurred along Fiske Hill and in the Hartwell area, mostly sparing the Nelson Farm's agricultural/rural character.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Changes were also made to the Nelson Farm area buildings and structures after Minute Man NHP was established. The John Nelson and Jacob Whittemore Houses were restored to their Federal and Colonial appearances, respectively (Figures 19, 20, and 21). In the late 1970s, the John Nelson Barn was also rehabilitated, while the (Hargrove) barn was moved to the Whittemore House site. Both the houses and their accompanying barns contribute to the historic character of the Nelson Farm area. There are also remains of stone foundations throughout Nelson Farm, including the Josiah Nelson, Jr. hop house, Josiah Nelson house, Thomas Nelson Jr. house, and Tabitha Nelson (Thomas Nelson Sr.) House (Figure 22, see Figure 16). The 1974 Minute Man visitor center, amphitheatre, and two remaining modern homes do not contribute to the property's historic significance (Figures 23, 24, and 25).

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
* John Nelson House (1-111-A)	156333	Contributing	006551		Location	64219	Yes
* John Nelson Barn (1-111-B)	156335	Contributing	012008		Location	64221	Yes
* Jacob Whittemore House (1-162-A)	156337	Contributing	000929		Location	64231	Yes
* Barn at Whittemore House (1-162-B)	156339	Contributing	040239		Location	64232	Yes
* Josiah Nelson House Foundation (1-164-A)	156341	Contributing	000920		Location	64218	Yes
* Josiah Nelson, Jr. Hop House Foundation (1-111-C)	156343	Contributing	040027		Location	64223	Yes
* Tabitha Nelson House (Thomas Nelson, Sr.) Site (1-159-A)	156345	Contributing	040253		Location	64225	Yes
* Thomas Nelson, Jr. House Foundation (1-152-A)	156347	Contributing	012006		Location	64224	Yes
* Minute Man Visitor Center	156349	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	64230	Yes
Amphitheatre	156351	Noncontributing – Compatible			Location	71753	Yes
Residence on Mill Street	156353	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Residence on Airport Road	156355	Noncontributing – Compatible					No

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 19. View northeast toward the John Nelson House. (OCLP, 2003)



Figure 20. View southeast toward the John Nelson Barn. (OCLP, 2011)



Figure 21. View east toward the Jacob Whittemore House and Barn in the background. (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 22. View east toward the Josiah Nelson, Jr. Hop House Foundation and the North Great Road (Route 2A) in the background. (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 23. View north toward the Minute Man Visitor Center, patio area, and sidewalk leading west to the parking lot. (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 24. View north toward the small amphitheatre near the visitor center. (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 25. View west toward one of the two contemporary residences that remain in the Nelson Farm area. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
In the 1600s, woodland cover prohibited expansive views across the landscape. By the 1775 battle, however, tree clearing had opened views in every direction. The openness allowed colonial militia and Minute Men a clear view of the British retreating along the Battle Road. Trees would grow back starting in the late 1800s with the decline in agricultural use and rapidly cover the Nelson Farm area throughout early- to mid-1900s. Also blocking views by the mid-1900s were several contemporary homes and structures.

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
Today, fields along the Battle Road are open and offer views into the surrounding landscape. Although some woodlands have been cleared and many non-historic houses have been removed, trees still block expansive views in other areas. However, as much of the land around Minute Man NHP has been developed, this tree growth effectively blocks views of contemporary structures. In the Nelson Farm area, woodlands screen visitors from the Hanscom Airfield to the northwest and other surrounding neighborhoods. However, the openness created by Airport Road does allow visitors to view the gate house and other structures at Hanscom at the northern border of the Nelson Farm area (Figure 26).

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 26. View north toward the Hanscom Air Force Base guard gatehouse and other structures at the northern border of the Nelson Farm area. In other areas of Nelson Farm, the base is mostly screened by trees. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: **Small Scale Features**

Historic Conditions (through 1959):
The most visible small-scale feature in the Nelson Farm area is the system of stone walls. While wood fences were initially used to demark property and prevent the movement of livestock, stone walls were eventually constructed throughout the Battle Road Unit and Nelson Farm area. When trees were cleared to make fields, the insulating value of the topsoil was lost and stones were pushed to the surface, forcing farmers to pile the stones in the middle of fields and pastures. Soon, the farmers moved the stones to the edges of existing wood fences, forming tossed walls. Stone walls both confined livestock and protected orchards and crops from livestock, and also marked property boundaries. During the Battle of Lexington and Concord, militia and minutemen used stone walls, boulders, and other objects as cover from British fire. After the war, as farming evolved and property use in the Nelson Farm area changed over the years, some stone walls were demolished to enlarge fields and, later, to construct new house foundations. Also during the 20th century, before park operations were established in the area, many stones along the road were removed by people to be utilized at their yards in other locations. Many of these people were unaware that they were in a national park area and of the protected status of the stone walls.

In 1885, a small rectangular granite marker called the Bluff Monument was placed near the eastern boundary of Nelson Farm area in commemoration of the fighting that took place at that location. It was relocated slightly several times due to various road construction projects. In the 1890s, the Massachusetts Highway Board installed granite markers every thousand feet along both sides of the newly designated state highway Route 2A. The top foot was exposed, with the remaining six feet below ground. The markers were inscribed with the letters “M.H.B.” (CLR 2005: 152, 159)

Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:
A number of small-scale features contribute to the historic character of the site. Using imported stone, the National Park Service restored a number of stone walls in the Nelson Farm area over the years, and the stone wall system is visible throughout the Nelson Farm area. The Bluff Monument remains as one of four commemorative markers installed along the Battle Road in the late 19th century (Figure 27). A few of the above ground portions of the Massachusetts Highway Board granite markers are extant, including one at Nelson Farm (Figure 28). (CLR 2005: 159)

As part of the Battle Road Trail project, the National Park Service erected four types of markers along the trail in 2000. Examples of the markers can be found in the Nelson Farm area (Figures 29 and 30, see also Figure 15). The Battle Road Markers are inscribed granite posts placed in pairs and connected with an iron chain. They are located where the road enters/exits Route 2A or at other intersections. The Milestone Markers are also granite posts and inscribed with the distance to Boston. The British Soldiers Grave Markers are plaques set into granite boulders and mark the approximate locations of British graves. The Archeological Site Markers are granite boulders inscribed with the name of the site.

Other non-contributing features include a split rail fence near the hop house foundation and informational and wayside signs along the trail informing visitors of the area history and April 19, 1775 events. To serve park visitors, benches, picnic tables, and trash cans are now located near the visitor center, with the picnic tables located in a grove of conifers and the benches spread along a sidewalk. One feature, a well located at the Jacob Whittemore House is likely historic but requires additional research before making an evaluation.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
* System of stone walls (Whittemore-Muzzy Property) (1-162-D)	156357	Contributing	040230		Asset	1008313	Yes
* System of stone walls (Josiah Nelson Property) (1-164-B)	156359	Contributing	040207		Asset	35037	Yes
* System of stone walls (Daniel Brown-Nelson Property) (1-164-C)	156361	Contributing	040181		Asset	35038	Yes
* System of stone walls (Josiah Nelson Heirs) (2-141-A)	156363	Contributing	040208		Asset	35039	Yes
* System of stone walls (Thomas Nelson, Jr. Property) (2-101-A)	156365	Contributing	040209		Asset	35040	Yes
* System of stone walls (North Great Road) (portions) (1-115-A)	156367	Contributing	040212		Asset	1054519	Yes
* System of stone walls (Nelson Road) (1-119-B)	156369	Contributing	040206		Asset	35041	Yes
* Bluff Monument (1-113-A)	156371	Contributing	040259		Location	64234	Yes
Massachusetts Highway Board (M.H.B.) Markers	156373	Contributing					No
Battle Road Markers	156375	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Milestone Markers	156377	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
British Soldiers Grave Markers	156379	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Archeological Site Markers	156381	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Split Rail Fence	156383	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Information and Wayside Signs	156385	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Benches along Visitor Center Sidewalk	156387	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Picnic Tables	156389	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Trash Cans	156391	Noncontributing – Compatible					No
Jacob Whittemore Well (1-162-C)	156393	Undetermined			Location	64233	Yes

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Figure 27. View of the Bluff Monument. (OCLP, 2004)



Figure 28. View of a Massachusetts Highway Board Marker along the Battle Road Trail east of Airport Road. (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 29. View east at two sets of the Battle Road Markers at the intersection with Airport Road. (OCLP, 2012)



Figure 30. View of the archeological site marker at the Thomas Nelson Jr. House Foundation. (OCLP, 2012)

Landscape Characteristic: **Archeological Sites**

As stated in the 2002 National Register documentation, archeological research has served an important/key role in Minute Man NHP from its initial development in the early 1960s. Investigations have occurred at 23 Archeological sites and portions of historic roadways in seven sections in the park throughout a 23-year period, from 1963 to 1986. These studies located sites occupied in 1775 and a collection of a very large assemblage of artifacts which eventually received appropriate conservation and cataloging during a project begun by the National Park Service in 1983. Most of the sites were farmsteads or residences known or assumed to have been part of the setting for the events of April 19, 1775. Located in a village setting in the town center of Concord, the North Bridge vicinity and outlying rural areas along the Battle Road corridor in Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington, the sites had been occupied by persons involved in the events of April 19, 1775 or were the scene of particular incidents on that day. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 47)

In 1989 and 1990, an intensive level Archeological survey was conducted within Minute Man NHP by The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Recent Archeological investigations in Minute Man NHP have been carried out on several historic period sites in compliance with Section 106 review. These surveys were done in advance of proposed construction or other alterations to the settings of these sites from 1994 to 1998. (National Register 2002, Section 8: 54-55)

Five sites are identified in the National Register documentation for the Nelson Farm area: Site 22 and 23 (118), Daniel Brown House and Shop Site (119), Site 24 (122), Jacob Whittemore Blacksmith Shop Site (127), and the Barn Foundation Site (128). (National Register 2002, Section 8: 69-71)

Landscape Features:

Feature Name	CLI Feature ID	Feature Contribution	CRIS-HS Resource ID	Associated CRIS-AR ID	FMSS Record Type	FMSS Record Number	FMSS Exact Match
* Site 22 and 23	156395	Contributing					No
* Daniel Brown House and Shop Site	156397	Contributing					No
* Site 24	156399	Contributing					No
* Jacob Whittemore Blacksmith Shop Site	156401	Contributing					No
* Barn Foundation Site	156403	Contributing					No

Condition

Assessment Interval (Years): 6

Next Assessment Due Date: 09/16/2031

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/16/2025

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/25/2023

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to the effects of Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed. Planning and scheduling for this update will occur in FYs 2023-2024.

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 09/18/2012

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the Nelson Farm area landscape is “good.” There is no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deteriora¬tion by natural and/or human forces. The cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is re¬quired to maintain its current condition.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: 09/30/1998

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The condition of the Nelson Farm landscape is "fair." The condition assessment for the Nelson Farm landscape is based on the loss of historic character and features that has taken place since the site's period of significance. The change in character that has developed has resulted in the park's inability to properly preserve and interpret the significance of the landscape. In addition features that do exist, such as historic roads and pathways, stone walls, foundations, historic viewsheds, and agricultural fields are currently in danger of being lost or damaged due to erosion, invasive vegetation, deferred maintenance, adjacent development, vandalism/theft or other influences.

The baseline information and condition assessment was established by David Uschold, CLI Coordinator, New England, OCLP, in September 1998 in consultation with Dan D'Attilio, Chief Ranger, MIMA, and in concurrence with Nancy Nelson, Superintendent, MIMA.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact: Automobile Traffic

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Narrative: State Route 2A runs through the center of the linear Battle Road Unit. Route 2A includes large sections of the historic Battle Road. The visual intrusion and noise created by heavy commuter traffic on the road compromises the visitor experience. The steady traffic also prohibits safe pedestrian access from the northern section of the park, which includes the visitor center and the Battle Road Trail, across Route 2A to the southern section of the park. As a result, the area south of Route 2A is underutilized; all visitor amenities and interpretative areas are confined to the area north of Route 2A.

Date Identified: 09/13/2012

Type of Impact: Other

Other Impact: Airplane Traffic

External or Internal: Both Internal and External

Impact Narrative: Hanscom Airfield is located just north of the Battle Road Unit. The airport services private planes and small commuter airlines. Noise from overhead planes and from planes taking off and landing at the airfield compromises the experiences of visitors during interpretative programs at the Hartwell Tavern or hiking along the Battle Road Trail.

Date Identified: 09/13/2012

Treatment

Stabilization Measures

Treatment Documents

Treatment Type: Rehabilitation

Treatment Completed: No

Document Type: General Management Plan

Document Date: 1989-09-01

Title:

IRMA Link:

Narrative:

According to the 1999 report, “Environmental Assessment for ‘Save Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes’: Minute Man National Historical Park,” the 1989 General Management Plan (GMP) was developed to accomplish the original goals set out by Congress in the park’s enabling legislation. The GMP included the following management goals and objectives to “Protect, rehabilitate, and selectively preserve 18th- and 19th-century buildings for interpretation, visitor use and adaptive use for park purposes.” This goal was to be accomplished through a program of rehabilitation, restoration, and maintenance of the Battle Road Unit’s historic structures. An additional goal stated in the GMP was to “Protect and restore the historic scene of April 19, 1775, or the landscape and associated cultural resources in selected areas…” (“Environmental Assessment for ‘Save Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes’” 1999: 2)

The 1999 report also specifically described rehabilitation of historic structures and historic landscapes as the preferred treatment alternative:
“The Preferred Alternative…will provide the greatest balance between rehabilitating the park’s historic structures, rehabilitating their associated landscapes, improving interpretation of these resources and accommodating improved visitor access afforded by the Safe Visitor Access Trail (Battle Road Trail) while protecting the Park’s natural and cultural features and providing a safe experience for visitors. Maintaining the fabric of historic structures and the cultural landscape; conservation of natural and archeological resources; and improving interpretive and education opportunities were the primary issues considered during the development and selection of this alternative. (“Environmental Assessment for ‘Save Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes’” 1999: 4)

Approved Treatment Costs

Cost Narrative:

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography:

Citation Author	Citation Title	Year of Publication	Citation Publisher	Citation Type	Citation Location	Citation Number
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Abel, Leland J.	Research Report: Archeological Excavations at the Site of the Josiah Nelson House	1966	NPS			
Carroll, William F.	Nelson Family Papers	2002	Lincoln Public Library Archives/Special Collections			
Dietrich-Smith, Deborah	Cultural Landscape Report for Battle Road Unit: Minute Man National Historical Park	2005	NPS, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation (OCLP)			
Dolan, Susan	Fruitful Legacy: A Historic Context of Orchards in the United States, with Technical Information for Registering Orchards in the National Register of Historic Places	2009	National Park Service (NPS), OCLP			

Gavrin, Beth J., et al.	A Management Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources: The Minute Man National Historical Park Case Study	1993	Massachusetts Agriculture Experiment Station			
Harrington, M. K., et al.	National Register of Historic Places Documentation: Minute Man NHP	2002	NPS, National Register (NR)			
John Milner Architects, Inc.	Minute Man NHP, John Nelson House & Barn: Historic Structure Assessment Report	2008	NPS			
Keune, Russell V.	Historic Structures Report Part I: Building Number LIN-3, the Josiah Nelson House, Minute Man NHP, Architectural Data Section	1963	NPS, Eastern Office, Design and Construction			
Malcolm, Joyce Lee	The Scene of the Battle, 1775: Historic Grounds Report, Minute Man NHP	1985	NPS, North Atlantic Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources			
National Park Service	Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Battle Road, Minute Man NHP	2007	NPS, OCLP			
National Park Service	Environmental Assessment for “Save Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes”: Minute Man National Historical Park	1999	NPS			
National Park Service	The Master Plan, Minute Man NHP	1965	NPS			

Ronsheim, Robert D.	Historic Structures Report Part I on Building Number Lex-3: the Jacob Whittemore House, Minute Man NHP, Historical Data Section	1963	NPS			
Snow, David H.	Archeological Research Report: Excavations at Site 264, the Thomas Nelson, Jr. House, Minute Man NHP	1973	NPS			
Snow, David H.	Archeological Research Report: The Thomas Nelson, Sr. Farm, Minute Man NHP	1969	NPS			
Weinbaum, Paul	National Register of Historic Places Supplementary Listing Record: Minute Man NHP	2002	NPS, NR			
Wallace, Terrie	National Register of Historic Places Additional Documentation: Minute Man NHP	2006	NPS, NR			
Wallace, Terrie and Lou Sideris	Review Comments of CLI 8-7-12 draft	2012	NPS			
Zenzen, Joan	Bridging the Past: Minute Man NHP Administrative History	2010	NPS, Northeast Region History Program			

Landscape Documents:

File Name	Date	Attachment Type
CL-FMSS_crosswalk-MIMA_NelsonFarm_CLIUpload.xlsx		Other Report
MIMA_Battle-Brooks-Fiske-Hart-JS-Meriam-Nelson-NB-Way_CLI Updates Notes_2025.pdf		

Source