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INTRODUCTION

Meriam's Corner is located in the town of Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The 1.77-acre site is part of the Battle Road Unit of Minute Man National Historical Park, which covers approximately 770 acres of land in Concord and the neighboring towns of Lincoln and Lexington (figure 1). Located just east of the intersection of Old Bedford and Lexington Roads, Meriam's Corner was the home and farmland of five generations of Meriams, from 1639 to 1871. However, the site is primarily significant as the location where the Americans and British first exchanged shots as the British retreated to Lexington (and thence to Charleston) during the opening of the Revolutionary War on April 19, 1775. Following the Revolution the site and surrounding area saw primarily agricultural uses that evolved from 18th-century subsistence farming by Meriam family descendants to 20th-century market gardening by recently arrived European immigrants. After World War II, agriculture on the site declined as the town of Concord began the transformation to a suburban Boston community.

This Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner was written as part of a larger project to plan for the further development of the Meriam's Corner area within Minute Man NHP, as directed by the *General Management Plan (GMP)* for the park. Therefore, it was researched and written concurrently with two other studies on Meriam's Corner: The "Historic Structure Report: ~~for the~~ Meriam House," by NPS Architectural Conservator Barbara Yocum of the Cultural Resources Center in Lowell, and an Archeology Study, by NPS Archeologist ?, also of the Cultural Resources Center. Both of these studies and authors provided invaluable assistance in the writing and assembling of this report.

The goal of this particular study was to outline the history of the broader Meriam's Corner site, and to place it in the broader context of the area's agricultural history and land use patterns. It was therefore necessary to expand the study area to beyond the 1.77-acre site presently known as Meriam's Corner, given that much more land was originally associated with the Meriam family. However, for clarity and efficiency the study area was limited to about 75 acres around the immediate site, despite the fact that Meriam family members also owned farmland in areas beyond what is shown in the figures.

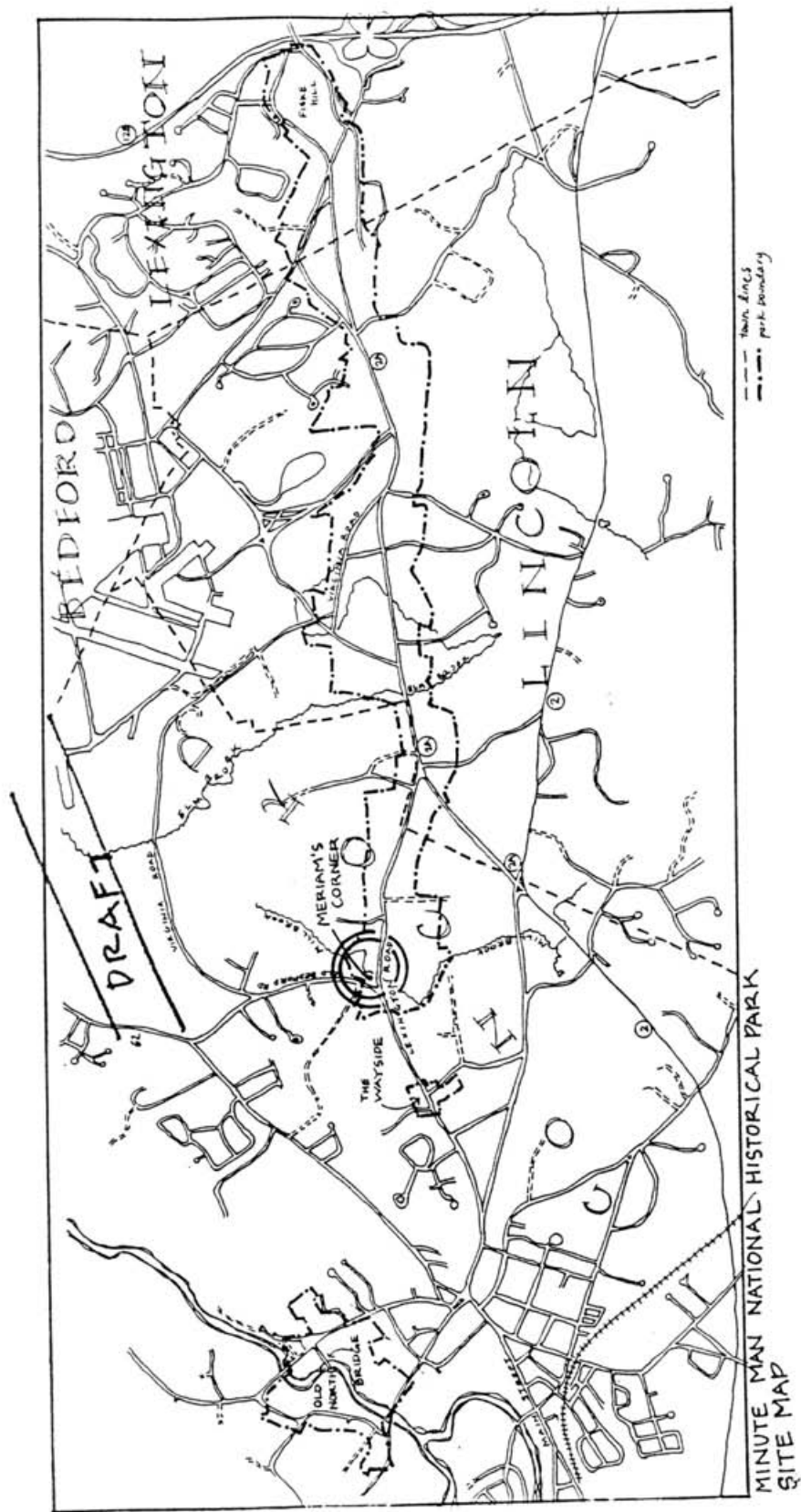


Figure 1. Meriam's Corner, located in Minute Man National Historic Park, in Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington.

PART I:

SITE HISTORY

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The purpose of this site history is to define the structure of the Meriam's Corner landscape, and to give an overview of its development and change over time. In 1993, a computerized database of deeds and wills was assembled, from which GIS maps showing land ownership around Meriam's Corner from the late 17th century to the present were created. Land use information in deeds, wills, tax valuations and other town records was also used to create maps that show the development of the landscape around Meriam's Corner from 1775 to today. Some of the maps generated from the data base have been redrawn and are used as figures in this report.

This historical summary is divided into two sections. The first section defines the "core area" and associated "family farmlands area" of the Meriam's Corner landscape, discusses the relationship between the built-up core and the larger landscape, and gives a sweeping overview of major changes in this landscape over time. The second section is a much more detailed discussion of historical and generational phases in the evolution of the Meriam and Burke families and their surrounding farmlands, supported by a series of land ownership and land use maps.

This research was done in close coordination with Barbara Yocum's work for the "Historic Structure Report" for the Meriam House, and reference should be made to her Meriam Family Genealogy (see appendix 1), Meriam Family/House Chronology, and Meriam House Tax Assessment Records. It is difficult, at best, to read the section on the development of the Meriam family without referencing the genealogy. This report also refers to deeds and wills, summaries of which have been cataloged in notebooks which support the GIS maps and placed on file at Minute Man National Historical Park.

I. Meriam's Corner Landscape: Definition and Development

A. Landscape Areas: Core and Farmland

Today there is a single "Meriam House" standing at Meriam's Corner. However, there was no one single "Meriam Farm" attached to this house from the 17th century onward. Instead, the extant structure, believed to have been built in 1705, was simply one of a series of structures located on three or four Meriam family homesteads clustered around the Corner. Each Meriam household had farmland parcels associated with it, but these parcels were intermixed with those of other family members and neighbors, and were reshuffled from generation to generation. This was a common (although not universal) pattern of landholding and farming in Concord. To understand how the Meriam's Corner landscape of 1775 was created, and how it evolved into the landscape we see today, the development of this family farm cluster should be traced over time.

The Meriam's Corner landscape was made up of two interacting parts: a small built-up "core" containing houselots, and a surrounding area of "family farmland." These two areas are delineated on the Meriam Landscape Areas Map (figure 2). The core area is obviously the richest site for archaeological and structures research. However, changes in the buildings at the core are best understood in conjunction with the development of the larger farmscape. Unlike wealthy estates, which may offer a compact, coherent story through a building set in its immediate grounds, an ordinary New England farm neighborhood such as Meriam's Corner has for its proper context an ensemble of parcels of different kinds of land distributed widely across the surrounding countryside, and seldom in a contiguous block. The evolution of this larger farmscape is as interesting and important to cultural landscape history as the details of the grounds within the core are.

The Meriam core area (figure 2) contains the sites of Meriam (and later Burke) family houses, barns, and outbuildings, the lock/blacksmith shop, cowyards, and gardens. The core consists of a strip of about an acre and a half of land east of Bedford Road containing two houselots, and a similar strip west of the road. The "Daniel Taylor" houselot west of Meriam's Corner is also included because this became a Meriam family house from 1778 to about 1828, and because part of this lot may also have provided a barn site for another Meriam who lived east of Bedford Road. (The core area could have been extended farther west to include the houselots of Nathan Stow and Ebenezer Meriam, but this would have required a thorough history of the Taylor family who lived there for most of the 17th and 18th centuries. This was unfortunately beyond the scope of this project.) After a detailed archeological survey of the core area is completed, it may be possible to create a set of site plans of the core area to accompany the series of land use maps of the surrounding farmscape. For now, we can only guess at the exact location of most of the buildings within the core area.

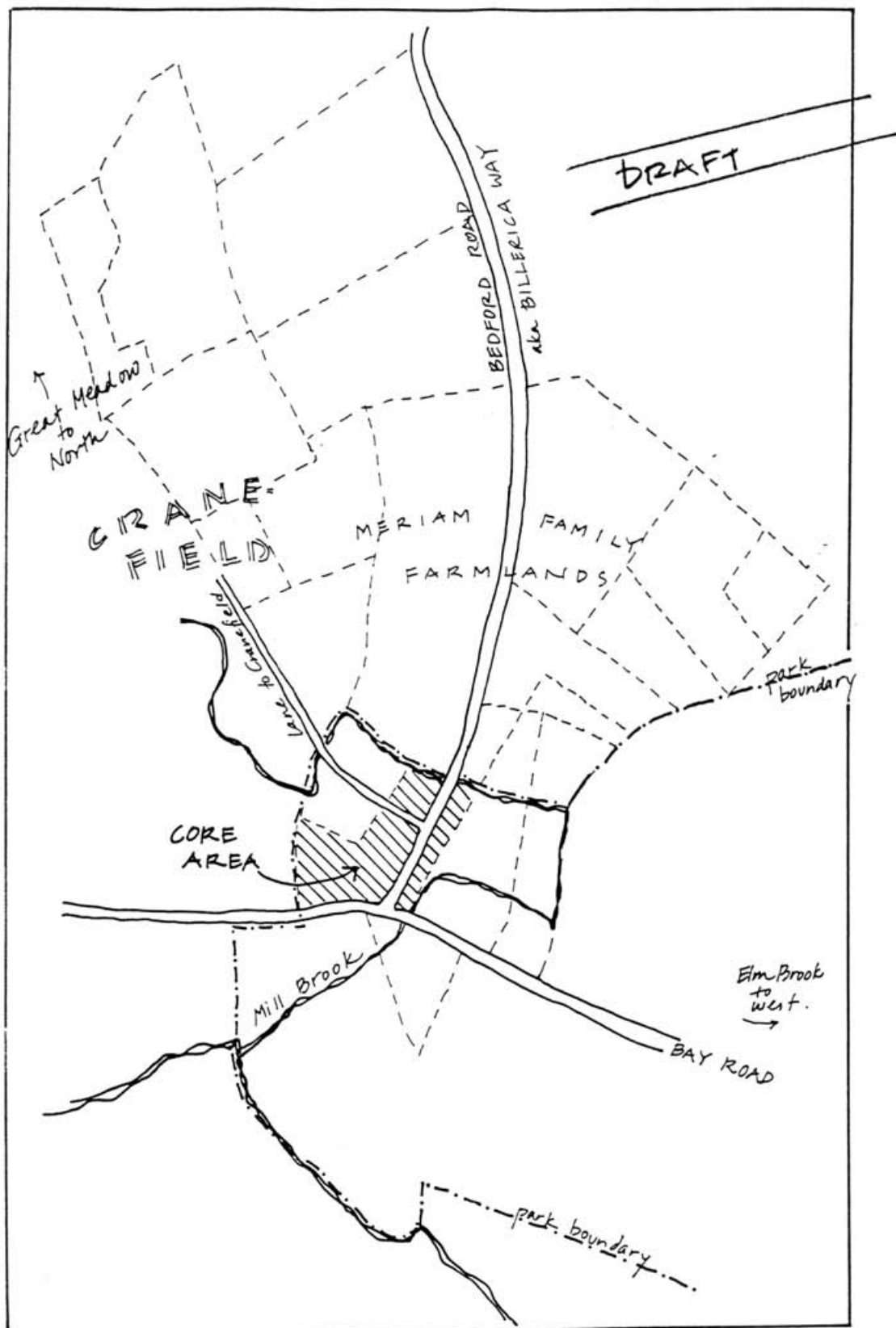


Figure 2. Meriam's Corner: Relationship of "Core area" to larger "Family Farmland."

For the Meriam Family Farmland area, more than 100 acres of land running north from Meriam's Corner on both sides of Bedford Road have been mapped. Two sets of maps have been developed for the years 1775, 1860, 1938, and 1993. The first set (figures 7, 9, 12, and 16) show land use: tillage, pasture, English hay, meadow, orchard, woodland and scrub, as well as "developed" parcels in the later years. The second set (figures 6, 8, 11, and 15) shows the landownership of Meriam's Corner. Meriam's Corner residents owned a large part of the land within this area, although never all of it. They also owned parcels beyond this area at a greater distance from home, primarily meadows and woodlots. The area mapped gives a reasonably complete picture of what was going on in the Meriam farmscape, as long as one remembers that meadows and woodlots are somewhat slighted, while tillage land is proportionally inflated, because it tended to be closest to the core. In every case, the location and boundaries of land use types were deduced from complex and ambiguous references in deeds, inventories, tax valuations, topography, and aerial photographs, as noted in the text. These determinations are not definitive, and cannot be, especially since the way an individual field was used may have changed from year to year. However, given these qualifications, the maps give a reasonably clear picture of the the general land use patterns of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries.

B. The Relationship of Farmscape to Core

Obviously, the core area and the larger "farmscape" were closely related to each other. A change in one generally reflected a change in the other. The core area served to manage and process crops, livestock and other materials flowing to and from the larger farmscape. The layout and architecture of the buildings and yards reflected these functions and the economy of the day. Over time, the landscape of Meriam's Corner evolved from locally integrated, to linear, to disintegrated.

Through the 18th century, homesteads and their surrounding land made up largely (though not completely) self-contained systems. Cows came in from pastures to the barn or cowyard to be milked, then returned to pasture; hay came from the meadows to feed stock during the winter, and the resulting manure was carted to tillage land; corn and rye went via the husking bee or threshing floor in the barn to the family grain chests, and so on. Most produce was consumed at home. Each family needed to have a reasonably complete ensemble of meadow, tillage, pasture, orchard and woodlot, and the corresponding buildings and equipment at home to handle the diverse material flowing from the land.

External flows in and out of these systems were limited mainly to interlocking links with others nearby. Families were never self-sufficient, but engaged in a complex local exchange of labor, services, and above all, goods with their neighbors. Many families engaged in a trade that facilitated the local economy, such as running a cider mill, a tannery, or, as in the Meriams' case, a blacksmith and locksmith shop. All this added up to a highly integrated local landscape.

When agriculture became increasingly commercialized in the 19th and 20th centuries, homesteads and farms were reorganized to use purchased goods and to produce crops for market. With this change came parallel shifts in the make-up of the farmscape, and in the buildings and tools at home: English

hay, under-drainage, dairy barns, feed grain, greenhouses, coal stoves, and so on. This might be called a linear landscape, because of the influx of resources and goods on one side, and outflow of marketed crops on the other.

In the modern suburban landscape, different parts of the landscape retain little functional connection to each other. Some land is simply abandoned, residential areas are connected via the automobile to distant resources, and still-active farmland is more connected to consumers at large than to nearby residences. This is a locally disintegrated landscape, with its components organized along broader, metropolitan lines.

Along with these economic changes, family and social developments were also reflected in both the core area and the farmscape. During the colonial period, when a child married and a new household was created, the family farmscape was reapportioned to create a new, functioning land holding. If needed, more land might be acquired from family members or neighbors leaving to make a fresh start in a newer town, or a family trade might make it possible to subdivide existing land and still make a living. Or, standards of living might fall. In the 19th century, family clusters disappeared as farms were consolidated in a more commercial pattern, and housing hired labor became important instead. Again, developments in housing at the core paralleled changes in land holding and use. The story of one cannot very well be told without the other.

C. Large-Scale Landscape Change and Continuity

This evolution of the Meriam's Corner core and farmscape through a series of stages from the 17th century to the present will be carefully detailed in the next section. One thing emerges very strikingly from this examination, however. While there were many subtle changes in the landscape of Meriam's Corner over the centuries, reflecting important social and economic developments, in a broad way the landscape looked very much the same for nearly 300 years, from the mid-17th century until World War II. This continuity then gave way to dramatic change in the past half-century.

This continuity is noticeable in a glance at the four Land Use maps (figures 7, 9, 12, and 16; see figure 17 for composite). The dominant visual character of the landscape is determined by the balance between three elements: open agricultural land (including tillage, meadow, English hay, and pasture); natural land (including woodland, scrub, and marsh); and developed land (including residential, commercial, and school land). From some time in the 17th century through the mid-20th century, open farm land completely dominated the scene, although both forest and residences were beginning to spread by 1938. By 1993, this landscape has been transformed to one dominated by development and abandoned farmland.

This is no great surprise, but perhaps a number of additional observations should be made. One is that while the expansion of suburban development seen here is fairly typical for Concord, the balance between farmland and overgrown "natural" land is not: the proportion of open land still being farmed is quite high around Meriam's Corner both in 1938 and in 1993, while the proportion of reforested land is relatively low. Secondly, something that is not visible in these maps is that the landscape

lying to the east of Meriam's Corner has seen much more development in the past 50 years, but still has a similar high proportion of open farmland by modern standards.

II. Historical Chronology

In this section, the development of the cultural landscape at Meriam's Corner, and of the generations of Meriams and Burkes who lived there, is delineated. Historical periods for the development of the landscape are as follows:

- 1) Native occupation to 1635;
- 2) 17th-century farmscape development lasting to about 1705;
- 3) 18th-century intensive occupation and fragmentation lasting to 1803;
- 4) 19th-century consolidation and commercial farming lasting to 1920;
- 5) 20th-century market gardening lasting to 1950;
- 6) Suburbanization from 1950 to the present.

The transition from each of these periods to the next took a generation or two to accomplish for Concord as a whole, and there was a great deal of overlap between them. Therefore, the dates listed are approximate, and the periods are dated somewhat differently elsewhere. Here, they are determined by convenient dates of transition in the families at Meriam's Corner.

Farms at Meriam's Corner followed a common pattern of development for Concord. For two centuries the land passed through five or six generations of the Meriam family, becoming quite fragmented during the 18th century, and being reconsolidated during the 19th. In 1871, the Meriam farm was sold to the Burkes, an Irish family who owned it up to the mid-20th century. The house and surrounding lot passed to the Ingrahams in 1951, and to the National Park Service in 1987. Much of the old Meriam/Burke farm is still cultivated today. If anything, this land is remarkable for unusual continuity rather than for dramatic change in ownership and use.

Period 1: Native American Horticulture (1000 - 1635)

This period has not been pursued in any detail. Early accounts and local traditions suggest that the first planting fields laid out by the English in Concord were on grounds recently farmed by the Indians. This included the "Cranefield" west of Bedford Road, where the Meriams had some holdings. However, getting a good picture of the native landscape is not something that can be accomplished within a limited study of Meriam's Corner, so it has not been researched for this project. Should any evidence of Indian occupation come to light in archeological surveys, this would greatly shift the focus of interest at this site.

Period 2: 17th Century Farmscape Development (1635 - 1705)

Generation 1: Joseph Meriam (1639-1641)¹: The Common Field System*

Joseph₂ Meriam (~ 1600-1641) was an early settler of Concord (1639), and undoubtedly received a houselot and "first division" planting and mowing lots within the original common field system of the town. Joseph₂'s houselot may have been at Meriam's Corner, but no hard documentary evidence of this has been found. Concord's first book of town records has been lost, and along with it most direct evidence of the first division of lands that might have existed. First division holdings were later used as the basis for Concord's larger second division, conducted in the 1650s and recorded in a new town book of records in the 1660s. Unfortunately, many first division holdings had changed by that time, because of subsequent land transactions, or the death or departure of the original proprietors.

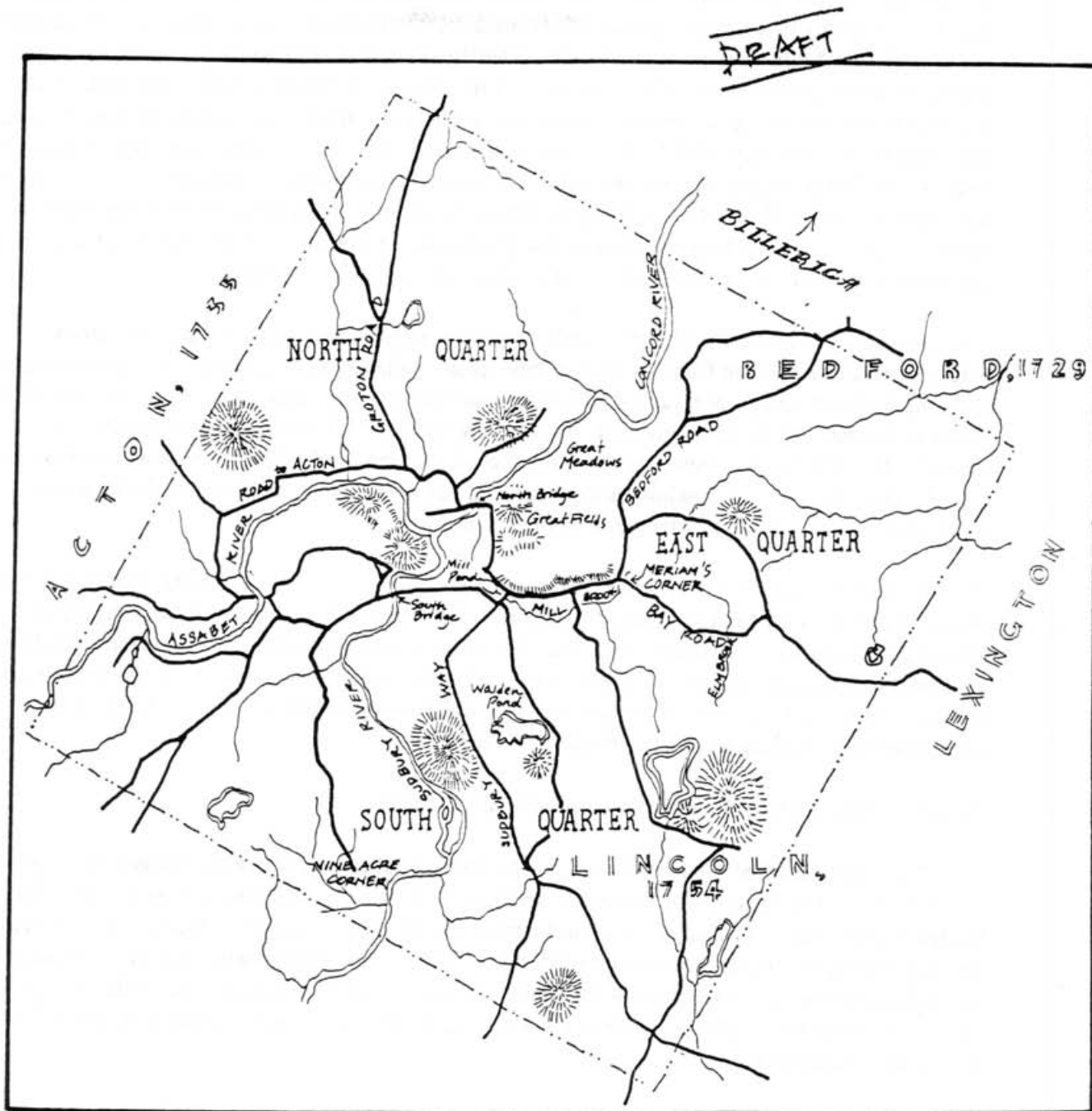
Joseph₂ Meriam died in 1641. No inventory of his real estate has been found with his will. His widow Sarah was empowered to sell his house, but no record of a sale has been found. By 1645, she re-married Lt. Joseph Wheeler, a substantial Concord landholder. In 1667, Joseph₂ Meriam's three grown sons conveyed all their rights in their father's real estate to their step-father Joseph Wheeler.² This may have formalized an earlier understanding by which Joseph Wheeler took control of the land until Meriam's sons came of age, and then distributed it back to them, or helped establish them in other ways. Unfortunately, once again, the real estate involved in this deed was not described in particular.

Because of this, we are not able to establish for certain that the houselot of John₇ Meriam (the first proven occupant of Meriam's Corner) came to him from his father's estate, although it most likely did. We are even less certain that Joseph₂ Meriam's houselot was on this site. On the whole, the Meriam records don't shed much light on the original common field system of the first generation of English farmers. Understanding this system in Concord is a matter of mapping records from a few dozen families over a wide area. Since the Meriam holdings were largely within the "Cranefield" to the west and well outside the Park bounds, this reconstruction has not been attempted, as it was also beyond the limited scope of this Meriam project.

Generation 2: John₇ Meriam (1663 -1724): The Original Meriam Farm

John₇ Meriam (1641-1724) was the only one of Joseph₂'s sons to spend his life in Concord. John₇ was married in 1663, so it is possible that a house (not the extant structure) for him was built at Meriam's Corner about this time, if one was not there already. John₇'s land holdings were recorded in the town book in 1666. Beside the house and 1-1/2 acre houselot at the Corner, he owned 16 acres "within Cranefield gate;" 20 acres upland "near Cranefield" across Billerica Way (later Bedford Road) to the west; 15 acres in Elm Brook meadow (about a mile to the east); 3 acres in the Great Meadow (by the river about a mile north); and 16 acres in Virginia Swamp. He had 9 acres of Second Division land at the "Suburbs." By 1672, he had been granted 91 more acres of Second Division at Shawshine Corner in the present town of Bedford, giving him 171-1/2 acres all told.³

* Note: numerical subscripts after names are references to numbering of Meriam family members on the genealogical chart in Appendix



Concord Area, late 1700s.

from Gross, R.

Figure 3. Concord-Lexington area in the 1700s.

This was John, Meriam's starting point. Unfortunately, when he passed his land at the Corner on to his sons around the turn of the century, he did not insist that they record the deeds of gift—thus depriving posterity of a detailed picture of his life's accomplishments. Some things can be surmised. His houselot probably included a small strip of garden and tillage land running north of his house (which is no longer extant and was probably built in 1663) along Billerica Way. The bulk of the houselot to the east of this toward Mill Brook was probably meadow—abutting deeds show this was in his hands by no later than 1698.⁴ The 20-acre strip of upland running up the west side of Billerica Way was probably largely brought into cultivation during John, Meriam's lifetime—it was not part of the original planting fields of the town lying farther to the west. This 20 acres would provide the main "homefield" tillage land for the next few generations of Meriams. A small piece of this, on the hill south of the lane to the Cranefield, was planted with an orchard by 1685.⁵

The greatest achievement of John, Meriam's generation was ditching and draining many of the extensive meadow areas in Concord so that they became reliable hay resources. It is evident that by 1695 the lowlands east of Meriam's Corner had been ditched to the point that part of the flow of Elm Brook at the east end could be diverted west, to flow into the Mill Brook that ran by John, Meriam's house.⁶ This implies that meadows had been ditched and improved all along the line, ensuring an outfall. John, Meriam had meadows along both Elm and Mill brooks, including his home meadow at the Corner, so he undoubtedly took part in this labor.

In brief, the basic pattern of cultivation had been imposed on the landscape around Meriam's Corner by the end of the 17th century. John, Meriam's holdings were rather small, but fairly typical for a second generation Concord landowner. The tillable lands were of good quality (some are still being cultivated today), and reasonably close to home. Meadow lands were scattered far and wide among brooks, swamps and the river in the normal way. And there were 100 acres of probably largely unimproved land waiting on the far fringes of Concord.

Period 3: 18th Century Intensive Occupation (1705–1804)

The 18th century marked the period when the Meriam's Corner area was most intensively occupied and cultivated. For most of the century, from about 1705 to 1778, there were three occupied Meriam houses at the Corner. During the lives of the third and fourth generations of Meriams to live there, the surrounding farmland was minutely subdivided, creating the characteristic "pinched" conditions of the social and ecological landscape of the Revolutionary period. Towards the end of the century, during the tenure of the fifth generation, signs of consolidation and a new market approach to land and farming began to appear.

Generation 3: John₁₆, Ebenezer₁₈, and Joseph₁₉, Meriam (1691–1777)

John, Meriam's land was divided among his five sons as they came of age. Two of them were provided with John's second division land at Shawshine Corner; Nathaniel₁₇ in 1696, and Samuel₂₀ in 1702.⁷ Samuel went on to become a deacon and selectman in the new parish and town of Bedford, incorporated in 1729 from parts of Concord and Billerica.⁸

Unfortunately, the deeds by which John₁₆, Ebenezer₁₈, and Joseph₁₉ Meriam, (the three sons who settled in the immediate vicinity of Meriam's Corner) were provided for were not recorded. It could be surmised that two of them built new houses about the time they were married, while the third stayed on with his parents in the ancestral home. John₁₆ married in 1691; Ebenezer₁₈ and Joseph₁₉ in 1705. By the earliest tax records available in 1717 the three sons owned property and the father did not. Using later deeds by which these men disposed of their land, a somewhat speculative map of the distribution of Meriam property around the Corner area during the first third of the 18th century can be constructed, as described below and pictured in figure 4.

Lt. John₁₆ Meriam, Jr., (1666–1748) married in 1691 and probably built his house across the street from his father about this time. The exact location of this house is unknown—for convenience, it could be assumed to have been located on the same site as the later Burke house. John₁₆ Meriam lived here until he moved to Littleton around 1737. His “tenement” (or holding) by then included the 6-acre houselot with a house and barn on Billerica Way, and another 2 acres of plowland up the road. He had 8 acres of pasture across the road from this to the east. This much is shown in figure 4. He also had another 5 acres of plowland “in the plain,” which may be another part of the “Great Field” further to the north toward the Great Meadows. He additionally had 6 acres that appear to be from his father's Elm Brook meadow, 3 acres of river meadow, and 4 more acres in Island Meadow, also on Elm Brook. In addition, he owned 16 acres of woodland near Sandy Pond acquired by his father in 1701, and 4 acres of swamp in the Suburbs, which had been a little piece of his father's second division land split with his brother Joseph. In all, his holdings comprised only 54 acres.⁹

When John₁₆ Meriam left Concord, the nucleus of his holding was acquired by his brother Joseph₁₉'s son Samuel₄₉, and the 6-acre Elm Brook meadow piece by Joseph₁₉ himself, so a good part of John₁₆'s land remained in the Meriam family.¹⁰

Ebenezer₁₈ Meriam (1675–1777) and Joseph₁₉ Meriam (1677–1750) were both married in 1705. Between 1717 and 1724, they paid exactly the same real estate tax (except that Joseph₁₉ paid a bit extra for his “faculty” as a locksmith). This indicates that their father's remaining land was split very evenly between them, or possibly that it had been passed to them undivided—other instances of this have been seen in the Concord records. It is also possible that both of their families lived together with their parents in the same house for a time, but this would have been unusual—and quite crowded. The odds are that a second house was built on the property about 1705. The most plausible hypothesis is that Ebenezer₁₈ stayed in the old house, and that the house that remains on the property today was actually built by Joseph₁₉ Meriam around 1705. This conclusion seems to be borne out by the structural research on the extant house summarized in the *Historic Structure Report for the Meriam House*. This report states that the architectural features of the house fit the 1705 construction date, and that the house was probably enlarged sometime between 1724 and 1728, the year when Joseph's taxes increased from 22 to 36 pounds.¹¹

Figure 4 shows Joseph₁₉ Meriam's new house with a small 1-acre lot around it, leaving Ebenezer₁₈ Meriam with their father's house and the remaining 7 acres or so of the old houselot and home

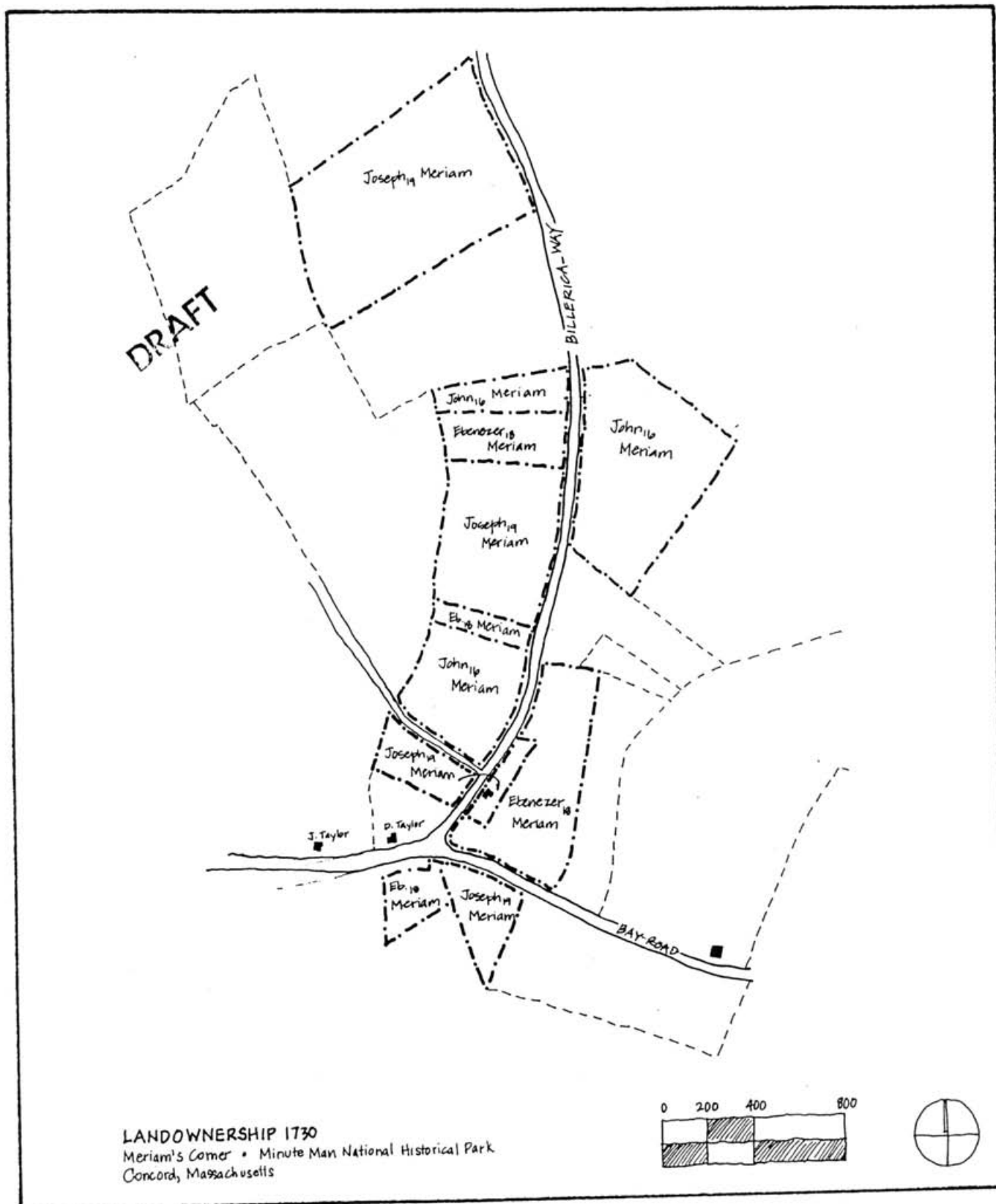


Figure 4. Landownership of Meriam's Corner in 1730.

meadow wrapping around Joseph₁₉'s houselot. This depiction is based on later transactions involving these lots, and on information in abutting deeds; but the evidence is so slight that it is no more than a best guess. The eastern boundary of this lot, which bounded on meadow of Nathaniel Ball, is also speculative, and may have lain farther west. A survey of Lexington Road in 1716 also suggests that Mill Brook may well have run farther to the east at this time. Other parcels of plowland, meadow, pasture, swamp and woodland belonging to John₇ Meriam, Sr., appear to have been equally divided between Ebenezer₁₈ and Joseph₁₉, and they subsequently bought more land in common. A few of these parcels are shown in figure 4, and many others are beyond the limits of what has been mapped so far. In spite of this apparent fragmentation, it is possible that in practice the brothers worked their land in close cooperation, as a single functional unit, for many years. Since Joseph₁₉ had a trade, he may have left most of the farming to Ebenezer₁₈, at least until his own sons were grown.

Ebenezer₁₈ Meriam moved a few doors west on the Bay Road in 1732, acquiring the homestead of Jacob Taylor, Jr. This was two years after the death of his mother. In 1743 he divided his land with his son Ebenezer₄₇, Jr.,¹² who died young in 1751. Ebenezer Meriam, Sr., and Jr.'s land dealings were so incompletely recorded and so jumbled that it is difficult to be certain, but it appears that at the peak they owned a little more than 50 acres of land scattered over three towns (Concord, Lincoln and Bedford) in at least 15 parcels, the largest of which was 8 acres. Beside the home lot on the Bay Road (the old Jacob Taylor homestead, which was largely wooded because of the steep slope of "the Hill" behind it) and a small barnlot and orchard across the road from it, there were 2 lots of plowland, 3 lots of pasture, 5 meadow lots, and 3 woodlots.¹³ Ebenezer₁₈ lived to 102 years of age, surviving his two grown sons by a quarter century, and at least four of his five wives. He was not a great patriarch, but he does seem to have been a quintessential 18th century "family man." Circumstantial evidence suggests that he farmed successively in collaboration with his father, his brother, and his son, cared for his father and mother in their old age, married five times himself, and ended his days being cared for by his granddaughter Sarah and her husband, a cooper named John Champney. Figure 5 shows a few of Ebenezer₁₈ Meriam's lots late in his life, under Champney's name.

It was left to Joseph₁₉ Meriam to carry on the Meriam family line in Concord. From tax records, he appears to have been a prosperous locksmith and farmer who succeeded in establishing three of his sons (Samuel₄₉, Nathan₅₀, and Josiah₅₁) around him in Concord, while a fourth moved to Grafton. We have no complete inventory of Joseph₁₉'s land, but working back from later deeds it appears that by the 1740s he owned at least 92 acres, having acquired some 40 acres more than his father passed on to him around the turn of the century. By then, he had also undoubtedly helped his son Samuel₄₉ acquire his brother John₁₆'s farm across the road when John moved to Littleton in 1737. Joseph₁₉ Meriam's holdings (see figure 4) included his houselot (with the extant Meriam House on it), 3 acres of orchard and pasture on the hill across Bedford Road, and 7-1/2 acres of plowland along the road a bit further north. Further north still, beyond Virginia Road, he had acquired 17 acres of swamp and pasture on the west side of Bedford Road, and 9 acres of pasture on the east (not mapped). For meadow, he had 3 acres on Mill Brook just across the Bay Road to the south, 16 acres in the northerly part of Elm Brook Meadow known as Virginia Meadow, 3 acres of river meadow in the "Holt" (a partly wooded, rather poor section of the Great Meadows in Concord), and 5 more acres of

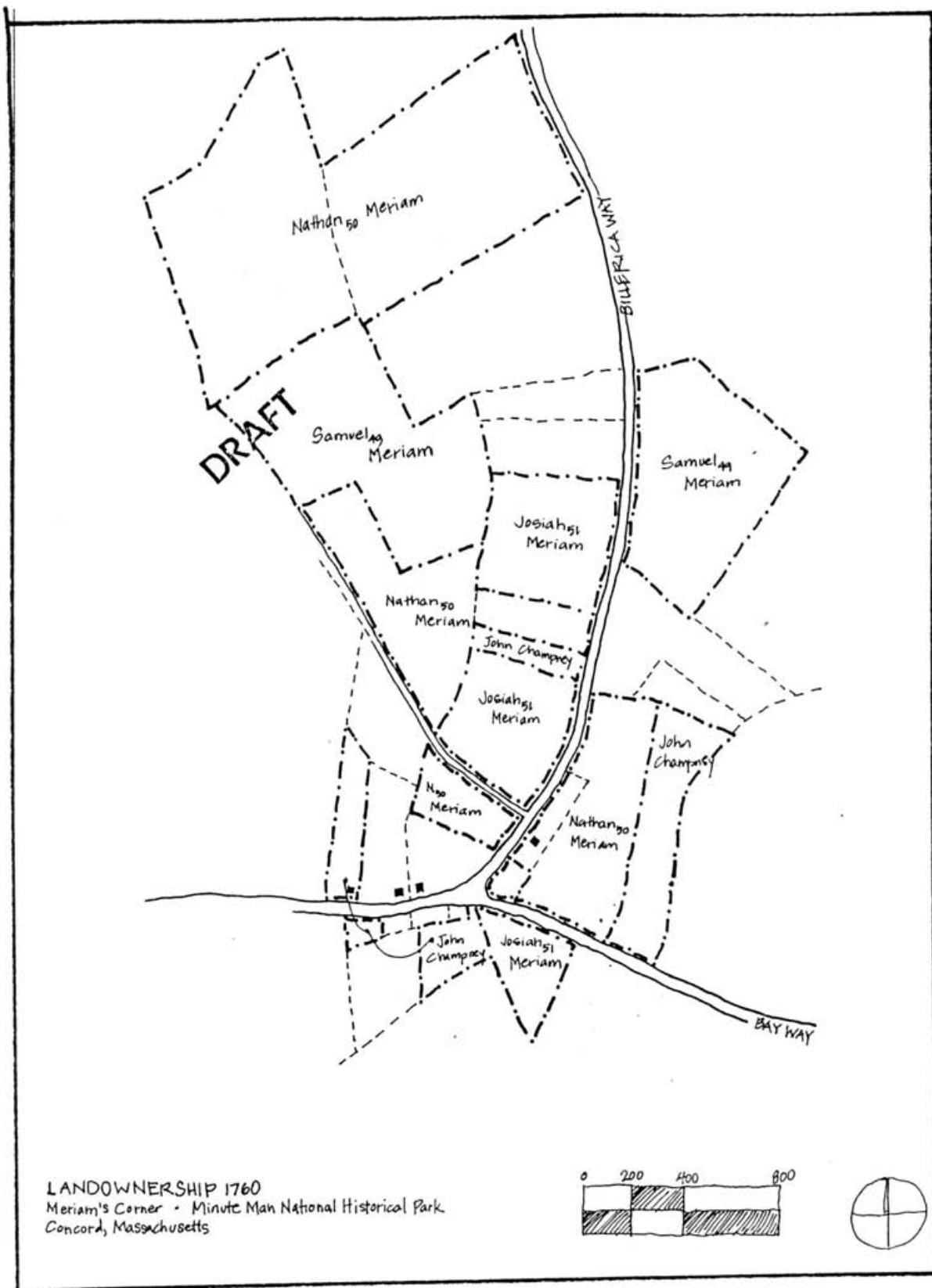


Figure 5. Meriam's Corner Land Ownership in 1760

river meadow over the Bedford line. He owned 11 acres of woodland at the old Chestnut Field in (soon to be) Lincoln, 15 acres in Virginia Swamp, and 2 acres in the Great Cedar Swamp in Bedford. He also owned land in Acton; perhaps this was summer pasture.¹⁴ His was a more robust version of an 18th-century farm than his brother Ebenezer₁₈'s, with plowland and orchard close to home (the latter on marginal land), pastures somewhat further away, and meadows and woodlots scattered to hell and gone across the landscape. Nowhere were more than 17 acres in a contiguous piece—but many acres abutted land of his brother and son.

Generation 4: Samuel₄₉, Nathan₅₀ and Josiah₅₁, Meriam (1737–1809)

During the middle part of the 18th century, the three brothers Samuel₄₉, Nathan₅₀ and Josiah₅₁, Meriam lived in three houses at Meriam's Corner, while their uncle Ebenezer₁₈ and cousin Ebenezer₄₇, Jr., lived nearby. Some of these Meriam holdings are mapped in figure 5. A general picture of the land uses at this time may be extrapolated from the 1775 land use map (figure 7).

Samuel₄₉, Meriam (1712–1767) purchased his uncle John₁₆'s house and 6 acres of tillage land across Bedford Road in 1737,¹⁵ although he did not marry until 1741. Few of his deeds were recorded, and no inventory of his land was included when his will was probated in 1769. He was a blacksmith, probably working in the same shop as his father Joseph₁₉ and his brother Josiah₅₁, who eventually inherited the locksmith trade. Samuel₄₉ continued acquiring land throughout his life, and was a more substantial landholder than his locksmith brother, although not as substantial as his other brother Nathan₅₀, who inherited the bulk of Joseph₁₉'s home farm. Tax records and later deeds suggest Samuel₄₉ was able to acquire his uncle John₁₆'s 8 acres of pasture east of Bedford Road, and to add considerably more pasture and meadow east of this in the Dam meadow later on, increasing this parcel to 37 acres. He also seems to have acquired about 16 acres of tillage and pasture land in the "New Field" portion of the general fields to the northwest of his houselot, in a deal with his brother Nathan₅₀ around 1747. It appears he owned at least 5 acres of river meadow in Concord and Bedford as well. In all, by the 1771 tax valuation (a few years after Samuel₄₉'s death, but before his son John₁₁₂ had come of age and begun buying land) the farm comprised at least 68 acres, in as few as 4 or 5 pieces and the great bulk of it in 3. Samuel₄₉ also owned land in Grafton.¹⁶

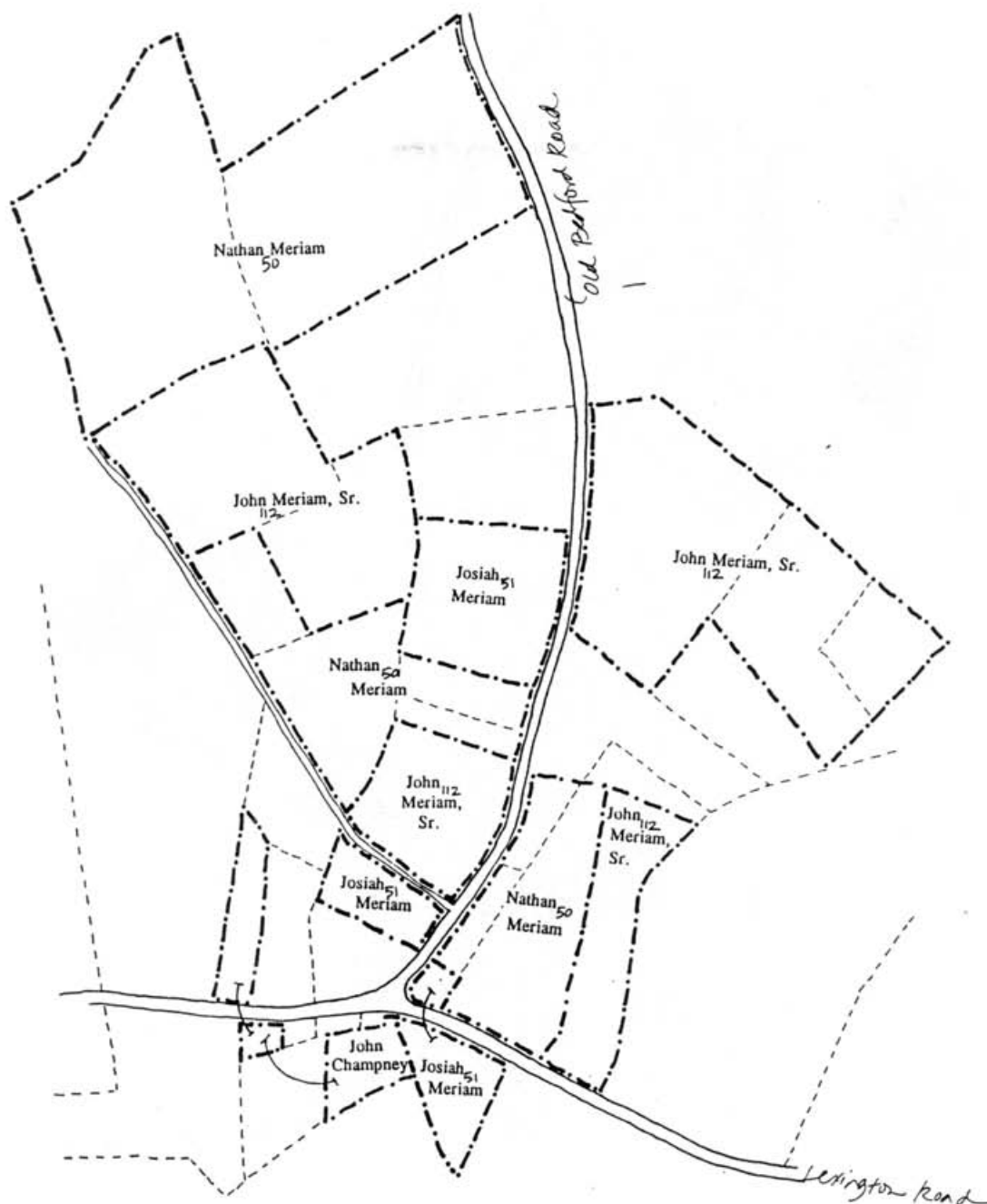
Josiah₅₁, Meriam (1726–1809), Joseph₁₉'s youngest son, was established in life by his father in 1747, a year after his marriage. Joseph₁₉ provided Josiah₅₁ with Ebenezer₁₈, Meriam's old house and barn on a 1/2-acre lot right at the northeast corner of Bedford Road and the Bay Road, along with a modest selection of farm land, and the tools of the locksmith trade. This house came into Joseph₁₈'s possession through some complex and incompletely recorded transfers of land within the family between 1745 and 1747, as Josiah₅₁ and his older brother Nathan₅₀ came of age. Tax records suggest that after his uncle Ebenezer₁₈, Meriam, Sr., moved from this house in 1732 it was occupied intermittently by a variety of tenants, including Ebenezer₄₇, Meriam, Jr., from 1741 to 1743. It appears that the house and its 7-acre lot were sold by 1744 to a man named Jonathan Stow. Stow in turn sold the house and land to Nathan₅₀, Meriam in 1745, along with a 20-acre block of tillage and pasture land adjoining the Meriam tillage lands across Bedford Road. Then, through a bit of intra-family redistribution, Josiah₅₁ moved into this house on a small lot, while Nathan₅₀ inherited the

augmented homestead from his father. Meanwhile, part of the new land across the road was parceled off to brother Samuel₄₉. It is unclear where the family blacksmith shop stood.

Josiah₅₁ Meriam did not acquire much if any land through most of his life, and in fact he eventually sold several of the small pieces given to him by his father. He probably earned his living primarily as a smith. His farm consisted of his houselot at the corner, 5-1/2 acres of plowland across and up Bedford Road, and 9 acres of pasture further up Bedford Road on the east side. He had 3 acres of meadow south across the Bay Road, 5 acres in Elm Brook meadow, 2-1/2 acres of river meadow in Bedford, and 7 acres of woodland at the old Chestnut Field by Sandy Pond in Lincoln. In all, not more than 30 acres—a bare subsistence holding to supplement his trade. Three of these lots are shown in figures 5 and 6.

In the early 1790s, when Josiah₅₁ Meriam's youngest son Joseph₁₁₉ came of age, father and son moved to a new farm on Virginia Road. His oldest son, Josiah₁₁₇, Jr., a carpenter, purchased a farm out Bedford Road beyond Virginia Road in 1799.¹⁷ Neither of these farms, both of which lie entirely beyond Park boundaries, has been mapped. In the early years of the 19th century, Josiah₅₁'s 1/2-acre lot at the Corner with the house and barn were acquired by John₁₁₂ Meriam, son of Josiah₅₁'s brother Samuel₄₉. Shortly thereafter, it appears that the old buildings were either torn down or moved, because there is no further record of them.

Nathan₅₀ Meriam (1720–1782) inherited the greatest part of his father's farm with its expanded homelot in 1747, and added to it with several substantial purchases around the same time. From that time on his career as a farmer appears to have been very steady. He seems to have possessed some of the family skills at smithing, and may have done some of that work, because he was given first refusal of his father's tools and shop should his brother Josiah₅₁ decide to sell.¹⁸ However, Nathan₅₀ Meriam was primarily a yeoman farmer, and one of enough weight in Concord to serve five years as a Selectman. His farm consisted of at least 95 acres. Aside from the acre or less of "gardening" that might have surrounded the house and barn, most of his tillage land was located within the 13-acre "home field and Stow pasture" across Bedford Road. According to a later deed, 3 acres of orchard covered the hill pasture south of the lane across the road, although brother Samuel₄₉ may have had possession, because he is the only Meriam listed with a single acre of orchard in tax valuations. A good bit of this so-called orchard may well have been effectively pasture. Most of Nathan₅₀'s pasture, along with some woods, was found up Bedford Road in the 35-acre tract that combined the "house swamp" and the "Hartwell pasture." His meadows included 7 acres in the "home meadow" at the Corner, 10 acres in Virginia Meadow on Elm brook, 3 acres of river meadow in the "Holt", and 3 more acres in Bedford. In addition to the woods found in some of the above parcels, Nathan₅₀ owned the 15-acre Virginia swamp, 2 acres of cedar swamp in Bedford, and 7 acres of woodland at Sandy Pond in Lincoln—4 of which he sold to Joshua Brooks.¹⁹ In addition, Nathan₅₀ owned half of a 120-acre pasture in Princeton in common with his neighbor Samuel (and later Samuel's son George) Minot.²⁰ In brief, Nathan₅₀ Meriam managed to put together a farm of about the same size as his father's, but somewhat more consolidated in layout. Four parcels comprising 59 acres, or almost two-thirds of his land can be seen in figure 6.



LANDOWNERSHIP 1775

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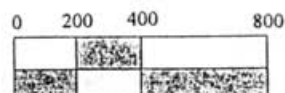


Figure 6. Meriam's Corner Land Ownership in 1775.

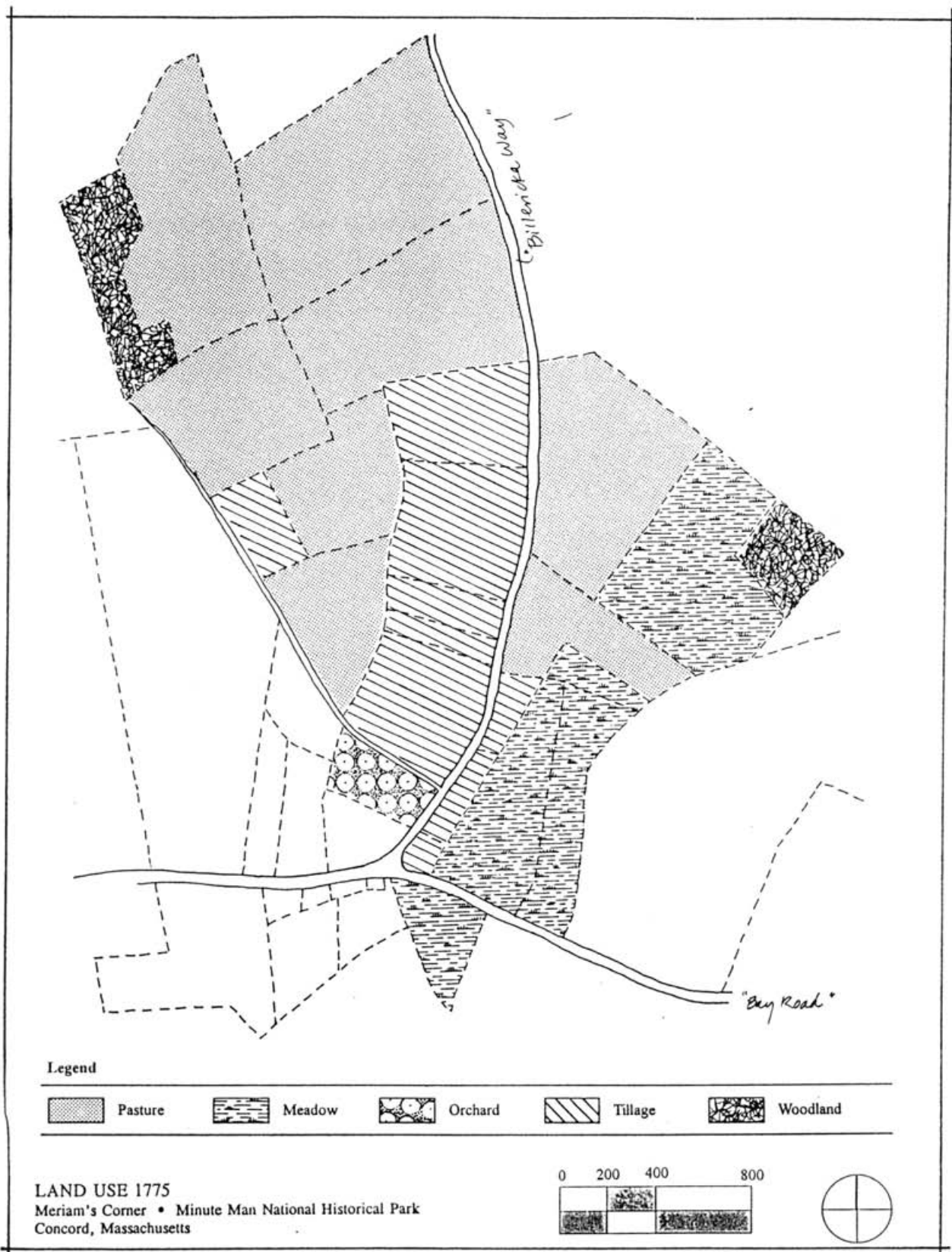


Figure 7. Meriam's Corner Land Use in 1775.

A composite picture of these Meriam holdings, along with some of their neighbors, is shown on the 1775 Land Use map (figure 7). A strip of houses, barns, barnyards and gardens (shaded as tillage on the map) extended northward along the east side of Bedford Road. We have no information on the exact location of these outbuildings, including the family blacksmith shop. East of this core area were meadows running along the Mill Brook. Across Bedford Road somewhere (the exact location is not known) was the old Lt. John₁₆ Meriam house, occupied in 1775 by his great-nephew John₁₁₂, who would move one door south to the Daniel Taylor lot on the corner a few years later. Between these houselots was the orchard on the hill, first recorded in 1685 and mentioned again in 1788. To the north was the 20-acre strip of tillage land, divided among various Meriam family members. Several parcels at the north end of this strip were gradually being sold off to the neighboring Minot family. Another 20 acres or more of tillage and pasture land to the west had been acquired by the Meriams in 1745. Although there is no documentary evidence that can pinpoint the exact distribution of pasture and tillage in any given year, the Meriams probably had anywhere from 15 to 20 acres of this 40-acre tract in tilled crops, while the rest was mostly in pasture. Still farther north lay rougher land described mainly as pasture, and partly as woodland and swamp.

It is unclear how the Meriam fields were physically divided from one another. Although late 19th-century photographs show the Meriam house with stone walls along both roads, it is not certain when these walls were built. Stone walls are not common in this part of Concord's landscape—and they are not mentioned in any of the Meriam deeds or inventories. Fences are occasionally mentioned. Most Meriam land was on soils that do not produce large stones, so most of their field divisions would probably have been rail fences, and of course ditches. Small private ways ran through this landscape along the edges of fields, so that stock could be driven to and hay carted from the various meadow lots and pastures. There were probably any number of plank bridges crossing the ditches.

Apart from the density of buildings and fences, the 18th-century landscape would have looked very open at Meriam's Corner. Back in the lowlands to the northeast, wooded swampland was being progressively cleared and converted to meadow. Away to the northwest up Bedford Road, a similar process was underway, gradually converting wooded pasture to more open land. But this deforestation was by no means complete in the 18th century. The landscape became even more open in the 19th century.

Generation 5: John₁₁₂ and Ephraim₁₁₆ Meriam (1775–1804)

Back in 1700, John₇ Meriam, a second generation Concord farmer of moderate means, still had enough land at his disposal to settle all five of his sons in Concord—two on the outskirts in what would become Bedford, and three right at Meriam's Corner. In the 1730s and 1740s, Joseph₁₉ Meriam of the third generation didn't have much surplus land to spare, but perhaps on the strength of the family smithing trade he was able to settle three of his four sons at Meriam's Corner. By the late 18th century, the fourth generation watched most of their offspring seek their fortunes elsewhere. Josiah₅₁ Meriam did see two of his three grown sons settle in Concord at Virginia Road—perhaps again on the strength of their smithing and carpentry trades. Samuel₄₉ Meriam died before most of his sons came of age. Only one of his grown sons, John₁₁₂, farmed in Concord; the other two moved

away. Nathan₅₀ Meriam saw his oldest sons Joseph₁₁₃ and Nathan₁₁₄ move to Mason and New Ipswich, New Hampshire, and after he died, his son Amos₁₁₅ moved to his land in Princeton. Only his youngest son Ephraim₁₁₆ remained to carry on the farm in Concord.

John₁₁₂ Meriam (1754–1804) inherited half of his father Samuel₅₀'s farm along with his brother Ebenezer₊ in 1769. John₁₁₂ came of age in 1775, the same year that Ebenezer₊ died. He soon embarked on a career of land acquisition in the neighborhood. Where John₁₁₂ obtained the resources for this I do not know—none of the tax or land records suggest he had any trade or business other than farming. Yet in 1778, at age 24 he purchased a 91-acre farm from his neighbor Daniel Taylor for £2000, more than doubling his land holdings.²¹ John₁₁₂ sold at least 41 acres in five transactions over the next year or so, but that only brought in about £445.²² Daniel Taylor was a trader, so perhaps he owed some kind of debt to young John₁₁₂ or his parents.

At this time John₁₁₂ Meriam probably moved one door down to Daniel Taylor's house on the western side of Meriam's Corner, across the road from his Uncle Josiah₅₁. This property had been in the Taylor family for generations. The old Meriam house built in 1691, on the west side of Bedford Road, across from Nathan₅₀ Meriam's house, disappears from the records at this point. On the 1784 tax valuation John₁₁₂ Meriam is only listed with one house—it is of course possible that someone else was leasing the old house and paying the tax on the property. But by John₁₁₂'s estate inventory in 1804 the old houselot was listed as simply "6-1/2 acres of gardening." It appears most likely that the house and barn were torn down or moved between 1778 and 1784.

In 1780 John₁₁₂ Meriam picked up a number of the small lots that had belonged to his great-uncle Ebenezer₁₈, who had died in 1777.²³ Some of these he later sold to other members of the Meriam clan, including his cousin Ephraim₁₁₆ and his western neighbor and cousin by marriage Nathan Stow.²⁴ He also picked up the old Josiah₅₁ Meriam houselot (see figure 6) across the Corner sometime just prior to his death in 1804. It appears he may have earlier sold or leased his Uncle Josiah₅₁ some land on the west side of Bedford Road for a barn, because in 1788 the orchard to the north is described in a deed as bounding south on John₁₁₂ Meriam and on Josiah₅₁ Meriam's barnyard.²⁵ When he died, John₁₁₂ Meriam owned some 183 acres. The great bulk of it is shown in figure 6. He also left his heirs some large debts.²⁶ Although his deeds still refer to him as a yeoman, he was obviously a new breed of economic man.

Although Nathan₅₀ Meriam's son Ephraim₁₁₆ Meriam (1764–1803) was ten years younger than his cousin John₁₁₂, he appears to have been cut from much more conservative cloth. Together with his brother Amos₁₁₅, he inherited his father Nathan's 95-acre farm (including the extant Meriam house) and the responsibility of caring for his mother in 1782.²⁷ Amos sold Ephraim his half of the farm in 1788 and moved to Princeton. Ephraim changed the farm very little in his lifetime, selling 3 acres of woodlot in Lincoln, and buying 4 acres of meadow (that had once been Ebenezer₊ Meriam's) adjoining his home meadow from his cousin John.²⁸ A careful re-inventory of Ephraim's land done in 1806 to determine his widow's third showed that the farm measured 94 acres.²⁹ A comparison of Ephraim Meriam's 1801 tax valuation to his father Nathan's in 1771 reveals only slight changes in land use and farm management. Ephraim tilled 6 acres to his father's 8, and produced 90 bushels of

grain to his father's 140. This makes sense as Ephraim had fewer mouths to feed and also no grown sons to help him work. Instead, Ephraim kept 12 cows to his father's 9. The amount of reported pasture doubled from 15 to 30 acres. This probably means that the family was gradually clearing and fencing wooded pastures on marginal parcels such as the "house swamp" and "Hartwell pasture" up the road, and reporting more pasture acreage, rather than that they had suffered a huge decline in pasture productivity. Ephraim Meriam appears to have been a solid yeoman who died young, leaving no great enlargements or improvements in the family farm, but leaving no staggering debts either. Structural evidence at the extant Meriam house indicates that Ephraim may have been responsible for a major reconstruction of that building towards the end of his life, another indication of his solid situation, and of his interest in the growing middle-class aspirations taking hold in his time.

Nathan₅₀ Meriam's daughter Abigail also settled nearby, marrying Nathan Stow two doors down. Her sons Nathan Stow and Cyrus Stow later went into business with her brother Ephraim₁₁₆'s son Ephraim₄ Meriam, Jr., helping to remake the economic landscape of early 19th-century Concord. It should be noted that women are virtually invisible in New England landscape history, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries. Because they rarely owned property, women don't make much of a showing in the primary sources used to research this document, except occasionally as widows. And because landscape history deals with manipulating the environment and working the land, it deals with what was primarily a male sphere in New England. But it is obvious that men could not have done what they did to the landscape without women. It was not just that women bore the legions of children who provided the labor to work the patriarchal family farms. Women's family and social relations were as important as men's in making up the networks of neighbors and kin whose close cooperation formed the economic fabric of communities like Concord, where everybody was indebted and obligated to everybody else within shouting distance. Above all, women's intensive "never done" labor maintained the household economies that processed and made available for consumption what the men extracted from the land outside.

Women may seldom have acted on the landscape beyond the garden wall, but some of the best insights into what was happening on the land can be gained by looking at what was being cooked and stitched by the kitchen fires. For example, the shift from corn and rye to wheat flour, the abandonment of apple cider for tea and coffee, the shift from homespun to factory cloth, the replacement of open fireplaces by cookstoves, and limitations in family size are among many domestic changes that were part of a wider shift in the relationship between the inhabitants of Concord and their environment that took place in the last decades of the 18th and first decades of the 19th century. These and other aspects of the middle class revolution underway may have reflected in part women's desire to escape from the grinding labor supporting the patriarchal yeoman way of life that their mothers had endured. In the bargain, of course, women dealt away some of the control they had enjoyed in these domestic areas.

Period 4: 19th Century Commercial Farming (1805–1920)

During the course of the 19th century, the landscape at Meriam's Corner opened to its greatest extent, as farms were consolidated, buildings disappeared, and the clearing of swampland and woodland in

the background continued. The new era could be said to have started in the Meriam family with the land acquisitions and speculations of John₁₁₂ Meriam beginning in 1778. The disappearance of his old house and barn, on the west side of Bedford Road, followed sometime thereafter. Josiah₅₁ Meriam's house and barn disappeared from the Corner in the early years of the new century. By the 1830s, only the now extant Meriam house, with an associated farm, remained at Meriam's Corner.

The yeoman farm pattern had been one of family clusters, with the houses of relatives lying close together, and the farm lands adjoining or intermixed. Throughout the 18th century, three or four Taylor and three or four Meriam households dominated Meriam's Corner. In the 19th century, this pattern was replaced by fewer, more consolidated commercial farmers, who often built new farm buildings and hired farm workers. These laborers—Yankee, Canadian, and increasingly Irish—typically boarded in the farmhouse itself, or in outbuildings. Even parsimonious Rufus Meriam (1801-1870), the last of the Meriam line, almost certainly hired some farm labor. His house was jammed with farm workers and domestics in 1860, but we don't know how many of them worked for him. As to improvements to his barn and outbuildings, the records don't suggest that he did as much as some of his neighbors. In particular, it appears he did not build a new dairy barn, since the old barn on the property was only worth \$100 when it was torn down in 1898.

The 19th century saw tremendous changes in the way land was used in Concord. It also saw the last generation of Meriams to live and farm at Meriam's Corner. The careers of these Meriams exemplify some (although not all) aspects of what was happening to Concord's landscape in the first half of the century.

Generation 6: Ephraim, Rufus, and Tarrant₅₂ Meriam (1804-1870)

When John₁₁₂ Meriam died in 1804, he left his heirs nearly 200 acres of land, and a lot of debt. From here, the story is difficult to follow in detail, but the outlines are clear enough. The estate was administrated by John₂₅₁ Meriam, Jr., (1778-1837), a "trader" (note that although John₁₁₂, Sr., was never positively identified as a trader, his son already was at age 26). John₂₅₁, Jr., occupied the farm for a few years, during which time he was involved in a dispute with Abiel Haywood, the guardian of his younger siblings, over the rent he was paying into the estate. In 1807 the farm was auctioned off for debts to John Sprague of Bedford.³⁰ However, by 1810 the property was back in the hands of John₂₅₁ Meriam, who was by this time a merchant in Vermont.³¹ John's younger brother Tarrant₂₅₂ Putnam Meriam (1782-1864) had been occupying the farm since 1807; by 1811 he began paying all the taxes, and at some point apparently acquired it outright. Tarrant Meriam was involved in a wide range of land dealings and mortgaged the property to several parties, including Harvard College.³² By the late 1820's Tarrant Meriam was bankrupt, and the farm was chopped up and sold to creditors. Several parcels were acquired by his second cousin Ephraim Meriam, Jr. In 1836 the main part of John₁₁₂ Meriam's old farm was acquired by Jabez Gowing, and in 1868 it passed to Benjamin Clark.³³ The Clark family ran a large dairy farm in the neighborhood into the 20th century.

Things seem to have worked out a little better for the other branch of the Meriam family across the road at the Corner. When Ephraim₁₁₆ Meriam died in 1803, his oldest son Ephraim, Jr., was only 8 years old, and his youngest son Rufus (and twin brother Marshall) only 2, but at least they didn't

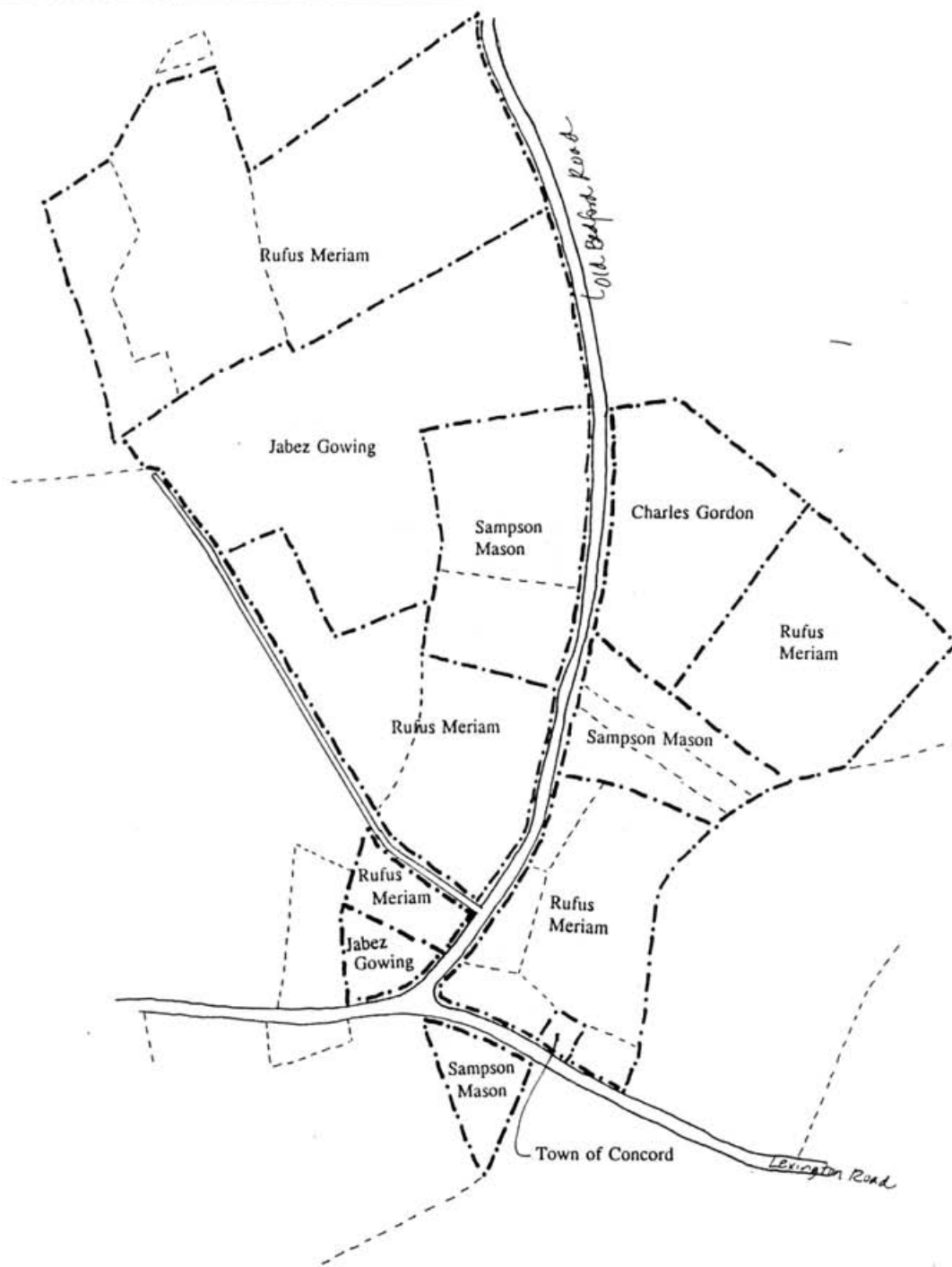
owe anybody anything. His widow Mary remarried a man named William Swan in 1806, who ran the farm. William Swan acquired several small pieces of land which he left to his step-son Ephraim Meriam when he died in 1822.³⁴

Although Ephraim Meriam, Jr. (1795–1843) lived at Meriam's Corner with his mother and brother for much of his life, and owned the family farm for a time, he was not a farmer. At age 21 he went into business with his cousins Nathan and Cyrus Stow, running a small butchering and candlemaking establishment, and by 1826 he was already styled a "gentleman." The firm expanded and relocated to Concord center, becoming a large slaughterhouse and tannery. Ephraim Meriam later went into the wood and lumber business in Lowell, and had extensive real estate dealings. He was noted for his business acumen. Although not a farmer, he certainly played an important role in the commercialization of agriculture in Concord. He died young of consumption in 1843.³⁵

Ephraim's younger brother Rufus Meriam (1801–1870) was the last Meriam to farm at Meriam's Corner. He probably assumed management of the family farm upon the death of his step-father William Swan in 1822. He began paying the taxes on the property in 1832, acquired the major interest from Ephraim in 1834, and finally bought out his other siblings' reversion of their mother's dower in 1853, a few years after her death.³⁶ Rufus Meriam became quite a wealthy man, but evidently not by farming. When he died he owned only \$69 in farm implements, but he owned over \$38,000 in railroad stock and other investments—enough to buy his own farm 7 times over, and tile drain it into the bargain.³⁷ He was a bachelor and a legendary miser;³⁸ however, he was certainly no recluse—in 1860 he had 13 people boarding in his house. He appears to have been a man who knew how to squeeze a nickel out of a penny, instead of plowing it into his farm.

William Swan and Ephraim Meriam, Jr., added and subtracted a few pieces to the farm bequeathed by Ephraim₁₁₆ Meriam, Sr., in 1803. In 1809, William Swan acquired 8 more acres of tillable land in the great fields to the northwest of the farm.³⁹ In 1826, Ephraim Meriam bought the old 1/2-acre Josiah₅₁ Meriam houselot and garden from Tarrant₂₅₂ P. Meriam, whose father John₁₁₂ had acquired it about 1801.⁴⁰ This filled out the Meriam houselot to the corner of the road. Ephraim managed to salvage the 6-acre garden piece across Bedford Road (that had once been Samuel₂₀ Meriam's houselot) from the fallout of Tarrant Meriam's bankruptcy, filling in the property on that side of the road.⁴¹ Ephraim also appears to have acquired a few acres of pasture and meadow north of the houselot, although this was later sold by Rufus.⁴² The "Virginia swamp" land on the Bedford line seems to have been sold by 1832, going by tax records. The farm that Ephraim Meriam, Jr., passed on to his brother Rufus in 1834 was almost exactly the same size as the one left by Ephraim₁₁₆, Sr., in 1803, but it was consolidated closer to home, and of better quality—16 acres of distant swamp had been replaced almost entirely by arable land.

Rufus Meriam made few changes in the farm acreage. The final, consolidated Meriam Farm of the mid-19th century is shown in figure 8. Rufus's largest acquisition came in 1837, when he picked up the 15-acre "Dam meadow" northeast of the houselot that had been part of John₁₁₂ Meriam's old farm.⁴³ He sold off the 3 acres of river meadow in Bedford, one-half of an acre to a farm laborer



LANDOWNERSHIP 1860
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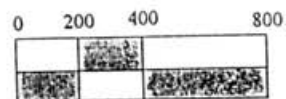


Figure 8. Meriam's Corner Land Ownership in 1860

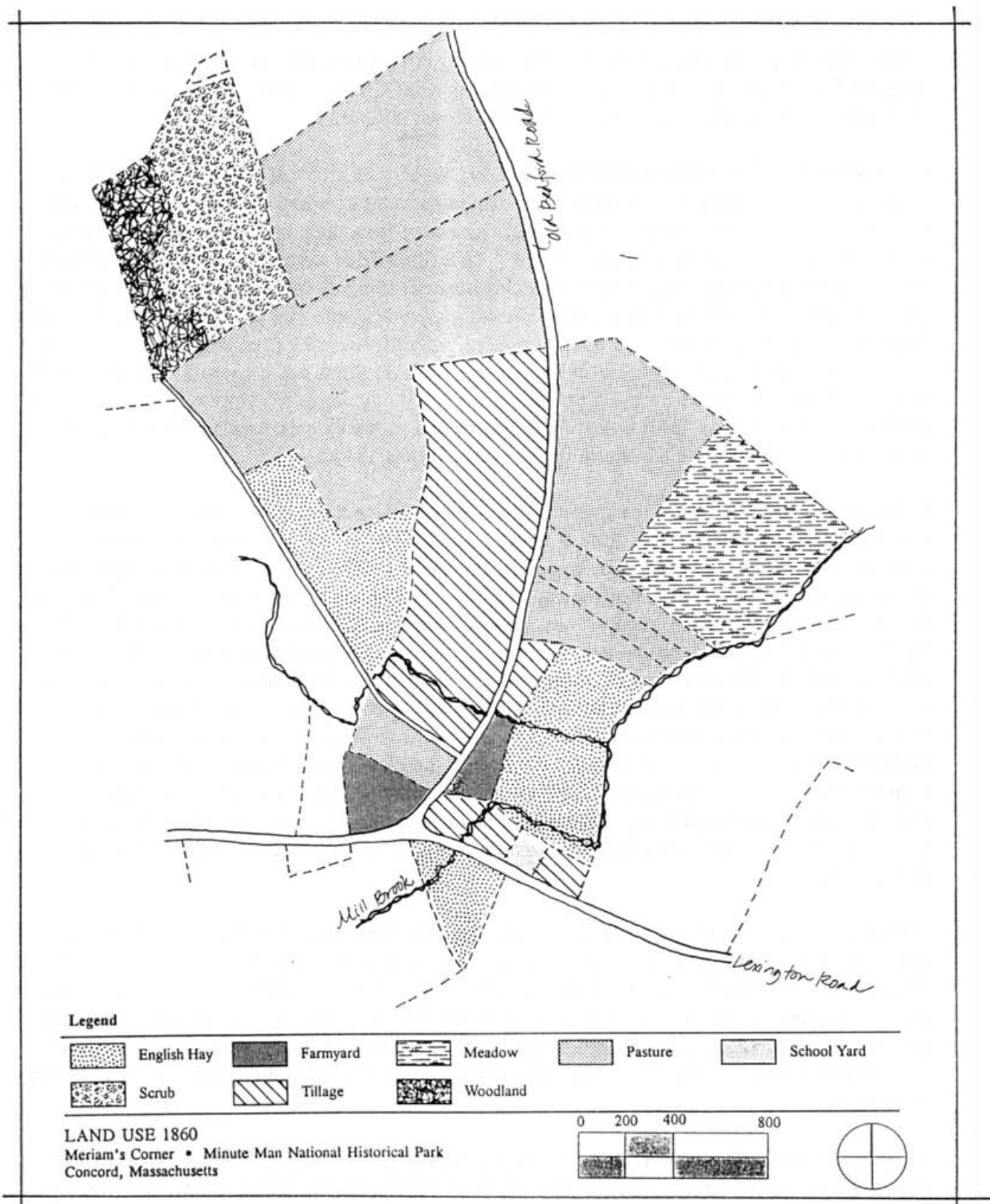


Figure 9. Meriam's Corner Land Use in 1860.

named Sumner Hardy who had boarded with him for many years, and one-half of an acre to the Town of Concord for a schoolhouse.⁴⁴ This left him with a farm of about 103 acres. The 1860 land use pattern of Rufus and some of his neighbors is shown in figure 9.

Rufus Meriam was no leader in farm improvement, but his was a typical mid-19th century Concord farm. In 1840, he had 8 acres in tilled crops—the same as his grandfather Nathan₃₀ in 1771, and back up from his father Ephraim₁₁₆'s 6 in 1801. Guessing from the produce reported in his census return, he had 8 to 10 acres in tillage in 1860.⁴⁵ His tilled fields were probably still near the house and across Bedford Road. His 1840 grain yields were not that bad, indicating that he was diligently manuring his crops. Where Nathan₃₀ and Ephraim₁₁₆ grew corn and rye, probably largely for human consumption, Rufus grew corn and oats, probably largely for livestock feed, along with produce for market. Ephraim kept 12 cows, 2 oxen and a horse in 1801; Rufus had 8 cows, 4 oxen and a horse in 1840. Rufus' cows were probably producing more milk—he slopped 6 hogs to his father's 3. By 1860, Rufus had 15 cows and 6 swine, indicating he was primarily milk farming for a living, like many of his neighbors since the advent of the railroad in the 1840s.

Rufus Meriam did take part in the spread of English hay during the early decades of the 19th century—taking the Meriam farm from 3 acres of English hay in 1801 (the year of his birth) to 17 acres in 1840. His yield in that year, however, was terrible, even by the low 1 ton per acre standards of his neighbors: 10 tons. His meadow hay crop was even worse: 8 tons from 25 acres. This leads one to suspect that the "Dam meadow" was in very poor condition when Rufus acquired it in 1837. He probably did do some meadow improvement, but the great movement for under-drainage that swept through the Mill Brook valley during the second quarter of the century seems to have largely passed him by. Rufus did raise his total hay yield (meadow and English) from 18 tons in 1840 to 35 tons in 1860. But the neighboring farm to the east went from 23 tons to 55, on less mown acreage. Meanwhile, the hay yield on Asa Brook's old farm in the Elm Brook lowland a mile eastward went from 30 tons to 100.⁴⁶ The 1860 land use map shows some of Rufus Meriam's upland and some meadow converted to English hay, but the Dam meadow, an obvious candidate for a major investment in drainage, was probably still a rough, boggy old place. It was growing trees again by the early 20th century.

Rufus reported only 20 acres of pasture in 1840 where his father had 30 in 1801, woodland was down to 4 acres from 10, while "unimproved" land had risen to 25 acres from 10—a very common pattern in Concord. This suggests that almost all the available land had been cleared, and that a good deal of marginal pasture was already reverting to brush by the mid-19th century. The tax and census data lack the resolution to tell us exactly where these changes took place, but it was probably at the 17-acre "Hartwell pasture", which was described as pasture and woodland at the sale of Rufus Meriam's estate in 1871.⁴⁷

All in all, Rufus Meriam appears in the deeds and records as a commercial but not too progressive 19th-century Concord farmer—shrewd, industrious, willing to expend labor but not capital on his farm, gradually running it down around the edges. This is in sharp contrast to his neighbors such as John B. Moore and Augustus Tuttle, who became well-known for their sweeping improvements on

very similar soils. To some of his more forward-looking contemporaries, Rufus Meriam and his farm no doubt epitomized the scrubby, bogged down, stuck-in-the-mud approach of their more pinched forefathers.

Generation 7: Thomas Burke (1871–1921)

When Rufus Meriam died in 1870, the Meriam family had been living and farming at Meriam's Corner for at least two centuries, through five or six generations. Now the farm became part of a new, emerging Concord tradition—the passing of run-down Yankee farms into the hands of first or second generation Irish immigrants, willing to try to make a go of them. And many families were successful—for example, members of the Burke family, who owned Meriam's Corner after the Meriams, are still living on parts of this land.

Thomas Burke (1840–1921) bought the core 50 acres of the Meriam farm in 1871—the 16-acre houselot, 19 acres across Bedford Road, and the 15-acre Dam Meadow.⁴⁸ An early 20th-century version of the Burke farm is shown in figures 11 and 12. The Burkes made only small changes in the property over the course of the next 50 years: they re-acquired the schoolhouse lot from the Town in 1893 and sold it to their son James to be converted into a dwelling in 1903,⁴⁹ and they sold 3 acres on the west side of Bedford Road to their son Thomas J. Burke, where he built a house in 1904.⁵⁰ This house, still standing today, may well have been built on or near the foundation of the long vanished John₁₆/Samuel₄₉/John₁₁₂ Meriam house.

Thomas Burke ran a small dairy farm and sold milk in Concord.⁵¹ From his 1880 census return, it appears he sold some eggs and produce as well. He listed 33 acres in tillage and rotation, and 9 in permanent meadow and pasture. He mowed 20 tons of hay from 13 acres, planted 2 acres of potatoes and *none* of corn or any other grain. A late 19th-century photograph shows what is now the front yard full of potatoes (figure 10). As a dairy farmer, most of Burke's farm was in pasture, and he probably moved the potatoes and hay cuttings around the farm. He kept five cows, had five calves, and sold five yearlings every year; oddly, he kept no pigs. This style of grass farming is similar to that still done in Ireland today. Given the sandy nature of his land across Bedford Road, Tom Burke probably wished it rained more in Concord. But he was lucky, for in summer he had the meadow land along Mill Brook to see him through.

The open character of the landscape at Meriam's Corner continued after Thomas Burke took over the farm there in 1871. There may have been some beginnings of reforestation in the background, especially in swampy parts of the "Dam meadow" to the northeast, and on the distant slopes of Pine Hill beyond. But generally, this area was not returning to forest as dramatically as some of the more marginal till or sandy outwash soils elsewhere in Concord during the late 19th century. Market gardening continued strong into the 20th century.



Figure 10. A late 19th-century photograph (circa 1898) shows crops in the "front yard" of the Meriam House. *Meriam House, 1898, H-1396a*

Period 5: 20th Century Market Gardening (1920–1950)

In the 20th century, the landscape in the vicinity of Meriam's Corner devolved from an integrated whole into a variety of specialized, largely unrelated uses—or uses related to one another only as separate components of a larger metropolitan economy bound together by the automobile. Some of the best tillable farmlands remained in agricultural production, primarily as intensive market gardens operated by immigrant farmers, particularly newly arrived Italians joining the Irish. Besides the Burkes, families such as Dee, McHugh, Dalton, Mazzeo, Muscarto, and Palumbo moved into the area. This generation of farmers and their children have kept farming in the vicinity of Meriam's Corner alive to this day, in spite of rampant suburban development since the Second World War.

Generation 8: Thomas J. and Ellen Burke (1922–1951)

After Thomas and Rose Burke died in 1921, the Meriam farm and house were purchased in 1922 by their daughter-in-law Ellen (Dee) Burke, who lived across Bedford Road with her husband Thomas J. Burke.⁵² Thomas J. Burke continued to farm some of the old Meriam farm into the 1960s. The old Meriam house was rented by the Burkes to a succession of tenants. By 1926, the schoolhouse/James Burke house had passed to the Palumbo family, who farmed across Lexington Street and on other land in the area.⁵³ A clam-bake house appeared on the site of the present Willow Pond restaurant in 1928, metamorphosed into an ice cream stand and a lunch room, and was finally sold to Ross Ransom in 1946.⁵⁴

The 1938 Land Use map (figure 12), drawn from an aerial photo (figure 13), shows a landscape largely open and devoted to agriculture. The Dam meadow had reverted to swamp, but aside from that, just about everything that had ever been farmed was still being cultivated. The photograph and deeds for the area suggest that these were mostly small scale market gardening operations of only a few tens of acres each. A pair of greenhouses also appears toward the north end of the old, 20-acre Meriam homefield strip west of Bedford Road. If anything, the Meriam's Corner farmscape was even more intensely cultivated in 1938 than it had been in 1860, with a higher proportion of land in tillage. This is a remarkable era in Concord's history that ought to be documented before it fades from living memory.



LANDOWNERSHIP 1938
 Meriam's Corner • Minute Man National Historical Park
 Concord, Massachusetts

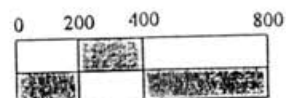


Figure 11. Meriam's Corner Land Ownership in 1938.



Figure 12. Meriam's Corner Land Use in 1938.

figure unavai lable
at this time

Figure 13. 1938 aerial photograph of Meriam's Corner

Period 6: Suburbanization (1950–Present)

After World War II, market gardening operations steadily sold up and were subdivided for residential development. Meanwhile, many of the wetter areas in the lowlands to the northeast of the Corner continued to revert to woods and swamp, together with more marginal uplands such as the old “hill pasture” directly across Bedford Road from the Meriam House. Thus, today’s landscape is a disjointed jumble of cultivated farmland, abandoned land grown up in scrub or forest, and suburban ranch houses with their yards—all ruled by the fourth, most pervasive landscape element of all: the roadways with cars accelerating along them. This landscape is depicted in the 1993 Land Use map, figure 15.

Generation 9: James and Margaret Ingraham (1951–1988)

The Ingrahams purchased the Meriam house and 1-3/4 acres from Ellen Burke in 1951.⁵⁵ Figure 14 is a deed showing the boundaries of their lot. According to neighbors, the Ingrahams were avid gardeners and planted many of the trees now on the property, including the line of evergreens north of the house. Also about the middle of the 20th century, the area around Meriam’s Corner began to grow up with trees in many places, dramatically altering the former open character of the landscape. The small field immediately east of the brook was largely open as late as an aerial photo in 1969, but is now grown up to ash and maple species. The old hill pasture west of Bedford Road behind the Burke’s barn was still open in 1938, but is now also reforested. Since the middle of the century, thick hedge rows of trees and shrubs have grown up along many of the ditches throughout this landscape, and brush and trees have invaded many of the wetter meadow areas. A few of the old Meriam fields are remarkably still in cultivation, although residential development and a school have captured much of the land up Bedford Road.

Probably the most dramatic changes in this landscape since the 17th century have taken place in the last 50 years. Residential development, increased traffic, and the growth of scrub woods and hedgerows have given the land a much more closed-in feeling than it has had for centuries. On the other hand, compared to many suburbanized or abandoned farmscapes, an unusually high proportion of the Meriam’s Corner area remains in cultivation. Once one is away from the road into the old fields, the sense of historic continuity increases markedly.

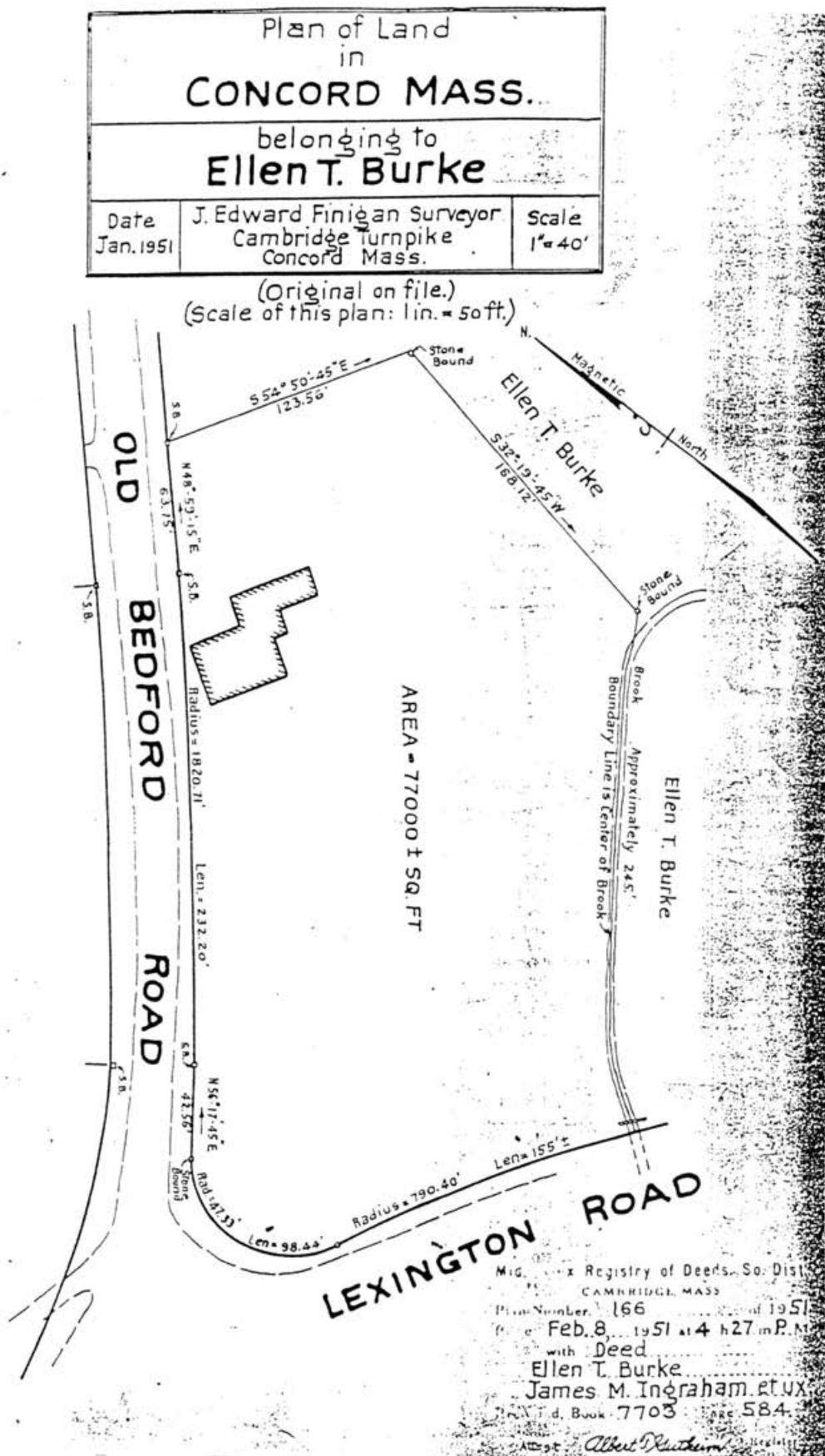


Figure 14. Plot plan, showing land bought from Ellen Burke by James and Margaret Ingraham in 1951.

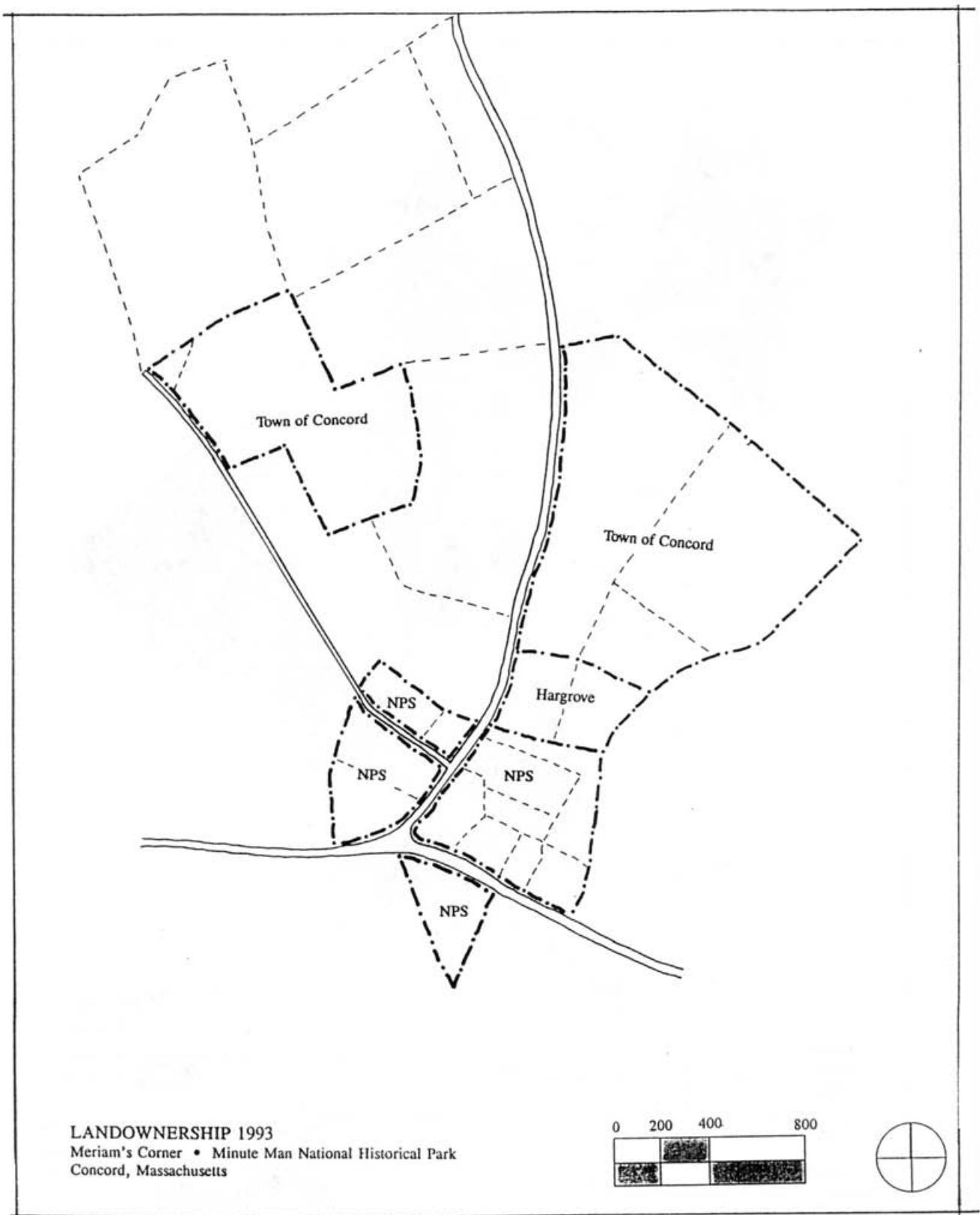


Figure 15. Meriam's Corner Land Ownership in 1993.

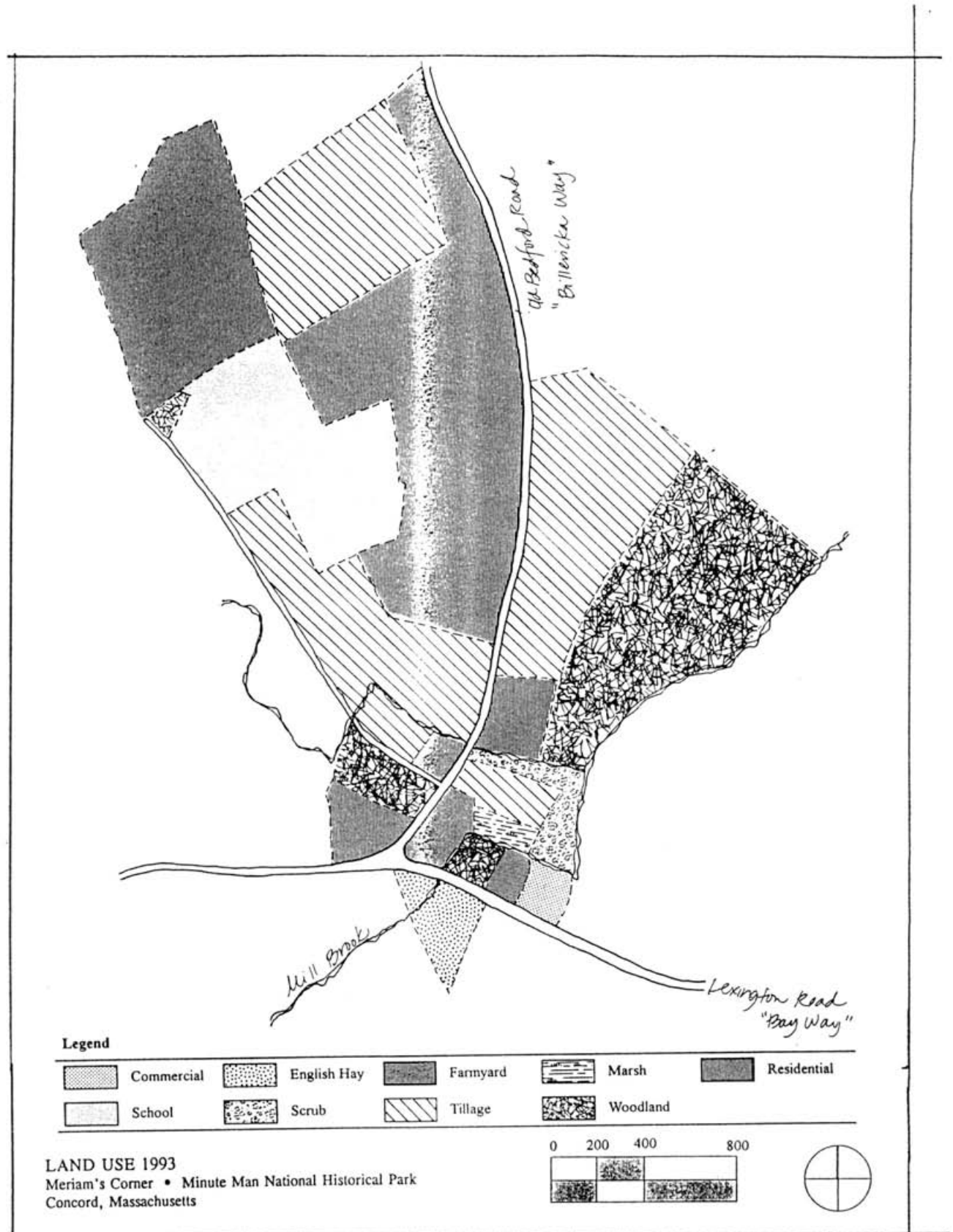


Figure 16. Meriam's Corner Land Use in 1993.

PART II:

SITE ANALYSIS

Heidi Hohmann

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National Park Service, North Atlantic Region

The purpose of this site analysis is to examine the site and the character-defining features of Meriam's Corner, and to assess the effects of change over time in the landscape. This analysis therefore relied heavily on information from both the Site History (above) and the "Historic Structure Report," written by Barbara Yocum, for historical information on the location and character of landscape features.

The analysis is comprised of three parts. The first part is an analysis of the character-defining features of the landscape, comparing their historic condition with their condition today. The explication of the features, each under a separate heading, is then followed by an overview of the park's areas and periods of potential significance, as based on National Register Criteria. Finally, Meriam's Corner is assessed as a contributing resource within the park, to determine whether the site contributes to the integrity of the park.

I. Analysis of Character-defining features

1. Topography/Physiographic Context

Although, when considered on a geologic time scale, many changes have occurred in the Concord landscape, on a human time scale, the physiographic context of the site—its topography, geology, and physical nature—has changed little during its period of human occupation. In terms of its physiography, the landscape of Concord, Massachusetts is quite typical of Southern New England. The rolling hills and valleys of the area were created by millions of years of geologic action, of which glaciation has left the most recent and striking evidence. During their advance (2 million years ago) and retreat (between 15,000 and 8,000 years ago), the glaciers moved and scraped the earth beneath them, creating the topography of the area, strewing the landscape with large chunks of bedrock (now known as "glacial erratics"), and forming glacial lakes. The westernmost part of the Battle Road Unit of the park, including Meriam's Corner, is in fact located within the lake bed of Glacial Lake Concord.⁵⁶

Glacial lake beds are characterized by their flat topography and the composition of their soils, which are composed of fine clay and silt particles. These particles were deposited on the lake bottom as the flowing and melting water from the glacial rivers came to rest. Meriam's Corner, with its flat topography, and fine clay and silt soils of the Swansea and Scarboro series, exhibits both of these characteristics, which made Meriam's Corner both attractive and suitable for 17th and 18th century agricultural practices.

After the glaciers receded, tundra plants first grew in the area, and by 2,000 years later the landscape was covered with forest. By the time of colonial settlement, the forests were mature, with large trees and relatively little understory vegetation. Although these forests were impacted by climatic change, natural catastrophes, and Native American land uses, the greatest change to the vegetation occurred starting in the late 1600s with the colonials' clearing of the landscape for agriculture. Clearing was so extensive that by the late 1700s, only 10-20% of the New England landscape remained forested.⁵⁷

It was not until the early 20th century, with the demise of agriculture in the area, that Concord began to be reforested. Today, much of Concord is reforested, with the dominant forest element generally considered to be the oak-chestnut-hickory association, typical of the Eastern Deciduous Forest. However, the cooler-climate species of western and northern New England, such as hemlock, maple, birch and beech, have also increased in number in the area. Thus, not only do different areas of the park represent various stages in the process of succession, but these second- and third-growth forests of today are most likely quite different in species composition than the original forest.⁵⁸

2. Land Use

The character-defining aspect of land use at Meriam's Corner historically was its agricultural character and its open spatial quality. By 1775 most of the land around the Meriam House had been cleared for pasture, hayfield, and tillage, leaving only a few outlying patches of woodland (figure 7). Although subsistence farming gave way to commercial dairy and produce farming after 1800, both agricultural uses and an open landscape were retained throughout the 19th and into the 20th century (figures 9 and 10). Figure 17, a summary of the preceding Land Use maps, clearly shows the site's continuity in land use and open spatial quality over 200 years of history.

The field patterns of the Meriam area were basically established in the mid-1600s by the first and second "divisions" of the town's original common field system. Throughout the 1700s the landscape became increasingly subdivided into lots and fields as the original Meriam farm was divided among the descendants of Joseph Meriam. The boundaries of homelots, crop fields, hayfields, orchards, and pasture were commonly delineated by physical markers such as roads, ditches, fences, walls, and stone piles. Although property changed hands and land uses rotated—orchards became pasture, tillage became hayfield—the field locations and boundary markers often remained constant. Field boundaries appear clearly in photographs from the late 19th century, in which Meriam's Corner is an unforested, rolling plane divided by walls and fences into patches of hay field, tillage, and pasture (figure 18).

It was not until after the Second World War that Meriam's Corner began to lose its open quality and agricultural uses. In 1951, the scene acquired a suburban quality when the Ingrahams bought the Meriam house and lot and planted ornamental trees and foundation plantings around the house. The conifers they planted along the northern lot line created a hedgerow behind the house and blocked the view north to the cornfield. The Ingraham property was further enclosed, and its open spatial quality further diminished, when the hayfield east of the house lot and Mill Brook was abandoned circa 1960 and allowed to regrow to red maple. Prior to this, there was a great visual connection between the East Quarter School House (now the Palumbo House) and the Meriam area. This view no longer exists.

Figure 19, an existing conditions plan, shows that land uses today are much as they were in 1960. The extant Meriam House is situated on a large, grassy area dotted with mature trees. To the west of the house is Old Bedford Road, across which lies regrowth woodland, the 1903 Burke farmhouse and yard, and more residential lots. The conifers north of the house screen a small cornfield from view; beyond the cornfield lie 2 more suburban houses and Concord Conservation Land (the old Kominski Farm). Across Mill Brook, to the east, is a low, wet maple and ash forest; east of this are the lots containing the Palumbo farmhouse (the 1853 Schoolhouse) and the Willow Pond Kitchen. Finally, across Lexington Road to the south are the fields of the Palumbo farm, which are still in agricultural production.



Figure 17. Composite of Land Use Maps, Meriam's Corner 1775-1993.



Figure 18. 19th-century photograph of Meriam's Corner, showing open spatial quality of landscape.
Photograph courtesy of SPNEA.

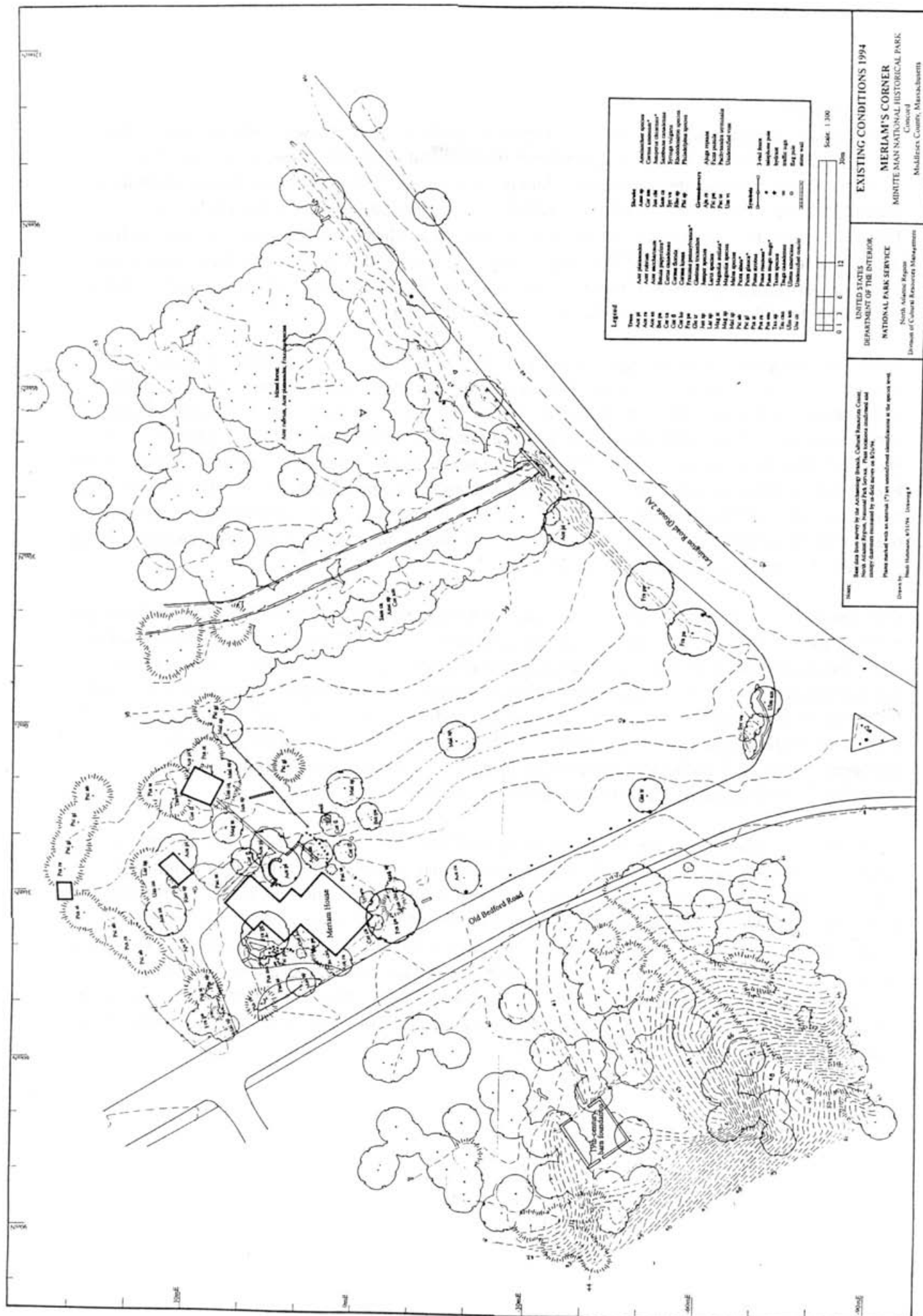


Figure 19. Existing Conditions plan 1994. Survey done by Archeology Branch, Cultural Resource Center, 1994.



Figure 20. Late 19th-/early 20th-century photo of Meriam's Corner.
photograph courtesy of SPNIEA

3. Vegetation

The character-defining aspect of the site's vegetation, prior to 1951, anyway, was its comparative absence. By 1800 early American agricultural practices had practically cleared the land of most of its trees, leaving it predominantly open. And prior to the area's first photographic documentation (circa 1885), it is difficult to determine precisely what vegetation did exist at Meriam's Corner. Crops included, at various times, small fields of corn, oats, wheat, rye, and potatoes. Hay included native grasses and, after around 1800, English hay. As described in deeds, an orchard also existed on the larger farm at at least two times during its history; in 1685 and in 1788 an orchard is cited as located on the hill just southwest of the extant Burke farmhouse.⁵⁹

After the photographic record begins, a clearer picture of the site and its vegetation emerges (see figures 10 and 20). The area in front of the extant Meriam House was once an active farm field, which grew tall hay and row crops (possibly corn or potatoes). In figure 20, some unidentifiable shrubs grow behind the 1885 plaque, and a tree or two—volunteers—grow along Lexington Road. However, four large deciduous trees, located at the southeast, southwest, and northwest corners of the house, and in an island at the intersection of Bedford and Lexington Roads (see figure 22), were the most dramatic vegetation features on the site. The trees were elms, with the exception of the ash at the southwest corner of the house. In the circa-1900 photos, the trees already appear mature, at least 30 years old, and they may have been even older.

Only the ash at the southwest corner of the house remains today, though the elms at the southeast and northwest house corners survived well into the 20th century. A 1937 photograph (figure 21) of the house shows the ash, the northeast corner elm, and a stump where the southeast corner elm once stood, indicating that the tree had probably died around then. The northeast elm, which apparently inhabited the middle of the circular driveway, died sometime between 1937 and 1951, after which time it no longer appears in photographs. It is unclear, however, how long the tree at the road intersection lived; it is unlikely it lasted longer than the late 1950s, when Bedford Road was reconstructed and asphalted for increased automobile traffic.⁶⁰

Currently, vegetation on the site (as shown in figures 23 and 24), is significantly different than it was during the 18th and 19th centuries. Wetland vegetation has grown up along the unused drainage ditches of Mill Brook. A tall hedgerow planted in the 1950s grows behind the house. Ornamental trees such as dogwood (*Cornus florida*) and magnolia (*Magnolia sp.*) and groundcovers such as English ivy (*Hedera helix*) and pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), also planted in the 1950s, now dot the lawn near outbuildings added by the Ingrahams. Foundation plantings from the same era have grown quite tall and dominate the structures. Two crabapple trees (*Malus sp.*) also stand in the front yard, and a few ash trees stand along Lexington and Bedford roads. Aerial photographs indicate that these trees originated circa 1950 and 1960.



Figure 21. 1937 photo of the Meriam house, showing elm stump in front yard (and arbor over door).

... photographs not back
from developing ...

Figures 23 and 24. Vegetation on site, 1994.



Figure 22. Elm in island at intersection of Old Bedford Road and Lexington Road, circa 1903.

4. Circulation

The first printed reference to Meriam's Corner as a definable place does not occur until 1797, when a town committee recommended that a school be built in the East Quarter District "at or near the place called Meriam's corner."⁶¹ But Meriam's Corner has been a corner at a road intersection since at least the late 1600s. By 1635 Lexington Road, known variously over the years as the "Bay Way," the "Bay Road," and the "County Road," had been laid out; it connected Concord to Lexington and points east. It appears that by 1685 Old Bedford Road was also in place, for it is mentioned (under the name Billericka Road) in the first known description of a Meriam house in the town record book dating to that year.⁶² By 1775, Billericka Road was commonly known as "the Bedford Road" and was described as extending "from Mr. Josiah Meriams Barn to Bedford Line. . . ."⁶³ One other road existed in the area, a small lane running west from Bedford Road to the Cranefield. This little road still exists today, its head located across the street from the extant Meriam house.

The alignment of Lexington Road has changed slightly over the past 200 years. From a detailed inventory of Ephraim Meriam's holdings, it is clear that Lexington Road was realigned sometime prior to 1806, because the boundary description of his landholdings mention "the line where the old road was trod."⁶⁴ Further evidence of the road realignment can be seen in the Thoreau surveys of 1855 (figures 25 and 26). These two drawings contain Thoreau's notations of "road" and "old road" and seem to indicate that the extant road's present alignment is slightly south of the line of the old road, which, if correctly drawn, almost intersects the porch of the schoolhouse. Thus, it seems Lexington Road may have been moved to accommodate the building of the schoolhouse in 1798.

It seems the road system changed little, if at all, in the next century. The earliest photos of the roads, circa 1885, show road surfaces that are dirt or gravel, and light in color. Photos from the early 1900s show Bedford Road forming a Y around a small "island" of grass at its intersection with Lexington Road (see figure 22). The island contained a road sign and a large elm tree that shaded the intersection. It is unclear how long the grassy island and tree persisted; however, it is likely that they were gone by 1958, when the roads were repaved to a darker, asphalt surface. This road resurfacing may also have included widening and improving the road bed and regrading the road shoulder to upgrade the road to modern standards.

The other remaining circulation feature on the site is the circular driveway behind the extant structure. This driveway is first documented in a Burke family photograph dating to circa 1903 (figure 27) so it dates from at least this time. However, it probably existed even earlier; situated between the extant house and the barn that presumably existed behind the house, the driveway would have been a useful vehicular access point for farm vehicles. Yet it is difficult to determine precisely at what time this feature was added to the site.

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8
 wall
 Road & Conservancy
 new wall
 N
 wall
 12 m 23 m
 Milos's Land
 Area between the new and old wall is 12 m 23 m

100

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26



Figure 27. The back of the Meriam house, circa 1903. Photograph courtesy of Alice Burke Hargrove.

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5. Buildings

Meriam Family Buildings

The extant Meriam House, most likely built in 1705, is the only remaining building of what was once a loose cluster of Meriam family houses built in the area of Meriam's Corner during the family's tenure on the land, from 1639 to 1871. This grouping of houses, which no longer exists, was the result of typical local settlement patterns, in which the land of the father was divided among his sons, who in turn often built their homes in close proximity to the parental homestead. Thus, the first house built at Meriam's Corner (built by the second generation John⁷ Meriam in 1663) was soon followed by the houses of the third generation, built close by the first, in 1691 (John⁶ Meriam, Jr.'s house located west of Bedford Road) and in 1705 (the extant Meriam house, built by Joseph¹⁹ Meriam). By 1775, the time of the battle, the three Meriam houses were inhabited by 3rd and 4th generation Meriams, and the extant house, at least, had undergone a number of additions and expansions.

In addition to the three Meriam houses, associated outbuildings such as barns, woodsheds, and privies existed on the site. Joseph⁴⁸ and Nathan⁵⁰ Meriam, for example, had a locksmith shop on the property for a period of time. And, according to battle accounts described in the *Historic Structure Report*, a barn was located directly north of the extant Meriam house.⁶⁵ However, without more detailed archeological work, the precise locations of these buildings are difficult to determine, since deeds of the time give locations in relative, not specific, terms. Known information about the locations of all Meriam family buildings is summarized in figure 28.

Following the Revolution, the original farmstead became increasingly subdivided among the Meriam descendants, coinciding with a gradual shift in the local economy from subsistence to commercial farming. During this time, the extant Meriam house once again underwent some additions and alterations, including a new kitchen (c. 1810) and major renovations (c. 1820). Meanwhile, the other two Meriam houses disappeared from the tax records: the house west of Bedford road is last mentioned in a 1769 will; and the other in an 1803 deed. Both were definitively gone by 1830, since neither appears in the 1830 Hales map of Concord, though the extant Meriam house, then owned by Rufus⁶ Meriam, does. (see figure 29).

Rufus⁶ Meriam, the last Meriam to farm at Meriam's Corner, apparently added few, if any, buildings to the family farm during his tenure, which lasted until his death in 1870. The probate record for his estate describes his holdings at Meriam's Corner as "Homestead Farm & Buildings, & 90 acres."⁶⁶

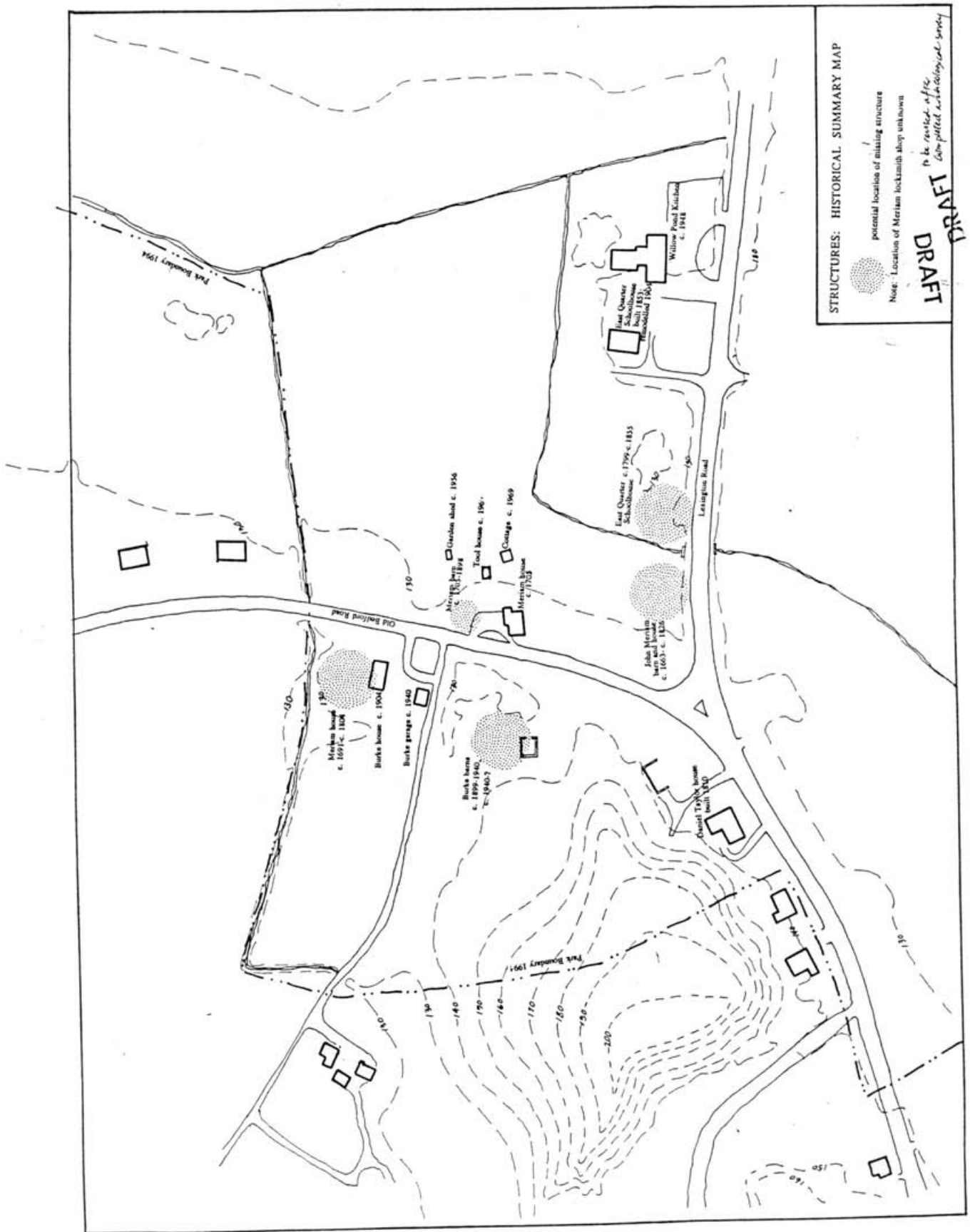


Figure 28. Graphic summary of buildings that existed on the Meriam Farm, 1663-1993. Locations for early buildings (shaded areas) are approximate locations only, to be revised, if possible, after archeological survey.

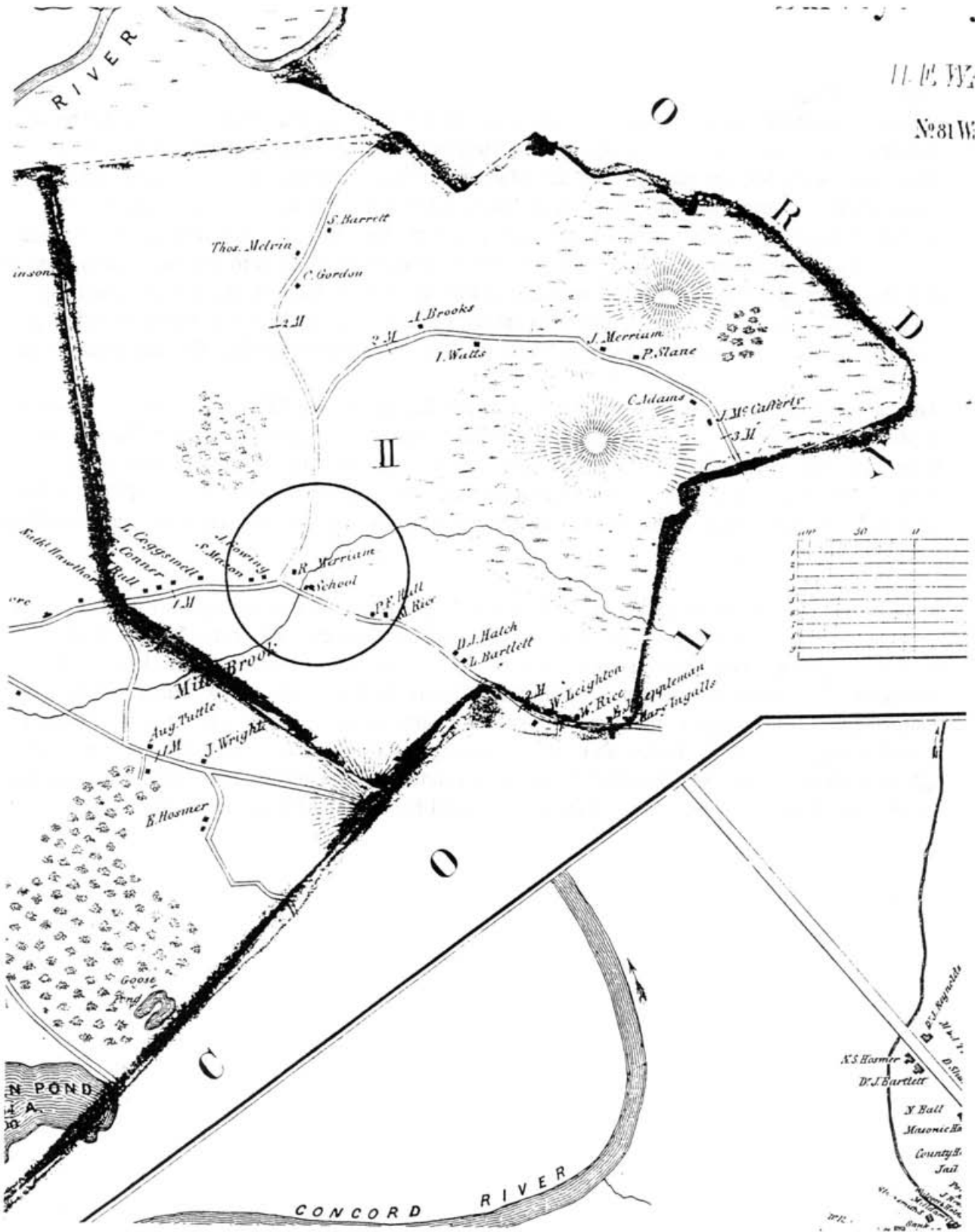


Figure 29. map of Concord, with Meriam's Corner and R. Meriam House circled.

1852 Walling

Other Buildings

During the Meriam family tenure at Meriam's Corner (1639-1871), two schoolhouses existed on the property. The first "East Quarter Schoolhouse" was built in 1789 on land which was retained in ownership by the Meriam family. This schoolhouse presumably functioned as such until 1853, when a second schoolhouse was built nearby on an 80-rod lot sold to the town by Rufus Meriam. The original schoolhouse, however, remained standing until at least 1855, because it is last documented in a survey of Lexington Road done by Henry David Thoreau which dates to that year (see figures 25 and 26). Located a few hundred feet northeast of the original schoolhouse, the second school was bought by Thomas Burke in 1893, and was converted into a residence by James Burke in 1903. Still standing, this structure is known today as either the Palumbo house or the East Quarter Schoolhouse.

After the Meriam family sold the farm to Thomas and Rose Burke in 1871, the number of buildings at Meriam's Corner once again increased. According to the Historic Structure Report, Thomas Burke demolished the Meriam barn and, most likely, rebuilt it across Bedford Road sometime around 1898.⁶⁷ The Burkes also built a new home on the west side of Bedford Road, in 1903-1904. In the same year, the renovation of the second East Quarter Schoolhouse occurred, and their son James lived there for a short while.

More buildings began to appear on the farm as the Concord area became more suburban in character. A restaurant was built on the site in 1928 (and eventually became the present-day Willow Pond Kitchen). Around 1940, both a garage and a new, smaller barn were built on the Burke property. And after 1951, when the Ingrahams bought the 1.77-acre lot that contains the Meriam House, they added 3 small outbuildings to the immediate site—a garden house (c. 1956), a toolshed (c. 1960), and a small cottage (c. 1969). Today, all of these buildings, with the exception of the Burke barn, are still in evidence on the site. In addition, two more residences have been added to what was once the larger Meriam farm, directly north of the house on Old Bedford Road (see figure 28).

21, Boston (a. 1904-16)
1st Street Corridor

T

10N Feb 28, 1932



Figure 30. Photo of East Quarter Schoolhouse, circa 1913.

Structures and Objects

Walls and Fences

Used to mark boundaries, keep in livestock, and keep out trespassers, walls and fences were important features at Meriam's Corner and in the Concord landscape. Walls and fences also figured in the Running Battle of 1775: both British and American accounts of the battle generally mention stone walls, fences, and ditches that soldiers used for cover during the British retreat. Although tradition has it that the Minutemen fired on the British from behind the walls of the Meriam House, specific documentation of any walls at the Meriam House in particular is scant until 1858, when a second-hand account of the battle describes the Reading Company's "position at Merriam's Corner, covered by a barn and the walls around it."⁶⁸

The first graphic documentation of stone walls at Meriam's Corner dates to 1855 with Henry David Thoreau's surveys of Lexington Road (figures 25 and 26). These drawings indicate the line of a "new wall" running around Meriam's Corner along the north side of Lexington Road and the east side of Old Bedford Road. It is presumably this same wall which appears in photographs of the area taken between 1885 and 1903, and which wraps around Meriam's Corner, ending just before the house. However, the existence of such a wall probably predates both the photos and the survey, since Thoreau's own notations trace the location of an "old wall" demarcating an earlier alignment of the road. Given this evidence, and the fact that colonial roads were often walled to show the extent of the wide road bed that shifted around ruts and mud holes, it seems likely that a wall along Lexington Road existed here well before 1855. After 1903, however the wall around Meriam's Corner disappears from photos. According to the granddaughter of Thomas and Rose Burke, the wall was taken down circa 1903, when some of its stones were used in constructing the foundation of the Burke House.⁶⁹

Given their transitory nature, it is difficult to determine the kinds and locations of fences in the landscape prior to the beginning of the photographic record. Common fences in colonial New England included stump fences, worm fences, and stone walls with riders. In the 1880s, historic photographs of Meriam's Corner prominently show three-rail post-and-rail fences dividing the fields behind the house. This fence was common in New England at this time; in 1871 it was cited as the second most built fence in Massachusetts.⁷⁰

Over the last 100 years, however, fences have become less prominent in the landscape at Meriam's Corner and in Concord. Livestock production fell after World War I, and the sturdy post-and-rail fences were eliminated or replaced with more economical, less visible barbed-wire fences. In some places, however, the location of old fences are still evidenced today by the presence of "fencerows"—the unmown, scrubby tree and shrub growth along an obsolete fence. At Meriam's Corner today, the only fences are a barbed wire fence along the northern boundary and a short section of 3-rail fence in the front yard.

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20th-century Structures

An arbor appears over the front door of the Meriam house in a photograph of 1937 (see figure 21), but how long this existed on site is unknown. During the Ingraham tenure, a number of small-scale structures were added to the site, including: A flagpole, presently located in the yard; a yard lantern, located near the juniper bush at the southwest corner of the house; the short stretch of post-and-rail fence in the front yard; and a brick patio and stone retaining wall located just off the southeast corner of the house.

Water Features

The major water feature on the site is the extant Mill Brook. This brook is characterized today by its surprisingly rectilinear route around and between the original Meriam fields. Although there are no distinct photographs of the brook's path prior to 1950, it seems it is possible that the route of the brook dates to as early as 1695. By that year the lowlands east of Meriam's Corner had been ditched and drained to allow the Elm Brook watershed to drain westward into Mill Brook. Such an ambitious drainage project would have required improvements as far east as Mill Brook by Meriam's Corner; thus it seems likely that Mill Brook at Meriam's Corner would also have been ditched at this time.

Today, the ditches of Mill Brook near Meriam's Corner are no longer as maintained and free-flowing as they were originally. The width of the water channel varies, but is generally narrow--about 2'. Wetland vegetation, such as purple loosestrife, red maple, and cattails, has grown up in a wide swath around the ditches. Designated as wetlands, the ditches and a 100-foot buffer around them are protected from development and other incursions by current legislation.

Only one structural element appears to be associated with the ditches in this area, although elsewhere in the park they are sometimes lined with stones. A small stone "bridge" or culvert (LCS #40225) (mentioned above) allows Mill Brook to run under Lexington Road at the eastern side of the property. However, the structure is unevaluated and it is currently not known when it was built.

A well (LCS #40203) is located just southeast of the extant Meriam house. It is unclear when this well was dug.

SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

Although the entirety of Minute Man NHP is included on the National Register of Historic Places, National Register forms have not yet been completed to document the significance of the park's historic resources. However, preliminary research toward this effort indicates that the park is a National Register district.⁷² Within this district, the Meriam House, as listed in the 1989 *General Management Plan*, will be identified as a contributing resource within the park. It is, however, important to note that in addition to the Meriam House itself, the site surrounding the structure—"Meriam's Corner"—may also be considered a significant contributing resource, as outlined below.

Areas and Periods of Significance

Preliminary studies of the park have indicated a number of periods and areas of National Register significance for the park, primarily under Criterion A, as a property associated with a historically significant events or trends in the United States. The areas and periods of significance pertinent to Meriam's Corner—military history, the commemoration of battlefield sites, and agricultural history—are as follows:

Military History (1775)

Based on the park's 1959 enabling legislation, Minute Man National Historic Park is primarily significant as the site of the outbreak of the American revolution and for its association with the events of the first battle of that war. The battle events which occurred within the boundaries of the park took place on April 18-19, 1775, and included the capture of Paul Revere and a number of skirmishes between American minutemen and British soldiers. Therefore, under National Register Criterion A, in the area of military history, the park's primary period of significance would be 1775. If the "*causes and consequences of the American Revolution*" were to also be considered as part of the park's significance, as stated in amending legislation from 1992, then the period of significance for this area and criterion could be extended to some appropriate dates prior to and after the battle itself.

Battlefield Commemoration/Memorialization (c. 1836-c. 1915)

As a site which contains numerous historical markers memorializing the Revolution and the birth of American democracy, and exemplifies the late 19th-century trend of memorializing significant battlefield sites, Minute Man NHP meets National Register Criterion Consideration F for Commemorative properties. It may therefore be considered significant under Criterion A, for its association with a late 19th-century movement of memorializing battlefields. Although this movement has not been well documented, this trend saw the construction of battlefield memorials such as the memorial tour road at Gettysburg, Virginia; the battle monument at Saratoga, New York; and the obelisk at Bunker Hill in Boston, Massachusetts. Concurrent with the rise of the historic preservation movement and the founding of patriotic societies such as the DAR, the trend of battlefield memorialization was borne out of the social perceptions and events of the time, including: feelings of disorientation and loss caused by the trauma of the Civil War; renewed interest in patriotism

coinciding with the celebration of the nation's centennial; and nationalistic feelings that accompanied the rise of industrialization and immigration in the United States.

Concord, with its Revolutionary history, also saw witness to this trend. A number of markers, including a granite obelisk at the North Bridge, were erected around the town in the late 1800s to honor the ideals and heroes of the Revolution. A second period of significance for the park (also on the national level) would therefore be a period of commemoration of the battle. This period would probably encompass the years from at least 1836 (the date of the first marker, the obelisk at the North Bridge) to at least 1915 (the date of the Jonathan Buttrick marker) or, possibly, the start of World War I.

Agricultural History (c. 1635-c. 1940)

Based on the 1992 amendment to the park's legislation, which emphasizes the importance of "the preservation and interpretation of. . . the historic landscape along the road between Lexington and Concord," another period of significance for the park may exist in the area of agriculture. Agriculture, which evolved from subsistence farming to commercial market gardening, was of major importance in the local economy until about World War II, after which time the landscape became primarily suburban. Agricultural land within and around the park illustrates a continuum of agricultural practices in New England, from the late 1600s to today. For example, 17th and 18th century field patterns are still evident, 19th century agricultural structures such as farmhouses and stone walls still dot the landscape, and in some cases, descendants of 19th century immigrants still farm the land. Yet the significance of an agricultural context remains largely undetermined, pending the completion of the state survey for cultural resources in this area of Massachusetts. It is unclear, for example, exactly which dates such a period of significance would encompass, and whether the area's agricultural history would be of state or local significance. However, the advent of the suburban landscape after World War II would seem to indicate circa 1940 as an end date for a period of significance for the historic agricultural landscape.

Meriam's Corner as a Contributing Resource within Minute Man NHP

Although both the park as a whole and Meriam's Corner as an individual site have not yet been documented to National Register standards, from a preliminary analysis, it appears that both the Meriam House and its surrounding site are historically significant within the park's historic contexts listed above. Meriam's Corner contributes to the integrity of the park, and qualifies as a contributing resource within the park, for the following reasons.

First, the site has prominence within the military context. Although no contemporary accounts of the running battle confirm Meriam's Corner's prominence in the fighting of April 19, 1775, based on subsequent data, historians have traditionally considered Meriam's Corner to be the first location along the Battle Road where skirmishes between the Colonials and the British occurred. It is difficult to determine, however, exactly how Meriam's Corner appeared in 1775, due to a lack of documentation. Yet certain features from that period do remain and contribute to the integrity of the park for this period of significance. These features include the extant Meriam House, the surrounding roads and farm fields, and the Mill Brook ditches. Furthermore, many of the changes in landscape

features that have occurred at Meriam's Corner are either reversible (as in the case of volunteer or ornamental vegetation in the yard) or do not detract from the historic scene (as in the case of the addition of 19th century farmhouses).

For the park's second period of potential significance, the period of commemoration (circa 1836-1915), the Meriam's Corner *marker* is part of and contributes to the integrity of the memorial layer of the park. As evidenced in photographs, the marker has changed little since its erection in 1885, and its presence in its original location contributes greatly to the integrity of the memorial layer. However, the immediate surroundings of the marker have been slightly compromised by the loss and addition of other landscape features at Meriam's Corner. In particular, the loss of the stone wall which surrounded the marker between 1885 and 1903 might be viewed as detrimental, since that structure gave the marker a greater prominence in the landscape, making it part of a larger feature which related to the site of the skirmish. However, given that the memorial period extends well beyond 1903, when the wall was taken down, it seems clear that the marker, without the wall, has maintained its own importance as part of the larger ensemble of monumentation within the park.

Meriam's Corner also contributes to the integrity of the park for its third period of potential significance, that of agricultural history. The Corner's extant 17th- and 18th-century field patterns and open views to neighboring 19th- and 20th-century farmhouses clearly illustrate significant aspects of state and local agricultural heritage. Furthermore, the fact that agriculture is still practiced on lands immediately adjacent to and originally associated with Meriam's Corner also enhances the park's historic scene and agricultural setting.

PART III:

TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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The following are a list of treatment and management recommendations for Meriam's Corner, based on the above analysis, the *General Management Plan, Minute Man National Historical Park*, and on the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Background/Previous Planning Documents

In 1989, a *General Management Plan (GMP)* for Minute Man National Historic Park was completed and approved. This document directs the future development of the park and also guides the management of the park's natural and cultural resources. Therefore, it is important that any treatment proposed for Meriam's Corner be considered within the context of the *GMP*. Indeed, this "Cultural Landscape Report for Meriam's Corner," the associated "Historic Structure Report: Meriam House", and the archeological research done in conjunction with these reports are all themselves the direct products of the *GMP*'s recommendations. The following, then, is a brief overview of the *General Management Plan*'s directives, as they relate to Meriam's Corner in particular and to the park's cultural landscape in general.

With respect to the park's broader cultural landscape, the *General Management Plan* recommends a treatment of:

Selective restoration of the 18th-century environment [which] will provide a flavor of the physical conditions on April 19, 1775, without requiring the detailed replication of the entire landscape.⁷³

The document further clarifies the somewhat ambiguous term "selective restoration" by defining the goals of this restoration to be primarily *interpretive* in nature:

An approximation of the historic landscape character will be directed towards creating an understanding of the 1775 environment, and will include, where practicable, restoration of the basic land use and cover conditions present at the time of the battle. This includes open fields, orchards, and natural woodlands. Specific crops, trees, or ecological units will as a general rule not be restored because specific information of that level of detail is missing for many areas of the park.⁷⁴

Recognizing the difficulties of obtaining detailed documentary evidence of the 1775 environment, the *General Management Plan*'s more specific recommendations for Meriam's Corner further echo this emphasis on interpretation, rather than exactitude. The *General Management Plan* recommends the following specific actions for the Meriam's Corner area:

- A wayside pull off for 3 cars will be installed on the south side of Lexington Road for interpretation of Meriam's Corner.
- A trail will be provided on the north to interpret the Americans' route across the fields from the fighting at Meriam's Corner to the Bloody Angles where the most intensive fighting occurred within the park.
- Stone walls will be rebuilt at the intersection of Old Bedford and Lexington roads to improve visitor safety when experiencing Meriam's Corner.
- A segment of the Battle Road will be located and restored when the site becomes accessible. In addition, a crossing of Mill Brook will be provided at the historic location to improve interpretation of the beginning of the running battle. . .

- The exterior of the John Meriam House and surrounding landscape on NPS property will be restored for interpretation. The exterior of the East Quarter Schoolhouse will be restored for orientation and interpretive purposes.⁷⁵

Consistent with the park-wide recommendations of the *GMP*, each of these proposed actions is recommended to increase both visitor access and visitor understanding of Meriam's Corner.

This emphasis on increased interpretation of the landscape of the park was recently, in 1992, restated and strengthened by an amendment to the park's enabling legislation. The new legislation expanded the park's mission to explicitly 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."⁷⁶ Although the term "historic landscape" was not well defined in this legislation, the amendment seems to imply that a period of significance for the park's landscape may be extended to include the broad continuum of agricultural history in the park, i.e., circa 1635-1940.

Selection of a Preservation Treatment

Four approaches are currently recognized by the Secretary of the Interior for the treatment of historic properties. They are Reconstruction, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Preservation, and are defined as follows: *Preservation* focuses on the maintenance and repair of materials and retention of features and form of a property, as it evolved over time. *Rehabilitation* acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character. *Restoration* is undertaken to depict a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods. *Reconstruction* re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.⁷⁷

In selecting a preservation treatment for a landscape, usually one of these four treatments is selected as a "primary" treatment for a property as a whole. This primary or property-wide treatment then provides a broad philosophical framework within which preservation treatment decisions for individual features may be made.

Recommended Primary Treatment for Meriam's Corner

*When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment.*⁷⁸

Based on the intent of the *General Management Plan* to create "an approximation of the historic landscape. . .directed towards creating an understanding of the 1775 environment," and based on the historical research and site analysis conducted for this report, Rehabilitation is the recommended primary treatment for Meriam's Corner. Rehabilitation "makes possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which

convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values."⁷⁹ Additions and new construction are allowed under Rehabilitation, as long as new work is compatible with the existing historic fabric and character of the property, yet is also clearly distinguishable as new.

It should be noted that while Rehabilitation is the recommended primary treatment for Meriam's Corner, individual features on site may receive different treatments. For example, preservation may be the appropriate treatment for a historic structure or an existing agricultural field within the larger site. However, the sum of treatments applied to all of the landscape features will result in the Rehabilitation of the property as a whole.

Rehabilitation is the recommended treatment for Meriam's Corner primarily because it allows new uses to occur on the site, while at the same time it encourages the preservation and enhancement of the site's remaining historic character. In other words, Rehabilitation will permit the construction of required new access and interpretive facilities for visitors, such as the addition of universal access pathways, parking facilities, trail linkages and outdoor interpretive features, while concurrently ensuring that historic features are protected by sensitive siting and construction of new features. Although actions for improved access and interpretation are not always considered "new uses," in this case, the significant number and magnitude of proposed actions do, in fact, constitute a major adaptive use for this property.

At the same time, Rehabilitation will also permit the removal of non-historic features and the reinstatement of missing historic features on the landscape. Both of these actions are crucial to increasing the interpretive potential of the site, so that fewer 20th-century intrusions are evident and more 18th-century remnants are perceivable on the site. Although the removal and reinstatement of features is often considered part of a Restoration treatment, in this case, where visual and documentary evidence of the site is actually quite minimal, Restoration to the site's primary period of significance (1775) would be difficult, if not impossible, to accurately implement. Under a Rehabilitation treatment, however, replacement and removal of historic features may be undertaken in a less literal manner, with an eye towards enhancing interpretation and the remaining historic character of the existing landscape. An example of such an action might be the marking of the Old Meriam Barn's foundation and archeological remains (if these are located in the field), rather than its reconstruction or restoration.

In general, then, this report recommends the removal of late 20th-century suburban additions to the landscape, while retaining and reinstating, where feasible, the agricultural features of the landscape, some of which (e.g., field patterns and land uses) were continuously present in the area from 1635 to 1940. Such removals and retentions would 1) help create a more appropriate and sympathetic agricultural setting for extant 1775 features than the existing suburban landscape; 2) expand interpretation of the landscape from 1775 to the broader continuum of the years 1635 to 1940; and 3) help visitors better perceive the history of the New England landscape.

Specific Treatment Actions/Individual Feature Treatments

Under a Rehabilitation treatment the following actions are recommended for the landscape of Meriam's Corner.

1. Rehabilitation of the site shall include the preservation and stabilization of all extant historic features, including the following actions:

a) Preservation of the Meriam House. Although the GMP suggests restoring the exterior of the Meriam House to its 1775 appearance, the recently completed "Historic Structure Report" (HSR) for this house recommends preservation as a more appropriate treatment.⁸⁰ The HSR recommends this for two reasons. First, restoration to 1775 would require the demolition of the circa-1810 back addition to the house and the attached garage/carriage shed. Second, insufficient documentation exists to recreate the exterior appearance of the house as it existed in 1775. The HSR concludes that preservation would maintain the "existing integrity and character" of the structure, whose current appearance is little changed from 1820. Under the broad, primary treatment of Rehabilitation, this report concurs that preservation is an appropriate treatment for this individual feature of the Meriam's Corner landscape.

b) Preservation of the exteriors of the other historic buildings in the area. In particular, these include the East Quarter Schoolhouse and the Burke House, both of which date to 1904. Although not present during the primary period of significance (1775), these buildings add to the agricultural setting of Meriam's Corner and the Battle Road. They also provide important interpretive opportunities for explaining the history of the area's cultural landscape, as part of the potential period of significance for local agricultural history (1635-1940). These buildings may also be important as locally distinctive examples of historic design and construction, although these determinations have yet to be made, pending completion of the park's National Register nomination.

c) Preservation of the agricultural field to the north of the house in its current use of agriculture. This land has been under cultivation of some sort since at least the 1700s, and this use should continue.

d) The pruning and preservation of the historic ash at the southwest corner of the site. Although this tree does not date to the 1775 period of significance, it is the oldest vegetation on the site. Dating to at least 1870, it was present as part of the Memorial period of significance, and is part of the historic agricultural landscape.

2. Any extant archeological sites or remains located at Meriam's Corner shall be protected and may be delineated for interpretive purposes, if the latter is deemed acceptable by the Regional Archeologist. As cited in this report, in the "Historic Structure Report," and in the *General Management Plan*, such archeological features might include the foundations of 17th and 18th century buildings, such as an earlier Meriam house; Meriam barns and outbuildings; and/or the

original East Quarter Schoolhouse. Other potentially extant, non-building archeological remains might include traces of the historic Lexington Road, as shown on the 1855 Thoreau survey, or the foundations of the alleged bridge across the Mill Brook. In general, given the lack of documentation of above ground buildings and structures, restoration or reconstruction of any of these features is not recommended, with the possible exception of the traces of the Battle Road in this area. If the location of the Mill Brook bridge is located in an archeological survey, a crossing of Mill Brook for visitors may be built at the historic location, provided that it does not impinge on the archeological resource and that it is clearly delineated as new construction.

3. It is recommended that certain features dating to after World War II, that are suburban in nature, and that detract from the historic, agricultural character of the landscape be removed. Such features might include:

a) The ornamental plantings around the foundation of the house and in the yard. Removing these plantings, which date to the 1950s, would provide a more historically appropriate setting for the preserved exterior of the house, especially as viewed from Lexington Road. Foundation and ornamental plantings, a late 19th-century suburban phenomenon, are in general not in keeping with the appearance of agricultural homesteads of the 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries. Removals should particularly target conifers and low-growing, shrubby species such as the juniper, lilacs, and dogwoods in front of the house, and the ivy and pachysandra groundcovers to the west of the house. The larger trees (ash and elm), especially at the corners of the house, which do not obscure the foundation and are in keeping with trees shown in late 19th-century photos of the house, could be maintained without great loss of historic character.

b) The hedgerow north of the house, which currently blocks the view to the agricultural field behind it. All research to date indicates that prior to World War II, the landscape here and elsewhere in the park was actually more open, without such vegetation enclosing and screening fields. Removing this hedgerow would be an appropriate action to allow a view of this field and to better interpret the area's historic land uses. However, given that some of the trees along this line (in particular, the conifers) were planted by neighbors, it may be better to selectively clear the hedgerow of obvious undergrowth and volunteer trees, rather than to remove the entire screen. This would result in a partial view to the cornfield, and would still be in keeping with interpretive goals.

c) The three small outbuildings that date to the 1950s. These features should be removed from the site, because they are in poor condition and their design, materials, and workmanship do not contribute to the historic agricultural character of the property. The vegetation associated with these buildings should also be removed, either at the same time as the buildings, or as they become old and decrepit.

d) The brick terrace off the southeast corner of the house. Again, this feature is not consistent with historic documentation of the site or with the design of 17th-, 18th- and 19th-

century farmhouses and their surroundings. Such houses were usually constructed to meet the grade without any other mediating structures or vegetation. Once removed, the site of the terrace should be regraded to provide a smooth transition to the surrounding open area.

4. Certain non-historic features which date to the post-World War II suburban landscape may be retained, because they do not detract from the historic character of the site.

a) The stand of ash, maple, and other scrub vegetation that has grown up just east of Mill Brook should be retained at this time. Historically, this field was cleared and open, used either as an agricultural lot or possibly as a homelot; as late as 1954 it was apparently a hayfield, as documented in aerial photographs. Although this field could be cleared and returned to agricultural uses at a later date, wholesale clearing of this lot may not be warranted as part of this project, since it is an extensive action without an immediate effect on the use or interpretation of the Meriam House. Minor clearing of trees for a pedestrian path or to delineate and interpret possible archeological sites, such as the historic road, the Mill Brook bridge, or the 1789 schoolhouse, should, however, be considered.

5) Some consideration should be given to the replacement of certain missing historic features that date to before 1940. The goals of such replacement would be, in combination with the removal of post-World War II suburban features, to enhance the agricultural setting of the Meriam House and to better convey a sense of the historic landscape to the visitor. It is not anticipated that the addition of features will occur in an extensive manner. Nor, given the paucity of visual documentary evidence, should such additions be considered restorations or reconstructions. Rather, they should be viewed as primarily interpretive elements. For example:

a) As stated in section 2 above, archeological sites or features may be delineated to provide the visitor with a clearer picture of the physical layout and make-up of early American homesteads.

b) As stated in section 6a below, a wall surrounding Meriam's Corner, which existed on site between 1855 and 1904, might be reinstated in the landscape. However, since its main purpose would be to increase visitor safety by delineating the edge of the property, it would be considered new construction and would be delineated as such in form and materials.

6) The recommendations made in the *General Management Plan* for improved access and interpretation at Meriam's Corner may be implemented under a Rehabilitation treatment. However, the following recommendations for the implementation of these projects should help fine-tune the intent of the *General Management Plan* and should ensure that as much of the remaining historic character of the site as possible will be preserved.

a) The *General Management Plan* recommends that a stone wall be built around the edge of the property, to ensure visitor safety. Although such a wall would contribute to the historic setting of the marker at Meriam's Corner, by placing it within a wall as it originally existed,

it is recommended that under a Rehabilitation treatment, this wall not be considered a reconstruction or replacement of the wall seen in historic photographs of circa 1890. Instead, the wall should be a stone wall compatible with the historic agricultural landscape as documented between 1635 and 1940, yet clearly delineated as new construction.

b) If it is determined that a parking lot should be added to the immediate site, for the use of park staff or for individuals who could not walk from a "remote" parking lot located in the vicinity of Meriam's Corner (e.g., Willow Pond Kitchen), such a lot would be best situated behind (north of) the house. It should be designed in conjunction with the extant circular driveway, which could be retained on site, since vehicular circulation at the back of the house dates from at least circa 1890, and probably earlier.

c) Any trails (including the proposed Battle Road bike trail) that access Meriam's Corner should be sited to avoid impinging on the site's landscape features and archeological resources. For example, it is recommended that the "trail to the north" cited in the *General Management Plan* should be routed around (to the north or the south) of the agricultural field north of the Meriam House. In general, it would be preferable for trails to approach the Meriam House from the front (south) side of the house, rather than from the back. It is also recommended that any trails to the house from a possible "remote" parking lot at Willow Pond Kitchen not cross the lot in front of the house diagonally, but rather follow the lot's rectangular boundaries, either to the north or south.

7) Once the above actions have been implemented at Meriam's Corner, a maintenance regime for the landscape will need to be implemented. For example:

a) Once non-historic, suburban vegetation has been cleared from the site, it might be recommended that the site be continued to be mown in a manner similar to the current maintenance regime. Mown grass, instead of reinstated crop fields, would be recommended as a surface treatment for the front area, if it were considered important to highlight any delineated archeological features, to promote public access, or to maintain the area with a minimum of time and effort.

ENDNOTES

1. Dates are for the period of occupancy of each generation, from date of known inheritance (or marriage, as a proxy) to death. Hence, dates for some generations overlap.
2. Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book 9, p. 259.
3. Middlesex Registry of Deeds, Book 10, p. 525.
4. Middlesex Registry, 10, p. 525.
5. Concord Town Records, Volume 1, pp. 268-269.
6. Middlesex Registry, Book 33, p. 129, an agreement between Noah and Job Brooks, and Daniel and Joseph Brooks.
7. Middlesex Registry, Book 14, p. 106 and Book 27, p. 409.
8. Ruth R. Wheeler, *Concord: Climate for Freedom*, Concord: Concord Antiquarian Society, 1967.
9. Middlesex Registry, Book 39, p. 59.
10. Middlesex Registry, Book 38, p. 106.
11. Barbara Yocum, "Historic Structure Report: The Meriam House," draft, 1994, pp. 17-19.
12. Middlesex Registry, Book 50, p. 73.
13. Middlesex Probate, First Series, 15051. It is possible that some of the parcels listed in Ebenezer Meriam, Jr.'s inventory were owned by him outright, while others were owned in conjunction with his father and the acreages listed were only half the actual size. The author did not consider the amount of time required to run all these far-flung parcels down worth it.
14. Joseph Meriam's holdings were worked out from deeds in the Middlesex Registry Book 19, p.403; Book 38, p. 106; Book 49, p. 259; Book 49, p. 260; Book 56, p. 508; Book 55, p. 332; Book 74, p. 177; Book 158, p. 163; and Book 122, p. 441.
15. Middlesex Registry, Book 38, p. 115.
16. Samuel Meriam's will, Middlesex Probate, First Series, 15106. This will includes no real estate inventory. Samuel Meriam's holdings are derived from his son John's inventory, 15076, by subtracting land acquired by John in his lifetime. Some parcels are ambiguous as to whether they were acquired by Samuel or John.
17. Middlesex Registry, Book 242, p. 425.
18. Middlesex Registry, Book 49, p. 260.
19. Middlesex Registry, Book 45, p. 345; Book 45, p. 259; Book 56, p. 508; Book 74, p. 177; Book 158, p. 163; Book 122, p. 441.
20. Middlesex Registry, Book 67, p. 109.

21. Middlesex Registry, Book 79, p. 324.
22. Middlesex Registry Book 184 p. 344; Book 80, p. 226; Book 93, p. 389; Book 98, p. 357; Book 101, p. 71.
23. Middlesex Registry, Book 147, p. 165.
24. Middlesex Registry, Book 158, p. 166.
25. Middlesex Registry, Book 158, p. 163.
26. Middlesex County Probate, 15076.
27. Middlesex County Probate, 15095.
28. Middlesex Registry, Book 122, p. 441; Book 158, p. 166. Ephraim must have sold the 4-acre "ox pasture" piece, because it is not in his probate inventory taken seven months later.
29. Middlesex County Probate, 15076.
30. Middlesex County Probate, 15076.
31. Middlesex Registry Book 181, p. 33, Book 200, p. 153.
32. Middlesex Registry, Book 248, p. 363.
33. Middlesex Registry, Book 365, p. 108; Book 995, p.74; Book 1054, p. 272.
34. Middlesex Registry, Book 203, p. 117; Book 215, p. 330. Middlesex County Probate, 21994.
35. Grindall Reynolds, "Ephraim Meriam" in *Memoirs of Members of the Social Circle in Concord—Second Series, 1795–1840*, Cambridge, 1888.
36. Middlesex Registry, Book 1160 p. 21 and p. 23.
37. Middlesex County Probate, 37626.
38. Wheeler, *Concord: Climate for Freedom*.
39. Middlesex Registry, Book 203, p. 117.
40. Middlesex Registry, Book 267, p. 156.
41. The author was unable to find this deed; the parcel is included in the land Ephraim sold to Rufus in 1834. Middlesex Registry, Book 1160, p. 21.
42. Middlesex Registry, Book 1064, p. 75.
43. Middlesex Registry, Book 1160, p. 24.
44. Middlesex Registry, Book 639, p. 167; Book 858, p. 11.

45. United States Census of 1860, Schedule 4, Agriculture. Rufus reported 150 bushels of corn, 100 bushels of oats, and market gardening worth \$550.
46. Concord Tax Valuations for 1801 and 1840, Concord Town Records, Concord Archives, Concord Free Public Library. Also, United States Census of 1860, Schedule 4, Agriculture.
47. Middlesex Registry, Book 1163, p. 244; Book 1165, p. 138.
48. Middlesex Registry, Book 1164, p. 448.
49. Middlesex Registry, Book 228, p. 481; Book 3068, p. 40.
50. Middlesex Registry, Book 3090, p. 154.
51. J.S. Keyes, "Houses in Concord," typescript in the Archives at the Concord Free Public Library.
52. Middlesex Registry, Book 4569, p. 381.
53. Middlesex Registry, Book 4944, p. 98.
54. Middlesex Registry, Book 7082, p. 12.
55. Middlesex Registry, Book 7703, p. 584.
56. Carl Koteff, "Surficial Geology of the Concord Quadrangle, Massachusetts," Map GQ-133, Washington, D.C., 1964.
57. Neil Jorgenson, *A Guide to New England's Landscape* (Chester, Connecticut: Globe Pequot Press, 1977), 142.
58. Emily B. Russell and Alfred E. Schuyler, "Vegetation and Flora of Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, Eastern Pennsylvania," *Bartonia*, No. 54:124-43, 1988.
59. Refer to Site History, above, page 17.
60. Concord Town Records 1958 and 59; get citation.
61. Concord Town Records, 1790-1814, entry for May 1, 1797, pp. 119-20.
62. Town of Concord, Mass.: Volume 1, Relating to Land Divisions, Highways, and Bridges, 1655-1784, pp. 268-269(Special Collections, Concord Free Public Library).
63. Document recording meeting of Town Selectmen, March 5, 1775 (Town Records, Special Collections, Concord Free Public Library).
64. Middlesex County Probate, Document 15056.
65. Yocum, "Historic Structure Report." pp. 28, 70, and 71; also pp. 375-78.
66. Middlesex County Probate, 37626.
67. Yocum, "Historic Structure Report," pp. 375-378.

68. William H. Sumner, *A History of East Boston* (Boston: J.E. Tilton and Co., 1858), p. 356, footnote 2.
69. Yocum, "Historic Structure Report," p. 73.
70. Mamie Meredith, "The Nomenclature of American Pioneer Fences," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 15 (June 1951): p. 133.
71. Sumner, *A History of East Boston*, p. 356, footnote 2.
72. According to the National Register, a district is an area "possessing a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically" (*National Register Bulletin* 15, p. 5).
73. National Park Service, *General Management Plan: Minute Man National Historical Park*, (National Park Service: Boston, 1989), p. 38.
74. National Park Service, *General Management Plan*, pp. 38-39.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
76. Public Law 102-48; 106 Stat. 3135; H.R. 2896; October 24, 1992; Section 2: "Amendments to Minute Man Park Act."
77. National Park Service, Brochure: *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Preservation Assistance Division, 1992).
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. Yocum, "Historic Structure Report," pp. 5-6.

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- 1641 Joseph Miriam (Last Will & Testament, Suffolk Probate Court Record Books, Vol. I, pp. 19 & 20; Inventory, Vol. II, pp. 17-20.
- 1751 Ebenezer Meriam (Inventory, Middlesex Co. P15051)
- 1772 Dorothy Meriam (Will, Middlesex Co. 15050)
- 1782 Nathan Meriam (Will, Middlesex Co. P15095, Guardianship, P15096)
- 1803 Ephraim Meriam (Will, Middlesex Co. P15056, Guardianship, P15057)
- 1809 Josiah Meriam (Will, Middlesex Co. P15090)
- 1843 Ephraim Meriam (Will, Middlesex Co. P37608)
- 1822 William Swan (Will, Middlesex Co. P21994)
- 1870 Rufus Meriam (Inventory, Middlesex Co. P37626)

Public Law 102-488, Minute Man National Historical Park Amendments of 1991; 106 Stat 3135; October 24, 1992; H.R. 2896.

MERIAM FAMILY GENEALOGY

William Meriam, of Hadlowe, Kent (England) - Clothier

