

BATTLE ROAD:

MEMORIAL or ARTERIAL ?

MINUTE MAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

North Atlantic Region

National Park Service

Department of the Interior

October, 1983

BATTLE ROAD: MEMORIAL OR ARTERIAL ?

As traffic levels build toward saturation, the Battle Road between Lexington and Concord, the most historic stretch of road in America, is disappearing under a sea of cars and asphalt.

Visitors come from all over the country and the world to see the Battle Road which forms the heart of Minute Man National Historical Park, a memorial to our struggle for independence. Today, a new revolution is underway on the Battle Road as the 18th Century landscape of the national park is being rapidly transformed into a high speed transportation corridor, serving a growing number of new office parks and suburban developments.

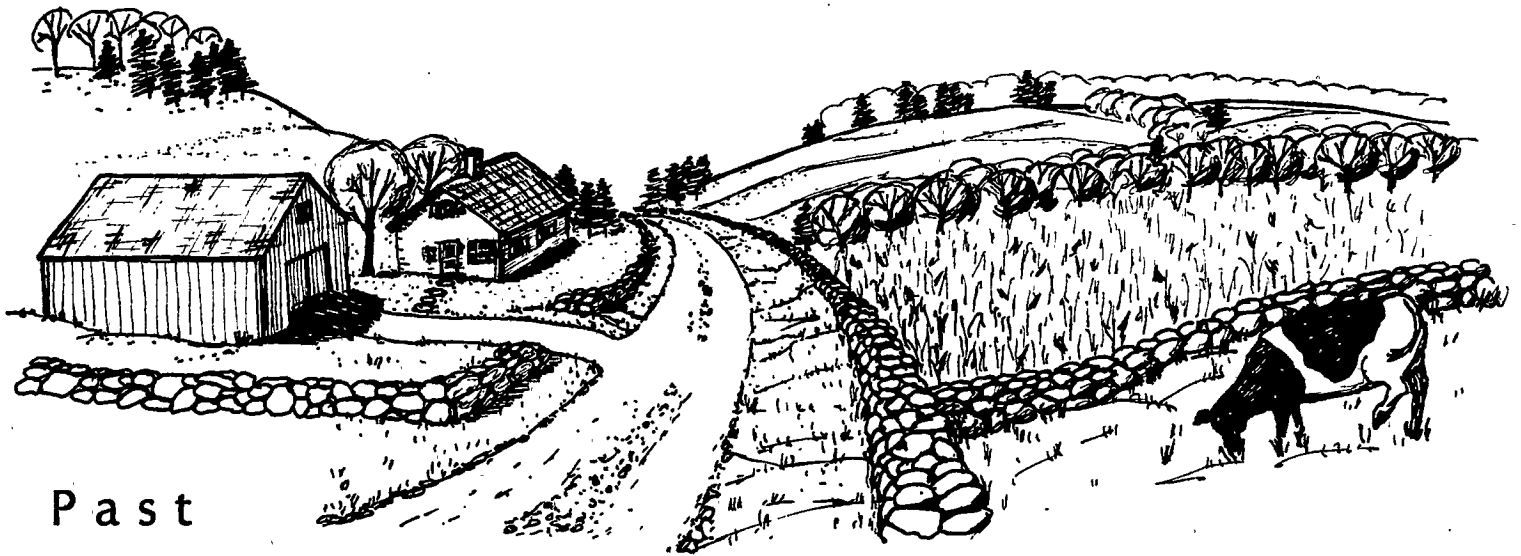
Over the last ten years, the impact of this transition on the park environment has been devastating. The many historic homes and sites along the Battle Road are being cut adrift from one another by bumper to bumper traffic. The quiet reflective quality of this historic landscape is being rapidly eroded by the noise, exhaust fumes and physical danger created by the growing number of cars and trucks funneled onto the road.

LOSING GROUND ON BATTLE ROAD

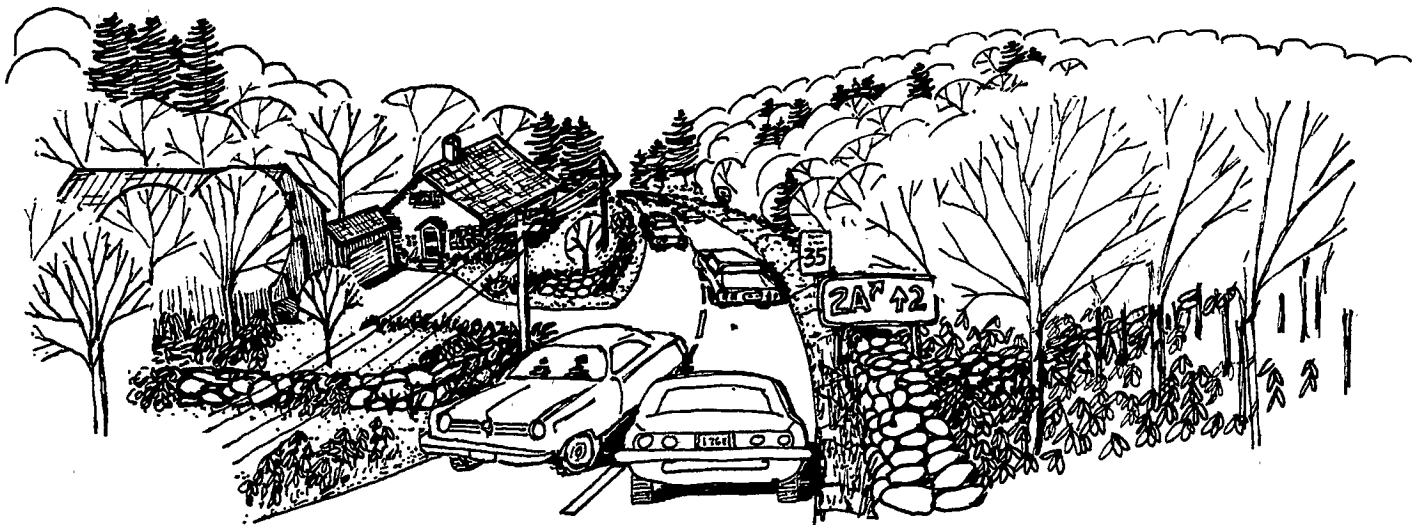
Plans are currently underway for "improving" the road with more lanes and paving to accommodate even greater volumes of traffic. At the eastern end of the park there is a proposal to widen the road to five lanes with signal control. There is also a proposal to widen and signalize the intersection with Hanscom Drive. In addition to both of these projects, new office park sites have been proposed along both sides of the park, in North Lincoln, East Concord and West Lexington. A 200-room hotel/conference center is being considered for the Minuteman Technical School across from the park's Battle Road Visitor Center and there may be significant new development proposed for Massport's

BATTLE ROAD

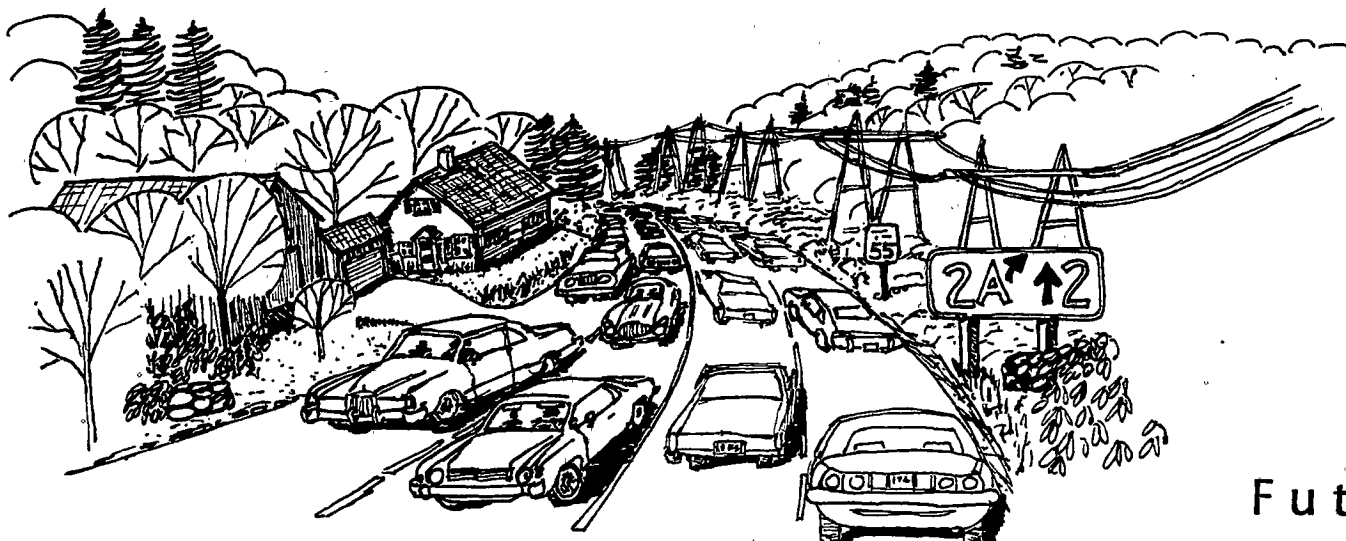
Minute Man NHP



Past



Present



Future?

Hanscom Field complex, in the not too distant future.

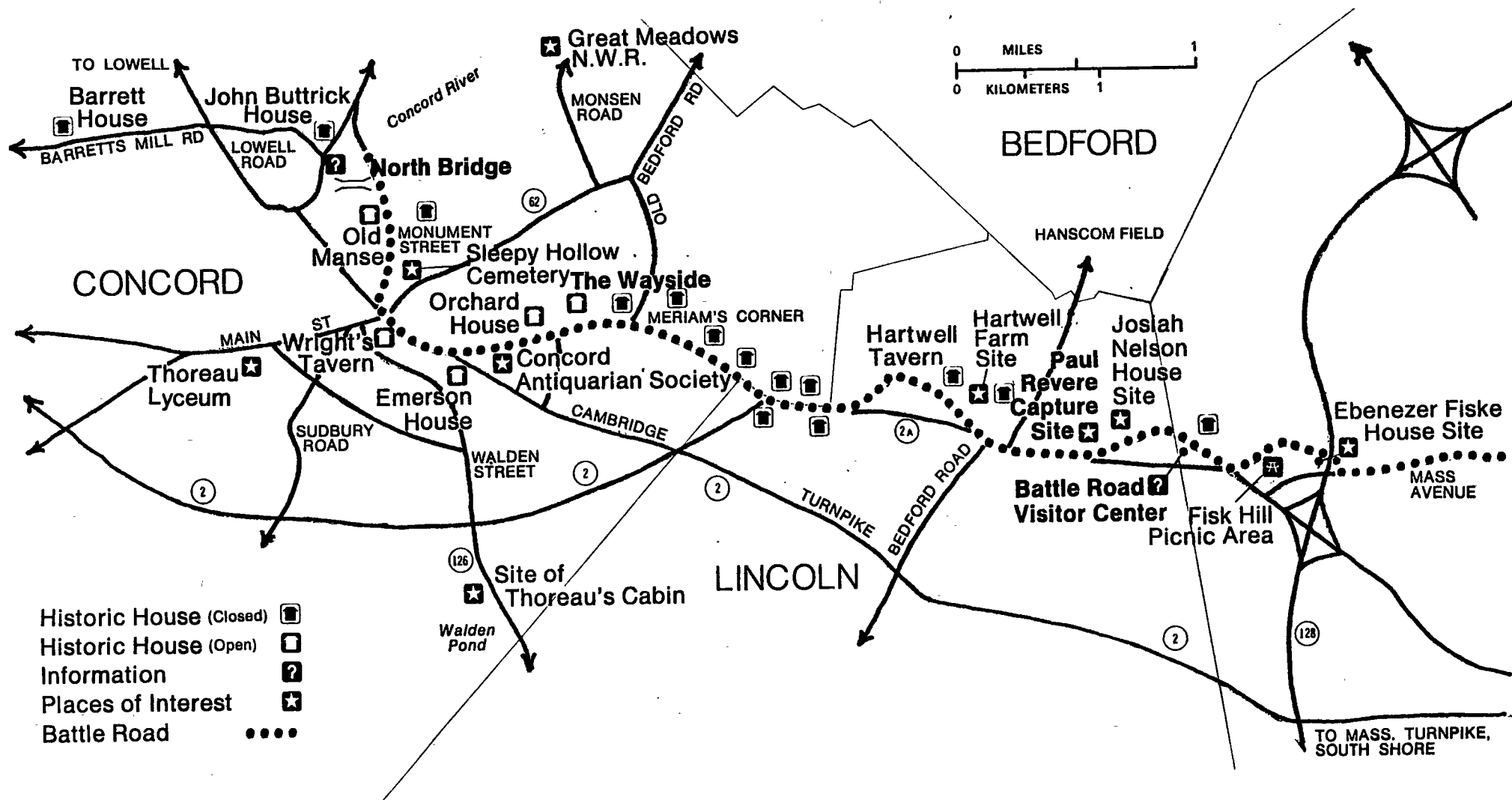
If the Battle Road remains the primary access for this proposed development, Minute Man National Historical Park, as envisioned by Congress and as we know it today, may itself become a thing of the past. The cumulative effect of all these proposals on traffic and on the park may irrevocably destroy what remains of the Battle Road's historic character.

Traffic is a major regional problem and we recognize that the National Park Service is one of many neighbors concerned with its impacts. While we understand the legitimate needs of communities to grow, and support cooperative regional efforts at transportation planning, we have witnessed a steady deterioration of the park environment as a result of traffic. Prospects for the park's future worry us deeply.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BATTLE ROAD

A national commitment to preserving a small portion of the scene of April 19, 1775, was made when Congress authorized Minute Man National Historical Park in 1959. The park's purpose is to not only chronicle the events of April 19, 1775, but also to help visitors understand the social context of the rebellion. To accomplish this, Congress directed the National Park Service to preserve and interpret the area's historic sites and structures. The four mile long section of the Battle Road from Meriam's Corner in Concord to Fiske Hill in Lexington was specifically mentioned as one of the "prime examples of our nation's heritage." The historic Battle Road is also an important unifying link joining seemingly disparate and fragmented sections of this linear national park.

It was along this road in 1775 that a British column was challenged and routed by local militia, beginning a war for independence that was to continue for nearly eight years. It became clear at Meriam's Corner, when colonials exchanged a sustained fire with British troops withdrawing from Concord, that events had been put in motion that could not be undone.



BATTLE ROAD (Route 2A) Environs

Minute Man National Historical Park

WHAT IS AT STAKE

Today, nearly one million people visit Minute Man National Historical Park and the sites of this bloody engagement each year. Since 1959, the National Park Service has spent nearly \$10 million dollars to create the park as we know it today, acquiring 734 acres of land, and preserving 22 historic structures. Many non-historic homes and businesses were removed from along the Battle Road to preserve as much as possible the 1775 appearance of the countryside. The area where Paul Revere was captured was once covered by an ice cream stand. Last year, the restoration of Hartwell Tavern was completed and currently work is underway on the restoration of the Captain Smith House.

Telling the story of the events on the Battle Road, however, is becoming increasingly difficult in the midst of a busy arterial highway. The substantial investment and effort that has gone into preserving the Battle Road and Minute Man is being progressively eroded as more and more traffic is funneled onto the road and through the park.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

The purpose of this brochure is to share with our many friends and neighbors our serious concern over the Battle Road and the future of Minute Man National Historical Park. During the next year, the National Park Service will be taking a hard look at the Battle Road, reassessing our objectives and our options. But it is clear that the future of the Battle Road is not ours alone to shape. The stewardship of the park is a responsibility that belongs to us all. Please take a moment to express your interest and ideas with us on the last page; we'll be asking for more of your help in the months to come.

This brochure has been prepared for discussion purposes.

It does not represent an official position of the
National Park Service or the Department of the Interior
on any plans or proposals under review.

Please place my name on a mailing list of people interested in the Park's future.

Name : _____

Address: _____

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We welcome any comments:

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