



# The Sutton Historical Society Bulletin

D e d i c a t e d t o p r e s e r v i n g o u r h i s t o r i c a l  
i n h e r i t a n c e f o r f u t u r e g e n e r a t i o n s .

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## SUTTON'S HISTORICAL MILESTONE MARKER

By: Joyce Smith

This information is from "Pa's Story" as written by Phyllis Arnold Batcheller MacLaren. The copy was gifted to the Sutton Historical Society by Alice L. MacLaren Anderson, "Pa's" granddaughter. (Also Ben MacLaren's grandfather.) It is the story of Fred Lewis Batcheller who was born in 1872 and died in 1964.

The following is excerpted from the 129 page handwritten story as it tells about the Milestone on Boston Rd from page 29.

The milestone, "the finest on the road", dates back historically to 1771 when Benjamin Woodbury implanted it for purposes of prestige at his tavern. The story goes that when Benjamin Franklin, the Postmaster General of the U.S. personally surveyed this so-called post road, the "measured mile" was marked about fifty feet west of the tavern and on the opposite side of the highway. Upon request, Mr. Franklin gave Mr. Woodbury permission to set this austere monument some distance from the official marker. So we are not exactly "48 miles to Boston" - we are a bit short of it.

Benjamin Franklin, according to the History of Sutton (volume II on page 172), spent the night in Sutton just down the street from the Woodbury Tavern at what is now the 3rd house to the west of the Sutton Elementary / Early Learning Center on the same side of the road. This story was also related by Fred L. Batcheller.

It seems Benjamin Franklin spent the night at this farm on his stay here and the family gave him a fine, turkey supper, lodging and breakfast.

cont...

As he was to continue on his journey, he asked what his bill was for the good service. "There is no bill. It has been a great pleasure, Mr. Franklin, a great pleasure, and come again." The Postmaster General was so overcome; his only answer was "Well! Well! You are a most beautiful lady! May I kiss your hand?" As he walked away, he commented, "This event caps my whole work. I never in my life got so much for so little expense. Thank you and good-bye!"

Materials from Ben MacLaren were donated to the Historical Society by his family in June of 2016. Among his things is a book written in 1900 by Alice Morse Earle titled *Stage-Coach & Tavern Days*. In Chapter XVI on page 351 I found the following: Another [milestone] is in Sutton. It is five feet high and nearly three feet wide. It is marked "48 mls. to Boston. B.W. "The letters B.W. stand for Bartholomew Woodbury, a genial tavern-keeper of Sutton. It shows a custom which obtained at that date. It was deemed most advantageous to a tavern to have a milestone in front of it. Possibly the tale of the stone shown in its lettering urged wayworn travellers to halt and rest within the welcoming door. Bartholomew Woodbury's Tavern was a few rods from the spot marked for the stone, but the government permitted him to set this stone by his door side, at his own expense, beside the great horse-block. Tavern-keeper and tavern are gone, and the old road sees few travellers. Occasionally some passer-by, inquisitive like myself of the presence of the old stone, will halt as did the traveller of old, and put away the curtain of vines, and read the lettering of this gravestone of the old Woodburny Tavern. On page 169 of Volume II in the Sutton Town History, Phyllis Batcheller MacLaren relates that the Woodbury Tavern owner "promised, that if the marker were placed in front of his tavern, he would have set up a fine granite stone, superior to the one originally used. His offer was accepted. Hence the initials, B.W. near the base of the milestone."

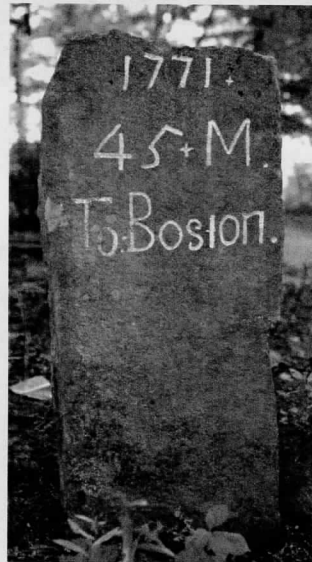
Fortunately, Sutton has four mile markers that exist, but the Milestone Farm marker is the most impressive and is no longer hidden in vines, but stands as a proud remnant of the importance of Boston Road in years past. It's the most imposing, probably because Bartholomew Woodbury paid for it himself.

On page 353 of the same chapter is information on Franklin. When Benjamin Franklin was Postmaster-general, he set an indelible postmark in many ways on the history of our country; and many mementos of him still exist. Among them are the old milestones set under his supervision. He transacted this apparently prosaic business with that picturesque originality which he brought to all his doings and which renders to every detail of his life an interest which cannot be exceeded and scarcely equaled by the events recorded of any other figure in history.

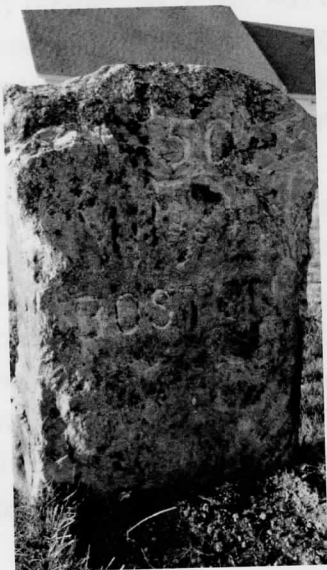
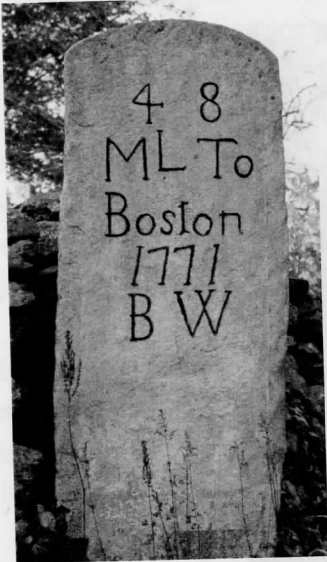
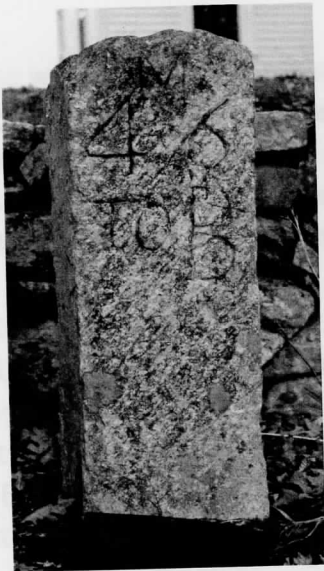
He drove over the roads which were to be marked by milestones, seated in a comfortable chaise, of his own planning, and followed by a gang of men, and heavy carts laden with the milestones. Attached to the chaise was a machine of his invention which registered by the revolution of the wheels the number of miles the chaise passed over. At each mile he halted, and a stone was dropped with was afterward set. The King's Highway, the old Pequot Trail, was thus marked and set. A few of these milestones between Boston and Philadelphia are still standing, one in New London, another at Stratford, and are glanced at carelessly by the hundreds of thousands who glide swiftly past on wheels bearing more accurate cyclometers than that of Franklin.

There are four historic mile markers remaining in existence in Sutton. The descriptions and locations of these mile markers, and their related photographs are provided to assist in finding and viewing these historic treasures.

1. **45 Mile Marker, Boston Rd:** the mile marker is located approximately a quarter mile east from the Route 146 and Boston Rd intersection, on the right side of Boston Rd.
2. **46 Mile Marker, Burbank Rd:** the mile marker is located at the intersection of Boston Rd and Burbank Rd, on the right side traveling west on Boston Rd.
3. **48 Mile Marker, Boston Rd:** the mile marker is located approximately a quarter mile west from the Hutchinson Rd and Boston Rd intersection, on the right side of Boston Rd.
4. **50 Mile Marker, Central Turnpike:** the mile marker is located approximately a quarter mile west from the West Sutton Rd and Central Turnpike intersection, on the right side of Central Turnpike.



*continued on next page*



## SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

The Historical Society wishes to acknowledge Marian King, Norm Storey and Johanne Walker for their outstanding devotion, long term service and major contributions in making the Historical Society a successful organization.

**Marian King** is truly an invaluable and exemplary member of the Historical Society as through the years she undertook many critical and important functions and was instrumental in developing and driving the success of the Society. Marian along with her parents Donald and Elizabeth were founding members of the Historical Society and we are forever indebted to them for their foresight and interest in establishing and ensuring the growth of the Society with the main goal to "preserve our historical inheritance for future generations". Marian acted as the long term Treasurer for the Historical Society and some of her diverse responsibilities were maintaining and archiving all saving and checking bank accounts, payment of utility bills and insurance policies, tracking all related expenses, annual registration of income tax forms and non-profit tax exempt certifications, receipt and tracking of membership dues and donations, and she coordinated the preparation, printing and distribution of the Society newsletters. Marian also developed and maintains the Historical Society's Facebook website. During the restoration of the Eight Lots Schoolhouse she properly collected, stored and cataloged the internal exhibits which are currently on display in the schoolhouse as well as taking and posting photographs during the different stages of the restoration activities. We all recognize and deeply appreciate Marian's dedicated and distinguished service.

Marian and her husband Norm Storey are retiring and will soon be relocating from Sutton as they pursue their next endeavors.

**Norm Storey** is a long time active and participating member of the Historical Society, and most recently served on the Board of Directors. In 2012 he was one of the original group members that inspected and evaluated the Eight Lots Schoolhouse, and helped the team consult with experts, develop plans and initiate the major restoration activities. Through his unselfish commitment and many hours of hard work including donation of equipment and materials, Norm was one of six individuals who received the Outstanding Volunteer award in recognition for his dedication and devotion in the full restoration and successful preservation of the Eight Lots Schoolhouse.

**Johanne Walker** is a long term and outstanding member of the Historical Society and has served as the Society's Historian for 9 years. We are in deep gratitude for her countless hours of faithful and valuable service as she extensively researched and created historical archives covering all important matters pertaining to Sutton. Johanne would perform a comprehensive review of all local print media newspapers and bulletins such as the daily Worcester Telegram & Gazette, the weekly Millbury-Sutton Chronicle and the Uxbridge Times. She would seek articles published on all general information and local news about the town, businesses, special events, obituaries and school/student news. Since most of the past and current articles/publications were not available in full electronic format Johanne would painstakingly cut out each article and create and compile the hard copy information in binders and properly cataloging and identifying the contents of the binders and the reporting intervals covered. We believe the archives created by Johanne maybe the only

consolidated repository of information in town. Recently Johanne has respectfully informed the Historical Society requesting her historian function and responsibilities be reassigned and handled by another interested society member. Thank you Johanne for all that you have done in providing an important service to the society.

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Please note the annual membership fees are due by February 2017. The fees collected are important funds to help sustain payments of related insurances, utility bills and ancillary bills, the mailing of the news bulletin and various activities. Please help support our Historical Society and use the attached Membership Form in this bulletin. Thank you.

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## **VOLUNTEER...**

WE WELCOME ALL VOLUNTEER HELP. IF YOU HAVE A SPECIAL TALENT, SKILL OR A TRADE, PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER OR WHAT YOUR AREA OF INTEREST IS. PLEASE CONTACT BRIAN STEVENSON AT [SUTTONBUZZ@GMAIL.COM](mailto:SUTTONBUZZ@GMAIL.COM) OR 508-865-2122 OR DAVE PIZZI AT [DAVEPZ@CHARTER.NET](mailto:DAVEPZ@CHARTER.NET) OR 508-865-5070.

THANK YOU.

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**SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP FORM**  
Annual Membership Fee is due February 2017

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15.00 Individual Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25.00 Family Fee (including children under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

Sutton Historical Society Inc.

4 Uxbridge Road

Sutton, MA 01590

The Sutton Historical Society is a nonprofit corporation, all donations are tax deductible

**SPECIAL ORDERS**

\_\_\_ Historical Society Stoneware Mug, \$20 plus \$5 S&H

\_\_\_ 1715 Original Sutton Map (17" x 22"), \$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

\_\_\_ 1795 Sutton Map (18" x 22"), \$20 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

\_\_\_ 1850 Sutton Houses 1700 - 1850 Map (16" X 22"), \$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

\_\_\_ 1870 Sutton Map (17" x 22"), \$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

**New Items**

\_\_\_ Original 30 Sutton Lots superimposed on current town map (11" X 23"),  
\$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

\_\_\_ Original Sutton Land Owners by Name and Location (13" X 22"),  
\$10 plus \$7 mailing tube & postage

Mail payment to:

Sutton Historical Society Inc.

4 Uxbridge Road

Sutton, MA 01590

Note: Sutton maps are on display and can also be purchased at the Sutton Public Library

Please contact Dave Pizzi at [davepz@charter.net](mailto:davepz@charter.net) or 508-865-5070 with any questions

SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
4 UXBRIDGE ROAD  
SUTTON, MA 01590

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

December 6 6:30PM Annual Christmas Pot Luck Supper First Congregational Church

As always, anyone interested is welcome to join us. Upcoming meetings are listed in The Millbury-Sutton Chronicle, Towns section of the Worcester Telegram, The Uxbridge Times and our Facebook page Sutton Historical Society Inc. A full Calendar of Events for 2017 will be provided in the next bulletin.