

Concord Scenic Roads

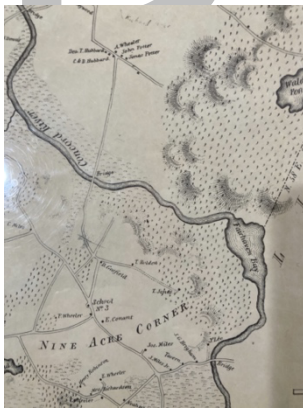
Garfield Road

Photos from December, 2021

Overview

After 1830 and before 1852, Garfield Road materialized as an extended farm track that originated at Daniel Garfield's home near Sudbury Road, then called Corner Road. The Garfield family lived at the corner of this road in a house that was later relocated. The original cart track extended to a farm owned by Silas Holden. Garfield Road went much farther southeast to connect to what is now Route 117 (then Fitchburg Turnpike) next to Lee's Bridge. The new road connected farms to Concord Center via Sudbury Road with the bridge across the Sudbury River (then Concord River) and shortened access to Lincoln, Sudbury and points west after the Fitchburg Turnpike was put through. In the 1920s the Thomas Mott Shaw estate transformed much of the land along the Sudbury River side of Garfield Road from farmland to residences. The County Commissioners defined the road's final alignment in 1916.

A series of stone walls of different types and increasingly recent historic periods reinforce the mile-long continuity of what remains a country road. Two series of concrete guardrail posts mark the transition from horse-drawn wagons and carriages to automobiles. The undulating topography of Garfield Road includes valleys and overlooks that provide constantly changing views and naturally reduce drivers' speed. The south side of Garfield Road is largely wooded and has three entrances into a network of trails managed by Concord Land Conservation Trust. Older houses are generally set back from the road and typically above or below its elevation. Newer houses cluster near the connection to Sudbury Road and Seven Sisters Road, then Garfield Road becomes increasingly natural as it passes both ends of Conantum's Valley Road loop. As the road approaches Route 117 views that are channeled by mature deciduous forest suddenly open across cultivated farm land and into the vast wetland of Sudbury Meadows at the river.



The 1830 map at left shows the origin of Garfield Road as a farm track.

The 1852 Town Survey on the right shows the extension to create Garfield Road with connection to the Fitchburg Turnpike at Lee's Bridge. A tavern, a blacksmith and other uses grew up at the new intersection.



Possibly Daniel Garfield at home with farm buildings. Garfield descended from the same ancestor as President Garfield and moved to the corner of this road when he married Polly Binney, cousin of the Hosmer sisters who lived nearby, one as wife of Silas Holden farther along its earliest route. Their substantial farmhouse at 23 Garfield Road was recorded in MACRIS in 1992 prior to demolition.



Stone foundation remnant between Garfield Road and later Daniel Garfield House.



Double stone walls along passage from Sudbury Road continue to accentuate views along Garfield Road and emphasize the hills and valleys of its glacial topography.

The roadway is built up considerably at some valleys, presumably in the early 20th century.



1905 Frederick Dumaine house by Almy & Howe (left) and (right) house by Thomas Mott Shaw, of the architecture firm for Colonial Williamsburg.

These homes are set into two separate valleys along Garfield Road.



Stone walls construction vary as their association with successive land uses changes. The large stones in single stone walls may be what was left behind when more easily handled, smaller stones were removed from farm walls to build new walls for houses in the 20th century.



Road edges without walls occur increasingly as Garfield Road moves south and east. The south side is more wooded and contains three entrances to the CLCT trail network.

One trailhead leading into Ferguson Wood is at the Sudbury Road end. A second, more central location is at a hill below the east end of Valley Road. The trailhead pictured to the left is at Thornton Woods where CLCT has unpaved parking spaces.



Long lengths of later wall appear along the north side of Garfield Road as it descends toward Route 117.

Two zones of precast concrete guardrail posts remain and define the road. The first illustrated on the left below is at the built-up section of roadway as it approaches the long Thomas Mott Shaw estate driveway. The second on the right below is along the farmland that extends south to Route 117.



Farmland views westward across fields to Sudbury Road as it approaches Nine Acre Corner with wooded hillside that continues around to the CLCT trail network.

The view below is of Sudbury Meadows and the Sudbury River seen from Garfield Road as it approaches Route 117. Somewhat wild and certainly scenic and an expansive contrast to the channeled views along Garfield Road.



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Compiled by Henry Moss, December 31, 2021

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