

Monument Street

Monument Street runs for approximately 3.2 miles as a two-lane road from Monument Square in Concord in the south to the Concord/Carlisle border in the north. Starting roughly at the Colonial Inn, which was first built in the 1700s, Monument Street runs roughly parallel to the Concord River, crossing it once just north of the Old North Bridge. Upon entering Carlisle, although the road's character remains unchanged, Carlisle calls it "River Road". Carlisle has designated River Road as a qualifying "Scenic Road".

For much of its entirety, Monument St and River Road are lined on both sides by stone walls and mature trees, behind which are numerous farms, fields, antique homes, and historical sites comprising, in some cases, the very bedrock of our national identity.

History:

Monument Street was originally a dead-end road that was extended over time. In the early 1700s it extended from the Old North Bridge as far as Punkatasset Hill, reaching the farms of Thomas Flint, brothers William and Nehemiah Hunt, Thomas Bateman, and Caleb Ball, being described only as an "old path."

In 1734, Samuel, Stephen, John, and Zachariah Blood along with Caleb Ball and Thomas Estabrook petitioned the Town to extend the road to the north. As reflected in the historical document below, the road was laid out and subsequently accepted by the Town in 1735, extending slightly beyond the current Town line and becoming known as "The Road to Blood's Farm" (the Town line at that time was north of its current location).

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(111)

A way or ways Layd out the thirteenth day of February. 1734 by us the subscribers a
 Committee from the Town of Concord from the Blood farm, to Concord of two rods wide
 beginning at a bound near James Bloods Dwelling house, and is described by marks on the
 Easterly and southerly side of said way, or ways the first mark is a black oak tree
 from thence to a white oak and thence to a white oak, from thence to a Red
 oak from thence to a walnut tree, at Capt Wilsons Easterly corner, then we
 begun at the southerly corner of Jonathan Bloods farm at a heap of stones
 and Layd out a two Rod way with marks on the easterly side, the first of which
 is a white oak tree marked from thence to a black oak marked thence to a black
 oak thence to a white oak thence to a white oak thence to a white oak
 and then to a white oak marked and thence to a black oak and thence to
 the afore said walnut tree at Capt Wilsons corner, then running two Rods wide
 on Capt Wilsons Land till it come to Gershom Healds westerly corner to a black oak
 thence to a white oak thence to a heap of stones near a Dwelling House belonging
 to Samuel Hunt (including said Hunt well in said way) from thence to a white oak
 from thence to a black oak then to a black oak, thence to a black oak, then to
 a black oak thence to a black oak then to a black oak thence to a black oak
 from thence to a pine tree thence to a white oak then to a white oak thence
 to a white oak thence to a black oak then running over the Dam of the Lower pond well
 or wigwam brook thence to a white oak from thence to a black oak then to a white
 oak, then to a pine tree marked from thence to a black oak thence to a white oak
 from thence to a white oak tree marked and into the old path and by the path now
 runs two Rods wide till it come to Gootan Road

at a General Town meeting of the respectable Inhabitants of
 Concord Held at the Town house on the fourth day of March
 1734 by a joynment from the third day of said month voted
 that the ways above described be accepted and recorded accordingly
 Attest Samuel Heywood Town
 Clerk

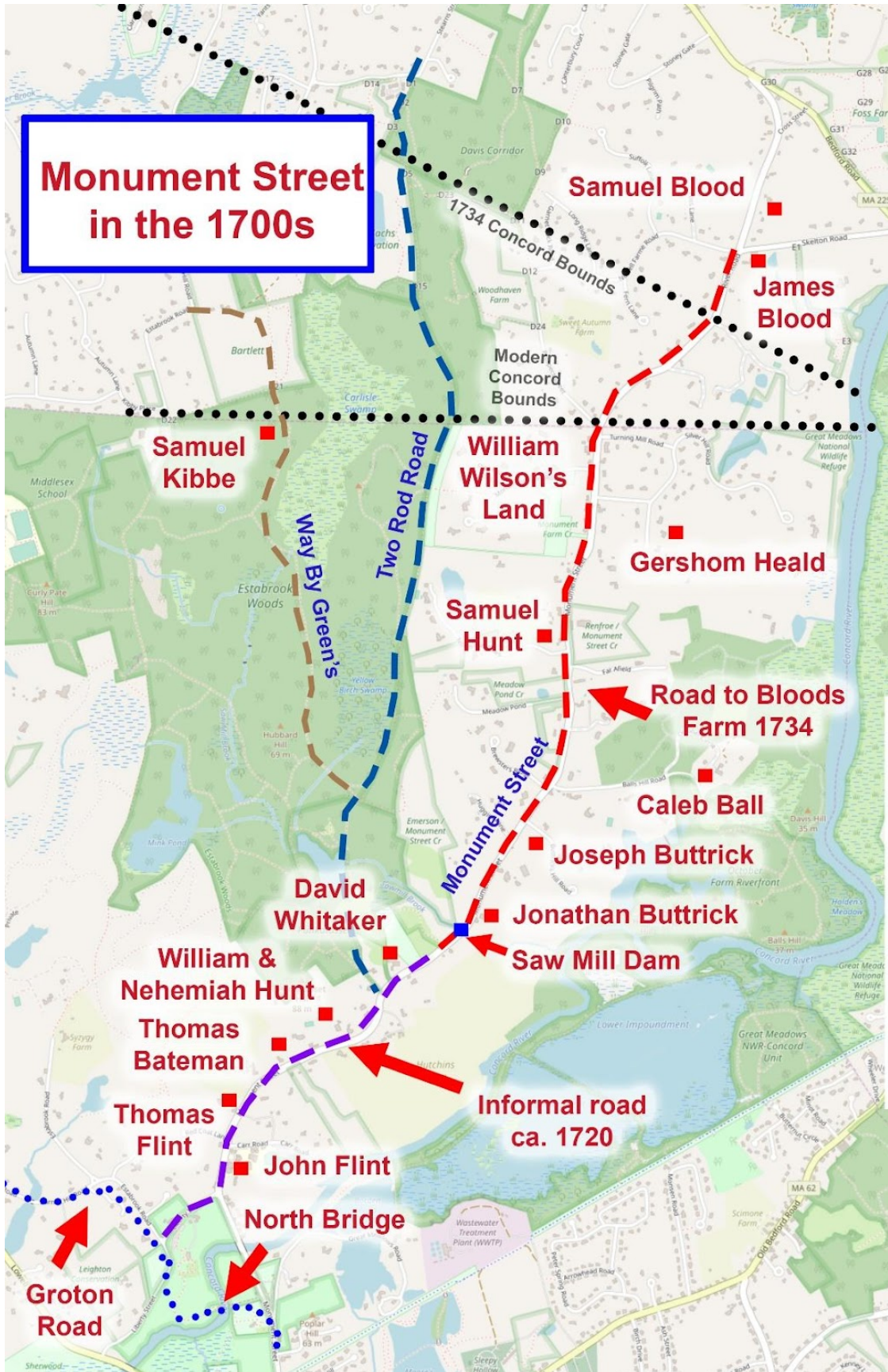
John Flint
 James Minnott Junr
 Samuel Newman

original
 upon file
 in 1734
 1734

When extended, the Road to Blood's Farm reached the farms of Jonathan Blood (on Prospect Street), John Blood, Samuel Hunt, Gershom Heald and the unimproved lands of William Wilson. Wilson's land was later owned by the Lawrence family and now is the location of the Monument Farm Road development. See the attached map:

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In addition to bridging the Concord River just past the Old North Bridge, Monument Street also crosses the Sawmill or Wigwam Brook to the north (see map). This crossing is over a dam, known as “Buttrick’s Dam” which has been raised over time. That dam originally impounded water that was used to power a sawmill on the downstream side of the dam, operated by the Buttrick family. Town records show that in 1804 the dam was operated by Jonathan (later Abel) Buttrick who lived in the small house just north of the dam on the east side of the road (still standing), and that the Town agreed to raise the height of the dam. The ancient stonework of the dam at its original height can be seen on the downstream side of the dam. Today the impoundment pond is drained by an open culvert at the base of the dam, and the old pond is invisible due to overgrowth.

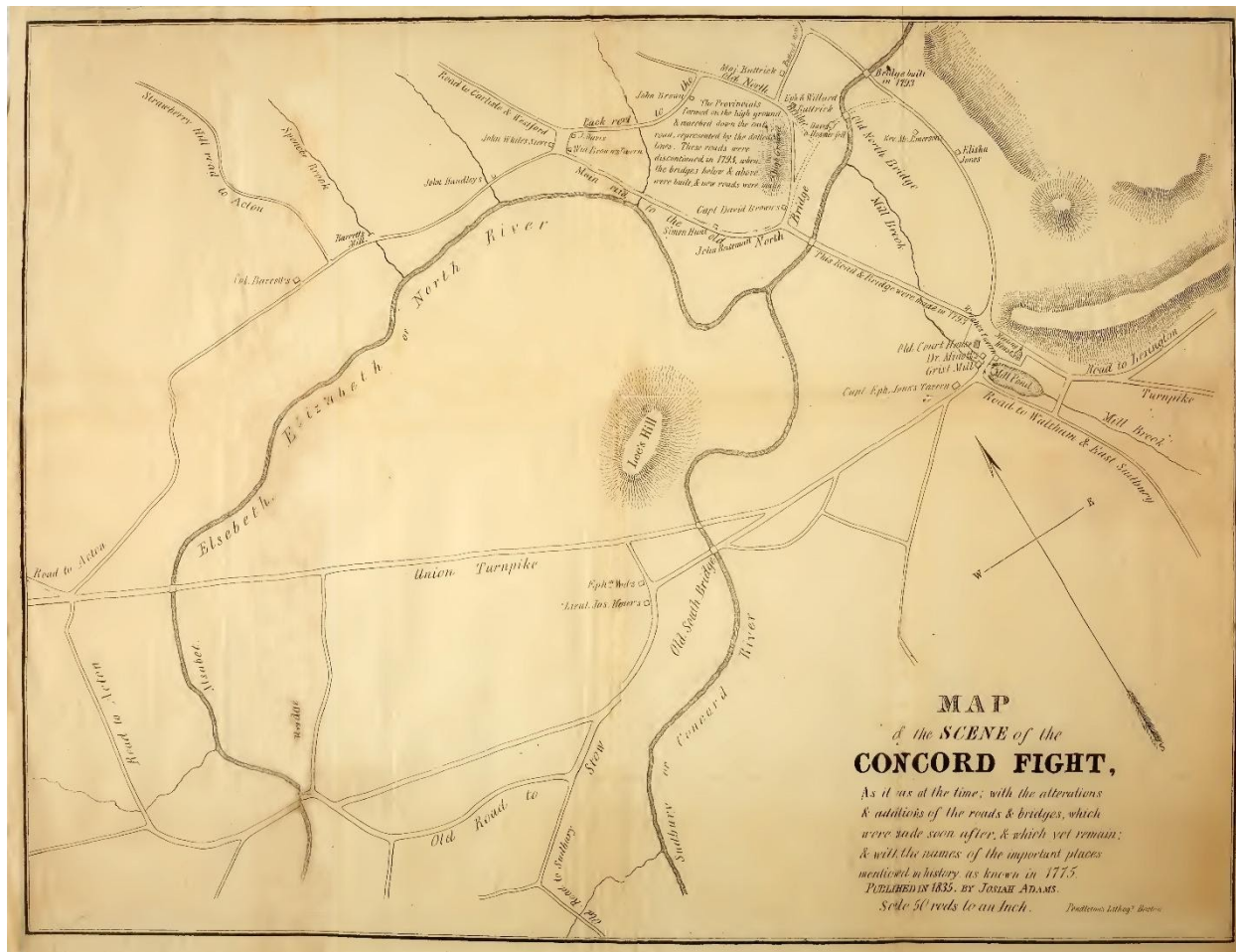
In 1780, some residents of the north of Concord, along with residents of Chelmsford, Billerica, and Acton, petitioned the General Court for a new district of Acton, known as Carlisle. The northernmost reaches of Concord became part of this new district, which the Legislature eventually made into a Town. A map associated with that new district labeled what is now Monument Street as “Road to Concord Meeting House.” By 1780, the road was no longer known as the Road to Blood’s Farm, but instead as the “Road by John Lawrence’s house to Carlisle”

Around 1790 the causeway to Bedford was created and what is now Monument Street was extended through Blood’s farms within Carlisle to reach the road crossing that bridge, then known in Carlisle as “the way to Bedford” and today as Route 4. The extension of Monument Street, now known as River Road, is first depicted on the Carleton Map of 1801.

In 1793 the roads crossing the Concord River were reconfigured. The Old North Bridge experienced continuing failures, and the Town petitioned the Legislature for a new bridge. In replacement of the North Bridge, two new bridges were created: one on the Lowell Road causeway, known as the Red Bridge, and a second extending from the Town Center directly to the Road to Carlisle, through the land of the Flint family and known today as Flint’s Bridge. This reconfiguration, which occurred in 1793, was depicted in the 1825 historic map of Josiah Adams:

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With the addition of Flint's Bridge, the road today known as Monument Street was completed. It is seen clearly on the Map of 1850, among others.

Historical locations viewed along Monument Street from behind its stone walls and towering mature sycamores and oaks include the Old North Bridge and the Old Manse, among others. The street was home to major colonial figures such as Major John Buttrick and numerous of his relatives. Numerous records show that, in the 1800s, various sites on Monument Street were significant in the journeys of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Monument Street Today:

Monument Street is often listed as among the most beautiful and scenic in the Boston area. (See Boston Globe: "20 Best Streets in Boston and Beyond", 5/4/12 "[P]rivate and quiet Monument Street feels like another world.... Lower Monument's antiques and Victorians feature incredible architectural detail; as you go farther up the street you'll find more and more space, with lots of up to 6 acres abutting conservation land."

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Monument Street is included in virtually every bike route list as a “must do” ride for its winding, rolling scenery. See, e.g., Paul Thomas, “The Best Bike Rides in New England” (1990).

The following is a series of photos and descriptions of various locations on Monument Street taken on Sunday, December 5, 2021.

1. The first photo is taken at the northernmost point on Monument St. It shows the Concord/Carlisle border sign, the stone walls lining the eastern side of the road, a mature Sycamore tree measuring over 16 ft in diameter, and the obelisk from 1903 indicating the town line. The stone walls are approximately 2.5 - 3 ft in height.



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The second photo from this location shows the eastern side of Monument Street looking along the stone walls south into Concord.



2. Moving down the street a few hundred yards, these next photos are taken at #1696 Monument Street and show the Jonas Brown Memorial and Home. The inscription reads "Wounded at the North Bridge, Bleeding, chased the enemy for 9 miles".

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The next photo is taken from the same spot but looking west thru the mature trees lining Monument Street into the expansive pasture at Monument Farm.

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3. This next shot is a photo at 1640 Monument Street, which for years was the residence of author and historian Doris Kearns and Richard Goodwin.



4. Continuing south along Monument Street, this next shot is taken at #1586 Monument Street, looking north on the east side, showing an ancient oak and the stone walls that line the road and the natural view from the road.

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6. Next is one of the many views of the fields at Water's Edge Farm located at #1455 Monument Street. Water's Edge Farm was formerly the estate of Henry Loughlin who ran the publishing house Houghton Mifflin and published the books of Winston Churchill.



And here we have a photo of the view across from the Farm, looking west across Monument Street, at the stone walls lining the western side and the vistas and pasture beyond.

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7. Next is the view from #1373 Monument Street, looking south along the road, viewing the stone walls, old oak trees, and the winding scenic nature of the road.



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8. As we continue south on Monument Street we come to Buttrick's Farm. Originally built in 1751 by members of the Buttrick Family. In 1775, Major John Buttrick of the family led the militia companies in the fight at the North Bridge and is believed to have issued the famous order to return the volley fired by the British soldiers. From the photos you can see the stone walls and mature trees continuing to line Monument Street on both east and west sides, protecting and presenting the beautiful views of the farm, the fields and graceful homes.



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11. The next photos are of #1024 Monument Street, where you can see the old barn, farmhouse, water well, and the fields beyond leading all the way down to the Concord River.



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12. At its lowest point, Monument Street crosses sparkling Sawmill Brook which runs through a broad field and ultimately down to the river. This is the view east from the road:



13. Then, as we begin the climb up Monument Street towards Punkatasset, you can see the old stone walls on both sides of the street and extended views of the fields to the west. This photo shows the open view past the walls into those fields from the road.



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14. At the top of the Hill, below the summit of Punkatasset, is historic Hutchins Farm and the open views of their fields to the east of the road, extending all the way to the River. Punkatasset Hill has been home to farmers for generations. Believed to have been the hill where the revolutionary Minute Men gathered to wait for the British Red Coats before the battle of Concord, the land was designated as farmland on maps as early as 1775. Hutchins Farm's history on this land begins in 1895 when Charles Hutchins, a retiring minister from Medford, Massachusetts, purchased the farm. <https://www.hutchinsfarm.com/history/> The current farm is one of the oldest and largest certified organic vegetable and fruit operations in Massachusetts.

Here are the views from Monument Street of the fields and of the stone walls along the east side of the road heading south:



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15. To the south of Punkatasset along Monument Street, behind the continuing border of stone walls, lies Pippin Tree Farm. It is well-documented that Thoreau often wandered the woods behind the Farm. Here is a view of the fields at Pippin Farm from Monument Street:



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16. Continuing south on Monument Street, we cross Liberty Street and approach the National Historic Battleground property. Here are photos of the fields protected behind the stone walls and mature trees lining the west side of the street:



17. Perhaps there is no more historic view in all of the US than the next photo taken from the west side of Monument Street:



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18. Next is a photo of the stone walls and trees that protect that view of the North Bridge and which continue to line Monument Street on each side as it makes its way past the park and towards town.



19. There are numerous historical buildings all along both sides of the road from the park all the way into town, including, of course, the Old Manse, where each of Hawthorne and Emerson lived for periods and authored landmark works, and the Robbins House, built (c.1800s) for the children of slavery survivor and Revolutionary War veteran Caesar Robbins. In addition, the Gothic/Greek Revival "Fifield Fay House" built in 1825 is at #93 Monument Street, and "The Francis Gourgass House" is at #98 Monument Street, built in 1826. #50 Monument Street is known as the "Bartlett-Emerson House" and was built between 1800 and 1820. And this brings us to the termination of Monument Street, at the historic Colonial Inn.