

## OLD MARLBOROUGH ROAD

Old Marlborough Road, or as it was known in Colonial times, "The Old Marlborough and Concord Road", is one of the older roads in the Town of Maynard. As the name implies, it is a road that is not entirely confined within the boundaries of the Town of Maynard.

Let us first look into the reason for the construction of the road. Travellers between the towns of Concord and Marlborough in colonial times used the Boston Post Road (U.S. Route 20) from Sudbury to Marlborough. A more direct route was desired by these early travellers. A direct highway from Concord to Marlborough was proposed.

In order to have a new road constructed, a petition must be presented to the Court of Sessions. The Court of Sessions Records of 1759 state that a petition was brought forth in 1758 to build a road from Concord to Marlborough. A committee met in Concord on the first Tuesday of September 1758 to lay out a highway from Concord to begin at the country road at the house of Oliver Wood in Concord and to run through a part of Sudbury, a part of Stow to the county road in Marlborough, that is the road to Worcester. The Court of Sessions gave their approval at their meeting in 1759 and laid out the way the road would take.

At a town meeting in Sudbury on March 5, 1759, Major Joseph Curtis was chosen to report to the committee on the laying out of the road and he was paid 50 shillings by the town of Sudbury as his salary.

In 1760 Colonel John Noyes, Deacon Josiah Haynes and Ezra Graves were chosen to meet with the people whose land was taken for

the laying out of the road and settling with them so that all would be justly paid for their land. At a town meeting on May 11, 1760 the town of Sudbury accepted the judgement of this three man committee that had met with the landowners and declared that all the inhabitants of the town of Sudbury should be assessed to pay for the cost of the land taking.

At a Sudbury town meeting on October 20, 1760 the town voted to pay Major John Curtis, Deacon Josiah Haynes and Extra Graves for their services in settling the claims for land taking with the landowners. Colonel John Noyes was not given compensation for his services. As he was town moderator this duty fell under his office as moderator.

Old Marlborough Road has it's start in Concord from Old Road to Nine Acre Corner, just across from the entrance to the Emerson Hospital. It proceeds on its westerly course to the Sudbury line where the name changes in Sudbury to Powers Road. When Powers Road enters North Road, our road follows North Road, or as it was known at that time, "The Fitchburg Turnpike" to the Maynard town line. Prior to the incorporation of the Town of Maynard on April 19, 1871 this portion was part of Sudbury. Shortly after entering the Town of Maynard our road leaves the "Fitchburg Turnpike" now known in Maynard as "The Great Road" and once again receives it's original name of Old Marlborough Road. At this intersection of Old Marlborough Road and Great Road a blacksmith's shop was run by Abijah Brigham from 1770 until 1880.

Old Marlborough Road joins Parker Street in its journey westward. At this intersection a school was built. At a town meeting in Sudbury in 1779, \$157.50 was voted to build a school in the

North West District. It was used there for many years and then moved to the crossroads of Parker Street and Great Road and used there until 1881 (known as the Turnpike School) when it was moved to Acton Street to be used as a dwelling house. Many prominent figures of early Maynard received their education in this school.

Old Marlborough Road follows Parker Street for a short distance and then leaves it to pass close by Vose Pond. It then crosses Puffer Road, or as it was known then "New Lancaster Road". New Lancaster Road was a stage coach route from Boston to Lancaster as was Old Marlborough Road a stage route between Concord and Marlborough. Close by this intersection was located Rice Tavern. Rice Tavern was used between 1700 and 1815 as a meeting place for all activities as well as a stop for travellers on the stage coach routes.

After passing Puffer Road, Old Marlborough Road enters the Federal Military Reservation. This reservation was developed by the United States government in 1942 as an Ammunition Storage Depot and has been closed to all unauthorized personnel since that time. The road passes out of Maynard, through Stow and into Marlborough while in the Federal Reservation. On leaving the military area the road continues on under the name of Concord Road until it joins the Boston Post Road in Marlborough. On a map of 1794 it was referred to as "The Marlberry Road".

On April 19, 1775 the Sudbury Minutemen travelled down Old Marlborough Road to join in the battle at Concord. With them was Deacon Josiah Haynes who was to fall in battle <sup>later</sup> that day.

As Old Marlborough Road is located in that portion of Maynard that was once part of Sudbury it was assumed that all roads were accepted by Maynard on its incorporation in 1871. In 1960 there

was some doubt as whether Old Marlborough Road was accepted when the town was incorporated. On examining the old records of Sudbury we find that on November 9, 1758 Major Joseph Curtis, Colonel John Noyes, Deacon Josiah Haynes and Ezra Graves signed a paper with the list of names of the people who had land taken from them in the laying out of the road and this was received and accepted by the Court of Sessions and recorded to that end that Old Marlborough Road was to be known and used as a public highway. With this evidence the Town of Maynard accepted Old Marlborough Road at its town meeting in 1961, two hundred and three years after it was laid out.

We now see that Old Marlborough Road's pleasant rural county road look belie its past. It has witnessed a great deal of history in its lifetime, both Maynard's and Our Country's.

Elmer W. Matson