

PARKER'S REVENGE NARRATIVE REPORT

PHASE I



Figure 1 Artist Don Troiani's depiction of the Parker's Revenge Battle (with permission of the artist).

Prepared for:
Robert Morris and the Friends of the Minute Man National Park

Submitted by:
Meg Watters
Visual Environment Solutions, LLC

February 2014

CONTENTS

Figures	4
Acknowledgements	5
Introduction to the Parker’s Revenge Project	6
Parker’s Revenge Project Phase Overview	7
Project Objectives & Research Questions	7
Phase I: Desk based assessment of documents and related resources.....	8
Phase II: Design and Development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) Project	8
Phase III: Field Investigations and Project Synthesis	8
Parker’s Revenge Project Objective and Methodology	9
KOCOA	9
Archaeological Investigations	9
Area of Interest (AOI)	10
The Parker’s Revenge Battle.....	12
Lead Up to “Parker’s Revenge”	14
Location of “Parker’s Revenge” Skirmish.....	15
Site Taphonomy.....	16
Archaeological Background	22
Phase I Conclusions and Phase II & III Overview	27
Phase II.....	27
GIS.....	27
Field Survey.....	27
Archaeological Investigations	28
Military Tactics Field Simulation (MTFS).....	28
Metal Detecting Survey	28
Final Deliverables.....	28
Phase III.....	29

Artifact Analysis	29
Parker’s Revenge Skirmish Analysis.....	29
Final Deliverables.....	29
References	30
Appendix 1: KOCOA Military Terrian Analysis	34
Appendix 2: Military Tactics.....	38

FIGURES

Figure 1 Artist Don Troiani's depiction of the Parker's Revenge Battle (with permission of the artist).	1
Figure 2 Granite outcropping and location of Parker's Revenge Battle Wayside.....	6
Figure 3 Parker's Revenge Project Area of Interest.	11
Figure 4 Archeological Sensitivity Map (Adapted from Herbster 2005 GIS files.)	12
Figure 5 Parker's Revenge wayside, Minuteman National Historical Park. (Image courtesy of NPS, Minute Man NHP.).....	13
Figure 6 Parker's Revenge skirmish location (in red) as currently marked (yellow star) in the Minute Man National Historical Park.....	13
Figure 7 Adapted from Malcolm 1985, Figure 2. 1775 historic landscape of Nelson Road and Marrett Street. Hand edited by Brian Donahue.	16
Figure 8 View west on Nelson Road and Battle Road (National Register Documentation Photos (NRDP, 2006).	17
Figure 9 Map of buildings in the AOI in the 1960s (red) and today (blue). (Adapted from image courtesy of NPS, Minute Man NHP.).....	18
Figure 10 Map of the Battle Road Unit showing (red) part that was surveyed in 1738. Based on 1738 road bounds survey and width of right-of-way depicted on the 1907 Middlesex County Map "Plan of a Portion of Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, as ordered by the County Commissioners." (OCLP)(Adapted from Dietrich-Smith 2005, Figure 15).....	18
Figure 11 Map of Lincoln surveyed by Stephen Hosmer in April 1758, copied by Samuel Hoar in 1772. The "Nelson Bridge" is identified by the gold star .(Adapted from Towle and MacMahon 1986, Figure 10.4 Courtesy of Lincoln Historical Room, Lincoln Public Library.)	20
Figure 12 Map of the Nelson Road area as drawn by George Nelson in 1902. (Adapted from Towle and MacMahon 1986, Figure 10.8 Courtesy of Lincoln Historical Room, Lincoln Public Library.)	21
Figure 13 Ronsheim depiction of the 1779 quitclaim land division between Thomas Nelson Jr. and his sister Tabitha Nelson (1968 Tabitha Nelson Houselot, p. 15).	22
Figure 14 Archaeological 1775 sensitivity map for project area of interest. (Adapted from PAL [Herbster 2005] GIS.)	23
Figure 15 Plan of Trenches 9 & 10, showing features 1 & 2 from Snow's excavations (1060). (Adapted from Towle and MacMahon 1986, Figure 9.3.)	25
Figure 16 The Nelson-Hastings House, Tabitha Nelson's house is on the left side of the structure. (Towle and MacMahon 1986. Figure 10.6. MIMA 63-193; original at SPNEA, Boston.).....	26

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Parker's Revenge Project is a collaborative effort of project partners working toward the common goal of better defining the events of the Parker's Revenge skirmish that took place at the junction of Nelson Road and Marrett Street along historic Battle Road in the Minute Man National Historical Park, Lexington, MA.

Bob Morris and the Friends of Minute Man National Park.

Nancy Nelson, Lou Sideris, Jim Hollister, Terrie Wallace, and Leslie Obleschuk from the Minute Man National Historical Park.

Jim Kendrick, Joel Dukes, Bill Griswald, Jim Harmon, and Gail Frace from the National Park Service Northwest Regional office based at the Boott Museum in Lowell.

Bill Poole and Bill Rose on behalf of the Lexington Minute Men.

Additional thanks go to park researchers that have provided information and insight to the activities in this area including Holly Herbster (PAL), Nigel Shaw (NPS GIS specialist), Barbara Donahue (HAFB research), and Brian Donahue.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARKER'S REVENGE PROJECT

This document is intended to provide information on the organization of the Parker's Revenge Project, an overview of the research conducted as part of the first phase of investigations, and an outline of the proposed work for the second and third phases of the project.

Interest in the Parker's Revenge skirmish during the first day of the Revolutionary War 19 April 1775, has been a long time focus of the Minute Man National Historical Park, the NPS Northeast Region Archaeology Program (NRAP), and citizen support organizations such as the Lexington Minute Men, Lincoln Minute Men, and the Friends of the Minute Man National Historical Park. Beginning in 2011, these various groups began outlining a formal project that would study the Parker's Revenge skirmish. Where did Parker's company wait for the approach of the British column? and where exactly was that first opening volley? The modern day wayside marking the location of Parker's Revenge (Fig 2) is placed at a granite outcropping on historic Battle Road based upon analysis of historic documents. Through a combination of approaches including examination of historic documentation, examination of the historic 1775 landscape, analysis of military tactics, and focused archaeological investigations we seek to securely establish the location where Captain Parker and his troops extracted their 'revenge' on the British regulars for their actions earlier in the day on the Lexington Common.



Figure 2 Granite outcropping and location of Parker's Revenge Battle Wayside.

A wealth of information exists that can provide insight to the events of this day and that can help better define the historic landscape of 1775 and the events that took place in what is now the Minute Man National Historical Park. Meg Watters initially contacted Bill Griswold¹ at the Boott Museum (NRAP) and discussed her new company Visual Environment Solutions, LLC and potential ways she might work with the NPS. Soon after this conversation, Watters and Jim Kendrick (NRAP) spoke about the Parker's Revenge Project that was waiting to begin. With a background in project management, archaeology, remote sensing & GIS, as well as landscape visualization and public outreach Watters provided a

¹ August 2013.

resource that could synthesize, analyze, and explore the potential of the Parker's Revenge Project in partnership with dedicated partners: Friends of the Minute Man National Historical Park, the Minute Man National Historical Park, the NPS NRAP, and the Lexington Minute Men.

PARKER'S REVENGE PROJECT PHASE OVERVIEW

The project outline, *Parker's Revenge Minute Man National Historical Park Archaeological Research Proposal* (Watters 2013, unpublished document) was submitted in October 2013 and stated project objectives, dividing the focus of the Parker's Revenge Project into three phases. Each project phase includes a series of tasks designed for comprehensive data integration, analysis, and interpretation. Due to the nature of this project, the amount of information (documents, etc.) and research questions developed will directly contribute to the time frame for completion of each phase. Any field work (GPS site feature mapping, geophysical surveys, and excavation) will be overseen by NRAP and MIMA. All results from these field activities will be integrated into the project GIS, used in the project analysis, and contribute to site interpretation.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objectives of the archaeological research for the Parker's Revenge project are to (1) Attempt to identify archaeological evidence that will determine the location of the Parker's Revenge skirmish, (2) learn more about battle tactics (extent, nature, duration) of the battle, and (3) to provide more accurate information for interpretation of the larger action of the running battle from Lexington to Concord (and back again) and its context to this site for park visitors.

The research questions for the project are:

1. Where did Captain Parker and his militia meet and fight the British Regulars in what is known today as the Parker's Revenge skirmish?
2. What evidence can the archaeological record (historic documents, historic landscape, material remains) provide to establish the location and actions of the Parker's Revenge skirmish?

The work completed and materials developed from this project will provide a valuable resource for park planning, preservation, and management (i.e. impact on park from climate, visitors, external development) and visitor experience.

The Parker's Revenge Project will implement and adapt the KOCOA system (defined below, p. 10) used by the NPS American Battlefield Protection Program as a central focus for project organization, data management, and interpretation.

The three project phases below outline the preliminary work plan for the Parker's Revenge Project. During the course of Phase I investigations, proposed adjustments to these phases and their specific tasks have been modified and are detailed in the final section of this report, Phase I Conclusions and Phase II & Phase III Overview.

PHASE I: DESK BASED ASSESSMENT OF DOCUMENTS AND RELATED RESOURCES

The first phase focuses on a review and synthesis of historical and contemporary documentation and information pertaining to the landscape, occupation, and the Parker's Revenge skirmish. The results of this phase include the:

1. Definition of the Area of Interest (AOI) for focused research efforts,
2. Development of Research Questions to focus research efforts,
3. Development of appendices containing historical resources, site features, maps etc. for use in subsequent phases of investigation.

PHASE II: DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) PROJECT

The second phase of the Parker's Revenge Project focuses on creating a multi-component GIS² for the AOI. The GIS project will combine spatial information including maps (historic survey, parcel, land use, etc.), aerial photographs (historic and contemporary), airborne LiDAR, and archaeological information (artifact information, historic features, etc.). In-field survey will be conducted with the goal to map existing landscape features to record present day site conditions. As part of this in-field survey we will seek to re-locate the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr.'s house foundations excavated by Snow (1969).³ The GIS will be designed to explore the evolution of the cultural landscape of the AOI from 1775 to today in order to better understand the potential of archaeological investigations.

Once the historic landscape of 1775 is accurately developed⁴, it will be used to assess potential military tactics and activity of the Parker's Revenge skirmish. A Military Tactics Event will be held during this phase of the project⁵. This event will take place in the park in the general Parker's Revenge area and will combine on-the-ground tactical analysis of the battle with military officers, park staff and military historians to discuss and document military tactics and strategies that may reflect the actions that took place as part of the Parker's Revenge Battle.

The results of the Military Tactics Event will be integrated into the project GIS with the goal of identifying areas of highest likelihood for containing potential battle-related artifacts. A final assessment of the GIS project and its predicted areas for investigation will be considered and project research questions refined to help develop the most effective strategy for Phase III site investigations.

PHASE III: FIELD INVESTIGATIONS AND PROJECT SYNTHESIS

The third phase of the Parker's Revenge Project focuses on (1) field investigations to attempt to identify and recover potential remaining battle-related artifacts, (2) integrate results from field based investigations into the project GIS in an attempt to better understand the events that took place in the

² The format and content of the Parker's Revenge GIS project will be designed and constructed following NPS Cultural Resources GIS standards.

³ This method for relocating and mapping this feature will be under guidance of NRAP. It may include limited excavation, shovel test pits, or soil auguring.

⁴ Including accurate representation of more contemporary impact on the landscape.

⁵ March or April 2014.

AOI, and (3) conclusions for better characterizing the Parker’s Revenge Battle and its location (Fig 2) on historic Battle Road.

In addition to the analysis and interpretation of project data to address project research questions, Phase three will also include recommendations for project interpretation and outreach. It is at this time that separate projects ((1) project interpretation for exhibit and public outreach material development and (2) site landscape maintenance, etc.) may develop in which materials from this project will provide a valuable resource. Possible future development of these materials and project scope should be considered during this final phase of the Parker’s Revenge Project.

PARKER’S REVENGE PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The main goal of this project is to identify the location of the Parker’s Revenge skirmish. The above outlined process for achieving this goal is evolving as the project advances. Research combines in-depth examination of existing documentation of the cultural landscape and historical events; the use of the KOCO system⁶ developed by military experts to analyze defining features, focusing on terrain and historic structures significant to the battle; GIS spatial analyses; and an integrated approach to archaeological investigations.

KOCO

The five categories used for characterizing a “defining feature” include key terrain, obstacles, cover and concealment, observation points, and avenues of approach and retreat. One of these five must be met for a feature to be classified as a “defining feature” with the relative importance of that defining feature dependent upon its significance to the ultimate success or failure of the troops in battle. Phase I has reviewed historic documentation that contributes information to the analysis of the 1775 terrain. A historic landscape model of the 1775 landscape in this area will be constructed using GIS to integrate historic and spatial data (maps, aerial photographs, LiDAR, potential battle-related artifact distribution) as well as additional evidence (tactical scenarios,) that will help characterize the landscape and events of the Parker’s Revenge skirmish that will be collected as part of the ongoing project research.

Integral to the landscape assessment are archaeological investigations and a proposed Military Tactics Field Simulation (MTFS)⁷. The MTFS intends to bring together military tactical experts with historical experts working with the park to analyze the Parker’s Revenge skirmish, on site in the park. Taking into consideration the 1775 landscape (and subsequent impact and changes through history) this group will discuss different military tactics and develop potential tactical scenarios for the skirmish.

The use of the KOCO system as an underlying method for project organization and management enables this project to follow established NPS American Battlefield Protection Program guidelines and provides valuable strategic approaches (and related terminology) to investigating the Parker’s Revenge “battlefield.”

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

⁶ See Appendix 1 for additional information on KOCO.

⁷ See final section Phase I Conclusions and Phase II & Phase III Overview.

Archaeological investigations for this project will combine a landscape feature survey (mapping what is currently visible on the landscape and examining areas that are mapped through historical documents), geophysical surveys, metal detecting, limited archaeological excavations⁸, and GIS predictive modelling to effectively reveal remaining cultural features (i.e. Tabitha Nelson/Thomas Nelson Sr.'s basement foundations and barn) and any artifacts that may relate to the battle of April 19, 1775.

While non-invasive survey methods and excavations can be effective for targeting and revealing pertinent information for research projects such as this one, the large scale physical impact on and subsequent land use of the Parker's Revenge Project area may have disturbed any physical evidence that relates to the battle on April 19, 1775.

AREA OF INTEREST (AOI)

The preliminary focus area, or area of interest (AOI) (Fig 3) for the Parker's Revenge project, is located at the bend in Battle Road at the intersection of Nelson Road and Marrett Street. This area is identified based on review of historic documentation, terrain (and historic impact), and research at the Hanscom Air Force Base (Donahue 2007; 2010) that suggests the potential existence of battle related artifacts. An estimated weaponry range of 200 yards⁹ has guided the radius of the AOI, approximately 200 yards, conforming to park boundaries.

⁸ Any excavations will be determined based on their direct contribution to providing information on the historic landscape and recovery of potential battle-related artifacts. The in-field survey excavations are research projects that will have budgets separate to the current quoted budget by Watters for the Parker's Revenge Project.

⁹ Provided by Bill Rose, Lexington Minute Men, see Appendix 2.



Figure 3 Parker's Revenge Project Area of Interest.¹⁰

While some of the area in the AOI may have been impacted by more recent development (Herbster 2005) (Figure 4), a thorough investigation of the area will provide a valuable resource for park management.

This project has a certain amount of flexibility in that with each new discovery, it is able to change its area of focus, thus scrutiny of all historic and contemporary documentation is key to the success of the project. As such, each component of the project, and how it is scheduled, is intended to provide information toward addressing the main research question.

¹⁰ Please note that the existing GIS data that is used for producing preliminary maps in Phase I is not yet consolidated and current maps may be inaccurate.

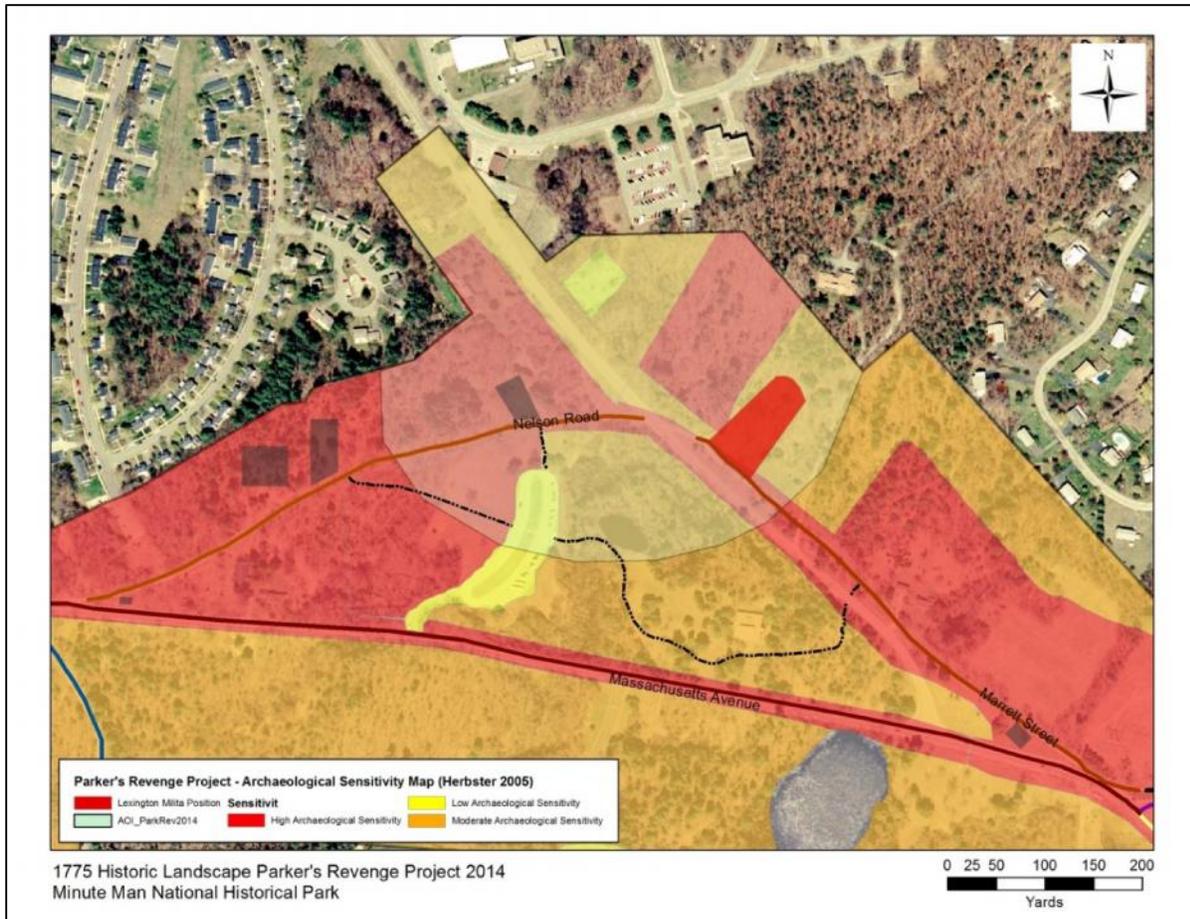


Figure 4 Archeological Sensitivity Map (Adapted from Herbster 2005 GIS files.)¹¹

The research approach engages a number of methods for collecting data including document review, archaeological investigations (that include: landscape survey, geophysical surveys, archaeological excavations, and metal detecting), and military tactic scenario investigation – all integrated into a project GIS for spatial data investigation and analysis. This type of approach integrates many methods and while hopeful that they will all produce useful information, we must understand that each approach has unique components and ultimately, we rely in a large part, upon the existence of intact material remains (i.e. bullets and barns).

THE PARKER'S REVENGE BATTLE

Today the Parker's Revenge Battle site is marked with a wayside (Figure 5) sign on the north side of Marret Street, slightly southeast of the intersection between Nelson Road and Marrett Street (Figure 6).

¹¹ Please note that the existing GIS data that is used for producing preliminary maps in Phase I is not yet consolidated and current maps may be inaccurate.

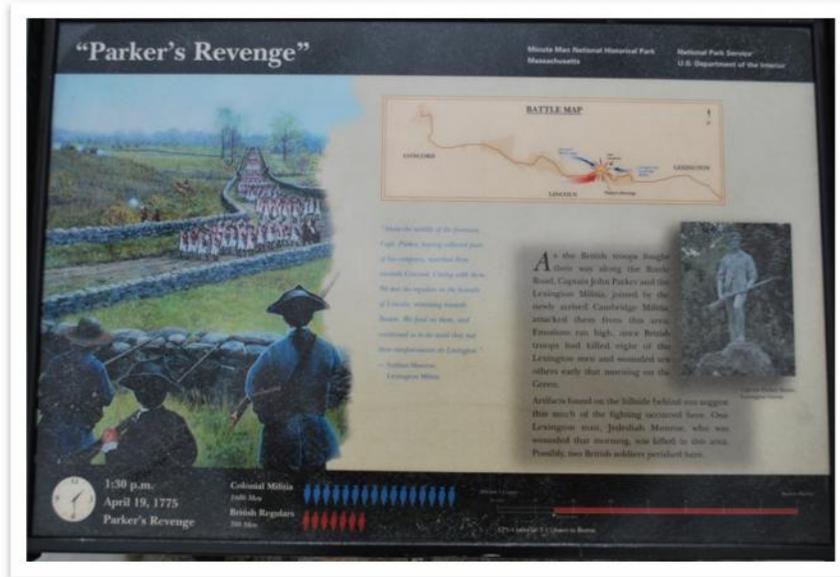


Figure 5 Parker's Revenge wayside, Minuteman National Historical Park. (Image courtesy of NPS, Minute Man NHP.)



Figure 6 Parker's Revenge skirmish location (in red) as currently marked (yellow star) in the Minute Man National Historical Park¹².

The wayside was put in place based upon the research of park historian Douglas P. Sabin, 1987, *April 19, 1775 A Historiographical Study*. Sabin reviews existing primary and secondary sources that report the events of April 19, 1775. Based upon these sources Sabin presents a solidly referenced and detailed account of what most probably happened on the first day of the Revolutionary War.

¹² Please note that GIS data are not yet consolidated (Phase II) and some features may be inaccurately represented.

LEAD UP TO “PARKER’S REVENGE”

The impetus behind the “Parker’s Revenge” battle, or skirmish, came from the first meeting and fighting between Captain John Parker’s troops and the British Regulars at the Lexington Common early in the morning of April 19, 1775. According to Sabin (Part I, pp. 30-35), shortly after Paul Revere had alerted Hancock and Adams about the movements of the British, the bell in the bell tower on Lexington Common rang out the first Lexington alarm. The Lexington Militia Company assembled on the Lexington Common, with Parker’s full company of between 130 and 144 men (Coburn, pp. 31-32; Phinney, p. 18) armed and assembled. Based on the cold weather and lack of response from scouts sent out on the road to Boston, Parker dismissed his men around 2:00 am with the instructions to reassemble when they heard the beat of a drum. Some men returned home, others retired to the Buckman Tavern (Phinney, p. 18). Concerned by the failure of his scouts to return, Parker sent out a final scout that evaded capture by the British and returned reporting that the British were on the road headed toward Lexington. Around 5:00 am Captain Parker ordered William Diamond to beat his drum, sounding the second Lexington alarm.

Captain Parker ordered Orderly Sergeant William Munroe to parade the company that was responding to the alarm drum into two ranks on the North side of the Common (Phinney, p. 34) facing, but not blocking, the road from which the British would appear. Historians record that only 77 men responded to the second muster (Sabin, Part II p.1).

Based on the conclusions of Sabin (Part II, pp. 1-3), it was here that, according to the many sources, led by Major Pitcairn, the British rushed onto the Lexington Common, muskets loaded to face the militia. As they approached the Meeting House it is reported that several shots were fired from near the corner of Buckman’s Tavern either fired at the British or more likely, fired to warn the militia on the Common that the British Regulars were coming.

Soldiers of the British 10th Regiment of Foot came into formation in front of the Lexington Militia on the Common. It is difficult to tell who fired the first shot(s) at Lexington and exactly how the battle progressed. There are a number of scenarios regarding the orders from Captain Parker for his men to “stand their ground” or to disperse as well as accurate reporting of the actions of the British officers and soldiers. Existing documentary evidence presents conflicting stories. When reading the original sources it is essential to take into consideration the individual testifying and the external pressures or expectations they were under and at what time the testimonies were made.

Original depositions by Captain Parker and other Colonial militiamen and witnesses testified in sworn statements about events of the Lexington Common battle only six days after the fact (i.e. Shattuck, p. 343-344) attributing the first shots to the British. Still fresh from battle, they may have been wary about appearing too aggressive or provocative; instead wanting to prove that the British were the aggressors and fired first while the militia was dispersing. Fifty years later however, not entirely happy with the passive role portrayed of the Lexington citizens, depositions taken from veterans of the Lexington Common battle that suggest a more aggressive role in the battle on the part of the Lexington Militia (Phinney, p. 39).

Understanding the events as they unfolded and their outcome on the Lexington Common early on the morning of April 19, 1775 is important to understanding the impetus behind the ambush at what is now called Parker’s Revenge. The battle that morning on the Lexington Common left seven Lexington men

dead and ten wounded. From the perspective of Captain Parker and the Lexington Militia at that time (Shattuck, p. 343-344), they must have been thinking about ‘revenge’ (Sabin, Part VI, p.1).

LOCATION OF “PARKER’S REVENGE” SKIRMISH

According to tradition (Sabin, Part VI, p. 180-181) it is known that Captain John Parker engaged the British in the area of the Lincoln-Lexington town line. Based upon the landscape, the ridge just inside the Lexington town line would have been the most logical place for Parker to set up an ambush. Overlooking the road, the wooded hill would provide cover for Captain Parker and approximately 120 of the Lexington Militia.

Only a few sources reference the actual location of the ambush by Captain Parker:

1. Lexington historian Elias Phinney wrote that Parker’s men gave the British a “galling and deadly fire” from a field in Lincoln. (p. 25). This was repeated by Ellen Chase (p. 78).
2. Frank Coburn states that the action was in Lincoln “not far from the Nelson and Hastings homes.” (p. 104).
3. Hudson (p. 195) puts the ambush “in Lincoln” with Parker’s company “taking a position in the fields.”
4. Nathan Munroe, one of Parker’s militia stated, “We met the enemy within the bounds of Lincoln,” but fought them in Lexington (Coburn).
5. French (p. 223) identifies the battle as “within the bounds of Lexington” (p. 223)
6. Early historian Ezra Ripley said that the company attacked the British within the bounds of Lexington from the woods on the south of the road (p. 31).

Other authors and historians provide detail as to the potential location of the ambush but in some cases as with Galvin (1967) a lack of documentation does not support the depth of detail in his account. Fischer (1994) presents detailed footnotes with references to support his description of the battle, but does not clearly outline the sources to solidly support his scenario of Parker placing militia in the field opposite, and on, the wooded hill currently marked as the location of Parker’s Revenge. An ongoing effort¹³ is underway by Jim Hollister (NPS, Minute Man Park), Bill Poole and Bill Rose (Lexington Minute Men) to create a document that cites all of the primary and secondary sources that mention and / or describe the location and action of the Parker’s Revenge ambush. They are also creating a document that will analyze the reported actions and propose a variety of military tactic scenarios that may have taken place during the ambush (Appendix 2).

Historical landscape research and archaeological investigations to date do not clearly identify the actual location of the ambush and subsequent battle of Parker’s Revenge but provide an excellent starting point for further scrutiny:

1. The 1775 landscape as detailed by Malcolm (1985, Fig. 2), and edited by Brian Donohue (*personal communication* with Lou Sideris, NPS 2008) identifies a woodland to the north of the road, that contradicts Ripley’s statement of the woodlot to the south of the road (Figure 7).
2. Coburn (p. 106) interprets artifacts found by John Lannon, a local farmer from the ridge (assumed to be the current Parker’s Revenge location) as possibly related to the battle that day:
 - a. a sword found around 1895 buried four feet deep under a boulder reported to be of British make in the 1775 period, and

¹³ See Appendix A

- b. a flattened lead musket ball.
- 3. Investigations by Donahue, B. (p. 14) on the Hanscom Air Force Base adjacent to the Parker's Revenge site location in the Minute Man National Historic Park identified historic artifacts that may be associated with the battle of April 19, 1775 (3 musket balls, a musket ball bullet mold, a gun fitting, and a cuprous shoe buckle.)
- 4. Additional archaeological and landscape assessments provide a robust body of work for continued research toward identifying the Parker's Revenge battle location. (See following sections *Site Taphonomy* and *Archaeological Background* for more information.)

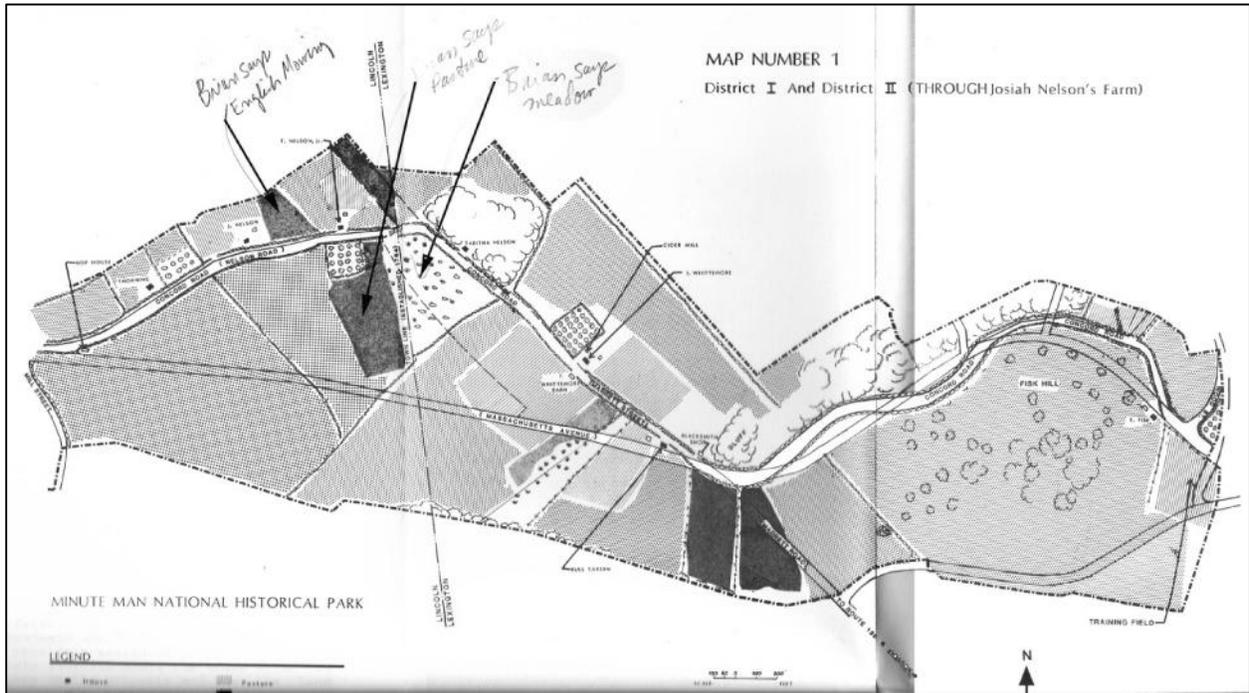


Figure 7 Adapted from Malcolm 1985, Figure 2. 1775 historic landscape of Nelson Road and Marrett Street. Hand edited by Brian Donahue.

Through investigation of the historic landscape and physical impact upon that landscape by subsequent occupation and use, archaeological investigations seek to locate and identify material remains that will provide significant information on the events in this area on the day of April 19, 1775.

SITE TAPHONOMY

The Nelson Farm Area, defined as the AOI (Figure 3) for this research project, is part of the Minute Man National Historical Park, located in the towns of Lincoln and Lexington, Middlesex County, sixteen miles northwest of Boston, Massachusetts. The park was established in 1959 with the intent to preserve the sites of the Battle of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775. The park is divided into four units (Battle Road, North Bridge, Wayside, and Barrett's Farm). The 123- acre Nelson Farm Area is in the largest of the park units, the 800 acre Battle Road Unit that preserves part of the route the British Regulars followed back to Boston under fire from the Colonial militia (Figure 8).



Figure 8 View west on Nelson Road and Battle Road (National Register Documentation Photos (NRDP, 2006).

Today, the Battle Road runs along present-day Lexington Road (Concord), North Great Road (Lincoln), and Massachusetts Ave (Lexington), parts of this route are also designated as State Route 2A. This area underwent significant change from 1775 to 1959 with the most intensive development in the early to mid-twentieth century when the Concord-Lexington area became part of the greater Boston's commuting community. Since the creation of the park, many of the structures from this suburbanization have been removed (Figure 9) resulting in a partial re-creation of the rural scene of 1775 with intent to provide a backdrop for the existing historic resources related to the Battle of Lexington and Concord (National Register Documentation (NRD), 2002).



Figure 9 Map of buildings in the AOI in the 1960s (red) and today (blue). (Adapted from image courtesy of NPS, Minute Man NHP.)

Modern day Nelson Road and Marrett Street both follow the path of the historic Battle Road (Figure 10), a landscape that reflects remnants of the area’s agricultural past. Some stone foundations remain of the Nelson family residences, a blacksmith shop, and a hop house. These remnants are set within a landscape of meadows, wetland, and woodland areas with stone walls lining Battle Road and demarcating historic field boundaries.

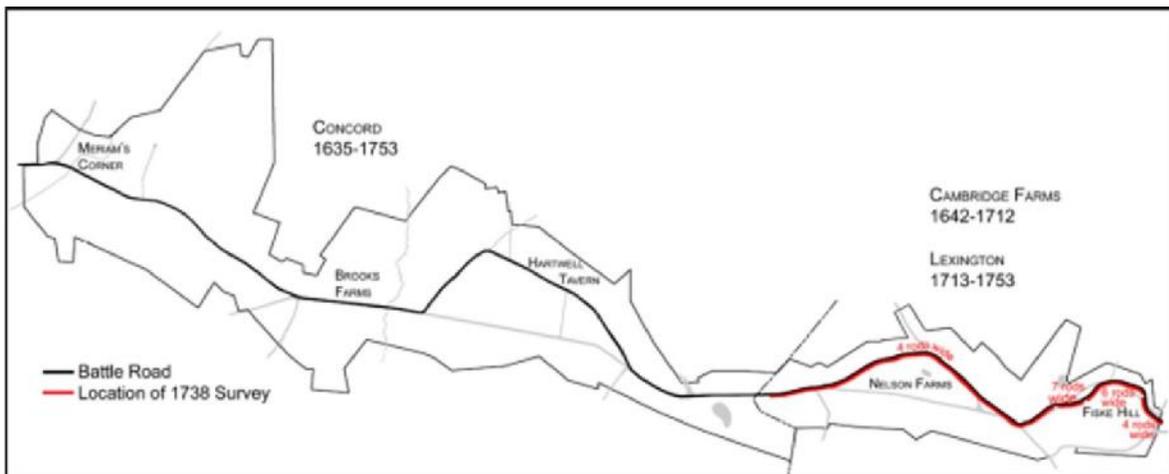


Figure 10 Map of the Battle Road Unit showing (red) part that was surveyed in 1738. Based on 1738 road bounds survey and width of right-of-way depicted on the 1907 Middlesex County Map "Plan of a Portion of Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, as ordered by the County Commissioners." (OCLP)(Adapted from Dietrich-Smith 2005, Figure 15).

A number of more contemporary early- to mid-20th century buildings that were private properties have been removed from the park to better represent the historic 1775 landscape (Diedrich-Smith 2005). The only modern structures remaining in the project area are the Minute Man Visitor Center (1975), parking lot, and a small amphitheater. The northern area of Nelson Farm in particular has been impacted by development associated with the Hanscom Air Force Base. A thin strip of woodland stands between the historic Nelson Farm landscape and the modern military base and provides a valuable backdrop to the view along Battle Road to the north.

A variety of reports and documents exist that detail the historic development of the environment, landscape, and history (*Cultural Landscape Inventory* 2012, further referred to as CLI; Donohue 2010, 2007; James-Pirri 2009; Dietrich-Smith 2005; Herbster 2005; Donahue 2004; Sabin 1987; Towle and MacMahon 1986; Malcolm 1985) of the Battle Road Unit.

The *National Park Service Area Cultural Landscapes Inventory Report: Nelson Farm Area, Minute Man National Historical Park* provides a very detailed chronology of land use, land ownership, development, and impact upon the Nelson Farm area from 10,000 BC to AD 2007 (CLI 2012, pp. 39-51). An expanded narrative of the development of this region can be found in Dietrich-Smith's *Cultural Landscape Report for Battle Road Unit, Minute Man National Historical Park, Volume 1* (2005, pp. 13-118) that presents a robust site history development of land use from the Pre-Colonial period (to 1634), the Colonial Period (1635-1783), the Rural Economic period (1784-1899), to the early – mid 20th century suburbanization (1900-1958) of the area and establishment of the Minute Man National Park (1959-2005).

An in-depth description of the region and emergence of agriculture and Colonial husbandry can be found in Brian Donahue's (2004) *The Great Meadow, Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord*. Donohue not only talks about the geological formation of the region, but discusses in detail the evolution of the different phases' use of the landscape in the Concord area. Though not focused specifically in the area of the Parker's Revenge skirmish, this work clearly defines the landscape and features inherent to the region during the Colonial period.

These documents are important in respect to the features we are looking for to help characterize the 1775 landscape, cattle watering holes, stone walls, barns and organization of farm buildings – as we don't yet know the full extent of the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr.¹⁴ farm structures and their occupation of the landscape, potentially central to the events of the Parker's Revenge skirmish.

Numerous historic maps, deeds, land conveyances, and tax records can be used to reconstruct the landscape, and the Nelson Farm area in some detail. *Land in the Park (the Nelson Properties)* by Robert Ronsheim (1968) presents a detailed history of the ownership of the Nelson Farm property and provides insight to the moving and changing boundaries of the Nelson properties (Thomas Jr., Josiah, Thomas Sr. and Tabitha Nelson) from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Donohue (2010, pp. 26-39) does a thorough job of analyzing the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. property¹⁵ combining primary documentary evidence with secondary sources in an attempt to establish not only the boundaries of the property (and their changes) but also to better understand what was happening on his farm, the number of animals he had and, for example, how this might be reflected in the barn structure and the potential (or not) for additional outbuildings.

¹⁴ The original Thomas Nelson Sr. property that his daughter Tabitha Nelson inherited upon his death is referred to throughout this document (and project) as the "Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr." property (house, barn, etc.).

¹⁵ Ronsheim 1968, Towle and MacMahon 1986b, deed transactions, historic maps, tax and assessor's records.

From these documents and review of original materials we are able to piece together not only the historic landscape but also begin to map the changing boundaries of towns and individual properties. A 1758 map of Lincoln¹⁶ depicts the town line between Lincoln and Lexington and the location of the “Nelson Bridge” (Figure 11). It is interesting to note that while the general perception of the “Nelson Bridge” was that it was part of the Battle Road, Barbara Donahue (2010, p. 30) cites evidence from Snow (1973) that this feature is noted as the bridge to Thomas Nelson Sr.’s houselot and that it may have been used instead of a causeway by Thomas Sr. to bridge a swampy area or used to cross a ditch. Evidence from Snow’s (1973) excavations at the Thomas Jr. site saw some evidence that a ditch existed along the boundary line between the houselots of Thomas Jr. and Thomas Sr. in the early 18th century as well as in 1775 between the Thomas Jr. and Tabitha Nelson (inherited houselot from Thomas Nelson Sr.). This is a good example of considering evidence from perhaps a different angle, and to query the existing landscape for more clues of possible routes through the potentially swampy areas of the Nelson Farm area that could have provided a clear path for movement during the events of April 19, 1775.

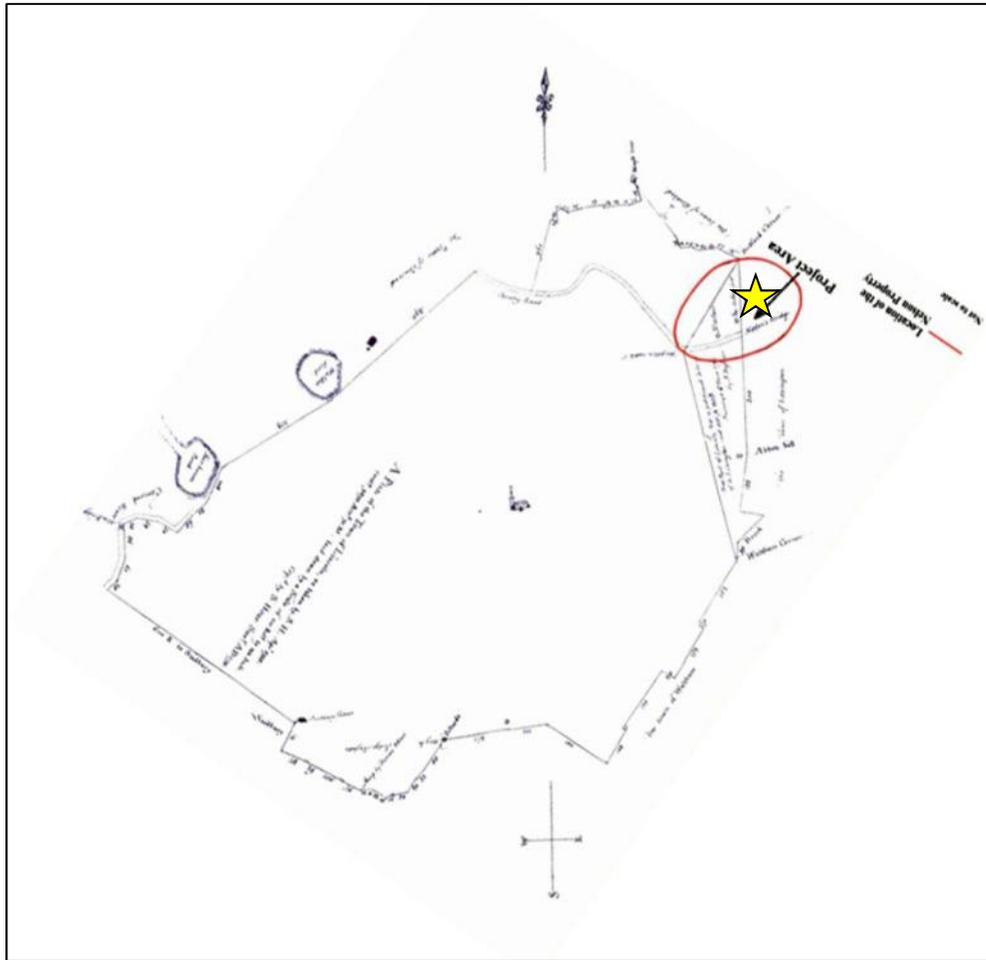


Figure 11 Map of Lincoln surveyed by Stephen Hosmer in April 1758, copied by Samuel Hoar in 1772. The “Nelson Bridge” is identified by the gold star .(Adapted from Towle and MacMahon 1986, Figure 10.4 Courtesy of Lincoln Historical Room, Lincoln Public Library.)

¹⁶ Image rotated to orient content to north.

Another example of documentation for consideration includes the 1902 sketch map (Figure 12) that George Nelson, the great grandson of Josiah Nelson drew as an interpretation of the 1775 landscape according to family history.

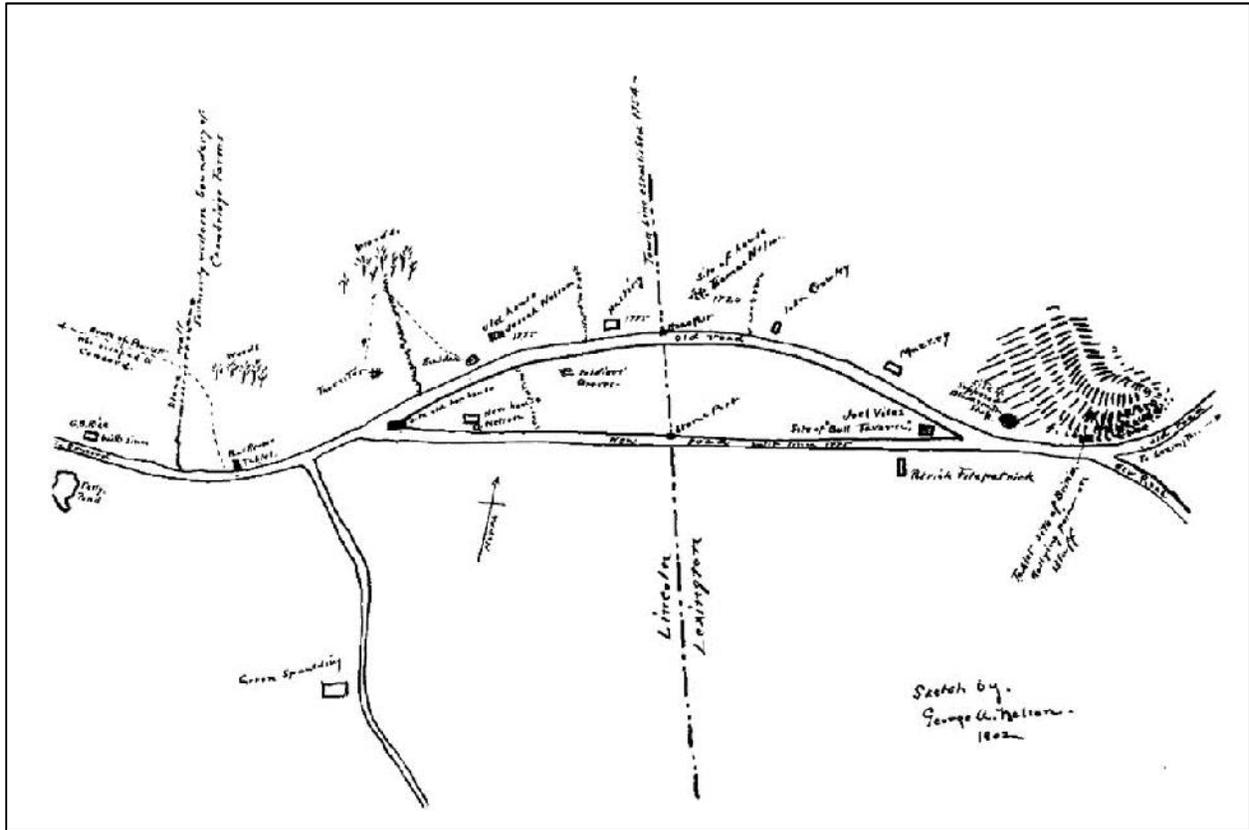


Figure 12 Map of the Nelson Road area as drawn by George Nelson in 1902. (Adapted from Towle and MacMahon 1986, Figure 10.8 Courtesy of Lincoln Historical Room, Lincoln Public Library.)

The wealth of information available allows us to focus on individual family properties, such as the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. houselot. Ronsheim (1968) has detailed descriptions of property boundaries, conveyances and more. Figure 13 shows a drawing (no scale) by Ronsheim mapping the property boundary between Thomas Nelson’s acquisition of some of the original property Tabitha Nelson inherited from Thomas Nelson Sr. In this exchange, it is reported that the property boundary at the point of this exchange split the barn (originally on Tabitha Nelson’s property) in half.

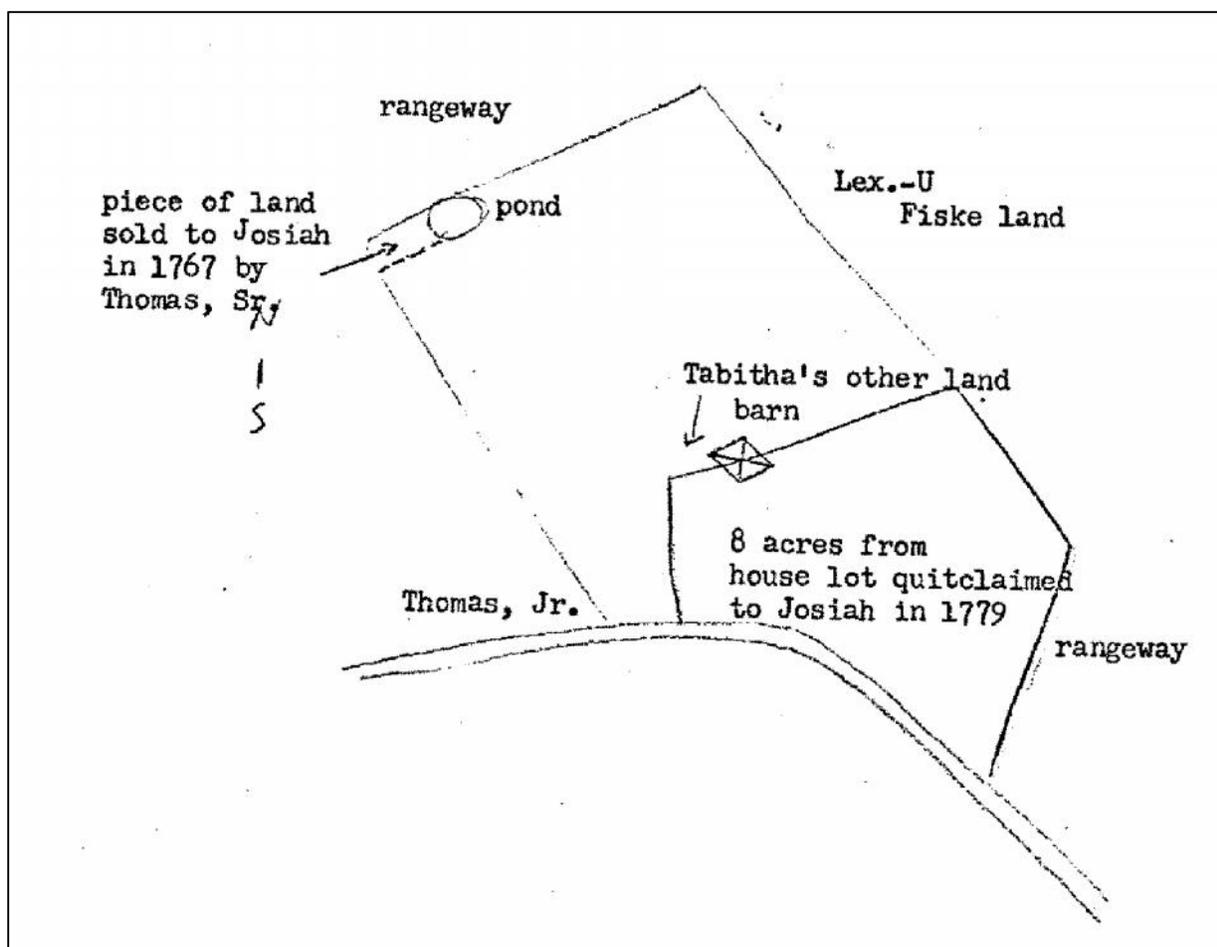


Figure 13 Ronsheim depiction of the 1779 quitclaim land division between Thomas Nelson Jr. and his sister Tabitha Nelson (1968 Tabitha Nelson Houselet, p. 15).

Using the variety of resources available, Phase II investigations of the Parker’s Revenge Project will re-create a detailed historic landscape for the focus area that will illustrate the change in land ownership and use as well as the impact subsequent occupation and use has had upon the 1775 landscape. The impact of occupation and development of this landscape (in particular in the early to mid-twentieth century) is relevant to our ability to study the battle archaeologically. Recognizing this fact, we will incorporate archaeological investigations into this model in an attempt to provide locations of structures and significant landscape features as well as potential relevant military-related artifacts that may have played a role in the Parker’s Revenge ambush.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Archaeological investigations in the focus area of the Battle Road Unit at the Minute Man National Historical Park began in the 1960s. *The Archaeological Overview and Assessment Minute Man National Historical Park* publication by Herbster (2005) at PAL presents a thorough overview and assessment of the archaeological investigations conducted in the Parker’s Revenge skirmish area. This document describes and assesses the known and potential archaeological resources of the park, evaluates previous archaeological studies and presents a series of archaeological sensitivity maps with an emphasis in particular on the Battle Road Unit focusing on four themes, including prehistory; April 19, 1775 (Figure

14); the colonial period; and nineteenth-century agriculture and daily life. This work is meant to help manage archaeological sites as well as identify unknown archaeological resources and contributes to the investigation of the events under scrutiny for this project.

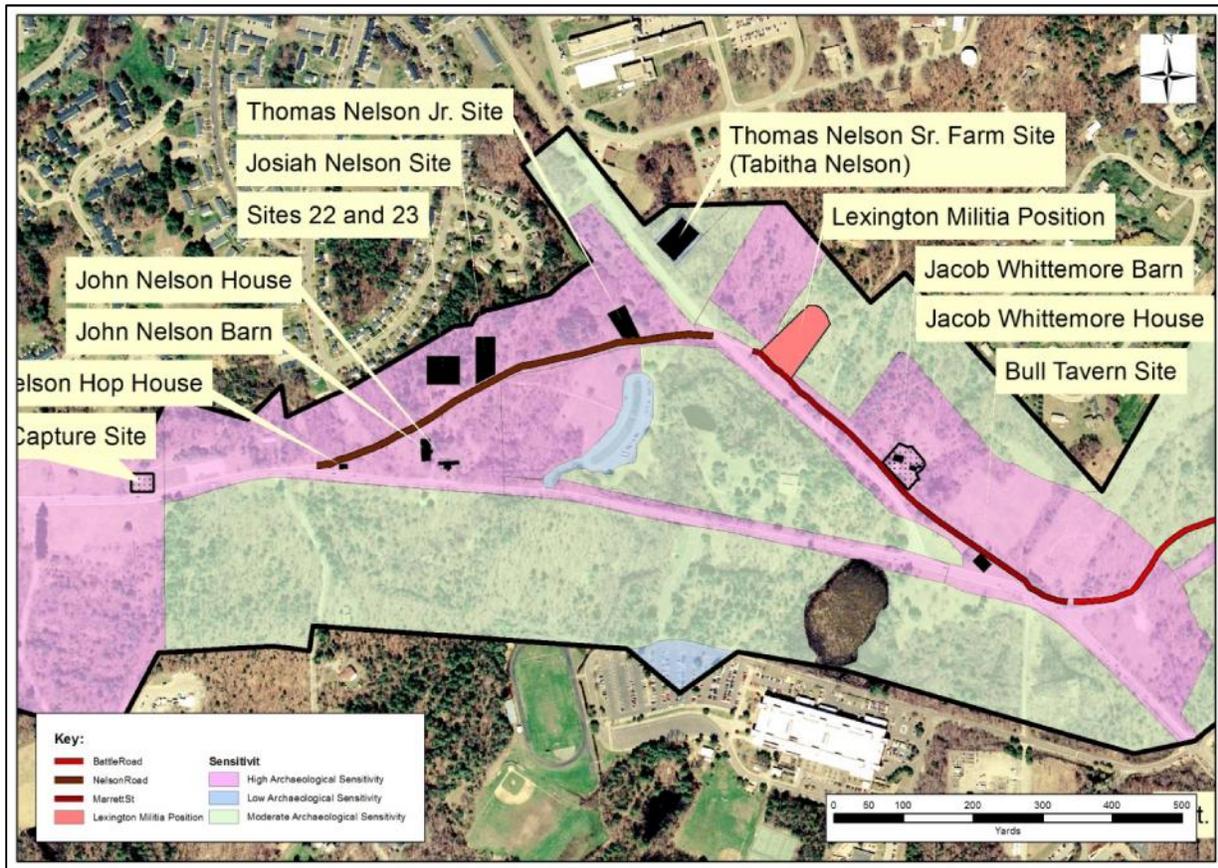


Figure 14 Archaeological 1775 sensitivity map for project area of interest. (Adapted from PAL [Herbster 2005] GIS.¹⁷)

A second vital document is the *Archaeological Collections Management at Minute Man National Historical Park, Massachusetts, Volume 2*, (ACMP) written by Towle and MacMahon (1986) that presents results from inventorying and reanalyzing the archaeological collections at MIMA. The scope of this research included analysis of the collections and evaluation of site interpretations which is significant for helping re-construct the 1775 historic landscape and integrating the material record (significance of the artifacts) into the analysis of the landscape. In particular, we are seeking to identify and map any (1) structures, such as the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. house and barn and (2) military related artifacts that may be associated with the events of the Parker’s Revenge ambush. Whether or not artifacts will be discernable as related to the ambush or simply artifacts left behind from the general running battle of the return of the Regulars to Boston that day will remain to be seen.¹⁸

¹⁷ Please note that GIS data are not yet consolidated (Phase II) and some features may be inaccurately represented.

¹⁸ Strategies for attempting to accomplish this are presented in the Phase I Conclusions and Phase II & Phase III Overview section.

The main properties within the area of interest (Figure 3) that this project is focusing on include those belonging to the Nelson Family: Josiah, Thomas, Thomas Sr. and Tabitha. Site investigation and archaeological excavations have been undertaken on all of these properties¹⁹ (Abel 1966c, 1967; Abel and Snow 1966; Abel, Fitzell, and Glumac 1998; Griswold 1996, 2011; Mead 1999; Pendry, Mead and Griswold 1996; Pendery and Cooney, 2003; Snow 1969, 1973; Syenenki 1985, 1990; Tremer 1974).

The importance of the archaeological record to this project is to contribute accurate spatial information to the historic recreation of the 1775 landscape that would include features such as stone walls, ditches, culverts, bridges, houses, barns, and other out buildings. These physical features would have played a role in the potential battle scenarios that may have unfolded culminating in the Parker's Revenge skirmish in this area. Additionally, through artifact recovery, the material record may reveal information as to the movement of the military troops and potential concentration of fire exchanged between the Regulars and colonial militia.

After review of original archaeological site reports, the Towle and MacMahon (1986), and Herbster (2005) reports, the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. site emerges as an area of interest for further investigation by this project. Towle and MacMahon (1986) review Snow's report and surmise that he did indeed locate a cellar hole (Figure 15) that most probably represents the original location of the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. house but that,

“There were certain gaps in the record of the Thomas Nelson Sr. excavations and in the artifact collection itself. These data problems influence the integrity of the collection and thus its value for future research and interpretive purposes.” (p. 77)

They recommend that if there was a future interest in this property,

“...it might be possible to locate some relatively undisturbed areas. These would include areas to the northeast, east, and southeast of Snow's excavations, and possibly to the west of Airport Road. These locations have not been systematically studied, and may have escaped the severe ground disturbance which other areas of the site have suffered.” (p. 96)

¹⁹ The most pertinent archaeological reports are referenced here, however all documents related to the archaeological record of the area of interest are included in the report “References” section.

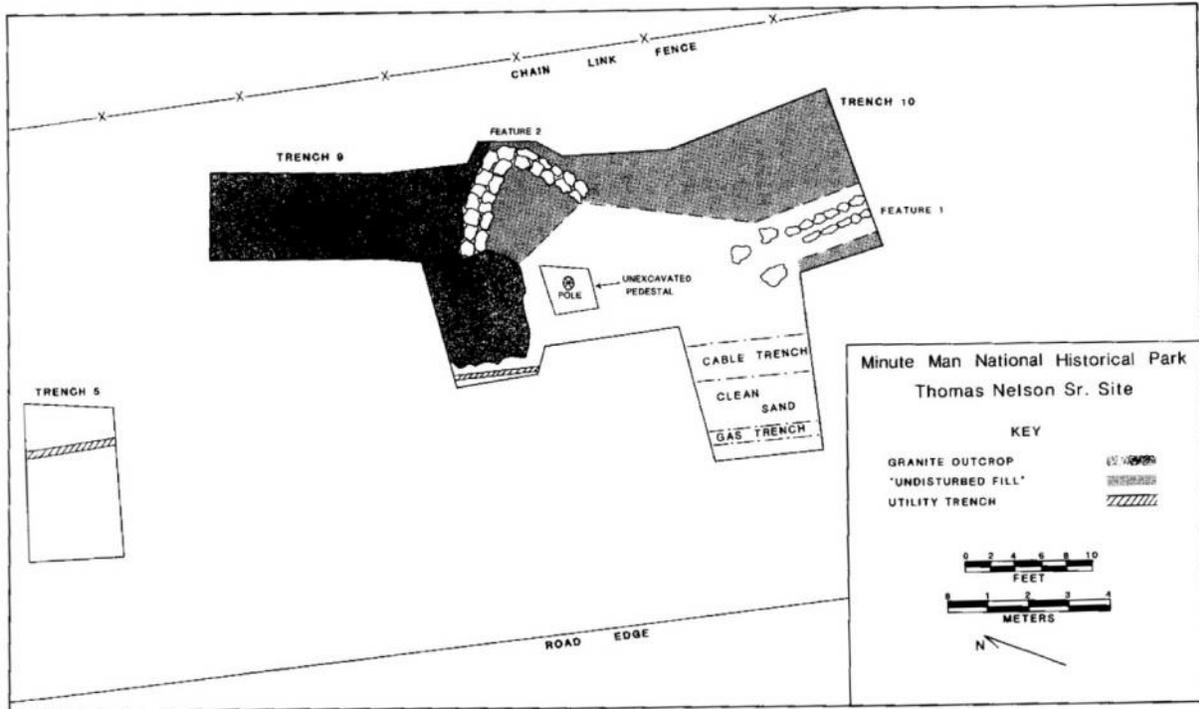


Figure 15 Plan of Trenches 9 & 10, showing features 1 & 2 from Snow's excavations (1060). (Adapted from Towle and MacMahon 1986, Figure 9.3.)

Late 19th century photos (Figure 16, the left half of the structure) and excavations at the Thomas Nelson Jr. site suggest that the original house from the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. site was moved and attached to Thomas Jr.'s house after Tabitha died in 1778. Combined photographic and archaeological evidence suggests the original Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. house was probably a two room central chimney plan house approximately 16' by 34' in dimension.



Figure 16 The Nelson-Hastings House, Tabitha Nelson's house is on the left side of the structure. (Towle and MacMahon 1986. Figure 10.6. MIMA 63-193; original at SPNEA, Boston.)

Beginning with the re-location of the basement foundations, intensive archaeological investigations²⁰ in these, and additional areas (see archaeological sensitivity map, Fig. 13) we may be able to discover important information on the organization of space (military tactics) and artifacts may provide evidence²¹ that may contribute to our knowledge of the events of the battle on April 19, 1775.

A review of the artifact assemblage for this area reveals no recorded military-related artifacts at the Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. excavation but identifies a total of sixteen "Weaponry/Accoutrements" artifacts combined from the Thomas Nelson Jr., Site 22, and Bull Tavern²² excavations, located within the boundaries of the Minute Man National Historical Park. These artifacts will be more thoroughly researched and physically examined.

The excavations, geophysical surveys, and metal detecting surveys conducted by Donahue (2010, 2008) identified 12 historic artifacts, six of which were identified as appearing to be associated with the Battle of April 19, 1775: three musket balls, a musket ball bullet mold, a gun fitting, and a cuprous shoe buckle; and an additional two may have also been associated: an oxen shoe and a cuprous ring. It is proposed that while the location of these artifacts were not in the area currently identified as the Parker's Revenge ambush site on Battle Road, the area where they were found may have been a waiting area (Donahue 2010).

²⁰ Not limited to excavation only, see final section Conclusions of Phase I and Overview of Phase II & Phase III.

²¹ This discussion focused on the products that are central to the investigation of the Parker's Revenge skirmish, but any excavations will also add important information to the archaeological record and property management.

²² Although not in the focus area of this research, in the vicinity so included in data collection during Phase I.

Results from most of the previous excavations in the area of interest as well as the methodology applied by Donahue (2010) contribute significant background information from which we can continue to investigate.

PHASE I CONCLUSIONS AND PHASE II & III OVERVIEW

The first phase of investigation for the Parker's Revenge Project has sourced, reviewed, and synthesized existing primary and secondary documents that pertain (directly and indirectly) to the Parker's Revenge skirmish, historical landscape, and archaeological record. Additionally, all existing GIS projects and files²³ pertaining to the environment, historic and contemporary landscape, and archaeology have been collected from a variety of sources. Among the information that has come from these investigations a few are identified as specific to continued research and use in Phases II and III:

1. GIS data acquisition:
 - a. all original historic maps, deeds, and tax records will be considered for integration to the GIS.²⁴
 - b. Modern data layers will be integrated into GIS
 - c. Coverage of airborne LiDAR will be investigated and if relevant, integrated.
 - d. Historic and contemporary aerial photographs will be investigated and if relevant, integrated.
2. Archaeological investigations will be focused on the Tabitha Nelson /Thomas Nelson Sr. property. Additional archaeological investigations may be conducted if deemed relevant to the research goals of identifying the location of the Parker's Revenge skirmish.

Based upon the work and conclusions of Phase I, the remainder of the Project seeks to assemble, map, discover, and analyze all potential data and related information to best record the Parker's Revenge skirmish. As such, the original project outline (Project Phase Overview, p. 7) has been developed and revised. The below sections (Phase II and Phase III) present the revised outline of research, tasks, and deliverables for the continuation of the Project.

PHASE II

GIS

1. Consolidation of existing GIS data
2. Research and acquisition of additional relevant historic and contemporary spatial data
3. Creation of a Master Parker's Revenge GIS project
4. Analysis of all project related spatial data (ongoing to the end of the project)

FIELD SURVEY

1. Establish project survey control
2. Visible Landscape feature mapping
3. Investigation of GIS project maps and features

²³ Data files that are part of existing GIS projects, additional data will be collected during Phase II investigations.

²⁴ GIS is inherently spatial, thus maps without scales, geographic reference, etc. are difficult to accurately represent. Efforts will be made to integrate as many historical data layers as possible, based upon reasonable accuracy of final spatial rectification.

A survey team will investigate and record existing, visible landscape features as well as attempt to locate additional historic landscape features that are identified through the GIS analysis.

[Deliverable: Included in Phase II Narrative Report](#)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

(geophysical surveys, excavation, soil coring/auguring)

1. Accurately locate and map Snow's (1969) excavated foundation at the Tabitha Nelson /Thomas Nelson Sr. site
2. Attempt to identify and map location of Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. barn and any additional out buildings (historic and contemporary)

[Deliverable: Report on archaeological excavations & geophysical surveys](#)

MILITARY TACTICS FIELD SIMULATION (MTFS)

1. On-site meeting with military tactical experts, park personnel, & military historians to discuss and develop potential Parker's Revenge skirmish tactical scenarios
2. Map tactical scenarios (GIS)
3. Landscape and topography impact analysis
4. Calculate (GIS) spatial distribution of military-related artifacts

[Deliverable: Report on MTFS including transcript of military tactics discussions](#)

METAL DETECTING SURVEY

1. Mapping distribution of military related artifacts
2. Recovering diagnostic and 'other' specified artifacts

Two metal detecting surveys may be conducted. The first would cover the area of the archaeological investigations at the of Tabitha Nelson / Thomas Nelson Sr. property. The second would be at a later time, covering a much larger area, based upon results from the MTFS and GIS spatial analyses.

[Deliverable: Report on metal detecting survey](#)

FINAL DELIVERABLES

1. Final report on Phase II activities
 - a. Overview on achievements of Phase II
 - b. Assessment and outline for Phase III
 - c. Appendices will include Reports from individual activities (as designated above)
2. Illustrated Project Narrative (PowerPoint intended as an image-rich overview)
 - a. Description of each activity of Phase II
 - b. Presentation of results

PHASE III

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS

1. GIS spatial distribution & interpretations
 - a. Military
 - b. Others of relevancy

PARKER'S REVENGE SKIRMISH ANALYSIS

1. Integration of all data and analysis
2. Discussion of conclusions derived from data analysis

FINAL DELIVERABLES

1. Final report on Phase III
 - a. Overview of GIS analysis methods
 - b. Conclusions and Recommendations for the project
2. Illustrated Project Narrative (PowerPoint intended as an image-rich overview)
 - a. Overview of the entire project (this will integrate the IPN from Phase I and Phase II)
 - b. Presentation of final results
 - c. Conclusion and Recommendations

REFERENCES

Abel, Leland JI.

- 1966a *Current Status of Archaeological Program at Minute Man*. Ms. (Memorandum) on file, Administrative Papers on the History of Archaeology at MIMA, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord MA.
- 1966b *The Tabitha Nelson House Site*. Ms. (Form 10-189 Resource Study Proposal) on file, Administrative Papers on the History of Archaeology at MIMA, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord MA.
- 1966c *Research report: Archaeological Excavations at the Site of the Josiah Nelson House*. Ms. On file, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord MA.
- 1967 *Historic Structures Report: Part II (supplement), Archaeological Data Section on the Josiah Nelson Farm*. Ms. On file, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord MA.
- 1982 Letter to Alan Synecki, January 22, 1982. Ms. On file, MIMA Correspondence File, Eastern Archaeological Field Laboratory, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, Boston.

Abel, Leland J. and Cordelia Thomas Snow

- 1966 *The Excavation of Sites 22 and 23*. Ms. On file, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA.

Abel, Julie, Sean Fitzell, and Peter Glumac

- 1998 *Phase I Archaeological Survey, Hanscom Air Force Base, Massachusetts*. Report on file, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, MA.

Baker, Vernon G.

- 1980 *Archaeological Overview and Evaluation, Minute Man National Historical Park*. Cultural Resources Management Study No. 2. Division of Cultural Resources, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, Boston.

Chase, Ellen

- 1911 *The Beginnings of the American Revolution, Volume III*, Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., London.

Coburn, Frank Warren

- 1921 *The Battle on the Lexington Common: April 19, 1775*, F.L. Coburn & Co., Boston.

Dietrich-Smith, Deborah

- 2005 *Cultural Landscape Report for Battle Road Unit: Minute Man National Historical Park*, NPS, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.

Donahue, Brian

- 2004 *The Great Meadow, Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord*. Yale University.

Donohue, Barbara

- 2010 *Results of the Research Conducted on the Thomas Nelson Farm Site (19-MD-347/HA.6) in Hansom Air Force Base, Middlesex, County, and Massachusetts*. John Milner Architects, Inc.

2007. *Report of a Specialized Intensive (Locational) Survey, Lexington Battle Road Hanscom Air Force Base, Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, John Milner Associates, Inc. for Hanscom Air Force Base, 66 MSG/CE.

French, Allen

1925 *The Day of Concord and Lexington*, Little Brown, Boston.

Garvin, Beth J., Julius Gy. Fabos, Meg Rasmussen, and Jack Ahern

1993 *A Management Plan to Balance Cultural and Natural Resources: The Minute Man National Historic Park Case Study*, Massachusetts Agriculture Experiment Station.

Grisowld, William

1996 *Management summary: intensive archeological testing, phase 2 trail and parking lot construction, visitor access trail project area, Minute Man National Historical Park*. Lowell, MA: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Archeology Branch. Unpublished report on file, Minute Man NHP, Concord, MA.

2011 *Geophysical Survey at MIMA The Bull Tavern Site, Lexington, MA 2010*. Unpublished report on file, Northeast Region Archaeology Program, Heritage Preservation, Planning & Compliance, Boott Cotton Mills Museum, Lowell, MA.

Grisowld, William A., and William Cooney

2002 *Archaeological Testing at the Whittemore House, MIMA, Lexington, MA*. Unpublished report on file, Minute Man NHP, Concord, MA.

Herbster, Holly

2005 *Archaeological Overview and Assessment Minute Man National Historical Park Concord, Lincoln, and Lexington Massachusetts*, PAL, Rhode Island.

Hudson, Charles

1913 *History of the Town of Lexington*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.

James-Pirri, Mary-Jane

2009 *Natural Resource Assessment for Minute Man National Historical Park*, Natural Resources Report NPS/NER/NRR – 2009/022. Graduate School of Oceanography, University of Rhode Island.

Malcolm, Joyce Lee

1983 *Three Historic Ground Study Reports, Minute Man National Historical Park*. Unpublished draft on file at Minute Man NHP, Concord.

1985 *The Scene of the Battle, 1775. Historic Grounds Report, Minute Man National Historical Park*. NPS, North Atlantic Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources.

Mead, Leslie A.

1999 *Report on Archaeological Testing for Package 170A: Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes (Tree and Stump Removal) Visitor Access Trail Project, Minute Man National Park*. Archaeology Branch, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, National Park Service, Lowell.

2000 *A Revolution Underground: A History and Analysis of the Management of Archaeological Resources at Minute Man National Historical Park Concord, Massachusetts 1959-2000*. Unpublished MA thesis, Boston University.

National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2012. *Nelson Farm Area Minute Man National Historical Park*.

National Register Documentation Photos (Minute Man National Historical Park), 2006. On file at Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA.

National Register Documentation November 29, 2002. On file at Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA.

PAL

2002 *Minute Man National Historic Park, National Register of Historic Places Documentation, Lexington, Lincoln and Concord Massachusetts*. On file, PAL, Pawtucket, RI.

Pendery, Steven R., and William Cooney

2003 *Management Summary, Archaeological Survey of Proposed Septic System, [John] Nelson House, Minute Man National Historic Site, National Park Service*. Unpublished report on file, Minute Man NHP, Concord, MA.

Pendery, Steven, Leslie Mead, and William Griswold

1996 *Management Summary, Intensive Archaeological Testing, Phase I Vegetative Clearing and Boardwalk Construction, Visitor Access Trail Project Area, MIMA*. Unpublished report on file, Minute Man NHP, Concord, MA.

Phinney, Elias

1825 *History of the Battle at Lexington on the Morning of the 19th April 1775*, (Later American Depositions), Phelps and Farnham, Boston.

Ripley, Ezra

1927 *A History of the Fight at Concord on the 19th of April 1775*, Allen and Atwell, Concord.

Ronshiem, Robert

1968 *Land in the Park Historic Grounds Report, Minute Man National Historic Park*. On file at the Minute Man Research Library, Concord, MA.

Shattuck, Lemuel

1835 *A History of the Town of Concord*, Russell, Oriorne and Co., Concord.

Snow, David H.

- 1969 *Archaeological Research Report: The Thomas Nelson, Sr. Farm*. Ms. on file, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA.
- 1973a *Excavations at Site 264, The Thomas Nelson, Jr. House, 1968*. Ms. on file, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA.
- 1973b *Archaeological Research Report Excavations at Site 264 The Thomas Nelson, Jr. House Minute Man National Historical Park*. On file at Minute Man National Park, Concord, MA.

Syenenki, Alan T.

- 1984 *Archaeological Investigations of Nelson road*. Ms. on file, Division of Cultural Resources, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, Boston.
- 1986a *An Archaeological Research Design for Minute Man National Historical Park*. Ms. on file, Division of Cultural Resources, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, Boston.
- 1990 *Archeological Investigations of Minute Man National Historical Park, Volume 1: Farmers and Artisans of the Historical Period*. Cultural Resources Management Study 22. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, DC.
- 1994 *Traces of the Past, A Visitor's Guide to Archaeological Sites at Minute Man National Historical Park*. Eastern National Park & Monument Association.

Towle, Linda A. and Darcie A. MacMahon (eds.)

- 1986 *Archaeological Collections Management at Minute Man National Historical Park, Massachusetts, Volume 2*. ACMP Series No. 4, Division of Cultural Resources North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior Boston, MA.

Tremer, Charles

- 1974 *Report on Inquiry and Recommendations for Disposition of the Thomas Nelson Jr. Site*. Ms. on file, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, MA.

Watters, Margaret S.

- 2013 *Parker's Revenge Minute Man National Historical Park Archaeological Research Proposal* (unpublished document).

KOCOA (Military Terrain Analysis) – Cheat Sheet

National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program
May 2008

Provided by Kristen McMasters, 2/6/2014

For more information on the American Battlefield Protection Program see
<http://www.nps.gov/hps/abpp/>

KOCSA (Military Terrain Analysis) - Cheat Sheet

The US military has developed a process for evaluating the military significance of the terrain denoted by the acronym KOCSA. Battlefield surveyors learn to view the terrain through the soldiers' eyes using the five aspects of KOCSA:

Key Terrain/Decisive Terrain

Observation and Fields of Fire

Concealment and Cover

Obstacles

Avenues of Approach/Withdrawal

Key and Decisive Terrain

Key Terrain ~ any local feature that dominates the immediate surroundings by relief or by some other quality that enhances attack or defense.

- High ground with good observation and clear fields of fire
- Transportation choke point such as a water crossing, defile, road junction

Decisive Terrain ~ also called Critical Terrain. Ground that *must* be controlled in order to successfully accomplish the mission. It is relatively rare and is not necessarily associated with a formal Course of Action²⁵ or present in every situation. Terrain is identified as decisive when it is recognized that the mission depends upon its seizure or retention. *Key terrain typically offers control of a local objective or an important transportation route.*

Observation and Field of Fire

Observation ~ the ability to see friendly and enemy forces and key aspects of the terrain in order to judge strength, prevent surprise, and respond to threats

Field of fire ~ an area that weapons may cover/fire upon effectively from a given position. A unit's field of fire is directly related to Observation

Dead Space ~ an area within the maximum range of a weapon or observer, which cannot be covered or seen from a particular position.

Cover and Concealment

Cover ~ protection from enemy fire

example - ditches, riverbanks, buildings, walls, entrenchments

Concealment ~ protection from enemy observation and surveillance

example - forests, ravines, dense vegetation, reverse slopes

Obstacles

Obstacles ~ natural or manmade terrain features that prevent, impede, or divert military movement
Existing obstacles are already present on the battlefield and not placed there through military effort. They can be natural (swamp, forest, river) or cultural (town, railroad, bridge).

²⁵ Course of Action - a sequence of activities that would accomplish, or are related to the accomplishment of, a specific mission.

Reinforcing obstacles are placed on the battlefield through military effort and are designed to strengthen the terrain. Reinforcing obstacles include such things as entrenchments, earthworks, and abatis.

The presence and difficulty of obstacles determine whether terrain is:

Unrestricted - fairly open and presents no hindrance to ground movement

Restricted – hinders ground movement. Little effort is needed to enhance mobility

Severely Restricted – unfavorable terrain

Complex – consisting of one or more of the above

Avenue of Approach/Withdrawal

Avenue of Approach ~ relatively unobstructed ground route that leads to an objective or to key terrain

Avenue of Withdrawal ~ relatively unobstructed ground route that leads away from an objective or key terrain

Mobility Corridor ~ area where movement is channeled due to terrain constrictions, e.g., road over a causeway. *The size of an attacking unit is limited by the breadth and difficulty of its Avenue of Approach.*

Definitions

Battlefield Land - Sites where armed conflict, fighting, or warfare occurred between two opposing military organizations (not civil unrest).

Associated Sites - Sites occupied before, during, or after a battle at which events occurred that had a direct influence on the tactical development of the battle or the outcome of the battle. A site must be associated with a battle in order to be considered an Associated Site.

How Many Sites Are There?

There were about 10,500 Civil War armed conflicts, ranging from major battles to minor skirmishes. Using military significance criteria, the 1993 Commission identified 384 such conflicts, or 3.7 percent of the total. These sites encompass virtually all of the principal land battles that were of special strategic, tactical, or thematic importance to local operations, campaigns, theaters, or to the war as a whole. Likewise in 1996, over 2742 Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites were considered with only 811 sites and 184 battlefields being surveyed with like criteria.

How Significant Are the Sites?

The Commission ranked military importance of the 384 battles (and their associated battlefield sites) according to the relative influence each had on the outcome of its operation, campaign, or on the war. The Class A and B battlefields represent the principal strategic operations of the war. The Class C and D battlefields usually represent operations with limited tactical objectives of enforcement and occupation.

"A" (having a decisive influence on a campaign and a direct impact on the course of the war);

"B" (having a direct and decisive influence on their campaign);

"C" (having observable influence on the outcome of a campaign);

"D" (having a limited influence on the outcome of their campaign or operation but achieving or affecting important local objectives).

Because of their strategic character and national significance, the Class A and B sites should be an interest or responsibility of the Federal as well as state and local governments, non- profits, and other private entities. Generally, the Class C and D battlefields, representing tactical operations, were of state or local significance and should be a primary interest or responsibility of state or local governments, or of private entities.

Parker's Revenge Ambush Primary and Secondary sources

Prepared and provided by: Jim Hollister, Park Ranger, December 7, 2011

Notes on the Action at "Parker's Revenge"

Prepared and provided by: Bill Rose, Lexington Minute Men, January 26, 2014

Primary Sources
Jim Hollister, NPS

Nathan Monroe (veteran of Capt. Parker's Company) December 22, 1824 – "About the middle of the forenoon, Capt. Parker, having collected part of his company, marched them towards Concord, I being with them. We met the regulars in the bounds of Lincoln, about noon, retreating towards Boston. We fired on them, and continued so to do until they met their reinforcements in Lexington."

Ensign DeBerniere, Report to General Gage, March 1775 – "We dined at the house of a Mr. Bliss, a friend to government; they had sent him word they would not let him go out of the town alive that morning; however, we told him if he would come with us, we would take care of him, as we were three and all well armed, he consented and told us he could shew us another road, called the Lexington Road. We set out and crossed the bridge in the town, and of consequence left the town on the contrary side of the river to what we entered it. The road continued very open and good for six miles, the next five a little inclosed, (there is one very bad place in these five miles) the road good to Lexington..."

Captain William Souter, Light Infantry Company, Marines – "On our leaving Concord we were immediately surrounded on every quarter, and expected to be cut off every moment. Sometimes we took possession of one hill, sometimes of another; at least it was determined to push forward to Lexington which we did through a plaguey fire, when we were joined by Lord Percy with the first Brigade..."

Secondary Sources [See also Doug Sabin's "April 19, 1775 – A Historiographical Study"]

Elias Phiney, "History of the Battle at Lexington on the Morning of the 19th April, 1775", 1825

After having dressed their wounded, the king's troops resumed their retreat toward Boston. No sooner were they in motion, than the American troops again pressed upon them, with a still more furious and intrepid attack. The Lexington company, with unabated ardour, joined in the pursuit, and the firing on both sides, with little or no intermission, continued until the enemy ascended Bunker Hill at the close of the day.

Ezra Ripley – "A History of the Fight at Concord", 1827: page 31

"From this time there was a general though not entire cessation of firing, until the enemy had entered the bounds of Lexington, when Captain Parker's company attacked the British on the south of the road."

Ellen Chase , "The Beginnings of the American Revolution, Vol. II" 1911

Page 78: *"Near the line Captain Parker and his men met the British and fired briskly from woods on the south side of the road, and from the opposite hillside. Jedediah Monroe, wounded in the early morning, was now killed, at the age of fifty-four, and Francis Brown, also of Parker's company, seriously wounded. He was thirty-seven years old and received a wound in the cheek by a musket-ball which passed nearly through his neck, and was almost a year later extracted from the back on the same. He lost about three months of his time and had a doctor's bill of 3/2/0 to pay, besides nursing, in consideration of which he received a grant of 12/2/0. At the time he was hit he had just stepped from behind a rock in Lincoln, near*

the boundary, when three Regulars fired, the ball passing under his ear. His granddaughter, Mrs. Pamela Fiske of Arlington, alive in 1894, as a child used to trace the scar with her finger."

Frank W. Coburn, "The Battle of April 19, 1775" 1912

It was in Lincoln that Captain Parker's Lexington Company, numbering in all one hundred and twenty men, again went into action, probably not far from the Nelson and Hastings homes; and also the Cambridge Company under Capt. Samuel Thatcher, seventy-seven men, joined the pursuit from there...

As the British forces again invaded Lexington soil, undoubtedly they looked for vengeance from the hands of the little band that stood before them in the early morning. If they did anticipate as much they were not disappointed, for as we have stated, Captain Parker and his men had come out into the edge of Lincoln to meet them.

Just over the line into Lexington, and a few rods north of the road, the land rises about fifty feet rather abruptly and with a ledgy face. This little summit commands a grand view up and down the road, for quite a distance, and therefore was an ideal location for the minutemen. Many were there awaiting the passing of the British, and when they were opposite, poured down on them a volley. At least one fell, an officer, for a few years ago a sword was taken up from the depth of about four feet, evidently from his grave. It was almost consumed with rust, but enough remaining to identify it as of British make and of that period. The reports of muskets, and little puffs of blue smoke betrayed the location of the marksmen, and the British at once returned the fire. Their aim was without effect. One of the bullets flattened against the ledge, and was also found by the present owner of the land, buried in the decayed leaves and refuse at the base of the ledge.

Charles Hudson, "History of the Town of Lexington" 1913

page 151: *"Jedediah Monroe was wounded in the morning, but nothing daunted by the dangers he had encountered and the wound he had received, instead of quitting the field, he marched with the company towards Concord to meet the enemy, and fell in the afternoon, a victim to his patriotism and bravery."*

Page 166: *"In Lincoln also, Captain Parker, who had collected most of his men, came up with his company, and taking a position in the fields, poured into the retreating enemy a galling and destructive fire as they passed."*

Notes on the Action at “Parker’s Revenge”

Bill Rose 26 Jan 2014

(all statements and opinions in this section are those of Bill Rose and are a contribution to the Parker’s Revenge Archaeology Project)

What do we know about the action at the site known as Parker’s Revenge? The short answer is that we know nothing. There is no specific contemporary account that either states the precise site, the action itself or the participants.

We are fairly certain that Capt Parker rallied his men from the morning’s action on the Green and determined to meet the returning Regulars on the western boundary of the Town of Lexington later in the day. And while Parker’s efforts have a special meaning to the people of Lexington, there were companies from many other towns in proximity to Parker. In particular, men from Concord were pushing the column from the west with other towns that had participated in the North Bridge fight and, of course, the western boundary of Lexington is the eastern boundary of Lincoln.

There is no clean answer or description of precisely what happened where, to whom and when in the early afternoon of 19 April on the Battle Road.

With that in mind, then what could be done to provide some meaning to the generations?

Some assumptions that might have merit. These are based on the few facts that are available, the land as it exists today and what we believe we know about tactics for a Regular column marching in the spring of 1775.

- There were a house and barn in the immediate area, north of the turn in the Battle Road as it exits the defile represented by a small bridge.
- The road in turn then passes a rocky prominence. The road turns southerly and passes roughly to the west of these rocks that form a west east spine before turning back towards the east. These rocks represent Parker’s Revenge.
- Capt Parker’s company was in ambush upon/deployed among these rocks.
- Two colonials were killed in the vicinity. One a bit farther to the west from the rocks.
- LTCOL Smith sent out flankers to defeat Colonial forces attacking his flanks or preparing ambushes to his front. A rear defense was also mandatory but the bridge offered a meaningful choke point to expose his forces but also to slow down colonial forces as well when they pass it.
- Military men drop stuff on the march. A myriad of stuff from buttons to bayonets to leather gear, shoes, hats, particularly as the wounded are lightened of their accoutrements in the process of tending to them.
- The Regulars had looted property before they reached the area of the rocks. There are depositions alluding to the Regulars discarding the loot as the intensity of the fight increased on the march east.
- A marching column moves at about 3 mph. This one was a tad more motivated due to the nature of the combat, but it was also retarded by the need to attend to a growing train of wounded.
- The distance from the bridge to the southern edges of the rocks is 300 yards.
- The column is made of 700 men, 4 across and spaced irregularly due to the intensity of the combat. Flankers were relatively fresh and sent out on a continual basis. The column was assumed at 300 yards from first to last man.

- There was also significant combat in the rear of the column defending against the pressure from multiple colonial companies pressing from the west.
- At the marching speed and the distance to travel, which captures our interest for Parker's Revenge, the column will be exposed to this 300 yards stretch for something under 10 minutes. (While the column is 300 yards long, the first men enter the combat area and traverse it before the last man enters it, thus the area is the equivalent of one man marching 600 yards. At marching speed a man will cover this distance in about 7 minutes.)
- The colonial shooters were on the north side of the road.
- Colonial and Regular shooters could fire 3 rounds per minute.
- Colonial and Regular shooters had sufficient store of ammunition at this point in the battle.
- The bridge formed a choke point and slowed the column within sight of the rocks.
- Muskets were fired and balls were scattered along virtually every point of the compass. This is based on the orientation of the road as it turns, the orientation of the rocky prominence. These features provide military targets in 360 degrees.
- Musket balls may be civilian or military/militia
- Musket balls were dropped in the process of loading.
- A lot of musket balls were used. If each Regular only fired 1 round in that 7 minutes and each colonial fired one then at least 1000 balls would have been distributed in the area. (One could apply sensitivity analysis to challenge this number as too great or too small. At present I let it stand as an assumption open to challenge.)
- The range of a fired musket ball was 200 yards given target elevation, trees to stop them, gravity etc.
- The area is as large as 5 acres. 200 balls per acre, simple average. There was not a uniform distribution.
- The useful range to "aim" and to fire a ball is under 100 yards.
- You cannot determine, easily, the difference between colonial and Regular rounds. However, caliber size is useful. Regulars would fire .75 from muskets, .65 from carbines and fusils (Artillery and officers) and .60 from pistols. Colonial muskets would be similar with the addition of French musket caliber of .69. These would be from arms captured from Louisburg in the previous war.
- Land use, plowing, building, demolition have all disturbed the upper layers of soil and some topographical features but have not destroyed all information

Facts that are useful:

- There was a fight here, wherever is.
- The Air Force Archaeology Team found three musket balls.
- Two were fired and struck a hard object. One appears to be near .75 caliber.
- One was probably fired, perhaps dropped, and is in good condition. It is .75 caliber.
- The Team found an 18th century shoe buckle. It is plain and suitable for a soldier or unpretentious farmer.
- The Rocks have not moved and provide a suitable ambush site as they overlook the Road from an elevated position.
- The site of the Tabitha Nelson House has not been confirmed.
- The site of her barn has not been found.
- Carriages to carry the wounded were appropriated/stolen from Concord. They were in the column so horse tack is present from these carriages as well as the officers' and appropriated horses.

- Plunder was removed from one town to another, west to east

So what does all this mean in our effort to execute a meaningful analysis of the site?

- Can we determine the site(s) of the encounter(s) among Smith's column as it exits the bridge and the men in ambush to the front of the column, Parker's men, and those pursuing the column from the west. Can we form an idea of the expanse of the site(s)?
- Can we find evidence of decidedly military presence at the site, Crown and Colonial?
- Can we identify any structures that existed at the time of the fight that would impact the tactics employed by either the colonials or the Regulars?
- Can we better understand the nature of the terrain and land use at the time of the encounter?

In general, can we paint a picture of what happened on this small piece of dirt on the western edge of Lexington on the early afternoon of 19 April 1775 that we can defend? And can we defend it with our efforts to uncover previously unknown information hidden in or on this ground?

I believe there were only two possible ways this fight took place. For both, the pressure from the west remains constant and not extreme at this point. There were multiple companies with no coherent command structure that comingled from the west and north including, but not limited to, Reading, Woburn, Lincoln, Concord, Framingham, Bedford and Acton. So if we concentrate on the force impeding eastward progress, we need to think primarily of Lexington men and perhaps Lincoln. As Smith's column exits the bridge area, he can be presented with two scenarios.

Military Tactic Scenario 1

One involves structures outside his interest. If the Tabitha Nelson house and barn site are much beyond 100 yards, the range of effective musket fire, he will more than likely tend to ignore them in his effort to get east. Flankers will protect the front of the column more than flanks. He will not detach men to clear the house of single or small numbers of snipers/harassers.

He will be more interested in the elevated rocky land to his immediate front and thus the combat area will be smaller.

Bullet flight from the colonials will be predominantly from east to west, some towards the north if aimed at the troops as they leave the bridge, some to the south as the troops turn back towards the east.

Bullet flight from the Regulars would form an arc from the bridge area northeast all the way to due south as they leave the ambush site.

Military Tactic Scenario 2

On the other hand, if the house and barn are closer, then he is compelled to send men to determine whether he is not only to be ambushed from the rocks but also from a defended "fort" to his left flank and rear.

In this case, the fight will be a bit longer and the area of interest will be larger. There would be bullet flight from the colonials farther to the north (in the area where the Air Force finds were made) fired from the rocks towards the flankers, and Regular rounds headed north as well, fired at the structures. Colonial rounds fired from the structures would be mingled with those of the Regulars fired towards the ambush on the rocks.

As to the fight at the ambush site around and below the face of the rocks, I believe the fight was forced to follow tactics dictated by the topography of the land.

As you face the rocks from the road, looking east, the site appears to be a rather daunting obstacle. However, the land slopes gradually to the east and also to north and south from the crest. This makes it very easy for the colonials to ascend the heights and to make an effective military egress as well after a suitable stand. At the time of contact, the colonials know this but the Regulars do not.

Had Smith sent flanking parties down the northern edge of the rocky prominence, they would have encountered a very gradual rise leading to a very exposed colonial rear guard. There is no forbidding cliff to negotiate. They merely need to run up a nice little slope.

Conversely, the top of the rocks gradually reduce to the level of the road to the south. This affords the defending colonials an excellent escape route.

So, I think the Regulars ran about 100 yards to the north and east of Parker's Revenge and threatened the rear of the colonial defenders/ambushers. Parker was able to bring off his men down the slope from the crest to the southeast and back onto the road and headed east.

We can't ignore the main body of grenadiers and increasingly tiring light troops and wounded marching in the road. They are certainly able to fire in a greater or lesser disciplined way, perhaps even in volley, at defined clumps of colonials, even those gathered about the Revenge site.

I believe that to the south and west of the road there is less/no action due to the fact the land there is very rocky and swampy, hence the need for the small bridge. This lets Smith concentrate on his front, some to his rear and only to his left flank, usually the northerly and easterly sides of the road. The right flank is defended by the land until he turns decidedly east after the Whittemore property.

One of my goals for this project is to uncover information that either supports or refutes these assertions.

What information would do that?

- Finding the structures
- Finding artifacts germane to the fight
- Determining land characteristics, roads, paths, trees at the time of the fight
- OTHER!?!?!?

In the event artifacts are recovered, what tools can help us tease the story out?

- Chemistry/metallurgical analysis
- Cultural attributes and styles
- Land records of use and ownership

As you can see from these pages, my emphasis is on how this effort illuminates what we know about the fight along the Battle Road. The military aspect drove the whole reason there is ANY interest in this site in the first place so I believe this is the overarching consideration.

On the other hand, learning anything new is useful and anything new about 18th century material culture is really useful.

What are my expectations?

They are few and one IS NOT that we will find anything in the ground. That is a hope but not an expectation.

However, one is that we will offer an opportunity for any interested citizen of the local towns to participate in a meaningful way to gain any insight into the story this piece of dirt has to tell.