

**"84 Miles to Boston/13 to Hadley"**

South Cemetery Milestone, Photo by Author.

# A Stone's Throw to Belchertown:

## Milestone Markers Along a Massachusetts Bay Path

NOLAN COOL



**Editor's Introduction:** *This article explores the hidden history surrounding three surviving eighteenth-century milestone markers in Belchertown, Massachusetts. Through a careful exploration of the interconnected histories of colonial travel, networking, turnpikes, and stonecutting, as well as the development of the postal service, the author unravels the enigma of these granite markers. The author argues that "milestones offer a glimpse into local manifestations of early infrastructure and temporal networks while shedding light on the presence of roads, time, and distance in the mindset of peoples navigating and negotiating New England's earlier landscapes." Many Massachusetts' towns have similar mile markers, and each tells a unique story.*

*In what is essentially a detective story, author Nolan Cool sifts through the surviving historical records, unearthing clues from obscure sources including maps, letters, and the granite stones themselves, in an effort to accurately date and identify the stones' creators. Before embarking upon this story, however, it*

*is helpful to briefly trace the arc of Belchertown's history. Incorporated in 1761, "Belchertown is a 'bedroom' community with many residents commuting to jobs in surrounding towns and cities and even to Hartford and Boston," according to the official town website. Located adjacent to the Quabbin Reservoir, the town has one of the largest land areas in Massachusetts but a population of only 14,649 as of 2010.*

*In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the local economy centered on lumber, orchards, and the raising of cattle, sheep, and hogs. Lumbering benefitted from the presence of large pine and hardwood forests. Although there were many small farms, for the most part large-scale crop farming was not widespread due to the area's rocky soil. As in most areas of New England, water power was central to early industrial development. Throughout the nineteenth century, Jabish Brook and the Swift River furnished power for many types of mills, including sawmills, grist mills, plaster mills, cider mills, turning mills, and even a woolen mill. Belchertown's many streams still show the remains of mill ponds and dams today.*

*In 1845, these industries produced a wide assortment of products. This list will sound quaint to today's ears: one organ ("valued at \$300"); 30 plows; 65 pairs of boots; 200 pairs of shoes; 475 hats and caps; 1,000 rakes; several thousand farm implements (including shovels, forks, and hoes); 1,500 bricks; an unspecified number of chairs ("valued at \$700"); saddles, harnesses, and trunks ("valued at \$1,200"); and an astonishing 176,782 "braided palm leaf hats" (today known as straw hats and typically braided by women working at home).<sup>1</sup> Most important was the carriage industry. According to local historians Shirley Bock, Doris Dickinson and Dan Fitzpatrick:*

*Belchertown's fame was spread across the United States by the carriage industry. From the early 1800s until after the Civil War, when business dropped sharply because of competition from the factories of the West, there were, at various times, over ten carriage shops. In the year 1845, 677 wagons were manufactured valued at \$40,400. Buggies and sleighs were shipped all over the East and as far south as Virginia."<sup>2</sup>*

*The authors go on to note that Josiah Gilbert Holland, in his History of Western Massachusetts, "stated that Belchertown produced more fine carriages than any other town of any size in the state. The finest make of carriages proudly bore the label 'Made in Belchertown.'" The town proudly bore the nickname "Carriagetown."<sup>3</sup>*

*During a short but notable period, the town's lifeblood was tourism, according to local historian Cliff McCarthy. Spurred by its location on the main overland*

route from Northampton to Boston and by the construction of a north-south railroad, starting at the turn of the twentieth century, people of means sought out Belchertown as an escape from the foul air and overcrowding of industrial cities, especially New York, Boston and Worcester. Belchertown had two resort hotels on its picturesque common and several beautiful lakes which were used for recreation.<sup>4</sup>



**Belchertown, Massachusetts**

With the demise of Belchertown's famed carriage industry in the late nineteenth century, dairy farming assumed greater importance. Belchertown Creamery was established during that period and lasted until 1917, shipping butter by train to cities across New England. During the 1930s and early '40s, the raising of chickens briefly flourished. Contractors provided local residents with feed and young chicks which they raised to broiler size, receiving payment when they returned them to the contractor. This required no cash investment and helped many families during the Great Depression.<sup>5</sup> The town also became the site of the Belchertown State School for the Feeble-Minded, which existed from 1922 until its closing in 1994 amid revelations of poor conditions and inhumane treatment. Today, the University of Massachusetts in neighboring Amherst employs more Belchertown residents than any other company or institution.

This is the first article relating to the history of Belchertown to be published in the Historical Journal of Massachusetts. The story told here ranges well beyond local history, however; author Nolan Cool's investigation traverses and illuminates broad themes in Massachusetts' colonial history. It is the author's hope that this framework may prove useful to other local historians and concerned citizens interested in placing their towns' stones and monuments into deeper historical contexts. Mr. Cool received his M.A. in Public History from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. As a public historian, he is interested in understanding how communities preserve, remember and use material culture and historic places to connect their past with their present.

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In popular culture, the concept of "historic place" is typically associated with local bits of material culture—historic houses, cemeteries, monuments, statues, and other notable landmarks. The small town of Belchertown in

Western Massachusetts is no different. There one can find three carved granite stones standing roughly three and a half feet above the ground. Near the town hall sits the most visible of the three. Inscribed with the words “85 Miles to Boston 15 to N. Hampton,” the granite slab marks a point in the road emanating outward from Massachusetts Bay. Its continuing presence bears witness to Belchertown’s historical centrality to the landscape of this rural Connecticut River Valley place.

Over 250 years old, the stones stand within two miles of each other, and all record Belchertown’s distance between Boston, Hadley, and Northampton. Carved during the eighteenth century, they have remained enigmatic in the town’s history and public memory. Local residents have speculated about their pasts and sought to identify precisely when they were placed on the “County Road” linking Boston and Albany. These seemingly inauspicious granite markers offer travelers, scholars, and passersby multiple layered historical contexts. Although the documentary record is sparse and tangled, clues to their origins can be found by unraveling the interconnected histories of travel, networking, turnpikes, stonecutting, and the development of the postal service. Each context remains embedded in these stones.

In the mid-1630s, “Bay Roads” began launching European colonists outward from Massachusetts Bay and Boston across appropriated Native American trails, with milestones gradually marking the Anglo American presence on the landscape.<sup>6</sup> Massachusetts’ first milestones appeared near the densest settlements along Massachusetts Bay and near Boston, where the earliest marker emerged in 1707. This early milestone represents the infancy of the system: the marker only lists the year of its placement, the initials of the person who commissioned it, and a single letter as a way to identify the name of the towns mentioned.

## DESCRIPTION AND PLACEMENT

Since their inception, Belchertown’s stones have continuously stood 84, 85, and 86 miles from Boston. Currently, milestones 85 and 86 sit closer to the town’s main center and appear to have been crafted by the same eighteenth-century carver. In contrast, milestone 84 stands just outside of town on Mill Valley Road (Route 181), near Belchertown’s oldest burial ground, South Cemetery. This marker exhibits major differences from the two others. These include its darker patina, its reference to Hadley instead of Northampton, and its presence close to a graveyard (a center of eighteenth-century stonecutting). In addition, the carving style differs on this marker:

the lettering exhibits closer spacing and is placed closer to the top of the stone.

Although these physical traits can be clearly observed, the stones' origins have been shrouded in obscurity. Milestones nearer to Boston are more well-documented than those in more rural locales such as Belchertown. Official documentation from the Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS) completed in 1975 by the Belchertown Historical Commission label the stones as "monuments" and date them to "C. 1790." The study explains that the markers stand along an "old stage road from Northampton to Brookfield" and refer to their similarity to "those placed by order of Benj. Franklin throughout the colonies." Each MACRIS form lists only the single word "observation" under the references section, providing no further information.<sup>7</sup> It seems that contemporary thought surrounding Belchertown's stones brings up more questions than answers. However, careful investigation reveals new truths and offers evidence that they were, in fact, constructed decades earlier than 1790.



Belchertown Milestone #86, c. 1970



## POSSESSING THE ROAD: 16<sup>TH</sup>- AND 17<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY COLONIAL ROOTS

Massachusetts' milestones trace their roots to the early eighteenth century and reflect Anglo American traditions of manipulating, marking, and controlling local landscapes. The inclusion of milestones along British roads borrowed from a Roman past, where these types of physical markers aided travelers in efficiently managing time while traversing the empire's roads. With the exception of more uniform milestones emerging along nineteenth-century turnpike roads, no two stones appear exactly the same. Each differs in its overall size, shape, lettering, carving patterns, materials, color, and other traits closely related to gravestone design and local stonecutting traditions and techniques. As roads expanded, so did the need for road signage.

In the British Empire's North American colonies, roads served as networks for settler expansion and of colonial appropriation as much as they did for more utilitarian use in travel, by which the milestones illustrate a clear, physical example across Anglo American landscapes. As Katherine Grandjean explains in her study, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England*, the British empire's colonization of New England did not simply emerge as a "series of settlements being planted in American soil," but included the appropriation of Native American trails and "road" networks across the landscape.<sup>8</sup> Through a "communications frontier" of traveling information, news, and trade goods along New England's roads, colonists and Native peoples mapped the region with their feet between the 1630s and early eighteenth century, creating what Grandjean labeled a "new dimension of contest and conquest" along colonial roads and Narragansett trails.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, in *Fellow Travelers: Indians and Europeans Contesting the Early American Trail*, Philip Levy argues that these appropriated colonial "wagon roads, dirt roads, toll roads, and state roads" proved "essential for survival" for both Europeans and Native peoples across North America. Levy asserts that these road systems retained their former use as trails hosting shared "trade, visitation, or hunting" between tightly entangled settler and Native communities along these lines of travel.<sup>10</sup> For Anglo American travelers, settlers, colonists, and administrators, "measurements, recording distances, and describ[ing] what they saw" reinforced a type of control over the landscape, and milestones remained a key part of this phenomenon.<sup>11</sup>

From the mid-seventeenth into the early eighteenth century, "Bay Roads" emerged between the Massachusetts Bay and interior settlements closer to the developing Connecticut River Valley. By the 1660s, the developing interior

and connections to New York and Philadelphia called for better roadways, communication lines, and intercolonial travel routes. Major roadways served as travel and post routes along these distances, notably the “King’s Highway,” which ran from Boston to Springfield, down to Hartford and New Haven, and then along the coastline to New York and Philadelphia.

Many different routes went by the name of “Bay Path,” creating some confusion in the historical record. The year 1673 brought a new “Bay Path” from Worcester to Brookfield, which branched off from major routes heading to and from Boston.<sup>12</sup> A few years prior, settlers migrating from Ipswich arrived at a site along the Quaboag River that became Brookfield. As this settlement grew, a “Bay Road” emerged connecting Brookfield to the Upper Connecticut River Valley via a road to Hadley and Northampton. Although difficult to trace during the late seventeenth century, this route continued west through the Berkshire hill towns to its destination in Albany.<sup>13</sup>

Worcester historian Alice Earle Morse located Belchertown along this “Old Bay Path” as an extension of the 1673 road, which ran from Brookfield through Ware and on to Hadley and Northampton.<sup>14</sup> A Massachusetts Historical Commission archaeological report labeled this route a “major east-west trail” linking Brookfield to the middle Connecticut River Valley as it ran from “the Ware River ford in Ware Center over the highlands and across the Swift River to Cold Spring in Belchertown.” The route continued through “Cold Spring,” as Belchertown was known prior to its 1761 incorporation.<sup>15</sup> These and other primary sources indicate that Belchertown maintained a presence on routes connecting Boston, the Massachusetts interior, and Albany via one of earliest “Bay Roads” carrying news, people, trade goods, and information into and out of Massachusetts Bay.<sup>16</sup>

## **PRECARIOUS ROADWAYS: KING PHILLIP’S WAR 1675-76**

Networks of interconnected trails, roads, and highways proved fragile and risky spaces during periods of conflict. During King Philip’s War in 1675 and 1676, French and Indian attacks rose along interior regions of New England. Trails and roads far removed from more densely populated and better defended Massachusetts Bay settlements became volatile spaces. Nearby Nipmuck warriors attacked travelers between Boston and Springfield, creating fear among colonial travelers moving along Bay Roads. In August 1675, Native warriors attacked and lay siege to Brookfield, halting all travel and communications between the coast and interior.

Algonquians strategically targeted colonial reliance on road systems for communications and potential aid. Smaller Bay Road settlements like



Brookfield, Springfield, Hadley, and Northampton were largely disconnected from Massachusetts Bay at this time. This tension illustrated the importance of road maintenance, protection, and colonial control following the conflict, perhaps foreshadowing later efforts to appropriate Native trails and “mark” colonial roads linking coastal Massachusetts with more distant Connecticut River Valley frontier settlements.<sup>17</sup>

### “COLD SPRING”: BELCHERTOWN’S EARLY YEARS

Roadways, migration, and landmarks defined Belchertown’s earliest history. As with other landscape features, or natural landmarks such as specific rocks, waterfalls, and ponds that were prominent in Algonquian peoples’ ecological and spiritual stewardship over New England’s landscape, one such site constituted the origins of what became Belchertown. Europeans often ignored or derided Native peoples’ relationship to natural landmarks. However, they adapted and appropriated the “Cold Spring” as an important water source and landmark about midway between Brookfield and Northampton. The site served as a stopover and eventually became a settlement for migrating colonists and travelers.<sup>18</sup>

In a brief sketch of the town’s history, second generation colonist, Justus Dwight, chronicled that “Cold Spring took its name from a noted Cold Spring in the East part of town near the path that was traveled from Northampton to Brookfield to Boston.” Dwight continued that there was “no House between Hadley and Brookfield” and that “the people that traveled made that a place to stop at it being about halfway from Hadley to Brookfield.”<sup>19</sup> During this early period in the first half of the eighteenth century, surveyors and travelers began eying Cold Spring as a potential settlement, and no doubt used the roadway between Brookfield, Hadley, and Northampton.

Sources indicate that Deacon Aaron Lyman took the road from Northampton to Cold Spring and established a farmstead there in 1728. Lyman also capitalized on his position along the road as he obtained a license to operate a tavern near Cold Spring that same year.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, surveyor Timothy Dwight acquired land alongside several other local settlers from nearby in Hadley and Northampton. In the early 1730s, additional colonists migrated along the “County Road” to Cold Spring from Hatfield and Northampton.<sup>21</sup>

Another Northampton native, Nathaniel Dwight migrated to Cold Spring in roughly 1732, where he settled an estate near the center of town along South Main St., close to the location of one of the three milestones. Like his predecessors, Dwight served as a surveyor in Hampshire County and

surveyed roads in nearby Palmer, Sturbridge, Brimfield, and elsewhere. He operated a tavern close to the position of milestone 85 and present-day town hall. Dwight maintained his prominence in the town as a major landholder, the first town clerk, and by serving as a selectman multiple times.<sup>22</sup>

The town grew slowly. In 1731, roughly five or six families inhabited about six hundred acres close to the Bay Road. By 1737, about twenty families lived in the area. Primarily focused on agriculture, the town's position on the road between Brookfield, Hadley, and Northampton carried travelers and settlers alike to Cold Spring.<sup>23</sup>

### **ROAD BUILDING IN "BELCHERS TOWN": 1761-1800**

As early as 1735, county records indicate road maintenance in the area. For example, a ledger entry on April 8th describes efforts toward "making alterations In the road" between the house of settler John Smith and Brookfield's western line.<sup>24</sup> During the late eighteenth century, a growing population demanded greater organization of settlement, road-building, infrastructure, and general maintenance of highways. After Cold Spring's citizens sent several petitions to Massachusetts colonial officials, the town finally became incorporated on June 23, 1761 as "Belchers Town" [sic], named for Jonathan Belcher, Massachusetts' provincial Governor between 1730 and 1741.

Road-building continued in subsequent years, as the newly incorporated town annually estimated road repair costs and landholding members of the community contributed to paying for highway maintenance. Citizens collaboratively provided labor, materials, and money for road repairs. Road maintenance proved crucial but fluctuated during periods of conflict and war. Meanwhile, town roads continued expanding around the main County Road. Plans to, for example, "Raise money to Repair highways" continually made it into town meeting notices throughout the period.<sup>25</sup>

### **MILESTONES MAPPED: "A PLAN OF BELCHERSTOWN," 1794**

During the early 1790s, Belchertown's road-building plans required significant maintenance and official town records indicate that its milestones were in place by this time. Belchertown's Stone Museum houses a copy of a map titled "A Plan of Belcherstown as it was surveyed in November & December 1794." This map shows that roads expanded in the town during this period and grew even more interconnected with the Bay Roads and stagecoach lines connecting Boston to Hadley, Northampton, and beyond.

Separate “Stage Roads” appear everywhere, connecting Belchertown to Boston, Ware, Palmer, Hadley, and elsewhere in Massachusetts.

Most notably regarding the town’s milestones, this map confirms the presence of milestone 85. In the center of the map, a line refers to a “Meeting House 85 miles from Boston 15 from Northampton,” which matches the inscription on the milestone standing near present-day town hall next to the Belchertown Common. The map strongly suggests that the surveyors who created it borrowed the wording from milestone 85, near the site of Nathaniel Dwight’s estate.<sup>26</sup>

Similar to milestones, wooden “guide posts” emerged around the Commonwealth that same year. The Massachusetts Legislature mandated towns and private landholders to construct “a substantial post of not less than eight feet in height” containing “the distance or number of miles” between destinations with the “figure of a hand with a fore finger thereof pointing towards the town or place to which the said road may lead.”<sup>27</sup> These wooden guideposts served a similar purpose and maintained a presence across the Commonwealth, although few of them have survived.

Although they prove difficult to pin down in remaining records, Belchertown’s milestones appear when one reads between the lines. Looking into the deeper context of road network, travel, and local politics illustrates a wider picture of where Belchertown’s milestones fit into broader transportation and networking patterns across Massachusetts and New England. Maps, correspondence, and land records strongly suggest the milestones’ presence at least as early as 1794, appearing to confirm the town Historical Association’s estimated date of “C. 1790” offered in the 1975 MACRIS report. However, exploring other contexts reveals additional clues to dating the stones, as well as determining their creator(s) and original purpose.

## **POSTAL PORTALS: POST ROUTES & COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION**

Massachusetts’ milestones are often linked to Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin. This association can create a confusing web of local lore, legend, and unsubstantiated claims. Belchertown’s own stones remain subject to these possible legends: the town’s MACRIS forms state that the markers appear “similar in shape and style to many of the markers erected along the Boston Post Road, connecting Boston to Springfield beginning in 1767.”<sup>28</sup>

Although these stories often prove to be fictitious, the post road context offers a number of potential clues to their origins, even if records do not explicitly mention them by name. Digging deeper into the history of post roads



**Royal Governor Jonathan Belcher (1682-1757)**



**Branches of the Boston Post Road**

across the Northeast and more locally across the Connecticut River Valley's smaller towns reveals several pieces of evidence supporting the presence of milestones along Bay Roads linking Boston to New York, Philadelphia, and Albany. Alongside this post road context, records illustrate Massachusetts colonial officials' efforts to map roads on the eve of the Revolutionary War.

During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the colonial postal service across New England proved sporadic and poorly unorganized. In the 1630s and 1640s, Massachusetts Bay correspondence and letter-carrying remained in its infancy. Although a postmaster organized postal deliveries, roads remained largely undeveloped alongside these unorganized services. In 1673, colonial officials mandated a system standardizing payment for post riders and letter-carriers along colonial roads, trails, and paths leading into and out of Massachusetts Bay. After this year, the post traveled from Boston to New York once a month. In 1729, London cartographer Herman Moll drafted the first map of North America's post roads linking Boston to New York and Philadelphia.<sup>29</sup> It shows a route along the southern New England coastline, closely paralleling long-used and appropriated Algonquian trails. The Massachusetts interior bordering New York appeared largely devoid of roads and also appeared forested in Moll's map, suggesting that a major road to Albany via western Massachusetts had not yet attained broader use.<sup>30</sup>

Beginning in the early eighteenth century, colonial post officials and private landowners arranged for the establishment of milestones marking out major post roads. Following Queen Anne's War between Britain and France, Queen Anne and British colonial officials aimed to create a "truly public postal service." In 1710, Parliament passed the Post Office Act, which further mandated standardized postal rates and "transatlantic letter bearing," based on distance and de-privatizing post rider occupations.

Meanwhile, the earliest surviving milestone dating to 1707 marked distances from Boston to Newbury along Massachusetts Bay.<sup>31</sup> Sandstone milestones began popping up along colonial post roads expanding outward from Boston and following well-worn Algonquian trails and roadways. The main Boston Post Road extended out from Boston, through southern Worcester county, through Brimfield, and ran to Springfield. Between the 1720s and 1750s, other post roads branched off along this route.

Milestones carved by local stonecutters, such as New London's Joshua Hempstead, mimicked gravestones in their appearance and style and emerged rapidly during the early eighteenth century along these networks of post roads. Milestone historians Mary and James Gage locate the Belchertown milestones on this road and assert that they belong in the post road context. Post lines in this region followed both old and new Bay Roads. From the Upper Post Road, separate roads split off separately from the route. Belchertown sat along one of the three that followed the old Bay and County Road linking Brookfield, Hadley, Northampton, which remained hubs carved on the milestones themselves.<sup>32</sup>

## **BELCHERTOWN'S MILESTONES: BEN FRANKLIN AND THE POST**

Many Massachusetts' milestones, including Belchertown's, likely emerged during Benjamin Franklin's tenure as Postmaster General. The British Empire commissioned 47-year-old Franklin and his Virginia counterpart, William Hunter, on August 10, 1753, offering them a £600 salary generated by postage tax and stamp sales.<sup>33</sup> However, the postal service Franklin and Hunter inherited proved extremely disorganized and unprofitable, leaving them with a fairly low-to-nonexistent salary early on. Plagued by rampant delays and post rider thefts, Franklin made it his mission to revise the postal service. He installed policies establishing standards for speed and efficiency, which included having carriers travel at night and fining riders for delays. Additionally, Franklin arranged for an added shipping charge to each subscription to the postal service, which provided extra currency to riders as



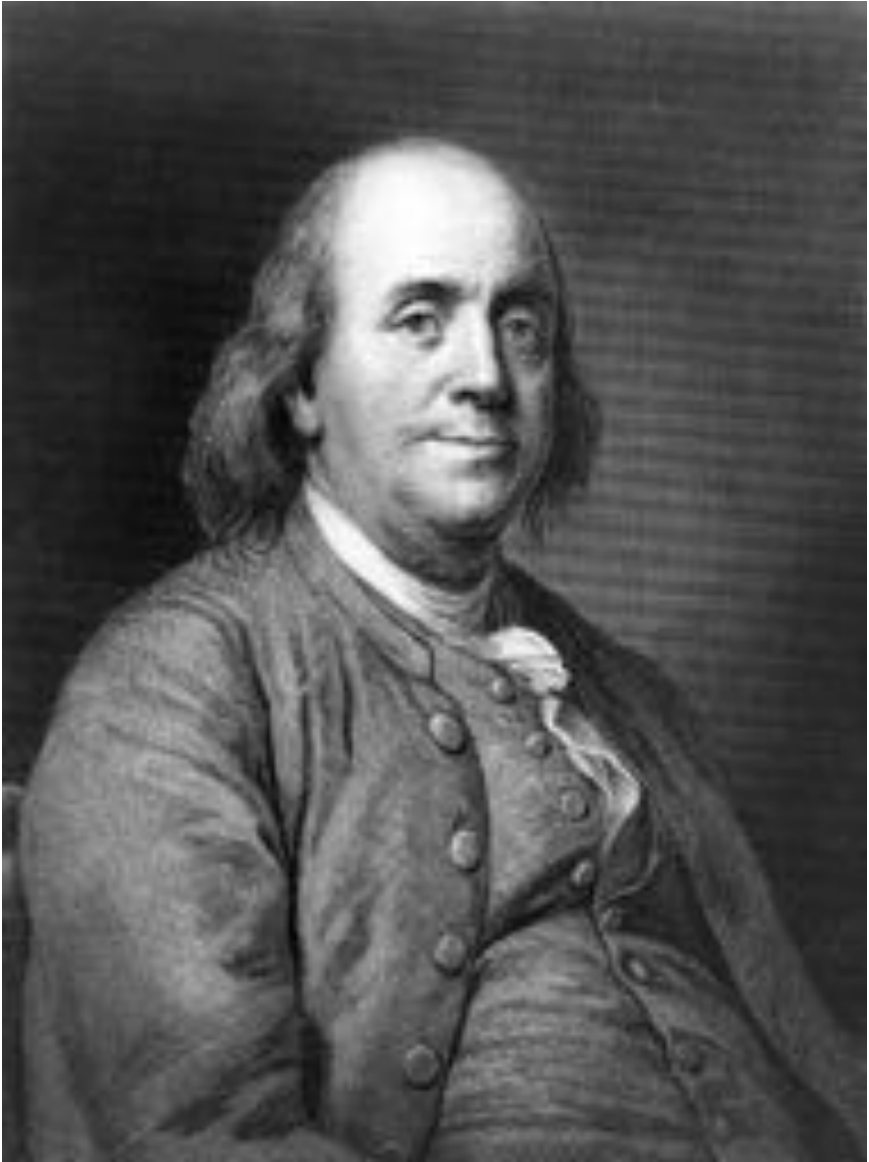
well as empowering postmasters to neglect “delinquent subscribers,” thereby eliminating wasteful travel for carriers.<sup>34</sup>

Franklin’s papers offer several clues suggesting that establishment of many Massachusetts’ milestones occurred during his tenure as Postmaster General. In a March 1758 report to deputy postmasters throughout North America, Franklin directed them to keep riders working on “their respective Roads,” and ordered them to pay carriers with the “Carriage-Money you collect for the Riders, to the several Riders who have carried such Papers, in Proportion, as near as conveniently may be, to the Distances they have been carried by each Rider.”<sup>35</sup>

Payment based on distance suggests the presence of some method of physically marking distances by 1758, and milestones may have proven the most effective way for postmasters to measure distances along post roads. In 1761, Franklin’s reorganization of the colonial postal service generated a profit for the first time in its history.<sup>36</sup> Over the course of the summer and into fall 1763, Franklin explained that he traveled over 1,600 miles “on a Tour thro’ all the Northern Colonies, to inspect and regulate the Post Offices in the several Provinces,” including Massachusetts.<sup>37</sup> That same year, Franklin and Hunter mutually measured the rates of postage, explaining that “several Places are ranged as they live in the Course or present Route of the Post.”<sup>38</sup> Although often shrouded in lore and legend in many milestone-bearing towns today, Franklin’s directives suggest that milestones fit into the Postmaster General’s organizational agenda to more efficiently regulate the colonial postal service.

The savvy inventor had created an odometer capable of recording the revolutions of a carriage’s wheels every mile. Franklin personally charted the distances he traveled by attaching a geared device to the rear wheel of his carriage. Every four hundred revolutions made by his wheel caused the device to click ahead one mile. By the end of his tour, he had gathered a stunningly accurate survey of early colonial roads.

However, there has also been much mythologizing in regards to his personal presence: legends in some towns retaining extant milestones today seem dubious. For example, some local histories refer to Franklin’s supposed travels measuring roads during periods when he was either overseas or elsewhere in the colonies.<sup>39</sup> However, important truths also exist in these stories, notably that teams working under the Franklin’s jurisdiction did indeed measure the distances inscribed on milestones at different intervals, which guided riders and helped them calculate postage rates. These markers altered the colonial landscape, appearing every mile so that post riders could confirm postage costs “accurately and fairly.”<sup>40</sup>



**Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)**

Source: 1868 Engraving by Henry Bryan Hall based on a portrait painted in 1783. Library of Congress.

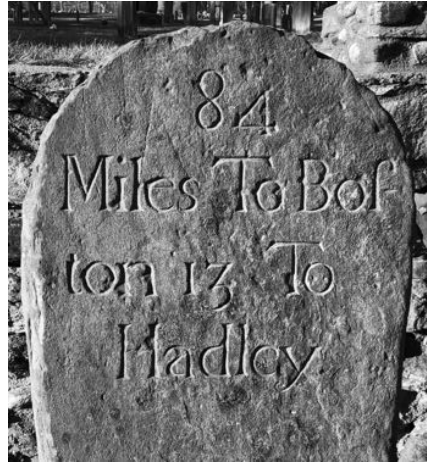
Beyond local lore, post roads and milestones must be understood within a broader context of colonial consolidation and control over North America's travel networks and landscapes. Franklin remarked to the Lords of the Treasury that his 1763 survey "was proposed to extend at least, through the whole present Post Roads, in order to examine everywhere into the state and Management of the several Post Offices."<sup>41</sup> He noted that the Governor of Quebec, James Murray, clamored for the "necessity of a regular Post between New York and Quebec." After Britain's acquisition of Canada in April 1765, Massachusetts Governor Sir Francis Bernard wrote to Governor Murray from Boston. He explained that trying to control the largely Catholic French Canadian population will "not be easy untill they get amidst the free Exercise of their own religion." Governor Bernard also enclosed maps completed containing "a Plan of the Rout from Fort Pownall to Quebec", revealing interest in mapping colonial highways toward sustaining control over roadways following the French and Indian War.<sup>42</sup>

In a larger Parliamentary plan devised in 1763 to survey post roads and travel networks more broadly, Governor Bernard collaborated with British officials to map highways around New England and beyond. In 1765, he reassigned Francis Miller, a surveyor and 45th regiment soldier then stationed in Newfoundland, to survey roads for the Commonwealth and Parliament.<sup>43</sup> Milestone scholars Mary and James Gage state that this route followed the Upper Post Road from Boston, through Brookfield, then to Hadley and Northampton, and ending in Albany.<sup>44</sup>

Along the Bay Road, this route passed directly through Belchertown. Francis Miller mapped out this road, a portion of it running between Brookfield, Belchertown, Hadley, and Northampton. Each mile along the road was marked on his map and near Belchertown, numbers 84, 85, and 86 are labeled, a clear reference to mileage from Boston. These labels provide strong evidence that the milestones were already present as early as 1765. Miller, who was unfamiliar with the landscape he surveyed, must have referred to existing mileage markers along the road. Days later, Governor Bernard enclosed Miller's 1765 maps in a letter to British General Henry Seymour Conway, writing that he "should be pleased to enquire of him Concerning the Temper of the people in this Country he may be ready to answer" just after opposition to the Stamp Act gave colonial officials in Boston a scare.<sup>45</sup>

Later Massachusetts council and legislature mandated towns to erect milestones along major roads.<sup>46</sup> However, Benjamin Franklin's earlier efforts as Postmaster General, as well as the presence of mileage notations on Francis Miller's 1765 maps, strongly suggest that Belchertown's milestones were established during the mid-eighteenth century and were thus present between

1758 and 1765. Parliamentary plans to survey post roads more broadly in Massachusetts coincided with both Franklin's agenda to make the postal service more efficient and Miller's commission to survey roads for Governor Bernard and the Board of Trade.



**Belchertown Milestone Markers  
84 (top right), 85 (above), and  
86 (bottom right)**

## STONE CARVING NETWORKS

While we have identified their dates, the names of the carver(s) of Belchertown's granite milestones remain elusive. When workers planned to move milestone 86 on Federal Street during a road-widening project in 2002, town historian Doris Dickinson hoped to search for a carver's initials, but observations during the move revealed no signs of a potential carver's name or initials.<sup>47</sup> However, some clues can be gleaned by exploring stonecutting and particularly stylistic lettering and ornamentation on local eighteenth-century Connecticut River Valley gravestones.

The details differ between the three Belchertown stones, suggesting that at least two carvers worked on them. Milestones 85 and 86 are closer to the center of town and both mention Northampton. Milestone 84 refers to Hadley as its other destination alongside Boston. Milestones 85 and 86 contain the words “From Boston,” while milestone 84 (near South Cemetery) reads “To Boston.” Lastly, milestone 84’s wording starts on the left side of the stone, while the other two milestones contain centered inscriptions. All three are made from identical materials and contain an “8” and a “1” next to an offset second number. This suggests that they were all carved in the same shop but inscribed by different carvers.<sup>48</sup>

Gravestone carving proved a relatively small-scale occupation for stonecutters operating in the Connecticut River Valley. Across rural New England, this craft served religious roles, but also became a commercial craft in places along the coast.<sup>49</sup> Gravestone makers called themselves “stonecutters, engravers, and sculptors,” and sometimes carried their craft along the networked roads of New England as they migrated from job to job.

Overall, approximately 127 identifiable gravestone carvers operated in pre-1800 New England. Rural stonecutters in towns like Belchertown and the Upper Connecticut River Valley “worked independently in isolated frontier communities,” and often used carving to supplement their income. These engravers worked with locally-sourced schist (a type of crystalline rock) and sandstone throughout the eighteenth century, often moving from place to place to practice their craft.<sup>50</sup> Stonecutters normally ran shops with pre-cut slabs for gravestones, yet the similarities between eighteenth-century milestones and gravestones suggest that carvers were prepared to construct both types of marker.<sup>51</sup>

Stonecutting and roadways maintained a tight-knit connection during the eighteenth century, creating what may be labeled as a kind of monument landscape today. Remaining milestones belong in this category. For example, a Cambridge marker from 1734 contains the initials “A I” for Abraham Ireland, who commissioned and paid for milestone 8. Ireland, who died in 1753, is buried in Cambridge’s Old Burying Ground, residing in the same landscape as the marker he commissioned, which sits in the bounds of the graveyard. Along this major road in Cambridge, milestones and gravestones appear connected in a monument landscape.

As wagon roads and travel grew in rural parts of the Commonwealth, craftsman began to operate along major roads, eroding a reliance on local carvers. For example, along the County Road connecting Brookfield with Hadley and Northampton, carvers contributed to the monument landscape through travel. A 1798 marble headstone marking the burial site for Mary

Hinckley contains identical material, style, art patterns, and lettering as that on the marble gravestone for Moses and Elizabeth Porter in Hadley that same year. Although this stonemason remains unknown, he clearly used the main road to transport his craft, thereby reinforcing the idea that styles traveled alongside carvers, creating a mobile monument landscape. Other stylistic ornamentation traveled between Brookfield, Hadley, and Northampton along the County Road. These included common biblical symbols commemorating death including trees of life, vines, and resurrection crowns. Whether producing gravestones, milestones, or both, road networks connected carvers to a wider monument landscape.<sup>52</sup>

Belchertown stands right in the middle of the Brookfield-Northampton monument landscape. The town functioned as one of the major centers for ornamental carving in the Upper Connecticut River Valley. Operating mostly in and around Hampshire County, members of the town's Sikes family contributed to the regional monument landscape through gravestone carving as far west as Northampton, as far north as the small settlement of New Salem, and as far south as Mansfield Center, Connecticut. Their local customers lived in Hadley, Northampton, Sunderland, Hatfield, and more easterly points along the Bay Road near Spencer.<sup>53</sup> Building materials connected this monument landscape as well. Most Upper Connecticut Valley stone markers and monuments were crafted from sandstone and granite, including the Belchertown milestones, which were made from locally-quarried granite. Members of the Sikes family used granite in their work, including Pliny Dwight's 1783 gravestone in South Cemetery.<sup>54</sup>

Lettering styles offer additional clues to identify the carver and appear connected to the post road context as well. Gravestone scholars Avon Neal and Ann Parker argue that "incongruity between image [motifs] and lettering" on many New England gravestones suggests that carvers specialized in either pictorial designs or lettering. Furthermore, the authors explain that "English country dialects" and rural linguistic patterns appear present in gravestone inscriptions, reflecting differing educational backgrounds, or simply patterns of carelessness.<sup>55</sup> Some carvers remain forever unidentified in existing records and usually stayed silent about their work. However, stonemasons such as Worcester's Ebenezer Howard, who produced work in Brookfield and in nearby Worcester County towns along the Upper Post Road and Bay Roads, was discovered more recently by cemetery scholars. Scholars cross-referencing stonemasons' work provides clearer methods to identify carvers and their specific works.<sup>56</sup>

Carving patterns, lettering, and gravestone placement often displayed similarities in towns situated along post roads, which further suggests the



continuity of travel and mobility in the stonemasonry profession. Lettering, for example, appeared uniform on Benjamin Franklin's post road milestones, despite the use of different types of stone. However, Belchertown's milestones retain a common design layout, including mileage to and from Boston and mileage to a major destination nearby, such as Hadley or Northampton. These shared traits suggest that they all belonged to the same context but were potentially carved by different stonemasons.<sup>57</sup>

During the late eighteenth century, the monument landscape around South Cemetery expanded. Milestone 84 appeared at the graveyard's southern end prior to 1765. Locals established Belchertown's oldest burying ground on land that Belchertown minister, Justus Forward, who donated to the town "for a Possession of a Buriing Place" along "County Road" in late 1766, the same year that Governor Bernard sent out surveyor Francis Miller's maps of the road between Boston and Albany.<sup>58</sup> Given that so many gravestones appeared in close proximity to milestone 84 so quickly during the second half of the eighteenth century, the possibility exists that stonemasons producing gravestones also carved one or more of the milestones. Thus, it is a strong possibility that Sikes family members produced one or more of Belchertown's milestones.

## **MILESTONE MILIEU: 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY TURNPIKES AND CONTEMPORARY MEMORY**

Massachusetts' milestones continue to generate interest in communities that retain them. They remain enigmatic markers of possession, colonization, appropriation, and utilitarianism along the former post roads, highways, and paths throughout the Commonwealth. Most stand more or less where they did a century or two ago.

During the nineteenth century, New England's roads became much more organized. The Commonwealth's turnpike era began in 1796, when the first one connected Boston, Brookfield, Warren, Palmer, and Springfield. Turnpikes reached their zenith in the state between 1803 and 1814, when roughly six were built. Belchertown entered the fray in 1803, when Henry Dwight built a turnpike from the town to Greenwich Plains. Three generations of the Dwight family continued operating this turnpike.

From 1790 to 1850, roughly two hundred forty corporate entities made up of officials and private investors constructed more than 3,700 miles of toll roads across New England.<sup>59</sup> Amid this transportation revolution turnpike lines, and later railroads, followed previously appropriated trails, paths, roadways, and post roads.<sup>60</sup> In 1820, Justus Dwight wrote that the "Publick

Roads in Belchertown are numerous[;] they are Estimated at a hundred miles and . . . are in general kept in good repair,” and that the “Stage road from Boston to Albany goes about nine miles in Belcher[town].”<sup>61</sup> During this time, Belchertown also became a prominent manufacturing center for carriages.<sup>62</sup>

Belchertown’s three milestones took on new significance during the twentieth century, with milestone 85 even appearing on the town seal. A 1976 Bicentennial quilt housed at the Belchertown Stone House Museum illustrates the reverence and rootedness of the town’s three milestones in the town’s collective memory, despite their obscure origins.

Development in Belchertown presented challenges to preservation of the milestones in the twenty-first century, notably potential damages from traffic fumes, as well as possible accidents and potential vandalism.<sup>63</sup> Some protections exist for milestone 85, as it lies on publicly-owned property near the town hall and sits within a historical district listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which opens the door for potential preservation funding channels and some federal protections.<sup>64</sup>



### **Cowles Carriage Manufactory, Belchertown**

Many of the carriages that passed by Belchertown’s mile markers may have been manufactured locally. Nicknamed “Carriagetown,” local residents were proud of their reputation for fine carriage production.

In 1997, planning started on a new shopping plaza just west of milestone 86 at the corner of Federal and George Hannum Streets. This project called for a widening of Federal Street to accommodate both the new plaza and increased traffic along Route 9. However, respect for the milestone's historical significance contributed to its preservation and secured its major role in the "Milestone Crossing" plaza project. In 2002, architect Kelli Burke explained that the marker "is the namesake of the project, so we want it to be a focal point." Springfield-based L&D Services crews wrapped nylon and canvas straps around the center of the cracked granite stone, lifted it with a bucket loader, and re-secured it ten feet back from the road, attempting to retain its position "86 Miles from Boston 14 to N. Hampton." This care reflects the milestone's contemporary importance as symbols of Belchertown's past.<sup>65</sup>

Referencing milestones as part of the broader monument landscape across Massachusetts and New England, historian Katherine Grandjean explains that, "The more you look, those stones along the post road start to look like epitaphs."<sup>66</sup> The Gages identified 129 surviving milestones in Massachusetts which are described in *Guideposts and Milestones of Massachusetts* and by their local communities.

Although they no longer service travelers in an age of readily-available road maps and mobile GPS, the milestones constitute monuments of eighteenth-century travel that reveal histories of regional networking, stonecutting, postal delivery, and colonization. Despite their obscure origins, the town's three milestones represent a unique and vital piece of Connecticut Valley and Massachusetts material culture. Milestones remain unique identifiers in local communities across the Commonwealth. Examining their deeper historical, material, and cultural origins can provide us with a clearer appreciation for their role in Massachusetts history.

HJM

## Notes

1. "A summary of the history of the Town of Belchertown," originally written in 1960 by Kenneth A. Dorey and revised in 2005 by Shirley Bock, Doris Dickinson, and Dan Fitzpatrick specifically for the Town of Belchertown Web Page, [www.belchertown.org/residents/town\\_history/index.php](http://www.belchertown.org/residents/town_history/index.php) (accessed 1-3-2019). Another brief history can be found in Fitzgerald and Haliday, "Belchertown, Massachusetts Cultural and Architectural Resource Survey Performed in 2007-2008 for the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Belchertown Historical Commission" located on the Belchertown town website. See also *Belchertown: Bits of History - The Collected Writings of Doris & Harvey Dickinson* (The History Press,

- 2007) and Cliff McCarthy, *Mysteries of Belchertown's History*, published by the Belchertown Historical Association.
2. Bock, Dickinson and Fitzpatrick, "A summary of the history of the Town of Belchertown."
  3. Ibid.
  4. Information and text provided by Cliff McCarthy, Archivist, Stone House Museum, Belchertown, email correspondence 2/4/19.
  5. Ibid.
  6. Mary E. and James E. Gage, *Milestones & Guideposts of Massachusetts and Southeastern New Hampshire* (Amesbury, MA: Powwow River Books, 2014), 1-6, 9, 13.
  7. Belchertown Historical Commission, Forms BLC.901, BLC.902, and BLC.906, Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS), Received 2 June 1975. As specified later, only Form BLC.906 (South Main Street Milestone) was updated when architects moved it in 2013.
  8. Katherine Grandjean, *American Passage: The Communications Frontier in Early New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 4-5.
  9. Ibid., 2, 4-7, 11-12, 215.
  10. Philip Levy, *Fellow Travelers: Indians and Europeans Contesting the Early American Trail* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), x, 1-5.
  11. Levy, *Fellow Travelers*, 6; Grandjean, *American Passage*, 215.
  12. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 67, 128-29; Eric Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway: The Lost History of the Boston Post Road, the Route that Made America* (New York: Scribner, 2010), viii, 17, 24n.
  13. Avon Neal and Ann Parker, *Early American Stone Sculpture, Found in the Burying Grounds of New England* (New York: Sweetwater Editions, 1981), PLATE X; Doris Dickinson and Cliff McCarthy, *Images of America: Belchertown* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 11; Gage, *Milestones & Guideposts*, 111-12.
  14. Alice Morse Earle, *Stage Coach and Tavern Days* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), 224-25.
  15. The route continued passing along Jabish Brook, Metacomet Lake, running along the northerly base of the Mount Holyoke Range to a ferry point in Hadley, and finally, through Northampton and outward through the Berkshire hill towns to Albany, NY. Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Historic & Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut River Valley: A Framework for Preservation Decision* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1984), 50-51, 67.
  16. Belchertown Historical Commission, *Along the County Road: Belchertown Discovered* (Belchertown, MA: Belchertown Historical Commission, 1982), 1; William E. Shaw, *History of Belchertown in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. William A. Doubleday (Amherst, MA: Newell Press, 1968), 19.
  17. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 12, 153-55, 158-59.
  18. Levy, *Fellow Travelers*, 6, 66; Grandjean, *American Passage*, 67-69; Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 3; Dickinson and McCarthy, *Images of America: Belchertown*, 9.

19. Justus Dwight, "History of Settlement of Equivalent Lands," c. 1820, p. 2, Box 112, Folder 10, Dwight Family Papers, Belchertown Historical Association Archives (hereafter abbreviated as BHA Archives), Stone House Museum, Belchertown, Massachusetts. This sketch may have been written prior to 1820 and added to over time.
20. Hampshire County Court of Common Pleas Records, Vol. 3, 1735-1741, p. 237, W.E.B. DuBois Library Special Collections, University of Massachusetts at Amherst (hereafter abbreviated as DuBois Special Collections); Belchertown Historical Commission, *Along the County Road*, 75.
21. Dwight, "History of Settlement of Equivalent Lands," 2; Dwight Survey Maps Book (Box 159), BHA Archives, Stone House Museum.
22. Hampshire County Highway Plans, 1759-1838, p. 12, in W.E.B. DuBois Special Collections; Belchertown Historical Commission, *Along the County Road*, 60.
23. Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Historic & Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut River Valley*, 93; Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 4; Belchertown Historical Commission, *Along the County Road*, 2.
24. Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 15; Hampshire County Court of Common Pleas Records, Vol. 3, p. 237.
25. Town Meeting Notice, 11 November 1766, in Early Town Records, Box 046, BHA Archives, Stone House Museum; Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 34, 44; Hampshire County Court of Common Pleas Records, Vol. 7, 1762-1764, p. 86. Roads emerged throughout Belchertown during this time, even linking the town to smaller towns further northwest, including Hardwick.
26. "A Plan of Belchertown as it was surveyed in November & December 1794," in Box 94, Maps, BHA Archive, Stone House Museum; Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 63.
27. Secretary of the Commonwealth, "An Act Making Provision for the Erecting Guide Posts Upon Publick Roads," 1794, Chapter 63. in *Acts of Resolves of Massachusetts, 1794-95* (Boston: Adams & Larkin, 1794; reprint, Boston: Wright and Potter, 1896), 116-17; Gage, *Milestones and Guideposts*, 4.
28. Belchertown Historical Commission, Forms BLC.901, BLC.902, and BLC.906, MACRIS, 1975.
29. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 118, 136, 208; William F. Robinson, *Abandoned New England: Its Hidden Ruins and Where to Find Them* (Norwalk, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1976), 4.
30. Herman Moll, "An Account of ye Post of ye Continent of Nth America as they were Regulated by ye Postmasters Genl. of ye Post House," *Herman Moll Map Atlas* (London, 1736).
31. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 204; Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway*, 35.
32. Gage, *Milestones & Guideposts*, 77, 96, 102; Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Historic & Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut River Valley*, 83.

33. General Post Office: Appointment of Franklin and Hunter, 10 August 1753, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1792*, 37 vols. Available via Yale University at <http://franklinpapers.org/franklin/> 5:18, hereafter cited as Franklin Papers.
34. Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway*, 40-42; Grandjean, *American Passage*, 211-12.
35. Additional Instruction to the Deputy Postmasters of North America, 10 March 1758, Franklin Papers, 7:390-91.
36. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 213.
37. Benjamin Franklin to Lord Kames, 2 June 1765, Franklin Papers, 12:158-64.
38. Benjamin Franklin to John Foxcroft: Table of Rates of Postage, Franklin Papers, 10:417-19.
39. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 212-13;
40. Several mythologized accounts of Franklin's personal involvement stem from Worcester historian and author Alice Morse Earle's work. See *Stage Coach and Tavern Days*, 353; Gage, *Milestones & Guideposts*, 42, 66-67; Stephen C. Hill, "A mystery in stone in Belchertown," *Hampshire Gazette*, 4 September 1997; Belchertown Historical Commission, *Along the County Road*, 61.
41. The Postmasters General to the Lords of the Treasury: Memorandum on the American Postal Service, 28 January 1764, Franklin Papers, 11:36-41.
42. Sir Francis Bernard to James Murray, 22 April 1765, in *The Papers of Francis Bernard: Governor of Colonial Massachusetts, 1760-1769*, 5 vols., ed. Colin Nicolson (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2007), 2:249-51, hereafter cited as Bernard Papers. Available at <https://www.colonialociety.org/publications/3111/345-james-murray> (accessed April 30, 2018).
43. Writing to MP Lord Barrington in January 1766, Bernard "gave Leave" for Ensign Francis Miller "to come to Boston to assist me in some Works of Public Surveying, which I had undertaken in pursuance of resolutions of the general Assembly & partly by Orders from England." Bernard explained that "Early in the Last Summer [1765] I employed Mr. Miller (having previously informed Genl. Gage of the Intention) to make an actual Survey from Boston to Albany & back again by another Way being near 200 Miles." Sir Francis Bernard to Lord Barrington, 11 January 1766, Bernard Papers, 3:52-53. Available via the Colonial Society of Massachusetts website.
44. Gage, *Milestones and Guideposts*, 3, 106-07.
45. Sir Francis Bernard to Henry Seymour Conway, 19 January 1766, Bernard Papers, 3:65-68. Available via the Colonial Society of Massachusetts website.
46. Gage, *Milestone and Guideposts*, 90; Robinson, *Abandoned New England*, 9.
47. Stephen C. Hill, "Ancient mile marker will be protected by mall," *Hampshire Gazette*, 13 September 2002.
48. Gage, *Milestones and Guideposts*, 102.
49. Allan Ludwig, *Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols, 1650-1815* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 6, 20, 74; Dickran and Ann Tashjian, *Memorials for Children of Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1974), 7.



50. Neal and Parker, *Early American Stone Sculpture, Found in the Burying Grounds of New England*, 7, 11-12, 16-17; James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 91-100, 118.
51. Tashjian, *Memorials for Children of Change*, 30.
52. Robinson, *Abandoned New England*, 9; Neal and Parker, *Early American Stone Sculpture*, PLATE X, XXIX; Ludwig, *Graven Images*, 121-32, 180; Gage, *Milestones and Guideposts*, 84-86.
53. Ludwig, *Graven Images*, 412, 469; Kevin M. Sweeney, "Where the Bay Meets the River: Gravestones and Stonecutters in the River Towns of Western Massachusetts, 1690-1810," *Markers: The Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies* 3 (1985): 33-36.
54. Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Historic & Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut River Valley*, 248; Belchertown Historical Commission, Form BLC.906, MACRIS, 1975; Ludwig, *Graven Images*, 412, 416-17, 462.
55. Neal and Parker, *Early American Stone Sculpture*, 17-20.
56. Ludwig, *Graven Images*, 6; Theodore Chase and Laurel K. Gable, *Gravestone Chronicles: Some Eighteenth-Century New England Carvers and Their Work*, 2 vols. (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1997), 1:157, 175.
57. Neal and Parker, *Early American Stone Sculpture*, 19, PLATE X; Hill, "A mystery in stone in Belchertown," *Hampshire Gazette*, 4 September 1997.
58. Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 42; Town Meeting Notice, 11 November 1766, and Nathaniel Dwight Survey Plans for South Cemetery, 16 December 1766, in Box 046, Early Town Records, BHA Archives, Stone House Museum. A month before the official survey of South Cemetery, locals raised the issue in a town meeting, "Deciding whether the Town will Purchase Some Land to Buru their Dead."
59. Robert N. Parks, *Roads and Travel in New England, 1790-1840* (Sturbridge, MA: Old Sturbridge Village, 1967), 3-5; *Hampshire County Highway Plans, 1759-1838*, p. 47, in W.E.B. DuBois Special Collections; Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway*, 93; Shaw, *History of Belchertown*, 19; Gage, *Milestone and Guideposts*, 126.
60. Jaffe, *The King's Best Highway*, 114; Parks, *Roads and Travel in New England*, 17.
61. Justus Dwight, "History of Settlement of Equivalent Lands," c. 1820, p. 5, Box 112, Folder 10, Dwight Family Papers, BHA Archives, Stone House Museum.
62. Dickinson and McCarthy, *Images of America: Belchertown*, 18; Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Historic & Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut River Valley*, 109.
63. Belchertown Historical Commission, Forms BLC.901, BLC.902, BLC.906, MACRIS, 1975.
64. Julie Ann Larry (Turk, Tracey, and Larry Architects), BLC.906, MACRIS, Received 27 November 2013.
65. Stephen C. Hill, "A mystery in stone in Belchertown," *Hampshire Gazette*, 4 September 1997; Hill, "Ancient mile marker will be protected by mall," *Hampshire*

*Gazette*, 13 September 2002; "Old mileage marker shifts locale," *Hampshire Gazette*, 17 September 2002.

66. Grandjean, *American Passage*, 206-07.