

Chelmsford

Secretary, State House, Boston

Street Central Square

(Minute men)

STATUE MONUMENT
 BUST FOUNTAIN
 MARKER MILESTONE
 RELIGIOUS SHRINE BOUNDARY MARKER
 GROUP COMPOSITION

Name Concord Battle Monument

Original Owner _____

Present Owner town of Chelmsford

Date Constructed engraved 1899

Date Dedicated June 17, 1899

Source of Date Chelmsford "Newsweekly" '55

Designer or Sculptor --

Individual or group responsible for monument if other than owner town Park Commission

Monument has historical connection with the following themes: (See also reverse side)

Agriculture Commerce/Industry
 Architecture Science/Invention
 Art/Sculpture Travel/Communication
 Education Military Affairs
 Literature Indians
 Music Development of Town/City
 Government Religion/Philosophy

CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved* Altered _____

IMPORTANCE of monument to area: Great Moderate None _____

MONUMENT endangered by: --

LOCATION OF INSCRIPTION: Plaque on wall, house, post; base of monument; other _____
on the front of boulder: 22" wide, 24 1/2" high

ENTIRE INSCRIPTION on monument: _____

Here on the 19th of April 1775, the minute guns summoned the men of Chelmsford to the Concord fight.

Erected by the Molly Varnum Chapter D.A.R. A.D. 1899

DESCRIPTION**

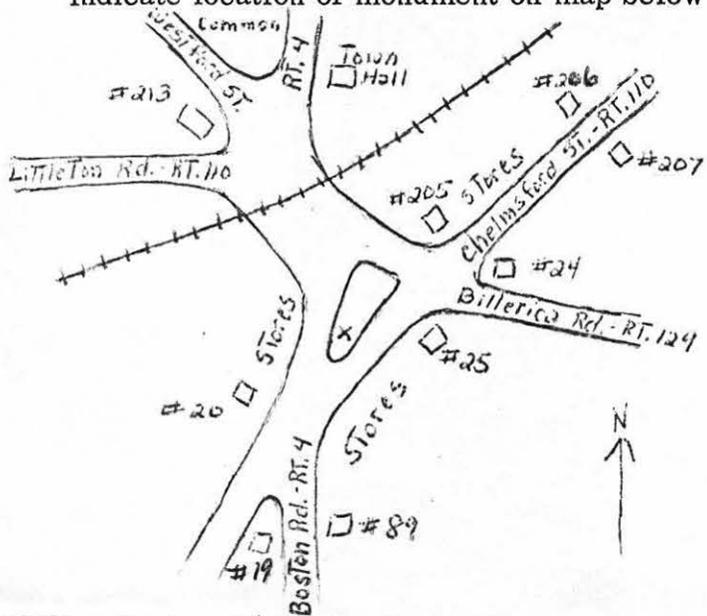
Foundation: Pedestal Base None Material _____

Material: Bronze Stone Marble Granite Wood Other Boulder

Setting (surroundings) on Central Square

Size (approximate) Width 42" Height 57" Depth 31"

Indicate location of monument on map below



Recorder Mrs. Jane B. Drury

For Chelmsford Historical Commission
(Name of Organization)

Photo #10-11 Date Received 7/1/1974

* If the monument has been moved, indicate the original location on the reverse side.

** Describe the monument on the reverse side.

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT MATTER AND/OR DESIGN OF MONUMENT

A 2nd Rev. memorial was unveiled on June 17, 1899 in Central Square near the assembling place of Chelmsford's minute men who responded to the alarm guns of April 19, 1775. Nearby buildings were decorated with flags and bunting and special street cars 'crowded to their utmost capacity' brought passengers from Lowell. On the program were speeches, singing by a male quartet, musical selections by cornetists, and the reading of a patriotic poem. The Regent of the N.Y.C. chapter of the D.A.R. spoke just before the boulder was unveiled by the late Elizabeth Fiske Warren, then 8 yrs. old, a lineal descendant of Rev. ancestors, and the ceremony concluded with 3 rousing cheers. A large elm shaded the group of distinguished guests & speakers who were gathered around the rostrum on the hay scales near the watering trough, and after the exercises the Fiske house was opened to the public & many of the guests were entertained with refreshments at nearby homes and at the town hall.

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF MONUMENT. (Refer to the theme circled on front of form. What happened? Who was important? Comment)

About 8 AM on April 19th a messenger arrived from Billerica bringing news of the British advance. The minute men of Chelmsford rendezvoused near the memorial boulder in Central Square. From a rock a few feet north of this spot the minute guns were fired by Joseph Warren. Rev. Bridge requested the men to go into the meeting-house for prayers before they went, but Serg. John Ford replied that they had more urgent business on hand, and he hastened on to the conflict with over 100 men. The 1st men reached Concord about 9:30 AM, before the fight began at 10 AM. Later Chelmsford men joined them at Merriam's Corner. Serg. Ford was especially active at Hardy's Hill. Wounded during the day were Capt. Oliver Barron and Deacon Aaron Chamberlain. Some British prisoners were brought back to Chelmsford the next day, and the Committee of Safety "consented to have them left, provided that we would leave a guard."

REFERENCE: (Where was this information obtained? What book, records, etc.)

Chelmsford "Newsweeky" 1955

Waters, "History of Chelmsford"

Drake, "History of Middlesex County", pg. 302

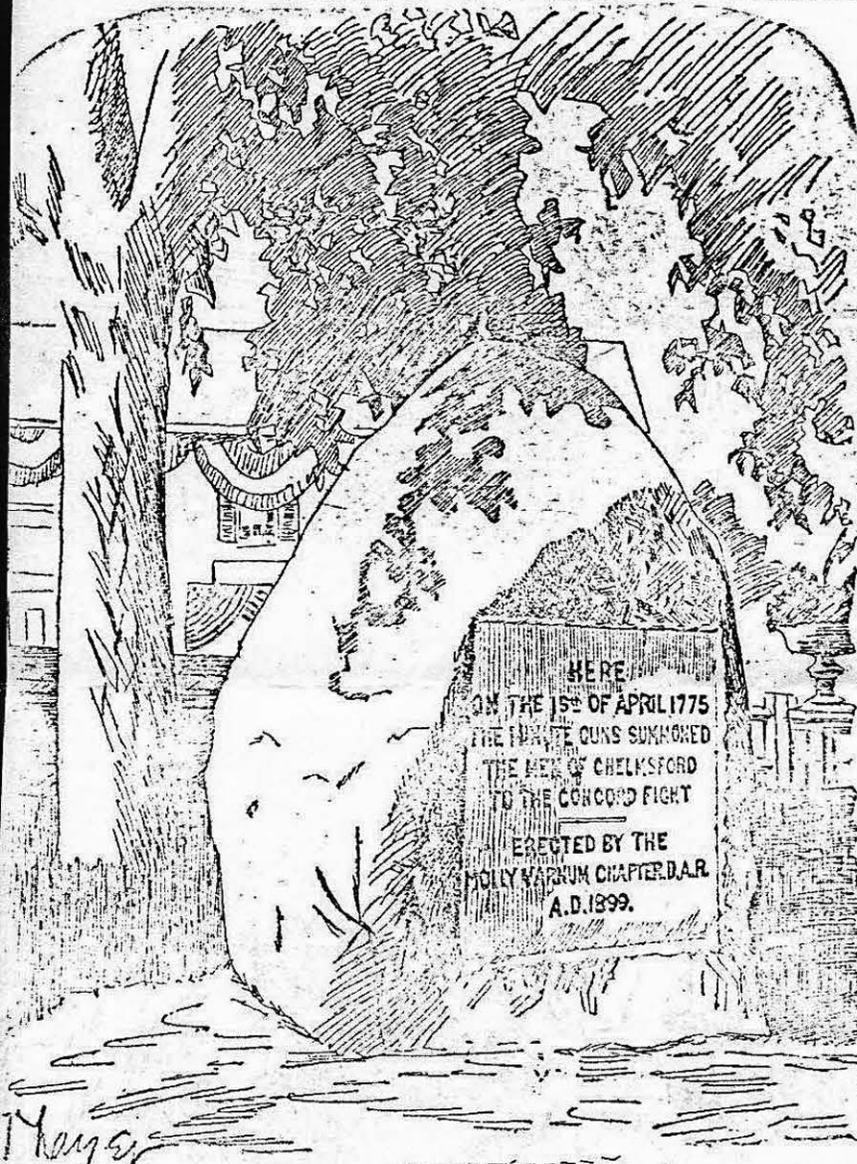
CHELMSFORD MINUTE MEN.

Brave Deed Recorded Upon Rugged Stone.

MEMORIAL BOULDER UNVEILED AT THE CENTRE
SATURDAY.

June 17, 1899.

The Exercises Attended by Prominent Members of Patriotic Societies.



THE MEMORIAL BOULDER.
Marking the Place From Which Chelmsford Minute Men Started For Concord.
(From Photograph by Freeman.)

MRS. DONALD McLEAN,
Who Delivered the Address at Chelmsford.

President General, NSDAR

Story on other Side

No longer does the monument on the common at Chelmsford—erected in 1859—stand as the sole memorial of the valor of her sons who in the Revolutionary war went forth to battle for liberty at Concord, Bunker Hill and on other fields of that memorable struggle. Saturday afternoon, June 17, with interesting exercises that patriotic organization, Molly Varnum chapter, D. A. R. in the presence of representatives of Old Middlesex Chapter, S. A. R., Dr. Moses G. Parker, president, a delegation from Post 185 G. A. R., J. A. Bartlett, commander, and a large gathering of the people of the town and from other places, dedicated a massive boulder to the memory of the minute men of Chelmsford who responded to the alarm guns on the morning of April 19, 1775. The memorial stone is placed in the very heart of the village and near the exact spot of assembling upon that eventful day, and on its face fronting the road down which the patriots marched is chiselled the following inscription: "Here on the 19th of April, 1775 the minute guns summoned the men of Chelmsford to the Concord fight. Erected by the Molly Varnum Chapter, D. A. R., A. D. 1899."

The dwellings and business places surrounding the little park where the ceremonies took place had been appropriately decorated with flags and bunting and prominent among these were the following:

The historic Fiske mansion, over 100 years old, which besides the national colors displayed the hospitable word "Welcome;" the store of S. W. Parkhurst; houses of Dr. A. Howard and Mrs. Sarah P. Ripley; Episcopal parsonage; the post office; the home of E. T. Adams; Wilson's block and the Odd Fellows' building. "Old Glory" also floated from the flagstaff on the common and school building, and at other places the spirit of the occasion found expression in patriotic emblems. Over the entrance to the town hall where Molly Varnum chapter entertained, were decorations of red, white and blue and the invitation "Welcome."

Sergt. Charles E. Bartlett of Troop F, cavalry, was chief aid at the grounds, and the ushers were Chelmsford school cadets.

The autocratic weather man was in his happiest mood, and he smiled approvingly upon the patriotic "Daughters," members of Molly Varnum chapter, in their noble endeavor.

The street railway company put on extra cars for the occasion, and a special, bearing the speakers, guests of honor and members of the chapter, left Merrimack square at 2.10 p. m. Other cars, leaving every 15 minutes, were crowded to their utmost capacity, up to the hour of the exercises.

Arriving at the grounds, it was found that the efficient committee had made admirable arrangements for the speakers and audience. The platform of the hay scales, under the shadow of a magnificent elm, made an excellent foundation for a speaker's rostrum, and surrounding the enclosure, within a convenient radius of the historic spot, were arranged seats for the members of the chapter and their friends. At the centre of the enclosure was the boulder, veiled in the Stars and Stripes and crowned with a laurel wreath.

A few minutes after 3 o'clock a bugle call, sounded by Williston Carl, announced the opening of the exercises. Mrs. Thomas Nesmith, regent of Molly Varnum chapter, presided with characteristic modesty and grace, briefly announcing the numbers on the programme.

Rev. Granville Pierce made an introductory prayer, and he was followed by Mr. H. S. Perham of Chelmsford, who gave the historical address, which follows:

H. S. PERHAM'S ADDRESS.

It is nearly a century and a quarter since the startling sound of the minute guns, fired from this spot, summoned the men of Chelmsford to that first clash of arms of that great struggle which resulted in the founding of the nation.

It is graceful and fitting that this patriotic society, composed of the descendants of those revolutionary actors, should erect this tablet in the heart of the old mother town, to help to keep green the memory of heroic deeds.

For the first time in the history of our country we find people questioning the soundness of those principles adopted by the founders, as the basis of their faith and inspiration. It is even suggested that in order to deal more efficiently with present conditions, our government should in some respects be reconstructed upon lines more nearly resembling the monarchies of Europe. It seems to be necessary, therefore, to re-examine those principles laid down in that ancient document, the Declaration of Independence, in order to determine whether they may not have become outgrown, and no longer in keeping with the spirit of a great and progressive people.

Are those before me—patriotic as you are in every fibre of your being—prepared to see that hitherto sacred instrument flung aside like an implement once useful but rendered obsolete by a more modern invention? and, in the place of its sentiments, the principle substituted that governments may derive just powers over a people by purchase and conquest, or, shall we still pin our faith to those more noble sentiments for which our fathers fought, sentiments more consistent with the spirit of our institutions, that "all men are created equal," and that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The Chelmsford minute-men, whose memory we honor today, numbered 104 men. Here are their names. One company of 43 men was under the command of Captain Moses Parker, who lived about a mile easterly from the village, at what is now the Widow Driscoll place, and the other company, consisting of 61 men, commanded by Capt. Oliver Barron, the tavern-keeper, whose hostelry stood opposite us upon the site of the Wilson cottage by the railroad. Upon the roll of Barron's company it states: "We, in consequence of the alarm made upon ye 19th of April, 1775, marched from home for the defence of this colony against the ministerial troops." The men composing these troops were scattered throughout the town from Concord on the south to the Merrimack river and Dunstable on the north.

My father has pointed out to me the place on the farm where his grandfather, Samuel Perham, left his tools, when the report of the minute guns called him to sterner duties. Benjamin Pierce, the father of President Franklin Pierce, was plowing in a field near what is now the junction of B and Powell streets, in Lowell. In after years he pointed out the tree to which he chained his steers when "the plow was in mid furrow stayed." Captain Ford, the sergeant in Barron's company, left his mill at Pawtucket Falls and stepped into the kitchen for a hasty bowl of bread and milk before mounting his horse. As the men gathered here at the village they were met by the good parson, Rev. Ebenezer Bridge, who invited them to the meeting house for prayers, but Ford politely objected on the plea of more urgent business, and well did the gallant captain justify his haste, for it is said that five British soldiers fell before his rifle that day. One young man who was not enrolled begged and obtained leave to go in place of his more elderly employer, and ran beside Captain Ford's horse to Concord, holding by the stirrup

when the men reached Concord the retreat of the British had already begun, and they immediately joined in the pursuit. William Fletcher of Parker's company wrote out, late in life, a very modest account of his experience that day. He says: "We followed the enemy and came up with them somewhere in Lexington. Our company behaved as well as could be expected."

things considered. I was four times that day where the arrows of death flew thick. We followed the enemy more than half way over Charlestown neck. The enemy was taken in plain view, rising Bunker's hill. There are those present who remember him as "Uncle Billy Fletcher," living in the old gambrel roof house by North Square, and I see one before me who has heard Mr. Fletcher tell how they ran through the fields to get in front of the red-coats to fire on them. So you see it wasn't such a very long time ago that it all happened.

At the battle of Bunker Hill the men from this section were in the regiment of Col. Ebenezer Bridge, who was a son of the minister of that name. Lieut.-Col. Moses Parker was the Captain Parker of the Concord fight.

The Chelmsford company, which consisted of 60 men, was commanded by Capt. John Ford. Capt. Benjamin Walker was in command of a company of about 50 men, of whom 10 were from this town. He took his company into Charlestown to fire from the cover of buildings and fences upon the enemy's left flank. When driven from that position he passed, with some of his men, to the right flank along the margin of Mystic river, where he was wounded and fell into the hands of the enemy. He died in August following from the effect of his wound.

Capt. Ford was sent with his company from Cambridge to reinforce the troops on the hill. One account states that he "obtained permission from the general to withdraw his company privately and march directly to the scene of action."

The crossing of Charlestown Neck, raked by the guns of the British vessels, was a severe ordeal for the Chelmsford boys, and some wavered, one or more turning back. As the company passed down from Bunker Hill they came upon the cannon which had been abandoned by Capt. Callender. These by orders from Gen. Putnam were drawn to the rail fence, which

position the company reached just before the action began. The field pieces were served effectively under Putnam's direction.

The British right wing under Gen. Howe was directed against the rail fence in order to turn Prescott's position at the redoubt. Our men were ordered to reserve their fire until the enemy were within eight rods. But while the advancing regulars paused to demolish a fence which obstructed their progress, Joseph Spalding was unable to resist the opportunity offered for a good shot, for which the wrath of Putnam was visited upon him for disobedience of orders. The inscription upon his gravestone in yonder cemetery states "He was among the brave asserters and defenders of his country at Bunker Hill, where he opened the battle by firing upon the enemy before orders were given."

His descendants, some of whom are here present, say that Joseph always declared that he brought down Major Pitcairn.

The rail fence was stubbornly defended and was the last point to be yielded at the third assault. Capt. Ford was highly commended for the spirit he displayed. Eleven of his men were wounded. Lieut.-Col. Moses Parker fell mortally wounded and was left in the redoubt. He was a veteran of the French and Indian wars, and his loss was deeply deplored. He had "behaved with great gallantry in the action."

Story Book, xued
next page.



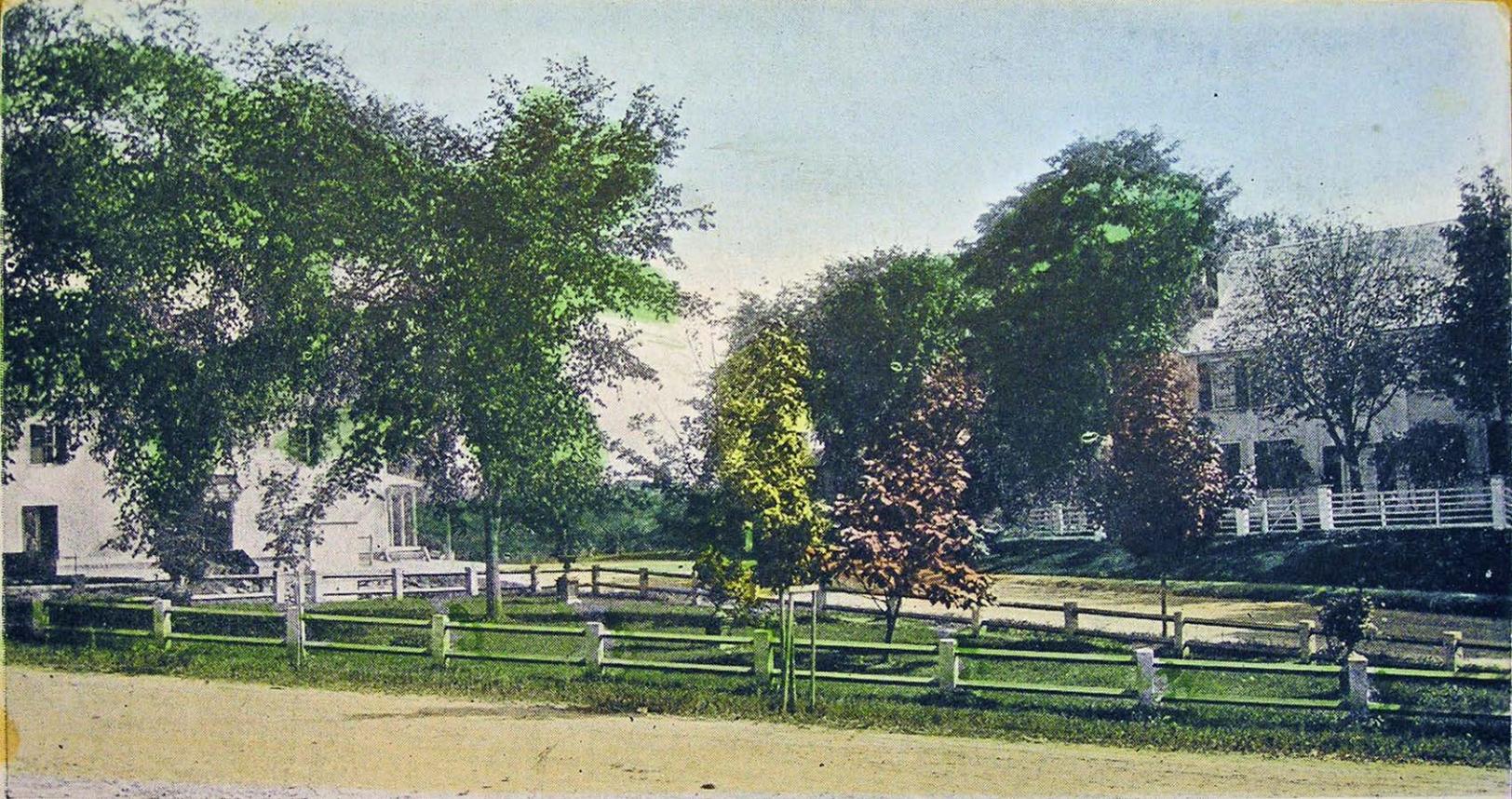
Boulder dedication, June 17, 1899
Courtesy of Chelmsford Historical Society, Index #bbh457

WHERE THE MINUTEMEN MEET



A second Revolutionary memorial was unveiled on June 17, 1899, in Central Square, near the assembling place of Chelmsford's minute men who responded to the alarm guns of April 19, 1775. This boulder was erected by the Molly Varnum Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and dedicated with elaborate ceremonies.

Nearby buildings were decorated with flags and bunting, and special street cars 'crowded to their utmost capacity' brought passengers from Lowell. On the program were speeches, singing by a male quartet, musical selections by cornetists, and the reading of a patriotic poem. A special guest, the Regent of the New York City chapter of the D.A.R. spoke just before the boulder was unveiled by the late Elizabeth Fiske Warren, then 8 years old, a lineal descendant of Revolutionary ancestors, and the ceremony concluded with 3 rousing cheers. A large elm shaded the group of distinguished guests and speakers who were gathered around the rostrum on the hay scales near the watering trough, and, after the exercises, the Fiske house was opened to the public, and many of the guests were entertained with refreshments at nearby homes and at the town hall.



Central Square, Chelmsford Center, Mass.

7184 PUBLISHED BY R W EMERSON



Central Square. Here on the 19th of April, 1775, the Minute Guns Summoned the Men of
Chelmsford to the Concord Fight. Erected by the Molly Varnum Chapter,
Published by R. W. Emerson D. A. R., A. D. 1899

Postcard Courtesy of Paul Pettazoni



CENTRAL SQUARE, CHELMSFORD, MASS.



The Square, Chelmsford, Mass.

*Just starting for
Manchester. N. H. 1920*



Central Square Watering Trough

7/31/2004 F. Merriam

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ON THE 19TH OF APRIL 1775,
THE MINUTE GUNS SUMMONED
THE MEN OF CHELMSFORD
TO THE CONCORD FIGHT
—
ERECTED BY THE
POLLY VARNUM CHAPTER D.A.R.
M.A.D. 1899.

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