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Historical Research Report
The Joshua Brooks House
Lincoln, Massachusetts

Prepared by
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Historian, Minute Man NHPP
March, 1963

Joshua Brooks House

This house, located on North Great Road, Lincoln, was constructed during the years 1779-1781 by Haden Joshua Brooks, a well-to-do farmer and Tanner with extensive land holdings in Lincoln and Oneida at the outbreak of the war of the American Revolution. Built on a five-acre tract, the property remained in the hands of the Brooks family until the time of the Civil War.

Minute Man National Historical Park Project
1400 Post Office & Courthouse
Boston, Massachusetts, 02109

H30

August 19, 1963

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Superintendent, Minute Man

Subject: Historical Research Report on the Joshua Brooks House
(Brooks-Sturm House on Parcel 7-E, south side of North
Great Road in Lincoln)

Attached herewith are the original and two copies of an historical research report which has been prepared by Historian Arthur L. Sullivan on the Joshua Brooks House, also more frequently referred to as the Brooks-Sturm House, on Parcel 7-E beside North Great Road in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

This report was initiated by Historian Sullivan to serve the purpose of an Historic Structures Report, but in view of the instructions contained in paragraphs two and four of your memorandum of July 23 on the subject of Historic Structures Report, Part I, The Jacob Whittemore House, the report is being submitted at this time as an historical research report or "working" research report.

A report on the Job Brooks or Brooks-Beharrel House on Parcel 7-U in Concord, Massachusetts, was submitted by our memorandum of August 9 under the same circumstances. The Joshua Brooks House is almost opposite the Job Brooks House on North Great Road, but is in Lincoln rather than Concord and should not be confused with the Job Brooks House.

EDWIN W. SMALL

Edwin W. Small
Superintendent

Enclosures

cc: Historians Office

EWSmall/mk

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INTRODUCTION

The function of this report is, first and foremost, to date the construction, determine the ownership and occupancy, and provide a description of the Joshua Brooks house, identified as 7E on Drawing Number NHP-124 2004, and referred to as Lin-7E.

However, as will be seen in the body of the text, another house once stood very near the first-mentioned dwelling. This dwelling remained standing until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, when it was demolished. It will be necessary, therefore, to provide a history of this second dwelling, so that we may be able to distinguish between the two.

Evidence will be offered to support the conclusions that the existing dwelling was not constructed until c. 1781, while the dwelling, now gone from the scene, was constructed c. 1713. The former was owned and occupied by Joshua Brooks - the latter by his father Deacon Joshua Brooks.

Deacon Joshua Brooks was a well-to-do farmer and tanner with extensive land holdings in Lincoln and Concord at the outbreak of the War of the American Revolution. It is not the purpose of this report to provide a history of all these holdings. Rather, the undertaking will be confined to his house lot which, historically, was a tract of land containing about two acres with a number of outbuildings. Deacon Joshua Brooks' other holdings, including his Tan Yard, will be treated in subsequent reports.

This two acre tract, as will be seen, remained in the hands of the Brooks family from the mid-seventeenth century until the middle of the Civil War. In determining the ownership of the lot in question, it was necessary, of course, to execute a title search. In the course of this search, it was discovered that between 1666 and 1862 this parcel of land was owned, at various periods, by five individuals with the same first and last name, i.e., Joshua Brooks, as well as by other members of the Brooks family. As an aid to the reader, when referring to any of the Joshua Brooks' in the body of the text, the name will be followed by the years of his birth and death, when known, in parenthesis. When either the birth and/or death dates are not known, a question mark will be inserted.

It will also be helpful to refer to the genealogical chart incorporated in this report as Appendix I.

I CONSTRUCTION OF DEACON JOSHUA BROOKS' (1720-1790) DWELLING HOUSE c.1713:

On January 29, 1663, a Town Meeting was conducted at Concord, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The purpose of this meeting was to seek agreement among the landholders of the town on a proposal to transcribe the property descriptions of each proprietor from an old book into a new Town Register Book. The property-holders agreed to the proposal and the job was accomplished, however, several years elapsed before every landholder surveyed his properties and provided the town clerk with adequate descriptions for inclusion in the new Town Register Book.¹

Thus, on October 26, 1666, Joshua Brooks (? - ?) entered his property holdings in the new book.² These same holdings were also recorded with the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, April 30, 1673.³ Here we have the first descriptions of Joshua Brooks' (? * ?) lands.

In 1666, we find he owned eleven separate parcels, totaling some 196 acres. He added to these in 1679 when he acquired an additional 169 acres, in thirteen separate parcels, from Caleb Brooks.⁴

¹ Lemuel Shattuck, History of the Town of Concord, Boston and Concord: 1835, p.36.

² Concord Town Records, Old Vol. II, Folio 18. In 1934, the town records of Concord were transcribed by the Civil Works Administration, under the supervision of Whitney C. Smith. The transcripts are deposited in the Concord Free Library, by volume and page numbers assigned by the CWA. The Brooks property descriptions are found in Vol. I, pp. 189b - 190b. Hereafter, when citing the Concord Town Records, both the old volume and new volume will be given.

³ Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Deed Book 5, p. 3f. Hereafter, all deed references are to those filed with the Middlesex County Registry of Deeds. Photostatic copies of this, and all deeds cited in this report, are in the park files.

⁴ Deed Book 7, pp. 199ff. For description of lands cf., Concord Town Records, Old Vol. II, Folio 18; Vol. I, pp. 191a - 192b.

Of all these separate parcels, both those owned in 1666 and those acquired in 1679, only one was bounded on the north by the Bay Road (Route 2A). This is significant, as we intend to demonstrate that this particular parcel or tract of land is the site of Deacon Joshua Brooks' (1720-1790) dwelling house. The 1666 dimensions of the parcel in question was thirty-five acres. (The dwelling house of Joshua Brooks (? - ?)⁵ was⁵ north of the Bay Road.)

Between 1693 and 1695, Joshua Brooks (? - ?) distributed his lands among his four sons - Joseph, Daniel, Job and Noah.⁶ We are concerned here only with one parcel acquired by Noah in 1695. This was a sixteen acre tract bounded on the north by the Bay Road.⁷ That this was sliced from the original thirty-five acre tract we do not question, as was noted earlier, Joshua Brooks (? - ?) owned only one parcel with the Bay Road as the northern boundary.

On November 25, 1713, Noah Brooks, "...for and in consideration of the good will and affection that I have and bear to my well beloved son ...and shewing a fatherly care towards him...", presented his offspring⁸ Joshua (1688-1768), with a gift of several parcels of land.

⁵Deed Book 5, p. 3f.

⁶Deed Book 17, p.3; Deed Book 10, pp. 438, 494f.; Deed Book 12, p. 71f.

⁷Deed Book 12, p. 71f.

⁸Deed Book 39, p. 512f.

One of these, a two acre parcel of upland, contained a dwelling house.

We will now offer evidence to illustrate several points. First, that this house was probably constructed in 1713. Secondly, that it was constructed by Noah Brooks, and, lastly, that this was the house occupied by Deacon Joshua Brooks (1720 - 1790) and his family during the Battle of Lexington and Concord, and has subsequently disappeared from the scene.

The conclusion that the structure was erected c. 1713 is based upon the following considerations. Noah's son Joshua (1688-1768) was but twenty-five years old in 1713. On April 24, of the same year, he married Lydia Wheeler.⁹ The gift presented by Joshua's (1688-1768) father, which, in addition to the dwelling house, included several acres of upland, plowland, and meadow, is the first recorded acquisition of Joshua Brooks (1688-1768). From the wording of the recorded gift, together with the generosity of the same, it is evident that Noah Brooks held a deep love for his son. It appears, therefore, that this is a case of a generous and loving father rewarding a faithful son and providing him with a good start in his new life. That the gift of the house and other lands did not occur, or at least was not recorded, until seven months after the marriage, could better be explained if we knew

⁹
Concord, Massachusetts, Births, Marriages, and Deaths 1635 - 1850,
printed by the Town, Deacon Press, Boston: c. 1891, p. 83. Hereafter
cited as Concord Register.

the circumstances attending the courtship and marriage. Perhaps the courtship was a relatively brief one, leaving insufficient time to build a house and plan an estate. There is the possibility, too, that the presentation of the gift actually took place prior to the marriage but was not formalized by deed until the date before mentioned.

In any event, we can safely assert that the structure was not built prior to 1695. As was seen earlier, in 1695 Noah Brooks received a sixteen acre tract from his father Joshua (? - ?). This was the only piece Noah acquired with the Bay Road as the northern boundary. The parcel was unimproved land in 1695. The gift of two acres of upland, together with the dwelling house, which Noah presented to his son Joshua (1688-1768), also noted the Bay Road as its northern boundary. Noah Brooks was the abutter on the other three sides of the two acre tract, which undoubtedly was cut from the sixteen acre piece acquired in 1695. We can definitely date the construction of the house, therefore, as sometime between 1695 and 1713. We are inclined, however, to believe it was in the last year mentioned for reasons stated before.

We can assume the house was constructed, or at least caused to be built, by Noah Brooks since it was he who presented the gift.

II - ACQUISITION OF TWO ACRE LOT AND DWELLING BY DEACON JOSHUA BROOKS (1720-1790):

On December 26, 1715, Joshua Brooks (1688-1768), "...in consideration of the Love and Affection which I bear unto my son..." presented Joshua Brooks (1720-1790) with several tracts of land. ¹⁰ One of these was a two acre tract with a dwelling house. That this is the same two acre tract

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Deed Book 45, p. 623. Joshua Brooks (1688-1768) had moved from the house he acquired in 1713 sometime before 1715. The house at the later location was acquired by another son, Timothy, half by deed of gift, May 27, 1762, and half by will, Jan 7, 1767, cf. Deed Book 60, p. 247f.; Probate Case # 2863. This house will be the subject of a separate report.

and house which Noah presented to his son Joshua (1688-1768) in 1713, and which was occupied by Deacon Joshua Brooks (1720-1790) and his family at the outbreak of the Revolution is unquestionable.

This conclusion is based upon several considerations. First of all, let us examine the description. In 1745, the tract was bounded on the north by the Bay Road, on the west by Thomas Brooks' land, on the south by a way leading from Thomas Brooks' barn to the Old Saw Mill Dam, and on the east by Thomas Brooks.

In 1713, the tract was bounded on the north by the Bay Road, and the other three sides by Noah Brooks. We are certain that the dwelling house of Noah Brooks was immediately east of Joshua Brooks from evidence found in a 1715 settlement of the bounds of the Bay Road.¹¹

We see, however, that in 1745 Thomas Brooks, rather than Noah, was the east and west abutter of Joshua Brooks (1720-1790). This is easily explained, as in 1725 Noah Brooks presented his son Thomas with the bulk of his holdings.¹² Included in the gift was Noah's dwelling house, barn, and the land on which the buildings stood. This particular tract was bounded on the north by the Bay Road, on the east by Joshua Brooks (1688-1768), and a two rod highway ran from Noah's barn in a southeast direction. (The land just described is the Brooks Tavern Farm, identified as Lin-7I on Drawing Number NHP-M 2004. The history of this tract will be the subject of a separate report.)

¹¹ Concord Town Records, Vol. II, folio 94; Vol. I, pp. 357 a - 362 a.

¹² Deed Book 35, p. 193f.

We believe the 1745 presentation from Joshua Brooks (1688-1768) to Joshua Brooks (1720-1790) was a wedding gift. We do not know when Joshua Brooks (1720-1790) and Hannah were married. We do know, however, that the first of twelve children was born December 4, 1746 - perhaps about one year after the marriage. (See Appendix II for list of twelve children.)

The subsequent history of the two acre tract is very easily traced. Before proceeding further, however, we will establish the construction of the second dwelling house on this parcel of land.

III - CONSTRUCTION OF MANSION c. 1781:

On October 3, 1781, Joshua Brooks (1720-1790) sold his "...new Mansion house standing & being in said Lincoln near my own Dwelling House and the land it stands on ..." to his son Joshua (1755-1825).¹³ (The town of Lincoln was incorporated in 1754. Prior to that date, the Joshua Brooks house lot was in Concord.)

The term "new Mansion" can be interpreted two ways. First, in the strictest sense, i.e., that the house was constructed in 1781 and was therefore new. Secondly, that the "new Mansion House" was new as contrasted with the house built c. 1713. In this event, the "new Mansion House" could have been several years old in 1781.

We will now offer evidence to support a theory that construction of the mansion commenced in 1779, and was brought to completion in 1781.

First of all, there are no recorded deeds to indicate Joshua Brooks (1755 - 1825) owned any real estate prior to 1781. (Joshua Brooks as Grantee-Grantor, 1639-1865, has been title searched in Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.) The "new Mansion House" and the land on which it

stood, then, was his first property acquisition. According to the Lincoln Tax Records, however, Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) did acquire real estate in 1779.

In 1779, Lincoln residents were taxed twice. The dates of the two tax levies are not available. From the order of the tax books, however, we can determine which tax was taken earlier and which later in the year.

When the first tax was levied in 1779, we find no evaluation placed upon real estate of Joshua Brooks (1755-1825), as he evidently did not own any. The real estate of his father, Joshua Brooks (1720-1790), however was evaluated at £ 1,690. At the second tax levy, we find the real estate of Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) evaluated at £ 33, while that of his father's was evaluated at £ 2,000. Thus, the real estate value of the two Brooks' increased, but this came about without the acquiring of additional property. At least there is no public record of their having done so. (In comparing the two assessments ²³⁴⁹ taken in 1779 of real estate owned by other Lincoln residents we find that in the vast majority of cases the assessments remained the same. In a few instances the assessment was different, either upward or downward, which probably was the result of acquisition or disposal of property. Further research will confirm or refute this statement.) We, therefore, reached the conclusion that the rise in the valuation of the real estate was due to the initial construction of the mansion house. Perhaps father and son shared the increased tax burden caused by construction of the mansion.

To further

substantiate this theory, we note that Joshua Brooks

1b

(1755-1825) married February 27, 1780. He, therefore, could have had need of a home to begin his new life.

The tax record of 1780 offers additional evidence pointing to the conclusion that the mansion house was built during the years 1779-1781. In 1780, we note that the evaluation placed upon Joshua Brooks' (1720-1790) real estate was £ 550. Here we see a tremendous drop in the value of his real estate; from £ 2,000 in 1779 to £ 550 in 1780. This drop in valuation occurred without any disposal of real property. We explain this in two ways. First, from an examination of the 1779-1780 tax records, we note a corresponding drop in 1780 of all real estate owned by Lincoln residents as compared with the 1779 evaluation. In most cases, the downward evaluation was fifty per cent or more, due, no doubt, to some economic factor which we will not attempt to define here. Secondly, we believe that the mansion house, which we theorized was under construction in 1779, was transferred to Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) in 1780, though probably unfinished.

We state this for two reasons: first, as we have seen Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) married in 1780; and secondly, the valuation of his real estate actually rose, from £ 33 in 1779 to £ 131 in 1780, whereas, as before stated, the real estate valuations of other property holders was drastically reduced. But this rise occurred without Joshua (1755-1825) having acquired any real property, i.e., there is no record of his having done so. Thus, we believe the real estate valued in 1779-1780 was the mansion house, which was probably delivered from father to son by oral contract. At least, this is the only logical explanation.

That the mansion was not completed until 1781, we again offer two

II

Concord Register, op. cit., p. 251; Vital Records of Lincoln, Mass.

Year 1850, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston: 1908, p.96. Hereafter cited as Vital Records

reasons. First, it was October 3, 1781, that the mansion was formally presented to Joshua (1755-1825) by deed.¹⁵ Secondly, by this deed we see that Joshua (1755-1825) paid £ 200 for the property, or £69 more than the 1780 evaluation. Surely, if the house was completed in 1780, and valued at £ 131 that year, its value would not have increased £ 69 in one year. Unfortunately, the tax records which might have shed additional light on the subject for 1781 through 1783 are not extant.

IV - LOCATION AND DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO HOUSES:

Now that we have established the construction of two houses on the two acre tract in question, one c. 1713, the other c. 1781, we will now locate the buildings and enter into a discussion as to how we are enabled to distinguish one from the other.

For the location of the two buildings, we are indebted to an 1852 survey executed by the celebrated Concord author, Henry David Thoreau (Appendix IV). Although the survey delineates the Brooks farm as it appeared in 1852, embracing some 175 acres, rather than the two acre house lot in question, it is valuable in that it shows the relationship of one house to the other, even though it does not distinguish which is the older of the two. For that we must look to other evidence. It should be noted that the house farthest east on the survey lies in a generally east-west direction, while that lying northwest of it lies in a generally north-south direction. This is important for reasons we will enter into later. But, let us proceed with the discussion.

¹⁵ Deed Book 91, loc. cit., p. 157f.

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On March 8, 1790, Joshua Brooks (1720-1790) died intestate. His widow, Hannah, relinquished her right to administer her late husband's estate, and requested that her son Joshua (1755-1825) be appointed in her stead. ¹⁷ This was done, ¹⁸ and on September 17, 1790, Hannah, Joshua (1755-1825), and the other legal heirs of Joshua (1720-1790) ¹⁹ entered into an agreement as to the distribution of the estate. We will confine this distribution to the two acre lot in question. By this agreement, Joshua, (1755-1825) gained title to the two acre tract of land. The widow Hannah was granted lifetime use of the dwelling house in which she and her late husband resided, while her daughter, Sarah, was given the right to live with Hannah.

The agreement further stipulated that upon the death of Hannah, her share would be equally divided among the heirs of Joshua Brooks (1720-1790). Hannah passed away, November 17, 1806, ²⁰ and the following ²¹ year, the legal heirs quitclaimed their share to Joshua Brooks (1755-1825). Thus, Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) became sole owner of the two acre tract

¹⁶ Vital Records, op. cit. p. 156. We learn from his Probate Case 3 2864 that he left no will.

¹⁷ Middlesex County Registry of Probate Courthouse, Cambridge, Mass, Probate Case # 2864. Hereafter all Probate Cases cited will be those filed with the Middlesex County Registry of Probate Courthouse.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The Original agreement is deposited in the Concord Free Library, Base. Vault, Shelf 22; Photocopy & typescript re in the Park files.

²⁰ Vital Records, op. cit., p. 155.

²¹ Edward Flint, guardian of Abel Brooks to Joshua Brooks, Deed Book 199, p. 112; John Hartwell et al. to Joshua Brooks, Deed Book 199, p. 113f; William Brooks et al. to Joshua Brooks, Deed Book 199, p. 114.

and all the buildings on it.

Sarah Brooks, who had been living with her mother, Hannah, married
Daniel Wood, February 10, 1803,²² and relocated in Concord.²³

Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) retained title to the two acre tract until January 1, 1823, when the tract was divided - one house being sold, the other the other mortgaged. From an examination of these two deeds, along with other evidence, we are able to distinguish between the two houses and determine which is the older of the two.

By the first of these two deeds, Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) sold a piece of land to Isaac Brooks,

...bounded north by the Great road, west on a private way by land of Cyrus Brooks till it comes to the south end of the hog sty by a spruce tree, thence turning and running East till it passes twelve feet beyond the southeast corner of the old dwelling house, thence turning and running north twelve feet in front of said Old house to the Great road first mentioned with a dwelling house thereon...²⁴

By the second deed, we learn that on the same day, Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) mortgaged his house lot to Nathan Brooks, described as follows:

bounded north on the great road till it comes to land this day conveyed to Isaac Brooks, west on land of said Isaac and land of Cyrus Brooks, south by a private way, east on land of Cyrus Brooks to the first mentioned road containing two acres more or less with a dwelling house...²⁵

22 Vital Records, op. cit., p. 97.

23 Deed Book 199, p. 113f.

24 Deed Book 246, p. 314.

25 Deed Book 247, p. 432f. Underscoring in these two deeds is that of the author's.

Here is conclusive proof that the old house, i.e., the house constructed c. 1713, which has disappeared from the scene, was west of the dwelling constructed c. 1781. (We see by these two deeds, that in 1823 Cyrus Brooks is the east and west abutter of the two acre tract. Cyrus Brooks acquired the same land which, as we have seen, was once owned by Noah Brooks and subsequently by Thomas Brooks. Now this came about will be ^{treated} in another report.)

There is additional evidence, however, to support this statement. On November 8, 1825, Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) died intestate. ²⁶ As was customary, a certain portion of his estate was allotted his widow. As was also customary, the widow received, as part of her lawful dower, one half of the dwelling house. Let us now examine that half of the dwelling in which the widow and her late husband Joshua (1755-1825) resided, in other words, the house deeded to Joshua (1755-1825) in 1781:

...i.e. the easterly end of said House as follows, viz. The lower front room, chamber over head, the two bed rooms adjoining the said front room and chamber. The easterly end of the garret as far as the garret stairs with a privilege to pass to and from the said farret with a privilege in the front door, lower front entry, chamber front entry. The cellar under a part of said front room, being the northerly part of said cellar as far as the wall south of the cellar stairs in a parallel line with said wall till it comes to the cellar wall in the east end of House with the exclusive privilege of this part of the cellar and the cellar stairs leading to the same. Also a privilege to bake in the oven in kitchen as as occasion may requir⁸⁷ and a privilege in the several door yards and well... ²⁷

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Vital Records, op. cit., p.156. We learn from Probate Case # 2866 that he left no will

27

Probate Case # 2866

We note in the assignment of the widow's dower, that she received the east end of the house, in other words, the house was divided into two parts - east and west. It was customary, when assigning a widow's half, to utilize the central chimney as the dividing line. As was pointed out earlier, the 1852 Thoreau survey delineates two houses; one lying generally east-west, the other generally north-south. Now we find Joshua's (1755-1825) widow, Sarah, receiving the east end of a house, (which we have already established was owned by Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) and which lay east of the older house), rather than the north or south half which would have been the case had Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) owned and occupied the house lying north-south. This argument is, perhaps, superfluous, but it does confirm the evidence contained in the two 1823 deeds.

Furthermore, the room layout as found in the widow's dower, coincides with that of the existing building. (See HABS Drawing "The Joshua Brooks House" Minute Man NHP Survey, 1961, 11 sheets, included in Architectural Data Section, Illustration # 81.) Moreover, we are able to contrast this description with that of the dwelling we have established was constructed c. 1713. Following Joshua Brooks' (1720-1790) death in 1790, an inventory was taken of both his real and personal estate.²⁸ From the inventory taken of the articles found in his house we learn something of the number of rooms and their arrangement. These were as follows: a north front room;

²⁸

Probate Case 3 2864

a north front chamber; a south front chamber - division of the same chamber; a bedroom in the garret; a north garret; a small room over the milk cellar; a common front room; a kitchen; a small apartment (where the stove and other utensils were kept and must have either adjoined the kitchen or been a division of it); a kitchen chamber; a milk cellar; a front cellar; another apartment in cellar; another cellar.

This room layout does not coincide with that of the existing dwelling. In addition, we see that the rooms lie north and south, rather than east and west - further confirmation that the house west of the east-west house on the 1852 survey is the earlier of the two.

The photograph on the following page, the only photograph known showing both houses, offers additional clues

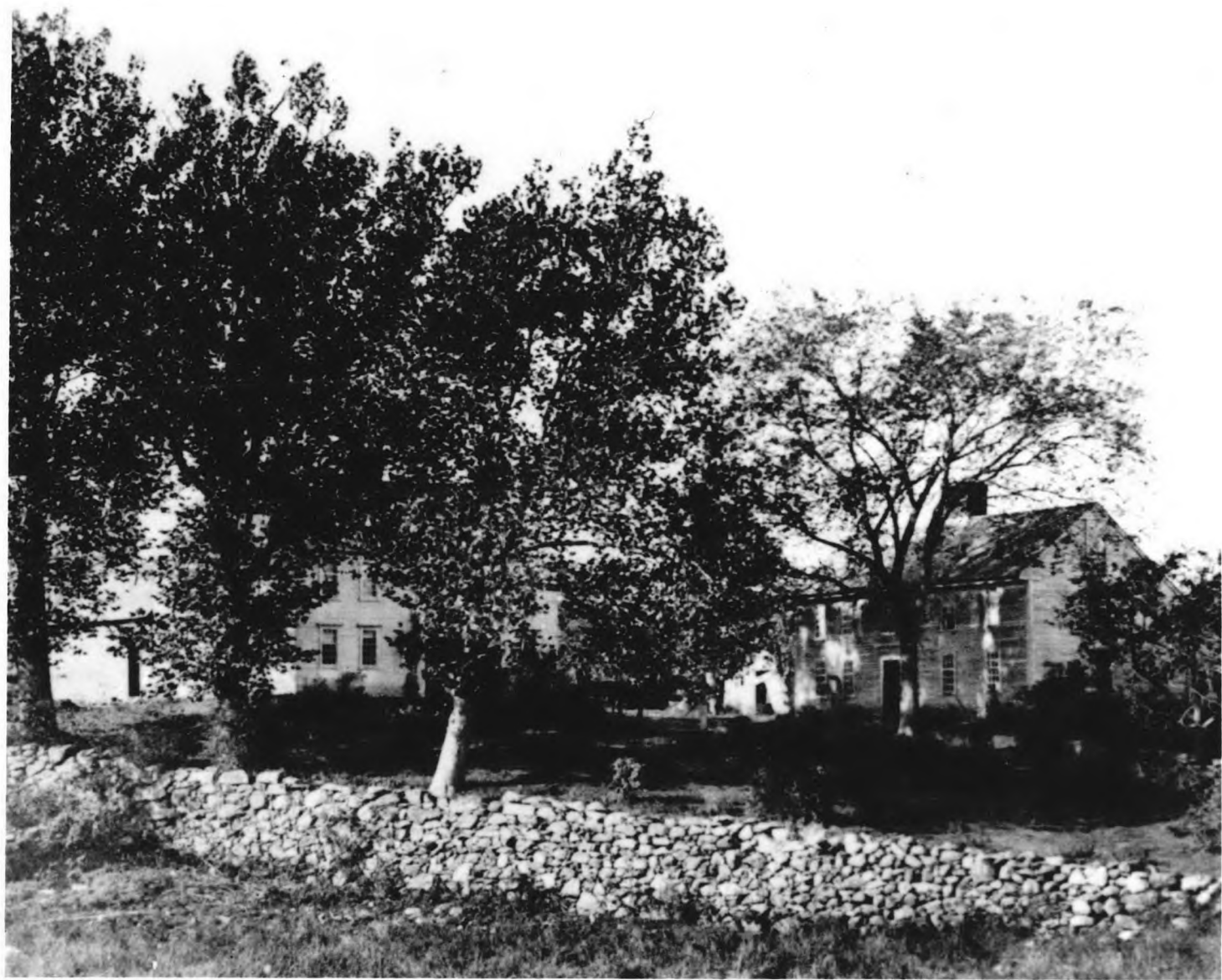
Joshua Brooks House

Negative No. MNHPP 62-74

This photograph, assumed to be taken sometime prior to 1900, was found in a scrapbook compiled by Edward and Samuel Farrar, entitled "Houses in Lincoln 100 Years Old and Over and Their Owners." This scrapbook, deposited with the Lincoln Historical Society, is undated. Another scrapbook, however, compiled by the two Farrars much along the same lines of the other, is dated 1935. The latter is in the Concord Free Library.

The house on the left is that identified as Lin-7E on Drawing NHP-MM 2004, i.e., the dwelling or mansion house constructed c. 1761. The house on the right is that constructed c. 1713 .

We are unable, from the photograph alone, to determine which house is the older of the two. EODC Architect Russell V. Keene, who has studied the photograph, and the existing dwelling and other known 18th century dwellings in this locality, however, is able to conclude, from certain structural details, that the house on the left of the photograph is of later origin.



V - HOUSE DESCRIPTIONS:

A - c. 1781 House

Interior and exterior descriptions of the dwelling constructed c. 1781, as it now stands, is provided in the Architectural Data Section of the Historic Structures Report. The only documentary evidence available, which sheds some light on the historical description of the dwelling, is the 1826 widow's dower. Treated earlier in this report, it provides us with a room layout for the east half of the house. The 1781 deed also describes the dwelling as a "mansion house". At this time, sufficient evidence is not available which would enable us to determine what an eighteenth century New Englander meant by a "mansion house". Perhaps further research will uncover a type of structure which could be termed "mansion" as distinguished from other types.

In any event, we interpret it to mean a farm structure of superior design and construction as compared with other farm dwellings. In comparing the two dwellings in the photograph, there is no question that the structure on the left, i.e., the existing dwelling, is superior in these respects to that shown on the right of the photograph.

B - c.1713 House

For a description of the c.1713 dwelling, we must rely on the evidence contained in the 1790 inventory, presented earlier, and the photograph. Taken together, we see that this structure was composed of eight rooms; ^{two} of which were divided, i.e., the south

front chamber and the kitchen. In the latter we find "a small apartment" and a "kitchen chamber". The cellar was divided into four compartments: milk cellar; front cellar; and two other compartments.

From the photograph, we see that the dwelling was a two story, clapboarded structure, with a high central chimney and gable roof sloping into a lean-to on the west. The main entrance was on the east elevation and in the center. There were four windows on the lower floor of the east elevation - two on either side of the main entrance. These windows were six over nine lights. Five windows, six over six, were on the upper floor of the east elevation - one directly over the main entrance, the remaining four directly over the four first floor windows.

On the north elevation are three windows in a vertical row. The number of lights in these windows is not discernible from the photograph. They probably coincided, however, with those on the east elevation - the window on the lower floor six over nine, and remaining two, six over six.

The south and west elevations of this dwelling are not visible in the photograph.

VI OUTBUILDINGS AND OTHER STRUCTURES:

The two acre tract was also occupied by a barn, corn and wood house, chaise house, outhouses, watering place, well, and perhaps a hog sty. Of all these, we can positively state only that the barn was there in 1775, and that most of the others probably were.

The first reference to the barn is found in a 1719 deed,²⁹ when Noah Brooks presented his son Joshua (1688-1768) with a two acre tract of woodland lying south of the two acre house lot which, as we have already seen, was presented to Joshua (1688-1768) in 1713.

In addition to the two acre tract of woodland, Joshua (1688-1768) was granted, "...the privilege of a convenient way for carting and driving...forever over my (Noah's) land in the place now described viz: beginning at said Joshua Brook's barn yard extending where the way is now occupied to the old mill Dam and over the Dam on where the way is now occupied to the above said two acres of land..."³⁰

Thus, we definitely know that a barn was located on the premises in 1719. If we are correct in our reasoning that the dwelling was constructed c. 1713, however, it is not unreasonable to assume that the barn was either constructed in the same year or shortly thereafter.

Following the death of Joshua Brooks (1720-1790), in 1790, we again find reference to a barn, both in the 1790 Inventory of the

²⁹

Deed Book 39, p. 515f.

³⁰

Ibid.

deceased's real estate,³¹ and in the 1790 agreement between the widow Hannah and the other legal heirs of her late husband.³² Whether or not this is the same barn mentioned in the 1719 deed or one of later origin is uncertain. From the 1790 agreement, we learn that the widow Hannah received one-third of the barn, while her son, Joshua (1755-1825), acquired the remaining two-thirds. We can infer from this that only one barn existed on the two acre tract and that it was used in common by the occupants of the dwelling constructed c. 1713 and that built c. 1781. In any event, there are no references to a second barn.

Upon the death of Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) in 1825, his widow was granted, as part of her lawful dower, fourteen feet of the south end of the barn. Thus, we learn the barn lay in a north-south direction. Whether the fourteen feet represented one-half, one-third, or some other arbitrary division, is unknown.

This barn, or at least a barn, stood until 1939, and was located on a hill behind the dwelling erected c. 1781 (See 1852 Thoreau survey). The barn consisted of hewn mortar and tenon framing members, covered with sheath board. Vertical sheathing was on the walls and the roof. The main entry to the barn was on the south elevation and a privy was located inside the structure.³³

31 Probate Case # 2864, loc. cit.

32 Agreement, September 17, 1790, loc. cit.

33 Interview with Mr. Roy C. Peterson, 22 Elliott St., S. Mattick, Mass. Tel. No. 235-2565, by Architect Russell V. Keene, EODC, Dec. 18, 1962. Mr. Peterson acquired the property in 1939 and sold it in 1940. It was Mr. Peterson who removed the barn. Hereafter cited as the Peterson Interview.

The first mention of structures, other than the dwellings and barn, are also found in the 1770 inventory and agreement already referred to. By these we learn that a corn barn, outhouses, watering place and well were located on the two acre tract. Their precise location, however, is not known.

In 1823, when Isaac Brooks purchased the c. 1713 dwelling from Joshua Brooks (1755-1825), we discover a hog sty southwest of the old house. From reading this deed, however, it is not clear whether the hog sty was on the two acre tract in question, or on the land owned by Cyrus Brooks immediately west of it. In any event, the construction date of the hog sty is not known. We also learn from this deed, that along with the old house, Isaac Brooks received a "right to use the well in common..." We conclude, therefore, that one well served both houses.

From the 1826 widow's dower, previously referred to, we learn that a wood house was underneath the corn barn. The widow received as her portion, the easterly end of the wood house, "...as far west as the first beam..." Here we discover the corn barn and wood house was a two story structure, and that it lay in an east-west direction. To reiterate, the construction date and precise location of this building are not known.

24

In 1961, an incident occurred which might provide a clue in locating the watering place. During a cleanup operation of the yard in front of the existing dwelling, the driver of an NPS vehicle suddenly found the vehicle sinking into the ground. The vehicle uncovered what appeared to be a stone-lined trench.

One Other building is mentioned in the 1826 widow's dower, which is also found in the 1823 mortgage deed from Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) to Nathan Brooks, but not found elsewhere. And that is a chaise house. Since there is no mention of a chaise house in any of the earlier deeds, nor in the 1790 inventory of Joshua Brooks' (1720-1790) estate, we can only surmise that it was built sometime between 1790 and 1823.

VII WALLS AND FENCES:

The existing Joshua Brooks house is now almost entirely surrounded by stone walls. Our purpose is to determine which of these, if any, were standing in 1775. We can immediately eliminate the north wall and the wall east of the house but west of Elm Brook that flows through the property. These, we know, were not built until about 1940. The 1939 owner-occupant recalls that these walls were constructed by Harold Gardner, who purchased the property in 1940.³⁵ These walls do not appear on a plan of this property executed June 30, 1940. (Appendix V). Thus, we can conclude they were constructed sometime after that date.

In conjunction with the construction of the east wall, Mr. Gardner placed a sizeable amount of fill behind the wall above Elm Brook.

³⁵

Peterson Interview, loc. cit. For sale of Peterson to Garner c.f. Deed Book 6416, p. 144. Mr. Gardner is no longer living.

No documentary evidence has been uncovered which could date the west and south walls. In all the deeds concerning this two acre tract, neither walls nor fences are mentioned as boundary dividers. The northern boundary was always the Bay Road; the southern boundary a lane; and the east and west boundaries were always identified by the names of the property owners lying east and west of the two acre tract.

We do know that in 1715, however, a fence ran along the eastern boundary of the two acre tract, dividing it from land owned by Noah Brooks.³⁶ Whether this was a post and rail fence or some other type is not known. Neither is it known whether or not the fence was still standing sixty years later at the outbreak of the Revolution.

Today there is a stone wall, perhaps forty yards east of the Elm Brook, which runs directly south from the Bay Road to an old road south of the Brooks property. Two additional walls run vertically from this wall, i.e., parallel with the Bay Road, to Elm Brooks. The first of these is approximately in line with the rear of the existing dwelling, while the second ends at the old road behind the house where the road crosses Elm Brook. The origin of these walls, however, is obscure. Furthermore, they are evidently outside the limits of the two-acre tract.

All this, however, does not preclude the possibility that stone walls and/or post and rail fences, or some other type of fences, enclosed the property in 1775.³⁷

36

Settlement of Highway Bounds, loc. cit., Concord Town Records, Old Vol. II, folio 95; Vol. I, p. 360b.

37

Perhaps the most useful source we have regarding eighteenth century fences and walls - descriptions; methods of construction; etc; is: Deane, Samuel, D.D., The New England Farmer or Georgical Dictionary, Press of Isaiah Thomas, Worcester, Mass: 1797, pp. 105ff.

VIII ROADS:

As was noted previously, a road was the southern boundary of the two acre lot in question. This road was laid out sometime between 1713 and 1719. We base this conclusion on evidence contained in deeds of conveyance. In 1713, when Noah Brooks presented his son Joshua (1688-1768) with the two acre tract and dwelling house, it was bounded on the south by land owned by Noah and not a road.³⁸ First mention of the road is found in a 1719 deed when Noah again presented Joshua (1688-1768) with a two acre tract of land. This was woodland lying south of Joshua's (1688-1768) house lot. Along with the woodland, Joshua (1688-1768) was granted the privilege of carting and driving over Noah's land, "...beginning at said Joshua Brooks's barn yard extending where the way is now occupied to the old mill Dam and over the Dam on where the way is now occupied to the above said two acres of land..."³⁹

In 1725, Noah Brooks, who lived immediately west of Joshua Brooks (1688-1768), presented his son Thomas with the largest part of his holdings. Thomas, however, was not to take possession of the property while Noah was living. In describing his house lot, Noah mentions a highway, two rods in width, running from his barn southeasterly

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Deed Book 39, loc. cit., p. 512f.

³⁹

Deed Book 39, loc. cit., p. 515f.

40

to a large tract of woodland, a logical place for a saw mill to be located.

Following Noah's death in 1739, Thomas came into full possession of his deceased father's holdings. Now let us examine the southern boundary of the two acre house lot in question as it is described in a 1745 deed of conveyance from Joshua Brooks (1688-1768) to his son Joshua (1720-1790), i.e., "...southerly by a way leading from Thomas Brooks Barn to the Old saw mill Dam..."⁴¹

In tying this evidence together, then, we are able to conclude that the road was built sometime between 1713 and 1719, and that it was two rods or thirty-three feet wide.

In examining ground evidence today, we find an old dirt road south of the existing dwelling quite discernible, even though overgrown with heavy underbrush. This trace of a road we believe to be the original southern boundary. It is, in most places, at least thirty feet wide and is bounded on either side by stone walls. Where the road crosses Elm Brook, perhaps a hundred yards or more southeast of the existing dwelling, is a crude bridge constructed

⁴⁰ Deed Book 35, p. 193f.

⁴¹ Deed Book 45, loc. cit., p. 623.

huge boulders covered with dirt. The possibility exists that this bridge may also have been the saw mill dam mentioned in several of the deeds, but it is equally possible that the dam may have been located farther upstream. Further research may help clarify this point.

There is one other passageway mentioned, and this is found in the 1823 sale of the old house from Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) to Isaac Brooks.⁴² Here we note that the western boundary was "...a private way by land of Cyrus Brooks..." This is the first and only time that a way is noted as the western boundary. All of the earlier deeds concerning the two acre tract give the name of the owner west of the tract as the western boundary, even as late as 1807 when Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) mortgaged the property.⁴³ From this we surmise that the way was laid out sometime between 1807 and 1823.

Again, as in the case of the hog sty, it is not clear whether the lane was on the two acre tract or on land of the western abutter. In any event, since a lane is given as the boundary, rather than a barrier such as a fence or stone wall, this would seem to indicate absence of the latter.

⁴²

Deed Book 246, p. 314.

⁴³

Deed Book 177, p. 96f.

Today, there is a modern driveway from Route 2A to the c. 1781 dwelling, and west of this, a dirt road providing access to a house situated in rear of the two acre tract. The latter road was bulldozed out by the present occupants of the last-mentioned house.

IX SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF THE TWO ACRE TRACT 1823-1961:

As was seen earlier, Joshua Brooks (1755-1825) mortgaged his house and two acre lot to Nathan Brooks. The mortgage was not paid off before Joshua's (1755-1825) death in 1825. Thus Nathan Brooks secured title to the two acre lot and the house. The older house, which Isaac Brooks purchased in 1823, was mortgaged to Nathan Brooks in 1829. Isaac went bankrupt in 1844, and through legal proceeding following his bankruptcy, Nathan Brooks secured title to the old house. The subsequent title chain is as follows:

March 12, 1859 - Nathan Brooks to Joshua Brooks (1780-?).
November 4, 1862 - Joshua Brooks (1780-?) to George T. Smith.
July 26, 1872 - George T. Smith to James R. Carty.
April 1, 1889 - James R. Carty to John H. Bulger and Martin Bulger.

⁴⁴ Statement of Mrs. Kieley

⁴⁵ Probate Case #2866

⁴⁶ Deed Book 288, p. 167; Deed Book 331, p. 457.

⁴⁷ Deed Book 446, pp. 429ff.; Deed Book 479, p. 498.

⁴⁸ Deed Book 814, p. 226.

⁴⁹ Deed book 894, p. 571.

⁵⁰ Deed Book 1221, p. 490.

⁵¹ Deed Book 1900, p. 513.

December 28, 1905 - John H. Bulger et al. to Mary L. Brooks et al. ⁵²
⁵³
 April 3, 1911 - Mary L. Brooks to Sarah W. Brooks. ⁵⁴
 July 8, 1939 - Sarah W. Brooks to Frank Ware. ⁵⁵
 November 18, 1939 - Alice M. Brooks et al to Roy C. Peterson. ⁵⁶
 July 29, 1940 - Roy C. Peterson to Harold and Antoinette M. Gardner. ⁵⁷
 May 20, 1947 - Antoinette M. Gardner to Bertram Wellman et ux. ⁵⁸
 September 28, 1951 - Bertram Wellman and Cora B. Wellman to Henry A. Sturm et ux. ⁵⁹
 November 24, 1961 - Henry A Sturm, Jr. et ux. to the National Park Service, Department of Interior. ⁵⁹

52

Deed Book 3217, p. 208.

53

Deed Book 3593, p. 110.

54

Deed Book 6321, p. 336

55

Deed Book 6345, p. 156.

56

Deed Book 6416, p. 144.

57

Deed Book 7135, p. 42.

58

Deed Book 7807, p. 491.

59

Deed Book 9939, p. 253.

Biographic Sketch - Deacon Joshua Brooks (1720-1790):

Deacon Joshua Brooks was born in Concord Lincoln January 20, 1720, son of Joshua Brooks and Lydia Wheeler. Deacon Brooks married Hannah about 1745 and fathered twelve children, seven daughters and five sons. One daughter died in infancy, and two others when but young adults.

Deacon Brooks, like his father and his father's father, was a well-to-do farmer and tanner, with extensive land holdings in Lincoln and Concord. The Deacon was evidently a deeply religious man, as evidenced by his library composed almost solely of religious works, and having served as Deacon in the Lincoln Church of Christ for twenty-six years, being elected to that office December 28, 1763 and serving until his death.

His father evidently was interested in civic, political and military affairs, having served as Town Selectman in 1734, 1749 and 1750. The Deacon's father, too, was among those who agitated for the creation of the town of Lincoln, succeeding in this objective in 1754. Moreover, he had served as Lieutenant of a detachment of fifty men who marched from Concord to Boston, September 23, 1746, in response to an alarm of an expected attack from the French fleet under the Duke D'Anville.

Deacon Brooks was interested in education. In 1761, he and a number of others sought permission from the town to build a school house near Deacon Brooks' tan yard. Permission, however, was denied.

The Deacon's eldest son, Joshua, was also active in civic and political affairs. We find the son serving as Justice of the Peace at various times and as Representative from 1809 to 1811. The son also served as a Minute Man, in 1775 and, according to any eyewitness, was wounded while contesting the British at the North Bridge in Concord.

A musket ball reportedly pierced his hat, inflicting a slight scalp wound. Another account, however, indicates the bullet merely passed through the coat of Joshua without inflicting a wound.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The existing structure was not a part of the April 19, 1775 scene, but in order to be in keeping with the Master Plan proposed for Minute Man National Historical Park, we recommend that restoration be performed on the exterior. We further recommend that the original interior fabric be preserved insofar as is practicable, but not to interfere with nor impose an inconvenience on any modern use to which the structure may be properly put.
2. For purposes of recording, we recommend an archeological investigation of the two acre tract to locate any structural remains of the c 1713 dwelling, barn, corn, and wood house, chaise house, watering place, wall, and any other man-made features which may have been within the bounds of this parcel. This investigation can be deferred until further historical research is accomplished enabling the archeological investigation to encompass other parcels, e.g., Deacon Joshua Brooks' tanyard, opposite the existing dwelling and north of Route 2A.
3. We recommend any plans to exhibit features uncovered through archeological investigation be deferred until such time as the overall planning of the Park has progressed to such a point where exhibition of these features should prove not only feasible but desirable.
4. We recommend a landscape study of this tract and landscape restoration, based upon historical and archeological evidence.

APPENDIX I

Genealogical Chart - Joshua Brooks

Thomas Brooks d. May 21, 1667
Grace d. May 12, 1664

Joshua
Hannah

Noah Brooks d. Feb. 1, 1739
Dorothy

Joshua Brooks b. October 14, 1688 - d. June 26, 1768
married April 24, 1713

Lydia Wheeler b. 1694 - d. June 25, 1750
remarried June 4, 1751

Mary Wheeler b. 1701 - d. May 30, 1782

Joshua Brooks b. January 10, 1720 - d. March 8, 1790
Hannah b. 1729 - d. November 17, 1806

Joshua Brooks b. February 11, 1755 - d. November 8, 1825
married February 27, 1780

Martha Barrett b. 1755 - d. November 28, 1792
re-married October 3, 1793

Sarah Davis

Joshua Brooks b. October 9, 1780

APPENDIX II

Children of Deacon Joshua Brooks

Deacon Joshua B. (1720-1790)
Hannah Brooks

Hannah
b. December 4, 1746
d. October 13, 1747

Hannah
b. October 2, 1748
d. December 3, 1773

Lydia
b. October 3, 1750
d. May 17, 1772

Hephzibah
b. April 19, 1753

Joshua
b. February 11, 1755
d. November 8, 1825

William
b. March 13,

Abel
b. June 17, 1759

Jonas
b. October 4, 1761

Deborah
b. January 3, 1764

Phebe
b. July 22, 1766

Sarah
b. November 11, 1768

John
b. May 19, 1771

APPENDIX III

Living Children of Deacon Joshua Brooks
as of April 19, 1775

Living children of Deacon Joshua Brooks (1720-1790)
and Hannah his wife, as of April 19, 1775.

Name	Sex	Age
Hephzibah	Female	22
Joshua	Male	20
William	Male	18
Abel	Male	15
Jonas	Male	13
Deborah	Female	11
Phebe	Female	8
Sarah	Female	6
John	Male	3

APPENDIX IV

Plan of the Noah and Joshua Brooks
Farm in Lincoln, Mass. Surveyed by
Henry David Thoreau, May 1852.

Henry
Henry, & Thomas
May 26-8th-9-83 1852

Male of 16 rods, 5 cm. in all



considering I A strong light

Area of Meadow 12 acres ~~2000~~ 68 perches
Grass field (taking out road) 5 A 2 R 8 P
North of (exposed) 31 A 2 R 8 P
Main body South of Road 125 A. 2 R. 31 P.
Whole Area 175 A 0 R 15 P

NB from 8 to 9
 bet 3/4 & 6 pm
 KCH bet 2 & 4 AM
 S & D bet VI & 6
 from D & X bet 10 & 4 pm
 X 11 & 9 " 5 & 6 1/2 pm

2 plan the evening in H I K S R H dining
 butchery from kitchen var. as usual
 at 8. K & being highest & little to the south of R & made
 more on W of about 1 1/2 The triangles show how it was
 originally drawn there.

933
 128
 505

APPENDIX V

Plan of Land, Lincoln Mass.
Land of Roy C. Peterson

Plan of Land
LINCOLN, MASS.

Land
of

Roy C. Peterson

Scale - 1" = 40'

June 30, 1940

C.A Knowles, Eng.

(Original on file.)

LOT A

LOT B

Right of Way

170'
N 58° 06' W

30.0'
N 25° 05' W

RIGHT OF WAY

Hartwell

66,900 Sq. ft.

Brook

Drain

N 76° 0' W

EXINGTON RD.

LINCOLN
CONCORD

Middlesex Registry of Deeds
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

Plan Number..... 679
Rec'd. July 29, 1940 at 4
with Deed

This 1940 plan of the Joshua Brooks tract contains a total of 66,900 sq. feet, or better than one and one-half acres, whereas the original tract was two acres, "more or less". The right-of-way bounding the tract on the south is believed to be the two rod way laid out sometime between 1713 and 1719. The right-of-way bounding the tract on the west is the modern access to the owners and occupants of Lot A on the 1940 plan. The stone wall (shown in blue) on the west of the latter right-of-way is believed to be the same position as the original western boundary. If these assumptions are correct, then we need only extend the eastern boundary, shown on the 1940 plan, approximately thirty-five feet eastward to complete the picture of the original two acre "more or less" tract. The original eastern boundary, however, rather than being a straight line, as shown on the 1940 plan, turned "several angles", perhaps following the course of Elm Brook.

ADDENDUM

The following illustrations were received after
the Joshua Brooks Report was completed.

Minute Man National Historical Park Project
Negative No. 63-195

This is a photograph reproduction of a charcoal drawing which was executed c. 1883 by the grandmother of Charles Paine, the current owner-occupant of the Brooks-Paine house, Rte. 2 A, Concord, Mass. The original is owned by Mr. Paine. The drawing is a northwest view of the Joshua Brooks house, built c. 1781. Note the structure to the right and rear of the dwelling. This may be the barn, but the design of this structure is quite different from the barn which appears in a 1939 photograph (negative no. 63-194). It is also possible that the outbuilding depicted in the c. 1883 drawing is the two-story corn and wood house. If so, then the structure would have been sandwiched in between the dwelling and the barn.



Minute Man National Historical Park Project
Negative No. 63-194

This photograph was taken in 1939 by Roy C. Peterson,
22 Elliot St., South Natick, Mass. The barn shown here is
the one which Mr. Peterson tore down in 1940.

