

# THE FRANKLIN MILE MARKERS: A HISTORIC LINK TO THE PAST IN SPENCER AND THE BROOKFIELDS:

WELCOME TO OUR BEAUTIFUL SECTION OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS.

WE INVITE YOU TO EXPLORE THE AREA, WHICH INCLUDES SPENCER AND THE BROOKFIELDS BOTH LINKED BY MUCH HISTORY.

BACK IN THE MID 1700'S, BEFORE THE REVOLUTION, BEN FRANKLIN WAS PUT IN CHARGE OF THE COLONIAL POSTAL SYSTEM BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. IN AN EFFORT TO OVERCOME THE SUSPICIONS OF HIS YANKEE CUSTOMERS, WHO WERE SURE THEY WERE BEING CHEATED ON POSTAGE THAT WAS ASSESSED BY THE MILE, HE RODE THE BOSTON POST ROAD IN A CARRIAGE WITH A HOMEMADE ODOMETER ATTACHED TO THE WHEEL. AT EVERY MILE A STAKE WAS DRIVEN INTO THE GROUND AND A CREW FOLLOWED BEHIND AND REPLACED THE STAKE WITH A STONE MARKER...THE STONE MARKER NOW REFERRED TO AS A FRANKLIN MARKER INDICATED THE MILES TO BOSTON.

OVER THE YEARS THE BOSTON POST ROAD WHICH WAS NO MORE THAN A COW PATH BACK THEN HAS CHANGED WITH BITS AND PIECES OF IT STILL REMAINING ALONG OUR HIGHWAY SYSTEM OF TODAY. THE ORIGINAL ROAD WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1639 WHEN THE FIRST GENERAL HIGHWAY ACT WAS PASSED. THE ROAD WAS UPGRADED IN THE 1700'S AND THE VALUE OF THE ROAD WAS DEMONSTRATED IN 1775 BY THE HASTE IN WHICH THE MINUTEMEN RESPONDED TO THE ALARM IN LEXINGTON.

THE MILE MARKERS IN OUR AREA ARE BY FAR THE BEST EXAMPLE OF THIS HISTORIC ENDEAVOR'S PRESERVATION... MOST MARKERS ALONG THE ROUTE FROM NEW YORK TO BOSTON HAVE DISAPPEARED BUT RIGHT HERE IN CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS FROM THE WEST BROOKFIELD WESTERN TOWN LINE TO THE SPENCER 'S EASTERN TOWN LINE YOU WILL FIND MARKERS FOR MILE 69 DOWN TO MARKER 57. THE TOWN'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAVE INSTALLED SIGNS TO POINT OUT THE MARKERS TO AID IN YOUR SEARCH. COME LET'S FIND THIS HISTORIC COLLECTION AS WE BROWSE THE BROOKFIELDS AND BEYOND...

WE START ON THE EASTERN END OF THE AREA AND HEAD WEST..IT SHOULD BE NOTED TOO THAT MORE MARKERS EXIST IN THE TOWN OF WARREN TO THE WEST AND THE TOWN OF LEICESTER TO THE EAST BUT THIS TOUR IS OF THE SPENCER/BROOKFIELDS.. SPENCER IS OUR START OFF POINT AND WE BEGIN AT THE SPENCER/LEICESTER TOWN LINE AND LOCATE **MARKER 57** LOCATED IN THE FLOWER GARDEN OF BY THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE BEAUTIFUL SPENCER COUNTRY INN. THE INN SITS ON A KNOLL OFF ROUTE 9 ENTER THEIR DRIVEWAY AND YOU WILL FIND THE MARKER DIRECTLY OPPOSITE THE GAZEBO AREA. NOW IT IS ONTO **MARKER 58** GOING BACK TO ROUTE 9 AND TURNING LEFT OR WEST ON 9 AND TRAVEL JUST ABOUT 1 MILE. THE MARKER WILL BE ON YOUR RIGHT JUST BEFORE PAXTON ROAD AND OPPOSITE A VACANT CAR DEALERSHIP AND AT THE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF 325 MAIN STREET.

NOW WE CONTINUE WEST ON ROUTE 9 TO DOWNTOWN SPENCER AND PULL INTO THE SHOPPER'S VILLAGE PARKING LOT AND WALK OVER TO THE SIGN AND IN A FLOWER GARDEN (IN SEASON) THERE YOU WILL FIND **MARKER 59**.

CONTINUE ON ROUTE 9 WEST BY THE POLICE AND FIRE BARN AND THE PROPERTY OF THE CATHOLIC CEMETERY WILL START.. YOU ARE NOW GOING DOWN AN INCLINE AND WATCH FOR THE DRIVEWAY INTO THE CEMETERY ON YOUR RIGHT.. OPPOSITE SPENCER INDUSTRIAL PARK.. PARK YOUR CAR IN CEMETERY DRIVE AND WALK BACK OUT TO ROUTE 9 AND JUST DOWN THE SIDEWALK A SHORT DISTANCE YOU WILL FIND **MARKER 60**. INTERESTING TO NOTE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PLACED A SIGH HER TO DENOTE THE HISTORICAL MARKER A FEW YEARS AGO... AND THE PAINT ON THE SIGN IS PEELING BUT FRANKLIN'S MARKER REMAINS MUCH THE SAME AS IT DID BACK IN THE MID 1700'S .. I GUESS WE DON'T MAKE THINGS TO LAST ANYMORE. **MARKER 61** IS LOCATED AS WE CONTINUE WEST ON ROUTE 9 ON YOUR LEFT NEAR THE AUTO PARTS STORE. CONTINUE ON ROUTE 9 INTO THE TOWN OF EAST BROOKFIELD AND ON YOUR RIGHT IN A STONE WALL AT RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS OF 320 MAIN STREET YOU WILL FIND

**MARKER 62.** THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS PLACED A BEAUTIFUL BRONZE MARKER TO IDENTIFY THE FRANKLIN MARKER HERE... IT IS IN THE WALL BUT IT GIVES YOU AN IDEA OF HOW MUCH OF THE MARKER IS BURIED IN THE GROUND... LOOKS LIKE THE CREW FOLLOWING FRANKLIN HAD THEIR WORK CUT OUT FOR THEM.

TO FIND **MARKER 63** WE TURN OFF ROUTE 9 ONTO NORTH BROOKFIELD ROAD,,, IT IS THE SECOND RIGHT AFTER KEN'S CITCO STATION... FOLLOW THE ROAD DOWN TO THE BAYPATH GOLF COURSE WHICH WILL BE ON YOUR LEFT. THE MARKER IS ON YOUR RIGHT JUST BEFORE MAILBOX 191 AND AT TELEPHONE POLE 18.

NOW WE PROCEED INTO THE NEXT TOWN WHICH IS NORTH BROOKFIELD AND WATCH FOR SLAB CITY ROAD WHICH WILL BE YOUR THIRD LEFT AFTER THE GOLF COURSE. HERE ABOUT 5/10THS OF A MILE YOU WILL FIND **MARKER 64** THIS ROAD AND FOSTER HILL ROAD WHICH WE WILL BE ON SHORTLY ARE PROBABLY CLOSEST TO HOW THINGS LOOKED TO BEN FRANKLIN BACK WHEN HE MOVED SLOWLY ALONG MARKING THE MILES.

NOW WE MOVE ALONG ON SLAB CITY ROAD INTO BROOKFIELD AND ON OUR RIGHT WILL BE **MARKER 65** THE MARKER IS WELL MARKED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

FOLLOW THIS ROAD OUT TO ROUTE 148 AND TURN LEFT ONTO ROUTE 148 AND FOLLOW IT TO THE JUNCTION OF ROUTE 9 TURNING RIGHT ONTO ROUTE 9. WATCH FOR A BEAUTIFUL FARM HOUSE ON THE LEFT WITH A PICKET FENCE AROUND IT... JUST BEFORE THIS FARM YOU WILL FIND **MARKER 66.** YOU WILL BE AT POLE NUMBER 23 AND ROBERT'S ENTERPRISES WILL BE ON YOUR RIGHT. NOW CONTINUE WEST ON ROUTE 9 AND TURN RIGHT ONTO WEST BROOKFIELD ROAD AT PILLSBURY FUNERAL HOME THIS ROAD BECOMES FOSTER HILL ROAD ONCE YOU ENTER THE TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD. THE RIDE ON THIS ROAD AND SLAB CITY ROAD WE WERE RECENTLY ON MAKE THE TRIP WELL WORTHWHILE.

**MARKER 67** WILL BE ON YOUR RIGHT JUST A SHORT WAY UP FOSTER HILL ROAD... IT IS WELL MARKED AND THE DAY I WAS THERE IT WAS SITTING IN A BED OF DAY LILIES IN FULL BLOOM... I HOPE THEY WILL BE SMILING AT YOU WHEN YOU COME BY.. CONTINUE ON FOSTER HILL ROAD AND EXPERIENCE THE BREATH TAKING VIEWS OF FIELDS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD BY INDIAN ROCK FARM. WATCH FOR JOHN PRITCHARD LANE ON YOUR LEFT AND STOP AT THE PARK THERE. THERE IS A SMALL PICNIC AREA AND NOTATION OF THE SITE OF THE HOME AND LAW OFFICE OF JEDEDIAH FOSTER, REV. AND PATRIOT... THE JUDGE WROTE THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CONSTITUTION. NOW FOLLOW THE ROAD ON INTO THE TOWN OF WEST BROOKFIELD AND REJOIN ROUTE 9 WEST TO THE BEGINNING OF THE WEST BROOKFIELD TOWN COMMON. HERE YOU WILL FIND **MARKER 68.** THE MARKER HAS BEEN ENTOMBED WITH STONE. BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE BEAUTIFUL COMMON AND HOMES SURROUNDING IT.. CHECK OUT TO SEE IF THERE IS A CONCERT TONIGHT AT THE BAND STAND... THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SPOTS IN CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS.

NOW CONTINUE ON ROUTE 9 WEST TO JUST BEFORE WAREPOINT ROAD.. THERE IS A RESIDENCE/INSURANCE COMPANY HERE AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR FRONT YARD ENCIRCLED IN SHRUBS IS **MARKER 69** IT IS ON YOUR RIGHT AND WOK CHINESE RESTAURANT IS DIRECTLY ACROSS THE STREET. IF YOU WANT TO GO INTO THE NEXT TOWN OF WARREN THERE ARE THREE MARKERS THERE ALSO..

WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR AND WILL THINK OF BROWSE THE BROOKFIELDS AND BEYOND AND COME BACK AND VISIT OUR SHOPS, RESTAURANTS AND B&B'S.. BE SURE TO ASK ABOUT THE KNOX TRAIL WHICH ALSO RUNS THROUGH OUR AREA AND YES GEORGE WASHINGTON PASSED THROUGH AND SLEPT HERE TOO... WE EVEN HAVE A COVERED BRIDGE IN THE AREA JUST BEYOND WEST BROOKFIELD AND A COUPLE OR THREE GREAT WATERFALLS IN THE AREA TOO BUT THAT IS A STORY FOR ANOTHER DAY.

A CLOSING NOTE IF YOU USE YOUR ODOMETER TO MEASURE BETWEEN POINTS AND YOU DON'T GET AN EXACT MILE ...PLEASE DO NOT BLAME MR FRANKLIN. THE REASON FOR THE DISTANCE DIFFERENCES IS DUE TO THE CHANGING PATHS OF OUR ROADWAYS IN THE PAST 250 PLUS YEARS... THE MARKERS HAVE NOT MOVED WE HAVE MOVED THE ROADS BY THEM...

**THANKS FOR YOUR INTEREST.... JIM DEVEREUX OAKWOOD FARM CHRISTMAS BARN  
SPENCER MASSACHUSETTS.**