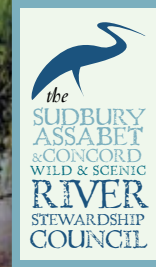


# The Sudbury River Boater's Trail



COMMENTARY GUIDE BY MATTHEW EISENSON



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## THE SUDBURY RIVER BOATER'S TRAIL

From Little Farms Road (Framingham) to Old Calf Pasture/Egg Rock (Concord) runs approximately 15 miles. It consists of three major segments, each of approximately 5 miles:

1. *Little Farms Road to Route 27*
2. *Route 27 to the Lincoln Boat Launch on Route 117*
3. *Lincoln Boat Launch Route 117 to Old Calf Pasture/Egg Rock*

### 1. Little Farms Road to Route 27

This section of the Boater's Trail begins in the shaded, meandering reaches of the Sudbury River and runs about 5 miles to the beginnings of the wide open flood plains in Sudbury and Wayland. Take modest precaution because the water can be quick moving in the upper portion of this section in the spring. Along the way there are many natural and historical sites of interest, including the Oxbow, a natural river feature near the put-in, and remnants of the Old Stone Bridge. The River passes to the east of Heard Pond in Wayland and enters Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. Towards the conclusion of this section, the flood plains open in to wide meadows where there is opportunity to view numerous water birds.

### 2. Route 27 to Route 117, Lincoln Boat Launch on Route 117

The meadows reach their widest just downstream of Route 27. This section of the Boater's Trail is open and the River is slow moving as it flows northward. As you travel you will see open land — some farms, and land that is now protected which was once active farmland. Headquarters of the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is just past Sherman's Bridge and a nice spot to get out and stretch your legs. You will also pass under Lee's Bridge in Lincoln, an historic granite bridge, recently reconstructed.

### 3. Lincoln Boat Launch, Route 117 to Old Calf Pasture

This section of the Trail is both naturally and culturally interesting. Just downstream of the boat launch on Route 117 in Lincoln you will enter Fairhaven Bay, a beautiful wide open section of the River, and an area written of by Thoreau and others. From here, the River loses some of its wide floodplains and becomes a bit more developed, traveling by the hospital and under Route 2. It is a gentle trip through the Town of Concord with a lot to see. The Trail concludes at the Old Calf Pasture, at the confluence of the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers, and a fun place to explore. You can take your boat out at the Lowell Road Boat Launch (on the right adjacent to the Calf pasture) or you can continue, either up the Assabet a short way or down the Concord to the Old North Bridge.

## 1. Oxbow downstream [SU Mile 16.1]

### 2. Weston Aqueduct [SU mile 16.2]

A tenth of a mile upstream of the oxbow, the Weston aqueduct passes overhead, an "immense cylinder of steel arched up and over the river...supported by massive abutments of stone at either end."<sup>i</sup> It is 11.5' in diameter,<sup>ii</sup> and during its long tenure of activity transported tens of millions of gallons per day to the mains of Boston, but is now reserved for back-up use.<sup>iii</sup>

The Wachusett Reservoir was created in 1897 to service a growing demand for water in the Boston metropolitan area.<sup>iv</sup> With the damming of the Nashua River, six and a half square miles in the towns of Boylston, West Boylston, Clinton and Sterling were flooded. To transport this water to Boston, two aqueducts and several intermediary reservoirs were built concurrently: the Wachusett aqueduct was constructed to transport water from the Wachusett reservoir to the intermediaries in the Sudbury river watershed; the Weston Aqueduct (completed in 1903), would, for its part, convey millions of gallons per day from these intermediary reservoirs to the city.<sup>v</sup> The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority is currently in the midst of a project to rehabilitate and line with reduced-size gate valves three of the four supply mains, which, upon completion, will each have the capacity to deliver 125 million gallons per day from the new Weston Covered Storage Facility to the combined Boston and Northern Low Service areas.<sup>vi</sup>

### 4. Stone's Bridge [SU mile 16.3]

Stone's Bridge, a tenth of a mile downstream of the Weston Aqueduct, is one of the most historic and scenic sites along the river, dividing Framingham from Wayland. The bridge's primary notoriety is its location along the historic Knox trail: In 1776, Colonel Knox led 60 tons of cannon and supplies on a grueling 300-mile eastward trek from Fort Ticonderoga to the aid of General Washington's forces in the Siege of Boston, crossing the Sudbury at the point indicated on the bronze plaque on the eastern bank of the river.<sup>vii</sup> The cannon, used to bombard Boston from Lechmere Point and Dorchester Heights on March 2-4, 1776, were a major factor in forcing the British to evacuate their positions surrounding the city two weeks later.<sup>viii</sup>

However, the bridge that Knox and his men famously crossed was not the same arched stone bridge built that stands today, but rather the third wooden bridge built at that location. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the bridge owes its name not to the material of

which it is (only now) composed but rather to an early colonist of the name Stone, whose family's holdings once extended from the site of the bridge to the Saxonville Falls, giving the whole region the name "Stone's End."<sup>ix</sup> Though, as if to deliberately exacerbate the confusion, the name was coincidentally changed from "New Bridge" to "Stone's Bridge" at the same time that the bridge happened to be rebuilt of stone.<sup>x</sup>

Hank Norwood's research reveals that there have been four different bridges built at this site which the native Americans had previously used as a shallow crossing:

- (1) A "rudimentary wooden horse bridge" built in the mid-1600s
- (2) A "privately owned wooden toll bridge" built in 1674 for carts—"the 'new bridge,' a key link in the new 'highway' known as South County Pass (now Old Connecticut Path) from Watertown to Marlborough that had been authorized the previous year by the General Court"
- (3) After the second bridge was destroyed in 1771, a new wooden bridge was erected by Captain Richard Heard in 1772
- (4) In 1857 the current stone version of Stone's Bridge was built, though the Western end was washed out in 1955 by Hurricane Diane<sup>xi</sup>

Teale waxed poetic on the famous landmark:

*Like some ancient Roman aqueduct set down in the New World, the remains of an old stone bridge stood stark and lonely in its river setting. With its weathered blocks of stone, its four remaining arches, its western end fallen away, it seemed surrounded by a venerable air, enveloped in an atmosphere of great antiquity.<sup>xii</sup>*

### 4. The Weston Fault/Ice Contact Deposit [SU mile 16.7]

Four tenths of a mile downstream of Stone's Bridge, through the "ancient trough of a natural canal,"<sup>xiii</sup> the river swings a right angle to the east, at the corner of a glacial deposit. According to Ron McAdow, in his guide to canoeing the Concord, Sudbury, and Assabet Rivers, "such a steep bank appearing to be all of sand and none of bedrock, is an example of an ice contact deposit. The embankment formed during the glacial period when sand piled high against the side of a block of ice."<sup>xiv</sup> Cutting through the river at this L-shaped bend, "runs a line of weakness in the earth's crust called by geologists the Weston Fault."<sup>xv</sup>

In the quarter of a mile approaching the bend from upstream, one is "walled in by almost vertical banks of mud and interlacing roots of grass and sedge."<sup>xvi</sup> After the bend, the red maples thin out, and

i [A] 80

ii [A] 80

iii MWRA: <http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04/water/html/0805juisipmap900.jpg>

iv MWRA: <http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04/water/html/hist6.htm>

v Markey: [http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=118](http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=32&Itemid=118)

vi MWRA: <http://www.mwra.state.ma.us/04/water/html/hist6.htm>

vii [G] 3

viii [G] 3

ix [A] 103

x [G] 3

xi [G] 2-3

xii [A] 103

xiii [A] 111

xiv [B] 38

xv [A] 111

xvi [A] 111



clusters known as graminoids begin to dominate the banks.<sup>xvii</sup>

### 5. Major Power Lines from the Boston Edison Transmission Tower [SU mile 17.2]

Major power lines pass overhead one half of a mile after the right-angle bend in the river. Thanks to the protest of several citizens in the late 1940s, Boston Edison's original plan to set up transmission towers running along the length of the river was amended to a crossing at this point before turning its course along the railroad tracks at Route 20.<sup>xviii</sup>

### 6. Entrance to Heard Pond/ Indian Point [SU mile 18.1]

The channel to Heard Pond, hard to find and only accessible in times of high water and low vegetation, is located at Indian Point nine-tenths of a mile downstream of the transmission towers opposite the great marshes of the Broad Meadows where the Indians used to cross the river.<sup>xix</sup> The pond itself is of historical and archaeological interest, as it once hosted the "annual scene of a great summer encampment" of up to 5000 Nipmucks living along the shore in "beehive huts," leaving behind on the shore thousands of "bird points," sharp stones used to kill birds and small animals.<sup>xx</sup> Its ecology, furthermore, deserves special mention for several important bird sightings, including the first cattle egret seen in the Western Hemisphere, April 23, 1952.<sup>xxi</sup>

Buttonbush, a woody shrub is prominent along this stretch of the river. Also present is the rare river bull-rush, and migrating warblers and blue-gray gnatcatchers in May.<sup>xxii</sup>

### 7. Pelham Island/Heard Farm Landing

Isolated by Heard Pond to the west, the Sudbury River to the South and East, and Hop/Wash Brook to the North, Pelham Island is a "low drumlin deposited by glaciers."<sup>xxiii</sup> Beaver Hole Meadow lies across the river to the South, while the Heard Farm Conservation Area dominates the Southern region of Pelham Island.

Beaver Hole Meadow consists primarily of sedge, bur reed, and cotton grass.<sup>xxiv</sup> Heard Farm, with some acreage of grasses allowed to grow tall is prime breeding ground for bobolinks in the summer.

### 8. Wayland High School View

On the right bank opposite the southernmost point of Pelham Island, the "Field House," or gym, of Wayland High School is visible, a bizarre 1960s-era structure with a dome roof and skylights.

xvii [B] 38

xviii [G] 4

xix [G] 6

xx [A] 112

xxi [G] 7

xxii [G] 6

xxiii [A] 112

xxiv [A] 112

At this point, black willows and swamp white oaks begin to dominate the treescape, providing prime breeding grounds for the Willow Flycatcher, the most common of the breeding *empidonax* flycatchers in the region.<sup>xxv</sup>

### 9. Greenways Landing at the old Paine Estate [SU mile 18.9]

There is an outcropping of stone on the right bank, a "metamorphosed grandiorite," marking the canoe landing, at the top of which sits a picnic table amidst the silver and red maples.<sup>xxvi</sup> In 1995, after a long series of negotiations with the trustees of the Paine Estate, the Sudbury Valley Trustees acquired the 90-acre Greenways Conservation Area. The namesake of the acquisition, the great mansion on the estate, was named Greenways after Edwin Farnham Greene, a Boston businessman, whose family sold the house in 1926 to the shipping magnate Frank Paine. In addition to the expansive Greenways home, which is now at the center of the Traditions of Wayland retirement community, the property contains 150 acres of mixed fields, the 1669 Noyes-Parris House (the oldest house in Wayland), and an old carriage house on Route 27. The Noyes-Parris House, according to Wayland Historian George Lewis, has a history closely tied to the infamous Salem Witchcraft scandals of the late seventeenth century:

Identified as *Cedar Croft* in the 1692 will of Peter Noyes, the house's current name comes from his family and from Samuel Parris, a minister and widower who married Noyes' daughter. Parris had left Salem Village, where his servant, Tituba, daughter Elizabeth and niece Abigail Williams were instrumental in bringing witchcraft frenzy upon the town.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Silver and Red Maples dominate the treescape by the river, while mixed fields cover the remainder of the estate. Thoreau, who visited the Noyes-Parris House frequently in the 1800s, had referred to it as "the Chestnut House, due to the large grove of chestnut trees that stood nearby at the time"<sup>xxviii</sup>

### 10. Sandy Burr Country Club

The golf course, dating back to the 1920s, comes into view immediately downstream of Greenways along the right bank, with the steeple of the First Parish church rising above in the distance. The prosperous banker William Bullard had operated a dairy farm at this location in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>xxix</sup>

### 11. Pelham Island Bridge [SU mile 19.8]

This one-lane bridge linking Pelham Island to Wayland Center was originally a ford created by rocks dumped into the river to reach the island farms. This was followed by a succession of wood

xxv [G] 7

xxvi [B] 39

xxvii [E] 99

xxviii [E] 99

xxix [G] 8



bridges, and then in the 1920s, a stone bridge, known as Farm Bridge of Heard Bridge, that reached beyond to Sudbury. The state now plans to replace the stone bridge with a wooden bridge!<sup>xxx</sup>

## 12. Wash/Hop Brook

Hop Brook, with its two mouths on either side of the abandoned railroad bridge, is the largest and longest tributary that feeds into the Sudbury River.<sup>xxxi</sup> The name of this brook, which winds northeastward to the Sudbury from Nobscott Hill, is often disputed. George Lewis carefully disambiguates: Hop Brook refers to the tributary on whole, whereas Wash Brook refers only to the segment closest to the Sudbury River. The section of Hop Brook west of Landham Road in the town of Sudbury is often called Landham Brook. The Native Americans are believed to have built a bridge, known as Indian or West Bridge, across the Wash Brook Marshes from Duck Hollow (north of Heard Pond), to the Old Town Dump on Route 20. This ecologically productive brook is especially difficult to access at low water levels.

Sedge meadows flourish along on both sides of the river, providing key habitat for ducks, rails, bitterns, and for breeding marsh wrens.<sup>xxxii</sup>

## 13. Abandoned Railroad Bridge [SU mile 20.3]

The Massachusetts Central Railroad first commissioned this line and bridge in 1880, with service from Boston to Hudson through this line inaugurated two years later. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the railway had come under the control of the Boston and Maine Company, which went bankrupt in 1968, and discontinued service, first of passenger and then of freight, within the next two years on the Sudbury line.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Hank Norwood attributes the Boston and Maine Company's downfall to "America's love affair with the automobile and truckers' love affair with the interstate highway system in the 1950s and 60s." The MBTA, which purchased the abandoned lines from the bankrupt company, has since abandoned hope of reviving the Sudbury line, and has officially designated the land for recreational usage. The development of a bicycle trail is currently underway.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

## 14. Route 20 Bridge [SU mile 20.3]

Route 20 was built in 1820, and was not the original Boston Post Road. The bridge was created as a causeway from sand transported from Sand Hill.<sup>xxxv</sup> Russell's Garden Center, spanning the right bank of the river between the railroad and Route 20 bridges, has a history that spans many generations in the Russell family of

Wayland. In 1876, Sam Russell began to farm this land, opening up a delivery business soon after, which supplied farm goods to wholesalers in Faneuil Hall, Boston until 1930. Meanwhile the Russell family had opened a retail vegetable stand in Wayland in 1925, which lasted until Sam Russell's grandson, Lew, in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, converted the focus of the family business toward the sale of gardening-related goods.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

## 15. River Road/Route 27 Bridge [SU mile 21.3]

Route 27 crosses the river one mile downstream of Route 20. There is launch access off of River Road [OK TO MENTION, LIBBY?]. A few dozen yards inland of the right bank, as the river snakes past the Wayland Country Club, is a stone marker at the base of the old Route 27 bridge, which commemorates the citizens of Concord who died helping those of Wayland and Sudbury during King Philip's War. Other relics from this war include the ruins of two old garrison houses accessible only by foot, one across from at the intersection of Old Country Road and Route 20 in Sudbury, and the other on Water Row, just north of Route 27. The first purchase of the Sudbury Valley Trustees was a ten acre tract in this marshy section of the river, bought from the Boston Edison Company in 1954 at a rate of \$10 per acre.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## 16. Sedge Meadows

Between Route 27 and Sherman's Bridge, is a region known as the Sedge Meadows for the stands of sedge on either side of the river.

## 17. Sherman's Bridge [SU mile 24.0]

Sherman's Bridge, a wooden bridge with wooden railings that links Wayland and Sudbury, is "almost unaltered since colonial days."<sup>xxxviii</sup> To the left, one can see Round Hill, formerly a great site for hawk-watching, but now obscured in the trees. Ahead, where the river narrows, is Weir Hill.

Stocks of wild hay had once grown abundantly along the river banks, making the floodwaters valuable to farmers. Unfortunately, with the industrial damming of the Concord River at Billerica and other locations throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the river no longer supported such growth, and the land lost much of its original value. At this point, however, near Sherman's Bridge is a strip 150' wide and a quarter of a mile long of wild hay, the "single place where one could experience what the colonists had experienced when they first stood amid the close-packed stems of the high, waving grasses of the river meadows."<sup>xxxix</sup>

xxx [G] 8

xxxi [E] 60

xxxii [G] 9

xxxiii [G] 9

xxxiv [G] 9

xxxv [G] 9

xxxvi [G] 9

xxxvii [E] 21

xxxviii [A] 166

xxxix [A] 132



### 18. Weir Hill [SU mile 24.8]

Weir Hill is home to the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters. There is a concrete boat ramp on the left bank, at the narrow point across which the Indians used to stretch their thatched reed weirs to catch the ocean salmon and shad that had migrated annually upstream to spawn.<sup>xi</sup> The Broad Meadows lie on both sides.

### 19. Pantry Brook [SU mile 25.1]

In high water, it is possible to access the wetlands controlled by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In Colonial times, this area was a source of Bog Ore, or limonite, for ironworks.<sup>xii</sup>

### 20. Boundary Rock/Four Corners [SU mile 25.9]

At this unmarked point, the four towns of Concord, Lincoln, Wayland, and Sudbury (listed clockwise from the north) meet. Concord is ahead on the left, Lincoln ahead on the right, Wayland back-right, and Sudbury back-left. One-fifth of a mile downstream is the entrance to Farrar Pond, a well-known stop on the migration routes of many bird species.

### 21. Lee's Bridge/Route 117 [SU mile 26.4]

A temporary bridge now serves to link Route 117, while a costly project is underway to restore Lee's Bridge in granite.

### 22. Lincoln Canoe Launch [SU mile 26.5]

The Lincoln Canoe Launch is located one tenth of a mile downstream of Lee's Bridge, accessible by a channel carved through the vegetation on the right bank.

### 23. Mt. Misery

Rising above the right bank of Fairhaven Bay is the small hill of Mt. Misery, "so-called from a legend of some lost cattle who had strayed away when yoked together, and were prisoned [sic] by a tree"<sup>xiii</sup> The hermit thrush, an uncommon breeder in Eastern Massachusetts, is known to breed here.<sup>xiiii</sup>

### 24. Entrance to Fairhaven Bay/Lee's Cliff

The entrance to this clear, tranquil 70-acre bay is heralded by Mt. Misery on the right bank, and Lee's Cliff on the left. Fairhaven Bay is enclosed by the Conantum Ridge on its western bank, of which Lee's Cliff is at the southernmost end, Fairhaven Hill directly opposite the entrance, and relatively low ground between Fairhaven Hill and Mt. Misery along the right bank, which includes a historic 19<sup>th</sup> Century stone boat house. The individual peaks along the ridge are somewhat difficult to discern (as is Fairhaven Hill), due to the thick second growth forest that now dominates

<sup>xi</sup> [C] 173

<sup>xii</sup> [A] 169

<sup>xiii</sup> [C] 177

<sup>xiiii</sup> [F]

and obscures the modest topographical gradient. The Conantum was named by Thoreau after "an old cellar which was once part of the Conant House."<sup>xliv</sup>

The stewards of the land work diligently to expunge the invasive water chestnut that threatens to drown out the native vegetation and snag one's boat. Kingfishers and osprey frequent this region, lured by the numerous fish that populate these waters. Yellow perch, bullhead, bluegill, pickerel, pumpkinseed, bass, and crappie are all caught at Fairhaven Bay.<sup>xlv</sup> Inaccessible by road, this beautiful site remains unknown to many.

Thoreau, who rowed, sailed, ice-skated, and walked to the bay from Walden, wrote in his journal:

*In all my rambles...I have seen no landscape which can make me forget Fair Haven. I still sit on its Cliff in a new spring day, and look over the awakening woods and the river, and hear the new birds sing, with the same delight as ever.*<sup>xlvi</sup>

Bartlett, a writer of the late nineteenth century, commented on the customs of his time:

*The depth of this clear bay and its freedom from rocks renders it the best place for the races and regattas of the Concord Canoe Club, which are held once or twice a year, for the amusement of crowds of people who come to enjoy the spectacle, and the picnic which precedes it.*<sup>xlvii</sup>

William Brewster offers a beautiful picture of the bay in his journal entry from October 10, 1879:

*As we entered Fairhaven a thin gray mist had settle over the beautiful basin. The surrounding hills were brought out in unusually bold relief and looked much higher than common. The expanse of water was absolutely without a ripple and the mist air rendered distant sounds distinctly audible. We could hear a farmer whistling as he worked a mile away, and the chirp of crickets came distinctly to our ears across the widest part of the bay.*<sup>xlviii</sup>

### 25. The Island in Fairhaven Bay

In the northwest corner of the large bay is the Island in Fairhaven Bay, which is only a true island in high water when it is completely cut off from land. It is otherwise distinguished by its tall trees that soar above the aquatic shrubbery.

### 26. Martha's Point/Bittern Cliff

Opposite Fairhaven Hill, and several hundred feet downstream of the island, is an outcropping of bare serpentinized rock on the left bank of the river known as Martha's Point, which Thoreau called Bittern Cliff. The rocks do not constitute an impressive "cliff," as they rise only a few feet above the river bank, but are indeed clearly visible in this short stretch of the river where the buttonbush is

<sup>xliv</sup> [C] 177

<sup>xlv</sup> [B] 47

<sup>xlvi</sup> [A] 209

<sup>xlvii</sup> [C] 174-177

<sup>xlviii</sup> [H] 6



largely absent. White pond lilies are common downstream.

Bartlett elaborates on the history of the point:

*This fine promontory was named for a lady of literary taste and culture, who spent many happy days there; and for years it was the meeting place of the picknickers of Concord, until it was leased by some gentlemen who have built a large house upon its crest; but they have done a good deed in boxing the excellent spring which is at the foot of a maple near the point, thus preserving and keeping clean the best drinking-water, upon which so many thirsty travelers depend.<sup>xlix</sup>*

The Harvard Zoologist Brewster described the beautiful autumn foliage in his October 6, 1892 entry:

*The autumn tints were very brilliant wherever there were red maples, in fact I have never seen these trees more intensely colored than they are now. Along the meadow edge of the Conantum woods they formed a belt of gleaming scarlet, crimson and gold most effectively brought out and intensified by contrast with the perfect green of the oaks and pines which cover the hillside behind and above them. Most of the bright coloring on Martha's Point was supplied by the hickories which have now generally put on their old gold tints.<sup>l</sup>*

### 27. Sudbury Road Bridge [SU mile 28.7]

As one passes under this unremarkable bridge not far downstream from the hidden paradise of Fairhaven Bay, Emerson Hospital and its assisted living facilities come into view, a slight blemish to the otherwise bucolic landscape over the course of the next mile. Herons, kingbirds, and other birdlife are abundant along these riverbanks.

### 28. Dugan Brook

Dugan Brook feeds the Sudbury River through dense thickets of river vegetation on the left bank of the river, which obfuscate this tributary to view.

### 29. Clamshell Bluff/Route 2 [SU mile 29.5]

On the left bank of Route 2 there once existed an embankment that Thoreau had called "Clam Shell Bluff." According to Bartlett, this "large kitchen-miden [was] originally a shell-heap thrown up by the Indians to mark the place of one of their solemn feasts."<sup>li</sup> Sadly, however, the historic embankment did not survive the construction of the hospital, and a few yards of wild roses along the river edge at the base of the bridge mark where it once stood. The Route 2 Bridge consists of an especially wide single arch spanning the river. The road remains above ground for several hundred feet in the direction of the right bank, and includes built-in underpasses for the safe crossing of animals.

xlix [C] 177-178

l [H] 76

li [C] 180

### 30. Commuter Rail

The Commuter Rail crosses the Sudbury overhead, shortly upstream of South Bridge.

### 31. South Bridge [SU mile 30.1]

South Bridge, which carries Route 62 across the river, is dull by appearance, a rather worn, single-arched, concrete bridge. It is easy to confuse this historical landmark with the more ornate, triple-arched Elm Street/Route 2A Bridge [SU mile 30.2] just downstream.

As Bartlett describes:

The old South Bridge is a few rods below that of the railroad, and resembles in form the identical bridge guarded by the British on the morning of the fight. The left bank of the river, between the South and Stone Bridges, is full of interest, as two of the old houses which still stand were searched by the British soldiers. Adj. Joseph Hosmer lived in the house just across the railroad track. He was adjutant; and to his skill and valor much of the success of Concord's fight is due. His wife, according to Shattuck's history, said to the lieutenant, who was trying to force open a locked door, "You will not disturb the sick!" and thus saved from confiscation a bed stuffed with cannon-balls."<sup>lii</sup>

### 32. Southbridge Boat House [SU mile 30.1]

Canoe and kayak rentals are available here. There is no fee to launch one's own canoe from this point.

### 33. Nashawtuc Road [SU mile 30.7]

Nashawtuc road runs across Hurd's Bridge, one half of a mile before the Sudbury joins the Assabet River at Egg Rock. On the left bank, the terrain is marshy and the 250' high drumlin, Nashawtuc Hill rises beyond, while on the right is situated Concord Academy.

Ann Zwinger tells the story of Nashawtuc:

*...Nashawtuc was the dwelling place of Indians who had survived the decimating epidemics of 1617 and 1633; it was an ideal campsite, providing height for surveillance, ample and close water and food. Sometimes they burned sandy hills to allow blueberries to come in, or to clear land for planting corn. They raised pumpkins and beans and had abundant wild game—bear, beaver, otter, muskrat—for food and fur-trading.*

Simon Willard was an Indian trader who had bargained for furs with these Indians, and it was he, along with the Reverend Peter Bulkely, who brought the first families to Concord, the farthest inland settlement, in 1635. Official purchase took place in 1636, a plantation 'six miles of land square,' and negotiations were so agreeable that they were commemorated in the name of the settlement: Concord.

lii [C] 180-181



For his own land Willard chose Nashawtuc Hill. He accompanied the settlers, served as a military commander in King Philip's War, and was later town clerk. He died just one hundred years before the British troops fired on the colonists within half a mile of his hill home... the mast for the frigate *Constitution* was cut on Nashawtuc Hill.<sup>liii</sup>

### 33. Old Calf Pasture/Egg Rock [SU mile 31.2]

The Sudbury and Assabet Rivers come together at Egg Rock to form the Concord River. The conservation area to the right is called Old Calf Pasture. There is a boat ramp and access to Lowell Road. There is a tablet at Egg Rock, installed in 1885 for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Concord, inscribed:

*On The Hill Nashawtuck*

*At the Meeting of the Rivers*

*And along the Banks*

*Lived the Indian owners of*

*Musketaquid*

*Before the White Man Came*<sup>liv</sup>

<sup>liii</sup> [A] 223

<sup>liv</sup> [B] 47

Anne Zwinger and Edwin Teale had regarded reaching Egg Rock bittersweet, the end of their explorations down the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers:

*I imagine the sound of voices on a fine summer night three-quarters of a century ago, when boaters in crafts large and small would congregate just up from the mouth of the Assabet, and lash their boats, one to the other, until the river was solid boats. Then they would float downstream, drifting with the current, Japanese lanterns swaying, while singers harmonized on songs that everyone knew—a time of harmony and affection that lasted but an evening and then was gone, morendo, fading gently as the last notes hung for that imperceptible moment before the final darkness came, the goodbyes were said, and all was over.*<sup>lv</sup>

<sup>lv</sup> [A] 237

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