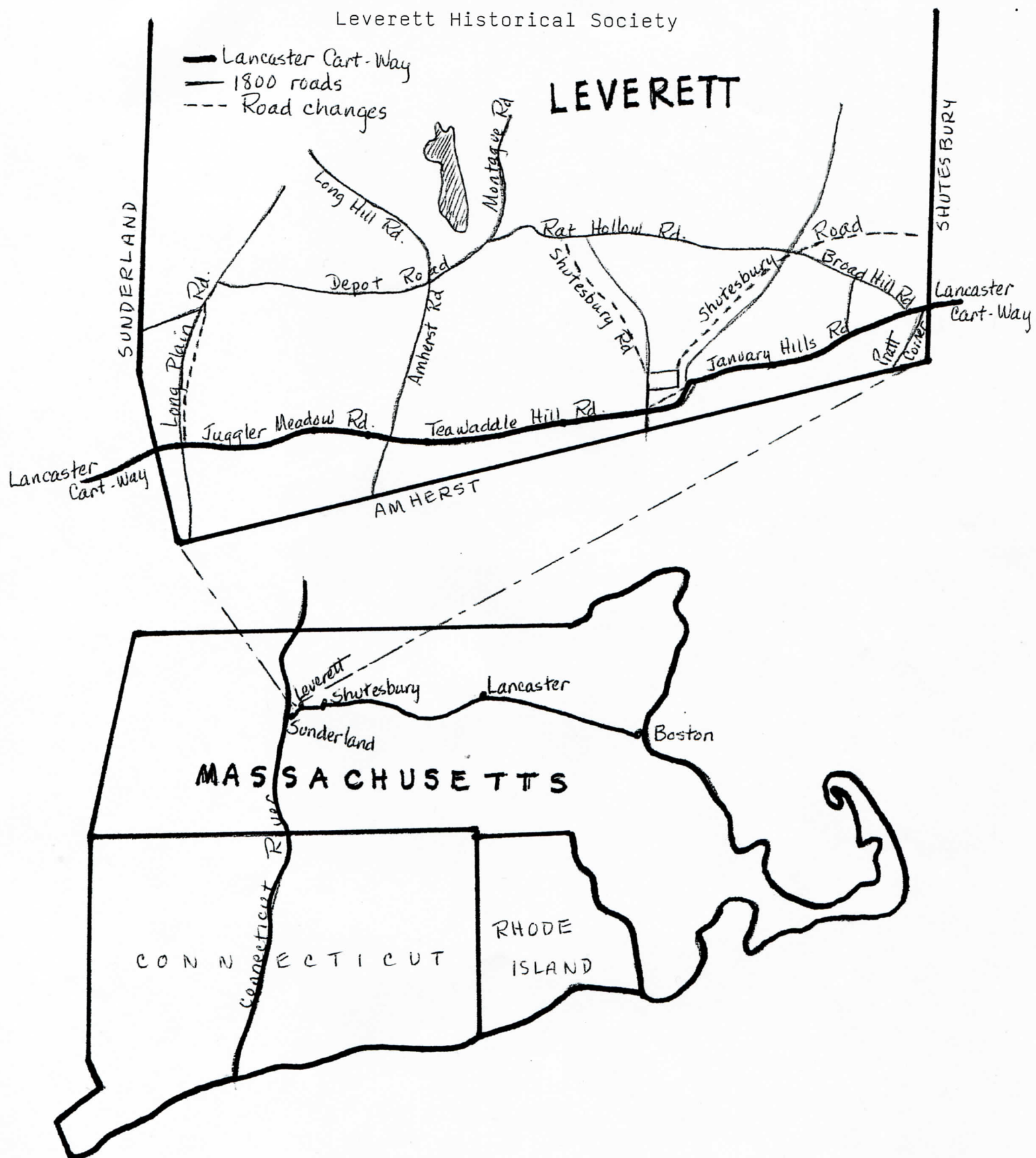


# THE LANCASTER CART-WAY

HARVEST FESTIVAL, 1990

Leverett Historical Society



## THE LANCASTER CART-WAY, 1733

Today's tour starts with the past. As we stroll a short way up the discontinued section of January Hills Road, try to imagine blazing and cutting a rough road through the wilderness. If we continued our hike, we would come to the discontinued section of Broad Hill Road, which became the connection from the east to the center of Leverett by way of Old Mountain Road and Rat Hollow Road, before the development of East Leverett and the building of Shutesbury Road.

Turning west, we pass the old cemetery and the dump, where the past abuts the present. Teawaddle Hill Road and Juggler Meadow Road are fascinating place names with folklore of their own, running through lands of the earliest settlers. We pass some of the oldest houses in town.

We will end our tour with the present confronting the past, as we leave Leverett and drive down Sunderland's Hubbard Hill Road, a county road which, if discontinued, will disappear into a gravel pit. But let's review that past.

In the early 1700's, western Massachusetts was really divided from the eastern part. The settlements along the Connecticut used the river for transportation, and ties were closer to Connecticut than to Boston. There was political concern that western Massachusetts might align with the state of Connecticut.

Lancaster, directly east of Sunderland, was a thriving town on the Nashua River the westernmost outpost of the Massachusetts Bay Colony with a good connecting road to Boston. Marvin's History of Lancaster states that "all the territory west of Wachusett, except Brookfield, was almost an unbroken wilderness."

Quoting from our own History of Leverett, 1774-1974: "A group of more than one hundred men banded together to carve a road through the wilderness to the Connecticut River in Sunderland, this being to their advantage and giving them access also to Deerfield and Hadley. On their petition they were granted, in the year 1733, a tract of land on the new highway six miles square. Appropriately, they called the new settlement "Roadtown". In 1761 when the town was incorporated, it was renamed Shutesbury, in honor of the former Governor Shute."

Fifty miles in length, the Lancaster Road wound past the base of Mount Wachusett, climbed the steep ascent to Petersham, thence to New Salem and what is now Shutesbury, through Leverett and so to Sunderland and the river. It entered Leverett on January Hills Road, intersected the present Cushman Road and continued over Teawaddle Hill Road, Juggler Meadow Road into Sunderland down Hubbard Hill Road, to Plumtree Road and the Connecticut River. The road followed the high land, avoiding swamps and marshes. "Keep to the ridges, don't build bridges", says Frances King.

The building of this road created the town of Shutesbury. It also changed the course of development in Leverett, which up to this time was an agricultural overflow from Sunderland in the Long Plain area. With a road to Boston, materials and equipment needed to develop the waterpower potential of Roaring Brook and Sawmill River could be hauled in, beginning the industrial development of East Leverett, Moore's Corner and North Leverett. So began Leverett's first century, which saw the town become self-sufficient. "We didn't have to go to Amherst for anything!" This development can be traced back to the Lancaster Cart-Way.

(ANG - 1990)



## TOUR NOTES

Why would families leave the good soil of Sunderland for rocky soil described as "two stones to one dirt"? There were two reasons: the 2 mile addition and the Lancaster Road.

### Sunderland beginnings:

- 1700 - Sunderland extended 9 miles along Connecticut River, 4 miles east, (to Teawaddle Hill-Cushman intersection).
- 1730 - Petition granted for 2 mile addition, because "our lands are chiefly mountainous and unfit for improvement otherwise then for feeding of cattle and most of the little land which we do or can manure is poor and infertile."
- 1733 - Lancaster Cart-Way came into Leverett in 2 mile addition.

### Early Homes:

- 1727 - First title recorded to Samuel Montague for 10 acres "laying on the Fishpond Rocks, .... at ye north end of Juggle Meadow..."
- 1737 - (Mitchell, 72 Teawaddle Hill Rd.) Thomas Adams settled in 2 mile addition. His son Nathan was large landowner in E. Leverett, built here.
- 1750 - (Greeley, 11 Teawaddle Hill Rd.) Samuel Gould kept a tavern here until he sold to Gideon Hubbard in 1763; it was in Hubbard family until 1912.
- 1767 - (Gere, 92 Juggler Meadow Rd.) Israel Hubbard, part of 600 acre farm; later belonged to Martin Field, grandfather of Samuel Minot Jones (Jones Library) and poet Eugene Field.

### East Leverett

Lancaster Cart-Way made possible shipment of tools and equipment to take advantage of water power of Roaring Brook, with mills and factories dotting area. There were 9 mills within one mile of river; "Water ran out one mill and into another. Must have been well-nigh worn out by the time it got to Amherst." (Ed Field, Bicentennial movie)

East Leverett variously known as South Leverett, Still Corner because of gin distillery.

### East Leverett Restoration era

After 1900, mills and factories closed, population down, area depressed. In 1930's, Minona Seagrove successively bought four East Leverett houses, restored them while she was living in them.

She was followed by Dorothy King in the 50's.

### Road Names

January Hills Road - named for the January Hills it ran through. Confused by Amherst's recent calling the road running from Amherst to East Leverett "January Hills".

Teawaddle Hill Road - according to Ruth Field, the Ladies Aid facetiously named the road in the mid 1800's, when customers at the tavern for "tea" would be seen later wending their way unsteadily home. Waiting women called it the "teawaddle". During our 1974 Bicentennial preparations, a recipe for "Teawadiddle", an English drink served at taverns, was discovered by George Emery and sampled by the Committee. It was made of table beer, brandy, brown sugar, nutmeg or ginger, with lemon peel.

Juggler Meadow Road - original name was "Juggle Meadow", meaning quaking or an unstable area of land. It was said that a man could cause the meadow to move by jumping up and down. The change to Juggler was in the 1900's.

### Mining:

A north-south lead vein was found on either side of Juggler Meadow (by Hoadley's, 35 Juggler Meadow), extending to south side of Long Hill. Active mining occurred in 1786-89 and again in the 1800's, when copper, zinc, lead and iron used for paints and turpentine was taken from the area.

Foster  
Kallie  
Barn  
Shadown

-daughter Robert Fitts; Minona Stearns  
niece - Minty, Herman Field

13 E. Lev.  
20 E. Lev.  
21 " "  
37 Jan Hills