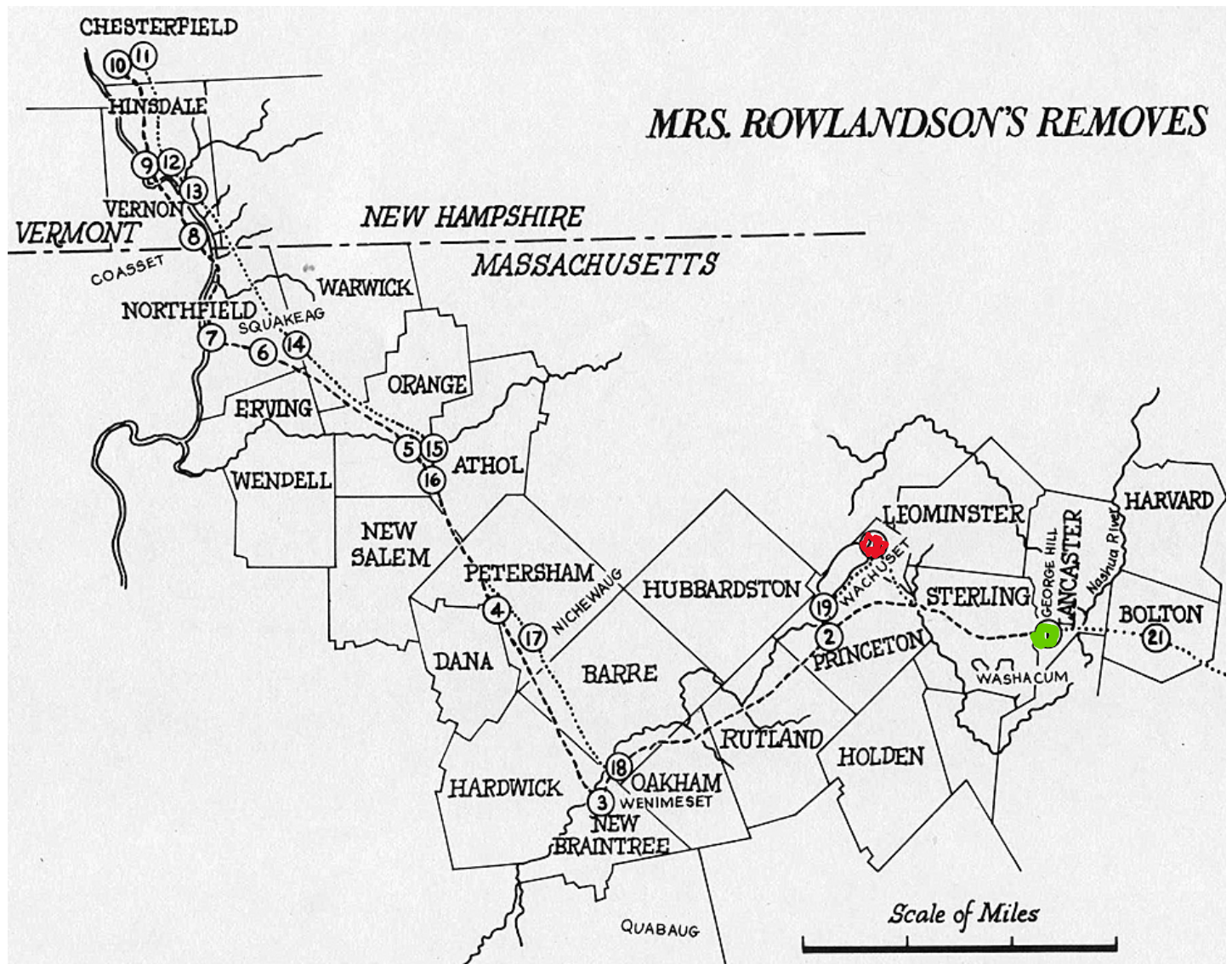


Then & Now - Redemption Rock

#199 Redemption Rock Trail

The story of Redemption Rock begins with a terrible massacre in Lancaster in which all the inhabitants were slain or taken captive by the Indians. Mary Rowlandson, wife of Rev. Joseph Rowlandson (who was in Boston at the time), and her three children were among those captured.

"On the 10th of February, 1675, came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster: their first coming was about sun-rising: hearing the noise of some guns, we looked; several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven... oh the roaring, and singing, and dancing, and yelling of those black creatures... which made the place a lively resemblance of Hell" wrote Mary Rowlandson. Mary ran from her home with her 6-year old daughter Sarah in her arms and her 11-year-old son Joseph and 10-year-old daughter Mary by her side. A bullet pierced Mary's side and passed into her daughter Sarah's abdomen. She watched in horror as her relatives and neighbors were slaughtered around her.



A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration Of Mrs. Rowlandson, and her suffering at the hands of the Indians told through her own words is one of the classics of Colonial literature. For eight days she carried her wounded 6-year old daughter, Sarah, until the child died and was buried beside the trail near New Braintree, where a gravestone marks the place today. Her other children were taken from her and although she saw them briefly once or twice, she never knew if she would see them again.

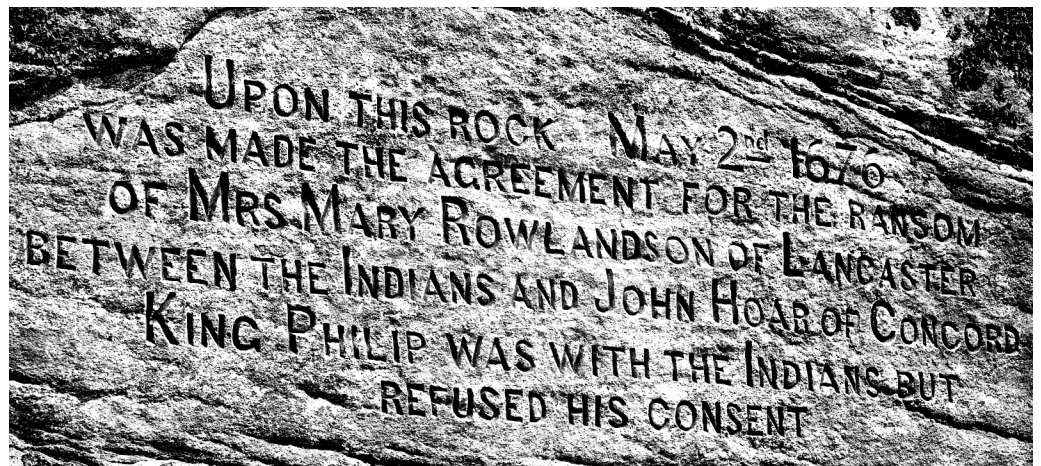
The Indians took her through Princeton, Barre, Petersham, Northfield, and to the Connecticut River where they met King Philip - then on to Vermont and New Hampshire. She had little food, continually feared for her life, and suffered the taunts and beatings of the Indians. When they discovered she could sew, she fared somewhat better and even had the "honor" of making King Philip a shirt. A Bible given to her by one of the Indians (from another massacre) was her source of strength, and her account is extremely moving.

After 4 months of captivity and following several exchanges of letters between the Indians and Government Officials, Mrs. Rowlandson was brought back to Princeton and redeemed upon Redemption Rock for L20 and a gift of liquor. John Hoar, an English emissary from Boston, brought this about, and though he was treated threateningly by the Indians, he and Mrs. Rowlandson made their escape to Concord and thence to Boston, where Mary was reunited with her husband - and not long after with her children.

In 1879, Senator George F. Hoar, a descendant of John, purchased the Rock and 1/2 acre of land from the Everett family of Princeton, and caused to be inscribed on the face of the huge boulder the following words:

***"Redemption Rock
Upon this rock May 2nd, 1676 was made
the agreement for the ransom of
Mrs. Mary Rowlandson of Lancaster
between the Indians and John Hoar of Concord,
King Philip was with the Indians but refused his consent."***

One hundred yards west of Redemption Rock, near the old Indian trail, are the remains of the Everett Tomb. Legend has it that the bodies of the Elder Everett and his wife rested here in a standing position for



75 years before being removed to the Princeton North Cemetery.

In 1898, S. Hathaway published the "History of Redemption Rock". In 1930 the Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission placed a marker on the side of the road - Route 140 - near Redemption Rock. The discrepancy in dates -1675 and 1676 - is due to the fact that the Gregorian calendar was not adopted till 1752. Previous to that time, the year began in March. Thus, the destruction of Lancaster is recorded as February 10, 1675-6.

About Mary Rowlandson

Mary Rowlandson (1637-1711), born Mary White, was born in Somerset, England, somewhere between 1635 and 1638. She married Joseph Rowlandson in 1656. They lived in Lancaster, Massachusetts, and had four children, the first child, Mary, died at age 3, Sarah died in captivity at age 6. Joseph and Mary, the other two, grew into adults.



Mary Rowlandson was held in captivity from February 10 until May 2, 1676 during King Philip's War (also known as Metacom's Rebellion). Following the Rowlandson family's reunion in Boston, Joseph Rowlandson preached at many different churches. He was called to a congregation in Wethersfield, Connecticut on November 21, 1678.

He preached a sermon about his wife's captivity, "The Possibility of Gods Forsaking a People, That Have Been Visibly Near & Dear to Him, Together, With the Misery of a People Thus Forsaken.", that day being a day of fast and humiliation.

His last sermon was included with early editions of Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative.

Mary Rowlandson's book, first published in 1682, retells the story of her captivity and rescue in the context of religious faith. The book was originally titled *The "Sovereignty & Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, Commended by her to all that Desire to Know the Lord's Doings to, and Dealings with Her. Especially to her Dear Children and Relations."* The book was published with the assistance of Reverend Increase Mather. Some scholars believe that he also heavily edited it.

Mary Rowlandson married Captain Samuel Talcott in 1679. Captain Talcott died in 1691 and she died in January 1711. Most people consider King Philip's death the end of the war, but skirmishes continued for several years thereafter.

Everett's Tomb

Another location of interest is about 100 yards west of Redemption Rock, just off the old Indian trail. The two flagstones that form the roof are estimated to weigh approximately twenty tons each.

The tomb is intact except for the front which was torn out in order to remove the bodies. It is said that the bodies of the



Circa 1900 Postcard

Lieut. Joshua Everett and his wife were in the tomb until the late 1800's. Their bodies were moved to the North Cemetery of Princeton, which is their last resting place.



Tomb 9_6_1957

The Everett homestead was located near 286 Redemption Rock Trail and stayed in the family till circa 1900. They farmed the land in and around Redemption Rock, raised cranberries and operated a tannery. In 1777 they built a large house which they opened as a tavern. In 1781, they sold the tavern and across the road bought

the confiscated homestead of John Bowen, a "loyalist absentee," of Princeton in the extreme northern corner of the town bordering Wachusett Lake. There they founded the village of Everettville and carried on as before the businesses of farming and tanning. He married June 21, 1764 at Attleboro, Molly Titus, born March 11, 1738 at Attleboro, died in Princeton on June 5, 1823. He was a revolutionary soldier reaching the rank first lieutenant. He died Feb. 4, 1825 in Princeton, at the age of 84.

Their son Dea. Joshua T. lived at this location most of his life and was widely known in Worcester County and elsewhere for his active interest in agriculture, and the various moral and social reforms of his time. He became an early convert to the Anti-slavery cause and was a personal friend of Garrison, Phillips, May, Douglass, and other champions of freedom, many of whom he entertained at his home, and otherwise aided and encouraged in their work. His house was always open to the fugitive slave. For many years he held the office of President of the Worcester North Anti-Slavery Society, and was an occasional

contributor to "the Liberator." He was Selectman and Assessor in Princeton in 1834 and '35, and a member of the Massachusetts Legislature in 1833, '34 and '35. At the time of his death at the age of 91, he was the oldest living ex-member of the General Court.



Everett Tomb 2021-12-15

Researched and compiled - William Brooks and edited by members of the PHS Board

“History of Redemption Rock” by Joseph Mason, 53 Phelps St Fitchburg, MA

“The History of Redemption Rock” by S. Hathaway

“History of the Town of Princeton” 1759-1915 Vol 2., by Francis Everett Blake

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To learn more about Princeton’s rich history, please visit:

<http://www.princetonmahistory.org>