

# FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

(E to W) 48,60,59,  
47,36,46,35,34,24,  
23,33

Maynard,  
Hudson



See data  
sheet

## Photograph



**Town/City:** Hudson

**Place (neighborhood or village):** Gleasondale

**Name of Area:** Central Massachusetts Railroad Corridor  
(Boston & Maine Railroad Corridor)

**Present Use:** vacant

**Construction Dates or Period:** 1881-1965

**Overall Condition:** Good to poor

**Major Intrusions and Alterations:** passenger service  
ended 1965, service stopped 1970s

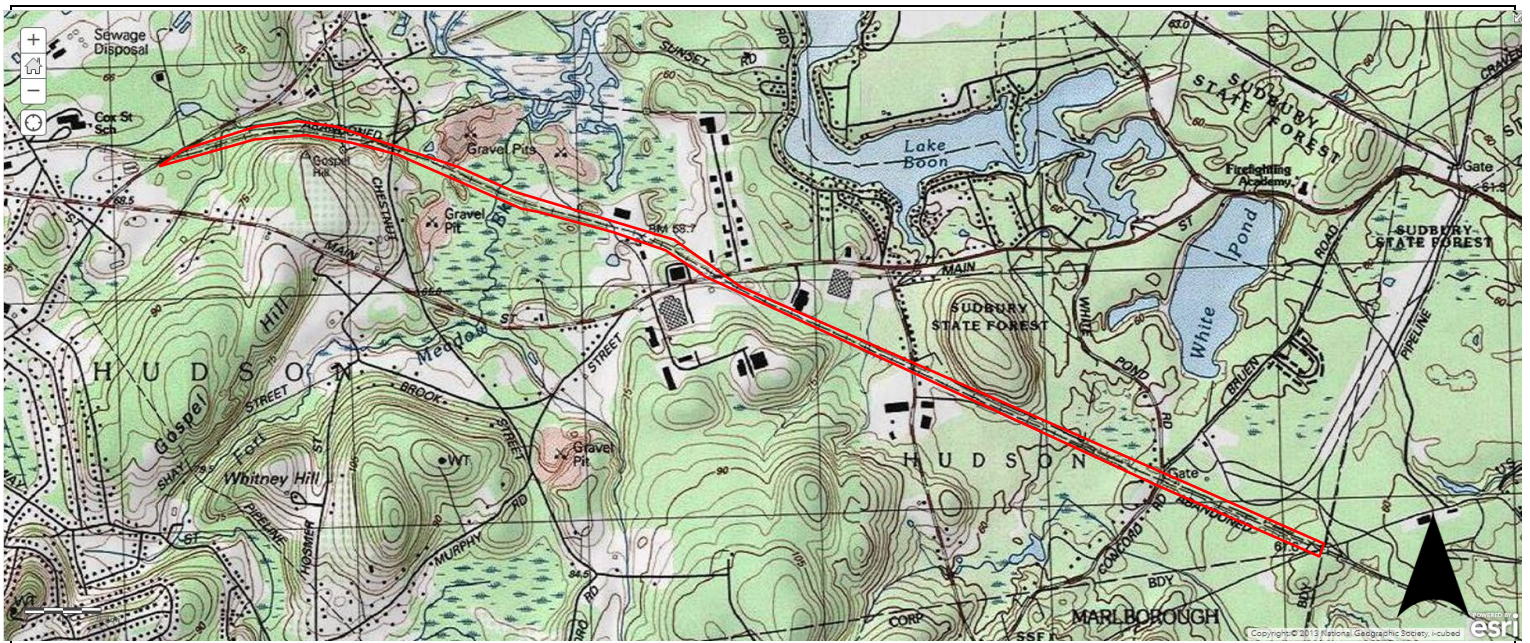
**Acreage:** 30.1 acres

**Recorded by:** N. Benjamin-Ma, Q. Stuart, D. Gutbrod

**Organization:** VHB and Commonwealth Heritage Group

**Date (month/year):** October 2021

## Locus Map



see continuation sheet

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.  
*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

This inventory form was prepared to identify extant rail-related resources in Hudson, Massachusetts for the proposed Sudbury-Hudson Transmission Reliability Project through Sudbury, Hudson, Marlborough, and Stow, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> This form discusses the portion of the former Central Massachusetts Railroad/Boston & Maine RR (CMRR/B&MRR) corridor running from the Hudson municipal border with Sudbury and Marlborough at the east end, west to Wilkins Road where the proposed project within the rail corridor ends. In addition to the identification of extant rail-related resources within the project area in Hudson, this form is intended to complement the inventory form for CMRR/B&MRR resources through the adjacent Town of Sudbury (**SUD.R**)<sup>2</sup>, completed in December 2020 by the Sudbury Historical Commission.

It is noted that in addition to Sudbury and Hudson, the CMRR/B&MRR corridor in the project area travels briefly through Marlborough and Stow, for a distance of approximately seven feet and 440 feet, respectively. While the rails, ties, and railbed are generally extant in these locations, no additional rail-related resources were observed.

The survey to support this inventory form was conducted by Commonwealth Heritage Group, who supplied the majority of the photographs. Supplemental information and photographs, especially regarding rail-related over/underpasses, were provided by VHB. Much of the contextual historical information regarding the CMRR/B&MRR in this region was adapted from **SUD.R** and the project historic context developed by Commonwealth Heritage Group in the 2018 Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey for the project<sup>3</sup> and is cited as such. The overall organization of the discussion is adapted from **SUD.R** as well, to maintain consistency across inventory forms for this linear district.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

*Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

The CMRR/B&MRR Corridor Historic District in Hudson encompasses the rail right-of-way (ROW) as well as the extant rail-related structures and objects along this corridor. The features described in this section were purpose-built for the railroad and are considered contributing features to the district. They are also summarized in the included tabular data sheet (listed east to west) and mapped on the enclosed figures in this form.

### Rail Corridor and Railbed/Trackbed

The rail corridor in Hudson is approximately 6.8 miles long, approximately 3.1 miles of which is in the project area and covered by this form. The width of the corridor was established using current property boundaries, with an average width of approximately 80 feet. Much of the terrain in this area consists of gently undulating woodlands with areas of flat, low fields and wetlands.

<sup>1</sup> The field survey attempted to relocate features shown on the 1914 valuation map, not all of which are extant. Only extant features are included in this form.

<sup>2</sup> Spies, Stacy and the Sudbury Historical Commission, SUD.R, "Central Massachusetts RR Corridor," Sudbury, MA, December 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Dudek, Martin G. and Barbara Donahue, Commonwealth Heritage Group, *Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey for the Sudbury-Hudson Transmission Reliability Project, Towns of Sudbury, Hudson, Marlborough, and Stow, Middlesex County, Massachusetts*, prepared for NSTAR Electric Co. d/b/a/ Eversource Energy, February 20, 2018.

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

From the east end of the corridor at the town boundary to White Pond Road, the railbed is mostly slightly raised on a low berm. As summarized in Commonwealth Heritage Group's 2018 Reconnaissance Survey report, "From White Pond Road in Hudson, the bed continues west through a level wooded area and then on an elevated bed through broad hydric wetlands. West of the wetlands, the rail bed is cut through several knolls, sometimes with stone retaining walls..." West of Parmenter Road, the wooded terrain runs adjacent to a golf course with an intermittent stream. Portions of the railbed occur in shallow cuts or on low raised beds. As the corridor travels west beyond Main Street, it runs through wooded uplands, with adjacent parcels developed with industrial sites, a business complex, and a former gravel pit. The wetlands around Fort Meadow Brook required the railbed to be built up; a 1939 bridge (Bridge 130) carrying the rail line across Fort Meadow Brook (**HUD.908**) is partially extant but suffered major fire damage in 2019 (see resource type discussion, below). Beyond the extensive wetlands of Fort Meadow Brook, the rail line has been more heavily altered, with former rail bridges at Chestnut Street and Wilkins Avenue having been removed and the former underpass filled in.<sup>4</sup> Despite these earth-moving activities, much of the railbed remains along the western portion of the project area. Although it generally runs along a level bed, the portion just east of Wilkins Street is raised as high as 10 feet above the surrounding landscape. Earthworks required to construct the railroad, including raised berms, the filled route through wetlands, and portions of cuts are considered to be contributing features. Integrity of the railbed varies but is generally high along much of the corridor, with the route overgrown but legible except in areas where former overpasses and underpasses have been removed at Chestnut Street and directly adjacent to the west end of the project at Wilkins Street.

## Tracks and Rails (Photos 1-9)

The tracks and rails remain largely extant, except in localized areas where bridge structures have been removed (see above discussion). Although the 1914 valuation maps for the line indicate an occasional siding stemming off toward an adjacent (presumably industrial) property, only the main line was observed to be extant. **SUD.R** notes the similarity of the track structure in Sudbury to that of Wayland; the same is true of the structure in Hudson:

"The track structure consists of a pair of steel rails mounted to wood ties. The rails are typically 39-foot-long sections of rolled open-hearth steel, joined end-to-end by splice bars and roundheaded, threaded bolts. ...The rail is light, weighing between 75 and 90 pounds to the yard, and as in all American standard gauge railroad tracks, the rails are 4 to 8.5 feet apart between the inner flanges of the rail head. The rails rest on steel tie plates spiked to wood ties set into a [gravel] ballast."<sup>5</sup>

## Bridges

Although the 1914 valuation maps indicate that four bridges were wholly or partially located in the project area in Hudson, the two at Chestnut Street and Wilkins Street were removed after the railroad was abandoned in 1980.

Bridge 130 across Fort Meadow Brook (MP 25.37; Photos 10-11), **HUD.908** is a timber pile structure constructed in 1939, replacing an earlier structure at this location that was similarly identified as a pile trestle in the 1914 valuation map. The four-span bridge carries a single track across the brook, with a length of just over 49 feet and a width of 12 feet. At the time the 1987, HUD.908 form was prepared, it was noted that the trestle was an example of a common bridge type of the time period, and that Bridge 130 was the shortest of five pile trestles in the corridor between Waltham and Hudson.<sup>6</sup> In 2019, a major fire occurred at the structure causing moderate damage and diminishing the integrity and condition of this structure. However, the rails along the deck remain intact and the piles are still recognizable as the bridge

<sup>4</sup> These bridges were identified as Bridges 131 and 133, respectively, on the 1914 valuation maps for the line.

<sup>5</sup> Cherau, Suzanne G. *et al* and Public Archaeology Laboratory, *Archaeological Site Examination: Wayland Center Railroad Complex*, prepared for AT&T Wireless Service c/o Anderson and Kreiger LLP, April 2001:38.

<sup>6</sup> Stott, Peter, A.G. Lichtenstein and Assoc., and the MBTA, HUD.908, "Fort Meadow Brook Railroad Bridge," MBTA Survey, Phase II, December 1987.

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

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substructure; therefore, while the bridge does not retain individual integrity, is considered to be a contributing feature to the district.

Bridge 132/Cattle Pass (MP 25.83; Photos 16-18) is a six-foot-by-six-foot concrete structure, which was in place by 1914. The structure has concrete headwalls and a concrete roof, with stone ashlar abutments on each side. The surface is buried below the existing ballast and the corridor running on top of the structure is approximately 18 feet wide between each 12-inch-thick headwall. It is in fair condition, exhibiting some concrete spalling and delamination and a temporary mud and debris dam at the south opening have covered all but the top third of the opening.<sup>7</sup>

## Culverts

Only two of the four culverts indicated on the 1914 valuation map were located during the survey (129C and 132A); the other two have presumably been filled and no water flow was observed in their former locations (129B and 129E). Both of the extant culverts are in fair to good condition.

Culvert 129C (MP 24.30; Photo 12) is a 24-inch tile pipe, approximately 39 feet long. It is topped by approximately 5 feet of cover. A field inspection notes that the pipe is cracked at the north end, likely due to a tree growing atop the northeast corner.<sup>8</sup>

Culvert 132A (MP 26.12; Photos 13-15) consists of both a granite stone box and a 30-inch clay pipe, with approximately 12 inches of cover. The 2x3-foot stone box is near the center of the extent of the culvert, flanked by five-foot sections of pipe. The stone portion of the structure is labeled on the 1914 valuation plan; it is assumed that the clay pipe was installed to supplement the structure during a later improvements project, perhaps when the line was upgraded in the 1920s. The north headwall of the stone box is partially collapsed.<sup>9</sup>

## Whistle Posts (Photos 26-28)

There are two extant concrete whistle posts in this portion of the rail corridor, alongside the north and south side of the tracks east of the Main Street crossing (MP 24.40 and 24.50). As noted on the **SUD.R.** form:

The cast concrete posts feature an inset "W" on the east or west face, depending on the direction for which the instruction is intended. Whistle signals are posted on the engineer's side; on this line, on the north side for trains heading west and on the south side of the tracks for trains heading east. The posts each contain three holes above the inset W, through which bolts are attached to hold a small piece of sheet metal, perhaps a reflector.

Both whistle posts are in good condition.

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<sup>7</sup> VHB, "Eversource Sudbury to Hudson 115 KV Line Construction Platform Project – Existing Cattle Pass Evaluation (Hudson)," memorandum, June 8, 2017.

<sup>8</sup> VHB, "Eversource Sudbury to Hudson 115 KV Line Construction Platform Project – Culvert Structure Assessment," memorandum, May 31, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> VHB 2017.

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

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## Mileposts (Photos 29-34)

There are four mileposts located in the rail corridor in the project area (MPs 23-26). They are present on the 1914 valuation map and may date to the original 1881 opening of the railroad; alternatively, they may have been erected by the B&MRR in the early twentieth century to replace the original posts. Similar to those in **SUD.R**:

All are located on the north side of the tracks. The upright rectangular posts are roughly hewn with a more carefully dressed, bush-hammered, section at the tops of the east and west elevations that were to be painted. The posts have flat tops and are approximately 12 inches square and approximately eight feet tall, with four feet set underground.

The posts for mile markers 24, 25, and 26 are painted, showing the mileage to Boston on the inbound side, and the mileage to Northampton on the outbound side. All of the mileposts are in good condition.

## Section Post (Photo 47)

The bottom portion of a wood post is extant at MP 24, located in line with the granite milepost but 10 feet closer to the rail. The post is likely to have been a section post, which was recorded at this location in 1914 and often would have lined up with a milepost. This squared post would have extended four feet above ground, with the section number painted at the top of the post.

## Rail Rests (Photos 35-40)

All four rail rests noted in this portion of the corridor on the 1914 valuation map are extant, though in varying conditions. As with Sudbury, the current iterations likely date from the 1929-1930 upgrade of the corridor. **SUD.R** notes, "In this corridor, rail rests are located on the engineer's side, outbound movement, and as near as possible to the mileposts, as per B&MRR specifications." As constructed, "Each rail rest consists of a set of three reinforced cast concrete posts with flared heads placed approximately 15 feet apart. The pair of inverted metal track spikes set into the top surface of each post served to hold the rail sections in place. The posts measure 5'-0" H x 6" deep. The posts are 10" wide at the base and 1'-6" at the top."

Although constructed in sets of three, only three of the locations retain all three of their original posts. The rail rest associated with milepost 23 exhibits the most intact condition, with the shape and flared profile highly visible. In contrast, at milepost 25, only one post was relocated. It is fragmented and is leaning heavily due to its location immediate to a mature tree and its roots.

## Street Crossing Posts (Photos 45-46)

Two squared wood posts were observed, one on each side of the railroad crossing at Main Street and are likely to have been associated with one or more of the crossing-related features noted on the 1914 valuation map (MP 24.72 and 24.78). Crossing signs, highway flashers, and a wig wag were marked at this location, and the posts may indicate the former locations of the crossing signs. The posts are in fair to good condition, but associated elements that could confirm their original use have been lost.

## Utility Pole (Photos 19-20)

One utility pole is located at the Main Street crossing (MP 24.76). The pole as a square, cast-steel base that supports the round cast steel pole. This purpose-built pole likely brought power to the crossing and the warning signals used to control vehicular and train traffic movement at this at-grade crossing. The remains of a meter are extant near the bottom of the

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

---

pole, with a likely regulator cabinet underneath and a conduit running out of the boxes to the top of pole secured with double pipe clamps.

## Switch Features

Features associated with two former switch locations were identified, which appear to line up with industrial sidings shown on the 1914 valuation plan.

Approximately 30 feet of a Conduit for Pipe-Connected Derail (MP 23.33; Photos 24-25) is extant between mileposts 23 and 24, held at ground level by cast iron saddle brackets. The pipes were connected to the switch machine (not extant) and were used to engage the derail (lined up with the mainline) or disengage the derail (lined up with the industry track). It is unclear which nearby industry(ies) utilized the industry track. The extant conduit likely dates to a 1929-1930 upgrade of the line conducted by the B&MRR.

A Track Switch Stand with Electrical Box (MP 24.80; Photos 41-43) is located west of the Main Street crossing. The cast-steel Switch Stand is a Model No. 17 B manufactured by Ramapo Ajax Corp. of Huntington, NY. This is the same type found in Sudbury, and as described in SUD.R, "Each switch stand consists of a rectangular cast steel base that supports a round, tapered steel pivot post. A curvilinear locking handle is connected to the post with bolts. A sheet steel day target is bolted to a steel rod that extends from the top of the pivot." The nearby electrical box, manufactured by the General Railway Signal Company, may have serviced an electric switch stand lamp. The switch is noted on the 1914 valuation map but based on the patent date embossed on the electrical box, the latter was installed after 1932.

## Telegraph Pole (Photo 44)

Only one telegraph pole (MP 23.06) was relocated in this portion of the corridor through Hudson. It was in fair condition, and tipped over partially on its side with the cross post askew.

## Miscellaneous Objects/Features

While there are several recognizable individual objects/features extant in the corridor, there are a few identified features that cannot be definitively tied to a specific resource type or represent a small, secondary part of a resource type. These are briefly discussed below.

A Stone Wall (MP 23.95; Photo 21) is extant along approximately 50 feet of the corridor. The four-course dry-laid fieldstone retaining wall is approximately 2 ½ feet tall.

An isolated concrete Battery Base Well (MP 24.36; Photo 23) was likely originally associated with a signal structure, but the structure is not extant. There is no signal noted on the 1914 valuation map at this location, suggesting it may have been added later.

An isolated Concrete Box (MP 24.89; Photo 22) may also have been historically associated with a signal structure. Although the 1914 valuation map indicates a whistle post near this location, the hollow concrete box (or base) does not resemble the known whistle posts in Hudson or Sudbury. It is possible the box is a remnant of a signal added after 1914 in association with the industry siding located east of this location.

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

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## Archaeological Sites

Two archaeological sites associated with the railroad were previously identified in the corridor, the Ordway Station site (HUD.HA-9) and the Gleasondale Station site (HUD.HA-8). Consistent with the **SUD.R** form, these are listed in the data sheet, but the locations are confidential and are therefore not shown on the included maps.

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

*Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.*

### Development of the CMRR/B&MRR

The CMRR, and its long-term lessee the B&MRR, were born at a time when the promise of quick travel, new technology, and financial gain led to a glut of proposed railroads. Many of these mid-nineteenth century railroads were plagued by difficulties such as financing issues, the challenges of construction (sometimes through difficult terrain), and competition as multiple companies set upon establishing railroads in the same service areas. As a result, the early histories of several railroads in Massachusetts, where some of the country's earliest railroads got their start, often involve a complex web of stops and starts, mergers, abandonments, acquisitions, and renaming. The CMRR is no different, but still held the promise of industrial growth and prosperity for the towns along its route.

As summarized in the **SUD.R** form:

"The success of this new transportation technology inspired entrepreneurs, politicians, and industrialists in every sizable southern New England community to pursue a rail connection to these east-west mainlines, hoping to benefit from the economic growth the railroad could bring."<sup>10</sup> Ten residents of Sudbury, Wayland, Weston, including Sudbury residents Thomas P. Hurlburt and Samuel B. Rogers, were among those inspired. The group successfully petitioned the legislature in 1868 to authorize construction of the Wayland & Sudbury Branch Railroad on a 6.75-mile alignment from Stony Brook on the Fitchburg Railroad at Weston to Mill Village in south Sudbury.<sup>11</sup> That same year (1868), the town of Barre in central Massachusetts petitioned the legislature to grant a charter for a railroad between Northampton and Boston, incorporating the unbuilt Wayland & Sudbury Branch Railroad. In 1869, this new railroad was authorized as the Massachusetts Central Railroad and formed a 98-mile route between Weston and Northampton.<sup>12</sup> "These individuals were totally lacking in railroading experience and they had, as one close to the scene observed, proposed a road 'from nothing to nothing.'<sup>13</sup> Despite a lack of evidence of a viable market for their venture, the railroad had, so to speak, been set in motion.

Field survey of the route began in 1870. In 1871, railroad contractor Norman C. Munson of Shirley, Massachusetts was awarded the contract and work began in Hardwick. The Panic of 1873 halted work until 1878, when Munson was rehired, and work resumed. In 1880, the railroad's stockholders, seeking some stability, voted to lease the line to the Boston & Lowell Railroad for 25 years. "In October 1880, the first rails were laid at South Sudbury at the junction with the Framingham & Lowell Railroad, and during the following winter work progressed towards Hudson to the west and Boston to the east."<sup>14</sup> In October 1881, the line was finally opened to rail traffic.

In 1883, the company that sold the railroad's bonds went bankrupt. The railroad ceased operations for 29 months and was forced to sell off most of its rolling stock. The Massachusetts Central Railroad

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<sup>10</sup> Cherau *et al* 2001: 21.

<sup>11</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society, *The Central Mass* (Brimfield, MA: Marker Press, 2008 second ed.): 6

<sup>12</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 21, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society, *The Central Mass*, 1975 ed.; Karr, Ronald Dale, *The Rail Lines of Southern New England*, 1994 ed.: 195.

<sup>13</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008 ed.: 1

<sup>14</sup> Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008 ed.: 9

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

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reorganized as the Central Massachusetts Railroad. Service to Hudson was restored in 1885 with seven daily round trips to Hudson and soon increased to 17 daily round trips to Jefferson. In 1887, the Boston & Maine Railroad leased the Central Massachusetts Railroad for 99 years (bringing the Boston & Lowell lease along with it). "The first train through to Northampton ran in December 1887 and regular service began seven days later."<sup>15</sup>

The continued efforts to keep the Central Massachusetts Railroad running did not, unfortunately, pay off in terms of profitability or long-term stability. "The chartering and construction of these new railroads eventually resulted in a dense, sometimes redundant, network of trackage. In the period after the Civil War, Massachusetts railroad speculators dreamed of building additional mainline railroads from Boston to the west. These lines were built, but never realized their investors' dreams." "Massachusetts was already amply served by the rail networks that evolved from the three original east-west lines: the Boston & Maine Railroad..., the New York Central's Boston & Albany Railroad..., and the New York, New Haven & Hartford... In this saturated railroad market, ... the Central Massachusetts Railroad [was...] relegated to secondary status."<sup>16</sup>

Despite the route redundancy of the CMRR with other regional railroads, the B&MRR was able to use the leased rail line to its advantage. In fact, although the rail line was often in financial trouble, other regional rail lines recognized it as legitimate competition and the Boston & Albany Railroad went to great lengths to acquire additional lines to increase its advantage.<sup>17</sup> The **SUD.R** form continues:

The Central Massachusetts did have periods of prosperity. That prosperity, however, was always frustratingly short-lived. During the late 1880s and 1890s, the Boston & Maine used the Central Massachusetts line to successfully compete with the parallel Fitchburg and Boston & Albany lines. This had been made possible with the completion in 1890 of the Central New England Railroad's Hudson River railroad bridge at Poughkeepsie, New York. The bridge became an important link for a consortium of railroads, including the Boston & Maine, that used the route as a link between New England and the West to avoid the bottleneck at New York City, where rail cars had to be barged across the Hudson River from New Jersey to New York City and points east. The Boston & Maine's new route pattern carried heavy freight, and "name-train" long-distance passenger express service between Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. to Boston and Bar Harbor, Maine.<sup>18</sup> From 1890 to 1893, one such name-train, the Philadelphia and Washington Express, passed daily through Sudbury as it traveled between Boston, Philadelphia and Washington over the Poughkeepsie bridge. Between 1907 and 1914, the Boston & Maine Railroad maintained a successful freight business, "when the New Haven Railroad assumed control of the Boston & Maine. This welcome spate of traffic ceased in the wake of a legal campaign that ... charged that the [arrangement constituted] a monopoly."<sup>19</sup>

During the interwar years freight service was limited to only local traffic<sup>20</sup>, but the B&MRR implemented a 1929-1930 improvements campaign that became especially important when infrastructure was heavily relied on during WWII. However, the decline of train use by both passengers and freight in favor of roadways spelled the end of the rail line. Although it wasn't officially abandoned until 1980, **SUD.R** describes how the abandonment really occurred in stages between the 1950s and 1970s, as services were cut back both in quantity and in areas served.

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<sup>15</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 22, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975 ed.

<sup>16</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 21, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975 ed., Emery 1981; Karr 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 18.

<sup>18</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 22, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975 ed.; Emery 1981; Karr 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 23, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975 ed.

<sup>20</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 23.



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

The program included “new steam locomotives, rail, ballast, bridges, and signaling systems, all of which helped stabilize the economics of operating the Central Massachusetts line.”<sup>21</sup> In the 1930s, passenger service continued from Boston to Clinton and Marlboro. Like much of the economy, the Central Massachusetts languished during the 1930s until World War II prompted a surge of traffic on the line. In 1942, the U.S. Government built a 2,750-acre, ammunition depot in Maynard, Stowe and Sudbury, Massachusetts. For three years, the line carried heavy ammunition trains between the Watertown Arsenal and Ordway station. Passenger trains were heavily patronized during wartime due to gasoline rationing.

After the war ended, traffic on the Central Massachusetts shifted to passenger service. Despite the proliferation of private automobiles, Wayland, Weston and Sudbury were becoming rail commuter suburbs, and train service to Boston was well- patronized, marking “a high point for the Central Mass.”<sup>22</sup> Trucks, however, cut deeply into freight traffic.<sup>23</sup> Hudson became the terminus for passenger trains in 1958, when the track between Berlin and Clinton was abandoned. The line was cut back to South Sudbury in 1965.<sup>24</sup> In 1968, trips were cut from two daily round trips to one, which, by 1971, were utilized by an average of seven passengers.<sup>25</sup> Passenger trips were discontinued in 1971. Freight traffic between Waltham and South Sudbury “was reduced to three times per week, and then later to an as-needed basis.”<sup>26</sup> The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) acquired the right-of-way in 1975. The final freight train traveled the remaining line in 1980, after which the line was abandoned.

#### Economic Impact of the CMRR/B&MRR on Hudson

As described by Commonwealth Heritage Group in 2018, Hudson remained largely agricultural until the arrival of the railroad. Although the Assabet River provided a catalyst for small-scale industry, it was the railroad that allowed these enterprises to expand. This expansion not only supported cottage industries but also an increase in population over the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Present-day Hudson was an outlying district of Marlborough consisting of scattered farms with no village center. Agriculture and grazing were the main economic activities with the only significant waterpower located along the Assabet River at Feltonville (present-day Hudson Center). A gristmill constructed along the Assabet River circa 1698 served as the primary gristmill for Marlborough during the early eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup>

In 1743 the residents of Feltonville unsuccessfully petitioned the General Court to break away from Marlborough to become a separate town. Through the eighteenth century this section of Marlborough witnessed extremely small growth with colonial highways remaining as local routes. Small-scale industrial activities included the introduction of a tannery in 1799.<sup>28</sup>

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century the small village that developed along the Assabet River contained 16 houses, one store, a small cotton factory, and a small shoe factory. Circa 1844 box-making factories supplied the shoe industry leading to an increase in the production of shoes. A railroad link by

<sup>21</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 23, citing Boston & Main Railroad Historical Society 1975 ed.

<sup>22</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 56.

<sup>23</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 23, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975.

<sup>24</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 24, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 24, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975.

<sup>26</sup> Cherau, *et al* 2001: 24, citing Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 1975.

<sup>27</sup> MHC, Hudson, Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, March 1980.

<sup>28</sup> MHC 1980; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hudson,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hudson,_Massachusetts). Also see Worcester, E.F., *Hudson: Yesterday and Today*, 1914, n.p., <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/bc.ark:/13960/t5gb81266>, accessed October 2021.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

the Central Massachusetts Railroad Company to the mills along the Assabet River occurred in the 1850s. As a result, the town's population increased and larger factories, some of the first in the country to use steam power and sewing machines, were constructed. By 1860, Feltonville had 17 shoe and shoe-related factories attracting immigrant workers from Ireland and French Canada. In 1865 residents of Feltonville again petitioned the General Court to become a separate town and in 1866 the town of Hudson was incorporated. Over the next twenty years Hudson grew as two woolen mills, an elastic-webbing plant, a piano case factory, and a factory for waterproofing fabrics with a rubber coating were constructed.<sup>29</sup>

By the 1880s, Hudson boasted a robust industrial center, and a growing municipal center to go with it, including "two woolen mills, an elastic-webbing plant, a piano case factory, and a factory for waterproofing fabrics by rubber coating...as five new schools, a poor farm, and a wonderful new town hall were built..."<sup>30</sup> Electric trolley lines connecting to nearby towns like Concord and Marlborough helped make the area into a regional powerhouse. Although most of the immigrants arriving to work in Hudson were European, their countries of origin stretched from Portugal to Lithuania.

The mills made Hudson a natural stop (and indeed, original terminus) for the CMRR, and in turn, the growing industrial center made the CMRR a welcome sight. The arrival of what was then called the Massachusetts Central Railroad was suitably greeted with fanfare in Hudson. On October 1, 1881, the first train travelled the 28 miles from Boston to Hudson, where it was celebrated with a parade and banquet.<sup>31</sup> Several daily round trips through Hudson, including on Sundays, were part of the schedule for a number of years. A short-lived through service intended to improve service was added in Hudson in the first years of the twentieth century, at Gleason Junction (west of the Project area) utilizing a disused connecting track.<sup>32</sup>

Hudson had three stations along the rail line<sup>33</sup>, though by far the flagship station in the town was located downtown along the river at the town's industrial, municipal, and commercial hub. Located approximately two miles east of the Project area, this station is extant but in a highly altered condition (34 Pope Street, **HUD.24**). Originally constructed in 1881 as a wood, board-and-batten building with a gabled-hip roof and integrated freight house<sup>34</sup>, the station was reconstructed in the twentieth century at the behest of local businessman L.D. Asley in exchange for a share of the freight takings from the Ashby Rubber Company.<sup>35</sup> The second station at Hudson was a hip-roofed building fronted on the track side by a gable-roofed canopy<sup>36</sup>; in the late twentieth century, wings were added and several of the materials swapped out to serve new commercial uses.

The other two stops were located in the Project area, east of the downtown Hudson station and west of the Sudbury/Hudson/Marlborough town line. Neither of these two former stops are extant. Ordway Station, initially called Ordway Crossing, was established as a seasonal flag stop in 1902 serving tourists coming to White Pond. This small, shed-roofed wood shelter had an enclosed room for the ticketing agent at one end.<sup>37</sup> Later the stop served a nearby ammunition facility during WWII; the shelter was demolished in the 1970s. Gleasondale Station

<sup>29</sup> MHC 1980; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hudson,\\_Massachusetts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hudson,_Massachusetts). Also see Worcester 1914; Halprin, Lewis and the Hudson Historical Society, *Hudson* (Postcard History Series), (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2008): 27-34.

<sup>30</sup> Halprin 2008: 8.

<sup>31</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 9.

<sup>32</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 28.

<sup>33</sup> Hudson also had two junctions, Gleason Junction at the Marlborough Branch and a brief, WWII-era connection at Mirror Lake to Fort Devens. Neither junction had an associated station.

<sup>34</sup> As classified in Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 87 and illustrated on 9. Usually in combination depot buildings, the freight room and the passenger waiting room were separated by a projecting ticket office.

<sup>35</sup> Hudson Historical Commission, HUD.24, "Boston and Maine Railroad Station," Hudson, MA, September 1978.

<sup>36</sup> As shown in an image in Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 76.

<sup>37</sup> As shown in an image in Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 75.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
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was original to the line's opening in 1881, when it was called "Rockbottom." The station building was a gable-roofed wood structure with a large overhang to shelter passengers<sup>38</sup>; the station closed in 1924 and was removed in 1965.

After WWII, the increase in industrial activity in Hudson and the concurrent uptick in rail traffic quickly disappeared. When the B&MRR received permission to discontinue passenger service on the line in 1965, service was continued from Boston to South Sudbury under an agreement with the MBTA. Municipalities located further down the corridor were encouraged to coordinate their own contracts with the MBTA to continue service, but Hudson declined.<sup>39</sup> The track between Hudson and Berlin were taken completely out of service in 1977, and highway overpasses and underpasses were removed at Chestnut Street and Wilkins Street.<sup>40</sup>

### Rail Features – History and Context

While the buildings and larger-scale features along this stretch of the CMRR/B&MRR corridor are not extant, there are several smaller-scale rail features that survive. These features provide an opportunity to understand the various factors that go into railroad design and operations, as well as the challenges of standardizing and upgrading these features across massive networks in the early twentieth century.

### Signals

Although signals are often classified by type, several features often worked together to make the signal system work, making it more of a network than an individual element. These include tell tales, mileposts, flags, crossing signs, whistle posts, speed signs, balls, fouling posts, section posts, and yard limits<sup>41</sup>, some of which are extant in this portion of the rail corridor. The B&MRR has been noted for its willingness to upgrade its mechanical devices using new technologies and products to the market.<sup>42</sup> While it is known that the B&MRR undertook a corridor-wide upgrade in the late 1920s, in reality there were probably several pieces of equipment that were upgraded as ongoing maintenance required.

By the end of the nineteenth century, railroad signals were transitioning from manual operation to electric motors, using the rails as electrical conductors. Like other companies, the B&MRR had its own preferred slate of signal equipment, including the Hall Disk signal, the Union Banner signal, and Hall Style "F" Semaphore, and the Union Switch and Signal Company's Style "B" semaphore signal. In the twentieth century, lights were introduced to convey messages on the signals through the color-light and searchlight signal types, and by the 1930s automatic crossing protection was being rolled out to replace gate tenders.<sup>43</sup>

The presence of a concrete battery well (MP 24.36; Photo 23), and features associated with the Main Street crossing such as the wood signposts and a rail-related utility pole (MP 24.72-24.78; Photos 19-20, 45-46) all speak to the complicated signaling systems along the line. As described and illustrated in **SUD.R**:

The Battery Wells associated with the distant signals here are also typical of railroads in during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The cast concrete wells are located underground, with only a concrete lip and

<sup>38</sup> As classified in Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 87 and illustrated on 91.

<sup>39</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 60.

<sup>40</sup> Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society 2008: 136-137.

<sup>41</sup> Wallace, Stuart and Lisa Mausolf, *New Hampshire Railroads: Historic Context Statement*, April 2001. [https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/nh\\_railroad\\_context.pdf](https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/nh_railroad_context.pdf), accessed October 2021: 95.

<sup>42</sup> Wallace and Mausolf 2001: 94.

<sup>43</sup> Wallace and Mausolf 2001: 94-95.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

metal hatch visible above ground. The wells are typically "4 or 5 feet in diameter and from 4 to 8 feet in depth. Tiers of wooden shelves are provided around the wall of the well to support the battery cells."<sup>44</sup>

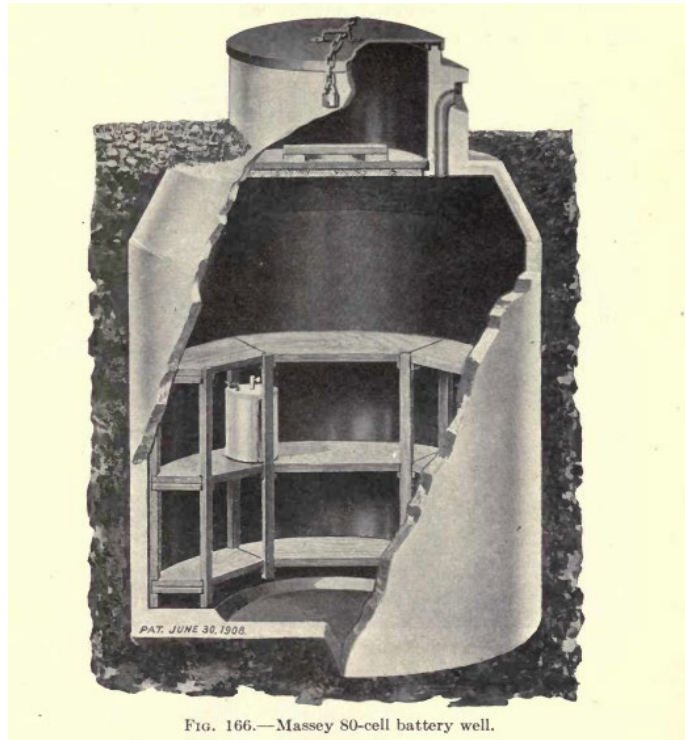


FIG. 166.—Massey 80-cell battery well.

Typical battery well from 1908. As illustrated in SUD.R and King 1921: 161.

### Mileposts

**SUD.R** notes that the mileposts, like the four extant posts in this portion of the corridor (Photos 29-34), were also standardized along the B&MRR. Quoting from an early twentieth century maintenance manual:

The stone milepost of the Boston & Maine R.R. is of granite, 12 inches square in section, 8 ½ feet long, set 4 feet in the ground. The side faces, occupying 24 ½ inches of the top part of the post, are bushhammered, while the remaining surface of the post is uncut. Distances are painted on the post with black letters and figures 5 inches high on a white field... The post at the ground line is kept free from grass and other vegetable growth by a heap of cobble stone 4 feet in diameter.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> King, Edward, *Railway Signaling*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1921)

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Railway\\_signaling\\_%28IA\\_railwaysignaling00kingrich%29.pdf](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/44/Railway_signaling_%28IA_railwaysignaling00kingrich%29.pdf). Accessed October 2021: 160.

<sup>45</sup> Camp, Walter Mason, *Notes on Track: Construction and Maintenance, Vol. 1*. (Chicago: Walter Mason Camp, 1904 second ed.). <https://books.google.com/books?id=vHUPAAAAYAAJ>, accessed October 2021: 898.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
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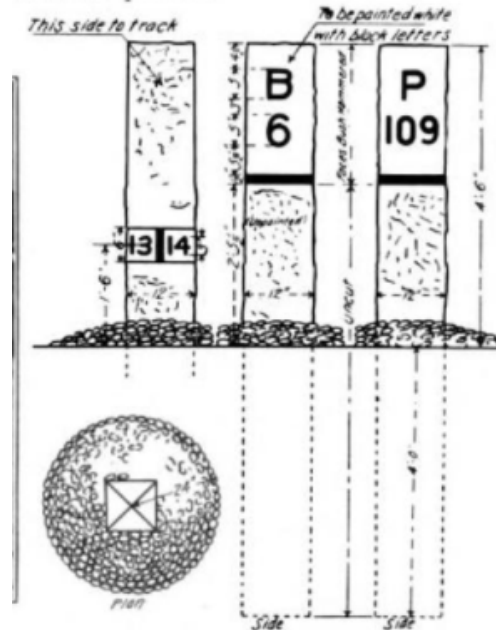


Fig. 469.—Granite Mile Post,  
Boston & Maine R. R.

Typical milepost, as illustrated in SUD.R and Camp 1904: 898.

Rail Rests

Rail rests, including the four sets located in this portion of the corridor (Photos 35-40), were often sited near mileposts and were used as a way to keep spare rails along the corridor for easier maintenance. As explained in **SUD.R**:

The existing circa 1929-1930 rail rests replaced earlier rail rests in the same locations. The rail rests, also called rail racks, are constructed to store spare rails at convenient intervals in order to make repairs easier. Storing the rails off the ground prevents them from being covered with snow or frozen to the ground when needed. Rail rests typically keep the rails at least 18 inches from the ground and could be constructed of a number of materials, although concrete was a popular choice due to ease of maintenance and longevity. In this corridor, rail rests are located on the engineer's side, outbound movement, and as near as possible to the mileposts, as per B&MRR specifications.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

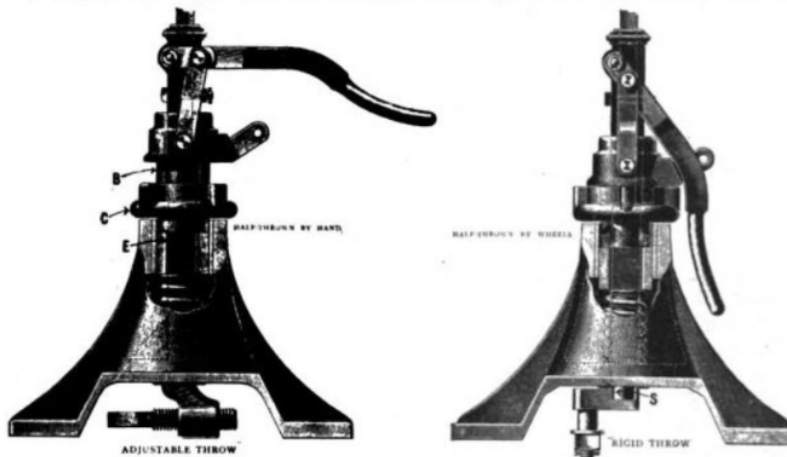
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Although a different style from the flat, flared profile used by the B&MRR, the rail rests shown here illustrate how they were utilized on the rail corridor. From Camp 1904: 574.<sup>46</sup>

Switch Stands

Track switch stands such as the extant one located on this portion of the corridor (MP 28.80; Photos 41-43) were pieces of pivoting equipment, manually or automatically operated by a lever. Among the most popular products was the Ramapo automatic switch stand found on the CMRR/B&MRR corridor.<sup>47</sup>



**Fig. 152.—Ramapo Automatic Switch Stand.**

The Ramapo automatic switch stand, as illustrated in Camp 1904: 396.

The electrical box used to power the switch indicates that the B&MRR continuously upgraded its equipment, utilizing older and newer technology together. As illustrated above, the Ramapo switch stand was in regular use by 1904; however, the 1932 patent date embossed onto the front cover of the electrical box indicates that 1930s technology was being used to help power it.

<sup>46</sup> For B&MRR-specific examples, see the illustration provided in SUD.R, included with permission by the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society.

<sup>47</sup> Camp 1904: 396.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
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### Culverts/Cattle Passes

The two culverts (clay pipe and combination pipe/stone box; MP 24.30 and MP26.12; Photos 12-15) and cattle pass (concrete; MP 25.93; Photos 16-18) found on the corridor in this portion of the CMRR/B&MRR are typical of B&MRR construction. Elsewhere, it has been noted that many of the culvert structures have been filled, removed, or buried<sup>48</sup>, as with some of the former culverts noted on the 1914 valuation map.

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<sup>48</sup> Wallace and Mausolf: 120.

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDORMASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
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# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
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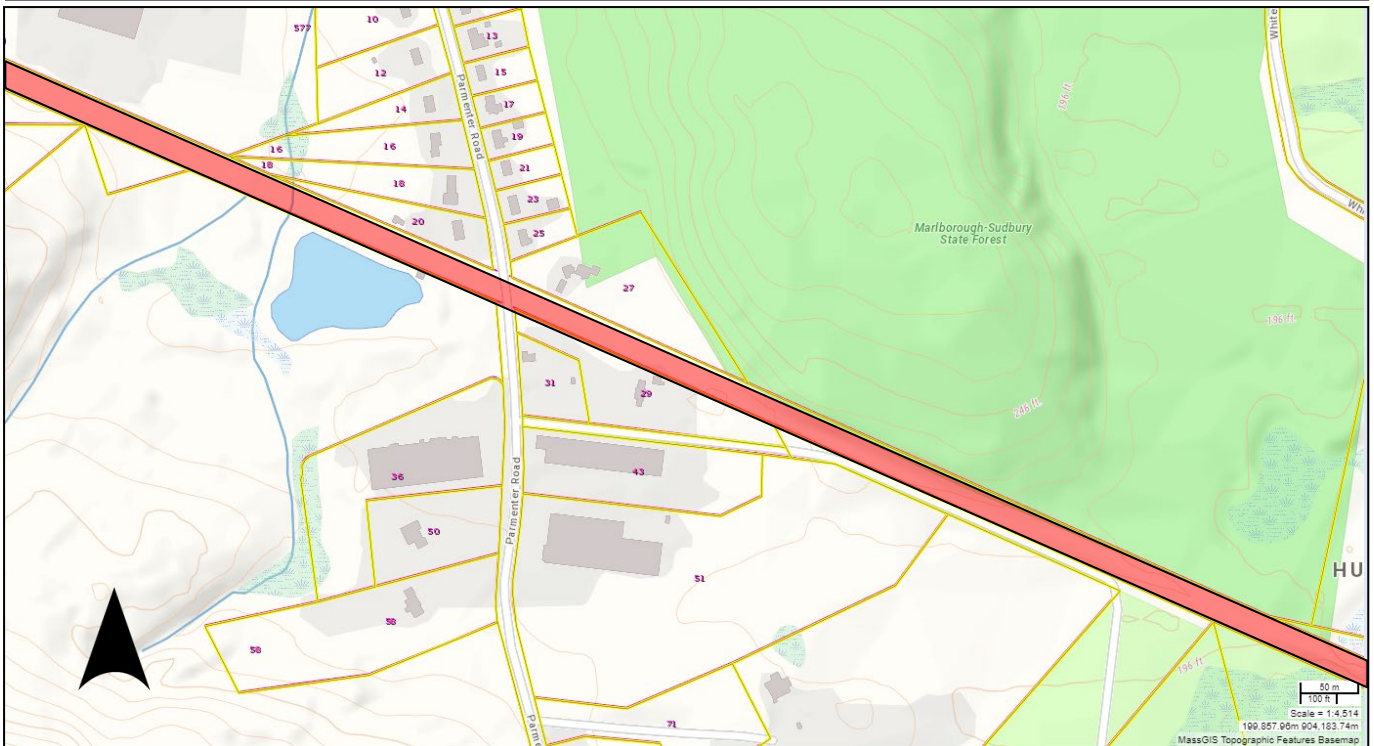
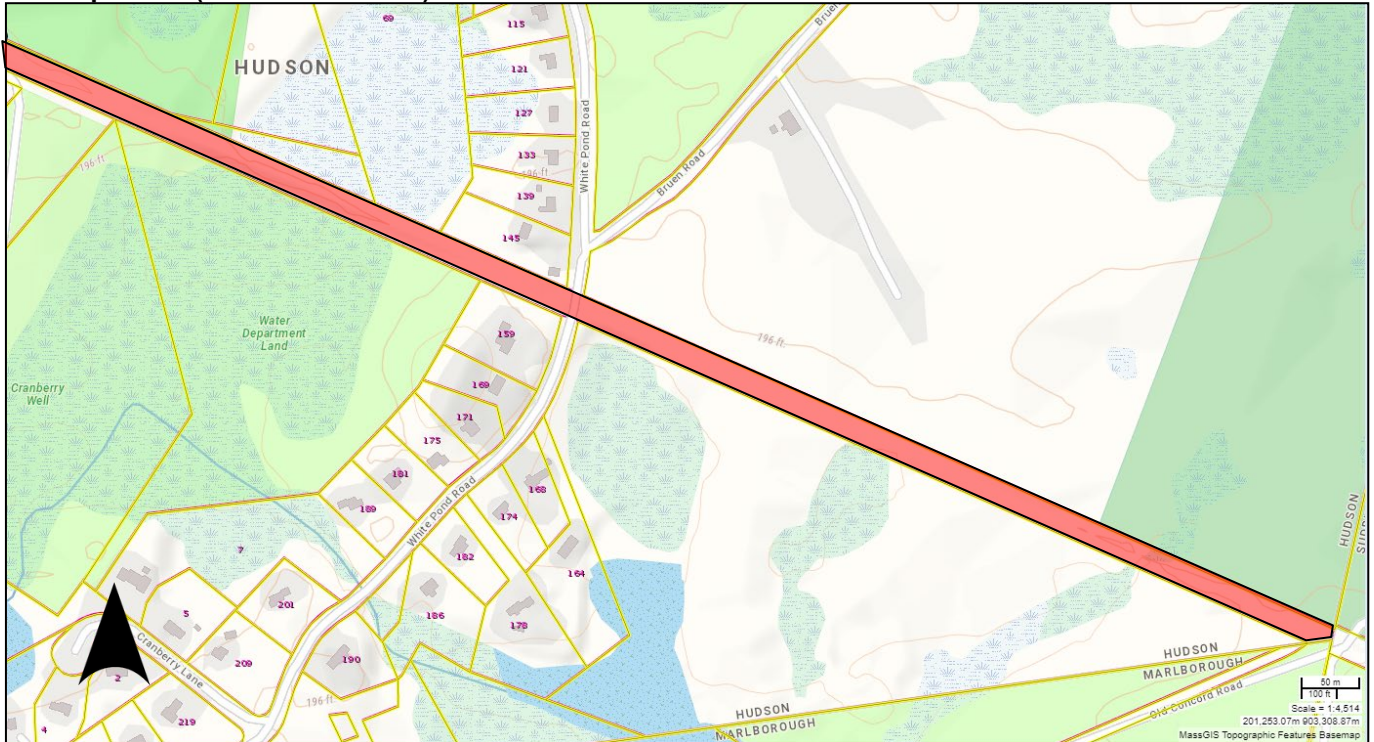
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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

## Locus Map Detail (from east to west)



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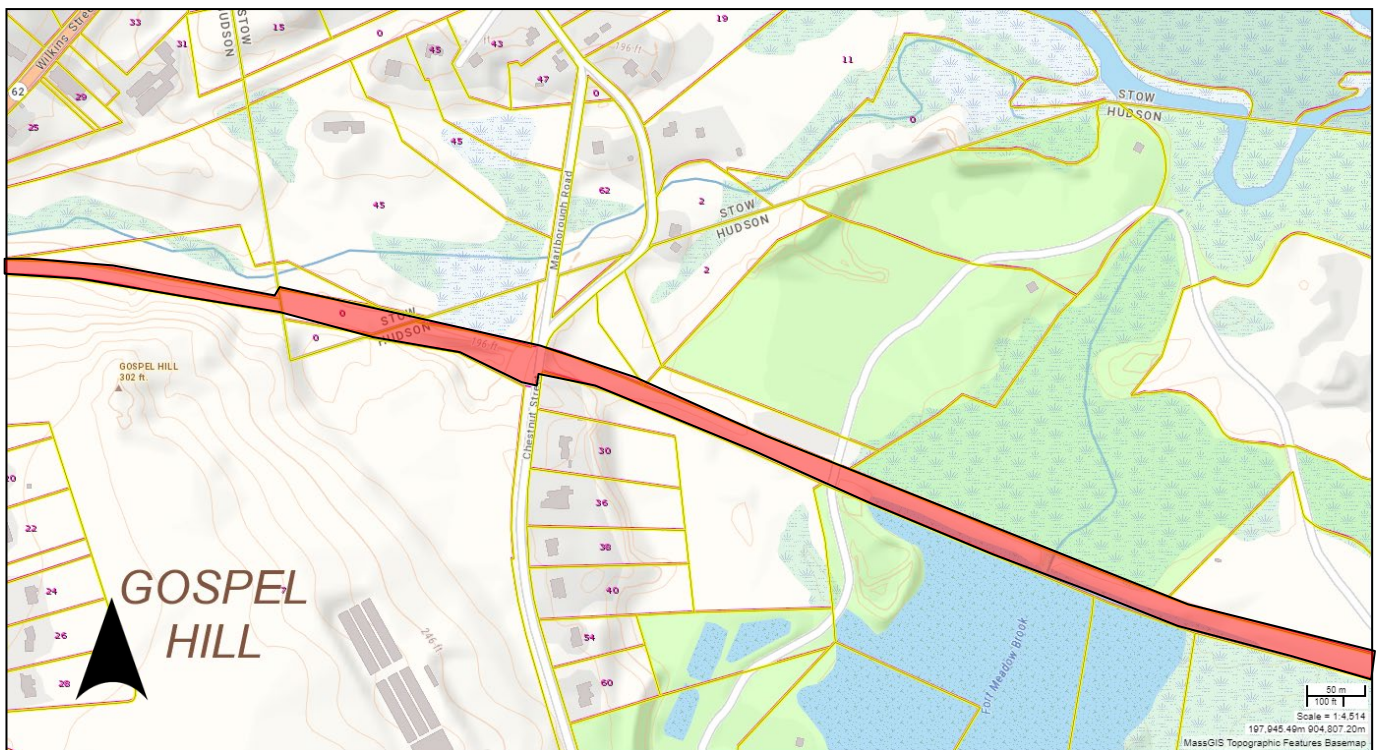
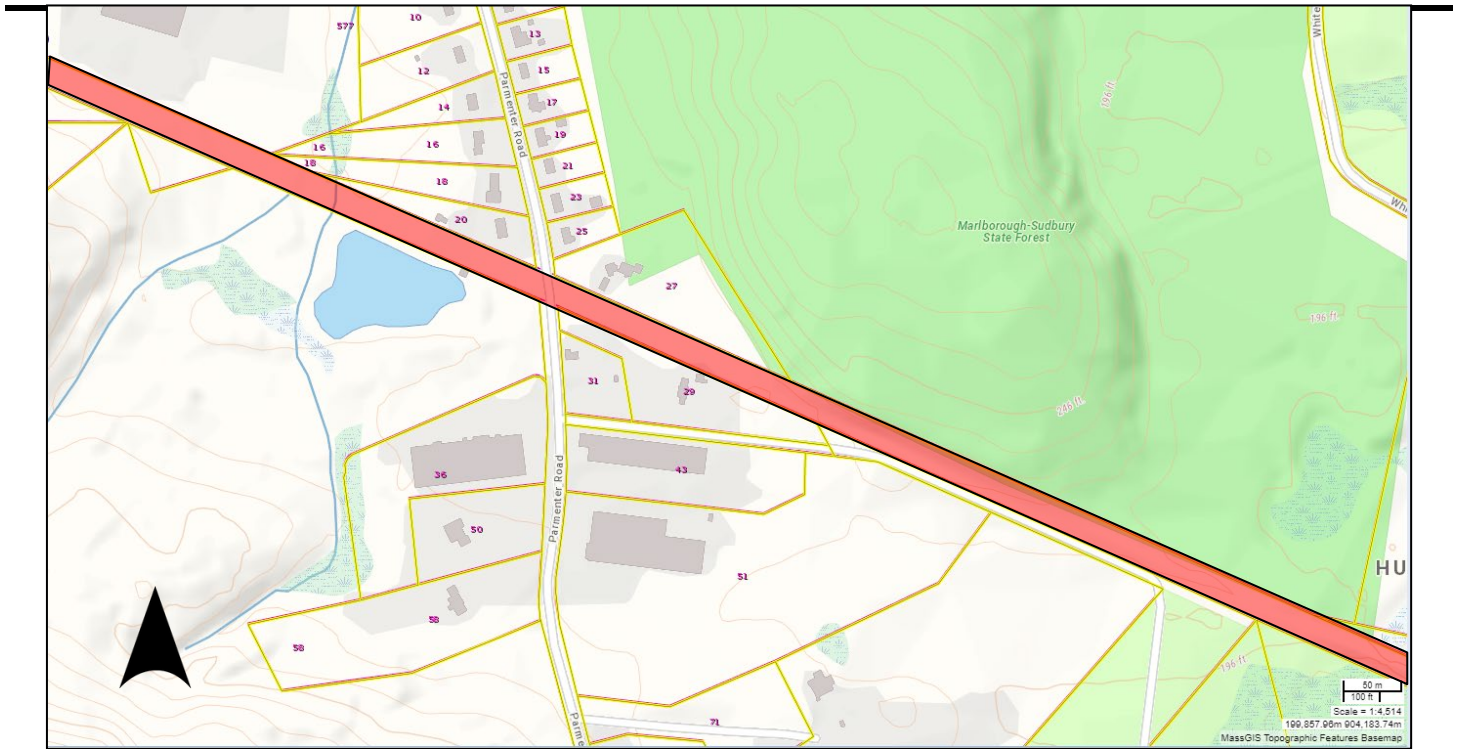
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

Area Data Sheet (from east to west) - final MHC numbers will be filled in when assigned during MHC review

MHC #	Milepost Location	Resource	Year	Photo #
<b>Town Boundary</b>				
	N/A	Rails	1880-1881	1-9
	N/A	Ties	1880-1881	1-9
	23.00	Milepost	1880-1881	29
	23.05	Railrest	1929-1930	35
	23.06	Telegraph Pole	1880-1881	44
	23.33	Conduit Pipe Derail Switch	1929-1930	24-25
	23.95	Stone wall	1880-1881	21
	24.00	Milepost	1880-1881	30-31
	24.00	Section Post		47
	24.09	Railrest	1929-1930	36-37
HUD.HA-9	24.10	Ordway Archaeological Site	1902	N/A
<b>Parmenter Road</b>				
	24.30	Culvert 129C	pre-1914	12
	24.36	Concrete base well		23
	24.40	Whistle post (S)		26
	24.50	Whistle post (N)		27-28
	24.72	Wood Post		45
	24.76	Utility Pole		19-20
<b>Main Street</b>				
	24.78	Wood Post		46
	24.80	Track Switch Stand with Electrical Box	pre-1914 (switch) post-1932 (box)	41-43
	24.89	Concrete Box		22
	25.00	Milepost	1880-1881	32
	25.00	Railrest	1929-1930	38
HUD.908	25.37	Bridge #130	1939; fire 2019	10-11
<b>Fort Meadow Brook</b>				
HUD.HA-8	25.64	Gleasondale Station Archeological Site	1881	N/A
<b>Chestnut Street</b>				
	25.83	Cattle pass	pre-1914	16-18
	26.00	Railrest	1929-1930	39-40
	26.00	Milepost	1880-1881	33-34
	26.12	Culvert 132A	pre-1914	13-15
<b>Wilkins Street</b>				

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

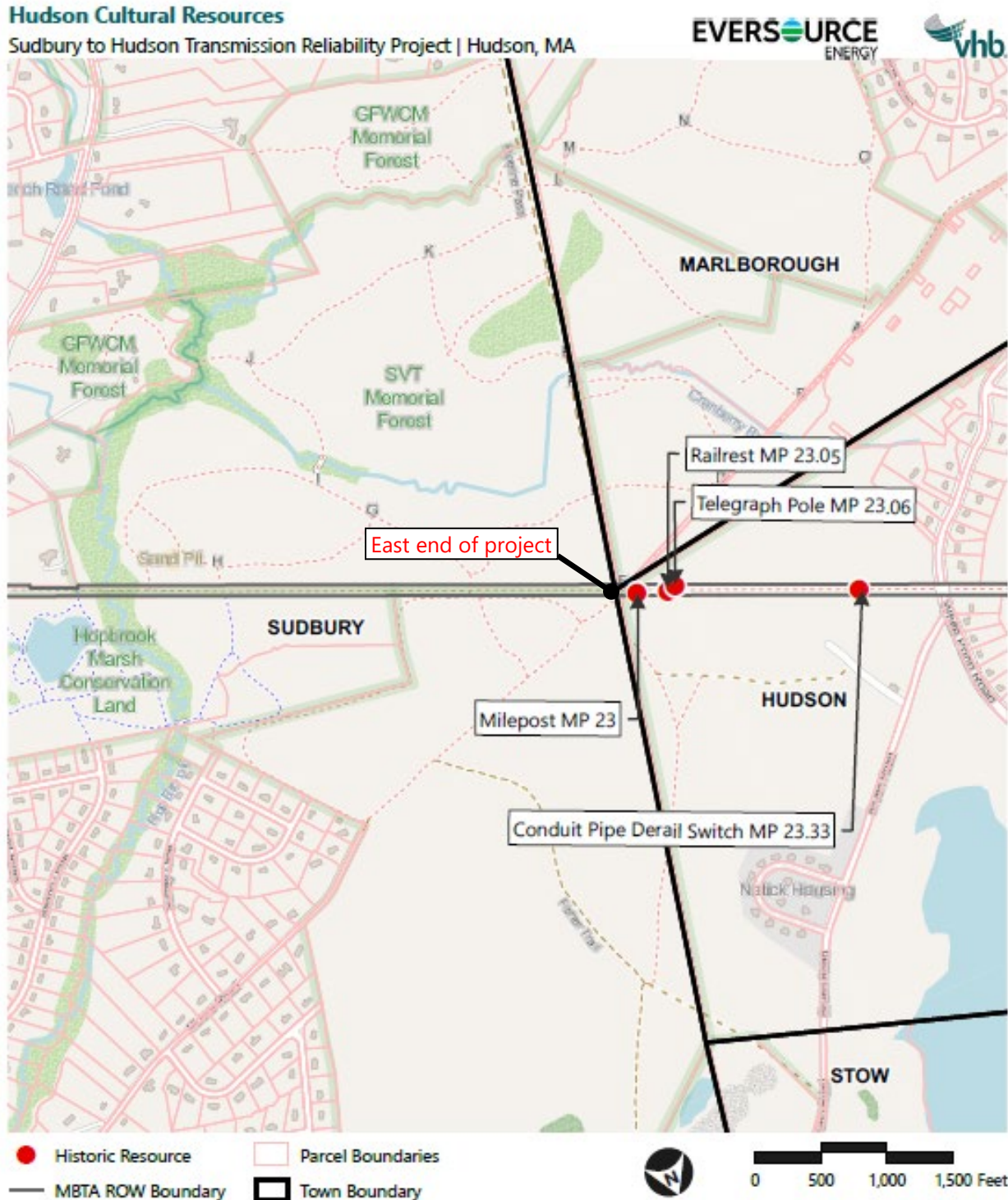
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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

Resource Location Map (note: north toward bottom)



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

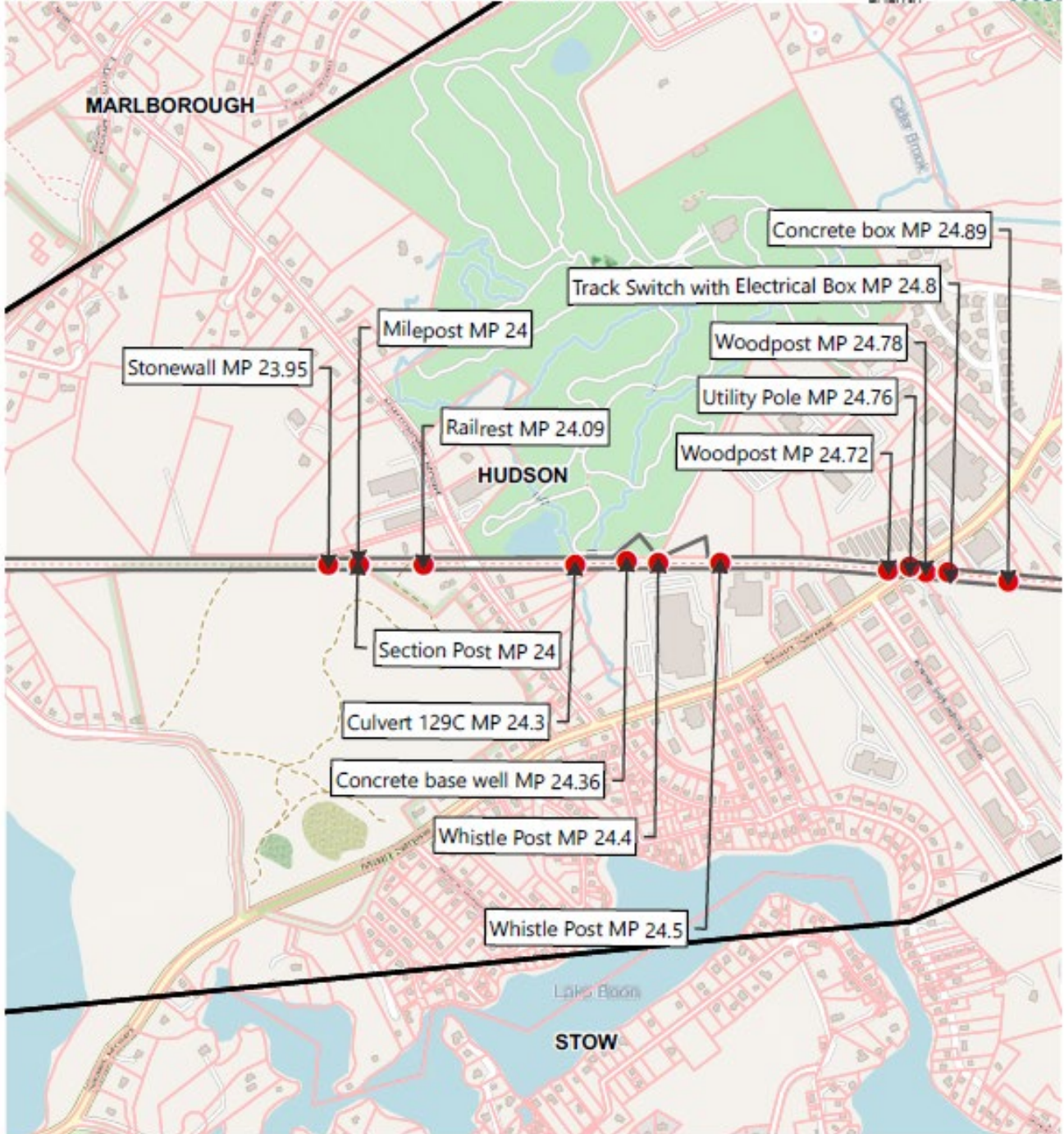
Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

## Hudson Cultural Resources

Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project | Hudson, MA

EVERSOURCE  
ENERGY



- Historic Resource
- Parcel Boundaries
- MBTA ROW Boundary
- ▭ Town Boundary



INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

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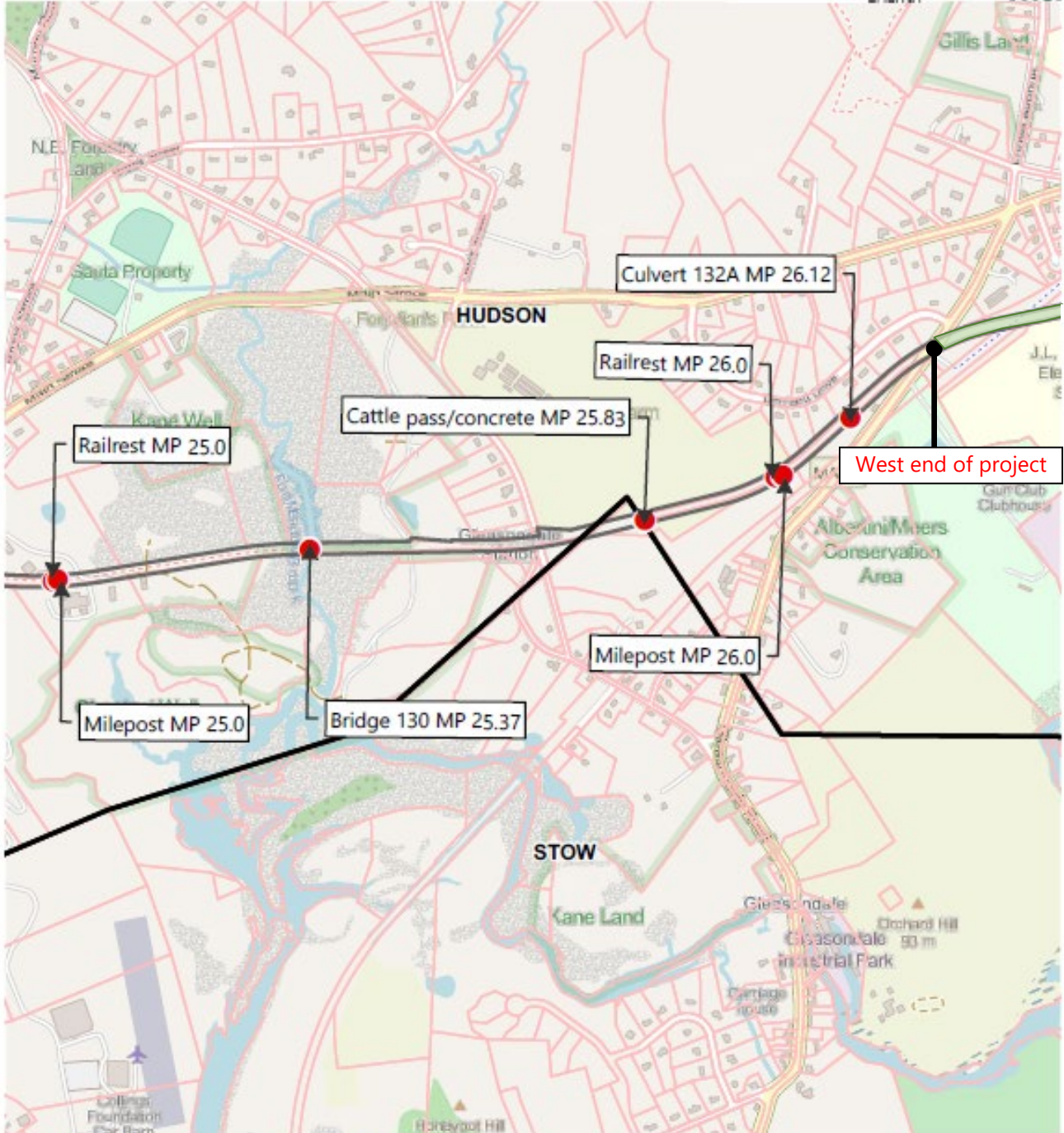
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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

Hudson Cultural Resources

Sudbury to Hudson Transmission Reliability Project | Hudson, MA



- Historic Resource
- Parcel Boundaries
- MBTA ROW Boundary
- Town Boundary





**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet

**Photo # 1: (front cover)** Filled rail bed across wetlands at Fort Meadow Brook, view southeast



**Photo # 2** Raised rail bed east of White Pond Road, view east



**Photo # 3** Raised rail bed through wetlands east of Parmenter Road, view southeast

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
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**Photo # 4** Rail bed and knoll east of Parmenter Road, mile marker 23 visible on left (pink tag), view northeast



**Photo # 5** Cut and fill of corridor through wooded terrain east of Main Street, view southeast

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 6** Crossing at paved access road west of Main Street showing extant rails, view southeast



**Photo # 7** Filled site of former Bridge 131, under Chestnut Street, view east

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 8** Raised rail bed approaching Chestnut Street, view east



**Photo # 9** Raised rail bed east of Wilkins Street, view east

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



Photo # 10 Bridge 130 at MP 25.37, view northwest



Photo # 11 Bridge 130 at MP 25.37, view southeast

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 12** Culvert 129C at MP 24.30, south end inlet, view north



**Photo # 13** Culvert 132A at MP 26.12, south end and embankment, view south

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 14** Culvert 132A at MP 26.12, north end with collapsed headwall, view north



**Photo # 15** Culvert 132A at MP 26.12, stone box in center of culvert, view south

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



Photo # 16 Cattle pass at MP 25.83, south side, notice mud and debris dam that has formed, covering most of the opening, view north



Photo # 17 Cattle Pass at MP 25.83, north side, view south



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------



**Photo # 18** Cattle Pass at MP 25.83, view of the interior of the cattle pass toward the north side opening, view north



**Photo # 19** Utility Pole at MP 24.76, view south

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 20** Utility Pole at MP 24.76, view south



**Photo # 21** Stone retaining wall at MP 23.95 along the north side of the rail corridor, view west

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 22** Concrete mechanical/electric box at MP 24.89, view north



**Photo # 23** Concrete base well at MP 24.36, view north



Photo # 24 Conduit for pipe-connected derail switch at MP 23.33, view east



Photo # 25 Conduit for pipe-connected derail switch at MP 23.33, view east

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 26** Whistle Post, south side of track at MP 24.4, view east



**Photo # 27** Whistle Post, north side of track at MP 24.5, view west

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 28** Whistle Post, north side of track at MP 24.50, view southeast



**Photo # 29** Milepost 23, view southwest

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



Photo # 30 Milepost 24, view east



Photo # 31 Milepost 24, view west

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



Photo # 32 Milepost 25, view east



Photo # 33 Milepost 26, view west



**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 34** Milepost 26, view northwest



**Photo # 35** Rail rest at MP 23.05, view southwest

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 36** Rail rest at MP 24.09, view west



**Photo # 37** Rail rest at MP 24.09, view east

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 38** Rail rest at MP 25.00, view east



**Photo # 39** Rail rest at MP 26.00, view west

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 40** Rail rest at MP 26.00, view east



**Photo # 41** Switch Stand and Electrical Box at MP 24.80, view east

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 42** Switch Stand and Electrical Box at MP 24.80, view south



**Photo # 43** Closeup of Electrical Box cover at MP 24.80

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



Photo # 44 Telegraph Pole at MP 23.06, view S



Photo # 45 Wood post at MP 24.72, view west

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

See data sheet



**Photo # 46** Wood post at MP 24.78, looking north



**Photo # 47** Section post stump at MP 24.00, view west

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

**National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form**

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible       Eligible **only** in a historic district  
 Contributing to a potential historic district       Potential historic district

Criteria:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**

Criteria Considerations:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**     **E**     **F**     **G**

Statement of Significance by Nicole Benjamin-Ma, VHB

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The CMRR/B&MRR is eligible as a linear historic district, along with other extant portions of this rail line such as SUD.R (also recommended as a potential historic district in the December 2020 inventory form). The district includes the rail right-of-way, as well as purpose-built or purpose-installed structures, objects, and sites intended for the operation and maintenance of the railroad. The Period of Significance is 1881-1965, marking the opening of the railroad to traffic through the date when passenger service ended in Hudson.

The CMRR/B&MRR in Hudson is eligible under Criterion A for the importance of the east/west regional connection to the economic and industrial development of Hudson, with Transportation and Industry as identified Areas of Significance. It is significant under Criterion A for Transportation for its significant contributions to broad patterns of history. This was not the first railroad to serve Hudson, where a short railroad was initially laid in the 1850s to connect the burgeoning mills along the Assabet River, but it provided the first major rail link through Hudson and its neighboring communities, and farther-flung destinations such as Boston and New York. Further research would be required to understand the significance of the CMRR/B&MRR under Transportation, as its significance under this Area would consider the corridor beyond the area covered by this form. Within Hudson, the CMRR/B&MRR is significant under Criterion A for Industry as it became a catalyst for the development of larger, more robust industry along the Assabet River, along with the proliferation of the cottage industries needed to support these operations (such as box manufacturers needed to support shoe manufacturing) and an increasing immigrant population who lived and worked in the town. Although the Ordway Station stop is not standing, archaeological data associated with the stop may provide information supporting additional Areas of Significance such as Entertainment/Recreation due to the opening of the stop in 1902 to support seasonal tourism to White Pond, and Military due to Ordway's use in transporting ammunitions during WWII.



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

HUDSON

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS  
RR CORRIDOR

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area Letter Form Nos.

	See data sheet
--	----------------

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The sites of two former stops are located in this corridor; these and the potential for underground buried features suggest the potential for significance under Criterion D with the potential to yield information about the operation of the railroad.

This portion of the rail corridor is easily readable on the landscape as it cuts through Hudson on a southeast/northwest axis. Rails and ties are extant along much of the corridor, along with evident earthworks associated with laying the railroad, including raised berms and a retaining wall. Despite the loss of major structures such as the former station shelters, features and equipment needed for the complicated signaling and switch systems are found throughout the corridor, including remnants of the at-grade crossing at Main Street and switching mechanisms at local industry sidings. Structures include culverts and a cattle pass, illustrating typical designs and materials utilized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the wood trestle bridge (HUD.908) was heavily damaged in a 2019 fire, precluding consideration as an individually eligible resource, it retains enough materials to show the design of the piles and the extensive wetland setting around the bridge (along with the built-up right-of-way approaching each side of the bridge) demonstrates why this structure was necessary for easy passage. Though the integrity of the corridor is somewhat diminished through the loss of large-scale features, it still retains integrity of design, materials, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, and location, especially when considered together with other portions of the CMRR/B&MRR corridor. In this linear district, the integrity of individual elements is secondary to the integrity of the railroad system on a broad scale and the various elements historically needed to make it operate. These interconnected resources, in turn connected by a readily observable right-of-way, are significant together. Part and parcel to this is an understanding that due to the ongoing maintenance necessary for rail operations, contributing features date from various years, rather than reflecting a specific point in time (or the original opening of the railroad).