Roadside Marker Inventory
Massachusetts Bay Colony-
Tercentenary Commission Markers (MBC-TC)
1630 - 1930

Celebrating the 300th anniversary of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and preparing for the 400th anniversary in 7 years.

Inventory of Massachusetts Bay Colony-Tercentenary Commission Markers-by Russell C. Bixby
(original 2011 inventory edited February 2023)
Massachusetts Bay Colony
1630 - 1691

The Province of Massachusetts Bay was formed in 1691 by merging the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Plymouth Colony, Province of Maine, Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard, and Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia was split off in 1696. Previously New Hampshire had been part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony from 1641-1679.

Map provided under creative commons public license from Wikimedia Commons (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Masscolony.png).
# Historical Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Charter Granted-Plymouth Council for New England</td>
<td>1620</td>
<td>One of the early charters issued to trading companies by the English crown. In December 1620 a permanent settlement was established through land patents granted by the Council (1621 and 1630) to the Plymouth Colony, governed separately under the <em>Mayflower Compact</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Charter Granted-Massachusetts Bay Colony</td>
<td>1629</td>
<td>Granted by Charles I, the boundaries of this new charter extended from the 40th parallel to the 48th parallel establishing colonial rights of the company &quot;from sea to sea&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrival of the Arbella</td>
<td>1630</td>
<td>The first colonial governor (John Winthrop) arrives in Salem with 700 men, women and children to settle the Massachusetts Bay Colony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pequot War</td>
<td>1636-1639</td>
<td>Native American rebellion in southeastern Massachusetts, western Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King Phillip's War</td>
<td>1675-1676</td>
<td>Native American rebellion in the Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Rhode Island and Connecticut colonies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion of New England</td>
<td>1686-1689</td>
<td>Administrative union imposed on the New England colonies by the English crown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province of Massachusetts Bay</td>
<td>1691-1776</td>
<td>Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Plymouth Colony were united in October 1691 through a new charter issued by William and Mary, the joint monarchs of England and Scotland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King William's War</td>
<td>1690-1697</td>
<td>European conflict with extended hostilities in North America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Anne's War</td>
<td>1702-1713</td>
<td>European conflict with extended hostilities in North America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King George's War</td>
<td>1744-1748</td>
<td>European conflict with extended hostilities in North America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French and Indian War</td>
<td>1754-1763</td>
<td>This conflict between England and France, known as <em>The Seven Years War</em> in Europe, was fought in North America primarily along the frontiers between the British colonies from Virginia to Nova Scotia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of Independence</td>
<td>1776</td>
<td>American revolution establishes Massachusetts as one of the original thirteen states.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Period of Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission Markers (Approximately 1630 to 1750)**

Historical background adapted from Wikipedia web based articles published by Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. under creative common license.
Marker Descriptions

• All markers are made of cast iron, both the post and the tablet.

• The background of the tablet is painted with aluminum; the letters and the trim in black; the coat of arms of the Commonwealth in blue and gold. The post is painted with aluminum.

• All the tablets are thirty-six inches in width; those bearing the longer inscriptions are forty-five inches high to the top of the coat of arms; those with the shorter inscriptions are thirty-five inches high to the top of the coat of arms. The weight of the larger tablet is about 200 pounds; the weight of the smaller tablet is about 65 pounds.

• The legend is the same on both sides of the tablet which is erected perpendicular to the road in order that a passer-by from either direction may read the inscription without descending from their car.

• Carlisle Foundry Company in Carlisle, Pennsylvania cast the markers.

Source: Historical Markers Erected by Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission (1930); available from The Internet Archive at http://www.archive.org/details/historicalmarker00mass.
Total Markers Erected

275 Total Markers

95 Cities & Towns

9 Counties

Distribution by County: Total Markers

Middlesex (Boston-West) 84
Essex (Boston-North Shore) 83
Worcester (Central Massachusetts) 33
Plymouth (Boston-South Shore) 23
Norfolk (Boston-South) 21
Franklin (Pioneer Valley-North) 12
Suffolk (Boston) 10
Hampshire (Pioneer Valley-Central) 6
Hampden (Pioneer Valley-South) 3

275

Source: Compiled from the book *Historical Markers Erected by Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission (1930)*; available from The Internet Archive at [http://www.archive.org/details/historicalmarker00mass](http://www.archive.org/details/historicalmarker00mass).
Inventory of Standing & Missing Markers
Massachusetts Bay Colony-Tercentenary Commission

2011 Inventory Results:

Markers Still Standing       146
Missing Markers              128 *

Marker Distribution by County:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total Markers</th>
<th>Missing Markers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampden</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>275</strong></td>
<td><strong>128</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Includes seven replica markers and nine in storage.
Web Based Collection of Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission Markers

The website Historical Markers Data Base (HMdb) includes a series for the Massachusetts Bay Colony-Tercentenary Commission Markers under their Heritage Series at the below link:


Each standing marker entry in the HMdb series provides photography and GPS ground coordinates.

The original documentation text, published by the Commonwealth, Historical Markers Erected by Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission (1930); is available from The Internet Archive at:

[http://www.archive.org/details/historicalmarker00mass](http://www.archive.org/details/historicalmarker00mass)
The existing markers can be grouped by their overall conditions:

- **Good**
  MBC-TC cast iron markers, restored to their original appearance.

- **Bad**
  MBC-TC markers which are not homogeneous with their original 1930 design. Can not be identified as MBC-TM markers without extended visual examination.

- **Ugly**
  These markers have fallen into disgraceful disrepair reflecting poorly on the State and diminish the significance of their subject. *Close to impossible to read unless you stand in front of the marker.*

- **Missing**
  These markers are unaccounted for. Some may be stored by town DPWs but cannot be located or confirmed.
Examples of Good Markers

Groton- Main Street- Groton, Massachusetts

Sherborn- North Main Street- Sherborn, Massachusetts

Chelmsford- Chelmsford Street- Chelmsford, Massachusetts
Massachusetts Tercentenary Commission

Examples of Bad Markers

Way to Charlestown- Massachusetts Avenue- Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jason Russell House- Jason Street- Arlington, Massachusetts

Planters Neck- Gloucester, Massachusetts
Massachusetts Tercentenary Commission

Examples of Ugly Markers

Wigwam Hill - Belmont Street - Worcester, Massachusetts

Oldest House in Cambridge - Massachusetts Avenue - Cambridge, Massachusetts

Lieu. Ebenezer Sheldon Fort - Northfield Road - Bernardston, Massachusetts
Massachusetts Tercentenary Commission
Remediation of markers

The actions needed for each of the four groups of markers:

- **Good**
  No actions needed.

- **Bad**
  Markers require minimal cleaning, repainting and remounting.

- **Ugly**
  Markers require extensive rehab, examination, sandblasting/cleaning, possible repair, repainting and remounting.

- **Missing**
  Each city/town needs to commit to searching DPW garages and any other likely location where the markers might be. For markers not found, a new marker needs to be forged and placed.
Russell C. Bixby of Bernardston performed an examination of the original marker documentation text *Historical Markers Erected by Massachusetts Bay Colony Tercentenary Commission (1930)*, to arrange the markers into a logical format for the 2011 inventory effort. He composed all inventory documents and initiated contacts with local historical societies and town officials to aid in validating the location of markers. Finally, he was instrumental in establishing a website series published by the *Historical Marker data base (HMdb)*. Numerous field work trips were taken by all *HMdb* contributors to validate the existence of markers and gather GPS coordinates and photography.

Christopher C. Skelly, Director of Local Government Programs at the Massachusetts Historical Commission provided contact information for other citizens with an interest in preservation of these markers. In this regard, Robert J. Briere of the Sturbridge Historical Society contributed useful information derived from his 2005-2008 field work and photography. Michael Tiernan of Danvers provided valuable assistance in documenting markers located in Essex County.

Special thanks must be given to Mr. J.J. Prats; publisher of the HMdb website for providing a documentation media, entitled Massachusetts Bay Colony-Tercentenary Commission Markers, under their Heritage Series.
Contact Information

Russell C. Bixby may be reached at the below contacts to obtain an electronic (PDF) copy of the 275 MBC-TC marker inscriptions; with GPS coordinates and photographs of standing markers:

Email: rbixby1@outlook.com

Telephone: 413-834-2290 (Text or Voice)