

# All known original quotes and references regarding use of or condition of the Estabrook Trail, prior to 1966, in chronological order.

There is an ongoing dispute about the history of use of Estabrook Trail. On the one hand, some have attempted to claim it was a major road widely used by the public since the mid 1600s. On the other hand, the owners say that it was a logging and farm road created near the end of the 1700s and used by the owners and their friends, and that public recreational use began when Harvard acquired a significant part of the Woods and allowed public access on their part of the Trail.

For two years the Town and the landowners have been searching for all known primary source references regarding this issue, and have found the citations presented below, which speak for themselves and unequivocally answer the questions about historic use of the Trail.

This collection includes all known references regarding the use or condition of the Estabrook Trail, from 1600 to 1966, including references to the earlier names of "The Road by Clark's", "Old Carlisle Road", and "The Lime-Kiln Road". After 1966, the use changed because Harvard granted permission for public use of their lands in the north and east of Estabrook Woods.

As background, the existence of the now-paved section of Estabrook Road was first mentioned in Town records in 1759; the later Trail to the north does not show on any map until 1830, a few years before the first known descriptions of it as presented below. While some have suggested the Trail as a main road, all known maps and records since the 1600s describe what are now Lowell Road and Monument Street as the main roads to the north.

The known primary source citations are presented in chronological order:

*"This road has little travel excepting that which is caused by the owners of land near it. Nothing has been done to keep it in repair for many years."*

*Report to the Concord Town Meeting, 1838*

*This 1838 reference is the first known mention of the condition or use of the Trail from any source, and occurs 8 years after it first shows on a map.*

*"No track had worn the old deserted road...no other signs of life beyond ourselves"*

*William Ellery Channing, The Lonely Road, 1845*

*This is the first of a number of references to the Trail as "deserted", only 15 years after its first appearance on a map.*

*“Mr. Isaiah Green of Carlisle who lives nearest to the Kibbe Place, can remember when there were three or four houses around him (he is nearly eighty years old and has always lived there and was born there); now he is quite retired, and the nearest road is scarcely used at all.”*

*Thoreau, Sept 18, 1851*

*Note: Mr Green lived in Carlisle approximately 0.25 miles north of the discontinued Estabrook Trail, on a road which is the extension of the trail into Carlisle.*

*“I have overwalked the most of these Concord fields, and not often find a new one. Yet to find a new one here gives a true pleasure, having usually to find so many old ones. This place behind Clarke’s I have oft been on the edges, but a few steps was needed to carry me on. In fact this district from the corner of the Deserted Road, the Carlyle Road, and back of Bateman’s pond is on the whole a new district to me. I have walked the road, but have not taken between the roads. Especially the fine white pine grove I found today pleases me...”*

*William Ellery Channing: Jan 11, 1853*

*Note: this describes Channing’s early visits to lands to the west of the Estabrook Trail, on land now owned by the Rasmussen family. The Trail is described as “deserted.”*

*“The earth is uninhabited but fair to inhabit, like the old Carlisle Road”*

*Thoreau, March 21, 1853*

*Note: one of many of Thoreau’s description of the Estabrook Trail as uninhabited and unused*

*“There is a tract of pasture, woodland, orchard, and swamp in the north part of the town, through which the old Carlisle road runs, which is nearly two miles square, without a single house and scarcely any cultivated land in it, - four square miles.”*

*Thoreau, June 5, 1853*

*Note: this passage describes the Trail as uninhabited with little farm activity in 1853*

*“When I came out on to the old Carlisle road in the dusk on my return, I saw Brooks Clark coming homeward, with his axe in his hand and both hands behind*

*his back, being bent almost double. He said he was over eighty. Some years ago he bought some land up that way, and, the birches having sprung up there, he called it his birch pasture. There was enough birch wood there to carry him through the winter, and he was now cutting it. He remembered when they began to burn lime there, and bought the right to get out stone of Easterbrooks more than sixty years ago. It was Peter Barrett that began it. The lime sold for \$5.00 per cask (larger casks than now). But the stone was difficult to get out.”*

*Thoreau, Nov 6, 1857*

*Note: Mr Clark owned the property that now belongs to the Rasmussen family. This quote shows familiarity between Thoreau and the landowners of the Estabrook Woods, indicating Thoreau was not viewed as a trespasser. It is also the only historical source describing the origins of the private lime mining operation on the Trail in the late 1700s.*

*“Delicious summer stroll through the endless pastures of Barrett, Buttrick, Estabrook farms, yesterday, with Ellery, the glory of summer. What magnificence, yet none to see it.”*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1857*

*Note: Mr Emerson’s description of the Trail: “yet none to see it”, clearly indicates a place where he believes there are few or no visitors.*

*“That very dense and handsome maple and pine grove opposite the pond-hole on this old Carlisle road is Ebby Hubbard's. Melvin says there are those alive who remember mowing there.”*

*Thoreau, Oct 20, 1857*

*Note: Although this does not mention the condition or use of the road at that time, it shows that at a prior time some landowners were working the fields. It also indicates a discussion at some time with Melvin, who was an owner along the north end of the Estabrook Trail, establishing a familiar relationship between Thoreau and the landowners of the Woods.*

*“Warren Brown, who owns the Easterbrooks place, the west side the road, is picking barberries. Allows that the soil thereabouts is excellent for fruit, but it is so rocky that he has not patience to plow it. That is the reason this tract is not cultivated”*

*Thoreau, October 20, 1857*

*Note: This quote shows that some owners of the property along the road, in this case Mr Brown, used the road. The "Easterbrooks place" refers to the old cellar hole along the Trail, which we now know was not the home of any members of the Estabrook family. It also establishes a familiar relationship between another owner and Thoreau.*

*"road for walkers, for berry pickers, and no more worldly travelers...which no jockey, no wheelwright in his right mind drives over..."*

*Thoreau, describing Estabrook Trail, Sept 24, 1859*

*Note: Thoreau is describing a road that is of poor condition and not suitable or used for common travel.*

*"Road - that old Carlisle one -that leaves towns behind; where you put off worldly thoughts; where you do not carry a watch, nor remember the proprietor; where the proprietor is the only trespasser, looking after his apples!"*

*Thoreau, Sept 24, 1859*

*Note: this suggests the Trail as a location isolated from people and civilization.*

*"The road is only laid out, offered to walkers, not accepted by the town and the travelling world. To be represented by a dotted line on charts, or drawn in lime-juice, undiscoverable to the uninitiated, to be held to a warm imagination. No guide-boards indicate it."*

*Thoreau, describing Estabrook Trail, 1859*

*Note: The underline above is by Thoreau in his manuscript. Thoreau was a road surveyor and understood the legal meaning of "accepted by the town" in relation to roads. "Not accepted" means that a road has not been made an official Town road. "a dotted line on charts" means a lower grade, private, or informal road. Lime juice is "invisible ink". "No guide-boards" means there are no road signs.*

*"Fine walk yesterday with Ellery to Estabrook Farm. Finest day in the year and best road, almost all the way "through the lots." Birds singing; -got over their summer silence... Boulder field: cooper's hawk....Largeness of the estate. Nobody can buy. Came out at Capt Barrett's and through the fields again out at Flint's"*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson Journal, Sept 11, 1860*

*Note: This describes a walk with William Ellery Channing. Channing lived on the east edge of Estabrook Woods. The boulder field is a field to the east of Estabrook Trail. The only specific locations of travel called out are Barrett's and Flint's, both on Monument Street.*

***“The windows were gone in '63, and the plaster mostly cracked off, from the moving to old Clarke's in the north part of the town, very near the opening of the old Carlisle Road. Used as a place to store corn – visited with Blake and Brown”***

*William Ellery Channing, Sept 11, 1864*

*Note: Thoreau's Walden hut was moved from the Emerson's property at Walden Pond to the Clark property on Estabrook Road by Daniel and James Clark in 1849. The fact that Thoreau's hut ended up on the Clark property again shows the familiar relationship between Thoreau, Emerson, and the landowners. The location of that site is near the beginning of the Estabrook Trail on the property of the Rasmussen family.*

***“The hayrigging jolted merrily down the hill after it had passed the Dakin's and turned into the Brooks Clark Road... Once we entered the gates of Estabrook the jolting of course became frequent and delightful...”***

*Ellen Tucker Emerson, Letters, 1866*

*Note: this is a description of a picnic that Ms Emerson went on with some women friends. Ms Emerson was the sister of Edward Emerson, who owned land along Estabrook Trail and was the father of Raymond Emerson who later owned the property currently owned by the Rasmussen family. This entry also may suggest the presence of gates at the entry of the Trail.*

***“The picture is a feeble caricature of the true house. It was standing, sept. 5, 1863, near old Clarke's, and still perfect. I visited it, next above old Clarke's on the Deserted Road...”***

*William Ellery Channing, 1868*

*Note: another reference clarifying that the “Deserted Road” refers to the Estabrook Trail commencing at the Clark (Now Rasmussen) home. Thoreau's hut was located approximately 200 feet into the Rasmussen property from the current point of discontinuance so it would have been “on the Deserted Road”.*

***“I saw H's rafters, June 4, 1868, the ruins of this house on the old Carlisle Road, just pulled down.”***

*Ellery Channing, 1868*

*Note: This is again describing Thoreau's hut, located a few hundred feet along the Trail. The hut was used by the Clarks for storage and was not occupied.*

***“Last Saturday I had an Easterbrook (sic) picnic... we went through the lime-kiln field and the boulder-field, in the third enclosure sought and found a spot combining all possible advantages, and there settled our headquarters for the day.”***

*Ellen Tucker Emerson, Nov 22, 1886*

*Note: this is a description of a picnic that Ms Emerson went on with friends. Although the Estabrook Trail is not specifically mentioned, this is the likely path. Note that the picnickers walked off-trail through land of different owners (most likely land of her friends- the Barrett's and Buttricks) and had the picnic on private land. Ms Emerson was the sister of Edward Emerson, who owned land along Estabrook Trail and was the father of Raymond Emerson who later owned the property currently owned by the Rasmussen family.*

***“The Easterbrook road, that had been badly cut up by teaming wood over in the spring, was repaired and graded to the town line.”***

*Concord Town Records, 1877*

*Note: Teaming of wood refers to logging operations using oxen to pull logs. Such logging must have been on private land and therefore are private operations. This therefore refers to road damage caused by the owners and not by the public.*

***“seldom used for public travel;...little better than ruts through a piece of woodland”***

*Description of Estabrook Trail, Report of the Road Commissioners, Concord Town Records, 1891*

***“This morning I went to the lime kiln, riding up the Estabrook road on a sled”***

*William Brewster, Feb 4, 1892*

***“Drove to Rhodora Pool on the Estabrook Road and spent an hour or more digging some of the Rhodora bushes to take to Ball's Hill. Returned to the Buttricks by the shortest route across the fields”***

*William Brewster, April 20, 1892*

*Note: Mr Brewster removed bushes from private land and took them to his home. It is implausible that he would publish a record of a theft, which strongly suggests he had permission*

*from the owners, who his books show he knew well. He returned home through the land that now belongs to the Robb family.*

*“Spent the forenoon in the Estabrook Woods with Mr. Buttrick. We started in past Mr. Pratt’s followed the wood-path through the “common lot” to “Hubbard’s Pasture” where we “salted” the cows, kept on beyond to the head of Ash Swamp, and returned by the Estabrook Road and Derby’s Lane.”*

*William Brewster, Sept 25, 1892*

*Note: Mr Brewster visits the woods with a major owner of the Woods, Mr. Buttrick. This demonstrates familiarity between Mr. Brewster and a key owner of the woods and obviously demonstrates the approval of Mr. Brewster’s visit. On this walk they entered through the private land on Monument Street of another owner, Mr. Pratt (now the land of the Robb family) and used the farm trails there to reach Estabrook Trail. They ultimately returned via Estabrook Road, but took a private side trail (still existent) from what is now paved Estabrook Road to return to Monument Street.*

*“The roadway toward the lane is lined on the right side with pitch pines, rather a remarkable collection... About twenty rods below the wood path near the lime—kiln by which we first entered the road now on our left, we pass a remarkably graceful white oak in the woods just within the roadside stone wall. It is notable for its size as well as its beauty, measuring about eight and a half feet in circumference and having a spread of from sixty to seventy feet. Farther along, on the right side of the road, down there is a handsome double white oak; and on the opposite side, a large oak and a large pine.”*

*Edwin Bacon, Walks and Rides, 1897*

*Note: Mr Bacon wrote a book about walks and rides he took around Boston. In this case he wrote a description the path he used on his walk in the Estabrook Woods. He walked in from Monument Street, traversed many private properties on trails, briefly was on the Estabrook Trail, and then left back via Monument Street. According to his description, he did not enter or leave the woods via the disputed southern Trail entrance on Estabrook Road.*

*“When crisp nights bring Indian summer days the fruited apple orchards, deep red barberry bushes, fragrant red cedars, and pungent wild grapes hanging from tangled vines along deserted Estabrook Road cause one to linger on pasture bars and bask in reverie.”*

*Mary Rogers Clark, approx. 1900*

*Mary Rogers Clark was the great-granddaughter-in-law of Benjamin Clark the second, who was the first documented resident of Estabrook Road (at the yellow home at 299 Estabrook Road). Her extended family had extensive landholdings in the Estabrook Woods throughout the 1800s. The above citation is part of a description she wrote of Concord at the turn of the century, on file at the Concord Library Special Collections. This use of the term "deserted" to describe the road comes 55 years after Channing first described the road using that word in 1845.*

*"Mr. Robert Bygrave appeared before the Board representing Raymond Emerson, Stedman Buttrick and Russell Robb and requested the Road Commissioners to petition the County Commissioners for the closing of Estabrook Road from a point just northerly of Raymond Emerson's bungalow to the Carlisle line as a public way. His reasons for this being that the road is now almost impassible and is used only by picknickers and is a serious fire hazard. There are no houses on this stretch of the road in Concord. The Board voted to grant Mr. Bygrave's request and requested him to draw the necessary petition and submit it to the Board for their signature."*

*Minutes of the Concord Road Commissioners, April 13, 1932*

*Note: Emerson, Buttrick, and Robb were predecessors in title of the current landowners Rasmussen, Read/Kay, and Robb. The owners were petitioning the Town to close the Trail to the public, and understood this required the Town to petition the County, as discontinuance by the County was the common practice used in Concord and had recently been used on nearby Two-Rod Road and Great Meadows Road. While there is no record that the Trail was ever made a public road, the history of a road can be difficult to determine, so formal discontinuance is often used as a way to eliminate uncertainty regarding the status of a trail.*

*"Estabrook Road... has for a long period ceased to be in general public use; that there are no residences served by that portion of said way sought to be discontinued as a public way"*

*Discontinuance Petition of the Concord Road Commissioners to the County, 1932*

*Note: The Town is representing to the county that the road has ceased to be in public use, and is requesting the county to **discontinue it as a public way**. That petition was granted by the County.*

*"At the time of said hearing, no person interested appearing to object to the discontinuance of a portion of said highway as a public way, said commissioners found the common convenience and necessity no longer require such way to be*

*maintained in a condition reasonably safe and convenient for travel, and adjudicated that said way shall hereafter be a private way...provided that sufficient notices to warn the public against entering on said way are posted..."*

*Decision of the County Commissioners, July 9, 1932*

*Note: this demonstrates that no members of the public were interested or expressed concern with the closure of Estabrook Trail to the public in 1932. There is no record of any further public concern in the decades after the road was discontinued and closed.*

*"the year being about 1958 or 1959...One day I decided I wanted to walk in along the Estabrook Trail... I knew an Emerson lived in the old house at the beginning of the trail and I felt I shouldn't go in there without permission"*

*Mary Sherwood, Letter dated 1995*

*Note: this letter is described in the 1996 publication of the Thoreau Society Journal in the article on Estabrook Woods by Steve Ells. This is the only known record of a person discussing whether access to the Trail was by permission, prior to the current controversy.*

*"People walk through Estabrook Woods now. They never used to."*

*Stedman Buttrick, Concord Oral History, 1997*

*Note: This was a retrospective by Stedman Buttrick, descended from one of the first families of Concord and with an original land grant in the Estabrook Woods. The Buttrick's owned much of the woods throughout Concord history, and in 1966 their landholdings were sold to Harvard University and are the major part of Harvard's land in the Woods.*

## Summary:

Above are all the known quotes and references regarding use of the Estabrook Trail. The users of the Trail fall into four categories. First, there are owners of land in the woods; these are owners there by right, and not members of the general public. Second, there are friends of the owners; these are assumed to be permitted to be there, and in fact are often interacting with the owners. Next, there are members of the general public who have been granted permission. Finally, there are members of the General Public who are identified as using the Estabrook Trail. The following is a list of all of the users broken into the three categories:

### Owners

Brooks Clark  
Stedman Buttrick  
George Melvin

Warren Brown

**Friends of the Owners**

Thoreau  
Ralph Waldo Emerson  
Ellen Tucker Emerson  
William Ellery Channing  
William Brewster

**Members of the general public, with permission**

Mary Sherwood

**Members of the general public**

“Used only by picnickers” (around 1932)  
Edwin Bacon

From the above list, *in the entire history of evidence regarding the Estabrook Trail*, there are only TWO mentions of unpermitted members of the public using the Trail, which are a vague 1932 reference to “used only by picnickers”, and a single reference of a walking trip by a Mr. Edwin Bacon in 1897.

What is even more remarkable is that not one of these citations mentions encountering anyone who is not a landowner. In fact, many specifically note that the road is deserted, abandoned, isolated, or uninhabited.

## Other original quotes and references about use related to the Estabrook Woods in general but not specifically to the Estabrook Trail:

The previous citations are all known citations with specific reference to condition or use of the Estabrook Trail. There are other citations that are not specific to the Trail, but are more generally associated with the Estabrook Woods. They are presented in chronological order:

*“They will be known only like Kibbe, who is said to have been a large man who weighed 250 –who had 5 or 6 heavy daughters [Sally, Betty, Molley, Beulah, and Miriam] who rode to concord meeting house on horseback–taking turns they were so heavy that only one could ride at once.”*

*Thoreau, 1853*

*Note: Mr Kibbe lived just north of the Estabrook Woods in Carlisle. Mr Kibbe did not live on the Estabrook Trail but on a road called "the road by Green's" that was the shortest route to Concord center and connected to Monument Street. That old road is still there today and is known as "East Hubbard / Carlisle Trail" and his old cellar hole can be found there today. For much of his residence, the Estabrook Trail did not yet exist. While Mr Kibbe could have used the longer route of Estabrook Trail, there is no specific evidence of the family's route.*

***"With Minot Pratt into Carlisle" (long passage includes brief landmark mentions of "the woods behind his house", "the meadow southwest of Hubbard's Hill", "Hunt's pasture", and "the bridle road", "Robbin's field").***

*Thoreau, Sept 3, 1854*

*Note: This passage refers to locations on the east side of Estabrook Woods, and not on the Estabrook Trail. Pratt lived on Monument Street where the Robb family now resides. "Hubbard's hill" is along Two-Rod Road. "The bridle way" is what Thoreau called the road now named Two Rod Road. No reference to Estabrook Trail.*

***"To Bateman's Pond via Yellow Birch Swamp with Pratt" (long passage includes brief landmark mentions of "Yellow Birch Swamp", "swamp northeast of Bateman's Pond", "the woods behind Estabrook's Place"***

*Thoreau, May 18, 1757*

*Note: Pratt owned land in Estabrook Woods south of Punkatasset Hill (Now owned by the Robb Family). Yellow Birch Swamp is located on the east side of Estabrook Woods and not on the Estabrook Trail. The swamp northeast of Bateman's Pond is not on the Estabrook Trail. The "woods behind Estabrook's Place" is not on the Estabrook Trail. Although the Estabrook Trail is not mentioned, a route connecting these landmarks would require crossing the Trail.*

***"Boston Outing: Saturday, Oct 10. North Station, 1:04 PM for Concord. Estabrook Woods and Bateman's Pond. 5 ½ miles. Boston from Concord 5:42. Expense 60 cents. ETHEL G HOYLE"***

*Appalachian Mountain Club Bulletin, 1914*

*Note: A one-time excursion led by artist Ethel Hoyle to the Woods and to Bateman's Pond (which is considered to be in Estabrook Woods but is not located on Estabrook Trail). About 20 similar outings per year were offered by the AMC, many on private land. The above is the only known description of this event. The land around Bateman's Pond was privately owned at that time, so this was a one-time excursion, led by a guide, onto private land. There is no mention of the Trail.*