

The Lancaster Railroad

It was less than three years after the first transcontinental railroad was finished that the Lancaster Railroad became reality. The groundbreaking occurred in the winter of 1871. The land had to be pushed around and built up for the railroad. Some of the beds were built up to 20 feet high. Many problems arose along the way for instance there was a shortage of labor. They had to cut through ledge 20 feet deep and 50 feet long. What killed the railroad eventually were the financial problems. Even though Bolton had "railroad fever", they just did not have enough money. The railroad was finished in the spring of 1882. After that only one train ever rode on those tracks and it was a test run. In 1883 the railroad was sold and six years later, in 1889, the tracks were removed.

The eight and a half mile Lancaster Railroad started in Hudson, followed along Rt. 85 and crossed Century Mill Road. It went through what is now Interstate 495, Memorial Field, and crossed Wataquatock Rd. From there it followed behind the houses on Manor Rd, cut through St. Francis Xavier Church and crossed Rt. 117. At that point it curved from 117 and goes over Sampson Road and crossed right back over 117 again. It headed Southwest and crossed Wilder Road before heading into Lancaster.

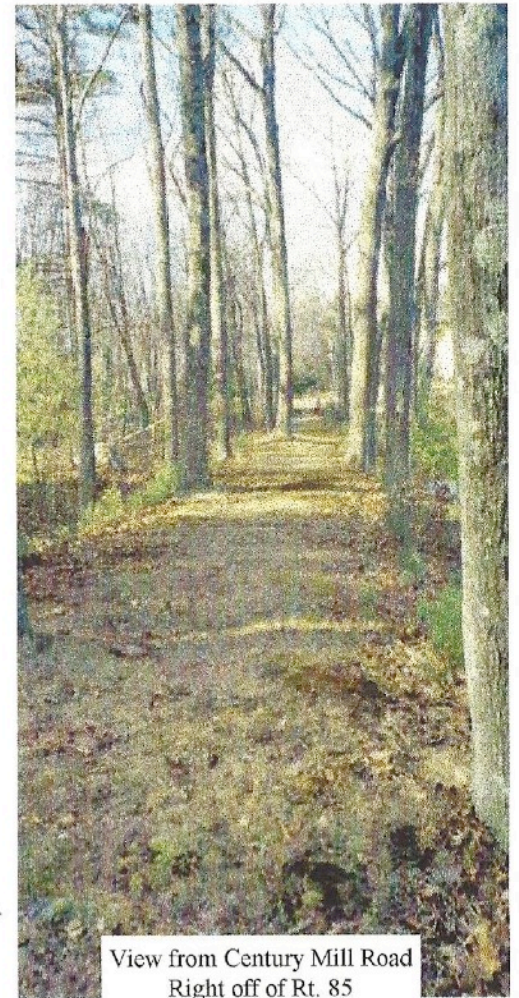
Bolton's Railroad Tracks 1872-1889



View from 495-South

By: Rachel Nichols
Girl Scout Gold Award Project
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Bolton's Railroads



View from Century Mill Road
Right off of Rt. 85

See it Yourself!

Here are some of the best places to view the railroad beds.

The first place to start would actually be in Hudson. You can pull your car into the Danforth parking lot, .3 of a mile from the Bolton line, off Rt. 85. There is a small path on the right that opens up to a beautiful clearing to view the beds. As you travel down 85 towards Bolton, you can look in on the left and see some of the raised beds.

(a) If you happen to be traveling down 495-South, .3 of a mile from the Bolton on ramp, part of the ledge is cut out for the railroad to pass through.

(b) Just beyond Bolton center, traveling west on 117, right across from St. Francis Xavier Church you can see the raised bed along Main Street as it slowly disappears into the distance.

(c) A good place to look at the beds would be along Sampson Rd. Park your car along Weathers Lane so it is out of the way. You want to walk back towards 117 along Sampson and about half way up the guardrail, on the left, you can peer in and see the bed.

(d) A little farther up 117, there is a small opening on the south side to conservation land, better seen when heading east (on the opposite side between 999 and 1009 Main Street). Pull your car in there and follow the path in. There is a new bridge over the brook that is right next to the bed. You can look both ways and see where the train would have come and where it would have gone.

