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## WILLIAM MUNROE

### Munroe Tavern, Lexington, Massachusetts 1695

William Munroe was born at Lexington, Massachusetts 10 October 1669<sup>49</sup> and died there 5 January 1759<sup>50</sup>, son of William and Martha (George) Munroe<sup>51</sup>. He married at Concord, Massachusetts 3 October 1697<sup>52</sup> Mary Cutler, born at Lexington 15 March 1680<sup>53</sup> and died at Lexington 26 June 1713<sup>54</sup>, daughter of Thomas and Abigail (---) Cutler of Watertown.<sup>55</sup> He married second ca. 1716 Johanna Russell, born 30 December 1683 and died at Lexington 17 September 1748<sup>56</sup>, daughter of Philip and Johanna (Cutter) Russell.<sup>57</sup>

William Munro/Munroe was an Ensign in the colonial militia,<sup>58</sup> designated "Ensign Roe" when admitted to the church 9 April 1699 along with his first wife, Mary. His second wife was admitted 24 December 1727. He served as constable in 1708, assessor in 1713, and selectman in 1724, 1730, 1734 and 1735. With wife Mary he had seven children, and with Johanna, two.<sup>59</sup>

William built the Munroe Tavern around 1695. It still stands (1998).<sup>60</sup> The estate today is but a small portion of the hundreds of acres granted by King's decree to early settlers of Cambridge Farms, later Lexington. There have been at least three restorations: a major restoration in 1930s, then in early

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<sup>49</sup> Lexington, Massachusetts Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths (Boston, 1898), 50.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 189 ("called Ensign").

<sup>51</sup> Cambridge Vital Records, 507; Richard S. Munroe, *History and Genealogy of the Lexington Munroes*, (Florence, MA, 1966), 2, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Concord, Massachusetts Births, Marriages and Deaths, 1635-1850 (Beacon Press, Boston, undated), 44.

<sup>53</sup> Lexington VR, 18

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>55</sup> Marjorie Cutler Burgess, *A Genealogy of the Cutler Family of Lexington, Massachusetts, 1634-1904*, (Concord, NH., 1965), 21.

<sup>56</sup> Lexington VR, 189.

<sup>57</sup> Lexington VR, 145.

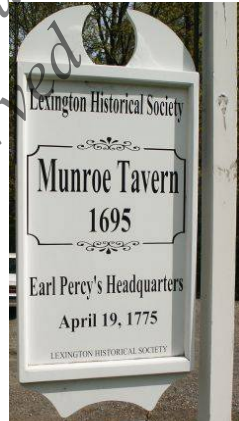
<sup>58</sup> Society of Colonial Wars, 340.

<sup>59</sup> Vital Records, Lexington, MA (1853-1897)

<sup>60</sup> Visited by the author in April, 1998.



MUNROE TAVERN, LEXINGTON, MA



MUNROE TAVERN, INTERIOR  
from *Early American Inns and Taverns*, 81.



forties, again in the seventies, and a complete residing in 1993. As in the long past, the final coat of paint was Munroe Tavern Red.<sup>61</sup>

The colonial tavern door was never locked. Many parties or "balls" were held there. During the Battle of Lexington and Concord, the British took over the Tavern, using it as their headquarters and as a hospital for their wounded soldiers during their retreat from Concord and again through Lexington.

President George Washington visited the Tavern on the afternoon of 5 November 1789 as he returned from New Hampshire for a testimonial dinner.<sup>62</sup> He arrived in his own carriage, accompanied by two secretaries and six servants. A room on the second floor, now called the Washington Room, contains the chair and table at which he sat, hat rack he used, and cup and saucer from which he drank. Several pieces of furniture belonging to the first Mrs. Munroe are still in the house, as is the old sign that hung outside when the British came, and during Washington's visit.

A descendant of William remembered, in later years, the drovers' pungs<sup>63</sup> in winter, and herds of cattle being driven to Boston in summer. Cost of supper, breakfast and the nights' lodging was then twenty-five cents. "One hundred horses could be stabled in the barns and two or three hundred cattle could graze around the Tavern. There were pens for sheep while turkeys, driven in flocks would rest in trees on the roads to Boston markets before Thanksgiving!"<sup>64</sup>

Eventually the Tavern passed out of Munroe family ownership, but later was purchased by James S. Munroe who deeded it to the Lexington Historical Society. It remains open to the public at a nominal fee, as a Museum, located at 1332 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington. Donald Gray Robbins 96-03

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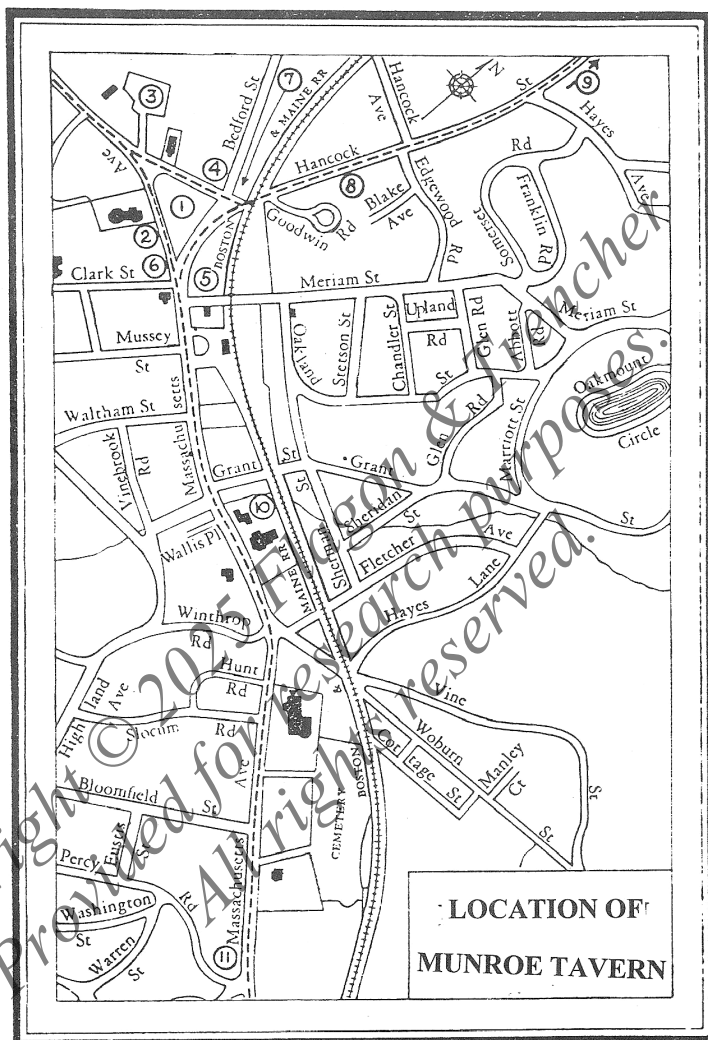
<sup>61</sup> Richard Munroe, *History and Genealogy of the Lexington Munroes*, Florence, MA 1926; E.O.Sullivan, *Time and Tavern*.

<sup>62</sup> Federal Writers' Project, WPA, *Massachusetts, A Guide to Its Places and People*, (Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1937), 260.

<sup>63</sup> crude carts on runners, drawn by horses.

<sup>64</sup> Elise Lathrop, *Early American Inns and Taverns*, (Concord, MA 1926), 80.





#### LEXINGTON MAP INDEX

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| 1. Lexington Battleground          | 7. First State Normal School |
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*Massachusetts, a Guide to its Places and People,*

(Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1937), 258.