



Washington Historical Society Newsletter

SPRING 2003 EDITION

President's Message

I would like to welcome all the Members of the Washington Historical Society to the 2003 season. After a long, hard, Cold and Snowy winter I am sure that we are all looking forward to Spring and the Beginning of our Pot Luck dinners at Camp Morgan on the Second Monday of each month, April through November. April 14th will be our first meeting, with a Pot Luck dinner at 6:00 PM and Business Meeting at 7:00, followed by the Guest Speaker at 7:30. We hope to see you all there.

The Program Committee has scheduled another outstanding season of interesting Speakers for our monthly meetings. A listing of these will be found on the insert in this Newsletter.

The Board of Directors has been busy working on the request that the members made of looking into the possibility of adding to our responsibilities the Carriage Museum that is located next to the Museum on Half Moon Pond Road. We have had an exchange of communications, but there is no firm commitment to report.

We have also scheduled a Spring Clean Up for the Society's properties on the 26th of April at 9:00 AM. I would like to see you all there. We have the grounds at the Museum, the #5 School House and the Mill Stone area at Cram's corner to clean up.

The themes for the Museum's 2003 season are "Old Mills in the Town of Washington" and "Antique Quilts."

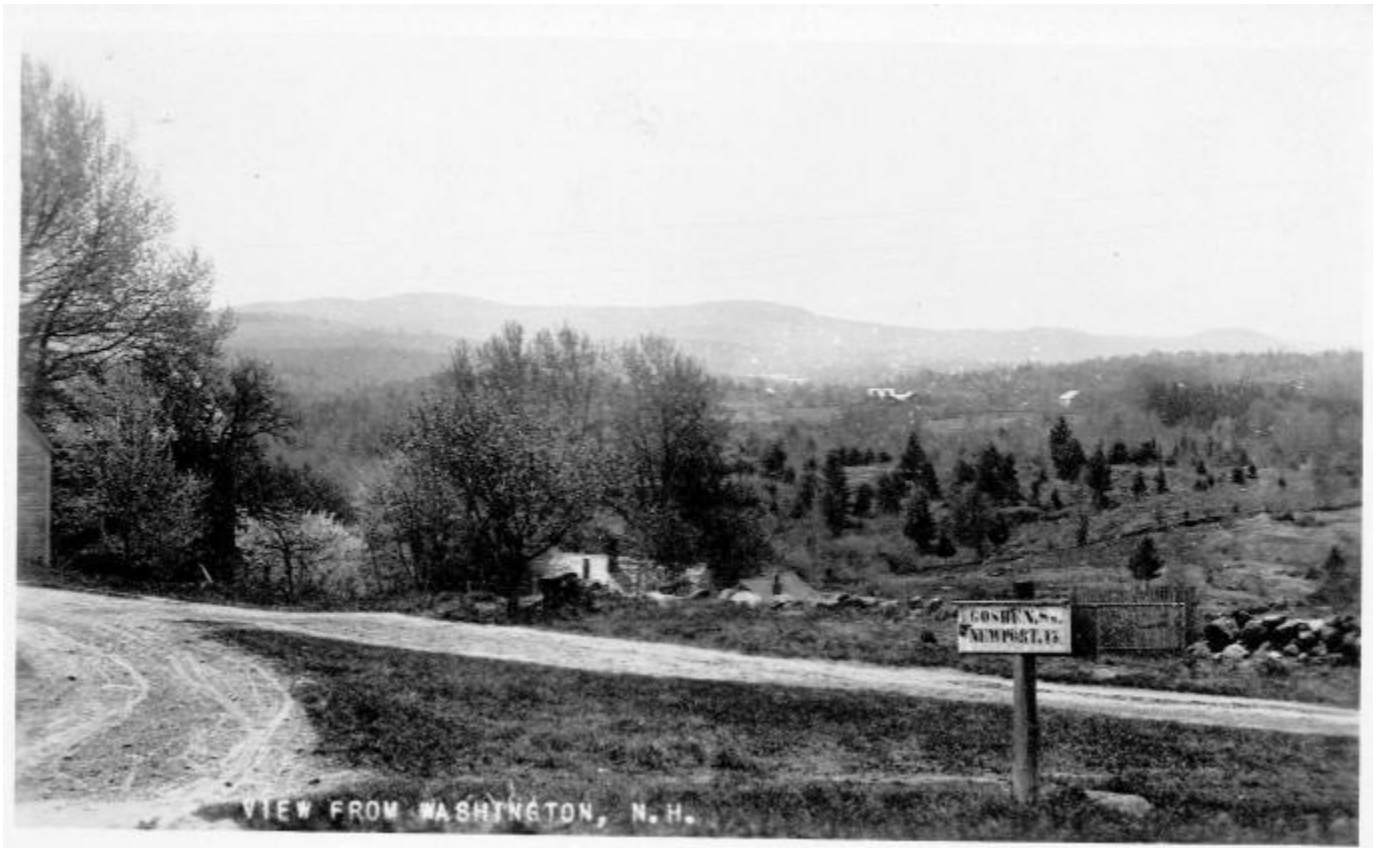
John Siciliano, President
Washington Historical Society 2002-2003

The Croydon Turnpike

by Tom Talpey, with Significant Help from Grace Jager, Town Archivist

In the early 1800s a number of turnpikes, or toll roads, were built in New Hampshire and the Town of Washington had its share. The Second New Hampshire Turnpike will be the subject of an article in our next newsletter. It went from Amherst to "the lottery bridge in Claremont," passing through the center of Washington-coming up what is now Route 31 and leaving by way of Lempster Mountain Road. The Croydon Turnpike started at the corner near the present Shedd Free Library and passed through Goshen and Newport on its way to Lebanon, where it met the Fourth New Hampshire Turnpike which provided service from Concord to Dartmouth in Hanover. A photograph from the museum's collection, taken about 1912 in Washington long after the demise of both turnpikes, and reproduced here, shows the junction where the Croydon Turnpike met with the Second New Hampshire Turnpike. (This is now the junction of Route 31 with Lempster Mountain Road.) A

State law in 1792 required the placing of signposts at every public intersection. These became known as "finger-posts" because of the hand and finger painted on them to indicate directions. (One of these signposts can be seen at the right of the photo below.) As mentioned by Donna-Belle Garvin and James Garvin in their book *"On the Road North of Boston: New Hampshire Turnpikes and Taverns,"* these signposts were sometimes colorfully referred to as "parsons" because they "always pointed the way and never seemed to go."



Junction where the Croydon Turnpike once joined the 2nd NH Turnpike, now the junction of Route 31 with Lempster Mountain Road, near the Shedd Free Library. Barely visible at the far left of the picture is part of a small barn, still standing and now painted red, opposite the library.

Photo from the Museum collection, taken about 1912 by Abner Barker, Gwen Gaskell's grandfather.

The book *Turnpikes of New England*, by Frederic J. Wood, published in 1919 documents 51 turnpikes chartered in New Hampshire and shows the routes of 32 of these. In addition there were 31 more turnpike companies created, which have left no records after their incorporation. The turnpikes were created in order to facilitate travel through the country and to encourage commerce in farm products and timber and, on the return trip, rum and store goods. It became the practice for most farmers to take their produce to market in Boston with their own teams, frequently after the first snowfall when sleds could be used. It was not uncommon to see as many as twenty to forty traveling together. Passengers were also carried by stagecoaches along the roads. Turnpikes and taverns had a symbiotic relationship--each needed the other--and the number of taverns dramatically increased all along turnpike routes in the early 1800s. A number of the Croydon Turnpike proprietors operated taverns along its route and David Farnsworth ran one at the southern end. The turnpikes were constructed mainly with private funds by investors willing to risk obtaining profits by the collection of tolls. Generally the towns along the route would be in favor of the turnpike, as it meant the possibility of obtaining more traffic for business. Whenever possible the turnpike was built as a straight road, uphill and down, in order to shorten the route.

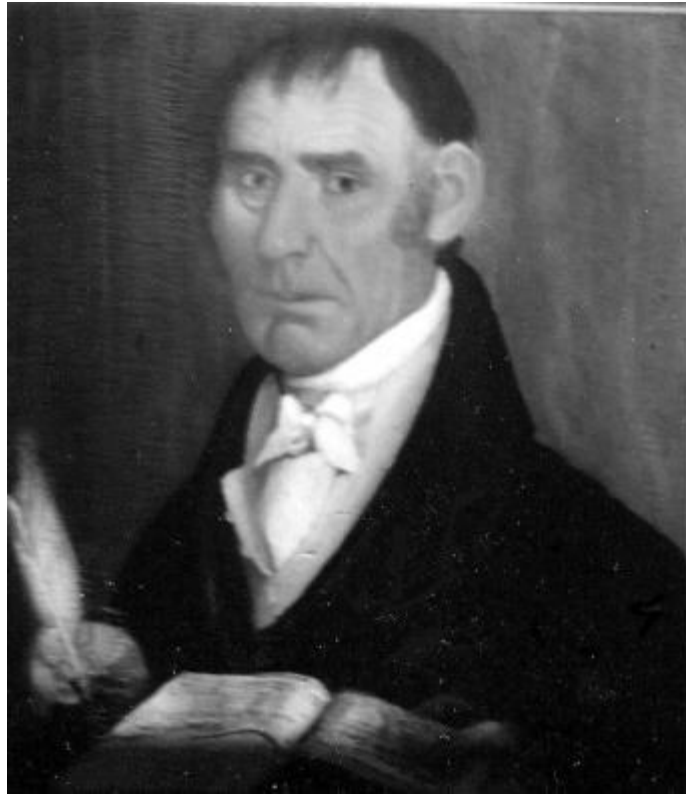


Photo of painting of Deacon David Farnsworth, one of the original Directors of the Croydon Turnpike

Courtesy of Shedd Free Library.

The State Legislature authorized the construction of the Croydon Turnpike by an act passed on June 21, 1804. The Charter also set various requirements. The right-of-way was to be four rods wide and the proprietors were given the right, by State law, to take land, with reasonable compensation, when necessary to lay out their route. And they were given the right to erect toll gates along the road, placed wherever the proprietors wished but generally spaced about 8 to 10 miles apart. Anyone trying to avoid a toll by circumnavigating a gate could be fined three times the amount of the toll, providing he could be caught. The Law also provided that no tolls could be charged until at least \$600 per mile had been expended on the section involved. Nearly everything that went through the gate was charged a toll: wagons, coaches, sleighs, horses and riders, cattle, sheep, hogs-with the possible exception of flocks of turkeys, as they were not mentioned! Rates could be changed only with State approval but a provision in the charter mandated an accounting of expenditures every six years to the court, which could adjust the tolls to keep the net profits between 6% and a maximum of 9%.

The Croydon Turnpike held its first board meeting on Aug. 20th of 1804 "at the dwelling house of Capt. Jesse Wilcox, Jr. in Newport." (The Tuck Library at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord is the repository of the original log book containing the minutes of all of this Corporation's meetings and, with their gracious permission, much of the information in this article was gleaned from those minutes.) Earlier in 1804 the Town of Washington, at a town meeting on March 13th, had voted for approval of a Turnpike Road beginning "not far from the meeting house in said town thence to the west line of the town as it may be laid out." Furthermore, at another town meeting on November 5, 1804, it was "voted that the town take Fifty shares in the Croydon Turnpike Road" and in an accompanying article "chose David Heald, David Farnsworth and Abraham B. Story as a Committee to transact the business relating to said turnpike road." (Our Town Archivist, Grace Jager, was able to locate these and other motions concerning the turnpike for me in the old Town records and her help is gratefully acknowledged.) These men subsequently became some of the original proprietors and remained directors until the Corporation was dissolved in 1837. William Lawrence, a tavern keeper in Washington, later became another proprietor and was at one time the treasurer. For a time, 1813-1814, David's brother Reuben Farnsworth served as clerk. Manassah Farnsworth, another brother, was a contractor for a large

part of the road construction. Other names appearing in the 1886 *History of Washington* of men who were either shareholders or active in the corporation are Daniel Greenleaf, Church Tabor, Francis Faxon, Ward Sampson, Ephraim and Thomas Farwell. Pledges were sought from prospective "proprietors" (shareholders) in the Corporation at \$10 per share and originally 400 shares were authorized. However, judging by the Corporations' minutes, an early disagreement over whether the southern end of the turnpike should join the 2nd NH Turnpike in Washington or in Lempster resulted in many subscribers withdrawing their pledges, leaving only 146 of the authorized shares ever being bought. Early in the project the directors established a schedule of "Assessments" on the shareholders in order to pay for the construction. According to the Corporation's minutes a total of 13 assessments of \$10 to \$20 each were to be levied during the construction phase, making the prospective eventual cost \$190 per share. The Town's original pledge to subscribe to fifty shares thus appeared to end up costing much more than had been anticipated. Understandably this cooled off the town's initial enthusiasm for participating in the project and as a result, at a special town meeting in June of 1805 early in the construction phase, the Town decided to dispose of its shares. After an initial agreement with Moses Dinsmore failed to be consummated, a group consisting of townsmen David Heald, Joseph Healy, David and Reuben Farnsworth finally agreed to take over the Town's fifty-share obligation for the assessments and this was ratified at another town meeting in November of 1805. (The Town of Goshen, at its town meeting in August of 1804, had voted to subscribe to 30 shares of turnpike stock "if it would be built through the town." However, at a town meeting on October 2, 1805, a committee of three was named to "dispose of and transfer" the town's obligations towards the shares in a manner similar to Washington's actions.)

The cost of constructing the Croyden Turnpike is documented in the firm's record book and totaled over \$35,000. The Turnpike was about 35 miles long and much of the construction was done by farmers along the way. A list of "payments" to these men is also contained in the company's records, but according to one authority some of these men were shareholders of the Corporation who "worked out their subscriptions to the stock by building each a section of the road." W. R. Nelson in the *History of Goshen* (1957) relates the personal recollections of Alfred Booth, who worked on the "great project" as a young man: "Day after day the construction crew, comprising men and the proportionate number of ox-teams, pushed along, ditching, widening, filling. Marshes were 'corduroyed' with logs laid closely together, side by side. One day Mr. Booth and a companion shoveled, carted and dumped sixty ox-cart loads of earth onto a stretch of corduroyed roadway in the ten hours then constituting a day's work." Tolls were set by the Legislature in the Corporation's charter as shown in the accompanying table:

Toll Rates (per mile) for the Croydon Turnpike, taken from their charter of 1804

For every ten sheep or swine	Half of one cent
" " " cattle or horses	One cent
" " horse and his rider or led horse	One cent
" " sulky, chair or chaise with one horse and two wheel	Two cents
" " chariot, coach, stage, wagon, Phaeton or chaise with two horses and four wheels	Three cents
" either of the carriages last mentioned with four horses	Four cents
" every carriage of pleasure -- The like sums according to the number of wheels and horses drawing the same	
" each cart or other carriage of burden drawn by one beast	One cent
" " wagon, cart, or other carriage of burden drawn by two beasts	One cent and a half
and if by more than two beasts	One cent for each additional yoke of oxen or pair of horses
" each sleigh drawn by one horse	One cent

if drawn by two horses	Two cents
and by more than two horses	One cent for every additional horse
" each sled drawn by one horse	One cent
" " sled drawn by two horses or a yoke of oxen	One cent and a quater (sic)
and if by more than two horses or one yoke of oxen	One cent for each additional pair of horses or yoke of oxen

And at all times when the toll keeper shall not attend his duty the Gates shall be left open

The charter also provided that no tolls could be charged to anyone passing on the way to or from public worship or to or from any mill or on "ordinary business of family concern within said town." Militia members were given the right to pass free on muster days.

On May 12, 1809, notice was given to the Cheshire county court that more than \$600 per mile had been expended in constructing the whole route. Apparently, however, the collection of tolls had started late in the previous year, as the first accounting to the court (in 1815) states that the first two toll gates had been erected on November 28, 1808, and gives the "amount of toll received at gate number one from the time it was erected until March 4, 1809," as \$190.20. The turnpike soon brought a measure of prosperity hitherto unknown to the villages through which it passed. At their annual meeting of 1824 the directors voted "to petition the U. S. Congress for mail service between Newport and Lebanon to connect with the route from Boston to Hanover through Washington and Goshen," using of course the Croydon Turnpike. Five years later the directors voted to reduce tolls for this mail stage to one quarter of the regular fare.

There was eventually a total of four tollgates constructed along the Croydon Turnpike route, the only one in Washington being at May's Tavern near what is now Pillsbury State Park. The cellar hole of this tavern can still be seen. There was another gate in Newport, later moved to Goshen. From the minutes of the 1816 Corporation's annual meeting we learn, for example, that the receipts for the previous year from the first toll gate (May's tavern) totaled only \$593.72 and returns from other gates were even lower, so it is difficult to see how this could have been a money-making venture. Indeed, over the 35-year life of the Corporation I have been able to find only eight (or possibly nine) dividends as having been declared, totaling less than \$15, so most of the investors, if they had faithfully paid their assessments, lost over \$175 per share. The exceptions were the directors and officers, who at each annual meeting, after deducting expenses for repairs and wages for the toll gatherers, paid themselves salaries out of the toll proceeds.

Another interesting bit gathered from the Corporation's records and copied verbatim from the company's 1816 minutes: "Voted that the treasurer pay to Samuel Curtice three dollars in lieu of a counterfeit bill of three dollars paid to him by the treasurer for part of his dividend ordered on March 6, 1815 and that such counterfeit bill be publicly burnt."

In 1838, Goshen, (and Washington?) "acting with other towns concerned revoked the franchise of the turnpike corporation because of its sad state of disrepair and the width of the roadway was reduced from four rods to two." (*History of Goshen, by W. R. Nelson, 1957*) On November 19th (1938) the directors met at the Eagle Hotel in Newport and "voted to sell the personal property belonging to said Corporation to Thomas J. Harris, Treasurer, viz.: One cart, one horse cart and harness, one old plow, one scraper, 2 shovels, 3 poor ditto, one chain, two iron bars, 2 boxes, for the sum of eighteen dollars." After settling all known obligations of the corporation they next disposed of the money still on the Corporation's books by declaring a dividend of eighty-eight cents on 145 shares.



Perley Crane in his favorite hat with his black and white horse team, working to clear rocks during repairs to Route 31 just north of Twin Bridge Road on the way to Goshen. Photo taken about 1935. This was part of the former Croydon Turnpike but the photo was taken nearly 100 years after the corporation folded, so this will give an idea of what the turnpike road may once have looked like! The truck at the far right belonged to Hazel Drew's father, Harry Newman, who was road agent at the time. License plate reads F-728.

Museum Photo collection, gift of Hazel Drew

This left 17 cents in the treasury as the dividend for the last shareholder, possibly the treasurer! They then voted "that Thomas J. Harris, Esq., have leave to prosecute for the recovery of all claims which said Corporation may have against any town or individual and receive all damages to his own use without being accountable to said Corporation thereupon without incurring any expense to said corporation." The last meeting of the Croydon Turnpike Corporation was thus adjourned.

Three years later, according to a record found in the Town archives dated June 11, 1842, "We the subscribers do hereby for ourselves and our heirs relinquish to said Town of Washington forever for the purpose of a public highway all our right, title interest and claim to the land lately used and occupied (sic) by the Croydon Turnpike Corporation" from the Goshen line to the center of Washington. It was signed by fifteen landowners. Sometime later the State of New Hampshire took over the maintenance of the road, which eventually became what is now part of Route 31.

An article dealing with the Second New Hampshire Turnpike will appear in our next issue scheduled for the late Fall of 2003.

What's a MOOSE WALLOW?

Contributed by Gwen Gaskell.

In a low, swampy area alongside the road in the spring a moose will trample in the mud to "muck it up." This brings muddy water to the surface which he likes to taste because of the salt which was in the run-off from the road. There are several of these areas along Route 31, one of them just north of the Washington/Goshen town line where the State has even conveniently put up a sign reading "Moose Crossing." But WE know that it really is a "Moose Wallow!" Stop and look for one during mud season this spring and in the summer in wet places.

Museum Committee Report

The Museum Committee is excited to bring "Quilt Documentation Day" to Washington on July 19, 2003. Please see the separate article about this elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The gift shop will be open again this season and any member is invited and urged to bring in hand crafted items for consignment sale. Men-How about bird feeders, houses or lawn ornaments? The Ladies are not the only ones invited to take part. To list a few of the things one finds there: we have baby items, clothes pin bags, notepaper, afghans, dolls, etc. The Society's afghans, pillows, mugs and puzzles are available also.

The displays this summer will feature the "Old Mills of Washington" and "Quilts," in conjunction with the July Quilt Documentation Day. We hope that every member will make an effort to check out the display during the season. A lot of work goes into the preparation of these displays and it is nice to have it appreciated by a visit. Spread the word to neighbors and friends.

The Cotton Road

by Gwen Gaskell

As related by Fred Otterson in an interview with Gwen

The Cotton Road was an experimental project, which took place in the summer of 1935 or 1936 when there was a surplus of cotton in the country. Someone came up with the rather eccentric idea that the cotton could be used to keep the road smooth and prevent frost heaves from appearing in the late winter to early spring. Fred Otterson, who still lives in Washington and was a worker on the road, related the information on which this article is based.

The Cotton Road started near the old Sleeper Place (you can see Half Moon Pond in the distance behind a little red house on the right, a half-mile or so north of the Shedd Free Library) and followed Route 31 toward Goshen. Fred thought it went for about 2-1/2 miles but *Portrait of a Hill Town* by Ronald and Grace Jager states that it was one mile. (I guess it might have seemed a lot longer to one who was working on it!)

Piles of sand from the Windsor sand pit were put along the side of the road in preparation. Then oil or tar was spread on the road and some of the sand from the piles was "fanned out" onto the tar. Next came the messy job. Fred and Earl Cilley (the father of one of our members, Richard Cilley) were about the same height so they formed a team to carry the cotton, which was put down in three layers. They ran a pole through a big roll of cotton mesh, probably 12 feet wide and about all two young men wanted to lift. They walked on the slippery tar and sand, unrolling the mesh onto the surface. When they reached the end of a roll, they got another roll of a coarse and not too fluffy cotton, so big around that their arms would not quite reach around it. They put the rod through the second roll and unrolled it onto the first layer. This process was repeated with a third layer of fine cotton. All of this was then sealed with more tar and sand.



Former Croydon Turnpike, 1935 photo of Route 31 - 2.5 miles north of Shedd Free Library, looking northwest. Believed to be part of the Cotton Road construction "Codman pasture on left, moose wallow on right"

But where's the cotton?

Museum photo collection, gift of Hazel Drew.

Fred laughed when he thought of how messy the job could be. The gauntlet type gloves they used would get covered with tar, not to mention their boots. One day Earl got quite a bit of tar on his neck and the side of his face from holding the pole on his shoulder. Upon arriving home that afternoon he asked his wife, Zaida, if she had something which would remove the tar. She sure did! Fred couldn't remember what it was, but it was strong enough to take off the tar as well as a couple of layers of skin, which did not make a happy husband for a few days.

Fred's brother Bill (Mike Otterson's dad) was made foreman of that section of road when it was finished and it was his job to "fix" the bumps that inevitably came up each spring. When they would not smooth out, Bill and his crew would cut across the middle of the bump with an axe-like tool. They then made a cut at right angles to the first, like cutting a pie in quarters. They next folded the layers of cotton and tar back, dug out the material causing the bump, smoothed it out, replaced the cotton and tar and then sealed the spot with more tar and sand. After about five years of this "foolishness" as Fred called it, the project was given up as a bad idea.

Fred remembered several other local men, all of them now deceased, who worked on the road when he did. There was Charlie Hersey from Hillsboro Upper village (member Jan Walsh's father), Jimmy VonBlacken, Sam Kemp and his brother Dude, all from Hillsboro.

Further up Route 31, in the area beside Hedgehog Pond, along what was once the Croydon Turnpike, built perhaps a hundred years earlier than the Cotton Road, there was a section, which had been "corduroyed." It was a swampy, always wet area, where logs had been laid side-by-side and chained in place to keep them from sinking or moving around. The road was laid on top of these logs, as mentioned in the article on turnpikes elsewhere in this newsletter. It apparently served the purpose for many years when travel was by horse drawn

carriages and oxen carts, but the author remembers seeing bumps made by the logs which were still evident at the edge of the road into the 1950s.

More on Taverns

Subsequent to the Spring 2002 issue of our Newsletter with its article on Taverns in Washington, Grace Jager and Tom Talpey researched the Town Archives looking for more references to tavern licenses. They found documentation that the Selectmen, between the years 1792 and 1855 (when State prohibition started) had issued at least 160 licenses for "mixing and selling spirituous liquors" in individual dwellings, taverns or stores. Many of these were renewals from one year to the next and there were some licenses issued to storekeepers. The first license they found documented was issued to Abner Sampson in 1792 for a tavern "near Freezeland Pond," although *Portrait of a Hill Town* mentions that he kept one there as early as the 1770s. Early licenses frequently referred to the applicant as "being of good character and living in a convenient place," but later ones simply stated that the applicant was licensed. Numerous licenses were issued over the years to David Farnsworth, William Lawrence, Jonathan Philbrick, Jabez Brainard, Joseph Healy and Jabin Fisher. Some years there may have been as many as 5 or 6 persons in town from whom one could legally purchase liquor. It seems that, in stagecoach times, tavern keeping was a rather popular occupation!

The New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project Phase II

Washington, NH, Camp Morgan Lodge -- Saturday, July 19, 2003

The New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project (NHQDPII) and the Washington Historical Society will sponsor a Quilt Documentation Day during which quilt owners can learn more about their antique quilts and quilted objects. The organizers of this statewide project hope to discover the old quilts that Washington and surrounding area residents may have tucked away in attics, linen closets, garages and hope chests.

Quilts have been a part of New England life for many years, but often, they are so familiar that little is written about who made the piece or what it might signify. When quilts are brought to a Documentation Day, owners obtain a permanent record of the quilt or quilted piece and any details known about its maker.

New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Project Phase II, a volunteer organization, has organized a statewide survey of all quilts, quilt tops, quilted clothing, quilt blocks and unfinished pieces, made before 1976. We encourage the owners of the works not only made in this state, but also works that are, at present, living in New Hampshire to attend the D-Day. The Documentation Team will examine and photograph quilts at Camp Morgan Lodge in Washington, NH. Quilt owners will receive detailed information about the style, approximate date, fabrics, condition and construction of the quilts in their collections, and, in addition, be given information on how to care for their antique quilts.

It is the desire of the New Hampshire Quilt Documentation Team to document older quilts people have in their homes, regardless of whether or not they know who made them or where they came from. The Project's goal is to include the Historical Society's quilts in the historical records. When information is known about the quilt maker it adds to the excitement of placing this quilt into an historical perspective. This helps increase the public's awareness and appreciation of such works and their makers.

Quilt owners are urged to call Gwen Gaskell, 495-3231 for an appointment. Members of the Historical Society will be given preference since this Newsletter is being issued several weeks before general publicity begins. You **MUST** have an appointment, however. On the day of the event all quilts will be documented free of charge. If an owner requests a copy of the documentation and a photograph, the fee for this service is \$5 each. This is to help defray the costs of copying, photographs, supplies, printing, etc.

Another service we offer is that of verbal or written quilt appraisals. There are three different types of appraisals: Insurance, Fair Market Value, and Donation. Most people want to know what their quilt is worth. If they are selling a quilt that value is Fair Market Value. If they want to know what it would cost to replace the quilt that value is Insurance. Normally Insurance and Fair Market Value are the same. Donation and Fair Market Value are always the same and donations must be acknowledged within 60 days of the gift. Fees vary amongst appraisers but usually run between \$25 and \$40, depending on whether verbal or written.