

Old Homes of Conway

For the Conway Historical Society

October 11, 2022

By

Members of the Town of Conway Historic District Commission

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The Challenge:

- Find the older homes in Conway by examining Town Records
- Investigate other records that are available – i.e., books, personal notes, old photos, etc.
- Speak with the present Owners – do they know the history of their house, or property, or maybe have historical notes?
- Will they allow Town of Conway Historic District Commission members to tour their homes, and/or to take photos?
- Can we use their information in meetings like this?

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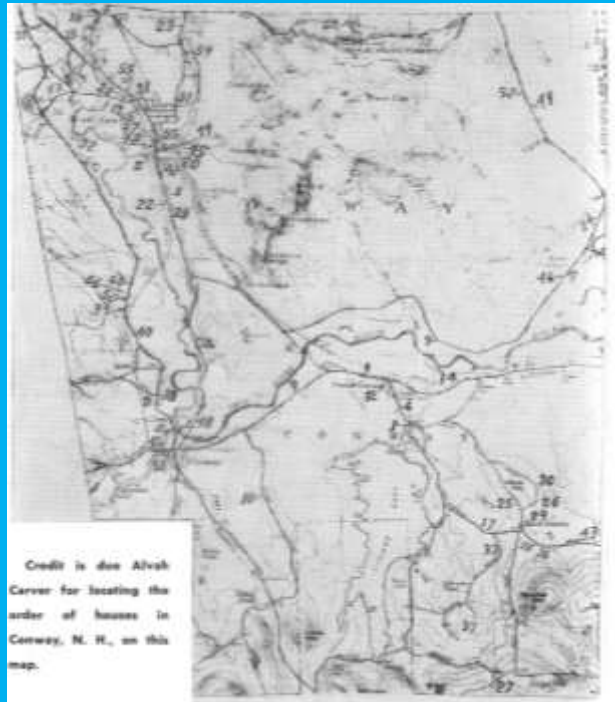
Old Home locations in the town

From the centennial booklet by Alva Carver

#1 1765 is the Capt. Timothy Walker home at the head of Conway Lake (Walker's Pond)

#2 1768 is the Hortense Levy house, located in what is now known as North Conway, on the corner of Main and Artists Falls Road

#3 1770 Ervin S. Farrington house, located on the East Conway Road



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A little bit of history – why are they there?

- The earliest documented home is the “Walkers” at the head of what is now known as Conway Lake – by the town beach. (Carver)
- We can confirm 1763-5 but (like many) renovations did occur
- Walker was a miller. He had both a sawmill and grist mill.
- In those early years water meant power to do things, and the bigger the ‘drop’ the more power was available, so the dam was raised over the years to create more power and is now at the highest level it has ever been.
- All the other ‘older structures’ that existed here have all burned down over the years.
- Walkers Pond was originally thought to be in Fryeburg.

4

Old Homes from Carver: valid as of Feb 1, 1965

Conway Houses Built Circa 1765 - 1820

Early deeds are often quite vague. Although a great amount of research went into tracing these properties, the occurrence (B) is who to use "C" for "street" or "about" preceding the date before the date of construction are definitely known. If the original owner is known, the name is listed in []. Many homes have been considerably altered or rebuilt but if the original was incorporated into the present building, the house has been marked with a yellow sign. Owners and locations as of February 1, 1965 are given here.

- 1--c1765 Mrs. Clarence H. Doolittle, lot of Conway Lake, Center Conway. (Capt. Timothy Walker, last well owner)
- 2--c1768 Nathaniel C. Levy, corner Main Street and Astor Falls Road, North Conway. (Richard Eastman)
- 3--c1770 Ervin S. Farrington, East Conway Road. (John Wilson)
- 4--c1774 Harvey D. Ward, Center Conway. (Ebeneser Barfield's farm)
- 5-- Dr. David F. Robinson, Route B, North Conway. (Abraham Robinson)
- 6--c1774 John Packer, Conway Lake Road, Center Conway. (First Town Church, moved from Robinson)
- 7--c1778 Wilfred Duchaschewski, East Conway. (Jovanick Page)
- 8--c1778 Mrs. Catherine H. Agnew, River Road, North Conway. (Abel Leroy)
- 9-- Richard W. Whitland, Jr., Center Conway Road, Conway. (Abel)
- 10--c1778 Roger Reed, Stark Road, Conway.
- 11--c1780 Wenzel W. Alcott, (Baby Elm Farm), West Side Road, Conway. (Levin Merrill)
- 12-- Center House Farm, Center Conway. (Samuel Walker)
- 13-- Sarah A. Bellows, (Hudson House), Route B, Intervale. (Harriet Walker)
- 14-- George Johnson, (Hemstead), Parkside Road, Center Conway. (Jovanick Page)
- 15--c1784 M. David Douglas, Golf Road, North Conway. (Joseph Walker)
- 16-- Mrs. Carl Back, (Hemstead Hill), North Conway. (High Burley, Stealing Location)



This Hemstead of Daniel Robinson recently moved where the original Hemstead is now located in North Conway. (New Hampshire)

- 17--c1786 George (Joshua, Hemstead Hill), North Conway. (Joseph O'Leary)
- 18-- Ebenezer W. Woodbury, (Hemstead Hill), Route B, Intervale. (Joseph Woodbury)
- 19--c1787 Capt. Edward Call, (Pepel-Dice House), River Road, North Conway. (Moses Burtch)
- 20-- Nathaniel and Alfred Gardner, Astor Falls Road, North Conway. (Town of Conway Incorporated)
- 21-- Robert M. Green, (Newbridge Inn), River Road, North Conway. (Moses Burtch)
- 22--c1788 George J. Strick, (Shook's Mill), Main Street, Route B, North Conway. (Anna Bates)
- 23--c1790 Marmy Page, Knapshaw. (Jonathan Snow)
- 24-- Sweetfields Farm, East Conway.
- 25--c1792 Doolittle House, Davis Hill Road, North Conway. (Harriet Eastman)
- 26--c1792 Mrs. Andrew J. Merrill Sr., Davis Hill Road, North Conway. (Joseph Burtch)
- 27-- Mrs. W. Elizabeth Pease, Corner Hill, North Conway. (Richard Pease, Sr.; moved from Foster's Pocket, near Robinson)

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The Later Homes – 1793 to 1820 or so

- 28--c1790 Joseph H. Lake, (The Hemstead), Route B, North Conway. (Anna Bates)
- 29--c1790 Dr. Walker Smith, Davis Hill Road, North Conway. (James Woodbury)
- 30-- Mrs. John E. Hoady, Davis Hill Road, North Conway. (W. S. Eastman)
- 31--c1790 Christ Church Episcopal, Intervale, Fair Street, North Conway. (Joseph Thompson)
- 32-- Edward S. Brown, West Side Road, North Conway. (John Thompson)
- 33-- Richard Rice, Road Hill Road, North Conway. (Joseph O'Leary)
- 34-- Frank R. Bennett, Jr., West Side Road, Conway. (Anna Merrill)
- 35-- Mrs. Mary D. Brown, (Knapshaw Hill, Parkside), Main Street, North Conway. (Ebeneser Thompson)
- 36-- Mrs. Ben H. York, (Chapman Street), Main Street, North Conway. (Andrew McMillan's farmstead)
- 37--c1795 Edwin E. North, (Hill Hill Road), North Conway. (Township Farm)
- 38--c1800 Arthur Hale, corner Parkside and West Side Roads, Conway.
- 39--c1800 Charles B. Cook, West Side Road, North Conway. (Hiram Warburton, Jr.)
- 40--c1810 Mrs. Nancy M. Hale, West Side Road, Conway. (Harriet Warburton)
- 41--c1810 Edward J. Roblin, (Cotton Hill), Main Street, Conway. (Richard Warburton)
- 42-- Lady Day, (Old Hill Inn), Main Street, North Conway. (Frank Eastman)
- 43-- Charles Young, (Hemstead Hill), North Conway. (Wright Reed)
- 44-- Frank Brown, (Farm Hill Inn), Astor Falls Road, North Conway. (Harriet Merrill)
- 45-- Dr. Apple Gardner, Astor Falls Road, North Conway. (Harriet Merrill)
- 46--c1810 Mrs. Maria S. Woodland, East Conway. (Jane Page)
- 47--c1810 Walter Robinson, (Cotton Hill), Main Street, North Conway. (David Eastman)

- 48--c1810 Capt. W. Conroy, (Old Hill Hill, Conway)
- 49-- Mrs. G. Hill, Corner Hill, Conway. (John Burtch)
- 50-- Dr. Eugene R. Howe, (Center Episcopal Farm), West Side Road, Conway. (Thomas Merrill)
- 51-- Mrs. John C. Phillips, (Cotton Hill), North Conway. (David S. C.)
- 52--c1810 Mrs. J. New Green Hill, East Conway. (Ann W. Latta)
- 53-- Dr. Charles E. Wright, Main Street, Conway.
- 54--c1810 General Richard Smith, (Old Hill Road, Conway. (William S. Eastman)
- 55--c1820 Charles B. Day, (Main Street), North Conway. (Levin Whitely)
- 56-- Edward E. Clarke, West Side Road, Conway.
- 57-- (Chapman Cottage), River Road, North Conway. (Hiram Eastman)
- 58-- (Hemstead Hill), Main Street, North Conway.
- 59-- Park Lodge, (Cotton Hill Apartment), Conway.
- 60-- Mrs. S. Perkins, West Side Road, Conway. (William Reed)

One of these homes, North Conway, about 1800, showing what Hemstead Hill was like. Robinson, moved from the location at Top Hill, North Conway on the way to...



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Homes we have lost-forever.

Year built: 1793

It has a 'secret room' where it is thought the residents hid from marauders, and hid fugitive slaves on their way to freedom in Canada.

The current Passaconway Road is also known as Canada Street in old records, hence the Canada Street Cemetery is located there.

The Homestead

In 1793 Arsen Barnes started to build The Homestead. Before 1808 he sold out to Thomas Eastman, a relative by marriage. Until 1888 the house was owned by descendants of the latter. In 1945 it was bought by Joseph M. Lutz, the present owner.

The front section of The Homestead is of heavy-beamed, weather-jugged Cape Cod style construction, without a roof in the side front. During remodeling in 1945 a hidden room 8' by 8' was found behind an old fireplace in the front of the house. This room was entered by removing three planks from a china closet and opening a 3' by 4' half-panel door. Lester Barnes said his grandfather had told him that this room had been built to hide from possible marauders and later was used to conceal fugitive slaves on their way to freedom in Canada. From the amount of old hay pulled out of the walls during remodeling, it seems possible that the front part of The Homestead was originally built for a barn.

The Homestead has been used as a guest or a small inn from sometime before 1865. An old letter dated April 4, 1865 requested summer's lodging for a Rev. J. Greene of Brookline, Massachusetts, with accommodations also for a horse.



"The Homestead" on South Main Street, North Conway as it looked in 1890.

81

CONWAY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

7

Good for now?

The Capt. Timothy Walker homestead

Year built – 1763

The main beams were cut with an "Up and Down" saw

The House that Capt. Walker Built

In 1763 wooden shingles given from Colonel Joseph Frye of "Seven Lots," long the name of Stratham Village. Captain Timothy Walker was situated a fine and modern a country and a gentleman of the north of White City Pond. Between 1760 and 1768 he built a small house and barn on the westerly side of the 100' Brook. Later it was discovered that this great lot within the boundaries of the newly incorporated (1763) town of Conway.

When Captain Walker made this change to the house by replacing in 1768 the roof was raised and an old added. The original part of the house set lower to the living room, the dining room, a small back room, and the front hall, with the stairs leading to what was once the attic.

The remaining features in the house are the "open stack" chimney and the old beams were then new timbers. The old members in the attic are of separate orange oak, and the beams used for the under-flooring were made on an "up and down" saw the earliest type of saw used.

The house was long and took a bit, but one wonder how many years back in 1763 and still for standing here hundred years from now.

The Eastern Shingles by the house in 1763 today, was owned by Dr. and Mrs. H. William Bartlett, Condit Conway.



8

Capt. Walker - inside



Room in Capt. Family Walker's House, Center Conway, New Hampshire, showing original pattern and new tables.

"Conway Through the Years and Weather" is a history of the town completed in 1960 by its author, Ruth R. D. Harris, then in her eighty-fourth year. The book was sponsored and published by the Conway Historical Society. It not only covers such varied facets and factors of town life and growth as churches, schools, music, politics, artistic and industrial development, and outstanding personalities, but also is enlivened with an abundance of anecdotes flavored with the very salt and spice of older days. A limited number of copies are still available in the local book stores.

SEVENTEENTH YEAR - 1921-1922

29

9

1779 – Drummond House



10

1779 – The Drummond Home on the Stark Road

- The original builders/residents are unknown. By 1850 it was known as the “Calvin Whitaker Farm”.
- Style: of the rural Federal cape.
- Has the original Post and Beam construction and is built on a granite block foundation. The inside has been extensively remodeled, but carefully executed. The horsehair plaster has been mostly removed.
- Granite posts along the road indicate are the remains of a fence typical of the period when the house was built.
- The Drummonds have owned it since 1970, maintaining a small farming operation until recently.

11

1779 - Drummond



12

1779 – Drummond. On the right, the house 50 year ago.



13

Abt. 1790 - The Maxfield House

- One of two of the oldest homes on the Stark Road
- The original owners are not known
- By 1850 it was known as the Steven Shackford House, it has a post and beam frame, and a granite block foundation; Steven died in the late 1860's. Other Shackfords lived farther south on the Stark Road.
- The original chimney was likely replaced by one currently in use, which is located just off-center on the ridge.
- By 1892 C. Emerson was the listed owner, and a relative (L. Emerson) built on land across the street.
- The Maxfields have owned the property since the mid 1960's.
- The property is significant for retaining a strong rural setting and character and has been farmed continuously on a small scale up to the present day.
- The barn is of similar age, and the hay elevator was rescued from the Smith/Cross Farm on the West Side Road.

14

1785 – Maxfield's



15

1784 – Hugh Sterling / Jane S. Walker home

- Hugh Sterling received the property by a Grant in 1765 from King George III. It is likely that he lived here for a short time, but records are unclear. Hugh did marry Isabel Stark so together the families owned over 4,000 acres.
- It is one of the oldest home in South Conway
- Currently owned by Barbara Douglas
- Additions were made in the early 1800's (the center section), and again in the 1870's (the leftmost section).
- Hugh Sterling's daughter, Jane, married Joseph Walker, and this was their first home. Later, they moved to the King home to take care of her parents.
- In the mid 1800's Lorenzo Mills, a Civil War veteran, lived in the house.
- Eleanor Boyd/Merrow/Hubbard/Jordan of Baltimore did extensive renovations, and it was apparently their summer home.
- When the Douglas's moved in the house had been vacant for about 5 years.

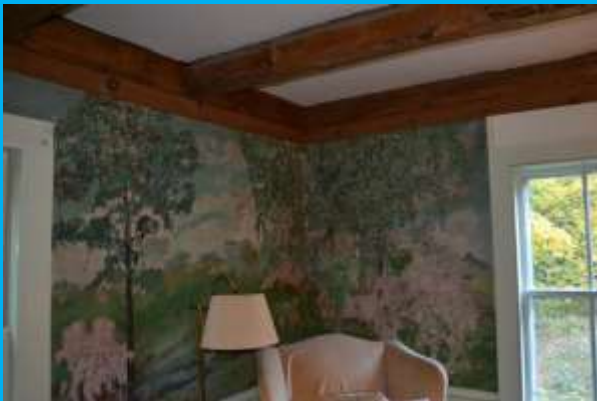
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1784 – The First Sterling Home



17

1784 – Jane Sterling Walker - unique wall art (probably late 1800's)



18

1784 – Jane Sterling Walker – ceilings – original beams



19

Abt. 1796 – Hugh Sterling’s daughter Jane’s home

- Hugh’s daughter, Jane Walker, cared for her ageing parents here, then moved in. Her brother James lived here next, and then the property was sold to the Cole family in about 1889.
- After the Coles’ the Busum family lived here, and then the Friary family. The King family are the present owners.
- SO: it has been inhabited by only 5 families in 227 years!
- Of the same period of the Douglas home.
- Significant history has been provided by the current owners.
- The house has seen many renovations over the years, but the interior layout remains mostly original.

20

1796 - King home, south side, showing original house on right.



21

King home. Note the oldest portion is on the left side. This south side faces Clark Brook and Dundee Mountain.



22

1802-1803 - The Nichols House (Cutts/Eastman farm)



23

Basic historical facts:

- The property originally consisted of a large tract of land extending from the Saco River south to the head of Conway lake – over 1,000 acres. It was owned by John Dollof, one of Conway's original settlers. A cabin built in 1765 is the first known structure on the property, and all that remains is a cellar hole.
- Style: Federal when built, then renovated in the Greek Revival style in 1833 by Nathan Whitaker.
- A cottage was built in 1849 by carpenters Trueworthy Palmer and Leandor S. Morton and is still on the property.
- The house was owned by Judge Joel Eastman, who, with partner John Smith, built the Smith-Eastman bridge across the Saco in 1836. The Town of Conway eventually 'bought' the bridge from them. It was burned by kids on the 4th of July 1975.
- Judge Eastman, being childless, left his estate to his nephew, Joel Eastman Morrill who then left his entire estate to his four children. Mary Morrill Leadbeater inherited the farm. In 1948 Mary Leadbeater's grandson, David Nichols, began to actively farm the land that had sat idle for many years. David and his wife Jean began their efforts with one tractor and one cow to develop Twin Spring Farm.
- In 1986 David and Jean's daughter Susan took over the farm and are the sixth generation of the Joel Eastman family to have ownership.

24

The addition – to the right of the main house.



25

The main house is dated "1803" – the three light door is standard for the time



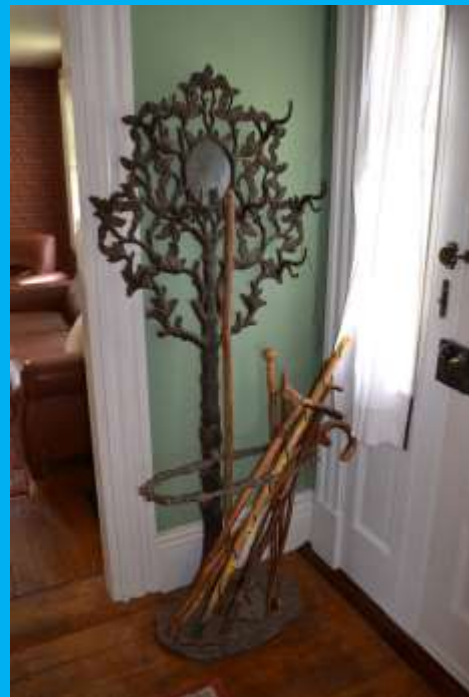
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This window faces the “main road to Conway” and is bordered by what is called “Indian Shutters”. Besides ‘Indians’, it blocked the sounds and dust from the road from entering the house.



27

A Craftsman from Fryeburg created this very heavy clothes rack made of cast metal. The base holds walking canes.



28

Judge Joel Eastman (1798-1884) was not the first owner of the home but was the most prominent. He and John Smith, of Portland, Maine and the owner of a livery business (Smith ran stagecoaches from Portland to Conway) built a bridge across the Saco to shorten the route. The access road to the bridge runs through the Dolloff-Cutts-Eastman property and on the other side passes the current Police Station and the river walk.



29

Custom molding around the ceilings has been maintained where possible.



30

The Chimney -
One of 7 in the home
has been like this
since it was built!

The roof rafters have
indications that they
were used in a
previous building.



31

Large stones in
the foundation
of the addition
and main house
were typical of
the period.

Note: this corner
is the site of the
“Three Hole
Outhouse”!!!



32

The Fence Over Time: the older fence, on the left, was built 'between' posts, while the later fence, on the right, was just added to the 'face' of the posts- this method is simpler and easier to construct.



33



34

The Barn: some history

- It is not the original barn due to political history!
- A post and beam barn measuring 42 feet by 100 feet and 40 feet high was constructed in 1864 and still towers over the homestead today. It is also likely the largest stand-alone barn in New Hampshire.
- The original barn was deliberately burned to the ground by “The Copperheads” – individuals who severely hated Abolitionists of the period – in 1863.
- When that arsonists were interviewed, they indicated that if Judge Eastman was in the barn at the time, it would be all the better!!

35

Inside The Barn: you can get a feel for how much hay it took to fill the three stories.



36

The hay elevator at the top of its reach - 3 stories high.

Some structural beams have been replaced over the years.



37

1800– The Kennett/Merrill homestead on the West Side Road

- The builder and first owner was Amos Merrill. Amos was a Selectman of the Town of Conway in 1814.
- Frank E. Kennett, son of A Crosby Kennett, eventually lived here with his wife Carol, who was a Merrill.
- It is built in the Federal style, with “proper proportions.”
- It comprises 2-1/2 stories and is a “5x2 Bay House”.
- The barn is of a late 19th century construction and has a gambrel style roof allowing for more space on the upper floors.

38

1800 - Amos Merrill House



39

1810 - Kin Earle Home

- Built for a Civil War veteran who lived there: Alba Garland. He was postmaster in Conway.
- At one time there was so much pasture to the west you could see Conway Lake (Walker's Pond) from the homestead.
- Typical was the connection of house-wood shed-barn to make winter access easier.

40

Currently Kin Earle's on Baird Hill Road.



41

Earle home showing connected barn.



42

Mid 1800's – Old Bartlett School House



43

Ty Palmer House – Old Bartlett School – the least renovated of all!



44

Unique woodwork: tapered roof supports held up the beam; notch marks indicated which beam the mortise was made for!



45

Pre 1700 hinges



46

Fireplace and joints



47

Other homes we will be working on:

- West Side Road - many older farms, with both owner and worker residences.
- More in South Conway (Goshen)
- East Conway Road – same story
- And farms usually extended to the Saco with wood lots farther back

48

The Two Story Home in South Conway.



49

West Side Road – Todd Marshall



50

West Side Road - Hale Farm



51

West Side Road – Densmore/Merrill



52

West Side Road – Allard?



53

West Side Road - 1820



54

West Side Road – 1820 - granite fence posts just like at the Nichols Farm



55

West Side Road – another 1820 nearby; same builders?



56

And to close: where are we?



57