

SANBORNTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Sanbornton Historical Society held its first meeting in Academy Hall (the present Town Library building) in March, 1952. It was a group concerned with the changes taking place and the fading memories of times past. It was our objective to preserve what we could, of what seemed most significant, of life in the past in Sanbornton.

Membership is open to anyone interested in New Hampshire history. We welcome all to join the Society. Annual dues are modest and we hope members will get involved and occasionally contribute some time to further our work and interests.

Meetings are held from April to October, on the first Wednesday of each month at the Lane Tavern, and include interesting programs. Many programs share and promote history.

TAVERN HISTORY

In 1965 the life of the Society was greatly enriched and given a more significant focus for its aims and objectives when it acquired the Lane Tavern as a gift from an anonymous donor. The exact date the Tavern was built is unclear. It was, however, a family affair.

Andrew Lovejoy, as early as 1796 became a trader and business man at the Square where in 1801 he married Esquire Nathan Taylor's daughter Mary. As his business's (potash factory, distillery, slaughter house, wholesale and retail store and tavern) grew they became prosperous enough for the couple to move into a three story house (now gone) that Mr. Ward had built in the fall of 1798.

The Tavern was built on land belonging to Lovejoy's father-in-law, Nathan Taylor, and was operated by others such as Richard Hazeltine. In 1808 Thomas Gilmore came to Sanbornton, married Lovejoy's oldest daughter Hannah and took over operation of the Tavern. Then in 1809 Nathan Taylor sold the property to his son Thomas Taylor. Thomas was Lovejoy's brother-in-law twice over for not only was his sister Mary married to Lovejoy, he was married to Lovejoy's sister Mary (Molly).

In 1812 Thomas sold it to Andrew Lovejoy for \$1,000.00 but the war, from 1812 to 1815, brought financial difficulties to Lovejoy. In 1816 Stephen Smith, of New Hampton, took Lovejoy to court to collect a debt of \$1,181.26. He received judgment for the debt, plus \$46.74 in court costs, and was given the Tavern as payment.

Stephen Smith also had others tend the Tavern for him. As Richard Hazelton was already in town in 1816 he may have had him stay on for in 1817 Richard Hazelton again received a liquor license.

By 1825 when Smith sold the Tavern Chase Jaques was operating it for him. The Tavern was sold, September 1, 1825, to Charles Lane for \$550.00 and on September 6, Lane and his family moved in.

Three years later, in July 1828, when Charles Lane sold to Plumer Dodge, he was glad to leave. He noted in his diary *"We have had much peace and comfort of body and mind since we left the Tavern, and in fact we now wonder how we ever got along with it at all. We are now snugly and comfortably situated in 'private life'."*

He also noted in his diary when he *"Held my first Justice Court at Dodge's Tavern."* He had an appointment as Justice of the Peace.

It was at Dodge's Tavern on March 1, 1829 that the Republican Caucus was held. About 80 attended making their way through roads that were drifted with snow by the high winds.

January 1830 Lane writes *"Dodge being unable to pay for the Tavern stand I find it for my interest to take it back and accordingly pay Lewis claim \$545.00 upon it and take it into my own possession"*. He and Lewis had once been partners in the firm 'Lewis and Lane' so he now must pay his ex partner's claim to own the Tavern free and clear.

Jan 27, 1830 he wrote *"Moved into the Tavern though reluctantly, yet with a determination to continue in it until a more favorable opportunity to leave it shall offer than when we before left. Have five boarders. Spear, Howland, H.F. Lane, Morrison and Smith."*

The "more favorable" opportunity came when in 1836 he sold the Tavern to his brother Joseph Hilliard Lane for \$800.00. Joseph, called Hilliard, must have come to help his brother at an earlier date as the deed says he is "Innkeeper" and the building "is the same which is now occupied by said Joseph Hilliard Lane as a tavern house." Hilliard Lane was Innkeeper until 1844 and it is the Lane name that remains with the Tavern today.

The years that Hilliard kept the Tavern were prime years for Taverns. Lane Tavern was on the main stage line between Concord and the North Country and also served as a local gathering spot, both for social and political meetings.

Hilliard died of asthma and heart disease September 16, 1843 when he was 50 years old. His brother Charles tried to help his brother's family and on February 20, 1844 he ran the following ad in both the BELKNAP GAZETTE and CARROLL COUNTY ADVERTISER.

For Sale; the well known Tavern Stand recently owned and occupied by Joseph Hilliard Lane, now deceased. Said Stand is located Sandbornton Square so called, at the centre of the town and on the great thoroughfare leading through said town to the capital of the state and is well calculated to do an extensive business. The buildings are large and well furnished and now in a good state of repair. Connected with the Stand there is a large Garden, well supplied with a good and rare selection of excellent Fruit Trees. The house and stable are supplied with excellent water.

Any person wishing to purchase a tavern stand would do well to call and examine the above named premises before buying elsewhere. Said property will be sold at a very reasonable rate. Enquire of the widow on the premises or of either of the selectmen or town treasurer of Sandbornton.

Charles Lane

The property didn't sell but the Town of Sanbornton foreclosed on it for its \$400.00 debt and in 1847 they sold the Tavern to Noah B. Eastman for \$277.00.

Noah , to our knowledge, did not run a tavern. The hey-day of coaching taverns was passing. Railroads were replacing coaches and Tilton, with the railroad and the mills, was becoming the more active town. Noah lived at the Tavern until his death in 1851 and his wife and daughter remained there until 1853.

Eastman's widow sold to John Blaisdell, who in 1867 sold to Daniel Jacobs. It then in turn was passed to Albert and Eugene Jacobs, George Wadleigh, George Jacobs, Albert and Eugene Jacobs, Emma Howe, Gardner Ward and finally Dr. Archie Grevior. But these owners all kept it a residence until 1965 when it came into the ownership of the Society.

The people who occupied it lived chiefly in the rear rooms, thus the front ones, both the ground floor and above, were altered very little. The 'ladies parlor' (ground floor, front) exists as it was originally built and for the most part the tap room and the ballroom above were not seriously altered. We are not sure as to just how the bar facilities were originally arranged and those that are now installed came from another tavern of about the same vintage as ours. The ballroom had been partitioned to form three bedrooms, but no basic damage had been done. We are fortunate in having the distinctive interior shutters in the windows of all the front rooms.

But much work had to be done, involving, first, new sills and foundation repairs. The ballroom and front room below were made useable for meetings of the Society. The present kitchen in the rear and modern toilet facilities presented an especially expensive phase. The kitchen should not be regarded as a restoration. We are reasonably sure that this room was the original kitchen, but it had been much altered over the years. It is especially important to note that our restoration of the Tavern, within the financial limits of the Society, has been directed with two objectives: to actually restore as much of the building as is feasible and to render it functional to the community as a whole for certain present day social and educational uses. We could not afford a building that is just a museum.

The completion of the kitchen, with certain old features (a fine and useful fireplace with a brick oven) combined with modern facilities (running water, electric stove and refrigerator) render it useful for many services - for our monthly meetings as well as community and Society functions, including parties, dinners, teas and even weddings.

The Tavern also serves as a museum repository of various memorabilia of the past 200 years of Sanbornton life., and for what we believe to be unique educational functions. Each spring, in late May or early June we arrange for visits of the 4th grade children from Tilton, Sanbornton, and Franklin. These are guided tours using our history, building and collections as teaching tools. We even include a cooking demonstration in the kitchen using our fine brick oven. This service has been so well received that we now conduct tours for adults as well, by appointment.

A few years ago we acquired the garage and about one acre of land directly across the road from the Tavern. This is indispensable for many of our functions and for the overall operation of the Society.

There is always much to be done and new members are always welcome. Preservation and restoration are still ongoing for the Tavern and collecting oral, printed and photographic history is a need. Taking care of the pieces of history that we currently have is also extremely important. There is of course a limit as to how much we can preserve of the past but certainly some aspects of it merit our best efforts.

We believe that an understanding of and respect for the past is essential for an understanding of the present and, we hope, will aid in guiding us in the future. We invite you to help us in these objectives.

THE SANBORNTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 2., Sanbornton, N.H. 03269

(603) 286-7227