

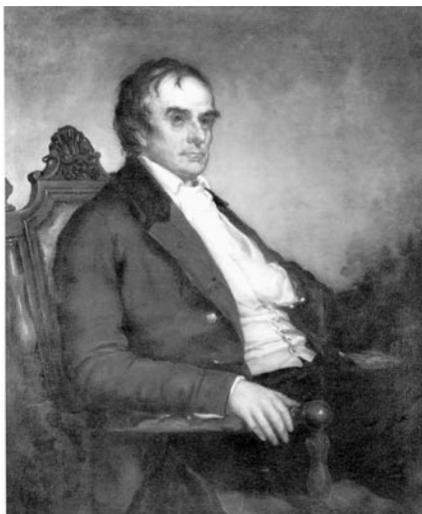


The Old Stone Wall

Volume XIII, Number 1

State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Resources,
Division of Historical Resources

Summer 2005



Daniel Webster by Joseph Alexander Ames, courtesy of the New Hampshire Historical Society

Daniel Webster Farm Named One of America's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places

On June 2, 2005, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced its choice of "America's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places" at the National Press Club in Washington, D. C. Prominent among the vulnerable properties was "Elms Farm," Daniel Webster's home in Franklin, New Hampshire. Leigh Webb, president of the Franklin Historical Society, nominated the Webster Farm for the Trust's "Most Endangered" designation.

The Webster Farm has been the focus of much anxiety since the fall of 2004, when developers acquired a purchase-and-sales agreement on the property from its current owners,

(continued on page four)

Forensic Timber Workshop at Allenstown Meeting House

James L. Garvin, *State Architectural Historian*

The Timber Framers Guild of North America has taken the first steps toward reconstructing the roof of the Old Allenstown Meeting House, destroyed by arson in 1985. On May 21, 2005, some twenty Guild members gathered at the building to carry out the Guild's first-ever "forensic timber framing workshop," aimed at understanding the lost roof frame and at evaluating the surviving body of the 1815 meeting house.

As reported in the Fall/Winter 2004 *Old Stone Wall*, the Town of Allenstown regained title to its early meeting place in 2004, following 83 years of ownership of the building by Buntin Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and 13 years of ownership by the State of New Hampshire. In 1985, a fire set by an arsonist had traveled up the rear wall of the building and spread through the attic, destroying the roof frame. The present roof is composed of a series of plywood-covered prefabricated roof trusses.

Over the past year, an Allenstown task force has researched the history and construction of the building, written a National Register nomination, applied for a state historical marker, and discussed the construction of a replica of the original roof with Joel McCarty of the Timber Framers Guild. The group also met with Epsom craftsman Neil English,



Members of the Timber Framers Guild discuss alternatives for roof restoration framing at the Allenstown Meeting House
Photograph by James L. Garvin

who had recorded details of the original roof twenty years ago while preparing a proposal to reconstruct the frame following the fire. English's field notes, timber list, and sharp memory proved crucial to the efforts of the Timber Framers Guild to create drawings of the long-lost frame. His

(continued on page four)

HIGHLIGHTS

DANIEL WEBSTER FARM	1
FORENSIC TIMBER WORKSHOP.....	1
NATIONAL REGISTER LISTINGS	2
FEEDBACK ON DHR POSTER SITE	2
MOOSE PLATE REMINDER.....	2
STATE REGISTER LISTINGS	3
2005 ENVIROTHON	3

**NH Division of
Historical Resources**
<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr>

James McConaha
Director & State Historic Preservation Officer

P. Russell Bastedo
State Curator

Patricia Blevens
Program Assistant

Richard A. Boisvert
State Archaeologist

Edna M. Feighner
*Historical Archaeologist &
Review and Compliance Coordinator*

Deborah J. Gagne
Program Assistant

James L. Garvin
State Architectural Historian

Elizabeth H. Muzzey
State Survey Coordinator

Christine Fonda Rankie
*National Register, Preservation Tax
Incentives & Covenants Coordinator*

[Vacancy]
Resource Inventory Technician

Linda Ray Wilson
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

[Vacancy]
*Grants Manager & Certified Local
Governments Coordinator*

[Vacancy]
Preservation Planner

**STATE HISTORICAL
RESOURCES COUNCIL**

Jason Hoch, Littleton, *Chair*
Mary Rose Boswell, Laconia
Gail Nessell Colglazier, Londonderry
Sheryl N. Hack, Canterbury
Robert Macieski, New Boston
Duffy Monahan, Peterborough
Carl W. Schmidt, Orford
David R. Starbuck, Plymouth, *Vice Chair*
David Watters, Dover

[Appointment pending],
Governor's Designee
James McConaha, *Ex-officio*
Patricia Blevens, *Secretary*

**DEPARTMENT OF
CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Van McLeod
Commissioner

The DHR is a state agency, supported by the State of New Hampshire, by the federal Historic Preservation Fund (through a matching grant administered by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior), and by donated funds and services. In addition to its state functions, the DHR is also responsible for administering the federal preservation program in New Hampshire.

Recent National Register Listings



North Charlestown Historic District, Charlestown NH. Listed June 2005. Photograph by Lisa Mausolf.

The North Charlestown Historic District is a well preserved village center initially settled c.1790. Its early focus was the Little Sugar River whose water power drove small manufacturing concerns. The nearby Connecticut River provided for movement of goods, and through-traffic on area roads helped business grow. The railroad's arrival enhanced the flow of goods and passengers. More recent changes in transportation have bypassed the village, helping it to remain a cohesive and intact unit. Within the grouping is a range of resource types documenting this 19th century local center of civic, religious, commercial, and transportation activity.



Chocorua Lake Basin Historic District, Tamworth NH. Listed June 2005. Photograph by Elizabeth Hengen.

The Chocorua Lake Basin Historic District is a distinctive summer colony with significance in conservation as well as architecture. Initially an agricultural community in the late 18th century, the area evolved into one dominated by summer residents who put down deep roots. The properties within the district blend with the natural beauty of the area. They range from large architect-designed summer home complexes to small

cottages, log cabins, and simple bath-houses. The setting around Chocorua Lake, with views of the water and Mount Chocorua beyond, is the centerpiece of the district. This beauty and its vulnerability sparked committed conservation efforts in the late 19th century that have continued actively to this day.

*Christine Fonda Rankie
National Register &
Tax Incentives Coordinator*

Feedback on the "DHR Publications" Web Pages

Received by Russell Bastedo, State Curator and reprinted by permission

I came across your web site while looking for WW2 posters. I am the Operations Security (OPSEC) Manager for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). I was putting together a briefing on OPSEC and needed some posters from WW2. I give a 45-50 minute presentation on OPSEC and part of the brief talks about the history of OPSEC. I used a few of your posters (Loose Lips Sink Ships) as part of my briefing. Because NORAD is a Bi-National Command I also had the opportunity to brief one of our Canadian Regions. The Canadian poster sure came in handy as I made it part of my presentation while in Winnipeg, Canada. Thank you for making these treasures available online.

*David Carson
NORAD & USNORTHCOM*

Show everyone that
YOU care about saving
NH's special places:



www.moosplate.com

New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (DHR) is very pleased to announce that five more properties have been listed in the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. Each is pictured below, in views from their respective nominations. For more information on the benefits of listing a property on the State Register and the application process, please visit our web site, <http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/>, or contact the office at 19 Pillsbury Street, 2nd Floor, Concord, NH 03301, 603-271-3483.



Gorham Town Hall, Gorham: Built in 1919 in brick, Gorham Town Hall replaced opera houses that had burned on the site in 1914 and in 1917. Since then, the three-story Colonial Revival style building has been the center of community life, over the years housing the town offices, the police and fire departments, the town library, an auditorium and the local Masonic lodge.



Blanchard-Bowers House, Merrimack: According to local records, the Blanchard-Bowers House was built c.1726 as a center chimney cape, raised to 2-1/2 stories about 1750, and

then updated with a colonnaded façade addition in the 1830s. Today the building is among the best examples of the Greek Revival style in Merrimack and houses the administrative offices of the Thomas More College. Each of its architectural transitions illustrates the town's growing prosperity as a 19th century center for agriculture, industry and trade.



The Whipple House, Bristol: The Whipple House was built in 1904 for the family of Henry Chandler Whipple, president of the Dodge Davis Woolen Mill, a local mill that was perhaps best known for providing uniforms to major league baseball teams. This well-preserved Queen Anne style home is a landmark in historic downtown Bristol.



Rossvie Farm, Concord: Well-known for its strawberries, pumpkins, maple syrup and Christmas trees, Rossvie Farm today incorporates three early farms in West Concord. Historic farm buildings, a former school house, cellar holes, sugar bush, stone walls, and acres of fields and forests together tell the story of farming in the Merrimack River valley for more than 200 years.



Baptist New Meeting House, New London: The design of this Federal style meeting house was patterned after designs in Asher Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant*, the first architectural guidebook written by an American for American craftsmen. Since 1826, the church has sheltered religious and community activities, redefining the center of New London and drawing the center of the village from Summer Street east to its current location.

*Elizabeth H. Muzzey
State Survey Coordinator*

NH Envirothon 2005

Envirothon is an annual North American high school competition to build students' knowledge of water resources, forests, soils, wildlife, and current environmental issues. The 2005 subject, **Managing Cultural Landscapes**, introduced students to the complex range of choices, constraints, opportunities, and unintended consequences that need to be considered when projects involving changes to natural and cultural resources are being planned.

For the first time, planning for the NH Envirothon included the DHR and focused on one of the DHR's major concerns: the proposed removal of the historic Homestead Woolen Mills dam in West Swanzey. The competition was hosted by Canterbury Shaker Village, an ideal location to witness the management of more than 700 acres of natural resources in conjunction with a major internationally known cultural resource.

For information about the 2006 Envirothon, contact the NH Envirothon coordinator, Herb Vadney, at 603-279-3436.

Have You (Re)Joined the NHPA/DHR News Network?

Send an email to linda.wilson@dcr.nh.gov to join or rejoin us!

Daniel Webster Farm *(continued from page one)*

the Sisters of the Holy Cross (see *The Old Stone Wall*, Spring 2005). Although the Franklin zoning board of adjustment denied the original proposal to cluster 130 manufactured homes along the riverfront, Franklin zoning rules would permit the construction of as many as sixty individual houses on 1.84-acre lots.

“Elms Farm” was Daniel Webster’s New Hampshire retreat throughout his mature life and his permanent link to the soil of New Hampshire, his native state. The property retains a farmhouse that Webster’s father purchased around 1800. Writing from the dwelling in 1846, Webster revealed the ties that bound him to the site: “My eye sweeps a rich and level field of 100 acres. At the end of it, a third of a mile off, I see plain marble grave-stones, designating the places where repose my father, my mother, my brother Joseph, and my sisters Mehetabel, Abigail, and Sarah.” In a letter to his son, Fletcher, in 1848, Webster said of Elms Farm, “this is the most beautiful place on this earth.”

With the burning of Daniel Webster’s other home in Marshfield, Massachusetts, in 1890, Elms Farm assumed a deeper connection with Webster than almost any other property in the country. In recognition of this association, the National Park Service named the farmhouse a National Historic Landmark in 1974.

The farmhouse has another historical distinction that is often overshadowed by its connections with the Webster family. This building was the nucleus of the New Hampshire Orphans’ Home, a private institution that was the first of its kind in the state and one of the earliest rural orphanages ever established in the

United States. Between 1871 and 1925, a dozen buildings were clustered around the old dwelling. Today, having no obvious use to a developer intent on profiting from the construction of houses, these buildings are as much in jeopardy as the fertile fields that embrace them.

Designation as one of the nation’s “Most Endangered” properties will raise the level of concern for Elms Farm beyond local and state arenas. National visibility should bring new resources to an issue that has thus far been treated as a local matter, greatly expanding the circle of those who can address the plight of this vulnerable treasure.

James L. Garvin
State Architectural Historian

See related coverage on the Daniel Webster Farm in this issue of New Hampshire Preservation Alliance News

Allenstown Meeting House *(continued from page one)*

evidence also pointed strongly to the fact that the Allenstown roof had been unique in many ways.

The forensic workshop was led by expert timber framer Arron J. Sturgis of Preservation Timber Framing, Inc., in Berwick, Maine; engineer Edward M. Levin of Paradigm Builders in Hanover, N. H., a contributing editor to the Guild’s quarterly journal, *Timber Framing*; and architect Jack A. Sobon of Windsor, Massachusetts, author of many articles and books, including

Historic American Timber Joinery.

A guiding principle of the workshop was that a new roof should not be fabricated until the historic structure had been evaluated from the foundations upward and found capable of bearing the stresses that a new roof would impose upon it. Following a briefing by James Garvin on local carpentry practices and meeting house roof framing, participants swarmed over and under the building, measuring, probing, photographing, and assessing the condition of the structure. Their evaluation will prove invaluable to the local committee and will lead to several conservation treatments of the original building fabric.

Combining a meticulous inspection of the lower frame with an analysis of the notes of Neil English and of photographs taken in 1985 after the fire, the team proposed a roof system that appears close to the original.

In a remarkable tour de force of computer simulation, engineer Levin created a digital model of the roof. He then imposed the snow loading to be expected in Allenstown, together with the weight of the original plastered ceiling that had trapped the heat of the fire within the attic and thereby saved the old building from complete destruction. When these loads were applied, the animated computer model deflected precisely as pre-fire photographs showed that the original roof and ceiling had sagged over time.

Based on its inspection of the meeting house, the Timber Framers Guild may propose additional workshops that will use the building as a laboratory for teaching other building conservation skills.

James L. Garvin
State Architectural Historian

State of New Hampshire • Department of Cultural Resources • Division of Historical Resources

19 Pillsbury Street, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-3570

603-271-3483 or 603-271-3558 • FAX 603-271-3433 • Voice/TTY Relay Access 1-800-735-2964 • preservation@dcr.nh.gov

This newsletter has been financed in part with a federal ‘Historic Preservation Fund’ matching grant from the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, to the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources/State Historic Preservation Office. Part of the cost of this newsletter has been paid by the DHR’s annual federal program grant. However, its contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior. Regulations of the US Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or disability. The State of New Hampshire (under RSA 275 and RSA 354-a) prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race, creed, color, marital status, physical or mental disability or national origin. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20240.