

4. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Dunbarton has a rich and productive history, which is preserved today with many historic and cultural resources still existing throughout the Town. These historic houses, barns, cemeteries, stone walls, and churches have remained a staple of the Town’s rural landscape, keeping longtime residents in Town and drawing new residents to the community. Dunbarton also has a strong sense of community among its residents, many of whom volunteer and participate on local boards and organizations and contribute to the success of local events and activities held in Town.

The first authoritative mention of Dunbarton (originally named Starkstown) is from 1692, with a description of the Nipnuch Native Americans roaming the territory. Permanent settlements first appeared in 1749 when James Rogers, followed by James Putney, erected homesteads. In the mid 1700’s, John Stark was granted 100 acres of land to build a sawmill, which remained open until 1890. The presence of the Stark mill led to the construction of framed houses beginning in 1765, followed by the laying out of highways two years later. From 1752 to 1862, Dunbarton was a thriving agricultural Town with dairy products regularly shipped to Boston. The production of wool, hops, wheat, flax, vegetable crops and lumber provided most families with a comfortable living.

From these beginnings to the community it is today, Dunbarton residents have continuously documented and tracked its historic and cultural heritage. While history doesn’t necessarily change with every revision to a master plan, there is new information available from the community survey and other public outreach events as

well as changes to ordinances and regulations that have been updated.

This Chapter focuses on Dunbarton’s historic and cultural resources, including an overview of Dunbarton’s history and a summary of past and present cultural activities held in Town. It also discusses techniques and opportunities to preserve these resources for years to come.

VISION STATEMENT

Continue to appreciate and preserve Dunbarton’s historic character and cultural resources for current and future generations.

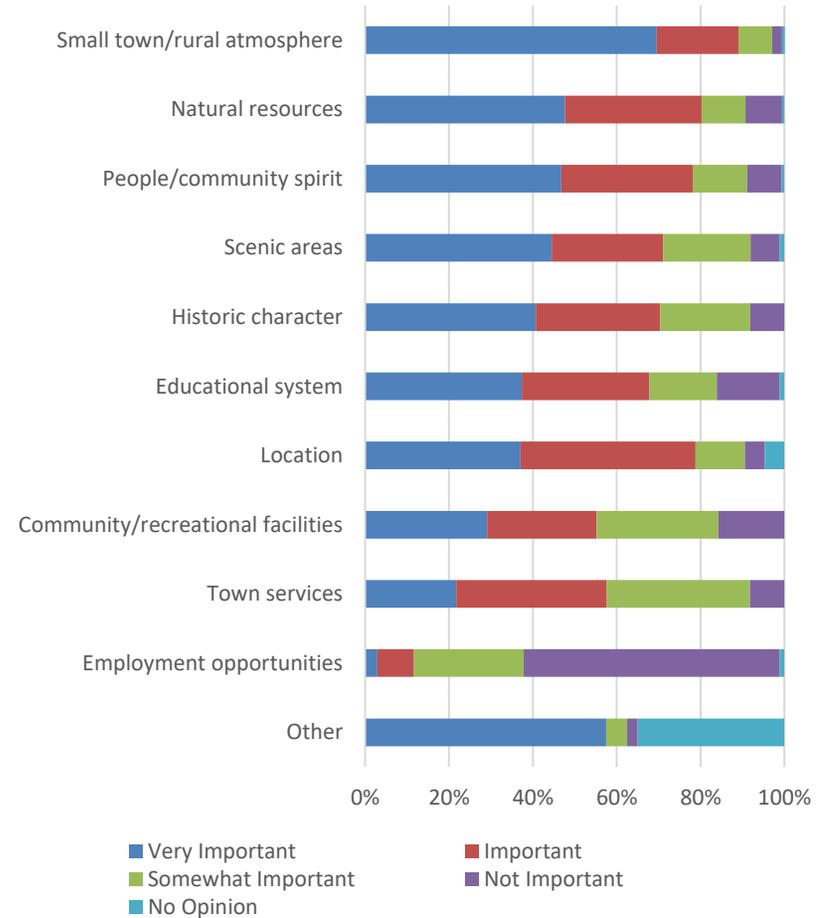
COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Prior to writing the Master Plan, a Community Survey was available to residents to provide input. In addition to the specific questions about historical resources, there were several opportunities for respondents to submit write-in comments. Preserving the historic Town Center, historic homes, and the character of Dunbarton were the subjects of many written comments. More community events were also mentioned as a way to bring the community together and continue to keep the strong sense of community Dunbarton currently has.

Responses to the Community Survey demonstrate residents' appreciation of the Town's small-town feel and rural character, rating it as Dunbarton's most important feature (Question 2). Also rated highly were scenic areas, natural resources, and historic character. The majority of participants (89.2%) are in favor of preserving Dunbarton's rural character as an overall goal of this Master Plan.

The majority of respondents, 79.9%, stated they value historic places and properties in Dunbarton. Results also show some interest in a historic district, but not overwhelmingly, with 51.2% of survey participants in favor. It may be beneficial for the Historic Awareness Committee or Historical Society to explore this further through a historical resources survey. This could help determine what could be done to preserve historic resources in the future that would be supported by a majority of residents.

Survey Question #2: Please rate each of the following features for their importance to you in Dunbarton.



Community Survey Question #17: Do you think that maintaining Dunbarton’s rural character should be a goal of the current Master Plan, as it was in the previous Plan?

Q.17	Total	Percent
Yes	149	89.2%
No	13	7.8%
No opinion	5	3.0%
Total	167	100.0%

Community Survey Question #23: Do you value historic places or properties in Dunbarton?

Q. 23	Total	Percent
Yes	135	79.9%
No	19	11.2%
No opinion	15	8.9%
Total	169	100.0%

Community Survey Question #24: Do you support the designation of a specific area in Dunbarton as a historic district?

Q. 24	Total	Percent
Yes	86	51.2%
No	54	32.1%
No opinion	28	16.7%
Total	168	100.0%

DUNBARTON COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSION

Attendees at the Dunbarton Community Visioning Session emphasized that Dunbarton’s history and historic buildings were highly valued, specifically mentioning the Library and the Town Hall. The contribution of Dunbarton’s residents to the overall strong sense of community and place was specifically mentioned by attendees. However, concern was expressed that this strong sense

of community seems to be changing and there needs to be a focus on keeping the community together in the future.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DUNBARTON

The earliest times of European influence on New Hampshire were the 1600s. In 1621, Captain John Mason procured a grant of land between the Naumkeag River in Salem, Massachusetts and the Merrimack River. In 1749, the grant was sold to a group of twelve men known as the Masonian Proprietors, who resided in the Seacoast area. These twelve became responsible for granting new townships in New Hampshire.

In 1749, the Masonian Proprietors granted a new township to a group headed by Archibald Stark. The township was named Starkstown in Stark’s honor. In 1751, Starkstown was re-granted, and the first meeting of the Starkstown Proprietors was held on April 8, 1751, in Londonderry.

In New Hampshire, after land was granted, there was a period of settling the frontier – establishing property boundaries, clearing the land, building rudimentary houses, planting, putting in roads and constructing mills. Nature was viewed as a wilderness to be conquered. The terms of the Starkstown grant were aimed at encouraging settlement – quickly:

“By the last of May, next, 30 families must take up residence on their lots; have a house built that is at least 16 feet square, or the equivalent (sic); have 3 acres of land cleared for tillage or mowing and shall clear 3 acres more, yearly, for the next 2 years.”

If a lot was not settled as required by the conditions of the grant, the ownership of the lot would be forfeited, and the lot would be

sold at auction. The grantees were also required to build a meeting house within five years. If settlement was not made in accordance with the intent and meaning of the grant within the allotted time, then the whole grant would become null and void and revert to the Grantors.

Under these conditions, Dunbarton's early settlement developed into an agricultural community, as did other settlements in New Hampshire. Between 1761 and 1775, New Hampshire grew faster than any of the other colonies, and at the time of the Revolution, farming was New Hampshire's largest single industry.

In Dunbarton, local gristmills and sawmills were established to support the local farms. About 1760, the Starkstown proprietors granted John Stark 100 acres to build a sawmill "to sell boards to the settlers of Starkstown as cheap as any of the neighboring mills sell," and other mills were established later.

In addition to mills, Dunbarton supported small industries including coopers, tanneries, shoemakers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and carpenters. There were stores at Page's Corner and in the Center. In 1808, selectmen issued eleven permits, most of which included the right to "mix and sell spirituous liquors," to Dunbarton innkeepers.

At the beginning of the 19th century, farming was still strong in New Hampshire. The Census of 1820 listed 52,384 residents earning a living by agriculture compared to 1,068 who were in commerce and 8,699 in manufacturing. A newspaper article dated 1831 said of Dunbarton,

"...enterprising farmers of this excellent farming town have realized abundant crops of wheat the present year, as well as great crops of almost everything else. Competent judges say that the wheat and rye raised in

Dunbarton this season are sufficient to bread the whole population for the coming year. Few, if any, towns in New England supply themselves as independently of other sections of the country as does Dunbarton."

However, the opening of the western states before the Civil War brought cheaper land that could be farmed more productively. In the 1850s, land in the West sold for about \$1.25 per acre, compared to about \$30 per acre in New Hampshire. It cost a New England farmer about forty to fifty cents to produce a bushel of corn, while in Illinois, it cost twelve to fifteen cents. After the Civil War, young men followed the advice of Amherst native Horace Greeley and went west. In 1963, Weston P. Lord wrote of Dunbarton:

"About the time of the Civil War was the farmers' greatest period of prosperity...There were eleven sawmills running in or near Dunbarton...Farming as a business was at its peak. All products of the farm, beef, hay, lumber, wood, apples, vegetables, eggs and milk were in good demand...During the Civil War, many of the younger men went away to war, and then went west after the war was over. As the west was opened prices began to fall...Young men were accepting higher paid positions in industry. There was a lack of confidence in investing huge sums of money in farming when no one seemed to know what the future of agriculture would be."

Industrialization further changed the state. Where water power was available, it was put to use. On a smaller scale, in towns like Harrisville, and on a larger scale, in the cities of Manchester, Nashua, Dover and Somersworth, corporations developed mills. These mills initially drew their labor force from farms.

Railroads tied New Hampshire to the rest of the country, making it easier to move factory goods to markets. They also brought in cheaper farm products from the West, and made travel to the West easier.

New Hampshire's economic problems continued in the first half of the 20th century. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, textile mills were proving to be uncompetitive, and the growth of the state's population slowed markedly. New Hampshire's industries shifted to shoe and electronics manufacturing.

The railroads that carried produce to markets outside of New Hampshire also brought tourists. Tourism and the appreciation of the state's natural resources became a new cultural and economic force in the state, a force that continues to grow.

In the late 20th century, the introduction of high-tech industries, the continued growth of tourism, and the proliferation of service industry jobs has transformed New Hampshire from a slow-growing state into the fastest growing state in the Northeast.

*“Since the middle of the 19th century, the most powerful current in the state’s development has been the growth of business and industry. However, a secondary current – the desire to create a happy society based on local autonomy and individual freedom in **a congenial rural environment** – has both challenged and enriched the desire for economic growth.¹ [Emphasis added]*

Dunbarton has no major sources of water power, so did not become industrialized. Railroads were built to the south, west and east, but

¹ Heffernan, Nancy Coffey and Stecker, Ann Page, New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in its Development, University Press of New England, 1996.

not through Dunbarton. Farming remained, but gradually, fields have reverted to forest. By 1975, Alice M. Hadley's Where the Winds Blow Free listed thirteen small businesses and two working farms in the Town of Dunbarton.

While many of the cities and towns around Dunbarton have experienced notable growth and development in response to the economic and transportation trends in the state, Dunbarton has retained a rural character that harkens back to times when the state was a colony and “The farmer’s life was marked by diligent, sober work, close family interdependence and communal responsibility.” Dunbarton has avoided suburban sprawl and highway shopping strips.

Attitudes toward undeveloped land have evolved from the fear of an untamed, threatening wilderness that was prevalent in colonial times through economic exploitation of resources to a reverence for an Acadia with recreational, spiritual and even moral characteristics. Dunbarton embodies the “congenial rural environment” that will be so highly sought after as the 21st century progresses. The question today is whether this rural environment will be preserved for future generations.

References

Hadley, Alice M., *Where the Winds Blow Free*, Published for the Dunbarton History Committee by Phoenix Publishing, 1976.

Heffernan, Nancy Coffey and Stecker, Ann Page, *New Hampshire: Crosscurrents in its Development*, University Press of New England, 1996.

Noyes, Harlan A., *Where Settlers’ Feet Have Trod*, Town of Dunbarton, 2004.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

From the mid-eighteenth century through the first decades of the 20th century, Dunbarton's historical character developed in several distinct geographical areas. The Town Center, Page's Corner, Mansion Road and Montalona areas, are reminders of Dunbarton's social and architectural heritage. These areas, as well as other less geographically distinct areas, require future efforts to preserve their historical character.

From an historical point of view, Dunbarton Center and Page's Corner remain the areas of Dunbarton with the highest concentration of historical buildings. The Center today is a picture of the classic New England Town center with a Town common, meetinghouse, cemetery, and church surrounded by numerous colonial and Federal era homes. Page's Corner, still designated on most geographical atlases and maps, possesses one of central New Hampshire's more significant concentrations of historically and architecturally significant homes of the colonial and financially prosperous early Federal era, extending not only along Stark Highway but also into the historically and architecturally significant Tenney Hill neighborhood. Both the Mansion Road and Montalona districts incorporate important Colonial and early Federal era farms dwellings, from the simplest and earliest two-room structures to grand late-Federal homes.

While each of these areas deserves special consideration as historic neighborhoods or areas of Dunbarton, it is also essential that historical preservation occur throughout Dunbarton for all historic homes. It will require considerable thought as to how to accomplish historic preservation of certain properties while maintaining the balance of new homes mixed with old without infringing on property owner rights.

Dunbarton is a bedroom community which lies nestled between two major cities: Manchester and Concord. Residents have the opportunity to travel, shop and work in either city. Neighboring Towns include Goffstown, Weare, Bow and Hopkinton.

Residents in Dunbarton are fiercely independent, value their Town, and protect their resources. There is a strong community spirit within Dunbarton, and people involved with their Town express their thoughts openly.

FEATURES AND RESOURCES

LOCAL HISTORIC MARKERS

The Dunbarton Historical Awareness Committee was created at Town Meeting in March of 1992, with three specific charges. One was to research and document historic houses and structures (and sites) and arrange for property owners to have historic house signs if they desired.

To date, over 80% of historical structures in Dunbarton have received signs. But since all structures over 100 years of age are eligible, this will continue to be an ongoing project for the Committee. Additionally, the first signs were made of wood and hand painted and need replacements. Newer signs have been made of a weather-resistant composite material with etched verbiage.

HISTORICAL SITES AND STRUCTURES

PRIVATELY-OWNED HOMES

The Town of Dunbarton remains a relatively rural community to the present day, and has been fortunate to have retained many of its historical resources. Dunbarton's roadsides are graced with the presence of many wonderful historic homes and cellar sites, many of which are comprised of beautiful cut granite.

Because these homes and cellar sites are too numerous to list, an entire map with markers was created in 1976 by Harlan “Bud” Noyes titled “The Past and Present of Dunbarton NH as of 1976.” It’s published on pages 154 & 155 in “Where the Winds Blow Free” and also available at the Library in full scale.

In a combined effort with the Dunbarton Conservation Commission, these historic homes and cellar sites were overlaid on an existing map of the Town. This allows residents using the many hiking trails to identify cellar sites and read about their history.

Many of these sites and structures are displayed on the **Historic Features: Cellar Sites and Cemeteries Map** and the **Historic Features: Home Sites Map**.

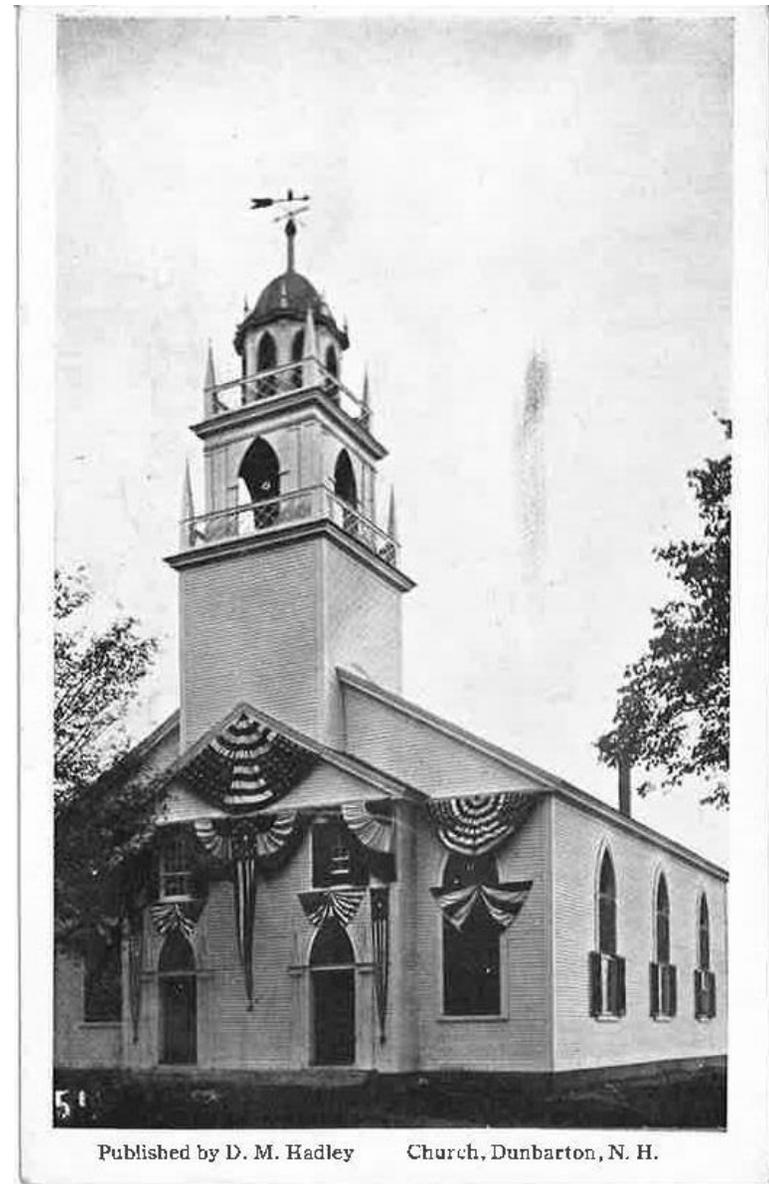
CHURCHES

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF DUNBARTON

On June 18, 1789, the First Congregational Church of Dunbarton was founded with the Reverend Walter Harris as its minister. The Congregational Church members used the Town Meeting House for worship peacefully until the year 1833. Because of the increasing competition for worship space with the Baptists and Universalists, the Congregationalists decided to build a church of their own. In 1836, the Congregational Church commissioned the skills of master builder, Capt. Samuel Kimball. The Church was constructed in the center of Town, west of the Town Common. Its steeple design mimics the architecture of the steeple of the North Church of Boston. The First Congregational Church of Dunbarton worships in this historic church to this day.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH VESTRY

In the Congregational Society’s annual meeting report of March 21, 1832, the Vestry was to be built so that the Congregationalists could have a place to hold their meetings other than the Town Meeting



The First Congregational Church, Stark Highway North, Dunbarton

House. The Vestry was built in 1832 originally on the east side of the Town Common where it stood until the year 1873. The building was used by both the church and Town for meetings and a high school. It was then moved by oxen to its present location on the west side of the Town Common and just north of the Congregational Church. The move began on November 22nd and was completed on December 6th.

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Construction of the church began in 1866 on a plot of land owned by Miss Mary Stark, located near the Stark Mansion. The building boasts Gothic architecture and is graced with beautiful stained glass windows which were donated by Reverend Henry A. Coit, a rector of St. Paul's School. St. Paul's also donated the pipe organ. Thomas G. Valvey, a master at St. Paul's School, conducted services in the new church until 1867. Because of the secluded location of the church, it was moved – mostly intact- by a large team of oxen to its present day location on Stark Highway North in 1890. The land was donated by David Sargent. The entire project was completed in one week by master builder John Bunten.

ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

Throughout Dunbarton's history, there have been eleven known one-room school houses scattered across each section of Town. Two of these schoolhouses are still standing today, the Page's Corner Schoolhouse and Dunbarton Center Schoolhouse. The Historical Awareness Committee is currently in the process of documenting the eleven schoolhouses as one of their ongoing projects.

COLBY (SOUTH) SCHOOL (DISTRICT #1)

Of frame construction, this school house was built during the mid-1800s and was moved a total of three times. It was converted into a

dwelling in 1956 and is currently part of a private home on Long Pond Road.

DUNBARTON CENTRE (CENTER) SCHOOL (DISTRICT #2)

Comprising the most westerly-situated third of the Town Office Building, this structure was originally the Dunbarton Centre School. Originally built in 1866, two more additions came in later years and it was in use until 1971. (This school is not to be confused with Dunbarton's rumored "first school" supposedly constructed in the Town center behind the Center Store prior to 1866).

STARK SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #3)

This structure was a red, frame, hip roofed structure that stood at the intersection of Ray, Hoyt, and Mansion Roads. Remnants of the foundation remain, the school yard "shade" tree located on the west of the school house remains, as well as a grainy photo. The Historical Awareness Committee plans on placing a historic marker at the site.

WAITE SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #4)

This building was a white, frame structure that was constructed around 1850 and stood near the intersection of Guinea and Grapevine Roads. It was purchased in 1951/1952 and moved by flatbed to Grapevine Road and converted into a private residence. The outhouse was attached to the existing structure to form the kitchen and a breezeway.

MONTALONA SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #5)

This school house was of frame construction and painted white. Located on Montalona Road it is said to have been moved once or twice before resting in its current location. After it was no longer used as a school, the Boy Scouts and Silver Birch 4H used it as a meeting place until the 1960s. Sometime later it was taken down; the maple floor is now part of a house on County Road and the

granite step graces a home on Jay Drive. The school clock is in possession of the Town. Several interior and exterior photos exist.

PAGE'S CORNER SCHOOLHOUSE (DISTRICT #6)

Built in 1855 from bricks manufactured at Dunbarton's only brickyard on Gorham Pond Road, it replaces a frame school house formerly on this site. It is now owned by the Dunbarton Historical Society and is one of their three museums.

STINSON SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #7)

This was the Town's third school house and was located on Gorham Pond Road in the same area that contained three large Stinson farms. Parts of the foundation are intact, the sugar maple "shade" tree to the west of the foundation remains, as well as evidence of a privy. The Historical Awareness Commission is currently undergoing research to locate a photo and a historical marker is being discussed.

WHEEL SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #8), BAILEY SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #9), AND RAY SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #10)

These schools were last known to be in existence in 1903. They were of frame construction, with the Bailey School painted red. Sites are noted on the Noyes historical 1976 map, but photos have not yet been located. These sites will be researched, measured, photographed and GPS coordinates are currently being established. The Historical Awareness Committee plans to place historical markers on all sites.

BURNHAM HILL SCHOOL HOUSE (DISTRICT #11)

This brick school house was built in 1855, although there was probably an earlier structure of frame construction either on this site or nearby. Again, the bricks were from a brickyard on nearby Gorham Pond Road. When no longer in use as a school, it was utilized by one of the "Ladies Groups" in Town as a little shop for

fundraising; coffee, baked goods and other items were stocked. It was later sold and converted to a private residence and is still occupied as a home on Stark Highway South.

TOWN STRUCTURES

TOWN HALL

Gracing the center of the Town Common, the Town Hall was built in 1908. It is erected on the same site as the original 1789 Town Meetinghouse, which was destroyed by fire in 1908.

TOWN COMMON BANDSTAND

A bandstand was an active part of community life and spot where the Dunbarton Coronet Band played many times between the years 1882 and 1913. In 2008, a second Town Common bandstand was built with monies raised over the previous seven years; no taxpayer funds were used.



Late 1800's – Dunbarton Town Hall & Bandstand

TOWN POUND

In 1791, the Town voted to build a Town Pound of stone for Town use. The dimensions of the pound were to be 32 feet square inside, 6 feet high of stone and a stack of timber on top with one side flat that locks the corners. The walls were to be 4 feet thick at the bottom and 3 feet thick at the top and built of large stones. The pound was used to contain loose livestock and pets until the owners could claim them.



Published by D. M. Hadley The Town Pound, Dunbarton N. H.

Dunbarton Town Pound, unknown year.

TOWN HEARSE HOUSE & HORSE-DRAWN HEARSE

The first Hearse House was in the Center Cemetery until destroyed by a fire in 1858. The mid-1800s horse-drawn hearse, burned and in a state of disrepair, was shuttled between various locations in Dunbarton for years until it was saved by a private citizen when it was headed to the scrap heap. In 2003 a Town committee was formed to raise funds, restore the hearse and build a new hearse house. Due to lack of space in the Center Cemetery, a new house

was built at Pages Cemetery and the project was completed and dedicated in 2007. Today, the hearse is taken out for various occasions and is also viewable through a sliding panel whenever the cemetery is open.

SHOPS

WAITE BLACKSMITH SHOP

A beautiful stone structure, the blacksmith shop was built by Jonathon Waite. The shop was originally located on the north side of Grapevine Road and was built from stone cut from the Guinea Road area. In 1980, under the ownership of the Dunbarton Historical Society, the blacksmith shop was moved stone by stone to its present day location on Stark Highway North and is now part of the Dunbarton Historical Society's Museum.

SITES

ROBERT ROGERS' HOME CELLAR SITE

One of the most famous men in the history of the French and Indian War, Robert Rogers was appointed as captain to a company of rangers in the year 1755. Soon to be called "Rogers' Rangers," they were considered the most invincible group of men in the early wars of America. Robert Rogers developed a code to govern soldiers' actions in times of conflict which is still taught today in the United States 75th Ranger Regiment. The cellar site is located off of Robert Rogers Road in the area of the Great Meadows. The site is protected through an easement held by the Dunbarton Historical Society.

STATUE OF CALEB STARK

Located in the Town Common near the public library, this life-like bronze statue commemorates the son of General John Stark, a hero of the Revolutionary War. Caleb joined his father at the Battle of Bunker Hill in Charlestown, Massachusetts. The statue was donated by Herb & Laraine Allen, a direct descendent of General John Stark.

MILL SITES

From Town records, it appears that throughout Dunbarton's early history, nearly every section of Town had one or more sawmills.

STARK MILL

Constructed at the outlet of Stark Pond, the sawmill was built by John Stark on land that was granted to him by the town in 1760. This enabled the settlers to begin building framed houses instead of log cabins. Soon after its completion, a grist mill was added. During its time of operation, it was also used as a shingle mill. In January of 1916, the historic mills were taken down. A bronze plaque once marked the site but went missing many years ago. One of the two original mill stones was relocated to the grounds of the Stark Mansion on Mansion Road. In addition, one of the mill stones was relocated to the Pages Corner School House owned by the Dunbarton Historic Society.

PAGE & HADLEY MILL

Constructed at the outlet of Kimball Pond, a grist mill was built by Benjamin Hadley on land he acquired in 1771. The mill at one point in its history also became a sawmill. The mill was later owned by Hezekiah and Ebenezer Woodbury and was known for years as Woodbury's Mill. The mill then passed into the hands of the Kimball family, thus the current name "Kimball Pond." The mill changed name again, later being called Page's Mill. The mill burned down on October 6, 1919. The Dunbarton Historical Awareness Committee installed two historical markers at this site in 2017.

STINSON'S MILL

On the outlet of Long Pond, a sawmill was built by the Stinson family.

SARGENT MILL

Constructed on what was known as Bog Brook, it lay north of the

old George Noyes place, near the Bow line. The original owner is unknown; however, it was later owned by John Page.

STACK BROOK MILLS

Two mills were located on along Stack Brook, one built by Samuel Evans and the other by a person with the name of Putney.

SMITH MILL

A sawmill was constructed on Harris Brook about 1809 by Samuel Smith. Remnants of the old dam can still be seen near residences on Rangeway Road.

INCOMPLETE DOCUMENTED MILL SITES

- A mill once stood on a brook east of the Dornier place on Montalona Road (the stone dam can still be seen).
- Dan Gregg operated a mill located west of the Labbe property on Mansion Road.
- A mill once stood on Harry Brook, located in the southeast corner of Town.
- The Colby Shingle Mill stood west on the old Putnam Colby place (location unknown).
- A mill once stood on property at the western end of Tenney Hill Road (near Stark Highway North) which was owned by the Mills family.
- Evans Mill once stood west of Tenney Hill Road near Bella Brook.
- Numerous old deeds refer to land with "mill privileges", but it is not presently known if mills were actually constructed on these sites. Much of the information found in old deeds is yet to be scrutinized, studied and catalogued.

52 BARNs IN 52 WEEKS

Across New Hampshire, historic barns are one of the many characteristics that contribute to the state's rural character and scenic beauty. Dunbarton is lucky to still have many historic barns standing or even still in use by property owners. In an effort to slow down the deterioration and demolition of these important historical resources, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance oversees *52 Barns in 52 Weeks*, a program that offers assessment grants that help owners prioritize and plan barn repair work, offers educational programs for barn owners and enthusiasts, and expands the use of a state barn easement program that can offer tax relief to property owners for their historic agricultural structures. The program has a goal of helping 52 barns across New Hampshire in 2017.

Additional information on this program and other programs offered the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance can be found at <https://nhpreservation.org/new-hampshire-preservation-alliance/>.

BARNs

For nearly 200 years, New England farmers used a traditional barn design called the English Barn. English barns are characterized by the location of their main doors on the main side of the barn under its eaves. Dunbarton is fortunate to have two examples of English barns.

JOHN WHITE BARN

Located at 251 Stark Highway North, this barn was part of John White's original farm established in 1776. It features the large main doors on its north side visible from Route 13.

LUTHER CLEMENT BARN

Located at 1191 Gorham Pond Road, it is believed that the barn was moved from the farm across the street to its present location (from the historic property of Major John Stinson).

The majority of historic barns that are seen in Dunbarton and throughout New Hampshire are Yankee barns, distinguishable by their large doors on the gable ends. Another type of barn that graces Dunbarton's village setting is the village barn. These small attached barns, built during the 1800's and early 1900's, were built to house a village family's carriage horse, cow, chickens, a pig or some sheep. Some examples of village barns can be found in the Town Center and Page's Corner.

J. ALLEN CHAMBERLAIN BARN

Located at 1062 Gorham Pond Road, this large barn is believed to have been built around 1870. It's attached to the farmhouse and sits perpendicular to the road, with full access below barn storage from the south. It still contains an intact pig hoist in front of the rear double doors.

CEMETERIES

CENTER CEMETERY

It has been said that early settlers followed the custom of establishing a graveyard near the meetinghouse. The first graveyard was located on Parsonage land on the southern side of the Common, on or near the location of the Dunbarton Telephone Company buildings. This spot was referred to as Prospect Hill. Town history states that the first burial was probably for Samuel Stinson, whose estate was settled in 1759. The land was found to have too much ledge for burials, and thus the cemetery was moved to its present site.

The earliest entry for Center Cemetery's present location was in 1767, when it was voted that "the Selectmen build a pound and fence the graveyard." It was also "voted that any person or persons who shall not come, or send a hand to help build said pound and fence the graveyard...shall pay three shillings, lawful money, to the selectmen, to be collected by the constable."

In 1800, bids were again sought for fencing of the graveyard. Among the specifications was, "the Bids shall be by the rod (16½ linear feet) and nothing short of ten cents will be considered a bid." In 1803, the selectmen set the bounds of the Common.

PAGES CORNER CEMETERY

This cemetery was originally the Page family's private burial ground. In the northeast corner of the cemetery are several unmarked fieldstones marking the graves of the slaves owned by, and later freed by, Captain Caleb Page. The graves are now believed to be those of Scipio Page, his wife and three of his children.

STARK CEMETERY

The Stark Cemetery, established in 1815 by Major Caleb Stark, was originally located on the south side of Stark Pond. Located north of the Stark Mansion, it was built as a private cemetery for the Stark family and its descendants. In 1962, it was relocated to its present site on Mansion Road due to the installation of the Hopkinton-Everett Flood Control Area by the Army Corps of Engineers. The original site was below the flood line and in the event of major flooding, it would have been destroyed.

The statue of Christ, standing with outstretched arm in an attitude of benediction, was erected in 1914 by Arthur Winslow as a memorial to his parents and other Stark family members. Winslow found the original statue, in marble, in a churchyard at San Miniato,

Florence, Italy. Impressed by its beauty, Winslow arranged with its sculptor, Signor Dante Sodini, for this duplicate executed in bronze.

The Dunbarton Historical Society maintains the current cemetery site as well as the original site near Stark Pond. The famous poet Robert Lowell is buried here.

EAST DUNBARTON CEMETERY

This cemetery, currently located at Robert Rogers Road and Montalona Road, was first located adjacent to the old stone post on the Putney Homestead (now the Knight home) on Montalona Road. It was the resting place for members of the Putney family and sons of James Rogers. The date the cemetery was established is unknown, although it is known that it was at this location in 1791.

THE HISTORICAL AREA OF PAGES CORNER

Page's Corner by James L. Garvin, *State Architectural Historian*, January, 1996

With its open, agricultural setting, Page's Corner is one of the most attractive sections of Dunbarton. Architecturally, the village is one of the most distinguished in central New Hampshire. Although the district includes a number of small, modern dwellings, the majority of its older homes are large and imposing farmhouses that clearly reflect an era of agricultural prosperity. The spacious lots on which these houses stand (some of them now subdivided) derive from the large-scale farming that originally characterized the neighborhood.

The dwellings display architectural qualities that reveal the prosperity and taste of their original owners. These same features display the high degree of skill possessed by the artisans who framed and finished the houses. It is remarkable to find a group of houses of such scale in an agricultural village. The prosperity that gave birth to these spacious dwellings was undoubtedly a reflection of

the soil geology of the neighborhood. The deep loams that occur at and near Page's Corner, are among the finest agricultural soils to be found in Dunbarton and in all of Merrimack County. It is no accident that these productive soils have been kept open as mowed or cultivated fields until the present day, or that the Page's Corner area is one of the last districts in Dunbarton to be maintained under cultivation. Farmers who acquired land in this district were among the most fortunate of Dunbarton's grantees. Their good fortune is reflected in the fine houses they or their successors eventually constructed in this favored location.

The interior and exterior woodwork of these early-nineteenth-century houses is of fine quality. Remarkable in a farming neighborhood, this woodwork reveals the builders' familiarity with the latest architectural styles.



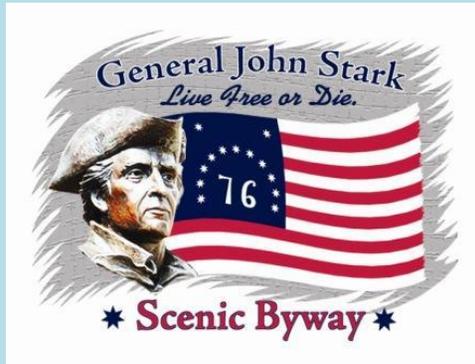
Molly Stark House

These houses of the late 1700s and early 1800s preserve an important and little-altered record of the aspirations of prosperous farming families and of the abilities of local craftsmen. The scale and well executed detailing of the houses lead one to wonder who built them. Did these prosperous farmers employ craftsmen from Concord, some seven miles away? Or did Dunbarton itself support carpenters and house-joiners with the skill to construct these great frames, and with the training, tools, and books needed to make these houses excellent examples of the architecture of the early nineteenth century? Concord, regrettably, has lost most of its houses of this era, so there is little in the capital city to compare with the dwellings of Page's Corner as we seek answers to these questions.

Houses like the Caleb Page (Molly Stark) House, the Clifford Tavern, and the William Tenney (Walker) House were built prior to the post-1800 group. Other houses in the neighborhood would be constructed after that group. These later buildings give the Page's Corner neighborhood the identity of a changing and evolving district, revealing the styles that marked the later nineteenth century. Among the later dwellings of the neighborhood are several that date from the 1850s. Simple and modest in scale, these houses reflect the transition to more flexible plans demanded by changing fashion and made possible by the substitution of stoves for fireplaces.

The neighborhood is fortunate to have a few historic buildings of a non-domestic nature. The brick Page's Corner (District No. 6) schoolhouse of 1855, now the headquarters of the Dunbarton Historical Society, is an excellent example of a nineteenth-century district school building in which all grades were taught by one teacher in one room. Brick schoolhouses were exceedingly rare in New Hampshire prior to 1850. Many of the insubstantial wooden

GENERAL JOHN STARK SCENIC BYWAY



The General John Stark Scenic Byway is a closed loop route connecting the four towns of Dunbarton, Goffstown, New Boston, and Weare. Designated as a Scenic Byway in 2008 by the State of New Hampshire, the Byway was named in honor of New Hampshire's best known Revolutionary War hero. After serving with distinction, Stark returned to his native New Hampshire to live with his wife Molly Stark in Dunbarton.

Traversing Routes 77 and 13, the Byway passes along distinctive sites of Dunbarton's history, including Page's Corner Cemetery, the Molly Stark House, First Congregational Church of Dunbarton, Page's Corner Schoolhouse, Dunbarton Center School, Dunbarton Town Hall, Dunbarton Town Pound, Waite Blacksmith Shop, and the life-like bronze statue of Caleb Stark, son of John and Molly Stark.

Additional information on the Byway and the General John Stark Scenic Byway Council can be found on the [Byway's website](#).

school buildings that had been common in the early nineteenth century were later condemned by educational reformers who urged the use of brick by those Towns or school districts that could afford the best construction. Today, the schoolhouse stands as a symbol of an important chapter in educational reform in New Hampshire.

Page's Corner is also fortunate in having one of the finest examples of a rural wooden Gothic chapel to be found in New Hampshire. Built near the Stark mansion in the 1860s, the Church of Saint John the Evangelist was moved to its present site in 1890. Reflecting an age when the Gothic style was rendered in a romantic rather than an archaeologically studied fashion, St. John's Church is a rare example of the "carpenter Gothic" period of American ecclesiastical architecture.

The Page's Corner district contains houses of every era from the eighteenth century to the twentieth. The neighborhood retains outstanding examples of several architectural styles, further enriched by a school building and a church that are significant monuments of their respective types. Its varied collection of buildings and its rural setting make Page's Corner a rare survivor from the agricultural age, preserved by good fortune into the late twentieth century.

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN DUNBARTON

Cultural resources are difficult to isolate from historical resources because one is often part of the other. The following list highlights some of the Town's resources, which are often described as being cultural. Some of the resources are run by the Town, while others are privately directed by local organizations and clubs.

DUNBARTON'S WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The Dunbarton Book Club was founded on January 10, 1904, and maintained an active membership until the club disbanded in 1983. It became affiliated with the New Hampshire Federation of Women's Clubs in 1919 and with the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1941. Although it was originally organized as a study club to promote interest in literature, drama, biography, art, music and current events, the scope was broadened to include the study of New Hampshire and its geographic area, natural resources, industries, etc. In later years, however, more emphasis was placed on community service with assistance to the library being one of its foremost projects.

PAST AND PRESENT ACTIVITIES

The following past and present activities have helped to shape the fabric of Dunbarton's current social environment.

CHURCH ACTIVITIES (PAST AND PRESENT)

- First Congregational Church of Dunbarton – including Ladies Aid Group and Spares and Pairs Group.
- St John's Episcopal Church Altar Guild.
- Baptist Church until 1905.
- First Congregational Church of Dunbarton – including maintaining Food Pantry for Town use and Youth Group.
- Church of St. John the Evangelist.

- Spireside Coffee House & Open Mic – third Saturdays of the Month at the Vestry (open to the public).
- Curios on the Common (in the former Dunbarton Center Store) – a thrift & gift shop to benefit the Church's Community efforts.

TOWN ACTIVITIES (PAST AND PRESENT)

- Fire Department - Women's Auxiliary and Annual Chicken BBQ and suppers.
- Police Department – Annual Dance.
- Dunbarton Community Club – 1926.
- Dunbarton Historical Society – including Lawn Party and programs of historic interest.
- Dunbarton Historical Awareness Committee – including installation of historical house signs on all structures over 100 years of age, plus historic markers for historic sites (public & private property).
- Centennial Celebrations.
- Dances at Stark Mansion.
- Dances at Town Hall.
- Town Hall activities (1769 – 1909).
- Trick or Treating around the Town Common.
- Art on the Common (Mother's Day Weekend).
- Dunbarton Public Library – including Summer Reading Program for children, Story Hour for preschoolers, and

Special educational programs.

- Police Department –Senior Citizens Events.
- Dunbarton Recreation Department – including sports programs, seasonal parties, and bus trips.
- Volunteer Spirit – including Barn & House raising, constructing the Recycling Center, Dunbarton Elementary School building additions and landscaping, and Fire Department Volunteers.
- Town Swimming Hole on Everett Road (near Town center) – 1940s-1950s.
- Town Softball Field (on land now occupied by the Town Sheds).
- Hiking Trails with Maps – Kuncanowet Town Forest, Bella Brook, Kimball Pond, Stone Farm.
- Hike of the Month with the Conservation Commission.

COMMUNITY GROUP ACTIVITIES (PAST AND PRESENT)

- Book Club.
- Men’s Club.
- Stark Grange #42, organized in 1874.
- Junior Grange organized in mid-1930’s.
- Dunbarton Players Theater Group – including an annual community play.
- Dunbarton Coronet Band.
- Silver Birch 4-H Club (1930’s and present).

- Victory 4-H Club 1940’s.
- New Horizon’s Extension Group 1970’s.
- Dunbarton Women’s Club.
- Dunbarton Garden Club – Founded 1934, recently sponsored “Daffodils for Dunbarton” 2005-2015 and coordinated planting 100,000 daffodils to celebrate Dunbarton’s 250th Anniversary.
- Dunbarton Elementary School “Roots” Project.
- Dunbarton Brownies, Girl and Boy Scouts, and Cub Scouts.
- American Legion – including suppers and Memorial Day celebration.
- Dunbarton Elementary School – including Harvest Moon Supper, Halloween Parade through Town Center, and Snowflake Supper.
- Old Home Day.
- Annual ham and bean supper (Dunbarton Historical Society).
- Lion’s Club 2000-2010.
- Men’s Coffee (Dunbarton Public Library).
- Dunbarton Inspiration Group (Dunbarton Public Library).
- Ruth Hingle Memorial Scholarship – supported strictly by contributions from various groups in Town, it awards annual scholarships to deserving Dunbarton senior high school students.

- Arts on the Common – an annual event on Mother’s Day Weekend featuring juried artists, vendors, live music and yummy food (benefits the Town Hall Restoration Project).

HISTORICAL GROUPS

[DUNBARTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY](#)

The Dunbarton Historical Society was founded in 1963 with the names of 124 members on its charter which reads: “Know ye that the Dunbarton Historical Society by virtue of authority vested in it as a corporation will promote and inculcate an understanding of the history and development of the Town of Dunbarton and whatever relates thereto. It will locate for posterity, preserve and mark historical sites and places of public interest in Dunbarton. It will disseminate historical information and arouse interest in the history and development of New Hampshire, particularly the Town of Dunbarton, by holding public meetings and assemblies for historical and related purposes.”

In keeping with its charter, the Dunbarton Historical Society purchased the Page’s Corner Schoolhouse in 1975 for a museum to house memorabilia and artifacts from the Town of Dunbarton and surrounding areas. Located adjacent to the schoolhouse is the Waite Blacksmith Shop which was moved from its original site on Grapevine Road in 1980. In 2012, the Flintlock Farm was disassembled with plans to reconstruct the farmhouse to the rear of the Schoolhouse Museum. Located on the same property is the T. Sylvester Wilson Cobbler Shop. The last of Dunbarton’s seventeen known shops, it was located in Goffstown, moved back to Dunbarton, restored and completely outfitted with period appropriate tools and furniture. Dedicated in 2013, this undertaking was a joint venture between the Historical Awareness Committee, the Historical Society, and various individuals.

In addition to their past projects, the Dunbarton Historical Society offers educational programs and presentations of historical interest that are free and open to the public. Furthermore, the Dunbarton Historical Society hosts an annual ham & bean supper as part of Dunbarton’s Old Home Day. The Historical Society also maintains the Stark Cemetery and Robert Rogers Home Site located on Robert Rogers Road.

[DUNBARTON HISTORICAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE](#)

The Historical Awareness Committee was established at Town Meeting in 1992 with three charges: list historic structures for the town, make dated plaques (signs) for those wishing to have them on their structures, and establish educational programs for the children of the Dunbarton Elementary School. Twenty-five years later, the charge remains the same, although historic sites are included as well, and at times call for addressing the needs of homeschooled children when possible. They are a Town committee and work through the Selectmen.

Members have created bicycle and walking tours, written two books, transcribed Alice Hadley’s genealogical town history into printed, searchable format, published ‘Teacher Tidbit Sheets’ connecting Dunbarton’s historic past to such national topics as Black History, Women’s History, and much more. They conduct valuable research and assist the Town Clerk with preservation efforts as well as assisting the Library with acquiring and making historic material available. Efforts include videotaping older town residents to record the past.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AND OR STUDIES

[AVAILABLE AT THE DUNBARTON PUBLIC LIBRARY \(LOCAL HISTORY ROOM\)](#)

- History of Dunbarton, by Caleb Stark
- The Snowflake, by John Mills

HEARSE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION COMMITTEE & VOLUNTEER TEAM

The Hearse Restoration and Preservation Committee was established in 2004 for the purpose of restoring the horse-drawn hearse originally purchased by the Town in 1870. After experiencing extensive damage when the old hearse house located in Center Cemetery was destroyed by fire in 1958, the sensitively restored hearse has been placed in a new hearse house located at Page's Corner Cemetery. The Committee disbanded upon competition in 2007.



Photo taken from the Dunbarton Town Website

- Where the Winds Blow Free, Alice Hadley
- A Tale of Dunbarton, by the Dunbarton Historical Awareness Committee
- Where Settlers' Feet Have Trod, by Harlan "Bud" Noyes
- (5) Walking & Bicycle Tours of Dunbarton, by the Dunbarton Historical Awareness Committee
- Historic Sermons of the Dunbarton Congregational Church
- Bunton-Hadley Dunbarton Scrapbooks (late 1800s – mid 1930s)
- Dunbarton History Scrapbooks, Compiled by the Library (1970s to present)
- Alice Hadley's Complete Town Genealogy (1600s-1950s) (Raw Manuscript, Edited Typed Version, and searchable DVD)
- Alice Hadley's Complete Town History Manuscript (most material unpublished)
- Alice Hadley's Town Records: Publishments and Vital Statistics (1600s through 1950s)
- Dunbarton Cemetery Records
- Town & School Reports, dating from 1852 to present (some missing)
- Town Celebration Records: 100th, 125th, 150th, 175th, 200th, 225th, 250th
- Noyes Historical Collection (including 1761 & 1763 Inventory of Dunbarton Property Owners, copies of deeds, history of property owners, etc.) *Currently in progress.*

AVAILABLE AT THE DUNBARTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

- Raymond Adams collection (scrapbooks 1970-1980s)

AVAILABLE AT THE TOWN OFFICE

Town Records are located in a vault and are only available by appointment. Due to the frailty of these documents, viewing is reserved for special circumstances and the viewer must wear protective gloves. These records include tavern licenses, vital records (early deaths and births,) marriage licenses, etc.

- Hadley-Tucker Collection: Photos, newspaper clippings of the early history of Dunbarton purchased from Alice Hadley's Great grand daughter
- Town & School Reports, dating from 1852 to present (some missing)
- Dunbarton Book Club Scrapbooks and Records 1929 – approximately 1980
- Mittie Grace Webster Collection: photos, ephemera and articles from the life of a Dunbarton woman who taught school in one-room schoolhouses

STATE ARCHIVES, STATE LIBRARY AND REGISTRY OF DEEDS IN CONCORD, NH

Additional historic information on Dunbarton is located at these mentioned locations. The Ethel Cilley Stone Collection can be viewed at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, NH.

METHODS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Dunbarton has a rich historical legacy that is evident in its buildings, landscapes, and patterns of development. These resources contribute to the quality of life in the community and provide a sense of identity that many residents enjoy and find important to them. The strategies listed below can help ensure that these

resources are protected and preserved so that future generations may not only learn from them, but also enjoy them.

BARN OWNER TAX RELIEF

RSA 79-D authorizes municipalities to grant property tax relief to barn owners who can demonstrate the public benefit of preserving their building and who also agree to maintain their structure throughout a minimum 10-year preservation easement. On or before April 15th of the new tax year, owners of historic barns or other farm buildings may seek relief by applying to their local governing body to grant a discretionary preservation easement to the municipality and by agreeing to maintain the structure in keeping with its historic integrity and character during the term of the easement. Additional information on this program can be found on the [New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources' website](#).

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S LAND AND COMMUNITY HERITAGE

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program ([LCHIP](#)) is an independent state authority that makes matching grants to NH communities and non-profits to conserve and preserve New Hampshire's most important natural, cultural and historic resources. LCHIP works in partnership with New Hampshire municipalities and non-profits to acquire land and cultural resources, or interests therein, with local, regional and statewide significance. The legislatively mandated mission of the program is to ensure the perpetual contribution of these resources to the economy, environment and quality of life in New Hampshire.

LAND TRUST

The Town should support non-profit land trusts that accept and pursue property and easements for land of local historic and cultural concern. For more information, contact [Five Rivers Conservation Trust](#), located in Concord.

NEW HAMPSHIRE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

The Alliance was founded in 1985 and works to preserve New Hampshire's historic buildings, landscapes, and communities through leadership, advocacy, and education. [The Alliance](#) maintains a website that lists financial resources for community landmarks and other historic structures.

PRESERVATION EASEMENTS

Preservation easements are initiated by landowners who wish to protect their land from future development, while still retaining owners' rights. Farms, buildings and scenic and historic areas all have the right to be protected by an easement. Perpetual easements protect the land or structure through subsequent owners, while term easements have a set time period agreed to by the Town and current owner. Perpetual easements often reduce the estate tax on large amounts of property, though the decision to award tax relief is officially decided by state law, local officials, and Town assessors. For more information contact the [New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources](#).

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) is a nation-wide privately funded nonprofit organization that works to save America's historic places. Funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation is awarded to nonprofit organizations and public agencies, and the majority of funding is awarded for planning an education projects through the [National Trust Preservation Funds grant program](#).

TAX REHABILITATION CREDITS AND INCENTIVES

Income tax deductions may be granted for two types of historic properties, a historically important area, or a certified historic structure. A twenty percent tax credit is given by the federal

government for rehabilitation of certified historic structures. For more information please refer to the related [website](#).

COOPERATIVE VENTURES WITH PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

Partnerships can be formed when the interests of the Town to preserve historic or cultural resources match with the interests of a private organization. This tactic will require some creative thinking and introductory discussions by Town officials with area organizations that have, or could develop, an interest in conserving such resources.

GRANTS FROM FOUNDATIONS

The Town should research available grants and develop proposals to seek funding for the conservation of particular pieces of property or other historical resources within Town. Funding could be sought from foundations at the local, state, regional, and national level.

SUMMARY

Dunbarton is fortunate to have many of its historical resources still standing and in good condition. This is due in part to the dedication and concern by its citizens and two historical groups: the Historical Society and Historical Awareness Committee. The fact that Dunbarton has remained a rural town to the present day has also helped retain its historical sites and structures. One only has to view the numerous publications written over the years about this Town to realize the depth of pride and commitment of its residents. Thanks to the efforts of these invaluable people, much of Dunbarton's history has already been documented for future generations to enjoy.

Preserving a town's history and character is not often an easy task. As individual properties are developed or redeveloped, it may be difficult to track what historic resources could be lost. Often people find it easier to demolish historic sites and structures to make way

for future uses than to preserve them. Historic structures can also be costly to maintain. So, while retaining the overall historic character of a Town is generally supported by the community, the responsibility of doing so often comes down to individual property owners. For this reason, it is key to raise awareness about the importance of Dunbarton's historic features and create incentives and guidelines for their preservation.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1:

To identify the historic sites, areas and resources integral to the community and character of Dunbarton.

- Preserve the integrity of Town Hall/Town Office Building and Dunbarton Center School.
- Pursue a permanent easement on the Robert Rogers Homesite.
- Document, catalog and preserve historic records in the Town Office Building and make them available to the public, such as through the History Room at Dunbarton's Library.
- Document, catalog and preserve private and Historical Society collections and make them available to the public.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To raise the awareness of, and foster an appreciation for, Dunbarton's rich historic resources, which include the physical/built environment and the cultural and social traditions of the community.

- Keep other Committees, Boards, and community organizations informed of activities and initiatives involving historical and cultural resources in Town.
- Expand existing Historical Society Museum/Blacksmith Shop site.
- Offer technical assistance to owners of historic structures.
- Reach out to our elder citizens to record historic information about the Town's history.
- Locate as many photographs, letters, ephemera and items pertaining to our history to preserve and make available to the public.
- Continue to locate cellar holes and historic sites and continue to work with private owners to protect sites when possible.
- Find a means to promote our history, especially to the newest members of our community.

OBJECTIVE 3:

To recommend measures for retaining the historic quality and character of Dunbarton's landscape.

- Continue to require design guidelines for new commercial and residential development.
- Consider providing assistance to property owners with tax easements on historic barns and other agricultural buildings through RSA 79-D: Discretionary Preservation Easements.
- Consider investigating preservation easements on historic properties.

→ Continue to work towards context sensitive solutions for local and state transportation improvements.