

CHAPTER 7: CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES



Coe House and Raines House, 1983
(Source: National Register of Historic Places)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

A close look at history can tell us about the people who lived here before us. We might learn what things they did while they were here and why they did them. We might learn why people moved here, why they stayed here, or possibly why they chose to move away. We can learn about the particular events, businesses, or resources that shaped the community. Likewise, exploring the culture of a community can tell us something about its traditions, heritage, or values. This includes opportunities for people to come together and share something about themselves; such as service and religious groups, hobby or sporting clubs, arts and music organizations or festivals.

After exploring some of Center Harbor's past, we can ask whether any of these same situations, organizations, or traditions exist today. How is the community of the past similar to today's community? How is it different? Is the situation likely to change in the future? Should certain things be preserved? How can the town plan for this?

This chapter serves to outline historical and cultural resources recommendations that are consistent with Center Harbor's vision and the results of the community survey.

7.2 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Center Harbor has a history of recorded settlement dating back to the mid-1700s and likely had native settlements prior to that. Historic resources can include buildings, objects, sites, documents, images, or recordings that tell us something about the past. While many of these artifacts and resources exist, an important question is what should be kept and what should not? Other questions include: how should those things that are kept be preserved, how should they be shared, and at what point should an historical resource no longer be retained?

7.2.1 Local Historic Preservation Efforts

The Center Harbor Historical Society was formed in 1971. Its mission is to, "collect and preserve objects and facts of historical interest to the town. The Society also participates in projects designed to preserve or improve the town's historical image." The town-owned schoolhouse on Dane Road (NH Route 25B) is home to this organization and its collection of documents and artifacts; it is also where they hold a series of historical and cultural programs. The organization has more than 130 dues-paying members; their monthly meetings (April – November) attract about a dozen members who are involved in the regular planning and organizing of the Society's activities. Recent activities have included the inventorying of artifacts in their collection, development and maintenance of the Society's website (<http://chhistory.com/>), inventorying of local cemeteries and their records, and reprinting their 1986 history of the town, *Center Harbor, New Hampshire*.

More than ninety percent of those who responded to the 2009 Community Master Plan Survey indicated they felt there are structures of distinctive architectural character or historical importance in Center Harbor and more than ninety percent of these respondents felt that these structures should be



Walking Tour cover

preserved. The Historical Society continues to embrace the 1983 Master Plan recommendation to “encourage the protection, enhancement, and renovation of historical resources”.

Center Harbor’s recorded history stretches back more than 200 years. Over that time period, circumstances have changed and the community changed with it. The town has been home to numerous businesses, several schools including a college, and a number of large hotels. Some buildings have been demolished, several buildings burned, and a few have survived. Most that have survived have been modified in one way or another to adapt to local needs. The Historical Society pointed to renovation of the Sutton/Piper House, the church on Piper Hill Road, the old Catholic Church, and the former Nichols Store as examples of implementation of the 1983 recommendation “encouraging the renovation of village buildings for residential and mixed commercial/residential use”.

The municipal building and E.M. Heath’s Supermarket currently display several photographs depicting Center Harbor’s past. There is now a marker on Main Street and a bench in front of the library acknowledging Belknap College, which was housed in several buildings around town from 1963 - 1974. In 1986 the Historical Society published the 76-page book *Center Harbor, New Hampshire* which recounts events in the town’s history and the people and places involved; copies are available for loan at the library and may be purchased from the Historical Society. In 2010 the James E. Nichols Library celebrated its centennial accompanied by the publication of *A Viable Service: A Centennial History of the James E. Nichols Memorial Library, 1910-2010*. The library houses a good collection of resources on the history of New Hampshire; however, *A Viable Service* and *Center Harbor, New Hampshire* developed by the Historical Society are the only two that address the history of Center Harbor in depth. In conjunction with the town’s bicentennial in 1997, the Historical Society developed a brochure with a map and walking tour of the village area; this too is available from the Historical Society.



Historical Society Walking Tour map

7.2.2 Documenting Center Harbor’s Historical Sites

Several important compilations document historical sites in Center Harbor these include: 1) the nationally designated Centre Harbor Village Historic District, 2) Historical Resources Inventory (1982), 3) *A Tour through the Village* (a walking tour of Center Harbor historic and cultural places), and 4) a recently created inventory of known cemeteries. Tables 7-1 through 7-4 provide basic information about the structures and sites identified in each of these resources including: names, locations, dates, status updates, and map references. The map references correspond to points on Map 7-1, located at the end of the chapter. A current photograph is included after each table.

The inventory and walking tour are dated and would benefit by being updated further than what was accomplished for this master plan. Combined they represent an excellent starting point for a comprehensive historic and cultural resources inventory that could be readily integrated with town mapping and tax assessor databases for the purposes of planning, organization and data

preservation. They also represent an opportunity for the Historical Society to reflect on additional considerations for the inventory. For example, the Longwood Barn (1870s) is identified on the Center Harbor walking tour, but is not in the historic inventory. Similarly, the walking tour identifies sites such as the waterfront that serve a cultural function and may also have historic significance for inclusion in a historic inventory that considered more than structures.

Nationally Designated Centre Harbor Village Historic District - Ten structures in the village area were incorporated into a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as the Centre Harbor Village Historic District and it was accepted into the Register in September of 1983. The structures on the National Register are the Raines House, Coe House, the Ferrante Building (now known as the former Nichols Store), the Kahle House, Dane House, Locust Cottage, Dr. Morrill House, Page House, the Kona Drinking Fountain, and the Nichols Memorial Library. The Kahle and Dane Houses, which had been merged as the Garnet Inn, have since been demolished; a furniture store now occupies the site. The Dr. Morrill House was torn down and a new home occupies the site. Full descriptions were a major part of the National Register of Historic Places application which was included in the 1983 Master Plan and can be read at the National Register web site.¹

Table 7-1: Nationally Designated Center Harbor Village Historic District

Name	Map Number	Location	Date	Status
Coe House, formerly Glencoe	1	Main Street	1820	Barn removed. Currently a restaurant owned by Brook, LLC.
Dane House	-	Plymouth Street (NH Route 25B)	Early 1800s	Demolished in 1995. No photograph.
Dr. Morrill House	-	Plymouth Street (NH Route 25B)	circa 1860	House demolished and replaced, garage remains. Owned by K. Sweeney.
Former Nichols Store	2	Corner of NH Route 25B and Main Street	1837	No substantial modifications. Owned by Bailey Park Properties, LLC.
Kahle House	-	Plymouth Street	1837	Demolished in 1995. No photograph.
Kona Drinking Fountain	3	Junction of NH Route 25B and Main Street	1907	Elevated during a street paving project. Owned by the town.
Locust Cottage	4	Plymouth Street (NH Route 25B)	circa 1800	Addition onto the rear. Owned by Artisan House, LLC.
Nichols Memorial Library	5	Corner of NH Route 25B and Main Street	1909-1910	No substantial modifications. Owned by the town.
Page House	6	Plymouth Street (NH Route 25B)	1850s	No substantial modifications. Currently owned by M. Keay.
Raines House	7	Main Street	Mid-1800s	Moved closer to Bean Road and serves as the Yarn Shop for Keepsake Quilting.

¹ National Register of Historic Places <http://nrhp.focus.nps.gov/natregsearchresult.do?fullresult=true&recordid=7> (accessed September 25, 2011).

Current Photographs: Nationally Designated Center Harbor Village Historic District

Coe House



Coe House – west side

Structurally, the main portion of the Coe House retains much of its original form. The barn and its porches have been removed. It now serves as a restaurant and while it is surrounded by parking lots for shopping areas, the lot has retained a relatively large lawn area.



Former Nichols Store (Ferrante Building)



Kona Fountain

Few changes have been made to the former Nichols Store since 1983. It still serves as a mixed use storefront with apartment. The Kona Fountain still shoots a stream of water into the air at the junction of Main Street and Plymouth Street (NH Route 25B).



Raines House and the shopping center, 2011

Raines House was moved away from the Coe House and closer to Bean Road and has been merged with Keepsake Quilting and the Heath Shopping Center.



Nichols Memorial Library



Nichols Memorial Library, from Main Street

Since the 1983 Master Plan, there have been no major modifications to the Nichols Memorial Library but it does now have a National Register of Historic Places plaque, a visible source of pride in the community.



Page House



Site of the Dr. Morrill House

Page House remains much the same as in 1983, right down to its long white picket fence. While the garage remains as described in 1983 nomination to the National Register, the Dr. Morrill House was later replaced in the 1980s.



Locust Cottage from NH Route 25B



Locust Cottage – rear addition

The back side of Locust Cottage has been renovated with an extension added to the rear. The primary entrance is now from the parking lot off of Main Street.

Center Harbor Historical Resources Inventory - An inventory of twenty-two historic structures was conducted for the 1983 Master Plan, including a description of the architecture and historical significance of each structure. Since then a couple of structures have been destroyed and some have been modified. Table 7-2 lists each of these structures and provides a status update. The inventory of historic structures has not yet been expanded as recommended in the 1983 Master Plan. Consideration should be given to including the Canoe House and Winnepesaukee Flagship Corporation's shipyard in the Center Harbor Historical Resources Inventory.

Table 7-2: Center Harbor Historical Resources Inventory

Name	Map Number	Location	Date	Status
Leavitt House	8	NH Route 25	c. 1790	No substantial changes. State Historical Marker on NH Route 25. Current owners are T. & S. Whalen.
Libby House	9	Winona Road, West Center Harbor	1790 - 1795	No substantial changes and this continues to be owned by the Libby family.
Bartlett Homestead	10	Caleb's Clearing, off Bartlett Road (Now called Tuttle Road)	c. 1794	Under renovation and owned by Bigelow, Inc.
Mead Farm/ Joseph Kimball Farm	-	Center Harbor Neck	c. 1800	Disassembled and moved to Connecticut.
Stone Cider Mill	11	Mayo Farm, Waukegan Road	c. 1800	No substantial changes. Owned by G. and M. Mayo.
Sturtevant Farm	12	NH Route 25B	c. 1825	No substantial changes and owned by J. Carty.
Charles Pfeifer House	13	NH Route 25B, 0.75 mi. east of College Road	pre-1865	No substantial changes. Owned by A. Morton.
Congregational Church	14	Main Street	c. 1837	No substantial changes. Continues to be owned by the Congregational Church.
Coe House, formerly Glencoe*	1	Main Street	1820	Barn removed. Currently a restaurant owned by Brook, LLC.
Sutton Place	15	NH Route 25	1869-1879	Renovated after a 1993 fire, now operated as a Bed & Breakfast by B. Merrill.
Twin Gates/Dybro's House	-	Main Street	1880's	Was temporarily moved and eventually demolished.
Caldwell House, formerly Butterfield Cottage	16	Old Meredith Road (Now Coe Hill Road)	1884	Some renovation has occurred.
Finn Gate House	17	NH Route 25B	1880's	No substantial changes. Now part of the Immaculate Conception Apostolic School, Legionnaires of Christ, LLC.

Table 7-2: Center Harbor Historical Resources Inventory (continued)

Name	Map Number	Location	Date	Status
Gilnockie	-	Off Old Meredith Road, 0.5 mi. from Plymouth Street	1885	Demolished
Center Harbor Village School	18	NH Route 25B	1886	Continues to be owned by the town and used by the Historical Society.
Bjune House, formerly Irving Simonds House	19	Corner of Kelsea Ave & Bean Rd.	1892	Still there, has a new garage which matches the house. Owned by R. Williams.
Keewaydin	20	Off College Road	1903	No substantial changes and is owned by the NH Music Festival.
Town House	21	Corner of NH Route 3/25 and Waukewan Road	1843	No substantial changes, is owned by the town and used for storage.
Kona Fountain*	3	Intersection of NH Route 25B & Main St.	1907	Owned by the town and was elevated on pedestal.
Nichols Memorial Library*	5	Corner of NH Route 25B and Main Street	1909-1910	No substantial changes and is owned by the town.
Hearthstone Garage	22	Center Harbor Neck Road, on the Dane estate	1915	No substantial changes and is owned by Hearthstone Bed and Breakfast.
Lamprey House	23	NH Route 25	1867-1872	Some renovations have occurred and owned by Lamprey Real Estate.

* National Register of Historic Places

Current Photographs: Center Harbor Historical Resources Inventory



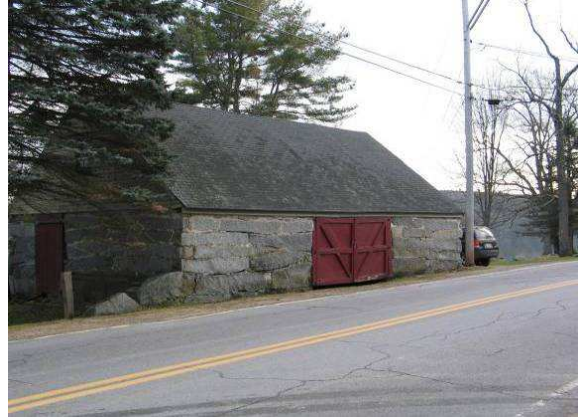
Leavitt House



Libby House



Bartlett Homestead



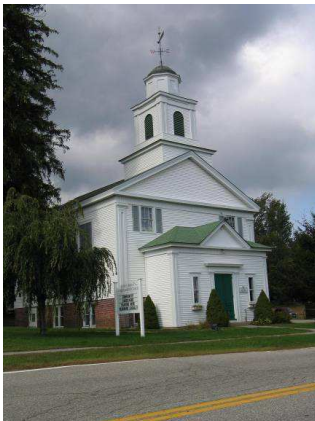
Stone Cider Mill



Sturtevant Farm



Charles Pfiefer House



Congregational Church



Sutton Place



Caldwell House



Finn Gate House



Center Harbor Village School



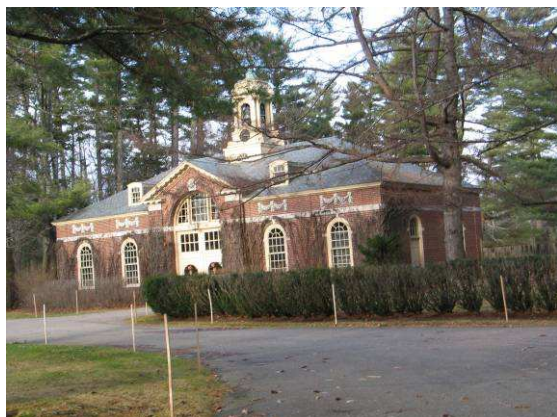
Bjune House



Keewaydin



Town House



Hearsthorne Garage



Lamprey House

Center Harbor Walking Tour - *A Tour through the Village* was developed by the Center Harbor Historical Society to invite residents and visitors to celebrate the history and architecture of the village area. By discussing more than sixteen locations with text and map, the handy tri-fold brochure gives the reader a sense of life in the village years ago as well as changes that occurred over the years. Most of the buildings noted are still standing; some modern structures and areas of the village are included on the tour to orient the visitor to events that happened there years ago. Table 7-3 provides a list of the locations identified in the Center Harbor walking tour.

Table 7-3: Center Harbor Walking Tour

Name	Map Number	Location	Date	Status
Leavitt House	17	NH Route 25	c. 1790	No substantial changes. State Historical Marker on NH Route 25. Current owners are T. & S. Whalen.
Longwood Barn	24	NH Route 25	circa 1876	Next to the Canoe Restaurant and owned by the Dew Drop Farm.
Dearborn Place (The Lamprey House)	22	NH Route 25	1867-1872	Some renovations have occurred and owned by Lamprey Real Estate.
Sutton Place	21	NH Route 25	1869-1879	Renovated after a 1993 fire, now operated as a Bed & Breakfast by B. Merrill.
William Sheafe House (also known as Twin Gates/Dybro's House)	-	Main Street	1880's	Was temporarily moved and eventually demolished. No photograph.
Congregational Church	13	Main Street	c. 1837	No substantial changes. Continues to be owned by the Congregational Church.
U.S. Post Office	25	Main Street	1969	No substantial changes. Owned by US Postal Service.
Municipal Building	26	Main Street	1970	No substantial changes. Owned by town.

Table 7-3: Center Harbor Walking Tour (continued)

Name	Map Number	Location	Date	Status
Nichols Memorial Library*	5	Corner of NH Route 25B & Main Street	1909-1910	No substantial changes and is owned by the town.
Former Nichols Store*	2	Corner of NH Route 25B & Main Street	1837	No substantial modifications. Owned by Bailey Park Properties, LLC.
Coe House, formerly Glencoe	1	Main Street	1820	Barn removed. Currently a restaurant owned by Brook, LLC.
Yikes (formerly Heath's)	27	Main Street	unknown	No substantial changes. Owned by K. and D. Campbell.
Dr. Leonard B. Morrill Park	28	NH Route 25B	1952	No substantial changes. The property is owned by the town.
Center Harbor Village School	11	NH Route 25B	1886	Continues to be owned by the town and used by the Historical Society.
Kona Fountain	3	Intersection of NH Route 25B & Main Street	1907	Elevated on pedestal during repaving and owned by town.
Kelsea Avenue	29	Kelsea Avenue		Lady of Victory Church and the Grange are now residences owned by D. Heiderer and V. Fisher.
Town Beach and Waterfront	30	Lake Street		The beach and waterfront are owned by the town. The M/S Mount Washington winters at its wharf here and visits Center Harbor on Mondays in the summer.

Current Photographs: Center Harbor Walking Tour

Longwood Barn



U.S. Post Office



Municipal Building



Yikes



Dr. Leonard B. Morrill Memorial Park



Former Lady of Victory Church



Former Grange Hall off Kelsea Avenue



Town Waterfront

Known Cemeteries in Center Harbor - Table 7-4 indicates the known inventory of the town's cemeteries. Most of the cemeteries are public, a few are private. The graves in three of the listed cemeteries have been relocated and these cemeteries no longer exist. Through its website the Historical Society has received several inquiries about ancestors buried in town cemeteries.

Table 7-4: Known Cemeteries in Center Harbor

Map ID	Name	Public/ Private/ Graves moved	Road	Location Description
A	Pleasant View	Public	Main Street	Across street from Congregational Church
B	Senter	Public	Coe Hill Road	0.5 mi. SW of NH Route 25B on N side (Gilnockie)
C	Indian	Public	Coe Hill Road	Just NE of Butterfield Road on SE side of road
D	Hitchins-Smith	Public	Smith Farm Lane	At end of road on NE side in field
E	Follet		Follet Road	0.5 mi. S of NH Route 25B on W side of road
F	Canney Hill	Public	College Road	0.3 mi. S of NH 25B on E side, uphill of Keewaydin
H	Davis	Public	Waukevan Road	0.6 mi. W of US 3/NH Route 25 on S side of road
I	Harrison-Perkins	Public	Waukevan Road	0.15 mi. E of bridge (New Hampton town line) on S side
J	Huckins	Public	Winona Road	0.2 mi. S of New Hampton town line on N side of road
K	Hawkins	Public	Hawkins Pond Road	0.25 mi. N of bridge on E side of road
L	Greenleaf	Public	McCrillis Hill Road	0.35 mi. S of Holderness town line on E side of road
M	Cram	Public	Piper Hill Road	Just W of Waukevan Road on S side of road
N	Thompson	Public	NH Route 25B	0.2 mi. E of College Road
O	Jackson	Graves moved	Kline Road	End of the road - at beginning of Heiner property
P	Morse	Public	Garden Wall Lane	Just off Route 25B on W side of lane
Q	Sturtevant	Public	NH Route 25B	0.4 mi. E of Follet Road on N side behind house
17	Mead	Graves moved	Mead Farm Road	0.4 mi. from Center Harbor Neck Road on E side
R	Center Harbor Memorial Park	Public	NH Route 25B/ Dane Road	0.25 mi. NW of Kelsea Avenue on N side of road
S	Smith	Public	McCrillis Hill Road	0.65 mi. S of Holderness town line on E side of road
T	Old Sturtevant	Public	Center Harbor Neck Road	0.1 mi. W of Anthon Road on S side of road
U	Boyle	Private	Piper Hill Road	0.75 mi. E of Hawkins Pond Road on N side on Cook Farm
V	Dane	Private	NH Route 25B	At Center Harbor Neck Road intersection
W	Lep	Private	NH Route 25	W side behind the Lamprey Building on the knoll
X	Rachel's Garden	Graves moved	Winona Road	0.25 mi. S of New Hampton town line on S side of road
Y	Campbell	Private	High Haith Road	Across the bridge on E side of road
Z	Rich	Private	Waukevan Road	0.6 mi. W of US 3/NH Route 25 on S side of road



Pleasant View Cemetery

7.2.3 Historic Preservation Tools and Techniques

Buildings, historic sites, objects, documents, photographs, and audio recordings can all be preserved. Before delving too far into a discussion of the various tools and techniques available to a community, organization, or individual for preservation, the question of “Why preserve?” should be addressed. The Historical Society’s mission, stated at the start of previous section, begins to address this question. The answer frequently centers on the desire to maintain contact with one’s heritage. Under certain conditions there may also be economic benefits to preservation.

For buildings and historic sites there are a number of options for preservation, each providing different benefits. The town may establish a heritage commission through Town Meeting vote that consists of three to seven members. A heritage commission is advisory to the planning board and selectmen (RSA 673:4-a, 674:44a-d) for the recognition, use, and protection of historic and cultural resources. It can accept funds to carry out its mission. A heritage commission differs from a historic district commission (RSA 674:45) which is primarily associated with a local historic district and serves in a regulatory capacity. An effort to establish a local historic district in the 1980s was defeated at Town Meeting and there is little interest in pursuing that further at this time.

There are a several programs through the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources that can help in preserving historical sites and structures including the State and National Registers of Historic Places, assistance with inventorying historical resources, preservation of barns and farms, and access to tax benefits and grant opportunities.²

Listing in the state Register of Historic Places can contribute to the preservation of historic properties in a number of ways, including:

- ☐ Public recognition that a property is significant to a community.
- ☐ Consideration and advocacy in the planning of local and state funded or otherwise assisted projects such as governmental land sales and transportation projects.
- ☐ Qualification for financial assistance for preservation projects.
- ☐ Special consideration or relief in the application of some access, building and safety code regulations.

² New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources <http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/> (accessed September 30, 2011).

Owners of property listed on the State Register are free to maintain, manage or dispose of their property as they choose, without oversight or comment from the NHDHR. However, as property owners plan for needed maintenance or changes, staff members at the NHDHR are available to answer questions and provide assistance.

The New Hampshire Register of Historic Places was established in 2001. Currently no Center Harbor properties are listed on the NH Historic Register. Individual owners may nominate their property by submitting a completed inventory form to the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR).³ While there is no fee associated with the nomination, it is recommended that an architectural historian or archaeologist assist in this process. Properties already on the National Register of Historic Sites can readily be added to the state register by providing updated information to the State Survey Coordinator at NHDHR.

According to the National Register of Historic Places website⁴, there are a number of benefits that can be gained for both individuals and communities that own properties on the National Register, including:

- ❑ formal recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archeological significance based on national standards used by every state
- ❑ inclusion in a public, searchable database that provides a wealth of research information
- ❑ encouraging preservation of these historic resources by documenting a property's historic significance
- ❑ opportunities for specific preservation incentives, such as:
 - federal preservation grants for planning and rehabilitation
 - federal investment tax credits
 - preservation easements to nonprofit organizations
 - alternatives to the International Building Code fire and life safety code
- ❑ involvement from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation when a Federal agency project may affect historic property
- ❑ information on the care and maintenance of your historic property through various Preservation Briefs and Tech Notes
- ❑ opportunities to network with other historic property owners, tour historic areas, or chat with preservationists through conferences, workshops, and preservation organizations
- ❑ the opportunity to celebrate your listing by ordering a bronze plaque that distinguishes your property as listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



Plaque on the Nichols Library

During several meetings with the Historical Society, some residents expressed concern about the restrictions that might be placed on residents and businesses by various preservation programs. Listing a property on the National Register places no obligations on private property owners. There are no restrictions on the use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property as long as there are no federal monies attached to the property. National Register listing does not lead to public acquisition or require public access. A property will not be listed if, for individual properties, the

³ New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state_register.html (accessed December 30, 2011).

⁴ National Register of Historic Places: Fundamentals http://www.nps.gov/nr/national_register_fundamentals.htm

owner objects, or for districts, a majority of property owners object. National Register listing does not automatically invoke local historic district zoning or local landmark designation.

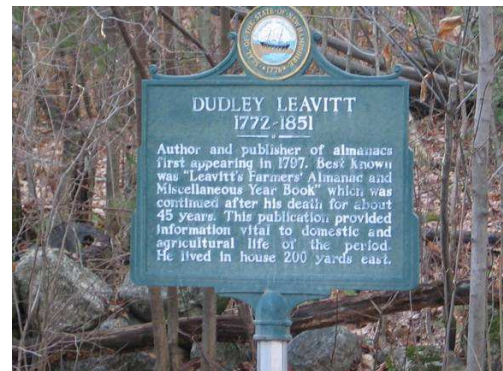
The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program offers a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of income-producing historic structures (<http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>). This program has been quite successful in promoting private investment in historic buildings for things such as stores, offices, and rental housing. Owners of National Historic Register properties may apply for this credit on rehabilitation costs.⁵

Inventorying historic structures serves to document the importance of that site and its relevance to the history of the community. Both technical and financial assistance are available through NHDHR to New Hampshire communities for inventorying historical structures; to be eligible however, requires the community has an established heritage commission.

In 2002 the New Hampshire legislature acknowledged that many of the state's old barns and other farm outbuildings are important local scenic landmarks and help tell the story of New Hampshire's agricultural heritage. Yet many of these historic structures are being demolished or not repaired because of the adverse impact of property taxes. RSA 79-D encourages barn owners to maintain and repair their buildings by granting them specific tax relief and assuring them that assessments will not be increased as a result of new repair work.

The program is strictly voluntary on the part of the property owner and combines statewide eligibility criteria and guidelines with decision-making and implementation at the local level. Any owner of an historic barn or other farm building over 75 years old may seek relief by applying to the Select board to grant a discretionary preservation easement and by agreeing to maintain the structure in keeping with its historic integrity and character during the term of the easement.

If, after a public hearing, the Select board determines that the proposed preservation of the structure is consistent with the purpose of the law, it may acquire an easement on the structure for a minimum of ten years and grant tax relief within a range of a 25 to 75 percent reduction of the structure's full assessed value. Maintaining and repairing the building will not result in an increase in its assessed value for property tax purposes.⁶



In 2006 the New Hampshire Legislature enacted RSA 79E enabling communities to provide tax relief incentives for community revitalization projects. If after adopting an incentive program at Town Meeting, the community determines that substantially rehabilitating an underutilized structure would “enhance the town center with respect to its economic activity, cultural or historic character, sense of community, or in-town residential uses that contribute to economic or social viability”, then the community may grant tax relief to the property owner *on the value of the upgrades* for up to five years. Additional tax relief can be made available for historic structures.

⁵ National Parks Service <http://www.nps.gov/history/tax.htm> (accessed December 30, 2011).

⁶ New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/barn_property_tax.html (accessed December 30, 2011).

The NH Division of Historical Resources manages the Historical Highway Markers program jointly with the NH Department of Transportation.⁷ Individuals, groups or the town may petition for an historical marker. A limited amount of state funds are set aside each year for these markers; the nominating entity may be asked to pay for the marker once state funding is used up. Each marker costs approximately \$1,800. Currently there is one historical marker along NH Route 25, near the Meredith/Center Harbor town line, which notes the Dudley Leavitt House. The Belknap College Alumni recently erected a similar-looking sign across from the municipal building.

The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance is another resource for local preservation efforts with an emphasis on private efforts. They provide strategic coaching, technical assistance, planning grants, and other services to property owners and civic leaders. These services include workshops for homeowners, training for heritage commissions, matching funds to assist with historic barn assessments, and their staff can meet with community leaders to discuss legal and funding issues.⁸

7.2.4 Issues and Challenges

While some solid steps have been taken to implement recommendations from the Historical Resources chapter of the 1983 Master Plan including several ideas for outreach, more can be done. Some of the issues that existed then are no longer relevant but several continue as issues today.

- The 1983 Master Plan included an extensive inventory of the town's historical structures. This inventory is a valuable resource to the town and should be maintained as a document separate from the master plan. The inventory is in need of an update. There are additional sit historical structures in Center Harbor for inclusion in the inventory.
- While some steps have been taken to promote Center Harbor's history in a variety of ways, there are some associated issues.
 - Old photographs in public and commercial buildings exist but there could be clearer links to town history.
 - Regarding the erection of markers at key historic structures and sites, issues of privacy and the question of who will pay for putting up and maintaining such signage need to be addressed.
 - The Walking Tour Map is a nice document but is out of date and a limited number of these are available. The Historical Society might also consider a "Historical Home Tour" to raise both historical awareness and funds.
 - Expanding the membership of the Historical Society to include younger persons continues to be a challenge. Some ideas discussed in preparing this chapter included modifying meeting times and better promotion of activities on local web pages.
- Many local artifacts have been donated to the Historical Society's collection but an inventory of these materials has not been completed.

⁷ New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, Historical Road Markers <http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/markers/> (accessed November 30, 2011).

⁸ New Hampshire Preservation Alliance http://www.nhpreservation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=118 (accessed November 10, 2011).

This is an opportunity for the Historical Society to explore and address the various opportunities that exist for it. Challenges include establishing an appropriate means for passing along local history so that it does not simply reside with a few key individuals, prioritizing the group's efforts and coordinating with other entities in town to effectively use limited resources, addressing declining revenues, and increasing awareness of both the Society's activities and opportunities for local participation.

In the years ahead the town will face new challenges as it considers how best to retain elements of its history and make it relevant to the citizens and visitors of today and tomorrow. Establishing effective working relationships between various town entities and clearly identifying local priorities are essential steps in ensuring that important elements of the town's history are passed on to future generations. The Planning Board recognizes that in the coming decade there may be some changes in ownership of some of Center Harbor's traditionally large parcels, presenting opportunities for preservation of land and historic resources. The Board wishes to ensure that the town is well positioned to respond to any opportunities that may arise.

7.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES

7.3.1 Cultural Resources Defined

A cultural resource can be thought of as something that serves to enhance the sense of place, traditions, heritage, or values of the community. It could encompass the arts, service groups, festivals, and other opportunities for people to come together and share or interact with others.

There are several reasons for including cultural resources in a master plan. Cultural resources can be an important part of the fabric of a community, something that helps bind members together. In some cases, cultural resources have clear links to the economic vitality of the community.

7.3.2 Cultural Connections

In discussions with members of the Center Harbor Historical Society, the Center Harbor Bandstand, the Brick Boathouse at the Town Beach, and the James E. Nichols Memorial Library were noted as places where people gather. Likewise the Congregational Church is a gathering area, not just for religious activities but also for day care, the Center Harbor Soup Kitchen, and some exercise programs.

There have been several schools located in Center Harbor over the years, including Hawkins Pond School, the Center Harbor School which closed in 1967, and Belknap College (1963 – 1974). Alumni of the college will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the college in 2013. Students now go to school in Meredith at the various Inter-Lakes schools. Immaculate Conception Apostolic School is a private boarding school for 80 – 100 boys in grades 7 – 12 associated with the Roman Catholic Church located above the village on NH Route 25B.



Center Harbor Bandstand

Center Harbor's Town Band is one of the oldest continuously operating bands in the state at 133 years old and they now have between forty and fifty musicians. Other community organizations include the Historical Society which hosts more than half a dozen public programs each year, the Center Harbor Woman's Club, and the Community Caregivers of Meredith, Center Harbor, and Moultonborough, a program that matches volunteer drivers with those in the community who need rides.

Members of the Center Harbor Historical Society note that over the years a number of social, civic, and recreational organizations existed in town but have either merged with neighboring groups or ceased to exist. Groups merging with neighboring organizations include the Food Pantry (Meredith) and Girl Scouts (Sandwich), the Garden Club (Opechee). Once active but now defunct groups include the Red Men of Center Harbor, the Grange, the Pocahontas Women, the 4H Club, and the Quinnibaug Outing Club.

For the town's Bicentennial (1997) there were monthly events such as ice sculptures, beard growing, and a chili fest coordinated by a special committee. Many of the activities and events in Center Harbor today are coordinated by the Parks and Recreation Department. These include the 4th of July parade and footrace (700 runners plus 200 kids in 2010), the Easter Egg Hunt (300 children in 2010), the Memorial Day Parade and assorted seasonal parties. Parks and Recreation also puts on craft days, gardening programs, softball, volleyball, yoga, senior walking programs, and an annual horseshoe tournament. Musical events such as the Town Band Concerts, Harborpoolooza, and "Strings & Things & Wings" are also coordinated by this department. Each year the Congregational Church holds a craft fair and Strawberry Festival.

Center Harbor is home to Keepsake Quilting, a leader in the craft field which hosts several internationally juried competitions each year. Bayswater Books is a small independent bookseller that regularly hosts book discussions. The NH Independent School of Music is also based in Center Harbor and offers programs around the Lakes Region.

7.3.3 Issues and Challenges

Center Harbor's residents and visitors have access to a number of cultural and social opportunities. The nature of these opportunities has changed over time with many activities happening in neighboring communities, such as Meredith. Like much of Belknap County, Center Harbor's residents have become older. The median age of its residents has increased, from 37.5 years in 1990 to 49.9 years in 2010 and more than thirty percent of the town's residents are now over 65 years of age, up from seventeen percent in 2000. With an older population, there may be more people on fixed incomes, leading to more limited donations to organizations. There is a desire to pass along the "cultural tissue", documenting how organizations have worked in the past and what role they have served in the community.

A challenge seems to be how best to attract and retain volunteers/members. Associated with this are the times when groups meet, the limited time available to households with two parents working outside the home or single parents, and methods for younger people to learn about groups and their activities. While some people consider Center Harbor as a destination, either because of a vacation home or rental or due to one of the town's distinctive businesses, the sentiment was expressed that Center Harbor is merely a place to pass through on the way to a neighboring community. This

sentiment may limit how involved people become in community groups. Another point that was mentioned during discussions is that like many Lakes Region communities, Center Harbor has a couple of distinct populations, those that are year-round residents and those that are summer residents or vacationers. Each group may have different needs.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

While there are some issues and challenges regarding historic resources that Center Harbor faces, there are a number of opportunities for the town. There do appear to be several resources available to assist the town, the Historical Society, and individuals as they strive to be good stewards of Center Harbor's history and culture.

- 7.4.1 To enhance the communication and understanding between the Planning Board and Historical Society, the Planning Board should seek to retain a member who is also active in the Historical Society and will actively serve as an intermediary between the two entities, giving regular updates on the activities of each to the other.
- 7.4.2 The inventory of Historical Sites should be maintained as a separate document by the Historical Society with a copy on file at the library.
- 7.4.3 Work with NHDHR to update the National Register of Historic Places regarding the demolition of the Kahle, Dane, and Dr. Morrill Houses.
- 7.4.4 The development and maintenance of an inventory of cemeteries and those interred therein should be coordinated between the Historical Society and the town.
- 7.4.5 A cemetery layer should be added to the town's GIS mapping layer.
- 7.4.6 The Historical Society should update and promote the Walking Tour of the village area.
- 7.4.7 Improve the labeling of old photographs in the Municipal Building to put the images in historical context.
- 7.4.8 Members of the Planning Board and the Historical Society should gain a greater awareness and fuller understanding of the funding, restoration, and development opportunities associated with historical properties that are available. After considering the various tasks that need to be done, the Historical Society should establish its short- and long-term priorities and communicate these to the town.
- 7.4.9 Support the efforts of the town Recreation Department to develop and promote activities that bring residents and visitors together throughout the year.
- 7.4.10 Establish a section on the town website for posting information about local groups and their activities.