



Judith Russell painting as common might have been in 1818

Rediscovering Hawley's Old Town Common



Common as it is in 2009

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Rediscovering Hawley's Old Town Common by John F. Sears

The last few years have wrought great changes in the location of the towns and villages in the mountainous regions of New England. We have stated that, the early settlement of those parts, the church—which, as the town and parish were identical, was the property of the town—was located as near the center of the district to which it belonged, as practicable. Around it, in most cases, eventually arose more or less of a village, which was the central point for the country around. There were the stores, taverns, post-office and some shops for various mechanical purposes. We know not that a single church in all that region could be found standing out alone, as they often are found in the Middle and Southern States.

But gradually, as people thought more of manufactures and less of husbandry, locations along the streams became important, and the settlements away from them, and often quite above them, were gradually abandoned.

This transition had already been going on for some time in Olney [Hawley]; and the progress of it, has since been such that our stores, our taverns, our post-office, and our shops are all gone, and we do not think another building will ever be put up in what was once the center of that town.

Even now, as we write, the traveler finds only a common where once stood a sanctuary that God often honored with his especial presence and that, as we think eternity will show, was the birthplace of souls and the gate of heaven to many.

The Reverend Rufus Taylor, *Cottage Piety Exemplified* (1869)¹

Hawley's old town common, located at the corner of what are now Forget and East Hawley roads, served as the religious, civic, social, and economic center of the town from 1794-1848. A meetinghouse stood in the middle of the common, which was about two acres in size. Two taverns, a blacksmith shop, and several houses stood close by, including the homes of Hawley's first ministers and doctors. One of the taverns housed Hawley's first post office. A third tavern existed for a brief time between 1798 and 1804. The townspeople gathered for religious services and town meetings in the meetinghouse, socialized at the taverns with each other and with people passing through or doing business in the town, and sometimes appeared for legal proceedings before one of the tavern keepers, who functioned as a magistrate. The taverns provided fresh horses for the stage coaches passing through and overnight accommodations for stagecoach passengers and drivers. Other activities, such as militia training on the common and dances in the taverns, may also have taken place, although documentation for such activities has not been found.

Over three hundred towns and cities in New England possess commons or greens. Most town commons have undergone change over time, often shrinking in size because of the pressures of development or through adaptation to new uses. Hawley's town common is unusual because it vanished entirely from sight. In 1848-49 the Congregational church moved to its present location on East Hawley Road, about a mile and a quarter south of the common, and the town constructed a town house on Middle Road, about a mile and a half west of the common. At about the same time, Calvin Longley moved his inn and store to a site opposite the new meetinghouse where the Hawley Grove building now stands. The Sanford Tavern, which thrived in the early part of the nineteenth century, fell on hard times in the 1830s and was abandoned. By 1858 it no longer appeared on maps of the town. Stripped of the meetinghouse and the businesses that generated its vitality, the old town common began to disappear. By 1880 the area was known as

“Poverty Square.” Although the Town of Hawley still owns most of the town common land, none of the buildings near it survive. The important functions performed at the common moved to other locations in Hawley or to surrounding towns. Never again would Hawley possess such a concentrated and active town center.

The historian must construct a story of the past from the fragments that survive. Often time erases much of the record, and this is especially true when an entire village center disappears. In the case of Hawley’s town common, some intriguing physical evidence remains: the cellar holes of the two taverns and of several of the houses in the vicinity, the wells that provided water to the owners of these buildings, and several stone walls. One of the tavern cellar holes lies under the cottage now owned by Ray and Phyllis Gotta and built about 1902 by E.H. Pratt around the tavern’s old chimney foundation. These artifacts provide a visual anchor for imagining Hawley’s town common as it once existed while vividly testifying to its abandonment and decline. The environment surrounding these remnants of the past also tells a story of radical change. An area once largely bare of trees that provided dramatic views of the hills to the east, north, and west is now mostly clothed in dense forest.

Aside from the remaining stonework and a few hand-thrown bricks, no clues to the history of the town common remain on the surface of the ground. An archeological dig, perhaps in the kitchen midden of one of the taverns, might turn up evidence that would provide insights into the history of the site. Unfortunately, no visual evidence of the way the structures around the town common looked, such as drawings or engravings, has turned up. A few of the buildings in the area survived into the age of photography and it is possible that photographs of them exist, but, again, no one has found any to date.²

Harrison Parker, who spent many years researching the history of Hawley, located deeds and maps and also tax, census, and town

meeting records that provide specific details about the formation and history of Hawley's town common. This material provides a valuable resource for constructing its story.³ Another way to understand Hawley's old town common is to look at the history of the New England town common in general and of commons in nearby towns: What are New England "town commons"? How did they come into being? What did they look like? What purposes did they serve? How is Hawley's town common alike or different from other Massachusetts town commons? What political, religious, and economic forces shaped and reshaped Massachusetts town commons between 1794 and 1848? Histories of town commons, taverns, stagecoaches, and meetinghouses and the histories of nearby towns, such as Ashfield and Rowe, help us to answer these questions. This approach provides insights that cannot be gleaned from the existing records of Hawley alone into how the common and the community center that formed around it functioned and how and why they changed over the roughly fifty years of their existence. John Warner Barber's *Historical Collections*, published in 1840, for example, consists of brief descriptions of every town in Massachusetts and many engravings of town centers based on Barber's drawings.⁴ While this book contains no engraving of Hawley, the engravings of the town commons in other small towns help us to see how Hawley's common may have looked and how it fit a widespread pattern.

What is a "town common"?

The idea of a town common was deeply rooted in English history and changed over the course of more than a century and a half between the first settlements in Massachusetts and the establishment of Hawley's early town center. According to English "common law," much of the land in England, all of which was ultimately owned by the king, was considered common land. "In a typical English village of 1550," writes John Stilgoe, "a particular house and houselot owned clearly defined rights to use the common forest, the common pasture, and other pieces of common land."⁵ These

rights included gathering a specified amount of firewood and pasturing a specified number of cattle, horses and geese. This manner of sharing the land began to change at the end of the sixteenth century as the nobility petitioned the king to allow them to enclose large tracts of land, usually for sheep grazing, thus depriving the householders of their rights to use what had been common land up to that time. This caused economic hardship and discontent among the householders, some of whom left England in the seventeenth century in hopes of recreating the style of village government and common-land agriculture they had once enjoyed in England. Puritanism strengthened this desire for common land by emphasizing the communal basis of religion. The official name of the state of Massachusetts-- “The Commonwealth of Massachusetts”—reflects this concept.

In the absence of nobles, each New England town established its own common-land system, making its own decisions about which land would become common pasture, which would become common woodlot. Each town also determined how many cattle and other stock could graze in the common pasture. In the seventeenth century, a householder would drop off his cattle at a paddock in the center of the village on his way to his plow land and a herdsman would lead them to the common pasture. At the end of the day, the householder would pick them up. This system continued longest in coastal towns where salt marches and grassy dunes provided good, convenient grazing land.

As New Englanders moved westward, the tradition of common pasturing endured, particularly in the early years of settlement. But after the 1660's, as an abundance of land allowed the size of houselots to grow to forty acres or greater, farmers began grazing their livestock on their own land, the need for common pasture decreased, and common-land agriculture in New England eventually disappeared.⁶

As the system of common-land agricultural fell into disuse, another system of common land became more important. The Puritans believed that the ideal town centered on a meetinghouse and the fields around the town center. They avoided the word “church” because for them “church,” congregation,” and “town” were one and the same. In practice, settlers often built the meetinghouse in the area where they first cleared land and established farms, rather than at the geographical center of town. As the town grew many came to regard the meetinghouse site as inconveniently situated on one edge of town. This led to struggles in many towns over building a second meetinghouse or moving the original meetinghouse to a more central location, or both. Such struggles played an important role in Hawley’s history.

Each New England meetinghouse stood on a plot of land called the meetinghouse lot that served the community in a number of ways. During the period of common-land agriculture the lot was often the site of the “close” where farmers dropped off and picked up their livestock at the beginning and end of the day. The town often established a burying ground on the meetinghouse lot and sometimes an area for militia training, including a firing range. During religious services, worshippers tethered their horses on the meetinghouse lot and some towns, such as Sturbridge in 1791, erected “warming” or “nooning” houses where congregants could get warm and eat their midday meals.⁷

Until the mid-eighteenth century, when other denominations, such as Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians were permitted to form congregations and build churches throughout New England, each town had one Congregational meetinghouse and one meetinghouse lot. Until the 1830s, even after other denominations began to construct their own churches, town taxes in Massachusetts paid not only for roads and bridges, but for the support of the Congregational minister.

During the eighteenth century meetinghouse lots in Massachusetts towns became more and more associated with secular affairs and, in many cities and towns, began to be called “greens.” Between about 1780 and 1830, Congregational churches began to relinquish their stake in town commons or greens to town governments. Because of its late settlement and conservative Congregational settlers Hawley followed the old pattern longer than towns that had become more religiously diverse.

The area around the meetinghouse lot quickly became a center of economic and social, as well as religious and civic activity. The meetinghouse in most New England towns stood at an important crossroads. Tavern keepers soon realized that placing their establishments as close as possible to this community center would increase business. The taverns (a common word for inns at the time) displaced “nooning” houses as places for worshippers to eat and warm up in the middle of the day, and accommodated stagecoach passengers, drivers, freight haulers, and others passing through or doing business in town. They also sometimes housed meetings to conduct town business, provided a site for winter court sessions when the meetinghouse became too cold in the winter, and refreshed militiamen during training.⁸

How was Hawley’s town common created?

Hawley was originally known as Plantation No. 7 and was one of ten townships or plantations sold by the Massachusetts General Court in 1762. When selling tracts of land for settlement, the Massachusetts General Court specified that the proprietors build a suitable meetinghouse and settle “a learned Orthodox minister” in the town. It further stipulated that each town “lay out three houselots . . . each of which to draw a sixty-third part of said town in all future divisions, one to be for the first settled minister, one for the ministry and one for the school . . .” How, when and how strictly a town adhered to the provisions laid down by the Court varied a good deal, partly because the original buyers were usually speculators who

frequently divided the land and sold it to other speculators or proprietors. The proprietors did not usually settle on the land themselves but induced others to do so. Eventually, however, the towns fulfilled the intent of the provisions laid down by the General Court, though in different ways. Hawley followed this pattern. Moses Parsons, the original buyer, divided the property into sixty-three shares or “rights” then sold these shares to a group of proprietors.⁹ According to Harrison Parker, the proprietors set aside one lot for support of the minister and one for the school. Apparently the proprietors or the town later sold these lots, presumably to finance the ministry and schools.¹⁰

It took Hawley thirty years to start fulfilling the General Court’s requirement that it build a meetinghouse and settle a minister. On May 7, 1792, at the second town meeting after Hawley’s incorporation as a town, the principal subject of discussion was that the “town had to have a church building for a meeting house.” But the town reached no decision about where to locate the building. In 1793, when the town of Hawley hired Jonathan Grout as the town’s first settled minister, it voted him 150 pounds in addition to his salary to induce him to settle. For 135 pounds, Grout then bought 120 acres of land south of where the roads now known as Forget and East Hawley roads met and not far from the barn which the town was temporarily using as a meetinghouse. Once the town did that, it was natural that the town would want to situate the meetinghouse nearby. Nevertheless, it took the town four more years to agree on a location. Such controversies about where to place a meetinghouse were frequent in other towns as well, including Rowe and Cummington. In Cummington there was so much dissatisfaction with the location originally chosen that the town abandoned the partially completed building and built a new one at another site.¹¹

While the town of Hawley remained undecided about the site of its meetinghouse, the congregation met in the barn on property adjacent to Grout’s farm. Finally, in 1797, the town voted to locate the

meetinghouse just south of the barn and partially on Grout's property. Although the town erected the meetinghouse in 1797, it did not yet formerly own the property on which it stood. In April 1798 in a deed transferring a tract of land to William Sanford, Artemas Loomis recognized the conveyance to the town of about half of the land that would form the town common. His deed grants all of his land (Lot 163 of the old Proprietor's Lots) to Sanford except for "the land the meetinghouse stands on and so much more around it (to the west) as I have agreed on with the Committee of the Town for their convenience, not to exceed one acre, and also the barn standing on the premises." The barn would have been the structure in which the congregation had been meeting. A year later, in March, 1799 Asa Blood sold one half acre to the town for eight dollars forming the northeast corner of the common. Finally, in 1808 the Rev. Grout transferred half an acre of his property, "in consideration of one penny and for the love and goodwill I bear unto the inhabitants of the Town of Hawley," to formally complete the formation of what by 1799 was already the town common. In the end, three landowners, including Grout, gave or sold portions of land to the town for the purpose of creating a town common on which the meetinghouse already stood.¹² This fact suggests that for these citizens of Hawley the communal effort of building the meetinghouse was more urgent and important than completing the legal transactions necessary to create the common and establish the town's ownership of the land under the meetinghouse.

Was the formation of Hawley's town common typical of Massachusetts towns?

A survey of the histories of a number of hill town towns in Franklin County did not yield a definitive answer to the question of whether the formation of Hawley's town common by sale or contributions of land to the town was typical of Massachusetts towns.¹³ Ashfield never had a town common, although it very recently created one. Fannie Kendrick notes in the *History of Buckland* that Buckland had a common "well-situated for the display of parades and trainings"

by the militia, but makes no other mention of the common. Lois Patrie, who wrote a history of Colrain, refers to its common but says nothing about its origin, location, or early history. The Village of Cummington created a common at the center of town in 1838-39 by purchasing a knoll on which the liberty pole stood from Harvery Tirrell and then leveling the land. A Congregational meetinghouse was built on the site. Horse sheds were erected across the way where the Community House was later built and a store (or “ordinary”) stood across from the common. Percy Whiting Brown’s *History of Rowe* makes no mention of a common.¹⁴

Of the hill town histories surveyed, the history of Heath provides the best comparison to that of Hawley. In 1785 Heath separated from Charlemont to become a new town and in 1788 the town purchased an acre of land from Benjamin Maxwell on which to build a meetinghouse. This land became the town common and the town built the meetinghouse near the east end of the property. When the town later erected a town house, it sited the building on the far southeast corner of the meetinghouse lot, leaving the rest of the common available for a militia drill field and other purposes. The town cut and sold the hay on the common until sometime in the twentieth century. The store, inn, and blacksmith shop that stood near Heath’s town common, made it typical of many New England town commons and very much like Hawley’s.¹⁵

Locating Hawley’s Town Common

One reason for the location of Hawley’s meetinghouse and town common was that four roads converged at that site. The road entering from the east (now Forget Road) was an extension of the first county road in Hawley begun in 1771, and it connected the common to Buckland to the east. This road ran past the northern edge of the common and then branched in two. One fork, Potash Road, ran west down to Middle Road, where it connected with Pudding Hollow Road. Traveling west on Pudding Hollow Road and then over Forge Hill Road, the traveler arrived at the settlement

of West Hawley. The other branch ran southwest past the home of Abraham Parker and on to King Corner, an important mill site in the southern part of West Hawley. A third road passed south through the swamp (the Hawley bog)¹⁶ to Hunt Road, and a fourth road--probably only a track in the early nineteenth century--ran southeast through Rev. Grout's farm to the main north-south road (now East Hawley Road). This road, which ran from Plainfield through Hawley to Charlemont, followed the route of the current Grout Road a little to the east of the common. Although the meetinghouse and town common stood on the eastern edge of Hawley, and were therefore quite distant from the western part of town, they occupied a strategic crossroads with access both to the outside world and to the various districts of Hawley to the south and west.

What buildings surrounded the common?

The only structures on the Hawley town common itself were the meetinghouse, probably one or more privies, and, later, the horse and carriage sheds that provided shelter for the worshippers' animals and conveyances while they attended services.

The erection of the meetinghouse in 1797 and the creation of the town common led almost immediately to the construction of several taverns close by. When William Sanford acquired land adjacent to the meetinghouse a year after its erection, he did so with the purpose of building a tavern. His establishment, which also included a store, grew into a substantial enterprise and Sanford became quite wealthy. After his death in 1831, however, his children experienced financial difficulties. In 1843, his son William Sanford, Jr., lost the property in a lawsuit, and by 1858, the inn no longer appeared on Hawley maps.

In 1802, Colonel Edmund Longley, a prominent leader during Hawley's early years, who lived just south of the common, bought the site opposite the meetinghouse and erected a competing inn, tavern, and store. Several members of the Longley family,

including Thomas Longley, Joshua Longley, William F. Longley, and Calvin Longley, ran this tavern and store from 1802 to 1848.

This tavern also housed Hawley's first post office, and the Longley's who resided in the tavern and store served as postmasters from 1817 to 1858. About 1848, Calvin Longley, the last Longley to run the establishment at the common, built a new inn, store, and post office at a site opposite the current meetinghouse where the Hawley Grove building now stands. The old Longley tavern became a home.

A third tavern, owned by Ebenezer Pomeroy, Jr. and located on Forget Road, a little east of the town common, operated from 1798 to 1804.

The house in the vicinity of the common that drew the most interesting occupants over the years was Asher Loomis's home, a one-story house built in 1797 and located on the western side of the common behind the meetinghouse. Asher Loomis lived in it from 1800 to 1817 and ran a shop there (what he sold is unknown). He may have established the blacksmith shop that by 1819 stood on the south side of the common on Rev. Grout's land (the site of this shop may now be under East Hawley Road).¹⁷ Later, from 1824 until 1835, Dr. Charles Knowlton, one of the two physicians practicing in town at the time, lived in the house. Knowlton was a purported materialist and atheist and the author of *Fruits of Philosophy*, one of the first books published in America on family planning. In 1834 or 1835, Knowlton participated in probably the most dramatic event in Hawley's history: a debate in the meetinghouse between himself and the Rev. Tyler Thatcher, Hawley's second minister from 1834 to 1843, about Knowlton's controversial views. Finally, in 1837, a pious widow named Martha S. Taylor, who lived at an inconvenient distance in West Hawley, moved into the house in order to be close to her place of worship. In *Cottage Piety*, her son Rufus Taylor described his mother's house as follows:

At a little distance from that end [of the meetinghouse], separated from it by a narrow carriageway was a neat little cottage, with out-buildings, garden, and orchard. It was so near the church that, when the windows were open, the occupant might hear the preacher without leaving the house.¹⁸

Hawley's first two doctors lived a little east of the town common in a house on Forget Road. Dr. Daniel Fobes lived there from 1796 until his death in 1809 and Dr. Moses Smith (the religiously orthodox competitor of Dr. Knowlton) occupied it until his death in 1849.

The most important house in the vicinity belonged to Abraham Parker, one of the wealthiest and most influential people in town. It lay several hundred yards southeast of the common along the road to King Corner. Town meetings and church services were held there from 1792 until 1793, just after the town's incorporation and before any public meeting place became available. A reporter who viewed the ruins of the house in 1910 wrote:

The house was back several hundred yards from the road, in the middle of a sweeping hedge of high trees that swing around the spot in a huge amphitheater. The brick in the chimney is all hand made, and the base of the chimney is 12 feet square, and in the old days had three fireplaces on the first floor and two on the second floor, reaching up to the top of the house in mammoth massiveness. Near the house are the remains of an old raceway, evidence of the presence, years ago, of an old grist mill. From the top of the hill near this spot may be seen both Greylock and Mt. Tom as the elevation is about 2200 feet.¹⁹

Four generations of Parkers lived in the house from 1775 until its sale in 1891. The date of its abandonment remains unknown.

What did the buildings on and around Hawley's town common look like?

Since no one has found any drawings, engravings, or photographs of any of the buildings--even of those that survived into the late nineteenth century--we don't know a great deal about what these buildings looked like. From contemporary accounts, we know that the meetinghouse was almost square, 40 by 50 feet, like a large barn with added windows. It had no belfry or steeple. A large central door led to a two-story "porch" or entrance hall, probably like the current meetinghouse, but with additional doors at the north and south end.²⁰ At a meeting on August 20, 1811, the town voted to paint the meetinghouse orange, a hue that turned a "dingy yellow" by the 1830s. It was not painted white until around 1840, a time when white was becoming the standard color for New England churches.²¹ The Rev. Rufus Taylor remembered the meetinghouse as follows:

The building itself, for the place and time in which it was erected, was large and high, having as memory serves the writer, more than forty windows,²² with square pews, and seats upon hinges.

Excepting the aged and the infirm, the people stood, during the public prayers, all through that region. As some suppose, they were called the "standing order" on that account. To enable them to stand the more conveniently, when they arose they turned the seats up against the sides of the pews, upon the tops of which the worshippers were accustomed to lean.

The clatter when the seats were let down at the close of the prayer, must be heard to be understood.

As approached from the north and northwest, this house stood upon an eminence, while to the south, for a considerable distance, extended a table-land. . . .

The lofty pulpit of that meeting-house, with its model window, according to the custom of the day, was in the west end of the building.²³

According to P.F. Cooley, a former resident of Hawley writing about 1886, the Sanford Tavern, just north of the meetinghouse, was

a large pretentious building of two stories, and a long ell running out to the west. It had never been adorned with paint, but the elaborate carvings and exterior ornaments gave evidence that it had once been a place in which the owner felt not a little pride William Sanford . . . kept a tavern in the upright part, and in the ell was a general country store.²⁴

A sketch of the town common found in Harrison Parker's papers—probably executed by him and based on the deeds, historical accounts, and other information he had gathered—provides an imaginative re-creation of the way the common may have looked.²⁵ The drawing shows wooden fences lining the roads as they pass through the common.²⁶ These fences probably served to prevent the livestock permitted to graze on the common from wandering. In front of the meetinghouse, a low wall, which still exists, allowed ladies in their Sunday dresses to step easily out of their carriages onto the ground.

Until the 1840s most town commons were not well maintained, unlike the town greens of today, and Hawley's was probably no exception. The lawnmower was not yet invented and there may not have been much grass to mow in any case. Travelers in the early nineteenth century often lamented the state of town commons, which were crisscrossed with dirt roads and sometimes covered with weeds, rubbish, and stones and trampled on by sheep and hogs.²⁷ So, Hawley's town common may well have been unsightly. A spirit of beautification gradually developed in New England cities and towns during the nineteenth century, but we do not know whether it touched Hawley's old town common before it began its decline.

How did the Hawley town common and the buildings on and around it serve the community?

The main purpose of a New England town common was to provide a site for the meetinghouse. As the name implies, a meetinghouse was not just a church. It functioned as both the religious and secular center of the community, where the members of the community gathered to conduct town business as well as to worship. In Massachusetts, the Congregational minister remained an employee of the town until the adoption of the Eleventh Amendment to the state constitution in 1833 separated church and state. Town business included hiring the minister and levying taxes for his support. We know that the Hawley church was a very active one. Frequent religious revivals took place between 1794 and 1832, bringing new members into the congregation. But there were also Hawley citizens who supported the controversial Dr. Knowlton in his debate at the meetinghouse with the Rev. Tyler Thatcher.

The Hawley town common served at least one other purpose in addition to being the site of the meetinghouse, and, judging from the history of other New England town commons, probably more. We know that the ancient practice of grazing livestock on common land persisted in Hawley because, beginning in 1803, the town meeting voted that only yearling cattle could graze on the town common. The common may also have served as a site for militia training, although no documentation confirming this has yet come to light. Town commons frequently provided centrally located public spaces for this purpose, with the added attraction of at least one convenient tavern nearby. In colonial times and during the early republic, all able-bodied men between the ages of 16 and 60 were required to do military service and appear at training days every three months. In most towns these trainings took place on the town common. The men drank heavily at the nearby tavern and played games, such as wrestling and cudgel, as well as trained. These gatherings also ensured that notices and proclamations received wide distribution. Militia training declined with the establishment of a standing army

and navy after the War of 1812, but persisted in Hawley and other towns for some time after that.²⁸

We know that Hawley had an active militia company and also furnished military leadership to larger bodies of militia. In 1813 Lt. Col Thomas Longley commanded a regiment that paraded in Buckland. The *Franklin Herald* reported that “the troops made a display brilliant beyond example in the militia. The Hawley Company of Infantry, in particular, deserves notices for its truly martial appearance and improved state in dress and discipline.”²⁹ To improve in discipline the Hawley militia company must have trained somewhere. It is possible that the militia trained on the Longley family’s farm a little south of the town common, but it is more likely that they trained on the common itself, probably between the meetinghouse and the Longley Tavern.

The town of Hawley may also have maintained a pound on or near the common for holding stray cattle, although no documentation to prove this has surfaced to date. The town of Heath purchased land for this purpose, and Cummington voted in 1794 to build a pound near its meetinghouse. The town of Cummington specified that the pound be “30 feet square—13 posts 6 X 8 and 6 rails high, said rails to be 6 inches wide and 2 inches thick.” In 1785 Rowe voted to construct a pound near its meetinghouse, and in 1794 it voted to build a pound 38 feet square and 7 feet high from the top of the sills. In 1822 it voted to use Solomon Read’s barnyard as the pound, and in 1835 the town constructed a stone pound with a wooden gate on the West road. This pound’s stonework was restored in 1957 and a replica of the wooden gate built.³⁰ Pounds were important for protecting crops. Before the invention of barbed wire, especially in the early years of settlement before farmers completed their stone walls, animals frequently strayed off their owner’s land. The town’s field driver would round them up and put them in the pound until the owner claimed them. The town’s pound keeper fed and watered the stock while they were in the pound. If Hawley had a pound, and

it is likely that it did, it was probably on or near the common and similar in construction to the ones in Cummington and Rowe.

Every town common in New England not only had a meetinghouse on it, but at least one tavern across the street or close by. So it was not unusual that Hawley supported two, and for a brief time, three taverns in the vicinity of the town common. In New England, the word “tavern” at this time was synonymous with “inn” or “hotel” and meant a place for travelers to stay as well as a place that served liquor.³¹ Taverns were identified by their tall signs, easily seen from a distance by a rider on horseback or a driver on the seat of a stagecoach or wagon. Signs similar to those depicted in the engravings of Massachusetts towns in John Warner Barber’s *Historical Collections* probably stood outside the taverns across from Hawley’s town common.

Taverns were in many respects just large homes. The innkeeper and his family usually lived in the building, the husband serving as manager and barkeeper, the wife as cook. The boys tended the stable and the girls served as waiters and made beds.³² Taverns, and the stores often associated with them, played a central role in New England community life in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Town meetings would sometimes move to one of the taverns, particularly in the winter months when the meetinghouse went unheated. “Voted to adjourn to Mr. Sanford’s bar-room forthwith,” reads an entry in the Hawley Town Records for a Special Town Meeting on October 30, 1815. When the meeting resumed in Sanford’s tavern, the town voted on the construction and repair of several bridges.³³ Taverns also functioned as courthouses. William Sanford, who apparently had some legal training and acquired the title “Esquire” from the governor, tried lawsuits in his “commodious hall.”³⁴

The taverns in New England towns served as the primary venues for male socializing outside the home. Scholars believe that the

consumption of alcoholic beverages in the United States reached its highest peak in history between 1790 and 1830.³⁵ Men often drank far more than they do today. This too accounts for the initial success of the Sanford and Longley taverns. According to William Giles Atkins, Hawley's townspeople considered Sanford's inn the best place to buy New England rum. Some communities overlooked the legal prohibition against serving alcohol on the Sabbath, and men would flock to the taverns during the mid-day break in the services. This may not have been true in a conservative religious community such as Hawley, but heavy drinking probably went on at other times during the week. The effects of excessive drinking during this period led, in the 1820s, to the temperance movement, which began to achieve some success in the 1830s and 1840s. Historian Jack Larkin writes that "A substantial number of country innkeepers gave up the serving of liquor, either acting out of growing personal conviction or responding to community pressure."³⁶ This was the case in Hawley, where, in 1831, a religious revival drew many new members to the East Hawley church. Many of the new members vowed not to drink alcohol and, apparently as a result, neither the Sanford nor the Longley tavern sought to renew its liquor license in 1831. Neither tavern served liquor after that date, and that may have been one reason why the Sanford Tavern began to experience financial difficulties and finally closed. Noah Joy, who opened a tavern on South Road in 1830, did renew his liquor license in 1831 but in 1832 the Hawley selectman would not send his license application to the Franklin County commissioners. He managed to renew his license anyway by applying directly to the county commissioners and continued to do so each year for the next ten years. After that the commissioners licensed the Joy Tavern to serve wine and beer only. From 1831 until 1857 the Joy Tavern was the only legal source in Hawley for alcoholic beverages of any kind.³⁷

We know from an article published on January 3, 1843 in the *Greenfield Gazette & Courier* that there was a time when "every one used ardent spirit" and that the temperance movement affected

at least one of Hawley's prominent citizens. In paying tribute to Edmund Longley (1746-1842), the founder of one of Hawley's taverns, the article throws a poignant light on the momentous change in the drinking habits of Hawley's residents after 1831: "He was very regular and temperate in his habits. In former days when every one used ardent spirit, he used it moderately, for those times. When the temperance reformation commenced, however, his mind was open to conviction, and he signed the pledge, though he was then more than four score years old."³⁸

New England taverns also functioned as stagecoach stops and centers of communication. Roads greatly improved after 1790, better horse-drawn vehicles became available, and stage coach lines expanded just as Hawley entered its most intense period of growth. The Sanford and Longley taverns were not on a major stagecoach route, but apparently enough traffic came through town to sustain both of them in the early years of the nineteenth century. Stagecoaches brought news of the outside world in the form of mail, newspapers, and broadsides, and their passengers and drivers also carried and disseminated stories and information.

Who stayed at the taverns on the Hawley town common?

Harrison Parker says that residents of Hawley coming from the more distant parts of town stayed at the inns on Saturday night so that they could worship in the meetinghouse the following day. It is unclear what evidence he bases this on, however, and one wonders how many residents in town could have afforded to do that each week. We know that when Martha Taylor lived in West Hawley she and her family would often leave for church the night before and stay with friends along the way. That seems a more likely scenario for those who lived at a distance from the meetinghouse.³⁹

Rural New England taverns during this period were small and accommodations primitive. Before 1820 guests in New England taverns--with the exception of married couples--slept at least two to

a bed in same-sex bedchambers containing two or more beds. Some taverns had only two bedrooms, one for men and one for women. Others, such as the Stratton Taveryn in Northfield, Massachusetts had several small rooms, but could only accommodate twelve to thirteen people: the passengers in a nine-person stagecoach, for example, plus the driver and a few people traveling on their own.⁴⁰ Probably most of the guests at the taverns in Hawley were stagecoach passengers coming to town on business or passing through. Perhaps this included the drivers of freight wagons who brought goods to stock the stores in the Sanford and Longley taverns.

One or both of the taverns on the Hawley town common probably served as a station for changing horses on the stagecoach route and its stable would have housed two teams of horses for this purpose: one rested and ready to go, the other recovering from completing an earlier stage of the route. The blacksmith shop on the southern edge of Hawley's town common, like those found near almost every meetinghouse and tavern in New England, would have provided an essential service to the stagecoach drivers and to others traveling by carriage or wagon and or on horseback, often over rough roads.

Why did Hawley's old town common decline and eventually disappear?

In 1848-49, the First Congregational Church of Hawley dismantled the meetinghouse on the town common and incorporated most of its boards and timbers into a new meetinghouse a mile and a quarter to the south at the corner of East Hawley and Buckland Roads. The process of deciding to make this move caused some consternation among the residents of the town, as Rufus Taylor reported:

During the early part of this year [1848], much was said about the venerable church-edifice which overshadowed Mrs. Dawson's [Mrs. Taylor's] cottage, and to which the people of the parish had gone up to worship, ever since the settlement

of the town. Some wished to repair it; others, to take it down and build elsewhere. The excitement growing out of this state of things greatly disturbed the one of whom we write It was at length determined to take down the old meeting-house, and to build another elsewhere.⁴¹

Several factors precipitated this change, two of which reflected the conflicting needs of the eastern and western sections of town.

One factor was the division of the Hawley congregation, which weakened the strategic importance of the town common's location. In 1825, as a result of population growth in the western part of town and the inconvenience of traveling more than two miles over rough, steep roads to East Hawley to go to church, a group of West Hawley residents formed the Second Congregational Society of Hawley and built their own meetinghouse.⁴² This probably resulted in a decrease of business at the Sanford and Longley taverns as fewer people made their way to the meetinghouse to worship. Hawley had held its town meetings in the East Hawley meetinghouse from 1797 onward, but probably around 1825 it began to hold these meetings alternatively in the East Hawley meetinghouse and in buildings in West Hawley. For the people of West Hawley, the town common no longer represented the center of their community.⁴³

Another momentous event for Hawley took place in 1833: the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which separated church and state, went into effect. Heath responded to this change almost immediately. In 1833, the Heath Congregational church, now a separate entity from the town, purchased land and constructed a new building in which to worship. The town tore down the old meetinghouse and may have used some of its materials in building a town house on the Heath common in 1834.⁴⁴

Heath was unusual, however, in its prompt compliance with the law. Many towns, including Hawley, still allowed town business to be conducted in the meetinghouse after the passage of the Eleventh Amendment. Not until the 1840s did most New England towns construct separate buildings for carrying on town business. Usually they located the buildings on the town common, as Heath did, but Hawley's geography induced the townspeople to choose a different solution. In April 1848, the town meeting voted "to build a Town House as near to the center of town as possible." It chose a site on Middle Road near the geographical center of town and relinquished all claims to the meetinghouse, with the exception of its "eight windows with frames and casings and one of the stoves and half of the stove piping in said meeting house." These materials it incorporated into the new town house on Middle Road (now Alice Parker's home). The rest of the salvageable materials in the old meetinghouse went into the new meetinghouse at the corner of East Hawley and Buckland roads.⁴⁵ The construction of separate buildings for ecclesiastical and governmental functions physically enacted the separation of church and state.

As Harrison Parker points out, the first two factors that shaped Hawley's future do not explain why the congregation decided not to rebuild the meetinghouse on the old town common. The decision to move to a different site almost certainly reflected the strong pull of a new transportation route. In 1826 the rebuilding of Ashfield Road resulted in the routing of the Boston to Albany stagecoach through Hawley (the old route passed through Plainfield). The new route followed Ashfield Road to Plainfield Road, turned south, then westward onto South Road, and finally passed into Plainfield. That this route functioned as the principal artery between Hawley and the outside world after 1826 almost certainly meant a loss of business for the taverns on the Hawley town common. The opening of the Joy Tavern in 1830, strategically located on South Road along the new stagecoach route and the only tavern to serve alcohol after 1831, also weakened the economic importance of the common. The

Sanford family lost their tavern in a lawsuit in 1843. In about 1848 Calvin Longley, now the owner of the Longley Tavern, moved his business close to the stagecoach route, constructing a new tavern and store opposite the site of the new church where the Hawley Grove building now stands.⁴⁶ Here he could compete directly with Joy's Tavern.

With the religious, civic, social, and economic institutions that drew people to it gone, the old Hawley town common now began its decline. Six years later, in 1854, the town voted "that William Sanford, Jr. have the improvement of the Common where the old meetinghouse stood until the call for it." He apparently used it to pasture his sheep. Aaron Gould, a later owner of the property, probably inherited these rights in the 1870s and 80s. Town records never mention the possibility of selling the common and most of it still remains the property of the town.⁴⁷

In 1891, a visitor walking northward along East Hawley Road described the site of the old town common in this way:

On further, up the gradually rising, muddy road was "The Old Meeting-house spot." It was "a pretty sightly place" I had been told. It surely was this morning. I exclaimed with surprise at the panorama to the northward, and blinked my eyes. I could hardly trust my sight. There along the horizon, like a picture in a dream, were snowfields, so pearly and soft in the distance it seemed as if they were on the point of dissolving into nothingness. . . . On the high ground here at "The Old Meeting-house spot" was once the center of the town. Here were the church, the parsonage, tavern, store, doctor's office, post-office and several houses. Now it is known as "Poverty Square." A guide-post, with the names on its board half worn away by the weather, leans sidewise, in discouraged attitude, at the parting of the roads. Two deserted houses still mark the spot. One is low and long with a roof

almost covered with green moss. This was the store [Longley Tavern]. The other, a little north, with still lingering traces of red paint on its old clapboards, and its broken windows staring at one like the vacant sockets of skull, was in former days the parsonage [Rev. Tyler Thatcher's house]. A dreary spot it must be in winter, but, if the wind does not sweep across it too keenly, it must at all times be a place worth visiting for its views."⁴⁸

Why is the story of Hawley's old town common significant?

The fate of Hawley's old town common is an archetypal American story. From the founding of this country, the vanishing of a town center, or even a whole town, has been a significant part of the history of American settlement.⁴⁹ Jamestown, the very first permanent English settlement in America, fell on hard times and disappeared as a town after the capitol of Virginia moved to Middle Plantation (now Williamsburg). The growth of our towns and cities, or of one part of them, has often been accompanied by de-settlement somewhere else. Changes in transportation routes and the introduction of new modes of travel (steamboats, railroads, automobiles) have often undermined the viability of what were once thriving centers of economic activity. A railroad built through one town leads to prosperity, but the town ten miles south, bypassed by the railroad, withers and dies.

The conflicting needs of different sections of town also make a familiar story. Rowe could not agree on the location of a meetinghouse in 1791 because of differing views about where the center of town lay and the citizens of Cummington, unhappy with the site chosen for the meetinghouse, abandoned the half-built structure and built a new one at another location.⁵⁰ In the case of Hawley—a town that might be called “geographically challenged”—the rugged hills and narrow valleys that separated the east and west sections of town complicated the situation. Initially, the town was oriented east to west with the major roads running in

those directions. With the building of the West Hawley church and the abandonment of the town common, the town began to shift to a predominantly north-south orientation in conformity with the direction of its narrow valleys.

The history of Hawley's old town common also illustrates the effects of the separation of church and state in Massachusetts in 1833. Like other Massachusetts towns, Hawley ceased to tax its citizens to support the Congregational minister; then physically enacted the separation of church and state by constructing a separate town house. This represented a milestone in the achievement of religious freedom and a more pluralistic society.

Acknowledgements

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Note

This essay should be regarded as a report on the research conducted by the author under the MHF Scholar-in-Residence grant. The author intends to continue his research and prepare a revised version of the essay as part of the larger "Rediscovering Hawley's Old Town Common" project.

Endnotes

¹ [Reverend Rufus Taylor], *Cottage Piety Exemplified* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1869). The Rev. Rufus Taylor, one of the four sons of Captain Jeremiah Taylor (1765-1820) and Martha S. Taylor, grew up in West Hawley. In her later years, Martha lived in a house right on the edge of Hawley's old town common. In 1869 Rufus Taylor published anonymously an account of his mother's life entitled *Cottage Piety Exemplified* in which he changed the names of people and places, presumably to protect their privacy and, perhaps, to universalize the tale. To purchase a reprint of *Cottage Piety* write to: The Sons & Daughters of Hawley, P.O. Box 206, Hawley, MA 01339-0206.

² Harrison Parker obtained over a dozen photographs of houses in Hawley taken by the Howes brothers of Ashfield around 1905 from the collection at the Ashfield Historical Society, but none of these depict a house in the immediate town common vicinity. These photographs now hang on the wall of the present meetinghouse. The Ashfield Historical Society owns 23,000 glass plate negatives of the Howes photographs, but there is no catalogue of them. In 2008 Norman Pike, the curator of the collection, sent me thumbnails of the photographs of Hawley that have been identified in the collection, but none of these are of buildings that stood near the common.

³ See Harrison Parker, "The Old Hawley Town Common and Poverty Square," *The Edge of Hawley*, Vol. 5 (February 1985). I have drawn on this monograph and Parker's *Hawley Massachusetts: The First Fifty Years, 1770-1820* (Amherst, MA: Sara Publishing, 1992) throughout this essay for much of the basic information about Hawley's old town common. Most of the records he drew on can be found at the Hawley town office or the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Greenfield, others are in the Massachusetts State Archives. He also drew on census records. Copies of some of these records are in the Harrison Parker Papers, Special Collections, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The Sons & Daughters of Hawley historical collection includes the death and birth register that was probably kept in the old meetinghouse on the common.

⁴ John Warner Barber, *Historical Collections: being a general collection of interesting facts, traditions, biographical sketches, anecdotes, & c., relating to the history and antiquities of every town in Massachusetts, with geographical descriptions; illustrated by 200 engravings* (Worcester, MA: Dorr, Howland, 1840).

⁵ John Stilgoe, "Town Common and Village Green in New England: 1620 to 1981," in Ronald Lee Fleming and Lauri A. Halderman, *On Common Ground* (Harvard, MA: The Harvard Common Press, 1982), 8.

⁶ Stilgoe, 13.

⁷ Stilgoe, 16-17.

⁸ Stilgoe, 18-22.

⁹ For some unknown reason, sixty-three was the standard number of lots used by proprietors when dividing the tracts distributed by the Massachusetts General Court: three lots set aside for the minister, the ministry (presumably for the meetinghouse), and the schools, the other sixty to be divided among the original proprietors by lot. Colrain, Ashfield, and Cummington all followed this formula. Colrain was one of three tracts granted by the General Court to the town of Boston in 1735. The Court required each of the towns created from these tracts "to draw a sixty-third part of said town in all future divisions, one to be for the first settled minister, one for the ministry and one for the school . . ." (Patrie, 8-9). Cummington was another one of the ten tracts, which included Plantation No. 7 auctioned off in 1762 by a committee appointed by the General Court. At their first meeting the proprietors laid out sixty-three lots containing 102 acres each, including one sixty-third for minister and the same for schools (Olive Thayer, *A History of Cummington, Massachusetts, 1779-1979* [Souvenir Committee, Cummington Bicentennial, 1979], 6). In 1736 the General Court granted the tract that became Ashfield. to veterans of the expedition against Quebec and Montreal in King William's War (1690-97). Again, the proprietors laid out sixty-three lots, in this case of 50-63 acres,

including one for the minister, one for the ministry, one for the schools (Howes, 16-17).

¹⁰ Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 7-13. A “school lot” appears on the Hawley proprietors’ map of 1799 but by the time the proprietors’ map of 1818 appeared, the town had sold the lot. Joseph Bangs now owned it. No deed transferring this lot to Bangs or some other party appears in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds. Apparently, the proprietors did not set aside a lot for “the ministry.”

¹¹ Thayer, 7.

¹² Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 6.

¹³ At least one Massachusetts town acquired its town common through gifts of land. Belchertown possesses a large green that is several blocks long. Col. Elijah Dwight gave land to the town in 1791 for a meetinghouse, which “later became part of the town green, more popularly known as the “Common.”” Dr. Estes Howe then contributed the northern and southern ends of green in 1803. (William E. Shaw, *History of Belchertown in the 18th Century* [Amherst, MA: The Newell Press, 1968], 102-03).

¹⁴ Fannie Shaw Kendrick, *The History of Buckland, 1779-1935* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing Co., 1937), 93-94; Lois McClellan Patrie, *A History of Colrain, Massachusetts with Genealogies of Early Families* (Lois McClellan Patrie, 1974); Thayer, 17; Percy Whiting Brown, *History of Rowe, Massachusetts* (Rowe, MA: Town of Rowe, revised edition, 1960). In the case of Cummington, it is not clear what the role of the town was in the creation of the common. By this time the Congregational church was by law, at least, independent of town government and may have been primarily responsible.

¹⁵ Edward Calver, *Heath, Massachusetts: A History and Guidebook* (Heath, MA: Heath Historical Society, 1979), 163-64.

¹⁶ It may seem surprising that the town decided to locate the town center near a swamp or bog. Could it have been the land included some natural grasslands? John Stilgoe says that because it was so hard to clear land, settlers often located towns adjacent to salt marches, freshwater meadows, or upland grassland. (Stilgoe, 10-11). Or was it because the water table was close to the surface in such a spot, as evidenced by the water still to be found at the bottom of the shallow Loomis, Sanford, and Parker wells? Edward Calver, who wrote a history of Heath, suggests that Heath center was located near the semi-swampy area that gives rise to Dell and Avery brooks because the water table is close to the surface there, although, he concedes that its position at the intersection of two main roads is probably the main reason. (Calver, 163)

¹⁷ Parker, "The Old Town Common," 15

¹⁸ Taylor, *Cottage Piety*, 238-39. See footnote #1.

¹⁹ Unknown reporter, *North Adams Evening Transcript*, 17 September 1910, 2 and 6. Transcript of a news clipping sent to *The Edge of Hawley* by Dick Hollien, curator, Shelburne Historical Museum, 21 June 1993.

²⁰ The doors to the meetinghouses in Rowe, Colrain, and Buckland were all in the center of the south side of the buildings, "according to the plan all early church builders followed," says Colrain historian Lois Patrie. Patrie, 15.

²¹ Parker, "Old Hawley Town Common," 7. White did not become the standard color for NE churches until well into the nineteenth century. The meetinghouse in Colrain was painted blue in 1765, the one in Cummington built in 1793 was Prussian blue, the town of Rowe voted in 1814 to paint their meetinghouse French yellow with a chocolate roof but then rescinded the vote.

²² Perhaps he means windowpanes.

²³ Taylor, 237-38.

²⁴ P.F. Cooley, “Reminiscences of a Former Resident,” in William Giles Atkins, *History of the Town of Hawley* (West Cummington, MA, 1887; rpt Sons & Daughters of Hawley, 1992?), 125.

²⁵ This drawing may have been used by Judith Russell in creating her painting of Hawley’s town common for the town’s bicentennial.

²⁶ This feature also appears in John Warner Barber’s depiction of the town common in Brimfield, Massachusetts.

²⁷ Stilgoe, 26-27.

²⁸ In 1827 Ashfield held a general training or brigade “muster” on “the Plain” to which soldiers from neighboring towns were summoned “for Military duty and inspection, with arms and equipments, as the law directs.” Perhaps Hawley was one of those towns. (Howes, 303)

²⁹ Quoted in Harrison Parker, *Hawley, Massachusetts: The First Fifty Years, 1770-1820* (Ashfield, MA: Sara Publishing, 1992), 66.

³⁰ Calver; Thayer, 9; Brown, 48, 73-74.

³¹ Jack Larkin, *The New England Country Tavern* (Sturbridge, MA: Old Sturbridge Village Publication, 2000), 10.

³² Larkin, 15.

³³ Parker, *Hawley Massachusetts*, 394-95.

³⁴ Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 9.

³⁵ W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), ix, 7.

³⁶ Larkin, 22.

³⁷ Parker, *Hawley Massachusetts*, 396; 454, 314-15. Parker does not cite all his sources for this information. Further research may more fully illuminate this significant turning point in Hawley's early history.

³⁸ Longley would have taken the pledge in the early 1830s. Newspaper clipping, Harrison Parker Papers, Special Collections, Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

³⁹ Rev. Rufus Taylor reported that his parents "usually walked, and occasionally carried an infant in their arms, for the purpose of dedicating it to God in the holy ordinance of baptism. On such occasions, as they had five miles to go, up hill and down, they started the day before, and spent the night with some friend on the way." 238

⁴⁰ Larkin, 34-35.

⁴¹ Taylor, 288. The pious Martha Taylor had lived close by the meetinghouse for ten years. As it came down "Almost every blow that was struck would fall upon [Martha Taylor's] ear. 'Sad indeed,' says her daughter, 'was the day to mother when the sound of the hammer was first heard upon that building in the work of destruction. It is hard to conceive what her feelings were as she saw that work going on day after day and week after week.'" Later, she could not forget what she referred to as the "dear old spot where it stood" and her son wrote: "rubbish that long remained there might well remind her of the desolation of Zion." Taylor, 289, 297.

⁴² Harrison Parker, "Second Congregational Church Now Owns All the Land It Sits On." Typescript, Sons & Daughters of Hawley historical collection. The original West Hawley church was torn down in 1846 and a new one constructed in 1847. Harrison Parker apparently prepared this history of the second West Hawley meetinghouse shortly before his death, but the legal transaction transferring a piece of land under the church, which the Second Congregational Church did not own, never took place. The West Hawley meetinghouse and all the land on which it sits are now owned by Craig and Pam Shrimpton.

⁴³ Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 18.

⁴⁴ Calver.

⁴⁵ Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 18-19. One of the doors on the end of the meetinghouse “porch” was salvaged by a member of the Dodge family (probably Hiram) and reused in the family’s home. Later it was stored in at least two different barns owned by the family and finally donated to the Sons & Daughters of Hawley. It remains part of the Sons & Daughters historical collection. Harrison Parker, “The Old Church Door,” *The Edge of Hawley*, July, 1997.

⁴⁶ Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 19.

⁴⁷ Parker, “Old Hawley Town Common,” 19. In 1993 the town of Hawley transferred .42 acres of the town common on the east side of East Hawley Road to Ray Gotta and this portion of the common is now owned by Ray and Phyllis Gotta.

⁴⁸ *Picturesque Franklin*, ed. Charles F. Warner Northampton, MA: Wade, Warner & Co., 1891), 45-46. Clifton Johnson (1865-1940) probably wrote this account. Johnson, who lived in the Connecticut Valley, was the popular author of numerous books on rural landscapes, mostly in the United States, that he illustrated with his own photographs. See for example, *The New England Country* (1897), *The Country School in New England* (1893), and *New England and Its Neighbors* (1902). These are a superb resources for studying the vernacular landscape of the period.

⁴⁹ See, for example: Donald Harrington, *Let Us Build Us a City: Eleven Lost Towns* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, c1989).

⁵⁰ Brown; Thayer, 7.

