

A Short History of Hebron

Hebron is a town located in Grafton County, New Hampshire. As of the 2000 census, the town had a total population of 459.

Hebron was formed in 1791 from a portion of the extinct township of Cockermouth and from a portion of what was then called West Plymouth.

The original township of Cockermouth was granted to 64 proprietors in 1761 but was not sufficiently settled by this original group and was therefore, regranted in 1766. In order to meet the terms of the grant it was required “that every grantee, his heirs or assigns, shall plant and cultivate 5 acres of land within the term of 5 years for every 50 acres contained in his share or portion... and continue to improve and settle the same...” Only a few of the original proprietors ever settled in the Cockermouth grant, and as a result, an extension of the second grant terms was made in 1772.

Plymouth was granted in 1763, and the list of men that would come to live in what is now Hebron who signed the original Plymouth petitions and became grantees include: William Nevens, Gershom Goodhue, and William Cummings.

At one of the first meetings held in Cockermouth on July 19, 1775 a group of settlers met to create a Committee of Inspection “to inspect and take up any person that shall be suspected to be Enemies to the Contrey and to Deal with them accordingly.” The purpose of this meeting was to establish Cockermouth in support of the American Revolution which had started just three months prior.

After the formation of the new town, the first Hebron town meeting was held on June 15, 1792. With few exceptions, the men who settled into the area now called Hebron came from or through Hollis, NH. Many collateral branches of these families stayed in Hollis, and from there, helped to settle other parts of New England, New York and in the nineteenth century, the rest of the western United States. The few exceptions came primarily from Bow, NH, the Massachusetts towns of Newbury, Concord or Groton, and nearby towns, or from Connecticut. As a result, Hebron was entirely settled by New England stock with no known first generation emigrants from Europe. The early settlers were, however, predominantly of English blood lines with a very small amount of Scotch-Irish added as time went on.

On the Patriot front, many of these men fought in the French and Indian War and in the American Revolution. In the hardy breed that came to settle in present-day Hebron there were very few Tories. In fact the support for the Revolution from the Cockermouth and Plymouth people was overwhelming.

By the early 1780's most of the accessible farm lots in Hebron along the Cockermouth River and Newfound Lake were taken. The rocky lake shore did not yield very many farmlots, and the number available along the Cockermouth too was very limited. This forced any new-comers to turn to the lots on the surrounding hills. A hill farm had other

advantages as the narrow valleys of the region were often subject to floods, while much of the land near the lake was swampy and covered by a growth of underbrush and trees. On the hills the land was dry and easier to cultivate. The timber on the hills was easier to clear because there was less growth and dragging timber was simpler on a downhill grade. Once the trees were cleared, a crop of grain could be grown the first year unlike in the valleys where it was the second year before crops could be planted. The hillside farm lots were covered predominantly by hardwood, thus supplying the firewood and building materials needed for tools, furniture and handles. Further, the many maples furnished a supply of sugar. The approach was difficult, but this was offset by a longer growing period. As Dr. Howard Oedel has demonstrated, frost appears in the valleys before it does on the hilltops. No doubt, this is partly explained by larger amounts of sunlight the hilltops receive, but also by the simple fact that colder air is heavy air and settles in the valleys first.

The farmers in Hebron in the early nineteenth century were very self sufficient. There was little excess produced on the farms, and what there was was used as the basis for barter, as hard currency was little and far between. By necessity farmers were limited to the necessary articles needed to sustain the farm and family, and for these they bartered their maple sugar, corn, hay, wood and labor at the Hebron Village store, or traded in Bristol. The account books for the Hebron Village store from the mid-nineteenth century still exist, and within their pages everything imaginable that could be produced on a farm was bartered for life's necessities. Most of the family's clothes, tools, furniture, and food were produced on the farm. There were some specialists in the village; thus there were blacksmiths, millers, sawyers, tanners, basket makers, tailors, glove makers and even a brick producer in Hebron during this time period. However, in nearly every case where a man developed a specialty, there was no whole time occupation by which a man could earn a living for himself and his family save farming. Thus nearly all of the specialists were also farmers at the same time. This situation continued in some cases even through the 1880's. Farming was the chief occupation during this period until the very end of the century. All the food was the produced on the farm, or found in the woods, or in the waters of the vicinity. Wheat, corn, potatoes, turnips and other root vegetables were all produced at home. Cows afforded milk and sometimes in winter an older cow was slaughtered to supply meat that could be frozen and salted and also provided the leather needed for the family's shoes. Most farms had sheep which were accounted the most profitable stock, which could be raised on a farm, because of their wool and mutton. The oxen were the "tractors" for the early farmers. Being stronger than horses and easier to handle they were the predominant means for clearing the land, building the stone fences and for cultivation. "As the country became more and more cleared, pasture for cattle increased, and the number of cattle was continually multiplied." As the roads became better, herds of cattle were driven to the Boston market, but this phase did not reach Hebron until after the Mayhew Turnpike was built in 1803.

Spinning wheel, and the hand loom were common in every household. The cloth they spun was durable, if not fashionable. Women were also responsible for the salt tub, the smokehouse, the drying kettle, the ash leach, and the candlemould, besides butter and cheese production and food preservation, including canning, smoking and salting. The

hard working, 'womenfolk' were an important factor in making the farm pay. The lot of the pioneer woman on the self sufficing northern New England farm was not an enviable one. She literally worked herself to death. During the winter the farmer manufactured furniture, tools, barrels and other farm implements. Diversions from the laborious farm work were few. Literacy was not universal. What travel there was, was usually done on horseback with a saddle, or with a pillion to carry double. The majority of settlers relied on their feet, or the ox cart. There were social events, such as, quilting parties and husking bees. This was the era when spelling-bees were a social event attended by nearly everyone, literate and illiterate. Church meetings were also major weekly social events which lasted all day with a break for lunch.

There were also barn and house raisings. The ridge frame, which had first been put together on the ground, was hoisted into an upright position by man and oxen power. These raisings, while hard work, were enjoyed by both the men and boys doing the raising, and by the women who collectively cooked to feed them.

In 1792 (the year in which Hebron was formed from portions of Cockermouth and Plymouth) a law was passed that required all men between the ages of eighteen and forty to be enrolled and organized into companies, one for each town, and called out for inspection twice a year. This day was called Muster Day. The men drilled and marched to the great amusement of the village folk. The passing of the bottle was not unknown at such occasions.

The twenty years from 1800 to 1820 saw the people of New England building turnpikes which furnished a mode of speculation to the local investors and also aided materially in the development of the country. The inhabitants of Hebron were not far behind their times for in 1803 a charter was granted for the construction of the Mayhew Turnpike.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the main pathway (road is too grandiose a term) connecting Bristol (then called New Chester) to Cockermouth (later Hebron) ran up the west side of the lake. This was not the existing West Shore Road as the Ledges had to be bypassed unlike today's road. It was in 1803 that the Mayhew Turnpike was built on the east side, through East Hebron. The Turnpike was built to shorten the distance between Concord to Haverhill and other Connecticut River towns, and it also served West Plymouth. The Turnpike was sixteen miles long and started south of Bristol at the Peasley Graveyard on Smith River and ran to the present Route 3A and Route 25 traffic circle in Plymouth. One of the toll booths on the Turnpike was at the crossing of the Newfound River in Bristol.

One of the toll booths on the Turnpike was at the crossing of the Newfound River in Bristol, the other at its termination in West Plymouth. There were certain exemptions to the tolls, such as, those going to church or a funeral, those traveling in the town where they resided, and the militia, under arms, going to or returning from military duty. The toll gates were discontinued in 1840, and the road given to the towns to maintain. The inhabitants living along the Pike did not pay the toll, but won a free right of way by doing work on the Pike. This work also helped them pay their taxes. The Turnpike greatly

facilitated travel from the northern part of the State, for it was one of the direct routes from Montreal to Boston. It was also an aid to business in the region, especially to the tavern keepers. The location of the Turnpike, on the east side of the Newfound Lake, influenced the later settlers' choice of lots which were those near the Pike. Thus the majority of new farms built at this time were in the hills near the Pike on Pike Hill, Wade, Favor and Hunt roads, and especially at the intersections of these roads with the Pike.

There was heavy team traffic on the Mayhew Turnpike from 1803 until about 1850, transporting northern New Hampshire products to the cities and towns further south, and bringing back manufactured products and other goods not produced on northern New Hampshire farms. One of the earliest taverns in the Hebron area was formed around this time. Daniel Pike had settled about 1791 on land that was along the route the Mayhew Turnpike took in 1803. His home was near the present junction of North Shore Road and Route 3A. He enlarged his house and stable facilities and opened Pike's Tavern around 1804. Putnam Spaulding of Bridgewater bought the property from Daniel Pike in 1822, together with adjoining land owned by Moody Pike. David McClure of Groton bought the land and buildings from Spaulding in 1837. David McClure carried on the tavern business actively until about 1850, and probably did some tavern business for several years after that but with far fewer customers. The reason he had fewer customers after 1850 was that the traffic on the Mayhew Turnpike declined sharply due to the opening of the Franklin and Bristol railroad which had been completed in 1848; another branch of this railroad was opened for traffic from Concord to Plymouth in 1850, and completed to Woodsville in 1853. With the advent of these railroads, the traffic through East Hebron greatly diminished.

According to Justin McClure (1866-1952), the McClure Tavern had stables which would take care of 50 or 60 horses. Many of the heavy teams were six and eight horse teams. The cost of caring for horses was much greater than the expense of accommodating the drivers. There is an account book of the tavern for the years 1841-1845 in the Hebron Public Library. It shows that, in addition to the accommodations for travelers, the tavern served considerable rum to some residents of Hebron. Today the old McClure Tavern is called "Six Chimneys."

The effects of the Federal Embargo of English goods, and the War of 1812, and especially the depression that followed the war had its effects in Hebron. During the War wool was especially easy to sell, but as soon as the War ended the wool market died and those Hebron farmers who made ready cash during the War were forced back into the old self-sufficiency life style. Life on the farm remained very much the same as during the eighteenth century. New settlers arrived and nearly all of the available land was taken up. The amount of farmable land was limited, and by the end of the second decade the beginnings of the western migration from Hebron to New York and Vermont, or further west or to Canada had started.

During the period 1800-1820 there was an increase in the size of the farms and in the amount produced within Hebron. With this increase came a better standard of living. With an increase in their produce and with the building of the Mayhew Turnpike which

opened new markets, more products could be sold and bought, removing the need to produce everything on the farm. Though the farms remained essentially self-sufficient, more and more was bought from outside the village. The isolated self sufficiency of farms through the twenties, had almost completely disappeared by the middle of the century. The farmers were beginning to feel the impact of certain basic movements which were to alter their lives and compel them to wrestle with new problems which by 1880 had become so powerful that farming was practically driven from the hill farms. In the early nineteenth century inexpensive fertile lands opened in the Western United States with the result that farming in Hebron peaked in the 1850's. By that time the old self sufficient family farm had been converted to a commercial farming venture, but even during this period migration was leaving deserted farms behind. Those farmers, who remained on their old places, flourished for a number of years with their flocks of sheep, but from the fifties on the advent of the railroads and new farm machinery made agricultural competition with the vast acres in the West practically impossible. By 1880 those few farmers who were still able to eke out a comfortable existence from their farms found that they, too, would have to abandon their old homes or fall to the level of those who remained on sub marginal land. Thus the end of this period saw, except in a few scattered cases, the end of agriculture as a dominant force in Hebron. By the early to mid twentieth century the majority of farms were overgrown; crumbling barns and cellar holes were all that showed where houses had formerly stood. Entire roads, once populated by ten, fifteen and even twenty families in the preceding decades became extinct, and are now only over grown trails in the woods. Where once Tenney Hill, Hobart Hill, Kidder Hill, Wade Road, Pike Hill Road, the College Road were all known for large farms, with cultivated fields and open pasture land, today all but a few have been completely reclaimed by the forest. Even the evidence of cellar holes is fading in some cases, being filled in by nature and so overgrown as to be hardly recognizable.

The decline in the farm population is reflected in the general population trend of the village. Year Population of Hebron 1800 281 1810 563 1820 572 1850 565 1880 329 1920 184

Hebron Industry "Hebron's first saw and grist mill apparently was built in 1810 by James George who continued operating it for 25 years. Then Joseph Whipple became the owner.

The majority of the small industries of Hebron did not begin operating commercially until around the mid 1800's. Frequently, a business owner who operated an industry in Bristol moved to Hebron to expand his business.

Many small industries or businesses grew up around the skills early settlers had to use to maintain a self sufficient existence, such as shoemaking, tailoring, blacksmithing, carpentry, masonry, cooperage (barrel making) and wood working. Those who were more adept than others at one trade would barter their work with someone who had goods they could use, or offered to do a task they were not so skilled at. Specialties developed and businesses grew. John Gardner was a cooper in Hebron around the mid 1800s, and historians speculate that he operated the early shop on Bog Brook from which Cooper St.

derived its name. Other coopers in the latter half of the 1800s were Benjamin Kimball on Sanborn Hill, J. W. Goodhue in western Hebron, and William Clement.

The Ball brothers, Levi and Emri, lived on George Rd. and carried on the cooper and woodworking trade. Emri specialized in basketmaking while Levi concentrated on sap yokes, ox yokes, and other wooden products.

A well known tailor in town was Charles W. Powers who operated his shop on the north side of the Hebron Common. For more than 50 years, until the 1890s, he provided custom clothing for the townspeople.

Shoemakers included Sam Holland and William Hobart.

At one time, there were as many as six shoemakers in business in Hebron. Glovemaking was offered by Hannah Coburn around 1860.

Blacksmithing eventually was available in almost every New England town. Well known in Hebron for this trade were the Rogers shop, east of the Hebron Common, and the Sanborn shop, at the rear of the Grove Hill buildings. Both shops were in operation before 1850, and then the businesses were carried on by the Sanborn and Rogers sons.

A tannery operated in Hebron from 1840 until 1857 when the business burned for the second time and was not rebuilt. Before coming to Hebron, Nathaniel S. Berry ran a tannery in Bristol. He and his son, William A. Berry, then moved to Hebron and opened their tannery on Tannery Brook not far from the Hebron Common.

Records indicate that, in 1850, the steam powered N. S. Berry & Co. tannery had 12 employees and, in 1849, produced leather valued at \$24,800 while tanning around 6,000 hides. Another tannery existed at the same time in Hebron, operated by Varnum Pratt. It was considerably smaller and did only \$800 of business in 1849.

A creamery operation made the move from Bristol to Hebron in the late 1800s when the Bristol Creamery opened an E. Hebron branch. However, financial difficulties apparently forced its closure in the early 1900s, and, in 1917, the property was purchased by Elizabeth Ford Holt of Mowglis.

Brickmaking was another industry common to New Hampshire towns, wherever suitable clay was available. Many of the brick houses standing today in Hebron and area towns were constructed from materials made on the property. B.F. Smith and Stephen C. Dustin operated brick manufacturing businesses in Hebron in the 1860s and 70s. In the 1880s, Willard Wise ran a brick making kiln for a number of years.”

Other Factors That Effected Hebron In the mid-nineteenth century both the California Gold Rush and the Civil War was felt within Hebron. The “Reminiscences of the Gold Fever” by F. A. C. Nichols and published in the Bristol Weekly Enterprise on June 8, 1893 tells the story of the Hebron residents Samuel and Isaac Noyes, Arthur

Nutting, Charles Hazelton, Leonard, Curtis and Willard Wise, John Sanborn, Lyman Whipple, Walker Merrill, Fred Clement, William Crosby, Dr John and Capt. Joseph Whitmore, and Walter Cummings (most of whose genealogies appear in this book). The Noyes' departed Hebron for California in 1849 and were soon joined by the others at their Macaluma River surface mine. These hard working and adventurous men were netting about \$25 dollars a man per day. This was a substantial sum in those days. Of these men William Crosby and Capt. Whitmore drowned in the river and Curtis Wise settled in California. Of the remaining, only Willard Wise, John Sanborn, Dr. John Whitmore and Charles Hazelton are known to have returned to Hebron.

The Civil War claimed several from Hebron, as you will see in this book. But it was not only war and the dangerous allure of California riches that made life during this century difficult. This was the century before antibiotics, before pasteurization, before inoculations and vaccines. Disease often struck Hebron, and as you will see in some cases, like the family of Richard Greenleaf, destroyed entire families. The Greenleafs lost five of the seven children to Typhoid Fever between November 13 and December 6, 1815. Only one of the Greenleaf children survived to marry. This was not an isolated case.

For all of its natural beauty, Hebron was a tough place to live in the nineteenth century. It speaks volumes for the toughness and tenacity of the people who lived here, some of whose descendants are still here.

A passenger and mail stage from Bristol to Hebron and Groton started operation before 1870. The Bristol Enterprise for January 4, 1879 advertised that the charge for carrying passengers or express between Bristol and Hebron was 15 cents. The Star Mail Route and Stage Line, as it was called, ran past the Merrill farm (now called the Hillside Inn) twice daily as the stage made the 3 hour, 12 mile run from Bristol, through Bridgewater, East Hebron, Hebron to Groton and returned.

It was in the 1870's, thanks to the stages, that the beginning of the tourist migration to the Newfound area countryside started. Many, mostly fishermen and hunters at first, and leisure seekers later, started searching for accommodations during their visits to the lake area. The village of Hebron had all the necessary attributes at the time to attract visitors: fishing, hunting, scenery, nature walks, boating, and sources for good meals. The gradual influx of summer tourists necessitated places to stay. Immediately, some local farmers capitalized upon the situation as a good means to supplement their income. Extra bedrooms in a farmhouse, along with all the old fashioned home cooking, were an irresistible temptation to many visitors. It added up to a business bonanza for this small rural town struggling for existence with the demise of farming and her former small industries and trades. Grove Hill Farm with proprietor John W. Sanborn and his wife was the first to move into the boarding house business in 1875, followed soon after by Mr. and Mrs. George Smith when they created the Hillside Inn in East Hebron. Guest houses were built in Sleepy Hollow and other places, and for the less affluent, camping facilities were built by families such as the Merrills.

In the 1890's a tourist boom resulted in beginning of another Hebron institution: the private boys and girls camps. First, Pasquaney in 1895 in East Hebron was established for boys by Edward Wilson. Soon after in 1900, a sister camp was established in East Hebron by Mrs. Oscar Holt and named Redcroft. When Mrs. Holt sold the camp to Mabel Hollister in 1911 she changed the name to Camp Onaway. The same Mrs. Holt who started Redcroft was also involved in the opening of Camp Mowglis for boys in 1903. In 1916, Walter Prince opened Camp Sagamore for boys in Hebron just below Indian Point. Mr. Prince sold the camp to Jacob Milsner in the early 1920's and changed the name to Camp Wah-Kee-Nah. At the end of the 1930's this camp was sold once again to a religious group and the name was changed to today's Camp Berea. Also in the 1920's across from what is now Camp Berea, Anna Rothman built a girls camp and named it WiCoSuTa. At nearly the same time near Indian Point, a Miss Lillard built another girls camp that she sold in 1929 to Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Derby. This camp is now gone. There were other camps now gone that originated in the 1920's. There was Journeys End which was next to the marina in Hebron, and Camp Greyrock, a camp for girls was started by Mrs. Clinton McLane. These last few camps lasted into the 1930's but the Depression forced them to close. The greatest impact on Hebron from the establishment of these camps, especially the ones that survive to this day, was unintentional. Large areas of shoreline and many acres of surrounding land have been kept in natural condition because of these camps. Further, in several cases, the land is now locked away in perpetual trusts that insures that these many acres remain forever wild. Between 1925 and 1945 tourism was a full-blown industry at Hebron. The great camps that owned so much of the lakeshore on the north end kept the tourism activities and population density in Hebron is much lower than that on the south end. This is still true today. Whereas, cottages and bungalows dotted the southern half, the northern half of the lake was limited to campgrounds, inns and private camp complexes.

The most popular boats to ever commercially ply the waters of the lake were the Hebron built "Stella-Marion I and II." The "Stella-Marion" built in 1901 by Ambrose Adams was the first steam launch on the lake. Adams delivered passengers and mail up and down the lake for many years. When the "Stella-Marion" burnt in Pasquaney bay (its wreck is still dived upon by archeologists) on August 27, 1915, Adams built the "Stella-Marion II" and continued operating until 1921 when he sold the boat to a Lake Winnepesaukee company who moved it to that lake. Adams wasn't alone, as Irving Kent ran sightseeing cruises on the lake. The "Stella-Marion" was also famous for its ability to haul logs. A log boom was constructed at the mouth of the Cockermouth River and the logs coming down the river in the spring flood were collected in this boom. When the boom was filled (the largest on record being 1,100,000 board feet and covered four acres of lake surface) it was towed down the lake to Merrill's Sawmill. The "Stella-Marion" would usually start late in the evening with the Stella-Marion slowly pulling all night long. By sunrise she was off the point of Wellington beach and late morning at Merrill's sawmill at the foot of the lake.

Skiing was a recognized Hebron sport before 1922 on Tenney Hill in Hebron. In 1922 the first Winter Carnival was planned and soon after private skiing clubs in Bristol and Hebron sprung up. Soon these private clubs were renting everything one needed to go

skiing including a place to stay in the ski lodges, such as Harvard University's ski lodge in Hebron which is now Howard Oedel's house.

After the World War II things in Hebron, especially tourist returned to normal.

Source: "History of Hebron, NH" by Ronald W. Collins, Historian and Archivist, Hebron, NH

Geography

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 49.0 km² (18.9 mi²). 43.6 km² (16.8 mi²) of it is land and 5.3 km² (2.1 mi²) of it is water. The total area is 10.90% water.

Demographics

As of the census² of 2000, there are 459 people, 206 households, and 146 families residing in the town. The population density is 10.5/km² (27.3/mi²). There are 517 housing units at an average density of 11.9/km² (30.7/mi²). The racial makeup of the town is 95.86% White, 0.44% African American, 0.22% Native American, 0.22% Asian, 0.00% Pacific Islander, 1.74% from other races, and 1.53% from two or more races. 0.00% of the population are Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There are 206 households out of which 20.4% have children under the age of 18 living with them, 63.1% are married couples living together, 5.8% have a female householder with no husband present, and 29.1% are non-families. 23.3% of all households are made up of individuals and 10.2% have someone living alone who is 65 years of age or older. The average household size is 2.23 and the average family size is 2.60.

In the town the population is spread out with 16.1% under the age of 18, 6.3% from 18 to 24, 18.7% from 25 to 44, 30.7% from 45 to 64, and 28.1% who are 65 years of age or older. The median age is 50 years. For every 100 females there are 97.0 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there are 91.5 males.

The median income for a household in the town is \$47,639, and the median income for a family is \$54,688. Males have a median income of \$37,857 versus \$30,625 for females. The per capita income for the town is \$30,196. 2.8% of the population and 2.6% of families are below the poverty line. Out of the total population, 6.8% of those under the age of 18 and 2.3% of those 65 and older are living below the poverty line.

The Hebron Village Store - where friends meet and new ones are made."