

**A**  
**New Hampshire**  
**Village**  
**Through**  
**Two Centuries:**  
**A Walking Tour**  
**Of**  
**Ossipee Corner**

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Donations to maintain the walking tour will be most welcome. They may be left at Grant Hall (the Society's museum) or sent to:

Ossipee Historical Society  
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## A HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR OF OSSIPEE VILLAGE

Ossipee Village or Ossipee Corner as it was known for much of its history -emerged as the main village in the town in the earliest days of settlement, and remained the chief village for nearly a century. Its prosperity rested on its advantage at the junction of the five major roads to Wakefield, Wolfeborough, Tuftonborough, and to Ossipee Pocket and Effingham. The village naturally became the marketing center for the southern and central uplands of the town, the largest agricultural region, and after 1840 received a boost when its favorable location allowed it to claim the county seat of the newly organized county of Carroll. Commercial and governmental travelers flocked to its inns and hotels, helped in part by the stage lines that ran from the village south to Rochester and north to Conway. Its status as a transportation hub was reinforced when it secured the station for southern Ossipee on the Great Fall and Conway Railroad after the Civil War. But its commercial prosperity began to ebb in the post-Civil War period as well, with the long, slow decline of agriculture and of the population supported by it.

From the late nineteenth century, the balance between Ossipee Comer and the younger village of Center Ossipee shifted markedly. Center Ossipee had more natural industrial sites nearby, and was closer to the sustained center of the lumbering industry in the river valleys and in the Ossipee Mountains. Business and population grew around Center Ossipee while business in Ossipee slackened. For a half-century town government was shared between the two villages, before locating decisively in Center Ossipee after World War II. Commercial decline was hastened by a series of devastating fires in the early twentieth century that took, at one time or another, both hotels, all five general stores, the courthouse, and a number of residences and smaller businesses. The village rebuilt around the new courthouse, a new store, and a new set of automobile-related businesses, and stabilized at a lower level of activity.

Further change came with the relocation first of Route 16 and then of Route 28 (1950s) out of the village, and the discontinuance of rail service. Gradually, businesses moved out of the village to new locations along the highways. In recent years the village has become more and more of a center for the legal profession and the court system.

1\* **The Town Meetinghouse and Second Congregational Church**. This New England meetinghouse was authorized by the town in 1800, and completed under the leadership of Ossipee Corner businessmen Samuel Quarles and Jacob Brown. Although the town had appropriated small sums to hire preaching during the 1790s such as the division of religious loyalties among Congregational, Baptist, and Freewill Baptist denominations that the original expectation that the town would hire a single minister at public expense to preach in the meetinghouse was never fulfilled. Town meetings were held there from 1802, and preaching was conducted irregularly, by the First Congregational Church and Elder Lord's Baptist Church and later by the Fourth Freewill Baptist Church (1836-1895), which flourished until the 1870s and the Second Congregational Society, which grew in strength from the 1860s and organized as a church in 1894.

Originally, the meetinghouse stood longside to the road, with a door in that side and an interior filled with box pews. In 1839 the town rebuilt the ground floor as a townhouse, while local worshippers fitted out a church above. In the 1880s the building was turned end to the street, a new belfry was added, and the whole structure modernized. The Second Congregational Church again modernized the second story about 1950, and in 1955 they purchased the disused town and meeting space for use as a community hall.

2. \* **Poland Bridge and Mills**. Captain Jacob Brown developed grist and saw mills on Poland Brook in 1781. The mills flourished under Josiah and Samuel Poland in the 1810s and 1820s, but they proved unable to compete with better situated sawmills in the Pine River valley. The mills were discontinued about 1810, Brown and partnership of Jonathan Dodge and Samuel Quarles ran stores near Poland bridge. After Brown retired and Dodge's store burned, both in 1811, the seat of business moved decisively to the center of the village.

3 \* **The Village Schoolhouse**. Ossipee provided public schooling in the village as early as 1792, and for many years the local school had the largest attendance and the longest sessions of the town's twenty-three districts. In the 1880s the town launched a reform program that consolidated the small districts in the strongest locations. The village school was replaced about 1892 with the current building, an improved model. As the town extended schooling beyond the eighth grade and gradually consolidated schools into a central building in Center Ossipee, Ossipee Comer was the last area to retain its local elementary school. The school closed in 1950 and was sold soon after.

4 \* **Brown's Tavern and the Post Office.** Jacob Brown established an inn on this site as early as 1781. When his son John took over the business in 1810, he greatly expanded the inn business, which also became headquarters for stage coach lines run by Jonathan Dodge (Jr.) and Leander Sinclair. After John Brown's business failure in 1826, the inn was continued by John Brewster, Jr., into the 1840s. The old building stood into the 1890s. In the 1910s it was replaced with a small building that was operated by the family as an ice cream parlor until about 1935. About 1940 it was rebuilt to serve as the local post office.

5. \* **Isaac Thurston's Store.** In the triangle formed by the junction of Brown's Ridge Road and the Pocket Road, John Brown built a store in the 1810s. In 1821 he sold it to Clark and Wingate of Wakefield. They in turn sold it in 1833 to Isaac Thurston, who had been managing it for them. Thurston, a prominent local figure, did a large business until the 1850s when he closed the store to concentrate on the lumber business. The store became a house, which burned in the early twentieth century.

6. \* **Moulton's Store.** The first store on this site was built by John Brown, Jr., about 1844, who ran it until he entered the army in 1861. It was run by a long succession of store-keepers, and for many years was a "Union Store," a kind of early IGA-style chain. The most prominent proprietor was Newell P. Sias, the builder of Flag Gate Farm, who ran it from 1894 until it burned down in 1912. Sias sponsored a series of local postcard views, which can still be found in antique shops today. Meanwhile, the property had been purchased by members of the family. Lisle O. Moulton promptly rebuilt it in a similar style, and ran it as large and successful general store until his death in 1960. Grant and Beryl Kramer continued it for some years, but closed it when the growth of supermarkets began to make general stores uneconomic. It has continued intermittently under varying management as a kind of convenience and specialty store.

7. **Carter's Store and the Great Fire.** Directly across the square was the store started by Bracket Wiggin in 1830. Wiggin, did a large trade until his death in 1860. The store was later run by members of the Carter family. To the east was a house belonging to the Brown family, a small building used as a law office by Sanborn B. Carter and later Samuel D. Quarles, and then the blacksmith shop in which the fire started on June 23, 1915. The fire burned everything from the Moulton house west to the courthouse and the house of Elisha P. Allen, on the site of Clyde Brown's bungalow-style house. Steam fire-engines came from as far away as Dover and Rochester, but arrived after the buildings were destroyed. Tom Brown's new house on the store site later became the offices of the Ossipee Insurance Agency and recently of the Clerk of Courts.

8. \* **The Moulton House.** The large house located here was the home successively of G. Greenleaf, and Ausbrey C. Moulton. They were carpenters, coffin-makers, and undertakers. The Pine River Bank was located in their house from 1857 to 1864.

9. \* **The Courthouse.** Carroll County was created out of the northern part of Strafford County in 1839. Asa Beacham, the local businessman who was the Ossipee representative, left Concord on Saturday when the legislature adjourned, rode all night, met with local businessmen on Sunday, and by Monday was back in Concord with a subscription paper promising \$595, and eventually \$850 toward a courthouse in Ossipee Corner. Suitably impressed, the thrifty legislators awarded the county seat to Ossipee. The courthouse opened in 1840 a white clapboard structure right at the road that resembled a meetinghouse. It burned in the fire of 1915. The current Colonial Revival courthouse replaced it.

10. \* **The Railroad and Railroad station.** The Portsmouth, Great Falls and Conway Railroad was constructed as far as Union village in 1854, then was suspended while the railroad company debated its further path. In 1870 the town raised almost \$20,000 (five percent of the assessed valuation) as a "loan" to the railroad to insure it's passage through Ossipee. Construction reached Ossipee Corner in 1871 and Center Ossipee in 1875. The station was completed 1871. Leander Sinclair, who had driven the now unneeded stagecoach to Dover, became the station agent. The railroad brought new business opportunities, such as Asa Beacham's steam sawmill along the tracks, but also opened local business to outside competition. It revolutionized travel, making possible daily round trips to nearby towns, and easier access to distant cities. Passenger service ended in 1961 and freight service about 1972.

11. \* **The Pine River House/Carroll Inn.** About 1830 Bracket Wiggin took over the Poland farm, which extended along the Tuftonborough Road from the Corner to well beyond the meetinghouse, and began to expand the farmhouse at the Corner into an Inn. After Wiggin's death it was taken over by Joseph Q. Roles, who named it the Pine River House. Later it was called Huse's Hotel, and after 1900 the Carroll Inn. It was the only one of the Ossipee hotels to come to grips with the automobile; its large barn made the transition in the 1910s from livery stable to auto garage. The Inn burned in 1922 and its site was redeveloped as a gasoline station, which continued until the highways left the village. More recently the building has been remodeled into a law office and then a house.

12 \* **Brown's Store.** In 1818 Peter Huckins, a young storekeeper, purchased a lot west of Samuel Poland's barn and erected a store. After Huckin's untimely death, the store was kept for sometime by Wentworth L. Young, and in 1856 sold to Jacob F. Brown. Brown, then his sons, Dana and Eugene, ran the store until 1915. The store burned twice, in 1903 and again in 1915, and the second time was not rebuilt.

13. \* **The Carroll House.** On the site of this small ranch house stood the Carroll House. About 1838 John Brown Jr. acquired and began to expand a small house into what became an impressive hostelry. Curtis Pitman, Asa Beacham, and Joseph Q. Roles were notable innkeepers as was Elisah P. Allen who expanded the house to accommodate seventy-five guests during his twenty-five year tenure after 1872. The House burned in 1903 and was not rebuilt.

14 \* **The Brown/Schoolmaker House.** This impressive Victorian house was the home successively of Jacob F and Eugene Brown, who ran the store across the street. It replaced an earlier house, purchased along with the store in 1856.

15. \* **The Hardy and Webber Houses.** These attractive Greek revival houses were built in the 1840s on lots taken from the Poland farm. The house nearer the meetinghouse was long the home of Loammi Hardy, a popular vote-getter who served a register of deeds for more than thirty years. Hardy was a Democratic stalwart and his house was the center for Democratic electioneering when an election was underway. One suspects that Asa Beacham's house on the other side of the meetinghouse fulfilled the same function for Republicans. The Webber house was originally built and occupied by Jacob F Brown, before he moved across the street. It was long occupied by Horace Webber, a Freewill Baptist minister who was for some time pastor of the local church.

