

This Month!

Taverns along Post Roads provided shelter and refreshment for travelers in the 18th and 19th centuries. There exists at 8 Old Coach Road, a building still retaining its tavern features. Read about the Peaslee Tavern in this month's **Kingston Stories**.

This year is a special year for the museum. It was 125 years ago this June that the Nichols Memorial Library opened for the townspeople. The museum is planning a celebration of the event scheduled for Saturday, June 10th. Set your calendars!.

Walt Roy photographed last month's **Mystery Object**. It's a rather common object that those of us of a 'certain age' would have seen in our travels. Look familiar?

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Kingston Historical Museum. This month, Steve Sousa shares some of his thoughts of being a museum volunteer.

So you don't miss an issue of the "What's Happening" newsletter, just go the town's website and select to receive the newsletter by email. You can also download past issues at:

<https://www.kingstonnh.org/historical-museum-committee/webforms/whats-happening-newsletter-archives>

The museum is in the middle of its winter schedule. The 1895 Firehouse, the 1880s Cobbler Shop, the 1907 Tramp House and the 1833 Grace Daley barn will be closed during the cold weather. The Nichols Memorial Library is still be open for visiting. We are here on Wednesdays from 9:00 AM until noon! We can also be here by appointment. Call or email us using the information on page three of this newsletter.

Kingston Stories

Stops Along the Way: Post Road Taverns

by Steve Sousa



The Peaslee Tavern photo by Walt Roy

T r a v e l and communications between towns in New Hampshire and Massachusetts in the 18th and early 19th centuries relied on roadways that had at one time been old Indian trails. Two historic trails were the southern Pentucket and the Northern Pentucket trails.

The southern Pentucket trail stretched from Pentucket (now Haverhill) to the Kingston area, then on to Pickpocket Falls and then Squamscott (Exeter). The northern trail also began in Pentucket and headed up towards Great Pond, then Epping, Lee, Barrington, Gonic, Rochester, and ending around southern Lebanon, Maine. The current route 125 follows along this old trail.

As colonial towns and villages grew in number, size, and importance, it was necessary to make communication and travel safe and efficient. In May of 1693, a Postal Service was instituted between Portsmouth, NH and Boston, MA (old route 1) and then on south. Roads such as these became known as Post Roads. Feeding, watering, or changing out horses along with feeding and watering the passengers required way stops along the route. Taverns and inns would be found close to or on heavily traveled post roads.

The taverns also provided a service to those living nearby. They were the meeting places where townspeople would hear news from around the region. During the American Revolution, Kingston's taverns became even more essential as meeting places for military planning and practice, the posting of letters and messages, and a means of keeping informed regarding the welfare of loved ones and the progress of the war. (KIHS, *History of Kingston, 1664-1969*. p 49) Taverns of the period still residing in local memory were the Badger and Peaslee taverns, the Kingston House, and the old Kingston Inn.

The tavern features of the Peaslee building were preserved through the efforts of Aaron Kalman and his wife. Refugees from WWII Europe, the Kalmans came to America in 1946. In 1962, they bought the Peaslee building and preserved it from destruction. The building is still owned by the Kalman family.

The Peaslee Tavern continued on next page

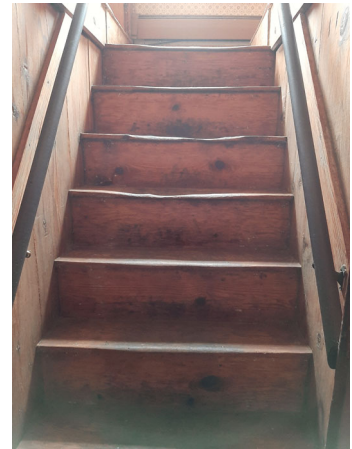
Travelers heading to Haverhill and points south in the late 1700s and early 1800s would have the opportunity to stop at the Peaslee Tavern on the old Concord Coach Road. Begun in 1776 and continuing for the next 50 years, the Peaslee Tavern was one of the most lively taverns in Kingston. The building that once housed the tavern still stands along with the many of its tavern features.



Second floor ballroom Photo by Steve Sousa

“One of the most unique and charming facets of the tavern is the second floor ballroom where dances were held, militia was trained, and circuit court sessions were convened” (KIHS, *History of Kingston, 1664-1969*. p 48-49).

Perhaps the most memorable feature of the old tavern is the stairway leading from the main kitchen up to the second floor. As seen in the photo, the stairway presents the worn treads from years of use.



Stairway treads
Photo by Steve Sousa

As the 19th century drew on, new travel routes and methods of transportation reduced the need for these Post Road venues. Rail and then automobiles changed the way and speed that travelers moved. Newspapers and the development of a robust postal system sped up the way information passed. The travelers' taverns fell back to being a local spot for townspeople to gather and share their stories.

Nichols Memorial Library Celebrates its 125th Anniversary



This year, the Nichols Memorial Library will be celebrating its 125 years at the center of town. Donated by J. Howard Nichols (1837- 1905) in memory of his parents, the Nichols building served the town as its library until April 28, 2012 when the new Kingston Community Library opened. The Nichols building now is the headquarters of the Kingston Historical Museum.

The museum volunteers are planning a birthday party for the Nichols building this June 10th at 1:00 pm and the town is invited!

Mark your calendar to be here and wish the building another 125 years of service to the town.

Did You Know?

“John Howard Nichols early life was spent in Kingston and Exeter where he attended Phillips Academy. After graduating, he taught school in Stratham for a year before moving to Boston at the age of 18. He worked in the wholesale grocery business and later as a clerk for a tea importing house on Central Wharf. It was there that Nichols met John Gardner, who hired him as a supercargo on the bark *Arthur*, which was bound for China in 1858. He was twenty years old. J. Howard's responsibilities were to serve as the merchant-ship officer in charge of the cargo and the commercial concerns of the voyage. Once he arrived in China, Gardner requested that J. Howard remain in China to act as an agent. He accepted the position and remained in China for ten years, returning to America once during this time.”

from: “Kingston New Hampshire: Our History and Stories 1694-2019”. Great Life Press. p 180.

Donations Needed

If anyone has left over lumber and white paint, we could use these items for our maintenance and exhibit programs. Pre-lit Christmas trees 6 - 7 feet tall as well as Christmas decorations are also needed.

Spotlight on a Volunteer

by Steve Sousa

There are many opportunities to contribute to the Kingston Historical Museum. What I find fulfilling is that the time spent here fits in with my interests.

About 5 years ago, we began an effort to record the stories and memories of the people who have called Kingston home for many years. I had some experience in collecting oral histories and volunteered to help out with the project.

Over the years, we've been able to talk with 70 individuals (with more to do!) and preserve their memories of what it was like in town. What I didn't realize was what effect these stories would have on me.

What I found is the small town atmosphere that everyone interviewed remembers. This was not what I remember when growing up. My childhood was spent in a more suburban setting. The events, the friendships, and the shared experiences they talked about contributed to making living in town during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s so interesting. Whether they were talking about the Kingston days celebration and the bonfire or being a student at Sanborn Seminary, you could feel the pride and sense of home each of the respondents remembered. It made me wish I had lived here so long ago.

There is a second 'benefit' I get from volunteering. Seeing the artifacts stretching from the 7,000 years of Kingston's history is so fascinating. From ancient Native American tools, to the surgical instruments that belonged to Josiah Bartlett the second signer of the Declaration of Independence after John Hancock, to a piece of USS Constitution's hull, the oldest ship still commissioned in the US Navy, removed during a refit, to the everyday objects from kitchens of the town's homes, they each tell a story of the townspeople and the events they faced each day.

Volunteering at the museum is like being part of both the "Antiques Roadshow" and "Finding Your Roots" every day I'm there.

Please consider stopping by the museum to learn more about becoming a museum volunteer!



What is it?



Photo by Lesley Hume

Long time residents of town may remember seeing this once or twice a year during town meetings!

February's What is it?

Before plastic cones and battery powered devices, these highway construction markers were fueled by kerosene and lit for nighttime warnings. Sometimes called "smudge pots" or "Toledo Torches" these road flares were set out along construction zones to warn drivers that there were areas in the road that could create hazardous conditions to driving. The museum has several of these devices. They bring back memories of summer nighttime driving!



Photo by Walt Roy

Volunteer Hours Contributed

Spring seems to be just around the corner. The museum is working on planning for the new exhibit season and the 125th anniversary of the Nichols Library. For the month of February, the volunteers have contributed 61.5 hours and 163 hours for 2023. Thank you all so much.

**The Kingston Historical Museum headquartered at
the Nichols Memorial Library
169 Main Street,
Kingston, NH 03848**

**The Museum is open each Wednesday from 9:00 AM
until 12:00 noon and on the second Saturday, June
through October, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm.
Appointment to conduct research or a tour can be
arranged for another date.**

**For more information, please call Ruth Albert at
603-642-5508 or email us at**

museuminfo@kingstonnh.org.