

### **III. HISTORY OF WARNER**

## **Chapter III**

### **HISTORY OF WARNER**

#### **Introduction**

Warner's unique history sets it apart from all other towns. Historical interpretation of the natural setting and human spirit that are part of Warner's past provide important insights to our present condition and should be used as a guide for the future. The Master Plan is one method of helping to recognize and continue the best traditions of the town. However, a plan for the future is incomplete, without a look at the past.

The visual evidence of Warner's early settlement and later periods of development contribute greatly to the Town's present day character and appearance. The identification and conservation of the built environment can be an important community development instrument, especially in terms of evaluating future development proposals. There is a deepening recognition in Warner that the Town's historic resources and cultural heritage are significant ingredients in its overall quality of life. This chapter reflects these values and places historic resource protection as a cornerstone in the Master Plan's goals and objectives.

The historic narrative included in this chapter was provided by members of the Warner Historical Society and members of the Master Plan Committee.

#### **Goals, Objectives and Actions**

One of the major goals of the Master Plan is to conserve and protect the historical and cultural resources of the Town

The following objectives and recommended actions are presented as ways of achieving this goal:

**Objective 1:** Identify and conserve the historical features in Town, such as historic buildings, covered bridges, stone walls, foundations, scenic views and ridgelines. Conserve historic and culturally important land and preserve landmarks.

*Actions:*

1. Complete the Warner Historic Resource Inventory Survey
2. Develop walking or driving tours of historic sites
3. Create maps of historic resources
4. Conduct a stone structures inventory
5. Encourage increased communication between the Planning Board and the Historical Society

6. Replace covered bridge signs
7. Promote the Village as the center for community services and activities

Objective 2: Encourage the preservation, enhancement and rehabilitation of buildings of architectural and historical significance.

*Actions:*

1. Hold preservation/education workshops
2. Write historical articles for Warner's New Paper

Objective 3: Establish a committee to explore historic and scenic roads.

*Actions:*

1. Research the New Hampshire State Scenic Byway program and the steps necessary for designation
2. Develop historic and scenic driving tours of Warner
3. Explore the New Hampshire historic marker program

Objective 4: Publicize the history and culture of the Town.

*Actions:*

1. Review Village Center signage and explore a design theme
2. Apply to the NH Department of Transportation's Transportation Improvement Program to complete sidewalks throughout the Town
3. Update the current version of Town History
4. Encourage new research using the Warner Historical Society archives to publish articles that promote Warner's history
5. Publish books of local interest (cemeteries, location of one-room school houses, historic buildings, cellerholes, etc)

Objective 5: Facilitate local interest in historic neighborhoods.

*Actions:*

1. Publish walking and driving tours of the neighborhoods
2. Develop slides shows about the various neighborhoods for programs at the Warner Historical Society and public schools

Objective 6: Encourage activities and events that facilitate community involvement, such as the Fall Foliage Festival, the 4th of July celebration and other Holiday activities.

*Actions:*

1. Explore the implementation of a Community Cornerstones Project.

## **Historic Narrative of the Town of Warner**

In colonial America, charter governments ruled the royal land grants. A governor was appointed by the English King and empowered with the "authority to grant, in the name of the King, any unchartered lands in his province. Such was New Hampshire."<sup>1</sup>

On November 7, 1629, the Council of Plymouth, Massachusetts granted the territory of which Warner is now a part, to "Captain John Mason, his heirs and assigns forever".<sup>2</sup> He was a prosperous London merchant turned Sea Captain. Mason had been governor of Portsmouth in Hampshire, England and of Newfoundland in America. When a seat on the Plymouth Council was vacated, he was elected to join the Council. And when "Charles, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland"<sup>3</sup> granted John Mason lands in the New World, he called them New Hampshire after his native County Hampshire, England.

An imprecise delineation of boundaries left several grants overlapping, and led to years of strife, and even violent dispute among New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Province of Maine, and later with New York and Vermont.

"To gain ground in the contest"<sup>4</sup> and to make difficult a settlement should they lose the legal contest, Massachusetts Bay decided to settle its frontier. The inducements were unusually generous. Sixty people from Amesbury and Salisbury, Massachusetts were granted proprietorship calling their grant New Almsbury. The boundaries of this 1735 grant, also called Township Number One, are just as those we have today, with the exception of the Gore, which was annexed in June, 1818.

The grantees were instructed to "take care that there be sixty-three house lots laid out in a regular, compact and defensible a manner as the land will admit of; one of which lots shall be for the first settled minister, one for the second settled minister, and one for the school."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Harriman, The History of Warner New Hampshire, For One Hundred and Forty-Four Years, From 1735 to 1879., p. 12

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 552

<sup>3</sup> Idem

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 15

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 20

Each grantee was to build a house at least eighteen feet square and to clear, fence and plow five acres of land within three years. They had also to build a meetinghouse and settle a minister within that time or forfeit their rights to another, hopefully more successful, petitioner.

After several failed attempts, Township Number One was surveyed and it was determined that the meetinghouse lot should be where the Parade Ground Cemetery is now located.

Each of the proprietors then contributed to the cost of building a sawmill at the Davisville Falls, which was completed in May, 1740. It was the first structure and a necessary tool of the settlement. It was here that the first proprietor's meeting was held on May 28, 1740. Those proprietors who attended the meeting returned to Massachusetts with glowing accounts of a region in which, according to one report, "The soile is rich and Deap, the Trees are very large and the Brookes are stocked with fish."<sup>6</sup>

The legal dispute over the boundaries raged on until King George III ruled in favor of New Hampshire's claim. Nevertheless, the Amesbury proprietors persevered, convinced that "no government would drive out bona fide settlers."<sup>7</sup> Even the subsequent sale on July 31, 1746 of the entire grant to twelve men from Portsmouth did not deter the Massachusetts proprietors. Thomas Colby, Moses Morrill, Jarvis Ring and Gideon Straw built four homes on twenty acres near what is now the Davisville Cemetery. But before settlers could be induced to occupy them "they were burned by the Indians at the same time they put fire to the saw-mill."<sup>8</sup>

Again the grant was transferred. This time the Masonian proprietors granted New Almsbury to seventy-six men hailing largely from Rye and Newcastle, New Hampshire, on March 14, 1749.

Yet the final blow to the settlement of Township Number One was "the renewal of the French and Indian War, which stopped the tide of emigration to the frontier."<sup>9</sup>

It would be another decade before "the axeman's blows again broke silence in this then howling wilderness."<sup>10</sup> Then, early in the summer of 1761, Daniel Annis and his son-in-law, Reuben Kimball, crossed the river and came up from Hopkinton. In his *Historical Sketches of The Town of Warner New Hampshire*, Dr. Moses Long states that Daniel Floyd, another of Annis's sons-in-law, was with them.

Whether there were two or three, they cleared the land by summer and sowed winter rye in the fall. Returning the following spring, Daniel Annis, at fifty, was the first to successfully settle in New Almsbury. By May 1, 1762 his house had been completed. It is for this first family that Annis

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 45

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 54

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 63

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 64

<sup>10</sup> Dr. Moses Long, Historical Sketches of the Town of Warner New Hampshire, p. 9

Loop in the Bagley district is named, and it is there at the northern end of the old road that they settled. Daniel's daughter, Hannah Annis Kimball, and her husband Reuben, lived with him on his sixty acres until their own forty-acre settlement and house were completed, just one-third mile to the southwest.

On June 30, 1762 they repaired to their log home and primitive barn, their land with six acres "then in corn, potatoes and winter rye...Kimball was 24 years of age, and his wife 22."<sup>11</sup> A few months later in October, 1762, Hannah gave birth to Daniel Kimball, the first child of European extraction to be born in New Almsbury. There is a plaque marking the site of his birth on Red Chimney Road.

Daniel Annis' family, his wife and remaining children having since joined him, and the Kimballs, constituted the northernmost settlement in New England.

By 1763, forty-three men and their families had settled here. In 1872, Amanda B. Harris interviewed a Warner native, a woman then ninety-six years old, who said: "there were so few of them that they were drawn together in kindly feeling and used to go a long distance to see one another, two on one horse, or with an ox team."<sup>12</sup>

Within another three years a new sawmill had been built at Davisville Falls, as had a meetinghouse on the Parade Ground. Potash from wood burning had developed into an industry and a gristmill had been built. The Lower Village had a tavern, a lawyer and a doctor, a post office and stores.

Fire had soon devastated New Almsbury's meetinghouse and in 1769, a less primitive one was built on the same site at the Parade Ground. In 1772, Reverend William Kelley became New Almsbury's first permanent minister. He built his home in the Lower Village.

Then, one hundred and forty-five years after John Mason had named New Hampshire, Francis Davis rode to Portsmouth and returned "with the precious document"<sup>13</sup> of incorporation and the new name of "Warner", given by Governor Wentworth on September 3, 1774. Governor Wentworth's reasons for choosing Warner are unclear, but considerable evidence favors a decision on his part to honor Seth Warner. He was a man the Governor respected personally and had been a staunch New Hampshire ally in the lengthy political disputes with Massachusetts. He was soon to become a brilliant hero of the Battle of Bennington, at which five Warner men also served.

It was a heady time in Warner. There was a sense that rewards were forthcoming for the heavy price that had been paid. In 1832, Dr. Moses Long wrote his *Historical Sketches of the Town of Warner New Hampshire*. In it he recognized the cruel and tenuous nature of that generation's

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<sup>11</sup> Harriman, p. 72

<sup>12</sup> Amanda B. Harris, "A Sketch of Warner: Historic And Otherwise.," The Granite Monthly A New Hampshire Magazine, 19: 410-439, December, 1895.

<sup>13</sup> Idem

existence, but notes "The people enjoyed more social and friendly intercourse; felt more interest in each other's welfare, and more ready to contribute to each other's wants. Before the fire-brands of discord were thrown among the people, they were united like a band of brothers and sisters; to which time the survivors will now refer as the happiest of days...The first settlers considered every additional family that moved into town as a valuable acquisition to the place. All were ready to welcome the new comers into the fraternity."<sup>14</sup>

But the firebrand was among them. Barely seven months after Warner's incorporation, came the Battle of Lexington and Revolution. "Warner had only 262 inhabitants, the majority of whom must have been women and children; yet soon the number of men in the service was creditable to the town."<sup>15</sup> Warner men were at Bunker Hill and Bennington with General Stark. They served at Saratoga and West Point, as well as in Rhode Island, Canada at Monmouth and Morristown. Anthony Clark, who as General Washington's negro waiter also carried water and cartridges in many battles, actually witnessed the surrender of Cornwallis. After the war he settled in Warner, where he remained until his death at 102.

On November 19, 1776, Captain Francis Davis was sent to Exeter to represent Warner in the new State Assembly. It was his son, General Aquila Davis, who in 1812 "raised the first regiment of N.H. volunteers, enlisted for one year, and was chosen and commissioned its colonel."<sup>16</sup> He had enlisted at seventeen in the revolutionary army, serving for three years, and had witnessed the surrender of Burgoyne. Now he led his regiment to Burlington and commanded a detachment of two hundred men at the battle of Lake Champlain. "It is related of him, that, while stationed on an island in Lake Champlain, he mounted a battery of large guns, and kept the British at respectful distance from the island by this formidable contrivance, which, in reality, was nothing but an array of huge guns made from pine logs, and so painted as to deceive the eye at a little distance. That example was copied, over and over again....."<sup>17</sup>

He led many a muster at the Parade Ground. "No entertainment ever quite equalled a muster, in the estimation of a patriotic youth."<sup>18</sup> The infantry from many towns would assemble on the parade, the Warner Artillery bedecked in black broadcloth with red trimmings and black plumes; the Warner Light Infantry with their white pants, blue coats, large white plumes tipped with red; "the cavalry with spirited horses and shrill bugle".<sup>19</sup>

The years during and immediately following the War of 1812 were a period of continual growth in Warner. In 1813, the first post office was established in the Lower Village. By 1818 the Davisville

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<sup>14</sup> Long, p. 23

<sup>15</sup> Harris, p. 415

<sup>16</sup> Harriman, p. 280

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 281

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 495

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 496

School had been built and the Kearsarge Gore annexed, only to be devastated by a tornado on September 9, 1821. The tornado utterly destroyed the Daniel and Robert Savory homesteads, buried the settlers in their rubble and killed two of them. It then passed over the Flanders and True homesteads, killing one of each family's children and an elderly woman. Everything in the valley between the mountains was destroyed.

Although Warner's population peaked in 1820, at 2,446 and the trend was toward westward migration, our economy continued to thrive.

The Warner River made this possible. From the beginning it had provided the path for settlement and prosperity. Dozens of homes, barns, businesses, several churches, and twenty-four schools had blossomed from the original mill in Davisville and others like it. By 1823, there were sixteen sawmills and eight gristmills. A trail of them ran from Davisville to the Village where, among others, Nicholas Fowler built both a gristmill and sawmill on opposite sides of the river in 1829.

Then, at the Waterloo Falls, which "were known to the proprietors as 'the Great Falls'. Once there were sawmill, gristmill, tannery and paper-mill. There were also a bakery and book-bindery."<sup>20</sup>

The Redington Hub Company was located at Roby's Corner. "An industry for the manufacture of wooden wagon hubs"<sup>21</sup> had been created about 1800, a new mill built by the Redingtons in 1884, and by 1894, it had become "the largest hub factory in New England and probably in the world."<sup>22</sup>. Adapting to the times, it continued as a mill until 1940, despite having been twice destroyed by fire.

Farther on at Melvin's Mills, the Bartlett brothers milled one thousand tons of excelsior annually. From there to the Bradford border were mills that made "carriages, churns, chairs, and a variety of things down to clothespins."<sup>23</sup>

With the development of various lumbering industries along the river, came the inevitable support, service and retail businesses. By 1849, when the Concord and Claremont Railroad opened to Warner, settlement was centered within Warner Village. Grocery, dry good, hardware and clothing stores, several blacksmiths, and even a bakery and creamery lined Main and Depot Streets.

Warner farmers had sustained the early settlement and many continued to be productive and prosperous in the nineteenth century. In addition to raising the family food supply, they grew feed corn, oats and hay for market. "In 1870, Warner produced about 4,300 tons of hay"<sup>24</sup> and her 1,684 sheep produced 17,000 pounds of wool. Cattle, sheep and hogs were loaded at the railroad stations for export.

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<sup>20</sup> Harris, pp.431-2

<sup>21</sup> The Warner Historical Society, Warner, N.H. 1880 - 1974, Carl Malmberg, editor, p. 96

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 96

<sup>23</sup> Harris, p. 433

<sup>24</sup> Warner Historical Society, p. 87

"Today, the number of dwelling and barn cellar holes that one finds even in the isolated wilderness areas of Warner, as well as the countless stone walls that criss-cross extensive tracts of former pasture land long since grown up to tall timber, are evidence that the town was once a thriving agricultural community."<sup>25</sup> No longer the frontier town of the eighteenth century, Warner also allowed its gentler side full expression.

Many religious denominations, besides the original Congregationalists, became active in Warner. They "included the Methodists; Baptists; Universalists; Freewill Baptists, ... Antipedobaptists,... and the Osgoodites... There were also a few Quakers and Adventists."<sup>26</sup> By 1880 only the Congregationalists and Baptists remained active, the Methodists having finally abandoned their meeting house, which still stands in the Lower Village. Its preservation is assured as the Lower Warner Meeting House has been deeded to the Warner Historical Society.

The Baptist Church was established here in 1833, at the intersection of Kearsarge and Church Streets, where services were held for over one hundred years. It is now the Masonic Temple.

The Congregationlists have occupied four different buildings since the first meeting house was built on The Parade Ground. The most recent Congregationalist Church was built in 1819, and in 1845, was moved to its "present location in the Center Village. This was accomplished without any interruption of services, for on Sunday the congregation met in the shored-up church where it stood in the roadway."<sup>27</sup> It is now the United Church.

The social life of the community revolved around the churches. There were socials, picnics, two services on Sundays and prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings.

The declining population, which would ultimately lead to the federation of these two congregations in 1940, had already affected the school districts. By 1887, there were fewer than two hundred students enrolled in the twenty-four districts. "The inhabitants of the widely-scattered districts placed great store on the autonomy of their particular area. Advice or interference by anyone from another district was not likely to be well received..."<sup>28</sup> But welcome or not, consolidation of the one-room school houses was inevitable.

Franklin Simonds became the catalyst. In 1869, shortly before his death, he bequeathed \$20,000 to the town of Warner: "My wish to leave some token of my regard for the town of Warner, which has so long been the place of my residence. An appropriation toward the support of a High School in said town, occurs to me as the best form of such a token ..." <sup>29</sup>. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Abigail Simonds contributed an additional \$10,000 toward the fund for building a High School.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 86

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 49

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 52

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 37

<sup>29</sup> Harriman, P. 409

On January 4, 1870, a committee was formed at town meeting to "solicit subscriptions towards building a School House ....".<sup>30</sup> "Gilman C. Bean and Samuel H. Dow, each contributed liberally...and other citizens gave money or work. On the proposal of Mr. Dow it was named 'Simonds Free High School'...The building was erected in 1871, dedicated December 1st of the same year, and opened December 4th with 60 pupils..."<sup>31</sup>

In 1904, a full time superintendent was hired and the consolidation of school districts began in earnest. By 1906, the students were brought to school by oxcart or horse and wagon or, in outlying areas, by train.

When the Warner Village schoolhouse on School Street burned in 1909, a new elementary school was built on Main Street. This building, the Old Graded School, now houses a variety of community services, including day care, kindergarten and elderly services. In 1920, only five one-room school houses remained. And in 1936, the last of them closed in Davisville.

Warner was again a fortunate beneficiary when, in 1892, George A. Pillsbury donated a library building and over four thousand volumes. N.G. Ordway contributed the land upon which to build the library.

In 1873, Mr. Ordway and William E. Chandler had furnished a bond to complete the Kearsarge Mountain Road, which had begun in 1869. "In 1873 Nehemiah G. Ordway laid off from his intervale land, between the river and the railroad, ten or twelve acres for a fair ground. He erected the buildings and stalls, and made a track for horse-trotting."<sup>32</sup>

The railroad continued to bring prosperity to Warner. There were stations at Dimond, Bagley, Lower Warner, two in Waterloo, another at Melvin's Mills and at Roby's Corner. Several of these stations were also Post Offices and small stores.

Our link to the world beyond also brought visitors to Warner's many country inns and hotels. Summer tourism had long been a significant part of our economic life when, in 1931, the first "Snow Train" came up from Boston and launched a brief but flourishing ski trade.

By the 1940s, Warner's Breakneck Hill was "one of the state's best-known ski areas... Warner became the winter sports capital of central New Hampshire."<sup>33</sup> But in the 1950s, the state "built the multi-million-dollar Mount Sunapee State Park just a few miles away..."<sup>34</sup> and "once again the state struck a blow, putting Interstate 89 right through the center of the slope... Gone forever are

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 411

<sup>31</sup> Harris, p. 426

<sup>32</sup> Harriman, p. 415

<sup>33</sup> Warner Historical Society, p. 13

<sup>34</sup> Idem

the big crowds and all the glamour of the 1940s. All fourteen inns either closed or were burned down...."<sup>35</sup>

By the end of World War II, the railroads had waned and in 1955, the last passenger train made its stop in Warner.

The automobile soon dominated transportation and brought with it mixed blessings. The enlarged roads positively impacted many neighborhoods but the construction of Interstate 89, in 1968, devastated the North Village, taking approximately twenty homes as well as the ski area.

That development was symbolic of a series of events that led to Warner's unraveling in the nineteen sixties and seventies. It was a period of gradual estrangement.

With the regionalization of our schools in 1967, our children's participation within the community diminished considerably. The social and sporting events, with their camaraderie and pride, took place in other towns. As parents, we lost not only much of our involvement with each other but also our autonomy. Only our elementary school remained in town, where Simonds Free High School had been, and it was governed by a regional school district.

In the late 1960s, *The Kearsarge Independent*, which had published the news of the day since 1884, ceased publication and Warner lost its voice. Even the weekly meeting of townspeople at the Warner Dump, our lively exchange of opinion and ideas, became a thing of the past.

It was also a period of significant growth in population. And while that certainly had its advantages, it also meant that a large proportion of us had no common history or memory.

Perhaps Nancy Sibley Wilkins recognized these factors when she revived the Warner Historical Society in 1967, thus creating an invaluable source of information for all, and perhaps more importantly, the opportunity for our own rediscovery. If she, and those who worked beside her, believed that we would seize the opportunity, they were proven right.

In the late 1980's, there was rebirth of community feeling. The advent of the *Warner Clarion* and information of local interest on cable vision allowed us to communicate again on a community-wide basis. The Warner Historical Society purchased the Dow House on Main street and over the next few years established a year round series of programs, renovated the building and completed a very successful long range plan and a major fund raising effort.

The Merrimack County Telephone Company built a new office building on the former Cogswell property and the post office relocated from its former location in the Robertson to its present location across from the United Church in Warner. It was important to the lifeblood of Main Street that the post office remained on Main Street and was not relocated to Exit 9.

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<sup>35</sup> Idem

A major fund-raising and volunteer project took on the task of organizing the creation of a student-designed community built playground at Simonds Elementary School.

In the 1990's, many community projects were completed, such as the installation of brick sidewalks, updating the Town Hall facilities and making it handicapped accessible, and the Pillsbury Library celebrated its 100th year of service with a substantial addition to the facilities.

The Solid Waste Transfer and Recycling Station was built and is extremely successful. It has become a place of much community activity, such as canvassing for political opinion, recruiting volunteers for the Fall Foliage Festival and the posting of community events.

The Kearsarge Elderly Housing Project was constructed to address the needs of the elderly population in the community.

Warner's economic base has also expanded with the expansion of WPI, Inc., Mesa International and the location of businesses, such as Market Basket, at Exit 9 off I-89. Main Street has survived the development of Exit 9 with the establishment of two fine restaurants, a video store, Colby Realty, the expansion of Perkin's Hardware and several gift shops and boutiques, such as Country Cobwebs, Spirit Waves and MainStreet BookEnds.

Warner was without a newspaper for a few years after the *Warner Clarion* stopped being printed. In 1997, due to the organizational and fund raising efforts of many people, the *Warner New Paper* was established and it is published on a monthly basis. The local stories, combined with paid advertising has once again created a sense of community and provides an opportunity for ongoing dialogue about issues affecting the town and its people.

After the completion of town wells to provide water to the precinct, the Silver Lake Reservoir was turned over to the town. Despite the number of ponds in town and the Warner River, Warner had no public swimming facilities. It was decided that a town beach would be created with recreational and picnicking facilities at the western edge of Silver Lake. The creation of this public use area has again helped to create a sense of community and a place for families to meet other people in town. Red Cross swimming lessons are held in the summer and Parks and Recreation holds educational programs.

Due to the increase in students enrolled in baseball, softball and soccer, the athletic fields at Riverside Park were expanded and upgraded and Bagley Field, in Lower Warner, was converted and used as a soccer field.

The Warner Fire Department needed to expand its facilities to accommodate larger equipment and its increase in providing emergency services. Fortunately, they were able to add onto their existing building on Main Street. The fire department and many volunteer hours organized this volunteer effort and donations were expended to successfully complete this renovation.

Magdalen College moved from Bedford to a brand new facility on Kearsarge Mountain road. Townspeople may attend church services and the college students volunteer for town activities, such as the Fall Foliage Festival and the Holiday Festival Trees.

The Mount Kearsarge Indian Museum and Educational Center opened on Kearsarge Mountain Road. It draws thousands of people to visit and attend special promotional days that are held from May through December.

The Festival of Trees is a town-wide holiday celebration during the month of December with organizations decorating trees in the town hall. The library and historical society host open houses with music, readings, Santa and refreshments. The event culminates with a parade down Main Street, the lighting of the town tree and caroling with the Magdalen college students.

The American Legion decorates Main Street with American Flags on Memorial Day, Flag Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day. They also host a Pancake Breakfast on the Fourth of July.

The Kearsarge Trail Snails maintain miles of trails for snowmobilers in the winter. The trails are also used for cross-country skiing in the winter and for hiking and biking during the warmer months.

For over fifty years, the Warner Fall Foliage Festival has exemplified the best aspects of our community character with hundreds of volunteers helping to make the event a great success. Each year the proceeds are granted to various community projects, further enriching the community.

Whatever his military achievements, and they were considerable, one cannot help but suspect that Governor Walter Harriman's most profound gift to posterity was his *History of Warner*. In it he proposes "To rescue the early history of Warner from oblivion and to perpetuate a knowledge of it in generations to come..."<sup>36</sup> noting that "Records become dim with age, and are destroyed; the traditions of events which occurred in the preceding century are rapidly fading from memory..."<sup>37</sup>

We will be wise and fortunate indeed if we are able to preserve something of ourselves and our aspirations for our children.

"Warner is my native town, and there cluster all my earliest and fondest remembrances. Every brook and rock and tree that I knew in my childhood is still dear to me, and, if my wishes are regarded, Warner will be the place of my final rest."

Walter Harriman

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<sup>36</sup> Harriman, p.3

<sup>37</sup> Idem

## Outline of Important Dates

- November 7, 1629: Council of Plymouth, Massachusetts grants the territory of New Hampshire to John Mason.
- 1735: Sixty people from Amesbury and Salisbury Massachusetts are granted proprietorship of New Almsbury (present boundaries of Warner, with the exception of the Gore, which was annexed in June 1818).
- May, 1740: Sawmill at Davisville Falls constructed. Site of first proprietors's meeting on May 28, 1740.
- July 31, 1746: New Almsbury grant sold to twelve men from Portsmouth.
- March 14, 1749: New Almsbury grant transferred to seventy-six men from Rye and Newcastle, N.H.
- 1761: Daniel Annis and son-in-law Reuben Kimball arrive from Hopkinton.
- May 1, 1762: Daniel Annis builds first house in New Almsbury.
- June 30, 1762: Hannah Annis Kimball and Reuben Kimball house built
- October, 1762: Daniel Kimball, first child of European extraction, born in New Almsbury. (Plaque marking the site of his birth is located on Red Chimney Road.)
- Reverend William Kelley named first permanent minister at New Almsbury.
- September 3, 1774: Town of Warner incorporated.
- November 19, 1776: Captain Francis Davis represents Warner in the new State Assembly
- Redington Hub Company founded at Roby's Corner
- General Aquila Davis raises the first regiment of NH volunteers
- First Post Office is established
- Congregationalist Church established.



September 9, 1821: Tornado strikes Warner and devastates homesteads.

Dr. Moses Long writes “Historical Sketches of the Town of Warner, New Hampshire”

Baptist Church established

Concord and Claremont Railroad opens to Warner.

Simonds Free High School erected.

“The Kearsarge Independent” newspaper established.

George A. Pillsbury donates the Pillsbury Free Library to the Town with 4,000 volumes.

1931: First “snow train” arrives from Boston, bringing tourists to the ski area

Last one room school house closes at Divisive.

1940's: Ski trade flourishes on Breakneck Hill.

1955: Last passenger train stops in Warner.

1967: Schools become regionalized.

1967: Warner Historical Society revitalized.

1980's: Warner begins to be revitalized. Warner *Clarion* published.

1990's: Expansion of Warner commercial base begins.

## List of Important Historical Resources

Please refer to the map of Historic Buildings and Sites in Warner, which is located at the end of this chapter.

### Structures:

Pillsbury Free Library

The Glendon in Davisville

Lower Warner Meeting House

Country Corner Store in Davisville- National Historic Register

Daniel Kimball Birthplace - Red Chimney Rd

Warner Town Hall

Odd Fellows Hall

Masonic Hall/Old Baptist Church

Simonds Elementary

Warner Community Action Building

United Church of Warner

Brick Law Office Lower Warner

Tavern at Davisville

Fran Brown's/ Rev. William Kelley House

Existing Railroad stations - Warner Village, Waterloo and Melvin's

Existing one room school houses - New and Old Davisville, Schoodac, Waterloo

Warner Historical Society Main Street House

Iron Railroad bridges - Old Ela Bridge and Iron Railroad Bridge at Bagley



### **Important Historic Locations:**

Warner River	Schoodac	Bible Hill
Chandler Reservation	Lime Ledge Quarry	Pumpkin Hill
Newmarket	Bagley	Denny Hill
Collins	Soapstone Quarry	Burnt Hill
Burnap	Hoyt	Couchtown
Howe	Joppa	Kearsarge Gore
Sisco	Parade Grounds	Tory Hill
Liberty Union	Boundtree	Davisville
Judytown	North Road	Melvins Mills
North Village	Village Center	Birthplace of Daniel Kimball
Lower Warner	Waterloo PO	Mill Sites along Warner River
Cellar Holes in Mink Hills	Kearsarge Mountain	Pine Rock
Tory Rock	Bible Rock	Mink Hills

### **Cemeteries:**

Lower Warner	Ferrin	Gore
Parade Ground	Davisville	Hoyt
Waterloo Bridge	Poverty Plains	Sisco
French Brook	Coal Hearth	Sanborn
Pumpkin Hill	Poor Farm	Wheeler
Village Center	Welchans	BeanSchoodac
Tory Hill	Peaceful Retreat	Colby
Seavey	Pine Grove	Page
Old Warner Village	New Warner Cemetery	Kittredge
Morse	Melvin	Johnson

### **Covered Bridges:**

Dalton Covered Bridge, Waterloo Bridge

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