

# Colonial Ramblings

*A hiking, biking guide of Historic York*



*All of America can find quiet peace in the beauty of a  
New England scene, where stone wall and rustic gate  
join with pine and elm — in a setting  
much as in colonial days!*

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Colonial Ramblings  
Historic Trail  
in  
York, Maine  
by  
Virginia S. Spiller  
1998

Colonial Ramblings was published by American Association for University Women in 1976 as its Bicentennial gift to the town of York. Virginia S. Spiller coordinated this effort. Subsequent editions have been published by Ms. Spiller. This, the third, was edited by Jean Tucker with thanks from the researcher and publisher.

Cover credit: Newcomen Society Bulletin 1952

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TOURS:

All tours begin on the Village Green in front of the Town Hall. Three routes are outlined, and you are invited to participate in any or all of them. Route 1 is 1.6 miles long, Route 2 is 2.2 miles long and Route 3 is 5 miles. We encourage you to either hike or bike these routes. Route 1 and 2 may also be covered by car, but please drive carefully. Route 3 includes passage over a footpath and bridge (not car-accessible), although part of this route is possible by car. There is a map at the center of this booklet to help you find your way. All tours end at the Village Green. These routes are registered with the Boy Scouts of America and Youth Trails of America.

It is possible to enter all the Old York Historical Society seasonal buildings and the SPNEA house (Sayward-Wheeler), which require a fee, but it is not essential for this tour. These buildings are clearly marked in your booklet along with a brief description of each. The other homes on these routes are privately owned, and it is requested that individuals take care not to trespass or violate the privacy of the owners.

*Note: Participation of individuals in this tour in no way obligates any party in the case of accident or injury.*

**PARKING:**

Parking is available in the Old York Historical Society parking lot next to the Old Schoolhouse on Lindsay Road; in the parking area behind the Town Hall; at the Village Green; at the John Hancock Wharf and Warehouse, Lower Lindsay Road on the York River; and at the Elizabeth Perkins House across from Sewall's Bridge on the right.

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OLD YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
LIBRARY  
YORK, MAINE

## **PUBLIC REST ROOMS:**

Located in the Town Hall and Jefferds Parking Lot has port-a-potties.

## **AWARDS:**

Awards are optional and not a requirement of the tour. The award consists of an embroidered patch, which can be obtained by completing the tour and answering the observation questions at the end of this booklet. Points of interest that are used in the observation questions are noted as you visit them. When you have completed these requirements, send your answers, \$4.00 and a self addressed stamped envelope to:

Colonial Ramblings  
71 York Street  
York, Maine 03909-1353

## **OLD YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Old York Historical Society is a nonprofit organization which manages all of the sites open to the public from mid-June through September, Tuesday through Saturday. Tickets may be purchased at Jefferds Tavern or at individual sites. For more information on educational programs, camps and special tours, write or call:

Old York Historical Society  
P.O. Box 312  
York, Maine 03909  
207-363-4974

Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities is a non-profit, member supported organization that owns seven Piscataqua Region Properties. These homes are open seasonally with an admission fee. Call their regional office at 143 Pleasant Street, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 03801 (603-436-3205) for information.

## **VILLAGE GREEN:** *All routes begin here.*

Our trail starts at the Revolutionary War Marker between the Town Hall and the First Parish Church. This is the place where the York minutemen gathered after the Battle of Lexington and Concord in 1775. They marched down Lindsay Road, across the York River, down South Side Road on the Post Road across Dolly Gordon Brook to Kittery, ferried the Piscataqua River, and were one of the first from Maine to join the Revolutionary forces in Lexington, Massachusetts. (Answer Question # 1)

*The following buildings are all in the Village Green Area*

## **OLD GAOL** (Open to the Public Seasonal)

Across the street from the Revolutionary Marker and on your left is the Old Gaol (red building). Construction of the Gaol was started in 1719 by order of the General Court of Massachusetts, containing one stone cell. The building was completed in its present form around 1806. Although there were murderers, thieves and counterfeiters held here at times, most of the prisoners were sent to prison for debt. A reproduction pillory is in front of the building. Stocks were a common form of public reprimand for petty behavior. Longer jail sentences were completed at Castle Island in Boston, Massachusetts.

In 1868, the county sold the Gaol to the Town of York. It was used as a jail, warehouse, schoolhouse, and a private dwelling. This building is believed to be the oldest extant English government building in the United States. The building has been a museum for the last 95 years and is on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. It currently houses changing exhibits and a "museum of colonial relics." The jailer's living quarters are furnished according to the 1790 inventory of gaoler William Emerson.

## EMERSON-WILCOX HOUSE (Open to the Public Seasonal)

The light buff colored building across the narrow street from the Old Gaol was built in 1740 by George Ingraham. This house was bought by Edward Emerson in 1752, where he operated a general store and tailor shop. In 1757, Emerson attached a second structure to the original building. In 1817, the house was sold to David Wilcox and was occupied by the Wilcox family until 1954. The Parish allowed Wilcox to build on the triangular piece of his leased land on the North side of the building to the burying yard. This room with the burying yard stone wall as its foundation became a post office for the town of York.

The house now serves as gallery space for decorative arts and the famous eighteenth century Mary Bulman crewel work bedhangings. These bedhangings are believed to be the only existing 18 C complete wool embroidery on linen in the United States. Mary Bulman was Edward Emerson's second wife's aunt.



## OLD BURYING YARD

This cemetery is adjacent to the Emerson-Wilcox House, and is the second cemetery in York. Victims of the Candlemas Day Massacre may be buried here in unmarked graves. One grave is known as the "Witch's Grave" and is covered by a stone slab, supposedly to keep the witch from leaving the grave. Actually, it is the grave of Mary Nasson whose husband placed the stone there to keep cattle from damaging the grave. The old stones demonstrate the stone

carvers' art of the period but are fragile. Please treat the area with respect and care...rubbing is not encouraged. You will see three major forms on the cemetery stones as examples of the religious beliefs of the 18 C society.



The death's head presents a fearful image of the after life. Puritans believed in predestination and the uncertainty of salvation. The great awakening, a religious revival movement circa 1720-1760, encouraged a more personal connection between this life and the next. Eternal life could be achieved through forgiveness and good works. The forgiving cherub's face replaced the death's head by the middle of the 18 C. The urn and willow appeared late in the 1790 and remained popular through the 1830's. Ancient Greek images were used on decorative art objects during this time, as well as, gravestones. This change seemed to indicate a decline in religious control on the life after death.

Stones in the burying yard may be attributed to: Johnson, Lamson, Loder, Emmes. Walk cautiously in the burying yard because there are small footstones, unmarked field stones and impressions from burials. There has been a fence and gate around this yard since 1734.

Many of those who shaped the destiny of York in the 1600's and 1700's are buried here. Notice the sassafras grove which is registered and protected by the State of Maine. These trees were the basis of many English fortunes amassed from the sale of sassafras root, bark, leaves, and blossoms. Different parts of the sassafras tree were used to make perfume, skin lotion, medicine, and a new beverage called sloop, sold to the British working class instead of ale. (*Answer Questions # 2 & 3*)



### **JEFFERDS TAVERN (Open to the Public Seasonal)**

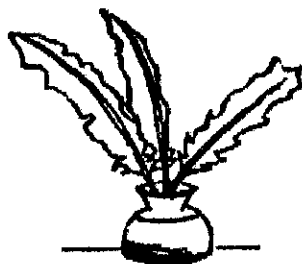
The Tavern, facing the Old Burying Yard, was built circa 1750. It originally stood on the King's Highway in the Township of Wells. It was a stop for the stagecoach travelers between York and Kennebunk, and served as a neighborhood tavern.

In the 19th century it was a residence and fell into disrepair. It was moved to York and restored in 1942; later moved to its present site in 1958. It now serves as Old York Historical Society's education and visitors center with exhibits and demonstrations.

A highway milepost was moved to the left of the tavern in the 1950's when Long Sands Road was widened. These posts were located at intervals of the King Highway from Boston to Portland, Maine. This post indicates that Portsmouth, NH is 11 7/8 miles South and Boston is 81 miles South.

### **OLD SCHOOLHOUSE (Open to the Public Seasonal)**

Next to Jefferds Tavern is a building that was used as a seasonal school in 1746 near York Corner. Before being moved to its present site it was used for 16 years as a three-room home by a descendant of the Moulton family. The windows are believed to originally have been covered with brown paper, which gave a dull yellow light. The primer contained secular and religious teachings, as well as the basic principles of language arts. One of their basic exercises was to copy from the primer, or horn book, into their home-made copy books which they



took home for easy reference at the end of each semester. The ink was made by boiling the bark of swamp maple and diluting it with copperas.

Etched vessels are on the inside back wall of the school house. Scholars had to bring their own pen knives to school to make quill pens; evidently some children used their pen knives for other activities! OYHS has school copy books in their manuscript collections at the Society's library.

*Cross York Street back to the Revolutionary War Marker*

### **TOWN HALL (186 York Street)**

To your right you will see the Town Hall, built in 1811 to replace the original court buildings condemned as unsafe in 1809. In the 1820's the shire town for the county was changed from York to Alfred, but until that time the County Court was held here. In 1871 the building was painted gray with green shutters. Town meetings were held here for many years. The building served as a court house and office for town officials. It was also a grammar school for six months each year. Later the second floor was used for high school basketball games and as a movie theater.

### **FIRST PARISH CHURCH AND PARISH LANDS**

This building was erected in 1747. The cornerstone was laid by Rev. Samuel Moody who became pastor at York in 1698 and held that influential position for almost 50 years. The building was owned by the parish and used for public gatherings and business. At first all of the citizens were required to be members of this church and to provide land and income to the pastors. Originally the church was given six acres of meadow and marshland on Lindsay Road; the Selectmen in 1660 extended the grant

from the burying yard to Little River, after owner Joseph Jenks moved to Lynn, Massachusetts to establish the Saugus Iron Works. This land was leased to townspeople to provide revenue for the church.

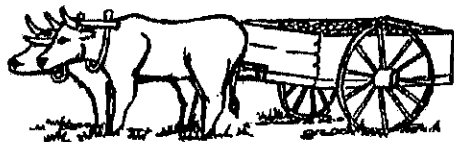
"Father Moody" was known for his lengthy sermons. Every church service was attended by a beadle who walked among the congregation with a tithing stick which he used to tickle the ladies and prod the gentlemen lest anyone fall asleep. The services were also attended by a soldier who kept guard at the door against an Indian attack.

In 1838-39 the church was remodeled in Greek Revival style. Again in 1881 Thomas Silloway, a noted Boston architect, redesigned the building and grounds. By 1882, the church had been turned on its axis so the entrance would face the street with a secondary roadway looping in front of the church. Originally the structure was a soft yellow, but at this time it was painted white and the steeple was replaced.

*Proceed down York Street away from the Village center towards US Route # 1*

## YORK STREET

York Street was originally called Scituate Men's Row because four men from Situate, Massachusetts, received grants of land from the Town in 1642, on condition that a lane would be kept open through their lots. As you travel, imagine the street as a cow path. Animals were walked along this route every day. Lumber for the homes, granite and big rocks for foundations were pulled by oxen along this path. Children played games along the way, interrupting their play to



watch the York Militia train in Preble's field (across from the Green Dragon Inn).

## GREEN DRAGON INN (Abraham Preble House) 142 York Street

This house was built by Abraham Preble in 1642 and was converted to a garrison prior to the Candlemas Massacre of 1692 by his son. It was the only private dwelling left standing on the main street after that tragedy. The garrison protected a number of families who escaped capture or death.

In the 1700's, the house was known as the Green Dragon Inn and was the central gathering place for the people of York. When this house was restored, the front staircase was so worn from use that it had to be exchanged with the attic staircase. Notice that many of the windows have 9 panes over 6 panes. You will see this style window in quite a few homes on our routes. It is typical in the 18 C New England houses.

The men of the York Militia gathered at the Green Dragon Inn to train in the fields across the street. This field was also the location of an early community well which made the area a center of activity in the upper village.

## JOSEPH HORN HOUSE (130 York Street)

Next to the Green Dragon Inn is the Joseph Horn House. In 1748 this half-acre of land was bought by Joseph Horn, who built this house. Originally the floors of this house (as in most others of this period) were made of boards nearly two feet across. He agreed to a mortgage on condition of a monetary loan and being able to find material "for a suitable stack of chimneys with at least four smokeys". Today the house exhibits extensive renovation

of numerous periods.

### **DR JOSEPH GILMAN HOUSE (118 York Street)**

Dr. Gilman's home was built in 1800, but he probably came to York much earlier. Dr. Gilman's Day Book is preserved in the Old York Historical Society Library. It shows that between 1803 and 1813 he made 17,200 house calls, at an average charge of twenty-five cents per visit. His records show that he charged \$3.00 to deliver a baby boy but only \$2.00 for each girl.

### **LT. JOSEPH BANKS HOUSE (112 York Street)**

This house, built in 1696, is an example of the early American center-chimney plan. In this home many local affairs were discussed, because Lt. Banks was a leading citizen of York for many years. In 1696 he served York as selectmen. He was actively involved in the building of the grammar school, the damming of Meeting House Creek, and the building of a county road through York. Hepzibah Bragdon lived in this house prior to her marriage to Stephen Longfellow and her move to Portland, Maine. The laureate poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow of Portland was her grandson.

### **CHARLES BANE HOUSE (106 York Street)**

It is believed that this home was built in three stages: 1690-1710 when it was a small salt-box; 1780 when five rooms were added; and 1815 when the roof was raised to add rooms. This home still has the original boot scraper on the front doorstep. People who walked the cow path in muddy weather used the scraper before entering the house. This house



also has window shutters, which close from the inside, either folding or sliding into the wall.

The trees that hand down over the sidewalk here are tamarack trees. These trees were not native to the Moulton Farm, but were transplanted from the Barrell Farm located on the York River. These unusual trees, also called English larch trees, are fir trees, but they lose their needles in the winter and have tiny rose colored flowers in the spring. (*Answer Question # 4*)

### **The Moulton Properties (98 York Street)**

The next house, which is on the east corner of Raydon Road and York Street, is the Judge Jeremiah Moulton House, built in 1759. This was on the edge of a large tract of land which the Moulton family, from the Folly Pond area, purchased in the 1600's. The next few houses were built by various Moulton descendants for their children. The land to the right was farmed by the Moultons, and extended from Route # 1 to Little River and from York Corner to York River and the Organug Road area.

Several houses down York Street, a white farm house sits on a small hill (70 York Street). There is a red barn next to the house. This was the home of Henry Moulton. Here he established and operated the Henry Moulton Ladder Company in the late 1800's. His horse-powered factory produced one ladder from each oak tree, the ladders are still in use today. Mr. Moulton had two peddler's carts on the road, and in good weather he sold his ladders, chairs, settees, ironing boards, outdoor revolving clothes dryers, and indoor clothes racks.

The adjacent house, also part of the Moulton property, is the Brigadier General Jotham Moulton House, built in 1770 (66 York Street).

### **EBENEZER COBURN HOUSE (62 York Street)**

Ebenezer Coburn purchased a tract of land from the Moultons after the original Moulton Tavern was burned in the Candlemas Massacre. The Coburn House, built in 1719, has had a few additions, but you can still see the original lines. This house was sold back to the Moulton family in 1758.

### **LT. DANIEL SIMPSON HOUSE (36 York Street)**

This home is on York Street, just after you cross Hilltop Drive. When this house was built in 1720, a stone hideout was included in the cellar for the protection of children in the event of any danger. Members of the Simpson family were killed in the Candlemas Massacre of 1692. This probably prompted Daniel to provide for his loved ones safety.

### **YORK CORNER**

By early 1900's York Corner was one of the busiest commerce centers of York. Businesses included a post office, a grocery store, the telephone company, two general stores, insurance company, printing office and a blacksmith among other small establishments...many of these buildings have disappeared.

### **BANE HOUSE (34 York Street)**

In 1692 Joseph Bane age sixteen, was captured by Abenaki warriors and held captive for seven years. While in captivity, he earned the respect of the Abenaki for his skill and bravery as a hunter. He served as a translator during negotiations between the English and the Native Americans. Joseph built his house around 1721; it stood on

its original site adjacent to the Dead River Gas Station until 1977. The building was scheduled to be destroyed until Robert P. Hodgins gave the building to a community group, York Initiatives. They moved and restored the building with the help of funding from the New England Regulatory Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission and private citizens. (*Answer Question # 5*)

*Retrace your steps along York Street to Organug Road. Turn right down Organug Road at the York Street Baptist Church. (All routes are still together.)*

### **YORK STREET BAPTIST CHURCH**

The York Christian Church was organized in 1808 after an Act of the General Court permitted people to pay their church tax to the church of their choice. There were 26 members; 13 men and 13 women. The original church was situated on the corner of Routes #1 and #91 and completed in 1816. It was financed through assessments to members and the sale of church pews. In 1867 an acre of land was purchased for a parsonage on Organug Road, just down from York Street. In 1890, the York Christian Society decided to abandon the original church and build a new church on the land adjacent to the parsonage on Organug Road. This new church was dedicated in 1891 and cost \$10,000. Notice the hinges on the front door which are typical of the Victorian period when the church as built. A Kittery blacksmith worked the hinges. In 1967, the original parsonage on Organug Road was destroyed to provide for the church expansion as you see it today.





## ORGANUG ROAD

The selectmen laid out this road in 1769 through the pastures of Tucker, Lyman, Adams and Moulton families. The 20C name, Organug, is probably an anglicized Indian name. As you proceed down Organug Road (originally called Padlock Lane because all of the homes had padlocks on their front doors), you are passing through part of the old Moulton Farm. It was across this land that Frank Emerson attempted to channel water from Folly Pond near Mount Agamenticus for an ice cutting operation at the Mill Pond. Mr. Emerson constructed a wood pipe with staves held by 16" round hoops to conduct the fresh water from Folly Pond. Mr. Emerson went to great expense in this attempt. While he was never successful in producing ice for the Boston market, it is a testimony to the ingenuity and perseverance of York men.

**Routes 1, 2 & 3: Continue on Organug Road past the middle school to intersection of Indian Trail**

### JOB LYMAN HOUSE (1 Indian Trail)

Job Lyman was a physician in York for over 30 years. He was born in North Hampton, Massachusetts and a graduate of Yale in 1756. In 1761, Dr. Lyman bought the original Arthur Bragdon Farm which extended from Indian Trail to Rice's Bridge (Route #1) on the York River. In 1785, he purchased the Card farm and mill. His brother was Rev. Isaac Lyman, pastor of the First Parish Church and his son was a York physician until 1822.

Isaac Lyman's son used the York River frontage of this property for a shipyard, grist and fulling mill. Nathaniel Grant Marshall, another leading York citizen lived here from 1822 to 1882.

**Routes 2 & 3: Proceed down Organug Road towards York River through the York Golf and Tennis Club**

The next 140 acres were purchased in 1889 by The York Country Club, Inc. This land included the river estates of the Junkins, Bragdon and Mc Intire farms. The club house was built by E.B. Blaisdell. In July, 1901, the first fairways were opened. By 1902 York had one of the few 18 hole golf courses in the United States. The York Country Club also offered a croquet ground, tennis courts, and docks for canoes on the river. It is a private club today. **Turn to Page 20 - SEWALL'S BRIDGE.**



**Route 1: Continue on Indian Trail Road along the upper section of Meeting House Creek and Mill Dam Pond**

### INDIAN TRAIL

As you travel this road, you are using the original path to the sea used by Native Americans before the first settlers arrived. In 1616, a plague killed nearly all those who summered here in York, planting corn and fishing the shores.

### JOHN HARMON HOUSE (10 Indian Trail)

The Harmon family was famous in early York history for leading an attack against the Native Americans. In 1710 Johnson Harmon, brother of John Harmon, had been captured by Abenaki Indians. He was exchanged for a French prisoner and returned to York. In 1724, Captain Johnson Harmon led the expedition against Norridgewock

(Skowhegan, Me.) in which the entire settlement was destroyed. In 1775, John Harmon's grandson, Johnson Moulton, led the York Militia to the aid of the Lexington and Concord Massachusetts Minutemen. In 1754, the home was sold to Captain Johnson Simpson whose son took part in the Boston, Mass. Tea Party.

General Jeremiah McIntire, who purchased the house sometime after 1832, is remembered for the time he rode his horse up the first steps of the stairway after a militia muster. The horse's hoofprints can still be seen on the stairs.

**Route 1: Turn left onto Lindsay Road**

**Route 2: Joins us here**

## LINDSAY ROAD

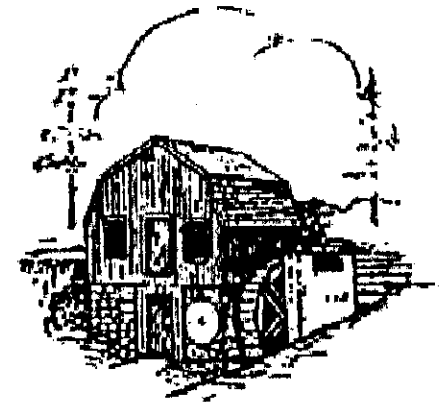
This road is one of the original cartways used by the settlers of York. Edward Godfrey built the first house in York on the Point Bolleyne, the land between Barrell Mill Pond and the York River. The second church to be built in York was built on the east side of this road in 1667.

Lindsay Road was officially laid out in 1699. In 1744, the Town voted to build a road from the proposed bridge to Scituate Men's Row. After Sewall's Bridge was completed, Lindsay Road became a major thruway for travelers between Boston and Falmouth (Portland, Maine). At this time, it was known as the King's Highway. The Maine volunteers under Johnson Moulton marched down the King's Highway and over Sewall's Bridge after the battle of Lexington and Concord. Later, it became part of the Post Road which connected Boston and Falmouth. With wharves and warehouses on one end, a tavern in the middle, and the gaol and church at the other, much of Colonial York's activities passed over this road.

## BARRELL MILL POND AND EMERSON MILL POND

As you walk across the causeway on Lindsay Road, to the left you see the Emerson Mill Pond, which was created in 1884 when Frank Emerson attempted to establish an ice-cutting operation and dammed Pickering Creek at Lindsay Road.

On the right side of Lindsay Road, you see Barrell Mill Pond. This pond was created in 1726, when 21 York men decided to dam Meeting House Creek to provide power for a saw and grist mill. In time, all the shares to the mill were acquired by the elder Jonathan Sayward Barrell, who inherited the mill and surrounding property in 1797.



## NICHOLAS SEWALL HOUSE (20 Lindsay Road)

Further up Lindsay Road and on your right is the Nicholas Sewall House. Nicholas Sewall moved to York in 1708 with his brother Samuel from Newbury, Massachusetts. Nicholas built a house and tannery (circa 1715) next to the old church. Later he purchased the "ruins of the old meeting house" and two acres, which he added to his tanyard. In 1725 he accompanied Jeremiah Moulton on the first expedition to Norridgewock (Skowhegan, Me.). In 1735 he was killed when thrown from his horse. (*Answer Question # 6*)

## **HUGH HOLMAN HOUSE (12 Lindsay Road)**

Hugh Holman, a fisherman & weaver, built this house behind the Gaol in 1727. In 1737 the parish sold him a half-acre of "ministerial land" on which his house was built. Holman was one of the "Snowshoe Men" of Captain John Harmon's Company on the expedition in 1744 to Louisburg, Cape Breton, Canada.

*Turn to Page 34 - VILLAGE GREEN.*

## **SEWALL'S BRIDGE**

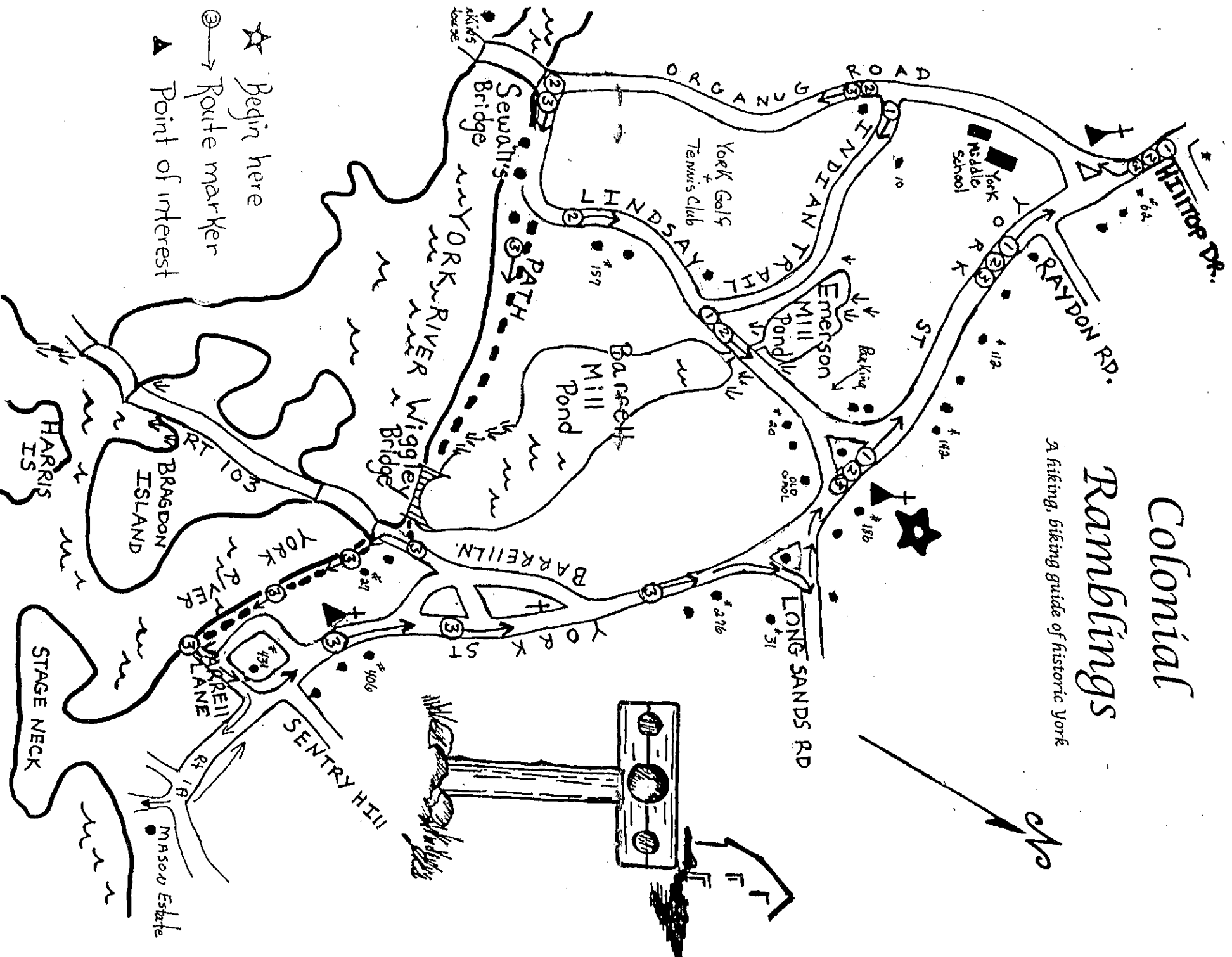
The 1742 York Town Meeting authorized a bridge built over the York River between Colonel Harmon's Wharf and Mr. Donnell's Point of Rocks, providing that sloops could pass. The engineering plan for this bridge was drawn by Major Samuel Sewall and his assistant, Captain John Stone. The original plan is in the Old York Historical Society's collections. Sewall's Bridge was the first wooden pile drawbridge in this country with thirteen spans. Major Sewall invented the pile driver to complete this bridge. The piles were cut and joined into sections of four, then driven into the river bed by a heavy oak log rigged as a trip hammer or pile driver. Construction was completed in 1761.

The 1771 Town Meeting fixed rates to be collected at two thirds of a penny for every person, two pence for every horse, four pence for every four-wheeled carriage, and four pence a dozen for sheep or swine. The passage of the bridge was kept open free for all persons traveling to or from public worship, and public meetings. The bridge has been maintained and repaired from time to time. Although, it is no longer operated as a drawbridge, the original structural design remains (*Answer Question # 7*)

*Look across the bridge toward the right*

# Ramblings

# A hiking, biking guide of historic York





**ELIZABETH PERKINS HOUSE (circa 1745) (Open to the Public Seasonal - OYHS property)**

Elizabeth Perkins (1869-1952) was born in New Jersey. Her life spanned a period of tremendous change in the United States and in York. In 1898 she purchased what she and her mother, Mary Soules Perkins, called the "Piggin House" for their summer home. During her life she was preoccupied with the preservation of the ways of her ancestors. Her first project was the support for the restoration of the Old Gaol and its establishment as a museum of early Americana. She also founded the Society for the Preservation of Historic Landmarks in York County (SPHLYC) By the time she gave the house to the SPHLYC, the house had been expanded to include a modern kitchen, servant's quarters, porches, and a garage. A boat house and dock were added to the property. The building is appointed with china collectibles of the "Colonial Revival era."

*Turn left and proceed down river on Lindsay Road*

**MARSHALL STORE GALLERY (140 Lindsay Road)**

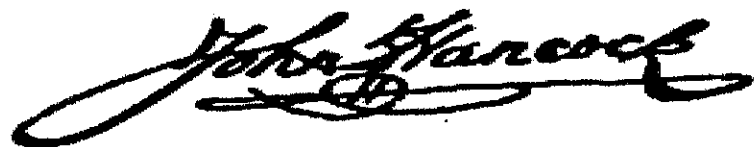
This store was built by George Marshall in 1870, and was considered very modern for its day. It was constructed so that hogsheads of molasses could be rolled from the wharf into the store cellar. Groceries, hardware, cloth, cement, coal and fertilizer were sold here. Very often the farm people brought their produce here to exchange for goods.

The structure presently is used as a gallery for the Old York Historical Society with changing exhibits monthly from May to November.

## **JOHN HANCOCK'S WAREHOUSE (1785) (Open to the Public Seasonal)**

Captain Thomas Donnell, originally owned the land and built a warehouse. At the time of the American Revolutionary War, John Hancock owned one-half interest in this building. The most active years for shipping trade in York were between 1760 and 1800. However, as early as 1734, Nathaniel Donnell Jr. traded between York and Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia. Typical export trade included lumber, farm goods, salt hay and dried fish while molasses, china and textiles were imported.

During the Revolution, the British Blockade slowed shipping, but it later flourished and reached its peak around 1800. After 1800, embargoes and the demand for deeper harbors attracted merchants away to other ports, and shipping in York declined. (Answer Question # 8)



**Routes 2 & 3: Continue on Lindsay Road**

### **SAMUEL LINDSAY HOUSE (157 Lindsay Road)**

This land originally belonged to Captain Thomas Donnell, who was the first operator of the middle ferry. He sold a small piece of land to Captain Daniel Bragdon, who built a house and wharf for his son. Captain Samuel Lindsay acquired the land in 1795, and built this house. He was lost at sea on his first ship. His mother continued to live here for some time. The home was later owned by the

Marshall family. George E. Marshall, who owned the Marshall Store, was Customs Officer for the Port of York, and lived in the Samuel Lindsay House. His office was in the Marshall Store, and ships carrying freight would stop there for clearance papers on their way to Nova Scotia. Adeline Talpey Marshall Nadeau (his niece), served as acting collector in 1906. The customs office was closed when President Taft abolished small collection districts in 1913.

**Route 2: Turn at the bend of the road and continue on Lindsay Road. Next stop, a few houses up the road on your right, is the Steven Lovejoy House.**

**Route 3: Follow Lindsay Road to the bend in the road. There is a dirt road on the right (Mill Road). Follow this road to the footpath. Take a right going into the woods. Follow this path to the Wiggley Bridge. You will pass near some private homes, but this is a public way. Turn to page 24 - STEEDMAN WOODS.**

### **STEPHEN LOVEJOY HOUSE/MATTHEW LINDSAY TAVERN (94 Lindsay Road)**

Stephen Lovejoy built this house in 1753. The land was purchased from Benjamin Holt, who began what was probably the first real estate development in York when he subdivided his land along Lindsay Road into small lots in 1746. His house was later owned by Captain Abraham Adams, and then by Matthew Lindsay, whose wife conducted a tavern here for a short time after his death.

### **ALEXANDER MC INTIRE HOUSE (82 Lindsay Road)**

Alexander McIntire was active in town politics, and at one time or another held practically every office to which

he could be elected or appointed. He built this house in 1811 on land bought from William Stacey's heirs. This land is part of the original Godfry tract. An unusual feature of this house was an "indoor smokehouse" with a special flue from the oven opening into the hearth. This innovation made smoking a part of the cooking process and eliminated special fires and trips outside to a cold smokehouse.

**Route 2: Continue down Lindsay Road. Turn back to page 18, LINDSAY ROAD.**

### **Route 3 continuation**

### **STEEDMAN WOODS & WIGGLEY BRIDGE** (Not Accessible by Car)

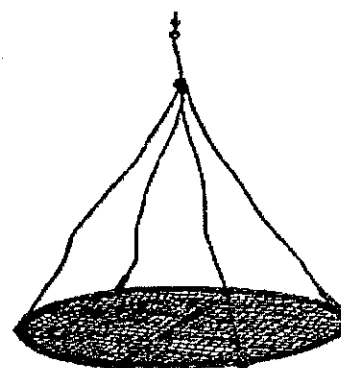
Steedman Woods is a seventeen acre nature preserve owned by Old York Historical Society. Woodland paths follow along Barrell Mill Pond and the York River to Wiggley Bridge and Route #103. This area in 1632 was called "Point Bolleyne" by Edward Godfrey whose house was here. During the 1700's the area was the site of a tidal grist mill. The bridge was built in 1930 at an estimated cost of \$3940. It is 75 feet long, 5 feet wide and spans the gap where tidal water from the Mill Pond runs into the York river.

According to local lore, there was a bridge build over the Mill Dam about 1896. There is no record that it became a town maintained bridge. Attempts were made to have it accepted, as it provided a shorter route between York Harbor and Sewall's Bridge, which also made a convenient route between the Harbor and Country Club. Town Meeting records of March 9, 1911, approved the motion "to construct and maintain a public pedestrian promenade over and along the dam on the Barrell Mill Pond." (Answer Question # 9).

*As you cross the bridge, you can imagine the site of the tidal grist mill described in the Barrell Mill Pond section of Routes 1 and 2 (page 19).*

### **LOBSTERING**

Since the 1700's fishing and lobstering have been important industries along the banks of the York River. In the early days, the lobsters were caught with a hooked staff. Between 1850-1860 lobsters were gaffed (speared)



which did not allow for the transportation of live crustaceans to the kitchen! A hoop net was finally developed where nets were hauled every fifteen minutes. Each lobsterman only had a few hoop nets. The American lobster trap used today was invented in the 1860's using "Yankee Ingenuity" and available materials. The only

change made in the last 30 years, is the replacement of the wooden slats and a stone weight to a wire cage.

### **HARRIS ISLAND**

To the south you see Harris Island, which is now the site of the York Harbor Marina and two town docks. Native American artifacts were found here. During York's small pox epidemic in the late 1700's, Harris Island was leased by the Town to house those who had been banished to this "hospital."

*As you come off Wiggley Bridge, cross the street and turn left onto Route # 103. Take a right onto the path along the river to see the next two houses located on Barrell Lane Extension.*

## **SAYWARD-WHEELER HOUSE**

**(79 Barrell Lane Extension)** Open seasonal by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Joseph Sayward purchased this "new dwelling house" in 1720. It was sold to his son, Jonathan, who made a fortune in the lucrative West Indies Trade. The external architectural integrity of the building was maintained by the family, although internal additions were added in 1859 and 1900. Jonathan Sayward hired the local joiner and engineer, Samuel Sewell, to install paneling and build numerous pieces of furniture which can still be seen today. Sayward was a merchant, shipowner, judge, and representative to the Massachusetts General Court who retained the respect of the community despite his Tory (English) sympathies.

The home remained in the family until 1977 when the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities acquired it. It is open to the public for a fee from June 1 through October 15, Wednesday through Sunday, 12:00 to 5:00 P.M.

## **RICHARD KEATING HOUSE**

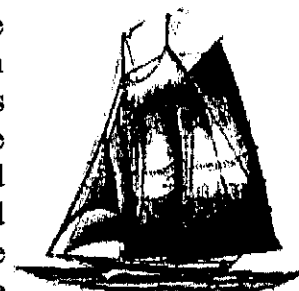
**(27 Barrell Lane Extension)** [major renovations in 1998]

This house was originally built by Abraham Preble Jr. and moved to this site by Jonathan Sayward in 1782 for his business clerk and grandson-in-law, Richard Keating and his wife, Sally Sayward Barrell Keating. Keating died at 25 and his widow married General Abiel Wood of Wiscasset, Maine. Madame Wood is known as the first woman novelist in Maine (novels include *Tales of the Night*, *Dorval*, *Amelia*).

*Continue along the river path to where Varrell Lane ends at the wharf. Turn left at Varrell Lane and proceed up the Lane.*

## **LOWER TOWN**

At the corner of Varrell Lane and Harmon Park you will have a good view of the Harbor area. The wharf area along this tidal river from Harbor Short Sands to Clark Lane was the most important section of York in the 1600's and early 1700's. This was the site of the Market Place until 1737; sailing vessels anchored here while the captains bartered with the settlers. With the decline of shipping, Lower Town became quiet, and was a poorer section in the 1800's.



*Walk up the hill to York Street and take a right. Continue down York Street towards the ocean past the Harbor Post Office. At the sharp curve leading up a hill take a right off York Street and bear left down toward the beach front (Mason Estate Park is on your left).*

## **STAGE NECK POINT**

From the beach you can see Stage Neck Point, which received its name from the fish stages used for salt drying in preparation for exporting the fish and local consumption. Executions also took place at Stage Neck probably until the Revolutionary War. During the War of 1812 there once stood a small defensive fort (Fort Head) that served as a look-out. Volunteers called "Seafencibles" watched for enemy ships in order to protect York Harbor from invasion. One of the grand hotels of York, The Marshall House, was built here by Nathaniel G. Marshall in 1871. Today, the Stage Neck Condominiums and Inn dominate this historic site.



*Return back to York Street and turn left. You are now heading back the way you came. As you proceed toward York Village, you are again traveling a route used so often by the early families of this area. Before the railroads were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people depended on boats for economical, quick transportation to the York area.*

*By the mid 1800's York was becoming a "watering place" for the wealthy city folk from Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Hartford, and Boston, to visit. Eventually they built "summer cottages" or leased them from local developers.*

*The open fields and cartroads were objects of numerous land development schemes along most of the York shore-front which had changed "Colonial York" into a summer colony.*

#### **LANCASTER BUILDING (431 York Street)**

The Lancaster Building begins a section where Dr. Frederick Stackpole, a Boston physician, constructed his "health resort." The building was constructed around 1895, in the Georgian Revival style, as one of the largest commercial structures in the Harbor. During the early 1900's it housed an opera house, movie theater and numerous stores. In the early 1980's it was remodeled and converted to condominiums. The lower floor still houses stores as it did close to a century ago. As you return to the village most of the "summer cottages" on both sides of the street between Varrell Lane and Clark Lane were part of his enterprise.

*As you retrace your steps from the Atlantic Ocean towards the village along York Street, you not only are in the area discussed as "Lower Town", but also traverse an earlier historical area where the Alcock Garrison built in 1680, was situated. During the Abenaki massacre of 1692, a*

*number of families found shelter in the Garrison during the attack on Lower Town. The Rev. Shubel Dummer, minister of York from 1665-1692, was slain in his doorway.*

#### **ST. GEORGE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

**(407 York Street) (Site of the First Meeting House)**

This building was originally built on the property adjacent to the Lancaster Block. It was designed by William Dabney of Boston for Dr. Frederick Stackpole. The structure was built as a combination library and Unitarian Chapel. It was moved from the original site in 1982. In 1632, the Anglican Church stood at the present site of St. George's. The first burying yard for the town was in back of the church on the edge of the York River.

On the left side of the road, in a small grassed area, you will see a stone marking the site of the old "Chapel or Oratory" which served as the first meeting house in York.

*Look across the street and to your right. Fishermen on the Isles of Shoals (seven islands about 10 miles off the coast), fearing attack by the British during the Revolutionary War dismantled their homes and transported them ashore. The next three houses are some of the houses located in York.*

#### **BAYER and CASWELL HOUSE (42 Sentry Hill)**

This house stands on a small hill on the left hand corner of York Street and Sentry Hill. It has been newly shingled, but if you look closely, you will see that it is an older home. This is one of the houses moved from the Isles of Shoals. The front part of the house is the original. While working on the house, the owners found many wooden

pegs used instead of nails. The original fireplace is still in use and some of the inside glass appears to be original.

### **DANIEL DILL HOUSE or VARRELL HOMESTEAD (412 York Street)**

On the same side of the street, you will notice a shingled house with gold trim. This home is the Daniel Dill House or Varrell Homestead, and is also a Shoals' house. It was purchased in 1782 by John and Rachel Varrell, who came from the Isles of Shoals. The 'L.' at the back of the house is a newer addition. In the oldest portion, the ceiling is six feet high, and hides the original beams. The present owner reported that a tiny white doll's cup and a 1732 penny were found on the property.

### **JOB WELLS HOUSE (406 York Street)**

Next door to the Varrell Homestead is the Job Well House (gray color). The actual origin of this house is in question. One theory says it was built by Job Wells in 1755, purchased by Col. Nathaniel Donnell who sold it in 1765 to his nephew, Captain James Donnell, a Revolutionary War hero.

The other theory is that the house is the Tucke parsonage, originally built on the Isle of Shoals in 1732 for John Tucke, their minister from 1733-1773, and relocated here. The two theories illustrate the problem historians have with being "sure" of what happened if the "paper trail" is incomplete.

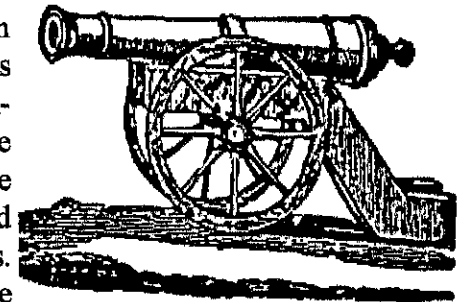
*Continue on York Street away from the Beach, and go around the bend. You are now heading toward York Village.*

### **JOB YOUNG (JACOB CURTIS) HOUSE (367 York Street)**

This house is now used for offices and a restaurant. It is on the right side of York Street. John Kingsbury returned home from the Louisburg Expedition (Cape Breton, Canada) with a wooden leg, and built his house about 1760 on the site of the present Realty Building in the center of York Village. His blacksmith shop was located there. The house was greatly enlarged when it was moved to this location, and then restored to its present size in 1962.

### **POWDER HOUSE (276 York Street)**

Next to the Kingsbury House is an attractive house that is believed to be the original Powder House which stood behind the town hall and was used to store war materials. It was moved to the "Little Parade" around 1831 to serve as Charles O. Emerson's Law Office. Later it was moved to the present site where it was renovated and enlarged.



### **SOLDIERS MONUMENT**

As you arrive in the center of the Village, you will notice this monument. In 1906, the Civil War Soldier's statue was erected in memory of the York men engaged in the war. Many experts believe that the soldier is Confederate but the Quartermaster Corps of the United States Army identified the uniform as Spanish American. A local monument merchant, John Staples, chaired the town committee

who commissioned the Frederick Barnicoat Granite Statuary Works of Quincy, Massachusetts to create this meritorious work.

The small triangle of land on which the monument stands was once much larger, and was known as "The Little Parade." This shape was created by early York settlers who took short cuts across town land to turn towards the Harbor. The resulting triangle of town-owned property was leased through the years for a blacksmith shop, a lawyer's office, and a public hay scale. In 1880, a liberty pole stood on the point towards Town Hall. The size and shape of the triangle was greatly changed in 1955, removing a watering fountain and widening the road.

*Turn right at the Soldier's Monument, and walk down Long Sands Road for just a few yards.*

#### **EMERSON HOMESTEAD (31 Long Sands Road)**

A short walk down Long Sands Road brings you to the Emerson Homestead on your right, and Coventry Hall on your left. In the late eighteenth century these homes were the center of elite social activities that took place in York.

Part of the Emerson Homestead is believed to have been the Norton Garrison, built about the time of King Philip's War in 1675. Later it was licensed as Woodbridge Tavern. When the road was widened, the home was moved back from the road to its present location. In 1830's this was an 111 acre farm managed by Abigail Emerson.

#### **COVENTRY HALL (Sewall Mansion) (34 Long Sands Road)**

Coventry Hall was built in 1794 by Judge David Sewall, a distinguished gentleman whose career as a judge in the colonial and national courts spanned 41 years. While at Harvard, Judge Sewall was a classmate of John Adams, our second president.

It was at Coventry Hall that Judge Sewall entertained President James Monroe. He was also one of the earliest benefactors of Bowdoin College, and a "Sewall Prize" is awarded annually in his honor.

If you look closely, you will see that the main doors of both Coventry Hall and the Emerson Homestead do not face directly on the street. (*Answer Question # 10*)

*Go back to York Street and turn right*

#### **BENJAMIN STONE TAVERN (200 York Street)**

Benjamin Stone built this house in 1719 on land bought from his brother-in-law, Caleb Preble. It was the first tavern started on York Street after the Candlemas massacre. In 1729, the house was sold to Dr. Alexander Bulman. Dr. Bulman's practice extended from Kittery to Biddeford. He and his wife endeared themselves to all who came to know them. Dr. Bulman enlisted to serve as a physician on the Louisburg Expedition (Cape Breton, Canada) under Sir William Pepperell in 1745, and died of a fever as he was about to return home.

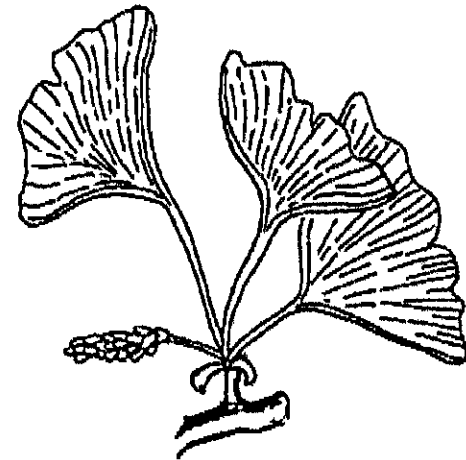
Frank Phillips Emerson remodeled the house in early 1865, completely rebuilding the exterior.

*Routes 1, 2 & 3 join here*

## VILLAGE GREEN

You are now back at your starting point on the Village Green (Parish Land). The village green was created in the early 1900's by the Old York Historical and Improvement Society whose purpose was "to beautify the village and to preserve York's past." Summer resident and chairman of the OYIS project, Bryan Lathrop, achieved this transformation with the assistance of his fellow Chicago friend and renowned landscape architect from the "prairie school", Ossian C. Simonds. The circular drive extended in front of the Court House near elm trees which had been planted by David Sewall on April 15, 1773. The elms succumbed to Dutch elm disease in the 1960's. The King's Daughters Society dedicated a red maple and a blue spruce which were planted by the First Parish Church School Children in 1976. Simond's plantings that you enjoy today are: silver maples, oriental lilacs, golden chain tree, two ginkos, oriental dog woods and sassafras trees. Some of the other plantings can be seen across the street in the burying yard and around Jefferds Tavern. The program nurtured in the early 1900's by Lathrop was recognized in 1917 when the people of York erected a plaque in his memory which you can see between the church and the town hall. His beautifying efforts have continued as honey locust, black locust and small leaf linden; the town's tree warden replaced some of the silver maples with flowering crab apples. The oriental dogwoods on either side of the town hall bloom in mid June. The two ginkgo trees can be easily found on the west side of the church. This is an ancient species known to be at least 70 million years old. The leaves are unique bilobed fan shape which turn brilliant yellow in the fall. These separate sex trees were reintroduced to America in 1784. They were harvested for wood but the suggested medicinal uses may have saved the species. Both of the York trees are male. These specimens will grow to heights taller than the church spire someday!

The town painted the gray and green town hall to "colonial white" thus completing the transformation of the once rough "common grounds" to a revived Village Green with the white church as the focal point for York's Village Green.



*Ginko Leaves*

*This completes your tour. If you are interested in learning more about York area history, we encourage you to visit the Old York Historical Society Library located at 207 York Street (next to the Old Gaol in the 1894 brick bank building). Remember to answer the observation questions and mail these answers with \$4.00 to receive your embroidered color patch to Colonial Ramblings 71 York Street, York, Maine 03909-1353.*



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York County Deeds

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## OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. How many men were in the York Militia that marched on April 21, 1775 to participate in the American Revolutionary War?

2. There is a large stone commemorating the people killed in the Candlemas Day Massacre. How many people does it say were killed by the Abenakis that day?

3. Read Mary Nasson's epitaph...do you think she was a witch? Defend your position.

4. What is the object on the granite step of the Charles Bane House?

5. Who helped fund the restoration for the Bane House project?

6. What style of window was used on the Nicholas Sewall house and many other 18 century homes you have seen today?

7. The markers at Sewall's Bridge were installed by what two historic preservation organizations?

8. Who leased the John Hancock Warehouse to Historic Landmarks in York County?

9. Harmon Park in York Harbor is the site of \_\_\_\_\_ Garrison which served as a "safe haven" from the Indian raids.

10. The monument in the center of town is a memorial to the men who fought in the American Civil War from 18?? to 18??

**Remember**, to receive your Colonial Ramblings embroidered patch, with the answers to all ten observation questions found on previous page, enclose \$4.00 along with a self addressed stamped envelope and this page to:

Colonial Ramblings  
71 York Street  
York, Maine 03909-1353