

## HISTORIC RESOURCES 2008

### I. TOWN HISTORY

Fremont, New Hampshire is a proud old New England Town, steeped in history. The Town was, in its early years, a farming, and lumbering community and today it has evolved into a residential community.

Like Newmarket, Newfields, Epping and Brentwood, Fremont was originally a part of Exeter which was founded in 1638. This connection with Exeter made Fremont part of one of the earliest settled communities within the United States. In 1742, "Brintwood" (now Brentwood) was separated from Exeter and made into a new Town. Fremont in turn, separated from Brentwood twenty-two years later and became an incorporated Town on Friday, June 22, 1764 and named "POPLIN."

The Town held the name of "Poplin" for ninety years until July 8, 1854, when the name was changed to "Fremont" in honor of John Charles Fremont, the great American West Explorer / Pathfinder, who at that time was one of the most famous men in America. So great was his fame, that in 1856 John Fremont became the first nominated Presidential candidate of the newly founded Republican Party. His unsuccessful bid for the Presidency paved the way for Abraham Lincoln's successful Republican Party bid just four years later in 1860. John C. Fremont (1813-1890) was not a native, nor a resident of our small Town of Fremont, NH

The area which later became Fremont remained a wilderness for many years prior to the 1720's due to the threat of Native American Indian attacks, and the obstacle that the Great Spruce Swamp posed as a significant natural barrier between present-day Fremont and the more settled area of the original Township of Exeter. As settlers began to move inland from the coastal Towns during the 1720's and 1730's, Fremont gradually began to take shape. Long before the Town was incorporated in 1764, a settlement had been made called "Black Rocks Village." Over the years the prosperous Black Rocks Village grew to consist of a sawmill, gristmill, woolen's mill, school house, Union Church, Democratic Hall, barrel cooperage, hotel, bandstand, Town hall, gun shop, shoe factory, public library, and various blacksmith shops, stores, taverns, inns, post offices, restaurants, ice houses, and tourist boarding houses - all located within the vicinity of the present-day 1820 Liberty Square Market.

Several mills gradually sprang up along the Exeter River which meanders a circuitous route through Fremont. In 1734, the famous Mast Tree Riot took place at one of these mills called Copyhold Mill near the present-day Fremont / Brentwood Town line. This Mast Tree Riot became the **first** recorded rebellion of its type to take place in British controlled colonial America. Locals were protesting against the despised British mast tree law which forbade colonists from cuttings down certain sized valuable white pine trees that were to be reserved solely for use in the King's Royal Navy to be used as masts on newly built ships.

In December 1774, over 200 New Hampshire patriots seized Fort William & Mary at New Castle, New Hampshire, and procured approximately 100 kegs of gunpowder. The powder was divided and distributed amongst eight New Hampshire Towns. Poplin received four kegs. This powder was hidden at Zacheus Clough's "Hook-In-The-River Hotel" at 125 South Road. The capture of Fort William & Mary is considered the first military action of the American Revolution. Poplin sent over 108 soldiers into the Revolutionary War between 1775 and 1783. John Leavitt and (possibly John Knowles) were the only known casualties of the war from Poplin.

Between 1744 and 1750, part of present day Fremont and Brentwood was known as "Keeneborough" which was a Town established illegally by Governor Benning Wentworth with full Town rights and privileges. Keeneborough separated from Brentwood because two factions could not agree on a suitable location for a new Meeting House. The two Towns finally re-united on July 30, 1750.

Fremont is unique in that it was the only Town in Rockingham County that never established a Congregational Church or settled a Congregational minister at Town expense before the Toleration Act was passed in New Hampshire in 1819.

Establishing a Congregational Church and settling a Congregational minister were both requirements once a New Hampshire Town became incorporated.

Fremont, after an unprecedented 36 years after becoming an incorporated Town, finally built its first meeting house in 1800. This unique twin-porch meeting house now remains one of only two 18<sup>th</sup> Century twin-porch meeting houses still standing in the United States. The porches were built at each end of the main building to contain stairwells to the upstairs gallery. The square box pews, choir stall, and impressive goblet-style high pulpit are all beautiful to behold. This impressive building stands as a noble monument to the pioneers who helped shape the Town.

During the Civil War (1861-1865) Fremont sent 99 soldiers to fight to preserve the Union of which twenty-two soldiers died in that noble cause. After the Civil War, small industry and businesses began to settle in Fremont. In 1874 the Spaulding & Frost Barrel Cooperage was established within the village. It thrived and gradually grew to become the oldest and largest white-pine cooperage in the world until closing in 1999 after 125 years of operation. The largest brickyard in New Hampshire was established on Martin Road in 1885. Five to seven million bricks were produced annually at the Fellows Brickyard between 1885 and 1890. The brickyard village consisting of several buildings burned in 1912 in the largest fire in Fremont's history. Shoes, furniture, farming, lumbering, palm leaf hats, carriage-making, gun-making, dairy farms, and poultry-raising have all played important roles in Fremont's economic heritage.

Fremont has had a long tradition of self-sufficiency and farsighted planning. The first school supervisory union in New Hampshire was formed by Fremont, Salem and Hampstead in 1900. Miss Clara Smith opened and operated Fremont's first (and only) High School as early as September 1863. The first tax map dates to 1931, the municipal budget plan from the 1930's, and the first planning board in 1936. When the Union Church and Spaulding & Frost Cooperage burned in a spectacular fire on June 17, 1921, a Community Club was formed to

raise money to rebuild the church. The Townspeople rallied and encouraged the cooperage owners to rebuild the cooperage, which was completed in 1922. When the Cooperage burned again on December 6, 1973, a group of local citizens formed the Fremont Development Corporation and with purchases of stock by numerous Townspeople, more than enough funds were secured to gain the support of the federal Small Business Administration so the new barrel factory was quickly back in operation by late summer 1974.

## **II. HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

Until the 1870's, Fremont population never exceeded six hundred (600) residents. This modest population level and the scattered location of surviving 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival architecture indicate that Fremont was primarily a rural and agricultural community.

Fremont was a Town of modest, self-sufficient farms; the Vernacular architecture is very low key, much in keeping with other small rural New Hampshire communities.

The rare outstanding examples of architecture in Fremont include the 1800 Meeting House; the 1858 "Wedding House; at 252 Main Street; " the 1891 Early Learning School at 300 Main Street (formerly Gagnon's Barbershop); the 1838 Elisha Scribner Brick House at 89 Scribner Road; the 1874 Perley Robinson (now Rowell House) at 38 Sandown Road, and the ca. 1749-1760 John Scribner House (now Danley residence) at 92 Scribner Road; are probably the finest examples of Georgian, Federal, Gothic, Greek and Victorian architecture in Fremont.

The population climbed steadily during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, peaking at 749 residents in 1900. Assuming that many 19<sup>th</sup> century Fremont residents migrated south and west during this time period, as did their counterparts across New Hampshire, the Town's increase in population can be explained by the emergence of prosperous local shoe, brick, furniture, wooden box, and barrel manufacturing. In fact, the vast majority of residences in the Town center are in the Italianate, Queen Anne and Greek Revival styles, dating to the last three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a steady decline in population, apparently reflecting a decline in local manufacturing as businesses continued to move south and west in search of cheaper materials. During this period, agriculture was also in decline. Few buildings were erected in Fremont during this time frame.

Fremont has seen a more than 100% increase in population during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reaching thirty five hundred and ten (3,510) residents by the year 2000. In 2007, Fremont's population had reached roughly forth two hundred (4,200) residents and by the end of 2008 it had reached roughly forty four hundred (4,400) residents. Fremont, like much of southern New Hampshire, has fast become a bedroom community for the industrial prosperity of the Merrimack Valley. Most of the Town's prime farmland has reverted back to forest land and the number of active farming operations has dwindled significantly. The recent growth in residential development gives the Town an increasingly suburban character.

The following is a list Fremont's Historic Resources with an asterisk marking those which are noted on the Historic Resources Map that is part of The Fremont Natural Resource Inventory Map Set.

## **FREMONT, NH HISTORIC SITES**

(As shown on the NRI Historic Resources Map)

Compiled by Matthew E. Thomas 2008

1.)	1883 Gagnon Family Cemetery - 209 Main St. – Lot 3-151
2.)	Gorden / Diptheria Cemetery – 236 Main St. – Lot 3-22
3.)	Rockrimmon Granite Quarry – Lot 3-15-1
4.)	Benjamin Whittier Tavern built ca. 1759-1765 239 Main St. – Lot 3-147
5.)	Black Rocks Millsite built 1726/27 Lot 3-147
6.)	Two Ancient “Poplin Squire” Trees – over 250 years old - Lot 3-170
7.)	1858 Granville Wood’s “Wedding House” – 252 Main St. – Lot 3-25
8.)	John Prescott Lovering’s Inn / True’s Hotel – 272 Main St. – Lot 3-26
9.)	Liberty Square (Site of 1861 Civil War Riot) intersection Main St. & Sandown Rd.
10.)	1820 Liberty Square Market – 281 Main St. – Lot 3-203
11.)	Black Rocks Village & Rocks Bridge – intersection Sandown Rd. & Main St.
12.)	1894 Fremont Public Library Building – 282 Main St. – Lot 3-28
13.)	ca. 1840 Senator Isaiah L. Robinson House – 287 Main St. – Lot 3-145
14.)	Andrew Brown’s 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1899 Gun Shop – 291 Main St. – Lot 3-144
15.)	Site of 1856 Democratic Hall & 1909 Fremont Bandstand – 288 Main St. – Lot 3-29
16.)	1911 tin-sided Fremont Town Hall – 295 Main St. – Lot 3-143
17.)	John Week’s Tavern – built ca. 1760 – 299 Main St. – 3-142
18.)	1910 Cook Villa Tourist House – 292 Main St. – Lot 3-30
19.)	1910 Cook & True’s Store – 296 Main St. – Lot 3-31
20.)	Eli Gagnon’s Store, Barbershop & Post Office – 300 Main St. – Lot 3-32
21.)	Former Spaulding & Frost Cooperage Site & 1922 Water Tower – 326 Main St. – Lot 3-37
22.)	1893 Hon. Stephen Frost House – 308 Main St. – Lot 3-34
23.)	Site of 1865 Union Church – 314 Main St. – Lot 3-25
24.)	1902 40# Cooperage Shop – 337 Main St. – Lot 3-135
25.)	John & Andrew Brown’s ca. 1845 Gun Shop – 390 Main St. – Lot 3-44
26.)	1925 Methodist Church – 408 Main St. – Lot 3-47
27.)	1895 Rocks District Grammar School House – 8 Beede Road – Lot 3-48
28.)	1851 Rocks District Primary School House – 16 Beede Road – Lot 3-49
29.)	1950 Ellis Central School – 432 Main St. – Lot 3-110
30.)	ca. 1765-1768 Dr. William Hardy’s Tavern – 454 Main St. – Lot 3-109
31.)	Site of 1802 Poplin Town Pound – 464 Main St. – Lot 3-108
32.)	1800 Poplin Twin-Porch Meeting House – 464 Main St. – Lot 3-108
33.)	1819 Fremont Village Cemetery – Main St. – Lot 2-1-5
34.)	1820 Methodist Parsonage – 481 Main St. – Lot 3-114
35.)	1878 Tramp House – 504 Main St. – Lot 2-9
36.)	ca. 1925 John Ellis Store & Gas Station – 528 Main St. – Lot 2-164-1
37.)	1897 Fremont Railroad Station – 564 Main St. – Lot 2-163-3
38.)	2002 Fremont Public Library – 7 Jackie Bernier Dr. – Lot 2-163
39.)	1925 Fremont Village Market – 6 Danville Rd. – Lot 2-44
40.)	Historic Red Paint Mines – Lot 2-151

41.)	Jackethole – 651 Main St. – Lot 2-58
42.)	Site of Ca. 1836-1840 Union Store – 848 Main St. – Lot 2-134
43.)	Bodge's 1789 Pottery Shop / Underground Railroad Stop – 855 Main St. – Lot 2-95
44.)	ca. 1813 Isaac Brown Cemetery – 910 Main St. – Lot 2-127
45.)	Copyhold / Pine District 1878 School House – 921 Main St. – Lot 2-100
46.)	Asa Woods ca. 1760 Tavern – 980 Main St. – Lot 2-118
47.)	ca. 1768 Moses Leavitt Cemetery – Lot 2-156-2
48.)	ca. 1725-1734 Copyhold Mill site – Mill Rd. – Lot 2-115
49.)	Site of 1959 B-52 Bomber Plane Crash – Lots 4-91 & 4-93
50.)	ca. 1758-1794 Smith Cemetery – 193 Danville Rd. – Lot 2-22-12
51.)	1859 Hooke Family Cemetery – 245 Danville Rd. – 2-23
52.)	Clough's Bridge – Danville Rd. near intersection of South Rd.
53.)	Site of 1753 Clough Saw Mill – 13 Clough's Crossing – Lot 2-29
54.)	Zacheus Clough Tavern ca. 1753-1757 – 125 South Rd. – Lot 2-18
55.)	ca. 1759 Hoyt-Currier Cemetery – South Rd. – Lot 1-71
56.)	1786 Hook / Southside District Schoolhouse – 239 South Rd. – Lot 1-78
57.)	1894 Hook / Southside District Schoolhouse – 253 South Rd. – Lot 1-79
58.)	Site of 1742 Garrison House – 252 Sandown Rd. – Lot 1-87
59.)	1748 Brown Homestead & Cider Mill – 235 Sandown Rd. – Lot 1-6
60.)	1819/20 Town Pound – Corner of Sandown Rd. & 5 Abbott Rd. – Lot 1-88-1
61.)	Site of 1853-1864 Town Poor House – 216 Sandown Rd. – Lot 1-89-3
62.)	Bog Bridges – Sandown Rd near Sandown Town line – Lot 1-52
63.)	Bog Meadows – South of 88 Chester Rd. – Lots 1-25 & 1-27
64.)	Camp Rock – 214 Chester Rd. – Lot 1-15
65.)	Bog Island Indian Cemetery – erroneously on map as Day's Island Lot 1-35
66.)	321 ft. high Whittier Hill & Mountain Pastures – near Raymond line – Lot 3-169
67.)	Glidden Hill – 91 Sandown Rd. – Lot 3-185
68.)	1908 Fremont Band House – 57 Sandown Rd. – Lot 3-184
69.)	Philip Pratt Memorial Park – next to Rocks Bridge on Sandown Rd. – Lot 3-202
70.)	Freewill Baptist Parsonage – 55 Beede Rd. – Lot 3-63-1
71.)	ca. 1750 Beede Cemetery – 245 Beede Rd. – Lot 5-72
72.)	Beede Family Shoeshop & Schoolhouse – 267 Beede Rd. – Lot 5-72-1-1
73.)	Woodman's Causeway (a.k.a. Sunken Casey) 364 Beede Rd. – Lot 5-72-2-2
74.)	ca. 1730-1760 Thomas Chase House – 456 Beede Rd. – Lot 5-37
75.)	Lyford's Boulder – Shirking Rd. – Lots 5-21 & 5-22
76.)	ca. 1746-52 Beede-Carr Saw Mill Site – 101 Leavitt Rd. – Lot 6-11-1-2
77.)	ca. 1777 Knowles-Chase-Carr-Leavitt Cemetery – Leavitt Rd. – Lot 6-11-1-7 (?)
78.)	Perley Robinson's 1825 Tailorshop – 106 North Rd. – Lot 6-18-1
79.)	1753 Josiah Robinson's Tavern – 85 North Rd. – Lot 6-47-3
80.)	Robinson City – 84, 85 & 106 North Rd. – Lot 6-47-3
81.)	Rum Hollow – 85 & 106 North Rd. – Lot 6-47-3
82.)	Ezekiel Robinson Tavern – 84 North Rd. – Lot 6-16
83.)	1848 Northside District Schoolhouse – 234 North Rd. – Lot 6-28
84.)	ca. 1750-1800 Mudgett Family Cemetery – Old Ridge Rd. – Lot 6-60
85.)	ca. 1790 Ingall's – Sleeper Cemetery – Martin Rd. – Lot 6-37
86.)	Site of Fellows Brickyard – Martin Road – Lot 6-34
87.)	ca. 1800 Sleeper-Ingalls Saw Mill – Off Martin Rd. – Lot 6-21

(See the 2004 hardcover Town of Fremont History Book for more information relative to the locations of structures of historical significance throughout Fremont.)

### **III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

According to the Division of Historical Resources within the NH Department of Cultural Affairs, there are two known archeological sites of significance in Fremont. These sites are described in more detail below.

The first archeological site was unearthed as part of the Route 101/51 highway realignment project which is still in process. The site is a cellar hole from an old colonial residence and a number of 19th century artifacts were discovered there. The site is located at the corner of Beede Hill Road and Shirkin Road. This site is shown on the Historic Resources Map as Site #AR-1.

The second archeological site is a small open pit which was used for red ocher mining up until the beginning of the twentieth century. Red ocher was used as an ingredient of red barn paint. The site is located at the northern end of Spruce Swamp, just east of the abandoned railroad tracks. This site is shown on the Historic Resources Map as Site #AR-2.

### **Recommendations**

1. In a Town whose economy once revolved around agriculture, little recognizable farmland remains. Particularly in the northeastern part of Town, the Zoning Ordinance should encourage agriculture and farming, or at least discourage standard residential tract development in favor of residential development techniques which encourage the retention of usable open space and the preservation of critical natural resources.
2. Most of Fremont's surviving historic buildings are either interspersed with newer buildings or scattered in the remote areas of Town. Should the citizens of Fremont wish to establish a historic district, the primarily Victorian Town center vicinity appears to be the only area to qualify for such a designation.