



Fairview Hotel, July 1971.

North Woodstock Main Street, 1906,
as seen from Sharon Hill.



Old Fairview Covered Bridge, one of
five in town, washed away in flood of
1938.



Fred Brown's History of Woodstock

The Pemigewasset River, named by the Indians of the region, was one of the principal routes used in travelling on raiding expeditions into Canada. Near the origin of this river is the town of Woodstock.

On Sept. 13, 1763 during the early settlement of New Hampshire, a group of thirty men, headed by Daniel Hayes, who was said to be seeking a dowry for his daughter, asked for a land grant to start a town to be called Peeling. This grant was to be seven square miles and to contain twenty five thousand acres of ninety equal shares. It was located east of Haverhill, the last township granted in this section of New Hampshire.

Peeling, as it was known, was not settled at that time because the

charter was said "Not to hold water" and on June 17, 1771 it was again granted to one Nathaniel Cushman of Lebanon, Connecticut and called Fairfield. This too was considered invalid, and a group of the original grantees headed by Eli Demerit received the grant from Governor Benning Wentworth.

Ten families moved into the grant. While the first known settlers were James McNorton and his family, (the falls south of town still bear his name) he moved away prior to the revolution.

One of the earliest settlements was on Mount Cilley which grew at one time to fourteen families, but is now spoken of as the "Deserted Village". Another early settlement was located

on Gordon Hill. Some of the Gordons live up that way now. The Gordon Brothers were mill men and built a sawmill on the side of the Moosilauke branch of the Pemigewasset River. The Section west of the village of North Woodstock was known as Pondfield. Jacob Demerit, a relative of Eli Demerit, lives in this part of town.

The name Woodstock, as the story goes, came about after one Rev. Benjamin Ropes preached a day-long sermon lasting to around 4 P.M. in 1839 about the name Peeling and the fact that the town couldn't succeed under that name. The general court in 1940 passed an act changing the name of the town from Peeling to Woodstock.

(Continued on next page)

Old Fox-Baston sawmill on Eastman Brook.



As the town developed, a sawmill owned by Major Royal Jackman was built on the Jackman Brook at the head of Jackman Falls, and he moved into the Pondfield section.

Flax was grown for clothing and potatoes were raised for use in a local starch mill. Warren White and Richard Danford from Bristol built a tannery in March of 1852 and when the first building burned another replaced it in 1856. It too burned some thirty years later. The Vessey Saw Mill replaced it in 1908.

Farming, at one time a big indus-

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try, has long since left for "Greener pastures" and their locations have grown back to forests. The largest sawmill in New Hampshire in its time, on the site of the "Old Woodstock Covered Bridge," had a railroad which ran back to Livermore. The bridge burned in 1912.

The Pemigewasset Valley Railroad Company established a railroad in to North Woodstock in 1883. Earlier the Concord Stage Coach ran from Plymouth to the Profile House in the

Woodstock Covered Bridge. It spanned the Pemigewasset River for about 95 years until it burned in April of 1971.



summer, ending its run at Tuttle Tavern in the wintertime. This Stage also brought the mail from Concord. The drivers were a hardy lot.

The big business that has lasted over the years is that of accommodating the tourist trade. Among the larger hotels in the history of the town are The Alpine, Deer Park (the name derived from deer kept in the park nearby), The Russell House, Moun-
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tain Park House and The Fairview House. These latter two had their own railroad stations and post offices. The Three Rivers House, now the Adams Inn, is the only one remaining of these, and many motels and cabins now take care of the travelers. The location of the present Jack O'Lantern Motor Resort was once that of the Walker Mineral Spring and Tavern.

Woodstock, while small in population (910 people make their permanent home here), stands at the crossroad of the Valley. Here U.S. Route 3 intersects N.H. Route 112 and in 1974 Interstate Highway I-93 was opened over the length of the town. Woodstock people, far from being an isolated mountain town, are now linked to a main thoroughfare.

Among names of "Ye Olden Times" that are still with us are Sawyer, Brown, Smith, Gilman, and Baston. They have made their mark in town affairs over the years. □

