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THE NEW ENGLAND TAVERN
A GENERAL STUDY

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The conflicting view of taverns as held by eminent 18th century English and American gentlemen.

"There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."

Dr. Samuel Johnson

"Several county towns within my observation, have at least a dozen taverns and retailers. Here the time, the money, the health, and the modesty, of most that are young and of many old, are wasted; here diseases, vicious habits, bastards and legislators, are frequently begotten."

John Adams, May 30, 1760

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to provide our interpreters with broad background information on the New England tavern and its role in society. In a sense it is a continuation of an earlier comparative study of taverns completed for the National Park Service by Anna Coxe Toogood in 1974.

Although general in nature, a close study of this report and previous Park-sponsored reports related to the Ephraim Hartwell Tavern should provide Minute Man National Historical Park intrepreters with confidence in their ability to interpret the role of an 18th century New England tavern in the society of its day.

In compiling this report, this writer found a few sources not available to Anna Coxe Toogood at the time she completed her report. However, in regard to the interior of taverns and their furnishings, original documentation remains scarce. Unfortunately, many of the earlier secondary sources also lack documentation by modern standards of historiography. Nevertheless, the conjectural conclusions of these writers should be presented and considered for their worth.

The writer of this report is indebted to the generous assistance of various people including Jay Daley, Librarian at the Lincoln Public Library, Mrs. Marcia Morse, Curator of

Special Collections at the Concord Free Public Library, Mr. Howard Gambrill, Jr., Director of the Golden Ball Tavern, members of the Hartwell and Flint families, Fredrick Szarka, Chief of Interpretation of Minute Man National Historical Park, whose support during this time-consuming project was essential for its success, and to all previous historians whose pioneer efforts in this field aided me greatly.

Part I. The Tavern in Colonial Days

The house for common entertainment or tavern as it was best known in New England at the time of the American Revolution dates to the earliest days of the Puritan commonwealth in Massachusetts. It was usually located near the meeting house in order to provide food and drink to the churchgoers during the break between the Sunday morning and afternoon sermons. Inns were later built along heavily traveled roads and important road junctions, as travel increased in the later 17th and 18th centuries.

It should be noted that in 17th century New England the term inn usually indicated that lodgings were available as well as food and drink. The term tavern could denote more of a drinking establishment.[1] In 1693, Massachusetts passed a law that required "all innholders, taverners and common victuallers to furnish suitable provisions and lodgings for the refreshment and entertainment of strangers and travelers."[2] After 1693, the words inn and tavern denote public establishments with a legal mandate to provide similar service. Earlier both the term, ordinary and house of common entertainment, were in use in New England.

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[1]Elise Lathrop, Early American Inns and Taverns, Robert M. BcBride & Co., New York, 1926, p. 19.

[2]Anna Coxe Toogood, A Comparative Study: Ephraim Hartwell Tavern, Minute Man National Historical Park, Massachusetts, Denver Service Center, Denver, 1974, p. 7.

In old England throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the term tavern denoted a public house or taproom where wine was retailed. The words inn or ordinary implied that food and lodgings were also available as well as drink.[3] In Pennsylvania, the term inn was used most frequently, while in the southern colonies the term ordinary was most popular. According to Elise Lathrop, it was not until after the Revolution that the terms hotel or house were in general use.[4] Why the term tavern evolved in New England and New York while the terms inn and ordinary were more frequently used in other colonies is not clear.

In addition to providing travelers with food, drink and lodgings, the inns and taverns in the early New England towns became important community centers. Court sessions were often held in taverns. People having business before the court ate and often lodged in the tavern. The tavern was a place where people could go to learn of the most recent news and local gossip. Frequently, the important political issues of the day were discussed in the tavern's barroom. Participation in these informal discussions often resulted in the formation of attitudes on various issues.

As noted earlier, the tavern serviced the needs of the churchgoers during the break between the morning and

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[3] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[4] Lathrop, p. VIII.

afternoon sermons. As the whipping post, stocks and gallows were usually located near the tavern, the tavern owner could usually count on an increase in business on days when public whippings and executions were held. The tavern proprietor could also count on an increase in business on the days that the local militia was trained. In many New England towns throughout the colonial period and well into the 19th century, the militia drilled on the green or common of the various towns. The common was often located in the center of the town near the meeting house and tavern. Following the militia drill, many of the men would visit the tavern for a few sociable drinks before going home.

The tavern played an important role in the life of a 17th or 18th century New England militiaman. As mentioned, it was a gathering place for his company for refreshment after training drills. Company elections were also held in the tavern where candidates for company rank often bought drinks for the company members assembled. Sometimes the tavern owner, or landlord as he was often called, ran for a ranking position in the local militia company. From time to time, captains of trained bands or militia companies, who were also tavernkeepers, have been charged with holding training drills for the purpose of drawing business to their establishment.[5] One militia captain fined his men for

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[5]Edward Field, The Colonial Tavern, Preston and Rounds, Providence, 1897, p. 122.

missing train band drills. This captain was also a tavern-keeper who recorded the fines in his tavern account book beside his men's drinking debts.[6]

Taverns could also be important during 17th and 18th century military campaigns in New England. Troops deployed on long marches in the countryside often stopped at taverns for food and drink. They frequently rested in or about the tavern and its grounds. Sometimes the regimental officers would utilize taverns as temporary headquarters for operations in the area. After battles, taverns were frequently used as temporary hospitals. The friendly tavernkeeper could provide information on the terrain in his community and the movements of any suspicious strangers who might be enemy spies. During the Revolutionary War period, tavern owners often knew who was for the king and who was for the patriot cause. A few taverns, like the Golden Ball Tavern in Weston, Massachusetts, gained in reputation as Tory operated. As a result, the Golden Ball was damaged by an angry mob of area citizens in the spring of 1774.[7]

Taverns were also utilized by town officials, such as the selectmen, to hold their meetings in. During the winter, especially, the selectmen served the town without pay;

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[6]Ibid., p. 112.

[7]Howard Gambrill, Jr. and Charles Hambrick-Stowe, The Tavern and the Tory: The Story of the Golden Ball Tavern, Stone Reprographics, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977.

however, some towns allowed them to charge meals and limited alcoholic refreshment in the tavern at the town's expense while they were meeting to discuss the town's business.

On town meeting days, the tavern nearest to the meeting house usually saw an increase in business. In 17th century New England the local militia's training days were usually held on Saturday. Sometimes town meetings were called on the same day as the militia training.[8] On such days taverns would be busier than usual.

In early New England county inns and taverns were often small two-story wood frame structures featuring four rooms and a rear lean-to addition. The rear lean-to could be divided into three or more rooms including a kitchen located behind the massive center chimney. In this type of structure the owner could designate three rooms for the tavern operation. Perhaps the downstairs room to the left of the center entrance would be used for the barroom. The room in the lean-to adjoining the barroom could be used as a taproom and storage. More storage would be available in the basement. The guests bedchamber would be located on the second floor directly above the barroom. This room could be partitioned to provide overnight guests with more privacy. The tavern owner and his family could live in the rooms not utilized for the tavern operation. This would leave them

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[8]Field, p. 110.

the two rooms to the right of the central chimney and one room in the rear lean-to on the first floor. The kitchen would be utilized for both the needs of the tavern operation and the owner's family. The garret space under the sloping lean-to roof could be utilized as storage. More rooms could be added on to this structure as the need developed over the years.

A number of outbuildings would be located near the tavern which were intrinsic to the tavern operation and the needs of the tavern owner's family. These buildings might include the barn, stables for horses, chicken house, swine shed, woodshed and various storage sheds. One would probably see various fenced-in pens and gates as well as piles of wood stacked in the open or under shed structures with post supports and no walls. One might also see a corn crib and various wooden feeding troughs and pens.[9]

The innkeeper might choose to grow herbs, vegetables and fruit on the tavern grounds. Herbs and vegetables could be planted separately or combined in the kitchen garden. Herbs that were grown included lavender and rosemary for making the linen closet fragrant; thyme, tarragon and chives for giving flavor to the salads; rue, sage and savory for use on vegetables; and mint for use with meat and drinks.

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[9]Russell Hawes Kettell, Editor, Early American Rooms The Southworth-Anthoensen Press, Portland, Maine, 1936, p. 85.

The garden could also produce dill for fish sauces and pickles, anise for pastries and maybe balm and coriander for flavoring liqueurs. Other herbs grown might include stalks of costmary, whose broad fragrant leaves could serve as markers for designated passages in the Scriptures. Costmary if often referred to as Bible Leaf.[10]

If the tavern had a kitchen garden, it probably varied in size depending on available space and the needs of the particular tavern. It could be fenced in to keep out domestic animals. A kitchen garden would be a good place to grow vegetables that did not require large scale fields. These vegetables might include leeks, onions, garlic, melons, English gourds, radishes, carrots, cabbages and artichokes. Field crops such as maize, beans and pumpkins were grown at a greater distance from the tavern.[11] As prior noted, both herbs and vegetables were often grown together in the kitchen garden. Herbs were also planted near the back door of many colonial dwellings.

It was not unusual to find fruit trees growing on the grounds of New England taverns. Such trees as apple, pear, peach, plum and cherry all grew in New England.

In addition to herbs, vegetables and fruits, certain plants and shrubs might be found on the grounds of a

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[10] Ibid., p. 85.

[11] Rudy F. Favretti and Gordon F. DeWolf, Colonial Gardens, Barre Publishers, Barre, Massachusetts, 1972, p. 10.

New England tavern in colonial days. These flowers could include lilacs, cinnamon, damask, and Gallica roses. The latter rose was also known as "apothecary" rose, a type of rose which has been found near the entrance doorways of many a old house long ago burned or deserted.[12]

Unlike the balanced gardens of the New York Dutch or the parterre gardens of the Boston merchants, rural colonial New England gardens were unsymmetrical. Plants were located in no particular order. Short plants were often obscured by tall plants. Flowers, herbs and vegetables were frequently mixed in the same beds.[13]

Garden walks were usually tamped soil or sometimes gravel. Occasionally, crushed clamshells were spread on the walk's surface. From these walks, a person could weed, water, gather the harvest or pass to another garden bed or outbuilding.

In rural New England, early crops such as peas, lettuce, radishes, carrots, beets and onions were often planted in the garden with the best southern exposure. Plants like beans were planted later when the soil had warmed up. Consequently, they did not require a garden with a southern exposure. On the other hand, flowers were often grown in the front dooryard garden where they could be viewed from the

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[12]Kettell, p. 85.

[13]Favretti and DeWolf, pp. 11-12.

front chambers and by people approaching the front entrance. Dooryard gardens were popular in the 17th and 18th centuries and did not peak in popularity until after the Revolution.[14]

It is unlikely that the early established taverns near the meeting house in the virtual center of the old New England towns had as much grounds as the taverns that were later established along the country roads a good distance from the town center. In the latter case, the country road taverns were often farmhouses prior to the farmer's application for the all important tavern license. The owner of such a farm/tavern establishment would have little trouble feeding his guests with products grown or raised right on his nearby farm. On the other hand, the innkeeper with limited space in the town center, would be hard pressed to satisfy the needs of his guests from a small kitchen garden. Unless he owned a farm in addition to his tavern, the "town center" tavern owner would have to purchase most of his vegetables, eggs, meats and poultry from area farmers. Unless he owned a woodlot, he would also be dependent on area farmers to supply him with fuel for the long winters and daily cooking fires. The "town center" innkeeper could usually expect a more diversified and hopefully more consistent business which from his point of view would offset any disadvantages his lack of land created.

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[14] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

It should be stressed that the prime location for most taverns in the small towns of 17th and 18th century New England was in the "center" near the meeting house and training field or common. These taverns were expanded as the town and business grew. Sometimes they were replaced with new and larger structures. At the time of the American Revolution, many taverns were among the most substantial and impressive structures of New England. These taverns were built so well that many of them are still standing today.

The spread of inn-type establishments in Massachusetts was early encouraged by the General Court. In 1656, the General Court passed an Act which made the towns subject to a fine for not maintaining an ordinary. For example, Concord was fined in 1660 for not having a "common house of entertainment."[15] Apparently, these fines were necessary because the more remote towns could not support a full-service tavern in the mid-17th century. Profits in the tavern business were limited in the early days of the colony's development due to limited travel. Doubtless, the restrictive laws which discouraged excessive public drinking also held tavern profits down. In time, as the colony grew, travel along the coastal and interior roads in Massachusetts increased as did also the need for full-service taverns. To

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[15]Field, pp. 12-13.

fill this need, many new taverns were opened along the wayside and at the junctions of country roads.

In the early Puritan Commonwealth in New England, men, women and children had formed the habit of drinking alcoholic beverages with their meals. This was a habit brought over from England. As moderate drinking was deemed socially acceptable, owning a tavern was also socially acceptable. In fact, in the early days of the colony, men of the highest standing in the community often applied for licenses to operate taverns. In addition to the profits derived from the operation of their taverns, many tavern owners benefited politically from the many social contacts they made in their business. It was not unusual to find a prosperous tavern owner also serving as an officer in the local militia company and a member of his town's selectmen. No wonder that ambitious young men associated tavern ownership with the successful life.

As time went on, the number of taverns in the more settled areas of Massachusetts greatly increased, it became more profitable to operate a tavern. In 1647, applications for tavern licenses had become so numerous and bothersome that the General Court passed an act delegating its authority to

grant tavern licenses to the county courts or the Court of Assistants.[16]

By 1675, taverns had become so numerous that Cotton Mather, a leading clergyman of the day, is said to have remarked that every other house in Boston was one of "these public houses.[17] Apparently by the 1690's, persons of questionable character were operating taverns in Massachusetts. In a letter to the Salem Court on December 26, 1696, Nathaniel Saltonstall of Haverhill protested the granting of any more tavern licenses in Salisbury and Haverhill on the grounds that there were already enough taverns. He also stated that the characters of the prospective owners were lacking and that taverns contributed to poverty.[18] There is evidence that one's reputation was not enhanced by the sale of alcoholic beverages. On September 20, 1721, Judge Sewall wrote "Thomas Hale was made a justice. I opposed it, because there are five in Newbury already, and he had lately kept an ordinary and sold rum.[19]

As the 18th century wore on, taverns remained numerous in Massachusetts. A close observer of the tavern scene,

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[16]Allan Forbes and Ralph M. Eastman, Taverns and Stagecoaches of New England, Vol. II, The Rand Press, Boston, 1954, p. 13.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Field, pp. 32-36.

[19]Ibid., p. 37.

John Adams remarked in his diary on May 30, 1760, "Several county towns within my observation, have at least a dozen taverns and retailers. Here the time, the money, the health, and the modesty, of most that are young and of many old, are wasted; here diseases, vicious habits, bastards and legislators are frequently begotten."[20] It should be noted that John Adams viewed the tavern as a clear threat to the communities' welfare and to representative government. In the early 1760's, Adams wrote "The number of these houses have been lately so much augmented and the fortunes of their owners so much increased, that an artful man has little else to do but secure the favor of taverners, in order to secure the suffrages of the rabble that attend these houses, which in many towns within my observation makes a very large, perhaps the largest number of voters."[21] Adams blamed the local selectmen for granting too many tavern licenses to improper persons. He also thought that too many tavern licenses had been granted. For in the mind of John Adams, the only justification for a tavern's existence was for "the accommodation of strangers, and perhaps, of town inhabitants on public occasions."[22]

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[20] Charles Francis Adams, Editor, The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States with A Life of the Author, Vol. II, Charles C. Little and James Brown, Boston, 1850, p. 85.

[21] Ibid., p. 112.

[22] Ibid., p. 84.

The General Court was aware for the need for tavern control long before John Adams came upon the scene. A careful study of relevant laws passed in Massachusetts between 1642 and 1757 indicates that the retail by drink operation was carefully regulated to prevent public intoxication. For example, by 1658 legislation was passed making the tavern owner subject to a fine if he allowed someone to become or remain intoxicated within the tavern or its grounds. This legislation reads as follows, "And no licensed person as aforesaid, shall suffer any to be drunk, or to drink excessively, viz. above half a pint of wine for one person at a time, or to continue tipling above the space of half an hour, or at unreasonable times, or after nine of the clock at night, in, or about any of their houses, or penalty of five shillings for every such offense.

And if any person licensed to sell wine or beer as aforesaid, shall conceal in his house any person that shall be found drunken, and shall not forthwith procure a constable to carry such drunken person before some magistrate or commissioner, and in the interim, the said vinter or drawer of beer, shall make stay of such persons till the constable shall come under the penalty of five pounds, for each default."[23]

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[23]Toogood, p. 28.

The law in this case clearly held the licensed operator responsible for the sobriety of his guests while they were in his establishment. It also provided the tavern operator with legal excuses for shutting off unruly patrons. On the other hand, the guest was also responsible for his individual conduct in the public establishment as the following indicates: "And every person found drunken, viz so as he be thereby bereaved or disabled in the use of his understanding, appearing in his speech or gesture, in any of the said houses or elsewhere, shall forfeit ten shillings, and for excessive drinking, three shillings six pence, and for tipling at unreasonable times, or after nine of the clock of night, five shillings for every offense in those particulars, being lawfully conducted thereof, and for want of payment, they shall be imprisoned till they pay, or be set in stocks one hour or more (in some open place) as the weather will permit not exceeding three hours."[24]

It is interesting to note that the stocks in the above cases were reserved in the magistrates option for those who were convicted and could not pay the fine. Apparently, those with money to pay fines did not have to worry about being confined to the stocks as a result of their excessive public drinking. Note also that the time a person could be held in the stocks was limited to three hours "as the

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[24]Ibid., pp. 28-29.

weather will permit." Clearly the Puritans believed that punishment in the form of public humiliation could serve as a determent to repeated violations. However, convicted third time offenders who could not pay their fines could be given up to ten "stripes" with the whip for violations of the drinking laws.[25]

Tavern owners could also be put into the stocks after conviction of one of the alcohol related laws if they did not have the money to pay their fines. They also could have their tavern license revoked for second offenses of the same nature. This license could not be granted for periods of over a year. It had to be renewed each year and was subject to review at that time.

Apparently public drunkenness in the taverns was becoming a problem in the 1600's as a number of laws were passed during this period that were designed to separate the drunkard from his drink. In order to combat the "sin of drunkenness," the General Court of Massachusetts in 1670 passed a law giving the selectman of the various towns the responsibility to see that frequent drunks were banned from the public taverns. Keepers of public houses could be fined as much as 20 shillings for serving a person who was "noted" as a drunkard by the selectmen of his town.

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[25]Ibid., p. 30.

By the early 1690's the General Court found it necessary to pass legislation providing penalties for gambling in the Massachusetts licensed public houses. Under the law it was illegal to play dice, cards, bowls, shuffleboard, and billiards in the inns and taverns of that period. A guest in a tavern could be fined six shillings and eight pence if he was convicted on a gaming charge. On the other hand, in order to stay out of jail, a tavernkeeper convicted on a gaming violation had to pay a fine of 40 shillings for every such offense.

The Massachusetts General Court in the years from 1660 to the end of the 17th century passed a considerable body of laws regulating public drinking and behavior in taverns, inns and other public houses of entertainment. However, the earlier law of 1647 whereby the General Court delegated its power to license taverns to the counties is most significant in that it eventually evolved into a system whereby the selectmen of the individual towns would in fact control the issuances of tavern licenses. The local control of the issuances of tavern licenses gave to the selectmen a power which they have sometimes abused. In complaining about the multiplication of public houses in 1761, John Adams said that "some selectmen are induced by a foolish complaisance, and others by designs of ambition, to give their approbation

to too many persons who are improper, and perhaps, too many that are proper for that trust."[26]

Puritan leadership and thought dominated the early years of Massachusetts development. As the 17th century progressed, however, the leaders of the Commonwealth became alarmed at what they considered to be a departure from the Puritan spirit and values. In reality, according to Thomas Wertenbaker, the old order was losing ground to the younger generation who did not display the same religious zeal as the founders of the bible commonwealth. Within 50 years of its settlement, Massachusetts ministers were complaining of the "degeneracy of times, the laxity of the new generation, and the decay of religion."[27] In response to the challenge to Puritan values, the General Court in the 1660's and again in the 1690's enacted legislation designed to restrict tavern behaviour to an earlier and more demanding standard. This legislation failed to achieve any lasting results.

As the population in Massachusetts grew in the 18th century, the numbers of taverns also increased, and although Puritan ideals would still influence the thoughts and conduct of many, the minds of many active and able men turned to secular thoughts and affairs of trade. A new class was

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[26] C. F. Adams, p. 113.

[27] Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, The Puritan Oligardy, Charles Scribners Sons, New York, 1947, p. 76.

emerging in the province previously dominated by the Puritan agriculturist; this new class was the merchant involved in maritime trade. New England rum was a staple of this trade, and it flowed freely in the rapidly multiplying taverns of Massachusetts and elsewhere.

In 1721 in order to reduce the debt of the province of the Massachusetts Bay, the General Court enacted legislation which granted the government an excise upon "all brandy, rum and other spirits distilled, and upon all wine whatsoever, sold by retail in this province, to be raised, levied, collected and paid, by and upon every taverner, innholder, common victualler and retailer within each county."[28] This act appeared to be a temporary expedient to ameliorate the province's financial condition as it was limited to five years. However, by the 1750's, the province was deeply involved in the regulation of the large liquor industry. In a study of laws passed in 1756 and 1757, it is clear that the province intended to get its share of profit from the flow of rum within its many taverns. Very detailed legislation was passed in three years insuring the government a revenue from license fees and excises. Only one witness was required to convict a person of selling strong drink without a license providing that witness was acceptable to the court or justice before whom the trial was heard. It is

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[28]Toogood, p. 44.

clear that the province did not wish to lose any revenue to the unlicensed retailor of tax free drink. To insure that the province received all the taxes it could legally collect, the province allowed the excise to be paid to "the farmers of excise, or his deputy."[29] Licensed retailors had to pay the before-noted officials fourpence for every gallon of rum and sixpence for every gallon of wine that they sold in the province.

In addition to the usual distillers, exporters and retailers of liquor in 1757, we can see the province in Massachusetts Bay and its tax gathering officials all deriving a significant or partial income from "demon rum." If oil is the lubricant 20th century New England runs on, perhaps a good case can be made for saying that rum was the lubricant which propelled the economy of 18th century New England. Rum, of course, was the New England staple, which combined with slaves from Africa and molasses from the West Indies made up the infamous "triangle" trade of the colonial period.

The class in power in the mid-18th century appears to have given more concern to regulating the business end of the liquor trade so that the government could get its share of the profits than the regulation of human behavior in taverns and inns. Perhaps little new legislation was needed

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[29] Ibid., p. 52.

as the earlier Puritan oligarchy had passed its share of restrictive legislation covering drinking, gambling and other activities in taverns. Looking back today, however, it is doubtful if all taverns abided by the strict drinking laws that were still on the books upon the eve of the American Revolution. If, John Adams, the arch critic of the later 18th century New England tavern can be believed, tavern society by the eve of the American Revolution presented a spectable the early Puritan founders would find to be scandalous in the least. In any event, by 1775 taverns were numerous in the land of the Yankee, rum flowed in most all of them, and men talked revolution in some of them.

Part II. The Revolutionary Era Tavern

The tavern was a well established institution in King George's province in the Massachusetts Bay by 1775. In the early days of the 17th century, taverns were built in central locations near the meeting houses in the small Puritan towns. By 1775 many taverns were still centrally located, but a great number had been built in other good locations. For example, taverns were often found outside the town at the junctions of two country roads. Other taverns were found along the "market" roads about half way between two towns. These market road taverns often serviced the needs of the many drovers who drove their flocks and herds along the road toward large market towns such as Boston, Salem and Newburyport.

The Munroe Tavern in Lexington is a good example of a tavern which serviced the needs of the 18th and 19th century drover. Located not far from Lexington Center along the old stage route from New Hampshire to Charlestown, the Munroe Tavern during its peak in the early 19th century could stable one hundred horses in its barns and graze two or three hundred head of cattle on the tavern grounds. The Munroe Tavern during this period also maintained pens for the sheep

and turkeys that were driven along the road to the Boston market.[30]

The Munroe Tavern must have been a busy place in the days just prior to the Revolutionary War. First built by William Munroe in 1696, the Munroe Tavern had a long addition added on to it just prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution. The landlord maintained a store on the first floor and above was a dancehall with a partition which would be raised or lowered as necessary. Rows of beds were set up in the dancehall to accommodate the many drovers who patronized the tavern in great numbers. The wing containing the dancehall was later taken down.[31]

William Munroe, the proprietor of the Munroe Tavern in 1775 was also an orderly Sergeant in Captain John Parker's Lexington militia company. As noted earlier in this report, many of the innkeepers were also officers or noncommissioned officers in their local militia companies. During the withdrawal of British troops from Lexington on April 19, 1775, Lord Percy used Munroe Tavern as a temporary field hospital and headquarters. Through the Revolutionary War, both the British and Americans would frequently utilize taverns as temporary field headquarters or hospitals.

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[30] Lathrop, p. 79.

[31] Ibid.

The Hartwell Tavern in Lincoln, Massachusetts, was also owned by a family with a long-time connection with the local militia establishment. In 1775 the Hartwell Tavern was owned by sixty-eight-year-old Ephraim Hartwell who in his younger day had served as a cornet in the local militia. Ephraim's twenty-eight-year-old son, John, who lived with his parents in the tavern, was a sergeant in Captain William Smith's Lincoln Minute Man Company. Both Ephraim and John were descended from William Hartwell who had served proudly in the mounted militia troops of his day.

Not all public establishments in 1775 were associated with the Whig or patriot cause. The British Coffee House was a place where loyalists met frequently. It was in the British Coffee House that the brilliant, but often unstable patriot James Otis was severely beaten to the floor by his political opponents. The Golden Ball Tavern in Weston is another tavern associated with Tory ownership. In late February of 1775, two British officers, Captain Brown and Ensign DeBernier, spent an evening at the Golden Ball where they were well treated by the landlord, Isaac Jones. Brown and DeBerniere, who were on an undercover scouting mission for General Gage, later wrote that the tea-serving Jones was a "friend to government."[32] Prior to the Revolution, Jones had held the rank of captain-lieutenant in his cousin's

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[32]Gambrill and Hambrick-Stowe, p. 23.

militia company. Issac Jones was eventually able to live down his Tory reputation and regain the trust of his fellow citizens in Weston.

The Golden Ball Tavern was constructed in 1768 and is a beautifully proportioned example of Georgian architecture.[33] Built on Weston's main street, the Golden Ball Tavern remains today as an impressive survivor of the colonial period.

Although there were some Tory leaning tavern owners, the majority of Massachusetts tavern owners probably reflected the mood of their patrons, which in Eastern Massachusetts was Whig. In the critical days prior to the Revolution, tavern meetings played a large role in Massachusetts politics. In fact, political clubs such as the Caucus Club, the Merchants' Society and the Sons of Liberty held their meetings in taverns.

Samuel Adams became very influential in the Caucus Club, an organization consisting mainly of merchants and working men. This club often supported Adams in his political struggles. The Caucus Club eventually held its meetings in the Green Dragon Tavern in Boston. James Otis was also influential in the Caucus Club as was Doctor Joseph Warren. Another member of this powerful political organization was Paul Revere who attended meetings at the Green Dragon Tavern.

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[33] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

In reference to his meetings at the Green Dragon, Revere wrote: "In the fall of 1774 and winter of 1775 I was one of upwards of thirty, chiefly mechanics who formed ourselves into a committee for the purpose of watching the movements of the British soldiers and gaining every intelligence of the movements of the Tories. We held our meetings at the Green Dragon Tavern."[34]

The Merchants Society, as the name implies, included many merchants among its members. However, the club was not limited to merchants. Gentlemen of very high social rank of any political opinion could belong. The Merchants Society also included army and naval officers, lawyers and crown officers.[35] This club held its meetings in the British Coffee House which later changed its name to the American Coffee House. James Otis was perhaps the most outspoken political figure of the Merchants Society. As politics became heated in the turbulent days prior to the Revolution, the Whig faction of the Merchants Society broke away and formed the Whig Club. This club held its meetings in the Bunch of Grapes Tavern which was located at the head of Long Wharf in Boston. The Whigs of this club corresponded with leading Whigs in England such as Wilkes, Saville, Barre

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[34]Field, p. 260.

[35]Samuel Adams Drake and Walter K. Watkins, Old Boston Taverns and Tavern Clubs, W. A. Butterfield, Boston, 1917, p. 38.

and Sawbridge. Doctor Benjamin Church was a member of the Whig Club as was the Salem patriot, Richard Derby.[36]

John Adams writing in his diary on August 14, 1769, described a gathering of about 350 members of the Sons of Liberty at Robinson's Tavern in Dorchester. Adams wrote in part, "Otis and Adams (Sam) are politic in promoting these festivals; for they tinge the minds of the people, they impregnate them with the sentiments of liberty, they render the people fond of their leaders in the cause, and adverse and bitter against all opposers. To the honor of the Sons, I did not see one person intoxicated or near it."[37] According to Adams' diary account, two tables were set up in an open field near a barn under an awning of sailcloth to accommodate the 350 Sons of Liberty who gathered for dinner at Robinson's Tavern. In Boston the Sons of Liberty met regularly in the counting-room of Chase and Speakman's distillery near the Liberty Tree.

In addition to the three groups I have mentioned, there were other private organizations who played an active role in Massachusetts politics in the critical years prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution. These groups would include the Masons and such temporary groups as the

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[36] Ibid., p. 39.

[37] C. F. Adams, p. 218.

Mohawks.[38] The various committees of correspondence that were formed in Boston and numerous Massachusetts towns were also active. These groups would often hold their meetings in taverns where important political plans could be made.

Politicians, such as Samuel Adams and James Otis, knew the political importance of gaining influence within the clubs and private organizations. By the mid-1760's, Sam Adams had become a major figure in the Caucus Club. He had also became a link between the mechanics and workmen in the Caucus Club and the higher placed individuals in the Merchants' Society.[39] Adams became friendly with James Otis, who was well known within the Merchants' Club. Otis also gained recognition at this time because of his vocal opposition to crown policies at the Boston Town Meeting.

In order to gain political influence, both Sam Adams and James Otis had to meet people. They went to the taverns of Boston because that is where politically minded people congregated. It has been said of Adams that after an evening of political discussion in the tavern, he would often sit up in his room in the small hours of the evening writing in opposition to the Crown regime in Boston. Otis,

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[38]Benjamin Woods Labaree, The Boston Tea Party, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964, p. 143.

[39]John R. Galvin, Three Men of Boston, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1776, p. 37.

of course, received the blow to his head which he probably never fully recovered in a Boston tavern.

One may wonder what late 18th century people saw in taverns that made them so popular. Many, of course, were attracted by the alcohol. New Englanders liked rum and drinks with a rum base. A drink called flip was popular at the time of the American Revolution. The Buckman Tavern in Lexington, Massachusetts, made flip in the following manner: Fill a quart mug or cup 3/4 full of bitter beer. Add four tablespoons of cream and sugar mixed. Add one gill of rum or gin. Plunge a hot iron in this mixture to warm it.[40]

The loggerhead or flip-dog as it was sometimes called, stood or hung by the fireplace, so it would be available to warm drinks. After the loggerhead was plunged into the drink, the liquid would foam and give off a burnt bitter flavor.

Cider, beer and wine were also popular drinks at the time of the American Revolution. Fashionable New Englanders also loved to drink punch. For example, at the Rev. Joseph McKean's ordination in Beverly, Massachusetts, in 1785, the tavernkeeper presented a bill which included charges for "30 bowls of punch before the people went to

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[40]Lathrop, p. 84.

meeting and 44 bowls of punch while at dinner."[41] According to this bill, the 80 or so guests also drank 18 bottles of wine, 8 bowls of brandy and unspecified amount of Cherry Rum.

There is ample evidence that New Englander's consumed large quanities of alcohol at the time of the American Revolution. In writing of New England inhabitants Baron Reidesel wrote, "most of the males have a strong passion for strong drink, especially rum and other alcoholic beverages."[42] The following statement on the drinking habits of New Englanders is attributed to John Adams, "if the ancients drank wine as our people drink rum and cider, it is no wonder we hear of so many possessed with devils."[43]

Some taverns were noted for specific drinks. For example, May's Tavern in Canton, Massachusetts, and Danforth's Tavern at Cambridge were noted for flip. At Westborough, Brigham's Tavern featured mulled wine. The receipe for mulled wine is as follows: one quart Madeira boiling hot; 1/2 pint hot water; 6 eggs beaten light; sugar to taste."[44]

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[41] Alice Morse Earle, Customs and Fashions in Old New England, Chas E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermon, 1973, p. 177.

[42] Ibid., p. 178.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Field, pp. 136-137.

Beer, ale and gin drinks were also popular in New England taverns.

Probably the most common drink of people of all ages during the colonial period was apple cider. There were several variations to the popular drink. For example, egg cider, mulled cider, and cider royal. The price of cider varied according to the apple crop.[45]

People were also attracted to taverns by the food that was served in them. Tavern meals were served at the public table at scheduled times. Permanent guests and strangers would eat together at the same table. New England meals in the 18th century included a lot of salt pork and Indian corn. A variety of vegetables were grown for the table as well. These vegetables, however, were often served in hog's lard, butter or fat. Puddings were often served with dinner. Yankees liked to eat meat with each meal. Poultry or fresh game, if available, added variety to the salt port diet of many. Salt pork was popular in the days before refrigeration as hog meat was easy to preserve.

Although many went to the New England tavern to satisfy their basic needs for food, drink and shelter, others went to the tavern for reasons other than these. Doubtless, many went to mix among friends and to learn the latest news and gossip. Perhaps, others were lonely and hoped to meet new

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[45]Ibid., pp. 137-138.

friends in the tavern. It was not hard to strike up a conversation in the tavern, as 18th century Yankees were curious about strangers. Others stopped at taverns regularly in the course of their business. Tinkers, drovers and stage drivers being in the latter category. Sailors, of course, also frequented certain taverns in the coastal ports up and down the Atlantic seaboard.

In addition to the beforementioned patrons, men who by 18th century standards could be classified as "gentlemen" visited the taverns with some frequency. Many belonged to politically active clubs, societies, associations or lodges. Tradesmen and mechanics also formed organizations which met in taverns. Groups like the Caucus Club and the Merchants' Society were influential in the politics of Boston and Massachusetts. Some of the clubs like the Merchants' Society were "gentlemen" clubs and excluded members of the nonprofessional classes. Other clubs, such as the Caucus Club in Boston, consisted mainly of mechanics and tradesmen. In many cases the tavern was the meeting place for these private groups. Active Massachusetts political figures, such as James Otis, Samuel Adams, Dr. Joseph Warren, Wiliam Molineux and Paul Revere, attended frequent meetings in taverns prior to the outbreak of the Revolution. Even John Adams, the anti-tavern crusader of the early 1760's, spent evenings in taverns enjoying the company of his friends. In August of 1771, he wrote in his diary, "Spent

the evening at Cordis's, the British Coffee House, in the front room towards the Long Wharf where the Merchants' Club has met this twenty years."[46] In addition to John Adams, Samuel Adams, James Otis, John Pitts, William Molineaux and Josiah Quincy are recorded in Adams' diary as being present at the British Coffee House that evening. It should be noted that John Adams traveled a great deal in legal business in Massachusetts and elsewhere. His impressions of taverns and tavern keepers, "landlords" as he called them, was sometimes favorable. He seemed to like the Treadwells in Ipswich, Massachusetts. He was also impressed by Pease's in Enfield, Connecticut. Concerning the Pease establishment, Adams wrote: "Oated and drank tea at Pease's; a smart house and landlord truly; well dressed, with his ruffles, etc. and upon inquiry I found he was the great man of the town; their representative, etc. as well as tavern-keeper, and just returned from the General Assembly at Hartford."[47]

It should be noted that the society John Adams found in 18th century Massachusetts was on the whole sociable, although it had its crude and sometimes violent side. Adams enjoyed good conversations and gravitated toward genteel companions. Like most Yankee gentlemen, Adams was rank conscious as the old New England values were very strong in him.

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[46] C. F. Adams, p. 290.

[47] Ibid., p. 271.

Many of his tavern friends were older and better established than he was. The taverns they visited were probably of the better sort. Many of them had been constructed with ample rooms or had been added on to over the years. A room perhaps could be set aside at designated times so members of a club could hold their meetings. Perhaps several clubs used the same room to hold their meetings on different evenings. Politics was not always the main topic of "gentlemen" conversation. As the Revolution neared, however, concern for individual citizen rights increased. This political concern often found vocal expression in conversations that took place in both the tavern barroom and the tavern meeting room during the regular meetings of private clubs and organizations.

In appearance the taverns that flourished on the eve of the American Revolution differed greatly. In the country we still had numerous farmhouses that had been converted to taverns. These were common two-story, four-room, wood-frame structures with the center chimney and lean-to addition. Perhaps, an extra room or two had been added to the before described structure as the need for additional space developed. In many towns, however, more elaborate structures had been built. For example, in the 1760's, Issac Jones began construction on his Golden Ball tavern in the Georgian style. In 1777, a British prisoner of war made the following remarks concerning the Golden Ball: "In

Westown (Weston) we found the most convenient inn of any of the road, it is equal to most in England, the room commodious, provisions good, service attentive."[48]

The Golden Ball Tavern in Weston was constructed with four rooms on the first floor and four rooms on the second floor. One of the second floor rooms was designated as a meeting room. The accommodations of the Golden Ball were spacious compared to many of the earlier built farmhouses that had been converted to taverns.

It is safe to say that by 1775 a great number of substantial multi-roomed taverns had been built in New England and elsewhere in the colonies. Some of these more elaborate taverns were among the more substantial buildings of their communities. In addition to the main tavern building, many of these taverns maintained a large stable to accommodate the horses of their guests. To insure that no prospective guest missed sight of the tavern, each tavern was identified by its own unique sign.

In Roman times the bush was used as a symbol to denote a tavern or inn. The English continued to use this symbol to denote their public houses. The bush symbol was often seen on New England tavern signs. An old proverb "Good wine needs no bush" derived from the bush symbol. Prior to the

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[48]Gambrill and Hambrick-Stowe, p. 6.

[49]Field, p. 77.

Revolution many landlords displayed symbols of royalty on their tavern signs. Many inns and taverns were also names for leading military and naval figures of the British Empire. For example, the Admiral Vernon, the George, the King's Arms, the King's Head, the Marlborough Arms, and the Queen's Head were names of some of the Boston taverns.[50] After the Revolution, the signs displaying symbols of royalty and the heroes of Empire disappeared. Many were replaced by symbols of the new Republic. For example, the American Eagle was displayed on many post-Revolution tavern signs. Sometimes the eagle was shown holding the British lion in chains or with wings extended. Portraits of General Washington, Lafayette and other heroes of the Revolution also became popular subjects of tavern signs.[51]

The number and size of the rooms in the tavern of the 1775 period varied. By 1775, large three-story taverns had been built in prime locations. The larger rooms of these newer taverns offered guests more comfort than the smaller and older taverns. However, the custom of crowding many guests into one bed chamber persisted well past the Revolution. This was not a custom confined to New England. Many foreign travelers complained about the lack of privacy they found in American inns. The Duc de Liancourt, a French

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[50]Drake and Watkins, pp. 99, 124.

[51]Field, pp. 82-83.

traveler remarked, "Not only must all men travel in the same coach, dine at the same table, at the same time, on the same fare, but even their beds were in common, without distinction of persons."[52] One landlord in an inn along the main road from Philadelphia to Baltimore told the English traveler Weld that "I have no less than eleven beds in one room alone."[53] According to Henry Adams, this primative custom prevailed in taverns and inns from Massachusetts to Georgia and that "no American seemed to revolt against the tyrany of innkeepers."[54]

There is no question that the landlord was master of all he surveyed in the tavern. From his post behind the bar, the landlord could control the operation of his tavern. He had great discretionary powers. When he wanted to, he could suddenly enforce the old Puritan laws governing the sale of alcoholic drinks. On the other hand, he could see that the cups of his friends and more orderly guests were seldom empty. There is good evidence that many of the old Puritan laws, although still on the books, were not always enforced by the few constables of the day. When laws became out of

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[52]Henry Adams, The United States in 1800, Cornell University Press, Itaca, New York, 1960 (reprint of first six chapters of History of the United States of America during the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson, originally published in 1889), p. 32.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

step with social mores, selective enforcement will often occur. Americans at the time of our Revolution were a heavy drinking people. Later generations would view this as a social illness and opposition to the drinking habit would develop within the reform movement of the following century. However, in 1775, Madeira, rum, French brandy, gin, beer, ale, hard cider, and various modifications of the beforementioned liquids were drunk on a daily basis in New England and elsewhere in the colonies.

The alcohol behind the bar in the barroom was protected by a wooden portcullis which could be lowered from the ceiling at night. If the innkeeper desired, he would partially lower the portcullis and slide drinks underneath its protective barrier to his patrons. One wonders if this was done in the tougher taverns where patrons were less controllable. The marks of the portcullis can still be seen today on the ceilings of many old New England taverns long after the original barrier has gone.

Another feature of the tavern worth mentioning is the tip box. According to Edward Field, one of the accessories found in the great room of the tavern was a small box nailed to the wall. There was a slot or opening in the box wherein money could be dropped; on the face of the box the words "To Insure Promptness" were printed. Guests, of course, could drop in whatever they thought the service was worth or the least amount they thought they could get away with without

being considered cheap. According to Field, the "To Insure Promptness" box was eventually referred to as the T.I.P. box. The gratuity gradually became known as the tip.[55]

Not all transactions in the tavern were on a cash basis. Some innkeepers allowed their steady patrons to charge their drinks and meals. Officers of the town, county or province were also given credit in taverns when they were on official business. For example, the sheriff's men charged their meals, drinks and lodging when they were on duty in the escort of a prisoner from one jurisdiction to another. Later the innkeeper would submit his itemized bill to the county for payment. The innkeeper also submitted their bills to the towns, as town selectmen often charged the food and drink they consumed during the official selectmen's meetings they held in the tavern. The landlord kept track of these debts in the tavern's account book. This book was usually maintained near the bar or in a convenient quarter of the main room. According to Edward Field, the tavern account book was kept in a box-like desk with a slanting lid, which could be raised when desired. A quill box, ink horn and sand box also stood on this desk. These account books came in varying shapes and sizes. Some consisted of a few leaves of irregularly shaped paper stiched together. Other

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[55]Field, p. 97.

account books have been found in bound volumes of quality vellum.[56]

According to Edward Field, the "Great" room of the typical tavern was low studded with great beams running across the overhead. The bar with its wooden portcullis was usually in a corner. Sometimes a buffet was built into a corner. A large fireplace usually took up most of the wall space on one end of the room. The flip iron or loggerhead stood near or hung from this fireplace. Various chests, chairs, forms, settles and stools were scattered about the hard oak sanded floor of the "Great Room."[57]

During the winter, logs were burned in the fireplace of the "Great Room." In the summertime, the fireplace was often filled with green shrubs or logs neatly piled on the fire dogs or andirons.[58] It was because of the warm fires in the tavern fireplaces and the availability of food and drink that New England selectmen preferred to hold their winter meetings in the taverns rather than the unheated meeting houses.

During the 18th century the second floor and the third when it existed, were usually used as bedchambers. Normally, the bedchambers were named in relation to the room below it.

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[56] Ibid., p. 167.

[57] Ibid., p. 134.

[58] Ibid.

For example, hall chamber, parlor chamber, kitchen chamber, or entry chamber.[59] In the 18th century tavern, the bar chamber was often crowded with beds. Often this room was partioned with a sliding panel. By means of this partition, gentlemen and ladies could be given some privacy from the drovers who were frequent patrons of the roadside taverns. Americans as well as foreigners complained of these crowded sleeping quarters which were not always on the upper floors. In 1796, a Philadelphian remarked, "At New York I was lodged with two others in a back room on the ground floor. What can be the reason for that vulgar, hoggish custom, common in America, of squeezing three, six, or eight beds into one room?"[60] The custom of squeezing travelers into their bedchambers had prevailed from very early days in America and was widespread. During the Revolutionary War years, officers and soldiers in transit must have added greatly to the overcrowded sleeping quarters of the taverns.

By 1775, in some of the more elaborate taverns, the partition on the second floor separating rooms could be raised and room could be had for holding dances. Other rooms on the upper story could be set aside for meetings. Groups

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[59] Abbott Lowell Cummings, Editor, Rural Household Inventories 1675 - 1775, The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Boston, Massachusetts, 1964, p. XXIV.

[60] H. Adams, p. 32.

like the Masons and the Sons of Liberty often met in these tavern rooms.

Frequent travelers along the same road, cattle drovers, for example, would often patronize certain taverns where they were made to feel welcome. The Munroe Tavern in Lexington, Massachusetts, was popular with the drovers. A country tavern like the Hartwell Tavern in Lincoln, Massachusetts, would probably get its share of drovers, as it was also situated along the road from northern farms to the market town of Boston.

In general, it can be said that in 1775, New England taverns varied in both size and style. The rural taverns served the needs of the local yeomanry and traveler including the many drovers who followed the dusty roads to market. The town taverns not only serviced the needs of the traveler, but provided a meeting place for the merchant, lawyer and the political activists of the day. Both town and country taverns provided a forum where political discussion and social interaction could occur.

There is good evidence that the management style of taverns in the Revolutionary era also varied considerably. There were still, if John Adams is to be believed, tavern keepers of the highest quality like the Ipswich Treadwells. On the other hand, the same Adams could and did describe a very uncomplimentary view of the tavern scene prior to the Revolution. It is apparent that the good character and high

community standing of tavern keepers during the early Puritan period did not universally prevail at the time of the American Revolution. Prudent gentlemen, therefore, exercized care in the selection of their regular tavern.

Part III. The Peak and Decline of the Traditional New England Tavern

The tavern often thought of today as the traditional New England type probably reached its peak in the period just proceeding the expansion of the railroads in the 1830's. There is a close connection between the decline of the traditional New England tavern and the decline of the stagecoach business.

Stagecoach lines between leading towns along the eastern seaboard had been established prior to the American Revolution. For example, in 1769, stages were running twice a week from Providence to Boston, covering the route between destinations in a day.[61]

The tavern business and the stage business were closely related in the days before the railroads. The function that depots provide for railroads was provided by the tavern. Passengers often "booked" their stage trips in the tavern. Stages would pick up passengers at the tavern of one town and deposit them at the tavern door of another town. Distances from town to town were calculated from tavern to tavern.[62]

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[61] Field, p. 272.

[62] Ibid., p. 267.

Certain taverns were designated as "change stations," where a fresh team of horses could be secured. Upon his approach to the tavern, the stage driver would often blow a bugle to alert the tavern operator that the stage was coming. Sometimes he would give a blast for each passenger on board. This would tell the tavern operator how many guests would require food and refreshment while the new team was being hitched up.

Following the Revolution, the need for more and better roads was evident to all who had occasion to use them. By the turn of the century, cooperations were forming to build turnpikes so that farmers could get products into the market towns without undue expenses and delay. These early turnpikes were toll roads financed by private capital. For example, the Salem Turnpike and Chelsea Bridge Corporation, which was incorporated in 1802, divided the cost of its toll road among twelve hundred shares. After the original cost of the investment had been regained with twelve per cent interest the turnpike would revert to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.[63] The route of this old turnpike is still the most direct route from Salem to Boston, although stop lights and heavy traffic impede progress considerably.

The 1790's and the first decade of the 19th century was a busy period in New England highway construction. Between

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[63]James Duncan Phillips, Salem and the Indies, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1947, p. 301.

1796 and 1806, 42 companies were given the right to build roads in Massachusetts. These roads were usually four rods or 66 feet wide.[64] These new and improved roads altered old travel patterns and created the need for new taverns or "hotels," as some of the newly built establishments were being called.

In August of 1803, work was started on the turnpike between Newburyport and Boston. This toll road went on a straight line over the many hills between the two important seaports. This type of construction required many cuts and much filling in the valleys to reduce grades. Upon the completion of the turnpike, a need for taverns developed along the route. In Lynnfield, a large hotel was constructed on 53 acres of land. Another large establishment was built in Topsfield. This latter structure was given the name of the Topsfield Hotel. This hotel, like the earlier taverns, was on occasion a center of political activity. It was the site of the great 1808 Caucus which was held in protest of President Jefferson's embargo on shipping.[65]

The close connection between the stage lines and the taverns can be illustrated by the purchase in 1828 of the Wolfe Tavern in Newburyport by the prosperous Eastern Stage

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[64]H. Follansfee Long, "The Newburyport and Boston Turnpike," Historical Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society, published by the Society, Topsfield, 1906, pp. 1-2.

[65]Ibid., p. 8.

Company. This tavern became the company's headquarters, starting point and home station for the company's coaches. For about 20 years, the Eastern Stage Company flourished from its headquarters at The Wolfe Tavern. However, the railroad eventually reduced the need of its coaches.[66] It is interesting to note that The Wolfe Tavern retained the name of the British officer whose capture of Quebec insured his long lasting popularity in New England.

A large contributing factor in the success of the New England tavern in the days before the railroad was the livestock drives from the farm and cattle areas of northern New England and southern Candada to the Massachusetts market towns. From the early days of its settlement to well into the 19th century, the thrifty farmer found that the cheapest way to get his livestock to market was to walk it. As a result, large droves of cattle, hogs and sheep often clogged the rural roads leading to the coastal ports and larger inland towns. In addition, huge flocks of turkeys and other foul were also moved along these rural arteries. At the end of a hard day's drive, the roadside tavern must of presented a welcome sight to the hungary, dusty, tired men and boys who guided their herds and flocks along the country roads of New England.

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[66] Ibid., p. 15.

To accommodate the herds and flocks of the drovers, the tavern operators maintained large fields nearby the tavern. Lewis Smith, grandson of Colonel Daniel Brooks describes the following scene as it occurred in Lincoln, Massachusetts, between 1835 and 1845, "Monday was cattle market day at Brighton. The latter part of each week the fields were filled, droves of horned cattle, sheep and swine, and occassionally might be seen on the road 50 or 75 horses in pairs attached to a rope between them."[67]

Rural taverns such as the Munroe Tavern in Lexington and the Brooks and Ephraim Hartwell Taverns in Lincoln were well situated to receive the trade of the countless drovers who passed along the road to Boston. In 1904, Mr. Smith provides us with the following glimpse of the Brooks Tavern as he remembered it between 1835 and 1845: "The Brooks Tavern, being on the thoroughfare from Boston called the Great Road, is said to have had the largest patronage of any hostelry out of Boston. Its large stables, covered driveways, sheds and buildings of a great variety, make a picture which would be a choice for a modern photographer."[68]

In addition to the flocks and herds of the drovers, animal-drawn vehicles of various types moved along the rural

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[67]Letter from Lewis E. Smith to Moorfield Storey, Esq., "An Account of the Celebration of Lincoln, Massachusetts, April 23, 1904, of the 150th Anniversary of its Incorporation 1754-1904," printed by the Town of Lincoln, p. 199.

[68]Ibid.

roads. Mr. Smith provides us with the following description of traffic in Lincoln between 1835 and 1845. "Passing the old North Schoolhouse, which then welcomed within its brick walls between 50 and 60 scholars, were to be seen at nearly all hours of the day, large teams of six and eight horses, innumerable wagons and carriages. In the winter a score or more or two horse pungs from Vermont of New Hampshire often made the journey together. The four horse mail stage, with Boston, Keene, Brattleboro, and U. S. M. inscribed in large letters, represented the transportation of those times."[69]

In order to attract the patronage of the many drivers of the horse and ox-drawn vehicles, the successful tavern owner maintained a large stable operation. As noted earlier, the Munroe Tavern maintained stable facilities for 100 horses.[70] Taverns that were "change stations" for the stage lines also had to maintain stable space for the horse teams that were kept there. Some taverns maintained horses that were available for rent. It was also necessary for tavern operators to maintain feed for the horses of their guests. The stable operation, in short was very important to the overall success of the tavern.

The country tavern with ample field space would often attract the business of the drover. In this respect,

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Lathrop, p. 80.

taverns like the Munroe and Brooks enjoyed an advantage over competitors with less field area. The tavern operator also maintained pens on the grounds to contain the flocks of sheep and turkeys that stayed there overnight on their way to the Boston markets.[71]

The chances are that the tired drover would eat at a public table and sleep in a room filled with the cots or beds of other men. As noted earlier, this democratic procedure did not favorably impress one distinguished French visitor, the Duc de Liancourt.

The meals in American taverns during the early 19th century were remembered by foreign visitors. In 1807, an English visitor commenting about the higher quality tavern wrote: "At the better sort of American taverns very excellent dinners are provided, consisting of almost everything in season. The hour is from two to three o'clock, and there are three meals in the day. They breakfast at eight o'clock upon rump steaks, fish, eggs, and a variety of cakes with tea or coffee. The last meal is at seven in the evening, and consists of as substantial fare as the breakfast, with the additional of cold foul, ham, etc. The price of boarding at these houses is from a dollar and a half to two dollars per day. Brandy, hollands, and other spirits

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[71] Ibid.

are allowed at dinner, but every other liquor is paid for extra."[72]

The preceding description is obviously not of the rural type tavern frequented by the drover, who in the early 19th century paid 25¢ for an evening's lodging, which included supper and breakfast at the Munroe Tavern in Lexington.[73] In reference to small rural taverns, the same English visitor remarked that "Formerly pies, puddings, and cyder used to grace the breakfast table, but now they are discarded from the genteeler houses, and are found only in the small taverns and farmhouses in the country."[74]

In the early 1800's foreign visitors were often critical of American society. Sometimes American travelers were equally uncomplimentary. In 1808, a Pennsylvania ornithologist traveling in New England included the region's taverns in his uncomplimentary remarks which follow in part: "the taverns along the road dirty, and filled with loungers brawling about lawsuits and politics."[75] Comments by travelers concerning loungers and idlers of various sorts hanging around American taverns in the early 1800's were quite common. As Henry Adams pointed out, that in the days

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[72]Kettell, p. 89.

[73]Lathrop, p. 80.

[74]Kettell, p. 89.

[75]H. Adams, p. 13.

of pre-industrial America, it was possible for many people to earn a living by agriculture and still have time to lounge about the tavern if they chose to.

Americans if judged by today's standards, were not a temperate people in the early years of the 19th century. Of this period Henry Adams has written: "Every one acknowledged that in the South and West drinking was occasionally excessive; but even in Pennsylvania and New England the universal taste for drams proved habits by no means strict. Every grown man took his noon toddy as a matter of course; and although few were seen publicly drunk, many were habitually affected by liquor."[76]

As noted earlier, the stage coach lines and the drovers contributed greatly to the health of the tavern business. Even by stage coach along the best of highways, progress was slow. For example, it too three days travel to cover the distance between New York and Boston by light stage coach.[77] In three days time a stage would make many stops at taverns along the route to change horses and to feed and rest the driver and passengers. The progress of the drovers along the country roads was even slower than the stage coach average of four miles an hour in the northern states.[78]

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[76] Ibid., p. 33

[77] Ibid., p. 8

[78] Ibid.

this meant that the men and boys driving the herds or flocks spent many nights either in taverns or out under the stars before their journey was over. In any event, the coming of the railroads would eventually reduce the number of stage and wagon traffic along the highways. In time, it would be cheaper to send cattle, hogs, sheep and domestic poultry to market by rail than to walk the droves and flocks in by the country roads.

For a time, the stage lines tried to compete with the railroads for passengers, but it was a losing battle. Eventually, their business was reduced to meeting the trains at the depots to provide transportation into the smaller towns. As the railroads in Massachusetts constructed branch lines into the smaller towns during the great railroad expansion of the 1840's and 1850's, the stages lost this part of their business. As the 19th century wore on, stage passengers became a smaller part of the tavern operator's business.

Not all taverns were hurt by the railroads. Those that were located near railroad depots usually survived. Many of them enlarged their structures and took the name of "hotels." They were not, however, what we think of as New England taverns in the traditional sense.

In general, taverns in the country retained their "traditional" style of operations longer than those in the city. Some farmers were slow to send their herds and flocks to market by rail. A few stage lines continued to operate right

up to the days of the gasoline propelled vehicle. Not all tavern owners followed a trend to call their establishments hotels. However, by the 1890's writers like Edward Field were writing in a nostalgic style about the bygone days of the New England tavern.

A great deal of sentiment has developed in this century concerning the old taverns of New England. Some people see them in a romantic light. They picture them as warm cheery places where friendly less complex folk gathered in good companionship. Certainly, these elements were present in varying degrees, but taverns had their rougher side as well. In a sense, they were mirrors which reflected the society that prevailed at the time. Located within the shadow of the gallows and stocks, the early 17th century taverns were the haunts of grim visaged Puritans, who could watch a hanging or whipping and then retire to the tavern for a hearty meal and half pint of wine. Later, during the Revolutionary period, they were the havens of sober-hard minded men who could plot rebellion against their king. Sometimes, as James Otis found out, they could be places of sudden violence and the end of dreams. They were frequently run down and the crowded, often dirty, sleeping quarters they offered were unacceptable by today's standards. Moreover, as John Adams and other contemporaries pointed out, tavern owners and their idle customers often left much to be desired. Certainly a degree of ignorance, coarseness and

drunkenness was exhibited in the New England tavern throughout its long and colorful history.

In order to gain a true perspective of the New England tavern, one must consider its total role in the society of its time. In a narrow sense, it provided the necessities of life: food, drink and shelter. In a broader context, it provided society with a place to meet; a political forum where issues, great and small, could be debated. Finally, it provided society with a place where people could be with people; where they could talk, relax and spend an enjoyable hour or two. Perhaps that is what Doctor Samuel Johnson had in mind when he said, "There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn."

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research needs are dependent on management's plans for the interpretation of the Ephraim Hartwell Tavern. Should it be decided to refurnish the rooms we feel were utilized as a tavern with period furnishings, a detailed historic furnishings plan will have to be compiled. If the grounds with associated outbuildings, fences, pens, etc. are to be restored, a comprehensive historic grounds report will also be necessary.

Should a historic furnishing plan be necessary, a close study of the inventories of contemporary tavern keepers in area towns should prove helpful.

In view of the evidence available to us today, planners attempting restoration projects of the types mentioned above will be guided by much information of a conjectural nature.

There is still much we don't know about Hartwell Tavern operations from 1756 to 1787. Contemporary references to the tavern's interior or even who patronized it have not been found. We would like to know more about the tavern's role prior to the outbreak of the American Revolution and on April 19, 1775. Much of what we know is conjectural based upon few contemporary records and poorly documented secondary sources. Clearly, additional research is needed. Perhaps, a lucky "breakthrough" will result by the discovery

of documentation that may repose in the hands of the large and widely dispersed Hartwell and Flint families. Contacting Hartwell/Flint descendants, however, is a time-consuming process with no guarantee of success. Therefore, little can be expected by a short intensive research effort, such as the type conducted by outside contract. This type of research can probably be best handled by the Park's Staff Historian as time and priorities permit.

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