BETHLEHEM
NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

A Bicentennial History

(Updated 1999 Edition)

edited with introductory chapters by

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and 1974–1999 update by

MIKE DICKERMAN

and written by the people of Bethlehem
with dedication to Hattie Whitcomb Taylor
1999

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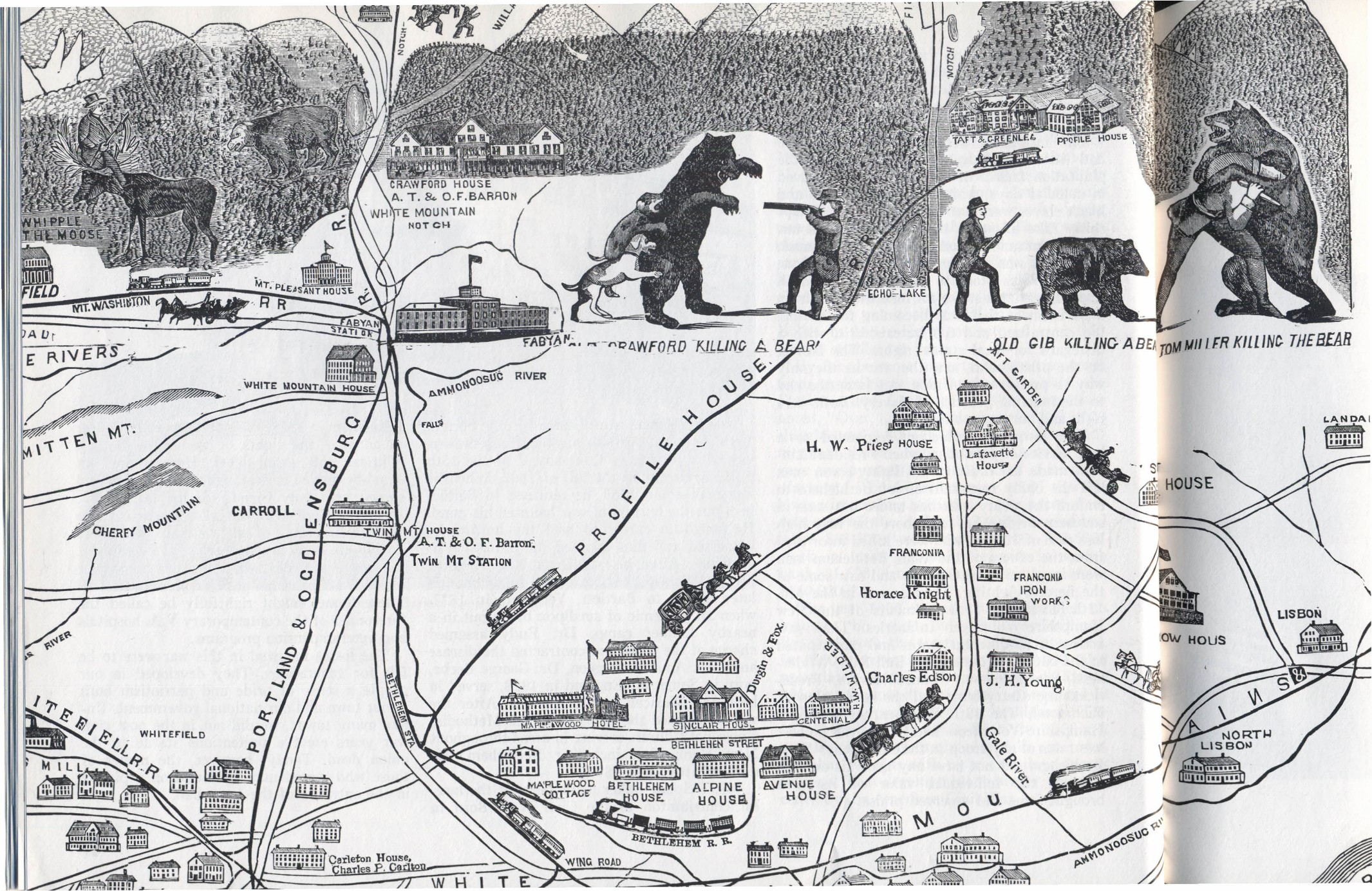
WHIPPLE
THE MOOSE
CRAWFORD HOUSE
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WHITE MOUNTAIN
NOTCH
TAFT & GREENLEAF
PROFILE HOUSE
ECHO LAKE
CRAWFORD KILLING A BEAR
OLD GIB KILLING A BEA
TOM MILLER KILLING THE BEAR
MT. WASHINGTON R.R.
MT. PLEASANT HOUSE
FABYAN STATION
WHITE MOUNTAIN HOUSE
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FALLS
PROFILE HOUSE
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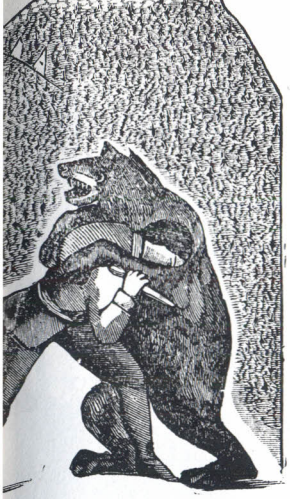
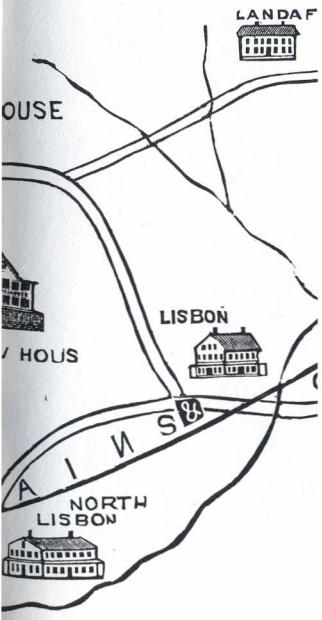
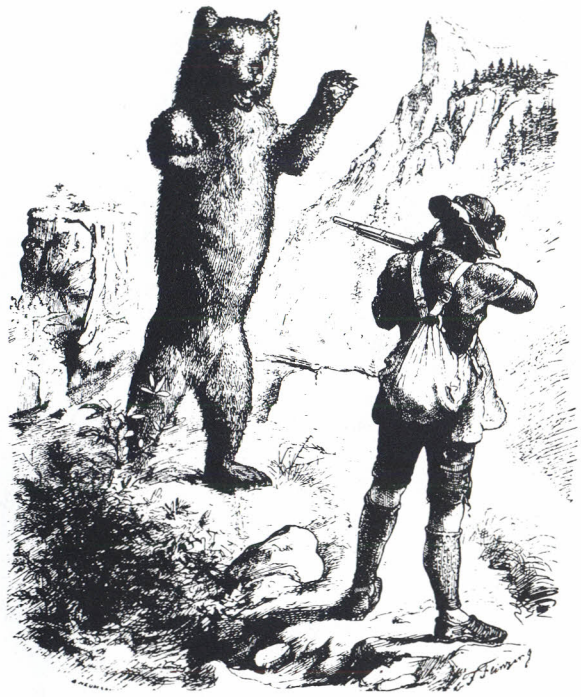
HOUSE





The Grand Hotels

A detail from Leavitt's map of White Mountain hotels and a hunting scene from an old children's book on the White Mountains, indicate the popularity of the North Country as a vacation spot. The development of the tourist industry in the towns surrounding the mountains had a drastic and permanent effect on Bethlehem.



When the Bethlehem boys in blue returned from the savage civil war they found the town much as they had left it. However, one thing had happened during the war that was to have a drastic effect on the town's development. This event ultimately transformed our village. During the Civil War, Rhode Island Governor Henry Howard and his family were visiting the White Mountains. A runaway stage coach, culminating in an accident, resulted in a prolonged stay for the Howard family in the Sinclair House. Then the Sinclair was a small, well-kept stage tavern with a few rooms. Quietly resting in our town Governor Howard quickly understood its potential as a summer resort.

He returned summer after summer and then bought a large farm on Main Street known as the Carlton Farm. He also bought the Brooks or Strawberry Hill Farm, opposite the Carlton Farm, and built in 1873 a summer cottage for his personal use. The Howard purchase marked the beginning of a new era for Bethlehem. Prior to Howard's arrival, tourism was not important, but his developments started a new trend which resulted in a major industry.

Main Street looking east in the early 1870's before the tourist boom exploded. No shade trees, street lamps, or sidewalks greeted the returning veterans of the Civil War, but in a short time these would be a part of Bethlehem life. On the left is the Methodist Church. On the right is the Jefferson Spooner House, now the site of the Colonial Theatre and the Alden Huntoon house, C. G. White house and store, Sinclair Cottage and Sinclair Hotel.

One of the older taverns constructed for transients was the Presby Tavern which burned in 1856. It stood opposite the present Sinclair Hotel. In 1864 James Turner expanded the family inn started in 1807, and in 1865 John Sinclair expanded his facility which resulted in the present Sinclair Hotel. In 1853 Cyrus E. Bunker came to Bethlehem from Barnstead, New Hampshire. Originally a blacksmith, he quickly saw the benefits of the new tourist industry. In 1870 he erected the Mt. Agassiz House, the first hotel to cater exclusively to summer boarders as opposed to the transient. In 1875 Bunker exchanged the Agassiz House for land outside the village but later returned to buy the site of the Howard House which was destroyed by fire in 1874. In 1878 he erected the second Howard House which he sold in 1887 to F. E. Derbyshire.

The Sinclair Hotel was built on Main Street in 1865 by John Sinclair, one of the first men to realize the possibilities of Bethlehem as a summer resort. Mr. Sinclair was a Democrat and ran for Governor in 1866, 1867 and 1868, and for U.S. Senator in 1876. During the 1880's the hotel was operated by Mr. Durgin and Mr. Fox. Other proprietors were Mr. Dan Harrington, Mr. Will McAuliffe and Mr. Mitchinoff. Today the owners and operators are Mr. David Spiwack and Mr. Myron Herrman.

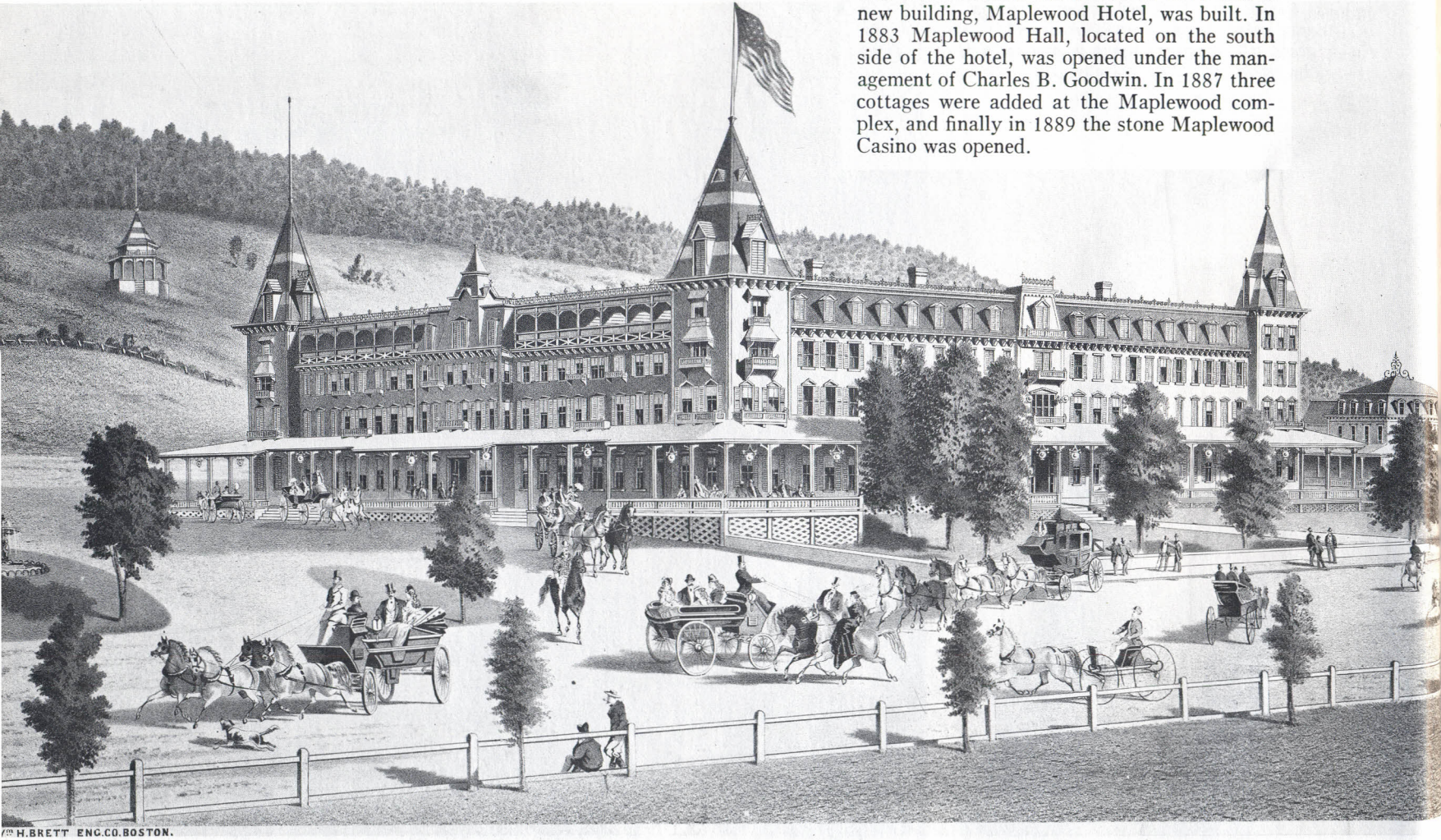
Main Street looking west in the early 1870's. Left: Cruft Cottage, now Sinclair Cottage. Right: Methodist Church, Willard Presby house, later replaced by the Woodlawn Hotel (the present Stage Depot managed by Mr. and Mrs. David Hard), Tom Bean's blacksmith shop, Bean's boarding house and the Howard House.

Below: Railroad Street, the present Agassiz Street in the 1870's.

Below: Agassiz Street in the 1870's, and right: Main Street looking east about 1870. Photograph was taken from the top of the Sinclair Hotel.

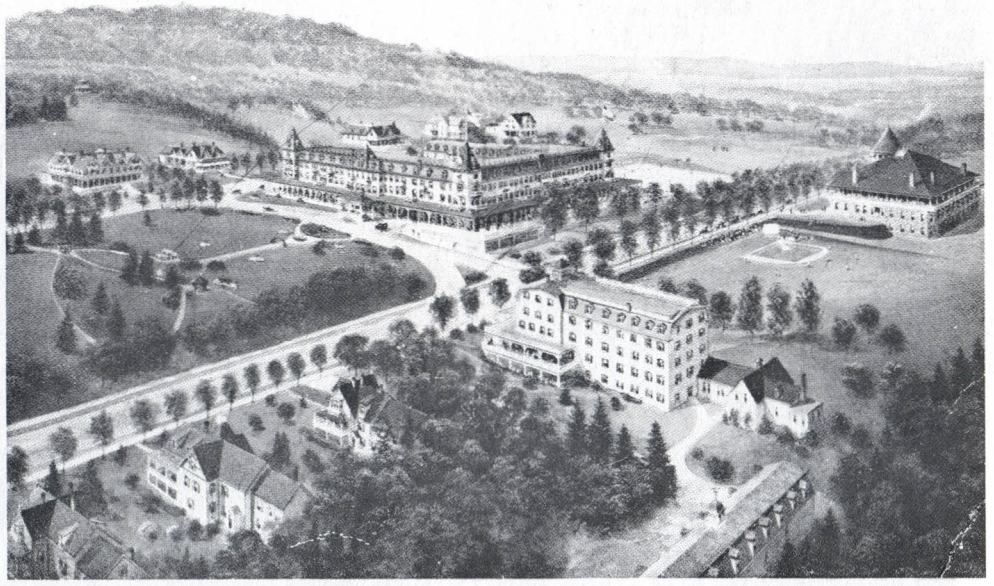
The Maplewood

Possibly the most spectacular hotel development was the Maplewood, built by Isaac Cruft. In 1816 the Maplewood Cottage was built, little is known of its early history. It was moved across the street in 1876 and a new building, Maplewood Hotel, was built. In 1883 Maplewood Hall, located on the south side of the hotel, was opened under the management of Charles B. Goodwin. In 1887 three cottages were added at the Maplewood complex, and finally in 1889 the stone Maplewood Casino was opened.



H.BRETT ENG.CO.BOSTON.

A Maplewood coach (above) about to depart for a tour of the mountains. This photograph was taken about 1900. A 1900 bird's-eye view (right) of the Maplewood.



This photograph taken from the Maplewood Observatory (shown below) was made in the 1890's.

THE MAPLEWOOD CASINO

The Maplewood Casino, which opened in 1889, contained a dance floor, bowling alleys, a theatre and facilities for the golf course. A story found in Robert Pike's *Tall Trees, Tough Men* concerns building the foundation of the Maplewood Casino:

In the winter of 1888, Arthur Gordon of Lisbon was working in the woods as an axeman for the I. B. Andrews Company. One Sunday he was out digging spruce gum when an Indian who was working in the camp, and who had taken a liking to him, came wandering by. The red man sat down on a spruce log about fifty feet long, and the following conversation took place: Gordon, "Nice log." Indian, "Looks good." Gordon, "It is good." Indian, "Maybe. No tell." Gordon, "What's the matter with it?" Indian, "No tell. No put to test." Gordon, "What do you mean?" Indian, "You go small end. Put ear close. You hear anything?" Gordon, "Yes, I hear a sound like scratching." Indian, "The log is good."

The Indian told him the secret of how to listen to test the soundness of a log and Gordon promised not to tell anyone. Years later while Art was working in a sawmill in Easton for Charles Young, an order came in for a piece of sound timber 2 by 12 inches and 40 feet long for the foundation of the Casino at Bethlehem. The boss told Gordon to save such a specimen of timber when he found it. The next day among a pile of logs one such piece turned up with the right dimensions and the appearance of soundness. Several workmen were called to pass judgement upon the soundness of the log and all were in favor of using it. Then Gordon offered to try the Indian test.

With Young at the listening end, he started the mysterious maneuver. Young could hear nothing, but without divulging his secret, Gordon declared that in his opinion the log was unsound. The boss then ordered the men to saw it. About six feet from the butt they came onto a two foot piece of rotten wood in the heart of the log.

The Indian trick eventually worked on a proper log, for the Casino still stands.

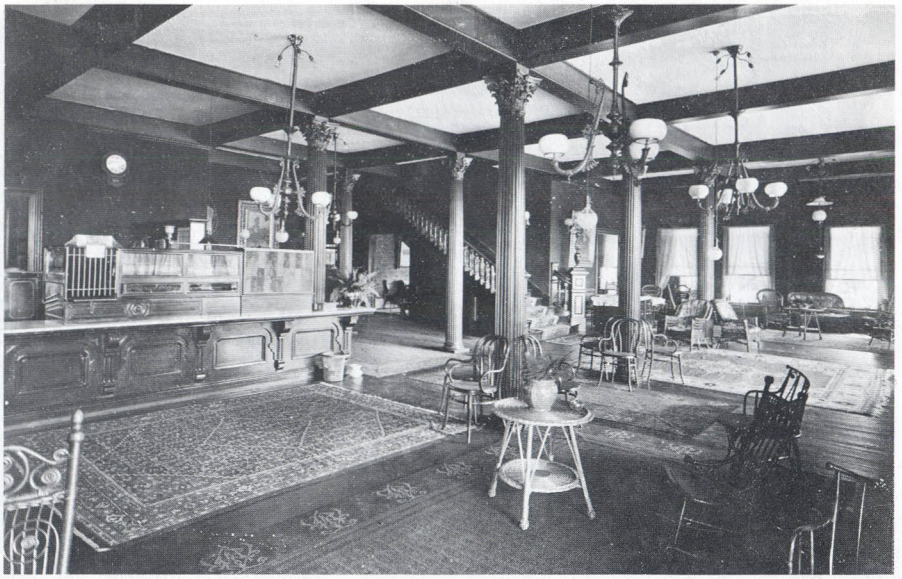
In later years part of the Maplewood Hall was purchased by Fred Lewis and moved to Main Street where it was known as Lewis Block, until it was sold to Mr. Bonardi. When Lewis owned the building it housed Lewis' Meat Market, the Town Clerk's office and C. S. Boston's Candy Store, noted for its delicious White Mountain kisses that were made on the premises. Part of the block also served as living and lodging quarters, containing at one time "The Pelham," operated by Mrs. Helen Fletcher. Mr. Bonardi operated a food market in the building until his death.

In the spring Charles Churchill and Alex Chisholm would take the Maplewood oxen team to Pierce Bridge to gather logs for the Maplewood fireplace. Behind the oxen team is the lumber mill at Pierce Bridge. The Maplewood Hall and farm (below) about 1884. Cynthia and Josie Kidder are the two girls on the left.

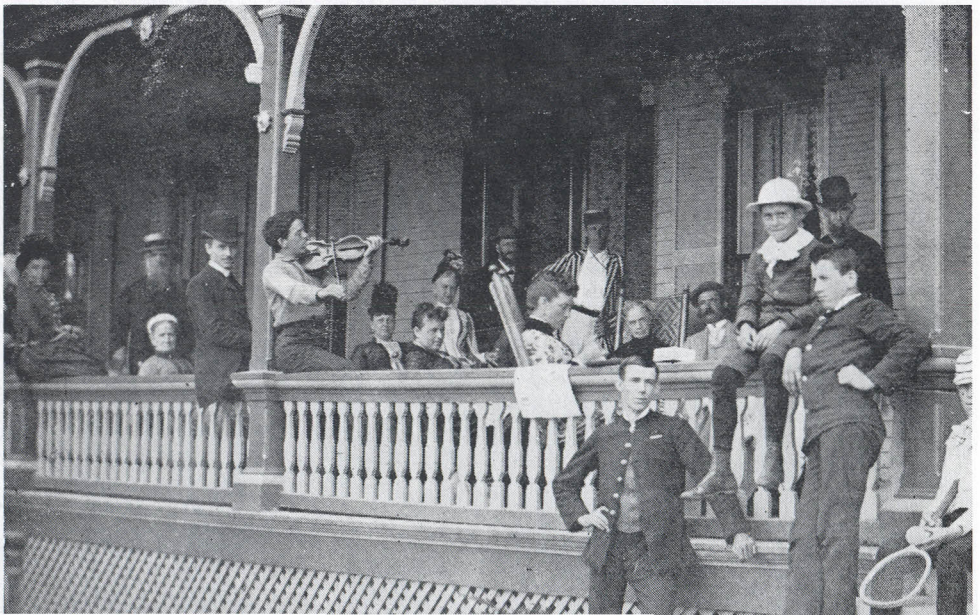
The Maplewood was a self-contained village with a railroad depot, post office and a 500-acre farm. The farm, managed by Ransom Day, furnished much of the hotel's daily needs of milk, vegetables and meat. One popular attraction was a large maple sugar orchard and sugar house where hundreds of gallons of maple sugar were made annually. Located on the hill leading from Maplewood to Bethlehem Hollow, it is lost, along with the Maplewood Station, in a forest of second growth trees and shrubs. The Maplewood built its own 18-hole golf course which was serviced by a unique caddy camp. The caddies were brought to Bethlehem each season. From 1915 to 1949 the camp was managed by Norman Franzeim, and the boys came from the North Bennet Street Industrial School.

In 1958, Mr. Franzeim deeded land to the caddy camp alumni association and a memorial to former caddies was erected in the Maplewood area on U.S. Route 302. Now a favorite picnic spot for summer tourists, the memorial is a dignified token of Bethlehem's historic past. It was dedicated a few years ago by Rev. Fr. J. K. O'Connor of Littleton and Rev. Fr. Joe Sigodelli, a former caddy. Toni Russo of St. Johnsbury, Vt., a former caddy, recently erected a rustic fence around the memorial.

The Maplewood also had an extensive and beautiful stable which is still standing but in need of major repairs. In 1882 the Maplewood Stables created much excitement with its new "four horse omnibus" capable of carrying 20 passengers inside with "always room for one more." The Maplewood remained open until it burned down in 1963. The golf course, casino, highway motel, and other buildings were acquired in 1973 by Neil Chase, proprietor of the Chase Golf and Tennis Camp. Extensive renovations of the buildings are underway, and he has generously offered the use of the casino for the 1974 Bicentennial Ball.



Above, the interior of the Maplewood and below, a summer afternoon at the Maplewood about 1890.



Visitors spending the morning rocking on the Maplewood porch in the 1890's. Bethlehem House (page 43), located on Congress Street, opened in 1874 and was owned by Willard McGregory. Some of the proprietors were N. W. Cheney, George Coburn, E. P. Marston, H. E. Richardson and J. H. A. Bruce. It burned down about 1908.

While the Maplewood was probably the most spectacular of Bethlehem's hotels, it was by no means the only large hotel. Beginning in the early 1870's, the town was clearly establishing itself as a tourist center. Each year hotels were built or expanded and local natives took in additional summer boarders or built summer cottages.

The Park House was erected by Charles Bunker in 1876, at the head of Park Avenue which was laid out that same year. In 1878 P. W. Ranlett left the Sinclair House to own the Park House which he renamed Ranlett's Hotel. In 1880 Mr. Ranlett built an attractive cafe by the side of the hotel. Years later this cafe was moved to the eastern end of the Lewis block and used as a meat market by Harry and Fred Lewis. In the late 1890's the Ranlett Hotel was purchased by I. A. Taylor and renamed the "Altamonte."

Other interesting hotels developed before the turn of the century included the Centennial, now the Arlington; the Alpine House; the Upland Terrace, now Chase Golf and Tennis Camp; Sunset House, now the Bethlehem Inn; and the Prospect House and the East View, later the Lyndhurst and then Park View.

By the mid-1870's Bethlehem was definitely known as a tourist town. Over 4,000 persons a year came for the summer and more were to come each year. The *Statistics and Gazetteer of New Hampshire* for 1874 noted: "The inhabitants are generally devoted to agriculture and keeping summer boarders . . . a prominent resident of this town says: 'The future prospects of Bethlehem are very flattering, owing to the great rush of summer tourists. The number who stopped here in 1872 from one week to three months, according to a careful estimate, was four thousand'. Large boarding homes are being erected every season and are filled . . . The large influx of people through

the summer affords the farmers a fine opportunity to market their surplus produce at advance rates . . . Hotels and Summer Boarding Houses: Sinclair House, valued at $60,000; Mount Agassiz House, $20,000; Prospect House, $12,000; White Mountain Boarding House, $9,000; Spooner Cottage, $7,000; Bean's Cottage, $6,500; Turner's Cottage, $4,000; Wilder Boarding House, $8,000; Bailey's Cottage, $5,000. There are other houses where some summer tourists stop through the summer."

The Rev. Simeon Bolles' *The Early History of the Town of Bethlehem* provides the following information on hotels ten years later in 1883: "Maplewood, one of the largest and handsomest buildings of its kind about the mountains, accommodates 500 guests, Maplewood Cottage, 100 and Maplewood Hall, 150. These three houses are all under one ownership. The Sinclair House covering the site of the original establishment — the first of its kind in Bethlehem — accommodates 300 guests. Blandin House, H. C. Clark, proprietor, 30 guests; Centennial House, H. W. Wilder, proprietor, 60 guests; Mt. Agassiz House, H. Nye, proprietor, 60; Mt. Washington House, C. L. Bartlett, proprietor, 60; Prospect House, G. W. Phillips, proprietor, 80; Ranlett's Hotel, D. W. Ranlett, proprietor, 75; Turner House, J. N. Turner & Son, proprietors, 75; the Highland House, the Bellevue, the Alpine, the Uplands, the Bethlehem House, the Howard and the Strawberry Hill Houses each accommodate from 50 to 150 guests. There are numerous smaller houses at which guests can secure good accommodations at reasonable rates . . . Taking everything into consideration, Bethlehem offers more advantages to the summer tourist than almost any place on the western continent . . ."

Center photograph taken about 1906 shows E. A. Long on left, the owner of the Highland House; L. M. Knight, third in from right, and Fred Abbe, far left on steps.

E. L. Merrow's studio (shown below) on the corner of Park Avenue and Main Street in 1887. Ida Atwood Waterman is in the photographer's frame.

Photograph on far right is an enlargement of the group standing by Merrow's Studio. Note the attractive wooden sidewalks, lamp posts and shade trees.

The Mt. Washington House, above, about 1894 and below, about 1875.

The Avenue House about 1894.

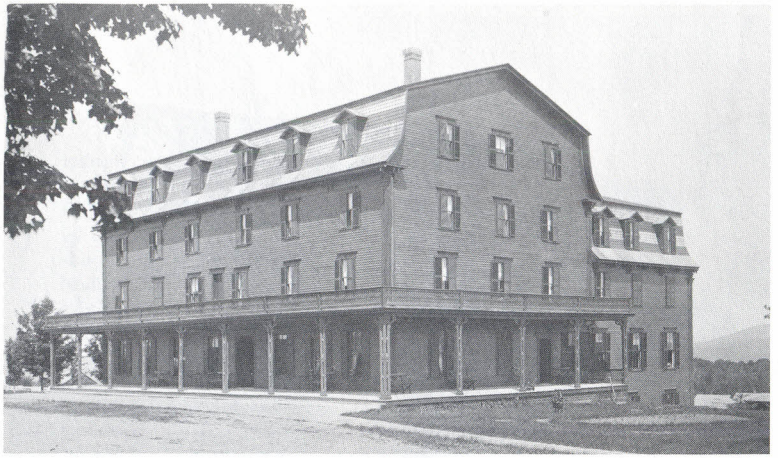
The Mt. Washington House (left and below) was built on Park Avenue in 1877 by C. L. Bartlett. In later years it was owned by R. N. Gordon. It was destroyed by fire in 1934. The Avenue House (above right) was built on Main Street in 1876 by F. L. Kelley. It was also known as the Gramercy and the Maplehurst. Some of the proprietors were Mr. Stimpson, Mr. Edmunds and A. P. Rowe. Now owned by Neil Chase, it is part of the Chase Golf and Tennis Camp.

Howard House (below left) built by Cyrus Bunker in 1878 on the site of a former house of the same name, was built by Governor Howard. In 1887 it was purchased by Mr. Derbyshire and later owned by Mr. Goldfarb. It was torn down in 1958. The Woodlawn (right above) was built in 1887 by Willard Presby. Now known as The Stage Depot, it has also been called the Bethmer Inn and Colby Inn. Other proprietors have been Ira Taylor, Frank Colby, Elmer Harrington and Mrs. Mann. The Woodbine Cottage (below right), built by Mr. Presby in the 1870's, was located on the site of the Woodlawn. It was moved to the corner of Agassiz and Cross Streets in 1887 and used as the town jail until the jail was moved into the Cruft Block which was built in 1880.

The Howard House circa 1890.

Above, The Woodlawn, circa 1890;
and below, The Woodbine, 1884.

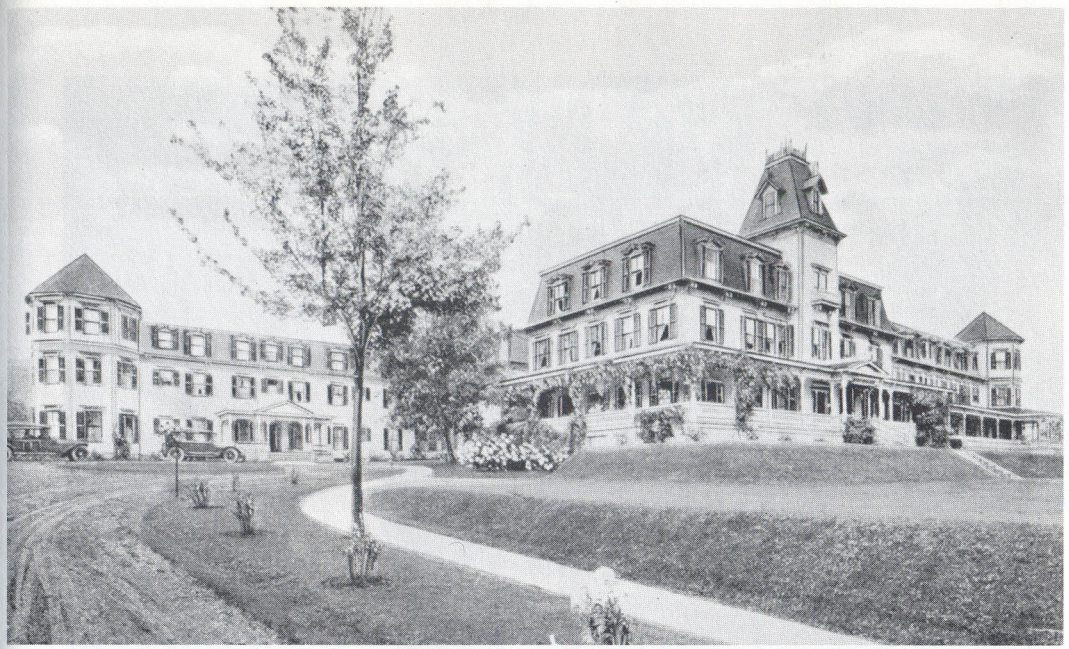
Turner's Tavern, circa 1930.



Strawberry Hill House, circa 1890.

Turner's Tavern (above left) opened in 1805, enlarged in 1864, remained in the Turner family until 1945 when it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Nagel of Manchester. In 1957 Mr. and Mrs. Martin Acampora acquired the tavern and then changed its name to Martin's Motor Inn. The Strawberry Hill House (above right) was built on Main Street in 1874 by J. K. Barrett and remained in the family until the death of Henry Barrett in 1938. It was later owned by the Reiss family. The Centennial House (lower right) now the Arlington, was built by Horace Wilder in 1876. Other proprietors have been Fred Abbe, L. M. Kight, and William Chesley. More recently it was owned by Mrs. Gross. It currently serves as the summer hotel for members of Chassidic religion.

Centennial House, circa 1890.



The Upland Terrace Hotel was erected in 1877 by Rev. C. J. Fowler. In 1885 it was operated by W. C. Noyes and in 1887 it was purchased by F. H. Abbott. A later proprietor was J. Elmer Herrington. It is now owned by Neil Chase of the Chase Golf and Tennis Camp.

Ranlett's Hotel, circa 1894.

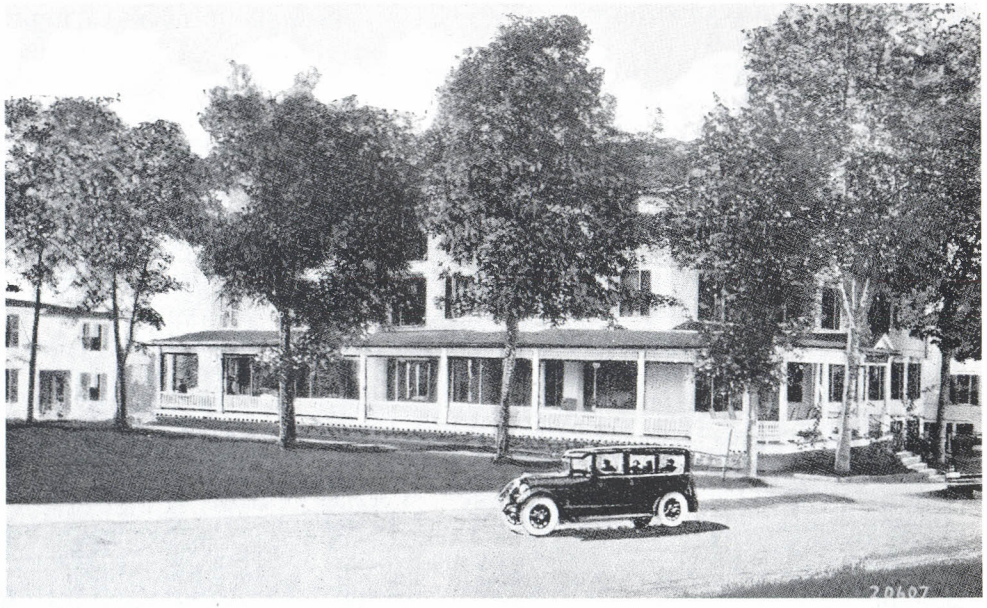
Agassiz Hotel, circa 1894.

Bellevue House, circa 1894.

The Altamonte House (above left) was built in 1876 by Charles Bunker. First known as Park House, then Ranlett's Hotel, and later the Altamonte when it was managed by I. A. Taylor. Mr. Taylor sold the hotel in 1916 and it became the first hotel in town to be owned by a Jewish person. On the right of the hotel is Ranlett's Cafe on the site of the present Martignetti Block. The cafe is now on the east end of the Bonardi Block and was used as a meat market by Fred Lewis. The building at the right of the cafe is the Sunlight Cottage, owned by Mrs. Ben Glazer. The Mt. Agassiz House (above right) was built on Agassiz Street by Cyrus Bunker in 1870. It was later operated by Horatio Nye and in 1896 was purchased by John Mathes. Mr. Mitchinoff, owner of the Sinclair Hotel, purchased it as an annex for the Sinclair, a function it still serves. The Bellevue House (lower left) was opened in 1875 by David Phillips on the site of the present Country Club. It burned in 1900.

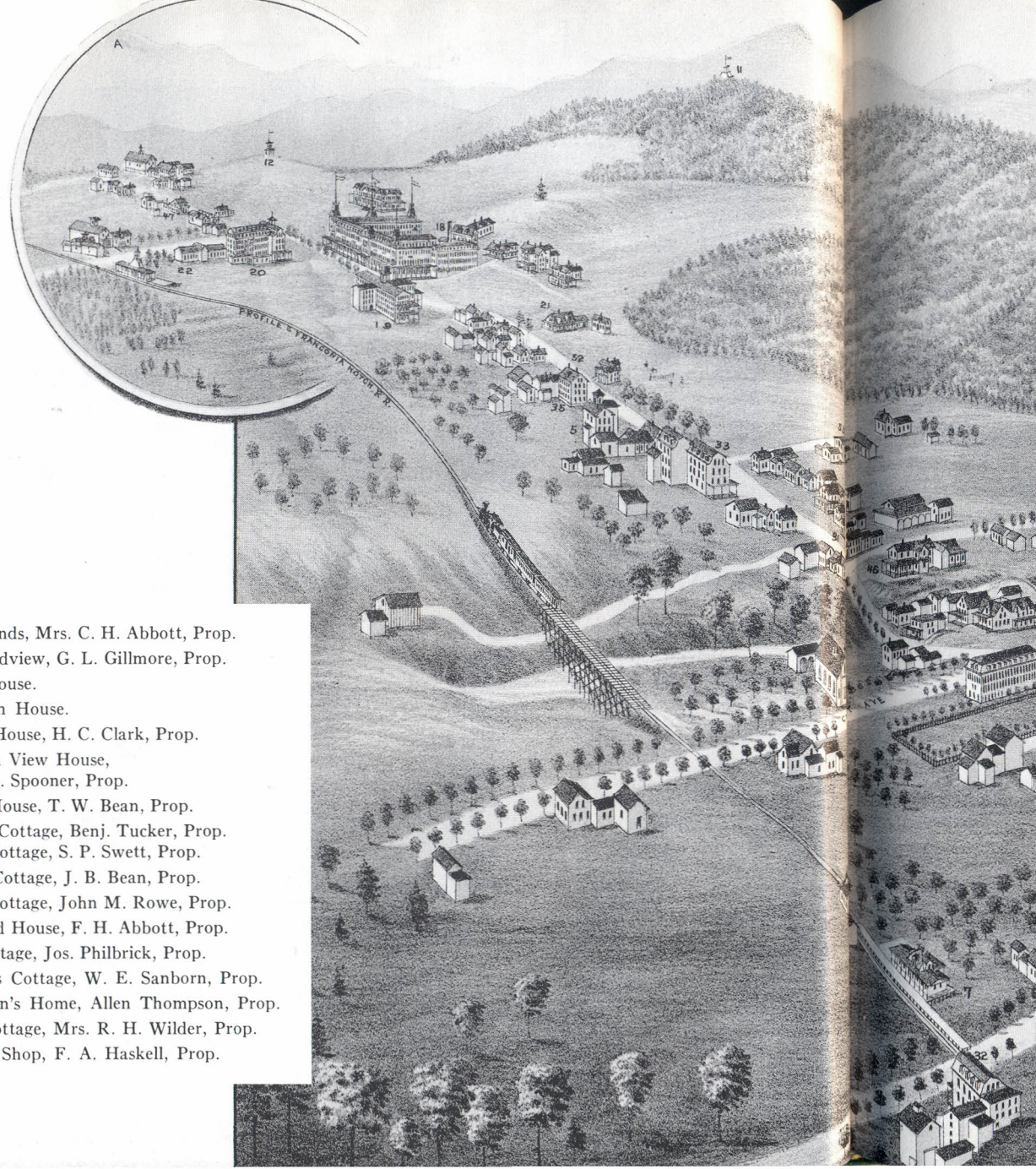
The Columbia Hotel (left) located on Park Avenue, was built in 1893 by G. Allen Noyes. It was later owned and operated by Harry Lewis. The original part of the Columbia was the first house built on Park Avenue, and was built as a private cottage by C. G. White. The Columbia is now joined to the Park View Hotel and operated under the name of Park View.

The Park View (right) on Park Avenue was built by Mr. Higgins. This hotel has also been known by the names of East View and Lyndhurst. It was purchased by Henry F. Hardy in 1897. In 1921 the hotel became the property of Charles Levin and Samuel Krim. Today it is used in the summer season by the Jewish community.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF BETHLEHEM,
GRAFTON COUNTY, N. H., 1883

1. Cruft Block and Post Office, White Mountain Echo Office.
2. Methodist Church.
3. Episcopal Church.
4. Congregational Church.
5. School.
7. Profile and Franconia Notch R.R. Station
8. Park.
9. Mt. Washington Cemetery.
10. Mount Agassiz Observatory.
11. Maplewood Observatory.
12. Cruft's Ledge Observatory.
13. Mount Lafayette.
14. Mount Cannon.
15. Franconia Notch.
16. Mount Garfield.
17. Twin Mountains.
18. Maplewood Hotel, I. S. Cruft, Prop., O. D. Seavey, Mgr.
19. Maplewood Hall, Chas. B. Goodwin, Mgr.
20. Maplewood Cottage, Chas. B. Goodwin, Mgr.
21. Poplar Cottage.
22. Maplewood Station.
23. Sinclair House, Durgin & Fox, Props.
24. Ranlett House, D. W. Ranlett, Prop.
25. Highland House, J. H. Clark, Prop.
26. Strawberry Hill House, J. K. Barrett, Prop.
27. Prospect House, Geo. W. Phillips, Prop.
28. Bellevue House, David S. Phillips, Prop.
29. Mount Agassiz House, Horatio Nye, Prop.
30. Alpine House, C. H. Clark, Prop.
31. Howard House, C. E. Bunker, Prop.
32. Mt. Washington House, C. L. Bartlett, Prop.
33. Avenue House, J. C. & F. L. Kelly, Props.
34. Centennial House, H. W. Wilder, Prop.
35. Turner House, J. N. Turner, Prop.
36. Hillside House, D. F. Davis, Prop.
37. The Uplands, Mrs. C. H. Abbott, Prop.
38. The Broadview, G. L. Gillmore, Prop.
39. Sunset House.
40. Bethlehem House.
41. Blondin House, H. C. Clark, Prop.
42. Mountain View House, Mrs. T. J. Spooner, Prop.
43. Central House, T. W. Bean, Prop.
44. Tucker's Cottage, Benj. Tucker, Prop.
45. Swett's Cottage, S. P. Swett, Prop.
46. Georgia Cottage, J. B. Bean, Prop.
47. Rowe's Cottage, John M. Rowe, Prop.
48. Greenfield House, F. H. Abbott, Prop.
49. Echo Cottage, Jos. Philbrick, Prop.
50. Sanborn's Cottage, W. E. Sanborn, Prop.
51. Sportsman's Home, Allen Thompson, Prop.
52. Cedar Cottage, Mrs. R. H. Wilder, Prop.
53. Carriage Shop, F. A. Haskell, Prop.




CONGRESS ST.
RAILROAD
PARK AVE
BETHLEHEM ST.
To Prospect House
To LITTLETON
To FRAN
GONIA

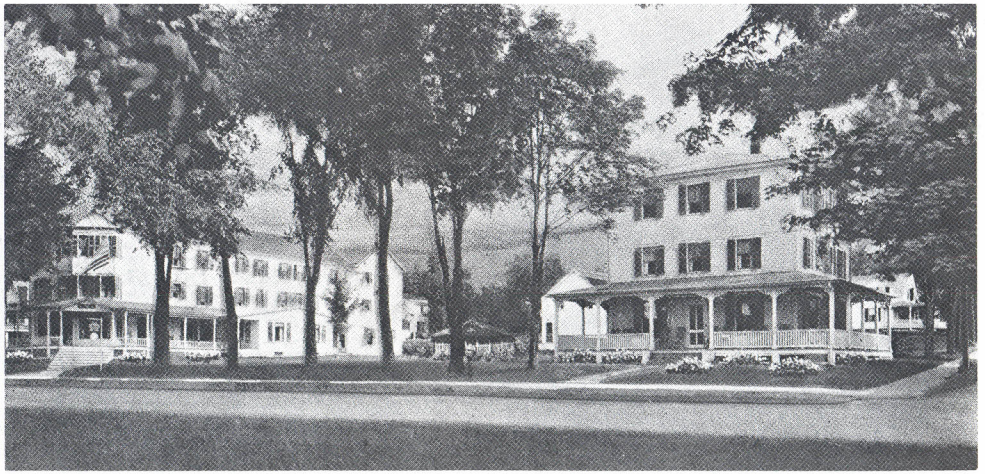
The Blandin House (left) was built by A. W. Blandin a few years prior to 1890. It was reopened in 1894 as the Central House managed by A. P. Rowe. It was purchased in 1902 by Walter Lewis. Later Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Perry bought the hotel, which is still managed by Mrs. Perry under the name of Perry House. The Hillside House (right, page 55) was opened in 1874 by Deacon Davis. It was purchased in 1919 by Walter Lewis. Mrs. Lewis ran the hotel for a few years after her husband's death in 1926. She sold the property to the Perrys, who tore the Hillside House down to build the Perry House theatre.

Hillside House

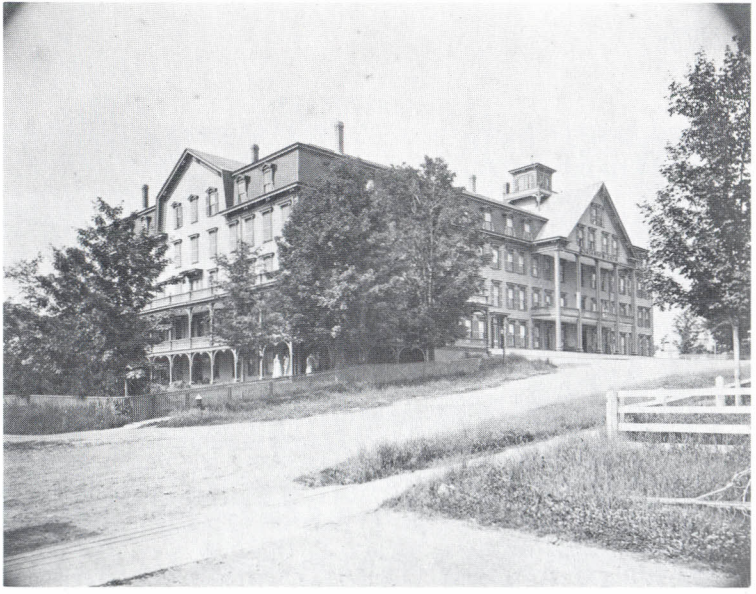
The Alpine Hotel (above) was built on Main Street in 1877 by Charles Clark on the site of a smaller residence destroyed by fire. Some of the owners of the hotel, over the years, were W. S. Dunham, Mr. Chesley and R. H. Buckler. It is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Marcus, who also own the Highland House located just east of the Alpine.

The Highland Hotel (below) located on Main Street was built in 1880 by Henry Clark. Later it was owned and operated by Ernest A. Long, a judge of the Municipal Court for 26 years. The hotel is now operated as the Alpine Annex.

The Bethlehem Branch of the Littleton National Bank (left) opened in May of 1973 on the site of the Reynolds Hotel. In the early 1900's the Littleton National Bank opened a "branch bank" in the Jackson Block (now H & H Outdoorland Hardware), even though branch banking at that time was prohibited by New Hampshire law. The opening of the modern Littleton Branch on the eve of our Bicentennial marks the recent economic growth of our town. The Reynolds House (below), located on the bank site, was razed in 1958. Some of its owners were Mike Reynolds and William Aiken. The Reynolds Annex was operated by R. M. Hodgdon and William Aiken.

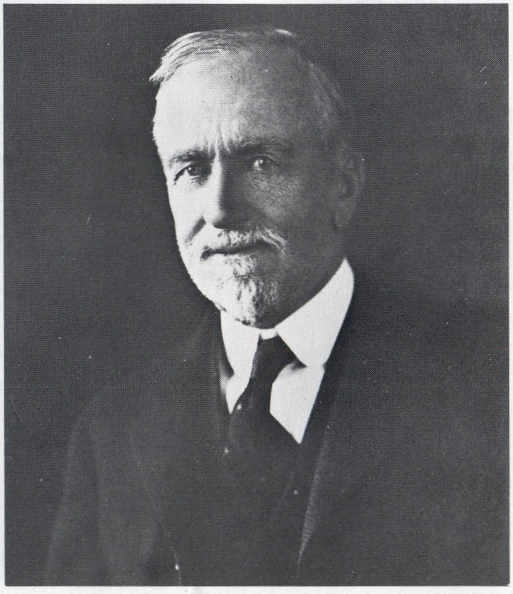


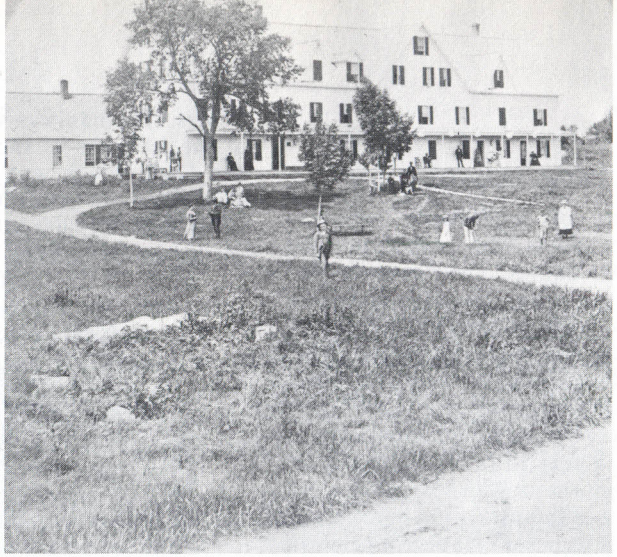
The Sinclair Hotel about 1894.



Victor Whitcomb and Fred Girouard's dog in front of the Sinclair porch in the winter of 1917. The Sinclair porch (right, page 59) crowded with summer guests, about 1890.

Isaac S. Cruft built the Maplewood Hotel in 1876 and then in 1880 developed the Cruft Block (left). The building at one time had five floors and many felt, probably unjustly, Cruft built the fifth floor to destroy the view of the mountains from the Sinclair Hotel. The fifth floor roof was removed in 1893 because it swayed dangerously in winter storms. The block was the center of town activity and contained through the years a jail, post office, offices for the *White Mountain Echo,* general store, library, dance hall, lodge rooms and drug store. In 1911 George T. Cruft (below), the nephew of Isaac, sold the block to Myron Jackson who ran a general store until he sold the building to Philip Lyster in 1955. The building is currently used by H. & H Outdoorland, a Trustworthy Hardware store managed by Ralph Holmes. George Cruft gave the town the memorial fountain on Main Street in 1899 and its current town building in 1912.





The Stevens Inn (above left) near Bethlehem Junction has also been operated as Lovejoy's. It is currently owned by Alan and Beverly Miles, who plan to operate a foundry for making iron household items. The Prospect House (above right), was built by M. J. Phillips who sold it to Mr. Macbeth in 1905; the latter in turn sold it to Mr. Zinn. In 1923 the Prospect House burned and the location is now the Stonecrest Colony, owned and operated by Betty and Tony Pepitone and Nancy and Clem Hubert. The Hillcrest Inn (left below) was built by Bryan P. Ferrin and was acquired by Raymond and Ethel Schoewe in 1952. The Inn burned down in 1958, but Ethel McGinnis (the former Mrs. Schoewe) lives on the property with her son and daughter-in-law, Baird and Nancy Schoewe. Gregory and Harriet Wilson currently live in the annex to the Hillcrest Inn.

THE COTTAGE COMMUNITY

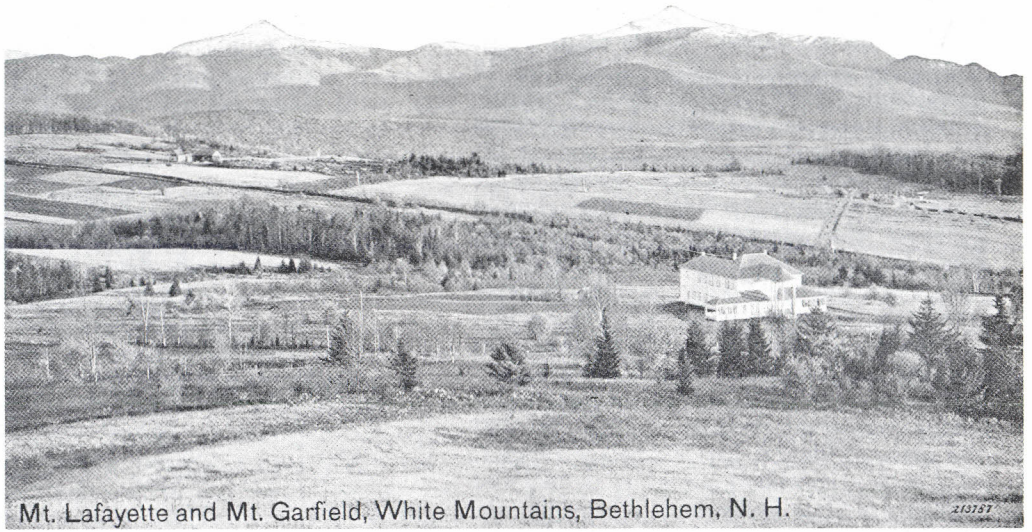
The popularity of Bethlehem's summers began to attract people who wished to have their own summer homes. The "summer cottage colony" began with Governor Howard's "Buckeye," a summer home on Main Street built in 1873. In 1880 Miss Elizabeth Cleveland purchased land belonging to H. W. Wilder and built a cottage known as "Parva Domus." The Rev. John Rhey Thompson of Brooklyn was the next to build and his summer home was known as "The Bells." Located on Strawberry Hill and unique in architecture, it set a pattern for summer homes in our town. W. M. Sayer, Jr., and L. M. Knight were also among the early summer home builders. Mr. Knight started the practice of building summer homes and renting them. "Closed View" was one of them and was the home of poet Will Carleton. It was also owned by Reginald Buckler, one of the editors of *Above the Clouds*, the newspaper printed on Mt. Washington. Another interesting house was the "Gables," built for Mrs. W. H. Kelner.

Possibly the most interesting summer home with garden was built by Theodore Thomas and his wife. Mr. Thomas was the conductor of the Chicago Symphony and in 1867 was the first to introduce Johann Strauss' "Blue Danube Waltz" to an American audience. In 1894, when Thomas and his wife were guests at the J. J. Glessner estate, they were attracted to a plot of land on the Whitcomb farm, about two miles from the village on the Lewis Hill road near its connection with the Franconia road. The house was started in 1896 and soon became a summer showcase. Known as "Felsengarten," it was famous for its outstanding gardens.

Mrs. Thomas was the inspiration and one of the founders of the White Mountain Garden Club, which was organized in 1925. She also wrote the book. *Our Mountain Garden,* which describes her attempts to make a flower garden in Bethlehem. References to a young lad who did chores for her refer to Waldo Whitcomb, the brother of Hattie Whitcomb Taylor. Mr. Thomas died in 1905 and Mrs. Thomas in 1929. Their home still stands but unoccupied for years, it shows the neglect of time, and the lovely gardens, untended for years, are overgrown with weeds.

Felsengarten (above), the summer home of Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Thomas with its abundant gardens, was the theme of Mrs. Thomas' book *Our Mountain Garden.* This photograph was taken in the winter of 1959.

In 1919 A. D. Locke built an imposing edifice near Felsengarten on the Lewis Hill road. Known as "Lone Larch," it commands one of the finest views in the North Country. Built largely of fieldstone, it has a living room 48 by 23 feet, panelled in western pine, with a great stone fireplace. The home is currently owned by Curt Gowdy, the famous sportscaster. The inventor of the Lewis Machine Gun, Col. I. N. Lewis, bought the Bodwell farm and built an impressive home presently owned by the Wrights.



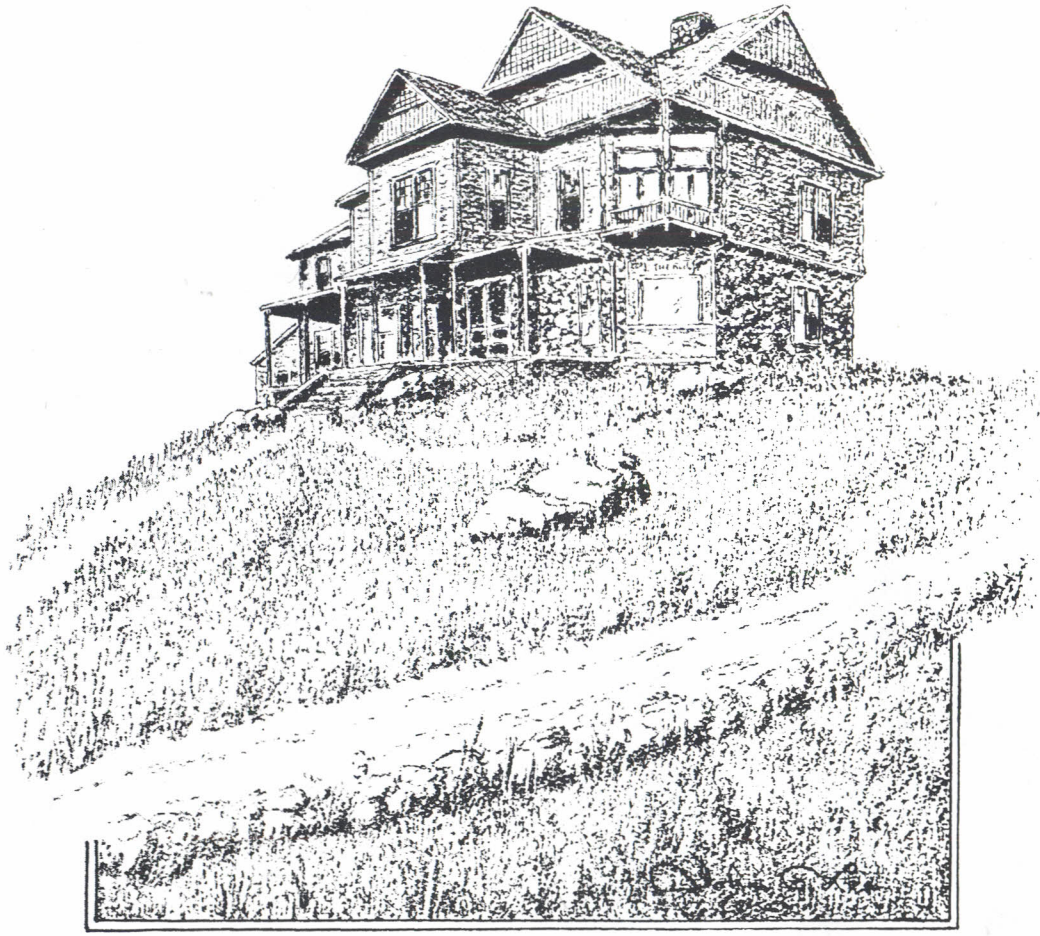
The Frank McCullock farm (left) about 1870 on Route 142 no longer stands but was located near Six Pillars (above) which was built in 1906 by Dr. Shaw. In the background of both pictures can be seen the Ellsworth Wright farm which was formerly owned by Col. I. N. Lewis, the inventor of the Lewis Machine Gun.

"THE ROCKS"

The Glessner Estate known as "The Rocks" is owned by John G. Lee of Farmington, Connecticut and his sister, Mrs. Charles Batchelder of Milton, Massachusetts. They inherited it from their mother, Mrs. Frances Glessner Lee, who in turn received it from her father, John J. Glessner. It was he who purchased the property in 1883 and built the 19 room home known as "The Rocks." John J. Glessner was at his death the vice president of the International Harvester Co., and an active civic leader. He did much to improve the town of Bethlehem, including the building of miles of wide symmetrical stone walls that lined his estate. In 1946 "The Rocks" was torn down but the family retained property and other structures including "The Ledge."

Frances Glessner Lee (1878-1962), the daughter of John J. Glessner, became a summer resident of Bethlehem at the age of nine and a permanent resident in 1938. In 1898 she married Blewett Lee of Chicago. Frances G. Lee was appointed a captain in the New Hampshire State Police in 1943 and was the first woman member of the International Association of Police Chiefs. In 1936 she founded the Department of Legal Medicine at Harvard. Her "Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death," doll-sized tableaux depicting famous murders, were internationally famous. Many of her models were made in Bethlehem by local persons, such as Alton Mosher. In 1948 Erle Stanley Gardner dedicated his *The Case of the Dubious Bridegroom* with the following salute: "To Frances G. Lee, Captain, New Hampshire State Police and one of the few women who ever kept Perry Mason guessing."

In 1971 Percy Maxim Lee and John G. Lee wrote and privately printed *Family Reunion —An Incomplete Account of the Maxim-Lee*



The Big House on the Rocks Estate, drawn by John G. Lee.

Family History. That work contains fascinating accounts of life in Bethlehem when the tourist industry was at its peak. The following excerpts from *Family Reunion* are provided because they tell a great deal concerning the style of life, the attitudes and the mores of those who chose Bethlehem as their summer home. In 1961 Frances G. Lee wrote the following concerning her early days in Bethlehem:

My brother George was 7½ years older than I, and was from his birth a rather delicate boy. I, on the contrary, was a hale and hearty fat child with a tendency to throat trouble. George developed a bad case of hay fever when about 5½ years old and Dr. Charlie Adams (the family physician at that time in Chicago) told my parents that George *must* be moved, for the hay fever months, to some part of this country free of the disease. He gave them a list of places, Littleton, New Hampshire, and Escanaba, Michigan, being two of those he favored. Mother and Father went up to Escanaba, and didn't like it at all. They made some inquiries about Littleton and the replies sounded better to them. By this time, I was "on the way" and railway travel of those days being what it was, my mother couldn't make the long trip to the east, so Aunt Helen (my mother's sister) was pressed into service and brought George up to Littleton, to stay in the old Oak Hill House.

George didn't do well there so Aunt Helen consulted Dr. T. E. Sanger, the only homeopath in town. He told Aunt Helen that George was not "far enough into the mountains" and that she had better take him "farther in" and recommended the Twin Mountain House, perhaps 14 miles further.

There were many people who came to the Twin year after year. In those days, people closed up the city house for the summer, put it up in mothballs, so to speak, and went to some summer hotel for the hot weather. All through the White Mountains there were many of these old wooden hotels, all much alike in plans and furnishing and differing only in the quality of the food they served. The Flume House, the Profile House, the Maplewood, the Twin, the Mount Pleasant, Fabyans, the Crawford House and the Waumbek over in Jefferson were the names of the best known.

I well remember the railroad journey to get up here. We left Chicago on a sleeping car one morning about 10:00 o'clock and lumbered slowly and noisily to Springfield, Massachusetts which we reached on the second noon, only to watch the train for the White Mountains slide away from us as we slid into the station. The two railroads were not on speaking terms and nothing could persuade the New England road to hold the start of their train for the five minutes necessary to make the connection. The two trains were on two tracks side by side and it was torture in the hot weather of early July to see that train bound for what we children called Paradise slip away from us and leave us behind. No other train till the same one next day, so nothing for it but to spend 24 hours in Springfield at the old Massasoit House, right at the station.

Well, next day at noon we were all down at the station for our train. It wasn't a nice train but was made up of "day coaches" the kind with cheap red velvet upholstery and with seat backs that could be shifted from one edge of the seat to the other. We promptly faced two seats towards each other and put our bags on one and ourselves on the opposite one. There was no such thing in those days as a vestibule connection from our car to another even on a train of all Pullman cars, much less on one of all day coaches. But each platform between cars' ends had its brakeman — the engine could not yet control any brakes but its own so when a stop came, the brakemen between the cars had to screw the brake wheels down by hand. These wheels were at each end of the car so the man between cars had to screw down the brakes on two cars for each stop.

Just before reaching a station platform he would open the car doors on his platform and call out "Bellows Falls" or whatever and just as we were leaving he would open them again and call "Next stop Fairlee and Orford." Of course George and I knew every one of these names, "Fairlee and Orford" — "Thetford and Lyme" — "Norwich and Hanover" the first pronounced as spelled. One of the stations he called out was "Eeee Sputney," and we were always waiting for it. Each car had a stove at one end standing on its hind legs, and which was kept practically red hot even on the hottest days. Every little while the train "butcher" would pass along the aisle with newspapers, books and magazines to sell, or candy. Also he would come carrying a tin contraption painted green shaped like a watering can but with no sprinkler on the spout. This utensil was filled with drinking water and there were two thick glasses in a little metal container beside the spout. You stopped the boy as he passed by, took out one of the glasses and held it while he filled it for you and then, empty or not as the case might be, you replaced it and he went on to the next thirsty person. Mother would never let us drink from this affair so that is one experience I missed and probably several colds and other diseases I didn't get.

At last about 5:45 we reached Woodsville-Wells River and there our car was disconnected, picked up by another engine while our old

train went sailing off to Montreal. From that moment the trip was one round of excitement as we knew every house and every tree along the way. Never shall I forget the effect when, stepping off our car in Littleton, I drew the first full breath of good clean country air.

One thing I should tell is about the railroad tickets — yards and yards long. The train from Springfield was a Boston & Maine, I think, but in short stretches it ran on leased tracks owned by another road. Each little stretch, sometimes only 25 or 30 miles, had to have its own ticket and the conductor was constantly coming into the car calling "Tickets Please" and tearing off another tiny coupon from the yardage. In the Pullman from Chicago the dressing rooms were very small, each with two nickel plated basins and hand pumps.

I can remember one place where we stopped at night, on a siding to let the westbound train go by—(Westbound had the right of way in those days and Eastbound had to wait for it). This was right out in the country and very quiet. With the window open I could hear the frogs and could smell the fresh sweet night air. Also I could hear the Westbound approaching and its big noise and roar and rattle as it passed us and then our engine making its appropriate noises to start again.

One of the guests at the hotel was Henry Ward Beecher who came every year. (He was a celebrated clergyman.) He took a fancy to me as I did to him. In the middle of the morning he would go into the bar for a lemonade and often took me with him. I would sit on his knee with a little glass of ice cold lemonade. One day my father walking down the stairs looked in and saw me there. This was at the time Beecher was having his trouble with a mixup with one of his choir singers, unsavory, and in consequence of what he saw, Father said to Mother, "My dear, a summer hotel is not a good place to bring up children. I think, if we are going to have to come up here year after year for George's hay fever, that we will have to have a home of our own." Mother agreed wholeheartedly. About this time I took a hand in affairs by being taken very ill with what was then called "cholera infantum." I don't know what disease it really was, but it was a narrow squeak for me. Dr. Sanger came over by train every day and finally when I was so much better that every other day seemed often enough for him to come, Father decided to talk to him about the possibility of finding some property he could buy, on which to build a house. The doctor said, "Now you hire a buggy and a pair of horses and drive over to Littleton and have noon dinner with me. I think you might find something you'd like, and if so you'd better let me buy it for you, for the local farmers will put on a fancy price for you, and I can get it for nearer what it's worth."

So Mother and Father did just that. They drove past Beech Hill which has one of the most magnificent views of any place I know and came along to Wallace's. Wallace had taken his land up from the government, or rather his forebears had. They had to cut down a number of trees and cleared a place for the house and these trees, cut by hand adze into timbers, boards and shingles, etc. were used to build the house. It had changed hands only by inheritance up to that time. Right in front of the house was a road to the left leading up a steep hill where there was another house of similar construction with more hill beyond it. Mother said, "John, that looks as if there would be a good view up on the top of that hill." Father replied, "Would you like to go up?" So he turned the horses to the left and when opposite the old house he tied them to

a butternut tree growing beside the wall opposite the house, and he and Mother walked on up the hill through a rough rocky pasture where nothing taller than a raspberry bush grew except one white birch tree. When they reached the top there sure enough was a beautiful wide view, including Mt. Washington on the right clear around to the Green Mountains in Vermont on the left and with the towns of Bethlehem, Littleton and Scythefactoryville (now Apthorp) spread out as well. As they stood looking at this wide expanse, Mother said, "Now the front door would be here and the driveway would go along here." Father said, "I think you are quite right." And so they went on in to Dr. Sanger's. He asked, "Well, did you see anything you liked?" and when the property was described to him he said he thought it was for sale—most everything was—and the arrangements were made for him to buy it, which he did.

When we arrived at Littleton station there was Alec Williamson with the carriage and the pair of bay horses, Bill and Jerry, to meet us. George and I were so happy to be there that we thought we couldn't live till we got home—a three mile drive. My mother, ever a wise planner, would have sent the maids on ahead and so the house was always ready to receive us with a bright fire burning in the hall fireplace and the table set in the dining room where shortly a delicious hot supper awaited us. We had two cooks, Mary Friel and Mary Dempsey, who spelled each other. We always brought Mary Dempsey up here and left Mary Friel to take care of Father in Chicago. I don't know which was the better cook —I adored them both and both in turn loved me and were always willing to let me play in the kitchen and to teach me how to do things. That first night at the Big House was always something never to be forgotten—so cool, so clean, so quiet. George and I would settle down in our beds so deliciously comfortable we could hardly wait to get to sleep and to wake up in the morning to bright sunshine and to getting up to be sure that everything was still there.

The people who stayed at the Twin couldn't imagine why we wanted a house of our own and made many remarks about our decision, remarks both skeptical and critical. Mother, realizing that their curiosity, if nothing else, would bring them over to call, wisely prepared for the occasion. She had a huge black fruitcake made by Delmonico and stocked her cellar with some fine French red wines. So one day a mountain wagon with 4 horses brought about 16 of the Twin's guests over to call and the wine and fruit cake were brought out and passed around. Each lady looked at the cake and with turned up nose said, "No thank you" until one lady braver than the others took both cake and wine and then said, "Better take some, Mrs. Devoe, it's really good."

The guests asked many questions — some of them silly, such as "Don't you get lonely up here?" and "Do you get anything to eat up here?" We were always so glad to see them go and so annoyed when they came. For a time it got to be "one of the sights" and every driver of a mountain wagon of tourists considered it a "thing to do" to bring his wagon load of sightseers up to our front door to see what "he" had done. This reached its climax one hot summer day when I was sitting on the porch and a wagon load of tourists drove up to the kitchen window and called in to the cook to order a pitcher of lemonade made for them. She of course refused. I had great pleasure telling my parents about this and it resulted in a pair of formal stone gate posts with a gate between (never closed) and a sign "The Public is Requested Not to Enter These Grounds." Much discussion over whether it should be "the public is" or "the public are." This settled the problem and the intrusions became fewer and fewer until after a year or two they ceased altogether.

The son of Frances G. Lee, John G. Lee, wrote the following concerning his early experiences in Bethlehem:

There was an established summer routine. Breakfast at eight, then "fix the flowers." Each morning the gardener brought in a huge basket of cut flowers. My mother spent an hour or more arranging them. There was a great collection of vases and other ornaments resting on a foot-wide shelf that went around all the living rooms in the house. It covered the top of the fieldstone base. My mother had no pictures in the front of the house—just vases of flowers and handsome brass and pewter and glass and copper ornaments on the wide shelf. We children were expected to help fix the flowers, while I, for one, would much rather have been flying a kite.

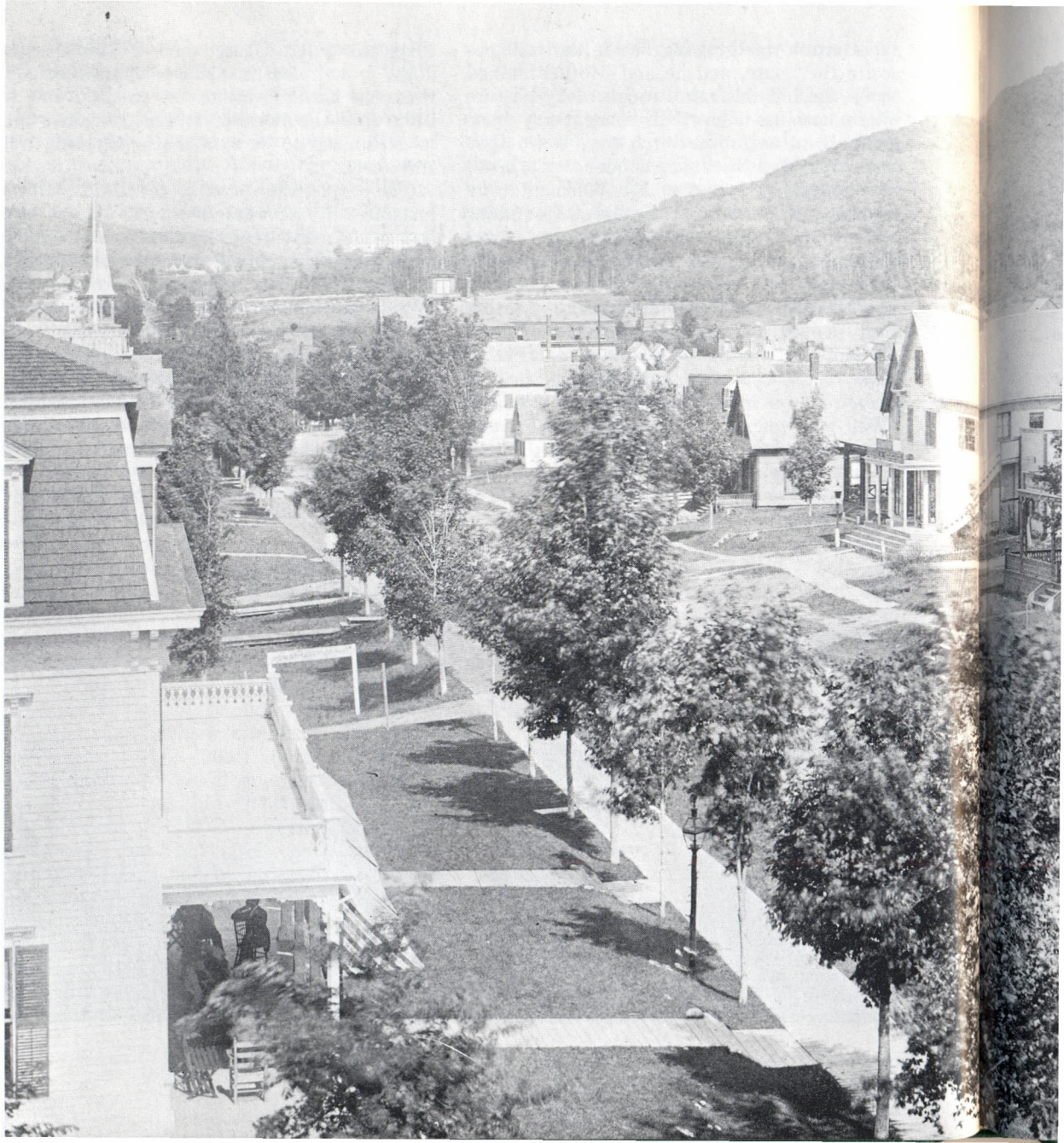
After lunch, my grandparents went riding in the buggy behind Topsy — a large black mare of sedate habits. They drove to wherever new work was being done—a field being cleared and the countless rocks and boulders being made into broad stone walls or the base for roads. They would sit in the buggy and watch all afternoon. To quote the *Littleton Courier*, "Some will say the first good roads in the North Country were built by Mr. Glessner. At one time there were more than 80 men engaged in this activity. The stones were moved by oxen, horses, and manpower, as this was long before tractors and modern farm or earth-handling equipment was available."

But the man whom I remember best, and whose mark the path still bears after 70 years, is John Glode. He was old—he had always

been old, it seems, short, squarish with a drooping moustache, a stubble over most of his face, a shabby vest open at the front, a dark nameless shirt, suspenders, trousers so old they had character, and powerful hands. He cut the stone steps to make the walk easy, leveled the path between the great boulders and trees, built up retaining walls, and made this path a delight to walk on.

One would hardly notice the granite steps or the telltale half-round grooves spaced along their edges where he had drilled holes with his hand hammer and drill, and split the stone along its seam with shims and wedges. In his earlier days John Glode had had charge of the blasting and many a boulder was dynamited to pieces in JJG's fields when it was too big to split and carry away. In those days there were no tractors or bulldozers. Rock was treated with respect. It was moved with sweat and profanity, and with oxen and great skill. I have seen John Glode seated on a rock, a tall drill sticking up from between his legs, and three men striking it with sledge hammers. They stood around him in a circle, and struck in turn, mighty two-handed blows, so the hammer head seemed only a moving streak. With each blow the drill would ring, and between each blow John Glode would turn the drill a little. There was a rhythm to it—ring-ring-ring—ring-ring-ring. The blows fell at about the pace of a man's footsteps in a steady walk —ring-ring-ring—ring-ring-ring. It was something to see.

When John was older he spent most of his time keeping up the Mile Path and making new paths—a veritable network on the back hill. I used to watch him, fascinated with the seeming ease with which he handled his own hammer. Once I asked him if any man had ever missed a stroke when he was holding the drill and hit his hand. "Not yet," he said.



Evening at the Big House meant an early dinner. Afterwards my grandmother and her two sisters sat around the table in the hall embroidering under the yellow light of oil lamps, or the equally yellow electric light which duly replaced them. My grandfather read the paper and usually fell asleep. Small wonder, for it was his custom to get up very early in the morning, 5:30 I think, write his letters, and confer with Mr. Sullivan, the superintendent, before breakfast at 8 o'clock in the morning.

Main Street looking east, taken about 1890. Left: Howard House and Methodist Church; right: Gilmore House, Sunset House (built by H. Clark, now Ruth Sherman Apartments), Goodale Studio, Dr. Hildreth's house, Susie Abbott house, I. A. Taylor house and Sinclair Hotel in far background.

Governor Howard's Buckeye (left) of 1873 was the first summer cottage built in town. It started the trend toward a cottage community and the development of unique structures, such as The Bells (below). The town still has a high proportion of second home owners, but unlike earlier years they now visit Bethlehem during all the seasons.