

September 16, 1996

Freedom's Way Heritage Association, Inc.
43 Buena Vista St.
Ft. Devens, MA 01433

Dear Mr. Farwell,

I am writing in response to your inquiry regarding the location of taverns within a National Heritage Corridor, including our town of Chelmsford, MA. This was indeed an interesting request, and one that took some researching to find the answers! I hope the information I was able to glean will be of some assistance to you.

According to the History of Chelmsford, by Rev. Wilson Waters in 1917, the town had such an establishment in 1672, seventeen years after its incorporation. I have included a photocopy from Waters book which lists the names of some of these proprietors. Upon further research, I was able to locate the names and addresses of a few of the historic taverns in Chelmsford. While most of these buildings are still standing, none are presently used as "Public Houses" today. I will provide you with background information on a few of the more well-known taverns:

- *Fiske House, 1 Billerica Road, c.1798*; built in 1798 by Simeon Spaulding, Jr., son of the Revolutionary War colonel Simeon Spaulding. At one time Thomas Morre owned the house and conducted a tavern there, known as the Lafayette House. In 1839, Mr. & Mrs. John Minot Fiske came from Boston with their three sons in search of a country place. They intended to buy an older house which had belonged to Rev. Ebenezer Bridge, great grandfather of Mr. Fiske, but Mrs. Fiske took a fancy to the tavern. The northeast room contained the bar. It remained in the Fiske family until about 15 years ago. Today it serves as office space.
- *J.S. Spaulding House, 109 Billerica Rd*, built prior to 1800; Said to be one of the oldest houses in Chelmsford, this building was owned by Jonathan Manning, a housewright, farmer, and by 1812 a tavern keeper, who moved here from Billerica. His son-in-law, Benjamin Chamberlain, later succeeded him there as inn-keeper. For thirty years after the Civil War the house was owned by Jacob Spaulding, whose daughter, Mary S. Lovering, remained there until her death in 1910.
- *Manning House, 110 Billerica Road, 1816*; This substantial colonial building was built by Jonathan Manning in 1816 and used as a tavern. The opening of the railroad, in 1835, took away the trade from this, as well as other taverns, and it closed in 1838. In 1872 the property was bought by the town and became known as the Town Farm.
- *Marshall House, 61 Carlisle St., c.1753*; This was a famous tavern and stage coach stop on the road to Boston. At the time it was built, it was the only house on the road from the Billerica line to what is now Gorham Street, Lowell, but was then East Chelmsford. Thomas Marshall was the first Marshall to settle in E. Chelmsford.

He made his home in this house and it remained in the Marshall family until 1860. Thomas was the brother of Dr. Jonas Marshall, who resided at the Barrett-Byam Homestead on Byam Rd. before and during the Revolution.

- *Parkhurst's Store, 2 Chelmsford St., c.1862*; An old tavern stood near this spot and was kept by Oliver Barron and later Joseph Reed. It burned in 1861. The Chelmsford Historical Society has the tavern ball in its collection. The word "Reed" is visible on the gold-colored wooden ball, which was a signal to stage coach drivers as to whether to "high ball" through town or not, depending on whether there were passengers waiting for the stage. The building now standing on this site was built by Edwin King Parkhurst and was located near where the old Town Hall stands. When the railroad was built, the structure was moved to its present location and operated by ~~Samuel Stevens Parkhurst~~ as a grocery store. *Today, it serves as office space.*
- *Sam Martin House, 145 Park Road, c.1790*; this was once a tavern and a relay station for the Pony Express.
- An area now a part of the city of Lowell:
Middlesex Tavern, (1700's - 1900's); Also known as Clark's Tavern in colonial days, probably built by Col. Jonas Clark, son of Chelmsford's second minister. Such distinguished guests as Lafayette and John Hancock had spent the night there. Was stopping place for Middlesex Canal travelers. Approximate location today ⊖ former Alexanders Supermarket Store in Lowell.

See also
Waters, page 46D.

I must add one more tavern to the list, however, it is located in the town of Billerica, MA. The Manning Manse was built in 1696, is owned by the Manning Association, and is presently leasing the old Manse and new restaurant facilities to "Livingstone's at Manning Manse" at 56 Chelmsford Rd., Billerica, MA. I am a Manning family descendent and serve on the Board of Trustees as Secretary of the Manning Association. Just needed to put that plug in for my own history!

While it seems Chelmsford did have its share of taverns, it seems that none have continued that tradition. Good luck in your research endeavors and please don't hesitate to contact the Society if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely yours,

Rebecca A. Warren,
Curator

Taverns in Chelmsford

- ✓ Fiske House 1 Billerica Rd
- Holt House 32 Billerica Rd
- J. S. Spaulding House 109 Billerica Rd.
- Manning House 110 Billerica Rd.
- Marshall House 61 Carlisle St.
- Parkhurst's Store 2 Chelmsford St. later Reed's Tavern
- Frost/Carlton/Dyer House 114 Gorham St.
- Solomon Byam/Chamberlain House 19 Maple Rd.
- Sam Martin House 145 Park Rd.
- Middlesex Tavern, aka Clark's Tavern (1700's to 1900's) near Middlesex Canal