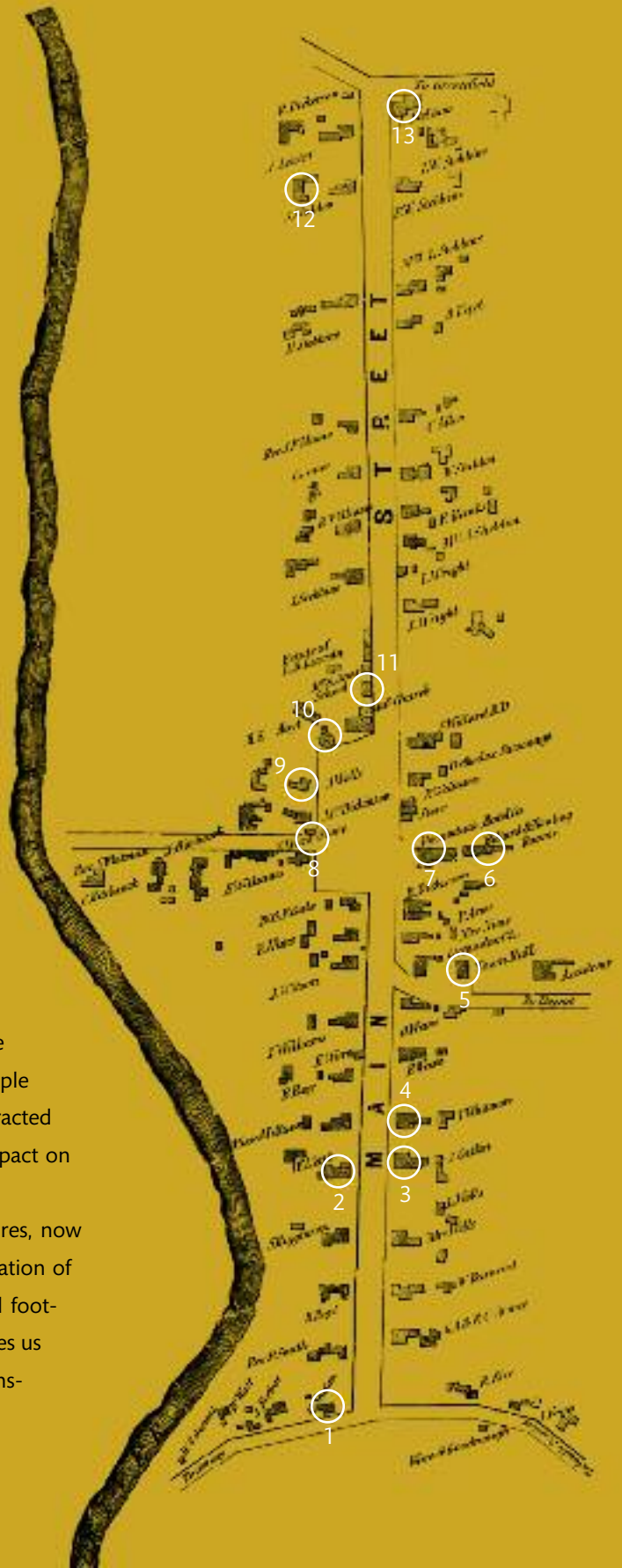


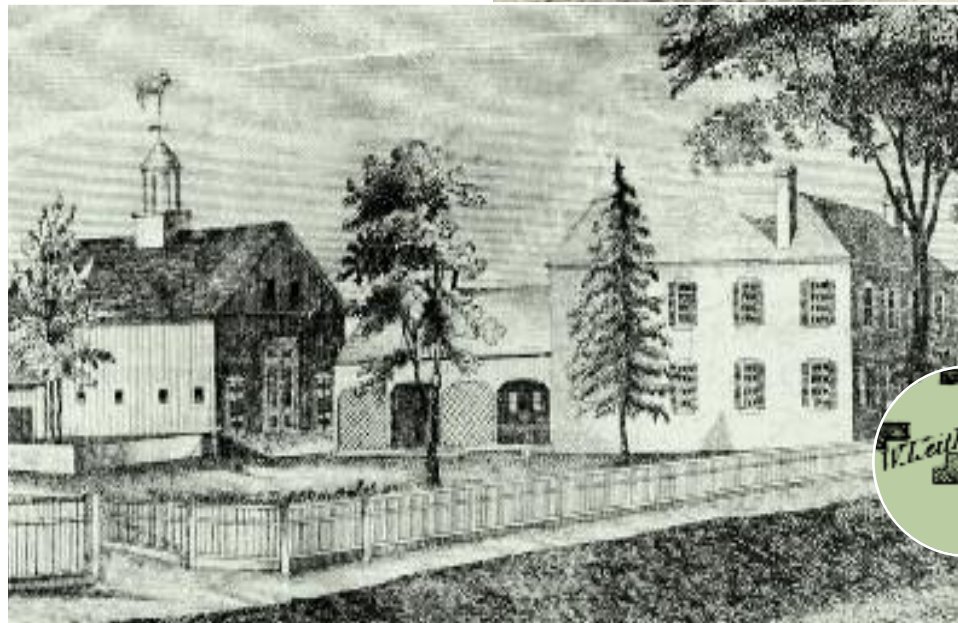
# LOST DEERFIELD

Deerfield is often regarded as a place of continuity. Visitors who spend a day in the village are left with an impression of the timelessness of the houses, many of which stand on their original lots. Even the street itself follows a centuries-old path. A romanticized view that ‘nothing has changed’ in Deerfield could not, in fact, be further from the truth. Like every community, the village of Deerfield has witnessed numerous changes over its nearly 350 years. Time and disasters—natural or otherwise—have caused deterioration and destruction. Human activity has had even greater effect. Military conflict has wreaked the greatest havoc, the wholesale destruction of the 1704 raid standing above all others. More subtle and incremental are alterations to the village made by Deerfield’s inhabitants. Some changes were highly visible. In 1824, for example, the present Brick Church in the center of town replaced the wooden structure where townspeople had worshipped since 1729. Other changes undoubtedly attracted the notice of neighbors and others, but ultimately had less impact on the overall character of the village.

What follows is a pictorial review of a number of structures, now lost, that stood in the village in 1855 at the time of the publication of Benjamin Clark’s *Map of the Town of Deerfield*. Clark included foot-prints of structures on a detailed inset of the village that provides us with a yardstick with which to measure some of the Street’s transformation.



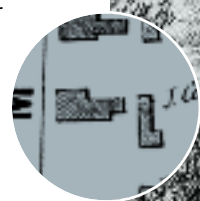
1. Lot 20. This one-story saltbox gambrel roofed house, located just west of the Street's south-end island, overlooked the south meadows. It was likely built in the latter part of the 18th century, though an exact date cannot be determined. In 1791, when John Williams sold this portion of lot 20 to Abigail Norton, the property included unspecified "buildings." It wasn't until a 1798 property transfer from then-owner David Sexton to his son, Rufus, that a dwelling house was specifically mentioned. The house burned in 1891. Courtesy of Memorial Hall Museum.



2. Lot 16. View from the south looking north of the c. 1792 house of Thomas Wells complete with a large barn and cowhouse, as depicted on the 1855 map of Deerfield. The structure was moved off the site in 1866, and eventually demolished in 1892. The image's hipped roof and paired chimneys reveal a central hall plan very similar to Historic Deerfield's Hinsdale and Anna Williams house 1817 remodel, complete with attached carriage shed.



3. Lot 24. Built by Samuel Catlin in 1815 on the east side of the street facing west at the south corner of Main and what is now Wells Street, this hipped roof center hall house with a rear story and a half ell was one of a number of fashionable Federal-style houses built along the street in the early years of the 19th century. The house burned in 1871; the fire reportedly starting in a defective chimney in the rear ell. Drawing by Agnes Higginson, c. 1870. Courtesy of Memorial Hall Museum.





4. Lot 25. The Ebenezer Smead house, torn down in 1889, was erected around 1718 on the east side of the street facing west. The square plan, with direct access into the front parlor through the front door and an offset central chimney, emanated from southeastern New England, suggesting that framers from this region migrated to the Deerfield area early in the 18th century. Photo by Emma Lewis Coleman, 1886. Courtesy of Memorial Hall Museum.



5. Lot 27III. The small, one-story building on the right side of the image is the 1842 Town house, or Town hall. The building was constructed in response to the burning in 1841 of the brick town school on the common where town meetings had been held. In 1878, the building was enlarged by turning it sideways, jacking it up, extending it 14 feet, and building a new first floor under the structure for three classrooms while reserving the second floor for Town meetings. In 1925, the building, now owned by PVMA, was remodeled to its present form, based on the Framingham, MA, town hall.



6. Lot 29II. Pocumtuck House Billiard and Bowling rooms. The larger, house-like structure is the late-18th century Ebenezer Barnard tavern that once stood along the east side of the Street facing the common on Lot 29II. It was moved out behind the new Pocumtuck House which took its place in 1853. The long, low extension housed the bowling operation. This structure, along with the Pocumtuck House, burned in 1877. The image is a detail from an 1867 photograph taken from Pocumtuck Ridge to the east of town. Photo courtesy of Memorial Hall Museum.







7. Lot 29II. Between 1805 and 1935 this lot on the east side of the street facing the common supported a tavern and several hotels. This image depicts the Pocumtuck House, constructed in 1853 and burned in 1877. The 1699 Old Indian house door, on display in the hotel's lobby, was rescued during the early stages of the fire.



8. Lot 7. The 18th-century general store of Elijah Williams and his heirs stood on the west side of the common at the junction with Albany road. In the 19th century it was owned and operated by Orlando Ware and then his son, Edwin, until 1870. Note in the background on right a portion of the façade of the Elijah Williams house when it stood close to the common before being moved back on the lot in 1877. The store was eventually moved to the site of the present Deerfield Inn, where it burned in 1881. Photo courtesy of Memorial Hall Museum.



9. Lot 13. The 18th-century, center chimney, Thomas Wells house, located on the west side of the common facing east, could very well have been built by Thomas in the mid- to late- 1720s around the time of his marriage to Sarah Hawks in 1726. Careful scrutiny of the image reveals several agricultural outbuildings tucked behind and to the north of the house. In May 1892, a fire in one of the nearby barns traveled to the house and burned it to the ground.





**10.** Lot 12.2 Built in 1848 by the last resident of the Old Indian house, Henry Hoyt's house stood just west of the Brick Church on the Old Indian house site. Hoyt, a frugal New Englander, recycled some of the materials from the 1699 Ensign John Sheldon House, known as the Old Indian House after the 1704 raid on Deerfield, in his new house. George and Jennie Arms Sheldon purchased the building in 1910, and donated it to the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. In 1949, Deerfield Academy purchased the building, but demolished it in 1960 to make room for a new classroom building. Most of the reused material from the early house was saved by Historic Deerfield.



**11.** Lots 12.5 & 13.4. The Grange, built in 1842 as the Town Street School, stood on the Street just north of the 1824 brick church. In 1874 the building's function changed to that of a Grange hall where activities to promote the social and economic needs of farmers were held. After changing ownership several times, Jennie Arms Sheldon purchased it in 1911 and donated it to Deerfield Academy. After being moved to the Academy campus, behind what is now the main administration building, it served as a meeting place and club for female students until the Academy tore it down in 1951. The Grange postcard dates from the early 20th century.

**12.** Lot 3. Behind Historic Deerfield's Sheldon house, built in 1754/55, can be seen agricultural buildings that supported the family's farming activities. This c. 1900 photograph, taken looking north, captures some of the work space where many members of the Sheldon family labored throughout the seasons.



**13.** Lot 43. This 1855 lithographic view, looking from northeast to southwest, depicts the numerous barns and other agricultural buildings behind the 1824 residence of Asa Stebbins Jr. at the very north end of the Street. While the main brick house still stands at the West end of the lot, as shown on this view, all the agricultural outbuildings depicted are long gone. The house of son Edward Stebbins, at the far left in the image, still looks much as it did when it was constructed in 1849 at the east end of the homelot.

