



Built in 1825

The Bayley-Hazen Military Road

TOWN OF WALDEN

The Hazen Military Road
Town of Walden

We really should start our part of the road on the edge of the town of Cabot where the Walden Heights-Cabot Road now crosses the Hazen Road about 1.2 miles from Route #15 at Walden Heights, or about 3.8 miles from the Village of Cabot.

The road is well designated by the depression made by years of use before the road was discontinued.

As you follow northerly along this road you have a beautiful view to the west, until you pass an old cellar hole. Then you dip down hill for some distance until you come to a small cattail swamp on the right where the road was built up to avoid the marsh. Along the road thirty paces from the center line of the swamp and then westerly fifteen paces off the road, is a marker that commemorates the shooting of General Gordon. This marker is in the town of Cabot near the town line. Please don't stop here; come into the town of Walden - you have traveled less than half a mile. The way is still easy to follow and soon you will pass another small cattail swamp on the right. Then through a gate into the valley road to Cabot. Please be sure you have closed the gate so the cattle won't get out. This Valley-Road once connected Walden Heights and Cabot, and you go straight across this road onto another old discontinued roadway; here the Hazen Road keeps straight over the knoll while this better roadway bears slightly right and is only a short cut to the valley road. But the Hazen Road is to the left and crosses the lower end of two swampy bogs before swinging right to slab a steep hillside, and returning to compass direction half way up this hill. Soon you are at the top and over, down to where it crosses the Walden town road near the present residence of Frank Greaves.

Now you have come another half mile. In 1875 this farm was owned

by L. H. Collins, but formerly was part of the land owned by Nathaniel Perkins, the first settler. Mr. Greaves' buildings are in the westerly corner of this four corners. Along the Hazen Road 60 paces bearing to the north and 100 paces westerly is a cemetery where many of the first settlers were laid to rest. This family of Perkins built the first family-house in Walden near the old block house, which was built by General Hazen in 1778.

Description of the Walden blockhouse on the
Bayley-Hazen Military Road, from:

Elkins, Jonathan. "Reminiscences."
(In Vermont Historical Society.
Collections, v. III (Upper Connecticut,
v. I). Montpelier, VHS 1943, p. 270)

...The 2d (blockhouse) was built in Walden 12 miles above Elkins, that was built for to be a more servicable one, a large log house 20 by 40 feet, with a stone chimley in the middle, and the beams run over all around the house about 6 feet and covered with hewed timbers on the outer side of this House was carried up above 6 feet higher with port holes for small armes, and about 3 or 4 rods from the house there was placed the tops and limbs of trees 8 or 10 feet high and sharpened to a point, except a narrow way to pass in, and there was brush sharpened (?) in the same way to fill up the road if nessery, and the trees was all fell for some distance from the block house, &c.

It is accepted as a fact that the first white inhabitants of Walden were a small garrison under command of a Major Walden, in the winter of 1779-1780, his name being given to the township. The block house remained standing for many years, and housed early settlers. In it the first school was held, and it was also the scene of the first religious services, and the first white birth which was Jessie Perkins in 1790. At one time it served as a homestead for Mr. & Mrs. Gideon Sabin and their 26 children. Here may be seen a well about 20 feet deep, dug and walled by the garrison, still in splendid condition.

Today this is purely an agricultural vicinity with land under cultivation at an altitude of 1,671 feet, one of the highest elevations

at which agriculture is carried on in the state. From this point you look north-east by east onto the present Foster farm, where the first death in Walden occurred when Samuel Gilman was clearing land and had gone out in the evening to roll the burning piles together. On his failing to return his wife went looking for him, and found his body crushed under a smoldering tree that had toppled onto him. Part of the present house on this farm is over 150 years old and is the oldest standing inhabited house in town.

Beyond this farm up the hillside is where the Stevens families settled. Ebenezer Stevens being the first, in about 1795, and by 1804 was the possessor of about 1000 acres of Walden soil.

Now turn around and face in a westerly direction so you are looking over the Hazen Road. You can see the buildings where Mr. Olney now lives, where David Farrington settled about 1804. A bit farther to the right is a farm now owned by Elmer Bean, which was cleared by William Dutton soon after 1800. There are two cellar holes on the other side of the Hazen Road close by, but we can find no record of who built there.

About due east is Lyford's Pond, but you cannot see it from here. All of this pond lies in the town of Walden and was named for a Lieutenant Lyford of General Hazen's army during the road construction.

Now we will continue on over the Hazen roadway and in so many places you can see Jay's Peak in the distant northerly landscape. It seems that only one more house was built beside this road before you travel down the long slope toward Meadow Brook and there is no record of its builder.

Now for half a mile you follow a row of aged elm trees down a long hillside in a northerly direction to a hard surface town highway. You here cross Meadow Brook and climb a grade. Ahead you see the old

Farrington Tavern Stand, where Roy and Jennie Goodenough now live; you have arrived at South Walden. A long shed connects the horse-barn to the house so that in the rough wintery weather the traveler was sheltered as his team was unhitched and stabled for the night. He was also sheltered from the wind as he went to the house. This is the Road Tavern built by Nathaniel Farrington who settled in the south part of Walden in 1799, building a large log cabin which they opened as a public house, lodging travelers of the Hazen Road. Later he built the present frame structure and opened the first Stage Tavern in the town of Walden. This is made of hand-hewn timbers and hand planed boards which are well preserved and show the handicraft-skill of the carpenters.

Here you cross State Highway Route #15 to a well graveled road. A quarter of a mile beyond you come to a white church standing alone on the left hand side of the road, and from here you can look northwest to view Mt. Mansfield. Some very beautiful sunsets and sunrises have been viewed along this road for the next mile. This church, built in 1825, is also of hewn timbers braced by mortise and tenant construction and fastened by wooden pins. One timber along the front base is 18 inches square and 36 feet long, with no wainy corners showing on the open side. This took quite a tree, of a variety that has stood the years and still is a solid sill. What stories this old church might tell about bygone days if it could speak. It has weathered four different Protestant religions - Congregational, Free Baptist, Universalist, and Methodist.

From here to Morrill Brook were a number of houses that have possibly been destroyed by fire at various times, as there are eight known cellar holes that still showed plainly five years ago. A short distance beyond the church on the left was the first town house in

Walden, the cellar hole is still showing. The old cemetery is over a half mile to the north on the left side of the road, but first let's stop at Morrill Brook where Abel Morrill settled before 1800 and built the first saw mill in town. Here also was built a blacksmith, carriage shop and a grist mill. This was a booming community about 1850. As stories go this is where Indian Joe's father left General Hazen to go back to see his family by the pond in Cabot, later known as Joe's Pond in honor of his son Joe.

Progress was slow in building the road from between the ponds in Danville to here and the aged Indian had been away from his family a long time that summer, so he departed in the night and did not return. This may be true or false as some of the legends can be, but is true to Indian nature.

Easterly up this brook about a mile is a wonderful piece of railroad bridge building for its time (about 1895) by the use of a large granite-block tunnel that is worth a person's time to see. This tunnel is covered with dirt to level the railroad track. The stone work is massive, being about 200 feet long and about 30 feet high, made up of stone blocks 8 feet long, 24 inches wide, and 24 inches thick, forming a huge arched canopy. This trestle was first built of wood to span a gully about 200 feet deep and about 300 feet across the top, then the stone tunnel was laid and the trestle filled with dirt *on the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad.*

Now Up a sharp climb ^{on our road} and on the right is another old house built by Nathaniel Farrington about 1805. This has some nice stone work for a base, and housed a country store and post office for many years. There were three fireplaces and four cellars in this house.

Up the hill to the cemetery on the left. This was a gravelly knoll and good digging, and the back part of the yard is very old with some interesting epitaphs on some of the stones. Early

settlers' names are on many of the stones.

Here and for a half mile farther you can have a wonderful view of Mt. Mansfield to the west, also Jay's Peak farther to the north across hills and valleys.

The next dwelling is that of Lester Fuller, a plank house like many others in the vicinity and here John Weeks kept one of the first stores in town. Near the south side of this house can be seen a well similar to the one near the block house and is said to have been dug by men while the Hazen Road was being constructed past this point. Also here Capt. Edmund Eddy was the first carriage-maker in town, about 1820.

After traveling over a hill to a small brook now known as Dudley Brook, you go $1/8$ mile up a hill to the old Edwards farm house where Mrs. Albia Charland now lives. At this point the Hazen Road continues straight across a field, passing in front of Mr. Guy's house, then across the St. J. & L.C. R.R. track and continues in a northerly direction, passing close to the north end of Bert Wheeler's house. About $1/4$ mile from this point we cross the town line into Hardwick, somewhere near the site of the Whipple buildings which are but a short distance crosslots north-east, to the late Governor Bell buildings now owned by John Hancock. Just a bit about this Governor Bell farm that was settled by Esq. James Bell in 1804. He had one son, Hon. James Dean Bell, who held many town and state offices, and was the father of the late Governor Charles J. Bell.

Walden is very proud of having a governor born, raised, schooled and elected to office in this town, who, after serving as governor, retired to his Walden farm to spend his remaining years. Few towns in the United States have such a record in their annals.

The Hazen Road continues on past the site of the Whipple buildings under two fences close to each other and through Mr. Gendron's pasture to a bridge over the St. J. & L.C. R.R. track, now known as "The Dry Bridge".

We have purposely overlapped our description of Walden's part of the Hazen Road in order to start and finish on present hard surface road.

*Compiled and written by
Olive & Maurice Eddy*

We have been honored with much assistance in gaining the preceding information from many sources.

Namely:

St. Johnsbury Atheneum
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Mr. George Luther
Mrs. Jennie Goodenough
Dr. Elmer Farrington
Mr. P. Rudolph Pike
Mr. Carl Warren
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Orner

and

friends and neighbors

1958-1959