

The Lodge at Camp Tecumseh



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Internship at Camp Tecumseh

The Lodge at Camp Tecumseh has been a very important place since its humble beginnings as a farm house. It has seen the days of a working farm, an addition by the town c.1840 to house the town's poor farm and the 1903 purchase of the property by Alex Grant, Josiah McCracken and George Orton, camp founders. All of its history and alterations over the years has made the Lodge not only an interesting study, but also a valuable piece of living history for Camp Tecumseh.

At the beginning of this internship it was important to understand what the camp already knew about the Lodge. Fred Clark's book on the camp, Camp Tecumseh: 1903-1993, provides an array of information and wonderful photographs from the camp's archives, but the Lodge is not the focus of the book. After reading Clark's book and speaking with Bill Hamilton, Emeritus Trustee, a plan was developed to fill in the gaps of the camp's knowledge of the building.

The goal was to discover, through photographs and other documents, the changes that have been made to the Lodge throughout the years, more information on the Lodge when it was a functioning poor farm in the 1840s-90s and any clues as to who was buried in the small town cemetery on the property. The camp's extensive photographic archives proved to be the best resource of information for tracking architectural changes throughout the years. This information was linked to a number of different events throughout the camp's existence, namely growth of the camp, activities centered around the Lodge and the eventual erection of other buildings for camp use.

All other information on the Lodge and the camp was found in Fred Clark's book, but without any citations or sources of where his research came from, it was difficult to retrace his steps. Research trips were made to the Moultonborough Historical Society, the Moultonborough Library and the Town Clerk's office, but attempts were all met with dead ends. The Historical Society did not have any records of the camp and suggested a visit to the Town Clerk office. The Town Clerk did have ledgers of handwritten death records going back to the 1840s, but without knowing any names of possible inmates at the Poor Farm, it was difficult to trace any of them back to the Poor Farm era of the Lodge building.

The following timeline of the Lodge building is a combination of architectural research done using the camp's extensive photograph collection and the camp's history from Fred Clark's book. Each of the years highlighted, when photographs were available, show the major changes in the Lodge building from the earliest known photograph from 1904 up to the present day. Most of the major structural changes were made by 1950 and the present building reflects those changes. The Lodge continues to be an important piece of Camp Tecumseh history as well as an prominent building in the camp's day to day activities. Each camper gets to see his name on the walls of the Lodge among those of the relatives who have walked the grounds of the camp throughout the years. It is a wonderful place for memories and lifelong friends where the history is just as important as the experience.

Origins of the Lodge building

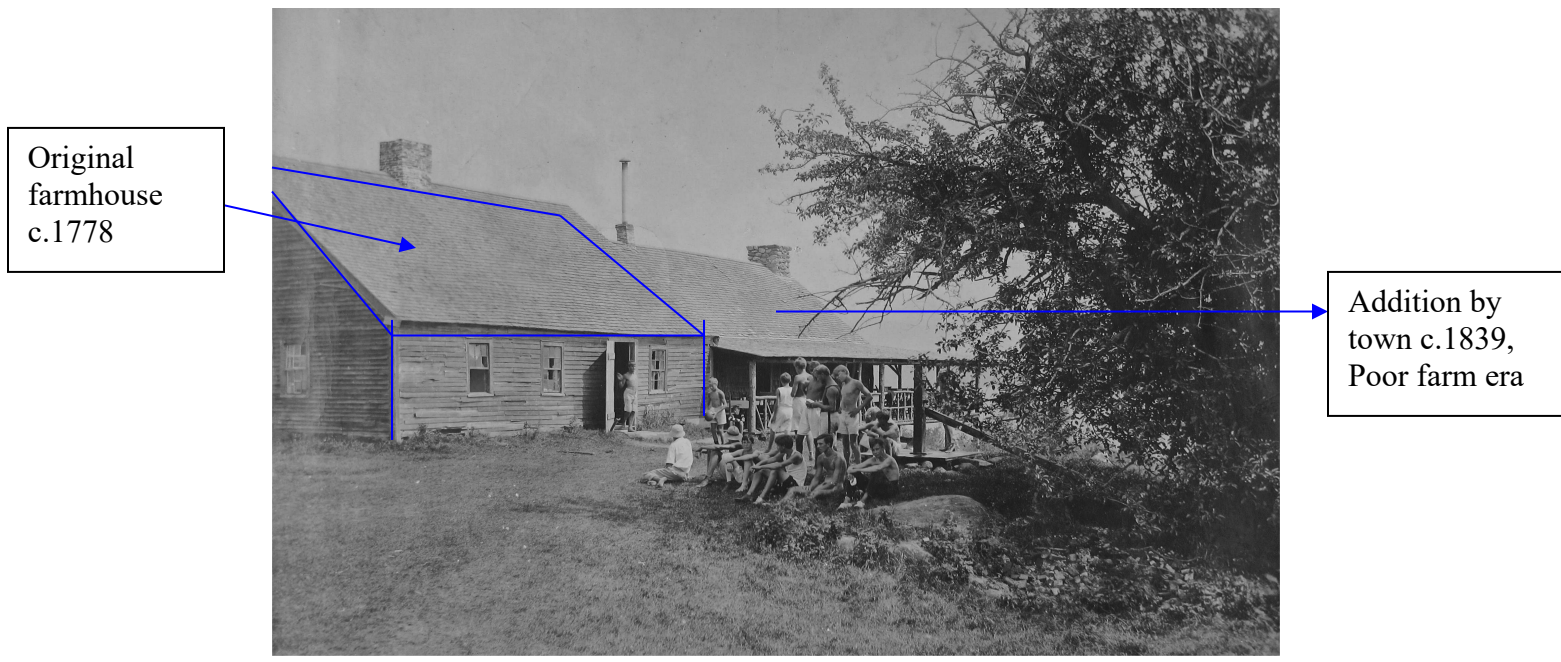


Figure 1: view from Trunk Room, 1905, un-numbered

*Sanborn Chandler (died 1790) purchased land in 1777 from Jonathan Moulton, namesake of Moultonborough¹

* Moulton was given the land in a grant by the British before the Revolutionary War

*Farmhouse was built c.1778 in the Cape style and was a functioning farm for many years, even after Chandler's death in 1790²

*The barn (currently known as the Trunk Room) housed cows and had an attached silo

Poor Farm

Poor farms existed in the US from around 1840-1890s until they began to be converted to the large almshouses after the turn of the century. In New Hampshire, as well as in other states, counties had their own poor farms or almshouses which were state funded. Most of the institutions housed the extremely poor who were unable to make ends meet, others were unable to be cared for by their families and were sent to almshouses for a higher level of care. Some housed the poor and also functioned as workhouses for those who were able to work for a small stipend.

*Farmhouse converted for poor farm which was owned by the town from 1839-1890, addition built by town c.1839³

¹ Chandler, George, *The Chandler Family: The Descendants of William and Annis Chandler who Settled in Roxbury, Mass, 1637*, (Massachusetts: Press of C.Hamilton, 1883), 170.

² Clark, Fred G., *1903-1993: Camp Tecumseh*, (West Kennebunk: Phoenix Publishing, 1994), 7.

³ Clark, *Camp Tecumseh*, 8.

*Small section torn down facing the lake (roofline seen inside lodge), expanded room to be used for individual cells for residents of the poor farm, violent and mentally unstable housed downstairs in cells, used restraints, not medicated.

1904

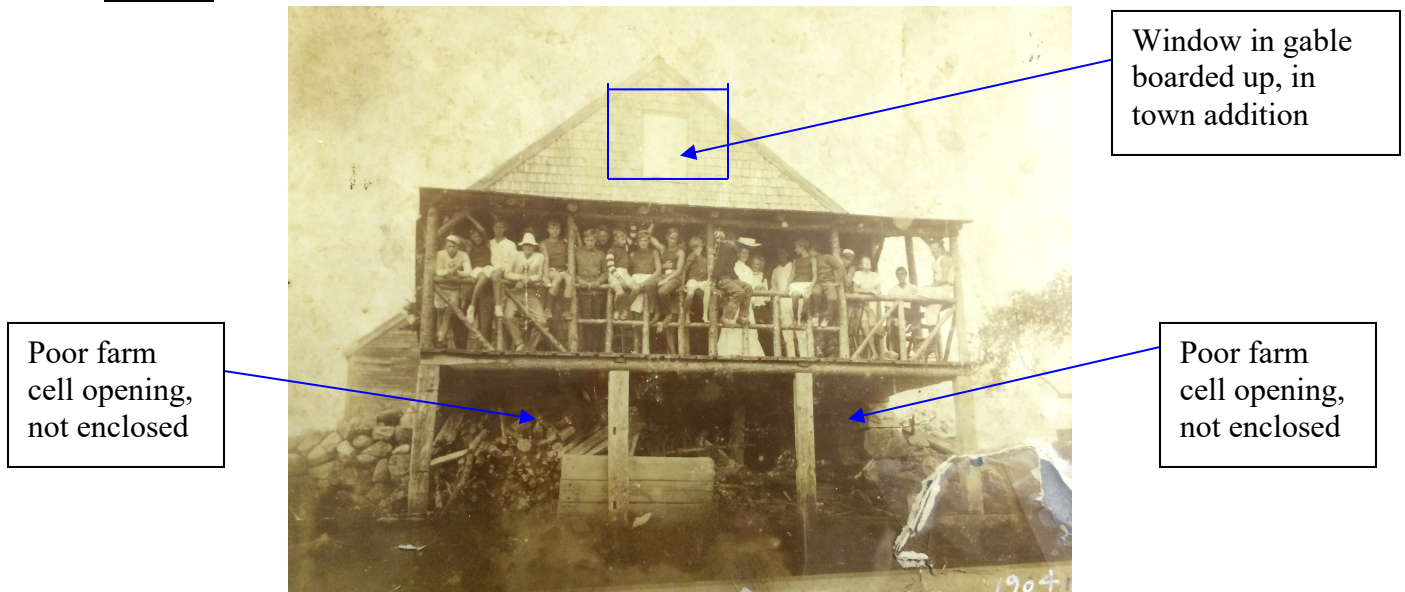
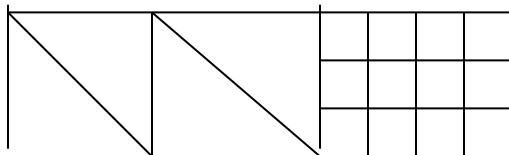


Figure 2: Facing Lake Winnepesaukee, un-numbered

- *Earliest photograph of the Lodge with campers from 1904
- *Size of porch changes throughout the years as enrollment in the camp expanded
- *Campers ate all meals on the porch since there was no dining hall yet
- *No side porches, no stairs down to grass
- *Porch railing design: consistent through 1940



- *Poor farm cells are visible behind stacked wood, empty since the 1890s when the poor farm was no longer using the building
- *Window in gable appears to be boarded up, addition of fireplace chimney in wall of gable could be reason for removal of the window

1905

Chimney added
for large
fireplace, camp
addition c.1905



Figure 3: Facing historic tennis courts, un-numbered

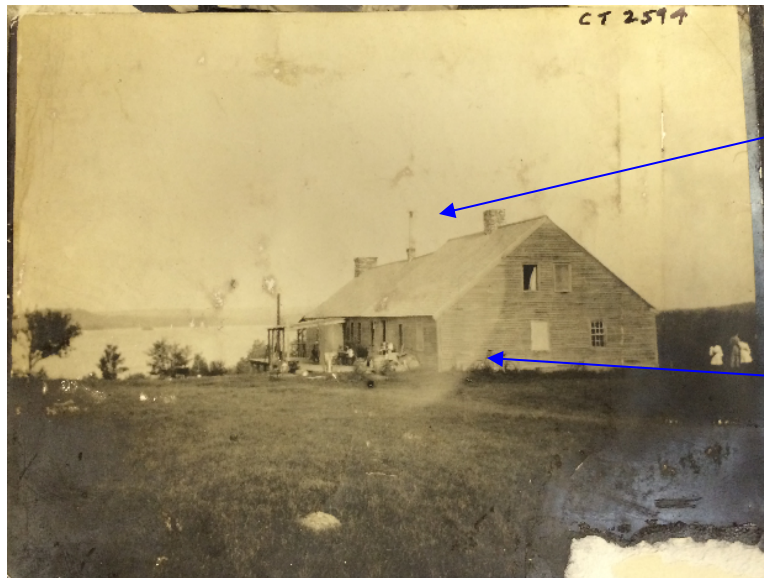
- *Lodge was being used for dining and assemblies during inclement weather
- *Enrollment in camp doubled in the two years since the camp's establishment; dining on the porch still existed, but needed more space for the growing enrollment
- *Additions of the two side porches and expansion of the porch facing the lake
- *Central chimney in Figure 3 for kitchen which was housed in building



Window in
gable present
until c.1910

Figure 4: photograph from 1905, CT 0766

1906



Battery operated
bell called staff by
code

Fifth
window
not present
until 1909

Figure 5: view of Lodge from road, CT2594

*Porch on left side of building has small overhang compared to fully covered porch on right side, completed at a later time

*Bell tower is present in the middle of the two chimneys, only present until c.1912

*Only four windows on back of original farmhouse, fifth window added c.1909



Fifth window
added c.1909

Figure 6: Current view of Lodge from road with fifth window,
photo by author

1907



Figure 4: Interior of Lodge, un-numbered

- *Interior view of Lodge, back of Lodge facing the lake
- *Note there is no indentation in the floor in front of the fireplace
- *Kerosene lamp hanging from beam was used and pine boughs were added for decoration even though they were a fire hazard!
- *Large stone fireplace added by camp in 1905
- *Arch on current fireplace has definite curve, height lower than historic fireplace, re-faced at some time, dates unknown



More
pronounced
arch

Pattern of
rocks differs
from 1907
picture above

Figure 5: current view of fireplace, photo by author

1910

TECUMSEH

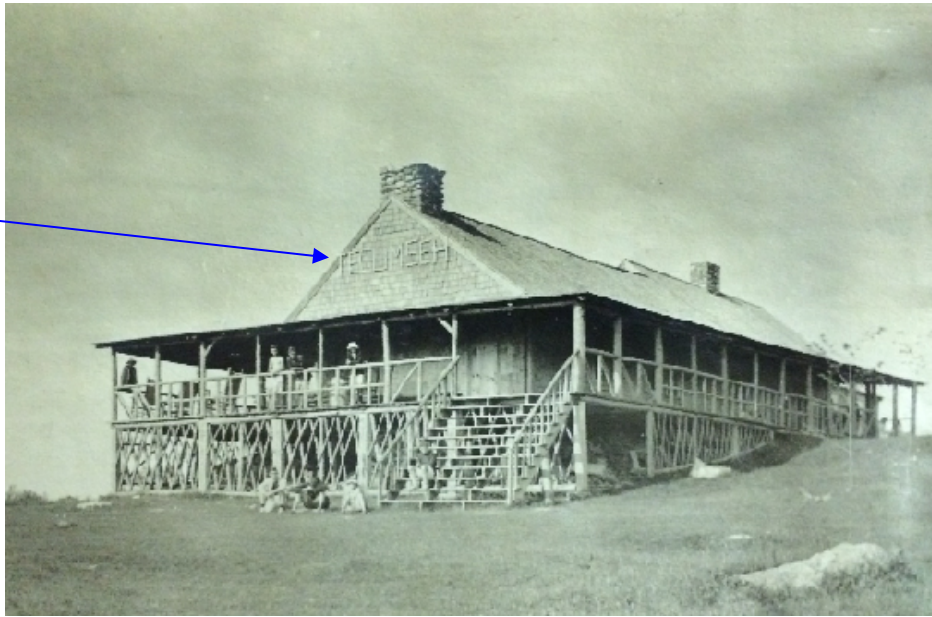


Figure 6: view facing Lake Winnepesaukee, un-numbered

- *Addition of stairs on the back porch facing the lake
- *Lattice added to the underside of the porch on left, right and back to cover cells and field stone foundation
- *TECUMSEH added to gable, covering the window that has been covered and shingled over in order to blend into building
- *Dining no longer takes place on the porch with the building of the Dining Hall



Figure 7: Group picture on back porch, un-numbered

1912



Figure 8: Aerial view of Lodge, CT3299

*"Double hung sashes" have been replaced with 2x2 double hung sashes from earlier 6x6 double hung window sashes (refers to the 2 pieces which make up the entire window, 2x2/6x6 is the number of panes in each of the window pieces.)

*Bell is still present at meeting site of buildings

*Background of photograph shows the camp's growth in just nine years with the addition of the dining hall and other buildings

*Appearance of Lodge has vastly improved over the years, with replacement of windows, shingles, clapboards around side door and painting of trim



First appearance of campers writing their names or initials on the walls, a time honored tradition

Figure 9: Interior of the Lodge, CT3302

1914



Mysterious
"witch
window,"
in gable of
original
farmhouse

Figure 10: Group photograph, exterior of Lodge, un-numbered

*"Witch window," or "coffin window," mysteriously appears in the mid nineteen teens, folklore states they existed in New England, mostly Vermont, and were called "witch windows" because people believed witches couldn't fly through a tilted window⁴

*Folklore also calls them "coffin windows," either because they were shaped as such or because steep, narrow staircases in early homes did not allow coffins to be brought down stairs, instead they had to be taken out the window onto the roof



Figure 11: Witch window present, 1923, CT0848

⁴ Eddy, Katherine, "Building Blocks: Exploring Witch Windows," *The Barre Montpelier Times Argus*, July 30, 2012, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.timesargus.com/article/20120730/THISJUSTIN/707309970>

1915

Slanted floor
present c.1915



Figure 12: Interior of Lodge, campers sweeping new floor, CT0103

*The floor was raised c.1915 to join the original farm house portion to the Poor Farm portion around this time. Instead of the two buildings having their own identities, they were now joined as one marking the importance of the building to the camp and how the Lodge was creating its own history apart from the farm house and Poor Farm that once inhabited it.

*The photograph shows two campers sweeping the floor and debris into the large fireplace at the lake end of the building. It seems the slanted portion of the floor, not present until this time, was used to sweep debris into the fireplace for burning. The benches in the background are the same benches which are still used in the Lodge today.



Figure 13: Modern view, slanted floor still present, photo by author

1916



Figure 14: Theatre comes to the Lodge, CT099

*The arrival of Ralph and Walter Johnson in 1916 brought theatre to the camp and the Lodge was used as the theatre space.

*Skits and musicals were performed every Saturday night with kerosene lamps burning because there was no electricity, and the rafters were adorned with pine boughs. It's a wonder the place didn't burn down!⁵



Figure 15: Plays still being performed in the Lodge, 1942, CT3752

⁵ Clark, *Camp Tecumseh*, 37.

1926-27



Stairs
facing lake

Figure 16: 1910 view of Lodge, stairs facing lake, CT1638



Stairs now
facing
dining hall

Figure 17: View of stairs on side of porch facing the dining hall, 1926, un-numbered

1930s



Figure 18: 1933, Interior of Lodge, campers names and pianist, un-numbered

*The tradition of each camper writing their names on the walls and rafters of the Lodge began in the nineteen teens. This photograph shows the number of campers that had attended camp since then and how they already seemed to be short on room.

*The piano in the background was a tradition started in the nineteen teens as well. Alex Grant wanted to expose the boys to accomplished pianists and provide entertainment. Grant made many connections in the music world and offered the male students of music a free summer at camp.

*The oak floor that is currently in the Lodge was laid in 1934 by Clint Grace, a skilled farmer. He followed the pattern of the floor when the original farmhouse floor was leveled to meet the Poor Farm. He was also responsible for modernizing the widdow in the mid 1930s.

Door facing like a leftover cell door from Poor Farm era, in use currently



Figure 19: 1938, Laundry ready for pickup on Sundays, FC 313

1940s

"CAMP"
added to
gable

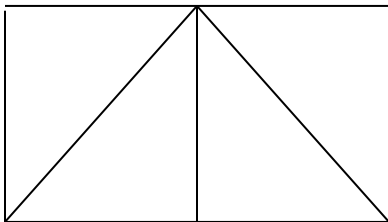


Figure 20: 1940, Exterior view of Lodge, from Dining Hall, CT0573

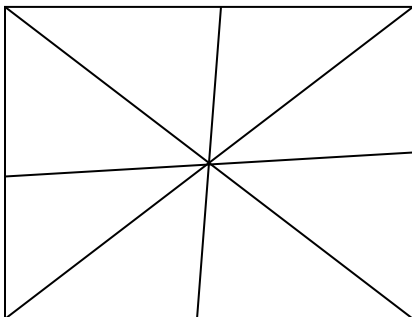
*First appearance of "CAMP" being added to the gable to read "CAMP TECUMSEH"

*Stairs are on the right side of the building

*Railing patterns have changed for the first time since their construction:



*Pattern present on all upper railings, all three sides



*Pattern over Poor Farm cells

1940s

"witch
window"
present



Figure 21: Mysterious witch window still in gable of original farmhouse, un-numbered

*Through studying every photograph Camp Tecumseh has featuring the Lodge, it seems that most of the renovations and updates to the building slow down in the 1940s. This seems to be the case because of the start of World War II. With the increase in costs, camp sessions were cut from nine weeks to eight, gasoline rationing cut down on the numbers of who could attend and, with the passing of the pasteurizing law, money was spent elsewhere to build a steel pasteurizer.⁶

⁶ Clark, *Camp Tecumseh*, 73.

1950s



Figure 22: View from playing field, CT0641

- *Molding around all windows and doors whitewashed c.1940-50
- *Re-shingling of roof done by David Spooner, an original Trustee, while camp in session
- *Playing fields surrounding the Lodge highlights central importance to camp and activities



Figure 23: Baseball outside Lodge, un-numbered

1960s



Figure 24: Photo from 1961 appraisal form

*From appraisal by Arthur F. Solomon:

Style of house: Cape Cod

Post and beam construction

2600 square feet of porch space

Foundation dry rubble masonry, partial cellar with dirt floor

Remainder of house (addition) standard framing

\$32,500 to replace building

*Asymmetrical pattern of windows on original farmhouse facing road, trim and molding painted on all sides

*Shingles on building have been replaced over the years and at some time (unknown) painted red

*Repairs and additions on the Lodge since the nineteen-teens is evident



Figure 25: 1967 view of Lodge, un-numbered

1970s



Figure 26: Exterior of Lodge, 1974, un-numbered

*Restoration of Lodge building started in August 1976

*Restoration included:

- New roof

- New clapboards

- Complete overhaul of foundation

- Beams and plaques preserved

*1977 Chairman of the Board of Trustees A.F. Armstrong proposed the alumni raise money for the restoration in conjunction with the camp's 75th Anniversary



Figure 27: Exterior of Lodge, 1974, un-numbered

The Lodge Today



Figure 28: The Lodge facing the road (west), photo by author



Figure 29: The original farmhouse portion of the building (south), photo by author



Figure 30: View of the porch (south), photo by author



Figure 31: Lodge facing the lake (east), photo by author



Figure 32: Interior of Lodge, present day, photo by author



Figure 33: History on the walls, photo by author

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Photographs:

CT0766

CT2594

CT3299

CT3302

CT0848

CT0103

CT099

CT3752

CT1638

FC313

CT0573

CT0641

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