



## **NH Division of Historical Resources Inventory Form for Center Harbor Town Beach, Park & Canoe House**

**24 Lake Street, Center Harbor, New Hampshire**

By

Mae H. Williams, Preservation Consultant

Determined Eligible for the NH State Register of Historic Places on April 9, 2025 (updated April 22, 2026)

& For the consideration by the NH State Historical Resources Council for inclusion on the

New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places on July 27, 2026

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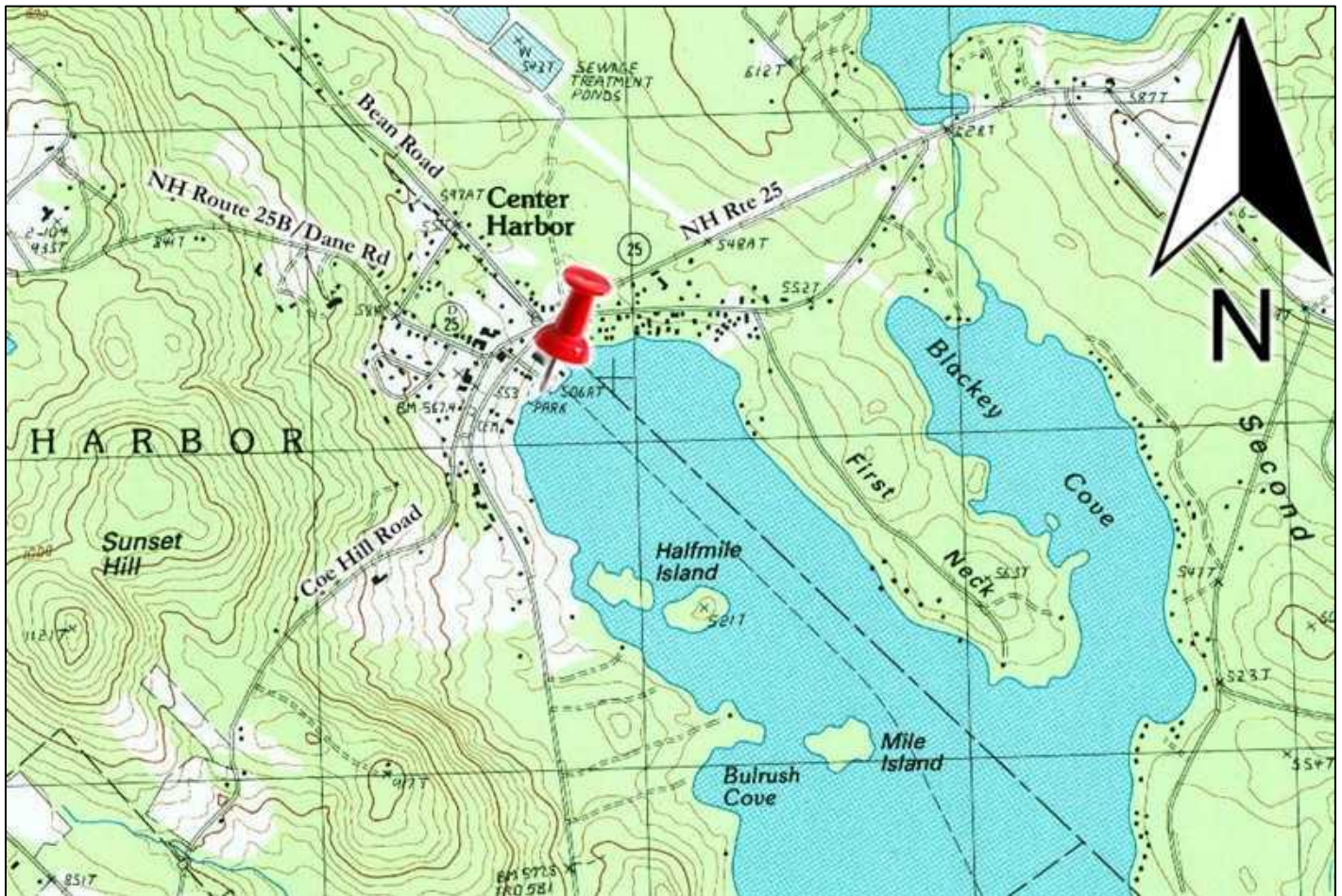
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**INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM**

**NHDHR INVENTORY # CH TOWN BEACH/CANOE HOUSE**

Name Location Ownership			
<b>Resource Name</b>	Center Harbor Town Beach, Park & Canoe House		
<b>Property Owner (s)</b>	Town of Center Harbor <a href="mailto:selectmen@centerharbornh.gov">selectmen@centerharbornh.gov</a> (603) 253-4561	<b>Address</b>	36 Main Street Center Harbor, NH 03226
<b>Preparer (s)</b>	Mae H. Williams	<b>Dates of Survey</b>	3/19/2026-3/25/2026

**1. Location Map:**



<b>Resource Location</b>	24 Lake Street, Center Harbor, NH	<b>Tax Map</b>	102-Lot 71	<b>Acreage</b>	3.3-acres
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**2. Boundary Description:**

The eligible area includes all of the current tax parcel associated with the Center Harbor Town Beach, Park and Boathouse. The parcel is bounded on the southeast by the Center Harbor Bay of Lake Winnepesaukee, on the South by the ca. 1965 Center Harbor Inn Motel (292-294 Whittier Highway/102-072), on the northwest by NH Route 25/Whittier Highway, and on the east by several small tourist cabins along Lake Street (the ca. 1930 Cottage at 12 Lake Street/102-70, the ca. 1930 cottage at 165 Lake Street/102-69, the ca. 1881 cottage at 18 Lake

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Street/102-68, the ca. 1945 cottage at 20 Lake Street/102-67, and the ca. 1947 cottage at 22 Lake Street/102-66), and by the ca. 1950s buildings of the Winnepesaukee Flagship Co. (30 Lake St/102-65).

**3. Boundary Justification:**

The New Hampshire State Register-eligible boundary includes all of the area associated with the current tax parcel for the Center Harbor Town Beach and public boat-launch. Though the parcel once included all of the land between Winnepesaukee and Main Street and additional acreage to the southwest, much of this land was sold off during the historic period to private ownership and to allow for the construction of NH Route 25. The current boundaries have remained consistent since the property was given to the Town by Ernest Dane for use as a public park in 1964.

**RESOURCE INFORMATION**

Architectural Resource Type Building

Current use(s) Landscape: Park or Common; Recreation/Culture: Outdoor recreation

Historic use(s) Agriculture/Subsistence: Barn or Outbuilding; Domestic: Hotel; Recreation/Culture: Outdoor Recreation

**SITE FEATURES**

Settings Waterfront

Outbuildings Bath House (ca. 1970) – located north of Canoe House at south edge of Lake St parking area

Picnic Shelter (1971) – located northeast of Canoe House, near center of sand beach

Landscape features Beach, Dock (1970/1998), Basketball Court (1980), Playground, parking lot(s), Fences, Trees

**BUILDING INFORMATION**

<b>Foundation Materials</b>	Poured Concrete (over granite)	<b>Roof Materials</b>	Slate
<b>Wall Materials</b>	Brick	<b>Roof Types</b>	Hip
<b>Number of Stories</b>	1.5	<b>Chimney Material</b>	N/A
<b>Entry Locations</b>	Façade, center, paired	<b>Chimney Locations</b>	N/A
<b>Windows</b>	Double-hung, simulated 6/6	Replacement? no <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Window Replacement Details</b>	Original double-hung wooden replaced with vinyl simulated 6/6 sash, August 2024		
<b>Building Styles</b>	Chateausque	Moved? no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> date: _____	

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<b>Residential Building Form</b>	Does not Apply
<b>Architect (source)</b>	Unknown
<b>Builder (source)</b>	Unknown
<b>Construction Date</b>	Ca. 1921
<b>Alterations (dates)</b>	Replacement windows (2024)

**Architectural Description:**

The property that is now home to the Center Harbor Town Beach has played a prominent role in the development of Center Harbor since its first European settlement. In the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the slope between what is now Main Street and the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee was developed as gardens and recreational facilities for a large hotel that stood on the corner of Main and Plymouth Streets known as the Senter House Hotel (including a boat/bath house near the shore). After the first Senter House Hotel burned in 1887, a New Senter House Hotel (later Colonial Hotel) was constructed, along with a new bath house on a granite foundation. After this second hotel was also destroyed by a fire (in 1919), a third building was constructed on the existing foundations and the parkland was used for farming. In the 1960s, it was given to the Town for use as a Public Beach/Park, and redeveloped and returned to its recreational use. The ca. 1921 boathouse was joined by two new buildings in ca. 1970 and has continued to serve as a combination public boat launch, town park, and town beach since. Aside from the boathouse, all of the buildings and structures date to this late 20<sup>th</sup> century redevelopment.

A. Canoe House, ca. 1921 (Contributing)

The approximately 19 x 25-foot canoe house is the oldest structure in the Center Harbor Town Beach complex, and the only surviving structure to predate the Town Park. The building was likely constructed on the granite foundations of an earlier New Senter House/Colonial Hotel boathouse and is at least the third generation building to stand at this approximate location.

The date of construction is unclear: a photographic postcard from the 1910s shows an earlier building at this location (figure 10), and the building is known to have exist by the 1920s. As of writing, it is unclear if William Maclean/the Colonial Hotel Corporation built the brick boathouse shortly before the fire that destroyed the main hotel in 1919 or if the Dane Family constructed it after they purchased the Colonial Hotel grounds in 1921.

The 1 ½ story brick-walled canoe house faces southeast, overlooking Center Harbor Bay of Lake Winnepesaukee. The brick walls are set in common bond with seven stretcher rows per header row with struck mortar joints.

The hip roof of the building is steeply pitched and flared at the eaves. The roof is covered in multi-colored coursed slates. There is a copper ridge roll at the peak with copper finials at either end. The wide overhang of the open eaves is decorated by the exposed rafter-tails of the roof system.

The foundation appears to be composed of a granite core with an outer coating of poured concrete. Historic photographs indicate that the size of the present foundation correlates with the plug-split granite foundation of the earlier boat house, suggesting that the older foundation was used as a base when this building was constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The corners and cured edges of the poured concrete have begun to spall, revealing an inner skeleton of rebar, which was added to strengthen the structure that is located just at the edge of the lake where it is subjected to significant moisture and the cyclical freezing and thawing of the lake.



*Photo 1: Canoe House, photographed facing southwest with concrete boat ramp and double-doors*



*Photo 2: Canoe House, photographed facing northeast with single door at uphill side*

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The primary entrance to the building is through a set of paired batten doors on strap hinges at the center of the southeast elevation (photo 1). Each strap hinge is cast with the name of the manufacturer, which is somewhat difficult to read due to layers of accreted paint (likely "Richards Wilcox", an Aurora, IL manufacturer of hardware that was founded in 1880 and is still in operation). Set within a decoratively corbeled entrance with low arch, the doors open onto a flat cement pad with incorporated boat ramp.

A centered single door at the rear/uphill side of the building (northwest) is of similar design with a decorative corbeled brick surround and batten door with cast strap hinges (photo 2). Though some of the historic hardware remains in place, the building is currently secured with a hasp and padlock.

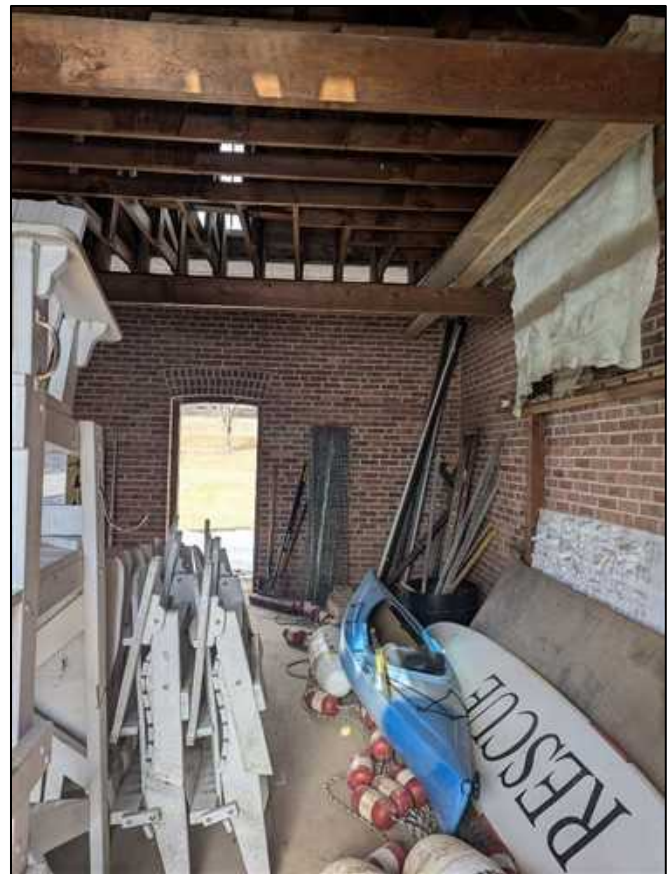
A single dormer window with modern simulated six-over-six sash is centered in the roof slope above either door (southeast and northwest). In August of 2024, the original historic wooden sash were removed and replaced. The dormer roof and sides are all sheathed in slate to match the rest of the roof (photo 3).



*Photo 3: Modern vinyl replacement window at dormer*

The interior of the building is currently used to store Center Harbor Parks and Recreation beach-related paraphernalia such as life-guard chairs, swim lines, signage, beach chairs and a kayak. The room has a poured concrete floor and brick walls (photo 4). According to the Director of the Town's Department of Public Works, his father (who was also the head of the DPW) told him that there were once canoe racks lining the interior walls.

The building is open to the roof, revealing the elaborate roof truss system to support the heavy slate hip roof (photo 5). All of the framing of the roof is composed of dimensional lumber that is fastened with early 20<sup>th</sup> century wire nails



*Photo 4: Interior of Canoe House*



*Photo 5: Canoe House roof truss system*

The origins of the current brick building have caused some confusion, as late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographic images of the shoreline show a different structure at this location, jutting out into the water's edge, on a platform edged with granite curbing (figures 6-10). The building is a very similar shape (causing some to mistake it for the same structure), but has a colonnaded porch incorporated beneath the eaves around all four sides. Unfortunately, none of these photographic images is clear enough to say for certain what the wall material was, however it was painted a light color and appears to have been either flush-laid wooden boards, clapboard, or stucco. The entrance locations and approximate sizes are approximately consistent with the modern locations, however, there were two sets of windows along either side elevation behind louvered blinds. This earlier ca. 1888 building had a mansard roof, with extremely low upper pitch hidden behind a decorative cast-iron cresting and a central flagpole. A straight gravel path led up the hill from the canoe/boat house to the Colonial Hotel. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building had lost the decorative cast-iron cresting and by the mid-1920s, the building had been replaced by the present structure.

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B. Bath House, ca. 1970 (Contributing)

A 16 x 20' bath house stands at the northeast section of the parcel, just off of the public parking area near the public boat-launch (photos 6 & 7). The exact date of construction of this structure is unknown, however it was standing by 1971, when the town report mentioned repairs to the "men's room".<sup>1</sup>

This single-story building has a side-gable roof that is covered with asphalt shingles. The moderate overhang has a flat fascia and soffit. The foundation of the building is poured concrete, and the walls are made of cinder-block construction. The north gable-end of the building is made of hardware cloth suspended between flat wooden battens to allow natural light and ventilation into the otherwise unlit building. The south gable-end is covered with composite board.

There are three evenly-spaced entrances along the façade (east) of the building. Each entrance has a metal door with knob. The south entrance has a rusted "Men" plaque on the door (with a modern plaque above the entrance). The north door has a similar rusted "Women" plaque (and a modern plaque above).

There is a 1970s-era public sign board mounted on the north end of the building, facing the parking area.



Photo 6: ca. 1970 Bath House, photographed facing southwest

<sup>1</sup> Town of Center Harbor, *Annual Report...Town of Centre [sic] Harbor New Hampshire For the Year Ending December 31, 1971* (Meredith, NH: Meredith News, Inc., 1972), 42.



Photo 7: ca. 1970 Bath House, photographed facing north

C. Pavilion, 1971 (Contributing)

A 22 x 40' open picnic shelter/pavilion was also constructed in 1971, just west of the public beach and between the bath house and boat house (Photos 8 & 9). This wood-framed shelter rests on Sono-tubes and has a dirt floor and is two bays wide and five bays long. The dimensional sawn lumber framing is fully-visible in the open building. T-111 siding is laid over the gable ends and cross-bracing. The roof of the building is covered in asphalt shingles, and the open eaves have a narrow fascia that is hidden behind gutters along the east and west elevations.

The Center Harbor Town Beach also includes the location of the historic steam boat landing where Lake Street intersects Lake Winnepesaukee (with the modern MS Mount Washington Docks at the adjacent lot to the north). When the historic hotel parkland was redeveloped by the Town as a Town Beach in 1970, the old docks were rebuilt to serve as a **public boat-launch** (photo 10). As motorboat traffic on the lake has increased in the modern period, these docks proved inadequate and they were rebuilt and reconfigured again in 1998 with expanded access.

The modern public boat launch includes a small parking lot against the Town Beach side of the street and a circular drive with concrete ramp into the Lake. A small garden area has been constructed between the drive and the extensive public boat docks, with a brick patio that was added in 2020 (photo 11).

A sandy beach spans the edge of the water, between the paved parking area. Historic photographs of the shoreline (figures 3 & 7) indicate that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the shoreline was rocky with a line of fieldstones between the water's edge and the lawns of the Senter House/Colonial Hotel. The present sandy beach offers a shallow entrance to the water, creating a safe location for swimming and launching canoes and kayaks.



*Photo 8: 1971 Pavilion, photographed facing north (with modern playground and ca. 1970 bath house behind)*



*Photo 9: 1971 Pavilion, photographed facing northeast, toward public boat launch*



*Photo 10: Public docks and boat launch (with MS Mount Washington behind) photographed facing northeast from Canoe House*



*Photo 11: Modern landscaped terrace/garden near public boat launch (with MS Mount Washington behind), photographed facing northeast*



*Photo 12: Modern playground, photographed facing southwest*

The former Hotel Gardens/park occupied the space above the beach, between what is now Main Street and the water's edge. The area is undulating with terraced lawns that are bisected by NH Route 25 (which was added in the 1950s). Historic images reveal that this area has been terraced lawn since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A **playground** with all modern equipment is located just southwest of the Bath House, on a flat area of land slightly uphill from the beach (photo 12). The playground includes a jungle-gym, overhead bars, ladders, and plastic slides. Older **swing-sets** are located slightly higher on the terraced hill (photo 13).

A set of pressure-treated wooden stairs with wooden handrails just above the swings leads to the next level of terraced lawn, which contains the non-contributing ca. 1980 **basketball court** (photo 14) and a gravel parking area that is used during the summer season for overflow traffic. The basketball court is surrounded by a high chain-link fence. There is a split-rail fence along the edge of the parking area terrace. A paved driveway leads from the south side of Route 25, across the west side of the basketball court, and down to this overflow parking area.



*Photo 13: Swing sets, photographed facing southwest with basketball courts behind*



*Photo 14: Modern (1980) basketball court, photographed facing southwest*



*Photo 15: View southeast toward lake from gravel parking area with swing set in mid-ground, 1971 pavilion at left margin (behind), and ca. 1921 canoe house just right of center.*

Property Map and Photo Key:



**Comparative Evaluation:**

The Center Harbor Town Beach has served as the primary public boat launch and public beach for the Town of Center Harbor since it was established in the mid-1960s and has continued to serve the community as a public park through the modern era (a second, smaller public boat-launch is located elsewhere in Town, but provides a simple launch area, and does not have any associated infrastructure).

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources files appear to only have one other surveyed Town Beach complex: the **Hebron Town Beach** (which only has a 2018 preliminary survey and has not been Determined Eligible). The Hebron Beach (55 Lakeshore Drive/HEB0052, photo 16), was established on the site of a former summer camp for girls and deeded to the town 2009 with existing 1930s buildings and a 1960s bath house. The ca. 1965 bath house is the only remaining historic structure on the parcel. This wood-frame building with novelty siding is quite different from any of the brick or cinderblock structures at the Center Harbor Town Beach.

Other beach/bath house complexes have been surveyed and demolished, perhaps indicating that the Center Harbor Town beach structures represent a threatened resource type. A much grander-scale comparison is the Hampton Beach Seashell Complex (180 Ocean Boulevard, Hampton/2009RE00110), which was demolished in 2001. A smaller, and more comparable example associated with a small town's public beach is the 1930s utilitarian Legace Beach Bath house (187 Webster Lake Road, Franklin/2000RE00283), which was demolished between 2003 and 2006 (photo 17). Again, the Legace Beach Bathhouse was constructed earlier (in the 1930s), of wood with novelty siding, and stood on concrete piers. The layout of interior space and citing on the property between the parking area and beach, however, was similar to Center Harbor's ca. 1970 concrete block bath house.



*Photos 16 & 17: Hebron Bath House, photographed Nov. 2018 by author (left) and Legace Beach Bathhouse photographed May 2000 by Lynne E. Monroe/Preservation Company*

**Historical Background:**

The location that is now the Center Harbor Town Beach was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the grounds for the Senter House Hotel. After the first hotel burned in 1887, a new, grander hotel was built along the south side of Main Street (at the approximate location of the current Center Harbor Bandstand) with manicured gardens sweeping down to a lakeside boathouse. After this second hotel burned in 1919, the property was used for farming. Whether the current boathouse was constructed by the hotel just before the fire or by the Dane Family after they purchased the grounds in 1921 is unknown as of this writing. The current boat house is known to be at least the third boat house to stand on this location. In 1964, the property was deeded to the Town for a Town

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Beach, and additional outbuildings and structures joined the historic boathouse in the early 1970s as the property was transformed to a public park.

**Early History of Center Harbor (bef. 1830)**

Center Harbor was home to Native American tribes long before the European settlement of New Hampshire. The streams, ponds, and lakes that attracted later European settlers provided travel routes and supplies of food for native people. Known settlements were located on Meredith Neck and in Weirs, and the prominent Msquamchumaukee, Winnebisoagua and Co-joss indigenous trails intersected in what is now Meredith Village.<sup>2</sup>

The earliest European settlement of the area that would become Center Harbor began shortly after the end of the French and Indian Wars. **Moses Senter** (1735-1813)<sup>3</sup> is said to have visited the area from Londonderry as early as October 1763, surveying the area with his companion John Bean (1748-1836). The two were so delighted with a campsite that they used, that they decided to come back and settle there. Senter built a log house on the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee about ½ mile south of what is now the Center Harbor Town Beach, near what is now the Garnet Hill Farm/Longwood Barn (CEN37/34 Dew Point Lane/103-12) with plans to return with his family the following summer.<sup>4</sup> The family returned in June 1764, settling briefly at the homestead before moving to Manchester and then returning after the Revolutionary War when they built a permanent frame house on Garnet Hill.

Though the earliest municipal/primary village at Center Harbor developed on what is now NH Route 25B/Dane Road, a second village developed at the crossroads near the Center Harbor Bay of Lake Winnepesaukee. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, four roads intersected at this location: A road west, skirting the south shore of Squam Lake, to the Pemigewasset Valley towns of Holderness and Plymouth [along what is now Plymouth Street/NH Route 25B/Dane Road], a road southwest to Meredith and the towns of the Winnepesaukee and Merrimack River valleys [Coe Hill Road/Old Meredith Road], a road northeast to Moultonborough and the towns east of the lakes [Main Street/Lake Shore Ave], and a road north between Squam Lake and Red Hill to the village of Sandwich [Bean Road] (figure 1).<sup>5</sup> Center Harbor became an important stopping off point where several coaching lines converged and was the half-way station on the once well-known Concord and Fryeburg, ME stage route.<sup>6</sup> The village that grew up there was also the starting point for excursions by coach through the Crawford and Franconia notches.<sup>7</sup> When

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<sup>2</sup> Chester B. Price, "Indian Trails" (Prepared by the State Planning and Development Commission in Cooperation with the Lakes Region Association, 1956).

<sup>3</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Moses Senter (1735-1815) is interred at the Senter-Coe Cemetery in Center Harbor.

<sup>4</sup> John D. Bardwell and Ronald P. Bergeron, *The Lakes Region New Hampshire: A Visual History* (Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1989), 71. This even is also described in both Centre Harbor Historical Society, *Centre Harbor New Hampshire Historical Society 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1971-1986* (Laconia, NH: J & J Printing Inc., 1986), 4 and Clarence Johnson "Center Harbor" (*The Granite Monthly*, Vol. XXIII, 1897), 167. Daniel W. Coe, "Early Settlers of Centre Harbor" in *More New Hampshire Folk Tales* (Plymouth, NH: Mrs. Guy E. Speare, 1936), 19 retells the story of the settlement as well, and offers this location. According to secondary sources, either the provincial government of New Hampshire granted the land to Moses (Centre Harbor Historical Society, 3) or his brother Joseph (Centre Harbor Historical Society, 4). Deed research seems to contradict this assertion: A November 25, 1786 deed indicates that John Sullivan sold at least the western half of this property (Div. 3, Lot 9, which was "improved" by Senter) for £30 (Strafford Deeds, BK13, PG295). The location of the present town beach, however, falls within what was Lot 10 of Meredith's 3<sup>rd</sup> Division (originally given to John Moffat, Esq.). (Bean settled on land adjacent to what is now the Bean Cemetery (262 Bean Road) across the town line in Moultonborough.)

<sup>5</sup> David Rule, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form: Centre Harbor Village Historic District" (Listed 9/8/1983, NRIS#83001126), 3.

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Hartshorn Campbell, *A Little History of the Squam Lakes* (Holderness, NH: The Squam Lakes Association, 1980), 12.

steamboat lines reached Winnepesaukee in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the village became an even more important hub of activity.



Figure 1: Excerpt from 1816 Carrigan Map of New Hampshire with approximate site of Center Harbor Town Beach indicated

### **Senter House Hotel (ca. 1830-1887)**

In about 1830, **Samuel M. Senter**, Esq. (1767-1855,<sup>8</sup> son of Moses) built the **Senter House Hotel** on the site of the present James E. Nichols Memorial Library (35 Plymouth Street/102-2).<sup>9</sup> This hotel sat along the northwest side of Main Street, at the intersection with Plymouth Street and the stage coach route northwest to Holderness and the White Mountains beyond.

On May 2, 1846, Senter deeded the Hotel (along with all of his property in the Meredith portion of the village)<sup>10</sup> to his son-in-law **John Coe** (1797-1861).<sup>11</sup> An early painting of Centre Harbor by Samuel Gerry (1813-1892) indicates that the hotel grounds included a fenced garden that stretched from the opposite side of Main Street down to the shores of Winnepesaukee, adjacent to the steamboat wharfs and including the parcel currently associated with the Centre Harbor Bandstand and Town Beach.<sup>12</sup> The 1986 Centre Harbor Historical Society town history relates that there were built-in benches between the trees on the edges of this park, where one could sit

<sup>8</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Samuel Moore Senter (1767-1855) is interred at the Senter-Coe Cemetery in Centre Harbor.

<sup>9</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 49.

<sup>10</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 8/PG 536.

<sup>11</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), John Coe (1797-1861) is interred at the Senter-Coe Cemetery in Centre Harbor.

<sup>12</sup> The 1847 painting, titled "View of Centre Harbor, New Hampshire" is in the collection of the New Hampshire Historical Society, Object ID: 2021.02.

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and enjoy “the cool breeze which drifted in from the water’s edge.”<sup>13</sup> As of this writing, the 1847 painting is the earliest known image of the area that would become the Center Harbor Town Beach.

Less than four years after he obtained the title to the Hotel, Coe sold his son, **Curtis S. Coe** (1824-1892)<sup>14</sup> the property for \$15,000 on January 17, 1850.<sup>15</sup>

On May 26, 1856, Curtis S. Coe of Meredith and his wife Laura M. Coe (1824-1888)<sup>16</sup> sold seven acres to **George W. Gilman**<sup>17</sup> of Meredith and **James L. Huntress** (1818-1883)<sup>18</sup> of Lowell, Massachusetts for \$13,000. This property included the **Senter House Hotel**, stables, a bowling alley building, boathouse, wharf, shoe shop, outbuildings, Hotel privy and “aqueduct to draw water” from Lake Winnepesaukee and consisted of property previously owned by D. W. Coe, John H. Moulton and Eliza Sutton.<sup>19</sup>

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the lakeside village (most of which was actually within the Town of Meredith at the time, as the corner of the town at the shores of the Lake was not annexed to Center Harbor until 1873) contained a Congregational Church, Lake View Cemetery, Senter House Hotel (run by Gilman & Huntress), the ca. 1848 Col. J. M. Moulton’s Hotel and Store; E. S. Tucker’s Store, a shoe shop, the ca. 1852 Keneson Jewelry Shops, school, and several freight houses adjacent to the steamboat wharves (figure 2).

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<sup>13</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Curtis Samuel Coe (1824-1892) is interred at the Senter-Coe Cemetery in Center Harbor.

<sup>15</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 15/PG209.

<sup>16</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Laura *Merrill* Coe (1824-1888) is interred at the Senter-Coe Cemetery in Center Harbor.

<sup>17</sup> Likely George Washington Gilman (1812-1861), who is interred in Meredith Village Cemetery (Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com))).

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), James Lewis Huntress (1818-1883) is interred at the Lowell Cemetery in Lowell, Massachusetts.

<sup>19</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 27/PG 250-251.

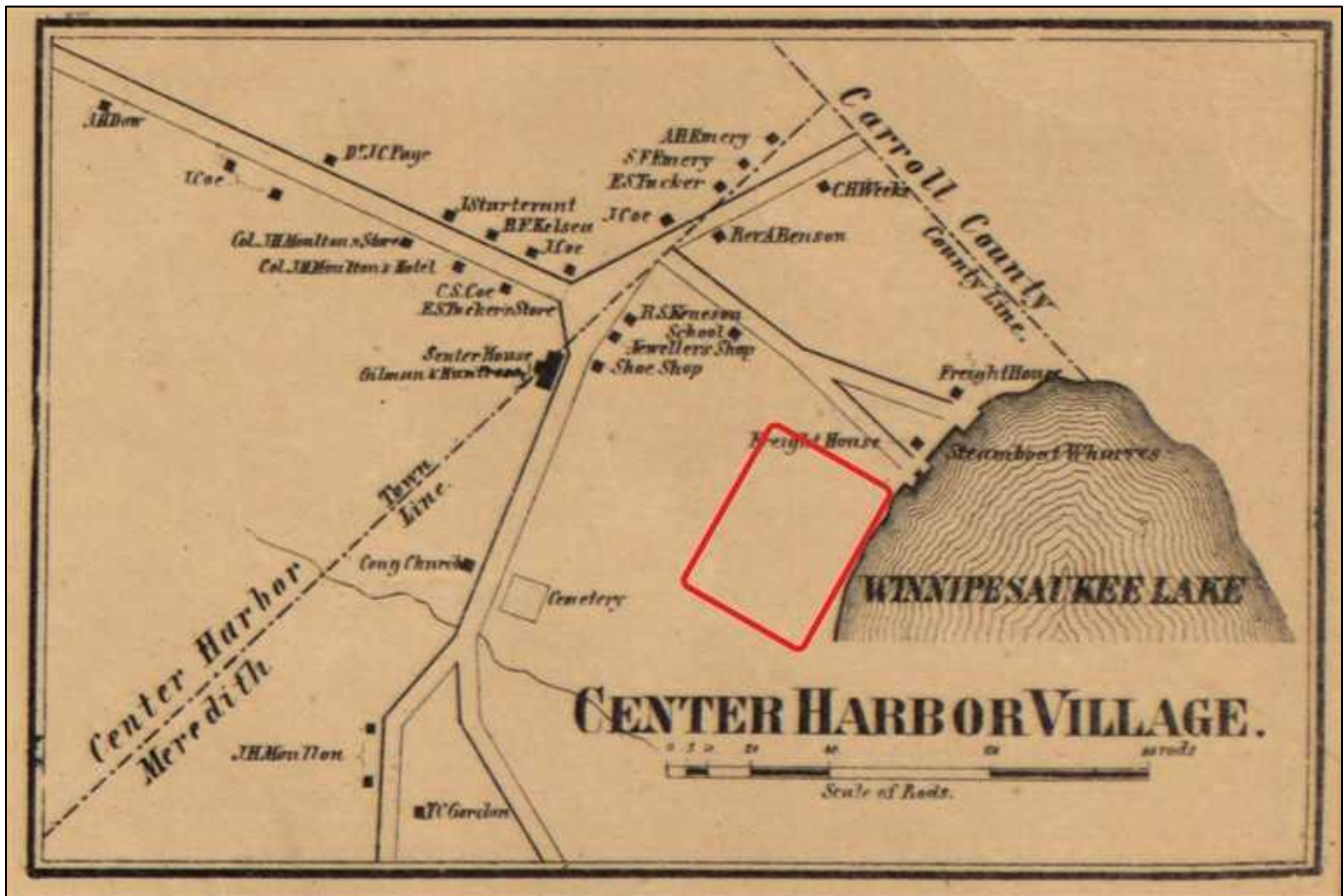


Figure 2: Center Harbor Village in 1860 from E. M. Woodford, "Map of Belknap County, New Hampshire" with approximate site of town beach indicated (Library of Congress)

Stereographic views of the Senter House hotel grounds in the Robert Dennis Collection of the New York Public Library that were taken by the Kilburn Brothers of Littleton in about 1872 clearly show a rudimentary boat house at the approximate location of the present boat house (figure 3). The building sits at the edge of the rocky shore with gable-end facing the water's edge. The wood-frame building is on stilts with the ground-floor open to create a covered pavilion and interior stairs leading up to the second-floor, which was presumably used for boat storage. Two women stand on a square dock that extends into the water and has row boats moored to it.

INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM

NHDHR INVENTORY # CH TOWN BEACH/CANOE HOUSE

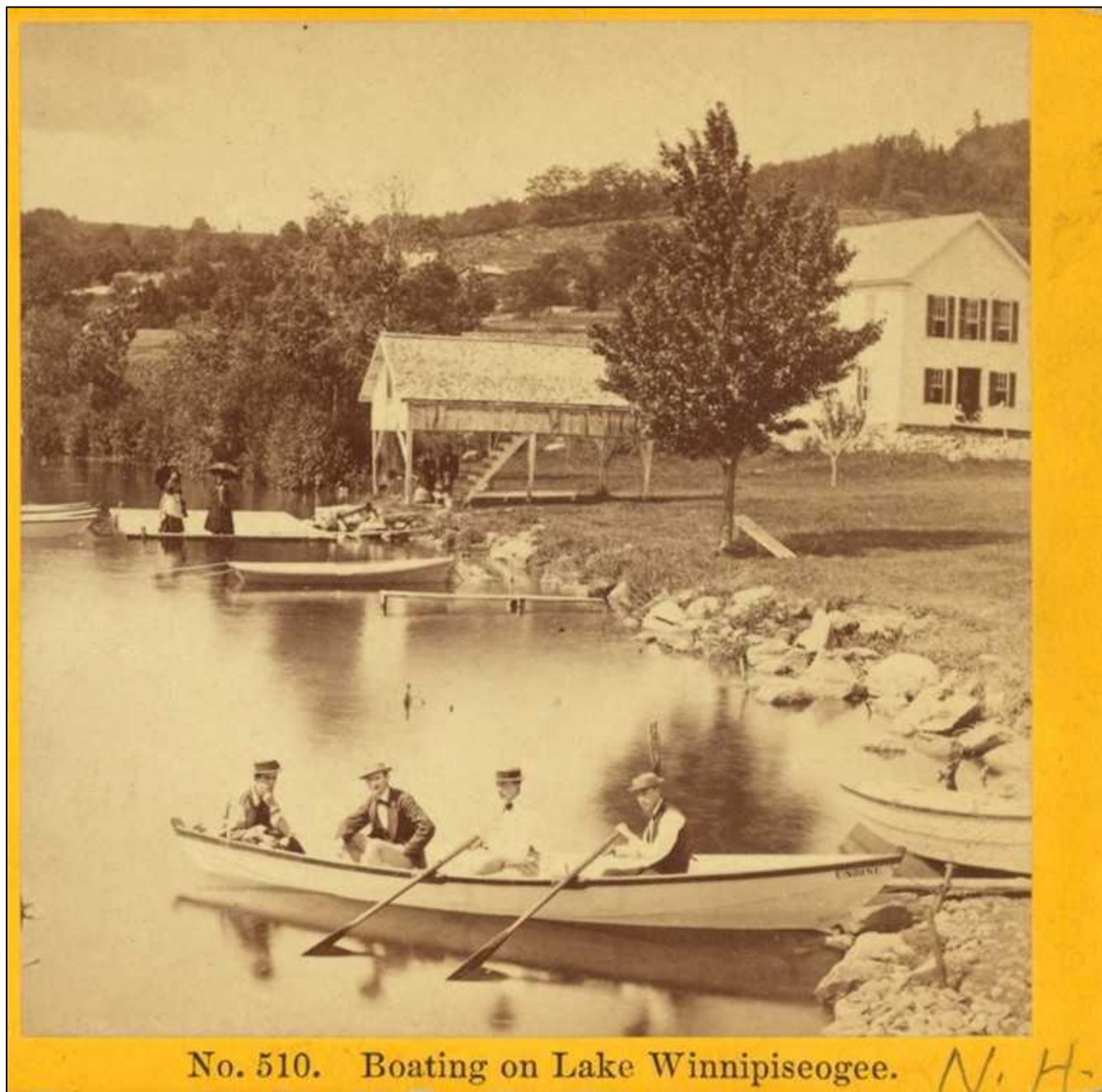


Figure 3: Photographic image of shoreline of Lake Winnepesaukee below the Senter House hotel, ca. 1872 by the Kilburn Brothers (Robert Dennis Collection, New York Public Library, NYPG91-F47)



Figure 4: First Senter House Hotel, photographed before fire with facade facing Main Street (left) and side elevation along what is now Plymouth Street (right) (Robert Dennis Collection, New York Public Library)

By the mid-1870s the Senter House had expanded to include 150 rooms for a nightly rate of \$4 (as compared to the adjacent Moulton House, which stood just north along Plymouth Street at what is now the Dr. Leonard B. Morrill Park (102/003), and offered rooms for \$3 per night).<sup>20</sup> An 1880 brochure advertised an unobstructed view of Lake Winnepesaukee from the hotel piazzas, a livery stable, billiard room and bowling alley, and accommodations for boating, bathing and fishing. By this date daily rates under proprietors J. L. Huntress & Sons ranged from \$2-\$3 per day or \$10-17.50 per week depending on the season.<sup>21</sup>

Tragedy struck on July 16, 1887, when the original Senter House hotel was destroyed by fire.

#### **Second Senter House/Colonial Hotel (1888-1904/1904-1919)**

The **Senter House Hotel Company** was formulated on September 5, 1887 with James L. Huntress's son, **George L. Huntress** (1847-1924)<sup>22</sup> of Winchendon, MA; **George H. Pearle** of Boston, MA; and **William Sheave** of Boston as directors and James L. Huntress's other son, **Henry L. Huntress** (1848-1947),<sup>23</sup> as Treasurer.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 49.

<sup>21</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 49.

<sup>22</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), George Lewis Huntress (1847-1924) is interred at the Lowell Cemetery in Lowell, Massachusetts.

<sup>23</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Henry L. Huntress (1848-1937) is interred at the Lowell Cemetery in Lowell, Massachusetts.

<sup>24</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 52.

## INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM

## NHDHR INVENTORY # CH TOWN BEACH/CANOE HOUSE

On May 15, 1888, James L. Huntress' heirs: his widow, **Harriet P. Huntress** (1820-1909)<sup>25</sup> and surviving children, viz: George L., Henry L., and **Harriet L. Huntress** (1860-1922),<sup>26</sup> conveyed the land and remaining buildings to the Senter House Hotel Company, including the “right to build a boathouse” and the “right to build and maintain sewers to the Lake.” The deed also includes all viaducts, the approximate 24-acre Drake Farm, Mile Island (possibly Drake’s Island/Great Island in Squam), and Lower Drake pasture.<sup>27</sup>

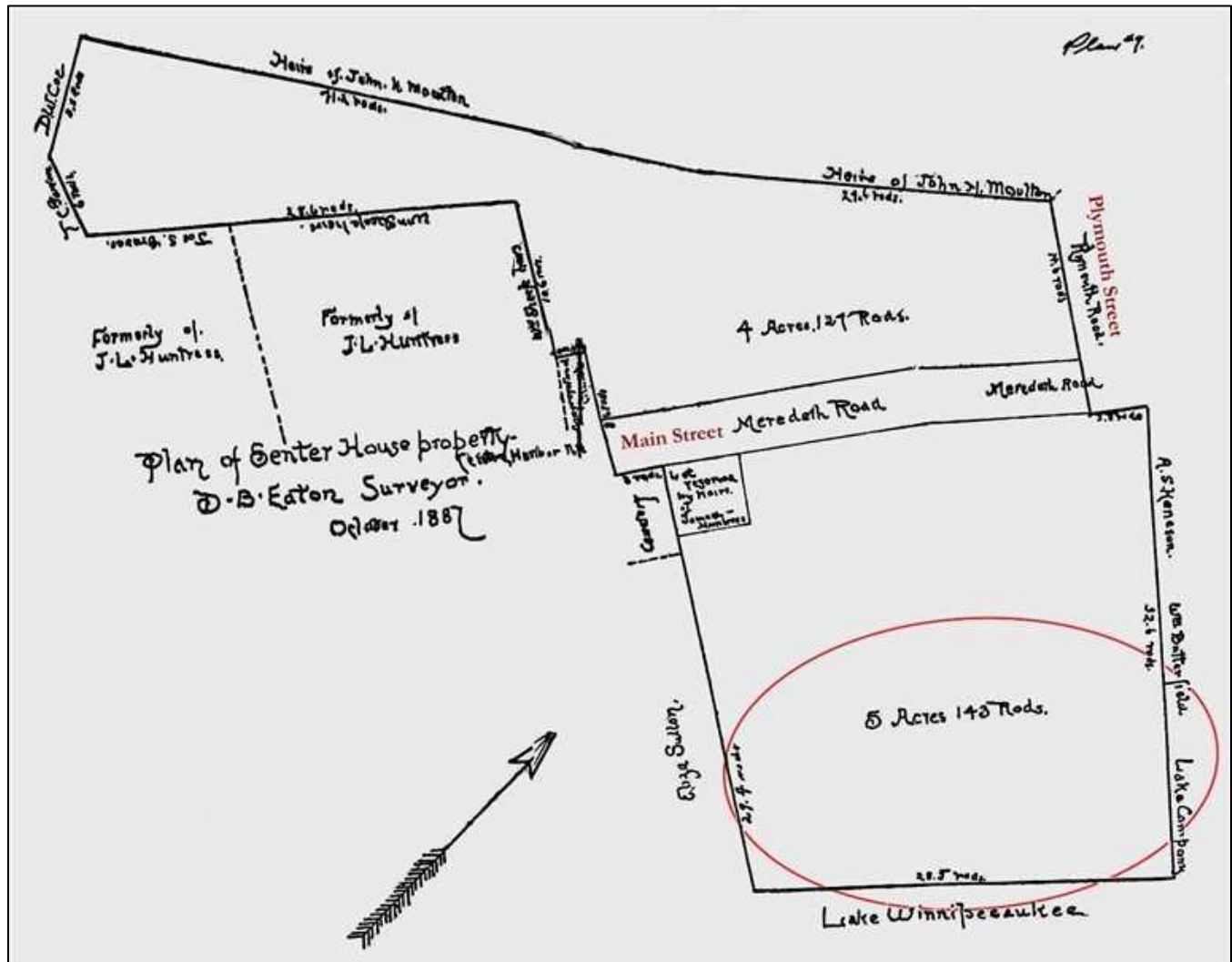


Figure 5: 1887 Senter House property (Enhanced map from Belknap County Registry of Deeds with modern street names added and approximate Town Beach parcel circled in red)

<sup>25</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Harriet Perkins Towne Paige Huntress (1820-1909) is interred at the Lowell Cemetery in Lowell, Massachusetts.

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Harriet Lane Huntress (1860-1922) is interred at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A noted suffragette, Harriet lived on Pleasant Street in Concord, served on the advisory board of the New Hampshire Equal Suffrage Association, and became the first female deputy superintendent of the NH Department of Public Instruction in 1913. She was particularly involved with the Keene and Plymouth New Hampshire Normal Schools and a member of the Concord Women’s Club.

<sup>27</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 79/PG 269-273.

In about 1888, the Senter House Hotel Company hired well-known Lowell Architect, **Frederick Stickney** (1853-1918) to design and build the **New Senter House Hotel** on the opposite side of Main Street (at the approximate location of the present Center Harbor Bandstand (102-076)).<sup>28</sup> Plans indicated that the hotel had sweeping verandas on either side, offices, dining and serving rooms on the ground floor (including nurse's and children's dining rooms), a drawing room, music room, ladies waiting and smoking rooms as well as 51 double-fireplaces, 91 sleeping rooms and two cottages.<sup>29</sup>

Among the many forms of amusements fishing, boating and bathing were probably the most popular. The excellent tennis courts and croquet grounds furnished milder sports for those who preferred them. The billiard parlors and bowling alleys also had their followers.<sup>30</sup>

It is very likely that the plug-split granite foundations of the current boat house were laid at about this time, as photographs taken in about 1888 clearly show a more substantial boathouse at the location that was set on a granite block foundation (figure 6). The 1 ½-story building had a mansard roof with a very low upper deck that was hidden behind an ornate fence and a flared lower slope. A flag pole ascends from the center of the roof. There is a central door at the north side of the structure (facing the hotel) and a second single door at the south elevation to open onto the lake. The wall material of the small building was likely clapboards, set back inside an open porch supported by square columns. The flared eaves created a sheltered interior walkway around the building with built-in benches against the structure. A long, straight path led from the veranda of the New Senter House in a straight line down the terraced hillside to the boat house with intersecting paths at right angles leading east to the landing (now public boat launch) and west to the bowling alley. Entry doors were located at the west (uphill) and south (water) sides of the building, and there were two windows at each wall that were hidden behind louvered blinds (figure 7).

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<sup>28</sup> A copy of Stickney's drawing of the "Senter House, Centre Harbor, N.H." is held in the collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society (1995.590.05) and was published in *American Architect and Building News* in 1888.

<sup>29</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 52. As late as the 1980s, the cottages survived as part of the Meadows Hotel (which had been constructed in 1965). Though the Hotel survives as the Center Harbor Inn, the cottages have since been demolished.

<sup>30</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 52.

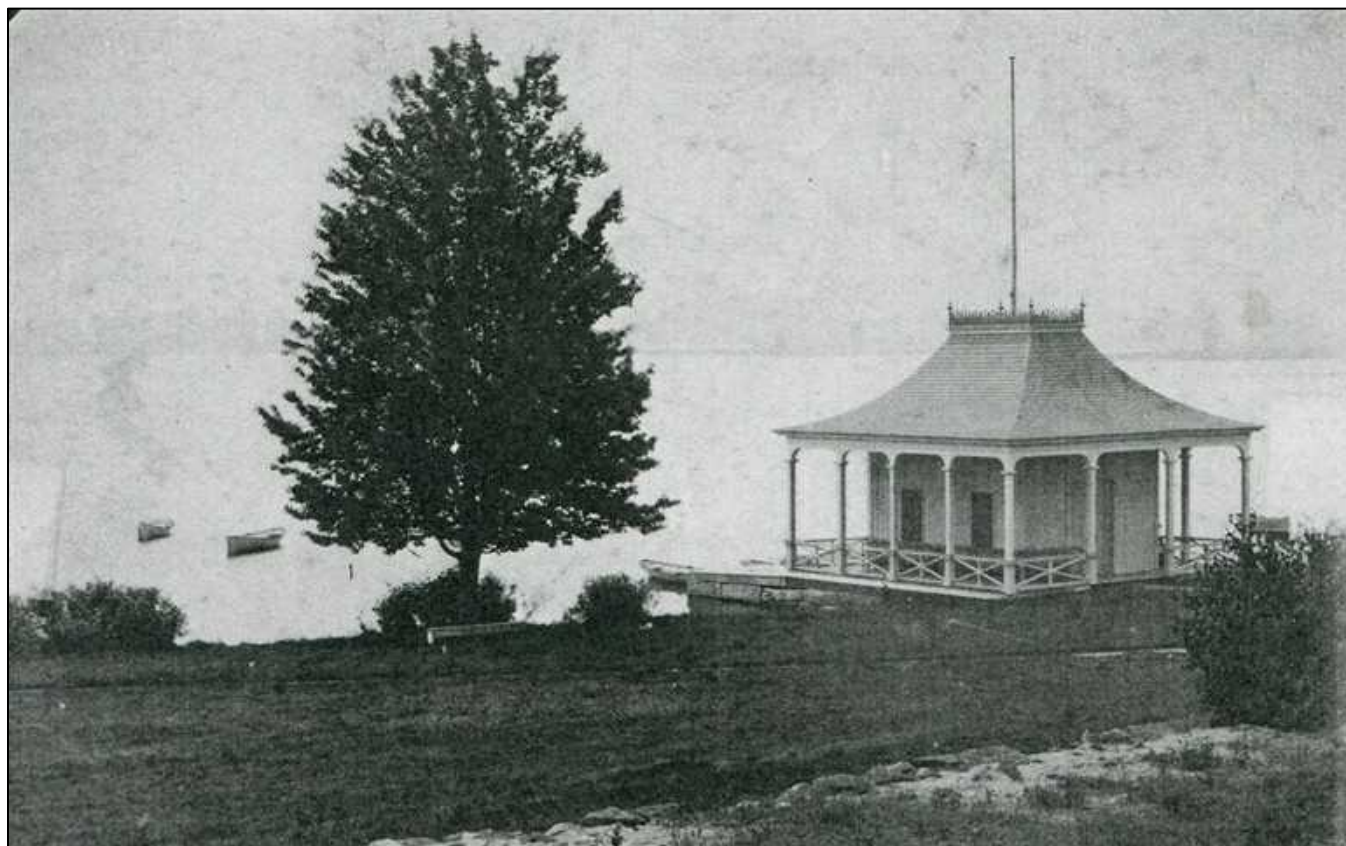


Figure 6: Photograph of New Senter House Hotel boat house, ca. 1888 (Centre Harbor Historical Society)

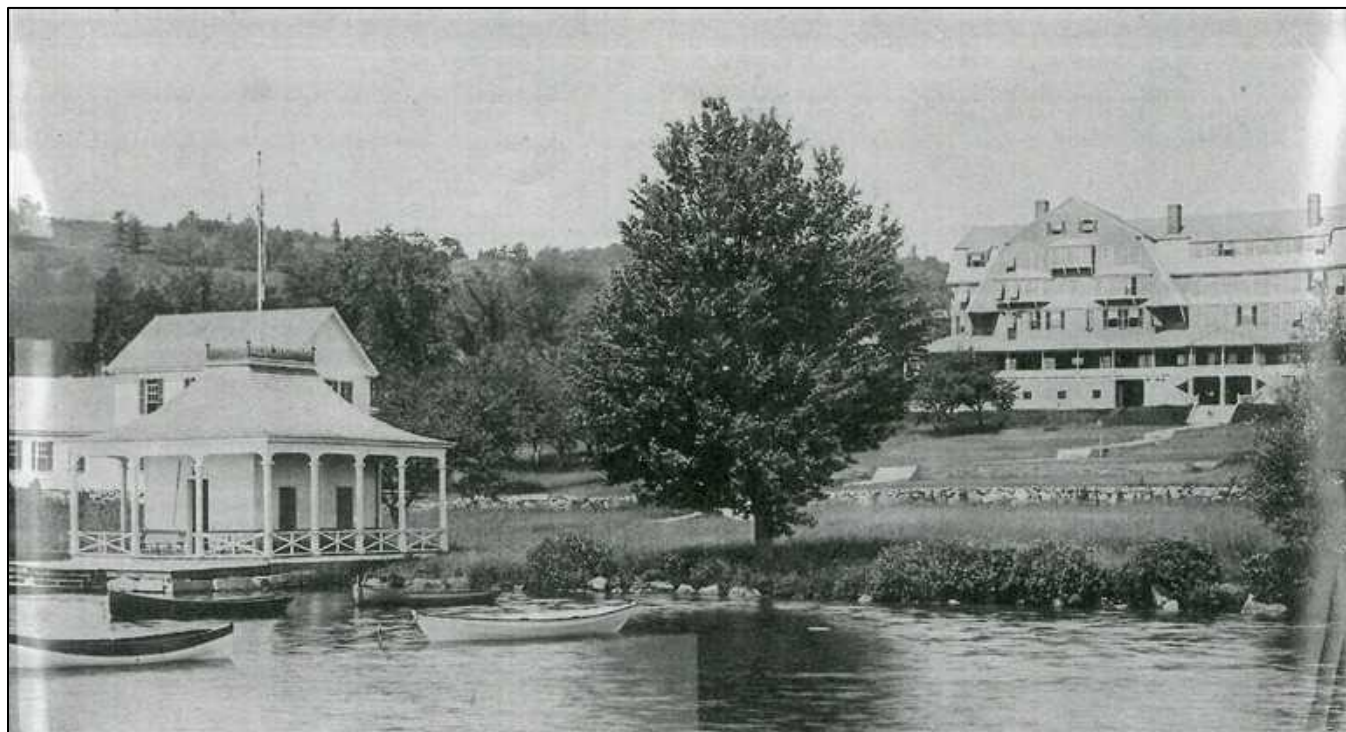


Figure 7: Second Senter House boat house from landing, ca. 1890 (Centre Harbor Historical Society)

Meanwhile on August 31, 1900, **George W. Armstrong** (1836-1901) purchased the "Landing" (public dock and Winnepesaukee Flagship Corporation Shipyard/30 Lake Street) from the Winnepissiogee Lake Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company for \$1,000.<sup>31</sup> A prominent Boston businessman and newspaperman, Armstrong had purchased the Gilnockie Estate on Coe Hill in 1895 (razed 1987).<sup>32</sup> Armstrong filled in much of the shoreline to improve the wharf, and sold the property to the Boston & Maine Railroad for \$1 on December 18, 1900.<sup>33</sup>

Colonial Hotel: 1904-1919:

On June 27, 1904 the Senter House reopened as the Colonial and under the Management of **William A. Maclean** (b. 1864) (though still owned by the Huntress family).<sup>34</sup> Born in Canada, William had come to the us in the 1880s<sup>35</sup> married Catherine Ann MacLennan on May 24, 1899 in Boston.<sup>36</sup> By 1904, the hotel advertised 91 rooms with modern plumbing and steam heat.

On February 1, 1906, the Huntress family sold the Colonial Hotel to W. A. Maclean.<sup>37</sup>

Photographs from the Colonial Hotel era show the boathouse painted with polychrome. By this time the railing around the exterior of the porch had been removed, as had the decorative cresting, revealing the upper deck of the roof (figures 8-10).



Figure 8: New Senter House/Colonial Hotel Boat House, ca. 1900 (Centre Harbor Historical Society)

<sup>31</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 20.

<sup>32</sup> Born in Windham, NH, Armstrong was the benefactor of the Nesmith Library AKA Armstrong Memorial Building in Windham, NH in 1898.

<sup>33</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 20.

<sup>34</sup> 1904 Colonial Hotel Brochure, collection of the Centre Harbor Historical Society.

<sup>35</sup> 1910 US Federal Census, Center Harbor household of William A. Maclean (Dwelling 24, family 24).

<sup>36</sup> Massachusetts Bureau of Vital Records, "Massachusetts State Vital Records, 1638-1927" ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)), Entry for William A. MacLean and Catharine B. MacLennan, 24 May 1899.

<sup>37</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK117/PG247-248. MacLean appear to have taken out a loan or similar from Archibald McLean for this purpose, from which he was released on May 29, 1909 (Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK133/PG273).



Figure 9: Colonial Hotel with Boathouse in foreground, photographed from Lake, ca. 1910 (CardCow.com)



Figure 10: Swimmers at the Colonial Hotel boat house, ca. 1910 (Courtesy Karen Ponton)

Though the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Colonial Hotel continued to attract scores of tourists to the Lakes Region town until tragedy struck on June 20, 1919, when the Colonial Hotel burned to the ground.<sup>38</sup>



Figure 11: Dane Boat House, ca. 1920s or 1930s with men harvesting grain in field (Centre Harbor Historical Society).

### **Intermediate Years (1921-1964)**

On June 9, 1921, **Ernest B. Dane** (1868-1942)<sup>39</sup> of Brookline, MA purchased the Colonial Hotel grounds and surviving buildings from William A. MacLean.<sup>40</sup> Dane was a Harvard-educated banker and president of the Brookline Savings and Trust Company and had married **Hellen Folsom Pratt** (1887-1949)<sup>41</sup> in 1903 and begun to purchase land in Center Harbor soon after. The couple quickly amassed many of the large farming estates in the town that had fallen onto hard times by World War I. Mr. Dane placed caretaking families on these farms under his employment,<sup>42</sup> thus preserving much of the open farmland in the community and continuing a local farming initiative. Amongst the family's landholdings were their summer home at Hillcrest Farm (252 Dane Road/211-013); Hearthstone (224 Dane Road/211-015); the Longwood Farm (34 Dew Point Lane/103-012), where he kept his Guernsey herd; the Jackson Farm (43 Kline Road/212-029), where he kept his Devon herd; and Davis Farm/Waukegan Golf Course (166-168 Waukegan Road/093), where he raised Clydesdale and Belgian work horses. Additional properties throughout the town, including the land associated with the Colonial Hotel, were used to raise feed for his animals.

<sup>38</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 52.

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Ernest Blaney Dane (1868-1942) is interred at the Walnut Hills Cemetery in Brookline, Massachusetts.

<sup>40</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK159/P507-512.

<sup>41</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Helen Folsom Pratt Dane (1867-1949) is interred at the Walnut Hills Cemetery in Brookline, Massachusetts.

<sup>42</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 15.

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The Danes very likely tore down the New Senter House/Colonial Hotel boat house to the foundations and rebuilt the structure in about 1921 (although it is possible that the canoe house was built in the late 1910s by the Colonial Hotel, just before the fire). The new structure was the approximate size and shape of the building it replaced, except the new structure had brick exterior walls and a hip roof. The side-windows were removed, and replaced by gable dormers at the north and south roof slopes. Each dormer had a 6/6 double-hung sash. The slate roof was ornamented by copper finials, and had exposed rafter-tails. Interestingly, the building was vented: the brick walls were only built up to the bottom of the roof rafters, and hardware cloth screening was placed across the gap between the top of the walls and the roof structure to keep birds and animals out but allow for the passive ventilation of the building. Inside, there were racks for canoes.

The small outbuilding was constructed in what may be described as the “chateausque” style. This style of architecture is relatively rare and primarily used for architect-designed landmark houses between about 1880 and 1910, and more prominent in larger northeastern cities than as a simple outbuilding in a decidedly small town. The boathouse is certainly not a “high style” example, but still includes the characteristic steeply-pitched hip roof with ornamental metal finials seen in the outbuildings of some of the contemporary urban mansion house examples. The shallow relief corbelling around the doors and vertical thrust created by the location of the dormer windows above the entrances is also emblematic of this visual language which is loosely based on monumental 16<sup>th</sup> century French chateaus. The exposed rafter-tails are an unusual design choice for this style, and may relate more closely to some of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles that were beginning to come into fashion. The design choices for the permanent brick structure may relate to the Colonial Hotel’s marketing of modern elegance or may relate to the Dane Family’s architectural influences from their time in Boston.

While the Dane family was farming the former Colonial Hotel grounds, in 1922, the Boston & Railroad sold its docks and a small parcel of adjoining land to the Town of Center Harbor for \$1<sup>43</sup>. This sale likely included what is now the Town Docks and some of the beach area, but did not include the Boat House, which remained on private property until the 1960s.

On October 25, 1951, **Edward** (1907-1982)<sup>44</sup> and his first wife, **Jane E. Dane**, sold the water-front property with bathhouse to **Nan Hanks** of West Orange, NJ.<sup>45</sup> On December 3, 1951, Hanks sold the property to **Red Wagon Corporation**,<sup>46</sup> a conglomerate that consisted of herself, **Virginia Hanks** (also of West Orange, NJ), **Ruth Hanks** (Moultonborough) and **William T. White** (Meredith). During this turnover of ownership, the former Senter House/Colonial bowling alley was converted into a private dwelling, which remained standing as the private home of the family of **Donard “Don” Carr** (1918-2011)<sup>47</sup> as late as 1986.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 20.

<sup>44</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Edward Dane (1907-1982) is interred at the Dane Cemetery in Center Harbor.

<sup>45</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 333/PG 351-352.

<sup>46</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 334/PG 501-502.

<sup>47</sup> Anonymous, “Find A Grave” ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Donard D Carr (1918-2011) is interred at the Center Harbor Memorial Park in Center Harbor. His obituary was published in the *Laconia Daily Sun* on August 2, 2011.

<sup>48</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 52. The bowling alley/house has since been demolished to allow for the expansion of the adjacent Center Harbor Inn.

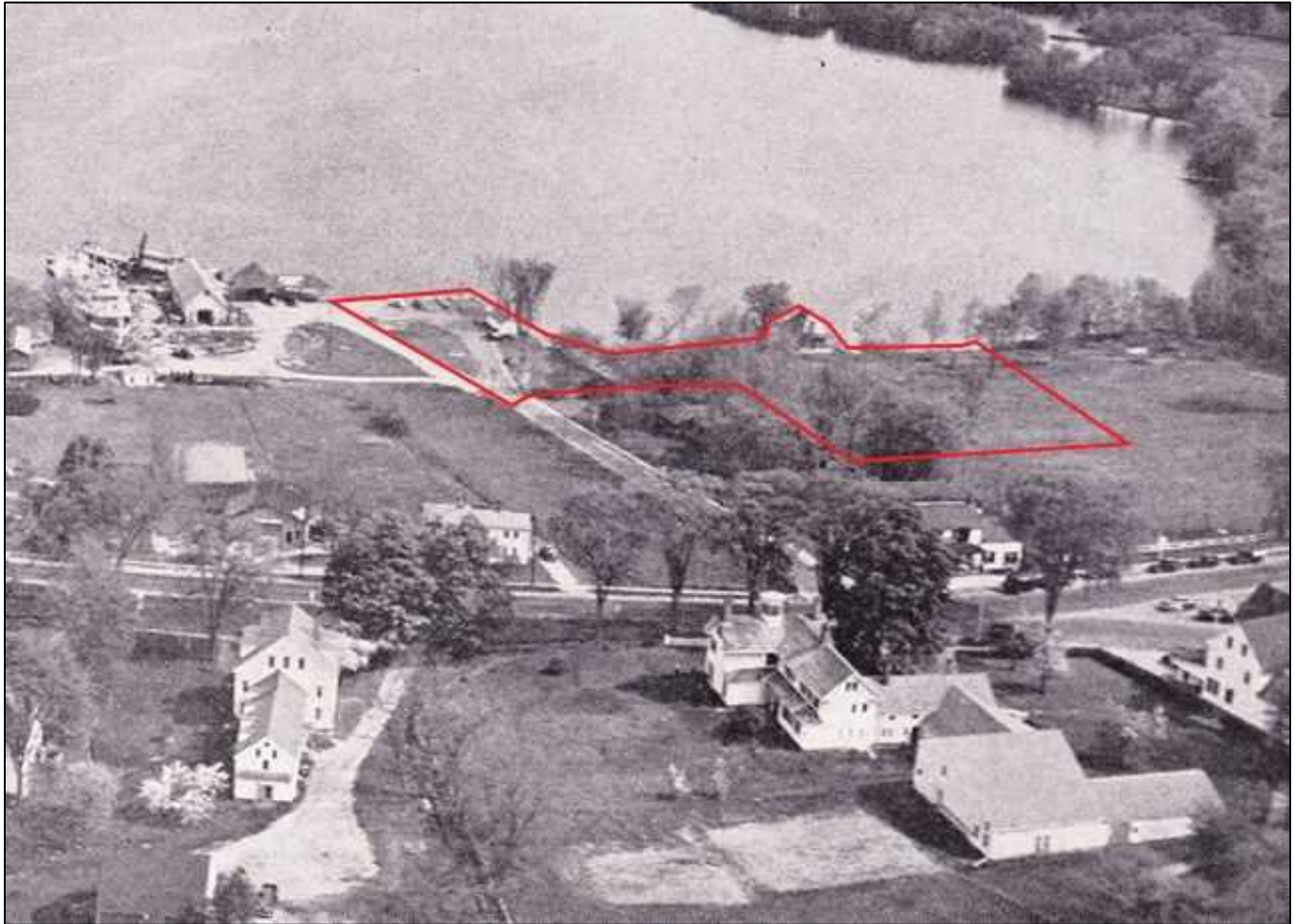


Figure 12: East-facing aerial view of Center Harbor, 1952. Red outline is approximate location of present Town Beach (Courtesy David Hughes)

In the mid-1950s, the former Colonial Hotel grounds were bisected when NH Route 25 was constructed parallel to Main Street. An historic area photograph (figure 11), shows what the area looked like in 1952, just before the highway was laid out across the property and before the construction of the adjacent Center Harbor Inn to the south.

In 1964, the title to the former Colonial Hotel grounds transferred from Red Wagon Corp. to the individual members.<sup>49</sup> During this turnover of ownership, the former Senter House/Colonial bowling alley was converted into a private dwelling, which remained standing as the private home of the family of **Donard "Don" Carr** (1918-2011)<sup>50</sup> as late as 1986.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 443/PG 321-322.

<sup>50</sup> Anonymous, "Find A Grave" ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)), Donard D Carr (1918-2011) is interred at the Center Harbor Memorial Park in Center Harbor. His obituary was published in the *Laconia Daily Sun* on August 2, 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Centre Harbor Historical Society, 52. The bowling alley/house has since been demolished to allow for the expansion of the adjacent Center Harbor Inn.

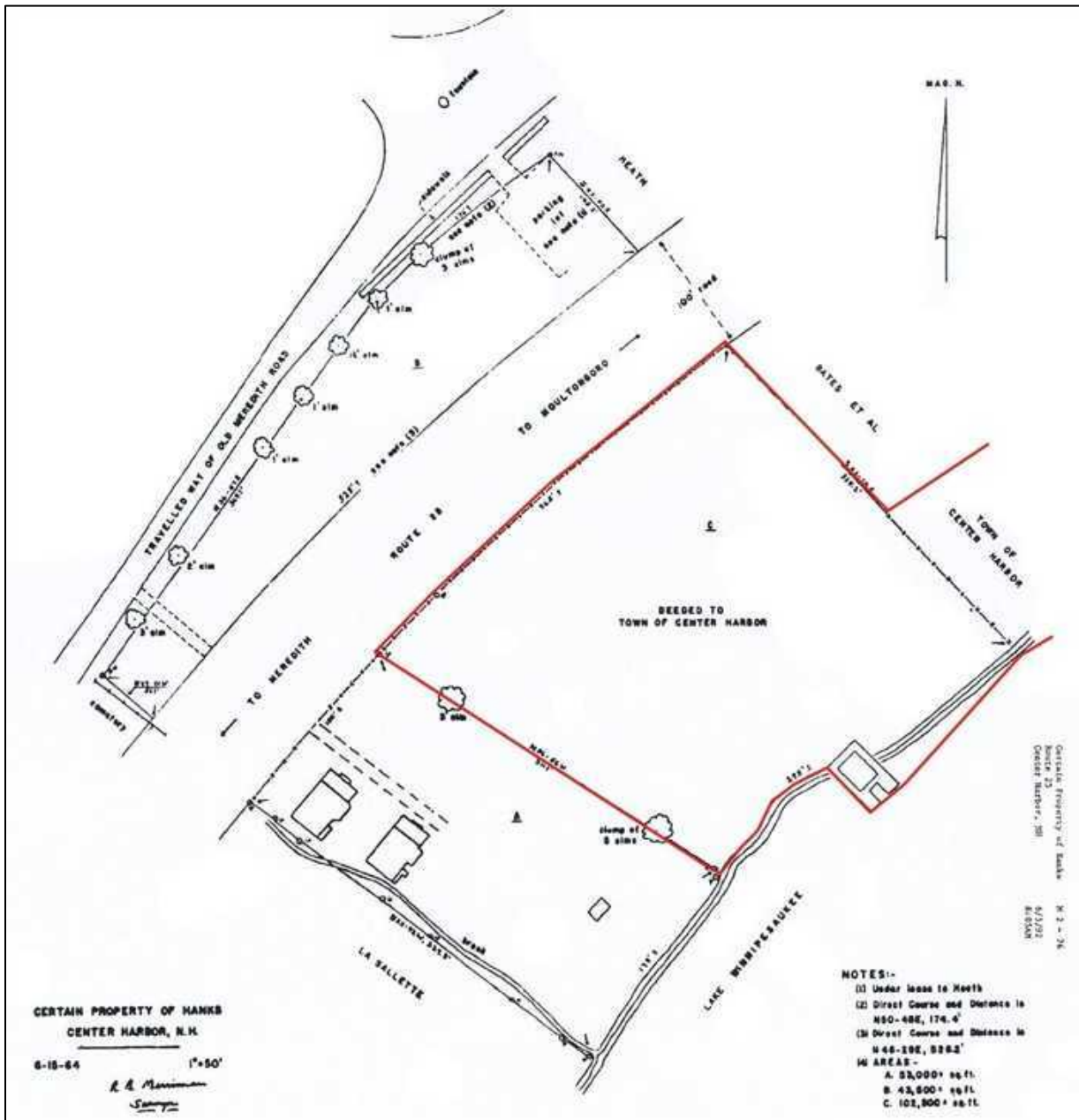


Figure 13: Certain Property of Hanks, Center Harbor June 15, 1964 (Belknap County Registry of Deeds, Plan Draw M2, No 76, Sheet 1)

**Center Harbor Town Beach (1964-present)**

The Hanks and William White subdivided the parcel (figure 12) and sold the eastern side of their property to the Town of Center Harbor on July 31, 1964.<sup>52</sup> The former Colonial Hotel parcel was combined with the smaller former Boston & Montreal Railroad parcel next door, the land around the boathouse was built up with sand, and the current Town Beach created.

<sup>52</sup> Belknap County Registry of Deeds, BK 446/PG 268. The southwest portion of the property was then developed into a motel, now the Center Harbor Inn.

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In about 1970, the Town added a new 16 x 20' concrete block bath house to the property, between the public parking area near the public boat launch and the lake's shore.<sup>53</sup> The public docks were also enhanced at about this time.

Article 16 of the 1971 Town Warrant asked to raise and appropriate \$1,500 for the construction and maintenance of a pavilion at Winnepesaukee Town Beach (as the beach was the known).<sup>54</sup> The Town bough \$953 in lumber from Prescott Lumber Co. in Meredith, paid Person's Concrete Inc \$103.13 to pour the footings, and paid John Gore \$150 to build the structure later that season.<sup>55</sup>

In 1980, the Town added a 50 x 70' basketball court to the property. Swing sets were also added, as well as a playground.

As the Lakes Region summer population has grown in recent decades, and as the popularity of motor boating on Winnepesaukee has skyrocketed, the Town has continued to adapt the park to accommodate the influx of visitors. In 1998 the Town Docks were replaced, and repaired in 2001. In 2020, the area adjacent to the boat ramp was landscaped with a new brick patio, perennial gardens, and built-in benches.

In 2018, a preliminary survey of the Canoe House was conducted as part of a larger town-wide survey (figure 14). Working on preliminary information, this survey incorrectly assumed that the building was the same structure as the ca. 1888 boat house and that it was heavily renovated with brick veneer walls in about 1921.

In 2024, the Selectmen/Parks and Recreation Department made some incremental repairs and upgrades to the Park. White House Construction Co. Inc. of Gilford was paid \$2,000 to replace the true divided light wooden windows of the Canoe House with

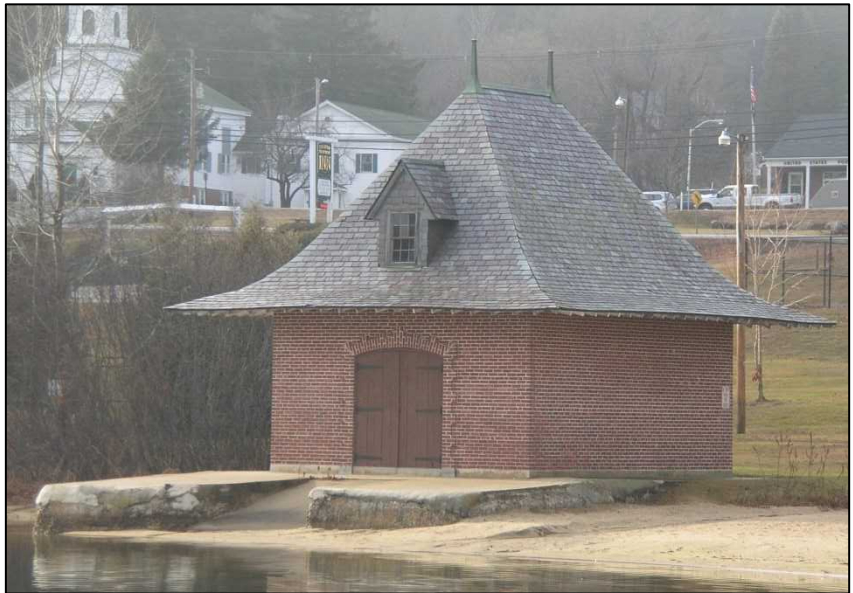


Figure 14: Canoe House in 2018, with original windows (2018 Survey/Karen Ponton)

modern vinyl sash with simulated muntins.<sup>56</sup> Custom Slate and Copper replace some broken roof slates and copper flashing of the building as well for \$11,650. Daniels Electric replaced the lighting of the Basketball Court

<sup>53</sup> The building was standing by 1971, when repairs were made to the men's room (Town of Center Harbor, *Annual Report...Town of Centre [sic] Harbor New Hampshire For the Year Ending December 31, 1971* (Meredith, NH: Meredith News, Inc., 1972), 42).

<sup>54</sup> Town of Center Harbor, *Annual Report...for the Year Ending December 31, 1971*, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Town of Center Harbor, *Annual Report...for the Year Ending December 31, 1971*, 42.

<sup>56</sup> Town of Center Harbor, *Annual Report Town of Center Harbor, New Hampshire for the Year Ending December 31, 2024*, 63.

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and parking lot with LED (\$2,770) and Vermont Tennis sealed cracks and painted new lines on Court (\$2,500). New security cameras were also installed at this time.

The Center Harbor Town Beach and Boat Ramp are heavily used throughout the summer season. The Parks and Recreation department operate the beach between 6 am and 10 pm May 1 to October 15<sup>th</sup> for Center Harbor and Moultonborough Residents and their guests. The boat launch and beach are staffed throughout the summer season and area heavily used by the community.

**Applicable NHDHR Historic Contexts** (please list names from appendix C):

608. Outdoor recreation in New Hampshire

**Statement of Significance:**

The Center Harbor Town Beach, Park and Canoe House is eligible for the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places under criterion A.

Criterion A: The Center Harbor Town Beach, Park and Canoe House is eligible for the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation for its association with the recreational history of the community. The acreage that is currently associated with the Center Harbor Town beach has been associated with the recreational history of the town since the mid-1800s, when it was part of the landscaped grounds of the Senter House Hotel. At that time, a simple boat house was constructed adjacent to the waterfront, near to the steam boat wharf that stood at what is now the public boat launch. After the first Senter House burned, the parkland entered a second wave of development with new landscaping features and a new bath house to accompany the New Senter House (later the Colonial). Despite these strong historic associations with the hotel and tourism themes that are so central to the development of Center Harbor, the property retains little historic integrity for this period. The current layout of the site is more closely associated with the Town Beach era of development which occurred after the Town acquired the property in 1964. Thus, the slightly earlier boat house (either constructed shortly before the Colonial burned or by the Dane family in the 1920s) and accompanying ca. 1970 bath house and 1971 pavilion are considering contributing features to this era of development: the property retains strong integrity for this period of development in the second half to last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Criterion B: The Center Harbor Town Beach, Park and Canoe House does not appear to have strong associations with any figures known to have made significant contributions to history.

Criterion C: Though the Boat House is a rare local example of the chateausque style of architecture, due to modern changes to the historic fabric of the structure and of the Town Beach parcel it no longer retains sufficient architectural integrity to qualify under Criterion C.

**Integrity Statement:**

The Center Harbor Town Beach, Park and Canoe House have mixed integrity. The property retains strong integrity of location between Center Harbor's Main Street and Lake Winnepesaukee with the ca. 1921 boat house, ca. 1970 bath house and 1971 pavilion at their original locations. Overall changes to the surrounding area with modern infill and the loss of surrounding historic structures and changes to the park layout during the modern period have led to some loss of integrity of setting and design. Though the ca. 1970 bath house and pavilion retain very strong integrity of design, materials, and workmanship and have changed little since their construction, the boat house

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has lost some integrity over recent years with changes to the foundations and the loss of the original windows. Despite some losses to other areas of integrity, the park as a whole retains strong integrity of feeling and association as a public waterside park.

**Period of Significance:**

A. 1964-1976 (arbitrary 50-year cut-off)

**Surveyor's Evaluation:****Significance Evaluation Criteria**

Criterion A  Criterion B  Criterion C  Criterion D

**Significance Evaluation Criteria Considerations**

A  B  C  D  E  F  G

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