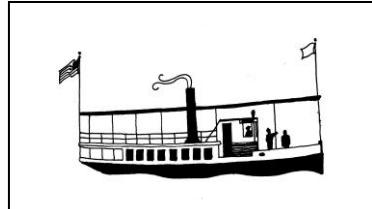


# Sunapee Echoes

Sunapee, New Hampshire Historical Society, Inc.  
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603-763-9872  
Winter 2026



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

As I write this, I'm looking out at our winter wonderland. It sure is pretty, but I'm glad it's warm in here! We worked from home this afternoon instead of at the Archives and hope that no one was disappointed not to find us there.

Our plans for summer are beginning to come together:

**History cruises** are planned for 6 July and 3 August at 5:30 pm. This year we'll cover shoreline development from Gardner Bay to Georges Mills, and seats will be \$50 each. We'd be glad to add you to our reservations list anytime. Just let us know. No need to pay until closer to time.

**Programs** to help celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution and our country will include something about life in Sunapee in the 1770s and a bit about the lives of some of our veterans of that war. Sunapee was very young, having been founded as Saville as recently as 1768, so we picture a handful of residents struggling to establish their farms and town. Not many resources survive from those days, but we certainly appreciate what their efforts.

We are collaborating with the Newbury Historical Society and many others to share information about local area plans for celebrating the 250th. Watch for events in neighboring towns as well as in Sunapee. We'll try to keep you posted.

**SHS Publications.** Barbara Chalmers has **three new books** in the works! One will be a slim volume on all the industries that once lined the Sugar River all the way from the Harbor to the Guild town line. Another will tell you what we know about all the hotels, cabins, and other places to stay that once catered to visitors around the lake. And the third book will be a compilation of all the information she has published on our Facebook page since 2012.

The museum will continue to feature many of your favorite exhibits of Sunapee artifacts, but we're planning at least one new one. With its running at Thanksgiving,

the **Sunapee Turkey Trot** will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We have T-shirts from each year but the first two—2007 and 2008. If anyone has souvenir shirts for those years and would like to donate them, we'd be grateful to have the collection completed. Please contact [Kathy.Springsteen@gmail.com](mailto:Kathy.Springsteen@gmail.com) if you can help with those or any other souvenirs. Thanks!

Yes, we know that Sunapee's Turkey Trot history isn't particularly old. If you don't think of that as history, please remember that anything that has happened starts receding into the past as soon as it's over. If you have photos of Sunapee events, we'd love to have copies for our town collection and would be happy to scan them if they're not already in digital form.

Enjoy the skiing or whatever your favorite winter sport is, indoors or out, and remember that spring will be here before we know it.

--Becky



### Did you know?.....

Our town once had a different shape. Although most towns were rectangular, Saville (Sunapee) when chartered was long and narrow. The southern end went further south and ended in a point and the northeastern corner included Little Lake Sunapee. Both ends were sliced off early in our town history in order to give the residents of those pieces more convenient access to their town centers. When the towns in western New Hampshire were first laid out, the eastern border of Saville followed the Masonian Curve Line—a surveyed line drawn 60 miles from the coast. The land within it was given to John Mason (hence the line's name) and subsequently was divided up and sold off.

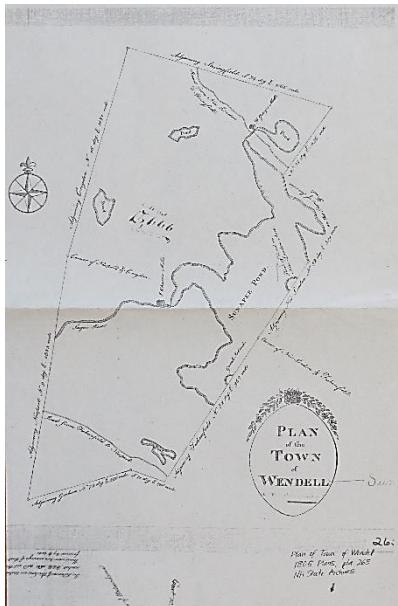
This 1784 map shows the original shape. Note that Newbury was Fishersfield, Sutton was Perry, Springfield was Protectworth, and New London was the Alexandria Addition.

The line you see running across just below the “s” in Saville is the Province Road. Through the 1760s, the old scouting path was under improvement. By about 1770, it may have finally been made suitable for coaches and other horse-drawn vehicles. By 1776, it certainly constituted the main route from Boscawen to the Fort at Number 4 (now Charlestown). As noted in a previous *Echoes*, my own gggg grandfather marched with the Candia, NH militia north to Boscawen and west to the Fort at No. 4, then on to Saratoga, so we know the road was used by through traffic.



So what did all that mean to our early settlers? Saville was chartered as a proprietary under the king in 1768. The first three residents came in 1769, a mere 7 years before the Revolution, and settled in the south end of town, not far from the Province Road. By 1776, they had been joined by 3 more. Meanwhile, 12 others had settled in the “permanent” part of Saville, and all 18 males age 16 and over in 1776 signed the Association Test—in essence, a loyalty oath that they would join in defense of the colonies against the British. Twelve or more of those who were in town in 1776 served in the war. More men (and presumably their families) filtered into town during and after the war, some purchasing land here before volunteering and some serving in regiments elsewhere before settling here.

In 1783, after the end of the war, our town’s name was changed from Saville to Wendell, in honor of the Portsmouth lawyer who was instrumental in establishing the town. By 1790, according to the first US census, our population had reached 267 residents in 51 households including 70 men age 16 or more. In 1791, 15 of those households, located in the “tail,” became residents of Goshen when that town was created by joining parts of Saville, Newport, Unity, and Fishersfield (Newbury).



What was life like here at that time? Much is left to conjecture—or perhaps to educated guess—and I wish I could travel back in time to see for myself. As our early settlers worked to establish our town, there must have been much clearing of land to create fields and pastures. The early houses must have been log cabins, but by 1800 buildings we would recognize as houses and barns were appearing. How much traffic went by on the Province Rd? Did the residents turn out to cheer on my ancestor and his friends among others, or were they too busy working on their farms?

As the population grew, so did the road network. The primary north-south road in 1800 was Stagecoach Road and North Road to Springfield. Another road connected Grantham to New London through what became Georges Mills. The northeast corner was annexed to New London in two pieces in 1804 and 1817.

Here’s an 1805 map showing the shape of Wendell (Sunapee) after we lost the south end to Goshen and the first northeast corner to New London.

## Looking for something to do?

Why not try out our self-guided walking tour of the Harbor area? You'll discover old and current photos of the historic buildings and places complete with information about them, all on your smart phone thanks to the *Sunapee Harbor Historical Walking Tour* on the Clio app!!

**Or for gifts?** Check out our store:

<https://sunapeehistoricalsociety.org/our-store>

*Take a walk with us through the early stories of Sunapee Harbor*

Download the CLIO app



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- Follow the numbered pins on the map
- Enjoy the pictures of then and now
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and search under "Tours" by either Location or Title *Sunapee Harbor Historical Walking Tour* ~ Enjoy!

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Thank you!

## ***Sunapee Echoes***

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PO Box 501  
Sunapee, NH 03782

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*Sunapee's Thanksgiving Tradition, now 20 years old—the Turkey Trot in 2017!*