

The Orford Historical Society Hosts:

“Exploring Orford’s Cellar Hole Secrets”

Presented by:

Stephen Alden

Leader and Founding Member, Lyme Cellar Holes Project

Sunday, October 12, 2014



Nathan Ames Cellar Hole on Old Grimes Hill Road, Photo Courtesy of Stephen Alden

*Orford Congregational Church
Main Street (NH Route 10), Orford, NH*

1:00 P.M.

Walking Tour to Follow

“Exploring Orford’s Cellar Hole Secrets”

Important Dates

- Pre-1760 Rangers, explorers, and fur trappers travel in the area along Native American trails.
- 1760 End of French and Indian War; this area now safe for settlement by colonists.
- 1761 Orford chartered by King George III; Governor Wentworth granted township’s land to 63 Proprietors.
- 1765 John and Lydia Mann arrive from Connecticut, to become Orford’s first permanent colonial settlers.
- 1766 Proprietors pay early settlers in town “for cutting & clearing of roads.”
- 1774 Meeting of townspeople agrees to support building road to Wentworth town line.
- 1776-87 Hill farms begin on Dame Hill, slopes of “Cuba Mountain” and at Quinttown.
- 1802 First bridge built across Connecticut River at Orford.
- 1804 Grafton Turnpike Corporation chartered by state legislature.
- 1805 First map of Orford, with town and county roads, surveyed and drawn by Daniel Hovey.
- 1806 Grafton Turnpike opens; northern terminus at the Connecticut River bridge in Orford.
- 1809 U.S. Ambassador William Jarvis gets permission to import first Merino sheep from Spain.
- 1820’s Iron cook stoves are introduced, changing cellar construction.
- 1820-35 “The Great Sheep Boom” in northern New England.
- 1800-40 Orford prospers; 1830 population reaches 1,896, nearly twice today’s total.
- 1848 Railroad is routed through Fairlee, Vermont; commercial activities begin to shift away from Orford.
- 1840-70 Orford hill farms begin to be abandoned, partly due to competition from large mid-western farms.
- 1860 Publication of detailed Grafton County map.
- 1861-65 American Civil War; many men left and did not come back to the hill farms.
- 1869 Agricultural census reported over 11,000 sheep in Orford; in 1883 only 4,500 and none by 1896.
- 1890 Orford’s population declines to 916.
- 1892 Publication of Grafton County Atlas, containing detailed map of Orford.
- 1890’s Start of new uses for Orford’s landscape: tourism and summer camps.

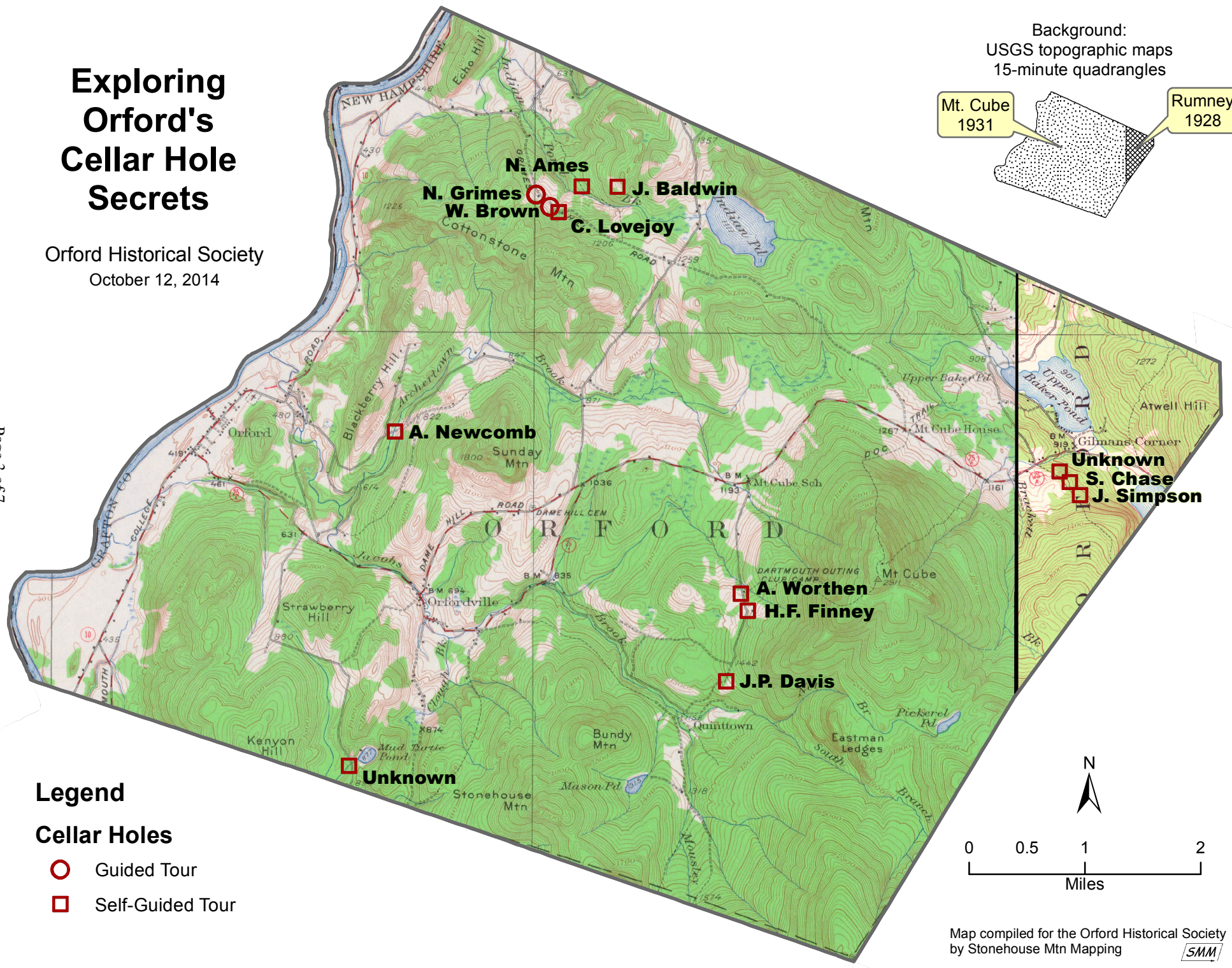
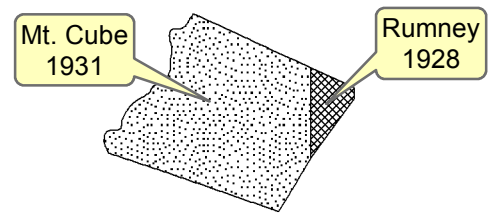
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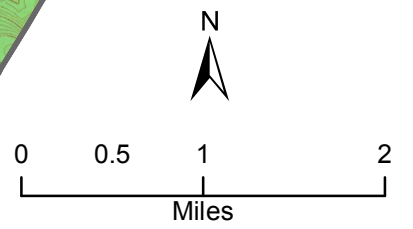
Background:
USGS topographic maps
15-minute quadrangles



Legend

Cellar Holes

- Guided Tour
- Self-Guided Tour



Map compiled for the Orford Historical Society
by Stonehouse Mtn Mapping SMM

“Exploring Orford’s Cellar Hole Secrets”
Guidance and Highlights for the Tour
(Use together with the map on page 3)

NOTE: Please protect this important aspect of Orford’s history and respect the cellar holes, which are on private property. Disturbance or removal of any objects or materials is strictly forbidden. As you explore these cellar holes, please be careful since cellar hole foundations can be unstable and there may be wells nearby that have not yet been discovered and marked. Also, please heed the prohibition on wheeled vehicles on roads leading to some sites; at these sites you will be required to approach on foot. The land owners and the Orford Historical Society appreciate your consideration and cooperation.

Guided Tour: Steve Alden will lead a guided tour of the two cellar holes marked as N. Grimes and W. Brown on the map. These cellar holes are on the old Grimes Hill Road, known as Road 3 in the 1800’s, on the Schwaegler property west of Indian Pond Four Corners. It will be possible on the day of the program only to drive and park near these two cellar holes and Sites #3, #4 and #5 via access roads on the Schwaegler property.

Site #1: N. Grimes. The Nathan Grimes homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford. It was a 130 acre farm with horses, cows, sheep and hogs. The 1892 map shows Mrs. Howland living at this location. This site includes a number of interesting features which will be explored on the guided tour.

Site #2: W. Brown. The William Brown homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford. In addition to owning this 130 acre farm on Road 3, William Brown owned or co-owned considerable other property in the area with large quantities of valuable timber. This site is well preserved and has many interesting features which will be explored on the guided tour.

Self-Guided Tour:

Site #3: C. Lovejoy. The Charles G. Lovejoy homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford. It appears that this was a prosperous farm. Orford’s 1873 Tax Records list his home place as valued at \$3,500, 1 horse at \$125, and 5 cows at \$250.

Site # 4: N. Ames. The Nathan Ames homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford. No records were found about Nathan Ames, however, tax records list Asa Ames as being taxed for the old Nathan Ames place valued at \$700 in 1873 and \$500 in 1876. By 1892 the old Nathan Ames homestead was owned by William Brown.

Site #5: J. Baldwin. The John Baldwin homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford. The 1873 Tax Records list the home place as valued at \$1,200, 1 horse at \$50, 2 cows at \$48, and money on hand at \$450. The 1876 Tax Records list the home place as valued at \$800, but no livestock. The homestead appears to have been abandoned by 1892 since it does not appear on the 1892 map of Orford.

Site #6: A. Newcomb: The Asahel W. Newcomb homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford on Tillotson Falls Road, formerly Road 22. His 120 acre farm was valued at \$1,000 in 1873, and he had 1 horse valued at \$60, 6 cows valued at \$150 and 19 sheep valued at \$50. This area currently is referred to as “Newcomb Hollow.”

Site #7: A. Worthen: The A. Worthen homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford on Baker Road, formerly Road 30. The cellar hole is located on the east side of Baker Road, 1.0 mile from the intersection with Route 25A, at the top of the hill just past the Cross Rivendell Trail. In addition to the house cellar hole, there are two barn foundations, a well, apple trees and old cars.

Site #8: H.F. Finney. The Henry F. Finney homestead is shown on both the 1860 and 1892 maps of Orford on Baker Road, formerly Road 30. The cellar hole is located on the east side of Baker Road 1.1 miles from the intersection with Route 25A, and about 100 yards up a side road on the left. Eleazer Finney and his wife and father came to Orford from Connecticut in about 1781 and moved into a house built for them on this site in 1784. Seven generations of Finneys lived at this farm. It ceased operations in about 1922 and the house and barn burned in 1947.

Site #9: J.P. Davis. The John P. Davis homestead is shown on the 1892 map of Orford on Baker Road, formerly Road 30. The cellar hole is 1.8 miles from the intersection of Route 25A and Baker Road. Although the road from the Finney cellar hole to the Davis cellar hole is open to traffic, it is only appropriate for high clearance vehicles. Others should park near the Site #8 Finney cellar hole and walk the 0.7 miles to this very nice cellar hole. It has an almost intact bulkhead entrance and 5 foot thick front foundation.

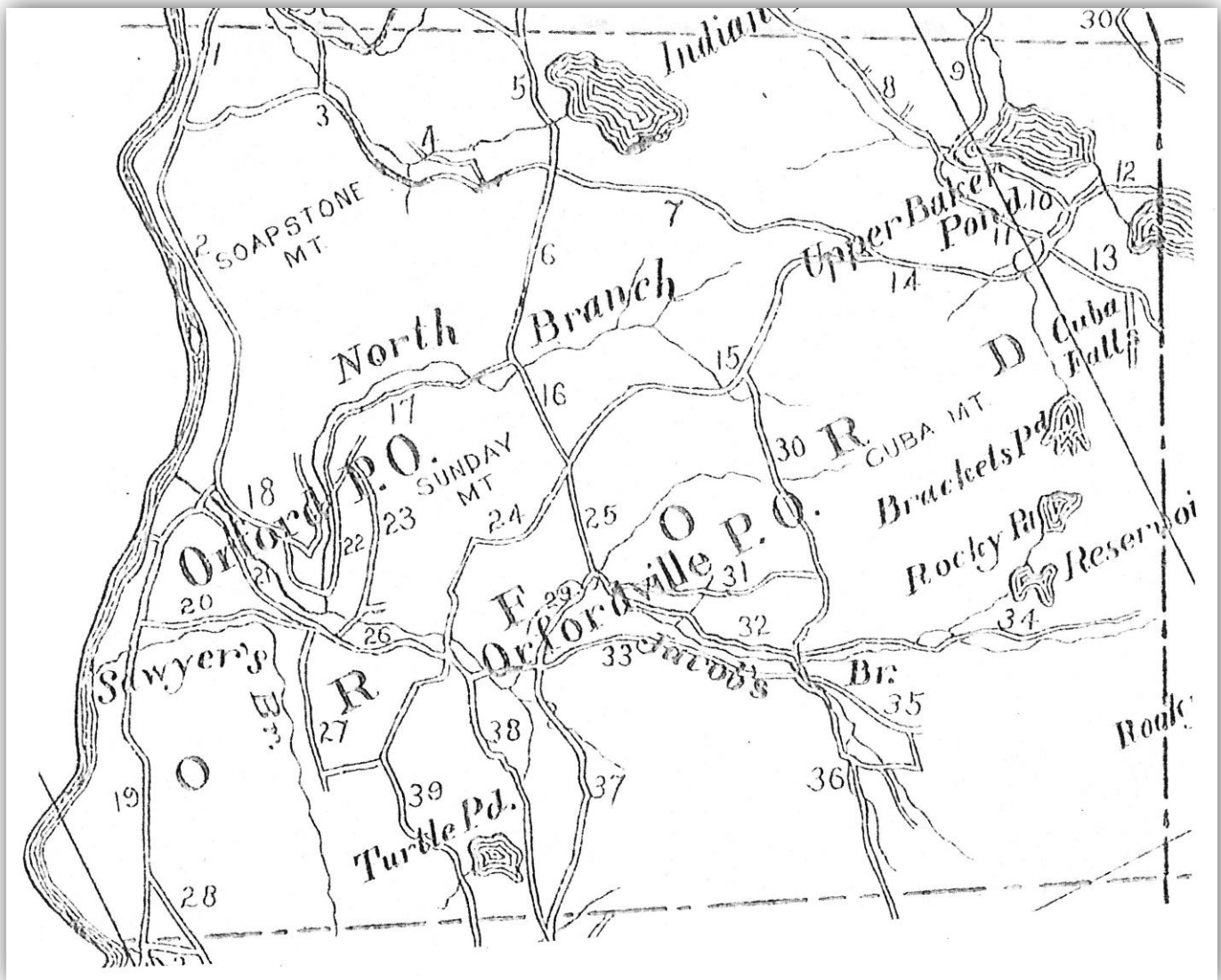
Site #10: Unknown. This cellar hole, located on the west side of Mud Turtle Pond Road, 2.5 miles from the intersection of Route 25A and Strawberry Hill Road, is directly across from the private access road to Mud Turtle Pond. It is not shown on either the 1860 or 1892 maps of Orford. It is a nice cellar hole to view, but nothing is known about its origin or history.

Site #11: Unknown. This cellar hole is not shown on the 1860 or 1892 maps of Orford. This cellar hole, as well as Site #12 and Site #13, are located on the so-called “Old County Road” in East Orford directly across from (south of) East Cemetery Road. Access to these 3 sites is by driving south on the Old County Road, through the first gate, and to the second gate, about 0.3 miles. Park outside the second gate and follow the signs to the 3 cellar holes. This cellar hole is directly behind and to the left (east) of the gate. It is a large cellar hole with a high retaining wall to the south by the small brook.

Site #12: S. Chase. The S. Chase homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford. Nothing has been found about S. Chase or this cellar hole. However, a very unique feature of this cellar hole is the upright cut granite posts in each corner and the middle of each side of the foundation. Nothing like them has been found elsewhere in Orford.

Site #13: J. Simpson. The J. Simpson homestead is shown on the 1860 map of Orford and is only about 50 yards from the S. Chase cellar hole. Again, nothing has been found about J. Simpson or this cellar hole, but it is in pretty good condition and worth a visit. The Appalachian Trail runs between the S. Chase and J. Simpson cellar holes.

1886 Map of Orford Showing Numbered Roads



(Source: Gazetteer of Grafton County, N.H., 1709-1886, compiled and published by Hamilton Child)

“Exploring Orford’s Cellar Hole Secrets”
Sources and Acknowledgements

Primary Sources:

Gazetteer of Grafton County, N.H. 1709-1886

1865 Orford Centennial Report

Report of the Bicentennial Celebration of the Town of Orford, New Hampshire, August 7&8, 1965

Thanks to the Past: The Story of Orford, N.H. by Alice Doan Hodgson

A Town That Has gone Downhill, Geographical Review, Vol. 17, 1927, by James Walter Goldthwait

Grafton County Register of Deeds

Orford Tax Records

1860 and 1892 Maps of Orford

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