

Origin of the GILMANTON POUND

In Revolutionary Times, many Gilmanton farms lacked fences or stone walls to contain their cattle, which were then free to wander about the town. So in 1783 the Selectmen voted to erect a "Pound" near Smith Meeting House, which was then the center of town activities. Stray cattle were confined here until their owners came to collect them.

In 1801 a Town By-Law was written to address the problem of "neat cattle, sheep or swine" eating the straw out of sleighs while the people attended church. (The straw was placed there to soften the ride and as insulation against the cold.) -- Under the new law, farm animals (except dogs and cats) were legally not permitted within 1/3 mile of the Academy, Meredith Bridge, or the homes of prominent people, such as Mr. Gilman, etc.

In 1807, the Selectmen voted to "rebuild the Pound of stone" and relocate it to "South of William Peaslee's". This is probably the Pound we know today, on Route 107 just east of Gilmanton Corners.

In 1824 the law was tightened to prevent domestic animals from roaming "at large within a half mile of the Academy or any store or tavern". Exceptions were permitted for "animals to go to water".

From then until the early 20th Century, Gilmanton has elected/appointed a town position of keeper of the Pound. The last person to hold this office was a Mr. Ellsworth. His son, Earl Ellsworth, donated the key to the Pound to the Gilmanton Historical Society, where it is on display today.

RPA
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Source: Much of the above information was drawn from the "History of Gilmanton"
by Daniel Lancaster