



PRESCOTT TAVERN IN FORGE VILLAGE as it looked forty years ago when it housed Hanley Yarns, Pete Connell's store and the post office. Should you not recognize the young people in front, they are left to right Fred Connell, Georgette Socha Pietras with Patricia Hartly, and Postmaster Robert Connell.

Demise Of Old Tavern At Forge Brings Nostalgia

By Gordon B. Seavey

WESTFORD — If the demolition of the Prescott Tavern in Forge Village had been piece by piece, as it was built, perhaps the shock to the villagers wouldn't have been so great.

But to go to work in the morning, glancing at the venerable landmark without due thought, and return at night to see an empty cellar hole and a pile of debris, that was too much for most, particularly among the so-called old timers.

Constructed nearly two centuries ago with each joint fitted in mortise and tenon fashion, it must have taken many, many hours of tedious hand work. A bulldozer wiped this all out recently in a couple of hours.

There is no one alive today who can remember when the structure was used as a tavern. Mrs. Luella Prescott Collins, now 90, only recalls that when she was a little girl, it was a very "old" building.

It is said that Luther Prescott lived here and probably was the keeper of the tavern. He was born in 1809 and after his death in 1895 the granite horse mounting block in front was removed to the West "burying ground" where it now sits as a grave marker for him and his family. Luther also doubled as station agent, postmaster, trial justice and also a state representative.

Daughter Olive Ann Prescott was preceptress at the Academy in 1859. The town has her to thank for putting in print (1896) a history of the town's greatest Revolutionary hero, Colonel John Robinson. He was her great, great grandfather. Many facets of his interesting career would have been lost forever had not she penned the stories that came down through the family.

Galloping Horses

A son, Richard, who lived until 1935, is well-known. He continued the Prescott place as a farm. People remember him, high on the front seat of the village fire wagon, whipping his pair of work horses to a galloping speed whenever the alarm sounded. Local fisherman, looking for bait, were able

to buy shiners from "Richie" for two cents each.

His wife was often visited by the local children. Miss Annie McMurray, 77, remembers hearing that the Prescotts once owned 800 acres in the vicinity of the village. This made the Prescotts no doubt the largest land owners in town.

She also recollects being shown an older ledger of the tavern with the records written in the common currency of the early days, the English pound, shilling and pence. There was once an ell to the tavern, complete with a two-story porch plus rocking chairs.

Another relative about the village was George Henry Prescott, a wool sorter in the mill, who dressed up his full beard with a flower between his lips.

In the early 1800's, "Forge Village" was in a very prosperous condition. It had a store, hotel, three iron forges, two blacksmith shops, two wool-carding machines, one clothier's mill, a grist mill and a wheelwright's shop, all located near the new worsted mill.

Half a century ago, life centered once again around the old "hotel" for it was now a business block. Here was the post office in the variety store operated by Harold F. "Pete" Connell, a barber shop and the widely known Hanley & Co., a yarn shop.

Katherine "Kate" Hanley was a friend to all and lived to a ripe 90, she died in 1965. She recalled as a little girl sitting on the stairs of the tavern waiting for the mail to be sorted. There were three mails a day then, arriving by train at the depot across the street.

List of Postmasters

The list of postmasters included John and Abbie Splaine, Mary Nutting, Eva Pyne (onetime station agent at Pine Ridge), Burton Griffith and Josephine Connell, mother of the present Westford postmaster. William Marcoulier operated the barber shop for many years, followed by Francis Daly. Probably the best known person in the village was John C.