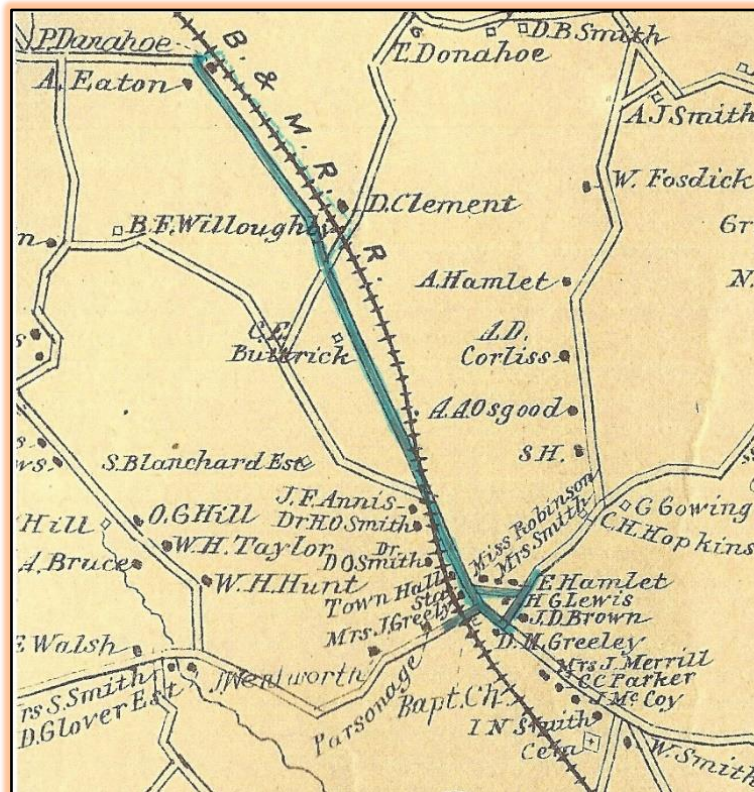


Hudson History “Ride Around Town” Trip 2: Hudson Center

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Editors Note: The “hot links” in this dialogue will direct you to articles in RememberHudsonNHWhen.COM for further information. Use “shift-click” on the link and you will be returned to this file when you close the link. Enjoy!!



This 1892 Map shows our itinerary for this trip, the railroad tracks through Hudson Center and many of the surnames.

This trip begins at the parking lot of the First Baptist Church (236 Central Street). A good place to assemble.

Parking lot behind the church, near the telephone pole. From this location we reveal several pieces of history.

The Baptist Church

The [Baptist Church](#) was organized in 1805 as a mission church of the Londonderry Baptist. At first services were held in private homes and later in other church buildings when not used by other denominations. The sanctuary, including the original steeple, was built in 1841. In 1888 an alcove was added to house the Woodbury and Harris organ which had been donated to the church by Dr David O Smith. The 2-story vestry was added in 1897.

A point of historical interest: Prior to 1888 a Mason & Hamlin pump organ was used by the church; this very same organ, in playing condition, is now located in the Dining Room of the Hills House.

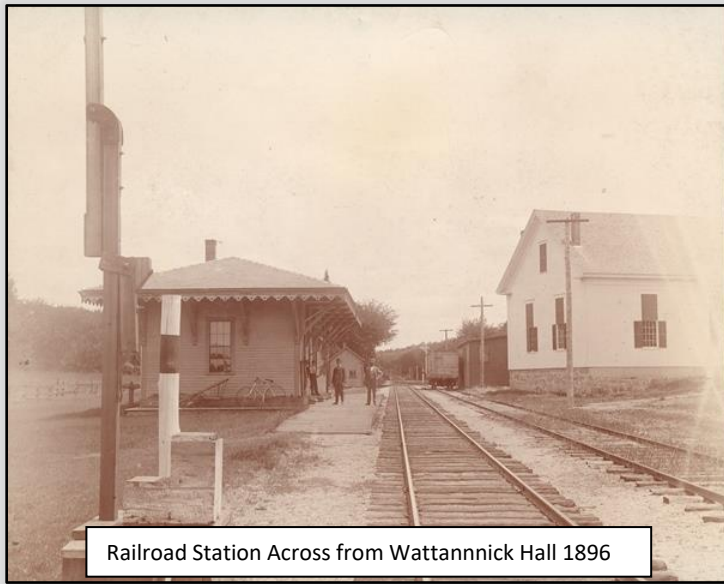


The Parsonage

Adjacent to the church on the right and surrounded by a white fence, is the rear of the present church [parsonage](#) ([residence of the pastor](#)). This home was built c 1790 and by 1817 became the home of Reuban Greeley, well known in our history as a long-standing Town Clerk and Postmaster of Hudson in Hudson Center. His post office was in a barn connected to the west side of his house. This home remained in his family until 1962 when it was purchased by the church. Prior to this time the parsonage was located at 6 Greeley Street; first built in 1846, it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1909.



Steam Railroad



Railroad Station Across from Wattannick Hall 1896

Of major significance is the [steam railroad and the station](#) in Hudson Center. If you stand with your back to the church near the telephone pole (at Greeley St) you can imagine the route of the railroad and the station. Looking to your left you will see the 7-11 Market (formerly Thompson's Market) and a row of pine trees leading to the playground. These trees and the embankment are an approximation of the route of the railroad as it approached and crossed Greeley Street. Looking to your right towards the back of Wattannick Hall (large white building) the tracks continued toward and across Windham Road and on to West Windham. The railroad depot (station) was to the left of the tracks, occupying a part of the lot where we see the rear of a yellow duplex. The railroad depot was used as a residence for several years and has

since been removed from this location to just inside the gate for the handicap entrance to Bensons Park.

Another trivia: the tracks were so close to the rear of the church vestry that the railroad company paid to put a slate roof on the back of the church to protect it from cinders

The trip continues: take a right onto Greeley and cross to Kimball Hill Road at the light. Park in the green space on the right of Kimball Hill Road.

From this location you can see the Front of the Baptist Church and the Reuben Greeley home on the left.

Hudson Center Common



Hudson Center Cemetery

Across the way and on the Hudson Center Common you see the wall and entrance to the [Hudson Center Cemetery](#), a Revolutionary Cannon, two mill stones, and a [Revolutionary War marker \(boulder\)](#). For a moment imagine the common without Route 111 passing through it. This was the original common; encompassing everything bounded by Windham Road, Kimball Hill Road, and Hamblett Avenue. Windham Road was the main road to West Windham and Kimball Hill Road the main route to Pelham. In the 1960's the State of NH extended Route 111 through the center of the common.

In the early years the center of Hudson was around this common. There was a Post Office, a church, the town hall, a 'filling station', two forms of public transportation (steam railroad and electric trolley), and at least one store.

In April 1775, some 65 men from Nottingham West assembled on the common and marched toward Lexington and Concord to help with the fight against the British. The inscription on the stone boulder at the point of the common commemorates this event.

The founding date of the common is vague. We do know the cemetery dates to 1775. Some historians say the common was a natural occurrence as the land known as the common became 'cut off' from surrounding fields and homes by the three roads which surround it.

Tenney Home



This green space on Kimball Hill Road was the site of the [Tenney Home](#). Built about 1791, the first occupant was Dr. Paul Tenney who moved into town about that time. He also built the Tenney Tomb located just below his home and on the same side of the road. Members of the Tenney family are interred within it. Our town cemetery trustees have taken great care to improve this tomb and the surrounding landscape. The Tenney home has a long history with Hudson Center. In 1801 James Tenney was Hudson's first postmaster. In 1849 it was purchased by Dr. Barrett and later by Henry Brown. In 1935 it was purchased by John T Benson. It has since been demolished. During the Benson years this was home to Vera Lovejoy and family who managed Bensons during the Lapham years.

Hudson Center School

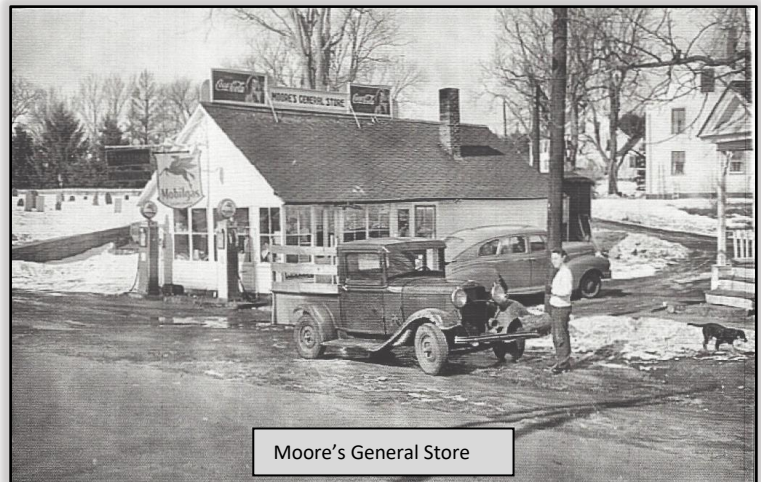
Return to your car and drive a short distance on Kimball Hill Road and turn around at the old Hudson Center School on your left.

As you pass by the cemetery wall notice Bill Cahill's Shop on your left just below the cemetery. More about this a bit later. Proceed partway up the hill and you will see the [Hudson Center School](#), built in 1908 by the town after the David O. Smith school on Windham Road. was destroyed by fire. As you turn around look at the old school building and proceed back down Kimball Hill Road and keep to your right. As traffic permits park at the side and look around.



Moore's General Store

[Moore's General Store](#) (now Cahill's Shop) as shown in this c 1949 photo has a long-standing history with Hudson Center. Originally known as Harvey Lewis' Store, later Moore's Store, and still later Thompsons Market, owned, and operated by brothers David and Robert Thompson who grew up in Hudson Center. Fire destroyed their store in the 1960 and rather than rebuild at this location they built a larger complex at 232 Central Street, now the site of 7-11 convenience market. The site has since been remodeled and rebuilt into this popular sub shop.



Buildings Surrounding the Center

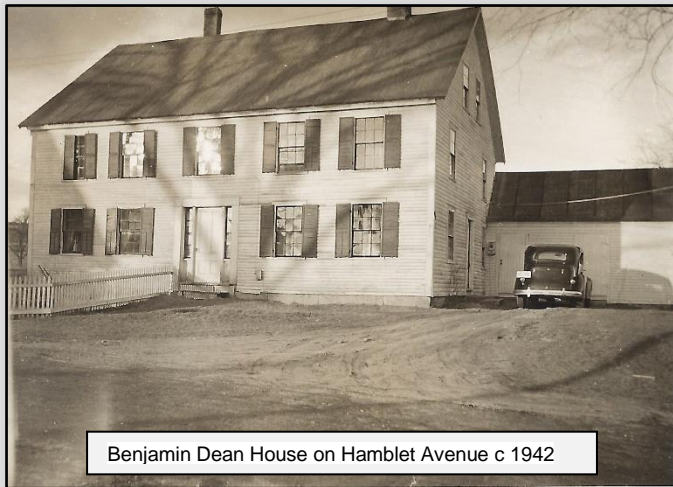
Continue slowly up Hamblett Avenue and stop at the right side of the road just past Cahill's. From here you can look across the common to the Reuban Greeley House, the Baptist Church, the [old Town Hall \(Wattannick Hall\)](#), and the office building between them.

On your right is the site of the [Eli Hamblett House](#), more recently the home of Robert and Georgia Thompson and their family. This site became part of the land parcel of Shephard's Hill and, after being vacant for several years, it was razed a few years ago.

This is a good vantage point to compare [Hudson Center of the 1880's](#) with that of today. This old photo of the center was taken from this approximate location prior to the addition of the vestry onto the church; thus, dating it to about 1880.



Remain here and look around the perimeter of the common. Straight ahead, on Windham Road, is Wattannick Hall. On this site in the 1770s stood the North Meeting House, built by the Presbyterians and pastor Rev. Mark Strickland. This building was very plain: no chimney, no heat, no steeple, and no basement. Rev Strickland lived nearby on Windham Road. The Presbyterians shared this house with the Baptists; later the Baptists had ownership of the house. After the Baptist Church on Greeley Street was built, they turned the North meeting house over to the town by 1857 the town had razed the old meeting house and erected this town house. Town Meetings and town business was conducted here until about 1939 when the town voted to move meetings to the Bridge Area.



Benjamin Dean House on Hamblett Avenue c 1942

Turn your attention back to Hamblett Avenue and Route 111. Prior to the 1960's when the state extended route 111 through the common, this was the site of the home of Richard and Claudia Boucher and their family. Historically this is known as Benjamin Dean House. Originally a part of the Haselton Farm on Bush Hill it was moved from that location to Hamblett Avenue adjacent to the Eli Hamblett house and facing the east side of the common. [Rev. Benjamin Dean](#) has an interesting story; serving as pastor for the Baptist Church, he lost his position in the church, remained active in town for several years. He died a pauper and was interned in an unmarked grave in Westview Cemetery.

When Richard and Claudia realized their home was about to be demolished in favor of the highway, they made plans to move it again. Within a short time, the Benjamin Dean House was relocated to its current site at 8 Windham Road. Thus, it is now known as 'the house twice moved'. The house remains in the Boucher family to this day.

One last piece of history before we move on. Turn your attention to the [office building between Wattannick Hall and Greeley Street](#). An old home, arguably one of the older in Hudson, was on this site. Built before 1850, it was known to many as the home of Everett and Ruth Hamblett. [Everett "Bill" owned a filling station](#) and garage; first located to the right of the grange hall and later rebuilt on Central Street about where Burger King is now located. His wife, Ruth, also wishing to take advantage of the Benson Animal Farm traffic, operated a diner and a gift shop near Bill's garage.



c 1920

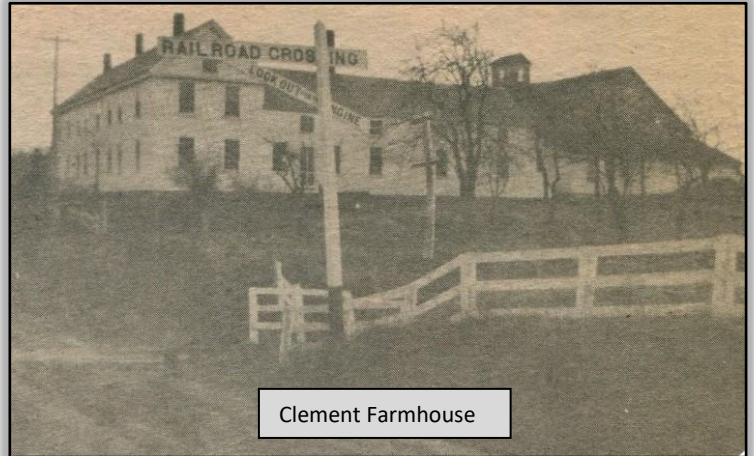
Go to the stop sign at the end of Hamblett Ave and turn right onto Route 111.

Steam Railroad

The steam railroad tracks went from the rear of the Town House (Wattannick Hall) and crossed Windham Road and proceeded easterly in the (then) wooded area on route to West Windham. As we drive east on Route 111, we are following the same general direction as the steam railroad. You will see residences off to your right on Windham Road. Route 111 more or less parallels Windham Road until you get to what is now Lawrence Road. Lawrence Road was originally a part of Windham Road; taking a sharp left turn toward the Robinson Pond area just beyond what is now the traffic light at Industrial Road. The railway and route 111 continue easterly crisscrossing each other to West Windham.

Clement Farmhouse

Proceed to Clement Road and pull off route 111 onto Clement Road near Tip-Top Tree service. This is where the steam railroad crossed Clement Road. History shows us the large [Clement farmhouse](#) on this site.



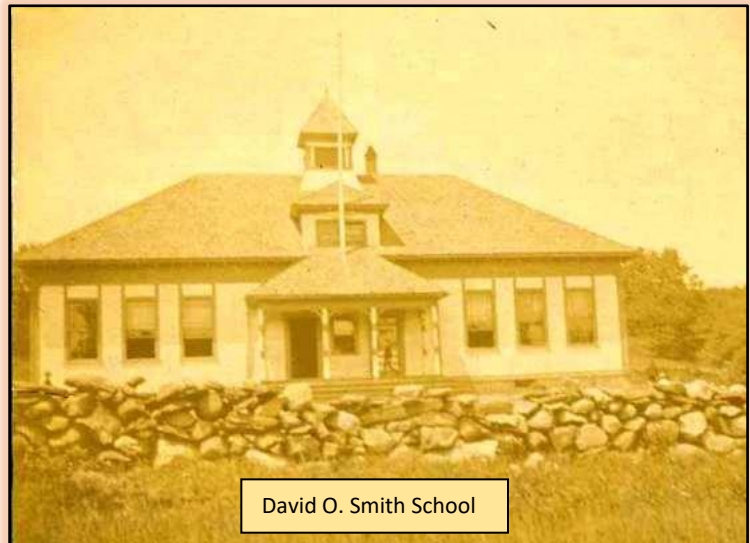
Driving again, return onto route 111 and continue east; BUT be prepared to take a quick left onto Windham Road. We are now heading back toward Hudson Center. Note: if traffic does not permit a safe left turn continue route 111 and take a left onto Lawrence Road just past the traffic light. Find a spot to turn around and return to Route 111 and take a right onto Windham Road and carefully go to your left.

Windham Road



As you make this turn you will see that the current Windham Road stops at this point. Beyond this curve to the right, is a section of the old road which is now on private property. Continuing to our left down Windham Road our first point of interest is **58 Windham Road**; once the home of Clifton Buttrick, later that of John Witkowski, and now of Lee and Sherie Lavoie.

Continuing, our next point of interest is the site of the [David O. Smith school](#) erected by the town in 1896 at approximately 42-44 Windham Road. The proximity can be identified by the old maple trees. This school was used for only a few years when it was destroyed by fire in 1908. Rather than rebuilding on the same site the town opted to replace it with the Center School on Kimball Hill Road.



David O. Smith School

As we continue on Windham Road towards the common take note of the following older (before 1900) homes:

The Elbridge Dow home at 22 Windham. Was later the home of Julia Peterson and the Burt Family. It has since been remodeled as a multi-family.

Rev. Mark Strickland, Presbyterian Minister at the North Meeting House was the original occupant of the house at 18 Windham. Expanded through the years, it is now home to the Sudsbury family.



14 Windham Road.

The Home of Dr. Henry Onslow Smith, medical doctor, historian, and educator is located at the white house on your right at 14 Windham. It was occupied Dr. Smith during his entire medical career in Hudson. It has since been home to the Whittemore Family, the Albert Hunnewell Family, the David Thompson family, and now the family of Linda Smith.



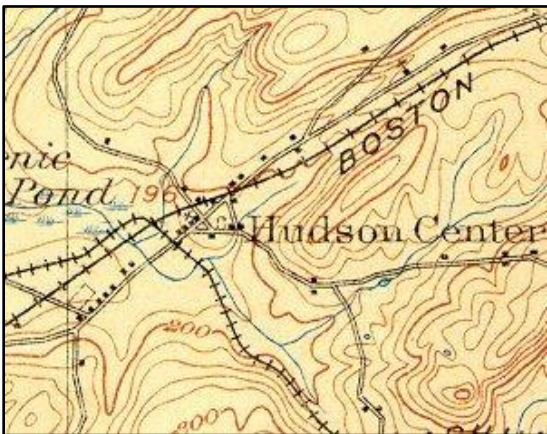
10 Windham Rd.

Proceeding to 10 Windham, we find the home and office of Dr. David O. Smith, father of H.O. Hudson Center was fortunate to have several doctors; two of whom were Dr. David and his son Dr. H.O. [Click to see this house](#) as it appeared in the 1880's. Note the steam railroad tracks along the side (facing Windham Road) of the home. The front of the house was actually perpendicular to this road and facing Dr. Smith's garden.

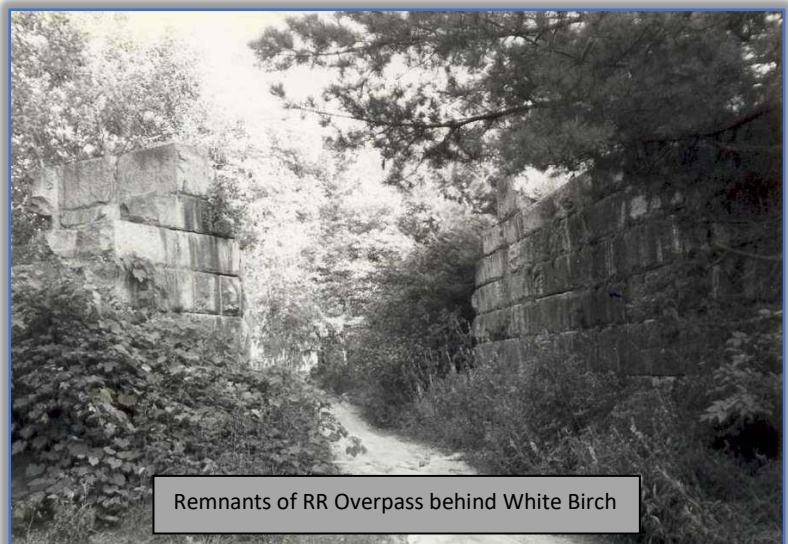
As mentioned earlier, the "house twice moved" or the Benjamin Dean House is located at 8 Windham Road. Moved here in the 1960's by Claudia and Richard Boucher; it is now home to their granddaughter and her family.

To end the trip return to the traffic lights and proceed onto Central Street, pass the 7-11 and Burger King and take a right into the plaza. Continue all the way to the right behind Burger King and the right of The White Birch.

Railroad Overpass



We have mentioned the steam railroad many times in this trip; but little has been said of the electric trolley in



Remnants of RR Overpass behind White Birch

Hudson Center. The trolley line came from Nashua, crossing on the Taylor Falls Bridge. After entering Hudson the line turned left and proceeded up Ferry Street and continued to the end of Ferry. Then continuing straight the line went into the woods behind Westview Cemetery where, taking a sharp turn toward Central Street it emerged between what is now Burger King and the 7-11 market. With this route the trolley line and the steam railroad line

intersected behind Burger King and beside the White Birch. Our final stop on this trip will be at the parking lot of White Birch where we see the relic of the [railroad overpass as it crosses over the electric line](#) on its way to Hudson Center station. The trolley line then emerges and crosses Central Street onto the Bensons property.

With this we end trip #2 – Hidden History at Hudson Center