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them to be a gold mine for historical research. Right now I am in the process of researching one in Portsmouth that has revealed layer after layer of data.”

Indeed, human waste was not the only thing to go down the hole, and often the remains can reveal such information as the size of the family, whether there were children, and when a new wife was introduced to the household. (The old wife’s dishware was often the first thing to go into the hole.) “We can even follow the rhythm of the year through the waste that accumulated during holidays,” says Sheila.

Andover (And Other) Privies

In the Andover area, Nelson located a number of old indoor privies.

The Village Store - Says Andover resident Don Gould, “When I was inspecting the old building on Lawrence Street that used to be the Village Store and is now Dr. Schneider’s office and Ragged Mountain Physical Therapy, there were indoor privies on both the first and second floors. These two had a common ‘flue’ or ‘chute,’ so if you were seated on the first floor, you could hear the [detritus] coming from the second floor.” The second floor privy served the Masonic Hall.

Concord - “When I was a lad,” continues Don, “I worked on a farm in the Concord area. One day the man came to clean out the farm’s privy. He would dig it out with a shovel, and I guess the

soil was then spread on the fields.

“The farmer’s wife was a very nice lady. She brought him a freshly made doughnut and handed it down to him in the hole. He took it and thanked her. But then she said she also had a cup of coffee.

“‘Just a minute,’ says he, ‘I have to find a place to put down this doughnut.’ So saying, he did! He found a ‘dry’ spot and laid that confection right on it, and then she handed down the cup.

“You know, that man was never sick that I can recall.”

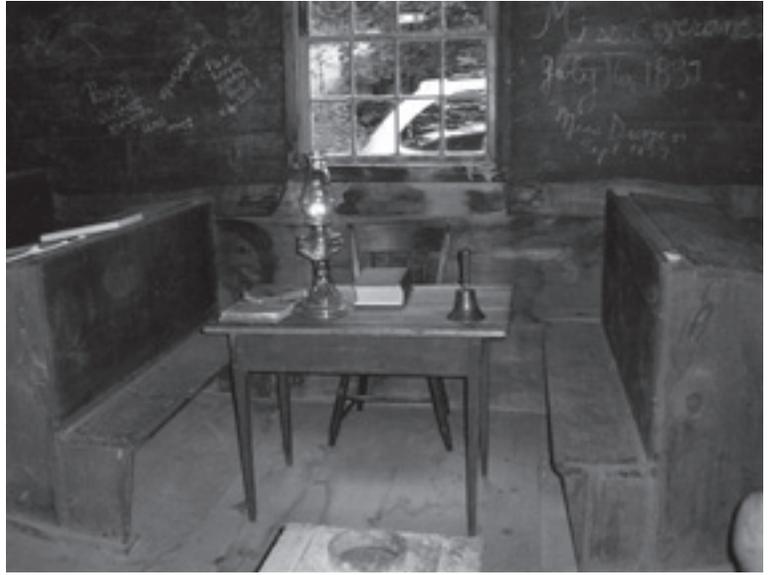
Shaw Hill Road - Nelson also investigated the three-hole privy in the 1830 colonial farm of Linda Barnes on Shaw Hill Road in Salisbury, just over the Andover border. Besides the two regular seats is a third, tiny child’s seat nearer the floor.

One delightful feature of this house is that the clean-out access panel to the privy is still on the outside of the house, right beside the front door. “Didn’t that smell?” asks Nelson. “Well, now, this was a farm, and there were all sorts of smells,” Linda replied.

The Maples - A three-holer was once the only facility in use when the Goneau residence was “The Maples” on Main Street in Andover, operated by the Quartz family. Tourists came to spend the whole summer as part of the “Summer on a New Hampshire Farm” movement at the turn of the 1900s.

Highland Lake Grange - Many current residents of Andover will blush to realize that they have been intimately associated with this privy. Nelson learned that when the Highland Lake Grange was recently remodeled, this one-seater was taken out and is now stored, for sentimental value, in the basement of the historic Grange Hall. “Even a governor of New Hampshire sat here,” chuckles Don Gould, referring to Nahum Bachelder. Don has been actively working with the team of dedicated people restoring the Grange.

Messer Farm, New London - “It made for father-son bonding,” quipped Paul Messer as he showed Nelson the two-holer at the 1853 Messer farm in New London. “Interesting items used for toilet paper were catalogs and magazines and old dried corn cobs. There were a lot of hired hands who also used the privy.”



Ken Reid donated this old desk and chair to the Andover Historical Society. It’s on display at the Tucker Mountain Schoolhouse this month.

Tucker Mountain Schoolhouse

By Donna Baker-Hartwell
Andover Historical Society

On Sunday, September 13, from 1 to 3 PM, the 1837 one-room school house will be open for visitors. You will be able to see the newly-acquired period teacher’s desk and chair. Many thanks to Ken Reid.

The Tucker Mountain School House was built in the corner of William Tucker’s orchard. It is hard to find any remnant of the orchard today. However, we can surmise that apples were very important to the early residents of Tucker Mountain. Apples store well and are very versatile. Recipes for apple butter, cakes, sauce, cider, applejack, vinegar, candies, and pies were common then, as they are today.

Peter Zak, who lives at the foot of Tucker Mountain Road on Maple Street and owns Highland Lake Orchard, has one of the oldest Baldwin trees still producing in this area. He believes his tree is around a hundred years old. Peter says that most likely the Baldwin apple was grown at William Tucker’s orchard.

If you would like to know more about apples, Peter will be available to share his wealth of knowledge at the open house. Some of his apples and apple products will also be available to

taste and purchase.

Putting an apple on the teacher’s desk was a tradition which began in the era that the Tucker Mountain School was in operation.

According to Barry Popik, a contributor and consultant to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, “In the second half of the 1800s, students (especially in rural communities) brought an apple to the teacher. The origin of this practice can’t be pinned down to a specific date, but ‘an apple for the teacher’ was well-known by the 1880s and 1890s.

“To ‘polish an apple’ originally meant to wash them for sale, but the term ‘apple-polisher’ means someone who carries favor with a superior such as a student who brings an apple for a teacher to help get better grades. ‘Apple-polisher’ became popular college slang in the 1920s.”

On another note, the folk art of making apple head dolls is one we can still enjoy. If you visit the school this month, you will be able to see how an apple head is carved. There will be a few on display and some in process.

Refreshments will be served. You guessed it ... apples, and more!

For more information, call the Andover Historical Society at 735-5586 or 735-5628.

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