

**Back Road from page 16**

Eastman says the road ran past the former Newel Healey house, which would have been the Emery farm at the time Eastman was writing his account. So if I interpret this correctly, the Back Road would have run from today's Jerry Hersey farm, past the Guy Hersey farm, and then probably followed a path similar to that of today's Hoyt Road, going past the former Emery farm, and to the top of Great Hill. Hoyt Road today dead ends at the top of the hill, but in earlier times, it continued down the other side towards Webster Lake.

It was interesting to read Eastman's reference to Newel Healey, as living in the area of the later Emery farm. Ralph Chaffee often referred to the top of today's Hoyt Road as the Great Hill or Healey's Hill. This is the first time, however, that I have come across a reference to the origin of the name Healey. I was glad to have this piece of information, which answered a question that had been puzzling me for some time.

**The Jerry Hersey Farm**

Since I have previously written about the early settlers on the eastern end of the Back Road (today's Hoyt Road), I will begin on the western end, at the Jerry Hersey farm. Much of the following information was obtained by Ed Hiller while he was doing research for the placing of the Hersey Farms on the National Register of Historic Places, which occurred in 2008.

Alfred Weare and his son Leonard began farming this land in 1833, and continued for more than 45 years. They were descendants of early settler Jonathan Weare, and there were many branches of the family living in this area at that time.

The structure as we know it today was built in 1874-1875, after the entire farmstead was struck by lightning and burned on July 6, 1874. Jerry says there was a foundation in back of where his garage now stands, and word had been passed down through the years that there was a smaller barn in the field

beyond the foundation. It is not known, however, whether there were two houses or farms close to each other at one time, or whether it was all one farm.

Following the Weares, the owners of the property in 1878 were Acer Knowlton and his son Charles. According to Ralph Chaffee's History of East Andover, an old Andover residents map has Silas M. Ellis living at this location in 1892. Since Ellis's name did not appear during Ed Hiller's deed search of the property, I'm assuming Mr. Ellis was probably leasing the farm at this time, and was not the owner. Dimond and Ida Shaw, and later their grandson Irving, were next in line, beginning their farming operation in 1906.

James and Polly Hersey (my uncle and aunt), who were married in 1944, bought the farm from the Shaws in 1945. James and Polly, later assisted by their four sons, ran a dairy farm with Holstein cattle. In 1951 they built a large barn across the road, west of the house, and in 1963 they built the garage beside the house.

In the early 1980s the farm was taken over by their son, Jerry, at which time the operation shifted to raising Hereford cattle for breeding stock and beef production. The farm continues to be run by Jerry, with the help of his brother Jim. Jerry, who is a long-time member of the Andover Conservation Commission, placed his 268 acres of fields and forest land into a conservation easement with the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust in 2007.

It is interesting to hear Jerry refer to one of his fields as "the Ellis Field." Apparently, this particular field was purchased at a later date than the original property and has always been known as the Ellis Field. It surprises me to hear this name still being used today, well over 100 years after there has been an Ellis family member living in the area – but I think it is wonderful!

**Back Road Schoolhouse**

Ralph Chaffee places the Back Road Schoolhouse nearly across the road from the James Hersey farmhouse, and possibly near where the new barn

was built. But according to Jerry, the schoolhouse was directly across Route 11 from Sam Hill Road. Jerry adds that the schoolhouse was actually located in the northwest corner of the Guy Hersey farm, and was not on the James Hersey farmland as stated by Chaffee.

In his *History of Andover*, Chaffee goes on to say: "There were fourteen district schoolhouses scattered throughout town at the end of the Civil War. Each district was supported by meager funds from an education tax on the real and personal property within its own little school district boundaries."

As one might expect, the condition of the schools depended on the wealth of the district and the parents' interest in the education of their children.

Unfortunately, the Back Road Schoolhouse was not in one of the wealthier districts, and the building was reported to have been in deplorable condition.

In 1884, the Back Road district was combined with the Emery Road district, whose schoolhouse was also in very poor condition. In their place, the Dyers Crossing Schoolhouse was built, which was located near the intersection of today's Route 11 and Dyers Crossing Road. The old Back Road Schoolhouse is long gone, but not before having served for a number of years as a wood shed for Dimond Shaw!

The next article in this series will take a look at the Guy and Nannie Hersey Farm (my grandparents) just down the road from Jerry's farm.



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**Photo from page 16**

framed, or mounted on foam core, or printed on aluminum or other substrates, such as canvas, wood, or fabric, framed or unframed, with maximum final size of 11" by 14", oriented horizontally or vertically.

Each entry must be ready to hang, with entrants providing hanging wire or hooks on the backs of their entries, as well as their name and phone number on the back. Each participant may enter one photo, so they are encouraged to carefully select their best!

Those who wish to participate must notify contest coordinator Steve Colardeau by Wednesday, June 15, by simply e-mailing their intentions to [SColardeau@tds.net](mailto:SColardeau@tds.net). Upon notification, he will send further instructions.

Submitted photos must be delivered to the Andover Village Green between

8 and 9 AM on the day of the Fourth of July Celebration. The Institute will have a tent set up near the Stone Chapel, where the photos will be displayed throughout the day.

The public will be given ballots so they can vote for their top three choices. Awards will be given based on the popular vote, and a "Best of Show" award will be selected by a panel of judges. Ribbons will be given to all participants, and the top vote-getters will receive special recognition, including having their images published in The Andover Beacon and various other publications and media outlets.

All photos entered into the contest will be on display throughout the month of July in the Andover Town Hall.

For more information or to express interest in participating by June 15, please contact Steve Colardeau at [SColardeau@tds.net](mailto:SColardeau@tds.net).



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