

Andover Horseshoe Club Announces Start of Season

Club plays
every Thursday

Press release

Norm Green, President of the Andover Horseshoe Club, would like to extend an invitation to everyone to come join them on Thursday evenings (weather permitting) for horseshoe season.

Sign up is at 6:45 P.M. and playing starts

at 7 P.M.. Dues for the season are \$20 to cover electric bill, paint, etc. Pay \$5 each night and that goes back to the winning players. It is a draw for a partner.

Everyone is welcome and the club would like to see more new faces. Any questions, you can call: Norm Green at 603-768-3262, Glenn Lowe at 603-748-0181, or Estelle Howe at 603-748-2131.



Early July 4th Celebrations in Andover, 1814-1828

**John A. Hodgson
Andover Historical Society**

As we prepare to celebrate Independence Day and to enjoy our town's seventy-fifth consecutive Fourth of July Parade, it's time to take stock of this local tradition. How did Andover celebrate this holiday in its early years?

Although Andover had its raw beginnings before the country did, there were probably no Fourth of July celebrations here in the first few decades after the Revolutionary War. Nearby New London, a somewhat younger town, apparently held its first such celebration in 1804; and the letter reporting on the event noted that "several gentlemen and ladies from Andover, Springfield, Warner, Sutton, and Kearsarge-Gore" were in attendance, suggesting that these towns did not have their own celebrations yet.

The first account of an Andover celebration I have found dates from 1814. (Two of the presiding dignitaries were from adjacent towns, New London and Wilmot, so possibly the towns in this area were still taking turns hosting the celebration.) The event started with a bang ("The morning was ushered in by the discharge of a cannon"), proceeded through the day's ceremonial formalities (the flag-raising, a procession of four or five hundred people to a hilltop, a prayer, a speech for the occasion), and then moved to a long set of formal resolutions that were all unanimously passed. It concluded with a series of toasts, which would have been occasion for a good amount of drinking.

Many of the resolutions were somber; and this is unsurprising, because our country was at war in 1814, and the war was going badly. The security and even the continued existence of the still-young United States were genuinely in question. So, following upon the early resolutions celebrating "the liberties achieved by our worthy ancestors, and bequeathed to us as a legacy at the expense of their blood" and vowing that "so ought we to devote our lives and fortunes if necessary to transmit

the all-important privileges by them obtained unimpaired to posterity;" an anxious note quickly entered. There is regret that some Americans are "attempting to palliate the aggressions of the enemy" and "discouraging enlistments," consolation in the knowledge that the administration has tried "to terminate [the war] by every honorable mean in their power," and joy that the American people seem "determined to support the Constituted Authorities of the nation" despite efforts "to alienate [them] from their government" and to "alienate any portion of our beloved country from the rest." Interestingly, there is also a strong affirmation that "liberty of the Press should not be abridged." The final resolution—a resolve, indeed—contemplates potential disaster: "if our liberties are to be destroyed, our Republic overturned—if this fair fabric of freedom which was raised at the expense of so much blood and treasure, is destined to fail—we will embody around the Constitutions of our fathers, and never assent to anything short of 'Liberty or Death.'"

What a difference a few years make! The celebration on July 4, 1816, with the war over and the nation at peace, was celebratory indeed. This time a band of some sort was present, and a dinner was laid on for the celebrants after the patriotic oration of the day. The after-dinner toasts (at least seventeen in number, all "accompanied with the discharge of cannon, music, and lively flourishes of music") gave glorious opportunities for both noise making and drinking. (A sample: "Our gallant Tars—May they snatch the trident of the Ocean from brutal hands and bear it triumphantly with our National Flag.")

The same celebration a year later was similar in spirit and tone but conducted on an even grander scale. After the formal procession to the Meeting-House (in East Andover), the services included music by a band, a prayer, and a reading of the Declaration of Independence before the culminating oration and closing anthem. Then followed a procession out to the green, where all "partook of a rich repast." Afterwards various "sentiments" were adopted by the company. "What added to the brilliancy of the ceremony," the New Hampshire Patriot article reported, "was the novel spectacle of between one and two hundred ladies in white apparel, who walked in the centre of the procession." (Apparently this novelty became something of a tradition; it still made part of the arrangements nine years later.) Also, particularly noteworthy was "an elegant flagstaff, upwards of 100 feet in height, upon which was placed during the day, the starry ensign of the union." (As a reference point, the flagstaff stands on the Andover Centre green today is approximately 40 feet in height. This one was more than two and a half times taller!)

Andover's Fourth of July celebrations apparently continued in this wise for another ten years, culminating in the grand 50th anniversary celebration of 1826. By 1828, however, the commemoration (which took

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