

THE HORSE, DOG and PEOPLE WATERING-TROUGH

Bet you didn't know we had one of these. It is located across from the Mobil station on Route 3. Before there were gas stations, and people traveled by horse and buggy, the horses needed water. The original one was probably made of wood, but we have no record of this. However, we know there was one, because, in 1924 the town voted to replace the original one with a granite one, still to be connected with the village water supply. (They also voted to provide a "danger signal" on the road in the Reeds Ferry Village- stop sign or traffic light?) .

We have no record of the original one's design, but it was located "midway of the village" according to a newspaper clipping from that year.

The new one was made of Milford granite, cut from the Green quarry in South Milford. On July 6, 1925, Tonelia & Sons, from Milford completed work on a granite drinking fountain of "original design". The trough was a gift from the Merrimack Community Club, and stood 4 feet 3 inches high, designed for "man and beast", including a "bubble spring" for humans on an artistic curved projection from the drinking bowl used by horses and a lower cup for thirsty dogs.

The next year, the town voted to accept the trough, build a foundation and supply it with water. The town meeting appropriated \$250 for the foundation and piping. It was located at the intersection of the Concord Road, with Baboosic Lake Road adjacent to Ayer's Store and Hall (later to become Kiestlinger's Store and now a mattress store). Until recent years, it showed on the deed to that property as being the property of the town through an easement.

In 1984, Joyce Bishop, president of the Merrimack Historical Society, in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the Town, asked if the fountain could be moved to prevent damage during road construction. She asked to have it moved to the "park" adjacent to the Town Hall, which is now Abbie Griffin Park. The town approved that move, but in 1987, when the Community Club disbanded, it had not yet moved. For unknown reasons, it didn't go to Abbie Griffin Park, but was moved further south on Route 3 within the boundaries of the adjacent property with an easement that it must remain at that location, but was the property of the Merrimack Historical Society. The pedestal/foundation was found to be cracked on both sides, and the lower portion and the "bubbler" were removed as the water was disconnected.

The Merrimack Garden Club currently provides decorative flowers to the trough as a memory of days-gone-by, when DOGS, HORSES and PEOPLE used this "bubbler".

The Merrimack Historical Society is open for visitors on Tuesdays from noon until 8 PM at the 1847 one-room schoolhouse at 520 Boston Post Road in South Merrimack. Contact Anita at 424-5084 or anitacreager58@comcast.net for more information.