



179 YEARS AND ONLY ONE BATHROOM THE STORY OF 17 CENTRAL ROAD IN RYE

In the early 1840s, Americans across the country were heading west in the California Gold rush, William Henry Harrison was inaugurated as president (and subsequently died leaving John Tyler as President just one month into the term), and Nathaniel Hawthorne along with Ralph Waldo Emerson converged on Brooks Farm in Massachusetts to explore new ideas. In Rye, NH the house at 17 Central Road was built.

In May 1842, Col. Simon Jenness II, who is now buried across the street in Central Cemetery, sold a portion of his land at the top of Central Road to the Methodist Episcopal Society. The trustees of the society decided to build a parsonage later that year. Constructed between 1842 and 1843, the parsonage's first purpose was to be the home for the pastors of the Methodist Episcopal Church whose meeting house had been built across the street in 1839.

The pastor at that time, Rev. Henry Drew, began living in the parsonage in 1843 and subsequently 17 pastors occupied the parsonage through 1868. The society was then without a pastor for several years after that and finally, in 1873 decided to sell their meeting house to the town for a town hall.

That same year the meeting house was sold, so too the parsonage was sold to Anna (Annie) Drake (Jenness) Hodgdon born in 1846 and married to Alexander H. Hodgdon July 13, 1871. Annie was the daughter of David A Jenness (1814) and Sarah Drake Jenness. David is the son of Col. Simon Jenness (1792), son of Simon Jenness (1751), son of Richard (1718), son of Richard (1686), son of Francis (1634). Francis came to Hampton as early as Feb. 15, 1670.

Annie served two terms as postmaster 1885 – 1889 and 1893 to 1897.

Hodgdon spent the rest of her life in this home, and deceased intestate in 1912 and passed the house down to her daughter Mabel H (Hodgdon) Perkins born October 4, 1871 and married to Herbert Perkins in 1891.

- At some time in the early 1900s the barn was converted and extended to act as a sawmill. Mabel deceased intestate in 1944 and the property passed down to Elizabeth P. Garrett (d. 1954) who sold the home in 1944.

- In 1944 the home was acquired by George and Daisy Ellison. George was caretaker of the Rye Public Library.

- In 1953 the home was sold to Floyd and Beulah Perkins. Floyd was a locksmith. Together they raised 5 children in the house with **1 bathroom, No heat on the 2nd floor** and no dishwasher. Beulah's two sons used the barn to store their Corvettes. Beulah passed in 2008.

- In 2008 the home was acquired by Tim and Leslie Barnhorst who sold the home to Shannon Murphy in 2019. Tim and Leslie had two children while living at 17 Central still with no bathroom on the second floor.

- Shannon Murphy and Lydia Tilsley have started a renovation to add that upstairs bathroom while retaining the historic beauty of the home.



**Today,
the home
looks much
like it did back
then.**

**Photographs
taken 1889
and 2021**

RYE ADVOCATES

The Rye Advocates, formed by volunteers from the Rye Historical Society, Rye Heritage Commission, Rye Historic District Commission, and the Demolition Review Committee, are a group of committed town residents whose purpose is to:

- **Raise awareness of Rye's historic houses,**
- **Support the preservation of historic houses.**
- **Identify and document homes for the public.**

Board members include

David Choate, Alex Herlihy,
Elizabeth Sanborn,
James Tegeder,
Jay Longtin,
Peter White,
Phil Walsh,
Chelsea Conley Fardelmann
Stacey Smith.

You can learn more about Rye Advocates By contacting any of the members listed above.