

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Chapter 1: Historic and Archaeological Resources

Goal: To preserve the Town of Clinton's historic and archaeological resources.

Purpose: The purpose of this section is to identify and ensure the value of historical and archaeological resources are recognized and protection is afforded for resources that warrant it.

Brief History of Clinton: The following information on Clinton's history was obtained from *History of Clinton Maine* written by Major General Carleton Edward Fisher in 1970.

The area which is now known as Clinton was obtained in the 1700's by the Kennebec Purchase Company. In 1763 the Company offered settlers 200 acres lots if they settled on the land, built a house to certain specifications, worked the land, and lived there for at least seven years. This was done with the hope that homesteading some of the land would make the remaining land worth more money. The town ultimately benefitted from this method of settling the land since it grew in an orderly, systematic fashion.

The first settlers who arrived before 1782 were poor but industrious and daring, as evidenced by their leaving well- established towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and entering the wilderness. The area was inhabited with Indians and the white settlers were beyond the protection of Fort Halifax. It was not until after the war of 1812 that the settlers felt safe from Indian threats. The first white settler in Clinton was Ezekiel Chase, Jr. who settled at some point between 1761 and 1768 before the Kennebec Purchase Company claimed the area.

The area was officially incorporated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1795. Captain Samuel Grant, a highly respected citizen of the town, was in the Revolutionary War under General Clinton, whom he deeply admired, and chose the name Clinton to honor him. The town began a system of annual town meetings. The first Clinton Town Hall was built in 1893.

Prior to 1795, there was no formal education available for the children in Clinton. However, in 1795, the townspeople began to appropriate money for schools. One-man school committees were set up for various districts within the town and classes were held in private homes until some of the districts constructed their own school houses. There are no records to determine when the first school houses were built. By 1856 the town realized the need for consolidation and established a system of three school supervisors to oversee education in the town. The Clinton High School was established in 1873; the building was closed in 1967 and burned in the early 1970's. Five students graduated from the first class in 1902. In 1965 Clinton joined with Benton and Fairfield to establish School Administrative District 49.

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Mills were a major part of Clinton's economy for the first fifty years of the town's history. The first mills were sawmills which provided lumber and shingles to build cabins. The first sawmill was established by Jonathan Philbrook who settled in the town in 1773. Eventually gristmills were set up, followed by manufacturing mills for furniture, coffins, doors, and other products.

Water was the primary method of transportation in Clinton before the first railroad came to town in 1855. Goods were brought up the Kennebec River and some early settlers also arrived by boat. A map in 1796 show one road located along the east bank of the river. More roads were built after 1798 when the town began to appropriate money for this purpose.

In 1900, the Brown Memorial Library was opened to the public. The library was given to the town by William W. Brown, a Clinton native. Between 1877 and 1909, the Clinton Advertiser, the town's first newspaper, was established by Benjamin T. Oster. The first Clinton Post Office was erected in 1811 and the first telephone system in town was Independent Telephone Company. The Seabasticook Lodge No. 146 A.F. & A.M. is the oldest fraternal body still active in the community.

Prehistoric Archeological Sites: The Maine Historic Preservation Commission has identified prehistoric archeological sites, on the banks of the Seabasticook River, on the bank of the Kennebec River, and on Carrabassett Stream. Map 1-1 generally identifies the four areas. Professional archeological surveys would have been limited to new powerline/gas pipeline corridors in Clinton.

Historic Archeological Sites: The Maine State Historic Preservation Commission has identified the Clinton Iron Foundry and the S. Wood Farmstead as historic archeological sites in the community. One of the town's oldest industries, and certainly the most unique, was the forge and foundry where bog iron was turned into bar iron. The most likely site is one and one half miles from the Kennebec River on Carrabassett Stream. The S. Wood Farmstead is a known historic archaeological site located on the Map 1-1.

Historic Buildings/Structures and Objects: The Maine State Historic Preservation Commission has identified the Brown Memorial Library as the only building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See Map 1-1.

History of the Clinton Water and Sewer District (now called Clinton Water District): In a special meeting on July 25, 1945, citizens approved the formation of the Clinton Water and Sewer District. During the first year of operation there were 181 water customers who used approximately 14 million gallons of water. Fluoride was added to the water from 1969 – 1972. Over the first 30 years, water service expanded to homes on the outskirts of town, and the customer base was increased to 420 water users with 346 of those having sewer service.

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The first water tank was installed on Gospel Hill in 1979 with the landmark words, “CLINTON WATER DISTRICT, 400,000 GALLONS OF PURE WATER.” The two lagoons at the end of Old Leonard Wood Road were constructed in 1987 and are still being used.

Local Historic Sites and Places: The Clinton Comprehensive Planning Committee has identified potential historic above ground resources as follows and depicted them on Map 1-1:

1. Former Town Hall Site (Current Masonic Hall location)
2. Potter Cemetery
3. Town House Hill Cemetery
4. Evergreen Cemetery
5. Joy Cemetery
6. Green Lawn Rest Cemetery (west side of Main St./Rt. 100)
7. New Village Cemetery, Old Village Cemetery, Riverview Cemetery and Civil War Statue
8. Nobles Ferry Cemetery
9. Morris Corner Cemetery
10. Caverly Family Cemetery
11. Museum and Clinton Fairgrounds
12. Pishon Ferry Baptist Church
13. Clinton Baptist Church
14. Brown Memorial United Methodist Church
15. Former High School
16. Site of water-powered wood mills
17. Site of the Former Eastland Woolen Mill
18. Pratt Farm
19. O. C. Dickey Shingle Mill
20. Frank L. Besse House
21. Mutton Lane Meeting House/Bush School House
Cemetery on end of Gibson Road (unnumbered)

Scenic Resources: Although scenic resources may not traditionally be considered as historic resources, they nevertheless can be highly valued by citizens. Often scenic vistas are viewed by residents as part of their town’s identity. The following is a partial list of some scenic areas: view to the east on the Hill Road along the ridge, view of Seabasticook River near the small craft launch along the former site of the Eastern Woolen Mill, and from the River Road looking across to Goodwill Hinckley. The scenic areas identified are only those which can be viewed from public locations or roads.

Clinton Historical Society: The Clinton Historical Society is a valuable asset that has a long record of promoting the town historic resources. They maintain historic artifacts and records at the Brown Memorial Library and a museum at the fairgrounds. The society does take a lead role in implementing policies recommended in this plan to promote and preserve archeological and historic resources.

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Clinton Town Office: The town office has many historical records which are catalogued and are available. Some older town records are housed in the vault at Brown Memorial Library.

Issues:

Are the existing provisions in the Subdivision and Shoreland Ordinances adequately used to identify potential archeological and historic sites prior to development?

Policies: Minimum policy required to address state goals: Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

Strategies: Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) For known historic archeological sites and areas sensitive to prehistoric archeology, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
- (2) Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.
- (3) Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.

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Issues identified by the Comprehensive Planning Committee with Strategies:

Issue	Strategy	Responsibility	Action Party	Coordinator	Implementation
Issue 1-1 Review and make changes as necessary to local land use and subdivision ordinances to protect historic and archaeological resources in Clinton	The Planning Board will draft and propose amendments to the required ordinances. Code Enforcement Officer to update permit applications to agree with new changes.	Selectmen	The Planning Board	Code Enforcement Officer and Clinton Historical Society	2025