

## Pittsfield Historical Trail

Pittsfield, New Hampshire, the "Gem of the Suncook Valley," was first settled by John Cram in 1768. Originally a part of Chichester, it was incorporated in 1782 with a population of approximately 518 people. It enjoyed steady growth except during the Civil War when most of its men left for the battlefield. The post war era was one of the most important in the Town's history. It brought the telegraph, telephone, railroad and a local newspaper. Between 1870-90 its population increased nearly 63%. It was during this period that many of the governmental buildings and business establishments were constructed. Most remain today and form the heart of Pittsfield's Historic Trail.

### Pittsfield's Historic Walking Trail

1. The trail begins at Frank Lyman Park the site of the old *Yellow Block* apartment building. The park which now exists on this spot was erected entirely by volunteers in honor of the local industrialist and benefactor, Frank Lyman. The rough granite in the wall was mined in Pittsfield while the cut granite came from Concord. The canopy over the kiosk is a replica of the race track starter's stand at the old Pittsfield Fair.

The Queen Anne style "Yellow Block" erected in 1883, was originally 30' x 40' and two stories high. Another story was added later as were side additions. For decades it was painted yellow and thus its name. Gradually it fell into disuse, was purchased by the town in 1992 and was razed in 1995.



**Yellow Block c1900**

2. Further down Carroll Street is *Cram Avenue*. The four brick buildings in Second Empire style were constructed by Charles T. Cram, great grandson of Pittsfield founder John Cram, with bricks manufactured locally. Distinctive are the "French" or Mansard roofs which were becoming popular at the time.

3. Next on the Trail is the site of the old *Mayett and Globe Buildings*. The plaza was designed by the Historical Society in cooperation with Rite Aid. The bricks in the walkway were taken from the old Globe Building.

The Mayett Hotel, erected in 1891, was owned and operated by a woman, Mrs. Marietta Tallant, a rather unusual circumstance at the time. She was the daughter of one of the largest landowners in Pittsfield, Sir Moses D. Perkins. A sign on the side of the building advertised that it was heated by steam and thus its nickname, Hotel Steam Heat. Mrs. Tallant died in 1919 and the hotel, falling into disuse, was razed in 1930.



**Mayett Hotel c1910**

The Globe Manufacturing Building, designed by architect William A. Butterfield, was erected behind the hotel in 1922. C. F. H. Freese purchased a leather manufacturing business in Lynn, Massachusetts in 1901 for \$350 and brought it to Pittsfield. The company first advertised waterproof clothing for firemen the following year and within three years had tripled its business. Emblazoned on the roof of the new building in large letters was the word "Pittsfield". On July 25, 1927 Charles A. Lindberg, enroute to Concord, used the landmark to verify his course. The lettering was removed during World War II.



**Globe Building c1956**

4. Across the street in *Aranosian Park* is a sign commemorating the Suncook Valley Railroad built in 1869. The Depot stood to the southeast near where the concrete block building is now located and the round table, used for reversing the direction of the train, and engine house were located on the site of the grocery store to the north. Immediately after its construction a building boom took place in Pittsfield and the town became the economic hub of the area. The railroad hauled farm products, lumber and the U. S. mail until its closing in 1952. It also hauled large quantities of blueberries, hence its nickname, the "Blueberry Express".



**Pittsfield Depot c1900**

5. Proceeding south along Broadway you will come to the *Old Meeting House Cemetery*. Most of Pittsfield's early settlers are buried here including its founder, John Cram. Among the Revolutionary soldiers are Enoch Blake who also served in the War of 1812, Enoch Butler, uncle of General Benjamin Butler of Civil War fame, "Jockey" Fogg, Pittsfield's first soldier, who helped carry the fatally wounded General McClary from the Battlefield at Bunker Hill and later participated in the ill fated march to Quebec, and Bradbury Green who officiated as drum major at the execution of Major Andre, the famous British spy who plotted with the American traitor Benedict Arnold.

Also buried in the cemetery are Bridget and Josiah White. Bridget was the sister of Grace Fletcher who married Daniel Webster. It is because of this relationship that the "Great Expounder" frequently came to Pittsfield and actually owned property here.

6. Proceeding up Broadway we turn left onto Main Street and come to the *Old Stage Depot*. This Greek Revival house, c1840, was purchased by Jackson Freese in 1865 and it was from here that this highly esteemed "Knight of the Whip" operated one of the three stage lines in Pittsfield, the Pittsfield-Dover route. Pictured is one of the famous Concord Coaches pulling up to the Depot across the street.



**Concord Coach Across From Old Stage Depot**

*Courtesy Walker Transportation Collection, Beverly, MA Historical Society*

7. Next door is the *Grammar School*, one of five Pittsfield buildings designed by renowned architect William A. Butterfield. It was completed in 1890 and served as a schoolhouse for nearly a century. The original plaque noting those involved in developing and constructing the building, including Governor Hiram A. Tuttle, is found in the atrium. In 1995 the building was substantially reconstructed to serve as Pittsfield's Town Offices. Interestingly, the slate floor in the entryway is made of the blackboards used in the old school.



**Grammar School, c1900**

8. Returning west on Main Street you will come to the front of the *Old Meeting House*, completed in 1789. The first minister of the church was Christopher Paige, step-father of the wife of Daniel Webster. He was succeeded by Rev. Benjamin Sargent who for the next 18 years, in an extremely unusual arrangement in the annals of church history, ministered simultaneously each Sunday morning to a group of Congregationalists under the leadership of Deacon Jonathan Perkins and to a group of Calvinist Baptists under the leadership of Deacon Jabez James.



**Old Meeting House 1845-81**

9. Beside the Old Meeting House, near the cemetery, is a sign noting the famous encounter in 1842 between *Frederick Douglass* and *U. S. Senator Moses Norris, Jr.* Douglass, the famous escaped slave working for abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, came here to explain the horrors of slavery. Norris was widely known for his anti-slavery sentiments including having the Reverend George Storrs illegally arrested in Pittsfield for making an anti-slavery speech in the Pittsfield Baptist Church. When Norris discovered that Douglass had been left out in the rain after his noon address, the Senator took the abolitionist to his home and offered food and shelter. Douglass was so impressed that he wrote at length about the event in his autobiography .



**Frederick Douglass**



**Moses Norris, Jr.**

10. The next stop on the trail is the elaborate Second Empire style *Tuttle Mansion* erected in 1875 by Hiram A. Tuttle, later governor of New Hampshire. The distinctive Mansard Roof was lost during a fire in 1911, a month after Gov. Tuttle's death. It was restored by his widow and today the building appears very much like when it did when originally constructed. Of particular interest is the granite stepping stone emblazoned with the word "Tuttle" by the side of the street. This stone was used by women to mount horses before the advent of the automobile.



**Tuttle Mansion c1900**

11. Across the street is the *Memorial School*. This Neoclassic and Prairie style building erected in 1910, is notable for its gabled entry portico. The slate roof is original. The building was a gift to the town by Governor and Mrs. Tuttle in honor of their daughter, Harriet Folsom, who was serving on the school board at her

untimely death. the *Calvinist Baptist Church* which originally occupied this site was torn down to make way for the school. Interestingly, the bell on the front lawn was a gift to the church from the community at-large as is noted in the inscription.



**Calvinist Baptist Church 1854-1910)**



**Memorial School 1910**

12. Returning to the north side of Main Street you will come to the site of the original *Pittsfield Bank*, established in 1850. Its offices were in the two East Rooms of the former Pinkham Hotel. The remainder of the building was occupied as a dwelling by Charles H. Carpenter, the bank's first cashier, and his family. His daughter *Electa*, who literally grew up in the banking business, was elected president in 1915. At the time she was the only female bank president in NH and

one of only two female bank presidents in the US. Unfortunately the magnificent brick building was torn down in 1938 to make way for a gasoline station. The present building was erected in 1974.



**Brick Bank Building**



**Electa Goss**

13. Further west on Main Street past the War Memorial in Dustin Park is the *Opera House Block*. This large frame commercial structure, erected in 1883 with Italianate details including quoins, segmental arched windows and wooden storefronts, was originally three stories in height. It was the vision of John Goss, Electa's husband, and Charles H. Carpenter. After two stories had been completed they ran out of money and admitted Hiram Tuttle as a part owner who supplied funds for the third. This floor, removed in 1963, contained the famous opera house and was the Town's social center for much of the Twentieth Century.





**Opera House Block**

14. Across the street is the *Carpenter Library*. Erected in 1901 in time for Pittsfield's first Old Home Week, this Neoclassic building, designed by William A. Butterfield, was a gift to the town by Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Carpenter. Mrs. Carpenter was the daughter of James Drake and grew up in the home two buildings to the east. Mr. Carpenter was a brother to Charles H. Carpenter, had served as cashier in the Pittsfield Bank, and subsequently made a fortune in the banking business in Manchester.

15. The Second Empire house topped by a Mansard Roof to the west of the library was built by *John Berry* c1875. Mr. Berry was one of the most prominent and colorful individuals in Pittsfield during the Nineteenth Century, helping to found Pittsfield Academy, Pittsfield Savings Bank, and the Suncook Valley Railroad. Because of his prominence he was affectionately known as "Uncle John." His son, John M. Berry, moved to Minnesota after attending Yale College, served in the territorial legislature, on the board of regents of the state university, and was elected an Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1864 where he served until his death in 1887.

16. The next building, known in the early days as the *John Berry Stand*, was constructed in 1818. It was one of the first business establishments on Main Street. Mr. Berry ran a general store here for decades. After his death Ellery B. Ring operated a hardware store in the building for many years. Between 1907 and 1953 it was occupied by the Valley Times newspaper, and subsequently by flower shops. Today it serves as an apartment building.



**Ellery B. Ring Store**

17. Returning to the North side of Main Street you will come to *Fort Wilkins*, erected c1836. This stick style building with its Nineteenth Century storefront intact, at one time contained the Pittsfield Savings Bank, chartered in 1855. The bank's principal asset was an 18" safe for holding money which was kept behind the counter of secretary-treasurer Lowell Brown's "tin plate" shop which also occupied the building at the time. In 1866 the building was acquired by the infamous dentist Dr. G. G. Wilkins who also sold firearms and animal pelts among other items, and thus acquired the name Ft. Wilkins.



**Tuttle Building 1870-76, Congregational Church 1839-76, and Fort Wilkins**

18. Adjacent to Ft. Wilkins is the third building to house the *Congregational Church* in Pittsfield. The first on this site was a wooden structure erected in 1839. In December of 1871 quite a commotion was caused when the bell fell from the belfry while it was being tolled for Sunday services. Considerable damage was done but no one was hurt. The bell and the entire building, were destroyed by fire in 1876. This brick, High Victorian Gothic structure with needle spire was immediately erected in its place.



**Union Block 1840-70, Congregational Church 1839-76**

19. Next on the Trail is the Queen Anne / Commercial style *Union Block* also erected after the disastrous fire of Valentine's Day 1876. It was in this building that in 1894 one of Pittsfield's most daring burglaries took place. The perpetrators broke into the post office in the back of the building, drilled holes into the safe, filled them with powder and lit the fuse. The door blew off awakening the entire neighborhood but the burglars made off with \$1100 worth of stamps and \$25 in cash. they were never apprehended.



**Union Block 1876-95**

20. Across the street is the *Tuttle Block*, erected in 1874 during the aftermath of another disastrous fire which had destroyed several buildings on that side of the street the previous year. This large Renaissance Revival commercial building with round-headed windows was the third location of the famous H. A. Tuttle Clothing

Store. Hiram Tuttle, later governor of N. H., initially hired many employees to make tailor-made suits. Later he increased his business tremendously by selling "off-the-rack" clothing in 13 states.



**Hiram A. Tuttle**

21. The vacant lot across the street contained Pittsfield's first frame building known for nearly a century as the *Washington House*. Erected by town founder John Cram in 1769, it quickly became the social, economic and political center of town during his lifetime. Here he ran an inn which through the years increased in size. In 1866 a two story piazza was added and in 1873 a third floor. It was named after America's first president, although he never stayed there. The building was destroyed by fire in 1984 and razed in 1993.



**Washington House 1861**



**Washington House c1900**

22. Across the street is the *R. P. J. Tenney House* erected immediately after the fire of 1873 which had destroyed the doctor's dwelling house, double tenement building, out buildings and their entire contents. At the time it was Pittsfield's finest. The Italianate style residence with classically derived entry portico, contained 19 rooms and was built at a cost of \$10,000, a monumental sum in those days. Only a wealthy individual such as the well known Dr. Tenney could have afforded such an extravagance.

23. The large Greek Revival house next door was erected during the early Nineteenth Century to provide quarters for agents of the Cotton Mill and thus became known as the *Agents' House*. Among the Nineteenth Century agents were James Treat, Hervey Kent, Orman Davis, and George Kent. It was the latter Mr. Kent who, in 1889 had the gable entry porch and side veranda added by contractor L. L. Caswell. Unfortunately a part of the unique, arts and crafts style stick work on the side veranda was destroyed by the tornado of 1999. E. P. Sanderson, important industrialist and Pittsfield benefactor, was born here.



**Agents House With Arts and Crafts Veranda**

24. Across the street is a Federal Style residence constructed c1826 as a boarding house for female employees of the Cotton Mill. It has traditionally been known as *Old Number 1* because it is the first house at the bottom of Factory Hill. In 1836, Mr. and Mrs. Eben Swett and their son John moved into the building as managers. John, later the famous California educator, disliked "town life" and was much relieved when the family returned to their farm the following year. The commercial panic of 1837 had rendered the business unprofitable because of the high cost of food stuffs.



**John Swett**

25. Crossing Main Street you will come to the site where a five-story woolen mill was erected during 1826. The following May it burned to the ground under very suspicious circumstances. The factory was much hated by farmers whose daughters left their farms to work in the mill and many attribute the loss to agrarian arsonists. Rebuilt of bricks made near Webster's Mills, the new *Cotton Mill* building survived until the tragic fire of 1995. At the time it was one of the oldest mills in continuous use in N. H. The smoke stack, erected in 1883 of 100,000 bricks, as well as the lintel of the 1827 factory, survived the fire.



**Cotton Mill**

26. Crossing to Water Street you will come to the site near where *John Cram* constructed his dam and grist mill during 1768-69 and effectively founded the Town of Pittsfield. The dam was constructed by chopping trees from both sides of the river and filling in behind with brush, stones and gravel. In 1826 James Joy, then owner of the Cotton Mill, erected a new wooden dam. The next was built in 1883 and during construction, human remains and a long axe thought to be a tomahawk, were found. It is believed that they were relics of an old Indian settlement. The present dam was built in 1920 and still generates electrical power which is sold to Public Service of New Hampshire.



**James Joy's Dam of 1826**

27. Turning onto River Road you will come to the location of one of Pittsfield's earliest schools. When the Town granted Mr. Joy the right to erect his dam in 1826, the mill pond substantially increased in size causing the *River Schoolhouse* to be relocated. One of the early teachers in the school was Master Joseph Odiorne, who also served as town clerk for 28 years. At the bottom of his notes of the 1810 annual meeting he wrote that they had been recorded "with a metallic pen," probably the first used in Pittsfield. Among his students were two individuals who would later gain national reputations, educator John Swett and antiquarian Samuel G. Drake, who helped found the New England Historic Genealogical Society.



**Samuel G. Drake**

28. Further down River Road is the site of *Mary's Bridge*, one of two covered bridges in Pittsfield during the Nineteenth Century. Erected in 1874, it was named after Mary Bodge, a 23 year old woman who had drowned here the previous winter. Mr. Butman, who likely lived in the house just across the river, and Captain Towle, had removed the little foot bridge in order to let ice pass underneath. The unsuspecting Mary, returning from work in the dark of night, attempted to cross where she had traversed earlier in the day. Her screams were heard on both sides of the river and people rushed to her aid, but to no avail.



**Mary's Bridge 1874-1910**





**Old Steel Bridge 1910-97**

29. Further down Bridge Street is the *Parsonage House*, erected c1843. The building originally served as the parsonage for the Free Will Baptist Church on Park Street. In 1907 it was sold to blacksmith George Emerson and moved to Fayette Street. Its first occupant was veterinarian Dr. A. E. Atwood. The building was later purchased by industrialist Fritz Petig who, in 1950, decided to build a new home on the site. The building was then sold to Kenneth Garland and moved to its present location.

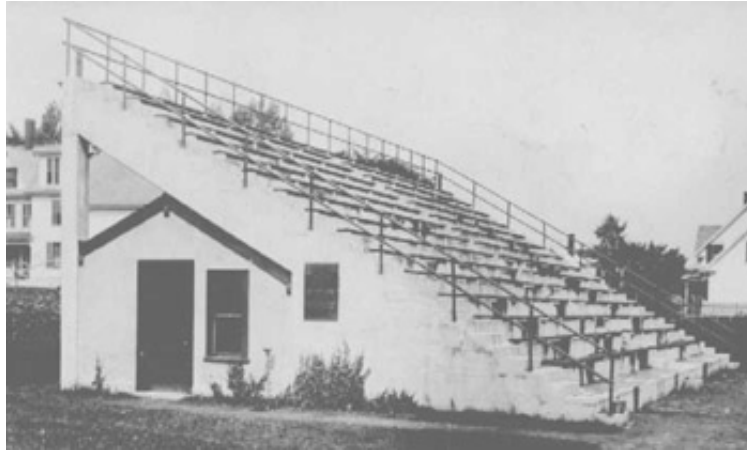
30. Passing a number of ornate Nineteenth Century homes, you will come to the first site of the *Pittsfield Weaving Company*. The building was originally located on Depot Street and housed a wheel wright shop and horse shoeing business. It was moved here early in the Twentieth Century and for a while was occupied by the short-lived Wilkinson Shoe Company. In 1926 a trio of German immigrants led by Fritz Petig, with capital supplied locally, began one of the great American success stories. Their woven label business increased steadily surviving the Great Depression and by 1982 had outgrown its quarters. The building was torn down that year and replaced with the modern one across the street.



**Pittsfield Weaving Company 1928**

31. Turning left on Fayette Street you will come to *Drake Field*. This park was given to the school district in honor of Colonel James Drake, a prominent local

citizen, by his children in 1917. Because the grandstand had no roof, the colonel's daughter, Georgiana Carpenter, donated one in 1928. The flag pole was a gift in 1950 of Colonel James Frank Drake, the colonel's grandson. Since its inception, the field has served as the hub of outdoor entertainment in Pittsfield. It is the scene of youth and high school sporting events, graduations, carnivals, and Pittsfield's famous Balloon Rally.



**Drake Field Grandstand c1917**

32. Going east through the field, one comes to Carroll Street. Turning left the Thyng Memorial will be observed. Dedicated in 2004, it honors on of America's outstanding military leaders.



**Thyng Memorial c2004**

33. Retracing the route along Fayette Street you will come to Depot Street. Turning left you will come to the *G. A. R. Building*. Erected in 1914 after a tragic fire which destroyed the old hall and most of Pittsfield's Civil War memorabilia, this Colonial Revival style commercial building was the first in town to have a slanted floor made specifically for showing "moving pictures." In 1925 when Grand Army of the Republic membership declined, the building was sold to the

American Legion. Several patriotic organizations continued to meet in the upper floors and the G.A.R. Theater on the first floor was renamed the Liberty Theater. In 1937 the building was again sold and the Theater was renamed The Scenic. Movies ceased in 1991 and since that time the building has been the home of the renowned Pittsfield Players.



**G. A. R. Building Before the Fire**

34. Retracing the route along Depot Street you will come to Elm Street and the *Old Engine House*. This Stick Style building with hip roof was erected in 1878 as Pittsfield's first permanent fire station. The first floor housed engines and fire equipment and the second served as a meeting hall. Through the years the hall was used for many socials as well. Dances were held here and at one time the upper floor was used for offices by the selectmen and school board. Needing much more spacious quarters, the fire department moved to a new building on Catamount Street in 1974. It was destroyed by fire in February, 2000.



**Old Engine House c1900**

35. Turning left onto Park Street you will come to the *Free Will Baptist Church*. Originally constructed in 1838, it was completely remodeled in 1886 after a design by William A. Butterfield. It is an eclectic blend of Stick Style and Queen Anne elements dominated by a steeply pitched hip roof and an open belfry with pyramidal cap. Members can trace their origins to the Baptist Church of Reverend David Knowlton established on Catamount Mountain in 1791, only the second Free Will Baptist Church in the United States, and the first to have its own building.



**Free Will Baptist Church Before 1886**

36. Beside the church is *Pittsfield Academy*. The first school classes were held on this site in a wooden structure erected in 1830. This private school operated until its doors closed in the late 1880s. It produced several nationally recognized individuals, including one of the most prolific journalists and authors of that century, Colonel Thomas W. Knox. Another student was John Swett who was instrumental in California's effort to adopt the first state tax for funding education. In 1888, J. Wilson White, a wealthy Nashua businessman and former graduate, offered \$5000 to the trustees to build a new structure. In 1890 the wooden building was removed and in 1892 the present brick building was erected. It served as Pittsfield's high school until 1942 when a new one was built across town on Odeida Street.



**Old Wooden Academy 1830-90**

You have now arrive at the point of beginning, Frank Lyman Park, and have completed Pittsfield's Historic Trail. Members of the Pittsfield Historical Society hope that you have enjoyed the tour. Comments may be mailed to the Pittsfield Historical Society, 13 Elm Street, Pittsfield, New Hampshire 03263. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings and programs, and visit our museum. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month, September through June.

**This trail data/booklet was prepared by Larry Berkson, President of the Pittsfield Historical Society. Without his diligence this material would not be available.**