

Brigham Hill Farm

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In 1769 a widower named David Kneeland came north from Topsfield, MA, and bought the land on this hilltop; when he had cleared the land and built a house, he planted the first apple trees in this part of Maine.

The post-and-beam barn was put together with pegs and hand-hewn nails which are still there today. The foundation of the house was of granite slabs wrested from the land when the fields were cleared, and hauled into place by oxen.

Twelve years later, Kneeland sold the property to Asa Kimball, who owned a mill three miles away on Stevens Brook. Kimball had a large family, and his sons were able to tend the farm while each morning he rode his horse three miles to the mill, and each evening home again. There were no roads then, just a trail worn by the horses over the ridge.

Today I drive those same three miles to the post office, or the library, or to pick up a New York Times at Bridgton Books, which is just beside the bridge over Stevens Brook.

I love the history of a place. I loved a book called Blackbird House by my friend Alice Hoffman; it followed the generations —and their stories—on a small Cape Cod farm about the age of this Maine homestead.

It is foolhardy to hope that things will never change. And I would not want to be without the road, or the electricity, or the 300-foot artesian well that makes my life here both possible and comfortable. Change is inevitable.

But oh, I cringe at the sound of the heavy equipment that I hear nearby. It appears that a driveway is being constructed in the meadow uphill beyond my big pine trees. When a driveway is built, a house will follow.

I can only hope that it will contain people who love books and music and history and Brigham Hill.







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