



The Old Town Hall – S.A. French Livery Stable **By Ron Garceau, President, Sunapee, NH Historical Society**

This landmark building located between Main Street and the Sugar River was built in the late 1880s. An early photo shows a different looking building with a sign on it that says: M.F. Knowlton Livery and Feed Stable. Just beyond it in the photo is the Sunapee Harbor Hotel. On a map of Sunapee Harbor dated 1892, it shows the S.A. French Livery in the same location. We are unsure when the building was remodeled and enlarged to the way it looks today, but if you compare the earliest photo with the current building, you can see parts of it which match in the center section of the building. Perhaps further research may shed some more information on this.

In 1920, the building, then owned by Bert Sawyer, was deeded to the Town of Sunapee. In 1926, Moses Knowlton purchased and donated the Town Clock to top off the building.

The interior consists of three floors above ground level. On the ground level, wagons could drive under the building, in one side, out the other. While parked under the building, manure from the horse stalls on the first floor could be shoveled through hatches in the floor.

The first floor still contains the horse stalls, with the names of the horses tacked above the stalls. There is a spiral wooden ramp to lead horses from this floor to the second floor (street level). This ramp was obviously used quite a bit, and is somewhat unique. After WWII, this floor was used for storage by the town. There are some old civil defense helmets still in one of the stalls.

The street level, or second floor, was used to keep the buggies and tack. About the time that gasoline vehicles became popular (c.1920s), the building became used as a town fire station, and a fire truck was kept in this garage area. (Older trucks were smaller than today's.)

The third floor was used as a meeting room, but as with the rest of the main structure, was not insulated, had no heat or plumbing.

Since 1920, the building has been used as a town office, it housed the Municipal Court, was home to the Sunapee Water & Sewer Department, has provided storage for the recreation committee, housed the Sunapee Police Department, and is currently home of the Sunapee Thrift Shop.

A town committee has been appointed to study and make recommendations for it's future.